

Argyll and Bute Council
Comhairle Earra-Ghàidheal Agus Bhòid



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17 September 2020

NOTICE OF MEETING

A meeting of the **ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL** will be held **BY SKYPE** on **THURSDAY, 24 SEPTEMBER 2020** at **9:30 AM**, which you are requested to attend.

Douglas Hendry
Executive Director

BUSINESS

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (IF ANY)

3. MINUTES

Minutes of Special Argyll and Bute Council Meeting held on 30 June 2020 (Pages 5 - 6)

4. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

- * (a) Community Services Committee held on 27 August 2020 (Pages 7 - 12)
- (b) Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee held on 10 September 2020 (Pages 13 - 16)

The above minutes are submitted to the Council for approval of any recommendations on the items which the Committee does not have delegated powers. These items are marked with an *.

5. LEADER'S REPORT

Report by Leader of the Council (Pages 17 - 26)

6. POLICY LEADS REPORT

Report by Policy Leads (Pages 27 - 54)

7. APPOINTMENT OF LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support (Pages 55 - 58)

8. COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support (Pages 59 - 64)

9. POLITICAL MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support (Pages 65 - 68)

10. BOUNDARY COMMISSION - REVIEW OF ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support (Pages 69 - 80)

11. CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) - MEETINGS AND ASSOCIATED MATTERS

Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support (Pages 81 - 84)

12. LUSS CAR PARK - TEMPORARY PORTALOO FACILITIES

Recommendation by the Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee of 17 September 2020 and report to that Committee (Pages 85 - 90)

REPORTS FOR NOTING

13. BUDGET 2020-21 UPDATE

Report by Section 95 Officer (Pages 91 - 98)

ITEMS FOR DECISION

14. NOTICE OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDER 13

Moved by Councillor Green, seconded by Councillor McKenzie.

In recent years there has been a worrying reported rise in racism, xenophobia and hate crimes across the United Kingdom. Taking many forms, the impact this is having on people in their day-to-day lives and the inequalities faced have been highlighted by groups such as Black Lives Matter.

Argyll and Bute Council is proud that communities in our area are tolerant and inclusive to people from all racial, ethnic and religious backgrounds, but also recognises that continuing work is still necessary to ensure that everyone feels welcomed and safe here.

As Councillors we individually:

- Condemn racism, xenophobia, hate crime, and all other forms of intolerance;
- Express our support to victims of these crimes, and;
- Urge members of the public to report incidents and barriers in reporting.

Furthermore we agree that Argyll and Bute Council will continue to:

- Promote initiatives to tackle hate crime and prejudice in our schools, online and within our communities;
- Commit to working with all our partners, including the Scottish Government and Police Scotland, to ensure that divisive and discriminatory behaviour is not allowed to continue in our area, and;
- Be supportive of groups and individuals that are seeking to address these issues through respectful and constructive dialogue.

EXEMPT REPORT FOR DECISION

15. NPDO & HUB DBFM SCHOOLS ANNUAL REPORT - APRIL 2020

Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support
(Pages 99 - 106)

The Council will be asked to pass a resolution in terms of Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to exclude the public for items of business with an “E” on the grounds that it is likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in the appropriate paragraph of Part I of Schedule 7a to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

The appropriate paragraphs are:-

Paragraph 6 Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (other than the authority).

Paragraph 9 Any terms proposed or to be proposed by or to the authority in the course of negotiations for a contract for the acquisition or disposal of property or the supply of goods or services.

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

Contact: Sandra Campbell Tel: 01546 604401

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**MINUTES of Special MEETING of ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL held BY SKYPE
on TUESDAY, 30 JUNE 2020**

Present: Councillor Roderick McCuish (Chair)

Councillor Jim Anderson	Councillor Yvonne McNeilly
Councillor John Armour	Councillor Aileen Morton
Councillor Gordon Blair	Councillor Gary Mulvaney
Councillor Rory Colville	Councillor Iain Paterson
Councillor Robin Currie	Councillor Alastair Redman
Councillor Mary-Jean Devon	Councillor Alan Reid
Councillor Lorna Douglas	Councillor Elaine Robertson
Councillor Jim Findlay	Councillor Richard Trail
Councillor George Freeman	Councillor Sandy Taylor
Councillor Bobby Good	Councillor Douglas Philand
Councillor Kieron Green	Councillor Andrew Vennard
Councillor Anne Horn	Councillor Jean Moffat
Councillor Donald Kelly	Councillor Jim Lynch
Councillor Donald MacMillan BEM	Councillor Graham Hardie
Councillor David Kinniburgh	

Attending: Pippa Milne, Chief Executive
Douglas Hendry, Executive Director
Kirsty Flanagan, Interim Executive Director
David Logan, Head of Legal and Regulatory Support
Jane Fowler, Head of Customer and Support Services
Tricia O'Neill, Governance Manager

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were intimated from Councillors Forrest, Morgan, E Morton and Scoullar.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest intimated.

Members were asked to suspend standing orders with particular regard to Standing Order 5.4 - the Member who is presiding at the meeting must do so from the specified location for the meeting and cannot join by video conferencing. The requisite two thirds of Members present agreed to suspend Standing Order 5.4.

3. BEST VALUE ASSURANCE REPORT - ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

The Council considered a report which advised of the Accounts Commission findings on the Controller of Audits Statutory Report on the Council and on the statutory requirements in relation to the Council's consideration of the Commission's findings together with the draft action plan in response to the findings.

Decision

1. The Council welcomes the findings, particularly in relation to the progress the Council has made; the significantly improved relationships amongst elected members and between elected members and officers, which provide a sound basis for tackling future challenges, and the Council's sound approach to financial planning and budgeting which has allowed it to achieve financial balance in the short term.
2. Agreed to accept the recommendations and the development of an action plan to take forward the Statutory Report and Accounts Commission findings.
3. Agreed the draft action in appendix 2 of the report which sets out how the Council will implement the recommendations of the report.

(Ref: Report by the Chief Executive dated 1 June 2020, submitted)

4. CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) - REVIEW OF THE CONTINUED ROLE OF THE BUSINESS CONTINUITY COMMITTEE

The Council considered a report which advised of the decision of the Special Council Meeting in March to put a hold on scheduled meeting and constitute a temporary Committee (BCC) to exercise all of the powers of the Council for a finite period of time. The Council were asked to review the continued role of the BCC.

Decision

The Council:-

1. Agreed that all Area Committees and Strategic Committees (with the exception of the Policy and Resources (P&R) Committee scheduled for August / September will resume on a virtual basis, with a restricted number of agenda items.
2. Agreed that the BCC will, in the meantime, continue its role, exercising all delegated functions from the Council and the Policy and Resources Committee.
3. Agreed that a further review of the operation of the BCC and committees will be undertaken and reported to the Council meeting scheduled for 24 September 2020.
4. Noted the log of decisions that have been taken in consultation with the Leadership Group as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.
5. Agreed to approve the non-attendance of any member at any meeting of the authority for the period up to and including the Council meeting scheduled for 24 September 2020.

(Ref: Report by Executive Director for Legal and Regulatory Support dated 22 June 2020, submitted)

The Depute Provost, on behalf of the Council, thanked all Council staff and volunteers who were working above and beyond through this difficult period. These are challenging times and it is thanks to those efforts and working together that we will come through this.

**MINUTES of MEETING of COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE held BY SKYPE
on THURSDAY, 27 AUGUST 2020**

Present: Councillor Yvonne McNeilly (Chair)

Councillor Jim Anderson	Councillor Donald MacMillan BEM
Councillor Rory Colville	Councillor Iain Paterson
Councillor Lorna Douglas	Councillor Alan Reid
Councillor Kieron Green	Councillor Elaine Robertson
Councillor Graham Hardie	Councillor Andrew Vennard
Councillor Anne Horn	Margaret Anderson
Councillor Jim Lynch	William Hamilton
Councillor Julie McKenzie	

Also Present: Councillor Robin Currie
Councillor Aileen Morton
Councillor Richard Trail

Attending: Douglas Hendry, Executive Director with responsibility for Education
Anne Paterson, Head of Education: Lifelong Learning and Support
Louise Connor: Head of Education: Learning and Teaching
Jane Fowler, Head of Customer Support Services
Stuart McLean, Committee Manager
Douglas Morgan, Education Manager
Simon Easton, Education Manager
Superintendent Brian Gibson, Police Scotland
Joe McKay, Area Commander, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Joanna MacDonald, Chief Officer, Argyll and Bute HSCP
Stephen Whiston, Head of Strategic Planning & Performance, Argyll and Bute HSCP
Graeme Fraser, HM Fire Service Inspectorate for Scotland
Martin Riach, HM Fire Service Inspectorate for Scotland

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mary-Jean Devon and Alison Palmer, Teacher Representative.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Community Services Committee held on 12 March 2020 were approved as a correct record.

4. ARGYLL AND BUTE LOCAL POLICING PLAN 2017-2020 - QUARTERLY REPORT Q4 2019/20 & ARGYLL AND BUTE LOCAL POLICING PLAN 2020-2023 - QUARTERLY REPORT FQ1 2020/21

Superintendent Brian Gibson presented the FQ4 – 2019/20 update in relation to the Argyll and Bute Local Policing Plan for 2017-20 and the FQ1 update in relation to the Argyll and Bute Local Policing Plan for 2020-23 on behalf of Chief Superintendent John Paterson, who had submitted his apologies for today's meeting.

Superintendent Gibson referred to the different stages of recovery in respect of the Covid-19 pandemic and the ongoing impact this has had on trends in respect of crimes and behaviours. He expressed his thanks to the Policing team who have worked tremendously hard beyond what was expected, he also thanked Alan Morrison and Jim Smith from the Council for the huge support they had given to him during this period. He then responded to a number of questions.

Decision

The Committee reviewed and noted the content of the reports.

(Reference: Reports for FQ4 2019/20 & FQ1 2020/21 by Divisional Commander for Argyll and Bute West Dunbartonshire Division, Police Scotland, submitted)

5. SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE - ARGYLL AND BUTE PERFORMANCE REPORT FQ4 2019/20 & FQ1 2020/21

The Chair welcomed Joe McKay, the new Area Commander for Scottish Fire and Rescue, to his first meeting of the Community Services Committee.

Mr McKay presented reports highlighting the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service's review of local performance within Argyll and Bute for FQ4 2019-20 and FQ1 2020-21 which showed a downward trend across all key priorities.

Before inviting questions from the Committee, the Chair expressed her thanks to the previous Area Commander, Andrew Watt, for his invaluable input while in this role. She also welcomed Graham Fraser from HM Fire Service Inspectorate for Scotland who was listening into the proceedings today.

Decision

The Committee noted the content of the reports.

(Reference: Q4 2019/20 and Q1 2020/21 Reports by Local Senior Officer, Scottish Fire and Rescue, submitted)

6. ARGYLL AND BUTE HSCP - NATIONAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING OUTCOMES PERFORMANCE REPORTING FRAMEWORK AND EXCEPTION REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS - FQ3 & FQ4

A report highlighting the National Health and Wellbeing Outcomes Performance Reporting Framework and Exception Reporting Arrangements which was reported recently to the Integrate Joint Board (IJB) was considered.

Decision

The Committee noted:

1. the Integration Joint Board Health and Social Care Partnership performance report for quarters 3 and 4 for 2019/20;
2. the impact of Covid-19 on some of the IJB performance targets;
3. the resumption of services and revised performance targets in line with national phase four route map; and
4. the delay in the production of the IJB Annual Performance Report.

(Reference: Report by Head of Strategic Planning and Performance, Argyll and Bute HSCP, submitted)

* **7. SCOTTISH SOCIAL SERVICES COUNCIL (SSSC) REGISTRATION POLICY**

A report presenting the Committee with a new policy to ensure and safeguard SSSC registration for social care employees of Argyll and Bute Council who are managed by the Argyll and Bute HSCP was considered.

Decision

The Committee agreed to recommend approval of the policy to the Council and then notify the IJB (Integrated Joint Board).

(Reference: Report by Chief Officer, Argyll and Bute HSCP dated 4 August 2020 and SSSC Registration Policy, submitted)

8. 2019/20 ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICES PLAN 2017-20

The Committee considered the Year 3 review of the Children and Young People's Service Plan 2017-2020. The review considered updates on 2019/20 progress, provided information on developments that had taken place since the plan was published, and set out key plans for the year ahead.

Decision

The Committee agreed:

1. to note that both NHS Highland and Argyll and Bute were jointly and equally responsible for children's services planning;
2. to approve Argyll and Bute's Children and Young People's Services Plan 2017-2020 Year 3 review for the period 2019/20; and
3. that once approved by the Community Services Committee and approved by the Integration Joint Board, to approve the submission of the Children and Young People's Services Plan Year 3 review to Scottish Government as per the legislative requirement.

(Reference: Report by Chief Officer, Argyll and Bute HSCP dated 8 July 2020, submitted)

Margaret Anderson, Church Representative, and Councillor Robin Currie joined the meeting during consideration of the foregoing item.

9. ARGYLL AND BUTE - ANNUAL EDUCATION PLAN

A report updating the Committee on the progress made by the Education Service in achieving the priorities included in the Argyll and Bute Education Plan for 2019-20 presented at the Community Services Committee in September 2019, and to outline priority actions for 2020-21 was considered.

Decision

The Committee agreed to:

1. note the progress made with respect to priority actions within the 2019-20 Argyll and Bute Education Plan;
2. note the Covid-19 Education Recovery Plan;
3. approve the 2020-21 Annual Education Plan (Appendix 1);
4. approve the publishing of the 2020-21 Annual Education Plan; and
5. approve the submission of the 2020-21 Annual Education Plan to Scottish Government.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Education dated 12 August 2020 and Annual 2020/21 and 2019/20 Progress Report, submitted)

10. SCHOOLS (CONSULTATION) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010 - SKIPNESS PRIMARY SCHOOL

In response to the current Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, consideration was given to a report setting out proposals to further extend the statutory consultation exercise with regard to the proposal to close Skipness Primary School and to reschedule the public meeting to such a time during the consultation process that this is permissible under the Regulations relating to public gatherings.

Decision

The Committee agreed:

1. a further extension of the current consultation period, due to end on 31 August 2020, to 18 December 2020; and
2. that a new date for the public meeting is established once the UK/Scottish Government restrictions on public assemblies allow it to proceed.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Education dated 12 August 2020, submitted)

11. SQA SCHOOL EXAMINATION MODERATED AWARDS 2020

A report updating the Committee on the initial outcome of the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) 2020 awards was considered.

Following the cancellation of the formal SQA examination diet due to Covid-19, schools submitted estimate grades relating to each presentation and level made on behalf of each young person. These estimate grades were originally considered, moderated and awards allocated by the SQA to each presentation and level. On 11 August the Scottish Government indicated that SQA would change this approach and revert to candidate awards based solely on the estimates provided by schools and colleges. Any learner that was awarded a grade higher than their estimate in the original process maintained their award at the higher level.

Decision

The Committee:

1. considered and noted the outcome of the initial SQA awards for pupils in academic year 2019/20 ie
 - I. National 4 results were above the national outcome by 9.1%
 - II. National 5 results were above the national outcome by 2.5%
 - III. Higher results were above the national outcome by 1.3%
 - IV. Advanced Higher results were above the national outcome by 2.6%
2. requested that the Executive Director with responsibility for Education provide a further report to the Community Services Committee in December 2020 to allow the consideration of further statistical school and national information, released by Insight (school data analysis tool) in September 2020; and
3. agreed that in session 2020/21 attainment and achievement outcomes would be presented to the Community Services Committee only following release of Insight data which affords full access to statistical school and national information in relation to attainment and achievement outcomes of the young people of Argyll and Bute.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Education, submitted)

12. GAELIC LANGUAGE PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

A report updating the Committee on progress in delivering the actions in the approved Argyll and Bute Council Gaelic Language Plan was considered.

Decision

The Committee considered and noted the progress made in delivering the Council's Gaelic Language Plan.

(Reference: Report by Interim Executive Director with responsibility for Customer Support Services and Gaelic Language Progress Action Plan, submitted)

13. EXTERNAL EDUCATION ESTABLISHMENT INSPECTION REPORT

A report providing details of all external education establishment inspection reports received across Argyll and Bute Education Service during the period March – August 2020 was before the Committee for information.

Decision

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Education dated 13 August 2020, submitted)

14. COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2020/21

The Community Services Committee work plan for 2020/21 was before the Committee for information.

Decision

The Committee noted the contents of the work plan.

(Reference: Community Services Committee Work Plan 2020/21, submitted)

**MINUTES of MEETING of ENVIRONMENT, DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE
COMMITTEE held BY SKYPE
on THURSDAY, 10 SEPTEMBER 2020**

Present: Councillor Robin Currie (Chair)

Councillor John Armour	Councillor Sir Jamie McGrigor
Councillor Gordon Blair	Councillor Jean Moffat
Councillor Jim Findlay	Councillor Aileen Morton
Councillor David Kinniburgh	Councillor Gary Mulvaney
Councillor Donald MacMillan BEM	Councillor Alastair Redman
Councillor Roderick McCuish	Councillor Andrew Vennard

Also Present: Councillor Richard Trail

Attending: Kirsty Flanagan, Executive Director
Jim Smith, Head of Roads and Infrastructure Services
Fergus Murray, Head of Development and Economic Growth
Stuart McLean, Committee Manager

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ellen Morton and Alan Reid.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee held on 5 March 2020 were approved as a correct record.

4. UPDATE ON ROADS CAPITAL RECONSTRUCTION PROGRAMME 2020/21

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update on the Roads and Infrastructure Services operational and revenue matters relating to roads activities throughout the council area.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee noted the update provided in the report.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure dated 10 September 2020, submitted)

Councillors Andrew Vennard and Sir Jamie McGrigor joined the meeting at this point.

