

Public Document Pack

Argyll and Bute Council
Comhairle Earra Ghaidheal agus Bhoid

Executive Director: Douglas Hendry



Kilmory, Lochgilphead, PA31 8RT
Tel: 01546 602127 Fax: 01546 604435
DX 599700 LOCHGILPHEAD
22 September 2021

NOTICE OF MEETING

A meeting of **ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL** will be held **BY TEAMS** on **THURSDAY, 30 SEPTEMBER 2021** at **10:30 AM**, which you are requested to attend.

Douglas Hendry
Executive Director

BUSINESS

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (IF ANY)**
3. **MINUTES** (Pages 5 - 14)
Argyll and Bute Council of 24 June 2021
4. **MINUTES OF COMMITTEES**

- *
- (a) Policy and Resources Committee of 12 August 2021 (Pages 15 - 22)
 - (b) Community Services Committee of 25 August 2021 (Pages 23 - 28)
 - (c) Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee of 2 September 2021 (Pages 29 - 34)

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** (Pages 35 - 48)
Report by Leader of the Council
6. **POLICY LEADS REPORT** (Pages 49 - 70)
Report by Policy Leads
7. **CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER**
 - (a) Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report 2020/21 (Pages 71 - 100)
Report by Chief Officer, Health and Social Care Partnership

- (b) Appointment of Chief Social Work Officer (Pages 101 - 102)
Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support

8. REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT (Pages 103 - 112)

Report by Chief Executive

9. SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATIONS - A NATIONAL CARE SERVICE FOR SCOTLAND / COVID RECOVERY (Pages 113 - 128)

Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support

10. BEST PRACTICE REVIEW OF POLITICAL MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS (Pages 129 - 134)

Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support

11. POLITICAL MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS (Pages 135 - 140)

Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support

12. PROPOSAL TO AMEND THE SCHEME OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMUNITY COUNCILS (Pages 141 - 148)

Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support

13. MICROSOFT TEAMS/HYBRID MEETINGS/LIVE STREAMING UPDATE (Pages 149 - 154)

Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support

14. COUNCIL CONSTITUTION (Pages 155 - 170)

Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support

15. PROGRESS REPORT: DANGEROUS BUILDING: 5-7 EAST CLYDE STREET, HELENSBURGH (Pages 171 - 178)

Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth

16. CIVIC AWARDS AND UK CITY OF CULTURE COMPETITION (Pages 179 - 184)

Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth

17. HOUSING ANNUAL ASSURANCE STATEMENT 2021 (Pages 185 - 190)

Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth

18. STRATEGIC HOUSING INVESTMENT PLAN (SHIP) 2022/23 - 2026/27 (Pages 191 - 246)

Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth

19. ISLE OF BUTE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT - OUTCOME OF BALLOT AND NOMINATIONS FOR BUTE BID BOARD (Pages 247 - 252)

Report by Executive Director with the responsibility for Development & Economic Growth

20. UK LEVELLING UP FUND - POTENTIAL BIDS FOR FUNDING (Pages 253 - 260)

Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth

21. IMPLEMENTATION OF A NEW LICENSING REGIME UNDER THE ANIMAL WELFARE (LICENSING OF ACTIVITIES INVOLVING ANIMALS (S) REGULATIONS 2021 (Pages 261 - 268)

Recommendation by Planning, Protective and Licensing Committee of 18 August 2021

22. ARDENCRAIG GARDENS - NOTICE OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDER 13 (Pages 269 - 270)

Recommendation by the Bute and Cowal Area Committee of 31 August 2021

REPORT FOR NOTING

23. EXECUTIVE ACTIONS IN RESPONSE TO EMERGENCY SITUATION (Pages 271 - 276)

Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support

REPORT FOR DECISION

24. NOTICE OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDER 13 (Pages 277 - 280)

Moved by Councillor Robin Currie, seconded by Councillor Yvonne McNeilly

Climate Emergency – Argyll and Bute

Argyll and Bute Council:

1. Renews the commitment made by this council two years ago, in September 2019, to playing its part in the global effort to address climate challenges, and declares a climate emergency.
2. Acknowledges the United Nations' warning of a 'Code Red for Humanity' situation in relation to tackling climate change, following the publication of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Report Climate Change 2021 – The Physical Science Basis';
3. Welcomes the significant actions that the council has been taking in recent years, highlighted in Appendix 1, to ensure that Argyll and Bute improves even further its current positive position and low carbon emissions levels and continues to make a significant contribution, with our communities and partners, to fighting the critical impact of climate change;
4. Reaffirms our determination to contribute to tackling the impacts of climate change at local, regional and national levels wherever possible, by agreeing together today that this vital work will continue as a priority for this council, expanding where possible and where necessary as identified through the Action Plan and ongoing monitoring that is already in place.

Argyll and Bute Council

Contact: Sandra Campbell Tel: 01546 604401

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**MINUTES of MEETING of ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL held BY SKYPE
on THURSDAY, 24 JUNE 2021**

Present:

Councillor David Kinniburgh (Chair)

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Councillor Liz McCabe | Councillor Julie McKenzie |
| Councillor Gemma Penfold | Councillor Roderick McCuish |
| Councillor Jim Anderson | Councillor Yvonne McNeilly |
| Councillor John Armour | Councillor Barbara Morgan |
| Councillor Gordon Blair | Councillor Aileen Morton |
| Councillor Rory Colville | Councillor Gary Mulvaney |
| Councillor Robin Currie | Councillor Iain Paterson |
| Councillor Mary-Jean Devon | Councillor Alastair Redman |
| Councillor Lorna Douglas | Councillor Alan Reid |
| Councillor Jim Findlay | Councillor Elaine Robertson |
| Councillor George Freeman | Councillor Richard Trail |
| Councillor Audrey Forrest | 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 Sir Jamie McGrigor | |

Attending:

Pippa Milne, Chief Executive
Douglas Hendry, Executive Director
Kirsty Flanagan, Executive Director
David Logan, Head of Legal and Regulatory Support
Laurence Slavin, Interim Head of Financial Services
Ross McLaughlin, Head of Community Services
Fergus Murray, Head of Development and Economic Growth
Patricia O'Neill, Governance Manager
Fergus Walker, Revenues and Benefits Manager
Rona Gold, Community Planning Manager

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence intimated.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Jean Moffat declared a non-financial interest in Item 9 of the Agenda (Flexible Funds Projects) due to her being a trustee of Women's Aid. She advised that she would leave the meeting and take no part in the consideration of this item.

Councillor Jim Findlay declared a non-financial interest in Item 10 of the Agenda (Isle of Bute Business Improvement District) due to his position on the Steering Group. He advised that he would leave the meeting and take no part in the consideration of this item.

Councillors Douglas and Morgan each declared a non-financial interest in Item 12 of the Agenda (Supporting Communities Fund) due to their positions on local groups receiving

funding. They both advised that they would leave the meeting and take no part in the discussion of this item.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of Argyll and Bute Council held on 15 April 2021 were approved as a correct record.

4. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

(a) Policy and Resources Committee held on 13 May 2021

The Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 13 May 2021 were noted.

Arising under Item 8 (Supporting Attendance at Work Policy), the Council approved the new Supporting Attendance at Work Policy.

Arising under Item 10 (Strategic Events and Festivals Fund – Round 3 Grant Awards), the Council agreed that any underspend from SEF Round 3 (2021-22) is earmarked and used to augment future SEF round for 2023-24).

(b) Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee held on 3 June 2021

The Minute of the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee held on 3 June 2021 were noted.

(c) Community Services Committee held on 10 June 2021

The Minutes of the Community Services Committee held on 10 June 2021 were noted.

(d) Audit and Scrutiny Committee held on 15 June 2021

The Minutes of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee held on 15 June 2021 were noted.

5. LEADER'S REPORT

The Council gave consideration to a report outlining the Council Leader's activity during the period from 15 April to 11 June 2021. The report also included updated in relation to his Policy Lead portfolio.

Decision

The Council noted –

1. The content of the report.
2. That any reports, briefings or copy correspondence referred to in the report could be requested as appropriate through Leadership Support staff, noting that some confidential reports provided by external organisations, such as COSLA, may be restricted.

(Ref: Report by Leader of the Council dated 11 June 2021, submitted)

6. POLICY LEADS REPORT

The Council gave consideration to a report providing an update on the key areas of activity for each Policy Lead Councillor since the last update provided to the Council at the meeting held on 15 April 2021.

Decision

The Council noted the content of the report.

(Ref: Report by Policy Lead Councillors dated 14 June 2021, submitted)

7. YEAR END REPORTS PACK 2020-21

(a) COVERING REPORT AND UNAUDITED ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

The Council considered a report which gave an overview of the Unaudited Annual Accounts for 2020-21 and a summary of the significant movements from 2019-20 and sought approval for the unaudited annual accounts for 2020-21 for issue.

Decision

The Council –

1. Approved the unaudited annual accounts for the year ended 31 March 2021 for issue.
2. Approved write-off of the outstanding rent deposit debt totalling £122,844 and note that this will have no impact on the Council's General Fund as there is a full bad debt provision that matches the outstanding debt.

(Ref: Report by Section 95 Officer dated 16 June 2021, submitted)

(b) REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING

The Council considered a report which summarised the revenue budget position of the Council at the end of the financial year for 2020-21 which also summarised the movement in the General Reserve balance.

Decision

The Council –

1. Noted the revenue budget monitoring position as at the end of financial year 2020-21.
2. Noted that the unallocated balance within the General Fund as at 31 March 2021, after taking into account the contingency, amounts to £1.325m.
3. Approved the revenue virements over £0.200m between January and March 2021.

(Ref: Report by Section 95 Officer dated 11 June 2021, submitted)

(c) **EARMARKED RESERVES - 2020-21 YEAR-END**

The Council considered a report which provided information on the progress with balances already earmarked within the General Fund, new balances earmarked at the end of 2020-21 that qualify for automatic carry forward. The report also presented proposals to earmark 11 new areas of unspent budget which required approval.

Decision

The Council –

1. Approved the revised Policy on Year End Flexibility including approval of two new categories - for automatic carry forward of unspent income from One Council Property Team to invest in the Council's property portfolio to ensure it remains fit for purpose and for Fleet orders committed from revenue budget but not delivered within the financial year due to supplier issues.
2. Approved the 11 new unspent budget earmarked reserve proposals totalling £4.472m as supported by submitted business cases and note that there are a further five unspent budget earmarkings amounting to £1.300m that have been previously approved, as outlined in Appendices 2.1 and 2.2.
3. Noted the new balances of £25.153m at the end of 2020-21 that qualify for automatic carry-forward as outlined in Appendix 3.1. This includes unallocated COVID funding of £1.230m.
4. Noted the new balances of £2.389m at the end of 2020-21 from Social Work that qualify for automatic carry-forward as outlined in Appendix 3.2.
5. Noted the previously approved unspent budget earmarked reserves of £6.290m and the justification for continuing to earmark these as outlined in Appendix 4.
6. Noted a total of £34.673m of automatically carried forward balances which are previously earmarked balances in addition to the new amounts earmarked as a result of budget decisions in February 2020 and February 2021 as outlined in Appendix 5.
7. Noted that £0.537m of no longer required earmarked balances will be released back into the General Fund.

(Ref: Report by Section 95 Officer dated 10 June 2021, submitted)

(d) **CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - 31 MARCH 2021**

The Council considered a report which highlighted the contents of the financial summary in relation to the Capital Budget as at 31 March 2021. The report provided information on the financial position in respect of the Capital Plan and also the performance in terms of delivery of capital plan projects.

Decision

The Council noted the contents of the report, the financial summaries as detailed in Appendix 7, approved the roll forward of any over or underspends in relation to expenditure and income as part of the year and process and approved the proposed virement requests in Appendix 3.

(Ref: Report by Section 95 Officer dated 1 June 2021, submitted)

(e) **ANNUAL TREASURY REPORT 2020-21**

The Council considered the Annual Treasury Management report for 2020-21.

Decision

The Council noted and approved the Annual Treasury Management Report for 2020-21.

(Ref: Report by Section 95 Officer dated 1 June 2021, submitted)

(f) **STRATEGIC HOUSING FUND ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21**

The Council considered a report which provided an annual update on the Strategic Housing Fund (SHF) income and expenditure position for 2020-21.

Decision

The Council –

Noted the report on income and expenditure for 2020-21 and the balance on the SHF as at 31 March 2021 and noted the estimate future income for SHF for 2021-22.

(Ref: Report by Executive Director dated 25 May 2021, submitted)

8. 2022/23 BUDGET APPROACH

The Council considered a report which provided information on the proposed 2022-23 revenue budget approach including the identification of savings to balance the 2022-23 budget.

Decision

The Council –

1. Agreed to the overall 2022-23 budget approach including the continuation of themed reviews and establishing a new theme in relation to a shared service approach to catering and cleaning.
2. Agreed to the establishment of a cross party budget working group with a composition of six administration Members, three opposition Members comprising Councillors Mulvaney (Chair), Currie (Vice Chair), Colville, Good, Green and McNeilly and Councillors Findlay, Forrest and Lynch, and two Trade Union representatives.
3. Approved the draft budget timetable as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report.

(Ref: Report by Executive Director / Section 95 Officer dated 24 June 2021, submitted)

9. FLEXIBLE FUND PROJECTS

The Council considered a report which provided an update on the proposals for the use of the £537,000 the Council had received from the Scottish Government (SG) under the Flexible Fund banner.

Decision

The Council –

1. Approved the plans to progress matters and the list of projects as set out in Appendices 1-3.
2. Agreed that future amendments to the project programme and spend is delegated to the Executive Directors in consultation with the Leader, Depute Leader and the Leader of the largest opposition group.

(Ref: Report by Interim Head of Financial Services dated 24 June 2021, submitted)

10. ISLE OF BUTE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT - APPROVAL OF BALLOT SUBMISSION AND BUSINESS PLAN

The Council considered a report which asked Members to endorse the Isle of Bute BID (Business Improvement District) Steering Group Ballot submission and to approve the Business Plan in support of the Ballot.

Decision

The Council –

1. Approved the ballot request, approved the Isle of Bute BID Business Plan and agree to instruct the Returning Officer to conduct a ballot over 42 days in 2021 from Thursday 29th July to Thursday 9th September ('the ballot day').
2. Authorised the Executive Director with the responsibility for Development & Economic Growth to cast the votes on behalf of the council in favour of the BID.
3. Agreed that the Council will charge £6,500 (excluding VAT) per annum, to the BID company for administering the levy charge to businesses in Bute, with charges thereafter

increased annually. The first increase will apply on 01 March 2022, and annually thereafter for the subsequent term of the BID.

4. Agreed that, if the BID group are successful in the ballot, the Council will pay an estimated £9850 per annum in levy contributions for Council properties on the Isle of Bute.

5. Noted that if the BID group are successful in the ballot 2 representatives from the Council would be requested to sit on the Isle of Bute BID Board; one Elected Member and one Officer.

(Ref: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth dated 12 May 2021, submitted)

Councillors Taylor and Moffat left the meeting at this point.

11. MICROSOFT TEAMS/HYBRID MEETINGS/LIVE STREAMING UPDATE

The Council considered a report which provided an update on the progress of the project which will see Microsoft Teams becoming the preferred platforms for meetings and gives detail on the work which is ongoing to facilitate hybrid meetings and live streaming.

Decision

The Council –

1. Noted the progress made to date in relation to the rollout of Microsoft Teams as the preferred meeting platform, including the options relating to hybrid meetings and live streaming.
2. Agreed that all Council meetings will now move over to Teams which will become the default platform from August 2021; and
3. Agreed that a further update report will be submitted to the September 2021 meeting of the Council.

(Ref: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support dated 17 May 2021, submitted)

12. SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES FUND - EXTENSION OF TIME TO SPEND FUNDS

The Council considered a report which asked Members for a further extension for groups awarded funds from the Supporting Communities Fund 2020/21 due to the impacts of Covid guidance and uncertainty.

Decision

The Council –

1. Agreed to an extension until 31 December 2022 for groups to complete their projects and spend their allocated funds originally awarded in 2020.

2. Agreed that any Community Group awarded the funding in 2020 and who is unable to spend the funds by December 2022 returns the funds to the Council for redistribution in the Supporting Communities Fund decisions in Spring 2023.

(Ref: Report by Chief Executive dated 24 May 2021, submitted)

13. PROPOSED ARGYLL AND BUTE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2: NEXT STEPS

The Council considered a report which outlined the representations made to the Proposed Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan 2 (LDP) and outlined the next stages of the process, including the examination stage, in accordance with the Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006.

Decision

The Council –

1. Noted the process and next stages in progressing the PLDP2 to the Examination Stage.
2. Noted the issues raised in Appendix 1 to the report.
3. Approved the detailed responses in the Schedule 4 forms in Appendix 2 with the exception of Schedule 4 No 139 dealing with Ganavan and that this be approved subject to amendment recommending to the reporter that Housing be removed from the proposed list of uses for Potential Development Area P4023 in reflection of the validly made public representations under consideration by the reporter.
4. Authorised Officers to establish the Examination process and the submit all required documentation including the Schedule 4 forms to include No 139 dealing with Ganavan and amended as set out above and to report back on the outcome of the Examination prior to the adoption of the Plan.
5. Delegated authority to the Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth to make final checks and edits of the Schedule 4 forms and respond to any information requests received from the DPEA, and
6. Approved the Statement of Conformity at Appendix 3 for submission to Scottish Ministers prior to the Examination of the Plan.

(Ref: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth dated 12 May 2021, submitted)

14. SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT PLACE BASED INVESTMENT PROGRAMME FUNDING 2021/22

The Council considered a report which advised that the Council had been allocated £821,000 of funding from Scottish Government for the financial year 2021-22 in connection with the Placed Based Investment Programme. The reports asked Members for the initial approval to allocate funding to three projects and to delegate authority on the allocation of the remaining funding to the Policy and Resources Committee in August.

Decision

The Council –

1. Noted the allocation of £821,000 of Place Based Investment Programme funding from the Scottish Government for the financial year 2021-22.
2. Noted the main objectives of the Place Based Investment Programme funding and associated criteria and conditions of the grant including the tight timeline for delivery.
3. Agreed to the allocation of the Place Based Investment Programme funding to the three projects as detailed in paragraph 4.9 of the report.
4. Agreed to delegate authority on the allocation of the remaining unallocated Place Based Investment Programme funding for 2021-22 to the Policy and Resources Committee with a report going to the August meeting recommending subsequent individual projects and associated funding allocations for 2021-22.

(Ref: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth dated 24 May 2021, submitted)

15. REVIEW OF THE CHARGE FOR MILK IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

The Council considered a report which asked Members to remove the current 10p fee per 189ml portion of milk to be removed from August 2021 due to the change in service delivery model being adopted.

Decision

The Council –

1. Agreed that the current 10p fee per 189ml portion of milk be removed from August 2021.
2. Noted that this will incur a cost pressure in the region of £21,700 per annum.
3. Noted the wider benefits to children and young people of consuming milk.

(Ref: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Commercial Services, dated 5 May 2021)

16. BOUNDARIES SCOTLAND REVIEW OF ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

A report providing an update on the Boundaries Scotland, Review of Electoral Arrangements was before the Council for noting.

Decision

1. Noted the final proposals from Boundaries Scotland in regard to the 2019 Review of Electoral Arrangements for Argyll and Bute Council area at Appendix 1 to the report.
2. Noted that if Scottish Ministers are content with the report, any proposals approved by them will be in force prior to the Local Government Elections in May 2022.

(Ref: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support dated 11 June 2021, submitted)

17. REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT PROGRAMME UPDATE

A report providing an update on the refugee resettlement programme was before the Council for noting.

Decision

The Council –

1. Noted the Council's continued involvement in the resettlement of refugees on the Island of Bute through the Home Office UK Resettlement Scheme; and
2. Noted the continued good work of the Refugee Resettlement Group and the local community in resettling refugees on the Island of Bute.

(Ref: Report by Executive Director for Refugee Resettlement dated 1 June 2021, submitted)

**MINUTES of MEETING of POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE
held BY MICROSOFT TEAMS
on THURSDAY, 12 AUGUST 2021**

Present:

Councillor Robin Currie (Chair)

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Councillor Rory Colville | Councillor Yvonne McNeilly |
| Councillor Mary-Jean Devon | Councillor Gary Mulvaney |
| Councillor Kieron Green | Councillor Douglas Philand |
| Councillor Jim Findlay | Councillor Alastair Redman |
| Councillor Audrey Forrest | Councillor Elaine Robertson |
| Councillor Jim Lynch | Councillor Richard Trail |
| Councillor David Kinniburgh | |

Attending:

Pippa Milne, Chief Executive
Douglas Hendry, Executive Director
Laurence Slavin, Interim Head of Financial Services
Jane Fowler, Head of Customer Support Services
Fergus Murray, Head of Development and Economic Growth
Ross McLaughlin, Head of Commercial Services
John Gordon, Project Manager
Patricia O'Neill, Governance Manager

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bobby Good and Aileen Morton.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Elaine Robertson declared a financial interest in item 11 of the agenda (Place Based Investment Funding – Projects and Allocation) by reason that her husband had an interest in Gibraltar Street, Oban. She left the meeting during consideration of this item of business.

Councillor Audrey Forrest declared a non-financial interest in item 15 of the agenda (Dunoon Queen's Hall – Project Close Out Report) by reason of her Council appointment to the Board. She claimed the benefit of the dispensation contained at Section 5.18(2) of the Standards Commission's Guidance and Dispensations Note dated July 2018 to allow her to speak and vote on this item of business.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 13 May 2021 were approved as a correct record.

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4. FINANCIAL REPORTS MONITORING PACK - 30 JUNE 2021

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing a summary of the financial monitoring reports as at the end of June 2021. There were six detailed reports setting out the position as at the end of June 2021 which were summarised in the submitted report and which included the Revenue Budget Monitoring Report,

Monitoring of Policy Savings Options, Monitoring of Financial Risks, Capital Plan Monitoring Report, Treasury Monitoring Report and Reserves and Balances.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee –

1. Noted the revenue budget monitoring report as at 30 June 2021 and noted the comments in respect of the Health and Social Care Partnership.
2. Noted the progress with the policy savings options as at 30 June 2021.
3. Noted the financial risks for 2021-22.
4. Noted the capital plan monitoring report as at 30 June 2021.
5. Noted the treasury monitoring report as at 30 June 2021.
6. Recommended to Council the approval of the following amendments to the Annual Treasury Management Strategy:
 - i. Increase the investment limit for term deposits with UK banks from £15m to £20m.
 - ii. Increase the investment limit for term deposits with all other banks from £10m to £15m.
7. Noted the reserves and balances report as at 30 June 2021.
8. Recommended to Council that the revenue virements over £0.200m during April to June 2021 are approved.

(Reference: Report by Section 95 Officer dated 9 July 2021, submitted)

5. BUDGET OUTLOOK 2022-23 TO 2026-27

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update to the budget outlook 2022-23 to 2026-27 that had been reported to the Policy and Resources Committee on 13 May 2021.

Decision

Noted the current estimated budget outlook position for the period 2022-23 to 2026-27.

(Reference: Report by Section 95 Officer dated 20 July 2021, submitted)

6. REVIEW OF MEDIUM TO LONG TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update on the Council's medium to long term financial strategy which had been first approved by the Policy and Resources Committee on 19 October 2017.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee endorsed the medium to long term financial strategy for the Council.

(Reference: Report by Section 95 Officer dated 8 July 2021, submitted)

7. COUNCIL TAX ON DEVELOPMENTS MEETING DEFINED HOUSING NEEDS

The Committee gave consideration to a report proposing a permanent change to the Council's policy of charging double Council Tax on long term empty dwellings where the development contributes to meeting the Councils' defined housing need and are being supported by public funds.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee approved that the double charge for Council Tax is not levied on any property where both the following apply –

1. The property has been identified as contributing toward meeting the Council's defined housing need.
2. The applicant is in receipt of public sector or community development funding relating specifically to the property development.

(Reference: Report by Interim Head of Financial Services dated 29 July 2021, submitted)

8. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FQ1 2021/22

The Committee gave consideration to a report presenting the financial quarter 1 2021/22 performance reports for Financial Services, Commercial Services, Legal and Regulatory Support and Customer Support Services.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee noted the FQ1 2021/22 Performance Reports as presented.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Commercial Services and Legal and Regulatory Support and Executive Director with responsibility for Financial Services and Customer Support Services dated 19 July 2021, submitted)

9. SERVICE ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEWS 2020/21

The Committee gave consideration to a report presenting the Service Annual Performance Reviews and Scorecard 2020/21 for Financial Services, Community Planning and Development, Legal and Regulatory Support, Commercial Services and Customer and Support Services.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee approved the Service Annual Performance Reviews and Scorecards 2020/21 as presented prior to publishing on the Council Website.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Customer Support Services dated 25 June 2021, submitted)

10. LORN ARC TAX INCREMENTAL FINANCE PROGRAMME - RECONVENING OF DUNBEG WORKING GROUP

The Committee gave consideration to a report proposing the re-establishment of an officer/member working group to take forward proposals in relation to the Lorn Arc Tax Incremental Finance Programme.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee –

1. Agreed to the reconvening of the Dunbeg Working Group and agreed to the membership and remit as outlined within the submitted report.
2. Noted that an update report would be provided to the Policy and Resources Committee every 6 months to advise on progress of the Lorn Arc TIF programme.

(Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth dated 25 June 2021, submitted)

Councillor Elaine Robertson, having declared an interest in the following item of business, left the meeting and took no part in the consideration of this item of business.

11. PLACE BASED INVESTMENT FUNDING - PROJECTS AND ALLOCATION

The Committee gave consideration to a report seeking agreement on the allocation of remaining unallocated Place Based Investment Programme Funding for 2021/22.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee agreed to the allocation of the remaining unallocated Place Based Investment funding for 2021/22 to the projects in Table 1, paragraph 4.7 of the submitted report.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth dated 30 June 2021, submitted)

Councillor Elaine Robertson re-joined the meeting at this point.

12. SCOTLAND LOVES LOCAL GIFT CARD SCHEME

The Committee gave consideration to a report which sought endorsement of an Argyll and Bute Love Local gift card scheme designed to encourage local shopping, drive footfall to local businesses and keep spend local in the local area for longer.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee –

1. Agreed to the Council taking part in the initiative and signing up to the concordat in regard to the initial fully funded trial period for the Love Local Gift card.
2. Agreed to give further consideration to a future report in early 2022 that looks at the possibility of continuing the scheme beyond the initial year, once sufficient information is available to determine its benefit, given the resource implications.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth dated 3 August 2021, submitted)

13. COVID DISCRETIONARY FUND

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update on phase 2 of the Council's Discretionary Fund. The report also set out an approach for how the remainder of the fund could be used to support businesses impacted by Covid in Argyll and Bute.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee –

1. Note the final position regarding the two phases of the Discretionary Fund.
2. Approve the remaining monies in the Discretionary Fund be used to establish an Argyll and Bute COVID Business Hardship Fund to directly support business affected by COVID with the criteria as noted in paragraph 3.7 and with three levels of grant award as noted in paragraph 3.10.
3. Agree that the fund is advertised at least 14 days prior to applications being accepted and the application period will be for 7 days.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth / Financial Services dated 4 August 2021, submitted)

14. CLIMATE CHANGE BOARD UPDATE PAPERS

(a) Decarbonisation Plan Tracker

The Committee gave consideration to a report presenting the Decarbonisation Action Plan Tracker showing the progress of a number of key actions contained within the De-Carbonisation Plan. The De-carbonisation Plan sets out a number of key actions which contribute towards reducing overall carbon emissions and footprint in Argyll and Bute during 2021.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee –

1. Noted the Climate Change Board activity Tracker contained within Appendix A to the submitted report.

2. Noted the actions contained within the tracker contribute towards the Council becoming a net zero organization by 2045 as outlined in our De-carbonisation Plan.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Commercial Services dated 16 July 2021, submitted)

(b) **COP 26 - Update on Training and Event Planning**

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update to the report provided to the May meeting of the Committee in respect of Elected Member training and also the two COP26 events that were agreed on.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee noted the update on activity in relation to climate change training and the COP26 events.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Commercial Services dated 16 July 2021, submitted)

(c) **Partnership Planting with Argyll and the Isles Coast & Countryside Trust (ACT) at Kilmory Home Farm**

The Committee gave consideration to a report outlining proposals for a planting partnership between Argyll and Bute Council and Argyll and the Isles Coast and Countryside Trust for an area of 60 hectares of native woodland planting on Council owned land principally around Kilmory Home Farm.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee noted that the Climate Change Board, the Executive Director with responsibility for Commercial Services and the associated Departmental Management Team had agreed the following recommendations:-

1. Agreed to Licence up to 30ha of land at Kilmory Home Farm to ACT to be used as compensatory planting of native woodland and funded by Scottish and Southern Electric Networks (SSEN) thus supporting rural skills, biodiversity creation, and carbon sequestration,
2. Agreed to Licence up to an additional 30ha of land at Kilmory Home Farm to ACT to be used for direct carbon sequestration to offset our Council's Carbon Footprint by using funding from Woodland Grant Schemes and formal Carbon Credit arrangements.
3. Agreed to appoint ACT to develop a woodland management strategy for existing conifer woodland blocks at Kilmory Home Farm (Blocks 7 and 9) including strategy for removal of commercial timber crop, felling licences and replanting scheme with reinvestment from timber income into replanting or climate change related activity on Council Estate; and
4. Agreed that preferred areas for planting will be Blocks 4, 5, 6, 8, 10 and

east of 11 with options on the remaining numbered blocks shown on Appendix A following collaboration with Argyll and Bute Council officers to identify planting sites which will complement other development opportunities under consideration.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Commercial Services dated 16 July 2021, submitted)

15. DUNOON QUEEN'S HALL - PROJECT CLOSE OUT REPORT

The Committee gave consideration to a recommendation from the Bute and Cowal Area Committee held on 1 June 2021 with regard to the Dunoon Queen's Hall Project Close Out Report.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee approved the recommendation that the Queen's Hall Refurbishment and Public Realm Improvements Project be formally closed out as detailed at section 1.3 of the appended Project Close Out Report.

(Reference: Recommendation from Bute and Cowal Area Committee held on 1 June 2021 and report by Executive Director with responsibility for Commercial Services dated 18 May 2021, submitted)

16. POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

The Policy and Resources Committee Workplan was before the Committee for noting.

Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee noted the content of the workplan as at August 2021.

(Reference: Policy and Resources Committee Workplan dated August 2021, submitted)

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**MINUTES of MEETING of COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE held BY MICROSOFT TEAMS
on WEDNESDAY, 25 AUGUST 2021**

Present: Councillor Yvonne McNeilly (Chair)

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Councillor Jim Anderson | Councillor Gemma Penfold |
| Councillor Lorna Douglas | Councillor Alastair Redman |
| Councillor Audrey Forrest | Councillor Alan Reid |
| Councillor Kieron Green | Councillor Elaine Robertson |
| Councillor Graham Hardie | Margaret Anderson |
| Councillor Donald MacMillan BEM | William Stewart Shaw |
| Councillor Iain Paterson | Alison Palmer |

Attending: Douglas Hendry, Executive Director
 Louise Connor, Head of Education: Learning and Teaching
 Jennifer Crocket, Head of Education: Lifelong Learning and Support
 Ross McLaughlin, Head of Commercial Services
 Stuart McLean, Committee Manager
 Simon Easton, Education Manager
 Wendy Brownlie, Education Manager
 Superintendent Claire Dobson, Police Scotland
 Group Commander Gregg McKearney, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
 Fiona Davies, Interim Chief Officer, Argyll & Bute HSCP
 Stephen Whiston, Head of Strategic Planning, Performance & Technology,
 Argyll & Bute HSCP
 Kevin Anderson, General Manager, Live Argyll

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Gordon Blair, Mary-Jean Devon and Julie McKenzie.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Graham Archibald Hardie declared a non-financial interest in the report dealt with at item 6 on the Agenda (Argyll & Bute HSCP – Performance Report June 2021) as he was appointed to the role of non-Executive Member with NHS Highland by the Council.

Councillor Hardie also declared a non-financial interest in the reports dealt with item 7a on the Agenda (Live Argyll – Monitoring and Performance Reporting – Update Report) and 7b on the Agenda (Live Argyll Annual Report 2020/21) as he was appointed to the Board of Live Argyll by the Council.

Councillor Hardie claimed the benefit of the dispensation contained at Section 5.18(2) of the Councillors Code of Conduct to enable him to remain in the meeting and speak and vote on these reports.

Councillor Audrey Forrest declared a non-financial interest in the reports dealt with item 7a on the Agenda (Live Argyll – Monitoring and Performance Reporting – Update Report) and 7b on the Agenda (Live Argyll Annual Report 2020/21) as she was appointed to the Board of Live Argyll by the Council.

Councillor Forrest claimed the benefit of the dispensation contained at Section 5.18(2) of the Councillors Code of Conduct to enable her to remain in the meeting and speak and vote on these reports.

Councillor Jim Anderson declared a non-financial interest in the report dealt with at 7b on the Agenda (Live Argyll Annual Report 2020/21). He advised that he would be remaining in the meeting.

3. MINUTE

The Minute of the Community Services Committee held on 10 June 2021 was approved as a correct record.

4. ARGYLL & BUTE LOCAL POLICING PLAN (2020-2023) - QUARTERLY REPORT (QTR1 - 2021/2022)

Superintendent Claire Dobson presented the Quarter 1 – 2021/22 update in relation to the Argyll and Bute Local Policing Plan 2020 – 2023 and responded to a number of questions asked.

Decision

The Committee reviewed and noted the contents of the report.

(Reference: Report for Quarter 1 2021/22 by Divisional Commander for Argyll and West Dunbartonshire Division, Police Scotland, submitted)

5. SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE - ARGYLL & BUTE PERFORMANCE REPORT Q1 - 1 APRIL 2021 - 30 JUNE 2021

Group Commander Gregg McKearney presented a report highlighting Scottish Fire and Rescue Service's review of local performance within Argyll and Bute for Q1 2021-2022 and responded to a number of questions asked.

Decision

The Committee reviewed and noted the contents of the report.

(Reference: Q1 2021/22 Report by Local Senior Officer, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, submitted)

6. ARGYLL & BUTE HSCP - PERFORMANCE REPORT JUNE 2021

Consideration was given to a report which provided an update on the impact of service performance with regards to the Covid-19 pandemic and the progress made with regard to remobilising health and social care services in Argyll and Bute.

Decision

The Committee considered and noted the IJB Health and Social Care Partnership report as at June 2021.

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

Margaret Anderson joined the meeting during consideration of the foregoing item.

7. LIVE ARGYLL

(a) Monitoring and Performance Reporting - Update Report

A report providing an update on the performance and monitoring arrangements between Live Argyll and the Council as set out in the various agreements between the Council and the Trust was considered.

Decision

The Committee considered and noted the contents of the report.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Commercial Services dated 9 August 2021, submitted)

(b) Live Argyll Annual Report 2020/21

Consideration was given to Live Argyll's Annual Report for 2020/2021.

Decision

The Committee reviewed and noted the contents of the report.

(Reference: Live Argyll Annual Report 2020/2021, submitted)

8. COMMUNITY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT: STRATEGIC PLAN FOR CLD IN ARGYLL AND BUTE 2021-2024

A report updating the Committee on the development of the Community Learning and Development (CLD) Strategic Plan for 2021 - 2024 was considered.

Decision

The Committee:

1. noted the areas requiring further action during the lifetime of the new plan; and
2. approved the CLD Partnership Strategic Plan for 2021 – 2024.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Education dated 25 August 2021 and CLD Strategic Partnership Plan 2021-2024, submitted)

9. SERVICE ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW 2020/21 - EDUCATION SERVICE

A paper presenting the Committee with the Service Annual Performance Review and Scorecard for 2020/21 for the Education Service was considered.

Decision

The Committee reviewed and approved the Service Annual Performance Review and Scorecard 2020/21 as presented prior to publishing on the Council website.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Customer Support Services dated 25 June 2021, submitted)

10. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FQ1 2021/22 - EDUCATION SERVICE

A paper presenting the Committee with the FQ1 2021/22 performance report for the Education Service was considered.

Decision

The Committee reviewed and scrutinised the FQ1 2021/22 Performance Report as presented.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Education dated 29 July 2021, submitted)

11. 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 Annual Education Plan for 2020-21 and outlining priority actions for 2021-22 was considered.

Decision

The Committee:

1. noted the progress made with respect to priority actions within the 2020-21 Argyll and Bute Annual Education Plan;
2. approved the 2021-22 Annual Education Plan;
3. approved the publishing of the 2021-22 Annual Education Plan; and
4. approved the submission of the 2021-22 Annual Education Plan to Scottish Government.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Education dated 12 August 2021 and Annual Education Plan 2021/22 and 2020/21 Progress Report, submitted)

12. LEARNING ESTATE STRATEGY

In 2018 the Scottish Government published a Learning Estate Strategy to set out a joint vision for the learning estate of the future 'Connecting People, Places and Learning'. In line with this National Strategy being produced, the Education Change Programme identified Education Learning Estate as a work stream which would produce a bespoke Learning Estate Strategy for Argyll and Bute.

As part of the Education Change Programme a project board was established to develop a Learning Estate Strategy. Membership of the board was made up of a cross section of Council services who contributed to the layout and content of the document that has been prepared for approval. This document sets out the agreed guiding principles for the Argyll and Bute Learning Estate Strategy that aligns with those of Scottish Government and was before the Committee for consideration.

Decision

The Committee considered the document and agreed that it be adopted as the Learning Estate Strategy for Argyll and Bute Council.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Education and Argyll & Bute Learning Estate Strategy 2020-2030, submitted)

Councillor Donald MacMillan left the meeting during consideration of the foregoing item.

13. REPORT ON ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL RESPONSE TO SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION ON THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

A report informing the Committee of the background and context relating to Argyll and Bute Council's continuing preparation for the incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into Scots Law, and the associated work currently underway in Argyll and Bute in response to the opportunities and challenges which have emerged was considered.

Decision

The Committee:

1. noted the current position with regard to the incorporation of UNCRC into Scots Law and the associated opportunities and challenges, and work currently underway in Argyll and Bute;
2. noted the Action Plan priorities defined in the Argyll and Bute Children's Rights Report 2020-2023;
3. endorsed the work of the Officer Working Group co-ordinating preparation for the incorporation of the UNCRC into Scots Law; and
4. agreed to a further report coming to the Community Services Committee with further progress outlined.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Education dated August 2021, submitted)

14. SQA SCHOOL ALTERNATIVE CERTIFICATION AWARDS 2021

A report providing an update on the outcome of the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) Certification Model 2021 awards was considered.

Decision

The Committee considered and noted the outcome of the initial SQA awards for pupils in academic year 2020/21 as follows:

- National 4 results are 100%
- National 5 results are 87.33%
- Higher results are 90.15%

- Advanced Higher are 91.41%

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

15. COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2021 - 2022

The Community Services Committee work plan for 2021 – 2022 was before the Committee for information.

Decision

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

(Reference: Community Services Committee Work Plan 2021 – 2022, submitted)

**MINUTES of MEETING of ENVIRONMENT, DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE
COMMITTEE held BY MICROSOFT TEAMS
on THURSDAY, 2 SEPTEMBER 2021**

Present:

Councillor Robin Currie (Chair)

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Councillor Rory Colville | Councillor Gary Mulvaney |
| Councillor John Armour | Councillor Alastair Redman |
| Councillor David Kinniburgh | Councillor Alan Reid |
| Councillor Roderick McCuish | Councillor Andrew Vennard |
| Councillor Sir Jamie McGrigor | Councillor Anne Horn |
| Councillor Jean Moffat | Councillor Jim Lynch |
| Councillor Aileen Morton | Councillor Bobby Good |

Attending:

Fergus Murray, Head of Development and Economic Growth
 Jim Smith, Head of Roads and Infrastructure Services
 Stuart McLean, Committee Manager
 Iain MacInnes, Digital Liaison Officer

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Donald Kelly.

2. DECLARATIONS FOR INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest intimated.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee held on 3 June 2021 were approved as a correct record.

Councillors Anne Horn and Andrew Vennard joined the meeting during consideration of the following item of business.

4. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FQ1 2021/22

The Committee gave consideration to a report presenting the FQ1 2021/22 Performance Reports for Development and Economic Growth and Roads and Infrastructure Services in a revised simplified format commensurate with the Covid-19 situation.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee noted the FQ1 2021/22 Performance Reports as presented.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Customer Support Services dated 19 July 2021, submitted)

5. SERVICE ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEWS 2020/21

The Committee gave consideration to a report presenting the Service Annual Performance Reviews 2020/21 and Scorecards for the Development and Economic Growth and Roads and Infrastructure Services.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee approved the Service Annual Performance Reviews and Scorecards as presented prior to publishing on the Council website.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Customer Support Services dated 25 June 2021, submitted)

6. ROADS CAPITAL RECONSTRUCTION PROGRAMME UPDATE 2021/22

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update on the progress of the delivery of road resurfacing and reconstruction works.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee –

1. Endorsed the progress made on delivering the programme of capital works for 2021/22.
2. Noted that the council had been successful in securing an additional £1.249M through the Scottish Timber Transport fund.
3. Noted that progress updates were provided regularly on the Council website.
4. Noted and endorsed the allocation of funding for footway schemes.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure dated July 2021, submitted)

7. WINTER SERVICE POLICY 2021/22

The Committee gave consideration to a report presenting the Winter Service Policy 2021/22 which remained in a similar format and covered a similar network to that approved by the Committee in previous years while taking into consideration Covid-19.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee –

1. Agreed that the £50k funding allocation for community resilience is used as part of the general winter budget.
2. Noted the weather summary from 2020/21 at Appendix 1 to the submitted report.

3. Approved the 2021/22 Winter Maintenance Policy at Appendix 2 to the submitted report.
4. Endorsed the advisory signing, routes unsuitable in severe conditions at Appendix 3 to the submitted report.
5. Approved the Salt Use Reduction and Preservation of Stocks Protocol at Appendix 4 to the submitted report.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure dated August 2021, submitted)

8. FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update on progress with flood risk management activities across Argyll and Bute including news actions which are in development. The report detailed work complete on the Local Flood Risk Management Plans, flood monitoring network, flood risk management WDM system, flood studies and schemes in development, coastal adaption plans and watercourse inspections.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee endorsed the content of the submitted report.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure dated 2 September 2021, submitted)

9. CAMPBELTOWN FLOOD PROTECTION SCHEME

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update on the progress with the Campbeltown Flood Protection Scheme including work completed, key dates and risks going forward.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee –

1. Endorsed the content of the submitted report.
2. Noted that the full Business Case would be brought back to the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee in December 2021.
3. Noted that construction of the final scheme would be subject to approval of Full Business Case prior to tender award.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure dated 2 September 2021, submitted)

10. TACKLING DIGITAL EXCLUSION IN ARGYLL AND BUTE

The Committee gave consideration to a report presenting a set of options and criteria for the £250k Tackling Digital Exclusion Fund that had been approved by the Council at its budget meeting in February 2021. The options were described in detail with the advantages and disadvantages of each option identified.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee –

1. Approved that £10k of the £250k fund be used to start a marketing campaign to target low take-up areas for Superfast Broadband.
2. Approved that the remaining £240k be distributed as outlined in Option 2 at paragraph 4.5 of the submitted report.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth dated 22 July 2021, submitted)

11. TRANSFORMATIONAL PROJECTS & REGENERATION TEAM - LARGE SCALE PROJECT UPDATE REPORT

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update on the delivery progress of the larger-scale, externally funded project work of the Transformational Projects and Regeneration Team.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee –

1. Noted the current progress contained within the submitted report.
2. Approved that £80,000 Place Based Investment Funding for Lochgilphead Front Green be swapped with £80,000 Town Centre Funding for Bowmore Public Realm to ensure that the delayed Bowmore project could still go ahead and to remove the risk of having to pay back any unspent Town Centre Funding.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth dated July 2021, submitted)

12. PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING GRANT UPDATE

The Committee gave consideration to a report outlining works undertaken using the Private Sector Housing Grant in 2020/21. The Private Sector Housing Grant supports adaptations to allow people to stay in their own homes and also supports common repair works to properties in Argyll and Bute with a budget of £1.033M for 2020/21.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee –

1. Noted the statutory nature of the work carried out by the Private Sector Housing Grant budget.
2. Noted the role of the Private Sector Housing Grant in addressing common repairs enabling significant additional funding from other external sources helping maintain and improve existing housing stock in the local authority area.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth dated 7 July 2021, submitted)

13. RAPID REHOUSING TRANSITION PLAN ANNUAL UPDATE

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an annual update on Argyll and Bute Council's Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee noted the progress in Argyll and Bute of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan within the complex environment of the Covid-19 lockdown in 2020/21.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth dated 7 July 2021, submitted)

Councillor Sir Jamie McGrigor joined the meeting during consideration of the following item of business.

14. STRATEGIC HOUSING FUND SCRUTINY REVIEW

The Committee gave consideration to a recommendation from the Audit and Scrutiny Committee in respect of the Strategic Housing Fund Scrutiny Review which had been undertaken as per the 2019/20 Scrutiny Plan.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee considered and noted the content of the Strategic Housing Fund Scrutiny Report.

(Reference: Recommendation from Audit and Scrutiny Committee held on 15 June 2021 and report by Chair of Strategic Housing Fund Scrutiny Panel dated 15 June 2021, submitted)

15. ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE EXTERNAL CONTRACTS

A report providing an update on Roads and Infrastructure Services activities which had been outsourced to external contractors and works provided to external bodies over previous three financial years was before the Committee for noting, as per a request at the last meeting of the Committee.

Decision

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

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure dated August 2021, submitted)

**16. ENVIRONMENT, DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE
WORK PLAN**

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee work plan 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 September 2021, submitted)

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**COUNCIL**

30th September 2021

LEADER'S REPORT

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Leader of the Council and Policy Lead Councillors provide a report outlining their strategic activities for consideration at each meeting of Argyll and Bute Council, except the budget meeting in February. The last Leader's Report and Policy Leads Report were considered at the council meeting on 24th June 2021. This report covers the period from that date until 10th September 2021.
- 1.2 The report includes an outline of the council Leader's activity during the period, and includes updates in relation to his Policy Lead portfolio.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members are asked to consider the report.
- 2.2 Members are asked to note that any reports, briefings or copy correspondence referred to in the report can be requested as appropriate through Leadership Support staff, although it should be noted that some confidential reports provided by external organisations such as COSLA may be restricted.

3. COSLA LEADERS MEETINGS

- 3.1 COSLA board meetings are operating according to their normal schedule but continue to take place virtually, via Teams. Below are the agenda items for the COSLA Leaders meetings I have attended during this period. Details of the COSLA strategic board meetings are noted elsewhere in this report.

COSLA Special Leaders, 24th June 2021

- Discussion on Strategic Finance issues facing local authorities (including pay issues) – with Kate Forbes, Cabinet Secretary for Finance

COSLA Leaders, 25th June 2021

- The Promise
- Employability Phase 2 of No One Left Behind
- COSLA and Improvement Service Partnership
- Scottish Local Government Conduct Order 2021
- Digital Citizenship Guide for Councillors – Civility in Public Life
- Christie Commission – Ten Years On
- Local Government Finance
- Pay Negotiations
- Scottish Government First 100 Days Commitment
- Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children – National Transfer Scheme Emergency Response
- Covid-19 and Supporting Roadside Encampments for Gypsy Travellers
- Abolition of Instrumental Music Tuition Fees and Core Curriculum Costs
- Pandemic Proofing the Education System
- Flood Risk Management Funding
- Priority Groups – Local Government Employment Commitment
- Affordable Housing Supply Programme
- Fair Work in Social Care
- Play Parks Renewal (100 Days Commitment)
- UNISON One Year of Covid Survey
- Distribution

COSLA Special Leaders, 30th July 2021

- Pay Negotiations
- Revised Engagement Protocol for Covid-19 Decision Making
- Support for Destitute People with No Recourse to Public Funds
- Play Park Renewal Update
- Community Planning Improvement Board
- Partnership Development Framework for ADPs
- Distribution

COSLA Leaders, 27th August 2021

- Joint Address by Scottish Police Authority Chair and Chief Constable Police Scotland
- Car Use and the Just Transition to Net Zero
- Localism – APSE report

- Economic Transformation Strategy
- UK Subsidy Control Bill
- 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence 2021 Proposal
- COP26 Climate Summit
- Role of National and Local Leadership in Ongoing Covid-19 Compliance Activity
- Local Government Finance
- Pay Negotiations
- National Care Service Consultation
- National Recovery Strategy
- Financial Support for Adult Social Care Providers
- Annual Adult Social Care Uplift
- Affordable Housing Supply Programme
- Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children National Transfer Scheme
- Afghan Locally Employed Staff Scheme
- SQA Levy in the Context of the Alternative Certification Model
- ELC Funding for 2022/23
- Scottish Child Payment – Bridging Payment
- Tenants Grant Fund
- Distribution

3.2 Interview with Improvement Service on Covid-19 Governance: The Improvement Service have been interviewing council Leaders and Chief Executives over the past few months to explore the governance arrangements that local authorities put in place and used given the necessary changes to daily business wrought by the Covid-19 pandemic.

I had an interview with David Barr of the Improvement Service on 18th June to feed back in relation to the arrangements we put in place in Argyll and Bute, namely the establishment of the Business Continuity Group and the Leadership Group. The activities of both have been covered in detail in previous reports to council. I was happy to report to David that our arrangements had worked well in terms of handling the unprecedented extent and nature of demand on council services in governance terms, supporting effective decision making and allowing other more routine decisions and items of business to continue.

3.3 Helensburgh Waterfront Development Visits: It was great to join members of the Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee on Friday 18th June for a socially distanced outdoor site visit to the Helensburgh Waterfront development. As befits a significant multimillion pound regeneration investment, this ambitious project is making great progress and although it is very much a working construction site it's already clear what a fantastic amenity this will make for the town.



I returned to the site on 31st August to mark the first anniversary of construction work, joining councillor and officer colleagues along with main contractors Heron Bros This £22m project remains on track with the main building structurally complete and landscaping under way. As well as promising a fantastic new facility for the town in the future, this development is currently providing employment for local people and businesses, as well as offering learning and skills development opportunities through a number of apprenticeships.

3.4 Alliance Scotland meeting: The first of two Leader engagements on 23rd June was the Alliance Scotland meeting (formerly the Industrial Communities Alliance). Agenda items discussed were:

- Gap funding for land and property development
- UK Levelling Up and Community Renewal Funds
- Making Scotland's Future – A Recovery Plan for Manufacturing
- Cross-Party Group on Industrial Communities position statement

3.5 Scottish Land Commission Public Meeting on Land Use in Scotland: 'Land matters because we all use it, and we all need it' has been the theme for a series of virtual public meetings held by the Scottish Land Commission over the summer. The session for the Argyll and Lochaber area took place on Wednesday 23rd June at 7pm.

A short presentation on the Commission's work was followed by a question and answer session with commission Chair, Andrew Thin, and

Land Commissioners Megan MacInnes and Lorne MacLeod. This offered opportunities to consider land reform, the impact in the local area and how it can contribute to national success overall.

The session also focused on the following issues:

- Modernising land ownership
- Transforming vacant and derelict land
- Land for housing
- The SLC's Good Practice programme
- Putting land rights and responsibilities into practice
- The work of the Tenant Farming Commissioner
- The new Expert Advisory Group on Tax on Land and Property

This was a well-attended session on a very interesting issue. All of SLC's virtual public meetings (and other events) are recorded and can be found on their YouTube channel.

3.6 Community Planning Partnership Management Committee: 30th June saw the CPP Management Committee coming together on a virtual basis once more to consider the following issues:

- Outcome 4 – Children and Young People:
 - The Promise
 - Children's Rights Update
 - Youth Participation Structure
- Matters arising from Area Community Planning Groups
- Cross Cutting Themes:
 - Digital Inclusion
 - Building Back Better (Communities)
 - Community Wealth Building
- Child Poverty Training for Partners
- Climate Change:
 - CPP Group Update
 - Cowal Youth Forum Video on Keep Scotland Beautiful
- Outcome 3 – Community Learning and Development Partnership

Coming together as community planning partners also provides opportunities during discussions to consider key issues that affect all of us – including the ongoing impact of the A83, for example. We are all aware of the challenges that the current situation brings to our own service delivery – as we all work together in calling for a swift solution it is helpful to add other voices, viewpoints and, crucially, experiences to what is arguably one of the most significant challenges for our region:

3.7 Transport Connectivity: Since my last Leader's Report, there has been no significant change in the current arrangements at the A83 which continues to have just one lane open under traffic light control, with periodic closures and diversions to the Old Military Road if weather conditions require it. While this, at least, affords a degree of improvement compared to last year, it remains deeply unsatisfactory and it is vital to continue pressing for urgent action here as much as possible. This is exacerbated in the context of any disruption at the A82 Loch Lomond route which has, sadly due to a number of road accidents, seen several periods of closure over the summer months.

We continue to press the case at every possible opportunity, including meetings of the A83 Taskforce (most recently on 9th September).

I did meet with Graeme Dey, Minister for Transport, when he visited Oban on 24th August. We started off with a tour of Oban Airport and an opportunity to highlight to Mr Dey the important role it plays in keeping our island communities connected. We were also able to highlight to him the NHS supply drone project which operates from the facility.

We then moved to the council's Oban North Pier building for our meeting. In our discussions we covered a wide range of transport issues including of course the A83 Rest and Be Thankful, a range of ferry issues, and the Strategic Transport Projects Review 2.

I was heartened to hear him recognise that there is room for improvement in relation to ferry services and also welcomed his offer of a session for all members with his officials in relation to the Rest and Be Thankful, and his wish to take a different approach to such discussions than has perhaps happened previously. All in all this was a positive introductory session.

I have followed up our meeting with new correspondence to Mr Dey, reiterating the vital importance of resilient solutions for transport connectivity to and from the area, and highlighting some particular areas of concern expressed to me by colleagues across the chamber and our communities. This includes the ongoing impact of an ageing Calmac fleet, the very disruptive effect on vital island links caused by breakdowns and general capacity problems. Members have also highlighted to me ongoing issues in relation to the Dunoon-Gourock passenger service and I have raised these in my correspondence with the Minister.

