

MINUTES of MEETING of ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL held ON A HYBRID BASIS IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, KILMORY, LOCHGILPHEAD AND BY MICROSOFT TEAMS on WEDNESDAY, 25 FEBRUARY 2026

Present:

Depute Provost Jan Brown (Chair)

Councillor John Armour	Councillor Reeni Kennedy-Boyle
Councillor Gordon Blair	Councillor Jim Lynch
Councillor Math Campbell-Sturgess	Councillor Luna Martin
Councillor Garret Corner	Councillor Tommy MacPherson
Councillor Maurice Corry	Councillor Ian James MacQuire
Councillor Audrey Forrest	Councillor Dougie McFadzean
Councillor Kieron Green	Councillor Julie McKenzie
Councillor Amanda Hampsey	Councillor Yvonne McNeilly
Councillor Daniel Hampsey	Councillor Ross Moreland
Councillor Graham Hardie	Councillor Gary Mulvaney
Councillor Anne Horn	Councillor Iain Shonny Paterson
Councillor Fiona Howard	Councillor Gemma Penfold
Councillor Willie Hume	Councillor Alastair Redman
Councillor Mark Irvine	Councillor William Sinclair
Councillor Andrew Kain	Councillor Andrew Vennard
Councillor Jennifer Kean	Councillor Peter Wallace
Councillor Paul Donald Kennedy	

Attending:

Pippa Milne, Chief Executive
Douglas Hendry, Executive Director
Kirsty Flanagan, Executive Director
David Logan, Head of Legal and Regulatory Support
Anne Blue, Head of Financial Services
Evan Beswick, Chief Officer, Health and Social Care Partnership
Fergus Murray, Head of Development and Economic Growth
Jane Fowler, Head of Customer and Support Services
Andrew Summers, Head of Roads and Infrastructure Services
Ross McLaughlin, Head of Commercial Services
Shona Barton, Governance Manager
Jane Jarvie, Communications Manager
Margaret Anderson, Religious Representative

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were intimated by Councillor Dougie Philand and Daniel Semple (Teacher Representative).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (IF ANY)

There were no declarations of interest intimated.

The Depute Provost moved and the Council agreed to vary the order of business to take Agenda item 10 (Housing Emergency – Tobermory Worker Housing Pilot) as the last item

of the meeting, to allow the Council to deal with all of the business which could be taken in public before moving into private session.

3. MINUTES

(a) Argyll and Bute Council held on 26 November 2025

The Minutes of the meeting of Argyll and Bute Council, held on 26 November 2025, were approved as a correct record.

(b) Special Argyll and Bute Council held on 29 January 2026

The Minutes of the Special Meeting of Argyll and Bute Council, held on 29 January 2026, were approved as a correct record.

4. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

(a) Policy and Resources Committee held on 4 December 2025

The Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 4 December 2025 were noted.

Arising from Item 4 of these Minutes (Financial Monitoring Overview – 31 October 2025) the Council approved the revenue budget virements over £0.200m set out at paragraph 3.2 of the Revenue Budget Monitoring report.

Arising from Item 7 of these Minutes (Royal National MOD 2028 – Update) the Council agreed that the total financial commitment of up to £225k is funded from the Unallocated General Fund.

(b) Community Services Committee held on 11 December 2025

The Minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 11 December 2025 were noted.

(c) Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee held on 18 December 2025

The Minutes of the meeting of the Environmental, Development and Infrastructure Committee held on 18 December 2025 were noted.

Arising from Item 5 of these Minutes (Annual Status and Options Report 2025-26) the Council agreed that consideration of increasing the resource for roads reconstruction in 2026/27 should be dealt with as part of the consideration of item 5 of the agenda (Budgeting Pack 2026/27).

