
27th June 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 18th April; this report covers the period from that date until 10th June 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 May and June 2019.
- 3.2 **Strategic Finance:** Finance Officers continue to finalise the year-end accounts for 18/19 and it should be noted that there was a significant overspend for the council as a consequence of the HSCP overspend – that risk continues into the current year budget. Our Head of Strategic Finance, Kirsty Flanagan has completed her secondment with the HSCP and she is commended for the rigour and robustness she brought to their reporting and financial monitoring and providing a sound foundation for her successor, Judy Orr.

3.3 Capital Regeneration:

Helensburgh Waterfront Development: The project continues to make progress with tender documents issues to shortlisted to suppliers in mid-May with tender returns requested by 12th July 2019. Thereafter officers will evaluate the submissions on technical and commercial grounds prior to a recommendation to award during September. Key dates are below:

- Tender return date now 12th July 2019
- Technical/Commercial Evaluation and Bidder Presentation 12th July – 6th September, 2019
- Preferred Tenderer Stage – PTN (two weeks) 16th – 27th September, 2019
- Contract Award 14th October, 2019
- Contract Start-up meeting – mid – late October
- Contractors Mobilisation Period – 10th Oct – 11th November, 2019

Rothesay Pavilion: The Grade A Listed Building refurbishment project remains challenging. Construction work delays have increased following a small area of the main hall ceiling coming away, with the resultant discovery of additional asbestos contamination. All options to address this issue have been considered and, given the type and condition of the asbestos containing materials uncovered, and the fact that the main hall ceiling is approaching 100 years old, the safest and most efficient long term solution is to remove the existing ceiling and replace it with a modern equivalent, of the same aesthetic qualities

The programme implications of the main hall ceiling works have yet to be fully quantified. We are currently assessing the tenders for these works, but it is estimated this will delay the Contract Completion to the end of January 2020. The project remains on budget (£10.6m construction costs) at P2 FY19/20, but the additional ceiling works puts the budget under significant pressure, despite the unexpended contingency allowance.

- ### **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. At the time of writing I am due to deputise for the Leader at the June Chief Officers and Senior Officers session in Helensburgh, a welcome opportunity to meet with staff who are helping to steer the organisation and its services through a period of challenge and change.

4. POLICY LEAD FOR CORPORATE SERVICES – Councillor Rory Colville

4.1 Management Changes: Over the last two years of my Policy Lead role it has been my privilege and indeed pleasure to work with some of the most experienced senior officers within the Council. With a combined total of one hundred and twenty five years' service their contribution to the delivery of the corporate wellbeing of the residents of Argyll and Bute is immense. As author and journalist Jack Webster said, "*The one thing that is certain in Life is that things will change*". That change in the council's journey is, by their contribution, moving forward on solid foundations. Some of them are retiring from the council in June and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of these officers for their commitment and professionalism over the years in their service to the people of Argyll and Bute.

4.2 Best Value 3: As I notified Council in my last Policy Lead Report, Audit Scotland were on site in April and again in May to carry out planned Best Value work on the themes of Fairness and Equality and Performance, Outcomes and Improvement. This work is in advance of the BV3 Audit of the Council which will start in October this year. I met with the auditors and was able to explain to them the role that our EQSEIA or 'Fairness Test' plays in informing the important decisions that we take.

Audit Scotland have completed their BV fieldwork on Fairness and Equality and whilst they have yet to fully assess what they found, an emerging finding is that there is clear evidence of equality issues being embedded within everyday working. Their work on performance, outcomes and improvements has been substantially completed and their preliminary findings indicate that Public Performance Reporting is well established.

4.3 Wellbeing: The HROD team have been working hard on an area of policy that is very close to my heart – wellbeing. I have reviewed a draft wellbeing strategy and will be bringing this forward for adoption after recess.

As part of ongoing wellbeing activities, the team arranged for an Alcohol Brief Intervention event in the Kilmory Canteen in May. Run by the NHS, this provided information about alcohol consumption and physical and mental health.

I am sure that the wellbeing strategy will enable us to improve on the support that we give to our staff who work hard on our behalf every day.

4.4 SVQ Training Centre: The SQA accredited Council Training Centre now offers 22 different accredited training courses from Foundation Apprenticeships to SCQF Level 10 Leadership and Management. The team continues to receive excellent external verification assessments from the

SQA, the latest one stating that *'High Confidence identified in the maintenance of SQA Standards for Resources, Candidate Support and Internal Assessment and Verification'*. It is important that we continue to provide quality training and development for our staff to ensure high standards of service delivery. I am pleased also to hear that the Training Centre is now delivering accredited training on a commercial basis, getting income which helps to offset some of the previous cuts to the service.

