

The responsible budget for Argyll and Bute



**How your views helped to set it and our
next steps**

March 2018

Setting the responsible budget for Argyll and Bute

The long term success of Argyll and Bute as a place to live, work and visit needs investment in the local economy now.

Every day our residents and businesses use a huge range of council services, from roads to schools to recruitment services.

Argyll and Bute Council's budget has fallen by more than 3% (tens of millions of pounds) over the past four years. Our funding gap in 2018/19 alone was £5 million. More funding cuts are expected next year and in the years after.



Setting a responsible budget for Argyll and Bute was therefore about taking difficult decisions that would make it possible to invest in the longer term as well as in our most vital services now.

That is what we did – with your help.

A lot of people went to a lot of effort to give us their views, on making savings and on working with the council to support our communities. More than 770 people, of all ages and from across Argyll and Bute, responded to the consultation and gave around 2,500 comments and ideas. Others gave views directly to the councillors of Argyll and Bute. *Thank you.*

We listened to what you told us and you will see in the pages that follow just how much your views shaped the council's budget.

We're making vital and significant investment in Argyll and Bute in the face of challenge – we want to see Argyll and Bute thrive.

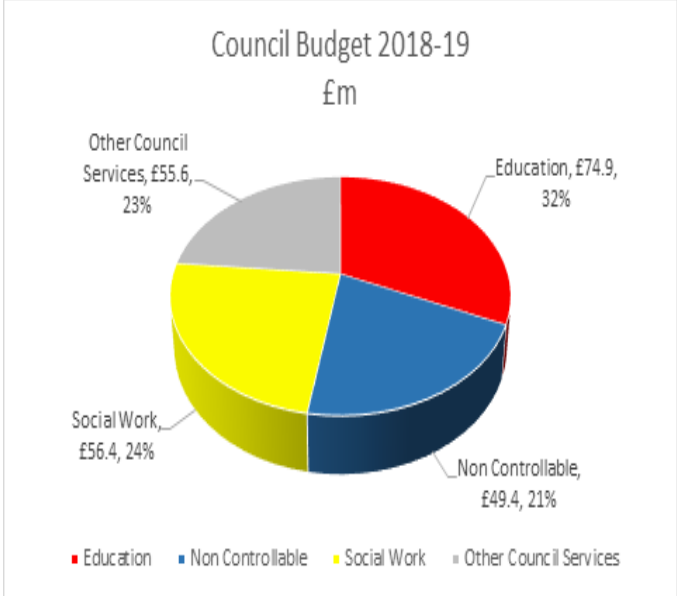
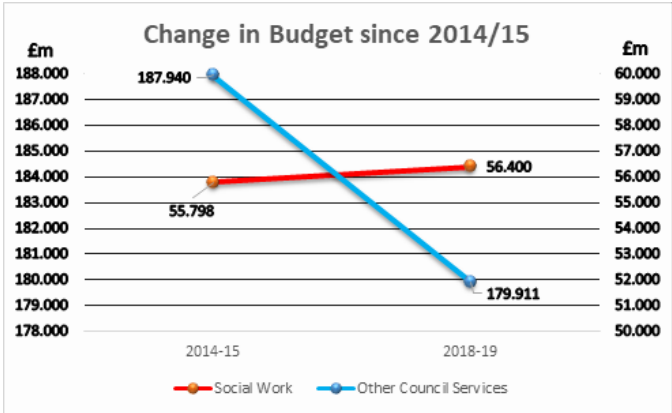
Councillor Aileen Morton
Leader of Argyll and Bute Council

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Planning our services: Investing in your priorities

We asked you to tell us which three areas of the council's work are most important to you. We matched funding to your priorities.

You said – these services matter most	We did															
<p>Education for children</p>	<p>The council continues to dedicate more funding to our education services than to any other area of work.</p>  <table border="1"> <caption>Council Budget 2018-19</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Service Area</th> <th>Amount (£m)</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Education</td> <td>£74.9</td> <td>32%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Social Work</td> <td>£56.4</td> <td>24%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Non Controllable</td> <td>£49.4</td> <td>21%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other Council Services</td> <td>£55.6</td> <td>23%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Service Area	Amount (£m)	Percentage	Education	£74.9	32%	Social Work	£56.4	24%	Non Controllable	£49.4	21%	Other Council Services	£55.6	23%
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<p>Care for vulnerable people</p> <p>Our social care services are managed and delivered by the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP).</p>	<p>We have protected the HSCP from the funding cuts experienced by council services.</p> <p>Since 2014, council funding for social work services has increased by 1%; budget remaining to fund other council services has decreased by 4%.</p>  <table border="1"> <caption>Change in Budget since 2014/15</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Social Work (£m)</th> <th>Other Council Services (£m)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2014-15</td> <td>55,798</td> <td>187,940</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2018-19</td> <td>56,400</td> <td>179,911</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Social Work (£m)	Other Council Services (£m)	2014-15	55,798	187,940	2018-19	56,400	179,911						
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<p>Roads</p>	<p>We are dedicating another £15 million over the next two years in our roads network.</p> <p>The £40 million already invested by the council over the past six years is delivering improvements to local roads.</p> <p>We are also campaigning for improvements to the trunk road network (please see page 7 for details).</p>															

Bridging our funding gap—cutting costs and raising income

Our funding gap in 2018/19 alone was £5 million. More funding cuts are expected next year, and in the years after, rising potentially to as much as £18 million over the next two years. Our priority is always to do all possible to protect services.

