

**ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL'S ECONOMIC STRATEGY ACTION PLAN: 2024-2027**

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**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to provide the Environment Development and Infrastructure Committee with an action plan (see **Appendix 1**) to implement and deliver the refreshed Argyll and Bute Council Economic Strategy, endorsed by the committee on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2024, covering the short-term period 2024-2027 in the first instance.
- 1.2 A key requirement of the action plan is that the actions are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound) and delivers opportunities that drive economic growth and a fair and inclusive wellbeing economy across the four strategic pillars: **people, place, planet and prosperity**.
- 1.3 It is important that the action plan is a working document that takes account of changes in Government economic policy direction, prioritising resources to make the greatest impact, acknowledges and responds to advances in technology, productivity gains and sustainable economic growth with a clear focus on actions taken over the next three years to deliver longer term key outcomes.
- 1.4 It is recommended that Members of the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee:
- Provide commentary on the action plan, with the addition of appropriate outcomes, as outlined in **Appendix 1**.
  - Endorse the Economic Strategy Action Plan.

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### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 A successful economy is key to delivering many of our council priorities and is fundamental to our future quality of life as a place to live, work, learn and visit. The pace of economic change has been accelerating globally in response to a number of economic challenges which has required Argyll and Bute Council to refresh its economic strategy and develop an action plan to deliver this strategic intent.
- 2.3 A key requirement of the action plan is that it is an ongoing working document that contains actions that are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound) and delivers opportunities that drive economic growth and a fair and inclusive wellbeing economy across the four strategic pillars: **people, place, planet and prosperity**.

### 3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that Members of the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee:
- Provide commentary on the action plan, with the addition of appropriate outcomes, as outlined in **Appendix 1**.
  - Endorse the Economic Strategy Action Plan.

### 4.0 DETAIL

- 4.1 The need for collaboration and the interplay between economy, environment and community has never been stronger. Argyll and Bute is particularly well placed to benefit from the potential of the area's natural capital resources and the role it can play in providing green jobs and achieving net zero across key industries.
- 4.2 The refreshed Economic Strategy Action Plan has been prepared with a strong focus on collaboration and a joined-up approach, working closely with the Community Development Team with their work on the revised Local Outcome Improvement Plan

(LOIP) and Community Wealth Building research on behalf of the Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership (CPP), partner agencies and stakeholders across Argyll and Bute and at both a regional and national level.

- 4.3 The detailed programme of recent online surveys, collaboration and engagement events was integral to the development of a SMART action plan and is presented in **Table 1** below.

<b>Table 1: Recent Collaboration and Engagement</b>	
<b>Group</b>	<b>Date of event</b>
Argyll and Bute Youth Council/Voice	26 <sup>th</sup> January 2024
Separate workshop session with the Argyll and the Islands Area Manager, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE, noting that the Area Manager is a member of the Economic Strategy Refresh Officers' Working Group.	26 <sup>th</sup> January 2024
Argyll and the Isles Strategic Tourism Partnership	1 <sup>st</sup> February 2024
Policy Lead/Executive Leadership Team (ELT) meeting	12 <sup>th</sup> February 2024
Argyll and Bute Employability Partnership	21 <sup>st</sup> February 2024
Argyll and Bute Renewables Alliance	6 <sup>th</sup> March 2024
Workshop (session 1) with Development and Economic Growth officers and some strategic partners focusing on People and Place	20 <sup>th</sup> March 2024
Discussion between Economic Growth; Partnership Lead, Community Planning; and CLES (authors of CWB report)	27 <sup>th</sup> March 2024
Workshop (session 2) with Development and Economic Growth officers and some strategic partners focusing on Planet and Prosperity	28 <sup>th</sup> March 2024
Climate Change Board	17 <sup>th</sup> April 2024
Education and Skills workshop with attendance by Education staff, UHI, UHI Argyll, SAMS, DYW Argyll, InspirAlba and SDS	26 <sup>th</sup> April 2024
<b>Surveys</b>	
Ad hoc web form responses to some generic questions	Closed on 29 <sup>th</sup> April
56 responses from the online business survey to small and micro businesses	Closed on 6 <sup>th</sup> May

- 4.4 With limited resources there is a need to focus on key interventions and where we can make the greatest impact. A core focus of the action plan is for Argyll and Bute to be a wellbeing economy through embedding a Community Wealth Building approach and inclusiveness enabling people of all abilities to reach their full potential. Key sectors for our area include tourism, food and drink and clean energy production with the increasing importance of private sector investment and SMEs in the local economy creating employment opportunities and retaining wealth in our communities.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The Argyll and Bute economy is undergoing significant changes, presenting both distinct short and longer-term opportunities and challenges to overcome. The actions outlined in **Appendix 1** are intended to provide a renewed focus to celebrate and deliver on our key strengths as an area and embrace the opportunities of our rural, natural resource-based economy for the short term delivery in the first instance.

## 6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy – endorsed Argyll and Bute Economic Strategy 2024-34, LOIP and National Strategy for Economic Transformation refresh (NSET – 10-year duration).
- 6.2 Financial – resources will be required to deliver the strategic intent articulated in the action plan in **Appendix 1**.
- 6.3 Legal - all appropriate legal implications have been taken into consideration.
- 6.4 HR – none.
- 6.5 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
  - 6.5.1 Equalities - all activities have complied with all Equal Opportunities/Fairer Scotland Duty policies and obligations
  - 6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty - all strategic pillars, priorities and project activities will comply with the council’s socio-economic duty
  - 6.5.3 Islands – actions will be delivered across the whole of Argyll and Bute including the island communities.
- 6.6 Climate Change – the economic actions under **planet** have been framed to address the net zero transition agenda.
- 6.7 Risk - buy-in by key partner agencies and stakeholders to assist with the delivery of short-term strategic actions (up to three years) could be challenging due to the uncertainty around future funding streams; many budgets are still decided on an annual basis.
- 6.8 Customer Service – none.
- 6.9 The Rights of the Child (UNCRC) – none.

