

# SERVICE ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

## DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

PERIOD: FINANCIAL YEAR 2019/20

### DELIVERING OUR OUTCOMES – CASE STUDIES ILLUSTRATING THE POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO OUR COMMUNITIES

Corporate Outcome: **People Live Active, Healthier and Independent Lives**

Business Outcome 101 We Ensure Information And Support Is Available For Everyone

#### 1. Delivering a Community Food growing Strategy

**Community Food Growing Strategy**  
Argyll and Bute Council.  
Food-Growing Strategy  
April 2020



**Vision** – Our vision is to encourage and enable people in our community who wish to grow their own food, by providing: information on potential community food growing spaces, advice and guidance.

This is Argyll and Bute's first Community Food Growing Strategy aimed at encouraging and empowering people to grow their own food. Argyll and Bute is a very diverse area from towns near the Glasgow conurbation to remote rural areas. We have 23 inhabited islands and are known as a crofting county with a long history of people growing their own food. As a local authority, we recognise that there are currently many different forms of community food production in the area including: orchards, community growing spaces and gardens, edible hedgerows, school growing spaces and three allotments, thus reflecting the existing diverse culture of Growing (Y) our Own.

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill - Part 9 which was enacted on the 24th July 2015, places a duty on local authorities to take reasonable steps to protect and provide growing spaces to meet community needs. It requires local authorities to provide a food growing strategy that reflects their area and to identify potential land in our Local Development Plan which may be used for cultivation by community groups.

The Argyll and Bute Community Food Growing Strategy explains how we support current community growing provision and how we will respond to future demand and support new approaches such as community lead growing space establishment.

The Argyll and Bute Council Community Food Growing Strategy provides an insight into what the allotment and community growing provision already exists within our area. This was informed by a stakeholder engagement survey, the results of which have enabled us to capture the current status, management arrangements and interest of the community in growing their own food.

In order to address the objectives of the strategy we will encourage and empower communities to establish their community growing spaces/gardens by providing information to community groups. These groups will independently manage their respective growing spaces addressing all day-to-day issues relating to plot holders.

The strategy outlines an approach that should deliver best value for Argyll and Bute Council Area and all community groups that have an interest in growing their own.

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Barcaldine Primary School- Growing spaces.

### A snap shot on what our schools are doing to promote 'Growing our Own Food'

Our schools promote 'Growing your Own Food' through Curriculum for Excellence with many using a variety of growing spaces from raised beds, containers to tunnels to grow a wide range of vegetables, fruit and herbs. We have included some pictorial examples throughout this publication to illustrate this.

A number of schools run a variety of programmes in order to gain the necessary skills for successful food growing. An example of this approach is Tighnabruich Primary School who run a year round permaculture programme which is based on ecological principles for food growing and includes composting and nutrient cycling, energy cycles and renewable energy, building design, storytelling and practical hands-on experiences. The school has a poly tunnel, an orchard and a forage hedge allied with two beds within the local Kyles Allotment Group community growing space which is located within the Kilfinan Community Forestry.

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### Business Outcome 102 We Provide Support, Prevention And Opportunities To Help People Make Better Lifestyle Choices

1. New processes and service arrangements have been implemented to protect the quality of private water supplies

The **Water Intended for Human Consumption (Private Supplies)** (Scotland) Regulations 2017 introduced new duties in local authorities and a new regime relating to private water supplies on which commercial properties were located. This increased the regulated supplies in Argyll and Bute by 100% to 980 supplies, introducing enhanced monitoring and risk assessment programme. The environmental health service have redesigned its delivery arrangements to meet this additional workload, as well as continuing to offer improvement grants to users of supplies, in order to protect and improve the drinking water quality of users of private water supplies in Argyll and Bute which accounts for 31% of our total population (national average 3.6%).





