

18<sup>th</sup> April 2019

---

**POLICY LEADS REPORT**

---

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This report provides members with an update on key areas of activity for each Policy Lead Councillor. This aims to provide updates from all Policy Leads at each council meeting so that all members are informed, up-to-date and able to engage with current issues. The last update was provided to the council at its meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2018; this report covers the period from that date until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

Please note that the Economic Development portfolio sits with the council Leader and is included in the Leader's Report.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 Members are asked to consider the report.

**3. POLICY LEAD FOR STRATEGIC FINANCE AND CAPITAL REGENERATION PROJECTS – Councillor Gary Mulvaney**

- 3.1 **Introduction:** This report provides members with an update on my activities as, Depute Leader, Policy Lead for Strategic Finance and Capital Regeneration during the period from December to March.
- 3.2 **Strategic Finance:** The council agreed a balanced budget for 2019/20 on 22<sup>nd</sup> February and albeit there were some differences in the financial approaches by particular groups, in the context of a £240 million budget there was vastly more consensus than divergence. All officers are to be thanked for supporting members in this process and special praise in particular to our Section 95 Officer, Kirsty Flanagan, Head of Strategic Finance, for the quality of the information provided, more so especially in

the context that she presently covers the Health and Social Care Partnership S95 role on an interim basis too.

In terms of longer term planning, it is welcome that the Scottish Government have accepted the need to move to a three-year settlement for local government and that should enable the council to consider bringing forward more informed long term budget and financial models.

### **3.3 Capital Regeneration:**

Helensburgh Waterfront Development: Following the granting of planning permission on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2019, the project team's focus turned to the procurement of the main contractor for the construction works. The project remains on track to issue the Invitation To Tender (ITT) in late April, and all going well bringing forward the contract award recommendation and Full Business Case for approval in August.

The cost management team are busy progressing the billing exercise - i.e. basically where they convert the detail of the individual design elements and specifications into a schedule for the candidates to price as part of the tender submission. This is a very resource intensive process and is the main focus of their works in April, following which there will be a final quality check to ensure that everything on the drawings/specs has been captured in the bills.

At the same time we are progressing the drafting/finalisation of all of the other tender documents e.g. preliminaries, instructions to tenderers, assessment and award criteria/scoring, and the council's supplementary conditions of contract, all of which are at an advanced stage.

We are at the same time progressing the development of the Full Business Case (FBC), which will ultimately be informed by the procurement exercise and the Live Argyll Business Plan for the operation of the new Leisure Centre and, subject to the tenders returning an affordable offer and the Council approving the contract award and FBC, we would look to award the construction contract in August/September, and start on site as soon as possible thereafter.

Key forthcoming stages are set out below:

- 7<sup>th</sup> June 2019 - deadline for ITT submissions
- 11<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> June 2019 - conduct technical evaluation of submissions
- 25<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> June – bidder presentations
- 2<sup>nd</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> July 2019 - conduct commercial evaluation of submissions
- 16<sup>th</sup> July 2019 - combined technical/commercial evaluation results
- 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2019 - evaluation results

- Contract award following Full Business Case (FBC) approval towards the end of August 2019.

Rothesay Pavilion: Good progress is now being made with works to the roof, window installation and building fabric with overall project completion at 55%. The original practical completion date of 31<sup>st</sup> July 2019 is less likely to be achieved due to ongoing challenges including weather and complexity. However, every effort is being made by the design team and main contractor to minimise time delays, although weather continues to impact on works. Negotiations are in progress with the main contractor regarding an extension of time beyond the original contracted completion date.

At this late stage of delivery the project is not without its challenges and issues continue to arise from the age and deterioration of the structure in a seaside/marine location. No change to the anticipated final cost of the project is forecast, despite cost pressures associated with keeping the contract provisional sums within allowances, but these are being monitored and actively managed to minimise the overall risk to the council.

- 3.4 Depute Leader Update:** I continue to meet regularly with the Leader, the Chief Executive and other officers in terms of this role, covering a wide range of subjects.

#### **4. POLICY LEAD FOR CORPORATE SERVICES – Councillor Rory Colville**

- 4.1 Introduction:** I continue to meet with the Executive Director of Customer Services and Heads of Service every six weeks to discuss matters relating to my Policy Lead remit.

**4.2 Corporate Services Good News Stories:**

Communications Gold Standard: On 13<sup>th</sup> March the council's Communications Team was awarded the Communications Management Standard (CMS): The CMS is the "mark of communications professionalism worldwide". It is assessed and awarded by the PRCA (Public Relations and Communications Association), and is regarded as the "PR industry gold standard". In brief - it shows the members of the team are working together in a way that ensures the organisation can get the most from its Communications Team.

Facility Services: The council's Facility Services team have been recognised for utilising the Scottish Government's Biomass Energy Supply Agreement Framework to procure ten biomass projects on a design and build model, with a six year operations and maintenance performance contract. Lochgilphead Joint Campus was the largest of the team's projects

and involved conversion from an oil fired heating system to a wood pellet fire system. The systems have forecasted carbon savings of 273 tCO<sub>2</sub> (carbon dioxide equivalent) per annum and an individual project payback of circa eight years.

World War 1 Commemorations: Governance and Law were shortlisted at this year's SOLAR (Society of Local Authority Lawyers and Administrators) Scotland Awards for their work over the four-year centenary period on commemorating the First World War. The work carried out across the whole service, in partnership with colleagues in other teams and local community groups, has helped to reinvigorate the council's civic function as well as attracting international attention. They were runners-up in the Administration Team of the Year category, with the project receiving very positive comments from the SOLAR judging panel.

Recognition for Partnership Working: The council's Anti-Social Behaviour Coordinator has received a Divisional Recognition Award from Police Scotland at their annual award ceremony on 12<sup>th</sup> March in recognition of the exceptional partnership and support work provided to Police Scotland in the delivery of community safety and anti-social behaviour services.

Exceeding targets: Our Procurement and Commissioning Team have been ranked in the top band for the Procurement and Commercial Improvement Programme (PCIP) with a score of 79% against a target of 75% - well done.

Events hub at Civic Centre: With its fantastic indoor spaces and scenic waterside location, more and more local events are being held at the Helensburgh and Lomond Civic Centre. The next big event is the Helensburgh Beer and Gin Festival and this promises to be a great weekend, attracting connoisseurs from all over the country to sample artisan products. There is now a dedicated Facebook page for Civic Centre events and this really is a fantastic facility. Seeing use increase and more activities for local people is very welcome.

#### **4.3 Improvement and HR:**

Supporting wellbeing: More mental health first aiders have been trained in council workplaces across the area and this month's staff magazine highlights this important initiative for anyone who may be in need of some support.

The HR team have been supporting staff who have been absent with stress related illnesses to get well and welcome them back to work, arranging targeted mental health support in partnership with our Occupational Health provider.

Digital opportunities: Council services are making the most of technology and digital services to increase efficiency and reduce time/cost.

The council's move to online recruitment through social media has saved over £100k in advertising costs and has increased the reach of job adverts using the hashtag **#abplace2b**.