**Kirsty Flanagan, Executive Director responsible for Development and Economic Growth**

**Policy Lead for Business Development:** Councillor Math Campbell-Sturgess  
30<sup>th</sup> August 2024

### **For further information contact:**

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## **APPENDICES**

**Appendix 1:** Argyll and Bute Council SMART Economic Strategy Action Plan 2024-2034

**Appendix 1:**  
**Argyll and Bute Council SMART Economic Strategy Action Plan 2024-2027**  
**(WORKING DOCUMENT)**



**PEOPLE:** Addressing the continuing decline in our economically active population, improving workforce skills and attracting key workers, promoting equal access to education opportunity, and supporting job opportunities in emerging and new industries.

The SMART actions noted in the **PEOPLE** tables below:

- Increase the economically active population by investing in skills development.
- Work with partners to enable equal access to education, both academic and vocational.
- Focus on STEM education.
- Promote increased adaptability and skills development for both existing and new staff including Argyll and Bute Council and local businesses.

**PEOPLE: Education, skills and training opportunities for all ages are aligned to higher paid employment and/or self-employment opportunities, with embedded Fair Work First principles.**

Council Actions	Partner Actions	Short-term success measures (up to 3 years)	Resources	Outcome by 2034
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Council services (DEG, Education, DYW, HR) to map out all support for vocational education and training opportunities across all key sectors to share with schools, parents and all residents.</li> <li>2. Economic Growth to align with the current work of HR and DYW on increasing awareness of occupational opportunities across Argyll and Bute Council.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. HIE, SE, SDS, UHI Argyll, UHI, SAMS, third sector providers and employers to assist the council with this mapping exercise.</li> <li>2. HIE to progress with establishing the new private sector driven Economic Forum.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Completion of an online directory of all support for vocational education and training opportunities, with web links to relevant information, by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025.</li> <li>2. Economic Forum to be established by end of October 2024.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In-kind support from all partners.</li> <li>2. Funding opportunities for individuals and skills will be identified by web links to current support.</li> </ol>	<p>Raised awareness of all occupational employment opportunities for all ages across Argyll and Bute.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Council HR to create tailored adult apprenticeship schemes for areas of skill shortages, including Planning and Environmental Health through investing in council officers with transferable skills.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. More employers to consider opportunities to undertake work tasters and apprenticeship training for adults aligned to current funding opportunities until the end of March 2025.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Council HR to introduce a Planning and/or Environmental Health Adult Apprenticeship programme(s) to alleviate some skills shortages.</li> <li>2. Current funding work taster caseloads available to employers to be committed by end of October 2024 and spent by the end of March 2025.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use existing UK Shared Prosperity Fund.</li> <li>2. Council to invest to save to alleviate the skills gap with appropriate / improved access to the Apprenticeship Levy funding.</li> </ol>	<p>Sustained work taster placements and created Adult Apprenticeship schemes to address critical Argyll and Bute Council skills shortages.</p>

**PEOPLE: Education, skills and training opportunities for all ages are aligned to higher paid employment and/or self-employment opportunities, with embedded Fair Work First principles.**

Council Actions	Partner Actions	Short-term success measures (up to 3 years)	Resources	Outcome by 2034
<p>1. DYW, Education and Economic Growth to focus on the increasing the range of Foundation Apprenticeships for senior pupils across Argyll and Bute schools aligned with industry demand.</p>	<p>1. SDS to assist in increasing the range of Foundation Apprenticeships with sustainable job opportunities.</p> <p>2. Scottish Government and the Scottish Funding Council to reduce the necessary class size due to rurality for Foundation Apprenticeship delivery.</p>	<p>1. Council to increase the range of Foundation Apprenticeship programme(s) available by 10% to alleviate some skills shortages.</p> <p>2. Council to increase the uptake of senior phase pupils undertaking Foundation Apprenticeship by 15%.</p>	<p>1. Council to invest to save to alleviate the skills gap with appropriate / improved access to the Apprenticeship Levy funding.</p>	<p>A greater range of Foundation Apprenticeship schemes available across all Argyll and Bute schools to address training and employment within key existing and emerging sectors.</p>
<p>1. Economic Growth to focus on the delivery of Graduate Apprenticeships for a variety of occupations across Argyll and Bute aligned with industry demand.</p>	<p>1. SDS and HIE to work with Economic Growth to encourage industry recruitment of Graduate Apprenticeships aligned to funding opportunities.</p> <p>2. HIE to conclude the delivery of the Graduate Placement programme funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.</p>	<p>1. 10% increase in the uptake of Graduate Apprenticeships supported by Argyll and Bute businesses across a variety of occupations.</p> <p>2. 12 Graduate Apprentices employed by 12 enterprises under the HIE Graduate Placement Programme funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund by end of March 2025.</p>	<p>1. Council to invest to save to alleviate the skills gap with appropriate / improved access to the Apprenticeship Levy funding.</p> <p>2. UK Shared Prosperity Fund.</p>	<p>Sustain and grow the number of Graduate Apprenticeship schemes available across Argyll and Bute within existing and emerging sectors.</p>



