

Annual Business Plan 2026/27

ID	Priority Description	Next Steps/Action	Activity	Success Measure
Communities				
ABP01	Build stronger connections and collaborations with communities to increase empowerment and make the best use of local knowledge to help shape delivery of local solutions.	Meeting people where they live - progressing and engagement programme for senior leadership across and around local communities.	Senior leadership engagement programme has been developed alongside rollout of the Community Engagement Framework and staff training across services. Coproduction of action plans to deliver the ABOIP priorities with community planning partners and community members.	15 co-produced project plans agreed by CPP March 2026.
ABP02	Enhance and deepen our understanding of local issues and improvement opportunities for collaboration - including launch of Aspiring Places: Community Projects programme in Argyll and Bute.	Use online tools/digital platforms to find ways to reach those not in established groups and start ongoing conversations about local issues.	Use of Basecamp digital platform to engage with members of the community attending Area Community Planning Groups.	Two Basecamp posts (per month) per Area Community Planning Group.
ABP03	Take forward a piece of work to support Area Committees to reshape their business, decision-making and overall activities to align with existing/emerging local plans and issues, following agreement of Priorities.	Once Priorities agreed by Council - Area Committee Chairs to have initial discussion and feed back views to political leadership as first action.	Work has been ongoing with initial meetings taking place with Area Committee Chairs. Following a reorganisation of the Area Committee Chairs we have taken this forward again and a briefing paper has been circulated to the Council administration for consideration. Following that a report will be prepared and taken to the June 2026 Council meeting.	Recommendations taken to Council for agreement in June 2026.
ABP04	Reaffirm our commitment to refugee resettlement, valuing the contribution that new families and residents make to life in Argyll and Bute.	Ensure that our approach to refugee resettlement has regard to the availability of housing, employment and skills locally while being delivered through national funding scheme.	Promote our film "An Argyll and Bute welcome" to audiences across Argyll and Bute and wider afield. The film showcases the lives of newly resettled refugees in Argyll and Bute, the warm welcome they receive and the contributions they bring to our communities. Our Refugee and Asylum Strategy also reaffirms our commitment to refugee resettlement.	By 31 March 2027, the film will be screened at a minimum of 10 events across Scotland.

Annual Business Plan 2026/27

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Children and young people				
ABP05	Develop our school curriculums with the jobs of the future in mind, to build up a strong local skills base and help create more opportunities for young people to stay and grow in their own communities.	Look at data from across the Council to identify skills, service delivery and employment needs locally - to shape learning opportunities for the short and medium term which contribute to overall population and economic growth.	Continued engagement with Education Scotland and education central team to support all establishments, senior leaders and practitioners to engage with the national Curriculum Improvement Cycle and take forward developments within their own setting. Establishments will be supported through targeted support for individual establishments and universal professional development sessions.	By December 2026 all establishments will have engaged with Curriculum Improvements Cycle from Education Scotland. All Heads will have engaged in professional development session to gain a deeper understanding of the technical frameworks. By June 2026 all establishments will have identified and taken forward curriculum priorities related to the Curriculum Improvement Cycle as required for their specific development need and context.
ABP06	Enabling as many young people as possible to for school to positive destinations of all kinds.	Work with partners on local further and higher education provision and apprenticeship opportunities that meet identified skills, service delivery and employment needs.	The Education Service will engage with the Scottish Government's programme of reform in relation to the Apprenticeship Family, particularly Foundation and Modern Apprenticeships, working to facilitate greater autonomy for schools to design, deliver and verify Foundation Apprenticeships informed by the aspirations of young people and local employment/skills contexts. Secondary schools will continue to be supported in raising attainment, achievement and capacities for all in order to maximise positive destinations and further life chances, with an explicit focus on ensuring those who wish to enter higher education have the accreditation and preparedness to do so. Continuing support will be in place to ensure schools work in effective partnership with MCR Pathways, SDS, DYW and other agencies to ensure effective interventions are in place for those most at risk of not securing a positive post-school destination.	The Annual Participation Measure (16-19 year-olds in Education, Training or Employment) for 2025/26 (to be issued in August 2026) will exceed the figure for 2024/25 (94.6%). School-leaver Initial Positive Destinations for 2025/26 (issued February 2027) will exceed the 2024-2025 figure.