3.8 Island Matters: On 6th July, the first meeting (in the life of the new Scottish Parliament) of the Islands Strategic Group was held via Teams. This was the first meeting convened by the new Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands, Mairi Gougeon MSP, and was a helpful opportunity for an introductory discussion with her in relation to Argyll and

Bute's unique position as the Scottish local authority with the highest number of inhabited islands. Graeme Dey, Minister for Transport, was also present.

This initial meeting considered the following topics:

- Manifesto commitments in relation to island issues
- Islands Programme Finance
- Islands Transport – Ferry Services
- STPR2 update
- Population matters
- Island Community Impact Assessments

Meeting with Cabinet Secretary, 12th July: We had an opportunity to follow on up on island issues with the Cabinet Secretary by securing, at short notice, a meeting with Mairi Gougeon when she visited Islay on 12th July.



We met with her in Port Charlotte where time was limited but we were able to convey to her some of the challenges and opportunities characteristic of Argyll and Bute's rural and island communities, including population growth, connectivity of all kinds and of course to highlight in particular the contribution that Islay and our other communities make to national priorities.

We also discussed the opportunities for rural and island communities in Argyll and Bute, including aquaculture and the employment/economic opportunities it brings, and the Islands Bonds proposals in the context of

our shared aim of ensuring local young people have opportunities in their home communities. Jenni Minto MSP was also present and commented on the positive working relationships within and outside the council.

I had a follow-up meeting with Jenni on 27th August, again on our home island of Islay, and while we had only limited time, this was once again a constructive discussion. I very much welcome Jenni's positive approach to working with the council and look forward to building on this as we move forward.

Visit to Islay and Jura, 22nd July: I was able to showcase some island challenges and opportunities to Kirsty Flanagan, Executive Director and Fergus Murray, Head of Economic Growth, when they visited Islay and Jura on 22nd July.

This full day visit covered a lot of ground and was much appreciated by the local community representatives and businesses involved.

We visited and met with the following:

- ACHA's Bowmore Phase 4 affordable homes development and Jura housing site
- Jura Community Shop
- Business units at Craighouse
- Meetings with Jura Community Development Trust and Community Council representatives to consider economy, population, recovery, connectivity and more
- Jura Hotel
- Ardfin hotel and golf course development



Island Policy Lead meetings: I continue to meet with officers from Economic Development on a regular basis to focus particularly on island matters.

Key issues that have featured of late include:

- Islands Community Fund – applications to this national fund closed in July. The fund has been heavily oversubscribed and it is understood that the Scottish Government is exploring other sources of funding to which unsuccessful applicants can be signposted.
- Island Bond consultation – the bond is due to launch in April 2022 and while the overall amount seems significant, it is important to consider how meaningful the impact will be when broken down and on an individual basis. Officers are finalising a response to the consultation.
- The Argyll Islands Sounding Board is next due to meet on 4th November.

3.9 Housing: There are a range of meetings that I attend in my capacity as Policy Lead for Housing. Over the period covering by this report, these include the Strategic Housing Forum on 7th September, bringing together RSLs and service delivery partners to look at issues in the round.

Members will also be aware that the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee's most recent meeting on 2nd September included updates on the Rapid Rehousing Transition Programme (RRTP) and the Private Sector Housing Grant. The RRTP has included a range of measures aimed at reducing homelessness and supporting people to retain and maintain tenancies; the Private Sector Housing Grant has also

enabled many vulnerable people to remain living independently at home through providing funding for adaptations and improvements (over 70% of the PSHG allocation was used in this way). It has also helped tackle improvement across the area's overall housing stock through leveraging in other sources of funding to increase the pot available for these works.

The Strategic Housing Investment Plan will feature on the September council agenda and more detail about our housing activity and plans will be included therein. We are also on track to bring the latest Local Housing Strategy to council in November. Our Housing Need and Demand Assessment is currently with Scottish ministers for examination.

I have also attended two sessions on Scottish Government new build resources, along with officers from our Housing service and RSL partners. These have been very useful sessions offering opportunities to explore in more depth all aspects of our Resource Planning Assumption (RPA) for the next five year period and to look at forward planning in partnership.

Meeting with Professor Nick Owens of SAMS, 13th August: This was a helpful opportunity to catch up with Professor Owens ahead of the SAMS Housing Summit organised for 20th September. I was able to outline some of the actions that the council is taking in relation to contributing to meeting the housing need in the area and also to hear some of the ideas that SAMS have for tackling this issue.

A number of key stakeholders have been invited to attend the summit to consider the current supply and demand, market pressures (including the impact of Covid) and discuss potential solutions in the short and longer terms, including exploring scope for more creative, innovative solutions.

While at SAMS on 13th August, and in a somewhat different context, it was also very positive to hear what a success the new café at SAMS is – this is run by Argyll and Bute Council's Catering team within Commercial Services and I am told it is a fantastic facility and is very popular, doing excellent trade.

3.10 Financial Inclusion: Colleagues will recall a briefing circulated in August providing an update on all of the activity being carried out to support people facing hardship of all kinds. Highlights include:

- Scottish Welfare Fund - £641,474 support for over 1,500 households facing disaster or extreme hardship.
- Handling 445 Crisis Grant and 328 Community Care Grant applications and making awards exceeding £230,000.
- Committed Discretionary Housing Fund spend of £785,119 to support housing costs.

- Ongoing meetings of the Financial Inclusion Advice Group which I chair.

Also worthy of note is the Flexible Food Fund. This has seen 535 families in need supported in just six months of operation. The project has been shortlisted for the Institute of Revenues, Rating and Valuation (IRRV) National Performance Awards in the Excellence in Innovation (Service Delivery) category, with the winners announced in October this year at the IRRV National Conference in Telford.

Late in August I managed to catch up with representatives from Bute Advice Centre and ALI Energy, who were on Islay and Jura delivering the Flexible Food Fund Roadshow.



Roadshows have been taking place across the area to highlight the Fund to people who could benefit from assistance and also to raise awareness among other agencies who may be working with people in low income households so they can signpost people to this provision.

3.11 Gaelic: A major focus for officers at the moment is the planning and preparation for the Gaelic Gathering 2022, which will take place next March. A working group has been set up and meets on a regular basis. The two-day Gathering will build on the success of previous years' events and will focus on Argyll Gaelic, including one conference style event and a day centring on youth engagement.

A report on the recent Gaelic survey is currently in circulation to interested stakeholders and participants.

The Scottish Government's Gaelic Language Plan consultation closed on 9th September and we are looking forward to the outcomes from that.

Three online Oidhche Earra-Ghaidheal le events have been hosted, attracting over 50 live attendees and with the videos reaching over 5,500

views. This was an excellent initiative and the live music events in particular were very well received.

Gaelic Education Staffing: Gaelic staffing in our schools is currently well resourced and stable. Permanent appointments have been made at Bunessan Primary School and Islay High School. Both appointments underline the authority's commitment to sustainable growth in Gaelic Learning.

At Tobermory High School, three days per week of spare capacity in Gaelic staffing have been identified. This will see staff working with Mull primary schools, supporting Gaelic as Language 2, and specifically with the Gaelic Learners and Gaelic Medium pupils at Salen and Tobermory to develop a stronger Gaelic ethos across the two schools.

Primary One Literacy Assessment and Action Resource (POLAAR) for Gaelic Medium Education: Over the last year, we have worked in partnership with Education Scotland to adapt the Primary One Literacy Assessment and Action Resource (POLAAR) programme for Gaelic Medium Education. The resource is a proven tool for planning high-quality learning and teaching around reading at First Level, with a focus on sounds, known as phonics. All of the many games and activities in the programme, as well as the phonics and language aspects themselves, have been replaced by content relevant to Gaelic culture, context and language, with much of the work having been carried out by teachers in four Argyll and Bute schools – Salen, Bunessan, Bowmore and Sandbank.

The Gaelic POLAAR programme is now live on Education Scotland's website, where the Argyll and Bute logo can be seen prominently. The programme is due to be presented to a national audience at the Scottish Learning Festival in late September.

School Improvement Planning – GME-Specific Planning: Argyll and Bute Council has been identified by the Scottish Government body *Bòrd na Gàidhlig* as a model of excellent practice as a result of its adoption into the standard school improvement planning template of a section dedicated to strategic planning for Gaelic Medium Education. The model was presented to other local authorities in an online seminar in June, and the authority has been asked to present its practice at The Scottish Learning Festival in September.

- 3.12 Economic Growth:** The Rural Growth Deal Programme Board work is ongoing. Sub-group meetings have now been set up for the housing and digital projects and it is also intended to set up a tourism sub-group in due course. These sub-groups include key internal and external stakeholders

and will lead on the development of options for RGD investment and act as a sounding board for the project OBCs.

The council has secured CARES funding from the Scottish Government and Local Energy Scotland to help with the development of potential options for RGD investment as part of the Low Carbon Economy Project on Islay. There will be no requirement for match funding from the council.

As the economy builds back up following the easing of restrictions, unemployment levels have dropped to an average of 4.7% (although this does vary across the area, with parts of Bute and Cowal at 7% and areas of Helensburgh/Lomond at 2%).

Some challenges in relation to recruitment continue especially as businesses seek to recoup after the impact of the pandemic. The council continues to work with Skills Development Scotland and other partners.

Members will have seen the confirmation in early September that Campbeltown-based CS Wind had entered administration. While this development was expected, it is still a very challenging blow for the Kintyre economy. I have written to Scottish ministers, building on the correspondence and engagement previously carried out over the life of this council, seeking their support wherever possible given the area's fragility in recent years – while Kintyre has faced a number of significant challenges it also offers much potential which can and should be realised.

An 'Invest in Argyll and Bute' website, targeting potential investors, is due to launch and there are plans for a marketing campaign with tourism sector partners. Our Economic Development team continue to liaise and negotiate with interested investors across a range of sectors – while much of that detail is confidential at this point there is certainly serious interest in the area from a number of companies operating in a variety of fields.

- 3.13 Meeting with National Farmers Union Scotland:** I met with the Chief Executive of NFUS, Scott Walker, plus regional representatives, on 5th August. This was a useful introductory meeting and we hope to have further discussions soon. We considered a range of issues including engagement with the council's Food and Drink Strategy, business diversification and opportunities for joint lobbying and partnership working.
- 3.14 COSLA Strategic Board meetings:** I sit on both the COSLA Environment and Economy and Community Wellbeing Strategic Boards. Meetings attended during this period are noted below, with agenda topics:

COSLA Community Wellbeing Board, 18th June 2021

- Employability Update
- Child Poverty Update
- Human Right to Adequate Housing
- Supporting Roadside Encampments and Capital Funding for Gypsy Traveller Accommodation
- Libraries Strategy
- Royal British Legion
- Delivering Equally Safe Funding
- Equally Safe Procurement and Commissioning
- Appropriate Adults
- Immigration Policy and Humanitarian Project Update
- Ending Destitution Together Governance Arrangements
- ESOL and Adult Learning Strategy
- Policing and Justice

COSLA Environment and Economy Board, 3rd September:

- Heat Decarbonisation – presentation on Local Heat and Energy Strategy, Scottish Government
- Transport – developing a road map for the 20% car km reduction target
- Subsidy Control
- Town Centre Action Plan
- Just Transition and Economic Recovery Strategy

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1** This report highlights the activities of the Leader of Argyll and Bute Council for the period from July to September 2021.

Councillor Robin Currie
Leader, Argyll and Bute Council

14th September 2021

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

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**COUNCIL****30th September 2021**

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 24th June 2021.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members are asked to consider the report.

**3. POLICY LEAD FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES AND MAJOR PROJECTS –
Councillor Gary Mulvaney**

- 3.1 **Introduction:** This report provides members with an update on my activities as Depute Leader, Policy Lead for Financial Services and Major Projects during the months from July to September 2021.
- 3.2 **Financial Services Team:** The department continues to consider budget monitoring and the Covid impact along with the future budget strategy, updating members, council and policy and resources in due course. The first meeting of the cross party Budget Working Group (BWG) took place last week.
- 3.3 **Local Tax Collections:** Current year Council Tax collection at 31st August 2021 is 47.92%, which is up 1.13% on collections at the same time last year. A number of taxpayers claimed hardship in 2020/2021 because of the pandemic and paid their April 2020 and May 2020 instalments in February 2021 and March 2021 so this increase in

collection rate is artificial. Comparing the collection rate to the last pre-pandemic year in August 2019 is more realistic and shows that we are 0.18% behind collections in that year which is a cash equivalent of £100,000. Works are continuing with Walker Love to target large debtors.

Current year Non-domestic rates (NDR) collections at 31st August 2021 is 64.13%, down 5.10% in comparison to 69.23% in August the previous year and up 2.19% on collections in the 2019/2020 year. This variation is because of movements in the level of rates relief we have been able to offer businesses between these years.

- 3.4 Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF):** Expenditure in SWF for the year to 31st August 2021 is £280,577, with the Council paying out at High and Medium priority levels. The annual budget is £458,827 - however this is due to be topped up with phase 2 funding to be released shortly by the Scottish Government.
- 3.5 Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs):** The total expenditure for DHPs at 31st August 2021, including commitments, is £787,614 against a confirmed total budget for the year of £984,000. This should be enough funding to cover the anticipated spend for the rest of the financial year.
- 3.6 Benefits processing:** As at 31st August 2021 Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction Scheme show average processing times of 20.30 days for new claims and 5.74 days for changes in circumstances. Whilst these speeds both fall below the service plan target of 21 days and 6 days respectively, there is evidence that processing times are slowing down due to a reduction in available staff resources, due to both staff absences and the increase in volume of Self Isolation Support Grants being processed. The position will be monitored closely going forward.
- 3.7 Flexible Food Fund:** The SWF has been administering claims for a new Flexible Food Fund project launched on 11th January. This scheme is funded by Scottish Government monies for food and fuel insecurities. At 31st August the project has delivered £845,000 of additional income for 589 families across Argyll and Bute - an average of £1,435 per household. The scheme has been short-listed for the national IRRV (Institute of Revenue Rating and Valuation) Performance Awards 2021 in the category Excellence in Innovation. The award ceremony is in October and I will update members on the outcome.
- 3.8 Helensburgh Waterfront Development:** At the end of August, we celebrated the first anniversary of Heron Bros Ltd starting work on-site. With ongoing Covid restrictions, it has taken a huge team effort from the

Council, Heron Bros Ltd and our Internal and External design consultants to get us to this important milestone. The progress achieved in the face of considerable challenge is a testament to the power of partnership and professionalism. It is all the more impressive given all the back office staff behind the Waterfront Development are working remotely to deliver the project.

Heron Bros has continued to make significant progress against their contract programme. The building structure is complete along with all the glazing installed. The flood defence walls and placement of rock armour around the site is complete, along with the installation of flood gates to the recently completed eastern slipway. The car park and public realm works are well underway.

The main pool tank is currently being fully filled with water, as part of the pre-tiling testing. Mechanical and electrical installations are progressing at a pace to the whole of the building including to ground floor changing village, reception area, plantroom, gym, fitness studios, sauna, steam room etc. Lomond stone walling to the bin store, electric sub-station and retaining walls are complete.

Whilst the project has made significant progress to date and is being delivered in the midst of a global pandemic, currently it remains on programme and within budget. However the Project Management Team recognise that issues of a commercial nature will likely emerge given the size and scale of this complex major capital project, and we continue to work closely with all parties to mitigate and minimise the potential impact of these upon the delivery of the works.

The project has once again achieved a rating of excellent in a recent audit conducted by the Considerate Constructors Scheme (CCS), a not-for-profit, independent organisation founded to raise standards in the construction industry. Heron Bros were commended in this recent CCS audit for extensive COVID-19 protection measures with the introduction of biometric scanner that all employees use for clocking in and out every day. The scanner uses retina recognition and also scans temperature giving a green light to proceed or a red light to leave site.

3.9 Rothesay Pavilion: Over the last several weeks, officers have been involved in detailed negotiations via an established National Construction Framework with a major construction contractor. Our initial engagement with them has enabled their appointment to undertake 'pre-construction activities'. This is where they will work closely with our in-house team and our design consultants to further develop our specific technical and contractual requirements for completing the refurbishment of the Rothesay Pavilion.

As members may be aware, the construction sector globally is facing unprecedented pressures arising due to a number of factors including the COVID pandemic and the recent blockage of the Suez Canal which, taken in combination, have impacted upon the availability and material and transportation costs for core construction resources, materials, plant and equipment.

As part of the pre-construction activities, the preferred contractor is undertaking an extensive market engagement exercise with its established supply chain, such that later this year it will be able to submit to us its' price and programme of activities to complete the works.

- 3.10 Depute Leader:** I have regular other meetings with the Leader, Policy Leads and the Chief Executive in respect of council business and priorities.

4. POLICY LEAD FOR SUPPORT SERVICES – Councillor Mary Jean Devon

- 4.1 Governance:** The council has agreed to record Committee Meetings for the website and this has been implemented for the recent Committee Meetings from May to date.

Significant work has been undertaken on implementation of new ICT systems and also progressing arrangements for introduction of virtual/hybrid meetings and livestreaming of Council meetings. This is a resource intensive and complex area of work activity with ongoing reports to council.

In addition, a Review of Council Constitution has been prepared for council in September. This also includes arrangements in the event of introduction of virtual/hybrid meetings and livestreaming.

A further report has been prepared outlining proposals for Best Practice Review of Political Management Arrangements with a view to making recommendations to a new Council in May 2022.

- 4.2 Childrens Panel:** Nine trainee panel members have successfully completed service training and have joined the rota from August 2021. The annual recruitment campaign, which is normally held in August/September, has been pushed back to January/February 2022.
- 4.3 Elections:** Local Government Elections May 2022. The first E-count bulletin has come in from the Election Management Board (EMB) and on-line training on the new Idox system for the core team took place in

the week of 30 August. The Returning Officer has requested monthly election meetings starting in September.

Boundary Commission Review (Islands Act) - Final Proposals were submitted by Boundaries Scotland to Scottish Ministers on 10th June. No date has yet been set for the proposals to be considered by Scottish Parliament. The assumption is that the decision by Scottish Parliament will be reported to council in November on associated Polling Districts and ward changes.

4.4 Community Governance: Following on from the relaxation of numbers permitted to gather in public, guidance was issued to all Community Councils last month on the safe resumption of their in-person meetings. Some face to face meetings have already taken place with other meetings planned.

The council will be invited to consider proposals for making a permanent change to the Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils at the end of this month for continuation of remote meetings to provide choice for community councils going forward. If approved this will require a formal 8 week public consultation.

4.4 Procurement, Commercial and Contract Management:

Local Spend:

The Procurement, Commissioning and Contract Management Team are monitoring the level of local spend and can confirm the year to date percentage spend with our local suppliers is 27.9%.

Local Suppliers Bidding and Winning Contracts:

Not all requirements can be fulfilled by the local supply market. Therefore, to gain a better understanding of performance, the number of tenders bid and subsequently won by local suppliers is also monitored. See below:

| Process August | Total No. of Tenders | No. of Tenders receiving local bids | No. of Tenders won by local bidder | Success Rate % won of those bid for |
|------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Open/ Restricted | 1 | 1 | 1 | 100.0% |
| Quick Quote | 7 | 1 | 0 | 0.0% |
| Total | 8 | 2 | 1 | 50.0% |

| | | | | | |
|-----|-------|----|----|----|-------|
| YTD | Total | 69 | 28 | 19 | 67.9% |
|-----|-------|----|----|----|-------|

The following example is a local supplier winning our contracts:

Title: **Live Argyll Leisure Management System**
Value: **£199,700**

Supplier: **BC Technologies LLP**

Following an open tendering exercise, the replacement Leisure Management System contract has been awarded to a local contractor, BC Technologies, based in Dunoon.

- 4.5 Complaints Handling:** There has been a positive outcome to the recent audit of the council's new Complaints procedure, with the audit opinion reported as High.

Work is continuing to provide more detailed monthly and quarterly reports to management, and all improvements to the Oracle system to provide these details now complete. The Central team continue to support colleagues in other services who are new to the role of complaints handling, providing training and support as appropriate.

- 4.6 Customer Support Services – Apprenticeships Opportunities:** Customer Support Services is committed to providing opportunities for young people to join the council's workforce through apprenticeships.

One of the areas that we have focussed on most recently is to encourage young people to take up a Digital Apprenticeship. We have roles in the ICT team and also our Customer Services and Engagement team – some of the service areas that are at the forefront of delivering our Digital First agenda.

We have one Digital apprentice currently studying for their Diploma in Digital Application Support at SCQF Level 6. In ICT, we have one staff member who has just completed their Graduate Apprenticeship via Glasgow Caledonian after coming through the ranks as a Modern Apprentice. They will graduate with a BSc (Hons) in Cyber Security this month and have secured a permanent job in the team.

Another excellent Modern Apprentice, who was working with the desktop team, has also moved on to a permanent post as an ICT Engineer. And our final Modern Apprentice just completed their course we were delighted when they were successful in their application to join the ICT Desktop Team, starting this month. We look forward to

welcoming more young people into our digital teams – they are all doing so well so far!

I am also aware that there are a number of staff within my portfolio services, as well as in other services right across the organisation and the area, who are undertaking study at various levels right up to university degrees. This requires very significant commitment and dedication, balancing study with family life and commitments and of course the day job. I am always delighted to hear about the successes of staff who are making the most of their skills in this way – my thanks and congratulations go to each and every one of our employees who is seeking to develop in this way.

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

5.1: HSCP Leadership: I am delighted to welcome David Gibson, as the new Head of Children, Families and Justice, and James Gow as Head of Finance and Transformation to the Health and Social Care Partnership. Many thanks to Patricia Renfrew and Brian Reid for covering Children, Families and Justice, and to George Morrison and David Forshaw for covering Finance in the interim since Alex Taylor and Judy Orr left.

Sadly Julie Lusk is leaving to take up a post with the Scottish Government, and I am grateful to her contributions as Head of Mental Health, Learning Disability, Addictions and Lifelong Conditions, and as Chief Social Work Officer during her time in Argyll and Bute.

5.2 Local Activities: The IJB met on 16th June and 15th September, reviewing the Child Poverty Action Plan Children and Young People's Service Plan, in addition to regular items on Culture, Finance and Public Health, in particular COVID-19.

At Finance and Policy Committee on 25th June and 27th August updates were received on savings and transformation activity, as well as consideration of budget monitoring, outlook and risks. The unaudited annual accounts came before Audit and Risk Committee on 29th June, however the approval of these has since been delayed due to factors outwith the control of the HSCP.

The Strategic Planning Group on 2nd September discussed the Joint Strategic Plan, draft Strategic Commissioning Strategy, and the Strategic Commissioning and Market Facilitation Plan, along with associated engagement specifications.

The Clinical Care Governance 9th September received reports on Care at Home Services, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and gaps in staffing, along with exception reports from across services and areas.

5.3 National Meetings: I attended COSLA Health and Social Care Board on 6th August, which included items on Learning Disability, Scottish Strategy for Autism and code of practice for Adult Support and Protection.

At the COSLA Children and Young People Board on 20th August there were presentations from Intercultural Youth Scotland on Race Equality and Anti-Racism in School, The Promise Change Programme and Lived Experience and the Participation of Children and Young People, along with papers on Early Learning and Childcare and Digital devices for school-aged children.

Other national meetings I have attended since my last report have included the IJB Chairs and Vice Chairs Exec on 1st July and 19th August, IJB Chairs and Vice Chairs Network on 29th July, discussions with COSLA Officers on 8th September and Scottish Government Civil Servants on 10th September, engagement with the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care on 30th August, a government consultation event on 10th September and the Scottish IJBs Remote, Rural and Islands Subgroup on 13th September.

These have all been dominated by consideration of the Scottish Government proposals for a National Care Service. Based on the Feeley Report, implementation of which had been a manifesto commitment, what has been put forward goes far beyond this, and is generating considerable debate about to what extent this is necessary to achieve, or will be able to contribute to improved outcomes and experiences for service users.

5.4 Children and Young People:

Children and Young People's Service Plan (CYPSP) 2020-23 – work is progressing on the Year 2 priorities within this. On the 1st September an animated version of the Plan developed by the Youth Advisory Panel (YAP) was launched and can be viewed on the GIRFEC website at <https://argyll-bute-girfec.com/>

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) – work is continuing to develop a recruitment plan to meet the Scottish Government service specification for a Tier 3 service managing scheduled care. This will also encompass the CAMHS to age 25 years

element of the additional government funding given. The team recruited already includes a Consultant Lead Psychologist, Advanced Nurse Practitioners, Occupational Therapists and a Dietitian, with additional posts to be advertised. The Mental Health Recovery and Renewal Fund has enabled use of agency nurses to reduce numbers on the waiting lists for Primary Mental Health Worker assessment and Tier 3 assessment. Issues continue with recruiting permanent Consultant Psychiatrists due to a national shortage in this field, with the service being maintained through use of locums.

School Counsellors – this service is now in place across Argyll and Bute, with over 200 referrals to date including from Education and self-referrals.

National Guidance for Child Protection – this has been updated by the Scottish Government. Over a two year implementation period this will be further linked into the GIRFEC approach, with Case Conferences becoming Child Protection planning meetings, and a greater focus on participation and engagement of children and families in the assessment and planning processes. Full details are available at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-guidance-child-protection-scotland-2021/>.

Guidance for Child Protection Committees Undertaking Reviews of Significant Events – this has been newly published and places a much greater emphasis on learning and embedding changes. The Child Protection Committee will lead on the adoption of this over the coming months, with further information available at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-guidance-child-protection-committees-undertaking-learning-reviews/>.

Child Protection Committee sub-group – a multi-agency forum is operating to monitor any physical assaults of a child, which could have previously had the defence of reasonable chastisement. Under the Children (Equal Protection from Assault) (Scotland) Act 2019 Police have powers to warn and issue fines to any parent, without the necessity to progress through Child Protection and court proceedings, however locally there have been very few cases which have required to be progressed to fines.

Children's Hearings – incorporation of the UNCRC (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) into Scots Law and the Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019 has been followed by a staged eighteen month implementation. In 2020 offence was removed as grounds for referral for children under the age of 12, and the remaining changes are coming into statute at the end of October 2021.

Where such children have caused significant harm to others, new procedures, duties and powers have been given for Police and Local Authorities to interview and provide places of safety using Children Interview Rights Practitioners. The Scottish Government in partnership with Social Work Scotland is supporting training for staff, prior to full implementation on 21st October.

5.5 **Adult Services:**

Care Homes – a fortnightly task force meeting is supporting internal and independent homes. Revised Scottish Government guidance on COVID-19 self-isolation and social distancing has been put into effect. Along with this work to ensure that residents, including those outwith Argyll and Bute, have had a review within the last 6 months is underway. Where possible this is through Near Me remote meetings to reduce travel and footfall in homes.

Care at Home – significant challenges are being experienced in recruitment to this sector, with significant numbers of hours being handed back by providers. Oban, Lorn and Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands have been most affected to date, although Helensburgh is also facing difficulties with staff moving to work in West Dunbartonshire. With persistent issues such as Brexit and COVID-19, a care at home strategy group has been established to look at short, medium and long terms plans for the service.

Hospitals – all have seen increases in Accident and Emergency attendance which has been largely appropriate. Stretched staffing arising from vacant posts and COVID-19 self-isolation is being managed.

Learning Disabilities – work continues in line with Government guidelines to re-open day services, subject to risk management and consideration for the safety of vulnerable service users. The service is liaising with Housing to re-establish suitable and sustainable housing for community living to replace that being withdrawn by a private sector provider.

Mental Health – statutory work is continuing to be delivered with no backlog, however Succoth Ward staffing remains pressured and consideration is being given to recruiting differently to these posts.

Addictions – notification of funding for Argyll and Bute has been given and in conjunction with the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (ADP) and partners work is being progressed to investigate the potential to develop and integrate Addictions services.

Adult Support and Protection Inspection – a largely positive outcome report has been received, with the service working to address the associated action plan for improvement.

- 5.6 Finance:** Whilst the outturn for the HSCP reported as of 31st July was for a forecast overspend of £1.4m this is expected to improve to £0.8m following further analysis of Social Work Budgets. However, in line with the Integration Scheme, and to reduce any risk of overspend to Argyll and Bute Council and NHS Highland a Financial Recovery Plan was approved by the IJB on September 15th. Initially this focuses on approval of Social Work Care Packages and Allocation of Income to address cost pressures. If necessary further actions will be brought forward to Delay Planned Projects, increase Vacancy Management and remove non-essential spending.

**6. POLICY LEAD FOR ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES –
Councillor Rory Colville**

- 6.1** It has been a very busy summer period for Roads and Infrastructure. Below is an overview of some of the activities that I and the service and have been involved with over the last couple of months.
- 6.2 Oban Harbour:** There are three separate Harbour Orders in place for Oban: the North Pier, Railway Pier and South Pier. The approaches and waters through the bay are not covered by an order. The responsibility for these waters defaults to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA).

In 2018 CMAL were preparing to commence a formal process which would allow them to become the Harbour Authority for the waters currently not covered within Oban Bay. This had been supported by the Council's Harbour Board at the time, providing unfettered access could be provided to the Council's North Pier which was to be left nested within the bay.

Following a public meeting where there was some concern expressed about CMAL becoming the new Harbour Authority the Council, through its Harbour Board, asked CMAL to pause its process to allow a community group to develop an alternative proposal – the trust port option. A community group was formed named Oban Community Harbour Development Association (OCHDA) which consists of a number of volunteers who have been seeking to progress a Trust Port model for Oban Bay.

The Harbour Board at the request of Oban, Lorn and the Isles area committee recently met with representatives of OCHDA to hear first-hand their proposals for establishing a Trust port model. Originally it had

been suggested that OCHDA could pursue a Wet Port option which would have left the current Harbour limits and North Pier assets with the Council. OCHDA have stated that they no longer see this as a viable option and now seek to lease council assets at and around the North Pier. These assets are: Harbour Masters office and wider harbour building, the berthing face of the North Pier, the transit berth marina and the Oban Times Slip.

Following the Harbour Board meeting of 2nd September, board members agreed to visit the North Pier in Oban as part of their Development Programme and see at first hand the many capital improvements the council have delivered. The Board also agreed to hold a special meeting early in December 2021 and that an options appraisal process be conducted to determine a preferred option for the future management of Oban Bay and the engagement that will be carried out with other partners who have an interest in Oban Bay.

6.3 Marine Asset Management Plan: Our rolling ten-year Marine Asset Management Plan was recently reported to the Council's Harbour Board on 2 September 2021. The report provided an updates on the following projects:

- Craignure
 - Passenger Access at existing terminal
 - Public consultation – New Pier
- Iona / Fionnphort
- Rothesay
 - Piling and grouting works
 - pontoons
- Dunoon / Kilcreggan

The full report can be viewed here (item 5): [Agenda for Argyll and Bute Harbour Board on Thursday, 2 September 2021, 12:30 pm - Argyll and Bute Council \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](#)

6.4 Road and Footway Improvements: Really good progress is being made on our £10M Roads Reconstruction Programme. Individual scheme details can be found on our website here: [Roads Capital Programme \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](#)

In addition to this, £0.9M has been invested in a footway and active travel improvement programme which will see over 40 schemes being delivered across Argyll and Bute. More information on the footway schemes can be found in a report which was considered by the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee here (item 6): [Agenda for Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee](#)

[on Thursday, 2 September 2021, 10:30 am - Argyll and Bute Council \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](https://argyll-bute.gov.uk)

- 6.5 Staycation Initiative:** In response to the increase in visitors to Argyll and Bute, the service continues to deliver a number of initiatives including parking enforcement, fly tipping and litter management, additional public bin collections, working with communities and local groups, enhanced cleaning of our 57 public conveniences and traffic management.



- 6.6 New recycling service for Kintyre:** The new recycling service for Kintyre will commence on Monday 4th October. The team have been really busy behind the scenes to ensure all arrangements are in place for residents and businesses to ensure a smooth roll out. A briefing session has also been arranged for local Elected Members on 20th September to provide information and answer any queries ahead of the new service starting.
- 6.7 Winter Maintenance:** Preparations are in place for the upcoming winter with several hired vehicles due in advance of the season. We have also purchased a number of multi-body vehicles which have ploughing capability as well as gritting capability.



Our Winter Policy 2021-22 was considered at the September meeting of the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee which remains the same as previous years. The full report and policy can be read in full here (item 7): [Agenda for Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee on Thursday, 2 September 2021, 10:30 am - Argyll and Bute Council \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/agenda-for-environment-development-and-infrastructure-committee-on-thursday-2-september-2021-1030-am)

- 6.8 EV Charging:** We have recently received Energy Saving Trust funding to expand Fleet charge point infrastructure, in addition to this we are expecting, in the next month, SG funding to install a new public rapid charger which will be located in Tighnabruaich

Joint working with the FASTER project is progressing and could potentially see 9 new public installations across Argyll and Bute. At time of writing, this was due to feature at a Members Seminar on 21st September, where a presentation will be given on a consolidated long list of possible future sites for electric vehicle charging provision based on the methodology and criteria agreed at Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee in June.

- 6.9 Route Optimisation:** The service are working with colleagues in Procurement and IT to put together tender information to go to the market for a proven solution that will allow for intelligent routing functions to be performed via a system rather than manually. The first phase of this work is likely to focus on bin routes and will include in-cab technology for up to date information on service delivery. In future the system could be used for winter gritting, gully cleaning, home to school transport etc.

- 6.10 Play park funding:** The Council has recently received notification from the Scottish Government of funding for playpark works in this and future years. This year we have received just over £70,000 and officers are currently coming up with plans to spend that money - these plans should be presented to councillors for a decision in early course.

We are in the process of getting further information from the Scottish Government on what future funding may look like. Ideally we will be clear on the amount of funding coming forward over a three to five year period to allow us to plan properly for a comprehensive programme of upgrades.

The initial batch of funding will look at areas in need of refurbishment on a priority basis and then if we have funds left look at disability inclusive play equipment.

6.11 Dog fouling campaign: A brief update on the council's dog fouling campaign where we set out to raise awareness via community involvement and owners cleaning up after their dogs.

To date seven community councils have requested 110 posters for use in their local areas. Our wardens also put them up in known hot spots. We reached 58,500 through Facebook with the campaign and 3071 people engaged directly with the campaign by liking posts, clicking on links, commenting and sharing the posts.

From January to mid-August, there were a total of 616 views of the dog warden page on the website. 157 of these page views were during the four weeks of the #makeyourpupproud campaign, which is 25% of the total.

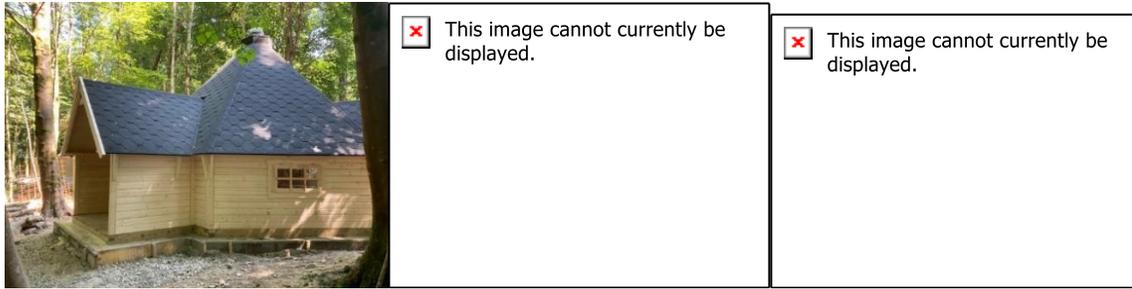
We inspired people to click through to the dog warden page on the website directly from social media and to go directly to the 'report online' form.

Sixteen members of staff, their families and dogs joined in the campaign and gave brilliant stories about why people should #pickup.

Wardens reported an increase in reports of dog fouling during and after the campaign, particularly in MAKI and a smaller spike in Bute and Cowal.

7. POLICY LEAD FOR EDUCATION – Councillor Yvonne McNeilly

7.1 Early Years: Early Years were delighted to welcome their first children to the new outdoor nursery, Silver Birch, in Hunters Quay, Dunoon from 16th August. This fabulous new setting is nestled into a former community woodland area tucked between the Hunters Quay Hotel and a residential area. Feedback from parents on the provision has been very positive, with reports that the children are very much enjoying their learning and sleeping soundly at night!



Willow View ELC in Oban also opened its doors at the start of the new term. Whilst this is an indoor nursery the outdoor area is extensive and offers a range of challenging and stimulating areas for children to explore and create in. The outdoor setting has a natural area which offers future use for Forest School activities for other settings in order to support equity across the Early Years service.



Both of these sustainable spaces provide a wealth of opportunities, and add to the choice and number of placements available within two of our main towns.

7.2 Argyll and Bute's Children and Young People's Service Plan: Over the past year a multi-agency group has been working with a group of young people from across the authority as part of the 2020-2023 Children and Young People's Service Plan's (CYPSP) priority 4 on the voice of children and young people. The Youth Advisory Panel (YAP) has been using Improvement Methodology to look at how to engage young people in having a voice in the next CYPSP.

YAP identified the need for young people to be able to access and understand what a Children and Young People's Service plan is before they would be able to give informed views. Provided below is a link to the animation project that they have developed at every stage (researching, planning, designing, voicing and also providing feedback to the production company).

YAPs are really proud of the work they have progressed in developing an animation that explains the Argyll and Bute CYPSP to young people. The launch of the animation across services and partners took place on 1st September 2021. You can view the animation here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=07CdxSKjNA>.

7.3 Inclusion and Equality Team: As part of the ongoing commitment to provide ASN teaching and support staff with opportunities to build on their knowledge and skills, a survey was undertaken across the authority to establish areas of strength within the service and to identify any challenges or gaps in knowledge and good practice. The data collated as part of this exercise has been utilised to inform the development of a training calendar for 2021-2022 and, as a result, bespoke training has been provided in regard to Dyspraxia, Dyscalculia, ASD and girls, ADHD and Down's syndrome. This will increase understanding in key ASN areas and improve confidence in managing ASN needs in the classroom. Further evaluations will be carried out to assess the efficacy of each training session and the ASN survey will also be carried out on an annual basis to ensure continuous improvement.

As part of the in service days, online training workshops in 'Deaf Awareness' were also provided to teaching and support staff in four high schools across the authority. The training was provided by Elena Adair and Joe O'Donnell, who has worked in deaf education for 35 years as a Teacher of the Deaf and an Educational Audiologist. He has worked in a range of educational establishments, primary and secondary and for Donaldson's school – which was the national school for the deaf. It was a privilege for the authority to have the opportunity to collaborate with him on this and for all attending to learn from his expertise.

Supporting learners who are deaf is a key part of the commitment as teachers to the professional values of integrity, trust and respect and social justice. At present there are over 60 children in educational establishments across the authority who have varying degrees of deafness; research shows that even mild hearing loss can have a significant impact on children's learning and health and wellbeing. It is therefore hugely important that teachers feel confident that they have the knowledge and support to ensure that they are able to teach children effectively to ensure inclusion. Moreover, the continued use of face masks or coverings in schools is something that has significant implications to many deaf children and it is therefore vitally important that teachers are made aware of strategies and interventions that may help mitigate this impact.

7.4 Developing the Young Workforce Cluster Leads: Four Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) Cluster Leads were appointed in July and began work with the authority on 2nd August. Their role is to work in partnership with schools and other partners to develop the links between secondary schools and local and national employers. As a result, young people will have greater choice and quality of work placements, and employers will work more closely with schools in contributing to the curriculum, particularly as it relates to skills for life and work.

The appointments are a result of several months careful planning and liaison with the Scottish Government, who have funded the posts as part of a national initiative. All four Cluster Leads, who each cover the schools in a different geographical area of the authority, have shown themselves to be enthusiastic, creative and self-starting in their first three weeks of work, which have included a varied induction programme.

- 7.5 Primary One Literacy Assessment and Action Resource (POLAAR) for Gaelic Medium Education:** Over the last year, Education Officer Catriona Garvin has worked in partnership with Education Scotland to adapt the Primary One Literacy Assessment and Action Resource (POLAAR) programme for Gaelic Medium Education. The resource is a proven tool for planning high-quality learning and teaching around reading at First Level, with a focus on sounds known as phonics. All of the many games and activities in the programme, as well as the phonics and language aspects themselves, have been replaced by content relevant to Gaelic culture, context and language, with much of the work having been carried out by teachers in four Argyll and Bute schools – Salen, Bunessan, Bowmore and Sandbank.

The Gaelic POLAAR programme is now live on Education Scotland's website, where the Argyll and Bute logo can be seen prominently. Catriona will be presenting on the programme to a national audience at the Scottish Learning Festival in late September.

- 7.6 School Improvement Planning – GME-Specific Planning:** Argyll and Bute Council has been identified by the Scottish Government body *Bòrd na Gàidhlig* as a model of excellent practice. This recognition is due to the work that has been undertaken to develop the standard school improvement planning template, by including a section specifically dedicated to strategic planning for Gaelic Medium Education. The model was presented by Simon Easton to other local authorities at an online seminar in June, and the authority has been asked to present its practice at The Scottish Learning Festival in September. Well done to all involved.

- 7.7 Summer Programme:** By utilising Scottish Government funding, Argyll and Bute Council were able to provide a three-week programme across seven venues for targeted pupils to support them during the summer break. The programme was targeted at low income families, children with additional support needs and other young people that schools had nominated. An average of 322 young people attended the venues each day, with positive feedback from the young people and their families.

The authority were also able to provide additional provision for children on Lismore and Gigha, which proved to be very successful.

A wide range of activities were provided as part of the programme, from Arts and Crafts, sporting activities, outdoor education to Alpaca walking on Bute.

Partnerships were established with third sector organisations and new internal partnerships were also cemented due to the close collaborative working that took place both during the lead up to and during the 3 week programme.

Feedback from some of the children included:

"We loved it."

"It is good for your health being active during holidays."

"I enjoyed it and made some new friends. The teachers were great."

"Everything was great."

"I met new friends and was not bored."

"It was fun to do."

"The staff were amazing kind helpful and would love a repeat next year it has really helped my confidence."

The service are currently preparing a full report including 'lessons learned' which will be shared with the Scottish Government.

7.8 Psychological Services: The service have been successful in appointing two teachers for a period of 12 months to join the nurture team, promoting and supporting Our Children Their Nurturing Education (OCTNE), utilising additional funding directed at COVID recovery. There has been excellent engagement across schools, with support from the Educational Psychology team and Principal Teacher of Nurture, providing bespoke support aligned to the identified needs of each educational establishment. OCTNE will maintain a focus on increasing the quality of the nurturing environments across our schools so that children and young people can build relationships and learn to the very best of their ability. The enhancement to this team will allow extension of these developments in to the Early Years as well as supporting schools who are further on in the nurture journey to audit their progress using the accreditation framework.

During the in-service days held in August 2021, requests for training by the Educational Psychology Service have had a significant focus on topics relating to mental health and wellbeing including Nurture, the Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) curriculum, resilience, cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) approaches to supporting young people at the secondary stage using Living Life to the Full and developing a PACE approach (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy) to meeting the needs of children and young people in distress. There has been high level engagement throughout the sessions, often with full school teams engaging with professional learning together to drive the ethos and practice across the school establishment. The

Educational Psychology Service is working to identify the impact of this professional learning on practice over time.

Despite the ongoing challenges of the pandemic and at all times following safety guidance, the Educational Psychology team is delighted to be spending more time with children, young people, families and staff within schools and communities to build solutions through understanding the context within which children and young people grow, develop and learn.

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

8.1 Planning Applications: Since 1st April 2021 submission rates for planning applications has remained high, with 864 formal submissions being received up to 1st September 2021. This is an increase of 158 applications for the same period last year when 706 applications were received and is close to the number received in 2019 when 871 applications had been received for the same period.

8.2 Planning Fee Income: Planning fee income to 1st September 2021 was £70k below the forecast budget following poor income in July and August despite a continuing high volume of applications. A £77k fee for a major application has still to be collected which should boost the income for September.

8.3 Planning Performance Framework 2020/21: The 10th 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 the document provides an opportunity for Planning Services to promote their service and the local area by incorporating customer feedback and case studies within the document. During 2020/21 the resilience, effectiveness and efficiency of the Planning Service has been significantly affected by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and this year's PPF includes commentary which addresses those factors.

As with previous year's feedback from the Scottish Government will be reported to the Planning, Protective Services and Licensing committee when this is to hand.

- 8.4 Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2):** As members will be aware at the last council meeting members authorised officers to establish the Examination process and submit all the necessary documentation to the Scottish Governments Department of Planning and Environmental Appeals Division (DPEA) after final checks and edits of the Schedule 4 forms had been concluded under the delegated authority of the Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth. This work has almost been completed and it is anticipated that all the required documentation will be submitted to the DPEA in early October.
- 8.5 PPSL Training:** PPSL training recommenced after the summer recess on 22nd September with a presentation from Laura MacLean, Planning Unit Manager (SW) and Judith Montford, Senior Planning Officer with the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) The training sessions, which are bite-sized sessions covering a range of subjects, are generally held monthly before meetings of the Planning, Protective Services and Licensing (PPSL) committee and are open to all elected members.
- 8.6 Consultation Update:** Feedback from the recent on-line consultation in relation to the Argyll and Bute Technical Working Note has still to be considered by officers, although this is not a priority at this time and it has been noted that when progressing this now the document should be reviewed to reflect LDP2 given the timing.
- 8.7 Building Standards Staffing:** The recruitment process for an Area Team Leader in Helensburgh has concluded and David MacLachlan has been appointed and will take up the post on 4th October.
- 8.8 Building Standards Income:** Building Standards income for 2021/22 to the end of August was £364,289 from 666 applications which is 96% of projected income. This is an improvement from 20/21 but down 15% from income levels in 19/20 and although income is dependent upon the building market and economy the situation is being closely monitored.
- 8.9 Commercialisation:** Commercialisation work for other authorities has dried up recently for a number of reasons, including Covid-19, although East Lothian Council continue to use our services there is no long term commitment in place.
- 8.10 Local Air Quality Progress Report:** Work has recently been completed on local air quality and concludes that local air quality in Argyll and Bute is good and well below prescribed standards, a report is due to come to PPSL committee highlighting the findings in October.

8.11 Regulatory Services: Covid-19 work continues, albeit with less enforcement powers, to ensure that there is continued compliance with national guidance. A programme of work providing advice/guidance and reinforcing controls is ongoing targeted at specific businesses and events and signage in town centres with updated guidance is due to be replaced over the next few weeks.

9. CONCLUSION

9.1 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 – 21st September 2021

For further information please contact Aileen McNicol, Leadership Support and Member Services Manager, telephone 01546 604014 or email aileen.mcnicol@argyll-bute.gov.uk

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**COUNCIL****IJB****30 SEPTEMBER 2021**

CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER REPORT 2020 - 2021

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The report presents the Argyll and Bute Chief Social Work Officer report for the period 1st April 2020 until 31st March 2021. The report provides oversight and accountability within the local authority for all social work and social care services, delegated to the Integrated Joint Board (IJB). Following consideration of the report by the IJB and the Council it will be submitted to Scottish Government. Social work and social care services are key to delivering the Strategic Plan.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Council is invited to

- I. Note, comment and approve the contents of the Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report for 2020 to 2021.
- II. Acknowledge the efforts of social work and social care staff across all sectors, as well as unpaid carers in continuing to support the people of Argyll and Bute, particularly as we continue to work within a Pandemic situation.
- III. Approve the publication of this report
- IV. Note that once approved, the report will be forwarded to the Scottish Government.

3.0 DETAIL

- 3.1 The Chief Social Work Officer has a statutory requirement to produce an annual report providing an overview of social work services for Argyll and Bute. The Chief Social Work Officer also has a responsibility to report directly to elected members, HSCP Chief Officer and Chief Executive in respect of any significant, serious or immediate risk or concern arising from statutory responsibilities within her professional remit.
- 3.2 The report details arrangements within Argyll and Bute Council to enable the Chief Social Work Officer to fulfil the responsibilities. For the purposes of this report it should be noted that we are still following the advice from the Office of the Chief Social Work Adviser in relation to the report contents, given the ongoing Pandemic.
- 3.3 The report highlights the progress of the delivery and performance of social work services during 2020 – 2021. The report highlights performance

information and also challenges for the year and provides highlights and areas for development for the forthcoming year.

- 3.4 The report provides acknowledgement of the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic. It should be noted that the Scottish Government agreed to a shorter report again for 2020 - 2021 given the ongoing impact of Coronavirus and the changes that this has required to service delivery. Current priorities for recovery in response to Coronavirus remain a priority going forward, in line with the changing directions in relation to policy and legislation as this arises.

4.0 CONCLUSION

4.1 Throughout 2020/21, our workforce have continued to deliver and provide high quality, flexible services to children, young people and adults who need additional support. Examples of innovative practice and developments to improve outcomes for people using our services are highlighted in the report. Once again this year's report comes at a very difficult time and reflects the challenges faced by the citizens of Argyll and Bute and also our staff as a result of working through the pandemic. Performance data is provided and reflects the close partnership working with our performance team who support the delivery of this report.

4.2 The members of the Council are asked to note the content of the report and approve the contents. Once approved the report will be forwarded to the Scottish Government.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Policy – no policy implications as retrospective report. Information presented may have a bearing on future policy recommendations

5.2 Financial - none

5.3 Legal – The report details arrangements within Argyll and Bute Council to enable the Chief Social Work Officer to fulfil the responsibilities outlined in Section 5 (1) of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 (as amended).

5.4 HR - none for this report

5.5 Fairer Scotland Duty: – none specific outwith national legislation and policy guidelines

5.5.1 Equalities -

The report links in to the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Strategic plan. The report further links to the policies and legislation that surround children's, adults, justice, learning disability, mental health and older adults care. These priorities further include the underpinning human rights principles across all services. Our priorities also include maximising inclusion and reducing inequalities and empowering people to be part of communities that are strong, resilient and citizen led

5.5.2 Socio-economic Duty – none specific outwith national legislation and policy guidelines

5.5.3 Islands – none specific outwith national legislation and policy guidelines

5.6. Risk – none for this report

5.7 Customer Service – none for this report

For further information contact:

Julie Lusk

Chief Social Work Officer & Head of Adult Services

julie.lusk@argyll-bute.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Chief Social Work Officers Report 2020-21

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**Argyll and Bute
Health and Social Care Partnership
Chief Social Work Officer
Annual Report 2020/21**



**Julie Lusk
Chief Social Work Officer
Argyll and Bute HSCP**

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Chief Social Work Officers Report

1. Introduction

Welcome to the annual Chief Social Work Officer report for Argyll and Bute for the year 2020/2021.

Little did we expect that the impact of COVID -19 would remain with us and continue to have an impact across services in Argyll and Bute. The remobilisation planning that was undertaken across the HSCP was robust taking into consideration changes to local services, guidelines from the Scottish Government, public health and partner organisations. The health and safety needs of staff were also supported as teams adapted to home working and to working in team safety bubbles as they continued to deliver social work services, support people using our services, balance risk and undertake statutory duties sometimes within specific COVID-19 legislation.

This year the report will remain a shortened version of the standard annual report. This is in line with information shared from the Office of the Chief Social Work Advisor to all Chief Social Work Officers. The report will focus on the areas of Governance and Accountability, Service Quality and Performance, Resources, Workforce and Coronavirus (COVID-19). An overview of our challenges will also be provided all in the context of social work service delivery across our remote, rural and Island communities. Areas requiring improvement will also be considered as will the work of our ongoing culture review.

2. Governance and Accountability

Role of the Chief Social Work Officer

The Chief Social Work Officer for Argyll and Bute is also Head of Adult Services. This portfolio includes direct responsibility for Mental Health, Learning Disability, Physical Disability, Sensory Impairment, Addictions and Transitions.

The Chief Social Work Officer is a member of the Senior Leadership Team and has specific accountability for the delivery of social work and social care services ensuring that the statutory duties of the profession are delivered across children's, adults and justice services.

Partnership working with a wide range of multi-agency professionals including the Chief Officer, Chief Executive, Elected Members, health and social care managers and practitioners are all crucial to the role. This ensures that appropriate advice, guidance and support is given to ensure that services are delivered safely and professionally.

The CSWO is a member of various key groups and committees within the organisation. Clear governance and reporting arrangements are in place. The CSWO provides professional advice and guidance on all social work matters and provides assurance that social work services are being delivered to the best standards and within the required statutory and policy guidelines. Regular performance reporting around risk management is also provided with the CSWO specifically reporting through the Public Protection Chief Officers Group. The CSWO is the MAPP (Multi-agency public protection arrangements) lead officer and is a member of the Adult Support and Protection and Child Protection Committees. The CSWO further reports to the IJB on key changes and developments

regarding social work profession and any policies and legislative changes as part of the professional accountability to the role as well as leading on the performance and development of the social work workforce in line with the SSSC standards and guidance of the profession.

One point of note at this stage is that the CSWO will be leaving the organisation on the 1st November to take up a seconded post to the Scottish Government Mental Health Division. This role is to inform the implementation of the Mental Health Transition and Recovery Plan and the Government's programme of activity to support the implementation of the recommendations of the Independent Review of Adult Social Care. A new CSWO will be appointed to Argyll and Bute.

3. Service Quality and Performance

Service quality and performance is managed on an ongoing basis and in several ways. This is in line with the discharge arrangements of the CSWO and the requirement to manage the performance and quality of social work services being delivered.

The CSWO has continued to attend the key service performance and improvement meetings including Clinical and Care Governance and the Chief Officers Group for Public Protection, Child Protection Committee and Adult Support and Protection Committee etc. The Introduction of the Daily Huddle during the Pandemic as well as the Bronze, Silver and Gold meetings has also ensured that service delivery has been robust and adapted where required to support the Pandemic response. This remobilisation response has been positive and has ensured that service quality across Argyll and Bute remained high.

Performance monitoring has also been thorough during the Pandemic and we have contributed to all statistical data requests from the Scottish Government. Locally we have been keen to monitor the comparison of our performance to treatment times and also to statutory work pre Pandemic. From this we were able to see that in some areas referrals fell and an example of this was in Adult Support and Protection where we anticipated an increase in referrals due to lockdown.

We further monitored the use of the Coronavirus Legislation and if this was applied and reported back on this to the Scottish Government and we put extra measures in to support the use of s13za of the Adults with Incapacity Act was requested in that all s13za requests were signed off by the CSWO if appropriate.

