

Public Document Pack

Argyll and Bute Council

Comhairle Earra-Ghàidheal Agus Bhòid

Executive Director: Douglas Hendry



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20 April 2023

NOTICE OF MEETING

A meeting of **ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL** will be held **ON A HYBRID BASIS IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, KILMORY, LOCHGILPHEAD AND BY MICROSOFT TEAMS** on **THURSDAY, 27 APRIL 2023 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 - 26)
Argyll and Bute Council held on 23 February 2023
4. **MINUTES OF COMMITTEES**
 - (a) Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee held on 2 March 2023 (Pages 27 - 32)
 - (b) Community Services Committee held on 9 March 2023 (Pages 33 - 38)
5. **LEADER'S REPORT** (Pages 39 - 52)
Report by Leader of the Council
6. **POLICY LEADS REPORT** (Pages 53 - 92)
Report by Policy Leads
7. **DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT** (Pages 93 - 158)
Report by Director of Public Health
8. **POLITICAL MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS** (Pages 159 - 162)
Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support
9. **ROAD TRAFFIC ACT 1991 - REVIEW OF PENALTY CHARGE NOTICE FOR PARKING ENFORCEMENT** (Pages 163 - 170)
Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services

10. NOTICE OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDER 13

The Coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla takes place on Saturday 6th May 2023, following the King's Accession to the throne on 8th September 2022 upon the sad passing of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

The Coronation itself precedes a weekend of celebration across the nation, with a particular focus on community and volunteering, culminating in The Big Help Out on Monday 8th May – a national day of volunteering and service to the community. This theme is in line with the King's particular wishes for a meaningful and lasting legacy which makes a difference to local life, and in recognition of His own personal dedication to public service.

Argyll and Bute Council therefore:

1. Welcomes the work being carried out by communities around Argyll and Bute who are arranging celebratory events of all kinds to mark the Coronation, and who are planning to make their own very significant contributions to the national Big Help Out at a local level;
2. Acknowledges, on this historic occasion, the tremendous dedication and commitment of Argyll and Bute's volunteers and local groups, which makes a difference all year round, and thanks them for their ongoing contributions to community life; and
3. Sends its congratulations and best wishes to King Charles III and Queen Camilla on the occasion of His Coronation on Saturday 6th May 2023, and agree that the Provost write to the King expressing these sentiments on behalf of the Council and the communities of Argyll and Bute.

Proposer: Councillor Tommy Macpherson
Seconder: Councillor Alastair Redman

11. NOTICE OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDER 13

Disposable single use vapes represent a significant danger to both the environment and also the health of our young people.

At least 1.3 million disposable vapes are binned every week in the U.K. The improper disposal of these is not only a squandering of valuable recyclable materials but can also lead to potential damage of council and private facilities.

16% of young people say they have used e-cigarettes in the last 30 days (The Annual report of the Director of Public Health NHS Highland) and according to research by ASH (action on smoking and health) Vaping among the 11-17 year old age group doubled over the last year with this increase in use likely driven by the growth in cheap, disposable single use vapes, this represents a significant risk to the health of our young people especially as the long term effects of these products remains unknown.

Argyll and Bute council therefore calls on the Scottish government to use its existing powers to implement a ban on single use disposable vapes as soon as practicably possible.

Proposed by Councillor Ross Moreland
Seconded by Councillor Math Campbell-Sturgess

REPORT FOR NOTING

12. DUNOON BID - OUTCOME OF BALLOT AND APPOINTMENT OF ELECTED MEMBER TO DUNOON BID BOARD (Pages 171 - 176)

Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth

Argyll and Bute Council

Contact: Hazel MacInnes Tel:01546 604269

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MINUTES of MEETING of ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL held ON A HYBRID BASIS IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, KILMORY, LOCHGILPHEAD AND BY MICROSOFT TEAMS on THURSDAY, 23 FEBRUARY 2023

Present:

Councillor Maurice Corry (Chair)

Councillor John Armour	Councillor Reeni Kennedy-Boyle
Councillor Gordon Blair	Councillor Jim Lynch
Councillor Jan Brown	Councillor Luna Martin
Councillor Math Campbell-Sturgess	Councillor Tommy MacPherson
Councillor Garret Corner	Councillor Ian MacQuire
Councillor Robin Currie	Councillor Liz McCabe
Councillor Audrey Forrest	Councillor Dougie McFadzean
Councillor Kieron Green	Councillor Yvonne McNeilly
Councillor Amanda Hampsey	Councillor Ross Moreland
Councillor Daniel Hampsey	Councillor Gary Mulvaney
Councillor Graham Hardie	Councillor Iain Paterson
Councillor Fiona Howard	Councillor Gemma Penfold
Councillor Willie Hume	Councillor Douglas Philand
Councillor Mark Irvine	Councillor Alastair Redman
Councillor Andrew Kain	Councillor William Sinclair
Councillor Donald Kelly	Councillor Peter Wallace
Councillor Paul Donald Kennedy	Councillor Andrew Vennard

Attending:

Pippa Milne, Chief Executive
 Douglas Hendry, Executive Director
 Kirsty Flanagan, Executive Director
 Fiona Davies, Chief Officer – Health and Social Care Partnership
 David Logan, Head of Legal and Regulatory Support
 Anne Blue, Head of Financial Services
 Ross McLaughlin, Head of Commercial Services
 Shona Barton, Governance Manager
 Alison Palmer, Teacher Representative
 Lorna Stewart, Teacher Representative
 John Wallace, Music Education Partnership Group
 Emma Lines, Drake Music Scotland
 Laura Mandleberg, Sound Waves / Screen Argyll
 Giles Perring, Youth Music Initiative Instructors

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Julie McKenzie, Rev. Sandy MacPherson, Church of Scotland Representative and Margaret Anderson, Roman Catholic Church Representative.

DEPUTATIONS

The Provost intimated that 5 requests for a deputation to be heard by the Council had been received and it was unanimously agreed to hear from those organisations.

The Council heard a deputation from Mr John Wallace on behalf of the Music Education Partnership Group relating to Policy Saving Option EDU2324-002 (Removal of non-statutory Cultural Coordinator post) which is dealt with at item 5 of these Minutes (Budgeting Pack 2023-24).

The Council heard a deputation from Mr Giles Perring on behalf of the Youth Music Initiative Instructors relating to Policy Saving Option EDU2324-002 (Removal of non-statutory Cultural Coordinator post) which is dealt with at item 5 of these Minutes (Budgeting Pack 2023-24).

The Council heard a deputation from Ms Emma Lines on behalf of Drake Music Scotland relating to Policy Saving Option EDU2324-002 (Removal of non-statutory Cultural Coordinator post) which is dealt with at item 5 of these Minutes (Budgeting Pack 2023-24).

The Council heard a deputation from Ms Laura Mandleberg on behalf of Sound Waves and Screen Argyll relating to Policy Saving Option EDU2324-002 (Removal of non-statutory Cultural Coordinator post) which is dealt with at item 5 of these Minutes (Budgeting Pack 2023-24).

Each Member was given the opportunity to ask one question of those who had made deputations.

The Provost thanked those who had made deputations and advised that the Council would consider their submissions as part of Agenda Item 5 (Budgeting Pack 2023/24).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Jim Lynch advised in relation to item 9 of the agenda (Bid4Oban – Outcome of Ballot and Nominations for Bid4Oban Bid Board) that he had been appointed to the Dunoon BID Board by the Council. Having taken note of the updated Standards Commission Guidance in relation to declarations (issued on 7 December 2021) with specific reference to section 5.4(c) he did not consider that he had a relevant connection and as such would remain in the meeting.

3. MINUTES

(a) Argyll and Bute Council held on 24 November 2022

The Minutes of the meeting of Argyll and Bute Council held on 24 November 2022 were approved as a correct record.

(b) Argyll and Bute Council held on 8 December 2022

The Minutes of the meeting of Argyll and Bute Council held on 8 December 2022 were approved as a correct record.

4. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

(a) Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee held on 1 December 2022

The Minutes of the meeting of the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee held on 1 December 2022 were noted.

(b) Policy and Resources Committee held on 8 December 2022

The Minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 8 December 2022 were noted.

Item 4 of this Minute (Financial Reports Monitoring Pack – 31 October 2022) contained an asterisk and the Council agreed that the revenue virements over £0.200m during September and October 2022 were approved.

Item 8 of this Minute (Procurement Strategy 2022-25 and Sustainable Procurement Policy 2022-25 Draft Documents and Consultation) contained an asterisk and the Council approved the final revised Procurement Strategy 2022/25 and Sustainable Procurement Policy 2022/25 subject to the following amendment to paragraph 1.3 of the Sustainable Procurement Policy 2022/25 –

Amended paragraph 1.3 - Argyll & Bute Council is one of the region's major public money spenders with £158.8 million spent in 2021/22 and resolves to embed progressive procurement practices by developing local supply chains of businesses likely to support local employment and keep wealth within communities. Further Argyll & Bute Council will make its financial power work for local places, working collaboratively to increase flows of investment within local economies by harnessing and recirculating the wealth that exists.

(c) Community Services Committee held on 15 December 2022

The Minute of the meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 15 December 2022 were noted.

(d) Special Policy and Resources Committee held on 19 January 2023

The Minutes of the meeting of the Special Policy and Resources Committee held on 19 January 2023 were noted.

(e) Policy and Resources Committee held on 16 February 2023

The Minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 16 February 2023 were noted.

Item 4 of this Minute (Financial Reports Monitoring Pack – 31 December 2022) contained an asterisk and the Council agreed that the revenue virements over £0.200m during November and December 2022 were approved.

Item 5 of this Minute (Budgeting Pack 2023/24) contained an asterisk and the Council noted that this would be dealt with as a substantive item at item 5 of the agenda.

Item 6 of this Minute (Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy) contained an asterisk and the Council noted that this would be dealt with as a substantive item at item 6 of the agenda.

Item 8 of this Minute (Strategic Events and Festivals Fund – Round 5 – 2023/24) contained an asterisk and the Council agreed as part of the budget in February

2023, £90,000 base funding for Strategic Events and Festivals in order that the application process could commence during 2024/25 and that this fund be augmented by any underspend remaining from the current financial year.

Item 12(b) of this Minute (Rothesay Pavilion – Financial and Contractual Issues) contained an asterisk and the Council agreed the recommendation made by this Committee as detailed in the exempt appendix to the Minute containing the full decision wording.

5. BUDGETING PACK 2023 - 2024

The Council considered the Revenue Budget and Capital Budget papers as contained within the budgeting pack, considered such other appropriate resolutions in relation to these papers and fixed the Council Tax for the year to 31 March 2024 which had been referred without recommendation by the Policy and Resources Committee held on 16 February 2023.

Motion

The Council:

- a) Approves the revenue budget for 2023/24 as set out in the Revenue Budget Overview Report and subject to the decisions outlined below and in the Administration Revenue Budget Model provided at Appendix 1 (A).
- b) Approves a base allocation to the Health and Social Care Partnership of £76.253m for 2023/24. Approves indicative base allocations for 2024/25 and 2025/26 to be £76.253m. The level of future years funding is subject to the level of Scottish Government funding and the Council's overall financial position in future years.
- c) Notes the deferred 3% reduction to the Live Argyll management fee from 2022/23 and approves a 3% reduction in 2023/24, resulting in a management fee of £3.835m for 2023/24.
- d)
 - (i) Endorses the new management/operational savings totalling £2.962m outlined in Appendix 5 of the Revenue Budget Overview Report.
 - (ii) Rejects the following policy savings options, in full or in part, as set out below and in the Administration Revenue Budget Model at Appendix 1(A) and totalling £319.5k in 2023/24:
 - EDU2324-003 – Funding for parent/toddler groups/other non-statutory third sector
 - CSS2324-001 – Customer Engagement Team
 - RIS2324-001 – School Crossing Patrollers, while agreeing that all SCP posts vacant for one year or more are deleted from the establishment (saving of £60k)
 - DEG2324-002 – Funding contribution to Argyll and the Isles Countryside Trust (ACT)
 - (iii) Accepts all other policy savings options totalling £6.144m.

- e) In respect of the service concession arrangements:
- (i) Approves the accounting change as outlined within the report, noting the principal repayment period will now be 60 years which better reflects the life of the asset.
 - (ii) Notes that this accounting change will create a one-off retrospective benefit of £36.038m.
 - (iii) Agrees that £5.4m of the one-off retrospective benefit will be used to replace exercising the principal repayment holiday that was previously agreed by Council.
 - (iv) Notes that the view of the Council’s Section 95 Officer is that the revised accounting approach is affordable, sustainable and prudent.
 - (v) Invests the remaining £30.638m in Priorities for Argyll and Bute as set out in Table 1 below.
- f) Approves the capital plan as set out in Appendix 3 of the Capital Plan Summary Report, and agrees to fund the £725k gap through transfers to the Capital Plan as set out in the Administration Capital Budget Model provided at Appendix 1 (B) to this motion, and agrees additional capital allocations for investment in Priorities for Argyll and Bute, as set out in Table 1:

Table 1 – Investing in Argyll and Bute’s Priorities

Supporting Delivery of Priorities for Argyll and Bute – delivering a vision for Argyll and Bute, our people, our success and our future			
			Funded From
£7m	Priorities Investment Fund	Safeguarding future investment in Priorities for Argyll and Bute by making long-term use of service concession gain to establish dedicated fund to lever in, secure and support key strategic investments in this year and future years.	Service Concessions
£2m	Capital Projects Inflation Pressures	Boosting resilience of Capital Programme and providing added support as required for key capital/infrastruct	Service Concessions

		ure projects.	
Priorities: Education – Learning Estate, now and in the future Partnership and Action – contributing to tackling climate change			
£8m	Learning Estate Investment Strategy	Signalling council's commitment to working in partnership to secure new schools for Argyll and Bute, through substantial investment to support future-proofing of Argyll and Bute's schools estate.	Service Concessions
£640k	Climate Change	Continuing our track record of investing in climate change with funding to further enhance school estate climate change measures, with allocations for primary and secondary schools across the area in Campbeltown, Dunoon, Helensburgh, Lochgilphead, Oban and Rothesay.	Service Concessions
Priorities: Potential and Growth – investing in the future. Partnership and action – everyone has a part to play in Argyll and Bute's future success.			
£6.132m	Rothesay Pavilion	Building on previous commitments to securing a future for this building of international, national and local significance with additional contribution to the	Service Concessions (£4.772m) Recovery and Renewal Fund (£1.360m)

		overall funding target which requires collective action; helping project to progress towards success with funding that supports completion of certain work stages and securing wind/watertight status.	
Priorities: Infrastructure, Waste and Recycling Services Partnership and Action – playing our part in tackling climate change			
£3.5m	Biodegradable Municipal Waste (BMW) Ban	Ensuring Argyll and Bute is able to better address the challenges faced by a remote/rural/ island region in complying with the forthcoming national BMW ban.	Service Concessions
£700k	New refuse collection vehicles	Enhancing waste and recycling uplift arrangements through placing orders for new refuse vehicles.	Service Concessions
Priority: Roads and Infrastructure – roads and pathways			
£3.797 m	Extra Capital Funding for Roads	Allocating more capital funding in for roads repair and maintenance programme as part of overall £8m total investment for 2023/24.	Unallocated General Fund
£4.588 m	Roads Investment to Capital	Augmenting overall allocation for roads repair and maintenance programme with	Service Concessions (£3.546m) Unallocated General Fund (£1.042m)

		additional funds to bring up to £8m total investment for 2024/25.	
£750k	Footpath improvements	Providing additional funding for footpath improvements across Argyll and Bute.	Unallocated General Fund
£250k	New jet patcher vehicle	Complementing multi-million pound capital investment in roads repair and maintenance with new jet patcher order to support delivery of programme.	Service Concessions
£230k	New road marking vehicle	Completing suite of investments in new fleet procurement, to support delivery of roads repair and maintenance programme, with order for additional road marking vehicle.	Service Concessions
Priority: Potential and growth – making assets work now			
£531k	ICT computer replacement	Supporting the council's digital resilience and overall efficiency with investment in ICT assets.	Unallocated General Fund
Total Investments through Service Concessions			£30.638m
Total Investments through Recovery and Renewal Fund			£1.360m
Total Investment from Unallocated General Fund			£6.120m
Total Investments in Priorities for Argyll and Bute			£38.118m

- g) Agrees the following external funding requests, to be funded on a one-off basis for 2023/24 from the Unallocated General Fund:

- (i) CHARTS - £75k
 - (ii) Mid Argyll Community Pool - £30k
 - (iii) MacTaggart Leisure, Islay – £30k
- h) Approves the following in relation to fees and charges with effect from 1st April 2023 unless otherwise noted:
- (i) Freezing ferry fares on the four Argyll and Bute Council-operated ferry services (Jura, Cuan, Lismore, Easdale) until 31st March 2024 – total financial impact £38k.
 - (ii) No increase to school meal charges in 2023/24 as detailed in section 3.5.2 of the Fees and Charges report.
 - (iii) Approves proposals for an inflationary increase of 6% to all other fees and charges and approves the charges that are over and above inflation, noting that this results in additional income of £0.8m in total.
 - (iv) Approves the changes proposed to the Social Work fees and charges.
- i) Notes the financial risks analysis.
- j) Approves the contingency level for the General Fund balance at a level of 2% of net expenditure, equivalent to £5.691m, and notes the report on reserves and balances.
- k) Approves the allocation of £0.1m from the Unallocated General Fund balance for the Health and Social Care Partnership to engage, in partnership with the Council, with Hub North to develop a strategic business case in relation to the provision of services for older adults and other vulnerable people across Argyll and Bute.
- l) Approves the revenue estimates for 2023/24 and that consequently the local tax requirement estimated at £59.277m is funded from Council Tax; approves the following rates and charges for the year 2023/24:
- i) Council Tax to be paid in respect of a chargeable dwelling in Band D of £1,479.20 representing a 5% increase.
 - ii) Council Tax to be paid in respect of a chargeable dwelling in each of the other valuation bands in accordance with Section 74(1) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended.
 - iii) Business Rates as determined by Scottish Ministers.
- m) Approves the Corporate Asset Management Strategy and Plan including the Asset Group Summaries.

Appendix 1 – Administration Budget Model Reconciliation

(A) Revenue Budget

	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000
Budget Surplus/(Gap) as Per Budget Pack	0	(7,970)	(14,490)	(21,946)	(28,391)

Council Tax Increase to 5%	376	393	405	417	429
Policy Savings Rejected :					
CSS2324-001 Customer Engagement Team	-191	-318	-318	-318	-318
EDU2324-003 Funding to support parent and toddler groups	-86	-86	-86	-86	-86
RIS2324-001 School Crossing Patrollers – removal of full saving	-88	-151	-151	-151	-151
RIS2324-001 School Crossing Patrollers – accept saving of vacant posts over 1 year	60	60	60	60	60
DEG2324-002 Discretionary Budget Contribution to Argyll and the Isles Countryside Trust	(14.5)	(14.5)	(14.5)	(14.5)	(14.5)
Freezing of Argyll and Bute Council operated ferry fares for 1 year	(38)	(38)	(38)	(38)	(38)
Transfer surplus to Unallocated General Fund	(18.5)				
Revised Budget Surplus/(Gap)	0	(8,124.5)	(14,632.5)	(22,076.5)	(28,509.5)

(B) Capital Budget 2023/24

	Capital Plan £000	Unallocated General Fund
As Per Budget Pack	(725)	8,109
Capital Plan Gap Funded from Unallocated General Fund	725	(725)
Footpath Improvements		(750)
ICT Computer Replacements		(531)
Roads Reconstruction 2023/24		(3,797)

Roads Reconstruction 2024/25		(1,042)
Charts		(75)
Mid Argyll Community Pool		(30)
MacTaggart Leisure, Islay		(30)
HSCP for Strategic Business Case		(100)
Transfer from Revenue Budget		18.5
Adjustment to 2% Contingency following Budget Decisions		(7)
Revised	0	1,040.5

Moved by Councillor Robin Currie, seconded by Councillor Gary Mulvaney.

Amendment

Argyll and Bute Council:

- 1) Approves the revenue budget for 2023/24 as set out in the Revenue Budget Overview Report and subject to the decisions outlined below and set out in Appendix 1 below.
- 2) Approves a base allocation to the Health and Social Care Partnership of £76.253m for 2023/24. Approves indicative base allocations for 2024/25 and 2025/26 to be £76.253m. The level of future years funding is subject to the level of Scottish Government funding and the Council's overall financial position in future years.
- 3) Approves the deferred 3% reduction to the Live Argyll Management Fee from 2022-23 and a 3% reduction in 2023-2024, resulting in a management fee in 2023-24 of £3.835m.
- 4) a) Rejects the following savings options totalling £ 0.416m

CSS2324- 001- Minimising Face to Face Customer Service Delivery
Officers are instructed to prepare a report to the Policy and Resources Committee outlining how this service can be further developed to provide more local support to all our services.

EDU2324- 002 - Removal of non-statutory Cultural Co-ordinator post

DEG2324-002 - Reduce discretionary budget to minimum.

EDU2324-003 - Remove funding to support parent and toddler groups and other non-statutory third sector.

RIS2324-001 - School crossing patrollers.

b) Accepts all other policy savings options proposals, set out in Appendix 6 of the Revenue Budget Overview report, totalling £6.048m

c) Endorses the management/operational savings, set out in Appendix 5 of the Revenue Budget Overview report, totalling £2.962m

5) Agrees the following additional investments, as set out in the table below and also in the Budget Model at Appendix 1:

Investing in Argyll and Bute's road network – £4.901m			One-off or Recurring	Funded From
£4.551m	Roads	Increasing investment in our roads by providing an additional £4.551 m to maintain and improve Argyll and Bute's rural, remote, island and urban roads network providing an overall Roads Reconstruction Budget of £8m for 2023/24.	One-off	Unallocated General Fund
£0.250m	Jet Patch equipment	Investment to replace ageing less effective equipment and increase efficiency.	One-off	Unallocated General Fund
£0.050m	Amenities Warden to cover the Mid Argyll Kintyre and the Isles area.	Makes provision for the employment of an Environment Warden based in the Mid Argyll Kintyre and the Isles area.	Recurring (to be baselined)	Revenue Budget
£0.050m	Flashing Road Safety Signage	Purchase and installation of road safety signage to improve road safety on our rural roads. Officers to engage with Area committees and local communities to identify suitable priority sites.	One - off	Unallocated General Fund

Cost of living Crisis support £0.465m				
£0.050m	Argyll and Bute Citizens Advice Bureau	In recognition of the substantial increase in demand during the current Cost of living Crisis	One off	Recovery and Renewal Fund
£0.050m	Bute Advice Centre	In recognition of the substantial increase in demand during the current Cost of living Crisis	One off	Recovery and Renewal Fund
£0.050m	Alienergy	In recognition of the substantial increase in demand during the current Cost of living Crisis	One off	Recovery and Renewal Fund
£0.050m	Rape Crisis Centre Argyll and Bute	To enable the centre to continue to provide much needed support against a background of rising running costs.	One off	Recovery and Renewal Fund

£0.185m	Continuation of Free School Meals Additional allowance	Providing additional funding to extend the Free School Meal Additional allowance scheme.	One off	Recovery and Renewal Fund
£0.080m	Cost of Living Contingency Fund	Each Area Committee to be allocated £20k To provide emergency support to Food banks and warm space providers experiencing financial difficulties.	One off	Recovery and Renewal Fund

Climate Change Initiatives - £0.6m				
£0.5m	Climate Change Projects	Provides funding of £0.5m for climate change, including projects within Argyll and Bute's schools. Regular updated to be provided to the Council's Policy and Resources Committee	One-off	Recovery and Renewal Fund
£0.1m	Climate Change Projects	Funding to further scope the Kilmory Renewables Project. Officers to provide regular reports to members of the relevant committees	One-off	Recovery and Renewal Fund
Supporting our Partners and Businesses - £0.335m				
£0.075m	CHArts (Culture, Heritage and Arts)	Agree to the request to provide investment for 2023/24 to support the organisation in delivering targeted support, in communities, to the culture, arts and heritage sector as part of its plans to contribute to overall economic recovery.	One-off	Recovery and Renewal Fund
£0.030m	Mid Argyll Community Pool MACPool	Agree additional sum of £30k to address utility and property repairs.	One off	Recovery and Renewal Fund
£0.030m	MacTaggart Leisure Centre	Agree additional funding to support ongoing increases in utility costs	One off	Recovery and Renewal Fund
£0.100m	HSCP	Approve the allocation for HSCP to work in partnership with the council to engage with Hub North to develop a	One off	Unallocated General Fund

		strategic business case in relation to provision of services for older adults and other vulnerable people across Argyll and Bute.		
£0.100m	Business support Hub	Funding to develop a "Business Hub" which will provide a "One Stop Shop" "delivering advice and support across a wide range of services. Officers to prepare a reports the relevant committee to provide and update to members.	One off	Recovery and Renewal Fund
Total investment in Argyll and Bute Priorities - £6.301m				

6) Approves the following in relation to fees and charges with effect from 1st April 2023 unless otherwise noted:

- a) Approve the proposals for the fees and charges inflationary increase of 6% and approve the charges that are over and above inflation. Note that this would generate additional income of £0.838m in total.
- b) Approve the changes proposed to the Social Work fees and charges.
- c) Approve all other charges as noted within the Fees and Charges Schedule.

7) Notes the financial risks analysis.

8) Approves the contingency level for the General Fund balance at a level of 2% of net expenditure, equivalent to £5.265m and note the report on reserves and balances.

9) Approves the revenue estimates for 2023/24 and that consequently the local tax requirement estimated at £59.277m is funded from Council Tax. Approve the following rates and charges for the year, 2023/24:

- a) Council Tax to be paid in respect of a chargeable dwelling in Band "D" of £1,479.20, representing a 5% increase.
- b) Council Tax to be paid in respect of a chargeable dwelling in each of the other valuation bands in accordance with Section 74(1) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended.
- c) Business Rates as determined by Scottish Ministers

10) Approves the capital plan as set out in Appendix 3 of the capital plan summary report, and agrees to fund the £0.725m gap from the Unallocated General Fund.

11) Approves the Corporate Asset Management Strategy.

12) Notes the Corporate Asset Management plan and the Asset Group Summaries.

13) Notes that the Unallocated General Fund Balance is after proposals contained in this budget is £2.394m.

14) Service Concessions

a) Notes that the view of the Section 95 Officer is that the revised accounting approach is affordable, sustainable and prudent.

b) Approve the accounting change as outlined within the report noting the principal repayment period will now be 60 years which better reflects the life of the asset

c) Note that this accounting change will create a one-off retrospective benefit of £36.038m.

d) Agree that £5.4m of the one – off retrospective benefit will be used to replace exercising the principal repayment holiday that was previously agreed by Council.

e) The remaining one –off retrospective benefit generated from the accounting change will be used as outlined below –

£8m	Learning Estate Strategy	Funding allocated to help safeguard and support future funding for Argyll and Bute's Learning Estate strategy.	Earmarked
£3.450m	Biodegradable Waste Ban 2025	Provision to support the capital costs of implementing the Biodegradable Waste Ban	Earmarked
£4 m	Inflationary Increase (Capital Projects)	Provision to offset future capital inflationary increases.	Earmarked
£6 m	Spend to Save	Council wide allocation to support services develop projects that deliver future financial benefits.	Earmarked
£6.132m	Rothesay Pavilion	Contribution to implement stage 1 (Wind and Watertight).	Earmarked
Total £27.582m			

The balance remaining of £3,056 to be held in the General Fund to assist with future budget pressures

Appendix 1 **Revenue**

	23/24 £000	24/25 £000	25/26 £000	26/27 £000	28/29 £000
Budget Surplus / (Gap) as per Budget Pack	0	- 7,970	- 14,490	- 21,946	- 28,391
<u>CSS2324-001</u>	-191	-318	-318	-318	-318
<u>EDU2324-002</u>	-15	-15	-15	-15	-15
<u>DEG2324-002</u>	-36	-36	-36	-36	-36

<u>EDU2324-003</u>	-86	-86	-86	-86	-86
<u>RIS2324-001</u>	-88	-151	-151	-151	-151
Increase in CT from 4.33% to 5%	376	393	405	417	429
Funding for Warden in MAKI	-50	-50	-50	-50	-50
Transfer from Unallocated General Fund and Recovery and Renewal Fund	90				
Revised	0	-8,233	-14,439	-22,185	28,618

Unallocated General Fund

	£000
Unallocated General Fund as per Budget Pack	8,109
Roads	-
Jet Patcher	4,551
Flashing Road Signage	-250
HSCP Business Case	-50
Capital Plan Gap	-100
	-725
To Balance Budget 2023-24	-30
Keep 2% Contingency Adjustment	-9
Revised	2,394

Capital Plan Gap

Capital Plan Gap as per Budget Pack	-725
From Unallocated General Fund	725

Revised	0
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Recovery and Renewal Fund

	£000
Recovery and Renewal Fund as per Budget Pack	1,360
Argyll and Bute Citizens Advice	-50
Alienergy	-50
Argyll and Bute Rape Crisis	-50
Bute Advice Centre	-50
Continuation of Additional Free School Meals support	-185
Cost of Living Contingency Fund	-80
Climate Change	-500
Kilmory Renewables	-100
CHArts	-75
MACPool	-30
Islay Pool	-30
Business Hub	-100
Transferred to Revenue Budget 2023- 24	-60
Revised	0

Service Concessions Benefit

	£000
Service Concessions Benefit	36,038
Principal Repayment Holiday	- 5,400
Learning Estate Investment Programme	-8,000
Biodegradable Waste Ban 2025	-3,450
Inflationary Increases	

(Capital Projects)	-4,000
Spend to Save Projects	-6,000
Rothsay Pavilion (Wind and Watertight)	-6,132
Revised –Balance to be held in General Fund to assist with future budget pressures	3,056

Moved by Councillor Jim Lynch, seconded by Councillor Dougie Philand.

The Provost requested the Section 95 Officer to confirm that the Motion and Amendment before the Council, containing budget proposals were competent and balanced. The Section 95 Officer confirmed this was the case.

As the meeting was being held on a hybrid basis, the vote required to be taken by calling the Roll and Members voted as follows –

Motion	Amendment	No Vote
Councillor Garret Corner	Councillor John Armour	
Councillor Maurice Corry	Councillor Gordon Blair	
Councillor Robin Currie	Councillor Jan Brown	
Councillor Kieron Green	Councillor Math Campbell Sturgess	
Councillor Amanda Hampsey	Councillor Audrey Forrest	
Councillor Daniel Hampsey	Councillor Fiona Howard	
Councillor Graham Hardie	Councillor Willie Hume	
Councillor Andrew Kain	Councillor Mark Irvine	
Councillor Paul Donald Kennedy	Councillor Donal Kelly	
Councillor Liz McCabe	Councillor Reeni Kennedy-Boyle	
Councillor Yvonne McNeilly	Councillor Jim Lynch	
Councillor Ross Moreland	Councillor Luna Martin	
Councillor Gary Mulvaney	Councillor Tommy MacPherson	
Councillor Gemma Penfold	Councillor Ian James McQuire	
Councillor Alastair Redman	Councillor Dougie McFadzean	
Councillor William Sinclair	Councillor Iain Shonny Paterson	
Councillor Andrew Vennard	Councillor Dougie Philand	
Councillor Peter Wallace		

Decision

The Motion was carried by 18 votes to 17 and the Council resolved accordingly.

(Reference: Budgeting Pack 2023/24 dated 16 February 2023, submitted; Motion by Councillor Robin Currie, seconded by Councillor Gary Mulvaney, tabled; and Amendment by Councillor Jim Lynch, seconded by Councillor Dougie Philand, tabled)

6. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT AND ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY

The Council gave consideration to a report which sought approval of the proposed Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy which set out the Council's Strategy for borrowing and investment for the forthcoming year. The report also set out the policy for the repayment of loans fund advances for 2023-24 which had been referred without recommendation by the Policy and Resources Committee held on 16 February 2023.

Decision

The Council –

1. approved the proposed Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy and the indicators contained within and noted that the figures within the Strategy would be updated to reflect the budget decisions agreed at Council;
2. approved the continued use of the asset life method for the repayment of loan fund advances using a 5.1% annuity interest rate, with the exception of spend to save schemes where the funding/income profile method could be used;
3. approved the proposed asset repayment periods as detailed within section 2.7 of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement; and
4. approved the ability to continue to use countries with a sovereign rating of AA- and above, as recommended by the Council's external treasury management advisors.

(Reference: Report by Section 95 Officer dated 9 February 2023, submitted)

7. POLITICAL MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The Council gave consideration to a report advising of a number of changes relating to the political management arrangements which have arisen since the last meeting of the Council. The report set out detail of the vacancies that had arisen as a result of these changes and invited the Council to consider what action it wished to take in that regard. An update on the Council's political composition was provided for noting.

The Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support advised that he would bring forward a report to the next meeting of Council which would provide clarity around the Political Composition of the Council.

Motion

The Council:

1. Notes the appointment of Councillor Peter Wallace to the role of Depute Policy Lead for Roads and Transport;
2. Appoints Councillor Peter Wallace to the vacant position on the Northern Roads Collaboration;

3. Appoints Councillor Peter Wallace to the vacant position on the Fyne Homes Management Committee.
4. Notes the detail in relation to identification of Shadow Policy Lead Councillors.

Moved by Councillor Robin Currie, seconded by Councillor Gary Mulvaney.

Amendment

The Council:

1. Notes the appointment of Councillor Peter Wallace to the role of Depute Policy Lead for Roads and Transport;
2. Appoints Councillor John Armour to the vacant position on the Northern Roads Collaboration;
3. Appoints Councillor Dougie Philand to the vacant position on the Fyne Homes Management Committee.
4. Notes the detail in relation to identification of Shadow Policy Lead Councillors.

Moved by Councillor Jim Lynch, seconded by Councillor Audrey Forrest.

As the meeting was being held on a hybrid basis, the vote required to be taken by calling the Roll and Members voted as follows –

Motion	Amendment	No Vote
Councillor Garret Corner	Councillor John Armour	
Councillor Maurice Corry	Councillor Gordon Blair	
Councillor Robin Currie	Councillor Jan Brown	
Councillor Kieron Green	Councillor Math Campbell Sturgess	
Councillor Amanda Hampsey	Councillor Audrey Forrest	
Councillor Daniel Hampsey	Councillor Fiona Howard	
Councillor Graham Hardie	Councillor Willie Hume	
Councillor Andrew Kain	Councillor Mark Irvine	
Councillor Paul Donald Kennedy	Councillor Donald Kelly	
Councillor Tommy MacPherson	Councillor Reeni Kennedy-Boyle	
Councillor Liz McCabe	Councillor Jim Lynch	
Councillor Yvonne McNeilly	Councillor Luna Martin	
Councillor Ross Moreland	Councillor Ian James McQuire	
Councillor Gary Mulvaney	Councillor Dougie McFadzean	
Councillor Gemma Penfold	Councillor Iain Shonny Paterson	
Councillor Alastair Redman	Councillor Dougie Philand	
Councillor William Sinclair		
Councillor Andrew Vennard		
Councillor Peter Wallace		

Decision

The Motion was carried by 19 votes to 16 and the Council resolved accordingly.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support dated 16 January 2023, submitted; and Motion by Councillor Robin Currie, seconded by Councillor Gary Mulvaney, tabled; and Amendment by Councillor Jim Lynch, seconded by Councillor Audrey Forrest.)

8. COUNCIL GAELIC LANGUAGE PLAN

The Council, at its meeting on 30 June 2022 had considered proposals recommended by Bòrd na Gàidhlig to amend the Council's Gaelic Language Plan and had decided not to agree an amendment to the Council's Gaelic Language Plan which would have committed the Council to establishing a Gaelic school. The Council gave consideration to a report providing an update on the Council's Gaelic language Plan following referral to Scottish Ministers for a final decision.

Decision

The Council –

1. noted that this matter had been referred to Scottish Ministers in June 2022 under section 5(5)(c) of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005, as there had been no agreement between the Council and Bòrd na Gàidhlig on the proposed amendment regarding the establishment of an all-Gaelic School;
2. noted that engagement between officers from the Council and from Scottish Government took place to inform Scottish Ministers of the Council's position and subsequently a decision by Scottish Ministers was sent to the Council on 16th December 2022. This decision stated that Ministers would approve the Plan subject to the modification already agreed by Council regarding L2 or L3 and the following alternative approach to the matter of a Gaelic School:

"Action 2.11 Argyll and Bute Council will engage fully and constructively with Bòrd na Gàidhlig, as adviser on Gaelic education, and other stakeholders (including parents and parent representatives) with a view to bringing forward, within the next 2 years, a consultation to ascertain the demand for an all-Gaelic School within the local authority area."; and
3. noted the position that the decision of the Scottish Ministers was one that, subject to any considerations in relation to judicial challenge, is binding on the Council and Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Customer Support Services dated 18 January 2023, submitted)

9. BID4OBAN - OUTCOME OF BALLOT AND NOMINATIONS FOR BID4OBAN BID BOARD

The Council gave consideration to a report providing an update on the outcome of the Bid4Oban ballot held on 8 December 2022. The report advised that one elected member had been appointed to the Oban BID Board and invited nomination of one Council officer to sit on the Board of the Oban Business Improvement District (BID) Company.