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## Business Outcome 103 We Enable A Choice Of Suitable Housing Options

### 1. Area Property Action Groups

#### Area Property Action Groups

Area Property Action Groups (APAGs) have been established in all 4 administrative areas of Argyll and Bute Council to address concerns regarding unsafe/problematic buildings. Officers from various services are involved. This includes; Housing, Planning, Building Standards, Landlord Registration, Environmental Health and Community Safety and Economic Development.

The aims of the partnership meetings associated with APAG are to identify 'problematic buildings' and to develop a pro-active, co-ordinated and strategic approach for practical and effective Council intervention across services. This method provides an opportunity for Officers to address the relevant issues associated with a variety of buildings and to identify the most effective/appropriate tools and service to liaise with owners/ responsible parties.

Whilst there are many statutory powers available that Services can utilise to bring properties up to an acceptable standard, this type of action can result in high costs to the Local Authority with limited scope for recuperation. By linking the different powers and tools available to each service, Officers can now take a more targeted and joined up approach to addressing the particular problems associated with each building that have been highlighted by colleagues, elected members, and/or our customers.

5 Branksome Park, Oban is a good example of this co-ordinated approach with the APAG working group coming together to identify funding and facilitate development after the property was identified as a priority for repair and energy efficiency improvements by the Council's Housing Service having fallen into a bad state of repair. The project consists of four private owners; and has benefitted from a variety of different funding options to create a suitable and sustainable funding package for all owners involved. The property is a 1950's style cavity wall flatted property and delivering the necessary improvements was considered problematic due to issues surrounding the multiple ownership including timescale and legal matters relating to a property that was vacant following the death of an owner with the state of disrepair preventing resale until improvements had been carried out.

The improvements to the property included provision of cavity wall insulation, external wall insulation, replacement of a flat roof with a pitched roof, and interior works to eradicate rot. The Housing service contributed a proportion of Private Sector Housing Grant which was utilised for common repair issues and has been factored in to the package; predominantly for the roofing upgrades. The Council also receive a grant from the Scottish Government for fabric insulation upgrades called the [Home Energy Efficiency Programmes for Scotland: Area Based Scheme \(HEEPS: ABS\)](#) which has assisted with the cavity wall insulation and external wall insulation for the project. In addition, Argyll and Bute is one of the pilot areas for the Scottish Government's [Equity Loan](#) pilot project – which allows householders the opportunity to take equity out of their property in order to fund repair and energy efficiency improvements. Development Management officers were engaged at an early stage in the project by attendance at the APAG group and were able to process and determine the related planning application within a 4 week period to assist with delivery timescales of the project.



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**Corporate Outcome: People Will Live In Safer And Stronger Communities**

**Business Outcome 105 Our Natural And Built Environment Is Protected And Respected**

1. The Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan 2015 sets out policy provisions which seek to protect and enhance the historic built environment. These principles are exercised in practice by the Design and Conservation Officer and Development Management Officers in their handling of applications for listed building consent, and providing advice to prospective applicants. The attached case study from the 2018/19 PPF details the high profile 'Hill House Box project' which is intended to secure the long term future of the category A listed Hill House, in Helensburgh. Officer engagement was critical to the delivery of this innovative project which has subsequently been short-listed for awards by the RIAS/RIBA.

## Case Study 2 The Hill House: The Big Box Project

The work of the Scottish architect, designer and artist, Charles Rennie Mackintosh (7 June 1868 – 10 December 1928) is today celebrated internationally. His designs have connections with the Arts and Crafts, Glasgow Style, and progressive developments on the Continent. Glasgow Mackintosh introduces you to many of his world-famous buildings and interiors.

In the 1890s he was part of 'The Four' – an informal grouping with the English sisters Margaret and Frances Macdonald and James Herbert McNair – that produced some of the most inventive decorative art and graphic design of the period. His major achievements include his masterpiece The Glasgow School of Art, the villas Windyhill and The Hill House, Scotland Street School and a series of city-centre tea room interiors. In common with many of his contemporaries he believed that the architect was responsible not just for the fabric of a building, but for every detail of its interior design.