4.5 Communications: The Communications Team continues to increase the number of followers that the Council has on all social media channels. They have also been shortlisted in no fewer than three categories in the forthcoming PRCA Awards. This again highlights the quality of the staff and service that we have in such a small team.

4.6 Customer and Support Services Highlights:

Local Tax Collections

Council Tax collections for 2019/20 as at the end of April are 11.22%, up 0.14% on last year at this time.

Collections for 2018/19 (on a cash basis) are now 95.94% and up by 0.18% on previous year at this time. Collections on 2017/18 year (on a cash basis) are at 96.63%, up 0.07% on previous year.

The team have now started issuing text/email reminders in advance of posting out formal reminder notices and as a result, the number of reminder notices in the first reminder run for 2019/20 were down by around 1400.

Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF)

As at the end of April we have spent £32,125 on applications received which was 86.7% of the profiled amount. There were 15 community care grant claims received. We are continuing to support high priority cases only, with the intention of being able to support this level for the full financial year.

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) and benefit cap

The confirmed funding for 2019/20 so far is £561,802 with an estimated £90,000 to be received in the summer. The Strategic Management Team has agreed to support the same priority cases in 2019/20 as we have done throughout the last two years. At the end of April we have spent or committed £625,218 which exceeds the funding available, primarily on under-occupancy cases which are fully funded and have all been rolled forward much quicker this year, thanks to new software. We have processed 705 applications for DHP and made 714 awards.

Benefits processing

For new claims processing we took an average of 20.36 days for April which is better than the target of 21 days. Our full year accuracy statistics are excellent at 100%, above the target of 96.0%.

Procurement, commissioning and creditors

For April, we have paid 97.07% of creditors' invoices within 30 days which is well above our target of 95.50% and a great start to the new financial year.

Customer Service Centre (CSC) and Registration

The call abandon rate for April was 4.9%, much better than the target of 6.25%. Average call times for the year were 3.73 decimal minutes, above the target of 3.73 minutes reflecting the growth of the simpler matters being addressed on a self-service basis. The "Resolved at first point of contact" level was 94.9% for April against a target of 91%. The voice automated call routing success rate was 77.9% just below the target of 79%.

We went live on 9th May with a new interface from the roads WDM system to our customer case management system which gives greater visibility to our CSC agents of the status of previously reported faults, and will give our customers automatic updates as faults get fixed – this is something our customers have been asking for.

ICT

The average time to fix IT faults for April was 2.34 hours, well below our target of 4.5 hours.

Migrations are now well underway to the upgraded Kilmory server environment.

Socitm has advised us that initial results from benchmarking done in 2018/19 on 2017/18 data show that the Council's ICT service is one of the very best in the UK in terms of ICT performance and cost (i.e. high performing despite keeping costs low). This is a tremendous accolade and I congratulate the team for their hard work in achieving this – well done.

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

5.1 Changes in Health and Social Care Partnership Senior Management:

There have been a number of changes in senior management within the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP). Sandra Cairney, Associate Director Public Health has retired while Sandy Wilkie, Head of People and Change will be moving to other duties within the partnership. Lorraine Paterson, Head of Adult Services (West) and Phil Cummins, Interim Head of Adult Services (East) have also left to take up posts elsewhere in

Scotland. I would like to thank all four for their contributions and support to the IJB. Confirmation of final replacement management restructures is pending final agreement, however interim management arrangements are being put in place to ensure that staff remain supported and that there is effective strategic leadership.

I am delighted to welcome Judy Orr to the HSCP as the new Head of Finance and Transformation, a role that is going to be crucial in ensuring that plans are in place to deliver sustainable services for people in Argyll and Bute. I have particularly appreciated Kirsty Flanagan covering the IJB Section 95 officer role over the last few months and thank her for stepping in at such a busy time.

5.2 Policy Lead Activities: In order to complete a required self-evaluation for the Scottish Government the IJB had a special non-business meeting on 30th April. This is part of a national review of integration, and members discussed progress with Collaborative Leadership and Building Relationships, Integrated Finances and Financial Planning, Effective Strategic Planning for Improvement, Governance and Accountability Arrangements, Ability and Willingness to Share Information, and Meaningful and Sustained Engagement.

At the regular meeting of the IJB on 29th May a key agenda item was the Sturrock Report. This was commissioned following reported behaviours across NHS Highland. Within it are a number of potential implications for the HSCP and as further details emerge these will be brought back for consideration by the IJB. Another item which prompted much debate was around governance of the IJB and the committees which report to it, including the role of different members and the filling of a number of vacant positions.

There was a further Joint Leadership Meeting with representatives of Argyll and Bute Council, NHS Highland and the IJB on 3rd April, where the proposed review of scheme of integration was discussed, as well as meetings of the Senior Members Officers Group on 16th April, Clinical and Care Governance Committee on 25th April, and Quality and Finance Board on 6th June.

