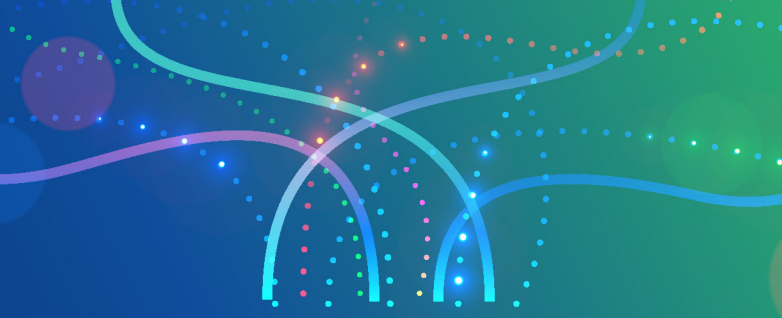




ICT AND DIGITAL STRATEGY 2021-2024





INTRODUCTION

Argyll and Bute Council is a sector leader in using digital technology to enable effective public service delivery.

This ICT and Digital Strategy aims to position Argyll and Bute Council as a “digital by default” authority. It will sit alongside the new Digital Strategy for Scotland to help realise Argyll and Bute’s full potential in a digital world.

The council already benefits from a low cost, stable, and efficient ICT environment. Building on this, the council’s digital by default transformation programme will achieve “digital services so good that all who can use them prefer to use them”.

The strategy matches ICT and Digital services with the council’s ambition for service improvement and sustainability through digital innovation. It sets out how ICT and Digital services will be designed, sourced and delivered, and how digital technologies and processes can support our people and our customers to work better together, get things done, and contribute to a better organised and more efficient council.

When fully implemented the strategy will lead to further efficiencies, savings, and improved services for council staff and customers.

Our goals as a **truly digital by default authority** are to:

- *be inclusive and put customers’ needs first;*
- *make services more efficient through the adoption of new ways of working enabled by technology;*
- *put services online and encourage all of our people and customers to use them by default;*
- *work in real-time - with systems available 24/7;*
- *be automated - with minimal manual processing;*
- *be intelligent and pre-emptive of the next steps and future trends;*
- *be secure and accessible anytime.*

Our aims are simple:

- *Our networks and systems are secure, accessible, current, and enable delivery of council and service objectives.*
- *ICT provides value, and enables and empowers both customers and staff to make tasks easier.*
- *Our people have the knowledge and capabilities to use ICT effectively.*

A Recovering Council

Our working environment is no longer limited to our offices, depots and schools. The events of 2020 have resulted in huge changes to the way we work, the way we teach, the places we work from, and our reliance on remote technologies. Such changes present huge opportunities for a recovering council and for our people. Our strategy will support all who need access to systems and information from every possible place of work.

The events of 2020 have also reaffirmed that data is the fuel which drives service delivery. Our services need to know who in our communities are vulnerable, in order to better protect them. They need to know when and where social care is required, in order to deliver it effectively. Every day our council takes in information, processes it, and uses it for service delivery across every aspect of the council. ICT will continue to help our customers collect data more effectively, process it more efficiently, and use it intelligently to better tailor what we do to meet the needs of our community.

We will meet the changing and growing digital expectations of our customers via a strategy that allows for a clear and progressive approach to continuously improving ICT and Digital services at pace. We will make our environment simpler. We will consolidate systems where possible and we will introduce industry leading collaborative technologies to allow us all to work better together.

Our ICT Digital Vision is to provide digital technologies and processes to support our people and our customers, to encourage collaboration, get things done and contribute to a better organised and more efficient council. Our ICT Digital Vision is supported by four key themes - Customers, Technology, Processes, and People.



CUSTOMERS

ICT provides value to our customers

Our Customers will:

- choose digital by default;
- blend working from the office, home or other locations;
- meet, both internally and externally, using virtual platforms;
- access self-service channels;
- not be digitally excluded.

Key Deliverables:

- Customer focused services.
- Customer service excellence.
- Easy to use system interfaces.
- Explore using new digital technologies.
- Service improvement driven by customer data.



