

**MINUTES of MEETING of BUTE AND COWAL AREA COMMITTEE held ON A HYBRID BASIS IN
THE QUEEN'S HALL, DUNOON AND BY MICROSOFT TEAMS
on TUESDAY, 6 DECEMBER 2022**

Present: Councillor Liz McCabe (Chair)

Councillor Gordon Blair	Councillor Ross Moreland
Councillor Daniel Hampsey	Councillor William Sinclair
Councillor Reeni Kennedy-Boyle	Councillor Peter Wallace
Councillor Yvonne McNeilly	

Attending: Stuart McLean, Committee Manager
Mark Calder, Project Manager
Stuart Green, Corporate Support Manager
Douglas Whyte, Housing Strategy Team Lead
Claire Hallybone, Dunoon CARS Project Officer
Michelle Mundie, Chief Executive, Argyll Housing Community Housing Association (ACHA)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Audrey Forrest.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

(a) Bute and Cowal Area Committee - 6 September 2022

The Minutes of the meeting of the Bute and Cowal Area Committee, held on 6 September 2022 were approved as a correct record.

(b) Bute and Cowal Area Community Planning Group - 1 November 2022

The Minutes of the meeting of the Bute and Cowal Area Community Planning Group, held on 1 November 2022 were noted.

(c) Cowal Transport Forum - 15 November 2022

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cowal Transport Forum, held on 15 November 2022 were noted.

4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Question from Liz Neilson, Sandbank Resident

Liz Neilson highlighted that the Community were concerned with traffic speeding through Sandbank and the general lack of road safety measures along the entirety of the road.

She added that within the last 6 months there had been a number of accidents with 2 fatalities being recorded. Mrs Neilson advised that the Community would like the Council to consider a number of suggestions to mitigate against speeding, the principal suggestion being a reduction of the speed limit to 20mph from Sandbank to Sandhaven.

Response from Committee/Project Manager

Councillor Sinclair highlighted that a speed survey had been requested for the section of road mentioned and advised that he had also spoken to 2 senior officers who are aware of the situation.

The Project Manager referred to the general purposes roads and infrastructure update provided in the agenda pack and highlighted the outstanding speed surveys, with the Sandbank to Cothouse survey being first on that list. He advised that local authorities have been allocated funding from the Scottish Government to undertake reviews of the road network which would allow an assessment of whether 30mph roads would remain as such or be reduced to 20mph.

Decision

The Bute and Cowal Area Committee agreed to invite Police Scotland to a future meeting to discuss road safety measures within the locality.

Questions by Jim Osborne, Bute Community Councillor

Question 1

Jim Osborne enquired about the Traffic Speed Survey's which are to be carried out on Kilchattan Bay and Crichton Road, Rothesay and asked the Project Manager if these are separate from the previously mentioned 20mph speed reviews and when these would be undertaken.

Response from Project Manager

The Project Manager advised that the speed surveys are in addition to the 20mph national speed reviews and that there is a section in the general purposes roads and infrastructure update that provides information on the speed surveys which would be worked through in that order.

Question 2

Jim Osborne asked about the review of Arden Craig Gardens which was to take place following the summer season, specifically the quality of plants. He asked the Project Manager if it had taken place and if so what the outcome was, he also enquired about who the Council's horticultural experts were.

Response from Project Manager/Committee

The Project Manager confirmed that the Council employ a team of gardeners across the council area and that there are two based in Rothesay. The Project Manager confirmed that the Department would soon begin exploring options for the supply of bedding plants for 2023.

Question 3

Mr Osbourne asked why the Chair of the Bute and Cowal Area Committee never attends Bute Community Council meetings?

Response from Councillor McCabe

Councillor Mcneilly responded that this was an inappropriate question as there could be a host of private reasons as to why any elected member could not attend certain meetings and that members do face demands on their time.

The Chair advised that there are two other local councillors who routinely attend these meetings and are more than capable of giving council updates.

Question 4

Jim Osborne enquired about the target of 73 in the performance measure for "street cleaning" referenced within the Area Performance Report and asked what the number meant?

