

24TH SEPTEMBER 2020

POLICY LEADS REPORT

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** This report provides members with an update on key areas of activity for each Policy Lead Councillor. This aims to provide updates from all Policy Leads as regularly as possible, so that all members are informed, up-to-date and able to engage with current issues.
- 1.2** The last update was provided to the council at its meeting on 28th November 2019. In normal circumstances the next update would have been provided to the council at its meeting in April 2020. The implications of the Covid-19 pandemic on normal business and on the way that council and committee meetings were conducted saw appropriate Policy Lead updates provided instead through Leadership Reports considered by the Business Continuity Committee. With a shift and resumption in business over recent weeks as lockdown restrictions have changed, it is now possible to provide a dedicated Policy Leads update once again.

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.
- 3.2 Financial Services:** The department continues to monitor current year expenditure and how Covid-19 has impacted on our finances, both in the short term and longer term. Regular reports have been provided to the Business Continuity Committee. At the moment the net additional costs due

to Covid are in the region of £11m, with just over £6m being covered by previously announced additional Scottish Government funding. That leaves a gap of just over £5m to be found.

The council will be able to use some current monies more flexibly and use some savings from severance and loans funds to reduce this gap to nearer the £2m mark. It is also anticipated that there may be further funds from schemes, such as Lost Income and the 'Fiscal Flexibilities' options that the UK Treasury and Scottish ministers are considering. This will hopefully close the current year gap.

The council's figures do not of course include those of the HSCP and, as we have seen in the past, the HSCP deficit for social work has had to be covered by loans offset against our general reserve. There is a significant risk that this will be the case again and that risk could be in the region of £1.5m to £2.0m. That will need to be borne in mind as we progress the budget monitoring and the 21/22 budget preparation.

- 3.3 Local Tax Collections:** Council Tax collections as at end of August 2020 are 46.61%. This is a reduction of 1.31% on August 2019 with a collection rate of 47.92%. This is equivalent to £725,000 for the current year in real terms. The reason for the reduction is entirely related to COVID. The Council, in line with many other local authorities, have been very supportive of taxpayers claiming hardship. Just under 700 householders made requests to defer their Council Tax payments to June-March this year rather than the traditional payment plan of April-January which has had an impact on our collections.

Non Domestic Rates collection as at August 2020 is 69.23% compared to 61.94% at the same time in 19/20. This is an increase of 7.29%. Due to COVID the Scottish Government has introduced further reliefs for businesses giving a higher number 100% relief and therefore no rates to pay. This has meant a reduction in the level of NDR billed of £10.7million in 2020/2021 compared to the previous year. However the payments received from liable businesses has been consistent as reflected in the collection figure.

- 3.4 Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF):** The programme funding for 2020/21 is £765,421. This includes an additional COVID allocation of £293,000. At the end of August council spend was £170,114. This is lower than expected over the whole fund but there are 47 claims received and yet to be processed. Despite the low level of spend there has been a significant increase in the number of people who have needed support by way of Crisis Grants. Spend on Crisis Grants is up 67.65% on the previous year with £35,310 spent from 1st April to 31st August this year compared to £23,885 for the same period the year before.

The reason for such a low spend across the fund in the early part of the year is attributed to COVID. This is because the level of applications and spend on Community Care Grants were low as people were not able to move into or out of care during lockdown. 85% of the fund was spent on Community Care Grants in 2019/2020 and once this part of the fund gets moving again we anticipate a significant increase in spend.

3.5 Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs): The funding for DHP for 2020/21 is £683,875. However this does not include tranche 2 funding which we will not receive until our actual spend on the Scottish Government's mitigation of the removal of the spare room subsidy has been finalised in March 2021. As at the end of August our spent or committed amount is £801,363. There has been a significant increase in spend this year because of the amount of people claiming Universal Credit for the first time. These automatically receive full DHP under occupancy which we have no control over. However the Scottish Government has committed to fully cover these costs with the tranche 2 payment to be received next year.

3.6 Benefits Processing: Our statistics for processing new claims and changes in circumstances at the end of August 2020 are much improved. For new claims the average number of days is 19.84 against a target of 21 days and for changes in circumstances the average number of days to process is 2.92 against a target of 6 days. The reason for the improved performance is twofold. We have been able to reduce some of the verification requirements pre claim due to difficulties for claimants submitting evidence due to COVID. Additionally staff have adapted well to working from home and productivity has increased as a result.

3.7 Capital Regeneration:

Helensburgh Waterfront Development: Heron Brothers were awarded the tender and are now on site having established a site office and compound in August. I visited the site in early September and saw the work to date, which included the arrival of the rock armour for the flood defences; site infilling to raise its height and the start of piling works for the steel erection. Heron Bros have issued local newsletter to those in vicinity. Local members will receive regular updates from officers and a brief presentation was made at the recent Area Committee meeting.

Rothesay Pavilion: With the demise of original contractors CBC, the appointment of administrators and of course Covid, there has been some slippage in this increasingly lengthy project. Procurement of another contractor is now underway with an intention to award a contract in Spring 21, with practical completion date toward the end of that year. I should offer my thanks to our team for this additional work and to our Project Manager

for helping to return some tools and plant to local suppliers and sub-contractors who found themselves caught up in the administration of CBC.

- 3.8 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, including participating in the COVID Leadership Group with the Leader and Cllr Sandy Taylor; Executive Director Appointment panel; IJB Board and the IJB Finance and Policy Committee. Along with other colleagues, I joined the Cabinet Secretary's virtual meeting of the A83 Taskforce to hear of his timelines and corridors. It was welcome but we do need to see clear construction timetables and a date for the new route to open. We have waited long enough.

4. POLICY LEAD FOR SUPPORT SERVICES – Councillor Rory Colville

- 4.1 Introduction:** I continue to meet with the Executive Director of Customer Services and Heads of Service as often as possible and currently on a virtual basis to discuss matters relating to my Policy Lead remit.

4.2 Legal and Regulatory Support:

Elections: The Election Team are beginning preparations for the Scottish Parliament Elections which are scheduled for May 2021. Options are being looked at for training of Election staff, with the possibility of offering an online training module being investigated which could be utilised for more experienced staff. Preparations are being made with consideration being given to contingencies for Covid-19 still being a factor at the time of election. At the time of writing arrangements were in hand for the Community Council By-Elections which will take place on 5th November – these to fill a number of vacancies which have arisen on community councils across the area.