Arising from Item 9 of these Minutes (Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders – Review of Charging and Advertising) the Council agreed that Option 3, detailed within Appendix 4 of the report, be taken forward from 1 April 2026. They further agreed that the Fees and Charges would apply for events held after this date; that early submission for events after 1 April 2026 would not be charged at current fees (s16A TTRO fees are suspended at present until 31 March 2026) and that the Service would write to known Event Organisers and Community Councils advising of the new charges and minimum application timescales.

Arising from Item 11 of these Minutes (Review of Roads and Infrastructure Services – Update) the Council agreed that the increase in saving target of £500k due to be applied in 2026/27 to the RIS Review be removed, and instead, the RIS Review work towards achievement of the cumulative £500k saving from 2024/25 and 2025/26 recurring.

(d) Policy and Resources Committee held on 19 February 2026

The Minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 19 February 2026 were noted.

Arising from Item 5 of these Minutes (Budgeting Pack 2026/27) the Council agreed that this item be dealt with under item 5 of the agenda as a substantive item.

Arising from Item 6 of these Minutes (Treasury Management Strategy and Annual Investment Strategy 2026-27) the Council agreed that this item be dealt with under item 6 of the agenda as a substantive item.

Arising from Item 7 of these Minutes (Flexible Food and Fuel Fund and Connected for good) the Council approved Option 2 and that provision be made for the annual cost of £104,000. The Council further agreed that this item will be dealt with under consideration of item 5 of the agenda (Budgeting Pack 2026/27).

Arising from Item 8 of these Minutes (Annual Business Plan) the Council approved the Annual Business Plan Measures.

Arising from Item 11 of these Minutes (Early Departures from Council Employment) the Council agreed that information will be prepared, as part of the year-end financial report to inform members of severance packages, their costs and any associated savings. This will include confirmation that appropriate internal processes had been exercised in accordance with the Accounts Commission letter to all Councils concerning the exit packages for staff. The Council agreed that the process and protocol for the assessment, approval and scrutiny of exit packages pertaining to Executive Directors or Chief Executive be augmented to include formal Member scrutiny as set out in Paragraph 4.7.5 of the submitted report.

Arising from Item 12 of these Minutes (Payroll and Pensions Team Resourcing) the Council agreed the recommended option 2, to recover and stabilise the position in the short term and ensure that the Payroll and Pensions Team are sufficiently resourced to deliver an efficient and effective payroll and pensions service on a sustainable basis for the long-term. The Council agreed that this item will be dealt with under consideration of item 5 of the agenda (Budgeting Pack 2026/27).

Arising from Item 14 of these Minutes (2026/27 Annual Review – Sustainable Procurement Strategy 2025/2028) the Council approved the revised final Sustainable Procurement Strategy 2025/2028.

Arising from Item 16 of these Minutes (Strategic Events and Festivals Fund – Round 8 2026/2027) the Council agreed that as part of the budget in February 2026, that they consider a minimum of £90,000 base funding for Strategic Events and Festivals in order that the application process can commence for Round 9

(2027/28). The Council agreed that this item would be dealt with under the consideration of item 5 of the agenda (Budgeting Pack 2026/27). The Council further agreed that any underspend from SEF Round 7 (2025/26) is earmarked and used to augment a future SEF round.

5. BUDGETING PACK 2026/27

The Council considered the Revenue Budget and Capital Budget papers as contained within the budgeting pack which had been referred without recommendation by the Policy and Resources Committee held on 19 February 2026, considered such other appropriate resolutions in relation to these papers and fixed the Council Tax for the year to 31 March 2027.

Motion

The Motion moved by the Administration is attached at Appendix 1 to this Minute.

Moved by Councillor Jim Lynch, seconded by Councillor Ross Moreland.

Amendment

The Amendment moved by the Opposition Group is attached at Appendix 2 to this Minute.

Moved by Councillor Peter Wallace, seconded by Councillor Maurice Corry.

The Depute Provost requested the Section 95 Officer to confirm that the Motion and Amendment before the Council, containing budget proposals were competent and balanced. The Section 95 Officer confirmed that this was the case.

