



Council Communication Strategy 2024 - 2027

Together for Argyll and Bute



Context

Argyll and Bute Council, and the area as a whole, face challenges and opportunities in building the prosperous future that the council and our communities want.

The nature and scope of what has to be achieved highlight the need for everyone who cares about Argyll and Bute to work together for its benefit.

As an illustration, challenges and opportunities include: attracting people, skills and investment to the area; addressing the impact of climate change; and public sector reform that envisages increased collaboration across agencies and with communities.

Effective communication is key to achieving success – to contribute to success, people must know why and how to play their part.

This strategy sets direction for how the council will communicate to support employees, communities and the area as a whole in achieving our goals.

The strategy focuses on informing to involve – enabling anyone with a contribution to make, to work with us and support the success of the area.



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1 Strategic alignment

This strategy is developed to support:

- The [council's vision](#) for a successful, vibrant Argyll and Bute with a growing population and a thriving economy; a place where people want to come to live, to work and to do business.
- [Connect for Success](#) – the council's drive to develop culture that enables business success.
- Local ambition – employees' commitment to doing a good job in difficult circumstances, and communities' aspiration for success for Argyll and Bute.
- The increasing importance, in day-to-day practices and in national reform proposals, of agencies, councils and communities working together.



2 Delivering impact Principles

Trusted voice

- Our communication will be open, accurate and accessible, to provide information that can be trusted amidst the risk of mis/disinformation elsewhere.

Inform to involve

- We will provide information and opportunities for those with a contribution to make to, to work with us for Argyll and Bute's success.

Evidence and insight

- Communication activity is based on audience insight, and evaluated so that we do what works.

Proactive and reactive

- We will adapt communication practices to resources and opportunities.

Enabling

- We will make support available in communicating effectively
- We will deliver communication services that support communities affected by, and council services responding to, area emergencies

Digital First

- In support of customer preferences, and delivering best value, we will take opportunities from digital innovations to develop and improve communication practices.

Council and area

- Our communication services will support the objectives of the council and also the aims shared with partners for the area.



Communication practices

There is local, national and global competition for people's time and attention, from the considerable scale of information sources available.

We will use a range of channels to match communication activity to the right communication channel to reach our audiences.

These will include but not necessarily be limited to:



Digital communication

- We will develop channels for making information accessible for all employees
- We will identify and take opportunities to grow the relevance and therefore use of our channels by our communities.



Social media

- We will match content strategy for each channel to its audience
- We will use corporate hashtags for sharing across council sites and reaching more people



Visual communication

- We will use corporate branding to show communities how the council delivers value from its public sector funding, and the role we play in community life.
- We will use high quality design material to develop the effectiveness of our digital communication channels.



Word of mouth / interaction with the council

- Communication skills development – many people communicate on behalf of the council; we will provide guidance in delivering informed, constructive communication.

Resilience – council and community



Cyber attacks have the potential to stop access to the digital systems that organisations depend upon to communicate with each other and their communities.

Councils have a duty to warn and inform their communities in area emergencies.

To be able to comply with this duty, and support employees and communities in the event of a cyber attack, the council will maintain corporate communication channels that sit outside the council’s systems as well as within it.

Communication campaigns and initiatives



We will develop an annual communication plan to set out priority communication initiatives. These will support area, council and service priorities.

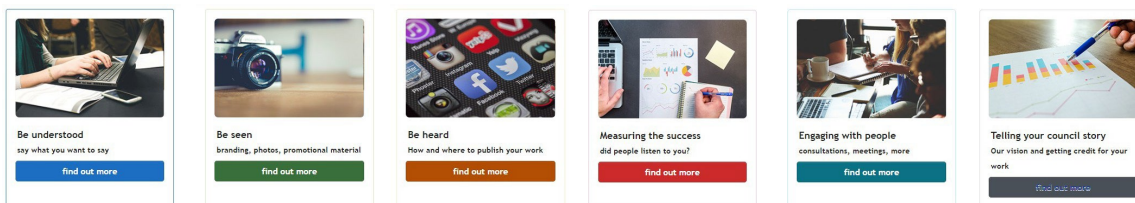


Our audiences are our employees, our communities, our partners, and everyone with a contribution to make to life in Argyll and Bute.

