

## Rural Service Priority Areas – proposals 2/2/2006

The proposals detailed below are the distillation and development of ideas gathered from an initial trawl in early January and meetings over the past 2-3 weeks. There has been significant input from Deirdre Forsyth and George McKenzie, the Council's Area Corporate Services Managers with responsibility for the areas containing the two census "data zones".

Each area has £100k available to spend on improving access to services identified by focus groups interviewed as part of the research commissioned by the Rural Policy Team in the Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department (SEERAD).

Any improvements must fit with the priority service improvements identified by the focus groups and primarily benefit the population in the census data zone area, but there can be benefits beyond that area if there is a logical reason to do so. (See associated report for summary of the findings.) There is an expectation that any improvements outside the data zone would be largely focused on the census "Intermediate Geography" surrounding the data zone (see associated maps) – but if a corporate change were necessary an Argyll and Bute wide action is acceptable (but monitoring would need to be in place for the data zone area).

Funds are available for capital or revenue costs in 2006/7. Where a project has revenue costs in 2006/7 there is no prospect of future support from the Community Planning Partnership. Revenue supported projects would have to end or find alternative sources of funding. Community Planning Partners may wish to consider how they would support ongoing activities if required. Argyll and Bute Council has already indicated that there is no prospect of further funding from the Council's own budget, but that the Council is willing to support and advise organisations as they look for other sources of funding.

Colonsay, Jura and N Islay		Lochs Goil and Eck	
Advice Network online referrals (50% of cost) to enable easier access to most appropriate advice services. benefits	£10k	Advice Network online referrals (50% of cost) to enable easier access to most appropriate advice services	£10k
Partial support for capital costs of starting a fast passenger service from Crinan to Craighouse (suggestion of using covered 12-seat RIB)	£40-50k	Partial capital support for new vehicles to allow extension of community transport schemes into Lochgoilhead area (£40k for Cowal Deserve and £8k for Lochgoilhead Community Trust)	£48k
Ferry Master training (contingency for Jura ferry)	£5k	Extension of Healthy Communities Collaborative to Lochgoilhead area to promote falls prevention and so avoid demands on healthcare services	£30k

Colonsay, Jura and N Islay		Lochs Goil and Eck	
Installation of video conferencing in Port Ellen Police station to enable Colonsay and Jura to have a direct police link. The facility would be available for partner and community organisations.	£7,500	Installation of video conferencing facilities in Lochgoilhead village hall with training and initial support to create community owned access point (similar approach to “Here we are...” at Cairndow)	£13k
Relocation of Marriage Room and reconfiguration of office space to better accommodate and improve access to IDEAS Community Transport scheme (includes installation of stair lift)	£13k	Installation of video conferencing equipment in GP surgeries in Lochgoilhead, Kilmun and Strachur so that NHS staff and Council/voluntary sector social care staff can effectively communicate.	Approx £6k each for lines, equipment and training
Pilot of Patient transport using IDEAS – also includes the intermediate geography area. Addresses a need on Islay and concern expressed by residents of Jura.	£30k for pilot patient transport scheme		
Additional equipment at Colonsay and Jura service points for Police and other partners	£4k		
Accommodation for Amenity Services on Jura	£????		

The process of reviewing and developing suggestions has highlighted that whilst there is good provision of video conferencing equipment in many rural areas, there is not a matching investment at mainland facilities – especially those located in more urban areas. For example, residents of Colonsay, Jura and Islay can relatively easily communicate with other islands or facilities in other parts of Argyll and Bute, but communication with organisations/facilities (e.g. hospitals) in Glasgow is much more difficult.

The comments from the island focus group indicate a desire to use video conferencing and reports of good experiences when this has been used in the past. The research also highlighted inequalities in patient transport as patients returning to islands are expected to be more independent than those who receive support in urban settings.

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