

Ulva Ferry Community Plan



Plana Leasachadh-Coimhearsnachd

Caolas Ulbha

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Ulva Ferry Community Plan

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Introduction

The Ulva Ferry area on the island of Mull is defined as the catchment area of Ulva Ferry Primary:

From the top of Burg, on the North West of the Island down to just before Kellan Farm, including the islands of Ulva & Gometra and from Keepers Cottage at the bottom of the Hill road through to the Torloisk Cross Roads, over to the North Eastern base of Cnoc an Da Chinn, at Glen Bellart.



Ulva School. Photo: Alasdair Satchel

The population and household make-up of the area is defined in the following table:

| Population Info | |
|-------------------------|-----|
| Adults | 91 |
| Children <17 | 32 |
| Household Info | |
| Households in area | 100 |
| Holiday Homes | 30 |
| Commercial Holiday Lets | 19 |
| Leased | 17 |
| Tied | 5 |
| Derelict | 3 |
| In Private Ownership | 26 |

The Ulva Ferry Growth At The Edge¹ [UFGATE] project came in to being as a consequence of community advocacy in the area:

¹ For further information on the Growth At The Edge initiative refer to the section on page 5.

In 2010 Argyll and Bute Council marked Ulva Ferry Primary and 25 other small community schools in the county for potential closure.

In response to this threat a school and community advocacy group was formed in 2011: Ulva School Community Association [USCA].

USCA run community and social engagement events from both the school premises and the outside. Their events range from the hosting of incoming touring events to a wide range of workshops and talks for community members and visitors.

In the pursuit of its constituted aims USCA are pursuing the development of a plot of land near to the school which has been gifted to them, and also following up on an offer from a further community member to sell land to them.



Mather Meeting. Photo: Sam Jones
<http://www.islandscap photography.co.uk/>

Morven Gibson, Local Development Officer [LDO] for The Ross of Mull and Iona brought USCA and the Ulva Ferry area to the attention of Highlands and Islands Enterprise [HIE].

Identifying the area as having an active profile in community advocacy HIE offered the Ulva Ferry Area an LDO position, through contact with USCA.

The LDO position was then taken up by Cally Fleming and Alasdair Satchel, working on a job share basis.

USCA co-ordinated a stakeholder's meeting at the end of March '12, which was chaired by former MSP Jim Mather. This meeting produced a detailed mind map of a vision for what the community could become in the years to come².

² For a copy of the Mind Map generated at the event, please contact either the LDO's or USCA.

A video identifying the need for affordable housing based on interviews with local people was compiled for the event. That the need for affordable housing was identified so early on in the process, even before the community consultation took place, shows how much a priority this issue is for the people of the Ulva Ferry area.



Ariel View of Ulva Sound
Photo: Donald Melville

A body for community advocacy, USCA also seek to represent the views of their constituent members where matters affecting employment, environmental factors and housing are concerned.

The continuing success of USCA is a testimony to how strongly people feel about issues around the threat of school closure in Ulva Ferry. If people did not feel as strongly as they do there would be no USCA, and no LDO position. Therefore, assuring the continual existence of Ulva Primary is at the heart of the LDO's role.

It is important for the UFGATE project to be successful it must cause the least displacement possible to existing businesses in the area.

Where displacement could be an issue solutions will always be sought to work with the existing businesses connected with the specific initiative's area of provision.

The Growth At The Edge Project

The Growth At The Edge Project [GATE] is an initiative created by Highlands and Islands Enterprise [HIE] in response to the Scottish Government's Economic Strategy. This strategy looks to find means to allow people access to employment opportunities and a quality of life, regardless of their geographical location within Scotland.

One aspect of the GATE project is Community Account Management [CAM] which sees a Local Development Officer [LDO] post created in the community area. The LDO is then charged with drawing up a Local Development Plan following a community consultation, (the document you are currently reading) and to seek means to allow the priorities of the community plan to be implemented.

The LDO is also charged with finding a means to allow the GATE project to carry on beyond completion of the initial two year funding from HIE.

How This Plan Was Achieved

This community plan has been achieved as a result of a community consultation with the people of the Ulva Ferry area.

This consultation took several forms:

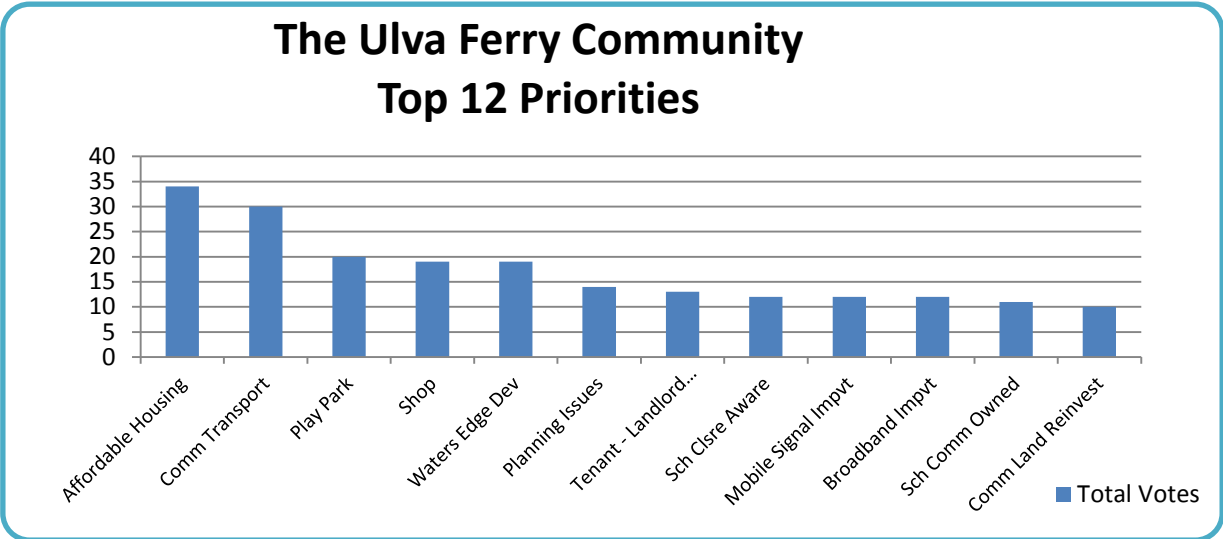
- Conversations and interviews with individuals
- Community consultation days
- Community meetings
- Online surveys
- A community consultation top fifteen priorities review meeting.



