

RESTART, RECOVERY AND RENEW: DELIVERING OUR RECOVERY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1** The report updates the Policy and Resources Committee on progress in delivering the Argyll and Bute Covid Recovery Strategy and requests funding from the Recovery and Renewal Fund to support specific priorities of the Recovery Working Group.
- 1.2** Good progress is being across all groups in delivering the Recovery Plan, with frameworks in place for taking forward their priorities. The demands and duration of the different thematic groups vary considerably with economic and social recovery and building back stronger communities being medium to long term. Other work streams have now been completed, or reintegrated back into normal activity, for example, the Infrastructure Group priorities are largely now complete with transportation and other services reinstated back to pre-pandemic activity.
- 1.3** To support ongoing recovery, short term additional resources are required to support the critical longer-term themes of economic and social recovery and building back stronger communities. The Council's Executive Leadership Team considered the Recovery Highlight Report No 14, on the 25th October 2021 and noted the request for funding of £110K from the Recovery and Renewal Fund to provide two temporary LGE 11 posts (or equivalent) for a 12-month period to support the economic and social recovery together with the building back stronger themes. This will significantly improve our ability to deliver these critical areas of our Recovery Strategy and Action Plan.
- 1.4** The recommendations are that members:
- (i) note the progress made in delivering the Covid Recovery Strategy;
 - (ii) approve the sum of £110,000 from the Recovery and Renewal Fund to aid the delivery of critical areas of the Recovery Strategy and Action Plan.

RESTART, RECOVERY AND RENEW: DELIVERING OUR RECOVERY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Argyll and Bute's Recovery Strategy and Framework, approved by the Council's Business Continuity Committee on the 25th June 2020, outlined the process to be followed when working with our partners including multiple public agencies, the third sector and local communities, to ensure a planned **"return to normality"** from the Covid 19 pandemic. The Recovery Action Plan, was subsequently agreed by the Policy and Resources Committee on 12th December 2020, outlined the specific actions and priorities for the thematic groups, to return to the "new norm".
- 2.2 To support ongoing recovery, additional resources are now required to support the critical long- term themes of economic and social recovery and building back stronger communities. The Council's Executive Leadership Team (ELT) considered the Recovery Highlight Report No 14, on 25 October 2021, noted the request for specific funding from the Recovery and Renewal Fund, and recommended that Policy and Resources Committee now consider this matter.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The recommendations are that members:
- (i) note the progress made in delivering the Covid Recovery Strategy; and
 - (ii) approve the sum of £110,000 from the Recovery and Renewal Fund to aid the delivery of critical areas of the Recovery Strategy and Action Plan.

4.0 DETAIL

- 4.1 The Council's Business Continuity Committee approved the Recovery Strategy and Framework on the 25th June 2020, which established the framework for recovering from the Covid pandemic. This covers a wide range of areas including economic and social, building back stronger communities, public health infrastructure and transportation, financial management, communication and engagement, and renewing/ reinstating Council and HSCP services.
- 4.2 The Recovery Working Group is well established and the strategy has been adapted to incorporate the concurrent risks from EU Withdrawal into the Recovery Plan. The Overarching Recovery Working Group meets on a regular basis and reports its work through Highlight Reports to the Council's Strategic Management Team/ELT.
- 4.3 Good progress is being across all groups in delivering the Recovery Plan, with clear frameworks in place for taking forward their priorities. The demands and duration of the different thematic groups vary considerably with economic and social recovery and

building back stronger communities being medium to long term to achieve full recovery. Others will be of shorter duration and as an example, the Infrastructure Group priorities are largely complete with transportation and others services reinstated and mainstreamed back into pre pandemic activity. A detailed Progress Report outlining achievements and medium term priorities is currently being finalised by the Recovery Working Group and will be subject to a report to the appropriate Committee.

- 4.4 The Recovery Plan remains on target although additional resources are now required to increase capacity for the economic and social recovery and building back stronger communities groups to progress their priorities. These two thematic groups have the following distinct remits as reported to P&R Committee in December 2020:

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

- 4.5 These are critical to ensuring that Argyll and Bute recovers from the pandemic as the impacts of the pandemic have added to the workload of council officers as they have returned to normal council business.

- 4.6 This funding would provide two temporary LGE 11 posts (or equivalent) for a 12-month period to support these themes, with these officers working with other Council services, local communities, third-sector groups and Highlands and Islands Enterprise/Scottish Enterprise to take forward a range of key priorities. These includes the Council's Economic Recovery Action Plan, community wealth building and ensuring that longer-term recovery are embedded with strategic and operational plans, including the new Community Planning Partnership Plan.

- 4.7 They key remits of these temporary posts are outlined below. Specific job descriptions will be developed and evaluated, on receipt of a positive decision by Committee.