Community Governance: The Community Council Liaison Officer has received a number of enquiries from Community Councils who wish to restart their meetings on a face to face basis. The advice which is being given is in line with the current Covid-19 guidelines which restricts gatherings, and this will be reviewed as and when the guidelines from the Scottish Government change. Virtual meetings have continued in the meantime. The requirement for AGMs to be held has also been extended and if necessary these will take place in 2021 if it is not possible to have full public meetings.

Customer Service Excellence Accreditation: Preparation of the submission for re-accreditation of the Customer Service Excellence Award submission for Legal and Regulatory Support continues. The assessment is scheduled for September/October 2020 and officers are working towards finalising the information.

Civil Contingencies: In order to meet compliance for the new Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) Regulations 2019 (REPPiR) a significant update to the Clyde Off-Site Plan was undertaken in conjunction with emergency services. This plan alongside the operator consequences report and public information leaflets are being uploaded on the Argyll and Bute Council website.

The team have also run, in conjunction with NHS Public Health, an exercise across council services and external partners on potential COVID-19 local outbreaks and clusters, incorporating scenarios from remote rural islands to more urban areas.

Enforcement of Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Regulations: Trading Standards have been working with Environmental Health in continuing to ensure that business sectors who reopen in accordance with the Scottish Government's route map, have appropriate management and COVID/physical distancing measures in place. This is very resource intensive and can only be undertaken at the expense of other work.

Compliance levels are generally good but businesses do require support and the complex landscape where many of the requirements are guidance, rather than statutory, is creating difficulties. There have been reported issues with beer gardens and licensed premises and a coordinated approach with Police Scotland is in place to respond.

Two members of the team spent a day assisting Aberdeen City Council phoning businesses on their behalf as part of Aberdeen's attempt to contact properties which would allow the local lockdown there to be eased. There was a request from Aberdeen for assistance and, as part of a North of Scotland TS group it was considered appropriate to assist a partner Council experiencing difficult circumstances.

Procurement: This report provides an opportunity to update members on recently announced council procurement scheme to benefit community projects which demonstrates that the council is listening to the needs of our communities and can now coordinate help and support where needed. I would encourage anyone who is looking for help to get in touch. Further information and an online application form for communities can be found on the council website <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/forms/community-benefits>. Enquiries can also be emailed to communitybenefits@argyll-bute.gov.uk

Procurement spend with local companies is shown in the table below:

Month	Total Spend	Local Spend	%
April	£6,284,459	£3,015,771	48.0%
May	£9,078,065	£3,894,493	42.9%
June	£9,921,549	£3,208,238	32.3%
July	£10,308,505	£3,547,838	34.4%
Total:	£35,592,578	£13,666,341	38.4%

4.3 Improvement and HR:

The council's newly formed Wellbeing Team was formed earlier this year to support the organisation's Wellbeing Strategy. Prior to lockdown the team had been progressing the following areas:

- Revision of policy, procedures and guidance for managers
- Employee Assistance Programme Communication Plan
- Revision of Wellbeing Pages on the Hub and creation of wellbeing pages on the website for non-networked staff.
- Baseline Wellbeing Survey developed and issued

Supporting employees and managers during COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in:

- Weekly Wellbeing Wednesday
- Intensive promotion of Employee Assistance Programme
- Creation of additional Wellbeing pages
- Support to managers with employee wellbeing concerns
- Routine Attendance Management advice

Forthcoming plans include:

- Supporting managers to creation Attendance and Wellbeing Action plans
- Promotion of Wellbeing Fund
- Exploration of further support services that meet the wellbeing needs of the organisation.
- Analysis and improvements based on the outcomes of the Employee Wellbeing Survey data

4.4 Customer and Support Services:

Communication and Engagement: The Keep in the Loop Service (KITL) has continued to play a significant role in keeping people pro-actively informed of developments and helping to prevent needless contacts. Over a million emails have been sent to Argyll and Bute households on different topics throughout response and recovery phases and the team are working on developments to enhance this type of service experience even more for users.

The council's website has continued to be a hugely popular means by which customers have sought and been given coronavirus information and updates on the service changes engendered by lockdown restrictions. During the pandemic there has been a significant increase in website views and in online transactions. The only element of the website to see a decrease was online payments as council tax and NDR billing was suspended. Some key statistics are shown in the infographic below.



ICT: ICT staff continue to support the demands of and response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Council's office based workforce has worked well from home with some 1,000 users on VPN each day. Work continues with all customers and partners to ensure access for all who can work from home, keep everyone safe from increased cyber threats, and to maintain access to the network and our key applications with minimal interruptions.

The council remains on alert regarding the risks from Cyber Security. There are numerous Covid related threats and scams happening all over the world. We continue to monitor systems and maintain contact with the NCSC during this volatile period. The council achieved the national Cyber

Essentials Plus accreditation again in May - one of only six Scottish councils to meet this demanding cyber security standard.

The stats for Skype since the start of lockdown show that the council has hosted an astonishing 26,124 Skype conference calls. These are meetings involving at least three people and with all but a small minority of the 102,134 participants working from home.

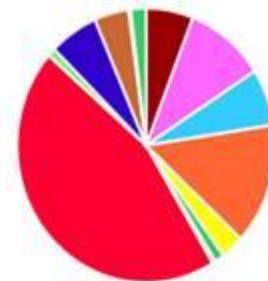
Customer Service Centre and Registration Teams: Both teams have continued to support both the ongoing response to the Coronavirus situation and the return from lockdown and towards recovery.

Registration services have had to adapt to a number of changes as a result of the pandemic with changing guidance on how they can provide birth and death registration services and conduct weddings – this included a period of providing a 24/7 death registration service.

Staff have supported the Coronavirus helpline from the outset and below is an overview of the levels and types of calls handled since the onset of lockdown. In addition the CSP agents have helped Education to process the increased volume of Free school Meals and Clothing and Footwear applications; to allow food payments to be made over the summer holidays.