A jobs section has been developed on the [www.abplace2b.scot](http://www.abplace2b.scot) website for partners to promote jobs online and reduce their advertising costs. This links to online campaigns such as 'Proud to Care' and 'National Social Work Day' to focus on experiences of working here in hard to fill posts, such as social care and social work. This is receiving a very positive response.

Best Value 3 (BV3) Update: Officers met with Audit Scotland in March and indication was given of early activity on site in April to look at equalities. The timetable has been scoped out as well as the approach that will be adopted to collect evidence from services for the main audit visit in October.

#### **4.4 Customer and Support Services:**

Local Tax Collections: Council Tax collections for 2018/19 as at the end of February are 94.81%, up 0.08% on last year at this time. Improvements are due to better Sheriff Officer and Water Direct collections. Collections for 2017/18 are now 96.50% and this is down by 0.01% on previous year at this time, with 2018/19 taking greater priority. Collections on 2016/17 year at 96.81% are now increasing only slowly and are down by 0.44%.

The new council tax annual bills have recently been issued and are promoting sign-up to the online portal with a prize draw for all who sign up to e-billing by 24th March offering a year's free council tax as the prize. 2603 people signed up to the competition, and will be automatically re-entered next year.

Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF): The programme funding for 2018/19 is £438,720. Including carried forward underspend we have a total of £456,659. As at the end of February we have spent £425,612 on applications received which was 101.7% of the profiled amount. The programme funding for 2019/20 has just been announced. We will receive £438,740 – an increase of just £20.

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) and benefit cap: The confirmed funding for 2018/19 is £642,220. The Strategic Management Team has agreed to support the same priority cases in 2018/19 as we have done throughout 2017/18. At the end of February we have spent or committed £651,458 which exceeds the funding available. Our spend on other cases is below the profiled amount so there is ample scope for us to continue to support similar priority levels for the remainder of the year.

Benefits processing: Our statistics for processing housing benefit changes in circumstances and these now show that we have taken on average 7.09 days year to date to end of February, below our target of 9 days.

For new claims processing we took an average of 18.51 days for the year to date to end of February which is much better than the target of 21 days. Pleasingly, our year to date accuracy statistics have remained excellent at 96.8% to end of February, above the target of 94.0%

Access to the Landlord portal has now been offered to all 72 private sector landlords. So far only seven have taken this up.

Procurement, Commissioning and Creditors: For the year to end of January, we have paid 96.96% of creditors' invoices within 30 days which is well above our target of 95.0%.

Customer Service Centre (CSC) and Registration: The call abandon rate for February was 2.0%, much better than the target of 6%. Average call times for the month were 3.7 decimal minutes above the target of 3.5 minutes, largely reflecting the lower pressure due to fewer calls waiting to be answered and the growth of the simpler matters being addressed on a self-service basis. The 'Resolved at first point of contact' level was 92.16% for the month against a target of 91%. The voice automated call routing success rate for the month at 80.7% is again above target of 79%.

We have gone live with the new Blue Badge delivery system on 5<sup>th</sup> February without any issues. We have also introduced a new 'golden number' for Registration Services - 01546-605521 - which is promoted in the annual council tax leaflet.

ICT: The average time to fix IT faults for February is 2.3 hours, well below our target of five hours. All equipment has been delivered for the Kilmory server upgrade and is now being commissioned. Applications will migrate to the new environment between mid-February and May 2019.

Internet of Things (IoT): The Scottish Government has recognised the importance of IoT by establishing IoT Scotland, a joint venture with Boston Networks, seeking to establish 500 IoT wireless network gateways for use by public and private sector across Scotland in a £6m project. The council's ICT Team has already engaged with Boston Networks to potentially host gateways in our larger towns as they overcome the limitations of having limited 4G coverage in our area.

- 4.5 Food Banks update:** Staff and pupils from schools across Argyll and Bute collected a range of items from the beginning of December 2018 up until Christmas to donate to food banks across Argyll and Bute. The council's food bank collection point is open all year round, however, at a particularly difficult time of year for many people, staff and pupils upped the ante in terms of collections/donations.

Campbeltown Grammar pupils are shown left handing over their generous donations after taking part in the 'Twelve Days of Christmas' advertised by council staff.



I was delighted to be asked to deliver the items for Kintyre Foodbank in Campbeltown and am very proud of the work and effort everyone has put in to help others at a very challenging time of year.

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

**5.1 Local meetings:** Over the last few months I have participated in a number of meetings locally:

- Integration Joint Board (IJB) meetings were held on 28<sup>th</sup> November, 30<sup>th</sup> January and 27<sup>th</sup> March. A variety of papers have come before the board including on Values and Culture, a Communications Framework and Carers Strategy.
- The Strategic Plan for 2019/2020 was approved by the IJB following public engagement and came before the Strategic Planning Group on 19<sup>th</sup> December, 19<sup>th</sup> February and 7<sup>th</sup> March.

- Finance has also been a focus with meetings of the Quality and Finance Board on 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 20<sup>th</sup> February and 19<sup>th</sup> March. Through these significant progress was made in controlling the overspend for 2018/19 and bringing forward to the IJB a balanced budget for 2019/20 which was approved.
- Audit Committee met on 9<sup>th</sup> January and 8<sup>th</sup> March, with an emphasis on improving processes and governance within the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP).
- Clinical and Care Governance Committee met on 5<sup>th</sup> March looking at how our services are performing and areas where learning can be made in order to improve the quality of care.
- Senior Members Officers Group on 18<sup>th</sup> December and 12<sup>th</sup> February, and the Joint Leadership Meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> January included discussions around improving communication within the HSCP and IJB, and monitoring progress of the review of the Scheme of Integration.

**5.2 Regional and national meetings:** I have also contributed to a range of meetings outwith Argyll and Bute:

- The IJB Chairs and Vice-Chairs executive met on 20<sup>th</sup> November and 13<sup>th</sup> March where the national workforce plan for Health and Social Care and the Review of Integration have been looked at closely.
- COSLA Health and Social Care Board on 10<sup>th</sup> December, 6<sup>th</sup> February and 22<sup>nd</sup> March where, in addition to those items above, agendas have included Public Health Reform, the National Care Home Contract, Community Engagement, Participatory Budgeting, Self Directed Support Implementation, Social Isolation and Loneliness, Keys to Life Learning Disability Strategy and ending price promotions of foods high in fat, salt or sugar.
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Children (Equal Protection from Assault) Bill were amongst the items at COSLA Children and Young People's Board on 23<sup>rd</sup> November and 8<sup>th</sup> February. Additionally there has been a degree of crossover between the two COSLA Boards I attend, particularly concerning the Children and Young People's Mental Health Taskforce and National Suicide Prevention Leadership Group.
- Regionalisation of health and social care services remains under consideration although active progress seems to have somewhat slowed. There was a further update on the delivery plan for the West of Scotland Region at a meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> December.



