Cabinet

A Meeting of the **Cabinet** of North Ayrshire Council will be held in the **Council Chambers**, **Ground Floor, Cunninghame House, Irvine, KA12 8EE** on **Tuesday, 05 December 2023** at **14:30** to consider the undernoted business.

Meeting Arrangements - Hybrid Meetings
This meeting will be held on a predominantly physical basis but with provision, by prior notification, for remote attendance by Elected Members in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 2003. Where possible, the meeting will be live-streamed and available to view at https://north-ayrshire.public-i.tv/core/portal/home.

1   **Declarations of Interest**
     Members are requested to give notice of any declarations of interest in respect of items of business on the Agenda.

2   **Minutes**
     The accuracy of the minutes of meeting of the Cabinet held on 7 November 2023 will be confirmed and the Minutes signed in accordance with Paragraph 7 (1) of Schedule 7 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (copy enclosed).

     EDUCATION ITEMS FOR DECISION

     Reports by the Executive Director (Communities and Education)

3   **Early Learning and Childcare – Redesign of Service**
     Submit a report by the Executive Director (Communities and Education) to seek approval to engage with parents and carers on the proposed redesign of Early Learning and Childcare in North Ayrshire to match capacity to demand in the context of a reducing pupil roll and a corresponding revised funding allocation (copy enclosed).

4   **North Ayrshire Council Strategic Community Learning and Development Plan 2021-24 Progress Report**
Submit a report by the Executive Director (Communities and Education) to provide an update on the North Ayrshire Council Strategic Community Learning and Development Plan 2021-2024 through the six-monthly update report (copy enclosed).

5   **HMIe Progress Review of Community Learning and Development**
Submit a report by the Executive Director (Communities and Education) to advise Cabinet of the outcomes of the recent Progress Review of Community Learning and Development by HMIE (copy enclosed).

GENERAL BUSINESS FOR DECISION

Reports by the Chief Executive

6   **Procurement Annual Activity Report 2022-23**
Submit a report by the Head of Service (Finance) to provide Cabinet with an update on Procurement activity for the period 22/23 (copy enclosed).

Reports by the Executive Director (Place)

7   **Review of the Management of Temporary Furnished Accommodation**
Submit a report by the Executive Director (Place) to advise Cabinet of the outcome of the review of the North Ayrshire Temporary Accommodation policy and seek approval for the establishment of a Temporary Accommodation Fund to support students and people in employment who have no
entitlement to Housing Benefit (copy enclosed).

8   **Sustainable North Ayrshire Strategy**
Submit a report by the Executive Director (Place) to seek approval of the proposed Sustainable North Ayrshire Strategy 2024-27 (copy enclosed).

9   **Community Transport Pathfinder**
Submit a report by the Executive Director (Place) to provide Cabinet with an update on the Community Transport Pathfinder work and proposed next steps (copy enclosed).

10   **Consultation Response on Scotland's Strategic Framework for Biodiversity**
Submit a report by the Executive Director (Place) to seek approval of the proposed consultation response to Scotland's Strategic Framework for Biodiversity (copy enclosed).

11   Great Harbour Masterplan
Submit a report by the Executive Director (Place) to approve that the
Great Harbour Masterplan for Irvine Harbourside is referred to Planning
Committee for consideration as a material planning consideration, related
to the adopted Local Development Plan and setting out the wider
development aspirations for the area (copy enclosed).

**12   Irvine Town Centre: Long-Term Plan for Towns Levelling Up Fund
Award**
Submit a report by the Executive Director (Place) to update Cabinet on
the award of funding for Irvine under the Levelling Up Fund and seek
approval for the interim governance structure and early commencement
of work to develop a Long-Term Plan for the investment (copy enclosed).

13   Urgent Items
Any other items which the Chair considers to be urgent.

Webcasting
Please note: this meeting may be filmed/recorded/live-streamed to the
Council's internet site and available to view at https://north-ayrshire.public-
i.tv/core/portal/home, where it will be capable of repeated viewing. At the
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Cabinet Sederunt

Elected Members

Marie Burns (Chair)
Shaun Macaulay (Vice-Chair)
Tony Gurney
Alan Hill
Margaret Johnson
Christina Larsen

Church Representatives

Mr Andrew Bruce
Ms Elizabeth Turbet
Rev Mark Goodman
Teaching Representative

Ms Jacqui MacKenzie

Youth Council Representatives

Chair:

Apologies:

Attending:

IRVINE, 7 November 2023 - At a Meeting of the Cabinet of North Ayrshire Council at 2.30 p.m.

Present
Marie Burns, Alan Hill, Margaret Johnson, Christina Larsen and Shaun Macaulay; and Elizabeth Turbet, Andrew Bruce and Jacqui McKenzie (Teaching Representative).

Also Present
Davina McTiernan and Eleanor Collier.

In Attendance
C. Hatton, Chief Executive, M. Boyd, Head of Service and D. Forbes, Senior Manager (Finance) (Chief Executive's Service); A. Sutton, Executive Director, A. McClelland, Head of Service (Education); R. Leith, Head of Service (Communities) and C. Hope, Senior Manager (Communities) (Communities & Education); R. McCutcheon, Executive Director, T. Reaney, Head of Service (Neighbourhood Services), Y. Baulk, Head of Service (Housing & Public Protect), L. Kirk, Interim Head of Service (Economic Development & Regeneration) and J. Barrett, Senior Manager (Homeless & Community Safety), (Place); C. Cameron, Director and P. McArthur, Senior Manager (Health and Social Care Partnership); and A. Craig, Head of Service, I. Hardy, Team Manager (Corporate Policy, Performance & Elections), M. Sugden, Communications Officer (Communications) and S. Wilson, Committee Services Officer (Democratic Services).

Apologies
Tony Gurney.

Chair
Marie Burns in the Chair.

1.   Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest by Members in terms of Standing Order 11 and Section 5 of the Code of Conduct for Councillors.

2.   Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on 29 August 2023 and the Special Meetings of the Cabinet held on 19 September 2023 and 3 October 2023 were confirmed and the Minutes signed in accordance with Paragraph 7 (1) of Schedule 7 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

3.   Annual Participation Measure 2023

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Communities and Education) updating Cabinet on the Annual Participation Measure (APM) for 2023. Further statistical analysis was attached at Appendices 1-3 to the report.

Noted.

4.   Annual Report – School and Early Learning and Childcare Inspections 2022-23

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Communities and Education) on the performance of North Ayrshire schools and early learning and childcare settings in external inspections, with a focus on those published during session 2022-23. The Inspection Outcome Report from Education Scotland was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

The Cabinet commended the performance of schools and Early Learning and Childcare settings inspected by Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate and thanked all staff involved for their continued commitment.

Noted.

5.   Education Authority Annual Plan 2023-24

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Communities and Education) seeking approval for the publication of the Education Authority Annual Plan for 2023-24. The Education Authority Annual Plan for 2023-24 was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

The Cabinet agreed to approve (a) the draft Education Authority annual plan for 2023-24 as aligned to the Council Plan priorities and the National Improvement Framework priorities; and (b) the publication of the plan.

6.   Proposals for Community Investment Fund (CIF) Expenditure

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Communities and Education) on applications by Locality Partnerships to allocate CIF funding to proposed projects. Applications from Irvine Locality Partnership and CHAP (Community Housing Advocacy Project) were attached at Appendices 1 and 2, respectively, to the report.

The Cabinet (a) reviewed the application from the Irvine Locality Partnership; in line with CIF criteria; and (b) agreed to approve the CIF application in relation to CHAP in the amount of £91,534, subject to the conditions approved by Irvine Locality Partnership, as detailed at section 2.6.4 of the report.

7.   Cost of Living Crisis

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Communities and Education) providing a third progress report in relation to the North Ayrshire Council responses to the current cost of living crisis and associated investments and funds. The Cost of Living Themes & Updates (November 2023) report was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

The Cabinet commended the team and Partners for the extensive amount of work undertaken.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) discontinue reporting on those areas for which the funding had been fully expended; (b) accept future progress reports on the investments, funds and activity associated with the cost-of-living crisis; and (c) note the progress made in developing support in relation to the cost of living crisis.

8.   Performance Information – Drug and Alcohol Services – April 2022 to 31 March 2023

Submitted a report by the Director (Health and Social Care Partnership) providing an update on the national and local drug and alcohol related targets and standards and performance in North Ayrshire; and providing assurance to Members of the performance, actions and service developments being progressed to address the significant challenges for our communities. The North Ayrshire HSCP and ADP Performance Management Report was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

A Member asked a question and was provided with further information in relation to the support available locally and the uptake in detoxification support as the preferred method of treatment.

Noted.

9.   Capital Programme Performance to 31 August 2023

Submitted a report by the Head of Service (Finance) on progress in delivering the Capital Investment Programme 2023/24 to 31 August 2023.

A Member asked a question and was provided with further information in relation to the monitored risks across projects and whether the current earmarked funds could adequately mitigate these.

The Cabinet agreed (a) to approve the virement proposals noted within the HRA Programme and set out at Appendix 2 to the report; and (b) note (i) the revisions to budgets outlined in the report, (ii) the General Services and HRA revised budgets at 31 August 2023 and (iii) the forecast expenditure to 31 March 2024.

10. Revenue Budget 2023/24: Financial Performance to 31 August 2023

Submitted a report by the Head of Service (Finance) advising Cabinet of the financial performance for the Council at 31 August 2023. Supporting information was attached at Appendices 1-8 to the report.

Members asked questions and were provided with further information in relation to:

- the under-recovery of rental income resulting from long-term voids and the factors contributing to this;
- recent industrial strike action and whether this contributed to an underspend position; and
- an update in regard to potential recharges for delayed discharge of patients.

The Cabinet agreed (a) to approve the virements detailed at Appendix 7 to the report and; (b) note (i) the information and financial projections outlined in the report and (ii) the latest financial projection for the Health and Social Care Partnership highlighted at section 2.6 of the report.

11. Treasury Management and Investment Mid-Year Report 2023/24

Submitted a report by the Head of Service (Finance) providing a Treasury Management update for the period 1 April to 30 September 2023. The Treasury Management and Investment Mid-Year Report 2023-24 was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

A Member asked a question and was provided with further information in relation to standard Treasury Management Practice in regard to providing loans to other Local Authorities.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) endorse the contents of the Treasury Management and Investment Mid-Year Report for 2023/24 detailed at Appendix 1 to the report; and (b) note (i) the Prudential and Treasury Indicators set out in the report and (ii) the changes arising from the review of HRA Loans Fund Advances.

12. Year End Performance Reporting: Council Plan Year End Progress Report 2022-23; Annual Performance Report 2022-23; and Local Government Benchmarking Framework Analysis of 2023 Data Release

Submitted a report by the Head of Service (Democratic Services) on the progress of the Council Plan priorities. The Council Plan 2019-24 Progress Update was attached at Appendix 1, supported by the Council Plan Performance Indicators at Appendix 2, the Council Plan Action Tracker at Appendix 3, North Ayrshire Council Annual Performance Report 2022-23 at Appendix 4 and Local Government Benchmarking Framework Analysis of 2023 Data Release at Appendix 5 to the report.

A Member asked a question and was provided further information in relation to the three performance indicators which were measured as 'significantly adrift' and the external factors which contributed to this.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) approve (i) the Council Plan year End Progress Report and supporting performance measures as set out at Appendices 1-3 to the report and (ii) the Council Plan Annual Performance Report as set out in Appendix 4 to the report; (b) refer the report to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee for further consideration; and (c) note the status of the Council's performance indicators within the LGBF Analysis of 2023 Data Release at Appendix 5 to the report.

13.   Roads Winter Service and Weather Emergencies Plan 2023/24

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) seeking approval for the Roads Winter Service and Weather Emergencies Plan 2023/24. The Neighbourhood Services 2023/24 Winter Preparation Action Plan was attached at Appendix 1, supported by the Roads Winter Service and Weather Emergencies Plan 2023/24 at Appendix 2 to the report.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) approve the Roads Winter Service and Weather Emergencies Plan 2023/24 and (b) note the preparations and actions taken, as set out in the Winter Preparation Action Plan.

14.   Scottish Government Consultations on Burials and Cremation

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) seeking approval of the proposed responses to the Scottish Government consultations on Burials and Cremation. The proposed consultation response was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

The Cabinet agreed (a) to approve the consultation responses from North Ayrshire Council included at Appendix 1; and (b) that the consultation responses be submitted to the Scottish Government by 17 November 2023.

15.   Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2024-2029

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) seeking Cabinet approval of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2024 – 2029 attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) approve the Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2024-2029 for submission to Scottish Government; and (b) give delegated authority to the Executive Director (Place), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Green Environment and Economy to liaise directly with the Scottish Government in agreeing (i) the North Ayrshire development programme and (ii) the rescheduling of projects as required.

16.   Former St Mary's Primary School, Largs – SHIP Social Housing Development Proposal

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) seeking approval for the inclusion of the former St Mary's Primary School site, Largs as a 26-unit Council social housing development in the North Ayrshire SHIP 2024-29.

The Cabinet welcomed the provision of more homes within the North Coast and also noted the potential for considering further the housing needs of Ukrainian refugees.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) note the challenges encountered in delivering the Home Ownership Made Easy (HOME) pathfinder project on the site of the former St Mary's Primary School site, Largs, since its approval by Cabinet in December 2018, and no longer progress this; (b) note the discussions which had taken place with Scottish Government in recent months to identify alternative affordable housing options for the site; and (c) approve (i) the sale of the site by the Council's General Fund to the Housing Revenue Account at the indicative value of £300,000, pending District Valuer valuation and subject to any abnormal costs and (ii) the inclusion of the site as a 26-unit Council social housing development in the North Ayrshire SHIP 2024-29.

17. Council House Buy-back Programme to Accommodate Ukrainian Displaced People

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) seeking Cabinet approval to purchase up to 40 properties to accommodate Ukrainian households for three years using Scottish Government grant being made available.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) approve the purchase of up to 40 properties to be used to accommodate Ukrainian households for three years; and (b) note that the homes would be available for allocation to other housing applicants thereafter.

On behalf of the Cabinet, the Chair congratulated Yvonne Baulk on her success in obtaining the Leadership Award from the Chartered Institute of Housing.

18. National Islands Plan Review Consultation Response

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) providing an update on the Council's engagement in the consultation on the review of the National Islands Plan by the Scottish Government and seeking approval for the proposed consultation response. The proposed consultation response was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

A Member asked a question and was provided with further information in relation to the next steps of the National Islands Plan review process.

The Cabinet agreed to (a) approve the proposed consultation response provided at Appendix 1 to the report; and (b) note the submission of separate consultation responses on behalf of the Island Plan Steering Groups on both islands.

19. Exclusion of the Press and the Public

Cabinet resolved in terms of Section 50(A)4 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, to exclude from the Meeting the press and the public for the following items of business on the grounds indicated in terms of Paragraph 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

20.   Irvine - Montgomerie Park : Marketing and Disposal Strategy for Sites E, F and G – EXEMPT REPORT

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Place) seeking approval for the marketing and disposal of the remaining residential development sites, Sites E, F and G, at Montgomerie Park. The proposed marketing and disposal strategy was set out at Appendix 1 to the report. The marketing brochure and the Development Brief were provided at Appendices 2 and 3 to the report.

The Cabinet agreed to approve the recommendation as detailed in the report.

21.   The Portal Café – EXEMPT REPORT

Submitted a report by the Executive Director (Communities & Education) seeking approval to transfer the operation of the Portal Café to North Ayrshire Leisure Limited (NALL).

The Cabinet agreed to approve the recommendation as detailed in the report.

22. Urgent Items

There were no urgent items.

The meeting ended at 4.35 p.m.

NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

5 December 2023

Cabinet

Title:	**Early Learning and Childcare – Redesign of Service**
Purpose:	To seek approval to engage with parents and carers on the proposed redesign of Early Learning and Childcare in North Ayrshire to match capacity to demand in the context of a reducing pupil role and a corresponding revised funding allocation.
Recommendation:	That Cabinet approves the proposed engagement with parents and carers with the purpose of informing a further report to Cabinet early in 2024 on ELC provision in North Ayrshire.

1. Executive Summary

1.1 North Ayrshire Council (NAC) has implemented the Scottish Government's policy to provide 1140hrs of funded Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) to eligible children, utilising the additional grant funding received to support this new policy.

1.2 After three years of delivery aligned to earlier assessments of need and uptake, the Council now has an evidence base to inform its analysis of demand and therefore optimum capacity. In addition, based on a declining population and a lower than anticipated national and local uptake of 1140hrs of funded ELC, NAC has received a revised core allocation and specific grant allocation for the delivery of ELC in line with the reducing roll. The Scottish Government, as part of a national review of funding, now plans to provide an annual core quantum for the provision of ELC. Further budget reduction for NAC is anticipated.

2. Background

2.1 Early Learning and Childcare Funding

2.1.1 The Scottish Government introduced a policy to increase funded ELC for eligible children from 600 hours per year to 1140 hours per year from August 2020, supported through the provision of specific annual grant funding to local authorities. NAC phased in this programme with full implementation of 1140 hours funded early learning and childcare for all eligible children from August 2021. There was a delay in full implementation due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

2.1.2 Data for the whole of Scotland shows that there are fewer children eligible for funded ELC and the uptake of 1140 hours is lower than originally anticipated when the multi-

year grant funding agreement was reached. Current NAC capacity is 2228 spaces with 1852 spaces allocated (83% occupancy rate).

2.1.3 Correspondingly, the Scottish Government has advised local authorities they now intend to remove the specific annual grant funding for 1140 funded hours and provide an annual core funding quantum for the provision of early learning and childcare. The Scottish Government is working with COSLA to agree the annual core quantum for 2024/25 onwards.

2.1.4 It is anticipated that the share of the annual quantum received by local authorities will be based on:
a) the number of eligible children in the local authority area; and
b) the percentage uptake of 1140 hours in the local authority area.

2.1.5 North Ayrshire Council has therefore had a reduction in funding since 2022/23:

Financial Year	ELC Specific Grant Funding	ELC Specific Grant Funding Reduction	NAC Core Allocation	NAC Core Allocation Reduction	Funding Revision	Total Funding Reduction
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
2021/22	14.013		11.654			
2022/23	13.093	-0.920	12.033	0.379	0.000	-0.541
2023/24	12.579	-0.514	11.561	-0.684	0.212	-0.986
Total Funding Movement to 2023-24		**-1.434**		**-0.305**	**0.212**	**-1.527**

Current reductions in NAC core and grant funding allocations for ELC

2.1.6 In line with the national picture, the uptake of children's ELC places in North Ayrshire has been lower than originally estimated. In addition, declining birth rates will continue to impact the overall level of uptake. The reductions noted above demonstrate a reduction to the level of Scottish Government funding allocated to NAC as a direct result of these two factors.

2.1.7 It is estimated that a further reduction in the specific grant will take effect from 1st April 2024. As noted in 2.1.5, a budget reduction of £1.527m is confirmed in 2023/24 with a further £0.411m estimated in 2024/25 due to the factors outlined in 2.1.4. This represents an overall estimated reduction of £2m in the ELC budget across the 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25 financial years. To date, the £1.527m budget reduction has been met through use of temporary funding sources, including earmarked funds, to enable longer term planning to take place.

2.1.8 In response to the demographic and budget position outlined above, a review of early learning and childcare service delivery is underway, governed by an ELC Review Board. The key aim of this review is to redesign early years service provision to meet current and anticipated levels of demand, within the anticipated Scottish Government

2024/25 funding envelope. This would include the implementation of refreshed delivery models in line with current and projected demand.

2.1.9 It should also be noted that the Scottish Government has outlined an ambition to increase the eligibility of 2-year-olds to access 1140 hours of funded ELC. NAC currently makes provision for eligible 2-year-olds in a number of establishments, and these children are typically referred by Health Visitors. There is currently no published timescale for this.

2.2 Current ELC delivery models

2.2.1 Funded ELC is delivered by NAC alongside our funded providers, which are predominantly private nurseries and childminders. As of the 2023 census return, 2394 children are accessing 1140 hours of funded ELC in North Ayrshire, breakdown provided below:

Type of provision	No. of children	Overall % of children accessing 1140
Full 1140 hours through Local Authority	1852	77%
Full 1140 hours through Partner Nursery	427	18%
Full 1140 hours through Partner Childminder	21	1%
1140 hours through a blend of providers	94	4%

2.2.2 Based on wide-ranging consultation at the original design stage, there are currently three models of service delivery provided by NAC schools and ELC centres:

Model	Service Provided	Number of Schools/Centres
1	8am to 6pm over 48-weeks per year. Option of either full year (48 weeks) or term time (38 weeks) with a variety of children's attendance patterns to obtain 1140 hours of funded ELC.	24
2	8.45am to 4.30pm over term-time (38 weeks). 665 hours of funded ELC provided by NAC with 475 hours available to blend childcare with a private nursery or childminder.	11
3	9am to 3pm over term-time (38 weeks). Children attend 6 hours each day to obtain 1140 hours of funded ELC.	8

2.2.3 In delivering ELC, the Council is required to maintain a minimum statutory adult:child ratio based on the age group of children. For children aged 3-5 years, this ratio is 1 adult to 8 children. For children under the age of 3, this ratio is 1 adult to 5 children.

2.2.4 The current employee budget required to support current service delivery models is £16.8m. Existing model 1 and 2 sites require complex staffing schedules to ensure

statutory ratio is maintained during lunch breaks, annual leave and across a maximum day from 8am to 6pm.

2.3   Redesign of ELC Delivery Models: next steps

2.3.1   The existing ELC delivery models require to be redesigned to take account of reducing birth rates, available data on uptake of 1140hrs funded ELC (particularly outside of the school term), current parental preferences and the projected budget envelope.

2.3.2   Redesigned models would be implemented from the new academic session in August 2024. This would allow time for engagement with parents and carers and consultation with staff and trade unions as well as consideration of workforce implications, service impacts and opportunities and approach to organisational change in delivering required service changes within the revised financial envelope, as well as in relation to redesigned delivery models.

2.3.3   Redesigned models will ensure that there is capacity for all eligible children across NAC to receive 1140 hours of funded ELC provision either through a North Ayrshire Council establishment or a funded provider.

3.   Proposals

3.1 It is proposed that Cabinet:

Approves the proposed engagement with parents and carers with the purpose of informing a further report to Cabinet early in 2024 on ELC provision in North Ayrshire.

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4.   Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial

4.1   A summary of the overall financial position is provided at 2.5 above. The current proposals have no direct financial implications.

Human Resources

4.2   None within the current report although future proposals will require organisational change.

Legal

4.3   The *National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16* outlines a statutory requirement for ratios of 1:5 for 2 to under 3s and 1:8 for children aged 3 and over in ELC provisions. The proposals outlined in this paper are cognisant of this statutory requirement and will ensure that ratios are maintained. The *Children and*

Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (Modification) Order 2021 places a statutory duty on education authorities to make provision for 1,140 hours of funded ELC available to all children aged 3-5, and eligible 2-year-olds.

Equality/Socio-economic

4.4 A review of the current Equality and Children's Rights Impact Assessment (ECRIA) for ELC will be carried out to inform future proposals and implementation.

Climate Change and Carbon

4.5 None.

Key Priorities

4.6 Proposals developed as a result of this report would support the Council Plan 2023-28 strategic aim to "transition to a wellbeing economy, delivering prosperity, wellbeing and resilience for local people" and more specifically "improving educational attainment and achievement and closing the attainment gap" activities.

Community Wealth Building

4.7 North Ayrshire's Education Service works closely with a range of funded providers (private nurseries and childminders) to deliver 1140 through procurement of local services.

5. Consultation

5.1 This report proposes engagement with parents and carers, to inform, alongside the current evidence base, future proposals for ELC service delivery in North Ayrshire.

Audrey Sutton
Executive Director Communities and Education

For further information please contact **Andrew McClelland, Head of Service (Education),** on **01294 32 324413**.

Background Papers
None

NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

5 December 2023

Cabinet

Title:	**North Ayrshire Council Strategic Community Learning and Development Plan 2021-2024 Progress Report**
Purpose:	To provide an update on the North Ayrshire Council Strategic Community Learning and Development Plan 2021-2024 through the six-monthly update report.
Recommendation:	That Cabinet: a) Reviews the North Ayrshire CLD Strategic Plan 2021-2024 Progress Report; and b) Authorises officers to continue to take forward the actions within the plan

1. Executive Summary

1.1 The North Ayrshire Council Strategic Community Learning and Development Plan 2021-2024 was developed in accordance with the Education Scotland guidance and the continued engagement and professional guidance from CLD Managers Scotland. It built on the learning from the Covid-19 pandemic and the previous 2018-2021 plan.

1.2 The CLD plan makes a commitment that communities of North Ayrshire, communities of place and communities of interest, will have access to CLD support as appropriate. Communities were involved in the development of the plan through consultation and engagement, particularly where needs had not been met. The focus of the Action Plan is clear in relation to closing the gap between needs and delivery.

1.3 Community Learning and Development includes the three domains of Adult Learning, Youth Work and Capacity Building, and the plan is built around these with themes of health and wellbeing, digital participation and workforce development. It also covers inequalities and the targeting of resources, as well as describing unmet need and governance.

1.4 Progress continues to be made on delivery across all domains and themes of the plan. The Quarter 2 update (Appendix 1) provides detail of this.

2. Background

2.1 In June 2012 the Scottish Government issued Strategic Guidance for Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) on the provision of Community Learning and Development (CLD) services. This guidance was followed by the CLD Regulations

(Scotland) in 2013, which placed a legislative duty upon Local Authorities to put in place a 3-year Strategic CLD plan.

2.2 The Government introduced further legislation in 2015 in the form of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act, designed to give greater powers to local communities and by December 2016, new guidance was published as part of the Act which placed CPPs on a statutory footing and imposed a duty on them for the delivery of a local outcomes improvement plan (LOIP), with the involvement of community bodies at all stages of community planning.

2.3 The North Ayrshire Council Strategic Community Learning and Development Plan 2021-2024 builds on the previously refreshed plan of 2018-2021. It is informed by the learning from COVID 19 pandemic in terms of response and needs. It was approved by Cabinet on 28th September 2021. At its heart is the Learners' Voice structure, which brings together a range of learners from across the six localities. Introduced in the previous 2018-2021 CLD plan, the Learner's Voice is its major success, with other highlights including the pathways of support for young people, including the Modern Apprenticeship programme, and the development of dignified food provision and cost of living support through community hubs.

2.4 The delivery of the CLD plan continues with the Education Scotland guidance and the continued engagement and professional guidance from CLD Managers Scotland. It has key themes and commitments which were made to the communities of North Ayrshire. These commitments will be realised throughout the life of the plan with recognition that the levels of delivery will differ in each year as needed.

2.5 The plan was developed with the underlying principle of partnership working, involving not only the NAC CLD team as an integral part of the development, but also far wider partners and staff teams. While the CLD team provides professional knowledge and advice, CLD approaches are integrated across services within the local authority area, and this amplifies the impact of the work of the plan. This was clearly seen in the impact of the community hubs during the Covid-19 pandemic. Services are provided by the CLD workforce employed and volunteering within the local authority, as well as CLD provision within schools, colleges, third sector organisations and other community planning partners. Collaborative approaches are a key strength in North Ayrshire.

CLD Strategic Plan 2021-2024 6-month update report (Appendix 1)

2.6 Youth work activity continues to support young people in their attainment and personal development, with 391 national awards being carried out through the CLD team's locality and thematic work including the PDA in Youth Work, Hi-5 Awards which are SCQF recognised, John Muir Environmental Awards and SVQ Level 2 and 3 qualifications in Youth Work. 264 young people completed their Duke of Edinburgh Awards with an additional 174 completing sections towards their full award, working through their bronze, silver and gold awards through school and community groups. Over 90 young people have received certificates for their participation in Mental Health and wellbeing Mini-Ambassador programme and Drama for Wellbeing programme.

2.7 6,314 adults were engaged in CLD activity during the time period, including adult learning and capacity building. Some key adult learning activities include the Community Based Adult Learning ESOL programme, where tutors currently provide 25 ESOL support activities a week. The Multiply Project, which is part of the UK Shared Prosperity

Fund (UKSPF), aims to boost people's ability to use maths in their daily life, at home and work. It targets learners who are 19+ that have not previously attained SCQF level 5 or Higher maths qualifications. The Multiply team have used summer 2023 to promote and increase visibility for our project engaged and with 1500 people through promotional events. Five groups have already been established and through partnership work with TACT, funding identified for delivery by third sector partners.

2.8 In line with the priorities of the new Council Plan, empowering communities to identify and deliver their own solutions is a key aspect of the CLD Plan work. Currently 14 food larders across North Ayrshire support over 3000 households with dignified food provision, as well as an increased move towards the "No Wrong Door" approach of access to the other supports and services that would help improve their lives. The North Ayrshire Food Forum has been reestablished and now meets every six weeks with great attendance, giving an opportunity to share learning and build social capital between groups working in different communities. Links are being established between local food growing projects and larders to ensure their produce is used to support those who most need it.

28 Community "wishes" have also been delivered in 2023 so far through the Community Benefits Wishlist. This links needs in communities with businesses delivering contracts and ensures community benefit is directed in the way which makes the most impact. In total, 61 "wishes" have been delivered since the Wishlist was launched in October 2021.

Work continues to progress strongly in meeting the identified unmet need around older people. Mapping and consultations have been completed with older people and a draft participation structure will be agreed at the Older People's Conference to be held in November. 29 different activities are currently running across the four older people's engagement hubs, with the Saltcoats, Irvine and Kilbirnie hubs having established their own entertainment committees and a fourth committee in development at the Dalry engagement hub.

Resourcing the work in and by communities through the distribution and leverage of funding remains a key priority. Locality Planning Partnerships awarded a total of £61,619 from April to August 2023. £603,720 in additional external funding has been levered in by third sector organisations in the same time period. Eight funding workshops and drop-in sessions were delivered from April to August and 18 funding updates circulated to community organisations and colleagues. 677 members have now joined North Ayrshire Virtual Funding Centre.

Work continues successfully around other key activities such as Community Asset Transfers, Participatory Budgeting grant programmes, the delivery of the holiday meals programme and wellbeing support for young people and families.

In September 2023, HMIe visited to carry out a Progress Review of the work around the CLD Plan. The resulting report identified that the self-evaluative and monitoring work of the partnership reflected a true picture and clear understanding of the progress being made and was overwhelmingly positive in its nature. Further information on the process and published HMIe report is being provided in a separate report to Cabinet.

3. **Proposals**

3.1 That Cabinet:

a) Reviews the North Ayrshire CLD Strategic Plan 2021-2024 Progress Report; and

b) Authorises officers to continue to take forward the actions within the plan.

4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial

4.1 The CLD Plan is delivered from within existing resources, with some additional support for ESOL to support New Scots.

Human Resources

4.2 Any human resource requirements are met within the existing staffing cohort. Increasing community activity and the corresponding support needs can place a strain on this resource and monitoring continues to ensure workloads are manageable.

Legal

4.3 The CLD Strategic plan meets the council's legislative duties under CLD Regulations (Scotland) 2013.

Equality/Socio-economic

4.4 The values base of CLD work includes valuing equality of both opportunity and outcome, and challenging discriminatory practice. The work of NAC staff and partners on the CLD plan helps to address inequalities across communities and empower them to have their place within the design and delivery of services. It helps to ensure resources are targeted to those in most need and where they will make the greatest impact on outcomes, while ensuring there is also a universal offer of learning opportunities and activities. Through working with communities and with partners, the voices, needs and aspirations of the communities inform the operational delivery and targeting of resources. It is foreseeable that the escalating cost-of-living crisis will put pressure on individuals and communities and work with the community larder network and partners who provide energy, financial and mental health advice will intensify. The delivery of the plan focuses on building capacity and optimising opportunities so that efforts to address poverty and inequalities are strengthened.

Environmental and Sustainability

4.5 Environmental and sustainability issues provide opportunities for skills and learning development. With rich and diverse spaces, North Ayrshire offers opportunities for involvement in marine, coastal and woodland activities; tree-planting; allotments, growing, community gardening and food production; and community environment projects.

Key Priorities

4.6 The activities contained within the CLD Strategic Plan 2021-2024 support the North Ayrshire Council Plan strategic aims:

- To transition to a wellbeing economy, delivering prosperity, wellbeing and resilience for local people.
- We will have active, inclusive and resilient communities.
- A Community Wealth Building Council that is efficient and accessible, maximising investment and focusing resources towards our priorities.

Community Wealth Building

4.7 The activities contained within the CLD Strategic Plan 2021-2024 support the following pillars of community wealth building:

- Creating volunteering and skills development opportunities;
- Sustaining local employment through skills development;
- Advancing community enterprises, such as food pantries, community centre ownership and community sports clubs; and
- Advancing local ownership of underused land and buildings.

5. Consultation

5.1 Significant consultation was carried out in the development of the original CLD plan in 2020 and 2021, with the learner at the centre, including all Locality Partnerships and Locality Forums, and a "co-define, co-design and co-deliver" model. Consultation with learners and partners continues in line with recommended good practice by the Consultation Institute and the National Standards for Community Engagement. The Community Engagement Network (CEN) is hosted by North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership and meets quarterly. This is the community engagement reference group for this toolkit/hub, support and development forum for the Engagement Champions and a networking opportunity for all partners involved in community engagement. Engagement Champions are representatives from all partners, departments or organisations. The Learners' Voice, Youth Participation Engagement Structure and feedback from learners and partners continue to inform delivery and practice.

Audrey Sutton
Executive Director of Communities and Education

For further information please contact **Rhonda Leith, Head of Service (Connected Communities),** on **01294 324415**.

Background Papers
Appendix 1: North Ayrshire CLD Strategic Plan 2021/2024 – Q2 Progress Report
Appendix 2: North Ayrshire CLD Plan (September 2021/24)

North Ayrshire CLD Strategic Plan 2021-2024

Year 2 Update 2022-2023

Key Priority	Action Plan	Update
Youth Work		
Positive Destinations for 16 19- year-olds	Through the work of our Modern Apprenticeship Programme, we will continue to take young people through their SVQ Level 3 in Youth Work. We will strengthen our employability programmes from Playback Ice Qualifications, Ambition Agreement, Youth Guarantee and a wide range of one-to-one support, group work and signposting services.	The Modern Apprenticeship Programme continued to take young people through their SVQ Level 3 in Youth Work. 5 MAs completed in March and achieved their qualification and moved onto to further education and/or employment. 6 MAs are halfway their qualification with another 5 MAs that have started their qualification in August/September 2023. Throughout the programme we ensure that MA's are nurtured and encouraged to take on new learning opportunities. Candidates will often find new training courses or discover personal development needs as their knowledge and skills grow. The annual External Verification meeting by SQA resulted in a high confidence level result in the services delivery of both SVQ and Learning and Development qualifications. Additional Additional training out with their core training has included a pilot for suicide prevention training. Participating in the Fair Jobs Fayre, they have also been working on national consultations including Alcohol Marketing consultation with Alcohol Focus Scotland. The MAs are additional accredited Mental Health Ambassadors gaining Mental Health First Aid (SCQF Level 6). In March 2023 funding for our two Employability Project and Delivery Workers contracts came to an end as per funding agreement, therefore specific youth employability programmes can no longer be delivered. North Ayrshire

		CLD team continue to work with SDS to support young people into volunteering and positive destinations as and where appropriate.
		We continue a range of employability work incorporating youth work practice that is delivered across North Ayrshire to support young people into positive destinations, this includes ESOL Employability Introductory session in partnership with CEIS.
		As part of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) North Ayrshire Council have secured funding to deliver the Multiply Project. This project aims to boosts people's ability to use maths in their daily life, at home and work targeting learners who are 19+ that have not previously attained a level 2 SCQF, level 5 or higher maths qualification.
		The Multiply team have used summer 2023 to promote and increase visibility of the project. Our summer outreach programme engaged with around 1500 residents of North Ayrshire which allowed us to interact with young people in the authority, which will assist with the removal of the barriers and stigma that can be attached to numeracy and literacy.
Attainment and Wider Achievement	We will continue to provide a wide variety of youth work opportunities to young people based on local need and in partnership with young people.

Young people will have access to awards and certification though our programmes. | The CLD team continues to ensure that appropriate accreditation routes are utilised to enable a formal recognition of young people's community-based learning is recognised.

391 national awards being carried out through the CLD team's locality and thematic work including PDA in Youth Work, Hi 5 Awards, John Muir and SVQ Level 2 and 3 in Youth Work

264 young people completed their Duke of Edinburgh Awards with an additional 174completiong sectional towards their DofE, working through their bronze, silver and gold awards through school and community groups. |

| | Working in partnership with schools, we will provide a menu of curriculum enhancement activities. | Over 90 young people have received certificates through the Mental Health and wellbeing Mini Ambassador programme and Drama for Wellbeing

This summer saw one new Scots young womens group, with Syrian and Ukrainian nationalities, and two new Scots boys groups, with Syrian, Afghanistan, Vietnamese and Egyptian nationalities, attend residentials with Arran Outdoor Centre. Among the young people attended there where 9 unaccompanied young people that are currently resident in North Ayrshire. And among the staff on the residential was Mariana who had been a member of the swans group and is now a sessional youth worker with North Ayrshire.

Ukrainian and Syrian young people attended Youthbeatz festival in Dumfries. As well as enjoying the festival it was an opportunity to practice photography skills.

A number of new Scots youth activities are being delivered in North Ayrshire by CLD new Scots team these include Swans, girls D of E, film club, judo club with Lorretta Doyle Judo Foundation, summer arts club, summer sports club with Active Schools and Nova Scotia boys group. |
|---|---|---|
| **Health and Wellbeing** | We will continue to development our LGBT specific work across localities and to gain the LGBT Charter Mark.

We will develop and deliver issue-based resources, projects, and programmes on health, including alcohol and drugs, health and wellbeing, suicide prevention and promote positive wellbeing tools and resources. | The service has been successful in achieved their LGBT Silver Charter award by LGBT Youth Scotland by developing a portfolio of evidence. The work around this supports our LGBT Young people across North Ayrshire. Young people who attend the group, want to be proactive in their local community, to ensure that all young people are all equal - not only those who are protected by the characteristics but allies of these young people too. Following on from the equality's forum, the young people were invited over to Arran Pride to walk in the parade and hold a stall to support the event.

The Equality Project is led by the young people's needs and wants, in a hope to speak truth to power and empower our young people to make positive change within their communities in a safe and nurturing environment. The group has around 20 members and concentrating on LGBTQI+. During this 6-month period the Equalities Forum brought along 20 young people from across our six localities to have the opportunity to join together with other LGBTQ+ people across North Ayrshire at a residential. |

		The Take Time Families programme offers support to families targeting parent/carers and young people to achieve a joined understanding of resilience and emotions in the home. This programme has found success and has a group of core members keen to keep this group consistently running, the group came together for summer trip to a Farm Park. Before the summer break parents and children have been giving feedback on the journey with the group so far.
		The Mini Ambassador programme surrounding mental health and wellbeing for North Ayrshire Bee You mental health ambassadors is delivered to primary 6/7 school aged young people and becoming mini bee you ambassadors for their primary school. This programme has been so far successfully delivered to multiple schools across North Ayrshire. The programme allows the ambassadors who are all aged between 16 and 21 the chance to share valuable information with young people aged around 10-12. The programme is designed to support all of the young people involved and their resilience. The Ambassadors all have completed Mental Health First Aid and/or the Mental Health UKs Your Resilience programme so in delivering what they have learned only reaffirms the learning that these young people have already had further increasing their resilience and confidence.
		The Drama for Wellbeing programme created a summer a programme that used the power of drama therapy to connect young people, allowing them to express themselves whilst addressing issues surrounding Mental Health and Wellbeing. 30 young people came together to create scripts and express themselves through drama approaching subjects and themes as Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, Learning and Friendships, creating a space for young people to use drama as an outlet to address issues affecting our young people. Supported by youth work staff, a drama tutor and a singing coach, this space was about inclusiveness, trying new things and creating lasting messages with our young people.
		Take Time on the Road was designed as a pop-up open day style, tying in with different partners and inviting along agencies that have a focus on mental health and wellbeing. Targeting families across areas of North Ayrshire, hosting 10 events across all 6 localities. The roadshow was well received by the communities of North Ayrshire brining in over 2000 people to engage in various activities that took place during the summer months. Over 40 partners came along to support these events and the families living in or visiting North Ayrshire.
		Your Resilience supports young people's mental health resilience. The education programme is focused on building resilience through life's transitions in 14–20-year-olds, equipping them with the tools and resources to manage their mental health now and in the future. The programme is delivered in a range of settings, Individually, community groups, schools, or college groups. This programme included pupils from Kilwinning Academy S6 pupils for 3 full days.

| **Young Peoples' Voice and Rights** | Ensuring young people have structures in place to use their voice through our Youth Participation and Citizenship Strategy. Strengthening the voice of seldom heard young people with focused work with Care Experienced young people, Gypsy Travellers, Young Carers and New Scots. | Joint Youth Forum took place in March bringing together all of our youth forums and youth voice groups engaging on the topics of the Local Development Plan and the Mental Health Toolkit. These 40 young people also had the opportunity to share good practice and take part in some teambuilding activities.

North Ayrshire MSYPs continue to represent the views of their constituents with the support of the youth work team. These 4 young people are engaged in national and local work and are embedded in locality work, work with partners and various other projects. We have started the recruitment for SYP candidates and the upcoming elections allows young people to vote for their preferred candidate, giving MSYPs their democratic mandate to represent the views of North Ayrshires young people locally and nationally.

Youth Participatory Budgeting is currently live and is a way for young people to decide how local funds are spent choosing which projects get a share of the allocated money in each locality. A bi-annual source of community funding given directly from North Ayrshire Council to communities in need of a financial boost to realise their ambitions with a sum of £198,377 overall, this year's fund is split into three different categories, running simultaneously – Youth PB, Locality PB and funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund – a UK Government funding stream helping to boost pride and prosperity across all localities.

Primary 7 youth council brought together 140 young people from all localities attended this interactive day to take part in four workshops ahead of transition into secondary school. These workshops included: developing a Mental Health Toolkit, Health and Wellbeing Curriculum, Transition to Secondary School and Financial Literacies and Life Skills. This also provided an opportunity to consult the Local Development Plan.

We planned and hosted our first even themed Joint Cabinet in June in partnership with HSCP with a focus on the Promise and engaged with our Care Experienced young people. This follows the same format as our generic Joint Cabinet with themes and activities based on the needs, wants and issues faced by these young people. |

Climate Change	North Ayrshire, as a Child Centred Council, is committed to ensuring that young people are involved and engaged at all stages of our Climate Change journey.	The CLD team support the young Climate Change Ambassadors to engage with the wider Council, and create events and activities for young people to take part in.

They follow the North Ayrshire's Youth Participation and Engagement Strategy Climate Change Plan on a Page delivering a variety of training and taking a green approach to their wider activities. |
| | Ensuring a UNCRC Rights based approach is co-produced and co- delivered with our young people | The group are working to create a Climate Change Time Capsule, along with tree planting. The aim is to include items to look back on in 20 years on to see how much change young people have been able to achieve in relation to green initiatives, climate change and sustainability in North Ayrshire. The group have consulted with over 200 young people on what should be included in this with feedback telling us their hopes and aspirations for the future: The young peoples feedback is reported to the North Ayrshire Council Climate Change Steering Group which helps to shape policies and work surrounding the North Ayrshire Climate Change agenda. |
| **Digital connectivity** | We will work with partners to ensure that young people can get access to devices and connections to connect digitally to services and peers. | We have been successful in receiving £70,000 from Education Scotland to pilot the Cyber Explorers Programme in North Ayrshire. This pilot will allow a team within our service to use the Mobile Youth Centre in a community setting to deliver new online learning platform to teach cyber skills to young people. |
| | We will ensure that young people are equipped in

digital literacies. | The new platform is being rolled out as part of the government's ambition for cyber skills set out in the National Cyber Strategy. This will help ensure the UK has a sustainable supply of diverse and high-quality individuals joining the cyber workforce in the future. Equipping young people with the digital awareness and skills they need will enable them to pursue a career path in the sector. |
| | We will provide training and information for young people enabling them to be digitally secure and resilient. | |

| Poverty and Inequality | Through our Cost of the School Day work, we will work on ensuring equity of opportunities and activities across schools and community.

We will continue to provide food with dignity through our activities, events, holiday programmes and weekend and evening provisions. | The Cost of the School Day work continued with the CLD team working on ensuring equity of opportunities and activities across schools and community. Child Poverty is embedded into all youth structures including youth councils and Joint Cabinet meetings.

The Cost of the School Day work has been focussed and two separate groups. Initially to professionals that work with young people across North Ayrshire and secondly to young people from both primary and secondary across North Ayrshire.

Young people lead on discussions around Child Poverty, shaping policy and practice for North Ayrshire Council and partners, they are involved in all initiatives that have came from the data in a co design, production and delivery model. This work shows visible changes to lowering the cost of the school day for young people and their families.

The work that we carry out is in partnership with our education colleagues, the creation of this joint piece of work allows us to plan, alongside our young people, in delivering events, activities, creating feedback loops and disseminating information to our young people and their parents.

