

Argyll and Bute Council
Comhairle Earra-Ghàidheal Agus Bhòid

Customer Services
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11 October 2018

NOTICE OF MEETING

A Special meeting of **ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL** will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, KILMORY, LOCHGILPHEAD** on **THURSDAY, 18 OCTOBER 2018** at **11:30 AM**, or at the conclusion of the Policy and Resources Committee, whichever is the later, which you are requested to attend.

Douglas Hendry
Executive Director - Customer Services

BUSINESS

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
- 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS (IF ANY)**
- 3. DELIVERING THE ARGYLL RURAL GROWTH DEAL**
 - (a) Report by Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure Services (Pages 3 - 38)
 - (b) Recommendation by Policy and Resources Committee of 18 October 2018 (to follow)
- 4. JOINT LOCAL BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE PLAN FOR ARGYLL AND BUTE**
 - (a) Report by Executive Director of Customer Services (Pages 39 - 108)
 - (b) Recommendation by Policy and Resources Committee of 18 October 2018 (to follow)

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

Contact: Sandra Campbell Tel: 01546 604401

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**COUNCIL****Development and Infrastructure
Services****18th October 2018**

Delivering the Argyll Rural Growth Deal

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Members will be aware that a series of City and Regional Growth Deals are being taken forward, or agreed, between Scottish Local Authorities and the Scottish and UK Governments. Informed by extensive research and public consultation Argyll and Bute Council, working in partnership, with a number of key stakeholders has been developing a potential Rural Growth Deal (RGD) for the region in dialogue with UK and Scottish Government representatives and the Scottish Futures Trust. This RGD is considered essential by the council to build on a series of public and private sector investments that have either taken place in recent years or are under way in Argyll and Bute to help keep our region competitive through the acceleration of economic growth in our key business sectors and by addressing the barriers that are believed to hold back our growth potential.
- 1.2 Discussions to date with UK and Scottish Government officials have been positive, particularly around the evidence gathering and consultation undertaken to date. Both Governments have however stressed the importance of Argyll and Bute Council submitting their formal Rural Growth Deal proposition as soon as possible to allow formal negotiations to take place as part of a pipeline of City and Regional growth deals they are now considering.
- 1.3 Both the Scottish and UK Governments have advised that they will not begin to consider any proposals until they are formally submitted by Argyll and Bute Council. This is particularly significant given there are other local authorities who are also negotiating similar deals with both governments at this time.
- 1.4 This report provides details of the emerging Rural Growth Deal for Argyll and Bute including a summary of the business and public consultation undertaken to date, the overarching vision, the key themes and growth sectors that we are aiming to support through the deal and the emerging projects that it is intended will be included in the formal proposition to both the Scottish and UK Governments.
- 1.5 The latest public consultation drew more than 900 responses and this has demonstrated strong support for a Rural Growth Deal with 97% of those surveyed supporting a deal for Argyll and Bute. Further details are included in **Appendix 1** of this report.

1.6 The following overarching vision has been developed for the Rural Growth Deal and supported through public consultation (see Appendix 1):

“Argyll the natural choice.”

1.7 In addition to the overarching vision, the following key growth sectors and project themes have emerged as investment priorities for the Rural Growth Deal focusing on the region’s key economic strengths and the critical infrastructure, skills and education required for growth. These reflect findings from the public consultation on opportunities for and obstacles to growth;-

- **Connecting:** our high value and growing business sectors with national and international business markets; our economic local successes with national strategic priorities.
 - Transport (road/air routes to market)
 - Digital
 - Business innovation
- **Attracting:** additional skills, training and learning opportunities; new residents, visitors and business.
 - Skills, training and education
 - Accommodation (housing and business)
 - Places to live, work and visit (community-led regeneration)
 - Centre of excellence
- **Growing:** doing more of what works; making more of our natural and built resources.
 - Aquaculture
 - Tourism
 - Low carbon economy

1.8 Our Rural Growth Deal proposals are about placing investment where it will best place Argyll as an ambitious and economically successful region creating employment opportunities and additional GDP for Scotland and the UK.

1.9 The content of the RGD has been informed through working with key stakeholders via a series of meetings, working groups and workshops to identify Argyll based potential projects which are consistent with UK and Scottish Government economic policy. Following this process, a list of projects has been compiled and this is included in **Appendix 2** of this report. This list of projects will inform a compelling presentation document to be submitted to both the UK and Scottish Government to allow negotiations to commence.

- 1.10 Council is asked to approve the proposed overarching vision, key growth sectors and project themes which form the basis of the Rural Growth Deal to enable the process of formal negotiations to be progressed with submission of the formal Rural Growth Deal proposition document by November 2018. It has been indicated that a Heads of Terms Agreement could be signed with the Scottish and UK Governments in mid to late 2019 subject to the formal proposition document being submitted imminently.
- 1.11 The Council are asked to approve the proposal to delegate authority to the Council's Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader, Depute Leader and Leader of the largest opposition group to progress negotiations with UK and Scottish Government officials following submission of the formal Rural Growth Deal proposition document.
- 1.12 The bid proposals invite investment in Argyll economic growth to the initial values below:

Connecting: Estimated investment required circa £90.5M covering investment in Transport, Digital connectivity and Business Innovation.

Attracting: Estimated investment required circa £51M covering investment in Skills, Training and Education, Accommodation (housing and business), Places to live, work and visit (community-led regeneration) and Centre of Excellence.

Growing: Estimated investment required circa £37M covering investment in Aquaculture, Tourism and Low Carbon.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- a) Note the advice received from the Scottish and UK Governments and the support demonstrated via the public consultation in relation to a Rural Growth Deal;
- b) Agree the proposed overarching vision, key growth sectors and project themes which form the basis of the Rural Growth Deal;
- c) Approve the submission of a formal Rural Growth Deal proposition document by November 2018 to the Scottish and UK Governments to enable the process of formal negotiations to be progressed;
- d) Delegate authority to the Council's Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader, Depute Leader and Leader of the largest opposition group to progress negotiations with UK and Scottish Government officials following submission of the formal Rural Growth Deal proposition document;
- e) Note that in reaching a Heads of Terms Agreement with the Scottish and UK Governments it is likely that certain projects included as part of the Rural Growth Deal proposition will be either amended, removed or new projects included as part of the negotiations.
- f) Confirm that a further report in terms of programme governance will come to council in due course.

Delivering the Argyll Rural Growth Deal

3.0 INTRODUCTION

3.1 Argyll and Bute Council and our partners have been developing and gathering evidence essential for a potential Rural Growth Deal (RGD) for our region. The RGD is considered essential to help keep Argyll competitive in a global economy, stimulate economic growth in our key business sectors and reverse the decline in our population.

3.2 The Argyll Rural Growth Deal will follow similar principles to the City and Regional Growth Deals, either agreed or in development for other Local Authority areas in Scotland. In discussions undertaken to date, both the UK and Scottish Governments have advised that projects included in the deal must be:-

- Transformational as opposed to business as usual;
- Consistent with Scottish and UK Government economic policies;
- Able to demonstrate clear links across Argyll and Bute Rural Deal projects which in combination will make the greatest economic return;
- Where possible be pan-regional and compliment other City Deal investments in neighboring areas.
- Projects focusing on devolved matters should be consistent with the Scottish Governments policy on inclusive growth.
- The Rural Growth Deal could include additional policy powers as well as funding for infrastructure projects.
- The predicted timescale, over which the projects contained within a Rural Growth Deal will ultimately be delivered, is approximately 10 years.

3.3 Discussions to date with UK and Scottish Government officials have been positive, particularly around the amount of work and consultation undertaken to date. However, it should be noted that both Governments have stressed the importance of Argyll and Bute Council submitting their Rural Growth Deal proposition timeously. In addition, both the Scottish and UK Governments have advised that they will not begin to formally consider any proposals until this happens and this is particularly significant as there are other local authorities also negotiating deals at this current time all at different stages of development.

3.4 This report provides a strategic level overview on the emerging Rural Growth Deal for Argyll and Bute including details of the business and public consultation undertaken to date, the overarching vision, the key themes and key growth business sectors that we are aiming to support through the deal and the

emerging projects that it is intended will be included in the formal proposition to the Scottish and UK Governments.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- a) Note the advice received from the Scottish and UK Governments and the support demonstrated via the public consultation in relation to a Rural Growth Deal;
- b) Agree the proposed overarching vision, key growth sectors and project themes which form the basis of the Rural Growth Deal;
- c) Approve the submission of a formal Rural Growth Deal proposition document by November 2018 to the Scottish and UK Governments to enable the process of formal negotiations to be progressed;
- d) Delegate authority to the Council's Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader, Depute Leader and Leader of the largest opposition group to progress negotiations with UK and Scottish Government officials following submission of the formal Rural Growth Deal proposition document;
- e) Note that in reaching a Heads of Terms Agreement with the Scottish and UK Governments it is likely that certain projects included as part of the Rural Growth Deal proposition will be either amended, removed or new projects included as part of the negotiations.
- f) Confirm that a further report in terms of programme governance will come to council in due course.

5.0 DETAIL

- 5.1 Over the past year, Argyll and Bute Council, our partners and key stakeholders supported by the Scottish Futures Trust (SFT) have been developing a Rural Growth Deal with the Scottish and UK Governments. The Rural Growth Deal for Argyll and Bute will follow similar principles to the City Region Deals previously agreed for other local authority areas with a focus on delivering innovative and inclusive economic growth for the region in line with Scottish and UK Government economic policy.
- 5.2 In developing the Rural Growth Deal proposals, extensive public, business and key stakeholder consultation has been undertaken via multiple channels and this has been used to identify key opportunities and barriers that could potentially be addressed via a Rural Growth Deal. In addition to the extensive previous stakeholder consultation reported to the Policy and Resources Committee of 24 May 2018 an engagement strategy was approved for the Rural Growth Deal and it was agreed to undertake a further public consultation during the summer.
- 5.3 In summary, the public consultation drew more than 900 responses, with 97% of people saying they back a RGD for Argyll and Bute. Additionally, most people who took part agree that food & drink (84%), tourism (91%), culture (85%) and innovation (87%) are the areas with the most potential growth for Argyll and Bute. And respondents also overwhelmingly agree that roads and infrastructure (96%), digital connectivity (94%), skills (86%), accommodation (85%) and

natural energy (82%) are the key areas in need of development to achieve significant economic growth in Argyll and Bute. A full breakdown of the public consultation results is included as **Appendix 1** of this report.

- 5.4 From the evidence provided via the consultation undertaken and a thorough review of existing Council and key stakeholder strategies and plans the following overarching vision has been developed for the Rural Growth Deal, with public support through consultation;-

“Argyll the natural choice.”

- 5.5 The bid will be submitted under the name of Argyll and Bute Council. As benefits of the deal are targeted not only at mainland communities and Bute, but also at additional islands, the vision uses ‘Argyll’ to cover all. This was supported in the public response to the consultation.
- 5.6 In addition to the overarching vision, the key growth sectors and project themes below have emerged as investment priorities for the Rural Growth Deal focusing on the region’s key economic strengths and the critical infrastructure, skills and education required for growth.
- 5.7 Our RGD proposals are about placing investment where it will best place Argyll as an ambitious and economically successful region creating new employment opportunities and additional GDP for Scotland and the UK:
- **Connecting:** our niche and growing business sectors with national and international business markets; our economic local successes with national strategic priorities.
 - Transport (road/air routes to market)
 - Digital connectivity
 - Business innovation
 - **Attracting:** additional skills, training and learning opportunities; new residents, visitors and business.
 - Skills, training and education
 - Accommodation (housing and business)
 - Places to live, work and visit (community-led regeneration)
 - Centre of excellence
 - **Growing:** doing more of what works; making more of our natural and built resources.
 - Aquaculture
 - Tourism
 - Low carbon economy

- 5.8 Argyll and Bute Council has been working with our partners and key stakeholders via a series of meetings, working groups and workshops guided by the Rural Growth Deal Steering Board to identify potential projects which are consistent with UK and Scottish Government economic policy and could be included as part of the formal RGD proposition to both governments. Following this process, the following list of potential projects has been compiled and further details are included in **Appendix 2** of this report.

Connecting

- Roads - develop our key routes to market and business development;
- Air - create a west coast regional hub for Scotland;
- Digital Connectivity: meeting our medicare, social and business needs;
- Food and Drink pilot - a rural transformation agenda for Bute;
- Develop local, national and international excellence in aquaculture, by delivering an innovative seawater pipeline and new business incubator hub at Machrihanish in Kintyre;
- Deliver a state-of-the-art marine industry training facility (EMSP)

Attracting

- Match local skills development to local economy opportunities;
- Provide affordable housing of the right type and in the right place to support growing business sectors;
- Logistics Business Park Expansion, Lochgilphead;
- Place-based investment to support community-led regeneration
- Realise local community opportunities from the MOD's emerging centre of engineering excellence in Helensburgh;

Growing

- Establish an accelerating aquaculture fund, focused on innovation, to drive forward the aquaculture industry in Argyll;
- Argyll as a world class visitor destination - open up access to our coasts and waters;
- Argyll Scotland's Adventure Coast - develop our natural resources as a driver for the local and wider tourism industry;
- Run a pilot on the island of Islay to deliver a smart island local energy network.

- 5.9 In addition to the above projects, a range of policy and fiscal asks will also be included as part of the Rural Growth Deal proposition. These policy and fiscal asks will complement the infrastructure projects listed above. Further details are included in **Appendix 2**.
- 5.10 Government officials have stressed that it is unlikely all projects included in the formal Rural Growth Deal proposition will be supported by the Scottish and UK Governments. As such, it will be necessary to consider alternative sources of funding for certain projects or that they will be re-shaped. In addition, where alternative funding is secured, some projects may be accelerated in advance of

the RGD programme.

- 5.11 It should be noted that in discussions to date with government officials and the Scottish Futures Trust, the Council have been advised that the scale of the deal in terms of potential funding must be proportionate to a region's population and the ability of the Council and key stakeholders to provide match funding (see Table 1 below). That said, the council is set on submitting an ambitious RGD that fully recognises our economic potential, our rural geography and infrastructure challenges.

Table 1: City Deal Funding Examples

City Deal	Pop of City Deal Area	Total Value (£m)	UK Gov Funding	Scot Gov Funding	UK Gov. funding per head (£)	Scot Gov. Funding per head
Glasgow	1,790,600	1,130	500	500	279	279
Inverness	234,100	315	53	135	226	577
Aberdeen	484,800	595	125	379	258	782
Edinburgh	1,330,500	1,101	300	300	225	225
Stirling	140,000	214	45.1	45.1	321	321

*Figures provided by Scottish Futures Trust (exception of Stirling)

- 5.12 In the negotiations to follow with both governments, Argyll and Bute Council will look to make a compelling case for additional funding to be invested in the region to take account of the significant challenges we face due to our relatively small, dispersed and in places declining population, shortage of private sector match funding and the higher cost of delivering projects and services locally due to the geographic size of the region.
- 5.13 The bid proposals invite investment in Argyll's economic growth to the initial values below:

Connecting: Estimated investment required circa £90.5M covering investment in Transport, Digital connectivity and Business Innovation.

Attracting: Estimated investment required circa £51M covering investment in Skills, Training and Education, Accommodation (housing and business), Places to live, work and visit (community-led regeneration) and Centre of Excellence.

Growing: Estimated investment required circa £37M covering investment in Aquaculture, Tourism and Low Carbon

6.0 Next Steps

- 6.1 Following approval from the Council, a formal proposition document including details of the public consultation and supporting work undertaken to date will be submitted to Scottish and UK Government officials.

- 6.2 We understand that there will follow a period of negotiation and challenge by both Governments. When both Governments are satisfied with what the projects will deliver for Argyll and the national economy a Heads of Terms Agreement will be signed committing both governments and Argyll and Bute Council to the principles of the deal. It has been indicated that a Heads of Terms could be signed by mid to late 2019 subject to the formal proposition document being submitted imminently.
- 6.3 Thereafter, further development work will be required for specific projects included in the Rural Growth Deal (e.g. Treasury 5 Business Cases, STAG assessments etc.) prior to funding being released for individual projects.

7.0 Conclusion

- 7.1 Argyll and Bute Council, our partners and key stakeholders have been developing an ambitious Rural Growth Deal for the region. This RGD is considered essential to help keep Argyll competitive, stimulate economic growth, address barriers that inhibit growth and reverse the decline in our population.
- 7.2 Following positive discussions with UK and Scottish Government officials both Governments have stressed the importance of Argyll and Bute Council submitting their formal RGD proposition to allow formal negotiations to commence. It has been indicated that a Heads of Terms could be signed by mid to late 2019 subject to the formal proposition document being submitted imminently.
- 7.3 It should be noted that Government officials have stressed that it is unlikely all projects included in the formal Rural Growth Deal proposition will be supported by the Scottish and UK Governments. As such, it will be necessary to consider alternative sources of funding for certain projects or that they will have to be reshaped. In addition, where alternative funding is secured, some projects may be accelerated in advance of the RGD programme.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Policy - The Rural Growth Deal supports the council's overarching aim to deliver economic growth in Argyll and Bute through a rising population, as set out in the ABOIP and aims to support the key aims of the UK and Scottish Government Economic policy in relation to inclusive economic growth, innovation and internationalisation.
- 8.2 Financial The Rural Growth Deal will require match funding from the Council. At the May P&R it was agreed to use the Inward Investment Fund as match funding.
- 8.3 Legal There are likely to be legal implications associated with the Rural Growth Deal following final agreement of

	Heads of Terms and subsequent approvals of Business cases.
8.4 HR	None directly from this report
8.5 Equalities	The Rural Growth Deal will be subject to the Fairer Scotland Duty. Inclusive growth is integral to the Rural Growth Deal.
8.6 Risk	Full business cases will be developed for Rural Growth Deal projects following submission of the final Heads of Terms.
8.7 Customer Service	None.

Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure Pippa Milne
Councilor Aileen Morton, Policy Lead for Economic Development

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Rural Growth Deal Public Consultation Summary Report
Appendix 2 - Rural Growth Deal Project Summary.

Appendix 1: Rural Growth Deal consultation findings summary

We received **907** responses, primarily via the website and citizens' panel.

Question	Overall response	Rate of response
Q1: Are you in favour of a Rural Growth Deal?	Yes	Yes = 97% No view = 1% No = 2% ('Argyll's remoteness is a key quality; 'investment would go to towns')
Q2. Are these the areas with most potential growth for Argyll and Bute?	Yes	Food/drink = 84%; Tourism = 91%; Culture = 85%; Innovation = 87%
Q3. Are these the areas to develop to achieve significant economic growth?	Yes	Roads/Infrastructure = 96%; Skills = 86%; Digital connectivity = 94%; Accommodation = 85%; Natural energy = 82%
Q6. Do you agree with 'Argyll, the natural choice' as a base for a vision?	Yes	Yes = 60% Don't know = 24% No = 16% ('live, learn, visit etc sounds like a list', 'needs to be more dynamic')

Below is a summary of the range of additional comments made.

Q 4/5 What would encourage young people to move and to stay here? (Responses to 'move' and 'stay' are very similar so are listed together.	Alternative suggestions for our vision?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Education/training/job opportunities eg bursaries - Leisure facilities – film, nightlife etc - Better transport links - Better broadband/digital - Suitable, affordable housing - Reduce council tax for young people - Better childcare initiatives - Good shops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Argyll, the land of natural opportunity - Argyll, the future is here - Argyll - for a richer pace of life - Argyll, the right choice for you - Come out west, we need the best - Argyll, expand your horizons - Argyll for growth, choice & nature - Argyll, the best choice
Suggestions for economic growth?	Any other ideas for growth?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marine industry (e.g. improve piers, encourage water sport industry) - Renewable energy other than wind - tidal, wave, solar, biomass and geothermal. - Arts and culture – encourage creative industries into the area - Promote 'dark sky' space - Education (eg attract universities for rural and marine based courses) - Affordable/suitable accommodation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Better transport infrastructure - Broaden the business base; don't rely on tourism - Develop a route like the North Coast 500 - Support for business start-ups - Run large events eg sports, winter lights festivals - Improve digital connectivity - Trails – archeology, history, celtic - Serviced industrial, business sites - Coastal/Marine National Park status

Additional finding

Feedback demonstrates a sense of pride in Argyll, and awareness of its great potential for success, for example: *"If [Argyll] can be supported by 21st century standards of connectivity, roads, transport and communications, we couldn't be bettered in Scotland."* / *"[Argyll's] potential for growth is plain to see..with ideas and drive we still need investment to fulfil this potential."*

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Rural Growth Deal

Argyll, the natural choice

Master

Introduction

Argyll brings together much of what is best about Scotland – natural resources that drive national and international business markets, expertise that inspires innovation, and people committed to developing the prosperous future the area needs and deserves.

Argyll therefore provides opportunities for economic growth that would benefit life in Argyll, Scotland and the UK.

To turn opportunity into success we must reverse the decline in our population. Forecasts estimate that by 2027 Argyll will need 10,000 more people just to replace demand for existing services; and we will need thousands more to realise our ambition to drive business development.

There is strong, clear local backing for a rural growth deal for Argyll. The council's recent public consultation motivated more than 900 responses, with 97% of people saying they support a rural growth deal.

Scotland and the UK need rural areas. Food production and tourism are just two reasons why. Residents of rural communities have the right to access opportunities that will bring growth just as those in cities do. It is in everyone's interest that rural Scotland thrives.

In the words of one of the many local people supporting a deal, “[Argyll’s] potential for growth is plain to see...with ideas and drive we still need investment to fulfil this potential.”

Rural growth deal approach

Our rural growth deal proposals are about placing investment where it will best develop Argyll as an economically successful region and driver for Scotland and the UK.

The proposals are designed to deliver success across Argyll, based on three key drivers:

- **Connecting:** our high value business sectors with national and international business markets; our local economic successes with national strategic priorities
- **Attracting:** additional skills, training and learning opportunities; new residents, visitors and businesses
- **Growing:** doing more of what works; making more of our natural and built resources

The proposals are a starting point for discussion. Their development could be affected for example by the availability of funding from alternative sources. Details of investment and the use to which it will be put will be confirmed as negotiations progress. National policy development, where it would support economic growth, will also form part of negotiations.

The proposals reflect the categories agreed with the public for development, through consultation: transport infrastructure (96% support); digital connectivity (94%); tourism (91%), innovation (87%), skills (86%), culture/sense of place (85%), accommodation (housing and business) (85%), food and drink (84%), natural energy (82%)

The proposals all link to each other. They are listed in the category in which they would have most impact.

Connecting: our high value and growing business sectors with national and international business markets; our local economic local successes with national strategic priorities

Connecting	Transport Infrastructure - roads
Proposal 1	Develop our key transport to achieve business expansion across high value, international markets.
Purpose	Develop the local, Scottish and UK economies by developing key routes to market for our high value produce (whisky/salmon/timber etc.) and facilitating the movement of our people and visitors.
Detail	<p>Food and drink production, including agriculture, whisky, aquaculture and fishing, is a significant contributor to the Argyll, Scottish and UK economies.</p> <p>The distance from key markets/suppliers, the requirement often to use ferries and high rural fuel prices, all result in high transport costs that are barriers to business growth in Argyll. Transport investment could make local businesses more competitive and so develop an economic driver for Argyll, Scotland and the UK.</p> <p>Rural growth deal investment would deliver appraisals/technical feasibility work to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve route resilience by removing pinch points and addressing accident black spots • Improve journey times by installing climbing/safe overtaking lanes and other similar enhancements on the A83 network • Unlock strategic development sites for business and housing, and support key sectors such as tourism and aquaculture, by re-routing the A85. This would support island communities served by Oban as well as the wider Oban area. • Identify options for developing local transport routes of strategic importance to the economy of Argyll, and better accommodating visitor pressure. • Deliver improvement action where evidence-based improvements are substantiated for our strategic routes. • Ensure that our strategic transport corridors are recognised in the National Transport Strategy and Strategic Transport Project Review.
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oban is the second busiest port in the UK serving 7 islands and in 2017 ferry services to / from Oban carried in excess of 820,000 passengers. • Improved access to national and global markets would bring significant, economic benefits for example via key sector

	<p>businesses such as whisky, aquaculture and tourism in Argyll</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Scotch Whisky Association statistics estimate that the whisky industry provided more than £5 billion of value to the UK economy. • Salmon makes up more than 40% of total food exports from Scotland, with exports of whole fresh salmon representing £494 million. • Salmon is the number one food export for Scotland and the UK, with trade extending to more than 65 countries across the world. • The Argyll region is well-placed to facilitate the continued expansion of the salmon industry - the Scottish Salmon Company for example has its key processing plant at Cairndow, Loch Fyne - and diversification to new products such as halibut, trout and seaweed. • The aquaculture sector across Argyll currently employs 600 full time and part time jobs with a total GVA estimated to be £31 million, plus processing and retail. • Improved connectivity within the Argyll region, and better connections with the Scottish Central Belt and key markets, would achieve: access to markets, improved visitor access and benefits to movement of citizens as a whole.
	<p>Estimated Costs circa £0.5M for feasibility studies for A83 improvements, realignment of A85 and improvements to other identified local strategic economic routes.</p> <p>Following on from the appraisals it is critical where the findings for evidence-based improvements are substantiated circa £40M is implemented on enhancements to our strategic Trunk Road arterial routes.</p> <p>Following on from the appraisals it is critical where the findings for evidence-based improvements are substantiated circa £20M is implemented on enhancements to our local strategic economically significant routes.</p>

Connecting	Transport infrastructure – air
Proposal 2	Create a west coast regional hub for Scotland
Purpose	Develop niche business and tourism opportunities by improving connectivity between the central belt and west coast of Scotland.
Detail	Air connectivity is increasingly important for a modern economy. While a number of our communities have direct access to Glasgow by scheduled

	<p>air services, northern Argyll and Lochaber do not.</p> <p>Oban Airport has the potential to act as the regional Highlands and Islands / west coast hub, serving the western isles and potentially offering connections to strategic cities such as Glasgow, Edinburgh and Inverness. Business charter air routes could also link Oban to cities and towns south of the border. The private aviation industry already market such services, which can deliver a time saving of up to 19 hours each way.</p> <p>Oban Airport currently supports key Scottish businesses, in particular staff from the Liberty House company using business charter flights to Oban to undertake work relating to the investment plans for the smelter site at Lochaber which is currently Scotland’s largest industrial site under development. In addition, the Scottish Association of Marine Sciences (SAMS) delivers world-class marine science research and teaching from the European Marine Science Park at Dunstaffnage which is in close proximity to the airport. This is a world renowned facility and the ability to access Oban via key international airports such as Glasgow and Edinburgh would potentially be attractive to staff, students and visitors.</p> <p>Enhanced routes to Oban Airport will also support tourism and leisure travel, for example the local, national and international urban-rural tourism initiative linking Glasgow and Argyll, as ‘Scotland’s Heart and Soul’. (See proposal number 13 on page 20 for more information on this partnership initiative between AITC (Argyll and the Isles Tourism Co-operative) and Glasgow Life.</p> <p>Future growth in air traffic at Oban Airport would make the area more attractive to niche aviation businesses with the associated potential to develop new hangerage and maintenance facilities for aircraft at the site. There is also the potential for the airport to cater for air freight which could assist with the transport of high value local produce such as seafood which requires to reach international markets quickly. This would also reduce the use of roads by LGV’s and therefore the damage to the road network. A future freight facility could potentially support smaller regular deliveries to all the key catchment areas from Fort William to Lochgilphead and the western isles.</p> <p>This project is also consistent with the Scottish Government’s inclusive growth agenda and would give the fragile islands of Coll and Colonsay (via Oban) access to international air services and healthcare facilities in the main conurbations of Glasgow/Edinburgh. This would bring services to Colonsay and Coll in line with those to Campbeltown and Tiree which already benefit from air services to Glasgow subsidised by Transport Scotland.</p>
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Argyll as a region has comprehensively outperformed Scotland as a whole in terms of tourism. Argyll and the Isles Sustainable Tourism GVA rose from £81M to £127M – an increase of 36%

	<p>(15% for Scotland).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment would bring an increase in national and international tourism/visitor numbers including opportunities to support the cruise ship market with air service connections from Oban airport to International airports of Glasgow and Edinburgh. The cruise market brings over £1M into the Argyll economy. • Improve UK business access into Argyll and Highland region, for example such as investment plans for expansion of the smelter site at Lochaber.
	Estimated costs : circa £3.5M

Connecting	Digital Connectivity: meeting our medicare, social and business needs
Proposal 3	Support the health of our communities and our businesses
Purpose	Digital connectivity is critical to the future of the Argyll economy. This proposal is about addressing both health and business growth challenges in rural areas, by closing the ‘digital divide’, and supporting our medicare, social and business needs.
Detail	<p>The Argyll and Bute Economic Forum Report 2016, identified poor mobile and broadband connectivity as one of the key barriers to economic growth in the region. A number of key business sectors including aquaculture and tourism identified this as the single biggest barrier to operating successfully and efficiently in the region given the often dispersed and remote nature of many sites. Recent Ofcom figures have highlighted that Argyll currently has only 0.6% of premises in its area covered by 4G mobile services from all 4 mobile network operators which continues to represent a critical barrier to economic growth.</p> <p>As bandwidths in urban areas have continued to advance rapidly, a new ‘digital divide’ is emerging to the disadvantage of rural communities left with relatively poor levels of broadband service.</p> <p>With increasing demands on the NHS and local authorities, there is considerable potential for telehealth and telecare applications to help these organisations meet the needs of an aging population cost effectively.</p> <p>Enhancing and improving the national R100 programme (for digital development), by developing ultrafast ‘Fibre to the Premise’ infrastructure, would support both patients and the health service by enabling medical practitioners to hold medicare surgeries, and by widening the availability</p>

	<p>of telecare health services. ‘Attending Anywhere’ healthcare would also give rural and remote communities access to a range of healthcare specialists online via telehealth with no costs associated with travelling or requirement to take extended time off work.</p> <p>Developing ultrafast ‘Fibre to the Premise’ infrastructure would also drive business development, by connecting businesses to their on-line markets, and future proofing in terms of digital capability.</p> <p>Suitable venues identified are: selected village halls (which serve as central points in their communities), strategic business sites, council offices and education establishments. Premises of this type are accessible to high numbers of people; the improved broadband availability would also be available to premises located in their vicinity.</p> <p>The cost per premise to provide digital connectivity is far higher in rural than in urban areas due to, for example, economy of scale challenges. Maximum return on investment therefore would be achieved through strategic positioning of infrastructure</p> <p>4G Infill Project</p> <p>Argyll and Bute Council would work with Scottish Futures Trust (SFT) to build on the knowledge, experience and lessons learned from their development and implementation of the Scotland 4G Infill (S4GI) project to procure a supplier that would deliver passive mast infrastructure, power and fibre to a portfolio of pre-agreed locations in collaboration with the Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) and Argyll and Bute Council’s Planning Authority.</p>
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By avoiding commuting costs, the additional teleworking made possible by faster broadband will lead to total household savings rising to £270 million per annum by 2024 (£45 million of which are attributable to intervention). Argyll is the second largest local authority area in Scotland; savings on commuting/car usage would be significant. • UK Broadband Impact Study reported in November in 2013 that for every £1 of public investment in digital connectivity there is a projected return of approximately £20 in net economic impact. • It is estimated that the net benefits from widespread adoption of telehealth are worth £1.1- £2.3 billion. The potential savings for a remote rural region like Argyll are therefore significant.
	Estimated costs circa: £10M

Connecting	Business cluster innovation – food and drink
Proposal 4	A rural transformation agenda for Bute

Purpose	Develop a pilot within Argyll for the high value business sector of food and drink, and primary island industries, by working with the Mount Stuart Trust, Fyne Futures and Bute Alliance to deliver benefits for Bute and wider Argyll.
Detail	<p>A more productive, inclusive and sustainable rural sector provides the stimulus for an expanded, locally based food and drink sector, based on increased quality and variety of produce. This pilot project will illustrate how traditional rural industries, with 21st century support, can contribute to national wealth through economic growth.</p> <p>Reversing population loss through sustainable economic growth would achieve a vibrant and sustainable rural community with a more robust island economy.</p> <p>Options for consideration could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger, more sustainable and productive farms • Expanded commercial forestry and actively managed bio-diverse native woodlands. • Increased large scale production horticulture including orchards. • More manufacturing and value added activity along the supply chain
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased growing opportunities for SMEs through production horticulture, multi-trophic aquaculture and vertical farming. • More on-island processing/value added activity in the supply chain. • Increased opportunity for vocational careers. • A vibrant rural community and an increased rural population. • Enhanced island bio-diversity through increased habitat management and the creation of wildlife corridors. • A more skilled rural workforce. • Greater use of renewable energy.
	Estimated Costs circa: £3M

Connecting	Business cluster innovation: Aquaculture
Proposal 5	Develop local, national and international excellence in aquaculture, by delivering a seawater pipeline and new aquaculture business incubator hub at Machrihanish in Kintyre.
Purpose	Facilitate development of scientific techniques, technologies and expertise to support the sustainable production of food in aquatic environments.
Detail	For more than 40 years, working hand-in-hand with industry, the University of Stirling has pioneered the development of scientific techniques, technologies and expertise to support the sustainable

	<p>production of food in aquatic environments. Their research and education programmes are of fundamental importance to the aquaculture industry in Scotland and across the world.</p> <p>Argyll and Bute Council, working in partnership with the University of Stirling, HIE and Machrihanish Airbase Community Company (MACC), would use rural growth deal investment to deliver an innovative seawater pipeline and pumping system. This would take fresh seawater from the shore at Machrihanish to the MACC site to support research and development.</p> <p>This seawater intake system would contribute to the development of MACC as a centre of excellence for aquaculture and create strong ties with industry, research and education bringing investment, quality learning and employment opportunities to the region. By making a clear link with industry and research at this site it has the potential to provide transformational change to the South Kintyre economy, providing a range of high end jobs and attracting new residents, young families and students to the Campbeltown area.</p> <p>It could also enable the University of Stirling to develop its options for aquaculture research at the site. This could also allow the development and/or expansion of an Innovation Park. This would also be facilitated by providing a new aquaculture business incubator hub at Machrihanish in Kintyre.</p>
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The marine economy is one of the fastest growing sectors in the UK (currently 4.2% of GDP or €39 billion (£34.8 billion), and globally (22% of the EU market). Argyll is a leading player in the UK's marine economy, because of its natural resources, and is a leading global player, with scope for further growth. • Marine biotechnology is also growing in Scotland and the sector has a target to contribute £3bn GVA to the Scottish economy by 2030. • The global economic growth of marine biotechnology is between 5-7% per annum. • There are 225 aquaculture related businesses in Scotland supporting 9,000 jobs with a target to grow employment to 18,000 by 2030 and improving productivity. <p>This project is consistent with and will support the recommendations of the MAXiMAR Science Innovation Audit.</p>
	Estimated costs circa: £6.5M