Decision

The Council –

1. noted the outcome in regard to the BID4Oban BID ballot;
2. noted that Oban Lorn and the Isles Area Committee appointed an Elected Member to the BID4Oban BID Board meetings for the third term of the BID, 2023-2028 on 15th June 2022; and
3. delegated authority to the Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth to nominate a Council Officer to attend the BID4Oban BID Board meetings for the third term of the BID, 2023- 2028.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth dated December 2022, submitted)

**MINUTES of MEETING of ENVIRONMENT, DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE
COMMITTEE held ON A HYBRID BASIS IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, KILMORY,
LOCHGILPHEAD AND BY MICROSOFT TEAMS
on THURSDAY, 2 MARCH 2023**

Present: Councillor Andrew Kain (Chair)

Councillor John Armour	Councillor Ian MacQuire
Councillor Jan Brown	Councillor Luna Martin
Councillor Garret Corner	Councillor Ross Moreland
Councillor Mark Irvine	Councillor William Sinclair
Councillor Donald Kelly	Councillor Andrew Vennard
Councillor Jim Lynch	Councillor Peter Wallace
Councillor Tommy MacPherson	

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

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Robin Currie.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest intimated.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee held on 1 December 2022 were approved as a correct record.

Councillor Luna Martin joined the meeting during the consideration of the following item of business.

4. ROADS RECONSTRUCTION CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing details on the proposed roads reconstruction programme for 2023/24. The programme was based on the 2023/24 allocation of a total of £8.0M, which included £754k brought forward from 2022/23.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee –

1. endorsed the proposed programme of capital works for 2023/24;
2. agreed that details of each area committee's programme would be forwarded on to individual Elected Members;

3. noted that following the budget decision on 23 February 2023, a programme of footway works would be presented to a future meeting of the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure dated February 2023, submitted)

5. ANNUAL STATUS AND OPTIONS REPORT 2022

The Committee gave consideration to a report introducing the Annual Status and Options Report which set out an analytical assessment of the condition of the Council's road network and associated infrastructure as well as setting out projected conditions based on varying levels of investment.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee –

1. endorsed the Annual Status and Options Report and the positive analytical feedback it provided; and
2. noted that the Annual Status and Options Report informs key elements of the Development and Infrastructure Asset Management Plan.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Infrastructure dated 15 December 2022, submitted)

6. ROUTE OPTIMISATION UPDATE

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update on the introduction of a route optimisation system that would seek to improve the operational management of certain services operated via vehicles providing specific services.

Decision

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

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services dated February 2023, submitted)

7. REST AND BE THANKFUL UPDATE (Pages 7 - 8)

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update following the announcement by the Transport Minister in December 2022 in respect of improvements to the Old Military Road as a medium term solution to improve the resilience of the temporary diversion route to the A83, should it be closed.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee –

1. reaffirmed the Council's long-established position that a permanent solution for the A83 Rest and Be Thankful must be identified and, crucially, put in place as soon as possible, as first agreed in this new Council term through a motion to Council in September 2022 and subsequently embedded within the Priorities for the Council agreed in November 2022;
2. noted the confirmation from the Transport Minister that funding would remain available for both the medium and long-term solutions for the route;
3. noted the timescales set out in the report and that the aim was to have both lanes of the A83 reopened, with traffic signals removed, by June or July of this year;
4. noted that there was a further meeting of the A83 Taskforce due to take place in June 2023; and
5. in light of the timescales at (3) and (4) above, requested that officers bring a further update to the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee meeting on 31 August 2023, for consideration of any further lobbying action that may be required.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services dated January 2023, submitted; and Motion by Councillor Andrew Kain, seconded by Councillor Donald Kelly, tabled)

8. CEMETERY ASSET REPORT - UPDATE

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update on the current Argyll and Bute cemetery provision and detailing options for reviewing the current Management Rules for Burial Grounds as well as management of the cemetery assets in the context of current needs and future demands in each administrative area.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee –

1. noted the Area Committee Business Days arranged;
2. noted that officers propose to review cemetery numbers annually;
3. noted the updated lair availability in each available cemetery with associated updates in regards to works carried out and proposed as detailed in Appendix 1 to the submitted report;
4. endorsed and approved the change in policy for the Management Rules for Burial Grounds which have less than 10 years availability to restrict the pre-sale of lairs to protect the cemetery capacity as well as the other updates as detailed in paragraph 3.2.3 of the submitted report; and
5. noted the future capital investment required in this asset group.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services dated January 2023, submitted)

9. CARDROSS CREMATORIUM INSPECTION

The Committee gave consideration to a report presenting the findings of a recent inspection of Cardross Crematorium.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee endorsed the findings of the inspection on Cardross Crematorium.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services dated February 2023, submitted)

10. PLAY PARK FUNDING - UPDATE REPORT

The Committee gave consideration to a report outlining a suggested process and timelines for proposing further engagement with other groups, including youth forums and relevant Community Councils in relation to the Play Park Funding Award of £938k which had been awarded by the Scottish Government for the 28 play parks being renewed in Argyll and Bute until 2025/26.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee –

1. noted that Area Committee Business Days were underway, where officers were engaging with Elected Members; and
2. agreed the proposed timeline as set out in section 4.4 of the submitted report.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services dated February 2023, submitted)

11. FILM IN ARGYLL - SCREEN INDUSTRIES UPDATE REPORT

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update of the work of the Council's Film in Argyll service in attracting inward investment into Argyll and Bute from the screen industries and the economic benefits that this had brought to the local economy, including opportunities to promote and market the area.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee noted the contents of the submitted report, including the fact that the sector was still recovering from the impact of the pandemic, and the continued positive economic impact the screen industry had on Argyll and Bute.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth dated 10 December 2022, submitted)

Councillor Donald Kelly left the meeting during the consideration of the following item of business.

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

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update on progress of the large scale, externally funded project work of the Transformational Projects and Regeneration Team. The report highlighted key issues that could impact on the successful delivery of projects.

Decision

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

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth dated 9 January 2023, submitted)

13. STRATEGIC TRANSPORT PROJECTS REVIEW 2 (STPR2) - OUTCOMES

The Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2) was developed to inform transport investment in Scotland for the next 20 years (2022-2042). The final STPR2 was published on 8 December 2022. The Committee gave consideration to a report providing information on the outcomes of the review and advising that Argyll and Bute Council had been poorly served through the outcomes of the document despite initial assurances and having been fully engaged throughout the process.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee –

1. noted the Transport Scotland Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 that had been published on 8 December 2022.
2. requested that the Leader of the Council write to the Scottish Government expressing the Council's disappointment with the STPR2 process and its outcomes in relation to Argyll and Bute.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth dated 22 January 2023, submitted)

14. 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 Work Plan dated February 2023, submitted)

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MINUTES of MEETING of COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE held ON A HYBRID BASIS IN COMMITTEE ROOM 1, KILMORY, LOCHGILPHEAD AND REMOTELY BY MICROSOFT TEAMS on THURSDAY, 9 MARCH 2023

Present: Councillor Yvonne McNeilly (Chair)

Councillor Gordon Blair	Councillor Paul Donald Kennedy
Councillor Math Campbell-Sturgess	Councillor Liz McCabe
Councillor Garret Corner	Councillor Dougie McFadzean
Councillor Audrey Forrest	Councillor Iain Paterson
Councillor Amanda Hampsey	Councillor Gemma Penfold
Councillor Daniel Hampsey	Councillor Douglas Philand
Councillor Graham Hardie	Margaret Anderson, Church Rep
Councillor Andrew Kain	Reverend Sandy MacPherson, Church Rep

Also Present: Councillor Kieron Green

Attending: Douglas Hendry, Executive Director
 Jennifer Crocket, Head of Education: Wellbeing, Inclusion and Achievement
 Wendy Brownlie, Head of Education; Performance and Improvement
 Stuart McLean, Committee Manager
 Graeme McMillan, Transformation Programme Manager
 Chief Superintendent Lynn Ratcliff, Police Scotland
 Chief Inspector Samantha Glasgow Police Scotland
 Chief Inspector Simon Shanks, Police Scotland
 Group Commander Grant Fraser, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
 Watch Commander Tony McGloin, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
 Station Commander Anthony Mallon, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
 Fiona Davies, Chief Officer, Argyll & Bute HSCP
 David Gibson, Head of Children and Families, Argyll & Bute HSCP

The Chair, on behalf of the Community Services Committee congratulated Stuart Liddell, piping instructor with the Council and Pipe Major of the Grade 1 Inveraray and District Pipe Band, on receiving an MBE in the New Year Honours for services to piping and music education.

The Chair intimated that Councillor Kieron Green, who was not a member of the Community Services Committee, had notified the Executive Director that he wished, in terms of Standing Order 22.1 to speak but not vote on items 9a and 9b of the Agenda. The Chair confirmed that she would exercise her discretion to allow Councillor Green to speak but not vote on items 9a and 9b of this Minute.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Julie McKenzie, Alison Palmer (Teacher Representative) and Lorna Stewart (Teacher Representative).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTE

The Minute of the Community Services Committee held on 15 December 2022 was approved as a correct record.

4. ARGYLL & BUTE LOCAL POLICING PLAN (2020 - 2023) - QUARTERLY REPORT (QTR 3 2022/23)

Chief Superintendent Lynn Ratcliff presented the Quarter 3 – 2022/23 update in relation to the Argyll and Bute Local Policing Plan 2020 – 2023 and responded to a number of questions asked.

Thereafter, she, along with Chief Inspector Simon Shanks, Area Commander for Oban, Lorn, the Isles, Mid Argyll and Kintyre, and Chief Inspector Samantha Glasgow, Area Commander for Bute, Cowal and Helensburgh, responded to a number of questions asked.

Decision

The Committee reviewed and noted the contents of the report.

(Reference: Report for Quarter 3 2022/23 by Divisional Commander for Argyll and West Dunbartonshire Division, Police Scotland, submitted)

Margaret Anderson (Church representative) joined the meeting during consideration of the foregoing item.

5. LOCAL POLICE PLAN - POLICE SCOTLAND

In accordance with the Police & Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012, Police Scotland has a responsibility to prepare Local Police Plans for the period 2023-26. The draft plan was before the Committee for consideration prior to publication.

Decision

The Committee reviewed and approved the Local Police Plan – Argyll and Bute attached at Appendix 1 of the report.

(Reference: Report by Divisional Commander for Argyll and West Dunbartonshire Division, Police Scotland and Draft Argyll and Bute – L Division – Local Policing Plan for 2023-2026, submitted)

6. SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE - ARGYLL & BUTE PERFORMANCE REPORT Q3 - 1 OCTOBER - 31 DECEMBER 2022

Group Commander Fraser Grant introduced Watch Commander Tony McGloin, who had recently been promoted into the Local Authority Liaison Officer role in community safety engagement, and Station Commander Anthony Mallon, who had recently moved from his Training reference to Prevention and Protection within the area.

With the aid of power point slides, Group Commander Fraser then presented a report highlighting Scottish Fire and Rescue Service's review of local performance within Argyll and Bute for Q3 2022-2023 and the Officers responded to a number of questions asked.

Decision

The Committee reviewed and noted the contents of the report.

(Reference: Q3 2022-2023 Report by Local Senior Officer, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, submitted)

7. 2021/22 ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES SERVICES PLAN 2020-23

A report providing an update on the second annual review of the Children and Young People's Service Plan 2020-2023 was before the Committee for noting on 15 December 2022. At this meeting the Committee agreed to refer this item to the next meeting of the Community Services Committee as a substantive item.

Decision

The Committee agreed to consider and note:-

1. NHS Highland and Argyll and Bute Council were jointly and equally responsible for children's services planning;
2. Argyll and Bute's Children and Young People's Services Plan 2020-2023 Year 2 review for the period 2021/22 had been approved by Argyll and Bute's Children Strategic Group; and
3. the submission of the Children and Young People's Services Plan Year 2 review to Scottish Government as per the legislative requirement.

(Reference: Report by Chief Social Work Officer, Argyll & Bute Health & Social Care Partnership dated 30 August 2022, submitted)

8. FINAL ATTAINMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT REPORT - SESSION 2021-2022

Following the release on 28 February 2023 of data on the Scottish Government's Insight tool, a report updating Members on final attainment, across all Argyll and Bute Secondary Schools was considered.

Decision

The Committee agreed to:

1. consider the information in this report, particularly as it related to the attainment performance of school leavers;
2. note the increase in attainment brought about by successful appeals, at authority level and school-by-school;
3. note, as also recommended in December's report, that for the first time since session 2018/19, pupil performance and outcomes were based solely on examination performance; and

4. note that the information contained in this report constituted all attainment across both National Qualifications and Wider Achievement courses, the latter of which was described in the December report without the associated tariff points having been included in statistics.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Education dated 9 March 2023, submitted)

9. SCHOOLS (CONSULTATION) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010

(a) Kilchrenan Primary School

A report updating the Committee on the current situation of Kilchrenan Primary School was considered.

Decision

The Committee agreed:

1. to note the decision of the Committee in March 2022, and the updated position of the School as set out within this report;
2. that Kilchrenan Primary School should continue to be mothballed on a temporary basis and the School premises be retained on a care and maintenance basis.
3. to note that there had been no requests to use the building since March 2022, but that should any be made they would be considered in the light of the current condition of the building, and any recommissioning works required; and
4. that the Education Service would undertake the required preliminary Consultation for Kilchrenan Primary School, in compliance with the preliminary requirements as set out in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, and thereafter prepare an Options Appraisal for Members' consideration at the August 2023 meeting of the Community Services Committee.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Education dated 6 February 2023, submitted)

(b) Achaleven Primary School

A report providing details of the Options Appraisal for Achaleven Primary School, carried out in accordance with the preliminary requirements set out in Section 12A of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended, was considered.

Decision

The Committee agreed:

1. to note the outcome of this consideration of the preliminary requirements; and
2. that Officers now formulate a draft closure proposal that would come back to the August 2023 meeting of the Committee for approval by Members, which, if approved, would subsequently trigger a formal consultation process under the

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Education dated 7 February 2023 and Options Appraisal for Achaleven Primary School, submitted)

(c) **Southend Primary School**

A report providing details of the Options Appraisal for Southend Primary School, carried out in accordance with the preliminary requirements set out in Section 12A of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended, was considered.

Decision

The Committee agreed:

1. to note the outcome of this consideration of the preliminary requirements; and
2. that Officers now formulate a draft closure proposal that would come back to the August 2023 meeting of the Committee for approval by Members, which, if approved, would subsequently trigger a formal consultation process under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Education dated 7 February 2023 and Options Appraisal for Southend Primary School, submitted)

(d) **St. Joseph's Primary School, Helensburgh**

A report providing details of a draft proposal to extend St Joseph's Primary School's catchment area, formulated in accordance with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, was considered.

Decision

The Committee agreed to adopt the draft proposal, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, as "a relevant proposal" that should now proceed to a statutory consultation under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Education dated 9 February 2023 and Proposal Paper to Rezone the Catchment Area of St Joseph's Primary School, submitted)

10. DALINTOBER AND CASTLEHILL PRIMARY SCHOOLS, CAMPBELTOWN

Consideration was given to a recommendation from the Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands Area Committee meeting held on 7 December 2022, that the Committee exercise its functions of the Council as Education Authority, to request that the Executive Director with responsibility for Education prepares an initial report outlining the way forward and potential for a proposal in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 which would allow for an initial business case to be formulated with a view to replacing the existing outdated Campbeltown primary schools of Dalintober and Castlehill, and that the completed report be presented to a meeting of the Community Services Committee for deliberation in early 2023.

Decision

The Committee agreed to request that the Executive Director with responsibility for Education prepare an initial report outlining the way forward and potential for a proposal in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 which would allow for an initial business case to be formulated with a view to replacing the existing outdated Campbeltown primary schools of Dalintober and Castlehill, and that the completed report be presented to a meeting of the Community Services Committee for deliberation in early 2023.

(Reference: Extract from Minute of Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands Area Committee held on 7 December 2022, submitted)

11. EXTERNAL EDUCATION ESTABLISHMENT INSPECTION REPORT

A report providing details of all external establishment inspections reports received across Argyll and Bute Education Service during the period November 2022 to January 2023 was before the Committee for information.

Decision

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Education dated January 2023, submitted)

12. LIVE ARGYLL - CLD MONITORING AND PERFORMANCE REPORT

A report providing the Committee with an update on the performance of Live Argyll's provision of Community Learning and Development (CLD), and the monitoring and governance arrangements for CLD between liveArgyll (LA) and the Council as set out in the 30 June 2021 Transfer Agreement between the Council and the Trust, was before the Committee for information.

Decision

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Education dated February 2023 and CLD Partnership Annual Report September 2021 – August 2022, submitted)

13. COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2023-2024

The Community Services Committee work plan for 2023-2024 was before the Committee for information.

Decision

The Committee noted the contents of the work plan.

(Reference: Community Services Committee Work Plan 2023-2024, submitted)

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**COUNCIL**

27th April 2023

LEADER'S REPORT

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** The Leader of the Council and Policy Lead Councillors routinely provide a report outlining their strategic activities for consideration at each meeting of Argyll and Bute Council, except for the annual budget meeting in February.
- 1.2** This report provides an update on the activities of the council Leader, Cllr Robin Currie, for the period 11th November 2022 to 10th April 2023. It also includes notes on activities relating to the Leader's Policy Lead portfolio of Strategic Development.

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 the Leadership Support Manager, although it should be noted that some confidential reports provided by external organisations such as COSLA may be restricted.

3. LEADER ACTIVITY 11th November 2022 to 10th April 2023:

- 3.1 Freedom of Argyll and Bute Ceremony, 8th December 2022:**
It was a real pleasure to join colleagues and officers, and invited guests, for what is, I am sure many will agree, one of the most special Freedom ceremonies we have ever held – the award of the Freedom of Argyll and Bute to former Mid-Argyll councillor Donald MacMillan BEM.

It was my privilege to move the formal Freedom motion and to deliver a valedictory in support of conferring this prestigious award on Donnie – known to so many of us as a valued colleague and indeed friend over his four decades of service to local government in Argyll and Bute.



Donnie signing the Council's Freedom Roll

Donnie has been well known and well-loved as one of Scotland's oldest and longest serving councillors. He has given over four decades of service to the people of Argyll and Bute, from his time on Strathclyde Region and Argyll and Bute District Councils in the early 1980s, right up until May 2022 his work as a councillor concluded at the magnificent age of 94.

Each and every day of those four decades of services has been dedicated to helping the people of Mid Argyll. In terms of council business, Donnie played a very active role over the years and was always ready to support new councillors to find their way and navigate the workings of the local authority.

As well as a welcome opportunity for colleagues to get together in person, it was truly an honour to be part of such a special occasion which marks Donnie's dedication, commitment and lifetime of service to the communities of Argyll and Bute.

3.2 Budget Development:

The period of time covered by this particular Leader's Report is always inevitably dominated by budget development.

The specifics of the budget have been comprehensively covered elsewhere but I would like to take the opportunity to record my thanks to the officers who work hard to ensure that the Council is able to deliver a balanced budget. The work involved is considerable and constant from the time the Scottish Government makes its initial budget announcement in December right up to the day of the Council budget meeting itself.

The financial challenges facing Scottish local government are also well documented but again this year both officers, and members across the chamber developing their political budget proposals, have worked assiduously to minimise as far as is possible the impact on services and jobs, and to maximise all possible opportunities for investment and growth. They do so in what is often a rapidly shifting financial landscape and must respond swiftly to updates and changes which very often impact many areas of the council's budget rather than happening in isolation.

While it feels like we have only just completed this year's budget, it is necessary to start thinking already about the 2024/25 process. All the indications are that this next budget will be particularly challenging for local government in Scotland, and that is why it is important for us to start our process as early as possible. There will be more detail about that in due course.

3.3 Leader Correspondence:

It may be helpful for colleagues to have an update on some of my strategic correspondence over the last few months.

November 2022:

- Royal Mail senior management, calling for urgent action in relation to significant issues at local distribution centres in various parts of Argyll and Bute where communities are waiting several weeks to receive deliveries. The impact is particularly serious in the context of missed hospital appointments – remote and island community residents already face considerable challenges in attending hospital appointments on the mainland or in the central belt and have to plan carefully in advance to manage travel logistics. Many people reported that their mail was so delayed that appointment letters arrived days or weeks after they should have attended. The situation seems to have improved now with Royal Mail providing assurances in relation to extra staff to support clearing of backlog and bringing deliveries back to an acceptable schedule.

December 2022:

- To then-Deputy First Minister John Swinney pressing for urgent update on confirmation of Crown Estate funding allocation. Members (engaging very positively on a cross party basis) and officers had been working for some time to prepare a suite of projects which could be ready to go upon receipt of allocation, given the very tight timescales involved.
- To Jenni Minto MSP following up on our previous engagement in relation to Rothesay Pavilion and building on previous letters to ministers. With the Cabinet reshuffle, I will be following up on our prior engagement with Neil Gray MSP and contacting the new minister to maintain momentum.
- To Michael Matheson, then-Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, in relation to the forthcoming biodegradable municipal waste ban and the implications for Argyll and Bute.

January 2023:

- To Jenny Gilruth, then-Minister for Transport, seeking meeting during her planned visit to Islay (covered later in this report) and welcoming her confirmation that funding is guaranteed for the medium and long-term solutions at the A83 Rest and Be Thankful. I will be following this up with Kevin Stewart, who has assumed the Transport ministerial brief.

March 2023:

- To Calmac senior management and Jenny Gilruth, then-Transport Minister, in relation to capacity and block booking pressures on island routes.

With the new Cabinet now in place I will be writing to a number of ministers on key issues such as transport, waste and economy, to set out the unique Argyll and Bute context and to seek discussions. We will also be building on previous engagement in relation to west coast depopulation. At the time of writing, we are finalising arrangements for meetings with Lorna Slater, Minister for Green Skills, Circular Economy and Biodiversity, and Joe Fitzpatrick, Minister for Local Government. I am also due to meet soon with Jenni Minto MSP as part of our programme of regular engagement and, with her new ministerial appointment to the Public Health and Women's Health portfolio, it will be helpful to have an opportunity to pick up any pertinent strategic issues with her.

3.4 Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMAs):

One of this council's strengths is its ability to come together, on a cross-party basis, swiftly and readily on the matters of real risk, challenge or indeed opportunity for Argyll and Bute. The issue of HPMAs sits firmly in the former category and the proposals under consultation (closing 17th April) pose very serious threats to various key economic sectors across Argyll and Bute and, indeed, along the entire west coast of Scotland which is already battling a depopulation trend.

At the time of writing this report, I had circulated to all councillors for their views and input a copy of the Council's draft response to the consultation, together with a letter to the new Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands, Mairi Gougeon MSP. This letter (signed by myself, the Depute Leader, the Leader of the largest Opposition Group and the Chair of PPSL) and the response both reflect the grave concerns expressed by the aquaculture, commercial fishing, marine tourism and leisure industries should these proposals become reality. If progressed, they would see further areas of our sea space highly restricted and the risk not only to industries but to the survival of coastal communities themselves is potentially catastrophic.

3.5 COSLA Leaders Meetings:

In my last report to Council in November, I prefaced this section by highlighting that national local government pay negotiations had required a number of additional Leaders meetings at short notice, alongside the regular schedule. The position is exactly the same for this report period. I have noted agenda topics for the various meetings which have taken place over the period – many of these are confidential and taken in private session but if you would like more information, please get in touch with Leadership Support staff.

Meetings taking place during the November to mid-April period were:

25th November - Leaders:

There was an extensive agenda for this session, including:

- Local Government Finance
- Pay Claim Update
- Ukraine – update on Super Sponsor Scheme
- Improvement Service Think Piece – Delivering a Future for Scottish Local Authorities
- Accounts Commission
- COSLA Response to Social Justice and Social Security Committee on Low Income and Debt
- Scottish Attainment Challenge – Stretch Aims Publication
- Legal Advice on Provision of National Care Service

- National Care Service – Mental Health, Neurodiversity and Dementia
- Health and Social Leadership and Winter Pressures
- Draft Statement of Intent – Local Authority Rent Levels
- Additional Cost of Living Support – DHP route proposal
- Cost of Living – BEIS Alternative Energy Support
- Scottish Veterinary Service – Powers
- Asylum and Humanitarian Support
- Distribution

Leaders – 16th December:

The regular Leaders meeting which coincides with the Scottish Government budget announcement took place on 16th December, and also featured the following agenda items:

- Covid-19 Inquiries
- Local Government Finance Update
- Pay Claim
- Ukraine Tariff (an emergency item taken following UK Government announcements on 15th December prior to the meeting)

Leaders – 27th January 2023:

The first Leaders meeting of the New Year included further updates on some of the key issues and challenges facing local government – their frequency on these agendas reflecting their significant importance:

- Local Government Finance
- Pay Claim Update
- National Care Service
- Historical Child Abuse Redress Scheme
- National Care Home Contract
- Health and Social Care System Pressures
- Social Work Workforce
- Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children
- Local Governance Review Update
- Suicide Prevention Strategy
- Cost of Living – BEIS Alternative Energy Support
- Local Authority Issues Arising From Energy Companies
- UK Covid-19 Inquiry Module 1 Witness Statement
- Joint Working Group on Local Government Funding Sources and Council Tax Reform
- Distribution

Special Leaders – 3rd, 10th and 14th February:

Members may recall media coverage in relation to the Scottish Government's proposed response following indications that some Scottish local authorities were considering budget savings in relation to teacher numbers.

This – in the same context of complex teachers/other pay negotiations and industrial action – required additional Special Leaders meetings to consider the matter of Scottish Government Education Interventions.

The session on 10th February also included an update on the Local Government Settlement and Teachers Pay Negotiations.

Leaders – 24th February:

This routine schedule Leaders meeting considered the following:

- COSLA/Police Scotland/Scottish Police Authority Partnership
- Pay Update
- Pay Claims 2023/24
- Joint Working Group on Local Government Funding Sources and Council Tax Reform
- Local Government Finance
- Scottish Government Education Interventions
- National Care Home Contract
- Complex Care Delayed Discharge Memorandum of Understanding
- Levelling Up Fund
- Digital Boost Funding Position
- Managing Pressures from Humanitarian Protection Schemes
- CELCIS – Protecting Children Programme
- Local Governance Review
- Distribution

Leaders – 31st March:

The following agenda items came to Leaders on 31st March:

- Freedom of Information (Scotland) Bill Consultation
- Electoral Reform
- SJC Pay Claim
- National Transfer Scheme for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children
- Funding to Support Ukraine Humanitarian Programme
- National Care Home Contract
- Learning Estate Investment Programme – Project Costs Review
- Distribution

The spring COSLA Convention took place on the same day and considered the following:

- COSLA Budget
- COSLA Plan Sign-off
- European Charter on Self Government
- Ethical Standards Commissioner – presentation
- Spokespersons Updates
- COSLA Excellence Awards

3.6 Meeting with Jenny Gilruth, Minister for Transport, 13th February:

Jenny Gilruth MSP, Minister for Transport, visited Islay on 13th February and I had an opportunity to meet with her during her trip.

While this was just a short meeting, it provided another opportunity to reiterate the case about the importance of the long-term solution for the A83 Rest and Be Thankful – it is vital to take every chance to press home that particular point given the impact on our communities and our businesses.

This came soon after a meeting of the A83 Taskforce (on 25th January, in Arrochar) where I asked for reassurance about the funding remaining in place for the medium and long term solutions for the Rest, and was glad to receive her confirmation that this was indeed guaranteed.

That is a positive development but the drive for swift resolution must continue and I will be picking this up shortly with Ms Gilruth's successor, Kevin Stewart MSP.

3.7 Meeting with Jenni Minto MSP, 14th February:

My most recent meeting with Jenni Minto MSP took place on 14th February. We have put in place a schedule of regular catch-ups which is a positive step and helps to cement our constructive working relationship. Our discussion on the 14th focused mainly on Rothesay Pavilion and Jenni's support of the lobbying activity in that regard – including plans for a parliamentary reception later in the year. I am next due to meet with her on 17th April and will be happy to provide a verbal update on any matters of significance.

3.8 Scottish Parliament Cross-Party Group on Islands:

The inaugural meeting of this group took place on 11th January, with the aim of providing a forum for the discussion of issues relevant to Scotland's islands and the residents of island communities, and to improve links between the Scottish Parliament and island communities. As well as Jenni Minto MSP, the Argyll and Bute Constituency MSP, as vice-convenor, its membership includes two of our Highlands and Islands Regional MSPs who have links to Argyll and Bute – Donald Cameron MSP and Jamie

Halcro-Johnston MSP. Their knowledge of our geography, our challenges and our opportunities will, I hope, prove helpful.

The group agreed that its future work programme will focus on island transport (particularly ferries); energy (especially offshore and remote island energy arrangements) and population and depopulation (including economy and jobs).

The next meeting is due to take place on 19th April and an update will feature in the next available Leader's Report.

3.9 Other key strategic meetings:

Renewables: With key strategic renewables developments such as the Machair Wind offshore project and others across the areas, I have had a number of meetings with Scottish Power Renewables and Scottish and Southern Energy over the past few months. This includes an SSEN workshop on net zero communities as well as a meeting with their directors in relation to investment and growth plans.

These have largely been introductory meetings at this stage but there will be follow-up meetings (alongside the routine engagement with officers and the community engagement programmes that both companies have been operating, and where meetings and open sessions are also offered to local members). There are considerable potential benefits and opportunities for Argyll and Bute and it is important to maximise these. With the height of the budget development programme concluded, we will be arranging follow-up sessions and I will be happy to update colleagues on these in my future reports.

Aquaculture: I met recently with Tavish Scott, Chief Executive of Salmon Scotland. We spoke about a range of topics but the Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMAs) issue, covered elsewhere in this report, inevitably dominated.

Economy: I continue to attend the regular Highlands and Islands Regional Economic Partnership meetings and we have ongoing engagement with our partners at Highlands and Islands Enterprise. Our Rural Growth Deal Programme Board meetings are also progressing.

I was unable to attend the most recent Convention of the Highlands and Islands (COHI) in the Western Isles at the end of March, but was represented by Cllr Andrew Kain as Policy Lead for Transport, who accompanied the Chief Executive. We are yet to receive the final outcomes from that session but I will be happy to cover that in a future report.

Highlands and Islands Airports Ltd (HIAL) engagement: HIAL's senior leadership have put in place a programme of engagement with the local authorities whose areas include a HIAL facility. Their Board Chair, Lorna Jack and Chief Executive, Inglis Lyon host a call every four to six weeks with council leaders. The last call was on 24th March – these are useful sessions where leaders can hear about issues and activities relating to the HIAL sites and I very much welcome HIAL's proactive approach to local authority engagement, as well as the commitment shown by the involvement of their senior team.

3.10 Housing:

Empty Homes success: At the Shelter Scottish Empty Homes Conference on 1st March this year, Argyll and Bute had a local renovation project shortlisted as a finalist in the Best Retrofit of an Empty Home category. The building, in Sandbank, had been empty for over 20 years and was causing concern due to its visual appearance. Now, it is a fantastic example of a derelict property facing demolition instead being rescued and brought back into use.

In the first nine months of the financial year 2022/23, the council's Empty Homes team have assisted owners to bring 30 properties back to life as homes – including 12 which have been empty for up to five years.

Homelessness: Homelessness applications have increased by around 29% but the Council (which has a duty to secure permanent accommodation for 258 statutory homeless households) has a 56% success rate compared to 22% across the country. There are currently 121 statutory households in temporary accommodation. The main reasons for homelessness at present are situations where people have been asked to leave due to relationship breakdown. In addition, since the pandemic, there has been an increase in landlords seeking to take properties back, but this is a matter that is challenging to address.

Through the COVID Tenant Rent Arrears Fund the team have assisted 70 households with rent arrears at a total cost of around £91K. While this funding is now fully committed, there remains support for rent arrears through the Rapid Rehousing initiative.

Strategic Housing Forum: The Forum continues to meet, bringing together key stakeholders involved in the delivery and progression of housing across Argyll and Bute.

Highlights from meetings on 20th December and 28th March include:

- Confirmation of the Council's formal approval of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan and its submission to Scottish ministers – if all projects completed this will deliver 248 affordable homes in the year.

- Exploration of ways to innovate to address housing challenges, including looking at buy-back schemes to boost availability of lower-cost homes within communities.
- Updates on new developments including the opening of the Oakhill development in Tarbert, where four new homes are now available.
- Dunoon's Eton Avenue development is progressing well and due to complete in summer this year, bringing a further four affordable homes.
- A total of 227 new affordable homes have been handed over at the Dunbeg project in Oban, including a number of accessible properties and homes for sale as New Supply Shared Equity.
- A pipeline of new projects across Argyll and Bute which would bring on over 80 more homes, around half of which would be on island communities.

Rural Housing Scotland Conference, 24th February: This always proves to be a highly useful and interesting event and this year was no exception.

The programme featured speakers including Jake Ryan, Head of Regional Development and Innovation at the Irish Government, and Shona Robison, then-Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government.

There were a number of workshops and sessions delivered by local housing innovators and leaders – including one from Mull and Iona Community Trust on 'Community-led housing – how we did it!'. This tied in perfectly with this year's conference theme of 'Sustainability and Rural Communities'.

3.11 Cost of Living:

Warmer homes and energy efficiency: Argyll and Bute Council was awarded funding of £2,371,323 through the Home Energy Efficiency Programme Scotland: Area Based Scheme for the year 2022/23. To date, the programme has spent £1,222,308 on insulation measures in Argyll and Bute. The current programme runs until 30th June 2023 and it is expected that all funding will be spent. The programme allows homeowners and private rented tenants to reduce their energy bills, assists with the cost of living crisis and reduces energy consumption contributing to a reduction in climate change.

The Home Energy Efficiency Team have attended public events including island and rural areas to promote the grants available for insulation measures across Argyll and Bute. Levels of customer satisfaction remain high. The team continues to work closely with other departments within the Council, for example promoting the Welfare Rights Service to those that would benefit from a referral.

The Council is also working in conjunction with Argyll Community Housing Association to insulate mixed tenure blocks of properties in Argyll and Bute. Funding of £2.2m was awarded by the Scottish Government in December 2022 to support insulation projects in Lorn, Tarbert, Bute and Cowal. The funding will also contribute towards an insulation and regeneration project in Ardrishaig. To date, £244,800 has been spent. The programme runs until 30th June 2023.

Home Energy Scotland: Local Home Energy Scotland advisors have reported (through the Strategic Housing Forum) that contacts have risen to 3,077 compared with 1,943 in the same period last year.

There have been around 350 support measures provided to people through Warmer Homes Scotland, including through insulation, glazing, draught proofing and other measures.

Financial Inclusion and Advice Group: The FIAG continues to meet regularly, bringing together a range of partners all focused on helping find ways to bring support to people in Argyll and Bute who may be struggling. I have included a selection of highlights from the March meeting below:

- 365 Scottish Welfare Fund Community Care Grants paid out between 1st April 2022 and 31st January 2023 – a total of £443k of support and an increase of £35k.
- £760k in Discretionary Housing Payments committed by 31st January 2023.
- School Clothing Banks now live in the majority of the Argyll and Bute area.
- £120 Scotland Loves Local Cards distributed with 85.2% activated and £680K spent in local areas. Around 1,300 cards issued to island residents who receive Council Tax Reduction Benefit. £1.60 top-up payments provided to pupils who get free school meals.
- Energy Bill Support Scheme administration - £530k funding received from the UK Government; 66 applications for support were received on the first day.
- Scottish Welfare Fund Crisis Grants – between 1st April 2022 and 31st January 2023, 701 grants were paid out totalling £65k. This is up 13% compared to last year. In January alone there were 192 applications – the highest ever.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 This report highlights the activities of the Leader of Argyll and Bute Council for the period from 11th November 2022 to 10th April 2023

**Councillor Robin Currie
Leader, Argyll and Bute Council**

12th April 2023

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

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ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**COUNCIL**

27th April 2023

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 Policy Leads report was considered by Council at its meeting on 24th November 2022. This latest report provides an update on activity during the period to 7th April 2023.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members are asked to consider the report.

**3. POLICY LEAD FOR FINANCE AND COMMERCIAL SERVICES –
Councillor Gary Mulvaney**

- 3.1 **Introduction:** This report provides members with an update on my activities as Depute Leader and Policy Lead for Finance and Commercial Services during the period from January to March 2023.
- 3.2 **Finance:** The last three months have seen a significant amount of time spent on the 2023/24 budget setting process, including supporting the various service areas of the Council and Elected Members to ensure a balanced budget was presented at the Council meeting in February. Initial planning meetings have already begun for the 2024/25 budget setting process.

There has also been a high volume of work for the payroll team in recent months in relation to the pay awards.

In the next few months, the key area of work will be the production of the financial statements for 2022-23. While this is always a busy time of year it will be particularly challenging this year with new external auditors in place and the anticipation is that this first year of audit will take up significantly more of our time. Initial planning meetings with external auditors have started.

- 3.3 Local Tax Collections:** The Council Tax collection rate for the current year as at 20th March 2023 was 96.61%, which is 0.43% above the collection rate at the same time the previous year. The projected outturn has been incredibly hard to predict this year given the increased collection early in the year due to the injection of the £4.33 million cost of living award (where £150 was allocated directly to circa 30,000 Council Tax accounts at the start of the year).

