
Welcome to our annual report 2015/16



This has been a year of challenge, change and progress.

Argyll and Bute Council is transforming how we work, to serve our island and mainland communities with significantly less funding, and to build the prosperity that Argyll and Bute, one of Scotland's most promising regions, deserves.

We continue to deliver a huge range of services. We continue to progress investment in regenerating our economy. We continue to work, as a council and with our partners, in achieving the goals that will together attract the people and jobs our area needs.

Our annual report provides you with a snapshot of services and successes delivered in 2015-2016.

Amidst difficult decisions and change, Argyll and Bute Council remains ambitious for the future of our communities, hard working in delivering services daily that touch on all aspects of our residents' lives, and award winning in standards we are achieving.

Councillor Dick Walsh

Leader of Argyll and Bute Council

Cleland Sneddon

Chief Executive



Annual Performance Report 2015/16

What we are working to achieve for Argyll and Bute

As a key member of the community planning partnership, our aim is that Argyll and Bute's economic success is built on a growing population.

To achieve this we will work with our partners to deliver these long term outcomes, as set out in our [Single Outcome Agreement \(Local Outcomes Improvement Plan\)](#):

- The economy is diverse and thriving.
- We have infrastructure that supports sustainable growth.
- Education, skills and training maximises opportunities for all.
- Children and young people have the best possible start.
- People live active, healthier and independent lives.
- People live in safer and stronger communities.

As a council we are working to make Argyll and Bute a place people choose to live, work, visit, invest and do business, as set out in our corporate plan.

What we have delivered and achieved in 2015-16

Factsheets

- Council finance facts and figures
- Community and culture
- Customer and support services
- Developing our economy
- Education – working to give our young people a great start in life
- People and places delivering improving, award winning services
- Planning and regulatory services – Argyll and Bute open for business
- Roads and amenity Services
- Social Care – looking after vulnerable children, adults and families.
- Supporting democracy in action
- Glossary of terms and useful links

[Quick facts and figures about Argyll and Bute](#)

Council finance – facts and figures

Key successes of our Strategic Finance Service

- Supporting the council to deliver a balanced budget at a time of significant funding reductions for local government. Planning into the medium term is challenging due to new statutory duties placed on authorities, ring fencing of funding and uncertainty around longer term funding settlements.
- Supporting council services to identify and implement savings and transformational change.
- Effective financial planning supported the council in making best use of its resources, by creating income through managing of loan charges and investments. This is described below.
- The council's accounts, submitted by the statutory deadline, were approved without qualification, by the external audit process.

CASE STUDY

Illustrating the positive contribution to our communities

In 2015/16 Argyll and Bute Council had to deliver £10 million in savings to address a significant gap in council funding.

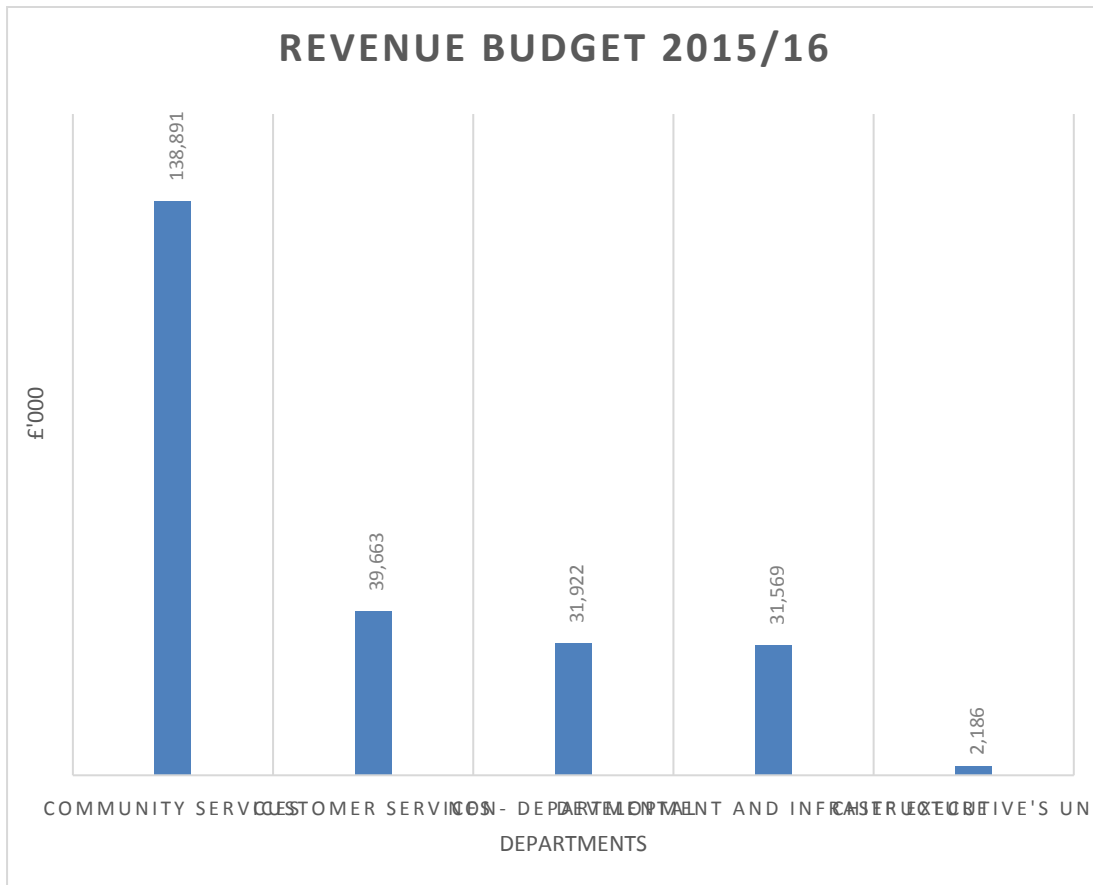
The Corporate Support Section, working with the assistance of the Council's Treasury Advisors, delivered £1 million of savings in loan charges during 2015-16. This was achieved by monitoring the Council's cash flow and placing investments for longer durations to benefit from higher rates of return while ensuring that the Council had cash available to meet its payments.