Connecting	Business cluster innovation: Marine Science
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Proposal 6	This project would involve the construction of a new state of the art marine industry training centre and a cluster development fund as part of a wider investment package in the European Marine Science Park.
Purpose	Grow the local marine industry by developing a workforce trained in specialist skills and by achieving good and improving industry practice through collaboration with the wider regional marine industries.
Detail	<p>The marine industry training facility would cater to two substantial industry demands:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training the ‘workforce afloat’- incorporating vocational training and academic education for the aquaculture, sea farms, leisure and marina sector. • Training and development of a skilled workforce to support the marine industry in Boat Building, Maintenance and Repair, Engineering and Fabrication. <p>The facility will also encourage and develop entrepreneurial skills and increased collaboration across the EMSP campus and with the wider regional marine industries. This specialist training centre would deliver a major competitive advantage for Argyll by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retaining and attracting an increased working age population through extending educational opportunities. • Investing in the specialist knowledge required to support the continued growth of the EMSP businesses. • Enhancing the existing investment in the EMSP. <p>The associated cluster development funding will further stimulate business cluster activity at the site. This will enable the employment of a Cluster Director to drive the collaborative ambition across all facets of the EMSP. A ‘collaborative campus’ challenge fund for small/ medium businesses will encourage collaboration between academia and industry. Revenue funding for a specific cluster programme of activities will focus on commercialisation and entrepreneurship</p>
Context	<p>This project is part of a wider £14m package of investment in the EMSP.</p> <p>The business cluster funding is consistent with the key recommendations of the MAXiMAR Science Innovation Audit in particular:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating multi-sector clusters of marine energy, biotech and aquaculture organisations (incorporating industry and academia) will result in significantly increased growth rates for the marine sector.
	Estimated costs circa: £7m

Attracting: additional skills, training and learning opportunities; new residents, visitors and businesses

Attracting	Skills, training and education
Proposal 7	Match local skills development and career paths to local economic opportunities
Purpose	Support economic growth by developing an integrated skills, education, training and employment framework to develop and retain business skills in Argyll.
Detail	<p>A mobile STEM academy would make Argyll a region of excellence where the skills of young people are matched to the growth of STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) related employment prospects. This would offer every school in Argyll cutting edge learning on subjects such as science, digital skills and cybersecurity. The Mobile STEM Academy modules would reflect local industry or research expertise and would be developed in partnership with employers and academic institutions, such as Argyll College, City of Glasgow College and the University of Strathclyde.</p> <p>Skills for rural enterprise, economic growth and population rebalance would provide a model based on a Centre for Rural Entrepreneurship (as identified in the Compelling Argyll report, 2015) and a locality-based approach. This project would deliver a strategic approach to enterprise that would raise awareness of local economic opportunities and create pathways for young people to remain in, return or relocate to Argyll.</p> <p>Small business support programme would support individual businesses in developing the skill sets of staff and maximising their growth potential. Key components include grant support for SME businesses to improve the skills of their employees for example via training in digital connectivity, to start/refurbish /relocate/expand into cluster sites, access specialist advice or networking linked to cluster sites, and maximise the benefits of the framework projects.</p> <p>Capital funding for UHI/Argyll College accommodation this would support the expansion of further education opportunities in Argyll by delivering much needed new accommodation for Argyll College, with Dunoon currently being the highest priority area.</p>
Context	In 2017, as noted in the Regional Skills Assessment for Argyll, total employment in Argyll was 46,800 jobs , with the largest employing

	<p>sectors being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public administration and defence (7,400 jobs, 16%); • Human health and social work (6,200 jobs, 13%); and • Accommodation and food services (5,700 jobs, 12%). • Although total employment is forecast to decline, the area is expected to see a total requirement of 10,100 openings/replacement demand for people by 2027. • Of the expected job openings for 10,100 people in the forecast period, demand will be greatest for elementary occupations (2,400 people) followed by professional occupations (2,200 people) and skilled trades occupations (1,800 people). • Accommodation and food services will require a total of 2,900 jobs through replacement demand by 2027. • Tourism will require 3,400 jobs through replacement demand by 2027.
	<p>Estimated costs circa: £10M</p>

Attracting	Housing to facilitate economic growth
Proposal 8	Provide affordable housing of the right type and in the right place to support growing business sectors.
Purpose	Support business growth by providing housing to attract a skilled workforce.
Detail	<p>Housing is a key component of economic growth which has been identified as a priority by a number of local business sectors, in particular the growing food/drink, marine and tourism sectors. It is essential that housing is available for key workers and is located in areas which are accessible and connected with good digital and transport infrastructure. Argyll and Bute Council is working with a wide range of stakeholders including local housebuilders, housing associations and business sectors to identify a range of measures including infrastructure, technology and policy interventions that will provide the range of housing required for inclusive economic growth. It is essential that housing forms a key part of the Rural Growth Deal and a range of potential projects will be considered including:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of a Key Worker Housing Enabling Fund. • Establishment of an Innovation Fund to develop modern methods of construction to drive down costs, improve quality and facilitate more rural and island development. • Establish a Community Finance Initiative to enable as

	<p>many as possible to benefit from the opportunities inherent in the housing stimulus of the Rural Growth Deal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of clusters of assisted living schemes at key locations particularly in rural and island communities.
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is evidence that lack of housing for workers in certain areas in Argyll is constraining economic growth by making it difficult for local businesses to expand. An adequate supply of affordable housing is critical to encourage a growing population and meet the labour/skills requirements of the region's growing sectors. • Reducing fuel poverty in rural areas aligns with the Scottish Government's policies on inclusive growth; using innovative and sustainable local sources of energy generation will help achieve a more prosperous, low carbon economy. • A recent health and housing study highlighted the fact that the population of people over the age of 75 in Argyll will increase by 3000 over the next 10 years. Technology assisted care can improve health outcomes for the population and reduce pressure on health and social care services. • Increased construction employment opportunities - it is estimated that each house constructed can support 4 jobs in the local economy.
	Estimated Costs circa: £10M

Attracting	Business Accommodation:
	Logistics Business Park Expansion, Lochgilphead
Proposal 9	Deliver infrastructure that will support business growth and job creation.
Purpose	Provide the critical infrastructure necessary to support the private sector to deliver this strategic business site catering for the significant unmet demand for business accommodation in Mid Argyll.
Detail	<p>The Mid Argyll Chamber of Commerce has worked hard to spearhead improvements to transport links into Argyll and is now concentrating on addressing the need for increased business space.</p> <p>The project will deliver the critical supporting infrastructure which in turn will enable the expansion of Kilmory Business Park in order to deliver a range of fully serviced sites for the provision of circa 55,000ft² of business premises and storage options for up to 10 new and expanding small and</p>

	<p>medium sized enterprises (SMEs).</p> <p>This project would unlock 2.7 hectares of undeveloped land through the provision of site infrastructure including the construction of a new access road from the A83 into the development area at Kilmory, Lochgilphead.</p> <p>The proposed project also has the potential to develop new training facilities as well as logistic workshop and business units.</p> <p>This would create a Mid Argyll distribution hub to support the development of effective routes to market.</p>
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of up to 50 jobs through business expansion and start up • Support new and existing businesses (10 SME) creating new employment opportunities encouraging population retention • Support for 50 construction jobs during phase 1 • Local contractors used where possible for maintenance and repairs • Opportunity for businesses to increase their turnover • Increase the value of the land, which currently has little value for agricultural or forestry use.
	Estimated Costs circa: £1M

Attracting	Developing places to live, work and visit
Proposal 10	Place-based investment to support community-led regeneration
Purpose	Develop our coastal communities as great places to live, work and visit.
Detail	<p>80% of the population of Argyll live within one kilometre of the coast.</p> <p>This proposal is about making Argyll's Places (towns and villages) sustainable and prosperous through mini capital regeneration schemes by empowering communities to drive forward and reach their economic potential. This supports the UK Governments £2m investment in place-based cultural development to continue to support the role culture can play in regeneration as set out in the Industrial Strategy.</p> <p>This project will see the delivery of community led capital regeneration and public realm projects across Argyll which will attract new talent to our area and created communities where people want to live, work, visit and invest.</p> <p>Valuing and having pride in the fabric of our places and associated built heritage environment is essential to protect what makes Argyll special as a place and capable of strong and sustainable growth.</p>
Context	Attractive Places will:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on investment already made in our Places and the leverage of additional external funding secured • Target funding to support change according to the needs of communities based on a place making approach. • Create attractive, vibrant and sustainable Places through investment and improvement to the built fabric of our towns and villages • Create stronger communities by tackling area inequality and creating opportunities for communities to be fully involved and take action themselves • Support existing businesses and create new business opportunities • Help and create Retaining and attracting young people through the creation of vibrant places and new job opportunities
	Estimated Costs circa: £10M

Attracting	Centre of excellence and community growth
Proposal 11	Realise local community opportunities from the MOD's emerging centre of engineering excellence in Helensburgh and Lomond.
Purpose	Develop a prosperous urban community by creating mutually beneficial opportunities for existing and arriving residents.
Detail	<p>The MOD Maritime Change Programme will see £1.3bn invested over the next 10 years in order to facilitate HMNB Clyde becoming the Royal Navy's "UK Submarine Centre of Specialisation."</p> <p>This programme will result in an increase in military personnel by 1,700 by 2032 resulting in a total of 8,200 staff directly employed at the site.</p> <p>The town of Helensburgh, located 6 miles from HMNB Clyde, is perfectly positioned to help ensure that this change is successful, for the people who will make it work – armed forces personnel, their families, private contractors, and local people in Argyll.</p> <p>While this proposal clearly connects local success with national priorities, we are classing it as 'place-making' initiative as it focuses on the people who together will ultimately make the Maritime Change Programme a national success; the proposal is about ensuring that armed forces personnel and their families come to opportunities for employment and quality lifestyle, and that their move brings new opportunities for business success to the people of Helensburgh and Lomond and wider Argyll.</p> <p>A new business hub in Helensburgh would create a mixed use, high</p>

	<p>specification industrial/business site allowing for non-secure MoD functions or supply chain businesses to be sited off-base, with the added benefit of providing employment opportunities for Royal Navy spouses and local residents. This industrial hub, specialising in engineering excellence, would be developed with the support of the academic sector including Strathclyde University.</p> <p>It is the aim of Argyll and Bute Council to maximise this potential by instigating measures that will attract businesses and families to the area, and to demonstrate the value of such investment to the local community through infrastructure projects.</p> <p>The proposed package of works looks to demonstrate value to the local community while providing opportunities for economic growth. It does this by focusing on enhanced amenity, recreation, employment and business facilities and opportunities for sustainable transport enhancements such as low emission buses providing new/enhanced services between HMNB Clyde and key sites / services such as Glasgow Airport and the Royal Alexandria Hospital.</p> <p>The project will serve to enrich the area surrounding HMNB Clyde, providing an enhanced welcome to the naval personnel and their families, while stimulating economic growth and job potential.</p>
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The UK Government's aspiration is that 33% of public expenditure with third parties be placed with SMEs by the end of this parliament. MOD's expenditure is particularly important, as it accounted for some 44% of the Government's overall £45 billion procurement expenditure in 2015/16. • In 2016/17 MOD direct spend with SMEs amounted to around £707 million with just under 5,980 different suppliers. MOD Core Department placed around 440 new contracts with SMEs having a collective value of around £523 million • The Maritime Change Programme will result in all UK Submarine operations being delivered from the Clyde by 2020, which will reinforce the long term future of Faslane and Coulport.
	Estimated Costs circa: £20M

Growing: doing more of what works; making more of our natural and built resources

Growing	Argyll – National Aquaculture Hub
Proposal 12	Invest in the critical infrastructure required to accelerate growth in local marine industries in Argyll.
Purpose	Invest in essential infrastructure that would unlock land-based sites and significantly increase production capacity in Argyll, encourage innovation in the industry, add value to products and support the development of the important supply chain such as net washing, manufacture, etc.
Detail	<p>Given its abundant natural resources and strategic position on the west coast of Scotland, Argyll has the potential to be the national hub for aquaculture in Scotland, the UK and Europe.</p> <p>The aquaculture economy makes a significant contribution to the wider Argyll economy and provides year round jobs which are important for coastal communities with downstream jobs supported in transport, processing, support services and equipment manufacturing.</p> <p>Argyll has the ingredients for success. It has the Scottish Association of Marine Sciences (SAMS), and is currently working in collaboration on a study investigating the feasibility of seaweed farming in Argyll. Seaweed has the potential to be a lucrative growth sector in Argyll as this abundant natural resource is used in many products including (but not limited to) bread, spices, health products, pharmaceuticals, animal feeds and biofuels.</p> <p>This sector has grown in recent years and has significant potential for further growth, particularly in relation to aquaculture, a sector with strong ambitions for growth both nationally and regionally. Scotland: aquaculture has a high-value industry and one of the strongest growth opportunities in the 21st century.</p> <p>This proposal would invest funding in essential infrastructure that would allow land based sites to be unlocked and fast track the development of new aquaculture hubs across Argyll. Ardyne for example is a strategically important area for the development of aquaculture with the benefit of approved masterplan status and outline planning consent to develop a large brownfield site adjacent to deep water and suitable for a wide range of marine aquaculture businesses to locate to or expand.</p>
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Industrial Biotechnology Innovation Centre estimate that the value of marine biotechnology to the Highlands and Islands region could amount to around £600m by 2030, with £350m of this figure attributed to extractives from seaweed.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aquaculture is one of Scotland's real economic success stories and the industry is on track to grow to a value of well over £2 billion annually to the Scottish economy by 2020, supporting 10,000 jobs. • Aquaculture brings £1.8 billion to the UK economy each year, 77% from Scotland. • In Scotland, the aquaculture industry has ambitious plans to double output by 2030. • Internationally, aquatic food production is growing at 8% per annum and has already surpassed wild capture fisheries in the supply of fish for human consumption. • Salmon is the UK's biggest food export, by value, serving China, the US and France amongst other markets, but shellfish is a growing market and relatively under developed. • The EU aquaculture sector was worth €4.1 billion (£4.6 billion) in 2015, a 20% increase from 2018 (in the same period the economic value of Scottish aquaculture rose by just under 50%). • Global production rose by 54% from 69 million tonnes to 106 million tonnes reflecting the growth in demand for protein rich foods. • Sustainable seaweed farming and harvesting has the potential to rival the scale of fish farming in Scotland with a long and growing list of products with international appeal, including (but not limited to) bread, spices, health products, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, animal feeds and biofuel.
	Estimated Costs circa: £10M

Growing	Tourism: Argyll - Scotland's Adventure Coast
Proposal 13	Develop our natural resources as a key economic driver
Purpose	Attract significantly more visitors particularly from the UK and overseas to travel throughout Argyll, as Scotland's Adventure Coast, stimulating economic growth across the region
Detail	<p>The region has been performing well over recent years but to consolidate and sustain this growth important investment is required to encourage visitors to travel further into and around the region, link up our different islands and peninsulas and offer unique and authentic adventures and experiences that derive local, regional and national economic impact.</p> <p>Through focused activity in recent years, Argyll is now positioned as 'Scotland's Adventure Coast'. Actions have included for example the hugely successful partnership-funded Wild About Argyll campaign in 2017</p>

	<p>which was a finalist in the international City Nation Place Awards 2017 sponsored by the New York Times. 'Wild About Argyll'. https://www.wildaboutargyll.co.uk/</p> <p>To consolidate this positioning, strategic investment is required in our visitor and adventure tourism infrastructure, and in business and product development, marketing and promotion.</p> <p>Argyll's natural environment and outstanding coastline provides numerous opportunities to further develop adventure tourism. Options could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanding and connecting existing walking, cycling, kayaking and driving route and trail networks on land and sea • developing iconic features at strategic locations on our trails and roads network to draw visitors and travellers through the region and providing much-needed visitor facilities and services at strategic locations • Working with existing and new businesses to expand the quality and range of products and experiences on offer and ease to find and book these experiences • Working collaboratively with Visit Scotland, AITC, Scottish Canals, Forestry Commission Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage plus our strategic travel partners to develop new facilities, products and experiences at key locations and offering integrated travel solutions
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct expenditure on tourism in Argyll rose by 52% between 2009 and 2017 (increase of £117m). There was a 60 % growth in income to the accommodation sector between 2009 and 2017. Total Economic Impact of Tourism to Argyll was £479m in 2017 (direct and indirect) up 49% from 2009 (£322m) • The percentage of people employed in tourism in Argyll has consistently been above the Scottish average but the GVA derived from tourism in Argyll has traditionally been below the Scottish average. This is changing but significantly more investment is needed to extend the season and provide visitors with increased opportunities to spend locally to secure great GVA from tourism. • Argyll has four of Scotland's Great Trails on land (Kintyre Way, Cowal Way, West Island Way and Three Lochs Way), the John Muir Way starts/finishes in Argyll and the West Highland Way dips in and out of Argyll. The 237 mile Sustrans Caledonia Way stretches from Campbeltown to Oban (and on to Inverness) and is linked via Dunoon to the central belt. The Argyll sea kayak trail is Scotland's first. There are strategic gaps and opportunities to extend this trail network with focused investment • The Heart & Soul campaign in 2018 follows on from Wild About Argyll and is an excellent example of partnership in action: it positions Glasgow & Argyll as the Heart & Soul of Scotland and

