
ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

**HELENSBURGH AND LOMOND AREA
COMMITTEE**

CHIEF EXECUTIVE UNIT

MARCH 2026

HMNB CLYDE TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME- NEW PARTNERSHIP WORKING ARRANGMENTS

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to outline proposed changes to governance arrangements for engagement between Argyll and Bute Council, HM Naval Base Clyde (HMNB Clyde), and the Scotland Office. These changes aim to strengthen collaboration and strategic alignment in support of the Clyde Transformation programme, replacing the previous Strategic Delivery and Development Framework (SDDF) agreement.

The proposal introduces a new structure of quarterly meetings:

- **Two strategic sessions** between Argyll and Bute Council and HMNB Clyde/Scotland Office.
- **Two wider sessions** involving Clyde authorities and partners.

This approach seeks to improve the quality of discussion, unblock issues, and ensure alignment with shared objectives, while addressing some drawbacks of previous arrangements.

Recommendations:

- Consider the proposed governance arrangements for the Clyde Transformation Programme.
- Note that endorsement of the new arrangements will be sought from the Community Planning Partnership and Full Council.

**HMNB CLYDE TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME- NEW PARTNERSHIP
WORKING ARRANGEMENTS**

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This report updates members on the evolution of governance arrangements for engagement with HMNB Clyde and the Scotland Office and sets out their proposals for a refreshed approach aligned to the Clyde Transformation.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Consider the proposed governance arrangements for the Clyde Transformation Programme.
- 3.2 Note that endorsement of the new arrangements will be sought from the Community Planning Partnership and Full Council.

4.0 DETAIL

4.1 Previous Working Arrangements

In 2017, the Council entered a Memorandum of Understanding with HMNB Clyde and the Scotland Office, establishing the Strategic Delivery and Development Framework (SDDF). This was widely regarded as an exemplar of partnership working, providing governance through:

- **SDDF Board** (strategic leadership, met six-monthly)
- **Senior Management Group** (quarterly)
- **Project Working Groups** (as required)

4.2 Post-COVID Changes

The operating environment changed significantly post-2019 due to COVID-19 and estate challenges (including RAAC) prompting the incumbent Commodore to undertake an urgent review of the estate and created a new HNMB

Masterplan for 2070 setting out an ambitious construction and engineering programme to meet its aspirations. In 2023, the arrangement was replaced by slimmer six-monthly meetings between the Council Chief Executive and HMNB Clyde leadership which was updated on the Council Website (see appendix 1). While maintaining dialogue, this reduced structure, limited opportunities for wider strategic alignment and regional engagement

4.3 **Clyde Transformation Programme Context**

The Clyde Transformation programme represents a multi-decade, multi-billion-pound redevelopment of HMNB Clyde, including major infrastructure upgrades and new submarine programmes. This scale of investment has led to HMNB Clyde and the Scotland Office evolving their approach to partnership working. In discussions regarding these changes the requirement for a continued focus on securing socio-economic benefits for Argyll and Bute and alignment with local priorities (LOIP, Rural Growth Deal, Local Development Plan) has been stressed.

4.4 **Proposed New Arrangements**

Quarterly Strategic Meetings:

- Two meetings per year between Argyll and Bute Council, HMNB Clyde, and Scotland Office.
- Two meetings per year with wider Clyde authorities and partners.

Focus Areas:

- Strategic updates from HMNB Clyde and MoD.
- Collaboration on The Clyde Transformation Programme (previously Clyde 2070 & Project Euston).
- Infrastructure, housing, and transport development.
- Education, skills, and workforce planning.
- Economic development and community integration.

4.5 **Benefits**

Smaller, high-level meetings allow for more targeted discussion on Clyde Transformation Programme priorities and unblocking key issues.

Quarterly sessions enable quicker escalation and resolution of emerging challenges compared to the previous six-monthly cycle.

Supports integration of Clyde 2070 with local and national plans (LOIP, Rural Growth Deal, Local Development Plan).

Reinforces collaboration between HMNB Clyde, Scotland Office, and Argyll and Bute Council at Chief Executive level.

Wider meetings maintain engagement with other Clyde authorities, supporting the increased requirements for infrastructure, skills and shared economic objectives.

4.6 Drawbacks

Risk of Dilution of Argyll and Bute Focus, in wider meetings with larger councils, the specific needs and priorities of Argyll and Bute may receive less attention.

The original Memorandum of Understanding was seen as a landmark agreement and an exemplar of partnership working; moving away from this may reduce perceived commitment and symbolic importance.

Slimmer governance arrangements may lead to perceptions of less openness compared to the SDDF structure, which had published minutes and broader stakeholder involvement.

Compared to the SDDF, fewer opportunities exist for detailed input from community planning partners and thematic working groups.

Success of the new model relies heavily on sustained engagement at senior levels; frequent leadership changes could undermine consistency.

4.7 Terms of Reference

The new governance arrangements will operate under the following TOR:

Purpose: Maintain and strengthen the relationship between HMNB Clyde, Scotland Office, and Argyll and Bute Council, focusing on economic and social outcomes.

Objectives: Strategic oversight, monitoring initiatives, alignment with LOIP, and addressing emerging challenges.

Meeting Frequency: Twice annually (Spring and Autumn), with flexibility for additional meetings.

Membership: Commodore or senior RN officer, Scotland Office representative, Council Chief Executive, Clyde 2070/Programme Euston leads.

Agenda Focus: Strategic updates, infrastructure, housing, education, economic development, community integration, and alignment with Local Development Plans.

Outputs: Meeting summary reports, annual strategic updates, and an action tracker.

Governance: Rotating chair between Council and Royal Navy; secretariat support by Council; reports shared with relevant boards and CPP.

4.8 Next Steps

The original SDDF agreement was signed by the Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership and the Royal Navy. It is therefore proposed that agreement with the new arrangements will be sought from the Community Planning Partnership and Full Council.

The views of the Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee are invited before that agreement is sought.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The Clyde Transformation programme presents a significant opportunity for Argyll and Bute. Resetting governance arrangements will strengthen collaboration, ensure alignment with shared objectives, and maximise socio-economic benefits for our communities.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy: Aligns with LOIP and national defence priorities.
- 6.2 Financial: No direct cost; potential for significant economic benefit
- 6.3 Legal: None identified.
- 6.4 HR: None identified.
- 6.5 Customer Service: Positive impact through improved strategic outcomes.
- 6.6 Risk: Failure to engage effectively could limit benefits from Clyde 2070.
- 6.7 Climate Change: Supports low-carbon infrastructure planning.
- 6.8 Fairer Scotland Duty: Promotes inclusive economic growth.
- 6.9 Equalities: No adverse impact identified.
- 6.10 Consumer Duty: Not applicable.
- 6.11 Island Communities: Indirect benefits through regional economic uplift
- 6.12 Children's Rights and Wellbeing: Supports education and skills development.

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