

Title – Reduction in Parks Establishment

Intended Outcome

This proposal is to reduce expenditure by 15% where there is sufficient capacity to do this, ie not on small islands where budget is part of a post – Islay, Coll, Colonsay.

The saving would equate to approximately £150,000, 3FTE at Grades 4 and 5, by reducing 1 FTE in Mid Argyll, Lorn and Helensburgh and Lomond. Activities reduced would include seasonal bedding and grass cutting.

Description

Reduce the parks establishment by the equivalent of 3 FTE.

The service is responsible for the maintenance of amenity open spaces, play areas, sport pitches including stadiums and it also delivers floral bedding displays and hanging baskets. The service is also responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of burial grounds and war memorials across the council area. Other works include general cleanliness such as weed control, including the control of invasive species, removal of detritus (including trunk roads), litter collection and removal of debris from open space areas.

The service is also responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of children's play areas, many of these have been delivered through partnerships with third sector groups. This has a minimum cost to the Council in supporting these partnership workings with the 3rd sector organisations attracting funding the Council is unable to access. Without such partnerships many of these facilities would no longer be available to local communities, therefore reputationally damaging to the Council.

Other service impacts include less resilience for the waste collection service and also the burial service. Street sweeping and park staff are utilised at times of annual leave and sickness absence to ensure that these critical services are delivered. In the financial year 2023/24 17,911 hours were used to support the waste collection services.

The service is also responsible for 2 Nursery complexes Kilmory and Ardenraig, Bute, the nursery complex on Bute is responsible for producing the summer bedding material for the island of Bute. The floral bedding material for all other areas is purchased to be delivered to the Kilmory nursery

complex, fully mature plants ready for planting and are collected by the respective areas.

This team delivers grounds maintenance work for third parties, this is a service that can generate income for the council by undertaking third sector contracts.

The reduction in grass cutting would also have a knock on effect with regards to machinery maintenance as longer grass is harder to cut thereby putting larger pressure on the machines. Lesser maintained areas regularly see an increase in dog fouling issues, this can also become a health and safety issue to members of the public using the amenity areas and also Council employees responsible for the maintenance of these areas.

Sports pitches would require to be exempt from any reduction in service.

This proposed saving will also have a visual affect on the presentation of towns and villages across the Council area at a time when the Council is trying to introduce the visitor levy.

How does your proposal align with strategy?

To achieve the service savings indicated.

Lead and Appropriate Officers

Lead Officer Andy Summers	Job Title Head of Service	Service RIS
Appropriate Officer Tom Murphy	Job Title Operations Manager	Department RIS

Who will deliver the proposal

Tom Murphy

Signed Off By	Date
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Evidence

Data – what data have you used to inform the IIA?

The data used to inform is gathered from current operational evidence for example LEAMS and evidence of hours to support other services, which is having a strain on the existing parks operations.

During the financial year 2024/2025, Parks, Street Sweeping and LETS operatives provided 17,911 hours of support to waste and recycling services. By reducing the parks establishment this will reduce that resilience and will also put additional pressure on the remaining teams.

Other information – This may include reference to reports by other people/organisations relevant to the impacts you identify.

Not applicable in report format this will be a visual impact, with the hours of support from other services being provided by strategic finance colleagues

Consultation – What consultation/engagement have you carried out to inform the IIA?

Discussions have taken place with all potentially affected teams to date on two occasions.

Gaps in Evidence – Are there any gaps in evidence?

There has been no consultation with Community Councils, the public or partners.

Knock on Effects

Knock-n effect – will your proposal have knock-on effects?

Yes

Knock on Effects Details

Reduction in service will further reduce the aesthetic appearance of Argyll and Bute for visitors and residents.

This proposal would see a reduction in resilience during severe weather events and the council's assistance in local events.

The resilience provided to the waste collection and burial service will also be affected with this proposed reduction.

Monitoring

How will you monitor the impacts of your proposal as it progresses?

This will require extensive amendments to the current working schedules to reduce existing frequencies and where necessary spread workloads.

The monitoring of the impact will be assessed through future LEAMS scoring and the monitoring of complaints received.

Fairer Scotland Duty

Impact on service users

Mainland Rural Population	Island Population	Low Income	Low Wealth	Material Deprivation
Negative	Don't know	Negative	Negative	No impact
Area Deprivation	Socio-Economic Background	Communities of Place	Communities of Interest	
Negative	No impact	Negative	Negative	

Impacts on service users details

As before, this will have a negative visual impact

Don't knows identified

Impact on service deliverers

Mainland Rural Population	Island Population	Low Income	Low Wealth	Material Deprivation
Negative	Don't know	Negative	No impact	No impact
Area Deprivation	Socio-Economic Background	Communities of Place	Communities of Interest	
Negative	No impact	Negative	Negative	

Impacts on service deliverers details

Reduction in service will further reduce the aesthetic appearance of Argyll and Bute for visitors and residents.

This proposal would see a reduction in resilience during severe weather events and the council's assistance in local events.

The resilience provided to the waste collection and burial service will also be affected with this proposed reduction.

Due regard

Not applicable

No Impact Justification (To be completed if the screening has shown you do not have to complete this impact assessment)

Consumer Duty

Does your proposal affect individuals, businesses or both?

