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## **Argyll and Bute Employability Partnership Terms of Reference and Improvement Action Plan**

### **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Management Committee with regard to the Argyll and Bute Employability Partnership (ABEP) Terms of Reference and Improvement Action Plan.

### **2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The CPP Management Committee are asked to:
- Note the content of this paper.
  - Endorse the proposed Terms of Reference (see **Appendix 1**) for the ABEP.
  - Endorse the content of the ABEP Improvement Action Plan (see **Appendix 2**), noting that this will be a working document going forward.
  - Agree that regular updates are provided on the progress of the delivery of the ABEP Improvement Action Plan, to foster a strong governance approach with and by the committee.

### **3.0 Background**

- 3.1 The ABEP has been in existence as a discussion forum on employability issues and opportunities for a number of years. However, further to the signing of a partnership agreement between the Scottish Government and Local Government on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2018, there has been a stronger focus on delivering the shared ambition of the Scottish Government's No One Left Behind (NOLB) policy agenda through all 32 of Scotland's Local Employability Partnerships (LEPs).
- 3.2 NOLB is a programme of transformation which aims to change the employability system in Scotland to make it more adaptable, responsive and person-centred. Transforming the system will require collaborative leadership across all partners and a culture change in how services are designed, delivered and funded, in particular the move from national to increased local governance arrangements through LEPs.
- 3.3 The Scottish Government's NOLB Delivery Plan<sup>1</sup> outlines the model for national employability investment in the period to April 2022 (this timescale was pushed back a year due to the COVID-19 pandemic). A key focus of the national NOLB Delivery Plan has been an increasing shift towards strengthening partnership working between the public, third and private sectors at the national and local

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/no-one-left-behind-delivery-plan/pages/2/>

level, user engagement, collaborative service design, shared measurement and a common approach to inclusive communications.

- 3.4 The ABEP recognises that through stronger and more collaborative partnership working, focused on a place-based person-centred approach, will help to ensure suitable opportunities for individuals of all ages and capabilities through tackling socio-economic disadvantage, inequalities and removing multiple barriers to securing sustainable employment. On this basis, the ABEP has developed a new Terms of Reference as outlined in **Appendix 1** and adhered to the Scottish Government's requirement to prepare an Improvement Action Plan for consideration, as presented in **Appendix 2**.

#### 4.0 Detail

- 4.1 The Terms of Reference presented in **Appendix 1** has intentionally been prepared as a concise document to outline the clear purpose of the ABEP and importantly the roles and responsibilities of ABEP members going forward. Specifically, there is a requirement to build an ongoing relationship with the Argyll and Bute CPP Management Committee, with a particular focus on a strong governance approach. It is hoped that regular reporting to the CPP Management Committee on the progress of the delivery of the ABEP Improvement Action Plan (**Appendix 2**) along with appropriate updates on employability issues and opportunities, will provide sufficient governance arrangements acceptable to the committee.
- 4.2 Recognising the degree of variability of LEPs across Scotland, the Scottish Government noted the need for some consensus around structure and remit of employability partnerships, whilst allowing flexibility reflective of local circumstances. Therefore, the Scottish Government requested that all 32 LEPs were strengthening with the requirement to put in place Local Improvement Action Plans in the first instance. To enable this work, a self-assessment survey was undertaken with all LEPs during May 2021, using separate returns from all LEP members, in order to strengthen the work of the partners at a local level. On the back of this work a LEP Checklist was developed to cover the following nine areas:
1. Leadership and relationships.
  2. Governance.
  3. Use of Evidence.
  4. Community Engagement and Participation.
  5. Focus on Outcomes.
  6. Use of Resources.
  7. Accountability.
  8. Performance Management and Reporting.
  9. Impact.
- 4.3 The Improvement Action Plan outlined in **Appendix 2** has been developed based on collective feedback (collated by the Improvement Service) from the self-assessment reviews undertaken by ABEP members. This was followed by a 'Consensus Session on Actions for Improvement' on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2021 and an 'Action Planning Workshop' on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2021, both of which were facilitated by Scottish Government officials. The ABEP Improvement Action Plan, aligned to the nine areas noted above, was then finalised by ABEP members at the partnership meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021.

