

**Budget consultation**

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**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 Argyll and Bute Council aims to work with as well as for our communities. This report sets out a consultation exercise that will give our communities the opportunity to contribute to transforming the work of the council.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 Members are recommended to agree that the council carries out the consultation exercise proposed in this report, noting that the presentation of the consultation will be developed prior to publication.

**3.0 DETAIL**

- 3.1 We have been asking people to respond to budget consultations every year for a number of years, with the focus in large part on changing what the council does and how we work.
- 3.2 We know, from public feedback, that there is a need for more information about the challenges faced by the council, and about the services and support the council continues to deliver amidst on-going change.
- 3.3 In addition therefore to asking people for their priorities for the work of the council, the proposed consultation includes information about financial constraints and ways in which we continue to support our communities.
- 3.4 In order to encourage a good level of response, we will draw on channels of promotion that have proven popular in the past. The consultation will be available in a number of ways:
- on the council's website
  - via our Citizens' Panel
  - via our information-subscription services
  - in printed copies available from council offices
  - via digital and employee communication channels
- 3.5 The consultation will run from the end of October to the beginning of December.

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The consultation set out in Appendix 1 is intended to gather views from our communities and employees that will support the council in setting a balanced budget in February 2020.

## 5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- |                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| 5.1/2 Policy/Financial       | Views provided are intended to help shape budget setting decisions   |
| 5.3/4/5 Legal/HR /Equalities | None   |
| 5.6 Risk                     | Public views are sought to help ensure that the council considers all options in bridging its funding gap. |
| 5.7 Customer Service         | Evidencing the influence of public views will be important in encouraging involvement in consultations.    |

Executive Director with responsibility for Customer Support Services: Pippa Milne

### **For further information:**

Jane Fowler, Head of Customer Support Services  
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Appendix1: Outline of proposed consultation

## **Appendix 1: Outline of proposed budget consultation**

Argyll and Bute has great people, places and opportunities for success.

Argyll and Bute needs its council to deliver more services than many other councils: we provide transport to and from islands for example, and we are investing in our economy to reverse the decline in population that threatens the future of the area.

Careful financial planning and changes to how we work mean we are continuing to deliver more than is required of a council.

Argyll and Bute however has had the third highest cut to its council funding of all of Scotland's authorities in recent years. We've delivered £57million in savings since 2010 and estimates show we will have to deliver another £9.2 million of savings next year.

You may be aware that we recently secured a rural growth deal of £50 million for Argyll and Bute. While this is great news, this one off funding cannot be used to bridge gaps in our budget; it must be used to deliver specific economic development objectives to be agreed with the UK and Scottish Governments.

Delivering more savings means that we have to focus on duties and growth:

- we must protect the services all councils have a duty to provide
- we must achieve the population and economic growth Argyll and Bute depends on to grow a successful future.

There are no easy options left for making savings. Your views have helped us deliver a balanced budget in the past. We would value your involvement again this year.

Thank you for taking time to respond to this consultation.

**Councillor Aileen Morton**  
**Leader of Argyll and Bute Council**

## Introduction to the work of Argyll and Bute Council

# Argyll and Bute Council

serves the second largest area and highest number of inhabited islands of all Scottish local authorities



- Delivers hundreds of services every day around 250 - more than many other councils.

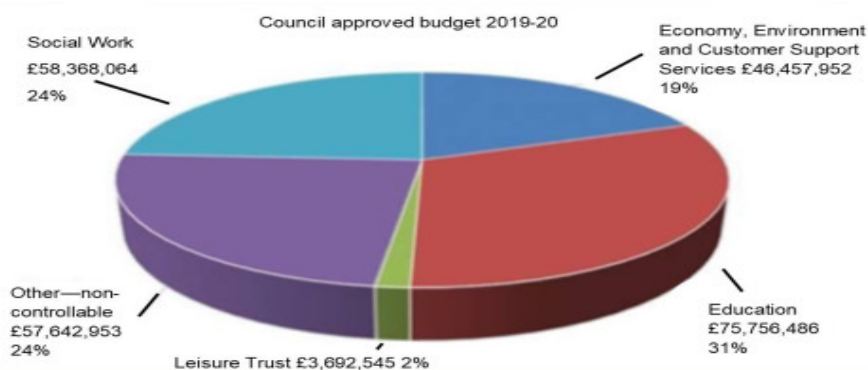


- Invests in building a successful future for Argyll and Bute

- Had the third highest cut in council funding over the past five years.