Young people are empowered to speak truth to power, support and challenge officials and decision-makers as duty bearers and to ensure young people voice is respected and acted on in relation to Child Poverty and have made significant strides towards our Child Poverty work including:

- Non branded uniforms policy has been implemented across all of our schools
- Policy on no gifts for teachers
- Increase in breakfast clubs and swap shops in schools and communities.
- Family learning providing opportunities for extracurricular across schools
- Increase in homework clubs
- Increased uptake and use of the transport for U22 scheme
- Healthy snacks free of charge in all primaries through PEF funding
- Access to digital materials for all pupils
- Holiday meals provisions – over 11,000 young people accessed this over the summer period 2023. |

		- Joint working across CLD and Education has allowed us to engage more young people and children in activities, opportunities and feedback – the commitment to young peoples active participation around voice and rights is increased across schools. - Youth led PB process and community PB has a key theme of poverty and inequality to support local groups and initiatives in delivering activities and support for young people around child poverty and cost of living. Child poverty will continue to feature across all of our platforms from Locality priorities, our CLD Plan, youth work key priorities and youth participation work. Whilst the Pupil Equity Fund will focus on child poverty and mitigate the effects of this for our children, young people and families. The CLD team provided food with dignity through their activities, events, holiday programmes and weekend and evening activities. This included weekend breakfast clubs

Key Priority	Action Plan	Update
Capacity Building		
Food Insecurities	To continue to develop our food with dignity approach to food poverty/insecurity – working in partnership with communities, to expand food pantries, larders, and community fridges.	**North Ayrshire Fairer Food Network** The Fairer Food Network continues to grow, with 14 locations open and a subsidised food model on the Isle of Arran. Work is establishing for a 15th larder in Largs and a community consultation is underway for food support in Cumbrae. The network provided upwards of 600 appointments per week representing approximately 3000 households across North Ayrshire. At a recent meeting, the network had a taster session with the Community Baker from North Ayrshire Foodbank and got to taste pies, biscuits and scones. Support is provided to Cafe Solace and to their new Food Development Worker to develop food education programmes, which will soon be delivered in the Garnock Valley. The team, work in partnership with KA Leisure and Dalry Community Sports Club to deliver a weekly programme of activities, food and youth diversionary work, with 40 to 80 young people attending every week. The Farm Basket, Side Larder and Choices are supported by CLD, with 751 residents accessing the provision. Working in partnership with BABCA, The Farm Basket, and the Sew Lovely group 'A Guide To Making A Canny Cooker' Film has been made and is available to view on the CPP website alongside a handout. A Canny Cooker training session was delivered by BABCA on February at Towerlands CC which was attended by 4 learners. Emergency food parcels are now available at Redburn Community Centre; 8 parcels have been given out over the last month. This provision has increased since it started a month ago. The centre continues to run a regular Breakfast Club and support with providing Community Lunches (Friends of Redburn/BABCA) with 119 attendees. Three Towns Family Fun Time and Grub Club (Family fun activity and food provision through the winter period) had 146 residents accessing provision. Association Winter Warmer Activities- took place with 179 people attending, activities included a Daffodil Tea, Cinema Clubs and Family Fun Nights. NAC were successful in receiving £16,600 from Magnox which was distributed across the network with the aim of helping people keep warm. This funding is to be spent by August 23. Many of the larders applied to

		the Corra Household Fund and received £5250 to assist household with energy costs. Support has been given to Choices Larder to apply for Little Magic Grants and currently People's Postcode Lottery. The Fairer Food Network has held information stands and participated at various venues including: Stevenston library where several residents from Stevenston south were unaware of their larder; the Warp it Eco Awareness Event in Cunninghame House where staff demonstrated Canny Cookers and had surplus supermarket food available to take away to reduce landfill; the Green Health Day at Eglinton Park; Streetscene Volunteer Awards; Go Green at Kilwinning Library; and the Capacity and Empowerment Team's Engagement Day on 31st May at Ormidale Pavillion on Arran where members of community groups could discuss the wish list and whether it might be able to support their projects. All larders are now purchasing their own stock and analysis of the variance in basket values across the network is being looked at. The third quarterly payment has been made to all larders under the revised funding model. Weekly footfall will be monitored and reported on quarterly, and that figure will dictate the payment for the next quarter. Larders with up to 30 households per week will receive £1000 per quarter. Thereafter, it will be a cost per head calculation of the remaining funding pot. Eco Savvy now offer subsidised ambient food at the Zero Waste Café's. Given that this is the only subsided food model on the island and a larder model that works on the island, they will be included in the next quarter payment run. A Stock leaflet for New Scots (Ukranian and Syrian) is almost complete and will be given to the larders early next month. This was developed in response to feedback from the larders around the time that it was taking for New Scots to complete a shop due to lack of knowledge of the products available. This was becoming an issue if the larder is only open 4 hours per week and trying to serve 80+ household in that time. The work placements with Equal Supported Employment are ongoing, although due to end soon. There will then be a review of the placements and a decision as to whether they will continue this winter. The employability team have provided the network with reusable canvas tote bags to reduce the number of plastics being used. Contact was made with the Oral Health Team within the NHS and toothbrushes and toothpastes were delivered to all larders and guidance on how to reorder when required. The Energy and Sustainability Team were also able to provide each of the larders with a box of 50 led lightbulbs to give out to households to help with energy costs. **Growers and Allotments**

Eglinton Growers. GV Allotments and Eglinton Community Gardens have been very generous with the harvests for the larders. Produce including onions, potatoes, tomatoes, beans, patty pans, cucumbers, lettuce, carrots and herb have all made their way to the larders with assistance from Supported Employment. Work is now underway with Eglinton Park Rangers to produce recipe cards for winter veg such as kale, so larder members are encouraged to make use of the less popular winter veg. Support is provided to the GV Allotments Association to ensure their smooth running and development, as well as support to Dalry Community Sports Club, who are looking to develop a growing space within Dalry. Beith have developed their growing space and have raised beds and area of reflection for the community to make use of and support their larder.

Support provided to Arran Pioneer Project to connect them with the appropriate internal NAC staff and teams to help them site a geodome on the island near the Outdoor Centre. The geodome would provide year-round, stable and secure growing conditions for exotic varieties, creating increased food resilience on the island while supplementing the offer for young people at the Centre.

Sustainable Food Places

Ongoing participation in Sustainable Food Places discussions between North Ayrshire, Ecosavvy and Nourish to identify a route forward for a project in North Ayrshire and the impact of the Good Food Nation Act coming into effect this year.

North Ayrshire Food Forum

The first meeting of the resurrected North Ayrshire Food Forum took place in August. Reps from NHS, TSI, Foodbank, larders, Green Health, FM, Eco Savvy and Arran Pioneer Project were in attendance, and it was agreed that the forum will meet every 6 weeks with a mix of online and in person.

Participation and Democracy	To extend our participatory approaches, offering communities more opportunities to lead in local decision making, including grant making (youth and locality) and mainstreaming PB. To build on the projects funded via the devolved Community Investment Fund	**Participatory Budgeting** The 6 Locality Partnerships established PB steering groups and delivered the 22/23 round of Locality and Arts and Culture PB. The overall budget was £109,777, with 110 local community groups benefitting from locality funding. The Youth PB fund took place in December 22, an incredible 4,131 young people aged 8 to 25 helped make the dreams come true for almost 100 youth projects who had a share of the £56,000 PB windfall. PB was delivered as a hybrid approach this year with votes taking place on the CONSUL site, as well as paper voting taking place in libraries. A small task force was set up and we have gathered learning and feedback that will help reshape the process moving forward into '23/'24. Participatory Budgeting 23/24 is currently live with a sum of £198,377 overall, this year's fund is split into three different categories, running simultaneously – Youth PB and Locality PB applicants can apply for a share of up to £1,000 and a funding commitment from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund – a UK Government funding stream helping to boost pride and prosperity across all localities, has allowed for the opportunity to encourage partnership applications for up to £5,000. The COSLA annual return was completed and NAC exceeded the 1% target. Public decision- making was recorded for £7,012,787 or 2.32% of the Council budget in 2021/22. Two rounds of Council training on mainstream participatory budgeting took place. Discussions took place with a number of depts regarding extending PB approaches, including Active Travel Team and Roads. RHONDA TO CHECK The CLD team worked with the Locality Partnerships and their subgroups to look at Community Investment Fund projects and applications ensuring that appropriate people are round the table and working in line with participation by experience, where possible. Kilwinning & NC staff continue to support various community groups such as - Eglinton Growers, UK Shared Prosperity fund and other external funders. CORRA Foundation received support in completing a CIF bid.

		Community Councils and Community Associations were supported by the service throughout North Ayrshire with decision making in relation to their communities. The CLD team also helped them look for ways to engage with their communities and offer activities that are open and inclusive to all.
		All Community Councils played an active and integral role in the Locality Partnerships and various working groups. In the Garnock Valley work commenced to explore opportunities to lead on the development of Local Place Plans and Regeneration Place Frameworks. The CLD team supported all Community Councils and community representatives with training and solving local problems. **Older People's Voice** Consultations and mapping exercise of current provision for older people has been completed across NC, 3towns, Irvine, and GV (5 consultations) and findings have been broken down and summarised. Work is progressing in relation to older people's voices being heard through a participation and engagement structure by holding an older peoples conference on November 22nd at Saltcoats Town Hall where older people will have the opportunity to feedback on platform presented. The conference will build on the Older people's participation strategy. The conference will also provide education around scams, intergenerational work, older peoples stories of trying to get their voices heard, KA Leisure input regarding health and well-being, lunch and a raffle.
Community Asset Transfer	To support community organisations and groups seeking to secure local management/control of community assets, through lease, ownership, or management.	Four organisations received Cabinet Approval for CAT's – TASS Community Sports, Pirnmill Village Hall, Ardrossan Community Development Trust and Irvine Tennis Club. A temporary post was created, to be based with The Ayrshire Community Trust, to strengthen community capacity to take on assets. This post has recently been extended to March '24 and the postholder continues to work closely with CLD Staff on key priority areas and provide valuable support as a single point of contact with community groups.

		In addition, 20 other groups are currently being supported by the CLD team, at different stages of the CAT process. This includes supporting Douglas Park Nursery and the Douglas Park tennis courts who have received advice regarding their asset transfer process, Dalry Community Sports Club, who have decided to merge 2 applications together towards securing ownership of both Pavilions and old tennis courts. The Simson/Craufurd Avenue Swing Park in West Kilbride are at the early stages of CAT process and liaise with community groups, housing, Streetscene, legal and elected members on this project.
		The Community Asset Transfer paperwork has all been reviewed and updated and has been uploaded onto the CAT webpage in an accessible format.
Community Leadership	To support volunteers, individuals, and community groups, to develop the required skills and knowledge to achieve their ambitions, through opportunities co- produced and offered thorough our 'Leadership Collective'	The Leadership Collective, which represents partners from the Third Sector Interface, Green Health Partnership, NHS and HSCP meet regularly to coordinate the development and promotion of a wide range of training opportunities across North Ayrshire. Training delivered has included Committee Skills, REHIS, Interview Skills, Defib, cooking on a budget, Canny cooker training, Barista training, naloxone training, joint funding workshops and walk leader training.
		The Kilbirnie Cafe Solace Food Development Worker has been supported to develop and deliver food education programmes, ensuring local families feel confident preparing nutritious meals from scratch on a budget.
		ASN Parents group, created and supported by CLD staff looking to become constituted to bring in funds for transport to and from group.
		Staff from the service facilitated naloxone training to 20 individuals to make them better equipped in supporting any potential drug misuse.
		The Community Association handbook has now been refreshed and updated and will be delivered through NAFCO. A Good Governance training toolkit has also been created and this will be a tool for CLD staff to identify support and training needs with the associations and organisations they work with.

		A wide range of training opportunities for staff and CLD partners has taken place including Cyber First Aid, Child Protection, risk assessment, numeracy resource development, STEM for youth work, literacy for ESOL learners, fast forward gambling education and prevention, PB awareness, Good Governance toolkit training, Community benefits, Smoking, Vaping, Mental Health and Wellbeing – Training for Youth Workers and safe talk.
Participation Requests	To continue to raise awareness and provide support with Participation Requests to complement and improve our local range of participation processes rather than replace them.	One Participation Request was received by the Regeneration team. The guidance and support was updated on the Community Planning Partnership website. The CLD team contributed to Scottish government workshops on the review of the Community Empowerment (Scotland0 Act 2015 in relation to an appeals process for Participation Requests. Jacqui to Check
Community Engagement	To continue to develop and enhance opportunities for community engagement/involvement, through the development	The Community Engagement Resources toolkit is hosted on North Ayrshire Community Planning Website engagement hub page Engagement Hub – North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership and continues to be a resource updated and promoted by CLD

Work continued on the Engagement Toolkit, Engagement Champions, Youth and Community Participation and Citizenship Strategies, and Older Peoples Voice through the Community Engagement Network and CLD team.   Work has also started on a participation strategy.

 Rhonda Statement on Participation Strategy

There are currently 4 elderly engagement hubs operational with over 29 programmes running and receive regular input from partners within trading standards; fire service, arts and culture and local 3rd sector. The hubs have been supported to establish entertainment committees and 4 out of 5 hubs are being supported in various stages to become constituted groups and apply for funding to tackle social isolation and loneliness |

		Opportunities for community engagement/involvement across NA included:
		- A joint Library series focussing on green interventions along with CLD staff was held at Kilwinning Library in June. Attendance was up on the last event and participants enjoyed the breadth of stallholders and activities offered on the day. Representation from North Ayrshire Fairer Food Network, Eglinton Community Gardens (including Equal), Random Acts of Kindness and Creative Recycling who ran 2 fully booked upcycling sewing workshops. 3 winter warmer events held in Beith, Kilbirnie and Dalry saw over 200 children, young people and adults access free food and activities during a difficult January month. This also provided an opportunity to access the uniform preloved centre and several support services. - Dalry Mens Shed were supported to engage at a local coronation event. - The John Muir Award was promoted at a Green Health Fun Day, held at Eglinton Park. - An open day to launch the Discovery Award has led to 20 adults over the age of 50 sign up and are currently progressing towards their Bronze Award. - Chit Chat events were held within various neighbourhoods. 96 people contributed to these events. 30 people took part in a public engagement event run by KA Leisure, assisted by the CLD team. - Engagement took place at locality community events over summer 2022 including Kilbirnie Ambulance Open Day, Youth Fest and Garnock Valley Carves. - Take Time on the Road summer roadshow was designed as a pop-up open day style, tying in with different partners and inviting along agencies that have a focus on mental health and wellbeing. Targeting families across areas of North Ayrshire, hosting 10 events across all 6 localities. The roadshow was well received by the communities of North Ayrshire bringing in over 2000 people to engage in various activities that took place during the summer months. Over 40 partners came along to support these events and the families living in or visiting North Ayrshire Examples of community consultation included: - Consultation and mapping exercise was carried out across North Ayrshire to create an engagement and participation structure for older people. Our first older people's conference will take place

		later in the year and will build on and hear from the older people on how they want to move forward and vote on an older people's participation strategy.
		• SPLASH Group Consultation event: 125 Community members consulted
		• Ripple Effect / Seasalt Streets Online Consultation: 116 online responses (still live) (39 people want to get involved)
		• Consultations supported across Irvine included Montgomery Park, Ayrshire Central, Great Harbourside, Bourtreehill Park, Our Space, Children's Service Plan, Budget Engagement
		• The Bourtreehill Park Green Health Activities Action Plan 2022 in which support was provided to The Conservation Volunteers in undertaking a community consultation on Bourtreehill Park regarding the use and various green health activities taking place. The consultation was completed on Friday 5th March, with 44 online responses received.
		• The Irvine Harbourside consultation recorded 50 people at the Beach Park and in Eglinton Park around proposed development of the harbourside at Irvine.
Networking and Funding	To provide capacity building support to key community anchor organisations. We will support communities to achieve what is important to them through strong local networks. Support groups to generate sustainable income, through successful grant funding applications.	**Funding** The CLD team's Funding Officer continued to support funding enquiries from community groups and support the distribution of Elderly Grants and local funds as well as the PB process. External funding levered in from Third Sector organisations was £1,907,537 Local grants of up to £35,361 were disbursed to local community groups. Several groups were supported to access external funds including GV Allotments Association, Kilbirnie Scouts, Cafe Solace, Beith Community Association. The Garnock Valley Food Network enables 7 local

| | | community organisations to come together and share good practice and resources. The Garnock Valley Mens Shed and Dalry Mens Shed will be supported to attend the Ayrshire Sheds Network on Friday 9th June. 3 community associations AGMs were able to be completed.

The Ayrshire Community Trust were funded to support at £20 000 mentoring programme to build capacity.

Hayocks Community Association MHWB Project staff funding (£28,000)

Whitlees Community Association MHWB Project staff funding (£28,000)

Kilwinning and Largs Christmas lights events have both been supported by CLD staff. West Kilbride Yuletide. West Kilbride Community Assoc. North Coast Youth Forum recieved funding from PB. Kilwinning Larders, Kilwinning Community Council, Choose Kilwinning

Springside received the Lottery Awards for All award of £3000

The Irvine Youth Forum received £9,400 from Awards from All & Leaders Unlocked

5 youth groups and a local community group received Community PB funding.

3 community groups received the Art & Culture award

Cunningham MS Support group offers support and fellowship to people who suffer from disabilities their families, friends, carers, and support workers. The group is also open to Vennel Gardens residents. The group saw a recent drop in numbers. The group was originally set up for people who suffer from Multiple Sclerosis (MS), but this has been extended to all types of disabilities. Lunch is also provided.

Staff have supported the group with an application to the Scottish Government Social Isolation & Equalities Fund. Assistance was given with the development of a child protection and vulnerable adult policy, equality and inclusion policy and providing an avenue for the group to have their financial accounts completed to be eligible for the grant. |

		£10,500 was awarded by the Scottish Government for three years full sustainability for the group. This has dramatically boosted the group to now hire catering and drop their prices for attendance with the aim to reach more people in need.
		Networking
		Locality Network Events continue to be supported across North Ayrshire.
		Generations Working Together NA wide network meeting brought together colleagues and partners from NHS, East Ayrshire Council South Ayrshire Council and Generations Working Together. It was an effective meeting for updates regarding all that is going on in terms of intergeneration work with the opportunity for staff to network an arrange follow ups for potential partnership work.
		Community Benefits
		28 wishes delivered this year out of 61 in total – almost half of all wishes have been delivered this year!
		Summer issue of the Community Benefits Newsletter launched in July and circulated to almost 400 contractors. As a result, 3 wishes were matched (Creative Recycling, Fairlie Growers and Hessilhead), of which 2 have been delivered so far.
		The July newsletter was shared on the Sharp UK LinkedIn page, which has over 9,000 followers.
		The Community Benefits Wish List now has a search function and the ability to filter the submissions by locality based on feedback from contractors and community groups.

Key Priority	Action Plan	Update
Adult Learning		
Core Skills	To work with our partners and organisations in localities to ensure Adult Literacy, Numeracy and Core Skills support given is learner centred, using a collaborative approach to develop staff, volunteers, and programmes to best support learners.	As part of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) North Ayrshire Council have secured funding to deliver the Multiply Project. This project aims to boosts people's ability to use maths in their daily life, at home and work targeting learners who are 19+ that have not previously attained a level 2 SCQF, level 5 or higher maths qualification. North Ayrshire Councils multiply project delivery plan was developed in collaboration with CHAP to develop and deliver innovative numeracy based first steps and next step support and programmes that encompasses numbers and how we use them, fun with numbers, help with homework, cost of living, understanding financial terminology used in your everyday lives, money life skills and financial capabilities/literacies. The Multiply project officially launched to tie in with National Numeracy Day on May 17th. Locality and thematic teams work with services/partners/organisations to provide literacy, numeracy and core skills support including The Wellbeing Hub in Irvine, parental engagement projects with secondary schools, Lighthouse outreach project, Trindle Moss day centre, HMP Kilmarnock information and support family day and SDS employability event on Arran. Locality and thematic teams delivery literacy, numeracy and core skills support including 1 to 1 sessions, literacy and numeracy groups, Barista project, café solace sessions, food larder volunteer training, allotment and growers groups and New Scots community hub provision.

New Scots	To support our New Scots to become active members of our community, building social relationships. Be an active partner to improve participation and deliver ESOL activities and learning.	The numbers of New Scots being supported in North Ayrshire through the Ukrainian crisis has levelled off and North Ayrshire are now completing their commitment made to the Syrian and Afghan resettlement programmes. We have had a further 6 families, 3 Syrian and 3 Afghan, arrived to settle in North Ayrshire between June to August 2023. The weekly community hub, in collaboration with the Spike Wheat Scots community group, continues to grow and we are now working with partners including CHAP, DWP, Social Security Scotland and NHS to provide support for Arabic speaking new Scots. A community hub for Ukrainian guest has also been developed, in collaboration with the newly formed Ukrainian Community in North Ayrshire community group, working with partners including DWP, Social Security Scotland and NHS to provide support for Ukrainian guests. Spike Wheat Scots have been supported to key hold at Whitehurst Park Community Centre on a Wednesday where they run activities for Arabic speaking new Scots living in North Ayrshire. Activities that are ran from here on a Wednesday include men's breakfast, woman's breakfast, Arabic speaking lessons for children and the Outside the box project that is working with our Arabic speaking women around resettlement health and wellbeing. Cranberry Moss Community Centre is the building being used for the Ukrainian community hub including donations and resources could be stored and distributed from. There are also several presentation evenings where groups, organisations and services provide information for Ukrainian guests. Services that have presented include Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue and Scottish Refugee Council. CLD community development tutors currently provide 25 ESOL support activities a week including literacy/beginners, ESOL for employment, ESOL Food Safety and Hygiene, ESOL for college transition, 1 to 1 language support delivered by staff and volunteers and employability project with CEIS working with employers and providing support for ESOL. We have support higher level learners to access college and online learning by providing language level assessments and support with application/interviews. This effort resulted in 30 successful sign-ups and we also received feedback

from residential care homes, indicating that two young men have been offered full-time placements as a direct result of these assessments.

Speaking Club runs from St Mary's Hall, Saltcoats, on Sundays from 2pm-4pm where new Scots, young and older, meet with ESOL staff, volunteers and parishioners always finding a warm welcome as well as tea and biscuits courtesy of St Mary's.

Language Café runs from The Temple of Art café, Irvine, on Wednesdays 3:30pm - 5:30pm where new Scots, meet with EOSOL staff and volunteers. This is a great opportunity for new Scots to practise and improve English in a relaxed atmosphere. It's a great way to meet people, make new friends and get a cup of coffee.

Resettlement groups and opportunities supported by CLD include gardening groups, discovery award Ukraine, locality based women groups, sewing groups, print making group, film making group and adult volleyball.

Community Based Adult Learning (CBAL)	To continue to provide opportunities, in partnership with learners, to participate in community-based adult learning including activities that promote health and wellbeing and tackle isolation.	6,314 adults have engaged in CLD activity with locality and thematic teams. Activities delivered and supported includes Men's Shed, adult literacy/numeracy support, digital/computer literacy support, LGBTQ+ Support recovery/addiction groups, café solace, environmental groups, allotments and growers groups, mental health and wellbeing groups, fairer food groups, New Scots community hubs, community-based organisation boards/committees, participatory budgeting, ESOL delivery, Community Councils, community associations, Outdoor first aid, D of E training courses, groups to support the voice of older people, 50+ discovery award and Gaelic.
		We have several Discovery Award (over 50s Accredited personal development award) groups running with adult learners engaged and working towards bronze level.
		CLD have been developing recovery CBAL opportunities and we have a number of groups running including recovery activity drop in, recovery hu, lived experience panel and issue based learner led recovery focus group, recovery allotment group, recovery walk and talk group and a recovery cycling group.

		CBAL weekly Gaelic classes have continued for adult learners with a mixture of both face to face and online sessions from beginners to advance conversational level. Additional Saturday morning Gaelic sessions have continued across various levels on a once per term basis. CLD also provide fiddle and clarsach classes as part of the Gaelic CBAL provision.
		The delivery of The John Muir Award sees adult learners participate in outdoor learning, learning skills in nature conservation, as well as improving their health and wellbeing and reducing isolation. With participants working on bronze and silver with 1 learner having completed their award.
Skills for Work	To work with partners and organisations to deliver employability support. Provide opportunities to learn for work to achieve stronger employability outcomes for learners	Employability hubs, job clubs and employability groups were delivered through the CLD team in North Ayrshire. Including Café Solace Kitchen Skills for work. New Scots employability support with CEIS on a project working with employers and providing support for ESOL, Digital First Aid (ICT drop in, device and application assistance), Barista training and industry standard Barista qualification, Velotech Silver Award, an industry qualification in bike maintenance and literacy and numeracy support with referrals from CEIS- Employability Pipeline. The Multiply Project officially launched to tie in with National Numeracy Day on May 17th. They have attended events hosted by CHAP, TACT, The Lennox Partnership, Ardrossan Parent Hub and the Saltcoats Job Fair to maintain visibility across the authority and allow us the chance to meet with partners and potential learners. EQUAL Supported Employment have requested input from Multiply and our National Numeracy Day activity led to 5010 unique impressions across social media.

Digital Learning	To provide digital learning and digital literacy support to help communities to develop digital skills and confidence.	CLD digital learning that has been delivered and support in the community include digital literacies drop in, Introduction to Computing Skills, an Introduction to videomaking skills, improve your digital skills for employment, Digital First Aid (ICT drop in, device and application assistance) and digital skills for living.
	Encouraging and supporting people to get online and enjoy the opportunities offered by digital technology	We have supported new Scots learners to set-up a LingQ account, an online learning platform and continue to create Literacy videos for ESOL NAC YouTube channel making sure content covers learner centred topics based on learner feedback. The new Scots team has been nominated to feature in NATECLAS ESOL champions for their work on LingQ.
Training	Work with partners to train staff, volunteers, and community groups to deliver community- based adult learning opportunities	In the last quarter 6,314 adults have engaged in Community Based Adult Learning (CBAL) activity with locality and thematic teams.

The Leadership Collective, which represents partners from the Third Sector Interface, Green Health Partnership, NHS and HSCP met regularly to coordinate the development and promotion of a wide range of training opportunities across North Ayrshire. Training delivered has included Committee Skills, Rehis, Interview Skills, Defib, cook on a budget, Barista training, naloxone training, joint funding workshops and walk leader training.

A wide range of training opportunities for staff and CLD partners has taken place including Cyber First Aid, Child Protection, risk assessment, numeracy resource development, STEM for youth work, literacy for ESOL learners, fast forward gambling education and prevention, PB awareness, Good Governance toolkit training, Community benefits, Smoking, Vaping, Mental Health and Wellbeing – Training for Youth Workers and safe talk. |

North Ayrshire Council's Strategic Community Learning & Development Plan

September 2021-2024

North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

Index

Foreword

I am delighted to present the North Ayrshire Council Strategic Community Learning and Development (CLD) Plan 2021-2024, which builds on the refreshed 2018-2021 plan.

The previous Plan made commitments to ensure that learners and participants' voices were central to the CLD planning process. This commitment has been realised in this plan and is evident in the approach to its development. Built upon the principles of co-production we, as a Council, have emphasised the Customer to Citizen journey and our Child Centred Council culture.

CLD services and approaches have never been so evident across council services and partnerships. The CLD approach led the way in terms of our response to the COVID-19 pandemic, with the establishment of community and locality hubs supporting local people in response to their communities' needs. In a North Ayrshire Council context, the CLD service sits within the Communities and Education Directorate, Connected Communities. The planning and delivery of CLD approaches and provision is jointly planned with Information and Culture Teams, which incorporates Active Schools and Outdoor Education.

Recruiting and supporting volunteers, ensuring communities had access to essentials such as food and medicine and access to specialist services, the CLD team in North Ayrshire quickly adapted to delivering services through a digital platform and led the way in terms of creating Virtual Community Centres.

The learning from the CLD response has informed this plan and our services as we move forward.

I would like to personally thank all the learners, including young people and the partners, for their support and influence in shaping this Strategic Plan and for your commitment to ensuring communities have access to CLD services that they need, supporting us to be able to identify the gaps.

As we move forward, we know that targeting resources where they are most needed is an important part of equitable planning, and here in North Ayrshire, we know that this vital planning is based on the lived experience of our communities.

Councillor Joe Cullinane
Leader of North Ayrshire Council

Craig Hatton
Chief Executive of North Ayrshire Council

1

Introduction

In June 2012, the Scottish Government issued Strategic Guidance for Community Planning Partnerships (CPP) on the provision of CLD services. This guidance was followed by the CLD Regulations (Scotland) in 2013, which placed a legislative duty upon Local Authorities to put in place a 3-year Strategic CLD plan.

The Government introduced further legislation in 2015 in the form of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act, designed to give greater powers to local communities and by December 2016, new guidance was published as part of the Act which placed CPPs on a statutory footing and imposed a duty on them for the delivery of a local outcomes improvement plan (LOIP), with the involvement of community bodies at all stages of community planning. The CLD service in a North Ayrshire Council context, sits within the Communities and Education Directorate, Connected Communities. The planning and delivery of CLD approaches and provision is jointly planned with Information and Culture Teams, which incorporates Active Schools and Outdoor Education

This plan will build on the previously refreshed plan of 2018-2021. It is informed by the learning from the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of response and needs. It has been developed in line with the Education Scotland guidance and the continued engagement and professional guidance from Community Learning Development Managers Scotland (CLDMS). Throughout the plan we have identified the key themes and have made commitments to the communities of North Ayrshire. Commitments that will be realised throughout the life of the plan with recognition that the levels of delivery will differ from year 1 to years 2 and 3.
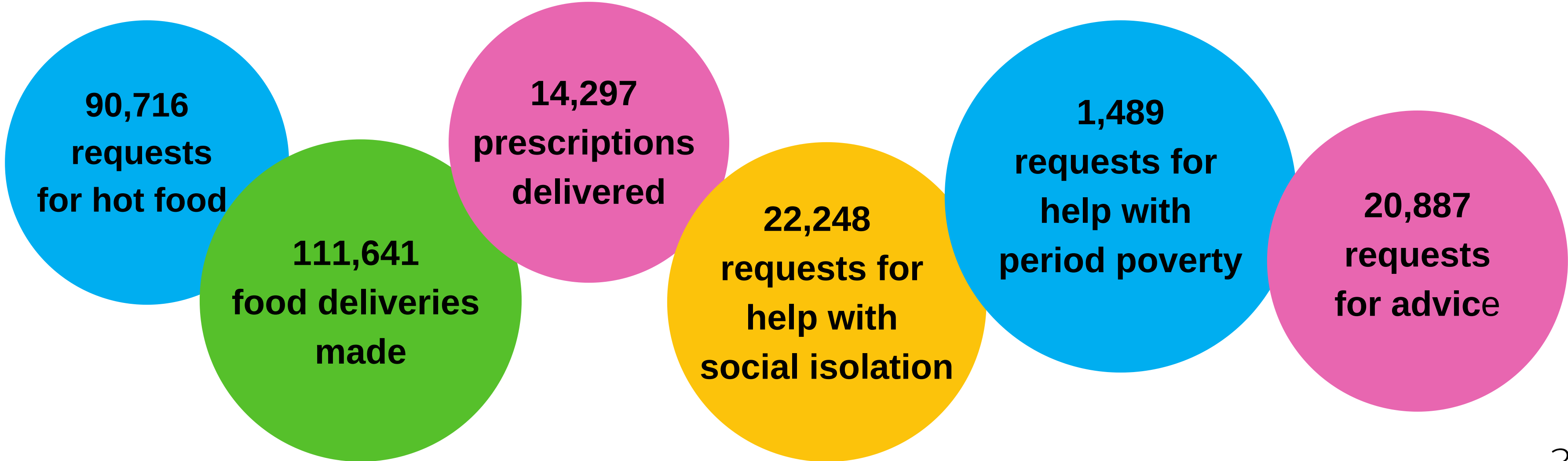
We make the commitment that communities of North Ayrshire, communities of Place and communities of Interest, will have access to the CLD support they need. We have identified through consultation and engagement with our communities, where needs have not been met and they have been included in the Action Plan, with a clear focus of action to close the gap between needs and delivery. All provision aims to be free at the point of access for all Learners.

This plan has been developed through a co-production approach, which is evident and detailed in our process section. The voice, experience and aspiration of communities, partners and staff is the scaffold on which this plan has been built. Throughout the plan we will use the terms Learners and Communities. These terms are all encompassing and reflect all of our citizens of North Ayrshire.
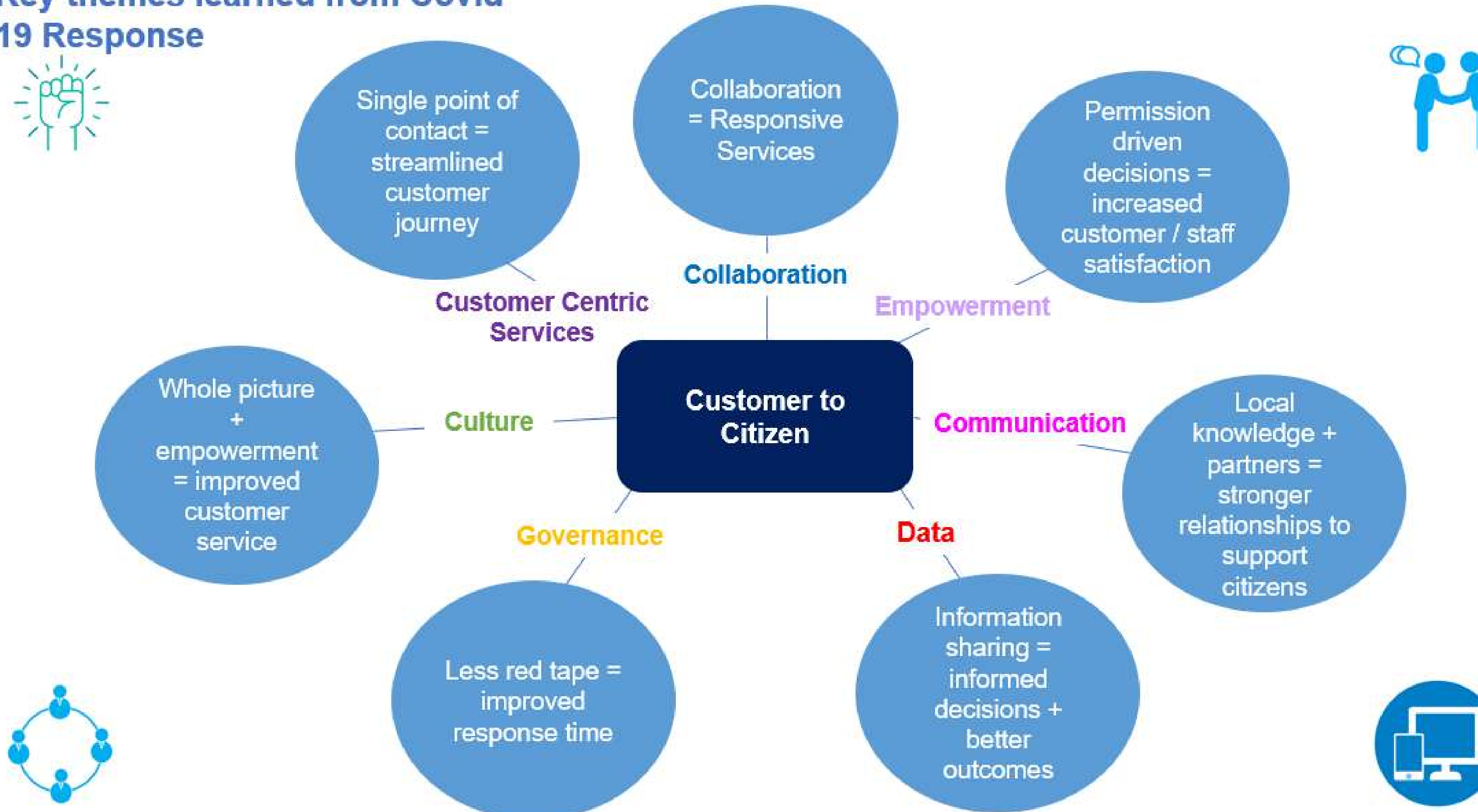
Audrey Sutton
Executive Director
Communities and Education Directorate
North Ayrshire Council

2

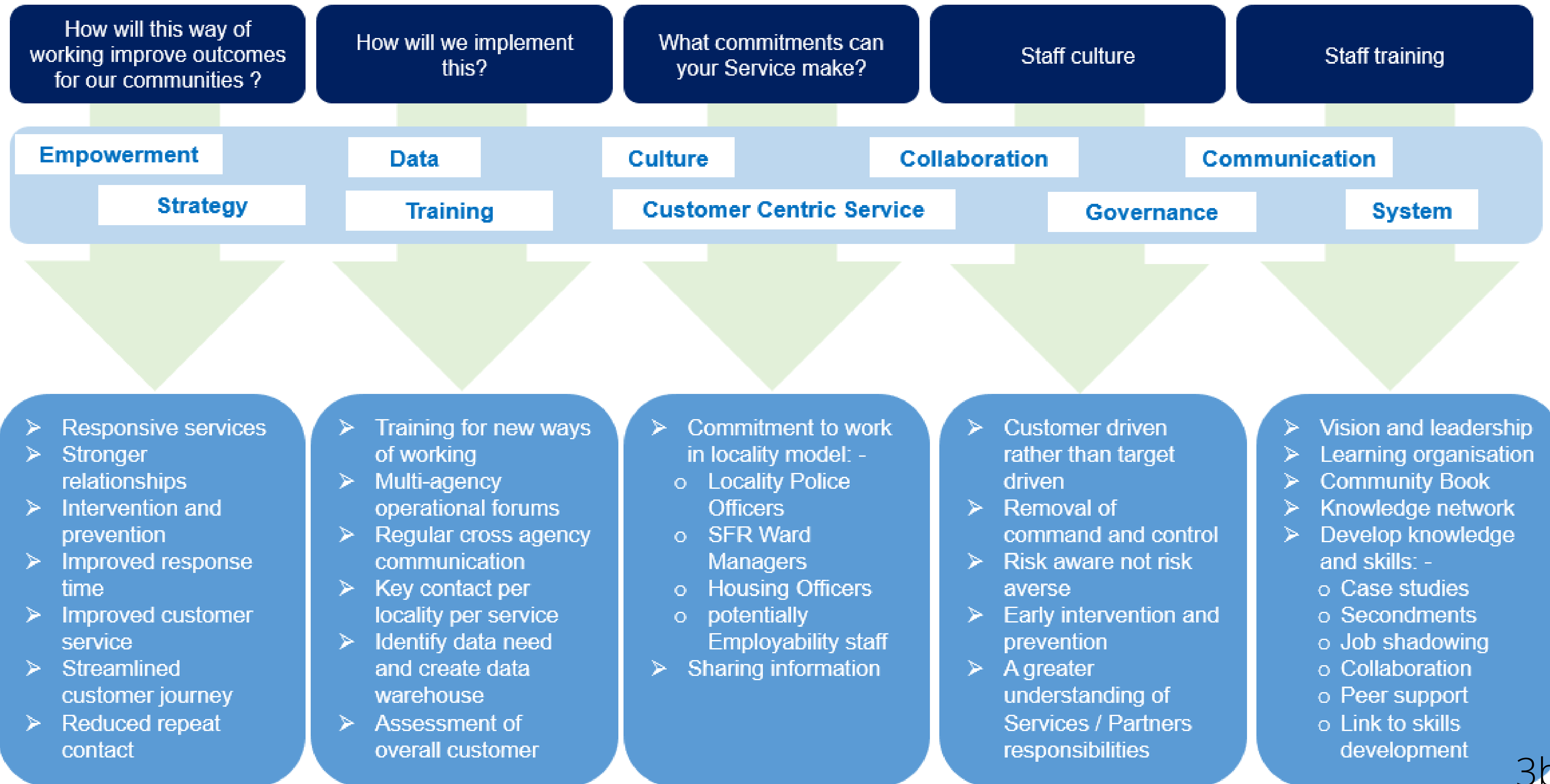# Impact of COVID-19 on CLD in the Communities of North Ayrshire

In March 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic changed the way that CLD services were delivered and how the vital support to our communities had to change overnight. CLD staff and services were no longer responding to learning and development needs. Instead, the staff and partners were the agents of essential support in term of access to food and vital services. The CLD approach of whole systems thinking informed and drove the Community Hub resilience model across all localities. The leadership qualities of the CLD workforce, with their levels of community understanding and networks ensured within one week of lockdown hubs were established, providing vital emergency support. Below is a representation of the support from the hubs to the communities of North Ayrshire.

90,716 requests for hot food

111,641 food deliveries made

14,297 prescriptions delivered

22,248 requests for help with social isolation

1,489 requests for help with period poverty

20,887 requests for advice

3

Key themes learned from Covid 19 Response

Customer to Citizen (central node)

Customer Centric Services
- Single point of contact = streamlined customer journey

Collaboration
- Collaboration = Responsive Services

Empowerment
- Permission driven decisions = increased customer / staff satisfaction

Culture
- Whole picture + empowerment = improved customer service

Communication
- Local knowledge + partners = stronger relationships to support citizens

Governance
- Less red tape = improved response time

Data
- Information sharing = informed decisions + better outcomes

54

3a

Summary of way forward informed by Covid 19 Learning

How will this way of working improve outcomes for our communities ?	How will we implement this?	What commitments can your Service make?	Staff culture	Staff training

Empowerment **Data** **Culture** **Collaboration** **Communication**

Strategy **Training** **Customer Centric Service** **Governance** **System**

➤ Responsive services
➤ Stronger relationships
➤ Intervention and prevention
➤ Improved response time
➤ Improved customer service
➤ Streamlined customer journey
➤ Reduced repeat contact
	➤ Training for new ways of working
	➤ Multi-agency operational forums
	➤ Regular cross agency communication
	➤ Key contact per locality per service
	➤ Identify data need and create data warehouse
	➤ Assessment of overall customer
		➤ Commitment to work in locality model: -
		  o Locality Police Officers
		  o SFR Ward Managers
		  o Housing Officers
		  o potentially Employability staff
		➤ Sharing information
			➤ Customer driven rather than target driven
			➤ Removal of command and control
			➤ Risk aware not risk averse
			➤ Early intervention and prevention
			➤ A greater understanding of Services / Partners responsibilities
				➤ Vision and leadership
				➤ Learning organisation
				➤ Community Book
				➤ Knowledge network
				➤ Develop knowledge and skills: -
				  o Case studies
				  o Secondments
				  o Job shadowing
				  o Collaboration
				  o Peer support
				  o Link to skills development

3b

Creating the Plan

In February 2021, in all six Locality Planning Partnerships, the requirements for a CLD Strategic Plan were presented and the draft proposal of creating the Plan were shared, including the draft stakeholder mapping. The feedback from the presentations, informed and formalised the process for developing the Plan. The following agreements and actionswere produced as a result of this:

- Workshops for all partners to be developed in partnership with Education Scotland.
- Creation of stakeholders reference group to create engagement plans for learners.
- Consultation and focus groups identified.
- Advisory and writing group to be established.
- Creation of public consultation to be created utilising Consul and hosted on the Community Planning Partnership site.

- Development of an animation to support consultation.
- Engagement with Public Health colleagues to support a Health Equality Impact Assessment.
- Workforce survey.
- Identify case studies and impact assessments.
- Use of plain English.
- Equality Impact Assessment.
- Summary of Plan.

On the 28th of April 2021, a joint workshop with Education Scotland was hosted for partners, colleagues, volunteers and staff. This resulted in jointly agreeing the priorities, themes and commitment which informed this Plan.

Involving our learners and the community of North Ayrshire was a key focus of the development of the plan. Along with our stakeholders' reference group, we developed the questions and workshop plan for this involvement. An agreement was made for both a targeted and universal approach to this, which included a workshop and engagement with targeted participants who were engaged in Youth Work, Adult Learning and Community Capacity across the six localities of North Ayrshire. This included the Adult Learners Voice and the Youth Participation Engagement Structure. In terms of universal consultation, we utilised the Consul platform as a digital engagement tool. The results of both the targeted and universal consultation enabled the identification of gaps and feedback on the priorities which ultimately informed the plan.

The North Ayrshire CLD Plan

The North Ayrshire Planning Model

Our staff and partners are committed to the highest standards of consultation and community engagement as developed by the Consultation Institute and in accordance with the National Standards developed by the Scottish Government. The following planning model was developed, which meets our promise of a high level of community and partner engagement through:

Co-Defining the Plan: Identification of assets, issues and opportunities e.g. using the family resilience profiles, other partner data and community assets.

Co-Delivering the plan: Agree the actions to be contained within the plan with learners/communities and other stake holders, implement the plan and review the impact of the plan.

Co-Designing the plan: Considering and preparing the response in relation to the findings with learners/communities and other partners.

4a

Community Engagement

CLD staff and partners are committed to ensuring a high quality of community engagement, with ever increasing demand for services to be delivered and developed in partnership and informed by the community. A range of partners and learners came together to provide a suite of resources to support the quality of the engagement and the Community Engagement Toolkit/ Hub was created.

The North Ayrshire Community Engagement Toolkit/ Hub aims to support and promote effective community engagement practice carried out across North Ayrshire by the Community Planning Partnership (CPP), the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), and their respective Locality Partnerships and Locality Forums.

In North Ayrshire, the approach that has been developed is the "co-define, co-deliver and co-design" model. This has been established in partnership with the Consultation Institute and in line with the National Standards for Community Engagement.

The Community Engagement Network (CEN) is hosted by North Ayrshire CPP and meets quarterly. It is the community engagement reference group for this toolkit/ hub, support and development forum for the Engagement Champions and a networking opportunity for all partners involved in community engagement.

Engagement Champions are representatives from all partners/departments/organisations. They must embrace and reflect the National Standards for Community Engagement and be an active participant within the Community Engagement Network meetings/developments.

4b

Policy Context

The North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership Vision is that "**Every person in North Ayrshire is valued and should have the best opportunities to live their life to their full potential".**

To achieve this we need to make sure that life is "Fair for All" in North Ayrshire and our Fair for All Strategy promotes equity as its primary objective.

Our LOIP explains how public bodies work with communities in North Ayrshire across four priority areas:

A Working North Ayrshire

A Healthier North Ayrshire

A Safer North Ayrshire

A Thriving North Ayrshire - Children and Young People
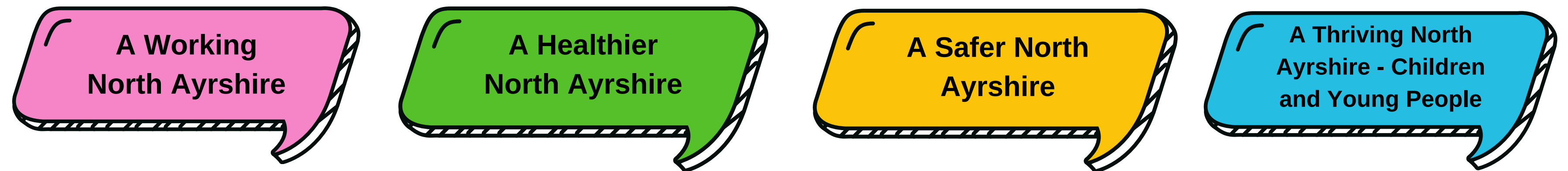
We have two cross cutting themes which influence our approach to these priorities:

Building stronger communities – enabling communities to increase control over their lives, being supported to do things for themselves and having their voices heard in the planning and delivery of services.
Prevention – tackling issues early to stop things from happening in the first place or from getting worse.

This is supported by thematic and partner plans, including the North Ayrshire Council Plan 2019-24.

5

North Ayrshire CPP and LOIP Structure

CPP Structure

Arran Locality Partnership | Garnock Valley Locality Partnership | Irvine Locality Partnership | Kilwinning Locality Partnership | North Coast Locality Partnership | Three Towns Locality Partnership

Safer North Ayrshire Partnership

Health and Social Care Partnership

Economic Development & Registration Board

Childrens Services Strategic Partnership

CPP Board
CPP Senior Officers Group

Community Engagement Network

Community Justice Ayrshire Board

Overarching Themes:

Strengthening local communities

Tackling inequalities

A Working North Ayrshire
To have created the most improved economy in Scotland by 2026.

A Safer North Ayrshire
North Ayrshire is a safer place to live, residence feel safer and Communities are empowered.

A Healthier North Ayrshire
All people who live in North Ayrshire are able to have a safe, healthy and active life.

A Thriving North Ayrshire
We want you to have the best start in life and for North Ayrshire to be the best place in Scotland to grow up.

Fair for All Strategy
North Ayrshire CPP pledges to tackle root causes of Child Poverty and mitigate its impact to create a better life for local people.

5a

This plan draws from and links to a wide range of national and local policies, drivers and plans. They are intrinsically linked and inform the identification of the priorities, our delivery, evaluation and governance. The review of the plan will connect as the programme for government commitments emerge.

Lifelong Learning Framework 2022–27, Adult Learning Strategy 2021–2026 and the Youth Work Strategy 2021-26.

Key Policies and Plans

National

Regional

North Ayrshire

Locality

National
- **Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015**
- **Strategic Guidance for CPPs: Community Learning and Development 2012**
- **Adult Literacies in Scotland 2020**
- **Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013**
- **Welcoming our Learners: Scotland's ESOL Strategy 2015 - 2020**
- **Adult Learning in Scotland The Statement of Ambition for Adult Learning 2014**

Regional
- **Ayrshire Growth Deal**
- **Community Wealth Building**
- **Ayrshire Police Plan**

North Ayrshire
- **Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2017-22**
- **North Ayrshire Council Plan 2019-2024**
- **Fair for All Strategy**
- **North Ayrshire Child Poverty Action Plan**
- **Youth Participation & Citizenship Strategy 2021-24**
- **Children's Services Strategic Plan**
- **Gaelic Language Plan**
- **Connected Communities Operational Plan**
- **Community Wealth Building Strategy**

- **Smarter Ways of Working: A Digital Strategy for North Ayrshire Council**
- **Environmental Sustainability Climate Change Strategy**

Locality
- **Locality Partnership Plans**
- **CLD Team Plans**
- **School Improvement Plans**

5b

Community Wealth Building

North Ayrshire Council is the first Community Wealth Building Council in Scotland. The launch of our Community Wealth Building Strategy in 2020 supports our ambition of a North Ayrshire that is Fair for All by **"enhancing local wealth and the creation of fair jobs, and maximising the potential of all our places through working in partnership with our communities and businesses".**

Community Wealth Building is a people centred approach to local economic development, which redirects wealth back into the local economy, and places control and benefits into the hands of local people.