- 4.4 The ABEP Improvement Action Plan contains a number of improvement actions, with lead roles, risk and cost implications, targets dates for action completion, measures and outcomes, all captured under an overarching local area of improvement, as follows:
1. **Leadership and relationships:** ABEP to build a stronger relationship with the Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership.
  2. **Governance:** Develop our governance approach, linking to our CPP, and establish our working arrangements, including the development of themed sub-groups and provider forums.
  3. **Use of Evidence:** Develop our use of shared data that enables effective decision making that develops opportunities and plugs gaps for sectors and communities. This includes establishing formal data sharing agreements across all partners to enable collective working to support those most in need.
  4. **Community Engagement and Participation:** Consider ways in which local communities and employers can better engage in the identification of priorities to shape local service design and delivery.
  5. **Focus on Outcomes:** Develop an Argyll and Bute Employability Partnership Improvement Action Plan that identifies local needs, objectives, impacts and outcomes which can be adapted as time goes on.
  6. **Use of Resources:** Consider developing a joined-up approach to learner engagement to include joint sessions, online presence and collective digital platforms that all partners, service users and employers can access.
  7. **Accountability:** Ownership and accountability of all ABEP partners.
  8. **Performance Management and Reporting:** Establish a mechanism to monitoring and evaluate ABEP performance.
  9. **Impact:** To evidence the impact of the ABEP.
- 4.5 The overall outcome of this work is to determine how effectively partners in Argyll and Bute are meeting the needs and strengthening the delivery of the No One Left Behind Employability agenda. The Improvement Action Plan will be reviewed regularly to ensure the partnership is collectively meeting the employability needs of our local vulnerable residents and priority groups, particularly in response to the impact of COVID-19 pandemic

## 5.0 Conclusions

- 5.1 It is necessary that the ABEP establishes an ongoing governance relationship with the Argyll and Bute CPP Management Committee. This is particularly pertinent due to changing landscape of employability service delivery, focused on a place-based person-centred approach, to be enabled through stronger and more collaborative partnership working at the local level, involving public, private and third sector stakeholders.
- 5.2 The Argyll and Bute CPP Management Committee is being asked to endorse the content of the documents, as outlined in **Appendix 1** and **Appendix 2**, to ensure that the ABEP is strengthened going forward. It is hoped that the ABEP Improvement Action Plan demonstrates to the committee that ABEP members are committed to working as a collaborative, complementary and joined-up partnership to support vulnerable residents and priority groups within our

communities across Argyll and Bute. However, it is also important for the CPP Management Committee to note that the delivery of the suite of actions in the ABEP Improvement Action Plan will need to be resourced accordingly.

## 6.0 Implications

Strategic Implications	<p>As well as responding to the Scottish Government's No One Left Behind policy direction, the ABEP Improvement Action Plan aligns and contributes in the main to <i>Outcome 3: Education, skills and training maximises opportunities for all</i> and <i>Outcome 5: People live active, healthier and independent lives</i> in the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP).</p> <p>Employability issues and opportunities also contributes to the Argyll and Bute Council priority: <i>'Argyll &amp; Bute Council will be a mental health champion, promoting good health and helping people back into employment when necessary'</i> and the inclusive <i>'skills for work'</i> focus outlined in the Council's Economic Strategy.</p> <p>Furthermore, the ABEP Improvement Action Plan is distinct, but complements, the actions outlined in the Community Learning and Development (CLD) Partnership Action Plan.</p>
Consultations, Previous considerations	The ABEP Improvement Action Plan was developed and prepared following a detailed self-assessment process with ABEP members, facilitated by the Scottish Government.
Resources	To deliver the suite of actions within the ABEP Improvement Action Plan will have resource and costs implications. Further representation on resources, given existing staff capacity, will be made to the Scottish Government through the Scottish Local Authorities Economic Development (SLAED) Employability/ People group. As per action 6.4, it is the intention to map out what resources ABEP members may have to enable a stronger, joined-up approach to employability interventions across Argyll and Bute. The findings could be a topic for discussion at a future CPP Management Committee meeting.
Prevention	None
Equalities	All ABEP activities will comply with all Equal Opportunities/Fairer Scotland Duty policies and obligations.

### For more information, contact:

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## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 1: Argyll and Bute Employability Partnership Terms of Reference**

#### **Purpose**

The role of the Argyll and Bute Employability Partnership (ABEP) is to provide local strategic direction and a strong collaborative partnership approach to the delivery of the Scottish Government's No One Left Behind Employability agenda across Argyll and Bute. The ongoing development and implementation of the new ABEP Improvement Action Plan (September 2021) will ensure that the ABEP is collectively meeting the employability needs of our local vulnerable residents and priority groups, particularly in response to the impact of COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **Terms**

The Terms of Reference is effective from 29<sup>th</sup> September 2021 and will be ongoing until terminated by agreement between the ABEP members.