### How our budget supported Argyll and Bute





**Q1: What for you is the most important role for the council?**

- Deliver the services I use
  - If you choose this option please tell us which services you use
- Attract people, jobs and investment to Argyll and Bute
- Support the most vulnerable people in our communities
- Support local people to get involved in helping their communities
- Other [please tell us what]

**Q2: Which of these general service categories do you use most?**

- Education
  - Schools, teachers, early years services, youth services, adult learning
- Economy, Environment and Customer Service
  - Roads, planning, bins, recycling, street lighting, harbours, ferries, air services, school transport, economic regeneration, business support, digital services, digital security, emergency planning, recruitment, website and information services, birth/death/marriage registration, burials/cremations, grass cutting, gritting, committee meetings, elections, community planning / development.
- Social work (managed and delivered through the Health and Social Care Partnership)
  - Care at home support, fostering, adoption, disability support services, criminal justice services
- Other (please tell us what)

**Section 2: Balancing our budget**

We have already delivered more than £57million worth of efficiencies and savings over the past 10 years. Mid-range estimates indicate that we will need to make additional savings of £9.2million in 2020/21.

Some areas of expense are not available to the council to make savings from:

- Teachers: Scottish Government requirements mean we must maintain teacher numbers. Cost = £50.5m
- Leisure Trust: to help the new Trust develop its library and leisure services for Argyll and Bute, the council agreed its funding allocation until March 2021. Cost = £3.7m
- Non-controllable costs: this category relates to expenses we cannot control, for example utilities or loan charges. We have achieved savings in this category previously, and do all possible to ensure value for money. We cannot however guarantee savings. Budget allocation last year = £57.6m

**Q3: In which three categories would you most support reductions to funding?**

- Education for adults
- Education for children
- Customer support/information services
- Economic development/business support services
- Environmental services (eg recycling, refuse, street cleaning)
- Public transport
- Regulatory services (eg planning, trading standards, environmental health)
- Roads/harbours
- Other (please specify)

**Q4: Please indicate your top three priorities from these service areas.**

- Education for adults
- Education for children
- Customer support/information services
- Economic development/business support services
- Environmental services (eg recycling, refuse, street cleaning)
- Public transport
- Regulatory services (eg planning, trading standards, environmental health)
- Roads/harbours
- Other (please specify)

**Q5. 80% of our funding comes from the Scottish Government. We do not yet know what our allocation is for 2020/21. To prepare for setting our budget in February 2020, we have already identified a number of options for making savings. We need to identify more to bridge our estimated funding gap, and we are working to do that.**

**If you have any comments on the savings options already identified, please let us know [link to be added to the savings options, following Council's consideration of the proposed consultation]**

One of the services this council funds and delivers that most other councils do not is ferry services: we run ferry services between Easdale/Seil, Lismore/Port Appin, Luing/Seil; and Jura/Islay.

The duty to provide ferries however lies with Transport Scotland. The council is calling on Transport Scotland to take over responsibility for these services – to protect them from cuts to the council budget and to free-up £1 million for services we have a duty to deliver.

**Q6: Do you agree with this approach?**

- Yes
- No
- Comment?

We need to find more savings options to bridge our estimated funding gap. [You have given us ideas in the past that have helped us make the savings we must – thank you.](#)

**Q7: What suggestions do you have this year for how the council could make savings or increase income?**

**Q8: Do you have any additional comments on any issue raised in this consultation?**

Thank you for taking time to give us your views.