**PEOPLE: Education, skills and training opportunities for all ages are aligned to higher paid employment and/or self-employment opportunities, with embedded Fair Work First principles.**

Council Actions	Partner Actions	Short-term success measures (up to 3 years)	Resources	Outcome by 2034
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Focus on improving the skills of existing staff and the recruitment of new council officers equipped with transferable skills that can move across teams to support funded projects/themes and/or council priorities.</li> <li>2. Economic Growth support to businesses through Business Gateway and Employability teams using UK Shared Prosperity Fund monies.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. HIE and SE to share approaches to business interventions to complement local authority delivery.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 5% increase in the recruitment of staff with transferable skills.</li> <li>2. Achieve outcomes associated with UK Shared Prosperity Fund interventions by end of March 2025.  (for all businesses supported, increase in turnover by 30% and increase in job creation by 26%).</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Invest to save.</li> <li>2. UK Shared Prosperity Fund.</li> </ol>	<p>Skills development mainstreamed for both existing and new council staff and local business staff to better capitalise on changing economic opportunities.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. On approval of the Rural Skills Accelerator Programme (RSAP) Outline Business Case, ensure 3 of the 4 Full Business Cases are concluded aligned to the Rural Growth Deal (RGD) projected delivery timeframe for RGD projects.</li> <li>2. Creation, co-delivery and ongoing KPI monitoring of the STEM Hub South (Dunoon), including mobile and outreach activity. led by the Council's Economic Growth and Education services.</li> <li>3. Assist the delivery of the STEM Hub North at SAMS through in-kind staff support from Economic Growth and Education services.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. SAMS to manage the delivery of the STEM Hub North, including mobile and outreach activity.</li> <li>2. HIE to manage and deliver the Business Leadership Skills programme, part of the RSAP.</li> <li>3. UHI Argyll to manage and deliver the enhancement of the college accommodation in Dunoon.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. a) 3 of the 4 Full Business Cases for the RSAP approved by both governments by the end of March 2027.  b) HIE to commence and start the delivery of the Business Leadership Skills Programme from April 2025</li> <li>2. Co-delivery of the STEM Hub South by Economic Growth and Education by the of March 2027.</li> <li>3. Delivery of the STEM Hub North by SAMS through liaison with Economic Growth, Argyll and Bute Council by the end of March 2027.</li> </ol>	<p>RSAP – RGD funding (£7m), plus Clyde Mission &amp; Crown Estate Scotland (digital connectivity) and Council funding (£807k).</p>	<p>STEM education and skills has enabled a digitally driven pathway to learning opportunities.</p>

**PEOPLE: Reducing Barriers to work through Employability**

Council Actions	Partner Actions	Short-term success measures (up to 3 years)	Resources	Outcome by 2034
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Economic Growth to prepare the Argyll and Bute Employability Partnership (ABEP) Delivery Plan for endorsement by the Community Planning Partnership Management Committee.</li> <li>2. Focus on all-age employability support and tackling child poverty with a 'no wrong path' approach to prepare the required Annual Investment Plan for No One Left Behind (NOLB) Scottish Government funding, complete with details of delivery interventions by the council and partners.</li> <li>3. Joint messaging about the benefits of investment in early prevention of poor health and how improving people’s health and wellbeing supports the local workforce and reduces health care costs over the medium and longer terms.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Partners, in particular members of the Argyll and Bute Employability Partnership, to delivery of all age and child poverty interventions, funded by the NOLB.</li> <li>2. To utilise levers for direct investment to support wellbeing outcomes.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. ABEP Delivery Plan and Annual Investment Plan to be endorsed by the CPP Full Partnership on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2024.</li> <li>2. Council and all delivery partners to achieve in-year spend and outcomes detailed in the Annual Investment Plan by the end of March 2025.</li> <li>3. Measurement of wellbeing outcomes, such as individuals supported to move into sustainable employment.</li> </ol>	<p>Scottish Government NOLB funding.</p>	<p>Deliver the employability agenda, with embedded Fair Work First principles to assist people with multiple barriers into sustainable employment.</p>



**PLACE:** Investing in our towns, rural and remote rural communities, including our islands and peninsulas, to attract new people and businesses, pursuing external funding opportunities, investing in critical economic infrastructure such as housing, land for business development, reuse of land and buildings for community benefit, digital connectivity and transport (principally roads, ports and ferries).

The SMART actions noted in the **PLACE** tables below:

- Secure future investment from cross sector partners and external funding streams into our towns, rural and island communities.
- Recognise the strengths of community resilience across Argyll and Bute.
- Work with strategic partners to support communities in the development and facilitation of transformational regeneration projects including community ownership of assets and wealth creation.
- Increase focus on areas of opportunity through better place making.