Response by Project Manager

The Project Manager advised that the measurement was 73 was out of 100, and that the figure was reached by applying the Local Environment Audit Management System, a process used by all Scottish Local Authorities to compare and benchmark street cleanliness levels and performance.

Question 5

Jim Osborne asked why there is a target of 0 for social housing new builds in Bute & Cowal?

Response by Housing Strategy Team Lead

The Committee Manager advised that he had received a response from the Housing Strategy Team Lead as follows:

I can't see where in the report it says there is a target of 0.

In terms of a couple of positive comments there are currently 4 new build houses under construction by ACHA in central Dunoon due for completion next year. We are actively looking for opportunities to build new build affordable houses in the Dunoon area.

Also in the overall Strategic Housing Investment Programme we have 40 units in there for Bute – all Fyne Homes. 10 at Ballochgoy – not on site yet but estimated completion in financial year 2023/24 and 30 at the Rothesay Academy site – not on site but preparatory work is ongoing and once the building starts there is an estimated completion date of 2024/25 for phase 1. There is scope for further units to be delivered on this site in the future.

Question 6

Jim Osborne enquired what is being done to address the causes of stress related absence amongst non-teaching staff in schools and what staff does the LGE category include?

Response by HROD Manager

The Committee Manager advised that he had received a response from the HROD Manager as follows:

LGE grouping of employees includes employees who are covered by the SJC negotiating committee terms and conditions of service. In practical terms that includes all employees who are not covered by teaching or chief officers conditions of service. The figures reported will therefore include Local Government Employees from all services across the council, and not only Education.

With regards to the actions around the causes of stress related absence, I will respond in general terms outlining what the council offer by way of identifying and managing stress in the workforce. Since the question was specifically related to non-teaching LGE staff in schools, the Education management team may be best placed to respond with any additional measures relating to this specific group of employees.

The causes of stress related absence in this category are varied and would include for example where an employee is signed off by their GP after a life event such as a bereavement. This category also includes other mental health matters such as depression, anxiety etc.

The council have a wellbeing strategy which aims to support our employees with their physical, mental and financial wellbeing.

With a specific focus on stress we have the following tools and resources which support employees and their line managers to identify and address causes of stress, and support employees who are feeling stressed:

- Reducing stress in the workplace procedures
- Stress risk assessment tool
- Wellness action plans and other personal resilience tools
- Employee Assistance Programme including free confidential counselling
- Conflict resolution toolkit
- Trained mental health first aiders
- E-learning modules and taught training courses which cover topics such as recognising the signs and symptoms and managing stress
- Our intranet also has links to a variety of external toolkits such as the Health and Safety Executive's talking toolkits

Question 7

Mr Osborne asked why the Bute Resilience Team was not being funded by Argyll and Bute Council?

Response from Committee Manager/Committee

The Committee Manager said that he was unaware if Bute Resilience Team had tried to access any of the funding streams such as the Supporting Communities Fund (SCF)

which provides grants of up to £2,500 for the voluntary sector, community councils and parent councils.

Mr McLean added that while it is not 'Council money' the Bute Resilience Team had applied to the Rothesay Common Good fund and had subsequently been awarded £900 in April 2020.

The Committee Manager highlighted that there is a Council hosted Grants and Funding webpage which is designed to help groups find their way through the funding maze and shows where Groups can get help to develop their project, information on sources of funding with links to sites that gives tips on funding and free software. The Committee Manager highlighted that he would be delighted to pass the link to Mr Osborne.

The Chair highlighted that the Council had previously provided the Bute Resilience Team with a shop to work from for many months and added that she was aware of The Bute Resilience team applying, successfully, for funds.

Questions by Roland Zielinski, Hunters Quay Community Council

Question 1

Roland Zielinski enquired about road signage for queuing traffic at Western Ferries, Hunters Quay, which was to be erected and asked if the Committee could provide an update.

Response from Committee/Committee Manager

Councillor Sinclair advised that he had raised this issue at the Cowal Transport Forum in relation to LED signage at Rankins Brae to give traffic the opportunity to travel via the top road and that discussions were ongoing with Western Ferries.