[Single Outcome Agreement \(Local Outcomes Improvement Plan\) objectives supported:](#)

Strategic Finance services support progress of all LOIP objectives by supporting the decision-making processes of Argyll and Bute Council.

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Breakdown of expenditure in 2015/16



Key areas of expenditure

Chief Executive's Unit: Strategic Finance

Community Services: community planning, education services, leisure and library services, adult and children social care services

Customer Services: Customer and Support services, Facility Services, Improvement and HR, Governance and Law

Development and Infrastructure: economic development, planning and regulatory services, roads and amenity services

Non departmental: loan charges, non-domestic rates, joint boards

Community and Culture Services

Key successes

- Campbeltown Museum had its Museum Accreditation status renewed by Museum Galleries Scotland.
- Visit Scotland awarded Campbeltown Museum a 4 Star visitor attraction rating.
- Development and implementation of the Sport and Leisure Framework 2015-2019 in partnership with the NHS, Education Service and SportScotland.
- The Royal National Mod was held in Oban in 2015, with the main venue for this prestigious event being the council-owned Corran Halls. This event is estimated to have injected more than £3 million into the local economy.
- 552 affordable homes were completed against a target of 550 over the period of the current Local Housing Strategy (2011-16) of which 87% were to the social rented sector.
- £2.1m income generated by Welfare Rights for vulnerable clients in Argyll and Bute.
- 103 organisations received Third Sector Grant funding in 2015/16, totalling £140,000.
- 2,134 adults accessed face to face learning or literacies opportunities, a 28% increase on 2014/2015.
- 166 adults achieved basic Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) accredited qualifications that will help them to access work or further learning, over 2.5 times as many as the previous year.
- Macmillan Cancer Information and Support Service units were launched in Helensburgh and Oban Libraries
- Use of libraries by outside agencies has increased by 10.5% from the previous year (2014/15). The main usage of the libraries tends to be community groups that use a room for various community activities such as reading groups.
- £161,000 of direct funding given to cultural events and festivals across Argyll and Bute generating around £13 million for the local economy.

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- Archives, in partnership with Argyll Estates, secured Heritage Lottery Funding of £100,000 to implement the “Written in the Landscape” project that will, among other things, see some of the area’s key archival papers/documents catalogued and digitised to aid future researchers.
- New athletic facility developed at Lochgilphead Joint Campus through partnership with the Athletics Club, SportScotland and the Council. This is the first facility of its type in Argyll and Bute.
- 73 empty homes were brought back into use.
- Reduction in homeless applications - 604 (2011) to 403 (2016), a 33% reduction against a target of 10%.
- Achieved gold at the Council’s Employee Excellence Awards for development of SOA/LOIP documents in partnership with Council’s governance team.
- Community Planning Partnership held an event with a number of speakers including MSP Marco Biagi and Nick Ferguson, chair of Economic Forum.
- The range of basic SQA accredited units that the adult learning service can offer has been increased from four to nine.
- Supporting 26 adult Syrian refugees to learn English through English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) training.

CASE STUDIES

The Royal National Mod

The Royal National Mod in Oban is now included as a fixture in the six yearly circuit of this event.

The nine-day festival celebrating Gaelic culture has been hailed as a “huge success” with thousands of competitors taking part in 200 competitions, whilst many fringe events added to the atmosphere in the town.

The event is estimated to have injected more than £3 million into the local economy, with the Corran Halls providing the main venue.

Older people assemblies

The Community Development Team, in partnership with the Scottish Older Peoples Assembly, hosted two assemblies in Argyll and Bute, one in Oban, one in Helensburgh.

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As an example of what was provided, the event in Oban included workshop activities and entertainment, and involved contributions from Age Scotland, NHS Highland, Argyll Third Sector Interface, Alzheimer's Scotland, North Argyll Carers Centre and the Salvation Army.

The issues raised at both the Oban and Helensburgh events will be taken forward to inform the Scottish Older Peoples Assembly work in Holyrood in 2016.

[Sport and Leisure Framework](#)

The new Sport and Leisure Framework focuses on ensuring that Argyll and Bute Council continues to maintain and develop services that will improve the overall sport outcomes of health, fitness and general wellbeing of our communities.

The immediate success of the framework has been the improvement in joint working between a number of organisations which supports the future pooling of resources.

The collaborative process and concise, realistic and comprehensive plan has been highlighted as best practice by SportScotland nationally.

Key [Single Outcome Agreement \(Local outcomes improvement plan\) objectives supported](#):

- The economy is diverse and thriving.
- Education, skills and training maximises opportunities for all.
- People live active, healthier and independent lives.
- People live in safer and stronger communities.

Customer and Support Services

Key successes

- Average time to process a benefits change in circumstance reduced from 5.79 days in 2014-15 to 5.60 days in 2015-16. Average number of days to process a new claim reduced from 22.09 days to 20.85 days in 2015-16.
- Collections of non-domestic rates increased from 96.1% in 2014-15 to 97.14% in 2015-16. Collections of council tax increased from 95.51% in 2014-15 to 95.97% in 2015-16. This is at least in part due to council tax payments by direct debit increasing from 77.71% in 2014-15 to 78.40% in 2015-16.
- The percentage of contracted spend increased from 85.99% to 88.61% in 2015-16. Number of contracts actively managed increased from 66 to 129. Top F1 banding achieved for the new annual procurement capability assessment score.
- Percentage of local suppliers bidding for council business on the procurement portal has increased from 15% in 2014-15 to 29.5% in 2015-16.
- Number of online transactions has increased by 8% to 176,473 and numbers of calls handled by Customer Service Centre has increased by 3.6% to 122,293. Percentage of abandoned calls through Customer Service Centre has halved from 10.9% in 2014-15 to 5.3% in 2015-16.
- Won top task in UK wide Socitm Better Connected Awards. Finalist in Government Opportunities (GO) Excellence in Public Procurement Awards Scotland 2015/16 in the category of GO Procurement People of Tomorrow Award.
- Completed Universal Support Delivered Locally trial which covered triage, digital skills and budgeting advice delivered in partnership with Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), registered social landlords, Citizens Advice and Bute Advice. This was shortlisted as a finalist for IRRV (Institute of Revenues, Rating & Valuation) awards for excellence in partnership working. This then led to new processes put in place to support introduction of Universal Credit in our area from 7 March 2016 providing help for those without the ability to make online claims, and provision of personal budgeting assistance following referral from DWP job centres.

