

2017/2018



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Foreword



Councillor Aileen Morton
Leader
Argyll and Bute Council

‘Success through partnership’ can best describe 2017/18 for Argyll and Bute Council. Welcome to our annual report where we highlight just some examples of the progress we have made for Argyll and Bute and the importance of partnership in it all.

One of our most visible successes was BBC’s The Country Council. As well as stunning shots of Argyll and Bute, the programme gave an insight into the every-day challenges our employees face in their work to help our residents and communities.

It was very well received, not just locally, but throughout the country, and as showcase for Argyll and Bute as a great place to live, learn, work and do business, I think it really worked.

Partnership among those with a role to play in Argyll and Bute will continue to be crucial. A declining population means that we must attract more jobs to attract more people to Argyll and Bute.

Securing transformational UK and Scottish Government funding, through a rural growth deal, is key in our ambitions for the area. In the year ahead we will draw on our proven experience in building effective partnerships to progress a deal, for the benefit of Argyll and Bute, and the country as a whole.



Cleland Sneddon
Chief Executive

Argyll and Bute is recognised as one of Scotland’s most promising regions. It’s not surprising. We have businesses making their mark nationally and internationally, scenery that inspires visitors (and film makers!) from around the world and natural resources with potential to drive our local and wider economies. More and more, people are making Argyll and Bute—the natural choice.

As a council we have many roles to play in the success and future of Argyll and Bute, as a major employer, a provider of services, a driver of the economy. I am proud to say that we boast dedicated employees who are achieving often award-winning progress in the work we are doing.

The council will continue to transform how it works to meet future challenges head on. Together, we will do that as Argyll and Bute’s most ambitious, committed ambassadors.

This report highlights just some of our achievements over the past 12 months, many of which have been achieved in partnership with others. This is something we take great pride in.

Locally, the council will transform to meet the coming challenges head on and we look forward to working for, and with, our community to continue to build a prosperous Argyll and Bute.

Argyll and Bute

Argyll and Bute is an area of achievement. It has award-winning people and businesses. Argyll and Bute is a place and lifestyle people love.

Our economic success is built on a growing population.

We're well connected to the central belt of Scotland by road, rail and ferry. Air services link Glasgow with Kintyre and Islay in less than an hour, and Oban to the spectacular inner Hebridean islands of Coll, Colonsay and Tiree in 30 minutes.

Our innovative communities have strong cultural identities and a can-do attitude. This is a place where everyone can make a difference. Growth sectors of renewable energy, life sciences, food and drink, tourism, creative industries and forestry have much to offer investors.

We are the second largest local authority in Scotland, in terms of land mass, and have the third sparsest population density. Seventeen per cent of our population lives on our 23 inhabited islands and 80% of our residents live within 1km of the 3500km coastline.

There are challenges. Like many other areas, we have a declining and aging population —25% of the population is over 65 years old. Furthermore, the geography that makes Argyll and Bute so special also creates its own issues in supporting and developing existing and new infrastructure to help grow our businesses and economy.

We have developed six outcomes that will make this a place that people, our long-term residents and the new ones we will welcome, want to live, learn, work and invest.