This includes building the capacity of local businesses to bid and win public sector procurement contracts; paying the Real Living Wage in jobs that have meaningful progression; supporting businesses to diversify their business models (encouraging social enterprise, employee ownership and cooperative development); and making alternative use of land and other assets that can provide greater benefit to local people under new ownership.

Key to the success of this approach is a strong relationship with our communities, who stand to gain the most from a strengthened, local, and inclusive economy that puts the people of North Ayrshire at its centre

Working with our communities to co produce, design and deliver, we will empower them through Locality Planning Partnerships, meaningful stakeholder engagement and consultation, and joint community/council working groups such as the North Ayrshire Fairer Food Network, ensuring that communities remain at the heart of North Ayrshire Council's Community Wealth Building Strategy.

5c

Health and Wellbeing

CLD adopts an asset-based approach across all service delivery and engagement, which is important when we focus on health and wellbeing, with the desired outcome of improved health and greater resilience. Relationships with self and others are at the centre of our communities, health and wellbeing. Recognising and supporting healthy relationships is central to improving our communities; overall physical and mental health and wellbeing.

The CLD strategic plan has an important role in promoting the health and wellbeing of our communities, including children and young people. Placing health and wellbeing in a learning context ensures that we help communities develop the knowledge, understanding and skills that are needed for good mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing. Learning about health and wellbeing enables adults, children and young people to make informed decisions about their health. It also allows them to experience positive aspects of healthy living and activity for themselves, thereby allowing them to apply these skills to pursue a healthy lifestyle and to develop a positive pattern of health and wellbeing. In North Ayrshire, the Health and Social Care Partnership and Public Health are key partners and the work of CLD is intrinsically linked through our CPPs, Community Resilience Hubs and whole systems working within North Ayrshire. There are many examples of joint planning and delivery from strategic through to operational level.

Outdoor Learning is integral in our communities' health and wellbeing. Working with a range of council departments, partner organsations and third sector organisations such as Duke of Edinburgh Award, KA Leisure, community environmental groups, Green Health Partnership, HSCP Community Link Workers and Cafe Solace help promote the benefits of Outdoor Learning.

In North Ayrshire mental health and wellbeing support is embedded within our work with schools and whole communities, supporting wellbeing models in schools, mental health walks and talks, links to employability, staff training and community groups. Support also includes: Your Resilience training, 13 Ways suicide prevention series, IOM Trauma training and online support groups for adults.

6

Inequality and Targeting Resources

Profile and Context of the Communities of North Ayrshire

The latest 2020 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) highlighted continuing levels of deprivation in North Ayrshire. 52 of our 186 data zones now fall within the 15% most deprived in Scotland. 39,139 people live within these deprived areas representing 28.8% of North Ayrshire's population, significantly above the Scottish average. High levels of inequality exist in North Ayrshire, particularly poverty and the associated effects this has. In addition, unemployment levels in North Ayrshire are high, there are significant numbers of people on low income and almost a third of children live in poverty.

It is these high levels of inequality that informed our Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) 2017-2022 and we have increased our focus on child poverty. The CLD service and partners are key contributors to the actions in our Child Poverty action plan and the targets within the plan inform the operational plan of the CLD service and its partners.

Inequalities in outcomes can be seen across all sectors including education, employment, income and health and wellbeing. They are the result of an imbalance in power, money and resources across society, further compounded by the recent economic conditions of recession, austerity and welfare reform.

This sets the context for service delivery and allocation of resources throughout Council and partner services. It is this partner approach to service and delivery, and the culture of co-production that has ensured that the CLD community empowerment agenda has been recognised and featured in national reports and audits: "*The council is committed to community empowerment and is recognised by the Scottish Government and COSLA as a sector leader. The council's approach is focused on embedding community empowerment in everyday business. The council works well with a wide number of communities and groups including young people and tenants*." Best Value Assurance Report: North Ayrshire Council, Accounts Commission 2020

Reducing inequalities and ensuring no one is left behind are integral to achieving our equity focus. CLD provision is targeted to those most in need whilst ensuring communities also have a universal offer of free access to learning opportunities and activities. This is achievable by the partnership approach and through empowering communities and individuals to have their place within the delivery of services. This is realised through the policy and strategy developments that have the principles of equity at the very core of resource allocation. Inequality within and among the communities of North Ayrshire is a persistent cause for concern and remains a focus of strategy developments. The CLD strategic plan brings together the range of partners necessary to address the inequalities and the governance of the plan ensures the voices, needs and aspirations of the communities informs the operational delivery and targeting of resources.

Our People

This page gives you a summary of some key statistics for North Ayrshire. Information at a local level is available in our locality profiles at www.northayrshire.community/your-community

135,280 ESTIMATED POPULATION	**22%** **POPULATION AGED 65+**
76 YRS MALE LIFE EXPECTANCY	**FEMALE LIFE EXPECTANCY** **80 YRS**

UNEMPLOYMENT CLAIMENT COUNT **7.6%**	**42% population in top 20% of SIMD20** (people living in areas within North Ayrshire that are amongst the 20% most deprived in Scotland)
27% PEOPLE WITH A LONG TERM HEALTH CONDITION	**27.9%** CHILDREN IN POVERTY
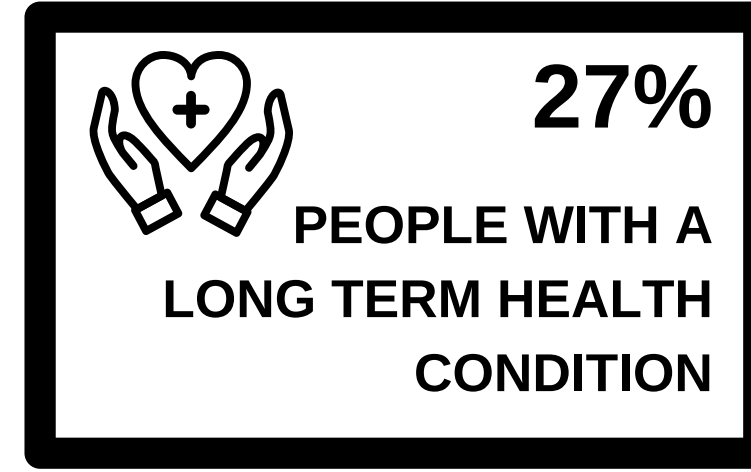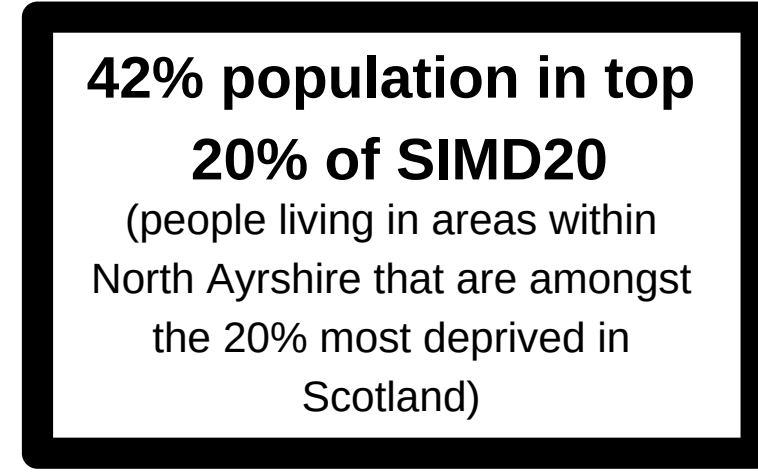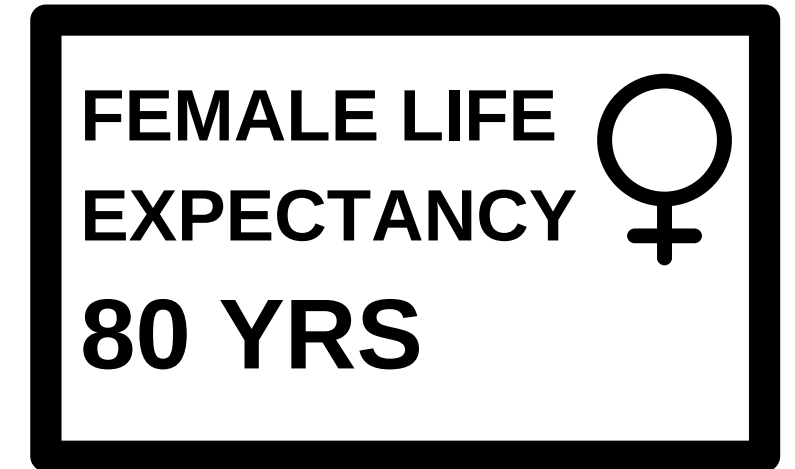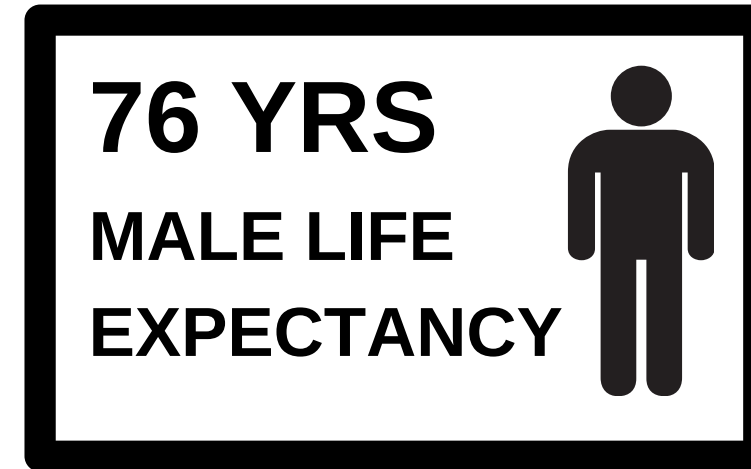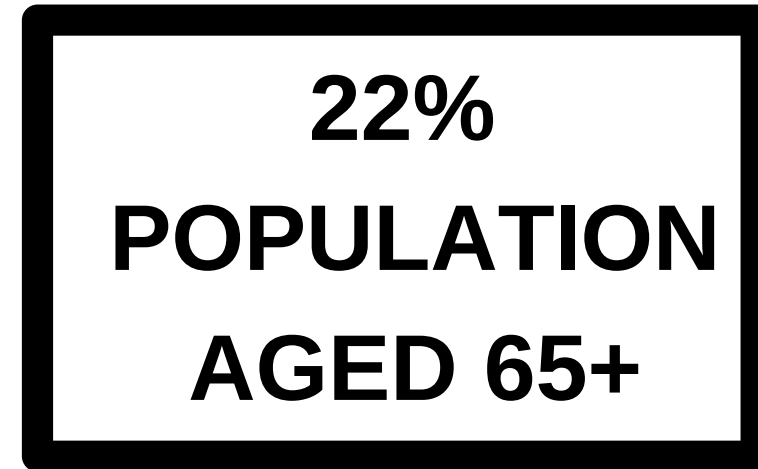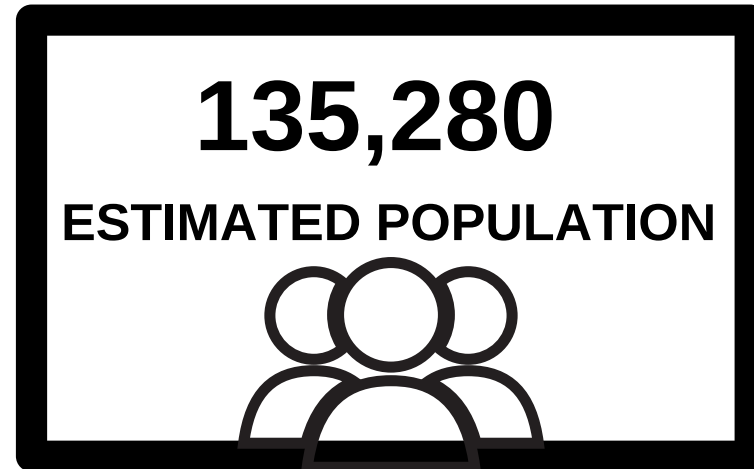
This understanding of the needs and aspirations of our communities has shaped our priorities

- Targeting resources
- Engaging communities and partners in the free universal offer of CLD services
- Learning from Community and Locality Hubs approach to inform service delivery
- Empowering approaches from customer to citizen journey

7a

Digital Participation

Digital Participation learning and support quickly moved on to digital platforms and the North Ayrshire Virtual Community Centre was created and established on Facebook, providing access to vital information and activities addressing social isolation and crucial learning. This digital learning and engagement has become increasingly important as a method of delivering services and support. The pandemic inevitably presented challenges for North Ayrshire's more vulnerable communities and learners. The issue of digital poverty had never been so prevalent and vital to daily life. Digital poverty resulted in people being excluded from learning through lack of devices and connectivity. A lack of digital skills resulted in people being unable to access learning, with confidence and trust being barriers to the digital world.

Working with the Connecting Scotland project, devices and connectivity for learners and families in North Ayrshire were secured. CLD staff and partners found themselves providing devices and delivering Digital Champions support to individuals on their doorsteps, front gardens and by phone to enable them to access services and, over time, as confidence grew, taking part in learning and activities to address social isolation.

There was a growth in participation in some learning, for example ESOL staff and partners developed the ESOL YouTube channel and native language digital volunteers. There was an increase in Gaelic participation and learners. Targeted support was put in place for elderly group members, in terms of devices and learning. The digital youth work programme was developed as were family activities such as the weekly family quiz, which enabled the reach of CLD services to engage with learners that had never been involved previously.

Through the Leadership Collective, we were able to provide learning on the use of devices and how their use could assist in addressing social isolation, provide learning opportunities for community groups on digital engagement and support staff with their digital learning. North Ayrshire Council and Education Scotland plan to pilot a peer learning project that trains volunteers to go out into their community to provide cyber resilience support.

Creating this plan has provided time to reflect on the achievements of digital work and the learning has informed the priorities of the digital learning and engagement targets.

8

We have agreed the following priorities for Digital Participation for the three year plan:

We will continue to work with partners to provide digital learning opportunities, accessible support and learning resources.

Using digital technology, we will collaborate with our partners to co-define, co-design and co-deliver better community digital engagement and participation. Taking cognisance of NAC Digital Strategy

Digital Participation
Key Priorities

We will work with partners to develop Cyber Resilience and Internet Safety (CRIS) skills for our young people and adults enabling them to be digitally secure and resilient.

8a

Workforce Development

North Ayrshire's CLD Workforce is a diverse landscape, as reflected in the Working In Scotland's communities report 2018. The CLD Standards Council Scotland defines Community Learning and Development as "a field of professional practice that enables people to identify their own individual and collective goals, to engage in learning and take action to bring about change for themselves and their communities". By nature, CLD is varied and wide-ranging, including those involved in community development, youth work, community-based adult learning, learning for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, health and wellbeing work for communities, and volunteer development. This definition is an accurate description of the CLD workforce in North Ayrshire and we recognise ourselves in this definition. There is a well-established partnership with a range of services and organisations. A multi-agency approach to workforce development is evident across such areas as:

- Child Protection
- Work of the Alcohol and Drug Partnership
- Funding
- Health and Wellbeing
- ESOL
- Employability

The Workforce Development has been greatly enhanced through the joint approach to training as identified in the South West Collaborative Action Plan and the programmes and opportunities this has provided to staff and partners at all levels. The sharing of resources, ideas and knowledge has produced synergy and developed relationships across the South West. This work features in the operational plan of the CLD Service, with a focus on ensuring partners can access the training opportunities and resources.

9

Workforce Development

We had an overwhelming response to the Workforce Survey, and it is evident that we have a highly skilled motivated workforce. The needs of the workforce will inform the future work of the Leadership Collective, which is developed and delivered with partners and learners. The Leadership collective provides the opportunity for access to training and learning opportunities to partners, community learners and volunteers, ensuring they are equipped with the skills and knowledge to develop their practice. An example of this being during the pandemic the Leadership Collective adapted to online learning and provided:

- Community Asset Transfer Introductory Course
- Range of digital upskilling courses
- Intergenerational Training
- Governance Structures for Community Groups
- Introduction to Participatory Budgeting
- Naloxone Training
- Child/Adult Protection Awareness
- LGBTQI+ Awareness

The Leadership Collective is built into the operational plan of the North Ayrshire Council CLD service. There is a culture of "Grow your own" within the CLD workforce with the CLD service approved to deliver SVQ level 2 and Level 3 in youth work, which enables the continued growth of a robust Modern Apprenticeship programme. As a council we support one of the highest numbers of Modern Apprenticeships in Youth Work, providing a learning pathway for young people. The apprenticeship is delivered across the learning partners, providing experience for the apprentices across a range of youth work providers.

The CLD service also has a strong commitment to supporting unqualified staff through a range of qualifications, including the opportunity to access the work base degree of Community Education (UWS) and Community Learning and Development (Glasgow University)
The focus of the workforce development is informed by the professional competences for CLD which include 'Know and understand the community in which we work' and 'Develop and support collaborative working'.

9a

Case Study - Workforce Development
My CLD Journey - Modern Apprentice - Localities Priorities Officer

Shortly after leaving school, I began working as a Scaffolder. I knew I wanted to work within the community, but I was unsure of which routes were available to me. From attending youth groups, the staff members encouraged me to apply for a Youth Work Modern Apprenticeship to start my journey to become a full time youth worker. Once vacancies became available I applied for the role within North Ayrshire Council.

Throughout my apprenticeship I was based within the Caley Youth Centre where I gained experience as well as great working relationships with staff and young people. I worked with young people with additional support needs, people in recovery, employability, LGBT & a wide range of community work.

At the end of my Modern Apprenticeship, I was supported by NAC to apply to university for the work based CLD degree and secured a place as part of my employment in the CLD team. Part of my remit was to coordinate and deliver the Activity Agreement within the Argyle Community Centre staying within the service and allowing me to gain further experience to enhance my skills set.

During this time a role became available as a Locality Worker within the service, which I applied for, and was successful. The role has given me experience not only in Youth Work but also working within Adult Learning and Capacity Building in more depth.

As I entered the last stages of my university education, I applied for a newly created Locality Priorities Officer within my current team and was successful. This exciting new role is my first full time graduate role and will allow me to put all the skills I have learned throughout my time with the service to use, benefiting the communities I work with.

My journey within the Connected Communities CLD team in North Ayrshire Council has given me a purpose and a career I am passionate about, something I had been searching for since school. Without these opportunities to progress throughout my CLD journey, I wouldn't have the wealth of knowledge and experience that I have today.

9b

Governance

This Community Learning and Development Plan fits within a landscape of Community and Locality Planning, with strong relationships in place with partners including community groups. You can find out more about Community and Locality Planning at www.northayrshire.community

The delivery of the CLD Strategic Plan is essential in achieving the aims of the North Ayrshire CPP, in that every person in North Ayrshire should have the best opportunities to live their life to their full potential. In acknowledgement of these interdependencies, and in accordance with national requirements, our governance arrangements include reporting to the Community Planning and Locality Partnerships.

 The development of this plan has included consultation with Community Planning partners and the Locality Partnerships.

Six monthly performance reports on the delivery of the plan will be provided to the Community Planning Senior Officers Group. Annual reports will be discussed by the Community Planning Board and the six Locality Partnerships. This plan provides the strategic direction for the CLD operational plan, which includes the CLD Key Performance Indicators (KPI). These KPI's have been shared with the CLD Partners as part of the process of shaping the plan, enabling partners to see themselves and their work. They have also been added to the refresh of the Service level agreement with the Third Sector Interface which will enhance the performance reporting to the CPP to capture the CLD landscape.

10

North Ayrshire CLD Plan - Youth Work

Youth Work is an educational practice contributing to young people's learning and development. Youth work engages with young people within their communities; it acknowledges the wider networks of peers, community and culture; it supports the young person to realise their potential and to address life's challenges critically and creatively and it takes account of all strands of diversity.

Youth Work takes place in a variety of settings, whilst using numerous approaches. It centres around young people's needs and wants, where young people choose to participate, and builds from where young people are at recognising the young person and the youth worker as partners in a learning process.

An understanding of youth work's essential role across public policy areas and recognition of the benefits of taking a youth work approach as a key component towards achieving positive outcomes for all Scotland's young people must be a priority. This is especially important at a time when the Scottish Government has committed to directly incorporating the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into Scots law. All of this is important as incorporation will mean that the rights of children and young people will be integral to law making at all levels of Government. The challenge of full incorporation of the UNCRC and advancing the legacy of the Year of Young People in 2018, will place an expectancy on a range of sectors.

Articles 12 focusses on every child having the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. In North Ayrshire we take a rights based approach to any work we carry out and this is embedded throughout our work and in our Youth Participation and Citizenship Strategy.

We will continue to work closely with Education to ensure that all young people and their families are at the centre of decision making and are aware of the support available to them. Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) takes into consideration the wider influences on a child or young person along with their developmental needs when thinking about their wellbeing, so that the right support can be offered. Supporting the work of our Child Poverty Action Plan we will ensure work is reflected to tackle the poverty related attainment gap through programmes such as Cost of the School Day.

11a

We have agreed the following priorities for Youth Work for the three year plan:

Positive Destinations for 16-19 year olds

Through the work of our Modern Apprenticeship Programme, we will continue to take young people through their SVQ Level 3 in Youth Work. We will strengthen our employability programmes from Playback Ice Qualifications, Ambition Agreement, Youth Guarantee and a wide range of one to one support, group work and signposting services.

Youth Work
Key Priorities

Attainment and Wider Achievement
We will continue to provide a wide variety of youth work opportunities to young people based on local need and in partnership with young people. Young people will have access to awards and certification though our programmes. Working in partnership with schools, we will provide a menu of curriculum enhancement activities.

Health and Wellbeing
We will continue to development our LGBT specific work across localities and gaining the LGBT Charter Mark. Develop and deliver issue based resources, projects and programmes on health, including alcohol and drugs, health and wellbeing, suicide prevention and promote positive wellbeing tools and resources.

11a

We have agreed the following priorities for Youth Work for the three year plan:

Young Peoples' Voice and Rights
Ensuring young people have structures in place to use their voice through our Youth Participation and Citizenship Strategy. Strengthening the voice of seldom heard young people with focused work with Care Experienced young people, Gypsy Travellers, Young Carers and New Scots.

Youth Work Key Priorities

Climate Change
North Ayrshire, as a Child Centred Council, are committed to ensuring that young people are involved and engaged at all stages of our Climate Change journey. Ensuring a UNCRC Rights based approach is co-produced and co-delivered with our young people

Digital Connectivity
We will work with partners to ensure that young people can get access to devices and connections to connect digitally to services and peers. We will ensure that young people are equipped in digital literacies.   We will provide training and information for young people enabling them to be digitally secure and resilient.

Poverty and Inequality
Through our Cost of the School Day work, we will work on ensuring equity of opportunities and activities across schools and community. We will continue to provide food with dignity through our activities, events, holiday programmes and weekend and evening provisions.

74

11a

Case Study - Youth Work - Youth Participation

In North Ayrshire we are proud of the young people that are at the heart of our Youth Participation Structure.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, young people volunteered across our local Community Hubs in North Ayrshire. This enabled our young people to contribute to the ongoing work in supporting the wider community during the pandemic. Their efforts attracted funding from the Corra Foundation, Tesco, and Youth Scotland to name but a few. This allowed youth forums to enhance the offer for young people during lockdown including creating activity packs for young people, garden planting packs, and a whole host of digital activities including filming challenges such as Tik Tok competitions and "Saturday Night Fake Away" for our social media platforms.

By involving young people, community partners and working alongside the Health and Social Care Partnership, Education and our CLD Team it provided a joint approach under the banner of 'DigiDream' allowing young people access to a mass of activities during a time where participation was restricted.

Over three localities, young people have secured over £100,000 from the Community Investment Fund. One group will be due to open their own Youth and Community Skills Hub and two other groups of young people have developed and secured funding for mental health programmes.

We were overwhelmed with the number of young people and families engaging digitally during COVID-19 with over 71,000 social media engagements during the first lockdown.

11a

Youth Work - Impact Statements

"My experience of youth work is one that is very empowering. As someone once told me - 'youth work in North Ayrshire is like getting on a bus – we'll get you to your destination, but you can get off at any time'. In North Ayrshire they take a 'for young people - by young people' approach to the work they do and ensure their needs are instilled through the whole process. My experience has given me the platform to raise youth voice meaningfully and show people that yes - young people are the future, but we are here already and have a voice too – we are active in our community, we are ready to get stuck in, and we are actively adapting and changing to what we are faced with each and every day."

"Being a young person in North Ayrshire, you get the opportunity to use your voice, to get involved and to be listened to – I am thankful for the opportunities we have and know it really makes a difference."

"I've had so many opportunities through youth work! I've made great friends, met some amazing people, had some unforgettable experiences and seen my confidence improve incredibly. It was also just really fun!!!"

"For me its been the defining role of my life so far. To work for and represent young people and be chosen by them is all because of the work we have done. We have made sure young people are involved and participate and they are developed into responsible and active citizens"

"It has given me the confidence to speak out for myself and help others with confidence and be their voice. It has given me so much experience with different groups and experiences at different places and has definitely helped me decide on what I want to do and achieve when I go into further education"

11a

North Ayrshire CLD Plan - Community Capacity Building & Community Development

Community Capacity Building is the support that community groups access to help them address issues which are important to them. 'Capacity' describes the range of resources that people have – knowledge about their area or common interest, skills and ideas, shared experiences, and material resources like funding and community spaces.

Community Development (building the capacity of communities to meet their own needs, engaging with, and influencing decision makers) – this can be with communities of place/geography or communities with a shared interest. Community development is a process where people come together to take action on what's important to them.

In North Ayrshire we will continue to develop our sector leading participatory budgeting and wider participatory and engagement approaches.

We will also support our community groups in their ambitions to own and lease assets via our Community Asset Transfer Policy. Our hope is to transform community interaction with the Council procurement process through improved delivery of Community Benefits.

Supporting the sustainability and development of groups/organisations and community ambitions will be provided through a range of grant supports including our transformational Community Investment Fund.

Continuing to develop sustainable, dignified food systems that are locally sourced, offer good value for money and are led by our communities' needs.

Our innovative Leadership Collective, will deliver capacity and learning opportunities built on the expressed needs of our communities. We will support our environmental capacity projects such as tree planting, coastal care and our growers programmes.

11b

We have agreed the following priorities for Community Capacity Building and Community Development for the three year plan:

Food Insecurities
To continue to develop our food with dignity approach to food poverty/insecurity – working in partnership with communities, to expand food pantries, larders, and community fridges.

Participation and Democracy
To extend our participatory approaches, offering communities more opportunities to lead in local decision making, including grant making (youth and locality) and mainstreaming PB. To build on the projects funded via the devolved Community Investment Fund.

Capacity Building
Key Priorities

Community Asset Transfer
To support community organisations and groups seeking to secure local management/control of community assets, through lease, ownership, or management.

Community Leadership
To support volunteers, individuals, and community groups, to develop the required skills and knowledge to achieve their ambitions, through opportunities co-produced and offered thorough our 'Leadership Collective'.

11b

We have agreed the following priorities for Community Capacity Building and Community Development for the three year plan:

Participation Requests
To continue to raise awareness and provide support with Participation Requests to complement and improve our local range of participation processes rather than replace them.

Capacity Building
Key Priorities
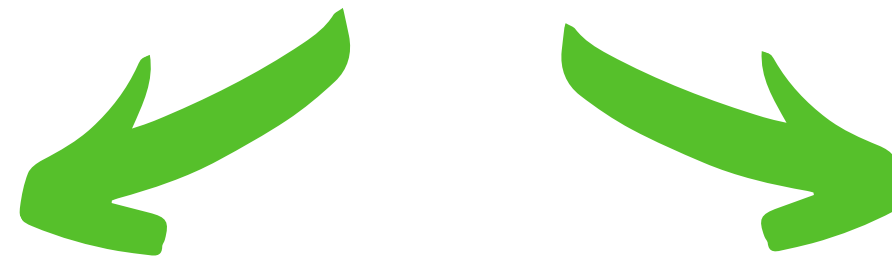
Community Engagement
To continue to develop and enhance opportunities for community engagement/involvement, through the development of the Participation and Citizenship Strategy, Community Engagement Hub/Toolkit and the older people's voice structure.

Networking and Funding
To provide capacity building support to key community anchor organisations. We will support communities to achieve what's important to them through strong local networks. Support groups to generate sustainable income, through successful grant funding applications.

11b

Case Study Capacity Building - Participatory Budgeting

Participatory Budgeting (PB) is about local people having a direct say in how public money is spent. PB can support active citizenship, help build more active and stronger communities that are better able to take decisions on where public funds are spent, more likely to take part in community activities and better informed about public budgets and decision making.

In this round of Youth PB on Arran, applications were invited for up to £1000 for youth projects/ideas. For Locality and Arts & Culture PB applications for up to £400/£1200 respectively.

Youth projects which were successfully short-listed were then voted on by young people age 8-25 years – in school or via the Young Scot website. The highest voted projects secured funding. The Locality and Arts & Culture Projects were short-listed by the Locality Steering Group and those who met the agreed criteria secured funding.

Youth and Community Capacity has been built around PB and completing and assessing applications . This is the 3rd round of Locality PB and 5th of Youth PB and it is now embedded in the way we work. A wide range of groups secured funding for their ideas and projects – 4 from Arts and Culture, 11 from Youth and 12 from Locality Funds.

Communities and residents are benefiting from new/continued opportunities being delivered locally. Local adults and young people were involved in all stages of the process from design to decision making, via the youth and locality steering groups – community empowerment and active citizenship. The steering groups spoke very positively about their experiences and being involved in making decisions about their Locality.

11b

Capacity Building & Community Development - Impact Statements

"I think considering the circumstances this year the PB partners outdone themselves with the program that was provided" – comment from member of steering group

"PB Funding will enable more young people to get involved in our activities on the Island"

'We are indebted to the Council for it's ongoing support to our shed. This community asset transfer will afford the opportunity to not only continue to develop and improve the facilities, without the pressure of high rent, but also allow us to focus on and meet the needs of our growing membership for many years to come.'

"Providing free starter kits during lockdown is an ideal way to introduce more men to the hobby and I'm really looking forward to meeting up with lots of beginner modellers online. The beauty of this project is we can connect with a much wider audience, than we would normally, and introduce new people to this pastime."

"It was a really positive experience meeting other volunteers from different areas, swapping idea's and skills and building things from scratch."

"I had been in the building game all my life before I lost the sight in one eye from an accident. I was so down when I lost my eye and now, thanks to the shed, I have so much to focus on."

11b

North Ayrshire CLD Plan - Adult Learning

Community based adult learning covers a wide variety of learning opportunities which target learners who have multiple barriers to opportunity, focusing on disadvantaged individuals and communities. Using a Social Practice Model, learning is built around the experience and needs of the learners and is underpinned by the three core principles of the Adult Learning Statement of Ambition - Learning is Lifelong, Life-wide and Learner-centred.

In North Ayrshire, we will ensure that learners are placed at the centre of our planning arrangements. Our learners voice process enables learners from our 6 localities, as well as communities of interest, to be at the centre of our planning, involving them in the identification of appropriate and relevant learning opportunities, the delivery and evaluation of their learning and the development of support for learners. This will ensure that there are sufficient opportunities available for adults to learn, achieve and progress through their learning journey.

We work in partnership to enable, encourage and improve participation in community based adult learning, examples being:
- The Pan Ayrshire ESOL network brings North, South and East Ayrshire CLD ESOL leads together with Ayrshire College. This partnership approach provides opportunities for maximising the use of local/regional resources, sharing expertise and planning seamless progression.
- Our leadership collective is a partnership of CLD, TSI, NHS, HSCP, Ayrshire College and a number of national organisations. It comes together to discuss, develop and plan learning opportunities that is informed by the learners needs.
- Working with North Ayrshire's Family Learning Team bringing adult and family learning together and developing progression routes.

Our innovative North Ayrshire Virtual Community Centre provides a much needed opportunity to engage with our CLD services and is used to deliver community based adult learning. Moving learning online, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, enabled us to continue to provide learning for our communities. We increased our Gaelic delivery and the numbers engaging in this provision increased during this time. Moving out of restrictions, we have recognised that our digital delivery will still be a method used for our learning opportunities.

11c

We have agreed the following priorities for Adult Learning for the three year plan.

Adult Learning
Key Priorities

Core Skills
To work with our partners and organisations in localities to ensure Adult Literacy, Numeracy and Core Skills support given is learner centreds, using a collaborative approach to develop staff, volunteers and programmes to best support learners.

New Scots
To support our New Scots to become active members of our community, building social relationships. Be an active partner to improve participation and deliver ESOL activities and learning.

Community Based Adult Learning
To continue to provide opportunities, in partnership with learners, to participate in community based adult learning including activities that promote health and wellbeing and tackle isolation.

11c

We have agreed the following priorities for Adult Learning for the three year plan.

Skills for Work
To work with partners and organisations to deliver employability support. Provide opportunities to learn for work to achieve stronger employability outcomes for learners.
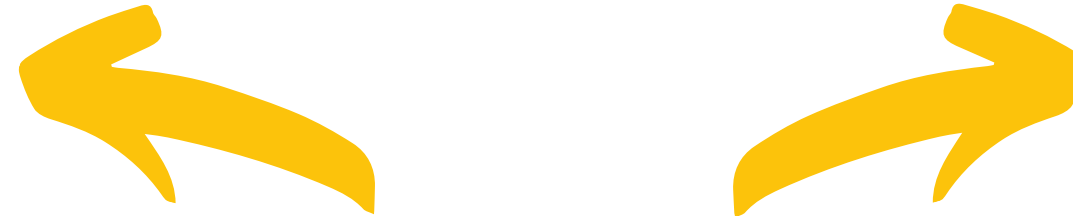
Digital Learning
To provide digital learning and digital literacy support to help communities to develop digital skills and confidence. Encouraging and supporting people to get online and enjoy the opportunities offered by digital technology.

Adult Learning
Key Priorities

Training
Work with partners to train staff, volunteers and community groups to deliver community based adult learning opportunities.

11c

Case Study - Adult Learning/Capacity Building - Leadership Collective

North Ayrshire Leadership Collective provides a community-based Adult Learning programme that all communities across the authority can access. The Collective is a partnership of CLD, TSI, NHS, HSCP, Ayrshire College and a number of national organisations.

The group was formed after engagement with partners and the community on their learning aspirations. The Leadership Collective meets monthly to discuss, develop and plan a training programme and calendar that is informed by the communities' needs.

Currently, all training is delivered virtually and, to date, the wide range of opportunities have been accessed by learners across North Ayrshire. Our engagement methods ensure that there are a number of routes for learners to access these opportunities and gain new skills.

The breadth of learning opportunities ensures that a wide range of topics are covered. Some of these include digital skills, community engagement/empowerment, health and wellbeing (including Community Green Gym), employability, book-keeping, ESOL, Gaelic and Core Skills.

The learning programmes are built around the needs of the learner and it provides the right learning environment for many that are taking their first steps back into learning.

Positive evaluations/feedback from learners highlight the opportunities they have experienced through the Leadership Collective and have enabled them to develop new skills e.g. digital and language skills, gained greater understanding of issues in their community and national and local policies, learned new techniques and ideas to address health issues. Community groups have benefited from capacity building opportunities such as book-keeping and governance and commented on the valuable networking opportunities. A strong partnership has been created, which brings expertise and enthusiasm to the Leadership Collective.

11c

Adult Learning - Impact Statements

"I have a sense of continuity in the lessons. I feel normal despite the bad conditions of Corona and have been able to continue my lessons and learn about Scottish life. I thank all volunteers who contributed"

"I arrived 2 months before lockdown. The whatsapp group has been very good for me. I've learned language to help me make GP appointments and other useful things"

"I was helped by the volunteers to use the computer and activate the zoom programme. It made a big difference in my daily life"

"Yes, the English Whats App classes are useful because it helps you in writing and reading. It help you to write so fast and help you read more fast as well. It also makes your brain thinking what and how you should talk in English."

"The volunteers helped me very well. I am now able to use my computer and use YouTube to learn."

"I have really enjoyed taking part in the digital Gaelic lesson and was really glad that it continued through lockdown. If it hadn't been for this I wouldn't have spoken to anyone at all."

11c

Unmet need within North Ayrshire Communities

Through a process of community engagement with Learners and partners and, as a result of addressing priorities within a finite resource for delivery during the COVID-19 pandemic, we have identified key areas of unmet need. We will engage our community partners in addressing these needs and they will inform the first year of our operational implementation plan. These include:

Creating an engagement and participation structure for older people

Addressing the digital gap

Implementing the Engagement hub/toolkit resources that were created pre-pandemic
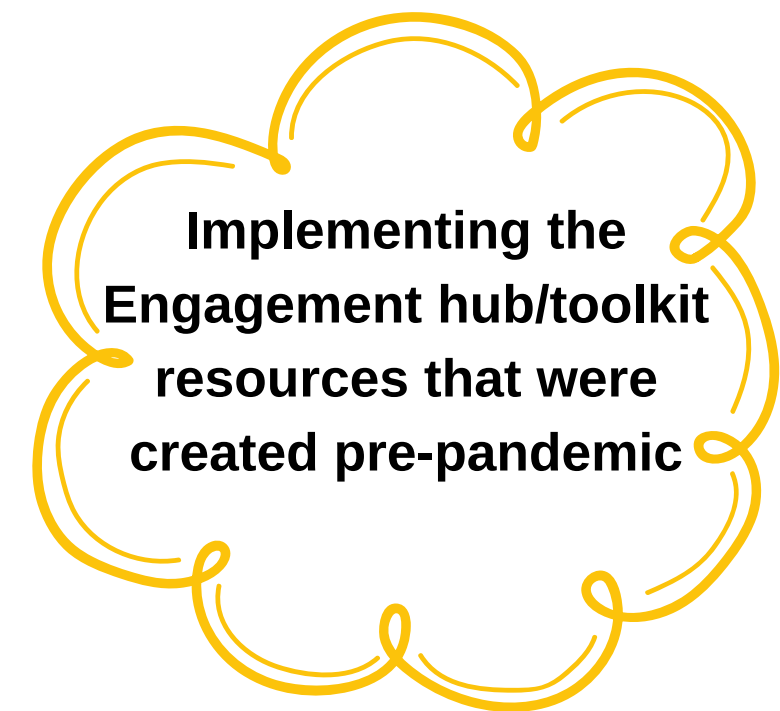
These key areas were paused due to staff and partners realigning resources and service delivery to implement the Community Resilience Hub model.

Whereas we are aware of a learning need as a partnership , we always seek to engage our community partners to fill that gap. We will continue to note any unmet need, report it through the CLD Strategic Plan governance structure, and determine how best to fulfil that need within our community partnerships, learners voice and participation structures.

12

Action Plan - Year 1

Implementing the plan	Input	Output	Outcome	Impact
To ensure that participants from the most disadvantaged and marginalised communities have access to the CLD support they need. In a North Ayrshire Context, these groups include the following, but not exhaustive. Gypsy Travellers New Scots Care Experienced LGBTI: Adult and Youth	Community Planning partners and CLD providers will contribute a range of resources to assist the 6 locality planning partnerships fit their priorities within the CLD Strategic plan for North Ayrshire.	Locality Partnerships will contribute to the continuation of the "Learners' participation and engagement structures, across all 6 Localities. Annual and 6 monthly reports will be provided to the CPP – SMT,	Our most disadvantaged and marginalised communities will have access to CLD opportunities that best support their needs. The CPP – SMT will monitor and scrutinise the progress of the plan to provide an effective and coordinated partnership, delivering high quality CLD opportunities within the 6 localities.	Our most marginalised and excluded communities will feel: • They can easily access and participate in CLD opportunities. • A sense of achievement and attainment from their involvement. • They are supported to progress further with their aspirations.

13

Implementing the plan	Input	Output	Outcome	Impact
To strengthen co-ordination between the full range of CLD providers across the sectors, by the implementation of the community hub model across all localities.	Connected Communities CLD staff to work with partners and communities through the community hubs to ensure there is a shared understanding of whole systems approach.	Service providers, partners and communities work together through the community hub model to deliver appropriate and targeted service.	Participants and local community groups will be actively engaged in CLD provision.	Community hub approach will result in significantly improved outcomes in communities.

13

Implementing the plan	Input	Output	Outcome	Impact
To reinforce the role of communities as central to the assessment, planning and evaluation processes, that enable us to shape and deliver CLD provision through partnership.	Connected Communities CLD staff will support and promote effective community engagement carried out across North Ayrshire by partners and encourage best practice in Community Engagement	Locality specific plans will evolve in partnership with communities across the 6 localities. A comprehensive North Ayrshire participation and engagement structure will be established across CLD.	6 Locality Plans will evolve to meet the real and felt needs of communities and engage those least seldom heard. Improved network of adult, youth and community engagement that influences local and national policy.	Evidence of very good engagement with local communities in the identification of real and felt need. Young people co design, co-deliver and co-produce fully inclusive youth work activities and opportunities in line with the Child Centred Council model. Empowered and influential community anchor organisations and groups.

13

Implementing the priorities of plan	Input	Output	Outcome	Impact
To ensure that the priorities within the plan are delivered in line with CLD regulations.	Connected Communities CLD teams will ensure that the operational and teams plan reflect the CLD strategic plan Connected Communities CLD staff will continue to facilitate the leadership collective and contribute to the south west collaborative action plan. Connected Communities CLD staff will work with partners to provide digital learning opportunities, accessible support and learning resources. Connected Communities CLD staff will work in line with the young people's participation structure and wider youth work programmes to identify, record and promote the current range of	Operation plans will be produced that address the priorities as detailed in the plan utilising the agreed KPIs. A wider range of continuing professional development training courses will be offered to CLD partners through the leadership collective and south west collaborative training programme. Using digital technology, we will collaborate with our partners to co-define, co-design and co-deliver better community digital engagement and participation. A wide range of CLD youth opportunities will be delivered in collaboration with young people and partners.	Performance information will be gathered and shared with CPP and communities. A continuum of CLD training opportunities will be accessible to all CLD providers. Communities will have access to a wide range of digital opportunities. Young people will have access to a wide range of youth opportunities with a focus on UNCRC article 12. Adult learners will have access to a wide range of adult learning opportunities with a focus on the learners voice structure. Communities will have access to a wide range of empowering and participatory opportunities	Governance is enhanced by accurate data which will inform subsequent years of the plan. It is evident that CPP and Communities are involved in evaluation of the plan. CLD providers are skilled and motivated to undertake their required roles. Barriers to digital learning will be removed and learners feel confident in engaging with CLD opportunities digitally. Young peoples rights are realised and are taken account of in line with the child poverty action plan and child centred council. Adult learners are well informed, confident, and barriers to learning have been removed.

13

	opportunities open to young people. Connected Communities CLD staff will work with the adult engagement and participation structures to identify, record and promote the current range of adult learner CLD opportunities. Connected Communities CLD staff will extend our empowering and participatory approaches, offering communities more opportunities to lead in local decision making and service delivery and design.	A wide range of CLD adult learning opportunities will be delivered in collaboration with adult learners and partners. A wide range of CLD empowering and participatory opportunities will be delivered in collaboration with communities and partners.	with a focus on capacity building and local community leadership.	Community groups and agencies work well together. They learn from each other, improve community cohesion and local community leaders are confident in their roles, with strong local networks formed.

Conclusion

Community Learning and Development (CLD) primarily supports disadvantaged or vulnerable groups and individuals of all ages to engage in learning, personal development and active citizenship with a focus on bringing about change in their lives and communities.

At the very heart of developing this CLD Strategic Plan has been the principles of participation for all partners and those who identify themselves as the CLD workforce for North Ayrshire and, most importantly, our citizens of North Ayrshire - our Learners. There has also been a focus on engaging with those who do not currently engage in our service provision, as this is an important learning space for all partners. At the very start of developing the plan, the importance of plain English was identified as being important, and we have also produced a summary of the plan, to increase the accessibility of the information contained in it. The commitments and priorities of the plan establish our framework for the next 3 years and on an annual basis we will evaluate our impact and the reach of the plan.

The Strategic Plan informs our operational plans across the partnerships and individual staff action plans. Our intention is for partners, staff, volunteers and learners to see themselves, and their work, in the plan. The plan builds on our previous CLD Strategic Plan 2018-2021 and the commitments made within that Plan. We have moved from consultation and engagement to a co-production approach.

Co-production essentially describes a relationship between service provider and service user that draws on the knowledge, ability and resources of both to develop solutions to issues that are successful, sustainable, and cost-effective, changing the balance of power from the professional towards the service user.

Our response to the COVID-19 Pandemic and the leadership role that CLD services adopted has created a depth of relationships and greater understanding of the role of the CLD professional. The learning from the response has created a greater, stronger scaffold which will enable the CLD Strategic Plan and its priorities to be realised and developed over the next 3 years.

The performance will be measured quarterly using the CLD KPIs, which were shared and reviewed at the Education Scotland workshop. This reporting will feature as part of the governance of the plan. In North Ayrshire we have a robust Community Planning structure which puts our communities at the heart of the evaluation and review of the plan, ensuring effective and appropriate targeting of resources, with the principles of equity informing how the plan is delivered.

North Ayrshire CPP is a strong and effective collaboration of a wide range of organisations. By working together, we continue to realise the benefits of sharing our resources, knowledge and skills to improve the lives of local people. All partners have a shared commitment and partnership vision, **"North Ayrshire – A Better Life".**

14

Appendices

15

Documents & Policies

- A Changing Nation: How Scotland will thrive in a digital world - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)
- Digital Strategy (north-ayrshire.gov.uk)
- Cyber Resilient Scotland: strategic framework - gov.scot (www.gov.scot) Action Plan 2021 – 23
- North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership - Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2017 – 2022
- North Ayrshire Youth Citizenship and Participation Strategy 2021-2024
- Community Learning and Development (CLD) Planning An aspect review of progress made in implementing the CLD Regulations instruments
- Planning for Change A Review of Community Learning and Development Plans in Scotland 2018 – 21
- Equality and Children's Equality Impact Assessment
- Scotlands Public Health Priorities
- Health Impact Assessment report (available soon)
- Child Poverty Action Plan
- Climate Change Policy
- Scottish Government Health Improvement Policy

15a

Key Partners - Developing and Implementing the Plan

- Third Sector Interface
- North Ayrshire Council Services
- Ayrshire College
- Police Scotland
- Community Planning Partnership
- Health and Social Care Partnership
- Public Health
- Communities of North Ayrshire
- Education Scotland
- Strathclyde Fire and Rescue
- North Ayrshire Federation of Community Associations
- NHS Ayrshire and Arran

15b

ASN

Secondary Schools

Primary Schools

Third Sector

Further Education

Youth Groups

How We Engage

MSYPs

Digital / Online Events & Groups

New Scots

BAME Community

Youth Council

Champions Board

Not in Education, Employment or Training

Youth Forums

Inclusive of all young people

Young Sports Leaders

North Ayrshire Council Departments

Pupil Councils

Executive Youth Council

Joint Cabinet

ASN Schools & Provisions

Young Workforce

Partner Organisations

Education (Primary and Secondary)

Face to Face Sessions / Group Work

National Organisations

Young Carers

Care Experienced

Issue Based / Specific Groups e.g. LGBT / Disabilities

BSL

North Ayrshire Cabinet Members
Councillor John Bell – Cabinet Member for Education
Councillor Robert Foster – Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care Partnership and lead member for Poverty
Councillor Louise McPhater – Cabinet Member for Participatory Democracy
Councillor Shaun McAuley – Young People Champion

15c

North Ayrshire Council's Strategic Community Learning & Development Plan

NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

5 December 2023

Cabinet

Title:	**HMIe Progress Review of Community Learning and Development**
Purpose:	To advise Cabinet of the outcomes of the recent Progress Review of Community Learning and Development by HMIE
Recommendation:	a) That Cabinet notes the recent Progress Review carried out by HMIE against the CLD Strategic Plan and the positive feedback from this; and
	b) That Cabinet approves the actions planned as a result of the outcome of the review.
	c) That Cabinet notes progress review will be presented at future Audit and Scrutiny.

