

COLONSAY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMPANY

Specialist report (Feb 2014)



WHAT

Investigation of a potential community acquisition of an area of land on Colonsay to be managed and developed for local needs.

HOW HIE HELPED

Technical support fees: £2500

- To commission an engineer's report for specialist assessment of the development potential of the site.

Officer support:

- To help the group prepare the brief and manage the contract.
- To make a strong application to the Scottish Land Fund.

OUTCOME

The group secured professional advice regarding the capacity of the site to meet their development needs, which helped inform their discussions with the landowner, valuer and potential development partners.



BACKGROUND

Colonsay Community Development Company (CCDC) was established in 2000 with the aims of developing economic and social opportunities to encourage population growth and improve the resilience of the island. Priorities included addressing a shortage of affordable housing and lack of employment. Following discussions with the landowner, feasibility work started on a development site of around 5ha which could help address some of the issues being faced by the islanders.

PROJECT DETAILS

As part of a wider feasibility study into community ownership and potential uses of the land, the group commissioned an engineer to make a detailed survey of the ground conditions of the site. The report also provided indicative capital and development costs. This information would be used to show how much of the land would be suitable for which types of development and therefore which areas should be acquired to best deliver greater social and economic sustainability of the island.

By gathering this level of information CCDC were in a position to negotiate with the landowner and to ensure the valuation was properly briefed. They were also able to start discussions with the housing association and other potential development partners with a realistic idea of how much land would be available for development. In conjunction with the wider feasibility study and housing needs analysis, this informed the group's business plan and funding applications for acquisition of the land through the Scottish Land Fund.

Although the acquisition didn't go ahead, the engineer's report provided CCDC with valuable information which informed their decision making and helped to develop the capacity of the board.

HIE'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE PROJECT

We worked with the group to help them identify and define this additional work required to support the feasibility study and funded the survey with a £2500 grant. We also assisted them with their Scottish Land Fund application for acquisition and revenue funding which was approved in August 2014.

OUTCOMES

HIE support helped to:

- Empower and inform the group to make decisions regarding the progress of the project by increasing their knowledge of the options for the land.
- Build capacity within the board to manage the contractor and use the information provided to hold further discussions with the owner and potential development partners.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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