

**MINUTES of MEETING of ARGYLL AND BUTE COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP -
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE held in the ONLINE VIA MS TEAMS
on WEDNESDAY, 8 DECEMBER 2021 AT 1000**

Present: Joe McKay, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (Chair)	
Pippa Milne, Argyll and Bute Council	Takki Sulaiman, Argyll and Bute TSI
Rona Gold, Argyll and Bute Council	Fiona Davies, HSCP
Martin Jones, University of Highlands and Islands	Morag Goodfellow, Highland and Island Enterprise
Willie Lynch, Bute and Cowal Area Community Planning Group	Fergus Walker, Argyll and Bute Council
Shona Barton, Argyll and Bute Council	Stan Philips, NatureScot
Laura Evans, Police Scotland	John Paterson, Police Scotland
Fergus Murray, Argyll and Bute Council	Anthony Standing, SDS
David Gibson, HSCP	Iain MacInnes, Argyll and Bute Council
Nicola Hackett, Live Argyll	Nicola Reaney, Argyll and Bute Council (Secretary)
Apologies	
Robin Currie, Argyll and Bute Council	Alison McGrory, NHS Scotland
Stuart Green, Argyll and Bute Council	Derek McCrindle, Scottish Enterprise
Patricia Renfrew, HSCP	Patricia O'Neill, Argyll and Bute Council
Ian Brodie, Mid Argyll and the Isles Area Community Planning Group	Stuart Mearns, Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park
John Paterson, Police Scotland	Stuart Green, Argyll and Bute Council
Kevin Champion, Oban Lorn and Isles Area Community Planning Group	Donna Bell, Scottish Government
Marlene Baillie, Police Scotland	Laura Evans, Police Scotland
Albert Bruce, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service	Murray McEwan, Scottish Ambulance Service

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES (CHAIR)

Joe welcomed everyone to the meeting, and for submitting papers for consideration, especially at this busy time of year. He also welcomed David Gibson, Chief Social Worker and Head of Children and Families and Justice, to the meeting. Apologies were noted.

2. APPROVAL OF LAST MINUTES AND REVIEW OF ACTIONS (RONA GOLD)

The last minutes were approved as an accurate record of the previous minutes. Rona the positive discussions at the last meeting and the many actions arising. The updated action shows that the majority of actions are completed and Rona thanked all partners for their work to move those forward. A few outstanding actions to check in on are:

- Short Life Working Group on Digital Inclusion. As updates on Digital Inclusion are given to the Management Committee under that cross cutting theme, it was agreed that there is no requirement to set up an additional group on this.
- Partners to encourage organisations they work with about Connecting Scotland. Rona noted that it is difficult for the Community Planning team to confirm if “actions for all” have been undertaken by all partners. Rona noted how Willie takes information from the CPP and shares it on Facebook to his contact organisations. Joe praised Willie for his efforts sharing information widely on Facebook, adding that he uses the SFRS intranet to cascade information, and that it is imperative that we all share information widely. Rona noted the fortnightly CPP Bulletin and asked that all partners share the information in that to organisations and communities as it also helps to increase understanding on what Community Planning is and how it helps communities. Please let ccpadmin@argyll-bute.gov.uk know if you are not in receipt of that bulletin.
- Updates from the SLWG on Recruitment and Retention. Anthony and Morag will provide an update in this action later in the meeting.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM AREA COMMUNITY PLANNING GROUPS (SHONA BARTON)

Shona provided a report with updates from the last ACPG meetings, noting there had been successful meetings with good attendance in all 4 areas during November. It was difficult for some partners to attend due to COP 26 commitments and they were grateful for the many partners who were able to attend. Shona said it was disappointing regarding the ongoing number of vacant Chair and Vice Chair roles (MAKI vacant Vice Chair, H&L vacant Chair and Vice Chair and OLI vacant Vice Chair (Cllr Elaine Robertson is temporary Vice Chair)). Shona asked the Management Committee to consider, and suggest, how to make these roles appear more attractive to fill the vacancies. Information has been sent to memberships of ACPGs and community groups with limited success.