5. WINTER SERVICE POLICY 2020/21

The Committee gave consideration to a report presenting the Winter Service Policy 2020/21 which followed a similar format and covered a similar network to the Policy approved by the Committee in previous years. This year the Policy included Covid-19 Vehicle Usage Guidelines.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee -

1. Noted the proposals for community resilience.
2. Noted the weather summary from 2019/20 contained at Appendix 1.
3. Approved the 2020/21 Winter Maintenance Policy contained at Appendix 2.
4. Noted the Advisory Signing, routes unsuitable in severe conditions contained at Appendix 3.
5. Approved the Salt Use Reduction and Preservation of Stocks Protocol contained at Appendix 4.
6. Approved the Use of Vehicles during Covid-19 Guidelines contained at Appendix 5.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure dated August 2020, submitted)

6. CLEANING AND DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS IN RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update on the additional funding allocated from the 2020/21 budget process to mitigate the impacts of weather related damage and climate change with specific emphasis on gully cleaning and drainage improvements.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee –

1. Noted the update contained within the report.
2. Noted that delivery of the project had slipped due to the Covid-19 pandemic and that budget would be rolled forward into 2021/22 and 2022/23 to provide funding over two financial years.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure dated 10 September 2020, submitted)

7. WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY UPDATE

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update on the Council's Waste Strategy. The report covered changes to the introduction dates for the Biodegradable Municipal Waste Landfill Ban and the Deposit Return Scheme; engagement with Scottish Government officials; and the impact of Covid-19 on the Waste Strategy and the Waste Strategy Action Plan.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee –

1. Endorsed the content of the report including the appended updated Waste Strategy Action Plan.
2. Noted that a future report would be taken to Committee in December with the result of negotiations with the Scottish Government.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure dated 10 September 2020, submitted)

8. TRANSFORMATION PROJECTS AND REGENERATION TEAM - LARGE SCALE PROJECT UPDATE REPORT

The Committee gave consideration to a report setting out the current position of the larger scale projects that were mainly externally funded and which were being delivered by the Transformation Projects and Regeneration Team.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee noted the current progress contained within the report.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth dated August 2020, submitted)

9. ENVIRONMENT, DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee Workplan was before the Committee for noting.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee noted the content of the work plan.

(Reference: Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee Workplan dated 10 September 2020, submitted)

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ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**COUNCIL**

24th September 2020

LEADER'S REPORT

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** This report gives colleagues an update on my activities as Leader of Argyll and Bute Council and Policy Lead for Commercial Services and Strategic Priorities from the period 16th June to 7th September 2020. The last Leader's report was provided to council at its meeting in November 2019 and the next scheduled report would have been due at the April 2020 meeting. The Covid-19 pandemic and resulting impact on council meetings and business saw leadership activities for the period being reported to the Business Continuity Committee meetings on 16th April and 25th June.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1** Members are asked to consider the report.
- 2.2** Members are asked to note that additional detail on any particular items of interest can be obtained through Leadership Support staff. This includes COSLA and other papers and briefings as referenced in the report.

3. COUNCIL RESPONSE TO COVID-19

- 3.1** Reports on the council's overall response to the Covid-19 pandemic have featured previously at meetings of the Business Continuity Committee.

These reports have outlined a period of significant shift in council activity, where our own services had to change and where we were involved in providing very different services instead, tailored to the needs of an unprecedented pandemic. These have been well documented and include of course virtual learning for our school students, followed by preparation for students to return to school buildings after the summer, enhanced IT support to enable hundreds of employees to work from home, food parcels

for people who were shielding, a dedicated Coronavirus helpline covering all sorts of queries and issues relating to the pandemic and associated community needs, administering business support and providing guidance and enforcement of national restrictions in partnership with other agencies – and that is only scratching the surface!

At this point many of the services which we had to change or pause at the beginning of lockdown have been restored or are working back to pre-pandemic levels.

The officer and leadership groups which had to be established very early in the pandemic have, to a large extent, stood down as managing the pandemic response becomes very much embedded as 'business as usual'. The cross party Leadership Group set up to handle urgent decisions last met at the end of July although arrangements are in place to allow it to reconvene if required in the event of any urgent requirements.

The main elements of the council's Covid-19 related activity at this stage are economic recovery planning and activity; continued guidance and enforcement of restrictions; designing service delivery in response to changing restrictions, for example operation and management of committee and council business, the planning function, in-school learning, school and public transport, conducting weddings and burials; working in partnership where required with other agencies on test and protect regimes; and being ready to respond as required to any resurgence. Working at home remains the default position for those staff who can and, of course, meetings have continued on a virtual basis, largely working very well.

Sincere thanks are due to all those who have been involved in our overall response to this incredibly challenging time. We have seen tremendous examples of community spirit, of partnership working, of innovation and adaptability, despite the very serious impacts on our daily lives and on how we work as an organisation. I know that our officers are looking to see how we can continue some of the unexpectedly positive elements that have surfaced during this time.

4. CLIMATE CHANGE AGENDA

- 4.1 Climate Change Environmental Action Group, 7th September:** The latest meeting of the CCEAG considered some of the short term impacts that Covid-19 has had in terms of climate change activity. This included discussion on the impact on individual carbon footprint data and reduction in emissions due to reduced travel. A further update will come back on this and also in relation to a strategy for disposal of PPE waste.

The council's action plans and indicators were updated in relation to Covid-19 effects and reported to the group. They also considered the council's proposed Decarbonisation Plan 2021, and this will feature again at the group's next meeting in November. The group should be reporting to the November council meeting with recommendations on how we should move forward towards net-zero CO2 emissions.

5. COSLA LEADERS MEETINGS

- 5.1 As highlighted in the Leadership reports to the Business Continuity Committee, the frequency of COSLA Leaders meetings was changed to fortnightly during the Covid-19 pandemic, although it was agreed in June that this would revert to the normal monthly cycle thereafter.

Meetings attended during this period considered the following topics. Reports and briefings from our officers can be provided by Leadership Support staff:

26th June

- Finance Update
- Distribution
- Digital Exclusion
- Monitoring of the Coronavirus Act
- Local Government Economic and Employability Recovery Position
- Education Update

31st July

- Local Government Finance
- Update from National Clinical Director
- Distribution
- An Employment Response to Covid-19
- EU Fund Suspension and Replacement
- Education Recovery
- Early Learning and Childcare Financial Sustainability
- Community Mental Health Support for Children and Young People
- Health and Social Care Provider Sustainability
- Social Renewal
- Update on Historical Child Abuse Redress Scheme
- National Suicide Prevention Leadership Group Recommendations
- Sports, Art and Culture

28th August

- Covid-19 Recovery and Prioritisation of Business
- Face Coverings in Schools and on School Transport
- Local Government Finance
- Social Care Sustainability
- National Digital Strategy
- Blueprint for Local Government
- UK-EU Negotiations
- European Charter of Local Self Government (Incorporation) (Scotland) Members' Bill
- Lone Working Guidance
- Community Mental Health Support for Children and Young People
- Distribution

6. HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS ENTERPRISE – CALL WITH NEW BOARD CHAIR, 23RD JULY

- 6.1** Following the retirement of Professor Lorne Crerar, Alistair Dodds was appointed as Chair of the Highlands and Islands Enterprise Board. On 23rd July we had the opportunity for an introductory call with Mr Dodds, HIE Chief Executive Charlotte Wright and local area manager Morag Goodfellow. We were able to share updates on our current priorities with, of course, a focus on the response to Covid-19 and the associated economic challenges for the region. We also covered potential for joint priorities for action such as through our Rural Growth Deal as well as how we can continue to engage and work in partnership on areas like depopulation and fragility given the challenges we all face following the pandemic. This was a positive session and follow-up correspondence has continued; this kind of collaboration will serve Argyll and Bute well as we focus on recovery.

7. INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD/HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PARTNERSHIP

- 7.1 IJB meeting, 5th August:** The scheduled Integration Joint Board meeting took place on 5th August. I had an opportunity to catch up informally with Boyd Robertson, NHS Highland Board Chair, the day before the meeting and to hear an update on NHS Highland's recruitment of a new Chief Executive and plans for Board Member recruitment.

Agenda items at the board meeting were:

- Chief Officer's Report
- Covid-19 Public Health Update
- HSCP Performance Exception Report FQ4

- Culture Programme Update
- Staff Governance FQ4 and FQ1
- Finance – Budget Monitoring and Budget Outlook to 23/24
- Financial Risks 20/21
- Covid-19 Response and Financial Implications

I also had the opportunity to catch up with the council's new Chief Social Worker, Julie Lusk, at the start of September to discuss current areas of priority and recent developments, including the impact of the Covid-19 response on social work services, the restructure of the HSCP management team and the role of the CSWO in reviewing and managing guardianship orders.

8. RURAL GROWTH DEAL

- 8.1** Pressing ahead with our Rural Growth Deal has always been a key priority for this council and particularly so in the overall context of economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.

There have been a number of internal meetings over the past months. As part of our engagement with national governments, Council officers have submitted a number of projects that could potentially be advanced to assist with economic recovery. No council, including Argyll and Bute, has yet received a response to date in terms of specific requests.

Political engagement with both the UK and Scottish Governments remains a key priority, particularly in order to secure signing of Heads of Terms as quickly as possible. The Business Continuity Committee agreed at its meeting on 11th June that I should write again to both governments seeking to accelerate progress. I wrote to both Alister Jack, Secretary of State for Scotland, and Michael Matheson, Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity, as the Lead Ministers, on 15th June, following my correspondence to each in both January and March of this year.

We have been advised by the Scottish and UK Governments that it is likely that Heads of Terms will be signed in winter 2020, with an initial target of November. Both governments have committed to providing all necessary feedback on our project Strategic Outline Cases by mid/late September 2020. The council continues to work with our partners and other key stakeholders to advance projects on a collective basis and there are a number of feasibility studies on-going which will inform the development of Outline Business Cases, for example the energy options study for Islay.

I have also received a letter from Baroness Annabel Goldie, the Minister of State for Defence, on 20th August, following a call with her and her officials on 6th May. Baroness Goldie welcomed our proactive approach to her and indicated that she wishes to maintain momentum and build up the relationship with the council. She reiterated in her letter that our Deal has her full support and that she particularly wishes to see opportunities and potential realised through joint working with the Royal Navy through the Maritime Enterprise Scotland concept.

9. A83 REST AND BE THANKFUL

- 9.1 Argyll and Bute Council Approach to First Minister, 5th August 2020:** Following a significant landslide at the A83 Rest and Be Thankful and indications of a possible prolonged closure, I wrote again to the First Minister seeking the Scottish Government's commitment to finding, once and for all, a permanent solution for the route. This was the latest in a series of communications to the Scottish Government over the years (including one to the First Minister just six months ago, when a landslide closed the road in January of this year). I repeated the message that we simply need the Scottish Government to get a move on so that Argyll and Bute can keep moving, after sustaining over a decade of disruption.
- 9.2 United Call for Action, 7th August 2020:** Following discussions with the council's own political group leaders and Michael Russell, I wrote a further letter to the Scottish Government on behalf of our cross-party leaders and both constituency MSPs Michael Russell and Jackie Baillie. We pointed out in our joint letter, signed by all parties, that the single issue that never fails to unite politicians of all persuasions is the A83 and ensuring that Argyll and Bute remains connected and open for business via a permanent, robust solution for the A83. We called for an urgent meeting of the A83 Taskforce to be convened, given the prolonged closure and impact on people's work, lives and business, and set out a proposed timescale, developed in partnership with our MSPs, the key element of this being the identification and confirmation of the nature of a permanent solution by March 2021 and completion of construction by the end of 2023 at the latest.
- 9.3 A83 Taskforce Meeting, 27th August 2020:** The Scottish Government responded to this call for action and convened an urgent, virtual meeting of the Taskforce on 27th August. The meeting was attended by several local businesses and community representatives and was chaired by Cabinet Secretary Michael Matheson. Mr Matheson confirmed at the meeting that the Scottish Government had listened to our calls and would commit to finding a permanent solution. We welcome this as a clear step in the right direction but continue to urge further commitment to the urgent delivery of a solution.

We are relieved there is now a recognised case for investment along with a continuation of temporary mitigation measures, as we need to move beyond these measures. We continue to make clear, though, that Argyll and Bute needs clear construction timescales and a date for the new route to open. It is simply not enough to talk about the options and agree a consultation phase. These early signs are encouraging but we must see swift progress maintained until the new route is fully operational.

I heard most recently from Mr Matheson when he replied to my follow-up correspondence, after the Taskforce meeting, on 4th September and said: "I reassure you that your call for action is heard and I am committed to infrastructure investment, to address the region's challenges and will publish recommendations for the preferred corridor in this parliamentary term."

10. SCOTTISH MARITIME CLUSTER AND MARINE RECOVERY PLAN

10.1 Meeting with Scottish Maritime Cluster Executive Director Brian Fulton, 10th August: The Scottish Maritime Cluster was set up following the UK Marine Growth programme in 2016, which recognised the value of the Maritime sector to the Scottish and UK economy as a whole. The cluster comprises of leading companies in shipping, ship management, ship building, marine equipment, maritime legal services, ferry services and marine leisure. The main purpose of the Cluster is to promote the Scottish Maritime sector within the UK and internationally.

On 9th June 2020, Maritime UK launched its 'Maritime Sector Recovery Plan' in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. An electronic copy is available via the following link: <https://www.maritimeuk.org/programmes/maritime-sector-recovery-plan/>

The maritime industry is vital to the economic prosperity of Scotland and is one of the driving forces of the British economy, having helped to keep Scotland and the rest of the UK fed, fuelled and supplied during the pandemic. It has a key part to play in the economic recovery that everyone wants to see as quickly as possible. In Scotland the sector is worth over £3.7billion GVA to the economy and supports some 41,000 jobs.

This was an opportunity for the Cluster to brief the council on its work and identify potential areas of overlap with our own activity, and I know that our Economic Development officers will continue to liaise with Brian and his team over the coming months and as we look forward to recovery.

11. ACCOUNTS COMMISSION – BEST VALUE 3 AUDIT, 18TH AUGUST

11.1 On 18th August, along with the Chief Executive and Depute Leader, I met online with representatives of the Accounts Commission, for a discussion about the council's Best Value 3 Audit. Members will recall that the Audit Scotland report and the council's associated Action Plan were reported to the Business Continuity Committee in June.

This was a positive, informative and helpful discussion and the Accounts Commission welcomed in particular discussion about the approach to working with all members in relation to budget and transformation, and the council's ambition to build on the rapid changes made in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The session also offered us an opportunity to provide feedback on the Best Value Audit process itself.

12. BUDGET WORKING GROUPS

12.1 Cross-party budget working groups were established at the Business Continuity Committee August meeting – an informal group focusing on the 20/21 period and the impact of the pandemic, and an additional group to look at longer term financial planning. The first meeting took place on 24th August and officers have been asked to do further work on proposals and budget planning – this will be the focus of a future members seminar as part of the overall budget process for this year. An interim update on the 20/21 budget position is included separately on the agenda for this meeting.

13. COSLA ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY BOARD, 4TH SEPTEMBER

13.1 The COSLA Environment and Economy Board meetings resumed for the year with this first post-lockdown session on 4th September, where the following topics were discussed:

- North Ayrshire Council – presentation on Community Wealth Building
- Verbal update on Broadband
- Waste Update
- Transport
- European and International Update

14. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECRUITMENT, AUGUST 2020

14.1 The pandemic put a pause on the process to recruit a new Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Infrastructure, following the promotion of Pippa Milne to Chief Executive at the beginning of the year. On 13th and 14th August it was possible to resume the process for this key post within the organisation. A very strong field of candidates

applied for the job, no doubt attracted by the real opportunities it offers in a great place to live, work and visit. After this very competitive process it was a real pleasure to see Kirsty Flanagan appointed to the role. Kirsty is one of Argyll and Bute Council's 'Growing Our Own' success stories; having started as a clerical assistant after school, she studied for accountancy qualifications, after qualifying progressing through various roles in the Strategic Finance team before being appointed as Head of Service and Section 95 Officer. She had been providing cover in the Director role on an acting-up basis during the challenging pandemic period and it is to her credit that she fought off such stiff competition to be appointed to the substantive role.

15. MEETING WITH ARGYLL COLLEGE UHI, 25TH AUGUST

- 15.1** The Chief Executive and I were delighted to catch up with Martin Jones, Principal of Argyll College UHI, on 25th August. This was a very positive discussion about the potential for greater co-operation and a shared approach to education for Argyll and Bute's secondary age pupils. We also covered the need for substantial capital investment in the college's estate across Argyll and Bute, to ensure equity and fairness for our residents who want to be able to live and learn in their communities. This responsibility sits with the University of the Highlands and Islands and it's likely that we will have further discussions with the college to see how this might be progressed along with scope for partnership working where possible.

16. CONCLUSION

- 16.1** This report highlights my recent activities as Leader of Argyll and Bute Council. I hope that this update is helpful for members and will be happy to provide more information wherever possible.

Councillor Aileen Morton - Leader, Argyll and Bute Council

15th September 2020

For further information or to access the Leader's Report Pack please contact Aileen McNicol, Leadership Support and Member Services Manager, telephone 01546 604014 or email aileen.mcnicol@argyll-bute.gov.uk

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ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**COUNCIL**

24TH SEPTEMBER 2020

POLICY LEADS REPORT

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** This report provides members with an update on key areas of activity for each Policy Lead Councillor. This aims to provide updates from all Policy Leads as regularly as possible, so that all members are informed, up-to-date and able to engage with current issues.
- 1.2** The last update was provided to the council at its meeting on 28th November 2019. In normal circumstances the next update would have been provided to the council at its meeting in April 2020. The implications of the Covid-19 pandemic on normal business and on the way that council and committee meetings were conducted saw appropriate Policy Lead updates provided instead through Leadership Reports considered by the Business Continuity Committee. With a shift and resumption in business over recent weeks as lockdown restrictions have changed, it is now possible to provide a dedicated Policy Leads update once again.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1** Members are asked to consider the report.