- 5.3 Conferences:** The first national Health and Social Care Conference was held in Glasgow on 7<sup>th</sup> December. Keynote speakers including the First Minister Nicola Sturgeon and the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport Jeanne Freeman, who gave assurances of the commitment by the Scottish Government to supporting integration across Scotland. It was also an opportunity to learn about how other rural areas are meeting the challenges of running services for their populations.

On 15<sup>th</sup> March Argyll and Bute Carers Partnership held a conference in Inveraray. As well as being a celebration of the contributions being made by carers, it was the occasion chosen to formally launch the new HSCP Carers Strategy. This has been developed to meet the requirements of the Carers Act and to set out how the HSCP will work with Carers Centres to identify carers and promote their mental and physical health and wellbeing. The aim is to assist carers with their caring role and enabling them to continue to enjoy a life outside of caring – particularly important for young carers.

- 5.4 Visits:** I have appreciated being able to see first-hand services being delivered across Argyll and Bute.

On 11<sup>th</sup> March I visited Helensburgh Childrens Home where I met with the manager and discussed plans to expand the service through a core and cluster model.

The Strachur Hub runs activities including exercises and Tai Chi which help reduce frailty and falls, while providing an opportunity for socialising. On 21<sup>st</sup> March I participated and it was great to see how valued it is by those people attending the service regularly.

I revisited Struan Lodge in Dunoon on 28<sup>th</sup> March, where it was interesting to see both what had changed, and stayed the same since my previous visit in 2016. The quality of care there remains high, but I can see the potential to do more within the building itself.

- 5.5 Adult Services:** Across the service there has been a focus on supporting and addressing long term staff sickness, commissioning former grant funded contracts, and exploring the interface with Mental Health and Acute services delivered by Greater Glasgow and Clyde.

The Short Life Working Group for Learning Disabilities and Autism continues to meet, with specific areas being looked at including assessing clients and identifying properties to enable resettlement and repatriation, discussions around campus models for providing care, and staffing requirements for an integrated learning disability service. Children and Families staff will lead future meetings with Adult Services and Education

around transitions. Draft strategies for Learning Disabilities (Keys to Life) and Autism have been written, with the Autism draft now going to be taken out to consultation with appropriate groups.

Work is being advanced by the Mental Health and Dementia Short Life Working Group around inpatient services, dementia services, including development of a local dementia strategy, Community Mental Health Services review and outcomes, psychological therapies, and care reviews.

In Cowal and Bute local activity has included advancing medical staffing vacancies and a clinical lead for Cowal Hospital.

In Primary Care the ongoing use of locums, operation of the Out of Hours Service and GP training are being looked at. There remains an aim to increase co-location of health and social care teams to improve communication, service delivery and reduce estate requirements.

Discussions remain ongoing to allow a dialysis unit to be created in the Victoria Hospital on Bute.

At the Lorn and the Islands Hospital work will begin in April to install a new Computerised Tomography (CT) Scanner. This is estimated to be completed in June with scanning continuing to be available during this time. Work is progressing towards appointing a fourth consultant physician for the hospital and a consultant psychiatrist for the wider Oban, Lorn and Isles area. Use of agency hospital nursing staff and social workers remains high and is under review, with recruitment efforts continuing.

There has been some notes of interest from GPs in the Mull Island Practice and this is now being progressed to the next stage of recruitment.

A recent moratorium placed on Kintyre Care Centre due to some care issues has been removed and assurance is now in place that care is of the required standard. Following the failure to progress the merger of Campbeltown Medical Practice and Kintyre Medical Group (KMG) the HSCP will now be advertising KMG as an independent practice. Progress with the implementation of a community team in Kintyre has resulted in a reduction in hospital admissions, earlier discharges and reduced lengths of stay, enabling a reduction of four beds within Campbeltown Hospital.

- 5.6 Joint Inspection of Services for Children and Young People in Need of Care and Protection in Argyll and Bute 2019:** The inspection report was published on Tuesday 26th March 2019 and can now be viewed on the Care Inspectorate's website [here](#).

The inspection looked at the difference our Community Planning Partnership is making to the lives of children and young people in need of care and protection, and those over which it has corporate parenting responsibilities. The Care Inspectorate and its scrutiny partners evaluated against four criteria:

How good is our leadership	GOOD
Impact on families	GOOD
Impact on Children and Young People	GOOD
Improvements in the safety, wellbeing and life chances of vulnerable children and young people	ADEQUATE

Following the report an Improvement Action Plan will now be prepared that will enable a focus on the areas in which Inspectors have indicated they would like to see some improvement.

- 5.7 Children and Families:** On the 11th March 2019 two of our care experienced young adults were invited to an audience with the First Minister Nicola Sturgeon. This invitation came from research being carried out by The Scottish Through and After Care Forum (STAF) titled Relationships Matter, which a group of our young people from Argyll and Bute had contributed to. The event was held in Glasgow at STAF headquarters; there were three local authorities represented and five young care experienced people and support staff were at the table. The discussion was facilitated through a game of Jenga with topics that would stimulate debate being written on each brick. Staff felt that it was surprisingly informal and that the young people were listened to.

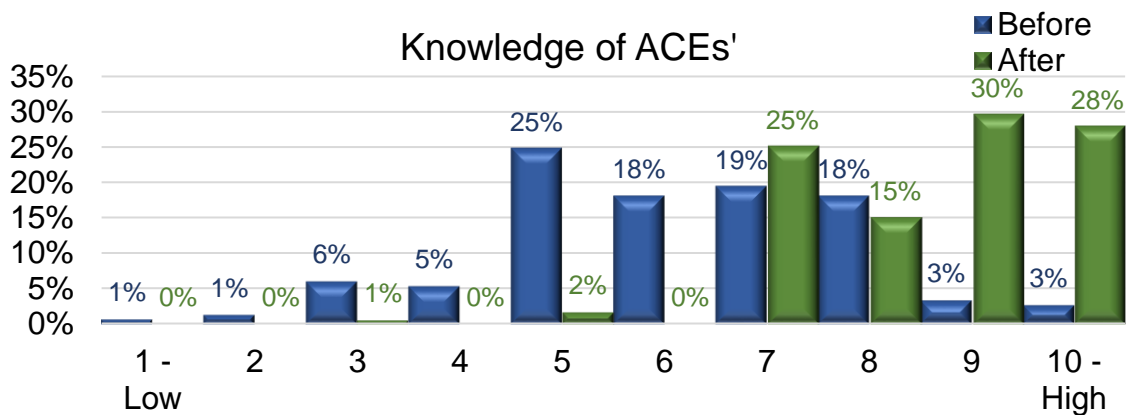
The Argyll and Bute Adoption Service received a positive mention in a recent Care Inspectorate publication. This highlighted training on life story work, impact of childhood trauma and helping children learn about their journey to adoption, as well as an annual social event for adoptive families.

In February 2019 the HSCP Public Health Team delivered the second event focussing upon Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) to 180 people in Dunoon. This followed on from a commitment made at the Health and Wellbeing Development Day in May 2017 when over one hundred people attended in Inveraray.

The 'In Touch with Distress Conference' welcomed headline speaker Dr. Suzanne Zeedyk to share her insight with colleagues from a broad range of organisations including Foster Carers, Police, Addiction Services, Social Work, Mental Health Services, Education and the Third and Independent Sector.