Going forward, as we make our plans to return services to some normality whilst we learn to live with Covid-19, we will continue to closely monitor or service quality and performance and use the opportunities that we have been given to work differently to our advantage as we strive to ensure the best services for the people of Argyll and Bute.

Adult Services

Adult Services includes all our hospital, community teams and dementia service supporting adults and particularly older adults. It is also inclusive of care homes, care at home and day services for older adults. It includes a range of services delivered on our island communities.

During April 2020 to March 2021 the service response has largely been focused on responses to the pandemic. This included escalation processes for all services in place via the Argyll and Bute Daily Huddle.

Care Homes

Accordingly the Assurance Functions for Care Homes was established in line with the expectations of the Scottish Government and this group linked with the Care Home Oversight Function for NHS Highland. Assurance visits to care homes took place in the summer of 2020 and some in early 2021 in line with national direction and local accountability. Latterly good practice and improvements through training and joint working have been co-ordinated.

In response to the pandemic, the care homes in Argyll and Bute formed a Care Home Task Force, which pulled together all the care homes, Public Health, Finance, Social Work, Health and the Care Inspectorate to work together to support the well-being of residents and staff. This group which has been running since April 2020 now effectively supports non Covid work and has effectively become a stakeholder group for developments for older adults across Argyll and Bute.

Care Home and Housing Programme Board

In March 2021, it was agreed to progress with a new programme board approach to re-establish the earlier work of care homes and housing which paused in 2019. Where there is major change there will be complexity, risk, many interdependencies to manage and conflicting priorities to resolve therefore a Programme Board establishes the fundamentals for a framework of good practice. The Board has in effect to support both shorter term objectives to review safe care in comfortable environments and to longer term develop a strategic approach to older adults' care needs across the challenging geography of Argyll and Bute. The Board has embedded the new standards of Planning for People within engagement strategies. The previous report along with up to date modelling and the impact of Covid-19 will be re considered.

Monthly board meetings have taken place to take place and Care Home Staffs, Relatives and families have been kept up to date via online engagement sessions and newsletters.

Integrated Dementia Service and Strategy

The proposal for the redesign of Dementia Services was brought to the Integration Joint Board in January 2020. This had followed a long period of short life working groups to review the current model of delivery which was seen as not fit for practice. After extensive debate, the Board agreed with the rationale of the development of an enhanced community dementia model and asked for consultation on the proposed approach between January and March 2020. Public consultation events were held across Argyll and Bute including focus groups in each mainland locality, online surveys and staff events. The events told us much about older adult services rather than exclusively dementia services and pathways including a lack of cohesive understanding of how to access services.

The feedback was positive and in agreement for a redesigned dementia service, this service will, for the first time, include social workers working within an integrated team. Unfortunately a stakeholder group of older adults and carers which was due to be established was on hold as a result of the pandemic but is still planned to be in place.

Community Based Developments

An adult services management re-structure took place in 2020 and this gave the opportunity to refocus on the priorities which will feed into the Strategic Plan for the HSCP in 2022. The re-structure was in part to focus on ensuring that there was a consistent Argyll and Bute approach to service delivery whilst recognising the unique geography and the role of Area Managers in co-ordinating across their area including the role of Third Sector Services plays.

Care at home services undertook the Care Inspectorate's national evaluation of managing in the pandemic where it was obvious that local relationships on the ground helped to mitigate risks and all providers and internal services worked together. Additionally the HSCP strengthened relationships with housing colleagues and undertook a sheltered housing review in terms of mitigating the impact of COVID-19. Latterly in early 2021 the pulling together of a strategy to support older adults to primarily be supported to remain well at home has started. Adult services participated in a Place Based Review of Cowal and Bute to work collaboratively with all partners and provide a framework for exploring the best use of services and assets in these two areas, that work is ongoing. The re-alignment of care at home services to meet demand was paused as a result of the pandemic but will be a priority for 21-22 as we expect this to be an area of growth.

Day Services

Day services for older adults have been closed during the pandemic and are now at the stage of risk assessments, referral processes and change towards provision of critical respite, working closely with Carer's Centres and the Carers Act Lead.

Building on work carried out during the pandemic, further work is being undertaken to support and develop a range of community assets, focussing on prevention and building of independence for older people in the community.

Adult Support and Protection

The Adult Protection Committee continues to support the adult support and protection developing agenda and improvement plan. Our partners play a full and comprehensive role in the widening adult protection agenda, with colleague committees and agencies working on other public protection issues.

The Committee's work has been fully supported by the Chief Officers Group for Public Protection through the COVID-19 period, cross cutting with child protection, alcohol and drug support, and wider violence to women, hate crime, domestic abuse, trafficking and other challenging areas, and with colleagues in the Health and Social Care Partnership, Police Scotland, the Argyll and Bute Council and the wider NHS Highland, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, the Care Inspectorate, the voluntary and independent sectors, and Advocacy services.

Adult Protection continues to identify challenging areas for protection such as scams and financial abuse, personal safety, self-harm and hoarding, trafficking and hate crime. While some of these activities can fall out-with the terms of reference and legal guidance in the Act, they will generate multi-agency responses to protection and support, with almost a third of all concerned referrals generating further activity.

The current review of the Adult Support and Protection Act along with the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) Act and Adults with Incapacity Act may bring further change, based on principles within the Human Rights Act and with the interests of citizens at its centre, and the experience arising from

the first 13 years of operation will be central to this. The impact of COVID-19 on support and protection has still to be fully evaluated, as has the operations of activity and engagement, but the enterprise of all staff has not gone un-noticed, adapting to the very real pressures which have presented, and through which they have worked to provide assistance, support and intervention when required in line with best guidance for Chief Officers and Adult Support and Protection Committees.

Mental Health and Addictions

The development of Primary Care Mental Health Services in collaboration with GMS Contract has now commenced and has seen the tier 1 and tier 2 practitioners come under a new team lead to guide and lead on primary care interventions, the service offers a range of interventions with an MDT approach.

Argyll and Bute HSCP remains a part of national accelerator site with NHS Highland supporting Early Interventions in Psychosis Work Stream in collaboration with Healthcare Improvement Scotland/SGHD and are negotiating phase 2 participation linking in with ESTEEM in GG&C as a spoke within the hub/spoke model.

Additionally, we have developed Advanced and Specialist Roles such as the nurse specialist for Housing/Addictions/MH in collaboration with locality authority and rapid rehousing strategy, who is due to start within the next month, a Perinatal Mental Health ANP who will join us in September and we have an acute/urgent and emergency advanced nurse practitioner post currently advertised

Continued use and engagement in Scottish Patient Safety Programme in the acute ward, to drive safety and quality within the acute setting. This is inclusive of a morning Argyll and Bute wide multi-disciplinary team safety huddle to highlight those presenting as more vulnerable and to assist in the discharge pathway

We have also had the privilege to work with the Scottish Government to develop a psychological therapies business case that will not only help us meet the long waits within Argyll and Bute but also allow us to expand and meet capacity in the future, the business case is currently with the Scottish Government for consideration for the remobilisation and renewal funds. We have a psychological therapies digital Strategy well established in Argyll and Bute HSCP with the use of cCBT/Near Me/IESO Digital Health to reduce and improve accessibility and waiting times. The new and updated cCBT platform Silverlight is also embedded in Argyll and Bute and provides modules for physical concerns such as diabetes alongside mental health support for a more tailored approach, and this is delivered by our co-ordinator with all our multi-disciplines within the CMHT having direct referral access.

We continue to development our Emergency and Urgent Care Service in Argyll and Bute HSCP, and we are fully on track to meet our commitment of 14.8 wte by 2022. The team work in close collaboration with A&E, Police, SAS, CMHTs and MHO colleagues to ensure that all service users are provided with a specialist emergency or urgent assessment within 2 hours of referral to the team where appropriate. The practitioners also undertake escort and transfer of those under mental health detention. The service continues to be monitored and have quarterly reporting to the Scottish Government

The Argyll and Bute Addiction Team covers all 4 localities of Argyll and Bute. It is an integrated health and social care service consisting of one consultant psychiatrist, which we have recently recruited to, 12 nurses, 2 social workers and 1 support worker with administrative support centrally within

Lochgilthead. In addition to this funding was made available from Scottish Government via the ADP for development of a Substance Misuse Liaison Nurse and more recently a practitioner focussed on embedding alcohol screening and brief intervention in target areas of primary care, maternity and in-patient services.

Recruitment to mental health practitioners remains challenging especially within the inpatient service and staffing levels for band 5 RMNs are at critical level, psychology and MHO teams within Argyll and Bute also remain concerning, concerted efforts continue to secure our future workforce and include establishing a programme board for MH recruitment and exploring all promotional avenues to attract candidate, social media platforms, career fayres, work with housing to secure accommodation for staff and redesign to meet the service needs.

Additionally, as a service we require to continue to remobilise services to a new normal and to look at ways to develop pathways and services that we do not currently have within Argyll and Bute at present such as a forensic service, eating disorder, IPCU beds and personality disorder pathways. To develop some of these pathways we will require to establish robust pathways with our colleagues in North Highland and develop additional SLAs with GG&C in a landscape of pressured services, national shortages of RMN and MHOs and challenged mental health estate nationally.

Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003

In 2020-21 there were 9.1% more detentions in Scotland than in 2019-20 (The use of the Mental Health Act in Scotland during the COVID-19 pandemic Mental Welfare Commission July 2021) and there was a drop in MHO consent to Emergency Detention Certificates in 2020-21 from 51.7% in 2019-20 to 43.8%. (MWC July 2021) In Argyll and Bute HSCP this is likely to be reflective of the geographical challenges where there is only 1 MHO on duty for an area which is the second largest local authority by area in Scotland and covers nearly 700,000 hectares. Another factor is that Argyll and Bute HSCP are presently reliant on MHO's who are working during the day to cover all evenings and weekends which can result in challenges in staff being able to complete emergency detentions out of hours. The out of hour's service is presently undergoing a full review of provision.

In Scotland in 2020-21 there was a reduction in social circumstances reports completed from 37.5% to 26.9% the previous year. Argyll and Bute HSCP had recognised the importance of completing SCR's and had aimed to increase the completion from 50% to 70% in 2020-21. This has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

There were reductions in the available MHO workforce during this period due to staff illness, availability caused by Covid and shielding which resulted in a reduction of staff by 33%. During the COVID-19 pandemic there was also challenges in gaining access to hospital wards to complete SCR's.

There are challenges in recruiting Mental Health Officers over Scotland. To address the shortages, the aim of Argyll and Bute HSCP would be to facilitate training for 2 social workers on the MHO learning Network west award programme. Due to the ongoing pressures to staff during the Covid -19 pandemic there were no applicants to complete the training in 2021-22. The HSCP are presently recruiting to 3 sessional MHO roles to ensure that statutory work is completed in the timescales required.

Adults with Incapacity Act (Scotland) 2000

There was a delay throughout Scotland during 2020-21 in processing Adults with Incapacity applications which was due to restrictions in Courts and also many private solicitors being on furlough. This resulted in an increase in applications when these easements were reduced. Argyll and Bute do not have waiting list for MHO report requests under AWI legislation and are continuing to work to complete supervision of guardianships under the legislated timescales.

In 2020-21 73.25% of Supervision of guardianships have been completed within the statutory requirement.

Learning Disability, Autism and Transitions

Work is also underway to support the repatriation of individuals who are currently placed out with the Argyll and Bute area. This is not without its challenges as it brings with it the requirement for additional specialist resources and provision, however, we remain committed to exploring and developing services to meet these identified needs. To this end we are working with housing and third sector partners including Enable, KeyHousing, Scottish Autism and Cornerstone to support this work. An example of this is the development of an Autism Toolbox which is being used in schools the development of a 10-bed resource in Garelochhead and two 3 person HMO's with Enable and Scottish Autism in Lochgilphead and Helensburgh.

The Argyll and Bute Autism Strategy Group was restarted in January 2020 and the group has been tasked to review the delivery and progress of the Implementation Plan. One area of progress has been the adult diagnostic and signposting service. The post holder will maximise the availability of appointments and ensure diagnosis and signposting is at an optimum across Argyll and Bute.

During COVID-19 we have worked to the guidance released by the Scottish Government in relation to day services. We have now started to re-open day services and full assessments are being undertaken to ensure risk management for those who attend.

Children & Families and Justice Social Work

The Children, Families and Justice Service includes Social Work, Youth Justice, Child Health, Paediatric Allied Health Professionals, Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS) and Maternity Services. The Children and Families Management Team model aligns management, professional and clinical leadership and strengthens oversight of the services and the accountability of managers and staff. The service is underpinned and delivered in line with the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) Framework. Over 2020 and 2021 the service has been working with partner agencies to adapt and improve provision through embedding practice driven by the welcome legislative changes outlined in the Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act; the Children (Equal Protection from Assault) (Scotland) Act 2019; the Incorporation of the UNCRC in Scots law: and the wider policy and practice changes driven by the work of the Promise Scotland. Over the next few months the service is working collaboratively with partners to prepare for the changes in practice which will be outlined within the refresh of GIRFEC and the updated National Child Protection Guidance expected imminently.

The service is committed to using improvement methodology to drive change and a range of improvement projects in progress include work exploring changes in Child's Planning, IRDs and a successful funding bid providing additional capacity to provide whole family support where parental

addiction and mental health are concerns. In partnership with colleagues in Education the service has been very successful in rolling out Trauma informed Training as part of a Scottish Government pilot, and we are now moving to build on this foundation by developing an implementation plan to spread this knowledge and practice across the service and through all service processes.

During the COVID-19 pandemic the service has worked closely with partner agencies and commissioned services to ensure critical respite provision on a daily and overnight basis has remained accessible for families with children with disabilities wherever COVID-19 restrictions have enabled services to continue safely, and encouraged innovation to ensure a level of service has remained even where restrictions have prevented direct provision.

In 2021/22 in line with The Promise the service is working with partners to build on current participation and engagement by children and young people in service planning across the Children and Young People's Service Plan, the Child Protection Strategy and the Corporate Parenting Plan. Developments include appointment of a care experienced co-chair for the Corporate Parenting Board and recruitment of Participation and Engagement Officer; the establishment of an effective young people's participation and engagement group; and we are progressing in the development of a joined up participation/engagement strategy.

Criminal Justice Services have faced the challenge of repeated changes in volume of work as the pandemic has progressed but the service has maintained performance targets and has taken up the Scottish Government offer of additional funding to support increased unpaid work and the increased output of the courts, successfully recruiting additional Social Workers and Unpaid Work Supervisors.

Children and Young People's Service Plan and GIRFEC Leadership

The Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) Collective Leadership Programme commenced pre-COVID and worked with leaders across children's services in Argyll and Bute to examine the content, structure and delivery of GIRFEC. Part of this work involved undertaking a range of supported evaluation interventions which provided a detailed analysis and understanding of how well GIRFEC was embedded across the partnership, drawing on evidence from partners and a wide range of practitioners, children, young people, parents and carers on their perspective of the children's services system.

The 2020 – 2023 Children and Young People's Service Plan (CYPSP 2020/23) was developed throughout the pandemic and much of the GIRFEC leadership work supported its development. The CYPSP 2020/23 is set within the context of four strategic priorities and aligned to the eight well-being indicators (SHANARRI). To evidence improvements in practice the Plan adopts a Quality Improvement approach supporting us to achieve our aim of improving outcomes for children and young people. Quality Improvement is a systematic approach using specific methods to improve quality; achieving successful and sustained improvement.

CAMHS

Delivery of good quality CAMHS depends on adequate numbers of well trained staff being recruited and retained across services in Scotland, including Argyll and Bute HSCP. To gain a better understanding of the needs of the Argyll and Bute CAMH Service a review of the current workforce and workload was undertaken. COVID-19 has had a wide-ranging impact on the mental health and wellbeing of the population with the overall impact of the pandemic on children, young people and families' wellbeing immense. Our Mental Health Transition and Recovery Plan lays out a comprehensive set of actions to respond to the mental health need arising from the pandemic. Scottish Government specified that £40 million would be available to take forward dedicated

packages of CAMHS improvement work, based on a gap analysis undertaken as part of implementation of the CAMHS Service Specification.

To increase staffing in CAMHS additional resource has also been provided by Argyll and Bute HSCP and recruitment to new posts has commenced. The School Counselling service commenced in January 2020, this service has been particularly beneficial during this challenging time.

The Promise – One Year On

The Promise outlines an ambitious and far reaching change programme to transform the Scottish care system and to reduce the numbers of children requiring to be cared for by redesigning community supports to families where children are at risk of coming into care and to reduce the numbers of children transforming services in support of parent's carers particularly those with mental health, addictions or learning difficulties and those parents at risk of custody or in prison.

To celebrate the first year of the Promise and the publication of The Plan, Argyll and Bute's Children Strategic group arranged a half day virtual event attended by managers and leaders from across children's services.

Key messages and outcomes from the event

- The Promise remains a key driver of transformational multiagency service redesign – building on, and complimenting GIRFEC
- Our work on developing a Trauma informed workforce is a positive initial step
- A range of positive steps are in place to progress the initial priorities
- There is a strong commitment to deliver The Promise across partners
- The Promise requires a major change in language, culture, approach and skills across the workforce
- The transformational change agenda needs to be widely owned and demands considerable resource shift and new ways of delivering services
- Work is required to embed subject matter experts within planning, strategic governance and to inform service development

Corporate Parenting

COVID-19 has seen us adapting our services to care experienced children and young people to the changing requirements and guidance. Overall our care experiences children and young people have coped remarkably well with the various impacts of Covid and have cooperated fully with government guidance and restrictions. We have continued to put them and their needs at the centre of our planning and decision making. We have been able to maintain all key services, albeit in sometimes different ways, and used pre-existing infrastructure to move as much as possible onto virtual platforms; whether this is workers keeping in touch, family time and contact or reviews and meetings.

Our children and young people adapted to this change quite quickly and many report preferring this approach - particularly for meetings and we anticipate making greater use of online and virtual platforms in future.

All our care experienced children have benefitted from personalised education support and the provision of electronic devices to maintain engagement in education. We are increasingly seeing children benefitting from the adopting of Trauma informed approaches within schools and across our workforce.

In the early part of the period we saw a significant increase in the numbers of children being received into care in a crisis and a rise on the proportion of care experienced children in kinship arrangements, this has helped us keep more groups of brothers and sisters together in care. This rise has also been coupled with more care experienced children returning home more quickly than has been the experience in previous years.

We have welcomed the report of the Independent Care Review and while its initial impact was slightly overshadowed by the early phases of lockdown, we have embraced the work of The Promise, we worked quickly with care experienced children and young people to develop and implement a lexicon of words and phrases we are stopping using and we have launched a set of recommended alternatives. The Promise has shaped and informed our priorities and actions for our Corporate Parenting Plan 21-24, and we have commenced work on proposals for a transformational change of our children's services to respond to the challenges the Promise rightly sets us – this will report in the summer of 2021.

We have identified 4 strategic improvement priorities for the next 3 years, through self-evaluation and informed by The Promise and the Care Leavers Covenant. These are the key areas where we are determined to make significant changes and improvements specifically for and with care experienced children, young people and adults;

1. We respect and include our children and young people - helping ensure they shape and inform all we do, and that we promote approaches that build on their and their families' and carer's strengths and assets
2. We ensure our children and young people grow up in safe, secure, nurturing and loving homes and we promote and maintain positive relationships
3. We support our children and young people to achieve their potential through lifelong learning, growth and development and the enjoyment of positive mental and physical wellbeing
4. We help ensure our young people move to a positive more independent life when they are ready and we support them on their journey to independence

In delivering these priorities we will seek to fully respect and incorporate the 5 foundations of The Promise and to encourage and support their implementation across wider children's services planning and with partner agencies;

The work of the Fostering and Adoption Panels and our Kinship Carers Panel quickly moved onto, and remains on, a virtual platform. Recruitment of carers has continued throughout the year, as with other areas of practice we initially put a number of assessments and applications on hold, but soon adapted our practice, operating face to face as and when restrictions allowed and developing virtual preparation groups, undertaking more assessment work virtually, and delivering virtual training and support groups.

Aftercare services continue to support around 100 care experienced young people and adults living in or moving into independence. The first half of the reporting period saw more young people choosing continuing care and delaying plans to move towards more independent living, this has enabled many to consolidate their skills and through the second half of the period they have begun

to feel ready to step into independence. We have prioritised keeping in touch with all our care leavers.

Child Protection

As with all other areas of Scotland, COVID-19 restrictions created significant challenges. Multi agency operational management groups were established to coordinate initial responses along with a commitment to maintain core CP services. Initially, most visiting and monitoring moved to virtual arrangements, all CP plans for children on the register were reviewed and updated to reflect the regulations and guidance and PPE were made available where there was a need for face to face interviews. All vulnerable children not receiving social work support, were reviewed by education staff to ensure sufficient supports were made available.

As we move through the pandemic, CPC has moved to delivering online training. This has included training for managers & designated CP officers, Care & assessment toolkit training and a rolling programme of level 1 training. Whilst attendance rates are up for online courses, connectivity issues continue to cause problems for some participants. Limited use of cameras means all communication and collaboration from body language is lost making facilitation and the ability to assess participant's levels of engagement and emotional well-being more difficult and challenging. In the absence of face to face training we have now produced a comprehensive range of online modules accessible from LEON & CPC website. This is enabling staff & volunteers across all workforce groups to still have access to information and learning to help them fulfil their roles and responsibilities in protecting children.

Whilst LEON allows us to gather data of who has accessed and completed the modules, we are unable to know how many non-council staff or members of the public have accessed the modules from the CPC website. We are working with A&BC web team to see if a heat map can be set up on the e-learning webpage that will give an indication of the number of hits to module links.

CPC has continued to audit Inter-agency Referral Discussion records on a bi-monthly basis, which is a key decision making stage following a child protection referral and the majority are now scoring 'Good' and above consistently. This group has also developed the record of discussion in order to provide more guidance to the writer with a clear focus on risk and rationale for decisions made.

CPC offers a monthly 'chat' session to all agency staff involved on child protection and this has been well attended by Police, Social Work, Education, Health and Third sector staff. Subjects of discussion such as working with resistance and challenging families has led to training being provided to promote confidence in this difficult area of practice.

Following the tragic death of a young person, COGPP requested that CPC carry out an Initial Case Review which is near completion. One of the recommendations, which reflects the soon to be published 'Learning Review Guidance' which replaces Significant and Initial Case Review guidance, is to hold a Learning workshop with the professionals involved with the young person and include their contribution in the final report.

CPC is currently progressing the use of other agency data in addition to what Social Work records on Carefirst and Education has now been contributing to CPC for the last 6 months. A small cohort of CPC members were also involved in a 'Deep Dive' supported by CELCIS and the Care Inspectorate, which afforded the opportunity to take a closer look at our local data and discuss trends and patterns which have emerged throughout the pandemic. This information is contained within a report which has recently been published by CELCIS.

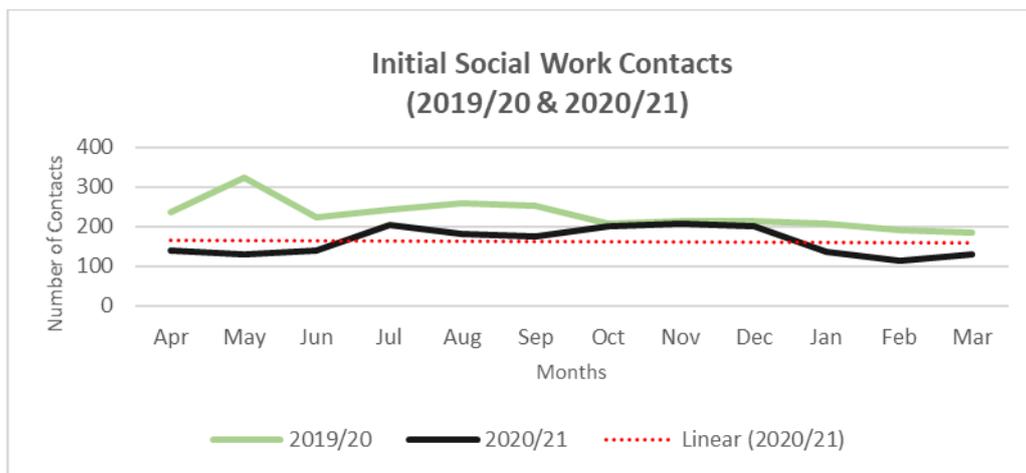
CPC is also developing a range of sessions which afford staff the opportunity to reflect on a particular family that presented challenge to the multi-agency Team around the Child. Such a session was held recently and was well attended with very positive feedback. It is proposed that this will be CPC is also developing a range of sessions which afford staff the opportunity to reflect on a particular family that presented challenge to the multi-agency Team Around the Child. Such a session was held recently and was well attended with very positive feedback. It is proposed that this will be developed by the Learning & Development sub group of CPC as part of our ongoing commitment to an Argyll and Bute learning culture.

Service Quality and Performance statistical data– including delivery of statutory services

Children

Social Work Contacts

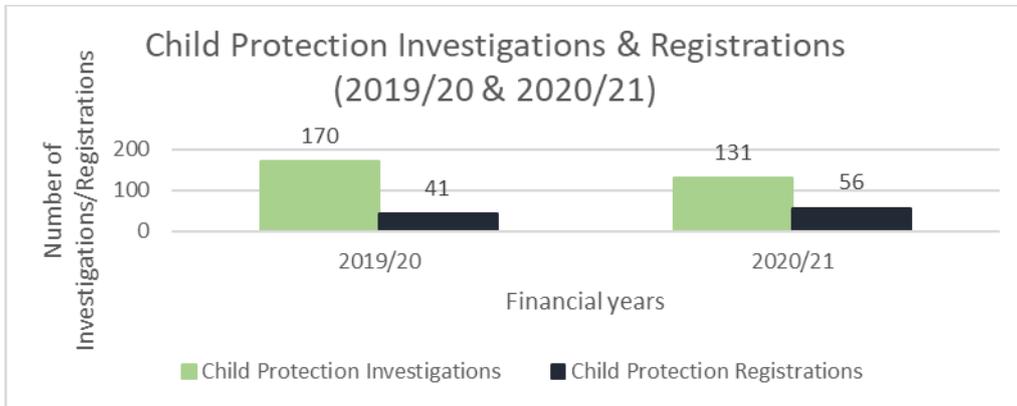
Data with regards to initial social work initial contacts notes an overall reduction for period May- July and Dec– Mar 2020/21. The average number of contacts for 2019/20 was (221) dropping to (163) in 2020/21 this is a 36% reduction. Data trends identify an increase in activity for the periods where national restrictions were eased from July to September (2020/21) and the period October to November for both years plateaued at the same rate.



(Data Source- Carefirst/ Business Object Report)

Child Protection

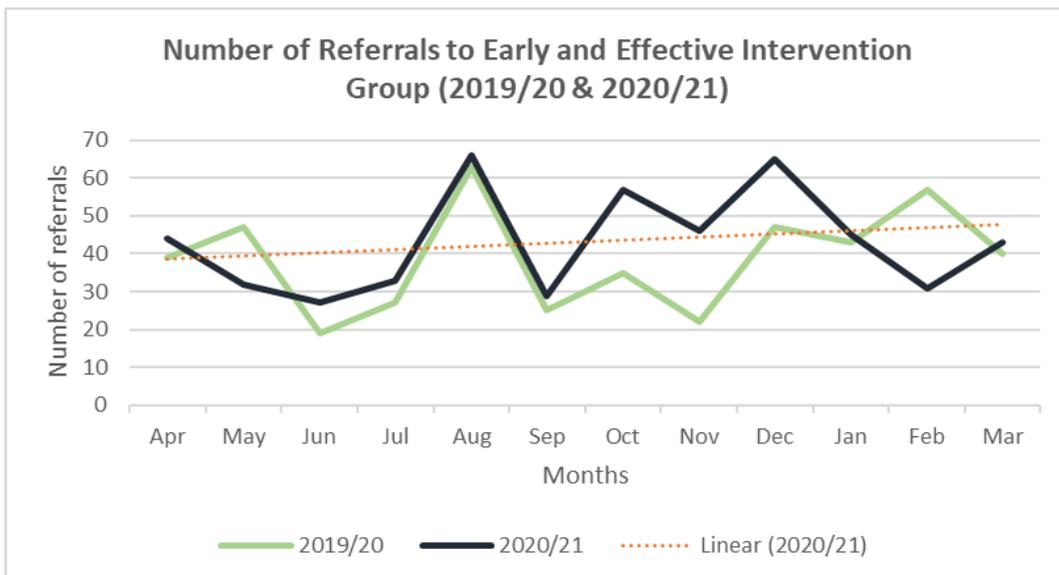
Child protection investigations note a 23% reduction for 2020/21 against the previous year 2019/20, in contrast there is a 27% increase with regards to the numbers of children placed on the child protection register for 2020/21.



(Data Source- Carefirst/ Business Object Report)

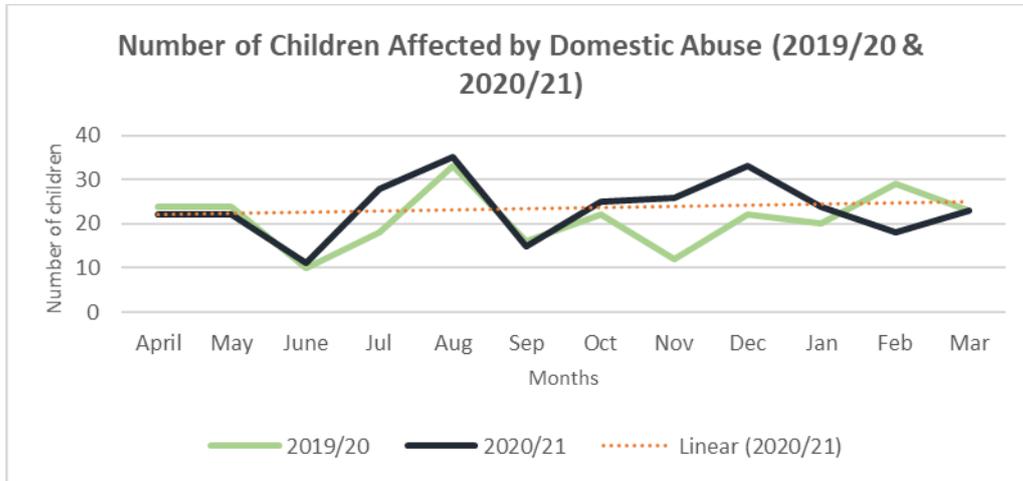
Children & Families Early Intervention Services

Trend analysis of the referrals to the Early & Effective Intervention Group notes an increase in activity for the most part for 2020/21 against the previous year. The trajectory of data notes a similar profile across both years for the period April- September, at this point there is an increase in trajectory for 2021 from Sep-Jan, this coincides with a lifting of COVID-19 lockdown restrictions at which point the data shows a reduction in activity against previous year. This could be attributable to the January 2020/21 increase in COVID-19 restrictions through to March. Data for the year performance notes an average number of referral for 2020/21 (43) against (39) for 2019/20 this is an overall 10% increase in referrals.



(Data Source- Carefirst/ Business Object Report)

The data notes that with regards to those children who were referred to EEI as a result of Domestic Abuse the trend data follows closely the overall referral data with a peak of activity across July – August 2021. Again the data suggests a correlation in a rise in Domestic Abuse Referrals against the effects of the two COVID-19 lockdowns at each end of the year.

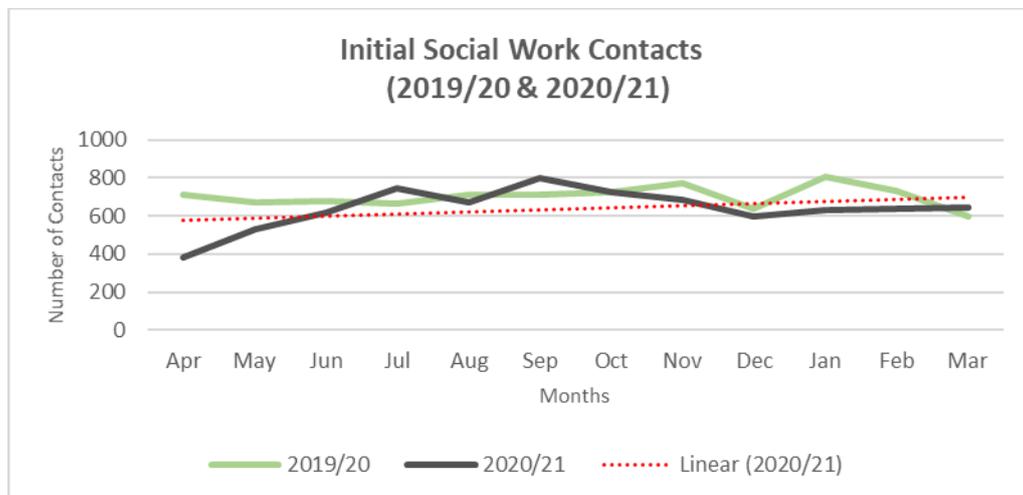


(Data Source- Carefirst/ Business Object Report)

Adult Services

Social Work Contacts

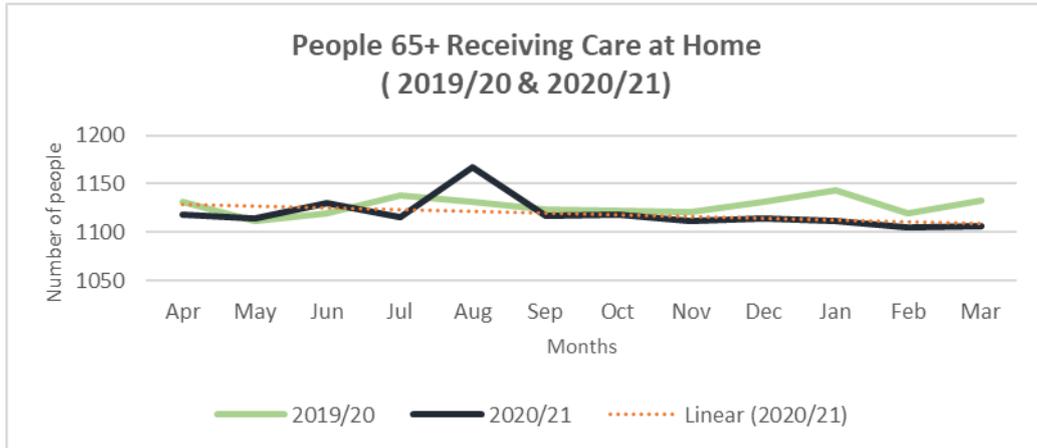
Data for initial Social Work Contact notes a 10% reduction in average social work contacts for 2020/21 (702) against the previous year 2019/20 (639). The overall data trend for 2020/21 notes a reduction in contacts which align with the COVID-19 lockdown period for the start of 2020/21 but increases slightly for the later January – March period, against the second COVID-19 lockdown. As previously seen in the data for other services the greater level of activity is seen in the months where the lockdown restrictions are eased across July-November 2021.



(Data Source- Carefirst/ Business Object Report)

Homecare

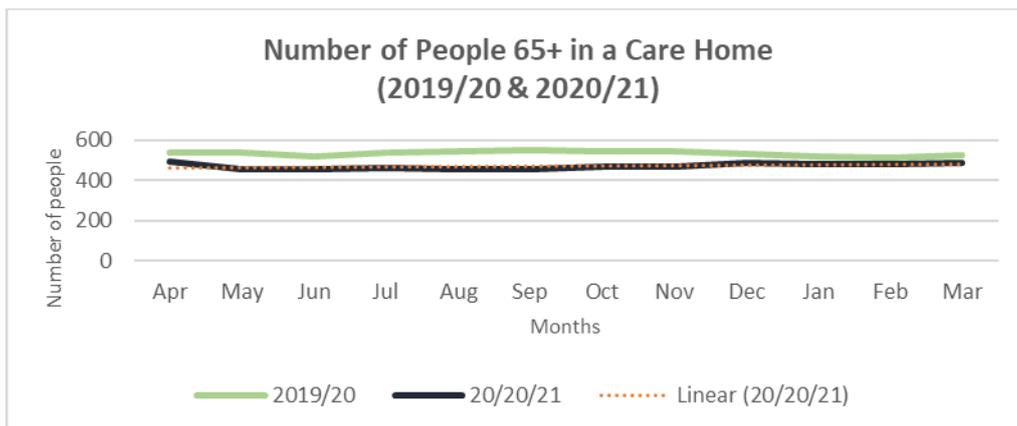
The data trend for those in receipt of homecare 65+ notes at the beginning of 2020/21 a similar trend to the previous year across April- June. Activity in the middle of the year is reduced for the month of July, an increase in activity above the previous year for August and the trend continues to reduce. Cumulative year data notes a 1% reduction for 2020/21 against the previous year, the average variance is (1127) for 2020/21 against (1119) for 2019/20.



(Data Source- Carefirst/ Business Object Report)

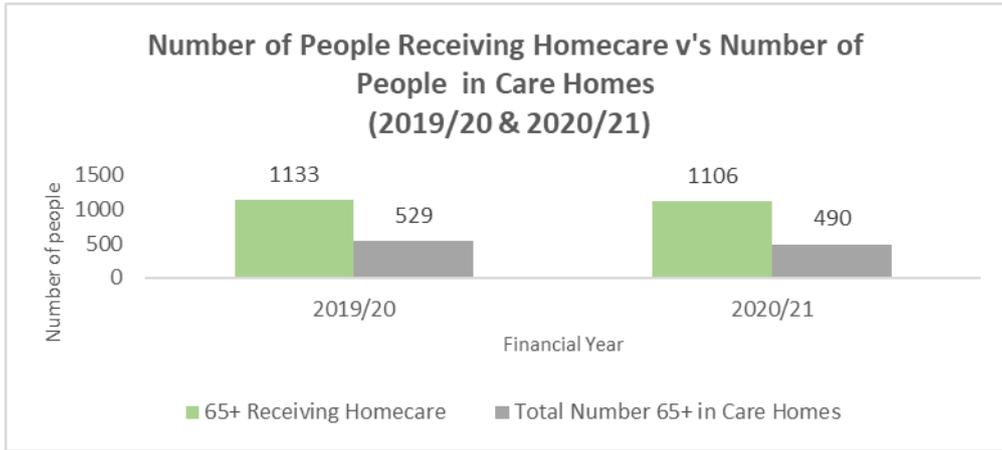
Residential Care

Trend analysis of the data for the average number of people 65+ in a Care Home notes an overall 13% reduction a decrease from (533) in 2019/20 to (470) in 2020/21. Although the trajectories for both years remain relatively flat the period between May-November for 2020/21 notes a slight reducing trend which could be attributed to the initial lockdown period and closures locally due to the effect of the COVID-19 virus on staff and residents.



(Data Source- Carefirst/ Business Object Report)

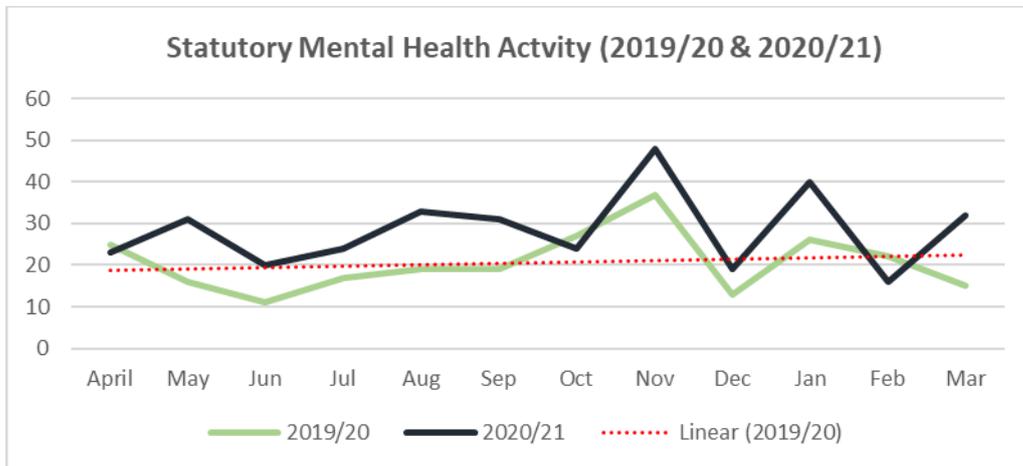
Analysis of both Care Homes and Care at Home together identifies a percentage split with regards to those in Care Homes and those receiving Care at Home as 46% for 2019/20 this is against a 44% for 2020/21.



(Data Source- Carefirst/ Business Object Report)

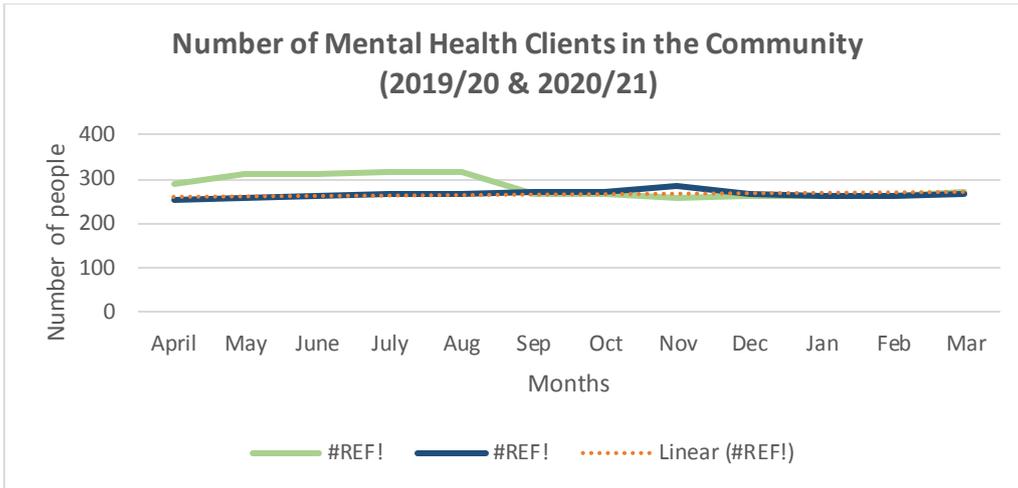
Mental Health

Statutory Mental Health Activity for 2019/20 & 2020/21 notes similar trend patterns for both years, however for the majority of 2020/21 activity was increased against the previous year. The pattern of activity across the 12 month period noted an increase in activity from April- November in line with easing of the COVID-19 restrictions. The effects of a further lockdown through Dec- Jan noted a reduction in activity, however this was recovered with an increase against the previous year in Feb to March. Statistically across the year there was an overall 44% increase in cumulative statutory activity.



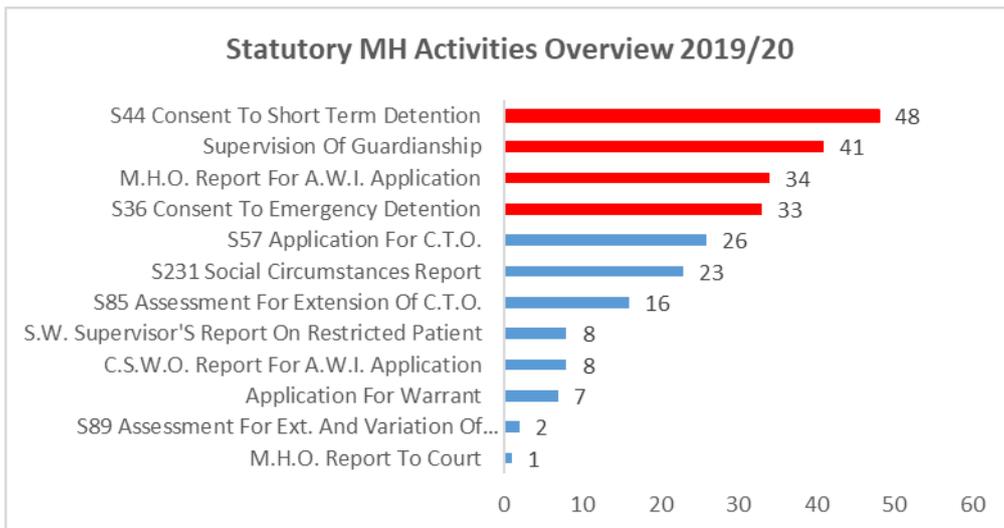
(Data Source- Pyramid Balanced Scorecard)

Alongside increased activity for 2020/21, the number of Mental Health Clients in the Community noted only a slight reduction from April – August and from August the trend notes an increase and plateau against the previous year.



(Data Source- Pyramid Balanced Scorecard)

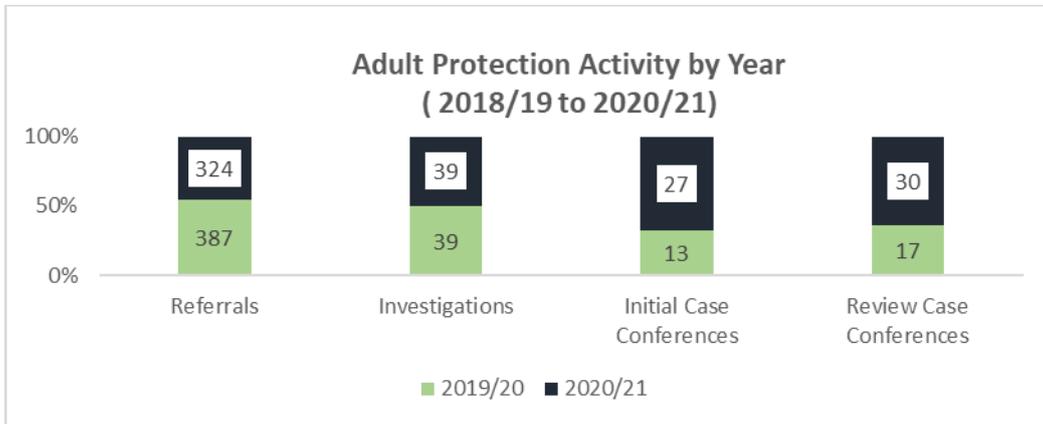
With regards to the types of statutory activities, Consent to Short Term Detention, Supervision of Guardianship, Reports for AWI Application and Consent to Emergency Detention are noted as having the largest impact across staff workloads.



(Data Source- Carefirst/ Business Object Report)

Adult Protection

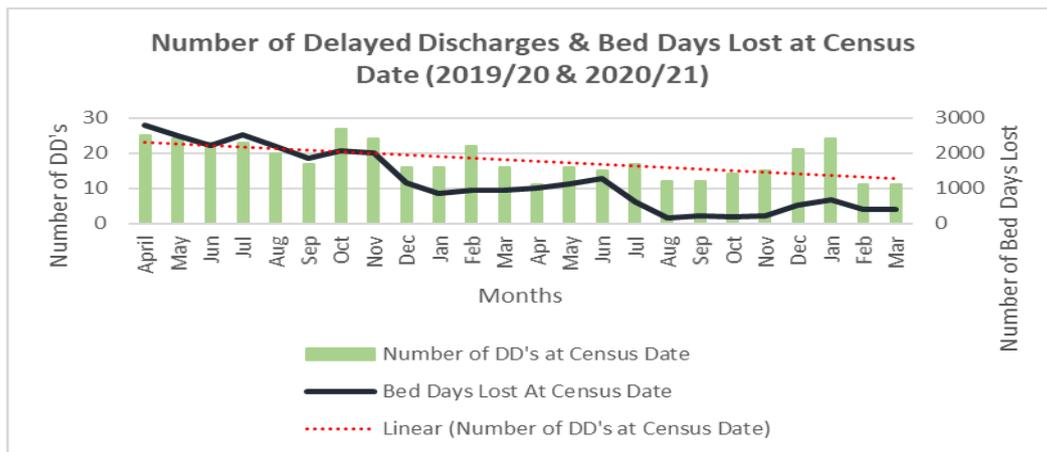
Adult Protection Referrals note a 19% reduction for 2020/21 against the previous year, Investigations remain the same and there are increased Initial Case Conferences (48%) and Case Conference Reviews (57%)



(Data Source- Carefirst/ Business Object Report)

Delayed Discharge

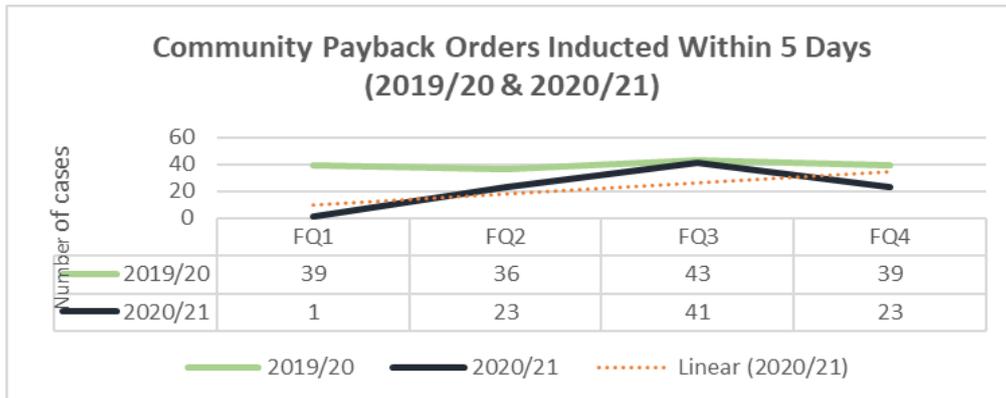
Delayed Discharge data across the period 2019-2021 notes sustained performance with regards to reduced numbers of delays and the length of time in hospital. The effects of winter pressures remains evident in the data trend, and there is evidence of the effects of lockdown with an elevation in DD's February-June 2021, this is recovered from June onwards. Statistically the average number of Delayed Discharges for 2019/20 are (21), this is reduced to (15) for 2020/21, this equates to a 31% cumulative reduction comparing the last two years data. Data suggests that despite COVID-19 restrictions the Delayed Discharge performance was maintained with the trend for Bed Days Lost noting less time in hospital for August onwards.



(Data Source- Micro Strategy/PMS)

Justice Services

Data for Community Payback Orders Inducted within 5 Days notes that performance for last year was reduced against the previous year. Again the trend pattern shows clearly the COVID-19 restrictions and the gradual easing of this mid-year did have an impact on service delivery. The period October – December noted a return to previous levels of activity, however again there is evidence to suggest that the reapplication of lockdown criteria in the Jan- March 2020/21 period reduced some of this earlier improvement.



(Data Source- Pyramid Balanced Scorecard)

Ability to deliver statutory functions and Key risks to delivery

Delivering Statutory Services

The data show that the delivery of statutory duties was robust and responsive, trends across most of the year note the potential for the COVID-19 restriction to have an effect on service delivery, against this the data shows that mitigating actions taken ensured that’s service delivery was responsive to demand. Service responsiveness is evident in data for Care at Home, Residential Care, Mental Health and Delayed Discharges. Alongside this the data also notes that the response to both Child and Adult Protection was robust despite local and national COVID-19 restrictions. Contact with services noted a minimal reduction across both Adult Care and Children & Families Services for 2020/21 against the previous year.

4. Resources

Financial Overview

Spending on social care was heavily impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic which affected the whole of the 2020/21 financial year. There was substantial extra spending involved in dealing with the impact of the pandemic across the service covering a wide range of cost areas including:

- Staffing - cover for absent staff and revised service delivery arrangements to ensure the safety of service users and staff;
- Equipment and materials - most notably on personal protective equipment to protect staff and slow down the spread of the virus;
- Income loss – a reduction in care fee revenues collected by the service due to service closures and reduced activity;
- Additional care packages and capacity – primarily to enable the transfer of people out of local hospitals back to their own homes with support or to local care homes to keep them safe and maximise the availability of hospital beds for people with COVID-19;
- Budget savings delivery – with the focus on dealing with the pandemic, activity on the delivery of budget savings was halted creating a substantial net overspend on the service budget; and
- Financial support for local commissioned care providers - to help with their COVID-19 related extra running costs and the reduction in care fee revenue caused by service closures and reduced activity.

The financial impact on the service of all of the above cost pressures was fully mitigated by additional funding from the Scottish Government and, despite all of the extra spending, the social work budget was underspent by £0.906m at the 31st of March 2021. The underspend was generated by a combination of lower than expected spending on the staffing budget due to higher staff turnover and slower recruitment to vacant posts and a reduction in spending on care home placements for older people, both of which were heavily influenced by the impact of COVID-19 on services, staff and on the choices people made about the care arrangements for themselves or their family members.

The underspend was paid back to the Council to reduce the debt which the partnership had built up over previous years when the partnership had overspent its budget and required extra funding from the Council to balance its financial position.

5. Workforce

Throughout the year we have progressed with and involved all staff in the ongoing work of the Culture review and we have implemented a new Leadership and Management programme for staff new to leadership roles. This has been undertaken remotely during the last year.

Our social work Training Board is now fully embedded with a more equitable approach for staff to access training in line with their PDP. We have been working remotely with the SSSC this year to look at developing a more robust supervision model. This work is progressing positively.

We have introduced Wellbeing Wednesdays to ensure that our staff are able to access support for their own needs, not only in terms of COVID-19 but with any matters that may support their health and wellbeing.

The review of the Culture across NHS Highland and Argyll and Bute should continue with social work having an equal recognition in this work if we are to genuinely overcome the long term culture of bullying and harassment and this should be inclusive of staff at the frontline with inclusive feedback.

Mental Health Officer Recruitment remains a pressure area for us and disappointingly we had no applications for the course this year. It is anticipated that we may have to look at some incentive to attract to the role. For example, senior practitioner status.

6. COVID-19

Like other HSCP areas Argyll and Bute has been impacted on by COVID-19. We have continued to work safely during the year in terms of service delivery and also to ensure that our most vulnerable children and adults were supported appropriately. This ensured that care needs and protection requirements were upheld. Our frontline social workers and social care workforce have been working from planned team “bubbles” to ensure a balance between service delivery, risk and social distancing. Staff have worked from home and the results of a recent survey by the Chief Executive indicates that this has been positive with staff advising that they have coped well to develop their working practice to suit the balance of blended working. Staff working from home have continued to have access to support and regular formal supervision. We are developing a more blended model of working as we progress this year.

COVID-19 fatigue has been an issue and staff have been robustly encouraged to take annual leave to have a break and rest. We have continued to work in partnership with HR and our mental health teams to ensure a fast track tier process for staff experiencing COVID-19 difficulties.

Care Homes, Care at Home and Day Services have been impacted on significantly by COVID-19. We are now moving forward with re-opening day services as per guidelines from the Scottish Government and associated safety measures.