PROCESSES

ICT is secure, accessible, current and enables delivery of council objectives

Our Processes will:

- be simpler;
- be more efficient;
- be planned;
- be prioritised;
- be continually improving;
- be documented and communicated.

Key Deliverables:

- Simplify process complexity.
- Optimise technology investment.
- Unlock our data.
- Fit for purpose infrastructure and key business solutions.
- Manage our information better.
- Improve change management.
- Evidenced compliance.



TECHNOLOGY

ICT enables effective, streamlined council processes

Our Technology will:

- be secure;
- be up to date;
- be easy to use;
- be cost effective;
- be accessible;
- be mobile and flexible.

Key Deliverables:

- Secure and resilient network and infrastructure.
- On-premise and cloud technologies.
- Up-to-date systems.
- Microsoft 365 for all users - mobile, flexible digital tools.
- Fit for purpose business systems.
- Latest hardware exploited



PEOPLE

Our people have the ability to make ICT work effectively for them

ICT will Empower Our People to:

- be customer focussed;
- be digitally skilled;
- be collaborative;
- be supported;
- be innovative.

Key Deliverables:

- Enhance the digital skills of the council's workforce.
- Annual attainment of the Customer Service Excellence standard.
- ICT teams have the skills to support the council.
- Maintain a high level of awareness of ICT and data security across the council.
- A culture of agile working within ICT.



CUSTOMERS

Our customers have a wide range of abilities and confidence in using ICT. They want to get the most out of our business systems and they have strong expectations in the way they envisage using ICT to effect change, deliver digital services and engage with citizens, clients, customers and learners.

Our customers need an up-to-date range of effective tools to support digital working, democracy, and community empowerment. Services are engaging in different ways with their customers, looking to access efficient services from multiple locations and being able to quickly adapt to an ever changing business and learning environment.

Our strategy will empower our customers to get the job done in a rapidly changing environment, to increase efficiency and mitigate the impacts of reduced funding, and is a key driver to support effective ICT and Digital services. We will:

- *provide the right tools to support digital and flexible working;*
- *simplify access to our main systems, with one set of credentials for each customer;*
- *build and design solutions with, rather than for, our customers;*
- *work to understand customers' needs and expectations, and use this knowledge to provide quick, easy and seamless digital solutions that will be the preferred choice;*
- *support departments who seek new ways of working more effectively and efficiently using ICT and digital tools;*
- *support departments in providing new channels and services for their engagement with their customers;*
- *be more flexible within the constraints of the ICT Capital Programme;*
- *offer an approachable, helpful and effective ICT support service;*
- *make available options for self-service and other channels, and use the council's Intranet Hub for communication of our services and key operational information;*
- *enhance the customer experience through continuous service improvement, incorporating both user feedback and technological advancement to improve and expand our ICT and digital offering.*

WHAT	WHY	WHO	WHEN
Embed a Customer First Approach			
• Engage more widely with our customers.	• To better understand what customers want from ICT and digital services and respond accordingly.	ICT	Dec 2021
• Improve the accessibility of our corporate network.	• To allow customers to perfectly blend working from the office, home or other locations as necessary.	ICT	Dec 2021
• Work with customers who seek to find new ways of delivering services more effectively and efficiently.	• To ensure an enhanced customer experience through outcome-driven continuous service improvement.	ICT	Dec 2024
Improve Digital Services for Customers			
• Continue the move towards providing services on a digital platform wherever possible.	• To meet the expectations of customers who wish to transact digitally with provider services.	ICT	Dec 2024
• Continue to provide access for joint teams within the HSCP to council and NHS systems in support of strategic integration objectives.	• To enable the HSCP to work as a partnership and continue to provide and improve their essential front-line services.	ICT/NHS	July 2022
• Facilitate further consolidation and improvement of the council's public-facing payment channels.	• To meet the expectations of the public who value the speed and convenience of e-commerce on the web.	ICT/Revenue Services	Dec 2021
• Help facilitate a digital platform for community engagement.	• To evaluate provision of a new public engagement platform, in alignment with COSLA and the Scottish Government's policy on community empowerment. ¹	ICT/Community Planning & Development	Dec 2021
• Continue to support delivery of digital learning transformation	• To widen access to education and ensure equity of opportunity.	ICT/Education	Dec 2021
Continue to Support the Customer Service Excellence Programme			
• Make it easy and convenient for customers to engage via the Service Desk and CLOs (Customer Liaison Officers).	• To be responsive to the evolving needs and strategic direction of our customers.	ICT	Dec 2021
• Develop further benchmarking and customer satisfaction surveys.	• To ensure ICT understands the needs of our customers, and that we deliver best value.	ICT	Annually
• Provide technical support to Live Argyll and other contracted partners when required.	• To ensure the council's partner organisations are provided with ICT and Digital services appropriate for their needs.	ICT	Annually

