

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUTE AND COWAL AREA COMMITTEE HELD ON A
HYBRID BASIS IN THE QUEEN'S HALL, DUNOON AND BY MICROSOFT TEAM
ON TUESDAY, 7 MARCH 2023**

Present: Councillor Liz McCabe (Chair)

Councillor Gordon Blair	Councillor Yvonne McNeilly
Councillor Audrey Forrest	Councillor Ross Moreland
Councillor Daniel Hampsey	Councillor William Sinclair
Councillor Reeni Kennedy-Boyle	Councillor Peter Wallace

Attending: Stuart McLean, Committee Manager
Mark Calder, Project Manager
Douglas Whyte, Housing Strategy Team Lead
PC Eddie McGunnigal, Police Scotland
David Mitchell, Head Teacher, Dunoon Grammar School
Alex Johnson, Senior Depute Head Teacher, Dunoon Grammar School
Salma Murray, Dunoon Grammar School
Charlotte Fish, Dunoon Grammar School
Emma Bancks, Dunoon Grammar School
Adam Smith, Dunoon Grammar School
Dale Somerville, Depute Head Teacher, Rothesay Joint Campus
Holly Reid, Rothesay Joint Campus
Kitti Carpenter, Rothesay Joint Campus
Ewan McMillan, Rothesay Joint Campus

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence intimated.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest intimated.

3. MINUTES

(a) Bute and Cowal Area Committee - 6 December 2022

The Minutes of the meeting of the Bute and Cowal Area Committee, held on 6 December 2022 were approved as a correct record.

(b) Bute and Cowal Area Community Planning Group - 7 February 2023

The Minutes of the meeting of the Bute and Cowal Area Community Planning Group, held on 7 February 2023 were noted.

(c) Cowal Transport Forum - 14 February 2023

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cowal Transport Forum, held on 14 February 2023 were noted.

The Chair ruled, and the Area Committee agreed, to a variation in the order of business. The minute reflects the order in which items were discussed.

4. PUPIL VOICE

The Committee gave consideration to a verbal update from Pupils from Dunoon Grammar School and Rothesay Joint Campus who outlined aspects of their learning journeys over the years.

Salma Murray, an S2 student from Dunoon Grammar School spoke of her transition from Primary to Secondary School which was done virtually due to Covid restrictions.

Charlotte Fish, an S3 pupil from Dunoon Grammar School spoke of her School trip to rural Tanzania in which she and 16 other pupils volunteered in the Community. Charlotte highlighted that it was an eye-opening experience, particularly the lack of facilities within the Schools.

S5 School Captains Emma Banks and Adam Smith from Dunoon Grammar School spoke of their experiences within the Senior School and their chosen career pathways.

Holly Reid, an S6 pupil from Rothesay Joint Campus spoke of her experience learning online and independently which she felt had prepared her well for the future.

S5 Pupil Ewan McMillan from Rothesay Joint Campus spoke of his plan to leave school at the end of S5 year and attend College to study to become a Gamekeeper. Ewan further advised that in preparation for this he had undertaken a one week summer placement with a Gamekeeper.

Kitti Carpenter, an S5 student from Rothesay Joint Campus spoke of her transition from Primary to Secondary School and spoke of the Children and Young People Foundation Apprenticeship which she is currently studying and highlighted her interest in continuing to study Childcare in College in the future.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chair took the opportunity to thank the pupils for taking time out of their day to attend and wished them well in their future endeavours.

Decision

The Bute and Cowal Area Committee considered and noted the information provided.

(Reference: Verbal Presentation by Pupil representatives from Dunoon Grammar School and Rothesay Joint Campus)

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Question from Kirstie Reid, Strachur Community Council

Kirstie Reid, Strachur Community Council submitted the following question, which was read out by the Committee Manager:-

We have been told there are currently 12 people on Argyll & Bute Council's home waiting list whose first choice is Strachur.

Manse Gardens in Strachur is classified as amenity housing and consists of 21 properties. Only 7 of these are currently occupied and the rest have been vacant for the past few years.

The Trust Housing Association, who own Manse Gardens, are investigating the possibility of redeveloping the properties to make them more acceptable to potential tenants.

Does Argyll & Bute Council support the redevelopment of Manse Gardens and, if they do, what are they doing to ensure that this redevelopment goes ahead.