Annual Business Plan 2026/27

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ABP07	Explore ways to enhance Argyll and Bute's early learning and childcare offer to support employment and business needs of local families alongside its role in nurture and contribution to access to better life chances for young people.	Identify measure to increase provision with partners.	We will deliver 5 Family Hub Early Learning and Childcare Centres (ELC'S) within central localities and concentrate on staffing and support resource within these to enable delivery of a paid childcare offer for working parents of 0-3 year olds alongside the provision of family support and learning offers to support improved outcomes for children and families within these communities.	By June 2027, 3 Family Hubs in Dunoon, Helensburgh and Oban, will be operating in a multi-agency hub capacity. They will be supporting improvements in children's outcomes across all developmental domains, through family support and learning programmes, universal and targeted early intervention approaches and strong community partnership collaboration to maximise resource. Progress will be evidenced through an increase in developmental achievement for targeted children and families, in a reduction in crisis referrals to partner agencies and an increase in employment and training rates for parents with young children.
ABP08	Enable learners to take full advantage of emerging technology and to be ready for the 'jobs of the future' here in Argyll and Bute.	Pursue opportunities for investment in schools digital network - 21st century digital network for schools and wider education infrastructure.	Funding has been secured to support the upgrade of the education network, and a project board has been established to oversee delivery and governance. An initial Proof of Concept (POC) is currently underway at Kirn Primary School. This includes trialling an enhanced internet content filtering solution across multiple platforms (PCs, iPads, and Chromebooks) to ensure compatibility and effectiveness. Additional technical improvements have been implemented, including enhanced security and improved internet speeds.	Kirn POC completed and presented to project board in July 2026. Security product improved to incorporate additional security features.
ABP09	United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) - ensuring that views of children and young people are considered in decision making.	Developing our organisational culture to be receptive to the views of children and young people in our decision making.	We will continue to progress the embedding of children's rights, in particular the views of children and young people in decision making processes through the involvement and engagement of children and young people in the School Improvement Planning Procession key guidance documents and policies. Schools will be supported in their development of this work through the on-going commitment to Rights Respecting Schools and the embedding of rights across a number of career long professional learning opportunities.	70.5% of schools at Silver and Gold RRSA level by June 2026.
ABP10	Continue the programme of improvement in our schools so that they are a compelling choice for families, providing good educational attainment and supporting the wellbeing of young people.	Explore options for Education Review.	We will continue to use the most up to date attainment data to identify key areas for development in literacy and numeracy with a continuing focus on raising attainment in writing through targeted support and universal professional learning.	The target for session 2026/27, Curriculum for Excellence attainment data as of June 2027, literacy combined at P1, 4 and 7 will be 75.5% and for numeracy 81.6%. These targets are against provisional data collected June 2026 (for session 2025/26) of 73.3% literacy combined and 81% numeracy.

Annual Business Plan 2026/27

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Housing, economic growth and population				
ABP11	Sharpen focus on the Housing Emergency Action Plan and other plans/delivery bodies as appropriate in line with the pace required in emergency. Refresh and update our Local Housing Strategy. Use policy and fiscal levers at our disposal to speed up delivery - lobby other agencies where required. Seek reform or flexibility on use of Resource Planning Assumption (RPA).	Look at overarching plans: - Argyll and Bute Local Housing Strategy (LHS) - Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) - Local Development Plan (LDP) - Oban and Helensburgh Development Masterplans Using latest data to reframe and target activities and resources to the right places at the right times. Revisit Strategic Housing Fund. Examine scope to reduce time spent in temporary accommodation. Lobbying work.	Work with consultants and key housing sector partners to produce revised Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) and start the process of producing a new LHS and continue with working with masterplan consultants and key stakeholders in Oban and Helensburgh.	Complete HNDA and submit to Scottish Government for approval as robust and credible. Complete revised LHS engagement and consultation process. Complete HSDF and OSDF. All complete by end of 2026/27.
ABP12	Drive forward in partnership across all sectors to deliver on vital areas like key worker accommodation, mid-market rentals, private sector development in addition to activity on affordable homes.	Engagement and partnership working across all sectors. Local Housing Strategy review to open up greater opportunities for partnership working and securing additional resources to support swifter delivery. Housing Emergency Action Plan.	Prepare procurement documents for construction/ research contracts, tender process, assess tenders, appoint contractor, manage contract for Tobermory Worker Housing and Modern Method of Construction projects.	Appoint contractor for Tobermory Worker Housing by end of 2026/27. Appoint contractor for study into Modern Methods of Construction by end of 2026/27.
ABP13	Explore scope for greater commercialisation of Council assets and otherwise attract external investment for the Council and communities.	Build on the existing foundations to derive further commercial income from Council assets. Explore opportunities for Community Partnerships to divest/operate Council assets. Further develop the approach to community benefits and the opportunities from planning gain for communities to augment Council funding.	Completion of the first new commercial property and Oban Airport Business Park and conclude the agreements for the second property. Complete the infrastructure works for the business park.	Practical completion of the first building achieved with the lease commenced and the tenant operating from the property. Legal agreements concluded for the second building to allow construction to commence. Practical completion of the infrastructure works by 31 March 2027.