Community Consultation Day
Photo: Alasdair Satchel

The responses to the consultation were then collated and the top priorities became apparent by the amount of times they were identified.

The Ulva Ferry Community Top 12 Priorities



Housing

The top priority for the residents of the Ulva Ferry area, identified within the community consultation is affordable housing.

At present there is only one house that falls in to the category of affordable housing assuring Scottish Secure Tenancy in the Ulva Ferry area. Of 100 households 22 are rented and 78 are in private ownership. Of the houses in private ownership 30 are holiday homes, 19 of which are let commercially. There are 3 derelict houses which could be demolished or refurbished to a habitable standard.

USCA have invested a significant amount of time in the investigation of housing projects and have been exploring the development of local affordable housing within the area and have, to date, a number of offers from local landowners for plots.

USCA are already in the process of setting themselves up as a Registered Social Landlord and charity.

Working with West Highland Housing Association, USCA is in the process of creating new housing in the area following the receipt of Innovation funding in 2011.

USCA have handed the governance of building projects over to the LDO's, who will oversee the developments in line with a plan agreed with the USCA committee. As building projects were already in existence before the creation of the Ulva Ferry LDO post it has been co-

opted in to our remit, as it falls within the principal objectives as identified in the community consultation. This has been ratified by both the committee of USCA and the LDO steering group.



Gometra Cottage Photo: Alasdair Satchel

In the community plan it was identified that there is a need for affordable housing not just for young families, whose children would attend Ulva Primary School, but also single people and couples, starting off life together, and older people who have maybe had a larger house, but are looking to down size.

If we were able to realise this vision of affordable housing it would support and strengthen the community as a whole, as there would be a continuity of housing through which to progress. This would encourage families to stay in the area and encourage long term social cohesion.

In line with their building developments USCA have created a housing list comprising both people living in the area and without in the larger community of Mull. There are, at the time of writing 76 people on the list, representing 15 family groups, 8 couples and 7 individuals.

USCA are currently developing a housing allocation policy. This will be in line with West Highland Housing's policies and those currently in use by local housing associations of a similar constitution to USCA.

Affordable plots for development have also been identified as of high importance to the community. Opportunities for these will be explored with an eye to both the facilitation of private sales and also community purchase, sale and re-investment, much like the model proposed by North West Mull Community Woodland Trust.

In line with the community's priority for affordable housing they have identified the need for independent energy audits to be offered to each house-hold within the area. As the financial climate of the country changes, and as winters are becoming more severe some households may find themselves in a fuel poverty situation in the years to come. This would push the cost of running a house up, possibly beyond the means of a family or household on a lower income. This would then have an adverse effect on the sustainability of the local population.

A quantitative site analysis document has been drafted and currently includes 10 sites that have been identified for possible future development of affordable housing. UFGATE/USCA will work with the relevant statutory bodies to ensure that the most appropriate sites are developed, that all developments are constructed to high standards, including environmentally sensitive solutions and renewable energy sources where possible and causing minimal disturbance to the surrounding landscape and community during construction. Benefits to the community will also be researched such as improved area water supply and potential renewable energy development.

Action Points:

- To pursue the Acharonich site for development for affordable housing
- To pursue further potential housing sites with an eye to developing affordable housing
- To pursue opportunities for low price plots for both private individuals and community groups
- To consult with owners of holiday homes to discuss possibilities of long term letting instead of seasonal short term holiday lets in some cases
- To find means to allow energy audits to be carried out on each household within the community. Means to realise actions & recommendations coming from the review shall be pursued

Community Transport

At present there is no dedicated public transport scheme in operation in the Ulva Ferry area.

The nearest that the local service provider, Bowmans, comes is to Calgary Bay, 7.1 miles north west of the Torloisk Cross roads, and to Salen 4.6 miles to the north east of Kellan Mill.

Taxi journeys on and around the island are very expensive.

4 principal journeys a person from the Ulva Ferry area may make on a regular basis are:

| | |
|-----------|---|
| Dervaig | to do a small shop / post office / see friends / church / go to an event in the village hall |
| Salen | shopping / church / socialising / doctors' appointments / hospital appointments |
| Tobermory | large shop / doctors' appointments / socialising / council office / high school / after school events and clubs |
| Craignure | ferry / progressive care centre / onward travel to Ross of Mull |

| Location | Destination | Distance |
|---------------------|-------------|------------|
| | Dervaig | 5.3 miles |
| Torloisk Cross | Salen | 14.3 miles |
| Roads to: | Tobermory | 12.5 miles |
| | Craignure | 25.3 miles |
| | Dervaig | 14.4 miles |
| Kellan Old Farm to: | Salen | 4.6 miles |
| | Tobermory | 14.2 miles |
| | Craignure. | 15.6 miles |

There are a number of options to be explored in the delivery of a community transport scheme for the area.

One option would be to see if existing vehicles and drivers could be used within the community for co-option in to a community transport scheme.

There are a number of community members who already provide a council funded school run. Another option may be to talk to these individuals to establish if they would like to pursue this role, in a paid position, further.