3. POLICY LEAD FOR STRATEGIC FINANCE AND CAPITAL REGENERATION PROJECTS – Councillor Gary Mulvaney

- 3.1 Introduction:** This report provides members with an update on my activities as, Depute Leader, Policy Lead for Strategic Finance and Capital Regeneration.
- 3.2 Financial Services:** The department continues to monitor current year expenditure and how Covid-19 has impacted on our finances, both in the short term and longer term. Regular reports have been provided to the Business Continuity Committee. At the moment the net additional costs due

to Covid are in the region of £11m, with just over £6m being covered by previously announced additional Scottish Government funding. That leaves a gap of just over £5m to be found.

The council will be able to use some current monies more flexibly and use some savings from severance and loans funds to reduce this gap to nearer the £2m mark. It is also anticipated that there may be further funds from schemes, such as Lost Income and the 'Fiscal Flexibilities' options that the UK Treasury and Scottish ministers are considering. This will hopefully close the current year gap.

The council's figures do not of course include those of the HSCP and, as we have seen in the past, the HSCP deficit for social work has had to be covered by loans offset against our general reserve. There is a significant risk that this will be the case again and that risk could be in the region of £1.5m to £2.0m. That will need to be borne in mind as we progress the budget monitoring and the 21/22 budget preparation.

- 3.3 Local Tax Collections:** Council Tax collections as at end of August 2020 are 46.61%. This is a reduction of 1.31% on August 2019 with a collection rate of 47.92%. This is equivalent to £725,000 for the current year in real terms. The reason for the reduction is entirely related to COVID. The Council, in line with many other local authorities, have been very supportive of taxpayers claiming hardship. Just under 700 householders made requests to defer their Council Tax payments to June-March this year rather than the traditional payment plan of April-January which has had an impact on our collections.

Non Domestic Rates collection as at August 2020 is 69.23% compared to 61.94% at the same time in 19/20. This is an increase of 7.29%. Due to COVID the Scottish Government has introduced further reliefs for businesses giving a higher number 100% relief and therefore no rates to pay. This has meant a reduction in the level of NDR billed of £10.7million in 2020/2021 compared to the previous year. However the payments received from liable businesses has been consistent as reflected in the collection figure.

- 3.4 Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF):** The programme funding for 2020/21 is £765,421. This includes an additional COVID allocation of £293,000. At the end of August council spend was £170,114. This is lower than expected over the whole fund but there are 47 claims received and yet to be processed. Despite the low level of spend there has been a significant increase in the number of people who have needed support by way of Crisis Grants. Spend on Crisis Grants is up 67.65% on the previous year with £35,310 spent from 1st April to 31st August this year compared to £23,885 for the same period the year before.

The reason for such a low spend across the fund in the early part of the year is attributed to COVID. This is because the level of applications and spend on Community Care Grants were low as people were not able to move into or out of care during lockdown. 85% of the fund was spent on Community Care Grants in 2019/2020 and once this part of the fund gets moving again we anticipate a significant increase in spend.

3.5 Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs): The funding for DHP for 2020/21 is £683,875. However this does not include tranche 2 funding which we will not receive until our actual spend on the Scottish Government's mitigation of the removal of the spare room subsidy has been finalised in March 2021. As at the end of August our spent or committed amount is £801,363. There has been a significant increase in spend this year because of the amount of people claiming Universal Credit for the first time. These automatically receive full DHP under occupancy which we have no control over. However the Scottish Government has committed to fully cover these costs with the tranche 2 payment to be received next year.

3.6 Benefits Processing: Our statistics for processing new claims and changes in circumstances at the end of August 2020 are much improved. For new claims the average number of days is 19.84 against a target of 21 days and for changes in circumstances the average number of days to process is 2.92 against a target of 6 days. The reason for the improved performance is twofold. We have been able to reduce some of the verification requirements pre claim due to difficulties for claimants submitting evidence due to COVID. Additionally staff have adapted well to working from home and productivity has increased as a result.

3.7 Capital Regeneration:

Helensburgh Waterfront Development: Heron Brothers were awarded the tender and are now on site having established a site office and compound in August. I visited the site in early September and saw the work to date, which included the arrival of the rock armour for the flood defences; site infilling to raise its height and the start of piling works for the steel erection. Heron Bros have issued local newsletter to those in vicinity. Local members will receive regular updates from officers and a brief presentation was made at the recent Area Committee meeting.

Rothesay Pavilion: With the demise of original contractors CBC, the appointment of administrators and of course Covid, there has been some slippage in this increasingly lengthy project. Procurement of another contractor is now underway with an intention to award a contract in Spring 21, with practical completion date toward the end of that year. I should offer my thanks to our team for this additional work and to our Project Manager

for helping to return some tools and plant to local suppliers and sub-contractors who found themselves caught up in the administration of CBC.

- 3.8 Depute Leader Update:** I continue to meet regularly with the Leader, the Chief Executive and other officers in terms of this role, covering a wide range of subjects, including participating in the COVID Leadership Group with the Leader and Cllr Sandy Taylor; Executive Director Appointment panel; IJB Board and the IJB Finance and Policy Committee. Along with other colleagues, I joined the Cabinet Secretary's virtual meeting of the A83 Taskforce to hear of his timelines and corridors. It was welcome but we do need to see clear construction timetables and a date for the new route to open. We have waited long enough.

4. POLICY LEAD FOR SUPPORT SERVICES – Councillor Rory Colville

- 4.1 Introduction:** I continue to meet with the Executive Director of Customer Services and Heads of Service as often as possible and currently on a virtual basis to discuss matters relating to my Policy Lead remit.

4.2 Legal and Regulatory Support:

Elections: The Election Team are beginning preparations for the Scottish Parliament Elections which are scheduled for May 2021. Options are being looked at for training of Election staff, with the possibility of offering an online training module being investigated which could be utilised for more experienced staff. Preparations are being made with consideration being given to contingencies for Covid-19 still being a factor at the time of election. At the time of writing arrangements were in hand for the Community Council By-Elections which will take place on 5th November – these to fill a number of vacancies which have arisen on community councils across the area.

Community Governance: The Community Council Liaison Officer has received a number of enquiries from Community Councils who wish to restart their meetings on a face to face basis. The advice which is being given is in line with the current Covid-19 guidelines which restricts gatherings, and this will be reviewed as and when the guidelines from the Scottish Government change. Virtual meetings have continued in the meantime. The requirement for AGMs to be held has also been extended and if necessary these will take place in 2021 if it is not possible to have full public meetings.

Customer Service Excellence Accreditation: Preparation of the submission for re-accreditation of the Customer Service Excellence Award submission for Legal and Regulatory Support continues. The assessment is scheduled for September/October 2020 and officers are working towards finalising the information.

Civil Contingencies: In order to meet compliance for the new Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) Regulations 2019 (REPPiR) a significant update to the Clyde Off-Site Plan was undertaken in conjunction with emergency services. This plan alongside the operator consequences report and public information leaflets are being uploaded on the Argyll and Bute Council website.

The team have also run, in conjunction with NHS Public Health, an exercise across council services and external partners on potential COVID-19 local outbreaks and clusters, incorporating scenarios from remote rural islands to more urban areas.

Enforcement of Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Regulations: Trading Standards have been working with Environmental Health in continuing to ensure that business sectors who reopen in accordance with the Scottish Government's route map, have appropriate management and COVID/physical distancing measures in place. This is very resource intensive and can only be undertaken at the expense of other work.

Compliance levels are generally good but businesses do require support and the complex landscape where many of the requirements are guidance, rather than statutory, is creating difficulties. There have been reported issues with beer gardens and licensed premises and a coordinated approach with Police Scotland is in place to respond.

Two members of the team spent a day assisting Aberdeen City Council phoning businesses on their behalf as part of Aberdeen's attempt to contact properties which would allow the local lockdown there to be eased. There was a request from Aberdeen for assistance and, as part of a North of Scotland TS group it was considered appropriate to assist a partner Council experiencing difficult circumstances.

Procurement: This report provides an opportunity to update members on recently announced council procurement scheme to benefit community projects which demonstrates that the council is listening to the needs of our communities and can now coordinate help and support where needed. I would encourage anyone who is looking for help to get in touch. Further information and an online application form for communities can be found on the council website <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/forms/community-benefits>. Enquiries can also be emailed to communitybenefits@argyll-bute.gov.uk

Procurement spend with local companies is shown in the table below:

Month	Total Spend	Local Spend	%
April	£6,284,459	£3,015,771	48.0%
May	£9,078,065	£3,894,493	42.9%
June	£9,921,549	£3,208,238	32.3%
July	£10,308,505	£3,547,838	34.4%
Total:	£35,592,578	£13,666,341	38.4%

4.3 Improvement and HR:

The council's newly formed Wellbeing Team was formed earlier this year to support the organisation's Wellbeing Strategy. Prior to lockdown the team had been progressing the following areas:

- Revision of policy, procedures and guidance for managers
- Employee Assistance Programme Communication Plan
- Revision of Wellbeing Pages on the Hub and creation of wellbeing pages on the website for non-networked staff.
- Baseline Wellbeing Survey developed and issued

Supporting employees and managers during COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in:

- Weekly Wellbeing Wednesday
- Intensive promotion of Employee Assistance Programme
- Creation of additional Wellbeing pages
- Support to managers with employee wellbeing concerns
- Routine Attendance Management advice

Forthcoming plans include:

- Supporting managers to creation Attendance and Wellbeing Action plans
- Promotion of Wellbeing Fund
- Exploration of further support services that meet the wellbeing needs of the organisation.
- Analysis and improvements based on the outcomes of the Employee Wellbeing Survey data

4.4 Customer and Support Services:

Communication and Engagement: The Keep in the Loop Service (KITL) has continued to play a significant role in keeping people pro-actively informed of developments and helping to prevent needless contacts. Over a million emails have been sent to Argyll and Bute households on different topics throughout response and recovery phases and the team are working on developments to enhance this type of service experience even more for users.

The council's website has continued to be a hugely popular means by which customers have sought and been given coronavirus information and updates on the service changes engendered by lockdown restrictions. During the pandemic there has been a significant increase in website views and in online transactions. The only element of the website to see a decrease was online payments as council tax and NDR billing was suspended. Some key statistics are shown in the infographic below.



ICT: ICT staff continue to support the demands of and response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Council's office based workforce has worked well from home with some 1,000 users on VPN each day. Work continues with all customers and partners to ensure access for all who can work from home, keep everyone safe from increased cyber threats, and to maintain access to the network and our key applications with minimal interruptions.

The council remains on alert regarding the risks from Cyber Security. There are numerous Covid related threats and scams happening all over the world. We continue to monitor systems and maintain contact with the NCSC during this volatile period. The council achieved the national Cyber

Essentials Plus accreditation again in May - one of only six Scottish councils to meet this demanding cyber security standard.

The stats for Skype since the start of lockdown show that the council has hosted an astonishing 26,124 Skype conference calls. These are meetings involving at least three people and with all but a small minority of the 102,134 participants working from home.

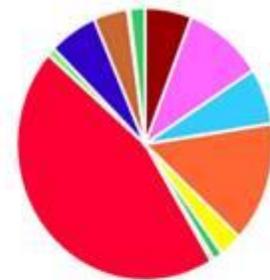
Customer Service Centre and Registration Teams: Both teams have continued to support both the ongoing response to the Coronavirus situation and the return from lockdown and towards recovery.

Registration services have had to adapt to a number of changes as a result of the pandemic with changing guidance on how they can provide birth and death registration services and conduct weddings – this included a period of providing a 24/7 death registration service.

Staff have supported the Coronavirus helpline from the outset and below is an overview of the levels and types of calls handled since the onset of lockdown. In addition the CSP agents have helped Education to process the increased volume of Free school Meals and Clothing and Footwear applications; to allow food payments to be made over the summer holidays.

5524 Coronavirus Caring for People - 27th Mar 2020 to 9th Aug 2020

	Total	%
All Calls	9,763	
Benefits	580	5.9
Business	986	10
Health	651	6.7
Social Work / Care for People	1,398	14.3
Care for People Voiceform	280	2.9
Education	114	1.2
Registration	36	0.4
Care for People General / Bailouts	4,396	45
Early Hangup	99	1
Out of Hours	598	6.1
Bank Holiday	418	4.3
Business Grants Voiceform	15	0.2
Self Employed Hardship Fund Voiceform	8	0.1
Council Tax	184	1.9



4.5 Community Planning:

Community Development: The team are working with partners on a Scottish Government initiative Building Back Better (Communities) – which aims to support strengthening of communities post lockdown, learning from the community response. Areas to be covered include community-led and place based renewal, harder-to reach groups, age, disability and long-term conditions, with further cross cutting themes relating to food security, digital inclusion, and climate change and environment. This is very much a community based consultation with actions determined through community engagement sessions.

5. POLICY LEAD FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE – Councillor Kieron Green

5.1 Local Meetings:

In response to the ongoing COVID outbreak and associated restrictions all IJB meetings, and those of HSCP committees and groups have moved to virtual platforms. All have continued to meet and public scrutiny of the IJB has been enabled through press attendance and audio recordings being made available.

At IJB meetings on 27th May and 5th August updates were received on COVID-19, the Sturrock Report and Culture Survey, and on the financial situation of the HSCP.

Clinical Care Governance on 21st May focused on many of the aspects around safety of staff, patients and services users at this time.

The HSCP Audit and Risk Committee on 23rd June and 18th August continued to look at regular items in the audit plan, accounts and audit reports, as well as workforce planning and care home oversight.

Finance and Policy Committee has on 13th May, 26th June, and 28th August been receiving regular reports regarding the impact of COVID-19 costs on the HSCP, along with other pressures. Whilst in principle there has been agreement from government to cover additional costs this has been subject to detailed analysis so a final position has not yet been confirmed.

Strategic Planning Group on 1st September noted the delays in progressing the Strategic Commissioning Plan and the role the group has in bringing together the widest possible range of partners who have involvement in health and social care.

5.2 National Meetings:

These have also proceeded on a virtual basis, and whilst COSLA Boards were temporarily postponed during March and April due to COVID-19, I

attended the Children and Young People Board on 22nd May and 21st August and the Health and Social Care Board on 6th May and 19th August. Apart from COVID-19, issues that were on the agenda for the Health and Social Care Board included Public Health Reform, Digital Health and Care, Integrated Workforce Plans, and Self Directed Support.

For the Children and Young People Board papers were on topics including Child Poverty, Domestic Abuse, Additional Support for Learning, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the SQA exam results. The Depute First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills took part in a question and answer session with the board which provided a valuable opportunity to engage on government plans for education.

I have continued as Vice-Chair of the national IJB Chairs and Vice-Chairs Executive which met on 3rd June, 6th July, 23rd July, and 18th August. These meetings concentrated on COVID-19 and implications for IJBs across Scotland – with it being helpful to have comparisons between different areas around governance arrangements and plans to remobilise services.

Through my role with the IJB Chairs and Vice-Chairs Executive I have been a member of the Scottish Government Mobilisation Recovery Group for Health and Social Care. I was present at meetings on the 29th June, 14th July, 31st July, and 28th August. In addition to the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport other ministers have attended this, along with representatives from COSLA, a wide range of professional and provider bodies and Scottish Government advisors including Jason Leitch as National Clinical Director. Receiving presentations on how COVID-19 is affecting Scotland we have been able to offer our own perspectives on the role different services have in the resumption of care as the pandemic progresses. From Argyll and Bute I have been joined on this group by Joanna MacDonald as Chair of the Adult Social Work Committee within Social Work Scotland.

5.3 COVID-19:

In Argyll and Bute initial planning in response to the pandemic had been to ensure capacity was available to meet the challenges of the forecast 'peak week'. Through the purchase of additional beds, work to support discharge of hospital patients into community settings and prioritisation of services capacity was created locally to support the anticipated numbers of people with severe COVID-19 symptoms.

As a result of the introduction of national lockdown measures and subsequent reduction in transmission of the virus much of this capacity remained unused, however a significant second or subsequent spike in cases should emerge then plans can be reactivated as necessary.

Recognition exists both locally and nationally of the consequential impacts of prioritisation of services on the provision of other aspects of health and social care. Remobilisation Plans are therefore looking at addressing waiting lists which have developed during the pandemic, while ensuring that care can be delivered in ways which are safe for staff and patients/service users.

For social care in particular there have been noted changes in demand for different services in response to the virus, with a reduction in demand for residential placements. To allow for compliance with national guidelines there have been delays in reopening certain services with staff deployed to best meet individual service user needs as appropriate.

The HSCP has been working along with COVID-19 testing programmes within Argyll and Bute organised by Scottish and UK Governments. The mobile testing units, initially operated by the Army and now by the Scottish Ambulance Service in Campbeltown, Dunoon, Helensburgh, Lochgilphead, Oban and Rothesay have provided capability to offer tests to the wider public. Community Assessment Centres, located on HSCP sites have meanwhile concentrated on allowing testing of the health and social care workforce, giving assurance about all steps being taken to minimise transmission of the virus amongst staff, patients and service users.

Reporting of numbers of confirmed cases of COVID-19 and deaths resulting from the virus has been through Public Health Scotland and National Records of Scotland in line with government guidance. Since the launch of Test and Protect, officers have been working with council colleagues to ensure that appropriate processes are followed when cases have links to businesses or educational establishments.

As part of the UK response to the pandemic Argyll and Bute has been the location of a trial involving the use of drones to speed up delivery of medical supplies and samples. With a pilot operating between Oban Airport and Mull this offers future opportunities to provide improved care for patients and service users.

5.4 Culture Survey:

As part of the Sturrock Report across NHS Highland, an identified action was to investigate further issues relating to staff within Argyll and Bute. In May 2020 the results of a survey of NHS employees were published, which clearly highlighted areas where intervention was required. In response management within the HSCP launched a 100 day plan involving establishing a Culture Group, having twice weekly sessions for staff to raise issues with HSCP leadership, improved development for management, and rollout of Courageous Conversations training.

These additional steps in Argyll and Bute build on work already underway by NHS Highland as part of their 'Culture fit for the Future' response to the Sturrock Report including a "Speak Up" Service for staff to independently discuss matters relating to care and safety, whistleblowing, bullying and harassment and work grievances, an Employee Assistance Programme, establishment of a Healing Process and appointment of an External Culture Advisor. Progress on this is overseen by a Culture Programme Board which reports to NHS Highland, with the IJB also kept updated.

