



ANNUAL REPORT 2018-2019

Foreword



Councillor Aileen Morton
Leader
Argyll and Bute Council

We are clear here in Argyll and Bute about what we have to do secure our own future.

Growing our economic success and our population remains our key focus, which is why we launched our new Economic Development Strategy. It focuses on our infrastructure, attracting new residents and supporting the key sectors that will attract investment and jobs.

Our investment includes improving our towns, making them better places to live and more attractive places to visit. Highlights of this work can be found here in the Annual Report.

We also pushed ahead with our Rural Growth Deal which has the potential to transform Argyll and Bute and create the thriving, attractive and well-connected communities all our people, old and young, deserve. The pieces of the jigsaw are falling into place and we look forward to what the coming year brings.



Cleland Sneddon
Chief Executive of
Argyll and Bute Council
2016 – 19

While we were very much focused in 2018/19 on what we have to do to make Argyll and Bute better, much of my work brought home just what makes it really great in the first place.

The 'Big Listen' we carried out took me the length and breadth of the area. It was terrific. I was reminded of the dedication of our local communities and just how many people participate in activities that make a difference to the people in their neighbourhoods.

The dignity and support that comes from our communities was brought home to me when I attended the World War 100 commemoration on Islay. We remembered not only the service men who died when the Tuscania and Otranto sank in 1918, but also the brave islanders who battled to save them, care for them and ultimately bury them with the respect they deserved.

Closer to home, I see unsung heroes within the council who go the extra mile for our communities, from our roadworkers who keep us safe on the roads to our care staff who look after our most vulnerable people.

We now have a promotional strapline that sums up all that is good about Argyll and Bute —#abplace2b. If you use social media, I urge you to use it and share the message about what a great place this is to live, work and invest.



Argyll and Bute

Argyll and Bute is an area of achievement. It has award-winning people and businesses. Argyll and Bute is a place and lifestyle people love.

We're well-connected to Scotland's central belt by road, rail and ferry. Air services link Glasgow with Kintyre and Islay in less than an hour, and Oban to the spectacular inner hebridean islands of Coll, Colonsay and Tiree in 30 minutes.

Our communities have a can-do, innovative attitude. This is a place where everyone can make a difference. Growth sectors of renewable energy, life sciences, food and drink, tourism, creative industries and forestry have much to offer investors.

We are the second largest local authority in Scotland, in terms of land mass, and have the third sparsest population density. Seventeen per cent of our population lives on our 23 inhabited islands and 80% of our residents live within 1km of the 3500km coastline.

There are challenges. We have had the third highest funding cut of all of Scotland's councils over the past five years. Our population is falling.

Our vision is of economic success, built on a growing population. To make this a place that people choose to live, learn, work and invest, we have developed six outcomes:

- Our economy is diverse and thriving.
- We have an infrastructure that supports sustainable growth.
- Education skills and training maximise opportunities for all.
- Children and young people have the best possible start.
- People will live active, healthier and independent lives.
- People will live in safer and stronger communities.



Yachts in Campbeltown harbour



Miss Hoolie turbine on Mull



Social housing, Bowmore



Finance

In 2018-19 the council set about making vital and significant investment in Argyll and Bute in the face of challenge.

Decisions were made to bridge a £5 million funding gap in 2018/19 as well as build in protection for vital services against funding cuts in future years.

We continued to prioritise economic growth, with securing a Rural Growth Deal for the area an absolute target to ensure that Argyll and Bute continued to thrive.

Reshaping what we do was also to the fore, looking closely at every aspect of our business – in a clear, focused and new way.

One example of this was the One Council Property initiative which involves proactively managing our 1,700 buildings and parcels of land, which will be better for the council and for local communities.

Our key investments for 2018-19 included:

- an additional £8.3million in the road network over the next two years, bringing total investment to almost £15million, and a further £0.5million in footpaths;
- £0.767million in the ICT system on which enables the public to use council services on which they depend; and
- increased funding for social care services by £2m.



Outcome 1— our economy is diverse and thriving

- To support investment by Scottish Sea Farms in Barcaldine, we worked with West Highland Housing Association and the Scottish Government to fund 10 affordable homes in the area. This has created an opportunity for people to live and work in the village.
- We completed the Queen’s Hall £12.5m refurbishment, providing Dunoon with a multi-purpose building fit for the 21st century and created 15 full time equivalent jobs. As well as housing the library, a fitness suite and play area, its auditorium has already attracted artists including Skippinnish, ABBA Mania and the Proclaimers.
- We attracted funding to Argyll and Bute to make our historic towns centres great places for businesses to flourish and people to enjoy. Regeneration funds have been allocated to Tarbert and Lochgilphead, while there are Conservation Regeneration Schemes in Dunoon and Campbeltown and a Townscape Heritage project in Rothesay.
- Local companies won 49 out of 70 council contracts keeping a total value of £29.4m within the local economy. Our Business Gateway team provides training so that local suppliers have the skills and knowledge to be successful in their bids for this type of work.
- Business Gateway supported 116 new business start-ups, 7.4% up on last year.
- Support provided to local entrepreneurs, through our Local Growth Accelerator Programme, saw combined turnover for those involved increase by £3.1m and full-time equivalent jobs rise by 54.