MICT are looking in to the feasibility of a community transport scheme to help residents travel from their homes to the progressive care centre at Craignure. The running of a community minibus is not financially viable at this time, but this remains an aspiration for which means are being sought through innovative projects, such as electric based vehicles.

A community car scheme will be set up. This will involve a pool of volunteer drivers who will provide lifts for a small contribution to costs and will be subsidised by grants, similar to the North Argyll Voluntary Car Scheme [NAVCS].

Action Points:

- Attend Community Transport Conference to keep abreast of current developments.
- Identify and support a Volunteer Driver / Car-Share scheme Coordinator.
- Set up a Volunteer Driver / Car-Share scheme to be administered through email or phone.
- Develop a community transport system. Link in to other community plan initiatives such as retail deliveries.

Play Park

In third place of the community's priorities is a Play Park.

Both young people and their parents feel that there is very little provision for places that offer structured play within the area.

A play park proposes many positive actions.

- It can be a focus for local children to play on and socialise at.



Kilninian Beach Games. Photo: Moray Finch

- As has been seen with other play parks in the West of Scotland, children

will come from considerable distances outside the immediate area of the play park to play on it. Bringing people in to the area to play and mix with the youth of the area is a very positive socialising action, particularly for younger children.

- An adults' kinetic gym as part of the play park development would allow for intergenerational engagement, and also a means of exercise for older people.

The location of the play park is important.

If it can be sited in line with other initiatives, such as the water's edge developments or beside the school or a community hub, it could be an attractive feature for both locals and visitors. Its design will be in keeping with the rural environment of the area, using locally sourced materials where possible.

Action Points:

- Source funding for a feasibility study in to play park development.
- Investigation of projected running costs for a play park.
- Identify means of governance and maintenance for a play park.
- Investigate sites, construction costs, agencies and professionals capable of running a play park.

Shop

At present there is no shop facility in the Ulva Ferry area. People either have to travel out to Salen, Dervaig or Tobermory for their staple provisions.

There are two delivery options for people's shopping in the area.

Dugie Allan of Dervaig Stores delivers to the area on a Wednesday afternoon. Dugie will deliver anything from the comprehensive range of goods on offer in his store, but his delivery service is currently at full capacity.

Bill Langford of Ardmore Fish delivers fresh seafood and other provisions around the area from his van.

As the community have identified the need for greater provision of retail opportunities in the area we will pursue a dialogue with both Dugie and Bill to see if they would like to expand their service and to see if we can help in the provision of their services, by tying in with other initiatives, such as a community transport scheme.

There may be opportunities for retail activities to fit in with other schemes created as part of the UFGATE project, such as at a waters' edge development or community hub. These should be supported, but should at no cost contribute to displacement of other, existing business in the area.

Action Points:

- To pursue a relationship with existing retailers to see if we can aid them in their services in the Ulva Ferry Area.
- Identify and support other potential retail opportunities within UFGATE project that do not displace other, existing businesses in the area.

Water's Edge / Community Hub Development

Coming 4th in the community's priorities is water's edge development.

As a large amount of life and business is transacted at the water's edge of Ulva Ferry this covers a wide area of locales, interests and concerns.

Piers

The pier at Ulva Ferry is privately owned on a lease from the Crown Estates.

The users have identified infrastructural concerns in the maintenance and up keep of the pier at Ulva Ferry itself and also the pier at Acarsaid Mhòr on Gometra.



Ulva Ferry Pier
Photo: Alasdair Satchel

The pier at Ulva Ferry sees a particularly high usage, as it is the principal lifeline for the Isles of Ulva and Gometra, and the home port of 5 fishing boats, 3 wild life trips, 1 dive boat.

The pier itself is a conduit for several thousand people every year, whether they be working there, travelling to Ulva, or on a wild life tour.

Pontoons

Yacht traffic is considerable and is growing in the area and local people feel that there is revenue to be generated from yacht based tourists. Statistics from Argyll Tourism Strategic Partnership indicate that yacht's people can have around £90 per day disposable income

available for shore visits, while Scottish Tourism Intelligence report an average spend of £130 per boat.

Cruise liners can also call in to the deep waters of Loch Na Keal and send their tenders ashore to Ulva, Ulva Ferry and mainland Mull.

There is an increase in other water-based activities such as kayaking and Mull and the Ulva Ferry area is an increasingly popular destination.

In the consultation local people have identified a number of priorities that could be of use to both the local community and visitors.

Although not reflected in the statistical analysis of the consultation it emerged in conversations that many people would like to see a hub for development of local business, whether that be at the Ulva Ferry pier area, Fish Farm or further inland and uphill is yet to be identified. This will be decided by further consultation with the community and relevant landowners.

The sorts of development that people feel they would like to see explored are small retail / craft units, a play park, a site for processing locally sourced sea food, possibly even a smokery using locally sourced wood from the community woodlands, a small workshop space, perhaps a small centre for tourist information, social space and bunkhouse accommodation.

In terms of access to the sea it has been identified that a pontoon system may be of use to some, though not all, of the current users of the piers in the area but would increase water-based tourism opportunities. At present when the tide is low it proves difficult to access the pier on the Mull side at Ulva Ferry.

The potential for new business to use a pontoon has also been identified, possibly a sailing school / kayak centre.

Fishermen using the pier at Ulva Ferry as it stands have identified a number of issues with its use. They would like to see developments explored to allow a safer, more sustainable environment from which to work in landing their catch.