1. Executive Summary

1.1 Education Scotland HM Inspectors of Education (HMIE) evaluate and report on the quality of Community Learning and Development (CLD) provision within local authorities, in line with [The Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013](#) and associated guidance for local authorities. This is also in line with the evaluation and reporting which HMIE carries out on other sectors of education provision, such as schools and early years centres.

HM Inspectors have developed interim arrangements for inspection from academic year 2023-24 to support improvement and provide external assurance of the quality of CLD provision in Scotland.

HM Inspectors are undertaking progress visits (PVs) to local authorities, commencing in September 2023. During PVs, HM Inspectors will take account of the extent to which local authorities are fulfilling their statutory duties in relation to CLD. HM Inspectors will evaluate the progress local authorities and their CLD partners are making to improve the quality of provision and services.

1.2 North Ayrshire was one of the earliest progress visits undertaken, with HM Inspectors visiting in the week of 18th September 2023. The report on the findings of the visit was published on 31st October.

2. Background

2.1 Between 2016 and 2019, HM Inspectors undertook inspections of CLD provision in all 32 local authorities in Scotland. A summary of the inspection findings was published in

January 2020. The report highlighted key strengths and aspects for improvement in the leadership and delivery of CLD provision. In March 2020, HM Inspectors recognised that local authorities and CLD partners faced challenges in adapting to the pandemic. As a result, the routine programme of inspections of CLD planning and delivery by local authorities was suspended. HM Inspectors have now resumed external evaluation of CLD in autumn 2023.

2.2   Progress Visits will help to provide an overview of the current quality and improvement in CLD leadership and governance across Scotland. They will also inform any future Scottish Government review of the CLD Regulations and Community Empowerment legislation and the implementation of CLD national strategies. The findings will also inform future approaches to inspection of CLD provision in Scotland.

2.3   The visits evaluate the effectiveness of local authority CLD partnerships' approach to self-evaluation and planning for improvement, and consider progress made against identified priorities in their CLD plans. As with previous inspections, the starting point was the CLD plan and the local authority and partners' self-evaluation. The focus was on the following high-level questions:

- How effective is the leadership of the local authority and their CLD partners in outcomes?
- How well does the performance of the local authority and their CLD partners demonstrate positive impact?

In answering these questions, a range of quality indicators from the CLD quality framework: How good is our community learning and development? were used and the HM Inspection team undertook a range of activities such as reviewing documentation, meeting strategic leaders and holding focus groups with partners and learners.

Progress visits are not graded using the evaluative grade scale for full inspections; however the inspection team makes an overall judgement on the progress that the local authority and their partners are making with the CLD plan and produce a statement of confidence.

The progress visit to North Ayrshire took place in the week of 18th September. A wide range of staff, partners and learners were involved in the activities which took place, and we would like to thank them once again for their support and engagement. At the end of the process the inspection team evaluated the progress locally as being of the level of the highest statement of confidence used, namely "The local authority and their CLD partners are making sufficient progress with their CLD plan and have the capacity to continue to improve."

This is testament to the robust planning and governance processes within North Ayrshire and the quality of delivery and evaluation undertaken by the Council and its CLD partners. Key areas of positive progress were identified as being:

- The value placed upon CLD across the CLS Partnership in North Ayrshire;
- Leadership of CLD in North Ayrshire: and
- Clear links from the CLD Plan to the Council Plan and the LOIP;
- A clear focus on inclusion and reducing barriers to participation;

- Effective support for learners, community activists and volunteers to gain skills that match their aims and ambitions.

  In particular, the Modern Apprentice programme within Youth Services was highlighted as an example of highly effective practice and we have been asked to share this more widely as a case study, which is being developed for publication.

  The process and report highlighted adult learner voice as an area for further development, and this is already being developed and will continue to be progressed. The ongoing development of the use of data in planning and of building capacity within colleagues to work with communities are the other areas of development identified. This aligns with the work already underway to continue to embed locality planning and delivery models working alongside communities within all parts of the Council and Community Planning Partnership. Next steps will be to implement a participation structure for adult learner voice, and to work with colleagues to support the ongoing development of locality planning and community empowerment.

  The full report which has been published is attached as Appendix 1 for consideration.

3. Proposals

3.1 Cabinet is asked to:

a) Note the recent Progress Review carried out by HMIE against the CLD Strategic Plan and the positive feedback from this; and
b) Approve the actions planned as a result of the outcome of the review.

4.   Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial

4.1 None

Human Resources

4.2 None

Legal

4.3 None

Equality/Socio-economic

4.4 The values base of CLD work includes valuing equality of both opportunity and outcome, and challenging discriminatory practice. The work of NAC staff and partners on the CLD plan helps to address inequalities across communities and empower them to have their place within the design and delivery of services. It helps to ensure resources are targeted to those in most need and where they will make the greatest impact on outcomes, while ensuring there is also a universal offer of learning opportunities and activities. Through working with communities and with partners, the voices, needs and aspirations of the communities inform the operational delivery and targeting of resources. It is foreseeable that the escalating cost-of-living crisis will put

pressure on individuals and communities and work with the community larder network and partners who provide energy, financial and mental health advice will intensify. The delivery of the plan focuses on building capacity and optimising opportunities so that efforts to address poverty and inequalities are strengthened.

Climate Change and Carbon

4.5   None

Key Priorities

4.6   The activities contained within the CLD Strategic Plan 2021-2024 support the North Ayrshire Council Plan strategic aims:

- To transition to a wellbeing economy, delivering prosperity, wellbeing and resilience for local people.
- We will have active, inclusive and resilient communities.
- A Community Wealth Building Council that is efficient and accessible, maximising investment and focusing resources towards our priorities.

Community Wealth Building

4.7   The activities contained within the CLD Strategic Plan 2021-2024 support the following
pillars of community wealth building:

- Creating volunteering and skills development opportunities;
- Sustaining local employment through skills development;
- Advancing community enterprises, such as food pantries, community centre ownership and community sports clubs; and
- Advancing local ownership of underused land and buildings.

5.   Consultation

5.1   No consultation was required for the purpose of this report.

Audrey Sutton
Executive Director of Communities and Education

For further information please contact **Rhonda Leith, Head of Service (Connected Communities),** on **01294 324415**.

Background Papers
Appendix 1: Community Learning and Development Progress Visit Report North Ayrshire Council

Community Learning and Development Progress Visit Report

North Ayrshire Council

31 October 2023

1. Context

HM Inspectors visited North Ayrshire Council to undertake a community learning and development (CLD) progress visit during September 2023. During the visit, we talked to learners and community representatives, CLD leaders, managers, staff, and volunteers, and other key stakeholders. HM Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of the local authority CLD partnerships' approach to self-evaluation and planning for improvement, and considered progress made against identified priorities in their CLD plans.

2. Findings from the progress visit

How effective is the leadership of the local authority and their CLD partners in improving outcomes?

Areas of positive progress

CLD practices and principles are embedded within the work of the North Ayrshire Council and the Community Planning Partnership (CPP). CLD is highly valued. Leadership of CLD is effective and supported by well-established reporting structures. The CLD plan reflects both council and local outcome improvement plan priorities. Staff understand their role well in delivering against CLD plan priorities. Shared aims and objectives are evident in partnership groups such as Locality Planning Partnerships (LPPs) and work is driven by council, CPP and local priorities. Senior leaders, the CLD service and partners have a clear commitment to partnership working with the communities they serve. Young people and community representatives are actively involved in a range of forums and meetings and their views are influential in shaping priorities and action plans. Third sector and community representatives are well represented across community planning structures and feel heard and valued. This supports services to understand the needs of communities. LPPs drive the delivery of CLD at area level, ensuring that services are responsive to locally identified need.

Effective evaluation and planning structures are in place. These support a continued focus on improvement at all levels. Council CLD staff review their progress against locality and North Ayrshire priorities. Staff at all levels are trusted and are empowered to make decisions about their work and undertake regular self-evaluation. This supports their capacity to reflect on their practice and work towards strong outcomes for learners and communities. The range of purposeful partnership groups, which include community members, supports the collective capacity to improve outcomes. The strong partnership between CLD and education colleagues is helping to embed the engagement and empowerment of young people in their education. Increasingly, CLD partners are coming together to discuss the impact of their work. This is helping to ensure resources are targeted appropriately on existing and emerging needs. Community organisations value the regular and useful communication they have with, and training provided by, CLD practitioners. CLD partners are effective in supporting the drawdown of significant additional funding by organisations across the local authority. North Ayrshire Council CLD has developed an effective 'grow your own' culture. This supports the service to maintain staffing levels in order to continue improving outcomes.

104

Areas for development

Community members are well represented on community planning structures. However, there is scope to increase the role of community members in decision making about CLD planning at a strategic level. There is a need for the council and its CLD and education partners to further consider how adult learners can contribute to and influence CLD planning. Continuing to grow and develop approaches to self-evaluation between partners would enable senior leaders to better capture and understand the impact of CLD across North Ayrshire. Senior leaders are aware of the risk of CLD practitioners being viewed as key to the delivery of most work with communities. Senior leaders within the CPP and the council now need to consider how to grow the capacity of all services to work with communities to improve sustainability.

How well does the performance of the local authority and their CLD partners demonstrate positive impact?

Areas of positive progress

Senior leaders, managers and partners use both demographic and performance data effectively to inform the allocation of resources. For example, they identified unmet need in CLD provision for older adults when developing their 2021-24 CLD plan. Since then, they have successfully allocated and attracted funding to enhance this provision. Since the start of 2023, Discovery Award groups have been developed across the local authority. Participants are increasing their skills, contributing to their communities as volunteers, and building social networks. The CLD service has a systematic approach to the gathering of performance data. CLD service staff are supported well to undertake quarterly reviews of their individual work. These reviews help practitioners to ensure their practice is based on what learners and community members need. The high degree of trust between practitioners and organisations means partners are confident to share data. Doing so supports them in deciding which services to take forward.

CLD partners have a clear focus on inclusion and reducing barriers to participation. They work together very effectively to support individuals and families who are experiencing additional challenges, to progress and achieve. The Additional Support Needs youth group helps young people with a range of abilities and neurodiversity to socialise and develop communication and life skills. New Scots enjoy meeting, sharing food, and developing language skills together at the refugee-led Spike Wheat Scots Group. Currently, 14 community-run food larders operate across North Ayrshire. They network with each other well to support innovation and share resources. In addition to helping to address food poverty, they each provide bespoke support to individuals and families to address wider issues in their lives. In many cases this support is life changing for their members, and for some lifesaving. Ambitious community organisations and committed volunteers provide a wide range of services and programmes that support community members very effectively. They are instrumental in taking forward essential, needs-focused provision in many local areas. They support local people well on a wide range of issues including poverty, mental health, and addiction. Garnock Valley men's shed is helping to tackle social isolation and developing the skills of its members.

CLD partners are effective in supporting learners, community activists and volunteers to gain skills that match their aims and ambitions. Young people gain a wide range of skills, develop confidence, and progress towards their career aims through the CLD Modern Apprenticeship programme. Modern Apprentices (MAs) support young people from across North Ayrshire well to be heard, respected and influential, including through Joint Cabinets. At each Joint Cabinet 120 young people from schools across North Ayrshire make sure their voices are heard and their lived experience is taken into account as decisions are made. CLD service staff support

community organisations effectively to engage with local people to design services. 'Doon The Beach' community café is a strong example of a local partnership that has enhanced the local environment, creating a local business with employment and volunteering opportunities.

Areas for development

CLD partners should now consider how they can use the data and other information they each gather to better demonstrate their collective impact and progress over time. The CLD service should continue work to create approaches to extend data sharing, analysis, and reporting across all CLD partners. This would help to provide a clearer picture of the difference CLD is making in North Ayrshire for senior leaders, funders, staff, and volunteers. Whilst there are areas of strength within adult learning provision, overall this is less well developed and coordinated across partners than other aspects of CLD. There is now a need for partners to work together to ensure that prospective and current adult learners are clear about the programmes and pathways available to them.

3.   Practice worth sharing more widely

The MA programme run by North Ayrshire CLD service has a significant impact on the young people who participate, the learners and communities they support as apprentices, and on the CLD service. Apprentices contribute to and run a wide range of CLD programmes across the local authority. They are key to the development of young people's empowerment and involvement in influencing decisions. They are instrumental in running the Joint Cabinets between young people and elected members. Young people on the programme gain a wide range of skills and gain confidence. Whilst the staff provide clear leadership and support to the apprentices, the apprentices themselves also influence the CLD service. The input from MAs is helping the service be innovative and remain responsive to learners' changing needs, especially for children and young people.

4.   What happens next?

The local authority and their CLD partners are making sufficient progress with their CLD plan and have the capacity to continue to improve. As a result, HM Inspectors will take no further action in relation to this progress visit. During the inspection, we identified an aspect of highly effective practice which we would like to explore further.

Alona Murray
HM Inspector
31 October 2023

106

NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

5 December 2023

Cabinet

Title:	**Procurement Annual Activity Report (22-23)**
Purpose:	To provide Cabinet with an update on Procurement activity for the period 22/23
Recommendation:	Cabinet notes the report

1.   Executive Summary

1.1   It was agreed by Council in September 2020 that an annual procurement activity report should be produced for Cabinet. This is the fourth report, for the period 22-23.

1.2   **Award Activity** - During the year, 182 different procurement exercises were undertaken resulting in contracts being awarded to 218 suppliers with a total value of £117.9m.

1.3   **Governance** – Procurement is governed by legislation and the Council's Standing Orders Relating to Contract and North Ayrshire Council (NAC) have a legal obligation to publish a Contract Register, Procurement Strategy, and Procurement Annual Report detailing a 2-year plan of future tendering opportunities.

1.4   **Spend Analysis** - NAC spent a total of £221.5m with 3829 suppliers. The report contains information on what category of goods/services are purchased, the top 20 suppliers by spend, the size, type, and locality of suppliers.

1.5   **Community Wealth Building -** £57.7m (26.04%) was spent locally with 926 suppliers. This was an increase of £6.5m from the previous year, meaning the target set in the Council Plan of 26% has been reached. The top 16 local suppliers, with spend over £1m, received 60% of the £57.7m (£34.7m) and the report details the amount spent on each category locally and what categories the spend increase relates to.

NAC's Business Support Team continue to work closely with suppliers and the Corporate Procurement Unit (CPU) to identify capable local suppliers and provide them with visibility of upcoming procurement opportunities and access to support and training to maximise their success winning contracts within legislative limitations. The ongoing Community Wealth Building (CWB) Quick Quote (QQ) process shows £2.7m of local QQs have been awarded (54% of total QQ awards).

The combined spend for NAC, East Ayrshire Council, South Ayrshire Council, NHS Ayrshire & Arran and University of West of Scotland is over £834m with £71m (8.5%) being spent with local North Ayrshire suppliers.

1.6 **Community Benefits –** Community benefits delivered are detailed including 3514 employment weeks, equating to 67 jobs and 32 wish list projects.

1.7 **Other Projects -** The report also provides details of progress of the ongoing improvement projects including the e-invoicing project, net-zero project, and procurement improvement project.

2. Background

2.1 At the Council meeting in September 2020, it was agreed that Cabinet should receive a detailed annual report covering all procurement activity. This report covers the 22-23 procurement activity.

Award Activity

2.2 During the 22-23 period, 182 different procurement exercises were undertaken by the CPU, resulting in contracts being awarded to 218 suppliers with a total value of £117,924,220.61. The different procurement types undertaken are listed below:

Procurement Type	Number of Procurements Awarded	Total Value Awarded
Quick Quotes Awarded	59	£ 5,007,009.51
Single Tender Actions Awarded	53	£ 5,782,577.95
Direct Awards Awarded	14	£ 1,975,507.45
GPA Tenders Awarded	8	£ 56,953,976.50
GPA Multi Supplier Awarded	4	£ 20,986,039.00
Non-GPA Tenders Awarded	10	£ 4,631,870.65
Non-GPA Multi Supplier Awarded	4	£ 7,966,490.00
Mini Competitions Awarded	20	£ 9,272,551.37
Mini Competitions Multi Supplier Awarded	2	£ 3,600,000.00
Self-Directed Support Option 2 Awarded	8	£ 1,748,198.18
Total	**182**	**£ 117,924,220.61**

Governance

2.3 Public sector procurement legislation regulates procurement activity for goods, services or works and there are 3 main regulations that NAC need to comply with

- Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014
- Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2015
- Procurement (Scotland) Regulations 2016

Each regulation has specific thresholds and requirements to be adhered to, and failure to adhere could lead to costly legal challenges. In addition to the external legislation the Council's Standing Orders Relating to Contracts also has requirements on how

officers are permitted to procure. The diagram below shows the activity required at specific values.

Tenders may be carried out above Quick Quote threshold and are open to any suppliers registered on Public Contract Scotland. Call-offs from established frameworks can also be carried out in the form of Directs Awards (to a sole framework supplier) or Mini-Competitions, where all relevant framework suppliers are invited, typically these frameworks are owned by Scotland Excel, Scottish Government, Crown Commercial Service and the 3 Ayrshire Councils.

2.4 NAC has a legal obligation to publish a Procurement Strategy, and an Annual Procurement Report on its regulated procurements (over £50K for supplies and services and over £2M for works), to give potential suppliers visibility of future tendering opportunities. This report provides a list of all known tender opportunities for the following two years. NAC also has a legal obligation to maintain and publish a Contract Register of all "live" contracts.

Spend Analysis

2.5 During the report period NAC spent a total of £221.6m with 3829 suppliers.

2.6 NAC buys a vast array of supplies, services and works and the table below details the top 10 categories by value, and the number of suppliers used within each category.

vCode Business Sector	Total Spend	Total Suppliers
Construction	£ 74,615,686.33	279
Social Care and Services	£ 61,021,125.04	267
Facilities Management	£ 22,955,038.72	130
Utilities & Energy	£ 10,138,094.60	31
ICT	£ 7,973,382.97	131
Healthcare	£ 6,540,205.57	67
Arts, Sports & Leisure	£ 6,047,205.57	74
Vehicles	£ 3,838,384.00	59
Travel & Accommodation	£ 3,371,394.62	83
Food Beverage & Catering	£ 3,171,021.88	51
Total	**£ 199,671,539.30**	**1172**

2.7   An analysis of the spend by suppliers shows that 43 of the 3829 suppliers, received more than £1m of business in the last year, equating to 56% of the total annual spend and at the opposite end of the spend profile, 2226 suppliers received less than £2,000 spend equating to less than 1% of total spend. The top 20 suppliers by spend account for £94m and 42% of the total expenditure. Details of suppliers is included in appendix 1 of the report.

2.8   This dataset shows that most suppliers are Scottish, and the table below shows the amount spent in each of the 4 nations.

Supplier Location	Spend	% of Total Spend	No. of Suppliers
Scotland	£172,530,210.39	80.33%	1065
England	£ 39,481,322.20	18.38%	635
Northern Ireland	£ 2,498,206.62	1.16%	22
Wales	£ 257,027.90	0.12%	15

2.9   The data also shows that where the size of the company is known, 81% are SME's. The chart below shows more detail and confirms most companies fall in the small company definition i.e., less than 50 employees.
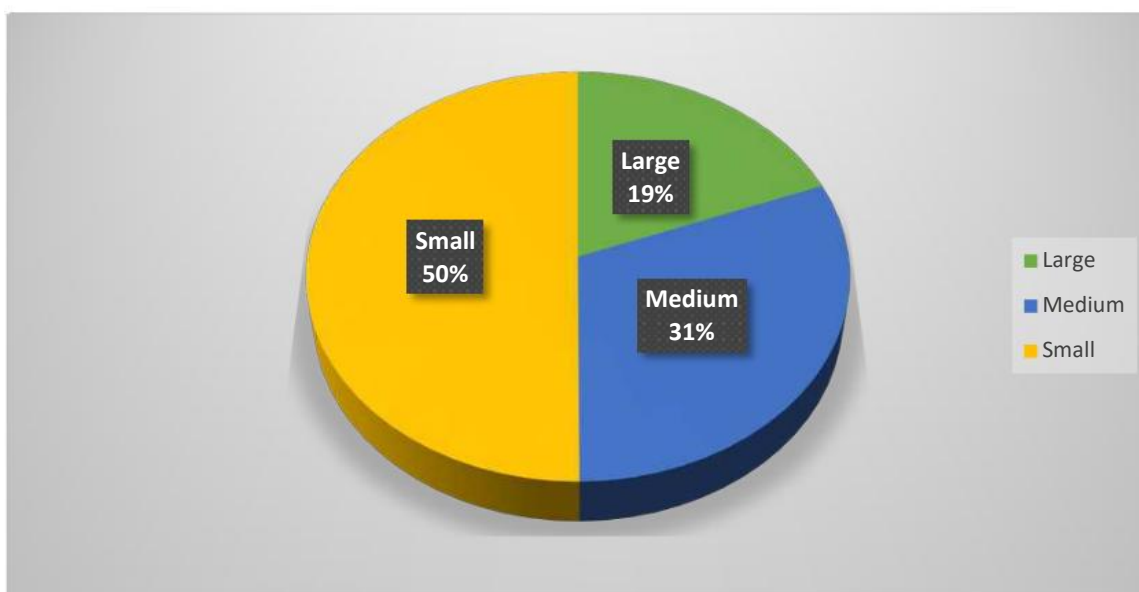
2.10   It is also recognised that Third Sector Organisation (TSOs) have a key role in delivering vital services for North Ayrshire citizens and strengthening community empowerment and during 2022-23 almost £36m was spent with 120 TSOs.

Community Wealth Building

2.11   From a CWB perspective, buying from local companies is a strategic priority for NAC, however procurement legislation does not permit preferential treatment for companies based on location. In the year covered by the report £57.7m was spent with 926 local suppliers which was an increase of £6.5m. This equated to 26.04% local spend and is a 3.11% increase on the previous year. The Council Plan included a target of 26% by

2024, and this target was reached during this reporting period, however there are many variables that can cause future fluctuation including:

- The existence, capacity, and competitiveness of the local supp/y base
- Fluctuation in NAC's requirements/budgets
- Providing services in-house rather than outsourcing
- The number of local suppliers awarded a place on National Frameworks
- An increase in total spend without a corresponding increase in local spend. i.e., a one-off large construction contract awarded to a non-local supplier.

2.12 The graphs below show the spend areas that account for the increase, with a further breakdown for suppliers out with social care and construction.

Increase in local spend

£1,711,134, 26%
£676,033, 11%
£4,085,769, 63%

■ Construction ■ Social Care ■ Other

Increase in other spend

£605,639.85, 15%
£1,042,672.64, 26%
£835,548.95, 20%
£1,601,907.37, 39%

■ Arts Sports & Leisure

■ Travel & Accommodation

■ Blanks - Not categoriesed (low value) - Inc. mix of local shops, businesses and child minders

■ Other Summary - Inc. FM, Education, Clothing HR, vehicles, Legal services etc.
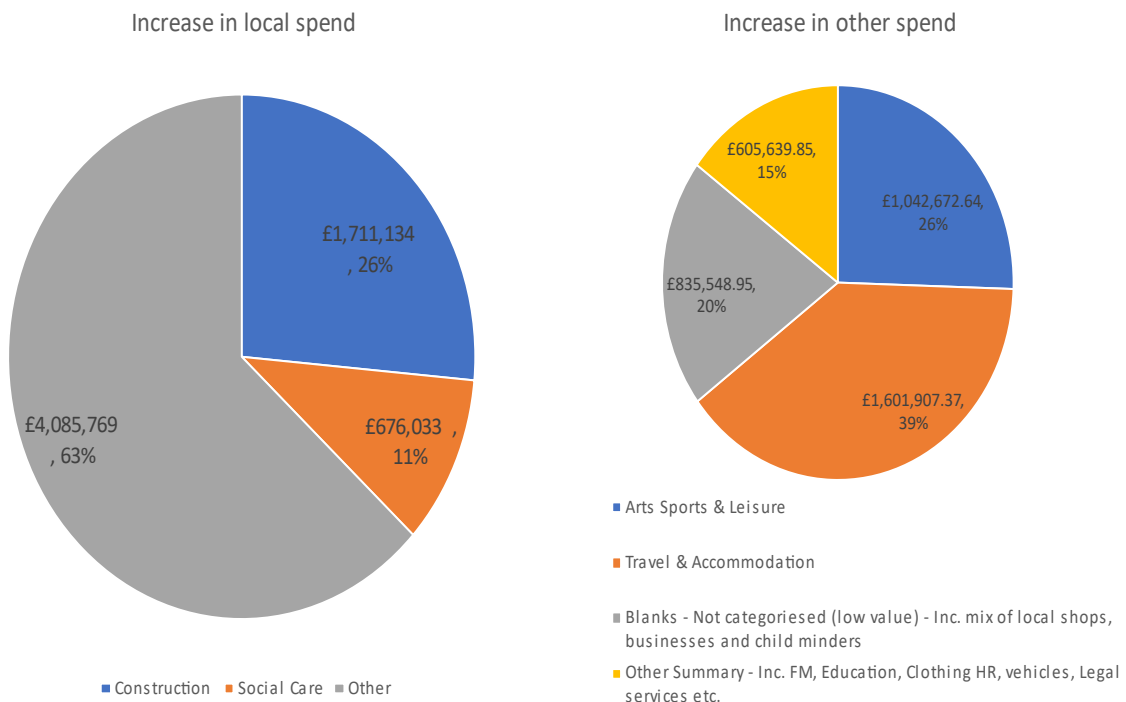
The graph below shows both the actual spend as well as the percentage of the total annual spend with local suppliers over the last 10 years.

	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23
Local Percentage	19.07%	18.88%	18.35%	19.96%	23.02%	20.31%	19.96%	21.39%	22.93%	26.04%
Local Spend	£29,896	£31,934	£35,710	£37,295	£44,669	£41,907	£43,243	£45,109	£51,220	£57,693

■ Local Spend ■ Local Percentage
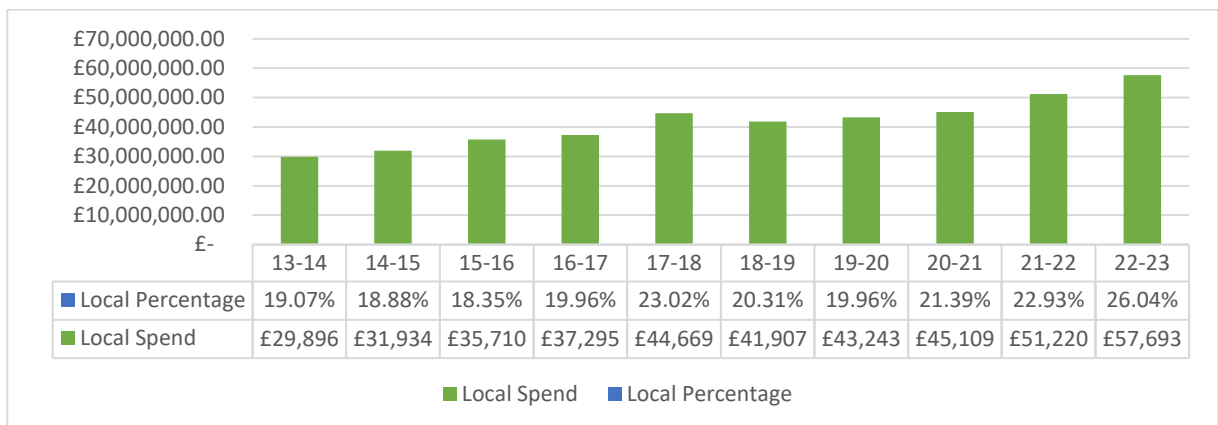
The actual spend data shows a steady increase throughout the 10-year period, almost doubling from £29.9m in 2013-14 to £57.7m in 2022-23.

2.13 The top 16 local suppliers by value all received more than £1m, with a total value of £34.7m (60% of total local spend). At the opposite end of the spend spectrum 454 local suppliers received less than £2,000, with a total value of £181k (0.3% of local spend). The graph below shows the spend distribution across local suppliers.

	Number
█ £1m or more	16
█ 500K to £1m	8
█ 100K to 500K	48
█ 50K to 100K	36
█ 10K to 50K	157
█ 2K to 10K	207
█ Less than £2k	454
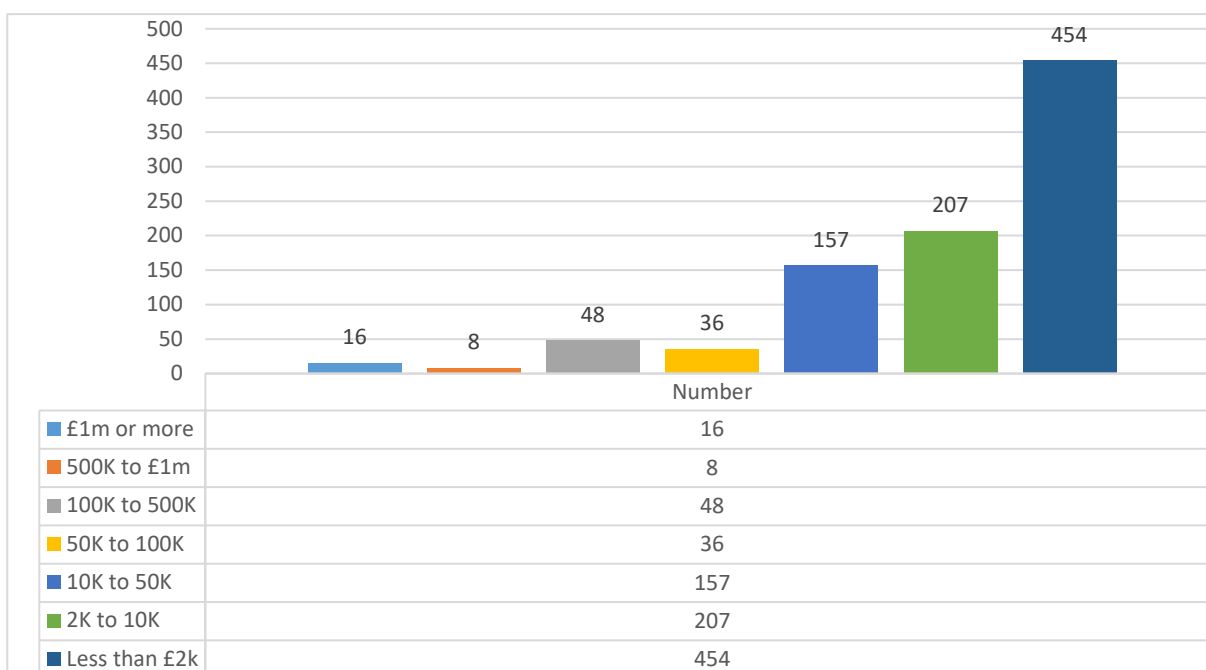
2.14 An analysis of the spend with local suppliers shows that over 73% was spent within the Social Care and Construction sectors.

Category	Value	Percentage
Social Care & Services	£23,418,714.69	41%
Construction	£18,288,653.62	32%
Arts, Sport & Leisure	£5,334,551.93	9%
Travel & Accommodation	£2,987,951.96	5%
Facilities Management	£1,459,285.26	3%
Education	£917,401.13	2%
Waste & Environmental Services	£902,499.94	2%
Business Support Services	£597,701.32	1%
Security Equipment & Services	£403,759.18	1%
Other	£2,319,885.20	4%

2.15 NAC's CPU and service teams work together to maintain a tender waveplan of all future tendering opportunities and participate in bidder's days and meet the buyer events to raise awareness of opportunities with local suppliers.

2.16 NAC's Business Support Team continued to engage and support local suppliers across North Ayrshire and during 2022/23 and there was 394 procurement related interventions, supporting 179 unique businesses and the support and interventions have focused on capacity building, putting suppliers forward for NAC QQs and Tenders, utilising specialist consultancy support, advising suppliers how to register and use PCS

and PCS-T and sign-posting to other procurement related resources such as the Supplier Development Programme.

The Business Support team continue to work closely with the CPU to streamline QQ and Tender processes and identify suitable local businesses as early in the procurement process as possible. This work means the team have further influence on smaller value spend for goods, services and works and this has led to individual service teams reaching out.   For example, PMI, Streetscene and HSCP teams have sought recommendations to gather quotes for jobs under £10k, resulting in local companies successfully winning work when they would otherwise have remained unknown to the service.

A focus also remains on actively encouraging local suppliers to bid on national frameworks, and although this does not guarantee spend it creates a pathway to supplying a product/service to any Local Authority when there is a requirement.

2.17 For lower value procurements, between £10K and £50K for supplies and services and between £10K and £500K for works, NAC use Quick Quotes. Cabinet previously approved our response to the Scottish Government consultation on Building Community Wealth in Scotland on 2 May 2023. The response included potential amendments to the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 to better support local suppliers where the supply base exists and reviewing the regulated threshold for supplies. The current NAC process states that if 4 local suppliers have the capability and capacity to do the work and agree to bid then the procurement will be restricted to those local suppliers, therefore ensuring that a local company benefits from the contract. During 22-23, 59 Quick Quotes with a value of £5m were awarded of which 22 with a value of £2.7m were awarded to local suppliers. This equated to 54%.

2.18 Through an analysis of other organisations spend data, a report on other CWB anchor institutions shows that councils have the highest annual spend and have spent the most within North Ayrshire. The combined spend for NAC, East Ayrshire Council, South Ayrshire Council, NHS Ayrshire & Arran, and the University of the West of Scotland was £834m with £71m (8.5%) spent with local North Ayrshire suppliers.

2.19 The CWB Commission promotes a collaborative approach to CWB and encourages participation of the Anchor Institutions in CWB initiatives. NAC and the other Anchor institutions have an ambition to use procurement to actively encourage and support a growing diverse and resilient local business base. All Officers involved in procuring goods and services can help achieve this ambition. The Ayrshire CWB Procurement Lead Officer Working Group has met twice during the reporting year and will carry out further work across the anchors institution to identify potential opportunities for more to be spent within Ayrshire.

Community Benefits

2.20 As part of the procurement process, community benefits are requested either on a voluntary or mandatory basis, dependant on the value of the proposed contract. The community benefits requested during 22-23 focused on employment and training, with a focus on priority groups, supply chain support, education support and community support. The table below shows what was delivered during 22-23.

67 Jobs	3514 Employment Weeks	7 Work Placements	4 SME Workshops	5 School Projects

19 Community Projects	32 Wish List Projects	7 Employability Sessions	11 Employment Fairs
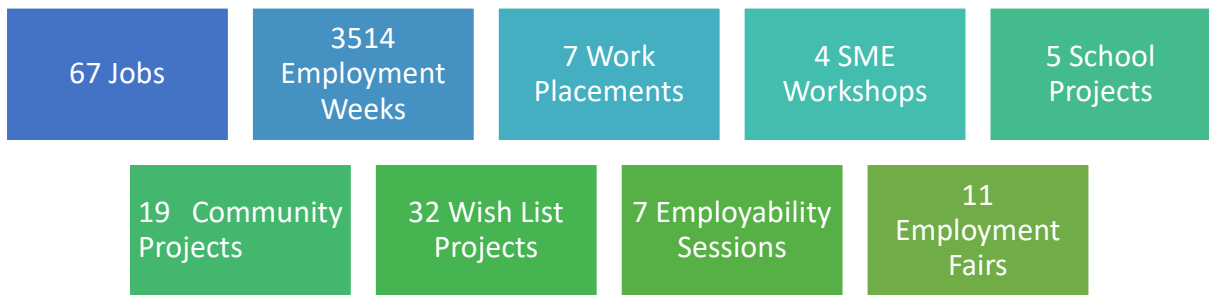
Other Projects

2.21 Additional projects were implemented throughout the year to improve procurement service.

The e-invoicing project continued to progress during 22-23 with an additional 2 suppliers being added, increasing the number of suppliers participating in this process to 7. Further rollout of the project is planned for 23-24.

To support NAC's net-zero journey, The CPU procure all goods, services and works that support reduction of climate change.

In addition to this the CPU have also created a Climate & Circular Economy Case Study for the Solar PV Farms and are in the process of creating more case studies for modular construction, flood protection, sustainable business travel and electric vehicle charging points. The CPU are currently working with Scottish Government to publish all case studies which can be found here when published.

The CPU have also created a net-zero roadmap in collaboration with the Energy and Sustainability Team that aligns with the Environmental Sustainability & Climate Change Strategy net-zero road map, which demonstrates how the CPU supports NAC to achieve its net-zero ambitions.

The CPU have also completed our first FNT2030 template in collaboration with the Transport Team for fleet that demonstrates and monitors how this category of spend will achieve its net-zero ambitions by 2030. Further templates for additional categories of spend including waste services, ICT and construction will be completed in future years.

A Procurement Improvement Action Plan has been created that outlines improvement activities ongoing during the report period. Improvement projects implemented in the report period included:

- Implementation of a Contract & Supplier Management (CSM) Policy to enable a standard approach to CSM throughout the Council, to make efficiencies and savings, take advantage of innovation, and ensure relevant information is captured to reflect performance against the National Performance Framework.

- Introduction of customer and supplier survey to collate feedback to capture essential feedback from internal customers and suppliers to record lessons learned and implement actions for continuous improvement.

- Implementation of a No PO No Pay Policy to encourage good Purchase to Pay (P2P) practice, ensuring all orders are processed via the relevant P2P system and approved prior to placing the order.

- Creation of a Strategic Training Plan to clearly document all training needs, linked to the relevant procurement strategic aims and identifying relevant training supports to ensure all needs are fulfilled.

The CPU are also currently preparing for the Procurement and Commercial Improvement Programme (PCIP), to be carried out in November 2023.

3. Proposals

3.1 Cabinet notes the contents of the report.

4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial

4.1 No direct financial implications within this report, however, all progress in growing the level of local spend will continue to be set within the context of NAC's duty to secure Best Value.

Human Resources

4.2 None.

Legal

4.3 NAC's procurement activities comply with all relevant procurement legislation and the Council's Standing Orders.

Equality/Socio-economic

4.4 None

Climate Change and Carbon

4.5 NAC's procurement activities comply with the sustainable procurement duty.

Key Priorities

4.6 None

Community Wealth Building

4.7 **Procurement**
- Community Benefits are requested as part of relevant procurement exercises
- Local suppliers will be identified and invited to quick quotes and supported through tendering and framework opportunities wherever possible.

Employment – As a Living Wage Accredited Employer, NAC strongly believes that all employees should be paid the living wage. NAC encourages all bidders to pay the living wage and ask for information on their payment of Living Wage practices. This will include the number of staff who are paid and those that are not paid the living wage, with reasons for non-payment also recorded. The CPU and The Fair Work Ayrshire Team will use this information to work with suppliers to help them achieve payment of the living wage to all employees on future contracts.

Land and Assets – Not applicable

Financial Power – Not applicable

Democratic Ownership – Not applicable

5. Consultation

5.1 Throughout all procurement exercises there is direct involvement with all relevant Directorate teams and engagement with other anchor institutions through the Community Wealth Building Commission.

Mark Boyd
Head of Service (Finance)

For further information please contact **Suzanne Quinn, Senior Manager (Corporate Procurement),** on **01294 324039**.

Background Papers
None

Appendix 1 – Top 20 Suppliers by Spend

Supplier Name	Aggregate Spend
PPP SERVICES (NORTH AYRSHIRE)	£ 13,927,010.29
HUB SOUTH WEST SCOTLAND LTD	£ 12,313,686.33
CLARK CONTRACTS LTD	£ 8,422,399.02
MARLEY CONTRACT SERVICES	£ 7,287,480.86
MCTAGGART CONSTRUCTION LTD	£ 5,500,427.28
NORTH AYRSHIRE LEISURE LIMITED	£ 5,086,615.54
MCTEAR CONTRACTS LIMITED	£ 4,309,468.91
EDF ENERGY CUSTOMERS PLC	£ 4,178,837.75
HANSEL ALLIANCE	£ 3,837,955.38
CORNERSTONE	£ 3,582,187.00
JAMES FREW LTD	£ 3,448,637.70
RICHMOND FELLOWSHIP SCOTLAND	£ 2,965,098.21
BUCKREDDAN LODGE NURSING HOME	£ 2,912,365.42
HILLHOUSE QUARRY GROUP T/A MACASPHALT	£ 2,718,389.45
TOTALENERGIES GAS & POWER LIMITED	£ 2,654,525.02
KEY HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD	£ 2,308,658.33
CALEDONIA CARE HOME	£ 2,283,704.15
THE FURNISHING SERVICE LTD	£ 2,122,492.38
W I & A GILBERT	£ 2,118,463.06
HAMILTON TARMAC	£ 2,069,491.46
Total	**£ 94,047,893.54**

NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

Agenda Item 7

05 December 2023

Cabinet

Title:	**Review of temporary accommodation**
Purpose:	To advise Cabinet of the outcome of the review of the North Ayrshire Temporary Accommodation policy and seek approval for the establishment of a Temporary Accommodation Fund to support students and people in employment who have no entitlement to Housing Benefit.
Recommendation:	It is recommended that Cabinet: (i)　considers the outcome of the Temporary Accommodation Review (ii)　approves the creation of a Temporary Accommodation Grant Fund from 1 April 2024 to support students and people in employment who have no entitlement to Housing Benefit

1. **Executive Summary**

1.1　The Council has a statutory duty to assist applicants who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, as defined in the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, as amended.

1.2　At the full Council meeting of 13 September 2023, it was agreed that officers would review the Policy and Management of Temporary Furnished Accommodation, and that a report would be submitted to Cabinet on how the policy should operate, including:
(i)　consideration of any possible adaptations or improvements which could be made to it to alleviate hardship; and
(ii)　details of any financial implications arising from any proposed changes to the policy.

1.3　The report detailing the outcome of the above review is attached at Appendix 1. The review determined that the current North Ayrshire temporary accommodation policy complies with statutory guidance and meets with best practice. It did, however, identify an opportunity to create a Temporary Accommodation Grant Fund to minimise the risk of financial hardship and reduce the impact that debt can have on people's mental wellbeing.

2. **Background**

2.1　The Council has a statutory duty to assist applicants who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, as defined in the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, as amended. These duties include the provision of temporary accommodation until such time as the Council has determined the outcome of their homeless application.

2.2　The Ending Homelessness Together Annual Report, published on 26 October 2023, details the Scottish Government's ambition to reduce the use of temporary accommodation by 2026.

23 There has been a significant increase in demand for temporary accommodation in North Ayrshire over the last two years, with fewer homeless people being able to either stay within their current home for a temporary period or live with friends and family.

24 The Council owns and operates a 20-bed direct access hostel, which is utilised as interim accommodation for homeless customers until a temporary furnished property can be identified for them.

25 In line with best practice, North Ayrshire temporary accommodation comprises predominantly of temporary furnished properties dispersed across North Ayrshire, of which there are currently 242 in use. All of these properties are owned by the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and leased to the Homeless Service at the appropriate HRA rent charge, which is based on size and whether they are houses or flats.

26 The temporary accommodation rent charge is higher than the HRA rent charge as it includes the following additional costs:
   • temporary accommodation staffing costs
   • excess repairs and maintenance beyond those covered in the rental payment to the HRA
   • void cleaning and garden maintenance
   • void rent loss and bad debt provision
   • relocation costs
   • administration costs

27 The report at Appendix 1 details the full outcome of the temporary accommodation review; below is a summary of the key findings:

   • North Ayrshire temporary accommodation predominantly comprises of temporary furnished properties across the Council area
   • the Council has never breached the Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2014, which sets out the standards expected of temporary accommodation
   • the management of the North Ayrshire Housing Support Service has been independently assessed by the Care Inspectorate as 'excellent'
   • customer satisfaction levels within temporary accommodation sits at 99%
   • Housing Support Officers are responsive to the needs of homeless people, neighbours and the wider community
   • For emergency presentations, initial placements are made in the direct access hostel, prior to sourcing a temporary furnished property within the community. In exceptional circumstances and subject to availability of suitable properties, homeless accommodation will be allocated in a specific area; this is usually where there are children within the household or a greater level of vulnerability, such as disability
   • on an annual basis approximately 22 homeless households are in full-time employment with income above the level of Housing Benefit entitlement
   • on an annual basis approximately six students approach the Council in need of homeless assistance and temporary accommodation
   • the current rent liability and the way in which the charges are managed can have an impact on people's mental wellbeing.

28 Options to minimise financial hardship for people in further education and employment who experience homelessness have been modelled, resulting in the proposal to create a Temporary Accommodation Grant fund. The fund will be available to students and

households who are in employment and have a rental liability in excess of the average North Ayrshire Council HRA rent.

2.9   Officers will assist the homeless applicant to apply for the Temporary Accommodation Grant, ensuring that there is a clear understanding that grant funding will be applied to the applicant's rent account to ensure that the maximum rent due is capped at the average Council HRA rent.

2.10   An information leaflet detailing the rent calculation process and how the homeless applicant will be supported to apply for both benefit and grant funding will be developed and given to anyone who requires temporary accommodation.

2.11   The Temporary Accommodation Grant will ensure temporary accommodation is affordable for all homeless people, minimising the risk of financial hardship and supporting the Council's wider financial inclusion work.

Financial Implications of creating a Temporary Accommodation Grant Fund

2.12   The fund will be available to students and households who have a rent liability above the average Council HRA rent.

2.13   The average duration of homelessness is 26 weeks; annually approximately 22 people have no entitlement to Housing Benefit. This will result in a requirement to have annual grant funding available of £160,000.

2.14   On an annual basis there are approximately six students residing in temporary accommodation; this would require grant funding of £56,000.

2.15   Currently, where tenants are unable to pay the temporary accommodation rental charge, the bad debt is written off in accordance with the Council's Corporate Write-Off Policy. The Council has a bad debt provision and write-off provision within the budget to account for this.

2.16   It is envisioned that if this approach was taken the bad debt provision would reduce over time so that no net additional funding would be required overall. However, there will be a requirement for initial funding of £216,000 to set up the Temporary Accommodation Grant Fund.

2.17   The Housing General Fund will be utilised to set up the Temporary Accommodation Grant Fund.

2.18   The creation of a Temporary Accommodation Grant will ensure that temporary accommodation is affordable for all homeless people.

3.0   Proposals

It is proposed that Cabinet:
   I.   considers the outcome of the Temporary Accommodation Review
   II.   approves the creation of a Temporary Accommodation Grant Fund from 1 April 2024 to support students and people in employment who have no entitlement to Housing Benefit

4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial

4.1   It is anticipated that the creation of a Temporary Accommodation Grant Fund will enable a reduction in the homeless bad debt provision over time, so that no additional funding will be required overall. However, there will be a requirement for initial funding of £216,000 to set up the Temporary Accommodation Grant Fund. The Housing General Fund will be utilised to set up the Temporary Accommodation Grant Fund.