Along with steps taken by the NHS, the IJB has recognised the importance of this issue and has approved increased investment in HR services. This will ensure that staff including managers are able to receive increased support to resolve complaints more quickly.

5.5 Management Changes:

Following the retirement of Alex Taylor, Patricia Renfrew has been appointed Head of Children and Families on an interim basis pending permanent recruitment, with Julie Lusk taking on the role of Chief Social Work Officer. In his time as head of service Alex has provided important continuity and stability as integrated structures have become embedded and I wish him well for the future.

6. POLICY LEAD FOR HOUSING, ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES – Councillor Robin Currie

6.1 Roads and Infrastructure Services: As we have gradually eased out of lockdown, many of our services have now resumed albeit these are operating very differently. New safety measures have been put in place for all aspects of Roads and Infrastructure including physical distancing, extra vehicles to reduce passengers, additional PPE, tool box talks and vehicle specific cleaning regimes to name but a few.

A83 Rest and Be Thankful: The landslide on the A83 Rest and Be Thankful on 5th August meant that the closure of the A83 with the Old Military Road being used as the diversion route.

Following pressure from communities and Argyll and Bute Council, Scottish Government has committed to finding a permanent solution for the Rest and Be Thankful. This step in the right direction is welcomed and the council continues to urge further commitment to the urgent delivery of a solution.

Michael Matheson MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity, made the announcement at the A83 Taskforce group on 27th August where 11 alternative route options were tabled.

At the time of writing in early September both the Rest and Be Thankful and the Old Military Road diversion route had had to be closed at periods due to further landslides in heavy rainfall. While every effort was made to keep the OMR diversion open as long as it was safe to do so, the situation simply serves to reinforce the urgent need for action to ensure a permanent solution is in place and in use as soon as possible.

Roads Revenue Works: Following the announcement of lockdown, activities carried out by the operations team were reprioritised. This meant that roads teams were responding to any dangerous defects which were found, these being dealt with by teams of two going out in pickups and trucks making good any defects as well as jetpatchers being utilised where it was appropriate. The normal schedule of road safety inspections continued throughout lockdown and these inspections, together with any representation from elected members/members of the public, were used to remove dangerous defects. There was also additional training carried out for roads colleagues to ensure that we had an increased resilience for grave digging etc. Roads colleagues also provided support to the refuse collection service to enable service continuity.

Revenue works have now resumed to pre-Covid specifications and schedules. Work is also underway for preparation for winter including replenishing salt stocks, arranging winter specific vehicles, carrying out staff training etc.

Roads Capital Programme: The 2020/21 Capital Programme was restarted in the latter part of July and has been revised with a number of preparatory schemes being carried out which will enable surface dressing to be applied in 2021. This in effect moves us to a two year capital investment programme due to delay in commencing the programme as a result of Covid restrictions. The total value of works which have been put back to financial year 2021/22 is £2.154M.

School transport: On the 12th August, pupils throughout Argyll and Bute began their return to school following a five month period based at home due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The school transport team have done a superb job putting measures and mitigating factors in place to ensure that the 3,000 pupils who receive school transport were able to get to school safely this week – a huge and complex task which has been delivered professionally despite the very challenging circumstances we all find ourselves working within.

Included within the work, the central school transport team have undertaken early and ongoing dialogue with several external operators, feedback from operators that was used to develop our guidance. Once the national

guidance was in place a number of documents were prepared and provided to our external contractors – a covering letter, as well as copies of the guidance which was shared with parents/carers and this including examples of cleaning procedures.

Projects Underway: A range of projects have now resumed/commenced on site including Oban Depot, Tobermory railings replacement and a number of studies and design works for marine construction including Craignure, Fionnphort, Rothesay etc.

6.2 Housing:

Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP): All new build developments are back on site (eight across Argyll and Bute). Thirteen affordable houses have been completed since lockdown measures have been eased – 12 in Glenshellach, Oban and one in Dunoon. The Dunoon affordable house was an 'off the shelf' purchase by ACHA with assistance from the council's Strategic Housing Fund and the Scottish Government.



Affordable home in Dunoon purchased by ACHA.

Home Energy Efficiency Programme Scotland (HEEPS): Around £900k worth of HEEPS: ABS works was put on hold. If COVID had not been a factor, this was what BCA had left to spend out of the 19/20 budget by June 2020. Approx. 80 working days were lost, between March and July. The programme has now resumed.

ACHA had committed to spending £1million by the end of June, this was for works to 135 private owners in mixed tenure blocks in Oban. This programme is in the early phase of restarting.

Local Housing Strategy: Work has started on the preparation of the Local Housing Strategy 2021 – 2026. Key stakeholders including the public have been contacted and asked to complete a survey. The survey asked participants what they see as the key issues to be considered when delivering a ‘well-functioning housing system’ in Argyll and Bute. Respondents were also asked to give their views on the most likely main impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the operation of the housing system in the local authority area.

Housing staff worked with the council Communications team to ensure that the survey was issued through the ‘Keep in the Loop’ system as well as circulating information through the local press to ensure that anyone without access to IT could share their views. As a result we have had over 1,100 responses to the survey which closed on 21st August. Progress on the Local Housing Strategy consultation will be contained in future Policy Lead updates.

Homelessness: The council continues to provide a 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year response to homelessness. Housing Services are working in partnership with the housing associations across the local authority area to ensure that statutory homeless households are given suitable permanent housing. There have been 64 permanent lets to homeless households since lockdown in March but there are still 27 homeless households in the additional temporary accommodation procured to mitigate the impact of the lockdown.

Housing associations will be providing information about the number of empty properties becoming available so that the council can plan for the reduction in additional temporary accommodation. This approach is dependent on the housing associations being able to carry out their core business. Any further lockdown restrictions will slow the recovery process and impact on the planned reduction of additional temporary accommodation procured by the council to fulfil statutory obligations to homeless households.

6.3 Island Issues:

National Islands Plan and Island Communities Impact Assessments (ICIA): Section 9 of the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 (“the Act”), which allows for Reviews of ICIA’s, requires the preparation of an affirmative Scottish Statutory Instrument (SSI) setting out the process for reviews of decisions relating to ICIA’s. Commencement Regulations are also required to bring into force sections 7 to 14 (inclusive) of the Act. Section 8 refers to the duty to carry out an ICIA and Section 14 refers to the duty on the Scottish Ministers to carry out a retrospective ICIA.

There is a new process for acquiring a SSI slot required completion of a Bid template in order to be accepted into the Parliamentary programme. It is understood that the Scottish Government Islands Team bid was successful. It is hoped that the required regulations will be laid before parliament later this year but may be pushed back depending on what further statutory instruments may be required to respond to COVID 19 and Brexit.

The SG Islands Team issued a paper on 26th June seeking views on a proposed overview of the review scheme under Section 9 of the Act to allow consultation with relevant authorities listed in the Act. The council has responded to this consultation

It is understood that the 'National Islands Plan Through a Covid Lens' survey in which the council took part will inform the National Islands Plan delivery and implementation.

The consultation on the Section 9 Regulations ended on 17th July and an analysis of responses is being prepared. This work will inform the Section 9 Regulations which in turn will inform the requisite guidance required for Island Communities Impact Assessments. It is understood that draft ICIA guidance is being finalised with a view to going out to consultation with relevant authorities under the Act.

- 6.4 Gaelic:** CHARTS, in partnership with Bord Na Gaidhlig, have launched a grant programme called Colmcille Legacy Arts Award Scheme. This national project links to the Year of Colmcille 1500, to commemorate the life and cultural legacy of St Columba (June 2020-December 2021); designed to profile and support Gaelic artists work and/or Gaelic speakers working in partnership with others, aligned to themes of Colmcille.

This eighteen-month programme offering monthly national arts awards and online exhibition, as well as one Colmcille heritage award for artists in Argyll and Bute only, was developed to highlight artworks digitally, mitigating challenges presented by the pandemic and particularly surrounding the launch of Colmcille 1500, in June 2020. Two grants have been awarded to date, one for the development and performance of new Gaelic music and one for an artwork. These, and all future awards will feature on the CHARTS and Colmcille Websites and details of the award programme at: <https://www.chartsargyllandisles.org/opportunities/colmcillelegacyaward/> <https://colmcille.net/colmcille-1500/>

7. POLICY LEAD FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH – Councillor Alastair Redman

- 7.1 Introduction:** Economic recovery lies at the heart of our agenda as we begin to understand the impacts of the pandemic on our local area and the people who live here. We have already put in place an economic recovery

plan to focus on our priorities moving forward and as the true impact of the pandemic becomes clearer, and to focus on the rise in unemployment which has affected Argyll and Bute along with all other areas of the country.

This recovery strategy was approved by members in June in terms of the overarching framework, with more detail in terms of priorities moving forward coming to the August Business Continuity Committee meeting. The council is now working with its partners, including the private and third sectors, to take forward appropriate actions utilising the resources we have available. Already, immediate actions such as the distribution of business support grants and allowing businesses to expand their operations in town centres through the easing of lockdown group for example has assisted the local economy. Efforts have also started to get people back to work with an emphasis on ensuring our young people have a positive destination to go to in the months ahead.

7.2 National Transport Strategy 2/Strategic Transport Project Review 2:

Transport Scotland have advised that it is now intended to take a phased approach to Strategic Transport Project Review 2, with Phase 1 reporting along the original planned timescales and focusing on recommendations which “lock in”, in transport terms, the positive benefits and travel behaviours of individuals and provide a step change in investment which supports the priorities and outcomes of the National Transport Strategy. It is currently envisaged that Phase 2, which will complete the review, will report later in 2021. It is now intended that engagement on the long list of transport options and option sifting process will commence in autumn 2020. Transport Scotland have advised that the deadline for responses to their Case for Change reports was the 4th September 2020, a deadline which we achieved, and following this they will look to conclude the Case for Change stage of STPR2 as quickly as possible.

7.3 Active Travel: Active travel is a key priority of the Scottish Government with 2020-21 being a positive year for sourcing active travel funding from external sources with confirmed grants awards totalling over £2.02M to date. These grant funds include the Scottish Government’s Covid-19 response to support social distancing for those walking and/or cycling, via the Spaces for People fund, where officers are working to finalise design of the interventions planned for the main town centres and schools across Argyll and Bute.

External grant funding has also been successfully sourced from the Places for Everyone fund, the Smarter Choices Smarter Places fund and Cycling Walking together with the Safer Routes funding. This external funding will support the development and delivery of 17 active travel projects across Argyll and Bute to support and encourage our residents and visitors to choose to walk and/or cycle when appropriate. It should be noted that these

works are mainly implemented by the council's own roads and infrastructure services or local contractors helping to generate income locally.

- 7.4 Digital:** A key positive in August was the resolution of the Court Challenge that has delayed the contract signature for the North Lot R100 contract. The Scottish Government are confident that they can now progress to contract signature with BT before the end of the year. The intervention area of the premises in scope of the R100 will follow after contract signature as the list of eligible premises will have changed.

Discussions are progressing well with the DCMS in Westminster into fibre infrastructure investment to some of our most remote areas. Originally 24 rural sites were explored, however these crossed the programme's Value for Money (VfM) threshold. That said, a limited number of these original sites have the potential of being included in an existing contract. The council in conjunction with the DCMS are continuing to explore alternative solutions to ensure the remaining sites are included in the next programme which is currently being designed to look at the final 1% of delivery.

The completion of the S4GI mast at Bendoran on the Ross of Mull is nearing completion. This will provide a much needed 4G signal to an extensive area in this poorly connected part of Argyll and Bute making a real difference to life and employment options for local people. For people who are struggling with a poor or unreliable broadband one option which could be explored is a 4G home broadband service. There are now numerous examples of this technology being applied that has helped transform broadband speeds from poor to super-fast without the need for fibre being laid to the property.

- 7.5 Economic and Social Recovery – Working With Our Partners:** The focus on Economic and Social Recovery is a key element of the Argyll and Bute Recovery Strategy, Plan and Framework, hosted by Argyll and Bute Council, aligned to the content and future direction set out by the Scottish Government in terms of national recovery.

The Argyll Economic Resilience Forum has been established in Argyll and Bute, chaired by Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) with a Vice Chair from Argyll and Bute Council. The principal objective of the Forum is to provide a collective platform for the 'voice' of industry to restart and reshape economic and social recovery across the communities of Argyll and Bute. An Officer Advisory Group has also been established to support the Forum, with a particular focus to facilitate the preparation, delivery and implementation of an Economic and Social Recovery Plan for Argyll and Bute that is fair and inclusive; building in the concept of community wealth building.

A seminar on Economic Recovery was held with elected members on 31st August. Further to presentations from Morag Goodfellow, Area Manager for Argyll and the Islands, HIE and Fergus Murray, the Council's Head of Development and Economic Growth, members posed a number of questions which provided a good discussion on particular aspects of the recovery agenda.

- 7.6 Business Gateway Local Growth Accelerator Programme 2015-22:** The Local Growth Accelerator Programme (LGAP) is a £850k programme of business support providing assistance to SMEs with ambitions to grow annual turnover by £50k within three years. It launched for grants and specialist advice in 2016. In Phase One (2016-18) £348k was spent and claimed, comprising 83 grants and 28 specialist advice sessions, supporting 72 unique clients.

The grant programme includes trade fair grants, accreditation grants, training grants, employer grants and growth grants. The specialist advice covers HR, marketing, growth strategy, procurement, finance and digital topics.

Phase Two, which launched in May 2019, was planned to run until December 2021 for approvals and June 2022 for claims, with a total spend of £507k available to support a further 49 unique businesses via 102 grants and 42 specialist advice sessions.

Whilst COVID-19 is anticipated to impact negatively on many Argyll and Bute SMEs for the remainder of the LGAP programme period it is very positive to see that there is still continuing demand for growth support. That said, it is also recognised that many SMEs have shifted from a growth and expansion agenda to a survival agenda. It is therefore important that interventions such as the LGAP programme are adapted quickly, building in sufficient flexibility, to help businesses to survive by enabling Argyll and Bute based SMEs to respond to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic within the context of the dynamic business environment we now find ourselves in. Approval is currently being sought from the Scottish Government, as the Management Authority, to flex the LGAP support. It should be noted that this is an operational issue to allow overall programme spend to be maintained. In turn this will enable the targets for the LGAP Phase Two to be achieved.

- 7.7 Projects and Regeneration:** The council agreed at its meeting on 11th June to hold a third round of Strategic Events and festivals Fund for events to be held during 2020/21. This will be formally launched on 22nd October and close on 7th December. A budget of £90k in grant has been made available for Round 3.

The Discover Campbeltown digital app has been launched and represents the last piece of work in regard to the successful delivery of the Campbeltown Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme and the significant investment that has been secured into the town as a result over the past 13 years which has resulted in the award of 157 grants totalling £3.25million leading to repairs on over 40 buildings. <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/campbeltown-regeneration>

Following lockdown and the cessation of all physical regeneration projects on site, work has now recommenced on a number of priority building projects as part of the Dunoon CARS and Rothesay TH/CARS and a number of the Town Centre Funded projects including Helensburgh Pier which is in its final stages, Tobermory railings, Dunoon Lighting project and delivery of 28 shop front improvements in Campbeltown,. The remainder of the projects are being progressed through tender stage.

Following a successful application funding bid £26,000 has been secured through Scotland's Town Partnership funding stream to support bespoke shop local campaigns for: Rothesay, Tarbert, Lochgilphead, Ardrishaig, Campbeltown, Tobermory and Helensburgh.

Grant contracts have been signed for the successful Regeneration Capital Grant Funded bids for Mid Argyll Community Pool redevelopment and Ulva Stora Ulbha. Five new RCGF stage one submissions have been made with a decision expected mid-September.

7.8 Micro-Cluster Network Argyll and Isles is funded by Creative Scotland and the Innovation School, Glasgow School of Art (GSA). This partnership with the GSA is supporting the development of six micro-clusters across Argyll and Bute. This includes support over the autumn of 2020 to build the independent capacity of creative businesses, sole traders and entrepreneurs. There are places remaining for this and further promotion taking place to address this. CHARTS has also offered weekly support sessions and one to one online marketing skills sessions for beginners to skilled users.

8. POLICY LEAD FOR EDUCATION – Councillor Yvonne McNeilly

8.1 COVID-19: There's no denying that the last few months have been a difficult time for everyone, let alone children and young people in our schools. Pupils have had to adapt to new ways of learning; staff have had to come up with new, imaginative ways of providing learning resources; and parents and carers have had to step into new roles as teachers. What's truly amazed me throughout all this though is the way that everyone's rallied around to help each other. This is something that's really

special and unique about Argyll and Bute - our school communities are like an extended family.

What's important now is that we continue to support each other with the same compassion we have during lockdown. I have heard so many good stories over the last couple of months about our staff, and pupils going above and beyond to help their community.

We have already proved that, despite challenges, we work well together to ensure the best outcomes for our children and young people. Let this continue and let us look back at this period in our education system where we conquered adversity.

8.2 SQA SCHOOL EXAMINATION MODERATED RESULTS AND CELEBRATING SUCCESS: We all want success for our young people. Achieving it has never been more challenging than this year. Sheer hard work, and partnership between our schools and their families have been key to ensuring that learning continues even in this unprecedented year.

Our pupils had to deal with the pressures of leaving their familiar school routines and surroundings and adjusting to new ways of learning. Our teachers have worked tirelessly to deliver digital and home-learning options. It's been a stressful, difficult time to say the least. The 'let's get it done' response I've seen in action is a real credit to Argyll and Bute. Our pupils, teachers and their families should all be very proud of themselves. Wholehearted congratulations to all our young people who achieved the qualifications they hoped for.

