

UPDATE ON STAYCATION PROPOSALS

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The council allocated two funding pots to support staycations in Argyll and Bute. £500,000 was allocated from the 2021/2022 budget and supplemented by a further £100,000 from the 2022/2023 budget to support the delivery of a range of facilities across Argyll and Bute necessary to support camping and motorhome staycations. A new Staycation Graduate Project Officer was employed in April 2022, until the end of March 2023, to help administer the council's investment. Four council wardens are in the process of being appointed for the period April to October 2022 to raise awareness in respect of visiting responsibly. In addition to this, £20,000 has been set aside from the Staycation budget to support four community groups/trusts to employ temporary wardens.
- 1.2 The majority of the staycation facilities approved at the December 2021 Environment, Development and Infrastructure (EDI) report, for 2022 have been set up and running. There is an ongoing process of developing new waste disposal points and supporting local business/community groups in upgrading and developing existing and new campsites.
- 1.3 It is recommended that the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee:
- Note and consider the content of this paper; and
 - Note that Staycation is an evolving process with key milestones identified throughout the year and beyond.

UPDATE ON STAYCATION PROPOSALS

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The council allocated two funding pots to support staycations in Argyll and Bute. £500,000 was allocated from the 2021/2022 budget and supplemented by a further £100,000 from the 2022/2023 budget to support the delivery of a range of facilities across Argyll and Bute necessary to support camping and caravan staycations. A new Staycation Graduate Project Officer was employed in April 2022, until the end of March 2023, to help administer the council's investment. Four wardens are in the process of being appointed for the period April to October 2022 to raise awareness in respect of camping responsibly.
- 2.2 The majority of the staycation facilities approved at the December 2021 EDI report, for 2022 have been set up and are operational. There is an ongoing process of developing new waste disposal points and supporting local business/community groups in upgrading and developing existing and new campsites.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee:
- Note and consider the content of this paper; and
 - Note that Staycation is an evolving process with key milestones identified throughout the year and beyond.

4.0 DETAIL

- 4.1 The council is working closely with a number of agencies, including the National Park, Police Scotland, Transport Scotland etc. to help mitigate against the surge in domestic visitor numbers. Officers continue to work with these agencies to build on the successes of interventions set up in 2021.
- 4.2 It is worth pointing out that whilst there were literally thousands of campervans and campers across Argyll and Bute in 2021, the vast majority of these were responsible and respectful to our environment and communities. This was no

doubt as a result of the communication and physical interventions put in place in 2021 and the fact that the vast majority of tourist facilities are now fully operational albeit hampered by staff shortages. It was therefore imperative that we revisited these interventions for 2022/23. Many of the interventions are already in place for 2022/23.

Staycation Interventions

- 4.3 Economic Growth initiatives, through close engagement with Environmental Health, Planning and Roads and Infrastructure, resulted in number of activities mitigating negative effects on our countryside and tourism sector. **Appendix 1** gives an overview of the interventions/actions to be taken forward in 2022/23.
- 4.4 **Waste disposal facilities for camping/campervans.** Officers are continuing to engage with campsite providers across Argyll and Bute in an attempt to encourage usage of existing waste disposal facilities by non-resident campervans and motorhomes. Officers continue to follow up with a number local businesses through providing an expression of Interest form.
- 4.5 **Public Toilets.** All public toilets are open. In 2021 stickers were designed and rolled out for all public toilets offering a link to the waste water disposal facilities map on our website to prevent irresponsible disposal in public toilets which are still in use. Through funding from the staycation budget, **eleven temporary toilets** have again been deployed by contractor at five locations (Westport, Bridge of Orchy, Glen Orchy, Kilchurn Castle and Victoria Bridge). This includes maintenance checks on a daily basis.
- 4.6 Council officers hold regular **staycation meetings** to discuss issues with a wide range of partners some of whom have taken forward their own initiatives.
- 4.7 **General Waste.** To promote responsible behaviour about 200 bin stickers have been put up on council bins at some hot spots by wardens and due to their durability they will remain throughout 2022. Local Amenity Officers have fed back that it seems to have some influence on behaviour and resulted in visibly reduced bin overflow.
- 4.8 **Additional Warden Posts and Staycation Officer.** Four wardens are being recruited to cover the whole council area. The wardens will cover the 120 car parks that the council is responsible for together with a number of other sites that appear to be a subject to littering. Positive comments have been received from the public on the work of the wardens. The Staycation Project officer was also recruited and started on 4th April 2022 until the end of March 2023. The officer will manage a variety of projects, engaging with communities, partners and businesses on littering, signage, provision of toilets, parking for motorhomes, and waste disposal development funding applications.
- 4.9 **Community Wardens.** £20,000 of the Staycation budget was set aside to support 4 x community wardens in 2022/23. As of 21/4/22 £5,000 of funding has been granted to support a community warden, employed by the Mount