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- Successful go-live of new customer contact systems in March 2016 as planned, allowing better multi-channel capabilities.
- Achieved Public Service Network re-accreditation.
- Education purchasing team implemented providing improved Value for Money for the education service.

CASE STUDIES

Universal Support Delivered Locally trial

More than 600 households were supported through the Universal Support Delivered Locally trial. Over half of these households were not previously known to the council and this project dramatically increased the reach of housing support services.

Many individuals attained employment as a result of the support they received. The partnership working led directly to the creation of a Mid Argyll Job Club where Job Centre Plus staff from Oban attend regularly and work together with us to offer more seamless services to jobseekers.

Non domestic rates relief

Businesses are supported in gaining non-domestic rates relief. In 2015-16 we granted £9.56m relief to businesses, up from £9.1m the previous year.

This relief is either 100% or 75% funded by the Scottish Government. The increase meant that although gross rates payable increased by £870,000, businesses only paid an extra £407,000 which helps the area's economy.

Supporting local business

We support local companies to win council business wherever possible. We are members of the Supplier Development Programme which offers free training to local companies on how to win public sector contracts. In 2015/16, 59 of our tenders received a bid from a locally based company. In 75% of these cases, the local company won the contract. Local companies won tenders worth £8.5m.

Key [Single Outcome Agreement \(Local outcomes improvement plan\) objectives supported](#):

- The economy is diverse and thriving
- People live active, healthy and independent lives

Developing our economy

Key successes

Supporting business growth

- Economic Development Action Plans established to capture and address local economic opportunities up to 2017-18
- Business Gateway supported 116 start-ups, 1% above the annual target and four more than last year.
- Business Gateway supported 604 existing businesses against a target of 200 (302% of the target achieved)
- The average one year survival rate of business start-ups supported was 84% against a local target of 75% and national benchmark of 78%.
- Customer satisfaction was high from those who have used the Business Gateway service, with an average of 88% against a target of 85% and a national benchmark of 84%.
- Invested in increased support for key business sectors with the creation of three new posts - Senior Economic Growth Officer, Economic Growth Officer (Tourism, Forestry and Defence) and Economic Growth Officer (Food and Drink and Marine Science).
- The European Team contributed towards the Scottish Government's development of the 2014-2020 European Structural and Investment Fund (ESIF) programmes, with a view to maximising the accessibility of the various funds to Argyll and Bute organisations.

Attracting people to the area

- Oban Airport is owned and run by the Council. In 2015 a total of 4,262 passengers were carried on Argyll Air Services operated out of Oban airport, 22.4% more than in 2014.
- The council offers free and confidential advice to the film, television and photographic industry. In 2015 we responded to 111 enquiries and there were 48 productions with an approximate spend of £524,500. The feature film, Whisky Galore and the BBC television dramas, From Darkness and Stag, along with a music video by Florence and the Machine have all used Argyll as

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a location. As well as the economic benefit to the area, tourism interest can also be generated through the resultant media exposure.

- People from across the UK attended a ride-in event at Inveraray when the Road Safety Unit launched the third edition of the Road Safety West of Scotland publication. An estimated 400 people attended. The magazine is distributed across the West of Scotland.
- The Strategic Transportation Team was highly commended in the Achievements in Cycling category at the National Scottish Transport Awards 2016 for the South Islay Distilleries Path. An estimated 9,000 people have used the path averaging around 2,500 users per month.
- The Strategic Transportation Unit delivered a bus turning circle at the Rest and Be Thankful. This project was secured through bids of £150,000 to Scottish Partner Transport and £250,000 to Transport Scotland's Bus Investment Fund. This facility is used by both local and CityLink services.

Creating opportunities through regeneration

- CHORD – We have continued to create economic growth opportunities across Argyll and Bute through the council's ambitious, forward-looking £30 million regeneration programme of our waterfront towns – [Campbeltown](#), [Helensburgh](#), [Oban](#), [Rothesay and Dunoon](#) (CHORD). Here are just a few highlights:
 - Transit berthing facility in Campbeltown completed with over 830 boats and 2,858 passengers making use of the facility in the first year of operation
 - In Oban Phase 1 is completed of our work to improve traffic flow in the town centre and reconfigure Oban Bay/Harbour to better meet the needs of users.
 - The first phases of the Dunoon wooden pier project were completed as part of our work to redevelop and create a vibrant and attractive waterfront.
 - Helensburgh – our regeneration of Helensburgh town centre has become [award-winning](#), securing prestigious design awards; in 2015/2016 grants delivered to local businesses as part of the Shopfront Enhancement Initiative.
 - Successful delivery of the [Rothesay Townscape Heritage Initiative](#) (THI).

Attracting external funding to Argyll and Bute

- Secured Regeneration Capital Grant Fund bid of £650 000 for Kilmahew/St Peter's project.