Detail on moderated exams results was presented to the Council's Community Services Committee on 27th August 2020 and can be accessed on the link below. A further report will be presented to the Community Services Committee in December 2020, to allow the consideration of further statistical school and national information. [SQA School Examination Moderated Results Report - August 2020](#)

8.3 EXPANSION OF EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE: From 12th August Argyll and Bute is now delivering 1140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare across the area. A total of 80 childcare settings and 29 childminders are offering 1140 hours. An additional 79.6 full time equivalent posts were created across the council to meet the requirements of 1140. Our partner providers and childminders have played a key role in delivering these hours. This scheme will support us to deliver a high quality service that will help to close the attainment gap, support child development and support parents and carers in work and or study.

We delivered emergency childcare HUBs over the summer holiday working with 9 partner providers, a number of childminders, local authority Early Years Staff, senior pupils and community volunteers. These partners are from childcare, out of school care and the National Scout Association. They not only kept our children safe but gave them fun and exciting experiences. Feedback from children and parents was very positive and our thanks go out to Stramash, Schools Out Oban, River Side Rascals, Fyne Families, Campbeltown Nursery Centre, Escape, Clyde Cottage Nursery, Drumfork Family Centre, Rothesay Playgroup and Out of School Care and staff from Scout Adventures, Lochgoilhead.

Early years settings have taken innovative approaches to welcoming their children and ensuring they have the capacity to accommodate them all safely. These have included increased use of outdoor spaces, beaches and woodland areas using tarpaulins and tents to provide shelter and add to the sense of adventure. The Early Years Excellence and Equity Leads are supporting establishments with these approaches to increasing use of outdoors.

8.4 ONLINE GIVE (GET INSPIRED THROUGH VOLUNTEERING AND ENGAGEMENT) PILOT SUMMER 2020: In response to the pandemic and restrictions, the Community Learning Team piloted an online version of the GIVE programme in Helensburgh this summer. The GIVE programme is designed to encourage young people to get involved in activities that promote citizenship, social action, volunteering and personal development. Activities were set up in such a way that they could be carried out at home, online or within lockdown guidelines in local communities. Each activity had a set number of points, which were awarded on evidence of completion of the activity (e.g. a photo/video/screenshot of a website).

On completion the young person would send the required evidence to their Community Learning Worker with a short summary of what they achieved in their activity. Rewards were given for achieving a target number of points and the more activities they completed the more points they gained. Activity packs containing instructions and materials were provided for each participant. Young people were offered a wide range of choices to engage them in physical, mental and social activities, which ranged from a 10 day photo challenge, to learning new skills for World Youth Skills Day.

The programme included eleven workshops delivered online using GLOW and young people gained points by participating in them. These also ranged from being safe online, General Equality and LGBT+ awareness, to Climate Change and Disability Awareness. 40 of our young people registered for the programme with an average of 28 participating on each activity. Feedback from young people suggests the online GIVE programme was a great success and very much contributed to their health

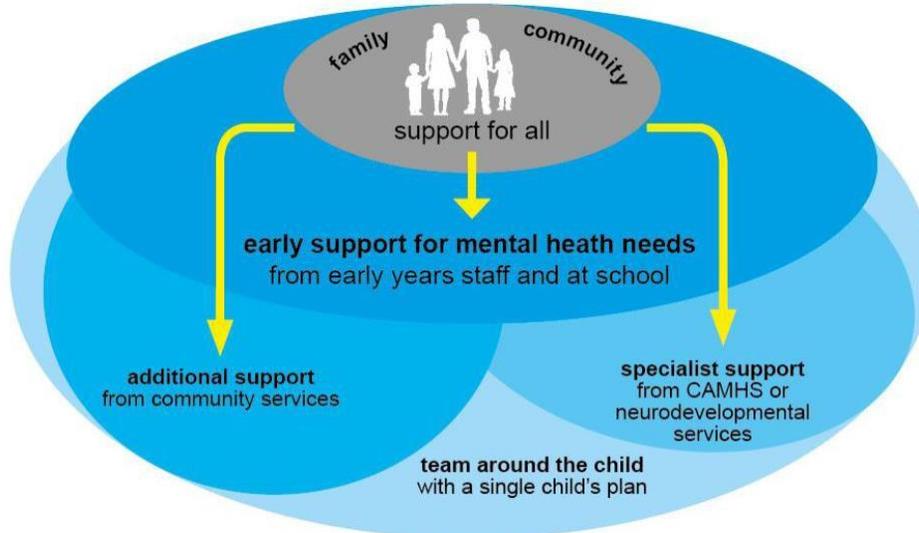
and well-being during an unprecedented and difficult period. Looking forward, Community Learning are planning for a “blended” model of delivery in the October and Christmas holiday period.

- 8.5 EDUCATION RECOVERY WELLBEING OF CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND STAFF:** Officers have been working on interventions and guidance required to build resilience, minimise harm and promote the emotional wellbeing of children, young people and staff. Preparing guidance was achieved through assessing and planning for the needs of our service focusing on our young people and their families, our education, care and learning provision and our staff. Throughout the team have maintained the vision contained within Our Children, Their Future.

Measures to ensure the robust safeguarding of children and young people were included in this guidance and distributed to schools alongside the COVID 19 Recovery Guidance for Transition for all ages and stages guidance. The Education Team has continued to prioritise child protection and support for families. There are children across the country who are experiencing difficulty in returning to school after lockdown and officers have produced guidance for schools to use in order to support a phased return based on a child centred, wellbeing approach, in line with the Council's GIRFEC practice model. The Education Psychological Services team have developed guidance and training to support schools and families to assist school refusers to return to school.

- 8.6 MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING:** Argyll and Bute Education Service, in conjunction with the Health and Social Care Partnership and the Third Sector, has a very strong commitment, maintained over time, to addressing the mental health and wellbeing needs of children and young people, and the wellbeing of those within the education community. This is even more important in the light of current global circumstances. The recently developed Argyll and Bute Education Recovery Plan has a strong emphasis on mental health and wellbeing throughout.

The national *Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Supports and Services Framework* has been carefully considered across services to map current developments with the framework and identify any gaps in service delivery, as detailed below.



The objectives of the framework are that every child and young person in Scotland will be able to access local community services which support and improve their mental health and emotional wellbeing, and, every child and young person and their families or carers will get the help they need, when they need it, from people with the right knowledge, skills and experience to support them. This will be available in the form of easily accessible support close to their home, education, employment or community.

Across Education and the HSCP there is a strong commitment to delivering these objectives.

The Scottish Government's ten year Mental Health Strategy (2017-2027) recognises the need for targeted and specialist Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), but also promotes effective prevention and early intervention through support services at a local level, delivered as close to the young people as possible. To this end, the Scottish Government has committed funding for this financial year and the following three years to support the delivery of counselling through schools following a set of ten nationally agreed core principles.

As schools have now returned, the Parent and Carer support line which was delivered by the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) through the Council Covid 19 phone lines has now ceased. While valuable support was provided in this way, the number of calls received was low with most parents and carers going directly to the service required, including phoning educational psychologists. Planning is now in place to respond to the possibility of future individual school closures resulting from outbreaks of COVID 19 and reduced staffing levels. A specific leaflet is being developed that will be sent to parents and carers should this occur, highlighting direct

telephone number to access support for mental health and wellbeing or child protection concerns.

- 8.7 TEAMING UP WITH THE COMMUNITY:** Members of the local community on Coll teamed up with teachers at Arinagour Primary School to provide island pupils with a wide variety of remote learning challenges during lockdown. As well as the day to day learning tasks set by teachers, residents on the island are also thinking up novel, fun ideas for children to get involved with.

One of the tasks was set by a chef at the local hotel, who invited children to create a recipe for their takeaway menu. The winner of the challenge was then be able to order the meal, as it will be added to the hotel's menu. Other challenges included a Coll Quiz and a Highland Dance Challenge.

This is another great example of our teachers and local residents coming together to ensure that our young people can still take part in a wide variety of learning opportunities during lockdown. This is community spirit at its best and shows the way in which people are really coming together and looking out for each other during uncertain times.

- 8.8 NASA:** Space rockets built by pupils from Port Ellen Primary School on Islay have caught the attention of NASA. This was part of their home learning activities during lockdown and they were over the moon when they received congratulations from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration on Twitter. STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) subjects are a vital study area for our young people and for Scotland, so it's wonderful to see pupils at Port Ellen engaging in these throughout lockdown. It is a huge achievement for the children to have their hard work recognised by NASA. You never know, we might have some future astronauts in our midst on Islay.

9. POLICY LEAD FOR PLANNING AND REGULATORY SERVICES – Councillor David Kinniburgh

- 9.1 Reform of Planning Legislation:** A draft of the fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4) which was due to be laid before the Scottish Parliament this month (September 2020) has been delayed due to the impact of the Covid-19 emergency and an interim NPF4 position statement is due to be released in the near future which will provide stakeholders with an update of the evidence gathered to date and explain other aspects of NPF4.

The delay means that the draft NPF4 will now come before the Scottish Parliament in autumn 2021 at the same time as extensive public consultation and it is anticipated that the date for the final version of NPF4, which will incorporate Scottish Planning Policy (SPP), will be spring 2022.

In the meantime NPF3 and SPP remain as current policy until final approval of NPF4.

- 9.2 Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2):** Work continues on LDP2 and in my last report I advised that the latest Development Plan Scheme (DPS) which is updated at least annually had been approved by the Planning, Protective Services and Licensing Committee in March 2020, just before the Covid-19 lockdown measures were announced by the UK Government, and at the time of that approval it was anticipated in the DPS that LDP2 would be adopted in October 2021.

At the time of writing this report and due to the Covid-19 measures that have been in place since March it is anticipated that the DPS will require to be updated showing slippage of the adoption of LDP2 by 5 months to the spring of 2022.

It should be noted that until LDP2 is adopted the statutory status of the current Local Development Plan remains as well as the associated Supplementary Guidance.

Details of the proposed LDP2 and any updated DPS can be viewed at the following link: <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/ldp2>

- 9.3 Planning Applications:** The submission of planning applications had been expected to tail off during lockdown but surprisingly they have remained higher than anticipated - between 23rd March and 29th July 2020, 593 formal submissions had been received by our planning department which was 81% of the volume received for the same period in 2019 when 732 applications were received.
- 9.4 Planning Fee Income:** Planning fee income for 2019/20 exceeded budget by £46k. However the Covid-19 pandemic raises significant concern in respect of projections for planning fee income for 2020/21 which included a budget saving based on additional fee income arising from amended fee regulations which were due to be implemented in June 2020. Due to the pandemic, though, the Scottish Government took the decision to pause the amended fee regulations and the situation is being closely monitored by the appropriate officers.
- 9.5 Consultation Updates:** A consultation which was due to take place relating to the Argyll and Bute Technical Working Note has been paused due to the current restrictions relating to Covid-19. Conservation Area Appraisal consultations for Helensburgh Town Centre and Tarbert Conservation Area remain on hold due to current Covid-19 restrictions.

- 9.6 Sustainable Design Awards:** In view of the current Covid-19 restrictions the Sustainable Design Awards competition which was launched in February has been postponed for the foreseeable future and a decision on how this will be progressed will be taken at the appropriate time.
- 9.7 Planning Performance Framework (PPF) 2019/20:** The latest Planning Performance Framework (PPF) report has been prepared and submitted to the Scottish Government for review and, as in previous years, the report focuses on the council being 'open for business'. The PPF presents case studies and examples of good practice throughout the document and although it is principally the annual performance measure for Planning Services which the Scottish Government scrutinise and score, it provides an opportunity for Planning Services to promote their service and the local area by incorporating customer feedback and case studies. The PPF submitted for 2019/20 can be viewed using the following link:
www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/sites/default/files/ppf_2020_v1.8_final_version_low_res.pdf
- 9.8 Pre-Determination Planning Hearing Arrangements:** At the present time there are three discretionary pre-determination planning hearings pending due to the restrictions imposed on public gatherings in light of the Covid-19 pandemic and at the August meeting of the Planning, Protective Services & Licensing (PPSL) committee it was agreed to arrange for virtual hearings to proceed on either an audio or video basis. It was also agreed that the options available to the committee for conducting site visits would be decided on a case by case basis.

There is no doubt that the current exceptional circumstances present challenges with regards to local participation and a priority of progressing arrangements in this manner will be to ensure that hearings continue to be heard in an open, fair and impartial way for all participants.

- 9.9 Regulatory Services:** In Regulatory Services the main focus of work at the moment is around Covid-19 regulation, work continues to enforce regulation, protect public health and support businesses that are open. Regulatory Services, including Licensing Standards and Environmental Health have coordinated the council's response to enforcement and adopted an enforcement strategy of the 4 E's; Engage, Educate, Encourage and Enforcement.

Work has included assessments of business standards and systems, responding to complaints and business enquiries and promoting and increasing awareness with business groups and sectors via our website, social media and direct engagement.

At the time of writing 1,938 businesses have been assessed directly and in responding to over 610 complaints the service has achieved a high level of compliance through their work with businesses and only seven formal warnings have been issued.

Recent legislation passed by the Scottish Government provided local authorities with powers to close premises and events and issue Prohibition Notices where there are significant risks to public health through the spread of coronavirus and compliance levels have been such that to date no Prohibition notices have been issued.

The service, together with another 20 local authorities, also provided mutual support to Aberdeen City Council by assisting in assessing premises there prior to reopening following the recent outbreak of positive coronavirus cases. This assistance was well received and was provided on the basis that we would require assistance from others if we were in the same situation.

10. CONCLUSION

- 10.1** This report provides members with an update on each of the Policy Lead portfolios. Policy Lead Councillors will be happy to discuss any particular issues with colleagues as required.

Argyll and Bute Council – Policy Lead Councillors Report – 15th September 2020

For further information please contact Aileen McNicol, Leadership Support and Member Services Manager, telephone 01546 604014 or email

ailen.mcnicol@argyll-bute.gov.uk

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**COUNCIL****LEGAL & REGULATORY SUPPORT****24th September 2020**

APPOINTMENT OF LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Council of the resignation of the Leader of the Council.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Council is asked to elect a Leader of the Council.

3. DETAIL

- 3.1 Councillor Aileen Morton, Leader of Argyll and Bute Council, has intimated her intention to step down from her current office. The Council Constitution requires the Council to give consideration to filling the vacancy. The roles listed at Appendix 1 are currently filled by Councillor Morton either ex officio or where she has been appointed while occupying the role of Leader. Councillor Morton has indicated her intention to demit from all offices as set out in Appendix 1.

4. IMPLICATIONS:

- 4.1 Policy: The role of Leader of the Council supports and facilitates the development of policy and provides political leadership and direction for the organisation.
- 4.2 Financial: None
- 4.3 Legal: The Council's constitutional arrangements require the Council to elect a Leader following any demission of office.
- 4.4 HR: None
- 4.5 Equalities/Fairer Scotland Duty – It is not anticipated that any of the recommendations in this report will have a potential negative impact on any particular group or discriminate on the basis of age, disability, gender, race, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity or religion and belief.

- 4.6 Socio-Economic Duty: None
- 4.7 Risk: Failure to appoint a Leader could present a risk to the Council's ability to set effective policy and to its community leadership role.
- 4.8 Islands: The Leader of the Council is represented on various local and national groups which focus on island issues.
- 4.9 Customer Service: None

**Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support,
Douglas Hendry**

8th September 2020

**For further information contact: Douglas Hendry – Executive Director on
01546 604244, email douglas.hendry@argyll-bute.gov.uk**

Attached:

Appendix 1 – Other Positions Linked to the Role of Leader of the Council

APPENDIX 1

Chair, Policy and Resources Committee
Chair, Policy and Resources Asset Transfer Sub-Committee - Review
Chair, Employee Joint Consultative Committee
Member, Argyll Islands Sounding Board
Chair, Rural Growth Deal Steering Board

Member of Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership Integration Joint Board

Member of Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership Management Committee and Full Partnership

Argyll and Bute Council Representative on the following:

Convention of the Highlands and Islands
Highlands and Islands Leaders Group
COSLA Leaders
Islands Strategic Group (Scottish Government)
Islands Transport Forum (Scottish Government)

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ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**COUNCIL****LEGAL AND REGULATORY SUPPORT****24 SEPTEMBER 2020**

COUNCIL CONSTITUTION REVIEW

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report considers proposed changes to the Council Constitution.

The Council generally reviews the Constitution annually and various minor changes are proposed and future issues highlighted in this report.

The key recommendations are as follows:-

- 1.1 To update the Scheme of Delegations for the Appointments Panel, Road Traffic Orders and the Strategic Housing function.
- 1.2 To amend the Scheme of Delegations in respect of two planning items to provide direction with regard to the role of officers in determinations
- 1.3 To amend the Financial and Security Regulations with regard to Risk Management.
- 1.4 To amend the Contract Standing Orders with regard to Procurement.
- 1.5 To include an amended Employee Code of Conduct which has been revised to reflect updated job titles and policy documents.

An overview of key changes is provided at Appendix 1.

Council is recommended to agree the adjustments to the Constitution as outlined in Appendix 1 to ensure the Constitution remains up-to-date and facilitates the operation of regulatory functions.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To agree to the adjustments to the Constitution as outlined in Appendix 1.

3.0 DETAIL

- 3.1 The proposed changes to the constitution are driven generally by the update to the Scheme of Delegations, the Financial and Security Regulations, the Contract Standing Orders and Standing Orders.
- 3.2 In addition to the annual review amendments to the Constitution will

be considered in the event of any potential alterations to operational and procedural requirements.