Joe felt it was important for partners to encourage our own staff to get involved in the ACPGs and asked if we can look at different types of organisations within local areas (colleges, fire cadets, young people, Faslane representatives etc.) to create interest from diverse parts of the community for Chair and Vice Chair roles. Rona noted there has been stability and passion within ACPG chairs, and a young person had been Vice Chair in OLI and had got a lot out of that role. She suggested creativity, perhaps a video, which highlighted what the role is, hearing from people in communities that have been in the roles, what they got out of it and interviews with key people in Management Committee. The context of ACPGs should be open and inviting. Takki agreed that was a great way forward. He had noted at the IJB that the ACPGs and Locality Planning Groups (LPGs) could merge as they have a similar remit, if that is legally possible and without impact to upcoming change relating to the National Care Service review.

Willie agreed it was important to highlight the “what is in it for me” part of involvement in the ACPGs, saying that he enjoys the role within the ACPG and as a Chair you listen to

lots of feedback and reports from within your community and that gives a broad understanding of what is happening in community and how to help move that forward.

Pippa felt there was opportunity in what Takki suggested and the council elected members are already looking to review political management arrangements for consideration but the incoming council after the May elections. She also noted for Area Committees can also be considered on how they link to ACPGs and LPGs, as is seen in other council areas. It is a big ask to communities to be involved in each of these groups, so we need to make that as easy as possible.

Fiona said the HSCP is very open to engagement and involvement to doing things differently to how it has been done in the past. Covid forced us to move into more technological ways working and we need to find the best solutions for the future. She is keen to join conversations on how we can work differently. Joe agreed that we need to be more agile and look at new ways of working, and that should be taken forward. Shona suggested that we carry forward discussions on this once the result of similar discussions in other areas is known i.e. the political management review.

ACTION - Shona to begin preparations for a short video with interviews and feedback from current and past Chairs.

Rona said that despite of current vacancies within ACPGs, there was diversity in age and gender for Chairs and Vice Chairs, and there are brilliant conversations taking place and that level on work by local groups that are meaningful to the community. ACPGs are an essential and important part of Community Planning. Joe and Rona both gave thanks to all current and past Chair that have facilitated the conversations in those meetings that have supported communities. Stan noted that the Climate Change Working Group are actively pursuing youth involvement and hoped the incoming MSYPs will want to be involved in that and the ACPGs. Rona advised the new MSYPS will be invited to the March meeting.

4. CROSS CUTTING THEMES

(a) Climate Change (Stan Phillips)

Stan advised that the Climate Change Working Group (CCWG) had met twice since last Management Committee and held a wider Short Life Working Group to develop a climate change strategy and plans to get to net zero in Argyll and Bute. There is now a vision for the “what” for adaptation, mitigation and engagement plans and now they need to work on how to write the plans and strategies. They are working with external practitioners to look at best way to do that and the required fundraising. Alison McGrory and Becky Hothersall are leading with the early stages on an engagement plan as there is the need to start that early to inform and engage on the journey we are taking to meet net zero to the wider Argyll and Bute population.

Willie asked for views regarding the licensing for the 2022 Dunoon Closed

Road Rally as he felt 2 days of approx. 150 cars racing in the area was counter to the climate change agenda and the event should not be licensed. Kirsty agreed to engage with Willie on this as it was not something that the CPP could take a view on, but needed a council response.

Rona asked if there was any details on what funding asks there may be on the wider partnership that the CCWG would need to complete engagement, noting that there is a small budget in the CPP that can fund some work of the cross cutting themes and could be used towards the climate change work. Stan said the CCWG has really active people on the group and things are working well, however, he does not have the details of any financial ask at present.