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- The Projects and Regeneration team was successful in securing funding for a second Campbeltown Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS). Following a successful bid to CARS Round 5, the Council secured funding from Historic Environment Scotland (HES) with an award of £990,000. This is Campbeltown's second CARS. The total common fund including the Historic Environment Scotland grant (£990,000), Council match funding (£500,000) and owner's contributions is £2,170,422.
- The Council secured a grant of £109,700 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for a second phase Townscape Heritage (TH), formally known as the THI.
- The Strategic Transportation unit secured £0.948 million external funding for transportation infrastructure projects from Cycling Walking Safer Streets, Sustrans, Smarter Choices Safer Places and Strathclyde Partnership for Transport.

Training

- iCycle training took place in 38 schools with 594 pupils in P6/7 taking part. Grades were awarded at A to 352 pupils (59%), B (27%) and C (14%).
- Using 'Smarter Places, Smarter Choices' funding, a Road Safety Magic Show was given to P1-P3 pupils in 11 primary schools. This used magic tricks to highlight key road safety themes including safe places to cross, the importance of wearing bright clothing and keeping away from parked cars.

CASE STUDIES

Restoring Rothesay's former glory

New jobs, repaired tenements and a redeveloped gap site were just some of the outcomes from the successful Rothesay THI.

The five-year project aimed to revitalise a defined core area within Rothesay's historic town centre by offering grants to property owners for structural and external repairs. The project was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (£1.49 million), Historic Scotland (£500,000), Argyll and Bute Council (£546,000) and LEADER (£94,000). In addition the £2.6 million of public funding levered in an additional £1.38 million of private investment, meaning a total investment in the island's gateway of approximately £4.2 million over a five year period.

In total, six jobs were created as a result of the project and four tenements were comprehensively repaired. Eight smaller scale projects have brought buildings back into a good state of repair and 12 shop fronts have been restored. A programme of

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activities was developed to run alongside the construction work in order to improve building conservation skills, encourage regular building maintenance and to promote and celebrate the unique character of Rothesay and the wider Island.

Step ashore in Campbeltown

The Campbeltown Transit Berthing Facility was one of the local CHORD flagship projects.

It was designed to create a more user-friendly, step-ashore berthing facility providing direct access to the shops and restaurants within the town centre. The new, modern facilities include a dedicated shower and toilet building. More and larger boats are now happy to come into Campbeltown thanks to the high standard of the piled pontoon system.

The vision behind the council's investment of £1.4 million - of stimulating higher visitor numbers and extending the season - is being realised. In the first year's trading, over 800 boats have carried around 2800 visitors into Campbeltown.

Key [Single Outcome Agreement \(Local outcomes improvement plan\) objectives supported](#):

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- We have infrastructure that supports sustainable growth.
- Education, skills and training maximises opportunities for all.
- Children and young people have the best possible start.

Education Services

Key successes

- We taught over 10,300 pupils in 77 primary schools and 10 secondary schools spread across our mainland and island communities.
- The overall percentage of school leavers entering a positive destination was 93.1% which is above the Scottish national average of 92.9%.
- We supported young people to achieve a total of 535 Skills for Work and Wider Achievement Awards.
- Four of our schools were shortlisted in the Scottish Education Awards.
- We are piloting a new attendance module to help ensure that pupils' attendance at school is high.
- 22 Additional Support Needs (ASN) Assistants achieved a Professional Development Award (PDA).
- The Early Years Service earned a gold award for its Developmental Milestone Tool at the Argyll and Bute Council Excellence Awards and a bronze award for its Early Years Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme.
- The [Early Years Collaborative](#) won a silver award for the Argyll and Bute Family Pathway at the Argyll and Bute Council Excellence Awards.
- All schools have developed awareness of the use of the population analysis provided in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) in raising attainment.
- An Authority led working group produced draft Education Guidance relating to Looked After Children (LAC). This was presented to the Corporate Parenting Board and will be a key driver to ensuring continued focus in raising attainment and improving outcomes for LAC pupils.
- Effective intervention for vulnerable young people has resulted in a continued decline of the number of young people placed outwith Argyll and Bute.

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CASE STUDIES

[The Kintyre Family Pathway](#)

The Kintyre Family Pathway continues to develop, with one of the key successes from this year being a parental engagement project in Tarbert Early Level Class.

The Pathway is about regularly assessing a child's needs from pre-birth to age five, with joint working between midwives, health visitors, nursery staff, primary schools and other community services, to help ensure children and families receive the right support at the right time.

Improving parental engagement within Early Learning and Childcare settings is a key Scottish Government priority. As a result we decided to carry out an intensive parental engagement project in one setting over ten months to derive as much information as possible in preparation for supporting practitioners across Argyll and Bute.

We aimed to increase the level of parental engagement in learning within one Early Level Class – consisting of 24 Early Learning and Childcare children and 16 P1 children. Prior to the beginning of the project, the team had no processes in place for engaging parents.

By the end of the project 84% of parents were engaging in their child's learning - 24% more than the target.

This is a joint initiative with Health and Social Care Partnership services.

The Argyll and Bute Youth Awards

The Argyll and Bute Youth Awards were established to counter the overtly negative image of young people often portrayed in the media.

The event celebrates the many achievements of Argyll and Bute's young people and was held in Oban on the 24th September 2015. A total of 32 young people were shortlisted for eight award categories with the winners announced on the night to a capacity audience. The categories were as follows: Unsung Hero; Youth Sporting Award; Youth Arts Award; Youth Citizenship; Youth Volunteering Award; Youth Environment Award; Health and Wellbeing Award; and Young Entrepreneur.

It was an excellent evening showcasing the amazing and talented young people there are in Argyll and Bute. Young people were involved in every aspect of the planning and delivery of the awards and were outstanding in their effort and enthusiasm.

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The Early Years Collaborative

The work of the Early Years Collaborative (EYC) is continuing to have a positive impact on the lives of children and families across Argyll and Bute through the scaling up of the Argyll and Bute Family Pathway to Cowal.

It is the world's first multi-agency, bottom up quality improvement programme to support the transformation of early years.