Tarbert



Queen's Hall

Did you know?

Air services carried 3221 passengers, including scholars, to our islands via council-run Oban Airport.



Outcome 2 — We have an infrastructure that supports sustainable growth

- In November 2018, we presented our Rural Growth Deal proposition to the Scottish and UK Governments. This proposition contains 16 projects, totalling £178.5m that will develop infrastructure to transform the economic growth of the region.
- Changing to LED street lighting has saved money and has helped reduce our carbon emissions from 2,358 tonnes in 2012/13 to 996 tonnes in 2018/19.
- We delivered an £8m roads capital programme and prioritised work that would extend the life of our roads network in a cost-effective way. An independent survey shows we have the fifth fastest improving roads' network in Scotland.
- Spreading 23,000 tonnes of grit kept Argyll and Bute moving over the winter enabling our communities to go about their daily business. No council roads were closed.
- As part of our environmental improvement commitments, we installed 16 electric chargers around Argyll and Bute and sourced £150,000 of grant funding to increase more installations in the future.
- We launched www.abplace2b.scot website (top right) to make it easy for people to find out about why they should move to the area.
- We worked in partnership with West Highland Housing Association and the Scottish Government to build affordable housing to support business investment near Oban.



Winter maintenance vehicle

Did you know?

Roads in Argyll and Bute make up 4.6% of Scotland's total road network.



#abplace2b

Outcome 3 — Education, skills and training maximise opportunities for all

- Young people are leaving our schools well equipped with the skills they need to succeed in life. 94.2% go on to further education, training or employment. That's up 1.2% from 2017 and is 2.8% above the national average.
- We have helped our pupils increase their attainment levels. Results across National 4, National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher in 2018 were higher than the national average. Both Higher and Advanced Higher outcomes have improved since last year by 2.9% and 4.92% respectively.
- Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) figures show that pupils in P1, P7 and S3 are performing better than the national average. Pupils in P4 are doing better than the national average too, in almost all areas.
- A number of our schools gained national, and even international, recognition for their efforts. Dunoon Grammar won a vast array of awards. Hermitage Academy became the first school in Scotland to gain national accreditation with Investors in Young People.
- School pupils are invited to give us feedback on lunch menus. This helps them get a better understanding of the nutritional benefits of the options and feel part of the planning process.
- Business Gateway delivered 22 Digital Boost workshops to 116 attendees. A further 20 businesses received one-to-one specialist support.
- Working with the food and drink and tourism industries, we commissioned a survey to find out what skills are needed to support these key sectors over the next three years.



Pupils participate in lunch menu planning



Our food and drink industry is a key sector

Did you know?

We teach 10,300 school pupils and 1,380 nursery school children every day in Argyll and Bute.



Outcome 4 — Children and young people have the best possible start

- We recruited a new Principal Teacher for Looked After Children to work with Social Work and Education, and across all schools, to make sure we close the attainment gap for our young people who are in care.
- The Early Years' service phased in 1140 hours' Early Learning and Childcare in 25 centres across Argyll and Bute.
- Volunteering and citizenship, combined with a positive summer experience for young people unable to go on holiday, was the focus of our Give Summer Programme. Three hundred and eleven young people, aged 11-18, volunteered in their community in return for trips, visits and leisure activities.
- We launched the Changing Lives initiative to help parents of, and professionals working with, children with ADHD or similar behaviours. One hundred and ten parents have attended, along with 248 professional workers, including health and social care, education staff, youth workers and foster carers.
- Our new £36m Oban High School opened with capacity for 1,300 pupils to enjoy state-of-the-art learning facilities, including gyms, fitness rooms, dance studios and sensory rooms. We completed Dunoon Primary School's £10.5m refurbishment, creating space for up to 300 pupils and 30 early learning and childcare space.
- We ran a special social media campaign to recruit foster carers. The number of enquiries over the five-week campaign increased by 90% compared with the usual level of interest. The campaign focused on the experiences of carers.



Did you know?

We approved a new mental health and wellbeing guidance document for schools in the area, *Our Children, Their Mental Health*.