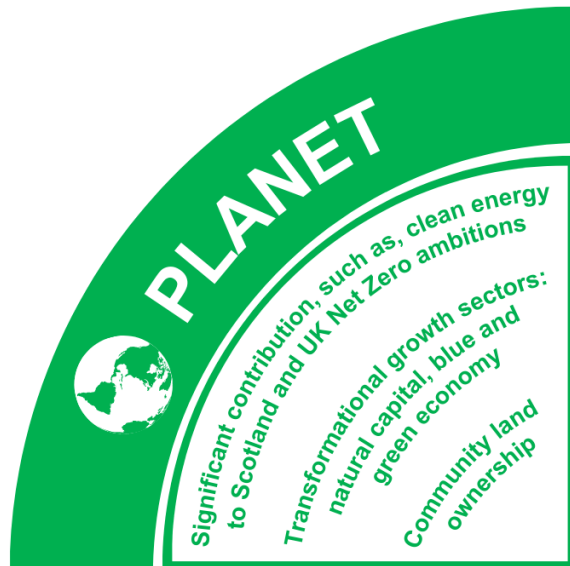
PLACE: Better Place Making				
Council Actions	Partner Actions	Short-term success measures (up to 3 years)	Resources	Outcome by 2034
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continued delivery of built heritage investment schemes.</li> <li>2. Continued delivery of the vibrant and living spaces projects funded through the UKSPF.</li> <li>3. Continued delivery of the UK Levelling Up Partnership monies.*</li> <li>4. Signing of the Argyll and Bute Rural Growth Deal (RGD).</li> <li>5. Further promotion of the #ABplace2b campaign.</li> <li>6. Secure future investment from cross sector partners and external funding streams including both the Scottish and UK Governments.</li> </ol>	<p>Establish a collaborative partnership between central governments, Argyll and Bute Council, CPP partners, communities and funders.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Complete Lochgilphead CARS project by end March 2026; commence 2 priority Helensburgh CARS buildings by the end of March 2026; commence Tarbert Heritage Regeneration Scheme by end of March 2026,</li> <li>2. Delivery of the 9 vibrant and living spaces project by the end of March 2025.</li> <li>3. Commence all Levelling Up Partnership projects by the end of March 2026.*</li> <li>4. Signing of the RGD by the end of the second quarter of 2024/25.</li> <li>5. Continue Love Local promotion and Increase #ABplace2b followers by 10% by the end of March 2026.</li> <li>6. Continue to lobby and influence the Scottish and UK Governments and key partners for cross-sectoral place-based funding.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. CARS multi-annual funding.</li> <li>2. Levelling Up agenda funding such as UK Shared Prosperity Fund of £304k for vibrant and living spaces projects. *</li> <li>3. Levelling up Partnership Programme, £20m. *</li> <li>4. Rural Growth Deal £11m investment.</li> <li>5. Scottish Government Place based funding.</li> <li>6. Historic Environment Scotland, Heritage Lottery Fund, Crown Estate and Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund strategic Investments.</li> <li>7. HIE capital funding.</li> </ol>	<p>Creation of a distinct sense of place through the delivery of an outstanding built environment making our towns, rural and island communities across Argyll and Bute attractive places to live, work, visit and invest in.</p>

\* Note: the term Levelling Up is currently being replaced by the new UK Government

PLACE: Increasing Community Resilience and Wellbeing through Identifying and Delivering Income Streams				
Council Actions	Partner Actions	Short-term success measures (up to 3 years)	Resources	Outcome by 2034
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Adopt a Community Wealth Building (CWB) approach to ensure the economic success of Argyll and Bute is based on a wellbeing economy.</li> <li>2. Council to work with partners and communities to create the opportunity for the use of community assets, empty spaces and co-production through the application of Place Based Wellbeing Principles such as accessibility and inclusion.</li> <li>3. Partnership working with the Community Planning Partnership and Health and Social Care Partnership prevention agenda.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. HIE, SE, third sector partners (including the Improvement Service) and external funders engage with the council and other stakeholders to maximise the wellbeing economy agenda for Argyll and Bute.</li> <li>2. Communities to develop shared management of civic spaces and natural assets.</li> <li>3. Input from community councils and development trusts to support community developments and co-production.</li> <li>4. Publish and implement actions of the Community Wealth Strategy.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish a multi partner and cross council departmental approach to CWB.</li> <li>2. Increase the number of community owned buildings and land assets by 5% including a renewed focus on job creation.</li> <li>3. Embed appropriate Place and Wellbeing Principles, including the prevention agenda, into project delivery.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. UK Government Asset Transfer fund/UKSPF.</li> <li>2. Scottish Government Community Empowerment – Asset Transfer Fund.</li> <li>3. Continue to lobby Scottish Government to maintain budgets for community led projects e.g. Regeneration Capital Grant Fund (RCGF), Scottish Land Fund, and Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF) for 2025/26.</li> </ol>	<p>Greater community resilience and wellbeing has created a better sense of belonging and prosperity through the access to external investment that has driven transformational opportunities, community ownership and innovation.</p>