The innovation driven by Mackintosh in the construction of Hill House has however resulted in some fundamental problems which have allowed prolonged water ingress and a requirement for a major conservation project to safeguard the future of the property. The house is a Category A Listed Building located within the 'Hill House Helensburgh Conservation Area'. Following pre-application engagement, a planning application for the project was submitted by the National Trust for Scotland during March 2018 with planning permission granted within the statutory determination period and ensuring that there was no undue delay to delivery of urgent conservation works.

The proposal comprises a free standing temporary shelter placed over the entire building to prevent further water ingress into its interior. The shelter is required for a 5 year period whilst conservation work is undertaken. In addition planning consent was granted for the erection of a two storey modular café/visitor centre located inside the shelter. This is required to ensure the building still functions as a world famous visitor destination.

Water ingress has occurred due to defects in the original construction and the limitations of early 20th century building technology. As a result the house is suffering on-going damage to its original fabric, both internally and externally.

The objectives of the conservation works are to:

- Stop further water ingress by erecting weather protection around vulnerable areas

- Confirm sources of water ingress by close inspection and moisture survey work
- Confirm extent of original roughcast (in order to establish how much survives)
- Confirm condition of existing fabric behind wall linings (in order to establish the extent of rot and monitor the drying out process)
- Implement a managed drying out of existing fabric using a conservation heating system
- Develop long-term solution which addresses the short-comings of the cement roughcast
- Demonstrate a rigorous conservation approach to all stakeholders

The conservation project consists of a series of key elements, which include:

The 'Big Box' – A free standing structure with no support from the house. Designed as a shelter for the house from direct rainfall a solid steel apex roof with gables facing south and north. Walls are vertical metal mesh perforated façades that provide high levels of daylight and airflow. An artificial lighting system is required to illuminate within enclosure and provide 'daylight' replacement within the house. The steel framed substructure is located within the grounds of garden with some planting, trees and vegetation also enclosed. Materials are metal roof, a lightweight lattice frame clad with a perforated stainless steel mesh which allows the building to remain visible to the public.

Visitor Walkways – Inside the structure accessible ramps and high-level walkways allow visitors the unique experience of being able to view conservation work as it progresses and to discover parts of property which are usually hidden from view, to venture onto a walkway which extends over the roof, and also to enjoy panoramic views across Helensburgh and the surrounding area.

**Customer Feedback:**

*"This project required a considered planning process due to its unique nature and importance of the building it was to protect. As agents for the project we had a strong collaborative relationship with Frazer MacLeod as the Planning Officer responsible for the project. This included excellent pre application engagement, with clear advice and concerns outlined allowing the design to be adapted in a timely manner. Communication during determination was open and responses to questions and queries raised was swift. During construction, when the public raised issues around the construction these were dealt with by Frazer and the planning department in an open and pragmatic manner. While planning queries from the National Trust for Scotland and the design team were addressed clearly and swiftly.*

*The excellent approach from Argyll and Bute Planning Department helped in the successful construction of the Box to protect and conserve the Hill House."*

Neil Michels, Carmody Groarke Ltd.

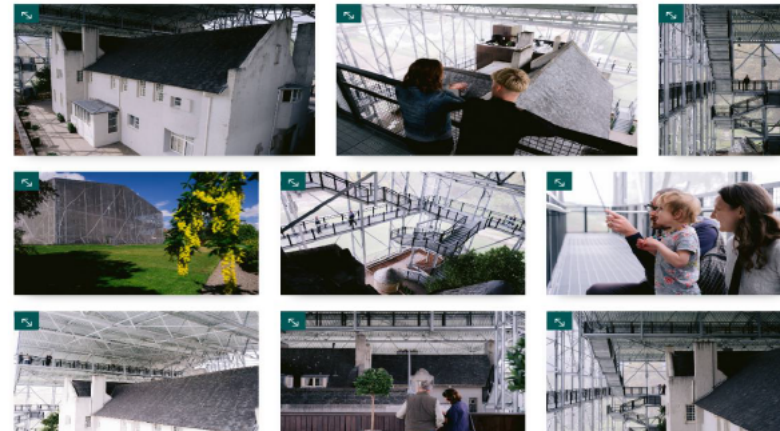


Image credit: screen shot from [NTS website](#)