#### **Membership**

Currently the ABEP Steering Group includes representatives from the following organisations:

- Argyll and Bute Council services including: Economic Growth (includes the Employability Team) and Growing Our Own;
- Live Argyll;
- Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership;
- Skills Development Scotland;
- Department for Work and Pensions (DWP);
- Argyll College UHI;
- Developing Young Workforce (DYW) Argyll;
- Argyll and Bute Third Sector Interface (TSI);
- Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE)
- Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA);
- WorkingRite;
- Fyne Futures Ltd;
- Clyde Fishermen's Association/Trust;
- Inspiralba

#### **Roles and responsibilities of members**

The ABEP is accountable for:

- Building a stronger relationship with the Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership (CPP), with a particular focus on a strong governance approach through the CPP Management Committee and partnership working arrangements and ensuring employability issues and opportunities are highlighted to the wider CPP members.
- Developing and implementing of the ABEP Improvement Action Plan as an ongoing working document, including the requirement to monitor and evaluate the performance and impact of the ABEP over time;

- Fostering collaboration and providing a joined-up partnership approach to support local vulnerable residents and priority groups;
- Sharing and communicating information across all ABEP members, including establishing formal data sharing agreements across all partners to enable collective working to support those most in need;
- Considering ways in which local communities and employers can better engage in the identification of priorities to shape local service design and delivery; and
- Ensuring members attend all ABEP meetings and if necessary, nominate a proxy.

**Members will expect:**

- That each member will provide information in a timely manner for discussion at ABEP meetings;
- A reasonable time to make decisions;
- To be alerted to potential risks and issues identified by members that could impact the delivery and implementation of the ABEP Improvement Action Plan as they arise; and
- Open and honest discussions without resort to any misleading assertions.

**Meetings and reporting:**

- Meetings will be chaired by Ishabel Bremner, Argyll and Bute Council or a substitute or another partner as agreed;
- A meeting quorum will be 5 members representing distinct organisations or teams within an organisation;
- ABEP decisions will be made by consensus or majority view;
- Meeting agendas and minutes will be provided by the Chair/Administrative support including supporting papers;
- Meetings will be held monthly using MS Teams; and
- The ABEP will report into the Argyll and Bute CPP Management Committee through the designated representative.

**Amendment, modification or variation:**

- The Terms of Reference may be amended varied or modified as agreed by the ABEP members.

## Appendix 2: Argyll and Bute Employability Partnership (ABEP) Improvement Action Plan

Improvement Actions	Lead	Implications [Risk, Cost, Resource]	Target Date	Measure	Outcomes
<b>Theme: Leadership and Relationships</b>					
<b>1. ABEP to build a stronger relationship with the Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership (CPP).</b>					
1.1: Ensure representation from all relevant partner organisations at a strategic and operational level.	ABEP/ ABEP Chair	Risks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The right people are not around the table that understand the purpose of the ABEP and can help influence and drive change.</li> </ul>	December 2021	Communication with all local organisations and internal departments including health to ensure participation	Appropriate strategic and operational representation on the ABEP, with shared objectives and outcomes along with improved collective leadership.
1.2: Create the space for delivery partners to look at conditions for collaboration, values-based leadership and identifying where partners could work together.	ABEP	Risks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited input and buy in required from all partners.</li> <li>Silo working prevents thorough needs analysis.</li> </ul> Costs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Co-ordination and collaboration requires resources to make it happen.</li> </ul>			

