

ARGYLL AND BUTE COVID-19 RECOVERY PLAN

Summary

This Argyll and Bute Recovery Action Plan outlines the key themes and actions which are encompassed into our Recovery Strategy which aims to assist Argyll and Bute in recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic and to shape the “new normal”.

In 2020/21 we face one of the toughest challenges that we could have imagined, as the impact of coronavirus (Covid-19) affects everything in our lives and all of the services that we and our partners provide.

We have worked tirelessly with our partners, across Council services, business and communities to respond to the pandemic and have also been planning ahead for our recovery. Early on in the pandemic, the Council agreed its Recovery Strategy and Framework and this has led to the establishment of a Recovery Working Group that are now progressing critical themes which will shape our recovery in the months and years ahead. This work has run in tandem with the pandemic response and has resulted in the development of the Argyll and Bute Recovery Action Plan with short/medium and long-term outcomes.

The Council aims to play an enabling role going forward to make more use of partnership working, to redesign how we deliver services learning from new ways of work through digital, building back stronger communities and improving business resilience. This work cannot be delivered alone and will be highly dependent on Government policies, strategies and financial support. Our existing arrangements, together with the relationships developed in the response stage to the pandemic, will prove invaluable in enabling us to draw upon existing strong strategic and operational partner relationships that span all the sectors

Our Priorities

The response stage to the pandemic is still very much with us, with an increase in the number of cases of COVID-19, and further restrictions following the easing of measures which were laid out in the through the Scottish Government’s route map. The Council recognises that recovery is a complex process influenced by many factors, not least the prevalence of the virus and changing restrictions, and the plan will be reviewed and amended to reflect emerging circumstances. However, the key elements of the strategy will continue and remain as:

- Reinstatement of normality in terms of Council and HSCP services, including reopening of buildings
- Continued protection of public health, including reopening of business and activities following closure;
- To develop and deliver a proactive and integrated framework for the care for vulnerable in our communities in terms of care, medical treatment and supplies;
- Economic wellbeing and recovery support to business and communities;

- Reinstatement of transport networks as soon as practicable;
- A proactive and integrated framework for communication (public information, employee information, media relationships);
- Maintaining detailed and audited financial records for all activity, decisions and expenditure;
- Engagement, active listening and working with communities and all relevant agencies.

Developing and Delivering our Plan.

The Action Plan, which is detailed in Appendix 1, has been developed by a number of key thematic groups established with clear and distinct remits. These groups report to the Overarching Recovery Working Group and there are appropriate governance arrangements in place to engage with senior management, elected representatives, business and community partners ensuring that our work is joined-up and supported with good communications, financial and risk management, and more. Outcomes of these themes are:

Recovering Council	Create COVID safe and improved workplace and services for now and in the future that benefits our staff and customers.
Economic and social recovery	Supporting the economic recovery of Argyll and Bute, sustaining jobs and communities
Community strengthening: building back better	Building upon communities resilience demonstrated through the pandemic and developing the best ways in which to respond, engage and work in partnership with our community organisations for the future
Transportation and Infrastructure	Reinstating services post pandemic and meeting emerging challenges relating to connectivity
Financial management	Sound financial management
Public Health	Appropriate arrangements are in place to manage the increasing incidence of Covid locally and nationally.

This plan is also linked to the Argyll and Bute Economic Recovery Plan, the areas Rural Growth Deal, and to other established plans currently being taken forward, including the Joint Health Protection Plan.

Challenges

There are a number of challenges which will impact on the extent of our recovery and/or the timescale. These include:

- (i) Covid-19 – this is a new disease with no currently known cure, and the pandemic will continue at the same time as we try to recover and renew;
- (ii) Limited resources – the government has not fully met the cost to councils and our finances in the coming years are very challenging;

- (iii) Inequalities – these have been exacerbated by the pandemic and exist across the communities with corresponding impacts on the health, education and quality of life for an increasing number of people;
- (iv) Uncertainty – nobody knows if and how quickly the economy will bounce back, nor what the long term economic and social impacts of the pandemic will be;
- (v) Concurrent risks - the greatest risk at present, other than COVID-19, is the uncertainties of the looming EU Exit as this has may have far reaching consequences to the Argyll and Bute economy and our communities. In addition, the ongoing issues regarding connectivity with the A83 has significant implications, together with a range of other civil contingency risks which will require to be managed over the immediate period (e.g. winter weather disruptions etc.), and responded to as appropriate.

Summary

Recovery is a complicated process as we are still within the incident/response/reset phase of the pandemic, with changing restrictions and impacts. There are also concurrent risks associated with EU Exit which adds more complexity as well as numerous Government consultations on significant areas of national policy that will affect our area together with developing our emerging Rural Growth Deal and economic strategy. In addition to all this our area has also had to contend with the ongoing issues around the A83 trunk road reliability. Whilst much of it out with our control, these factors all impact on the “recovery process” timescales and have been built into the Recovery Working Groups overview.