4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The proposed changes will address issues arising since the last revision in June 2019.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Policy – These revisions will keep the Constitution up to date.
- 5.2 Financial - None
- 5.3 Legal - None
- 5.4 HR - None
- 5.5 Fairer Scotland Duty - None
- 5.5.1 Equalities – protected characteristics – The provisions have no adverse impact in terms of equality issues.
- 5.5.2 Socio-economic Duty - None
- 5.5.3 Islands - None
- 5.6 Risk - None
- 5.7 Customer Service - None

Douglas Hendry - Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support

Policy Lead - Councillor Rory Colville

3 September 2020

For further information contact: David Logan, Head of Legal and Regulatory Support, Kilmory, Lochgilphead Tel: 01546 604322

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Review of Constitution 2020 – Summary of Key Changes

Reference – Current constitution page & paragraph detail		Proposed amendment	Rationale
Part C Scheme of Delegation	Page 59 Item 13	Add (13) – insert Appointments Panel	Addition of Appointments Panel for the arrangements for the recruitment procedure for Chief Officers.
Part C Scheme of Delegation	Page 67 (8)	Delete (8) and move delegation to Audit and Scrutiny Committee.	Risk Management function.
Part C Scheme of Delegation	Page 70	Under Community Planning – delete the Council’s Strategic Housing function and move to EDI Committee under Economic Development.	As per Council decision September 2019.
Part C Scheme of Delegation	Page 98 new item inserted at L10	Determination of applications under s75A of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended) unless subject to an earlier determination by the PPSL Committee.	These relate to applications seeking to remove or amend a S75 planning obligation. It is proposed that the ability to determine s75A submissions be delegated to officers, with PPSL reserving determination of submissions which relate to an earlier determination by PPSL.
Part C Scheme of Delegation	Page 98 new item inserted at L11	Determination of applications for a Periodic Review of Mineral Planning Permissions under Schedule 10 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended) – where conditions are agreed with the applicant.	These relate to submissions by quarry operators with proposals to update the conditions relating to the operation of their site. The process is one of reaching agreement with the operator, any decision to impose conditions which the operator hasn’t agreed could have financial implications for the Council in the form of compensation, and there is a right of appeal to Scottish Ministers. It is proposed that the determination process be delegated to officers where conditions are agreed with the applicant, and that where this cannot be achieved it

			would be appropriate to reserve determination to PPSL.
Part C Scheme of Delegation	Page 98 new items inserted at L10 & 11 change numbering from L10-L25	N/A	Numbering impact due to insertion of new items.
Part C Scheme of Delegation	Page 104 Items 35 & 36	Delete (35) and renumber subsequent delegations and amend (36) – To make, revoke, or vary Orders and Schemes under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984; and Sections 68, 69, 70 & 71 of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 and to commence and complete the statutory procedure set out in the Local Authorities Traffic Order (Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 1999 and undertake all necessary preparation prior to making orders and to make and sign temporary and permanent traffic orders and implement them where the statutory/public consultation process yields no objections or, where objections have been received & maintained, the orders have gained the appropriate committee approval.	Amended delegation for Road Traffic Orders.
Part D Financial and Security Regulations	Page 118 4.1	Amend 4.1 delete reference to P&R and insert Audit and Scrutiny Committee.	
Part E Contract Standing Orders	Page 178 1.1.7	Amend 1.1.7 – last sentence	Additional wording to reflect legislative documents and guidance
Part E	Page 178/179 (3)	Amend 3.1 – last sentence Amend 3.2 – deletion of wording	Additional wording and deletion of wording reflects legislative guidance

Contract Standing Orders		Delete 3.3 and 3.4	
Part E Contract Standing Orders	Page 180 (6)	Deletion of (6) – Performance Bonds. Renumber subsequent delegations.	Deletion enables the council to determine the most appropriate contract security for a particular contract.
Part E Contract Standing Orders	Page 180 (e)	Addition of (e) – ensure that appropriate contract security (for example guarantees or performance bonds) is obtained where required or considered prudent.	As per above, enables the council to utilise a variety of options for a contract security such a parent company guarantee or performance bond.
Part E Contract Standing Orders	Page 181 (10)	Deletion of (10) – Appointment of Nominated Sub Contractors.	Deleted as approval of nominated sub-contractors takes place at tender/contract award stage and appropriate checks are carried out.
Part E Contract Standing Orders	Page 182 11.1	Amend 11.1 – deletion of a, b and c. Insert new wording for a, b and c.	Additional wording to reflect legislative documents and guidance
Part E Contract Standing Orders	Page 182 (12)	Deletion of (12) – Final Certificate.	deletion of wording reflects legislative guidance
Part E Contract Standing Orders	Page 183 14.3	Delete last paragraph at 14.3 in inverted comma's and insert new paragraph. (<i>now 11.3</i>)	Deletion and replacement of wording reflects updated legislative guidance
Part E Contract Standing Orders	Page 184 15	Addition of 15.2 and 15.3. (<i>now 12.2 and 12.3</i>)	Additionally wording reflects updated legislative guidance
Part F – Part C Employee Code of Conduct		Updated Code	To include an amended Employee Code of Conduct which has been revised to reflect updated job titles and policy documents.

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ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL
LEGAL AND REGULATORY SUPPORT

COUNCIL
24 SEPTEMBER 2020

POLITICAL MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Council on political management arrangements principally arising from the resignations of the Vice Chair of the Bute and Cowal Area Committee and the Elected Member representative of the NHS Highland Board and the NHS Highland, Health and Wellbeing Partnership.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The Council is invited to:

- (a) Appoint a new Vice Chair to the Bute and Cowal Area Committee;
- (b) Appoint a Director to the board of the Nadair Trust;
- (c) Consider making appointments to the following outside bodies and statutory organisations:
 - NHS Highland Board (Non-executive Director)
 - NHS Highland, Health and Wellbeing Partnership (Board Member); and
- (d) Note the political composition of the Council, as at the date of this report, set out at appendix 1.

3.0 DETAIL

Bute and Cowal Area Committee

3.1 The Council appointed Councillor Jim Anderson as Vice Chair to the Bute and Cowal Area Committee in May 2017. Following his resignation on 27 February 2020, a vacancy has arisen.

3.2 The role of Vice Chair is to support the Chair in the effective management of his duties in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders. Having regard to the division of the Council's area a replacement for this role should be sought from either Electoral Ward 6 (Cowal); Electoral Ward 7 (Dunoon) or Electoral Ward 8

(Isle of Bute). Councillor Bobby Good, Ward 7, is currently Chair of the Area Committee and hence is not included in the list below.

3.2.1 Members of each Electoral Ward are as follows:-

- Electoral Ward 6 (Cowal) – Councillor Yvonne McNeilly; Councillor Alan Reid and Councillor William Gordon Blair
- Electoral Ward 7 (Dunoon) – Councillor Audrey E Forrest, and Councillor Jim Anderson
- Electoral Ward 8 (Isle of Bute) – Councillor Jim Findlay; Councillor Jean Murray Moffat and Councillor Len Scoullar

NHS Highland Board

3.4 A vacancy for a Non-executive Director has arisen following the resignation of Councillor Mary-Jean Devon, who was appointed to this role by Council in May 2017. The Board are accountable to the Secretary of State through the Scottish Executive Health Department which governs the accountability and performance of NHS Highland.

NHS – Highland, Health and Wellbeing Partnership

3.5 A vacancy for a Board Member has arisen following the resignation of Councillor Mary-Jean Devon who was appointed to this role by Council in May 2017. The Partnership leads the planning of health improvement in Argyll and Bute and is a strategic partner of the Community Planning Partnership.

Nadair Trust

3.6 Trust was the delivery vehicle for the 2 phases of National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF) projects focused on the Argyll Islands. The projects were completed in 2008. The Trust, does not currently have a quorate Board, and has not been active for some time.

The Trust want to work with former Partner Members to put appropriate governance in place, confirm legacy commitments and decide what to do with the remaining funds. A quorate Board will be needed for this to take place and partner Members who have nominated Directors in the past are now asked to nominate a Director to facilitate that.

4.0 CONCLUSION

4.1 As part of its political management arrangements the Council's practice is to appoint members to a range of bodies including outside bodies and organisations. Members are now invited to make appointments and recommendations on the basis of the detail in the report.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Policy - This is in keeping with the Council's commitment to working in

partnership with other agencies to benefit the people and communities of Argyll and Bute.

- 5.2 Financial – Travel and Subsistence costs for attending meetings if required.
- 5.3 Legal - None
- 5.4 HR - None
- 5.5 Fairer Scotland Duty: None
- 5.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics – None
- 5.5.2 Socio-economic Duty - None
- 5.5.3 Islands - none
- 5.6. Risk – addresses risk of underrepresentation in outside bodies.
- 5.7 Customer Service – none

6.0 APPENDICES

- 6.1 Appendix 1 – Political Composition of the Council as at September 2020

Douglas Hendry

Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support

27 August 2020

Policy Lead: Councillor Rory Colville

For further information contact: Patricia O’Neill, Governance Manager, 01546 604384, email: patricia.o’neill@argyll-bute.gov.uk

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL
POLITICAL COMPOSITION OF THE COUNCIL
SEPTEMBER 2020
THE ARGYLL, LOMOND AND THE ISLES GROUP (20)
Councillor Rory Colville (LD)
Councillor Robin Currie (LD)
Councillor Mary Jean Devon (Ind)
Councillor Bobby Good (Con)
Councillor Kieron Green (Ind)
Councillor Graham Hardie (LD)
Councillor David Kinniburgh (Con)
Councillor Roddy McCuish (Ind)
Councillor Sir Jamie McGrigor (Con)
Councillor Donnie MacMillan BEM (Ind)
Councillor Yvonne McNeilly (Con)
Councillor Aileen Morton (LD)
Councillor Ellen Morton (LD) (Leader of The Argyll, Lomond and the Isles Group)
Councillor Barbara Morgan (Con)
Councillor Gary Mulvaney (Con)
Councillor Alan Reid (LD)
Councillor Alastair Redman (Con)
Councillor Elaine Robertson (Ind)
Councillor Len Scoullar (Ind)
Councillor Andrew Vennard (Con)
ARGYLL AND BUTE SCOTTISH NATIONAL PARTY (SNP) GROUP (11)
Councillor John Armour
Councillor Gordon Blair
Councillor Lorna Douglas (Depute Leader of the SNP Group)
Councillor Jim Findlay
Councillor Audrey E Forrest (Secretary of the SNP Group)
Councillor Anne Horn
Councillor Jim Lynch
Councillor Julie McKenzie
Councillor Iain Shonny Paterson
Councillor Sandy Taylor (Leader of the SNP Group)
Councillor Richard Trail
ARGYLL AND BUTE FIRST (3)
Councillor George Freeman (Ind)
Councillor Donald Kelly (Con)
Councillor Douglas Philand (Ind) (Leader of Argyll and Bute First)
OTHER COUNCILLORS – NOT POLITICALLY ALIGNED (2)
Councillor Jim Anderson (Ind)
Councillor Jean Moffat (Ind)

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL
LEGAL AND REGULATORY SUPPORT

COUNCIL
24 SEPTEMBER 2020

BOUNDARY COMMISSION - REVIEW OF ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland is an independent, non-political body with responsibility for:
- Carrying out reviews of electoral wards for local authorities;
 - Carrying out reviews of the boundaries of local authority areas; and
 - Carrying out reviews of constituencies and regions for the Scottish Parliament.
- 1.2 The Commission has undertaken a review of the electoral arrangements for the Argyll and Bute Council area, which proposes 34 Councillors representing four 2-member wards, six 3-member wards and two 4-member wards, reducing overall Councillor numbers by two; and increasing the number of wards by one, from 11 to 12.
- 1.3 The legislation states that the Commission must first of all consult on proposals with Councils, as the statutory body, for a period of at least 2 months. This initial stage of the consultation process runs from 16th July until 30th September 2020.
- 1.4 To facilitate a response to the initial consultation, a members seminar was held on 10th August with the Boundary Commission, together with individual Area Committee sessions that were held on 11th, 12th and 17th August.
- 1.5 Having regard to the comments and feedback received at these consultation events, attached at appendix 1 is the proposed Council response to the initial proposals from the Boundary Commission, for consideration.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to:-

- 2.1 Consider the proposed response to the Boundary Commission attached at appendix 1; and

- 2.2 Agree whether this forms the basis of the Council's response to the Boundary Commission by 30th September 2020 deadline.

3. DETAIL

Background

- 3.1 The Commission are tasked by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to undertake reviews of local government electoral arrangements in Scotland every 8 to 12 years. Argyll and Bute Council area was last reviewed during the 5th Reviews of Electoral Arrangements, which reported in 2016. Scottish Ministers did not accept the Commission's 5th Review recommendations for Argyll and Bute due to concerns about the impact of the recommendations on local ties and preference at that time for maintenance of status quo.
- 3.2 A further review is now required under the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018. The Act recognises the importance of the Scottish Islands and the particular challenges they face. It offers additional flexibility to allow the Commission to recommend wards that elect 1 or 2 Councillors, as well as 3 or 4 Councillors, where such a ward contains an inhabited island. The Act requires the Boundary Commission to review the six Councils containing inhabited islands. Shetland, Orkney and Na h-Eileanan an Iar Councils were consulted during 2019, and Argyll and Bute, together with Highland and North Ayrshire Councils are being consulted with during the course of this year.
- 3.3 The Scottish Elections (Reform) Act, which has recently completed its passage through the Scottish Parliament, allows the Commission to recommend 2 and 5 member wards, in addition to 3 and 4 member wards, throughout Scotland. The Commission has considered the Act in determining their proposals.

Review Process

- 3.4 The number of Councillors for each Council is determined by placing it into a category with similar Councils. Argyll and Bute Council area is grouped with other more rural Council areas with below average levels of deprivation, according to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) with a ratio of electors per Councillor of 2,800.
- 3.5 In recognition that a large change of Councillor numbers can be disruptive, the Commissioner's methodology incorporates a 10% change rule, meaning that they will not normally propose increasing or decreasing the total number of Councillors in a Council area by more than 10%.
- 3.6 In undertaking their review the Commission took account of the relevant legislation and:
- The interests of effective and convenient local government;
 - Within each council, that each Councillor should represent the same number of electors as nearly as may be;

- Local ties which would be broken by making a particular boundary;
- The desirability of fixing boundaries that are easily identifiable; and
- Specific geographical considerations.

Proposals for wards in Argyll and Bute Council area

3.7 At its meeting held in April 2020 the Commission considered a report which set out 3 potential options with regard to ward designs for Argyll and Bute Council area –

Option 1 - Retains the existing electoral arrangements with 36 Councillors

Option 2 - Considers Island wards with 34 Councillors; and

Option 3 - Aims to minimise change to the existing ward boundaries with 33 Councillors.

3.8 The Commission have now advised that option 2 is being proposed - an electoral arrangement for 34 Councillors representing four 2-member wards, six 3-member wards and a two 4-member wards, reducing overall Councillor numbers by two; and increasing the number of wards by one, from 11 to 12.

3.9 A summary of key implications arising from Option 2 are:

- i. Makes no changes to the boundaries of five of the existing wards: Mid Argyll; Lomond North, Isle of Bute, Dunoon and Cowal.
- ii. Takes account of the Islands (Scotland) Act by using the flexibility offered by 2-member wards to better reflect local ties for Island communities. The proposals present a:
 - 2-member Isle of Bute ward, retaining the existing Isle of Bute ward boundary but reducing Councillor numbers by one;
 - 2-member Islay, Jura and Colonsay ward; and
 - 2-member Mull, Iona, Coll and Tiree ward.
- iii. The Island wards offer wide variation from electoral parity but as Islands they are less accessible than other areas within Argyll and Bute, therefore the Commission could consider special geographical circumstances in these wards.
- iv. Reduces representation in Helensburgh by one Councillor. It transfers approximately 900 electors from the existing Helensburgh Central ward to the Helensburgh and Lomond South ward. The proposed ward boundary follows historical ward boundaries from the Commission's 2nd and 3rd Reviews of Electoral Arrangements. As a consequence the Helensburgh Central ward becomes a 3-member ward, previously a 4-member ward.
- v. Proposes a 4-member Kintyre ward, covering the whole of Kintyre and including the Isle of Gigha.
- vi. Places Oban within a single 4-member ward to avoid breaking local community ties

- 3.10 Table 1 below illustrates the current electoral arrangement for Argyll and Bute and Table 2 details the proposed model, and actual/forecast variation from parity of the proposed wards.

Table 1 – Current Electoral Arrangements

Ward No.	Ward Name	Cllrs
1	South Kintyre	3
2	Kintyre and the Islands	3
3	Mid Argyll	3
4	Oban South and the Isles	4
5	Oban North and Lorn	4
6	Cowal	3
7	Dunoon	3
8	Isle of Bute	3
9	Lomond North	3
10	Helensburgh Central	4
11	Helensburgh and Lomond South	3
Total		36

Table 2 – Proposed Electoral Arrangements

Ward No.	Ward Name	Cllrs	Electorate (Dec 2018)	Variation from Electoral Parity (%)	Forecast Electorate (2024)	Forecast Variation from Electoral Parity (%)	Forecast Electors per Cllr
1	Kintyre	4	7,404	-5.7	7,222	-6.8	1,806
2	Islay, Jura and Colonsay	2	2,847	-27.5	2,927	-24.4	1,464
3	Mid Argyll	3	5,985	1.7	5,927	2.0	1,976
4	Mull, Iona, Coll and Tiree	2	3,211	-18.2	3,438	-11.2	1,719
5	Oban	4	8,357	6.5	8,497	9.7	2,124
6	Lorn	2	4,190	6.8	4,164	7.5	2,082
7	Cowal	3	5,734	-2.6	5,596	-3.7	1,865
8	Dunoon	3	5,500	-6.6	5,304	-8.7	1,768
9	Isle of Bute	2	4,696	19.6	4,406	13.8	2,203
10	Lomond North	3	6,000	1.9	5,858	0.8	1,953
11	Helensburgh Central	3	6,424	9.1	6,075	4.6	2,025
12	Helensburgh and Lomond South	3	6,377	8.3	6,420	10.5	2,140
Totals		34	66,725		65,834		

Consultation on Initial Proposals

- 3.12 The Council have been asked to consider the proposals from the Boundary Commission and agree the terms of an appropriate response. From an Officer point of view the proposals maintain the current four Area Committee areas, therefore from an administrative/governance perspective they do not create any issues. However, alteration of the ward boundaries is ultimately a political matter for consideration.
- 3.13 The legislation states that the Commission must first of all consult on proposals with Councils, as the statutory body, for a period of at least 2 months. This initial stage of the consultation process runs from 16th July until 30th September 2020. On the basis that the Council, as the statutory body, decides to submit views on the proposals, the Commission will consider these and then conduct the 2nd stage of the process in the form of a public consultation, which will commence in the autumn of 2020.
- 3.14 Following consideration of all the responses received, the Commission will then submit their final recommendations to Scottish Ministers by May 2021, in time for implementation for the next local government elections in May 2022.
- 3.15 In order to facilitate a response to the initial consultation, a member's seminar was held on 10th August, with the Boundary Commission in attendance, to allow members the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback on their proposals. In addition to this Officers met with each Area Committee during w/c 11th and w/c 17th August to discuss the proposals for each area in more detail and to give members another opportunity to provide their views. Members were also encouraged to submit written comments via email. Summarised below is the key comments / issues that have been captured as part of the consultation events with members.