The Non-domestic rates (NDR) collection rate for the current year at the end of February 2023 is 95.67%, down 0.75% in comparison to the previous year. There are two large debtors with liability of over £100,000 in the retail, hospitality and leisure sector that have failed to pay their NDR for 2022/2023. Efforts continue to recover these arrears.

In January significant changes to rateable values of Council properties were reported when the Assessor released their draft values for 2023/2024 onwards. The anticipated additional cost to the Council at that stage was £589,000 in NDR charges in 2023/2024. Estates continue to negotiate agreement with the Assessor for a reduction in the rateable value increases for the schools to reduce this increase.

In relation to Empty Property Relief the service will run a report in April by administrative area to show businesses and premises currently benefitting from Empty Property Relief in their area. This report will incorporate the NDR revaluation figures after annual billing and will provide members at a local level information to help them consider what might work well for their area going forward.

- 3.4 Benefits Update:**

Benefits Processing: As at 28th February 2023 processing speeds for Housing Benefit have improved over recent months. The average cumulative processing times for the full year are 25.81 days for a new claims and 5.67 days for change in circumstances. The team continue to look at ways to improve process and performance.

Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) and Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs): Expenditure in SWF is projected to be overspent by £170,000 reaching just under £628,000 by year end against programme funding budget of £458,000. The Council has earmarked reserves from the previous year's Covid related underspend to offset the increase in spend this year. Spend on DHP is steady and within this year's budget. The Scottish Government have decided to mitigate the Benefit Cap in Scotland using DHP from January 2023 onwards and have just increased funding to cover these costs.

Flexible Food Fund: As at 31st January 2023 the project has supported 1,658 households who are suffering from food and fuel insecurities in Argyll and Bute, with a combined client gain of £2,381,461 which is an average gain of £1,436 per household. The project has attracted funding of £204,000 from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund for each of the next two financial years and we have identified the funds to make up the shortfall to allow the project to continue for at least the next two years.

Energy Support: The Council Tax team are currently processing applications from customers for the Energy Bill Support Scheme (EBSS) and Alternative Payment Fund (APF) on behalf of the UK government. These schemes are open for three months and are for people who do not have a direct relationship with an energy supplier and therefore haven't benefitted from the £400 grant that reduces energy bills or the £200 for those using oil or gas central heating. The government has given the Council programme funding of £531,000 so we anticipate around 1,600 applications. Application levels have not been high and once we get into the new financial year we will consider a campaign to increase take-up. Typical beneficiaries are those living permanently in caravan/park based accommodation and those in care homes.

3.5 Commercial Services:

Helensburgh Waterfront: I am delighted to report that phase 2 of the £23 million investment to Helensburgh's waterfront is officially complete and open to the public. Following on from the huge benefits that are being realised from the investment in the leisure centre and swimming pool, these further works create a vibrant and attractive waterfront for the community, including new seating areas, all-ability access to the pier and resurfacing, an additional 100 parking spaces and a new footpath. I would like to express my appreciation and thanks to everyone involved in this incredible project, in particular the Commercial Services team, as it has been a team effort to get to this stage. We now move into the third and final phase of the development,

which will bring commercial and employment opportunities to further support the town centre.

Rothesay Pavilion: The Council, at their budget meeting held on 23rd February 2023, agreed the recommendations from the Policy and Resources Committee held on 16th February for a continuation of the project as set out in the accompanying Financial and Contractual Issues report, including:

- Approval of up to £89,099 in revenue funding from previously earmarked reserves to fund the day-to-day operational costs of the Rothesay Pavilion Charity (RPC) in 2023/24;
- Principle of a three-staged approach to the completion of works;
- An additional £3.102m capital funding be made available to the project, over and above previously committed capital/borrowing;
- That the previously agreed prudential borrowing up to £3.114m, now only requiring £3.030m, is replaced by additional capital funding to mitigate the year-on-year revenue impact of repaying the borrowing;
- Agreed the implementation of stage 1 works by Robertson Construction Central West to ensure that the main building is wind and watertight. The contract has been signed and it is anticipated that works will commence on site in May.

3.6 Depute Leader Update: I have regular other meetings with the Leader, Policy Leads and the Chief Executive in respect of council business and priorities. In addition, I have deputised for the Leader at COSLA meetings.

4. POLICY LEAD FOR EDUCATION – Councillor Yvonne McNeilly

4.1 Official Opening of Dunoon Primary: Since my last report in November the official opening of Dunoon Primary took place on 6th December, following a £10.8 million investment to transform the school into a state of the art teaching and learning facility, whilst maintaining its building status. The refurbishment, which included £5.08 million funding from the Scottish Government, saw the school's capacity rise to 300 pupils and 30 early learning and childcare (ELC) places, and includes a new family centre, gym hall, library, ELC Centre, and staff development area.

4.2 Coronation Flag Competition: Primary School pupils across Argyll and Bute have been given the opportunity to take part in a special competition to design and create a unique flag to mark the Coronation of King Charles III. Pupils had until 31st March to get their entries in via

the Head Teacher and we were overwhelmed by the huge response, with over 1,000 entries being received. All designs have been reviewed by the Judging Panel who had an incredibly difficult task of selecting only one winner from each of the Council's four administrative areas. One overall winner has also be selected, whose design will be made into a full size flag to be flown at Argyll and Bute Council Headquarters, Kilmory, on 5th May 2023.

The overall winner and their school will each receive a framed replica of their flag to keep, with an extra prize for the school too. Area winners will also receive framed replicas of their designs and special Certificates of Commendation.

Thank you to every pupil who took the time to submit an entry, we certainly have a lot of talented young artists in Argyll and Bute.

4.3 Minimum Annual Learning Hours: The Scottish Government published a consultation on 21st March 2023 in respect of proposals to set in law the minimum annual number of learning hours that local authority and grant aided schools must provide. Learning hours are the period of teaching that learners receive within the school day and in most cases excludes lunch and other break times or extra-curricular activities.

Scottish Ministers propose to:-

- Prepare regulations that prescribe the minimum number of learning hours that must be provided in local authority and grant aided schools in an academic year;
- Prescribe the number of learning hours at 950 hours for primary schools and 1045 for secondary schools; and
- Prescribe the circumstances where fewer than the prescribed number of learning hours may be delivered.

Officers are currently in the process of preparing a response to the consultation, which poses six key questions, and will bring a paper to the Community Services Committee on 8th June 2023. A final response will be submitted in advance of the consultation deadline on 13th June 2023.

- 4.4 Virtual Head Teacher Post:** There are around 17 local authorities in Scotland with a Virtual Head Teacher (VHT) in post. The VHT post provides us with a senior member of education staff who will work at a strategic level, but not in a physical school building.

The VHT responsibilities focus on improving the educational experiences and outcomes of care experienced children and young people in the whole local authority area. VHTs also provide key links between multi-agency teams and advocate for the needs and rights of care experienced children and young people.

We have completed the recruitment process for a VHT in Argyll and Bute. This is a new post and will replace the previous Principal Teacher for Care Experienced Children and Young People post. Making this post a Head Teacher post raises the profile of the role and allows the post holder greater credibility. Our expectation is that the post holder will work collaboratively with Head Teachers in each establishment and offer support and robust challenge around data and the strategies in place to secure better outcomes for each and every one of our care experienced children.

Following a strong leet of applications and a competitive interview process Louise Chisholm was appointed. Louise has previously been a Head Teacher in Argyll and Bute and within another local authority and brings substantial leadership experience to the post. Louise has experience in leading strategically and also has experience of internal and external scrutiny processes and will start the secondment on 17th April 2023.

- 4.5 MCR Pathways Pilot:** The Education Service are pursuing a new partnership with MCR (Motivation, Commitment, Resilience) Pathways which would see Oban High School, Hermitage Academy and Dunoon Grammar School in 2023-2024, engaging in a programme of mentoring for our most disadvantaged young people. This approach, if progressed, would see mentors sourced from across Argyll and Bute, including from within the council, to meet weekly with mentees. The programme aims to support young people to understand and develop their talents and capacities, and therefore their confidence and resilience, through their relationships and interactions with trained, committed mentors and a range of personalised taster experiences.
- 4.6 Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) Employability Conference:** Planning for the inaugural Argyll and Bute Employability Conference in the Queen's Hall, Dunoon on 19th May is progressing well. 125 delegates have confirmed their attendance, with a number of responses still to be received. The five workshops – of which each

delegate will attend three – are being planned, and young people from across our schools, and each engaging with DYW in a different way, are being recruited to share their experiences and thoughts with delegates. Discussions are ongoing with Scottish Government to secure a replacement for the former Depute First Minister as one of keynote speakers.

- 4.7 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC):** Following our UNCRC focus at the Head Teachers Conference in November there has been steady progress with Rights Respecting Schools (RRS) Awards. Overall, accreditations within Argyll and Bute consists of 11 registrations, 31 bronze (including one partner nursery), ten silver (including one partner nursery) and four gold awards. A professional learning event for RRS leads in schools is being developed to support the completion of the action plan that will help schools secure Bronze accreditation.
- 4.8 Children and Young People Improvement Collaborative (CYPIC) Improving Writing Programme:** Five schools have now taken part in the first cohort of the CYPIC Improving Writing Programme. Practitioners are reporting a clear impact of the programme through children's work and projected attainment data is reinforcing this with increased attainment forecasts for all schools who have taken part. We have now launched Cohort 2 of the programme, with staff embracing the intervention and providing evidence of positive impact.
- 4.9 Addressing Non-attendance:** The Educational Psychology profession hold an annual conference, organised jointly by the Scottish Division of Educational Psychology, the Association of Principal Educational Psychologists and Education Scotland. The conference, this year entitled "All our children: Inclusive practice in education", was held on 24 March 2023 and was attended by education colleagues across Scotland. We are delighted that our Educational Psychology Service was selected to share our work on Addressing Non-attendance nationally at this event. It was anticipated that there would be around 20 delegates for our workshop - however almost 60 colleagues from across the country joined to hear about this exciting work.

The team, led by Lisa Myburgh, Educational Psychologist, with Alison Munro, Principal Teacher and Chulainn Ledsom, Research Assistant, presented the details of our work to maximise the school attendance of children and young people through an evidence informed, structure approach with schools and partners.

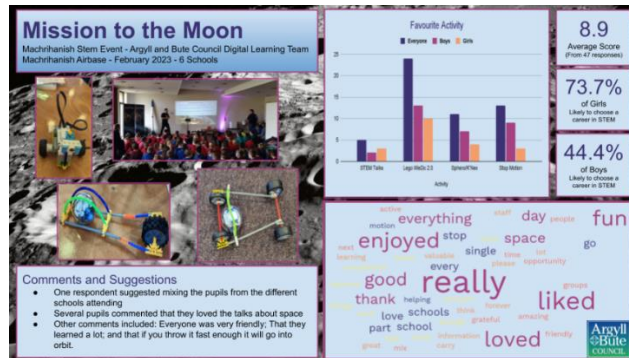
4.10 Digital Learning

During February and March this year, the Digital Learning Team has delivered digital inputs to over 160 pupils. These workshops aim to help inspire children and young people to learn digital technology skills through high quality learning.



Several primary schools have enjoyed a new, exciting cyber security workshop. The workshop focused on keeping data safe with strong encryption. Pupils used a variety of methods, including scytale and a Caesar cipher, to decrypt puzzles and reveal a pin that unlocked a custom-designed Micro:Bit safe.

Over 100 pupils from across the peninsula of Kintyre gathered at the Machrihanish Airbase Community Company (MACC) for a fun and informative day at the “Mission to the Moon” STEM event.



The event was hosted by Argyll and Bute Council’s Digital Learning Team, who led several workshops including building a Lego science rover, an engineering challenge to create a Sphero Bolt powered chariot using the K’Nex, and a Stop motion workshop. Pupils were able to engage with each of the activities in small groups.

The pupils were asked to complete a short evaluation at the end of the event, and it scored 8.9 out of 10. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with pupils praising the workshops for being fun, engaging, and informative. The team was delighted with the feedback, and they are looking forward to running similar events in the future.

4.11 Early Years

Kilmartin Primary School took delivery of a bespoke, modular build Early Learning Centre in February, which allows the children to access their full 1140 entitlement within their own setting.

Feedback from the children, families and staff has been glowing in terms of the flexibility, spaciousness and outdoor capacity this new build brings to the setting.



We have made significant investment to all settings as an Early Years Team this term to support our practitioners to more effectively to use their indoor and outdoor spaces to ensure our children are within environments which inspire and engage them as learners but which also nurture and sustain them when they want calm, rest and stillness.

In March, the Early Years service were one of just two local authorities in Scotland to host a professional learning day with Dr Sandra Duncan, an American Early Years researcher whose research work centres upon how the natural environment should influence classroom/playroom design, a field of thought which sits very well alongside our Argyll and Bute, Three Assets approach to curriculum design. Initial feedback from attendees has been overwhelmingly positive and, more importantly, changes practitioners are making within settings are beginning to have positive impacts upon the children and the natural rhythm of their day.

4.12 Leadership and Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL)

Argyll and Bute Teacher PRD and PU Guidelines: The Professional Review and Development (PRD) and Professional Update (PU) Guidelines for Teachers have been refreshed in line with the 2021 General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) Standards. The Education Management Team and Head Teacher Advisory Group were involved in the review process and the updated Guidelines were shared with all teaching staff, including supply teachers, in March 2023.

Engaging in Professional Update is a requirement for GTCS registration and is a key part of maintaining teacher professionalism. A one page infographic about the PRD and PU process has been

created in the Guidelines and this is accompanied by a range of self-evaluation tools which encourage teachers to engage with the Standards.

4.13 Celebrating Success

Port Ellen Primary – School of Year: Following on from my Policy Lead update in September 2022, I am delighted to report that Port Ellen Primary School have trumped their Silver award by securing Gold in the Pearson National Teaching Awards for Primary School of the Year. The award came as part of a week-long celebration of teaching which cumulated in a prestigious ceremony on 26th November 2022.

Port Ellen Primary have been honoured for their approach to the curriculum, which is designed around island life and has already seen them win a number of awards around STEM and entrepreneurialism. Despite the challenges of its rural location, the school makes the best use of the local environment and technology to creatively tackle these barriers. Staff have been recognised for the links they have built with other island schools around the world to build a global community for pupils, and the way in which the school values and harness their Gaelic heritage.

A huge congratulations to Maureen Macdonald, Head Teacher, and all her colleagues who go above and beyond to shape the future of the school's children and young people. Well done!

Updated 2022 Exam Results: Following the appeals process, updated results published by the Scottish Qualifications Association (SQA) show that young people in Argyll and Bute are performing above the national average. Advanced Higher Passes have risen by 1.8% to 85.5%, which is 2.9% higher than the average across Scotland. Higher passes have also increased by 1.4% to 80.9% - 1.6% higher than the national average.

Nurture Achievements: A further seven schools in Argyll and Bute have been accredited for their achievements in developing nurturing cultures in their school communities, bringing the total number across the area to 27. The accreditation forms part of the Council's 'Our Children, Their Nurturing Education (OCTNE) Strategy', which aims to ensure that children and young people have the emotional support they need to thrive.

The schools that have achieved bronze accreditation in this round are Carradale Primary, Castlehill Primary, Drumlemble Primary, Dunoon Grammar, Glenbarr Primary, Rockfield Primary, and Strone Primary. Well done to everyone involved.

The Council's nurture teachers have been involved in delivering training through Argyll and Bute's probationer teacher programme and will present a session as part of the University of Highlands and Islands Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) Programme.

Education Scotland also recently featured the strategy in its national thematic review around Health and Wellbeing, and it is set to be included in their National Improvement Framework scrutiny report to exemplify Teacher and Practitioner Professionalism.

Argyll Schools Piping Success: Lochgilphead Joint Campus excelled at this year's Scottish School Pipe Band Championships, with the school's A band being crowned the Quartets Champions, and the B band getting fourth in the same section.

Kintyre Schools Pipe Band also celebrated success, coming fourth in the Novice A section.

I would like to congratulate all the talented musicians, who were up against some of the best in the country.

Thematic Inspection of Curriculum Design at Oban High School: On March 7th and 8th 2023, His Majesty's Education Inspectors (HMIe) conducted a Thematic Inspection of Curriculum Design at Oban High School. The findings of the inspection were extremely positive, highlighting the clear rationale for the curriculum and the way it is led effectively by staff, pupils, parents and partners across the whole local community. They also highlighted the innovative and creative nature of the curriculum in promoting equity for all young people, and its effectiveness in creating individualised, flexible pathways for pupils, leading to positive post-school destinations.

Assessment and Moderation: A series of training twilights has been available for all teaching staff, with a focus on our digital approach to moderation. Feedback from practitioners has been positive and staff have commented on their developed understanding of standards and ease of moderating with other schools, using the support provided. A recent inspection from one of our schools, Lochdonhead Primary, graded Learning Teaching and Assessment as **Excellent**, please see bullet point below, lifted from Education Scotland Summarised Inspection Findings.

'Teachers engage regularly in collaborative, high-quality moderation activity with their partner school, other local schools and local authority

moderation processes. Staff are regularly moderating their innovative approaches to planning and assessment as well as agreeing standards across a range of curricular areas. Staff have a deep understanding of the process and apply this highly successfully. The principal teacher is an experienced Quality Assurance and Moderation Support Officer, sharing expertise and supporting practice in other schools. Teachers' robust moderation focused on listening and talking is being shared beyond the school to support system-wide improvement.'

Lochdonhead Primary Inspection: In January 2023 a team of Education Scotland inspectors visited Lochdonhead Primary. The school received very positive feedback from the Managing Inspector with specific reference to the compassionate, articulate, independent children who display an enthusiasm for learning, the highly effective leadership and direction of the Headteacher and principal teacher, very high quality teaching and learning provision and, the very well-established, high-quality community and partnership working and its significant impact. Overall the school achieved 3 'very good' and one 'excellent' grading.

5. POLICY LEAD FOR ROADS AND TRANSPORT - Councillor Andrew Kain

- 5.1 Introduction:** Roads are Council assets used by the vast majority of residents in Argyll and Bute for everyday living and all manners of business; essential for economic success. While there will always be aspects which should and can be improved the network in Argyll and Bute has been improving over the last few years. Prudent investment has resulted in a much improved network. There is much more to be done and with £8,000,000 committed in the budget for this year and next, more will be done.
- 5.2 Road Improvements:** More than 86% of Argyll and Bute's roads are in a good or fair condition according to the latest survey of the area's network. Despite normal maintenance work in some areas badly affected by the pandemic, more than 50% of the region's roads network, which covers more than 2,300 kilometres, is within the 'green' or 'good condition' band, whilst 36% are amber.

This is the first time in the last eight years that the results of the Annual Status and Options Report (ASOR) have reported more than half the area's roads network as green, which demonstrates the success that roads maintenance teams have been able to achieve despite challenging conditions. The survey of the roads network takes

place annually to provide information about which sections the Council should consider for maintenance.

As well as roads, the ASOR provides details on a range of other infrastructure assets including footways, bridges, street lighting and traffic signals, street furniture and electric vehicle chargers.

Our roads support thousands of journeys every day and are a vital component of the local economy, providing access for leisure, business, education and tourism as well as supporting vital services such as energy supplies, communications and the digital network. Road networks are a significant economic enabler for all areas. Available and safe roads, both local and trunk routes, are particularly important for the economic prosperity of rural mainland and island communities of Argyll and Bute.

Thanks to prudent investment and sensible engineering solutions our road network has improved and, while there is no doubt that increasing traffic levels and Scotland's challenging climate can have a detrimental effect, it is great news for our local communities that our maintenance programme is paying dividends with more than half of our roads in a good state of repair.

5.3 Bridge Funding: - this has also been secured, following a successful bid, for over £5.5M which will see four key bridges replaced and a further five strengthened. Ground investigation works has been carried out for the four replacement bridges and this data is being used to determine the best locations and designs for the replacements. Design work is underway for the five bridges to be strengthened. This additional investment is very much welcomed and will see nine bridges either replaced or strengthened. Once the design work is further progressed I will ask officers to share the programme with Members.

5.4 Oban Municipal Harbour Authority: The Council's plans to establish a Municipal Harbour Authority in Oban are continuing to move forward. The Council is already the Harbour Authority for Oban North Pier, and while CMAL/CalMac and Northern Lighthouse all have responsibility for separate areas within the bay, the approaches into and out of the bay are currently unregulated.

The Council and Stakeholder Communities want to establish a Harbour Authority to enforce positive safety measures and, on 22nd December last year, the Council submitted a draft Harbour Revision Order (HRO) to Transport Scotland. Since then, positive discussions have taken place between the council and Transport Scotland, and the

Scottish Government's legal team will now review the draft HRO. We are now awaiting approval of the draft HRO from the Scottish Government.

Once this has been done, the HRO will need to be approved by the Argyll and Bute Harbour Board before we then begin the statutory 42 day public consultation. Oban Bay is very busy with marine traffic, particularly during the summer months, so it is vital that we establish a Municipal Harbour Authority for this area so that people have safe and regulated access within the bay.

While there are differences of opinion as to some of the operational detail there is, I believe, unanimous support among Stakeholder Groups for addressing greater safety and future development of Oban Harbour through the establishment of a Municipal Harbour Authority.

5.5 Port Marine Safety Code: the Council remains on course to achieve a national good practice standard for its ports and harbours – something that very few others in the UK have secured. The Port Marine Safety Code (PMSC) sets out a national safety standard covering different aspects of running ports and harbours, and represents 'good practice' as recognised by a wide range of industry stakeholders.

The Department for Transport publishes a list of compliant ports every three years, and Argyll and Bute is on schedule for inclusion in the next edition that will be compiled next year for publication in 2025. The current list of more than 230 ports, published by The Department for Transport as complying with the Code, represents around 14% of UK ports and 30% of Statutory Harbour Authorities.

Achieving the standard involves an independent assessor, or Designated Person, carrying out assurance audits of ports and harbours. During their assurance audit in Argyll and Bute, the Designated Person highlighted three examples of 'Best Practice', including operations at Oban Harbour. It is intention to drive to be recognised for Best Practice in all areas!

Our ports and harbours play a key part in marine connections to and from our island and mainland communities. Although the Port Marine Safety Code is not an official requirement, it is something we want to achieve in Argyll and Bute and I am delighted to see the progress that we are making.

- 5.6 Kilcreggan Upgrade:** we are encouraging more people to have their say on plans to upgrade the ferry infrastructure in Kilcreggan. In order to improve the reliability and resilience of the ferry service between the village, the wider community and Gourock, plans are being explored with service users and communities to take advantage of the investment being made in new vessels, helping to bring new economic opportunities to the area.

Transport Scotland is close to confirming the designs for new passenger ferries coming into operation on the Gourock, Dunoon and Kilcreggan routes, and concerns for the existing B-listed pier at Kilcreggan having capacity to accommodate them safely have led to plans being developed for new accessible infrastructure that will see the service into the future.

The Council's preferred option would see a pontoon built to the west of the existing pier. The existing, historic timber pier remain in place as a supplementary facility for leisure and recreational use by others, and the Council would continue to maintain it for the benefit of the local community. Detailed drawings of the preferred option are available on the [Council website](#).

Ferry users need reliable vessels; they need certainty that crossings will run; and our preferred option means that can happen. Not only that, this design will help bring economic opportunities to the area for years to come. We know that weather can present an issue on the current service as vessels approach the berth. This has a huge impact on the reliability of sailings so, in order to alleviate that risk and ensure vessels can berth safely and reliably in all conditions, a breakwater is included in the preferred option.

This will enable vessels to berth in more difficult conditions, therefore improving the reliability of the service. The location and size of the breakwater has not yet finalised - this will be done during the detailed design stage.

To find out more about the project, including our list of Frequently Asked Questions, visit [Kilcreggan Ferry Terminal \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](#)

- 5.7 The Rest and Be Thankful:** At the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee in March, officers presented an update report on the Rest and Be Thankful. I am pleased to hear that in December the Transport Minister announced that the Scottish Government would make improvements to the Old Military Road as a medium term

solution to improve the resilience of the temporary diversion route to the A83, and said it will make an announcement on the long-term solution in the spring and it is understood that a date for the beginning of the first phase of this work has still to be confirmed.

The Rest and Be Thankful is a key element of Argyll and Bute's infrastructure and plays a vital role in the local economy. The ongoing issues around the route undoubtedly have a severe impact on local people, businesses and the area's profile as a popular destination for visitors. The planned improvements to the Old Military Road will help to provide a solution in the medium term to alleviate some of the problems but I'm sure I speak for the local community when I say that we are greatly looking forward to the announcement of the permanent solution by the Scottish Government in the spring.

We will do all necessary to ensure the new Transport Minister is fully aware of the Strategic importance of the Rest; and that commitments made are honoured. However, I am, sure he must be aware of its importance to the Scottish transport network and the economy.

5.8 Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2): STPR2 is highly significant for the future of transport investment in Scotland for the next 20 years and the recommendations for our communities are particularly disappointing in light of the initial assurances we were given and how engaged the Council was throughout the entire process. Indeed it is my view that some of the outcomes are likely to have unintended, negative and potentially damaging consequences. We will be seeking further discussions with both Transport Scotland and the Scottish Government to both express our major concerns about the review and to seek further clarification on a number of issues.

5.9 Flood Prevention: It is great to see the Campbeltown Flood Prevention Scheme well underway. This £15M investment, funded 80% by Scottish Government, as part of the first cycle of the national flood prevention programme will help to significantly build resilience against flooding in Campbeltown. I met with other councillors, our staff and staff from the contractor and consultants in September last year prior to the works commencing where we received a presentation about the works followed by a tour of the extensive site. I'm looking forward to a return visit late spring/early summer to see the works physically on the ground. It will also be an opportunity to meet with Ward councillors from Campbeltown.

Further study work has been undertaken and for some locations is still underway. This study work will be used to bid for cycle 2 of the Flood Prevention Scheme. Sites include Dunoon, Oban, Lochgilphead, Rothesay and Helensburgh. Cycle 1 was highly competitive with cycle 2 expected to be equally competitive with several councils likely to be bidding for limited (yet to be confirmed) funding. The study work will help officers to put forward robust bids for additional flood prevention funding.

- 5.10 Active Travel:** Investment of over £684,000 to widen pedestrian routes, build a new cycleway and improve bus stops will make it safer and easier for pedestrians, cyclists and bus users to travel between Ralston Road and Meadows Avenue in Campbeltown. Work started in January to construct the new cycleway linking Ralston Road, Campbeltown Hospital to Limecraigs Road, Meadowpark and Meadows Avenue. The route will also link key community facilities including Campbeltown Grammar School and Castlehill Primary School.

In addition to the new cycleway, work to upgrade sections of the existing footway and bus stops will start. The Council is delivering the project, funded by Highlands and Islands Regional Transport Partnership (HITRANS) and Transport Scotland's Cycling Walking and Safer Routes Fund. Work is due to complete by early summer 2023.

This significant investment in delivering active travel and bus accessibility will have far reaching benefits for residents and visitors to Campbeltown. As we improve and link pedestrian and cycle routes, we open up more opportunities for children to cycle to school or people working at the hospital to cycle there. As we do everything we can to create a climate friendly Argyll and Bute, we hope more people will take advantage when the route completes and travel by bike or foot.

- 5.11 Future:** While much has been achieved the challenges remain as resources become further strained. Within these constraints officers are looking to effectively 'do more with less' or to look at greater use of technology and purchase of specialist equipment. On a recent visit to Islay I witnessed a very impressive demonstration of a Jetpatcher by an experienced and professional operator. Technology will not solve every problem; but technology applied with expertise and professionalism will contribute greatly.

6. POLICY LEAD FOR CARE SERVICES – Councillor Amanda Hampsey

6.1 Integration Joint Board: I have now taken up the position of Chair of the Argyll and Bute Integration Joint Board and look forward to continuing to work closely with members. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the previous chair, Sarah Compton Bishop for the hard work and time she has dedicated to the IJB over the past two years and wish her well in her new role as Chair of the NHS Highland Board.

6.2 Kintyre Care Home: I was delighted to attend Kintyre Care Centre in Campbeltown for the formal handover into Council property. It was a privilege to speak with residents and their families, as well as meet and experience first-hand the excellent care that is provided by Kintyre Care Centre. The care home will be run by Argyll and Bute HSCP, whilst continuing with the dedicated team of staff previously employed there.

In purchasing the care home, we acknowledge and understand the importance of families having their loved ones as close to home as possible. I am therefore delighted that the hard work of the HSCP and Argyll and Bute Council has achieved saving this vital facility.

6.3 Adult Services:

Winter Planning and Pressures: The HSCP Senior Staff have a winter oversight group which looks at weekly escalations including the overall delayed discharge figure and rationale for delays and complex delays. Argyll and Bute residents in Greater Glasgow NHS Board and in Argyll and Bute hospitals is captured in delayed discharges figures and performance. The numbers of delayed discharges is gradually reducing.

Urgent and unscheduled care remains the focus of redesign on community services and the avoidance of admission.

Interim Care: Scottish Government Funding for interim care (where an individual in hospital cannot get a care at home package and who is offered a placement in a care home without charge of between three days and six weeks) ended on 31st March 2023. The HSCP and Council Finance are looking at the options for this transitionally and longer term.

This is creating intensive work to develop a fair and equitable service to both reduce delays in hospital but also manage budget pressures. A policy direction will be required from the HSCP and will come through the Senior Leadership Team and Finance and Policy.

Care Home Collaborative Arrangements: Oversight arrangements for care homes during the pandemic are transitioning to collaborative arrangements with additional funding to support. In Argyll and Bute there remains a Care Home and Care at Home Weekly Escalation Group.

Palliative Care: There is development of a national strategy of Palliative and End of Life Care. At a local level, there is a short-life working group on palliative care to provide clarity on services and pathways.

Adult Social Work: There remains a national shortage of social workers and national discussions on how to focus on this challenge. In Argyll and Bute HSCP there is a focus on grow your own, staff development and retention. Additionally there is a short life group for adult social work looking at the services social work provide and reviewing our current delivery model.

6.3 Children's Services:

Children's Resources: The service is responsible for ensuring high quality care for children who need it.

Overall there remains very limited availability of residential and foster homes for children. In anticipation of this we previously extended the Family Placement Team into the recruitment and support of kinship carers, which is helping ease this pressure. In addition a recruitment campaign for new foster carers is commencing.

Inspection reports were published in respect of Dunclutha – graded very good; Shellach View - graded good; and East King Street – where a number of concerns led to a grading of weak. An improvement plan has been in place for East King Street with additional resources approved. While progress has been made, staffing difficulties have hampered improvements in some areas. The Care Inspectorate recently undertook a follow up visit and have agreed to support us in delivering on outstanding improvements.

Child Protection:

Implementation of the updated National Child Protection Guidance: Multi-agency focus groups in two localities have considered the draft updates to the Child Protection Committee Website which will align Argyll and Bute's policy, procedures and guidance with the updated National Child Protection Guidance. Further tweaks to the draft site will be completed before a roll out of awareness raising and training on the updated guidance for all partner agencies will be progressed. The

Implementation Plan remains within the projected timescale for full completion and launch by the end of 2023.

Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM): The multi-agency SCIM Implementation Group, which is coordinating partnership implementation of the new model for joint police and social work interviewing of child witnesses/victims of abuse across Police Scotland L Division, and both West Dunbartonshire and Argyll and Bute Council areas, continues to progress the implementation plan with meetings on a fortnightly basis. Social Workers and managers are attending the first training modules throughout March with a target date for implementation of the new model in May 2023.

Feedback from Police Divisions and Local Authority areas where the new model has been implemented over the past three years reports better planning and co-ordination of interviews, leading to better outcomes both in terms of evidential utility and improved wellbeing of children and young people who become involved in these processes. Implementation will be on a staged basis in line with available capacity within police and social work.

Activity: Consistent with data reported across Scotland through the National Minimum Data Set for Child Protection, child protection activity is recovering from the period across the pandemic years where the trend across all indicators was a reduction in activity. Argyll and Bute has seen an increasing volume of initial referrals, Initial Referral Discussions, investigations and Registrations from December 2022 onwards. This is also consistent with a significant increase in the volume of referrals being received by the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration, who continue to manage capacity challenges around decision-making and scheduling of Children's Hearings.

Social Work Out-of-Hours Service: The new model of out-of-hours Social Work support to the community and partner agencies replaced the existing Social Work Emergency Service on 3rd April. This will see a continuation of the call handling service and overnight response provided by commissioned partners Carr Gomm, alongside a reduction in the numbers of geographic rotas for social workers on call from five to two. This will remove the previous significant out of hours responsibilities experienced by island resident staff, and reduce the overall frequency of out of hours duties for all social workers by 50%.

The new service will improve the match between the actual activity out of hours to capacity, and the change in emphasis encapsulated in the name change better reflects the continuation of planned daytime activities into overnight carried out by the call handling provision.

Child Health and Maternity:

Children and Young People's Service Plan (CYPSP) and Getting It Right For Every Child: Both consultations for the Children Young Person Service Plan are now complete, and the draft is currently with the graphic designer. Once in a dressed form, dates will be requested from the IJB then further circulation.

Neurodevelopmental Service: Argyll and Bute are progressing well with scoping and future plans of the Neurodevelopmental Service after having a recent multiagency process mapping day. Further needs analysis is still required to be undertaken.

Justice Social Work:

ViSOR (Violent and Sex Offender Database): ViSOR is a Home Office system that operates across the UK which provides a central store for up-to-date information about individuals managed under MAPPA including registered sex offenders, restricted patients and other risk of harm offenders.

ViSOR is due to be replaced in October 2024 by a new Home Office System MAPPS and work is ongoing on a national basis to resolve the issues of Non Police Personnel Vetting for Justice Social Work staff and the additional workload placed on the service.

Bail Supervision and Electronic Monitoring of Bail: The Scottish Government updated its guidance and policy on Bail supervision in 2022, with the expectation that this service be made available in all courts across Scotland. Development work has been ongoing to implement this in Argyll and Bute, with the service now fully operational, although the remote and rural geography of the area has presented some challenges.

Bail Supervision is a social work service whereby people who would otherwise be held on remand are released on bail on the condition that they meet with a bail supervisor a specified number of times a week; the aim of these meetings being to support the individual to comply with the conditions of their bail. It is intended to provide a robust and credible alternative to remand where people are assessed as needing a level of supervision and support to meet their bail conditions. It also helps to ensure that remand is only used where necessary and appropriate.

6.4 **Strategic Planning, Performance and Technology:**

Strategic Planning:

- Joint Strategic Plan and Commissioning Strategy – Year 1 monitoring: Processes are in place to ensure that this is effectively monitored with scope for strategic leads to revise Year 2 priorities to ensure they are appropriate, achievable and linked to the financial strategy.
- The Women’s Health Plan (2021–2024) was published by the Scottish Government in September 2021. The plan outlines improvement and change in areas that affect women, including menopause, endometriosis, heart health, menstrual health and sexual health. The HSCP has identified an executive lead and established a small group to start mapping what is currently in place and what are the gaps in the Argyll and Bute context.
- Reviewing the Service Level Agreement principles with NHSGGC – The Planning Team and Chief Officer are working to refresh and re-establish the critical working partnership and relationship between Argyll and Bute and Greater Glasgow and Clyde. We aim to reintroduce the principals of the Argyll and Bute and GGC SLA to establish a better understanding of the pathways and agreements in place and examine what requires to be refreshed to ensure these are maintained and the obligate networks reinforced.

Performance and Improvement:

- Delivery and go live of the new Integrated Performance Management Dashboard is on track for April - this will replace the previous Pyramid balanced scorecard. The new performance dashboard development has utilised a fully collaborative approach and integrated model to ensure full engagement with Heads of Service and Service Leads with oversight from the Strategic Leadership Team. The focus of this work has been to ensure that key performance indicators are able to respond to national reporting requirements whilst remaining focussed on what is important locally for manages, staff, community and strategic planning.

Technology: A key aspect of integration of health and social care services is the development of a person centred approach and a single health and care team. A single information system and ideally a shared record has been identified by front line staff as key operational requirement to achieve this from the inception of the HSCP.

The HSCP Digital Modernisation Strategy and action plan captures this aim and details how we are to achieve this. The Strategy has now been approved and included in the HSCP Strategic plan 2022-2025. The following outlines the current status of some of the projects.

- Implementation of the ECLIPSE system replacing Carefirst for social work and community nursing and community AHP health services go live date later in 2023.
- Implementation of Orion Portal allowing primary care and hospital systems to view ECLIPSE community health record later in 2023.
- Scanning of all general health Medical records at across the HSCP is well underway and will be completed by the summer 2023.
- Telecoms – eHealth continue to deploy “AB Connect”, our new Maintel IVR (Interactive Voice Recognition) automated service within hospitals across the HSCP. This new service has already been successfully enabled within Campbeltown, Islay and Helensburgh hospitals, followed by Mull due to go live by April. Dates are currently being arranged for the remainder sites Dunoon, Lochgilphead and Oban. All of this will benefit our staff and service by providing the very best digital telephony service to the HSCP.

