1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 At the Argyll Islands Taskforce Meeting of 17 May 2016, the Taskforce considered outline proposals for an island symposium. The aim of the event would be to create closer links between the island communities across Argyll and to share best practice. It may also be an opportunity to engage with the Scottish Government if they were able to support the event. This report provides an update on the arrangements for the event.

1.2 Since the May meeting we have contacted community groups to ask them to confirm whether they would be interested in attending, a summary of the responses received is contained at Appendix 2. The responses to the survey indicate that around 25 people would be looking to attend the event; we are therefore proposing that we proceed with the islands symposium.

1.3 We have also been investigating venues and are proposing to use Seil Island Community Hall, subject to availability.

1.4 Finally we have written to the Scottish Government Minister for Transport and the Islands to invite him to the event and are awaiting confirmation as to whether he would be able to attend.

1.5 It is recommended that the Argyll Island Taskforce:
   i. Note the content of the report and agree that arrangements for Island Connections should proceed;
   ii. Note that the Scottish Government Minister for Transport and the Islands has been invited to the event and that this will determine the final agenda as well as the date for the event.
2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 At the Argyll Islands Taskforce Meeting of 17 May 2016, the Taskforce considered outline proposals for an island symposium. The aim of the event would be to create closer links between the island communities across Argyll and to share best practice. We hope that it will also be an opportunity to engage with the Scottish Government if they were able to support the event. This report provides an update on the arrangements for the event.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 It is recommended that the Argyll Island Taskforce:
   i. Note the content of the report and agree that arrangements for Island Connections should proceed;
   ii. Note that the Scottish Government Minister for Transport and the Islands has been invited to the event and that this will determine the final agenda as well as the date for the event.

4.0 DETAIL

4.1 In May, the Taskforce agreed that proposals for the event should be progressed with the initial stage to be a survey of community councils and other community groups to establish the level of demand for the event. Since the meeting, we have written to the island community councils and those community groups that we are aware of; a copy of the email sent is included as Appendix 1.

4.2 We have had survey responses from 9 organisations and 2 individuals. A summary of the survey responses is contained at Appendix 2. There are a number of islands for which no response was received and we tried to make telephone contact we groups on these islands but have received no additional response at the time of writing this report.
4.3 The responses to the survey indicate that around 25 people would be looking to attend the event. We would hope that once the event is organised this number will grow. On this basis we propose that we proceed with the islands symposium.

4.4 We have also been investigating venues, you will recall at the meeting in May that Seil was identified as the most appropriate location. We believe that the Seil Island Community Hall would have sufficient space to accommodate the event with a separate meeting room which could also be used during the workshop session. We also received a request from Mull and Iona Community Trust to consider the An Roth Community Enterprise Centre as a venue however we note that the largest room in this facility is identified as having a capacity for 25 and on this basis we would be concerned that it was not large enough to accommodate the event.

4.5 Once we have confirmed dates for the event we will look to proceed with the Seil Island Community Hall if it is available and other requirements such as catering can be booked. If we are unable to secure the use of the Seil Island Hall then we propose that the Corran Halls in Oban is a secondary choice. Although not on an island, a number of ferry routes terminate at Oban and it would be therefore be a location that many islanders can reach.

4.6 We have written to the Scottish Government Minister for Transport and the Islands to invite him to the event and are awaiting confirmation as to whether he would be able to attend and also to confirm suitable dates. Once we have confirmation from the Scottish Government we will look to confirm the date of the event. We are proposing to hold the event in early October, before the end of the summer ferry timetable, however it should be noted that there is a period of Scottish Government recess during October which may adversely affect the Minister’s availability.

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 If the Taskforce is happy to proceed with the event we will work with all relevant parties to confirm the agenda, previously proposed draft attached as Appendix 3, and arrangements for the day. We will keep the Taskforce updated and insure that all Councillors from the Kintyre and the Islands, Oban South and the Isles, Oban North and Lorn and Isle of Bute wards are invited to the event. We would then provide a report to the next Argyll Islands Taskforce to summarise the event, what it achieved and feedback from participants.
6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Policy – the proposed event aims to support the Argyll Islands Taskforce’s vision for our islands and ultimately the Single Outcome Agreement objective of growing our population by encouraging community activity which leads to successful islands with thriving populations. The Symposium may also influence the Council’s responses to the proposed Islands Bill.

6.2 Financial - it is expected that the proposed Symposium could cost around £1,500-£2,000 to deliver in addition to staff resources.

6.3 Legal – none.

6.4 HR – staff resource from the Economic Development and Strategic Transportation Service as well as potentially other Council services and Community Planning would be required.