Human Resources

4.2   The creation and administration of the Temporary Accommodation Grant Fund will be managed within current staffing resources.

Legal

4.3   None

Equality/Socio-economic

4.4   The Temporary Accommodation Grant will ensure temporary accommodation is affordable for all homeless people, minimising the risk of financial hardship.

Climate Change and Carbon

4.4   None

Key Priorities

4.5 The matters referred to in this report support the delivery of the Council Plan Wellbeing priority: tackling inequality by maximising access to and uptake of benefits, entitlements, and financial advice.

Community Wealth Building

4.6   None

5   Consultation

5.1   Consultation with officers providing support, advice and assistance to homeless households was undertaken to inform the review of temporary accommodation.

RUSSELL McCUTCHEON
Executive Director (Place)

For further information please contact **Janeine Barrett, Senior Manager (Homelessness and Community Safety) janeinebarrett@north-ayrshire.gov.uk 01294-314600**

Background Papers
1   Review of Temporary Accommodation and Management Report

Review of Temporary Accommodation and Management

Janeine Barrett (Senior Manager / Homeless & Comm Safety)

December 2023

Contents

1. Review of temporary accommodation

Background

The Council has a statutory duty to assist applicants who are homeless or threatened with homelessness as defined in the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, as amended. These duties include the provision of temporary accommodation until such time as the Council has determined the outcome of their homeless application.

At the full Council meeting of 13 September 2023, the Council agreed:

(a)   that officers review the Policy and Management of Temporary Furnished Accommodation; and

(b)   that a report be submitted to the Cabinet on how the policy should operate, including (i) consideration of any possible adaptations or improvements which could be made to it to alleviate hardship and (ii) detail any financial implications arising from any proposed changes to the policy.

This report summarises the outcome of the above review and is submitted to the Cabinet for approval.

Legislative position

Interim Duty to Accommodate (Section 29 of the 1987 Act, as amended by Section 9 of the 2003 Act)[1]

Where the local authority has reason to believe an applicant is homeless there is an interim duty to secure accommodation until a final decision on their application has been reached.

Where the authority has a duty to provide an offer of permanent accommodation under Section 31 of the Act, the interim duty continues until the duty is discharged.

The Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2014 (UAO)

The Scottish Government has enacted the Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2014[2] which details the standards which temporary accommodation for households with children and pregnant women must meet. The purpose of this Order is to put an end to the routine use of B&B's and other unsuitable accommodation for these households.

Under this Order, local authorities cannot put households with children and pregnant women into "unsuitable" temporary accommodation unless exceptional circumstances apply. Exceptional circumstances are intended to give flexibility to councils when meeting their new duty, as well as giving families the ability to exercise choice in whether to stay in unsuitable accommodation beyond 7 days.

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[1] Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003 (legisla�on.gov.uk)
[2] The Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommoda�on) (Scotland) Order 2014 (legisla�on.gov.uk)

North Ayrshire Council has never been in breach of the unsuitable accommodation order.

When carrying out functions under the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 with respect to a homeless person, local authorities are required to have regard to the Code of Guidance on Homelessness 2019[3].

Advisory Standards for Temporary Accommodation

The Temporary Accommodation Standards Framework April 2023[4] sets out advisory standards in relation to temporary accommodation and addresses:

- physical standards
- location standards
- service standards
- management standards

The Ending Homelessness Together Annual Report, published on 26 October 2023, details the progress made over the last 12 months by national government, local government and third sector partners towards ending homelessness in Scotland.

The report details the Scottish Government's ambition to reduce the use of temporary accommodation by 2026, and the guidance being developed on how national acquisition plan funds can be used to purchase empty and private sector homes and alleviate the pressures in temporary accommodation.

The report further details Scottish Ministers' aspirations for a greater proportion of social rented homes to be allocated to homeless households. North Ayrshire Council has increased its allocation to homeless people from 25% to 41% over the last five years.

North Ayrshire temporary accommodation

There has been a significant demand for temporary accommodation in North Ayrshire over the last two years, with fewer homeless people being able to stay either within their current home for a temporary period, or live care of friends and family.

The Council owns and operates a 20-bed direct access hostel which provides interim accommodation until temporary furnished accommodation can be identified. The hostel was upgraded during 2021/22 to ensure that all rooms, with the exception of two emergency rooms, are fully self-contained, each with their own kitchen and bathroom. With the refurbishment of the hostel, this accommodation does not breach the UAO.

In line with best practice, the North Ayrshire temporary accommodation comprises predominantly of temporary furnished properties dispersed across North Ayrshire, of which there are currently 242 units.

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[3] Code of Guidance on Homelessness: Guidance on legisla�on, policies and prac�ces to prevent and resolve homelessness (www.gov.scot)

[4] Temporary accommoda�on standards framework - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

The above arrangements allows officers, where possible, to place homeless households within their town of preference where they have access to their own social networks, school, GP and wider support provision.

> Possible adaptations or improvements which could be made:
> The above approach is in line with best practice; therefore, no changes are proposed

2. Management of temporary accommodation

Accommodation type and duration

The direct access hostel is owned and managed by North Ayrshire Council. It operates 24 hours per day, 365 days per year and has three members of staff on a rotating shift rota. The day-to-day management of the hostel is undertaken by the Homelessness and Community Safety Coordinator responsible for temporary accommodation.

All temporary furnished properties are North Ayrshire Council houses or flats, which are owned by the HRA and leased to the Homeless Service at the appropriate rent. The properties are managed by the Team Leader – Temporary Accommodation, supported by a team of Property Officers. In addition, the Housing Support Team manage the support needs of homeless people residing within the properties and respond to issues arising within the neighbourhood resulting from any negative behaviour being perpetrated by the homeless household.

These properties are used as temporary accommodation for a period of approximately five years. Where there have been no issues within the community, the duration of use as temporary accommodation may be extended. Where there is an excessive level of complaints, consideration will be given to returning the properties back to the mainstream housing stock after three years.

> Possible adaptations or improvements which could be made:
> There is discretion as to the duration that a property is utilised as temporary accommodation, and a process in place to ensure on selecting accommodation that it is sustainable; therefore, no changes are proposed.

Allocation process

Where a household presents to the Council as homeless and advises that they have no accommodation available to them, they will be offered a placement within the direct access hostel until a temporary furnished property becomes available.

Where a household refuses accommodation, an officer will ascertain where they are going to stay on an interim basis, and they are asked to contact the Council again when accommodation is required.

Where a household is provided with temporary accommodation and is asked to leave because of their behaviour, alternative accommodation will be provided.

Council Officers have piloted different ways of allocating temporary accommodation. This includes utilising waiting lists and using the hostel as a longer stay provision to try and free space in furnished properties.

Possible adaptations or improvements which could be made:
For emergency presentations, initial placements are made in the direct access hostel, prior to sourcing a temporary furnished property within the community. In exceptional circumstances and subject to availability of suitable properties, homeless accommodation will be allocated in a specific area; this is usually where there are children within the household or a greater level of vulnerability, such as disability.

Support in Temporary Furnished Accommodation

Every temporary furnished property has a dedicated Housing Support Officer who delivers services aligned to the national support standards which is scrutinised independently by the Care Inspectorate[5]. North Ayrshire Council has consistently received a five-star rating for the quality of support provision within temporary accommodation.

In addition to working with homeless households to prepare for independent living and resettlement into mainstream housing, Support Officers liaise with partner agencies in response to the needs of their client.

Where issues arise within temporary accommodation the Housing Support Officer will work with the tenant, neighbours, support services and other agencies, for example Police Scotland, to try and resolve arising issues. Where issues cannot be resolved, the support officer will arrange to have the household moved to alternative accommodation.

Possible adaptations or improvements which could be made:
The North Ayrshire Temporary Accommodation Housing Support Service has been independently assessed as an excellent provision. The customer satisfaction levels within temporary accommodation sits at 99%.

Officers are responsive to the needs of neighbours and the wider community; therefore, no changes are proposed.

Cost of Temporary Furnished Accommodation

The cost of temporary accommodation varies across Scotland from that of a standard council rent up to that of £480 per week. The level of service provision also varies in terms of whether a property is furnished, supported, has a property management team etc.

As detailed above, North Ayrshire Council provides 242 fully furnished properties dispersed across North Ayrshire.

The temporary accommodation rent charge is higher than the HRA rent charge as it includes the following additional costs:

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[5] Introduc�on - Na�onal Care Standards: Housing Support Services - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

- temporary accommodation staffing costs
- excess repairs and maintenance beyond those covered in the rental payment to the HRA
- void cleaning and garden maintenance
- void rent loss and bad debt provision
- relocation costs
- administration costs

When considering the rental charge for temporary accommodation North Ayrshire Council follow the Code of Guidance which states, "In deciding what is reasonable, the local authority should take account of what the applicant can pay in the longer term. If an applicant is being asked to pay for accommodation provided by the local authority, then the applicant should be:
- informed in advance of the cost of the accommodation
- assisted when applying for benefit to cover the cost of such accommodation
- and advised of the likely level of benefit when considering charges"

The Scottish Social Housing Charter[6] sets out standards including those which tenants and homeless people can expect from social landlords. Outcome 14 states:" Social landlords set rents and service charges in consultation with their tenants and other customers so that:
- a balance is struck between the level of services provided, the cost of the services and how far current and prospective tenants and service users can afford them

Where it is identified that a person is homeless and in need of temporary accommodation, a Housing Advice Officer will explain the rent charging process and undertake a rental calculation to ascertain any rent charges that the applicant may be liable for.

The applicant is advised of the estimated rental charge and the assistance that can be provided based on the income detail provided. It is explained that the Housing Support Officer will assist with a Housing Benefit application on booking into accommodation.

The current rental charge for a temporary furnished property is £358.82 per week; these costs are fully met by Housing Benefit for households who qualify. Where an applicant is working, they will be advised to pay a standard amount of £80 per week (this is comparable with council rental charges for mainstream tenancies). The balance will accrue as rent arrears on their account. Officers try to reassure the tenant not to be concerned about this as they can enter an affordable repayment agreement when they are rehoused. Where it is determined that the arrears are unaffordable the debt will be written off as bad debt.

As well as assisting the applicant to submit an application for Housing Benefit, the Housing Support Officer will also assist those with a rent liability to apply to the Social Welfare Fund for a Discretionary Housing Benefit payment to assist with the rent costs.

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[6] Sco�sh Social Housing Charter November 2022 - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

Where the household income exceeds the qualifying level for Housing Benefit, an income and expenditure assessment is completed to determine an affordable rental charge, with the maximum amount of £80 per week set to reflect the average HRA rent.

When a household moves out of temporary accommodation, any arrears they have accrued will be transferred to 'former tenant' arrears. Any outstanding debts are pursued in line with the Former Tenant Arrears Management Policy. Where all avenues for recovery have been exhausted or due to the amount outstanding, further action is uneconomical, consideration will be given to write off the debt in accordance with the Council's Corporate Write-Off Policy. The Council has a bad debt provision and write off provision within the budget to account for this.

Current overview of homeless applicants within dispersed/direct access accommodation.

There is currently one person residing in temporary accommodation in full time employment with no entitlement to Housing Benefit.

Officers have reviewed our records of the last six months and have determined that there have been 96 people residing in temporary accommodation who had a rental charge, of which 11 had no entitlement to Housing Benefit. On an annual basis this would mean that approximately 22 households would have no entitlement to Housing Benefit.

Students within temporary accommodation

There are currently no students residing within temporary accommodation. However, on an annual basis, the Council receive approximately six approaches from people who are studying.

Most (but not all) full-time students are not entitled to Housing Benefit; this is dependent on the level of course and the age of the student.

A full-time student who is already in receipt of Housing Benefit at the point of homelessness can continue to get Housing Benefit as a student if they meet one of the following conditions:

- receive Income Support (IS) or income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) or income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- are a lone parent or a member of a couple who are responsible for a child and they are both full-time students
- are a lone foster carer with a child formally placed with them by a local authority or voluntary agency
- receive Disability Living Allowance (DLA), Personal Independence Payment (PIP), Adult Disability Payment Scotland or Attendance Allowance, the disability or severe disability element of Working Tax Credit or a War Pensioner's Disability Supplement
- they or their partner are registered blind

- have been unable to work due to sickness or disability for at least 28 weeks
- qualify for a Disabled Student's Allowance because they are deaf
- take time out from their course because of illness or caring responsibilities in certain circumstances
- are under 21 on a non-advanced course - age can sometimes be extended to 22
- are over 66 are not getting Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). If they qualify for guaranteed Pension Credit, they will receive maximum entitlement to Housing Benefit.

On review of this process, it was recognised that the accrual of debt can have a significant impact on people's mental wellbeing.

Possible adaptations or improvements which could be made:

It is proposed that the Council sets up a Temporary Accommodation Grant fund which will be available to households who are in employment and have a rental liability more than the average weekly Council rent.

At the initial interview when the rental calculation is completed, applicants will be advised that the maximum they will need to pay is the standard weekly rent charge, currently set at £80.

We will assist the applicant throughout the process to complete the necessary paperwork to ensure that the full Housing Benefit due is claimed to support the Temporary Accommodation Grant process.

We will develop an information leaflet which clearly details the rent calculation process and how we will support the applicants through this.

It is envisioned that if this approach was taken the bad debt provision would reduce over time so that no additional funding would be required. However, there will be a requirement for initial funding of £216,000 to set up the Temporary Accommodation Grant Fund.

A review of non-employee expenditure and income budgets across the Housing General Fund will be undertaken in order to identify appropriate underspends or over-recovery of income which can utilised to set up the Temporary Accommodation Grant Fund.

Financial implications

The fund would be available to students and households who have a rent liability above the average Council HRA rent, with no entitlement to Housing Benefit.

The average duration of homelessness is 26 weeks and there are approximately 22 people on an annual basis with no entitlement to Housing Benefit. This would result in a requirement to have grant funding available of £160,000 for these applicants.

On an annual basis there are approximately six students residing in temporary accommodation, this would require a grant funding of £56,000.

It is envisioned that if this approach was taken the bad debt provision would reduce over time so that no additional funding overall would be required. However, there will be a requirement for initial funding of £216,000 to set up the Temporary Accommodation Grant Fund.

A review of non-employee expenditure and income budgets across the Housing General Fund will be undertaken in order to identify appropriate underspends or over-recovery of income which can utilised to set up the Temporary Accommodation Grant Fund.

The creation of a Temporary Accommodation Grant would ensure that temporary accommodation is affordable for all homeless people.

3. Current position

Leaving temporary accommodation
Local authorities' duty to secure accommodation for unintentionally homeless people is fulfilled by a single offer of housing, even if this is refused by the applicant, provided that the offer was a reasonable one.

Applicants have the right to request a review of any decision made in relation to their application which includes the offer of housing. There is a robust appeals process in place and independent advocacy services to assist with an appeal where an applicant believes the offer of housing to be unsuitable.

Housing Support
The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 introduced a duty, under Section 32B of the 1987 Act[7], on local authorities to conduct a housing support assessment for applicants who are unintentionally homeless or threatened with homelessness and who they 'have reason to believe' need housing support.

Regulation 2 of The Housing Support Services (Homelessness) (Scotland) Regulations 2012[8] prescribes four types of housing support services which apply for the purposes of the duty. These are for advising or assisting a person:
- with personal budgeting, debt counselling or in dealing with welfare benefit claims
- to engage with individuals, professionals or other bodies with an interest in that person's welfare

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[7] Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 (legisla�on.gov.uk)
[8] The Housing Support Services (Homelessness) (Scotland) Regula�ons 2012 (legisla�on.gov.uk)

133

- in understanding and managing their tenancy rights and responsibilities, including assisting a person in disputes about those rights and responsibilities
- in settling into a new tenancy

The Housing Support Officer will work with the household throughout their period of homelessness in preparation for independent living. The support includes an assessment of the requirement for furniture. At the point of allocation of a tenancy, where a household has no furniture, the Housing Support Officer will assist the applicant to apply to the Social Welfare fund for grant funding to assist with basic furniture and essential goods for the home. If the applicant has been offered a North Ayrshire Council tenancy, they can also apply for a furnished tenancy grant which will provide beds, bedding, a refrigerator, and a microwave.

Every household allocated a tenancy following a period of homelessness will be provided with resettlement support for a period of six weeks. In addition, the housing support service will be available to them for the first twelve months of their tenancy to maximise tenancy sustainment.

> Possible adaptations or improvements which could be made:
>
> Officers will undertake a review of the timescales to be awarded grant funding from the Scottish Welfare Fund to ensure homeless people can access appropriate financial support at the point of allocation to enable them to move into their new home timeously.

Review of Temporary Accommodation and Management

Janeine Barrett (Senior Manager / Homeless & Comm Safety)

December 2023

Contents

1. Review of temporary accommodation

Background
The Council has a statutory duty to assist applicants who are homeless or threatened with homelessness as defined in the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, as amended. These duties include the provision of temporary accommodation until such time as the Council has determined the outcome of their homeless application.

At the full Council meeting of 13 September 2023, the Council agreed:

(a)   that officers review the Policy and Management of Temporary Furnished Accommodation; and

(b)   that a report be submitted to the Cabinet on how the policy should operate, including (i) consideration of any possible adaptations or improvements which could be made to it to alleviate hardship and (ii) detail any financial implications arising from any proposed changes to the policy.

This report summarises the outcome of the above review and is submitted to the Cabinet for approval.

Legislative position
Interim Duty to Accommodate (Section 29 of the 1987 Act, as amended by Section 9 of the 2003 Act)[1]
Where the local authority has reason to believe an applicant is homeless there is an interim duty to secure accommodation until a final decision on their application has been reached.

Where the authority has a duty to provide an offer of permanent accommodation under Section 31 of the Act, the interim duty continues until the duty is discharged.

The Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2014 (UAO)
The Scottish Government has enacted the Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2014[2] which details the standards which temporary accommodation for households with children and pregnant women must meet. The purpose of this Order is to put an end to the routine use of B&B's and other unsuitable accommodation for these households.

Under this Order, local authorities cannot put households with children and pregnant women into "unsuitable" temporary accommodation unless exceptional circumstances apply. Exceptional circumstances are intended to give flexibility to councils when meeting their new duty, as well as giving families the ability to exercise choice in whether to stay in unsuitable accommodation beyond 7 days.

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[1] Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003 (legislation.gov.uk)
[2] The Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2014 (legislation.gov.uk)

North Ayrshire Council has never been in breach of the unsuitable accommodation order.

When carrying out functions under the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 with respect to a homeless person, local authorities are required to have regard to the Code of Guidance on Homelessness 2019[3].

Advisory Standards for Temporary Accommodation
The Temporary Accommodation Standards Framework April 2023[4] sets out advisory standards in relation to temporary accommodation and addresses:

- physical standards
- location standards
- service standards
- management standards

The Ending Homelessness Together Annual Report, published on 26 October 2023, details the progress made over the last 12 months by national government, local government and third sector partners towards ending homelessness in Scotland.

The report details the Scottish Government's ambition to reduce the use of temporary accommodation by 2026, and the guidance being developed on how national acquisition plan funds can be used to purchase empty and private sector homes and alleviate the pressures in temporary accommodation.

The report further details Scottish Ministers' aspirations for a greater proportion of social rented homes to be allocated to homeless households. North Ayrshire Council has increased its allocation to homeless people from 25% to 41% over the last five years.

North Ayrshire temporary accommodation
There has been a significant demand for temporary accommodation in North Ayrshire over the last two years, with fewer homeless people being able to stay either within their current home for a temporary period, or live care of friends and family.

The Council owns and operates a 20-bed direct access hostel which provides interim accommodation until temporary furnished accommodation can be identified. The hostel was upgraded during 2021/22 to ensure that all rooms, with the exception of two emergency rooms, are fully self-contained, each with their own kitchen and bathroom. With the refurbishment of the hostel, this accommodation does not breach the UAO.

In line with best practice, the North Ayrshire temporary accommodation comprises predominantly of temporary furnished properties dispersed across North Ayrshire, of which there are currently 242 units.

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[3] Code of Guidance on Homelessness: Guidance on legislation, policies and practices to prevent and resolve homelessness (www.gov.scot)
[4] Temporary accommodation standards framework - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

The above arrangements allows officers, where possible, to place homeless households within their town of preference where they have access to their own social networks, school, GP and wider support provision.

> Possible adaptations or improvements which could be made:
> The above approach is in line with best practice; therefore, no changes are proposed

2. Management of temporary accommodation

Accommodation type and duration

The direct access hostel is owned and managed by North Ayrshire Council. It operates 24 hours per day, 365 days per year and has three members of staff on a rotating shift rota. The day-to-day management of the hostel is undertaken by the Homelessness and Community Safety Coordinator responsible for temporary accommodation.

All temporary furnished properties are North Ayrshire Council houses or flats, which are owned by the HRA and leased to the Homeless Service at the appropriate rent. The properties are managed by the Team Leader – Temporary Accommodation, supported by a team of Property Officers. In addition, the Housing Support Team manage the support needs of homeless people residing within the properties and respond to issues arising within the neighbourhood resulting from any negative behaviour being perpetrated by the homeless household.

These properties are used as temporary accommodation for a period of approximately five years. Where there have been no issues within the community, the duration of use as temporary accommodation may be extended. Where there is an excessive level of complaints, consideration will be given to returning the properties back to the mainstream housing stock after three years.

> Possible adaptations or improvements which could be made:
> There is discretion as to the duration that a property is utilised as temporary accommodation, and a process in place to ensure on selecting accommodation that it is sustainable; therefore, no changes are proposed.

Allocation process

Where a household presents to the Council as homeless and advises that they have no accommodation available to them, they will be offered a placement within the direct access hostel until a temporary furnished property becomes available.

Where a household refuses accommodation, an officer will ascertain where they are going to stay on an interim basis, and they are asked to contact the Council again when accommodation is required.

Where a household is provided with temporary accommodation and is asked to leave because of their behaviour, alternative accommodation will be provided.

Council Officers have piloted different ways of allocating temporary accommodation. This includes utilising waiting lists and using the hostel as a longer stay provision to try and free space in furnished properties.

Possible adaptations or improvements which could be made:
For emergency presentations, initial placements are made in the direct access hostel, prior to sourcing a temporary furnished property within the community. In exceptional circumstances and subject to availability of suitable properties, homeless accommodation will be allocated in a specific area; this is usually where there are children within the household or a greater level of vulnerability, such as disability.

Support in Temporary Furnished Accommodation

Every temporary furnished property has a dedicated Housing Support Officer who delivers services aligned to the national support standards which is scrutinised independently by the Care Inspectorate[5]. North Ayrshire Council has consistently received a five-star rating for the quality of support provision within temporary accommodation.

In addition to working with homeless households to prepare for independent living and resettlement into mainstream housing, Support Officers liaise with partner agencies in response to the needs of their client.

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Possible adaptations or improvements which could be made:
The North Ayrshire Temporary Accommodation Housing Support Service has been independently assessed as an excellent provision. The customer satisfaction levels within temporary accommodation sits at 99%.

Officers are responsive to the needs of neighbours and the wider community; therefore, no changes are proposed.

Cost of Temporary Furnished Accommodation

The cost of temporary accommodation varies across Scotland from that of a standard council rent up to that of £480 per week. The level of service provision also varies in terms of whether a property is furnished, supported, has a property management team etc.

As detailed above, North Ayrshire Council provides 242 fully furnished properties dispersed across North Ayrshire.

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[5] Introduction - National Care Standards: Housing Support Services - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

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Most (but not all) full-time students are not entitled to Housing Benefit; this is dependent on the level of course and the age of the student.

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NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL   Agenda Item 8

5 December 2023

Cabinet

Title:	**Sustainable North Ayrshire Strategy 2024-27**
Purpose:	To seek approval of the proposed Sustainable North Ayrshire Strategy 2024-27.
Recommendation:	That Cabinet approves the proposed Sustainable North Ayrshire Strategy 2024-27 at Appendix 1.

1.   Executive Summary

1.1   It is widely recognised that the world is facing a climate and nature crisis. The Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and has committed to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030. The Council's previous Environmental Sustainability & Climate Change Strategies (ESCCS) have helped to achieve a 69% reduction in emissions from the Council's estate, and 43% reduction area-wide (using a baseline year of 2005/06).

1.2   The proposed Sustainable North Ayrshire Strategy at Appendix 1 provides the next iteration of the ESCCS, covering the period 2024-2027. It provides an overview of work that has taken place to tackle climate change so far and sets out the journey ahead through implementation of nine strategic priorities, specific project actions across five workstreams and a proposed Carbon Footprint and Project Register.

1.3   Cabinet is invited to approve the proposed strategy at Appendix 1 for implementation.

2.   Background

2.1   In 2018, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report warned that the world has until 2030 to keep global temperatures from rising more than 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels before damage to the planet is irreversible. In June 2019, the Council declared a Climate Emergency, and has set an area-wide ambition to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030, in line with the IPCC report.

2.2   In September 2023, the Scottish Government recognised that the country is now faced with a 'Nature Emergency' and are consulting on a draft Biodiversity Framework and five-year Delivery Plan for the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy.

2.3   The Council Plan 2023-28 sets out North Ayrshire Council's commitment to deliver on tackling climate change. The new Sustainable North Ayrshire Strategy has been developed to support this ambition alongside the continuing strategic aim of achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2030 and to halt biodiversity loss and be Nature Positive by the same date.

2.4   Since our first Carbon Management Plan in 2005, North Ayrshire Council has been proactive in reducing carbon emissions. Our first Environmental Sustainability & Climate Change Strategy (ESCCS) was published in 2014 and updated in 2017 and

again in 2021, setting an area wide target to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030 (based on a 2005 baseline year). We have already achieved a 69% reduction in emissions since 2005 across the Council's estate, and an almost 43% reduction area wide.

2.5 These emissions reductions are from various projects and actions across the local authority area. Some examples of achievements and successes delivered through the last ESCCS (2021-23) include:

- Further reduced our carbon emissions across the Council's estate by an estimated 14,600 tonnes.
- Entered into a design and build contract for the delivery of two solar farms to provide installed capacity of some 12MW of renewable energy.
- Operation of 7MW of installed capacity providing district heating to over 300 homes.
- Launch of a range of measures to address fuel poverty and alleviate the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis through Energy Smart and ECO 4 Flex.
- Launch of a new fund to support community energy generation.
- We continue to be one of the top performing local authorities for household recycling rates in Scotland, at 55.3%.
- Avoided 102,658 tonnes of municipal waste being sent to landfill by participation in the Clyde Valley Project, to recover energy from waste, generating enough electricity to power 32,000 homes.
- Roll-out of 31 electric vehicles across our fleet and installation of 32 publicly accessible Electric Vehicle (EV) charge points across North Ayrshire, and 29 workplace chargers to support the decarbonisation of the Council's fleet vehicles.
- Approved a partnership with East and South Ayrshire Councils to implement a £5m investment, subject to external funding, to provide over 300 new EV chargers across the three Council areas (including 106 in North Ayrshire).
- Nearly 80% of our streetlights have been upgraded to energy saving LEDs.
- Completion of the Upper Garnock Valley Flood Protection Scheme and progressing the Millport Flood Protection scheme to protect buildings and prevent coastal erosion, as we adapt to the impacts of climate change.
- Implementation of North Ayrshire's 2030 Woodland: A Tree Planting Strategy, part of the Council's £500k project to plant 108,000 trees to help remove carbon from the atmosphere, with over 35,000 trees planted to date.
- Supporting islands on the journey to net zero through the Cabron Neutral Islands project in Cumbrae.
- Creation of a Climate Change Steering Group, comprising of local businesses, Community Planning partners, Council and voluntary services to support the net zero journey in North Ayrshire.

2.6 In preparing the next iteration of the ESCCS, a key aim was to make our work around tackling climate change more accessible. The strategy has therefore been renamed to 'Sustainable North Ayrshire' and now includes five simplified workstreams to link climate change to everyday behaviour and activities. The workstreams are:
- Energy
- Nature
- Waste
- Transport
- Adaptation

2.6.1 A series of stakeholder engagement sessions across autumn 2023 were held to hear the views of local communities, young people and businesses on climate change. The mini-enquiry model was used to engage with each locality in North Ayrshire, as well as an online questionnaire, Primary 7 Council workshop, and a Climate Change Steering

Group online workshop. We have learned from these sessions that there needs to be a more persistent presence within communities to make the net zero conversation more accessible, and to better support communities in identifying their climate change priorities and enabling action. Carbon literacy training would also be beneficial, in order to support the language used and offer greater understanding of what climate change means at a local level. This is proposed as an action in the new strategy.

2.7   The strategy follows the nine strategic principles approved by Cabinet on 22 November 2022, to help set priorities and actions for the period of the strategy. These are:

- We will take a whole system approach (including through behaviour change) to tackling climate change as far as possible, including identification of optimal approaches to achieve social and economic benefits alongside environmental ones.
- We will continue to clarify and report transparently on our emissions so that the North Ayrshire emissions baseline is clearly understood.
- We will complete a Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy to help understand where efforts to reducing emissions and reducing fuel poverty are best focused.
- We will prioritise actions in relation to two of the biggest emissions sources where we will have the most influence, commonly referred to as 'heat and fleet', including through project pathfinder approaches for decarbonisation of domestic and non-domestic buildings and vehicles to bring scale and pace to emissions reduction.
- We will work with stakeholders, including the Scottish Government, to articulate the potential costs and skills requirements to meet our net-zero aspirations.
- We will expand on the need for adaptation measures, recognising mitigation alone will not combat the impacts of climate changes on communities.
- We will identify opportunities for expansion of carbon sinks and other carbon capture technologies, which are expected to be an essential element of our net-zero strategy to mitigate residual emissions by 2030.
- We will seek to expand the remit and membership of the CCSG to enable us to work more closely with communities, taking account of outcomes from recent projects such as Climate Action Towns and Carbon Neutral Islands.
- We will explore the potential for carbon accounting, including carbon budgets for Council services, to support our journey to net-zero.

2.8   It is acknowledged that 2030 is now only six years away. Outline calculations have been completed to understand the further emissions reduction work required across North Ayrshire. Based on our current emission reduction trend, we aim to reduce North Ayrshire area wide emissions by a further $269ktCO_2e$ by 2030. For the Council's own estate emissions, we are aiming to reduce by a further $8,465tCO_2e$ by 2030. The residual estimated emissions ($533 ktCO_2e$ area wide, and $12,431 tCO_2e$ for the Council's estate) would then be sequestered. The emission reductions will be met through a range of actions which have been identified under each of the five workstreams. It is proposed that the Sustainable Scotland Network's Carbon Footprint and Project Register is used to consolidate carbon reduction projects across the Council in one platform. The register allows the calculation of carbon savings associated to each project to be recorded, which supports the mandatory Public Bodies Climate Change Reporting duty.

2.9   Some of the key actions proposed in the new strategy include:

- Development of new municipal renewable energy projects, including at i3, Irvine, subject to further feasibility work and available funding.
- Undertaking of community carbon literacy training and development of Community Climate Actions Plans for each locality and support action identified on islands.
- Exploration of the use of Sustainable Scotland Networks' Climate Change Impact

Assessment.
- Implementation of Nature Networks throughout North Ayrshire as far as possible.
- Progress the Ayrshire EVCI Pathfinder project to support a just transition to EVs.
- Investigate of the feasibility of a green hydrogen generation project using landfill gas, through the Energy Technology Partnership.
- Implement Adaptation Scotland's Framework for a Climate Ready Public Sector.

3 Proposals

3.1 It is proposed that Cabinet approved the Sustainable North Ayrshire Strategy at Appendix 1 for implementation.

4 Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial

4.1 Projects identified through the Carbon Footprint and Project Register will be assessed individually, utilising existing capital and revenue budgets or external funding wherever possible. The financial implications of any new projects will be established through business cases as required.

Human Resources

4.2 The Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) funding form Scottish Government will be utilised to support a 1.0 FTE LHEES Officer post for a three-year period. All other works will be implemented from existing resources.

Legal

4.3 Under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, as a public body, North Ayrshire Council is required to lead by example in reducing carbon emissions, contributing to climate change adaptation and acting sustainably.

Equality/Socio-economic

4.4 The strategy contains actions to work towards reducing fuel poverty and supporting a just transition, in a way that is fair and inclusive, therefore contributing to our socio-economic duty.

Climate Change and Carbon

4.5 The strategy provides direct actions to deliver on the Council's aspirations to become net-zero carbon by 2030, halt biodiversity loss by 2030, and implement the key activities within the Council Plan 2023-28.

Key Priorities

4.6 The strategy has been developed to support the strategic aim 'To achieve net-zero by 2030' within the new Council Plan 2023-28.

Community Wealth Building

4.7 The delivery of the strategy will contribute across the Community Wealth Building pillars

and to achieving a wellbeing economy. Each Community Wealth Building pillar is considered throughout the workstreams within the strategy, and their actions. Opportunities to collaborate within localities and maximise the co-benefits of climate action are key to a successful and just transition. The strategy also continues to support the sixth pillar in the Community Wealth Building Anchor Charter, through the Climate Change Steering Group.

5   Consultation

5.1   A series of stakeholder engagement sessions have taken place in order to develop this strategy and support future action on climate change. Six mini-enquiries entitled 'A Spotlight On…Climate Change' were also held during autumn 2023, together with an online consultation, Primary 7 workshops and a Climate Change Steering Group online workshop. Further consultation as part of the strategy implementation period is also proposed.

RUSSELL McCUTCHEON
Executive Director (Place)

For further information please contact **David W. Hammond, Head of Sustainability, Corporate Property & Transport,** on (01294) 324514.

Background Papers
0

Sustainable North Ayrshire

2024-2027

Contents

Introduction

This Sustainable North Ayrshire Strategy provides an overview of work that has taken place to tackle climate change and sets out the journey ahead through implementation of nine strategic priorities, specific project actions and a Carbon Footprint and Project Register.

The Council Plan 2023-28 sets out North Ayrshire Council's commitment to deliver on our communities' priorities over a five-year period. These priorities have been identified as:

- Wellbeing
- Communities and Local Democracy
- Climate Change
- A Sustainable Council

This 'Sustainable North Ayrshire' strategy has been developed to support the Climate Change priority and the continuing strategic aim of achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2030.

A climate and nature emergency

In 2018, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report warned that we have until 2030 to keep global temperatures from rising more than 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels before damage to the planet is irreversible. In response to this, governments and local authorities around the world have declared a 'Climate Emergency.'

Following advice from the Climate Change Committee, regulations were amended to the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019, setting a net zero target year of 2045 in order to contribute to global efforts to limit warming to 1.5°C through emissions reduction.

In June 2019, the Council declared a Climate Emergency, and has set an area-wide ambition to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030, in line with the IPCC report.

In September 2023, the Scottish Government also recognised that the country is now faced with a 'Nature Emergency' and are consulting on a draft Biodiversity Framework and 5-year Delivery Plan for the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy.

The Sustainable North Ayrshire strategy aims to tackle both of these environmental challenges.

Background

What is climate change?

Since the industrial revolution, the earth's temperature has risen beyond the natural cycle. Scientist from across the globe agree that this is caused in the first instance by human activity in burning fossil fuels.

Burning fossil fuels such as gas, coal, oil, petrol and diesel produces carbon, which combines with oxygen in the atmosphere, produces carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas. Other harmful greenhouse gasses are produced, but carbon dioxide is the most abundant. Greenhouse gases trap the sun's radiation, preventing heat from escaping, causing increased global temperatures.

Climate change is a long-term change in the average weather patterns cause by increased global temperatures. The impacts of climate change include more extreme weather events such as increased rainfall and flooding, high winds, drier and hotter summers. These are not the weather events we have grown to expect during our seasons, and this is also causing harm to our natural environment.

In order to reduce earth warming greenhouse gas emissions and keep global temperature increases to below $1.5^{o}C$, we must reduce the amount of carbon being emitted to the atmosphere.

Vision

North Ayrshire Council's vision is to achieve net-zero emissions by 2030 and to halt biodiversity loss and be Nature Positive by 2030.

Our vision of a sustainable, climate ready North Ayrshire is one where we all play our part, whether as a local authority, business, school, community group or individual.

This strategy also recognises that to achieve this sustainability vision, the Scottish Government will be a key enabler, empowering the Council to advance actions in tackling climate change such as reducing area wide carbon emissions; developing and retrofitting both domestic and non-domestic properties; eradicating fuel poverty; strengthening the green economy; and improving climate resilience of local communities and enhancing biodiversity.

As a local authority we seek to make effective use of our influence in areas such as procurement, planning, housing, education and transport to help drive area-wide emissions reductions in a way which tackles inequality, promotes fair work, supports Community Wealth Building and contributes to achieving a wellbeing economy.

We aim to:

- Embed our net-zero ambition in all democratic decision-making.
- Reduce the carbon footprint of our estate through rationalisation utilising a locality-based approach and taking a fabric first and low carbon energy generation approach to homes and buildings.
- Improve resilience and reduce carbon by developing and supporting supply chains where materials and goods are sourced locally.
- Promote new woodland creation and protect our green spaces to provide a natural resource for carbon sequestration.
- Support local businesses as they meet their climate change obligations.
- Promote a circular economy in North Ayrshire to reduce consumption of raw materials and promote reuse, repair and recycling, and generate energy from residual waste.
- Develop local low carbon energy generation schemes and networks.
- Unlock the potential of community owned energy generation to bring new income streams into communities and help them take direct action to combat climate change.
- Learn for Sustainability, and work with communities to adopt low carbon behaviour change and encourage climate-based volunteering activities.
- Improve communities' preparedness to deal with the impacts of climate change already locked in.
- Work with communities to adopt low carbon behaviour change and encourage climate-based volunteering activities.
- Take a nature-based approach to protect our habitats and species.

- Develop and promote active travel infrastructure. Transitioning to low and zero carbon travel.
- Embed a Community Wealth Building approach to delivery and support the transition to a wellbeing economy.

Net zero

It is unrealistic to eradicate all carbon emissions. In order to achieve net zero, emissions need to be reduced to a point where carbon sinks (such as trees, peatlands, other natural resources and innovative carbon capture technology) can remove the residual amount of carbon emitted.

The way will aim to achieve this target is through collaboration across services, within communities and with partners, to maximise the co-benefits of action on climate change.

What will it take to get to net zero?

Behaviour change – supporting more sustainable choices	Financial investment - for homes, businesses and for the Council to undertake emission reduction projects	Energy shift - from fossil fuel-based energy to renewable sources
Electricity grid upgrades – required to manage the additional load from low carbon alternatives and renewable energy generation	Skills - ensuring we have the right skills and encouraging local supply chains	New technology – act with what we have, futureproof where possible, and use innovation to build a healthier, more resilient planet

Policy context

Word leaders and local governments are responding to the call to act on the climate emergency, which has led to a number of international, national and local policies to be put in place. Some of these key drivers are listed below:

International

- Paris Agreement 2015 - The Paris Agreement is a legally binding international treaty on climate change.
- United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (adopted in 2015) - A set of 17 global goals aiming to eradicate poverty, fight inequalities and tackle climate change. The goals are closely interconnected and have a direct link to climate change.
- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) - published the Global Warming of 1.5ºC Report in 2018 and subsequent reports, providing guidance to world leaders on the status of global warming and climate change.

National

- Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 - the Scottish Government has set a legally binding target achieve net zero emissions by 2045.

There are interim targets of 75% by 2030 and 90% by 2040, against 1990 baseline levels.

- Update to the Climate Change Plan 2018 – 2032 (Securing a Green Recovery on a Path to Net Zero) is the Scottish Government's plan for a green recovery following COVID-19.
- Public Bodies' Climate Change Duties require public bodies to contribute to climate change mitigation and to climate change adaptation, and to act sustainably.
- Guidance to adhere to the building (Scotland) Regulations 2004 is noted in Building Standards Technical Handbook 2022, to support energy efficiency in non-domestic and domestic buildings.
- The Heat in Buildings Strategy sets out the Scottish Government's programme to deliver on climate targets by reducing dependence on gas and oil for heating homes and non-domestic buildings.
- The Heat Networks (Scotland) Act 2021 aims to contribute to increasing heat networks in Scotland.
- The Scottish Government published the draft Biodiversity strategy to 2045: tackling the nature emergency, in December 2022. This sets out the vision for halting biodiversity loss by 2030 and reversing declines by 2045.
- Climate Ready Scotland 2019-2024 is the second Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Programme which sets out policies and proposals to prepare Scotland for the challenges of adapting to a changing climate. The Programme is a requirement of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 Second Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Programme.
- National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) is the national spatial strategy for Scotland. It sets out the spatial principles, regional priorities, national developments and national planning policy.

Local

There are many Council-led strategies and plans which support the vision of the Sustainable North Ayrshire strategy, some of which are highlighted as follows:

- Council Plan 2023-28
- Electric Vehicle Strategy
- Zero Waste Strategy
- Local Development Plan
- North Ayrshire Partnership Plan
- Community Wealth Building Strategy
- Regeneration Delivery Plan
- 2030 Woodland: A tree planting strategy
- Digital North Ayrshire 2023-28

- Local Biodiversity Action Plan
- Fleet Decarbonisation Strategy
- Local Transport & Active Travel Strategy
- Sustainable Procurement Policy
- Local Housing Strategy

- Local Island Plans (Arran and Cumbrae)
- Food Growing Strategy
- Vacant and Derelict Land Strategy

What have we achieved so far?

Since our first Carbon Management Plan in 2005, North Ayrshire Council has been proactive in reducing carbon emissions. Our first Environmental Sustainability & Climate Change Strategy (ESCCS) was published in 2014 and updated in 2017 and 2021, setting an area wide target to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030 (based on a 2005 baseline year). We have already achieved a 69% reduction in emissions since 2005 across the Council's estate, and an almost 43% reduction area wide.

These emissions reductions are from various works across the local authority area. Some examples of achievements and successes delivered through the last ESCCS (2021-23) are:

- Further reduced our carbon emissions within the Council's estate by an estimated 14,600 tonnes.
- Entered into a design and build contract for the delivery of two solar farms to provide installed capacity of some 12MW of renewable energy.
- Operation of 7MW of installed capacity providing district heating to over 300 homes
- Launch of a range of measures to address fuel poverty and alleviate the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis through Energy Smart and ECO4 Flex.
- Launch of a new fund to support community energy generation.
- We continue to be one of the top performing local authorities for recycling rates in Scotland, at 55.3%.
- Avoided 102,658 tonnes of municipal waste being sent to landfill by participation in the Clyde Valley Project, to recovery energy from waste, generating enough electricity to power 32,000 homes.
- Roll-out of 31 electric vehicles across our fleet and installation of 32 publicly accessible Electric Vehicle (EV) charge points across North Ayrshire, and 29 workplace charges to support the decarbonisation of the Council's fleet vehicles.
- Approved a partnership with East and South Ayrshire Councils to implement a £5m investment, subject to external funding, to provide over 300 new EV chargers across the three Council areas (including 106 in North Ayrshire).
- Nearly 80% of our streetlights have been upgraded to energy saving LEDs.
- Completion of the Upper Garnock Valley Flood Protection Scheme and progressing the Millport Flood Protection scheme to protect buildings and prevent coastal erosion, as we adapt to the impacts of climate change.
- Implementation of North Ayrshire's 2030 Woodland: A Tree Planting Strategy, part of the Council's £500k project to plant 108,000 trees to help remove carbon from the atmosphere, with over 20,000 trees planted to date.
- Supporting islands on the journey to net zero through the Cabron Neutral Islands project in Cumbrae.
- Creation of a Climate Change Steering Group, comprising of local businesses, emergency services, Council and voluntary services to support the net zero journey in North Ayrshire.

Carbon emissions are measured in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO_2e) and are calculated from fossil fuel usage across non-domestic buildings, transport, street lighting, transport and from waste. Figure 1 shows a 69% decrease to 2022/23 – from 67,719 tCO_2e to 20,940 tCO_2e.

Figure 2 below shows the area-wide emissions and the breakdown of those emissions by sector (Industry, Commercial, Domestic, Transport, and Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry). In 2022/23, Council emissions were approximately 3% of the most recently reported area-wide emissions by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero.

Our aim is to support various sectors within North Ayrshire on their journey to decarbonisation, through collaboration and partnership working.

158

Figure 1 – Council estate emissions reduction

Council Estate Emissions (tCO$_2$e)
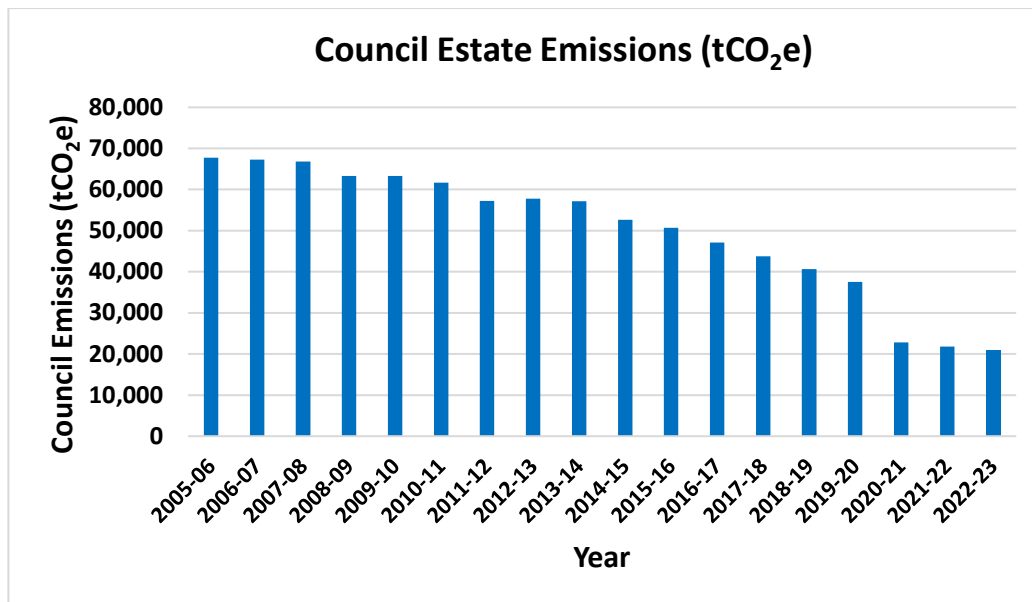
Figure 2 – Area-wide emissions by sector
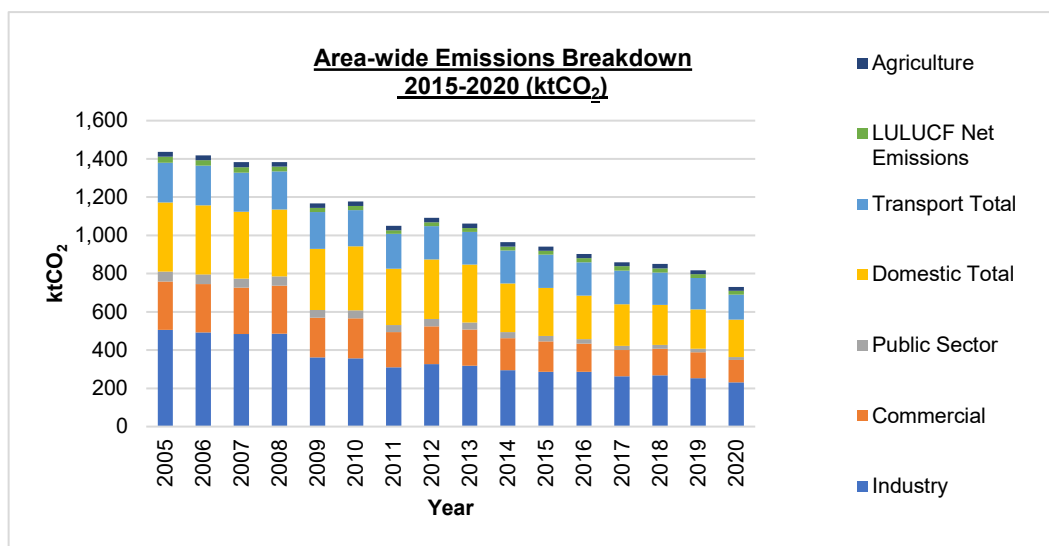
Engagement

A series of stakeholder engagement sessions have been held to hear the views of local communities, young people and businesses on climate change. We used the mini-enquiry model to engage with each locality in North Ayrshire, as well as an online questionnaire, Primary 7 Council workshop, and a Climate Change Steering Group online workshop. Views were sought in the main on the following questions:

1.   What does climate change mean to you?

2.	What types of action on climate change would you like to see more of in your area?

3.	What support do you need to tackle climate change in your area?

Figure 3 indicates the common themes form the community events, and figure 4 shows that of the Primary 7 workshop.

