

Corporate Plan

2023 - 2027



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1. Welcome

This Corporate Plan outlines our vision and strategic direction for the coming years. It embodies our shared aspirations, guiding principles, the £7m Priorities Investment Fund and the actions required to fulfil our vision of a prosperous, inclusive, and sustainable Argyll and Bute.

The landscape in which we deliver our services remains dynamic and ever changing. We will continue to transform how we work so that we can deliver the services our communities need and the prosperity the future of Argyll and Bute depends upon. The considerable challenges we identified in our previous corporate plan remain unchanged – declining funding for our services, economic dependence on the public sector, and an ageing population.

Central to our corporate plan is partnership. We recognise that by working together with our partners, stakeholders, and local communities, we can achieve far more than we could ever accomplish in isolation. We value the input and expertise of our diverse community, for it is through active engagement and dialogue that we can build a brighter future for Argyll and Bute.

The Corporate Plan is not inclusive of all Council activity and focusses on the priorities for the Council for the next four years. Detail on how we will deliver these priorities and measure progress are set out in the Annual Business Plan.

As we embark on this transformative journey together, it is crucial that we remain adaptable and responsive to the evolving needs and challenges of our time. Our corporate plan serves as a compass, guiding our decision-making processes and ensuring that our efforts are aligned with our strategic objectives. We are committed to delivering high-quality services, enhancing infrastructure, and nurturing a vibrant economy that creates opportunities for all.



Councillor Robin Currie
Leader of Argyll and Bute Council



Pippa Milne
Chief Executive

2. Our Vision

We have a vision for a successful, vibrant Argyll and Bute with a growing population and a thriving economy. A place where people want to come to live, to work and to do business as a result of action to combat and reverse decline. We see the potential for thriving local economies that support our rich mix of remote, rural and island communities. Communities which also benefit from services that work – where we make the best use of all of our resources so that our core business as a council is as effective as possible.

We want Argyll and Bute's communities to be on a level playing field with others around the country – that is why we will campaign for equity for our communities on issues like fair funding, coping with challenges like the cost of living, and securing digital access and physical access to other opportunities. We will do our utmost to ensure that local voices and needs are taken into account in national decision-making.

We recognise that the cost of living crisis will affect countless households in Argyll and Bute. We want to play a part in responding to that and mitigating the impact on our communities' overall wellbeing and future success.

We see our council and our communities working together in playing our part and making our contributions to wider priorities like climate change, economic growth, strong local governance and more – using our strong track record in partnership working, at all levels, to secure the best possible outcomes.

Our Priorities for the Council Term 2022 to 2027 are shaped around delivering this vision for Argyll and Bute, our people, our success and our future.