As the meeting was held on a hybrid basis, the vote required to be taken by calling the Roll and Members voted as follows:-

Motion

Cllr John Armour
Cllr Gordon Blair
Cllr Jan Brown
Cllr Math Campbell-Sturgess
Cllr Audrey Forrest
Cllr Kieron Green
Cllr Graham Hardie
Cllr Anne Horn
Cllr Fiona Howard
Cllr Willie Hume
Cllr Mark Irvine
Cllr Andrew Kain
Cllr Paul Donald Kennedy
Cllr Reeni Kennedy-Boyle
Cllr Jim Lynch
Cllr Luna Martin
Cllr Ian James MacQuire
Cllr Dougie McFadzean
Cllr Ross Moreland
Cllr Iain Shonny Paterson

Amendment

Cllr Garret Corner
Cllr Maurice Corry
Cllr Amanda Hampsey
Cllr Daniel Hampsey
Cllr Jennifer Kean
Cllr Yvonne McNeilly
Cllr Gary Mulvaney
Cllr Gemma Penfold
Cllr Alastair Redman
Cllr Andrew Vennard
Cllr Peter Wallace

No Vote

Cllr Tommy McPherson
Cllr Julie McKenzie

Cllr William Sinclair

Decision

The Motion was carried by 21 votes to 11, with 2 no votes, and the Council resolved accordingly.

(Reference: Budgeting Pack 2026/27 dated February 2026, submitted, Motion by Councillor Jim Lynch, seconded by Councillor Ross Moreland, tabled; and Amendment by Councillor Peter Wallace, seconded by Councillor Maurice Corry, tabled)

The Depute Provost ruled and the Committee agreed to take a 10-minute comfort break between 12.40pm and 12.50pm. The meeting reconvened with all those present as per the sederunt.

6. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2026-27

The Council gave consideration to a report which sought approval of the proposed Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy which set out the Council's Strategy for borrowing and investment for the forthcoming year. The report also set out the policy for the repayment of loans fund advances for 2026-27 which had been referred without recommendation by the Policy and Resources Committee, held on 19 February 2026.

Decision

The Council –

1. approved the Treasury Management Strategy and Annual Investment Strategy for 2026-27 and the Prudential Treasury Indicators for 2026-27 to 2028-29, as outlined in Appendix 3 of the submitted report; and
2. noted that the strategy will be further scrutinised by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 12 March 2026, with any recommendations requiring Council approval brought back to full Council at the earliest opportunity.

(Reference: Report by Section 95 Officer, dated 6 February 2026, submitted)

7. POLITICAL MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The Council gave consideration to a report which set out the updated political composition of the Council, and asking the Council to make a nomination to the Regulatory Cohort and to appoint one Member to the Licensing Board.

Motion

The Council:

1. Notes that Cllr Ian MacQuire has joined the Administration Partnership Group as an independent councillor, and that the updated Political Composition of the Council will be duly amended to reflect this;

2. Nominates Cllr Reeni Kennedy-Boyle to serve on the Regulatory Cohort and to undertake the requisite training;
3. Notes that Cllr Mark Irvine will remain a member of the Regulatory Cohort meantime for the sole purpose of completing a specific Local Review Body process which is well advanced and, following conclusion of this process, will step down from the Regulatory Cohort with immediate effect;
4. Appoints Cllr Reeni Kennedy-Boyle to the Argyll and Bute Licensing Board;
5. Notes that Cllr Mark Irvine previously held the role of Vice-Chair of the Licensing Board and that the Licensing Board will make its own arrangements in relation to the appointment of a replacement;
6. Appoints Cllr Ross Moreland as Vice Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee;
7. Agrees that Cllr William Sinclair will replace Cllr Mark Irvine on the Policy and Resources Committee;
8. Agrees that Cllr William Sinclair will replace Cllr Mark Irvine on the Employee Joint Consultative Committee;
9. Appoints Cllr Kieron Green, Policy Lead for Education, to the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) Foundation Committee in place of Cllr Audrey Forrest;
10. Agrees to appoint Cllr Willie Hume to the Oban Common Good Fund in place of Cllr Julie McKenzie;
11. Agrees to appoint Cllr Mark Irvine to the Community Services Committee in place of Cllr Julie McKenzie; and
12. Agrees to appoint Cllr Mark Irvine as Depute Policy Lead for Climate Change, Net Zero and Gaelic.

