

Open for business

Planning and Regulatory Services

Planning Performance Framework



Argyll and Bute Council
Comhairle Earra-Ghaidheal agus Bhoid
www.argyll-bute.gov.uk



PDF
2016

Foreword

This document captures the annual performance of the Argyll and Bute Planning Service for financial year 2015/16. All Local Authorities are required to produce a Planning Performance Framework (PPF) Annual Report which reports on performance against a broad range of areas including speed of decision making, quality, resources, successes, achievements and engagement. This document shows that our Planning Service is 'open for business' as we give priority to supporting sustainable economic growth whilst at the same time protecting the qualities which make our Council area so special.



Cllr David Kinniburgh,

**Depute Provost &
Policy Lead for Planning Services, Historic
and Sustainable Environment**



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Great Places @ABC_Planning

'As 2016 is the Year of Innovation, Architecture and Design I was delighted to welcome the Culture Secretary, Fiona Hyslop MSP to the Helensburgh & Lomond Civic Centre in March to officially open the launch event of the Festival of Architecture 2016 – Hinterland by NVA at St Peter's Seminary – which is located at Cardross within the Helensburgh & Lomond South ward which I represent¹.

Our Planning Service continues to deliver 'great places' and this year we also ran our own Sustainable Design Awards where a number of recently completed exemplar buildings were celebrated. Quality of architecture and innovation was high in all those shortlisted.

Our newly adopted and aspirational Local Development Plan has led to number of notable planning applications and masterplans being submitted demonstrating Planning is stimulating investment and interest in our area.

We have also sought to engage with our customers in new ways by holding Charrette workshops to promote sustainable change in some of our settlements and our Twitter feed grows monthly in popularity and followers.

This Report is a showcase for all the positive, innovative and quality outcomes that have been achieved by Planning Services in 2015/16'



¹ www.visitscotland.com/blog/scotland/festival-of-architecture-2016/

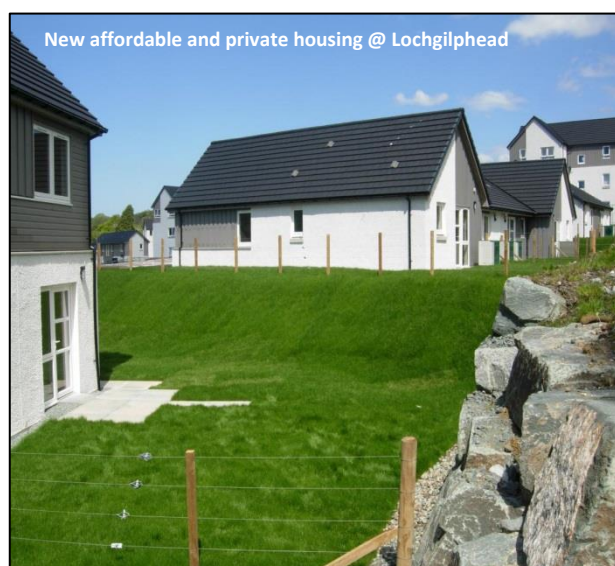
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DID YOU KNOW?

Our Council:-

- Approve 97% of all planning applications
- Has a new local development plan adopted in 2015
- Determine applications quicker than the national average in 10 Weeks
- Consented 658 new homes in 2015/16
- Has allocated 90ha of business land to support economic growth



About Argyll and Bute

Our Geography and People

- Argyll and Bute is the second largest local authority by area in Scotland and covers almost 9% of the total Scottish land area with a population of approximately 90,000
- 52% of Argyll and Bute's population live in areas classified by the Scottish Government as 'rural'
- There are 23 inhabited islands including Bute; Coll, Colonsay, Easdale, Iona, Islay, Jura; Kerrera, Lismore, Mull and Tiree.
- 15% of jobs in Argyll and Bute are tourism-related. This compares to 9% of Scottish jobs and 8% of British jobs.
- 40% of employee jobs in Argyll and Bute are in 'public administration, education and health'

Our ambitions

- Attracting people to the area – we are focussed on growing our population, attracting working age families to Argyll and Bute. Working with the private sector to unlock the potential in our economy of opportunity is key to realising the vision that our economy will be diverse and thriving, based on a growing population
- **Creating opportunities for all** – we want to develop education, skills and training which will allow people to grow and achieve their full potential, maximising opportunities for all and creating a workforce which supports the area's growing economy
- **Improving infrastructure** – improving and making better use of our infrastructure to support economic growth, enhancing the built environment and our key town centres
- **Sustainability** – ensuring a sustainable future by protecting the natural environment and working to combat the effects of climate change



Our Planning Service

The overall focus of the council's planning service is on making things happen, supporting sustainable economic growth and regeneration.

The service processes a huge range of applications, from large-scale windfarms, fish farms and housing developments to small scale croft diversification, self-build and alterations to listed buildings.

Planners work to support the ambitions of individuals while protecting the interests of the wider community. Our teams are located in key towns throughout the area, allowing them to be close to and engage with the environment and communities that they help to shape.

Part 1 - National Headline Indicators

| Key outcomes | 2015-16 | 2014-15 |
|--|------------|---------------|
| <u>Development Planning:</u> age of local/strategic development plan(s) (years and months) at end of reporting period <i>Requirement: less than 5 years</i> | 1yr | 0 |
| Will the local/strategic development plan(s) be replaced by their 5 th anniversary according to the current development plan scheme? (Y/N) | Y | Y |
| Has the expected date of submission of the plan to Scottish Ministers in the development plan scheme changed over the past year? (Y-earlier/Y-later/N) | N | N |
| Were development plan scheme engagement/consultation commitments met during the year? (Y/N) | Y | Y |
| Effective Land Supply and Delivery of Outputs* Established housing land supply | 8751 units | 8770 |
| 5-year effective housing land supply (units) | 4678 units | 4465 |
| 5-year housing supply target | 3175 units | 3175 |
| Effective housing land supply (year supply) | 7.8 years | 7 |
| Housing approvals | 658 units | 587 |
| Housing completions over the last 5 years | 1143 units | New Indicator |
| Marketable employment land supply | 88.7ha | 89.28 |
| Employment land take-up during reporting year | 0.51ha | 0.2ha |

| Key outcomes | 2015-16 | 2014-15 |
|--|-----------------|---------------|
| <u>Development Management</u> | | |
| Project Planning | | |
| Percentage of applications subject to pre-application advice | 10.7 | 19.52 |
| Number of major applications subject to processing agreement | 1 | 5 |
| Number of applications subject to other project plan | 1 | 1 |
| Percentage planned timescales met | 0% | 0% |
| Decision-making | | |
| Application approval rate | 97.4% | 96.7% |
| Delegation rate | 97% | 97% |
| Decision-making timescales | | |
| Average number of weeks to decision: | | |
| Major developments | 17 | 14.1 |
| Local developments (non-householder) | 10.3 | 10.8 |
| Householder developments | 7 | 6.9 |
| Legacy Cases | | |
| Number cleared during reporting period | 4 | New Indicator |
| Number remaining | 35 | New Indicator |
| Enforcement | | |
| time since enforcement charter published / reviewed (months) Requirement: review every 2 years | 10months | 0 |
| number of breaches identified / resolved | 191/309 | 218/310 |

Contextual Statements

Development Management Summary

Development Management has had another strong year in terms of statistical performance. We continue to exceed Council targets for determining applications and are consistently ahead of the Scottish Average. For the 3rd year in a row continuous improvement has been achieved in relation to our headline indicator – ‘Average Timescale to Determine Local Developments (Non-Householder)’

which relates to over two thirds of all submissions. We were able to reduce the average timescale by half a week. We continue to closely monitor team and Officer performance (for both applications

| DM Service Measure Tracker | | | Start: | 01/07/2016 | End: | 18/07/2016 |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|---|--|------------|------|------------|
| | Planning Application Approval Rate | Pre-Applications Processed Within 20 Working Days | Average Number of weeks to Determine "All Local" Planning Applications | | | |
| | Target = 95% | Target = 75% | Target = 12 Weeks | | | |
| ABC | 97.4 | 88.6 | 9.4 | | | |
| B&C | 90 | 75 | 11.8 | | | |
| H&L | 100 | 100 | 7.1 | | | |
| MAK | 100 | 75 | 7.2 | | | |
| OL&I | 96.6 | 92.9 | 10.8 | | | |
| xM.A.T | 100 | 0 | 0 | | | |

Screenshot of weekly performance management tool

and Pre-apps) on a weekly basis through reporting and circulation of statistics. Any dips in performance are quickly identified and improvement actions are enacted.

The average timescale to determine *Householder Developments* has also remained ahead of Council Target and National Benchmarking at 7 weeks.

The new Local Development Plan also stimulated a notable increase in Major Applications rising from 3 in 2014/15 to 7 in 2015/16. Unfortunately there was a 3 week increase in the average timescale to deal with Major Applications but this was significantly affected / skewed by a single Major Housing Application. In this case the Developer ceased all business in Scotland for several months due to global economic conditions and is still not committing to the site in Rosneath albeit the s75 legal agreement was finally concluded. This application was successfully ‘Clocks Stopped’ in agreement with the Scottish Government for quarterly statistics.

At the heart of our Development Management Service is a culture and willingness to work in partnership with the development industry of Argyll and Bute. We seek to positively manage development and resolve issues through negotiation and adding value to unlock projects and as an output approve applications. This is reflected in our high approval rate of 97%.

We have continued to promote our pre-application service ‘Planning for Firm Foundations’ and again have seen a significant rise in its use and growth in its use. In 2015/16 we processed 1,093 pre-application enquiries, which is 160 more than the previous year. We also monitor the time taken for our Officer’s to respond to pre-application enquires giving a service commitment to communicate back to the applicant within 20 working days – we currently achieve 75% within the timescale .

Whilst we continue to support and endorse the use of Processing Agreements (PA) their take up in practice has been relatively poor in 2015/16. Despite specifically promoting their use at our User Forums and on our web page about them customers are still reluctant to sign up. Feedback from

our customers suggests that our timescales for delivering important projects / applications is generally good and we specifically seek to 'fast track' economically important projects via our Major Applications Team. To this extent from a developers perspective, PA's would add little value to their projects.

Our Enforcement Officers have been proactively monitoring development to ensure compliance with drawings / conditions and have also been responding to complaints by the public. Our Enforcement Charter is also under 2 years old being adopted in March 2015.

Planning Policy Summary

Following the March 2015 adoption of the Argyll and Bute LDP early work for 15-16 saw publishing of the document, refining its availability online and; production and adoption of the supporting LDP Action Programme within the statutory timescale. In accordance with the replacement Development Plan Scheme for 15/16, work then focussed on production and adoption of the Supplementary Guidance to complement the LDP. A Strategic Environmental Assessment was undertaken, and following consequential review, a suite of SG was agreed by Scottish Government and adopted by the Council. The team continue to work on a small number of policy areas, particularly renewables, marine and coastal development and aquaculture, which have required refresh and update and it is hoped these will all be adopted by the autumn of 2016. Supporting and aligning with the Council's single outcome agreement, the LDP has provided a very ambitious spatial land use strategy which is focused on generating economic activity and delivering new homes in order to reverse population decline. To this end there is now a 7.8 year effective housing land supply and 80.28Ha of employment land. Comparison with the last 5 years housing land completions of 1143 units against the five year requirement of 3175 units demonstrates that there is an extremely generous housing land supply in comparison to take up, and this is mirrored in the employment land supply. This highlights the need to focus on delivery. To this end the team has continued to work towards the production of a Key Sites Action Programme focussing attention on the most important strategic sites within Argyll and Bute. To inform this, a comprehensive and rigorous review and assessment of all housing sites is underway to identify any impediments to delivery. Once this is complete it will enable the team to identify issues and focus attention on their resolution. This process will feed in to the Key Sites Action Programme and the review of the LDP Action Programme in 2017. As an early output from this process the team has been working closely with other services in the Council and building on the partnership arrangement which has emerged with LINK Housing Association to explore the infrastructure requirements required to deliver the Dunbeg strategic development which will be a crucial part of the Lorn Arc TIF project. In addition, there have been detailed discussion with a number of national house builders in the Helensburgh area and it is anticipated this will help to facilitate significant housing delivery in the coming years.

In parallel with this, the team has begun scoping the issues which will need to be considered for preparation of the next LDP in 2020, and a very detailed Development Plan scheme has been drawn up to ensure a rigorous planned approach to its delivery over the next four years. This was adopted by the Council in March 2016 and its implementation is already well underway.

Reflecting our commitment to align the LDP closely with Community Planning, the team has engaged with community planning partners and local communities to draw in Scottish Government funding for charrettes. In early 2016 Charrette events have been held in Rothesay, Tiree and Ardrishaig / Crinnan. The outputs of these will emerge over the coming months and their content, where relevant, will inform the development of the next LDP. The team will continue to roll this or similar approaches out to other communities when possible.

Building on the very successful delivery of the CHORD regeneration projects, the team continues to promote an agenda of sustainable place making. To this end it has delivered a Sustainable Design Awards competition which received enthusiastic participation and culminated in a well-attended award ceremony, all generally raising the profile and agenda for high quality architecture within Argyll and Bute.

The Council has now adopted the Argyll and Bute Heritage Strategy which was invited to be presented at the 'Our Place In Time' Conference by Historic Environment Scotland in October 2015. The team will now work with other Services of the Council to implement the action plan including taking a more holistic approach to the management of the heritage asset within the Council's stewardship. Alongside this a number of CARS schemes continue to be implemented within Argyll and Bute, and further bids for funding are being actively prepared for the future.

With almost 70% of the coastline in the Clyde Marine Region, Argyll and Bute Council is a key member of the newly formed Clyde Marine Planning Partnership and will be focused on ensuring this new marine plan both integrates with and is consistent with our Local Development Plan and Council priorities. Our Marine and Coastal Unit is already actively engaged in the early stages of this process.

Our Biodiversity unit has worked hard to ensure the Council is meeting its Biodiversity Reporting Duties and to refresh the Local Biodiversity Action Plan. In addition a biodiversity technical note has been produced which will ultimately form a checklist and toolkit for developers and planners alike.

Our access team, has continued to focus on increasing access to the outdoors by promoting and developing their "Where to go Outdoors" website which provides online footpath guides throughout Argyll and Bute.