- Drying off area
- A single fuel tank with chip and pin facility to be shared by all users of the pier
 - This has the potential for a social enterprise model. It may be possible to buy in bulk at a reduced cost to the user. Any margin on this could be used to maintain the fuel tank itself and fed back in to a social enterprise company
- Shore side flood light for safety of unloading catch

Andy Durie, a local fisherman who has been working from Ulva Pier for the past 20 years identified that he “[...] would love to have a bigger boat, it’s just the constraints of the harbour that mean I can’t. I think this is a sentiment that lots of the other people who fish out of Ulva Ferry would echo.”

The community have identified that developments that are made at the water’s edge should be gathered together and offer a variety of features so as to occupy all age groups.



Ulva Ferry Pier. Photo: Alasdair Satchel

It is felt that the developments must be sympathetic to the ecological and cultural nature of their environment and not change the “unique character of the area” and wherever possible offer a joined up philosophy of fitting in with the economic approach of the area and the islands around it. One example of this would be a smokery using locally sourced wood from the North West Mull Community Woodland, to smoke locally caught mackerel and locally farmed meats.

Action Points:

- To convene a sub-group of residents, landowners and businesses with a vested interest in the development of the pier.
- Perform a feasibility study into best means or supporting of local pier and business infrastructure
- To further consult with the community and prepare a feasibility study for a community hub incorporating a visitor attraction, whether at the water's edge or further in land and uphill. If located away from Ulva Ferry this may incorporate a café and toilets.
- Seek advice on community operated pontoon schemes with other groups, such as Tobermory Harbour Association and Morven Community Development Company re Lochaline Pontoons.
- Discuss yacht based tourism with organisations such as Sail Scotland, Sail West, Argyll and the Isles Strategic Tourism Partnership and Tourism Intelligence Scotland to ensure that relevant information is sourced within the sector.

Planning Issues

The community have identified planning and Building Control issues as being very important to the development and sustainability of the area.

In the past, community members have felt removed from the planning process, and unaware of the reasoning behind Planner's decisions.

A good relationship with the Planners lies at the heart of building, development and sustainability of the area.

USCA held a planner's meeting in November 2011, and a document¹ was created by the planners detailing potential sites for development and what conditions would need to be met to allow building to be pursued thereon. This document identifies 6 potential sites for

development. One of which is a site that has been gifted to USCA for the development of affordable housing.



Planning Day 5th Sept '12 Photo: Alasdair Satchel

As a deadline for the Local Design Plan was approaching before the scheduled publication of this document, Cally Fleming and Alasdair Satchel co-ordinated an initiative to find a means of interaction with the planners and community.

On the 5th of September 2012 a community and planner's liaison day was arranged. The day involved an initial meeting at the Salen Hotel, for a question and answer session, and then a series of site visits to talk about several additional sites considered suitable for development by the community.

The water's edge at Ulva Ferry was visited and the potential for developments on the coastal fringe of the area were discussed. Although reluctant to see housing directly developed at the water's edge, the Planners sounded positive on the potential for commercial and social developments to be pursued.

The Planners, Adrian Jackson-Stark and Fergus Murray, identified that it would be beneficial for the community to form a local planning action group. This is a model that has been successfully employed by the Craignish Community in Mid-Argyll.

A local planning action group would identify potential sites for development and create a community vision, through the delivery of a community development plan that would have a life span of 20 years.

The document that you hold in your hands at present would contribute towards this, as much of the material that would need to be identified has already been sourced in the process of the UFGATE scheme.

A community plan in this manner would detail the community's ambition for a successive chain of housing provision, from starter homes for young people, to family homes through to homes for older people.

A successful relationship with the Planners would allow for a sustained community vision to be pursued, allowing community members palpable access to how their area grows and develops.

Action Points:

- Facilitate the set-up of a local planning action group
- Pursue an on-going relationship with both Argyll & Bute Council Planners and Building Control.

Tenant - Landlord Relations

The community has identified poor tenant -land lord relationships as being amongst their priorities for improvement.

Of the 100 households in the area 17 are leased and 5 are tied.

While some people feel happy with their relationship with their landlords, many other people feel that their relationship with their landlord could be improved. Many have stated that their lines of communication with their landlord are unclear. Some have also stated that they feel that they are not on equitable footing with their landlords.

A possible means of addressing this issue may be to create a tenant – landlord forum, where both parties can meet to discuss their concerns about length of contracts, property, maintenance and rights.

A forum for discussion, such as this could improve communication allowing both parties to share their thoughts, worries and concerns.

Any housing developments that are owned or managed by USCA will comply with the Scottish Housing Charter which came in to effect on the 1st of April 2012.

Landlords will be encouraged to adopt the Scottish Housing Charter and assistance will be given to help them achieve this.

Action Points:

- Establish a tenant – landlord forum to facilitate communication and discussion
- Establish clear communication protocols for USCA governed housing tenants.

School Closure Awareness

Ulva School was threatened with closure by Argyll & Bute Council in 2010. This led to the formation of USCA, - the Ulva School Community Association.

The community have identified Ulva School as being one of the core elements of life in the Ulva Ferry area.

USCA and many members of the community feel that any future threat to the continuation of the school would be a direct threat to the socio-economic stability of the area.

In light of this we will look to pursue means to bolster the secure tenure of the school in the area, and, should closure become identified by the local authority again, we will look to find means of advocacy and support to allow the school to continue to thrive.

Action Points:

- To work with USCA in any future efforts to prevent school closure.

Mobile Signal Improvement

Due to the nature of the geography of the Ulva Ferry area, mobile signal is a considerable issue.

Mobile signal is vital for communications of a business, personal and emergency nature.

At present there is very little mobile coverage in the area. The masts that provide what coverage there is are located at Gruline outside of the Ulva Ferry area.

Attempts were made to improve mobile signal coverage some years ago, but were met with resistance due to lack of consultation with the community on the location of transmitters.