(b) Child Poverty (Fiona Davies and David Gibson)

Rona advised that the Child Poverty Working Group (CPWG) that reports to the CPP MC met yesterday so there was no update from that meeting yet. At that meeting they discussed the roll out of free school meals for P5 taking in effect January (so P1 to P5 will be entitled to a free lunch) and that a project officer is now in place for the work around period products and ensuring that communities are being engaged around how we meet the requirements on that Act, extending the support from schools to communities. There is a consultation expected on the “right to food” and there is also links in the agenda pack to the current consultation on food banks to which Jayne Jones, Jayne.jones@argyll-bute.gov.uk, is pulling a response together in the new year.

ACTION - Minutes of the 7 December Child Poverty Working Group to be circulated to partners.

David added that beyond that there is a lot of effort and people tasked to dealing with poverty, but this is everyone’s responsibility. They also talked about a public health model, similar to that used by the Police to tackle domestic violence, where no matter the issue families can have access to support and information from the people they are most likely to come into contact with / have relationships with i.e. health services giving information about money matters. It is important to get information out via non-traditional channels, rather than just who we would usually think of.

David said they are also looking at fuel poverty including that the best poverty indices can be used to reflect our remote and island areas accurately, and how do we make that data work for us as in Argyll and Bute a single post code can have massive inequality, even on one street. They are starting to develop ways forward on this and how do we get rid of food banks, rather than have better ones. Food banks have become part of the professional community culture and it is an indictment on society that we have food banks at all.

The CPWG is an active group and will be looking to take a number of

those agendas forward and will be talking to agencies (Fire, Police etc.) to support this. Joe noted the Fire Service has risk recognition training for staff to enable them to signpost families in need to further support. Fiona added that they also had some discussions on dates for school clothing banks to be established. This will be done in a phased approach to target areas with the most need then roll out more broadly across Argyll and Bute during 2022, and this is a welcome inclusion in the agenda on tackling child poverty.

(c) **Financial Inclusion (Fergus Walker)**

Fergus gave an update that overlaps on some of the information provided to the CPWG yesterday. The Flexible Food fund work, in conjunction with AliEnergy and the Community Food Forum, was given a Highly Commended award from the IRRV under the category of excellence and innovation, and it is great to see that work getting independent recognition. By end November, more than £1m had been awarded for the Flexible Food fund. The grant is an online claim to support food and fuel insecurity with claimants also being referred to AliEnergy and Bute Advice with an incentivised second payment if both confirm the claimant has engaged with them. 734 families have been supported with an average grant gain of £1034 each. The debt advice provided by AliEnergy has captured over £150,000 worth of debt capture £15000 with advice to help pay that off. The fund is contracted to 31 March 2022, but the hope is to carry forward any underspend and continue availability of the fund to end September 2022.

There has been an approx. £86,000 overspend on the Scottish welfare fund for grants to those in hardship and Fergus has provided a paper to the SMT on 13 December to discuss that as there was a national underspend last year which the Scottish Government advised would be used as top up funds for this year, although that did not happen. However, £373,000 has been given to the Council for a Hardship Fund and Fergus is requesting that some of those funds cover the overspend.

Discretionary housing payments has a committed spend of £854,000 and is set to be within budget (£900,000) by year end. This was funding provided by the Scottish Government policy to mitigate the “bedroom tax” across Scotland.

Poverty Awareness Training - There are 600 slots on this training available from 12 Jan to 31 March 2022, max 15 per session. Fergus previously asked for names to be forwarded to him for names of delegates within partner organisations that would like to receive this training. The training supplier in place to deliver the training is the Poverty Alliance. Fergus and David are keen that all the places on this training are filled.

ACTION - Partners to encourage sign up to Poverty Awareness training at [Poverty Awareness Training Tickets, Multiple Dates | Eventbrite](#)

Rona offered to provide support and advise to Fergus team from Community Planning on ticket and booking solutions for the training, which they hope to have in place before Christmas to start sign ups. Fergus can forward the details of the training programme to partners.