5524 Coronavirus Caring for People - 27th Mar 2020 to 9th Aug 2020

	Total	%
All Calls	9,763	
Benefits	580	5.9
Business	986	10
Health	651	6.7
Social Work / Care for People	1,398	14.3
Care for People Voiceform	280	2.9
Education	114	1.2
Registration	36	0.4
Care for People General / Bailouts	4,396	45
Early Hangup	99	1
Out of Hours	598	6.1
Bank Holiday	418	4.3
Business Grants Voiceform	15	0.2
Self Employed Hardship Fund Voiceform	8	0.1
Council Tax	184	1.9



4.5 Community Planning:

Community Development: The team are working with partners on a Scottish Government initiative Building Back Better (Communities) – which aims to support strengthening of communities post lockdown, learning from the community response. Areas to be covered include community-led and place based renewal, harder-to reach groups, age, disability and long-term conditions, with further cross cutting themes relating to food security, digital inclusion, and climate change and environment. This is very much a community based consultation with actions determined through community engagement sessions.

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

5.1 Local Meetings:

In response to the ongoing COVID outbreak and associated restrictions all IJB meetings, and those of HSCP committees and groups have moved to virtual platforms. All have continued to meet and public scrutiny of the IJB has been enabled through press attendance and audio recordings being made available.

At IJB meetings on 27th May and 5th August updates were received on COVID-19, the Sturrock Report and Culture Survey, and on the financial situation of the HSCP.

Clinical Care Governance on 21st May focused on many of the aspects around safety of staff, patients and services users at this time.

The HSCP Audit and Risk Committee on 23rd June and 18th August continued to look at regular items in the audit plan, accounts and audit reports, as well as workforce planning and care home oversight.

Finance and Policy Committee has on 13th May, 26th June, and 28th August been receiving regular reports regarding the impact of COVID-19 costs on the HSCP, along with other pressures. Whilst in principle there has been agreement from government to cover additional costs this has been subject to detailed analysis so a final position has not yet been confirmed.

Strategic Planning Group on 1st September noted the delays in progressing the Strategic Commissioning Plan and the role the group has in bringing together the widest possible range of partners who have involvement in health and social care.

5.2 National Meetings:

These have also proceeded on a virtual basis, and whilst COSLA Boards were temporarily postponed during March and April due to COVID-19, I

attended the Children and Young People Board on 22nd May and 21st August and the Health and Social Care Board on 6th May and 19th August. Apart from COVID-19, issues that were on the agenda for the Health and Social Care Board included Public Health Reform, Digital Health and Care, Integrated Workforce Plans, and Self Directed Support.

For the Children and Young People Board papers were on topics including Child Poverty, Domestic Abuse, Additional Support for Learning, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the SQA exam results. The Depute First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills took part in a question and answer session with the board which provided a valuable opportunity to engage on government plans for education.

I have continued as Vice-Chair of the national IJB Chairs and Vice-Chairs Executive which met on 3rd June, 6th July, 23rd July, and 18th August. These meetings concentrated on COVID-19 and implications for IJBs across Scotland – with it being helpful to have comparisons between different areas around governance arrangements and plans to remobilise services.

Through my role with the IJB Chairs and Vice-Chairs Executive I have been a member of the Scottish Government Mobilisation Recovery Group for Health and Social Care. I was present at meetings on the 29th June, 14th July, 31st July, and 28th August. In addition to the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport other ministers have attended this, along with representatives from COSLA, a wide range of professional and provider bodies and Scottish Government advisors including Jason Leitch as National Clinical Director. Receiving presentations on how COVID-19 is affecting Scotland we have been able to offer our own perspectives on the role different services have in the resumption of care as the pandemic progresses. From Argyll and Bute I have been joined on this group by Joanna MacDonald as Chair of the Adult Social Work Committee within Social Work Scotland.

5.3 COVID-19:

In Argyll and Bute initial planning in response to the pandemic had been to ensure capacity was available to meet the challenges of the forecast 'peak week'. Through the purchase of additional beds, work to support discharge of hospital patients into community settings and prioritisation of services capacity was created locally to support the anticipated numbers of people with severe COVID-19 symptoms.

As a result of the introduction of national lockdown measures and subsequent reduction in transmission of the virus much of this capacity remained unused, however a significant second or subsequent spike in cases should emerge then plans can be reactivated as necessary.

Recognition exists both locally and nationally of the consequential impacts of prioritisation of services on the provision of other aspects of health and social care. Remobilisation Plans are therefore looking at addressing waiting lists which have developed during the pandemic, while ensuring that care can be delivered in ways which are safe for staff and patients/service users.

For social care in particular there have been noted changes in demand for different services in response to the virus, with a reduction in demand for residential placements. To allow for compliance with national guidelines there have been delays in reopening certain services with staff deployed to best meet individual service user needs as appropriate.

The HSCP has been working along with COVID-19 testing programmes within Argyll and Bute organised by Scottish and UK Governments. The mobile testing units, initially operated by the Army and now by the Scottish Ambulance Service in Campbeltown, Dunoon, Helensburgh, Lochgilphead, Oban and Rothesay have provided capability to offer tests to the wider public. Community Assessment Centres, located on HSCP sites have meanwhile concentrated on allowing testing of the health and social care workforce, giving assurance about all steps being taken to minimise transmission of the virus amongst staff, patients and service users.

Reporting of numbers of confirmed cases of COVID-19 and deaths resulting from the virus has been through Public Health Scotland and National Records of Scotland in line with government guidance. Since the launch of Test and Protect, officers have been working with council colleagues to ensure that appropriate processes are followed when cases have links to businesses or educational establishments.

As part of the UK response to the pandemic Argyll and Bute has been the location of a trial involving the use of drones to speed up delivery of medical supplies and samples. With a pilot operating between Oban Airport and Mull this offers future opportunities to provide improved care for patients and service users.

5.4 Culture Survey:

As part of the Sturrock Report across NHS Highland, an identified action was to investigate further issues relating to staff within Argyll and Bute. In May 2020 the results of a survey of NHS employees were published, which clearly highlighted areas where intervention was required. In response management within the HSCP launched a 100 day plan involving establishing a Culture Group, having twice weekly sessions for staff to raise issues with HSCP leadership, improved development for management, and rollout of Courageous Conversations training.

These additional steps in Argyll and Bute build on work already underway by NHS Highland as part of their 'Culture fit for the Future' response to the Sturrock Report including a "Speak Up" Service for staff to independently discuss matters relating to care and safety, whistleblowing, bullying and harassment and work grievances, an Employee Assistance Programme, establishment of a Healing Process and appointment of an External Culture Advisor. Progress on this is overseen by a Culture Programme Board which reports to NHS Highland, with the IJB also kept updated.