General points

- i. Following on from the 5th Review of Electoral Arrangements undertaken in 2016, which recommended a reduction of 3 Councillors, and was subsequently rejected by Scottish Ministers, it is disappointing to note that the Commission have again proposed a reduction in Councillor numbers by 2, diminishing overall electoral accountability within Argyll and Bute.
- ii. Broad agreement of the principles and methodology applied by the Commission in their determination of the proposals for Argyll and Bute;
- iii. Content that the four Area Committee areas have remained unchanged;
- iv. General acceptance of the proposals with regard to those wards where no change is proposed to Councillor numbers or the boundary – Cowal, Dunoon, Lomond North, and Mid Argyll;

Ward specific points

v. Mid Argyll, Kintyre & the Islands

- Further proposal suggested which would see the boundary for the Kintyre ward stopping at Kennacraig, with Tarbert and Skipness moving within the boundary of ward 3 - Mid Argyll. This would maintain the current Community Council boundary for Tarbert and Skipness, and the East and West Kintyre split.
- View that the status quo should remain with regard to MAKI proposals as they do not appear to provide a positive outcome for the area.
- The proposals currently have Gigha as part of ward 1 – Kintyre, however, an alternative suggestion was that it should be considered in line with all other islands and form part of the proposed island ward for Islay, Jura and Colonsay.
- Proposed ward 2 – there was a division of opinion amongst members with regard to these proposals. On the one hand it was considered that having a 2-member ward for Islay, Jura and Colonsay has the potential to create workload issues and under representation. There was also a desire to take cognisance of a previous response submitted by the Council's Argyll Islands Strategic Group to the Islands (Scotland) Bill Consultation in September 2017. This response noted it was advantageous to have councillor representation which covered both mainland and island areas to better represent the interests between island and mainland communities.

Conversely, there was a view that the creation of dedicated councillors for island communities is a positive step forward, recognising the importance of, and particular challenges that Islands face. During the 5th Electoral Review an Atlantic Islands ward was considered but at that time it was not possible to have a 2-member ward. The Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 has changed this position and therefore presents the opportunity to adopt an islands only ward.

vi. Bute & Cowal

- There was consensus from all members consulted that the proposal to decrease the number of councillors for Bute from 3 to 2 should be rejected. As an area of social and economic deprivation there is a requirement for additional representation and the proposals would be counter to this. In addition an argument can be made for 3 members bringing the number of electors into closer parity with those proposed for Ward 2 - Islay, Jura and Colonsay and Ward 4 - Mull Iona, Coll and Tiree.

vii. Helensburgh and Lomond

- With regard to the proposed reduction of one member within the Helensburgh Central ward there was a view that this reduction would result in Helensburgh and Lomond, as an administrative area, being under-represented in terms of electoral parity. It is projected that the Helensburgh and Lomond South ward electorate will increase in future years as a result of planned developments, which could result in this discrepancy becoming more marked (increase from 8.3% to 10.5% in variation from electoral parity).

viii. Oban, Lorn and the Isles

- View that while the proposals deal with a dedicated 2-member island ward covering Mull, Iona, Coll and Tiree, there are concerns that there may be strong views expressed by residents on the smaller islands (Seil, Lismore, Luing, Easdale and Kerrera) which are currently included within the two mainland wards. If the public consultation process indicates that there is a desire for these islands to form part of proposed ward 4, this would be supported.
- The proposals suggest that the Lorn ward would be covered by 2 members. An alternative suggestion is that this should be a 3 member ward, and that the proposed ward 5 - Oban should also be a 3 member ward, as opposed to the 4 members suggested. In line with the comments made for ward 9 – Bute, this would bring the number of electors into closer parity with those proposed for ward 2 - Islay, Jura and Colonsay and ward 4 - Mull Iona, Coll and Tiree.
- A further suggestion in respect of ward 6 is that it should be renamed to “North Lorn”, rather than the proposed “Lorn”. The Council would recommend that this alternative is included in the public consultation for consideration.

3.16 Appendix 1 sets out the proposed Council response to the Boundary Commission, which covers the key themes that emerged from the consultation process and provides the overall consensus, based on the majority of representations provided at the member’s seminar and the area committee sessions. Members are being asked to consider the terms of the proposed response and agree the final version to be submitted by 30th September 2020 deadline.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland has undertaken a review of the electoral arrangements for Argyll and Bute. Following a period of consultation with members, Appendix 1 sets out the terms of a proposed response to stage 1 of the consultation process, which runs until 30th September 2020.

5. IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Policy – proposals take account of the Islands (Scotland) Act 201.
- 5.2 Financial – none arising from this report
- 5.3 Legal – Review undertaken in line with Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, Scottish Elections (Reform) Act, and the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018.
- 5.4 HR – none arising from this report
- 5.5 Equalities/Fairer Scotland Duty/Islands – the Boundary Commission proposals have taken account of the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018
- 5.6 Risk – none arising from this report
- 5.7 Customer Services – the Boundary Commission proposals consider enhanced local ties for Island communities / parity of constituent representation on Islands

6.0 APPENDICES

- 6.1 Appendix 1 – Proposed Stage 1 Consultation Response

Policy Lead – Councillor Rory Colville – Support Services

Douglas Hendry - Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support

26 August 2020

For further information, please contact:

Laura Blackwood
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**Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland (LGBCS)
2019 Review of Electoral Arrangements – Argyll and Bute Council Area**

Argyll and Bute Council Response

In response to the letter from the LGBCS on 16th July 2020, which set out the initial proposals for the Argyll and Bute Council area, the Council have now considered the proposals in detail and welcome the opportunity to provide the following response to the stage 1 consultation.

The Council are grateful for the efforts of the Commission to engage with us during the past couple of months, in particular attendance at the elected member seminar held on 10th August 2020 to discuss the proposals and to address member queries was appreciated.

The Council are content that the four Area Committee areas have remained unchanged, which from an administrative/governance point of view is welcomed. In addition, there is a general acceptance of the proposals with regard to those wards where no change is proposed to Councillor numbers or the boundary – Cowal, Dunoon, Lomond North, and Mid Argyll.

However, the Council are disappointed that the Commission's starting point, in a similar vein to the 5th Review that was undertaken in 2016, is to recommend a reduction in Councillor numbers for the Argyll and Bute area. In line with the Council's response at that time, the Council objects to the proposals in that they diminish the overall electoral accountability, while failing to take into account material factors in relation to electoral parity, impact of demographic issues such as an ageing population and social and economic deprivation, and the consequent requirement for more effective electoral representation these factors create. On this basis, the Council rejects any reduction in the overall number of Councillors for Argyll and Bute

In addition, the proposals for Argyll and Bute seem to be at odds with the overall focus of the review, which is to recognise the importance of Scottish islands and the unique challenges they face. The same can be said of the approach taken in 2016, when the review was focussed on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. In both reviews, the proposals adversely impact the island of Bute, with Councillor representation being reduced, which would appear to be in conflict with the principles being applied. There are significant demographic and deprivation issues on Bute, for example 30% of the electorate are over the age of 64. On this basis the case can be made that there is a requirement for additional representation on the island of Bute and the proposals from the Commission are counter to this. Furthermore, maintaining the status quo on Bute (3 members) would bring the number of electors into closer parity with the proposals for the other island wards.

Overall, the proposals presented by the Commission, particularly in respect of the island wards, have raised a number of concerns for the Council in terms of electoral parity. For example, in respect of the wards for Islay, Jura & Colonsay (ward 2) and Mull, Iona, Coll & Tiree (ward 4) it is proposed that there are 4 Councillors covering a similar population to ward 9 - Bute, where it is proposed to have only 2 Councillors.

Between ward 2 and ward 9 the forecast variation from electoral parity varies vastly from -24.4 to 13.8 respectively. Similar concerns can also be applied in respect of the proposals for ward 6 – Lorn, and the proposed boundary change within the Helensburgh and Lomond administrative area, which would inevitably result in the area being under-represented in terms of electoral parity in future years.

During the course of engagement with members on the proposals, a number of common points were captured with regard to the range of smaller islands within Argyll and Bute, which are currently included within mainland wards – Gigha, which sits within ward 1 – Kintyre, and Seil, Lismore, Luing, Easdale and Kerrera, which fall within ward 5 – Oban and ward 6 – Lorn. The Council are of the view that if, as part of the public consultation, there is a view that these islands should form part of the dedicated island wards proposed for their respective areas, then the Council would support this option being pursued.

A further boundary issue that the Council would like to see explored as part of the public consultation is in respect of proposed ward 1 – Kintyre, where it is suggested that the boundary for the Kintyre ward could stop at Kennacraig, with Tarbert and Skipness moving within the boundary of ward 3 - Mid Argyll. This would maintain the current Community Council boundary for Tarbert and Skipness, and the East and West Kintyre split. This proposal was raised at the Members Seminar held on 10th August 2020 and it is understood that the Commission have started looking at the implications of this.

The final issues that the Council would like to feedback on are in regard to the Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands (MAKI) area which covers wards 1, 2 and 3, where there was differing opinions from members in respect of the proposals, particularly those for ward 2 – Islay, Jura and Colonsay. One perspective was that the status quo should remain for MAKI as there are no proposals to change overall Councillor representation, and the proposed boundary changes do not appear to provide a positive outcome for the area. It was considered, for example, that having a 2 member ward for Islay, Jura and Colonsay has the potential to create workload issues and under-representation.

There was also a desire to take cognisance of a previous response submitted by the Council's Argyll Islands Strategic Group to the Islands (Scotland) Bill Consultation in September 2017, which noted the advantages of having councillor representation across both mainland and island areas to better represent the interests between island and mainland communities. Additionally, the consultation response submitted that the development of 1 or 2 member wards for inhabited islands would reduce the number of members representing islands as a whole.

Conversely, there was support for the creation of a dedicated island ward, which was deemed to be a positive step forward. During the 5th Electoral Review an Atlantic Islands ward was considered but at that time it was not possible to have a 2 member ward. The Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 has changed this position and therefore presents the opportunity to adopt an islands only ward.

The Council considers it important that the aforementioned issues are fully addressed and explored as part of the public consultation, to enable the views of communities in Argyll and Bute to be considered.

In addition, and although the Council recognises it may not directly relate to the Commission's remit, the Council considers that it is a matter of concern that the public consultation is being undertaken during the COVID-19 pandemic when potentially further restrictions are being applied for the protection of the public, which could adversely impact the public consultation process and the work of the Commission overall.

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ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**COUNCIL****LEGAL AND REGULATORY SUPPORT****24 SEPTEMBER 2020**

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)**MEETINGS AND ASSOCIATED MATTERS**

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 At the special Council meeting held on 30 June 2020 a report was tabled which reviewed the continued role of the Business Continuity Committee (BCC), taking account of the most recent guidance/routemap from the Scottish Government.
- 1.2 The Council:-
- i. Agreed that all Area Committees and Strategic Committees (with the exception of the Policy and Resources (P&R) Committee scheduled for August / September will resume on a virtual basis, with a restricted number of agenda items.
 - ii. Agreed that the BCC will, in the meantime, continue its role, exercising all delegated functions from the Council and the Policy and Resources Committee.
 - iii. Agreed that a further review of the operation of the BCC and committees will be undertaken and reported to the Council meeting scheduled for 24 September 2020.
 - iv. Noted the log of decisions that have been taken in consultation with the Leadership Group as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.
 - v. Agreed to approve the non-attendance of any member at any meeting of the authority for the period up to and including the Council meeting scheduled for 24 September 2020.
- 1.3 As per the decision at the Council on 30th June 2020 a further review of the continuing role of the BCC has now been undertaken and it is recommended that Members:-
- i. Agree that meetings of the BCC are suspended meantime;
 - ii. Agree that the Policy and Resources Committee resumes from the scheduled meeting on 15th October 2020;
 - iii. Agree that all committee meetings will continue on a virtual basis; and
 - iv. Agree that a further review of the operation of committees will be undertaken and reported to Council in April 2021.

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)**MEETINGS AND ASSOCIATED MATTERS**

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Covid-19 has required an urgent, multi-agency response at national and local government level. Argyll and Bute Council has been working in partnership with community planning partners and other agencies to respond to the pandemic. In order to provide capacity and focus in dealing with this response, and to adhere to advice and guidance from the UK and Scottish Governments, it has delegated emergency powers to ensure appropriate focus and oversight of decisions.
- 2.2 The initial urgency, degree of change, and intensity demanded by Covid-19 has now eased to an extent, however work is still ongoing to respond to the numerous challenges it brings.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are invited to:-

- 3.1 Agree that meetings of the BCC are suspended meantime;
- 3.2 Agree that the Policy and Resources Committee resumes from the scheduled meeting on 15th October 2020;
- 3.3 Agree that all committee meetings will continue on a virtual basis; and
- 3.4 Agree that a further review of the operation of committees will be undertaken and reported to Council in April 2021.

4. DETAIL

- 4.1 At the special Council meeting on 31 March 2020 a decision was taken to put a hold on scheduled meetings and constitute a temporary committee, known as BCC, to exercise all of the powers of the council for a finite period of time.
- 4.2 Subsequently, a review of the arrangements agreed in March 2020 were undertaken and a report tabled at Council in June 2020, where it was agreed that all Area Committees and Strategic Committees (with the exception of the Policy and Resources (P&R) Committee scheduled for August / September would resume on a virtual basis. It was also agreed that the BCC would, in the meantime, continue its role, exercising all delegated functions from the Council and the Policy and Resources Committee.
- 4.3 The purpose of this report is to undertake a further review in respect of the continued role of the BCC, and associated committee matters.

- 4.4 The circumstances surrounding coronavirus are ever changing, with advice and guidance from the Scottish and UK Governments and Public Health Scotland being updated daily. The situation is being continually reviewed by Officers in order to inform the options available in terms of returning to a normal committee schedule.
- 4.5 This report has been prepared having regard to the Scottish Government Covid-19 Routemap that was published on 21 May 2020. Scotland are currently in Phase 3 of the routemap, which advises:-
- Working from home and working flexibly remains the default position for those who can
 - Physical distancing requirements in place
 - Frequent handwashing and hygiene measures for all
 - Cough etiquette is maintained
 - Indicative dates – based on the First Minister’s update on 10th September 2020
 - Further review on 1st October prior to taking a decision on whether non-essential offices can re-open following implementation of relevant guidance, including on physical distancing.
 - 5th October (depending on outcome of review on 1st October) – live events (indoors) with physical distancing and restricted numbers, following guidance
- 4.6 Taking account of the latest guidance it is recommended that, due to there still being a number of restrictions in place, all committee meetings continue on a virtual basis. It is anticipated that a further relaxation of public/mass gatherings won’t occur until Phase 4 of the routemap, and at this time there is no clear indication of a timescale for moving into the next phase. The First Minister at her briefing on 10th September 2020 advised that the risk levels are too high at present to consider re-opening non-essential offices and that working from home should remain the default position.
- 4.7 On the basis that there has been a shift in focus across the Council towards recovery and “business as usual”, it is also proposed that meetings of the BCC are suspended meantime, with the ability for BCC meetings to be called in future should the need arise, with the Council and the Policy and Resources Committee resuming their normal committee schedule in September and October respectively. In the event of a second wave of the virus or a lockdown situation, consideration can be given to re-convening the role of the BCC. Meantime, officers are looking at potential arrangements to embed virtual meetings in the Council Constitution, ensuring secure public access, and will report back to Members on this. Factors being considered include the use of video during meetings for participants and wider public access to observe Council meetings in real time, which may include options for broadcasting.
- 4.8 The Council’s constitution gives specific delegations to the Chief Executive. Section 3 Part C paragraph 3(A)(5) gives the Chief Executive ‘power in an emergency situation to instruct executive action on any matter after consultation with the Leader or, in his/her absence, Depute Leader of the Council. This

provides a basis for any urgent decisions which require to be made in response to Covid-19.

- 4.9 On 31 March 2020 the Council agreed that for the life of the Covid-19 crisis the consultation by the Chief Executive will be with the Leader, Depute Leader, and Leader of the SNP Group where available and this arrangement will continue meantime.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 A further review of the temporary arrangements for conducting Council business during the Covid-19 pandemic has been undertaken by Officers. Members are asked to agree that the BCC is suspended meantime, and that the Policy and Resources Committee resumes from 15th October 2020, with all committee meetings continuing on a virtual basis until a further review is carried out and reported to the next Council meeting on 26th November 2020.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy – Emergency/urgency provisions put in place, to exist for duration of COVID-19 crisis only.
- 6.2 Financial – Any costs arising are being recorded in accordance with Scottish Government and/or COSLA guidance in the expectation that net additional costs will be reimbursed.
- 6.3 Legal – Amendment of the powers delegated to Officers and Standing Orders agreed at Council meeting on 30th March 2020 in accordance with Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.
- 6.4 HR – none
- 6.5 Equalities/Fairer Scotland Duty – It is not anticipated that any of the recommendations in this report will have a potential negative impact on any particular group or discriminate on the basis of age, disability, gender, race, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity or religion and belief.
- 6.6 Socio-economic Duty – none
- 6.7 Risk – Addresses risk associated with ensuring business continuity and resilience, in a manner that creates least risk to public health.
- 6.8 Islands – none
- 6.9 Customer Services – supports arrangements for amending decision making framework to support critical customer services.