For 2018/19:

- We identified another £0.620m [management/operational savings](#) in 2018-19 rising to £1.245m by 2020-21 without impact on policies
- We increased council tax by 3%, as assumed by the Scottish Government in its funding settlement for councils
- We have continued to work to increase income and make best possible use of our assets.

Our One Council Property Approach is one action we are taking to raise income

We have over 1700 buildings and parcels of land including airports, supermarkets, terminals, as well as schools, offices and cemeteries, all sitting in a variety of council departments and with varying degrees of focus and prioritisation.

We are shifting this to a proactive property development approach that brings efficiency through consistent, strategic management.

Your ideas in action:

The One Council Property approach matches one of the most recurring suggestions you made – that we sell, rent or make better use of buildings.

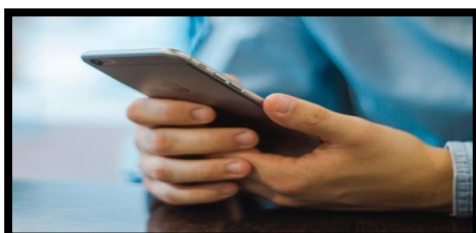


Investing in ICT – for customer service and savings

With 115,000 emails being sent to/from the council every day, local people and businesses are increasingly working with us on-line, from making payments to finding information about services.

Council employees depend on ICT (information and communication technology) to deliver the support customers need. Working with us on-line can make savings and help protect our services.

We have therefore invested an additional £0.76 million that will ensure we can maintain and develop on-line services to deliver customer service and savings.



Your ideas in action:

'Better use of IT' was a popular suggestion as a way to cut costs and raise income

Bridging our funding gap— savings decisions

We asked if you were for, against or had no view of 32 different savings options. The majority of people were in favour of, or had no view of, all options.

Council Leader, Councillor Aileen Morton:

“Taking service savings allowed us to invest in priority areas such as the HSCP or roads. The key drivers for our decisions are below.”

- Community response – for example, it was clear from public feedback that the proposal to close some toilets was unwelcome. We decided therefore that no toilets are to be closed. However, as the future is uncertain and this is not a statutory council service, we are looking into alternative options for providing public toilets, including supporting community groups to take facilities over.
- The [Priorities for the council](#) – for example, instead of ending funding for our (non-statutory) Road Safety Unit, we are asking the unit to prioritise ways of making travel to school safer and more child-friendly, and also to find ways of reducing congestion at school gates.
- Risks to the council: no decision is risk free but the changing landscape in education in Scotland means that we felt it was inappropriate to reduce the Central Education Team – who provide support to every school in Argyll and Bute – at this time.



Your priorities in action: The council rejected eight out of 32 savings options, fully or in part, to protect services that communities said matter.



- We will maintain a Road Safety Team to train children and young people in keeping road-safe
- We will maintain education improvement and support, with future support needs to be considered in 2018
- We will maintain public health and food safety services through the Environmental Health Team
- Parking charges will be matched to local circumstances rather than a one-size-fits-all approach
- Public toilets will remain open; alternatives for reducing their cost will be sought in 2018
- Community transport grants will continue to be available

- Funding and additional support for advice services will continue in 2018/19, with a full review to be reported to committee in May
- Roads and Amenity services will combine; two fixed-term posts will be created to improve customer care

You can read more about service option decisions [on our website](#).

Savings options agreed this year, and in previous years, mean that we have reduced the £18 million budget gap over the next 2 years to £10 million.

Working together for our communities and our future

Getting involved

We asked you about getting involved with us in helping your community through volunteering. The majority of people said that they would be interested in getting involved for these reasons:

- Making a difference to life in their community, work experience, training.

The most popular areas of the council's work for potential volunteers are:

- Community engagement/development, community councils; environmental or conservation; looking after or helping vulnerable people

Promoting Argyll and Bute to attract people and jobs

The long term success of Argyll and Bute depends on more people building their lives and the local economy here.

We asked what makes you most proud of Argyll and Bute, and how you could best help to promote it as a great place to live, learn, work and do business.

- Scenery, lifestyle and the people who live here were your three top reasons for being proud of Argyll and Bute.
- Social media was your top choice for playing a part in promoting the area.