Annual Business Plan 2026/27

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ABP14	Take a clear 'return on investment' approach to allocations of resources at all levels - prioritise action that brings people, jobs and business to Argyll and Bute through maximising community benefit opportunities from local development and promote community wealth building.	Agree refreshed Economic Strategies. Development Masterplans. Critical evaluation of activities, financial allocations and requests and how those will translate into employment or growth. Use policy and fiscal levers in our power to stimulate, attract and incentivise growth - for example exploring creation of enterprise zones. Where power to drive growth sits with other agencies, lobby for support to complement the actions we are taking and investments we are making (e.g. fuel, transport costs in rural areas). Engage with Argyll and Bute's key sectors and major employers in food and drink, tourism, construction, energy and social care to progress shared priorities and work in partnership where possible.	An updated Economic Strategy Action Plan for 2026-2029 will be presented for approval at the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee in September 2026. The revised Economic Strategy Action Plan, 2026-2029, will encompass Community Wealth Building indicators / measures to mirror those outlined in the Community Wealth Building (Scotland) Act 2026. Consideration to be given in due course to the requirement to publish a separate Community Wealth Building Action Plan by March 2029. Ongoing engagement on the Community Wealth Building agenda through the creation of a local Community Wealth Building Partnership; expanding the membership of the current Community Planning Partnership Community Wealth Building Strategic Group to focus on operational aspects going forward. Further to the Visitor Levy (Scotland) (Amendment) Act 2026, a revised Visitor Levy Scheme and supporting documentation will be drafted with input from the Shadow Visitor Levy Forum, which includes industry representation.	A revised Economic Strategy Action Plan will be presented at the next committee meeting in December 2026. Delivery of the in-year SMART actions for 2026/27 in the Economic Strategy Action Plan, 2026-2029, with a focus on actions under the four strategic priorities of People, Place, Planet and Prosperity. The Visitor Levy Scheme consultation 2026 on a flat rate levy is open until October 2026 and a revised Consultation Report will be prepared.
ABP15	Continue to lead on bringing depopulation to national government attention.	Bringing together group of depopulating local authorities to act together as a collective voice. Engage with Scottish Ministers and Ministerial Taskforce.	The Council's Settlement Project Support Officer, Economic Group, attends a Repopulation Group at a national level which includes officers from Argyll and Bute, Highland, Western Isles, Inverclyde, North Ayrshire and Dumfries and Galloway Councils. Regular engagement with the Scottish Government, COSLA and HIREP on population issues.	Twice-yearly returns on the Addressing Depopulation Action Plan activity at a local level submitted to the Scottish Government, Population Team.