Evaluation of pre and post event self-rated knowledge levels show a significant increase in knowledge of Adverse Childhood Experiences following the event.



Workshops provided the audience with opportunities to discuss ideas, challenges and solutions. This information, along with that collected from the screenings of the film *Resilience*, and the next event 'Raising Awareness of Adversity' will be collated into a report which will be circulated.

Recommendations will be taken through the ACEs Working group and disseminated to partners through strategic groups. The outcome will be that measurable objectives are set which aim to mitigate the negative effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences and support Argyll and Bute in becoming trauma aware.

**5.8 People and Change:** On 27<sup>th</sup> March the IJB approved an approach to spread and embed our HSCP Values and Practices framework (CIRCLE). This framework was also well received when presented at the National Health and Social Care Conference in December.

The first iteration of the HSCP workforce plan went to the IJB in August 2018. In autumn it was agreed the next iteration of the workforce plan would follow on from the strategic plan. Effective workforce planning is complex and requires input at national, regional, board, HSCP and local levels. Recommendations for improving workforce planning at all these levels are present Parts 1, 2 and 3 of the National Workforce plan, and there are ongoing developments at national level which will inform the next workforce plan.

Postponing the Workforce Plan until publication of the delayed National Health and Social Care Integrated Workforce Plan and associated guidance will allow officers to fully take this into account and prevent unnecessary duplication of work. In the meantime processes around workforce planning, including improved governance arrangements are being worked on.

Participation rates in the 2018 iMatter survey and action planning process fell within the HSCP. The University of Strathclyde is looking at the impact of iMatter in Scotland and staff in the HSCP participated in two focus groups as part of this. Ahead of the next national iMatter process in May 2019 efforts will be made to learn lessons from this and to increase participation.

Our Employee Health and Wellbeing working group has developed draft recommendations based on results from the 2018 Employee Health and Wellbeing survey and other information such as iMatter results. Feedback and contributions from staff has been sought and it is planned to implement preventative actions as part of action plan for 2019/20. There are two elements to the approach of promoting and maximising attendance: improving the application of the relevant policies, and a preventative approach to improving staff health and wellbeing. The latter is of benefit to the organisations, employee and service users, however both are needed to improve attendance at work and reduce sickness absence.

- 5.9 Finance:** It was verbally reported to the IJB in March 2019 that the forecast overspend for 2018/19 was around £4.1m, a position which has remained broadly static for the last few months. The element of the overspend relating to Health Services, including any amount not able to be agreed with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde will not be required to be repaid, in line with the government agreement with NHS Highland. However the Social Care overspend will be subject to an agreement for repayments to Argyll and Bute Council.

Containing the overspend for 2018/19 has been possible through daily Grip and Control Meetings. These were initially formed from senior management

and have involved scrutinising all elements of spending and budgets. Additionally Adult Care Group Resource meetings have been put in place led by a Head of Service and aiming to ensure consistent applications of the priority framework, self-directed support (SDS) options, use of technology enabled care (TEC), re-ablement, waivers and carers assessments. Weekly reviews of all vacancies submitted for approval are being held – seeking to minimise agency spend and tackling recruitment and retention for key posts that have been difficult to fill.

For 2019/20 a balanced budget has been approved by the IJB. This consists of a number of efficiency savings together with some changes in the way that services will be delivered. Further options for the financial year 2020/21 will be formulated and developed over the coming months. These will then be subject to appropriate engagement and consultation prior to the next IJB budget meeting in March 2020.

- 5.10 IJB Leadership:** On 1<sup>st</sup> April Robin Creelman reached the end of his second four-year term on the board of NHS Highland, and therefore stepped down as Chair of the IJB. He had served as Vice-Chair and then Chair of the IJB since its inception, and prior to that from June 2012 had been Chair of the Argyll and Bute Community Health Partnership. Along with the many other roles he has had since 2000 within the NHS at a local, regional and national level this brought considerable health governance experience to the IJB. Whatever the future brings I wish him well for the future, and as I again take on the position of Chair of the IJB I look forward to working with his successor as Vice-Chair, Sarah Compton-Bishop.

## **6. POLICY LEAD FOR ROADS AND AMENITY SERVICES – Councillor Roddy McCuish**

- 6.1 Introduction:** This report provides members with an update on my activities as Policy Lead for Road and Amenity Services to date. I maintain regular contact and meet with a range of officers across the policy briefs and, as always, their continued assistance and support is much appreciated.
- 6.2 Craignure STAG:** The final draft STAG report has now been received and, following comments from council officers, the report will be issued in early April. The details and recommendations made within the report have been shared with senior and local members. A meeting was held with the local community council and local members on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2019, at which Transport Scotland was represented, to discuss options and likely next actions. This meeting was positive with the community representatives agreeing to a broad series of objectives.

The report suggests a number of short-term and longer-term options for further consideration - work on an outline-business case will start shortly in order to give further consideration to the favoured long-term option. In the meantime, the suggested short-term options will be considered in greater detail to arrive at a conclusion. Partners Transport Scotland, CMAL and Calmac will take part in the decision-making process - a working group, involving the local community, will be set up to ensure that locals are very much involved in the process. A further meeting with the community will be held in late April / early May.

### **6.3 Port Infrastructure Update:**

Rothesay: Much of the structural elements for the wave screen have now been fabricated off site. These materials for the wave screen are now being transferred to the site at Rothesay Pier, with commencement of site work now planned for the week commencing 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019. The installation of the wave screen will take place during the months of April, May and June. Liaison with Calmac continues. A letter has been issued to local residents (copy attached for reference).

Dunoon: Portcabins have been repositioned to allow more efficient use of the parking area. The car park will be re-aligned.

An offer has been made by a local contractor to remove and replace the timber fence at Dunoon Pier – however, this would be based on payment for sub-contractor resources – labour and materials. Their quote is awaited.

Works to ‘top-up’ rock armour at the concrete breakwater are now likely to take place in 2020 – once the contract has been awarded and contract programme produced, further updates will be provided. These works are expected to be extensive with up to 10,000 tonnes of rock likely to be required.

Transport Scotland has intimated to council officers that a working group will be set up – Transport Scotland, CMAL and Calmac – to consider redevelopment of the marine infrastructure at both Gourrock and Dunoon – with possible impact on Kilcreggan too.

Fionnphort: The ongoing feasibility study is now nearing completion. Further consultation meetings were held on Iona and Fionnphort on 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> March to discuss the work done to date and seek views from the community. Generally, most concerns were related to the likely visual intrusion – particularly on the Fionnphort side. Once the feasibility study has been completed, work can commence on the next stages – planning and design. Transport Scotland has been advised that, depending upon the outcome of the issues identified at planning stage, works are likely to commence in the latter part of 2020.