¹<https://www.gov.scot/policies/community-empowerment/participatory-budgeting/>



PROCESSES

Our business processes will be streamlined, robust and efficient and they will help in our goal to transform service delivery. We will use the latest technologies to deliver innovative and effective processes, and ensure secure and easy access to our data, minimising effort and duplication.

We will work with services to:

- *strategically re-design processes ensuring, where possible, that systems interface seamlessly with each other to provide intuitive, end to end user experiences for both customers and staff;*
- *increase our use of automation and workflow management for high volume, low complexity transactions to make them more cost effective;*
- *unlock the value of our data through improved management, access and analysis to gain insight and better inform our decision making;*
- *embrace the principles of sharing our data with our partners and customers whilst maintaining its confidentiality, integrity and availability, through compliance with data protection legislation and the use of secure information sharing platforms.*

WHAT	WHY	WHO	WHEN
Simplify Process Complexity			
- Encourage implementation of Digital by Default services incorporating automation and workflow technologies. - Support business process re-engineering and user journey mapping activity using appropriate methodologies. - Continue to develop the ICT Service Desk through the introduction of a range of self-help capabilities and greater automation of routine tasks.	- To support service redesign and transformation and increase productivity. - To build the right solutions for the problems that our users truly need solved, and ensure using digital enhances and improves the service experience for our users. - To make it easier for ICT customers to engage with ICT, be more self-sufficient and free up ICT staff time.	ICT ICT ICT	Dec 2024 April 2023 April 2022
Optimise Technology Investment			
- Join up our systems through more integration using available technologies. - Ensure our suppliers use open standards and interfaces. - Challenge the technology market suppliers and procurement frameworks.	- To streamline processes between systems and identify opportunities to reuse existing applications where technically possible, rather than buy new ones. - To ensure commonality of systems and data to support integrations and automation. - To obtain the flexible and cost effective services/systems we need through engagement via our procurement team, active contract management and supplier user groups.	ICT ICT ICT/ Procurement, Commissioning and Contracts	Dec 2024 April 2022 April 2022
Unlock Our Data			
- Increase our data analysis expertise through acquisition of specialist skills and knowledge. - Increase our use of data analytics tools. - Embrace the principles of openness driven by the Scottish Government Open Data Strategy. ² - Optimise the use of our data. ² https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-data-strategy/	- To build on existing in-house data expertise, and develop protocols, publishable data sets and a consistent approach to our data use - To inform process redesign and service transformation plans. - To help make public services more transparent and more of our data publicly available. - Re-use existing robust data sources to reduce duplication and bureaucracy and improve data quality and consistency and improve customer experience. - Use the data we have as an asset to inform business decisions. - Use analysis and prediction techniques to turn data into information and then knowledge.	ICT ICT ICT ICT ICT ICT	April 2023 April 2023 April 2023 April 2023 April 2023 April 2023