The table below shows the provision as identified by the providers own websites.

| Provider | 2G Signal | 3G Signal |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Vodafone | Patchy | Minimal |
| O2 | Minimal | None |
| Orange | None | None |

As this is a matter that has been raised as a priority for the community we will look to seek means to improve coverage in the area.

We will look to fit in with initiatives that would allow mobile masts to be built in subtle locations with the highest coverage.

On finding initiatives we will consult with the community about location and placement of the masts.

There may be funds that allow the development of mobile coverage in order to increase access to emergency services.

Action Points:

- Identify funds to allow the means to improve mobile signal coverage.
- Fit in with initiatives to allow improvement in mobile signal coverage.
- On securing funding for initiative consult with community on locations.

Broadband Improvement

Access to the internet is of great importance to the people of the Ulva Ferry area.

At least one resident in the area works solely through the medium of the internet, while others use it to meet work commitments in a diverse range of locations across the globe.

At present the quality of broadband depends on a property's proximity to the exchange, either at Laggan Ulva or over the hill in Dervaig.

Some homes receive average broadband speeds expected for the Isle of Mull, but a large portion have speeds well below average, or even no access at all.

There is a capacity issue within the telephone cable that runs North on the Mull side from the Laggan Ulva exchange, which will only increase the difficulty of getting broadband to newer houses as more properties are built. British Telecom / Open Reach are aware of this issue and have been asked to be kept abreast of any potential housing developments in the area.

The main settlement on the Isle of Gometra lies some 12KM from the pier on the Isle of Ulva, and as such falls out with the 6KM range of broadband from exchange to client. At present Gometra relies on satellite broadband, which is prone to difficulties in time of adverse weather conditions.

That broadband has been raised as a priority area for the community at the same time as HIE has announced a period of major investment in broadband for rural areas is fortunate, as we will be able to look to find links with new initiatives in the provision of a higher quality broadband service for the Ulva Ferry Area. This funding is targeted at connections which fall below 2Mbps [Megabits per second], a level which many properties in the area would struggle to achieve.



Ferry Board. Photo: Alasdair Satchel

We will work in partnership with MICT as they pursue solutions to improve broadband on the islands of Mull, Iona, Ulva and Gometra, paying specific attention to the Ulva Ferry catchment area. MICT aims to provide access to a broadband service with a minimum connection of 2Mbps possibly achieving up to 8Mbps

In the pursuit of these objectives we will be fitting in with Scottish Government priorities, as identified in their Digital Future - Infrastructure Application Plan.

This plan states that their approach to delivering their commitments must be framed by the following principals:

[It will] be based on a shared vision that supports our overarching purpose of delivering sustainable economic growth. It is critical that the digital ambition for Scotland is a shared agenda and must be jointly owned and delivered by industry, communities and the public sector.

[It will] deliver a future proofed infrastructure that will enable Scotland to keep pace with and surpass international benchmarks.

[It will] deliver a world-class infrastructure which means delivering in terms of speed and ease of access, geographical coverage, and price and choice of provision for consumers.

[It will] ensure value for money. Public sector investment and public sector demand for services must ensure that industry investment in Scotland goes beyond current plans to deliver improved speeds to more people more quickly.

[It will] deliver a return on investment to the public sector as well as the private sector.

[It will] promote rural and community benefits, by supporting local projects and through contractual arrangements including education and improved technology.

The access to better and higher speed broadband will open up more opportunities in home-working, an area that is being actively promoted by HIE to national and global companies (eg Arise, Pexel, Sensee, Site Kit and Social Enterprise Direct). Average wages can be around £16,000 for the lower skilled jobs rising to much more for other companies such as legal firms requiring home-working legal secretaries. There are many advantages of homeworking to both employees and employers. Benefits to the environment and the community include reduced energy use and costs, less travelling for workers and less time away from home. These lead to an improved work-life balance, less stress and more flexibility.

Action Points:

- To ensure that any housing developments include provision of ducts for possible

future deployment of fibre optic cable.

- Keep BT Open Reach aware of housing developments.
- To support the MICT project to aggregate demand to secure competitively priced high speed broadband and to distribute this in a way that BT will not be able to do for commercial reasons.

Community Ownership Of School Building

The community have identified that they would like to explore the possibility of bringing the school building at Ulva Ferry in to community ownership.

A community owned school building would enable the community to take responsibility for the maintenance and upkeep of the building and to develop it in line with the community's vision of where it hopes to go in the coming years.

Attached to the school building is the one house in the area that falls in to the affordable housing bracket. The possibility of this house, currently administered by West Highland Housing Association, falling under the governance of USCA should also be explored.

One consideration to be acknowledged is that the school building contains asbestos. A report detailing the location of the asbestos and the extent to which it has been used exists within the school office.

In this initiative the community would own or lease the building and the grounds and facilities attached to it. The statutory education provision would continue to be met by Argyll & Bute council.

If the school were to be community owned there is potential for the initiatives, such as the play park, to be developed in the area of the school itself.

A school building committee would have to be established, which would respond to the needs of the school pupils and teachers, maintaining the fabric of the building and pre-empting any problems.

Should other community assets come on sale in the following years, USCA would have a proven track record in managing a central community asset if this initiative were successful.

Action Points:

- Investigate the feasibility of a community buy out of Ulva School.
- Identify structure for governance of a community owned school
- Pursue the actions identified by the feasibility study.

Community Land Reinvestment

The community have identified that they would like to see land or plots for housing or crofting for sale that are sold on to community members at a reasonable rate, and as part of this arrangement can only be sold back to the community. This will require discussion with all the landowners in the area.

This would assure a continuity of low cost housing or land in the hands of private individuals, and all the security that offers with a commitment to sell the plot and or house to the community at the end of their time there.



Kilninian Beach Games. Photo: Moray Finch

This is similar to the model employed by the North West Mull Community Woodland Company in relation to their community crofts.