7. POLICY LEAD FOR PLANNING AND REGULATORY SERVICES – Councillor Kieron Green

7.1 Introduction: Following from my previous Policy Lead Report I have chaired monthly Planning, Protective Services and Licensing Committee meetings, the Argyll and Bute Licensing Board and as required Local Review Bodies.

I have also sat on the panel for the Argyll and Bute Sustainable Design awards, which has seen shortlisted developments in all parts of our area. Site visits are now underway and the public vote is now open.

I continue to attend Clyde Marine Planning Partnership meetings where, alongside issues raised by users, there is an ongoing review over governance and representation.

I was invited to the online Building Standards User Forum on 29th March where agents and architects were updated on changes and revisions to standards.

Input from members has been sought to enable the Council to respond to the Scottish Government consultation on Highly Protected Marine Areas.

7.2 Development Management: Planning validation timescales have been brought down to seven working days, which is close to the target of five. However determination, which was already longer than target, has unfortunately continued to increase as officers become familiar with the approved National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) and its implications for planning policy in Argyll and Bute. NPF4, following adoption by the Scottish Government, is now a statutory policy consideration that impacts on all applications in the planning process.

Planning income at the end of January was £514k over target, which has enabled some additional temporary resource to support large scale applications in particular. This level of fee income reflects the high case load officers are having to deal with, including a high number of major applications that take a consideration amount of staff resource to deal with.

Recruitment is ongoing with some recent success in filling vacant posts at a time when there is a national shortage of qualified planning officers. In addition to further recruitment efforts, officers are looking to take forward an action plan to improve the planning process following a meeting with a number of planning agents.

Positive overall feedback from Government was received regarding the Planning Performance Framework for 2022/23, although determination and age of Local Development Plan were still rated red.

7.3 Development Policy: The adoption of the Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2) has been delayed due to approval of NPF4. Reporters have requested further information on renewables, wild land, flooding, and housing land supply to ensure that there is conformity between the plans. Depending on the final report there may be further steps required before final agreement can be reached and the plan adopted.

Major planning applications are due to be submitted to allow development at Dunbeg to be continued, with work continuing with the Scottish Government over Tax Incremental Financing and with Transport Scotland on the A85 junction design.

It has been confirmed that emergency services do not, at this time, want to be located on site as part of the 'Strategic Delivery and Development Framework' for the Faslane Maritime Change Programme. Development costs are being modelled to feed into the Rural Growth Deal Outline Business Case.

Following the demolition of the former Lochgilphead Primary School options are being considered to halt the Simplified Planning Zone

(SPZ) in Lochgilphead due to issues arising from statutory planning consultees particularly in relation to flooding impacting on a portion of the site.

7.4 Building Standards: As at the end of February income was £38.5k over target. While East Lothian Council is continuing to make use of capacity available, the contract with Dundee City is coming to an end and no interest has been received from elsewhere in Scotland. As such reduced income is being anticipated for 2023/24. Performance is exceeding all key measures - there is however reduced capacity due to vacancies and staffing, and so if necessary Argyll and Bute work will be prioritised.

7.5 Regulatory Services: Capacity within the environmental health service is an issue with six vacancies and two long-term absences, allied with a national shortage of qualified environmental health officers. As a result, work is being actively managed and reprioritised which may result in delays in response times, an increase in the provision of information to support individuals taking their own actions and a reduction to programmed works. This will be reviewed as resources increase and an external contractor has been appointed to support our food safety inspections.

A budget pressure for 2023/24 has emerged due to export health certificate income being 40% below budget, as businesses move to the commercial hub for services or are using private vets.

The Scottish Authority Food Enforcement Re-Build (SAFER) is changing food safety priorities in Scotland to reflect the current resource issues and changes to the food sector. Control procedures for approved food sector (exporters and manufacturers) came into place on 1st April 2023. These are more resource intensive than previously. Argyll and Bute have 52 approved premises with three under application and 43 other high risk manufacturers, which is one of the highest across all Scottish local authorities.

The Short Term Lets team is in place although the Scottish Government have extended the deadline for applications for existing hosts to October 2023. To mitigate the risk that hosts will wait until near that deadline hosts are being actively encouraged to apply now. As of March 2023 there had been 303 applications and 604 enquiries, with 7 licences issued and 30 valid applications being considered.

7.6 Biodiversity: NatureScot have launched a draft Scottish Biodiversity Strategy at <https://www.nature.scot/scotlands-biodiversity-strategy-2022-2045> with further work underway for an Action Plan estimated for

completion by Summer 2023. This will shape future work on Invasive Non-Native Species.

Consideration is being given nationally as to how to measure positive action to protect and enhance biodiversity following development – this could in time be linked to planning biodiversity net gain through an agreed metric.

New signage has been agreed and is to be installed by a contractor at the Holy Loch Local Nature Reserve.

A demonstration project is being developed for the Argyll and Bute Shoreline Management Plan in conjunction with roads.

8. POLICY LEAD FOR CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT SERVICES - Councillor Ross Moreland

8.1 Cardross Crematorium Inspection: The Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities Services has rated the services of Cardross Crematorium as excellent following a recent inspection. A range of aspects of the facilities provided by Cardross were examined including cremation, grounds and memorials, service and staff and overall quality of the premises.

The Crematorium Inspector reported an excellent level of service provision, giving the facilities a score of 411 out of a possible maximum of 455 and achieving over 90% compliance. The crematorium scored particularly well in the administration, premises and facilities, and grounds and memorialisation categories and the report made no further recommendations for improvements to the services provided.

The services and facilities provided by Cardross Crematorium have historically been of a very high standard. This latest inspection report is an excellent outcome and our congratulations go to the retiring Crematorium Superintendent and his team, as well as all other staff involved in this important service.

8.2 Waste: In my last Policy Lead update, I advised that a report would be presented to the Council's December Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee and that a Members Seminar had also been scheduled. The December report provided an update on external consultancy works to review the options available to the Council in relation to the Waste PPP contract and the BMW ban – a further report will be presented to the Committee in June.

The Council Leader wrote to the Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport on the Council's arrangements for the forthcoming ban on landfilling biodegradable municipal waste (BMW) due to be implemented in 2025, and the Minister has offered to meet with the Council and arrangements are being made.

- 8.3 Route Optimisation:** The Council are implementing a new route optimisation system – software which will improve the operational management of certain services which are operated via vehicles providing specific services. This is a joint remit which I share with the Policy Lead for Roads and Transport.

The system will consider all aspects of the waste collection service from the number of households, assisted pull-outs, additional bins to staffing, shift patterns, location and availability of onward processing/disposal/landfill sites (including travel off islands. The system also requires to be flexible with the ability to take into account new housing developments. The system will provide a range of efficient routing options enabling the Council to consider current and future alternative service provision, including development of "what if" scenarios to establish preferred future options.

- 8.4 Recycling:** Reusing items, donating them or selling them is a much better option than sending them to landfill because not only does it reduce waste, it helps to cut down on carbon impact.

This is particularly important because the average piece of each items of furniture dumped generates around approximately 47 kilogrammes of carbon dioxide equivalents – that's the same amount of greenhouse gases produced by burning around 5.3 gallons of petrol.

The [council website](#) has lots of useful information about recycling and donating unwanted household goods, as does [Zero Waste Scotland](#). I would urge you to have a read and see what small changes you can make that will have a long-lasting impact.

- 8.5 Play Parks:** In August 2022, the Scottish Government confirmed a full five-year funding package to all Scottish Local Authorities from 2020/21 through to 2025/26. Argyll and Bute Council will receive a total of £938k for Play Park funding which will cover our 28 Play Parks which are in need of upgrading. All Scottish Councils have received funding through the Capital Allocation for Renewal of Play Parks Fund for investment in play park equipment. The Scottish Government commitment was to ensure that all children have access to quality play in their own

community and the budget was specific in that the funding was for renewing play parks. Officers are getting ready to engage with community groups, education colleagues and disability forums to ensure proper facilities are discussed. Roads and Infrastructure Services presented a report to the March EDI Committee, which can be found at the link below for anyone wishing to read more about the funding. Officers will bring forward a further report to a future meeting.

[PLAY PARK FUNDING UPDATE REPORT.pdf \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](#)

- 8.6 Bid for Bronze CLO submitted:** I was delighted to be informed that in February 2023, the Council achieved bronze Carbon Literacy accreditation. Argyll and Bute Council are one of three Local Authorities in Scotland to hold this. We are committed to being a net zero organisation by 2045 and continue to work with community planning partners to tackle climate change across the region in a bid to safeguard our area for the future.

**9. POLICY LEAD FOR ISLANDS AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT-
Councillor Liz McCabe**

- 9.1 Islands Cost Crisis Emergency Funding - Support for Island Communities:** The cost of living crisis continues to affect many of communities across Argyll and Bute. Our island residents are seeing a significant increase in costs with many goods and services more expensive than the mainland. With costs much higher than the UK average, many residents are struggling. Funding from the Scottish Government means that we as a Council can take urgent action and help provide support and essential services to those who require it.

Households in receipt of council tax reduction will have received a £120 card to spend in local island businesses. This ensures that households who do not have access to a local food bank, or who would not wish to use the food bank, have some additional support. The council has a list of recipients and cards were issued from 13th February.

Other support includes £5,000 food bank grants for each of the four island community food organisations including Islay Foodbank, Bute Oasis, Tiree Food Project and Mull and Iona Community Trust. The Council will also pay an additional £1.60 per day for every secondary school pupil, in receipt of free school meals, every day between 14th February 2023 to 30th June 2023. This includes school holidays. The payment means that pupils in receipt of free school meals will also have additional funding for food throughout the day such as snacks, if

9.2 Strategic Events and Festivals: Calls for grant funding for Strategic Events and Festivals Fund (round 5.2) opened on 10th March until 17th April 2023, for events and festivals that had not secured grant funding from Round 5 and whose events and festivals are taking place between 17th May 2023 and 31st March 2024.

9.3 Film: In Argyll and Bute, we are proud to be able to offer some of the world's best scenic backdrops to the screen industry. Filming in the area not only brings a welcome economic boost to local businesses and services, it also provides opportunities to market the area and boost visitor numbers through increased film tourism.

Accommodation providers, local shops, caterers and services are all benefitting from an increase in filming across Argyll and Bute. Large-scale productions from the BBC and Disney are helping the local economy and helping to promote the area and encourage film tourism.

Argyll and Bute Council's Film service continues to work with production companies and Screen Scotland to attract inward investment across the area. From 2021 to 2023, 89 productions filmed in Argyll and Bute, with an estimated local production spend of £1.1 million. The sector continues to recover from the impact of the pandemic with a substantial rise in filming requests now starting to come in.

Productions include Top Gear at Oban Airport; BBC drama 'Float', filmed at the former Helensburgh Swimming Pool; Murder Island, a drama written by Iain Rankin – filmed on Gigha; Disney, Star Wars Andor, filmed in and around Cruachan Mountain; BBC Martin Compston's Highland Fling, filmed in Dunoon, Loch Lomond, Strathlachlan and Strachur; and Cbeebies, Ranger Hamza and the Ramblers, filmed in Oban, Connel and Mull.

9.4 Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) updates:
Rothesay Townscape Heritage: The final priority building 69 to 72 Victoria Street is now on-site and progressing well. Works to 1 Tower Street are progressing with the lead roof, slating and windows almost complete. 39 to 43 Victoria Street has now reached practical completion. A planning application has been submitted for a further shopfront restoration project within Victoria Street.

Dunoon CARS: Dunoon CARS is a £2m programme, due to complete on 31st March 2023 although an extension to the spend to complete the training and final priority building has been asked for from HES. The final priority building at 104 to 110 Argyll Street is starting onsite in

March 2023. This will be the final grant to be awarded under the scheme. We have commissioned Caroline Thompson Consultants to carry out the Dunoon CARS Evaluation to conclude the project.

Lochgilphead CARS: Lochgilphead CARS is a £2m programme in its third year. The first priority building project is on site with second building due to start in the spring. The third priority building is in the development phase. Working with key partners, a number of traditional skills training and education events are being held from April to June.

Helensburgh CARS: Helensburgh CARS is a £2.4m programme in its second year. Two priority buildings have contracted with the architect and a grant application is expected in May 2023. Small repairs are ongoing. One grant application has been received for a shopfront and is being progressed. Training events are being planned and promoted for June 2023 and discussions are ongoing regarding an apprenticeship.

9.5 Employability:

Fair Start Scotland - 16 to 67 year olds: Ten additional starts have signed up to Fair Start Scotland, bringing the total to 352 participants since the service commenced (72 Helensburgh, 79 Campbeltown, 41 Rothesay, 69 Dunoon and 91 Oban). Key workers have supported a total of 118 people into work. 85 of these job starts have occurred since March 2020.

PeoplePlus continues to set targets - referral numbers from DWP are better from some Job Centre Plus offices than others. This is linked to the availability of other employment provision available to claimants which involves shorter, sharp support rather than the 52-week programme FSS offers.

Officers continue to complete the Marketing Action Plan detailing the activity carried out to promote the service. One of our key workers attends the now monthly Resettlement Group meetings and this, following attendance at a recent Welcome Fayre in Dunoon, has resulted in five potential referrals.

Argyll and Bute Employer Recruitment and Training Incentive (ABERTI) – 16 to 67 year olds: Applications for this fund ceased at 31/03/22. A total of 37 participants and 28 employers were supported. To date 35 participants have completed the 52-week funded period or left early; 28 (80%) are in employment, 21 (75%) of which retained by the employer accessing the funding; and seven (25%) have moved to another employer. The remaining two continue to do well in their

subsidised employment, and it is highly likely they will be retained post funding.

No One Left Behind - Employer Recruitment Incentives (ERIs) 25+ Years: Applications are invited in respect of the ERIs of up to £6,000 per person. This allows unemployed people aged 25+ years the opportunity to move into permanent or a fixed term employment contracts of up to 18 months or more.

This funding has attracted five employers who have recruited a total of seven employees utilising this funding. It is encouraging to note two of these employees are aged 60 years plus.

No One Left Behind – Pre-employment support Phase 1 to 3: A further grant allocation of £228,017.65 in respect of 22/23 is available. Three Local Employability Partners (Inspiralba, WorkingRite and the Clyde Fishermen's Trust) have been delivering support to unemployed residents of Argyll and Bute until 31st March 2023. SLAs are in place for each of the phases. To date 58 people aged 25 plus have commenced support; six are in employment and one in self-employment.

Parental Employability Support Fund (PESF) - 16 to 67 year olds: This service, funded by the Scottish Government, is designed to support low income families to increase their income through work, both through supporting parents to access paid employment and in helping those in lower paid jobs to progress to higher income.

Our Engagement Worker continues to deliver intensive in and out of work employability support, including person-centred support to upskill, apply for jobs, gain progression whilst in employment, money advice, health support, motivational support, etc. A total of 65 parents have now joined the service, 28 of which have ceased support. Thirteen have moved into work and two into self-employment.

A further grant allocation of £149,219.53 in respect of 2022/23 is now available.

An SLA is now in place with our partner Inspiralba and provision commenced in December 22. It is anticipated a total of 31 target group parents will be supported by 31st March 2023. Inspiralba have formed a partnership with Alienergy and Bute Advice. Given the cost of living and fuel crisis, their expertise will be extremely beneficial to parents. Delivery is going exceptionally well and places are almost filled.

9.6 Digital Update:

Current stats are as follows:-

- 94.3% of Argyll and Bute premises are connected to the fibre network
- 86.1% can access speeds >30Mbps
- 0.8% are between 24 and 30 Mbps
- 2.3% are between 15 and 24 Mbps
- 1.8% are between 10 and 15Mbps
- 5.8% are between 2 and 10Mbps
- 3.3% are below 2Mbps
- Full Fibre availability is currently at 6.4%

These figures show that there has been a slight increase in access to Superfast Broadband and the availability of Full Fibre across Argyll and Bute.

Build was due to commence on Mull in the second half of this year, however the delivery schedule for the R100 fibre network has been adjusted again due to a combination of local delivery and planning issues, encountered by Openreach, on the current phase of the contract. The delivery dates are now end of March 2025 for Pennyghael and Ross of Mull and Iona by the end of September 2024.

Build is continuing across the Oban area (North Lot) with Full Fibre Connection available to 1,089 premises from Appin in the North, to Dalmally in the East and Bragleenmore at Loch Scammadale in the South.

There have also been 834 connections in the Helensburgh and Lomond area (Central Lot), in Coulport, Cove, Kilcreggan, Rosneath, Garelochhead, Shandon, Helensburgh, Craigendoran and Arden.

It must be highlighted that the numbers provided are the connections through the R100 contract - additional connections are also provided through overspill premises and Openreach commercial investment which in many instances can see an additional 20% connection availability.

On top of Openreach build Virgin Media are investing in the Helensburgh area through 2023, and officers attended a Virgin Media O2 (VMO2) investment event at the Scottish Parliament on 8th March to hear more about these plans.

10. POLICY LEAD FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH, COMMUNITIES AND CORPORATE SERVICES - Councillor Alastair Redman

10.1 Economic Growth and Communities:

MACC Spaceport: In February, children and teachers from six local Kintyre primary schools spent time at Machrihanish Airbase learning about space, gravity, with STEM-based workshops including Lego robot - Milo the Science Rover, Sphero K'nex - robot machine challenge, and Stop Motion - animation workshops. MACC are also considering a new business plan to cover the site which offers high potential for further employment growth in a number of key industries such as renewables, space and distilling. The base is also an important site for Film and TV work which helps promote Argyll and Bute.

Love Local Card: Love Local Cards is a joint part of my remit that I share with the Policy Leads for Strategic Development and Islands and Business Development. It is great to see that nearly 300 businesses have registered to accept the Argyll and Bute gift card. The gift card scheme encourages people to keep spending local to support businesses and jobs. The card works the same as a gift voucher and offers recipients a wide range of businesses to choose from including restaurants, gifts, experiences, accommodation and services.

We are incredibly lucky to have fantastic independent businesses and local produce here in Argyll and Bute. From farmers markets and restaurants to gift shops and outdoor activity providers, the gift card is helping to support businesses and jobs. By gifting the card, you are providing a much-needed economic boost to the local area and helping to showcase what Argyll and Bute has to offer. With more people using the card as a method of payment, we would love more businesses to sign up to the scheme.

To register, businesses must have a physical presence in Argyll and Bute and fall under one of five categories: health and beauty; shopping; leisure attractions; food and drink and accommodation.

Registering to the Argyll and Bute gift card scheme is free and only takes a couple of minutes. It is open to any business with a physical presence in Argyll and Bute. You can register at <https://lovelocal.scot/register-your-business/>.

Oban BID: A financial boost of £842,00 to the Oban business community and an increase in customers and visitors are just some of the benefits resulting from the Oban Business Improvement District (BID) extending to another five years. Following Council approval of BID4Oban's business proposals in September, local businesses were

balloted to gain support. The result was a clear majority meaning that businesses will invest and work together to focus on improving Oban as a commercial and tourist destination.

BID4Oban has delivered a number of projects and initiatives. They include financial support for 51 events; 700 hanging baskets and flower arrangements; additional Christmas lights throughout Oban; funded firework displays in November and Hogmanay; wifi installed in the Little Bay area; and Love Oban brand created.

As we continue to support growth across our local economy, it's fantastic to see businesses working together to generate ongoing investment for Oban.

Business Start Up: Ambitious start-up businesses across Argyll and Bute will receive additional support following confirmation of new grant funding. Due to strong demand for the New Enterprise Support Grant, councillors approved an additional £35,000 to support 12 start-up businesses. The fund, designed to help ongoing economic recovery from the pandemic has supported 40 businesses to date with £120,000 of funding in total. Support from the COVID Recovery Fund will focus on new businesses in Campbeltown, Lochgilphead, Isle of Bute and Dunoon, the areas of Argyll and Bute hit hardest by the pandemic.

The pandemic had a major impact on many of our local traders and we want to continue to support the sector as it continues to recover. Successful businesses are the lifeblood of the local economy and this new funding will provide start-ups with the support they need to realise their ambitions.

Encouraging responsible tourism: Car park upgrades, new signage and overnight parking for motor caravans are just some of the measures the council is planning to deliver to help protect Argyll and Bute's scenery and promote responsible tourism.

Councillors agreed the latest steps in response to increasing numbers of visitors choosing to staycation in the region. The plans will help support the local economy and encourage responsible tourism, and these include motor caravan overnight parking; Glenmorag car park in Dunoon; new signage; and temporary toilets introduced at popular visitor hotspots across the region will continue throughout 2023.

The new measures are in addition to a wide range of initiatives already introduced to address concerns about the impact of staycation visitors

on key tourism areas, and include enhanced waste disposal facilities for camping/campervans at campsites across Argyll and Bute; introduction of temporary toilets at various locations including Westport, Bridge of Orchy, Glen Orchy, Kilchurn Castle and Victoria Bridge, funding to support four community wardens and recruitment of additional wardens; and creation of the abplace2visit website (<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/abplace2visit>)

The website includes an interactive map of locations of car parks and caravan touring sites and information on waste disposal facilities. Tourism is a major contributor to the local economy, and the increase in visitors choosing to staycation in Argyll and Bute is extremely welcome. Thousands of visitors come to enjoy everything the area has to offer and the vast majority of people are responsible. However, we are fully aware of concerns and have listened to our local communities regarding the impact of litter and anti-social behaviour. We want everyone to have a great time and be a great visitor, which is why we have introduced new measures and extended those already in place to encourage responsible tourism.

Regeneration: A historic Lochgilphead property will benefit from a major regeneration thanks to new funding from the Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) with a grant of more than £241,000 to deliver a major repairs project for the building at 3-17 Colchester Square, Lochgilphead.

The CARS programme focuses on the regeneration of historic buildings as well as promotion of traditional skills training and community engagement. The programme is jointly funded by the Council and Historic Environment Scotland (HES). The aim is to safeguard Lochgilphead's heritage by supporting property owners to return their buildings and shopfronts to a good state of repair and boost the town centre's visual and visitor appeal.

A key element is promotion and delivery of traditional and construction skills training amongst Lochgilphead High School pupils, Argyll College students, local contractors, building professionals and public sector staff involved in the repair and maintenance of historic buildings.

This latest funding award from Lochgilphead CARS is further evidence of our commitment to supporting the continuing regeneration of Argyll and Bute. As well as helping to restore and preserve this historic priority property, this project plays a significant part in further enhancing the town centre, promotes traditional skills and helps encourage our young people to consider a career in construction.

New Homes at Oakhill, Tarbert: I was delighted to attend ACHA's official opening of the new Oakhill, Tarbert phase 2 housing development and privileged to officially open the four new family homes which increases the supply of affordable housing, on behalf of the Council Leader. These new homes will be put into good use by the residents of Tarbert and I wish them all the very best in their homes.



With partners and new tenants at the official opening of Oakhill

10.2 Customer and Support Services:

Customer Service Centre Audit: The Council's Customer Service Centre has had an audit, the scope of which was to review customer contact handling in the Customer Service Centre. It is of no surprise to me that the team has received a high audit opinion and there is a sound system of control designed to achieve the system objectives is in place and being applied consistently. Well done to the team!

Council Website: Did you know that Argyll and Bute Council's website contains lots of useful information for residents, businesses and visitors and also offers a huge range of online services that make connecting with the council quick and convenient? The website has a range of services from "Request It" and "Report It" that allows people to report lighting and road faults; tell us if they have moved house; make and comment on planning applications; order a new bin; change the name of their house; or request a copy birth certificate.

The website allows you to sign up to our "**Keep In The Loop**" service, which keeps you up to date via text or email about **disruptions**, service changes, events and news that affect you and I would encourage everyone to sign up to the keeping in the loop service.

Our Virtual Assistant (**Abby**) feature and improved search function, are geared towards helping you to get the information you need around the clock and there is also a wide range of **social media channels** to keep you informed. The sister website **abplace2b** focuses on all that is great about our area and if you are thinking about getting married in one of our beautiful locations the **marriage website** will inspire you.

The council website offers a huge range of useful resources that could help save you time and energy. Why wait in a phone queue or travel to a service point in the middle of winter when almost everything you need to contact the council about can be done online? I would urge everyone to take a look at the website and see all the services we now offer online. **www.argyll-bute.gov.uk**

Cyber Security: ICT staff have now submitted the council's PSN reaccreditation documentation. Access to the PSN network allows staff and Elected Members to interact with other users and services in a secure manner such as HMRC, the DWP, Police Scotland and the National Registrar for Scotland.

As an example of the continued scale of the threat to the Council network, in the last month our systems:

- Blocked 30,489 critical or high threats;
- Blocked 89,725 Denial of Service attacks;
- Quarantined 28,498 emails including 276 viruses.

All employees and Elected Members will receive regular emails from the Security Team, to participate in security awareness training videos – this ensures that all staff and Elected Members are up to speed with all aspects of security for their devices.

I would encourage anyone who receives or sees a suspicious email or activity, to report it – you can report it to the UK Government at **[Report internet scams and phishing GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/report-internet-scams-and-phishing)**

Remember to keep all of your passwords secure in the interest of protecting the Council and your own information.

10.3 Corporate Services:

Elections: Work is underway in preparation for future electoral processes and as part of this members of the team will be observing proceedings at local elections in England to view the use of Voter ID. From 4 May 2023 voters in England will be required to show photo ID to vote at polling stations in some elections including local elections,

Police and Crime Commissioner Elections, UK Parliamentary by-elections and Recall petitions. From October 2023 it will also apply to UK General Elections. A wide range of forms of ID will be accepted including passports, driving licence, blue badge, Older Person's Bus Pass, Scottish National Entitlement Card, National Identify Card etc. Further details can be found on the Electoral Commission website [here](#).

Member Development Programme: The Elected Member Development Framework has now been updated. The programme will consist of a range of training, including development sessions which will focus on skills, roles and responsibilities. Members will be asked to provide their views on what they would like to see in terms of development topics and the team would welcome all suggestions. The regular Elected Member Seminar programme will continue with input from services, covering a range of strategic areas. In terms of individual development, officers will be working with the Improvement Service to utilise their self-assessment tool. As part of this, councillors will be asked to complete a skills assessment, which will be followed up by one to one discussions with a member of the Governance Team to identify individual training needs and to produce a Development Plan.

Welfare Rights: The Welfare Rights Team work hard to ensure that residents of Argyll and Bute maximise their entitlement to both UK and Scottish Government-administered benefits and other related help. Members of the team are also funded by MacMillan Cancer Support and provide an enhanced Welfare Rights Service for people affected by cancer. The service continues to illustrate excellent performance, generating income of £816,120 during the latest reporting period. The overall target for the financial year is £2.5M, however the team anticipate exceeding this target with forecasts sitting at £2.8M.

Procurement and Contract Management:

Contracts - As at 31st January 2023 the team have awarded 383 contracts. As part of the ongoing monitoring of performance the number of tenders bid for at a local level and subsequently won by local suppliers is monitored. Of the 36 tenders receiving local bids for the year to date, 29 (80.6%) of these were won by local bidders.

Community Benefits - the Council is committed to maximising Community Benefits arising from procurement activities and to delivering wider benefits for its communities when purchasing goods, services and supplies for Argyll and Bute. The team have been working closely with suppliers to deliver additional social, economic and environmental value to the area. A Community Benefit Scheme

has been running since September 2020 which allows community groups to request help in achieving their goals, for example sponsorship for a local sports club, donations of labour or materials, work experience etc. More information on the current community benefit wish list and details of those requests that have been fulfilled can be found on the Council website [here](#).

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1** 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 – 14th April 2023

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

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Argyll and Bute Council

Agenda item :

Date of Meeting: 27th April 2023

Title of Report: NHS Highland Director of Public Health Annual Report 2022

Presented by: Dr Tim Allison, Director of Public Health & Policy

Argyll and Bute Council is asked to:

- **Note the Director of Public Health Annual Report**
- **Support the recommendations laid out in the report**

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Directors of Public Health are required to produce an annual report concerning the state of health of their local population. There is no set format for the report and in recent years the reports have tended to focus on individual themes rather than acting as a repository for population health intelligence.

The report for 2022 is presented to the Argyll and Bute Council along with this paper. The theme for the report is prevention of ill health. There is presentation of the local context and evidence base, together with case studies that show the value of prevention within NHS Highland. There are also recommendations for action for both NHS Highland and for partners.

2. INTRODUCTION

The Annual Report of the Director of Public Health for 2022 is presented.

3. DETAIL OF REPORT

As in the online report:

<https://indd.adobe.com/view/45cbb2d9-8f8d-44dd-a040-efe28296701c>

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

This report provides information that will contribute in some way to all strategic objectives but particularly to the priority to:

- Promote health and wellbeing across all communities and age groups

5. GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial Impact

There are no direct financial implications from the paper. A focus on prevention would incur costs, but net savings are possible from NHS budgets for many prevention initiatives. Some could also be cash releasing.

5.2 Staff Governance

There are no specific workforce implications from this paper, but a focus on prevention will affect work undertaken and will also improve the health of the workforce.

5.3 Clinical Governance

Prevention is an important part of both quality and patient care, and it is recommended that it is included in all pathways.

6. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

The report addresses equality issues.

7. RISK ASSESSMENT

Risks are managed in line with NHS Highlands policy.

8. PUBLIC & USER INVOLVEMENT & ENGAGEMENT

This is an independent report from the Director of Public Health.

9. CONCLUSIONS

Members are asked to note and comment on the report.

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The Annual Report
of the Director of
Public Health



2022



Prevention - Moving Upstream

Acknowledgements and list of contributors

Thanks are due to the following colleagues for their contributions to this year's report:

Susan Birse

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Barry Collard

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Introduction

Prevention is better than cure. This is a sentiment which I am sure the vast majority of people would support. Yet the proportion of resources, effort and attention that is devoted to the prevention of illness is small compared with that devoted to treatment.

The analogy of people in a river is often used to illustrate the contrast between prevention and treatment. We can imagine people being found in a river estuary and being rescued from the water. Efforts continue to rescue people, but more and more people are found in the estuary needing rescue and more resources are used to rescue them. But why did the people end up in the river? They were falling in the river further upstream and then needing to be rescued downstream. Stopping people falling in the river upstream would mean that there would be no need to rescue people from the estuary.

Prevention is about looking upstream and taking the actions that are needed to stop people becoming ill or to reduce the severity of that illness. This report includes examples of where preventative action can and does improve health and prevent the need for more intensive and more costly treatment. The report aims to present the case for the importance of prevention as a vital and integral part of both healthcare and of wider community activities.

It is easier to see treatment working than it is to see prevention working. It is easier to see people getting better following treatment than it is to see people not getting ill because of prevention. It is easier to look for quick effects of treatment for individuals rather than to consider longer term population prevention. It may be easier to look for new technology to help us when something that has always been with us such as increased physical activity may offer far more benefit. It is easier to side-line prevention as a marginal activity that only gets support at times of plenty rather than considering how cost-effective prevention can transform our services. Supporting prevention may not be the easy thing to do, but it is often the right thing to do.

I want us all to see the benefits of prevention and to recognise prevention as a fundamental element of all care. I want us all to look upstream and to work upstream.

Dr Tim Allison MD MRCP FFPH

Director of Public Health and Health Policy, NHS Highland
Stiùriche na Slàinte Phoblach, Bòrd Slàinte na Gàidhealtachd



Key Messages

- Investment in preventative measures which promote, protect and improve health and wellbeing is essential to ensure the future sustainability of the health and care system.
- There are many examples of preventative actions that have already helped achieve major improvements in health, for example, improved social conditions, vaccination against communicable diseases and national screening programmes.
- The effects of prevention work have contributed to a decline in cancer and cardiovascular disease mortality rates. Priority should continue to be given to preventing cardiovascular and smoking related conditions and there must be continued efforts to improve early diagnosis for effective treatment.
- There are thousands of avoidable deaths and preventable health conditions every year in NHS Highland. Estimates of health loss and avoidable mortality should be used to help inform priorities for health and care service planning and redesign, and for disease prevention.
- Actions to address modifiable risk factors, such as high blood pressure, smoking, alcohol and drug use, healthy weight and physical activity, present a sizeable opportunity to improve health, add years to life and to reduce existing inequalities in these measures.
- A life course approach to prevention should be used to identify potential areas of action relating to both the individual and the community.
- The characteristics of effective prevention work can be considered when planning programmes of work and training to ensure existing health inequalities are not reinforced.
- The 'best buys' in prevention will meet one or more of these objectives: cost-effective; likely to reduce health inequalities; likely to reduce avoidable health and social care problems.
- The NHS has an important role to play in prevention as an employer, researcher, collaborative partner and commissioner of services. Ensuring prevention is seen as part of everyone's role, and that time and resources are allocated to it may be key to supporting the fundamental shift towards prevention that is required for the future sustainability of health and care systems.
- There are many examples and evidence of preventative interventions that provide a return on investment and have the potential to deliver savings to the NHS in the short and longer term.

From case studies

Smokefree

- Smoking cessation interventions, whether pharmaceutical or through advice and counselling, are one of the most cost-effective interventions for reducing ill-health and prolonging life.
- Quitting can help add years to your life. Smokers who quit before age 40 reduce their chance of dying too early from smoking-related diseases by about 90 percent. Those who quit by age 45–54 reduce their chance of dying too early by about two-thirds.

Living Well

- Self-management is vital in preventing health problems arising or getting worse.
- Self-management puts people in control of their health and empowers them to have improved health and wellbeing outcomes.
- Benefits of improved self-management include: increased self-esteem, increased control, feeling connected, less isolated, reduced anxiety, improvement in mood, feeling empowered to challenge and question health professionals, recognised as experts in their condition, and able to provide peer support.
- Self-management and prevention free up resources and reduce demand as people who are managing their health better are less likely to use these services.

Co-production, building capacity and community led activity

- Working in a collaborative way with people who use health and social care services will make these services more effective.
- Co-production is a methodology that services can use to make services better.
- Effective co-production relies on sharing power, budgets and responsibility throughout all parties with an interest in building better services.
- Successful co-production incorporates citizen involvement e.g. listening, involving, collaborating, and empowering.

Community Link Workers

- The key value of this work is that the service is able to provide person-centred support which recognises that social issues, such as debt, relationships, employment and loneliness, affect people's health and wellbeing, and to connect people to sources of support or resources within their community.
- This in turn will reduce demand on health and social care, including GP practices, and have a positive impact on wider determinants of health and wellbeing.
- Gathering data and evaluating the service will be key to assessing its impact on patients, GP practices and communities in NHS Highland. This will also allow the service to adapt to overcome any challenges.

Planet Youth, the Icelandic Prevention Model, in Highland

- Primary prevention of adolescent substance use is a key public health priority.
- Changing our relationship with substances requires changes in practice and culture, and so matching ambition and investment to the scale of the problem is essential.

Infant Feeding

- Breastfeeding is the foundation for improving future health and getting it right at the very start is fundamental for ensuring the best possible health outcomes for both mums and babies in Highland.
- Breastfeeding is a skill and needs everyone's support.

Vitamin D3 Distribution

- Vitamin D is needed to support bone and muscle health with the main source of vitamin D being sunlight.
- Living in Scotland means we only get enough sunlight between April and September, so it is recommended that higher risk groups take a vitamin D supplement.
- Breastfeeding women, babies who are being breastfed and infants under 3 years, receiving less than 500mls of infant formula are all offered free vitamin D in NHS Highland.

Money Counts Training

- The Independent Food Aid Network's (IFAN) 'Worrying About Money?' leaflet has helped raise awareness of organisations that can provide financial support, and how to access these, amongst staff, volunteers and those experiencing financial difficulties across Scotland.
- In NHS Highland the 'Worrying About Money?' leaflet is being promoted through 'Money Counts' training delivered by the Health Improvement Team (Public Health), in partnership with the Argyll & Bute Council, to a variety of health and third sector organisations to enable them to support any individuals who may have financial worries.
- Research has demonstrated from a return-on-investment perspective that there are financial gains for individuals accessing welfare support, and there is good evidence to suggest that income improvements are associated with health improvements across the income distribution.

Health Protection

- Immunisation is one of the most effective and cost-effective public health interventions. It is vital that a high vaccine uptake is maintained.
- Although there has been a considerable reduction in TB incidence in Scotland in recent years, the predominant challenge facing low TB incidence countries such as Scotland is that of latent tuberculosis infection (LTBI). Investigations have indicated that the implementation of new entrant screening for individuals from high TB incidence countries would be highly effective.

Recommendations

There are many opportunities for the promotion and strengthening of preventative work within the area served by NHS Highland. It is important for both the health of people and for the sustainability of services that these opportunities are taken up. The following recommendations build on what is presented within this report as priorities for action:

- Prevention must be explicitly considered as a part of all service and pathway design or redesign in health and social care.
- Resources allocated to prevention should be identified within NHS Highland for comparison with treatment resources.
- Prevention of ill health should be included as a core part of planning in the work of public sector partners and Community Planning Partnerships, for example through adopting the approach of health in all policies, partnership working, and supporting staff health and wellbeing.
- NHS Highland and Community Planning Partners should work collaboratively to prioritise prevention when allocating funding and commissioning services from the third and voluntary sector.
- The importance of the wider determinants of health such as environment, housing, education and employment should be recognised, so that opportunities can be taken to improve health. This includes the role of large employers such as NHS Highland as anchor institutions.
- Opportunities to improve health and reduce inequalities by maximising income and addressing money worries should be taken. This includes ensuring that health and social care staff are trained and equipped to raise financial issues as a routine part of assessments.
- Clear pathways should be available within NHS Highland services for referral to non-clinical opportunities for health improvement such as physical activity and use of green space. This should be included within pathways for long term conditions and staff should be equipped to support the pathways.
- Research into the effectiveness and cost effectiveness of preventative work such as social prescribing should continue, and its results should be used for prioritisation of services.
- Preventative work should build on the assets of local communities and co-produce services with those communities. Place-based planning is important.
- Preventative activity in early years should be maintained and strengthened including infant feeding and supporting parents.
- Prevention programmes known to be effective must be implemented and managed to give optimum results. These include tobacco control and alcohol programmes and include specific work to reduce the burden of smoking and alcohol related disease in hospitals.
- Immunisation programmes must be managed and promoted to maximise uptake across the whole population as well as through targeting to reduce health inequalities.