WHAT	WHY	WHO	WHEN
Implement Fit for Purpose Infrastructure and Business Solutions			
- Assess condition and suitability of our ICT assets. - Developments are driven by service needs and priorities. - Annual Group Asset Management Plan (GAMP)	- Our infrastructure and business solutions are fit for purpose and compliant. - Our customers' business needs are met. - Our investment plans are transparent, prioritised, and funded.	ICT	Annually Annually Annually
Manage Our Information Better			
- Support records management compliance. - Improve document management and back office systems integrations. - Reduce the use of paper to a minimum. - Improve information findability/discoverability. - Standardise digital solutions for sharing content outwith the council.	- Harness metadata and technology to assist in retention and disposal of content. - Hold information and documents once and securely. - Support our green agenda, reduce cost and support flexible working. - Reduce time searching for information. - A collaborative council, assured data security and compliance with GDPR.	ICT/Governance, Risk and Safety	April 2022 Dec 2024 April 2022 Dec 2023 April 2023
Improve Change Management			
- Adopt customer centric change principles. - Simple, innovative and agile approach. - Align ICT and Digital services to business and education needs.	- Excellent customer focussed services. - Facilitate organisational change. - Responsive to changing business priorities and working practices.	ICT	Dec 2024
Evidence Compliance			
- Provide a secure infrastructure to support compliance with Data Protection Legislation. - Ensure Public Services Network/ CE+ compliance. - Maintain a network that meets Payment Card Industry Data Security Standards compliance.	- Ensure the privacy and security of personal data. - Protect the security and integrity of our council network. - Process card payments securely and prevent fraud.	ICT/Governance, Risk and Safety ICT ICT/Financial Services	Dec 2021 Annually April 2021 thereafter Annually



TECHNOLOGY

Our ICT environment will be secure, accessible, and maintained to the highest standards. Our core platforms, systems, hardware, and devices must be fit for purpose and fit for the future.

Our technology will enable and empower all of our users rather than add complexity to the work they do. We will continue to provide a secure, resilient and reliable core infrastructure. We will take all measures necessary to protect our network against cyber-attacks and to ensure robust arrangements are in place to deliver service continuity in the event of a component failure or other adverse incident.

Our systems and applications will be available to all of us, wherever we need to work from. They will operate at the latest versions and will be fully supported by our suppliers and we will, where applicable, continue to provide platforms and software in the cloud where it is economically viable to reduce long term cost.

We will maximise the use of existing systems and past investment whilst embracing technological advances to deliver a truly flexible and mobile working environment that is fit for the digital age.

WHAT	WHY	WHO	WHEN
Secure and Compliant Infrastructure			
• <i>Maintain our compliance with Public Sector Network and Cyber Essentials Plus standards.</i> • <i>Rollout of cloud content filtering for our corporate and education environments.</i> • <i>Employ and empower an in-house accredited cyber security professional.</i> • <i>Review and improve our disaster recovery and business continuity plans and technologies.</i> • <i>Conduct a systematic disaster recovery scenario for key systems.</i> • <i>Continually improve and promote the council's Cyber Security Policy.</i> • <i>Conduct National Cyber Security Centre exercises to test our readiness for cyber incidents.</i>	• <i>Ensure our security is robust, our customers and our systems are protected.</i> • <i>Protect the council and minimise the risk from cyber attack.</i> • <i>Ensure ICT can maintain high service delivery standards no matter the emergency.</i> • <i>Reassure our customers and partners that we can be trusted when transacting with us digitally.</i> • <i>Better prepare, inform, and equip our people when managing all cyber security risks.</i>	ICT	Annually
Optimise Our Infrastructure			
• <i>Utilise cloud services and features where they improve on-premises solutions.</i> • <i>Extend our Mobile Device Management infrastructure to include all devices.</i> • <i>Ensure our infrastructure is up to date to take advantage of any technology changes.</i> • <i>Maintain our data centres with class leading server, storage and communications technology.</i>	• <i>Improve customer and staff experiences and efficiency.</i> • <i>Enable mobile devices to be managed effectively using the appropriate infrastructure and tools.</i> • <i>Ensure that ICT and Digital services delivered to the council are secure, resilient and reliable.</i> • <i>Prepare and make use of improved infrastructure as a result of BT Openreach full fibre rollout.</i>	ICT	Annually