Part 2- Defining and measuring a high-quality planning service

Whilst Part 1 of the Planning Performance Framework (PPF) focusses on statistics, this chapter warmly recognises that successful planning is about much more than percentages and timescales. Part 2 highlights our main qualitative outcomes of 2015/16.

A - Quality of outcomes

Fiona Hyslop MSP, launched the Festival of Architecture 2016 from Argyll and Bute in March 2016². She opened arts organisation NVA's production of lights, music and restored woodland walks around one of Scotland's most iconic modernist buildings – St Peter's Seminary, Cardross³. The Planning team were involved in assessing planning and listed building applications for the event and the entire landholding is identified as an 'Area for Action' in the Local Development Plan.



Choosing the newly opened Helensburgh & Lomond Civic Centre for her civic gathering was a fitting backdrop for a celebration of our built environment, planning and delivering quality outcomes on the ground. **Case Study 1** demonstrates the positive strategic planning and Council investment that has taken place and is now delivering positive change and confidence in our largest town Helensburgh.

As well as St Peter's, which was named the best Modern Scottish Building⁴, Argyll and Bute boasted 7 buildings shortlisted for the Festival of Architectures 2016's '*Building of the Century*'⁵. These were Cour House (Mull of Kintyre), Winter Gardens (Rothesay), St Conans Kirk (Loch Awe), The Pavillion (Rothesay) and Mount Stewart Visitor Centre (Rothesay).

The final shortlisted building to make the national shortlist was House No. 7, Tiree which also featured in our own Sustainable Design Awards which we run bi-annually to commend and celebrate the great outcomes we achieve on the ground in Argyll and Bute. **Case study 2** outlines the success of our Design Awards and spread of recent great architecture and regeneration



² <http://www.foa2016.com/>

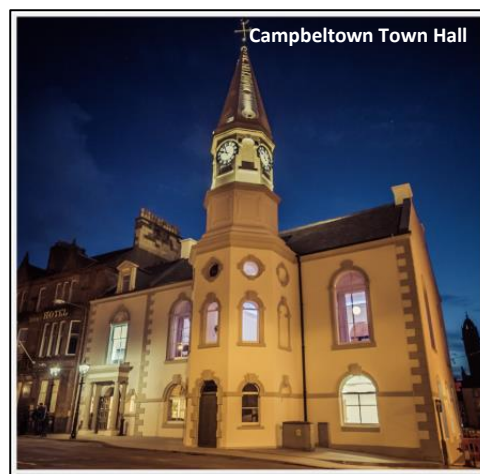
³ <http://hinterland.org/>

⁴ www.scotsman.com/news/revealed-top-100-modern-scots-buildings-1-1404368

⁵ <http://www.foa2016.com/scotstyle>

projects across Argyll and Bute. Oban is also hosting its own festival of architecture from 30th July 2016.

Campbeltown has also benefited from significant investment and positive place-making in recent years. Campbeltown's Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) is a Heritage Lottery Funded regeneration project that ran from 2009-2016 offering grant funding to property owners to assist with the repair of historic buildings within Campbeltown town centre. The main aim was to provide a sustainable economic future for Campbeltown's historic town centre, recognising the value of its built heritage whilst making it a better place to live, work and visit. Some of the key outcomes are shown in **Case Study 3 and 4**.



Our Planning Team also delivers quality outcomes when it comes to ensuring people can access our great places and landscapes. Our dedicated Access Team positively promote people visiting or experiencing Argyll and Bute. In 2015/16 our online Core Path Guides were launched to encourage tourism, recreation, fitness and safe appreciation of our outstanding network of routes – as can be seen in **Case Study 5**.



The Council has committed over £30 investment in its CHORD Regeneration Projects (Campbeltown, Helensburgh, Oban, Rothesay and Dunoon) particularly with the revitalisation of civic spaces and public realm as can be seen from these two examples of the newly completed Colquhoun Square in Helensburgh and Stafford Street, Oban. The Council has sought to create 'Great Places' using quality design and materials in the new public spaces.



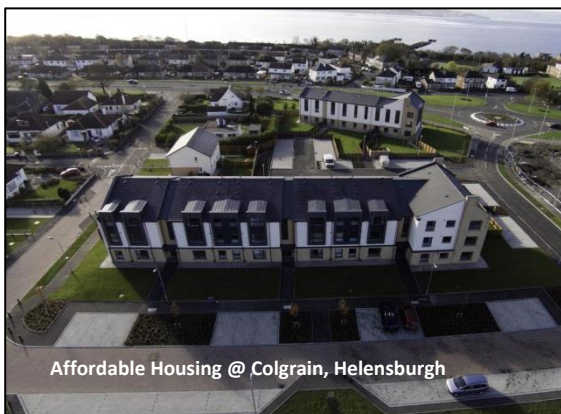
Planning Services have been part of CHORD Project Teams, determined planning applications and planning contributions were also obtained to enhance certain projects within them including shopfront improvements, enhancements in car parking and public art.

CASE STUDY 1: THE HELENSBURGH STORY

PPF Marker:- **Quality of Outcomes**

Helensburgh is Argyll and Bute's largest town situated on the north bank of the river Clyde and benefits from a high quality of environment coupled with short travel time to the Glasgow conurbation as well as picturesque Loch Lomond. There are also significant employment opportunities in the area generated from the HM Naval Base Clyde (Faslane) which is being expanded by the Ministry of Defence.

There has been little new housing development over the past 20 years and expansion has been limited for a variety of reasons including a lack of deliverable sites, greenbelt restrictions and a Conservation Area which is largely at capacity. In the past 5 years the Council and stakeholders have sought to invest in Helensburgh to improve its attractiveness and stimulate growth. A lot of the projects are now complete and outcomes on the ground have won national awards.



Projects / Outputs:-

- **Housing allocations & Strategic Greenbelt releases**– over 750 new homes allocated in 2015 LDP
- **Town Centre First Development** – Council invested £9m in new Civic Centre bringing 180 staff into town from a cluster of other sites. These other sites are being sold off for new opportunities. New Civic Centre also secured future of vacant listed building.
- **£7m of Town Centre Public Realm Improvements**- including new town square, wider pavements, outdoor museum & improved esplanade. Has won 2 National Awards in 2016 including RIAS Overall Award and a Scottish Design Award.
- New Housing Allocations have triggered **4 Major Applications for housing**
- Council is working in partnership with MOD on a **Strategic Delivery and Development Framework for the expansion of HMNB Clyde**.
- **New Secondary School and Supermarket** to east of town – delivered planning contributions to uplift attractiveness of town centre
- Completed new affordable housing at former secondary school site
- Adopted a **Masterplan for Helensburgh Pierhead** and committed over £5m for new swimming pool and mixed use development in Town Centre
- Successfully obtained over **£2m of Heritage Lottery Funding to restore historic Hermitage Park**



<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/news/2016/jun/helensburgh-town-centre-public-realm-recognised-prestigious-rias-award>

CASE STUDY 2: ARGYLL & BUTE SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AWARDS

PPF Marker:- **Quality of Outcomes**

During late 2015 and early 2016 the Development Policy team ran the Argyll and Bute Sustainable Design Awards. The 2015/16 awards followed a similar format to previously successful processes in 2009 and 2012 and featured four distinct entry categories.

- New build residential (single or small scale)
- New build large scale residential development
- New build non-residential
- Redevelopment or refurbishment of an existing building
-

A varied range of entries were received across the categories and these were scored against 4 principal criteria:

- The Context
- Environmental Design
- Economy, Innovation and/or Social Factors
- Detail Design and Workmanship

The judging panel was made up of range of staff from the Planning and Building Standards services as well as two elected members from the Planning, Protective Services and Licencing Committee with the aim to provide a wide range of opinion and expertise in the judging discussion.

The judges scored and ranked the entries against the criteria and then used the collated results to agree upon a shortlist of entries in each category. The judges then split into smaller teams to visit each of the shortlisted entries which were spread widely across Argyll from Helensburgh in the south to the islands of Tiree and Jura.

Once all the visits were complete the judges met one final time to report back their findings to the rest of the panel and discuss each of the entries and agree a recommended winner for each category. These recommendations were taken back to PPSL committee who endorsed them at the April 2016 meeting.

A ceremony was held during May to present the winners with their awards and the Council was delighted to welcome Karen Anderson, Chair of Architecture and Design Scotland as guest speaker as part of their "Say Hello to Architecture" programme.

Throughout the process the Sustainable Design Awards have been promoted through the Council's website and Twitter page with details of each shortlisted and winning entry individually Tweeted. The team also worked closely with the Council's communication officer to promote the awards ceremony through wider media channels.

The Sustainable Design Awards aim to raise awareness of high quality design and the Council's suite of design guides that cover areas such as small and large scale housing and the historic environment.

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/sustainable-design-awards-2015>

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/design-guides>

Twitter - Great Places@abc_planning

CASE STUDY 2: ARGYLL & BUTE SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AWARDS – THE WINNERS

The winners in each category were:-

- **New build residential (single or small scale) – House Number 7, Tiree**

A development of high quality finish and detailing which displays a significant level of architectural thought and balances the traditional Tiree vernacular with sensitive contemporary design

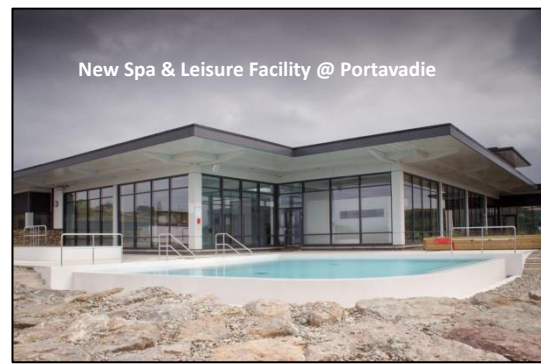
- **New build large scale residential development – Park Square, Campbeltown**

A particularly well considered site layout that frames views and provides welcome connectivity through the site and also displays a quality palette of materials and finishes throughout.



- **New build non-residential – Portavadie Leisure and Spa**

A high quality redevelopment of a brownfield site with a building appropriate to its special setting and featuring elements such as biomass heating, led lighting and green roofs.



- **Redevelopment or refurbishment of an existing building – Greystones, Oban**

A high quality refurbishment of a historic Listed Building displaying significant attention to detail and outstanding workmanship including the restoration of original features such as original rooms shapes, re-opening of fireplaces and refurbishment of windows.

- A commendation was also awarded to **Tayvallich Primary School Early Years Unit** in the New build non-residential category for a high standard of design, detailing, materials and finishes in a building that contains modern elements whilst still respecting the traditional school building.



CASE STUDY 3: HERITAGE LED REGENERATION IN CAMPBELTOWN

PPF Marker:- **Quality of Outcomes**

The upper floors of this 18th century B listed building on Cross Street / Main Streetm Campbeltown, had lain vacant for over 20 years and become infested with over 2 tonnes of pigeon guano. With a Dangerous Building Notice in force, it was threatened with demolition and would have left a gap site in the centre of Campbeltown.

Following a back-to-back legal agreement, we facilitated a change of ownership, leading to the full repair of the building, supported by grants of £390,000, from the THI, and £60,000, from Housing Services.

The new owner is MacLeod Construction Limited, who also acted as the main contractor for the capital works.

Key outcomes:

- One of Campbeltown's oldest tenements has been brought back into use.
- Three refurbished commercial units and four new high quality one-bedroom flats are now available for private rental;
- Removal of urban dereliction;
- Cross St has been re-opened to vehicles;
- Repair and reinstatement of the Macgochans Bar store and cellar (at 2 Cross Street) is now possible enabling the bar to re-open under new ownership.
- Boost to the local economy.



Before



After

As part of Elected Member Training and our Place Making agenda, Elected Members of the Planning Committee were given a guided tour around Campbeltown to demonstrate the improvements in the built environment that have taken place. Councillors were able to reflect on their decisions that they had made over recent years and see first-hand the impact of positive planning and importance of heritage led regeneration including the CARS and THI projects. Delivering on-site monitoring for the Councillors and reflecting on some of our key places spaces was a specific improvement action from the 2014/15 PPF.

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/campbeltown-regeneration>

CASE STUDY 4: ASSET TRANSFER AND REGENERATION OF KEY BUILDINGS

PPF Marker:- **Quality of Outcomes**

Described by Historic Scotland as 'One of Scotland's finest town houses' in 2009 it was announced that Campbeltown Town Hall, one of the town's most important buildings, was being mothballed. The THI team played a key role in identifying a new use that led to an asset transfer to South Kintyre Development Trust (SKDT) and a full repair and refurbishment scheme.

We worked in partnership with SKDT to develop and deliver the project. Our role included:

- Key member of the Town Hall project team;
- providing advice and guidance;
- securing grant funding;
- project management expertise;
- engaging and consulting with the community and stakeholders.
- procurement and tendering
- £387,000 of THI funding and £330,000 CHORD funding contributed to the £2M costs.

THI funded works included; re-roofing, leadwork, stonework, refurbishment of windows, removal of failing paint and application of mineral paint.

In addition to the THI and Council CHORD funding we helped SKDT secure almost £1M from the Big Lottery Fund and £224,800 from Historic Environment Scotland.

The building has re-opened as a multi-purpose facility and focal point for community activities. It is now fully accessible to all and is already proving popular as a venue for weddings and other functions.

The main hall has been retained and refurbished to include; uplighting, PA system, new floor and a fire escape that increases the capacity from 60 to over 200.

Throughout the building original features were retained and refurbished where necessary such as the Italian marble, terrazzo and balustrades.

To generate income modern offices have been created in the former Council Chamber. Existing historic features have been retained.

The former store has been transformed into a semi-commercial kitchen.

New toilets have been installed in the former committee room including disabled and baby changing facilities.