#abplace2b



Outcome 5 — People will live active, healthier and independent lives

- We continued to work with our health colleagues, at the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), to deliver vital health and social care services .
- We reviewed how we deliver our advice services so we can focus our attention on those people who are most vulnerable and need our help most. We also created a Financial Inclusion and Advice Group to oversee this work.
- We processed benefit claims in an average of 18.7 days, an improvement on last year's 22.2 days. One hundred per cent of crisis grants are processed within 24 hours.
- Measurable annual income generated through Welfare Rights intervention rose from £2.9m in 2017/18 to £3.6m in 2018/19 meaning more people are getting the money to which they are entitled.
- We continue to develop social media as a means of providing information to our communities. Our Instagram is the most followed local authority page in Scotland and in the top 10 for the UK.
- We asked residents in Dunoon and Rothesay to give their views on developing walking and cycling routes in the towns as part of the council's commitment to promote active and healthy living. This work is in partnership with Sustrans.
- British Sign Language Users (BSL) helped us develop a new Local BSL Plan to make information and public services more accessible for deaf and deafblind BSL users.



We develop cycle routes throughout the area

Did you know?

We have 373,807 metres of cycleway in Argyll and Bute. 106,500 of these metres are off road.



#abplace2b

Outcome 6 — People will live in safer and stronger communities

- Our latest survey shows that Community Councils are very positive about the support provided to them by the council.
- We have worked as part of a multi-agency group tackling serious and organised crime across Argyll and Bute and West Dunbartonshire. It has targeted successfully incidents relating to illegal workers, food and environmental crime and protecting consumers from fraud and scams.
- Our Rural Resettlement Fund attracted 196 new residents to Argyll and Bute; this included 55 children.
- We are working with communities to develop flood studies to reduce risks in Tarbert, Lochgilphead, Oban, Helensburgh and Clachan.
- We have developed new guidelines for Houses in Multiple Occupation. We want to make sure we have the right type of housing, in the right places, for our communities. It's also important that local services are not put under too much pressure.
- We asked customers what they felt about the advice we give on welfare, debt and trading standards. 93% were very satisfied with the help they received and 100% felt that our advice had helped them feel less stressed and better able to manage payment of their bills.

SERIOUS CRIME
AFFECTS ALL COMMUNITIES
NOT JUST CITIES

You know what's normal - report the abnormal:

Out and about:

- Permanently covered windows or unusual security
- No refuse for occupied premises
- Empty chemical containers or tubs as part of refuse
- People loitering or visiting properties at strange times

In businesses:

- High turnover of staff that speak limited or no English
- Staff seem nervous or described as just visiting
- Mattresses on non-designated sleeping areas
- Small businesses with more than one till

CALL CRIMESTOPPERS ON
0800 555 111

Argyll and Bute Council | POLICE SCOTLAND | SEPA | Home Office



The RRF welcomed families to Argyll and Bute

Did you know?

According to the RBS Quality of Life Survey, Argyll and Bute is in the top five best places to live in Scotland.



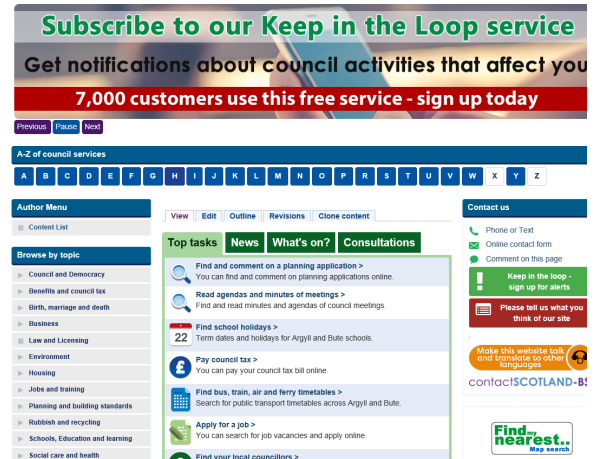
#abplace2b

Working with our communities

We have continued to listen to and consult with local communities. Local people and businesses are playing an increasingly important role in delivering change where needed.

Here are just a few examples of how.

You said	We did
You would like us to be more proactive in our communications.	We created a new outreach service where customers can sign up to different types of alerts from the council.
You wanted all our website content to be mobile adaptive.	We worked with our third-party system suppliers to achieve that.
Primary pupils told us they wanted an improved salad bar and favourite meals in their new school lunch menu.	The new menu includes options from all focus groups.
97% of the people responding to our Rural Growth Deal survey told us you supported our vision	Our bid has been submitted to the Scottish and UK Governments for consideration.
Helensburgh Community Council asked to be more involved in working with the council around road improvements.	We now hold regular meetings with Helensburgh Community Council to discuss local issues and building better communications.



Useful links: [Award winning council](#) | [Our vision for Argyll and Bute](#) | [Council website](#)



[Performance and best value](#)

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Argyll and Bute



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