



# Argyll and Bute Local Services Initiative

## What is ABLSI

ABLSI is a partnership initiative bringing together Argyll and Bute Council, Argyll and Bute Social Enterprise Network, Argyll Voluntary Action, and Argyll & Bute Community Health, NHS.

ABLSI is investigating whether asset-based approaches to service innovation can help to sustain (and improve) services even during a time of cuts and increasing actual costs. It offers an opportunity for local practitioners to learn from practice, analyse risk factors and develop and support stakeholders to develop service models which meet the long term needs of communities.

The work is part of a Rural Development Community of Practice (CoP), which is supported by Carnegie UK Trust and Highlands and Islands Enterprise. The CoP enables activists, professionals and policy makers from across the UK and Ireland to support and learn from one other online and at face-face events.

In 2007 Carnegie UK Trust was invited to speak at the Community Planning Partnership Biennial Conference in Rothesay. This meeting led to an informal partnership between the Trust and the Council. In March 2008, Carnegie UK Trust and the Council Leader delivered a joint paper to the Convention of the Highlands and Islands in Inverness. This paper laid down the challenges for local authorities in ensuring the sustainability of rural communities, and it is these challenges, which encapsulated the Demonstration Project work programme.

The full report from the Demonstration Project with recommendations can be viewed here - <http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/community-life-and-leisure/demonstration-project>

## Participation in Carnegie UK Trust Rural Development Community of Practice

The Demonstration Project recommended measures to support the development of asset-based approaches to service improvement throughout Argyll and Bute. One recommendation proposed continued working with Carnegie UK Trust to ensure local practitioners benefited from exchanging learning with others across the UK and Ireland.

On the basis of this recommendation, Carnegie UK Trust and Highlands and Islands Enterprise came together to support the establishment of a new initiative - the Argyll and Bute Local Services Initiative (ABLSI), to:

**Identify service areas where there is a real potential for the public sector in Argyll and Bute to work with the Third Sector over a period of time to determine ways in which collaboration might improve the quality of services while also achieving efficiencies.**

## Current Work (2011)

Within the current climate of reduced budgets, the public sector is faced with difficult challenges in continuing to deliver services for communities at a lower price where actual costs are continuing to increase. ABLSI partners including the Council and NHS in Argyll and Bute recognise that



## How ABLSI came about

The ABLSI was developed based on recommendations from the Argyll and Bute 'Harnessing the Potential of the Third Sector to Help Achieve Council Objectives Demonstration Project' (Demonstration Project.) This was established in 2008 following a meeting between the Council Leader and the Head of the Big Lottery Fund in Scotland. It is a record of the work that Argyll and Bute Council under-took to help develop and maintain sustainable communities, working jointly with community, voluntary and social enterprise organisations, collectively known as the Third Sector.



communities and the Third Sector are important resources for delivering local solutions to local issues. They also recognise the need to factor in impacts on community sustainability and quality of life of any changes.

During 2011, the Argyll and Bute Local Services Initiative will be working in the areas of:

- Funding (Participative and open budget planning,)
- Procurement and risk management
- Asset development – skills and training
- Asset-transfer (physical)



### Focus of Inquiry

Throughout the project we will gather information from existing examples of practice and new areas of work to identify the essential operational elements that are required for public services to develop effectively and sustainably with the third sector. Areas of focus will include:

- Access to capacity and skills for delivering and managing services for the long term future.
- Factors such as financial and organisational security as well as risk management which enable organisations to build from a robust starting point.
- Considerations when transferring assets, either human or physical to maximise community benefits.



### How to get involved

- If you are a third sector organisation in Argyll and Bute and want to find out more – please contact Bill Stewart, Development Manager, ABSEN- [william.stewart@absen.org.uk](mailto:william.stewart@absen.org.uk)
- If you are interested in this area of work and would like to find out more or share your experiences please sign up to the community of practice – [www.fieryspirits.com](http://www.fieryspirits.com) and join in the discussions in the Developing Rural Services – Transfer Process theme topic. <http://fieryspirits.com/page/developing-rural-services>