Moved by Councillor John Armour, seconded by Councillor Ross Moreland.

Amendment

The Council:

1. Notes that Cllr Ian MacQuire has joined the Administration Partnership Group as an independent councillor, and that the updated Political Composition of the Council will be duly amended to reflect this;
2. Nominates Cllr Reeni Kennedy-Boyle to serve on the Regulatory Cohort and to undertake the requisite training;

3. Notes that Cllr Mark Irvine will remain a member of the Regulatory Cohort meantime for the sole purpose of completing a specific Local Review Body process which is well advanced and, following conclusion of this process, will step down from the Regulatory Cohort with immediate effect;
4. Appoints Cllr Reeni Kennedy-Boyle to the Argyll and Bute Licensing Board;
5. Notes that Cllr Mark Irvine previously held the role of Vice-Chair of the Licensing Board and that the Licensing Board will make its own arrangements in relation to the appointment of a replacement;
6. Appoints Cllr Ross Moreland as Vice Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee;
7. Agrees that Cllr William Sinclair will replace Cllr Mark Irvine on the Policy and Resources Committee;
8. Agrees that Cllr William Sinclair will replace Cllr Mark Irvine on the Employee Joint Consultative Committee;
9. Appoints Cllr Kieron Green, Policy Lead for Education, to the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) Foundation Committee in place of Cllr Audrey Forrest; and
10. Agrees to appoint Cllr Mark Irvine as Depute Policy Lead for Climate Change, Net Zero and Gaelic.

Moved by Councillor Amanda Hampsey, seconded by Councillor Peter Wallace.

As the meeting was held on a hybrid bases, the vote required to be taken by calling the Roll and Members voted as follows:-

Motion

Amendment

Cllr John Armour
 Cllr Gordon Blair
 Cllr Jan Brown
 Cllr Math Campbell-Sturgess
 Cllr Audrey Forrest
 Cllr Kieron Green
 Cllr Graham Hardie
 Cllr Anne Horn
 Cllr Fiona Howard
 Cllr Willie Hume
 Cllr Mark Irvine
 Cllr Andrew Kain
 Cllr Paul Donald Kennedy
 Cllr Reeni Kennedy-Boyle
 Cllr Jim Lynch
 Cllr Luna Martin

Cllr Garret Corner
 Cllr Maurice Corry
 Cllr Amanda Hampsey
 Cllr Daniel Hampsey
 Cllr Jennifer Kean
 Cllr Tommy Macpherson
 Cllr Julie McKenzie
 Cllr Yvonne McNeilly
 Cllr Gary Mulvaney
 Cllr Gemma Penfold
 Cllr Alastair Redman
 Cllr Andrew Vennard
 Cllr Peter Wallace

Cllr Ian James MacQuire
Cllr Dougie McFadzean
Cllr Ross Moreland
Cllr Iain Shonny Paterson
Cllr William Sinclair

Decision

The Motion was carried by 21 votes to 13, and the Council resolved accordingly.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support, dated February 2026, submitted, Motion by Councillor John Armour, seconded by Councillor Ross Moreland, tabled; and Amendment by Councillor Amanda Hampsey, seconded by Councillor Peter Wallace, tabled)

8. PROPOSED BANK HOLIDAY SCOTLAND - 15 JUNE 2026

The Council noted that the Scottish Government had announced an additional bank holiday on Monday, 15 June 2026 to mark the participation of the Scottish Men's Football Team in the World Cup Tournament. Consideration was given to a report inviting the Council to consider whether to recommend the granting of an additional day's annual leave to employees who were scheduled to work on that date to commemorate the occasion.