Both

On the basis of your assessment, what are the likely impacts of your proposal?

Choice Negative	Fairness Negative	Redress Negative	Safety Negative
Information Negative	Access No impact	Representation Negative	

Describe the positive impacts you have identified

Not applicable

Describe the negative impacts you have identified

The Choice to remove is negative due to the aesthetic appearance of the area.

Fairness, the proposed saving will not be taken across all areas, therefore only certain areas will have a reduction in service.

Regarding Redress, the service still suffers from previous savings options with towns and villages having a poorer perception, therefore further savings will make the situation worse and put pressure on other services.

The reduction in service will have a health and safety aspect through lack of available greenspace recreational facilities, affecting health and wellbeing

If not communicated properly the impact of this proposed saving will be viewed worse than expected by residents and visitors.

This saving will result in further representation regarding standards as grounds maintenance schedules in certain areas will be reduced.

What alternatives have you considered which can improve outcomes for customers and/or reduce harm?

There are no alternatives

How have you reduced harm to consumers through the development of your proposal?

No

If you have not been able to reduce harm to your consumers, why not?

A reduction in this service will mean a further reduction in standards of delivery, lack of green space recreational facilities, external contractors would be required to deal with invasive species on council grounds due to lack of suitably qualified staff.

No Impact Justification (To be completed if the screening has shown you do not have to complete this impact assessment)

Children’s Rights and Wellbeing

Direct and indirect impacts on children and young people

Are there any aspects to your proposal which directly impact on children?

Yes

Are there any aspects to your proposal which indirectly impact on children?

No

Describe which groups of children and young people are affected by your proposal.

Pre- school and primary school children

How are these groups you have identified affected by your proposal.

They will use the play parks and a number of them will also use the sports fields provided. Any further maintenance reductions in maintenance will also see general open space amenity areas to be not in a recognised condition for children to use, especially for sports such as football.

Children’s rights

Article 2: (non-discrimination) No impact	Article 3: (best interest of the child) No impact
Article 6: (life, survival and development) No impact	Article 12: (repect for the views of the child) No impact

Have you identified any other articles as being relevant to your proposal?

No / Yes (The system defaults to ‘no’ if you don’t answer this question. List of articles is available in the guidance.)

What articles are relevant to your proposal? (This, along with the following five questions, appears if you answer ‘yes’ to having identified other articles as being relevant.)

If you have identified any positive impacts, describe what these are?

If you have identified any negative impacts, describe what these are?

What options have you considered to reduce negative impacts?

If you cannot implement measures to mitigate impact why not?

If you have identified relevant articles for which you don't know what the likely impact will be, how will you monitor impact as your proposal progresses?

Children’s wellbeing

For each wellbeing indicator, review whether your proposal will result in an improvement to children’s wellbeing or not. (More information about the indicators is given in the guidance.)

Safe Negative	Healthy Negative	Achieving No impact	Nurtured No impact
Active Negative	Respected No impact	Responsible No impact	Included No impact

For the indicators where you believe your proposal will result in reduced children’s wellbeing, explain what these reductions will be.

Reduction in parks maintenance service may result in dog fouling and used syringes being hidden in the longer grass, therefore causing possible health risks to children.

For the indicators where you believe your proposal will result in improved children's wellbeing, explain what these improvements will be.

If you have identified any indicators as being relevant to your proposal, but you do not know what the impacts will be, explain how you will monitor impact as your proposal progresses.

No Impact Justification (To be completed if the screening has shown you do not have to complete this impact assessment)

Island Communities

How many islands does your proposal affect? None
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Which islands are affected by your proposal?

Does your proposal impact on island communities...?

Demography	Economy	Society
No impact	No impact	No impact

Describe any positive impacts you have identified.

Describe any negative impacts you have identified.

If you do not know what the impacts will be, you should reflect this in your monitoring arrangements for the proposal.

Describe how your proposal affects the islands communities you have identified differently from other communities including other islands communities and mainland areas.

How will you ensure your proposal delivers equivalent levels of service to the islands communities you have identified compared to other areas, including mainland areas? (In your answer you should include descriptions of:

- alternatives you have considered to improve or mitigate the impacts identified,
- how you have reduced negative impacts on islands communities, and
- how your mitigations will vary between communities, if relevant).

If you have not been able to mitigate impacts, why not?

No Impact Justification (To be completed if the screening has shown you do not have to complete this impact assessment)

Equality impact

Equality impact on service users

Disability	Race	Marriage and civil partnership	Religion or belief	Sex
Negative	No impact	No impact	No impact	No impact
Pregnancy and maternity	Age	Sexual orientation	Gender reassignment	
Negative	Negative	No impact	No impact	

Impact identified

Due to the reduction in grounds maintenance and possible longer grass they may create unnecessary trip hazards for people with disabilities, those who may be pregnant and also for our elderly community.

Don't knows identified

Equality impact on service deliverers

Disability	Race	Marriage and civil partnership	Religion or belief	Sex
No impact	No impact	No impact	No impact	No impact
Pregnancy and maternity	Age	Sexual orientation	Gender reassignment	
No impact	No impact	No impact	No impact	

Impact on service deliverers

Don't knows identified

Due regard

No Impact Justification (To be completed if the screening has shown you do not have to complete this impact assessment)