Along with steps taken by the NHS, the IJB has recognised the importance of this issue and has approved increased investment in HR services. This will ensure that staff including managers are able to receive increased support to resolve complaints more quickly.

5.5 Management Changes:

Following the retirement of Alex Taylor, Patricia Renfrew has been appointed Head of Children and Families on an interim basis pending permanent recruitment, with Julie Lusk taking on the role of Chief Social Work Officer. In his time as head of service Alex has provided important continuity and stability as integrated structures have become embedded and I wish him well for the future.

6. POLICY LEAD FOR HOUSING, ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES – Councillor Robin Currie

6.1 Roads and Infrastructure Services: As we have gradually eased out of lockdown, many of our services have now resumed albeit these are operating very differently. New safety measures have been put in place for all aspects of Roads and Infrastructure including physical distancing, extra vehicles to reduce passengers, additional PPE, tool box talks and vehicle specific cleaning regimes to name but a few.

A83 Rest and Be Thankful: The landslide on the A83 Rest and Be Thankful on 5th August meant that the closure of the A83 with the Old Military Road being used as the diversion route.

Following pressure from communities and Argyll and Bute Council, Scottish Government has committed to finding a permanent solution for the Rest and Be Thankful. This step in the right direction is welcomed and the council continues to urge further commitment to the urgent delivery of a solution.

Michael Matheson MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity, made the announcement at the A83 Taskforce group on 27th August where 11 alternative route options were tabled.

At the time of writing in early September both the Rest and Be Thankful and the Old Military Road diversion route had had to be closed at periods due to further landslides in heavy rainfall. While every effort was made to keep the OMR diversion open as long as it was safe to do so, the situation simply serves to reinforce the urgent need for action to ensure a permanent solution is in place and in use as soon as possible.

Roads Revenue Works: Following the announcement of lockdown, activities carried out by the operations team were reprioritised. This meant that roads teams were responding to any dangerous defects which were found, these being dealt with by teams of two going out in pickups and trucks making good any defects as well as jetpatchers being utilised where it was appropriate. The normal schedule of road safety inspections continued throughout lockdown and these inspections, together with any representation from elected members/members of the public, were used to remove dangerous defects. There was also additional training carried out for roads colleagues to ensure that we had an increased resilience for grave digging etc. Roads colleagues also provided support to the refuse collection service to enable service continuity.

Revenue works have now resumed to pre-Covid specifications and schedules. Work is also underway for preparation for winter including replenishing salt stocks, arranging winter specific vehicles, carrying out staff training etc.

Roads Capital Programme: The 2020/21 Capital Programme was restarted in the latter part of July and has been revised with a number of preparatory schemes being carried out which will enable surface dressing to be applied in 2021. This in effect moves us to a two year capital investment programme due to delay in commencing the programme as a result of Covid restrictions. The total value of works which have been put back to financial year 2021/22 is £2.154M.

School transport: On the 12th August, pupils throughout Argyll and Bute began their return to school following a five month period based at home due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The school transport team have done a superb job putting measures and mitigating factors in place to ensure that the 3,000 pupils who receive school transport were able to get to school safely this week – a huge and complex task which has been delivered professionally despite the very challenging circumstances we all find ourselves working within.

Included within the work, the central school transport team have undertaken early and ongoing dialogue with several external operators, feedback from operators that was used to develop our guidance. Once the national

guidance was in place a number of documents were prepared and provided to our external contractors – a covering letter, as well as copies of the guidance which was shared with parents/carers and this including examples of cleaning procedures.

Projects Underway: A range of projects have now resumed/commenced on site including Oban Depot, Tobermory railings replacement and a number of studies and design works for marine construction including Craignure, Fionnphort, Rothesay etc.

6.2 Housing:

Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP): All new build developments are back on site (eight across Argyll and Bute). Thirteen affordable houses have been completed since lockdown measures have been eased – 12 in Glenshellach, Oban and one in Dunoon. The Dunoon affordable house was an 'off the shelf' purchase by ACHA with assistance from the council's Strategic Housing Fund and the Scottish Government.



Affordable home in Dunoon purchased by ACHA.

Home Energy Efficiency Programme Scotland (HEEPS): Around £900k worth of HEEPS: ABS works was put on hold. If COVID had not been a factor, this was what BCA had left to spend out of the 19/20 budget by June 2020. Approx. 80 working days were lost, between March and July. The programme has now resumed.

ACHA had committed to spending £1million by the end of June, this was for works to 135 private owners in mixed tenure blocks in Oban. This programme is in the early phase of restarting.

Local Housing Strategy: Work has started on the preparation of the Local Housing Strategy 2021 – 2026. Key stakeholders including the public have been contacted and asked to complete a survey. The survey asked participants what they see as the key issues to be considered when delivering a ‘well-functioning housing system’ in Argyll and Bute. Respondents were also asked to give their views on the most likely main impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the operation of the housing system in the local authority area.

Housing staff worked with the council Communications team to ensure that the survey was issued through the ‘Keep in the Loop’ system as well as circulating information through the local press to ensure that anyone without access to IT could share their views. As a result we have had over 1,100 responses to the survey which closed on 21st August. Progress on the Local Housing Strategy consultation will be contained in future Policy Lead updates.

Homelessness: The council continues to provide a 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year response to homelessness. Housing Services are working in partnership with the housing associations across the local authority area to ensure that statutory homeless households are given suitable permanent housing. There have been 64 permanent lets to homeless households since lockdown in March but there are still 27 homeless households in the additional temporary accommodation procured to mitigate the impact of the lockdown.

Housing associations will be providing information about the number of empty properties becoming available so that the council can plan for the reduction in additional temporary accommodation. This approach is dependent on the housing associations being able to carry out their core business. Any further lockdown restrictions will slow the recovery process and impact on the planned reduction of additional temporary accommodation procured by the council to fulfil statutory obligations to homeless households.

6.3 Island Issues:

National Islands Plan and Island Communities Impact Assessments (ICIA): Section 9 of the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 (“the Act”), which allows for Reviews of ICIA, requires the preparation of an affirmative Scottish Statutory Instrument (SSI) setting out the process for reviews of decisions relating to ICIA. Commencement Regulations are also required to bring into force sections 7 to 14 (inclusive) of the Act. Section 8 refers to the duty to carry out an ICIA and Section 14 refers to the duty on the Scottish Ministers to carry out a retrospective ICIA.

