

MINUTES of MEETING of ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL held ON A HYBRID BASIS IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, KILMORY, LOCHGILPHEAD AND BY MICROSOFT TEAMS on THURSDAY, 21 NOVEMBER 2024

Present: Councillor Jan Brown (Chair)

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

Attending: Pippa Milne, Chief Executive
Douglas Hendry, Executive Director
Kirsty Flanagan, Executive Director
Evan Beswick, Chief Officer – Health and Social Care Partnership
David Logan, Head of Legal and Regulatory Support
Fergus Murray, Head of Development and Economic Growth
Shona Barton, Governance Manager
Matt Mulderrig, Development Policy and Housing Manager

Prior to the commencement of Business, the Depute Provost, on behalf of the Council, recognised local competitors in Argyll and Bute who had won a number of prizes at the Royal National Mod. The Depute Provost recognised one achievement in particular, which had been a first for Argyll and Bute - Oban Gaelic Choir had taken home the prestigious Lovat and Tullbardine Shield again and in doing so had made Mod history by being the first choir to win the title for four years running.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Maurice Corry, Willie Hume, Jennifer Kean, Paul Donald Kennedy, Liz McCabe, Julie McKenzie, Yvonne McNeilly and Dougie Philand.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Gary Mulvaney declared a non-financial interest in items 9 (Housing Emergency – Local Housing Strategy Annual Update) and 10 (Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2025-26 to 2029-30) of the agenda as he was a member of Dunbritton Housing Association Board. Having reviewed the content of the reports, he did not feel that there was any substantive decision being taken and therefore advised that he would remain in the meeting during the consideration of these items of business.

Councillor Peter Wallace advised in relation to items 9 (Housing Emergency – Local Housing Strategy Annual Update) and 10 (Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2025-26 to 2029-30) that he had been appointed to the Fyne Homes Management Committee by the Council. Having taken note of the Standards Commission Guidance in relation to declarations (issued on 7 December 2021), with specific reference to section 5.4(c), he did not consider that he had a relevant connection and as such would remain in the meeting.

Councillor Mark Irvine declared a non-financial interest in items 9 (Housing Emergency – Local Housing Strategy Annual Update) and 10 (Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2025-26 to 2029-30) of the agenda as he was a member of ACHA Board. Having reviewed the content of the reports, he did not feel that there was any substantive decision being taken and therefore advised that he would remain in the meeting during the consideration of these items of business.

Councillor Iain Paterson advised in relation to items 9 (Housing Emergency – Local Housing Strategy Annual Update) and 10 (Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2025-26 to 2029-30) that he had been appointed to the Dunbritton Housing Association Board by the Council. Having taken note of the Standards Commission Guidance in relation to declarations (issued on 7 December 2021), with specific reference to section 5.4(c), he did not consider that he had a relevant connection and as such would remain in the meeting.

Councillors William Sinclair and Jan Brown each advised in relation to items 9 (Housing Emergency – Local Housing Strategy Annual Update) and 10 (Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2025-26 to 2029-30) of the agenda that they had been appointed to the ACHA Board by the Council. Having taken note of the Standards Commission Guidance in relation to declarations (issued on 7 December 2021), with specific reference to section 5.4(c), they did not consider that they had a relevant connection and as such would remain in the meeting.

Councillor Tommy MacPherson declared a non-financial interest in items 9 (Housing Emergency – Local Housing Strategy Annual Update) and 10 (Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2025-26 to 2029-30) of the agenda as he was an ACHA tenant. Having reviewed the content of the reports, he did not feel that there was any substantive decision being taken and therefore advised that he would remain in the meeting during the consideration of these items of business.

Councillor Dougie McFadzean advised in relation to items 9 (Housing Emergency – Local Housing Strategy Annual Update) and 10 (Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2025-26 to 2029-30) of the agenda that he had been appointed to the West Highland Housing Association Board by the Council. Having taken note of the Standards Commission Guidance in relation to declarations (issued on 7 December 2021), with specific reference to section 5.4(c), he did not consider that he had a relevant connection and as such would remain in the meeting.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of Argyll and Bute Council held on 26 September 2024 were approved as a correct record.

4. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

(a) Policy and Resources Committee held on 10 October 2024

The Minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 10 October 2024 were noted.

Arising from item 4 of these Minutes (Financial Reports Monitoring Pack – 31 August 2024) the Council approved the virements over £0.200m during July and August 2024.

5. LEADER'S REPORT

The Council gave consideration to a report providing an update on the activities of the Council Leader, Councillor Jim Lynch, for the period 16 September 2024 to 8 November 2024.

Decision

The Council noted –

1. the content of the submitted report; and
2. that any reports, briefings or copy correspondence referred to in the report could be requested through the Leadership Support Manager, noting that some confidential reports provided by external organisations such as COSLA may be restricted.