So that the individual would not gain from the sale of the plot over the community, its value should be tracked against the market and set at an acceptable percentage in relation to market value and the individual's investment.

This means the land remains accessible to the next buyer, and that the first buyer does not lose out on their investment.

As the only organisation in the Ulva Ferry area with a remit in line with developments of this nature USCA would act as the community's representative and act according with the tenets of its constitution.

Action Points:

- Support USCA in the means of sourcing funding to allow the purchase of land for community use.
- Seek advice from North West Mull Woodland Company on administration of such a project.
- Identify and pursue funds to allow the administration of community land.
- Discuss potential sites with landowners.

Action Points

Housing

- To pursue the Acharonich site for development for affordable housing.
- To pursue further potential housing sites with an eye to developing affordable housing.
- To pursue opportunities for low price plots for both private individuals and community groups.
- To consult with owners of holiday homes to discuss long term letting instead of seasonal short term holiday lets.
- To find means to allow energy audits to be carried out on each household within the community. Means to realise actions & recommendations coming from the review shall be pursued.

Community Transport

- Attend Community Transport Conference to keep abreast of current developments.
- Identify and support a Volunteer Driver / Car-Share scheme Coordinator.
- Set up a Volunteer Driver / Car-Share scheme to be administered through email or phone.
- Develop a community transport system. Link in to other community plan initiatives such as retail deliveries.

Playpark

- Source funding for a feasibility study in to play park development.
- Investigation of projected running costs for a play park.
- Identify means of governance and maintenance for a play park.
- Investigate sites, construction costs, agencies and professionals capable of running a play park.

Shop

- To pursue a relationship with existing retailers to see if we can aid them in their services in the Ulva Ferry Area.
- Identify and support other potential retail opportunities within UFGATE project that do not displace other, existing businesses in the area.

Water's Edge / Community Hub

- To convene a sub-group of residents and businesses with a vested interest in the development of the pier.
- Perform a feasibility study into best means or supporting of local pier and business infrastructure.
- To further consult with the community and prepare a feasibility study for a community hub incorporating a visitor attraction, whether at the water's edge of further in land and uphill. If located away from Ulva Ferry this may incorporate a café and toilets.
- Seek advice on community operated pontoon schemes with other groups, such as

Tobermory Harbour Association and Lochaline.

- Discuss yacht based tourism with Argyll and the Isles Strategic Tourism Partnership to ensure that any development is promoted by that group.

Planning

- Facilitate the set-up of a local planning action group.
- Pursue an on going relationship with both Argyll & Bute Council Planners and Building Control.

Tenant – Landlord Relations

- Establish a tenant – landlord forum to facilitate communication and discussion.
- Establish clear communication protocols for USCA governed housing tenants.

Broadband Improvement

- To ensure that any housing developments include provision of ducts for possible future deployment of fibre optic cable.
- Keep BT Open Reach aware of housing developments.
- To support the MICT project to aggregate demand demand to secure competitively priced high speed broadband and to distribute this in a way that BT will not be able to do for commercial reasons.

School Closure Awareness

- To work with USCA in any future efforts to prevent school closure.

Mobile Signal Improvement

- Identify funds to allow the means to improve mobile signal coverage.
- Fit in with initiatives to allow improvement in mobile signal coverage.
- On securing funding / relationships for initiative consult with community on locations.

School Building in Community Ownership

- Investigate the feasibility of a community buy out of Ulva School.
- Identify structure for governance of a community owned school.
- Pursue the actions identified by the feasibility study.

Community Land Re-Investment

- Support USCA in the means of sourcing funding to allow the purchase of land for community use.
- Seek advice from North West Mull Woodland Company on administration of such a project.
- Identify and pursue funds to allow the administration of community land.

Appendix 1

Information About Ulva School Community Association

A constituted community association the aims of USCA are as following:

[To...] give the people in and around Ulva Primary School a say in the future plans for the area.

- To provide support for the school in whatever form the Association agrees is appropriate and practical.
- To advance community development, including rural regeneration within the Community.
- To manage community land and associated assets for the benefit of the Community and the public in general.
- To advance the education of the Community about its environment, culture, heritage and/or history.
- To provide, or assist in providing, recreational facilities, and/or organising recreational activities, which will be available to members of the Community and public at large with the object of improving the conditions of life of the Community.

Appendix 2

Environment

The Ulva Ferry area lies within the Loch Na Keal National Scenic Area. National Scenic Areas [NSA's] were designated in 1980 in recognition of their outstanding scenery. Along with

Scotland's two National Parks, they represent our nation's finest scenery and are some of Scotland's most iconic places, of importance for both their natural and cultural heritage.

Development within NSA's should not affect the integrity of the area. Decisions by local planning authorities on built development are also important, particularly for the communities within these areas. Visitors also have an interest, with recreation and tourism based on the special qualities of these landscapes – itself an important source of economic activity.

The Special Qualities of the Loch na Keal National Scenic Area

- Highly distinctive seaways and shores
- World famous Staffa and Fingal's Cave
- Dramatic coast of basalt terraces and cliffs
- Views of an island-studded sea
- Islands and islet groups of astonishingly varied character
- A vast natural world, dwarfing human settlement
- A voyage from enclosed sea loch to the open Atlantic
- The horizontal Treshnish Isles
- The instantly recognisable Dutchman's Cap

The nearby Treshnish Islands have an additional designation of Marine Special Area of Conservation (Marine SAC). They are a remote chain of uninhabited volcanic islands and skerries situated 3km West of Mull and are mostly accessed from either the Ulva Ferry area or Fionnphort. The Treshnish Islands SAC area has been designated for their internationally important colony of grey seals and surf rock reef habitat.