One particularly successful project has been the 'Money Advice Project for Early Years Families'. The teams from Clyde Cottage Pre-5 Unit and Clyde Cottage Voluntary Nursery have worked in partnership with Argyll and Bute Citizens Advice Bureau (ABCAB) to provide money advice to parents of young families in the Cowal area of Argyll and Bute.

Through the use of improvement methodology, the partnership has identified how they can effectively support parents through building relationships and mutual trust and respect. The project ran for six months, with 49 families supported.

In addition to advice on rights and support with managing debt, families in the Cowal area benefitted from a financial gain of £79,783 by the end of the project. This will have a significant impact on children and families in the Cowal area, reducing inequalities and increasing aspirations for parents to ensure their children have the best start possible.

Key [Single Outcome Agreement \(Local outcomes improvement plan\) objectives supported](#):

- Education, skills and training maximises opportunities for all.
- Children and young people have the best possible start.

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People and places to deliver improving, [award winning services](#)

To deliver effective services we put the right employees in the right places. To achieve improving services we provide support and training that is practical and accessible.

Improvement and HR

- Increased availability of e-learning courses has provided greater access to training than ever before and across a wider range of topics.
- The audit of Public Performance Reporting confirmed good progress being made through the delivery of our PPR improvement plan.
- As part of our work to keep our communities informed and involved the Communications Team responded to nearly 1,000 media enquiries, issued over 300 news releases, and developed the Council's use of social media. The Team also raised positive awareness of Argyll and Bute as a place to live, work or visit through extensive international coverage of the Council's EU Referendum planning.
- The Health and Safety Team remodelled on-line information to make it easier for employees to find advice and practical health and safety help. Prioritising safe working environments for our employees supports the Council's aim of being an employer of choice.

Facility Services – looking after council buildings, catering and cleaning, and transporting pupils to and from schools.

- Delivery of the Helensburgh Office Rationalisation Project. This brought together, in one newly constructed building, staff who had worked in buildings across the Helensburgh area, therefore providing customers with a 'one-stop shop' of services.
- Completion of the package of works required to improve nine Council owned residential properties to Scottish Housing Quality Standard.
- Target met for 20% reduction on CO2 emissions, through energy projects such as oil to gas conversions and the installation of biomass heating systems.
- Uptake of free school meals for all pupils in Primary 1-3 remains high, averaging at 82% over the past year.
- Smart tickets for school transport have been rolled out to Tobermory High School.
- School and public transport contracts were successfully awarded on Islay.
- Delivery of replacement modernised vehicles to Adult Services Social Work.

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- Central Repairs (Emergency, Planned and Statutory Maintenance Works) ensured that we met statutory requirements for inspection and testing of the buildings.

Case Studies – Facility Services

Primary school menus

When developing the primary school menu during the past year, the Food and Nutrition Officer, supported by the Catering Management Team, held a series of focus groups with pupils from schools across the council area.

This allowed pupils to directly contribute to the development of the menu that they, and all other pupils, would use for the coming school term. It also gave them the opportunity to gain a better understanding of a balanced, healthy diet, and the reasons why certain items can't be available for school lunch.

Feedback from head teachers indicated that this was a valuable exercise, enabling pupils to participate in a key decision making process, and improving their understanding of health and wellbeing, an intrinsic part of [Curriculum for Excellence](#).

Helensburgh Office Rationalisation Project

The delivery of the Helensburgh Office Rationalisation Project meant that the Helensburgh and Lomond Civic Centre opened to the public in late November 2015.

Since then, members of the public have been able to access all council services at one location in the centre of Helensburgh, together with new community spaces including a café; marriage suite; landscaped grounds; and a community garden. Meeting room/spaces are available for booking throughout the day and evening.

School transport

We worked with parents and others to address school transport concerns, raised through public consultation by the joint parent councils of Oban primary schools.

This partnership looked for options which were cost neutral, and which could improve the availability of transport for pupils who are not entitled to free transport.

This working group successfully addressed the issues raised, which included rescheduling bus timetables in the Oban town area and the introduction of Kidz Cards, which may be used as an alternative to paper bus tickets.

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Case Studies – Improvement and HR

LEON

The HR and OD team have added more than 130 courses to our e-learning platform LEON.

This has allowed 4,754 people to complete courses saving time and money in terms of travel and accommodation.

Electronic learning supports the Council's Digital First agenda and the team is currently developing content to support a blended approach to our Argyll and Bute Manager programme which will reduce time spent travelling to face to face courses and allow managers to complete the learning at a time and place of their choosing.

Leadership Development

Growing excellent leaders and managers is key strategic objective.

During 15/16 we conducted a third tier leadership development programme which aimed at increasing awareness of leadership styles and how to adapt behaviour to make the individual's approach to leadership more effective.

The programme received excellent feedback with 93% feeling the course met their objectives and 100% stating they benefitted from increased self-awareness as a line manager as a result of the programme.

Did you know?

- Argyll and Bute Council employs over 5,000 people
- We provide career opportunities for scores of different professions and roles
- On-line technology is key to our working together across mainland communities and 23 inhabited islands

[Single Outcome Agreement \(Local outcomes improvement plan\) objectives supported:](#)

Improvement and HR, and Facility Services, contribute to the progress of all LOIP objectives by supporting the delivery of council services.

Planning and Regulatory Services

Key successes

- Creation of online footpath guides to promote and increase visitor numbers to the Argyll and Bute Core Path Network.
- Processing timescales for planning applications remains ahead of Scottish average and the time taken to deal with major applications has significantly improved. Our 'Open for Business' ethos is also underpinned by a 97% approval rate of applications.
- Positive feedback from the Scottish Government on Council's Planning Performance Framework Annual Report, and on its Building Standards Balanced Scorecards and Continuous Improvement Plan
- Building Standards retention of the National Customer Services Excellence Award.
- Developed a range of national benchmarks for Trading Standards.
- Building Standards verifier processing timescales continually surpassing statutory performance targets.