I have continued my involvement with the national Chairs and Vice-Chairs Network with a meeting of the Executive on 23rd April and the full network on 8th May during which the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport was in attendance.

COSLA boards that I have attended were Children and Young People on 5th April and 10th May, and Health and Social Care on 24th May. New topics discussed included Historical Child Abuse Payments, Devolved Social

Security, Self-Directed Support Implementation Plan, School Holiday food provision, preventing Harmful Sexual Behaviour by Children and Young People, Improving the Lives of Gypsy/Traveller Children and Young People and Secure Care National Standards for Scotland.

On 14th May I had a meeting with Cllrs Horn and Philand and officers from the HSCP about the Autism Strategy. There was recognition at the frustration amongst those with experience of autism with the delays in progressing work on this due to changes in staffing and a lack of capacity within the service. Reference was however made to developments happening to support service users remaining in and being repatriated to the area.

I attended ACUMEN's conference on 21st May in Inveraray where people from Argyll were joined by those from other areas covered by the organisation.

It was a pleasure to be able to visit Etive House Care Home in Benderloch on 31st May. Currently nearing the end of an extensive refurbishment programme, the enthusiasm of the management and commitment of the owning company to improving the environment for residents was clearly evident.

5.3 Adult Services: Jean's Bothy, the Mental Health and Wellbeing Centre in Helensburgh recently held an Open Day to help raise awareness of the facility. This is a successful example of partnership working between the HSCP, Enable Scotland, the Ministry of Defence, and the Third Sector Interface. Increasing numbers are using this service accessed either through self-referral or through GPs and support agencies. It aims to address needs in a more holistic way and encourage connection to non-clinical support services for problems such as debt, loneliness, relationship breakdown and caring responsibilities.

With increasing awareness of loneliness and isolation the HSCP is signposting people who do not meet criteria for accessing formal services to befrienders' organisations such as Visiting Friends, a privately funded service in Helensburgh which has now been running for a year. Such services are however reliant on volunteers and I would encourage anyone who is interested to consider contacting such organisations to find out the opportunities available to help vulnerable people.

Co-location of health and social care teams is progressing – with longer term plans for Bute and Cowal and Dunoon being looked at, as well as more immediate proposals to move staff in Oban from Willowview to other offices in the town. As well as improving communication between different

professionals, reducing the number of buildings used allows resources to be directed towards providing frontline care services.

The previously widely publicised national issues with the disposal of clinical waste have now been resolved with procedures now in place that meet the requirements of the new contractors.

Recruitment to the Mull Island Practice is ongoing, as are efforts to tackle staff vacancies across the HSCP with targeted advertising on social media as well as using more traditional routes.

5.4 Children and Families: Service reviews in areas including Community Assessment and Reviewing Officers (CARO), Justice and Early Intervention are completed or are in the process of implementation.

A review of the management and staffing structure is now underway including appropriate consultation with staff groups.

On 11th May a Foster Carer Development Day was held. The Chief Officer attended and participated, spending one to one time with our foster carers and many of our children and young people.

Shellach View Children's Care Home recently had an unannounced inspection, one of the first to be undertaken using the New Health and Social Care Standards. The inspection was very thorough and resulted in the grades of 5 (very good) being retained in the areas assessed.

The Argyll and Bute Children's Services Strategic Partnership applied for and have been accepted to participate in the GIRFEC Leadership Programme. This is a Scottish Government initiative to support the children's partnerships in improving the outcomes for children and young people. Argyll and Bute is one of only two partnerships which have been accepted.

5.5 Finance: The final financial year end position for 2018/19 for the HSCP was an overspend of £6.681m including £3.127m within social care. This was a substantial increase over that forecast primarily due to increases in charges for services delivered by NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (NHSGGC).

Officers remain engaged in negotiations with NHSGGC, and the Scottish Government are aware that there is now a dispute around the level of funding for the SLA. The IJB has confirmed the position that the current allocation has been set to enable reinvestment in community services within Argyll and Bute, in line with local and national plans to shift the balance of care away from acute settings.

Repayment of the £3.127m to the council has been agreed over a three year period, extending the current arrangements in place for the £1.155m 2017/18 overspend. The combined repayments are £100k in 2019/20, £1.1m in 2020/21, £1.755m in 2021/22 and £1.327m in 2022/23.

There will be ongoing close monitoring of progress with delivery of the 2019/20 Quality and Finance Plan as well as development of the 2020/21 plan through the Quality and Finance Board. Grip and Control and Resource Meetings are continuing with emphasis on supporting these shifted from strategic to operational management.

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 Capital Programme, Roads Reconstruction: Works are underway across the area including surface dressing which will help to seal and protect our road network.

