

ICT AND DIGITAL STRATEGY 2021-2024





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".

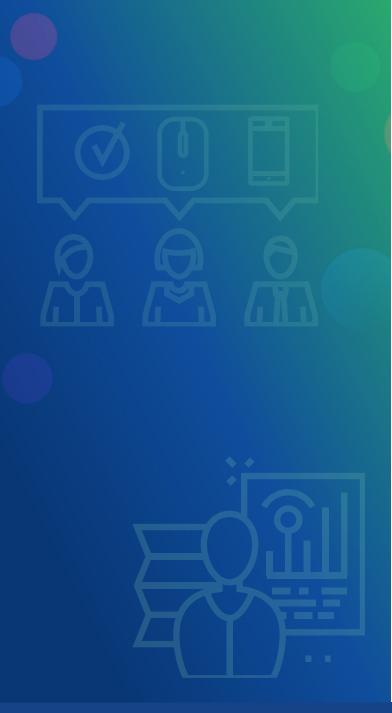
The strategy matches ICT and Digital services with the council's ambition for service improvement and sustainability through digital innovation. It sets out how ICT and Digital services will be designed, sourced and delivered, and how digital technologies and processes can support our people and our 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.





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 outcomedriven 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 	To enable the HSCP to work as a partnership and continue to provide and improve their essential front-line services.	ICT/NHS	July 2022
 strategic integration objectives. 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 Pro	gramme		
 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

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





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.

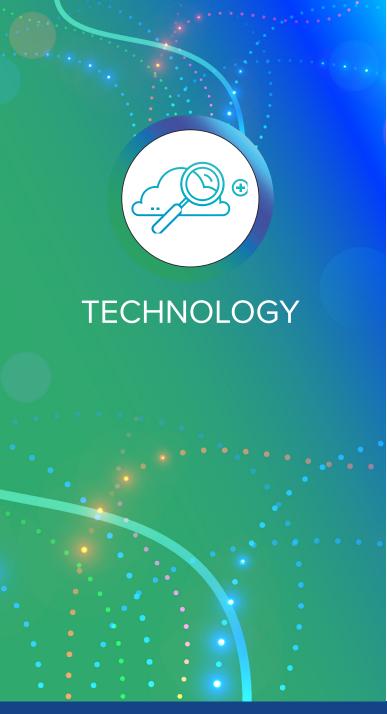


WHAT	WHY	WHO	WHEN
Simplify Process Complexity			
• Encourage implementation of Digital by Default services incorporating automation and workflow technologies.	To support service redesign and transformation and increase productivity.	ICT	Dec 2024
 Support business process re-engineering and user journey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



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





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



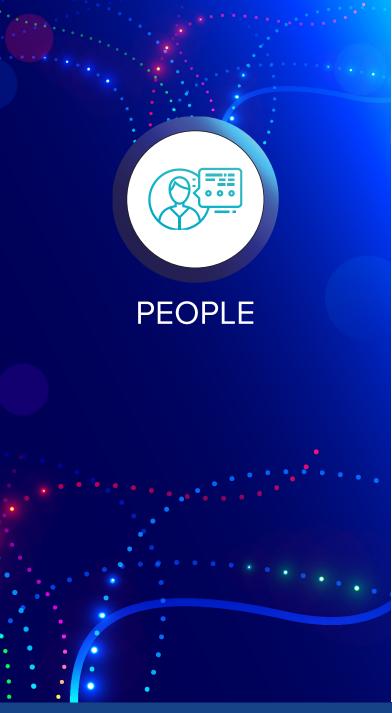
WHAT	WHY	WHO	WHEN
Implement Microsoft 365			
Migrate all users to Microsoft 365.	Introduce all users to a range of new collaborative tools and remove limitations associated with mailbox and file share sizes. Provide a single hub for collaborative teamwork and standardise on a nationally used communication platform.	ICT and Education ICT	Dec 2021
Adopt Microsoft Teams as our unified communications platform and as a central base for MS365.	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.		
Adopt Sharepoint online as our document repository.	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.		
• Establish a robust back up regime for off premise MS365 Environment.	To ensure we can recover from unexpected incidents outside of our control and restore cloud hosted data.		
Exploit additional MS365 capability to replace or supplement existing solutions.	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.		
Enable a Mobile and Flexible Workforce		1	
Develop simpler processes for accessing data securely from all environments.	Our staff and pupils can work from anywhere safely and securely and to introduce greater flexible working options. ICT		Dec 2022
Implement Cisco Anyconnect on all corporate and education end user devices.	To enable officer access to back office systems on the move to save time and improve efficiencies.		
Improve staff collaboration and modernise school telephony.	Extend unified communications to all schools and staff across the education infrastructure.		



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: OHR 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				
Al to introduce new and innovative services.	• To exploit the opportunities for innovation provided by AI, in line with the "AI Strategy for Scotland" developed by Scottish Government and the Data Lab.	ICT	Dec 2024	
Machine Learning to provide customers with new insights into their data.	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.			
The Internet of Things (IoT).	Work with partners such as Capita SWAN and others to evaluate the benefits of IoT technologies for the council.			

³ https://www.scotlandaistrategy.com/





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 2018-2021);
- 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	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.	HR/OD Team and ICT	Annually
curriculum.	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.		
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	Develop our ICT staff to ensure they can get the most from:	ICT	Annually
management skills to support the council.	Emerging technologies		
	Smarter working practices		
	Up to date management skills.		
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

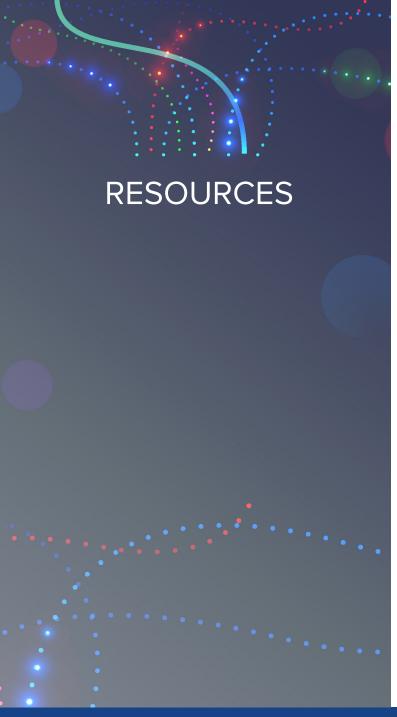
The total cost of the ICT service in 2020/21 is £5.1m including capital charges and £3.9m without. This equates to 2% of the council's total revenue budget. A significant part of the budget (c £1.66m) pays for externally provided supplies and services in support of the entire organisation.

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	





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

For further information please contact:

Argyll and Bute Council ICT Services Council Headquarters Kilmory PA31 8RT

Email: ServiceDesk@argyll-bute.gov.uk Tel: 01546 604060