Supporting the economy

- Good regulation supports a sustainable and successful economy and examples of our contributions include the recent food safety audits which have been undertaken by the government representatives from China and Namibia on specific premises in Argyll.
- Council Excellence Awards. Building on the success of 2014, Regulatory Services won silver in 2 of the 5 categories at the Councils Excellence Awards in the categories of service innovation and improvement and achieving better outcomes. We also received two bronze awards in tackling inequalities and health; and strong and sustainable communities. This recognises the good work and outcomes being undertaken by the Regulatory Services team.
- Contribute nationally to developing good practice across the professions of Planning and Regulatory Services.

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- Successfully tendered for and secured a private sector contract with Babcocks to provide the Building Standards verification service at Faslane and Coulport naval bases.

Partnership working

- Strong partnership working is critical to delivering effective Regulatory Services and there are arrangements in place with a range of agencies, local authorities and other regulators. Key successes in 2015/16 have been the development of the Joint Health Protection Plan 2015-17 which details the health protection/preventative public health priorities and working arrangements between Argyll and Bute Council, Highland Council and NHS Highland; improved use of an electronic intelligence system in trading standard which is used by all other Scottish local authorities and Trading Standards Scotland which allows for the targeting of a coordinated intelligence-led approach to deal with issues across boundaries.

CASE STUDIES

[Single Outcome Agreement \(Local outcomes improvement plan\) objectives](#)

supported: the economy is diverse and thriving and people live active, healthy and independent lives

In the reporting year, we assisted four new food businesses to gain formal approval to trade across the EU, and issued other approved food businesses across Argyll and Bute 1,621 export certificates for consignments to other international markets.

This work assists in developing business, allowing them to access international markets, yet ensuring a high quality food product (principally fish and shellfish) which protects the reputation of Argyll produce, and a sustainable market for UK products.

In the same period, we undertook enforcement action with other regulators to target illegal shellfish, preventing them from entering the market for human consumption, which had the potential to cause illness and adversely affect the reputation of high quality shellfish from Argyll and Bute.

[Argyll and Bute Sustainable Design Awards – Promoting High Quality Design](#)

The Development Policy team ran the Argyll and Bute Sustainable Design Awards celebrating the outstanding and innovative design that is happening across Argyll and Bute and allowing developers and architects to showcase their recent projects. They featured four distinct entry categories.

- New build residential (single or small scale)
- New build large scale residential development
- New build non-residential
- Redevelopment or refurbishment of an existing building

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A varied range of entries were received across the categories and these were scored against four principal criteria:

- The Context
- Environmental Design
- Economy, Innovation and/or Social Factors
- Detail Design and Workmanship

The judging panel was made up of range of staff from the Planning and Building Standards services as well as two elected members from the Planning, Protective Services and Licencing (PPSL) Committee, with the aim to provide a wide range of opinion and expertise in the judging discussion.

The judges scored and ranked the entries against the criteria and then used the collated results to agree upon a shortlist of entries in each category. The judges then split into smaller teams to visit each of the shortlisted entries which were spread widely across Argyll from Helensburgh in the south to the islands of Tiree and Jura.

Once all the visits were complete the judges met one final time to report back their findings to the rest of the panel and discuss each of the entries and agree a recommended winner for each category.

These recommendations were taken back to PPSL committee who endorsed them at the April 2016 meeting.

The winners in each category were

- New build residential (single or small scale) – House Number 7, Tiree
A development of high quality finish and detailing which displays a significant level of architectural thought and balances the traditional Tiree vernacular with sensitive contemporary design
- New build large scale residential development – Park Square, Campbeltown
A particularly well considered site layout that frames views and provides welcome connectivity through the site and also displays a quality palette of materials and finishes throughout.
- New build non-residential – Portavadie Leisure and Spa
A high quality redevelopment of a brownfield site with a building appropriate to its special setting and featuring elements such as biomass heating, led lighting and green roofs.
- Redevelopment or refurbishment of an existing building – Greystones, Oban
A high quality refurbishment of a historic Listed Building displaying significant attention to detail and outstanding workmanship including the restoration of original features such as original room shapes, re-opening of fireplaces and refurbishment of windows.

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A commendation was also awarded to Tayvallich Primary School Early Years Unit in the new build non-residential category for a high standard of design, detailing, materials and finishes in a building that contains modern elements whilst still respecting the traditional school building.

Throughout the process the Sustainable Design Awards have been promoted through the Council website and Twitter page, with details of each shortlisted and winning entry individually tweeted. The team also worked closely with the Council's Communications Team to promote the awards ceremony through wider media channels.

[Single Outcome Agreement / Local Outcomes Improvement Plan objectives supported](#): people live in safer and stronger communities

A very effective 'detect and disrupt serious organised crime' group has been established with membership from Argyll and Bute Council, West Dunbartonshire Council, Police Scotland and the Immigration Service to combat serious organised crime.

Enhanced liaison between all agencies, together with the development of a system to share intelligence, has led to a more effective and targeted multiagency response.

There are clear examples of this approach working well and in 2015/16 specific work has been undertaken to combat the illegal fishing and harvesting of shellfish; counterfeit and unsafe goods, the employment of illegal workers and issues relating to private landlords.

Roads and Amenity Services

Key successes

- Successful implementation of improved road safety inspection system including direct electronic data entry.
- Progressed energy efficient lighting programme that will deliver savings without compromising on quality of service.
- Delivery of successful roads reconstruction programme to time and budget.
- Exceeded target for response to category 1 road defects. Planned road repairs accounted for 78% of the revenue budget, exceeding the target and demonstrating our commitment to early intervention.
- Co-mingled waste collection was introduced in Cowal. This has increased the recycling percentage for this area from around 24% to 32%.
- Installed 9 rapid electric car charging points in Inveraray, Lochgilphead, Campbeltown, Arrochar, Tobermory and Fionnphort and 2 fast charging points in Helensburgh and Rothesay.

Did you know?

