
29th September 2022

POLICY LEADS REPORT

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report provides members with an update on key areas of activity for each Policy Lead Councillor. This aims to provide updates from all Policy Leads as regularly as possible, so that all members are informed, up-to-date and able to engage with current issues.
- 1.2 Policy Leads were appointed by Council on 18th May 2022. This is the first Policy Leads Report of the new Council term.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members are asked to consider the report.

**3. POLICY LEAD FOR FINANCE AND COMMERCIAL SERVICES –
Councillor Gary Mulvaney**

- 3.1 **Introduction:** This report provides members with an update on my activities as Depute Leader and Policy Lead for Finance and Commercial Services during the period from May till September 2022
- 3.2 **Financial Services Team:** Officers continue to work on the budget outlook and this is formally reported to each Policy and Resources Committee. The latest budget outlook reported to P&R advised that in the mid-range scenario, the budget gap estimated over the five-year period is £36.493m with a gap of £7.980m in 2023-24. Three factors materially affect this – our grant from Scottish Government; inflation; and pay award pressures. In terms of grant the working assumption is a 1% reduction in SG funding, and that will be confirmed in December.

The current non-pay inflation estimated for 2023-24 amounts to £4.291m and this compares to an estimate of £1.164m in August last year. The increased cost of inflation is putting significant pressure onto the Council budget.

In terms of the pay award, we budgeted for 2% for 22-23 like most other councils. Recent negotiations between COSLA and the Scottish Government have suggested a pay award averaging just over 5%, once minimum and maximum uplifts and extra days' holiday are accounted for. The unfunded gap for councils' is 1.5% and creates an unfunded pressure of circa £2.5m for current and future years. Officers will also change the pay award assumption for next year to 3.5%. This will increase the budget gap in 2023-24 by over £4.75m.

Officers have commenced work on the budget approach for 2023-24 with a detailed review of service provision and the high level approach was discussed at a meeting earlier this month of the cross-party Budget Working Group.

- 3.3 Local Tax Collections:** The Council Tax collection rate at the end of August 2022 is 50.72%, 2.98% up on the same time last year. The increased collection is due to the £4.33 million cost of living award that was allocated directly to Council Tax accounts at the start of the year although it should be noted that on a month to month basis the level of increased collections is reducing.

There are challenges reported by sheriff officers in collection performance post summons related to the cost of living crisis and as we are passing over less debt to them this year to collect as debtors in receipt of benefit increases.

The Non-domestic rates (NDR) collection rate at the end of August 2022 is 62.21%, down 1.92% in comparison to the previous year. This variation is because of movements in the level of rates relief we have been able to offer businesses between these years.

3.4 Benefits Update:

Benefits Processing: As at 31st August 2022 processing speeds for Housing Benefit show average processing times of 27.97 days for new claims and 8.56 days for change in circumstances for the year from 1st April. Performance is improving month to month, in August new claims were processed on average every 24.6 days and changes 7.5 days, despite being short on resources due to sickness and maternity leave.

Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) and Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs): Expenditure in SWF and DHP has increased in quarter 2 and at this stage we are not projecting costs over the annual budget of £458,827 for SWF or £961,000 for DHP.

Flexible Food Fund: The Flexible Food Fund project has been extended for a further year given the current crisis in relation to the cost of living and the increase in energy costs. At the end of July the project has delivered £1,746 million of additional income for 1310 families across Argyll and Bute an average of £1,330 per household. Half of the households being supported are single adults living alone, 30% are single parents and 15% are families with children in the household.

3.5 Commercial Services Update:

Launch of My Tribe Initiative: free period products are now widely available to everyone in Argyll and Bute, following the Scottish Government's Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Act 2021 becoming law in August. Commercial Services arranged two successful launch events at Helensburgh Civic Centre on 24th August and at Lochgilphead Joint Campus on 25th August.

Helensburgh Leisure Centre: the new £22M state of the art leisure centre is now complete and was officially handed over by contractors Heron Bros Ltd at start of August, on time, despite the global construction challenges being faced, which is a fantastic achievement by all involved. The centre, which will be operated by Live Argyll, opened its doors to the public on 3rd September and an official civic opening will take place on 7th October 2022.

Learning Estate Investment Programme (LEIP): Commercial Services are leading the preparation of a bid to the Scottish Government's highly competitive LEIP. Mull has been identified as the priority area across the whole school estate and a public pre engagement exercise was run until 9th September to seek initial views from the island community on a potential new campus.

Food for Life Award: Argyll and Bute Council's schools catering service has received The Soil Associations' Bronze Food for Life Served Here Award for the 10th year in a row. This year's accreditation also includes meal provision for the area's early years settings, meaning that even more young people are able to benefit from healthy, sustainable school meals – 125 schools in total. The award recognises food establishments that serve fresh, environmentally sustainable and ethical food, make healthy eating easy and champion local food producers.

Rothesay Pavilion: the latest meetings of the lobbying group took place on 10th August, which included a site visit, and 13th September. An action plan has been agreed to progress lobbying activity as a matter of urgency.

3.6. Depute Leader:

I have regular other meetings with the Leader, Policy Leads and the Chief Executive in respect of council business and priorities. In addition I have deputised for the Leader at COSLA and attended meeting and development sessions of the HSCP.

4. POLICY LEAD FOR EDUCATION – Councillor Yvonne McNeilly

4.1 Introduction:

This is my first report since being re-elected in May 2022 and I would like to say how delighted I am to be returning as a Councillor for Argyll and Bute and continuing the role of Policy Lead for Education.

4.2 Education Change Programme – School Leadership Proposals:

Following one of the most ambitious consultation and engagement exercises, which was undertaken by the Education Service from November 201 to March 2022, a report on the outcomes and findings of this process was tabled at the Community Services Committee on 25th August. Moving forward, a number of key actions were agreed including:-

- That the consultation exercise provided valuable feedback from teachers, pupils and communities;
- That the proposals as consulted on are not progressed;
- That the Education Service, working with Head Teachers, continue to work across all aspects of the Service to deliver improvement, to address the implications of national reform, to address the key issues raised in the consultation and other local and national challenges the Service is encountering, and will continue to encounter;
- That the Education Service continues to address the variation in performance within Argyll and Bute schools and work with Head Teachers at a local, and with partners at regional level, to improve outcomes for children and 5 young people.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the officers involved for their continued hard work and to everyone who took the time to engage with the process and submit their views. Moving forward I hope that we can continue to work with our stakeholders in a positive

manner, for the benefit of all our children and young people in Argyll and Bute.

4.3 Exam Results 2022:

Initial exam results were released by the SQA on 9th August and I am very proud to report that our young people have achieved impressive results in what has been another challenging period for them, their parents/carers and of course all the school staff. This is the first time in 3 years that our S4-S6 pupils have been presented for examinations, with exams in 2020 and 2021 cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Results show that National 5 attainment remains in line with 2019, while Higher and Advanced Higher pass rates have increased by 6.3% and 8% respectively compared to 2019 results. Argyll and Bute pupils' performances in both Higher and Advanced Higher are above the national average, while for National 4, a 100% pass rate across all our schools continues, which is 14% above the national figure.

Results will be updated by the SQA this month (September) following the processing of any appeal requests submitted by schools or candidates.