Argyll and Bute Council, 24 November 2022

3. Our Profile

Argyll and Bute Facts – Place

POPULATION

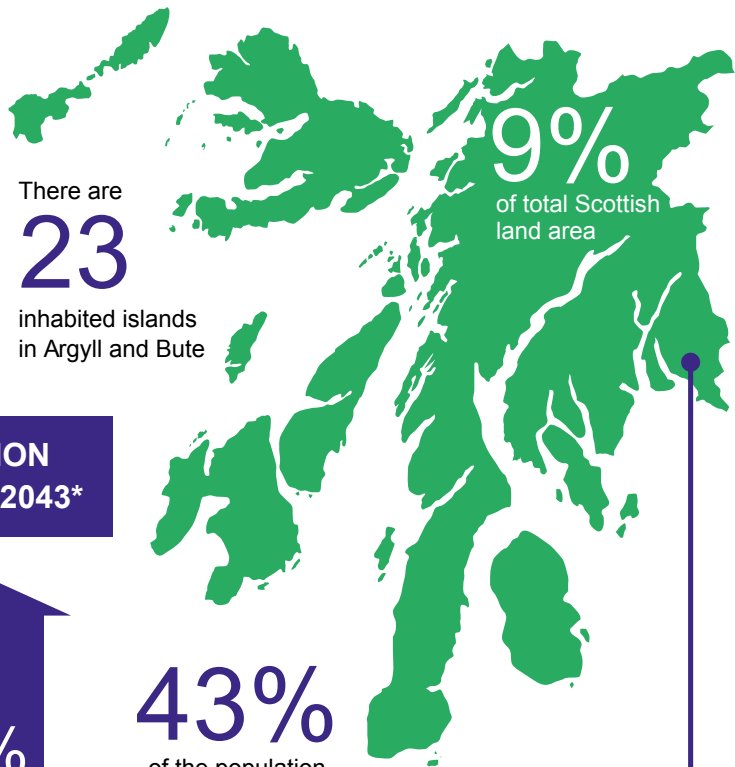


86,130

Giving a population density of approximately 12 people per square kilometre which is the third lowest in Scotland

Islands account for **17%** of the population

Argyll and Bute covers over **2,668** square miles and is the second largest local authority by area in Scotland



There are **23** inhabited islands in Argyll and Bute

9% of total Scottish land area

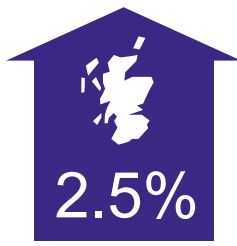
43% of the population are classed as living in remote rural areas

The largest settlement is **Helensburgh** with a population of **13,320** people

ARGYLL AND BUTE POPULATION ESTIMATE BETWEEN 2018 AND 2043*



Argyll and Bute population predicted to **drop by 14.8%**



Scotland is predicted to **rise by 2.5%** over the same period

This was mainly driven by a decline in the **25-44** age group

This is the **third largest decline** in population by a council area in Scotland

*National Records of Scotland

4. Our Place

The public sector is operating in a dynamic landscape which brings with it many challenges. The operations of the Council so far have risen to the challenge of meeting substantial savings and to date have made over £70million in recurring savings since 2010-2011. This equates to around 26% of the total budget and with each passing year it becomes more difficult to identify savings. There is therefore a need to develop the organisation to be in a position to continue to meet the financial, policy and societal challenges ahead.

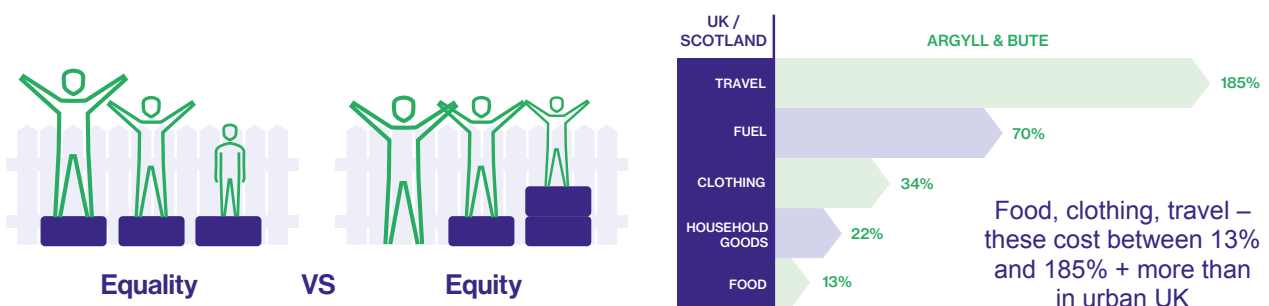
Assuming public sector finance will continue to fall (in real terms and against a background of high inflation and demands for increased pay) and demands for services will increase, the Scottish and Local Governments are seeking to reform the public sector to improve outcomes whilst reducing costs.

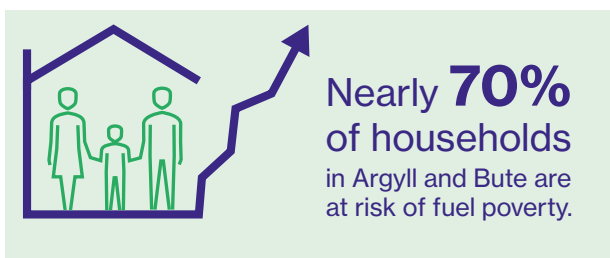
Cost of Living

The ongoing cost of living crisis in the UK is felt particularly hard in rural and remote rural areas. Argyll and Bute has;

- The highest percentage of people living in remote rural areas of all mainland councils.
- The third lowest median pay rate of all Scottish Local Authorities
- Ranked most vulnerable to post COVID economic shock.