School clothing banks - There is existing provision for this in H&L and 3 target areas for the initial roll out have been identified as Rothesay, Islay and Dunoon as the highest areas of deprivation. Community groups are already engaged in these areas and are keen to deliver this. Pupil equity teams are also keen to get on board for “sustainable use clothing banks” so this also support the climate challenges. It has also been badged as such to avoid the stigmatisation of poverty. Funds are available to help with set up costs and they are confident that the plans will be in place from end March and clothing banks set up in the initial 3 areas by end June in time for the new school term starting in August 2022. They will look to roll this out in OLI in the period June - December 2022.

Joe congratulated Fergus on the IRRC award recognition and the partnerships doing great work to tackle inequalities. Fergus clarified that they are not wanting to take over the great work already being done on this in communities but fill the gaps and support existing work. He also asked if they can accept donations as SFRS have a discretionary fund that could be used to support this.

ACTION - Albert to contact Fergus W directly to discuss discretionary funds.

(d) Community Wealth Building (Takki Sulaiman, Fergus Murray and Morag Goodfellow)

Takki gave a presentation on Community Wealth Building (CWB) and the work being taken forward on this on behalf of the CPP. The context of CWB is the new bill being proposed to the Scottish Government. The new outcome improvement plan (OIP) for 2023 will look at opportunities to include CWB in policy, as will the new HSPC and Commissioning Strategies.

Other parts of the country are well progressed on CWB and can offer hints, tips, toolkits etc. to us. CWB looks at how the concentration of wealth away from individuals to corporations creates inequality. The aim is that wealth should be generated and kept locally. The pillars of CWB cut across a number of existing strategies and Takki's team are looking at policy planning and mapping to pull together information on how existing strategies can be adapted or amended to take advantage of CWB, and identify where we are already delivering aspects of CWB.

Takki went to the Social Enterprise Sector and CWB networking event on 8 November 2021. That recognised key areas where there was substantial funding provided during Covid and a need to develop more sustainable funding models. The approach to service design, and some

infrastructure activity, seems to be fragmented into parts and third/social enterprise sector seem to be seen as the low pay option. This can be supported by transparency in procurement and local spend analysis, having a defined framework for anchor partners and building fair pay into contracts. The next steps are the policy mapping, analysis of resources available to support the development of CWB, a potential aspirations and benefit analysis then produce a proposal to the CPP on an Argyll and Bute approach to CWB. Links to tools and strategies are contained in the presentation from Takki.

Pippa is keen to look at how we can building on the activity that is already happening - the Shaping Places for Wellbeing programme (with funding from the Health foundation and Scottish Government, delivered by Public Health Scotland and Improvement Services) is looking at how changing places can improve wellbeing and they have picked Dunoon as a pilot to work on that program. She added that we need to be more coordinated on how regeneration links to these activities and will be good to see if there are lessons we can learn from that, and identify how to bring the fragmentation from health, welfare and regeneration together and possibly replicate that alongside the CWB ethos. Pippa and Takki will discuss this outside the meeting.

David emphasised the central role of housing availability needs to have in all that we do. We can recruit people but we cannot provide housing so it is a difficult situation, especially if we want those living and working in the area become central to our workforce. Pippa advised that work in the rural growth deal looks at population strategy work with HiE, and a key aspect of that is housing. We also have community trusts in Argyll and Bute that are developing housing. That sits well with CWB if communities themselves can provide that and help them build back housing capacity.

Stan asked how CWB fits with the renewables energy industry in Argyll and Bute (currently run by multinational companies) and is there a better way to build community benefits into this? Takki said there is a link in his presentation that documents how the transfer from old to new energy model can be facilitated by a CWB approach and it's very much a CWB issue that profits from locally produced energy be used locally.