CASE STUDY 5: GETTING ACCESS TO OUR GREAT PLACES

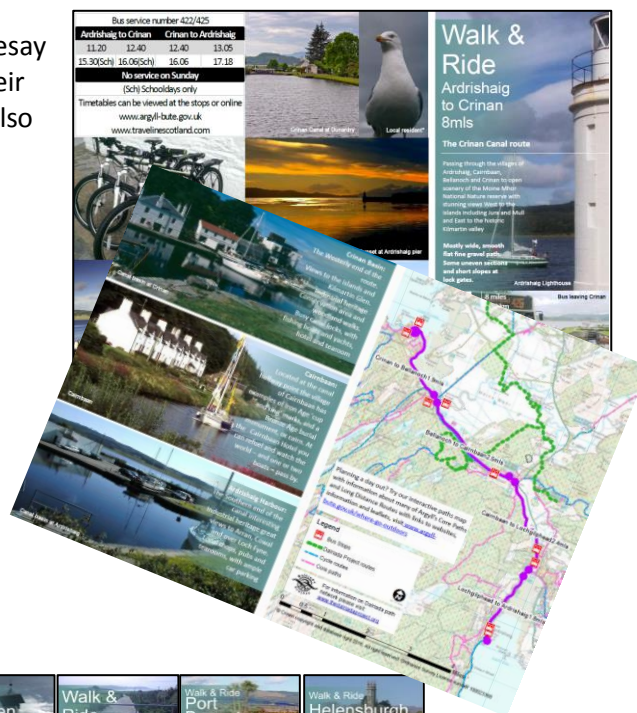
PPF Marker:- **Quality of Outcomes**

Using funding from the Scottish Government's Smarter Places Smarter Choices fund the Access Team was able to design and publish 22,000 copies of 14 leaflets highlighting the opportunities for the public to use buses and ferries to allow them to walk or cycle along paths across Argyll & Bute.

The routes have been graded using a national system developed by FCS & SNH. The routes vary from easy along the Crinan Canal or the promenades in Dunoon, Helensburgh and Rothesay where a tired walker can catch a bus back to their starting point at frequent intervals. There are also more strenuous paths including the first 9 miles of the Kintyre Way Long Distance Path between Tarbert & Skipness.

Distribution

The leaflets are designed to encourage residents and visitors to do the walks. The leaflets have been distributed to TICs, Libraries and Council Service Points. The leaflets are available through the Online Core Path Map [Where to Go Outdoors](#). Laminated copies have also be posted at bus stops and ferry terminals along the routes.



https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/LocalViewExt/Sites/Core_Path_Mapping/
<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/access-team>

B - Quality of service and engagement

This year we have used the strapline 'open for business' to promote our Planning Performance Framework. This is a reflection of our eagerness to work with all stakeholders to make things happen and deliver development in Argyll & Bute. It also reflects the aspirations of our newly adopted and growth focussed Local Development Plan (LDP).

Supporting sustainable economic growth

The LDP was adopted in March 2015 and during the past year the development policy team has worked to deliver a comprehensive suite of Supplementary Guidance which supports the LDP. This has now been substantively completed and adopted. The LDP is strongly aligned to the Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement and the focus is on now delivering the strategy and allocations of the Plan. The Council has also produced and adopted an Action Programme. This is being used as a basis to focus action on priority proposals and allocations and to identify work that is required to enable development on the ground. The Council is forming partnerships with developers to deliver a number of significant development opportunities such as the mixed use Dunbeg corridor development currently being Master Planned with LINK housing association, and the re-development of the former Hermitage Academy in Helensburgh which see a national house builder create a presence in Argyll and Bute for the first time in many years. Looking further forward the Development Policy team is undertaking a systematic and detailed analysis and monitoring of all LDP allocations to identify any issues which are precluding or slowing delivery of development. This analysis will filter into the review of the LDP Action Programme and allow the Council to target appropriate action on an ongoing and early basis. To assist this process the Development Policy Team is working to produce a highly focused version of the LDP Action Programme which will focus on the sites considered most Key to Argyll and Bute – **Case Study 6**. This will allow us to articulate the best and most important development and investment opportunities to the market, and also to focus all enabling partners, public and private, on putting in place the necessary physical, financial and intellectual capital required to deliver the opportunities outlined.



Customers

We always seek to put customers at the heart of our service and engage with them in a number of ways as highlighted in **Case Study 7**.

Our customers take comfort from knowing that we have a collaborative and positive approach to Development Management. The vast majority of applications are approved and we have one of the highest approval rates in Scotland at 97%. This is reflective of our culture to resolve matters at a

pre-application stage, add value during the development cycle and to work in partnership with applicants to deliver development that is consistent with our development plan policies. **Our Pre-application Service including Processing Agreements is detailed in Case Study 8.**

We have also continued to grow our social media presence in 2015/16 and our Twitter Feed – ‘Great Places@ABC_Planning’ grows monthly in followers and contains news, links to council website, photos, planning application outcomes and details of consultations. Our Twitter feed is also displayed on the main Council website.



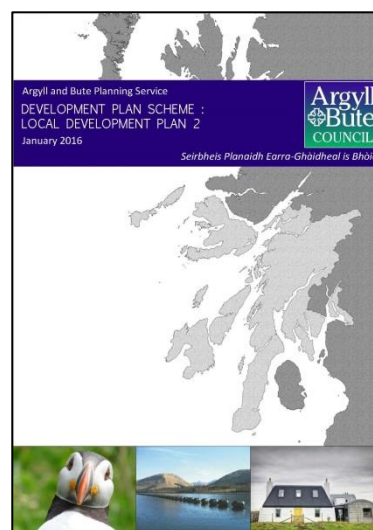
Alongside this, and to ensure we are taking accord and representing the aspirations of our many and varied communities we are coordinating with our Community Planning partners to assimilate where possible the community plans which have and are being produced. Most recently these have taken the form of charrettes which have been delivered in partnership with Scottish Government and are covered in **Case Study 9**. We will continue to deliver such events going forwards and these will all inform the initial stages of the next LDP, preparation of which is already well underway.

In 2016 we have also developed a new communications strategy which is detailed in **Case Study 10**.

Certainty

Argyll and Bute has a strong culture of working in partnership with our customers, stakeholders, communities and other organisations to deliver Masterplans. Developing masterplans can add certainty to a proposal / allocation and underpin investment. It can also speculate on longer term or aspirational opportunities without prejudicing earlier phases that may be taking place now. Overall we feel they improve the deliverability and design quality of development. 2 good examples of these that have been adopted in 2015/16 are detailed in **Case Study 11 and 12**.

In line with National objectives the Council is focussed on the effective delivery of sites and allocations. Detailed project management of the Local Development Plan and Innovative Communications is essential to deliver this in partnership with our stakeholders. The Planning Policy Team has recently completed the new Local Development Plan Scheme (**Case Study 13**) and embarked upon the Call for Sites Process, to influence and ensure realism in the next LDP – **Case Study 14**.

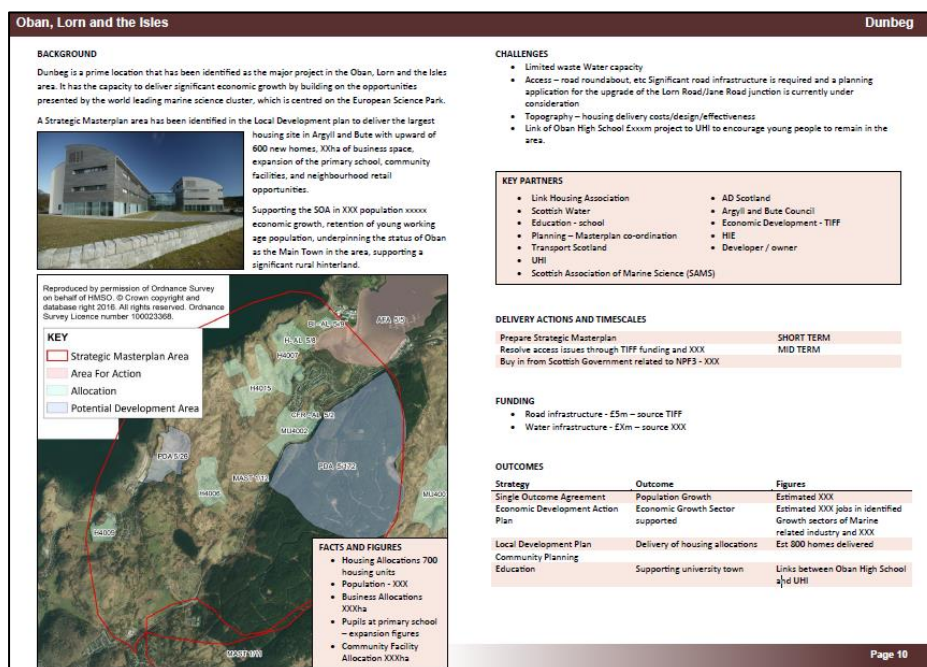


CASE STUDY 6: STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE / KEY SITES ACTION PROGRAMME (SIAP)

PPF Marker:- **Quality of service and engagement**

Argyll and Bute Council and Community Planning Partners have developed a series of strategic plans which aim to set out the vision, priorities and objectives for Argyll and Bute over the next ten years. Argyll and Bute Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) 2013-2023; The Strategic and Area Economic Development Action Plans (EDAP); Local Development Plan, Adopted March 2015; Renewable Energy Action Plan (REAP)

The Strategic Infrastructure /Key Sites Action Plan will clearly identify and prioritise infrastructure and development projects which will support the delivery of key economic goals for Argyll and Bute and will identify ways in which these priority projects could be funded. It will also identify the strategic infrastructure requirements of the key sites; provide costings where known or the need for them where not, and identify the partners required to enable delivery. The strategic sites identified in the Local Development Plan have the capacity to deliver a step change in economic activity within Argyll and Bute. In essence the SIAP will be a distillation of these plans, creating a succinct and easily read single document which can be used to highlight and advocate the important opportunities and challenges within Argyll and Bute. The SIAP will form the foundation for an economic case for additional funding being directed towards Argyll and Bute, similar to City Deal Initiative, the SIAP will form the platform for a justification for a 'Rural Deal Initiative'. The SIAP will be key in attracting capital investment for infrastructure. The SIAP will also promote the key development opportunities to developers and can be used to support the inclusion of significant projects in the next National Planning Framework. The SIAP is currently under production with consultation and investigation work ongoing.



<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/economic-forum-report>

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/business-and-trade/economic-development-action-plan>

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/soa-outcome-2>

CASE STUDY 7: CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

PPF Marker:- **Quality of Outcomes**

We actively encourage customer feedback and have an online survey on our website for any customers to rate the service they received. We also specifically target applicants by sending out a customer feedback form alongside every decision notice. Customer feedback through these channels has been consistently strong and is monitored at a departmental level every quarter. This feedback demonstrated that over 80% of respondents were either 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the service they received by Planning Service in 2015/16.

As well as our online and exit questionnaires we also hold focussed User Forums where the Managers of Planning Policy, Building Standards and Development Management meet our regular customers (mix of architects, agents, developers and landowners) to discuss topical issues and seek service improvements. Following User Forums in 2015/16 additional Focus Groups are going to be set up with key customers to review Planning Conditions.

A series of 1 Day 'Planning ToolKit' workshops were also held with Community Councils in 2015/16. In total around 20 Community Council's received presentations and 'hands on' examples of how best to get involved in the Planning Process, how to make an effective representation and reiterated their key role as a statutory consultee.

Planning Services also benefit from an up to date Monitoring and Enforcement Charter and Planning & Regulators Service Customer Charter were both updated in 2014/15 and outline how we deal with customers, planning complaints and alleged breaches of planning control. There is also a corporate Customer Services Development Action Plan and Corporate Monitoring of responding to enquiries.

All Planning Staff have 'Customer Service' online training as part of their induction and professional development plan.



<http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s97055/New%20Enforcement%20Charter%202015%20FINAL%20RM%202-3-15.pdf>
<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/planning-and-regulatory-services-customer-service-charter>

CASE STUDY 8: PRE-APPLICATION SERVICE & PROCESSING AGREEMENTS

PPF Marker:- **Quality of Outcomes**

Pre Application Service

Our Pre-application Service '*Planning for Firm Foundations*' has been up and running since 2011. All customers are encouraged to engage with the service so Officers can assist to add value to projects, identify issues, enhance certainty and negate abortive work.

The table below highlights the increasing importance of this service. .

| | 2013/14 | 2014/15 | 2015/16 |
|---------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| No. of Pre Apps Processed | 929 | 951 | 1,093 |

Reflective of the importance of pre-applications to our customers we monitor Council performance in terms of the speed of response. The performance indicator '*% of Pre-application Enquires responded to within 20 working days*' now appears on Planning and Regulatory Services Scorecard, Development and Infrastructure Scorecard and even at monthly Area Committee's where elected Members scrutinise the attainment of the indicator. Development Management staff and their managers use workload reports and weekly team meetings to allocate pre-applications to the most suitable officers and performance levels are monitored / managed to achieve compliance with our customer charter commitment for a timely response. In 2015/16 we responded to 81% of pre-application enquires within 20 working days above our set target of 75%.

As part of the 2016/17 Budget and Service Choices Process we are committed to charging customers for Major and Significant Local Pre-Application enquires from 2017/18. This has been discussed at our User Forums with general acceptance.

Processing Agreements

Whilst the number of Processing Agreements fell to just 1 this year for major applications we continue to promote their usage for Locally Significant projects through our webpage (see below link) and also publicising them at our User Forum. Customer appetite for Processing Agreements has been light / indifferent with regular users commenting that they are generally pleased with processing times (ahead of the Scottish Average and continuous improvement), know who the contact points / officers are, agree timescales are informally agreed without having to create a processing agreement and economically important applications are 'fast tracked' via the Major Applications team.

To this extent, developers have not considered that a Processing Agreement would add value. We shall nonetheless continue to offer and promote them in 2016/17.

In 2016/17 we have already entered into Processing Agreements with Cala Homes, Ministry of Defence, Taylor Wimpey and Advant Homes to deliver strategic projects.

<http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/pre-application-guidance>
http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/sites/default/files/planning_for_firm_foundations_customer_leaflet.pdf
<http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/processing-agreements>

CASE STUDY 9: INTEGRATION OF PLANNING AND COMMUNITY PLANNING

PPF Marker:- **Quality of Outcomes**

The aim of alignment of the community plan/single outcome agreement and the development plan is to improve communications, engagement and customer service through greater integration and working to shared objectives. It is envisaged that joint working will lead to a better alignment and delivery of policies and actions both internally within the Council and amongst the Community Planning Partners. As well as achieving greater synergies this approach is considered to be more resource efficient and should help reduce consultation fatigue. The following sets out how Argyll and Bute Council have been working towards this integration.