**6.4 Jura Ferry Transfer:** Direct management of all ferries has now been transferred from ASP to the council. A new ticketing system is currently being rolled out. There has been some confusion (in particular on the Jura Ferry) where some locals had become accustomed to travelling free-of charge – and, of course, paying at a later date. On taking over direct management of the ferries on 1<sup>st</sup> March, the ruling was enforced that either a ticket or cash must be produced by passengers. This problem is resolving itself as locals become accustomed to the enforcement of this ruling – worth noting that this is not a new ruling, it is merely being enforced now by the crew. Close liaison with Jura community council continues.

Discussions with Transport Scotland (TS), concerning the transfer of ferry services, are due to recommence. Information was passed to TS over a year ago for their consideration.

**6.5 Festive Lighting:** 2018 festive lighting was mostly delivered by communities with the aid of grant support from the council. In the few areas where communities had not yet taken it on the service was delivered by the council for the final time. Apart from tidying up the agreements with community groups and determining then processing surplus festive funds this project has concluded successfully.

**6.6 Customer Care Project:** Members will have seen an improvement in the timeliness and quality of responses to their enquiries from Roads and Amenity Services (RAS) thanks primarily to the new staff in place as part of the central Control Hub, as well as revised service procedures. This and other aspects of the customer care improvements were discussed at a recent Member Seminar.

On the customer facing front, of particular note are figures which show an overall reduction in customer contacts to the service of over 10% in 17/18 (with figures for 18/19 available soon). What we are seeing here are fewer public contacts to RAS through a combination of better service delivery, more proactive information and management of expectations.

The use of a new facility to email residents (Oracle Outreach) enabled us to send information on festive bin arrangements and disruptions, which saw a fall of 997 Roads and Amenity calls compared to January 2018. As ever there are a number of factors but the outreach does appear to be having a notable impact. In January there were 59 outreach mailings based on disruption notices, with 5,257 opened emails and 1,124 people clicking on the link for more detail.



**6.7 Depot Rationalisation:** Luddon Construction have been appointed to redevelop the Jackson's Quarry Roads Depot in Oban as the new single main depot facility for Oban and Lorn. This is a £1.4million contract which is moving through the design stages with a view to construction starting in the summer and the project completing this winter.

The remainder of the depot rationalisation programme is currently being firmed up, with Lochgilphead set to move forward next. The likelihood is a mix of in-house delivery by our Roads Design and Operations teams as the civil engineering work required is of a more generalised nature than the specialist requirement in Oban, then the appointment of an external contractor for the buildings works. A timescale for this will be reported back to members in early course.

**6.8 Roads Reconstruction Programme:** The Roads Reconstruction Programme was presented to the March Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee following which all Members have received a copy of the programme for their administrative area.

**6.9 Waste Management Strategy:** On Monday 4<sup>th</sup> March members of the Waste Management team delivered a presentation to Elected Members on the impacts of the Biodegradable Municipal Waste (BMW) ban across all three waste models. Incorporated into the presentation were potential waste disposal solutions. The presentation highlighted to members the current COSLA and Scottish Government (SG) positions on the BMW ban, noting that there has been important changes recently to which materials are included within the scope of the ban i.e. bulky items, animal by-product waste.

The Draft Waste Strategy was presented to the Environment, Development and Infrastructure committee on 7<sup>th</sup> March. The draft strategy was endorsed by committee, and key aspects of that endorsement include:

- Endorsement of the timeline for delivery of the final strategy;
- Endorsement of the strategy for public consultation, from April for a 6 week period;
- Noting the work and progress to date.

To take the strategy from the draft stage to the final stage we now need to secure concessions/support from the SG to enable BMW ban compliance; test/model the solution for the Waste PPP area; and create a detailed financial model covering all aspects of future Waste Disposal operations.

## 7. POLICY LEAD FOR COMMUNITIES, HOUSING, GAELIC AND ISLANDS – Councillor Robin Currie

**7.1 Introduction:** I continue to have regular meetings with Directors, Heads of Service and others regarding all matters under my remit of Communities, Housing, Islands and Gaelic. I attend the COSLA Community and Wellbeing Board and any Member that wishes to see the public papers can get in touch.

### 7.2 Housing:

Strategic Housing Forum sub-group: I continue to chair the Strategic Housing Forum which is an excellent example of partnership working and meets on a quarterly basis. Arising from this forum, I have set up a sub-group of various officers who meet with RSLs and others to try and resolve any issues regarding developments, face to face, and as quickly as possible rather than have protracted email correspondence. People are happy with how this is working.

New Developments: I was delighted to attend the official opening of the housing development at Queens Court, Dunoon. Other completions during this period were at Castle Wood Court, Helensburgh and at Connel. I'm very happy to see the start of developments at Dunbeg, Tighnabruaich and Kilmartin.

Argyll and Bute Women's Aid: Argyll and Bute Women's Aid have been given a glowing inspection report by the Care Inspectorate in March 2019. During the inspection service users said that the supports they received had helped them to feel safe and respected. They commented that workers were professional in their approaches and that they were accessible when women needed their assistance. One service user was quoted as saying 'I'm very happy with the support here. Staff go above and beyond for you'.

The service was graded 5 – Very Good for quality of care and support, quality of staffing and quality of management and leadership.

'Make a Stand' Pledge: Argyll and Bute Council Housing Services have signed up to the Chartered Institute of Housing Make a Stand pledge. This is a statement of commitment to taking action to support people experiencing domestic abuse. We must complete 4 focused actions by September 2019:-

- Put in place and embed a policy to support residents who are affected by domestic abuse
- Make information about national and local domestic abuse services available on our website and in other appropriate places so that they are easily accessible for residents and staff

- Put in place an HR policy, or amend an existing policy, to support members of staff who may be experiencing domestic abuse
- Appoint a champion at a senior level in the organisation to own the activity we are doing to support people experiencing domestic abuse.

Private Landlord Registration: Since the Scottish Government in conjunction with Registers of Scotland have provided a new website for landlord registration applications both local authorities and landlords themselves have been getting used to the new system. Many landlords find the new system easier to use although some have requested various changes and these comments have been passed onto the Scottish Government team responsible for the website development.

Within Argyll and Bute we have approximately 4,500 landlords letting out approximately 6,000 premises. Along with their applications and fee, all new landlords are required to provide evidence of satisfactory electrical and gas safety to their properties. This has highlighted a number of properties with issues and these have been actioned ensuring tenants are living properties that are safe. New regulations regarding energy efficiency in private let properties is soon to be introduced which should also bring improvements to the energy efficiency of let properties thereby reducing fuel poverty in the sector.

Changes to private water supply regulations will also require landlords to ensure that their tenants are provided safe and wholesome water when mains water supply is unavailable at the premises, this is expected to affect around 10% of the private let properties in Argyll – around three times the average within Scotland.

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs): Houses in Multiple Occupation are those premises where three or more unrelated persons live and share facilities. These premises require a specific licence that considers various issues including fire safety, electrical safety, general living space and facilities along with other areas such as tenancy agreements. There are currently 40 licenced HMOs within Argyll. These accommodate a range of persons and include persons of all ages.