(e) **Digital (Communities) (Nicola Hackett and Iain MacInnes)**

Nicola H said the CLD partnership is very committed to developing and working on digital development. They have agreed a work stream group for digital development with a focus on how we support learners and support those most in need. The group includes HSCP, Health Promotion, Education, CLD, Argyll College and Inspirabla. The first meeting is to be set up and that will agree the terms of reference, look at collaboration between organisations and where we are currently at, identify gaps and additional resources that may be required. There is a CLD adult learning fund, via the TSI, that the group will consider as part of the funding element around the Digital work to do a support analysis. They are

working to get devices to right people and provide training and support moving forward. They will also look to work with housing associations to support digital skills for practical day to day support with digital skills to pay bills as well as work on wider aspects of support like employability skills, and work with partners to spread the word and help identify those who are in need of the most support in our communities. The group will report back to CPP and the wider CLD partnership, and hope to bring details of firm plans to the March 2022 CPP MC.

Iain gave a detailed and informative presentation on the existing and planned connectivity of the fibre digital infrastructure across Argyll and Bute. Current premises access to superfast broadband (over 24mbps) is at 85.43% but there are still large numbers with poor connectivity (13% with connection under 10mpbs). The existing contract with Openreach to roll out fibre access has been subject to significant delay and works that were due to complete by 2025 are now scheduled by 2027. Colonsay and Iona are to get a sub-sea cable installed in 2022 however there is planning concerns regarding fragile areas of machair that are still to be resolved. Work has started on full fibre connection in Oban but many residents are unaware that this connectivity is now available. Iain intends to work with Comms to send messaging out with information on that in the area. Jura are part of a community connection programme and are working directly with Openreach to provide full gigabit connectivity (will be the first island to get this).

The Scottish Government has committed to providing full fibre access to 100% of properties in Scotland, however, some areas are not in the initial commitment areas of current work. For those outside of the initial commitment area, there is a complex voucher scheme available to provide alternative access to fast internet (usually via 4G) interim solution but this is also impacted by the 4G signal available in some areas. Argyll and Bute is seen as a challenging area to provide connection to, therefore the open market review on the provision of full gigabit connectivity are keen to work with providers in this area, if they can provide solutions here, they can provide them anywhere else in Scotland.

Iain also noted that mobile coverage has improved dramatically across the area over the last few years with over 70 masts built, however there are still gaps in some areas. The Scottish Government 4G Infill programme had proposals to build masts in the area including Mull, Jura, Islay, Southend and Crinan although he noted this is not confirmed as mast site plans are fluid.

Joe asked if the voucher scheme was widely known and has there been a good uptake on that. Iain said that voucher system is not easy to navigate as availability is supplier dependant/led. Joe asked how we can help to make that process easier. Rona asked if we could use part of the infrastructure funding to communicate what is available to premises, enabled by the CPP via the CLD partnership. Rona also welcomed more partners to get involved in that digital working group as the more of us that

can work on that, and share information, the better. Joe agreed and Willie offered to join the digital working group noting his 25 years' experience as an operations manager with Openreach.

(f) **Building Back Better (Communities) (Rona Gold)**

Rona gave an update linked to the [paper](#) being presented to the Policy and Resources Committee on 9 December. The Building Back Better (Communities) work stream is led by Rona and originated at the end of summer 2020 along with a number of other work streams and key leads. The key areas being looked at by the BBB came out of feedback from communities on what was important to them including health implications and financial implications of Covid, restarting health services, digital needs, connecting to the environment and climate change. Another work stream of critical importance is the impact of Covid on community organisations and helping them to increase their positive roles, grow volunteer numbers and face the challenging impacts on how to sustain the support they provide and develop support to ongoing needs. There is a cohort of Test and Protect response groups that the team still meet with on a monthly basis, and contact weekly, who provide support in rural communities. The paper highlights the ongoing importance of this work and ensuring a connection between the public sector and community groups and asks for funding for a 12 month post to oversee and lead on this work to support community groups, lead on Test and Protect, support volunteers, transport and vaccination support that are still ongoing and require resources. It is hoped to recruit to that role in the New Year. Recruitment has completed for a BBB worker to do the mapping for this live work, and collate the impacts to community groups, and put together a comprehensive plan that we embed into the work that we need to do on this in our 10 year plan.