6.3 Investment in island roads: A programme of works worth over £640,000 has been approved for roads improvements on Islay and Jura.

This includes £200k surface dressing works between Port Askaig and Ballygrant, a package of dressing works for Crosshouse totalling £65k and £15k of footpath works alongside a range of other improvement works all over Islay as well as on Jura and Colonsay.

6.4 LED Project Update: The project is progressing well with the majority of areas now complete and one final luminaire procurement will see the whole of Argyll and Bute street lighting successfully converted to LEDs. This has resulted in a significant reduction in the Council's lighting energy cost and has also reduced our carbon consumption associated with lighting by approximately two thirds.

6.5 Customer Care Project: Member enquiries continue to receive focused attention from staff members within the central control hub. This combined with revised service procedures should demonstrate continued improvements in timeliness and quality of responses. A future programme category has been agreed and introduced to Casebook which is designed to remove long term enquiries which do not have immediate resource of budget available to address but which should continue to be visible for consideration. Recently implemented with no entries at this time, entries

will transfer into this category as identified but the central control hub will continue to monitor on a daily basis.

6.6 Ports Infrastructure: Projects to continue to progress well across our network of ports and harbours. Works overall are summarised below:

Rothesay: Erection of the wave screen is now well advanced with much of the structural elements now in place. The latest contract programme still indicates completion of the work by the end of this month. Close liaison with Calmac continues. Thereafter, discussions with our consultant regarding the next stage of the work to stabilise the pier (grouting) will take place.

A brief will be issued shortly to produce tender documentation for replacement of the outer pontoons at Rothesay Harbour. Once a detailed estimate of the necessary works involved has been produced (previous estimates have excluded costs of dredging and piling), a view can be taken on the ability of generated income being sufficient to fund prudential loan charges.

Dunoon: Council Officers and Transport Scotland have agreed that a working group will be set up to consider infrastructure requirements at both Gourock and Dunoon – with possible impact on Kilcreggan too. Local community groups and elected members will be kept apprised of any development.

Discussions continue with the local contractor, 'Shearwater', regarding removal and replacement of the timber fence at Dunoon Pier. The Council will procure all materials on the basis that labour is provided free of charge. On a separate, but related issue, Shearwater has asked to make use of the storage shed on the timber pier – this is currently disused.

Tender returns have been received and we have a preferred bidder for 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.

Fionnphort: The ongoing feasibility study is now nearing completion – *expected by the end of this month*. Further consultation meetings were held on Iona and Fionnphort in 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 – *sedimentation modelling*, 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.

Helensburgh: The following options are currently under consideration:-

- Minor repairs to the existing timber pier. This option would ensure safe access for pedestrians only; it would not facilitate berthing of the Waverley and the fire-damaged section of the pier would remain off-limits. Related costs are likely to be in the region of £60K.
- Major repairs to the timber pier to reinstate all damaged sections: This option would facilitate Waverley berthing and permit full pedestrian access. Essentially, all damaged timbers would be replaced on a like-for-like basis, including timbers in the fire-damaged area. Costs for this option are likely to be in the region of £850K.
- Construct new berthing structure (monolithic piles with fendering system) adjacent to the pier and connected by access gangway: This option would allow the Waverley to berth. Costs are likely to be in the region of £580K for this option. But recent listing of the pier may rule out this as an option.

A further option involving dredging to the west side of the pier may be a potential solution – but this will be subject to further advice from Waverley Trust on practicability.

In the meantime, discussions with both the ‘Waverley Trust’ and ‘Helensburgh Seafront Development Project’ continue. A report was considered at the Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee on 20th June.

Craignure: A meeting took place with community groups at Craignure on 4th June to agree terms of reference for the ‘Craignure Marine Infrastructure Liaison Group’. A number of actions will be taken forward including a review of maintenance processes (including holding of spares) and setting up improved lines of communication with the community council. Next step in the process, following completion of the STAG report, will be to produce an Outline Business Case to consider both interim and long-term options. A report on the outcome of the STAG process was due to be heard by the OLI Area Committee on 12th June.

- 6.7 Ferry services update:** Negotiations with Transport Scotland (TS), concerning the transfer of ferry services, have now recommenced. A telephone meeting took place with Council officers and TS on 23rd May. Due to the time elapsed since discussions previously took place, much information had to be updated following this meeting – all revised information has now been passed to Transport Scotland and they are now preparing a ministerial submission. The next step in the process, once we

hear back from Transport Scotland, will be to arrange further consultation with local community councils.

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

7.1 Introduction: Since my last report of April 2019 I have continued my Policy Lead meetings with officers on a regular basis. I have attended COSLA meetings and I'm looking forward to chairing my first meeting of the Financial Inclusion and Advice Services Group which was set up by the Council and taking over from the Welfare Rights Group. I continue to chair the Strategic Housing Forum which meets on a quarterly basis. I suggested setting up an officer group to deal with matters concerning the Strategic Housing Investment Programme. This group has now met a couple of times and is proving beneficial and speeding up matters regarding developments, as people meet round a table rather than endless correspondence through emails.