	<p>raises awareness that Argyll, Scotland’s Adventure Coast, is just ‘a hop and skip’ from Glasgow, highlighting that few other cities have such incredible wild landscape within striking distance.</p> <p>Led by AITC with Council support, Heart & Soul is a strategic partnership between Argyll and Glasgow, with partners including Visit Scotland, A&BC, People Make Glasgow (Glasgow Life) and all transport partners - Scotrail, Calmac, Loganair, Enterprise rent-a-car, Glasgow Airport and West Coast Motors.</p>
	<p>Estimated costs circa: £13m</p>

Growing	Tourism: Creating a world class visitor destination
Proposal 14	Develop Argyll as Scotland’s prime marine tourism destination.
Purpose	<p>Open up access to Argyll’s coasts and waters to develop Argyll as a West of Scotland, “must visit” location for the maritime leisure market.</p>
Detail	<p>Argyll’s 3700km of coastline and 23 inhabited islands are surrounded by waters of an exceptional environmental quality, and the region boasts some of the world’s most beautiful and varied boating and kayaking waters, marine wildlife, scenery and heritage. There is a clear opportunity for Argyll to become Scotland’s prime destination for the marine leisure market, for private craft, charter yachts and cruise ship passengers to come ashore and for land-based visitors to gain access to the water on boat excursions and for water sports, wildlife watching and to island hop.</p> <p>A recent detailed inventory by AITC has demonstrated that there are several coastal hub locations offering exceptional seafood, distillery, heritage and wildlife experiences but these are not currently joined up. Rural Growth Deal investment would deliver strategic facilities that would ‘join-up’ coastal locations and so enable the growth of the maritime sector, bringing a range of economic and social benefits.</p> <p>The lack of a “joined up” experience for marine visitors to come ashore has resulted in recognition of the need for a ‘step change’ in the range, quality and nature of the region’s maritime facilities. There is also a need to provide the skills this industry requires to create a customer focused world class product with international appeal.</p> <p>Transport in Argyll was traditionally by water and there is significant potential in reinstating these seafaring routes through investment in strategic come-ashore facilities linked to visitor experiences. This could include investment in our iconic structures providing access to famous and</p>

	<p>historic waterways.</p> <p>Around 3,000 boats pass through the Crinan Canal every year – mainly pleasure craft and it continues to be popular with tourists with the route described as Britain’s most beautiful shortcut. Working in partnership with Argyll and Bute Council, Scottish Canals have developed proposals to transform the Crinan Canal Corridor into a major tourism attraction in Mid Argyll.</p>
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Year of Scotland’s Coast and Waters will be celebrated in 2020 led by VisitScotland. AITC is working with other west coast destinations to develop a programme of pan west coast activity • The yachting, tourist excursions and boat trip/water taxi sectors have all advised they are currently constrained (capacity and service standards) by the lack of adequate infrastructure to come ashore at key hub locations along the coastline. Therefore, development and infrastructure is needed to accommodate growth and realise the economic opportunities available. • Marine Tourism was worth £360m per annum to the Scottish economy in 2014 (British Marine Federation) and the ambition is to increase this to £450m by 2020 • A user survey in 2016 based on 2500 users produced heat maps identifying the West Coast, and Argyll’s coast and waters in particular, as prime locations for numerous water based activities including yachting, sea kayaking, whale and dolphin spotting, scuba diving and sea fishing. • Argyll as a region is in close proximity to Scotland’s central belt and national and international travel connections and therefore is much more accessible to maritime leisure markets than other west coast destinations • Studies on Sailing Tourism undertaken for Scottish Enterprise in 2010 and 2016 highlighted that Scotland lacks a joined up experience for sailing visitors seeking to come ashore. • Argyll’s coastline, communities and attractions are suited to and have significant appeal to the smaller high end cruise operators seeking authentic experiences but investment is required in come ashore facilities to secure the local economic impact
	Estimated costs circa: £9m

Growing	Creating a low carbon economy
Proposal 15	Run a pilot on the island of Islay to deliver a smart island local energy network.
Purpose	Address key island energy challenges for people and business; and support 'clean growth', an important element in the development of the UK's Industrial Strategy and Clean Growth Strategy.
Detail	<p>Low-carbon generation supports the Industrial Strategy's 4 Grand Challenge to promote clean growth, taking into account the five foundations of people, infrastructure, place, business environment and ideas.</p> <p>The island of Islay faces various challenges including a constrained grid network, high fuel and transport costs, high energy usage from the existing distilleries on the island and low local energy generation - despite the amazing natural resource, one of the best tidal power resources in EU with the exception of the Pentland Firth.</p> <p>The pilot would examine the use of smart grid technologies to improve energy provision, reduce cost and support local growth on our islands, building on the learning from smaller scale projects including the ACCESS project on Mull.</p> <p>This would be secured by examining the development of an integrated smart energy system to improve energy efficiency and manage energy demand, incorporating low carbon and smart technologies. This approach would be based on a partnership between public and private sector. It would support the community on Islay to deliver sustainable energy solutions that maximise benefit from the natural renewable resource on and around the island, reduce energy demand and the islands carbon footprint, reduce energy costs including transport and heat and increase the opportunity to generate income to the community.</p>
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The UK Industrial Strategy promotes smart systems that link energy supply, storage and use and join up power, heating and transport to increase efficiency and reduce costs as well as potentially creating high value jobs for the future. • Low-carbon generation supports the UK Industrial Strategy's 4 Grand Challenge to promote clean growth, taking into account the five foundations of people, infrastructure, place, business environment and ideas. • Islay's distilleries all currently use oil for their primary energy source which is imported onto the island at great expense. However Islay has considerable potential to increase renewable energy generation given its significant natural resources of wind,

	<p>wave and tidal power.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are limited options to high energy bills given the lack of a gas grid network. • The current fuel poverty rate for Argyll is estimated at 45%, compared with the Scottish average of 26.5%. This project could help tackle the issue of rural fuel poverty and if successful could be transferable to other island and rural communities.
	Estimated costs circa: £5M

Policy	Action on policy to deliver inclusive economic growth.
Proposal 16	Address obstacles to, and open-up opportunities for economic growth through policy developments.
Purpose	As part of the Rural Growth Deal, Argyll and Bute Council have been asked to consider potential policy or fiscal powers which could be implemented to complement the infrastructure, skills and training projects included within the deal.
Detail	<p>Some potential policy projects are set out below;-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest the circa £700k currently spent by Argyll and Bute Council on the apprenticeship levy on local apprenticeships and training tied to local job opportunities to help retain and attract working age people to Argyll and reverse our declining population. • Investigate the potential to relocate some government funded departments / organisations to Argyll e.g. Marine Scotland, CMAL/CalMac – this would create high value jobs in rural areas where the services are delivered. • Based on key export targets being achieved, return a proportion of excise duty on locally produced spirits to Argyll and Bute Council to be used for localised infrastructure projects that support / encourage growth in exports e.g. transport infrastructure focusing on key routes to markets. • Grow our working age population by encouraging more students to live, study and work in Argyll. Introduce a bursary and or write down student debt for graduates to encourage more students and graduates to work and study in rural areas. (subject to conditions e.g. resident for minimum period). Increase funding from the Scottish Funding Council for delivery of local college and university courses tailored to key sector skills gaps. At present Argyll gets a lower share of funding which restricts the courses which can be offered locally e.g. Moray awarded £15M as opposed to £3m in

	<p>Argyll despite similar numbers of students. This is a significant disadvantage to Argyll, particularly given the ambitious proposals to grow student numbers via projects such as Oban University Town.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There should be no VAT applied on works undertaken to refurbish older buildings in line with new build houses. This would make it more viable to regenerate some of our town centres and encourage investment by the private sector in domestic and commercial properties. • Create a number of Enterprise zones in Argyll at strategic business sites e.g. European Marine Science Park, Machrihanish Airbase Community Company site (also potential to consider sites at Craigendoran, Sandbank and Kilmory Phase 2). • Following the Scottish Ferries Review and Publication of the Scottish Ferries Plan we would encourage Transport Scotland ensure all local ferry services receive fair and consistent funding in recognition of their importance to local communities. This includes a fares structure which supports economic growth for all users.
<p>Context</p>	<p>Argyll brings together much of what is best about Scotland – natural and built resources that drive national and international business markets, expertise that inspires innovation, and people committed to developing the prosperous future the area needs and deserves.</p> <p>Argyll therefore provides opportunities for economic growth that would benefit life in Argyll, Scotland and the UK. To turn opportunity into success we must reverse the decline in our population.</p>

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**Special Council****Customer Services****18 October 2018**

Joint Local British Sign Language Plan for Argyll and Bute

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015 requires public bodies in Scotland to publish local plans every six years, showing how they will promote and support British Sign Language (BSL).

The Joint Local BSL Plan for Argyll and Bute 2018 – 2024 is at Appendix 1 of the attached Policy and Resources Committee Report and sets out how we propose to use BSL in the operation of our functions; including communications with the public, key partners and our employees.

The report is being presented to the Policy and Resources Committee on 18th October where the Committee will be asked to recommend approval of the plan by Council. The Council has a statutory duty to publish a BSL Plan in English and BSL by 31 October 2018 and hence approval of any recommendation brought forward by the Policy and Resources Committee is being referred to the Special Council Meeting on 18th October. Recommendations from the Policy and Resources Committee will be formally advised to the Special Council Meeting on this date.

The Council is therefore invited to:

- a) consider the proposals as outlined in the Joint Local BSL Plan for Argyll and Bute 2018 – 2024
- b) consider any recommendations forthcoming from the Policy and Resources Committee of 18th October in relation to approval of the Joint Local BSL Plan for Argyll and Bute 2018 – 2024.
- c) approve adoption of the Joint Local BSL Plan for Argyll and Bute 2018 – 2024

Douglas Hendry, Executive Director of Customer Services
Councillor Rory Colville, Policy Lead for Corporate Services
18 September 2018

For further information contact: Jane Fowler, Head of Improvement & HR,
Telephone: 01546 604466

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ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

Policy and Resources Committee

Customer Services

18 October 2018

Joint Local British Sign Language Plan for Argyll and Bute

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 requires public bodies in Scotland to publish local plans every six years, showing how they will promote and support BSL. The Joint Local BSL Plan for Argyll and Bute 2018 – 2024 is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

The Joint Local plan sets out how we propose to use BSL in the operation of our functions; including communications with the public, key partners and our employees.

The Scottish Government provided the Council with £11,000 to develop its Local BSL Plan but no additional money to put it into practice. Where the implementation costs are known, these have been detailed in Appendix 4 to this report.

Demand for interpreting and translation services may increase as well as requests for deaf awareness and BSL training as a result of developing and promoting the BSL Plan.

The next set of plans is not due until 2024 when the Scottish Government will decide on the resources to be made available to named public bodies at that time.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Policy and Resources Committee are asked to recommend the approval of the Joint Local BSL Plan for Argyll and Bute 2018 – 2024 to Council.

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

Policy and Resources Committee

Customer Services

18 October 2018

Joint Local British Sign Language Plan for Argyll and Bute

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Scottish Government wants to make Scotland the best place in the world for British Sign Language (BSL) users to live, learn, work and visit. The BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 requires public bodies in Scotland to publish local plans every six years, showing how they will promote and support BSL. The Joint Local British Sign Language Plan for Argyll and Bute 2018 – 2024 (Appendix 1) has been put together with NHS Highland; liveArgyll (who are responsible for some of the goals listed under the Culture and Arts, and Health (including social care), Mental Health and Wellbeing sections) and input from BSL users and their representatives. This is Argyll and Bute Council's first local plan which also covers the Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP).

The Socio-Economic Impact Assessment for the Plan is enclosed as Appendix 2 to this report.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Policy and Resources Committee are asked to recommend the approval of the Joint Local BSL Plan for Argyll and Bute 2018 – 2024 to Council.

3.0 DETAIL

- 3.1 Legislation requires BSL users (including those who use the tactile form of the language) and those who represent them to be involved in developing the local BSL plan. The consultation on the draft plan must be accessible to Deaf and Deafblind BSL users and both the draft and final plans must be published in English and BSL. Public consultation on the draft plan ran from 2 August 2018 – 2 September 2018 inclusive and a summary of the responses received is attached to this report as Appendix 3. This summary will be published with the Joint Local Plan so that members of the public can see how their responses have influenced the final document and associated actions.
- 3.2 The Joint Local plan sets out how we propose to use BSL in the operation of our functions; including communications with the public, key partners and our employees. It has been prepared in accordance with statutory criteria set out

in the 2015 Act, the National BSL Plan, and guidance provided by the BSL (Scotland) Act Partnership; particularly in relation to the development of BSL Plans.

Additional information about some of the actions contained within the Plan is provided in Appendix 4.

- 3.3 The actions detailed in the plan will be built in Pyramid, the Council's performance management system, and will be monitored on a regular basis. Progress will be reported to the Policy and Resources Committee once a year.

4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 requires named public bodies in Scotland (including Argyll and Bute Council) to publish local plans every six years, showing how they will promote and support BSL. The first local plans should be available by 31 October 2018 in both English and BSL. The final Joint local BSL plan for Argyll and Bute 2018 - 2024 sets out the collective intentions of Argyll and Bute Council, NHS Highland Health Board and liveArgyll to improve communication with, and access to services for, people who use BSL in the period 2018-2024. It has been prepared in accordance with statutory criteria set out in the 2015 Act, the National BSL Plan, and guidance provided by the BSL (Scotland) Act Partnership; particularly in relation to the development of BSL Plans. The final plan is attached to this report as Appendix 1.
- 4.2 Also accompanying this report is a summary of the feedback received during the public consultation on the draft BSL Plan (Appendix 3), and an Equality and Socio-Economic Impact Assessment which has been informed by the outputs from the public consultation (Appendix 2). Appendix 4 provides some additional information on some of the actions listed in the Plan. These documents will be published on the Council's website together with the Joint Local Plan.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Policy When approved by the Council, the BSL Plan will become Council policy and have the formal endorsement of our senior management team and Elected Members. Its contents should also be taken into account when devising any council policies which may have an impact on BSL users.
- 5.2 Financial The Scottish Government provided the Council with £11,000 to develop the BSL Plan. There may be costs associated with its implementation. Demand for interpreting and translation services may increase as well as requests for deaf awareness and BSL training as a result of developing and promoting the BSL Plan.

The council already provides some BSL training to staff, and to hearing and deaf children in some schools. The council may receive requests from parents to provide free BSL courses for them, however it is important to note that no commitment to provide this has been made in the final plan. Argyll and Bute Council's Teacher of the Deaf helps families who use signing to learn it as part of her regular visits with them. The National Deaf Children's Society (Scotland) has previously funded family home signing sessions for three families within Argyll and Bute, as well as organising and delivering an online BSL Level 1 course at one of the schools within the area.

- 5.3 Legal The Council has a statutory duty to publish a BSL Plan in English and BSL by 31 October 2018. It also has a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people under the Equality Act 2010.
- 5.4 HR Staff will be made aware of the BSL Plan and its associated activities. Deaf Awareness Training will be available for all employees to access.
- 5.5 Equalities The BSL Plan will help ensure that people whose first or preferred language is BSL can be fully involved in daily and public life in Scotland, as active, healthy citizens, and able to make informed choices about every part of their lives.
- 5.6 Risk The Council would be breaching its statutory obligations if it does not publish a BSL Plan by October 2018.
- 5.7 Customer Service Implementation of the BSL Plan should result in improved access to services, information and communication for BSL users.

Douglas Hendry, Executive Director of Customer Services
Councillor Rory Colville, Policy Lead for Corporate Services
18 September 2018

For further information contact: Jane Fowler, Head of Improvement & HR,
Telephone: 01546 604466

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 - Joint Local BSL Plan for Argyll and Bute, 2018 - 2024
- Appendix 2 - Equality and Socio-Economic Impact Assessment
- Appendix 3 - We asked, You Said, We Did – Analysis of responses to public consultation exercise
- Appendix 4 – Supplementary Information on Actions



Environment
Business
Families
Culture
Education
Cleaving
Recycling
Benefits
Licensing
Planning
Housing
Health
Transport
Care



Argyll and Bute Joint British Sign Language Plan 2018 – 2024

This plan has been prepared as required by the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015.



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1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This is the first Local Joint British Sign Language (BSL) Plan for Argyll and Bute. It sets out the actions which we will take over the period 2018 – 2024 to protect and support British Sign Language, including in its tactile form, in Argyll and Bute. This plan has been developed jointly by Argyll and Bute Council, NHS Highland Health Board (includes the services devolved to the Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP)) and liveArgyll (a charitable trust which delivers leisure and library services on behalf of Argyll and Bute Council), who are responsible for some of the goals listed under the Culture and Arts, and Health (including social care), Mental Health and Wellbeing sections.

NHS Highland's action plan is embedded within this document.

- 1.1.2 Throughout this Plan we refer to 'BSL users'. This covers all people whose first or preferred language is BSL, including those who receive the language in a tactile form due to sight loss.
- 1.1.3 Our Local Joint BSL Plan follows the same layout as the Scottish Government's National Plan which was published on 24 October 2017. The BSL National Plan is framed under ten long-term goals which have been put together with the help and support of Deaf and Deafblind BSL users across Scotland, and those who work with them.
- 1.1.4 The National BSL Plan covers all public bodies with a national focus who are directly answerable to Scottish Ministers. The ten long-term goals cover early years and education; training and work; health; culture and the arts; transport; justice and democracy. It includes 70 actions which the Scottish Government will take over the next three years. This Local Joint BSL Plan contributes directly to 31 of those actions. We will give the Scottish Government an update on the progress we have made on these actions in 2020.