Douglas Hendry

Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support

10th September 2020

Policy Lead – Councillor Rory Colville

For further information please contact:-

Laura Blackwood, Directorate Support Officer – 01546 604325

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

COUNCIL

LEGAL AND REGULATORY SUPPORT THURSDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 2020

EXTRACT OF HELENSBURGH AND LOMOND AREA COMMITTEE HELD ON 17
SEPTEMBER 2020

9. LUSS CAR PARK - TEMPORARY PORTALOO FACILITIES

The Committee gave consideration to a report detailing income lost due to the temporary siting of portaloo facilities at Luss car park.

Decision

The Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee noted that the National Park intends to remove the temporary toilet facilities by the End of October 2020. Therefore, the Committee recommends to Council that the charges for the parking bays continue to be waived until the toilets are removed but not beyond 31st October 2020.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with Responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services, dated 17 September 2020, submitted)

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ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

HELENSBURGH AND LOMOND AREA
COMMITTEE

ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE
SERVICES

17 SEPTEMBER 2020

LUSS CAR PARK – TEMPORARY PORTALOO FACILITIES

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Scottish Government Route Map began relaxing COVID-19 measures across Scotland in May 2020. One of the measures was the opening of car parks and National Parks. As part of this, Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park had risk assessed their public conveniences sited at Luss and found they were not fit for purpose under the Return from Lockdown Health and Safety conditions being imposed.
- 1.2 Several partnership meetings were held with Argyll and Bute Council where it was suggested that 10 portaloos be sited within the current Luss Car Park. Appropriate checks were made in respect of physical distancing as well as risk assessments regarding queuing within the car park with moving vehicles and it was agreed the safest place for 10 portaloos was within 8 parking spaces at the north section of the car park behind the old visitor centre.
- 1.3 As part of the Argyll and Bute Council Fees and Charges, set by Full Council, the Council charge for the use of any parking bays within our car parks. This was raised with the Chief Executive and forwarded to the Council Leadership meeting where a decision was made on 2 July 2020, due to the exceptional circumstances, to suspend charging for the bays from 4 July 2020 until the end of September where a report would be brought back to the September Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee.
- 1.4 It is recommended that Members agree that in the event of the National Park confirming on 13 September, the continued use of the parking bays, to recommend to Council that the charges for the parking bays continue to be waived for the rest of the financial year.

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

HELENSBURGH AND LOMOND AREA
COMMITTEE

ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE
SERVICES

17 SEPTEMBER 2020

LUSS CAR PARK – TEMPORARY PORTALOO FACILITIES

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This report details income lost due to the temporary siting of portaloos at Luss car park.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 It is recommended that Members agree that in the event of the National Park confirming on 13 September, the continued use of the parking bays, to recommend to Council that the charges for the parking bays continue to be waived for the rest of the financial year.

4.0 DETAIL

- 4.1 Luss, Duck Bay and Arrochar car parks have seen a marked increase in visitors since the relaxation of Lockdown. The feedback from Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park is that the portaloos are very well used and at this time they are still unable to utilise their own public toilets. The National Park are also utilising portaloos in other areas such as Loch Katrine and at this time are unable to confirm when they will be able to fully utilise their facilities and remove the portaloos.
- 4.2 Feedback from Argyll and Bute Council wardens is that the portaloos are in the safest position for pedestrians, however when the Luss Car Park is full they are causing congestion as the general area around the bays was previously used as a turning circle, therefore cars struggle to turn and exit this section of the car park. It is still however acknowledged that this is the safest area for pedestrian usage.
- 4.3 Contact was made with the Loch Lomond National Park on 28 July 2020 who confirmed they are looking to reduce the number of Portaloos as well as open their own public toilet block as soon as it is safe to do so. At this time they do not have a timeline, however officers have requested that an update be provided prior to Friday 13 September 2020 to allow time to consider an extension to the suspension of the car parking bay charges, or, ideally the removal of the temporary toilet units.

- 4.4 The current situation was put in place as a temporary measure. Whilst the measure provides a toilet facility it also reduces the car parking capacity. It is officer's preference that the toilet units can be either relocated within the landscaped areas to make available the full car park to ensure that full off street parking opportunities are available or alternatively that the use of the original block is reinstated. This would provide the full number of parking bays available to the public and would also complement the temporary traffic regulation order which has been promoted to ease traffic within the village of Luss.
- 4.5 Argyll and Bute Council normally charge for the use of our bays, this would be at a cost of £9 per bay per day. However, in the spirit of collaboration and partnership working, charges have not been recovered to date and it is recommended that if the National Park have a continued need to utilise the car parking bay for the siting of the portaloos, that this arrangement is extended.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 This report details temporary arrangements to enable additional portable toilets to be accommodated within parking bays at Luss car park.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1	Policy	In line with Council's Fees and Charges 2020-21
6.2	Financial	8 parking bays which would normally charge £9 per day
6.3	Legal	None
6.4	HR	None
6.5	Equalities /Fairer Scotland Duty	None
6.6	Risk	None
6.7	Customer Services	None

Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services
Kirsty Flanagan

Head of Roads and Infrastructure
Jim Smith

Policy Lead Councillor Robin Currie
August 2020

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ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**COUNCIL****FINANCIAL SERVICES****24 SEPTEMBER 2020**

BUDGET UPDATE 2020-21

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report provides a further update to the report presented to the Business Continuity Committee (BCC) on 13 August 2020 in respect of the current in-year 2020-21 budget position.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that Council note the update to the current financial position in 2020-21.

3. DETAIL

- 3.1 A report to the Business Continuity Committee (BCC) on 13 August 2020 highlighted the estimated financial impact of COVID on the Council for financial year 2020-21.
- 3.2 The report outlined an in-year funding shortfall of £4.023m after accounting for additional funding already received, assuming further budget consequentials, the use of this year's crown estate allocation as well as some in-year savings identified by Officers. On the day of the Committee, I advised that the budget gap was likely to reduce to around £3.2m as at the time of writing the report, the estimates were based on a blended education approach and now that schools are back full time, the estimated recovery costs had reduced.
- 3.3 The BCC agreed to establish a cross party informal budget working group to give consideration to the options available to bring the in-year estimates back in line with budget and it was the intention to report back to Council on these options in September.
- 3.4 The budget working group met on 24 August and an update on the estimated costs and budget shortfall was provided to the group. It was noted that a new scheme to help reimburse lost income is being considered by the Scottish Government and in addition COSLA and the Scottish Government are in discussions around a number of other financial flexibilities; both of these issues would assist in bringing the current year back into financial balance. The budget working group agreed that no specific actions were required at this stage and that further clarification on the lost income scheme and other financial flexibilities was required in order to allow full consideration of all options to address the in-year budget gap.
- 3.5 The updated estimated net additional costs are summarised in the table below with the more significant costs highlighted:

Cost Category	Cost (£,000)	Significant Elements
Mobilisation Costs	2,187	Community Food Project (£873k) Homeless Accommodation (£680k) Providing ELC to key workers (£328k) Additional Free School Meals (£92k)
Lost Income	6,872	Piers and Harbours (£2,300k) Waste Collection (£986k) Parking Fees and Fines (£929k) School Food and Drink (£624k) Planning Fees (£560k) Ferry Services (£336k) Previously agreed income savings (£618k)
Savings Not Delivered	112	Previously agreed savings which are not income related
General Fund Capital	1,087	Expenditure normally recharged to capital (£830k) Project contract inflation due to delay (£257k)
Recovery Costs	2,088	Education including additional teachers, transport reconfiguration, cleaning and digital technology (£1.612m) Waste and Environment (£258k) Offices (£119k)
Reduced Costs	(1,692)	Waste Costs including recycling, landfill tax and PPP charges (£540k) Closure of buildings (£296k) Reduced Travel (£295k) Lower Provision of School Meals (£270k)
Loss of Council Tax	555	Equivalent to 1% reduction in collections.
Net Impact	11,209	

3.6 The figures above also do not include the estimated additional costs for Social Work Services that are part of the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP). The HSCP has been required to contribute to a local mobilisation plan cost return on a regular basis, submitted to Scottish Government through NHS Highland. The return submitted in August estimated additional expenditure of £14.016m for the Partnership of which £7.203m relates to Social Work Services. The Scottish Government has "in principle" approved all mobilisation plans but no individual lines within the plan have been approved. It is my understanding that the funding set aside nationally by the Scottish Government is still around £300m short and therefore a risk remains that the HSCP could refer back to the Council to fund some of the additional costs. The Integrated Joint Board's (IJB) Head of Finance and Transformation has put together a financial recovery plan assuming that the undelivered savings included within the mobilisation plan may not be fully funded and this

will assist it mitigating any risk that the IJB will refer to the Council for additional funding.

3.7 Monies available to fund the estimated £11.209m gap can be categorised into three pots:

1. Specific SG Funding - Funding provided by the SG specifically for COVID related activity
2. Funding Flexibility - Flexibility provided by SG for funding provided for other ring fenced purposes which the Council may choose to use
3. Potential Alternative Options – Other options identified by Officers for consideration.

Specific SG Funding

3.8 The Scottish Government funding to date totals £6.116m as set out below.

- ABC Share of £50m Hardship Fund - £0.895m
- ABC Share of £155m Consequentials - £2.776m
- ABC Share of £30m Food Fund - £0.440m
- Additional Food Fund - £0.320m (equal to expenditure)
- ABC Share of £49m Consequentials - £0.878m (awaiting circular confirmation)
- Allocation for Registrars of Death - £0.009m
- ABC Share of £50m for cost of additional teachers and education support staff - £0.499m (2020/21 allocation)
- ABC Share of £30m for further cost of additional teachers and education support staff - £0.299m (2020/21 allocation).

Funding Flexibility

3.9 Additional flexibilities have been announced by the Scottish Government in relation to some ring-fenced funding. Whilst there is flexibility to utilise this funding it must be redeployed to the best support the education and care of children and young people during the response to the coronavirus pandemic, providing targeted support for the most vulnerable children and families. The funding not already committed is noted below:

- Early Years – £0.350m
- Pupil Equity Fund - £0.266m

Potential Alternative Options

3.10 The 13 August BCC report identified the possibility of being able to flexibly use the 2020-21 Scottish Crown Estate allocation, announced on 2 July, to assist with the in-year pressure and the report also identified three other potential options to reduce the funding gap. These totalled £2.774m and are noted below, however, we have now been advised that HMRC have now revisited their original decision in respect of the anticipated VAT reimbursement option and have deemed that we are no longer due this reimbursement.

- Crown Estates – £1.504m
- VAT reimbursement – £0.570m (no longer an option)
- Loans Fund - £0.300m
- Savings on Severance Costs – £0.400m.

Possible Lost Income Scheme

- 3.11 As noted above a new scheme to help reimburse lost income during the pandemic and boost cash flow has been launched in England and the Scottish Government have committed to a similar scheme in Scotland. All councils were asked to complete a lost income submission that Scottish Government had requested via COSLA. This has been submitted to Scottish Government but at the time of writing, COSLA have not seen sight of any draft guidance.
- 3.12 The scheme in England reimburses 75p in every pound of planned income that councils have lost from sales, fees and charges, not including the first 5%. Our total lost income in our draft COSLA submission is £6.872m. If an identical scheme was rolled out in Scotland the maximum we may receive is £4.897m based on current estimates. A note of caution needs to be applied to this as for the Council to receive a further £4.897m would require significant Scotland wide additional funding. The consequential associated with the scheme are, at this point, believed to be around £90m but this cannot be confirmed until all claims under the English scheme are made and this will not be until next May. If £90m was distributed based on actuals, the Council share would be between £1.5m and £1.6m.

Fiscal Flexibilities

- 3.13 COSLA has been working constructively with Scottish Government officials in relation to a range of fiscal flexibilities, providing options for councils to use to address significant pressures. There are now four options that are on the table. COSLA had hoped for formal approval by Scottish Ministers but Scottish Ministers now wish to undertake “due diligence” and make a joint approach to Treasury in relation to the proposals. At the time of writing this report, COSLA had received no update from Scottish Government.
- 3.14 The four options being considered are:

Option	Detail
Flexibility to use existing capital grant to fund revenue costs	Capital Fund - traditionally this is funded by capital receipts and revenue contributions to capital, that are held in the Capital Fund until required to finance a capital project or to repay debt. Dispensation is requested through Statutory Guidance to allow Councils to place capital receipts in a ‘Capital Grants and Unapplied Capital Receipts Account’ and then used to finance COVID expenditure. Due to COVID it is not anticipated that receipts will be high in 2020/21, therefore the “ask” is for flexibility over two financial years.

	<p>Use of Capital Grant for revenue purposes- The Scottish Government provides General Capital Grant to fund capital expenditure, some £468m in 2020/21. Proposed that £156m (£468m x 4/12) is set aside to partly address COVID by allowing a third of this year's Capital Grant allocation to be transferred to Revenue. This reflects delays in capital expenditure over the first four months of 2020-21 whilst the construction industry was on hold. The ask is only for 2020-21 capital grant.</p> <p><i>ABC Position: It is unlikely that the Council would want to take advantage of either of these options as at this current time, the capital programme could be underfunded in 2021-22 and 2022-23 if the settlement is similar to the settlement received in 2020-21.</i></p>
Business Grant Underspend	<p>It would appear that there is very limited scope for surplus, which at the very most, could be around £100m Scotland wide but a reconciliation is still to be done at council level and civil servants have suggested it could be significantly lower.</p>
Loans Fund Principal Repayment Holiday	<p>The proposal is to defer principal repayments for one year and extend the period over which debt is repaid by adding the deferred payment to the end of the life of the Loans Fund advance. Ideally, the ability to defer could be used by councils in either 2020-21 or 2021-22 as part of financial strategies. The most recent discussions suggest that the deferral could be permitted if repaid within 20 years rather than adding to the end of the life of the Loans Fund advance.</p> <p><i>ABC Position: The principal repayments are circa £4.8m which could be deferred. Depending on when this would need to be repaid there is a potential that it would create a cost pressure in future years.</i></p>
Service Concessions	<p>For PPP/PFI contracts, write the debt, based on depreciation, over the life of the asset rather than the contract period. Based on 2018-19 Councils paid £348.6m in principal and interest repayments and this proposal potentially halves the annual payments for the remainder of the life of the asset. There is also a significant potential one-off "saving" achieved through restating the value of the asset depending on the life of the asset. This reflects an overpayment of depreciation to date. Again ideally, this flexibility could be used by councils in either 2020-21 or 2021-22. This is very similar to the loans fund review.</p> <p><i>ABC Position: This is a complex issue to be assessed and officers are working through the modelling and will advise Members of the financial implications in due course.</i></p>

Updated Estimated Budget Gap

3.15 The table below provides the latest estimated shortfall and it can be seen that the current estimated shortfall before considering the use of potential alternative options is £4.477m which reduces to £2.273m if the other options are taken in full.

	£000	£000
Estimate of Additional Costs (para 3.5)		
Mobilisation Costs	2,187	
Lost Income	6,872	
Savings Not Delivered	112	
General Fund Capital	1,087	
Recovery Costs	2,088	
Reduced Costs	(1,692)	
Loss of Council Tax Income	555	
Total Additional Costs		11,209
Scottish Government Funding (para 3.8)		
Hardship Fund	895	
£155m Budget Consequentials	2,776	
Food Fund	440	
Additional Food Fund (equal to expenditure)	320	
£49m Consequentials	878	
Registrars of Death	9	
Share of £50m for education staff	499	
Share of £30m for education staff	299	
Total Scottish Government Funding		6,116
Funding Flexibility (para 3.9)		
Early Years	350	
PEF	266	
Total Funding Flexibility		616
Estimated shortfall before applying other options		4,477
Potential Alternative Options (para 3.10)		
Crown Estate Funding	1,504	
Loans Fund	300	
Saving on Severance Costs	400	
Total Potential Alternative Options		2,204
Estimated shortfall after applying other options		2,273

Next Steps

- 3.16 As noted in paragraph 3.4, the budget working group agreed at their meeting on 24 August that no specific actions were required at this stage and that further clarification on the lost income scheme and other financial flexibilities was required in order to allow full consideration of all options to address the in-year budget gap.
- 3.17 It is almost certain that the Council will receive additional funding in relation to the income scheme, the unknown is how much will be received. It is hoped that there will be sufficient additional funding to meet the estimated gap and ideally sufficient to meet the gap without the need to utilise the Crown Estate monies as the Council had previously agreed that this funding would be used to support coastal defences and flood works, projects currently underway or in development that are experiencing funding pressures or other liabilities affecting council infrastructure.
- 3.18 It is also likely that some of the flexibilities as outlined in paragraph 3.14 will be agreed and this will provide the Council with other options to consider, some of which may be better to be considered for financial year 2021-22 which will continue to be extremely challenging and likely to have additional pressures as a result of COVID.
- 3.19 The unallocated General Fund balance as 31 March 2020 was £1.326m and it is recommended that this isn't used towards the budget gap in light of the financial risk that the HSCP could seek additional funding from the Council.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The updated estimated net additional costs as a result of COVID-19 amount to £11.209m. The current estimated shortfall before considering the use of potential alternative options is £4.477m which reduces to £2.273m if the other options are taken in full.
- 4.2 It is likely that the estimated in-year funding gap in 2020-21 can be met from further additional funding from the Scottish Government income scheme, in addition to applying the options as outlined in the fiscal flexibilities paragraph, if approval is gained from Treasury.

5. IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Policy – None from this report but potential to have policy implications depending on options agreed to balance the budget.
- 5.2 Financial – This report outlines the estimated in-year budget gap as a result of COVID-19
- 5.3 Legal – None at this stage.
- 5.4 HR – None at this stage.
- 5.5 Fairer Scotland Duty:
- 5.5.1 Equalities – None at this stage.
- 5.5.2 Socio-Economic Duty – None at this stage.

- 5.5.3 Islands Duty – None at this stage.
- 5.6 Risk – There is a risk that the cost of COVID-19 is challenging the ability of the Council to operate within available resources.
- 5.7 Customer Service – None.

Kirsty Flanagan
Section 95 Officer
9 September 2020

Gary Mulvaney: Policy Lead for Financial Services and Major Projects

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of Schedule 7A of the Local Government(Scotland) Act 1973

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