- We look after 2283 km of carriageway, valued at £2.1 billion. Winter treatment is carried out on 1205km of the road network. 81% of the network is in rural areas.

CASE STUDIES

[Single Outcome Agreement / Local Outcomes Improvement Plan objective supported: The economy is diverse and thriving](#)

- Support for public events, including road opening/closing permissions and traffic management, wardens, and installation and removal of banners e.g. Highland Games, half marathon, Oban Live and West Highland week.
- Co-ordination of lights at tourist attraction, McCaig's Tower in Oban, for various occasions.

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[Single Outcome Agreement / Local Outcomes Improvement Plan objectives supported:](#) We have infrastructure that supports sustainable growth

- Designed and constructed Oban Airport Business Park Road. This is the first project to be delivered under the Lorn Arc TIF (Tax Incremental Finance) programme and will facilitate development of a business park.
- Developed the local flood risk strategy and management plan – this is a culmination of 4 years working in partnership with other councils and flooding authorities within the terms of the Flood Risk Scotland Act 2009. As a result of this work, the Campbeltown flood scheme has been recognised by Scottish Government as suitable for detailed investigation.
- Upgrading of key car parks to encourage visitors, for example Ganavan car park in Oban was resurfaced, re-lined, additional bays provided through formalisation of road markings including additional disabled bays.

[Single Outcome Agreement / Local Outcomes Improvement Plan objectives supported:](#) People live in safer and stronger communities

- Flood relief provided at Succoth, Arrochar, to maintain the road access to the housing scheme free from surface water and reduce risk of flooding to residential property.
- Crossaig bridge repair. This 100 year old bridge links Campbeltown/Carradale to Clanoig /Skipness. It is also an alternative lifeline route for the A83 and is the access to the Scottish Southern Energy power station at Crossaig. Recent inclement weather produced severe flash flooding at this location. Thanks to the bridge inspection regime a high risk weakness was identified before it caused a difficulty. The internal bridge squad carried out emergency repair work to rebuild part of the abutment and full training wall.
- Dredging carried out at Ellenabeich at Easdale to facilitate the operation of the ferry, and to remove silting in the mouth of the harbour to allow access for fisherman and other users at all tides. The material recovered was used to reconstruct a coastal protection breakwater which protects the inner harbour.
- In response to public demand for more eco-friendly burials, three woodland burial sites were developed and are now operational at Barbour Cemetery Lomond; Pennyfew Oban; Strachur. Tarbert to be developed in the near future. This provides access for the public to a more environmentally friendly funeral service.



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- Railings for Rothesay War memorial were installed as a result of partnership working, with the Bute branch of Royal British Legion contributing £11,000 towards this project.

Social Care – looking after vulnerable children, adults and families

Children and Families Services

Key successes

- The development of the Alternative to Care Project has ensured that the number of children placed outwith the authority has remained low, ensuring children from Argyll and Bute remain in Argyll and Bute wherever possible.
- Argyll and Bute has been successful in finding more 'forever families' for children who require to live away from their parents, by increasing the number of adoptive carers, permanent carers and kinship placements.
- There has been an increase in the number of those completing orders within Criminal Justice under the Unpaid Work Scheme.

CASE STUDY

Looked after accommodated children and transitions supports

James was 15 years old when concerns were raised about his behaviour in relation to using violence and aggression to resolve conflict. He demonstrated unprovoked levels of aggression towards others and showed no remorse.

James' mother had died when he was six months old. His father, who had issues with alcohol consumption, spent 6 months in jail, during which time James was looked after by his uncle.

The Alternative to Care (ATC) worker became involved to support James and his father, and to introduce some boundaries and strategies that would help James manage his behaviour and remain at home safely.

James continued to make negative choices within the community, putting himself and others at risk of harm. He had issues around impulsivity and struggled to control this effectively.

Assessment by Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) indicated that James would find it increasingly difficult to control these impulses, and that James was willing to be negatively influenced by others. The decision was taken at a children's hearing to place James in one of our residential children's houses with a compulsory supervision order.

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James was able to see this as an opportunity to rid himself of the 'bad' reputation he had attracted.

Due to the nature of his offences a multi-agency response was required. His social worker and residential staff worked closely with the local school to integrate James into his new school. Sessions between CAMHS and residential staff took place about managing James' anger and impulsivity. The ATC worker supported James to do a piece of work specifically around relationships and developing empathy. The school allocated a tutor to deliver a one to one programme of support for James.

James was central to planning for his future in consultation with his Through Care worker and the Who cares? (Scotland) worker. Employment opportunities were explored, particularly around the construction industry.

Home contact was increased with a view to getting James home to his own community.

James left residential care with a fully supported transition plan that he was enthusiastic about.

He is doing exceptionally well in a work placement and continues to show a high level of commitment. There have been no incidences of offending since James returned home.

ADULT CARE

Key successes

- There is high percentage of adult mental health service users receiving care in community settings – 98.2%
- Increased number of service users in receipt of enhanced telecare packages to 579
- Maintaining an impressive balance of care for older people living in community settings.

CASE STUDY

Self-Directed Support

Mrs McIntyre (59) lives alone, has a number of health concerns and needed care at home to be able to continue living in the community.

She was given choices for managing her care under Self Directed Support. She discussed these with the Self Directed Support Officer and the Care Manager and

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felt she was not able to manage employing her own carer under option 1 (Direct Payments). She opted for option 3 which meant the council arranged services for her. She also received help to attend groups and workshops where she met people in a similar situation to her own.

Within 3 months she asked for a review of the choice she had made. She decided she would like to hire her own personal assistants.

The Self Directed Support Officer met with her and together they created a plan to enable her to become an employer. Since choosing this, Mrs McIntyre has become more confident and feels in control. She is achieving her goals with the support of her assistants and is striving to be more independent. She is able to travel with support and is making hospital appointments, going shopping and visiting family. Mrs McIntyre still requires assistance with her personal care and meal preparation but is now able to do more for herself.