Officers have held a number of training sessions with school leaders to develop a knowledge and understanding of the attainment data for their school, which has also been further scrutinised to help inform our Local Authority Stretch Aims across a number of areas.

4.4 Potential New School for Mull:

As part of phase 3 of the Scottish Government's Learning Estate Investment Programme (LEIP) the Council is in the process of preparing a potential bid for funding for a new campus on Mull. In line with the adopted Learning Estate Strategy, Mull has been identified as a strategic priority for the Council given it is assessed as "C - poor" in terms of suitability.

Pre engagement activity has been ongoing with the Mull community in respect of the potential LEIP bid, with a number of workshops and meetings held in August to raise awareness and obtain initial views from key stakeholders.

A paper is on today's agenda in respect of the approach and if agreed, steps will be taken to progress a formal bid for funding by 31st October 2022 deadline.

4.5 Dunoon Grammar School - Celebrating Success:

World's Best School: Dunoon Grammar School (DGS) are in the running to become the World's Best School through the T4 Education World's Best Schools Award for Community Collaboration.

The Community Collaboration Prize recognises schools that have collaborated and developed partnerships with their community to have an integrated approach in helping each of their students striving for a whole child approach based on equity and inclusivity. Dunoon has been shortlisted for its wide range of local, national and international projects, including:

- A Covid-19 recovery programme that saw young people in the school live streaming bingo and other games into care homes.
- Working with local members of the community to design a lasting monument to those who lost their lives during the pandemic, and identifying a suitable area to erect it.
- Running events in local primary schools when children could not attend clubs out with the school during lockdown.
- Designing coded digital solutions to the climate crisis and presenting them to world leaders at COP26 in Glasgow
- Visiting communities in Malawi, Costa Rico and Ghana to build education and health facilities.

I am extremely proud of the school and wish them the very best of luck!

Gaelic Education Award: As if being one of the world's top schools wasn't enough, DGS have also recently won the Gaelic Education Award at this year's Scottish Education Awards held in Glasgow on 8th June 2022.

The award recognises early learning and childcare settings and schools that have developed a positive culture of continuous improvement in relation to Gaelic Medium and Gaelic Learner Education.

4.6 Celebrating Success and Continuous Improvement:

DGS aren't the only school celebrating success. I am amazed, but not surprised, that only a few months into the new school term there is already an array of awards and achievements to be celebrated right across our excellent Education Service. I have detailed below some of the highlights:-

Developing Nurturing Cultures: A further ten schools in Argyll and Bute have achieved accreditation for their achievements in developing nurturing cultures in their school communities, taking the total to 18.

The accreditation is part of the Council's 'Our Children, Their Nurturing Education (OCTNE) Strategy' and aims to ensure that children and young people have the emotional support they need.

The schools that have received bronze accreditation in this round are: Ardrishaig Primary, Bowmore Primary, Campbeltown Grammar, Colgrain Primary, Dunoon Primary, Garelochhead Primary, Hermitage Academy, Rothesay Primary and Sandbank Primary.

Port Charlotte Primary made an outstanding achievement and received gold accreditation.

The health and wellbeing of our children and young people is a key priority for the Council and the work of the Educational Psychology Service in supporting schools to implement these approaches has been fantastic. This success has been recognised by Education Scotland who are using the programme as a case study for positive practice in its national review.

Gold for Children's Rights: Ulva and Lochdonhead Primary Schools have both recently received gold accreditation in UNICEF UK's Rights Respecting School Programme. This is presented to schools that show commitment to promoting and realising children's rights and encouraging adults, children and young people to respect the rights of others in school.

Current engagement across Argyll and Bute:

- 45 schools and nurseries in Argyll and Bute are already engaged with the award
- Two of them are partner providers
- Ten are currently working towards Bronze: Rights Committed
- 23 are working towards Silver: Rights Aware
- Eight are working towards Gold: Rights Respecting
- And four have achieved Gold and are now classed as Rights Respecting Schools.

Silver Award for Port Ellen: Port Ellen Primary on Islay has received a silver award in the Pearson National Teaching Awards for 'Making a Difference – Primary School of the Year'.

The award celebrates excellence in education and recognises the life changing impact that an inspirational teachers can have on the lives of the young people they work with.

Port Ellen received recognition for its commitment to achieving excellence for all, enabling pupils to flourish in an environment that values every child, promotes high expectations and provides opportunities for achievement. The school has now been shortlisted to win one of 16 Gold Awards up for grabs later in the year. Good luck!

Top Marks for Head Teachers: Three of our Primary Head Teachers have received top marks following completion of Education Scotland's national 'In Headship' qualification. I would like to pass on my congratulations to Linda MacBeath from Rhu, Karen Wheatley from St Mun's, and Pauline Walsh from Colgrain for their outstanding results.

I must also recognise the achievements of five of our aspiring Head Teachers, who have received the General Teaching Council for Scotland's Standard for Headship, following successful completion of the 'Into Headship' qualification:-

- Shona Guthrie – Lochgilphead Joint Campus
- Caroline Lamond – John Logie Baird on secondment to Early Years Team
- Roseanne MacKay – Hermitage Academy on secondment to Central Team
- Leonie McMurdo - Craginish
- Kate Petrie - Bunessan

Small Isles Primary: Congratulations to Small Isles Primary on securing their sixth Eco Schools Green Flag Award. This demonstrates a huge commitment from teachers and pupils and the wider school community in delivering environmental benefits across a range of topics including biodiversity, energy, healthy living, waste and water.

Participation Measures: New figures published by Skills Development Scotland show that 93.9% of young people in Argyll and Bute are currently in education, employment or training, putting the area in fifth place out of all 32 Scottish local authorities.

The Annual Participation Measure reports on the economic and employment activity of 16-19 year olds in Scotland and is the source of the Scottish Government's National Performance indicator.

This year's figures show a 0.4% rise in Argyll and Bute compared with 2021 and a jump from 10th to 5th in the national table, illustrating the commitment and hard work of our young people, their families and all

staff across the Education Service, in achieving positive destinations for young people when they leave school.

4.7 Early Years Team:

Early Years Team – Quality Mark: The Early Years Team have received the General Teaching Council Scotland's Quality Mark after gaining an Excellence in Professional Learning Award from the organisation.

A huge well done to the team on receiving this accolade, which is in recognition of the excellent work that is taking place across early years establishments across the authority to support and promote professional learning that has a significant impact on teachers, classroom practices and our children and young people.

Childminders: The team have been working closely with the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) and Skills Development Scotland (SDS) to increase our childminder numbers within specific rural areas, to support parents to live and work across Argyll and Bute. We are currently awaiting confirmation of the number of new childminders enrolled with the Care Inspectorate (CI), however, early indicators suggest Argyll and Bute have been one of the most successful Local Authorities within the scheme in relation to numbers recruited.

Income Generation Pilot: This month, the team are starting an income generation pilot within Rothesay Joint Campus, using existing staffing levels to offer paying spaces to parents of non-eligible two year olds, with the aim of supporting working parents with childcare whilst maximising use of staffing resource to generate income. We will gather stakeholder views which will be used to determine whether an extension of the pilot will be rolled out in the Campbeltown area, where local intelligence suggests there is also a need for childcare provision to support working parents and where our current staffing complement could deliver this at no additional cost.