7.2 Supporting Communities Fund Grant Disbursement: 75 community groups across the Argyll and Bute Council area have been awarded grant funding from the Supporting Communities Fund to the sum of £108,499. Payment to grant recipients is currently ongoing with monies released on return of a signed contract.

7.3 Community Planning: Area wide engagement is currently taking place using a tool called: Place Standard. This will run until the end of September 2019. The results will directly feed into the next iteration of the Area Community Planning Action Plans, required in legislation through the Community Empowerment Act, and will be shared across departments, partner agencies and with community groups themselves, in order to assist them with any community-led action plans they may be developing.

All community councils have been emailed and offered an engagement session. A training session on using the tool has been run for Community Planning partners and Community Development Officers are running a series of engagement events to increase participation. Sessions will also be delivered to all ACPGs in August and in some areas the consultation is teaming up with other engagement activities to avoid "consultation fatigue".

7.4 Community Development: The Community Development Team continue to provide a wide range of support to third sector and community organisations across Argyll and Bute.

A training programme, aimed at third sector organisations and community groups has delivered courses on: 'Equality and Diversity' and 'Dealing with Challenging Situations'.

Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands (MAKI) – A new steering group for A816 has been established and the group has met with the Community Transport Association (Scotland) Director for Scotland.

A new Men's Shed in Campbeltown has been supported to become operational, called the 'Kintyre Workshop', which is based in St Kieran's church hall.

South Islay Development Trust have given MAKI Community Action Planning group a preview of their final draft Community Action Plan.

Oban, Lorn and the Isles (OLI) – supporting a community group considering Tralee Beach buyout; a long term project which aims to preserve and conserve the natural beach area. The group are a *Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation* (SCIO) and have registered with Scottish Land Fund for technical support and business plan to support process.

Helensburgh and Lomond – The Kirkmichael Community Development Group have undertaken a survey to better understand the needs of their community. Ongoing support is being provided by the Community Development Officer for the area, to help the community to access facilities and take forward priority projects.

Bute and Cowal – Cairndow Community Council are currently implementing the Cairndow Community Action Plan. They received Supporting Communities Fund to pay for an underwater survey to explore the possibility of a pontoon build at the head of Loch Fyne.

The Isle of Bute Resilience Team attended the Bute and Cowal Community Planning Group meeting on 7th May and gave a presentation. The team were awarded a grant from the Supporting Communities Fund 2019/20 to train the volunteers in manual handling and First Aid. Volunteers have already been trained in radio communication, map reading and the Resilience Team are working closely with the Council's Contingency officers. They have been asked to present at a seminar held by Stirling University as an example of community resilience in times of crisis.

- 7.5 Culture, Heritage and Arts (CHArts):** Membership continues to grow and as of 28th May 2019 there were 350 individuals and 69 organisations signed up to CHARTS. The Development Manager has been setting up governance processes and seeking additional members for the newly established CHARTS SCIO. The first board meeting will take place in June 2019.

The brief for Live Streaming and Filming was issued and a contractor will be appointed in June 2019. This contract will provide CHARTS with five films for use at both the CHARTS Showcase Event and for marketing. It will also enable the CHARTS Showcase Event in Oban to link with a further venue in Argyll and Bute and to be live streamed to audiences across the globe.

The CHARTS Showcase Event, a showcase of culture, heritage and art, will take place at St John's Cathedral in Oban on Saturday 14th September 2019 and will celebrate the creative talent within Argyll and Bute. A member of the Scottish Parliament and Creative Scotland representatives will be in attendance alongside Argyll and Bute Council representatives. The daytime showcase is open to all.

For up to date information, elected members are encouraged to visit <https://www.chartsargyllandisles.org/>

- 7.6 Islands:** The Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 was granted Royal Assent on 6th July 2018 with the first set of provisions coming into force on 4th October 2018. The Act introduces a number of measures to underpin the Scottish Government's key objective of ensuring that there is a sustained focus across Government and the public sector to meet the needs of island communities now and in the future.

The Act itself introduced a number of duties that are placed on the Scottish Ministers and Local Authorities in order to deliver the measures and objectives. This current consultation specifically relates to the duties detailed in Part 2 and 3 of the Act. Part 2 places a duty on the Scottish Ministers to prepare a National Islands Plan. Part 3 relates to duties in relation to island communities and requires Local Authorities and Scottish Ministers to have regard to island communities in carrying out their functions and where relevant to undertake a an island communities impact assessment .