Introduction to prevention

The focus of this report is on prevention and examples of preventative work being undertaken to improve health within our region. The word prevention may mean different things to different people. In public health, prevention can be defined as policies or actions taken to protect and improve the health of people and populations. Prevention aims to prevent poor health, disability and early death from occurring and increase the likelihood that people will stay healthy and well for as long as possible¹. Investing in preventative measures that help to promote health and wellbeing protects against future costs to the NHS, economy and society.

Prevention is not new. There are many examples of successful preventative work that have already helped achieve major improvements in health. Early work to improve sanitation, housing and social conditions contributed to improvements in life expectancy in the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth century. Vaccination to prevent disease is commonplace today and has led to a significant reduction in communicable diseases such as measles. It has been instrumental in reducing the harm from COVID-19. National screening programmes for pregnant women, newborn babies and for certain cancers have helped identify issues early, improve health and prevent severe disability or death. Actions to reduce smoking and dietary risk factors have contributed to decline in cardiovascular diseases².

The health concerns facing our region are common in Scotland and in other countries. An ageing population is increasing demand on health and care services as more people are living with one or more long-term health conditions and with increasingly complex needs. Social and health care costs are increasing and the need for greater resources to support an ageing population is predicted to produce consequential impacts on health and social inequalities³. Future public spending is unsustainable if no action is taken to reduce demands relating to the ageing population.

COVID-19 has also highlighted longstanding economic and social inequalities and how these impact on the health of individuals and communities^{4,5}. These same factors lead to higher levels of vulnerability to the cost of living crisis.

Most health investment is spent on dealing with pressing and acute needs. Tackling preventable physical and mental health problems more effectively would reduce healthcare costs, reduce formal and informal caring costs and have an impact on working lives with important economic benefits⁶. A fundamental shift towards prevention is required to improve health outcomes, reduce demand for high cost services and improve the future sustainability of the health and care system.

“An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure”

Benjamin Franklin

Health in NHS Highland

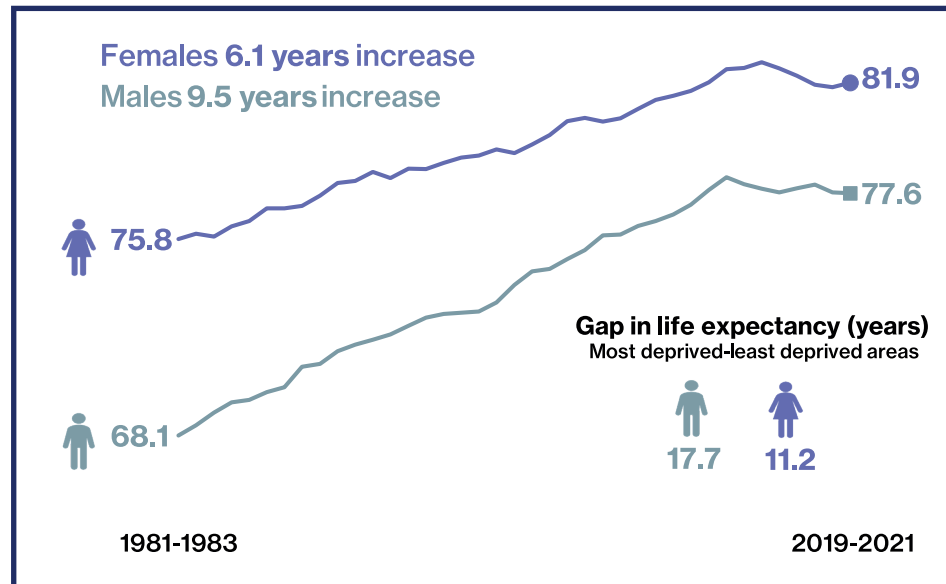
This section brings together an overview of health in the NHS Highland region with a focus on prevention and longer-term population health outcomes.

Life expectancy

Life expectancy is an important measure of population health. Following the pattern in Scotland, improvement in life expectancy in NHS Highland has stalled, probably as a result of economic austerity⁷ (Figure 1). There are clear geographic inequalities in life expectancy in NHS Highland, largely reflecting socio-economic differences. People in some of the poorest neighbourhoods are dying over a decade earlier than their peers. Life expectancy at birth for females was 11.2 years longer in some of the least deprived neighbourhoods compared with the most deprived neighbourhoods in 2016-2020. For males that difference increased to 17.7 years⁸.

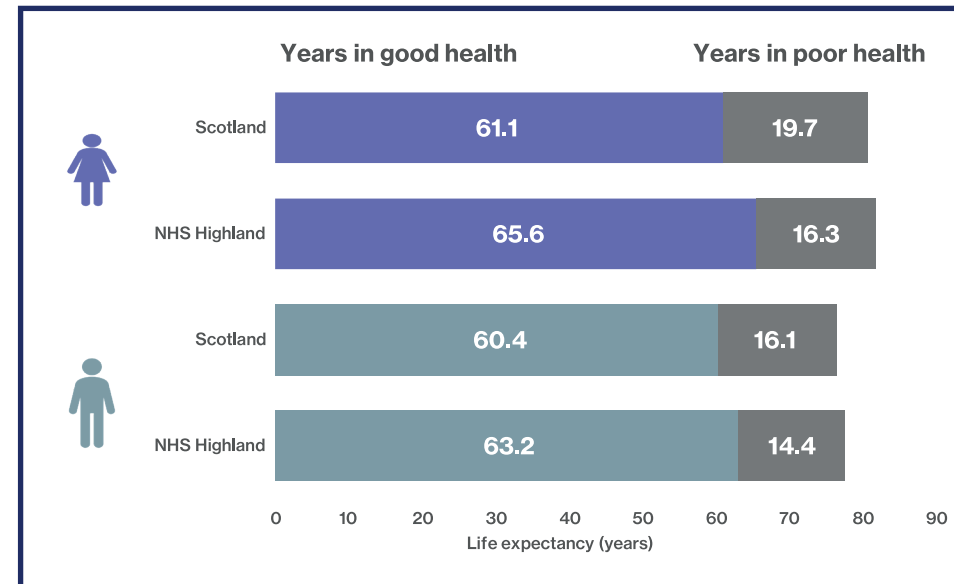
Healthy life expectancy provides insight into the proportion of our life expectancy spent in good health. It is an indicator of the health of the whole population. In 2019-21, the estimated healthy life expectancy at birth in NHS Highland was 65.6 years for females, and 63.2 years for males⁹. Life expectancy over the same period was 81.9 years for females and 77.6 years for males¹⁰. This means that around 20% of people's lives are spent in poor health (Figure 2). Deprivation has a large impact on healthy life expectancy. People in the most deprived areas spend more than a third of life in poor health.

Figure 1 - Trends in life expectancy, 1981-1983 to 2019-2021



Source: National Records of Scotland

Figure 2 - Healthy life expectancy at birth (years) in NHS Highland and Scotland, 2019-2021



Source: National Records of Scotland

Premature mortality

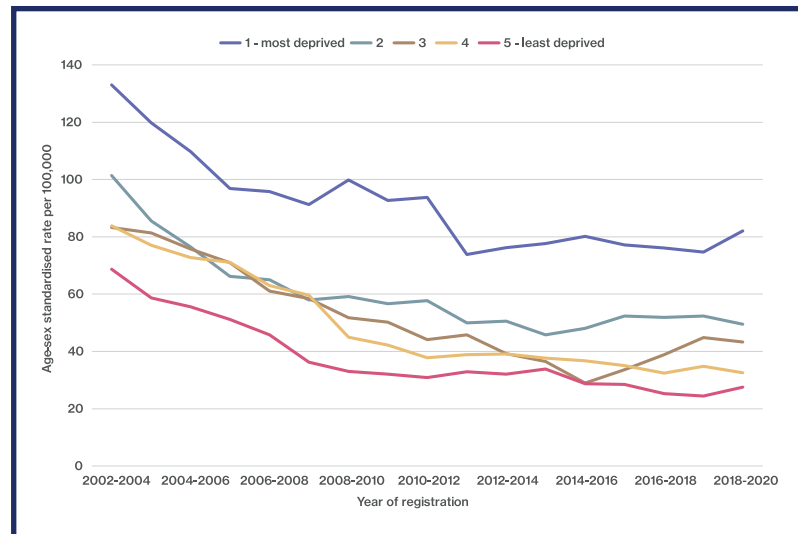
A premature death, defined as a person dying whilst under the age of 75 years, is a particular indicator of inequality. In 2020, premature deaths accounted for 34.7% of all deaths in NHS Highland, compared to the Scotland average of 36.5%. Premature mortality rates from cancers and heart disease remain consistently higher in the most deprived areas of NHS Highland compared to the least deprived⁷. Early deaths from coronary heart disease would be 42% lower if the levels of the least deprived area were experienced across the whole population (Figure 3).

Opportunities for prevention

One way of describing the opportunities for prevention across our population is in terms of health loss. The concept of health loss captures both the quantity and quality of life lost due to physical and mental ill-health and is measured in disability adjusted life years or DALYs. One DALY represents one year of life that a person in full health has lost. Recent research by Public Health Scotland identified cardiovascular diseases, cancers, neurological disorders, mental health disorders and musculoskeletal disorders as the leading causes of ill-health and disability in NHS Highland¹¹. They represent thousands of avoidable deaths and preventable health conditions every year (Figure 4).

Estimates of health loss characterise the proportionate impact of causes of morbidity and mortality on population health and can help inform priorities for health and care service planning and redesign, and for disease prevention.

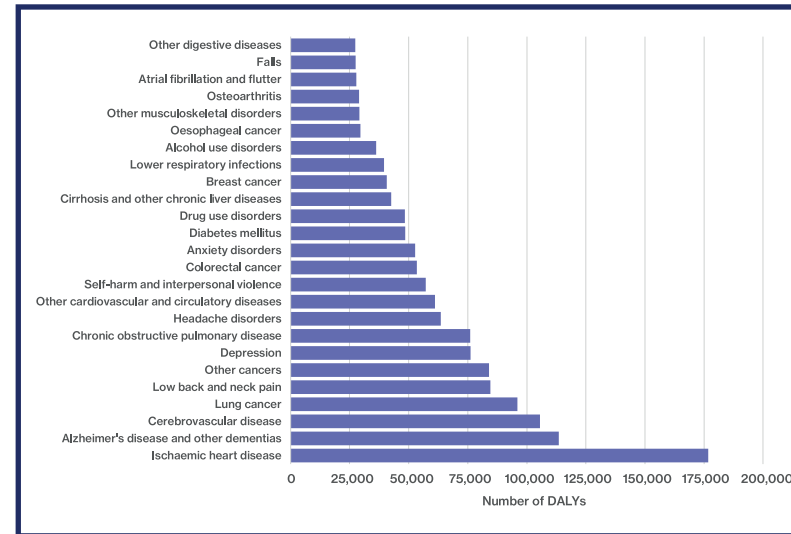
Figure 3 - Early deaths from coronary heart disease by deprivation group, age under 75 years, 2002 to 2020



Source: National Records of Scotland

3-year rolling age-sex standardised mortality rates per 100,000 population, directly standardised to the 2013 European Standard Population. Coronary heart disease (ICD-10 I20-I25).

Figure 4 - Leading causes of health loss (DALYs) in NHS Highland, 2015-2019



Source: Scottish Burden of Disease Study, Public Health Scotland

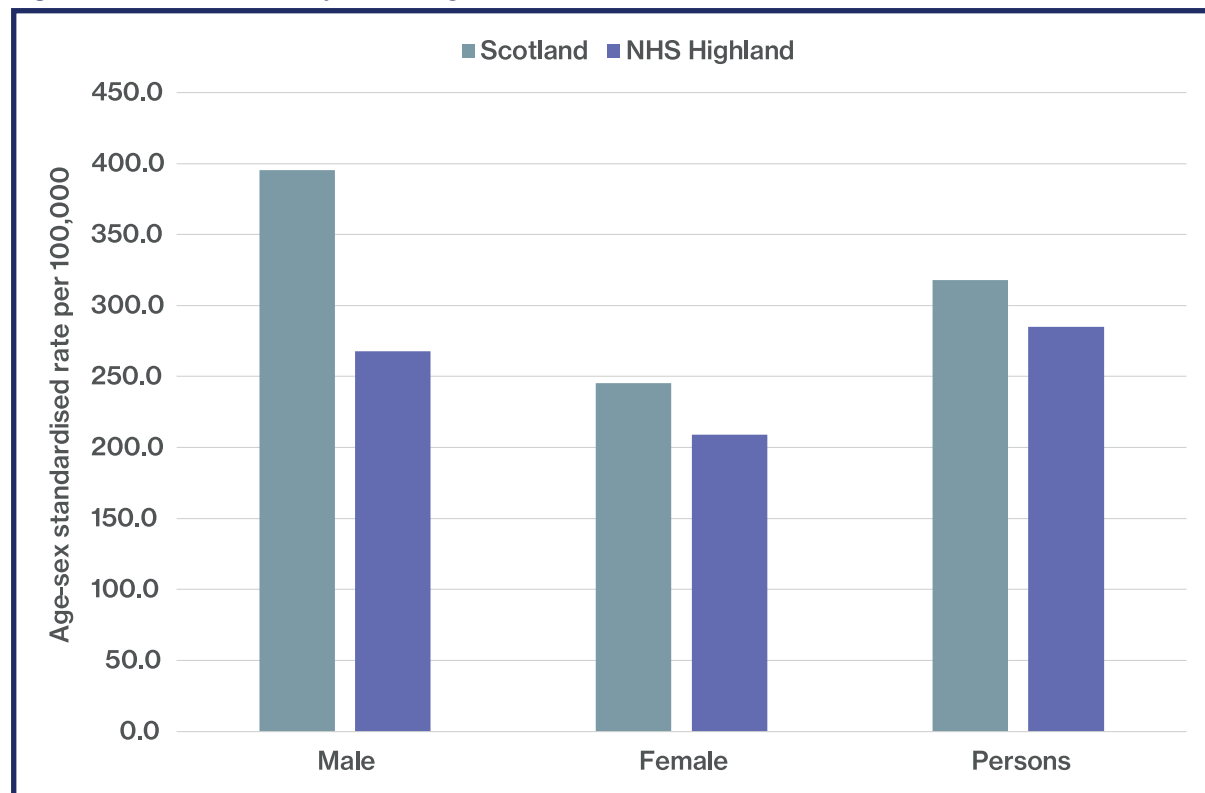
Number of Disability adjusted life years (DALYs), all ages, five-year aggregate

Avoidable mortality

Avoidable mortality is another way to inform priorities for prevention activity. Avoidable mortality is the number of deaths that could have been avoided had a public health or timely healthcare intervention been made and been successful¹². It includes deaths from conditions such as heart disease, some cancers, respiratory diseases and type 2 diabetes, where environment and health behaviours may have contributed to early death. Also included are deaths that could have been prevented such as drug use disorders, accidental and self-inflicted injuries, and infections.

NHS Highland's avoidable mortality rate in 2018-2020 was 285.1 per 100,000 compared to the Scotland rate of 318.0 per 100,000. Rates were higher for males (267.6 per 100,000) compared to females (209.0 per 100,000) (Figure 5). In the three years between 2018 and 2020, 25% of all deaths in NHS Highland were classified as avoidable.

Figure 5 - Avoidable mortality in NHS Highland, 2018-2020



Source: National Records of Scotland

3-year average age-sex standardised mortality rates per 100,000 population, directly standardised to the 2013 European Standard Population. Based on an international definition by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and Eurostat.

Effects of prevention on cancer and cardiovascular disease

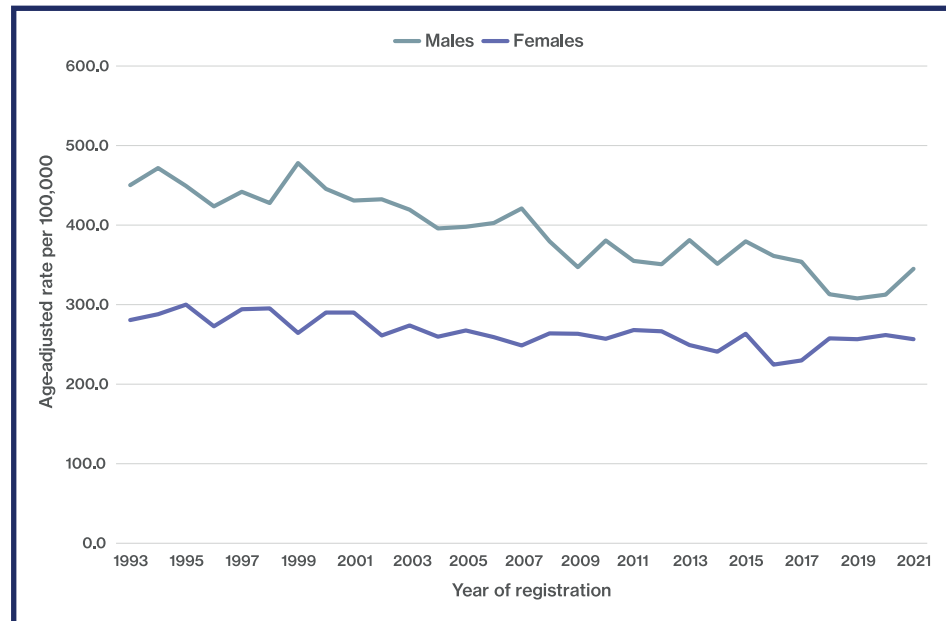
Cancer

Cancer is the leading cause of death in NHS Highland, accounting for more than one in four deaths each year. Mortality from cancer has declined over the past three decades (Figure 6). The age-adjusted cancer mortality rate for all cancers combined show a greater decrease in males than in females. The decline in cancer mortality largely reflects trends in the prevalence of risk factors, uptake of cancer screening programmes to aid early diagnosis, as well as advances in treatment that can affect survival.

Lung cancer

Lung cancer is the most common cause of death from cancer in both men and women in NHS Highland. Past actions to reduce rates of smoking have seen a decline in the death rate from lung cancer for males. Female lung cancer deaths have not improved and remained at a constant level (Figure 7). Prevention actions to reduce rates of smoking must continue and there must be continued efforts to improve early diagnosis for effective treatment. It is also possible that screening for lung cancer will be introduced soon.

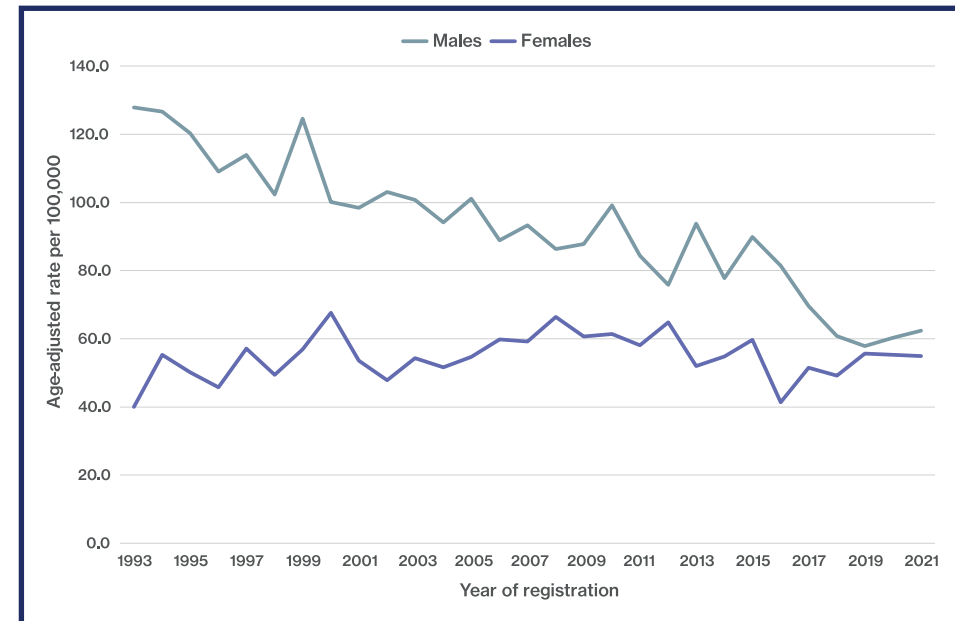
Figure 6 - Age-adjusted mortality rates for cancer in NHS Highland, 1993 to 2021



Source: National Records of Scotland, Public Health Scotland

Age-sex standardised mortality rates per 100,000 population, directly standardised to the 2013 European Standard Population. All cancers excluding non-melanoma skin cancer (ICD-10 C00-C97 excl. C44).

Figure 7 - Age-adjusted mortality rates for lung cancer in NHS Highland, 1993 to 2021



Source: National Records of Scotland, Public Health Scotland

Age-sex standardised mortality rates per 100,000 population, directly standardised to the 2013 European Standard Population. Trachea, bronchus and lung cancer and mesothelioma (ICD-10 C33-C34, C45).

Coronary heart disease and stroke

Heart disease and cerebrovascular diseases (stroke) are the second leading cause of death in NHS Highland. The main preventable risk factors for coronary heart disease and stroke are smoking, lack of exercise and a poor diet. Research also indicates a strong relationship between social deprivation and these risk factors.

Premature mortality rates from coronary heart disease (Figure 8) have shown a decline over the past two decades, falling from 244.7 per 100,000 population to 158.3 per 100,000 over the period. Coronary heart disease and cerebrovascular disease mortality rates over a ten year period show a continued decline (Figure 9). Preventative actions to control tobacco use and reduce smoking, high blood cholesterol and high blood pressure have contributed to the decline in risk. Priority should continue to be given to preventing cardiovascular and smoking related conditions.

Risk factors

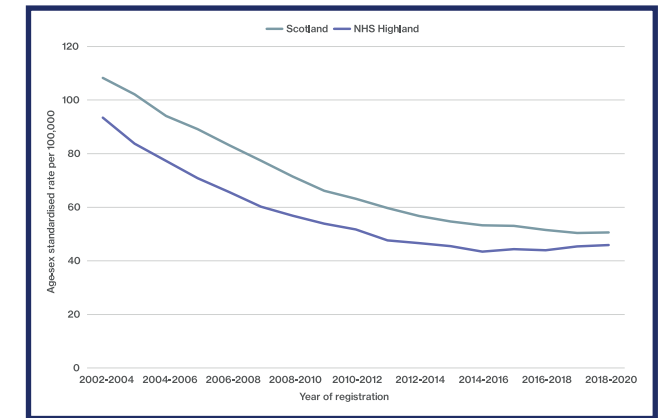
There is good evidence that preventable health conditions and avoidable deaths are linked to a range of modifiable risk factors including high blood pressure, smoking, alcohol and drug use, healthy weight, and levels of physical activity. These factors are known to correlate closely with environmental influences such as access to healthy food, safe streets, and exposure to poverty and chronic stress caused by unstable incomes, jobs and poor quality housing^{13,14}.

Tobacco smoking remains the biggest cause of lung diseases, heart disease and cancers; and is overall, the leading identifiable cause of poor health and early death in Scotland¹⁵. It has been estimated that half of all people who smoke regularly, will die prematurely as a result of smoking. Smoking prevalence in NHS Highland is around 20% of the adult population, which is comparable with the Scotland average of 19%. Smoking prevalence is significantly higher in men (26%) than women (15%)¹⁶.

Dietary risk factors and unhealthy weight are not far behind smoking as modifiable risk factors for ill-health. Recent research at the University of Glasgow found that in Scotland obesity now accounts for more deaths than smoking among people in middle and older age¹⁷.

Case study on Smokefree is on page 24

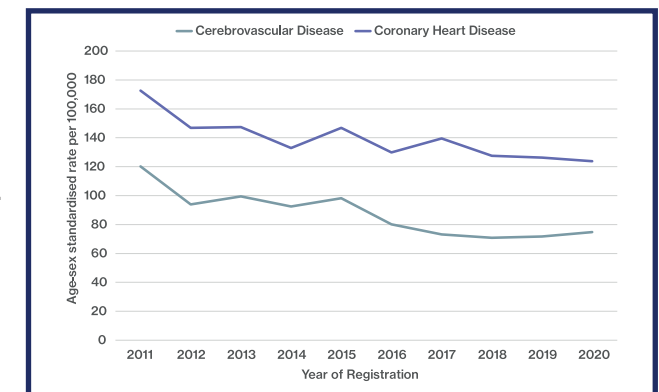
Figure 8 - Early deaths from coronary heart disease, age under 75 years, 2002 to 2020



Source: National Records of Scotland

3-year rolling age-sex standardised mortality rates per 100,000 population, directly standardised to the 2013 European Standard Population. Coronary heart disease (ICD-10 I20-I25).

Figure 9 - Age-adjusted mortality rates for coronary heart disease and cerebrovascular disease, all ages, 2011 to 2020



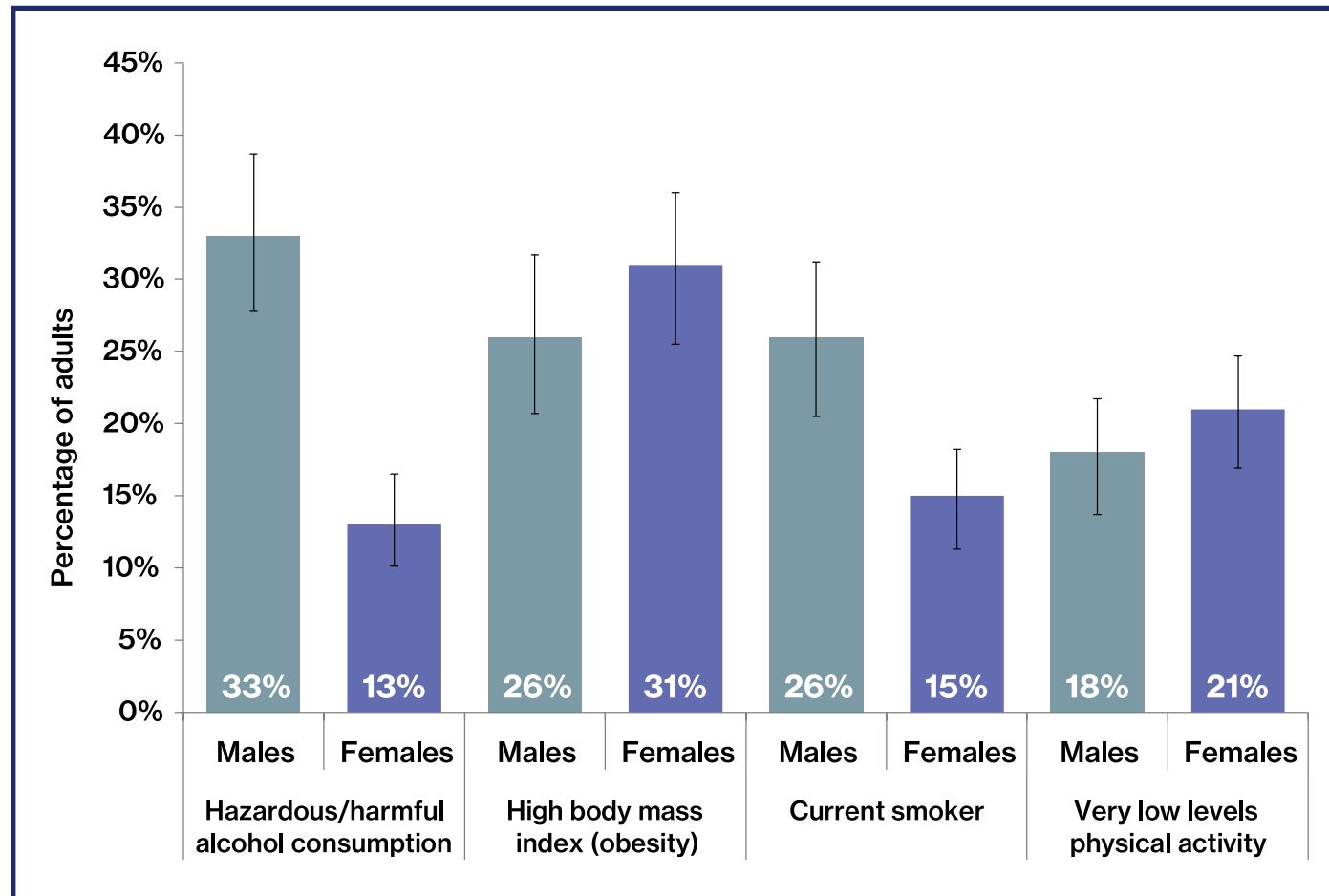
Source: National Records of Scotland

Age-sex standardised mortality rates per 100,000 population, directly standardised to the 2013 European Standard Population. Coronary heart disease (ICD-10 I20-I25). Cerebrovascular disease (ICD-10 I60-I69, G45).

Similarly, alcohol consumption is linked to a range of health risks. There is evidence that around 8% of health loss in Scotland is attributable to alcohol consumption, including the contribution of alcohol to deaths from cancer as well as admission to hospital for unintentional injuries¹⁸. There is no safe level of alcohol consumption¹⁹, and it is estimated that around 23% of adults (33% of men and 16% of women) in NHS Highland consume alcohol at hazardous and harmful levels (Figure 10).

Addressing modifiable risk factors presents a sizeable opportunity to improve health, add years to life and to reduce existing inequalities in these measures.

Figure 10 - Prevalence of risk factors in NHS Highland, 2016-2019



Source: Scottish Health Survey

A life course approach to prevention

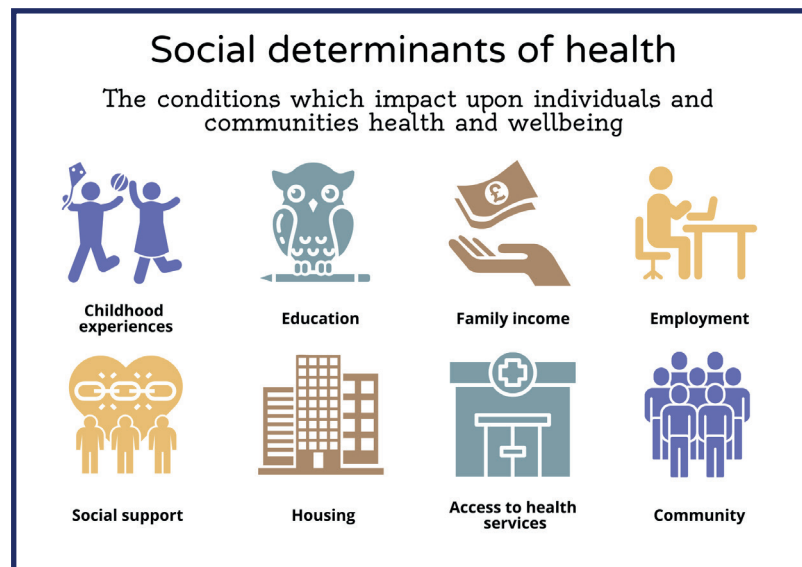
A person's physical and mental health and wellbeing is influenced throughout life by the wider determinants of health. These are a range of social, economic and environmental factors, alongside behavioural risk factors, which shape health and wellbeing for individuals and communities (Figure 11)²⁰.

It is well documented that social, political and economic factors outside the health system play a major role in influencing health outcomes and health inequalities²¹. Health inequalities have their roots in the unequal distribution of power, money and resources. This can lead to poverty and marginalisation of individuals and groups, and affects the distribution of environmental influences, such as good housing, work and education, which often cluster in the population. These influences can shape individual experiences and exposure to harms in the environment.

When looking at modifiable health behaviours such as smoking, poor diet and alcohol use, it is especially important to consider the major role of environmental influences. The risk factors reflect not only the choices that people make in life but also the ways in which choices are shaped by people's social circumstances such as employment, education, housing, income, relationships and communities. Addressing the wider determinants of health will help improve overall health by helping to improve the conditions into which people are born, live and work.

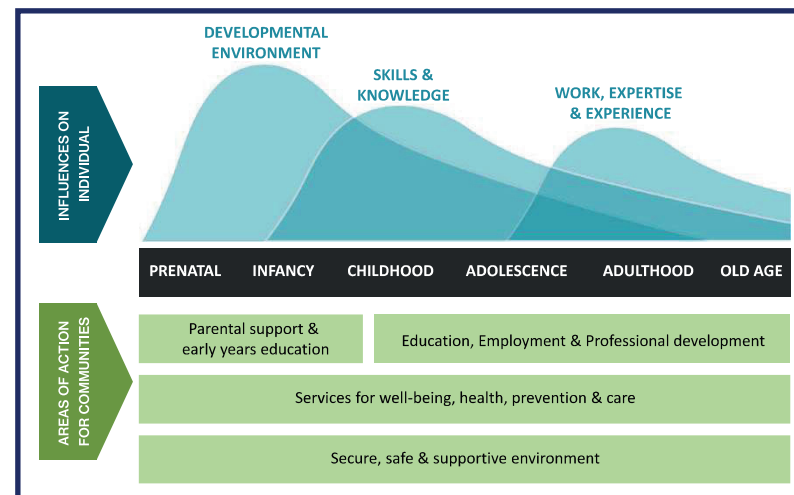
Unlike a disease-oriented approach, which focuses on interventions for a single condition often at a single life stage, a life course approach considers the critical stages, transitions, and settings where large differences can be made by prevention interventions. A life course approach to prevention identifies potential areas of action relating to both the individual and the community (Figure 12)²².

Figure 11 - The determinants of health and wellbeing



Source: Adapted from NHS Health Scotland²⁰

Figure 12 - A life course approach to prevention



Source: Davies S. Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer, 2012²²

Types of prevention

A public health perspective designed to understanding prevention typically considers three levels of activity: primary, secondary and tertiary. Prevention activities can also be considered as 'upstream' or 'downstream'. Upstream prevention activities address the economic, social and environmental causes of ill-health rather than treatment of illness or 'downstream' measures to change behaviours delivered to individuals.

Characteristics of effective prevention work

In 2018, a review by the Faculty of Public Health looked at the factors that support effective prevention work. The review highlighted much of the success or failure of preventative work is down to implementation, buy-in and collaborative working with other organisations. Partnership working, which includes co-production approaches working with individuals and communities, as well as partnership working between organisations is key to success^{21,23}.

Evidence from NHS Health Scotland highlights that policies and services delivered by national and local government need to help create a more level playing field to enable and realise the potential of community-led, assets-based preventative approaches to improve health and reduce health inequalities²¹. Prevention is most effective when multi-component interventions are implemented at different levels of a system or setting²⁴.

Case study on Living Well is on page 48

Case study on Co-production is on page 56

The key principles and characteristics for effective prevention work are summarised in the box. Prevention activities tend to be less successful where there is a lack of supporting infrastructure and resources, communication issues, programmes not being implemented as planned, insufficient investment in staff knowledge, and individual factors reinforcing health inequalities.

Case study on Community Link Workers is on page 26

Three types of prevention

- Primary prevention - universal approaches which tackle the causes of ill-health and prevent health problems from developing
- Secondary prevention - early intervention aimed at reducing the progression of health problems
- Tertiary prevention - treatment aimed at reducing the impacts of ill-health

Characteristics of effective prevention work^{21,22,23}

- Partnership working across sectors
- Multi-component programmes rather than single issue activities
- Programmes that reduce income and employment inequalities
- Widening access by offering prevention in communities and using a variety of methods
- Systematic and individually tailored processes for identifying people at risk and encouraging access to support
- Targeting population groups using appropriate and culturally sensitive language and materials
- Initial approach made by a familiar person, for example, GP or link worker
- Training health and care staff and partners to support prevention

Evidence for prevention

A report from NHS Health Scotland recommended that 'best buys' in prevention should meet one or more of three objectives: cost-effectiveness, likely to reduce health inequalities and likely to reduce avoidable health and social care problems (Figure 13)²⁸. Cost-effective actions are those that achieve large improvements in health relative to the resources required.