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### 2. Heritage-led Regeneration Projects

#### a) **Campbeltown Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS)**

- All grant funding committed. Finale reporting and evaluation due to be carried out.
- 5 priority building projects completed within budget safeguarding the future of 14 commercial units and 36 residential units.
- Tenement repair project at 22-30 Main Street/2-8 Longrow South wins Best Collaborative Project at the Howdens Scottish Empty homes Champion of the Year awards 2019.
- Shopfront Merchandising Training event held attended by 30 local businesses. Thirteen businesses benefited from one-to-one sessions.
- Funding secured to develop and produce a digital App for Campbeltown town centre.



**Rear deck – Before**



**Rear deck - After**

- #### b) **The Avenue Screen (The Arches), Inveraray** – £200,000+ repair scheme completed in November 2019. Main element was the removal of the failing cement render and replacement with lime harling. The structure was then decorated with silicate paint. Other works included; replacement stone copes using local stone, installation of new leadwork and all existing gates and screens removed from site, fully repaired and redecorated and reinstated.



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**Before work started**



**After work completed**

### **Corporate Outcome: Our Economy Is Diverse And Thriving**

#### **Business Outcome 110 We Support Businesses, Employment and Development and Opportunities**

##### **1. High hops for Islay Ales thanks to Business Gateway**

Islay Ales, a traditional 4-barrel brewery based on the island of Islay, has doubled its turnover after being awarded a grant and receiving specialist support from local advisory service, Business Gateway.

Local entrepreneurs Mackay Smith and Donald MacKenzie approached Business Gateway for support as they embarked on the company's first rebrand and the development of essential training workshops for their small team.



The duo, who also run the established whisky company, The Islay Boys Ltd, have wholly owned Islay Ales since July 2018. Since working with Business Gateway, the business has completely revamped its product offering with the notable introduction of a lager, the development of new recipes and the roll-out of a fresh, contemporary brand for the 15-year-old company.

These steps have significantly increased the appeal and success of the brand, which is now sold in all bars and hotels in Islay. It is a popular choice for locals and tourists alike who can also purchase it on the ferry crossing.



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The increased turnover, which has sparked the growth of the business, has resulted in the installation of a taproom at their brewery and Islay Ales is currently planning work on bigger, bespoke premises. This has created an opportunity for interested parties and investors to be part of the business's future growth plans.

### 2. Seaweed Farming Feasibility Study

Argyll and Bute Council commissioned SAMS to produce a report on the feasibility of Seaweed Farming. The completed Seaweed Farming Feasibility Study (SFFS) was published in December 2019. The report was presented by Argyll and Bute Council Officers at the ALGET 2 conference in Bergen, Norway in January 2020 and at the Scottish Seaweed Industry Association (SSIA) conference in February 2020. This generated a wide interest within communities, the industry and potential investors. Many contacts which were made at both events, and firmed up at the SSIA conference, have been followed up to work out potential new seaweed farming opportunities and other projects. For Example the Economic Growth team came up with an initiative to find partners for studying bio-remediation properties following a call from a consultant who became aware of the SFFS report and expressed an interest in exploring the ability of seaweed in absorbing pharmaceutical waste, thus removing it from the marine environment. This resulted in a SAMS-UHI Proof of Concept Proposal outline being drafted in March of 2020, with the idea to apply for funding. The PharmaSea proposal will research the ability of seaweed to adsorb pharmaceutical compounds that are currently polluting our marine environment as traditional wastewater treatments are not designed to efficiently remove all of them. This innovative approach, if developed into a new sustainable technology, could be effectively applied to protect our environment.