Close working relations have been promoted between Community Planning and Development Policy. The main areas where joint working is currently being undertaken are the Working Group for the Delivery of the Community Empowerment Act, preparation of "Locality Plans" and early focussed engagement in the Local Development Plan 2 process, in particular on the Local Development Plan Community Plans, which feed directly into the process.

The Development Plan Scheme, which sets out how we are going to prepare Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2), states that the Single Outcome Agreement/Community Plan is to be viewed as a "Sovereign Document". Community Planning are represented on the LDP2 Project board at Head of Service level. The first phase of engagement in the LDP2 process for community planning is joint working on the LDP Community plans which will inform the Main Issues Report and the Proposed Local Development Plan.

The intention to prepare the LDP Community Plans was trailed in the previous Planning Performance Framework 2014/15. The Adopted Local Development Plan March 2015 contains the following action "to continue to work with local communities to help prepare community development plans/crafting township plans and help implement them". This action was based on the success of the [Scottish Quality in Planning Award winning Craignish Community Plan](#), which the Council helped prepare through a capacity building role. Relevant spatial elements of this plan were then built into the Adopted LDP.

A report was prepared for the [Planning, Protective Services and Licensing Committee](#) in June 2015 to take forward the action in the adopted plan. The aim was to use the community based plans to help to inform the content of the LDP at a local level, explore future issues, consider the communities in a more holistic manner, and promote implementation of the Single Outcome Agreement related actions. The plans should consider wider social and economic issues as well as the traditional land use planning ones. The report proposed piloting up to 5 LDP community plans and to integrate the LDP community plan preparation with the work undertaken by Community Planning partners, particularly in terms of localising delivery of the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA). It was anticipated that this integration would lead to a more efficient and effective use of resources and greater synergy in delivery of the LDP and Single Outcome Agreement at a community level. The outcomes would also be available to feed into the next Local Development Plan process as appropriate.

The process requires a joint working arrangement between Development Planning, Community Services, Economic Development and other Council services as appropriate. The use of Charrettes was proposed, subject to identifying funding. Tìree Community Development Trust, Argyll and Bute Council, Scottish Canals and HIE were successful in securing funding for Charrettes on Tìree and for the Crinan Canal (Lochgilphead /Ardrishaig), 2 of the identified pilot areas. These areas were selected based on an assessment of the Areas For Action (AFAs) identified within the LDP. These AFAs reflect the aligned priorities and commitments of the Council and other Key Agencies.

The Tiree Charrette

The Tiree Charrette was commissioned by the Tiree Community Development Trust working in partnership with the Council and HIE. Economic Development, Development Plans and Community Planning from the Council worked closely on this project throughout. This island has suffered from a 34% decline in population since 1961 and the community are trying to find a common way forward to address this issue. The Charrette was held over 4 days during February and March 2016 with wide engagement across the community at a series of events. As well as drop in sessions there was a series of workshops and also involvement with the local schools with a design and art based content. A significant issue as an island was the lack of localised data and evidence to support future actions. A Socio-Economic report is a key outcome from this process. This will give all the partners the evidence base to progress future actions on the island, working from the same shared knowledge. A final report is currently being prepared. Housing delivery was identified as an issue which will require continued joint approach by the Council, HIE and the Trust to address.



The Crinan Canal Corridor Charrette

The Crinan Canal Corridor Charrette (based on Lochgilphead and Ardrishaig) was commissioned by Scottish Canals and Argyll and Bute Council and was held over 4 days in April and June 2016. The corridor was identified as a key opportunity for tourism, leisure and regeneration efforts with the aim of maximising economic outputs for the wider Mid Argyll area. The Charrette involved people from all ages and backgrounds across the area with the use of a range of techniques and supporting materials. People were encouraged to write postcards from the future to capture ideas of what people would like to see. A “Big Map” was taken around Lochgilphead and Ardrishaig for interactive work with the communities. A film was made with locals contributing their ideas. A drone was used to give a birds eye view of the area. A Pecha Kucha session was used to showcase community ideas. A final report is being prepared with an associated action plan. Spatial elements will be brought forward into the LDP Action Programme with Economic Development and Community Planning working on the delivery aspects.



The joint working between community planning, economic development and the development plan team has started an integrated approach to work, which is now being carried through to delivery.



https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s108687/EDI_Charrette_Update_2016.02.29v2.pdf

CASE STUDY 10: COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

PPF Marker:- **Quality of Outcomes**

In partnership with the Council's Communications Team, Planning Services have developed a new Communications Strategy. The Strategy is closely aligned to the Council's Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) and seeks to reinforce that Planning is 'Open for Business'.

Communications Team research from 2014/15 found that almost 75% of planning related news articles in the local Argyll and Bute print media and the national press were considered as neutral; around 16% of the stories were favourable/positive and around 9% were negative.

The ultimate goal of this communications strategy is to demonstrate to all audiences via a number of platforms that the planning service **makes things happen**; performs well; that it enables sustainable economic growth, regeneration and creates desirable places; that it creates a positive development environment which will attract people and investors to the area.

We are hoping to raise the profile of the service as a positive one, an enabling service; one which tries to say 'yes' and finds solutions. Raise the profile of great places, buildings and environment of Argyll and Bute.

This strategy will have been a success if we increase our positive media coverage (negative coverage will always remain to some extent) which has a tangible benefit in terms of reaching **the public**.

In order to do this we have identified a number of key audience groups and have identified a strategy of how to engage with them (using different platforms) and tailoring the content – and most importantly our 'story' – to them. Audience groups include Councillors, Senior Management, Community Councils, MPs/MSPs, Architects / Agents, industries (housing builders, renewables), consultees and media outlets.

Our proposition

We make things happen, working to support the ambitions of developers while protecting the interests of the wider community

Our top-line messages

- We make things happen
- We are ready to do business
- Argyll and Bute has 'great places' – buildings, public spaces, natural environment
- We ensure the right developments in the right places
- Ensuring development that benefits all is about communities and planners working together
- Our policies and practices have been endorsed by the Scottish Government
- We are a top performing planning authority, giving developers confidence
- We want to say 'yes'
- Where we have to take enforcement action to protect the interests of our communities we will



CASE STUDY 11: DELIVERING MASTERPLANS IN COLLABORATION WITH COMMUNITY GROUPS

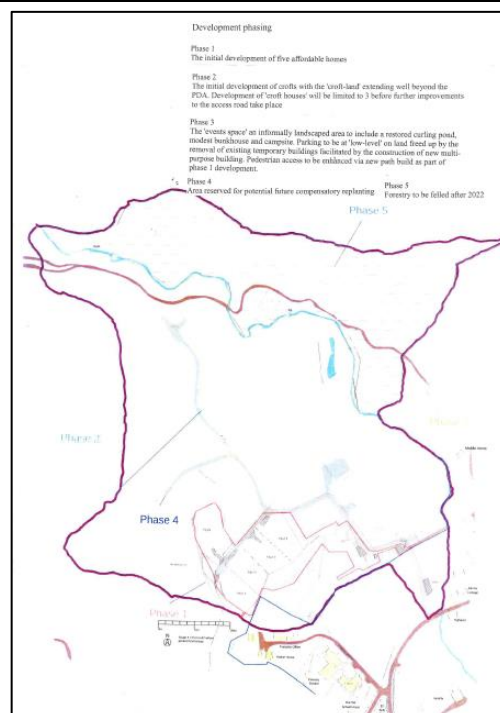
PPF Marker:- **Quality of Outcomes**

Kilfinan Community Forest Company (KCFC) is a registered Scottish charity formed in 2007. In 2010, KCFC purchased the lower part of Acharossan Forest in Tighnabruaich (125 hectares) on behalf of the residents of the Kilfinan parish, and what was once an unvisited tract of uninspiring commercial forestry has since then become a valuable community asset. KCFC aims to deliver a variety of benefits to the Kilfinan community, including the development of recreational facilities, further employment opportunities and the provision of genuinely affordable housing.

Potential Development Area 2/101 is referred to as 'Tighnabruaich - Acharossan' in the 'Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan' 2015. In the document, the proposed development is described as a "community forest croft project". A forest croft itself is a registered croft with sufficient tree cover overall to be considered a woodland under national forestry policy. It can provide access to woodland to manage in support of a person's lifestyle and livelihood. It is also an opportunity for individuals and communities to contribute to their needs from the woodland resource and the approach to management taken by woodland crofters is expected to deliver increase social, economic and environmental benefits.

The masterplan site identifies the use of an existing forestry access. There are five phases to the overall masterplan: Phase 1 is the erection of five affordable dwellinghouses; Phase 2 is the erection of up to three forest crofts; Phase 3 is the development of an 'events space' which would be an informally landscaped area incorporating a restored curling pond, a modest bunkhouse and campsite; Phase 4 is identified for compensatory planting; and Phase 5 which currently comprises a 38 year-old conifer plantation where harvesting will not begin before 2021 – it is advised that the development potential of this area will be assessed in the future, beyond the five year life of the current LDP.

<http://www.kilfinancommunityforest.co.uk/>



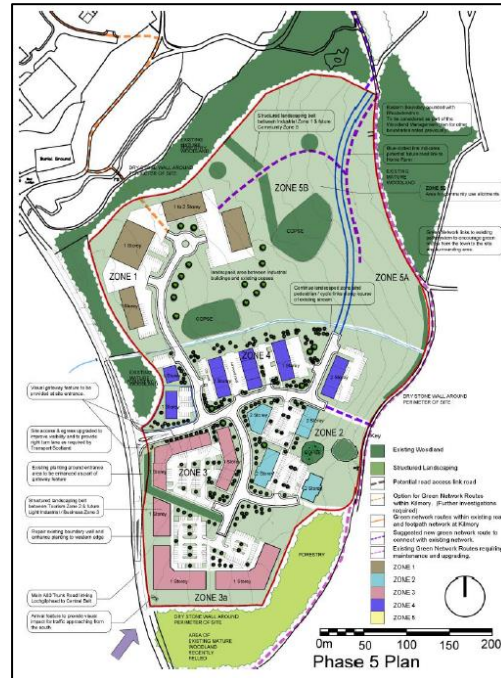
CASE STUDY 12: MASTERPLANNING FOR BUSINESS GROWTH – KILMORY

PPF Marker:- **Quality of Outcomes**

Lochgilphead is located centrally within Argyll and Bute on the arterial A83 trunk road route. In addition to being the Council's headquarters, the town is the focus of retail, business, industry, health services, and community facilities for the Mid Argyll area.

The Kilmory Park site relates to an undeveloped area of almost 15.5ha to the South of Lochgilphead which is part owned by the Council with the remaining land in the ownership of MacLeod Construction Ltd., a private developer. The land is identified in the Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan 2015 as allocations for both Business and Industry, and Community Facility development and is identified as a strategically important site for promotion and realisation of sustainable economic growth.

The masterplan has been commissioned by MacLeod Construction Ltd. with match funding support from Argyll and Bute Council, and Highland's and Islands Enterprise. The aim of the document is to provide a clear vision for the future development of the site. The document is intended to be sufficiently detailed to show a clear understanding of the constraints of the area whilst maximising the opportunities for sustainable development and its relationship with Lochgilphead and the surrounding area.



The submitted masterplan proposes to divide Kilmory Park into five zones which are brought together through a network of roads and structured landscaping. The document seeks to identify the key principles of a design code for each of the zones to ensure a high degree of integration and synergy between each of the zones/phases. It is intended that each Zone should incorporate design styles which are sympathetic to the surrounding landscape and which accord with the Council's design guidance for building types and intended uses. The masterplan sets out an expectation that each Phase of the development will be preceded by a more detailed design brief that expands upon the basic level of detail contained in the masterplan and ensures a consistency of approach even where proposals are considered on a site by site basis.

The masterplan proposals have been developed with significant input from representatives from across the Council's Development & Infrastructure Services Dept. and external agencies with a single point of contact facilitated by the Development Management Service and has included Development Policy, the Local Biodiversity Officer, Public Protection, and Roads & Amenity Services, in addition to Scottish Natural Heritage and the West of Scotland Archaeology Service. Working in partnership with the project architects has included input toward the scoping of the project, identification of constraints, site analysis and resolution of conflicts/development of solutions as the project progressed.

The masterplan document was formally considered and endorsed by the Council's Planning, Protective Services, and Licensing Committee at their meeting in March 2016 and accordingly requires to be given appropriate weight as a material planning consideration in the determination of any future planning applications.

CASE STUDY 13: NEW LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN SCHEME

PPF Marker:- **Quality of Outcomes**

The current [Development Plan Scheme](#) has been prepared to provide our communities and partners with information on our progress in updating the Local Development Plan (LDP2). The format has been reviewed and improved to create a more user friendly document. It conveys the information about the LDP2 process and how to get involved clearly with hyperlinks to any additional information. This document is therefore a good example of how Argyll and Bute Council is Open for Business by managing and communicating the LDP2 process effectively.

Project Management

It was considered important to demonstrate, in a transparent manner, how the LDP2 process is project managed to deliver the most effective development plan in a timeous manner. Therefore, the governance arrangements are set out in the DPS. Another aim of outlining the governance arrangements is to promote a better understanding of the process, in particular with communities.

The Lessons Log from the Adopted LDP indicated that cross Council input into the LDP process could be improved to deliver better overall integration and achieve synergies in the delivery of the outcomes set out in the Single Outcome Agreement/Community Plan. An additional benefit of a more integrated approach is the potential for efficiency/resource savings where processes can be combined or streamlined. Therefore, the decision was taken at [Council](#) to set up a cross Council Project Board to ensure integration with and buy in from all relevant services.

The Project Board consists of the Heads of Service for Planning and Regulatory Services, Economic Development and Strategic Transportation, Roads and Amenity Services, Community and Culture (covering housing, education and community planning) and the Communications Officer. The Project Board is updated quarterly on progress through highlight reports, co-ordinates cross Council actions, manages risk factors and future activities.