In setting out the Argyll and Bute Recovery Action Plan the Council aims to outline the key areas of work which will shape the area, post COVID. These actions are challenging and will be coordinated, reviewed and continue to evolve as circumstances change. The success of the plan and its delivery will be dependent upon the commitment and engagement of all relevant agencies, businesses and communities at both a local and national level.

APPENDIX 1: ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCILS OVERARCHING RECOVERY ACTION PLAN

ACTION	RESOURCE/COMMENTS	ORIGINAL TIMEFRAME	REVIEW COMMENT	STATUS
Develop and approve Argyll and Bute Recovery Strategy and Framework	Recovery plan to be drafted and approved by Tactical/Strategic and leadership Recovery Framework and Plan to be agreed by Business Continuity Committee Establish links with regional and national recovery groups	26 May 2020	Complete	
Establish the Recovery Working Group and thematic groups to deliver the Strategy	Establish Group to deliver strategy Identify thematic chairs/vice chairs Meet with each chair/vice chairs to agree roles and responsibilities	27 May 2020	Complete	
Agree specific terms of reference for each group with thematic Leads	Agree terms of reference for each group	12 June 2020	Complete	
Terms of Reference and initial priorities and outcomes agreed for all groups	Groups to be established and to meet to discuss terms of reference Priorities and actions to be agreed by Groups	24 July 2020	Complete	
Overarching Group to agree high level recovery plan	High level Recovery Action Plan to be developed outlining the key actions and priorities. To be agreed by Strategic Management Team and Police and Resources Committee	12 December 20	On target	
Determine political leadership and governance arrangements- interim	Business Continuity Committee/Council normal committee structure to consider reports relating to Recovery Strategy.	30 September 2020	Complete	
Recovery Action Plan to SMT for approval.	Prepare report for SMT Recovery Action Plan to be submitted to SMT for consideration and approval	21 September 2020	Complete	
Determine political leadership and governance arrangements- medium/long term	Ensure there is appropriate scrutiny in the new political arrangements post COVID Recovery Action Plan by Policy and Resources Committee.	12 December 2020	On target	
Determine role of Community Planning Partnership in terms of reviewing the Recovery Plan	Agree role for Community Partnership in participation, delivering and monitoring the Recovery Action Plan	1 st February 2020	On target	
Reporting arrangements to be agreed, linking into Strategic Management Team	Agreed and reporting mechanism put in place	30 August 2020	Complete	
Links to Scottish Government and national/regional arrangements				

Ensure that Recovery Strategy is consistent with Scottish Government's Route map and Recovery Strategies	In place and reviewed at each Recovery Working Group.	30 July 2020	In place and Ongoing	
Link with Greater Glasgow and Clyde Regional Resilience Partnership groups to ensure a coordinated approach and share best practice	Active membership of Resilience partnership and Recovery group established	30 July 2020	In place and Ongoing	
Report through Local Resilience Partnership	Linkages and reporting arrangements in place at Local Resilience Partnership level	30 July 2020	Complete	
Terms of Reference and initial priorities for thematic groups	Agree Terms of Reference and initial priorities and outcomes	30 July 2020	Complete	
Recovering Council Group				
Agree overarching Council vision, core principles	This has been implemented	19 August 2020	Complete	
Develop key priorities and workstreams	9 key work streams have been identified and agreed by SMT	30/9/20	Complete	
Priority 1: Staff Engagement	Develop and deliver Staff Survey work stream	31 December 2020	First survey complete/ongoing requirement	
Priority 2: Management Engagements	Develop and deliver Manager Survey work stream	31 January 2021	On target	
Priority 4: Route map for reinstatement of Council Services	Develop programme of reinstatement of Councils services based on the Scottish Governments Route Map for easing of lockdown. Review Council Route map	1 September 2020 & ongoing	On Target	
Priority 5: Progress Agile Working (homeworking) work stream	Following SMT direction, and implement action plan to deliver revised agile working arrangements across Council	Underway – April 2021	On Target	
Priority 6: Office Space Review	Redesign office space and rationalisation.	1 April 2021	On Target	
	Short term Risk Assessments Completed for all buildings, balance demand vs space in all locations (focus on hubs), based on feedback & evidence redesign office space and rationalisation	30 September 2020	Complete	
Priority 7: Promotion of digital by default	Implemented new culture of digital by default	1 April 2021	On Target	
7.1	Define definition of digital by default as it relates to Council operations	31/12/20	On Target	
7.2	Links to Digital by Default budget work stream.	30 September 2020	Complete	
7.3	Promotion of existing capabilities to staff and customers,	30 September 2020	Ongoing	
7.4	Provide specific support to services to encourage use of digital	30 December 2020	Ongoing	
Priority 8: Recovery redesign for front line staff			Ongoing	
8.1	Focus on front line staff	1/12/20	Ongoing	