There is a new process for acquiring a SSI slot required completion of a Bid template in order to be accepted into the Parliamentary programme. It is understood that the Scottish Government Islands Team bid was successful. It is hoped that the required regulations will be laid before parliament later this year but may be pushed back depending on what further statutory instruments may be required to respond to COVID 19 and Brexit.

The SG Islands Team issued a paper on 26th June seeking views on a proposed overview of the review scheme under Section 9 of the Act to allow consultation with relevant authorities listed in the Act. The council has responded to this consultation

It is understood that the 'National Islands Plan Through a Covid Lens' survey in which the council took part will inform the National Islands Plan delivery and implementation.

The consultation on the Section 9 Regulations ended on 17th July and an analysis of responses is being prepared. This work will inform the Section 9 Regulations which in turn will inform the requisite guidance required for Island Communities Impact Assessments. It is understood that draft ICIA guidance is being finalised with a view to going out to consultation with relevant authorities under the Act.

- 6.4 Gaelic:** CHARTS, in partnership with Bord Na Gaidhlig, have launched a grant programme called Colmcille Legacy Arts Award Scheme. This national project links to the Year of Colmcille 1500, to commemorate the life and cultural legacy of St Columba (June 2020-December 2021); designed to profile and support Gaelic artists work and/or Gaelic speakers working in partnership with others, aligned to themes of Colmcille.

This eighteen-month programme offering monthly national arts awards and online exhibition, as well as one Colmcille heritage award for artists in Argyll and Bute only, was developed to highlight artworks digitally, mitigating challenges presented by the pandemic and particularly surrounding the launch of Colmcille 1500, in June 2020. Two grants have been awarded to date, one for the development and performance of new Gaelic music and one for an artwork. These, and all future awards will feature on the CHARTS and Colmcille Websites and details of the award programme at: <https://www.chartsargyllandisles.org/opportunities/colmcillelegacyaward/> <https://colmcille.net/colmcille-1500/>

7. POLICY LEAD FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH – Councillor Alastair Redman

- 7.1 Introduction:** Economic recovery lies at the heart of our agenda as we begin to understand the impacts of the pandemic on our local area and the people who live here. We have already put in place an economic recovery

plan to focus on our priorities moving forward and as the true impact of the pandemic becomes clearer, and to focus on the rise in unemployment which has affected Argyll and Bute along with all other areas of the country.

This recovery strategy was approved by members in June in terms of the overarching framework, with more detail in terms of priorities moving forward coming to the August Business Continuity Committee meeting. The council is now working with its partners, including the private and third sectors, to take forward appropriate actions utilising the resources we have available. Already, immediate actions such as the distribution of business support grants and allowing businesses to expand their operations in town centres through the easing of lockdown group for example has assisted the local economy. Efforts have also started to get people back to work with an emphasis on ensuring our young people have a positive destination to go to in the months ahead.

7.2 National Transport Strategy 2/Strategic Transport Project Review 2:

Transport Scotland have advised that it is now intended to take a phased approach to Strategic Transport Project Review 2, with Phase 1 reporting along the original planned timescales and focusing on recommendations which “lock in”, in transport terms, the positive benefits and travel behaviours of individuals and provide a step change in investment which supports the priorities and outcomes of the National Transport Strategy. It is currently envisaged that Phase 2, which will complete the review, will report later in 2021. It is now intended that engagement on the long list of transport options and option sifting process will commence in autumn 2020. Transport Scotland have advised that the deadline for responses to their Case for Change reports was the 4th September 2020, a deadline which we achieved, and following this they will look to conclude the Case for Change stage of STPR2 as quickly as possible.

7.3 Active Travel: Active travel is a key priority of the Scottish Government with 2020-21 being a positive year for sourcing active travel funding from external sources with confirmed grants awards totalling over £2.02M to date. These grant funds include the Scottish Government’s Covid-19 response to support social distancing for those walking and/or cycling, via the Spaces for People fund, where officers are working to finalise design of the interventions planned for the main town centres and schools across Argyll and Bute.

External grant funding has also been successfully sourced from the Places for Everyone fund, the Smarter Choices Smarter Places fund and Cycling Walking together with the Safer Routes funding. This external funding will support the development and delivery of 17 active travel projects across Argyll and Bute to support and encourage our residents and visitors to choose to walk and/or cycle when appropriate. It should be noted that these

works are mainly implemented by the council's own roads and infrastructure services or local contractors helping to generate income locally.

- 7.4 Digital:** A key positive in August was the resolution of the Court Challenge that has delayed the contract signature for the North Lot R100 contract. The Scottish Government are confident that they can now progress to contract signature with BT before the end of the year. The intervention area of the premises in scope of the R100 will follow after contract signature as the list of eligible premises will have changed.

Discussions are progressing well with the DCMS in Westminster into fibre infrastructure investment to some of our most remote areas. Originally 24 rural sites were explored, however these crossed the programme's Value for Money (VfM) threshold. That said, a limited number of these original sites have the potential of being included in an existing contract. The council in conjunction with the DCMS are continuing to explore alternative solutions to ensure the remaining sites are included in the next programme which is currently being designed to look at the final 1% of delivery.

The completion of the S4GI mast at Bendoran on the Ross of Mull is nearing completion. This will provide a much needed 4G signal to an extensive area in this poorly connected part of Argyll and Bute making a real difference to life and employment options for local people. For people who are struggling with a poor or unreliable broadband one option which could be explored is a 4G home broadband service. There are now numerous examples of this technology being applied that has helped transform broadband speeds from poor to super-fast without the need for fibre being laid to the property.

- 7.5 Economic and Social Recovery – Working With Our Partners:** The focus on Economic and Social Recovery is a key element of the Argyll and Bute Recovery Strategy, Plan and Framework, hosted by Argyll and Bute Council, aligned to the content and future direction set out by the Scottish Government in terms of national recovery.

The Argyll Economic Resilience Forum has been established in Argyll and Bute, chaired by Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) with a Vice Chair from Argyll and Bute Council. The principal objective of the Forum is to provide a collective platform for the 'voice' of industry to restart and reshape economic and social recovery across the communities of Argyll and Bute. An Officer Advisory Group has also been established to support the Forum, with a particular focus to facilitate the preparation, delivery and implementation of an Economic and Social Recovery Plan for Argyll and Bute that is fair and inclusive; building in the concept of community wealth building.