Decision

The Council agreed that 15 June 2026 will not be designated as an additional bank holiday.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Customer Support Services, dated

9. UK TOWN OF CULTURE 2028 COMPETITION

The Council gave consideration to a report which sought approval to proceed with an Expression of Interest (EOI) for the UK Town of Culture 2028 Competition and to enter the Isle of Bute as our submission.

Decision

The Council approved the submission of an Expression of Interest (EOI) for the UK Town of Culture Competition 2028 and agreed that the Isle of Bute will be the proposed submission and that Officers will work with Rothesay Pavillion Charity Trust to develop and submit the EOI.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth, dated 9 February 2026, submitted)

The Depute Provost ruled and the Council agreed to adjourn for 30 Minutes from 1:15pm to 1.45pm. The meeting reconvened with all those present as per the sederunt, with the exception of Councillors Ian James MacQuire and Gary Mulvaney and Margaret Anderson (Religious Representative).

During discussion of the following item of business, the Depute Provost ruled and the Council agreed to adjourn for 5 Minutes from 1.48pm to 1.53pm to enable Councillor Tommy MacPherson to resolve his IT issues.

During discussion of the following item of business, Councillors Amanda Hampsey and Julie McKenzie left the meeting at 2.10pm.

10. NOTICE OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDER 13

The following Notice of Motion under Standing Order 13 was before the Council for consideration –

Cost of Living in Argyll & Bute

The Council Notes:

- The national announcement that Chief Executives of Scottish local authorities are set to receive a pay increase from 1 November 2026.
- That nationally this represents a 12% across-the-board increase, compared with a 4% increase for frontline staff this year, and follows an average 9.5% rise in council tax bills nationally (and 9.9% in Argyll and Bute).
- That in Argyll and Bute specifically, the Chief Executive's salary is due to rise by £22,059, from £155,014 in 2025/26 to £177,073 from November 2026, representing an approximate 14% increase.
- That the proposed increase would mean the Chief Executive earns more than five times the average yearly gross salary of a full-time employee in Argyll and Bute, based on the most recent available figures.
- This has become mainstream information in the past few days.

The Council Agrees:

- That households in Argyll and Bute – and across Scotland – have faced significant and sustained cost-of-living and pay pressures in recent years.
- Household budgets are under severe strain and council tax bills have risen sharply in recent times.
- Councillors, as directly elected representatives of our communities, must show the moral integrity to do right by the people we serve and ensure decisions are proportionate, justified, and aligned with local realities.
- That the perception of residents and businesses is that the Council's reputation, trust, and wider "brand" have been damaged in recent times, making it all the more important that elected members decisions support confidence in our democratic institutions.

Moved by Councillor Tommy MacPherson, seconded by Councillor Alastair Redman

Amendment

The Council:

1. Notes its long-standing and well-established commitment to and, crucially, action on tackling the cost of living, including but by no means limited to the following:
 - a) Budget decisions in both 2025/26 and 2026/27 including providing a total of £132k cash allocations directly to local foodbanks across the area and using

earmarked reserves to support the Flexible Food and Fuel Fund, a key element of the Council's poverty prevention approach and provides direct financial assistance to people in crisis;