8.2	Standardise approach and challenge process to service review for non-office based staff, focusing on depots, sites, kitchens, vehicles etc. Identify issues, risks and solutions.	31/03/2021	Ongoing	
Priority 9: Communications Plan	Develop and implement communications Plan	1 September 2020	Complete and ongoing	
Community Strengthening: Building back Better Group				
Agree Terms of Reference and initial priorities and outcomes	Agreed	24 July 2020	Complete	
Refine themes in alignment with Social Renewal Scottish Government work with leads identified	Themes aligned to Social Renewal Advisory Board's policy circles.	30 September 2020	Complete	
Listening events	Undertake listening event to identify learning outcomes which will feed directly into Scottish Governments Social Renewal Advisory Board	10 September 2020	Complete	
Community engagement sessions	Deliver community engagement sessions across each of the 4 administrative areas with groups involved in the response	30 September 2020	Complete	
Develop actions based on response from community engagement	Actions and timescales to be determined via relevant sections of Caring for People evaluation and especially through Community Engagement Sessions	28 February 2021	On Target	
Food security	Understanding of need and impact of the pandemic and lockdown on food insecurity. Ensuring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support services in place for most vulnerable to receive appropriate support. Preventative supports for those who have increasing vulnerabilities and signposting to these supports. Provision of food to the most vulnerable meets their nutritional needs. 	Ongoing	On Target	
Digital inclusion	Digitally-confident and equipped individuals Digitally confident and connected communities	31/12/2021	Ongoing On Target	
Economic and Social Recovery				
Agree Terms of Reference and initial priorities and outcomes	Agreed	24 July 2020	Complete	
Priority 1: Support economic resilience and develop recovery priorities	Establish links with appropriate business groups via Argyll Economic Resilience Forum	31 July 2020	Complete and ongoing	
	Establish Officer Advisory Group to support resilience and recovery priorities	31 September 2020	Complete	
	Focus activity on resilience priorities –specifically business resilience, tourism & hospitality and skills. This includes specific support to business	31 September 2020	On target	
	Develop Economic & Social Recovery Plan for approval by Business Continuity Committee on 20 August 2020	30 August 2020	Complete	
	Deliver Economic and Social Recovery Plan	31/03/2022	Ongoing	

	Support the easing of lockdown in town centres through a multiagency group to make the areas COVID safe and to access funding to provide specific public spaces projects within town centres (Sustrans etc)	31/12/2020	Ongoing	
Priority 2: Exploration of Community Wealth Building (CWB) principles	Secure agreement between Argyll and Bute Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, and Scottish Enterprise on how community wealth can be integrated into economic recovery CWB established as a cross-cutting theme with CPP.	31/03/2021	On Target	
Infrastructure and Transportation Group				
Agree Terms of Reference and initial priorities and outcomes	Agreed	24 July 2020	Complete	
Priority 1: Reinstatement of Council services	Provide regular updates on provision of services taking into account Covid secure measures as appropriate	31/03/2021	On Target	
Priority 2: Coordinate reinstatement of Council, private and public transportation services across Argyll and Bute	Largely up and running to advertised timetable	1 October 2020	Ongoing and On Target	
Priority 3: Temporary or permanent arrangements for town centres and other areas	Alternations to town centres through successfully accessing funding for Sustrans/Transport Scotland Spaces for People funding with appropriately approved improvement schemes	28/02/2021	On Target	
Priority 4: Ensuring availability of A83	Lobbying Cabinet Secretary/First Minister at a Council level/Taskforce meeting to identify options and secure a permanent solution	To be determined	On Target	
Priority 5: Winter maintenance planning	Final preparatory work underway for winter maintenance response for coming season	30 October 2020	Complete	
Financial Management Group				
Agree Terms of Reference and initial priorities and outcomes	Agreed	24 July 2020	Complete	
Continue to refine estimates of financial impact of Covid based on the return from lockdown and to reflect actuals	Monthly updates to SMT	Ongoing	On Target	
Health Protection				
Priority 1: Ensure compliance with COVID-19 measures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Effective enforcement of COVID Regulations to ensure compliance with standards to protect public health 2. Provide support to business to enable them to manage their business and the risks 3. Effective communication strategy 	31 July 2020	Ongoing	
Priority 2; Support Test and Protect arrangements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support Test and protect arrangements through supporting contact tracing and provision of services for those who are ill, or self- isolating 	9 October 2020	Ongoing	

Priority 3: Managing incidents across Argyll and Bute, including Council premises	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exercising the outbreak control procedures with NHS Highland, Argyll and Bute Council, HSCP and other partners to improve preparedness 2. Manage and respond to cases, clusters and outbreaks affecting Argyll and Bute through the Joint Health Protection Plan 	30 October 2020	Ongoing	
Priority 4: Planning and implementation of COVID vaccination programme	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Planning for the delivery of the vaccination programme for COVID to communities of Argyll and Bute 2. Delivery of the programme 	31 January 2021 To be determined	Ongoing dependant on availability of vaccine	
Health and Social Care services				
Accessible health and social care service for all our communities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Plan to reinstatement of health and social care services and responding to needs arising from the pandemic 		Ongoing	