(Reference: Report by Leader of the Council dated 8 November 2024, submitted)

6. POLICY LEADS REPORT

The Council gave consideration to a report providing an update on key areas of activity for each Policy Lead Councillor covering the period 26 September 2024 to 8 November 2024.

Decision

The Council noted the content of the report.

(Reference: Report by Policy leader Councillors dated 8 November 2024, submitted)

7. POLITICAL MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The Council gave consideration to a report setting out remaining vacancies that had been carried forward from the Council meeting on 26 September; the report also provided an updated Political Composition of the Council.

Decision

The Council –

1. appointed Councillor Jim Lynch to Ionad Chaluim Chille Ìle (ICCI), The Gaelic Centre, Islay;
2. noted the updated Political Composition of the Council; and

3. noted that Councillor Dougie McFadzean had indicated his intention to step down from the Argyll and Bute Care and Repair Agency, and therefore appointed Councillor Anne Horn to Argyll and Bute Care and Repair Agency.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support dated 4 November 2024, submitted; and Motion by Councillor Jim Lynch, seconded by Councillor Audrey Forrest, tabled)

8. SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON PROXY VOTING FOR COUNCILLORS

The Council gave consideration to a report providing details on the terms of a Scottish Government consultation looking at the idea of making a provision for Local Authority Councillors to have an option for votes to be undertaken by proxy in specific circumstances. The report provided a draft response for agreement by the Council.

Decision

The Council

1. noted the content of the submitted report;
2. agreed a response to the consultation be prepared for submission to the Scottish Government in consultation with the Leader, Depute Leaders and Leader of the Opposition.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support dated 25 October 2024, submitted)

9. HOUSING EMERGENCY - LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY ANNUAL UPDATE

The Council gave consideration to a report detailing progress made on the Outcomes within the Local Housing Strategy to date and incorporation of the Housing Emergency Action Plan within the Local Housing Strategy Update. The report also provided detail on progress made in terms of the Council tackling the Housing Emergency in Argyll and Bute and proposed a set of metrics by which progress could continue to be measured.

Decision

The Council –

1. approved the content of the Local Housing Strategy Annual Update;
2. noted the ongoing activity and progress in relation to addressing the Housing Emergency; and
3. approved the metrics detailed in Section 4.19 of the report which would annually measure progress in tackling the Housing Emergency.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth dated October 2024, submitted)

10. STRATEGIC HOUSING INVESTMENT PLAN (SHIP) 2025-26 TO 2029-30

The Council gave consideration to a report outlining the proposed annual Strategic Housing Investment Plan covering the period 2025/26 to 2029/30 and summarised the proposals for the revised Strategic Housing Investment Plan, in line with statutory requirements in the latest guidance.

Decision

The Council agreed to –

1. continue to speak up for Argyll and Bute, highlighting the issues that will help to ensure that everyone who needs a home can find one that they can afford, in the right place and at the right time;
2. note that the Leader and officers of the Council are meeting with the Local Government Housing and Planning Committee of the Scottish Parliament on Monday 25th November to highlight the housing issues in the area;
3. the SHIP document 2025/26 – 2029/30, submitted to the Scottish Government on 25th October 2024, as the Council's approved Strategic Housing Investment Plan.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth dated November 2024, submitted; and Motion by Councillor Jim Lynch, seconded by Councillor Audrey Forrest, tabled)

11. LOCAL HEAT AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY STRATEGY (LHEES)

The Council gave consideration to a report advising on the outcome of the Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy consultation exercise which had received a positive response both in terms of volume of response and general support for the Strategy.

Decision

The Council –

1. approved the content of the submitted report; and
2. adopted the Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy and Delivery Plan as detailed at Appendix 1 and 2 to the submitted report.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth dated 21 November 2024, submitted)

12. HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS REGIONAL ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP - REGIONAL ECONOMIC STRATEGY

The Council gave consideration to a report providing background and context on the development of the Highlands and Islands Regional Economic Strategy through the Highlands and Islands Regional Economic Partnership.

Decision

The Council endorsed the Highlands and Islands Regional Economic Strategy to be taken forward by the Highland and Islands Regional Economic Partnership.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth dated 28 October 2024, submitted)

13. TIMELINE UPDATE: ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL VISITOR LEVY

The Council gave consideration to a report providing an update on the pre-consultation preparatory work for the draft Argyll and Bute Visitor Levy Scheme.

Decision

The Council –

1. noted the content of the submitted report; and
2. endorsed the requirement for the draft Argyll and Bute Council Visitor Levy Scheme and associated papers to be considered to go out to a 12 week consultation period in January to March 2025 at a Special Council meeting on 20 December 2024 rather than on 21 November 2024.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth dated 7 November 2024, submitted)

14. TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997 - APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF PLANNING OFFICER

A report providing an update on the appointment of a Chief Planning Officer for Argyll and Bute Council was before the Council for noting.

Decision

The Council noted the appointment of Fergus Murray as Chief Planning Officer for Argyll and Bute Council.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support dated October 2024, submitted)