Innovative Communications

The DPS also contains information about how we will communicate throughout the LDP2 process. Given the scale and nature of Argyll and Bute with many island and remote communities an on line approach is being heavily promoted. This should improve dissemination and gathering of information and improve resource efficiency. To deliver this we have :-

- Dedicated webpages – www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/ldp2
- Tweeting - @ACB_Planning and @argyllandbute
- Facebook at www.facebook.com/argyllandbutecouncil
- Dedicated Email – ldp@argyll-bute.gov.uk
- On line forms e.g. Call for Sites currently on line for 6 month period www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/call-sites. Set up by web team to feed directly into dedicated back office system (reducing administration).
- Access to on line material in Council libraries with librarian assistance as required and key offices.
- Currently [Adopted Local Development Plan map](#) available in interactive on line system, linking all allocations back into the Written Statement Schedules.
- On Line [Customer Satisfaction Questionnaire](#)
- Use of video conferencing/lync system to enable remote meetings.
- Regular updates via email to all in the LDP2 customer contacts database
- Internally a sharepoint site has been set up to engage with all sections within the Council, including community planning, economic development and roads. Currently we are investigating rolling this out to encompass our Key Agency partners.
- The Communications Officer is a member of the Project Board

CASE STUDY 14: FOCUS ON DELIVERY AND CERTAINTY BY ENGAGEMENT – CALL FOR SITES

PPF Marker:- **Quality of Outcomes**

Argyll and Bute Council seeks to use a strong evidence base in the preparation of Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2). This is to ensure that the resultant plan is robust, credible, deliverable and supports both the settlement strategy and Community Plan objectives. One element of this evidence base is the **Call for Sites**, which is currently underway to gather information prior to the Main Issues Report. Working collaboratively with developers this identifies potential sites to meet the various land allocation requirements in the plan period.

The planning authority previously issued a Call for Sites at the start of the preparation of the Adopted Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan (LDP). This process proved useful in identifying potential sites early in the process and providing an evidence base to justify inclusion or not in the LDP. Since then the Lessons Log has highlighted a number of issues and areas for improvement with the process, which are being implemented during the current Call for Sites for LDP2.

It has been essential to integrate the Call for Sites data with other supporting information to ensure a complete and consistent picture is built up. This data sits alongside the Housing Land Audit and current site assessment data – desk and on site. A database has been set up to record the information in a consistent manner and to allow for tracking from this stage, through into LDP2, into the annual site audits and also into the Action Programme. The data is directly linked into the GIS system to give a spatial view of current sites and future sites with supporting constraints information. The analysis from this will support the development of the spatial strategy of LDP2. The system will also record relevant Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats regulation information.

The Call for Sites is now open and has been publicised through the [Council web site](#), emails to agents/developers, community councils and key agencies. Posters have been placed in libraries, where there is access to the online form. A presentation on the Call for Sites is being given at the Building Standards and Development Management User Forum. Councillors are being given a training session to raise understanding of the process and how it feeds into the development of LDP2. The Communications Officer is involved in continued awareness raising across the 6 month period through tweeting, press releases and other methods. The information collected in an online form will feed directly into the back office system, which is an efficient method speeding up the assessment process. The on line form is designed to collect the data in a consistent manner.

Once the Call for Sites has closed the planning authority will undertake an initial assessment of the submitted sites. Cross Council input is being co-ordinated through the Project Board with information being sought in particular from Environmental Health (contamination), Roads (access) and Education (capacity). The Key Agencies have been advised of the Call for Sites and may submit sites during the 6 month period. Sites that have the potential to support the development strategy as preferred sites but that may raise issues will be sent digitally, including all related information, to the relevant Key Agency for further assessment.

The Call for Sites evidence will allow the inclusion in the Main Issues Report of preferred sites that are robust, credible, deliverable and can be shown to support both the settlement strategy and Community Plan objectives.

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/call-sites>

C - Governance

Alignment of staff resources

Our service 'set up' aims to deliver efficient and customer focus outcomes. Due to the geographic size of our area the Planning Services operates a decentralised model for Development Management ensuring customers can build relationships with officers within their nearest large town. Being immersed in the local community is also positive for officers in terms of knowledge, learning, accountability and passion for the customers they serve. The vast majority of our officers live within the area that they plan for. We do have 2 centralised teams – the Central Validation Team who are the gateway to the planning application process and the Major Applications Team who prioritise and handle economically significant and complex applications in the most efficient manner.

We aim to take decisions at the most appropriate level and use delegated powers to make the planning process as efficient as possible. In 2015/16, 97% of decisions were made using delegated powers which focussed Committee attention on the more significant, major and controversial applications dealing with around 10 per month.

Our experience has found a centralised Planning Committee (Planning, Protective Services and Licencing Committee – PPSL) has a number of advantages over an Area Committee model including objectivity, delivery of training, consistency and cashable efficiencies.

Development Policy staff are dispersed across Argyll and Bute to work in the most efficient manner to suit their lifestyles as well as being close to the communities they plan for. All professional staff have laptops and all Planning Services systems can be accessed via a wifi connection either at home, office 'hotdesk' or other private network which provides flexibility.

Overall service performance for Development Management is monitored both at a Local level (Area Committee) and corporately as outlined in **Case Study 15**.

Team Working and Management Tools

Development Policy Teams meet face to face on a fortnightly basis. Quarterly face to face meetings are also held for the Team Leaders within Development Management who discuss strategic and operational matters. Development Management Team Leaders hold weekly meetings and case conferences with their staff to manage workload, performance and operational issues. Officer workload is monitored through a variety of management reports generated from our Uniform system. Earliest Determination Reports and Applications on Hand Reports focus efforts on getting applications determined as quickly as possible.

The Planning Service forms part of Planning and Regulatory Services that also consists of building standards, trading standards and environmental health. We share Health and Safety, IT, HR and other similar policies and procedures. The service in its current form has been operational from 1st April 2010 and is part of the Development and Infrastructure Department. We also have close working relationships within the department and hold a quarterly performance meeting whereby the Director scrutinises performance from each service manager. The Head of Planning and Regulatory Services, who is a chartered Planner, convenes quarterly meetings with service managers and other key members to discuss management issues.

Legacy files are a key area of improvement and we use weekly monitors to purge them as shown in **Case Study 16**.

Council Budget & Service Choices

As signposted in last years PPF, 2015/16 has been a transitional year as notable cashable efficiencies have been sought from Planning Services as part of the Council's budget process and 'Service Choices' exercise. Following public consultation, Councillors chose to a number of 'Savings Options' that will reduce the Planning Service budget by 25% by 2017/18. These options are currently being implemented and include the reduction in number of Enforcement Officers, Validation Technician staff, Technical staff, IT Software / support and resilience. The options also seek to generate more income from both statutory and non-statutory fees (looking to implement charging for pre-application enquiries in 2016/17) and review current processes and procedures to make things more efficient.

Forming partnerships and learning

Effective governance also entails forming productive partnerships that deliver outcomes for the component organisations. Planning Services meet regularly or have partnerships with:-

| | |
|---|---|
| ARGYLL BUILDING FEDERATION | E-PLANNING AND UNIFORM USER GROUP |
| HEADS OF PLANNING SCOTLAND | TREVOR ROBERTS ASSOCIATES |
| SEPA, SNH, TRANSPORT SCOTLAND, HISTORIC SCOTLAND, CROFTING COMMISSION | HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS BUYING FRAMEWORK |
| WEST OF SCOTLAND ARCHAEOLOGY | ENERGY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE (HOPS) |
| LARGE RURAL AUTHORITY BENCHMARKING CLUB | STRATEGIC HOUSING FORUM (A&B) |
| USER FORUM – LOCAL ARCHITECTS / AGENTS | NORTH OF SCOTLAND DEVELOPMENT PLANS FORUM |
| IMPROVEMENT SERVICE | ARGYLL AND BUTE AGRICULTURAL FORUM |
| SCOTTISH SALMON PRODUCERS ORGANISATION | ARGYLL LAND AND ESTATES |

One of our long term partnerships is with the Aquaculture Industry as demonstrated in **Case Study 17** and following permissions obtained in 2015/16 Argyll and Bute now supports the largest fin fish installation in the UK at Carradale, Kintyre and world leading onshore facilities at Machrihanish.

Internal Council groups have also been established to look into the following issues:-

| Issue / Name of Group | Council Department Involved |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Aligning Consents | Planning & Roads Department |
| Area Property Action Group – (APAG) | Vacant Homes Officer, Planning, Environmental Health, Building Standards, Private Sector Housing, Council Tax |
| Flood Risk Management Group | Roads, Planning, Property Services |
| Economic Development Officers Group | Economic Development, Roads , Planning |

Shared Services

The Council is a member of the West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WoSAS): WoSAS is a local authority shared service delivering curatorial advice to 10 councils and a National Park Authority in West and Central Scotland. The team maintain the Historic Environment Record (HER) for each member authority, and make information from it freely available to the public online. The service supports member authorities in the discharge of their responsibilities for the historic environment, which largely arise through the planning system. In addition to responding to the planning services' consultations, the service further facilitates sustainable development by providing information and advice to other council departments and to developers and their agents. The service liaises with national agencies on heritage matters, and participates on behalf of the member authorities in various working groups such as the Antonine Wall World Heritage Site working group, the National Parks Historic Environment Working Group, the Scottish SMR Forum, and the Regional Archaeological Research Framework for Argyll working group.





This year we have also partnered with Western Isles Council and peer reviewed our Performance Framework.

We have also sought to govern and manage our historic assets more positively with the production of our Historic Environment Strategy as detailed in **Case Study 18**.

CASE STUDY 15: PERFORMANCE MONITORING BY AREA COMMITTEES

PPF Marker:- **Governance**

Elected Members of all the 4 Area Committees (Helensburgh and Lomond, Bute and Cowal, Oban, Lorn and the Isles and Mid Argyll) monitor performance of the Planning Services explicitly by including Development Management indicators on their Area Based Scorecards. The '*% of pre-applications responded to within 20 working days*' and the '*% of applications determined within statutory timescale*' indicators are reported quarterly to the Area Committees and if targets are not met for that geographic area then Planning Officers are asked to attend Committee and explain why targets have not been attained. This makes Area Team Leaders very accountable for their team's performance directly to their Members. Corporate performance is also explained quarterly to the Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure.

| Economy | Target | MAKI | Council |
|---|----------|--|----------|
| All Local Planning Apps: Ave no of Weeks to Determine - MAKI | 12.0 Wks | 10.3 Wks  | 10.3 Wks |
| % of Pre-App Enquiries Processed in 20 working days in MAKI | 75.0 % | 66.7 %  | 76.5 % |
| Householder Planning Apps: Ave no of Weeks to Determine - MAKI | 8.0 Wks | 5.1 Wks  | 6.7 Wks |
| CC1 Affordable social sector new builds - MAKI | 2 | 2  | 10 |
| % of Local Review Body Decisions where original decision upheld | | no MAKI data available | 85.7 % |

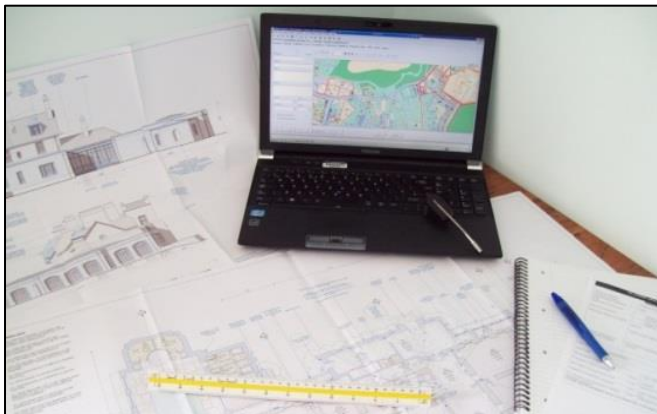
Example of Area Based Scorecard and Performance Monitoring

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s110045/Area%20Scorecard%20FQ4%202015-16.pdf>

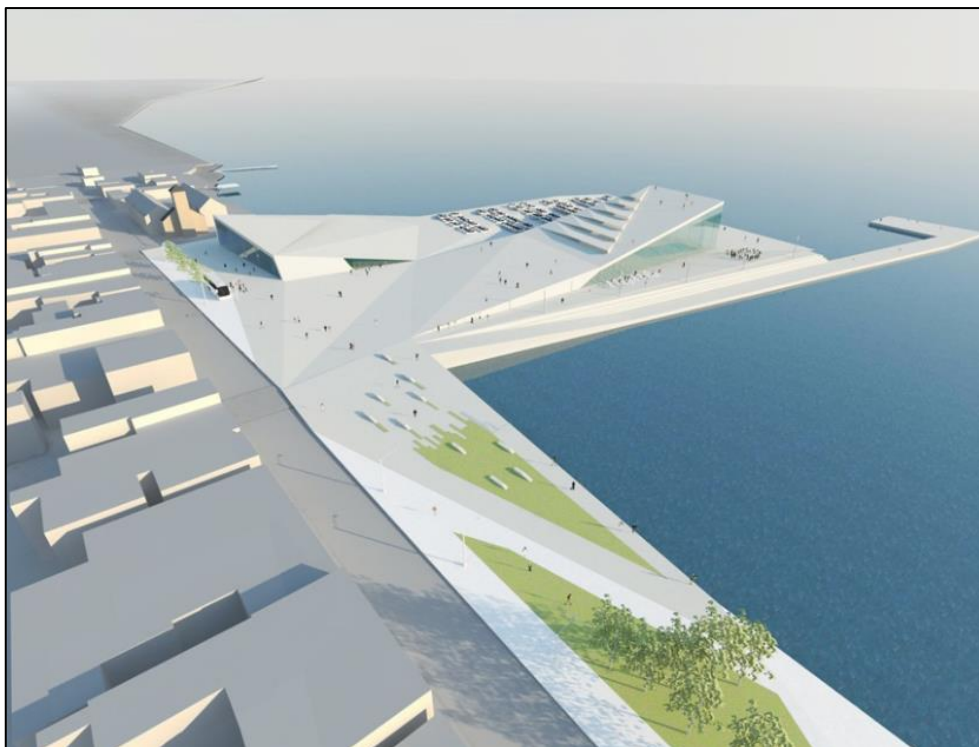
CASE STUDY 16: LEGACY FILES

PPF Marker:- **Governance**

Development Management has intensely micromanaged legacy files over past 5 years and shall continue to do so in future. The service initially recorded all legacy files and set targets on how many should be brought to determination each quarter – something that affects the 'Avg Timescale' overall. A quarterly update of Legacy Files is provided to the Development Manager who will challenge and set targets for teams, in a similar way to the core Development Management performance, to purge legacy files. Outstanding Section 75s have been revisited; applications taken to Committee to be resolved and applications have been withdrawn through negotiation. Since our review of legacy files began we have now cleared out over 200 files with only 25 remaining from pre- 2015.