1.2 Where you can find the BSL version of this plan

You can view the BSL version of this plan at:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/ArgyllandButeCouncil>



NHS Highland's action plan will be published on the NHS Highland website.
www.nhshighland.scot.nhs.uk

2. About us

2.1 Argyll and Bute Council

- 2.1.1 Argyll and Bute Council is one of 32 unitary local authorities in Scotland. It is responsible for a range of services including education, waste management, transportation, planning and building control, economic development, roads, strategic housing, environmental health and many others. We are forward looking and ambitious, continuously improving our relationship with our partners, customers and employees to ensure we deliver the right services, by the best people, in the best way.
- 2.1.2 Argyll and Bute Council is the second largest of Scotland's 32 councils covering nearly 10% of the total area of Scotland, but has less than 2% of the population. From Appin in the North, to Campbeltown in the South, Argyll and Bute stretches for over 100 miles and from Tiree in the West to Helensburgh in the East it stretches a further 80 miles. According to the 2011 census, 23 of Argyll and Bute's islands are inhabited and 17.1% of its residents are islanders. Islands account for a third of Argyll and Bute's total area.
- 2.1.3 The population estimate from the 2011 census was 88,166 ranking Argyll and Bute 27th in terms of population size amongst the Scottish local authorities.

In the 2011 Census, the people of Scotland were asked if they used a language other than English at home. In Argyll and Bute, 152 people of those aged 3 and over said "Yes – British Sign Language".

6931 of respondents in Argyll and Bute to the 2011 census reported they had deafness or partial hearing loss which had lasted, or was expected to last, at least 12 months.

- 2.1.4 The Council employs over 4700 staff who are based in over 300 different locations across the area. The Council is a core partner in the Integrated Joint Board for Health and Social Care in Argyll and Bute and also works closely in partnership with the Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership to deliver on the overall Argyll and Bute Outcome Improvement Plan (ABOIP) objective:

Argyll and Bute's Economic Success is Built on a Growing Population



There are 6 joint outcomes, which are also core to the Council's Corporate Plan:

- The economy is diverse and thriving
- We have infrastructure that supports sustainable growth
- Education, skills and training maximises opportunities for all
- Children and young people have the best possible start
- People live active, healthier and independent lives
- People live in safer and stronger communities

The Joint Local BSL Plan helps us to deliver these outcomes directly.

2.2 NHS Highland Health Board

2.2.1 NHS Highland Board is the largest and most sparsely populated Scottish Health Board area. It covers 41% of the country's landmass. The area covers 32,518 km. This results in a complex network for NHS service provision and referral pathways. We have difficult terrain, rugged coastlines, populated islands and a limited internal transport and communications infrastructure.

2.2.2 The Health Board includes two local authority areas, Highland and Argyll & Bute. Our diverse area includes Inverness, one of the fastest growing cities in Western Europe and 36 populated islands – 23 in Argyll & Bute and 13 in Highland.

2.2.3 We provide health and social care services to our resident population of 320,000 and to the influx of tourists which come to the Highlands. At certain times of the year, tourists can double or even triple the local population.

2.2.4 We provide services to patients and local communities through four main operational units - three geographical operational units and Raigmore Hospital.

The geographical operational units are:-

- Argyll and Bute;
- South and Mid Highland (covering Badenoch, Strathspey, Nairn, Inverness, East and Mid Ross);
- North and West Highland (covering Lochaber, Skye, Wester Ross, Caithness and Sutherland)

These operational units are supported by a range of Corporate Services including facilities, pharmacy, personnel, and finance.



Raigmore Hospital is the District General Hospital for north Highland. Most patients from Argyll and Bute are referred to Glasgow hospitals for secondary care.

- 2.2.5 NHS Highland is also a major employer, second only to the local authorities in the number of people employed. In business terms, this is of major significance to the Highland economy.
- 2.2.6 NHS Highland Health Board also have a BSL Plan which covers the Highland local authority region. That Plan was produced in partnership with Highland Council, University of the Highlands, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and D/deaf, Deafblind people, carers and those with a shared interest. The action points from NHS Highland are combined within this Council action plan for ease of reference.

2.3 Argyll and Bute Social Care Partnership

- 2.3.1 Integration of health and social care brings about significant changes to the way services are delivered, to help bring long-term sustainability to services and improve the health and wellbeing of the people of Scotland. It places greater importance on supporting people in their own homes and communities and reducing inappropriate hospital and care home use.
- 2.3.2 Local Authorities and NHS Boards created formal partnership arrangements (Integration Authorities) to integrate the planning, management and delivery of adult health and social care services (including some hospital services). These arrangements can either be in the form of a body corporate model (known as an Integrated Joint Board) or a lead agency model.
- 2.3.3 Argyll & Bute adopted the Integrated Joint Board (IJB) model. Under this model Argyll & Bute IJB is responsible for children's health and social care services, criminal justice, social work and all acute services.
- 2.3.4 Part of NHS Highland local services in Argyll and Bute have referral pathways to services in NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde. Oban has an audiology department which covers the majority of Argyll, whereas Helensburgh and Cowal (East side of Argyll and Bute) refer to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Glasgow for these services. This is a similar geographical split for the majority of NHS services with Glasgow providing Consultant Services in the specialities that are not provided locally across Argyll and Bute.

Some BSL users who are patients in Oban are offered the option of going north to link with the Inverness general services via satellite consultant clinics in Fort William.



2.4 liveArgyll

- 2.4.1 liveArgyll was established by Argyll and Bute Council in October 2017 and is a company which is limited by guarantee. This charitable trust delivers a wide range of services for the benefit of local residents and visitors including: libraries, leisure facilities, halls, community centres, community lets, sport development, Active Schools, archives and Campbeltown museum.
- 2.4.2 liveArgyll are helping Argyll and Bute Council and NHS Highland Health Board to deliver some of the goals listed under the Culture and Arts, and Health (including social care), Mental Health and Wellbeing sections of this plan.

3 British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015

3.1 The Act

British Sign Language is a language in its own right, with its own grammar, syntax, vocabulary and dialects. It enables many of our D/deaf (D - people born deaf, d - those who become deaf) and Deafblind citizens to learn, parent, work, and to make their contribution to our varied communities, rich culture and vibrant economy.

The British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015 was passed by the Scottish Parliament with the aim of making Scotland the best place in the world for BSL users to live, work and visit. Under the 2015 Act, Local Authorities, NHS Boards, colleges, universities and other national public bodies have statutory responsibilities to prepare BSL Plans by October 2018. This provision is designed to make sure the public sector in Scotland plays its part in promoting and supporting BSL by raising the profile of the language and improving access to services and information for BSL users. It will help people whose first or preferred language is BSL to be fully involved in daily and public life in Scotland, as active, healthy citizens, enabling them to make informed choices about every aspect of their lives.

Our Joint Local BSL plan sets out how we propose to use BSL in the operation of our functions; including communications with the public, key partners and our employees. It has been prepared in accordance with statutory criteria set out in the 2015 Act, and guidance provided by the BSL (Scotland) Act Partnership; particularly in relation to the development of BSL Plans. This plan will be sent to Argyll and Bute Council's Policy and Resources Committee for approval in October 2018 when it will become Council policy and have the formal support of our senior management team and Elected Members.



3.2 Consultation on the draft British Sign Language Plan

When developing their BSL plan, the 2015 Act requires public bodies to:

- Involve BSL Users (including those who use the tactile form of the language) and those who represent them;
- Ensure the consultation on the draft plan is accessible to Deaf and Deafblind BSL users and
- Publish the BSL Plan in English and BSL in both draft and in final form.

We set up a working group to develop our Draft Joint Local BSL Plan, and this included representatives from NHS Highland Health Board, liveArgyll and the Council; including those who work with BSL users on a day-to-day basis. Members of the group also went to three BSL Plan Roadshows hosted by the BSL (Scotland) Act Partnership, and information from these (including feedback on research carried out by the National Deaf Children's Society (Scotland), was taken into account when developing the Draft Joint Local BSL Plan.

We published our Draft Joint Local BSL Plan for public consultation on Argyll and Bute Council's website, and promoted it through social media including the Council's YouTube channel, Healthy Argyll and Bute and the Facebook pages of 2 national deaf organisations. We also wrote to BSL users in Argyll and Bute who have used our Council services and encouraged them to comment. We held two public consultation events in Lochgilphead and Tarbert on 14 August 2018. Representatives from the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service came along to provide advice on fire safety and the specialist smoke alarms available for those who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Consultation opened on 2 August 2018 and ended on Sunday 2 September 2018. We invited comments in the following ways:

- by completing our online survey
- by emailing responses to our survey in either English or BSL
- by phone using contactSCOTLAND-BSL (if appropriate)
- by attending our consultation events

Six people came to our public consultation events and 27 individuals filled in our survey. We are grateful to everyone who gave us their ideas, suggestions and, in some cases, details of their life experiences which helped us to gain a better understanding of some of the challenges which BSL users can face on a day-to-day basis. You can find a summary of the feedback which we received here <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/have-your-say/consultation-diary> This has been used to shape our final Joint Local BSL Plan.



3.3 Review and Monitoring

It is important to acknowledge that the BSL plan remains adaptable and flexible to the priorities set out by all of the organisations involved in its delivery, particularly when circumstances may change.

The plan will be monitored each year by the Council's Policy and Resources Committee.

NHS Highland Health Board will keep track of progress by yearly contact with BSL user groups and six monthly steering group meetings to ensure identified actions are progressing so that we can report back to the Scottish Government in 2020. Information on joint working in Argyll and Bute will be fed back into the NHS Highland action plan and vice versa.

3.4 The BSL Plan in the Corporate Structure

- 3.4.1 Overall responsibility for the Plan within the Council lies with the Chief Executive and the Policy Lead for Corporate Services
- 3.4.2 The senior officer with operational responsibility for overseeing the preparation and monitoring of the plan within the Council is the Head of Improvement and HR. Delivery of the individual actions in the plan are the responsibility of the named services.
- 3.4.3 Any queries about the Council's day-to-day operation of the Plan should be emailed to equality@argyll-bute.gov.uk and will be co-ordinated by the Performance and Improvement team.

3.5 Position with operational responsibility over the Plan

The senior officer within Argyll and Bute Council with operational responsibility for overseeing the preparation and monitoring of the Joint Local Plan within Argyll and Bute Council is:

Jane Fowler
Head of Improvement and HR
Customer Services

Tel: 01546 604466
Email: Jane.Fowler@argyll-bute.gov.uk



Argyll and Bute Council
Kilmory
Lochgilphead
PA31 8RT

British Sign Language (BSL) users can contact us via [contactSCOTLAND-BSL](#)
contactSCOTLAND-BSL

The senior officer within NHS Highland Health Board with operational responsibility for overseeing the monitoring of the plan is the:

Principal Officer Inequalities,
NHS Highland,
Larch House
Stoneyfield Business Park
Inverness
IV2 2PA

4 Delivery of the Plan and Resourcing

- 4.1.1 The Improvement and HR service leads on the preparation and monitoring of the BSL Plan for Argyll and Bute Council. Heads of Service across other Council services are responsible for the delivery of actions in their own services.
- 4.1.2 Lead officers will provide regular update reports to the Head of Improvement and HR, the Policy Lead for Corporate Services and the Policy and Resources Committee through the monitoring of the plan.
- 4.1.3 The plan will be put into practice by using existing resources, noting the current challenging financial position facing all the organisations' involved in its delivery. Strong working relationships between us, and with other bodies which deliver services and activities through BSL will support the effective implementation of our BSL plan, thus creating more opportunities for BSL to be used. Where possible, we will seek external



financial support to invest resources in BSL education, language, the economy and culture.

5 Promotion of the Plan

- 5.1.1 The plan will be promoted to all Council employees and Elected Members through the use of the website, 'The Hub' (which is the staff intranet) and newsletters.

NHS Highland Health Board will make people aware of the plan through staff emails, the Integrated Joint Board for the HSCP, senior operational management meetings and the NHS Highland website including the page for Argyll and Bute.

- 5.1.2 Externally, the plan will be promoted through the use of social media sites e.g. Facebook; Twitter; Argyll and Bute Advice Network (ABAN); Healthy Argyll and Bute; Locality Planning Groups; Community Planning Groups and local and national deaf organisations.

6 Summary of the Joint Local BSL Plan

6.1 Aim

- a) The overall aim of the plan is to create a working environment where BSL language and culture is visible and promoted within our organisations and throughout our communities. The Plan builds on the work Argyll and Bute Council and NHS Highland Health Board have undertaken in the past in promoting BSL and recognises the benefits of bilingual learning.
- b) To improve access to a wide range of information and public services in BSL
- c) To improve access to health care and mental health services in BSL
- d) To build the skills of qualified BSL/English interpreters to work in specialist settings like health and mental health
- e) To promote the use and understanding of BSL



6.2 Key Actions

- a) Argyll and Bute Council and NHS Highland Health Board will promote the range of BSL resources which are available to our service users.
- b) We will also ensure that the principle, introduced by the National British Sign Language Plan, to protect and support British Sign Language is followed across all of our services.
- c) We are committed to the promotion of BSL education, language, cultural and economic activities through continued awareness raising and language learning opportunities for children, employees and our communities.
- d) We will make sure that any new and current policies are in line with the BSL Plan.

6.3 Mainstreaming British Sign Language

Argyll and Bute Council and NHS Highland Health Board recognise the various goals listed in the National BSL Plan will mainly be put in practice through their individual action plans working in partnership, but there will also be opportunities to promote and develop BSL through existing policy measures. This Plan summarises the activities that Argyll and Bute Council and NHS Highland Health Board have already mainstreamed in terms of the use of BSL. We see this as a way of including BSL as an everyday part of life in Scotland.

Argyll and Bute Council's Teacher of the Deaf helps families who use signing to learn it as part of her regular visits with them. To date, the National Deaf Children's Society (Scotland) has funded family home signing sessions for three families within Argyll and Bute, as well as organising and delivering an online BSL Level 1 course at one of the schools within the area.

Sign Supported English (SSE) is currently used in six schools within Argyll and Bute to help deaf children to communicate with their friends and staff, and to assist them to access the curriculum. SSE takes the signs from BSL and uses them in the order that the words would be spoken in English. This means a working knowledge of the signs for different words is needed in order to understand and use SSE, but the more complex grammar of BSL is not. At one particular school, SSE has been used in class for at least 3 years giving children a basic level of sign vocabulary which is used throughout the day. Employees went to training sessions which took place out of school hours to help them to develop their signing. This has resulted in increased interest and



use of signing around the school. In another primary school, staff have recently attended BSL training delivered by the University of Highlands and Islands to develop the delivery of BSL in the school. Staff intend to continue with the training in academic session 2018-2019.

NHS Highland Health Board has an existing partnership and service level agreement with Highland Council to provide BSL interpretation and translation to anyone who requires support when accessing its services or attending appointments.

We recognise it is important to have effective communication. For all patients/service users who have sensory impairment (sight, hearing, multi-sensory), we aim to overcome any communication challenges. This can include face to face interpreting.

Both Argyll and Bute Council and NHS Highland Health Board have been using and promoting communication between their organisations and BSL users via contactSCOTLAND-BSL. This is an online interpreting video relay service (VRS) which enables BSL users to contact public and third sector services and vice versa. Whilst contactSCOTLAND-BSL will not remove the need for face to face interpreting provision, it will increase telephone accessibility between BSL users and service providers.

One of the main aims of the Scottish Government's National Plan is to increase awareness of and use of contactSCOTLAND-BSL as a means of communication. Patients/service users who have used contactSCOTLAND-BSL have reported that it provided them with:

- Access to a remote interpreter within their own home within minutes
- The option of a male or female interpreter
- Anonymity when accessing services (avoids the need to rely on friends or family members for sensitive matters)
- Access to a range of public bodies and third sector organisations
- Access to NHS 24 when their GP surgery is closed

More information on how to register for [contactSCOTLAND-BSL](https://contactscotland-bsl.org) and frequently asked questions and answers can be found at <https://contactscotland-bsl.org>

7.0 The National BSL Plan

The National BSL Plan focuses on ten long-term goals, all of which have a vital contribution to make in increasing the numbers of people learning, speaking and using BSL in Scotland. We are committed to ensuring the National Plan is implemented. The Action Plan at the back of this document sets out how we will achieve that aim.



7.1 Across all our services

We share the long-term goal for all Scottish public services set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“Across the Scottish public sector, information and services will be accessible to BSL users”.

7.2 Family Support, Early Learning and Childcare

We share the long-term goal for Family Support, Early Learning and Childcare set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“The Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) approach will be fully embedded, with a D/deaf or Deafblind child and their family offered the right information and support at the right time to engage with BSL”.

7.3 School Education

We share the long-term goal for school education set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“Children and young people who use BSL will get the support they need at all stages of their learning, so that they can reach their full potential; parents who use BSL will have the same opportunities as other parents to be fully involved in their child’s education; and more pupils will be able to learn BSL at school”.

7.4 Training, Work and Social Security

We share the long-term goal for training, work and social security set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“BSL users will be supported to develop the skills they need to become valued members of the Scottish workforce, so that they can fulfil their potential, and improve Scotland’s economic performance. They will be provided with support to enable them to progress in their chosen career”.



7.5 Health (including social care), Mental Health and Wellbeing

We share the long-term goal for health, mental health and wellbeing set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“BSL users will have access to the information and services they need to live active, healthy lives, and to make informed choices at every stage of their lives”.

7.6 Transport

We share the long-term goal for transport set out in the BSL National Plan, which is

“BSL users will have safe, fair and inclusive access to public transport and the systems that support all transport use in Scotland.”