6.5 Equalities – none.

6.6 Risk – despite the survey results there is still a risk that there may not be sufficient demand for the event. There is a risk that poor weather could affect the event if this caused disruptions to ferry and/or road travel.

6.7 Customer Service – none.

Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure Services
Policy Lead - Councillor Scoullar
05/08/16

For further information contact: Anna Watkiss, 01546 604344, anna.watkiss@argyll-bute.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Correspondence with community groups
Appendix 2 - Island Connections Survey – Main Points
Appendix 3 - Draft Agenda
APPENDIX 1 – Correspondence with community groups

LIST OF CONTACTS

Community Councils:
Bute, Coll, Iona, Lismore, Luing, Mull, Seil and Easdale, Tiree, Gigha, Islay, Jura, Colonsay and Oban
(to cover Kerrera)

Other community organisations:
Colonsay Community Development Company, Development Coll, Eilean Eisleail, Iomairt Chille CHomain, Island of Kerrera Development Trust, Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust, Isle of Luing Community Trust, Lismore Community Trust, Mull and Iona Community Trust, North West Mull Community Woodland Company, Isle of Jura Community Development Trust, Tiree Community Development Trust, Islay Energy Trust, Fyne Futures, Lismore Community Transport, Ross of Mull and Iona Community Transport Scheme and Tobermory Harbour Association
EMAIL TEXT

SUBJECT: Argyll Islands Taskforce: Island Connections Event

Dear...

As you may be aware, Argyll and Bute Council set up a Shortlife Working Group, the Argyll Islands Taskforce, in recognition of the important role that our islands play as a place in which to live, work and visit.

“It is recognised that our islands play a vital role in delivering economic growth across our area. We want to see our islands prosper and grow, providing education and employment for our young people, supporting and growing our businesses and communities and benefiting from the communication and transportation infrastructure and services necessary for them to be sustainable and prosperous.”

Argyll Islands Taskforce Vision

The Argyll Islands Taskforce is now investigating the opportunity for island communities to join together with each other to share your experiences and shape the priorities for action.

Subject to demand, we would like to arrange an islands symposium – Island Connections – which will be an opportunity for island communities to come together to share ideas and good practice and discuss the shared challenges which affect island life and how to work together to address them. We are also currently in contact with the Scottish Government to seek their input to the event which we hope will enable you to hear directly how they are progressing with the Islands Bill and how they expect to support Scottish islands.

Draft proposals would be to host Island Connections in October 2016 and we are investigating facilities on the Isle of Seil as a location for the event, detailed arrangements will be confirmed in due course.

If this event is to go ahead and be successful, we need your support and your examples of the many excellent community led projects which are taking place across Argyll to support island life, we will only be able to proceed if there is sufficient demand. We would be grateful if you could complete the short questionnaire at https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/P98QL2R by Monday 11 July 2016 to enable us to shape Island Connections and gather a clearer picture of the issues concerning island communities. It will also help us to understand the level of demand for the event, therefore please complete the questionnaire even if you would not plan to attend. If you have any further comments please also add them.

If you believe that another organisation on your island may be interested in attending please forward this email to them, they can also confirm their interest by completing the questionnaire by Monday 11 July 2016.

Regards...
QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Contact Details
   Name
   Organisation
   Email Address
   Address
   Phone Number

2. Would your organisation like to attend Island Connections? Yes  No

3. If yes, how many people from your organisation might attend:

4. If no, why would you be unlikely to attend?

5. Does your organisation have an example of a successful community project which you would be willing to share with Island Connections? If yes, please provide details:

6. Which of these issues are relevant to your island?
   - Adequate GP coverage, ambulance Service and Patient Transport arrangements are not available
   - Capital investment in key island transport infrastructure is required
   - Digital connectivity is poor – broadband and mobile
   - Economic challenges restrict opportunities e.g. lack of employment, high costs of business operation
   - Fuel poverty is high
   - Integration of transport infrastructure, e.g. ferries, trains, buses, is required
   - Lack of affordable housing
   - Mail delivery surcharges/restrictions stop access to goods
   - The Crown Estate devolution of powers and income is something our organisation would like to see
   - Water and waste water constraints restrict development
   - Other (please specify)

7. Please also identify your top three priority issues
   Priority 1   Priority 2   Priority 3
   Health services
   Transport infrastructure
   Digital connectivity
   Economic challenges
   Fuel poverty
   Integration of transport
   Affordable housing
   Mail delivery surcharges
   The Crown Estate powers
   Other (please specify)

8. Any other comments regarding these issues?

9. Does your island have a specific issue they would like to discuss as part of workshop sessions which would enable other communities to provide feedback and possible solutions? If yes, please provide details:

10. Any other comments or suggestions:
APPENDIX 2: Island Connections Survey – Main Points

14 responses to the survey were received which consisted of 9 Organisations and 2 individuals. Representatives from Bute, Easdale, Islay, Jura, Kerrera, Luing, Mull and Iona and Tiree responded.

