

Argyll and Bute Outcome Improvement Plan 2013-2023 sets up an overarching vision that “Argyll and Bute’s economic success is built on a growing population”. Overall aim of the project is to determine the barriers faced by people seeking to take up employment in Argyll and Bute’s remote, rural and island communities and to increase the likelihood that they will make the move and settle long-term. To address population retention and growth challenges the Settlement Project was developed during discussions in the COHI Population Working Group, with input from the Scottish Government’s Population Team and funding from HIE. Natalia Jejer, Settlement Project Support Officer was employed to work on the project and started with the Economic Growth Team on 4th April 2022.

Four geographical areas of focus for this project were identified at council as Coll and Tiree, Kintyre, Bute and the Rosneath Peninsula. All four will receive the same amount of attention within the scope of this project.

The first phase of project is to make contact with the relevant internal sections and external organisations. This contact, which is still ongoing, has provided a wealth of qualitative (e.g. local issues) and quantitative information (e.g. NRS population projections) that is currently being drafted into an initial report for presentation at committee.

This draft report is in its first iteration and is being prepared for review by senior management. Once finalised and approved at committee it will go forward to be presented at COHI, along with the other two Settlement Officers (Highland and Western Isles).