The Committee Manager delivered a response on behalf the Housing Strategy Team Lead as follows:-

The short answer is yes, the Council is supportive of the redevelopment of Manse Gardens to meet identified housing need and demand.

The Council has met with Trust Housing Association (HA) to discuss Manse Gardens and we are meeting with the Scottish Government to discuss funding options. It is not as straightforward as getting Capital Grant from the Scottish Government to build new houses as the project is a reconfiguration of an existing Trust HA asset.

Question from Archie Reid, Strachur Community Council

Archie Reid, Strachur Community Council submitted the following question, which was read out by the Committee Manager:-

As with many Community Councils we at Strachur Community Council are aware of the high number of patients that now receive Care in the Community and are concerned about the lack of care at home staff, we appreciate that this a nationwide issue but wonder what Argyll and Bute Council is doing to encourage people into the area to take this form of work.

The Committee Manager delivered a response on behalf the Health and Social Care Partnership as follows:-

All Care at Home providers are promoting opportunities in social care. Carrgomm, who provide support in this rural area note good responses to recruitment and are actively recruiting by fast tracking applications.

We are actively working with Human Resources and the Economic Development Team targeting opportunities in key areas especially those affected by depopulation.

The Integration Joint Board (IJB) continues to note workforce as a strategic risk, the strategic workforce plan is monitored on a 6 monthly basis with work undertaken reported through the public papers of the IJB.

Question from Hunters Quay Community Council

Hunters Quay Community Council submitted the following question, which was read out by the Committee Manager:-

Ongoing issues with traffic queuing on the main road waiting to board a Western ferry at the Hunters Quay terminal. I understand that there is a bit of a blame situation via the Council and Western Ferries re who pays?

The situation is going to get worse with one of Scotland biggest and now award winning holiday park companies getting bigger and spending millions. Hunters Quay Community Council are concerned about speeding, and want flashing 30mph signs and also queuing traffic signs.

The Project Manager advised that a Traffic Regulation Order was promoted at Hunters Quay separately from the queuing issue and advised that as part of that process a speed and volume survey was undertaken which found vehicle speed level acceptable, adding that at Council operated ferry sites they ensure that there is no queuing on public road.

Question from Andrew Widdows

Andrew Widdows submitted the following question, which was read out by the Committee Manager:-

Who in the Council and/or local business leaders is responsible and how are they directly benefitting by refusing to allow a budget supermarket in Dunoon during a cost of living crisis while local supermarkets are allowed to increase prices daily and therefore are literally squeezing the life out of the poorest people in our town?"

I would also hereby request that minutes of the meeting are made available to myself and others upon request. I might also add that this question continuously draws a blank from the council and one way or another I will find out the answers to this question and make the results public and publicly embarrass those responsible if it isn't discussed at the meeting.

The Committee Manager assured elected members and members of the Public that the agenda item is Public Question Time and as such all public questions whether submitted in advance or raised at the meeting will always be recorded and added that there has never been an instance nor will there ever be an instance where questions submitted will not be discussed or recorded at the meeting.

The Committee Manager advised that on receiving this question he visited the planning portal and there are no outstanding planning applications regarding this matter. He added that Policy Planners also confirmed that no queries had been received from budget supermarkets coming to Dunoon and colleagues in Economic Development also confirmed that no supermarkets, budget or otherwise had expressed any interest in coming to Dunoon.

Questions from Murray Doyle

I'd like to enquire whether the Serpentine Road, Rothesay, was considered as part of the Capital budget repair program for this year? If not, what was the rationale of leaving it out, I had requested on behalf of local cycling club Bute Wheelers for it be included in this year's repair program? and why would the likes of the road out to Glecknabae be included and Serpentine not?

I'd also like to enquire about maintenance required to sections of A844, Bute's major A road, that is in very poor condition. I did enquire in an email earlier this year, officers mentioned that these issues would be noted and looked at. Mr Doyle noted that there is a section of road between Meikle Grenach and A844 listed in the capital spend draft, which in his opinion looks to be in very good condition, and wondered if the aforementioned sections of A844 could benefit from this allocated budget instead?

The Project Manager advised that the Council have £8M for the roads Capital Programme but there is not enough money to make the roads to the standards wanted. The Project Manager advised that he would provide Mr Doyle with information on how decisions are made for the Roads Capital Programme.