The on-costs of living in our communities range from 13% to 185% above costs in urban UK areas. Nearly 70% of all households in Argyll and Bute are at risk of fuel poverty or extreme fuel poverty.





The price cap announcement does not help Argyll and Bute – the cost of heating homes here is estimated to be **more than double** the price cap figure for an average household.



To avoid fuel poverty an average all-electric household would need an **income of at least £72,200 per annum, or to avoid extreme fuel poverty £39,600**; this compares to a median household income of just under £33,000 (and excludes impact of increased costs elsewhere such as food).

Food, clothing, travel – these cost between **13% and 185% + more than in urban UK** however **disposable income** in Argyll and Bute is **10% less** than the UK average.

Tackling Poverty

The council's Financial Inclusion and Advice Group brings together council services and support agencies. To make it as easy as possible for people to get support when they need it, the council provides a 'one-stop-shop' of information on our website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/advice-services to provide key information and also help and information on money saving initiatives such as cheaper deals for internet connection and the availability of warm spaces provide by other organisations.

The Council's leadership will continue to lobby the government on the factors that are affecting our citizens and businesses.

Transform our Economy through a Just Transition to Deliver Net Zero

We recognise climate change as one of the biggest threats to communities. Argyll and Bute Council has reduced its carbon emissions by 27% over the past 5 years and is investing £1.2m to save energy. We are committed to driving down further our own carbon emissions, achieving net zero by 2045 and exceeding our target of a 75% reduction by 2030, building on our good track record in relation to combatting climate change, through the delivery of our Decarbonisation Plan.

However, we cannot do this alone and will work with the Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership to develop a Climate Change Strategy for the region as a whole.

Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership

The Community Planning Partnerships (CPP) brings together local public services with communities they serve, and provides a focus for partnership working that targets specific local circumstances. Partners work together to improve local services and to ensure that they meet the needs of local people, especially those who need the services most.

The Argyll and Bute CPP has completed its community engagement on identifying the priorities for the next 10 years (2023 - 2033) and these are:

1. Housing
2. Transport
3. Community wealth building¹

A plan on how the CPP will seek to address these priorities will emerge in due course. Argyll and Bute Council will continue to be a leading partner in the partnership and ensure that the priorities of the CPP and the Council are aligned.

1. Community wealth building; based on the premise that traditional economic development practice and developer-led regeneration are failing to address the economic challenges of our time, Community Wealth Building is a person centred approach to local economic development which redirects wealth back into the local economy and places control and benefits into the hands of local people.

5. Our Priorities to Support Delivery Of Our Vision

People and Places – our core business as a council

EDUCATION



Attaining and achieving at all stages

We will improve outcomes for our children and young people by:

- Improving educational attainment, achievement and outcomes for young people within Argyll and Bute to Scotland's upper-quartile.
- Educational Attainment and Wider Achievement – Developing the use of all the available data and intelligence on each of our educational establishments to focus on and drive improvement, achieving our stretch aims (goals to improve opportunities and outcomes for young people) as agreed with the Scottish Government.
- Developing a broader curriculum offer to augment current opportunities with a range of wider achievement awards and accreditations. This will have a positive impact on leaver destinations through inclusive, skills-based programmes in each secondary school.
- Continuing to promote the teaching and use of Gaelic as set out in the council's emerging Gaelic Plan for 2023.

Learning Estate – now and in the future

We will ensure our schools are effective, sustainable learning environments by:

- Progressing a bid to the Scottish Government to establish a new campus on Mull.
- Develop the next generation of capital investment plan and priorities for our school estate.

We will continue to support children and young people with additional needs

Continuing to support all of our children and young people with additional support needs across Argyll and Bute, within our schools and other service areas by:

- Reducing the number of children and young people who have to travel outwith the area to access services by enhancing provision where gaps currently exist.
- Working to improve and secure equity of specialist provision across Argyll and Bute by addressing gaps where they exist across the education estate.
- Maintaining the current staffing complement who support this work, in line with our nurture stretch aim agreed with Scottish Government.