Improvement Actions	Lead	Implications [Risk, Cost, Resource]	Target Date	Measure	Outcomes
<b>Theme: Governance</b>					
<b>2. Develop our governance approach, linking to our CPP, and establish our working arrangements, including the development of themed sub-groups and provider forums.</b>					
2.1: Agree a Terms of Reference for the ABEP with explicit roles, responsibilities, partner expectations and alignment with the Argyll and Bute CPP outcomes.	ABEP Chair	<p>Risks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The lack of an agreed Terms of Reference for the ABEP and any sub-groups could result in a duplication of activity.</li> <li>Appropriate links and protocols are not developed with the Argyll and Bute CPP.</li> </ul> <p>Costs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resourcing of activity – reliant on in-kind staffing costs.</li> </ul>	September 2021	Clear Governance protocols and processes in place within the ABEP, with the Argyll and Bute CPP and other appropriate forums and groups.	Fit for purpose and agreed governance protocols and processes.
2.2: Align the ABEP to the appropriate Argyll and Bute CPP outcomes and agree a governance protocol with the CPP Management Committee.	ABEP		September 2021		
2.3: Pilot the development of themed sub-groups to look at particular aspects and tasks of the ABEP, including the requirement for a strategic sub-group.	ABEP		December 2021		
2.4: Scope out the difference between the Terms of Reference for the ABEP and a distinct Providers Forum i.e. clarity is required of a Provider Forum is required.	ABEP		December 2021		
2.5: Consider the cross-sectoral representation at an appropriate level on the ABEP.	ABEP		December 2021		
2.6: Give due consideration to the requirement to develop a commissioning framework for the delivery of funded interventions by ABEP partners.	ABEP Chair		January 2022		

Improvement Actions	Lead	Implications [Risk, Cost, Resource]	Target Date	Measure	Outcomes
<b>Theme: Use of Evidence</b>					
<b>3. Develop our use of shared data that enables effective decision making that develops opportunities and plugs gaps for sectors and communities. This includes establishing formal data sharing agreements across all partners to enable collective working to support those most in need.</b>					
3.1: Identify what local data partners can provide and what is needed from external sources.	ABEP	Risks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not adhering to GDPR requirements.</li> <li>Duplication of activity if existing data sharing agreements are not considered.</li> </ul> Gathering data on what we want rather than what we need.  Costs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Time to work identify and working through difference data sharing agreements and requirements for ABEP partners.</li> <li>Costs associated with available resources to gather, store and share data.</li> <li>Costs associated with organisations required to seek legal advice</li> </ul>	End of December 2021	Data sharing agreements, protocols and portals in place.	Effective decision making and reporting based on shared data.
3.2: Confirm what data sharing agreements are already in place and how the ABEP can utilise these to make it easier for others to be included.	ABEP		End of November 2021		
3.3: Agree on how the data will be collated, used and updated.	ABEP		End of December 2021		
3.4: Agree a data sharing protocol(s) for the ABEP and an appropriate portal to host the data (e.g. Objective Connect?)	ABEP		February 2022		

Improvement Actions	Lead	Implications [Risk, Cost, Resource]	Target Date	Measure	Outcomes
<b>Theme: Community Engagement and Participation</b>					
<b>4. Consider ways in which local communities and employers can better engage in the identification of priorities to shape local service design and delivery.</b>					
4.1: Identify a range of community engagement mechanisms to inform of the work of the ABEP, particularly with organisations involved in employability services at the local level.	ABEP	Risks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of co-ordinated communication and engagement.</li> </ul> Costs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifying a budget and costs in terms of where information is being held (IT costs) GDPR costs etc.</li> </ul>	March 2021	Formal survey and/or formal/informal feedback from communities and businesses on engagement approach and the added value of that engagement.	An agreed and effective engagement protocol with communities and businesses with regard to employability services across Argyll and Bute.
4.2: Pilot a community/business engagement approach.	ABEP				
4.3: Avoid employer fatigue by co-ordinating or using a collaborative approach to engagement.	Argyll DYW				
4.4: Agree a protocol for communities and employers to inform and shape local service design and delivery.	ABEP				

Improvement Actions	Lead	Implications [Risk, Cost, Resource]	Target Date	Measure	Outcomes
<b>Theme: Focus on Outcomes</b>					
<b>5. Develop an Argyll and Bute Employability Partnership Improvement Action Plan that identifies local needs, objectives, impacts and outcomes which can be adapted as time goes on.</b>					
5.1: Scoping and consultation exercise to map out and identify local needs, including lived experience of groups/stakeholders.	ABEP	<b>Risks:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No alignment with other partnership and partner actions could lead to duplication of activities.</li> <li>Lack of awareness and ineffective communication of the work of the ABEP.</li> <li>All voices are not heard.</li> <li>Political (policy led) risks and economic uncertainty associated with the Improvement Action Plan delivery.</li> <li>Unable to spend current budget through NOLB policy direction.</li> </ul> <b>Costs:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited staff resources, capacity and time across ABEP partners.</li> <li>How to resource the initial and ongoing develop and co-ordination of the Improvement Action Plan.</li> </ul>	September/ October 2021	ABEP Improvement Action Plan signed off and agreed.	Working and deliverable fit for purpose Improvement Action Plan and medium- to longer-term Delivery Plan.
5.2: Ensure the Improvement Action Plan is aligned to appropriate CPP outcomes and communicate clearly how the ABEP fits and contributes to these outcomes.	ABEP				
5.3: Ensure the Improvement Action Plan aligns to the CLD Partnership Action Plan and communicate clearly how the ABEP complements (not duplicates) the work of the CLD Partnership.	ABEP				
5.4: Align the Improvement Action Plan with the strategic plans and documents of ABEP partners.	ABEP				