A seminar on Economic Recovery was held with elected members on 31st August. Further to presentations from Morag Goodfellow, Area Manager for Argyll and the Islands, HIE and Fergus Murray, the Council's Head of Development and Economic Growth, members posed a number of questions which provided a good discussion on particular aspects of the recovery agenda.

7.6 Business Gateway Local Growth Accelerator Programme 2015-22: The Local Growth Accelerator Programme (LGAP) is a £850k programme of business support providing assistance to SMEs with ambitions to grow annual turnover by £50k within three years. It launched for grants and specialist advice in 2016. In Phase One (2016-18) £348k was spent and claimed, comprising 83 grants and 28 specialist advice sessions, supporting 72 unique clients.

The grant programme includes trade fair grants, accreditation grants, training grants, employer grants and growth grants. The specialist advice covers HR, marketing, growth strategy, procurement, finance and digital topics.

Phase Two, which launched in May 2019, was planned to run until December 2021 for approvals and June 2022 for claims, with a total spend of £507k available to support a further 49 unique businesses via 102 grants and 42 specialist advice sessions.

Whilst COVID-19 is anticipated to impact negatively on many Argyll and Bute SMEs for the remainder of the LGAP programme period it is very positive to see that there is still continuing demand for growth support. That said, it is also recognised that many SMEs have shifted from a growth and expansion agenda to a survival agenda. It is therefore important that interventions such as the LGAP programme are adapted quickly, building in sufficient flexibility, to help businesses to survive by enabling Argyll and Bute based SMEs to respond to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic within the context of the dynamic business environment we now find ourselves in. Approval is currently being sought from the Scottish Government, as the Management Authority, to flex the LGAP support. It should be noted that this is an operational issue to allow overall programme spend to be maintained. In turn this will enable the targets for the LGAP Phase Two to be achieved.

7.7 Projects and Regeneration: The council agreed at its meeting on 11th June to hold a third round of Strategic Events and festivals Fund for events to be held during 2020/21. This will be formally launched on 22nd October and close on 7th December. A budget of £90k in grant has been made available for Round 3.

The Discover Campbeltown digital app has been launched and represents the last piece of work in regard to the successful delivery of the Campbeltown Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme and the significant investment that has been secured into the town as a result over the past 13 years which has resulted in the award of 157 grants totalling £3.25million leading to repairs on over 40 buildings. <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/campbeltown-regeneration>

Following lockdown and the cessation of all physical regeneration projects on site, work has now recommenced on a number of priority building projects as part of the Dunoon CARS and Rothesay TH/CARS and a number of the Town Centre Funded projects including Helensburgh Pier which is in its final stages, Tobermory railings, Dunoon Lighting project and delivery of 28 shop front improvements in Campbeltown,. The remainder of the projects are being progressed through tender stage.

Following a successful application funding bid £26,000 has been secured through Scotland's Town Partnership funding stream to support bespoke shop local campaigns for: Rothesay, Tarbert, Lochgilphead, Ardrishaig, Campbeltown, Tobermory and Helensburgh.

Grant contracts have been signed for the successful Regeneration Capital Grant Funded bids for Mid Argyll Community Pool redevelopment and Ulva Stora Ulbha. Five new RCGF stage one submissions have been made with a decision expected mid-September.

7.8 Micro-Cluster Network Argyll and Isles is funded by Creative Scotland and the Innovation School, Glasgow School of Art (GSA). This partnership with the GSA is supporting the development of six micro-clusters across Argyll and Bute. This includes support over the autumn of 2020 to build the independent capacity of creative businesses, sole traders and entrepreneurs. There are places remaining for this and further promotion taking place to address this. CHARTS has also offered weekly support sessions and one to one online marketing skills sessions for beginners to skilled users.

8. POLICY LEAD FOR EDUCATION – Councillor Yvonne McNeilly

8.1 COVID-19: There's no denying that the last few months have been a difficult time for everyone, let alone children and young people in our schools. Pupils have had to adapt to new ways of learning; staff have had to come up with new, imaginative ways of providing learning resources; and parents and carers have had to step into new roles as teachers. What's truly amazed me throughout all this though is the way that everyone's rallied around to help each other. This is something that's really

special and unique about Argyll and Bute - our school communities are like an extended family.

What's important now is that we continue to support each other with the same compassion we have during lockdown. I have heard so many good stories over the last couple of months about our staff, and pupils going above and beyond to help their community.

We have already proved that, despite challenges, we work well together to ensure the best outcomes for our children and young people. Let this continue and let us look back at this period in our education system where we conquered adversity.

8.2 SQA SCHOOL EXAMINATION MODERATED RESULTS AND CELEBRATING SUCCESS: We all want success for our young people. Achieving it has never been more challenging than this year. Sheer hard work, and partnership between our schools and their families have been key to ensuring that learning continues even in this unprecedented year.

Our pupils had to deal with the pressures of leaving their familiar school routines and surroundings and adjusting to new ways of learning. Our teachers have worked tirelessly to deliver digital and home-learning options. It's been a stressful, difficult time to say the least. The 'let's get it done' response I've seen in action is a real credit to Argyll and Bute. Our pupils, teachers and their families should all be very proud of themselves. Wholehearted congratulations to all our young people who achieved the qualifications they hoped for.

Detail on moderated exams results was presented to the Council's Community Services Committee on 27th August 2020 and can be accessed on the link below. A further report will be presented to the Community Services Committee in December 2020, to allow the consideration of further statistical school and national information. [SQA School Examination Moderated Results Report - August 2020](#)

8.3 EXPANSION OF EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE: From 12th August Argyll and Bute is now delivering 1140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare across the area. A total of 80 childcare settings and 29 childminders are offering 1140 hours. An additional 79.6 full time equivalent posts were created across the council to meet the requirements of 1140. Our partner providers and childminders have played a key role in delivering these hours. This scheme will support us to deliver a high quality service that will help to close the attainment gap, support child development and support parents and carers in work and or study.

We delivered emergency childcare HUBs over the summer holiday working with 9 partner providers, a number of childminders, local authority Early Years Staff, senior pupils and community volunteers. These partners are from childcare, out of school care and the National Scout Association. They not only kept our children safe but gave them fun and exciting experiences. Feedback from children and parents was very positive and our thanks go out to Stramash, Schools Out Oban, River Side Rascals, Fyne Families, Campbeltown Nursery Centre, Escape, Clyde Cottage Nursery, Drumfork Family Centre, Rothesay Playgroup and Out of School Care and staff from Scout Adventures, Lochgoilhead.