7.7 Culture and the Arts

We share the long-term goal for culture and the arts set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“BSL users will have full access to the cultural life of Scotland, an equal opportunity to enjoy and contribute to culture and the arts, and are encouraged to share BSL and Deaf Culture with the people of Scotland”.

7.8 Democracy

We share the long-term goal for democracy set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“BSL users will be fully involved in democratic and public life in Scotland, as active and informed citizens, as voters, as elected politicians and as board members of our public bodies”.



8 Action Plan

1 Across All Our Services						
	We will:	Success Measure	National Plan Action Point(s)	NHS Highland Plan Action Point(s)	Timescale	Lead
1.1	Analyse existing evidence we have about BSL users in our organisation; identify and fill key information gaps so that we can establish baselines and measure our progress.	Monitor uptake of our BSL services, including requests for translations and interpretation services, and downloads of BSL material from our website	2	4.1- 4.15	By October 2020 2024	Head of Improvement & HR; Head of Adult Services (East) NHS Highland



1.2	<p>Improve access to our information and services for BSL users, including making our website more accessible to BSL users.</p>	<p>Provide a BSL translation of our Complaints Procedure</p> <p>Translate key pieces of guidance into BSL where demand has been identified</p> <p>Provide a BSL translation of what to do if you are worried a child or an adult may be at risk of harm</p> <p>Raise general awareness of our BSL Plan and associated activities amongst staff</p> <p>Offer alternative communication methods where possible (for example give the option to text or email rather than phone and highlight the availability of face-</p>	3,4	4.4	<p>By October 2020</p> <p>2024</p> <p>October 2020 – October 2024</p> <p>By October 2020</p> <p>2018 – 2024</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Head of Improvement & HR</p> <p>NHS Highland</p> <p>Head of Improvement & HR</p> <p>Head of Improvement & HR</p> <p>Head of Improvement & HR</p> <p>All Council Heads of Service</p>
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		<p>to-face BSL translators if required)</p> <p>Make use of social media to promote our services among the BSL community</p> <p>Develop a Translation and Interpretation Policy so that staff can easily access the appropriate communication for service users</p>			<p>Ongoing</p> <p>By December 2019</p>	<p>All Council Heads of Service</p> <p>Head of Improvement & HR</p>
1.3	<p>Promote the use of the Scottish Government's nationally funded BSL online interpreting video relay services called 'contactSCOTLAND-BSL' to staff and to local BSL users. This is a free service which allows BSL users to contact public and third sector services and for these services to contact them.</p>	<p>Add a link to the service into our email signatures</p>	5		June 2019	<p>Head of Customer & Support Services</p>



		<p>Add links to the service into key documents and guidance</p> <p>Add a link to the service on each school's website</p> <p>Investigate creating alternative communication methods. For example, by giving the option to text, email or use contactScotland –BSL when confirming appointments</p>		4.10	<p>2018 - 2024</p> <p>By October 2020</p> <p>2024</p>	<p>All Council Heads of Service</p> <p>Head of Education – Lifelong Learning & Support</p> <p>NHS Highland</p>
1.4	Signpost staff who work with BSL users to appropriate BSL awareness training	Work with other local public bodies to identify BSL training opportunities for employees	6		2018 - 2024	Head of Improvement & HR
We will continue to:						
1.5	Promote the Communication Support Service within NHS Highland Health Board and Argyll and Bute HSCP					



1.6	Use Plain English where we can in our documents and on our websites					
1.7	Promote the link to contact SCOTLAND-BSL on Argyll and Bute Council and NHS Highland Health Board's websites					
1.8	Provide Deaf Awareness training for all staff (particularly employees who engage with members of the community), and make sure appropriate material and links are available to help their understanding					
2	Family Support, Early Learning and Childcare					
	We will:	Success Measure	National Plan Action Point(s)	NHS Highland Plan Action Point(s)	Timescale	Lead
2.1	Provide early years staff with information about BSL and Deaf culture, and about resources that are available in BSL, so that they can meet the needs of families with a D/deaf or Deafblind child.	Produce a pack containing deaf friendly educational resources and information about deaf culture for parents, nurseries and health visitors which will also include links to additional online resources	10,11,12		January 2019	Head of Education – Lifelong Learning & Support



		Provide Early Years' employees with access to training on basic BSL and fingerspelling			August 2018 onwards	Head of Education – Lifelong Learning & Support
		Make sure our children's services have access to nationally developed BSL resources and advice within key programmes such as Bookbug			When available	Head of Education – Lifelong Learning & Support & liveArgyll
We will continue to:						
2.2	Give staff and children at nurseries basic BSL training in preparation for deaf children attending those establishments					
3	School Education					
	We will:	Success Measure	National Plan Action Point(s)	NHS Highland Plan Action Point(s)	Timescale	Lead
3.1	Contribute to the Scottish Government's investigation of the level of BSL held by	Carry out a survey every year in schools to collect information on the level of BSL held by teachers	17, 18		From April 2019	Head of Education - Learning and

	<p>teachers and support staff working with D/deaf and Deafblind pupils in schools, and take account of any new guidance for teachers or support staff working with pupils who use BSL.</p>	<p>and support staff</p> <p>Keep in touch with the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) to remain up to date with current guidance on BSL</p> <p>Keep up to date records on where and how BSL is being offered in schools and report this to the Scottish Government</p>			<p>Ongoing</p> <p>From April 2019</p>	<p>Teaching</p> <p>Head of Education - Learning and Teaching</p> <p>Head of Education - Learning and Teaching</p>
3.2	<p>Take forward advice developed by Education Scotland to a) improve the way that teachers engage effectively with parents who use BSL and b) ensure that parents who use BSL know how they can get further involved in their child's</p>	<p>Consult with deaf parents who have children in schools within Argyll and Bute to find out if there are any barriers to their involvement with their child's education and how this could be improved. Communicate any lessons learned/good practice to</p>	20, 21		By October 2020	Head of Education - Learning and Teaching



	education.	Education Scotland				
3.3	Contribute to the SCILT programme of work to support the learning of BSL in schools for hearing pupils as part of the 1+2 programme, including sharing best practice and guidance.	<p>Maintain ongoing contact with Scotland's National Centre for Languages (SCILT) to keep up to date with information and support on BSL</p> <p>Review lessons learned from a pilot project to teach BSL101 to Primary 4 hearing and deaf students at a primary school within Argyll & Bute, and share examples of good practice with SCILT. BSL101 is an Introduction to British Sign Language course which teaches learners how to meet and greet; understand basic conversation and numbers, and to give and follow simple directions and information.</p>	23		<p>Ongoing</p> <p>August 2018 – June 2019</p>	<p>Head of Education - Learning and Teaching</p> <p>Head of Education - Learning and Teaching</p>
		Make BSL online resources readily accessible to practitioners			January	Head of Education -



		<p>through the Argyll and Bute Education blog</p> <p>From 2021 every child is entitled to learn a first additional language from primary one and a second by primary five. This entitlement continues until the end of S3. We will promote BSL as a language which can be learned as part of the 1+2 Languages policy.</p>			<p>2019</p> <p>October 2024</p>	<p>Learning and Teaching</p> <p>Head of Education - Learning and Teaching</p>
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3.4	Work with partners who deliver employment services, and with employer groups already supporting employability to help signpost them to specific advice on the needs of BSL users.	<p>Provide a wide range of information, advice and guidance in BSL that is being developed by Skills Development Scotland, to pupils and students to support their career and learning choices and the transition process</p> <p>Argyll and Bute Council's Education Service will work closely with the regional officer for Developing the Young Workforce to make sure training providers and employers are given appropriate support and advice to encourage more diverse recruitment and to make sure they fully understand their responsibilities as an employer</p>	34		<p>When available</p> <p>October 2024</p>	<p>Skills Development Scotland & Head of Education – Lifelong Learning & Support</p> <p>Head of Education – Lifelong Learning & Support</p>
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3.5	<p>Raise awareness locally of the UK Government's 'Access to Work' (AtW) scheme with employers and with BSL users (including those on Modern Apprenticeships) so that they can benefit from the support it provides.</p>	<p>Argyll and Bute Council's Education Service will work with the regional officer for Developing the Young Workforce, employers and relevant partner agencies to raise awareness of the "Access to Work" scheme for employers. This will make sure BSL users who are in employment are aware of the "Access to Work" Scheme and can benefit from the support it provides</p> <p>Raise awareness of the services of "Access to Work" in recruitment documentation, Council policies and through the Modern Apprenticeship Scheme</p>	35		<p>October 2024</p> <p>By October 2020</p>	<p>Head of Education – Lifelong Learning & Support</p> <p>Head of Improvement & HR</p>
We will continue to:						
3.6	<p>Make sure interpreter support is available for young people to access work placements, and deaf awareness training is provided before the placement starts</p>					



4 Training, Work and Social Security						
	We will:	Success Measure	National Plan Action Point(s)	NHS Highland Plan Action Point(s)	Timescale	Lead(s)
4.1	Signpost pupils and students to a wide range of information, advice and guidance in BSL about their career and learning choices and the transition process.	Careers Advisers are based in all secondary schools within Argyll and Bute. Careers Advisers will work with pupils who use BSL to signpost them to information, advice and guidance in BSL being developed by Skills Development Scotland (SDS).	28		When available	Skills Development Scotland & Head of Education – Lifelong Learning & Support
5 Health (including social care), Mental Health and Wellbeing						
	We will:	Success Measure	National Plan Action Point	NHS Highland Plan Action Point(s)	Timescale	Lead
5.1	Signpost BSL users to health and social care information available in BSL (to be	Please see NHS Highland plan for specific details	40(a), 40(b)	4.1 - 4.12	2024	NHS Highland & NHS Health



	produced by NHS Health Scotland and NHS24), and b) develop complementary information in BSL about local provision, as appropriate	www.nhshighland.scot.nhs.uk				Scotland
5.2	Work with Local Authorities, providers and service users to improve the way that adult social care is delivered for BSL users, including how residential care is commissioned and how care and support is delivered to people at home	Investigate technology enabled care systems such as telehealth applications to support people to self-manage long term health conditions at home. Promote text services for Deaf, hard of hearing or people who are speech impaired to contact the emergency services. We will do this by linking the emergency SMS website to NHS Highland website http://www.emergencysms.org.uk/registering_your_mobile_phone.php	41, 42	4.5	2024	NHS Highland
				4.12	2024	NHS Highland



		Complete a comprehensive Universal Adult Assessment (UAA) with BSL users, using BSL interpreters to outline what care services are available should BSL users need care. This is considered to be specifically useful for community based assessments. Hospital based assessments will be different because “it is the responsibility of staff to book communication support to help Deaf, deafened, deafblind or hard of hearing people access NHS Highland Services”.			October 2024	Head of Adult Services East
5.3	Signpost health and social care staff to an online learning resource toolkit to raise awareness of BSL and Deaf culture (this will be led by NHS Health Scotland)	Publicise the learning resources for health and social care staff developed by NHS Health Scotland and See Hear Highland Education	43	4.2 - 4.3	2024	NHS Highland & NHS Health Scotland



		Promote deaf awareness training available from See Hear Highland Education & Learning Services (SHHELS) for independent contractors e.g. Pharmacists, Optometrists, Dentists.		4.11	2024	NHS Highland
5.4	Improve individual patient health records so that they clearly show when the first or preferred language is BSL and a BSL/English Interpreter is needed.	NHS Highland will work with national partners and keep up to date with guidance to improve individual patient health records. We aim to ensure that patients' communication and access needs are recorded at the first available opportunity. We will ask permission to share this information across NHS Highland where relevant.	44	4.9	2024	NHS Highland
5.5	Review the mental health support that is available to the deaf community.	Where possible develop psychological therapies that can be offered on a fair and equal basis to BSL users	45(a)	4.6	2024	NHS Highland



		Signpost BSL users to out of hours support for example Breathing space and NHS 24		4.7	2024	NHS Highland
5.6	Support and work with NHS Health Scotland to implement a new national Interpretation and Translation Policy which includes BSL provision.	Review guidance and policies on arranging interpretation and translation services. We will make sure staff can easily access the translation services. We will make sure staff can easily access the appropriate communication method for patients/service users.	46	4.8	2024	NHS Highland
5.7	Take steps to improve access to information about sport, and to local sports facilities and sporting opportunities	Improved access to information about sport, local sports facilities and sporting opportunities	48		2024	liveArgyll



5.8	<p>Make sure any local work to tackle social isolation explicitly considers the needs of BSL users</p>	<p>Investigate the potential to create an online community forum for BSL users to communicate with each other, and with the Council</p> <p>Create a “loop capital” as a pilot project in Dunoon so that hearing Loops are available in all shops/businesses in the town.</p> <p>Work with partners to make sure that any local work to deal with social isolation explicitly considers the need of BSL users</p>	49	4.13	<p>October 2024</p> <p>December 2020</p>	<p>Head of Adult Services East; Head of Customer & Support Services</p> <p>Head of Adult Services East</p> <p>NHS Highland</p>
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6 Transport						
	We will:	Success Measure	National Plan Action Point(s)	NHS Highland Plan Action Point(s)	Timescale	Lead
6.1	Make sure BSL users can participate in the on-going feedback process of the 'Going Further: Scotland's Accessible Travel Framework' as individuals and staff.	<p>Promote BSL awareness training to regulated transport service providers, such as taxi provision and patient transport.</p> <p>Encourage private transport providers contracted by NHS Highland to have access to technology to support communication with BSL users. We will also encourage them to be deaf aware.</p>	50	<p>5.1</p> <p>5.2</p>	<p>2024</p> <p>2024</p>	<p>NHS Highland</p> <p>NHS Highland</p>
6.2	Develop and provide training for transport providers which includes strategies for communicating with BSL users	Make sure those involved in school transport, have access to deaf awareness training	53		October 2024	Head of Facility Services



	(patients and staff).					
	We will continue to:					
6.3	Promote Journey Assistance Cards to local bus operators and BSL users					
7	Culture and Arts					
	We will:	Success Measure	National Plan Action Point(s)	NHS Highland Plan Action Point(s)	Timescale	Lead
7.1	Enable BSL users to take part in culture and the arts as participants, audience members and professionals.	Investigate how we can help BSL users to become more involved in culture and the arts as participants, audience members and professionals	54		2024	Argyll and Bute Council & liveArgyll



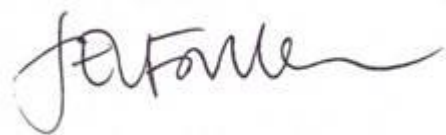
8		Democracy				
	We will:	Success Measure	National Plan Action Point	NHS Highland Plan Action Point(s)	Timescale	Lead
8.1	Take opportunities to promote the Access to Elected Office Fund locally, which can meet the additional costs of BSL users wishing to stand for selection or election in local or Scottish Parliament elections	<p>Provide links on Argyll and Bute Council's website to national information on the Access to Elected Office Fund (Scotland) to provide a signpost to BSL users who wish to stand for selection and election</p> <p>Make sure BSL video information on voting processes, developed by the Electoral Commission, is available (or links provided) on Partner websites</p> <p>Make sure BSL training information provided by the Electoral Commission is given to all relevant electoral staff</p>	65		<p>When available</p> <p>When available</p> <p>When available</p>	<p>Scottish Government & Head of Governance & Law</p> <p>Electoral Commission & Head of Governance & Law</p> <p>Electoral Commission & Head of Governance & Law</p>



		Raise awareness amongst Elected Members of the contactSCOTLAND–BSL service			By October 2019	Head of Governance & Law
8.2	Take opportunities to promote public appointments as a way of participating in public life by producing information about public appointments in BSL, and promoting public appointments specifically to BSL users.	Raise awareness among our executive and non-executive Board members about contactSCOTLAND-BSL	69	6.1	2024	NHS Highland
		Work with partners to develop and promote accessible guidelines for activities and events		6.2	2024	NHS Highland

Argyll and Bute Council: Equality and Socio-Economic Impact Assessment

Section 1: About the proposal

Title of Proposal	
Joint Local British Sign Language Plan for Argyll and Bute	
Intended outcome of proposal	
<p>The Joint Local BSL Plan for Argyll and Bute 2018 - 2024 sets out the collective intentions of Argyll and Bute Council, NHS Highland Health Board and liveArgyll to improve communication with, and access to services for, people who use BSL in the period 2018-2024.</p> <p>(NHS Highland remain the responsible body in Argyll and Bute HSCP devolved services and this plan feeds into theirs).</p>	
Description of proposal	
<p>The final plan sets out how we propose to use BSL in the operation of our functions; including communications with the public, key partners and our employees. It has been prepared in accordance with statutory criteria set out in the 2015 Act, the National BSL Plan, and guidance provided by the BSL (Scotland) Act Partnership; particularly in relation to the development of BSL Plans.</p>	
Business Outcome(s) / Corporate Outcome(s) to which the proposal contributes	
<p>BO104 Our Communities Are Supported And Protected BO107 The Support And Lifestyle Needs Of Our Children, Young People And Their Families Are Met BO108 All Our Children And Young People Are Supported To Realise Their Potential BO109 All Our Adults Are Supported To Realise Their Potential BO116 We Engage And Work With Our Customers, Staff And Partners</p>	
Lead officer details:	
Name of lead officer	Lisa Bond
Job title	Business Partner – Performance & Improvement
Department	Customer Services
Appropriate officer details:	
Name of appropriate officer	Jane Fowler
Job title	Head of Improvement & HR
Department	Customer Services
Sign off of EqSEIA	
Date of sign off	18/09/18

Who will deliver the proposal?

