

ARGYLL COASTAL WATERS PROJECT UPDATE

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Argyll Coastal Waters Project aims to develop the economic potential of our coastline through marine leisure opportunities based on the development of an Argyll Sea Kayak Trail, and a Paddle Argyll brand. To compliment this, there are opportunities for 12 modern apprentices, local businesses and for communities to take advantage of this development.
- 1.2 Project funding totals £606,199 and mainly comes from external funders. This fully funded phase of the project is due to complete in June 2015.
- 1.3 Funding has been awarded for small scale infrastructure, two full time and a one day a week post, 12 modern apprenticeships, and to promote the sea kayak tourism product.
- 1.4 We are working with a host of partners to ensure that marketing of the Argyll Sea Kayak Trail and the Paddle Argyll brand is maximised and that the water access sites are maintained and cared for. This will enable us to leave a legacy for local businesses and communities to build on.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.2.1 The Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee note the content of this report.

Argyll Coastal Waters Project Update

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This report provides an update on the current development phase of the Argyll Coastal Waters project and information on maintenance arrangements.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee note the content of this report.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Argyll Coastal Waters project is a partnership project between Argyll and Bute Council, Stramash and Scottish Canals, with the Council as the lead partner. It aims to develop the economic potential of our coastline through marine leisure opportunities. It does this through developing nine (with an additional site at Ellenabeich now being developed) coastal access sites with small scale infrastructure installed such as signage and kayak rings for storage, offering 12 marine based apprenticeships, and developing and marketing a sea kayak trail connecting the Argyll coastline. Two posts are hosted by Stramash, namely a paddlesports co-ordinator and a training and apprenticeship co-ordinator, as well as a one-day-a week graduate trainee position in marketing.
- 4.2 Argyll Coastal Waters is a £606,199 project funded by the Coastal Communities Fund, Argyll and the Isles LEADER, Skills Development Scotland, and Argyll and Bute Council. With £30,000 of Argyll and Bute Council investment we have brought in approximately £576,199 to the area, which is 95% of the total project costs.
- 4.3 A website and leaflets have been developed to market the trail which was launched at the Commonwealth Games in July 2014. This involved a kayak relay from Ganavan in the north to Helensburgh in the south, and a symbolic handing over of a baton at the Sugar Sheds in Greenock for the final leg of the voyage which then joined the Commonwealth Flotilla to Glasgow. Two hundred and fifty copies of the Argyll Sea Kayak Trail leaflet were included in 'goodie bags' for those taking part in the Flotilla. BBC Scotland's Out of Doors programme broadcast segments on the Argyll Sea Kayak Trail on two consecutive Saturday mornings, one as part of the

Commonwealth coverage and also a live interview with Councillor Vivien Dance took place on Radio Scotland's Good Morning Show on the day of the Flotilla. Coverage of the kayak relay could be accessed live through the RYA website through a tracking device and regular tweets and facebook posts were sent out by Argyll and the Isles Tourism Co-operative and Argyll and Bute Council's Communications Team and viewed by 96,714 people. The website can be found at www.paddleargyll.org.uk.

- 4.4 The Argyll Sea Kayak Trail is the tourism product developed and it consists of a skeleton of water access sites covering 150km that can be added to in the future. The sites are shown on the attached flyer and are; Ganavan Sands Oban, (Ellenabeich), Arduaine, Crinan, Ardrishaig, Tarbert, North Bute, Toward, West Bay Dunoon, and Helensburgh.
- 4.6 To maximise use of the Argyll Sea Kayak Trail by visitors and residents a marketing plan has been produced. This includes promoting the trail through the Paddle Argyll website and partner websites through linkages, articles in trade press, watersports magazines and local press, a presence at trade shows, a suite of promotional videos, and print and promotional materials. We have received positive coverage in a range of press and special interest magazines such as Scotland Outdoors, Canoe Wales and Scottish Paddler, as well as positive tweets on our Paddle Argyll website. To reach the widest possible audience we are working with Argyll and the Isles Tourism Partnership, Visit Scotland, Scottish Canals, Argyll and the Isles Coast and Countryside Trust, Stramash, Tarbert Yacht Club, North Bute Community Land Company, Castle Toward Sailing Club and a host of watersports clubs and business across the area.
- 4.7 The water access sites were developed with minimum maintenance as a requirement and a 'leave no trace' policy as used at similar sites and projects. They will be checked at the beginning and end of each season with spot checks throughout the year by our partners and Council employees where appropriate. The attached paper details the arrangements at each site.
- 4.8 All twelve modern apprentices are in place with Hebridean Pursuits, Lochgoilhead Outdoor Centre and Stramash.
- 4.9 The economic impact of these posts and the modern apprentices has been estimated as an indirect increase in employment of 6.3FT. The economic impact of spend by kayak visitors to the area as a result of the Argyll Sea Kayak Trail is expected but not defined and will begin to be realised this coming season.
- 4.10 The project will complete this year as per our current funding requirements and the next steps are to finalise capital works, continue to support the modern apprentices on placement and to undertake community and business events in April and May 2015.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The Argyll Coastal Waters project has improved the water access infrastructure and created a sea kayak tourism product for the area that will benefit communities and

tourism and leisure businesses alike. It is currently providing modern apprentices for twelve individuals as well as having created two full time and a one day a week post. It has brought funding into the area and will leave a legacy that can be built upon in the future.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

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| 6.1 | Policy | None. |
| 6.2 | Financial | None. The current project is fully funded although officer time is required to oversee the project and to develop the capital elements. |
| 6.3 | Legal | Bound by Coastal Community Fund and LEADER terms of grant. |
| 6.4 | HR | Council element is met under current staff resources. |
| 6.5 | Equalities | None but the proposed improvements increase accessibility of sites to those with mobility problems. |
| 6.6 | Risk | Risks have been mitigated against and we are in the final stages of the project. Main risk is that the product is not used. |
| 6.7 | Customer Services | Improved access for customers. |

7. APPENDICES

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| 7.1 | Appendix One | Argyll Sea Kayak Trail leaflet. |
| 7.2 | Appendix Two | Argyll Sea Kayak Trail Site Maintenance Report 09 04 15. |

Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure

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