Early years settings have taken innovative approaches to welcoming their children and ensuring they have the capacity to accommodate them all safely. These have included increased use of outdoor spaces, beaches and woodland areas using tarpaulins and tents to provide shelter and add to the sense of adventure. The Early Years Excellence and Equity Leads are supporting establishments with these approaches to increasing use of outdoors.

8.4 ONLINE GIVE (GET INSPIRED THROUGH VOLUNTEERING AND ENGAGEMENT) PILOT SUMMER 2020: In response to the pandemic and restrictions, the Community Learning Team piloted an online version of the GIVE programme in Helensburgh this summer. The GIVE programme is designed to encourage young people to get involved in activities that promote citizenship, social action, volunteering and personal development. Activities were set up in such a way that they could be carried out at home, online or within lockdown guidelines in local communities. Each activity had a set number of points, which were awarded on evidence of completion of the activity (e.g. a photo/video/screenshot of a website).

On completion the young person would send the required evidence to their Community Learning Worker with a short summary of what they achieved in their activity. Rewards were given for achieving a target number of points and the more activities they completed the more points they gained. Activity packs containing instructions and materials were provided for each participant. Young people were offered a wide range of choices to engage them in physical, mental and social activities, which ranged from a 10 day photo challenge, to learning new skills for World Youth Skills Day.

The programme included eleven workshops delivered online using GLOW and young people gained points by participating in them. These also ranged from being safe online, General Equality and LGBT+ awareness, to Climate Change and Disability Awareness. 40 of our young people registered for the programme with an average of 28 participating on each activity. Feedback from young people suggests the online GIVE programme was a great success and very much contributed to their health

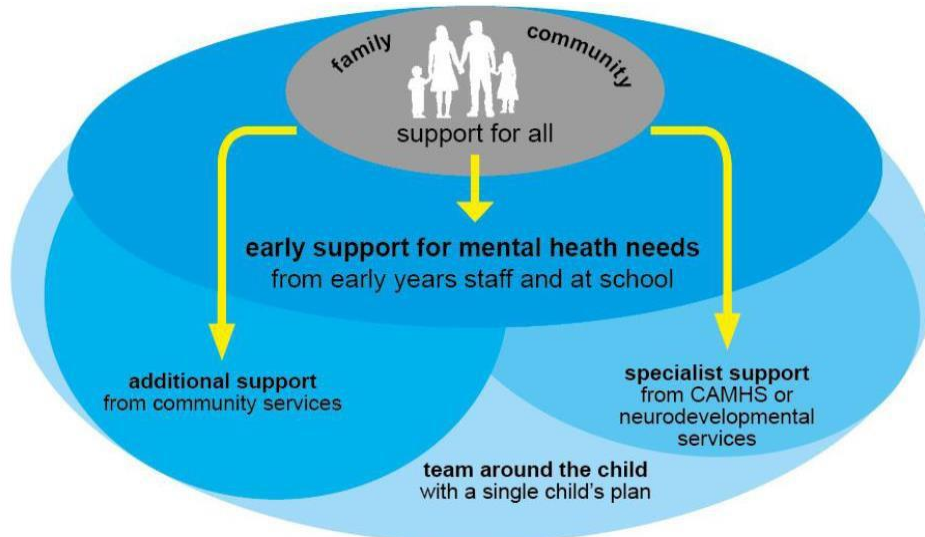
and well-being during an unprecedented and difficult period. Looking forward, Community Learning are planning for a “blended” model of delivery in the October and Christmas holiday period.

- 8.5 EDUCATION RECOVERY WELLBEING OF CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND STAFF:** Officers have been working on interventions and guidance required to build resilience, minimise harm and promote the emotional wellbeing of children, young people and staff. Preparing guidance was achieved through assessing and planning for the needs of our service focusing on our young people and their families, our education, care and learning provision and our staff. Throughout the team have maintained the vision contained within Our Children, Their Future.

Measures to ensure the robust safeguarding of children and young people were included in this guidance and distributed to schools alongside the COVID 19 Recovery Guidance for Transition for all ages and stages guidance. The Education Team has continued to prioritise child protection and support for families. There are children across the country who are experiencing difficulty in returning to school after lockdown and officers have produced guidance for schools to use in order to support a phased return based on a child centred, wellbeing approach, in line with the Council’s GIRFEC practice model. The Education Psychological Services team have developed guidance and training to support schools and families to assist school refusers to return to school.

- 8.6 MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING:** Argyll and Bute Education Service, in conjunction with the Health and Social Care Partnership and the Third Sector, has a very strong commitment, maintained over time, to addressing the mental health and wellbeing needs of children and young people, and the wellbeing of those within the education community. This is even more important in the light of current global circumstances. The recently developed Argyll and Bute Education Recovery Plan has a strong emphasis on mental health and wellbeing throughout.

The national *Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Supports and Services Framework* has been carefully considered across services to map current developments with the framework and identify any gaps in service delivery, as detailed below.



The objectives of the framework are that every child and young person in Scotland will be able to access local community services which support and improve their mental health and emotional wellbeing, and, every child and young person and their families or carers will get the help they need, when they need it, from people with the right knowledge, skills and experience to support them. This will be available in the form of easily accessible support close to their home, education, employment or community.

Across Education and the HSCP there is a strong commitment to delivering these objectives.

The Scottish Government's ten year Mental Health Strategy (2017-2027) recognises the need for targeted and specialist Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), but also promotes effective prevention and early intervention through support services at a local level, delivered as close to the young people as possible. To this end, the Scottish Government has committed funding for this financial year and the following three years to support the delivery of counselling through schools following a set of ten nationally agreed core principles.

As schools have now returned, the Parent and Carer support line which was delivered by the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) through the Council Covid 19 phone lines has now ceased. While valuable support was provided in this way, the number of calls received was low with most parents and carers going directly to the service required, including phoning educational psychologists. Planning is now in place to respond to the possibility of future individual school closures resulting from outbreaks of COVID 19 and reduced staffing levels. A specific leaflet is being developed that will be sent to parents and carers should this occur, highlighting direct

telephone number to access support for mental health and wellbeing or child protection concerns.