Argyll and Bute Council, NHS Highland Health Board and liveArgyll (a charitable trust which delivers leisure and library services on behalf of Argyll and Bute Council), who are responsible for some of the goals listed under the Culture and Arts, and Health (including social care), Mental Health and Wellbeing sections).

Section 2: Evidence used in the course of carrying out EqSEIA

Consultation / engagement

Public Consultation ran from 2/8/18 – 2/9/18 inclusive. We published our draft Joint Local BSL Plan in English and BSL on Argyll and Bute Council's website, and promoted it through social media including the Council's YouTube channel, Healthy Argyll and Bute and the Facebook pages of 2 national deaf organisations. We also wrote to BSL users in Argyll and Bute who have had contact with our Sensory Impairment Team before and encouraged them to comment; and also to parents of deaf children, as well as deaf parents to draw their attention to our consultation arrangements. We held two public consultation events in Lochgilphead and Tarbert on 14 August 2018. We invited comments in the following ways:

- by completing our online survey
- by emailing responses to our survey in either English or BSL
- by phone using contactSCOTLAND-BSL (if appropriate)
- by attending our consultation events

Data

Six people came to our public consultation events and 27 individuals filled in our survey (1 hardcopy and 26 online). Respondents gave us their ideas, suggestions and, in some cases, details of their life experiences which helped us to gain a better understanding of some of the challenges which BSL users can face on a day-to-day basis, particularly where:-

- a) They are not known to a service
- b) Their communication needs are not stated on their records
- c) They need urgent support
- d) Staff are not deaf aware and use inappropriate forms of communication

We have published a separate report (“We Asked, You Said, We Did”) which contains the results of the consultation.

We set up a working group to develop our draft Joint Local BSL Plan, and this included representatives from NHS Highland Health Board, liveArgyll and the Council; including those who work with BSL users on a day-to-day basis. Members of the group also went to three BSL Plan Roadshows hosted by the BSL (Scotland) Act Partnership, and information from these (including feedback on research carried out by the National Deaf Children’s Society (Scotland), was taken into account when developing the draft Joint Local BSL Plan.

In the 2011 Census, the people of Scotland were asked if they used a language other than English at home. In Argyll and Bute 152 people of those aged 3 and over said “Yes – British Sign Language”. 6931 of respondents in Argyll and Bute indicated they had deafness or partial hearing loss which had lasted, or was expected to last, at least 12 months.

Other information

BSL is a visual mode of communication with its own grammatical structure and syntax conveyed by gestures, facial expressions and body language. It is not dependent on, nor strongly linked to, spoken English. It has no written equivalent and is a point often missed by professionals who often resort to the written word using English language phraseology, grammar and syntax which is not an effective mode of communication for many Deaf people.

Deaf people often struggle to access services as the average reading age of a Deaf person is 9 years old (Wauters, L.N., Agnes, E.J.M., Tellings, A.E.J.M., van Bon, W.H.J. & Mak W.M. (2007) Mode of acquisition as a factor in deaf children's reading comprehension. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*).

People of all ages who use BSL within Argyll and Bute may be affected by the introduction of this Plan. A higher proportion of men than women will develop hearing loss over the age of 40. This is possibly because more men have been exposed to high levels of industrial noise compared to women. Among the over 80 years of age population, more women than men have hearing loss, which is due to women living longer than men on average, not because women are more likely to become deaf (Action on Hearing Loss Information July 2011).

With an ageing population the number of people with deafness or partial hearing loss will increase and so will the demand on communication support services. More and more people will require support and assistance to be able to access Health and Social Care services across the region without the need to rely on carers/family and friends.

NHS figures suggest 40% of deaf children experience mental health difficulties compared to 25% of hearing children (NHS, 2005).

More older people are likely to be affected by social isolation and there is a strong link between hearing loss and dementia. People with mild hearing loss are two times as likely to develop dementia, and this increases to three times for those with moderate hearing loss (Lin, F.R., Metter E.J., O'Brien, R.J., Resnick, S.M., Zonderman, A.B. and Ferrucci, L. (2011) Hearing loss and incident dementia. *Archives of Neurology* vol 68, no 2, pp. 214-20).

Not all Deaf people consider themselves to be disabled. Nevertheless, this Plan is specifically aimed at BSL users. It is acknowledged that not all Deaf/Deafblind people use BSL.

This group may also have additional disabilities, e.g. blind, partially sighted, learning disabilities, mental impairment and physical disabilities.

The needs of D/deaf people will be met no matter what protected characteristic they come under. There will be better access to services for all Deaf BSL users.

Gaps in evidence

The Council holds some information on its corporate systems about the BSL users who are supported by the Sensory Impairment Team, and also the deaf children in Argyll and Bute of pre-school and school age who are supported by the Teacher of the Deaf. There is no data source other than the census which was carried out in 2011, that would identify all adult BSL users in Argyll and Bute, as council services only hold data on the individuals who are accessing them. At present neither the Council nor NHS Highland Health Board collate information on the number of BSL users who are accessing their websites, and this is an action point which has been identified in the plan. The number of hits on BSL materials will be monitored once BSL materials have been made available on those sites though it is acknowledged that people other than BSL users may access these materials too. NHS Highland has also identified an action point to increase the amount of information held on their patient record system so that appropriate interpreter support can be arranged in advance of appointments as a matter of course.

Section 3: Impact of proposal**Impact on service users:**

	Negative	No impact	Positive	Don't know
Protected characteristics:				
Age			√	
Disability			√	
Ethnicity		√		
Gender			√	
Gender reassignment		√		
Marriage and Civil Partnership		√		
Pregnancy and Maternity		√		
Religion		√		
Sexual Orientation		√		
Fairer Scotland Duty:				
Mainland rural population			√	
Island populations			√	
Low income			√	
Low wealth			√	
Material deprivation			√	
Area deprivation			√	
Socio-economic background			√	
Communities of place?			√	
Communities of interest?			√	

Impact on service deliverers (including employees, volunteers etc):

	Negative	No impact	Positive	Don't know
Protected characteristics:			√	
Age			√	
Disability			√	
Ethnicity			√	
Gender			√	
Gender reassignment			√	
Marriage and Civil Partnership			√	
Pregnancy and Maternity			√	

	Negative	No impact	Positive	Don't know
Religion			√	
Sexual Orientation			√	
Fairer Scotland Duty:			√	
Mainland rural population			√	
Island populations			√	
Low income			√	
Low wealth			√	
Material deprivation			√	
Area deprivation			√	
Socio-economic background			√	
Communities of place?			√	
Communities of interest?			√	

If any 'don't know's have been identified, at what point will impacts on these groups become identifiable?

Not applicable

How has 'due regard' been given to any negative impacts that have been identified?

Deaf people of Black and Minority Ethnic origin may have additional cultural needs to be taken into consideration by service providers. The Plan is limited to British Sign Language. There are hundreds of variations of sign language used throughout the world. Foreign Sign Language users will potentially be disadvantaged but this would be mitigated by contacting a deaf relay interpreter if required.

Section 4: Interdependencies

Is this proposal likely to have any knock-on effects for any other activities carried out by or on behalf of the council?

Yes

Details of knock-on effects identified

The spirit and actions in the Plan should be considered when developing any new policies and/or procedures, for example when thinking about how service users can communicate with the Council, and offering a choice of communication options where possible. The plan will be promoted to all Council employees and elected members through the use of the website, 'The Hub' (which is the staff intranet) and newsletters. NHS Highland Health Board will make people aware of the plan through staff emails, the Integrated Joint Board for the HSCP, senior operational management meetings and NHS Highland website including the page for Argyll and Bute. Externally, the plan will be promoted through the use of social media sites e.g. Facebook; Twitter; Argyll and Bute Advice Network (ABAN); Healthy Argyll and Bute; Locality Planning Groups; Community Planning Groups and local and national deaf organisations.

Making materials available in BSL and developing a translation policy should help employees to communicate better with service users and benefit any employees who use BSL themselves.

Demand for interpreting and translation services may increase as well as requests for deaf awareness and BSL training as a result of developing and promoting the BSL Plan.

Section 5: Monitoring and review

How will you monitor and evaluate the equality impacts of your proposal?

The plan will be monitored each year by the Council's Policy and Resources Committee. Heads of Service will be responsible for updating the action plan in Pyramid; the council's performance management system. Some of the actions in the plan involve surveys which will be able to measure the impact of those measures for example it will be possible to see if the level of BSL held by teachers and support staff is increasing from the annual survey to be conducted by the Education Service.

No negative impacts have been identified at this stage. If any arise when the Plan is put into practice, attempts will be made to mitigate any adverse negative impacts.

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Joint Local British Sign Language Plan for Argyll and Bute (2018 – 2024)

“We Asked, You Said, We Did” Analysis of Responses to Public Consultation Exercise

September 2018



In this document we refer to 'BSL users'. This covers all people whose first or preferred language is BSL, including those who receive the language in a tactile form due to sight loss.

We Asked

From 2 August to 2 September 2018, Argyll and Bute Council, NHS Highland Health Board and liveArgyll consulted on what should be included in the Joint Local British Sign Language Plan for Argyll and Bute. We wrote a Draft Plan and put this on Argyll and Bute Council's website. We also put a BSL version of the Draft Plan on the Council's YouTube channel. We told people about the Draft Plan on social media, Healthy Argyll and Bute and the Facebook pages of 2 national deaf organisations. We wrote to deaf parents and parents of deaf children who are supported by the Council's Teacher of the Deaf to tell them about the Draft Plan. We also invited BSL users who have had contact with our Sensory Impairment Team previously, to tell us what they thought of our Draft Plan.

You Said

33 responses were received in total – 6 people came to our consultation events in Lochgilphead and/or Tarbert; 1 person filled in a hard copy consultation questionnaire and 26 people completed our online survey. We would like to thank everyone who took the time to give us their ideas, suggestions and, in some cases, details of their life experiences which helped us to gain a better understanding of some of the challenges which British Sign Language (BSL) users can face on a day-to-day basis.

You told us it can be particularly difficult for BSL users when:

- a) They are not known to a service
- b) Their communication needs are not stated on their records
- c) They need urgent support
- d) Employees are not deaf aware and use inappropriate forms of communication

We Did

Based on the feedback which you gave us, we put together a final Plan to tell you what we expect to do between 2018 and 2024 to protect and support British Sign Language, including in its tactile form, in Argyll and Bute.

You can find a copy of our final Plan here <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/have-your-say/consultation-diary>

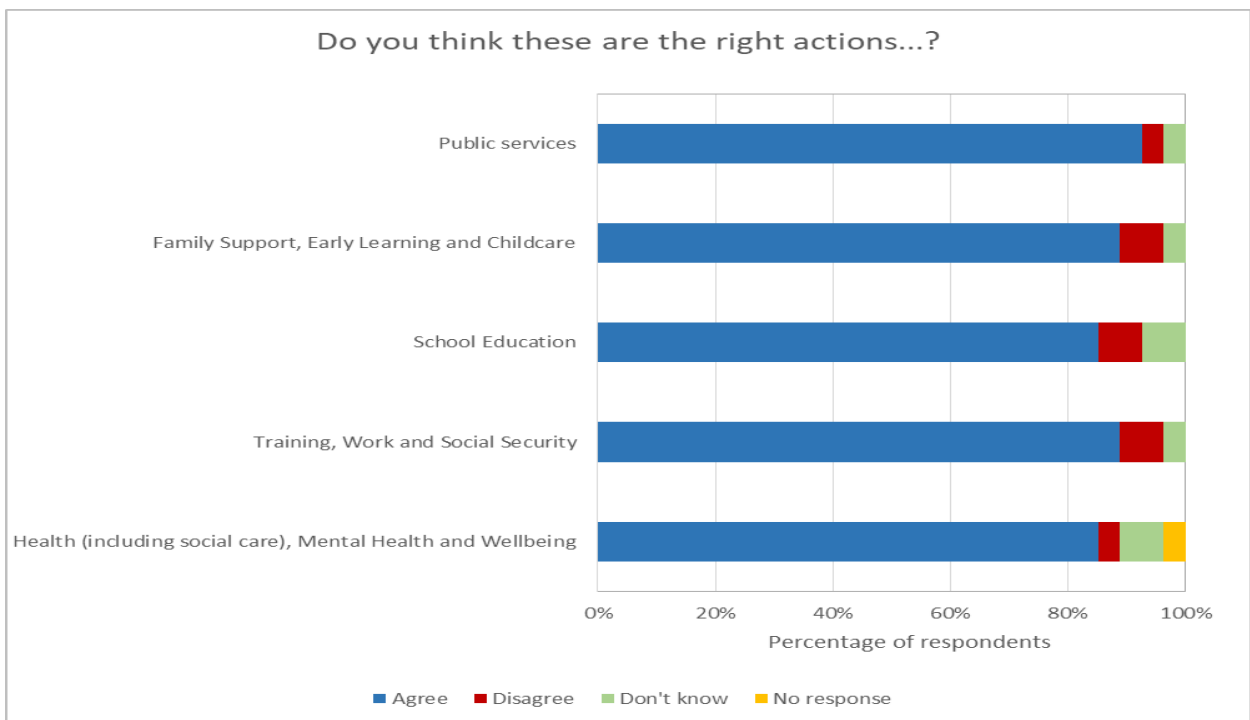


General reaction to the Draft plan

We listed 9 goals and asked you whether or not you agreed with the actions under each of these goals. We also asked you to tell us if, and how, they could be done better.

There was a high level of support for the actions outlined in the Draft Plan (Figure 1). This shows the goals which generated the most responses only. Where you did not agree with the proposals, this did not seem to be because you disagreed with specific actions so much as you felt that more could/should be done.

Figure 1



Most of the comments were positive and people felt the actions should make a big difference to the lives of Deaf/Deafblind BSL users.

Common themes across all areas

Something which was said a lot was the need for training in BSL, and the idea that children (both deaf and hearing) should be taught BSL from a young age. These actions would increase awareness, allow greater inclusion and engagement of deaf children, and promote a more inclusive society, more widely.

The need for education and training came across in all areas of the consultation, not just in the section devoted to 'School Education'.



The need for better communication and explanations was highlighted throughout the consultation as these remove barriers, and make it easier and more comfortable for people to use and access all types of services.

A few people were worried that some of the actions require people to access the internet and social media in order for them to work, as not all deaf people have access to these facilities. Practical considerations were also raised around internet solutions (e.g. Facetime) as these may not work in areas where the internet signal is not adequate. We recognise that some of the actions which we have suggested may take a while to put into place and also rely on BSL users having access to the necessary technology. We know not everyone is comfortable with these new technologies and there will always be occasions when a “human element” is required. However, we also hope this technology can help us to overcome some of the geographical challenges which an area as large as Argyll and Bute can create. We know from what you told us that social isolation and loneliness can be a very real problem for BSL users, and we hope that some of the actions which we intend to put into place will help to overcome that.

Having the necessary funding and resources to deliver the actions set out in the local plan will be key. All of the organisations involved in delivering the plan have limited resources and are facing budgetary constraints. We will continue to seek national and other sources of funding and support to help us to put our actions into practice wherever possible.

Public services

We asked if you thought the actions which we had suggested for Public Services were the right ones, and whether there was more that you thought we could do.

You said you generally agreed with the actions proposed; with efforts to enable and promote more inclusivity being welcomed from deaf and hearing respondents.

You felt the proposals would:

- Assist communication with public services
- Help people to access information

Some of the things you said would also help included increased staff awareness and training.

Suggestions included:

- Training staff at all levels of the organisations in basic BSL, particularly those who work with the public on a day-to-day basis



- Being proactive to reach out to individuals and families who are not already accessing services. You said this could be done via schools; public notices; social media; television and radio.
- Have face to face BSL translators available, rather than relying on letters and notes to communicate, as deaf people may struggle with spelling and grammar.

We already have arrangements in place to book face-to-face interpreters for planned meetings but we know it can be difficult to get an interpreter at short-notice and/or in an emergency situation. One of the common themes to come out of the Scottish Government's consultation on the National Plan was to ensure there are sufficient numbers of BSL/English translators in Scotland. We know there are only a small number of qualified BSL translators within Argyll and Bute, and with the size of the area that we cover it can still take interpreters several hours to travel from one part of the county to another. We are, however, looking at whether we can source BSL interpreters more locally, and will use video translation and interpretation services where appropriate.

We have already included a link to contactSCOTLAND-BSL on Argyll and Bute Council's and NHS Highland's websites and will continue to promote this with our employees. NHS Highland have recently sent out posters to GPs and the third sector, and Argyll and Bute Council's Sensory Impairment Team have been making BSL users aware of the service offered by contactSCOTLAND-BSL as part of their regular contact with service users.

Some people who attended the consultation events in Tarbert and Lochgilphead had not heard about contactSCOTLAND-BSL before and so we showed them how it worked by giving them a live demonstration and encouraged them to register for the service. contactSCOTLAND-BSL is Scotland's free BSL interpreting video relay service which enables BSL users to have contact with all of Scotland's public bodies and third sector organisations. You can find out more about it at:

<https://contactscotland-bsl.org/>

Family support, early learning and childcare

We recognise the early years of a child's life are very important and you felt a lot of support should be available to parents and guardians at this time. **We asked** if you thought the actions which we had suggested for family support, early learning and childcare were the right ones, and whether there was anything more that you thought we could do.

Whilst there was general agreement with regard to the proposals, a desire to see more awareness raising and training for GP's, health visitors and early year's staff was evident.