5. 2022 AND WORKING TOWARDS A REVISION OF THE ARGYLL AND BUTE OUTCOME IMPROVEMENT PLAN (PIPPA MILNE)

The existing ABOIP runs to 2023 and this will be the first big refresh of the plan in 10 years and Pippa felt it was apt to be talking about this based on the constructive discussions today. Over the next year we will be starting to look at how the new plan will look and assess what the needs and demands look like for the period of the plan. This will be followed by engagement with our communities on our outcomes, with a hope to do that in a united way across the partnership, and showing the full range of partnership working. This links into a number of other aspects such as periods of regeneration in the council coming to end, the emergence of levelling up funding and looking as a Council for a pipeline of potential projects to support those needs. This also sits alongside our climate change strategy and supporting economic growth (including priority areas of CWB and housing) and these should very much align to the terms of the refreshed outcome improvement plan. We also want to take advantage of funding opportunities, which we have touched on in so far as the massive amount of change in a national context for recovery and renewal. Potential developments from the National Care Service review will also affect our plan and thinking for next 10 years. Population decline is a big

issue which is particularly evident right now with staff shortage in health sectors, the national population strategy, the Islands Plan and place based learning - this all needs to be taken into account.

The Council, just one of the partners in the ABOIP, will be going through a period of refresh with elections due in May and the Council Corporate Plan will be reviewed ahead of the ABOIP to reflect the priorities of the new council.

The ABOIP is the overarching plan of shared priorities for the area and we should aim to align the corporate plan of the Council to the ABOIP so there is a clear link between the two. Pippa is interested to get views from partners on how they can each align their own plans to the new ABOIP so we can clearly show that combined focus of activity, how it works to the outcomes and pull data and insights together to inform and deliver them. Pippa will bring a further update to the March 2022 CPP MC with more detail showing the ABOIP revisions that will be undertaken and how we can work together to assess that need and engage with communities. She is happy to take comments, thoughts and suggestions outside of the meeting from ACPG Chairs etc. on how this can be approached.

ACTION - Partners to start to think about their plans from a renewed perspective and on how plans can be aligned.

Morag welcomed the timing of this, well in advance of 2023, to take into account of developing strategies and she pointed out the recent announcement of a national strategy for economic transformation from the Scottish Government and she expects to see some of the themes included in that around poverty regeneration that we have spoken about today and will provide a strong framework to address our priorities.

John noted that although community planning strategies are wonderful, the key is what we are actually doing. This is a unique opportunity for Argyll and Bute to do something different. He noted that the Police Plan for 2023 - 26 is also due and there is work going behind the scenes in Police Scotland on this. He also suggested to avoid consultation fatigue, we could go out with individual plans as part of a joint consultation with an approach that develops a joint mind-set, given we all have statutory responsibility to contribute to the ABOIP - if #ABplace2be how do we all get on that same journey to recruit people, develop and retain, face housing challenges etc. We can build on a strong evidence base of information gathered during Covid to help us decide what we need to do and need to stop doing.

Pippa agreed with John on consultation fatigue and how it is important for us to engage together on these interlinked matters and show how plans sit in a joined up way.

She asked how we can we improve on our already strong partnership working and cross the boundaries of themes and outcomes in a more joint up way? There is an opportunity in transformation to affect change and not just reacting in a national context. Current national context may not allow us to do everything that needs to be done, so how can we react to that and get the best for our communities - we need to challenge our thinking on how we can step it up.