Staff have continued to work extremely hard during this year to ensure all service areas have been fully operational. This has been difficult for them to adapt but they have done so and I would like to credit them for their efforts in keeping our services moving forward and our service users, families and carers supported whilst balancing the statutory elements of their jobs.

Key Priorities for Recovery in Response to COVID-19

We have to continue to adapt and work with the Pandemic in our day to day work. This brings opportunity for us in terms of continuing with some of the positive changes that we have had to make to our work with people. However we must enforce the fact that none of us should become complacent to the virus.

Winter Planning and the implementation of the flu vaccine continues to remain a high priority for us.

We will take cognisance of the need to implement the recommendations from the Independent Review of Adult Social Care and other areas of recovery policy and we will remain a competent working partner to the Scottish Government and other agencies as we progress this work.

We will step up service development areas of work that had to be parked due to our Pandemic response work.

We continue to have daily huddles in Argyll and Bute to keep a close overview of pressure areas and service specific issues that require action or escalation. We have found that daily huddles are positively to the team and area managers as a means of communication for staff to hear about developments and also as a way of bringing any pressure areas to the fore in order that we can respond quickly. We have maintained this through the Pandemic and will continue to do so as we move forward.

We will continue to monitor our ability to achieve our set financial savings targets given that demands for social services will increase as we move through the winter. It is acknowledged that financial challenges continue given savings planning was primarily side-lined due to the Pandemic.

We will support service users by linking to our caring for people groups, education, housing and other colleagues to ensure that any families or individuals that do find themselves in hardship are fully supported.

Finally we will continue to ensure that our care planning and reviews are undertaken in order that any shift in the balance of care that is required is undertaken quickly. This will ensure that services are provided timeously and carer's needs are fully considered during this significantly challenging period.

Challenges ahead

The Pandemic in general, the nature of the spread and continued learning about COVID-19 for us all will mean that we will need to continually navigate the fluidity it brings. We need to progress our recovery planning whilst keeping a firm view of the nature and behaviour of the Pandemic and continue to respond as best we can.

We will definitely continue to find the financial challenges a pressure and the ability to reach financial targets that were set prior to COVID-19. Future targets will also be challenging as we prepare for the year ahead.

The sustainability of care homes and care at home remains challenging as will the increased demands for services and the legislative and protection elements to our role.

We need to keep our Strategic priorities for service redesign and transformation of services in view, given the changes we need to make to ensure services are fit for purpose and deliver to the needs of the population across Argyll and Bute. Full consideration of the recommendations from the Independent Review of Adult Social Care will be a component of future strategic planning across all service areas as well as other key policy areas. The Coronavirus (COVID-19) Mental Health Transition and Recovery Plan will also be a priority and the recommendations within this and we must ensure that priority is given to the development and priority of mental health services in Argyll and Bute as their own identity and not a sub-section of NHS Highland.

Priorities for 2020/21

Recovery planning from Covid-19 will be the main priority for all services.

To remobilise staff and support new ways of working whilst ensuring that office rationalisation supports the supervisory and support elements that staff require in order to undertake their social work role. To consider wider work force planning across all service areas to sustain service delivery.

To continue with the transformation of Learning Disability Day Services and the implementation of the Learning Disability strategy. This will include Autism and Transitions and the development of a pathway from children to adult's services.

The development of Mental Health Services to include seamless pathways across services, implementation of the outcomes of the Mental Health Transition and Recovery plan, the development of the EIP pilot with NHS GG&C Esteem service.

Continued overview of Care Home needs and the development of Care at Home services will continue to be progressed.

To fully embed the work of the Promise and they key objectives arising from this work across Children and Adult Services.

To continue with the review of the current out of hours social work system which is not fit for purpose and in the long term unsustainable. This work is progressing. To support the use of Near Me for SWES.

To ensure that all new and updated legislative frameworks for social work services are fully embedded and understood by all staff across the HSCP.

CONCLUSION

We continue to learn to live with the impact of COVID-19 and adapt of working ways accordingly to support the needs of service users across Argyll and Bute whilst maintaining staff safety. No-one is clear of how Covid-19 will impact on us in the longer term, but we remain positive that by continuing to maintain an overview of services, pressures and support we can hopefully sustain the pace that we are working at.

Much of our transformational work and our financial planning has not been progressed due to the pandemic and we must now try and work together to remobilise and progress this work again. This has been challenging for us but we are not unique in this respect.

Compassionate leadership and understanding will be required given many of our staff teams remain under pressure, balancing complex case management with legislative duties and responsibilities.

I wish the new CSWO for Argyll and Bute every success in their new role and wish to thank all of those who have been supportive to me from Argyll and Bute in my role including my CSWO colleagues across Scotland, the OCSWA team and Social Work Scotland.

Julie Lusk

Chief Social Work Officer and Head of Mental Health, Addictions, Learning Disability, Autism, Transitions and Physical Disability Services.

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ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL
LEGAL AND REGULATORY SUPPORT

COUNCIL
30 SEPTEMBER 2021

APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Council on the appointment of David Gibson, Head of Children, Families and Justice to the statutory role of Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) with effect from 1st November 2021.
- 1.2 This appointment has arisen following notification of the current CSWO's, Julie Lusk, appointment to a seconded post within Scottish Government Mental Health Division with effect from 1st November.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Council is invited to:

Note the appointment of David Gibson, Head of Children, Families and Justice to the statutory role of Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) with effect from 1st November 2021.

3.0 DETAIL

- 3.1 The role of Chief Social Work Officer was established by The Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 which placed a legislative duty on all Scottish Local Authorities to appoint a professionally qualified Chief Social Work Officer and was also made statutory by the Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act 1994. Councils are required to appoint a Chief Social Work Officer to provide elected members and senior officers with effective, professional advice about the delivery of social work services. It is the responsibility of this officer to highlight where a council policy may endanger lives or welfare and to ensure that elected members and officers are provided with professional advice in relation to social work and social care services. The role requires the chief social work officer to maintain a governance, quality and professional leadership role for all social work services, both in the HSCP and in the council.

- 3.2 The CSWO undertakes the role across the full range of local authority social work functions, irrespective of the range of operational management responsibilities within their job description.
- 3.3 The current CSWO, Julie Lusk, is leaving the organisation on 1st November 2021 to take up a seconded post within the Scottish Government Mental Health Division.
- 3.4 The council constitution provides for a delegation to the Chief Executive to appoint a suitably qualified officer to the role of CSWO and to advise the Council on any such appointments made.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The Chief Executive has approved the appointment of David Gibson, Head of Children, Families and Justice to the statutory role of Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) with effect from 1st November 2021.

The Council is invited to note the appointment.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Policy - This role is critical to the provision of professional and independent advice with regards to social work policies.
- 5.2 Financial – no additional costs.
- 5.3 Legal – Addresses statutory requirements.
- 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 – none
- 5.7 Customer Service - none

Douglas Hendry

Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support

7 September 2021

Policy Lead: Mary Jean Devon

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

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

COUNCIL

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

30 SEPTEMBER 2021

REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report sets out the primary findings of a review of Performance Management and recommendations to simplify our existing performance framework, empower Members to scrutinise performance, shape policy, and ultimately improve outcomes.
- 1.2. It is recommended that the Council;
- a) Agree a proposed suite of Corporate Outcome Indicators (as set out in appendix 1) to be reported to Strategic Committees as set out in paragraph 4.10 and remove Business Outcomes.
 - b) Agree to pilot a more immersive method of assessment of performance.
 - c) Agree Members' review priorities within the Local Government Benchmarking Framework.
 - d) Members' note that changes will take effect for financial year 2022 – 2023 with a review to come back to a future meeting of the Council.

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

COUNCIL

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

30 SEPTEMBER 2021

REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Further to the findings of the Best Value Audit in 2020, this report sets out the primary findings of a review of Performance Management and recommendations to simplify our existing performance framework, empower Members to shape policy and ultimately improve outcomes.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 It is recommended that the Council;

- a) Agree a proposed suite of Corporate Outcome Indicators (as set out in appendix 1) to be reported to Strategic Committees as set out in paragraph 4.10 and remove Business Outcomes.
- b) Agree to pilot a more immersive method of assessment of performance.
- c) Agree Members' review priorities within the Local Government Benchmarking Framework.
- d) Members' note that changes will take effect for financial year 2022 – 2023 with a review to come back to a future meeting of the Council.

4.0 DETAIL

4.1 In June 2020 the Council considered the findings report and recommendations from the Accounts Commission on the Best Value Report on the Council. The report concluded that the Council's public performance reports do not provide a clear picture of how well the council is performing against its corporate outcomes and consequently one of the recommendations is to improve performance management reporting to provide a balanced picture of long term trends in performance against its targets.

4.2 Members may also recall that the accompanying Best Value Action Plan agreed by the Council in June 2020 sets out a series of activity in direct response to the recommendation. Jane Fowler was appointed Senior

Responsible Officer (SRO) to appoint a project lead and oversee the development of the project; as CEO I am the Project Sponsor.

4.3 Table 1 below highlights key activity of the review.

| Month | Activity |
|----------|--|
| Oct 2020 | SMT signed off Project Initiation Document |
| December | Online survey with Chief Officers and Senior Officers (COSO) |
| Jan 2021 | 4 x Virtual Introductory Workshops with COSO |
| January | Data survey |
| January | Members Online Survey |
| January | Members Seminar 1 |
| February | 6 x Virtual Stakeholder Workshops |
| March | Project progress report to Audit and Scrutiny Committee |
| March | Learning Sessions with other Local Authorities |
| April | 3 x Strategy Map Virtual Workshops |
| April | Members Seminar 2 |
| May | Draft Strategy Map |
| June | Review of Indicators |
| June | Progress Meeting with Audit Scotland |
| June | Review of all reports to Strategic and Area Committees |
| July | Selection of draft Corporate Outcome Indicators |
| August | Members' Online Survey 2 |
| August | Members Seminar 3 |

4.4 The extensive engagement with Members and officers across the organisation allowed the project team to develop a clear understanding of our current culture and approach and what Members and officers want. We know we have an overly complex and prescriptive performance measurement system which consumes significant officers' time which may not equal in value the benefits we receive.

4.5 From our engagements we identified that we require a system that is:

- a) Simpler to use and understand.
- b) Reduces the current significant levels of duplication
- c) Consists of a smaller and more meaningful set of indicators
- d) More customer focused.

4.6 A review of reports submitted to Strategic Committees and Area Committees over a two year period (2019 – 2021) demonstrates that nearly half of all reports contain performance related information and further to a second online Members Survey and Seminar it was established that;

- Levels of satisfaction with how performance is scrutinised by Members is not high.
- 90% of survey respondents agreed in principle we could reduce the amount of information reported to Committee if already publicly available.
- Over half of survey respondents don't think existing arrangements provides enough information to be able to shape policy.

4.7 We have made improvements to how we manage performance and some examples are as follows;

- a) The number of performance indicators reported through the Service Plans have been reduced from over 300 at their peak down to 85 to ensure a smaller set of meaningful indicators at the strategic level.
- b) Quarterly performance reporting to Strategic Committees has been simplified with an emphasis on trends with supporting narrative to provide context. It is understood this is popular with members and supports them in scrutinising performance.
- c) The collaborative style of the project has generated significant interest, discussion and ideas on how we can improve performance management at service, departmental and organisational level.

4.8 This report sets out a proposal for the Council that seeks to provide a revised and much simpler framework that allows Members control and improve effective scrutiny of Council performance as follows;

| Simplify | Empower | Improve |
|---|--|------------------------------|
| Reduce number of Performance Indicators | 'Deep dive' assessments of performance | Presentation of information |
| Remove Business Outcomes | Review priorities within LGBF | Public performance reporting |
| How we publish information. | Informed to shape policy | Outcomes |

Simplify

4.9 The project team identified a set of 44 indicators to support the Council in reporting progress grouped by our 7 corporate outcomes. The proposed draft Corporate Outcome Indicators can be viewed in appendix 1.

4.10 It is proposed that reporting of indicators to Strategic Committee is as follows;

| Committee | Existing reporting of Indicators by Service | Proposed reporting of Indicators by Corporate Outcome |
|--|--|--|
| Community Services | 1. HSCP 2. Education | 1. People live active, healthier and independent lives. 2. People will live in safer and stronger communities. 3. Children and young people have the best possible start. 4. Education, skills and training maximise opportunities for all. |
| Environment, Development and Infrastructure | 3. Roads and Infrastructure 4. Development and Economic Growth | 5. Our economy is diverse and thriving 6. We have an infrastructure that supports sustainable growth. |
| Policy and Resources | 5. Commercial 6. Customer Support 7. Financial Services 8. Legal and Regulatory | 7. Getting it right |

4.11 Historically when the Council reported on over 300 indicators it was considered too many to group by corporate outcome. For this reason Business Outcomes were created as a middle level to categorise information between corporate outcomes and indicators. Engagement with officers and Members' alike has confirmed that Business Outcomes are largely unpopular, creates complexity and deemed obsolete. With a smaller set of indicators, removing Business Outcomes is a quick win to simplify the system and group indicators by corporate outcome only.

4.12 As articulated earlier in this report, 90% of respondents to the Members Survey agreed in principle we could reduce the amount of information reported to Committee if already publicly available. With effect from the

beginning of the next financial year, this will become the default position and will improve Public Performance Reporting.

Empower

- 4.13 It is proposed to pilot in 2022 - 2023 under the new Council a more immersive style of scrutiny for members that;
- Provides a more in-depth and broader assessment of performance (i.e. are we achieving what we set out do and what is the level of impact?).
 - Creates a conversational culture that allows members to engage with officers in a manner that can inform and shape policy.
 - Can be cross cutting or theme specific e.g. a corporate outcome, public protection, child poverty, fuel poverty, housing etc.
 - Focus on improving outcomes.
- 4.14 Sometimes known as a 'deep dive', subject to a successful pilot, we would envisage in agreement with members a wider and agreed programme of in-depth assessments over a longer period. Respondents in the Members Survey were largely in favour (63%) whilst 27% were neutral and 9% disagreed.
- 4.15 A majority of respondents to the Members Survey (73%) agreed that Members' should consider priorities within the Local Government Benchmarking Framework and it is recommended that this is undertaken by the new Council.

Improve

- 4.16 In addition to the proposals set out above, the planned decommissioning of Pyramid provides an opportunity to;
- Review and simplify how we present performance information to improve scrutiny.
 - Improve Public Performance Reporting
- 4.17 Ultimately these changes will support the organisation in its pursuit of continuous improvement and more importantly Members' desire to improve outcomes for all.
- 4.18 Subject to the Council agreeing the recommendations, the next step is to prepare to implement these changes with the new Council in 2022.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 Further to the Council approving the Best Value Improvement Action Plan in June 2020, a full review of our Performance Management Framework is complete.
- 5.2 The project team adopted a collaborative approach using an extensive range of feedback to develop a clear understanding of our current approach and what we can do to improve.
- 5.3 The recommendations seeks to simplify our existing performance framework, empower Members for more effective scrutiny of performance and create the opportunity to further improve outcomes.
- 5.4 Our approach to performance management has been one of continuous evolution and I am confident that our proposals will support the new Council in 2022 to continue our journey to improve outcomes.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy; none.
- 6.2 Financial; none.
- 6.3 Legal; none.
- 6.4 HR; none
- 6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty: none
 - 6.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics; none
 - 6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty; none
 - 6.5.3 Islands; none
- 6.6 Risk; failure to implement a key recommendation from Accounts Commission Best Value Audit findings.
- 6.7 Customer Service; improve Public Performance Reporting.

Pippa Milne
Chief Executive
31 August 2021

Mary Jean Devon – Policy Lead for Support Services

Appendix - DRAFT Corporate Outcome Indicators

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| DRAFT Corporate Outcome Indicators | |
|--|---|
| Corporate Outcome | Description |
| CO1: People live active healthier independent lives | Maximise distribution of Scottish Welfare Fund |
| | Maximise distribution of Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) fund |
| | Proportion of care services graded 'good' (4) or better in Care Inspectorate Inspections |
| | Total % of adults receiving any care or support who rated it as excellent or good |
| | Total combined % carers who feel supported to continue in their caring role |
| | Homeless households in temporary accommodation as a percentage of all households |
| | The percentage of clients satisfied that they are better able to deal with their financial problems |
| CO2: People will live in safer and stronger communities | The percentage of groups who say their effectiveness has increased as a result of capacity building by the community development team |
| | The information provided to our community groups, individuals and partners is easy to understand |
| | The total value of compensation settlements for vehicle damage / driver injury as a result of road / bridge faults |
| | Percentage of adults residents stating their neighbourhood as a 'very good' place to live |
| | Percentage of adults satisfied with street cleanliness |
| CO3: Children and young people have the best possible start | Increase the percentage of our care experienced young people that have the recommended additional tracking and monitoring plans in place |
| | Support the increase in the uptake of available Grants, Allowance and Entitlements |
| | Provide quality meals within cost margins to all pupils |
| | A counselling service is available in all secondary schools |
| | The percentage of children with a healthy weight in primary 1 |
| | The percentage of children with no concerns across all domains at 27 to 30 month assessment |
| CO4: Education, skills and training maximise opportunities for all | Increase positive destinations for our looked after children in Argyll and Bute |
| | Increase the percentage of successful examination presentations in levels 4 and 5 for Literacy and Numeracy by our senior phase pupils |
| | Maintain the percentage of all young people leaving school achieving a positive destination into further education, training or employment |
| | Increase the uptake of wider achievement opportunities which complement traditional SQA awards and offer alternative ways to develop learning, life and work skills |
| | The percentage of children that achieve their appropriate developmental milestones by Primary 1 |
| | Attainment of national qualifications |
| CO5: Our economy is diverse and thriving | Maintain the percentage of local suppliers that benefit from the awards of contracts via the procurement portal |
| | Increase the number of community benefits that are delivered through the contracts we award locally |
| | Employment rate (percentage of population 16-64 employed) |
| | Number of business and industry planning applications submitted annually |
| | Business survival rates 3 years after start-up |
| | Geographical percentage coverage of 3/4G mobile phone connectivity and above |
| | The total number of visitor trips to Argyll and Bute |
| | The total visitor spend in Argyll and Bute |
| CO6: We have an infrastructure that supports sustainable growth | Number of new affordable homes completed per annum |
| | The percentage of roads in need of maintenance as defined by the annual survey |
| | The percentage of waste that is recycled, composted or recovered |
| | The number of tonnes of waste sent to landfill |
| | CO2 emissions per capita (per head of total population) |
| CO7: Getting it right | Sickness absence days per employee (non teacher) |
| | Sickness absence days per Teacher |
| | Level of employee satisfaction |
| | 95% of schools that have a suitability rating of A or B |
| | The percentage of Modern Apprentices that go on to a positive destination after completing the Argyll and Bute Council Modern Apprentice Programme |
| | Increase the percentage of all Self-Service and automated contacts |
| | Level of customer satisfaction |

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ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**COUNCIL****LEGAL AND REGULATORY SUPPORT****30 SEPTEMBER 2021**

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATIONS:-

- **A NATIONAL CARE SERVICE FOR SCOTLAND**
 - **COVID RECOVERY – A CONSULTATION ON PUBLIC SERVICES, JUSTICE SYSTEM AND OTHER REFORMS**
-

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides members with an awareness of the following two consultations, which have been recently launched by the Scottish Government (SG):-
- 1.2 [A National Care Service for Scotland](#) - this consultation sets out proposals to improve the way social care is delivered in Scotland, following the recommendations of the Independent Review of Adult Social Care (IRASC), which was Chaired by Derek Feeley, a former SG Director General for Health and Social Care and Chief Executive of NHS Scotland. A copy of this report, which was published in February 2021, is available to view [here](#). The deadline for responses to this consultation is 2nd November 2021.
- 1.3 [Covid Recovery](#) – this consultation invites views on specific legislative proposals to support Covid Recovery, including proposals for greater public health resilience, for public services and justice system reform and to respond to the impact of Covid in the justice system in particular. The deadline for responses to this consultation is 9th November 2021
- 1.4 Officers are currently in the process of preparing full responses to both consultations and, on the basis that both are due in November, it is proposed that a Special Council meeting is convened on 28th October 2021 to consider and agree the final responses for both consultations.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to:-

- 2.1 Note the work that is ongoing by Officers to prepare response to both consultations;
- 2.2 Agree to convene a Special Council meeting on 28th October 2021 to consider and agree the final submissions for both consultations.

3. DETAIL

3.1 A National Care Service for Scotland

3.1.1 On 9th August the SG launched the consultation “A National Care Service for Scotland”, which follows on from the IRASC report that was commissioned to recommend improvements to adult social care in Scotland. It concluded that whilst there were strengths of Scotland’s social care system, it needed revision and redesign to enable a step change in the outcomes for the people in receipt of care.

3.1.2 The consultation document has now extended the scope of the review to other service areas including children and families, community justice, alcohol and drug services, mental health services, and social work. The proposals have the potential to be the largest and most significant public sector reform in Scotland for decades.

3.1.3 The purpose of the consultation is to seek views from a range of stakeholders ahead of the creation of a NCS. The closing date for responses is 2nd November and the end of the consultation process all feedback will be analysed and conclusions will be used to shape and develop new legislation. It is anticipated that any new legislation (a bill) will be developed and introduced in the Scottish Parliament in summer 2022, with the intention that the NCS will be fully functioning by the end of the Parliamentary term in 2026.

3.1.4 The consultation contains 96 questions around 11 main themes, which are listed below. Further detail on the proposals contained within each theme is provided in **appendix 1** of this report.

1. Improvement
2. Access to care and support
3. Rights to breaks from caring
4. Using data to support care
5. Complaints and putting things right
6. Residential care charges
7. National Care Service and extended scope
8. Reformed IJBs – Community Health and Social Care Boards (CHSCBs)
9. Commissioning of Services
10. Regulation and scrutiny
11. Valuing people who work in social care

3.1.5 As part of the preparatory work being undertaken to develop a response to this consultation, Officers are giving detailed consideration to a number of implications/issues arising from the proposals, including:-

- Concerns about the diminution on local decision making and the detrimental impact on service delivery
- Impact on service users – e.g. unique remote/rural challenges in Argyll and Bute not considered, concerns about current joined up

working/collaborative working being diminished, ability to provide equity of provision

- Financial implications – e.g. funding of proposals, financial risks for the Council
- Impact on local government workforce and the future role of the Council as an employer
- Impact on local government remit, legal obligations and governance arrangements
- General lack of detail/clarity within the consultation in respect of key elements of the proposals – impacts on our ability to respond sufficiently

3.1.6 A Members Seminar was held on 21st September to discuss the content of this consultation in further detail and to invite comments and questions from Councillors. The outcomes from this session will be factored into the final response being prepared.

3.2 Covid Recovery – A Consultation on Public Services, Justice System and other Reforms

3.2.1 On 17th August 2021 the SG launched the “Coronavirus (COVID-19) Recovery – Justice System, Health and Public Services Reform Consultation. This consultation invites views on a range of legislative proposals that the SG think will have the potential to support Covid recovery:-

- Proposals for greater public health resilience, to protect Scotland against future public health threats;
- Proposals for public services and justice system reform, to ensure that the benefits of practical modernisations put in place during the pandemic are not lost; and
- Proposals to respond to the impact of Covid in the justice system specifically, where backlogs have unavoidably built up.

3.2.2 A full list of the topics being consulted on, together with a summary of the proposals, can be found at **appendix 2** of this report.

3.2.3 Officers are in the process of preparing a response to this consultation and as part of this exercise consideration is being given to the following principles in the formulation of our response:

- Whether the proposals provide an enhancement of civil liberties
- Provide a more efficient and effective conduct of business
- Little or no additional resource requirement to deliver
- Would avoid any reinstatement of outdated or ineffective practices.
- Whether the proposals enhance an individual’s access to services.

3.3 Any member who wishes to provide comments on either of these consultations, for consideration as part of the overall responses, can do so by emailing Laura Blackwood – laura.blackwood@argyll-bute.gov.uk in advance of the consultation deadlines set out above.

4 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 This report provides members with an awareness of two consultations which have been recently launched by the SG in respect of the creation of a NCS for Scotland and Covid Recovery. Officers are currently in the process of preparing full responses to both consultations, with submissions due by 2nd and 9th November 2021 respectively. Members are being asked to agree that a Special Council be convened on 28th October 2021 to consider and agree the final submissions for both consultations.

5 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Policy – none arising from this report
- 5.2 Financial – lack of financial information contained in the NCS consultation document but it is envisaged that significant investment will be required to deliver the proposals.
- 5.3 Legal – envisage new legislative requirements being introduced summer 2022 in respect of NCS
- 5.4 HR – Significant potential implications for Council employees working in social work and social care arising from NCS consultation – further detail required to ascertain impact.
- 5.5 Equalities/Fairer Scotland Duty – none arising from this report
- 5.6 Risk – none arising from this report
- 5.7 Customer Services – none arising from this report

Douglas Hendry

Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support

Policy Lead – Councillor Kieron Green - Health and Social Care

21 September 2021

For further information, please contact:

Laura Blackwood
Directorate Support Officer
Customer Services
01546 604325

A National Care Service for Scotland – Summary of Proposals

1. Improvement

- The establishment of a single, national body with clear lines of accountability to Ministers at a national level, to ensure that consistent, high standards of performance are developed and maintained across Scotland.

2. Access to care and support

- Removal of eligibility criteria in current form, moving away from a focus on risk and instead focusing on enabling people to access the care and support they need;
- Single approach to care and support services covering all types of care and support from early intervention to specialist intervention;
- Focus on prevention and early intervention;
- Development of a Getting It Right For Everyone (GIRFE) National Practice Model, building on the success of Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) multi agency approach;
- Single adult's plan and a single planning process.

3. Rights to breaks from caring

- Introduce a right to breaks from caring as part of a single, outcomes-focused approach to care and support, which stretches from prevention and early intervention to acute and specialist provision. The consultation sets out a number of potential options to achieve this.

4. Using data to support care

- NCS seen as an opportunity to meet expectations around how information is used to provide and support care, across all care settings and social care decision making at all levels;
- Through the NCS, the implementation of a nationally consistent, integrated and accessible electronic social care and health record that can be used and seen by all those who provide health and care support, with appropriate permissions and consent in place;
- Production of data will be used to assist care and support across all settings and to inform local and national decision making, including for strategic plans, commissioning and performance reporting;
- Compliance with data protection and Freedom of Information legislation to ensure individuals can access their own integrated social care and health record.

5. Complaints and putting things right

- National point of access for information on making a complaint or giving feedback about social care;
- Local systems for initial complaints and feedback should be strengthened to ensure similar processes across local bodies who commission and deliver services;

- Consideration to a charter for rights and responsibilities, as there are for health, for carers, and for Social Security Scotland;
- Scottish Government to consider the appointment of a commissioner for social care to champion the rights of those who receive care and support, their families and carers.

6. Residential care charges

- In line with IRASC recommendation, the consultation proposes to increase the sums paid for Free Personal and Nursing Care for self-funded care home residents to the levels included in the National Care Home Contract or consider alternatives, such as revising means testing, to assist in ensuring self-funding residents are treated fairly in their financial assessment.

7. National Care Service

- The proposals will make Scottish Ministers accountable for social care as they are for health care within Scotland;
- Establishment of a NCS, accountable to Scottish Ministers, which will have a clear focus on positive outcomes for people and define the strategic direction and quality standards. This would remove the responsibilities for social work and social care from local authorities.
- IJBs will be reformed and become CHSCBs and will be the local delivery body for the NCS. The NCS and CHSCBs will work in concert with NHS, local authorities, and the third and independent sectors to plan, commission and deliver the support services that the people of Scotland require;
- NCS itself will lead on aspects of community health and social care improvement and support that are best managed on a once for Scotland basis, such as very complex or specialist care and the planning and delivery of care in custodial settings, including prisons;
- NCS will be responsible for national workforce planning and development, data to support planning, commissioning and procurement, research to support improvement, digital enablement, and national and regional service planning.

Scope of NCS

- Children's Services
 - The SG proposal goes beyond the IRASC recommendations and indicates that is that these services are removed from local authorities and form part of the NCS.
- Healthcare
 - NCS and CHSCBs take responsibility for the commissioning and procurement of a range of health services, similar to (and potentially wider than) the range of services currently delegated to IJBs. The consultation is seeking views on what services might be included in this responsibility.
- Social Work and Social Care

- Proposal is that duties and responsibilities for social work and adult and children and families' social care services should be located within the NCS. Including social work within the NCS would mean social work's legal powers and expertise would remain inextricably linked with the delivery of care, and with the work of a National Social Work Agency
- Nursing
 - Propose to maintain the current Executive Director of Nursing role to provide professional leadership across community health and social care services, with possible expansion from the current advisory and oversight role to a role of accountability, with the NCS overseeing and ensuring consistency of access to education, professional development, standards of care and governance of nursing. The NCS could also be responsible for the commissioning of nursing in social care.
- Justice Social Work (JSW)
 - Propose that JSW is included within the NCS, but suggesting that this may be transferred in a later phase of the process.
- Prisons
 - In line with IRASC recommendations, the proposal is that the NCS should oversee social care provision for people in prison and be responsible for the planning and delivery of care in prisons.
- Alcohol and Drugs Services
 - The SG expect that CHSCBs will continue to be key partners in Alcohol and Drug Partnerships (ADPs), taking the place of IJBs and will continue to provide the governance, finance and procurement functions for them. Further consideration is being given to whether ADPs should become part of the NCS nationally and part of CHSCBs, and whether specialist provision, such as residential rehabilitation services, should be commissioned on a national basis.
- Mental Health Services
 - It is proposed that appropriate elements of mental health services should be consistently delegated to the NCS, to ensure responsibilities within and between organisations is consistently applied and understood.

National Social Work Agency (NSWA)

- SG propose that a NSWA is established alongside a centre of excellence for applied research for social work to support improvement activity (see 1 above), with both forming part of the NCS infrastructure. The NSWA would have national oversight and leadership over social work qualifications, workforce planning, improvement, training, continuous professional development and pay and grading within a national framework.

8. Reformed IJBs – Community Health and Social Care Boards (CHSCBs)

- As noted above, the SG proposes that IJBs will become CHSCBs and will be the local delivery body for the NCS, funded directly by the SG;
- The functions of CHSCBs will be consistent across the country;
- CHSCBs will be accountable to Ministers and will have members who will represent the local population, including people with lived and living experience, and carers;
- It is anticipated that CHSCBs will be aligned with local authority boundaries, unless otherwise agreed at a local level;
- Members will include local elected members to preserve local democratic accountability;
- CHSCBs will employ their own chief executives and staff who plan, commission, and procure care and support. Consideration will be given to employing other relevant staff to discharge their duties, such as chief financial officers. The chief executive of each CHSCB will report to the chief executive of the NCS;
- CHSCBs will oversee the delivery of all community health and social care services and support within their local area, and their work guided by the strategic direction, quality standards and operational framework set out by the NCS;
- CHSCBs will have responsibility and authority for planning, commissioning and procurement of community health and social care, and other relevant support, and for the management of GP contractual arrangements. They will be able to commission services from local authorities, the NHS and the third and independent sectors.
- CHSCBs will be members of community planning partnerships, taking the place of IJBs on these groups.

9. Commissioning of Services

- SG proposes that the NCS will develop and manage a National Commissioning and Procurement Structure of Standards and Processes for ethical commissioning and procuring of social care services and supports.
- The NCS will be responsible for governance and assurance that CHSCBs comply with the Structure of Standards and Processes, through oversight of commissioning and procurement processes at a local level. CHSCBs will report their progress to the NCS national commissioning and procurement team.
- The NCS will create and manage a professional development programme to ensure all commissioning and procurement professionals working within social care have the appropriate skills.
- The NCS will be responsible for market analysis and will work with partners to develop a thorough understanding of the market and share this information with CHSCBs.
- The NCS will be responsible for the commissioning, procurement and contract management of national contracts and frameworks agreements

for complex and specialist services. The NCS will establish a national commissioning and procurement team to deliver this role.

10. Regulation and scrutiny

- SG propose that scrutiny, inspection, and regulation of care services and the workforce should be undertaken independently of the NCS. The consultation document outlines a number of core principles underpinning the approach, which views are sought on.

11. Valuing people who work in social care

The consultation document seeks views on a number of people related matters, including:-

- Fair Work
 - The NCS could take the lead in the development, administration and assessment of national workforce quality standards that support the practical delivery of Fair Work principles, including rates of pay, security of employment contracts and training and development.
 - The NCS could oversee the creation of a National Job Evaluation framework/scheme which providers can opt into.
 - The NCS could provide the opportunity to implement a national pay band structure similar to that within the NHS.
 - As per 3.4.9 above, propose that the NCS will develop and manage a National Commissioning and Procurement Framework of standards and processes for social care. Commissioning and procurement will be a driving force to ensure the workforce, including personal assistants (see below) is appropriately valued.
- Workforce planning
 - Propose the development of a consistent approach to integrated workforce planning with health, supported by national tools/framework and an agreed data set.
- Training and development
 - The NCS will set training and development requirements that support both entry to the workforce and continuous professional development.
 - NCS will provide and/or secure the provision of training and development for the social care workforce. This will complement the leadership and development role proposed for social work.
- Personal Assistants
 - To understand the extent of personal assistants operating across Scotland, the SG propose that processes will be put in place to require personal assistants in Scotland to register centrally;

- There has been consideration of national minimum employment standards for personal assistants to ensure parity and fairness across Scotland;
- Consideration of provision of further administrative, recruitment or employment support to encourage further adoption of the full range of Self Directed Support options.

Covid Recovery – A Consultation on Public Services, Justice System and other Reforms

Alphabetical list of topics being consulted on

Council Response

- Topic P1 Alcohol licensing remote hearings (p23)
- This proposal would enable Licensing Boards to make discretionary decisions as to whether it would be appropriate for a hearing to be held remotely as opposed to “in person”.
- Topic P6 Care services: giving of notices by the Care Inspectorate (p31)
- The proposal is to enable the Care Inspectorate to send formal notices to care service providers by electronic means.
- Topic P7 Civic government licensing remote hearings (p32)
- This proposal relates to retention, in an amended form, of one aspect of the civic government licensing provisions in the First Scottish Act. This relates to the holding of licensing authority hearings.
- Topic P8 Courts: intimation, etc. of documents (p34)
- It is proposed that the law be permanently changed so that any requirement to display a document on the walls (or any other part) of a court building or to make it publicly available within a court can also be fulfilled by publishing the document on the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service’s (“SCTS”) website.
- Topic J1 Courts and tribunals: conduct of business by electronic means (p53)
- It is proposed that the provisions around electronic signing and sending of documents in courts and tribunals should be extended beyond March 2022.
- Topic J2 Courts and tribunals: virtual attendance (p54)
- It is proposed that the rules allowing people to attend a court or a tribunal by electronic means (for example, by live video link) should be extended beyond March 2022.
- Topic H1 Education: powers to make directions to close educational establishments, and to ensure the continuity of education (p13)

The proposal is to make permanent provisions in the UK Act that relate to education, namely the duty on all operators of educational establishments to have regard to the advice of the Chief Medical Officer for Scotland (“CMO”), and the powers for Scottish Ministers to give directions in relation to the closure of educational establishments and the continuity of educational provision during the remainder of the current pandemic and future pandemics.

Topic P10 Freedom of Information: giving notice electronically (p37)

The proposal is to enable the Scottish Information Commissioner and Scottish public authorities to issue formal notices under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (“FOISA”) electronically.

Topic H2 Power to make public health protection regulations (p15)

In order to ensure the continuance of the provisions which enable the Scottish Ministers to make regulations for the purpose of preventing, protecting against, controlling or providing a public health response to the incidence or spread of infection or contamination which presents or could present significant harm to human health in Scotland, SG are proposing to make permanent the provisions in schedule 19 of the UK Act.

Topic P16 Remote registration of deaths and still-births (p45)

It is proposed that the provisions as set out at page 45 are made permanent.

Topic P17 Remote registration of live births (p46)

The Scottish Government is proposing to develop permanent legislative provisions in relation to registration of live births. The proposed changes will build on the above revised ‘hybrid’ process for live birth registration that has been adopted as a result of the Covid pandemic.

Topic P18 Tenancies: protection against eviction (discretionary grounds of eviction); and pre-action requirements for eviction proceedings on ground of rent arrears (p48)

The intention is to ensure the continuance of the provisions which provide the First-tier Tribunal (Housing and Property Chamber – the “Tribunal”) with discretion to consider all matters relating to eviction cases going before them (First Scottish Act, schedule 1) and also provisions that set out pre-action requirements for orders for possession or eviction orders on the ground of rent arrears (Second Scottish Act, schedule 1, Part 2).

Topic H4 Virtual public meetings under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 (p18)

We intend to legislate so that in the event of a significant health emergency in the future, akin to the Covid pandemic, local authorities will have the flexibility to hold public meetings virtually. We wish this to be in place on a permanent basis so it can be utilised during any future pandemic.

HSCP Response

Topic P9 Criminal justice: arrangements for the custody of persons detained at police stations (p36)

The proposal concerns arrangements for the custody of persons detained at police stations. These provisions enable the Scottish Ministers to make arrangements for duties to be carried out by prisoner custody officers with escort functions within police stations.

Topic J3 Criminal justice: early release of prisoners (p56)

The proposal is to continue to provide Scottish Ministers with the power – where it is considered a necessary and proportionate action to maintain the safe and effective operation of prisons, and to protect the health of prison staff and prisoners – to instruct that the group of prisoners who fall within criteria set out in regulations would be released from prison earlier than their scheduled release date.

Topic J4 Criminal justice: expiry of undertaking (p58)

Proposal is that the provisions as detailed on p58 will be extended beyond March 2022.

Topic J5 Criminal justice: fiscal fines (p60)

The proposal is to seek views on whether there is merit in continuing for a longer, time-limited period policy that allows for maximum fiscal fines up to £500 to be offered by prosecutors as a non-court disposal.

Topic J6 Criminal justice: national court for cases beginning with an appearance from custody (p62)

The proposal is to extend the provision in the Act that introduces Scotland-wide jurisdiction for sheriffs dealing with first appearances from police custody and any continuation of the case up until a not guilty plea is tendered (or full committal in petition proceedings).

Topic J7 Criminal justice: time limits (p63)

SG are seeking views on whether none, some or all of the extensions of the time-limit provisions in the First and Second Scottish Acts, extended

by the Extension and Expiry Act, should continue in effect beyond March 2022.

Topic P13 Mental health: named person nomination (p40)

The proposal removes the need for a person to have their signature witnessed when they agree to become a named person.

Topic H3 Vaccinations and immunisations (p17)

The proposal is to make permanent the relaxation of the restriction within the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978 on vaccinations and immunisations being carried out by doctors or persons acting under their direction and control.

No response proposed

Topic P2 Bankruptcy: debt level that enables creditors to pursue the bankruptcy of a debtor through the courts (p25)

The proposal is to strengthen the protections available for those dealing with problem debt by making permanent measures that increase the minimum debt level a creditor must be owed to petition for bankruptcy through the courts.

Topic P3 Bankruptcy: electronic service of documents (p27)

The proposal is to improve the use of technology in bankruptcy proceedings by permitting documents required during bankruptcy administration to be transmitted to a person electronically.

Topic P4 Bankruptcy: moratoriums on diligence (p28)

The proposal is to protect those with unsustainable debt by increasing the length of the moratorium against diligence.

Topic P5 Bankruptcy: virtual meetings of creditors (p30)

The proposal is to improve the use of technology in bankruptcy proceedings by enabling meetings of creditors to take place by virtual means rather than in a physical environment.

Topic P11 Legal aid (p38)

The proposal is to make permanent existing temporary provisions which allow for increasing the availability of interim payments to solicitors, with corresponding powers of recovery in the event of overpayments resulting from interim payments, and removal of conditions for counsel to be able to apply for interim payment.

Topic P12 Legal writings etc. (p39)

This proposal would make permanent the disapplication of the requirement for the “physical presence” of certain parties, and allows for Scottish notaries public, solicitors and advocates to adopt alternative appropriate means of executing documents, and administering of oaths, affirmations and declarations.

Topic P14 Parole Board: delegation (p42)

The proposal is to continue to allow the Chairperson’s functions to be delegated to another member of the Parole Board should the Chairperson become incapacitated for any reason. To also continue to provide that the Chairperson may delegate functions for other reasons e.g. should another member have a particular expertise that would assist in carrying out the Chairperson’s functions.

Topic P15 Parole Board: live link (p43)

A further proposal related to the Parole Board is to allow the entire proceedings of a parole hearing to be held by video/teleconference (“live link”) so the Board or tribunal members, the parties, witnesses and others can provide evidence and participate remotely.

Topic J8 Proceeds of crime (p71)

The proposal is to keep in operation for longer two adjustments to the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (“the 2002 Act”) made by the Second Scottish Act.

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ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**COUNCIL****LEGAL & REGULATORY SUPPORT****30 SEPTEMBER 2021**

BEST PRACTICE REVIEW OF POLITICAL MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 As the Council approaches the Local Government Elections in May 2022 it is invited to consider future local democratic and governance arrangements for the Council and whether it wishes to make any recommendations to a new Council in this regard.
- 1.2 The current Council considered its committee structures and associated political management arrangements at its first meeting in May 2017. While these have served the Council effectively with the most recent Best Value³ Audit highlighting significant improvements in the Council's partnership working arrangements and approach to constructive and focused decision making it is recognised that the world has changed considerably in the last few years. Councils operate in a complex and challenging environment at the best of times however the Covid-19 pandemic has changed that environment on an unprecedented scale. Consequently it will be critical for a new Council to ensure that it has the governance and political management arrangements in place for effective scrutiny and decision-making to enable ongoing transformation and recovery.
- 1.3 While it will be for a new Council to determine their political management arrangements it is recommended as a matter of best practice to undertake a review of the current arrangements and identify key areas for consideration by a new Council in determining its governance and political management arrangements. Members are asked to endorse the review, determine the basic principles of the review and establish a Short Life Working Group to progress the review with a final report to the Council in April 2022 in readiness for a new Council.

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

COUNCIL

LEGAL & REGULATORY SUPPORT

30 SEPTEMBER 2021

BEST PRACTICE REVIEW OF POLITICAL MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 As the Council approaches the Local Government Elections in May 2022 it is invited to consider future local democratic and governance arrangements for the Council and whether it wishes to make any recommendations to a new Council in this regard. This report sets out a proposed process for review and invites Council to endorse a Best Practice review, determine the basic principles for the review and agree a process for the review with a final report to the Council in April 2022 in readiness for a new Council.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Members are asked to:-

- (a) endorse a Best Practice review of current political management arrangements in order to make recommendations to a new Council following Local Government Elections in May 2022.
- (b) determine the basic principles for the review of the Political Management Arrangements;
- (c) agree to the establishment of a Short Life Working Group (SLWG) to progress the review with a final report being submitted to the Council in April 2022 in readiness for a new Council; and
- (d) in the event of agreement to the establishment of a SLWG to identify membership, including the Chair and Vice-Chair.

4.0 DETAIL

4.1 The Council last undertook a formal review of its Political Management Arrangements in 2016/17. It established a Short Life Working Group (SLWG) for the purpose of considering the future local democratic and governance arrangements of the Council, to consider detail in relation to Performance and Scrutiny Review Handbook and how all of this would relate to future governance arrangements, The recommendations from the SLWG established for that purpose were considered at the final meeting of the Council in April 2017 where it was agreed to refer the findings to the first meeting of the new Council for their

consideration. These findings were subsequently considered by the new Council at its first meeting and formed the basis for the current Committee Structures and Political Management Arrangements.

- 4.2 The current Committee Structures and Political Management Arrangements have served the Council effectively with the most recent Best Value³ Audit highlighting significant improvements in the Council's partnership working arrangements and approach to constructive and focused decision making. However it is recognised that the world has changed considerably in the last few years and while Councils operate in a complex and challenging environment at the best of times the Covid-19 pandemic has changed that environment on an unprecedented scale. In respect of governance arrangements the Council moved quickly to establish arrangements for virtual meetings and emergency decision making arrangements and work is ongoing in this regard to harness the new technologies available to the committee to facilitate greater flexibilities in how it conducts its meetings in an open and transparent fashion. It will therefore be critical for a new Council to enable ongoing transformation and recovery and ensure that it has the governance and political management arrangements in place for effective scrutiny and decision-making. The Council is also awaiting the outcome of Boundaries Scotland Review of Electoral Arrangements for Argyll and Bute. Their report to Scottish Ministers proposes a reduction in Councillor numbers and the introduction of island-only wards which if accepted requires to be taken into account in any discussions on future political management arrangements.

4.3 Principles for Best Practice Review

The knowledge and insight obtained in the life of this council in relation to governance and political management arrangements would contribute significantly to these considerations by a new council and therefore Members are invited to consider the fundamental principles they would wish to form the basis of a Best Practice review. A review would include looking at arrangements across a range of local authorities. In the previous review the following principles informed the discussion on different options and types of Committee models:

- a) Stability in political management arrangements
- b) Clear strategic direction to deliver on Single Outcome Agreement
- c) The development of clear and sustainable policies
- d) An inclusive Council
- e) Positive Culture
- f) Constructive working relationships across all Elected Members
- g) Members focus on addressing challenges and identifying opportunities
- h) Good reputation
- i) Leadership
- j) Effective political scrutiny
- k) Effective decision making
- l) Focus on all our customers
- m) Achieving our ambition
- n) Future proofing

Members may wish to add to this list in light of developments in recent years in terms of community and partnership working, performance improvements, major investments such as the Rural Growth Deal and other strategic initiatives as well as the experience arising from the Covid-19 pandemic and our route to recovery. In addition, when considering these principles Members may wish to consider including reference to the current financial climate and to legislative factors such as the Community Empowerment Act and the Islands (Scotland) Act.

4.4 Process for Review

In order to progress the previous review relating to governance and Political Management Arrangements the Council established a Short Life Working Group comprised of 12 members, split between Administration and Opposition members taking into account the political composition of the Council. If members are minded to endorse a review the Council may wish to adopt a similar approach. The outputs of the Short Life Working Group considerations and any associated recommendations would then be incorporated into a final report for consideration by Council. In the event that Council seeks to establish a SLWG it is invited to identify membership including a Chair and Vice Chair.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 As the Council approaches the Local Government Elections in May 2022 it would be considered best practice to learn from the experience of the current Elected Members in relation to local democratic and governance arrangements for the Council and to consider whether it wishes to make any recommendations to a new Council in this regard. This report sets out a proposed approach and process for such a Best Practice Review in advance of the Local Government Elections next year.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy – none at this stage.
- 6.2 Financial - none at present, but may be financial implications dependent on the outcome of the review.
- 6.3 Legal – none at this stage.
- 6.4 HR – none at present, but may have HR implications dependent on the outcome of the review.
- 6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty: None
- 6.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics – None
- 6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty - None

6.5.3 Islands – Addresses consideration of proposed introduction of island only wards

6.6 Risk -

6.7 Customer Service - none

Douglas Hendry

Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support

21 September 2021

Policy Lead: Councillor Mary Jean Devon

For further information contact:

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ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**COUNCIL****LEGAL AND REGULATORY SUPPORT****30 SEPTEMBER 2021**

POLITICAL MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Political Management Arrangements by inviting Elected Members to nominate to vacancies which have arisen on the Fyne Homes Board, the Argyll and Bute Area Support Team and the Community Services Committee. In addition Members are invited to note the current political composition of the Council arising from changes within the membership of the Argyll, Lomond and the Islands Group (TALIG) which forms the Administration, as of the date of this report.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Council is invited to:
- (a) Nominate a representative to the Fyne Homes Board,
 - (b) Appoint to a vacancy arising on the Argyll and Bute Area Support Team
 - (c) Appoint to a vacancy arising on the Community Services Committee
 - (b) Note the political composition of the Council, and the consequent changes within the Administration as at the date of this report, set out at appendix 1.

3.0 DETAIL**Fyne Homes**

- 3.1 The Council is invited to nominate an Elected Member representative to sit on the Fyne Homes Board. The previous incumbent was the late Provost, Len Scoullar.
- 3.2 Fyne Homes is a Registered Social Landlord, Scottish Charity and Registered society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014. Operating in Argyll since 1936. It's main role is as a charitable affordable housing provider, which contributes to the sustainability of rural communities across Argyll and Bute through the provision of high quality affordable housing, with developments delivered in the main towns of Rothesay, Dunoon, Campbeltown and Lochgilphead as well as the rural villages of Strachur, Cairndow, Kilmun, Cairnbaan, and the island of Gigha.

Argyll and Bute Area Support Team (AST)

- 3.3 Councillor Mary Jean Devon has intimated her resignation from the Argyll and Bute Area Support Team. Each local authority can nominate at least one member to the AST of which they are a part. The current practice is that these nominees will ordinarily be elected members but this is not a requirement under the Act. Local authority nominees have an overview of the Children's Hearings System and the Children's Panel in their area. They are aware of local issues and act as an important link between the Children's Panel and the local authority elected members and relevant local authority senior officials and departments. They are not directly involved in panel member recruitment, selection, recommendation for appointment or reappointment, or practice observation and review processes undertaken by the AST panel practice advisors. The Council should consider making an appointment of one elected Member to the vacancy on this outside body.

Community Services Committee

- 3.4 Councillor Alistair Redman has intimated his resignation from the Community Services Committee and Council is invited to make an appointment to the vacancy.

The Community Services Committee, in addition to its responsibilities with regards to the Community Services Department and related functions, discharges the powers and duties of the Council as Education Authority. It has 16 members and the current membership is:

- Councillor Jim Anderson
- Councillor Gordon Blair
- Councillor Mary-Jean Devon
- Councillor Lorna Douglas
- Councillor Audrey Forrest
- Councillor Kieron Green (Vice Chair)
- Councillor Graham Archibald Hardie
- Councillor Donald MacMillan
- Councillor Julie MacKenzie
- Councillor Yvonne McNeilly (Chair)
- Councillor Barbara Morgan
- Councillor Iain Paterson
- Councillor Alan Reid
- Councillor Elaine Robertson
- Councillor Gemma Penfold
- Vacancy - Councillor

Political Composition

- 3.5 The Council is invited to note the updated political composition of the Council as set out in Appendix 1. It sets out a number of changes which have arisen in the membership of the Argyll, Lomond and the Islands Group (TALIG) which forms the Administration.

- 3.6 Council is further invited to note that Councillor Redman has stood down from the Administration and consequently the role as Policy Lead for Business, Regeneration and Commercial Development.

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 an appointment to the Fyne Homes Group, to the Argyll and Bute Area Support Team and to a vacancy within the Community Services Committee. Council is further invited to note the updated Political Composition of the Council arising from changes within the membership of the Argyll, Lomond and the Islands Group (TALIG) which forms the Administration.

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 and to ensuring appropriate arrangements for strategic direction and oversight by elected members.
- 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 2021

Douglas Hendry
Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support

21 September 2021

Policy Lead: Councillor Mary Jean Devon

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

Political Composition of Argyll and Bute Council

| ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL |
|--|
| POLITICAL COMPOSITION OF THE COUNCIL |
| SEPTEMBER 2021 |
| ARGYLL AND BUTE FIRST GROUP(3) |
| <p>Cllr George Freeman (Ind) Cllr Donald Kelly (Con) Cllr Douglas Philand (Ind) – Leader, Argyll and Bute First Group</p> |
| ARGYLL AND BUTE SCOTTISH NATIONAL PARTY GROUP (11) |
| <p>Cllr John Armour Cllr Gordon Blair Cllr Lorna Douglas Cllr Jim Findlay Cllr Audrey E Forrest - Depute Leader, SNP Group Cllr Anne Horn Cllr Jim Lynch- Leader, SNP Group Cllr Julie McKenzie Cllr Iain Shonny Paterson Cllr Sandy Taylor Cllr Richard Trail</p> |
| THE ARGYLL, LOMOND AND THE ISLANDS GROUP (19) |
| <p>Cllr Rory Colville (LD) Cllr Robin Currie (LD) – Leader, The Argyll, Lomond and the Islands Group Cllr Mary Jean Devon (Ind) Cllr Bobby Good (Ind Con) Cllr Kieron Green (Ind) Cllr Graham Hardie (LD) Cllr David Kinniburgh (Con) Cllr Liz McCabe (Ind) Cllr Roderick McCuish (ISP) Cllr Sir Jamie McGrigor (Con) Cllr Donald MacMillan BEM (Ind) Cllr Yvonne McNeilly (Con) Cllr Aileen Morton (LD) Cllr Barbara Morgan (Con) Cllr Gary Mulvaney (Con) – Depute Leader, The Argyll, Lomond and the Islands Group Cllr Gemma Penfold (Con) Cllr Alan Reid (LD) Cllr Elaine Robertson (Ind) Cllr Andrew Vennard (Con)</p> |
| COUNCILLORS NOT POLITICALLY ALIGNED (3) |
| <p>Cllr Jim Anderson (Ind) Cllr Jean Murray Moffat (Ind)</p> |

Cllr Alastair Redman (Con)

NOTE

Con – Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party

ISP – Independence for Scotland Party

Ind – Independent*

LD – Scottish Liberal Democrat

SNP – Scottish National Party

*Ind prefix + political party name indicates not a member of local political party group

There are 36 seats on Argyll and Bute Council.

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ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL
CUSTOMER SERVICES

COUNCIL
30 SEPTEMBER 2021

**PROPOSAL TO AMEND THE SCHEME FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF
COMMUNITY COUNCILS IN ARGYLL & BUTE UNDER SECTION 53(1) OF THE
LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT 1973 AND PROPOSED
ARRANGEMENTS FOR COMMUNITY COUNCIL ELECTIONS IN 2022**

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report seeks the agreement of the council in regard to amending the existing Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils in Argyll and Bute by commencing an 8 week public consultation on a proposal for meetings to take place on a remote or hybrid basis (currently permitted in terms of a temporary arrangement agreed in May 2020 and further extended in February 2021).

In addition, it also seeks agreement for holding community council full elections in the Autumn of 2022, and an in principal agreement to hold a further, more detailed review, on the wider Scheme commencing in 2022 which would coincide with the introduction of a New National Model Scheme, as well the holding of the 2022 elections.

There is a legal requirement that a decision to review (and subsequently amend) a Scheme “shall be by resolution passed by not less than two-thirds of the members voting thereon at a local authority meeting specially convened for the purpose with notice of the object”. Most commonly the specially convened meeting would coincide with an existing meeting date but be called separately. The report sets out the anticipated dates that those special meetings might be required.

