



Argyll & Bute Climate Action

A climate change strategy for Argyll & Bute

Executive Summary

Climate change is one of the most serious threats that we face in Scotland. Rising temperatures, drier summers, wetter winters, sea level rise, and an increased risk of flooding, will all affect our lives. There is a global need to take action to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions which are responsible, but changes in climate will not be completely eliminated by these actions. We also need to find ways of adapting to the effects of climate change.

This is a strategy and action plan for Argyll & Bute. A region wide, community led, net-zero, climate change resilient, adaptation plan, in support of the vision that:

We make Argyll and Bute climate ready by acting together to understand and adapt to our changing climate.

It has been developed through an engagement process managed by the [Argyll Countryside Trust \(ACT\)](#) on behalf of [Argyll & Bute's Community Planning Partnership](#), Climate Working Group, with funding thanks to Argyll and Bute Council, NHS Highland, NatureScot and Argyll & Bute Third Sector Interface.

It links to [Argyll & Bute's Outcomes Improvement Plan for 2024 – 2034](#) which focusses on improving the outcomes of Transport Infrastructure, Housing and Community Wellbeing.

The heavy rain in early October 2023 caused £15m damage to infrastructure (mainly roads and bridges) in parts of Argyll & Bute



Now and into the future, we want a thriving Argyll & Bute where our collective choices and actions enhance our continued wellbeing in a changing climate.

Our climate change strategy seeks to tackle climate change, by working together to be:

- **Climate friendly:** Reduce Argyll & Bute's greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change (mitigation).
- **Climate Ready:** Resilient and adapted to unavoidable climate change (adaptation), and
- **Climate Just:** Ensure all of our communities are included.



80% of the population of Argyll & Bute lives within 1km of the coast (97% within 10km of coast), and we have over 200km of road within 25m of the sea (at high tide).

Our strategy identifies the key climate risks impacting on Argyll & Bute and the areas in which we can take action to address them:

Climate Risk	Impact
Warmer, wetter winters: Increased rainfall volume and intensity	Increased landslides, flooded water courses and more surface water
Hotter, drier summers: higher average and higher peak temperatures, increased heatwave frequency and longer drought periods	higher risk of human and animal heat stress, illness and mortality, crop failure, wildfires and freshwater scarcity
More severe, and more variable weather events: Less predictable but more frequent storms, increased variability in wind speed and direction, higher peak wind speeds, higher rainfall intensity	windblow, forest damage, road blockage, power line damage/power cuts, property damage, flooding, landslides
Sea level rise and storm surges: increased coastal erosion	coastal infrastructure damage and loss, coastal retreat or protection cost
Multi-hazards affecting people, species and habitats: Combination of hazards compounding climate risks and impacts.	Single actions less likely to address mitigation or adaptation. Solutions needs to maximise multiple benefits and work with natural processes
Increased climate unpredictability	Climate forecasts less predictable, actions need to be based on worst-case scenarios, resilience more dependent on agile and diverse actions

Areas for action closest to the CPP's remit and ability to control or influence:

Areas for Action	
Infrastructure	Addressing demand and impacts of better transport infrastructure to reduce reliance on private cars and provide for those who do not have a car; Enhancing communications and grid infrastructure through maximising decarbonisation and renewable energy opportunities; Natural capital: managing our green and blue infrastructure to reduce emissions and support resilience.
Policy influence	Influencing national and regional public and non-public policies through the CPP's collective voice in a way that recognises Argyll & Bute's distinctive geography and population.
Skills, Procurement and Supply Chain	Promoting opportunities for climate mitigation, adaptation and community wealth building through improving circular economies within Argyll & Bute. Increasing opportunities for individuals to gain the skills required to deliver climate mitigation, adaptation and resilience in an inclusive and just way.
Risk Assessment	Deepening our understanding of the risks and opportunities, including economic risks and opportunities, presented by climate change to Argyll and Bute as a whole and to specific communities and sectors.
Resilience/Carbon Literacy	Promoting carbon literacy and greater resilience, across all CPP sectors to empower individuals to bring about climate mitigation, adaptation and resilience in an inclusive and just way.
Crosscutting/Other	Encourage individuals, communities and agencies to take multiple actions and to identify new risks and opportunities.

With fuel poverty nearly 50% higher than the Scottish average, and higher again in more rural areas, and private water supplies ten times the national average, our housing is largely insufficient to cope with our current climate and even less with the greater weather extremes forecast.

The principles and approach guiding the Strategy are:

- **An enabling strategy**, rather than creating new duties or replacing existing ones, it identifies gaps and opportunities, especially those made possible by working together.
- **Alignment** with the CPP priorities of: Transport Infrastructure , Housing and Community Wellbeing, which in turn are aligned to requirements in our national climate programmes.
- **Embracing diversity**, to recognise significant variation among our communities, places and landscapes, and that we are being affected by climate change in multiple ways.
- **Focussing on common challenges** across the region, such as the length and vulnerability of transport links, and our low population density that can make it harder to secure funding.
- **Adapting** as we build our understanding of the risks and opportunities we face, taking into account local knowledge and also local variations and capacity to adapt.
- **Engaging communities** through networks of community champions linked to Climate Hubs centred on the four Argyll & Bute administrative areas.
- **Developing resilience** by developing skills and capacity to adapt to ongoing change alongside longer term transformational capital projects.
- **Ensuring a socially just transition** to a climate ready future: as we prepare for the impacts of the changing climate we do so in ways that are fair and tackle inequality.

In addition to incremental steps to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and transitional steps to enhance our capacity to adapt, there is also a transformational component: as we improve our ability to cope with climate needs we also improve our current circumstances.

An example of this sort of transformational change is the importance of developing our local economy through developing appropriate local skills, produce and markets and the housing, energy and other infrastructure to support them. This reduces our transport and waste emissions at the same time as reducing our dependence on vulnerable, extended transport links and enables us to add value locally and reduce economic leakage, at the same time as supporting transformational growth sectors such as energy and valuing our natural capital.

For more information please contact

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