

COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22 (SUMMARY)

FOREWORDS

We are emerging from the demands of the Covid

DELIVERING OUR OUTCOMES

Corporate Outcome – People Live Active, Healthier and Independent Lives

1. In 2021/22 a total value of £521,815 in Scottish Welfare Fund grants were paid to support vulnerable people.
2. The amount of Discretionary Housing Payments distributed to households in need was £906,187
3. We paid out £269,950 in grants to cover food and fuel for people in poverty and successfully referred them for support to advice agencies.
4. Administered the Argyll and Bute Flexible Food Fund with our partners Bute Advice and Allenergy. The Fund supported 1,007 applicants to achieve financial support totaling £1.324m.
5. Over 500 empty homes brought back into use.
6. Winner of outstanding team and Scottish Empty Homes Conference 2022.

Corporate Outcome - People Will Live In Safer and Stronger Communities

1. The Environmental Health team carried out 862 Covid interventions and investigated 773 business enquiries and complaints.
2. The Council continues to provide support to the national effort as it continues to improve communication infrastructure across our rural areas.
3. During 2021/22 active travel projects totaling £1,279k from various funding streams were delivered.
4. The Community Development Team have sourced and delivered a range of training courses in response to identified needs within communities across Argyll and Bute.
5. Building Standards service was successful in obtaining commercial work from Scottish Borders and East Lothian Council.

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Corporate Outcome - Education, Skills and Training Maximise Opportunities for All

1. Digital video conferencing equipment is now installed in all Secondary schools. Consequently, young people disadvantaged by the remoteness of a locality now have access to the same curriculum offer as those in more populated areas.
2. A total of 1,067 young people gained a Wider Achievement Award at SCQF levels 4-7 during 2020/21. This equates to 90% of all entries.
3. A total of 95.02% of young people left school into a positive destination. This is an increase of 2.7% on the 2020/21 figure.
4. The level of participation in education, training or employment for 16-19 year-olds is 93.5%, we remain in the top 10 Scottish local authorities for participation levels.
5. The NOLB (No One Left Behind) employability programme was revised to accommodate learners. As a result some adult learners use a blended approach of online and distanced learning.

Corporate Outcome - Our Economy Is Diverse and Thriving

1. As part of the continuing easing of lockdown measures, agreements were put in place to enable businesses to utilise public spaces identified by the Council.
2. We awarded nearly £24.5 million of Non-Domestic Rates reliefs to support local businesses.
3. Support provided from Business Gateway via DigitalBoost (Scotland's national digital upskilling programme) and grant support from the Council helps local jewellery maker.
4. A total of 1,284 export health certificates were issued to businesses for exporting to non-EU countries (e.g. China, Middle East etc.) and 195 certificates for export to EU countries.
5. A Rothesay Townscape Heritage (TH) grant of £311,601 supported the comprehensive repair of a prominent listed building.
6. Our #abplace2b Instagram account is the most followed of all of Scotland's councils.
7. We developed and promoted our 'Have a great time. Be a great visitor.' message and campaign.

Corporate Outcome - We Have An

4. Road improvements totaling over £10m of council funding together with an additional £1.4m from the Timber Transport Fund were delivered.
5. Over 100 individual road reconstruction schemes were improved, contributing to keeping Argyll and Bute open for business.
6. Successfully carried out the winter maintenance programme which includes the removal of ice and snow to our 2,300km of road.
7. After the Bute seawall was washed away we worked with external contractors to put in place a temporary sea defence using interlocking concrete blocks.
8. The council's harbour board agreed to progress the municipal port for Oban.
9. The new vessel that was commissioned and built to connect Port Appin with the Isle of Lismore came in to service in May 2022.
10. Five major projects from the Council's Capital Plan were being delivered - Oban Transit Berthing Facility, Rothesay Pavilion, Helensburgh Waterfront, Kilmory Business Park and Lochgilphead Front Green.
11. Our carbon footprint will reduce by circa 460 tonnes per annum as a result of investing in carbon friendly energy solutions.
12. We have progressed a number of schemes which contribute to reducing our carbon footprint and provide for cleaner, greener transport options.
13. We continue to work with West Dunbartonshire Council on a joint procurement solution for municipal waste after December 2025.
14. We collect refuse and recycling from over 48,000 households and 3,400 commercial premises.
15. We are consistently achieving high marks in the street cleanliness index which is administered by Keep Scotland Beautiful.

Corporate Outcome - Getting it right

1. We have implemented a new Counter Fraud Team to enhance the Council's zero tolerance to fraud and protect the public purse. During 2021-22 the team rebilled £659k as a direct consequence of their work and have recovered £572k of that total to date.
2. The average investment rate received for 2021-22 was 0.418% compared to the average 7-day LIBID (London Interbank Bid Rate) rate of -0.74%.
3. We processed 96.6% of invoices due within 30 days, exceeding the target of 95.5%.
4. The harnessing of new technology developments has resulted in new ways of working, enabled a shift to paperless processing and

SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES DURING 2021/22

1. The Social Work Finance Team continue to deliver a financial sustainability scheme on behalf of the Scottish Government. The scheme provides financial support to local care providers to help them deal with the cost pressures placed upon them by the pandemic.
2. A significant challenge is emerging in relation to the statutory provision of suitable temporary accommodation for households presenting as homeless.
3. A national shortage of qualified environmental health and food safety officers is presenting a challenge to deliver the official food safety programme.
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