Annual Business Plan 2026/27

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Transport, infrastructure and digital connectivity				
ABP16	Seek full funding for delivery of internal ferry services, given that responsibility for these sits with Transport Scotland (TS).	Pursue formal request for full funding, noting previous shortfall.	While the Scottish Government provides significant financial support towards the operation of internal ferry services, this does not fully fund the service on a fixed or guaranteed basis. Funding is estimate-based and variable, and the Council retains financial exposure to cost fluctuations, particularly in relation to vessel maintenance, fuel and operational requirements.	Submission of a formal funding request to Transport Scotland, with confirmation of the 2026/27 funding allocation and a reduction in the Council's unfunded cost exposure for internal ferry services compared with 2025/26. Complete by 31 March 2027.
ABP17	Use strong data to develop a Transport Strategy which recognises the significance of connectivity to population and economic growth.	Explore options for full transport study (which can include looking at integration, organisation options) following RIS Review.	We have completed a public consultation on local transport priorities and the results of this will be presented to the June EDI Committee. Engagement with key transport stakeholders over the summer has commenced before coming back to the council in the autumn to approve a draft strategy for further public consultation.	An approved Argyll and Bute Local Transport Strategy by December 2026.
Environment				
ABP18	Reduce carbon emissions generated by the Council. Agree policies in relation to waste, recycling and other environmental issues, which will inform next steps. Evaluate Council targets for deliverability and improvement.	After agreement of policies, agree and implement SMART measures.	Ongoing engagement via Climate Change Board and production for consideration of an updated Carbon Management Plan.	Draft Carbon Management Plan released for stakeholder engagement by Oct 2026.
ABP19	Harness opportunities from expansion of renewable energy sector in the area.	Explore potential community/Council benefits from renewables projects. Revisit exploration of renewables projects on Council land.	On-going engagement with energy sector via bi-annual ABRA meetings. Social value charter and Renewable Energy Action Plan (REAP) now aligned into a single draft document and engagement with key industry partners on-going. Options being considered for RGD funding include a solar farm within Kilmory and opportunities to use micro-grid solutions to mitigate challenges such as grid constraints. A change request would need to be agreed by Government to move RGD funding from Islay to another location, should this be the preferred option for the Low Carbon Economy funding which is currently allocated to Islay.	Identification of a viable project to form the full Business Case relating to the £3m of RGD funding for net-zero project in Argyll and Bute. Social Value Charter approved by Council. The change request will be progressed for approval during 2026/27.

Annual Business Plan 2026/27

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Sustainable service delivery				
ABP20	Provide the best services we can with the money available.	Expand the RIS Review approach to other service areas to ensure we have the most effective and efficient delivery models possible.	Workstreams have been implemented for each service review recommendation.	Efficiencies delivered through each workstream.
ABP21	Provide the best services we can with the money available.	Develop proposals to expand and make the most of digital/technology, including further exploration of AI.	AI is now operational in our Customer Service Centre and is increasing the speed and efficiencies of our automated processes and Bots. Proof of concept for M365 Co-pilot AI concluded in May 2026 and assessment of results is underway. Magic Notes AI is being piloted in Children, Families and Justice Services throughout 2026/27.	AI embedded in Customer Service Centre by 31 October 2026. Co-pilot proof of concept complete by 31 May 2026. Magic Notes in operation in Social Work Children and Families by 31 March 2026.
ABP22	Make clear the service standards that communities can expect with the resources available.	Review, update, communicate clear quality service standards that match with local needs as well as available resources.	Embed team performance dashboards and develop proposal to enable communities to access service standards online.	Project brief completed by 31 December 2026.
ABP23	Completion and implementation of the Roads and Infrastructure Services (RIS) Review, particularly creation of robust, reliable data to inform decisions.	Progress and implement RIS Review.	Implementation of the RIS Review ongoing. For example, revised service structure will be completed by the end of June 2026. New ways of working have been introduced by strengthening the quality of management information available for decision making. Data is now being used to support service planning and performance management and ensure that the review continues to deliver measurable improvements in efficiency, customer service and long-term sustainability across Roads and Infrastructure Services.	Priority RIS Review actions delivered: at least 80% of planned priority improvement actions completed or on track by March 2027. Data-driven decision making embedded: Improved management information routinely used to support service planning, investment decisions and performance management by March 2027. Service reviews progressed: Key reviews of parking, fleet, school transport, public transport, waste collection and waste disposal advanced in line with agreed programmes. Governance and performance management strengthened: Regular reporting of financial, operational and performance data established across Roads and Infrastructure Services by March 2027. Measurable service improvements achieved: Evidence of improved efficiency, customer focus and long-term sustainability through implementation of RIS Review recommendations to be demonstrated by March 2027.