ROADS, AMENITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE



Roads and pathways

We will support connections to, from and within Argyll and Bute by:

- Reviewing our approach to road repair prioritisation to make the most effective use of resources in the context of budget pressures and to achieve the best possible balance in terms of strategic, operational and member input.
- Creating a plan, by 2025, for further active travel routes across Argyll and Bute and completing the Helensburgh-Dumbarton cycle path by 2027.
- Initiating plans for a 20mph speed limit by working in partnership, and in line with national legislation, on the rollout and delivery of a 20mph limit where that will work best for our communities.
- Completing a review of parking and traffic management/enforcement to reshape arrangements that reflect community needs and ambitions.

Piers and Harbours

In recognition of the importance of marine connections to and from our island and mainland communities, our role in maintaining these links will include:

- Upgrading the council's harbour infrastructure to ensure it is capable of receiving existing and planned new ferries (including at Craignure, Fionnphort/Ruahaich, Port Askaig, Dunoon, Kilcreggan and Campbeltown).
- Creating a new municipal harbour authority in Oban, ensuring that proposals are submitted to Scottish ministers as soon as possible following consideration by the Harbour Board in December 2022, and putting preparations in place to commence operations upon approval by ministers.
- Seeking funding for the procurement of new council-operated vessels including Islay/Jura, Luining and Easdale.
- Finalising the demand, economic impact and business case assessment for the Helensburgh Pier strategy in 2023.

Waste and recycling services

We will reduce our carbon emissions by:

- Delivering a solution that enables the council to divert its biodegradable waste from landfill, within 2026, while seeking a short term derogation to allow the PPP contract to expire.
- Encouraging households to increase use of recycling services to reach at least the Scottish average (with service exploring options to stretch targets where possible)

Housing

Argyll and Bute has a good track record in delivering affordable homes but to support our drive to grow the population, we need to do more. We will seek to increase availability of all types of housing, including affordable homes, by:

- Supporting the provision of over 1,000 affordable homes by 2027 (247 in 2022/23 plus at least 750 additional homes over the life of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan).
- Exploring additional options to increase the availability of all tenures of housing – mid market rents, shared equity, affordable by design and other developments – in the area.
- Considering the implementation of short term lets control zones to open up more housing availability.
- Continuing to support households to improve energy efficiency and tackle rising living costs through annual investment through and implementation of the Home Energy Efficiency Programme in Argyll and Bute.
- Developing the opportunity for the council to become a Rural Housing Body – where it would be more directly involved in the delivery of housing or land for housing.

Communities

We will build up and strengthen our communities as attractive, vibrant places to live, work and do business by:

- Creating area-based plans for all our communities, reflecting investment opportunities and local service prioritisation.
- Seeking ways of securing more community wealth building opportunities across Argyll and Bute and supporting communities to gain maximum benefit from developments in their area.
- Seeking to maximise scope for community involvement and participation, including exploring the role that community transfers can play.

Potential and Growth – turning opportunities into reality

We believe Argyll and Bute has tremendous potential and many opportunities. To turn those into reality, we need to make assets work now while we plan for and invest in the future. We will do this by:

Economic Development – investing in the future

- Achieving sign-off of the Rural Growth Deal business and cases and begin delivering priority projects like The Marine Industry Training Centre, UAV Drone Hub and Seaweed Academy.
- Securing Levelling Up funding for projects, including Argyll and Bute Western Seaboard Marine Gateways Initiative, targeting the Royal Hotel in Rothesay and Dunoon’s historic pier; and Connected Argyll and Bute – Whisky Islands; and Lorn Economic Growth Zone which targets a package of transport infrastructure improvements.
- Completing site development of Helensburgh Waterfront project securing long-term economic benefit and provision of a public skateboard facility
- Delivering the £15m Campbeltown Flood Prevention Scheme.
- Completing the Ardrishaig Public Realm Project.
- Driving forward additional strategic economic development projects including progression of the Dunbeg housing, commercial and infrastructure projects and the North Lorn Economic Growth Zone through the Lorn Arc TIF scheme.
- Delivering and completing more Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) Projects – in Dunoon, Lochgilphead, Tarbert and Helensburgh.
- Maximising community economic and employment opportunities from the Islay Scotwind offshore wind project.
- Preparing an options appraisal for implementation of a transient visitor levy.