Since taking over the whole of the HMO licence process we have identified a number of premises operating as HMOs and are working with these to ensure they are licenced and standards are met. Many of these premises operate as part of existing businesses and provide staff accommodation particularly those working in large hotels. We are involved in a further 15 premises where licences are likely to be required in the near future and are currently processing a similar number of new or renewal applications.

- 7.3 Energy Efficiency:** Following the successful roll out of the Home Energy Efficiency Programme Scotland (HEEPS) which now covers the whole Argyll and Bute local authority area we secured an additional £150 000 from the Scottish Government in February 2019. Staff are in the process of engaging with eligible households to ensure that the funding is spent appropriately and effectively.

After the excellent evidence given at the Scottish Parliament Committee on Fuel Poverty, Scottish Government officials wanted to do an Island Community Impact Assessment on Islay and this was duly organised. Unfortunately due to weather, the Edinburgh based officials were unable to attend but they did email across their presentation and questions and a very productive meeting went ahead with good attendance from people from Islay and Jura.

- 7.4 Community Planning:** The CPP meeting of the Full Partnership took place on the 28<sup>th</sup> March 2019 at the Queen's Hall, Dunoon. The theme for this year was Community Planning in Action: Meeting Challenges Together. Dunoon Grammar pupils worked in partnership with the team to support the day with pupils involved in facilitating the day, providing catering and music.

The CPP Annual Report has now been published and is available on the council website.

Area Community Planning Groups met in February this year and were generally well attended by community groups and partners. The focus for these sessions was on outcomes 3 and 4 – *Education, skills and training maximise opportunities for all* and *Children and young people have the best possible start*.

Applications to the Supporting Communities Fund have been assessed and are due to be considered by Area Committees during April. This year there were 115 applications to the fund from across Argyll and Bute – including 70 received from groups new to the fund.

- 7.5 Islands:** The council, through the Argyll Islands Strategic Group (AISG), continues to support our island communities and to lobby for the key issues and priorities affecting our islands.

AISG on the 27<sup>th</sup> February heard from our Island Liaison Partners in relation to the progress made in meeting with local communities on their designated islands and ongoing discussions with Erica Clarkson, Islands Implementation Lead at the Scottish Government who had also been visiting islands in an effort to build relationships. Discussion took place in respect of the role of the Partners and the need to establish a relationship

with island communities to allow a flow of information from these communities to the Scottish Government.

AISG gave consideration at the same meeting to a report updating on the key actions identified as being critical to island communities and their opportunities for growth and development. Discussion took place in respect of the roads infrastructure; the advantages and disadvantages of RET; the ports and vessel infrastructure and how the biodegradable municipal waste strategy will impact on island communities.

A number of small amendments were made to bring the priorities up to date that included calling for the Scottish Government to bring forward capital investment in key island infrastructure such as ports, ferry terminals, vessels and road infrastructure in order to facilitate the needs of RET and secure the future economic prosperity of our islands.

Another key issue raised was the need to address the disposal of waste on islands which has the potential to be very expensive for our island communities as greater restrictions on the use of landfill are implemented.

The AISG also gave consideration to a report providing an update on the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 with specific focus on the National Islands Plan. Discussion took place in respect of the consultation phase of the National Islands Plan with members agreeing that discussions are required to find out what the intention of the Scottish Government is in relation to what it will consist of and what impact assessments will look like to ensure due regard is given to existing policies and procedures. Islands Liaison Partner, Iain MacAllister agreed to look into the matter and confirm what the consultation will look at. Further discussion took place in respect of the provision to review ward boundaries.

The AISG also considered the issue of fuel poverty which is a significant issue for our island communities. There are national targets for reducing fuel poverty in Scotland but our challenge here is to ensure that fuel poverty levels in Argyll and Bute fall as quickly as the rest of Scotland and we are not left behind due to our remote location.

**7.6 Culture, Heritage and Arts – CHArts:** Membership continues to grow and as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 there were 335 individuals and 67 organisations signed up. A Development Manager contract was awarded to take forward the CHArts SCIO and its sustainability beyond the end of the Place Partnership with Creative Scotland in September 2019.

The contract for developing the tourism offer of culture, heritage and arts activity along the National Cycle Route (NCR) 75 from Dunoon to Portavadie, and National Cycle Route 78 from Tarbert to Appin has begun and will continue through to September 2019. This will provide

opportunities for creative individuals and businesses to work together to develop their shared offer and market this to visitors. The aim of this is to increase the sustainability of the sector in the area, assess how this can be achieved in a way that is replicable elsewhere and demonstrate the importance and the potential of culture, heritage and arts.

Skills and knowledge development continues to take place and in particular opportunities for collaboration between artists and heritage sites. A number of pilot projects on our islands will be delivered over the coming months and pave the way for further learning.

The Place Partnership comes to its conclusion on the 31<sup>st</sup> September 2019 and plans are being developed for a showcase of culture, heritage and arts to take place that month.

Visit [www.chartsargyllandisles.org/](http://www.chartsargyllandisles.org/) for up to the minute information.

- 7.7** Advice Services: Work to redesign advice services is ongoing and is on target. Tenders are being evaluated at present although we are awaiting further information from the applicants so allow us to complete the process and award the tender. New delivery model has been implemented for the Council's debt counselling team focusing on particularly vulnerable clients only, with others being supported by local or national advice agencies. A Financial Inclusion and Advice Working Group is in place, building upon the work of the Welfare Reform Working Group.

Universal Credit full service was introduced in Argyll and Bute in September 2018. During this period of natural migration Welfare Rights have seen a gradual rise in the number of cases involving Universal Credit. A total of 96 UC actions were recorded between April 2018 and February 2019 with 45 (47%) recorded during January and February 2019.

As a change in circumstances may trigger a claim for Universal Credit, enquiries have arisen due to a number of reasons including relationship breakdown, becoming a Carer, failing a Work Capability Assessment and employment ending or changing. In general, appointment duration times have increased due to the complexity of the issues and the need to carry out 'better off' calculations as income may be maximised by making a claim for Universal Credit.

There continues to be increased demand for Welfare Rights advice. Between 1st October 2018 and 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018, 543 referrals were received which is an increase of 28% on the previous year.

- 7.8 Gaelic:** I am pleased to inform Members that a very successful 2<sup>nd</sup> Gaelic Gathering was held in Oban last month with the Depute First Minister as the key-note speaker. The theme of this year's Gathering was, "How do we get more people speaking Gaelic in the communities" and brought together people and community groups with public sector agencies and national bodies to look at increasing the use of Gaelic across the area.

Organising this very well-attended event took a considerable amount of work and I'm truly grateful for the tremendous assistance given by Laura MacDonald and Antonia Baird from Community Development and also Duncan MacNeil from Furan. The Council has received many plaudits for this event and we are now working on collating the feedback from the delegates and continue a dialogue with them as to how we take matters forward.