You said you agreed with the proposals because:

- You feel it is currently difficult to access information within Argyll and Bute as not all parents or guardians may be aware of the help and support available from the National Deaf Childrens' Society (Scotland) and the West of Scotland Deaf Childrens' Society can be difficult to get to for residents of Argyll and Bute.
- Parents need to be given full information from the beginning, including information about BSL, so they can make informed choices about how to raise and communicate with their children.

You said using sign language has potential benefits beyond the Deaf community. You also felt it could benefit non-verbal children and children on the Autistic spectrum, as well as helping peers to better understand their classmates.

One respondent suggested cultural change takes time. Parents learn from their children: if children/young people see BSL as the norm, it will become habit and deliver that cultural change.

Ideally, you would like to see at least one employee in any educational establishment being confident in BSL, as well as all staff members knowing the basics.

You were keen for this learning to continue beyond pre-school and primary school and into secondary school education.

Two respondents felt the proposals could be further developed by:

- Every deaf child should meet the Teacher of the Deaf within one month of diagnosis, regardless of age and stage of education.
- Educate GPs on BSL and have more information available in doctors' surgeries. GPs need to be familiar with the issues faced in school and home settings that children with a hearing deficit face.
- Provide more BSL training for teachers to allow them to communicate with deaf children. BSL also helps classmates to learn how to communicate more with deaf children.

We will put together a pack containing deaf friendly educational resources and information about deaf culture for parents, nurseries and health visitors which will also include links to additional online resources.

In the 2018-2019 academic year, Early Years' employees will have access to training on basic BSL and fingerspelling as part of their Continuing Professional Development programme. We will also make sure our children's services have access to nationally developed BSL resources and advice within key programmes such as Bookbug once they are available.



School Education

The section on School Education invited the most comments and seemed to be the single most important issue for those who responded to our survey.

There is no reason why, with the right support, deaf children cannot achieve what they want to.

We asked if you thought the actions which we had suggested for school education were the right ones, and whether there was anything more that you thought we could do.

There was general agreement with the actions which we propose to take.

You said you agreed with them because they included teaching BSL in schools and nurseries from a young age. One respondent noted that BSL is as important as any other language.

Whilst there was general agreement that raised awareness of BSL is important, one respondent suggested that awareness training on its own did not go far enough.

You felt there are courses available in the central belt that could be accessed by people in Dunoon and Helensburgh, but that opportunities to access such courses is more difficult in the remoter parts of Argyll and Bute.

Suggestions made for additional actions and solutions included:

- Making BSL a part of the curriculum, and of daily school life
- Funding needs to be made available to employ more specialist Teachers of the Deaf, and for these Teachers to have sign language skills up to Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Level 6
- Consult with the National Deaf Children's Society (Scotland) to promote BSL and other sign supported language
- Provide training for teachers and Additional Support Needs Assistants in the use of BSL
- Include solutions for the employment of teachers who use BSL as their first language. Solutions to address the barriers to employment of Deaf teachers should be examined by way of consultation with teachers who are deaf, and also teachers who teach deaf children.

We will carry out a survey every year in schools to collect information on the level of BSL held by teachers and support staff. We will also keep up to date records on where, and how, BSL is being offered in schools in Argyll and Bute, and will report this to the Scottish Government.



Between August 2018 – June 2019 we are running a pilot project to teach BSL101 to Primary 4 hearing and deaf students at one of the larger primary school's within Argyll & Bute. BSL101 is an Introduction to British Sign Language course which teaches learners how to meet and greet; understand basic conversation and numbers, and to give and follow simple directions and information. We will review how this goes and share examples of good practice with Scotland's National Centre for Languages (SCILT).

We recognise the valuable support the Council's Teacher of the Deaf provides to deaf children and their parents, and that you would like us to employ more specialist Teachers of the Deaf. This is an important service and one which you appreciate. We also know that we have to balance this need with the funding challenges and budgetary constraints that we face, and the general difficulties across Scotland in recruiting suitably qualified teachers. This is a significant issue and one which was also raised in response to the Scottish Government's consultation on the National BSL Plan.

The distances that our staff have to cover, together with the time spent travelling to visit service users or to attend face-to-face training courses can sometimes make the challenges that we have to overcome even greater.

The Council's Teacher of the Deaf **will continue to** help families who wish to use signing to learn it as part of her regular visits with them.

To date, the National Deaf Children's Society (Scotland) (NDCS) have funded family home signing sessions for three families within Argyll and Bute, as well as organising and delivering an online BSL Level 1 course at one of the schools within the area. **We will continue to** work with NDCS and value the support and assistance which they give to us.

Sign Supported English (SSE) is currently used in six schools within Argyll and Bute to help deaf children to communicate with their friends and staff, and to assist them to access the curriculum. SSE takes the signs from BSL and uses them in the order that the words would be spoken in English. This means a working knowledge of the signs for different words is needed in order to understand and use SSE, but the more complex grammar of BSL is not. At one particular school, SSE has been used in class for at least 3 years giving children a basic level of sign vocabulary which is used throughout the day. Employees went to training sessions which took place out of school hours to help them to develop their signing. This has resulted in increased interest and use of signing around the school.

We will make BSL online resources readily accessible to early learning practitioners through the Argyll and Bute Education blog.



We will continue to make sure interpreter support is available for young people to access work placements whilst at school, and deaf awareness training is provided before the placement starts.

Training, work and social security

We asked if you thought the actions which we suggested for training, work and social security were the right ones, and whether there was anything more that you thought we could do.

There was broad agreement with the proposals and a strong view that employment not only provides an income, but also helps to promote self-worth and independence.

You agreed because the proposals would:

- Allow pupils the best opportunity to get the most from their education and to provide the greatest choice of career pathways and options
- BSL for a deaf child should be a way of life. They should not miss out on any opportunity to be great and to achieve what they want in life
- More people will be able to access work that uses BSL

You said it was important pupils did not view hearing loss as a barrier to education and future career choices, and employers did not perceive hearing loss to be an impairment to staff progressing in their careers.

You were concerned that “Access to Work” can be difficult to contact if you are a BSL user, and more support should be available with this, if required. Access to Work is a national scheme run by JobCentrePlus on behalf of the Government. It can provide financial assistance to disabled people who may need support to do their job. Support is based on the disabled person’s needs, and may include a grant to help cover the costs of practical support in the workplace. An Access to Work grant can pay for:

- special equipment, adaptations or support worker services to help disabled employees to do things like answer the phone or go to meetings
- help getting to, and from, work

Argyll and Bute Council will refer to the services of “Access to Work” in recruitment documentation, Council policies and through the Modern Apprenticeship Scheme. **Our Education Service will** work with the regional officer for Developing the Young Workforce, employers and relevant partner agencies to raise awareness of the “Access to Work” scheme for employers. This will make sure BSL users who are in employment are aware of the “Access to Work” scheme and can benefit from the support it provides.



Ideally you would like localised training in BSL to be delivered in various locations throughout Argyll and Bute so as many people as possible can benefit from it. Our geography makes this difficult and it is challenging for us to achieve.

Health, mental health and wellbeing

We asked if you thought the actions which we had suggested for Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing were the right ones, and whether there was anything more that you thought we could do.

There was broad agreement with the proposals made because **you said** they would:

- Encourage individuals with hearing loss to feel involved within the community.
- Improve social contact opportunities and hopefully will reduce loneliness and isolation.

You said sometimes it is difficult for you to access good quality health information and appropriate services, and suitably qualified and experienced BSL/English interpreters should be provided at all medical appointments.

You said mental health is a big issue for people who use BSL, and better access to services to prevent and treat mental illness is important.

Suggestions made for additional actions and solutions included:

- Offer more mental health support and awareness for hearing loss particularly during the education years.
- Ticket numbering system for appointments and/or provide a visual information screen to assist in alerting Deaf people about when it is their time to be seen by a medical professional
- Provide deaf awareness training for all NHS staff in frontline services
- BSL interpreters to be provided either in person or via a Video Relay Service (VRS).
- Ideally you would like BSL training for at least one counsellor in the Argyll and Bute area who could work on a peripatetic basis.

We will review what mental health support is available to the deaf community and, where possible, will develop psychological therapies that can be offered on a fair and equal basis to BSL users. Our geography and resources can sometimes make this difficult.

We will also review our guidance and policies on arranging interpretation and translation services. We will make sure staff can easily access the translation services and appropriate communication methods for patients/service users.



NHS Highland Health Board has an existing partnership and service level agreement with Highland Council to provide BSL interpretation and translation to anyone who requires support when accessing its services or attending appointments.

We recognise it is important to have effective communication. For all patients/service users who have sensory impairment (sight, hearing, multi-sensory), we aim to overcome any communication challenges. This can include face to face interpretation services.

Some people asked why the Council only had plans to introduce a “loop capital” in Dunoon when there are deaf people in all parts of Argyll and Bute. The Council is currently in consultation with local businesses in the Dunoon area, gauging interest in the project. This is still in the planning stage but we would like hearing loops to be available in all shops/businesses in the town. If this is considered to be a success then we would like to roll the idea out across Argyll and Bute. One respondent made the very good point about loops being accidentally used to hear other peoples’ conversations. To address this very real issue the plan is to adopt portable loops to be placed on the counter in shops, for example next to the till. These have a range of 1 metre only. The loops will be tested to make sure they are working.

Transport

We asked if you thought the actions which we had suggested for Transport were the right ones, and whether there was anything more that you thought we could do.

Comments around transport are limited. Although there was general support for providing accessible information in transport hubs, **you also said** that information is needed on all public transport, especially when transport plans are disrupted.

Of the people who answered questions relating to transport, respondents said they agreed because:

- Deaf people find it difficult to state their destination to bus drivers
- Deaf people can experience problems when things go wrong on a journey, and messages do not get communicated clearly.
- Adoption of journey assistance cards could be useful.

The Journey Assistance Card has been developed by the Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT) specifically to help passengers with hidden disabilities use public transport (buses and coaches) with confidence and remove the potential conflict or upset situations that can occur on boarding the bus. **We have already** put links to Journey Assistance Card information on Argyll and Bute Council’s website and we have made local bus operators aware of them, if they were not already using them.



We will encourage the private transport providers that we contract with to provide services on our behalf to have access to technology to support communication with BSL users. We will also encourage them to provide deaf awareness training to their staff.

We publish timetable and fares information for ferries on Argyll and Bute Council's and Caledonian MacBrayne websites, and hardcopy timetables are available in ferry waiting rooms and on board vessels. We recognise it can be potentially distressing for BSL users when transport arrangements do not go to plan as they are not always told what is going on. Some of the larger ferries do have electronic boards which can be used to update passengers but not all, and these may still be difficult for some BSL users to understand.

Information on local air services is currently available on Argyll and Bute Council's website.

Printed timetables are also available for customers and these can be picked up at Oban Airport. Flights can be booked online via the Hebridean Air Services website, over the phone and also at Oban Airport. Staff at Oban Airport assist passengers to get on and off the aircraft. Pilots are also advised when passengers with disabilities are travelling.

In addition to flight booking and timetable information, there is also signage at the Council's airports which complies with EU regulations and includes pictograms detailing health and safety and general information.

Culture and The Arts

We asked if you thought the actions which we had suggested for Culture and The Arts were the right ones, and whether there was anything more that you thought we could do.

Comments on this goal were limited but recognise that being able to access sports and leisure facilities is important, and can help improve physical and mental health, as well as providing good opportunities to meet other Deaf/Deafblind BSL users.

Respondents said they agreed with our proposed actions because:

- This area and tourism are already open to the idea of accessibility and social inclusion

Suggestions made for additional actions and solutions included:

- Making cinemas more accessible. **You said** cinemas are not accessible as they turn off the subtitles, sometimes at the request of others in the cinema.



- Run clubs in the morning rather than the evening; this would help older Deaf people who may not want to travel at night.

The geography of Argyll and Bute makes meeting other BSL users very difficult, and we are aware of only one deaf club in the whole area which meets regularly in Dunoon.

Argyll and Bute Council, working with liveArgyll, will consider how we can support BSL users to take part in sport, culture and the arts as participants, audience members and professionals but this is a long-term goal and we recognise that achieving it will be challenging.

Democracy

We asked if you thought the actions which we had suggested for Democracy were the right ones, and whether there was anything more that you thought we could do.

Comments on this goal were limited but focused on difficulties that BSL users can sometimes have in communicating with staff at polling stations when an interpreter is often not available. Some respondents **told us** they had chosen to have a postal vote for this reason.

It is important to us that Deaf and Deafblind BSL users can participate fully in the democratic process. **We will** make sure any BSL training information provided by the Electoral Commission is given to all relevant electoral staff. We will also make sure that any BSL video information on voting processes, developed by the Electoral Commission, is available on Argyll and Bute Council's website, or links are provided to the relevant partner(s) website.

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Appendix 4 – Joint Local British Sign Language Plan for Argyll and Bute 2018 - 2024; Additional information on some of the actions detailed in the BSL Plan

The following provides some supplementary information about some of the actions contained within the Joint Local British Sign Language Plan for Argyll and Bute.

For ease of reference further details have been provided under the actions in the plan to which they relate.

Family Support, Early Learning and Childcare:

Action Point	Success Measure
2.1	<i>Produce a pack containing deaf friendly educational resources and information about deaf culture for parents, nurseries and health visitors which will also include links to additional online resources.</i>

The National Deaf Children's Society (Scotland) (NDCS) will be developing resources to assist parents of deaf children to raise awareness of different pathways for language and communication, and to help them make informed choices. The Teacher of the Deaf will work with NDCS and the Council's Early Years Team to produce packs containing deaf friendly educational resources and information which can be used by parents, nurseries and health visitors. Some literature and online educational resources have already been identified, and include both free and paid for items.

Action Point	Success Measure
2.1	<i>Provide Early Years' employees with access to training on basic BSL and fingerspelling</i>

A one day BSL based course, "Using Sign in an Early Years Environment" is being offered for the Continuing Professional Development session in 2018-19 to practitioners working within Early Years settings in Argyll and Bute. This can be given as twilight training to the islands, or in more rural areas, and can be repeated if demand is high. The course covers:

- General Deaf awareness to give practitioners an understanding of what it means to be deaf in a hearing nursery and the impact this has on learning and wellbeing.
- Conductive hearing loss such as glue ear which affects 8 out of 10 children under the age of 10 and can cause temporary deafness which may delay language and communication development in young children. It can also affect children's wellbeing, behaviour and their educational progress. Strategies to support these children.
- Learn BSL signs to support listening, eye contact and communication. Sign can be an effective strategy to overcome barriers to learning and communication for all children but particularly for children who are deaf or who

have additional support needs. Sign can be used with babies as young as six months and supports early language and communication skills.

- Learn the finger spell alphabet so nursery practitioners can communicate more effectively with Deaf families.

School Education:

Action Point	Success Measure
3.3	<i>Review lessons learned from a pilot project to teach BSL101 to Primary 4 hearing and deaf students at a primary school within Argyll & Bute, and share examples of good practice with SCILT.</i>

BSL101 is an Introduction to British Sign Language course which teaches learners how to meet and greet; understand basic conversation and numbers, and to give and follow simple directions and information. In the 2018-19 school year, the Teacher of the Deaf is undertaking a pilot with Primary 4 children at one of the larger primary schools in Argyll and Bute to introduce BSL as part of the 1+2 Language arrangements. This is being offered to both hearing and deaf children who will be assessed using the BSL101 course and outcomes. If the decision is made to go for formal accreditation, this will cost approximately £350 in total, otherwise it will be delivered within existing resources. This pilot is expected to give deaf children increased opportunities to communicate, feel included and respected within the school, and to give hearing children skills to communicate better with their deaf friends.

Health (including social care), Mental Health and Wellbeing

Action Point	Success Measure
5.8	<i>Investigate the potential to create an online community forum for BSL users to communicate with each other, and with the Council</i>

The Deaf community across Argyll & Bute is very dispersed with little in the way of access to meet other signers. It was evident from the recent drop-in consultation events in Lochgilphead and Tarbert that BSL users appreciated the opportunity to meet new people, and to communicate with each other.

There is one deaf club in Argyll which meets most Wednesday evenings in Dunoon. This was started by a local organisation which also reached out to the hearing community. Hearing people do attend as it has an educational element to it. BSL is taught free of charge to a degree to interested parties. The distances to travel to the Dunoon club from some parts of Argyll mean it is almost impossible for some BSL users to get to this event.

Argyll and Bute covers a large rural area and social isolation is a major risk/concern for BSL users. This can also negatively affect a person's mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Technology can reach out across a large area. The Council's web team have been approached with an idea which, at this early stage, may have potential. The proposal is to connect BSL users via the internet using Council facilities. This would give the Council's Sensory Impairment Team another means of keeping in touch with people, and gives clients the opportunity to sign to the team's social worker should the need arise. However, the real idea is to put signers (who may not know of other BSL users within their local area) in touch with each other. Each person would require to use a PC, Tablet or smartphone and have internet access. They would also need to download an app, for example SKYPE or an alternative free open source software. Ideally the online community would have a specific date and time to meet every week to ensure optimum participation.

Similar forums already operate within the ASL community within America.

Action Point	Success Measure
5.8	Create a "loop capital" as a pilot project in Dunoon so that hearing loops are available in all shops/businesses in the town.

Argyll & Bute has a See Hear strategy; part of which is to make Dunoon a 'Loop Capital'. The Sensory Impairment Team are currently in consultation with Dunoon Presents (an organisation which represents local businesses in the town), to gauge interest. The project is currently at the planning stage, but the aim is to get loops into all shops/ businesses in Dunoon. This will help BSL users and deaf people who use either a Hearing Aid or a Cochlear Implant with a loop.

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