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**ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL  
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

**Community Planning Partnership  
Management Committee  
28<sup>th</sup> June 2006**

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**REPORT ON: The Current Situation with Scottish Water and  
Development Capacities within Argyll and Bute**

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**1. BACKGROUND**

**1.1** As members of the Community Planning Partnership are aware there has been widespread concern with regard to Scottish Water (SW) and water infrastructure related development constraints in many areas of Argyll and Bute.

In response to these concerns the Council has taken a number of actions in an effort to firstly clarify the situation and to also seek practical solutions to increase development capacity wherever possible. These actions can be summarised as follows:-

1. Following dialogue with Scottish Water's agents Babbie Planning Council investment priorities for SW assets was determined at an officer level
2. Council priorities were then approved following amendments at each Area Committee before being sanctioned at the Strategic Policy Committee that was held on the 16 March 2006.
3. At the same meeting Councillor Robin Banks in his role as the Council's Environment and Development Spokesperson was appointed as the Council's representative on the George Lyon's strategic group that has been formed to address SW development constraints within Argyll and Bute.
4. A series of meetings have been held with SW in an effort to clarify the situation and seek solutions to overcome existing constraints.

The rest of this report provides a summary of what has been discussed so far and what further action has been proposed.

**1.2**

**Council Administrative Areas Development Constraints:  
Q&S III Investment programme**

At the first meeting held at Kilmory, in Lochgilphead the discussion revolved around the Council administrative areas of Oban, Lorn and the Isles and Mid Argyll, Kintyre and Islay.

Scottish Water declared from the outset of the meeting that their main purpose in meeting with the Council at this time was to ensure that there was sufficient capacity within their systems to meet the realistic development aspirations of the Argyll and Bute Finalised Local Plan. Of particular interest was the likely demand over the next four years (2006 to 2010) which covers the initial investment phase of their Q&S III investment for growth programme. Markers were also put down for the need to bring forward capacity for growth for the period between 2010 and 2014.

All settlements with public sewerage and water supplies were discussed in detail with indicative numbers (in terms of additional households/business users) being determined for each settlement. Fortunately, there seemed to be sufficient capacity in the system for most settlements within Lorn over the next four years including the main town of Oban although there still remains a concern over the capacity of the water supply. Consequently it is felt appropriate at this stage to seek water conservation measures for new development within the Oban water catchment area in an effort to conserve finite resources and increase development capacity. Another area of concern was the Island of Tiree where there is limited capacity for new development given the shortage of potable water. This is despite SW shortly bringing on stream two new bore holes. Again, the need to conserve water here should be considered as part of the planning process.

In **Mid Argyll and Kintyre** there also seemed to be sufficient water and sewerage capacity to meet the realistic aspirations of the Finalised Local Plan for the vast majority of settlements including the main towns of **Cambeltown** and **Lochgilhead**. Nevertheless, there will be a need for growth to be factored in the next four year period for both towns if current development trends continue. On particular problem however is a lack of capacity for further growth on **Islay**, particularly the settlements of **Bowmore** and **Port Ellen** that are served by the same water treatment works. The need for growth was therefore highlighted here as a top Council priority. SW also raised concerns that there was a need to conserve the use of potable water throughout Islay given the finite resource

available.

A further meeting was held at Helensburgh between SW and the Council with regard to the Council's administrative areas of **Helensburgh and Lomond** and **Bute and Cowal**.

Again it seemed that there was sufficient capacity to meet the realistic aspirations of the Finalised Local Plan for most settlements with public sewerage and water infrastructure within Helensburgh and Lomond for the next four years. It was also noted that for Helensburgh at least there would be a need for growth to be accommodated within the next four year period to allow for possible expansion into the Green Belt.

1.3 In **Bute and Cowal** the principal concern was the main town of **Dunoon** that has no capacity for sewerage. SW confirmed however that growth would be built in to the new sewage works that in the process of receiving planning consent. This would raise capacity to a person (pe) equivalent of 14,500 when completed as part of the current Q&SII programme. It should be noted that SW's chosen site will not have the ability to expand in future years and a new site will be required to allow future growth. In **Rothesay** there was a huge surplus of capacity in terms of public sewerage although capacities were tight in terms of the supply of potable water. There was however sufficient for the needs of the plan and the realistic level of development envisaged. One other area of concern was highlighted in the **Kames Tighnabruaich** area that has a limited water supply which although would be sufficient for the needs of the local plan takes no account of the expansion plans of **Portavadie**.

At the end of these meetings it was agreed that full minutes including specific numbers for each settlement would be jointly agreed on and then published on SW's web site within the next month to allow the Council and the development industry to monitor capacities on a regular basis. It was further agreed that at a minimum yearly meetings would be held between SW and Council representatives in an effort to avoid future problems and help programme value for money investment. SW will also publish in due course a list of assets that will be subject to further investment to satisfy growth in the first Q&S III investment period. SW also intend to appoint "Account Managers" to service specific customer areas. These managers will act as a main contact point for future communication.

All the above information was presented to the Strategic level meeting convened by George Lyon and held in Dunoon on

the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June 2006. At this meeting representatives of the Argyll and Bute building industry and the Rented Social Sector were present and welcomed the progress that had been made.

The development policy service of the Council will prepare a report for the Council's August Strategic Policy Committee to inform members of the latest situation with SW, including their forthcoming investment programme.

## **2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1** That the Community Planning Partnership note the contents of this report for information purposes only.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

- 4.1** In response to growing concern over water development constraints facing many areas of Argyll and Bute the Council has undertaken a number of actions to clarify information and seek solutions to overcome development constraints. This has resulted in good progress being made with many areas of Argyll and Bute having sufficient capacity to meet the realistic needs of the Finalised Local Plan.

## **5. IMPLICATIONS**

<b>Policy:</b>	None
<b>Financial:</b>	None
<b>Personnel:</b>	Officer involvement in attending meetings
<b>Community:</b>	Addressing development constraints that could have severe impacts on communities throughout Argyll and Bute

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