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL
CUSTOMER SERVICES

COUNCIL
30 SEPTEMBER 2021

**PROPOSAL TO AMEND THE SCHEME FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF
COMMUNITY COUNCILS IN ARGYLL & BUTE UNDER SECTION 53(1) OF THE
LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT 1973 AND PROPOSED
ARRANGEMENTS FOR COMMUNITY COUNCIL ELECTIONS IN 2022**

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 This report seeks approval by Council to:

- (a) Commence a review of the Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils in Argyll and Bute in terms of S53(1) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to incorporate provision for community council to meet by remote means, or on a hybrid basis.
- (b) set a timetable for elections to community councils in the Autumn of 2022 (see Appendix 1); and
- (c) agree in principal to conduct a further, more detailed, review of the local Scheme for the Establishment when the new National Model Scheme is introduced.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Council agree:

- 3.1 to launch an 8 week public consultation on a proposed amendment to the 2018 local Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils 2018 to incorporate an alternative option for community councils to choose to meet remotely, or by a combination of remote and face to face, with any meetings held being open to the public, as in accordance with existing provisions within the local Scheme;
- 3.2 that the existing temporary departure regarding holding remote meetings continue until the outcome of the consultation can be considered by a specially convened meeting the Policy and Resources Committee on 9 December 2021.

- 3.3 to endorse the timetable for next year's community council elections, as set out in Appendix 1; and
- 3.4 in principle to conduct a more detailed review of the local Scheme when the new National Scheme is launched, noting that the anticipated timescales for this work to conclude would most likely see proposals coming before a specially convened Policy and Resources Committee on 17 February 2022.

4.0 DETAIL

- 4.1 Restrictions are changing with regards to the numbers of persons permitted to gather in public places. This will provide opportunities for community councils who have not been able to meet remotely since restrictions came into effect in March 2020 being able to resume their normal meeting schedules and hold their 2021 AGMs. However, an impact of this relaxation would be that the temporary measures put in place to allow community councils to hold meetings remotely should cease and meetings would require to be held in person, in accordance with the local Scheme.
- 4.2 While there remains some uncertainty going forward it would be advisable to consult with community councils, and the public, about putting in place a more permanent arrangement to allow for the continuation of remote meetings, or the possibility of hybrid meetings, where desirable. This will future proof the current Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils should there be a need to reintroduce measures which restrict the number of in person public gatherings. It is also expected to be in line with the anticipated new National Model Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils that is currently subject of reviewed.
- 4.3 It is suggested that the focus of review be restricted to the proposal to allow remote or hybrid meeting arrangements, in addition to the provision within the Scheme for face to face meetings. All meetings, however they are held, would require to be open to the public.
- 4.4 In terms of National Engagement Standards, a period of consultation on a proposed amendment to an adopted Scheme should not be less than 8 weeks. If approved, this would see the consultation taking place between 1 October and 26 November 2021. On this basis it is suggested that any feedback from the review be presented to a specially convened Policy and Resource Committee on 9 December 2021 (to comply with the legal requirement for a proposal to amend a Scheme being considered at a meeting specially convened for the purpose with notice of the object), and that the temporary departure relating to holding remote meetings continues until a decision on the proposed amendment.

- 4.5 While a Local Authority legally only requires to conduct a review of its Local Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils from time to time, there is a requirement to conduct full community council elections in Argyll and Bute every 4 years. A timetable which avoids the Local Government Elections on 5 May 2022 is attached at Appendix 1 and it is recommended that the Council approve the timetable.
- 4.6 Although it is not a legal requirement to amend a Scheme prior to holding elections, in line with previous process followed, it is further recommended that to coincide with the potential for elections in October 2022, a full review of the wider Scheme be undertaken which would seek approval to revoke and replace the 2018 version of the Scheme with an amended version. With work ongoing to modernise the National Model Scheme it would seem appropriate to await this document prior to reviewing our local arrangements. The most recent indication is that this would be expected in December 2021. On this basis it would be anticipated that the earliest opportunity to bring forward proposals to amend the Scheme would be at the Policy and Resources Committee scheduled for 17 February 2022, or Council on 24 February 2022. Again, any proposals would need to be considered at a local authority meeting specially convened for the purpose with notice of the object.
- 4.7 An indicative timetable for the review process would be as follows:
- 17/24 February 2022** – Report seeking approval to amend the local Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils in Argyll and Bute is presented.
- 8 week consultation period commences no later than **25 February 2022**
Consultation period closes **22 April 2022**
- Report on phase one consultation to be brought to the first meeting of the new council – **May 2022 (tbc)**
- Phase 2 consultation commences not later than **3 June 2022**
8 week consultation period closes **29 July 2022**
- Final proposals to Committee **August 2022/September 2022 (not later than 22 September 2022)**
- 4 week public notice provided with an implementation date of **20 October 2022**

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 There is a need to future proof the existing local Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils against the possibility of future restrictions having to be reintroduced on public gatherings in light of the ongoing pandemic and a consultation to this effect is necessary prior to making a permanent amendment to the existing scheme. This course of action is recommended to Council.

- 5.2 There is a further requirement to hold full community council elections in 2022. A timetable with an election date of 20 October 2022 is recommended to Council for endorsement.
- 5.3 Prior to those elections taking place, a more detailed review of local arrangement for the Establishment of Community Councils in Argyll and Bute should take place. With the National Model Scheme currently being reviewed, the suggestion is that this review be held off until the new Model Scheme is introduced. This is anticipated later this year but in line with committee schedules and the potential for delay, a further report will be brought forward in February 2022, on the basis of the timescales outlined in paragraph 4.7 of this report.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy - None, all proposals are consistent with policy
- 6.2 Financial - Mainly within budget although any contested elections would require to be conducted by postal voting, which would have an associated cost. It is not possible to indicate the costs likely to be incurred, these will be dependent on the size of the electorate of the community councils involved.
- 6.3 Legal - Proposals to amend and the process for this is consistent with the provisions contained in the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973
- 6.4 HR – Suggested consultations and elections will be conducted from within existing staff resources
- 6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty:
 - 6.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics – There is a lower age of 16 for candidates, this is consistent with other electoral events in Scotland.
 - 6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty – Elections will be promoted both by the council and locally by community councils
 - 6.5.3 Islands - None
- 6.6 Risk – There is a chance that the National review does not complete in time. Options will be considered where this looks likely.
- 6.7 Customer Service - None

Executive Director with responsibility for Community Councils

Policy Lead for Communities – Councillor Mary-Jean Devon

8 July 2021

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

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Suggested Timetable for Community Council Elections 2022

APPENDIX 1

PROPOSED ELECTORAL TIMETABLE

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| Publish Notice of Election | 17 August 2022 |
| Nominations Open | 18 August 2022 |
| Close of Nominations and last date for withdrawal (4pm) | 8 September 2022 |
| Publish Notice of Poll or Uncontested Elections | 15 September 2022 |
| Issue postal votes | 29 September 2022 |
| Election day/last day for receipt of postal votes (4pm) | 20 October 2022 |
| Count | 25 October 2022 |

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ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**COUNCIL****LEGAL AND REGULATORY SUPPORT****30 SEPTEMBER 2021**

MICROSOFT TEAMS/HYBRID MEETINGS/LIVE STREAMING UPDATE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report provides Members with an update on the progress of the project which has seen Microsoft Teams becoming the preferred platform for meetings and gives detail on the work which is ongoing to facilitate hybrid meetings and live streaming.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Council is asked to:-

- (a) Note the progress made to date in relation to the rollout of Microsoft Teams as the preferred meeting platform, including the options relating to hybrid meetings and live streaming; and
- (b) Agree that the Council will, for the time being, continue to operate by way of remote on-line meetings with a further update report to be submitted to the November 2021 meeting of Council.

3.0 DETAIL

- 3.1 All meetings of the Council and Committees have been held virtually since March 2020. Council agreed at the meeting held in June 2021 that all meetings would now be held using Microsoft Teams following the successful introduction of Teams at the Area Committees held in June.
- 3.2 Officers from Legal and Regulatory Support have continued to work closely with colleagues in ICT to take forward the various strands involved in the project:-
- 3.3 Microsoft Teams Roll Out
- 3.3.1 The Council now uses Microsoft Teams as the preferred platform with all meetings of Strategic Committees, PPSL, Area Committees and Council using Teams.
- 3.3.2 The move to Teams has been well received and has offered a greater degree of stability during meetings. This is in part due to the way that the setup for Teams is configured with it being routed through the user's broadband rather than the Council's VPN network. Members and officers should bear in mind that in a virtual

meeting environment they are still visible to third parties. There are corporate backgrounds that can be utilised to provide a degree of anonymity for users in regard to the appearance of their location and members are recommended to use that function. The Council's Constitution advises that there is an expectation that Councillors are dressed appropriately in all situations where they are acting in the role as Councillor, including representing the Council on official business.

3.3.3 The option in Teams to use the "hands up function" has also worked well with Members utilising this option when they wish to speak/ask questions. As previously agreed the chat function has been disabled during meetings. In response to queries from Members in relation to the options for raising a "Point of Order" it has been agreed that Members who wish to do this during a meeting should speak at the relevant point without using the "raise hand" function.

3.4 Hybrid Meeting Solution

3.4.1 The equipment which will facilitate Hybrid Meetings to take place in the Council Chambers is in course of being installed and it is expected that installation and testing will be complete by mid October 2021. Once testing is complete there will be a period of training for staff and familiarisation for members which is expected to be complete by end October 2021. This will allow participants at meetings which are held in the Council Chamber to choose to either attend in person or to join the meeting using Microsoft Teams, dependent on the Council's decision in relation to amendments to the Council constitution to accommodate arrangements for hybrid meetings. This will offer much greater flexibility for Members and Officers. It is proposed to carry out a number of "mock" meetings in advance of going live with any hybrid / livestreaming of formal meetings.

3.4.2 The work to identify options for hybrid meetings in area venues continues. The Committee Team are working closely with ICT colleagues on this part of the project. We are currently investigating the options for using the software which will be provided as part of the livestreaming phase of the project to enable Hybrid Meetings to take place in the 4 areas as well as in the future allow for livestreams of the Area Committees to take place. The solution for Area Committees will have an element of mobility that is not present in the solution being delivered in the Council chambers, which is more permanent in nature, and the scope and breadth of the service will naturally differ. A further update will be provided to Council at the November meeting on the progress of this part of the project.

3.5 Council Live Streaming (webcasting) and Recording

3.5.1 The equipment to allow meetings which are held in the Council Chamber to be live streamed and recorded is in the course of being installed and it is expected that installation and testing will be complete by end September 2021. A series of training sessions will be provided by the supplier for key staff across the Council. Once training is complete, then it is proposed to carry out a number of "mock" meetings in advance of going live with any livestreaming of the formal meetings.

3.5.2 New cameras have been installed and these link with the microphone system that is already familiar to Members. The cameras will be configured prior to meetings according to the setup of the room – for example in a boardroom style for Strategic

Committees or the theatre style for meetings of Council. The cameras will move to focus on the speaker and this will be reflected in the webcast.

- 3.5.3 The webcast itself is shown on a “microsite” which is hosted by the supplier “public-i” and which will be linked to the Council website. The webcast will also link to the Council’s Committee Management System (Mod.gov) which will allow bookmarking of agenda items for ease of access – this will enable users to immediately be taken to the item of interest without the need for scrolling through the entire webcast.
- 3.5.4 The options which may be available in terms of live streaming are, depending on circumstances, as follows:-

Live Stream with all participants in the room

In this scenario all of the meeting participants will be in the Council Chamber. The cameras will be configured in line with the table setup and will link to the microphones. The webcast will be managed by the Committee Team in liaison with the Chair who will ensure that all Members are aware when the webcast goes “live”. There will be no requirement for those in the room to use their laptops or to login to Teams – this meeting will operate like a traditional meeting and Members will use the microphones as was usual practice. It will be essential for all Members to use the microphones so that speech is relayed on the livestream.

Live Stream with participants in the room and also from remote location (Hybrid option)

This option will allow for some participants to be in the Council Chamber for the meeting and for others to join the meeting from a remote location (home, other Council office or other venue). Microsoft Teams will be used by those who are participating remotely with the live stream being facilitated using the same technology as if everyone was in the room. Members who are in the Chamber will not require to login to Teams as the meeting will operate as a traditional Committee meeting with microphones being used.

The meeting will again be managed by the Committee Team in liaison with the Chair of the meeting – guidance for Chairing and participating in meetings will be issued to Members beforehand.

Live Stream with all participants in a remote location

This option would be utilised when all participants were joining the meeting from remote locations. The Committee Team would manage the meeting remotely and as with the hybrid scenario, Microsoft Teams will be used to facilitate this option with the live stream operating in a similar fashion. This option will mirror the current arrangements for meetings but with the addition of the content being livestreamed on the Council website.

- 3.5.5 Although the meeting will be available to view on the website as it is happening, the webcast recording of the meeting will only be available to view once the minutes have been uploaded to the website, this is in line with the current practice for meeting recordings.
- 3.5.6 An infographic which provides detail on the various options is attached as Appendix 1.

3.6 Timescales

3.6.1 Indicative timescales for the project so far:-

| Project Element | Date | Responsibility | Status |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------|----------|
| Microsoft Teams Rollout – Area Committees | June 2021 | Committee Team | Complete |
| Microsoft Teams Rollout – Strategic Committees | Aug/Sep 2021 | Committee Team | Complete |
| Hybrid Equipment installation in Chambers | End September 2021 | Mediascape/ICT | ongoing |
| Installation of Livestream equipment | End September 2021 | public-i / ICT | ongoing |
| Testing of Hybrid and Livestream installations | Mid October 2021 | Committee Team/ICT | ongoing |
| Completion of training requirements for staff and familiarisation for members | End October 2021 | | ongoing |
| Report on readiness for hybrid meeting solution and livestreaming / broadcasting | November Council meeting | Committee Team | Ongoing |

3.7 Council Constitution

3.7.1 The Council Constitution is being updated to incorporate requirements for moving to allow remote participation in meetings and webcasting and is the subject of a separate report to Council.

3.8 Accessibility

3.8.1 As part of the Council's commitment to making meetings more accessible we have added some additional information to the Committee Management pages of the website which details how we can support people with disabilities to participate in and/or observe meetings. Developments such as subtitling and providing meeting papers in different formats are some examples of the measures that can be put in place. The move to livestreaming meetings will only enhance this offering.

4.0 **CONCLUSION**

4.1 All meetings have now moved over to Microsoft Teams as the preferred meeting platform with all meetings now being held using Teams.

- 4.2 Equipment to facilitate hybrid meetings and livestreaming is in course of being installed and it is expected that installation and testing will be complete by end September 2021.
- 4.3 Guidance on the use of the various options has been updated and will be provided to Members in advance of any move to live stream meetings. This will include the necessary permissions in terms of data sharing.
- 4.4 The delivery of the Hybrid solution and the live streaming of meetings will provide the ability for enhanced public accessibility and choice in how people attend, interact and participate in meetings of the Council.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Policy – in line with ICT guidance that Microsoft Teams is the preferred option for the future.
- 5.2 Financial – budget has been identified and the project for the initial costs of equipment with ongoing revenue costs built into future years.
- 5.3 Legal – prior to live streaming of meetings, all necessary permissions in terms of data protection and privacy will be highlighted.
- 5.4 HR - none
- 5.5 Fairer Scotland Duty:
 - 5.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics – options for subtitling of meetings will be available.
 - 5.5.2 Socio-economic Duty - none
 - 5.5.3 Islands – will offer greater flexibility for access to meetings.
- 5.6. Risk – manage risk around the reliability of broadband connections which could cause difficulties in areas with limited capacity.
- 5.7 Customer Service – improving customer experience and engagement in the Council's decision making processes.

Douglas Hendry

Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support

Policy Lead - Councillor Mary Jean Devon

24 August 2021

For further information contact:

Shona Barton, Committee Manager (01436) 657605

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Infographic of webcasting

Chamber Webcast – everyone in room

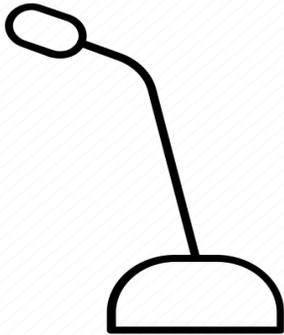
Hybrid Meeting Webcast – some in the Chamber and some in other locations

Fully Remote Webcast – everyone joining remotely

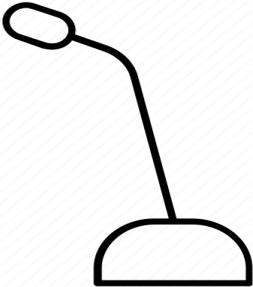
All participants

Chamber participants

All participants



Use Chamber Microphones



Use Chamber Microphones

Remote participants



Log on using Teams



Log on using Teams

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**COUNCIL****LEGAL AND REGULATORY SUPPORT****30 SEPTEMBER 2021**

COUNCIL CONSTITUTION REVIEW

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report considers proposed changes to the Council Constitution.

The Council generally reviews the Constitution annually and various changes are proposed which take into consideration decisions agreed by Council since the last review, updated terminology, documents and job titles. This review also addresses issues arising from any decision in relation to agreement by Council for remote participation in meetings and the incorporation of virtual and hybrid meeting and webcasting provisions into the council's formal meeting arrangements.

An overview of key changes is provided at Appendix 1.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The Council is invited to agree to the adjustments to the Constitution as follows:

- a) To update Part A of the Constitution to reflect current terminology, key document references, changes in Strategic Management Team working arrangements and job titles as set out in Appendix 1.
- b) To agree to amend Part B in respect of Standing Orders for Meetings as set out in Appendix 1, which facilitates arrangements for remote participation on a virtual and/or hybrid basis and webcasting of key strategic meetings subject to installation of appropriate technology and noting that the practical elements of these arrangements will be subject to a further report to Council in November.
- c) To amend Part C, Scheme of Delegations as set out in Appendix 1.
- d) To amend Part D, Financial and Security Regulations, to incorporate changes in the appointment of the Chief Financial Officer, the arrangements for risk management and the updated Procurement Manual as previously agreed by Council and set out in Appendix 1.

- e) To note the updated Procurement Manual as previously agreed by Council in February 2021 has been inserted at Part E, Contract Standing Orders and as set out in Appendix 1.
- f) To amend Part F, Ethical Framework to reflect revisions to Executive Director job Titles, insertion of the Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy as a standalone document and any decision made by Council in respect of virtual/hybrid meetings as set out in Appendix 1.

3.0 DETAIL

- 3.1 The proposed changes to the constitution are driven generally by incorporating updates in respect of decisions previously agreed by Council. It also includes updated terminology, documents and job titles as set out in Appendix 1.
- 3.2 The Council has recently invested in the technology to support virtual and hybrid meetings as well as live streaming (webcasting) and this will be the subject of a further report to Council in November 2021. In order to make provision for Council and Strategic Committee meetings to operate on a virtual and/or hybrid basis and for these meetings to be webcast as appropriate this will require adjustments to the Constitution in general and specifically Standing Orders as set out in Appendix 1. The Council is therefore requested to give consideration to incorporating these adjustments into the Constitution where appropriate to facilitate any decision in relation to remote participation in meetings and livestreaming.
- 3.3 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 September 2020. It also incorporates proposed changes to the Constitution in light of any Council agreement to make provision for Council and Strategic Committee meetings to operate on a virtual/hybrid basis and for these meetings to be webcast as appropriate.
- 4.2 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.

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 and have the potential to enhance accessibility in respect of remote participation proposals.
- 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 Mary Jean Devon

17th August 2021

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

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Review of Constitution 2021 – Summary of Key Changes

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For discussion

Virtual/hybrid

| Reference – Current constitution page & paragraph detail | | Proposed amendment |
|--|--------------|--|
| Part A The Constitution | Page 6 3 | <p>Policy Framework</p> <p>Amend reference to following updated terms and documents:</p> <p>Performance Improvement Framework Children and Young Peoples Plan Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan Decarbonisation Plan</p> <p>Remove reference to:</p> <p>Community Care Plan Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy Early Years Development Plan Food Law Enforcement Plan Local Transport Strategy Economic Development Action Plan</p> <p>Risk Management Strategy</p> |
| Part A The Constitution | Page 11 7 | <p>Overview and Scrutiny</p> <p>Amend reference from Planning and Performance Management Framework to Performance Improvement Framework</p> |
| Part A The Constitution | Page 12 9 | <p>Area Committees</p> <p>Amend wording to</p> |

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| | | (1)The Council will appoint area committees reflecting the Council's Political Management Arrangements. |
| Part A The Constitution | Page 12 | Executive Directors The Executive Directors have responsibility for the Council's Service Departments. As a general Note – the designations in relation to: Executive Director – Customer Services; and Executive Director – Development and Infrastructure Services; will be revised throughout the Constitution to reflect the designation of; Executive Director with Responsibility for; and will reflect he appropriate service and any further consequential revisals to ensure accurate nomenclature |
| Part A The Constitution | Page 13 4&5 | Amend Strategic Management Team Reference as follows: Executive Leadership Team The Chief Executive, 2 Executive Directors and Chief Officer of the HSCP form the Council's Executive Leadership Team. The Executive Leadership Team ELT will act as programme board for change and improvement activity, consider strategic issues, oversee budget planning and deal with any urgent issues (i.e. those issues currently raised through departmental updates). |
| Part A The Constitution | Page 13 12 (1) | The Monitoring Officer The Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support Services is the Council's Monitoring Officer in terms of Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. |
| Part A The Constitution | Page 13 13 | The Chief Financial Officer |

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| | | The Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Infrastructure Services is the Council's Chief Financial Officer in terms of Section 95 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 as amended and has responsibility for the administration of the financial affairs of the Council and for the provision of financial advice to the Council. |
| Part B Standing Orders for Meetings | Page 28 1.2 | ORDINARY MEETINGS Ordinary meetings of the Council will be held on the dates and at the times which the Council decide. These meetings will normally be held in Kilmory Castle, Lochgilphead, but the Council or the Provost may decide that alternative arrangements can be made, such that a meeting may be held elsewhere, or an ordinary meeting may be held on a wholly virtual basis by electronic means or in circumstances whereby some Councillors attend in person and others take part on a virtual basis. |
| Part B Standing Orders for Meetings | Page 29 2.1 | Public Notice Three clear days at least before a meeting of the Council, the Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support will display a notice at the Council's Headquarters saying when and where the meeting will be held and any associated arrangements. In the event the meeting is being held on a virtual/hybrid basis details on how to access the meeting will be included in the Notice and published on the Council website. If a meeting is called at shorter notice in case of urgency then the notice will be displayed at the time it is called ["Clear days" excludes the day of publication and the day of the meeting and does not include Saturdays, Sundays or public holidays]. |
| Part B Standing Orders for Meetings | New Paragraph | No sound, film, videotape, digital or photographic recording of the proceedings of any meeting shall be made without the prior approval of the Council or the Provost, other than recording of the proceedings of meetings agreed by the Council for webcasting or as a back-up for a live webcast, or as an alternative where live webcasting is not possible. |
| Part B | Page 31 4.1 | Quorum |

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| Standing Orders for Meetings | | Add to end of paragraph. For the avoidance of doubt a member that is attending the meeting virtually in accordance with the arrangements for the meeting will be considered as present. |
| Part B Standing Orders for Meetings | Page 32 5.4 | Amend with The Member who is presiding at the meeting must do so from the specified location for the meeting unless alternative arrangements have been made. |
| Part B Standing Orders for Meetings | Page 33 7.4 | Replace: that they are removed from the Council Chamber to – that they are removed from the meeting |
| Part B Standing Orders for Meetings | Page 37 11.2 | Amend with Where an ordinary meeting is held on a wholly virtual basis by electronic means or in circumstances whereby some Councillors attend in person and others take part on a virtual basis a vote will be taken by calling the roll. In meetings where all members are present in the same physical location a vote will be taken by a show of hands except in the following circumstances, |
| Part B Standing Orders for Meetings | Page 38 12.2 | Amend to read The Council may adjourn any meeting for a reasonable interval or to another date as the Council may agree then, or that failing, the Provost may decide then or afterwards. The vote on such a motion, on being seconded, will be taken without amendment or discussion and by roll call vote. A similar motion to adjourn to another day will not be competent within a period of one hour after the decision on the earlier motion. |
| | Page 39 | How a member submits a motion for the next meeting |

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| | | The requirements for written notification at 13.1 and 13.2 shall also be satisfied by an email of the motion being submitted by individual members via their Council email account. |
| | Page 42 18.3 | Amend with Every application for a deputation must be in writing, signed by a representative of the organisation or group wishing to be heard, indicating whether they wish to be present in person or virtually, and setting out the matter on which they wish to be heard and delivered to the Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support Services no later than three working days before the meeting concerned; but the Provost (i) may, at her/his sole discretion allow an application to be considered at shorter notice and (ii) will determine whether a deputation will be held in person or virtually. The requirements for written notification at 18.3 shall also be satisfied by an email of the deputation being submitted by individual members via their Council email account. |
| | Page 43 20.1 | Amend to include reference to virtual/hybrid meeting arrangements. The Chair of a Committee (or in whose absence the Vice-Chair) may for good cause cancel or alter the date, time, place or virtual/hybrid arrangements for a meeting of a Committee, but not after the summons for the meeting has been issued. The Chair (or in whose absence the Vice-Chair) may call a meeting of the Committee on dates in addition to those already decided by the Council. |
| | Page 44 20.4 | Amend to include reference to virtual/hybrid meeting arrangements. The dates of meetings of a Short Life Working Groups will be decided by the Group. The Chair of a Short Life Working Group (or in whose absence the Vice-Chair) may for good cause cancel or alter the date, time, place or virtual/hybrid arrangements for a meeting, but not after the summons for the meeting has been issued |
| | Page 46 23.6 | In reference to Declarations of Interest replace “leave the room in which the meeting is taking place” with “leave the meeting.” |

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| | Page 49 | Revised Protocol for virtual /hybrid meetings See Appendix 1 at end |
| Part C Scheme of Delegation | Page 60 1.4.2 | Executive Positions Add the Provost to the list of Executive positions on the basis that the Local Government Scotland Act 1994, as amended, now allows a Provost office to be terminated via Standing Orders. |
| Part C Scheme of Delegation | Page 70 | Community Services Committee Communities and Culture Remove reference to “the relevant functional areas relating to community learning and development, libraries and culture, and leisure and sport”; and replace with: To scrutinise performance and contract management arrangements in respect of Community Learning and Development and the operation of all services transferred to the Live Argyll Trust and to consider and comment on any policy proposals in respect of these services. The Council's Education Service will undertake the client role and remain as the key contact for liaison with Education Scotland, Live Argyll will be responsible for ensuring that the four statutory obligations, as set out in the Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013, are met. |
| Part C Scheme of Delegation | Page 72 2.4.5 | Area Committees To determine applications for bridging finance from voluntary groups in accordance with criteria to be agreed by the Council from time to time and subject to the approval of the Policy and Resources Committee if |

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| | | the decision is contrary to the recommendation of the Chief Financial Officer. |
| | Page 73 2.5.3 Page 74 F & g | Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth |
| | Page 76 2.6.2 | Amend to The arrangements for meetings of SLWGs will be a matter for the Group concerned, but the chair of a Group may for good cause cancel or alter the place, or virtual/hybrid arrangements, date or time for a meeting of a Group and may call a meeting of a Group on dates in addition to those already decided by the Group, but not after the summons for the meeting has been issued. |
| | Page 86 12 | Remove reference to European from list of elections |
| | Page 86 | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CUSTOMER SERVICES Executive Director – with responsibility for: Legal & Regulatory Support Services Commercial Services Education Services And consequential changes in nomenclature |
| | P97 | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES Change to Executive Director with responsibility for:- Customer Support Services Road and Infrastructure Services Development and Economic Growth And consequential changes in nomenclature |

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| | Page 108 | <p>Head of Financial Services</p> <p>Change to:</p> <p>Chief Financial Officer throughout document</p> <p>Add number 76 – “To act as the Council’s Chief Financial Officer in terms of Section 95 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 as amended, and as such is authorised to, or designate a suitable Officer to, discharge:-“ (1 to 12 as set out on pages 108/109)</p> |
| Part D Financial and Security Regulations | Page 114 | <p>Head of Financial Services</p> <p>Change to Chief Financial Officer</p> <p>And consequential changes in nomenclature</p> |
| Part D Financial and Security Regulations | Page 118 4.1 | Amend 4.1 to refer to Risk Management Plan and delete reference to strategy |
| Part E Contract Standing Orders | Page 177 1.1.4 | <p>Amend Preliminary, Extent and Application, Clause 1.1.4 to read:</p> <p>The Standing Orders are subject to the over-riding provisions of United Kingdom and Scottish legislation. They are also subject to any UK and Scottish Government guidance on public procurement that may be issued from time to time.</p> |
| Part E Contract Standing Orders | Page 178 3.2 | <p>Amend Advertising Tendering and Contract Management, Clause 3.2 to read:</p> <p>The procedure for the award of any contract depends upon the estimated value of that contract and any related contracts over their intended duration. Detailed provisions in relation to the tendering award of contracts and contract management activity are contained in the Procurement Manual and all Council employees should refer to the Procurement Manual for guidance which can be located here: Procurement Manual 2021 (argyll-bute.gov.uk)</p> |

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| Part E Contract Standing Orders | Page 180 7.2 | Amend Specification and Standards, Clause 7.2 to read: All contracts issued by a UK Conformity Assessed (UKCA) Approved Body or other Notified or Approved Body as may exist from time to time |
| Part E Contract Standing Orders | Page 184 (e) | Insert: PROCUREMENT MANUAL The Council's Procurement Manual can be located here: Procurement Manual 2021 (argyll-bute.gov.uk) |
| Part F Ethical Framework | | Code of Conduct Full document to be replaced with a link to the most recent version. Add a note advising that this section will be updated on an ongoing basis, as and when new versions of the Code are published. |
| | Annex 2 – part D | Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy To be removed as an Annex to the Financial Regulations and inserted in the Ethical Framework section as a standalone document, with any consequential revisions required. |

Appendix 1

PROTOCOL FOR VIRTUAL & HYBRID MEETINGS

The following protocol shall be adopted in relation to the conduct of any meeting which the Council has determined can be held on a hybrid or virtual basis using electronic means. Participation via remote link will be permitted as determined from time to time by the Provost/Chair of the Meeting.

For the avoidance of doubt Council has determined that the following meetings can be considered for operation on a virtual/hybrid basis where technology permits:

List:

Council

Policy and Resources Committee

Community Services Committee

Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee

Harbour Board

The Area Committees:-

(a) Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands

(b) Oban, Lorn and the Isles

(c) Bute and Cowal

(d) Helensburgh and Lomond

Planning, Protective Services and Licensing Committee

Audit and Scrutiny Committee

Appeals Committee

The Policy and Resources Asset Transfer Sub-Committee

Short Life Working Groups

The Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Services will, from time to time, issue guidance on matters relating to the arrangements for the conduct of hybrid and virtual meetings.

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ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**COUNCIL****DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC
GROWTH****30 SEPTEMBER 2021**

**PROGRESS REPORT: DANGEROUS BUILDING: 5-7 EAST CLYDE STREET,
HELENSBURGH**

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 At the Council meeting on the 26th November 2020, a report was considered relating to a dangerous building at 5/7 East Clyde Street, Helensburgh. In addition to noting the emergency works carried out by the Council to the property to stabilise the building, the Council “further instructed officers to continue to work with owners, and other interested parties, to identify a permanent solution. This will be the subject of a future report to the appropriate Committee”.
- 1.2 This report provides an update on the works to secure a permanent solution to this privately owned property within Helensburgh town centre. The property is also within the designated Helensburgh Town Centre Conservation Area and identified as a priority building repair project for Helensburgh CARS, with a substantial sum earmarked to support the property owners fund its comprehensive restoration. The absence of a collective agreement from the multiple owners to repair the building, makes the delivery of a permanent solution complicated.
- 1.3 A developer led option is possible, and there have been discussions between the Council and the Ministry of Defence (MoD) to assess whether there is demand from the public sector for the redeveloped property. At the same time, there remains a further option of compulsory purchase and redevelopment by Council although this is likely to be a lengthy and complex process. The favoured option at this stage, is a developer led scheme, with agreement by the owners, supported by Crown Estates and CARS funding as appropriate.
- 1.4 The risks posed by this unoccupied building require ongoing monitoring and the multiple owners advised of their responsibilities. The Councils building standards team commissioned a structural survey to assess its current condition and identify whether there was any further deterioration. This survey indicated that main propping is still providing a good system of support and along with the ties to the outer walling and other measures, are functioning as intended to stabilise the building. Water penetration is an issue and further deterioration of the property could affect adjoining properties.

The Helensburgh CARS framework provides an opportunity to access full design team services to take these issues forward and a dedicated CARS Officer is in place to progress the project.

- 1.5 Financial: Funding is available through Crown Estates and the Conservation Area Regeneration scheme for their building, to support a permanent solution. There is outstanding debt of £64,683.65 owed to the Council for previous works carried out to stabilise the building and make it safe. The Council may have to consider writing off this debt, to secure a developer-led solution.
- 1.6 It is recommended that Council:
 - a. note this report and the favoured option of a developer-led scheme, with agreement by the multiple owners and Council support; and
 - b. agree that work continues expeditiously to secure a permanent solution and provide a further report to Council in 3 months.

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**COUNCIL****DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC
GROWTH****30 SEPTEMBER 2021**

**PROGRESS REPORT: DANGEROUS BUILDING: 5-7 EAST CLYDE STREET,
HELENSBURGH**

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The tenement building at 5-7 East Clyde Street, Helensburgh is unoccupied and the Council have had to intervene on a number of occasions to repair, or stabilise, the building to remove dangers to public safety. The multiple owners are not maintaining the building and there is a high probability, without further repairs, or comprehensive development of the property, that the building will continue to deteriorate and that the Council will have to incur additional costs in the future.
- 2.2 At the Council meeting on the 26th November 2020, a report was considered relating to a dangerous building at 5/7 East Clyde Street, Helensburgh. In addition to noting the emergency works carried out by the Council to the property to stabilise the building, Council “further instructed officers to continue to work with owners and other interested parties to identify permanent solution. This will be the subject of a future report to the appropriate Committee “.
- 2.3 This report provides an update on the work to date to secure a permanent solution to this privately owned property within Helensburgh town centre. The tenement property is within the designated Helensburgh Town Centre Conservation Area. A permanent solution has not yet been identified and there does not appear to be any collective proposals by the private owners to refurbish/repair the property. A developer led option is still possible however, and there are ongoing discussions between the Council and the developer on the viability of the project. At the same time, there remains a further option of compulsory purchase and redevelopment by the Council however this is likely to be a complex and lengthy process. The favoured option is therefore a developer led scheme, with agreement by the owners, supported by Crown Estates and CARS funding as appropriate.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that Council:
- a. note this report and the favoured option of a developer-led scheme, with agreement by the multiple owners and Council support; and
 - b. agree that work continues expeditiously to secure a permanent

solution and provide a further report to Council in 3 months.

4.0 DETAIL

4.1 The Building (Scotland) Act 2003 places a statutory duty on local authorities to undertake works to remove any immediate danger to persons in or about a building or to the public generally or to adjacent buildings or places. Associated costs are recovered from the owners of the property. Notwithstanding this, responsibility for any other repairs or remedial works rests wholly with the property owner(s).

4.2 The responsibility for the building at 5 -7 East Clyde Street, Helensburgh rests with the owners and not the Council. Ownership of the property is complex with 7 owners which include a sequestrated Trust, a deceased owner and others who are unable to maintain the property as a result of their financial situation, including bankruptcy.

There is a longstanding history to the property at 5-7 East Clyde Street, Helensburgh with the Council having to undertake statutory works due to the dangerous nature of the building. Most recently, the Council carried out stabilisation works in November/December 2020. The owners are aware of the need for repairs and a monitoring plan to prevent any further deterioration and building standards continue to monitor the situation. In the intervening period however, the owners have not instructed any repairs and there remains a risk of further deterioration.

4.3 The building is currently unoccupied, with multiple owners, and not in a condition, which would allow reoccupation, without significant investment. There is outstanding debt owed to the Council amounting to £64,683.65 and formal charging orders are being prepared for service. This may enable the Council to recover some of the outstanding debt on sale of the properties although much will depend on the level of any outstanding mortgages and the price (if any) which a developer would be willing to pay. It is acknowledged that the debt may have to be written off to help the owners secure a deal with a prospective developer.

4.4 A permanent solution is not yet in place although a range of options have been considered. Indicative costs for demolishing the property are £200K, and £450K-£550K for repairs to the building to bring it into habitable condition. The options considered to move matters forward are:

| Option | Progress report | Comment |
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| Owner –led solution | All owners are aware of the need to repair/ refurbish the property The situation is complicated due to the ownership issues outlined in 4.2 above and there is no collective agreement by the owners to repair the property. | This option is unlikely and some owners are keen to pass on their liability |

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| Developer-led solution | <p>There is interest from a developer who proposes to acquire the property at 5/7 East Clyde Street, Helensburgh and the adjoining former Chinese restaurant, to redevelop the site. Detailed discussions are ongoing between the Council and the developer.</p> | <p>The current position is that the developer has secured provisional agreement from the majority of owners to take over the liabilities for the site, although further work is necessary. The intention is to demolish and redevelop the site including the vacant adjoining former Chinese restaurant. There remain issues relating to planning restrictions, the property as a historic building and priority for Helensburgh CARS, potential Council funding support (as there is an assessed development deficit), and issues around whether the Council would agree to write off outstanding debt to allow owners to agree to transfer ownership liabilities to the developer.</p> |
| Council – led solution | <p>A Council led option would require the Council to secure ownership of all properties through Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) This is a complex and protracted process and should be the last resort after all other avenues have been exhausted. By way of indicative timescale please note that a straightforward CPO may take 18 months to be determined once submitted to the Scottish Ministers. However, given the multiple owners in this case and the complexities of the nature of their ownership, it is likely that this would take significantly longer.</p> <p>The building falls within the designated Helensburgh Town Centre Conservation Area and there is significant earmarked funding to support the restoration of the building through grant assistance. This route will be pursued by the Helensburgh CARS</p> | <p>Due to the potential length of time to undertake a successful CPO with the preferred option is currently the Developer led option. This option remains an alternative possibility however and officers within the council are continuing to look at a CPO option to ensure a positive solution is delivered for this building.</p> |

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| | Officer | |
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- 4.5 Funding has been identified through Crown Estates and the CARS project to support the restoration/development of the property, although its availability is dependent on the scheme. Discussions are ongoing between Council officials, building owners and the prospective developer to identify what level of support is available in both financial and potential end user terms.
- 4.6 The condition of this unoccupied building is being monitored and building standards commissioned a structural survey to assess its current condition and identify whether there is any further deterioration. This survey, on 24 August 2021, confirmed that main propping is still providing a good system of support and along with the ties to the outer walling and other measures, are functioning as intended to stabilise the building. Water penetration is an issue and further deterioration of the property could affect adjoining properties. The report concludes that if the building is left to deteriorate further with no further repairs, then it would be easy to imagine the property could reach a point where it would be very difficult to instruct sensible or practical repairs. Owners have been sent the structural engineers report and advised of the need for action. Meantime, in the interests of public safety, building standards will instruct a contractor to check that the propping and bolting remain tight.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 It is important to secure repairs/redevelopment of this property that has a prominent position in Helensburgh Town Centre. The lack of any coordinated action by the private owners to repair/refurbish the property makes it very difficult to secure a permanent solution. As a priority building repair for Helensburgh CARS, with opportunity to support owners with grant assistance, the favoured option would be a developer –led approach to restoring the tenement property, supported through CARS funding. However all options are being considered as the prospective developers current scheme is to demolish and redevelop the site which would not attract any CARS monies but may access Crown Estates and other funding avenues.
- 5.2 Work to identify a permanent solution for this unoccupied building will continue through the Town Centre Heritage Scheme, supported by other Council services.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy: Property not within Council ownership
 6.2 Financial: Costs incurred by the Council in delivering its statutory

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| | responsibilities are significant, unbudgeted, with low chance of recovery. Monies have been identified through CARS project and Crown Estates to redevelop the site |
| 6.3 Legal | Statutory duty relating to dangerous buildings |
| 6.4 HR | None |
| 6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty: | |
| 6.5.1 Equalities | None |
| 6.5.2 Socio-economic duty | None |
| 6.5.3 Islands | None |
| 6.6 Risk | <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Further deterioration with risks to adjoining residents/public and recurring action by Council.b. Not meeting public/community expectation that Council will intervenec. Reputational damage with key partner and funder, Historic Environment Scotland should the tenement be demolished |
| 6.7 Customer Service | None |

**Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth:
Kirsty Flanagan**

Policy Lead: Councillor David Kinniburgh
10th August 2021

**For further information contact Alan Morrison, Regulatory Services Manager
(alan.morrison@argyll-bute.gov.uk : 01546604292)**

APPENDICES- NONE

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ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**COUNCIL****DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC
GROWTH****30th SEPTEMBER 2021**

CIVIC HONOURS AND UK CITY of CULTURE COMPETITION

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Members will be aware that the Queen is celebrating 70 years on the throne in 2022 which will be her platinum jubilee. To mark this unique occasion the UK Government has launched a number of rare civic competitions including, 'city status' and 'Lord Mayor or Lord Provost status', for a number of worthy towns and cities located in the United Kingdom, a Crown Dependency or Overseas Territory.
- 1.2 The UK Government also launched at the same time a competition for a new UK City of Culture that will take place in 2025 with a further round in 2029.
- 1.3 This report therefore considers the possibility of entering into these competitions with a recommendation contained in the report that the council enters one of our main towns Oban into the City status competition and further examine the possibility of entering the UK City of Culture competition in 2029.
- 1.4 It is recommended that the Council:
 - Consider the contents of this report and approve the submission of an application for City status for Oban and look to prepare a further application for UK City of Culture status in 2029.

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC
GROWTH

30th SEPTEMBER 2021

CIVIC HONOURS AND UK CITY of CULTURE COMPETITION

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Members will be aware that the Queen is celebrating 70 years on the throne in 2022 which will be her platinum jubilee. To mark this unique occasion the UK Government has launched a number of rare civic competitions including, 'city status' and 'Lord Mayor or Lord Provost status', for a number of worthy towns and cities located in the United Kingdom, a Crown Dependency or Overseas Territory.

2.2 The UK Government also launched at the same time a competition for a new UK City of Culture that will take place in 2025 with a further round in 2029. For the first time this competition can be entered by a place rather than restricted to a city which allows Argyll and Bute to also consider if they wish to enter this competition for the first time.

2.3 This report therefore considers the possibility of entering into these competitions with a recommendation contained in the report that the council enters one of our main towns Oban into the City status competition and further examine the possibility of entering the UK City of Culture competition in 2029 given that is now open to places (for example, the whole of Argyll and Bute) and not confined to cities.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 It is recommended that the Council:

- Consider the contents of this report and approve the submission of an application for City status for Oban and look to prepare a further application for UK City of Culture status in 2029.

4.0 DETAILS

4.1 The UK Government has launched a series of competitions to help celebrate the platinum anniversary of the Queen on the throne of the UK and also to assist the recovery of the UK economy following the negative impacts of the global pandemic.

- 4.2 The competitions include a call for new cities, Lord Mayor or Lord Provost Status for existing cities, and also additional rounds of UK City of Culture Status in 2025 and also in 2029. Argyll and Bute is currently eligible to enter both the city status competition and the UK City of Culture status in 2025 and/or 2029 as this competition is for the first time open to a place (the whole of Argyll and Bute for example) and not restricted to existing cities.

BENEFITS of CITY STATUS

- 4.3 The definition of a city in the UK is a place which has been granted city status by the monarch. There are currently seven cities in Scotland meeting this definition with Perth being the latest city declared. It is important to recognise that size is not an issue to be declared a city with the smallest city in the UK being St David's in Wales having a population of only 1,600 people.
- 4.4 Whilst the principal benefit is simply the status of being a City, newly created Cities tend to outperform other areas in terms of economic performance through increased investment, increasing population and additional employment opportunities. This can be clearly seen in Inverness which dominates growth in the Highlands and Islands. Research has also found that civic pride can be boosted with city status with additional cultural and creative opportunities.
- 4.5 The application process has been deliberately kept simple by the UK Government to keep costs down to a minimum for Local Authorities to enter. The deadline for submissions is the 8th of December 2021 and a link to the application form is embedded in this report.

[Platinum Jubilee Civic Honours Competition - Application form](#)

WHY OBAN?

- 4.6 Argyll and Bute has five Main Towns that could all be considered for being submitted for City Status. Whilst all of our towns have their own individual merits it is considered at this particular time that the town of Oban offers the best opportunity for Argyll and Bute to achieve City status in this round particularly given the published criteria issued by the UK Government.
- 4.7 In particular the town of Oban can offer the following attributes:-
- The town occupies a strategically important position on the west coast of the Highlands and Islands region independent of other cities;
 - A growing population with an expanding and diversifying economy;
 - It has 2 cathedrals;
 - It is a key transport hub as one of the busiest ferry ports in the UK with good road, rail, active travel and air links;
 - It is an important tourist hub with its population boosted from 8.5k to 25k during peak summer periods;
 - It is an established gateway to a number of our island communities;

- It is recognised as the seafood capital of Scotland;
- It is a University Town with in excess of 1,000 students including the world renowned SAMs marine institute;
- It is a centre of Gaelic culture, including home of the National MOD that has Royal status;
- It has played an important role in the history of the nation from the Bronze Age to the Second World War.

4.8 Given all of the above factors it is considered that the council look to work with our key partners, including the community of Oban, to submit an application in December for City status. The competition has been designed to be cost effective to enter with a simple application form. HIE have already expressed a willingness to assist the council make the application as competitive as possible. It is considered by entering the competition this has the potential to raise the profile of Oban, Lorn and wider Argyll and Bute to a wider audience and it will also help us better understand the unique appeal of the town and its infrastructure needs.

4.9 Another major consideration was for the council to enter the **UK City of Culture Competition** as announced by the UK Government working with the devolved administrations. A link to the application process for the completion is embedded within this report.

[Search for the next UK City of Culture launched - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Applications are encouraged from towns and cities across the UK with the winner succeeding Coventry the current UK City of Culture 2021. The competition, delivered by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in collaboration with the devolved administrations, will use culture as a catalyst for levelling up areas outside London and put culture at the heart of their plans to recover from the impact of the pandemic.

4.10 For the first time, groups of towns will now be able to join together and apply for the title to be awarded to their local area - widening the scope of which areas of the country could benefit. Towns and cities are required to articulate a strong and unique vision for their future growth, celebrating local heritage and using culture to bring communities together, build a sense of place and inspire local pride. Bidders will also be asked to demonstrate how investment in culture and creativity will drive growth, how they will open up access to culture and to develop partnerships and celebrate links with places across the UK.

4.11 Bidding for the title in its own right can have a hugely positive impact on a place - helping to bring partners together and develop strategic cultural leadership. To encourage as many places as possible across the UK to bid and to benefit from the UK City of Culture process, DCMS will offer funding of up to £40,000 to up to six longlisted places to help develop their applications. Bids for the 2025 title will be assessed by an independent panel include representatives for Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and England. It will visit each of the shortlisted cities, to be announced later this year, before each city

or town makes a final pitch to become the next UK City of Culture in 2025. The winning city or towns will be announced in Spring 2022.

- 4.12 It is to be noted that the deadline for the Expression of Interest for UK City of Culture 2025 is closed. Consequently, the report recommends that the council explores the possibility of preparing for a possible bid in 2029 working with all relevant partners.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The UK Government has launched a number of rare civic competitions to help celebrate the Queen's platinum jubilee that will take place in 2022. Argyll and Bute is able to submit an application for City Status for one of its Main Towns. It is therefore considered that Oban offers the best opportunity for success with a deadline for an application by the 8th of December of this year. It is hoped that this application can be assisted by HIE.

- 5.2 The UK Government, working with the devolved administrations, have also launched a new UK City of Culture competition for 2025 with a further round scheduled for 2029. Given the considerable resources required to submit an application it is considered that the council work with other key partners to look at the possibility of preparing a bid for City of Culture status in 2029.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 **Policy** - None arising from this report.

- 6.2 **Financial** - None arising from this report

- 6.3 **Legal** - No legal issues

- 6.4 **HR** - This will need to be resourced from existing staff.

- 6.5 **Fairer Scotland Duty:**

6.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics: There are no equal opportunities implications.

6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty: It is intended that by submitting an application it has potential to help support the social and economic needs of Oban, Lorn and wider Argyll and Bute.

6.5.3 Islands: None arising from this report; the economic needs of our islands will require to be fully considered as we move forward.

- 6.6 **Risk** - There is a risk that if we do not take advantage of opportunities that present themselves our communities could miss out.

- 6.7 **Customer Service** - There are no customer service implications.

Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth -
Kirsty Flanagan

September 2021

For further information - please contact:

Fergus Murray

Head of Development and Economic Growth 01546604293

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT AND
ECONOMIC GROWTH

30 SEPTEMBER 2021

HOUSING ANNUAL ASSURANCE STATEMENT 2021

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Council Homeless Services are subject to scrutiny and inspection by the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR). The Council must demonstrate that it is meeting the statutory requirements contained in the Scottish Social Housing Charter. Argyll and Bute Council is no longer a social landlord but retains statutory duties to provide services to households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. The Council submits an Annual Return on the Charter (ARC). In 2019 the SHR introduced a requirement for all local authorities to submit an Annual Assurance Statement which will be published on the SHR website. The 2020 Argyll and Bute Council Statement was approved by the SHR. This report details the proposed Statement for 2021.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that Full Council approve the Annual Assurance Statement contained in **Appendix 1** of this report.

3.0 DETAIL

- 3.1 The SHR produced a document entitled Regulation of Social Housing in Scotland in February 2019. The regulatory requirements are set out in Section 3 of the document and even though Argyll and Bute Council is no longer a social landlord there are requirements for the Council to ensuring that statutory duties are met in relation to preventing and alleviating homelessness.
- 3.2 The SHR issued an Engagement Plan to Argyll and Bute Council Housing Services in March 2019. This plan was not updated in 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID 19 pandemic. As a result there continues to be 4 areas in which the SHR can engage with the Council in relation to homelessness services:-

- How people access the service
- The assessment of homeless applications
- Access to and quality of temporary accommodation
- Outcomes for people who are homeless

The SHR are proposing to engage with Argyll and Bute Council in relation to Argyll and Bute's assessment of homeless applications and the outcomes for people who are homeless. The elements within these categories are detailed in the Annual Assurance Statement (**Appendix 1**) and the progress made. In 2019/20 the only cause for concern was the percentage of intentionally homeless cases in Argyll and Bute (7%) compared to the Scottish average (3%). The percentage of intentionally homeless cases reduced to 1% (5 out of 416 cases) in 2020/21 which is in line with the Scottish average.

Housing Services have identified 2 areas of concern from the 2020/21 statistics. The first is the number of repeat homeless cases which has risen from 20 to 25 and represents 6.8% of applications. This is a rise from 5.3% in 2019/20 and is above the Scottish average of 5% for 2020/21. The second area of concern is the number of households who stated that they had slept rough the night before application or within 3 months of applying as homeless. 25 households stated that they slept rough the night before they made a homeless application which remains the same as 2019/20 (6%) but is above the Scottish average of 4%. The number of households stating that they slept rough within 3 months of making a homeless application dropped from 50 to 40 which is a 10% reduction but still represents 10% of applicants which is higher than the Scottish average of 7%. Analysis of repeat homeless cases and rough sleeping cases will be carried out to establish if there are any patterns of areas of work which can be improved to reduce these figures.

- 3.3 In addition to the 4 areas of engagement a section on the impact of COVID 19 on the homeless service has been added to the 2021 Annual Assurance Statement.
- 3.4 Members are kept informed of the Council's performance in relation to statutory and regulatory requirements in relation to housing in various ways:-
- Through the Corporate Pyramid Reporting System
 - Through quarterly Housing Performance Reports submitted to Committee
 - Through the quarterly reporting produced for the Strategic Housing Forum
 - Through the Annual Updates on the Local Housing Strategy
 - Through an Annual Housing Activity report submitted to the 4 Area Committees
- 3.5 The Scottish Housing Regulator wrote to housing organisations on 24 June 2021 to explain that they are continuing to work with the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations, Glasgow and West of Scotland Forum of Housing Associations and ALACHO to produce guidance on equalities data collection. The SHR is working with the Scottish Human Rights Commission to develop a

briefing on the right to housing. The SHR anticipates that these guides will be published later in 2021.

4.0 CONCLUSION

4.1 The Development and Economic Growth Service – Housing Team will continue to improve services to households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. The Housing Team will continue to engage with the SHR to report on progress on the housing and homeless services provided in Argyll and Bute.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Policy None

5.2 Financial Sufficient budget is required to deliver statutory services

5.3 Legal None

5.4 HR None

5.5 Fairer Scotland Duty:

5.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics – access to services across the local authority area provided

5.5.2 Socio-economic Duty – addressing and preventing homelessness enables households to address other issues such as income maximisation and exploring employment opportunities

5.5.3 Islands – homeless advice and prevention services are provided on the islands

5.6. Risk – the Council will be subject to censure from the SHR and Scottish Government if statutory duties are not fulfilled

5.7 Customer Service – Area teams provided the service across the local authority

Kirsty Flanagan, Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth

Councillor Robin Currie Policy Lead for Economy and Rural Growth

For further information contact:

Douglas Whyte – douglas.whyte@argyll-bute.gov.uk – 01546 604 785

Fergus Murray – Fergus.murray@argyll-bute.gov.uk – 01546 604 293

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Housing Annual Assurance Statement 2021

Appendix 1

Argyll and Bute Council



Housing Annual Assurance Statement 2021

Legislative Compliance

We can confirm that Argyll and Bute Council achieves all the standards and outcomes for people who are homeless and others who use our services:-

- All relevant regulatory requirements set out in Chapter 3 of the Regulatory Framework
- All relevant standards and outcomes in the Scottish Housing Social Charter
- All relevant legislative duties

Argyll and Bute Council can confirm that there were no breaches of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order in 2020/21.

Argyll and Bute Council can confirm that there were no health and safety breaches in 2020/21 in relation to homelessness resulting in intervention by the Health and Safety Executive.