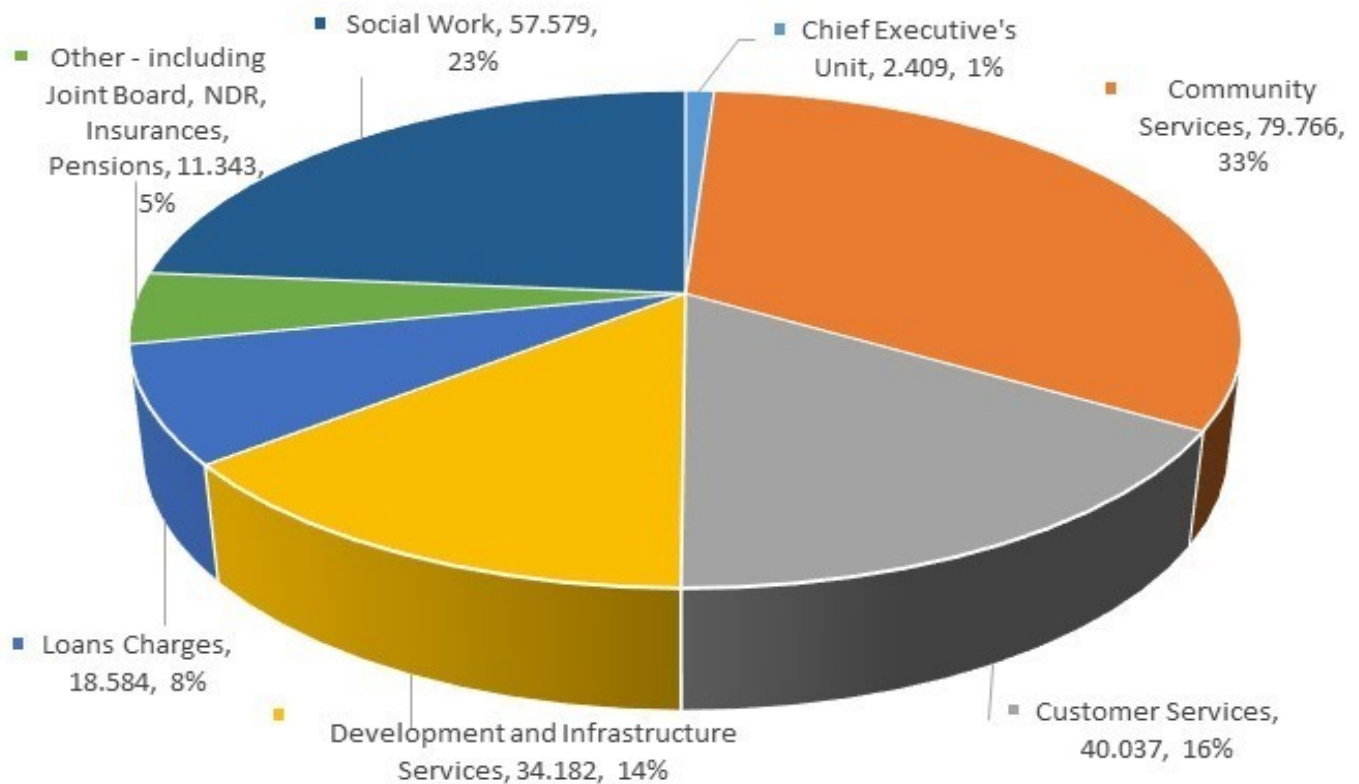
- Our economy is diverse and thriving.
- We have an infrastructure that supports sustainable growth.
- Education skills and training maximise opportunities for all.
- Children and young people have the best possible start.
- People will live active, healthier and independent lives.
- People will live in safer and stronger communities.



Choose Argyll and Bute **live, learn, work and do business**

Finance

What the money was spent on in 2017-18 (£m)



The council set a 2017-18 budget for stability, security and success in Argyll and Bute. Its focus was on protecting jobs and the services people need, while also investing in the future of the area.

Despite a reduction in Scottish Government funding of £6.3 million, we delivered £1.4m in efficiency savings that did not impact on communities. We continued to identify 'spend to save' projects and listened to what our local communities told us mattered to them, taking account of their views in reaching difficult decisions.

This drive, to overcome challenge through transformation and change, put us in a better position than many other councils.

Our key investments included:

- £2m in roads capital improvement works;
- £54.223m to the Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) for 2017-18 with additional one-off funding of £2.1m to help its transformational change;
- £1.6m+ in tourism, leisure facilities, and community regeneration.
- £1m in maintaining safe working environments for our employees and customers.

Council efficiencies also allowed us to make one-off investments in roads and health and social care in 2018/19.