Figure 3: Feedback from the mini enquiry, 'A Spotlight On…Climate Change'

Figure 4: Feedback from the Primary 7 Council workshop

We have learned from these engagement sessions that there needs to be a more persistent presence within communities to make the net zero conversation more accessible. We also need to work with communities to understand their climate change priorities and how we can better support community based action. Carbon literacy training would be beneficial, in order to support the language used and offer greater understanding of what climate change means at a local level and also support improved resilience to climate change impacts.

It is also clear that there is great work being carried out within local communities and local businesses, and a desire for communities to be more involved in the journey to net zero.

Where do we want to be?

We aim to achieve net-zero carbon emissions and halt biodiversity loss by 2030.

Net-zero emissions requires a balance between emissions released and emissions absorbed from the environment. Therefore, the Council must lead the way in:

- Reducing emissions from buildings (domestic and non-domestic), transport and waste
- Implementing methods to remove carbon dioxide (CO_2) from the atmosphere, and
- Following the draft Scottish Biodiversity Strategy targets and milestones.

This is an ambitious goal based on emission data available and is within the 10-year timeframe set by the IPCC to prevent irreversible damage caused by climate change.

The yearly milestones below provide an indication of the level of area wide emission reduction required in order to achieve our 2030 target.

Figure 5: Forward projection of area wide emissions
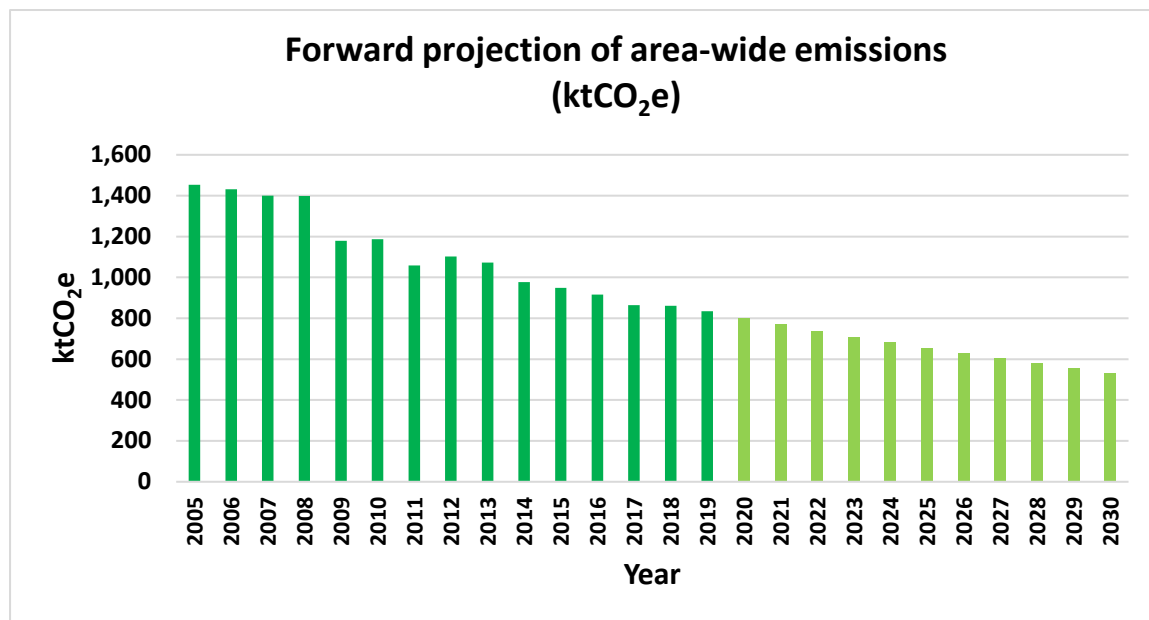
Figure 6 below shows the forward projection for Council estate emissions, based on a 6% reduction each year until 2030.

Figure 6: Forward projection of Council estate emissions

**Council Estate Emissions (tCO$_2$e)
Forward Projection to 2030**

Council Emissions (tCO$_2$e) vs Year — bar chart showing emissions declining from approximately 68,000 in 2005-06 to approximately 12,000 in 2029-30.
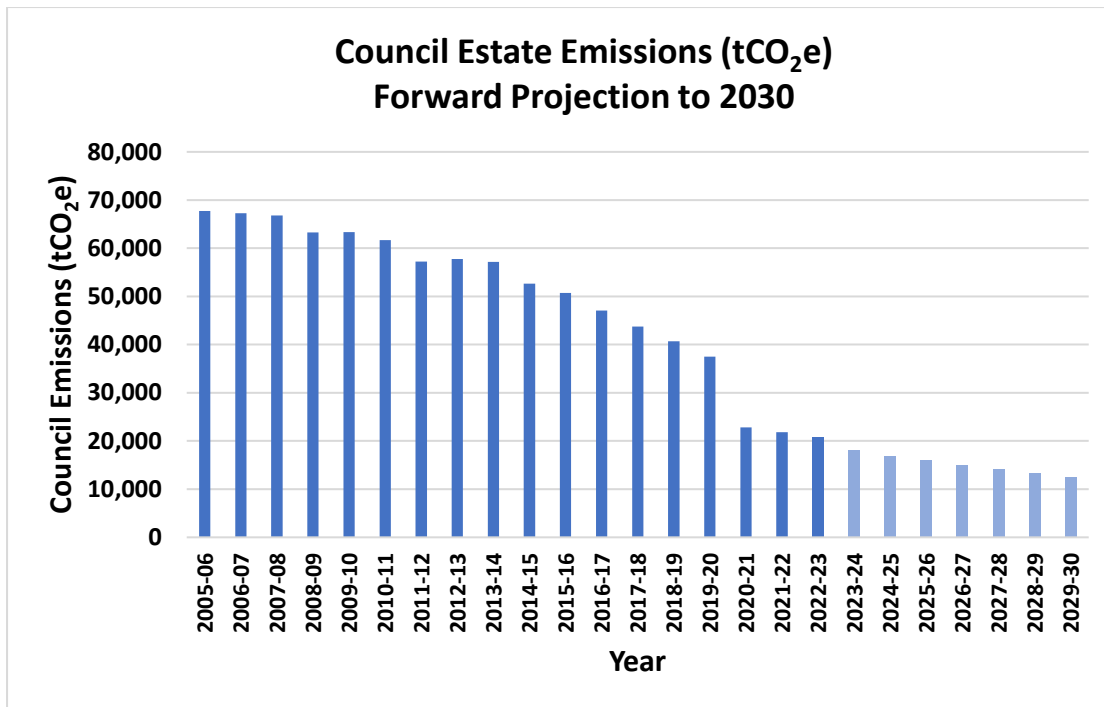
How do we get there?

Working together to maximise access to resources, best practice and co-benefits of action on climate change is our best chance of achieving net zero emissions and halting biodiversity loss across North Ayrshire. We will use the following nine strategic principles to guide this next stage of the journey to net zero:

The nine strategic principles.

1. We will take a whole system approach (including behaviour change) to tackling climate change as far as possible, including identification of optimal approaches to achieve social and economic benefits alongside environmental ones.
2. We will continue to clarify and report transparently on our emissions so that the North Ayrshire emissions baseline is clearly understood.
3. We will complete a Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy to help understand where efforts to reducing emissions and reducing fuel poverty are best focused.
4. We will prioritise actions in relation to two of the biggest emissions sources where have the most influence, commonly referred to as 'heat and fleet', including through project pathfinder approaches for decarbonisation of domestic and non-domestic buildings and vehicles to bring scale and pace to emissions reduction.
5. We will work with stakeholders, including the Scottish Government, to articulate the potential costs and skills requirements to meet our net-zero aspirations.
6. We will expand on the need for adaptation measures, recognising mitigation alone will not combat the impacts of climate changes on communities.
7. We will identify opportunities for expansion of carbon sinks and other carbon capture technologies, which are expected to be an essential element of our net-zero strategy to mitigate residual emissions by 2030.
8. We will seek to expand the remit and membership of the CCSG to enable us to work more closely with communities, taking account of outcomes from recent projects such as Climate Action Towns and Carbon Neutral Islands.
9. We will explore the potential for carbon accounting, including carbon budgets for Council services, to support our journey to net-zero.

Based on our current emission reduction trend data, we aim to reduce North Ayrshire area wide emissions by a further **269 ktCO$_2$e** by 2030. For the Council's own estate emissions, we are aiming to reduce by a further **8,465t CO$_2$e** by 2030. The residual emissions (533 ktCO2e area wide, and 12,431 tCO2e for the Council's estate) would then be sequestered.

There are key actions listed under each workstream later in this strategy document to achieve the carbon reduction needed. Figure 7 provides an overview of the highest contributing projects:

Figure 7: Summary of main carbon reduction actions

Area-wide	Anticipated CO$_2$ reduction
The Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy looks to reduce emissions through the transition to heat pumps in suitable properties, and installing energy efficiency measures.	Estimated potential: 168ktCO$_2$e/year
Council Estate	
Developing two solar PV farms with a total installed capacity of 12MW	859tCO$_2$e/year
Decarbonisation of Council fleet by replacing fossil fuelled vehicles with electric passenger vehicles and small vans	TBC
Decarbonisation of heavier fleet through the introduction of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil	TBC
Decarbonisation of buildings by 2038 using the Green Growth Accelerator study.	Up to 4,500tCO$_2$e/year

There is also an action recorded to undertake a study to understand the sequestration capacity and future requirements to meet net zero on our area wide emissions.

Whilst these and the actions identified under each workstream aim to support the objectives of the strategy, there are other actions to be managed through the use of Sustainable Scotland Networks' Carbon Footprint and Project Register Tool. The tool acts as a dynamic delivery plan that can be added to at any point throughout the period of this strategy. The project register will help to quantify carbon savings from projects and monitor their progress and impact.

In addition, the Council will consider the use of SSN's recently published Climate Change Impact Assessment (CCIA) to ensure climate change is at the heart of decision-making process.

Workstreams

We have established five workstreams to drive our action on climate change and the nature emergency, using the momentum of the previous ESCCS 3, and consolidating to make the climate change conversation more accessible. Each of these workstreams will be used when engaging with our communities so that we can be clear about the links between climate change and day-to-day living.

In addition, Community Wealth Building feeds through each of these workstreams, which is essential to maximise the opportunities that are presented by investment and to achieve a just and fair energy transition and a wellbeing economy. This approach will contribute to creating an economy that works for people and the planet and delivers social, economic and environmental justice for all.

Each workstream also has a behaviour change lens, as significant reductions in emissions can come from simple changes, for example using a reusable water bottle or committing to engaging in active travel one day per week as opposed to using a car.

The workstreams are as follows:

- Energy
- Nature
- Transport
- Waste
- Adaptation

Workstream 1 – Energy

This workstream will focus on reducing emissions and encouraging low carbon behaviours in relation to energy use.

It is vital that we consider energy in a new way and reduce our reliance on fossil fuels. Generating energy from renewable sources, be that electricity or heat, will produce less carbon emissions and help limit global temperature increases.

Utilising assets to maximise renewable energy generation, from using roof space on a building to generate renewable energy, to the heating choice for a home, is part of the solution to tackle climate change. We will consider the use of emerging smart technology to maximise the deployment of renewable energy, for example the potential of battery storage and intelligent management systems in homes, where renewable energy can be generated and optimised.

We must also consider the role of distributed energy, to maximise the environmental benefits of generating energy closer to where it is being used, for example, using heat that would otherwise be wasted, or reducing the losses from electricity at it travels to the point of use. Supporting community organisations to generate renewable energy is a key action that we wish to support.

The available capacity of the existing electricity network is limited, which presents challenges in terms of connection capacity, cost and timescales. We wish to continue to work closely with our local distribution network operators to support the transition the local renewable energy.

The cost-of-living crisis has exacerbated the major challenges of fuel poverty and access to affordable warmth across North Ayrshire. It is essential we access all funding streams available to support residents and increase energy efficiency in homes, to make heating them more affordable. Such action links to directly to promoting wellbeing, a key priority within our Council Plan.

We are well placed to support climate change awareness amongst communities, local businesses and decision makers. We also recognise the opportunities in upskilling existing services and promoting jobs in renewable and low carbon technology sectors. The Net Zero Accelerator programme delivered by the Council's Business development team is an example of this. We want to ensure that we maximise the opportunities to build a green economy in North Ayrshire.

Small cuts in emissions now can be worth as much as larger cuts in the future, therefore we must continue to reduce emissions in all scales. Progress continues to be made to advance the Climate Emergency agenda and move closer to achieving net-zero emissions.

Achievements so far

- We are developing our first solar PV farms on Nethermains and Shewalton former landfill sites. This aims to generate over 12MW of new clean, green electricity to support the local grid and reduce carbon emissions.
- The Energy Smart programme is supporting households through the cost-of-living crisis with emergency support payments, energy efficiency advice in partnership with the Energy Agency, and low-cost energy efficiency measures for households.
- In 2022, 26,380 tonnes of kerbside residual waste was diverted from landfill and converted into low carbon energy.
- Our first Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy and Delivery Plan is being developed, identifying areas suitable for heat networks and improved energy efficiency.
- Development of a pan Ayrshire Energy Masterplan, providing insight into the energy demand and investment needed to achieve region wide net zero.
- Primary School Energy Lessons have been delivered to 19 classes, furthering the role out of carbon literacy and engaging young people in the climate conversation.
- The Community Net Zero Fund has been launched, providing financial support to charitable organisations considering renewable energy technology.
- The Green Jobs Fund has supported over £1.14m of investment into 65 businesses to enable a range of sustainability related measures. This includes a North Ayrshire cohort of the Net Zero Accelerator programme for 17 businesses.

Future Actions

Action Ref	Action	Lead
E.1	Commissioning of two new solar farms at Shewalton, Irvine, and Nethermains, Kilwinning.	Sustainability
E.2	Development of other municipal renewable energy projects, including at i3, Irvine.	Sustainability
E.3	Publish and implement the Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy and Delivery Plan.	Sustainability
E.4	Completion of the Energy Masterplan for Ayrshire, in partnership with East Ayrshire Council, South Ayrshire Council and Scottish Enterprise.	Sustainability
E.5	Administration of the Community Net Zero Fund to support community energy regeneration.	Sustainability/Connected Communities
E.6	Administration and further development of the Energy Smart programme to provide low carbon advice and physical measures to reduce emissions and improve affordable warmth.	Sustainability
E.7	Develop Community Climate Actions Plans for each locality, building on the Climate Action Town Stevenston project.	Sustainability/Connected Communities
E.8	Support the delivery of the Carbon Neutral Islands project, and wider Arran Local Island Plan and Cumbrae Local Island Plan.	Sustainability
E.9	Develop a programme of Carbon Literacy Training for communities.	Sustainability
E.10	Completion of programme of energy lessons within schools.	Sustainability

E.11	Implementation of decarbonisation measures within our building estate as identified through the Green Growth Accelerator report.	Sustainability
E.12	Implement a range of energy efficiency and decarbonisation measures across Council housing stock to meet EESSH2 requirements.	Sustainability
E.13	Prepare proposals for external funding, e.g., Scottish Public Sector Heat Decarbonisation Fund.	Sustainability
E.14	Support local businesses on their journey to net zero and continue the implementation of the Net Zero Accelerator.	Business Development
E.15	Prepare a new Carbon Footprint and Project Register to manage carbon emission reduction and sequestration projects, embedding a data driven approach to the journey to our net-zero 2030 target (see Appendix 1).	Sustainability
E.16	Explore the use of Sustainable Scotland Networks' Climate Change Impact Assessment tool.	Sustainability

Workstream 2 – Nature

It is widely recognised that we are also experiencing a nature crisis.

Biodiversity refers to the variability among living organisms within terrestrial, marine and aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes they are part of.

Nature includes biodiversity, the relationship between humanity and nature, and the natural elements of our landscapes and seascapes.

Nature and biodiversity loss speeds up climate change and the changing climate feeds biodiversity loss. Scotland now only has half the biodiversity it had in the 1940s. We must take action now.

The Scottish Government are consulting on the new Scottish Biodiversity Strategy which sets out a nature positive vision for Scotland, with a target of halting biodiversity loss by 2030 and reversing declines by 2045.

Figure 6 shows a timeline from 1970 to 2045. Its starts with images of how land and sea was used in the 1970s. It is the aim the new strategy that by 2045, Scotland will have restored and regenerated biodiversity across our land, freshwater and seas.

Figure 6: A nature positive Scotland

The National Planning Framework (NPF4) aims to tackle the global climate emergency. This will involve reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to the future impacts of climate change. NPF4 acknowledges the links between the climate change and the biodiversity crisis:

"Proposals for local development will include appropriate measures to conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity, in accordance with national and local guidance".

NPF4 directs our next Local Development Plan (LDP3) to protect, conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity which means that any new development should secure positive effects for biodiversity. LDP3 will also facilitate the creation and strengthening of nature networks, improving connections between them to support improved ecological connectivity and promote nature recovery and nature restoration across the development plan area.

North Ayrshire has outstanding coastal and rural landscapes, and quality urban green spaces. There is an important role in supporting sustainable, nature based tourism to support our shift to a green economy.

Achievements so far

- The North Ayrshire Biodiversity Partnership has been strengthened, meeting regularly to participate in North Ayrshire's response to the climate and nature crisis. The partnership enables members to share information, support each other and participate in the shaping and delivering of biodiversity actions in their own communities.
- The initial stages of a Local Nature Conservation Sites review has been completed for mainland North Ayrshire. The review of sites has been subject to public consultation and feedback from the Biodiversity Partnership is being used to inform and improve the delivery of the second phase of the LNCS review which will involve sites on the Isle of Arran.
- A Biodiversity i-Learn module has been created, for use by Council employees, and members of the Biodiversity Partnership. The module focusses on raising awareness and compliance of our Biodiversity Duty, and to mainstream awareness of the Climate and Nature crisis across all services. The module has been created in

collaboration with other local authorities, to share resource and promote best practice.

- Work has begun on delivering the Scottish Government's Nature Network strategy. Delivery of the North Ayrshire Nature Network has been highlighted as a priority by the Scottish Government and is the primary focus of Nature Restoration Fund spending.
- The Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2019-2031 continues to be implemented however will require to be updated following the outcome of the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy consultation.
- The Council's large-scale woodland tree planting programme aims to plant 108,000 trees, providing a range of social, economic, and environmental benefits, including the carbon sequestration required to meet our net zero ambition by 2030. So far over 20,000 trees have been planted, with a particular focus on a woodland area at Lochshore Park as part of the wider regeneration masterplan.
- North Ayrshire's 2030 Woodland Grant Fund has been developed to assist constituted groups to deliver tree planting projects at grass roots community level.

Future Actions

Action Ref	Action	Lead
N.1	Complete the Local Biodiversity Action Plan review to align with forthcoming Scottish Biodiversity Strategy targets,	Sustainability
N.2	Identify and complete Nature Restoration Fund projects to support the Nature Network strategy.	Sustainability
N.3	Complete a biodiversity audit for North Ayrshire.	Sustainability
N.4	Undertake a Local Nature Conservation Sites review for Arran.	Sustainability
N.5	Implement Nature Networks throughout North Ayrshire as far as possible.	Sustainability
N.6	Implement the 2030 Woodlands: A tree planting strategy, and engage with Scottish Forestry as part of our climate change work.	Streetscene/Sustainability
N.7	Complete a comprehensive study to understand the carbon sequestration capacity and future potential of our natural assets.	Sustainability
N.8	Support the Local Development Plan to align with the positive biodiversity ambition of the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4).	Planning
N.9	Continue to support the increase in local food production.	Connected Communities
N.10	Continue to support food provenance and maximise the use of locally grown food through the actions within the North Ayrshire Food Growing Strategy.	Connected Communities
N.11	Support the repurposing of vacant and derelict sites through the Repurposing Property Grant Fund and Communities and Place Fund.	Regeneration
N.12	Maximise the potential for sustainable regenerative and nature based tourism opportunities as part of the Ayrshire Regional & Visitor Economy Strategy and the Council's annual Visitor Management Plans.	Sustainability/Growth & Investment

Workstream 3 – Transport

Transport is the largest contributor to harmful climate emissions in Scotland and so we must consider ways to support more active and low carbon methods of travel.

Scotland's National Transport Strategy promotes walking and wheeling, cycling, public transport, car and ride sharing in preference to single occupancy car use.

Prioritising Sustainable Transport
- Walking and wheeling
- Cycling
- Public transport
- Taxis & shared transport
- Private car
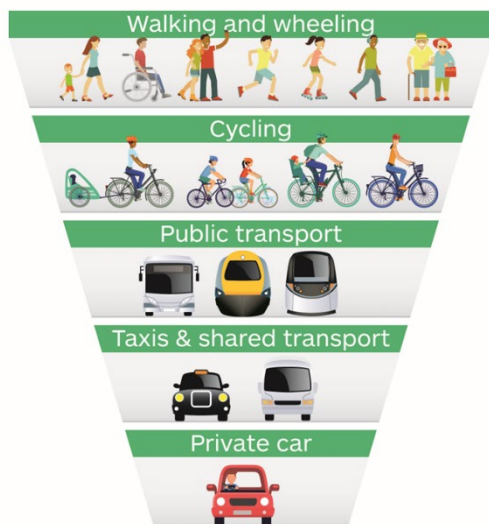
We are keen to support the decarbonisation of transport, whilst promoting the environmental and health benefits of alternative methods of transportation.

Prioritisation of Active Travel is one key element. There are many benefits of walking and cycling other than the reduction of carbon emissions, and reduced traffic. The co-benefits of physical and mental health are widely recognised and championed through our Green Health Partnership.

The Scottish Government has also set targets to phase out the need for any new petrol and diesel light commercial vehicles by 2025.

The Council's fleet currently consists of over 500 vehicles and plant and a key part of our decarbonisation journey will be to assess the need for travel, rationalise our current fleet, and switch to low carbon alternatives.

The Transport theme also includes the transportation of goods, therefore consideration of the procurement of goods and services will be an increasing focus.

Achievements so far

- In May 2023, Cabinet approved our first Decarbonisation of Fleet route map and a working group has been established to manage the direction of the decarbonisation work.
- The new Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy aims to promote social inclusion by connecting communities to facilities and services, and to minimise the environmental footprint of transport services. The new strategy refers to all types of transport, including walking, wheeling, cycling, bus, rail, ferry and car and considers how to integrate these types of transport to make travel by several modes easier for all.
- In order to support the uptake of electric vehicles (EVs), we have installed 32 public EV charging stations across the authority, while there are 33 privately installed chargers, in public places.
- We are participating in Transport Scotland's EV Charging Infrastructure Investment pathfinder project in conjunction with Scottish Futures Trust, East Ayrshire Council and South Ayrshire Council. The aim is to install an additional 307 EV charge points throughout Ayrshire, utilising private sector investment. It is important to us that the EV Infrastructure network is equitable – it should work for everyone.

Future Actions

Action Ref	Action	Lead

169

T.1	Progress the Council's fleet decarbonisation route map	Transport
T.2	Install additional workplace chargers to further electrify the Council's fleet	Sustainability
T.3	Consider use of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) in heavy fleet to reduce emissions	Transport
T.4	Progress Ayrshire EVCI Pathfinder project to support a just transition to EVs.	Sustainability
T.5	Undertake a review of EV Strategy with reference to the Ayrshire EVCI pathfinder.	Sustainability
T.6	Progress Community Transport pathfinder proposals.	
T.7	Achieve 2km (2,000 metres) of active travel infrastructure per year in North Ayrshire.	Regeneration
T.8	Consider the ongoing role of digital technology in contributing to the avoidance of travel journeys.	Sustainability

Workstream 4 – Waste

Scotland's Zero Waste Plan aims to make the most efficient use of resources by minimising our demand on primary resources, and maximising the reuse, recycling and recovery of resources instead of treating them as waste.

The Plan sets a target to achieve an overall recycling and composting level of 70% and a maximum 5% to landfill for the total Scottish waste arisings by 2025. The Council's current Zero Waste Strategy has been successfully working towards supporting this national target.

The draft Circular Economy (Scotland) Bill has been developed to make steps towards creating a circular economy in Scotland. A circular economy aims to turn all wastes into a resource by reintroducing them into the production cycle. The draft Bill includes the ability for Scottish Government to set statutory targets for Scottish local authorities. This coupled with the implementation of the national Deposit Return Scheme, will impact the next iteration of North Ayrshire's Zero Waste Strategy.

We currently operate four household waste recycling centres, in Kilbirnie, Largs, Irvine and Brodick, and we also operate a waste transfer station in Irvine and Brodick. We have two closed landfill sites that are monitored at Shewalton and Nethermains in Irvine.

Our Waste Awareness Team provides guidance to households, businesses, schools and community groups, encouraging recycling and sharing information about the environmental impacts of waste, resource efficiency, and the Zero Waste challenge.

As with all aspects of tackling climate change, community participation is key. The Council's Streetscene department provides litter picking equipment under the 'Adopt-a-Spot' initiative, for community organisations to arrange voluntary litter picking sessions in their local area.

Achievements so far
- We continue to be one of the top performing local authorities for household recycling rates in Scotland, at 55.3%.
- We established a 25-year contract for the 'energy form waste' treatment of our non-recyclable waste as part of the Clyde Valley Residual Waste Partnership via Viridor.
- Development and implementation of a corporate Single Use Plastic strategy, in order to minimise the use of single use plastics across the organisation.
- In partnership with Streetscene, the volunteer group 'Irvine Clean Up Crew' have won Keep Scotland Beautiful's 'Beach Award' status for Irvine Beach. This is largely down to the litter management strategy in effect.

170

- In June 2023, Climate Change Ambassadors have worked with the Three Towns Clean-Up crew to host their first community litter-picking session of the season at Ardrossan South Beach where over 21 bags of litter were collected.

Future Actions

Action Ref	Action	Lead
W.1	Develop the new Zero Waste Strategy in line with Scottish Government route map.	Waste
W.2	Building on the new Zero Waste strategy, support businesses to enhance innovation and reduce waste through working with partners to develop a circular economy approach.	Business Development
W.3	Implement actions within new Waste strategy.	Sustainability
W.4	Continue to implement the Single Use Plastic Strategy	Waste
W.5	Investigate the feasibility of a green hydrogen generation project using landfill gas, through the Energy Technology Partnership.	Sustainability

Workstream 5 – Adaptation

Adaptation is actions that reduce our vulnerability to the effects of climate change by managing the impacts. These effects can be from flooding or heavy rainfall, coastal erosion due to sea level rise, disruption to building use, energy supply, transportation and communication. These extreme weather events can also impact our health and well-being.

It means preparing for the impacts on climate change which cannot be avoided. Adapting to climate change will still be required, even if we manage to cut our carbon emissions. This is because historic emissions have already changed our climate and will continue to do so. The change in climate affects us all.

Adaptation gives us the ability to anticipate and prepare how we will respond to harmful climate change events. By improving our resilience this will allow us to take steps to cope better with climate related risks. By putting in place solutions now, they will have a positive effect on our climate today and in the future.

Achievements so far

- The Flood Risk Management Plan is an example of the importance of adaptation actions. The development of the dam in Upper Garnock and Coastal Flood Protection improvements in Millport will help avoid or reduce flood risks in these vulnerable areas and allow communities to prepare for flooding. We are also progressing the Largs Seawall Replacement Project.
- The Ayrshire Shoreline Management Plan helps the Council oversee the erosion and flooding of North Ayrshire coasts. It helps us manage the risks to people and the natural environment.
- The Council has been supporting the Climate Action Town, Stevenston project, which is being led by Architectural and Design Scotland. Stevenston is one of nine Scottish towns taking part. The project looks at the challenges and opportunities for communities to tackle climate change by implementing adaptation actions.
- We have also undertaken our first internal Adaptation Assessment with support Adaptation Scotland. The Assessment has provided a baseline for improvement, which will be acted on throughout the period of this strategy.

Future Actions

Action Ref	Action	Lead
A.1	Implement Adaptation Scotland's Framework for a Climate Ready Public Sector.	Sustainability
A.2	Undertake actions identified through annual assessments.	Sustainability
A.3	Develop and deliver the Flood Protection Scheme for Great Cumbrae.	Roads
A.4	Develop and deliver the Mill Burn Flood Alleviation Scheme in Millport.	Roads
A.5	Undertake coastal studies for Stevenston and Irvine beaches, to identify soft engineering methods to manage coastal erosion as promoted by the Shoreline Management Plan.	Roads

Governance

The Council's Climate Change Steering Group (CCSG) comprises a range of representatives from the Council, wider public sector partners and local businesses.

The CCSG will continue to receive updates on SNA implementation regularly, and act as a sounding board for new projects to be added to the Carbon Footprint and Project Register (see Appendix 1).

In addition, reporting on emissions performance will be included as part of six-monthly Council Plan updates, alongside annual submission of our Public Bodies Climate Change Reporting Duty return.

Appendix 1: Carbon Footprint & Project Register

Project Description	Location	Capital Spend Year	Commissioning Year	First Full Year of CO2e savings	Capital Cost (£)	Additional Annual Operation / Maintenance Saving (£)	Owner	Implementer	Dept / Team	Project Status	Estimate Confidence	Type of Source Saving	Type of Emission Saving	Amount of savings (in units stated in Type of Emission Savings)	Type of Source from related emission increase	Related Emission Increase Type	Related Emission Increase Amount (MUST BE in units stated in Related Emission Increase Type)	Annual Savings for this project already captured in most recent Carbon Footprint?

Cabinet

Title:	**Community Transport Pathfinder**
Purpose:	To provide Cabinet with an update on the Community Transport Pathfinder work and proposed next steps.
Recommendation:	That Cabinet notes the update and approves the next steps outlined at paragraph 2.15.

1. Executive Summary

1.1 On 30 May 2023, Cabinet approved the next steps for a community pathfinder project which included commissioning of community surveys, an in-depth travel needs analysis for Garnock Valley, and the testing of an initial 'dayhopper' service within North Ayrshire. Alongside these steps, further scoping work of a community transport offer was also to be undertaken.

1.2 This report provides an update on the work to develop an expanded community transport offer within North Ayrshire, along with proposed next steps and timescales at paragraph 2.15.

2. Background

2.1 The Community Transport Association defines community transport as "providing flexible and accessible community-led solutions in response to unmet local transport needs". There is no fixed model or vehicle used for community transport, and it can serve a vital role in addressing loneliness and social isolation, and in providing access to services, training and employment opportunities. Often those who utilise community transport opportunities are those who are vulnerable or isolated in some way and it can help them to maintain or develop independence. Community transport schemes are usually supported by volunteers within communities and they may provide services such as hospital transport, vehicles available for lease by local groups, or community bus schemes.

2.2 Following budget engagement activity undertaken earlier this year, coupled with mini-enquiries which took place around various themes associated with the cost of living and child poverty, transport was again confirmed as an issue within many North Ayrshire communities. The cost and availability of both public transport and vehicles for hire meant that vulnerable and more rural residents in particular were limited in their abilities to get from place to place, and it was reported that this in turn limited their ability to be involved in community life, get to vital appointments or take up learning and employment opportunities.

2.3   An allocation of £0.100m was made as part of the Council's budget setting process in March 2023 for a community pathfinder project, and a Cabinet report was approved on 30 May 2023 outlining the proposed next steps to develop a project. This included commissioning of community surveys, an in-depth travel needs analysis for Garnock Valley, and the testing of an initial 'dayhopper' service within North Ayrshire. Alongside these steps, further scoping work of a community transport offer was to be undertaken. It was agreed that a further update to Cabinet would be provided before the end of the year.

2.4   An update on each aspect of the next steps agreed at Cabinet in May 2023 is provided as follows, along with additional updates on other opportunities that have arisen:

Garnock Valley Travel Needs Analysis

2.5   Consultancy support is in the process of being procured to undertake the Travel Needs Analysis for the Garnock Valley. This is being led by the Garnock Valley Locality Partnership and funded by the Community Investment Fund. The Garnock Valley Locality Action Plan identified moving around as a priority and potential solutions to address travel issues.

2.6   The information available around the transport challenges experienced in the area was recognised as being anecdotal. The Moving Around working group identified the need to quantify and analyse transport challenges and patterns. This would thereafter provide an evidence base to inform potential projects and to ensure that any solutions were effective and would have the biggest impact for the community. The study will capture patterns of travel by the local community, the issues and barriers to travel within the area, and their impact on the community.

2.7   The study will also identify potential solutions to assist in easing transport issues and tackling inequalities including community-based solutions. These will be prioritised into short, medium and long-term actions. This will include consideration of micro improvements and low-cost interventions, which could potentially have a significant impact and benefit. Potential local and national partners and funding opportunities will be identified to assist in the delivery of the solutions. This will include exploring the scope, potential and demand for community transport and identification of real-life examples of any potential solutions. Work is expected to be complete by spring 2024.

Community Surveys

2.8   Consultancy support is also in the process of being procured, alongside the Garnock Valley Travel Needs Analysis, to undertake a North Ayrshire wide community engagement exercise. This aims to establish the demand for a community transport scheme across North Ayrshire, including how this would be shaped to meet the needs of the community. The programme and methodology will be agreed with the successful contractor; however, a broad range of engagement methods will be utilised to maximise engagement in the survey. The output will then be analysed to identify next steps. It is envisaged that this work will be complete by spring 2024.

Dayhopper Service

2.9   In partnership with Coalfield Community Transport (CCT), demand was tested for an initial trial of their 'Dayhopper' excursion service over the summer period. Interested residents were invited to register with CCT and sign-up for the day trip. A trip to Largs

was planned during July 2023 and information disseminated to older people in a selected number of sheltered housing complexes, however insufficient demand meant that the trip could not go ahead.

2.10 Officers have been exploring an alternative offer to a wider number of groups through CCT with a view to re-trialling the service in early 2024, including through the provision of a potential participatory budgeting approach using part of the £0.100m funding.

Pathfinder Scoping

2.11 An initial review has identified several examples of community transport models across Scotland. These are summarised at Appendix 1 and will be further considered through the survey and analysis work identified above. Initial findings have identified that there are a range of approaches adopted across Scotland, from providing a complementary service to existing bus services covering a direct route between specific destinations, to providing a specially adapted vehicle that can be self-driven. None of the schemes identified are currently self-sufficient due to funding mechanisms being short-term resulting in a reliance on external funding sources, often from local authorities, for continued operation.

Community Bus Fund

2.12 The establishment of a Community Bus Fund (CBF) formed part of the Bute House agreement signed in August 2021. The fund is available to support transport authorities to explore the full range of options set out in the Transport (Scotland) Act. It aims to support this reform by enabling local transport authorities to improve local public transport, with a focus on rural deprived areas where lower population density means bus services can be less commercially viable. The CBF has been allocated £5 million capital funding and £0.75 million in resource funding for 2023-24. The objectives for spend for the capital funding are:

- Connectivity to improve access to bus services, for example by upgrading bus stops and installing real time information electronic timetables.
- Integration between transport modes, for example by installing infrastructure to support integration between modes, such as mobility hubs.
- Trialling innovative transport solutions or improvements to encourage patronage or create efficiencies, for example by purchasing digital platforms to support Demand Responsive Transport.

2.13 The £0.75m resource is available to local authorities and is aimed at supporting completion of initial feasibility and preparatory work required for the 2019 Act. North Ayrshire Council has been allocated £0.146m of the capital funding which requires to be expended by 31 March 2024. It is proposed to use this allocation to upgrade bus stops in the Garnock Valley and other rural areas. These priorities were identified with reference to the potential for delivery given the timescales for expenditure of the funding. The Garnock Valley and other rural areas have been identified as a priority due to the impact caused by the reduction of services. These proposals will meet the funds' objective of connectivity to improve access to bus services.

2.14 Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT), on behalf of its 12 constituent local authorities, which includes North Ayrshire, are submitting an expression of interest to the £0.75m resource fund. The project aims to carry out a study into rural transport

needs and a technical assessment of municipal bus operation. It also includes further data gathering work to develop the Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy. If successful, this will complement the Garnock Valley Travel Needs Analysis work.

Next Steps

2.15 The following programme of work is proposed for the next stages of the Community Transport Pathfinder:

Item	Action	Timescale	Lead
Garnock Valley Travel Needs Analysis	Finalise procurement, appoint contract and complete study	Spring 2024	Connected Communities
Community Surveys	Finalise procurement, appoint contract and complete surveys	Spring 2024	Connected Communities
Locality Partnership Engagement	Undertake engagement with locality partnerships in relation to community transport needs and potential delivery models	Spring 2024	Connected Communities
Dayhopper Service	Work with identified community groups and re-scope trial, including exploration of a potential participatory budgeting approach	February 2024	Connected Communities/ Coalfield Community Transport
Pathfinder Scoping	Continue research on delivery models	Ongoing	Economic Development & Regeneration
Community Bus Fund- Bus Stop Upgrades	Identify locations, specify and complete upgrades	March 2024	Economic Development & Regeneration
Community Bus Fund- Regional Study	Subject to funding outcome. Work with SPT to develop the specification for the study	July 2024	Economic Development & Regeneration/ SPT

3.   Proposals

3.1   That Cabinet notes the update and approves the next steps outlined at paragraph 2.15.

4.   Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial

4.1   A total of £0.100m funding is aligned to the community transport pathfinder project, and proposals for expenditure of this funding will be clarified as the actions at paragraph 2.15 are developed further.

Human Resources

4.2   There are no human resources implications arising from the report.

Legal

4.3   There are no legal implications arising from the report.

Equality/Socio-economic

4.4   The proposal is designed to provide socio-economic benefits through the provision of low-cost transport particularly to vulnerable people on low incomes and/or who are experiencing the effects of social isolation.

Climate Change and Carbon

4.5   The provision of community transport can help reduce carbon emissions by reducing reliance on private transport.

Key Priorities

4.6   The aims of the community transport pathfinder link directly the Council Plan priority of supporting communities and local democracy and fostering community wellbeing.

Community Wealth Building

4.7   The proposal reflects community wealth building principles, for example through a potential partnership approach with an existing Ayrshire based community transport provider, and scope to offer excursions to our own tourism destinations to help support the local economy.

5.   Consultation

5.1   No consultation was required in the preparation of this report.

RUSSELL McCUTCHEON
Executive Director (Place)

For further information please contact **David W. Hammond, Head of Sustainability, Corporate Property & Transport,** on (01294) 324514.

Background Papers
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Appendix 1: Initial Review of Community Transport Models

The following provides a summary of the initial review of community transport models across Scotland. This will be further analysed through the survey work referenced within the report.

Arran Council for Voluntary Services Community Transport

The Community Transport Scheme is a low-cost door to door transport service for the local community who are unable to access existing transport, or where appropriate transport does not exist. The scheme operated a pilot phase since January 2022 in partnership with island medical providers to transport residents to medical appointments as well as liaising with and supporting social isolation and mental wellbeing groups. Transport was provided by volunteer drivers using their own vehicles.

The project has recently secured two new wheelchair accessible vehicles to expand the service through a grant from Motability, the Charity. Volunteer drivers can now use the vehicles for community transport journeys, providing easy access for their users, especially disabled passengers. As well as attending medical appointments, the service can now be used to attend social activities, helping to improve mental well-being and reduce any mobility barriers.

Coalfield Community Transport

Operating in East Ayrshire this scheme has as ten minibuses, seven of which are fully accessible by anyone who uses a wheelchair. The scheme is operated by Coalfield Community Transport (CCT), a registered charity and non-profit distributing company.

All services provided operate 363 days per year. Group Transport is the main service provided where drivers mainly drive for their own group however there is a core of 20 drivers who will drive for any group. Membership of the Group Transport service is open to all community and voluntary groups within East Ayrshire. The scheme also has a Dayhopper Club that provides a shopping and excursion service to individuals in receipt of benefit, older or unemployed people, lone parents, and people with a disability or who are geographically disadvantaged.

The project relies on funding applications to charity and grant making bodied for new vehicles. These variable annual grants allow the scheme to continue to operate but make planning for the future difficult. Any reductions in grant can result in a reduction in service provision.

The project relies on volunteer drivers for group transport services which is the mainstay of the project. These tend to be older drivers with the appropriate class of driving licence. There are difficulties in recruiting younger volunteer drivers because they do not have a D1 category on their driving licence.

South Ayrshire Community Transport

South Ayrshire Community Transport (SACT Ayr) was formed in 2016 by a consortium of local community transport operators and third sector organisations. The need for SACT Ayr was informed by the organisations' recognition that several unmet transport needs across South Ayrshire. The member organisations are involved in the joint planning of services to meet these needs.

It is a member of the West of Scotland Community Transport Network and has signed up to a quality assurance framework covering all aspects of vehicle and customer care. It offers the following services. All group or organisational drivers must be registered with SACT before driving any hired vehicle.

- Minibus hire using a range of wheelchair accessible minibuses including the provision of drivers where required.
- Barr to Girvan scheduled service operating five times a day on a Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday.
- Out and about excursion club offering free individual membership and providing one excursion a week for a modest charge.
- E-bike Club offering12 electric bikes in four different forms for 2 or 4 week hires at discounted rates.
- A Car Club with two electric Nissan Leafs and an electric 7 seat Nissan available to hire as a member or Pay As You Go by Ayrshire residents and businesses.
- Mini Bus Driver Awareness Scheme (MiDAS) training for volunteers and larger groups.

Carrick Community Transport Group a partner organisation CCTG and operates mainly in the Carrick area. It has three 16-seater minibuses for hire, one in Maybole and two in Girvan. These are not wheelchair accessible and drivers are not supplied. However, they can be used by voluntary groups and community organisations in Carrick.

3C Bus Service, Strathaven

The 3C Bus Service is operated by Climate Action Strathaven and is an express bus service between Strathaven, Stonehouse and Glasgow. It runs 12 times a day between Strathaven and Glasgow. The scheme was created because there was no direct bus route into Glasgow for around 15 years meaning an inconvenient two stage journey with a change in either Hamilton or East Kilbride.

To develop the scheme market research was carried out locally to establish whether a direct bus service would be desirable. Through crowd funding, a new Mercedes Tourismo coach was purchased to run the service. They have the equivalent of 1.5 full time drivers as well as other part timers with a PCV licence. Passenger numbers appear sufficient to maintain the 3C service as a regular route into Glasgow with fare cost set to maintain sufficient reserves to operate the service sustainably. Various funders are involved to ensure the service continues to operate.

m.connect, Moray

An accessible door to door bus service for anyone, regardless of age or disability, who is unable to use existing forms of transport or does not have access to a regular bus service. The service aims to compliment Stagecoach services by addressing the gaps in services across Moray where public transport is poor or non-existent. The service is funded by the Scottish and UK Governments, as part of the growth deal, and Moray Council and operates in five areas across Moray. It is a door-to-door bus service using 14 vehicles pre-booked through an app.

Scottish Borders

This service consists of several community transport organisations operating in local areas that tailor the transport services they provide for the needs of the specific communities.

- Berwickshire Wheels provides door to door transport for health-related appointments, shopping trips and social gatherings. The service is aimed at older and disabled residents of Berwickshire and relies on volunteer drivers.
- Gala Wheels offers accessible and affordable community transport for anyone who has difficulty using public transport through ill health, disability or age and for whom no private transport is available. The service is generally self-drive with volunteer drivers and uses two minibuses.
- Tweed Wheels is a community car specially adapted can be used by anyone living in Tweeddale who has difficulty using public transport because of a disability, ill health or age, and hasn't got access to a car.
- Teviot Wheels is a community transport service for residents of the Roxburgh area of the Scottish Borders. Their vehicles are based locally in Hawick, Jedburgh and Kelso. Currently their Hawick vehicle can take up to seven people including the driver. All the vehicles are wheelchair accessible with reduced passenger numbers.

Summary

From an initial review each scheme looks to address the issues in the community it serves, with no one solution fitting all circumstances. The current schemes range from providing a complementary service to existing bus services that provides a direct route between specific destinations, to providing a specially adapted vehicle that can be self-driven. In all cases an easy-to-use booking system is required to enable use.

No scheme appears to be entirely self-sufficient, and they rely on external funding sources, often from local authorities, for continued operation and maintenance of vehicles. Funding mechanisms are usually short-term therefore making long-term planning challenging. Each scheme has its own dedicated vehicles and community buy-in and volunteering are critical to success and to support delivery.

5 December 2023

Cabinet

Title:	**Consultation response on Scotland's Strategic Framework for Biodiversity**
Purpose:	To seek approval of the proposed consultation response to Scotland's Strategic Framework for Biodiversity.
Recommendation:	That the draft consultation response at Appendix 1 is approved and submitted to the Scottish Government.

1. Executive Summary

1.1 It is widely recognised that the world is facing a climate and nature crisis. The Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and has committed to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030.

1.2 The Scottish Biodiversity Strategy to 2045: Tackling the Nature Emergency has been published by the Scottish Government for consultation and sets out compelling evidence of long-standing global and Scottish biodiversity loss. The Strategy framework sets a goal to halt biodiversity loss and be 'Nature Positive' by 2030 and to have restored and regenerated biodiversity across the country by 2045.

1.3 The consultation exercise is seeking views on the strategy, delivery plan and Natural Environment Bill. Cabinet approval is sought for submission of the draft response to the consultation at Appendix 1 to the Scottish Government.

2. Background

2.1 Climate change is a direct driver of nature loss. In September 2023, the Scottish Government recognised that the country is now faced with a 'Nature Emergency' and has set out an ambitious new Biodiversity Framework to halt biodiversity loss by 2030 and reverse it with large-scale restoration by 2045.

2.2 In December 2022, the Scottish Government published its draft Scottish Biodiversity Strategy. It set out a vision, outcomes and 33 actions designed to halt and reverse biodiversity loss. There are five key overarching actions in the strategy, which are to:
- Accelerate restoration and regeneration
- Protect nature on land and at sea, across and beyond protected areas
- Embed nature positive farming, fishing and forestry
- Protect and support the recovery of vulnerable and important species and habitats
- Invest in Nature; and
- Take action on the indirect drivers of biodiversity loss

2.3   The strategy will be supported by a series of five-year delivery plans. There are a range of actions proposed within the initial delivery plan, which are grouped as follows:

Woodlands	Coastal	Freshwater
Urban	Uplands and Peatlands	Soils
Agriculture	Marine	Overarching

2.4   The Biodiversity Strategy is also supported by a Natural Environment Bill which will set out the framework for statutory targets for nature restoration. These targets will demonstrate whether delivery actions have been effective. There is also a commitment to protect at least 30% of our land and sea for nature by 2030 (the '30x30' framework) and to use Nature Networks to deliver the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy. A Nature Network connects nature-rich sites, restoration areas, and other environmental projects through a series of areas of suitable habitat, habitat corridors and stepping-stones.