Argyll and Bute Council can confirm that a statement is being prepared on Equalities and Human Rights in relation to homelessness in the local authority area.

In 2019 The Scottish Housing Regulator notified Argyll and Bute Council that they would be engaging with the Council over 2 areas of work based on the Scottish Government national statistics for 2017/18 and the Annual Returns of the Charter :-

- Argyll and Bute's assessment of homeless applications
- Outcomes for people who are homeless

Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic the Scottish Housing Regulator has not been able to engage with the Council about the 2020/21 position. The tables below provide an update on the areas of engagement previously notified by the Regulator in 2019.

Argyll and Bute's Assessment of Homeless Applications

| No. | Area of Engagement | Progress Made |
|-----|---|---|
| 1. | The percentage of households assessed as not homeless nor threatened with homelessness is above the Scottish average | Argyll and Bute figures – 5% of cases at the end of 2020/21 compared to 5% of cases at the end of 2019/20. Scottish Average for 2020/21 – 3% |
| 2. | The percentage of households assessed as intentionally homeless is the same as the Scottish average | Argyll and Bute figures – 1% of cases at the end of 2020/21 compared to 7% of cases at the end of 2019/20 Scottish Average for 2020/21 – 1% |
| 3. | The percentage of households withdrawing their homeless application before decision is the same as the Scottish average | Argyll and Bute figures – 5% of cases at the end of 2020/21 compared to 3% of cases at the end of 2019/20 Scottish Average for 2020/21 – 5% |

Outcomes for People who are Homeless

| No. | Area of Engagement | Progress Made |
|-----|---|---|
| 1. | The percentage of people in Argyll and Bute assessed as unintentionally homeless which it provided with a Scottish Secure Tenancy is above the Scottish average | Argyll and Bute Figure for 2020/21 – 81% 2019/20 – 67% 2018/19 – 66% Scottish Figure for 2020/21 – 78% 81% of all unintentionally homeless cases secured settled accommodation in 2020/21 compared to 78% across Scotland |
| 2. | There are a relatively high number of people waiting for more than one year for an outcome | Argyll and Bute Council continues to work with partners to implement a Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) which will address this situation. The RRTP Annual Update was approved by Council and |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | | submitted to the Scottish Government in June 2021. |
|--|--|--|

The Impact of COVID 19 on the Homeless Service in Argyll and Bute

As reported in the Annual Assurance Statement 2020 the Council has continued to provide a service to households in need of accommodation during the COVID 19 pandemic. Regular contact continues to be maintained with existing households and housing support services continue to provide support to households to ensure that they are able to sustain their accommodation.

The number of temporary accommodation units have now returned to pre-Covid 19 levels. The temporary exceptions to the Unsuitable Accommodation Order are due to end on 30th September 2021. This has given the local authority time to be able to comply with the Unsuitable Accommodation Order.

As a Stock Transfer authority the Council continues to work effectively with the Registered Social Landlords to secure permanent housing for statutory homeless households.

I can confirm that the Council has sufficient assurance and scrutiny processes in place to support this statement.

Signed

Kirsty Flanagan

Executive Director

Signed

Councillor Robin Currie

Policy Lead for Economy and Rural Growth

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL
COUNCIL**DEVELOPMENT AND
ECONOMIC GROWTH****30 SEPTEMBER 2021**

STRATEGIC HOUSING INVESTMENT PLAN (SHIP) 2022/23 - 2026/27

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report details the proposed annual Strategic Housing Investment Plan which will cover the period 2022/23 - 2026/27. The document is required to be submitted to the Scottish Government by October 2021. This paper summarises the proposals for the revised SHIP, in line with statutory requirements and the latest guidance.

In July 2021 The Scottish Government allocated Resource Planning Assumptions (RPAs) to local authorities for the five years to the end of March 2026:

| Year | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024-25 | 2025-26 | Total |
|-------------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|--------------|
| RPA | £21.250m | £18.317m | £18.264m | £ 18.328m | £ 18.632m | £94.791m |

1.2 In 2020/21, the SHIP delivered 48 new affordable homes. This SHIP identifies potential for around 343 units to be completed in 2021/22 and over 700 additional homes to be completed or approved in subsequent years.

1.3 As well as addressing unmet local need and contributing to national targets, the proposed programme will: generate additional investment in the local economy, supporting additional jobs including new apprenticeships in the construction sector and associated labour market; it will stimulate community regeneration and sustainability; it will help to attract and retain residents and employees for local businesses; it will encourage movement within, and more effective operation of, the local housing system; it will also contribute to improving general health and well-being; and more pragmatically the new homes will also generate additional Council tax revenue.

1.4 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council:

- a. Approve the SHIP proposals summarised in this report which will then be submitted to the Scottish Government in October 2021.

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

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**DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC
GROWTH**

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STRATEGIC HOUSING INVESTMENT PLAN (SHIP) 2022/23 - 2026/27

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This paper seeks council approval of the revised Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2022/23 – 2026/27 which will then be submitted to the Scottish Government in October 2021. The core purpose of the SHIP is to set out strategic investment priorities for affordable housing over a five year period to achieve the outcomes set out in the Local Housing Strategy.
- 2.2 The SHIP remains a continuous, iterative process: individual projects are subject to a variety of factors which can lead to slippage or revision; and the overall programme requires constant monitoring. Formal updates are now required on an annual basis.
- 2.3 The revised SHIP has potential for delivery of around 343 units this year, and over 700 new affordable homes in subsequent years.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Council:
- a. Approve the SHIP proposals summarised in this report which will then be submitted to the Scottish Government in October 2021.

4.0 DETAIL

- 4.1 From 2017, the Scottish Government and COSLA/Association of Local Authority Chief Housing Officers (ALACHO) agreed that SHIPs would revert to being submitted on an annual basis. In July 2021 revised guidance was issued to assist local authorities prepare their SHIPs, which require to be submitted to the Scottish Government by October 2021, and will cover the period 2022/23–2026/27.
- 4.2 The Local Housing Strategy (LHS) sets out the strategic policy approach of the council and its partners to delivering high quality housing and related services across all tenures to meet identified need in the area. SHIPs are directly informed by the LHS and its policies and are developed in consultation with key stakeholders. Therefore, the SHIP is operational in nature and not considered as a policy document.

4.3 The core purpose of the SHIP remains to set out strategic investment priorities for affordable housing over a five year period to achieve the outcomes contained in the LHS. The plan reinforces the council as the strategic housing authority; the importance of the outcomes and targets set out in the LHS; and informs Scottish Government investment decisions.

4.4 The SHIP should therefore

- Set out investment priorities for affordable housing
- Demonstrate how these will be delivered
- Identify the resources required to deliver these priorities
- Enable the involvement of key partners

The SHIP should contain a succinct narrative in PDF form, submitted as a supporting document to the SHIP in the Housing and Regeneration Programme (HARP) system, which explains the context to the SHIP including:

- A statement on alignment with the LHS demonstrating that priorities identified in the SHIP are consistent with what the local authority outlined in its LHS (and any subsequent updates) and how the SHIP priorities will contribute to delivery of LHS Outcomes
- A summary of the methodology used to prioritise projects
- Details of how the local authority has responded to and resolved development constraints on projects prior to the site start date
- Details on how the local authority's own resources and other funding are supporting the delivery of affordable housing in its area
- Details of progress towards the delivery of its Affordable Housing Supply Programme across all tenures by completions
- Details of affordable housing projects for Gypsy/Travellers
- Details of Housing Infrastructure Fund projects where these are linked to affordable housing delivery
- Details of local plans to support the delivery of wheelchair accessible housing within its area
- A statement that strategic housing priorities are aligned and are consistent with Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan priorities
- Details of affordable housing projects that are aligned with the local authority's Child Poverty Action Report
- Details that duties under the Islands (Scotland) Act have been followed by the local authority if appropriate
- Details of any empty homes services and actions to bring homes back into use
- Details of how Council Tax on Second and Empty Homes has been used to assist affordable housing
- Details of how Developer Contributions have been used to assist affordable housing
- The type and level of consultation undertaken with RSLs, communities, developers and other stakeholders in developing the SHIP and how this has helped with the development of strategic investment priorities

4.5 Key Aspects of the SHIP Guidance

Building on previous guidance, the Scottish Government's most recent guidance includes an enhanced emphasis on the delivery of wheelchair accessible housing and in support of action 62 of the Fairer Scotland for Disabled People Action Plan, the guidance requires additional material from local authorities in the form of a position statement covering the following broad areas.

- What the current evidence base tells you about the requirement for wheelchair accessible housing, and any plans the authority has to develop this work further.
- The approach, if any, the authority have set in the Local Housing Strategy/ Local Development Plan to wheelchair accessible housing including any target/ quota that the local authority currently has in place.

The current guidance also includes specific linkages between the SHIP process and the duty on local authorities to produce Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans, essentially ensuring that the delivery of the SHIP will have direct impact on homelessness in the local authority area.

4.6 Resource Planning Assumptions (RPAs).

In July 2021 The Scottish Government allocated RPAs to local authorities for the five years to the end of March 2026:

| Year | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024-25 | 2025-26 | Total |
|------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| RPA | £21.250m | £18.317m | £18.264m | £ 18.328m | £ 18.632m | £94.791m |

It should be noted that this is potential investment for Argyll and Bute, dependent on actual need and deliverability of suitable projects; and while obviously very welcome, this level of funding will also present real challenges for the council and its partners. This would be subject to sufficient complementary funding being available from the Council and RSLs themselves to support the programme; and the capacity of the constrained local construction industry to gear up to such an enhanced level of productivity.

- 4.7 Additional funding is required to complement the Scottish Government investment, and in Argyll and Bute this includes a significant contribution from the Council's Strategic Housing Fund (SHF) as well as Housing Association investment drawn from private sector borrowing. The council's SHF is primarily based on the revenue raised from reduced tax discounts on holiday and second homes. The SHIP sets out plans to fully utilise the SHF over 5 years to support the affordable housing development programme, including empty homes grants and loans. The projected income to the SHF over the next 3 years is approximately £2m per annum. In April 2016 the Council halved the level of grant

provision for RSLs from £25k to £12k per unit, to reflect the equivalent increase in Scottish Government grant; and an evaluation exercise carried out by independent consultants in 2016 confirmed that this is indeed the most appropriate and cost effective level of grant to support the SHIP programme. An indicative estimate of around £2.8m would be required to support in full the Scottish Government investment outlined in the 2021/22 RPA above.

4.8 Consultation and Collaboration

The preparation of the SHIP is intended to be viewed as a corporate activity with close working relationships fostered across housing, planning, economic development and other internal services. It is also crucial that the SHIP process is based on collaboration between the Council, RSLs, communities, developers, the Scottish Government and other stakeholders such as the Health and Social Care Partnership; and that the SHIP document should provide a detailed narrative about how consultation and collaboration has been undertaken with all stakeholders. In Argyll and Bute, while the Council remains the strategic authority with overall responsibility for the plan, local RSLs and developers are engaged formally and informally throughout the process, and do lead on delivering most of the individual projects. Regular review meetings are held with SHIP officers from the Council, RSLs, and the Scottish Government, and all proposals and decisions are considered by the overarching, multi-agency Strategic Housing Forum. Updates are also being tabled at local area community planning groups; and at the level of specific projects, sites and settlements, a range of community representatives and individual residents are routinely engaged and consulted. In recent years, a number of local community councils and development trusts have pro-actively engaged in the SHIP process, undertaking localised Housing Need and Demand Assessments (HNDAs), with Council support, to feed into the process and contributing to discussions on the project proposals. Additional engagement has been promoted across the local business sector and a network of employers and other interested parties has been established for future consultation.

4.9 A primary focus for the new SHIP has been engagement with the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) to ensure adequate specialist provision is included in the new build programme. The HSCP's 3 year strategic plan incorporates a Housing Contribution Statement (HCS) outlining the essential role housing plays in supporting and maintaining independence, health and well-being of residents. Following the production of the joint Health, Care and Housing Needs Assessment in 2018, and the recommendations which were appraised by a wide range of cross-sectoral stakeholders at a dedicated workshop session and subsequently approved by the Strategic Housing Forum that year, the revised HCS sets out a joint vision for housing, health and social care in Argyll and Bute:

**“People in Argyll and Bute with health and social care needs
have access to housing options that
maximise their health, wellbeing and independence”**

The post of dedicated Housing Occupational Therapist which was established in October 2018 to co-ordinate and promote these needs through the SHIP group, was made permanent in 2021.

4.10 Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF)

The Scottish Government introduced a Housing Infrastructure Fund in 2016 to support housing development through dedicated loans and grants. The HIF will prioritise sites which are of strategic importance and cannot proceed or have stalled due to exceptional infrastructure works. The council secured a £2.1 million HIF grant to address the costs of upgrade works at Kirk Road/Lorn Road. This work is now complete and has enabled delivery of the ongoing 300 unit affordable housing development at Dunbeg, which remains a high strategic priority for the council and its partners. The SHIP annual update contains proposals for 3 further HIF projects in Argyll.

4.11 Other Affordable Housing Provided Without AHSP Assistance

SHIPs should contain details of all proposed affordable housing projects within the local authority area including those which will be provided without AHSP support. This could include off the shelf purchases, buybacks of ex-council/RSL stock, projects where councils have exclusively used their own resources, pension funds or other sources of funding, including Scottish Government non-AHSP funds to develop housing. The Council will continue to explore these and all other appropriate options to increase the supply of affordable housing. SHF has contributed to 2 Rural and Islands Housing Fund projects in Argyll during 2021 – the refurbishment of 6 properties for affordable rent on Ulva through the North West Mull Community Woodland Company (NWMWC) and the purchase of a property for affordable rent in Pennyghael, Mull by the Mull and Iona Community Trust (MICT).

The potential impact of the proposed Rural Growth Deal (RGD) for Argyll and Bute will be significant, and the SHIP and the housing sector in general can contribute to this strategic agenda. Housing opportunities being pursued via the RGD include addressing infrastructure issues at potential housing sites, Technology Enabled Housing (TEC); delivering in housing which will meet the needs of key and essential workers.

4.12 Current Progress: Outputs 2020/2021

Table 1 details the affordable housing delivered by the SHIP in 2020/21.

TABLE 1: SHIP New Build Homes by HMA & Project, 2020/21

| Housing Market Area | Projects | Completions | % of Total |
|---------------------|---|-------------|-------------|
| Cowal | Dunoon (refurb) | 1 | 2% |
| | Tighnabruaich | 20 | 42% |
| Lorn | Glenshellach, Oban Phases 11-13 (final units) | 12 | 25% |
| | Barcaldine | 10 | 21% |
| Mid Argyll | Cairnbaan | 5 | 10% |
| TOTALS | | 48 | 100% |

4 of the 48 completions (8%) in Table 1 were Low Cost Home Ownership properties with the remaining 44 being for affordable rent.

4.13 The Revised SHIP Programme

The current year, 2021/22, is covered by a Strategic Local Programme Agreement while the new SHIP is intended to commence from 2022/23. The following tables summarise all proposals at the time of writing, including those projects which were completed in the first quarters of this year and for which funding has already been drawn down. It should be noted that the status of many future projects, particularly in the later years, remains provisional and purely indicative at this stage; some may not proceed within the timescale. However there is also scope for additional proposals to be brought forward or included in earlier years.

TABLE 2: SHIP Projects – Completions/Anticipated Completions in 2021/22

| Project address | Developer | Units | Completions/Anticipated Completion Date |
|---|------------|------------|---|
| Garelochhead (Passivhaus model) | ACHA | 10 | June 2021 |
| Milknowe, Kintyre | ACHA | 1 | July 2021 |
| Cairndow | FYNE Homes | 6 | May 2021 |
| Kirk Road, Dunbeg | WHHA | 4 | May 2021 |
| Dunbeg Phase 3 | LINK | 300 | March 2022 |
| Imereval, Islay, Phase 3 | WHHA | 8 | Oct. 2021 |
| Tarbert Phase 2 | ACHA | 4 | March 2022 |
| Jura | WHHA | 10 | Jan. 2022 |
| Argyll & Bute 2021/22 Total Completions (est.) | | 343 | March 2022 |

TABLE 3: SHIP Core Programme - Potential Completions by March 2027

| Project address | Developer | Units | Anticipated Completion¹ |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|--------------|---|
| Keills, Islay | ACHA | 4 | Feb. 2022 |
| North Connel Phase 2 | ACHA | 2 | 2022 |
| Rowan Cottage, Port Appin | WHHA | 6 | 2022 |
| Creamery, Port Charlotte | WHHA | 8 | 2022 |
| Inveraray, Phase 2 | ACHA | 10 | 2022 |
| Eton Avenue, Dunoon | ACHA | 4 | 2022 |
| Jeanie Deans site, Helensburgh | Dunbritton | 12 | June 2022 |
| Sawmill field, Helensburgh | Wheatley Group | 36 | Sept. 2022 |
| Tobermory (Phase 3) | WHHA | 12 | Sept. 2022 |
| Colonsay | WHHA | 5 | Oct. 2022 |
| Rosneath | LINK | 49 | Oct. 2022 |
| Bowmore (Phase 4) | ACHA | 18 | Oct. 2022 |
| Imereval, Islay, Phase 4 | WHHA | 20 | Jan. 2023 |
| 18 th Tee, Helensburgh | Dunbritton | 16 | Feb. 2023 |
| Lonan Drive, Oban | LINK | 46 | March 2023 |
| Hospital Field, Oban | LINK | 50 | May 2023 |
| Inveraray | Fyne Homes | 12 | Aug. 2023 |
| Salen, Mull | WHHA | 8 | Aug. 2023 |
| Dalintober, Campbeltown | ACHA | 25 | Nov. 2023 |
| Rothsay Academy | Fyne Homes | 20 | Jan. 2024 |
| Golf Club Site, Helensburgh | Dunbritton | 52 | March 2024 |
| Tighcargaman, Port Ellen | ACHA | 20 | March 2024 |
| Lochgilphead Phase 6 | Fyne Homes | 2 | Dec. 2024 |
| Dunbeg Phases 4, 5 & 6 | LINK | 150 | Feb. 2025 |
| Cairndow Phase 4 | Fyne Homes | 4 | Feb. 2025 |
| Lochgilphead Phase 7 | Fyne Homes | 4 | March 2025 |
| Glencruitten, Oban | LINK | 100 | 2026 |
| Cardross | DHA | 35 | 2027 |
| Tighnabruiaich Phase 2 | FYNE Homes | 10 | 2027 |
| Port Appin Phase 2&3 | WHHA | 24 | 2027 |
| Argyll and ButeTotal | | 776 | 2022-2027 |

¹ NB. Timescales are indicative and subject to change; and will be monitored on a regular basis. Some projects could also revise their final number of units.

4.14 Alternative sites are also being considered either to replace or enhance some of the sites listed in above tables. The Council also continues to provide support for communities considering the use of the Government's Rural and Island Housing Funds and other resources to deliver affordable housing out with the core AHSP development programme.

4.15 **Impact Assessments**

In preparing the SHIP, as in all aspects of housing policy and planning, the Council has taken account of the housing needs of all the communities we serve, and continues to address equalities issues and adhere to principles of diversity and inclusion. In addition to the robust baseline evidence of specialist accommodation and support needs across the range of equalities client groups contained in the HNDA, the Council is proactively pursuing engagement with the Health and Social Care Partnership to inform the SHIP programme. An overarching equality impact assessment will be completed for the LHS and this will inform our assessment of the impact of the SHIP, and how the strategic aims are embodied in the housing priorities of the programme. Housing Services will also consider requirements for Health Inequalities Impact Assessments, Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessments or other potential policy implications. However, as the responsible authority for the purposes of the relevant 2005 Act, the Council has determined that a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is not required for the LHS or SHIP.

5.0 **CONCLUSION**

5.1 The Scottish Government will review the SHIP in line with the process agreed jointly with COSLA. Their appraisal will therefore take account of the following: the extent to which the SHIP delivers LHS Outcomes; the extent to which it is feasible to deliver; the local authority's contribution to the delivery of the programme, both in terms of its facilitation role and in terms of maximisation of resources; evidence that the Council is supporting the efficient delivery of the SHIP; evidence of stakeholders' involvement in developing the SHIP and in the implementation of proposals; and the extent to which it takes account of equality issues. In March 2021, the Scottish Government provided positive feedback on the previous SHIP, submitted last year, and their comments have also continued to inform this latest version of the SHIP moving forward.

6.0 **IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 **Policy:** Proposals are consistent with current Council policy, including the revised policy in respect of

the use of Strategic Housing Fund monies. The SHIP supports the Local Housing Strategy vision and outcomes which are directly aligned with the overarching objectives of the Outcome Improvement Plan, in particular Outcome 2 – we have infrastructure that supports sustainable growth.

- 6.2 **Financial:** The proposals are based on the Resource Planning Assumptions provided by the Scottish Government; the Strategic Housing Fund and RSL private finance. There will be an ongoing requirement to retain and target SHF resources to support the proposed programme.
- 6.3 **Legal:** The submission of the SHIP will meet our statutory duties, and following its approval, Strategic Local Programme Agreements will be concluded between the Council and Scottish Government.
- 6.4 **HR:** None
- 6.5 **Equalities(Fairer Scotland Duty):** The proposals are consistent with aims and objectives set out in the local housing strategy, which is subject to an EQIA.
- 6.5.1 **Equalities – protected characteristics** There are targets set within the SHIP to deliver housing which meet the needs of specialist groups
- 6.5.2 **Socio-economic Duty** The delivery of affordable housing across Argyll and Bute facilitates socio-economic opportunities for all. The SHIP links with the Child Poverty Strategy.
- 6.5.3 **Islands** The Housing Needs and Demand Assessment process takes full account of housing need on the islands. New build developments on the islands are included in each of the SHIP tables.
- 6.6 **Risk:** Risk assessment is an integral part of each development and will be considered as the programme moves forward. The SHIP is required to show how risk will be managed. Failure to deliver a robust SHIP could result in loss of substantial government investment for the local authority area. Alternatively, however, failure to forward plan judiciously and to programme development in line with identified needs could result in over supply; generating imbalances in the local housing market, and creating risks for RSLs

and the management of their existing stock, with consequent adverse effects on local neighbourhoods and communities.

- 6.7 **Customer Service:** The proposals will deliver increased access to a range of suitable, affordable housing options.

Kirsty Flanagan
Executive Director with Responsibility for Development and Economic Growth

Cllr Robin Currie
Leader of the Council
Policy Lead for Economy and Rural Growth

September 2021

For further information contact:

Fergus Murray
Head of Development and Economic Growth

E-mail: fergus.murray@argyll-bute.gov.uk
Tel: 01546 604 293

Douglas Whyte
Team Lead – Housing Strategy

E-mail: douglas.whyte@argyll-bute.gov.uk
Tel: 01546 604 785

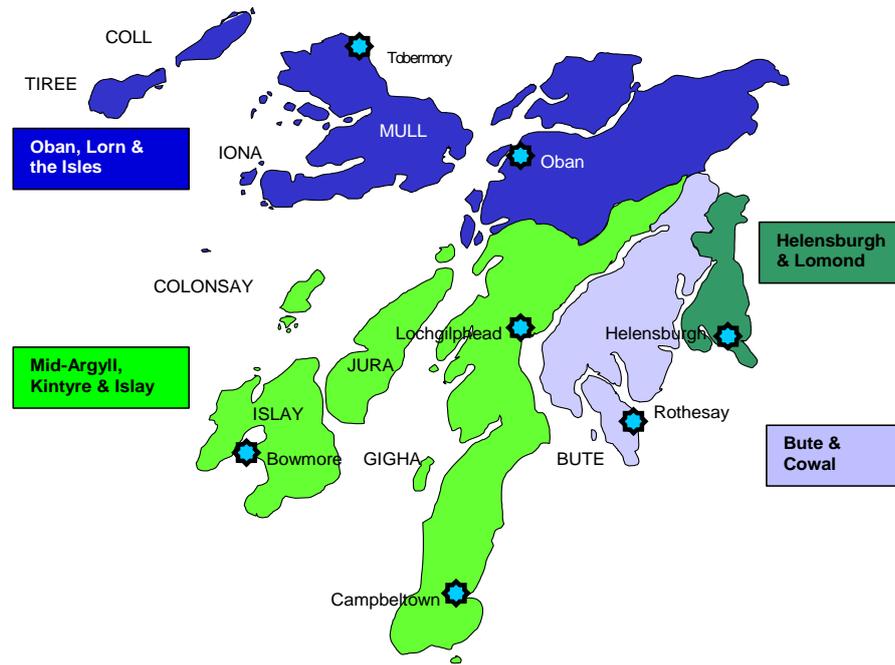
Appendix 1 – SHIP document



ARGYLL and BUTE STRATEGIC HOUSING INVESTMENT PLAN 2022/23 - 2026/27



“Everyone in Argyll & Bute has access to a suitable, high quality home which is affordable and located within a vibrant, sustainable and connected community.”



The focus of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) is affordable housing provision via new build, replacement, rehabilitation or re-modelling.

“**Affordable housing**” in this context refers to accommodation made available at a cost below full market value to meet an identified need and includes:

- Social rented housing;
- Subsidised low cost housing for sale (discounted, shared ownership or shared equity);
- Low cost housing without subsidy (entry level housing for sale); and
- Mid-market rental housing provided by social landlords.”

*Guidance on the Preparation of Strategic Housing Investment Plans,
Scottish Government, July 2016*

AFFORDABILITY – as a basic rule of thumb, an affordable house price is reckoned to be no more than 3.5 times the annual income of the household; and in terms of renting a property, the affordable benchmark is often considered to be around 25% of the household’s income.

1) INTRODUCTION

Argyll and Bute Council remains committed to working closely with the Scottish Government, local housing associations, and other key partners to increase the effective supply of affordable homes across the local authority area so that everyone can access a good quality home that is affordable and that meets their needs.

The Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) is a key local authority document which identifies priority housing projects to support the delivery of both local and national strategic housing targets; as well as helping to increase the supply of housing across other tenures as appropriate.

The Local Housing Strategy (LHS) sets out the strategic policy approach of the council and its partners to delivering high quality housing and related services across all tenures, to meet identified need in the area. The SHIP is directly informed by the strategy and its associated policies.

This plan is an operational document and the core purpose is to set out the strategic investment priorities for affordable housing and other tenures over a 5 year period, to achieve the priorities and outcomes set out in the LHS. It reinforces the Council's role as the strategic housing authority; and informs Scottish Government housing investment decisions. It also underpins the preparation of Strategic Local Programme Agreements (SLPAs).

Specifically, the SHIP is the key document for identifying:

- Proposed strategic housing projects which require funding from the Scottish Government's Affordable Housing Supply Programme;
- Proposed affordable housing projects which can be provided without Scottish Government funding support; and
- Projects across all tenures requiring grant and loan funding from the Scottish Government's Housing Infrastructure Fund.

This SHIP builds on the previous SHIP published in 2020, and has been developed in consultation with key stakeholders; and following agreement of the strategic local programme in June 2021 with the Scottish Government and individual, partner RSLs. The outline draft plan was also approved by the SHIP Officers' Group and the Strategic Housing Forum in 2021.

This SHIP covers the 5-year period from 2022/23 to 2026/27.

Content of the SHIP

The SHIP comprises two key elements:

- a) This narrative document setting out the context to the plan including:
 - The strategic framework and how the SHIP contributes to LHS Priorities and Outcomes;
 - A summary of the Project Prioritization Framework;
 - Deliverability of projects and Mitigating Development Constraints;
 - Resourcing the programme, including the local authority's contribution, the use of council tax on second and empty homes, Scottish Government investment and Developer Contributions;
 - Progress towards targets by completions;
 - Specialist Provision, in particular wheelchair accessible housing;
 - Empty homes services and actions to bring homes back into use;
 - Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement
 - Impact Assessments: including Equalities; Fuel Poverty and Energy Efficiency; Health Inequalities; Child Poverty; Homelessness; Gypsy/Travelers; and Rural & Island impacts
 - A summary of the Current and Projected Programmes

- b) An electronic annex listing affordable housing projects across all tenures that have been identified as priorities for funding over the five year period. This will:
 - Include rolling forward existing projects from the previous SHIP (October 2020) where appropriate;
 - Set out the funding and delivery mechanism; and
 - Demonstrate that the projects and resources will be realistically delivered over the plan period, highlighting any potential risks.

This second element of the SHIP is located on the Scottish Government's online HARP system (Housing and Regeneration Programme), however a summary list of projects is included in this narrative document for ease of reference.

2) THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

▪ Argyll & Bute Outcome Improvement Plan (ABOIP)



The Argyll and Bute Outcome Improvement Plan 2013-2023 (previously the Single Outcome Agreement / Community Plan) sets out the Community Planning Partnership's (CPP) vision for achieving long term outcomes for communities in Argyll and Bute. As the overarching strategic document for local partners, including the council, it provides the high level context for a wide range of strategies, plans and policies, including both the Local Housing Strategy and the SHIP.

The overall objective of the plan for the 10 years to 2023 is –

Argyll and Bute's economic success is built on a growing population.

This objective is underpinned by 6 long term outcomes:-

In Argyll and Bute:

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

While the housing sector has a role to play in achieving all of these outcomes, the provision of affordable new build housing, particularly the delivery of the SHIP, is primarily focused on Outcome 2, in relation to infrastructure that supports sustainable growth.

▪ **Priorities of Argyll and Bute Council 2017 - 2022**

The current council administration continues until 2022, and is focused on creating and making the most of opportunities while continuing to deliver quality services. Like the communities we represent we are ambitious and we will always be accessible to our constituents and accountable to the people of Argyll and Bute. We are committed to making Argyll and Bute a great place to live, work and do business and we will work hard to deliver better core services and improved support for communities. Local residents know that all councils are facing difficult decisions. Where we can't always provide, we'll enable, support and work in partnership to achieve delivery.

OUR VISION FOR ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

A Council that grasps opportunities to transform how it delivers services, working in partnership with communities and other public and private sector organizations, with a “can do, will do” attitude, and a strong commitment to community power and to the delivery of first class local services:

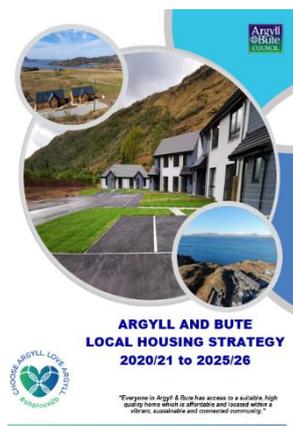
- An education service which enables all young people to achieve their potential;
- Support for the local economy in partnership with local businesses
- Homes for all, tackling poverty and building opportunity
- Greener and cleaner communities

A determination to ensure that our diverse geographic location with remote, rural and island communities is fully taken into account and supported in the distribution of any new funding

With specific regard to Housing, the priority of “**Homes for all, tackling fuel poverty and building opportunity**” is directly related to, and supported by, the SHIP. Relevant actions includes:-

- Work with partners and the Scottish Government to deliver new affordable homes across the Council area, and consider using the resources of pension funds or developer contributions whenever possible to increase numbers;
- Use the council's negotiating and initiating clout to secure lower priced energy for local people to address the issue of fuel poverty that has a significant impact locally;
- Work with partners to provide advice, information and support at an early stage for people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless

▪ **Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2021/22-2025/26**



The Council continues to ensure that the investment programme and priorities set out in the SHIP are consistent with the vision, aims and objectives of the LHS; and that these build on the latest assessment of housing need and demand (HNDA). Existing strategic priorities and outcomes continue to be ratified and supported by partners and stakeholders via the Argyll and Bute Strategic Housing Forum. The last LHS was completed in 2021, and a new strategy covering the five year planning period to 2025/26 is in the final phase of consultation. It sets out an updated core vision:

“Everyone in Argyll & Bute has access to a suitable, high quality home which is affordable and located within a vibrant, sustainable and connected community.”

Underpinning this vision are four high level outcomes:

- 1) Housing Supply and Place Making**
- 2) House Condition, Energy Efficiency and Poverty**
- 3) Specialist Provision and Independent Living**
- 4) Housing Options, Information and Support**

The SHIP continues to play a key role in promoting the overall LHS vision and in particular delivering on LHS Outcome One in respect of the affordable Housing Supply Targets (HSTs) for Argyll and Bute. A fully revised HNDA was submitted to the Scottish Government for appraisal in 2021 and the new LHS is due to be fully implemented later in 2021. The emerging Housing Supply Targets will be significantly higher than the baseline HNDA estimate, to address local and national strategic aspirations for repopulation, economic recovery, and overall growth throughout the authority area.

In summary, the SHIP will aim to deliver sufficient suitable and affordable new homes to attract and retain young people and families, to support a sustainable and thriving business sector, and to meet the needs of the elderly/ageing population, and those with particular needs.

- Potentially, up to 10% of the five-year provision could be for alternative tenures such as shared equity; and
- 10% should comprise some form of “specialist provision” including 5% which should be fully wheelchair habitable.

3) PRIORITISING THE PROGRAMME

The SHIP sets out a clear and transparent framework for the prioritisation of projects to be delivered over the next five years. The Council aims to maintain an appropriate balance of housing provision across Argyll & Bute that reflects the affordable housing requirement identified in the latest HNDA, (and any subsequent local Housing Market Area or Community needs assessments) and also contributes towards the outcomes detailed in the LHS, the Argyll and Bute Local Outcome Improvement Plan, and the Argyll & Bute Economic Strategy. A comprehensive revision of the HNDA was completed in 2020/21, and this has informed the development of an updated LHS, and will inform future iterations of the SHIP.

Within each HMA, investment is mainly targeted at communities exhibiting the greatest affordable housing pressures. These priorities recognize the importance of investing in smaller, fragile rural communities as well as larger urban areas. The communities have been identified by consideration of:

- the relative and absolute pressure on the existing affordable housing;
- the ability to meet need in the wider housing market area;
- recent investment patterns;
- deliverability (site ownership, infrastructure or planning constraints, etc);
- the potential contribution to population and economic growth.

Given that localised “hotspots” or pressured areas may still be masked within the wider geographic HMAs, a further refinement of the evaluation process is also required at the localised settlement (or letting area) level, to reflect the complex rural and island geography of Argyll and Bute. Therefore, the Council continues to employ the following key indicators:-

| Criteria | Indicator/Evidence |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Identified need | HNDA & local updates – total shortfall in affordable housing. |
| Pressure ratios | CHR - waiting list applicants per available let on annual basis. |
| Homeless Pressure | HL1 statistics - applicants & time to close cases; temporary accommodation; % of RSL lets to homeless cases. |
| Social stock levels | Proportion of existing RSL stock to total number of dwellings on Council Tax Register. |
| Wider Strategic Fit | Synergies with LDPs; economic development plans or regeneration initiatives; the local improvement plan; and the primary objective of reversing population decline. |
| Specialist Provision | HNDA/CHR/Health & Social Work caseload – total shortfall for special needs accommodation & evidence from waiting lists or bespoke research. |
| Risk/Deliverability | Satisfies key development criteria (site ownership; planning consent; resourced; infrastructure constraints; contractor capacity). Early liaison with Planning remains critical. |
| Affordability (of proposed rent) | Compared to Scottish Govt. benchmarks and other RSL rents; as % of LHA; and as % of local household incomes. |

Prioritisation by Housing Need - In terms of distribution by Housing Market Area (HMA), the main need continues to be evidenced in Oban & Lorn, albeit future demand may be subject to review, dependent on the results of the revised HNDA and strategic aspirations as set out in the updated LHS. Dunbeg remains the immediate development priority for the Council, but additional or alternative sites around Oban are also under consideration.

Strategically, Helensburgh & Lomond is also a high priority in terms of need and potential growth opportunities. Critically, the impact of the increased MOD presence at the Faslane naval base, and the consequential impact from families and dependents, as well as enhanced supply-chain requirements servicing the base, will inevitably result in additional accommodation pressures within this catchment area. Mid Argyll could benefit from further developments albeit this continues to be closely monitored to avoid creating imbalances in the existing system; and Cowal, as the HMA currently most at risk of severe depopulation, could be regenerated with judicious development, operating in tandem with improvements in employment opportunities and transport infrastructure; and there may be emerging particular needs in this HMA for a few larger families requiring specialist provision.

Small-scale developments could also have a significant and positive impact on the Atlantic Islands, and throughout the rural mainland. While Bute and Kintyre appear to be relatively well balanced in terms of current supply and demand (with annual RSL lets sufficient to address waiting list demand, and ongoing evidence of long-term voids in these areas, despite recent strategic stock rationalisation programmes) nevertheless, emerging analysis suggests these local housing markets have also been experiencing significant shifts in demand and potential needs may be evolving and growing, particularly as a consequence of the Covid pandemic.

Prioritisation by Tenure - The LHS continues to require that a majority of the programme should be for social rent, however, alternative tenures such as shared equity, other low cost home ownership options or below-market rent, will be considered on a site-by-site basis in line with local market conditions and needs, and actively encouraged where appropriate, subject to a robust business case being made.

Prioritisation by Size – The SHIP will continue to promote the delivery of smaller properties (1 and 2 bedrooms) where practical, in line with the HNDA and the continuing evidence of the HOMEArgyll common housing register. In 2021, for example, 73% of the active waiting list applicants required 1 or 2 bedroom accommodation; while 12% required three beds and 15% required 4 or more bedded properties. The requirement for larger, family-sized accommodation has increased, and this will continue to be monitored and addressed as appropriate, to allow for a degree of flexibility within the local housing system, particularly where this would support the strategic priorities of attracting and retaining economically active households, and increasing the resident population.

Prioritisation by Particular Needs – Given the impact of the ageing population, and the particular needs of other sectors of the population including the physically disabled and those with learning disabilities or mental health issues, as outlined in the revised HNDA, the LHS specifies a target of 10% of new build should be purpose designed as specialist provision to suit households with medium to high level particular needs. This includes provision of wheelchair and extra care accommodation, and, particularly, medium dependency, amenity housing. As far as possible, all general needs new builds are designed to the minimum lifetime, Housing for Varying Needs Standards, to maximise the accessibility for residents whose circumstances and needs will change over time.

In addition, the extent and nature of the future ageing population, for instance, will necessitate strategic investment in the development and delivery of housing-based care, support and aids and adaptations. To this end, the Council has developed a more cohesive partnership with the Integrated Health & Social Care body to ensure that the SHIP process is fully aligned with the health and social care integration agenda and other relevant plans such as the “Keys to Life” strategy for persons with learning disabilities, the Integrated Children’s Services Plan, the refreshed national housing strategy for Older Persons published in August 2018, “Age, Home and Community: the next phase”; and the Fairer Scotland for Disabled People strategy published by the Scottish Government in 2016; among others. Further refinement of the wheelchair housing targets in line with the Scottish Minister’s directive are set out in Section 7 of this plan.

The finer detail of the programme will be arrived at through specification of suitable type and size of accommodation for individual developments, taking into account the needs of actual households on the waiting list and, where appropriate and as far as possible, in consultation with local community stakeholders.

Rural and Island Proofing¹ – the Council’s Housing Service will continue to apply a policy of rural-proofing housing plans and strategies to ensure the more remote and isolated areas, or those designated as “fragile”, are not disadvantaged or adversely affected by investment and development decisions. Critical to this aim, is joint working with local planners to support the development and sustainability of designated key rural settlements across Argyll and Bute as well as supporting the aims of the Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park. As well as the ratio of waiting list applicants to available RSL lets and other indicators outlined above, key factors influencing the prioritization of rural developments include: the ratio of social housing to second homes; proportionate historic losses through Right to

¹ Rurality is defined in the Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification, see: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/About/Methodology/UrbanRuralClassification>. In addition, one definition of fragility is outlined in the report: Review of Fragile Areas and Employment Action Areas in the Highlands and Islands, HIE, November 2014.

Buy; the percentage of social housing to total dwelling stock; and the ratio of local earnings to average or lower quartile house prices and private rents. While existing, evidenced need remains the primary concern, consideration will also be given to rural areas of potential economic development and/or population growth in liaison with Economic Development colleagues and the local business sector. In this context, the potential impact of the proposed Rural Growth Deal (RGD) for Argyll and Bute will be significant, and the SHIP and the housing sector in general can contribute to this strategic agenda. Housing opportunities being pursued via the RGD include innovative construction methods, such as off-site, modular homes for example; with a particular focus on addressing the needs of resident and incoming workers.

The rural/urban housing differential is acknowledged nationally, in the structure of the Scottish Government's benchmark framework for grant funding, whereby Argyll and Bute receives a rural uplift to address the additional costs involved in remote rural and island development. The council previously commissioned dedicated studies of island housing markets, specifically for Mull and Islay², which provided evidence on the disproportionate uplift development costs for these areas and highlight specific issues and barriers to development in these contexts.

This SHIP has also been developed within the context of **the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018** which introduced measures to support and help the unique needs of Scotland's islands now and in the future. The Act also seeks to help create the right environment for sustainable growth and empowered communities. With around 23 inhabited islands in this local authority area (more than any other Scottish authority), Argyll and Bute is committed to supporting and sustaining population and economic growth in these communities and will always ensure to engage directly with the islands when new policies and strategies are being developed that may impact on them. The SHIP aims to support the priorities of the island communities, and our consultation reflects this commitment. In addition to the foresaid island studies, we ensure that our overarching HNDA process allows for a significant, representative sample of local households on individual islands to participate and register their housing needs and voice their general views on local housing. A formal Islands Impact Assessment is being developed for the new LHS and this will also encompass the SHIP, moving forward.

Recent engagement in Argyll and Bute and feedback from rural and island residents and stakeholders has reflected the findings of a survey carried out in support on the National Islands Plan in 2021. This provides strong evidence of dissatisfaction with housing provision and limited options on the islands. Only 20% of Argyll islanders believe there is sufficient affordable housing available locally, and only 22% agree that there is a variety of housing types, sizes and tenure to meet local people's needs. 92% of Argyll islanders believe that there is not enough housing to meet local demand. In

² "Islay Strategic Housing Overview", Community Housing Scotland (2019); "Isle of Mull Strategic Housing Review", Rural Housing Scotland (2019).

addition, high levels of fuel poverty are recorded on the islands, and very high rates of ineffective stock (mainly second/holiday homes).

Over the five years of the last LHS (2016-2021), a total of 77 new homes were delivered via the SHIP on the islands, amounting to 17% of the total completions. The islands received SHIP investment of over £14m to deliver these new homes, amounting to 19% of the total SHIP investment in completed projects in Argyll and Bute over that period. In addition, there are 18 new builds on site on Islay and Jura in 2020; with potential scope for further units to be delivered across Islay, Colonsay and Mull in the next couple of years; and further options currently being explored for Coll and Tiree, and Gigha. Demand on Bute is also being reviewed and may result in new development activity on the island for the first time in recent years,

As noted in a later section of the Plan, we are also engaging with, and providing support to, island and rural communities who are pursuing funding bids and feasibility studies via the Scottish Government's Rural & Island Housing Fund. These include additional projects on Mull (Ulva Ferry, Pennyghael and Dervaig for example), and other islands such as Colonsay and Gigha.

Ultimately, in terms of project prioritization, final preference will be influenced by project costings, therefore the proposed programme can only be indicative at this stage.

The Impact of Covid-19 on the HNDA and future SHIP programme

Given the unprecedented and unforeseen impact of the pandemic in 2020/21, it is anticipated that future need and demand for housing and related services will be affected in various and potentially significant ways. While that much is clear, the actual longer term impacts remain uncertain and it will be important to plan for a range of possible scenarios. This will affect not only the estimated requirement for affordable new build accommodation, but also the delivery processes, the funding structures and planning framework, and the economic and demographic environment in which policy and investment decisions will need to be made.

As a consequence, priorities are likely to change and evolve over time, and the prioritization framework underpinning the SHIP will also need to respond to these changes. In developing the new HNDA in 2021, and preparing revised Housing Supply Targets for the LHS in 2021-2026, the Council continues to take a pragmatic and realistic approach whilst striving to deliver its ambitious strategic aspirations. The HNDA will encompass a range of options from the worst case scenario of severe demographic and economic decline in the short term; through less severe and stabilizing scenarios; to more optimistic growth scenarios; all of which can be justified and supported by the available evidence and forecast modelling.

The need to sustain an increased new-build programme could arise under various scenarios: if economic decline and financial constraints lead to widespread unemployment and hardship with resultant loss of homes or tenancies, then there would be a requirement for the safety net of affordable social rented properties to increase; but on the other hand, if there is a behavioral shift in terms of more home-working, and in-migration to remoter, rural and island havens, then that would also entail a requirement for increased affordable housing supply. Current anecdotal evidence suggests that a property boom is occurring across the authority, even in areas such as Bute which have tended in recent years to be depressed markets with low demand and excessive turnover rates. This may just be an anomalous blip, following lockdown and the freezing of purchase and rental markets; however it will be important to monitor trends closely and review needs assessments and supply targets within the SHIP on a regular basis.

4) DELIVERING THE PROGRAMME: MITIGATING RISKS AND RESOLVING DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS

It is important to identify, assess and respond to any risks or potential constraints that might impact on the overall programme or individual projects; and that effective measures are taken to mitigate these as far and as early as possible. The SHIP aims to provide assurance that, if funding is secured, any other constraints will be resolved by the time of estimated site start of the relevant project. The main risks or constraints that tend to apply to the SHIP programme include:

- Development and Infrastructure constraints
- Financial Assumptions
- Planning issues
- Legal procedural constraints; and
- Effective land supply

In addition, an ongoing, critical factor in the context of this authority is the capacity of the local construction sector and the constrained market for competitive tendering.

The impact of the coronavirus will continue to exacerbate many of these risks and potentially introduce a set of new challenges: health and safety measures and distancing protocols will reduce contractor capacity onsite thus delaying developments; while supply chains, and travel, transport and accommodation constraints are likely to be affected and result in increased costs as well as further delays. The removal of most legal restrictions in August 2021 is welcome but may not lead to an improved environment for development immediately; and the implications of Covid are likely to remain a factor in policy planning and service delivery for some time to come.

The council and its partners are working continuously to minimize these risks and mitigate constraints as far as possible, for example:-

Development Constraints (such as infrastructure issues: roads, utilities, ground condition problems/ abnormal costs) - The core SHIP programme has always aimed to focus on sites that are not subject to significant development constraints such as contaminated brownfield sites, designated greenbelt areas, or sites with restricted infrastructure capacity in terms of access roads or water supply. However, in certain instances within some highly pressured areas where a substantial shortfall in affordable housing is evidenced, or in areas of wider strategic importance, it may be necessary to consider such sites in the absence of more practicable or easily-progressed sites. Apart from the site constraint itself there may be costs associated with carrying out remedial works, preliminary feasibility studies, or mitigating the potential impact on areas of archaeological significance or on historic buildings and this places a further constraint on site development. Mitigation may be aided by ensuring site investigation is carried out at early stages; and seeking to ensure land values reflect any remediation costs. In terms of infrastructure constraints, such as Scottish Water connections/ capacity/ access, early discussions with the Utilities companies will be initiated to address potential issues and achieve possible synergies in investment programmes. Where possible, abnormal costs should be deducted from the land purchase price and unforeseen costs may be met from alternative sources such as the council's Strategic Housing Fund, developer contributions, or other sources such as Rural Growth Deal funding following a successful bid to government.

The Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) in particular has already proven to be a significant factor in supporting housing development in this authority through grants for sites which are of strategic importance and cannot proceed or have stalled due to exceptional infrastructure works (out with the curtilage of the development); and can help facilitate the unlocking of these sites for the delivery of housing. The council successfully prioritised the further development of Dunbeg, for instance, as a key site for delivery of housing utilising this fund, and was awarded £2.1m in total, in line with the eligibility criteria and guidance set out by the Scottish Government. (See Section 6 for further details regarding the potential HIF investment in Argyll and Bute.)

Effective Land Supply - The historic RSL land bank and available council owned sites have now been depleted and it may be that in the future land assembly will prove a significant challenge. A notable feature of a rural and island authority such as Argyll and Bute is the dominance of large estates in terms of land ownership in many areas exhibiting housing need, and this can present additional challenges in respect of accessing and assembling suitable sites for development. Nevertheless, through collaborative efforts with planning colleagues, the council and National Park are confident that a "generous" supply of land for affordable housing continues to be sustained. The council continues to audit housing allocations in the current Local Development Plan to ensure a more robust and rigorous approach to effective site provision. Partners continue to carefully consider the timing and possible phasing of developments to make

realistic assumptions on when affordable housing will proceed. We aim to ensure that a sufficient supply of sites remains identified in the system to accommodate unforeseen slippage in the timing of projects coming forward; and to maximise the benefits of increased or additional funding. The council's combined Planning, Housing and Regulatory Services' tenth annual Planning Performance Framework, 2020/21 recorded the following National Headline Indicators (NHIs):-

| Effective Housing Land Supply | 2020/21 | 2019/20 |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| Established housing land supply | 5,310 units | 5,319 |
| 5-year effective housing land supply | 2,889 units | 3,738 |
| 5-year effective land supply total capacity | 4,998 units | 5,051 |
| 5-year housing supply target | 1,500 units | 3,725 |
| 5-year effective housing land supply | 9.63 years | 5.0 |
| Housing approvals | 509 units | 500 |
| Housing completions over the last 5 years | 1,084 units | 1,052 |

The updated housing land audit for 2021 was awaiting approval at time of writing, nevertheless the council does not anticipate issues in respect of the effective land supply over the period of this SHIP. Additional land supply, in parts of Cowal and Lomond, is set out in the Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park Plan which operates as the strategic planning authority for these areas within Argyll and Bute. Occasionally, proposed projects are subject to complex or protracted negotiations with private owners and their agents which can impact on the timing and ultimately on their deliverability. Therefore effective liaison with the Scottish Government to prioritise projects and progress site acquisitions to enable projects to be pulled forward if required, is essential. In addition, the impact of both the Council and National Park Affordable Housing Policies continues to prove valuable; and there is an obvious need to sustain practical negotiations with landowners, Estates, private developers and others. Some RSL partners have however raised concerns that in the current climate the application of the Council's Affordable Housing Policy will make site development less attractive and sites are only likely to be developed where there is a pressure to secure a return in the short term. In general, in the medium to long term, the private ownership of many sites in Argyll and Bute means that the Affordable Housing Policy will continue to have a definite role in securing a sufficient supply of affordable housing through developer contributions. Strategic engagement with local communities and agencies such as Highlands & Islands Enterprise to assess potential use of Strategic Land Fund, where appropriate, may provide benefits; and additional mechanisms may also be available via recent initiatives such as the Rural or Island Housing Fund and new Community Empowerment legislation.

The council is also exploring the current legislation around Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) and will consider the potential benefits of pursuing these on a case by case basis, where circumstances are proving unreasonably intransigent and there are compelling benefits to the public interest.

Planning issues - Early discussions will continue to be prioritised with planning services (both Council & National Park) regarding road layouts/ car parking requirements, school catchment areas, and other possible issues. The provision of adequate footpaths adjacent to new developments, for instance, have been particular prominent issues in relation to a number of recent SHIP projects. All of the development sites included in the SHIP programme should be effective given that they will, in most cases, require to be already allocated for housing development in the relevant local development plans. Many of the sites identified in the SHIP are of relatively small capacity. The costs associated with progressing smaller sites in the more remote rural areas are likely to be higher if developed as standalone projects. However it is envisaged that, where SHIP sites form part of a larger allocation identified in the LDP, through partnership working with private developers on adjacent sites the risk of such sites not being developed on cost grounds will be reduced.

More rigorous build quality standards, and “greener” standard requirements, can lead to conflicting pressures in terms of resources required per unit. RSLs and their partners continue to highlight concerns in balancing cost and quality considerations, especially given the ongoing cost of securing private finance in recent years.

Local RSLs are also currently committed to exploring effective measures for maximising procurement efficiencies through volume, but also continuity of work and standardisation of specifications and products as far as possible. Historically, the constrained capacity of the local construction sector has been seen as a particular issue and this remains a critical factor for this authority, (particularly beyond the Helensburgh area which benefits from wider competition from out with the local authority boundaries) however there has been an increase in the number of potential contractors operating in the area in recent years and currently it could be argued that the situation in Argyll and Bute is healthier than it has ever been. This is reflected for instance in the emergence of a new RSL/developer within Argyll and Bute, in the Helensburgh area, the Wheatley Group, with a significant project now included in this SHIP.

RSLs in Argyll and Bute have recently made significant progress in delivering alternative tenures such as shared equity units. The future provision for tenures other than social rent will require detailed business plans and must reflect robust and credible assessment of local needs before approval. The Council intends to evaluate the impact of these projects to inform the future programme. The council is keen to encourage and support alternative, intermediate tenures when appropriate to enhance the mix within the local housing system and to increase the range of potential housing options.

5) PARTNERSHIP WORKING AND CONSULTATION

As outlined in previous SHIPs, the preparation of this plan, as well as the planning and delivery of individual projects, remains a continuous, iterative corporate activity. Since 2019, close working relationships have been further enhanced and streamlined as the council's service restructuring brought Housing and Planning Services together with Economic Development and Regeneration in a single department of Development and Infrastructure, under one Head of Service. In addition, the internal joint working will include ad hoc involvement of other departments such as Roads, Property Development/ Estates when appropriate. The SHIP process particularly reflects a strong collaborative approach with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs, or housing associations), the Scottish Government, communities, developers and other stakeholders.

Key partners include:

- The Scottish Government: More Homes Scotland Division
- Argyll & Bute Council
- Argyll & Bute Health & Social Care Partnership
- Argyll Community Housing Association
- Fyne Homes Housing Association
- Dunbritton Housing Association
- West Highland Housing Association
- Link Group Ltd
- Wheatley Group
- Bield Housing Association
- Trust Housing Association
- HMNB Clyde/ MOD
- Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park
- Rural Housing Scotland
- Communities Housing Scotland.
- Highlands & Islands Enterprise
- Veterans Housing Scotland
- Scottish Water
- Home Energy Scotland
- Allenergy

At the very local level, on a site by site basis, RSLs and Council officials continue to liaise closely with private developers, local land owners, local community groups and development trusts, and a range of other stakeholders to negotiate, facilitate, enable and deliver viable projects within the context of the LHS and the framework of the SHIP. Updates are also being tabled at local area community planning groups; and at the level of specific projects, sites and settlements, a range of community representatives and residents are routinely consulted.