4.8 National Writing Project:

Argyll and Bute Council have applied and been chosen as one of the five authorities accepted to the first national wave of the Children and Young People's Improvement Collaborative National Writing Project. We have five schools participating in the programme which will see classroom practitioners, supported by school leadership, using a developed writing bundle for First Level learners. The programme supports practitioners to use a specific bundle of approaches to writing and to gather data using the bundle to evidence improvement.

4.9 Support for Parent Councils:

The Wellbeing, Rights and Relationships Manager has been working closely with parent councils to improve support for those who are involved. We are supporting this role through CONNECT membership. CONNECT provide a range of training and resources to improve parental involvement and engagement. We are also working together to agree support information for parent council members, as well as looking at how we promote the positive contributions parent councils make to our school communities. A draft document is currently being consulted on. CONNECT will be invited to our Parent Advisory Group to update members on what they can offer.

4.10 Summer Holiday Food and Childcare Programme:

As per last year, the Scottish Government rolled out a programme for Summer Holiday Food and Childcare and tasked local authorities to deliver a mix of holiday provision making best use of existing cross-sectoral childcare and organised children's activities services. Local authorities were asked to focus on areas with higher SIMD rating and support access for the six priority groups highlighted in the Tackling Child Poverty delivery Plan outlined below:

85% of funding was intended to be targeted at children and young people from the priority family groups:

- Children from lone parent families
- Children from ethnic minority families
- Children from families with a disabled adult or child
- Children from families with a young mother (under 25)
- Children from families with a child under one year old
- Children from larger families (3+ children)

The remaining 15% of the funding can be used flexibly to reach other children who would benefit from access to free holiday childcare, food and activities.

In line with last year Education took the lead for the Summer Activity programme for 2022. Due to the success of last year's programme and the feedback from staff and parents, it was agreed that we would target three weeks of the summer holidays and offer activities and childcare within hubs across the authority.

Hubs were established during the weeks of 4th July, 18th July and 1st August in Campbeltown, Dunoon, Helensburgh, Islay, Lochgilphead, Oban, Rothesay and Tobermory. Dates and times varied in each town.

Organising the programme is a huge undertaking and Education had great support from Customer Support Services who designed a bespoke booking form which enabled parents to book activities and gave Education staff the ability to run reports to support registration, have an overview of booking figures, and supply numbers to catering staff for lunch provision. In addition, Commercial Services helped to deliver 2,550 meals across the eight hubs.

Support was also received from a wide range of partners and external organisations who should be recognised for their contributions:-

After School Clubs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tarbert After School Care • Drumfork • Escape • Fyne Families 	Outdoor Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ardroy • Scout Scotland • Go Venture
Third Sector <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helensburgh & Lomond Carers • MAYDS • Achievement Bute • Cowal Young Carers • A&B Council Champs Group • MacTaggart Community Cyber Café • Mull & Iona Community Trust 	Others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oban Youth Café • Wee Happy Health Club • Hope to Oban • Albatross Arts • Rangers Football Club

Feedback on the programme has been collated from staff, partners, parents/carers and pupils and will be used to inform future programmes. Some of the feedback received is detailed below:-

“It’s a lifeline for my family. I find the holidays really tough and this makes life so much easier knowing they are happy and my life is easier throughout these weeks it’s on thank you thank you thank you!!!!”

“I loved everything.”

“I liked meeting new people.”

“Providing opportunities for young children that they may not have had.”

5. POLICY LEAD FOR ROADS AND TRANSPORT - Councillor Andrew Kain

5.1 Introduction:

Since May I have been getting familiar with the Roads and Transport brief and council officers. With Argyll and Bute covering such a large and diverse area the Roads and Transport services confront significant challenges in delivering. As well as roads, the service covers ports and harbours, ferries and airports. There is 2,300 Km roads (40% on Islands) of varying standards across the second largest council, by area, in Scotland, and over 4,500km of coast line plus 23 inhabited islands. When these facts alone are considered it is clear that delivering best value for Argyll and Bute's communities can present some significant challenges.

5.2 Major projects:

The following are in different stages of delivery and will contribute hugely in improving the economies and welfare of the communities they serve.

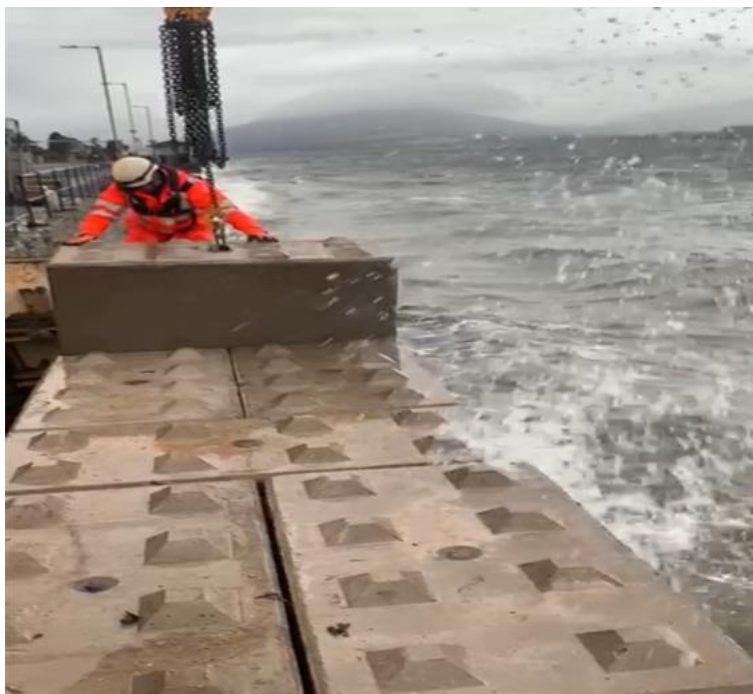
Campbeltown flood defences: this is a significant project newly underway which will greatly reduce the flood risk in the town while improving the resilience to the changing climate. While there will be some disruption during construction, all will be made good by the contractor with significant benefits for the future. There is a useful page on the Council website providing details about the works. In summary this project has a value of over £15M with Scottish Government Flood Prevention Scheme funding 80% and the Council 20%.

Elected Members have received a presentation relating to the works and have carried out a site visit to view the various elements of the proposed works. On the same day a public pop up event was held which was well attended. The three local councillors have had an additional workshop session with officers to progress options for the reinstatement of Burnside Square following the installation of an underground water storage tank which will occupy much of the footprint of the square. A public consultation exercise will be carried out to seek the views of communities regarding the reinstatement options.

Flood Prevention Study Work: The Campbeltown scheme is the first scheme that this council has received physical works funding for with flood study and design works having been carried out over a number of years. We are also currently undertaking flood study works under a similar programme for Rothesay and Oban. These flood studies will be

used for bids for future flood prevention schemes as the availability of external funding allows.

Ardbeg Sea Wall Isle of Bute In December last year a significant storm washed away the sea wall exposing utility services within the footway and putting at risk the public road and private land beyond. Quick temporary action was taken to provide a temporary wall to protect the road and utility services. These reactive works were carried out under emergency 'powers'. Permanent works are currently being designed and permissions sought as required with planned works. It is intended that a permanent solution will commence construction in 2024. However, it is worthy of note how vulnerable our infrastructure can be particularly in adverse weather events.