Feeding Cattle. Photo: Lucy MacKenzie

It is important to sustain the environment and the integrity of the area but it is also important for the local community to consider the economic opportunities presented to it by the Loch Na Keal NSA.

The Ulva Ferry area has a strong farming and crofting heritage. The islands of Ulva and Gometra were especially noted for their produce, Gometra itself earning the title of Iona's Granary. There is bountiful evidence of crofting activity from several hundred years ago evidenced by the lazy beds to ruined cottages and townships throughout the area.

Much of the area is still farmed, forming an essential component of the land management in the area.

The mix of farming and crofting, as well as the aquaculture and shell fishing that takes place from Ulva Ferry, provides a diverse economy for the area working with local resources. The Ulva Ferry area is very much a living, working landscape, one that it is important to sustain and to help expand and diversify.

Ecotourism: Ecotourism or Nature Tourism is a massive growth area for rural Scottish economies. A YouGov survey predicted that between 2009 and 2012 there would be a doubling in participation in "off the beaten track" or "special interest" holidays and a trebling in the number of people taking an adventure, eco-friendly or "discovery" holiday. Much of this growth relates directly to nature tourism.

According to the 2011 *Visit Scotland Scotland Visitor Survey*, 58% of visitors to Scotland cited our scenery as their top reason for choosing Scotland as a holiday destination. It is the visitors who enjoy wildlife as part of a mix of activities and attractions that offer the biggest growth potential to Scottish tourism.

Nature based tourism plays a vital part in Scotland's rural economy, pulling in millions of pounds and creating many thousands of job opportunities. As one of Europe's leading year-round nature destinations, with a world famous reputation for natural heritage, Scotland has a great deal to offer.

With spending on nature based activities worth nearly 40% of all tourism spending in Scotland, nature based tourism can generate significant benefits for the economy. We need to ensure that developments and activities are sustainable so that more people can enjoy the Ulva Ferry area.

The Ulva Ferry area has potential for sensitive economic opportunity, having the natural resources that this growth area requires: incredible scenery, unique coastal and marine environment and a diverse wildlife.

Within and alongside ecotourism are several other growth areas that the Ulva Ferry area could capitalise on:

Walking tourism: Walking is fast becoming one of the most popular activities that people undertake while on holiday in Scotland. Scenario planners at Visit Scotland tell us that by 2015, walking is likely to contribute up to 22% of the overall UK tourism revenue in Scotland. People are increasingly more health conscious and caring about the natural environment.

Adventure Tourism: The UK Tourism survey calculated the 2008 volume and value of some of Scotland's key outdoor activities including walking, wildlife-watching, adventure sports and mountain biking at 2.5 million trips and £759 million. This could increase to 3.7 million trips and £848 million expenditure by 2015. Adventure tourism can be categorised into discovery and special interest such as cultural discovery tours, wildlife watching, walking, trekking and cycling; and active adventure such as trekking, mountaineering, climbing, seakayaking, coastering and adrenaline activities. Ulva Ferry area is a perfect base for all of these activities.

Sailing Tourism: The West Coast of Scotland is widely regarded as one of the top sailing destinations in the world. The combination of open sea conditions together with islands, bays and anchorages gives yachtsmen both sheltered sailing and challenging adventures. Argyll and its islands is arguably the number one sailing destination in Scotland as it is relatively accessible yet contains spectacular scenery, remote islands and rugged coastlines. The value of the sailing market in Scotland is currently estimated at between £270 million and £300 million. The average expenditure per boat which moors up at a visitor mooring, anchors or comes alongside a pontoon is estimated at £130. The development of visitor moorings and/or a small pontoon in the Ulva Ferry area has potential to raise income for community projects in the Ulva Ferry area as well as increase local business opportunities.

Food and Drink Experience: The demand for natural foods and locally produced foods is increasing. Today's visitors are looking for a "food experience" where you can sample a local culture through the food and drink of the region.

There are many suppliers of seafood, shellfish, salmon as well as the potential to supply local venison, mutton, beef and pork in the Ulva Ferry area. There are also small scale vegetable growers and there is potential to develop a farm shop selling locally sourced and produced foods and locally made crafts.

Cultural Tourism: The Ulva Ferry area is steeped in history. There is evidence throughout the area of Prehistoric, Celtic and Norse peoples and there has been a strong Gaelic culture throughout the area.

There are remains of settlements from Mesolithic through to the clearance villages and important duns, brochs and standing stones.

Ancestral tourism is a growing and important niche market for Scotland. Worldwide, there are 50 million people who claim to have Scottish Ancestry. The Clans Maclean, Mackinnon, Macquarrie and Livingstone were very much in evidence throughout the Ulva Ferry area. Their diaspora, many of whom wish to maintain links with their homeland, have been identified as being a useful contact for future community projects.

Appendix 3

Renewable Energy

The need for Renewable Energy has been identified by the community in part to reduce our carbon footprint, improve energy efficiency and to help lower energy bills.

As well as helping combat climate change renewable energy has been identified as a potential revenue generator for the area, which may help in the development and delivery of further projects.

This fits in with Argyll and Bute Council's Renewable Energy Plan which has been developed to assist the county realise its vision for the development of the renewable energy sector. The council's vision is that Argyll and Bute will be at the heart of renewable energy development in Scotland, taking full advantage of its unique and significant mix of indigenous renewable resources, maximising the opportunities for sustainable economic growth for the benefit both local communities and the nation.

No other local authority in Scotland has our scale of mixed renewable resources. One of the council's aims is to "secure socio-economic benefit for our communities and assisting the development of local renewable projects."

Sustainable Mull and Iona was formed in 2011. Its objectives include: building awareness and supporting the implementation of all renewable energy development proposals / initiatives and energy conservation initiatives and opportunities on Mull and Iona. Projects developed within the Ulva Ferry area would work with Sustainable Mull and Iona.