The Argyll & Bute Strategic Housing Forum, comprising a wide range of key partners from the Community Planning Partnership, constitutes the overarching Housing Market Partnership with ultimate responsibility for overseeing the implementation and monitoring of the LHS and the SHIP; and is chaired by the Council Leader. The Strategic Housing Forum is also responsible for making appropriate recommendations to Council Members and for lobbying the Scottish Government in respect of housing issues in Argyll and Bute. The Terms of Reference for the Forum, as the formally constituted local housing market partnership within Argyll and Bute, were reviewed and agreed in September 2020, and are available on request to the council.

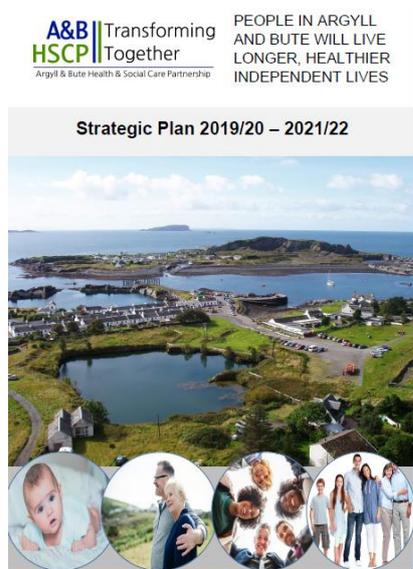
The SHIP Officers Development Group - In addition to regular programming meetings between the Council, the Scottish Government and individual RSLs, a dedicated SHIP Officers Group continues to bring practitioners from all these parties together on a quarterly basis to address and progress operational development matters which are then reported to the overarching Strategic Housing Forum. In 2018/19 a secondary SHIP Partners Group was convened involving other partners such as infrastructure services (Roads and Amenities) and agencies such as Scottish Water to consider specific project-based issues. This proved successful in addressing specific constraints and has now been incorporated, as appropriate, within the SHIP Officers Group and the Strategic Housing Forum.

Wider Stakeholders, Local Business, and Economic Development - Other stakeholders and strategic partners will be engaged on an ad hoc basis as appropriate. Increasingly, given the overarching strategic imperatives, economic development and regeneration partners are also emerging as key associates in the SHIP and LHS process. This has led, for instance, to an ad hoc working group (facilitated by Housing, Economic Development and HIE) co-ordinating dedicated events in August 2018 and September 2019, for local employers and representatives of the business sector to engage with housing providers, and explore innovative delivery mechanisms and opportunities such as the Rural Growth Deal. The events also provided networking opportunities for local community representatives as well as RSLs (which of course constitute local, community-based and focused organisations and charitable associations in their own right). In total, over 50 organisations, agencies, services and individuals attended the events, and the intention is to retain this network as one thematic interest group for future consultation and engagement when developing the next Local Housing Strategy.

Community Engagement - In addition to the above, the council has recently reviewed and updated its approach to localised housing need and demand assessment; building on a number of years' experience with community councils, development trusts, local study groups, green belt groups, tenants and residents' associations, and various other local bodies across mainland Argyll and throughout the islands. The result is a detailed resource for local communities and third party support agencies to carry out surveys, stakeholder engagement, and data analysis, with the support of council staff, in order to assemble the crucial, "high quality, fit for purpose" evidence base required to

secure public funding and help to deliver practical housing solutions³. The council has engaged with local representatives on Mull, and community councils in North Lorn, for instance, to implement the new toolkit; and this is now available both proactively and on demand.

Health and Social Care Partners



As a priority, the Council continues to foster closer engagement with the Health & Social Care Partnership (HSCP) at all levels (from senior management group to locality planning groups) and at the earliest possible stages in the process. The HSCP's current three-year Strategic Plan was launched in April 2019, incorporating a revised and updated Housing Contribution Statement (HCS) which outlines the essential role that housing plays in supporting and maintaining independence, health and well-being of all residents. The SHIP has a direct and significant contribution to make to these outcomes.

Following the production of the joint Health, Care and Housing Needs Assessment in 2018, and the recommendations which were appraised by a wide range of cross-sectoral stakeholders at a dedicated workshop session and subsequently approved by the Strategic Housing Forum that year, the revised HCS sets out a joint vision for housing, health and social care in Argyll and Bute:

“People in Argyll and Bute with health and social care needs have access to housing options that maximise their health, wellbeing and independence”

To achieve this, people need to be enabled, through their contacts with services and provision of information, to live at home, or in a homely setting, as independently as possible and to be well connected to their communities. The delivery of suitable specialist provision via the SHIP programme will be critical to this.

A dedicated Housing Occupational Therapist (OT) post was created to take this agenda forward and cement the close partnership working between the council, RSLs and the HSCP. This includes reviewing the circumstances and requirements of families with particular needs; developing a better understanding of the accommodation and support needs of wheelchair users;

³ The Argyll and Bute Community Housing Assessment Toolkit (CHAT) is available on demand from Council Housing Services. See contact details on the final page of this Plan.

and facilitating early interventions, particularly in relation to adaptations. One innovative outcome of this joint working was the delivery of a cross-sectoral training programme for partners, and this will also help to inform the SHIP process and promote greater engagement across the board.

The Housing OT and relevant HSCP officers will continue to participate in the SHIP Operational Group as well as the Strategic Housing Forum. In 2021, the council approved the recommendation that this post should become permanent, funded by Housing Services. Working closely with the Council's LHS Team, the Housing OT had a key role in research and consultation with wheelchair users across Argyll and Bute, to help identify specific new build targets for wheelchair accommodation, which have been incorporated into this plan and take immediate effect in respect of the SHIP programme. In 2021, Council Housing Services also appointed a dedicated Mental Health/Addictions Housing Practitioner with a focus on supporting the delivery of the Rapid Re-housing Transition Plan, and further enhancing the strategic and operational links between housing, health and social care.

HMNB Clyde / MOD engagement

As reported in previous SHIPs, the Strategic Delivery and Development Framework (SDDF) was established between the Council and HMNB Clyde to achieve maximum benefit for the Base and the wider community as a consequence of the proposals for increasing the naval presence at Faslane. This dedicated working group continues to explore the potential accommodation needs arising from the development of the naval base as the Royal Navy's UK Submarine Centre of Specialization; and the consequent economic impact this is likely to have in the local area. The SHIP is therefore required to take full account of the associated emerging accommodation needs in the Helensburgh and Lomond area. To this end a comprehensive housing market study of the area was completed in 2018 which involved further extensive consultation and stakeholder engagement; and a wider economic study is being carried out by the council in partnership with the MOD.

A key issue in relation to housing and potential requirements for the SHIP, is the implementation of the Future Accommodation Model (FAM) which is being piloted by the MOD. The 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) committed the Ministry of Defence to make a new accommodation offer, to help more service personnel live in private accommodation and meet their aspirations for home ownership. The way people live and work is changing and the FAM reflects this, giving more choice to more Service personnel and their families over where, how and with whom they live. This 3 year (approximately) pilot is a chance for the MOD to test the policy and the way it is delivered before a decision is made about whether to roll out the FAM across the UK. If this is confirmed, the majority of bases will gradually transition to the FAM over the next decade or two. The FAM pilot was launched in September 2019 for the Faslane site, and this will have a direct impact on the Helensburgh & Lomond housing market area, and beyond. Ensuring sufficient and suitable capacity within the

local housing system to address the anticipated increased demand will be a priority for the SHIP over the next 5 – 10 years.

In addition, the council has carried out a dedicated in-house study of the particular needs of veterans, and serving military personnel more widely i.e. beyond those based at or leaving Faslane; and the results have informed the new HNDA and LHS in 2021. This has involved engagement with local and national organizations such as Veterans Housing Scotland and Poppy Scotland among others. The final report will be available on the council website at: <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/housing/housing-strategies-consultations-and-research-0>

6) RESOURCING THE PROGRAMME & THE COUNCIL'S CONTRIBUTION

The three primary funding sources for the SHIP remain as follows:

- a) Scottish Government Grant (the Affordable Housing Supply Programme – AHSP)
- b) Council grant or long-term loan (the Argyll & Bute Strategic Housing Fund – SHF; which may be supplemented from Council central reserves)
- c) Registered Social Landlord (RSL) Private Finance Borrowing

The majority of developments will require a complex package of funding from at least all of these sources (additional investment from other sources may also be required – some of these are outlined below).

a) Scottish Government Resource Planning Assumptions (RPAs)

In July 2021 the Scottish Government confirmed local authorities' RPAs for the next 5 years up to 2025/26, as follows.

TABLE 3.7: RESOURCE PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS (RPA) 2021 - 2026 (£m)

| Argyll & Bute | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | 2024/25 | 2025/26 | Total |
|---------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Minimum RPA | £21.250 | £18.317 | £18.264 | £18.328 | £18.632 | £94.791 |

Source: Scottish Government Letter to Councils – AHSP RPA 2021-26, July 2021

As the current SHIP covers the period 2022/23 to 2026/27, we do not have an RPA figure for year 5 of that planning period, 2026/27, but might extrapolate a notional five year estimate roughly equivalent to the 5 year total above, in the region of £90-94m.

The actual AHSP spend in 2020/21 was lower than the original RPA for that year, due in part to the impact of covid on delivery of the programme, however previous year's spend significantly exceeded the RPA and consequently over the planning period expenditure tends to balance out, and the council will continue to encourage

RSLs/developers to maximise funding opportunities and utilise the available RPA as far as possible. This might for instance include increasing off-the-shelf / buy-back acquisitions, land banking in areas of identified need or designated future economic growth spots. In relation to this approach, the Council will develop a strategic plan to ensure that identified housing need and demand is met through this process. While it is likely that there may still be some slippage in achieved expenditure and project completions as an ongoing result of Covid-19 this year, it is also possible that there will be opportunities to maximise and accelerate spend on pipeline projects dependent on the local and national situation and the progress of the government's route map to recovery.

b) The Council's Contribution – The Strategic Housing Fund

Resourcing the SHIP programme also requires a significant contribution from the Council's Strategic Housing Fund (SHF). This Fund is primarily based on the revenue raised from reduced tax discounts on empty and second homes: where local authorities have used discretionary powers and reduced the empty and second homes tax discounts, the additional revenue **must** be used to support affordable housing delivery in their areas. In addition, since 2013 local authorities have had flexibility to remove the discount entirely and to apply a levy of up to 100% on long-term empty properties. These revenues are not ring-fenced although their use to bring long-term empty properties back into use, or to support affordable housing provision, is encouraged by the Scottish Government.

Since 2007, the SHF in Argyll and Bute has been used for the following eligible expenditure:

- Expenditure incurred in relation to assets formally held on the Housing Revenue Account;
- Expenditure relating to the acquisition of sites for the landbank;
- Expenditure related to the delivery of the Empty Homes Initiative;
- Payments to enhance infrastructure where this is restricting the development of affordable housing; and
- Payments to registered social landlords (RSLs) to partially fund proposed projects to deliver homes in accordance with the local housing strategy
- Following the council's annual policy review of the Strategic Housing Fund in 2018, potential grant payment of £12k per unit was also extended to local community bodies, which have been awarded Scottish Government support from the Rural or Island Housing funds, to deliver affordable homes.

Total income to the fund in 2020/21 amounted to £2.283m and total expenditure that year was £2.629m. It is anticipated that the SHF will continue to accrue annual revenue in the order of £2m over the SHIP planning period.

Argyll & Bute Council Strategic Housing Fund, balance as of March 2021

| Income 2020/21 | Expenditure 2020/21 | Balance March 2021 | Committed Spend | Available to support SHIP |
|----------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| £2.283m | £2.629m | £9.999m | £3.118m | £6.881m |

The balance of this Fund as of 31 March 2021 was £9.999m; of which £3.118m was already committed and £6.881m was available to fund the SHIP programme.

The SHIP sets out plans to fully utilise this balance over the planning period to support the affordable housing development programme, including empty homes activity and community-led projects out with the core SHIP. Since April 2016 the Council has provided grant funding of £12k per unit, to supplement Scottish Government grant; and an evaluation exercise carried out by independent consultants in 2016 confirmed that this remains the most appropriate and cost effective level of grant aid to support the SHIP programme.

The council reviewed the Strategic Housing Fund policy in 2018/19 and a further comprehensive audit was carried out in 2019/20 with a view to ensuring that this resource continues to complement Scottish Government priorities for Housing Beyond 2021. Final outcomes from the internal audit were reported in 2021, with a positive appraisal of the process and policies underpinning the SHF.

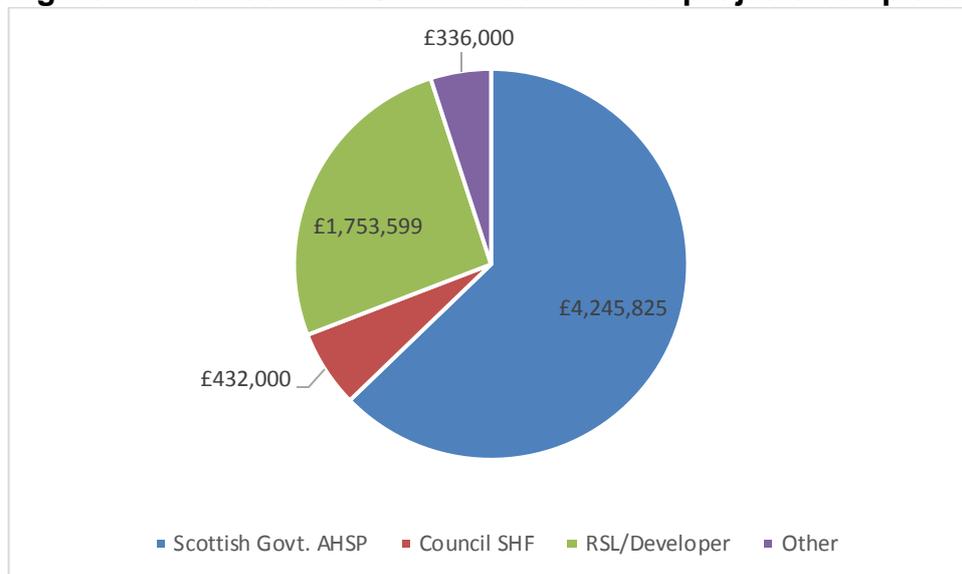
An indicative minimum estimate of circa £9.312m would be required to support the core projects outlined in this SHIP (£12k x 776 units), excluding the 2021/22 programme; and further funding will be required to deliver anticipated projects in Year 5 plus any additional projects brought forward during the planning period, either by RSLs or local communities out with the core SHIP.

In addition, the Council has also used its financial reserves on occasion to advance long term loans to support RSL projects and this commitment is subject to ongoing review.

c) RSL's Private Finance Borrowing

Banks and other lenders in the private sector also remain vitally important partners in the delivery of affordable housing, and RSLs are required to demonstrate that sufficient borrowing capacity or reserves exist to ensure delivery of the proposed development programme. Following a period of restrictive lending, with greater scrutiny of projects, higher lending rates and the requirement for additional security from existing stock, which often resulted in RSLs being forced to use their own reserves rather than borrow under such conditions; RSLs are now reporting positive improvements in their potential to access private finance; and at a national level the sector continues to explore innovative funding models. Private finance in support of the 4 SHIP projects completed in 2020/21 (excluding final 12 units carried over from the previous year at Glenshellach, Oban), totaled over **£2.089m**, approximately 31% of the total investment for those projects.

Additional investment in support of the SHIP programme includes, inter alia, Scottish Water grant; sales revenue on New Supply Shared Equity (NSSE) schemes; and other partner contributions, such as local Estates. Total investment from all sources for all SHIP projects completed in 2020/21 (as opposed to the actual spend within the year, and excluding the final units at Glenshellach) amounted to **£6.767m**.

Figure 1: Breakdown of SHIP investment for projects completed in 2020/21

Source: Council/RSL Records 2020/21

Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF)

The Housing Infrastructure Fund supports housing development through grants and loans with priority given to sites which are of strategic importance and cannot proceed or have stalled due to infrastructure requirements. Grant is available to local authorities and RSLs for works which are a) out with the curtilage of the affordable housing site and/or b) of scale and will open up larger sites for housing development. Loans are available for viable non-public sector led sites to support infrastructure delivery.

The Council's main priority for HIF funding is the Dunbeg development in Lorn, being delivered by the Link Group; and as reported in previous SHIPs, the Scottish Government awarded Housing Infrastructure Fund grant amounting to **£2,129,247** for upgrade works to Kirk Road to enable the development of 300 new affordable homes to proceed at this site. This remains a major priority for the council, Link and West Highland Housing Associations who are working in partnership to deliver the project. Housing Services has worked with colleagues across the Council and the Scottish Government to ensure the project is completed timeously and in 2019/20 the project received accelerated AHSP funding of over £2m to progress this. While the infrastructure issues have been addressed, the impact of Covid-19 in 2020/21 meant that the completion of all 300 units has been delayed and consequently the final units may not be fully delivered until 2022.

While the Scottish Government has confirmed that the HIF will be extended post 2021, there is no guarantee that Argyll and Bute will receive further awards from this source; nevertheless the council and RSL partners will continue to propose

potential projects within the SHIP that could benefit from HIF investment. These could include the following:-

SHIP Projects with potential HIF requirement, as of August 2021

| Project | RSL | Total Units | Estimated HIF Requirement |
|----------------------|------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| Glencruitten, Oban | tbc | 100 tbc | £715k (est.) |
| Hospital Field, Oban | Link | 50 | £1.4m |
| Dunbeg Phase 4-6 | Link | 150 | £2.5m |

Rural and Islands Housing Funds (R&IHF)

The Scottish Government also established a £25 million Rural Housing Fund and a £5 million Islands Housing Fund which ran initially to 2021. Both funds aimed to increase the supply of affordable housing of all tenures in rural Scotland and contribute to the national affordable homes targets. The Islands Housing Fund provided £5 million ring-fenced for islands housing projects and comprises two parts:

1. a main fund that offers capital support (grants and loans) for direct provision of new affordable housing, and refurbishment of existing empty properties
2. a small fund that contributes to feasibility studies

Both funds are open to a wide range of applicants including: community organizations; development trusts; private landowners; private developers; and traditional housing providers; however applications from individuals will not be accepted. Eligible projects must have a specific site or properties identified; be in an eligible rural area – levels 4, 5, and 6 of the six-fold urban/rural classification, which includes the majority of Argyll and Bute.

Islands Housing Fund applications must be located on a Scottish Island; demonstrate evidence of housing pressure in the location identified; have the support of the relevant local authority; be prepared to undertake appropriate community engagement; and be able to provide long term affordable housing.

Applicants can apply for either the rural Housing Fund or the Islands Housing Fund, not both.

In 2019, local community-led bids for Mull, Ulva, Islay, Colonsay and Gigha sought R&IHF support to carry out feasibility studies for small scale developments on island sites, with support from the council and third party agencies such as Rural Housing Scotland and Community Housing Scotland.

In 2020, Mull & Iona Community Trust were successfully awarded £777,855 from the Rural Housing Fund towards the delivery of 4 affordable homes at Ulva Ferry on Mull.

The council supported local communities and partners in lobbying for these funds to be continued post 2021, and in November 2020 the Minister confirmed that the funds would be extended beyond March 2021.

Other Initiatives

The council and strategic partners are also interested in exploring other potential funding sources, such as the Scottish Government's Building Scotland Fund and the national Self-Build Loan Fund; as well as the wider Partnership Support for Regeneration scheme. Such initiatives could facilitate the delivery of the SHIP and/or alternative affordable housing provision in the future.

The Scottish Land Fund (SLF) provided support to Colonsay Community Development Company, with a grant award of £390k to meet site acquisition costs for a mixed tenure affordable housing project on the island. Additional funding contributions have been secured from the Council's Strategic Housing Fund and from Highlands & Islands Enterprise. The SLF also enabled Ulva community to acquire ownership of the island with an award of £2m, and plans are now being developed for appropriate housing on Ulva.

We will also continue to explore and, where appropriate, promote non-AHSP financing models such as Build-to-Rent, Low-cost Initiative for First Time Buyers (LIFT), Help to Buy (Scotland) and Open Market Shared Equity (OMSE), which may fall out with the remit of the SHIP.

The potential impact of the proposed **Rural Growth Deal (RGD)** for Argyll and Bute will complement the SHIP process, and partners will contribute to this strategic agenda. Housing opportunities being pursued via the RGD include addressing infrastructure issues at potential housing sites, innovative Technology Enabled Care (TEC) in Housing models; and a particular focus on addressing the housing needs of key and essential workers. The RGD is worth £30m in total, and £3m of this is earmarked for housing projects. A steering group has been established and the SHIP prioritisation framework is being adapted to help assess potential bids.

Buybacks, second-hand acquisitions, and off-the-shelf purchases

While it is expected that the majority of homes delivered through the SHIP will be new build units (which could include 'off the shelf' purchases from developers), nevertheless where it can be demonstrated that acquisition of 'second hand' stock available for sale on the open market is the most appropriate method of meeting housing need in a particular area, this is supported both by the Council and by the Scottish Government. (For example, as noted in "Strategic Housing Investment Plan: guidance note MHDGN 2021/01" published in July 2021, which states that AHSP investment could include the purchase of former local authority housing. The Scottish Government and the relevant local authority will require to agree the number of such purchases that can be approved each year.) This must support the aims of increasing the supply of affordable housing, and priority property types and sizes in areas of high demand (particularly where stock has historically been depleted through Right To Buy); and meeting specific and urgent housing need.

Developer Contributions

Argyll and Bute falls within the purview of two planning authorities: while the council covers most of the mainland and islands, Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park is the planning authority for parts of Cowal and Lomond. Both authorities have set out formal Affordable Housing Policies in their respective Local Development Plans. These policies outline mechanisms and options to secure developer contributions, where there is a demonstrated need for affordable housing.

The council's current policy was adopted in supplementary guidance to the LDP in March 2016, and requires that out with specified housing allocations and Potential Development Areas (PDAs) new private developments proposing 8 or more homes should deliver a minimum of 25% affordable housing units. Given the revised and re-enforced strategic vision of growth and repopulation for the whole of Argyll and Bute, it is likely that the affordable housing policy will be applied presumptively across all HMAs.

Developer contributions can be delivered by a variety of means including social rented housing, mid-market rented housing, payment of commuted sums and also the building of houses/apartments designed to meet the needs of first time buyers (provided these are available at affordable levels as defined by the council's HNDA and with reference to the relevant local housing market).

The sequential mechanisms for securing Affordable Housing via the policy are applied in the following order:

- on-site provision;
- off-site provision;
- commuted payment;
- discounted low cost sale;
- affordability by design without subsidy.

To date, no commuted sums have been received and the preferred approach has been to engage with an RSL to deliver the affordable quota on site.

The National Park policy follows a generally similar approach, with a requirement for 25%, 33% or 50% affordable provision on sites of 4 or more units depending on the location. Sites of up to 3 units in accessible rural areas may also have a policy requirement under certain circumstances. A formal policy for calculating commuted sums has been established but again, to date, little or no payments have been received.

The delivery of unsubsidized affordable housing for purchase via the Affordable Housing Policy, but without Scottish Government funding, will normally target a different client group and requires close working between Housing Services and Planning colleagues to ensure these models are in fact affordable in accordance with the LHS and SHIP priorities.

7) SPECIALIST PROVISION, WHEELCHAIR HABITABLE HOUSING, & EQUALITIES ISSUES

The SHIP aims to address the housing needs of all the communities we serve, and continues to reflect a positive approach to equalities issues in line with the policies of the council and its partners, and the principles of diversity and inclusion in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. The new, revised HNDA (2021) provides robust evidence of accommodation and support needs across the range of protected equalities characteristics, and these have been translated into the SHIP priorities. The joint Argyll and Bute Health, Care & Housing Needs Assessment, completed in 2018, provided supporting evidence of the requirements for wheelchair accommodation, supported housing, and other forms of specialist provision. In 2019/20, the council undertook further specific studies on the need and demand for specialist provision for wheelchair users, gypsy/travellers, military personnel and veterans, and persons who are autistic or have learning disabilities. The findings have now informed the full revision of the new HNDA in 2021 and in turn will support revised Housing Supply Targets for the LHS and SHIP which will be approved later in 2021.

The previous LHS was supported by an overarching Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) in 2016 which is currently being reviewed as part of the development of the new LHS; and this will continue to inform the SHIP, and how the strategic aims are embodied in the housing priorities of the programme. The original EIA can be accessed on the council website at the following link:

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/housing/housing-strategies-consultations-and-research-0>; and the revised assessment will be posted online later in the year.

All SHIP projects, seeking public subsidy from the Council or Scottish Government, are required to meet basic design and building standards (of the Housing for Varying Needs Standard as a minimum) and should incorporate adequate provision to meet any additional identified particular needs. Prioritisation of projects will give due weight to those which incorporate elements of design or additional specifications for specialist forms of housing where the local profile of need and demand indicates such a requirement. The committed and planned programmes include provision for elderly and disabled residents and through the close partnership working with Health & Social Work, including Occupational Therapists, the SHIP will continue to ensure the strategic aims of the LHS in this respect are carried forward.

In particular, the post of dedicated Housing OT which was established in October 2018 to co-ordinate and promote these needs through the SHIP group, was made permanent in 2021, funded in full by the council Housing Services but working very closely with RSLs and the HSCP. In practice, this commitment to equalities principles will ensure:

- building all new affordable housing to HfVN Standards;
- implementing design solutions which help to meet the needs of disabled and infirm households;

- assessing and seeking to resolve the needs and aspirations of households with community care needs in partnership;
- developing communities with a good mix of households;
- allocating housing via HOME Argyll and national RSL partners who have strong commitments to equal opportunities; and
- providing affordable housing in rural areas which enables young and old people to remain within their communities.

Housing for Varying Needs (HfVNs) is a Design Guide published in two volumes (Parts 1 and 2). While not mandatory, the standards outlined in the guide have been used as the basis for standards for housing developments seeking grant funding support. The standards are intended to ensure that the housing is accessible, adaptable for different needs and over its lifetime represents good value for money. They are based on the principle that the design of a property should not hinder a person's ability to live as independently as possible and should recognize the needs of people as they age, become less able or whose mobility, dexterity, cognitive function, hearing or sight is impaired.

The idea of designing all housing to accommodate the needs of less able people is known as "barrier free" design and this is reflected in the core guidance of the design guide; but the guide also recognizes that barrier free design in itself is not a substitute for homes designed specifically for people with particular needs so it identifies additional features that should be included to address these needs.

Updated analysis of the HOME Argyll Common Housing Register in 2021 suggests that around 4% of applicants could still benefit from some form of specialist provision; and of these, 100 applicants included wheelchair accessible accommodation as an option; although only 24 of these applicants did not also select some other form of accommodation, including general needs/ mainstream housing. Applicants requesting wheelchair provision are evenly split by bedroom sizes required, with 22% requiring 1, 3 and 4+ bedrooms respectively; while the main need (34%) is for 2 bedrooms. In the wider population as a whole, the Health, Care & Housing Needs Assessment (2018) identified the following key points:-

- Around 350 wheelchairs are issued each year to people in Argyll & Bute
- The majority of wheelchairs issued are manual chairs
- Over 1,300 people in Argyll and Bute have wheelchairs on issue
- 55% of people with wheelchairs are aged 75+
- Up to 280 people a year may be new wheelchair users
- There could be 240 additional people needing wheelchairs by 2027
- The most common reason for a wheelchair is cerebrovascular disease (stroke) but the main reasons for wheelchair vary by age with Cerebral palsy being the most common reason in people under 25.

Correlating the data sources may suggest that a majority of wheelchair users are satisfactorily housed or do not aspire to social rented properties. However,

some wheelchair users who could benefit from suitable, specialist provision in the social rented sector may not apply due to lack of awareness or misperceptions regarding the suitability and availability of stock. This was identified as a key area for further research and analysis, and in 2019/20 an in-house study was duly completed jointly by the council's strategy team and the Housing OT. A key finding of this study, collated with national research, is that wheelchair users and those who might benefit from wheelchair accommodation are not a homogenous group, and that for many a range of specialist models would be appropriate.

On that basis, while in situ solutions such as aids and adaptations or support services will have a crucial role to play, nevertheless, the SHIP will continue to require a target of 10% of the new build programme to provide some form of specialist provision (to include retirement housing, amenity housing, and other specially adapted properties); and within that, half (i.e. 5% of the total new builds) should be built to the fully wheelchair habitable standard as defined in the relevant section of the current HfVN standards guidance.

The SHIP Officers Group and the Strategic Housing Forum approved this policy with immediate effect in 2020. RSL partners also continue to explore with HSCP partners requirements for extra care provision and replacement models for existing care homes which may no longer be deemed fit for purpose. Where possible, the council will strive to incorporate such needs within the SHIP programme as it rolls forward.

As far as possible, the wheelchair housing targets will also be encouraged within the private sector, across all tenures, on all developments where this would be appropriate.

Gypsy/Travellers

Argyll and Bute Council continues to support the Scottish Government's commitment to improve the lives of our Gypsy/Traveller communities; and to prioritise joint working with ACHA (who own and manage the two official, operational, Travelling Person sites in Argyll and Bute) and other stakeholders to drive forward positive improvements for this client group.

The Council continues to allocate ACHA an annual grant from the Strategic Housing Fund as a contribution towards the operation and maintenance of the two remaining Travelling Persons Sites at Bayview near Oban, and Duncholgan near Lochgilphead. A Minute of Agreement set up at the point of stock transfer in 2006 set the sum at £30k plus annual indexation. In 2018, the sum payable was reduced to reflect the withdrawal of the Torlochan site near Dunoon, which was deemed to be surplus to requirements due to the lack of demand. Recent council investment in the official sites is summarised below:

ACHA Gypsy/Traveller Sites – Annual Council Funding

| Year | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 5 year Total |
|--------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Grant | £39,660 | £41,228 | £31,001 | £28,939 | £29,338 | £170,166 |

As part of the comprehensive refresh of the Housing Need and Demand Assessment for Argyll and Bute, the council carried out a dedicated study to assess the accommodation and support needs of Gypsy/ Travellers in the area. This included an assessment of any “bricks and mortar” mainstream accommodation that may be required. The study has involved extensive primary engagement with Gypsy/Travellers and their representatives; and this work has informed the development of the latest LHS for Argyll and Bute.

In March 2020 the Scottish Government announced the allocation of a one-off short-term funding initiative in support of the national Gypsy/Travelers Action Plan which was launched in 2019. ACHA were awarded **£108,726**, to be administered by the Council, for improvements to the local Gypsy/Travelers sites, beyond the minimum standards. A range of positive options are being explored jointly with local site tenants and the ultimate aim is to deliver immediate benefits and improve the quality of life for these residents. A further bid has been prepared jointly by ACHA and the council in 2021 for additional resources which the Scottish Government has made available for this purpose.

8) ENERGY EFFICIENCY & FUEL POVERTY

Promoting energy efficiency and tackling fuel poverty remain strategic priorities for the LHS and key commitments for the council; and maximizing opportunities for sustainability in development remains a key principle underpinning the SHIP. As with all public bodies, this Council is also required to meet its statutory duties arising from the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, and the LHS and SHIP have been developed to ensure that the provision of new affordable housing complies with the Act; and that all housing activities and outputs should contribute to the overarching net zero targets and principles.

The Council requires affordable housing developments, as far as possible, to have a low environmental impact and to contribute to the LHS objectives of addressing fuel poverty and to ensure at least minimum standards of sustainability as required under Scottish Building Standards Agency regulations. This remains a key assessment criterion for any project seeking public subsidy from the Scottish Government or the Council.

There are significant challenges in delivering higher quality, energy efficient developments in an authority such as Argyll & Bute - for instance, a significant proportion of the area’s rural properties are not connected to the gas grid and many rely on costly oil heating – all of which impact on costs and on the ability to achieve sustainability targets. Nevertheless, local RSL partners continue to embrace sustainability principles which promote local material sourcing, recycling, insulation standards, and renewable energy, as far as possible within

Developers are encouraged to deliver the “Greener Standard” as default in all new developments; and the current SHIP indicates that 100% of the proposed programme will deliver to this standard.

the current financial climate. It is expected that all SHIP partners will continue to follow these principles to the best of their abilities despite the resourcing constraints under which they are currently operating. In particular, all new build RSL stock will be required to address the national Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH). Specific projects in the current SHIP include an innovative PassivHaus scheme at Garelochhead by ACHA, working with developers, Stewart & Shields

Sustainable Design

The SHIP and LHS are closely aligned with the LDP processes and the Council and its partners will explore sustainable design principles, not only to address climate change and provide energy efficient homes, but also to contribute to the creation of safe, sustainable communities which have a real sense of identity and place. In order to achieve a sense of community in new developments (whilst also delivering low environmental impact housing) we will work with partners to ensure a range of factors are considered; and when developing new areas sustainability principles will also be central to the design process. Wherever possible, use of the Place Standard Tool will be encouraged.

9) HOMELESSNESS & RAPID REHOUSING TRANSITION PLANS

Scottish Ministers have made an ongoing commitment to end homelessness in Scotland and consequently set up a national Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) to bring forward recommendations to address this. A key proposal was that each local authority should develop a Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) by December 2018, covering a 5 year period, or longer if required, to enable the implementation of this new approach. The RRTP maximises prevention and sets out the council's approach to minimise the time a household remains homeless and to ensure that they can access appropriate suitable accommodation as soon as possible.

Local Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans should be reflected in the LHS and also be fully integrated into Health & Social Care Partnership strategic plans. The Argyll and Bute RRTP has consequently been included in the current Housing Contribution Statement to ensure it forms part of the planning framework. In line with the previous SHIP guidance issued in August 2019, this SHIP's strategic housing priorities are aligned and consistent with the proposed RRTP priorities and outcomes. A crucial objective is to facilitate and deliver more affordable housing via the SHIP.

In the report "Scotland's transition to rapid rehousing", produced by the Indigo Group on behalf of the Scottish Government's HARSAG in June 2018, two specific recommendations were made in relation to the SHIP:

- Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans could be seen as an integral part of the SHIPs, and should be annually reviewed as part of the SHIP process
- The Scottish Government and Scottish Housing Regulator should improve data collection from local authorities or housing associations on completions and lettings relative to housing need.

With this in mind, Argyll and Bute Council continues to liaise with RSL partners and other key stakeholders to develop and implement the RRTP; and will aim to ensure that homelessness remains a critical factor in the SHIP process. This includes: homelessness as one criterion for assessing need, prioritising projects, and awarding grants from the Strategic Housing Fund. SHIP projects are expected to contribute directly or indirectly to alleviating homelessness across Argyll and Bute (for example, as a result of direct allocations or via consequential lets to existing properties freed up on transfer of occupants to new build properties). The performance of developing landlords in respect of the proportion of allocations to homeless households and time taken to rehouse these clients will continue to be material considerations in SHIP programming decisions and resource allocation moving forward.

In support of this RRTP the Council received £95,000 core funding from the Scottish Government in September 2019. In addition £30,000 was carried forward from the previous year in relation to enabling funding to assist with preparing the initial Plan. The main aims of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan is that by March 31st 2024:

- The number of homeless applicants will reduce from 517 per annum (2017/18) to 300 (2023/24).
Progress: 416 (2020/21)
- Units of temporary accommodation are accordingly reduced from 140 to 100 (2023/24). (Due to COVID-19 the Council initially increased the number of temporary accommodation units to 188 in 2020/21.)
Progress: Additional units successfully reduced to 129 by August 2021.
- Support for those homeless or threatened with homelessness is integrated between tenancy, mental health and addiction services. The dedicated post of Mental Health Practitioner was advertised in 2020.
Progress: Mental Health/Addictions Housing Practitioner appointed, 2021
- People spend as little time as possible in temporary tenancies before finding permanent re-housing; and no more than 26 weeks without good reason, reducing to 20 weeks by 2024.
Progress: 29 weeks in 2020/21
- People sustain permanent tenancies with a reduction in repeat homelessness.
Progress: Repeat homelessness increased by 5 cases in 2020/21

Council Housing Services have taken forward 6 key work strands within the original RRTP investing £53,979 in 2019/20 and £94,372 in 2020/21; of the £105,000 allocated that year for this purpose by the Scottish Government, in addition to the £71,021 carried forward from previous years. It is proposed that we continue to focus on the 6 areas of activity detailed above, with the funding allocation as follows:-

- Rent arrears prevention fund - £50,000
- Decoration project - £35,000
- Flexible Emergency Fund - £11,000
- Mental Health /Addictions Practitioner - £50,000 (part year)
- Housing First / RRTP training - £5,000
- Establish a Housing First model - £25,000 (creation of 10 tenancies)

10) UPDATE FROM THE 2020 SHIP

Current Progress: Outputs 2020/21

Building on the 411 units completed between 2016/17 and 2019/20, there were a further 48 units completed in 2020/21; bringing the five-year cumulative total to 459 which is 84% of the LHS target for at least 550 new affordable homes to be completed by the end of the 5-year planning period. Given the extremely challenging conditions of 2020/21, this is very positive outcome for the previous LHS and SHIP; and a significant number of projects are on-site and will complete over the coming year.

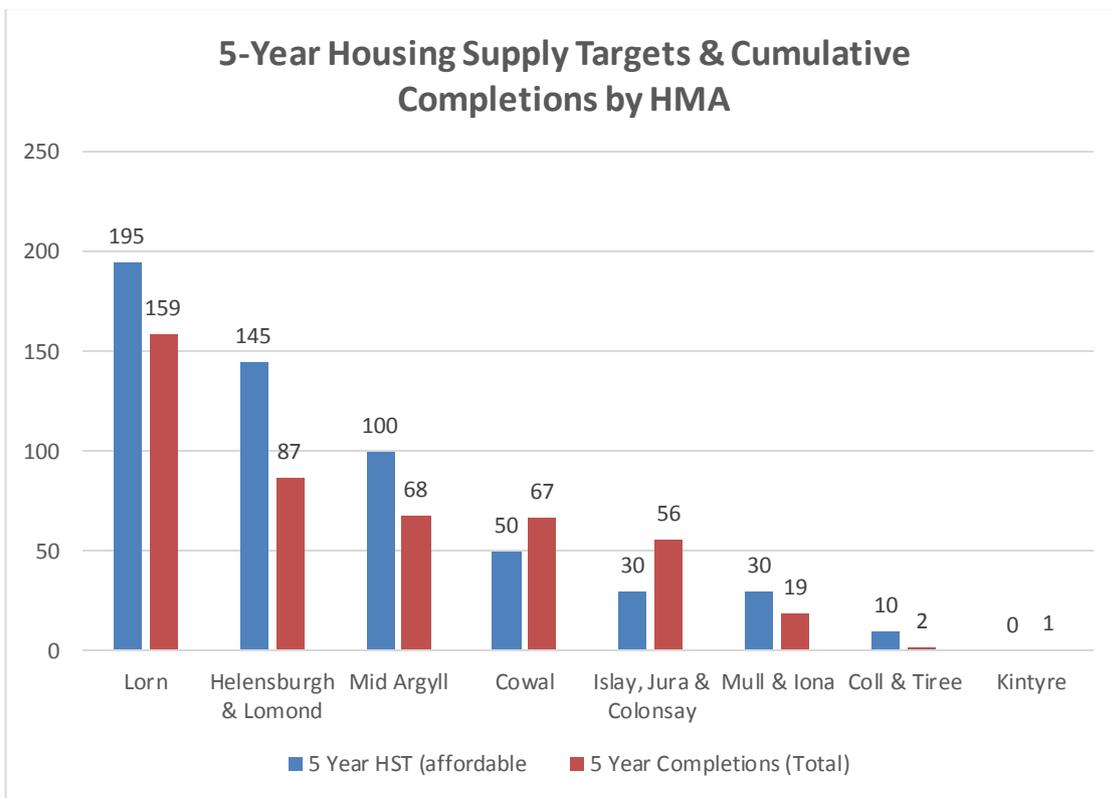
TABLE 1: SHIP New Build Homes by HMA & Project, 2020/21

| Housing Market Area | Projects | Completions | % of Total |
|---------------------|--|-------------|-------------|
| Cowal | Dunoon (refurb) | 1 | 2% |
| | Tighnabruaich | 20 | 42% |
| Lorn | Glenshellach, Oban Phases 11-13 (final units) | 12 | 25% |
| | Barcaldine | 10 | 21% |
| Mid Argyll | Cairnbaan | 5 | 10% |
| TOTALS | | 48 | 100% |

Three of the local RSLs contributed to the total programme. ACHA delivered 18 of the new builds; Fyne Homes provided 20; and West Highland completed 10. In terms of tenure, 4 units (8%) were for shared equity in line with LHS targets.

Reviewing overall progress at the end of Year 5 of the previous LHS, despite slippage due to Covid-19, the SHIP programme only narrowly fell short of the Housing Supply Target for Argyll and Bute as noted above, with a number of onsite projects, including a proportion of the Dunbeg development of 300 units, being delivered in the first quarter of 2021/22 as a result of inevitable slippage arising from the pandemic.

In terms of original HMA targets (2016 based), the main requirement was to progress delivery in Oban/Dunbeg and Helensburgh & Lomond, as well as some of the islands. The following graph illustrates the cumulative completions over the last five years against the LHS targets.



11) THE REVISED PROGRAMME

The current year, 2021/22, is covered by the Strategic Local Programme Agreement (SLPA) between the council, the Scottish Government, and the developing RSLs, and the previous SHIP (approved in 2020); while this new SHIP will commence from 2022/23. The programme is subject to ongoing change as either barriers to progress or windfall opportunities arise. Consequently, the following tables simply summarise all proposals at the time of writing (August 2021), including those projects which were expected to complete in 2021/22 and for which funding has already been drawn down. It should be noted that the status of many future projects, particularly in the later years, remains provisional and purely indicative at this stage; some may not proceed, or complete, within the timescale. However there is also scope for additional proposals to be brought forward or included in the programme.

Further details of the programme and individual projects are outlined in the electronic reports recorded on the Scottish Government's Housing and Regeneration Programme (HARP) system.

TABLE 2 SHIP Projects – Completions/Anticipated Completions in 2021/22

| Project address | Developer | Units | Anticipated Completion Date |
|---|------------------|--------------|------------------------------------|
| Garelochhead (Passivhaus model) | ACHA | 10 | June 2021 |
| Milknowe, Kintyre | ACHA | 1 | July 2021 |
| Cairndow | FYNE Homes | 6 | May 2021 |
| Kirk Road, Dunbeg | WHHA | 4 | May 2021 |
| Dunbeg Phase 3 | LINK | 300 | March 2022 |
| Imereval, Islay, Phase 3 | WHHA | 8 | Oct. 2021 |
| Tarbert Phase 2 | ACHA | 4 | March 2022 |
| Jura | WHHA | 10 | Jan. 2022 |
| Argyll & Bute 2021/22 Total Completions (est.) | | 343 | March 2022 |

TABLE 3: SHIP Core Programme - Potential Completions by March 2027

| Project address | Developer | Units | Anticipated Completion ¹ |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|------------|-------------------------------------|
| Keills, Islay | ACHA | 4 | Feb. 2022 |
| North Connel Phase 2 | ACHA | 2 | 2022 |
| Rowan Cottage, Port Appin | WHHA | 6 | 2022 |
| Creamery, Port Charlotte | WHHA | 8 | 2022 |
| Inveraray, Phase 2 | ACHA | 10 | 2022 |
| Eton Avenue, Dunoon | ACHA | 4 | l2022 |
| Jeanie Deans site, Helensburgh | Dunbritton | 12 | June 2022 |
| Sawmill field, Helensburgh | Wheatley Group | 36 | Sept. 2022 |
| Tobermory (Phase 3) | WHHA | 12 | Sept. 2022 |
| Colonsay | WHHA | 5 | Oct. 2022 |
| Rosneath | LINK | 49 | Oct. 2022/tbc |
| Bowmore (Phase 4) | ACHA | 18 | Oct. 2022 |
| Imereval, Islay, Phase 4 | WHHA | 20 | Jan. 2023 |
| 18 th Tee, Helensburgh | Dunbritton | 16 | Feb. 2023 |
| Lonan Drive, Oban | LINK | 46 | March 2023 |
| Hospital Field, Oban | LINK | 50 | May 2023 |
| Inveraray | Fyne Homes | 16 | 2023 |
| Salen, Mull | WHHA | 8 | Aug. 2023 |
| Dalintober, Campbeltown | ACHA | 25 | Nov. 2023 |
| Golf Club Site, Helensburgh | Dunbritton | 52 | March 2024 |
| Tighcargaman, Port Ellen | ACHA | 20 | March 2024 |
| Lochgilphead Phase 6 | Fyne Homes | 2 | 2022/23 |
| Dunbeg Phases 4, 5 & 6 | LINK | 150 | Feb. 2025 |
| Lochgilphead Phase 7 | Fyne Homes | 12 | 2023/24 |
| Glencruitten, Oban | LINK | 100 | 2026 |
| Cardross | DHA | 35 | 2025 |
| Tighnabruiaich Phase 2 | FYNE Homes | 10 | 2026/27 |
| Port Appin Phase 2&3 | WHHA | 24 | TBC |
| Rothsay Academy, Bute | FYNE Homes | 20 | 2025 |
| Cairndow Phase 2 | FYNE Homes | 4 | 2026 |
| Argyll and ButeTotal | | 776 | 2022-2027 |

¹ NB. Timescales are indicative and subject to change; and will be monitored on a regular basis. Some projects could also revise their final number of units.

If this programme is successfully delivered in full within the planning period (plus completions in 2021/22), it could provide up to 1,076 new affordable homes

across Argyll and Bute by March 2027. Over 38% of these would be in rural mainland, island and/or fragile communities; around 45% in the key strategic settlements of Oban and Dunbeg; 15% in Helensburgh; with just over 2% in the other main towns of Dunoon and Lochgilphead.

There is an expectation that the majority of these units will be built to allow for future adaptation to meet changing needs over time; and in addition approximately 10% (i.e. 77 units, if above programme is delivered in full) should be purpose-designed to medium or high dependency standards with potentially 38 of those units (5% of the total) being fully wheelchair accessible.

The figures above do not include the significant anticipated output for 2021/22.

However, the council is currently also in ongoing discussions with the HSCP to review and explore potential models for the re-provisioning or replacement of existing care homes no longer fit for purpose (with the crucial proviso that SHIP investment is only eligible for accommodation elements of any proposals). This could include “close” cluster specialist accommodation and/or more dispersed cluster units to address the needs of those who might historically have occupied facilities such as Eadar Glinn in Lorn, Ardfenaig in Mid Argyll, and Struan Lodge in Cowal. In principle, the council is supportive of the inclusion of these projects in the SHIP, in full or in part depending on detailed and realistic proposals coming forward, with a view to delivery early in the new programme if feasible.

In addition to this core programme, a number of other potential proposals are being developed for further consideration in later years of the SHIP, subject to robust assessments of need and demand, site assembly or acquisition, and available funding. Some of these projects therefore remain notional at this stage or are subject to development constraints that require to be addressed/mitigated before they can proceed. These projects are also dependent on clarification of local need or potential demand to support growth and recovery agendas; and will be considered in future updates of the SHIP.

The council will also continue to actively explore other sites and projects out with the core SHIP funding programme, as outlined in previous sections of this plan, where these are consistent with LDP policy/housing land provisions and align with high quality, fit-for-purpose assessments of local housing need and demand.

Finally, a number of community-led projects or private developments with associated affordable requirements but no RSL attached, may be delivered out with the core SHIP programme but will be significant adjuncts to this process and should deliver major synergies with the SHIP. Several projects are already progressing, and at least two have been completed at time of writing. While small in scale these community-based projects deliver substantial impacts at the local level, and help to ensure the viability and sustainability of fragile communities. The following table summarises the current programme for rural and island projects out with the core SHIP programme.

TABLE 4: COMMUNITY-LED HOUSING PROJECTS

| HMA | PROJECT/COMMUNITY | UNITS | Est. DATE |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|--|----------------|
| Mull & Iona | Ulva Ferry | 4 | Completed 2021 |
| Mull & Iona | Ulva | 6 | Nov. 2021 |
| Mull & Iona | Pennyghael | 1 off-shelf | Completed 2021 |
| Mull & Iona | Glengorm | 5 | 2021 |
| Mull & Iona | Dervaig | 3 rent + 2 LCHO | TBC. |
| Kintyre | Gigha | 4+2 plots | TBC |
| Islay, Jura & Colonsay | Scalasaig, Colonsay (Phase 1) | 12 mixed tenure: rent, LCHO & self-build plots | TBC. |
| Coll & Tiree | Hynish, Tiree | 6-12 | 2022 |

12) MONITORING AND REVIEW

The SHIP will continue to be appraised on an annual basis by the Scottish Government and affordable housing outcomes are monitored regularly by the Council's Housing Management Team; local authority Members via the corporate Pyramid performance management system; the overarching Community Planning Partnership via the ABOIP framework; and partners on the Strategic Housing Forum; as well as the boards and committees of the individual SHIP partners. In addition, as appropriate, wider stakeholder involvement will be sought via consultation with local communities, private developers and relevant particular interest groups. All pertinent feedback will help to inform the ongoing development and regular revisions of the SHIP.

The Council has also been exploring potential mechanisms for establishing a wider evaluation framework to capture the broader social return on investment and economic impacts of the SHIP programme, as well as the basic cost effectiveness and value for money of specific projects. Working with RSL partners, the council is keen to implement a formal evaluation procedure which will capture evidence on the wide range of strategic benefits that the SHIP actually delivers, beyond monitoring the basic number of completions.

13) IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Health Impact Assessment

In addition to the formal LHS Equality Impact Assessment referred to in Section 7 above, which encompasses this SHIP, the council also carried out a Health Impact Assessment in 2017 for Housing Services, this plan and the LHS in accordance with national good practice, and as a further step towards fostering closer linkages between Housing, Health and Social Care. It is

intended to review and update this Health Inequality Assessment in light of the comprehensive revision of the LHS and this SHIP. We will also continue to monitor and assess the impact of the SHIP and the LHS in terms of equalities and human rights, health inequalities, child rights, poverty and wellbeing, and in line with the principles of the Fairer Scotland Duty. Any relevant findings from such assessments will be reflected in the SHIP and future updates of the LHS and other associated plans, policies and strategies.

Child Poverty and Housing – In line with the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017, the council produces an annual Argyll & Bute Child Poverty Action Plan report which sets out progress against the four statutory, income-based targets (all after housing costs), to be achieved by 2030, which are in summary:

- Less than 10% of children are in relative poverty
- Less than 5% of children are in absolute poverty
- Less than 5% of children are in combined low income and material deprivation
- Less than 5% of children are in persistent poverty

The local vision is for an “Argyll and Bute where no-one lives in poverty. Everyone should be able to achieve their potential and feel healthy, happy and valued. ... a place where everyone understands that tackling poverty is a shared responsibility. We believe that if we act locally, and in partnership, we can make a difference”. The annual report highlights Housing’s contribution to child poverty, and notes that the availability and nature and costs of housing impacts on the cost of living of individual households and the wider economy. A good housing environment can make a difference to the experiences of children, young people and their families. Households with children living in homes that fail the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) are 46.3% in Argyll and Bute as opposed to the Scottish average of 41.6% according to recent SHCS reports. The Child Poverty Action Plan report acknowledges that through its Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) the Council is attempting to provide more affordable housing for rent to support families with children; partners in HOMEArgyll aim to increase and improve the stock of social housing; it also works with private landlords and home owners to improve housing conditions; rents are maintained at an affordable level (ACHA for example rents at 3.8% below the national average for Registered Social Landlords); and in addition the Housing partnership is working to ensure that appropriate accommodation is offered to families with children: there are no children placed in unsuitable Bed and Breakfast accommodation and such a move is only considered in cases of extreme emergency as a last resort.

The SHIP will continue to prioritise positive benefits for families and children wherever possible.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

As the “Responsible Authority” under the terms of the Environmental (Scotland) Act 2005, the Council has previously determined that the LHS (and

by association it's ancillary component, the SHIP) does not require a full SEA. The primary document in relation to land use planning is the Local Development Plan which is subject to a full SEA and which will ultimately cover all housing projects set out in the SHIP. The SHIP is an investment plan which sits underneath the LHS and sets out how the LHS objectives can be delivered. As such it is primarily an operational, working document and it will therefore not change the policy directions set out in the LHS and LDPs.

14) CONCLUSION

The Argyll and Bute Strategic Housing Investment Plan for 2022/23 to 2026/27 sets out an ambitious but realistic programme for the delivery of more than 750 new affordable homes (plus over 340 to be delivered in 2021/22); of which the majority would be built to lifetime standards, allowing for future adaptation to meet changing needs over time; and around 10% will be purpose-designed for specialist needs, with half of those i.e. 5% of the total being fully wheelchair accessible. The programme reflects a strong commitment to the economic growth agenda for Argyll and Bute; and over a third of the proposed developments will also directly support the sustainability of fragile rural and island communities.

This programme is in line with the emerging, minimum Housing Supply Targets for affordable housing which will be ratified in November 2021 following final phase of LHS consultation in September 2021. These new targets take account of the council's ambitious strategic objectives as well as the potential increased demand for social housing arising from the consequences of the coronavirus pandemic; the increased presence at the MOD base in Helensburgh & Lomond; the anticipated impacts of the Rural Growth Deal and other local and national resources and strategic imperatives for repopulation, recovery and growth; and therefore the scale of the proposed programme is likely to be more in line with actual requirements as well as our aspirational goals for Argyll and Bute.

A number of additional, potential projects have also been identified for consideration in later years and some of these may be brought forward as the programme is reviewed on an annual basis, subject to identification of robust need and demand; and the council and its partners are committed to maximizing available resources where possible, and will continue actively to explore opportunities for growth in the programme.

This SHIP clearly and directly aligns with the LHS and LOIP outcomes; sets out a core programme which is feasible to deliver; highlights the contribution of the council, developers and other partners; evidences the support and facilitation role of the local authority; outlines the extensive stakeholder engagement underpinning the planning and delivery of the programme; and explicitly reflects the central importance of equality issues for all partners.

ANNEX ONE

SHIP DEVELOPMENTS ACROSS ARGYLL & BUTE:
Projects in the Core Programme



**ARGYLL & BUTE STRATEGIC HOUSING INVESTMENT PLAN
2022/23 – 2026/27**

THIS DOCUMENT IS
AVAILABLE ON THE COUNCIL WEBSITE AT:

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/housing/housing-strategies-consultations-and-research-0>

This document can also be made available in other formats on request.