## **8. POLICY LEAD FOR EDUCATION – Councillor Yvonne McNeilly**

- 8.1 School Visits:** The Executive Director and I took to the road to visit Campbeltown Grammar, Clachan, Inveraray, Lochnell and Barcaldine Primary Schools last year, and are planning further visits over the next couple of weeks to Islay High School, along with schools in Mull, Cowal and Oban. Islay and Mull will be new places for me and I am really looking forward to the scenery and meeting the locals. It is important to both the Executive Director and I to visit the schools to see first-hand how the schools are operating and to meet our future leaders.
- 8.2 Positive progress on ELC 1140 hours preparation:** The council is making positive progress in preparing for the implementation of the fully funded 1140 hours of free Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) in Argyll and Bute by 2020.

The Community Services Committee which I chair heard at its meeting in March 2019 how 27 ELC services in Argyll and Bute are already providing parents and carers with the option to access the additional hours, which are funded by the Scottish Government. Plans are already underway to phase all ELC local authority, partners and childminding services in Helensburgh and Lomond, Lochgilphead, Ardrishaig and Campbeltown to 1140 hour provision by August this year.

We are committed to improvement, and to ensuring that our children get the very best start in life. These increased hours will benefit children aged three and four, as well as eligible two year olds, and will provide high quality, flexible early learning and childcare for families. Juggling childcare and work commitments can be a difficult task for parents, but these increased hours will help to give them with the flexibility they need to work, train or study. We are making good progress in implementing these additional

hours and I look forward to seeing the benefits that families experience as a result. I will keep members updated on progress.

- 8.3 Pupils' achievements in literacy and numeracy:** The Scottish Government has published figures relating to literacy and numeracy which shows our young people are achieving well. It collects data every year which details pupils' achievements in reading, writing, listening and talking and numeracy. These are known as 'Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) Levels' and focus specifically on pupils in P1, P4, P7 and S3.

CfE figures for 2017/18 show that pupils in P1, P7 and S3 are performing better than the national average in all four categories. Pupils in P4 are doing better than the national average too, with the exception of listening and talking, which is just 1% lower.

These figures are extremely encouraging and show just how dedicated our teachers and young people are to achieve such fantastic results. To be above the national average in even some of these categories is great result, but to be higher in them all, with the exception of one, is truly outstanding. We want the very best start for all our young people, and to ensure that they go on to achieve success in life. Clearly we are well on our way to achieving this and I would like to thank everyone who has been involved for their tremendous hard work. It's clear that Argyll and Bute's young people have a very bright future ahead of them.

- 8.4 Ideas from our Experts of the Future:** We all know that nowadays young children can use technology better than us, and our schools are taking this a step even further and coming up with their own technology ideas.

A talented team of pupils from **Hermitage Academy** have made it through to the UK finals of the Tomorrow's Engineers EEP Robotics Challenge. The youngsters beat off stiff competition in the West of Scotland heat in February this year, and went head to head with other teams from across the country at The Big Bang Fair in Birmingham in March.

The Tomorrow's Engineers EEP Robotics Challenge introduces student teams to real-world engineering, technology, robotics and computing challenges. The challenge aims to help students put their school learning into context and discover exciting new careers. The winning team of 10 students built, programmed and controlled LEGO robots for a series of 'aviation missions'. Students also had to research, design and present their own solution to a contemporary engineering problem faced by Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) professionals in the aviation industry. By being exposed to STEM throughout their education, our young people are more likely to develop a passion for these subjects and pursue a career in these areas in the future. The team of children were



led by Louise Baird, Technical Teacher at Hermitage. Well done to all of our budding IT experts.

Over in **Dunoon Grammar**, pupils scooped the top prize in a national competition for the third year running. The business and computing pupils beat off stiff competition from across Scotland when they won the Apps for Good Scotland event again, with a further two teams from Dunoon Grammar also sharing third prize. This is the third time running that pupils from the school have claimed the top prize at the event, which attracts industry experts from across the UK to visit and vote for their favourite ideas.

Apps for Good is a scheme that aims to build a global generation of problem solvers and works in partnership with schools and learning centres to deliver courses to young people aged between eight and 18 years old. Pupils work in teams to find issues they care about and think about how they can solve them.

At the event in Edinburgh, over 20 teams pitched their app ideas to visiting experts. The Dunoon pupils and staff were delighted to hear that, not only had they won the top prize, but two teams had also tied for third place. I was utterly speechless - the pupils at Dunoon Grammar are truly excelling, putting Argyll and Bute on the map in the process. To win the Apps for Good national event once is great, to win it twice is amazing, but to win it three times in a row is truly phenomenal. I was incredibly honoured to be invited along to the school to see some of the work that's going on, and to look at the Apps for Good creations that the young people have made.

**Campbeltown Grammar** are leading the way in music technology – pupils have been making the most of their new schools high tech music department from recording podcasts and radio adverts to making noise effects for computer games and have been letting their imaginations run wild. This is another great example of equipping our young people to use their initiative and secure and sustain positive destinations and achieve success – well done to all of the pupils.

Please click on the link to have a listen to our future musicians <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/news/2019/feb/leading-way-music-campbeltown-grammar>

Over at **Kirn Primary School** pupils visited Germany earlier in the year as part of an exchange programme which has been in place between the German school and Kirn for over 30 years and the opportunity allowed the link between the schools to be strengthened even more.

Senior pupils from Dunoon Grammar School worked closely with the children as mentors prior to the trip, teaching them some basic vocabulary

and helping them to create comic books about themselves in German. These were then shared with the two German schools that the children were visiting.

Exchange trips are a great way to ensuring our young people have the very best start, and enables our children to broaden their horizons, build independence and learn about other cultures. This is a wonderful example of a successful exchange. It's clear from the feedback that the children thoroughly benefitted from the trip, and its benefits are having an ongoing impact. I look forward to seeing how things progress in the years ahead.

Across in **Tobermory High School**, an S3 pupil has become the first student in Argyll and Bute to achieve an industry recognised qualification – Level 1 Good Certified Educator. Jakub Marzec is one of a number of pupils at the school using Google's G Suite to develop their digital skills, but the youngster has done so well that he's gone on to gain a qualification.

The Google Educator programme is designed to enable teachers to successfully use Google for Education to enhance teaching and learning. By gaining the educator status, Jakub has demonstrated that he has the knowledge and ability to do this.

What a fantastic achievement for Jakub and for Tobermory High School. We're seeing a huge increase in the number of young people taking an active interest in digital technology, and our schools are working extremely hard to give young people the opportunity to take the lead in this. It's clear that digital technology has a huge part to play in business too. It's all around us and it is important that young people are encouraged to become creators of digital content rather than just being consumers of technology. By introducing more digital opportunities in the classroom, we are helping our young people to prepare for positive destinations and achieve success in life. Congratulations to Jakub once again – I'm sure he has a very bright future ahead of him.

Back to **Dunoon Grammar**, where a team of budding young entrepreneurs from will see a tasty sandwich they created being sold in over 100 fast food stores across the West of Scotland, after winning a national competition organised by Subway. More than 80 entries were submitted to the fast food giant's annual 'Design a Sub Challenge', but only six teams made it through to the 'Dragon's Den' style finals in Glasgow – two of which were from Dunoon Grammar.