Improvement Actions	Lead	Implications [Risk, Cost, Resource]	Target Date	Measure	Outcomes
<b>Theme: Use of Resources</b>					
<b>6. Consider developing a joined-up approach to learner engagement to include joint sessions, online presence and collective digital platforms that all partners, service users and employers can access.</b>					
6.1: Undertake a mapping of learning engagement across the ABEP members to determine who needs to receive and participate in such engagement sessions.	ABEP	Risks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of a staffing resource to undertake this work.</li> <li>Ineffective communication and engagement, which results in duplication and confusion for customers.</li> <li>Economic instability and fragility.</li> </ul> Costs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Digital platforms, such as licences, etc.</li> </ul>	December 2021	Creation of a Learner Engagement Plan with active engagement in place.	Everyone has access to the one digital platform/s and partners are working together to deliver sessions where appropriate.
6.2: Consider the various approaches for learning engagement that can be shared across the ABEP and establish where clear additionality is between partners.	ABEP		December 2021		
6.3: Identify digital platforms that everyone has access to (all).	ABEP		December 2021		
6.4: Map out what resources do partners have to provide this joined-up approach.	ABEP		December 2021		
6.5: Clear communications plan for promoting and motivating such engagement, internally to within the ABEP and externally.	ABEP		January 2022		

Improvement Actions	Lead	Implications [Risk, Cost, Resource]	Target Date	Measure	Outcomes
<b>Theme: Accountability</b>					
<b>7. Ownership and accountability of all ABEP partners.</b>					
7.1: Accountability arrangements are revised, clear, understood and implemented by all partners (links to action 2 under Governance and the ABEP Terms of Reference).	ABEP	Risks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not everyone signs up to accountability pledge.</li> </ul>	September 2021	Improved internal communication amongst ABEP organisations and partners.	Improved partnership working, cohesion, communication and ownership amongst ABSEP members.
7.2: LEP members effectively communicate decisions of the ABEP within their own organisations.	ABEP	Risks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communication streams are not open and inclusive.</li> </ul>	Ongoing		

Improvement Actions	Lead	Implications [Risk, Cost, Resource]	Target Date	Measure	Outcomes
<b>Theme: Performance Management &amp; Reporting</b>					
<b>8. Establish a mechanism to monitoring and evaluate ABEP performance.</b>					
8.1: Agree KPIs to monitor the performance of ABEP.	ABEP	Risks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of a staffing resource to undertake this work.</li> <li>KPIs information not provided by partners</li> </ul>	February 2022	Effective collection and collation of agreed KPIs.	Fit for purpose performance management and reporting mechanism in place.
8.2: Regularly consider performance information as a standing item at ABEP meetings.	ABEP		Ongoing		
8.3: Use performance outcomes to review ABEP actions.	ABEP		Ongoing		

Improvement Actions	Lead	Implications [Risk, Cost, Resource]	Target Date	Measure	Outcomes
<b>Theme: Impact</b>					
<b>9. To evidence the impact of the ABEP.</b>					
9.1: Monitor the impact of the ABEP through undertaking impact assessments and demand assessments to ensure the ABEP is maximising the impact on the local communities.	ABEP	Risks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of a staffing resource to undertake this work.</li> <li>Ineffective communication and engagement, which results in duplication and confusion for customers.</li> </ul>	February 2022	Impact assessments and demand statements in place.	Impact evidence of the ABEP effectiveness to share with Argyll and Bute CPP and partners.
9.2: Use data to measure the impact of how the ABEP is narrowing the inequalities gap.	ABEP		March 2022		