Questions from Jennifer Wilson

Jennifer Wilson submitted the following question, which was read out by the Committee Manager:-

What policy do they have in place to tackle the scourge of derelict properties?

In Port Bannatyne on the Isle of Bute, specifically Buckingham Terrace (12, 14 and 16 Castle Street) and No. 21 Castle Street are derelict properties within a residential area. Can you confirm if these buildings have been removed from the Council Tax Register pending redevelopment and, if so, for how long has this been the case?

Buckingham Terrace, I understand, was bought via a compulsory purchase order by the Isle of Bute Housing Association in the late 1990's to provide affordable housing locally, however, this was never completed. During and since that period can you confirm whether any grants (public money) have been paid out for redevelopment and the total amount paid out for redevelopment, to whom and dates. Were any timescales given to complete redevelopment works?

No. 21 Castle Street is a derelict building covered entirely in scaffolding and advertising sheets. Can you confirm whether a grant has been made available for redevelopment of this building and, if so, has a timescale been given for completion of this work.

Councillor McCabe advised that the Buckingham Terrace property is owned by a private landlord and added that she had to contact them in the past to get the roof made safe with it lying derelict for many years.

The Housing Strategy Team Lead advised that the Council's general approach is through the Area Property Action Group and added that a Scheme of Assistance details advice and information for Private Owners.

6. AREA PERFORMANCE REPORT - FQ3 2022/23

The Committee gave consideration to the Area Performance Report for financial quarter 3 of 2022/23 (October to December 2022) which illustrated the agreed performance measures for this period.

Decision

The Bute and Cowal Area Committee:-

1. noted and considered the performance and supporting commentary as presented;
2. noted that upon receipt of the Quarterly Performance Report the Area Committee should contact either the Responsible Named Officer or Sonya Thomas with any queries; and

3. noted that work is ongoing and to respond to Sonya Thomas with requests or comments regarding the layout and format of the Performance Report and Scorecard.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Customer Support Services, dated 8 February 2023, submitted)

7. POLICE SCOTLAND ROADS UPDATE

Consideration was given to a roads update by Sergeant Eddie McGunnigal, Police Scotland. Sergeant McGunnigal highlighted that he had asked the Council to undertake speeding surveys, confirming that on receipt of these surveys Police Scotland will target speeding 'hot spots'. He advised that Police Scotland had received very few speeding complaints from residents, adding that most reports come from Community Councils meetings he attends, he encouraged people to report any speeding so that they can target the area. Sergeant McGunnigal highlighted that Community Speed Watch initiative is being developed and speed signage for wheelie bins has been purchased which the Youth Volunteers will be distributing.

Decision

The Bute and Cowal Area Committee considered and noted the information provided.

(Reference: Verbal Update by Sergeant Eddie McGunnigal, Police Scotland)

8. ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES UPDATE

The Committee gave consideration to a report which provided an update on the recent activities of Roads and Infrastructure Services and highlighted works being undertaken which were relevant to Bute and Cowal area.

Decision

The Bute and Cowal Area Committee:

1. considered and noted the contents of the report; and
2. supported the commitment made by the Council Leader during a recent meeting of the Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands Area Committee regarding future Member engagement in advance of developing the Roads Reconstruction Capital Programme.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services, dated January 2023, submitted)

9. HOUSING SERVICES ACTIVITY UPDATE - STRATEGIC HOUSING INVESTMENT PLAN (SHIP) - ANNUAL UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report which provided an update on Housing Services activity and the delivery of the Local Housing Strategy within the Bute and Cowal area.

Decision

The Bute and Cowal Area Committee considered and noted the contents of the report.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth, dated January 2023, submitted)

10. DRAFT BUTE AND COWAL AREA COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

The Bute and Cowal Area Committee workplan was before members for information.

Decision

The Bute and Cowal Committee noted the contents of the workplan.

(Reference: Bute and Cowal Area Committee workplan, dated 7 March 2023)

11. LAMONT BEQUEST AWARD RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing information regarding two applications that had been received for support from the Lamont Bequest.

Decision

The Bute and Cowal Area Committee agreed to award £100 to the family applicant and £50 to the individual applicant who met the criteria for support from the Lamont Bequest.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support dated February 2023, submitted)