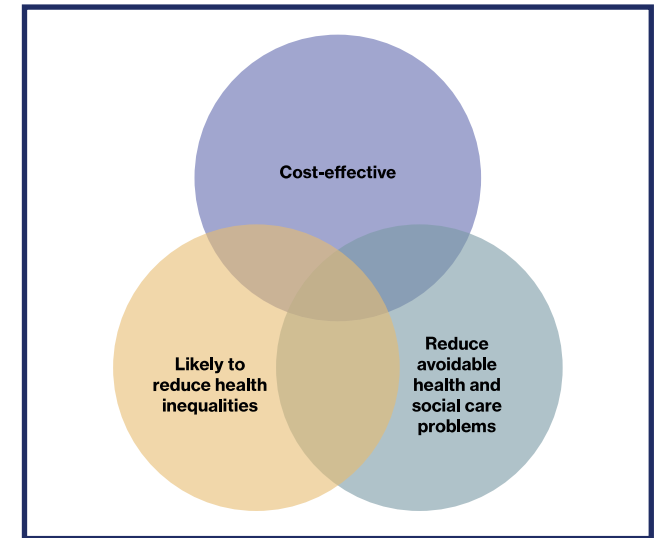
Much of the evidence for the impact of prevention programmes on health comes from economic evaluations. Economic evaluation measures the impact of prevention interventions on health relative to their cost, typically based on cost-effectiveness or return on investment analyses. Return on investment is a form of economic evaluation that places a value on the financial return of health benefits against the total costs of delivery of an intervention. Cost-saving approaches are where the health benefits are generated at a lower cost than usual practice.

A report from the World Health Organisation highlights that reducing or containing the costs of health care, without negative effects on health outcomes, requires cost-effective prevention interventions to play a significant role². They suggested a hierarchy of prevention interventions (Figure 14) and recognised that all approaches require initial investment. Cost-effective approaches that are cost-saving but do not produce a return on investment can increase overall costs.

There are some limitations in the evidence available from economic evaluation methods. The measurement of costs and health benefits vary across studies, making it difficult to make direct monetary comparisons²⁵. Most studies that identify potential savings from prevention do not specify how resources can be released in practice^{26,27}. Additionally, the degree to which many public health interventions can influence future spending, and the timing of any cost-savings, may be subject to uncertainty. The impact of an intervention may extend beyond the NHS, requiring consideration of wider societal costs and benefits that may not be recognised for many years.

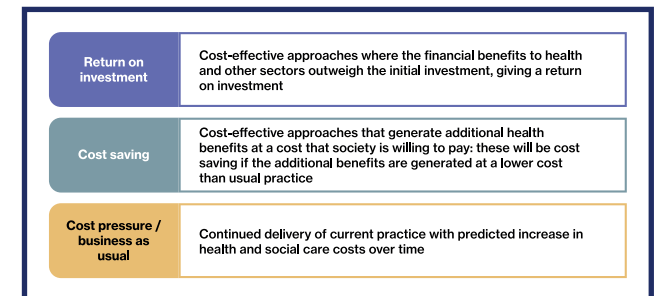
NHS Scotland have argued that the lack of evidence on actual savings made in practice should not stop investment in prevention²⁸. Overall, many studies provide clear evidence that prevention can be highly cost-effective, provide value for money and give returns on investment in both the short and longer term.

Figure 13 - Objectives of prevention activities



Source: Adapted from NHS Health Scotland²⁸

Figure 14 - Hierarchy of prevention



Source: Adapted from World Health Organisation²

Evidence of the impact of prevention work

This section summarises evidence and provides examples of prevention work that can be delivered locally.

Much of the evidence on cost-effectiveness relates to interventions that try and change the behaviours of individuals. One comprehensive source of evidence is the Assessing Cost-Effectiveness in Prevention (ACE-Prevention) study²⁹. This study evaluated the cost-effectiveness of 150 preventive health interventions, addressing areas such as tobacco use, alcohol use, body weight, physical activity and nutrition. Many individual level interventions, including smoking cessation services, alcohol brief interventions and prescribing to increased levels of physical activity, were found to be cost-effective and with the potential to reduce future demand for health and care services.

Likewise, a report from Public Health England identified six preventative interventions that could deliver cost savings to the NHS and care system within five years³⁰:

- Alcohol brief interventions
- Alcohol care teams in secondary care
- Tobacco screening, advice and referral in secondary care
- Improved management of hypertension in primary care
- Increased uptake of long-acting reversible contraceptives
- Implementing a fracture liaison service in secondary care.

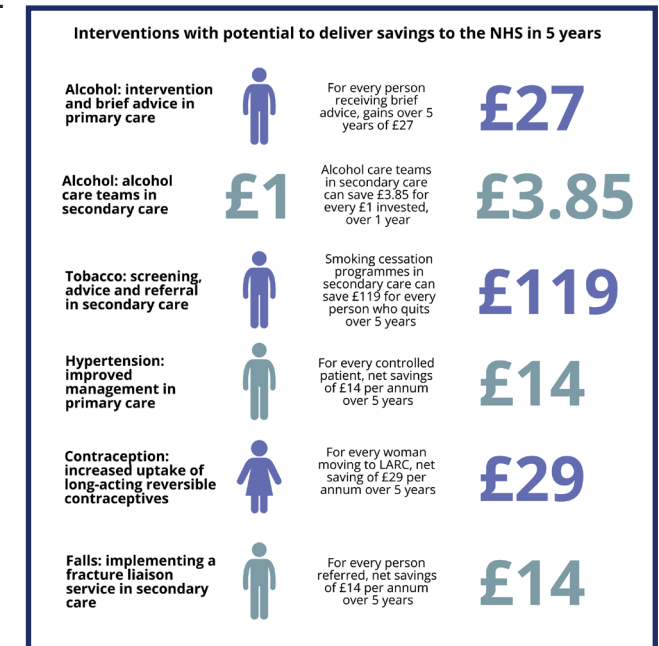
These interventions have proven to be effective where implemented and are based on National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance or recommendations. Some interventions will require upfront costs and the savings are likely to accrue over time³⁰. Details of the potential savings and benefits from these interventions averaged over a five year period are summarised in Figure 15.

Taxation policies to reduce alcohol and tobacco use, smoking cessation services, alcohol brief interventions, prescribing to increase levels of physical activity and multi-faceted school-based programmes to improve nutrition were all potentially cost-saving with the potential to reduce future demand for health and care services. With tobacco smoking, the short-term savings can be achieved through helping people who smoke being in contact with NHS services. Long-term savings come from preventing people from ever smoking.

Case study on Smokefree is on page 24

Case study on Planet Youth is on page 33

Figure 15 - Preventative interventions with the potential to deliver savings to the NHS within five years



Source: Adapted from Public Health England³⁰

The importance of the earliest years of life in setting the tone for the whole lifespan is well documented³¹. Reports from the Chief Medical Officer for England³², Public Health England³⁰ and the Australian Prevention Partnership Centre³³ found strong support for the benefits of prevention in childhood. There is evidence that investment in early childhood, child health and development, and preconception, pregnancy and childbirth care can yield a 10-to-1 benefit to cost ratio in health, social and economic benefits⁵. It can also reduce rates of non-communicable diseases and mental health disorders across the life course.

A range of evidence-based interventions are recommended in National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance that could improve children's health outcomes while delivering short-term cost benefits. Health behaviour interventions during preconception and pregnancy, breastfeeding, and family-based early childhood obesity prevention interventions have all demonstrated evidence of effectiveness and cost-effectiveness³².

Case study on Infant Feeding is on page 35

Case study on Vitamin D3 is on page 51

Case study on Planet Youth is on page 33

Reports from the Institute of Health Equity³⁴ and NHS Health Scotland²⁷ recognise there are fewer examples of good studies and economic measures in the wider determinants of health than for behaviour change. They underline that evaluation of complex social interventions, which will have multiple effects over the long term, may have limited measures of economic impact.

Despite this, there are a range of programmes that evidence suggests are both cost-effective and likely to be effective in reducing health inequalities³⁴. These include programmes and interventions that:

- ensure adequate incomes and the living wage
- increase employment opportunities
- reduce unemployment in vulnerable groups
- improve working conditions and workplace health
- improve housing conditions to keep people warm, safe and free from cold and damp.

Investment in programmes likely to help reduce health inequalities should be a core objective. Examples of interventions that provide a return on investment and improve health can be seen in Figure 16³⁵.

Case study on Money Counts is on page 42

Figure 16 - Making the case for public health interventions



Source: The King's Fund and Local Government Association³⁴

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the important role of work to protect the health of the population from serious risks and infectious diseases through vaccination, infection control and incident response (health protection). A 2017 systematic review evaluated the cost-effectiveness of 18 health protection interventions, including vaccination programmes and the control of infectious diseases such as HIV and hepatitis B.

These studies demonstrated a consistently high return on investment, reflecting the high disease cost of infectious diseases and the benefits of prevention³⁶. It is estimated measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccination in the United Kingdom has realised savings of £241k to £544k over ten years in reduced treatment costs². Likewise, evidence from a 2018 review concluded the majority of adult vaccinations are cost-effective³⁷.

Case study on Health Protection is on page 54

Priorities for Prevention

This section has summarised evidence on the role of prevention and the potential to improve health in a cost-effective way, reduce health inequalities and reduce the future demand for and cost of health and other public services. Preventative interventions can be cost saving, though how such programmes can enable cash to be released from existing services remains a challenge.

The strength of evidence is such that the Scottish Government identified a set of public health priorities for Scotland³⁸. The priorities do not reflect all of the activities that contribute to the health of the population. Work must continue to protect the health of the population from serious risks and ensure health and care services are delivered in a high quality and cost-effective way.

The NHS has an important role to play in prevention as an employer, researcher, collaborative partner and commissioner of services³⁹. Ensuring that prevention is seen as part of everyone's role and that time and resources are allocated to it are key to supporting the fundamental shift towards prevention that is required.

Public health priorities

- A Scotland where we live in vibrant, healthy and safe places and communities.
- A Scotland where we flourish in our early years.
- A Scotland where we have good mental wellbeing.
- A Scotland where we reduce the use of and harm from alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.
- A Scotland where we have a sustainable, inclusive economy with equality of outcomes for all.
- A Scotland where we eat well, have a healthy weight and are physically active.

Case Studies

Smokefree

Community Link Workers

Planet Youth

Infant Feeding

Money Counts

Living Well

Health Protection

Vitamin D3

Co-production

Case study: Smokefree

Introduction

Scotland is a world leader in tobacco control, implementing legislation, policy and strategy with the aim of a tobacco free generation by 2034. It is well known that smoking causes harm and reducing rates of smoking will save lives, reduce the cost of treating smoking related disease, improve quality of life and reduce health inequalities. Supported by national level input, local health board areas are supporting progression towards creating a tobacco free Scotland. NHS Highland's tobacco strategy aimed to support smoking prevention, protection and cessation, with an underpinning principle of reducing health inequalities.

Background

Smoking remains the leading cause of preventable ill health and premature death in Scotland. As well as improved health outcomes, reducing premature death and protecting those exposed to tobacco smoke, the cost savings to the individual and to the NHS of stopping smoking is significant. For example, someone smoking 20 cigarettes a day, buying an average packet of cigarettes at £9, would save £3,285 per year if they quit. That is £16,425 over 5 years and £32,850 over 10 years.

Around 17.5% of adults in NHS Highland smoke (ScotPHO 2019), which is comparable with the rest of Scotland. 19% of men and 16% of women smoke in NHS Highland .

Smoking Cessation Service

There is a network of Smoke-Free Advisers across NHS Highland, and 85 Community Pharmacists providing free, confidential, non-judgemental services to everyone who smokes. Many people can quit on their own, but evidence suggests that quitting with help can be up to four times more successful, and that people are more likely to stay smoke free if they have had support to quit.

From April 2021 to March 2022, more than 1767 quit dates were set. Of those that quit, over 675 remained quit at 1 month, and over 410 remained quit at 3 months. Over 245 of those who remained quit at 3 months were from the 40% most deprived areas.

The infographic is a grid of 8 panels. The top-left panel shows a group of five white silhouettes of people and text: 'In the whole NHS Highland area, a network of smoking cessation advisors cover our geography.' The top-right panel shows a pharmacy storefront with a sign that says 'PHARMACY' and text: 'In addition, 85 community pharmacies deliver smoking cessation support.' The second row, left panel, shows a house with a heart and a car, with text: 'Over 1,400 promises have been made to our Smoke-free Homes & Cars Challenge, helping to protect over 2,000 children.' The second row, right panel, shows a person with a 'CONGRATS!' banner and text: 'Nearly 1800 people stopped smoking with support from our services during the pandemic and remained quit at 3 months.' The third row, left panel, shows a house with a heart and a car, with text: 'Our Smoke-free Sports programme has reached over 700 young people.' The third row, right panel, shows a human heart and text: 'Smoking cessation is one of the most cost-effective interventions for reducing ill health and prolonging life. The UK National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) has reported that smoking interventions are highly cost-effective, at £975-£2,400 per quality-adjusted life years (QALY) gained.' The bottom row, left panel, shows a hospital building with a red cross and text: 'We have 26 hospitals, including a mental health hospital.' The bottom row, right panel, shows a smartphone with a green checkmark and text: 'There is also one prison within the Highlands. We've branded our service as e-cigarette friendly to support more people to stop smoking.' An illustration of an e-cigarette is shown at the bottom of the right panel.

Cost-effectiveness

Smoking cessation interventions, whether pharmaceutical or through advice and counselling, are one of the most cost-effective interventions for reducing ill-health and prolonging life. Studies have shown that the more intensive the intervention, the more cost-effective it is. A directory of healthcare programmes which ranked the cost-effectiveness of interventions in relation to quality-adjusted life years (QALYs) gained showed that giving up smoking following the advice of a general practitioner was ranked third in a list of 21 medical and surgical interventions aimed at preventing or treating disease. The UK National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) has reported that smoking interventions are highly cost-effective, at £975-£2,400 per QALY gained⁴⁰.

Smoking prevention policies such as advertising and marketing bans and high taxation play an invaluable role in preventing young people from taking up smoking. Smoking prevention policies are therefore cost effective and ensure that society will reap the benefits of these policies in future decades. Work to reduce the harm from smoking needs to not only provide support for quitting but also provide a range of preventative measures.

Case study: Community Link Workers

Community Link Workers (CLWs) are non-clinical practitioners who work one-to-one with individuals referred by GP practice staff, to address non-medical factors which contribute to poor health and wellbeing.

Evidence

- Majority of studies find positive changes in outcomes following Social Prescribing however evaluation can be challenging.
- An independent review estimated that in the UK, up to a fifth of patients presenting at GP practices have a problem which requires social prescribing.

<https://bit.ly/3GPF375>

Research

There are recommendations that future research needs to acknowledge and consider complexities of health when designing social prescribing and related evaluations.

<https://bit.ly/3OFnClh>

Challenges

- Use of a wide range of outcome measures to evaluate CLW makes it difficult to compare and synthesise evidence.
- Delivering CLW services across remote and rural areas where there may be limited social prescribing opportunities.
- Traditional research methods are not the best measure for evaluating social prescribing approaches.

Social return on Investment

Studies have estimated this to be from:

£1 ⇒ £1.09

£1 ⇒ £8.56

<https://bit.ly/3ilX4je>



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Community Links

Area	Who	Why	Where
North Highland	Change Mental Health (formerly Support in Mind Scotland)	Awarded contract through commissioning process	29 most deprived practices in North
Argyll and Bute	We Are With You	Awarded contract through commissioning process	12 practices, identified via patient list size & Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation

CLWs are social prescribers and aim to impact on the socio-economic issues affecting individuals. They work with the individuals to identify barriers to improving health and wellbeing and take a person-centred approach to mitigating these. They support the individual over an identified period of time.

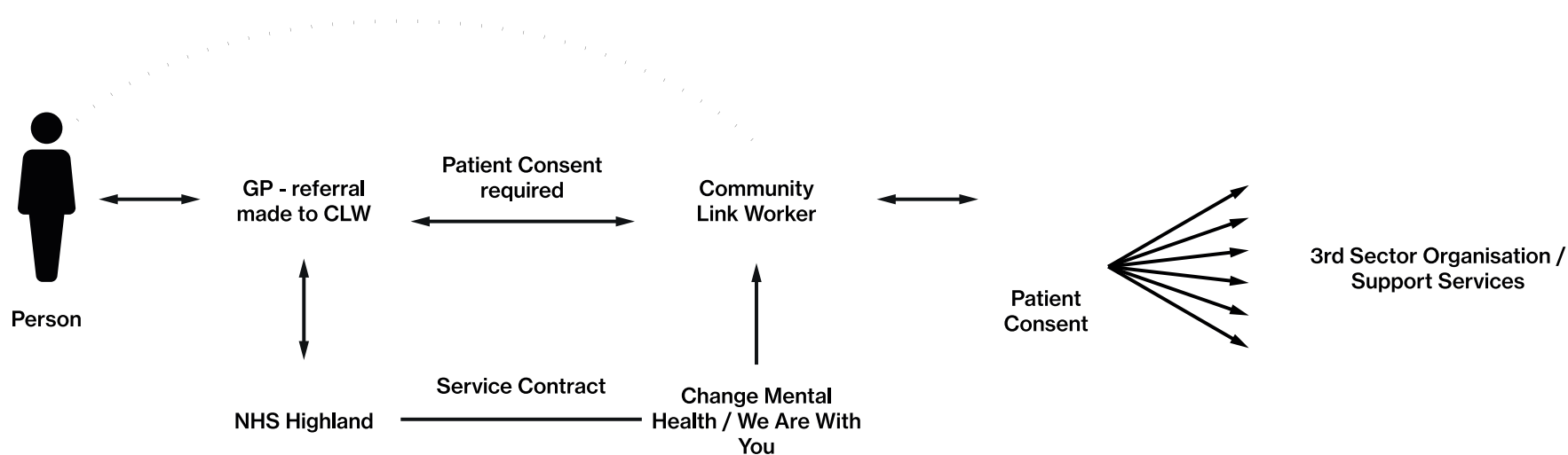
Patients are seen on an average of 4-6 sessions but this is flexible depending on need. Argyll and Bute CLWs offer group work sessions as additional support.

Further role of a CLW

- Work with local community groups to support funding applications.
- Promote and assist the shape and delivery of local services.
- Recognise gaps in services and highlight need for change.
- Network and connect with local and national organisations to bring about change in our local communities.

Referral pathways

The following diagram provides an oversight on the referral process



A short animation about Community Link Workers



**Please scan this QR code using a smart device to watch a video about:
Community Link Workers**

Referrals from individual GP practices to CLWs

Number of referrals for Apr to Sep 22 - Argyll and Bute	
Area	Number of referrals
Bute	67
Campbeltown	44
Dunoon	52
Helensburgh	42
Lochgilphead	20
Isle of Islay	15

Number of referrals for May to Oct 22 - North Highland	
Area	Number of referrals
Inverness	141
Caithness	58
Ross-shire	56
Lochaber	30
East Sutherland	23
Badenoch and Nairn	17
Skye and Lochalsh	7
Black Isle Corridor	4
West Sutherland	1

Top reasons for referral (North Highland)
1. Mental health and wellbeing
2. Loneliness and isolation
3. Social isolation
4. Bereavement
5. Housing and essential needs
6. Stress management and financial advice

Evaluation

North Highland

University of the Highlands and Islands: mixed method evaluation to monitor and measure the impact of the introduction of community link workers in three main areas:

- Impact on people, their carers and their families
- Impact on the third sector as part of the social prescribing system
- Impact on the wider health and care system



Argyll & Bute

Impact of the service evaluated using Warwick Edinburgh Wellbeing Scale).

- 93.8 % of clients who have completed a well-being scale at entry and exit from the service showed an improvement in well-being.
- 100% of people felt listened to, treated with respect and compassion
- 100% of people would recommend the Links Worker to other people
- 100% of people felt connected with the right sources of support



Feedback

Argyll and Bute

"Thank you for all your help as it has definitely helped going to the walking group and getting out and about. At least I am getting up earlier and trying to get earlier to bed as I was beginning to think before I had the meetings with you that I was never going to get back to getting out of bed at a reasonable time. I know where I can get help again so hope you are kept in your post and enjoy living in Argyll."

"I honestly can't thank the CLW enough for all the help he gave me and the changes we have made. Thank you again."

"My Links Worker was very easy to talk to and made me feel relaxed when I was getting support. She made some phone calls to various organisations about help and information I needed - always with my consent. She pointed me in the right direction about activities I would enjoy. I am glad I got the opportunity to talk with her because I felt that pills on their own were not the answer to my problems. Also I was able to talk to the Links worker for longer than an appointment with the doctor although I have had good support from my doctor."

"My Links Worker was amazing I feel really different about myself now and am feeling more confident in myself and about the future"

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Community Links

North Highland

"I've not met you before, but I'm one of the GPs at an Inverness Practice. I've been reviewing a 37 year old lady who I referred to you. I just wanted to pass on that she has really benefited from her session with you and feels you have been incredibly helpful." (GP to a CLW)

"I had some feedback today from a patient who was referred to the CLW. The patient says they really appreciate the time the CLW has spent with them, they have found all the advice she has provided really useful and said that they feel better knowing someone is helping them. They appreciated having someone to talk to in their own environment as they said they felt comfortable and how at ease they were made to feel. Thank you, it was great to see a positive change in the patient's attitude and overall outlook." (GP to a CLW)

"Just wanted to share some positive feedback with you. I had a lady who was very low when she started and was feeling depressed, demotivated and had put on a lot of weight. She wanted to focus on her weight gain first, so I put her in touch with a support organisation. I had my 4th session with her today following her meeting with them and she sounded like a different person, so positive. She said they have helped her understand so much about herself and she is feeling really motivated now, she is doing daily walks and has got into gardening and is loving it. She said 'I can't thank you enough, thank you for looking after me so well' which was lovely to hear!" (CLW about a patient)



Conclusion

- The key value of this work is to provide person-centred support that recognises that social issues such as debt, relationships, employment and loneliness affect people's health and wellbeing, and to connect people to sources of support or resources within their community.
- This will help people access the right support and services at the right time, and when they most need it.
- This in turn will allow for GP appointments to be more medically focused and also have a positive impact on the wider determinants of health and wellbeing.
- The data gathered from the CLW work will help shape, inform and direct approaches to social prescribing.

Case study: Planet Youth, the Icelandic Prevention Model, in Highland

The Planet Youth, Icelandic Prevention Model aims to increase protective factors, and decrease risk factors, to delay and reduce substance use among young people in Highland. Over five years (2020-2025), the Ten Steps⁴¹ of the approach will be applied in Highland.

Planet Youth is a primary prevention, whole systems, and whole family approach that works in collaboration with stakeholders by collating and analysing survey data on risk and protective factors that influence alcohol, tobacco and other drug use. This anonymous local data from S4 pupils informs development and implementation of local action plans that respond to findings in key areas of young peoples' lives. Since being applied in Iceland, this approach reduced substance use rates among young people from among the highest in Europe to the lowest. [Watch this video](#)⁴² we created for more information.

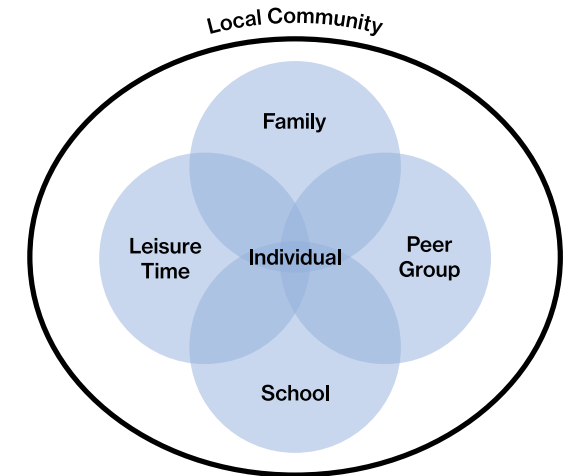
There have been more than 100 peer reviewed articles published on the Icelandic model. The evidence base for Scotland is also growing with a recent qualitative study⁴³ which concludes transferability to a Scottish context is feasible and highlights primary prevention of adolescent substance use is a key public health priority.

Work based on the Planet Youth model has been undertaken in both the Highland Council and Argyll and Bute areas. In Highland through Scottish Government and the Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (HADP), supported by third-sector organisation Winning Scotland, and actioned by a local coalition group, work is underway to increase positive activities for young people and families, increase social cohesion among families, and support families and schools with consistent messaging regarding alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

The local coalition group consists of schools' representatives, chairs of the relevant Community Partnership sub groups, representatives from Highland Council, NHS Highland, HADP, Highlife Highland, Winning Scotland Foundation, Police Scotland, Third Sector, and, importantly, local champions. Planet Youth provides training, guidance and templates to support local delivery and application of this process.

The project in Argyll and Bute is at an earlier stage of development. Focus is upon two secondary schools where work is underway to deliver upon the partnership action plan. Following engagement with staff and parents, support and commitment have been secured for the project and the next step is to galvanize community support for development and implementation.

Key areas of young people's lives



Given that poverty is linked with problematic substance use, it is essential to focus resources at a faster pace for people who are experiencing the most disadvantage. The pilot therefore complements other initiatives targeted at young people at higher risk of substance use in relation to protective factors including access to leisure activities and anti-poverty measures.

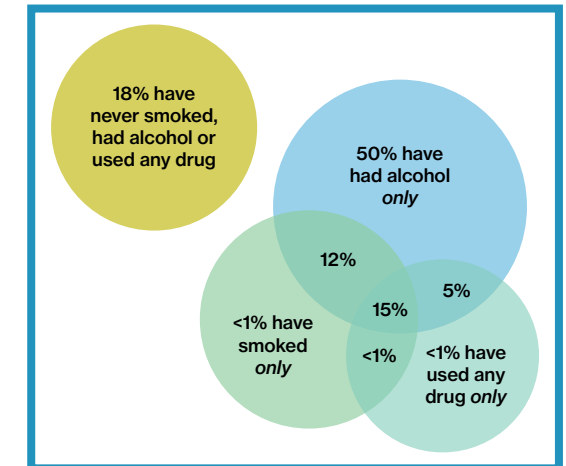
Monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the agreed actions will be highlighted by continued survey results. In addition, quality improvement techniques will be applied to actions to measure effectiveness more periodically. While each of the actions have a number of survey questions we can reference, ultimately, we aim to see reductions in the prevalence of substance use among young people. The initial survey, completed autumn 2021, highlighted the following substance use among young people.



Whilst we aim to see a reduction in substance use among young people, there are a range of other benefits that are associated with this approach, and linkage across all six public health priorities; where safer communities, early years support, good mental health, equality of opportunity and physical activity, all contribute to reducing the harm from substance use.

The various impacts of alcohol, tobacco and other drug use in Scotland are well documented. Changing our relationship with these substances requires changes in practice and culture, and so matching ambition and investment to the scale of the problem is essential. As with all prevention work, this needs to be committed to long term.

Substance usage of young people



Case study: Infant Feeding

Vision Aim

To reduce the breastfeeding attrition of any breastfeeding at 6 – 8 weeks by 10% by 2025.

Outcomes

To support an increase in breastfeeding at birth, exclusive breastfeeding at 10 – 14 days and 6 – 8 weeks to support improvement in short, medium and longer term health outcomes for babies and mothers.

Evidence to support

In 2016, the Lancet published an item⁴⁴ titled: *Why invest, and what it will take to improve breastfeeding practices?*. This series highlighted that breastfeeding is one of THE most preventative health measures for children and mothers regardless of where they live, but it has often been overlooked as a critical need for the health of the population. Evidence provides a strong economical case for investing in promotion and support of breastfeeding where it is estimated that boosting breastfeeding to 45% for infants less than 6 months of age in the UK would cut treatment costs of common childhood illnesses such as pneumonia, diarrhoea and asthma. The cost savings for these illnesses alone has been estimated to be £5 million.

In 2012, Unicef, a leading children's charity commissioned a report⁴⁵ titled: *Preventing disease and saving resources*. Findings demonstrated that for just five illnesses (breast cancer in the mother and gastroenteritis, respiratory infections, middle ear infections and necrotising enterocolitis in the baby) moderate increases in exclusive breastfeeding would translate into cost savings for the NHS in the UK of up to £50 million per year and tens of thousands of fewer hospital admissions and GP consultations for both mum and baby.

Infant Feeding Service

Pathways to service

There is a range of support for women who chose to breastfeed, including:

Specialist breastfeeding service	Referral pathways are in place for any NHS Highland or council staff to refer women into a specialist service for women experiencing problems with breastfeeding
Volunteer breastfeeding peer support	All breastfeeding women are asked to consent to refer to peer support.
Infant feeding support workers	Referral pathway is mainly from local midwifery and Health Visiting staff direct to the infant feeding support worker. The aim of the service is that all breastfeeding women will be seen by a support worker in the postnatal period. Support is provided for as long as it is needed.
Antenatal Facebook Breastfeeding Course	Advertised on parent portal on Badgernet and promoted to women through clinical staff and social media advertising this online course supports women with breastfeeding.
Postnatal breastfeeding support on Facebook	All breastfeeding women receive details of this group on discharge from hospital/home birth.
Self referral	Details of support for breastfeeding are available on the NHSH website and on all leaflets given to breastfeeding women to support self referral

Monitoring and Evaluation

Quality Improvement is embedded in the Infant Feeding Service and data is crucial to ensuring systems are working and women and families are happy with the support they are being given.

National data from Public Health Scotland is used to support ongoing improvement. More information can be found in their report on Infant feeding statistics - Financial year 2021 to 2022⁴⁶.



NHS Highland Infant feeding Service

What services we provide

Breastfeeding co-ordinators within Raigmore Supporting projects to reduce supplementation and spread colostrum harvesting project	Key workers Midwifery and health visiting staff who are local breastfeeding key contact for local staff	Volunteer supporters Offering support groups and a 365 day/year telephone support service
Infant feeding support workers Offering ante and post natal support in SIMD 1 and SIMD 2 areas	Vitamin D Distribution to all breastfeeding mothers and infants under 3 years	Ante natal colostrum harvesting
Specialist breastfeeding clinical service 82 women seen already in 2022	Staff training There have been 502 staff trained this year	Facebook Ante natal breastfeeding education course every 3 months (between 150 and 170 participants) and post natal support page with over 3,500 users
Supporting breastfeeding in public Over 400 public venues signed up	Strategy and policies 10 clinical policy/guidelines to support best practice in Infant feeding	

Chart 1: Exclusive breastfeeding at 6 – 8 weeks NHS Highland

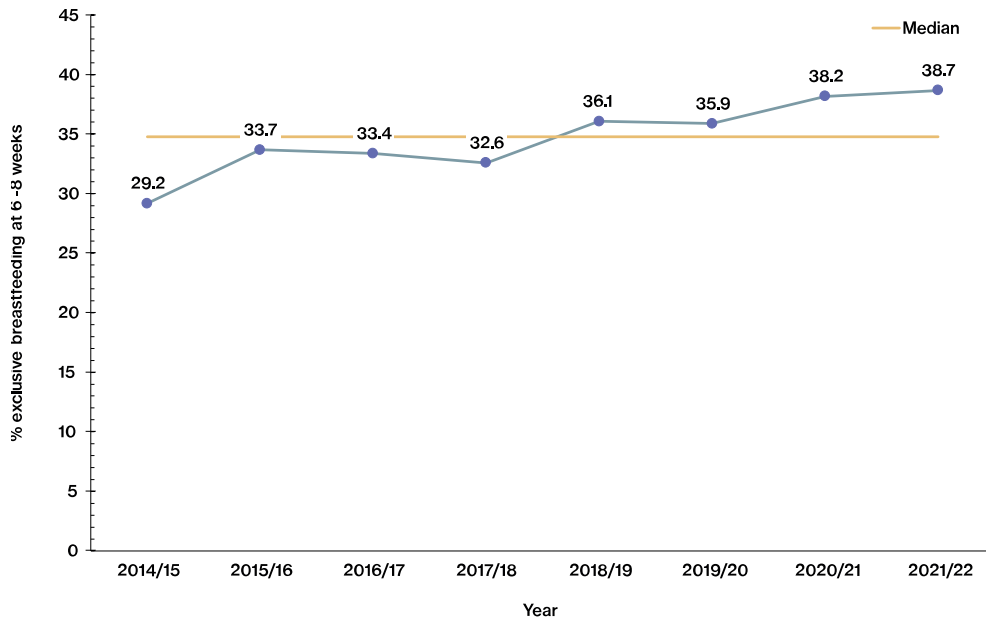


Chart 2: Exclusive breastfeeding at 6 – 8 weeks Argyll and Bute HSCP

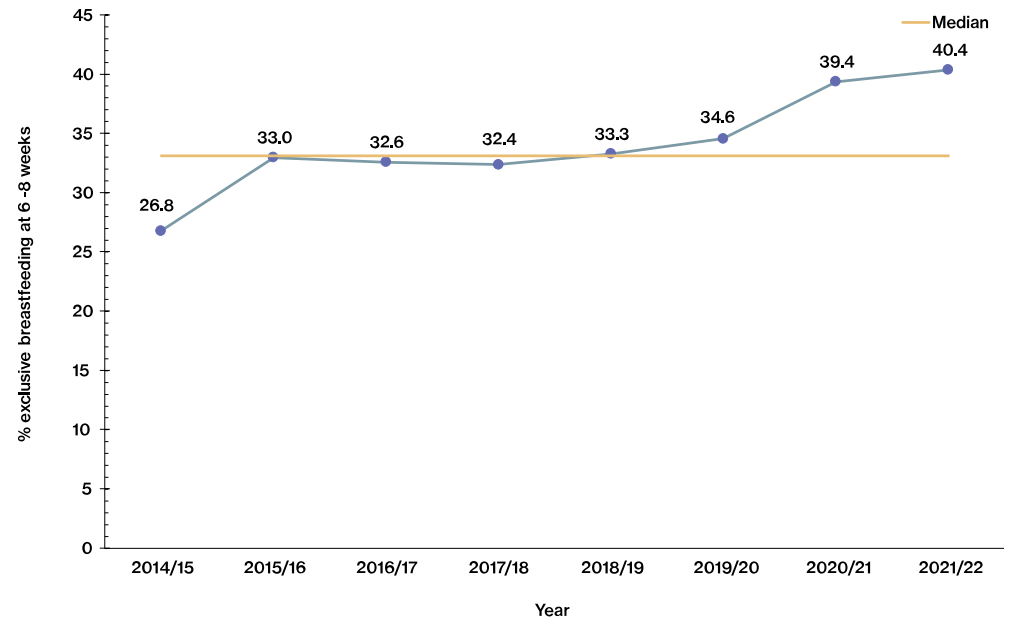
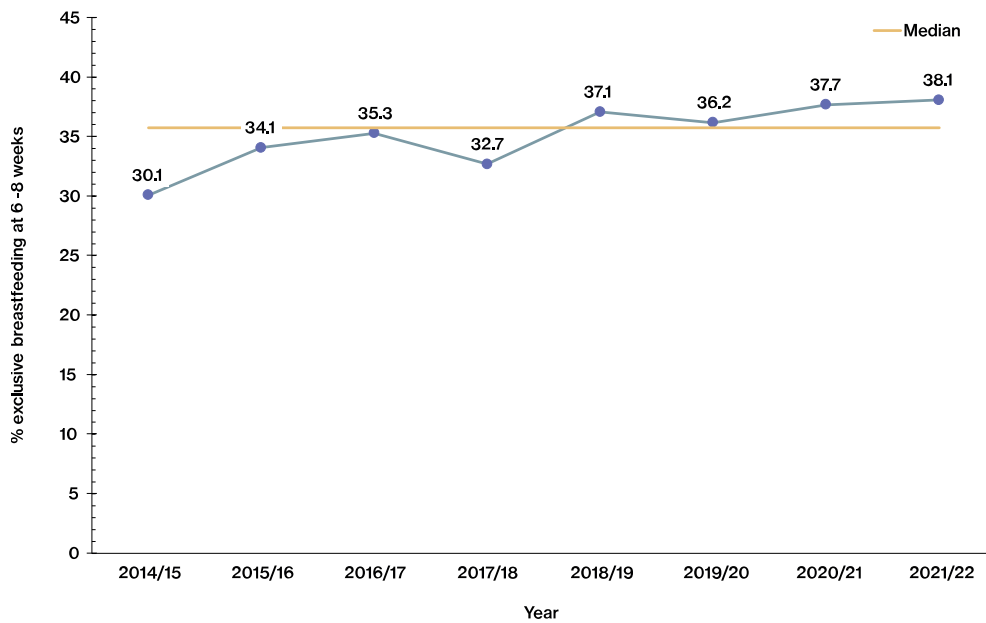


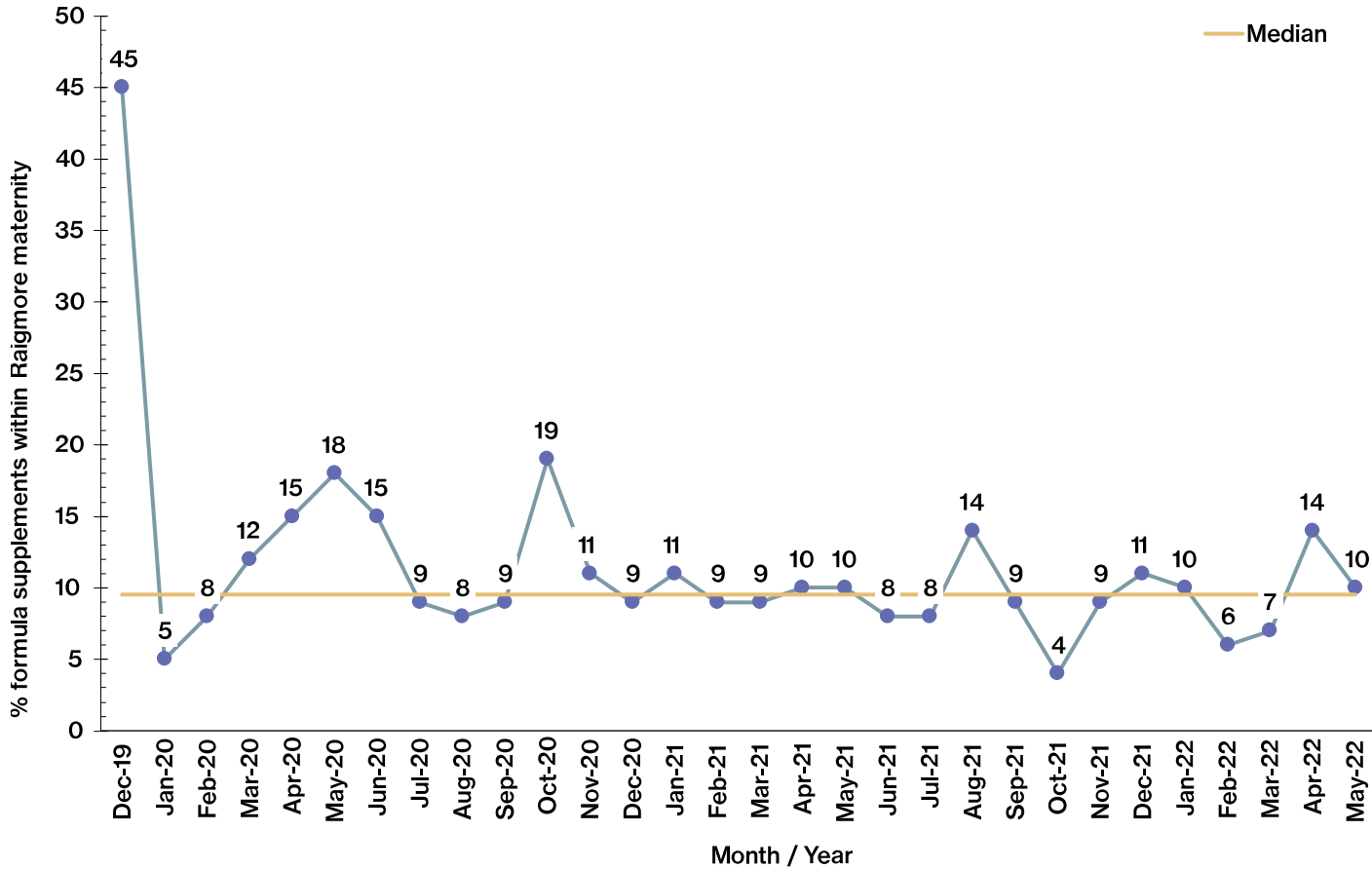
Chart 3: Exclusive breastfeeding at 6 – 8 weeks Highland HSCP



Supplementation of Formula within Raigmore Hospital

This project commenced in 2019, where supplementation rates were 45% - currently supplementation is about 11% per month. Data is manually collected from the breastfeeding coordinators daily.