- b) Bringing together partner agencies and cross-council teams through the Financial Inclusion and Advice Group to focus on issues like fuel and child poverty, access to benefits and support, welfare rights, advice and more – with £4.3m since April 2025 in benefits and financial support secured and going directly to people who need it;
 - c) Providing up to £2.7m through the Scottish Government's Energy Efficient Scotland area-based scheme for grants to help people save money on their energy costs.
2. Further notes the fact that, as part of the delivery of the Communities theme which underpins the Council's Strategic Priorities, the Council has taken action through budget decisions for 2026/27 which will see community councils receiving more funding to help them fulfil their vital local roles and activities, and which supports local Area Committees with dedicated funding for alignment to local priorities;
3. Welcomes the endorsement from external agencies and partners of the Council's overall approach to doing business, delivering core local services and working constructively in partnership, including but not confined to:
- a) Audit Scotland Best Value Report 2025:
 - 'the council is ahead of the game in terms of achieving efficiencies, including through its use of digital technology, with exciting examples of innovation within service areas'
 - 'the council has comprehensive structures for managing and reporting financial matters and for budget-setting, and a strong track record of delivering recurring savings'
 - 'the council's approach to workforce planning, including around agile working, is to be commended and should be shared with others'
 - 'the council has made good progress with previous improvement recommendations and remains committed to the principles of Best Value'
 - b) Working in partnership to tackle the housing emergency – winning the 2025 Innovation Award, plus shortlisting for four other awards at the Empty Homes Network Awards and for the working in partnership award at the Scottish Housing Awards; and the national recognition of our Building Standards team for their support of and work with other local authorities.
 - c) Demonstrating excellence and innovation embedded in practice in a wide range of other services, evidenced through ongoing success in various other national awards at team and individual level, with just some examples being:
 - our Education service securing global recognition for their endeavours – including remaining in the top ten local authorities in Scotland for positive destinations for seven years and counting

- countless awards for individual schools, including Dunoon Grammar School named as the World's Best School for Community Collaboration and the world's first Carbon Literate Primary School in Cardross
- numerous other schools across the area securing gold standard UNICEF UK Rights Respecting Schools recognition
- the United Nations' endorsement of the Council's approach to refugee resettlement as 'a true example of what successful resettlement looks like – hope, positivity and part of the community'
- regeneration developments attracting gold standard and other design awards for public realm, landscaping and sustainability.

Moved by Councillor Jim Lynch, seconded by Councillor Ross Moreland.

As the meeting was held on a hybrid basis, the vote required to be taken by calling the Roll and Members voted as follows:-

Motion	Amendment	No Vote
Cllr Daniel Hampsey	Cllr John Armour	Cllr Garret Corner
Cllr Tommy MacPherson	Cllr Gordon Blair	Cllr Maurice Corry
Cllr Alastair Redman	Cllr Jan Brown	Cllr Yvonne McNeilly
	Cllr Math Campbell-Sturgess	Cllr Gemma Penfold
	Cllr Audrey Forrest	Cllr Andrew Vennard
	Cllr Kieron Green	Cllr Peter Wallace
	Cllr Graham Hardie	
	Cllr Anne Horn	
	Cllr Fiona Howard	
	Cllr Willie Hume	
	Cllr Mark Irvine	
	Cllr Andrew Kain	
	Cllr Paul Donald Kennedy	
	Cllr Reeni Kennedy-Boyle	
	Cllr Jim Lynch	
	Cllr Luna Martin	
	Cllr Dougie McFadzean	
	Cllr Ross Moreland	
	Cllr Iain Shonny Paterson	
	Cllr William Sinclair	

Decision

The Amendment was carried by 20 votes to 3, with 6 no votes, and the Council resolved accordingly.

(Reference: Notice of Motion Under Standing Order 13, moved by Councillor Tommy MacPherson, seconded by Councillor Alastair Redman, submitted; and Amendment by Councillor Jim Lynch, seconded by Councillor Ross Moreland, tabled)

The Council resolved in terms of Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to exclude the press and public for the following item of business on the grounds that

it was likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 8 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

E1 11. HOUSING EMERGENCY - TOBERMORY WORKER HOUSING PILOT

The Council gave consideration to a report which outlined the aims of the Tobermory worker housing pilot proposal, which seeks to address the housing emergency and forms a fundamental part of the Rural Growth Deal's objective to support economic growth.

Decision

The Council agreed to the recommendations highlighted at paragraph 3.1 of the submitted report.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth, dated January 2026, submitted.)