Stuart Trust to cover all of Bute and £5,000 grant to Appin Community Development Trust for a community warden. Two opportunities remain.

- 4.10 **Web pages and Social media posts.** To mitigate the impact on the environment an interactive map of locations of PC and caravan touring sites with information about waste disposal facilities available across Argyll and Bute was created - [Touring sites and filling stations \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](http://argyll-bute.gov.uk). These pages are updated on a regular basis.

Partnership Working

- 4.11 Friends of Loch Lomond were provided £3,500 funding for Portaloos at Arrochar and Luss for 2021 with a further £12,500 committed for 2022.
- 4.12 Alongside these activities, officers have been working closely with the tourism industry via the Argyll and the Isles Strategic Tourism Partnership (AISTP) to develop a robust new tourism for Argyll and Bute strategy that will alleviate any bottlenecks and encourage new audiences to our area. It should be noted that this is an industry led strategy.
- 4.13 Agreement has been reached with Police Scotland to conduct additional patrols in hot spot areas repeating what happened in 2021.
- 4.14 Agreement has been reached with the GRAB Trust to conduct anti-litter activities across Argyll and Bute working with local businesses and communities.
- 4.15 It should be noted that communities and private businesses continue to improve their facilities to deal with the staycation economic opportunity. This is the preference of the council and we are providing grant assistance when possible i.e. Colonsay camp site, Sandbank Marina Motor Home site.

Finance

- 4.16 The total for actual spend to date is £242,512 and funds committed are £183,540 giving a total staycation spend of £426,052. This leaves £173,948 remaining budget that can be used for other interventions as and when identified. **Appendix 2** provides further information on the expenditure.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The staycation fund has been welcomed by local communities and has greatly helped in addressing a surge in visitor numbers due to the reopening of the visitor economy. Officers have received positive feedback from interventions from communities, businesses and individuals and this is being collated and analysed by the Staycation Officer.
- 5.2 Officers continue to work with partners to respond to the challenges and

opportunities that have arisen from staycationers and the situation will be monitored closely.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy – The council supports a strong economy with tourism identified as a priority sector.
- 6.2 Financial - The council has an approved budget for staycation activities to be spent over a number of financial years.
- 6.3 Legal - All appropriate legal implications will be taken into consideration.
- 6.4 HR - The council has approved the temporary employment of 4 additional wardens and 1 staycation officer.
- 6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty
 - 6.5.1 Equalities - All activities will comply with all Equal Opportunities/Fairer Scotland Duty policies and obligations.
 - 6.5.2 Socio-Economic Duty - Council services focus on removing socio-economic disadvantage for vulnerable residents across Argyll and Bute.
 - 6.5.3 Islands - Staycation interventions are being delivered across the whole of Argyll and Bute, including the island communities.
- 6.6 Risk - Littering and health and safety issues arising from informal toilet waste disposal. Any staycation activity has potential to impact our ability to meet Climate Change target obligations.
- 6.7 Climate Change – All activities will comply with the Decarbonisation Plan.
- 6.8 Customer Service – Information is being communicated in different formats to our customers.

Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth:
Kirsty Flanagan

Policy Lead for Economy and Rural Growth: Councillor Robin Currie

For further information contact:

Fergus Murray, Head of Development and Economic Growth
Fergus.Murray@argyll-bute.gov.uk

Nathan Gallogley, Staycation Officer
nathan.gallogley@argyll-bute.gov.uk

Appendix 1: List of actions being taken forward

Action Point	Date of Implementation and activity	Responsible Officer	Action to date – 4 th April 2022
Web pages; social media posts and communication plan	Content continually reviewed and now available	Jane Jarvie	Ongoing
Identification of private waste water disposal sites	Sites identified in Appin; Tarbet; Holy Loch Marina; Lochgilphead Caravan Site; Portavadie	Fergus Murray	All potential sites contacted with a mixed response—some facilities are on-site and but communication continues with others around possibilities.
Identification of Portaloos site (confirmed not needing planning consent).	Sites already identified Duck Bay; Arrochar car park; Bridge of Orchy, Victoria Bridge, West Port, Kilchurn Castle	Jim Smith/Fergus Murray	On site from 14 th April until mid-October
Community Hotspots identified via community councils/individuals and members	Continued contact	Jim Paterson	Action so far –portaloos in place, review of activities
Recruitment of wardens	Underway and advertised hoping to get in post asap. Operational plans being pulled together to ensure supervision and support is in place for out of hours and weekends. In addition we will look to carry out joint patrols with Police Scotland and council wardens where it is considered necessary and police have available resource to commit to this.	Jim Smith/Tom Murphy	As of 14 th April 2022 two wardens are now in place - Bute and Cowal and Helensburgh and Loch Lomond.

LGE 9 post to assist Economic Growth Tourism Officer	Staycation project Officer is in post since 4th April 22	Jim Paterson	No further update
Community wardens	4 grants of £5,000 allocated for Community wardens	Jim Paterson	Funding granted to the Mount Stuart Trust; grant to Appin Community Development Trust
There are a number of larger scale interventions planned at Tobermory, Arrochar Car Park; Duck Bay etc.	Completed for 2023	Jim Paterson, Hugh O'Neill	Completed for 2023

Appendix 2 – Staycation Expenditure 2021/22

Headline	Detail	Spent or Committed	Actual Expenditure £	Committed Expenditure £	Comments
Staycation Officer 2021/22	Temporary post for 1 year to progress Staycation proposals. recruited	Spent	14,741		Only part year
Staycation Officer 2022/23	Temporary post for 1 year to progress Staycation proposals. recruited	Committed		35,000	
Additional Staycation Wardens 2021	Four additional wardens for a period of 5/6 months to October	Spent	41,386		
Additional Staycation Wardens 2022	Four additional wardens for a period of 5/6 months to October	Committed		56,000	
Additional street sweeping/uplifts etc 2021	Extra street sweeping and uplifts, includes car park maintenance	Spent	19,816		
Grab Trust 2021	Anti-littering campaign staffing	Spent	18,830		
Grab Trust 2022	Anti-littering campaign staffing	Committed		17,000	

Additional Police 2021	To provide additional Police Services to assist in promoting responsible camping – across Argyll and Bute, for a 12 week Period.	Spent	23,040		
Additional Police 2022	To provide additional Police Services to assist in promoting responsible camping – across Argyll and Bute, for a 12 week Period.	Committed		23,040	
Waste Water disposal points Grants 2021	Holy Loch Marina, Buessan, Lochabie, Kilbride Farm, Pucks Glen, Gigha, South Islay Development, Portavadie, South Kintyre Development Trust	Spent	57,393		
Waste Water disposal points Grants 2022	Secret Glen, Dunoon	Spent	9,254		
Portaloos 2021	Installing 11 portable toilet facilities in places including Westport, Bridge of Orchy, Glen Orchy and Victoria Bridge plus support to Friends of Loch Lomond (£3,500)	Spent	5,833		Actual is low as this was part funded by Nature Scott
Portaloos 2022	Installing 11 portable toilet facilities in places including Westport, Bridge of Orchy, Glen Orchy, Kilchurn castle and Victoria Bridge plus support to Friends of Loch Lomond (£12,500)	Committed		42,500	

Temporary Campsite 2021	Colonsay - contribution to overall project costs	Committed	4,778		
Publicity 2021	information - leaflets etc	Spent	13,131		
Staycation car park improvements (17 locations) 2021	lining and information	Committed	24,310		
Community Staycation Wardens 2022	To support local communities and inform visitors	Committed	10,000	10,000	
Total			242,512	183,540	
Overall Total – Actuals and Committed				426,052	
Budget				600,000	
Remaining				173,948	