6. OUTCOME 6

(a) Rural Crime and Community Planning (Marlene Baillie)

John gave an update in Marlene's absence. He advised that the Local Chair for Rural Crime and has instigated a renewed look at a partnership approach to rural crime. Rural crime has an impact on our communities and we need to get better to inform communities where the issues are and help communities to raise awareness if things do not look right. Communities know if there are people from outside the area and we need to create a forum to get and gather information from them. He noted recent arrests of a number of offenders, who had travelled a considerable distance into a community to commit crime at 3am. Work on this the Police Area Commanders will provide regular updates to the CPP MC.

(b) Scamming and Community Pledges (Laura Evans)

John noted the paper and asked for partners to respond with comments and Joe deferred the giving of pledges to the March 2022 meeting. John said there had been a good uptake on call blockers and the return on investment will be £800k-£1m over 3 years. Willie advised of the [neighbourhood alerts](#) that can be signed up to provide information from the Police on current scams etc.

ACTION - Comments on the paper and pledges can be provided to cppadmin@argyll-bute.gov.uk.

7. OUTCOME 1 - RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION SLWG UPDATE (ANTHONY STANDING AND MORAG GOODFELLOW)

Anthony provided a detailed presentation which highlighted the complex issues being looked at by the Short Life Working Group (SLWG) across this cross cutting theme on investment in recruitment, population size and retention of staff. The SLWG contains representatives from HiE, SDS, Argyll and Bute Council, NHS Highland and Police Scotland. The group have looked at what is currently being done on this at a National, Highlands and Islands and Argyll and Bute area level to identify priority gaps and challenges. Multiple factors affect this including demographic trends, Brexit, unprecedented change to labour market from AI and automation etc. transition to net zero, nature of available work and Covid. There are labour market shortages in Hospitality and Tourism, food and drink, road haulage, construction and "Other" (Health social care digital economy).

An aging workforce is a national challenge as the working age population (16 - 64) is only due to fall from 5.4m in 2016 to 5.7m in 2041. However, the dependency ratio (those relying on those in work) will increase from a ratio of 1:0.55 up to 1:0.7 in the same period. Additionally, Argyll and Bute has one of the highest levels of expected increase in dependency ratio in Scotland. Anthony also noted that only 33% of Scotland's EU migrant population have applied for settled status.

In Argyll and Bute from 2021 - 2024 there is expected to be approx. 3900 job opportunities and 44% of those require higher/degree level qualifications. Anthony can provide further details with details for the job openings, recruitment and replacement by sector area. Unemployment in Argyll and Bute has risen from March 2020 to May 2021 from 3.4% to 5.9%. There is existing support and funding to youth unemployed (age 16 - 24) who make up 19% of the unemployed in the area, however that means 81% of those currently looking for work are aged 25 - 65 and this is where support should be focused.

Argyll and Bute has been identified as a key area for support on population (1 of 4 areas) by the COHI Population Working Group. The 5 key issues being looked at will be housing, jobs, critical infrastructure, access to services and talent attraction. Although we are already actively aware of those issues, and are working towards them, we need to do more. Within Argyll and Bute the key focus areas are Coll and Tiree, Kintyre, Bute and the Rosneath Peninsula.

The SLWG will keep partners aware of what is happening regionally and nationally, but we also need to look at what we can do locally and maintain an ongoing narrative on this cross cutting theme at the CPP MC. The SLWG will do a refreshed look at the barriers, explore 25+ interventions (working with the DWP), understand best practices in our areas where things are working, look for funding for more resettlement officers, look to support a return to the labour market (women), graduate placement programmes and how can the public sector combine to corral vacancies and share best practice on recruitment. This is a massive issue and they will try to start progress on local measures via the employability partnership.

Fergus asked why we have a lot of vacancies, and lots of potential job heavy projects, but no applicants. Are there skills gaps or do we have evidence on the barriers to people not taking up jobs here (wages, job security, reputation, housing or not the right skills)? He noted this was an issue across the public sector and pay in rural areas is falling behind in relation to inflation. Takki agreed that was a good point and added that in the TSI's response to the National Care Service Consultation they called for a rural funding premium so they could offer an R&R package for key workers plus access to housing subsidies. Fergus added his experience of going around businesses is that they have a third of the staff they need and facing issues retaining staff over quiet periods and lost revenue. There is good work underway but this is a critical needs urgent focus, or there will be bigger implications down the line.

