

**LATEST UPDATE ON THE SETTLEMENT PROJECT SUPPORT OFFICER
ACTIONS**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to provide the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee with an update on the progress of the Settlement Project Support Officer actions that were approved by the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee on the 31st of August 2023.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee members are asked to:

- Note and consider progress on actions agreed by Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee on 31 August 2023.
- Note that a further update will be provided on the work of the Settlement Project Support Officer at the next Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee.

3.0 DETAIL

- 3.1 The recent release of Scotland's Census 2022 (Rounded Population Estimates) has provided more up-to-date information on Argyll and Bute's demographic challenges. Between 2011 and 2022, the population of Argyll and Bute decreased by -2.4%. **(See Appendix 1).**
- 3.2 As well as a declining population, the 2022 census findings further highlighted an ageing population. When compared to all other Scottish council areas, Argyll and Bute has the largest proportion of the population aged 65 and over, 27.2%. **(See Appendix 1).**
- 3.3 With demographic trends across Argyll and Bute continuing to demonstrate an ageing and declining working-age population, there is a need to address these challenges through a multi-agency approach and support population retention and growth.
- 3.4 The Argyll and Bute Settlement Project Support Officer continues to work closely with the Settlement Officers in the Western Isles and Northwest Highland, as well as colleagues from Argyll and Bute Council, HIE, and the Scottish Government Islands Team. Working







in collaboration to recognise the place-based barriers to population retention and attraction and support measures to address population decline.








The Settlement Project Support Officer will be assisting housing colleagues to drive forward works on the Council's Housing Emergency. This will provide the Housing Emergency works with further resource to drive a more consistent and proactive approach to facilitating both private and affordable housing developments.

Update on Settlement Actions Approved at Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee 31st August 2023.

3.5 **Table 1** provides an update on the progress of the Settlement Project Support Officer Actions as approved at Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee on the 31st August 2023. The current status of each action is shown using a Red, Amber, and Green (RAG) indicator.

Table 1. Update of actions.

Focus Area	Action Approved	Progress to Date 30 th October 2023	Current Status
Active Promotion of Argyll and Bute	Continue to develop and expand settlement case studies for the abplace2b website and enhance marketing provisions where appropriate.	All initial settlement content has been prepared and will be uploaded to abplace2b and Invest in Argyll websites.	
		The settlement flyer has been updated with support from the Argyll and Bute Council's Graphic Designer and will be incorporated into web updates.	
		The welcome pack has been developed working alongside Settlement Officers in Uist/ NW Highland. The Argyll and Bute Council's Graphic Designer has provided assistance with layout.	
		To date, five case studies have been drafted, and subject to final edits may be included in abplace2b and Invest in Argyll websites.	
		The myjobscotland section specific to Argyll and Bute Council has been updated by the Communications Team to include improved links to abplace2b.	
		Further settlement updates are planned for myjobscotland, through collaborative working with Economic Growth, HR and the Comms/Web Teams.	

Supporting Relocation	Continue to respond to relocation queries.	To date, there have been eight relocation queries received. All queries have been responded to accordingly.	
	Set up a relocation network connecting new and existing residents.	Comprehensive relocation contact resources have been compiled for all Resettlement Zones.	
	Work with the new Housing Improvement Officer (Empty Homes) to support individuals relocating to recently refurbished properties.	A survey has been created to set up a relocation network, initially connecting people who have relocated to Argyll and Bute. Links to access the survey have been inserted on the flyer and welcome pack with the assistance of the Council's Comms/Web Teams.	
		Settlement support resources will be passed on to the Housing Improvement Officer in collaboration with the Council's Communications Team.	
Housing	Launch the 'Make Your Second Home Your First Home' campaign. Increased energy support and signposting across Argyll and Bute.	Initial discussions have taken place with the Argyll and Bute Housing Team. Economic Growth is working with colleagues in the Housing Team to refine the 'Make Your Second Home Your First Home' campaign.	
Employment	Consider current empty council-owned (non-residential) properties being used for remote working hubs or creative spaces (working with other council colleagues, as appropriate).	Reached out to council colleagues to try to determine if there are council-owned spaces that could be made available for remote working/ creative spaces.	
		A survey has been drafted for community groups and businesses that currently offer remote working/ creative spaces to advise on available premises. Collaboration will be required with other teams across the council to ensure that this data has not been captured previously. Survey fatigue also needs to be considered.	
	Engage with key employers across the Repopulation Zones to identify in detail the number and nature of	Monthly reports are being received from Argyll and Bute Council HR	