Ardbeg sea wall defences.

Home to School Transport and Public Transport – the Council transports some 3,000 school children between home, school and back every working day, the logistics behind this operation is significant. The majority of school transport is carried out by bus and mini bus. There are also a number of children who travel by train (mainly to Oban High School and Helensburgh Academy). Some of these train journeys have been disrupted due to industrial action in the rail sector. Service cancellations have been combatted by the introduction of bus services.

Roads Reconstruction Programme – The Council agreed a £8M investment for this financial year's roads reconstruction programme and a further £958K has been secured following a competitive bid to the external Strategic Timber Transport Fund. This coupled with some £500k for footways and an additional £300k for street lighting will deliver a significant programme of asset sustainability works across the public road and footway network.



Typical roads reconstruction works under way.

Oban Harbour: This is a hugely significant programme that will greatly benefit the economies of Oban, island communities and aquaculture businesses across Argyll and Bute. The move to establish Oban as a Municipal Harbour is close to being delivered and the Council has engaged with over 1,000 stakeholders thus far. I have engaged with members of OCDHA who are fully behind the development, indeed their attention to detail benefits greatly the process. That said the complexity and enormous number of moving parts make it impossible to satisfy every view. However, the unifying objective remains to deliver a 'Harbour Revision Order' to Transport Scotland by the end of year for Ministers to formally consider the proposals to create a Municipal Harbour Authority. We then move on to the next phase where, with the help of OCDHA and other stakeholders, we can ensure the effective management and success of Oban Municipal Harbour. The Council is also looking at options for extending the North pier to deliver greater capacity.

Bridge and Structure Funding: Following a successful bid for external government funding to upgrade a number of bridges and structures, design work is underway for 15 bridges and structures which meet the funding criteria and were part of a competitive bid which was successful in securing over £5M of additional funding. Construction work will be carried out over the years 2022 – 2025, allowing for detailed design, consents and permissions to be completed. This

funding will see significant upgrades to key transport infrastructure assets.

Winter cover: The service has in place a winter service policy as delivered in previous years with the objectives of ensuring the provision of a standard treatment appropriate to the prevailing weather conditions and; establishing patterns of working which will produce the greatest benefit from the deployed resources, with the view to reducing the level of risk and the extent of any delays to the public, caused by adverse weather conditions. The service will be rolling out its winter plans as normal over the coming period and will use both roadside weather stations and a professional external forecast supplier to determine daily treatments.



8 days



Preparation/calibration of a typical winter vehicle roadside weather station and typical forecast

Ports and Ferries: The Council is responsible for a number of ferries and ferry routes along with 34 piers and ports. The Council has previously pursued transfer of its internal ferry operations to Transport Scotland.

On a national basis, Transport Scotland is currently reviewing how services are delivered and looking at the best solution for delivery of future services in line with Islands plan. The service will continue to play its part in contributing to those vital transport links.

Electric vehicles and EV Charging Points: the Council has significantly increased the number of small vehicles which are either electric or hybrid over the last two years and will continue to capitalise on grant funding to add further EV charging points.



Qualifying Factors: The current economic environment is not something that will be consequence-free for Argyll and Bute and the service. The inflationary pressures across the board will impact all aspects and create significant cost increases. The cost of all materials is rocketing! However, the service is doing what it can to mitigate the effects through activities such as combining with other authorities to improve purchasing power, route optimisation, and everything in its power to maintain effectiveness with greatly reduced resources.

Future: It is my intention to continue familiarisation with projects within brief and further developing relations with officers as we jointly look to develop policy and maximise resource delivery for the benefit of all residents of Argyll and Bute. I am always happy to have further discussions with colleagues who may have issues or suggestions about mitigating pressures. We are anticipating policy changes from Scottish Government on both urban 20 mph zones and footway parking. Officers will bring papers to the relevant committees and/or briefing notes in due course when more information is available.

6. POLICY LEAD FOR CARE SERVICES – Councillor Amanda Hampsey

6.1 Introduction:

I was appointed to the role of Policy Lead for Care Services at the Council meeting on 19th May. Since taking on the role, I have worked closely to build relationships with the various heads of service and care providers, to gain a broader insight into the provisions provided within Argyll and Bute. Below is an overview to some of the activities in which have taken place.

6.2 Key Meetings:

On 4th July, I met with Fiona Davies, Chief Officer of the HSCP and Professor Jason Leitch, National Clinical Director to make visits to Oban, Lorn and The Isles Hospital, Eader Glinn Care Home, Lorn Medical Centre and Healthy Options, Oban. Tribute was paid to the staff for the exemplary continued commitment to patients. The opportunity was also taken to discuss with each member of staff what challenges they have faced, given the difficult circumstances in which our health care workers have been under during the pandemic and whilst our National Health Service has gently eased away from restrictions. Feedback from staff was incredibly positive.

On 19th August, I travelled to the Isle of Bute to meet with Fiona Davies, Chief Officer of the HSCP and Humsa Yousaf MSP to attend Bute General Hospital, Bute Medical Practice, Thomson Court Care Home and The Lade Centre. Again, much appreciation was shown to the staff for the excellent level of care provided and they were highly commended for the unity and teamwork shown within partnerships.

6.3 Mental Health and Inpatient Care:

Succoth Ward in Mid Argyll Hospital is currently operating 17 beds. Occupancy has been running consistently at 95%.

The team continues to be supported by bank and agency staff. However, the ward continues to facilitate student nurse placements and recruitment is ongoing. In responding to the challenges of recruitment the team have recently been successful in their application to the Scottish Terms and Conditions Committee to apply a Recruitment and Retention Premium to their band 5 posts. It is hoped that this will help stabilise the workforce by boosting recruitment efforts and minimising staff turnover.

The Mental Welfare Commission visited the ward in June of this year. The report is in the process of being finalised and is likely to be published by the Commission in the coming weeks.

6.4 Community Mental Health Teams (CMHTs):

CMHTs continue to function in each of our four localities and have close links with our inpatient service, General Practitioners, Addictions Service and acute and community hospital services. The effective function of these teams is crucial to support people to remain in the community and to facilitate timely discharge from hospital.

The new national Suicide Prevention Strategy is scheduled for publication by the Scottish Government week beginning 26th September 2022. The Argyll and Bute multi-agency Suicide Prevention

Group comprised a range of key stakeholders from across Argyll and Bute.

6.5 Primary Care Mental Health Service Team (PCMHT):

We have a single PCMHT that has practitioners based within and supporting, each of the four locality areas. The function of this team is to support a range of mental health conditions such as mild depression and anxiety.

We have recently commissioned Support in Mind Scotland to deliver Distress Brief Interventions for the people of Argyll and Bute and our initial focus has been on awareness raising and training our partner agencies, i.e. SAS, Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue, Local Authority and General Practitioners to be able to refer to this service. This work is in line with the national program details of which can be accessed via the attached link.

6.6 Perinatal Mental Health Service:

Our new Perinatal Mental Health Service is progressing well. The service has an Advanced Nurse Practitioner (ANP) and an Infant Therapist.