PLACE: Improving Connectivity				
Council Actions	Partner Actions	Short-term success measures (up to 3 years)	Resources	Outcome by 2034
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue to lobby the Scottish Government for a permanent and fully funded solution for the Rest and Be Thankful.</li> <li>2. Prepare an Argyll and Bute Transport Strategy that identifies the key local transport priorities.</li> <li>3. Lobby and influence the UKG, SG, BT and private contractors to deliver the R100 Programme.</li> <li>4. To map mobile phone coverage at an individual premises level.</li> <li>5. Prepare an Argyll and Bute Active Travel Strategy to achieve a healthier and more productive workforce.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue to lobby the Scottish Government for a permanent and fully funded solution for the Rest and Be Thankful.</li> <li>2. Continue to lobby for increased ferry and port infrastructure investments.</li> <li>3. Industry and public sector collaboration to secure basis critical infrastructure. Key partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scottish Government</li> <li>• UK Government</li> <li>• Transport Scotland</li> <li>• HITRANS</li> <li>• BT Openreach</li> <li>• Virgin</li> <li>• Digital Scotland</li> <li>• SPT.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Full commitment by Scottish Government to deliver a fully funded solution for the Rest and Be Thankful.</li> <li>2. Approve and publish an Argyll and Bute Transport Strategy that identifies the key local transport priorities.</li> <li>3. R100 achieved with 100% of premises with potential access to modern ultrafast broadband speeds; 100% coverage of 4G across Argyll and Bute.</li> <li>4. Conclude the mapping of mobile phone coverage by December 2024.</li> <li>5. Approve and publish an Argyll and Bute Active Travel Strategy.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lobby, influence and invest. Working with Industry and public sector partners to secure basis critical infrastructure. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scottish Government</li> <li>• UK Government – previous levelling up agenda monies and new future schemes</li> <li>• Transport Scotland</li> <li>• HITRANS</li> <li>• SPT</li> <li>• BT Openreach</li> <li>• Virgin</li> <li>• Digital Scotland</li> <li>• CMal/CalMac</li> <li>• Scotrail</li> <li>• Bus companies</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	Existing routes to market (roads, rail, ferries, ports and air) and local employment opportunities are secured through increased investment in our critical transport and digital infrastructure.

PLACE: Housing Emergency				
Council Actions	Partner Actions	Short-term success measures (up to 3 years)	Resources	Outcome by 2034
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reflect the endorsed Housing Emergency Action Plan (with a focus on increasing the supply of key worker housing).in the annual update of the local Housing Strategy.</li> <li>2. Complete mapping of second homes and short-term lets to inform the delivery of Planning Control Zones (PCZs).</li> <li>3. Alignment of the Housing Strategy and Local Development Plan to address the need for private sector housing that delivers on local living opportunities.</li> <li>4. Deliver the 2 Strategic Development Frameworks for Tobermory to Dalmally Growth Corridor (TDGC) and Helensburgh &amp; Lomond Growth Area (HLGA).</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ongoing engagement and delivery of specific actions in the Housing Emergency Action Plan will involve the following partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scottish Government.</li> <li>• CPP partners, including HIE.</li> <li>• Housing Associations.</li> <li>• Private sector builders.</li> <li>• Highlands and Islands Economic Partnership.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 20 key worker houses.</li> <li>2. Approve PCZs informed by up-to-date housing data.</li> <li>3. Approved the Local Housing Strategy annual update at the full council meeting in November 2024 prior to submission to the Scottish Government.</li> <li>4. Approve the 2 Strategic Development Frameworks for TDGC and HLGA. To be published post the publication of the Local Development Plan 3, potentially January 2028 (out with timeframe of this plan).</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lobby Scottish and UK Governments for additional flexibility and funding.</li> <li>2. Strategic Housing Fund.</li> <li>3. £450k for Strategic Development Frameworks of TDGC and HLGA.</li> </ol>	<p>Affordable homes have been built to meet the needs of our communities including attracting new economically active residents to Argyll and Bute to take up employment opportunities and to help expand established local businesses and / or to establish new businesses.</p>



**PLANET:** Delivering net zero and improving our biodiversity by supporting the sustainable growth of clean energy production (i.e. hydro, solar, wind and biomass), woodland, peat and marine habitat restoration, encouraging green industries to develop in our area, nature-based solutions and community ownership.

The SMART Actions noted in the **PLANET** tables below:

- Achieve net zero through increased clean energy production, forestry expansion, and marine habitat restoration.
- Embrace clean energy opportunities and work to provide better local outcomes, including job retention and creation.
- Develop low-carbon infrastructure to enable alternatives to private transport including active travel, better digital connectivity, and sustainable housing.
- Foster nature-based solutions for increased climate change resilience and biodiversity enhancement.
- Support emerging sustainable industries like seaweed farming, marine research and green energy.
- Unlock the potential of the marine economy to create sustainable economic growth opportunities across Argyll and Bute.



**PLANET: Delivering Net Zero by 2045 through Economic Actions**

Council Actions	Partner Actions	Short-term success measures (up to 3 years)	Resources	Outcome by 2034
<p>1. Prepare a Local Area Energy Plan for Argyll and Bute.</p> <p>2. Work with our Community Planning Partners, community groups, trusts and bodies to delivery environmental, carbon neutral, projects.</p> <p>3. Develop low-carbon infrastructure to enable alternatives to private transport including active travel, better digital connectivity*, and sustainable housing**.</p> <p>(*digital connectivity see PLACE: Improving Connectivity actions and **sustainable housing see PLACE: Housing Emergency).</p> <p>4. Reduce our housing carbon footprint (Local Heat &amp; Energy Efficiency Strategy, LHEES).</p>	<p>1. Strong collaboration required from all Community Planning Partner stakeholders and the private sector – community climate hubs.</p> <p>2. Argyll and the Isles Coast and Countryside Trust (ACT) leading on the delivery of an expanded North Atlantic Rain Forest and expanded restoration of peat bogs.</p>	<p>1. Deliver a Local Area Energy Plan for Argyll and Bute by December 2026.</p> <p>2. Ensure economic opportunities through the production of a Regional Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan by the end of March 2027.</p> <p>3. a) Adoption of an Active Travel Strategy by March 2025.</p> <p>b) Preparation of the full business case for the West Coast UAV Logistics and Training Hub at Oban Airport by March 2027.</p> <p>c) Continue the delivery of the Home Energy Efficiency Programme for Scotland (HEEPS) and new build (energy efficient) social housing *</p> <p>(*for target, 20 key worker houses, see PLACE: Housing Emergency).</p> <p>4. To complete the LHEES scheme by March 2025.</p>	<p>1. Funding via the UK and Scottish Governments Net Zero agenda.</p> <p>2. Renewables, forest expansion and energy conservation.</p> <p>3. Private sector community benefits.</p>	<p>Argyll and Bute established as a leading low carbon economy and taking best advantage of our natural capital.</p>