With different agencies working together - health professionals, the care provider, voluntary sector and social care services - Mrs McIntyre has learned how to speak out, be involved and be in control.

[Health and Social Care Partnership](#)

From April 2016 the council's children, families and adult social care services are delivered as part of Argyll and Bute's Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP).

The HSCP brings together all health services and all adult and children/families social work services.

This means in brief that GPs, hospitals, health workers, social care staff and others are going to work increasingly side-by-side, to deliver services that help people in Argyll and Bute to live longer, healthier, happier and independent lives.

[Single Outcome Agreement / Local Outcomes Improvement Plan objectives progressed](#)

- Children and young people have the best possible start
- People live active, healthier and independent lives.

Supporting democracy in action

Our Governance and Law service supports elected members and the decision-making processes of the Council, ensures the Council complies with legal requirements across all areas and professions of our work, and maintains tried and tested procedures for responding to emergency situations.

Key successes

- Completed a comprehensive review and update of the [Civic Government licence conditions](#), covering everything from driving taxis to the serving of hot food, as part of our work to support community and business growth.
- Developed a Corporate Records Management Plan to meet requirements of Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011.
- Achieved three gold awards in the Council's Employee Excellence and Recognition Awards 2015 – for Customer Service (Customer Service Excellence Award), Team of the Year (Election Team) and Local Matters (Single Outcome Agreement Localised Delivery Plans).
- Delivered a successful multi-agency emergency response exercise to a hypothetical incident at HM Naval Base, Clyde (Faslane).
- Provided legal advice to support the wide range of services the council delivered to our communities.
- Became the first full Service within the Council to achieve the nationally recognised accreditation for [Customer Service Excellence](#), applying the UK Government Cabinet Office standard of customer service excellence.
- Supported successful delivery of a demanding and challenging election schedule:
 - General Election May 2015
 - By-Election February 2016
 - Community Council By-elections
 - Preparation for a number of different election processes in the first quarter of 2016-17
- Supported and facilitated the 5th [Local Government Boundary Commission review](#).

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- Governance training delivered to internal services and Community Councils, and governance and scrutiny training provided for the Performance, Review and Scrutiny Committee.

CASE STUDY

Customer Service assessment

Governance and Law invited assessment of our customer service skills and support, as part of the nationally recognised Customer Service Excellence (CSE) programme.

CSE is designed to be a driver of continuous improvement, a skills development tool and an independent validation of achievement.

The Service took action where improvement options were identified.

As a result Governance and Law achieved Customer Service Excellence, and is now delivering improved service to our colleagues and external customers.

Helping communities in emergencies

Severe flooding in Clachan (Kintyre) closed the A83 road, washed a large container from the local filling station into the river, flooded homes and brought risk to vulnerable people.

The Governance and Law Service has responsibility for emergency planning services.

Helping residents in Clachan involved working, swiftly, in partnership with Police Scotland, the Coastguard, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, local farmers, SEPA (Scottish Environmental Protection Agency), SSE (Scottish and Southern Electricity), forestry and building contractors to ensure people were safe.

Those affected were kept up to date on progress throughout the response, and the road was re-opened quickly for local people, visitors and businesses.

The co-ordinated response led to positive feedback from the local community.

[Single Outcome Agreement / Local Outcomes Improvement Plan objectives](#) supported:

Governance and Law services support progress of all LOIP objectives by supporting the decision-making processes of Argyll and Bute Council.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

As a quick reference, please find here a list of terms you will find in our annual report, and links to additional information that may be of use to you.

Phrase	Meaning
ADHD	Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder
ASN	Additional Support Needs
Business Gateway	This service provides practical help, advice and support for new start and growing businesses in Argyll.
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
CARS	Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme
CHORD	The Council's regeneration projects in Campbeltown, Helensburgh, Oban, Rothesay and Dunoon
Community Planning Partnership	Group of organisations that work together to deliver the LOIP. The organisations include for example the local council, Police Scotland, Scotland's Fire and Rescue Service, local NHS and voluntary sector.
Corporate Parenting	The formal and local partnerships between all services responsible for working together to meet the needs of looked after children, young people and care leavers
CPD	Continuing professional development
Curriculum for Excellence	Curriculum for Excellence is designed to provide a coherent, more flexible and enriched curriculum from 3 years to 18.
Early Years Collaborative	National project that aims make Scotland the best place in the world for children to grow up
HLF	Heritage Lottery Fund
HR	Human Resources
Kinship care/placements	Kinship care is when a child is looked after by their extended family or close friends, if they cannot

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	<p>remain with their birth parents.</p> <p>Kinship care includes children who are looked after and are placed in a formal kinship care arrangement by the local authority.</p>
LAAC (Looked after and accommodated children)	Children and young people in the care of their local authority
Local Government Boundary Commission	<p>The Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •carrying out reviews of the boundaries of local authority areas; •carrying out reviews of electoral wards for local authorities; •responding to requests for reviews of electoral wards or local authority areas.
LOIP (Local Outcome Improvement Plan)	Please see the explanation of the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA)
Public Realm	This refers to publicly owned streets, pathways, right of ways, parks, publicly accessible open spaces and any public and civic building and facilities.
PDA	Professional development award
Renewables	This is about developing new, sustainable forms of energy.
SOA (Single Outcome Agreement)	<p>This plan is also being referred to within the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 as the LOIP (Local Outcome Improvement Plan).</p> <p>This plan sets out how the Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership (listed above) will together meet the challenges required to achieve the overall aim that Argyll and Bute's economic success is built on a growing population</p>
SUSTRANS	Sustrans is a UK charity enabling people to travel by foot, bike or public transport for more of the journeys we make every day

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Useful links

People and plans

[Our councillors](#)

[Plans and policies](#)

News and services

[Our website](#)

[News releases](#)

[Current job vacancies](#)

Performance information

[Local Government Benchmark Framework](#)

[Addressing climate change](#)