Both teams excelled, with Brain Booster fighting off stiff competition to win the best social media campaign category, and the other Dunoon team, Carnival Crunch, taking the overall top spot. Pupils were asked to come up with a well thought out design and marketing campaign for a new Subway

sub or flatbread using a fictitious budget of £50,000. The campaign also had to demonstrate Subway's variety, all within a specific calorie count, whilst getting across the company's core messages.

Brain Booster, made up of Olivia Robertson, Findlay Moback, Millie McMaster and Richard Reid, had the edge and won with their creation of lettuce, peppers, cucumber, chicken and sweet chilli sauce on warm hearty Italian bread. The sandwich will be available to purchase in Subway stores this spring.

I am absolutely thrilled, I really am. The children at Dunoon Grammar have worked extremely hard on this marketing campaign and I could not be prouder. To see a product that they have created being sold by one of the biggest fast-food chains in not just the UK, but the world, is a massive achievement. It's clear that these children are on a pathway to success and have a very bright future in front of them.

Being a real scientist was on the agenda for **Colgrain Primary School** in January this year – primary six pupils at Colgrain Primary got the opportunity to find out what it takes to be a real scientist when they received a special video message from Dr Suzanne Maclachlan from the Oceanography Centre in Southampton. Dr Maclachlan, a former pupil at Hermitage Academy, studies micro-fossils from the seabed and sent pupils an interesting and informative video message about her role, along with some real fossils for the children to look at through a microscope.

**8.5 Staying Safe on the Internet:** I know we can all agree that it is important that our children are safe when using the internet, and I was pleased to see that pupils across the board took part in a number of activities on 5<sup>th</sup> February to promote “consent online” which was this years’ theme of the Safer Internet Day 2019.

I was delighted to attend an event in Helensburgh on 27<sup>th</sup> March which showcased the work of pupils in the area to highlight this very important issue. Local Rotary members have been working in partnership with schools and Police Scotland to organise an annual Internet Safety Poster competition. The winning designs are used in internet safety campaigns all over the area. It was a privilege to be invited along to this year's presentation of prizes – what talented and internet-savvy young pupils we have! It was a great event and the pupils have, once again, been spectacularly creative in producing their own designs to raise awareness of the importance of staying safe. Thanks are due also to the Rotary volunteers who put in so much time and effort to arrange this every year.

**8.6 Investing in Young People:** Hermitage Academy has become the first school in Scotland to gain national accreditation with Investors in Young People. This accreditation framework recognises organisations that are committed to recruiting, retaining and developing their young workforce; it acknowledges them as an employer of choice, providing practices that have positive outcomes for young people. To receive accreditation with Investors in Young People is an honour in itself, but to be the first secondary school in Scotland to achieve this is truly amazing.

This accreditation recognises Hermitage as an employer of choice. It acknowledges the practices that the school has undertaken that have positive outcomes for young people, and the talent pool it's helping to create for the future. We want to ensure that every young person in Argyll and Bute is given the opportunity to succeed in life, and Hermitage Academy looks like it might be leading the way.

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

**9.1 Planning (Scotland) Bill:** The Planning (Scotland) Bill is currently at Stage 3 of the Parliamentary process and the Local Government and Communities Committee as the lead committee are in the process of considering amendments to the Bill.

**9.2 Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2):** As I have previously reported the council has a statutory duty under the Planning Etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 to prepare and keep up to date a Local Development Plan (LDP) and as such it should aim to prepare a new plan within five years of adoption of its current plan. The current LDP was adopted in March 2015 and in January 2016 the process of planning for its review and replacement was agreed by council with the preparation of the Development Plan Scheme (DPS) which sets out the programme for key milestones in the process of producing Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2).

The DPS is updated annually and in February the third update of the DPS was reported to and approved by the Planning, Protective Services and Licensing Committee. In this update of the DPS it was noted that some slippage had occurred since the last update and that the timetable now provided will deliver LDP2 by the third quarter of financial year 2020/21 which will exceed the five-year period for renewal from adoption of the current Local Development Plan by seven months.

It should be noted that until LDP2 is adopted the current LDP's statutory status remains and planning applications will be dealt with as normal.

Since the second update of the DPS the Development Policy Team have undertaken the following actions in the LDP2 process:-

- Published the updated DPS Jan 2018
- Considered the responses to the Main Issues Report
- Additional engagement with Key Agencies and stakeholders on specific issues
- Held five Councillor Workshops
- Started preparation of the Proposed Local Development Plan strategy, policies and allocations
- Started preparation of the following supporting documents
  - Strategic Environmental Assessment
  - Equality and Socio-Economic Impact
  - Habitat Regulation Appraisal Record
  - Action Programme

Following a member seminar/workshop the proposed LDP2 will be presented to the Full Council for approval during the first quarter of the 2019/20 financial year.

Once the draft LDP has been approved it will become the ‘settled view’ of the Council and it will then be prepared for a two-month consultation during the second quarter of the financial year (July-September) where interested parties will be able to participate in the consultation on line or at their local library.

Details of the Development Plan Scheme and LDP2 process can be found at: <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/ldp2>

- 9.3 Planning:** Planning fee income to the end of February 2019 provided a surplus of £41k from the forecast budget for the financial year 2018/19. The surplus in budget is due to a number of high value applications being submitted earlier in the financial year and although the surplus has fallen back month on month since my last report it is anticipated that there will be a surplus in the region of £20k at the end of the financial year.

In January Planning and Regulatory Services were the latest service to receive Customer Service Excellence accreditation and I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all those involved in attaining this prestigious award.

- 9.4 Building Standards:** Building Standards income for the 2018/19 financial year remains above budget with a surplus of £150k forecast for the end of the financial year.

As previously reported this is primarily as a result of ongoing commercialisation providing verifier services to other local authorities and over the last couple of months this work has been extended to processing

Building Warrant applications for East Lothian Council, Inverclyde Council and East Dunbartonshire Council.

Building Standards performance on vetting Building Warrant applications remains above their charter promise and their customer satisfaction rating remains constant at 100%.

Building Standards successfully retained their Customer Service Excellence accreditation after their recent annual audit being fully compliant in all 57 elements of the audit and gaining a further three compliances taking their total to 15.

**9.5 Training and Development:** The Planning, Protective Services and Licensing Committee continue to receive 'bite sized' training sessions prior to the monthly meetings of the PPSL Committee and at the February meeting the committee agreed a training programme with the following topics suggested for the coming year:

- Oban Strategic Development Framework
- LDP update
- Planning Act – Development Policy
- Planning Act – Development Management
- Aquaculture
- Use of Storybook and interactive consultation in the LDP process
- LDP – Placemaking – residential policies etc
- Low carbon technology and new development
- Delivery of affordable housing through SHIP and the LDP
- Digital Planning

The training sessions are open to all elected members and VC facilities can be accommodated for elected members who wish to take part in the sessions who are not on the PPSL committee.

## **10. CONCLUSION**

**10.1** This report provides members with an update on each of the Policy Lead portfolios. Policy Lead Councillors will be happy to discuss any particular issues with colleagues as required.

**Argyll and Bute Council – Policy Lead Councillors Report – 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2019**

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