WHAT	WHY	WHO	WHEN
Implement Microsoft 365			
• Migrate all users to Microsoft 365. • Adopt Microsoft Teams as our unified communications platform and as a central base for MS365. • Adopt Sharepoint online as our document repository. • Establish a robust back up regime for off premise MS365 Environment. • Exploit additional MS365 capability to replace or supplement existing solutions.	• Introduce all users to a range of new collaborative tools and remove limitations associated with mailbox and file share sizes. Provide a single hub for collaborative teamwork and standardise on a nationally used communication platform. • To increase the use of video and audio conferencing, reduce the need to travel to meetings, and improve the effectiveness of meetings for the participants. • To enable efficient partner working through digital collaboration and information sharing technologies and to simplify access and search of business data beyond unstructured files and folders. • To ensure we can recover from unexpected incidents outside of our control and restore cloud hosted data. • Maximise the potential of the MS365 platform to support council-based innovation and development and find new opportunities to help deliver the maximum benefit for staff and customers.	ICT and Education ICT	Dec 2021
Enable a Mobile and Flexible Workforce			
• Develop simpler processes for accessing data securely from all environments. • Implement Cisco Anyconnect on all corporate and education end user devices . • Improve staff collaboration and modernise school telephony.	• Our staff and pupils can work from anywhere safely and securely and to introduce greater flexible working options. • To enable officer access to back office systems on the move to save time and improve efficiencies. • Extend unified communications to all schools and staff across the education infrastructure.	ICT	Dec 2022

WHAT	WHY	WHO	WHEN
Review and Improve Core Business Systems			
- Position our line of business systems to be an engine for change. - Help deliver the replacement of the council's: - HR System - Financial Systems - Carefirst Social Work system	- To modernise the council's core systems and to maximise the use of existing systems and exploit more unused functionality. - To ensure we rationalise our application portfolio wherever practical to reduce datasets and costs and improve the sharing of data across the organisation.	ICT/HR/ Financial Services/HSCP	Dec 2023
Refresh our hardware			
Keep all hardware assets refreshed and up to date	Minimise support costs, improve availability and user experience with modern and fresh technology.	ICT/Digital Team	Annually
Explore the use of new digital technologies			
- AI to introduce new and innovative services. - Machine Learning to provide customers with new insights into their data. - The Internet of Things (IoT).	- To exploit the opportunities for innovation provided by AI, in line with the "AI Strategy for Scotland"³ developed by Scottish Government and the Data Lab. - To better predict customer requirements based on clusters and patterns observed in past data, for example Telecare clients at risk of future falls where preventative care should be offered. - Work with partners such as Capita SWAN and others to evaluate the benefits of IoT technologies for the council.	ICT	Dec 2024

³ <https://www.scotlandaistrategy.com/>



PEOPLE

ICT supports people working across all council services including Live Argyll and HSCP staff, and our Elected Members. ICT Client Liaison Officers work with assigned departments to develop new ideas and look for ways to exploit technology innovations, to improve the way council services are planned and delivered.

Digital skills will be elevated to new levels with all staff supported to meet their full potential. Staff will have the opportunity to train and further develop their digital skills as identified by their performance reviews and developments and their departments' operational needs.

We will:

- *support our people wherever they work, and as an agile service we will continue to adapt and respond to their changing requirements;*
- *continue to invest in and develop our ICT support staff to ensure they are trained in the latest industry standards and best practice, and are able to work with our wide range of suppliers to support the many software applications and tools in use across the council;*
- *help our people to focus primarily on using their specialist software, safely and securely, with a minimum of disruption, to plan and deliver council services;*
- *use feedback from formal customer satisfaction surveys and national benchmarking to influence and develop our staff training plans;*
- *continue to support the council's "Growing Our Own" policy through the recruitment of modern apprentices and help to address the national ICT skills shortages affecting the recruitment of experienced and qualified staff in a rural area (in line with the Strategic Workforce Plan 2018-2021⁴);*
- *encourage our staff to be innovative, by providing an open platform for staff to explore new ideas and investigate new technologies and opportunities;*
- *support and collaborate regularly with partners in other local authorities, the Third Sector, NHS, UK and Scottish governments, the Improvement Service, Scottish Local Government Digital Office, and Skills Development Scotland, among others. through participation in seminars, projects, and networking opportunities.*