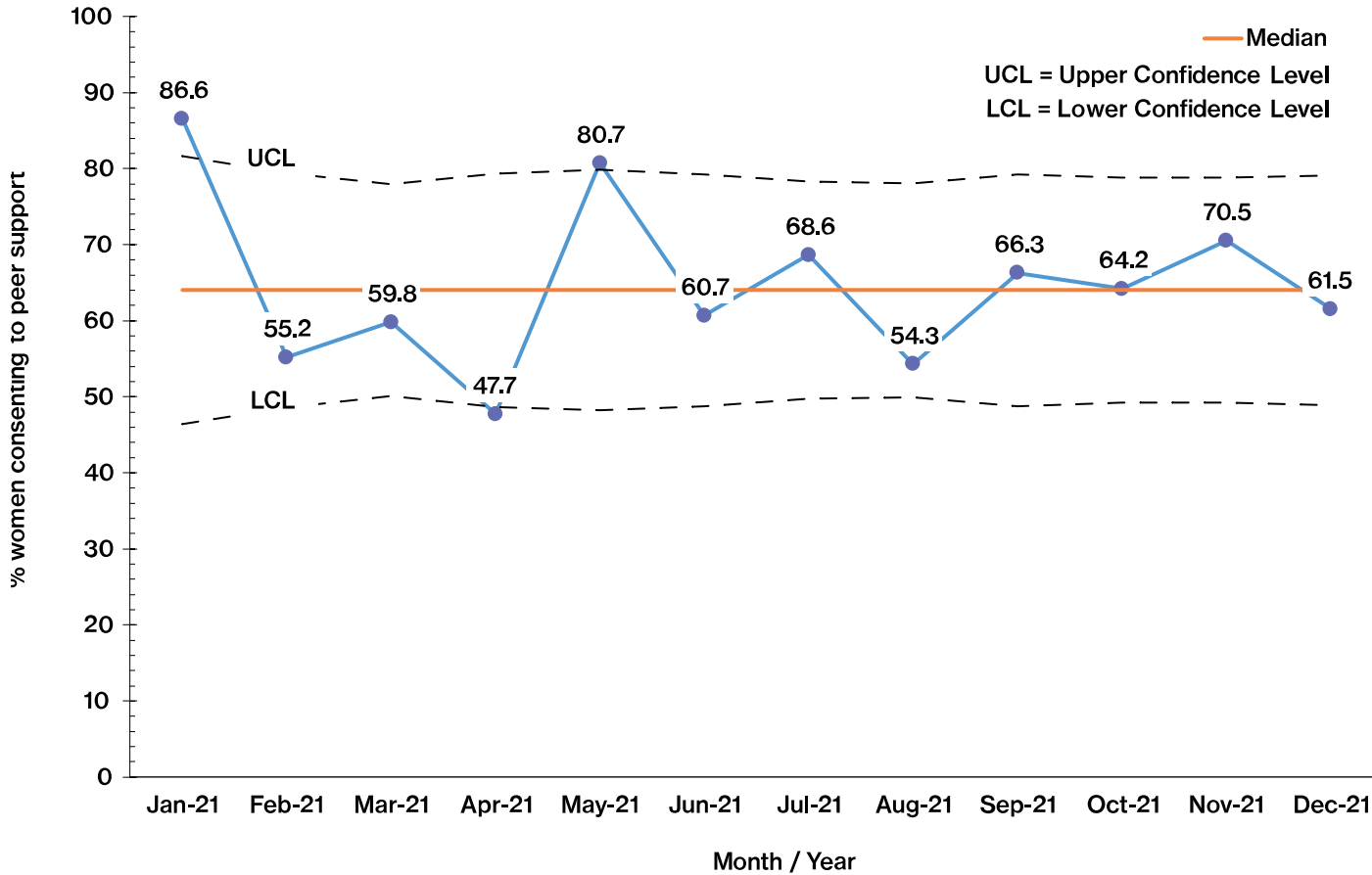
Chart 4: Formula Supplementation within Raigmore Maternity



Peer Referrals

Annually, we monitor percentages of women who consent to a peer on discharge from hospital. In 2021, 64% of women who were breast or mixed feeding consented to a volunteer support.

Chart 5: Percentage of women monthly who consent to peer support in Highland HSCP



Infant feeding support workers

Infant feeding support workers offer antenatal and postnatal support in the more deprived areas of NHS Highland, identified as Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation quintile 1 (SIMD 1) and quintile 2 (SIMD 2). There has been an increase in exclusive breastfeeding at 10 to 14 days and exclusive breastfeeding at 6 to 8 weeks following this work.

Exclusive breastfeeding at 10 – 14 days

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
SIMD 1	29.2	26.9	28.4	30.4
SIMD 2	35.7	36.3	38.8	41.0

Exclusive breastfeeding at 6 – 8 weeks

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
SIMD 1	20.8	21.5	20.5	24.7
SIMD 2	28.1	31.9	31.9	32.1

Antenatal Colostrum Harvesting Toolkit for Scotland

NHS Highland initiated the pilot of antenatal colostrum harvesting in Scotland and developed a toolkit, known as the [Antenatal Colostrum Harvesting Bundle](#)⁴⁷ to support other boards implement a similar project in their area. To date this has been adopted by seven other health boards.

Service User Feedback



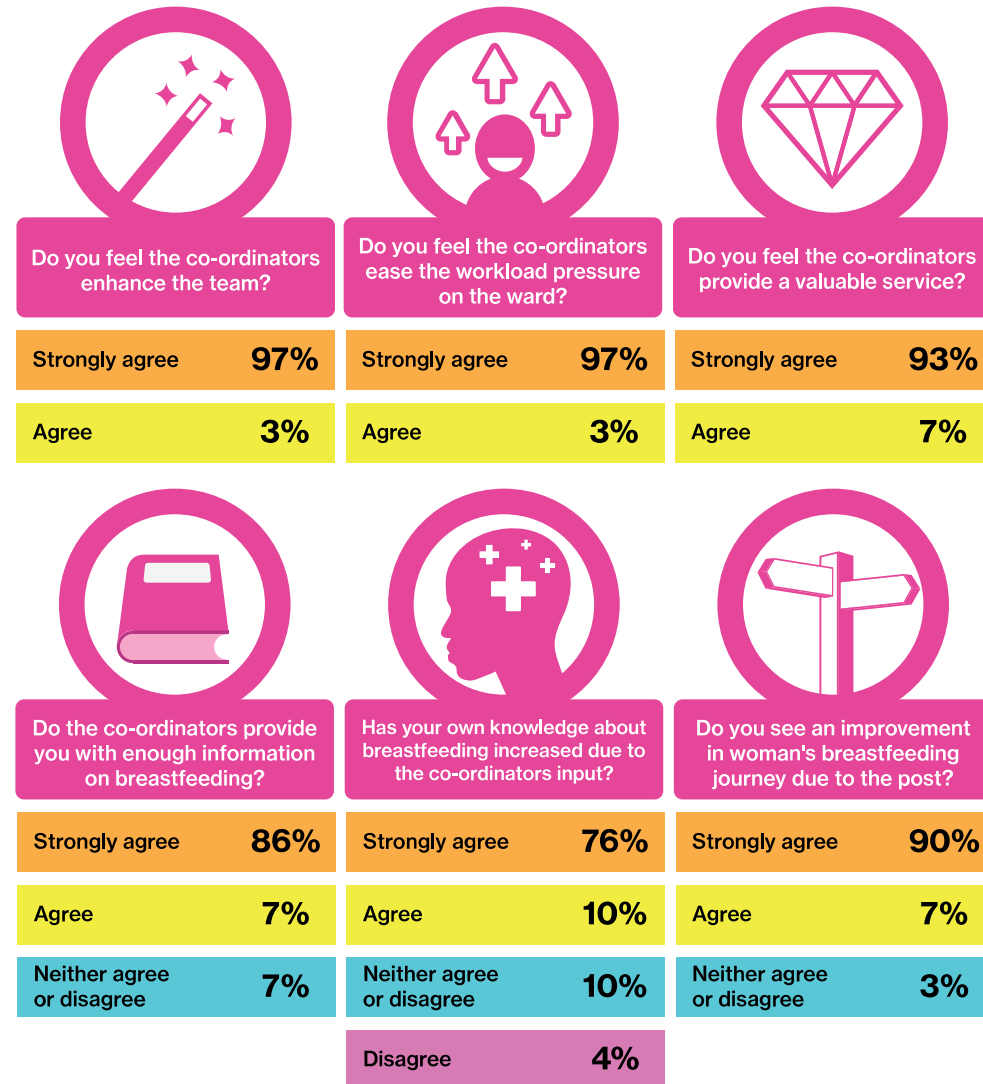
The Care Opinion website has been developed to allow the public to share their experiences of UK health and care services, good or bad. This information is then passed to the right people with the aim of helping to make a difference. The NHS Highland Breastfeeding Support Service have their [own page on the website](#)⁴⁸, which is regularly reviewed by team members.

Evaluation of Breastfeeding co-ordinators on postnatal wards

Two sets of infographics detailing the results of both staff and service user feedback

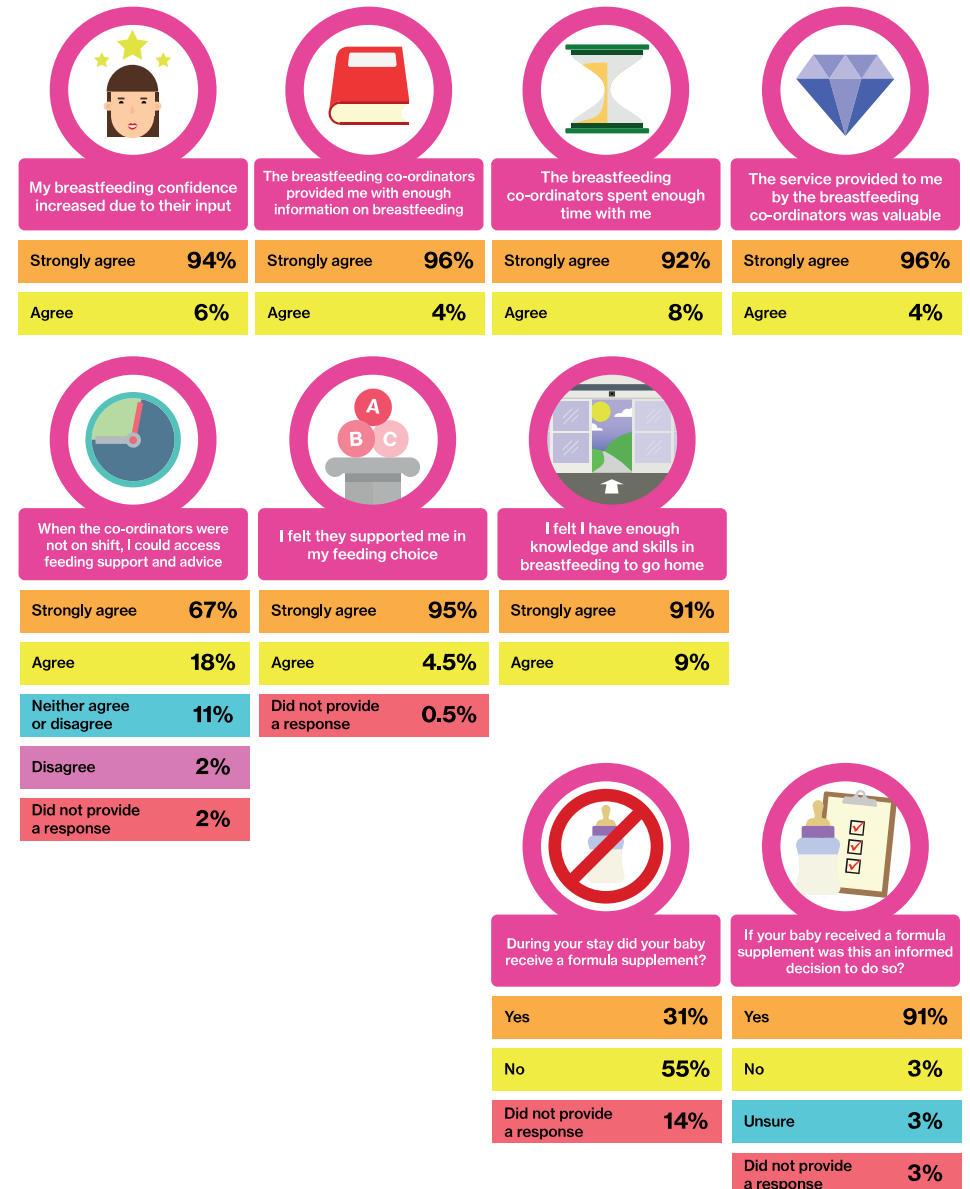
Breastfeeding Co-ordinators - staff feedback

Number of responses: 29



Breastfeeding Co-ordinators - service user feedback

Number of responses: 110



Case study: Money Counts Training

Money Counts training aims to promote using the *Worrying About Money?* leaflet to initiate person-centred conversations around financial worries and support individuals to access relevant services.

Context

- The Independent Food Aid Network (IFAN) works with partner organisations in local authority areas to develop localised *Worrying About Money* leaflets. In Highland, it was agreed through the Highland Poverty Action Network (HPAN) that training to support the use of the leaflet would have the potential to impact on poverty.
- A partnership between Argyll and Bute Council and the Health Improvement Team was developed to deliver the training.

Description

There are two levels of training available which aims to:

- Increase understanding of poverty and its impact
- Increase confidence to ask about money worries
- Increase knowledge of support services for money matters

It is aimed at anyone in a position to have a conversation about financial issues and encourages person-centred conversations, using the *Worrying About Money?* leaflet.

The *Worrying About Money?* leaflet is a step-by-step process to identify the issues and guide to the most appropriate support services.



Health Inequalities

The fundamental cause of health inequalities is an imbalance in power, income and wealth and of the three, income is the most important determinant.

Evidence

[Research by ScotCen Social Research](#)⁴⁹ found that the 'Worrying About Money?' leaflet helped raise awareness amongst staff, volunteers and people experiencing financial challenges, about which organisations can provide financial support and how they can be accessed.

The research suggested that where possible, training should be provided for those wishing to use the leaflet to generate conversations about money to ensure that this is done sensitively.

Impact of welfare advice

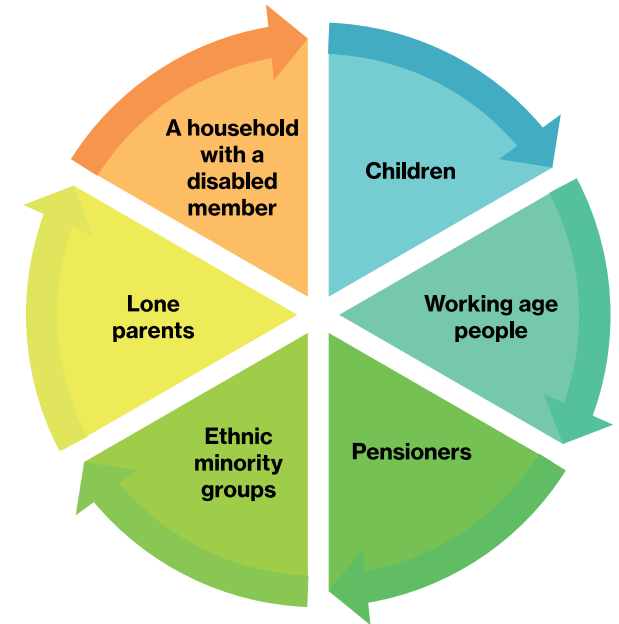
[Research from the Glasgow Centre for Population Health](#)⁵⁰, where welfare officers allocated to GP practices, showed from a return-on-investment perspective, the financial gain for individuals accessing welfare support was over £19 for every £1 invested and over £25 when debt negotiation and management was included over a period of 12 months. This demonstrates the benefit of individuals accessing welfare support regardless of the means through which they do this.

Evidence

[Looking at data on The Health Foundation website](#)⁵¹, there is a strong correlation between health and income. 32% of people in the lowest income category (poorest) report less than good health and at the top decile of income distribution (richest) the figure is 11%.

There is evidence to suggest that income improvements are associated with health improvements across the income distribution.

Who is likely to be living in poverty?



Level 1 Feedback - Argyll and Bute

- 7 courses delivered
- 26 attendees from a variety of health and 3rd sector organisations throughout Argyll and Bute

Chart 1: Confidence before and after session in talking to someone about money issues (numbers)

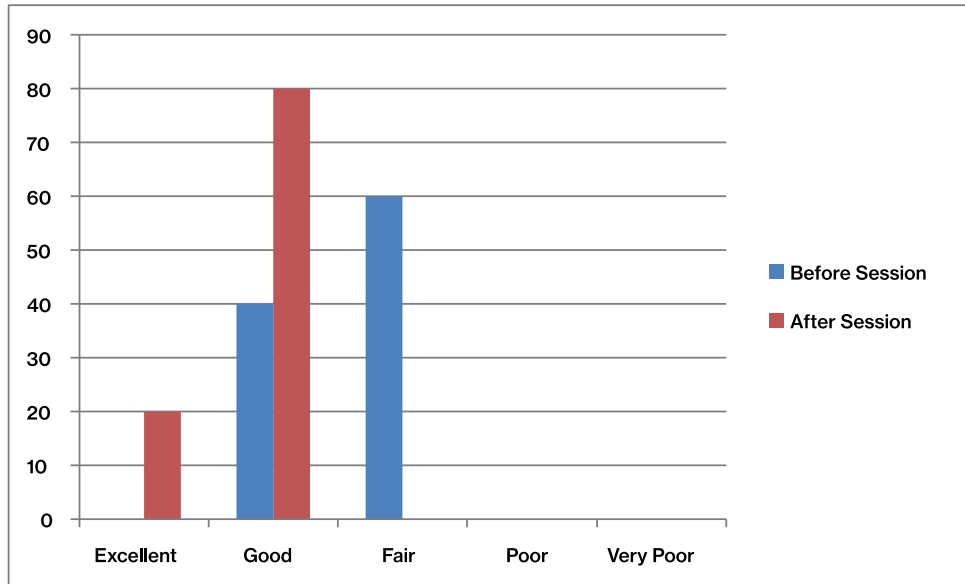
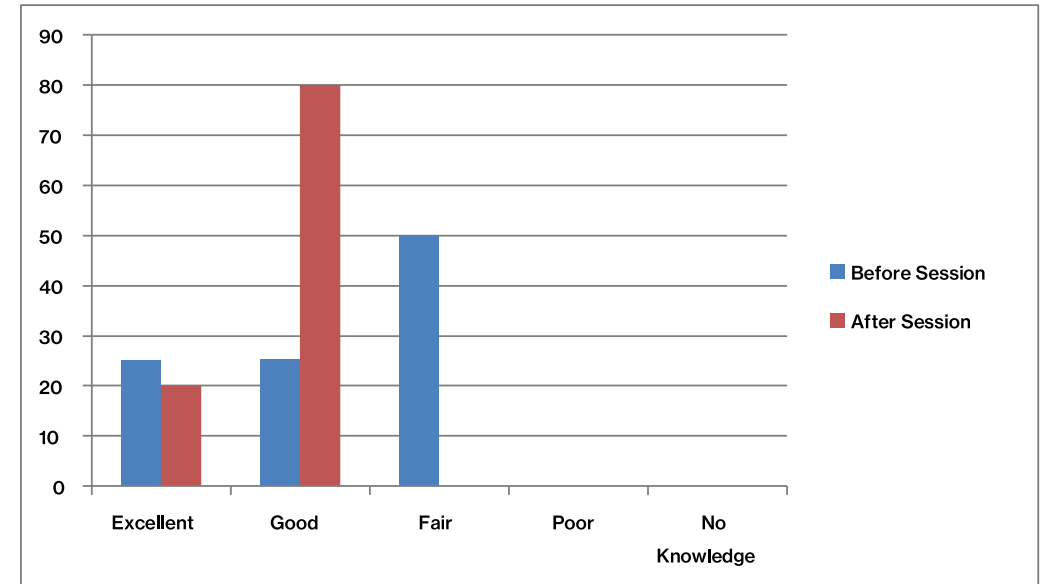


Chart 2: Knowledge of services which help people maximise their income before and after session (numbers)

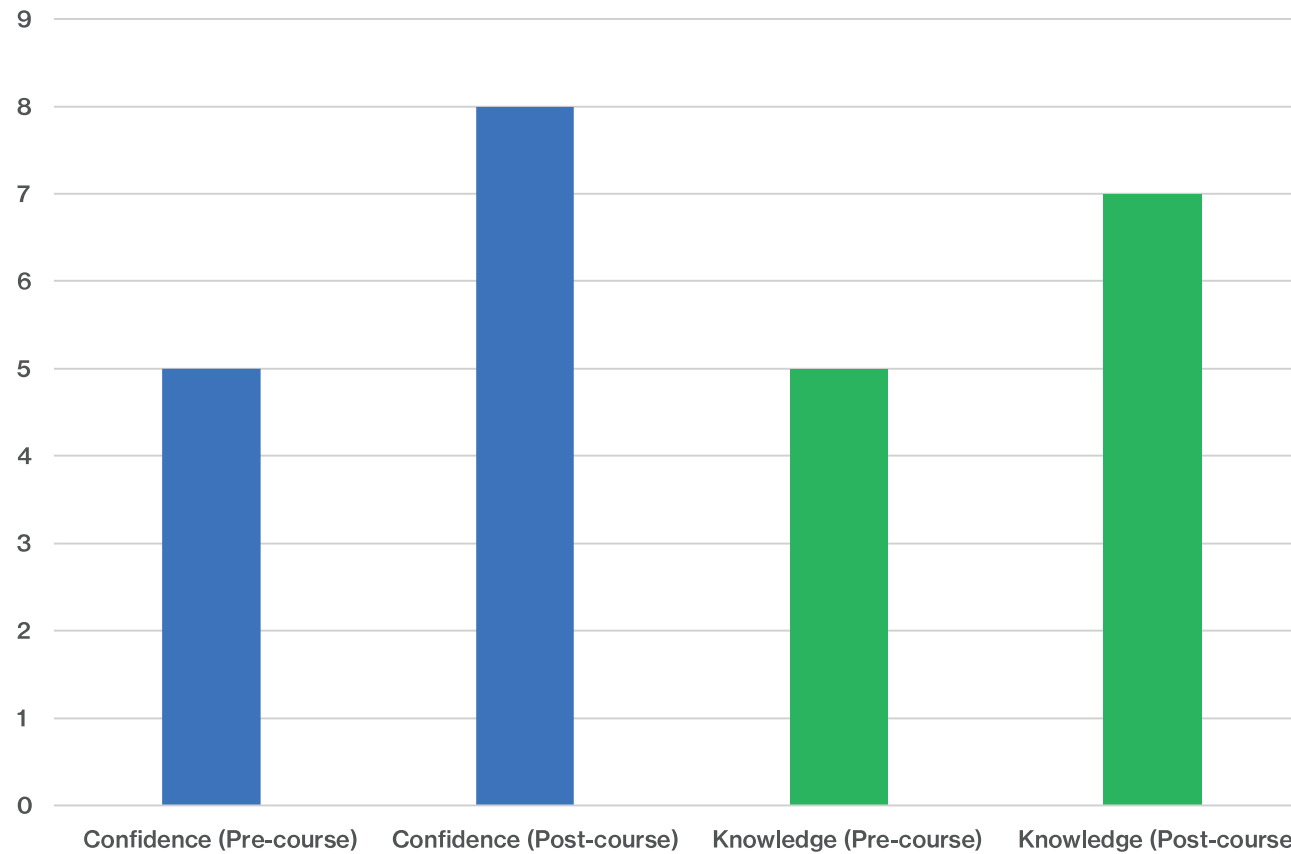


Level 1 feedback – North Highland from Jan 2022

Course name	Number of courses (from Jan 2022)	Number of attendees
Money Counts Level 1	10	71

The delivery of the training in North Highland is a partnership between Public Health, Fareshare/Cfine and Social Security Scotland

Chart 3: Average pre and post confidence & knowledge



Level 2 feedback – North Highland from Jan 2022

Course name	Number of courses (from Jan 2022)	Number of attendees
Money Counts Level 2	9	60

8.1. This learning activity helped me to increase my understanding of poverty and its impact		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly disagree	0.0%	0
2	Disagree	0.0%	0
3	Neither agree nor disagree	12.0%	3
4	Agree	40.0%	10
5	Strongly agree	48.0%	12
		answered	25

8.2. This learning activity helped me to increase my confidence to ask about money worries		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly disagree	0.0%	0
2	Disagree	0.0%	0
3	Neither agree nor disagree	16.0%	4
4	Agree	48.0%	12
5	Strongly agree	36.0%	9
		answered	25

8.3. This learning activity helped me to increase my knowledge of support services for money matters		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly disagree	0.0%	0
2	Disagree	0.0%	0
3	Neither agree nor disagree	0.0%	0
4	Agree	52.0%	13
5	Strongly agree	48.0%	12
		answered	25

Participant feedback:

“It was about the right length of time with the right amount of information. Both instructors knew their subject and were keen to get the audience involved. I enjoyed the course so thank you very much for your time today.”

“Overall course was interesting and very well delivered.”

“This is a really valuable course to take and opens great discussions amongst a variety of colleagues. Thank you for a thorough and informative presentation.”

“Very friendly and went at the right pace for me. I thought it was very informative.”

“Very useful training. Thank you! I can definitely apply the learning to my current role.”

Further developments & conclusion

- Work is underway (North Highland) to develop an app for smart devices based upon the *Worrying About Money?* leaflet. This effort will involve support from partner organisations who deliver the training.
- Ongoing evaluation to understand how learning has been used in practice.
- The key value of the work is to maximise income and reduce reliance on non-cash first approaches.
- With the current increase in cost of living, it is vital that everyone is aware, and has access to all their entitlements.

Case study: Living Well

Living Well is a strategy to support enablement, prevention and self-management in Argyll and Bute (October 2019 – October 2024)

Vision/aim/outcomes

The Argyll and Bute Living Well strategy was launched in September 2019 and makes a commitment to support people living with long-term conditions and those at risk of developing them.

Our intention is to highlight the importance of self-management, and to ensure that we have the structures in place to support people to Live Well effectively with the right information, and support when they need it.

Self-management and prevention go hand in hand, as self-management is vital in preventing health problems arising or getting worse. Self-management puts people in control of their health and empowers them to have improved health and wellbeing outcomes. Benefits of improved self-management include: increased self-esteem, increased control, feeling connected, less isolated, reduced anxiety, improvement in mood, feeling empowered to challenge and question health professionals, recognised as experts in their condition, and able to provide peer support.

Self-management and prevention also free up resources and reduce demand, meaning that more people can receive the right care in the right place at the right time. People who are managing their health better are less likely to use these services.

Context

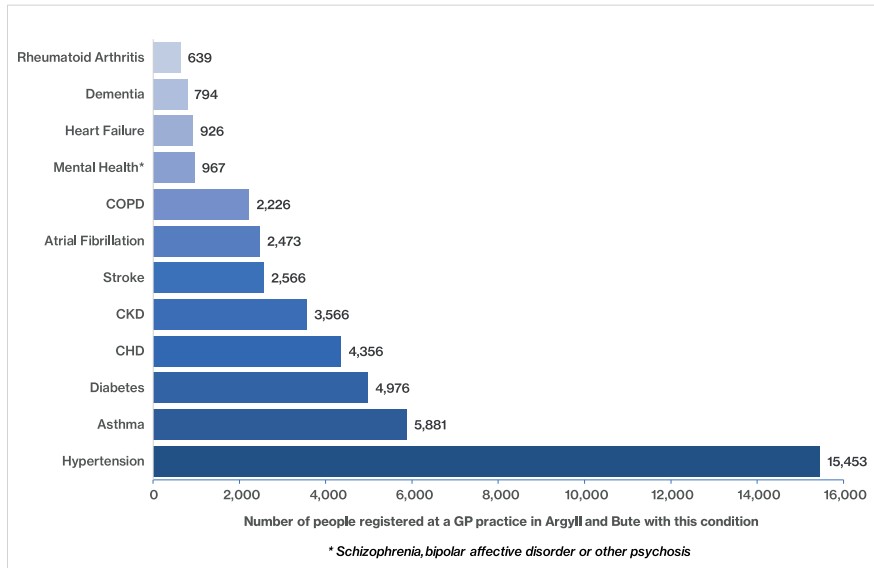
Argyll and Bute has a population of 86,810 with a quarter of the population over 65 and a further 27% within the 45-64 age group

Data shows that not only are people living longer, they are doing so with long-term conditions. We know that approximately 47% of people have a diagnosed condition and the majority of these have more than one diagnosis.

“Self-management is not a replacement for services. Rather, it’s about developing the tools to support people alongside services. By managing conditions effectively, people can take control and live fuller, more independent lives.”

Alliance ‘Gaun Yersel’ (2008)

Types of Long-Term Conditions in Argyll & Bute



Source: Public Health Scotland, ISD Scotland Quality and Outcomes data for 2018-19 financial year (published February 2020)

The Living Well strategy recognises that people can become experts in how their condition affects them, and that the most effective services that support people are often community based, third sector and peer led. When asked how they ‘lived well’, people in Argyll and Bute responded:



Who/Why/What/Where/How

The Living Well Strategy development process took place over 12 months and included extensive consultation and engagement.



Speaking to those living with long-term conditions meant that the strategy themes could be developed in partnership. Further information about the actions which accompany each theme can be found on the [Living Well website](#)⁴⁷.

Monitoring /evaluation

The Living Well Strategy takes a partnership approach and reports to a multi-agency Living Well Steering Group and the Argyll and Bute HSCP Prevention Programme Board. A mid-strategy report can be accessed on the [Living Well website](#)⁵².

Describe the value to the person/population/organisation

Living Well grant funding has been available to 3rd sector organisations for 4 years of the strategy. This essential work contributes to capacity building for prevention and health improvement across Argyll and Bute communities. Between £46,000 and £76,000 has been awarded to 3rd sector organisations, with outcomes ranging from increased physical activity to peer support and reduced isolation.

The Living Well strategy has promoted working in an anticipatory way across many Argyll and Bute services, from our community services to within the HSCP. Strong strategy leadership from the Integration Joint Board and Public Health team has enabled front-line and support professionals to buy in to a prevention approach. This ethos will continue and ultimately benefit the organisation and our population through reducing demand and improving health and wellbeing.

People - People living in Argyll and Bute have the tools and support they need to support them to Live Well

Community - There are a wide range of local services to support people to Live Well

Workforce - Staff are able and motivated to support the people they see to Live well

Leadership - Effective Leadership is in place to support the delivery of the Living Well strategy

Case study: Vitamin D3 Distribution

[Return to main document](#)

Vision Aim

For all breastfeeding/mixed feeding mothers to receive free vitamin D3 tablets for the duration of their breastfeeding experience and for all infants under 3 years who are breastfeeding or who are taking less than 500mls of infant formula per day to receive free vitamin D3 drops.

Sub Aim

By February 2022, 95% of breastfed mothers and babies discharged from Raigmore Maternity unit will receive vitamin D supplements*

(Baseline data from July 2021 0%)

*Breastfeeding/mixed feeding mothers will receive vitamin D tablets and breastfed babies will receive vitamin D drops

Evidence to support

The Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition produced a report on vitamin D and health in 2016⁵³, providing evidence to support vitamin D3 distribution to breastfeeding women and infants under 3 years who were breastfed or receiving less than 500mls of formula/24 hours to reduce the risk of rickets and osteomalacia.

The Scottish Government as part of the Programme for Government in January 2021 issued funding and guidance to all NHS Boards on the universal distribution of vitamin D3 to all breastfeeding women and infants under 3 years⁵⁴. This was an extension to the universal provision of Healthy Start vitamins in 2017 to all pregnant women in Scotland.

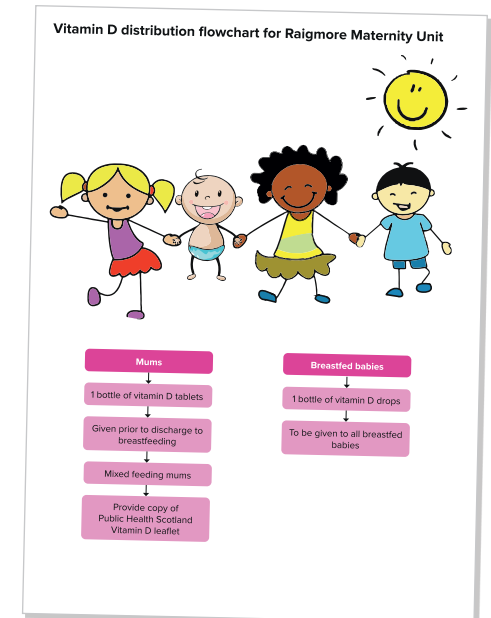
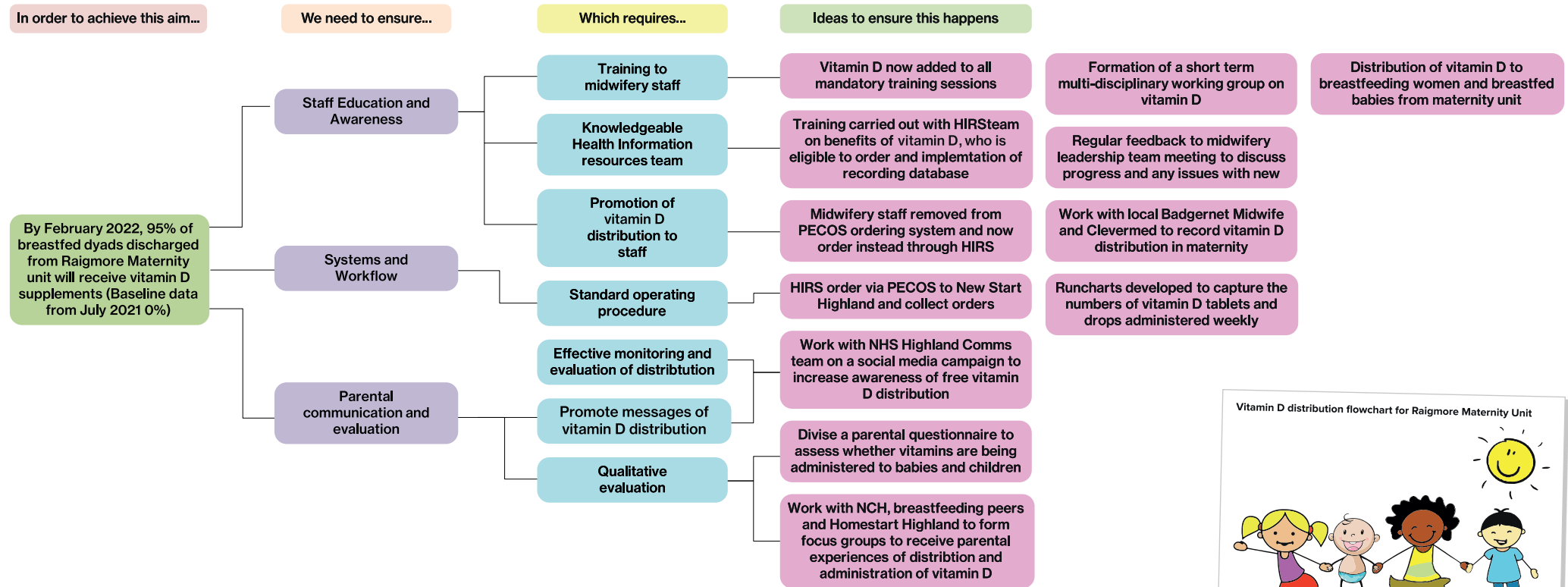
The prevention and treatment of rickets and osteomalacia is vitamin D3 supplementation which is relatively inexpensive at just over £1 per 3 month supply per individual. The preventive cost compared to the surgical cost to treat skeletal abnormalities such as curvature of the spine or bow legs is minimal in comparison and vital to prevent metabolic bone disease.