The Act requires Ministers to consult with local authorities, as well as representatives of island communities in preparation of the National Islands Plan (Part 2) and before issuing guidance relating to the duties detailed under Part 3.

The SG have launched a consultation and associated questionnaire as part of this requirement however it should be noted that the on-line results will be combined with more qualitative data gathered through a series of events that will be carried out by Scottish Government throughout islands in Scotland including those in Argyll and Bute. The consultation, which has a closing date of 6 July 2019, can be accessed via the following link.

<https://consult.gov.scot/agriculture-and-rural-communities/national-islands-plan/>

In addition to the on line consultation the Islands Plan Consultation Events are taking place to also gather views from the island communities across Scotland. The team have already been to Islay, Jura, Colonsay, Mull, Ulva and Iona Gigha and Bute. Tiree's consultation is scheduled for 26 June and Coll on 27 June. Further information on the events can be found on the SG Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/scottishislandsact/>

7.7 Housing:

Affordable Housing Delivered during 2018/19: A total of 107 affordable houses have been delivered through the Strategic Housing Investment Plan in 2018/19. The details of the developments are listed in the table below:

RSL	AREA	PROJECT	Units
ACHA	Islay, Jura & Colonsay	Bowmore, Islay Phase 3	20
ACHA	Helensburgh & Lomond	Castlewood Court (1 st phase) Helensburgh	16
ACHA	Lorn	North Connel Specialist Unit	1
DHA	Helensburgh & Lomond	Succoth Phase 1	26
FYNE Homes	Mid Argyll	Lochgilphead Phase 4	16
Cowal	Dunoon	Queen's Court Dunoon	16
FYNE Homes	Mid Argyll	Minard Phase 2	4
LINK	Oban	Albany Street	8

336 affordable housing units have now been delivered in the first 3 years of the current Local Housing Strategy (2016-2021) against a target of 330.

Home Energy Efficiency Programme (HEEP) Area Based Scheme:

879 referrals were made to the HEEPS:ABS programme in 2018/19. The programme has been awarded a further £410,100 of additional HEEPS:ABS funding. The programme has installed 262 measures to 189 households and is currently on track to fully allocate the budget (comprising of 21 External Wall Insulation; 106 Internal Wall Insulation; 65 Cavity Wall Insulation; 42 Loft Insulation and 21 Underfloor Insulation). The HEEPS:ABS budget for 2019/20 is set at £1 745 908 subject to a successful grant application to the Scottish Government

Empty Homes: 48 empty properties were brought back into use in 2018/19. 151 empty homes have been brought back into use during the first 3 years of the current Local Housing Strategy (2016 -2021) against a target of 75. The Council approved an Empty/Abandoned Buildings Enabling Budget in December 2018 to assist Council staff to tackle the most difficult and complex empty homes cases in the local authority.

Homelessness/Housing Advice: 459 homeless applications were taken across Argyll and Bute in 2018/19 which represents an 11% decrease on the previous year. Housing Services staff recorded 1438 advice and prevention cases in 2018/19 and 336 households were provided with housing support to assist them to sustain their current accommodation during 2018/19

8. POLICY LEAD FOR EDUCATION – Councillor Yvonne McNeilly

- 8.1 School official opening ceremonies:** The official opening of both Campbeltown Grammar School and Oban High School took place on 4th and 5th June respectively and I was joined by local Members in each area along with present and former pupils, staff and a variety of other people.

On 4th June, we celebrated the official opening of Campbeltown Grammar School – although pupils and staff moved into their new school last year, the old school building still had to be demolished to create a large car park, brand new 3G pitch and a sensory garden, complete with raised beds for pupils to cultivate. With all works now complete, we attended the new school for the official opening ceremony and received a tour of the state of the art facility from pupils. It was a very historic occasion for the people of South Kintyre and I was truly honoured to be a part of it. The pupils conducted some really fantastic performances and showcased their musical talent which was superb.

On 5th June, we celebrated the official opening of Oban High Schools and were given a tour of the school by pupils, they highlighted their hi-tech facilities, such as modern gyms, dance studios, fitness rooms, and sensory rooms, not only do they help pupils to thrive in a modern learning environment, but they help to prepare them for positive destinations in life. The demonstrations that the young people put on for all of us was absolutely marvelous – from gymnasts and dancers to musicians, bee-keepers and engineers - they have helped to show the variety of talent there is in our schools.

Head Teachers David Fyfe and Peter Bain demonstrated the real talent within their schools and I wish all current pupils, and future pupils the best of learning in their new facilities.

- 8.2 Visits to our schools:** The Executive Director and I took to the road once again to visit Dunoon, Kirn and Tighnabruaich Primaries in May along with Oban, Park and Dunbeg Primaries. We met many talented children, who demonstrated their enjoyment of learning and were able to teach both the Director and I some new things – as the say, *every day is a school day*.