	recruitment issues they have encountered/ forecast	Team regarding withdrawn and declined job offers.	
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4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 Recent data published by the Scottish Census 2022 has provided further insight into the demographic challenges facing Argyll and Bute, specifically an ageing and declining population. Census findings show that between 2011 and 2022, Argyll and Bute's population has decreased by -2.4%. Moreover, compared to all other Scottish council areas, Argyll and Bute has the largest proportion of the population aged 65 and over (27.2%).
- 4.2 As previously noted, **Table 1** provides an update on the progress of the Settlement Project Support Officer actions. Work is ongoing to progress these actions and a further update report will be provided to committee as required.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Policy The overarching vision of Argyll and Bute Council's current Economic Strategy, 2019-23 is that Argyll and Bute's economic success is based on a growing population.
- 5.2 Financial Using funding previously agreed for a staffing resource in the Restart, Recovery and Renew: Delivering our Recovery Strategy and Action Plan paper at the P&R Committee, December 2021. From June 2023, the Settlement Project Support Officer post has been extended for 18 months, joint funded by Argyll and Bute Council and the Scottish Government.
- 5.3 Legal All appropriate legal implications will be taken into consideration.
- 5.4 HR Funding from the Scottish Government has allowed the Settlement Project Support Officer post to be extended to the end of December 2024.
- 5.5 Fairer Scotland Duty The Fairer Scotland Duty, Part 1 of the Equality Act 2010, came into force in April 2018. The duty places a legal responsibility on particular public bodies in Scotland, such as Argyll and Bute Council, to pay due regard to (actively consider) how they can reduce inequalities of outcome, caused by socio-economic disadvantage, when making strategic decisions and how this has been implemented.

5.5.1 Equalities	All activities will comply with all Equal Opportunities/Fairer Scotland Duty policies and obligations.
5.5.2 Socio-economic Duty	All project activities will comply with the council's socio-economic duty.
5.5.3 Islands	The activities of the Settlement Project Support Officer covers three islands; Tiree, Coll and Bute.
5.6 Climate Change	None.
5.7 Risk	None
5.8 Customer Service	None.

Kirsty Flanagan, Executive Director responsible for Development and Economic Growth

November 2023

Policy Lead for Strategic Development: Councillor Robin Currie

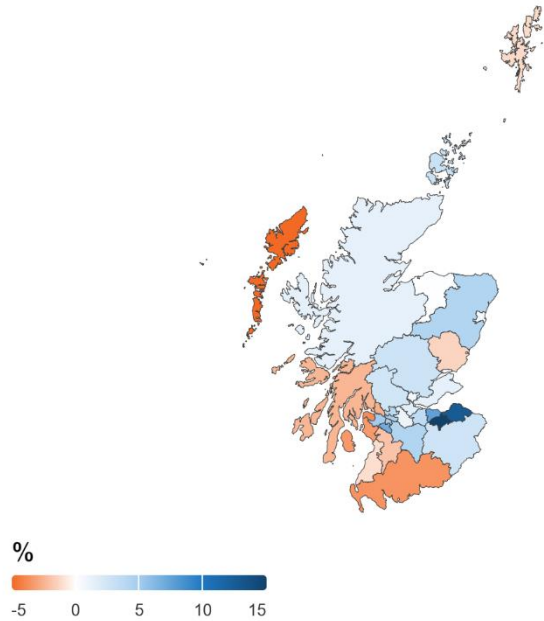
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Appendix 1: Scotland's Census 2022- Rounded Population Estimates

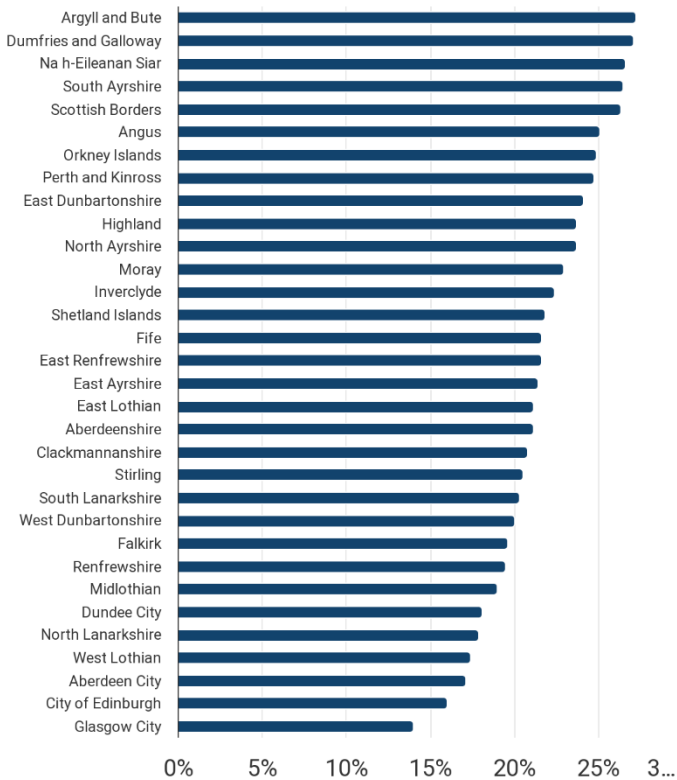
Population change, 2011 - 2022, council areas in Scotland



Population change, 2011 to 2022, council areas in Scotland.

Source: Scotland's Census 2022

The 65 and over age group as a proportion of the population, 2022, council areas in Scotland



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