2.5   A consultation has been launched seeking views on the strategy, delivery plan and Natural Environment Bill. A cross-service response has been prepared and is provided at Appendix 1. The Scottish Biodiversity Strategy aligns with the themes of the North Ayrshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan, which aims to protect and restore biodiversity, connect people with the natural world, and maximise the benefits of a diverse natural environment.

2.6   However, there a number of implications for local authorities from the proposed new framework. It is likely that the Council's Local Biodiversity Action Plan will require to be significantly updated to support new national targets and milestones. We are also seeking clarity on the new biodiversity targets, how they will be measured and monitored, what compliance would look like, and what enforcement action would be taken where targets are not met.

2.7   There are further potential implications arising from the new framework, including:

- Delivering on the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and statutory targets will require a move away from the current management practices for public green space and woodland. Further articulation and guidance on these proposals is sought within the response
- The Council will be required to identify opportunities as part of the Nature Network that can help target finance from developments to important areas for biodiversity connectivity under Policy 3 of NPF4
- The Nature Network will be the focus of efforts in mainstreaming the climate and nature crisis. Meeting this challenge will involve a redesign and realignment of our climate change and environmental education delivery

2.8   Whilst the ambition and drive to halt biodiversity loss at a national level is welcomed, a recurring consideration in the proposed consultation responses is the resources required to deliver on these aspirations. The new actions will not be deliverable within

current local authority funding envelopes, or from the number of staff available with the skills and expertise to undertake biodiversity related work. Officers are currently utilising national Nature Restoration funding to undertake a biodiversity audit to establish a biodiversity baseline in North Ayrshire and deliver on the Nature Network agenda (and link this to our next Local Development Plan), however it is noted within the responses that further resource will be required to achieve the wide-reaching aims of the strategy and delivery plans.

2.9   The Council's response to the consultation further supports the Council's Biodiversity Duty. Under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004, all public bodies in Scotland have a duty to further the conservation of biodiversity when carrying out their responsibilities. A Biodiversity Duty Report has been prepared for submission to Scottish Government in January, detailing our actions to protect biodiversity, connect people with nature and mainstreaming biodiversity. By engaging in the Scottish Government's consultation, the Council acknowledges the nature crisis and supports the proposals to halt biodiversity loss by 2030.

3.   Proposals

3.1   It is proposed that Cabinet approves the consultation response at Appendix 1 for submission to the Scottish Government.

4.   Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial

4.1   The financial implications of the proposals being consulted on could be significant for local authorities, and this has been raised repeatedly in the proposed response. The nature and extent of the resource implications is not yet clear.

Human Resources

4.2   If implemented, the proposals being consulted on would require additional resources for delivery. The nature and extent of human resources implications are not yet clear.

Legal

4.3   Under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004, all public bodies in Scotland have a duty to further the conservation of biodiversity when carrying out their responsibilities.

Equality/Socio-economic

4.4   The ambition to halt biodiversity loss by 2030 contributes to our socio-economic duty by protection our local environment for the benefit of communities.

Climate Change and Carbon

4.5   The consultation responses support the Council's climate change aspirations by proposing to halt biodiversity loss by 2030 and reverse decline by 2045, recognising the interdependency between the climate change and nature emergencies.

Key Priorities

4.6   The consultation responses are in keeping with the aim 'To achieve net-zero by 2030' within the Council Plan 2023-28.

Community Wealth Building

4.7   There are no community wealth building implications arising from the report.

5.   Consultation

5.1   The consultation documents have reviewed by various Council services including Planning, Growth and Investment, Information and Culture, Legal, Property Management and Investment, Regeneration, Roads, Streetscene, and Waste Resources to provide a cross-service response.

RUSSELL McCUTCHEON
Executive Director (Place)

For further information please contact **David W. Hammond, Head of Sustainability, Corporate Property & Transport,** on (01294) 324514.

Background Papers
0

Respondent Information Form

Tackling the Nature Emergency - Consultation on Scotland's Strategic Framework for Biodiversity

Please Note this form **must** be completed and returned with your response.

To find out how we handle your personal data, please see our privacy policy: https://www.gov.scot/privacy/

Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

☐ Individual

X Organisation

Full name or organisation's name

North Ayrshire Council

Phone number

N/A

Address

Cunninghame House, Irvine

Postcode

KA12 8EE

Email Address

dhammond@north-ayrshire.gov.uk

The Scottish Government would like your permission to publish your consultation response. Please indicate your publishing preference:

Information for organisations:
The option 'Publish response only (without name)' is available for individual respondents only. If this option is selected, the organisation name will still be published.
If you choose the option 'Do not publish response', your organisation name may still be listed as having responded to the consultation in, for example, the analysis report.

☐ Publish response with name

X Publish response only (without name)

☐ Do not publish response

1

We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

X   Yes

☐   No

2

Tackling the Nature Emergency: Consultation on Scotland's Strategic Framework for Biodiversity

Questions

We are inviting responses to this consultation by **14 December 2023**.

You are not required to answer every question in the consultation. The consultation is set out in sections to help you identify matters in which you may have a particular interest.

Please note that Section 1 of the consultation document does not contain any questions, so question numbering starts from Section 2.

Section 2 – Scottish Biodiversity Delivery Plan

Question 2a: Have we captured the key actions needed to deliver the objective: accelerate restoration and regeneration?

- Yes
- No X
- Unsure

Please explain the reasons for your response:
The key actions captured in the document broadly capture those needed to deliver the objective. A further useful key action would be to provide greater focus and support towards community mainstreaming and community partnership building. These partnerships will be key for local delivery. Therefore, introducing 'supporting local partnership building' as a key action would contribute towards the delivery of the existing actions.

The key actions should also focus on engagement. The action to safeguard space for coastal habitat change could conflict with the private interests of landowners and business operators, for example. In North Ayrshire, areas of space suitable for coastal habitat change are also key areas for economic development and regeneration. It will be important to undertake engagement to tease out competing interests to find areas of consensus to deliver the actions.

Question 2b: Are the key actions, to support the objective: accelerate restoration and regeneration, sufficient to put Scotland on track to ending the loss of biodiversity by 2030?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure X

North Ayrshire Council welcomes the strategy's ambition and recognises the potential the key actions have for accelerating restoration and regeneration. However, given the scale of the task and the short time scale involved, it will take a significant increase in the capacity to deliver the proposed level of restoration and regeneration. Without a significant increase in funding and resource, it is unlikely that local authorities will be able to deliver the actions in the strategy in a way that will halt biodiversity loss by 2030 and contribute to the national commitment.

Question 2c: Which actions do you think will have most impact?

We believe the following actions will have the most impact in North Ayrshire:

- *Introduce statutory nature restoration targets* - The scope and extent of the Statutory Nature Restoration Targets will be key to delivering on the other actions.
- *Implement a programme of ecosystem restoration* - The action to expand and enhance Nature Networks and ecological connectivity would help to emphasise the value of regularly used spaces within existing neighbourhoods.
- *Enhance water and air quality and undertake water management measures to enhance biodiversity and reduce negative impact*s - There are already challenges with delivering Natural Flood Management actions in small catchments so the above actions would need considerable support for implementation. This may require legislative changes to support.
- *Identify and facilitate partnership projects for six large scale landscape restoration areas with significant woodland components by 2025 and establish management structures with restoration work progressing by 2030*.
- *Implementation of a Scottish Plan for INNS Surveillance, Prevention and Control* - It is important that this is accompanied with wider support measures (including funding) to enable long-term effective INNS removal at scale. INNS management and damage costs increase rapidly over time as new species arrive and established ones continue to spread due to many factors, including climate change. Investing in prevention provides economic returns up to fifty times higher than trying to manage an INNS after it is established.

Question 2d: Have we captured the key actions needed to deliver the objective: protect nature on land and at sea across and beyond protected areas?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure X

Please explain the reasons for your response:
It is clear from the evidence available that we are in a nature emergency. North Ayrshire Council recognises this position and the need to protect nature on land and sea across and beyond protected areas. The Council agrees that strategy has captured key actions, but it is currently unclear if these will be enough to deliver the objective.

4

Question 2e: Are the key actions, to support the objective: protect nature on land and at sea across and beyond protected areas, sufficient to put Scotland on track to ending the loss of biodiversity by 2030?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure X

The Council welcomes the scale of the strategy's ambition and recognises the potential of key actions to protect nature on land and sea across and beyond protected areas in North Ayrshire. However, given the scale of the task and the short time scale involved, it will take a significant increase in local authorities' capacity to deliver the objective. It will be challenging for local authorities to deliver a truly integrated and functional Nature Network. Creating a functioning landscape of key local nature sites, NNRs, protected areas and public and private land within the time scale, without significant investment and increased partnership working, will not be possible. As with all actions in the strategy, it will be important for local authorities to be able maintain the delivered actions for the duration of the strategy time frame. This will not be possible without the allocation of appropriate long-term funding and investment in personnel with the required skills.

Question 2f: Which actions do you think will have most impact?

- *Identify and realise opportunities for expansion of existing NNRs or the designation of new ones – identifying a range of sites by 2026 and designating those considered suitable by 2028:* The process of expanding or designating new NNRs will have an impact at a local level. This impact will not just be through the provision of more sites managed for nature but also provide an important conduit for engaging with local communities. This engagement will then create further opportunities for the delivery of the wider Nature Network.
- *Ensure nature networks are implemented in every Local Authority area to provide connectivity between important places for biodiversity, deliver local priorities and contribute to strategic priorities at regional and national scales by 2030:* The Council welcomes this approach. The overall targets of the strategy will be more readily achieved if each local authority works together towards an integrated Scotland wide Nature Network. The concern that this approach raises is the lack of a unified approach between local authorities at present. Each local authority is delivering the network in a different way. This could make regional and nation cooperation more challenging.
- *Undertake mapping of opportunities for creating local-authority-wide Nature Networks by 2030:* The undertaking of mapping will not only benefit delivery of the Nature Network but also help create a better baseline for the creation of the Local Development Plan.

- *Develop a consistent approach to assessing existing and potential biodiversity value of green and blue spaces and measuring, monitoring, and demonstrating long-term positive effects for biodiversity and agreed approach to standardised monitoring has been provided to Local Authorities by 2030:* The adoption of a standard monitoring approach would enable the Council to undertake more fact-based management actions and help with a universal approach across Scotland.
- *Prepare and implement nature-positive amenity grassland management strategies for the public estate in town and cities by 2030, incorporating improved technical guidance for practitioners and access to suitable machinery for local authorities. A strategic approach is essential for the success of this key action, supported by sufficient funding, training, education and communications:* The preparation and implementation of a nature positive amenity grassland strategy will be an important part of the Council's delivery on biodiversity. The strategy will allow the Council to deliver cohesive grassland management strategies across all communities. However, we requite to see detail of the proposals for further assessment, and it will be essential for implementation of the plan to ensure that engagement with communities is undertaken in relation to any management regime changes, alongside grounds maintenance staff including planning in relation to training and funding for machinery that will be required.

Question 2g: Have we captured the key actions needed to deliver the objective: embed nature positive farming, fishing and forestry?

- Yes X
- No
- Unsure

Please explain the reasons for your response:

We welcome the fact that large-scale action in forestry is required and the need to improve the biodiversity benefits from all woodlands, as well as encouraging an expansion of natural regeneration.

The key actions for forestry and woodlands ensure that they deliver increased biodiversity and habitat connectivity alongside timber and carbon outcomes.

Sustainable forest management has been highlighted as a key action and is important for decision makers to increase biodiversity through this action to diversify age and species mixes and to facilitate natural regeneration as a method of increasing woodland cover.

6

Question 2h: Are the key actions, to support the objective: embed nature positive farming, fishing and forestry, sufficient to put Scotland on track to ending the loss of biodiversity by 2030?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Please explain the reasons for your response:
N/A.

Question 2i: Which actions do you think will have most impact?

Please state the actions and explain the reasons for your response:
The updating of woodland management guidance and plans (between 2023 and 2030) to reflect greater emphasis on actions that will improve biodiversity.

Question 2j: Have we captured the key actions needed to deliver the objective: protect and support the recovery of vulnerable and important species and habitats?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure X

Please explain the reasons for your response:
The Council welcomes the scale of the strategy's ambition. It will need sufficient resources, including additional and appropriate funding, training, education and communication, to meet the ambition of supporting the recovery of vulnerable and importance species and habitats in the delivery timeframes.

Question 2k: Are the key actions, to support the objective: protect and support the recovery of vulnerable and important species and habitats, sufficient to put Scotland on track to ending the loss of biodiversity by 2030?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure X

Please explain the reasons for your response:
The Council believes that more guidance is required on how decision makers can create green corridors to embed into open space strategies and planning developments and how improvements will be funded.

Question 2l: Which actions do you think will have most impact?

Please state the actions and explain the reasons for your response:

7

193

N/A.

Question 2m: Have we captured the key actions needed to deliver the objective: invest in nature?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure X

Please explain the reasons for your response:
The key actions of the strategy recognise some of the key aspects relating to investing in nature. The Council welcomes the proposed creation of a biodiversity investment plan. We also recognise the need to bring in private investment in natural capital. The provision of **"**direction on, and investment in, green skills and local economic opportunities supporting nature-based education, nature restoration skills and volunteering" is also welcomed. However, the focus of this investment is through information for land managers and the new agricultural payment system. As the strategy acknowledges that many local authorities have a resource gap when it comes to delivering on biodiversity, we would like to see specific actions that would help local authorities bridge identified knowledge and skills gaps.

It is important that Scotland works more strategically and at scale.

The Council would welcome the development of a Biodiversity Investment Fund. There is a need for this alongside signposting to funding streams. Funding is required to support projects and fund machinery. There is also a need for appropriate training, education and communication campaigns.

The Council also supports the development of the Woodland Carbon Code for improved biodiversity benefits.

Question 2n: Are the key actions, to support the objective: invest in nature, sufficient to put Scotland on track to ending the loss of biodiversity by 2030?

- Yes
- No X
- Unsure

Please explain the reasons for your response:

The Council welcomes the scale of the strategy's ambition and recognises the potential the key actions have for investing in nature in North Ayrshire. However, generating investment, building the green economy, and developing skills will be challenging particularly in the short term.

For example, we note that there is no clear way to fund or deliver the recommendations of completed natural flood management (NFM) studies. A funding and delivery

mechanism for implementation and maintenance of NFM would be helpful, especially as these schemes would deliver multiple benefits in terms of flood risk management, biodiversity and carbon sequestration.

Question 2o: Which actions do you think will have most impact?
Please state the actions and explain the reasons for your response:

As a local authority, the two main barriers to progressing biodiversity initiatives are funding and capacity. The increase in the capacity to deliver can currently only come from existing, limited funding streams. The establishment of a clear pathway for harnessing biodiversity investments would go some way to elevating the funding and capacity bottleneck.

Question 2p: Have we captured the key actions needed to deliver the objective: take action on the indirect drivers of biodiversity loss?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure X

Please explain the reasons for your response:
The key actions captured in the document broadly capture those needed to deliver the objective. The Council recognises the need to improve the engagement and connection between people, communities, and nature. It will require long term financial investment to build the required capacity. This lack of capacity to support communities will be an issue when it comes to supporting community ownership of local and national nature reserves.

Question 2q: Are the key actions, to support the objective: take action on the indirect drivers of biodiversity loss, sufficient to put Scotland on track to ending the loss of biodiversity by 2030?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure X

Please explain the reasons for your response:

On a local level, the Council would welcome further support in identifying the direct, and indirect, local drivers of biodiversity loss in our own areas. Many of the drivers are systemic, created by the interaction of complex local factors. A weakness of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan system has been presenting biodiversity loss as something that is addressed through individual projects. Although some projects have been individually successful, they have not arrested the overall decline in biodiversity. While funding and effort has been placed into these individual projects the more systemic drivers of biodiversity loss (lack of resources, skills etc.) remain unaddressed.

9

Question 2r: Which actions do you think will have most impact?

Please state the actions and explain the reasons for your response:
There is a need to ensure that the range of actions to tackle biodiversity loss and deliver a circular economy (through the Circular Economy Bill and Circular Economy & Waste Route Map) are complementary and co-ordinated. The Council recognises that lack of co-ordination between different policy areas is a barrier to halting biodiversity loss. Action would be welcomed to create pathways that would be able to facilitate collaboration between different policy areas and strategies. It should be recognised that the knowledge and skills gap within organisations plays a significant role in the current level of joined up working in policy delivery. A failure to tackle the skills gap would undermine any efforts to enhance complementary and co-ordinated working.

Delivery of action strengthening the connection between people and nature is imperative. The impact of having successful public awareness and education campaigns is important. It would increase the knowledge and understanding of people on the subject. This connection would empower people to carry out the actions required to protect and restore nature.

Section Three – Nature Networks Policy Framework

Question 3a: Do you have any comments on the Nature Networks Framework?

Please provide any comments:

'Governance and decision-making
- *Governance of Nature Networks will be transparent, democratic, and accountable and with inclusive and diverse representation. There will be a focus on empowering and equipping delivery partners from across sectors.'*

We welcome the drive to fully involve our communities in the Nature Network. Given the scope and scale of the Nature Network process it will be difficult to have uniform engagement levels across all North Ayrshire's communities. Building capacity in communities will be a long-term undertaking and challenging. Communities will require ongoing support to facilitate long-term engagement. It is currently unclear where the funding and capacity required to deliver this support will come from.

'Participation, engagement, and communication
- *Engagement with partnerships and communities will be inclusive, empowering and facilitate bottom-up activity.'*

The Nature Networks process has a potential conflict between being data driven, top down and community led, bottom up. It will be challenging to marry up community aspirations and the data driven process.
We welcome a policy framework for Scotland's Nature Networks and the development of a Nature Networks toolbox. We agree that action should make ecosystems

adaptable, robust, and fully connected. This will not only support nature restoration but also provide multiple benefits for people in their local communities.

- *'Simple and unifying messaging on Nature Networks across partners with a focus on building people's connection with nature and fostering stewardship.'*

We agree that it is important to send out a unifying message on Nature Networks.

- *'Scotland's public bodies will be exemplars, supporting the delivery of Nature Networks on their land.'*

We agree that it is important for local authorities to lead by example on the Climate and Nature Emergency, but we require the funding and skills investment in order to do so.

'Knowledge and Skills
- *Nature Networks will be developed using and sharing local knowledge, experience, and best-practice, and will support the growth of green skills and jobs.'*

We agree that development of the Nature Network will be best served by using and sharing local knowledge, experience and best practice. The challenge will be bringing together all of this in an efficient way that ensures all voices are heard.

It should be noted that a defined pathway between the creation of the Nature Network and the growth of green skills and jobs is unclear and requires further articulation and guidance.

'Data, mapping and monitoring
- *We will be adaptive in our approach to delivering Nature Networks and use the opportunity to improve our understanding of developing effective ecological connectivity.'*

Adaptivity will be key to meeting the differing needs of local authority areas. This flexibility may lead to challenges when it comes to sharing best practice between authorities. No two Nature Networks will be the same.

'Monitoring approaches for Nature Networks will be developed with, and for, stakeholders to inform management and action that maximises effectiveness of the network.
- *We will employ innovation and best practice in data collection, management, and use.*
- *Mapping and use of data will be collaborative and holistic in approach.'*

After the initial set up of the network, it is unclear how monitoring approaches will be continued by local authorities utilising existing budgets. There is currently no capacity to carry out the data collection and information management required to monitor a Nature Network. It is imperative that the monitoring approaches for Nature Networks are developed in partnership with local authorities and are fully funded. Appropriate training and data collection methodologies also need implementation. Any actions need to be sustainable in the long term.

11

'Finance and Resourcing
- *Public and private funding and finance will be delivered through properly resourced, clearly directed, long-term, simple, and accessible means.*
- *Funding and finance will be based on the principles of fairness, trust, and transparency through collaborative working.*
- *Funding and finance mechanisms will be coherent and will continue to be maintained.'*

The mechanism in which public and private funding and finance will be brought together is unclear. The managing and allocating of these funds will require additional resources.

'Policy and Mainstreaming
- *Policy and planning levers will be used to safeguard Nature Networks and provide long term assurance.*
- *Coherence across the policy landscape will be maintained.*
- *Mainstreaming Nature Networks, and wider biodiversity targets, at all levels of government and across the whole of society to encourage shared responsibility, efficient use of resources, and delivery of multiple benefits (additionality).'*

We agree with the need to mainstream the Nature Networks and wider biodiversity targets at all levels. At an organisational level this will require additional funding and access to appropriate courses for officer training. It is not apparent where this additional funding will come from.

Section Four – 30 by 30 Policy Framework

Question 4a: Do you have any comments on the 30 by 30 Framework?

Please provide any comments:
The Council welcomes the development of the 30 by 30 policy framework and is in agreement with the outline vision and guiding principles.

As calculated by NatureScot, currently in Scotland, 23% of land is designated as protected areas. This consists of areas such as: National Parks, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), and Special Protected Areas (SPA).

NatureScot reports that only 78% are currently in a favourable condition. We believe that there should be a further work on the effective management of these existing areas. These areas should then be used as examples of best practice.

The delivery of the 30 by 30 framework faces the same barriers to delivery as of the other elements in the strategy- funding and capacity. The Council welcomes the scale of the 30 by 30 ambition. However, without an increase in funding and capacity, it is unlikely that local authorities will be able to fully deliver the framework.

12

Section Five – Impact Assessments – Part A

Question 5a: What are your views on the accuracy and scope of the environmental baseline set out in the environmental report?

N/A.

Question 5b: What are your views on the predicted environmental effects as set out in the environmental report?

N/A.

Question 5c: What are your views on the reasonable alternatives as set out in the environmental report?

N/A.

Question 5d: What are your views on the proposals for mitigation and monitoring of the environmental effects set out in the environmental report?

N/A.

Question 5e: Do you think that any of the provisions in the SBS or Delivery Plan will have any adverse effects on business?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If yes, please provide any comments: N/A.

Question 5f: Are there any additional actions or changes to existing actions which can be taken through the Delivery Plan to benefit business?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If yes, please provide any comments:
N/A.

Question 5g: Do you think that any of the provisions in the SBS or Delivery Plan will have any adverse effects on socio-economic equality?

- Yes

13

- No
- Unsure

If yes, please provide any comments: N/A.

Question 5h: Are there any additional actions or changes to existing actions which can be taken through the Delivery Plan to benefit socio-economic equality?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If yes, please provide any comments: N/A.

Question 5i: Do you think that any of the provisions in the SBS or Delivery Plan, will have any adverse impacts on people with protected characteristics?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If yes, please provide any comments: N/A.

Question 5j: Are there any additional actions or changes to existing actions which can be taken through the Delivery Plan to benefit people with protected characteristics?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If yes, please provide any comments: N/A.

Question 5k: Do you think that any of the provisions in the SBS or Delivery Plan, will have any adverse impacts on island communities?

- Yes
- No X
- Unsure

If yes, please provide any comments:

North Ayrshire includes the Isle of Arran and the islands of Cumbrae. The Council has developed a local island plan for these locations. The plans are based around the key themes of community, economy, and environment. It has been concluded, from the information available, that there are elements of the proposals that could help facilitate the delivery of the island plans core themes.

14

200

Question 5l: Are there any additional actions, or changes to existing actions, which can be taken through the Delivery Plan to ensure that there are no adverse effects for Island communities?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If yes, please provide any comments: N/A.

Question 5m: Do you think that any of the provisions in the SBS or Delivery Plan, will have any adverse impacts on child rights and wellbeing?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If yes, please provide any comments: N/A.

Question 5n: Are there any additional actions or changes to existing actions which can be taken through the Delivery Plan to benefit child rights and wellbeing?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If yes, please provide any comments: N/A.

Section Six – Statutory Targets for Nature Restoration

Question 6a: Do you agree with this approach to placing targets on a statutory footing?

- Yes X
- No
- Unsure

Please explain the reasons for your response:

In principle, we welcome the approach of placing targets on a statutory footing. However, there is a need to clarify exactly what targets will be made statutory, what level targets will be set at, what compliance will look like, and what enforcement will be undertaken.
Mandatory targets will elevate the importance of biodiversity at a strategic and decision-making level. Mandatory targets can then be incorporated into statutory work programmes, strategies, and policies. The provision of appropriate levels of funding to support the delivery of statutory targets will be essential. Without funding, the targets are unlikely to be deliverable. The existence of mandatory targets will also help in

decision making at a strategic level through implementing biodiversity positive changes to maintenance and management approaches of our green infrastructure and open spaces. It is also important to recognise that any statutory target timeframes take note of existing timeframes in existing policies.

It is also unclear how the local authorities will monitor its delivery of statutory targets given the limited capacity to carry out the data collection and information management that would be required.

Question 6b: Do you agree with the criteria set out for the selection of targets?

- Yes X
- No
- Unsure

Please explain the reasons for your response:

The Council agrees that the target selection criteria are a logical basis for selecting targets.

Question 6c: Do you agree statutory targets should include a combination of outcome targets and output targets?

- Yes X
- No
- Unsure

Please explain the reasons for your response: It is understood that a range of both quantitative and qualitative targets would help provide a more meaningful framework. However, the level of target, the funding to reach them, and how compliance would be monitored and measured needs further articulation and consultation with stakeholders.

Question 6d: Is the list of potential target topics sufficiently comprehensive in terms of the focus of proposed target areas and overall scope?

- Yes X
- No
- Unsure

Question 6e: Do you have any other comments on the list of potential target topics?

No.

Question 6f: Do you agree with the proposal to have the smallest feasible number of targets which reflects the complexity of nature restoration?

- Yes X
- No
- Unsure

Question 6g: Do you agree statutory targets should align with the 2030 and 2045 timescales set out in the Strategy?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure X

Please explain the reasons for your response: The Council recognises the significance of the of the 2030 and 2045 timescales in relation to the realities of the climate and nature emergency. The timescale matches the urgency in which action is required to be taken. It is important, however, to make a distinction between the question of the timescale being an appropriate response to the emergency and the question of the timescale being appropriate in terms of the ability to meet the targets. The proposed Natural Environment Bill with statutory targets for nature restoration only gives limited time to act to be nature positive by halting biodiversity loss, for nature to adapt, and to monitor and publish results by 2030. Considering that the Bill is not due to be ratified until 2026, it will therefore be difficult to meet the 2030/2045 deadline within the present funding and resource landscape.

Question 6h: Do you agree the Bill should allow for the review of statutory targets?

- Yes X
- No
- Unsure

Please explain the reasons for your response:

The Council agrees that the Bill should allow for the review of statutory targets. It is important for the targets to be flexible and represent the reality of the climate and nature emergency. The targets need to also be flexible to match the success/lack of success of the response.

Question 6i: Do you agree that reporting on targets should align with existing Biodiversity reporting requirements?

- Yes
- No

- Unsure X

Please explain the reasons for your response:

The targets will be reviewed on a five-year rolling basis. The Council agrees that a five-year time scale is appropriate time to affect change on the ground while still being able to adjust the targets within the tight, 2030–2045, time scale. Due to capacity issues, we believe that the reporting process should be as streamlined as possible. It would make sense to facilitate this by aligning with existing biodiversity reporting requirements. There is a question around the practicalities of this process. The Council will need to align its own LBAP process to the time scale of the targets. Targets would be reviewed every five years with the LBAP being refreshed in the sixth year to deliver the targets at a local level. If the reporting on targets aligns with the present three yearly Biodiversity Duty reporting cycle. There are questions over the practicalities of how will this work in practice that need to be addressed through further guidance.

Question 6j: Do you agree that an Independent Review Body is needed to report on Government's progress in meeting the statutory targets?

- Yes X
- No
- Unsure

Please explain the reasons for your response:

Similarly to climate change, where the Climate Change Committee plays a role in monitoring and accountability, the Council agrees with the need for an Independent Review Body to report on the Government's progress in meeting statutory targets. Such a body would also require a process to be able to directly feed into the target review process.

Section Seven – National Parks

Question 7a: Do you agree that the purpose of National Park authorities should be amended in order to emphasise the important leadership role that National Park authorities need to play in restoring nature and in mitigating and adapting to climate change?

- Agree
- Partially agree
- Partially disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain the reasons for your response: N/A.

18

Question 7b: Do you agree with these suggested changes to the first National Park aim?

- Agree
- Partially agree
- Partially disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain the reasons for your response: N/A.

Question 7c: do you agree with the suggested change to the second National Park aim?

- Agree
- Partially agree
- Partially disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain the reasons for your response: N/A.

Question 7d: Do you agree with the suggested change to the third National Park aim?

- Agree
- Partially agree
- Partially disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain the reasons for your response: N/A.

Question 7e: Do you agree with the suggested change to the fourth National Park aim?

- Agree
- Partially agree
- Partially disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain the reasons for your response: N/A.

Question 7f: Do you agree that the National Park 'principle' set out in section 9(6) of the 2000 Act should be retained? This would mean that, if there is a conflict between the National Park aims, greater weight should be given to the first aim which would seek to protect, restore and enhance the natural assets, biodiversity and ecosystems within the National Park.

- Agree
- Partially agree
- Partially disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain the reasons for your response: N/A.

Question 7g: Do you agree that public bodies operating within the National Park should have regard to the proposed National Park aims?

- Agree
- Partially agree
- Partially disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain the reasons for your response: N/A.

Question 7h: Do you agree that public bodies operating within the National Park should have regard to the National Park principle?

- Agree
- Partially agree
- Partially disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain the reasons for your response: N/A.

Question 7i: Do you agree that the duty on public bodies operating within National Parks should be strengthened so they have an obligation to support and contribute to the implementation of National Park Plans rather than having regard to these plans?

- Agree
- Partially agree
- Partially disagree
- Disagree

20

*   Don't know

Please explain the reasons for your response: N/A.

Question 7j: Do you agree with the proposal that National Park Authorities should be able to enforce byelaw breaches within National Parks by issuing fixed penalty notices rather than referring them to local Procurators Fiscal?

*   Agree
*   Partially agree
*   Partially disagree
*   Disagree
*   Don't know

Please explain the reasons for your response: N/A.

Question 7k: Do you think that any other changes should be made to the general powers of National Park authorities?

*   Agree
*   Partially agree
*   Partially disagree
*   Disagree
*   Don't know

Please explain the reasons for your response: N/A.

Question 7l: Do you agree with the proposed changes to the governance of National Parks?

*   Agree
*   Partially agree
*   Partially disagree
*   Disagree
*   Don't know

Please explain the reasons for your response: N/A.

Question 7m: Do you have any other comments that you would like to make about the aims, powers and governance of National Parks?
N/A.

Section Eight – Impact Assessments – Part B

Question 8a: Do you think that any of the proposals in Part B, will have any adverse impacts on human rights?

21

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If yes, please provide any comments: N/A.

Question 8b: Are there any additional actions, or changes to existing actions, which can be taken through the proposals in Part B to ensure that there are no adverse effects for people's human rights?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If yes, please provide any comments: N/A.

Question 8c: Do you think that any of the proposals in Part B, will have any adverse impacts on people with protected characteristics?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If yes, please provide any comments: N/A.

Question 8d: Are there any additional actions or changes to existing actions which can be taken through the proposals in Part B to benefit people with protected characteristics?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If yes, please provide any comments: N/A.

Question 8e: Do you think that any of the proposals in Part B will have any adverse effects on socio-economic equality?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If yes, please provide any comments: N/A.

Question 8f: Are there any additional actions or changes to existing actions which can be taken through the proposals in Part B to benefit socio-economic equality?

- Yes

22

208

- No
- Unsure

If yes, please provide any comments: N/A.

Question 8g: Do you think that any of the proposals in Part B, will have any adverse impacts on island communities?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If yes, please provide any comments:

North Ayrshire includes the Isle of Arran and the islands of Cumbrae. The Council has developed a local island plan for these locations. The plans are based around the key themes of community, economy, and environment. It has been concluded, from the information available, that there are elements of the proposals that could help facilitate the delivery of the island plans core themes.

Question 8h: Are there any additional actions, or changes to existing actions, which can be taken through the proposals in Part B to ensure that there are no adverse effects for Island communities?

- Yes X
- No
- Unsure

If yes, please provide any comments:

The Council believes that delivering actions in a way that embraces the uniqueness of each island will be key to ensuring adverse effects are minimised.

Question 8i: Do you think that any of the proposals in Part B, will have any adverse impacts on child rights and wellbeing?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If yes, please provide any comments: N/A.

Question 8j: Are there any additional actions or changes to existing actions which can be taken through the proposals in Part B to benefit child rights and wellbeing?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If yes, please provide any comments: N/A.

Question 8k: Do you think that any of the proposals in Part B will have any adverse effects on business?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If yes, please provide any comments: N/A.

Question 8l: Are there any additional actions or changes to existing actions which can be taken through the proposals in Part B to benefit business?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If yes, please provide any comments: N/A.

Question 8m: What are your views on the accuracy and scope of the environmental baseline set out in the environmental report?
N/A.

Question 8n: What are your views on the predicted environmental effects as set out in the environmental report?
N/A.

Question 8o: What are your views on the reasonable alternatives as set out in the environmental report?
N/A.

Question 8p: What are your views on the proposals for mitigation and monitoring of the environmental effects set out in the environmental report?
N/A.

NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

05 December 2023

Cabinet

Title:	**Great Harbour Masterplan, Irvine**
Purpose:	To approve that the Great Harbour Masterplan for Irvine Harbourside is referred to Planning Committee for consideration as a material planning consideration, related to the adopted Local Development Plan and setting out the wider development aspirations for the area.
Recommendation:	That Cabinet approves the Great Harbour Masterplan for referral to Planning Committee for consideration as a material planning consideration related to the adopted Local Development Plan.

1. Executive Summary

1.1 The Great Harbour programme is a key project for the Ayrshire Growth Deal in terms of its Tourism Programme, with planned investment of £14m, subject to business case approval. The programme aims to stimulate further commercial and other investment in the area through Ayrshire Growth Deal investment in facilities within the harbourside area, to promote Irvine Harbourside as a regionally significant destination that will benefit local communities and businesses.

1.2 Irvine Harbourside is identified as a Strategic Development Area within the Local Development Plan (LDP 2), supporting the development of a Maritime Mile along the waterfront by maximising the area's best place assets, including heritage, location and environment, in order to attract investment to the area and creating an improved connection with the marine environment. The LDP supports its Strategic Development Areas being underpinned by masterplanning to provide further detail on the programme of interventions within the area and how those contribute to placemaking.

1.3 A draft Great Harbour Masterplan was prepared for public consultation in February 2023, as a framework for future development at Irvine Harbourside. Extensive public consultation has subsequently taken place during March and April 2023, with overall wide support for the proposals. A final draft Great Harbour Masterplan (Appendix 1) has been produced following consultation, with some changes to the proposals to reflect consultation feedback.

1.4 It is recommended that Cabinet approve the final draft Great Harbour Masterplan for onward consideration of the Planning Committee, to inform future proposals (and related planning applications) and be a material consideration in the determination of future planning applications for the area. The Masterplan will support and strengthen

the LDP and set a framework to guide future investment and define the quality and character of future changes to the area, providing increased confidence on the programme of development taking place through Ayrshire Growth Deal and beyond.

2.   Background

2.1   The Great Harbour Masterplan refines the strategic vision set out in the Ayrshire Growth Deal (AGD) Outline Business Case (OBC) for the project, as approved by Scottish Government in June 2021, to support the socio-economic regeneration of the area whilst securing its sustainable growth. Investment of £14M, comprising £9M from Scottish Government and £5M from North Ayrshire Council, will support place-making and destination development based on the utilisation of the area's best assets and community wealth building and will drive growth through investment and collaboration with key partners.

2.2   The Masterplan will guide delivery and future investment in the following key areas:

- Developing the **waterfront as place-based destination** - The Maritime Mile – creating an appealing waterfront destination incorporating three new activity hubs (Coastal Hub, Marine & Creative Arts Hub and Maritime Heritage Hub), addressing heritage, water sport and play and strengthening the link between the town and coast.

- Supporting the regeneration of vacant and derelict land and enabling partners, such as the Scottish Maritime Museum to create facilities that will provide further investment in the area and strengthen local neighbourhoods and 20 minute neighbourhood planning by building on the qualities of the place. This also includes the option for housing development on the site of the former Magnum at Portland Roundabout/Beach Drive.

- Promoting new **leisure related visitor facilities and developments** encouraging new investment in hospitality, leisure and event activity including enhancing the qualities of the existing Conservation Area and investment in existing buildings and site assets such as the Harbour Masters Office, the Beach Pavilion at Harbour Point and the option for leisure development at the former site of the Magnum at Portland Roundabout/Beach Drive

- Supporting the capacity of the area to host **major and community-led events** at the Beach Park and at surrounding smaller event spaces, to facilitate local and national events and build on the success of previous events, including local community events and activities.

2.3   The Masterplan consultation process helped to build a consensus on the way forward to allow the Council, community and wider partners to work together to direct investment, secure additional funding and secure regeneration across the area. Details of the feedback are included in the Consultation Report as part of the Masterplan and are covered in Section 5.0 of this report.

2.4   The vision for Great Harbour is an attractive place to live and work, but also a vibrant visitor destination, celebrating local built and natural heritage with improved access to enhanced blue and green spaces and safe public access throughout. The main elements and phases of improvements proposed by the Masterplan are summarised below and are detailed in the Masterplan document at Appendix 1.

<u>Coastal Hub (Phase 1)</u>

2.5 The Coastal Hub aims to create a new major play facility for varied ages and abilities and to define and provide infrastructure for an events space, all within the existing Beach Park. Longer term proposals for this area include the re-use and enhancement of the Pilot House and the re-development of the Beach Pavilion as a commercial café/restaurant and community hub. The play facility is currently being designed and its estimated that construction will begin on site in autumn 2024 with the aim of being ready for summer 2025. Immediately adjacent to the Coastal Hub a large parking area provides significant parking for the area. Following consultation on the initial draft Masterplan, which indicated that part of the parking area could offer potential as a development opportunity site (subject to replacement parking), this component of the draft Masterplan has been removed in the final draft and represents the only major change to the proposals. This reflects feedback from the consultation, which did not offer clear support to development at this location.

<u>Marine & Arts Hub and Public Realm (Phase 2)</u>

2.6 The Marine & Arts Hub will see the creation of enhanced public realm within the central Harbourside area adjacent to the Harbour Arts Centre, Marina View Hotel, Watersports Club, Ship Inn, Courtyard Studios and GRO. This will include a new waterfront space to support outdoor events and to provide better access to marine activities, through upgrading the existing infrastructure. The former Harbour Master's Office (HMO) offers the potential to accommodate new business or social enterprise, focussed on either enhancing the local food and drink or crafts offers. Land to the rear of the building will accommodate additional and some re-located car parking from the Harbourside. It is anticipated this phase will be on site in early 2026.

<u>Maritime Heritage Hub (Phase 3)</u>

2.7 The Maritime Heritage Hub will aim to create expanded facilities for the Scottish Maritime Museum with a broadening of its offer through an extension to the Puffer's Cafe building that will host a new gallery for the Museum's maritime paintings, exhibition and education space, and additional outdoor event space to the front of the building adjacent to Harbour Street. It is anticipated this phase will be on site in mid-2027.

2.8 The final proposals take into account local priorities as shaped through the public consultations, but also consider, through cross service consultations, the future maintenance burden and associated revenue implications. The proposals have also been considered against deliverability in the current economic climate, legal restrictions including ownership, required consenting and statutory planning processes.

2.9 The Great Harbour Masterplan supports the LDP and national policy, preserving, enhancing and building upon the best place assets, and identifying and strengthening opportunities for the future sustainable growth of the area and the community. The Masterplan constitutes a gateway to further development of the proposals to secure AGD funding drawdown, by identifying a number of economic outcomes and community benefits.

3. Proposals

3.1 That Cabinet approves the Great Harbour Masterplan for referral to Planning Committee for consideration as a material planning consideration related to the adopted Local Development Plan.

4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial

4.1 The program of phased delivery and associated Full Business Cases will determine the draw down of the capital funds from Government for the Great Harbour project. Any additional revenue implications of the overall Great Harbour programme and their timings are being considered as each project is developed and with assistance from other Council services including Streetscene and Roads. Any implications will be factored into the appropriate year's Revenue budget process and Medium-Term Financial Plan Update and on completion projects will be subject to a year's maintenance by contactors. It is worth noting that the need for regular maintenance was a concern raised by the public during the consultation period. In addition, in terms of revenue generation, the project may offer a number of opportunities that require further investigation, including:

- A proposal to re-develop the existing Beach Pavilion to provide modern community space and public toilet facilities on the ground floor, that are supported and maintained by the income from a commercial lease for the first floor, for example to provide a restaurant development with spectacular coastal views.
- The restoration and re-use of the Harbour Master's Office; and
- The development site adjacent to the Courtyard Studios.

Human Resources

4.2 The main projects set out within the Great Harbour Masterplan and funded by the Ayrshire Growth Deal, will be delivered by the Growth and Investment Team with support from other NAC teams.

Legal

4.3 If approved, the Great Harbour Masterplan will become a material consideration in the assessment of future planning applications. Prior to the implementation of projects set out within the Masterplan, further consideration is required in relation to property ownership, title burdens and statutory consents. Additional work is being progressed to establish options and processes for addressing areas of concern.

Equality/Socio-economic

4.4 The Great Harbour Masterplan considers social and economic sustainability through *NAC's Community Wealth Building Strategy 2020-2025*. As a regeneration and place-making project, Great Harbour aims to tackle inequalities derived from the area's high levels of multiple deprivation, through enhancement and improved connectivity,

improving safe public access to and the enjoyment of the waterfront and green spaces and also key attractions, preserving local heritage and creating new attractions.

Climate Change and Carbon

4.5 The Great Harbour Masterplan recognises the impact of climate change and considers national and local strategies and actions on environmental sustainability and carbon emissions in line with the *Climate Change Act 2019*, Scotland's net zero targets and *NAC's Environmental Sustainability & Climate Change Strategy*. In particular, the Masterplan addresses the following requirements:

- The project has been developed based on the Place Standard and 20 Minute Neighbourhood principles with considerations for its whole-life carbon emissions. It promotes the implementation of the *PAS 2080: Carbon Management in Infrastructure* for infrastructure projects and *RICS Whole Life-Cycle Carbon Professional Statement* for building projects.
- As a follow up a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has been undertaken for the project area and provides detailed recommendations for further design and civils works relating to the individual projects and phases of proposed works.
- A Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment has been undertaken for the project's main development areas and provides a range of recommendations for further design and civils works relating to the individual projects. These findings will be assessed further on a project by project basis and will reflect the new NPF4 regulations.

Key Priorities

4.6 The Great Harbour Masterplan reflects the Council priorities contained in the new Council Plan 2023 to 2028 of wellbeing, communities and local democracy, climate change and a sustainable Council. In addition to the Council Plan and LDP2, the Masterplan supports a number of other Council plans and strategies, including:

- Vacant and Derelict Land Strategy
- Community Wealth Building Strategy
- Electric Vehicle Strategy
- Environmental Sustainability & Climate Change Strategy
- Flood Risk Management Plan
- Open Space Strategy
- Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy
- Local Biodiversity Action Plan.

Community Wealth Building

4.7 The Great Harbour Masterplan considers social and economic sustainability through *NAC's Community Wealth Building Strategy 2020-2025*. In terms of empowering local communities, comprehensive engagement took place with special interest groups such as local heritage and history and outdoor and water activity groups. This has proven very successful and other partnerships will be explored in the future, such as natural heritage and the events sectors. In addition, early engagement was undertaken with several local manufacturers, who may be in a position to deliver

some elements of the proposed improvements, particularly around the public realm works. This will be explored further during civils works tenders.

5. Consultation

5.1 The Masterplan proposals are closely aligned with the Local Development Plan and National Planning Framework (NPF4) and build upon community engagement progressed during the Irvine Vision (2016) and the Irvine Harbourside Study (2017). Initial public consultation on the Great Harbour proposals took place over February and March 2022 and the feedback was then incorporated into the Masterplan proposals. The table below summarises the top priorities that emerged from the consultation in 2022 and how these were considered in the development of the Masterplan.

Great Harbour Masterplan
Previous Consultation Feedback Responses

Previous consultations. You said and we have listened and responded.

No.	Issue	You Said...	We did....Recognised in the Masterplan	Status
1.	Prioritising the Beach Park	• Beach Park needs upgrading. • Local needs to be prioritised. • Play space required.	• Coastal Hub & Play Park to delivered in Phase 1 • Events Space in Phase 1.	
2.	Traffic & Transport	• Reduce traffic on residential streets. • Need to retain public parking. • Reduce traffic speed and improve safety.	• Traffic encouraged to use Beach Drive to access coast. • Look to incorporate 'quiet streets' & designed in calming. • Level of parking unchanged in Masterplan. • Traffic calming integrated into road design.	
3.	Safe Movement	• Make pavements & road crossings safe. • Provide tactiles and improved mobility.	• Delete roundabout to improve active travel. • Traffic calm and upgrade pavements.	
4.	Car Parking	• Areas needs parking for events. • Local parking important.	• Retain existing parking numbers. • Ensure new development meets parking need.	
5.	Public Transport	• Better public transport.	• Encourage bus operators to provide services. • More demand created by new housing and waterfront attractions.	
6.	Events	• Success of Making Waves. • Need small/large spaces.	• Deliver new Event Arena in Phase 1. • Create small event spaces on Maritime Mile.	
7.	Water Access & Marine Activity	• Important local user group. • Better access to water facilities.	• Supports more water use / activity. • Supports upgrading around slipway.	
8.	Community Use	• Local uses key to place quality. • Proposals to meet local needs.	• Investment seeks to support residents. • Make Harbourside a more attractive place to live.	
9.	Waterfront Walkway	• Important link Town to Coast. • Needs investment.	• Major feature of the Masterplan. • Maritime Mile focus on the Waterfront.	
10.	Public Toilets	• Retaining public toilets at the beach. • Community safety & facilities.	• Proposal for new upgraded facilities. • New Beach Hub incorporating café / restaurant.	

Your Comment Addressed

Your Comment Partially Addressed

Your Comment Yet to be Addressed

18

5.2 Further public consultation on the Masterplan took place in March and April 2023. Similarly to the first phase of consultation, it followed a strategy based on the best practice process developed by NAC's Communities Team and also incorporated 'lessons learnt' from the previous phase. A Stakeholder Reference Group (SRG) supported the shaping of the consultation methodology and verification of the consultation information material. The material and a survey were available online for the duration of the consultation and several drop-in events, walkarounds and direct presentations to stakeholder groups were also provided. The material was also displayed at Irvine Library and on the fencing opposite the Harbour Arts Centre with a QR code for direct access to the survey and paper survey forms made available at specific locations. The feedback has been incorporated into the masterplan proposals and the consultation report is appended to the Masterplan at Appendix 1.

5.3   The majority of responses were supportive of all of the various proposals, recognising the opportunity for the regeneration of the Harbourside. There was overall support for improvements to the public realm and access along the Harbourside and for the proposed activity hubs. There was also overall support for the development of the Portland Road site, whilst there was a mix of views as to whether the Waterfront site should be developed for residential. Feedback suggested that there needs to be a clearer definition between what is being delivered through Ayrshire Growth Deal funding and what aspects will require other sources of funding. There was also a level of scepticism that all of the projects could be delivered. The main concerns focused on:

- sufficient provision of public amenities, including toilets, along the Harbourside;
- adequate traffic management recognising access needs of vehicles towing watercrafts and improving perceived safety for non-vehicle users;
- adequate maintenance;
- adequate waste management and introducing recycling; and
- protection of place assets, including heritage and cultural assets.

5.4   In addition, the Council has received representation from NPL as landowner at Ardeer, concerned that Ardeer has not been included within the overall Masterplan and regarding the development of the waterfront housing site, which has now been removed from the proposals.