The ANP, who is managed within Mental Health services, has developed care pathways and supports a caseload across Argyll and Bute. She has forged good links with the specialist Mother and Baby unit in Glasgow. This has contributed to improved clinical supervision and communication between the teams and better outcomes for patients and families.

The Infant Therapist is governed under integrated children's services. She has undertaken a training needs analysis within children's services.

We have two Nursery Nurses associated with the project and they have undertaken some preparation work to deliver an antenatal/postnatal group. They have undertaken training with Peep and the Solihull Programme and are linking closely with the Perinatal Team. They also plan to visit the Mother and Baby Unit at Leverndale to develop their knowledge and skills and learn from the specialist work that goes on there.

Patient and family engagement is a key strand of this work and a number of initiatives have commenced in relation to this. Practitioners from Lets Grow Kids are taking forward collaborative approaches from book bugs to attending soft play groups and developing surveys with

QR codes in an attempt to gather more anonymised feedback and to engage the voice of those with lived experience.

6.7 Learning Disabilities:

Argyll and Bute's integrated Learning Disability Services continue to provide support to approximately 377 people with either a Learning Disability or Autism via a range of services.

Phase 1 of the redesign of day care services is now complete and we are about to embark on phase 2 which focuses on our delivery models. Phase 1 focused on the reorganisation of our staffing structures and recruitment in relation to this has been very successful.

Work is also ongoing to review and expand our local core and cluster models in line with national policy (Coming Home Report).

In February 2021 the Scottish Government allocated a £20 million Community Living Change Fund to Integration Authorities via NHS Boards to:

- Reduce the delayed discharges of people with complex needs.
- Repatriate those people inappropriately placed outside of Scotland.
- Redesign the way services are provided for people with complex needs.

As part of the response to council on action taken the HSCP has utilised the allocation of £300,701 in the following way. The two key intentions are to use this money to:

- Employ a project manager on a fixed term contract for 18 months to review the care and support needs and arrangements of the 33 individuals who have been placed out with Argyll and Bute and to develop local pathways to support as many of these individuals as possible to return home.
- Support staff to undertake Positive Behaviour Support Qualifications and become PBS Champions.

Recruitment to the Project Manager post is underway.

6.8 Neurodevelopmental Conditions:

There is awareness of the lack of a robust infrastructure locally to provide assessment, treatment and support for those with neurodevelopmental conditions. There is an emerging trend nationally within Boards and Authorities to develop a Neurodevelopmental Pathway which is a specialist service responsible for the assessment of neurodevelopmental conditions such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

A business case is currently being to support the development of a Neurodevelopmental Pathway for Argyll and Bute. Officers have undertaken some horizon scanning to see what models and processes that other areas have produced and this work will shape proposals going forward.

6.9 Clinical Care and Governance (C&CG):

A review of the C&CG framework is being finalised, in support of partnership and integrated practice. The review is in its final stages and has been co-produced with professional Leads, Heads of Service and Clinical Care and Governance Committee members. The final Framework is expected by the end of September.

6.10 Care Homes:

A submission was compiled for the Scottish Government on Care Home sustainability and resilience given financial concerns around the sector. Locally day to day issues are managed through the care home assurance process.

Strategically the Care Homes and Housing Programme Board (under transformation) has completed an initial, independent architect's review of internal care homes and this needs to join with capacity planning and business cases for the future.

6.11 Right Care, Right Time (Unscheduled Care):

This is the main programme that reviews all unplanned care and in effect is a system wide approach across hospitals, community, acute that tries to avoid admission to hospital and support at home. The Chief Officer now chairs the Programme Board across Highland.

6.12 Adult Social Work:

Work continues to support the sustainability of Adult Social Work services reflecting national shortages of social workers. Work is progressing to redesign with Social Work Team Leaders to give assurance to the Chief Social Work Officer.

6.13 Care At Home:

Work is also continuing to support the sustainability of Care at Home services. This currently operates on a mixed economy of internal and commissioned services. A strategic approach is being taken to addressing this in the particular geography of Argyll and Bute.

6.14 Response function and island approaches

The response function for uninjured falls was successfully remodelled and funded for mainland areas. We are increasing focus for equity to develop such responses within island communities. This links with approaches with Coll and emerging discussions on Mull in terms of health and social care needs.

6.15 PLANNING, PERFORMANCE AND TECHNOLOGY WEST OF SCOTLAND REGIONAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE DELIVERY PLAN - 2022/23

The service work plan updates were presented to the Board in August noting the following areas of progress to regional service implementation and development this year:

- Major Trauma centre - Phased implementation of model for provision of hyper acute specialist rehabilitation.
- Vascular Services Programme - Deliver vascular centre at University Hospital Hairmyres (UHH).
- Cancer Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDT) - Roll out MDT FIT Improvement Programme across all MDTs in the region, building on learning from pilot.
- Ophthalmology Services overview report highlighting risks, issues and potential solutions required. The report will have a particular focus on glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy – March 23.
- Urology - Conclude the business case for robotic partial nephrectomy to inform funding decision by WoS NHS Boards for 2023/24.
- Interventional Radiology - Conclude the development of the Regional Interventional Radiology Service Model / Medical Model Proposal. Determine the regional support for this proposal and the implications for services/ Boards of the changes to provision – December 22.

6.16 Planning and Performance

The service is supporting and leading a number of streams of work including:

- Developing and implementing the new Integrated Performance Management Framework for the IJB by March 2023.
- Service reviews including future service model for Isle of Coll, Outpatient service redesign using the “Near Me” video conference service and digital appointing and service redesign. Supporting the Primary Care Mental Health Well-being plan, Highland Hospice remote advise support to clinicians. Agreeing pathway and service delivery redesign in ENT and Ophthalmology with NHS GG&C.
- Utilising SGHD waiting times initiative funding to boost service capacity, redesign processes and services to reduce waiting times in services as presented at the IJB in August 2022.

- Preparing the production of the IJB annual performance report 2021/22 presentation to IJB November 2022.
- Progressing the implementation of the HSCP Commissioning and Market Facilitation plan, report on partner co-production workshop June 2022 – “Think Home First” changing the hospital journey.
- The HSCP has been successful in obtaining grant funding of £465,000 to install up to 30 additional electric charge points to support the transition of the NHS fleet to zero emissions by 2025.

6.17 Technology:

A key aspect of integration of health and social care services is the development of a person-centred approach and a single health and care team. A single information system and ideally a shared record has been identified by front line staff as key operational requirement to achieve this from the inception of the HSCP.

The HSCP Digital Modernisation Strategy and action plan captures this aim and details how this will be achieved. The Strategy has now been approved and included in the HSCP Strategic plan 2022-2025. The following outlines the current status of some of the projects.

- Implementation of the ECLIPSE system replacing Carefirst for social work and community nursing and community AHP health services go live date from January 2023.
- Implementation of Orion Portal allowing primary care and hospital systems to view ECLIPSE community health record from January 2023.
- Scanning of all general health medical records at LIH Oban, 80% complete, commencing the scanning of such records in Mid Argyll and Cowal Community Hospital from October 2022.
- Federation of Microsoft teams and 365 e-mail between Council and NHS Highland to improve speed of communication via providing calendar sharing (free/busy, video, voice and message) by October 2022. The HSCP with Argyll and Bute Council and NHS Highland are participating/leading this national project rolled out to the rest of Scotland before winter.