Environmental Impact Assessments would be undertaken for any small scale renewable initiative in the Ulva Ferry area to ensure minimal damage to the environment.

Action Points:

- Undertake an energy audit of the housing stock within the Ulva Ferry Area.
- Identify energy efficiency requirements in the area.
- Collaborate with other island-wide projects to improve and develop efficiency/renewable energy projects.
- Source funding for energy efficiency/renewable energy projects.
- Investigate potential renewable energy schemes particularly micro hydro schemes collaborating with landowners.

Appendix 4

Information about the Isle of Ulva

Ulva is 7.7 miles square - 12km long by 4 km wide.

In 1945 Ulva was bought by the present owners.

There is now a population of 10-15 people who, over recent years have been involved variously in traditional sheep and cattle farming, fish farming, oyster farming, tourism, research and conservation.



View from West Coast of Ulva. Photo: Dr Bill Clegg

The proprietors are dedicated to “creating a balance of the needs of the community and the preservation of one of Scotland’s most unique, beautiful and accessible islands.”

Infrastructure and Economy

The island is connected to Mull by a small private, subsidised ferry that runs on request throughout the year.

All the island roads are rough tracks, with several fords. There are no cars, although quad bikes and tractors are used.

Ulva’s main industry is tourism. Other industries on the island include forestry, sheep, cattle and fish farming.

The Boathouse is an independently run award-winning licensed tea room on the island which sells locally caught seafood.

Ulva is now mostly moorland, native grassland and an increasing amount of native woodland.

Community and buildings

There are 15 people who live on the island, (11 full time).

There are a number of houses on Ulva. As well as Ulva House there are 6 habitable cottages and 1 requiring renovation and several bothies.

A church at Ardalum designed by Thomas Telford is used for occasional church services and community use from time to time.

Issues

Ulva as an island-estate has much on-going maintenance and difficulties getting skilled workers. There are large running costs as would be expected with an estate of this size.

The ferryman's contract is linked with a school contract to transport a local child back and forth to mainland Mull, and as the child will be leaving school in July '13 drawing the contract to an end, further means of support are necessary to be found to secure the link to the island.

Appendix 5

The Isle of Gometra

Gometra lies immediately west of Ulva to which it is linked by a narrow bridge and at low tide by a tidal ford. It is approx. 425 hectares (1.64 sq miles) in size.

The island currently has a small community that fluctuates between 5 to 10 people (currently 5 full time, 2 part time).

Gometra was bought in 1992 by the present owner. Gometra's mission statement is to create 'a peopled wildness'. The community is currently aiming to build on its focuses of sustainability, agriculture/forestry and artistic excellence.

Infrastructure

Gometra has very poor infrastructure. It has no school, doctor, ferry or reliable landline, mobile or internet. It has a weekly Royal Mail postal service. There is one pier at Acarsaid Mhor, which is in a poor state, and which dries at low water and floods at high water rendering it realistically accessible only to shallow draft boats.

There are no roads, but a rough track extends from the sea ford to the gates of the main settlement, and various other tracks are accessible by quad bike. The community aspire to seek means to address improvements in the state of the track to and from Ulva, and also to improve the waterside infrastructure, which would allow improvements in many aspects of life on the island.

The Gometra community would like funding for a feasibility study into funding sources for improvements to Gometra's housing stock, and infrastructure.

Housing

The main house and outbuildings were refurbished in the early 1990's.

There are a number of other cottages some of which have been improved and let out to tenants at low rentals throughout the years. For a variety of factors most tenancies have been relatively short.

Of the 4 houses to the east of the main house, two are on short assured tenancies and 2 are subject to closing orders and may not be occupied, pending the local authority's lifting of the orders.

At the settlement of Baileclaidh there is a cottage and a bothy. The cottage is let out on a short assured repairing tenancy. The bothy is made available to visitors on a shared basis, free of charge for the first week.

The community would like to set up its own housing association or partner with an existing housing association for compliance and project management aspects of Gometra tenancies.

Health and Emergency Services

There are no medical services on Gometra. The nearest doctor is around 2 hours away by track, ferry and road. With communication difficulties from the island, it is often difficult to make contact with someone with medical knowledge. Improvements will be sought in finding training in triage, communications and transport to Mull for patients.

Education

In the past twenty years there have been 15 Gometra children, of whom 7 have been home educated and 3 have attempted a school run to Ulva Ferry Primary School for longer or shorter periods, with others attending Oban High School and further afield. No Gometra child in the past 50 years has sustained the "school run" to Ulva Ferry for more than 2 years.

With infrastructural repair and technological improvements solutions may be found to allow local children to pursue a scholastic career from Gometra.

Employment and Business

Gometra is run as a family farm and has some areas of good arable land and various forestry plantations. It exports blackface breeding stock, lamb, mutton, wool, venison, oysters, vegetables, art and jewellery. The farm has a small highland cattle fold.

Farming on Gometra is extremely fragile economically due to geographical and compliance issues exacerbated by its extreme situation.

Art, jewellery and craftwork is displayed at a small gallery within the bothy at Baileclaidh and Gometra artists show widely offshore, both nationally and internationally.

Energy

The community are very environmentally aware and are slowly phasing out the use of fossil fuels on the island.

Various forms of renewable energy have been trialled including solar, wind and wood fuel.

Other Gometra Community Aspirations

- A community social space has been discussed, perhaps at Ulva Ferry to improve communications with the Ulva Ferry Community.
- A waste disposal service.
- A small scale renewable electricity infrastructure.
- A means of sustaining biodiversity, environmental and wildness values to support the community.



Gometra Farm. Photo: Roc Sandford

Total Vote Responses to Community Consultation