Outcome 1— our economy is diverse and thriving

- A new transit berth and harbour building opened in Oban, supporting the growth of the number of cruise ships visiting Oban from 15 in 2015 to 24 in 2017. The refurbishment Hermitage Park, Helensburgh, and the Queen's Hall, Dunoon, are nearing completion.
- We continue to regenerate our town centres to benefit residents and visitors. There are Conservation Area Regeneration Schemes ongoing in Campbeltown and Dunoon, while Inveraray CARS is completed . This work supports our tourism trade, brings new housing for local residents and has led to new businesses being opened.
- We support local businesses to start-up and grow. 94% of Business Gateway customers said their expectations were met and 93% said their businesses would benefit from the support provided.
- Argyll Enterprise Week 2017, organised with our partners, delivered 16 events across Argyll and Bute and nearly 300 participants. 100% of attendees said they learned something new.
- We supported business communities in Oban and Dunoon to successfully re-ballot for their Business Improvement District (BID) groups.
- We work to support ambitions for individuals and businesses. Our planning service has succeeded in delivering a decision-making process on planning applications that is faster than the national average: 8.3 weeks on average in Argyll and Bute compared to a national average of 9.3 weeks.
- Our Oban Airport saw 3,202 passengers carried , to our islands, on air services operated out of the airport.



For more information visit:

[Performance and best value](#)

Outcome 2 — We have an infrastructure that supports sustainable growth

- Our Strategic Transportation unit secured £1.258m external capital funding for transportation infrastructure projects across Argyll and Bute from Cycling Walking Safer Streets, Sustrans, Smarter Choices Safer Places and Strathclyde Partnership for Transport.
- We work with digital providers and partners to ensure that Argyll and Bute's digital connectivity improves, which helps our businesses, residents and visitors. The first 16 locations for the 4G In-fill Programme have been announced and these include Southend, Crinan and Garelochhead.
- 89.2% of premises in Argyll and Bute are now connected to the broadband fibre network and 81% of premises can access speeds greater than 24Mbps.
- Our Aqualibrium leisure complex, in Campbeltown, will be one of the first projects in Scotland to make revenue savings by generating heat from waste products. The project has been funded by the Scottish Government.
- We carried out detailed design work at Rothesay to deliver a wavescreen and repairs to the pier. These works will protect the long-term future of the pier.
- People are recycling 3% more waste since we introduced three weekly general waste collections. This means less material goes to landfill which is good for the environment and reduces the cost to the council and residents of Argyll and Bute. All savings free up scarce resources for delivering other frontline services.



For more information visit:

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Outcome 3 — Education skills and training maximise opportunities for all

- In 2017 our young people improved their attainment at SCQF 5 (National 5). There has been an increase of A-C passes of 5% from 2016-17, which is 1.6% above the national average.
- We aim to offer 60 modern apprenticeship places within the council by 2020. We have offered 42 modern apprenticeships and 91% of our apprentices, who have already completed, have gone on to a positive destination. 70% secured further employment with the council.
- Our SQA accredited training centre provides opportunities for employees to undertake qualifications which are relevant to their role. It offers a number of qualifications such as SVQs in a range areas including health and social care, education and business and administration.
- Business Gateway delivered seven World Host workshops for Argyll and the Isles Tourism Co-operative (AITC) in 2017-18. 55 individuals gained their customer service accreditation. To date Business Gateway has delivered 33 workshops for AITC, and trained 338 individuals, making Argyll and Bute even more welcoming to visitors.
- The Digital Boost Programme, delivered via Business Gateway, offers fully funded workshops advice and support. In 2017-18 we provided 31 workshops on a range of digital subjects, and enabled 18 businesses to access up to three days of specialist advice.
- Increasing demand from cruise ships visiting Oban led to us working in partnership with the Scottish Tour Guide Association and the Port of Oban Cruise Group to offer accredited tour guide training.



For more information visit:

[Perfomance and best value](#)

Outcome 4 — Children and young people have the best possible start

- Our education strategy Our Children, Their Future, sets out our belief that Argyll and Bute is the best place in Scotland for our children to grow. Our vision is that together we will realise, equality excellence and ambition. This starts from the work we do with families before a child is born all the way through to making sure our young people move on to positive destinations at the end of their school career.
- We implemented successful pilot programmes for delivering 1140 hours of pre-school education on Mull and Tiree. Evaluation of both trials showed evidence of a positive impact on children and families. As an example of feedback, one parent on Tiree reported that the additional Early Learning and Childcare has enabled her to return to work on the island.
- We increased the number of staff that are trained and delivering the PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) programme. Staff are now more confident in supporting wellbeing in the classroom. The target of 75% was exceeded and 80% of qualifying staff were trained during the year.
- We continue to improve the positive destinations for looked after children. Working with partner agencies we made sure that we have relationship-based support in place. We want to encourage and promote young people, with experience of being in care, to engage in further education, training and employment opportunities.
- 94.2% of 16-19 year olds from Argyll and Bute are participating in education, training or employment, compared to 91.8% nationally. We are proud our young people are well placed to achieve success in life.