The HSCP recent Digital Modernisation newsletter provides further information on the projects and programmes in place.

7. POLICY LEAD FOR PLANNING AND REGULATORY SERVICES – Councillor Kieron Green

7.1 Introduction:

This first report of my activities as Policy Lead for Planning and Regulatory Services covers from the election in May until August 2022. I would like to thank officers for their introductory briefing meetings in the numerous areas covered by this remit including Development Management, Development Planning, Building Standards, Regulatory Services and Biodiversity.

The Planning, Protective Services and Licensing Committee has continued to meet on a monthly basis, and the Licensing Board met in June and August. Additionally a number of Local Review Bodies have been convened, along with Community Council Conduct Review Panels and Appeals Committees as required. I have also attended the Clyde Regional Marine Planning Partnership which encompasses the eastern coastline of Argyll and Bute.

7.2 Development Management:

2,071 applications were submitted for 2021/22, higher than the pre-pandemic figure of 1,984 in 2019/20. First Quarter 2022/23 submissions are at similar levels to that seen last year.

Planning fee income received in the First Quarter 2022/23 was £76k above that forecast, with further increases to come from monies yet to be received for major developments and three Section 36/37 consultations.

Planning Performance Framework 11, covering the period 2021/22 was submitted to the Scottish Government in advance of their deadline of 7th September 2022, with the finalised report coming before committee this month.

7.3 Development Policy:

Reporters were appointed to conduct the examination of the Local Development Plan 2 in May. Most site visits have now been completed and the process is anticipated to be completed by December 2022.

Officers continue to engage with partners around developments at Dunbeg, and work is progressing on the Oban Strategic Development Framework as resources permit.

7.4 Building Standards:

Income levels are £94k above forecast including that received from high value applications and through commercialisation. 98.7% of

Building Warrant applications are being responded to within 20 days and 97.3% of Warrants and Amendments are being issued within six days of satisfactory information being received. I am delighted that the team has been recredited for the Customer Services Excellence (CSE) award covering 23 criteria, up from 19 previously.

At the Local Authority Building Standards Scotland (LABSS) Congress on Friday 16th September, Argyll and Bute Council received the Scottish Award for Outstanding Service and Commitment for Customer Focus. This is excellent news and recognises the very high standard and dedication shown by the team in delivering the Building Standards service across Argyll and Bute. This achievement is very well deserved and highlights that the team's contributions are recognised by peers at a national level. Congratulations and very well done to the whole team.

7.5 Regulatory Services:

Permanent signage advising of dangers of Blue-Green Algae has been installed at the higher risk Lochs - Avich, Awe, Eck, Nell and Lomond. Where blooms are reported in other lochs temporary notices are posted.

Avian Influenza has been closely monitored with the Council following UK Government Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs guidance in responding to this. Officers have contacted commercial poultry businesses to discuss the situation and their arrangements and contributed to the Scottish working group on this.

Ukrainian resettlement program property checks for the UK and Scottish Government Super-sponsor schemes ensure homes are suitable and safe. To minimise the impact on individual services, inspectors are being resourced from housing associations, and fire and rescue, together with environmental health, housing and estates staff.

7.6 Staffing:

Efforts to recruit to vacant posts across a number of areas continue, with recognition that until these are filled there will be an ongoing impact on service performance. As a result there is a growing backlog of planning applications with fewer being determined than are being validated.

7.7 Biodiversity:

New projects are commencing to restore peatland on Islay, following previous work at Achnacree Moss near Connel. This is being funded from Peatland Action and will also help address climate change.

Buglife B-Lines, which seeks to create a network of linked wildflower rich areas across Scotland has been completed for now within Argyll and Bute. Work by the Islay Natural History Trust covering Islay and Jura has now been linked to this national project.

There has been officer contribution to the consultation for the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and associated Delivery Plan. These are establishing measures to have achieved by 2030 and 2045 in relation to restoring native habitats, managing ecosystems, increasing health and resilience of species, and providing carbon sequestration.

8. POLICY LEAD FOR CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT SERVICES - Councillor Ross Moreland

8.1 Introduction: Following the elections held in May and the formation of the new Council, I have been appointed as the Policy Lead for Climate Change and Environment Services, which covers a range of Council Services. These range from waste management and amenity services to climate matters.

I had my first meeting with officers to discuss my role as Policy Lead in July, and continue to have monthly meetings where officers provide wide-ranging updates on matters within my remit.

8.2 Waste Management:

- The Council moved to a three-weekly general waste collection and two-weekly recycling service in 2016. This service delivery model was implemented to contribute towards increased recycling and also to make a financial saving.
- Collections take place from 48,000 households – with 18 bins lifted each minute of every working day. Overall, staff lift just short of three million bins per year across 236 collection routes.
- 3,386 commercial contracts are in place, and commercial collections are offered for general waste, recycling and glass. A number of commercial organisations offer commercial waste services in addition to the Council.
- 11 Civic Amenity and 98 Bring Sites are available across the council area.
- Across Argyll and Bute there are three waste disposal models in place: Islands Model; Mainland PPP Contract; and Helensburgh and Lomond Model.
- The Biodegradable Municipal Waste (BMW) landfill ban comes into force from December 2025. To deal with this the Council have in place a Waste Strategy and currently an Options Appraisal is being produced which will contribute towards a recommended solution for

waste disposal. A report will be presented to the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee in December 2022, detailing the full appraisal and proposed next steps. Officers will also be arranging an Elected Members seminar prior to the December Committee, which I would encourage Members to attend.

8.3 Grounds Maintenance:

- Grounds maintenance, including street cleansing operate to predetermined schedules with some reactive work being carried out to respond to issues such as fly tipping and removal of animal carcasses from the local road network.
- Scheduled spring and summer works have been carried out across all areas, grass cutting, weed killing etc. The bedding of plants has commenced where applicable.
- Grounds staff are often deployed to cut roadside verges which is an activity carried out in the main for road safety reasons.
- The council is also the litter authority for the trunk road (otherwise managed by Transport Scotland) under the Environmental Protection Act.
- The Council has 31 play parks across the area. The Scottish Government have awarded around £150k for improvements, which officers are reviewing in terms of implementing improvement works, and working alongside colleagues in Procurement. A further report is scheduled for the December ED&I Committee.

8.4 Electric Vehicle Charging (EVC):

- Good progress has been made with the Council's EVC Strategy. Charging has been in place for over a year now. In terms of public use, this continues to increase.
- The future installation/expansion plan – specific sites and high level criteria – has been to public consultation. The main headline from the consultation is that 75% of those responding support the expansion strategy.
- The Scottish Government has published a draft vision for EVC development which, among other things, includes a number of options for local authorities to consider in their own expansion plans, from a concession model to public private partnership to local authority-only plans. Officers are currently analysing these different models and how they would or could apply in Argyll and Bute. A further report on EVC will be presented to the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee in December 2022.