⁴ https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/sites/default/files/strategic_workforce_plan_2018_-_2022.pdf

WHAT	WHY	WHO	WHEN
Enhancing Digital Skills			
Enhance the digital skills of the council's workforce and develop our leaders, school pupils and learners, putting digital skills at the heart of our services, communities and curriculum.	All staff and elected members must be equipped to exploit the council's IT systems. Feedback from PRDs and staff surveys regularly include requests for systems-specific training. Support our employees to be comfortable with the technologies we use to deliver services and introduce a Digital Learning Framework for staff including system administrators and departmental development teams.	HR/OD Team and ICT	Annually
Customer Service Excellence			
Continue to achieve attainment of the annual Customer Service Excellence Standard.	Maintains the recognised high standard of excellent customer skills that ICT provide.	Customer Engagement Team and ICT	Annually
ICT Staff Training			
Ensure our ICT teams have the necessary technical and management skills to support the council.	Develop our ICT staff to ensure they can get the most from: • <i>Emerging technologies</i> • <i>Smarter working practices</i> • <i>Up to date management skills.</i>	ICT	Annually
ICT Security Awareness			
Maintain a high level of awareness of ICT and data security across the council.	All staff are aware of their responsibilities for the security of the systems and data they use.	Legal Services and ICT	Annually
Agile Working			
Embed a culture of agile working within ICT.	A Digital by Default Council will require ICT staff to adopt an agile approach to support a more diverse working environment and advise on these changing requirements.	ICT	Dec 2024

RESOURCES

Argyll and Bute Council has a centralised ICT function providing a full range of support services to all corporate and education establishments, users and services. In addition the service provides all infrastructure and key application support services for secondary schools. ICT operates from two main centres in Lochgilphead and Helensburgh and also has a number of key frontline support staff based in Oban, Campbeltown and Dunoon.

ICT Revenue

The total cost of the ICT service in 2020/21 is £5.1m including capital charges and £3.9m without. This equates to 2% of the council's total revenue budget. A significant part of the budget (c £1.66m) pays for externally provided supplies and services in support of the entire organisation.

Annual inflationary cost increases imposed by third party suppliers require us to seek improved value from our ICT suppliers. This applies to the central ICT budget and departmental budgets for 3rd party ICT applications and related services.

Socitm's UK wide benchmarking service, Socitm Improve, scored the council's ICT service as the number 1 ranked UK ICT service for 2019/20. The council scored highest of all in both cost and performance, illustrating a service that provides exceptional quality and value for money compared with other councils in the UK. Customer satisfaction scores also remain in the UK top quartile in the most recent Socitm Improve study. Overall the council's score ranked highest of all Scottish participants. These are impressive results in light of the comparatively low cost of the council ICT service.