We have also worked closely with our legal team and now have a single point of contact within Governance and Law to deal with Section 75s, Section 69s and other planning law advice.



Adopted Pierhead Masterplan including Swimming Pool & Retail @Helensburgh

CASE STUDY 17: AQUACULTURE - INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIPS TO ADDRESS PRIORITIES

PPF Marker:- **Governance**

The Planning Service has continued its efforts to support the sustainable growth of the aquaculture industry across Argyll and Bute, in partnership with Scottish Government, agencies and the industry itself. Proactive work has focussed on continued improvement of the aquaculture planning process through annual liaison meetings with aquaculture companies; representation on the Ministerial Group for Sustainable Aquaculture and associated working groups and close working with Highlands and Islands planning authorities to ensure consistency in approach in the delivery of the planning process and development of policy. This work has included significant input into the Government review of the aquaculture consenting regime, a review of the impact of planning on the Scottish shellfish farming sector, and the development of a planning circular for aquaculture.



Recognising the importance of the industry to the rural economy and its multi-faceted nature the planning service fully supports an increased focus on innovation and new technology in delivering sustainable growth of aquaculture. This has led to an increasing number of new and novel marine and onshore development proposals being considered by the Planning Service which has required special attention and close working with statutory consultees to consider new areas of assessment requiring advice at both at the pre-application and determination stages. Examples of new types of development or operational measures have included onshore salmon farming, new smolt and cleaner fish hatcheries, new operational measures for sea lice management, multi-tropic aquaculture, and the development of what is the largest marine salmon farm in Scotland at Carradale. The sector is particularly valued as a means of supporting employment in rural areas where new job opportunities are few and far between. An example of this has been the introduction of a large scale fin fish farm off the Isle of Colonsay, which has brought additional full-time residents and job opportunities to a remote island community.



The rapidly evolving nature of the aquaculture industry has made the sharing of information across planning authorities even more important. The planning service will be actively seeking input from the aquaculture industry in the development of our next LDP to ensure that planning policy is flexible enough to deal with novel development proposals and can facilitate future requirements for onshore development to support marine aquaculture. The emphasis on inter authority and inter agency working will continue, as will proactive engagement with individual aquaculture companies and industry bodies.

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/aquaculture>

CASE STUDY 18: HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY

PPF Marker:- **Governance**

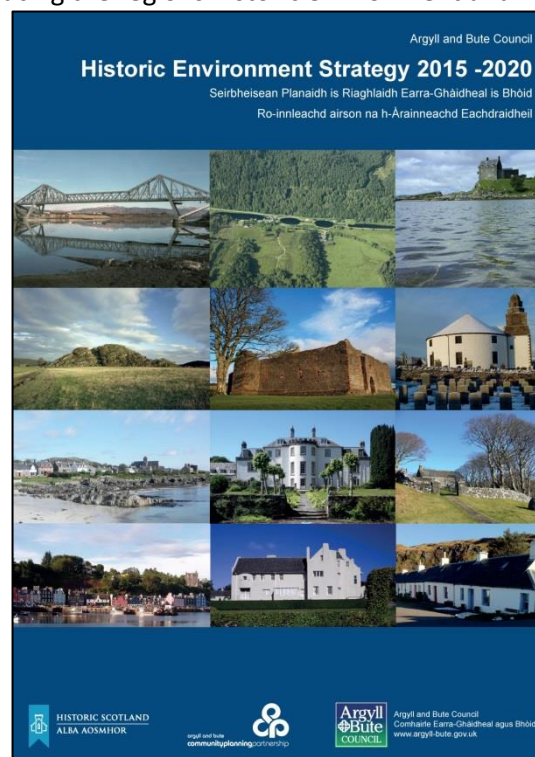
The purpose of Argyll and Bute Council's Historic Environment Strategy is to provide a framework and context for how we can continue to enjoy, preserve, manage, interpret and promote our historic environment. It seeks to promote partnership working both internally and external to the Council to develop a joined up approach to heritage, identify priorities and create an action plan to deliver them.

The strategy is concerned with the Council's direct impact through ownership or responsibility for heritage assets as well as its wider role in the protection, management, and promotion of the areas historic environment as a partner in heritage activity, economic development, and tourism as well as it's role as Local Authority. The Historic Environment is all around us and provides function and utility day by day, it is therefore affected by a diverse range of functions and activities of a range of different departments and services of the Council. The strategy seeks to promote a holistic approach to these as they effect the historic environment.

The strategy is intended to be used by individuals, communities, Community Planning Partners, Elected Members, Council Officers and other partners as an overarching framework through which heritage related projects, decisions and impacts can be positively manged.

The Strategy aims to deliver 8 key objectives:

- 1) To provide a strategic context and holistic approach and vision for Argyll and Bute Council's heritage activity.
- 2) To highlight the wider contribution our historic environment can play in the development of our economy, creating and maintaining a strong sense of place, social wellbeing, sustainability and climate change targets.
- 3) To identify key challenges and opportunities facing the regions historic environment and make recommendations as to how these might be addressed.
- 4) To identify key challenges and opportunities facing the Councils existing built heritage assets and make recommendations as to how these might be addressed and prioritised.
- 5) To devise a mechanism for prioritising future built heritage projects and to identify funding streams and partners to enable successful delievery.
- 6) To promote access to Argyll and Bute's heritage assets and extend the diversity of heritage activity.
- 7) To promote positive development management and intervention for Argyll and Bute's historic environment.
- 8) To prepare a priority programme of actions for delivery involving the Council, local community and property owners, heritage organisations other agencies and funding partners.



<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/our-historic-environment>

D - Culture of continuous improvement

Service improvement actions from 2014/15 Planning Performance Framework

A number of Improvement Actions from last year's PPF have been completed such as the adoption of a new Technical Working Note for dealing with window replacements in the Rothesay Conservation Area and new supplementary guidance in relation to wind energy developments. See **Case Studies 19 and 20**. Other actions are ongoing and are referred to in detail in **Part 4**.

Investing in staff and Councillors

As well as the Service Improvements identified in this PPF we also have internal Service and Team Improvement Plans that are monitored at a departmental level. Every member of staff from Planning Services completed a Performance Review and Development (PRD) plan in 2015/16 which feeds into a centrally held 'Skills Matrix' and identifies an annual programme of training. The Council delivers training through a variety of ways including internal workshops, peer learning, online learning and through the use of external training partners. In 2015/16 we utilised the services of the Improvement Service and Trevor Roberts Associates (TRA) to deliver training on a number of topics such as Planning Enforcement, Permitted Development Rights, EIA and Leadership

Based on the dedication and professional development of our staff, 3 internal promotions took place in 2015/16. See **Case Study 21**.

The Council also operates a monthly series of Elected Member Training Sessions aligned with monthly planning committee meetings. The developmental programme is devised by officers and agreed by Members at the beginning of the year. This comprises a mixture of bite-sized presentations on topical matters, half day workshops on subject areas requiring more in-depth attention, and site visits to examine the outcome of planning decisions on the ground. Topics covered in 2015/16 included a study tour of Campbeltown, Introduction to LDP, Biodiversity Action Plan, New Supplementary Guidance and Strategic Environmental Assessments.

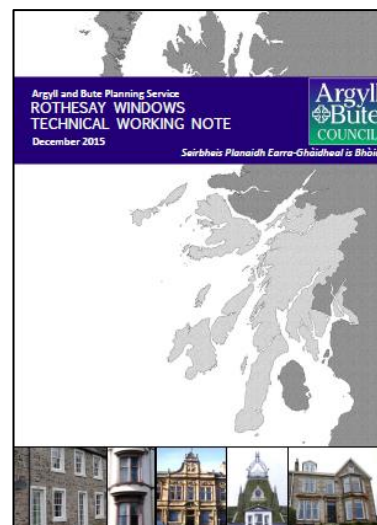
Marine Planning and Biodiversity

Argyll and Bute has huge potential and assets relating to biodiversity and the marine environment. Marine spatial planning is progressing at a national level this year and Argyll and Bute is at the forefront of development and implementation as can be seen from **Case Study 22**.

In 2015/16 we also sought to develop more positive approaches to site assessment, responsibility of developers and biosecurity. This continuous improvement in relation to biodiversity outcomes is detailed in **Case Study 23**.

Developer Contributions

Case Study 24 specifically outlines our approach to Developer Contributions which focuses on the delivery of affordable housing, play space and infrastructure given the market conditions of our area.

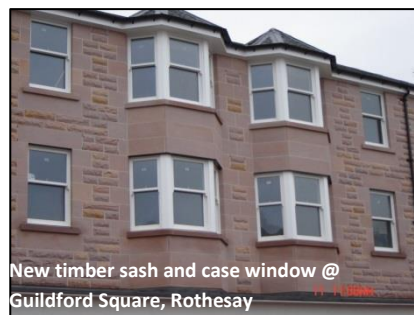


CASE STUDY 19: ROTHESAY WINDOWS TECHNICAL WORKING NOTE

PPF Marker:- **Continuous Improvement**

Many local streetscapes rely on historic, materials, doors and windows for much of their architectural impact and character. Windows are an essential element in the external character, appearance and composition of traditional buildings. They are an important element of a building's design and weatherproofing.

When replaced unsympathetically (most commonly with uPVC) the appearance of the building is damaged, and the unity that comes from the repetition of window patterns and traditional materials, particularly in tenements and terraced properties, is diminished. Cumulatively this leads to an erosion of the character of the street and over time the whole area.



Examples of inappropriate doors and windows, whether by design or use of materials, can be found in most conservation areas but there have been specific and high profile pressures in Rothesay in recent years including Local Review Bodies and DPEA Appeals.

Rothesay Conservation Area is one of Scotland's most extensive, stretching five miles along the east coast of the Isle of Bute and since 2008 has also benefitted from significant heritage investment. A Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) and Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) have been delivered and around £4 million has been committed to heritage led regeneration projects. To this extent, it is an established principal of the Council to protect and enhance the heritage assets of Rothesay – including its windows.

This new Technical Working Note seeks to foster a proportionate and pragmatic approach to window replacement. It adds a finer grain of detail regarding the development pressures in Rothesay as well as the scale of the Conservation Area and level of public sector investment that has recently been committed to the historic environment. It aims to give flexibility to customers / building owners whose buildings do not significantly contribute to the overall character of the Conservation Area. This includes an allowance for good quality uPVC windows to be installed in certain circumstances.

However, for our most important listed buildings and 'Prime Townscape Blocks' we seek to retain the policies and principals as set out in national policy and our Development Plan which is to uphold the historical and traditional window characteristics – mainly by repairing or replacing with white timber sliding sash and case units. The guidance also seeks to ensure an uplift in design quality or windows that have already been replaced by non-traditional windows. The Technical Working Note also provides information and guidance to applicants on thermal efficiency, noise attenuation, repair, maintenance, cleaning, environmental performance and costs.

It is envisaged that this Technical Working Note shall be an important reference point for assessing window applications and supporting the aspirations of the The Rothesay Town Centre Character Area: Management Plan which seeks to boost confidence, reverse the decline and mend damage. It will also support the regeneration commenced by the CARS and THI and potentially support future bids for Heritage Funding. The Technical Working Note was also presented to Bute Community Council and has been adopted by the Planning Committee.

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s104696/Rothesay%20Windows%20Technical%20Working%20Note%20-%202015%20-Draft%20Oct%202015.pdf>

CASE STUDY 20: CUMULATIVE LANDSCAPE & VISUAL ASSESSMENT OF WIND ENERGY

PPF Marker:- **Continuous Improvement**

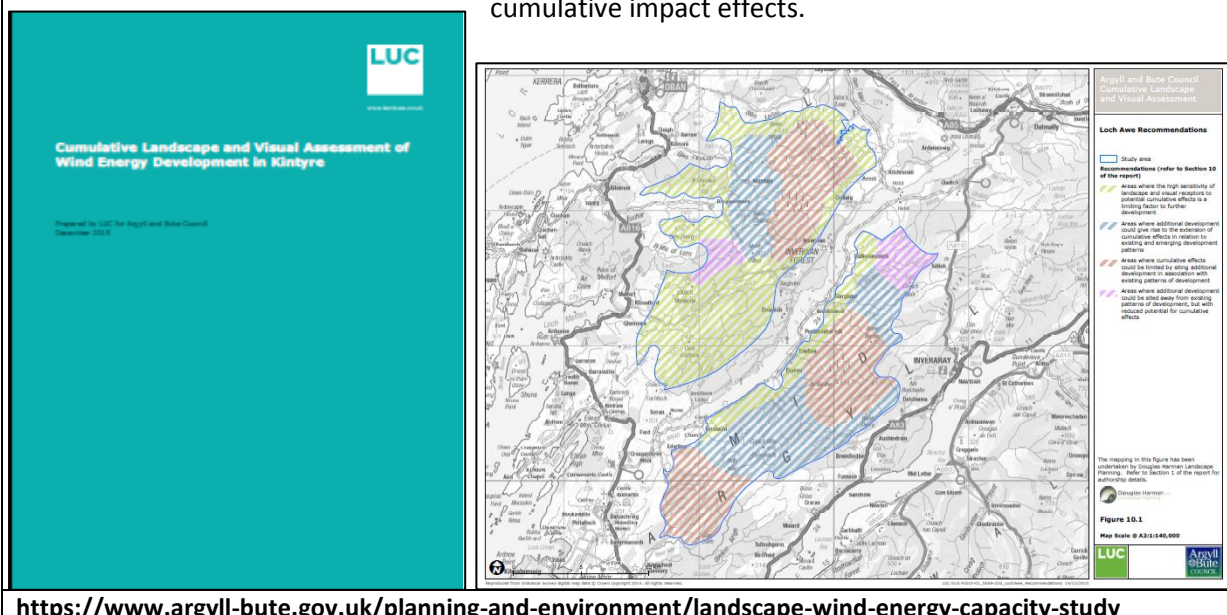
Cumulative Landscape and Visual Assessment Studies were commissioned for the Kintyre and Loch Awe areas as a joint commission with Highland Council as part of the funding package from Scottish Government to help Councils respond to Renewable Energy developments in 2013/14.