8.5 Climate Change:

- Addressing Climate Change is a global issue that is hugely reliant on partnership, collaboration and the actions of us all. No single organisation can tackle it in isolation and as a Council we need to show clear leadership and lead by example in all that we do.
- Officers provided two comprehensive reports to August Policy and Resources Committee on the Council's Carbon Emissions and Climate Investment, and the Decarbonisation Plan [Policy and Resources Committee - Climate Change Update](#)
- It is encouraging to see that there is a downward trend across the Council in terms of our annual carbon emissions footprint. The most recent national statistics show we have reduced our footprint by a third over the past six years, which is fantastic, but there is no room for complacency or de-acceleration. Officers monitor this activity and all departments across the Council, including us as Elected Members, have a responsibility to play in monitoring and reducing our carbon emissions.
- The relative sources of emissions by activity have remained fairly consistent for several years with processing municipal waste being responsible for around half of the entire emissions. Whilst overall all emission sources have reduced the proportions have remained relatively consistent. Future projects like Biodegradable Municipal Waste (BMW) Landfill Ban, switching to greener ways heat and power buildings and fleet replacement with low emissions vehicles will obviously have a significant impact on overall carbon footprint.
- The Council's Decarbonisation Plan was adopted in 2021 to support and align to the 'green recovery' from the pandemic and much progress has been made to delivering climate commitments. The Decarbonisation Plan sets a three-year framework to continue our climate journey and routemap to net zero.
- As Policy Lead with responsibility for Climate Change, I will be joining the Council's Climate Change Board. The Board is chaired by the Head of Commercial Services, and has representations from services across the Council, looking at how the Council will meet its obligations by 2045.
- Both Audit Scotland and our own Internal Audit team reviewed activities and actions relating to climate change in August 2022 and there was a 'high level of assurance' identified in terms of compliance with relevant statutory obligations and Acts.
- Officers are continuing to work with partners of the Community Planning Partnership and other Public Bodies in terms of producing a regional Adaptation Plan and scientific based net zero routemap.

8.6 Campbeltown Site Visit on 31st August:

Campbeltown Flood Prevention Scheme spans across the Policy Lead areas for Roads and Transportation and Environment and Climate Change. On 31st August the Policy Leads and local members met with the delivery team consisting of council officers, contractor Dawson WAM and consultant AECOM.



The scheme has a total value of over £15M, 80% of which is funded by Scottish Government and 20% by the Council.

We will take forward a number of different pieces of work to address the various causes of flooding in the town. The overall project is in five parts (the order these will be taken forward is being finalised).

9. POLICY LEAD FOR ISLANDS AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT- Councillor Liz McCabe

9.1 Introduction:

This is my initial Policy Lead Report since being appointed to the role of Policy Lead for Islands and Business Development. Since taking on this role myself and Deputy Lead Councillor Graham Hardie, have met with the Executive Director, together with the Head of Economic Growth and Regeneration Projects Manager to discuss all key service areas within my remit and to gain a further understanding of the current priorities and challenges. We meet every six weeks and they are available should I require any information during that time.

9.2 Islands:

The Scottish Government (SG) has introduced the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 and the National Islands Plan (NIP), which identifies 13 strategic objectives for action. In addition, the National Islands Plan Implementation Route Map 2020 – 2025 has also been developed. These documents set out how the Scottish Government (SG), local authorities and other public agencies will work together to improve outcomes for our island communities. As a consequence the Council has been required to provide additional officer resources to ensure engagement and collaboration with the SG, specifically the Islands team, to ensure that we maximise the opportunities for our islands from the NIP and NIP Route map as well as from the associated SG Islands budget that will be available until 2025. Officers sit on the SG National Islands Plan Delivery Group and feed into and work with the SG Islands team and across the council.

One of the SG Islands budget streams is specifically available to Scotland's six local authorities with islands. Please see below Islands Infrastructure fund 2021/22 which was provided directly to the local authority based on population and road length. On 17th December 2021, the SG confirmed Argyll and Bute Council's share of the funding was £740,000. The grant had to be drawn down before the end of March 2022. Grant contracts for ten community based projects were issued to enable drawdown of funding and officers are now working with them to draw down the individual grants.

Islands Programme 2022/23 – This year, rather than a direct allocation, the SG advised that it would be via a competitive process. The four bids listed below were the strongest and were submitted, and decisions on these are expected imminently.

1. Island Airports Resilience and Sustainability project – Coll and Colonsay - £300,000 IP grant request. This represents 100% of the costs.
2. Island Community Halls Digital Hubs – Islay, Iona, Tiree and Coll - £100,000 IP grant request. This represents 100% of the costs.
3. Tobermory Seawall and Railings project - £250,000 IP grant request. Total project costs is £450,000, remaining £200,000 being requested from PBI and CE 2022/23 allocation
4. Kerrera Road project - £357,577.32 IP grant request. Total project cost £557,577.32, £200,000 match from previous CE award. Total IP Grant request £1,007,577.32

Following the announcement that Islay was to be one of six Carbon Neutral Islands projects, officers are working with the Scottish

Government to understand what this means, what will be the next steps and associated timelines as well as resources.

9.3 CARS/THI Programmes:

Rothesay THI:

THI work in Rothesay has been running for three years now and is due to end in March 2023. It has been a great success with many properties benefiting. At the moment work is ongoing on a large building in Tower Street.

Following on from Rothesay THI (2011-2016), Rothesay TH is the largest of the four programmes, and is due to complete on 31st March 2023, by which date the combined investment made to the town centre of Rothesay will be £7m. Rothesay TH is funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund, Historic Environment Scotland, Argyll and Bute Council (£300k), Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Smarter Choices Smarter Places and LEADER. Work is ongoing to see the comprehensive repair of the final priority building at 69-71 Victoria Street, which is category C listed and in need of substantial repair.

Dunoon CARS:

Dunoon CARS is a £2m programme, due to complete on 31st March 2023. Dunoon CARS is funded by HES and the council (£500k). Work is out to tender for the final priority building at 106-110 Argyll Street and hoping to start works on site in September 2022.

Lochgilphead CARS:

Lochgilphead CARS is a £1.8m programme in its third year. It is funded by HES, the council (£400k) and Private Sector Housing Grant (£186k). Work is ongoing to commence the first priority building to site whilst other projects are being developed

Helensburgh CARS:

Helensburgh CARS is a £2.4m programme in its second year. This scheme is funded by HES, the council (£327k) and Private Sector Housing Grant (£173k). Work is ongoing to progress priority buildings, small repairs grants and shop front grants – two shop front grants have been applied for – training events have also taken place with one being planned for end September 2022.

In addition to the towns above the council has also delivered CARS Projects in Campbeltown and Inveraray. An expression of interest has been submitted to the New Heritage and Place Programme (which will be replacing CARS) for Tarbert.

CARS grants have helped to safeguard existing businesses, and new businesses have opened as a consequence of the regeneration, helping to create jobs within the community. Such investment has, and continues to change the physical appearance of our key town centres for the better, making them more attractive places in which to live, work, learn and do business.