Your ideas in action:

We launched an Argyll and Bute Instagram site which promotes the area mainly using photos provided by members of the public; it is proving so popular that it is now the most followed council Instagram site in Scotland!
#abplace2b

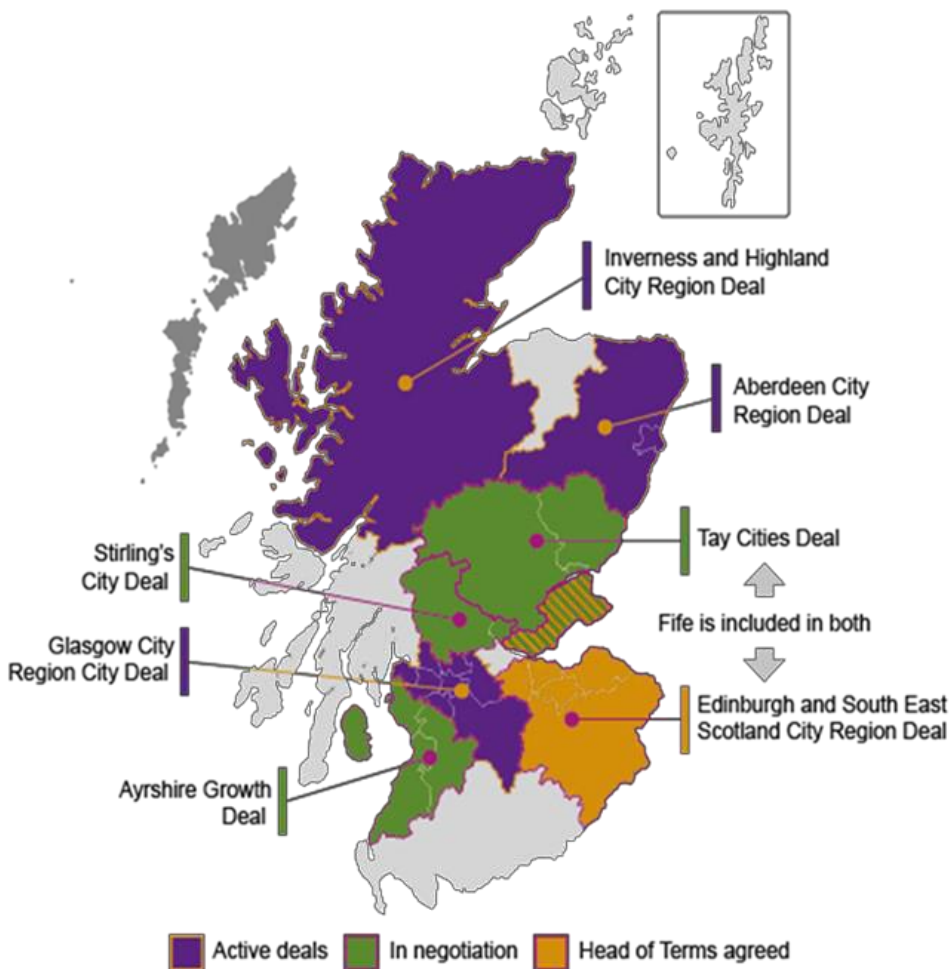


Campaigning for the future of Argyll and Bute

Rural Growth Deal

Council Leader, Councillor Aileen Morton:

“Securing a Rural Growth Deal for Argyll and Bute is a priority for us. A Rural Growth Deal would bring transformational investment for Argyll and Bute from the UK and Scottish Governments. As you can see from the graph below, island and rural authority areas are clearly missing out.”



GLASGOW CITY REGION DEAL
£1.13 BILLION
EDINBURGH & SOUTH EAST CITY REGION DEAL
£1.1 BILLION
ABERDEEN CITY DEAL
£826 MILLION
INVERNESS & HIGHLAND CITY REGION DEAL
£315 MILLION
ISLAND AND RURAL AUTHORITIES ARE STILL AWAITING GROWTH DEALS

Improving our road network

Councillor Aileen Morton:

“As mentioned earlier in this report, Argyll and Bute Council has invested heavily in maintaining our road network. Key routes however, such as the A83, A82 and A85, are the responsibility of the national government agency, Transport Scotland.

Argyll’s road network is crucial to local people, local businesses, our visitors and Scotland as a whole, considering our production of major exports such as timber and food and drink.

We are raising again with the Scottish Government the need for investment in Argyll and Bute’s roads, including finding a permanent solution for the Rest and Be Thankful.”



Did you know

The council looks after 2300km of roads across Argyll and Bute ranging from key 'A' class routes to unclassified roads serving single houses. 40% of our roads are on islands.

Bear Scotland manages the trunk roads in Argyll and Bute on behalf of the Scottish Government, including the A82, A83, A85 and A828.

Working together

Invitation to join our Citizens’ Panel



The council is keen to work with as well as for residents and communities across Argyll and Bute. Our Citizens’ Panel is one option for getting involved.

Panel Members will receive surveys by email inviting your views on different aspects of the work of the council and our partners. The information will be used to shape the services that we deliver.

Joining is easy. Please [find out more on our website](#).

If you have questions about this report, please contact:
planningourfuture@argyll-bute.gov.uk or call 01546 604171.

Thank you