3 Corporate guidance, policies, and legislation

1. Key corporate guidance and policies delivered or updated through this strategy:

- a. Corporate council media protocol
- b. Social media policy
- c. Council corporate brand guidelines
- d. Communication skills development



- e. Consultation and engagement skills development
 - i. [Involving communities guide](#)
 - ii. Measuring success and learning lessons of on-line consultations

2. Legislation/guidance relevant to this strategy:

- a. [National code of publicity](#)
- b. [Councillors' code of conduct](#)
- c. [Civil Contingencies Act 2004 \(Contingency Planning\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2005](#)
- d. Inclusive/accessible communication guidance
- e. Other relevant council service strategies

4 Campaign and initiative priorities for 2024/25

Priority campaigns/initiatives for 2024/25			
Supports the council's vision	Council/community support	Responds to community voice	Employee support
Campaign	Purpose	Comms Team + Service	Benefits
Better journeys / Active Travel campaign	Public interest and action in taking small steps to reduce car use	Active Travel	Roads and Pathways
Recycling – do more	Why, what and how to recycle, to increase recycling rates	Waste Services	Waste and recycling services
We're listening – You said, we did – web information produced and process developed – to benefit communities and evidence-based decision making.	Public is aware of the difference their views make	Web Team + consulting services	Communities
Area-wide recruitment/resettlement– develop use of abplace2b.scot / #abplace2b	Budget-free promotion of Argyll and Bute as a place to live and work	Partner agencies	Econ Dev – investing in the future
Climate-friendly Argyll and Bute	How to reduce your carbon footprint	Climate Change Board	Commercial services – making assets work now
Recruitment – develop and put to effect council employer brand	Candidates see and are interested in council vacancies	Comms Team	Skills to deliver council services for communities
Realistic expectations of the council	Develop informed expectations of the council to support council/communities working together – we can do this, we cannot do this, communities could do this...	RIS to start	Council/community understanding
Have a great time, be a great visitor	Responsible tourism support	Econ Dev	Community priorities
Develop employee communication channels and sounding board	Equality of employee access to information and employee views known and heard in making change happen well.	Employee volunteers	Increase employee involvement in communication that works
National reform/local position	Employees and communities informed about change and how it affects them	CEX	Council's trusted voice in changing affecting all



5 Key position statements and hashtags 2024/25

What we communicate will obviously depend on what is useful in different circumstances.

Below are overall position statements required (at the time of writing this strategy), by the circumstances in which the council is working, to be shared with our communities.

Councils' position

“Argyll and Bute Council must adapt to national reform across our services while also working to address challenges particular to the area. We would love to do all our communities want us to, and will continue to do more than we have a duty to, but decisions outside our control will affect or limit what we do. We will continue to campaign to bring the funding and support Argyll and Bute needs and welcome everyone with a contribution to make, working together for the good of the area.”



Argyll and Bute Council's role

- **Public** – to help communities access support they need, and know what they can expect from the council as we progress through multi-million pound budget cuts, we need to explain that:
 - We'd love to do everything our communities want us to do; lack of finance unfortunately means we can't
 - We still do more than we have a duty to do, and deliver countless services every day that support all aspects of life in Argyll and Bute
 - We can do [this]. We cannot do [this]. You could do [this] to support your community and area
 - You could help us save services by...

- **Employees** – Connect for success – employees' role is key in modernising the council's working practices to match business need; we need to illustrate how:
 - Connect for Success will make it easier for you to get your work done;
 - It's about developing working practices that work for you



Attracting the skills council services need to deliver council services:

- 'good career choice first, vacancy second' – raise understanding of the area as a desirable location to choose for work, and the council as a good employer, to increase interest in vacancies when they arise
- encourage communities to help attract the skills they need by promoting vacancies
- use data analysis to do more of what works in attracting candidates
- develop use of these hashtags to promote reasons to choose Argyll and Bute, and the council:
 - #abplace2b
 - #closerthanyouthink
 - #awardwinning



Working together

To encourage people to work with the council, we must show that:

- the council listens to and acts on your contributions to consultation and engagement exercises.
- We produce better results by working together
 - #workingtogether
 - #thankyou



FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information please contact:

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