

DATA STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN 2024-2028

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 In accordance with the presentation to the Members' Seminar on 21st November 2023, the council's Data Advisory Group has prepared a new Data Strategy and Action Plan for 2024-28 which is attached.
- 1.2 This Data Strategy aims to achieve Argyll and Bute Council's "Connect for Success" objective of embedding data and evidence driven decision-making at every level of the organisation. It will also advance the new mission statement stated in the data strategy of *"Improving outcomes for our residents and communities through better combination and use of data"*.
- 1.3 This Data Strategy will sit alongside Argyll and Bute Council's existing ICT & Digital Strategy for 2021-24 and its forthcoming update for 2025-28.
- 1.4 Policy & Resources Committee is asked to endorse the Data Strategy and Action Plan for 2024-28, attached at Appendix 1.

DATA STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN 2024-2028

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 In accordance with the presentation to the Members' Seminar on 21st November 2023, the council's Data Advisory Group has prepared a new Data Strategy and Action Plan for 2024-28 which is attached and presented for noting.
- 2.2 This Data Strategy aims to achieve Argyll and Bute Council's "Connect for Success" objective of embedding data and evidence driven decision-making at every level of the organisation. It will also advance the new mission statement stated in the data strategy of *"Improving outcomes for our residents and communities through better combination and use of data"*.
- 2.3 This Data Strategy will sit alongside Argyll and Bute Council's existing ICT & Digital Strategy for 2021-24 and its forthcoming update for 2025-28.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to:

- 3.1 Endorse the new Data Strategy and Action Plan for 2024-28, attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.2 Recognise the value and importance of data for decision-making.

4.0 DETAIL

- 4.1 Principle 4 of the council’s “Connect for Success” programme calls for the pursuit of data and evidence driven decision-making. To help make this happen, in March 2022 the council’s Data Advisory Group was established as a one-council, cross-service forum for considering data-focussed solutions to operational and strategic challenges. At the end of 2022 this group arranged for the council’s participation in cohort 2 of the Scottish Government’s Data Maturity programme within their new public sector Data Transformation Framework.
- 4.2 Not surprisingly, the data maturity assessment results indicated strengths in some areas but weaknesses in others, as summarised in the table below:

**Data Maturity Assessment Results
(December 2022)**

Data Maturity Metric	Score*
Data Assets	3.8
Data Culture	3.8
Data Use	3.7
Data Skills	3.5
Data Leadership	3.4
Data Analysis	3.3
Data Tools	3.3

** Scores rated on a scale from 0 to 5.*

These results are comparable to those of other Scottish Local Authorities who have completed the assessment. The Data Advisory Group has used these results as a catalyst to help structure the data strategy and action plan which will build upon the strengths and address those areas with lower scores.

- 4.3 The objectives of the data strategy and action plan cover 12 themes grouped around People, Processes and Technology. The document recognises that all three of these areas are critical, and to focus only on one or two is unlikely to lead to success. Each of the 12 themes are described in page 4 of Appendix 1.
- 4.4 A key benefit of the Data Strategy and Action Plan will be to prioritise attention and resources toward the most relevant data challenges and opportunities. The document covers a 5-year period during which opportunities will arise both from within the council and from trends emerging outside the council. The strategy will provide a framework through which such opportunities can be assessed, so that new opportunities offering ways to progress objectives laid out in the strategy will have stronger justification for attention and resourcing.

4.5 Elected Members will have a key role in helping the Data Strategy and Action plan to succeed by:

- a) Endorsing the new data strategy and its objectives;
- b) Being advocates for open data and helping to identify opportunities to publish useful information residents will find valuable;
- c) Making use of the new PowerBI version of the Area Committee Scorecard report available in the Members Area of the Hub;
- d) Supporting new and innovative uses of data across council services and in conjunction with trusted external partners;
- e) Recognising the value and importance of data for decision-making.

4.6 Throughout the activities within the action plan accompanying the data strategy there is an essential role for the council's services. The Data Advisory Group and the Data Programme will provide tools, such as the council's new Data Platform and Microsoft's PowerBI, and shared learning on successful implementations of these tools for other services to consider emulating. It is, however, within the services themselves that the subject matter expertise relating to their service demands and operations sits, so their active participation in the Data Advisory Group and the broader data strategy activities will be essential.

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 Argyll and Bute Council is recognised nationally for its innovative use of data, for example having been cited as a case study in the Scottish Government and COSLA's Data Strategy for Health and Social Care in February 2023 for using data to deliver integrated care. The council's new Data Strategy and Action Plan for 2024-28 will continue the focus on harnessing the value of the council's data to improve service delivery and ultimately outcomes for our residents and communities.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Policy A new Data Strategy and Action Plan has been developed to cover the period from 2024 to 2028. This aligns with the ICT & Digital Strategy for 2021 to 2024 and its forthcoming update for 2025-28.

6.2	Financial	<p>Delivering the objectives of the data strategy will require the council to continue its track record of investment in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Microsoft licenses, with diligence identifying and maximising value-for-money; b) ICT physical assets such as the new data platform and associated infrastructure; c) Human resource through training and skills development. <p>New opportunities to advance the strategy which can be maximised by one-off expenditure or further revenue investment will be raised through existing DMT and SMT governance channels.</p>
6.3	Legal	Aims to ensure compliance with all relevant legislation.
6.4	HR	<p>Several of the aims of the data strategy and action plan will lead to positive outcomes for staff, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) learning pathways to enhance workforce data literacy and skills, b) An enhanced data culture in the organisation. c) Having more time to spend on rewarding tasks such as interpreting data to gain service insight, rather than the repetitive effort of data collection and manual processing.
6.5	Fairer Scotland Duty:	Better use of data will lead to positive outcomes for service users in several ways, including reduced risk of unintentional bias against service users with protected characteristics.
	6.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics	
	6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty	
	6.5.3 Islands	
6.6	Climate Change	Since in its first few stages the data strategy will focus on maximizing use of council ICT's existing on-premise SQL Server infrastructure no noticeable increase in carbon cost is expected.
6.7	Risk	The strategy aims to manage data protection risks by embedding strong data governance and staff

awareness of their fundamental responsibility to care for the council's data.

- 6.8 Customer Service Potential to further improve services through data driven decision making leading to positive outcomes for staff and customers.
- 6.9 The Rights of the Child (UNCRC) A well-implemented data strategy can help local authorities uphold these rights. For instance, the data platform will combine datasets from across local government and provide frontline professionals with better awareness of the children receiving services.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Data Strategy and Action Plan 2024-28