Morag said the Council's Settlement post will provide a point of focus for those considering moving in to the region and that officer will need to build data around the wider housing need and provide details for families looking to relocate on education, child care etc. She is keen to see how we can build on that type of practical support to get people into jobs on the ground.

Rona felt the idea to co-ordinate around regret letters (allowing contact with unsuccessful applicants to identify upskilling needs) was a brilliant idea that could provide quick wins working with Argyll College to support training provision. Anthony said it will be a large piece of work get that happening (contact employers, keeping database etc.). He asked if settlement officers can work with the local employability partnership on this, and we could use some secondments to do specific bits of work such as identifying applicants for other positions. Morag suggested that the regret letters processes could be actioned simply by encouraging individuals to pro-actively signing up to a co-ordinated mailing list.

David asked about how we can keep our young people here. There are many young people in well paid jobs (distilleries etc.) but they are still living with parents as they are unable to get housing. We then lose those people to other parts of the country. David felt housing availability is key, and we need to keep housing availability in the market for those that are in local employment. Fiona agreed that the housing is key, but also stressed the need in those relocating to understand the broad aspects of education provision - not just information on schools, but also how the entire education system works in Scotland. Fergus W said the vast majority of people moving into Argyll and Bute are from the central belt, but we do need to understand that more so can we reach out to a wider field. He also that housing is complicated. The changes to regulations that allow more security for tenants has made many providing rental accommodation out of the market over fear of being unable to evict problem tenants. Across Argyll and Bute there are housing shortages, gluts and non-suitable housing - this is not a simple solution, but there is more housing being built on the islands. The settlement officer is a SLGE 9, but we also need to look at what other partners/agencies can bring to the table. Morag added that a consultation on private rent legislation is coming out from Scottish Government within the next month and it might be worth partners considering a consultation response if this is impacting on our ability to recruit and retain.

8. SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT'S AVIATION STRATEGY CONSULTATION (CHAIR)

Iain wanted to raise the CPP awareness of this [consultation](#) which is now open, and closes on 24 January 2022. Aviation may not be climate friendly but this provides a lifeline service in our area and Transport Scotland are looking at many different aspects of these services. Partners are encouraged to engage with the consultation and can respond directly or forward comments to Iain / Moya to compile a joint response on behalf of the CPP.

ACTION - Partners to respond to consultation directly or email comments to Iain.MacInnes@argyll-bute.gov.uk or Moya.Ingram@argyll-bute.gov.uk

9. AOCB

(a) Newly elected Members of Scottish Youth Parliament for Argyll and Bute (Chair)

Joe congratulated the newly [elected members](#) from the area to the Scottish Youth Parliament. They are Chloe Meikle - Helensburgh and Lomond Youth Forum, Ryan Macintyre - Dunoon Grammar School and Baileigh McIntyre - Rothesay Academy.

Joe looked forward to inviting them as formal members of the CPP MC at the March 2022 meeting.

(b) **Ending the need for food banks: consultation on a draft national plan (Chair)**

The Scottish Government is currently consulting on a national plan to end the need for foodbanks in Scotland. Details of the consultation can be found [here](#). Jayne Jones, Commercial Manager, Argyll and Bute Council is compiling a response to the consultation.

ACTION - Thoughts, comments and contributions are to be sent to jayne.jones@argyll-bute.gov.uk by Friday 14th January 2022.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING (CHAIR)

The next meeting will be held on 16 March 2022. Joe gave thanks to all the attendees, and their teams, for the fantastic partnership approach to all the projects that were evidenced today. He also gave thanks to John and Albert for their contributions to the partnership, and wished them the best in their new roles, saying that they will both be sorely missed.