PLANET: Expanding Green / Clean Energy Production				
Council Actions	Partner Actions	Short-term success measures (up to 3 years)	Resources	Outcome by 2034
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lead efforts to achieve net zero through clean energy production.</li> <li>2. Consideration of green energy production on Islay to unlock economic opportunity.</li> <li>3. To continue to lobby SSE networks for grid improvements to and from Islay to take advantage of new offshore wind opportunities and assist in the decarbonisation of the Islay economy; and to lobby SSE Networks and Scottish Power Energy Networks for better grid connectivity for communities experiencing grid constraints.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. HIE and SE to support carbon sequestration activity and relevant funding.</li> <li>2. Community groups to maximise returns for clean energy community benefits.</li> <li>3. Argyll and Bute Renewables Alliance (ABRA) and other relevant partners to support the sustainable growth of the renewables and clean energy sectors across Argyll and Bute in.</li> <li>4. To sign off by 2027 the Hebrides and Orkney Whole System Uncertainty mechanism (HOWSUM) to act as a framework for a modern fit for purpose electricity distribution network across our island communities.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increasing clean energy production by 500 MWs.</li> <li>2. Completion of Rural Growth Deal full business case for 'Creating a low carbon economy on Islay' by March 2027.</li> <li>3. To continue to lobby OFGEM and network operators to create SMART use of the grid and approve grid improvements – ongoing.</li> <li>4. Increase community benefit returns by 10% by 2027.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. UK and Scottish Government funding.</li> <li>2. Private sector investment.</li> </ol>	<p>Deliver clean energy sectoral opportunities and infrastructure across Argyll and Bute.</p>



**PROSPERITY:** Creating higher wage opportunities, seizing opportunities in the net-zero economy, improving productivity and innovation through increasing business efficiency including the use of digital technology, empowering communities through ownership and wealth creation, sustaining public services, promoting the marine and green economies, enabling the sustainable growth of key sectors such as food and drink together with revitalising the tourism and hospitality sectors and supporting the growth of the creative industries.

The SMART Actions noted in the **PROSPERITY** tables below:

- Capitalise on net-zero opportunities for green jobs and improve living standards.
- Focus on productivity improvements through digital technology.
- Empower the public, private and third sectors to provide services, participate in shared management of civic spaces and generate income.
- Revitalise our key sectors such as the tourism and hospitality industry.
- Leverage natural and cultural assets to drive sustainable business growth and overall economic growth.

**PROSPERITY: Supporting Business Start-up and Growth**

Council Actions	Partner Actions	Short-term success measures (up to 3 years)	Resources	Outcome by 2034
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lobby and influence the UK Government and the Scottish Governments on future funding decisions to continue business support funding across local government and partner agencies.</li> <li>2. Influence and facilitate business creation, retention and growth through tailored support by teams within Economic Growth, such as Business Gateway, and other council departments with sectoral remits.</li> <li>3. Encourage organisations to consider alternative business models, with a particular focus on succession planning.</li> <li>4. Focus on business productivity improvements through digital support and reviews through current Expert Help Business Gateway interventions, funded by the UKSPF and Scottish Government LACER initiative.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Collaborative working by UK and Scottish Governments working with local authorities.</li> <li>2. Complementary business start-up and growth support from HIE and SE.</li> <li>3. Complementary support on the adoption of alternative business models to assist with succession planning and business retention from HIE and SE.</li> <li>4. Complementary support on business productivity improvements from HIE and SE.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Commit and spend all business support grants funded by the UKSPF by the end of March 2025.</li> <li>2. Publish all outcomes from business start-up and development grants by the end of June 2025.</li> <li>3. Provide 2 cases studies by the end of March 2027 to demonstrate the adoption by local businesses of alternative business models.</li> <li>4. Publish all outcomes from the digital support and reviews and Expert Help by end of June 2025.</li> </ol>	<p>UK Government funding (RGD &amp; Levelling up agenda) and Scottish Government funding (RGD, Business Gateway and HIE).</p>	<p>Argyll and Bute established as the natural choice for ambitious, emerging, productive and innovative new SMEs and industries to grow and flourish.</p>

