

INVESTING IN COMMUNITY-LED DEVELOPMENT

Investing to grow
our communities





The opening of the Lochaline Marina, Lochaline

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HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS ENTERPRISE

Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) is an ambitious organisation with a unique remit which integrates economic and community development to achieve sustainable progress in every part of our region.

As the Scottish Government's enterprise agency for the Highlands and Islands, our aim is to build an increasingly successful and competitive region in which people choose to live, work, study and invest. We achieve this through our approach which integrates enabling economic growth and strengthening communities across the Highlands and Islands.

With teams located in all parts of our region, we invest in, empower and enable our businesses, social enterprises and communities to grow, be innovative, and become resilient.

OUR PRIORITIES

- Supporting businesses and social enterprises to shape and realise their growth aspirations
- Strengthening communities and fragile areas
- Developing growth sectors, particularly distinctive regional opportunities
- Creating the conditions for a competitive and low-carbon region

OUR APPROACH

Our approach to strengthening communities is threefold:

- 1** We invest in building community capacity, confidence and business skills
- 2** We empower communities to acquire, manage and exploit community assets for community benefit
- 3** We enable sustainable growth in the social economy through strong social and community enterprises





HIE funded event at Kilfinan Community Forest in Tighnabruaich, Argyll,

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ENHANCING CAPACITY

Rural communities are resourceful. Throughout the Highlands and Islands, local people know their own communities in detail and care passionately about their future.

We recognise that the projects which work best to deliver local benefits are those which are truly community-led. As a development agency, our role is to support the people in our communities to develop and deliver their own projects.

We help communities to identify and fully use their considerable potential, through the same clear account management principles we employ to support our private sector business clients.

By providing hands-on, expert support and access to skills, knowledge and funding, we are investing in increasing the capacity of communities to determine and then lead their own development and deliver sustainable progress.

SUPPORTING RESILIENCE

Every community has its own unique set of opportunities and challenges, though there are common characteristics which are integral to a strong and growing community. These include community dynamism, clear and consistent leadership, a sustained focus on long-term viability, and a high level of determination.

We have a strong record of investing in and enabling communities to achieve positive outcomes which include:

- Job creation and job retention
- Provision of affordable housing to meet local needs and grow the community
- Acquiring revenue generating assets, including renewable energy, community hubs and shops, heritage projects and community transport
- Provision of local services and amenities, often with a focus on young people, older residents, and people with health challenges
- Increasing participation in cultural and sporting activities, including music, and using Gaelic and local dialect
- Ownership and management of tourist facilities such as bunkhouses, provision for campers, walking routes and outdoor activities

HOW WE WORK

Central to our approach is a long-term relationship, to which we and our communities both commit. Through this, we deliver advice and support through a dedicated member of staff known as the community's account manager. Communities we work with develop a long-term growth plan through which they identify key local priorities, and routes to deliver them.

Communities are able to access a wide range of HIE products and services through their account manager, who will advise on and tailor support to meet specific community needs and ambitions, as described in the growth plan.

Depending on identified requirements, we can provide support across a broad range of subjects, from capacity building to leadership development, strategic workshops to student placements.

To drive innovation, we can help fund feasibility studies and provide links to social finance providers, partners, funders and investors. In many cases, we also fund a local development officer as a dedicated resource, employed by the community, for project development and delivery.

At critical stages of renewable energy projects, we can offer funding for specialist support to address particular challenges, including supporting the technical and financial issues associated with taking a grid connected project to closure.

CASE STUDIES



KYLES OF SUTHERLAND

With our support, Kyles of Sutherland Development Trust has attracted almost £500,000 of funding from a wide range of sources. We helped the Trust create a community development plan which set out several ambitious outcomes.

These include a joint venture to build a community owned tourist attraction, acquiring and managing the post office, plans to build six affordable homes on land acquired with HIE assistance, a programme to address fuel poverty, and investigating a micro-hydro scheme and the potential of taking part ownership of a local wind farm development.



NORTHMAVINE, SHETLAND

In Northmavine the community company is enhancing resilience through renewables, business space provision, broadband, recycling, tourism and housing projects.

They are enjoying the benefits of the award-winning design of innovative 'polycrubs' – extra sturdy polytunnels made using recycled pipe from salmon farms and capable of withstanding gale force winds. Twelve community polytunnels now exist in Northmavine and almost 60 people are now growing food locally, many for the first time.

As well as benefiting the community with more locally grown fruit and vegetables, the company is installing five polycrubs in the Outer Hebrides for the Horshadder community.



GALSON ESTATE

The community owner of Galson Estate, UOG, aims to promote rural regeneration through sustainable development. UOG has three subsidiaries, dealing with crofting, energy, and general trading/community projects.

With 10 staff, UOG has developed an estate office and one 900 kw wind turbine. Current priorities are to realise the installation of a further two turbines, construct a campsite and create an administrative system for crofting records and land-related business on the estate.

It is also leading on a community wide plan for the North Lewis area, which includes the potential development of a community hub and museum, community centres and pathways.



MORVERN

Morvern's priority was a pontoon to capitalise on visiting yachts, and this was achieved with the opening of Cala Loch Àlainn in 2011, an EU Inter-reg funded project providing 24 berths.

This, and the subsequent development of shore facilities, has provided significant economic benefit to the area. Other successes include the development of community allotments, with individual and shared spaces; the demolition of the Old Scout Hut, a disused building in the village, for redevelopment; and the community voting overwhelmingly to investigate the potential for two hydro schemes.



SOUTH ISLAY

Community-led development in South Islay started under Islay and Jura Council of Voluntary Service. However, after the success of its 'Festival of the Sea', South Islay Development was incorporated.

Since then, notable successes include the development of the South Islay Distilleries path; taking ownership of Port Ellen Filling Station; and support for Port Ellen Harbour Association's successful funding bid to increase pontoon capacity by 22 berths.



ISLAND OF HOY

The Orkney island of Hoy has a community-owned turbine which provides the local development trust with income to support local projects.

Successes include the refurbishment of a community centre on Longhope; the purchase and operation of community mini buses; surveying the energy efficiency of residential properties as part of an affordable warmth project, and the creation of a training fund for residents. HIE also helped the trust employ a graduate for a year to explore how the island's wartime heritage could be developed.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

You can find more information about how we invest in community-led development and the work of HIE as a whole on our website. Click on the Support for Communities tab on the home page.

www.hie.co.uk

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