13 responses indicated that they would attend with 1 no response. It was indicated that approximately 25 people would attend based on these responses.

People would not attend due to availability/dates, time for traveling and cost, lack of resources and a lack of information about why the event is taking place.

Suggested community projects for consideration for inclusion within the agenda were: ReJig Recycling, MacTaggert Community Pool, Ulva Ferry Housing Project, GigaPlus Argyll, Garmony Hydro, Tiley Community Turbine, Windfall Fund, examples of community owner buildings such as halls and museums, community bus service, Ross of Mull and Iona Community Transport, Eagle Watch, MESS (Mull and Iona Environmentally Sensitive Solutions), Tobermory Harbour Association, North West Mull Woodland, Bute Advice Centre, Scotland in Bloom project.

We asked those responding to confirm which of the Argyll Taskforce Priorities were important to their communities and the Relevant Issues highlighted were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relevant Issues</th>
<th>Scoring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Digital connectivity is poor – broadband and mobile</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital investment in key island transport infrastructure is required</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration of transport infrastructure, e.g. ferries, trains, buses, is required</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic challenges restrict opportunities e.g. lack of employment, high costs</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of affordable housing</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Crown Estate devolution of powers and income is something our organisation</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate GP coverage, ambulance Service and Patient Transport arrangements are</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not available</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuel poverty is high</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mail delivery surcharges/restrictions stop access to goods</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water and waste water constraints restrict development</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other issues raised were: the condition of the roads, lack of community buildings, lack of adequate visitor facilities (i.e. toilets, ferry waiting area, information/interpretive signs), lack of paths and pavements, refuse collection and recycling, need for a Sunday vehicular ferry service, impact of RET on Mull and Iona and the conservation of the ecosystem.

Those responding were asked to highlight the top three priority issues for their communities, the Priority Issues were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Issues</th>
<th>Scoring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Digital connectivity</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These figures were calculated by giving the following scoring based on whether the issue was identified as Priority 1, 2 or 3:

- **Priority 1** = 3
- **Priority 2** = 2
- **Priority 3** = 1

It is however worth noting that only a small number of communities responded and this means that a certain amount of caution should be applied to these findings.

**Other comments** received from those responding related to: the lack of high speed broadband and poor digital connectivity, improvements to Kerrera’s roads, economic challenges, need for a Sunday vehicle ferry, lack of funding for vital services.

On the positive side: GigaPlus Argyll is coming soon to provide faster Broadband to the areas which BT had no intention of covering and NHS currently looking for GPs to cover Mull and to provide a safer integrated service.

We asked those responding to identify issues that they might like to discuss as part of workshop sessions, the potential workshop issues highlighted were: high speed broadband, road infrastructure, community buildings, parcel delivery, RET, refuse and recycling collection, island bus services, transportation to medical appointments and a following up on the charrette process which has been ongoing on Bute.
Appendix 3 - Draft Agenda

Please note that these proposals are in draft only. It is proposed that those speaking will be invited to outline their projects, talk about the lessons learned and pass on hints and tips to other communities who might be considering a similar project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Suggested person/organisation</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>Refreshments and networking</td>
<td></td>
<td>Refreshments provided early to accommodate those arriving early because of ferry travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>Welcome</td>
<td>Councillor Scoullar</td>
<td>Start time pushed back to allow as many participants as possible to travel on the morning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.10</td>
<td>Ideas Exchange – projects delivered by island communities and organisations</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>A Pecha Kucha style event to offer up to 10 quick presentations from various island groups. Pecha Kucha limits each presentation to 20 slides each shown for 20 seconds – total time 6 mins 40 for each presentation. Any remaining time can be utilised for questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.45</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>Scottish Government Update</td>
<td>TBC</td>
<td>Invite Scottish Government to event to provide an update on their work on Scottish Islands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>Support for Communities</td>
<td>Social Enterprise and/or Community Development Team and/or EU Team</td>
<td>Information regarding the support offered by the Council to communities and funding opportunities. Possibly also speak to HIE regarding their attendance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>Solving real-life issues</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>Invite 2 or 3 island communities to bring forward an issue that they would like to address, split into small working groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>Round up and close</td>
<td></td>
<td>Finish by 3 to enable those traveling to get boats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>Refreshments and networking</td>
<td></td>
<td>Extended networking session to allow those who don’t need to leave to stay on.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>