PROSPERITY: Supporting Key Sectors and Productivity				
Council Actions	Partner Actions	Short-term success measures (up to 3 years)	Resources	Outcome by 2034
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lobby and influence the UK Government (e.g. UKSPF successor programme) and the Scottish Government (e.g. Community Led- Local Development Fund) future funding decisions to support our key sectors such as tourism, food and drink, creative industries, renewables and marine with multi-annual funding models.</li> <li>Progress the development of the Kilmory Business Park Phase 2, Colgrain Business Park and Oban Airport Business Park.</li> <li>Create a world class visitor destination through the delivery of Rural Growth Deal projects such as the Rothesay Pavilion and Kintyre Seaports.</li> <li>Facilitate private sector investment in tourism accommodation and facilities.</li> <li>Promote the strengths and opportunities of Argyll's two whisky regions, Islay and Campbeltown.</li> <li>Promote our creative industries and their expansion across Argyll and Bute.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborative working by UK and Scottish Governments with local authorities.</li> <li>Relevant private sector companies; HUB North; Scottish Future Trust (SFT), HIE and SE to support the Council's Procurement Team to publicise the supply chain opportunities from Kilmory Phase 2 and Oban Airport Business Park.</li> <li>Argyll and the Isles Strategic Tourism Partnership to work collectively to support the sustainability and growth of the sector.</li> <li>HIE to engage with a range of inward investors with a focus on the distilling sector.</li> <li>CHARTS to attract external funding and support the sustainable growth of the sector including Gaelic culture as a means to boost business growth.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secured sectoral funding for 2025/26 and beyond through external funding sources.</li> <li>Deliver the Kilmory Business Park, Phase 2 by first quarter of 2025/26; finalise the Colgrain Business Park Outline Business Case by September 2024 and delivery Oban Airport Business Park by spring 2027.</li> <li>Complete the restoration of the Rothesay Pavilion with the creation of 14 FTEs and deliver the Kintyre Seaports project, both by end of March 2027.</li> <li>Expected to facilitate the leverage of £0.5bn of private sector capital investment in our key sectors by March 2027.</li> <li>To facilitate the sustainable growth of Argyll and Bute's 2 distinct whisky regions (Islay and Campbeltown) that maximises local supply chain benefits by the end of March 2027.</li> </ol>	<p>UK Government funding (RGD &amp; replacement programme for levelling up) and Scottish Government funding (RGD, CLLD &amp; RCGF); Crown Estates; Tax Incremental Finance (TIF) model (Argyll and Bute Council), Historic Environment Scotland (HES) and Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF); Creative Scotland; HLF.</p>	<p>Argyll and Bute established as the natural choice for ambitious, emerging, productive and innovative new SMEs and industries to grow and flourish across the key sectors such as tourism, food and drink, creative industries, renewables and marine.</p>

**PROSPERITY: Empowering Communities (public, private and third sectors) to Increase their Resilience, Provide Services and Generate Income**

Council Actions	Partner Actions	Short-term success measures (up to 3 years)	Resources	Outcome by 2034
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Through collaborative and partnership working ensure the CWB approach is embedded in the delivery of council projects.</li> <li>Complete the development of the community led Tobermory Business Site phase 2, Port Ellen Community Hub, Colonsay and Tiree Business units.</li> <li>Engage and align with the Highlands and Islands Regional Economic Partnership (HIREP) Community Benefit sub-group activity and proposed outcomes.</li> <li>Follow statutory guidance to deliver the detailed pre-consultation engagement and consultation work with the accommodation providers who will be subject to the proposed Visitor Levy. Share approaches with members of the HIREP Visitor Levy sub-group.</li> <li>Focus on addressing areas of deprivation, particularly in Dunoon, Rothesay and Campbeltown, by fostering community partnerships.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The CPP, and other key cross sector stakeholders, to support the delivery of the CWB approach, with a focus on the recent CPP research on CWB.</li> <li>HIE to support the delivery of community-led projects to support resilience and create local wealth generating opportunities.</li> <li>Key partners across the Highlands and Islands are members of the HIREP Community Benefit sub-group with a focus on benefits pertinent to their own geographical areas as well as the Highlands and Islands.</li> <li>Key partners to influence the development and delivery of an Argyll and Bute Visitor Levy through being a member of the required local Visitor Levy Forum.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collective CWB approach embedded in council project/ programme delivery.</li> <li>Complete the community led Tobermory Business Site phase 2, Port Ellen Community Hub, and Colonsay and Tiree Business units by March 2025.</li> <li>Assist in the delivery of the community benefit proposals developed by HIREP, with a focus on Argyll and Bute communities.</li> <li>Successful introduction of an Argyll and Bute Visitor Levy by the end of 2026.</li> <li>Identify clear economic functions for Dunoon, Rothesay and Campbeltown by March 2027.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UK Government and Scottish Government funding.</li> <li>Private sector community benefit contributions.</li> <li>Community Benefit funding disseminated through working with and HIREP.</li> <li>Income to be generated from the proposed Argyll and Bute Visitor Levy by the end of 2026.</li> </ol>	<p>Communities are equipped to improve their resilience through achieving local economic outcomes and social benefits that retain economic prosperity locally.</p>