Councillor Hampsey advised that he would be happy to take this issue forward as Chair of the Cowal Transport Forum.

The Committee Manager advised that the Environmental, Development and Infrastructure Committee during its meeting of 1 December considered a report following the allocation of £100k for a bin and signage programme.

Question 2

Mr Zielinski asked why there are no white lines along Marine Parade and throughout the Hunters Quay area and those that are, are worn and not visible?. Mr Zielinski added that many double yellow lines are not visible which has created increased instances of illegal parking as parking restrictions are unenforceable.

Response from Committee

The Chair advised that the Council had employed 3 external service providers to undertake white lining work and that she expects the work to be concluded within the next 2 weeks. The Chair confirmed that she would confirm with the Department that the double yellow lines will also be reinstated.

Question 3

Mr Zielinski asked why a consultation is being undertaken regarding terminal infrastructure at Dunoon when local opposition on a passenger only service has been clear?

Response from Project Manager

The Project Manager advised that the purpose of the consultation is to get feedback to ensure safe and reliable berthing facilities.

Question 4

Mr Zielinski advised that construction work at Hunters Quay Holiday Park had to stop recently due to the release of hydrogen sulphur gas which caused an explosion. Mr Zielinski asked whether the relevant environmental agencies had been made aware and whether there had been an investigation?

Response from the Committee Manager

The Committee Manager advised that he would take this issue to the relevant Department and respond to Mr Zielinski and the Area Committee in due course.

Questions by David Clough, Dunoon Resident

Question 1

David Clough highlighted discussions held at the recent meeting of the Cowal Transport Forum, specifically the reliability and punctuality figures presented by Calmac ferries. Mr Clough advised that a recent Freedom of Information request to Transport Scotland showed that the technical reliability of Calmac was over 99%. Mr Clough asked whether Calmac are reporting cancellations against scheduled timetables, and should Calmac be providing better, more accurate performance data?

Response from Committee

Councillor Hampsey responded that the way in which Calmac presented the performance data was not acceptable and advised that he had raised this at the Cowal Transport Forum. Councillor Hampsey agreed that Calmac should be providing reliability figures based on all cancellations and added that he would be happy to pass Mr Clough's concerns to Calmac.

Question 2

In the same Freedom of information request that was provided by Transport Scotland Mr Clough reported that he had been advised that there was a Scotrail ticket machine in place in Dunoon. Mr Clough asked if any elected members knew of its location?

Response from Committee

The Committee advised that they were not aware of a Scotrail ticket machine in Dunoon and suggested Mr Clough contact Scotrail.

5. AREA PERFORMANCE REPORT - FQ2 2022/23

The Committee considered the Area Performance Report for Financial Quarter 2 2022/23 (July to September 2022) which illustrated the agreed performance measures.

Decision

The Bute and Cowal Area Committee:-

1. noted and considered the performance and supporting commentary as presented;
2. noted that upon receipt of the Quarterly Performance Report the Area Committee should contact either the Responsible Named Officer or Sonya Thomas with any queries; and
3. noted that work is ongoing and to respond to Sonya Thomas with requests or comments regarding the layout and format of the Performance Report and Scorecard.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Customer Support Services, dated 20 October 2022, submitted)

6. PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE PROJECT, COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

The Corporate Support Manager provided a short presentation on the Performance Excellence project. He outlined the findings of the Council's Best Value Audit which took place in 2020 and highlighted key points from the Best Value Improvement Action Plan. Mr Green advised that as a result of recommendations agreed by Council in September 2021, a new suite of Corporate Outcome Indicators will be reported on annually and that other improvements to the system were underway. He outlined the new hierarchy of performance reporting and confirmed that the Pyramid system previously used for performance reporting will be decommissioned by the end of this financial year.

Decision

The Bute and Cowal Area Committee agreed to note the contents of the presentation and information provided.

(Reference: Presentation by Corporate Support Manager, dated December 2022, submitted)

7. ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES UPDATE

The Committee gave consideration to a report which provided an update on the recent activities of Roads and Infrastructure Services and highlighted works being undertaken which were relevant to Bute and Cowal area.