Islay and Mull are next on our agenda and 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.

- 8.3 Working with our partners – making sure our young people get the best start:** The Council has recently gifted a piece of land to a nursery on Bute to enable it to grow and create additional childcare places for young people on the island. Apple Tree Nursery is based in Rothesay and the land concerned is at the rear of Rothesay Pavilion, adjoining the nursery. By gifting Apple Tree this land, it will enable the nursery to increase provision for young people in the area – something strongly supported by the Council's Education Service as part of the Scottish Government's 1140 hours requirement.

It is also a prime example of how Argyll and Bute Council is working with its partners to take forward the national policy – a request made to all Local Authorities by the Scottish Government as part of the implementation of the additional hours.

Apple Tree is the only year-round childcare provider on Bute and has just 12 places for children under the age of three. This land will provide the nursery with the opportunity to expand and ensure our children and young people are getting the very best start in life. We want our young people to thrive and a significant aspect of delivering quality pre-5 education across Argyll and Bute is outdoor learning. We expect a minimum of 50% of time to be spent in quality learning outdoors. Apple Tree does this extremely well within a very limited space but this land will enable them to enhance their outdoor provision. Apple Tree is already delivering 1140 hours childcare and recent questionnaires returned show parents are delighted with the service. A number have been able to work, increase hours or take up a college course as a result of the increased hours. Plans to extend the nursery will only help this to rise and I'm delighted that we can help and I am looking forward to visiting one day.

- 8.4 Award winning school meals – seven years in a row:** It will be no surprise that the Council has once again been recognised for offering fresh, healthy and sustainable school lunches, and in May were awarded the Soil Association Scotland's Bronze Food For Life Served Here. Food for Life Served Here award is a widely respected and independently assessed scheme, supported by the Scottish Government, which helps local

authorities to source food from the local area for school meals so that children benefit from freshly prepared, sustainable meals. It recognises and rewards councils that serve food made from fresh ingredients, free from genetically modified ingredients and undesirable additives, using free-range eggs and high-welfare meat.

Argyll and Bute Council serves 4,300 Food for Life accredited meals a day across their 80 certified primary schools.

8.5 Positive work in our schools and pupils' achievements:

Well done to Rosa!: Another one of Argyll and Bute's talented pupils from Rhu Primary School has had her art work put on display at a prestigious exhibition in the Tannahill Centre in Paisley. Rosa McLeod, of primary five, was selected as runner-up in the prestigious John Byrne National Drawing Competition, beating off stiff competition from more than 7,000 entrants. The exhibition was organised by Education Scotland in partnership with Renfrewshire Leisure, and showcased the highlights of the fifth annual competition by celebrated artist and playwright John Byrne.

Help DGS reach the final for the third year running: Two teams of pupils from Dunoon Grammar School are calling for help after making it through to the Apps for Good UK final for the third year running. The youngsters beat off stiff competition from over 25,000 young people to be shortlisted for the people's choice award after creating two unique mobile apps. However, in order to win, they need members of the public to vote for them.

This is the third year in a row that Dunoon Grammar has made it through to the final of this prestigious competition and I am extremely proud of everyone involved - the school is truly excelling in the world of digital learning and technology, and this is all down to the hard work and determination of pupils and staff, Dunoon Grammar. The two apps that the children have created are such a great idea but they are up against schools from geographically denser areas so they really need as much help as possible. I truly hope that the people of Argyll and Bute get behind them and vote. I wish them every success.

To watch the videos of both this year's finalists and to vote for your favourite app: www.appsforgood.org/awards/2019/peoples-choice-award

Praise for Dalintober: There was praise for Dalintober Primary School and Nursery in Campbeltown following a recent inspection – congratulations and well done to everyone at Dalintober Primary School and Nursery. I've watched with interest the initiatives that are underway at Dalintober and I am very impressed. It's clear that the school is very much at the heart of the local community and the children are proud of their education there. I look forward to seeing things continue to go from strength to strength at Dalintober.

Glowing report for Kilcreggan pre-5 unit: Kilcreggan Pre 5 Unit has recently received a glowing report from the Care Inspectorate – it's clear from the report that staff are continuing to move forward together as a confident, able and effective team, building on their good practice to achieve the best outcomes for our children and their families. We want the very best start for all our young people so it's very encouraging to see that Kilcreggan is working hard to provide consistently high standards of care. Congratulations to everyone involved.

Top quizzers at Hermitage Primary: What an amazing achievement for Hermitage – our young people never cease to amaze me – a talented young team from Hermitage Primary School scooped up second place at the Scottish European Educational Trust's National Euroquiz Final of 2019 which was held in the Chamber of the Scottish Parliament. Euroquiz is run by the Scottish European Educational Trust (SEET), a non-political charity which works to promote language learning, skills development and education about Europe and the wider world to young people across Scotland.