The intention of the studies was to identify areas where existing and potential cumulative effects from wind farm developments, may be a factor in determining opportunities for further development, and to provide guidance on how future development could be steered towards or away from certain areas, in order that the spread of cumulative effects is limited. The studies built upon the earlier work of the Argyll and Bute Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Study 2012.

The studies identified a number of variable factors which could affect whether a given area could accommodate additional development, including landscape and visual sensitivities, its context, existing patterns of development, and potential future development. To reflect these variables the studies considered four recommendations these were:

- Areas of high sensitivity of landscape and visual receptors to potential cumulative effects is a limiting factor to further development;
- Areas where additional development could give rise to an extension of cumulative effects in relation to existing and emerging development patterns;
- Areas where cumulative effects could be limited by siting additional development in association with existing patterns of development ;
- Areas where additional development could be sited away from existing patterns of development, but with reduced potential for cumulative effects.

The consultants used cumulative visibility analysis to identify the visual influence of operational and proposed wind energy developments and how and where they were likely to be seen both within the study area and adjoining areas. This was then combined with Landscape analysis of landscape character, visual receptors, designated landscapes and wild land and wildness qualities to provide an assessment of cumulative landscape and visual effects. These were then mapped and recommendations made with regard to areas of high sensitivity, areas where cumulative effects would arise, areas where existing developments could be expanded without giving rise to additional cumulative effects, and areas away from existing developments which would be unlikely to have cumulative impact effects.



<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/landscape-wind-energy-capacity-study>

CASE STUDY 21: GROWING OUR OWN

PPF Marker:- **Continuous Improvement**

In 2015/16 there were 3 internal promotions within Planning Services. The Council support 'Growing our Own' principles whereby we seek to foster and develop career development of our staff using annual Performance Development Reviews (PDRs) and guidance.

All successful candidates demonstrated dedication and professional desire and it is evident that they benefit from personal investment and experience they achieve from their day to day work at Argyll and Bute. All of the candidates had also received formal professional development over a number of years from the Council.

Rory Macdonald

Rory successfully secured a promotion to Planning Officer. This was his 2nd promotion in 5 years after moving from Business Support to Planning Technician. He completed his Planning degree last year which he studied for whilst remaining in employment and was part funded by the Council. He is now working towards obtaining his full MRTPI.



David Love

David was promoted from Senior Planner to Area Team Leader for the Bute and Cowal Team. He has been a flexible asset to the Development Management Team for 6 years and has assessed applications and complex projects from across the region including windfarms, minerals and regeneration projects. This is his first managerial post but he has already made a positive impact to the team.

Tim Williams

Tim has worked for Argyll and Bute for over 10 years based in Mid -Argyll. He performed exceptionally well at interviews of a high quality selection process. This is also Tim's, first management role and he has inherited a number of complex cases and resource issues to deal with. His professional knowledge and experience of Argyll and Bute has been an asset to his new team based in Oban.

Congratulations to these three and all other staff who continue to meet professional development standards.

CASE STUDY 22: INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IN MARINE PLANNING

PPF Marker:- **Continuous Improvement**

Regional Marine Planning

Given the coastal nature of Argyll and Bute and the significant importance of the coastal environment and coastal industries and activities it supports, the Council recognises the importance of a marine planning framework which integrates effectively with and complements the terrestrial planning system.

The Clyde and Shetland Marine Regions have been identified by Scottish Government as the first to start the development of statutory regional marine plans. With almost 70% of the coastline in the Clyde Marine Region, Argyll and Bute Council is a key Member of the newly formed Clyde Marine Planning Partnership and will be focussed on ensuring this new marine plan both integrates with and is consistent with our Local Development Plan and Council priorities.



The Council is well placed to contribute to this process with two specialist marine and coastal planning officers who have led and engaged in the development of ICZM plans and pilot voluntary marine plans. In addition considerable effort is being made to raise awareness of marine planning amongst elected members and relevant Council departments to ensure we utilise the wide range of knowledge and experience across the Council and maximise the benefits of our engagement in the marine planning process. In this respect, opportunities to improve integration and maximise stakeholder engagement will be explored including the potential to align the timing of the stages of plan development, sharing of information to inform economic and environmental baselines, and consideration of main issues and planning policy.

There are of course a further eight planning authorities with an interest in the Clyde Marine Region, and it is hoped that closer working between these authorities within a shared vision for the Clyde region, will result in a stronger and more integrated effort to sustainably grow the economy.

Closer working with Marine Scotland

The Council has a close working relationship with Marine Scotland through their role as a statutory consultee on marine aquaculture planning applications and will now be working closely with Marine Scotland as a key agency for our next LDP. In addition we are consulted on a number of marine licence applications by Marine Scotland, some of which are related to projects requiring planning permission. To improve the efficiency and consistency of this interaction the Council is setting up a



new internal process to manage marine licence consultations and is working in partnership with Marine Scotland to develop a Service Level Agreement for dealing with marine renewables casework.

Over time it is hoped that this agreement will also cover any development type which requires both planning consent and a marine licence, such as piers and marinas.

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/marine-and-coastal-development>

CASE STUDY 23: CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IN BIODIVERSITY

PPF Marker:- **Continuous Improvement**

Biodiversity is a core component to supporting our sustainability, underpinning economic development and prosperity, and has an important role to play in developing locally distinctive and sustainable communities.

The purpose of the Argyll and Bute Council Biodiversity Action Plan is to reflect the activities we carry out in exercising our functions across the council thus ensuring that we as a public body meet our Biodiversity Statutory Duty under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 and contribute to the Scottish Governments' Biodiversity Triannual Reporting under the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011.

In terms of our contribution to biodiversity through the planning process Outcome 1 states '*Biodiversity action to maintain and enhance within a range of developments- this includes good practice within planning, infrastructure, mineral extraction and where appropriate within the Argyll and Bute Council estate*'

Each action within the plan is aligned to the Single Outcome Agreement. Delivery by Development Management will focus on Pre- App and Development Proposals: where appropriate ensure protection, positive management and enhancement opportunities are taken into account and through Development Policy ensuring that the appropriate policies are in place to support developments. We will promote biodiversity conservation and enhancements in council development proposals. We will be actively encouraging the use of the Officer Biosecurity information for site visits.

Our biodiversity duty action plan will assist in an efficient way in gathering information on our activities in order to complete the triannual report for the Scottish Government which is a requirement under the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act. We submitted our report in February 2015 which has since been followed up by a Scottish Government Contractor who is involved in an evaluation project to assess the effectiveness of the process. The next report is due in 2018.

Biosecurity for Biodiversity



General information for Officers involved in Site visits.

Why?

Biosecurity is important to protect the public and our Biodiversity (native habitats and species) by means of taking steps to make sure that good hygiene practices are in place to reduce and minimise the risk of spreading notifiable diseases and invasive non-native species plants and animals. A good biosecurity routine is always essential, even if notifiable diseases and invasive non-native species are not always apparent.

Many species of plants and animals, including fish and shellfish, are susceptible to a range of diseases and pests, some of which are notifiable under animal health, fish health and plant health legislation.

Biosecurity is important when you enter any farmland- development sites, or other premises like fish farms where there is a risk of spreading pest or disease. This includes all agricultural land (including grassland and arable / horticultural crops), hill ground, moorland that carries stock, farm steadings, woodlands and rivers, lochs and aquaculture units. It is important that you are aware you might be up-stream of a fish farm if you are entering a watercourse.

What you can do? - Appendix 1- illustrations.

1. Arrive at the site with clean footwear and vehicle.
2. Ensure footwear is clean (visually from soil and debris) before leaving the site. If working near or in water courses- follow Check Clean Dry protocol **Appendix 2**.
3. Ensure vehicle is kept clean - in particular remove any accumulated mud before leaving the site.
4. If available, make use of facilities provided on the site to clean footwear/equipment.
5. Keep access to a minimum.
6. If practical do not take vehicles onto premises, keep to established tracks and park vehicles on hard standing.
7. Where possible avoid areas with known plant disease(s). Before you go out on site, Check Record Map. <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/chalara>
8. Plan visits so that the most risky visit is the last one of the day.

Note: For all sites, Argyll & Bute Council Officers will abide with any local biosecurity measures implemented at specific sites by the operators/owners'.



CASE STUDY 24: DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS

PPF Marker:- **Continuous Improvement**

The adopted development plan contains policy in respect of developer contributions in Supplementary Guidance [“SG LDP PG 1 – Planning Gain”](#). This policy provides additional detail to policy LDP 8 *Supporting The Strength of Our Communities* of the [Adopted Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan](#). This sets out a framework for the situations when developer contributions may be sought, the process, factors the level of contribution will be based on and the policy tests to be applied (Circular 3/2012).

Specific issues had been identified in relation to the delivery of affordable housing and green/play space provision and so these areas are highlighted in SG LDP PG 1 and have connected detailed Supplementary Guidance.

The development plan sets out clear and proportionate expectations in respect of developer contributions in relation to affordable housing as has been demonstrated in the previous planning performance framework. This was noted as a good example of Argyll and Bute’s approach to the issue of developer contributions. The advice is contained in statutory Supplementary Guidance [“General Housing Development - Delivery of affordable housing”](#), adopted in March 2016. This allows the viability of a project to be calculated early in the process and provides clarity for the developer in terms of their expectations.

The development plan also contains policy on developer contributions for the provision of community space or amenity areas which is important in residential developments, both in urban and rural areas, as it provides a formal outdoor space for the residents’ enjoyment. Such spaces are particularly important in high-density developments where private gardens are limited. New developments are therefore required to provide open space according to the standards set out in [SG LDP HOU 3](#) except where need is diminished due to the development being for “special needs” housing such as sheltered accommodation; or where physical restrictions (i.e. the development lies within a Conservation Area or high density urban space) are such that public open space cannot be provided. In such cases applicants may be asked to make an appropriate financial contribution (to be determined by the Council) to improve existing facilities in close proximity to the proposed development. This was also adopted in March 2016



Lochgilphead playpark. Play space provided in relation to a high density development in a Main Town in accordance with SG LDP HOU 3.

DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS CONTINUED//

Currently there is no detailed guidance in the development plan for developer contributions related to other potential infrastructure requirements. This matter is being addressed through the LDP2 process as follows:-

- Evidence gathering – re infrastructure /community requirements
Current Allocations and Potential Development Area Assessment. Pre Main Issues Report assessment of all current allocations and potential development areas shown in the adopted local development plan to verify their effectiveness including constraints related to infrastructure requirements.
Call for Sites – On line form and desk assessment to verify future infrastructure requirements including education capacity, water/sewerage capacity, roads issues.
Key Ideas Discussion – Community engagement re future requirements
- Engagement - Key Agencies, communities, infrastructure providers and developers
Pre Main Issues and Main Issues Report engagement to assess sites including wider infrastructure requirements. Formulate further options re developer contributions for consideration through the Main Issues Report where a need has been identified from the above assessment.
- Consultation on the Proposed Local Development Plan
Consider the responses to the Main Issues Report and prepare an appropriate policy to support developer contributions with any required detailed guidance for consultation at the Proposed Local Development Plan stage.
- Action Programme/Strategic Infrastructure Action Plan
Working in conjunction with the Key Agencies, internally (Economic Development, Roads, Housing, Education Community Planning) and named developers prepare an Action Programme that clearly identifies infrastructure requirements in terms of delivery for the LDP identified sites. The Strategic Infrastructure Action Plan will focus on promoting the developments that could lead to an economic step change in the area. It will identify the key partners infrastructure requirements and funding necessary to take the strategic projects forward. It will be directly linked to the LDP Action Programme which covers all sites in the LDP.



Inveraray affordable housing on Mixed Use Allocation in accordance with SG LDP HOU 1.

It is considered that the above is an inclusive and evidence based approach to best deliver the further development of the current Argyll and Bute developer contributions policy and guidance.

Part 3 - Supporting evidence

Part 2 of this report was completed with full weblinks and footnotes as supporting evidence. Other key documents include.

- Council Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement (2013-2023) - http://intranet.argyll-bute.gov.uk/sites/default/files/soa_april_2014_v6.pdf
- Local Development Plan - www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/ldp
- Draft Action Programme <http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/proposed-local-development-plan-documents>
- The "Lorn Arc" project
- The Council operates a formalised pre-application system called Planning for Firm Foundations. You can find out more information in our [leaflet](#), or use the [Pre-Application Enquiry Form](#) or [Householder Pre-Application Enquiry Form](#) to submit an enquiry.
- [Examples of Good Design](#). Within Argyll and Bute we have a design strategy which aims to achieve high quality new development that respects the local environment and provides a sense of place.
- One of the main objectives of our sustainable design strategy is for the Council to lead by example and demonstrate sustainable design by providing case studies to illustrate the principles of the Council's sustainable [design guides](#).
- Argyll and Bute Council has agreed to an ambitious and forward-looking programme to assist regeneration and economic development in five of its waterfront towns - Campbeltown, Helensburgh, Oban, Rothesay and Dunoon. '[CHORD](#)'
- [Planning and Regulatory Services' Customer Service Charter](#) is part of our annual improvement plan aimed at further improving customer service standards.
- Guidance and advice on [making a planning application](#)
- Argyll and Bute Council actively encourage online submission of planning applications via the [Scottish Government ePlanning Portal](#).
- Our [online planning information system](#) holds records of all planning and building standards applications The Council has also entered into a [Joint Procurement Framework](#) with all Highland and Islands based Councils.
- Detailed information regarding the Council's [Planning Service](#) can be found on our website.
- A copy of the [Customer Satisfaction Questionnaire](#) is sent out with every decision notice.