Theme	Remit	Specific detail (SMART)
Building Back Stronger communities	To lead the coordination of this workstream and to ensure that the needs of communities and best practice of working together realise its full potential. There is an opportunity to take this learning and the projects into longer term, sustainable working practices and outcomes for example with the revision of Argyll and Bute's 10-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring that Test and Protect community response needs are met and that groups are supported in accessing the funds required. Reporting weekly as part of the Councils response to Scottish Government. Reporting quarterly to Council's Tactical Group. Work in partnership with Third Sector Interphase (TSI), and other partners for example Scottish Fire and Rescue (SFR), to ensure that volunteering needs are met. Report to Council on the evaluation of the micro-grant scheme for community groups in 2022. Embed the Building Back Better workstreams into council and partners existing structures within a 12 month period to ensure sustainability of their deliver over the long-term.

	<p>year outcome improvement plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the learning from the support and relationship with communities organisations and make recommendations for the council's structures of working with communities in future. Take these recommendations to the Building Back Better Working Group for their consideration and onward to Executive Management Team. • Contribute to the development of the next 10 year Argyll and Bute Outcome Improvement Plan, specifically through research of the covid impacts by liaising with community planning partners, wider agencies and organisations and national guidance such as Social Renewal and Advisory Board recommendations. Provide this to the CPP by December 2022. • To link in and liaise with national consultations and responses on Covid-19 particularly in relation to communities, to track the inclusion of the points from Argyll and Bute so as to ensure that they continue to be represented within final guidance. • Support funding providers to find the appropriate means to distribute Covid related funding to community organisations within Argyll and Bute. • Manage the Building Back Better (Communities) Worker post overseeing their work that includes reviewing the learning from the support and relationship to communities and make recommendations for the council's structures of working with communities in future. • Manage all budgets relating to Covid within Community Planning and Development, reporting quarterly to the Community and Partnerships Manager
<p>Economic and Social Recovery</p>	<p>Working across the Council with other partners, including Highlands and Islands, to support delivery of the economic recovery strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic and Social Recovery is integral to the delivery of Government Recovery Strategies, the Argyll and Bute Council and partner agency Economic Strategies, funding streams associated with the UK Levelling Up agenda and the Argyll & Bute Rural Growth Deal into the medium to longer term. • Short term recovery priorities are focused on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Business survival and recovery with the ongoing dissemination of COVID -19 support funds and further business support initiatives. ➢ Tourism, hospitality and creative businesses, including ongoing support for staycation and Destination Management Organisations. ➢ Sustainable training and employment opportunities, which includes the No One Left Behind employability agenda and its

		<p>associated interventions, such as Kickstart Scheme and Young Person's Guarantee.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Key areas of research into potential barriers to recovery • Medium term priorities will be focused on attracting economically active individuals to the area and will be aligned to the current and ongoing categories and associated challenges and opportunities identified by the Convention of the Highlands and Islands Senior Officers' Population Working Group, as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Housing; ➤ Jobs; ➤ Critical infrastructure – especially digital and transport; ➤ Access to Services – health, education, childcare, etc.; and ➤ Talent attraction and retention – especially young people. • A dedicated Recovery Officer post will be required to work in partnership with all key stakeholders and agencies to deliver a coherent Argyll and Bute Economic and Social Recovery Action Plan that underpins the short to medium term recovery priorities. • Into the longer-term focus will be required on sustaining future strategic investment aligned to capitalising future funding opportunities, such as securing a fair and proportionate allocation of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to Argyll and Bute.
--	--	---

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 The Council's Recovery Strategy and Action Plan focuses on renewal, a desire to transform and adapt services to support the areas long-term future and its people, to learn from the Covid pandemic and apply lessons, to ensure our ongoing readiness and to enhance our economic and community resilience. There has been significant progress moving from a response mode to recovery. Council services have successfully restarted and mainstreamed other activities into normal business activity.

5.2 Additional resources are however required to provide capacity to take forward the priorities within the economic and social recovery and building back stronger communities' work streams. Without this additional resource, progress will be slow and recovery will take longer. The allocation of £110K funding will provide two temporary posts to progress a range of issues including community wealth building and economic and social recovery, and to align these priorities into longer-term strategic and operational plans, including the new Community Partnership Plan.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Policy : Consistent with Council policies including the recovering economic strategy. Council duty to coordinate recovery, in civil contingencies

- 6.2 Financial : Request for funding from the Councils Recovery and Renewal Fund
- 6.3 Legal : Meets statutory duty and responsibility
- 6.4 HR : Consistent with HR
- 6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty: Compliant
- 6.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics : No adverse impact
- 6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty: Proposals consistent with socio-economic duties
- 6.5.3 Islands : Recovery Strategy/Framework covers the whole of Argyll and Bute
- 6.6 Climate Change: Indirect impact through recovery actions
- 6.7 Risk : Risk register remains largely unchanged. Strategic Risk remains “AMBER”.
- 6.8 Customer Service: None

Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth – Kirsty Flanagan
Policy Lead - Councillor Currie
17/11/21

For further information contact:

Alan Morrison, Regulatory Services and Building Standards Manager
Fergus Murray, Head of Development and Economic Growth

APPENDICES

None