Discussion took place in respect of the consultation exercise that was ongoing regarding the passenger-only vessels for the Dunoon to Gourock ferry service.

Decision

The Bute and Cowal Area Committee noted and considered the contents of the report.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services, dated November 2022, submitted)

8. LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY (LHS) 2022-27 - ANNUAL UPDATE

Members gave consideration to a report which presented the Argyll and Bute Local Housing Strategy (LHS) Annual Report for 2022. It was noted that a further report with area specific information would be provided to the Committee at their meeting in March 2023.

Decision

The Bute and Cowal Area Committee considered and noted the contents of the report.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Housing, dated 10 October 2022, submitted)

9. ACHA ANNUAL UPDATE

Consideration was given to a presentation by the Chief Executive of ACHA, which provided an update on a number of areas including the investment programme for 2022/23; the Warm Homes Fund; the Business, Energy, Industrial Strategy (BEIS) Whole House Retrofit Programme; the replacement of wet electric heating systems; the Exemplar Estates initiative and a number of new build and refurbishment sites across the locality. Further information was provided in respect of Welfare Rights; the Rent Consultation for 2023/24; ACHA's 10 10 10 initiative and ACHA's Community Action Fund.

Decision

The Bute and Cowal Area Committee agreed to note the contents of the presentation and the information provided.

(Reference: Presentation by Chief Executive, Argyll Community Housing Association Ltd, submitted)

10. ARGYLL AND BUTE HSCP ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2021

Having noted that there was no officer in attendance to present this item, the Committee gave consideration to a report which presented the Argyll and Bute HSCP Annual Performance Report for 2021.

Decision

The Bute and Cowal Area Committee considered and noted the contents of the Annual Performance Report for the Health and Social Care Partnership for the year 2021.

(Reference: Report by Head of Strategic Planning, Performance and Technology, Health and Social Care Partnership, dated November 2022, submitted)

11. DUNOON CARS - RECOMMENDATION OF GRANT AWARD

Consideration was given to a report which provided an update on the progress of the Dunoon CARS project and sought the approval of a grant offer to the owners of 104-110 Argyll Street, Dunoon.

Decision

The Bute and Cowal Area Committee approved the grant offer of up to £236,000 to the 5 property owners of 104-110 Argyll Street, Dunoon.

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

12. CHARITABLE TRUSTS, BEQUESTS AND TRUST FUNDS

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing information on proposals relating to the ongoing management and proposed distribution arrangements for Charitable Trusts, Bequests and Trust Funds for which the Bute and Cowal Area Committee are Trustees.

Decision

The Bute and Cowal Area Committee:-

1. noted the financial position of all the Charitable Trusts, Bequests and Trust Funds as of August 2022;
2. agreed that a moratorium be placed on awards being made from the Piano Fund, Dunoon; and
3. agreed that the accumulated funds for distribution from the Tulloch Library, Dunoon be awarded to Live Argyll in their totality and that a moratorium be placed on awards being made from this fund thereafter.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support, dated November 2022, submitted)

13. DRAFT BUTE AND COWAL AREA COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

The Bute and Cowal Area Committee workplan was before members for information.

Decision

The Bute and Cowal Committee noted the contents of the workplan.

(Reference: Bute and Cowal Area Committee workplan, dated 6 December 2022)

14. THE PROVOST'S FUND (BUTE) - AWARD RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee gave consideration to a report which gave Members information regarding three applications that had been received requesting support from the Provost's Fund (Bute).

Decision

The Bute and Cowal Area Committee:-

1. agreed to award £100 to each applicant; and
2. agreed that a moratorium be placed on awards being made from the Provost's Fund (Bute).

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support, dated November 2022, submitted)

15. THE THIRD MARQUIS OF BUTE'S SILVER WEDDING DOWRY FUND

Members gave consideration to a report which gave information regarding an application that had been received requesting support from the Marquis of Bute's Silver Wedding Dowry Fund.

Decision

The Bute and Cowal Area Committee agreed to grant £500 to the applicant.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support, dated November 2022, submitted)