Commercial Services – making assets work now

- Increasing commercial development of business and retail space, including the Kilmory Industrial Park, and identifying other opportunities wherever possible.
- Exploring additional commercial opportunities at Oban Airport.
- Delivering the Modern Workspace Project, rationalising the council estate and facilitating hybrid working solutions.
- Leading the development and creation of Craigendoran Business Park as a business, engineering and innovation hub.

- Exploring opportunities for sharing services where possible – both to help grow our income through providing our expertise, and enhancing service delivery in communities where we need to source options from elsewhere.
- Driving down further our own carbon emissions, achieving net zero by 2045 and exceeding our target of a 75% reduction by 2030, building on our good track record in relation to combatting climate change, through the delivery of our Decarbonisation Plan
- Securing Carbon Literate Organisation status by the end of 2023, including completion of the rollout of carbon literacy training to all councillors.

Partnership and Action - everyone has a part to play in Argyll and Bute's success

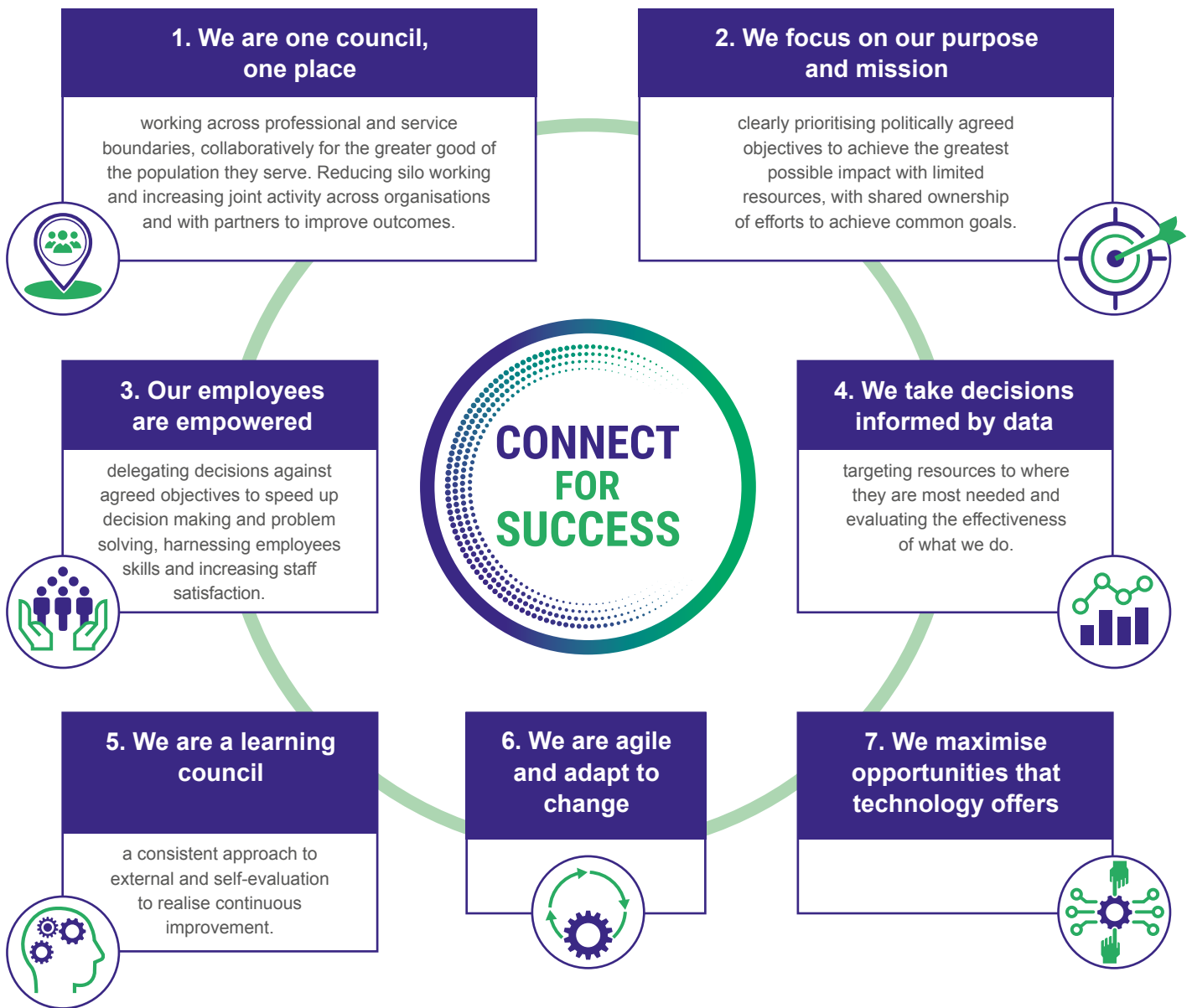
In our Priorities for the Council Term 2022 to 2027, we have set out our areas for action to deliver our vision for Argyll and Bute. There are elements of that vision which require action from other agencies at all levels – from our communities right up to national government. We will commit to working in partnership wherever we need to as well as calling on others, with responsibility, to take the action that is required to safeguard Argyll and Bute's success. This will include:

- Continuing to build up our strong track record in partnership working and seeking new ways of working with communities, other organisations, and the third and private sectors.
- Continuing to work in partnership with further education and higher education providers in Argyll and Bute to ensure young people have access to high quality innovative educational opportunities that support local employers and the Argyll economy.
- Lobbying for support for the higher-than-average energy costs faced by Argyll and Bute communities.
- Pressing the case for retaining delivery of care services locally, where community knowledge, relationships and experience are best placed to identify and meet local needs and local accountability.
- Calling for funding support to tackle challenges in local social care delivery – including recruitment, retention and development of care staff in communities – rather than centralisation of services.
- Continuing to call for planning, construction and opening of the replacement route at the Rest and Be Thankful within the life of the this Scottish Parliament

- Working in partnership with the Rothesay Pavilion Charity Trust to lobby for funding to complete the refurbishment of the Pavilion.
- Seeking additional funding support to address the unprecedented severe weather damage to the sea defences supporting Bute's main island roadway at Ardbeg.
- Working with the Community Planning Partnership to develop a Climate Change Strategy for the region as a whole.
- Adding our voice to those of our local government colleagues across Scotland to call on national government for fair funding settlements which enable councils to deliver the services that matter to communities, and reinforcing the need for recognition of the vital contribution that local government makes to national priorities and Scotland's overall success.

6. Our Principles

It has been widely recognised that driving change was particularly challenging during the period that the public sector was responding to the pandemic. Having returned to business as usual, the council needs to adapt the way it operates to meet the complex challenges our communities face and changes anticipated in the public sector. The Council has agreed its vision and priorities and below are the principles by which officers of the Council will seek to deliver the agreed priorities.



7. Measuring our Progress

The Corporate Plan is the overarching plan for the duration of the Council and the detail on how the Council will deliver these priorities will be illustrated and measured against the Annual Business Plan.

Outcome Indicators; the Council will publish separately an annual report on how it is progressing its outcome indicators.

National Performance Framework; the table below illustrates how the Council priorities are aligned with the NPF.

NATIONAL PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK	Human Rights	International	Environment	Health	Fair Work	Education
	Children	Economy	Culture	Poverty	Communities	
COUNCIL PRIORITIES	Equity of specialist provision in education estate across Argyll and Bute.	Recognition of the vital contribution that local government makes to Scotland's success.	Work with the Community Planning Partnership to develop a climate change strategy for the region as a whole.	Press the case for retaining delivery of care services locally.	Ensure young people have access to high quality innovative educational opportunities that support local employers and the Argyll economy.	We will ensure our schools are effective, sustainable learning environments.
	We will improve outcomes for our children.	We plan for and invest in the future.	Continue to promote the teaching and use of Gaelic.	Lobby for support for higher than average energy costs.	We will build up and strengthen our communities as attractive, vibrant places to live, work and do business.	

Corporate Plan

2023 - 2027

Argyll and Bute Council

www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