Part 4 - Service Improvements 2016-17

Service improvement actions & targets for this year

| | SERVICE IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS | TIMESCALE |
|----|---|---------------|
| 1 | Delivery and adoption of New Signage Strategy for Argyll and Bute | March 2017 |
| 2 | The development of a protocol and process for involving Members in providing early key advice for major development. | December 2016 |
| 3 | Improve planning application processing timescales at validation stage- Business Process Review (BPR) work package | March 2017 |
| 4 | Production of hill tracks guidance. | December 2016 |
| 5 | Rural Authority benchmarking group to progress Technical Guidance on 'occupancy restrictions' and 'rural exceptional circumstances'. | March 2017 |
| 6 | Review Enforcement Charter and provision of Enforcement Service following team re-structure | December 2016 |
| 7 | Production of 5 new conservation area appraisals | March 2017 |
| 8 | Produce co-ordinated LDP / Economic Development promotional action programmes / plans | March 2017 |
| 9 | Deliver a user forum workshop in Oban focussing on Planning Conditions | December 2016 |
| 10 | Concordat with Local Business Community – Actions that shows Argyll and Bute is Open for Business and working in partnership to realise sustainable economic growth | March 2017 |
| 11 | Review quarterly performance reporting – make it more qualitative, balanced and focus on outcomes. | March 2017 |

Our Service Measures and Performance Targets which are reported Quarterly for 2015/16 are:-

- All Local Planning Applications Determined:- Average Number of weeks Target 12 Week
- % of All Pre-Application Enquiries processed within 20 working days 75% Target
- % of Planning Applications Approved 95% Target
- % of Valid Applications Registered and Notified within 5 days 90% Target
- % of Population covered by adopted Local Plan 100% Target
- Number of new housing units / houses per annum 300 Units
- Produce 5 Conservation Area Appraisals
- Link 80 core paths to online footpath guides.
- Maintain effective housing land supply at all times.

Delivery of service improvement actions

Delivery of our service improvement actions in 2015-16: Delivery of our service improvement actions in 2015-16:

| | SERVICE IMPROVEMENT | STATUS |
|----|---|---|
| 1 | Production of 3 Community Plans | On-track (Case Study 9) |
| 2 | Development of Elected Member monitoring visits (including peer group review) – site visits to completed building projects, place making learning outcomes and promotion of exemplar projects | Complete – (Case Study 3) |
| 3 | Delivery and adoption of New Signage Strategy for Argyll and Bute | Ongoing – scheduled completion Autumn 2016 |
| 4 | Deliver and adoption of New Rothersay Windows Policy | Complete – (Case Study 19) |
| 6 | Publish and adopt technical guidance with regard to the cumulative impacts of onshore wind farm development | Complete – (Case Study 20) |
| 7 | The development of a protocol and process for involving Members in providing early key advice for major development. | Ongoing |
| 8 | Improve planning application processing timescales at validation stage-Business Process Review (BPR) work package | Ongoing |
| 9 | Delivery of Planning Services Communications Strategy | Complete – (Case Study 10) |
| 10 | Production of hill tracks guidance. | Ongoing – The Scottish Government are currently reviewing the guidance themselves so our guidance is awaiting the strategic review. |

Part 5 - Official Statistics

A: Decision-making timescales

| Category | Total number of decisions 2015-2016 | Average timescale (weeks) | |
|---|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------|
| | | 2015-2016 | 2014-2015 |
| Major developments | 3 | 17.0 | 14.1 |
| Local developments (non-householder) | 668 | 10.3 | 10.8 |
| • Local: less than 2 months | 439 | 6.9 | 7.2 |
| • Local: more than 2 months | 229 | 16.7 | 19.6 |
| Householder developments | 328 | 7.0 | 6.9 |
| • Local: less than 2 months | 292 | 5.9 | 6.4 |
| • Local: more than 2 months | 36 | 15.6 | 13.6 |
| Housing developments | | | |
| Major | 1 | 67.1 | 13.3 |
| Local housing developments | 303 | 10.9 | 12.1 |
| • Local: less than 2 months | 191 | 7.1 | 7.4 |
| • Local: more than 2 months | 112 | 17.4 | 21.6 |
| Business and industry | | | |
| Major | 2 | 18.0 | NIL |
| Local business and industry | 34 | 12.1 | 10.3 |
| • Local: less than 2 months | 21 | 6.5 | 6.5 |
| • Local: more than 2 months | 13 | 21.1 | 28.7 |
| EIA developments | 2 | 24.1 | 28.4 |
| Other consents* | 241 | 8.0 | 10.1 |
| Planning/legal agreements** | 23 | 22.1 | 28.6 |
| Local reviews | 2 | 8.3 | 30.4 |

Comments in relation to reduced performance

The statistics show that there has been an increase in Average Timescale to deal with both Major and Major Housing Applications. These statistics have been significantly affected / skewed by a single Application. In this case the Developer ceased all business in Scotland for several months due to global economic conditions and is still not committing to the site in Rosneath albeit the s75 legal agreement was finally concluded. This application was successfully 'Clocked Stopped' in agreement with the Scottish Government for quarterly statistics.

B: Decision-making: local reviews and appeals

| Type | Total number of decisions | Original decision upheld | | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|-----|-----------|------|
| | | 2015-2016 | | 2014-2015 | |
| | | No. | % | No. | % |
| Local reviews | 2 | 2 | 100 | 11 | 91.7 |
| Appeals to Scottish Ministers | 5 | 0 | 60 | 9 | 64.3 |

C: Enforcement activity

| | 2015-2016 | 2014-2015 |
|------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Cases taken up | 191 | 218 |
| Breaches identified | 191 | 218 |
| Cases resolved | 309 | 310 |
| Notices served*** | 37 | 40 |
| Reports to Procurator Fiscal | 0 | 1 |
| Prosecutions | 0 | 0 |

*** Enforcement notices; breach of condition notices; planning contravention notices; stop notices; temporary stop notices; fixed penalty notices, and Section 33 notices.

Part 6 - Workforce and Financial Information

| | Tier 1 | Tier 2 | Tier 3 | Tier 4 |
|--------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Head of Planning Service | | | X | |

Note: Tier 1= Chief Executive, Tier 2= Directors, Tier 3= Heads of Service, Tier 4= Managers

| | | DM | DP | Enforce- ment | Other |
|------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|------------------|----------|
| Managers | No. Posts | 7 | 3 | | 3 |
| | Vacant | | | | |
| Main grade posts | No. Posts | 12 | 2 | 2 | 5 |
| | Vacant | | | 1 | 1 |
| Technician | No. Posts | 7 | | | |
| | Vacant | | | | |
| Office Support/Clerical | No. Posts | | | | |
| | Vacant | | | | |
| TOTAL | | 26 | 5 | 3 | 9 |

Note: Managers are those staff responsible for the operational management of a team/division. They are not necessarily line managers.

| Staff Age Profile | Number |
|-------------------|--------|
| Under 30 | 1 |
| 30-39 | 10 |
| 40-49 | 11 |
| 50 and over | 21 |

| Committee & Site Visits* | Number per year |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Full council meetings | 8 (no Planning applications determined by full Council) |
| Planning committees | 16 (including 5 Planning Hearings) |
| Area committees (where relevant) | Planning is not heard at Area Committees |
| Committee site visits | 5 |
| LRB** | 5 |
| LRB site visits | 0 |

| | Total Budget | Costs | | Income*** |
|------------------------|---------------------|----------------|-------------------|------------------|
| | | Direct* | Indirect** | |
| Development management | 771473 | 1070182 | 772437 | -1071146 |
| Development planning | 821058 | 547331 | 277197 | -3470 |
| Enforcement | 117689 | 110959 | 6730 | |
| Other | | | | |
| TOTAL | 1710220 | 1728472 | 1056364 | -1074616 |

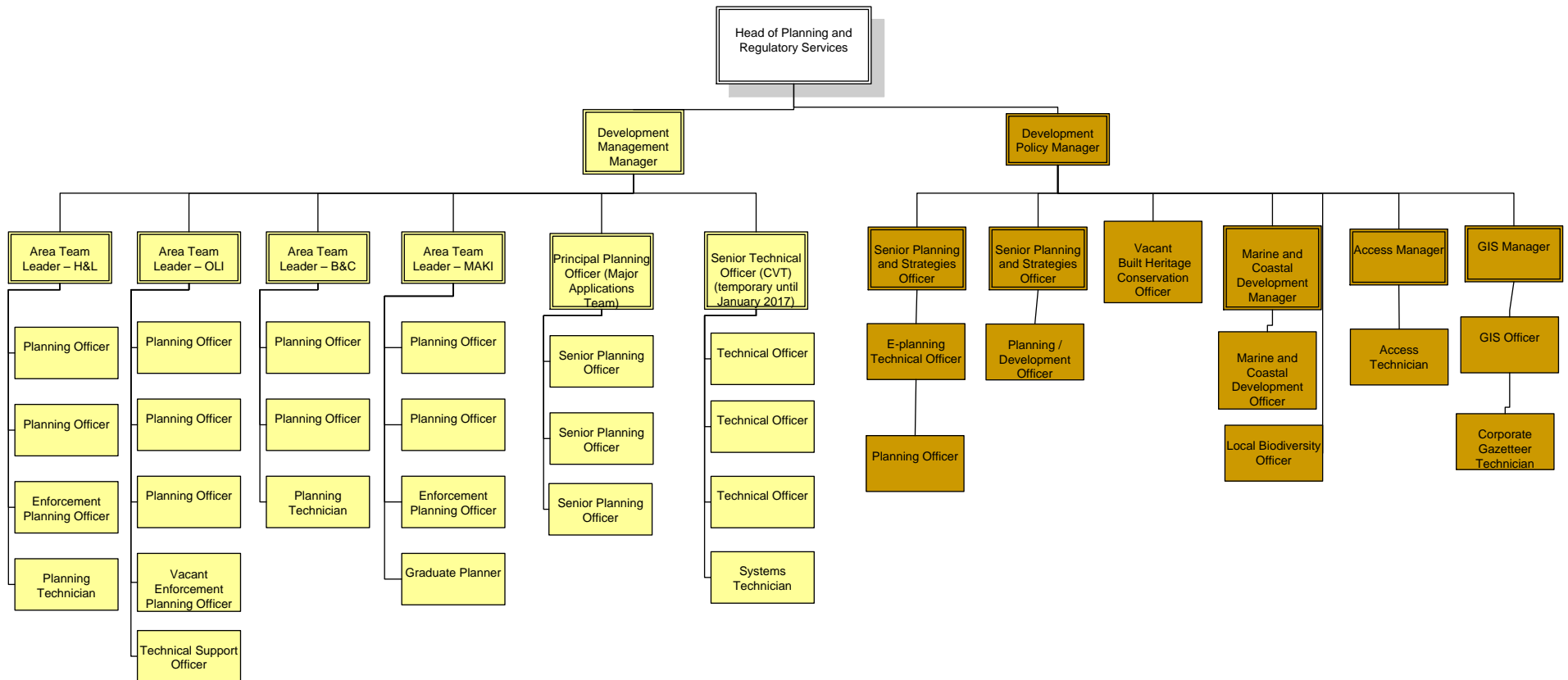
Performance markers and evidence base

| | PERFORMANCE MARKER | EVIDENCE |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Decision-making: authorities demonstrating continuous evidence of reducing average timescales for all development types | National Headline Indicators Page 6 and Page 45 |
| 2 | Project Management: offer of processing agreements (or other agreed project plan) made to prospective applicants in advance of all major applications <u>and</u> availability publicised on planning authority website | National Headline Indicators Page 6, Case Study 8 |
| 3 | Early collaboration with applicants and consultees on planning applications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - availability and promotion of pre-application discussions for all prospective applications - clear and proportionate requests for supporting information | Case Study 3 (working with THI), Case Study 6, Case Study 7, Case Study 8, Case Study 9, Case Study 10, Case Study 11, Case Study 12, Case Study 14, Case Study 17, Case Study 19, Case Study 20, Case Study 22, Case Study 23, Case Study 24 |
| 4 | Legal agreements: conclude (or reconsider) applications within 6 months of 'resolving to grant' * | National Headline Indicators Page 6, Page 45 |
| 5 | Enforcement charter updated / re-published within last 2 years | Adopted March 2015 https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/unauthorised-development |
| 6 | Continuous improvement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - show progress/improvement in relation to PPF National Headline Indicators -progress ambitious and relevant service improvement commitments identified through PPF report | National Headline Indicators Page 5/6 and Page 45 All case Studies |
| 7 | Local development plan less than 5 years since adoption | Achieved |
| 8 | Development plan scheme – next LDP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - on course for adoption within 5-year cycle - project planned and expected to be delivered to planned timescale | Achieved |

| | | |
|----|--|---|
| 9 | Elected members engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation – <i>if plan has been at pre-MIR stage during reporting year</i> | N/A |
| 10 | Cross sector stakeholders* engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation – <i>if plan has been at pre-MIR stage during reporting year</i> <i>*including industry, agencies and Scottish Government</i> | N/A |
| 11 | Production of regular and proportionate policy advice , for example through supplementary guidance, on information required to support applications | Case Study 6, Case Study 11, Case Study 12, Case Study 13, Case Study 14, Case Study 18, Case Study 19, Case Study 20, Case Study 23, Case Study 24 |
| 12 | Corporate working across services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit (for example: protocols; joined-up services; single contact arrangements; joint pre-application advice) | Case Study 1, Case Study 2, Case Study 3, Case Study 4, Case Study 5, Case Study 6, Case Study 7, Case Study 9, Case Study 10, Case Study 11, Case Study 12, Case Study 15, Case Study 17, Case Study 18, Case Study 22, Case Study 24 Page 31/32 – Forming partnerships, Shared Services. |
| 13 | Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge between authorities | Page 31/32 – Forming partnerships, Shared Services. Case Study 17, Case Study 20, Case Study 22 |
| 14 | Stalled sites / legacy cases : conclusion or withdrawal of old planning applications and reducing number of live applications more than one year old | National Headline Indicators Page 6, Case Study 16 |
| 15 | Developer contributions : clear and proportionate expectations - set out in development plan (and/or emerging plan,) and - in pre-application discussions | Case Study 6, Case Study 11, Case Study 12, Case Study 13, Case Study 14, Case Study 18, Case Study 19, Case Study 20, Case Study 23, Case Study 24 |

Appendix A – Staff Structure

Development and Infrastructure Services - PRS Development Management & Policy





Argyll and Bute Council
Development and Infrastructure
Director: Pippa Milne

www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

Chomhairle Earra-Ghàidheal is Bhòid

Key to cover photographs

- 1 Portavadie Leisure and Spa, Tighnabruaich, by Dunoon
- 2 House No 7, Tiree
- 3 Park Square, Campbeltown
- 4 MacKintosh Way, Lochgilphead
- 5 The White House, Grishipol, Isle of Coll
- 6 Guildford Square, Rothesay
- 7 Colquhoun Square, Helensburgh

House No 7, Tiree



Portavadie