More than 470 schools from across Scotland took part in the heats from January to March this year – more than 2,300 pupils in total. This competition is a great opportunity for pupils to widen their knowledge about our European neighbours and provides a valuable framework for learning, reaching beyond school to the wider world. The Euroquiz is no easy task. To even reach the finals is a huge feat, never mind winning second place. Everyone at Hermitage Primary should be very, very proud of themselves.

Dunbeg going for green!: Congratulations to Dunbeg Primary on gaining its seventh Green Flag from Eco Schools. The school's clans have been working hard on addressing a range of topics as part of their clan activities, resulting in a positive impact on sustainability at a local and even global level.

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

- 9.1** Planning: In FQ4 the planning application approval rate was 97.9% which was the 23rd consecutive quarter that it has been above the approval rate target of 95% and which demonstrates that Argyll and Bute Council has a planning service which is 'open for business'.
- 9.2** Planning (Scotland) Bill: As previously reported the Planning (Scotland) Bill is currently at Stage 3 of the Parliamentary process and a range of amendments are currently being considered by the Local Government and Communities Committee. What comes forward from the Stage 3 process will be vital to delivering the initial aims of the review of the planning system.

- 9.3** Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2): At a recent seminar members present were updated on the current progress on LDP2 which will eventually replace the current Local Development Plan.

During the seminar members were advised that the proposed LDP2 will be presented to full council in September and if approved will become the 'settled view' of the council.

After this approval the proposed LDP2 will then be subject to an eight-week consultation period where interested parties will be able to participate in the consultation on line or at their local library, it is anticipated that the consultation will be carried out between October/December 2019.

Although this timeline shows some slippage from the Development Plan Scheme, which is the document that tracks the delivery process of LDP2 and is updated annually, it allows more time for the preparation of associated documents which will support the plan e.g. the Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality and Socio-Economic Impact and Habitat Regulation Appraisal Record and it also avoids holding the consultation over the summer months.

At the conclusion of the consultation period responses will be prepared to representations by means of Schedule 4s and, following due process, will be submitted to Scottish Ministers for the examination process to take place.

It is anticipated that LDP2 will be adopted in Autumn 2020 and although this has slipped from the original anticipated timeline of being adopted within the five year period since the current LDP was adopted in March 2015 it should be noted that this delay in adoption is not considered to pose any significant risk to the council as we have a healthy housing land supply and the existing LDP will continue to be relevant.

- 9.4** Advertisement and Signage Guidance: As advised in an earlier report the Planning, Protective Services and Licensing Committee (PPSL) adopted the Advertisement and Signage Policy Technical Working Note in September 2017 and in addition agreed that initial survey work to identify unauthorised A-boards should, in the first instance, be focussed upon the town centres of Dunoon, Helensburgh and Oban.

At a recent meeting of the PPSL Committee and following on from the survey work that was carried out a programme of action proposing proactive enforcement measures was agreed to deal with unauthorised A-board signage and press and social media releases have now been prepared raising awareness of consent requirements and Council policy on A-boards.

- 9.5** Conservation Area Appraisals: Consultations in relation to proposed conservation areas in Lochgilphead and Helensburgh were carried out between 1st May and 12th June and it is anticipated that reports in relation to these will be prepared for the August meeting of the PPSL Committee.
- 9.6** Conservation Area Officer: Our Conservation Area Officer is now carrying out consultancy work for the National Park on a temporary basis one day a week which is assisting with commercialisation within the service.
- 9.7** Building Standards: The commercialisation work within Building Standards over the last year providing verifier services and processing Building Warrant applications for other local authorities resulted in the service returning an end of year budget surplus of £215k.

As well as continuing to provide services to East Lothian and Inverclyde Council's Building Standards are also providing services to Falkirk Council at the moment although with one fully qualified and experienced officer now retired and another on maternity leave it is a finely balanced operation to ensure their own stakeholders are not disadvantaged.

As I have reported previously Building Standards performance on vetting Building Warrant applications remains well above their charter promise and their Customer satisfaction rating remains constant at 100%.

- 9.8** Retirements: In concluding this report I would like to extend my thanks to two officers I have had the pleasure of working closely with since assuming the role of Policy Lead for Planning and Regulatory Services in 2013. Angus Gilmour, Head of Planning, Housing and Regulatory Services and Charles Reppke, Head of Governance and Law leave the council with 36 and 33 years' service respectively and their invaluable experience and advice will be greatly missed by all members of the PPSL Committee while carrying out their various duties and on their behalf I would like to record my thanks to Angus and Charles for their assistance to all PPSL members over the years with every good wish for a happy and well deserved retirement.

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 – 14th June 2019

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