Contact:
LHS Team
Argyll & Bute Council
Dolphin Hall
Manse Avenue
Dunoon
Argyll & Bute Council PA23 8DQ

Telephone:
01369 708 679
01631 700 058

Email:
allan.brandie@argyll-bute.gov.uk



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ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**COUNCIL****DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC
GROWTH****30 SEPTEMBER 2021**

**ISLE OF BUTE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT – OUTCOME OF BALLOT
AND NOMINATIONS FOR BUTE BID BOARD**

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update members on the outcome of the Bute BID Ballot held on 9th September 2021 and to seek nomination of one Elected Member and one Council Officer to sit on the Board of the yet-to-be formed Business Improvement District (BID) company for the island of Bute.
- 1.2 This follows on from the Full Council meeting on 24th June where Council agreed the ballot request, approved the business plan and instructed the Returning Officer to conduct a ballot. It was also agreed that the Council will charge £6,500 plus VAT to the BID company for administering the levy charge and to pay an estimated £9,850 per annum in levy contributions for Council properties on the Isle of Bute.

1.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Council:

- a) Note the outcome in regard to the Bute BID ballot.
- b) Nominate an Elected Member to attend the Isle of Bute BID Board meetings for the first term of the BID, 2021-2026.
- c) Delegate authority to the Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth to nominate a Council Officer to attend the Isle of Bute BID Board meetings for the first term of the BID, 2021-2026.

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC
GROWTH

30 SEPTEMBER 2021

**ISLE OF BUTE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT – OUTCOME OF BALLOT
AND NOMINATIONS FOR BUTE BID BOARD**

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 At Full Council on 24th June 2021, Councillors agreed to the following:

- 2.1.1 Approve the ballot request, approve the Isle of Bute BID Business Plan and agree to instruct the Returning Officer to conduct a ballot over 42 days in 2021 from Thursday 29th July to Thursday 9th September ('the ballot day').
- 2.1.2 Authorise the Executive Director with the responsibility for Development & Economic Growth to cast the votes on behalf of the council in favour of the BID.
- 2.1.3 Agree that the Council will charge £6,500 (excluding VAT) per annum, to the BID company for administering the levy charge to businesses in Bute, with charges thereafter increased annually. The first increase will apply on 01 March 2022, and annually thereafter for the subsequent term of the BID.
- 2.1.4 Agree that, if the BID group are successful in the ballot, the Council will pay an estimated £9,850 per annum in levy contributions for Council properties on the Isle of Bute.
- 2.1.5 Note that if the BID group are successful in the ballot 2 representatives from the Council would be requested to sit on the Isle of Bute BID Board; one Elected Member and one Officer.

2.2 Following approval by Full Council the ballot was then set up and the ballot took place on 9th September 2021 and the Business Community voted in favour of the Bute BID.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The Committee is asked to:

- a) Note the update in regard to the outcome of the Bute Bid ballot.
- b) Nominate an Elected Member to attend the Isle of Bute BID Board meetings for the first term of the BID, 2021- 2026.
- c) Delegate authority to the Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth to nominate a Council Officer to attend the Isle of Bute BID Board meetings for the first term of the BID, 2021- 2026.

4.0 DETAILS

- 4.1 The Bute BID was dependent on a successful outcome in the ballot. For the ballot to count, a minimum 25% turnout of all businesses had to be realised, and of those business representatives that vote, over 25% by number and 25% by combined rateable value must vote in favour of the BID.
- 4.2 The ballot was held on Thursday 9 September and the Isle of Bute Business community has voted in favour of the Isle of Bute BID. The results were as follows:

| No. of Ballot Papers Issued | No of Returns | Yes Votes | No Votes | Rejected Votes |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| 314 | 194 | 115 | 73 | 6 |

The BID ballot has therefore secured a minimum turnout of 25% of all businesses, and of those business representatives that vote, over 50% by number. The result has also met the 25% figure by combined rateable value vote in favour of the BID.

- 4.3 The Governance and Management arrangements outlined in the Isle of Bute Business Proposal and Business Plan stated that following a successful “yes” vote, the management and operation of the Isle of Bute BID Steering Group would be transferred to a Company Limited by Guarantee. In light of the successful “yes” vote the Company Limited by Guarantee will operate from Friday 1st October 2021 and will be managed by the Isle of Bute BID Steering Group until a Board of Directors is elected.
- 4.4 The Board will be representative of the businesses and stakeholders in the area and will act in the best interests of the BID Company. The Chairman, Vice Chairman, Company Secretary and Treasurer will be elected from the business members of the Board. The Board will include two representatives from Argyll and Bute Council, one Elected Member and one Council Officer. Other non-voting members may be co-opted onto the Board at the Board’s discretion. The Company will operate in a transparent way, answerable to the

levy payers in the area. There will be a detailed set of protocols which will cover the management of the BID and billing, collection and transfer of the levy.

4.5 In light of the successful “yes” vote the Council is asked to nominate an Elected Member and delegate authority to the Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth to nominate a Council Officer to attend the Isle of Bute BID Board meetings for the first term of the BID, 2021- 2026. The two nominated candidates will not have a right to vote as their role will be in an advisory capacity.

4.6 The nominated Elected Member and Officer will, along with the rest of the Directors, act in the best interests of the BID Company and add their support to the work of the BID. It will be a company limited by guarantee with a limited liability of £1.

4.7 The Isle of Bute economy and population has contracted. The implementation of an island-wide Business Improvement District (BID) has the potential to proactively contribute to addressing these issues, through a business-led approach. It is the intention of the Isle of Bute BID, which is comprised of business representatives from some of the largest island-based businesses, to provide a range of projects, initiatives and events to contribute to a healthier economic environment for the island.

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 The Isle of Bute BID Steering Group have secured a ‘yes’ vote from the business community on the Isle of Bute. The Council is therefore asked to nominate an Elected Member and a Council Officer to sit on the newly formed BID Board. The principle aim of the Isle of Bute BID is to deliver projects and events that would improve the trading environment of the island. The implication of an island wide BID is that it will contribute to addressing the economic and population contraction on the Isle of Bute.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- | | | |
|-----|-----------|---|
| 6.1 | Policy | Supports the delivery of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and the Council’s Economic Strategy and Economic Recovery Plan. |
| 6.2 | Financial | The Council levy payment will be £9,850 per annum for a period of 5 years as a budget pressure from the general unallocated fund. |

The Council will charge £6,500 per annum to the Isle of Bute BID Company for the collection and administration of the levy, with charges increasing on an annual basis.

- | | | |
|------|---------------------------------------|--|
| 6.3 | Legal | An Operating Agreement has been developed between the Council and the Isle of Bute BID, which lays out responsibilities for the BID levy collection. |
| 6.4 | HR | Officer support from existing staff. |
| 6.5 | Fairer Scotland Duty | None. |
| 6.6 | Equalities –protected characteristics | None. |
| 6.7 | Socio-economic Duty | The Isle of Bute BID aims to reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage on Bute and the BID represents the collective responsibility to grow the island economy. |
| 6.8 | Islands | This BID will encompass the whole of Bute. |
| 6.9 | Risk | The BID company may not deliver what has been laid out in their Business Proposal and Business Plan. |
| 6.10 | Customer Service | None. |

Kirsty Flanagan Executive Director with the responsibility for Development & Economic Growth

14th August 2021

For further information contact:

Marilyn Rieley, Development Officer
Transformation Projects and Regeneration Team
01700 501352

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ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**COUNCIL****DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC
GROWTH****30 SEPTEMBER 2021**

UK LEVELLING UP FUND – POTENTIAL BIDS FOR FUNDING

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report concerns the identification and proposed submission of two comprehensive bids to the next round of the UK Levelling Up Fund.
- 1.2 The UK Levelling Up fund is a highly competitive capital fund focussed on the following themes:
- smaller transport projects that make a genuine difference to local areas (or larger transport schemes such as road network investments);
 - town centre and high street regeneration; and;
 - support for maintaining and expanding the UK's world-leading portfolio of cultural and heritage assets.
- 1.3 The Bids have been informed by an analysis of existing council approved strategies, previous public consultations and speaking to Elected Members. This has enabled a programme of projects to be identified to make up the two bids under an overarching regeneration and transport theme. Best advice has also been taken from the UK Government but considerable uncertainty still remains in the process. That said, these bids offer a unique opportunity to progress key capital projects that can greatly assist the economy of Argyll and Bute through tackling known issues. Following approval the bids will be developed further which may have a bearing on what project elements we ultimately take forward. It is anticipated that prior to final submission Member approval will be sought.
- 1.4 It is recommended that Council agree that officers continue to develop the bids based on the themes and projects as contained within this report and report back to Council prior to submission to the UK Government.

UK LEVELLING UP FUND – POTENTIAL BIDS FOR FUNDING

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Following the report presented to the Policy and Resources Committee on 13 May 2021, this report provides Council with the latest information on possible projects to be included in a two potential future bids to the UK Levelling Up Fund and asks Members to agree that the shortlisted projects be developed further prior to submission in the next round of funding.
- 2.2 As Council are aware, the first bids to the Fund were due on 18 June 2021. The UK Government have still to determine a definitive timeline for a future round, however, we are working on being in a position to submit two bids before the end of the financial year.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that Council agree that officers continue to develop the bids based on the themes and projects as contained within this report and report back to Council prior to submission to the UK Government.

4. DETAIL**4.1 Context**

- 4.1.1 The UK Levelling Up Fund (UKLUF) was announced on 3rd March 2021 as part of the UK Budget process, and the wider UK Government Levelling Up agenda. It was one of three new UK wide funds launched using the powers conferred to the UK Government through Sections 50 and 51 of the UK Internal Market Act 2020.
- 4.1.2 It is a UK wide £4.8 billion capital fund which will support investment projects with up to £20 million of funding, in addition to investment in larger high value transport projects up to £50m in exceptional circumstances. The fund will run for four years until 2024/2025 with potential for some projects to be delivered until 2026 using only additional funding not Levelling Up funds. The prospectus published at the last UK Budget sets this out clearly and has been reconfirmed by the UK Government Civil Servants. It should be noted that the capital funds will require a minimum of 10% match capital funding.
- 4.1.3 A sum of at least £800 million will be allocated to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland over the lifetime of the Fund. For the first round of funding, at least 9% of total UK allocations will be set aside for Scotland. Bids in Scotland can be submitted by any local authority, with the number of bids being dependent on

the number of MPs in each area. An additional bid can be submitted for a transport bid which is the case for Argyll and Bute.

- 4.1.4 The themes of the Levelling Up Fund remain as previously reported however there is still a risk that the UK Government change these priorities. The current themes are as follows:
- smaller transport projects that make a genuine difference to local areas (or larger transport schemes such as road network investments);
 - town centre and high street regeneration; and;
 - support for maintaining and expanding the UK's world-leading portfolio of cultural and heritage assets.
- 4.1.5 There is a system of geographical prioritisation whereby the UK Government has devised an index that puts each local authority into one of three categories of need. Argyll and Bute has been placed in the second priority category. The indicators used relate to:
- economic recovery and growth;
 - improved transport connectivity; and;
 - regeneration.
- 4.1.6 The closing date for the first round of funding was the 18 June 2021. The Policy and Resources Committee agree on 13 May 2021, that that officers should develop ideas for future bids and bring back to Council for political oversight. The Community Renewal Fund closing date was also 18 June 2021 and there was a focus on a submission to this Fund which includes feasibility studies that have the potential in helping prepare the bids for the Levelling up Fund. There has been no decision on the Community Renewal Funding yet, this was expected late July or early August but we are hoping there will be an announcement in September.

4.2 Shortlisting Project Ideas

- 4.2.1 In developing the project ideas, we have had to take cognisance of the funding criteria and also the deliverability due to the tight timescale of the UK Levelling Up Fund. The Fund also rules out maintenance of assets being an option with only structural interventions linked to economic priorities considered a legitimate ask. We have also taken into consideration the linkages with the Rural Growth Deal, Regional Spatial Strategy, Economic Strategy and Local Development Plan.
- 4.2.2 Bids and constituent projects should have the support of local stakeholders and partners. They should be consulted on and bids should be developed with local input. The proposed projects have been based on agreed priorities with local communities developed over several years through community visioning exercises and are able to be taken forward within the challenging timeframe. Drawing in the expertise of established partners such as HES and Heritage Lottery will be essential.
- 4.2.3 Bids should also have local MP support and decisions on successful bids will be made by the UK Government although they will consult the Scottish Government to see if projects support key economic themes.

- 4.2.4 In terms of the £20m bid, which focuses on Town Centre Regeneration, the advice from the UK Government is that the programme of investment is to be considered across no more than three geographic sites. There also needs to be a link through a unifying theme.
- 4.2.5 In terms of the £50m transport bid, the advice is that this bid can be up to £50m in exceptional circumstances and as such it needs to be a robust, compelling bid that picks up on key issues like inclusion, economic and social impacts and how it contributes to net zero. There also appears to be a current stance by the UK Government against a programme of small works and there appears to be a limit of three individual projects/themes per lead Local Authority Bid. This applies to both themed bids. This approach appears to discriminate against rural authorities such as ours with only one MP covering the whole constituency. Glasgow for example can make 7 bids with up to 21 individual projects as they have 7 MPs.
- 4.2.6 A Members Seminar was held on 24 August 2021 to provide all Members with the opportunity to identify project ideas. There was good discussion at this Seminar and the following ideas were discussed, many of which feature in our bid proposals outlined later in this report:
- Whisky Isles infrastructure/ferry connectivity
 - Oban transport infrastructure, transport HUB
 - Royal Hotel Rothesay
 - Inveraray Pier
 - Additional Marinas
 - Ferry Service, Dunoon Gourock Kilcreggan
 - Lorn Economic Growth Zone
 - Dunbeg Corridor and Roundabout
 - Airport and Drone Technology
 - Dunoon Pier, berthing and pontoon facilities
 - Phase 2 of Industrial Estate in Kilmory
 - Flood protection works in Lochgilphead
 - Ideas from Ardrishaig Charette
 - Corran Halls Development as Conference centre
 - Active Travel project in Helensburgh, potential to accelerate.
- 4.2.7 For the projects identified in paragraph 4.2.6 that have not been proposed for a submission to the Levelling Up Fund, this does not mean that they are not worthy projects but rather they are considered not to be deliverable in the timeframe identified by the UK Government, or they may be better delivered through another route. For example, Kilmory Industrial Estate through RCGF, HIE and private sector funding.
- 4.2.8 The following two sections provide a high level outline of the identified projects for each of the two bids. It should be noted that all the project elements may be subject to change dependent on the feasibility work and this will be reported back to Members prior to any submission. We will also report progress with the bids to Members over the coming months.

4.3 £20m Regeneration Theme Bid

- 4.3.1 It is proposed that there is an overarching theme identified for this bid that includes the two main towns of Rothesay and Dunoon and also Ardrishaig/Lochgilphead Crinan Corridor. This theme is entitled **Western Seaboard – Marine Gateways** (working title). This theme includes a number of different elements for each of the towns to make up a single bid under the regeneration theme bid.
- 4.3.2 In terms of **Rothesay**, the projects are designed to make Rothesay and wider Bute a more investable community and will work alongside job creation and wellbeing in the wider community including the provision of additional family housing that is planned for the Island. The main element of the project would be restoring and finding a new purpose for the former Royal Hotel that dominates the principal gateway to the island. In addition the project would also include public realm works, the restoration of historical features in the town centre, net zero interventions such as EV chargers, cycle parking, expanded pedestrian space and harbour side environmental improvements.
- 4.3.3 This bid will also include the town of **Dunoon** with a focus on the A-listed Dunoon Pier with a further phase of restoration and possible demolition of unused features. In addition it is intended to add a new berthing facility as part of the regeneration of the pier together with improvements to the town centre/waterfront public realm including a link to the emerging Dunoon Project principle entrance at West Bay. This investment will add to the current regeneration activities such as the completed development of the Queens Hall together with the Dunoon CARs initiative and the Cycle Bothy project. In addition to regeneration works a series of measures will be added to help Dunoon get to net zero. All work will complement the use of the Pier as a town centre to town centre ferry service through further investment by the Scottish Government.
- 4.3.4 The third element of the bid includes **Ardrishaig/Lochgilphead - Crinan Corridor** that would include additional regeneration works improving marine connectivity, public realm elements and enabling further development on vacant sites such as new housing and/or employment generating uses including new holiday accommodation. This element of the bid will be taken forward by Scottish Canals and is informed by the extensive charrette work done to identify community priorities.
- 4.3.5 This bid would be substantial between these three communities with the feasibility work determining the final costs which will be kept to the £20m threshold of the Fund. The cost of developing the bid could be helped by a bid submitted to the Community Renewal Fund currently under consideration and we have possible agreement with private partners subject to further discussions. It is hoped that match capital funding (10%) can be achieved through projects we are already taking forward via Crown Estate funding, Island Infrastructure funding, RCGF, Tarbert and Lochgilphead, Active Travel and Better Places funding.

4.4 £50m Transport Theme Bid

4.4.1 There are three themes identified to be included within the Transport bid as outlined in the following paragraph.

4.4.2 Whisky Islands (Working Title)

Both Islay and Jura have seen substantial growth in the output of their spirits industry that makes a substantial contribution to the UK Exchequer. The industry continues to expand but this growth is placing undue pressure on the infrastructure of both islands. This project concerns an investment in the critical infrastructure of the islands principally, improvements to the local road network linking both the ferry terminals on Islay including carriageway interventions, active travel investments and an electric bus service. This project will also involve the replacement of the current Jura Ferry with a larger hybrid or electric ferry together with road improvements on Jura. This work would complement proposed investment by CMal at Port Ellen with capital contributions sought from the private sector. In addition there may also be a possibility of linking into the generation of Tidal energy being taken forward by the private sector. This critical investment would allow this nationally important industry to continue to expand on these island communities in a sustainable way.

4.4.3 Connected Helensburgh (Working Title)

Helensburgh is home to HMNB Clyde which continues to expand through the Maritime Change project. To assist the continued integration of the base with the wider community it is considered a further substantial investment is required in terms of transport connectivity. This project will include the completion of the Dumbarton to Rosneath Cycle Way depending on the ready availability of land. The development of a hydrogen/electric bus service and the purchase of buses to serve the community and the workers at the base and Colgrain with a possible link to Glasgow Airport together with the development of an additional rail halt at Garelochhead which is currently subject to feasibility work. In addition, it is intended to repair the structural integrity of Helensburgh Wooden Pier together with the installation of a modern berthing facility helping to complete the investment in Helensburgh Waterfront and create a new facility that enables marine connectivity to re-establish itself to Helensburgh Town Centre.

4.4.4 Lorn Economic Growth Zone

This important area of potential economic and population of growth in Argyll and Bute is in need of further investment in transport connectivity to reach its full economic potential. This programme of projects will involve the development of a new transport integrated hub in the town centre, transport capacity improvements within Oban, an investment in essential road infrastructure at Dunbeg and between Salen and Tobermory on Mull (interventions will include creation of overtaking lane, additional passing places etc. and will not extend to the creation of 2 carriageways the length of the route), a hydrogen bus service serving Lorn communities together with an investment in the Oban Airport to

help develop a potential Drone Hub with a focus on a first phase that provides essential infrastructure for future investment through the Rural Growth Deal.

- 4.4.5 Similar to the £20m Regeneration bid, it is envisaged that the necessary match funding can be sourced through the likes of Crown Estate funds, Lorn Arc, Strategic Housing Fund, RCGF, Rural Growth Deal and Active Travel.

4.5 Deliverability Of Approved Bids

- 4.5.1 The main challenge in preparing credible and robust bids to submit to the next round of the Levelling Up Fund is having sufficient resources in place to deliver the bids in the first place and then be able to deliver them if one or more of the bids prove successful within the demanding timetable set by the UK Government. The costs for developing the bids are substantial and where possible the council intends to take advantage of existing staff in place with the necessary local expertise, partners willing to assist us together with feasibility work either completed, underway or to be commissioned. For example, the Lorn Arc earmarked reserves can assist will some elements of delivery. The UK Government have also provided an additional £125k to help prepare the bids which is likely to be spent on specialist consultancy work to help develop the bids. The option to capitalise staff costs as and when our bids are accepted can be taken later to assist with project delivery.

- 4.5.2 It should be noted that the council has been successful with the delivery of numerous capital projects of various sizes in recent years with many local priorities already delivered. That said, a number of priorities for capital investment remain which we have been unable to implement due to a lack of resource to either develop the bid and/or do the actual works. The Levelling Up Fund presents an opportunity to take forward a number of these projects but it also has to be recognised that it has also become increasingly important given current funding models to have a future pipeline of projects developed to take full advantage of future external capital funding opportunities. For this reason council officers are also working on developing a number of options to help boost the capacity of the council to develop and deliver new capital projects that meet the aims of the council and represent Member priorities going forward. This could include a number of the projects identified by Members but not taken forward through this bidding process. A further report will come back to the Council in due course on this matter.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 This report provides Council with the latest information on possible projects to be included in a two potential future bids to the UK Levelling Up Fund and asks Members to agree that the shortlisted projects be developed further prior to submission in the next round of funding. The UK Government have still to determine a definitive timeline for a future round, however, we are working on being in a position to submit two bids before the end of the financial year.

6. IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy - Aligns with the Councils Economic Strategy.

- 6.2 Financial - Competitive opportunity for Argyll and Bute to lever in funding from the UK Government. There is no guarantee of funding for the bids. £125,000 has been made available from UK Government to assist in the development of bids.
- 6.3 Legal - All appropriate legal implications will be taken into consideration including adherence to the new UK Subsidy Control regime.
- 6.4 HR - None at present.
- 6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty: The Fairer Scotland Duty, Part 1 of the Equality Act 2010, came into force in April 2018. The duty places a legal responsibility on particular public bodies in Scotland, such as Argyll and Bute Council, to pay due regard to (actively consider) how they can reduce inequalities of outcome, caused by socio-economic disadvantage, when making strategic decisions and how this has been implemented.
- 6.6.1 Equalities All activities will comply with all Equal Opportunities/Fairer Scotland Duty policies and obligations.
- 6.6.2 Socio-Economic Duty Focus will be given to removing socio-economic disadvantage for vulnerable residents across Argyll and Bute.
- 6.6.3 Islands Duty The bid will be for the whole of Argyll and Bute including the island communities.
- 6.6 Risk - There is a risk over the timing of the bids.
- 6.7 Customer Service - None.

Kirsty Flanagan, Executive Director with responsibility Development and Economic Growth

For further information contact Fergus Murray, Head of Development and Economic Growth, 01546 604293

Robin Currie, Council Leader

ARGYLL & BUTE COUNCIL**COUNCIL****LEGAL AND REGULATORY SUPPORT****30 SEPTEMBER 2021**

**EXTRACT OF MINUTE OF PLANNING, PROTECTIVE SERVICES AND LICENSING
COMMITTEE HELD ON 18 AUGUST 2021**

* **5. IMPLEMENTATION OF A NEW LICENSING REGIME UNDER THE ANIMAL WELFARE (LICENSING OF ACTIVITIES INVOLVING ANIMALS) (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2021**

The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Authorities Involving Animals) (Scotland) Regulations 2021 come into effect on 1 September 2021, and place new statutory duties on Councils to licence certain activities concerning animals and also modernises the existing animal welfare licensing regimes.

A report advising Members of this new requirement, which will be carried out by Environmental Health, and seeking approval to introduce new appropriate fees and charges was considered.

Decision

The Committee agreed to:

1. note the introduction of a new licensing regime under the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (Scotland) Regulations 2021; and
2. recommend to the Council, agreement of the fees and charges as outlined in Section 4.5 of the Executive Director's report.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Regulatory Services dated 9 August 2021, submitted)

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ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

PLANNING, PROTECTIVE SERVICES AND
LICENSING COMMITTEE

DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

18th AUGUST 2021**IMPLEMENTATION OF A NEW LICENSING REGIME UNDER THE ANIMAL WELFARE
(LICENSING OF ACTIVITIES INVOLVING ANIMALS) (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2021****1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

| | |
|-----|---|
| 1.1 | The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals)(Scotland) Regulations 2021 come into effect on the 1 st September 2021, and place new statutory duties on Councils to licence certain activities concerning animals and also modernises the existing animal welfare licence regimes. This report advises members of this new requirement which will be carried out by Environmental Health, and seeks members approval to introduce appropriate fees and charges |
| 1.2 | The Regulations replace previous legislation covering pet sales and dog breeding and introduces new licensing requirements for cat and rabbit breeders, animal welfare establishments (such as animal sanctuaries and rehoming centres) and other pet rehoming activities, subject to operators meeting the licensing threshold for each activity. Work is ongoing to introduce the licensing scheme although Scottish Government Guidance to local authorities was only received on the 14 th July 2021. There will be a delay in fully implementing the scheme in Argyll and Bute to allow appropriate processes and fees to be in place, for this reason existing businesses will be able to continue to operate, unless there are significant animal welfare issues. |
| 1.3 | The Regulations make provision for local authorities to charge a fee for the consideration of an application for grant, renewal or variation of a licence and the subsequent grant, renewal and variation of the licence. A fee for the reasonable anticipated costs of enforcement action in relation to any licensable activity of unlicensed operators, although all costs must be reasonable and transparent. The proposed fees are detailed in sections 4.4/4.5 of the report and in the recommendations, and are based on full cost recovery |
| 1.4 | <p>Recommendation: Committee is asked to:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the introduction of a new licensing regime under the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals)(Scotland) Regulations 2021; and 2. Recommend to Council, agreement of the fees and charges as outlined in Section 4.5 of the report. |

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

PLANNING, PROTECTIVE SERVICES AND
LICENSING COMMITTEE

DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

18th AUGUST 2021

**IMPLEMENTATION OF A NEW LICENSING REGIME UNDER THE ANIMAL WELFARE
(LICENSING OF ACTIVITIES INVOLVING ANIMALS) (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2021**

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals)(Scotland) Regulations 2021 come into effect on the 1st September 2021, and place new statutory duties on Councils to licence certain animal activities under the Regulations. This report advises members of this new regime, which undertaken by Environmental Heath, and seeks Committee approval to introduce appropriate fees and charges

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Committee is asked to:-

1. Note the introduction of a new licensing regime under the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals)(Scotland) Regulations 2021; and
2. Recommend to Council, agreement of the fees and charges as outlined in Section 4.5 of the report.

4.0 DETAIL

4.1 The Regulations replace previous legislation covering pet sales and dog breeding and introduce new licensing requirements for cat and rabbit breeders, animal welfare establishments (such as animal sanctuaries and rehoming centres) and other pet rehoming activities, subject to operators meeting the licensing threshold for each activity.

4.2 Work is ongoing to introduce the licensing scheme. Scottish Government Guidance was issued to local authorities the 14th July 2021, and there will be a delay in fully implementing the scheme in Argyll and Bute. This will allow appropriate processes and fees to be in place. Existing businesses will be able to continue to operate, unless there are significant animal welfare issues. The target is all compliant premises to be licensed by 31st March 2022, as appropriate.

4.3 The licensing scheme introduces a new licensing regime for some premises, which are currently licenced by the Council, including pet shops and dog breeders. They will continue to operate under their current licence until it expires and then come within the new regime thereafter. There will be a new requirement for additional animal welfare establishments, which include:

- a. Cat and rabbit breeders

- b. Animal welfare establishments, including animal rehoming centres, anyone selling animals as pets in the course of their business and animal sanctuaries

There will be additional work arising from the new licensing regime and total number of premises are unknown at present. However, the Council are aware of 14 premises which includes 7 premises currently licensed as pet shops or dog breeders.

- 4.4 The licensing regime is to be self-funded through licensing fees on a full costs recovery basis. Fees and charges have been developed in liaison with other local authorities. Fees will cover all costs associated with determining an application, including initial inspections by officers and any monitoring visits. There will be full recovery of veterinary costs from the licensee as is currently done for other licences (e.g. riding establishments licensing etc.). A fee for formal enforcement visits is proposed for any licensable activity or unlicensed operators once a decision has been made that formal enforcement is necessary. There will be a fee for the first formal enforcement visit, and subsequent action will be at an hourly officer rate. The “fee for enforcement” will be charged to non-compliant businesses and this may encourage licensees to effectively manage their business.
- 4.5 The table below lists the proposed fees and charges, and Appendix 1 provides further detail on how these were calculated. A 50% discount for registered charities for new applications or renewals is proposed. The discount will not apply for variations or to enforcement visits and they will be liable for all veterinary charges. This recognises the important role they play on this sector (particularly rehoming) and reduces the financial impact the new licensing scheme.

| | Sale of pet animals | Animal rehoming activities | Animal welfare establishments | Breeding of dogs | Breeding of cats | Breeding of rabbits |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| New application/renewal (note 1) | £197.93 | £197.93 | £228.38 | £182.70 | £182.70 | £182.70 |
| Variation of licence | £152.25 | £152.25 | £182.70 | £137.03 | £137.03 | £137.03 |
| Charitable discount (to registered charities to new applications renewals and variations) (Note 2) | 50% | 50% | 50% | 50% | 50% | 50% |
| Licensing Enforcement Visit No 1 | £175.09 | £175.09 | £190.31 | £159.86 | £159.86 | £159.86 |
| Subsequent enforcement visits (includes officer time, travel and reports etc) | Charged at hourly rate in 30-minute period. |
| Hourly officer rate | £30.45 | £30.45 | £30.45 | £30.45 | £30.45 | £30.45 |

Notes:

1. Full vets fees/SSPCA fees will be recovered in full from the applicant/licensee
2. Charitable discount does not apply to charges for enforcement action.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The new licensing requirements under the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals)(Scotland) Regulations 2021 are designed to protect animal

welfare and introduce a new requirement for licensing some a number of animal welfare establishments. Arrangements are in place to introduce a licensing regime to deliver the Councils statutory duties.

- 5.2 Resourcing to deliver the scheme will be initially from within the existing environmental health resource. Income generated will fund an additional resource, as the service does not have sufficient capacity to deliver its wide range of statutory core duties.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- | | | |
|-------|--------------------------------------|---|
| 6.1 | Financial : | Scheme will be full costs recovery |
| 6.2 | Legal : | New statutory duty on local authority to licence animal welfare establishments |
| 6.3 | HR | HR : Additional resources will be funded from income |
| 6.4 | Fairer Scotland Duty: | None |
| 6.5.1 | Equalities protected characteristics | - No impacts |
| 6.5.2 | Socio-economic Duty: | Propose reduction in fees for charitable organisations |
| 6.5.3 | Islands : | None |
| 6.6 | Risk: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The delay in delivering the new licensing regime • Lack of available resource to deliver the licensing scheme. |
| 6.7 | Customer Service: | There will be a proactive communication strategy to advise business of the new requirements |

Executive Director with responsibility for Regulatory Services: Kirsty Flanagan

Policy Lead: Cllr David Kinniburgh

9th August 2021

For further information contact:

Alan Morrison, Regulatory Services Manager/ Jo Rains, Environmental Health Manager

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Detailed breakdown of fees

Appendix 1: Detailed breakdown of fees

Summary: Animal Welfare Licensing Fees and charges

| | Sale of pet animals | Animal rehoming activities | Animal welfare establishments | Breeding of dogs | Breeding of cats | Breeding of rabbits |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| New application/renewal (note 1) | £197.93 | £197.93 | £228.38 | £182.70 | £182.70 | £182.70 |
| Variation of licence | £152.25 | £152.25 | £182.70 | £137.03 | £137.03 | £137.03 |
| Charitable discount (to registered charities to new applications renewals and variations) (Note 2) | 50% | 50% | 50% | 50% | 50% | 50% |
| Licencing Enforcement Visit No 1 | £175.09 | £175.09 | £190.31 | £159.86 | £159.86 | £159.86 |
| Subsequent enforcement visits (includes officer time, travel etc.) | Charged at hourly rate in 30-minute period. |
| Hourly officer rate | £30.45 | £30.45 | £30.45 | £30.45 | £30.45 | £30.45 |

Notes:

1. Full vets fees will be recovered in full from the applicant/licensee
2. Charitable discount does not apply to charges for enforcement action.

Detailed breakdown of fees

| Animal Welfare Licencing - Fees | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| | Sale of pet animals | Animal rehoming activities | Animal welfare establishments | Breeding of dogs | Breeding of cats | Breeding of rabbits |
| New application/renewal | £197.93 | £197.93 | £228.38 | £182.70 | £182.70 | £182.70 |
| Receipt and check of application | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 |
| Process of fee | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 |
| LA assess fit and proper person | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 |
| LA arrange compliance inspection | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 |
| LA compliance inspection | 3.00 | 3.00 | 4.00 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 2.5 |
| LA arrange vet inspection | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 |
| Consideration of vet report | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 |
| Issue of licence | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Variation of licence | 152.25 | 152.25 | £182.70 | £137.03 | £137.03 | £137.03 |
| Receipt and check of application | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 |
| Process of fee | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 |
| LA arrange compliance inspection | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 |
| LA compliance inspection | 2.00 | 2.00 | 3.00 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 1.5 |
| LA arrange vet inspection | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 |
| Consideration of vet report | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 |
| Re-issue of licence | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 |
| | | | | | | |
| Licence compliance inspection (LA) | £91.35 | £91.35 | £121.80 | £76.13 | £76.13 | £76.13 |
| Travel, average time on site | 2.00 | 2.00 | 3.00 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 1.5 |
| Prep of report | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| | | | | | | |
| Licence enforcement inspection (LA) | £175.09 | £175.09 | £190.31 | £159.86 | £159.86 | £159.86 |
| Consideration of enforcement reason | 0.75 | 0.75 | 0.75 | 0.75 | 0.75 | 0.75 |
| Travel, average time on site (LA) | 2.00 | 2.00 | 2.5 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 1.5 |
| LA arrange vet inspection | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 |
| Consideration of vet report | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 |
| Prep and issue of enforcement report | 2.00 | 2.00 | 2.00 | 2.00 | 2.00 | 2.00 |
| | | | | | | |
| | | Hourly rate | | Half hour | | |
| Further hourly officer rate for additional enforcement work | | 30.45 | | 15.23 | | |

Note

The licence fee is the same whether 1,2 or 3 year duration

No licence compliance inspections will be carried out mid-cycle

Licence enforcement inspections will be carried out on receipt of a justified complaint. Non-justifiable complaints will not be charged for.

All veterinary/SSPCA fees will be charged back to the licensee

ARGYLL & BUTE COUNCIL**COUNCIL****LEGAL AND REGULATORY SUPPORT****30 SEPTEMBER 2021**

**EXTRACT OF MINUTE OF BUTE AND COWAL AREA COMMITTEE HELD ON 31
AUGUST 2021**

*** 10. NOTICE OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDER 13**

The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Moffat, seconded by Councillor Findlay:

Motion

The Bute and Cowal Area Committee request that the Council pause, for a period of 18 months from August 2021, the implementation of the decision of the budget meeting of 25 February 2021, regarding the future of Arden Craig Gardens making a saving of £5000 for the council and ask that the relevant service, in the meantime, find that saving from existing budgets. This will enable the community and other interested parties time to develop a business plan to still achieve the savings for the council and allow the gardens to remain open and operate commercially on a basis to be agreed. This would allow an opportunity for a very strong community group to get the required business plan and income revenue in place to continue the running and advancement of the gardens at no cost to the council whilst achieving the savings identified in the budget. This may also provide an income for the council.

Amendment

The Bute and Cowal Area Committee:

- (i) notes that all Councillors present at the Budget vote on 25 February 2021 voted to save £10,000 by stopping the nursery growing service at Kilmory and Arden Craig;
- (ii) notes that this decision has no impact on the continued operation of Arden Craig Gardens;
- (iii) welcomes the formation of the Arden Craig Garden Interest Group (AGIG) and the engagement of officers from Roads and Infrastructure with that group;
- (iv) thanks AGIG for carrying out their visitor survey and for engaging with the Council over the future of Arden Craig gardens and nursery; and

- (v) requests that Council officers continue their dialogue with AGIG and submit a paper to the December meeting of the EDI Committee with their recommendations regarding AGIG's plans for the gardens and nursery.

Moved by Councillor Reid, seconded by Councillor McNeilly.

The Members voted by calling the roll and voted as follows:

Motion

Amendment

Councillor Moffat
Councillor Findlay
Councillor Anderson
Councillor Blair
Councillor Forrest

Councillor Reid
Councillor McNeilly
Councillor McCabe
Councillor Good

Decision

With the Motion receiving 5 votes and Amendment receiving 4 votes, the Committee resolved accordingly.

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**COUNCIL**

LEGAL AND REGULATORY SUPPORT**30 SEPTEMBER 2021**

EXECUTIVE ACTIONS IN RESPONSE TO EMERGENCY SITUATION

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Council's constitution gives specific delegations to the Chief Executive in accordance with Section 3 Part C paragraph 3.2.5. This provides the Chief Executive with power in an emergency situation to instruct executive action subject to advising as appropriate (a) the Leader, (b) the relevant Policy Lead, and where the emergency is likely to affect significantly a particular part of the Council's area (c) the Chair of the relevant Area Committee and (d) Ward Councillors, reporting to the Council as soon as possible thereafter, on any items of expenditure for which approval would normally be necessary. This provides a basis for any urgent decisions which require to be made in response to an emerging situation.
- 1.2 This report advises Council on two situations in recent weeks where such measures have required to be invoked subject to appropriate consultation.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Council is invited to:-

- a) Note the decisions that have been taken with regards to participation in the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Scheme as set out at paragraph 3.1.3.
- b) Note the decision that has been taken with regards to a request for a variation to Council's Fees and Charges in relation to an event in Oban.

DETAIL**3.1 Afghan Relocations and Assistance Scheme**

- 3.1.1 The situation in Afghanistan has deteriorated rapidly in recent weeks with Taliban forces having control of the country. The UK Government with support from the allied forces increased their efforts to bring the eligible locally engaged staff and their families who were still in Afghanistan to the UK. Flights from Afghanistan have now ended and the approximately 8,000 Afghans who reached the UK safely are being housed in Home Office arranged accommodation. The UK Government is urging all local authorities to support the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Scheme and identify appropriate housing.

3.1.2 The Chief Executive, after consulting with the Council Leader and notifying the chair of Bute and Cowal area committee and Bute elected members, exercised emergency powers to agree to resettle Afghan families in Rothesay as per the recommendations and arrangements in a briefing note issued to all Councillors on 1st September. (Appendix 1).

3.1.3 Council is invited to note the following actions that have been taken in response in response to this situation:

- Argyll and Bute Council have given a commitment to the Home Office that we will participate in the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Scheme, initially accepting three families to Rothesay.
- The Resettlement Team will secure the two 3 bedroom properties and one 2 bedroom property ACHA and Fyne Homes has available and make them ready for arrivals.
- The Resettlement Team in Rothesay will deliver all of the support required to the Afghan families and any school age children will attend Rothesay joint Campus. All costs to provide support will be met from the Home Office funding.
- The programme of support will be coordinated through the multi-agency Resettlement Group which was established in 2015 and is chaired by the Council's Business Improvement Manager.

3.1.4 All Councillors will continue to receive updates on the resettlement programme.

3.2 Event Application – Request for variation to Council's Fees and Charges

3.2.1 Evans Fun Fairs normally hold their Funfair annually at Mossfield Stadium car parking area in Oban, however due to COVID-19 and the restructuring of the Mossfield Car Park they were unable to do this in 2021. In July 2021 they subsequently applied for the use of Lochavullin Car Park Oban from 15-28 August 2021. The use of Amenity sites such as Mossfield Stadium has its own standard charges and would normally cost the Fun Fair in the region of £500.

3.2.2 Argyll and Bute Fees and Charges places a duty on the Council to charge for the use of any car parking bays per day and the use of the full car park would incur a cost of £7 per bay per day totaling over £8,000 for the two week application period.

3.2.3 An urgent decision was necessary with regards to the level of charges taking into account the potential loss of income for the two week period. This was estimated to be in the region of £2,090, however to provide support for the event and promote a wider economic benefit to the town of Oban it was considered reasonable to reduce the charge to the equivalent cost associated with Mossfield Stadium and the estimated £1,500 loss of income would be absorbed within current budgets.

3.2.4 As it was not possible for a report to be taken to the Council for approval within the necessary timeframe, the Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure Services, with the approval of the Chief Executive, consulted with the Council Leader, Policy Lead for Roads and Infrastructure, the Chair of the Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee and Ward Councillors in relation to this decision. This was considered to be a unique situation due to the exceptional circumstances.

4.0 CONCLUSION

4.1 In accordance with the arrangements outlined in Section 3 Part C paragraph 3.2.5 of the Council Constitution the Council is invited to note the circumstances and decisions with regards to the exercise of emergency provisions with regards to two urgent matters relating to the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Scheme and the waiver of arrangements for Fees and Charges. Each of these decisions was subject to appropriate Elected Member consultation as outlined within this report.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Policy – Emergency/urgency provisions put in place in accordance with arrangements in Council Constitution.
- 5.2 Financial – Associated costs are absorbed within existing departmental budgets and additional costs associated with the Afghan resettlement programme will be met from the Home Office funding.
- 5.3 Legal – Application of the powers delegated to Officers within the Council Constitution.
- 5.4 HR – none
- 5.5 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.
- 5.6 Socio-economic Duty – none
- 5.7 Risk – None.
- 5.8 Islands – None
- 5.9 Customer Services – supports arrangements for critical customer services.

Douglas Hendry

Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support

8th September 2021

Policy Lead – Councillor Mary Jean Devon

For further information please contact:-

Morag Brown, Business Improvement Manager (01546) 604199

Hugh O'Neill, Network and Standards Manager (01546) 604084

Briefing to All Councillors

The Afghan Locally Employed Staff (LES) Relocation Scheme

There are currently two schemes which are in place to support and relocate eligible Locally Engaged Staff (LES) in recognition of their service and an assessment of likely current and future risk to them due to the nature of their work for the UK government and British armed forces in the evolving situation in Afghanistan. The Afghan Ex Gratia Scheme originated in 2014 to provide funding to local authorities to support resettled Afghan locally engaged staff and the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Scheme went live in April 2021 and provides similar support but to a wider range of staff.

The level of the tariff and associated support costs has been agreed to allow local authorities to provide a high level of intensive interventions and support in the 12 months following arrival into a local authority area and the commencement of the provision of housing and support to enable self-sufficiency for those relocated under these Schemes.

(From July '21 Funding Instruction and [Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy: further information on eligibility criteria and offer details \(Updated 4 June 2021\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#))

The situation in Afghanistan has deteriorated rapidly with Taliban forces having control of the country. The UK Government with support from the allied forces increased their efforts to bring the eligible locally engaged staff and their families who were still in Afghanistan to the UK. Flights from Afghanistan have now ended and the approximately 8,000 Afghans who reached the UK safely are being housed in Home Office arranged accommodation. The UK Government is urging all local authorities to support the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Scheme and identify appropriate housing.

Local Authority Support

LES and their families are accommodated on arrival in hotels and other temporary accommodation where they will be quarantined and take the necessary Covid tests. Once the 10 day quarantine period is over the families are moved into holding hotels until such a time as they can be transferred to a Local Authority. The Afghan Relocation Scheme funding officially begins from the date of arrival in the LA lasting for 12 months.

The Local Authority is responsible for providing:

- Fully furnished, affordable accommodation which meets LA standards. Families must also be provided with a welcome pack including suitable groceries on arrival.
- A package of advice and assistance covering employment, welfare, benefits, housing, health, education (including ESOL for adults) and utility supply
- Registration with GPs and local Job Centre Plus including receipt of a National Insurance Number, distribution of Biometric Residency Permits
- Assistance in securing school places for school aged children

- Cash support for up to four months

Relocated LES and their dependents are not eligible for benefits until they can satisfy the Habitual Residency Test set by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) which can take up to 3 months, so the local authority provides financial support to those who arrive under the relocation schemes for up to 4 months in the form of weekly cash payments.

Due to the scale of people who have been evacuated from Afghanistan in the last two months, families are mainly being assigned to Local Authorities based on property availability. Afghan families tend to be large so require more 3 and 4 bedroom houses.

Funding

The Integration Support package consisting of £10,500 per individual over 12 months will be paid to the LA in three stages, 40% can be claimed on the day of arrival and instalments of 30% at the end of the 4th and 8th month.

In addition, weekly cash payments can be claimed in the first four months varying according to age at arrival and family composition in addition to an allowance of £15 per person per day for rent.

Similarly to the VPRS scheme, there are £850 payments per individual (19 years old and above) to facilitate 8 hours of ESOL per week to those who require it.

Argyll and Bute Support - Rothesay

- ACHA and Fyne Homes have confirmed the immediate availability of two 3 bedroom properties and one 2 bedroom property. Both RSLs have indicated a willingness to support the scheme.
- Furnishing the property would be the responsibility of the Resettlement Team and would be to the same basic standard as for the SVPRs scheme. The LES funding tariff will cover all property costs.
- The package of advice and support already exists for the Syrian refugee families. It is anticipated that at least one member of the Afghan household will be fluent in English so translated material is not required. The Home Office have indicated that we can make fluency in English a requirement of our participation in the scheme.
- Strong partner links are in place with the DWP in Rothesay. Rothesay Job Centre and Gourock Job Centre share a manager and Inverclyde Council has been participating in the Afghan scheme for number of years including taking some new arrivals in the past few weeks. Advice and support is available to us if we should need it.
- Strong partner links also exist with the medical centre in Rothesay. Unlike the Syrian scheme Afghan's are not generally in poor health when they arrive. However it is anticipated that their mental health will deteriorate with lengthy stays in holding hotels and the anxiety and fears for family and friends remaining in Afghanistan.

- Our SVPR scheme continues to fund 62.5 hours of ASN support at Rothesay Joint Campus. In addition there is a part time Principal Teacher of EAL (English as an Additional Language) who coordinates the support. The support hours for the refugee pupils are due for review as many no longer need such an intense level of support. If we put this review on hold there is capacity within the ASN team to support more pupils who do not speak English and there are the skills and knowledge across the staff team on how to do this well. ASN support would be fully funded by the Resettlement budget.
- There is funding for ESOL classes for adults and there is capacity in classes at all levels in the Resettlement Teams ESOL programme. The SVPR commitment is also to deliver 8 hours accredited ESOL per week.
- The Resettlement Team have just secured £90k of grant funding from the European Commission's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) to fund integration activity in the Scottish Government's New Scots Strategy. Our project will see us work in partnership with Live Argyll, Mount Stuart Trust and Argyll College. Any Afghans resettling in Rothesay would be eligible to take part in the programme which will focus on integration partnering with volunteers in the local community, language, employability – developing skills for work, health and wellbeing.
- COSLA in their role as Strategic Migration Lead for Scotland are liaising with Home Office on behalf of all LAs and have set up fortnightly planning meetings to discuss support and share experiences and learning. We are participating in these meetings.

Recommendation

- Argyll and Bute Council give a commitment to the Home Office that we will participate in the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Scheme, initially accepting three families to Rothesay.
- The Resettlement Team secure the two 3 bedroom properties and one 2 bedroom property ACHA and Fyne Homes has available and make them ready for arrivals.
- The Resettlement Team in Rothesay will deliver all of the support required to the Afghan families and any school age children will attend Rothesay joint Campus. All costs to provide support will be met from the Home Office funding.
- The programme of support will be coordinated through the multi-agency Resettlement Group which was established in 2015 and is chaired by the Council's Business Improvement Manager.

Morag Brown
Business Improvement Manager
01.09.2021

Notice of Motion for Argyll and Bute Council meeting, 30th September 2021**Climate Emergency – Argyll and Bute**

Argyll and Bute Council:

1. Renews the commitment made by this council two years ago, in September 2019, to playing its part in the global effort to address climate challenges, and declares a climate emergency.
2. Acknowledges the United Nations' warning of a 'Code Red for Humanity' situation in relation to tackling climate change, following the publication of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Report *Climate Change 2021 – The Physical Science Basis*;
3. Welcomes the significant actions that the council has been taking in recent years, highlighted in Appendix 1, to ensure that Argyll and Bute improves even further its current positive position and low carbon emissions levels and continues to make a significant contribution, with our communities and partners, to fighting the critical impact of climate change;
4. Reaffirms our determination to contribute to tackling the impacts of climate change at local, regional and national levels wherever possible, by agreeing together today that this vital work will continue as a priority for this council, expanding where possible and where necessary as identified through the Action Plan and ongoing monitoring that is already in place.

Appendix 1 – Argyll and Bute Council Action on Climate Change – Overview

Tackling climate change is everyone's responsibility. During the whole of this council term (2017 to 2022) Argyll and Bute Council has considered its contribution to that collective effort to be a key priority – including the theme of 'Greener, Cleaner Communities' as part of its Priorities for the Life of the Council, agreed in September 2017. Environmental issues have featured in council life, business and activity long before that – and that is why the region has made a good head start in addressing this global challenge.

The list below highlights just some of the ways that Argyll and Bute Council is acting on climate change and is proactively climate friendly. It is not exhaustive – but much more detail can be found in the regular reports to the council's Policy and Resources Committee which is charged with monitoring and scrutiny of climate change activity, including the council's Decarbonisation Action Plan.

The motion above declares a climate emergency. In practice, Argyll and Bute Council has already taken – and continues to take – the actions which drive this terminology and bring it into reality:

Setting target dates to reduce local climate impacts:

- Argyll and Bute is already one of the lowest carbon emitting regions in the UK due to low levels of industry pollution and large land mass with hectares of forest cover.
- It also generates a significant amount of renewable energy through wind farms and hydro which means that when electricity is used from the grid, it is greener.
- Argyll and Bute aims to become the UK's first net zero region and its action plan target is net zero by 2045 – with ambitious interim targets of reaching 75% reduction by 2030.

Establishing a working group to report on intermediate and longer term actions:

- The council established the Climate Change Environmental Action Group (CCEAG) in September 2019 – cross party, evidence led, councillor led.
- CCEAG met regularly and also supported a workshop for all councillors as part of ongoing elected member training (which includes exploration of further climate literacy training options).
- The group helped shape the council's first Decarbonisation Plan and Action Plan which was reported to the full council in November 2020.
- Work also fed into the officer-led cross-council Climate Change Board and its predecessor Carbon Management Group (predating 2017).
- A dedicated communications approach to Climate Friendly Argyll and Bute to ensure that issues and actions are visible and to highlight ways that everyone can act and contribute.
- Agreeing that, given the significant importance of climate change activity, the Board's work would now be reported through the council's strategic Policy and Resources Committee (from November 2020 onwards).

Engagement at all levels

- Argyll and Bute Council is a member of the national Sustainable Scotland Network, sharing knowledge and practice with other organisations.
- Climate change is a specific strategic theme progressed by Community Planning Partners at all levels.
- Informal engagement by elected members with local action groups – mapping exercise to capture community activity on climate change.
- Work ongoing on web-based Argyll and Bute Climate Change Directory.
- Direct engagement with key sectors – this year the focus is on agriculture and land use, partnership working with NFUS in relation to climate change impact on that sector.

Strategic leadership

- Everyone has a contribution to make in tackling climate change. All council services and Policy Leads have a role in supporting the council's net zero journey, and the council Leader remains overall strategic lead for climate change. This commitment from senior leadership sets a marker in terms of the importance of the matter to this council.

Other Argyll and Bute Council contributions to collective action on climate change:

- Argyll and Bute Council has delivered a 27% reduction in carbon emissions over the past five years – with emissions dropping for three years in a row.
- Reduction to 28,643 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e) in 2019/20, from 34,738 tCO₂e in 2018/19.
- The council has made significant investments in climate change related activity and mitigation, with a total of £1.1m invested in climate change measures in the preceding two council budgets.
- Agreeing £1.2m in energy efficiency saving at council buildings actions at the Policy and Resources Committee meeting in May 2021.
- Undertaking a wide range of actions including but not confined to:
 - Reducing use of disposable and single waste plastics across services
 - Food waste reduction measures, including pre-order system at school
 - Renewable heat incentive projects
 - LED streetlight and lightbulb replacement programme
 - Installation of over 30 biomass boilers in schools and council buildings
 - Changing oil boilers to air source heat systems in other buildings
 - Installing solar panels on council buildings which generate over 1MW of renewable energy
 - Replacing petrol/diesel council vehicles with new electric fleet – and wider Fleet Replacement Strategy for future replacement approach
 - Reducing road miles in service delivery through new vehicle routing system
 - Developing the council's first Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy
 - Expansion of fleet charge point infrastructure, including securing £700k funding to install new EV points

- All of the above contributing to national target of phasing out new petrol and diesel vehicles by 2032
- Identifying water efficiencies at council premises
- Administering an annual £1m-plus grant (£1.7m in 2021) to help people make energy efficient improvements at home.
- Securing £2.3m Scottish Government funding to support ACHA's external wall insulation programme and improve energy efficiency in local homes.
- Developing a Renewable Sourcing Strategy.
- Review of flood and coastal protection policies.
- Ongoing support of the Argyll and Bute Renewables Alliance (ABRA) and annual review of Renewable Energy Strategy.
- Continued support for offshore renewable proposals and development.
- Council-owned Miss Hoolie wind turbine powering Mull's waste disposal site.
- Annual review of Sustainable Procurement Policy.
- Identifying and driving forward carbon offset projects and activity – including tree planting partnership with Argyll and the Isles Coast and Countryside Trust (ACT Argyll), planting more than 60 hectares of council land in Lochgilphead.
- Education Service participation in Queen's Green Canopy planting initiative over 2021 and 2022.
- 98 Argyll and Bute schools are Eco Schools (the first being Inveraray Primary School back in 2003) with many schools gaining more than five Green Flags.
- Creation of sustainable, outdoor learning spaces.
- Hosting Education Climate Change Summit in October 2021 – bringing together at least 25 educational establishments, third sector organisations and businesses to join forces in discussing a range of climate-related issues.
- Development of online resources targeted at schools to highlight the importance of the waste hierarchy (reduce, reuse, recycle, prevention) in combatting climate change.
- 'Digital by Default' approach across council services which reduces travel, printing, paper usage and contributes to overall targets.
- Innovative drone pilot scheme to transport medical supplies to remote and hard to reach areas and islands.
- Ongoing active travel activity following combined investment of almost £1m in preceding two council budgets and range of local projects including most recently the Lochgilphead town centre active travel route consultation and partnership working to deliver the Scotrail Highland Explorer Active Travel Carriage, the first of its kind in the UK.

For more detail on Argyll and Bute Council's progress in achieving net zero, please check the regular reports considered by the Policy and Resources Committee.