For more information visit:

[Performance and best value](#)

Outcome 5 — People will live active, healthier and independent lives

- We have continued to work with our health colleagues, as the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), to deliver vital health and social care services .
- We pledged funding to help deliver a new Dunoon Community Sports Hub.
- We carried out improvements works to 3G pitches at Innellan, Lochnell, Tobermory, Bendarroch, Dunoon and Kirkmichael.
- Welfare Rights helped vulnerable people access £1m in the first three months of 2018.
- In response to feedback from our residents telling us that they use digital channels to get council news, we have developed our use of social media. The number of people following the council on key corporate social media sites has increased to 20,000.
- We have sought our communities' views on a wide range of topics, including consultation on the budget decisions taken by the council.
- 90% of people who came to us for help avoided becoming homeless. This improved on the 81% helped in 2016/17.
- The uptake of school meals remains above the Scottish average, for both free and paid meals, in our primary and secondary schools.



For more information visit:

[Performance and best value](#)

Outcome 6 — People will live in safer and stronger communities

- 55 empty homes in the private sector were brought back into use, exceeding an annual target of 25. This is a 12% increase on last year.
- 75 affordable new homes were completed as part of our Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP). 229 new affordable homes were delivered in the first two years of the Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2016 – 2021, exceeding the target of 100 units per annum.
- Large-scale events are important to Argyll and Bute's economy and we want to make sure they are safe and successful. The Council piloted Safety Advisory Groups in 17/18. This multi-agency approach, co-ordinated by the council's environmental health team, is now part of our strategy for promoting events.
- We work hard to protect consumers, including working with the police to target 'scams', and promoting 'no-cold calling' and call blockers to protect vulnerable clients. We met government targets in ensuring that tobacco is not sold to underage people. The percentage of shops with suitable controls in place to prevent selling to under-age customers increased to 92%, from 83% in 2016.
- The Dunoon community has been supported to develop an action plan for the town centre. Think Dunoon, a place making charrette exercise, helped generate the action plan. Financial support from Argyll and Bute Council and Highlands and Islands Enterprise, enabled SURF (Scotland's regeneration forum) to work with an 'alliance' of community activists and local organisations to prioritise and develop the actions. Funding from Big Lottery Fund will support a dedicated part time worker to progress the idea of an 'alliance', and to further develop key projects suggested by the charrette.



For more information visit:

[Performance and best value](#)

Looking to the future

Within the council we are making changes to support success across all the outcomes and develop sustainable customer service.

Digital transformation is underpinning changes to our services and meeting the needs of the geography and dispersed population within Argyll and Bute.

Over the year, 264,510 transactions with the council were made on line allowing people to do what they needed to where and when it suited them.

The council call centre handles, on average, over 500 calls a day.

We need more people, to deliver services and run the businesses we all need. We are investing in our employees through the our Growing our Own initiative. We offer opportunities for young people, at the start of their working life, to join the council. Once with us, we encourage and support our employees to reach their full potential through lifelong learning.

The council is also investing in creating opportunities for growth, and positive change is already happening.

You can see it in our award-winning businesses, the increase in visitors to the area and the regeneration of our town centres,

However, we can't do it on our own.

Working with a range of partners in the public and private sector, and with the backing of our communities, we are putting together a case, for discussion with the UK and Scottish Governments, to secure a rural growth deal for Argyll and Bute.

A rural growth deal for the area is a priority. It could bring significant funding from both Governments, over 10 years, for projects that benefit the local area and the economy.

Argyll and Bute has much to offer, with key industries that support our own economy as well as those of Scotland and the UK. Think tourism, food and drink, marine science and renewable energy.



Useful links: [Award winning council](#) | [Our vision for Argyll and Bute](#) | [Council website](#)

Argyll and Bute



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