PROSPERITY Maximise the Potential of the Marine Economy				
Council Actions	Partner Actions	Short-term success measures (up to 3 years)	Resources	Outcome by 2034
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Unlock the potential sites for development with direct water access.</li> <li>2. Support SMEs (through the Business Gateway service) to access supply chain opportunities aligned to the marine economy.</li> <li>3. Provide support for new products including renewables linked to the RGD funded Marine Industry Training Centre (MITC) e.g. hydrogen, biofuels, bioplastics and to the Machrihanish Innovation Centre (MIC).</li> <li>4. Ensure that the Rural Growth Deal (RGD) Marine Aquaculture Programme (MAP) delivers benefits for the whole marine industry and supports the expansion of new industries such as seaweed farming.</li> <li>5. Unlock the potential of the North Lorn Port.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. HIE, SE, the Loch Lomond &amp; the Trossachs National Park Authority and Crown Estate Scotland are key partners to unlock potential sites.</li> <li>2. HIE and SE to support SMEs to access supply chain opportunities.</li> <li>3. HIE, in partnership with SAMS supports marine sector growth through:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) HIE led development of Phase 2 of the European Marine Science Park, “Camas House”.</li> <li>b) HIE led development of the business cluster through development and delivery of a strategy marketing plan.</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. HIE, in partnership with the council, SAMS, UHI, UHI Argyll and University of Stirling, to support marine economic opportunities realised through the MAP, specifically:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) RGD – MAP – SAMS led Centre for Seaweed and Shellfish Innovation and Development (CSSIDe).</li> <li>b) RGD – MAP – Argyll UHI led Marine Industry Training Centre (MITC).</li> <li>c) RGD – MAP – Uni of Stirling- Machrihanish Innovation Centre (MIC).</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Site options appraisal and feasibility work completed by end of March 2027.</li> <li>2. Supply chain opportunities realised and promoted through preparation of up to 5 case studies.</li> <li>3.               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Completion of Camas House, European Marine Science Park (EMSP) Phase 2 by first quarter 2025/26.</li> <li>b) Growth in the number of marine organisations at the EMSP by 5%.</li> <li>c) CSSIDe business case completed; CCSIDe design development undertaken by the end of March 2027.</li> </ol> </li> <li>4.               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) MITC full business case completed; MITC design development undertaken by the end of March 2027.</li> <li>b) MIC full business case completed: MIC design development undertaken by the end of March 2026.</li> </ol> </li> <li>5. Undertake a feasibility study into North Lorn Port.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. UK and Scottish Government funding.</li> <li>2. Council and HIE staff resource.</li> <li>3.               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) HIE GIA (General Investment Accounts) with external funding sought for fit-out.</li> <li>b) HIE GIA and council funded Business Gateway.</li> <li>c) SAMS, RGD and match funding.</li> </ol> </li> <li>4.               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) UHI Argyll and RGD.</li> <li>b) University of Stirling, RGD and match funding.</li> </ol> </li> <li>5. Council or future external funding opportunities.</li> </ol>	<p>Delivery of marine economy opportunities across Argyll and Bute.</p>

## Overarching Economic Key Outcomes for Argyll and Bute by the end of March 2027



1. Increase the rate of economic activity for the 16-64 cohort to **76%** (i.e. an increase of **360** individuals).
2. Grow the Argyll and Bute workforce by **600** individuals.



3. Secure a **5%** uplift in place-based investment.

4. Increase in turnover by **30%** and increase in job creation by **26%** for all supported businesses.



5. Deliver **20** key worker homes.



6. Retention of **60** FTEs and the creation of **30** FTEs.

Data sources: Office for National Statistics, Scottish Annual Business Survey (data often reported two years in arrears) and Skills Development Scotland Regional Skills Assessments.

These overarching economic outcomes can only be achieved through a strong focus on collaboration and a joined-up approach, working closely with the Community Planning Partnership, complete with the revised Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) and Community Wealth Building research, partner agencies and stakeholders across Argyll and Bute and at both a regional and national level.



<b>GLOSSARY of ACRONYMS</b>		
<b>COUNCIL DEPARTMENTS AND PARTNER ORGANISATION</b>	<b>DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS / PROGRAMMES</b>	<b>EXTERNAL FUNDS</b>
<b>DEG:</b> Development & Economic Growth, Argyll and Bute Council	<b>RGD:</b> Rural Growth Deal	<b>UKSPF:</b> UK Shared Prosperity Fund
<b>DYW:</b> Developing the Young Workforce, Argyll and Bute Council	<b>RSAP:</b> Rural Skills Accelerator Programme	<b>NOLB:</b> No One Left Behind
<b>HR:</b> Human Resources, Argyll and Bute Council	<b>STEM:</b> Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths	<b>RCGF:</b> Regeneration Capital Grant Fund
<b>SG:</b> Scottish Government	<b>CWB:</b> Community Wealth Building	<b>RTIF:</b> Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund
<b>UKG:</b> UK Government	<b>UAV:</b> Unmanned aerial vehicle	<b>CLLD:</b> Community Led Local Development Fund
<b>HIREP:</b> Highlands and Islands Regional Economic Partnership	<b>PCZ:</b> Planning Control Zones	<b>LACER:</b> Local Government COVID Economic Recovery
<b>ABEP:</b> Argyll and Bute Employability Partnership	<b>TDGC:</b> Tobermory to Dalmally Growth Corridor	<b>HLF:</b> Heritage Lottery Fund
<b>OFGEM:</b> Office of Gas and Electricity Markets	<b>HLGA:</b> Helensburgh & Lomond Growth Area	<b>HIE GIA:</b> Highlands and Islands Enterprise General Investment Accounts
<b>HIE:</b> Highlands and Islands Enterprise	<b>HEEPS:</b> Home Energy Efficiency Programme for Scotland	
<b>SE:</b> Scottish Enterprise	<b>CSSIDE:</b> Centre for Seaweed & Shellfish Innovation & Development (CSSIDE).	
<b>SDS:</b> Skills Development Scotland	<b>MAP:</b> Marine Aquaculture Programme	
<b>UHI:</b> University of the Highlands and Islands	<b>MITC:</b> Marine Industry Training Centre	
<b>UHI Argyll:</b> University of the Highlands and Islands in Argyll	<b>MIC:</b> Machrihanish Innovations Centre	
<b>SAMS:</b> Scottish Association for Marine Science	<b>EMSP:</b> European Marine Science Park	
<b>HITRANS:</b> Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership		
<b>SPT:</b> Strathclyde Partnership for Transport		
<b>BT:</b> British Telecommunications		
<b>ACT:</b> Argyll and the Isles Coast and Countryside Trust		
<b>ABRA:</b> Argyll and Bute Renewables Alliance		
<b>HES:</b> Historic Environment Scotland		