9.4 CHARTS (Culture, Heritage and Arts Network for Argyll and Bute)

CHARTS have successfully recruited a part time Gaelic Culture Heritage and Arts Officer to input into delivery of CHARTS projects. CHARTS were also successful in their £40K application to the SG Rural and Islands Futures Division to grow creative networks on island communities by supporting youth opportunities and entrepreneurship. Creative individuals and organisations will be encouraged to develop new initiatives such as heritage trails and to develop innovative visitor experiences. A series of opportunities will also offer learning experiences for young people. The programme will include digital events featuring experts that will encourage the pooling of resources and knowledge.

As part of the project, a new Islands Officer role will be created and is now open for applications. This new post on the CHARTS staff team will consult arts and heritage practitioners and voluntary groups to promote and support development for island communities, with the aim of increasing interest in the region's valued island culture.

9.5 Film and Creative Industries:

Creative industries play a strategic role in Argyll and Bute's Economic Strategy. The outcome is 'to raise our profile as a centre for cultural activity and create a vibrant and sustainable creative sector.' This includes the distribution of a strategic events and festivals budget subject to available resources. Further to the last update the Policy and Resources Committee approved seven applications from across the area namely: Tiree Music Festival, Bute Noir, Argyllshire Gathering Sea Change, Powering Women in Film, Oban Winter Festival, Tarbert Music Festival and Helensburgh Festival of Lights. The Royal Mod which takes place in Oban in 2025 is also funded through this grants programme.

The Development and Economic Growth service has been providing a service to the screen industries since 1998 when the film service was initially part of the Scottish Highlands and Islands Film Commission. Core to the service is providing confidential advice and support as a "one stop shop" to the industry through a single point of contact within the Economic Development section. The "one stop shop" supports the production's needs in many ways including, liaising with other council

departments (for road closures, access to land/property including car parks etc.), providing locations to film enquiries, land ownership queries, local knowledge and connecting productions to local services such as Gaelic speakers and community groups. July alone saw ten enquiries and seven productions filming across the area.

9.6 Business Gateway:

COVID-19 Response: Two new business support schemes were launched on 19th May 2022 using the Local Authority COVID Economic Recovery funding, administered by the Business Gateway team.

The Small Business Development Grant 2022 provides grants to existing businesses of up to £3,000 (75% of eligible costs). As of 9th June 2022, five applications have been received - two were approved, one rejected and two pending decision.

The Business Start-up Grant 2022 provides grants to new start businesses of up to £3,000 (paid in 3 instalments). As of 9th June, two applications have been received: one was approved, one pending decision. Officers are working with colleagues in Projects and Regeneration to design an uplift to the above schemes, to provide additional support in areas of greatest need. This will be piloted in Campbeltown, Dunoon and Bute.

Uptake of both new funds using the Local Authority COVID Economic Recovery Fund money has been good following promotion in June. As of 17th August, 50% of the Start-up grant allocation has been committed (20 grants approved) and 29% of the Development grant allocation (21 grants approved). At this rate, both funds will be fully committed in advance of year-end.

The pilot LACER Top-up is now live and a process agreed for referrals to the Projects and Regeneration team for this, for clients with premises in Campbeltown, Dunoon, Bute and mid Argyll.

Business Gateway Local Growth Accelerator Programme (LGAP): The Scottish Government approved a request to extend delivery of the programme to March 2023, with the final claim due by September 2023.

Key stats for Business Gateway's first quarter:

- 162 enquiries handled
- 145 Business Advisor meetings (by phone or email)
- 124 existing businesses supported

- 27 new start-ups supported
- 18 one-hour specialist advice sessions delivered
- 103 attendees from Argyll and Bute at national webinars
- Rolling 12-month customer satisfaction rates at 92% compared to national level of 82%

9.7 Employability Team Activity:

Fair Start Scotland: (for 16 to 67-year-olds) - 13 additional starts have signed up to Fair Start Scotland, bringing the total to 302 participants since the service commenced (67 Helensburgh, 72 Campbeltown, 34 Rothesay, 49 Dunoon and 80 Oban).

Argyll and Bute Employer Recruitment and Training Incentive (ABERTI): (for 16 to 67 year olds) - Applications for this fund ceased at 31st March. A total of 37 participants and 28 employers were supported. To date 29 participants have completed the 52-week programme and this has funded a total of 91 people into work. 58 of these job starts have occurred during the COVID-19 period.

No One Left Behind - Employer Recruitment Incentives (ERIs) 25+ Years: Applications are now invited in respect of the ERIs of up to £6,000 per person. This allows unemployed people aged 25 and over the opportunity to move into permanent or a fixed term employment contracts of up to 18 months or more. This funding has attracted two employers who have recruited one employee each utilising this funding. A further eight places remain. Our Employer Engagement Worker continues to promote this funding.

Given the success of the Young Person's Guarantee pre-employability support programme delivered by three of our Local Employability Partners, we have extended this support to include 46 No One Left Behind participants aged 25 and over. Up to 30th June 2022 a total of 23 participants aged over-25 have been supported. Of these, one is in employment and the rest continue to receive support. Partners have encountered a lack of referrals in this age group.

Parental Employability Support Fund (PESF) - Employer Recruitment Incentives (ERIs) 25+ Years: Applications are now invited in respect of the ERIs of up to £6,000 per person. This allows unemployed people aged 25 and over the opportunity to move into permanent or a fixed term employment contracts of up to 18 months or more. To date no one has accessed this funding, the one place previously reserved did not proceed as planned. All ten places remain available, our PESF Engagement Workers continue to promote this funding to parents they support.

9.8 Digital:

The £463m Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband (DSSB) programme has connected over 950,600 premises to fibre broadband – over 110,000 premises more than originally anticipated. 95% of premises across Scotland are now able to access fibre broadband – up from just 59% in 2014.

Due to the rurality of Argyll and Bute and the dispersed population we are the fourth lowest of Scotland's 32 local authorities. It has always been the Scottish Government's aim to provide every premise in Scotland with access to Superfast Broadband (SFB) so the Reaching 100% (R100) was developed and supported by a £600M commitment to connect the final 5%. Scotland was split into three procurement lots - South, Central and North. Most of Argyll and Bute is in the North Lot with most of Helensburgh and Lomond in the Central Lot.

Across Argyll and Bute there are 8,625 premises in the main contract with a further 4,016 eligible for SBVS, however a number of the premises not in scope may be connected as a result of "overspill" or commercial deployment. All of these 8,625 premises are to get a Fibre to the Premise (FTTP). This is true fibre broadband. Over the next few years people will be migrated from a FTTC connection to an FTTP connection as it becomes available.

Current stats:

- 93.7% Argyll and Bute premises connected to the fibre network
- 85.2% can access speeds >30Mbps
- 0.8% are between 24 and 30 Mbps
- 2.6% are between 15 and 24 Mbps
- 1.9% are between 10 and 15Mbps
- 6.2% are between 2 and 10Mbps
- 3.4% are below 2Mbps
- Full Fibre availability is currently at 4.2%

10. CONCLUSION

- 10.1** This report provides members with an update on each of the Policy Lead portfolios. Policy Lead Councillors will be happy to discuss any particular issues with colleagues as required.

Argyll and Bute Council – Policy Lead Councillors Report – 21st September 2022

For further information please contact Aileen McNicol, Leadership Support and Member Services Manager, telephone 01546 604014 or email aileen.mcnicol@argyll-bute.gov.uk