North Highland vitamin D3 distribution model

Starting the vitamin D3 distribution model within our largest maternity unit meant that we could test an early preventative model from birth to a large cohort of breastfeeding mothers and babies. Using quality improvement methodology was key to assessing our method and process changes and ensuring a large reach of our project.

Having a clear aim and shared ambition was fundamental to this project:



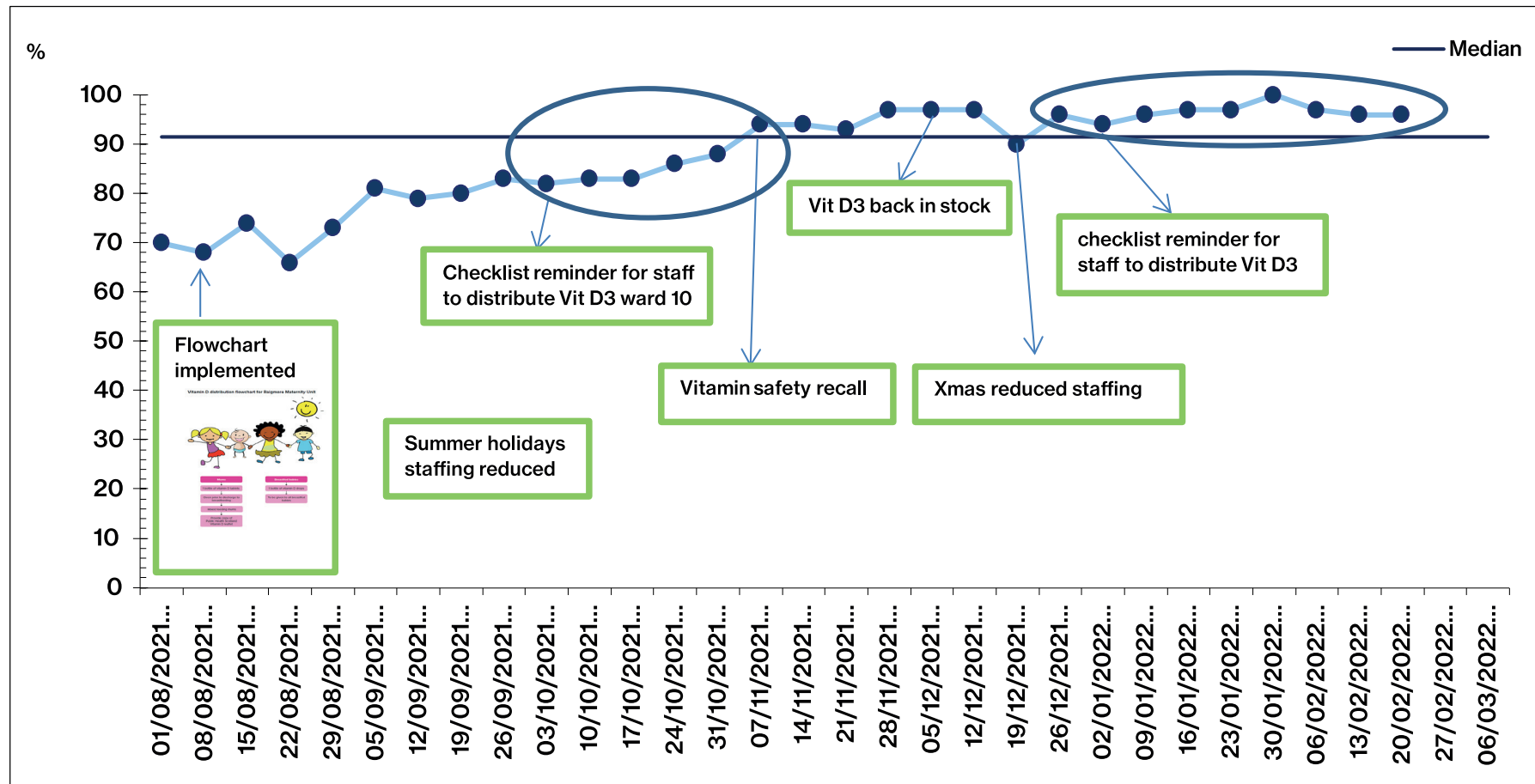
Pathways to service

Although maternity distribution was key, there was a clear need to ensure continued distribution via health visiting services/family nurse partnership and a standard operating procedure was developed which demonstrated clearly when vitamins should be distributed to mothers and by whom.

Vitamin D3 tablets – should be distributed to any mother breast or mixed feeding. Vitamin D3 drops – should be distributed to any infant under 3 years who is being breastfed or receiving less than 500mls of infant formula in 24 hours:

- 1 bottle at birth – Midwifery
- 1 bottle at 4 months – HV/FN
- 2 bottles at 8 months – HV/FN
- 3 bottles at 13 – 15 months – HV/FN
- 2 bottles at 27 – 30 months – HV

Monitoring and Evaluation



Case study: Health Protection

[Return to main document](#)

Vaccination

After the supply of clean drinking water, immunisation is the most effective public health intervention for preventing illness and deaths from infectious diseases. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), immunisation prevents between four and five million deaths⁵⁵ each year from diseases such as pertussis, influenza and measles. In addition to the health benefits, immunisation is recognised as one of the most cost-effective public health interventions available.

One example of the impact of vaccination is that of the introduction of the rotavirus vaccine. Rotavirus is a very common cause of gastroenteritis in children and prior to the introduction of a new rotavirus vaccine in 2013, rotavirus infections led to around 130,000 young children across England and Wales visiting the GP and 12,700 hospital admissions each year in babies and young children⁵⁶. Following the introduction of the rotavirus vaccine across NHS Highland, the admission to hospital for rotavirus gastroenteritis decreased markedly with reductions of over 200 bed days seen in each of the two year periods post vaccine introduction. This finding is consistent with a study on the impact of rotavirus vaccine conducted in Germany which found that a low-moderate vaccine uptake was associated with a 36% reduction in rotavirus-related hospitalization for children less than 24 months in the eastern Federal States⁵⁷.

Similarly, this year has seen an unprecedented global outbreak of monkeypox virus predominantly affecting the gay, bisexual and men who have sex with men (GBMSM) community which began in May. Despite rapid early transmission across the world and concerns that the infection could become endemic, there has been a dramatic decline in incidence. There have been no new cases of monkeypox infection across Scotland for almost two months as of November 2022. It is not possible to ascertain the impact of specific interventions given the range of measures deployed as part of the outbreak response although awareness raising resulting in behaviour change in combination with the rapid rollout of the vaccination programme to those at highest risk are likely to have played a part.

Although vaccination is a well established intervention, ensuring vaccine uptake remains high remains a key priority. Despite vaccination being such an integral intervention, there are a number of challenges facing healthcare services with respect to maintaining high uptake rates. These include the re-emergence of eliminated diseases such as measles, the emergence of new outbreaks, service reorganisation and the increasing risks posed by the global anti-vaccination movement. In 2019, the WHO cited vaccine hesitancy as one of its top ten global threats⁵⁸. Although the uptake of vaccines is generally high, uptake is lower in more deprived communities and amongst certain ethnic minority groups with reducing inequalities a key aim for all involved in immunisation programmes.



New entrant Latent TB Infection (LTBI) screening

Tuberculosis (TB) remains a leading cause of death and illness worldwide with an estimated 1.6 million deaths in 2021⁵⁹. TB disproportionately affects the most deprived and vulnerable members of society and thus serves to exacerbate existing health inequalities.

Over recent years there has been a considerable reduction in TB incidence in Scotland, a trend typical across many developed countries. However, the predominant challenge facing such low TB incidence countries is that of latent tuberculosis infection (LTBI). Across the UK⁶⁰ and the United States, the majority of active cases are the result of 'reactivation' of LTBI with Carlson et al.⁶¹ highlighting how 80% of the active TB cases in the US are the result of LTBI 'reactivation'. This challenge is compounded by the declining political commitment and investment that is frequently associated with a declining TB incidence⁶². This is recognised within the World Health Organisation's framework for low incidence countries⁶³ which places an emphasis on screening for LTBI in TB contacts and selected high-risk groups.

Scotland's TB Framework⁶⁴ describes the Scottish Health Protection Network's strategy in relation to TB control. One of the principal objectives is to reduce the harm caused by preventable TB infections through achieving fewer cases of active TB via person to person transmission or reactivation of LTBI. One of the recommendations is to screen new entrants from high TB incidence countries. This could identify more than 80% of TB cases in Scotland among people born outside the UK⁶⁵ and has been assessed as cost effective⁶⁶.

Work is being undertaken to explore options to achieve the outcomes of Scotland's TB Framework. Identifying and treating cases of LTBI is not only beneficial to patients but also wider communities and NHS services given the reduction in transmission and reduced need healthcare services which demonstrates the use of investment to save.

Case study: Co-production, building capacity and community led activity

Working collaboratively with communities for better health and wellbeing outcomes

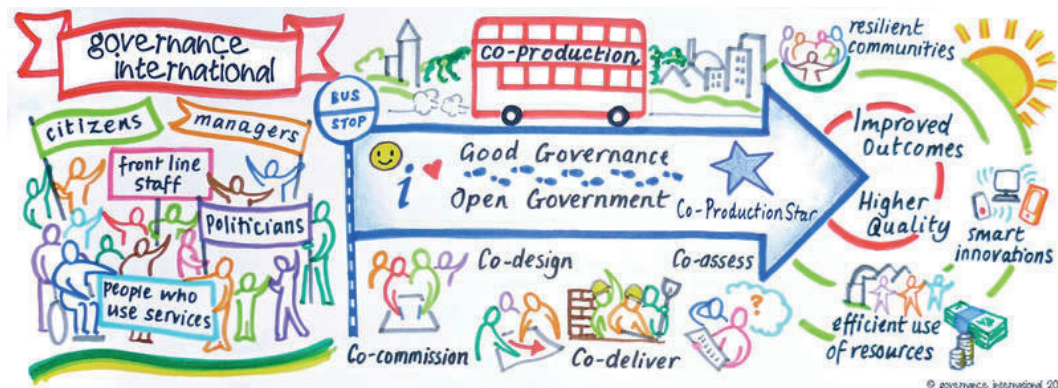
What is Co-production?

Co-production is an approach that can be used to build stronger, safer and more vibrant communities in which local people can live better lives. Co-production involves coming together around a common vision or goal. This can include people who use services and people who deliver services working collaboratively to enable everyone to live well. The following phrases illustrate the spirit of co-production:

- doing with, rather than doing to
- equal partnerships
- citizen power
- community led and bottom up
- assets based, i.e. focus on what's strong rather than what's wrong
- blurring boundaries between delivering and receiving services

Co-production can take place at different levels and includes:

- Co-design – working together to develop plans for new services
- Co-deliver – working together to implement services
- Co-assess – working together to evaluate the effectiveness of services
- Co-commission – working together to develop commissioning plans and procure services



There is no universal definition of co-production, however, the New Economics Foundation (NEF) defines co-production as:

'The relationship where professionals and citizens share power to design, plan, assess and deliver support together. It recognises that everyone has a vital contribution to make in order to improve quality of life for people and communities.'

There are many successful projects across Highland that have come about using principles of co-production.

Jean's Bothy in Helensburgh

Just some of the feedback received from members about Jean's Bothy mental health & wellbeing hub, based in Helensburgh:

- "Jean's Bothy has helped me gain confidence."
- "Jean's Bothy has enhanced my life like nothing else has."
- "Jean's Bothy acts like a family I can turn to whenever I need to."

Opened in September 2018, the hub has grown to over 290 members who play an integral part in the operation and day-to-day management with overall support coming from the Development Manager. A full monthly programme of activities includes local delivery partners offering their services on a paid for basis to deliver highly skilled sessions such as Art Therapy, Creative Writing, Woodwork and Fitness. However, just as important are the sessions delivered by members and volunteers. These vary depending on the current membership, currently on the programme is Knitting & Crochet, Resin & Stonecast, Guitar Playing, Sewing and Walking Groups. The cottage space allows members to take ownership of the space, taking responsibility for preparing lunches, serving teas/coffees, maintaining the garden space, growing fruit & veg and cleaning duties.

Member reps have been identified to raise any issues/suggestions at a monthly steering group meeting which includes local partners alongside ENABLE Scotland colleagues and HSCP staff. The diverse backgrounds members come from and different lived experiences encourages acceptance, tolerance and non-judgment as key components to its success.

Jean's Bothy's strength is in the membership, who are encouraged to use their skills and interests to help others. A Photography & Wellbeing Group has created an exhibition last year, and this year have created a Bothy Calendar. A Script Writing Group went on to produce a stageplay that went on tour. The Book Group are currently working on a book festival for next year in partnership with other organisations and the Art Group are currently exhibiting their work in the local library. These are just a few examples of how ideas have grown and formed strengthening relationships between members and a feeling of achievement that boosts wellbeing and a sense of purpose.

Reducing stigma associated with accessing mental health support is something that Jean's Bothy will continue to address. Members who initially were reluctant to tell others they were members have become some of the most vocal advocates of Jean's Bothy and what it offers. Our membership reflects local society, and in turn shows that mental health support is for everyone.



Lorn and Oban Healthy Options (LOHO)

LOHO was formed in 2011, with its ethos firmly rooted in the saying: “If the problem is in the community, the solution is in the community”. They bring together community activists, health specialists, and entrepreneurs and have strong partnerships with health professionals, clients and other third sector organisations. The Board of Trustees are all local people and there are two advisory groups which each have a volunteer and a service user representatives as well as a community member and a partner organisation member.

LOHO works with a very wide target audience, for example, people living with one or more chronic conditions or who are at risk of developing such conditions; people who, due to illness or injury, need pre or post surgery or treatment support; people experiencing mental health issues; those affected by the COVID-19 pandemic; and people who are socially isolated. Programmes on offer provide clients with advice, education, activities and support to develop self-management strategies, not only improving quality of life of the person experiencing them but also reducing the rate of progression or likelihood of additional conditions developing, thereby reducing the need for NHS services and adding to already burgeoning waiting lists.

“Local NHS services are limited and this partnership will facilitate a local community based rehabilitation pathway for patients with a neurological condition from diagnosis onwards which allows comprehensive access to supported self-management guidance in their own community with a right time, right place, right people approach.”

Derek Laidler, Professional Lead
Therapist (Argyll and Bute)



**Please scan this QR code using a smart device to watch a video about:
Lorn Healthy Options: Client Voices: Mairi Rothead**



**Please scan this QR code using a smart device to watch a video about:
New Healthy Options Service: 'THRIVE' - Graham's Story!**

The Role of Public Health and the Way Forward in Building Community Capacity for Prevention

Our remote and rural communities in Highland have high levels of social capital and often mobilise to find solutions to local issues. There is a rich, vibrant and responsive third sector and many exemplars of community led activity exist including setting up new services and taking local assets into community control. There are also very high levels of volunteering and a shared sense of community identity in Highland. Community empowerment was never more apparent than during the lockdown response during the COVID-19 pandemic when communities developed innovative local responses to deliver shopping and meet the needs of vulnerable people unable to leave home.

Notwithstanding this visible community empowerment, there are well known challenges to co-producing local services, for example, layers of bureaucracy and governance, fragile and unsustainable funding streams, and finite numbers of people available to volunteer. In addition to existing challenges, new ones have arisen from the ongoing pandemic recovery and cost of living crisis. These challenges are manifesting as increasing levels of hardship and distress, and long waiting times for referrals to healthcare.

The legislative landscape in Scotland is supportive of empowering communities. This evolved from the publication of the Christie Commission review of public services in Scotland in 2011⁶⁷ which concluded “... unless Scotland embraces a radical new collaborative culture throughout our public services, both budgets and provision will buckle under the strain...” and “that effective services must be designed with and for people and communities – not delivered ‘top down’ for administrative convenience”. This is set within the context that 40% of public sector spending in Scotland is on preventable problems that could be eliminated by addressing the root causes.

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015⁶⁸ provides a legal framework to promote and encourage community empowerment and participation. It creates rights for community bodies and places duties on public authorities. It includes the following requirements:

Empower community bodies through the ownership of land and buildings and strengthening their voices in the decisions that matter to them; and

Support an increase in the pace and scale of public service reform by cementing the focus on achieving outcomes and improving the process of community planning.

The Public Sector (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014⁶⁹ has brought together the delivery of health and social care with the intention of improving the health of the people who use these services. It sets out requirements to:

- Take account of the participation by service-users in the community in which service-users live; and
- Ensure services are planned and led locally in a way which is engaged with the community (including in particular service-users, those who look after service-users and those who are involved in the provision of health or social care).

Despite this legislation there is an imbalance of power and control of funding and assets which works against effective co-production. Greater community empowerment could be achieved by moving the locus of control of these assets and funding from statutory services to communities. This is worthy of debate in relation to what kind of society and country we live in and public health professionals have the community engagement skills to broker these conversations.

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Publication produced and published by NHS Highland Public Health, 2 February 2023 10:20 am



ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**COUNCIL****LEGAL AND REGULATORY SUPPORT****27th APRIL 2023**

POLITICAL MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the Political Composition of the Council.
- 1.2 The Council is asked to note the updated political composition of the Council as set out at Appendix 1 and requirement to appoint a member to the Council's PPSL having regard to the requirement for political balance.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Council is asked to note the updated political composition of the Council as set out in Appendix 1 and the requirement to appoint a member to the Council's Planning, Protective and Licensing Committee (PPSL).

3. DETAIL**3.1 Political Composition of the Council**

At the meeting of Council held on 22 February 2023, a report was considered which provided an update to the Political Composition of the Council. The report provided detail on the formation of the Strategic Opposition Partnership which had been notified to the Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support.

- 3.2 During discussion of the item it became clear that further clarification was required in terms of the membership of the Strategic Opposition Partnership, with it being noted that a further update would be provided to the next meeting of Council.

3.3 PPSL

Councillor Willie Hume has indicated that he wishes to step down from the Council's PPSL, creating a vacancy to be filled. Members are asked,

having regard to the political balance of the Council, to appoint to the PPSL in place of Councillor Hume. It should be noted that any new Member appointed to PPSL will require to undergo training.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1** This report provides, for noting, an update on the Council's political composition and requirement to appoint a member to the Council's PPSL having regard to the requirement for political balance.

5. IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Policy** – none
- 5.2 Financial** – None
- 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 Climate Change** - None
- 5.7 Risk** – None
- 5.8 Customer Service** – None

Douglas Hendry
Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support

31st March 2023

For further information please contact Shona Barton on 01436 657605 or by email on shona.barton@argyll-bute.gov.uk

Appendix 1 - Political Composition of Argyll and Bute Council, 27 April 2023

Argyll and Bute Council - Political Composition
<p>ARGYLL FIRST (2)</p> <p>Donald Kelly (Ind) (Depute Leader of Argyll First) Douglas Philand (Ind) (Leader of Argyll First) *</p>
<p>INDEPENDENT (1)</p> <p>Mark Irvine *</p>
<p>INDEPENDENT CONSERVATIVE AND UNIONIST (1)</p> <p>Tommy Macpherson</p>
<p>SCOTTISH GREEN PARTY (1)</p> <p>Luna Martin *</p>
<p>SCOTTISH LABOUR PARTY (1)</p> <p>Fiona Howard *</p>
<p>SCOTTISH NATIONAL PARTY (12)</p> <p>John Armour * Gordon Blair * Jan Brown * Math Campbell-Sturgess * Audrey E Forrest (Depute Leader, SNP Group) * Willie Hume * Reeni Kennedy Boyle * Jim Lynch (Leader of the Opposition) * Ian James MacQuire * Dougie McFadzean * Julie McKenzie Iain Shonny Paterson *</p>
<p>* Member of the Strategic Opposition Partnership (SOP) – an informal partnership arrangement and not a formal political group</p>
<p>THE ARGYLL, LOMOND AND THE ISLES GROUP (18)</p>

Garret Corner (Con)
Maurice Corry (Con)
Robin Currie (LibDem)
Kieron Green (Ind)
Amanda Hampsey (Con)
Daniel Hampsey (Con)
Graham Hardie (LibDem)
Andrew Kain (Ind)
Paul Donald Kennedy (LibDem)
Liz McCabe (Ind)
Yvonne McNeilly (Con) (Leader, TALIG)
Ross Moreland (LibDem)
Gary Mulvaney (Con)
Gemma Penfold (Con)
Alastair Redman (Ind)
William Sinclair (LibDem)
Andrew Vennard (Con)
Peter Wallace (Con)

Note:

Con - Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party

Ind - Independent

LibDem - Scottish Liberal Democrat Party

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

COUNCIL

ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

27 APRIL 2023

**ROAD TRAFFIC ACT 1991 – REVIEW OF PENALTY CHARGE NOTICE FOR
PARKING ENFORCEMENT**

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 In August 2021, Transport Scotland undertook a consultation on Parking Charge Notices (including a review of Contravention Codes and the setting of Fees). The analysis of the consultation was published in September 2022 and the majority view from responders including Local Authorities across Scotland was that Parking Charge Notice (PCN) fines should be increased. The current PCN fine of £60 (reduced to £30 if paid within 14 days) has been **in force for 22 years**.
- 1.2 Transport Scotland wrote to the Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) Local Authorities on 17 February 2023 to advise that Ministers had now agreed to increase PCN fees to £80 (£40 if paid within 14 days) Lower and £100 (£50 if paid within 14 days) Higher fee dependent on what the Local Authority considers appropriate.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Council:-

- Agree the Higher PCN fee which is set at £100 but reduced to £50 if paid within 14 days is adopted with immediate effect.

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

COUNCIL

ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

27 APRIL 2023

**ROAD TRAFFIC ACT 1991 – REVIEW OF PENALTY CHARGE NOTICE FOR
PARKING ENFORCEMENT**

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 This report details the current DPE process in place within Argyll and Bute Council and advises that Scottish Ministers have agreed to an increase to PCN fees to £80 (£40 if paid within 14 days) Lower and £100 (£50 if paid within 14 days) Higher fee dependent on what the Local Authority considers appropriate.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 It is recommended that Council:-

- Agree the Higher PCN fee which is set at £100 but reduced to £50 if paid within 14 days is adopted with immediate effect.

4.0 DETAIL

4.1 The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 allows the Council, as the roads/traffic authority, to implement Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs). This includes loading and waiting restrictions (“double” and “single” yellow lines) and on and off street parking.

4.2 The Road Traffic Act 1991 introduced provisions enabling the decriminalisation of the majority of non-endorsable parking offences in London and this was subsequently rolled out across the remainder of the UK. As of April 2022, 21 of the 32 Scottish Local Authorities were operating Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE).

4.3 The Road Traffic (Permitted Parking Area and Special Parking Area) (Argyll and Bute Council) Designation Order 2014 came into force on 12 May 2014. This is the instrument which permits Argyll and Bute Council to operate DPE.

From this point, most stationary traffic offences ceased to be criminal offences enforced by Police Scotland but instead become civil penalties (via Penalty Charge Notices, “PCNs”) imposed by local traffic authorities. Note, the enforcement of certain parking offences such as obstructive or dangerous parking remains the responsibility of Police Scotland.

- 4.4 Ultimately, the goal of DPE is to ensure that the parking policy is effective and the operation achieves 100% compliance without any PCNs being issued. While this remains the aim, officers recognise that this is unlikely to ever be achieved and it is more likely that PCNs will, at some time, plateau at a “mean” figure per annum. It is officers’ view that PCNs and warden presence, will remain the principle method to encourage responsible parking behaviours by motorists.
- 4.5 The level of fee for PCNs is set by the Scottish Government. This was last amended **22 Years ago** on 10 April 2001.
- 4.6 In August 2021, Transport Scotland undertook a consultation on PCNs (including a review of Contravention Codes and the setting of Fees). The analysis of the consultation was published in September 2022. The full report can be reviewed in the link noted below.

[Penalty Charge Notice for Parking Enforcement](#)

Overall the majority view from those who responded to the consultation **was that PCNs should be increased.**

- 4.7 Transport Scotland wrote to the DPE authorities on 17 February 2023 to advise that Ministers had now agreed to increase PCN fees (this letter is included under Appendix 1) with a lower and higher fee dependant on what the Local Authority consider appropriate.

- 4.8 The table below outlines current and new charges:

Level of PCN	Paid within 14 Days	Paid between 15 days and service of Notice to Owner	Paid between issue of Notice to Owner and service of charge certificate	Paid after service of charge certificate
Current	£30	£60	£60	£90
Lower	£40	£80	£80	£120
Higher	£50	£100	£100	£150

- 4.9 In regard to the setting of PCN levels, officers are of the view that it is entirely appropriate after no increases in 22 years to agree to use the higher level fees (as per the table above). This opinion is based on the following:

- i. In using the Bank of England's Inflation Calculator that the £60 fee set in 2001 would be £103.11 now if inflation had been applied;
 - ii. An increased rate of PCN should lead to a greater compliance. This includes, a reduction in irresponsible parking, increased turnover in bays (good for economic activity in towns) and improve on road safety/access (e.g. by reducing parking in disabled bays, loading bays and on no waiting restrictions);
 - iii. The increase in income from PCNs should make the operations entirely self-financing; subject to any decrease in PCNs due to better compliance;
 - iv. That the view of Ministers where they suggest the lower rate is preferred due to the ongoing cost of living crisis, has a flawed foundation. Motorists **will only** receive a PCN if they breach legislation/TRO (for example, parked in a disabled bay without a Blue Badge or on double yellow lines). Motorists must pass a test to drive on the UK road network and the Highway Code is clear on where not to park. The PCN issue must be taken into account alongside our communities concerns in regards to inconsiderate and at times dangerous parking.
- 4.10 In addition to the above points, Members should also be aware that the provision within the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019, including footway parking, double parking and parking at crossing points, have yet to receive the Commencement Order, however, it is expected to do so within the next 12 months. Once this is effective, the enforcement of breaches will be carried out by the existing warden service. While this will likely increase income from fines, **it will also increase demand for enforcement which**, with the current available resource, will be difficult to accomplish across the whole Council area and potentially cause far more complaints as our communities realise that parking in certain areas on the pavement/verge is illegal.
- 4.11 Officers will consider whether any additional income could be used to employ further resource to enforce these measures and officers will report an update to a future meeting of the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The report advises of the current process for PCNs in Argyll and Bute, and provides information on Scottish Ministers' decision to increase the PCN fee for the first time in 22 years. The report also notes that officers will explore options for additional warden resource using any additional income generated from the higher fee recommended by officers.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy – Parking Policy Framework 2014.
- 6.2 Financial – It is expected to increase PCN income. Any additional warden costs should be affordable within the forecast surplus income.

- 6.3 Legal – In line with national guidance.
- 6.4 HR – None known.
- 6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty:
 - 6.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics – None known.
 - 6.5.2 Socio-Economic Duty – None known.
 - 6.5.3 Islands – None arising from this report.
- 6.6 Climate Change – The higher fee is preferred as this would discourage people from using cars, which causes more emissions, and members of the public may therefore opt to use public transport.
- 6.7 Risk – Safer roads for all road users.
- 6.8 Customer Service – In line with Parking Policy Framework 2014.

Kirsty Flanagan, Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services

Jim Smith, Head of Roads and Infrastructure Services

Councillor Andrew Kain, Policy Lead for Roads and Transport

March 2023

For further information contact:

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APPENDIXES

Appendix 1 – PCN Guidance Letter

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Road Policy Team
Roads Directorate

Transport Scotland, Atlantic Quay 5, 150 Broomielaw,
Glasgow, G2 8LU
Direct Line: 0141 272 7100
roadpolicy@transport.gov.scot



Issued to all Local Authorities via email

Our ref:
PCN Guidance

Date:
17 February 2023

Dear Sir / Madam

ROAD TRAFFIC ACT 1991 – REVIEW OF PENALTY CHARGE NOTICE FOR PARKING ENFORCEMENT – REVISED GUIDANCE - EFFECTIVE 1 APRIL 2023

This revised guidance is only applicable to those local authorities in Scotland which have a decriminalised parking regime (DPE). It is being copied to other local authorities for information only.

Local Authority Circular 1/95 “Guidance on Decriminalised Parking Enforcement outside London” set out the procedures local authorities outside London in England and Wales must follow when applying for decriminalised parking enforcement powers. However, Scottish local authorities have used this guidance when creating decriminalised parking regimes within their local authority areas.

Paragraphs 4.19 of this Circular set out the guidance on the level of charges for Penalty Charges which were linked with the level of fixed penalty notices for non-endorsable parking offences.

The Scottish Government undertook a public consultation which considered the levels of fines associated with Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) and published the analysis of the responses in September 2022.

<https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/penalty-charge-notices-for-parking-enforcement-consultation-analysis-report/>

At that time Scottish Ministers did not feel that it was appropriate to raise the levels due to the cost of living crisis but committed to keeping that decision under review in the coming year. Since that decision was made there has been increased calls from local authorities and other interested parties asking that Scottish Ministers review that decision and asking for local authorities be given further fiscal powers to decide if they wish to increase the levels of PCN or not given that rates have not increased for 22 years.

In light of this the Scottish Ministers hereby issues revised guidance to local authorities in Scotland with a decriminalised parking regime notifying them of revised levels of the maximums that can be charged for penalty charges notices. Given the current financial climate, the Scottish Government would urge local authorities to be aware of the implications of this increase may have on members of the public and advise that local authorities be mindful to use the lower limit where appropriate.

From the 1st April 2023, the maximum amounts payable by a motorist issued with a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) may now be in the range of:

Level of PCN	Paid within 14 Days	Paid between 15 days and service of Notice to Owner	Paid between issue of Notice to Owner and service of charge certificate	Paid after service of charge certificate
Lower	£40	£80	£80	£120
Higher	£50	£100	£100	£150

Any enquiries on the contents of this letter should, in the first instance, be addressed to Road Policy Team, Transport Scotland, Atlantic Quay 5, 150 Broomielaw, Glasgow, G2 8LU, Telephone 0141 272 7100 or email roadpolicy@transport.gov.scot.

Yours faithfully



Fred O'Hara
Head of Road Policy

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**COUNCIL****DEVELOPMENT AND
ECONOMIC GROWTH****27TH APRIL 2023**

**DUNOON BID – OUTCOME OF BALLOT AND APPOINTMENT OF ELECTED
MEMBER TO DUNOON BID BOARD**

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 At the Council meeting on 24th November 2022 Elected Members considered a report which asked members to endorse the Dunoon Business Improvement District (BID) ballot submission and to approve the Business Plan, Term Three, in support of the ballot. It was also agreed that the Council would charge £7,903 (incl VAT) per annum to the BID company for administering the levy charge and to pay an estimated £6,120 per annum in levy contributions for Council properties in Dunoon.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to update members on the outcome of the Dunoon BID Ballot held on Thursday 2nd March 2023 and to notify members of the appointment of Councillor Ross Moreland to the Dunoon BID Board, which took place at the Council meeting on 19th May 2022.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Council:-

- a. Note the outcome in regard to the Dunoon BID ballot.
- b. Note that Councillor Ross Moreland was appointed by the Council to the Dunoon BID Board and will attend Board meetings during the Third term, 2023-2028.

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

COUNCIL

**DEVELOPMENT AND
ECONOMIC GROWTH**

27th APRIL 2023

**DUNOON BID – OUTCOME OF BALLOT AND APPOINTMENT OF ELECTED
MEMBER TO DUNOON BID BOARD**

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 At Full Council on 24th November 2022, Councillors agreed to approve the ballot request, approve the Dunoon BID Business Proposal and agreed to instruct the Returning Officer to conduct a ballot over 42 days in 2023, from Thursday 19th January to Thursday 2nd March.
- 2.2 The Council agreed to authorise the Executive Director with the responsibility for Development and Economic Growth to cast the votes on behalf of the Council in favour of the BID.
- 2.3 The Council also agreed that, if the BID company was successful in gaining a third term of operations, the Council would charge £7,903 (inc VAT) per annum to the BID company for administering the levy charge to businesses in Dunoon and to pay an estimated £6,120 per annum in levy contributions for Council properties in Dunoon.
- 2.4 Following approval by Full Council, the ballot was then set up and the ballot took place on Thursday 2nd March 2023. The Business Community voted in favour of the Dunoon BID.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Council:-
- a. Note the outcome in regard to the Dunoon BID ballot.
 - b. Note that Councillor Ross Moreland was appointed by the Council to the Dunoon BID Board and will attend Board meetings during the Third term, 2023-2028.

4.0 DETAIL

- 4.1 During the first two terms of the Dunoon BID, much has been achieved in developing a full and regular calendar of sporting events, with the BID leveraging over £2.8million into the Dunoon economy and, with the success of the third term ballot, there is a projection of a further £1.75million of growth in the Dunoon economy over the next five years. Furthermore, the Dunoon BID Board has committed to working more collaboratively with other key stakeholders in Dunoon to provide a unique opportunity for businesses across all sectors to work together, invest collectively and undertake projects which can contribute positively to improving the economic viability of businesses in Dunoon and securing investment in the area. The Dunoon BID Board has also committed to holding a fit and proper Annual General Meeting (AGM) on a yearly basis.
- 4.2 The Dunoon 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 voted, over 25% by number and 25% by combined rateable value had to vote in favour of the BID.
- 4.3 The ballot was held on Thursday 2nd March and the Dunoon Business community has voted in favour of the Dunoon BID. The results were as follows:

No. of Ballot Papers Issues	No. of Returns	Yes Votes	No Votes	Rejected Votes
435	195	144	48	3

The BID ballot has therefore secured a minimum turnout in respect 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 favor of the BID. Given the many economic challenges placed before Dunoon in the previous term it is welcomed that there was a very positive result which allows the local business community to implement their new business plan which contains a number of collaborative projects and initiatives.

- 4.4 Following a successful yes vote, as laid out in the Dunoon Business Proposal, the management and operation of the BID will continue under the existing company structure and name, PA23 BID Ltd, company number SC448869, which will operate from 3rd March 2023.
- 4.5 The Board will continue to be representative of the businesses and stakeholders in the area and will act in the best interests of the BID company. The Chair, Vice Chair, Company Secretary and Treasurer will be elected from the business members of the Board. The Board will include Councillor Ross Moreland, Elected Member, as a representative from Argyll and Bute Council. Other non-voting members may be coopted 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.

- 4.6 The appointed Elected Member 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.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 Dunoon BID has secured a “yes” vote from the business community in Dunoon. This is considered to be good news for Dunoon and the future of the town. The Council is, therefore, asked to note that Councillor Ross Moreland will sit on the newly formed BID Board. The principle aim of Dunoon BID is to continue to deliver projects and events that improve the trading environment of the area.

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 estimated Council levy payment will be £6,120 per annum for a period of 5 years as a budget pressure from the general unallocated fund. The Council will charge £7,903 (incl VAT) per annum to the Dunoon BID for the collection and administration of the levy, with charges increasing on an annual basis.
- 6.3 Legal - Facilitation of ballot.
- 6.4 HR - Council officers are supporting the Dunoon BID on an ad hoc basis. One Elected Member has been appointed to attend Dunoon BID Board meetings.
- 6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty
- 6.5.1 Equalities – protected characteristics – None.
- 6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty - The BID aims to reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage in Dunoon and represents the collective responsibility to grow the Dunoon economy.
- 6.5.3 Islands – None.
- 6.6 Climate Change - The business plan will take environmental impact into consideration in the delivery of projects.
- 6.7 Risk – The BID company may not deliver what was laid out in their Business Proposal and Business Plan.

6.8 Customer Service – None.

Executive Director with the responsibility for Development & Economic Growth
– Kirsty Flanagan

Policy Lead for Strategic Development – Councillor Robin Currie

March 2023

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