- 8.7 TEAMING UP WITH THE COMMUNITY:** Members of the local community on Coll teamed up with teachers at Arinagour Primary School to provide island pupils with a wide variety of remote learning challenges during lockdown. As well as the day to day learning tasks set by teachers, residents on the island are also thinking up novel, fun ideas for children to get involved with.

One of the tasks was set by a chef at the local hotel, who invited children to create a recipe for their takeaway menu. The winner of the challenge was then be able to order the meal, as it will be added to the hotel's menu. Other challenges included a Coll Quiz and a Highland Dance Challenge.

This is another great example of our teachers and local residents coming together to ensure that our young people can still take part in a wide variety of learning opportunities during lockdown. This is community spirit at its best and shows the way in which people are really coming together and looking out for each other during uncertain times.

- 8.8 NASA:** Space rockets built by pupils from Port Ellen Primary School on Islay have caught the attention of NASA. This was part of their home learning activities during lockdown and they were over the moon when they received congratulations from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration on Twitter. STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) subjects are a vital study area for our young people and for Scotland, so it's wonderful to see pupils at Port Ellen engaging in these throughout lockdown. It is a huge achievement for the children to have their hard work recognised by NASA. You never know, we might have some future astronauts in our midst on Islay.

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

- 9.1 Reform of Planning Legislation:** A draft of the fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4) which was due to be laid before the Scottish Parliament this month (September 2020) has been delayed due to the impact of the Covid-19 emergency and an interim NPF4 position statement is due to be released in the near future which will provide stakeholders with an update of the evidence gathered to date and explain other aspects of NPF4.

The delay means that the draft NPF4 will now come before the Scottish Parliament in autumn 2021 at the same time as extensive public consultation and it is anticipated that the date for the final version of NPF4, which will incorporate Scottish Planning Policy (SPP), will be spring 2022.

In the meantime NPF3 and SPP remain as current policy until final approval of NPF4.

- 9.2 Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2):** Work continues on LDP2 and in my last report I advised that the latest Development Plan Scheme (DPS) which is updated at least annually had been approved by the Planning, Protective Services and Licensing Committee in March 2020, just before the Covid-19 lockdown measures were announced by the UK Government, and at the time of that approval it was anticipated in the DPS that LDP2 would be adopted in October 2021.

At the time of writing this report and due to the Covid-19 measures that have been in place since March it is anticipated that the DPS will require to be updated showing slippage of the adoption of LDP2 by 5 months to the spring of 2022.

It should be noted that until LDP2 is adopted the statutory status of the current Local Development Plan remains as well as the associated Supplementary Guidance.

Details of the proposed LDP2 and any updated DPS can be viewed at the following link: <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/ldp2>

- 9.3 Planning Applications:** The submission of planning applications had been expected to tail off during lockdown but surprisingly they have remained higher than anticipated - between 23rd March and 29th July 2020, 593 formal submissions had been received by our planning department which was 81% of the volume received for the same period in 2019 when 732 applications were received.
- 9.4 Planning Fee Income:** Planning fee income for 2019/20 exceeded budget by £46k. However the Covid-19 pandemic raises significant concern in respect of projections for planning fee income for 2020/21 which included a budget saving based on additional fee income arising from amended fee regulations which were due to be implemented in June 2020. Due to the pandemic, though, the Scottish Government took the decision to pause the amended fee regulations and the situation is being closely monitored by the appropriate officers.
- 9.5 Consultation Updates:** A consultation which was due to take place relating to the Argyll and Bute Technical Working Note has been paused due to the current restrictions relating to Covid-19. Conservation Area Appraisal consultations for Helensburgh Town Centre and Tarbert Conservation Area remain on hold due to current Covid-19 restrictions.

- 9.6 Sustainable Design Awards:** In view of the current Covid-19 restrictions the Sustainable Design Awards competition which was launched in February has been postponed for the foreseeable future and a decision on how this will be progressed will be taken at the appropriate time.
- 9.7 Planning Performance Framework (PPF) 2019/20:** The latest Planning Performance Framework (PPF) report has been prepared and submitted to the Scottish Government for review and, as in previous years, the report focuses on the council being 'open for business'. The PPF presents case studies and examples of good practice throughout the document and although it is principally the annual performance measure for Planning Services which the Scottish Government scrutinise and score, it provides an opportunity for Planning Services to promote their service and the local area by incorporating customer feedback and case studies. The PPF submitted for 2019/20 can be viewed using the following link:
www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/sites/default/files/ppf_2020_v1.8_final_version_low_res.pdf
- 9.8 Pre-Determination Planning Hearing Arrangements:** At the present time there are three discretionary pre-determination planning hearings pending due to the restrictions imposed on public gatherings in light of the Covid-19 pandemic and at the August meeting of the Planning, Protective Services & Licensing (PPSL) committee it was agreed to arrange for virtual hearings to proceed on either an audio or video basis. It was also agreed that the options available to the committee for conducting site visits would be decided on a case by case basis.

There is no doubt that the current exceptional circumstances present challenges with regards to local participation and a priority of progressing arrangements in this manner will be to ensure that hearings continue to be heard in an open, fair and impartial way for all participants.

- 9.9 Regulatory Services:** In Regulatory Services the main focus of work at the moment is around Covid-19 regulation, work continues to enforce regulation, protect public health and support businesses that are open. Regulatory Services, including Licensing Standards and Environmental Health have coordinated the council's response to enforcement and adopted an enforcement strategy of the 4 E's; Engage, Educate, Encourage and Enforcement.

Work has included assessments of business standards and systems, responding to complaints and business enquiries and promoting and increasing awareness with business groups and sectors via our website, social media and direct engagement.

At the time of writing 1,938 businesses have been assessed directly and in responding to over 610 complaints the service has achieved a high level of compliance through their work with businesses and only seven formal warnings have been issued.

Recent legislation passed by the Scottish Government provided local authorities with powers to close premises and events and issue Prohibition Notices where there are significant risks to public health through the spread of coronavirus and compliance levels have been such that to date no Prohibition notices have been issued.

The service, together with another 20 local authorities, also provided mutual support to Aberdeen City Council by assisting in assessing premises there prior to reopening following the recent outbreak of positive coronavirus cases. This assistance was well received and was provided on the basis that we would require assistance from others if we were in the same situation.

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 – 15th September 2020

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