3. The Council's Development Management Service processes planning applications with the aspiration of delivering positive outcomes in all cases. This approach is reflected in our high approval rates with around 97% of planning and related applications being approved annually, and our willingness to input additional time and resource to engage and work with applicants and other stakeholders within the planning process in order to resolve issues that would otherwise prevent a positive determination and delivery of new development and employment. The attached case study from the 2018/19 PPF submissions identifies some of high quality developments which have recently be completed within Argyll and Bute.

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## Case Study 7 Examples of High Quality Design 2018/19



### The Columba Hotel, Tarbert

Change of use and alteration of former hotel to form 7 residential flats.

**Key Issues:** Sensitive conversion and alteration/extension which has secured the long term future of a derelict, category C listed building that occupies a prominent location within the Tarbert Conservation Area.

**Added Value:** Pre-application engagement provided the developer with sufficient comfort to purchase this derelict building and assistance in the development of detailed proposals which successfully obtained planning and listed building consent.

Image credit: [https://bellinoram.co.uk/property/flat-1-columba-house-pier-road-tarbert-pa29-6uf/#ndtn-panel\\_description](https://bellinoram.co.uk/property/flat-1-columba-house-pier-road-tarbert-pa29-6uf/#ndtn-panel_description)



Image credit: <http://l-m-a.co.uk/work/play/premier-inn-oban/>



### Premier Inn, Oban

Development of an 81 bedroom hotel

**Key Issues:** Redevelopment of a key site within Oban town centre; development is located on a location with a dual frontage.

**Added Value:** Pre-application engagement provided certainty on key matters relating to the acceptable scale of the development, key features of the building design and the palette of materials.

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<https://www.arqyl-bute.gov.uk/dunoon-regeneration-queens-hall-project>

Image credit: <https://www.hfm.co.uk/projects/queens-hall-dunoon/>



### Queens Hall, Dunoon

Refurbishment and remodelling of auditorium to incorporate fitness suite, library, café and playzone, and improvement of urban realm

**Key Issues:** Council led project to renew and revitalise a tired and dated 1950's auditorium and improve the public realm forming the gateway to Dunoon town centre to create an exciting gathering place with indoor and outdoor spaces.

**Added Value:** Investment of £9m led by the Council's Economic Development team supported by input from the Planning Service as a key component in the [Dunoon Regeneration Project](#).



### The Machrie Hotel, Isle of Islay

Alteration and Extension of Hotel

**Key Issues:** Transformation of a landmark at one of Scotland's best golf courses which had fallen into disrepair into a 47 bedroom boutique golf hotel with facilities including a cinema and private lodges which re-opened in Summer 2018.

**Added Value:** Significant input by the Planning Service to assist with the development of the project from pre-application discussions through to implementation. Development was shortlisted for 2019 RICS Award for Tourism and Leisure.

Image credit: <https://hudsonarchitects.co.uk/our-work/the-machrie-hotel-1>



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### Business Outcome 112 Argyll And Bute Is Promoted To Everyone

#### 1. Tarbert and Lochgilphead Regeneration Fund

Gleaner Site Phase 1, Ardrishaig – delivered by Scottish Canals with grant funding from the Tarbert and Lochgilphead Regeneration Fund

The project has delivered new and refurbished historic buildings, enhanced public realm and improved walking and cycling facilities. The main focus of the project was the creation of the Egg Shed, a heritage and community hub, which provides information about the canal and its surrounding communities as well as a multipurpose meeting room. The £1.65 million project was delivered with the support of £250,000 funding from the Tarbert and Lochgilphead Regeneration Fund as well as £580,000 secured from the Scottish Government's Regeneration Capital Grant Fund by Argyll and Bute Council on behalf of Scottish Canals. The Egg Shed opened in August 2019.



Before



After