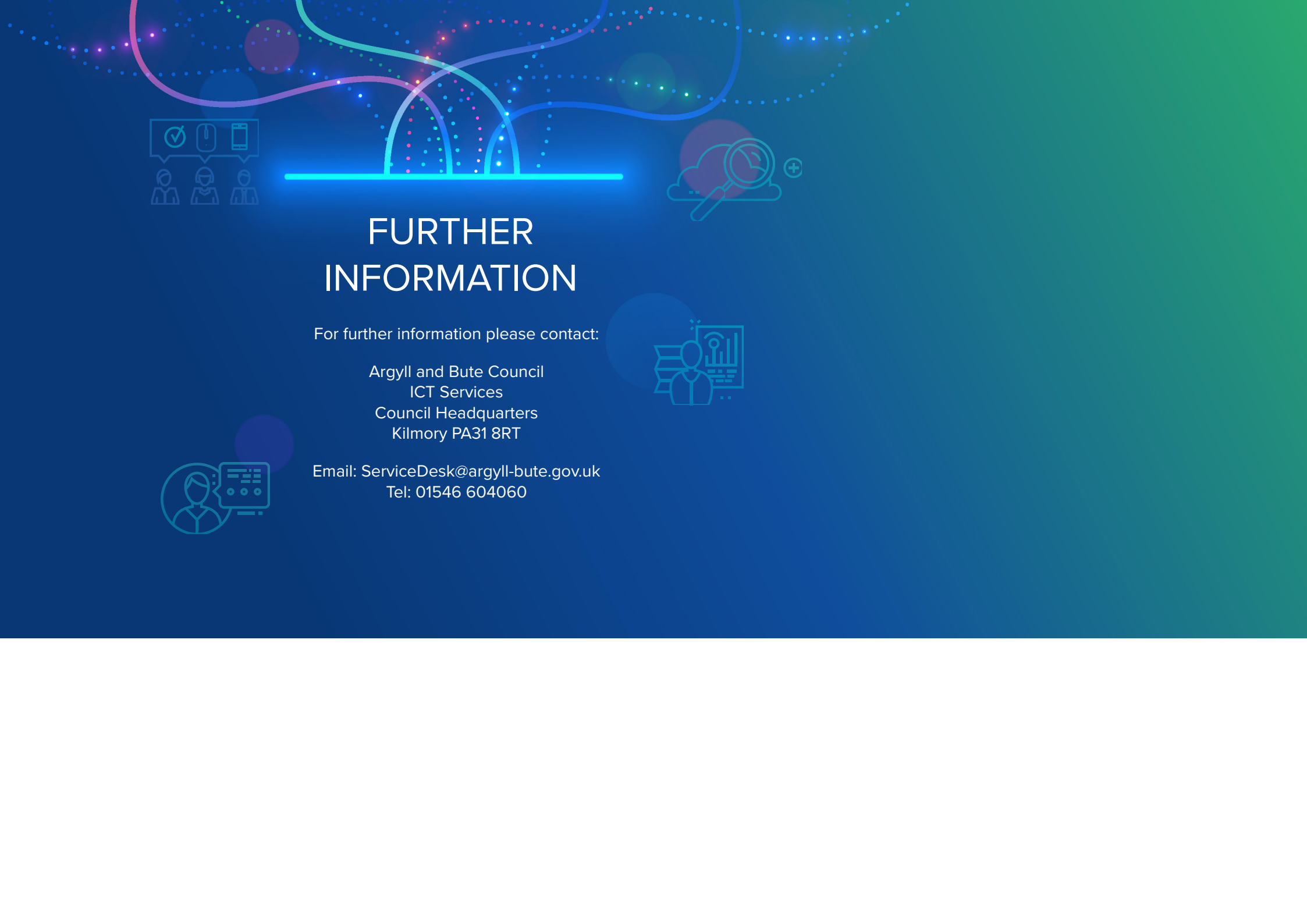
ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL ICT 2020/21 REVENUE BUDGET		
Head of Customer Support Services	2020-21 £000s Without Capital Charges	2020-21 £000s With Capital Charges
Employee Costs	2,791	2,791
Supplies and Services	1,662	1,662
Transport Related Expenses	29	29
Income	-573	-573
Capital Charges	0.00	1194
TOTAL Revenue Budget	3,909	5,103

RESOURCES

ICT Capital Plan

The ICT Steering Board or its successor will continue to oversee the prioritisation, development and delivery of the ICT capital work programme, ensuring the most appropriate deployment of funds and resources in support of the council's corporate and service objectives. This extends to the assessment of outcomes and ensuring that expected benefits are delivered. Despite financial challenges we have a track record of finding ways to deliver important projects and innovation in response to emerging ICT and Digital priorities. As outlined in the GAMP (ICT Capital GAMP November 2020), the capital funding available to ICT will be consumed mainly by existing asset sustainability projects such as PC and network equipment replacement, delivering limited infrastructure sustainability, and a much reduced development programme covering only the highest priority projects.

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL ICT 2021-24 CAPITAL PLAN			
Head of Customer Support Services	2021-22 £000's	2022-23 £000's	2023-24 £000's
Asset Sustainability			
Server Sustainability	188	183	70
PC Replacement	543	567	539
Telecomms Network	123	156	310
Block Allocation	37	0	0
	891	906	919
Service Development			
Application Projects	385	303	0
TOTAL Capital Budget	1,420	1,209	919



FURTHER INFORMATION

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