5.5   The Masterplan was also the subject of internal consultations with a range of Council services throughout its development, including Roads, Flooding, Streetscene, Waste, Planning, Regeneration, Tourism & Marine Tourism, Housing, Connected Communities, Property Management & Investment and Biodiversity.

5.6   The development and delivery of the various phases of the Masterplan is ongoing and will involve further community and stakeholder engagement.

RUSSELL McCUTCHEON
Executive Director (Place)

For further information please contact Neale Mcilvanney, Interim Head of Service, Growth, Investment and Employability, on nealemcilvanney@north-ayrshire.gov.uk.

Background Papers

Appendix 1 - Great Harbour Masterplan report

Great Harbour Masterplan

Developing the Quality of Place within Irvine Harbourside

September 2023

North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

Maritime Heritage HUB

Maritime Mile Waterfront

Maritime Mile Waterfront

Marine & Creative Arts HUB

Portland - Beach Drive Housing

Coastal HUB & Beach Park

Beach Park Event Space / Arena

Beach Park

Community Hub & Restaurant

Coast

219

Executive Summary

Irvine Harbourside and the Beach Park and coast are Irvine's greatest asset. The Ayrshire Growth Deal (AGD) recognised the strength of the asset and its potential to support area transformation, Community Wealth Building, and drive growth and regeneration through investment and collaboration with key partners.

The Growth Deal outlined a project with the working title - The Great Harbour – that identified investment in the Irvine Harbourside that supported place-making and development of the destination. The developed proposals are closely aligned with the Local Development Plan and the National Planning Framework (NPF4) and have been advanced through public engagement during March-April 2023 together with earlier engagement on the Coastal Hub (2022) and consultation on the Irvine Vision and the Irvine Harbourside Place-Making Study (2017).

This masterplan refines the vision and establishes a masterplan framework to support further local community and stakeholder engagement. Following consultation and engagement, it will be adopted as Planning Guidance setting a masterplan framework to guide future investment and define the quality and character of the varied development elements to be advanced under the Growth Deal (Maritime Mile and Activity Hubs) or though future housing and leisure developments advanced in accordance with the Local Development Plan.

Development elements include:

- Developing the **waterfront as place-based destination** - The Maritime Mile – creating an appealing waterfront destination incorporating three new activity hubs addressing heritage, watersport and play and strengthening the link between the town and coast. Funded through the Ayrshire Growth Deal.
- Developing the **events arena** along with smaller event spaces to facilitate local and national events and build on the success of both the Making Waves Festival and smaller local community events and activities. Funded through the Ayrshire Growth Deal.
- Building **new homes and associated community facilities** on brownfield sites, strengthen local neighbourhoods and 20 Minute Neighbourhood planning and build on the qualities of place. Advanced by development partners.
- Promoting **new leisure and related visitor facilities** (gallery /arts /café / restaurant/retail) encouraging new investment in hospitality, leisure and event activity including enhancing the qualities of the Conservation Area and investment in existing buildings and site assets. Advanced by development partners.

Engagement on the masterplan highlighted clear support for the place-making and public realm elements and the enhancement of facilities within the various Maritime Mile activity hubs, and also the future development options of either leisure or new housing development to the Portland-Beach Drive site

Engagement has helped to identify key local priorities with a clear consensus emerging on the way forward that supports this updated and amended masterplan and will enable North Ayrshire Council (NAC/Council), community and wider partners to work together to bring forward investment, identify new and additional funding and promote the regeneration of the Harbourside.

Contents

1.0
Great Harbour

1.1 Developing the Destination

Great places provide strong and appealing locations for people to live, work, play as well as to visit. Irvine Harbourside, in addition to its neighbourhood function, is also an attractive waterfront and coastal destination for local day visitors and tourists. Destinations are increasingly recognised as having a major role in supporting local economies and can have an important role in building successful places and supporting Community Wealth Building.

Distinctive, high-quality destinations have the capacity to attract additional footfall, drive new investment, support and sustain existing businesses and jobs, empower communities and support regeneration with positive local benefits over the long term. Destinations that offer sustainable and inclusive growth provide for stronger retained local income, create jobs, sustain local businesses and generate higher levels of local benefits.

The Ayrshire Growth Deal approved the Great Harbour as a major regeneration programme for the Irvine Waterfront. The programme seeks to unlock funding to deliver important public goals, including protecting and enhancing the quality of the Harbourside, strengthening neighbourhoods and investing in heritage and waterfront public realm as the catalyst for wider area regeneration.

The masterplan objectives are simple. The masterplan looks to enhance Harbourside as a place to live, work, play and visit by investing in facilities that will support local communities and regenerate the area. We will strengthen safe public access, enhance the Beach Park, local biodiversity and greenspace, develop a series of heritage and waterfront attractions, provide new homes within a well-connected 20 Minute Neighbourhood, improve access to the water and support local groups involvement in celebrating a high-quality waterfront, meeting the needs of both residents and visitors.

224

Developing the concept of 'The Great Harbour' adds a destination element to place-making that looks to raise quality and provide positive memorable experiences based on core visitor attractions (Scottish Maritime Museum / Harbour Arts Centre /Waterfront), distinctive hospitality offers (café/ restaurant), events and supporting visitor facilities (car parking /toilets/ path networks). The visitor infrastructure should be complementary to local neighbourhood enhancements with both elements building compelling reasons to visit and return.

The masterplan goal is to make Harbourside a more attractive and liveable place supporting area-wide regeneration and helping to deliver economic, social and environmental sustainability. The Maritime Mile project will enhance the waterfront setting, creating a continuous and attractive public realm connecting the Town Centre to the Beach. This maritime walkway from the station to the Coast is a mile in length and provides access to a range of facilities and numerous points of maritime interest and heritage. Strengthening local neighbourhoods with new housing on brownfield land helps to meet local housing demand in a highly sustainable location whilst also increasing local demand for goods and services. Promoting active travel and safe movement helps reduce car dependency and supports the transition towards Net Zero and a strong 20 Minute Neighbourhood.

The proposals for the waterfront are based on quality place-making and the six qualities of successful place-making (National Policy - NPF4) and will require significant investment. Importantly investment needs to deliver economic regeneration outcomes (jobs /homes /business growth / community growth) alongside the place enhancement with new facilities (Play Park / SMM@Gt Harbour / Maritime Mile/ Event Arena) driving additional footfall and place appeal.
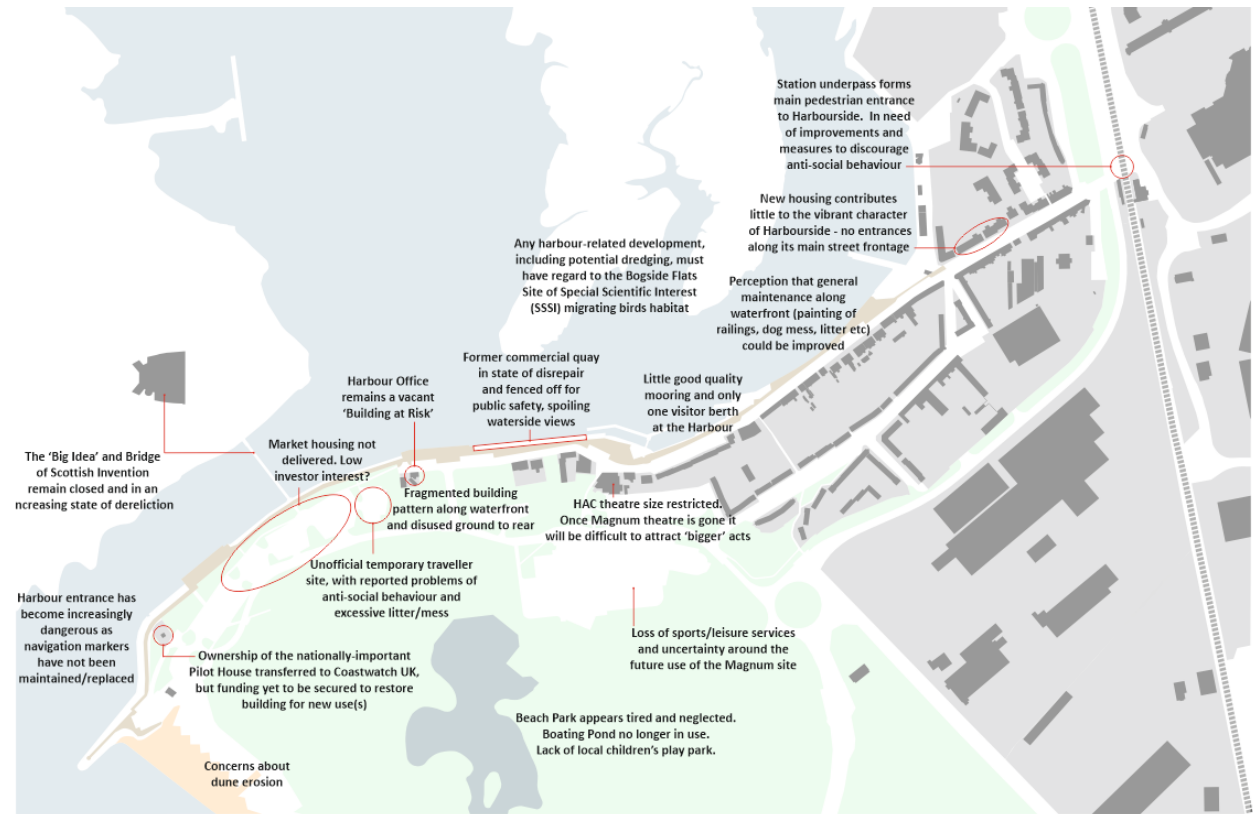
Initial Appraisals and Issues for consideration within Masterplan

1.2 Historical Land Use

Irvine Harbourside has a fantastic history and story.
Scotland's largest 18th century port and centre of
industry and commerce, Irvine and the Harbourside
straddle the longest beach on the West Coast and are
home to the Scottish Maritime Museum (SMM) and
Boyd's Automatic Tide Signalling Device historically
housed in the Pilot Tower House.

Irvine developed as a port from the 16th to the 19th century but
experienced terminal decline during the 20th century. The growth of
Glasgow as a port in the later 18th and 19th centuries brought a decline in
Irvine, although it was sustained by exporting Ayrshire coal.

Harbour Street began as a 'causeway' in about 1677, when the town
decided to give up fighting the problems of silt upstream and abandon the
quays at Marress and their plans to cut through from there to the sea. In
that year, they laid stones to create a roadway and organised a quay
somewhere on the current site of the harbour. It developed as a 'mixed-use'
neighbourhood with industry (hauliers/ chemicals/ glass/ foundries/
engineering works) mixed with merchant/ artisan housing, hotels, local
retail etc. (see https://www.irvineHarbourside.org)There was a ship-building
yard just to the east at Fullarton, and several iron and chemical works
located immediately to the south. Dredging of the Harbour ceased in the
1960's, with the core user limited to the Nobel / ICI Works at Ardeer.

Today the Harbour is an important environmental and leisure asset, with
the river and former wharves providing local moorings (circa 40 moorings
fully registered and licensed) and providing berthage of historic vessels
forming part of the exhibition of the Scottish Maritime Museum. Former
industrial areas have been reclaimed to create the Beach Park, providing the
whole town with an important greenspace resource and a popular space for
events such as Radio 1 Roadshow and Making Waves. The Magnum Sports
& Leisure Centre (1976-2016) was the largest in Europe and formed a
regional anchor attraction for both leisure and events.

226
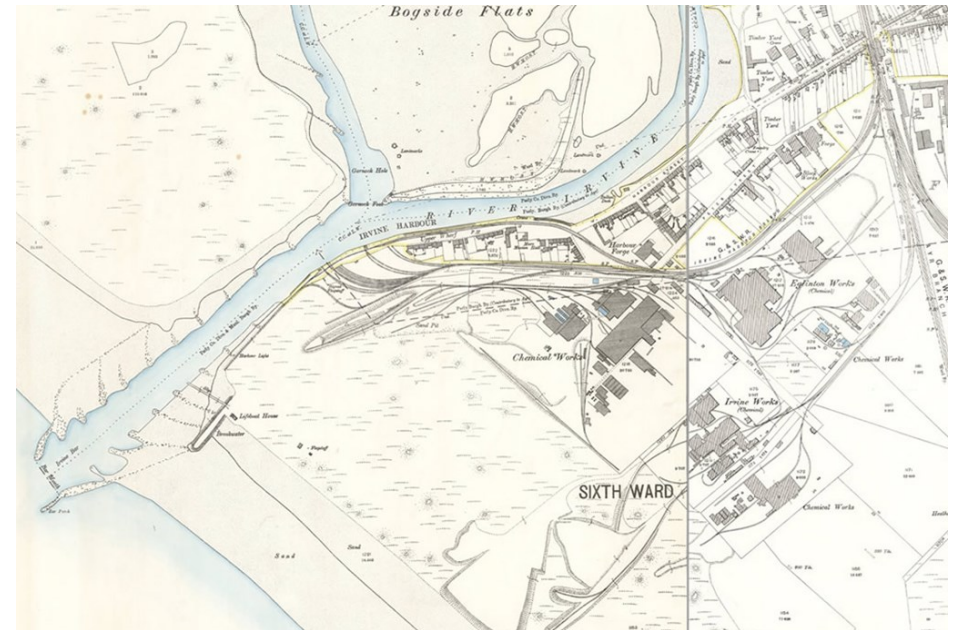
Contemporary & Heritage Elements within a waterfront setting create a distinctive place quality

1.3 Building on the Quality of Place

The proposals for change in the masterplan look to build on the existing special qualities of place, local needs and local community assets. For Harbourside to be 'all it can be' it needs to create a more appealing and inclusive sense of place.

The Harbourside masterplan seeks to build on:

- **Distinctive Place Quality**
  Commitment to sustainable quality. High quality, durable and distinctive design solutions that reflect the Harbourside's character, heritage, materials and create a low maintenance, high quality public realm that is accessible to all. The Harbourside forms an important Conservation Area with proposals planned to protect and wherever possible enhance the conservation value and status of the Harbourside.

- **People, Activity and Animation**
  Activity and animation are created by people enjoying space, with spaces that support local community, commercial and event activity. A number of local clubs (e.g. Irvine Watersports Club / heritage groups / Coastwatch) provide important local services and have significant local membership. The need to work with local organisations is critical to the public realm, and allows for more open, inclusive use (watersport activity/ waterfront seating/ cafes/ event spaces).

- **Places for Living**
  Opportunities for developing the neighbourhood and supporting town-living should be celebrated. Homes create life, increase activity and security and create demand for off-season goods and services. The Irvine Development Corporation developments and more recent North Ayrshire Council (Housing) set a successful residential framework with an appealing scale and character on which to build.

- **Celebrating Heritage & Distinctiveness**
  Heritage helps to anchor the Great Harbour and offers strong local stories (The "Herbour Dauner"/ Heritage Trail/ Tours). A heritage app with links to contemporary offers around local arts, stories, local foods, local hospitality, building a strong sense of participation and exploration that provides a unique narrative around a fascinating place.

- **Waterfront Appeal**
  Waterfronts have appeal and attract activity whether that be the River Irvine, Irvine Harbour, or the Coast. There is a need to strengthen the quality of the waterfront by removing clutter, enhancing water access opportunities, creating authentic experiences and building the level of activity and events that attract and retain visitors.

- **Inclusive Connections**
  Building connections (physical/ neighbourhood/ community/ organisation/ activities) is key to creating a more inclusive, active, healthier and wealthier place. This needs to provide safe walking, wheeling and cycling routes and strengthen the core path and cycle network and improve lighting and facility maintenance.

228

1.4 Local Development Plan

The Local Development Plan for North Ayrshire (LDP2) sets out the statutory framework to guide development and investment in the area over the next 20 years. The LDP document provides a series of plans and maps to be read alongside the Spatial Strategy.

Irvine Harbourside forms part of the "general urban area" / "open space" addressed by Strategic Policy 3: Strategic Development Area 4. Key elements of Strategic Policy 3 note:

- Proposals must demonstrate that they do not adversely impact on the environmental quality of North Ayrshire by way of adverse impact on soils, water, air, population, human health, cultural heritage, material assets, climatic factors, landscape and biodiversity (flora and fauna). Proposals may require to be the subject of an environmental impact assessment.

- North Ayrshire Council (NAC) will give consideration to masterplans submitted in support of development proposals where they have not been formally approved by the North Ayrshire Council as planning authority, however the information attached to any such masterplan will generally be considered for information only. Masterplans prepared by, or on behalf of North Ayrshire Council, may be subject to strategic environmental assessment where alternative uses are proposed.

The adopted Local Development Plan identifies Irvine Harbourside as a 'Strategic Development Area' and the Beach Park as a 'Strategic Tourism Asset'.

LDP2 supports the development of a 'Maritime Mile' at the Harbourside that makes the best use of the Harbourside's unique location, heritage, and environment to create new opportunities for local people and that can attract new investment into the area.

A range of uses are supported by LDP2 at Harbourside, these include:

- new residential development with NAC having recently completed a scheme of affordable housing and a care facility.

- commercial leisure facilities, particularly those that enhance or develop the maritime tourism potential of the area including proposals that strengthen links with the town centre; proposals that are in keeping with the character of the area as an 'edge of town centre' location, and

- proposals that result in the productive reuse of vacant and brownfield sites identified as development opportunities.

Alongside the Strategic Development Area policy, the following policies are also of importance to the masterplan process:

Place-making: ensuring that all development contributes to making quality places and that all applications for planning permission meet the six qualities of successful places – Healthy / Pleasant / Connected / Distinctive / Sustainable / Adaptable.
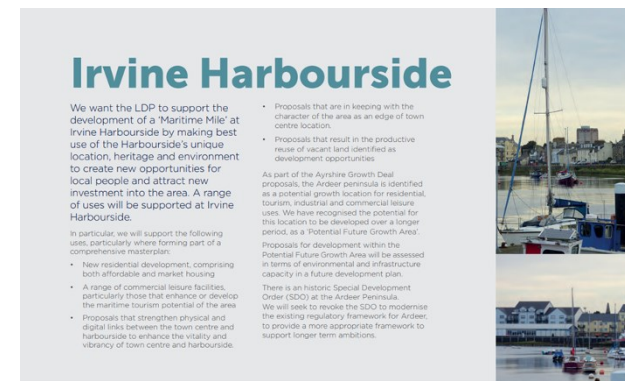
Building on the Principles within the National Planning Framework (NPF4)
The National Planning Framework (NPF4 – approved January 2023) forms part of the Development Plan. NPF4 sets out a series of principles of direct relevance in place making and building stronger and more resilient communities. Key policy areas include planning for climate change, biodiversity and the creation of 'liveable' places. The Harbourside offers significant opportunity to create a place with good-quality homes close to local facilities and services applying the concept of 20-minute neighbourhoods; making better use of spaces to support physical activity, relaxation and play, to bring people together and to celebrate culture, diversity and heritage. In addition, measures within the coastal margin can support enhanced biodiversity in accordance with the Local Biodiversity Action Plan.

Masterplanning for Mixed Use: A range of uses will be supported at the Harbourside where these form part of a comprehensive masterplan. The LDP2 and NPF4 support:

- New residential development, comprising both affordable and market housing.
- A range of commercial leisure facilities, particularly those that enhance or develop the maritime tourism potential of the area.
- Proposals that strengthen physical links, active travel and public transport connections between the Town Centre and Harbourside to strengthen the Liveable /20 Minute Neighbourhood and enhance place vitality and vibrancy. Enhancement of public transport routes and services will be encouraged with the ambition to see additional public transport services as the destination and the level of residential housing is developed.
- Proposals that are in keeping with the Conservation Area status and character and distinctiveness of the area including enhancement of greenspace and biodiversity assets
- Proposals that result in the productive reuse of vacant and brownfield land identified as development opportunities and enhancement of sustainable drainage, biodiversity and measures supporting climate change resilience and adaptability.

230
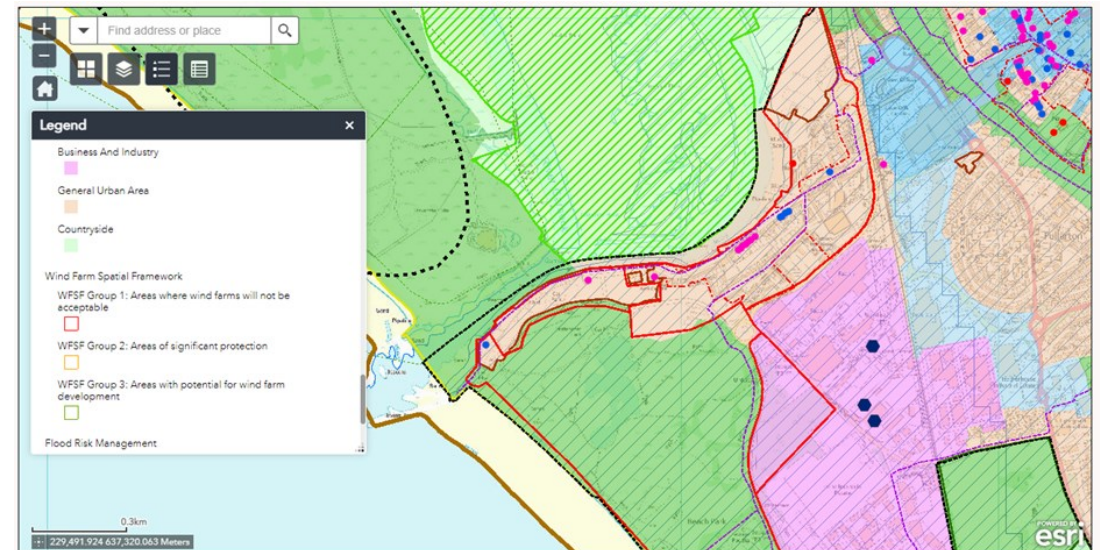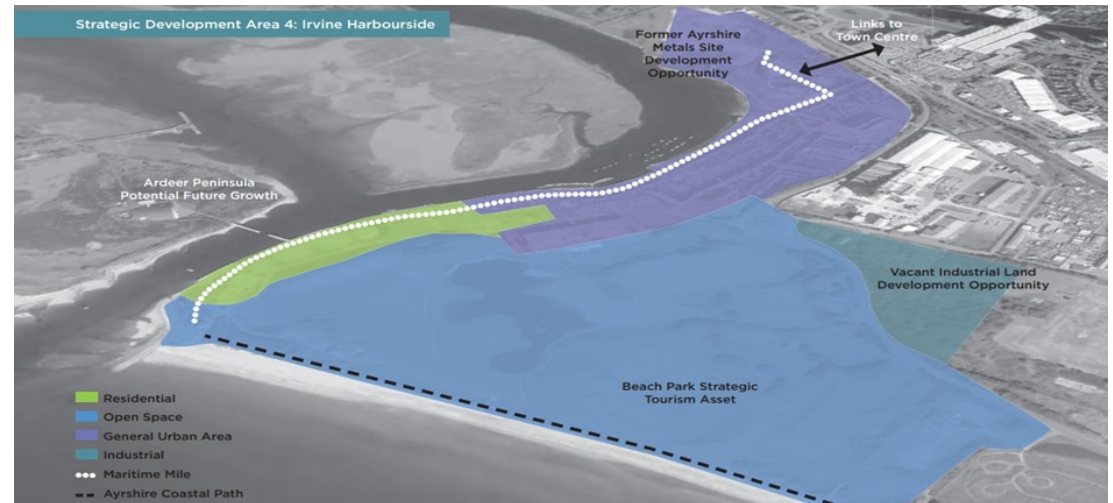
1.5 Urban Structure

The majority of the Harbourside buildings are in residential use, with terraces being the predominant built form. Much of the housing is modern, competed in 1995/96 by the late Irvine Development Corporation as part of the regeneration of the post-industrial port. Cochrane Street, Linthouse Vennel, Gottries Place, most of Gottries Road, Bimson Row / Bimson Place, Peter Street and a stretch of Harbour Street were all designed during this period. The investment in homes, alongside the Scottish Maritime Museum, Harbourside Arts Centre and WASP Studios have collectively created the identity of the Harbourside today.

In 1965 the Secretary of State for Scotland commissioned a report on a potential New Town at Irvine and in 1967 the Irvine Development Corporation was formed (IDC). IDC created a New Town Plan that included the Harbourside. This provided within the Harbourside with new housing, a leisure centre (Magnum) and industrial activity. The Harbourside housing was designed by the Corporation's architects, George Wren and Roan Rutherford. The housing was simple but elegantly detailed, reinterpreting a Scots harbour vernacular. Mackintosh influences are particularly evident in the Cochrane Street terrace.

There is a mix of one and two / two and a half storey property typically with stone or rendered facades and slate roofs. The windows are generally of a traditional sash and case design with smooth render banding surrounds. Many of the properties have additional detailing with rooflines, skews and chimneys all adding to a family of architectural detailing that complement the traditional aesthetics. Subtle variations mean that no two houses are the same, and the use of subtle pastel colour rendering adds to place quality.

Irvine Harbourside has been designated a Conservation Area since 2001. Conservation area status recognises the special architectural and historic interest in the assemblage of buildings within the Harbourside and the value of place. In addition to the Linthouse Building, there are a number of Listed Buildings within the Harbourside and the Beach area: Notably the Category B Pilot House, the Category C Harbourmaster's Office (both outside the Conservation Area), the C listed Marina Inn, and several other Category B and C listed houses further east along Harbour and Montgomery Streets.

The Council's Strategic Housing Investment Plan has recently complemented investment in Irvine Harbourside, creating a very sympathetic affordable housing infill between Harbour Street and Beach Drive.

The development architecturally reflects earlier housing phases (Irvine Development Corporation) creating a distinctive and appealing high quality neighbourhood including a mix of terraced 2 storey and single storey buildings with strong connecting path and footway connections, internal parking and service courts with coordinated colour and architectural detailing.

New homes Beach Drive by NAC

New homes within Harbourside - Laurel Homes

232

Legend:
- Primary route
- Other key route
- Street frontage
- Key public realm node

BOGSIDE FLATS

ARDEER PENINSULA

SCOTTISH MARITIME MUSEUM

STATION

PILOT HOUSE

INDUSTRIAL AREA

BEACH PARK

233

1.6 Local Character & Urban Grain

The Harbourside's character is closely aligned to its heritage and waterfront setting, presenting an appealing assemblage of historic and more contemporary buildings with a unified character created by materials, scale and tight urban grain. The area was designated a Conservation Area in 2001.

The predominant building height within the Harbourside is two storeys, with combinations of single or two/two & half-storey buildings adding variety and interest to the streetscape and local skyline. The Linthouse Engine Shop – a Category A Listed Building entirely relocated from Govan during the early 1990s houses the main exhibition, training and educational space operated by the Scottish Maritime Museum – is particularly large in terms of height (roughly equivalent to four or five domestic storeys) and massing.

The grain of the local townscape is particularly tight with continuous frontages creating enclosed streets and spaces with limited visual permeability or gaps through buildings. Buildings define the waterfront and hinterland of streets and provide strong active frontages with variable rooflines and heights. Variability of architectural treatment and attention to detailing within a simple and consistent palette generate interest and create an assemblage of buildings built over three centuries and of varying styles that collectively express a single identity, sense of place and welcome.

Irvine Harbourside is a mix of neighbourhoods. The more residential areas (Gottries Road / Dublin Quays) offer quiet streets tree lined streets or courts framed by terraced housing with distinctive detailing. Harbour Street provides the main link between the town centre and coast with a more vibrant, mixed-use character with open aspect to the north and west. The Harbour Street properties with the tight continuous frontages give strong definition to the waterfront and the flat open expanse of the River Irvine and Garnock estuary. Waterfront edges and boundaries are less well detailed with significant clutter created by boundary fencing but with two attractive small pavilion buildings (kiosks), slipway and pontoon moorings adding interest. The waterfront is characterful and active supported by local enterprise and a range of food and beverage, accommodation and arts and creative attractions but with a fragmented and tired public realm that has suffered from a lack of investment and today is characterised by a mix of post-industrial and semi-derelict wharves, hard-standings, redundant security fencing and under-utilised buildings.

Harbour Street boundaries often reflect historic operational boundaries (port activity/ quays) or have historically been enclosed to restrict access, provide for secure storage or safety. Water access is limited (slipway / pontoons) with vehicular movement/ parking a strong element of the streetscene. Footways and space to the front of buildings (Ship Inn / WASP Studios / Gro Coffee) are noticeably restricted. Frontage street activity (outside tables / seating/ etc) is also noticeably limited. Busy and vibrant during summer months, Harbour Street offers an appealing street of character with significant opportunity for enhancement.

234

20 Min Walk Isochrone

All of Town Centre
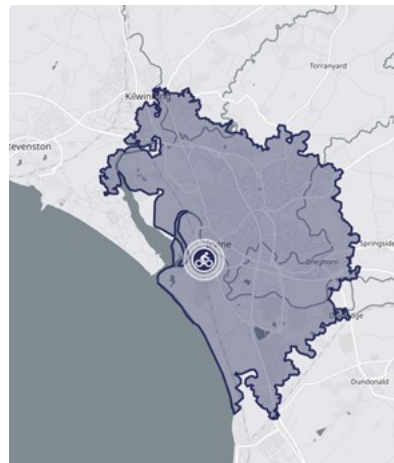
20 min Cycle Isochrone

Al main residential areas
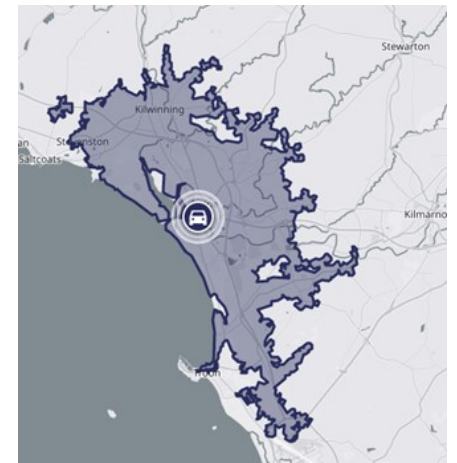
20 Min Drive Isochrone

Stevenson / Saltcoats / Kilwinning
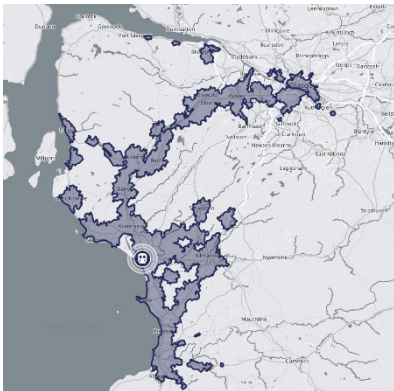
60 Min Public Transport
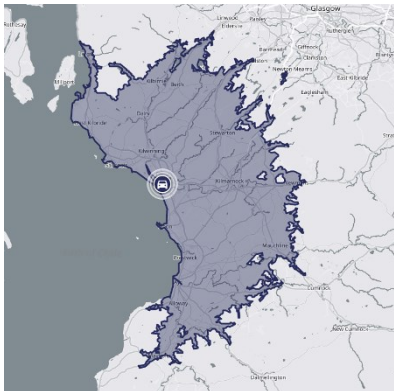
40 min Drive Isochrone
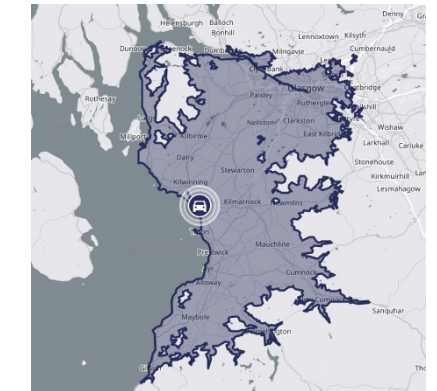
60 min Drive Isochrone

1.7 Place / Access / Movement

Streets define the key corridors of movement, with good street design requiring that issues of place and movement are considered together and with place and sustainable travel modes addressed ahead of vehicular movement.

There are a number of core routes into the Harbourside and Beach Area, radiating from the Town Centre and connecting with the primary street network (A737). These form multi-user streets albeit with differing considerations relating to the balance of place and movement. These include:

- **From the Town Centre & Railway Station -** The Beach and Beach Park can be accessed through Harbourside via Harbour Street, Gottries Road or Harbour Road, all connecting directly or indirectly to the connecting pedestrian underpass at the Railway station. Harbour Street (Montgomery Street/Harbour Street/Beach Drive) provides a direct waterfront link and is the main active travel (pedestrian, cycle and wheeling) route.

- **From north via Marress Roundabout –** Principal vehicular access to Harbourside from the Town Centre/ Rivergate/ Retail Park areas. Brings traffic in via Victoria Roundabout on western side of the railway. From here Harbourside can be accessed via Harbour Road or along Cochrane Street which leads directly to Montgomery Street- Harbour Street.

- **From southeast via Portland Road –** Distributor Road for the adjacent industrial estates. Visually dominated by industrial units, signage, vacant sites and screening vegetation/ trees. Road signage (Merryvale Roundabout A737) and A737 Heatherhouse Road directs vehicles to Harbourside on this route.

- **From south via Marine Drive –** Route provides a scenic entrance to the area, with sea views, open greenspace, and tree planting which visually screens most of the nearby industrial estates. It branches off the A737 to the south of the Gailes Golf Course and close to the A71 junction. The Ship public house and Harbour Arts Centre are signposted (brown heritage sign) on this route.

236

Legend:
- Primary Path
- Secondary Path
- Tertiary Path
- Core Paths

Map labels: Big Idea, River Irvine, Pilot House, Boating Pond, Portland Roundabout, NMMS

Path Network

1.8 Active Travel

Irvine Harbourside is well connected by Active Travel routes whether by footway or footpath with a broad network of routes. The principal entrance to Harbourside from the Town Centre and Railway Station is the short pedestrianised street which connects from New Street to the eastern end of Montgomery Street.

This follows the historic street alignment prior to the 1970s New Town/ Town Centre interventions, which formerly linked to the Old Irvine Bridge over the River Irvine. The pedestrian link is bridged by both the railway and Harbour Road.

Accessibility For All
Harbourside and the waterfront are largely at grade with capacity to provide safe mobility for wheelchairs and mobility scooters. Improvements to access for those with limited mobility/ disability can be supported with at grade crossings, raised tables and dropped and flush kerb detailing prioritising walking, wheeling and cycling into street design.

Walking & Cycling
The primary route, via Montgomery Street, Harbour Street and the River Irvine Walkway, offers a safe and predominantly barrier free link from the Railway Station to the coast. This 1.61km (1.0 mile) connected route passes through a high street / residential / mixed-use area and waterfront and greenspace corridor with supporting infrastructure (lighting/ seats/connections). This route is badged and/or referred to as the 'Maritime Mile'.

The Ayrshire Coastal Path provides pedestrian access from the south along the coast from Troon, although only sections of this are suitable for cycling. National Cycle Network Route 7, however, follows Marine Drive from the A737, then passes through the Beach Park and provides access directly to Harbourside at Beach Drive close to the Portland Roundabout. A wide network of recreational paths, some suitable for cycling, also wind through the Beach Park.

- NAC Core Paths include IK 8 Lowgreen Bridge to Irvine Harbour Point / IK10 Harbour Street to Gailes Caravan Park / IK 11A Marine Drive to Beach.
- NCN 7 is aligned along Marine Drive, Gottries Road and Montgomery Street. NAC are proposing to revise the alignment, creating a new link to NCR7 along the Harbourside and then across the Beach Park back to NCR7 at Portland Roundabout, which will replace the current on-road section along Gottries Rd.

Public Transport
Public transport services (Bus/ Rail/ Taxi) are all available within Irvine Town Centre. Bus services connect with regional and local centres with bus stops/stands located along the High Street. Rail services connect to Glasgow Central - Ayr – Stranraer, Kilwinning, Ardrossan Harbour and Largs. Local bus service currently provides limited access to the Harbourside. Services currently include the 21 / 21A service providing a 60–120-minute service connecting Harbour Street through to Crosshouse Hospital. Harbour Taxis operate from Harbour Street and across Irvine. Walk distances from coast, waterfront and Harbourside allow connections to public transport services on the High Street or Rail Station within 15-20 minutes. Opportunity exists to promote stronger public transport routes into the Harbourside (level of service and penetration) alongside the development of tourism and further development of Harbourside as a residential neighbourhood. Event based public transport support services will also be important.

238

Public Park / Greenspace

Private / Semi-private Greenspace

Public Realm

Big Idea

NMMS

River Irvine

Portland Roundabout

Pilot House

Boating Pond

Greenspace Network

1.9 Green Infrastructure

Urban green infrastructure provides the ecosystem elements within the neighbourhood that support the community in terms of greenspace, parks, play facilities, wider path networks that support the integration of local biodiversity. A good footway / footpath network exists on Harbour Street, connecting to path networks within the Beach Park that, in turn, connects to the Ayrshire Coastal Path and NCR7, offering walking/cycling routes to Troon and beyond. The Beach Park is substantially an open, multi-functional greenspace for informal recreation and events which with its dune system is a both an important recreational and ecological resource.

Greenspace:
The Beach Park extends to some 50 ha (124 acres) and is managed and maintained by North Ayrshire Council (NAC). The site includes a Boating Pond and to the west the Pilot House and Coastwatch facilities that support safe coastal access, and provide kiosk, toilets and first aid facilities. The Beach Park is well used year around and provides important connecting path routes and access for recreational users and dog walkers. The majority of the area is maintained and natural grasslands with limited shelterbelt style planting connecting with woodland to Marine Drive.

Play Provision:
NAC has recently completed a small play facility within Beach Drive (NAC Housing). Equipped play parks are also located within housing areas in the recent Dublin Quay development. Less formal play space is associated with the Beach Park in the form of landscape mounds and has also historically included a small skate park and a crazy golf close to the Boating Pond. Informal and creative play activity occurs across the Beach Park and within the coastal margins and beach zones.

Boating Pond:
The Boating Pond is used during events for Model Boating and a local model Boat Club use the facility. Wider recreational uses are limited. The pond is shallow and has limited flushing and can suffer from blue-green algae during summer months. Wider uses of the pond and improvements to facilities (signage/ lighting / seating / innovative play, outdoor gym) and water access could be considered.

Biodiversity:
NAC and partners, recognising the policy framework of NPF4 and through LBAP 2019-2031, are seeking to protect and enhance biodiversity across the region through ecosystem restoration, investment in natural capital, improving greenspace and supporting sustainable management of land, marine, freshwater and coastal ecosystems. Target areas relevant to the study area include Greenspace, Coastal Sand Dunes and a wide area of potential under ecosystem regeneration. The LBAP has specific reference to the Girvan to Irvine Nectar Network (Task 3.1 / 3.2 / 4.4) and a number of actions relative to estuarine sites.

Public Art & Trails:
The Carter and his Horse public art (HAC) celebrates the contribution of carters to the success of Irvine in the 1700s and 1800s. Carters were the hauliers - carting goods from the harbour as far as Glasgow, and carting coals down for loading onto the sailing ships. The Carters remain an active organisation supporting events and heritage in Irvine.

The 'Herbour Dauner' is a heritage trail from the Station Bridge to the Pilot house marked with 11 'Blue Plaques' and telling a little of the history about people and place Harbourside. Other local walks and trails include the Carter's Trail (Carters & Coastal Culture). The Burns Club organises a summer season of Harbourside Tours. The Beach Park includes the Stone Dragon (reclining dragon sculpture built in red sandstone) that formed part of the Beach Park upgrading and created a viewpoint towards the southern end of the park.

Main Traffic Routes

Existing Car Parking (420 Spaces)

New Car Parking (42 Spaces)

TOTAL Parking 460+ spaces

Big Idea

New Parking c42 Spaces

River Irvine

Existing Parking retained c300 Spaces

Portland Roundabout

Pilot House

Harbour Point c35 Spaces

Boating Pond

Existing Parking Boating Pond c85 Spaces

Beach Drive c300 Spaces

Coastwatch c35 Spaces

Boating Pond c85 Spaces

Car Parks	Number of Spaces
Beach Drive	c300
Coastwatch	c35
Boating Pond	c85
TOTAL	c420

Car Parking Existing

241

1.10   Public Parking Supporting the Destination

Great Harbour offers a range of attractions, events and activity that create the destination and whilst active travel and local community pedestrian access forms a substantive element of the public realm enhancement, parking provision is also important.

The Council strongly supports a reduction in non-essential car journeys but equally wants to attract visitors / tourists to the Great Harbour and is seeking to extend and grow the event programme.

The objective is to look to re-assign visitor traffic away from busy pedestrian and residential streets (Harbour Street / Montgomery Road /Gottries Road) towards Harbour Road and Beach Drive through new integrated streetscape measures and the introduction of a 20mph Zone, traffic calming and signage. Reducing parking accessed from Harbour Street and providing parking accessed from Beach Drive will allow greater segregation of resident and visitor parking and reduce traffic movement and through-traffic and create a safer environment for residents and pedestrians and cyclists.

The existing Harbourside and Beach Park area parking is considered adequate to meet current and future visitor demand with the masterplan supporting active travel and maintaining existing parking levels. Parking can, however, be better provided to ensure pedestrian safety, make key sites more accessible (for all modes), and to allow parking areas to offer hard-standing areas and support for events. The current parking on the River Irvine frontage will be retained. Upgrading parking areas to provide safer and more appealing parking areas through design would enhance the visitor experience without a loss of parking provision.

Future active travel and public realm improvements may involve the loss of some on-street visitor parking. Additional parking is therefore identified behind the Harbour Masters Office building. Total parking provision will remain unchanged and will be located as follows:

Site 1   Irvine Waterfront Car Park (300 spaces)
Enhancement to the existing car park on the Waterfront connecting to the Maritime Mile and the Coastal Hub (Pilot House, Beach Park and Play Park) with good footpath and footway connections across the rest of the site and supporting both major and local events across the Harbourside and Beach Park areas.

Site 2   Harbour Point Car Park (35 spaces)
Retention of the existing car park at Harbour Point to the coastal side of the Beach Facilities (toilets/kiosk) connecting into the top of the Maritime Mile and the Coastal Hub and providing good access for those with limited mobility, and capacity to access, view and enjoy the coast during off-season/poor weather.

Site 3   Boating Pond / Beach Park Car Park (85 Spaces)
Upgrading and potential for minor reorganisation/extension to the existing Boating Pond car park. Local car park and parking/hardstanding to support events (associated coach/bus parking) and providing good access to the Boating Pond.

Site 4   Harbour Master's Car Park (42 Spaces)
Ancillary local access will also be provided to the rear of the Harbour Master's Office with 42 additional spaces and scoping for additional EV charging points according to growing demand.

All sites will look to provide cycle parking (NAC Cycle Stands) and with all parking areas offering reserve parking areas for Blue Badge / disability users, as well as the provision of the EV charging points, when possible.

Residential parking associated with the potential Portland Beach Drive leisure and/or housing site is allocated separately and would be provided within small internal courts, on-street or within the curtilage of properties.

The summary position relative to existing and proposed public carparking within the Great Harbour is as follows:

- Existing Parking Provision   420 spaces
- Proposed future parking   460 spaces
- Residential parking   Additional to Visitor/ Local Parking. Provision to NAC Planning Guidance

242

1.11 Community & Services Infrastructure

Urban infrastructure provides the supporting elements within the neighbourhood associated with movement, access and services. Harbourside developed around a busy harbour with a roads infrastructure that provides local access (Harbour Street/ Gottries Road) with more strategic access (Beach Drive /Harbour Road/ Marine Drive). Land use is mixed and with a history of industrial land-use and large boundary industrial uses (Ardagh Glass) access and services remain important. The majority of the undeveloped land has had former industrial land-uses with potential implications for future use.

Land Ownership:
North Ayrshire Council (NAC) are the predominant landowner across the undeveloped areas of the Harbourside. The Irvine Harbour Company (IHC) is part of NPL Limited who own Ardeer and who, as statutory Harbour Authority, have significant control over the harbour, harbour quays/ wharves and related infrastructure. Any works requiring a Harbour Revision Order will require IHC approval. The Harbour Authority requires access to be retained to operational assets. NAC owns and leases to IHC a number of assets including the Public Slipway. Agreements on access / wayleaves may also be necessary with statutory authorities. Crown Estate are understood to be the landowner below the MHW (Mean High Water) and own all land below MLW (Mean Low Water).

Flood Risk:
NAC has recently completed a Lower Irvine Flood Study (NAC/ RPS) in dialogue with SEPA. The Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) addresses the masterplan area and proposed developments and has been completed to parameters agreed with SEPA taking account of latest forecasts for climate change. The Flood Study confirms areas of flood risk. The Flood Risk Assessment advises that none of the areas considered for residential built development are potentially vulnerable to flood risk (1:300-year events) and can be considered as potential development areas in accordance with LDP2. The full FRA will support any future planning applications for housing and other facilities and assess and report on flood resilience as well as vulnerability classification.

Ground Conditions:
The majority of the Harbourside area not in residential use by 1960 formed part of either the port or industrial area. Both port and industry involved potentially contaminative land-use with known heavy metal, slag, hydrocarbons and asbestos related contamination identified within the area. The 'Blue Billie' deposits formed local encapsulated deposits of ferric ferrocyanides in the area. Site remediation historically involved encapsulation of waste with all future developments requiring extensive Site Investigation and remedial action. Stripping of soils in all areas potentially forming domestic garden ground is likely to be a minimum requirement. NAC's development at Beach Drive (1.9ha) involved significant site remediation costs. Future applications will include Site Investigation information on a site-by-site basis.

Revetments and Waterfront Infrastructure
Water-edge structures (revetments /retaining structures/ wharves/ quays) defining the land-water edge may have changed over time leaving a legacy of below ground structures (piles / tie bars/ retaining structures) with implications for development. These are likely to be located on sites with previous development history and on the River Irvine frontage. All development sites will require site investigation and carry risks for land remediation. Below ground structures (tie bars / tension anchors) may introduce abnormal development costs. The Old/Upper Wharf is a large timber deck structure managed and maintained by NAC. NAC have completed an assessment of the wharf condition and note it would require significant investment to stabilise and restore as a part of the waterfront.

Street Design

The proposals for the Great Harbour look to enhance place quality and specifically to reduce non-essential vehicular movement and encourage public transport and active travel. The design proposals adopt Designing Streets principles putting place before movement reducing speeds through design to make streets more liveable, walkable and safer. Reducing traffic speed (20 mph zone) is supported with active frontages, street and junction geometry, street detailing including promoting multiple points of pedestrian and cycle access and street boundary landscaping.

Public Transport

Harbourside has good public transport interchanges within 15 –20-minute walk / 5 min cycle times including both bus and rail. Increasing demand for services (Destination Development / Housing / Play and Beach Park activity) could help support stronger public transport provision and an extended bus service to the Beach Park. NAC are keen to promote stronger public transport connections that help support sustainable place and reduce the need for car-based transport.

Education & Schools Capacity

Consultation and engagement with Education Services around education provision will be required. Local school provision and capacity within the area, will require forward planning and provisions made and secured based on residential phasing and the arrangements for developer contributions.

Strategic Roads Connections & Access

Harbourside has strong connections to the town centre and public transport interchanges (rail /bus) together with local bus services and connections. Subject to the scale of development proposals an assessment of the strategic junctions on the trunk road network may be required including those identified in the Irvine Bay Transport Protocol of 2015 (eg. Bellfield Interchange, Kilmarnock).

Utilities:

All main utilities and services are provided within the Harbourside (electricity/gas/water/drainage). Surface water discharges from residential uses are typically attenuated and/ or direct to the estuary. A number of major sewers and outfalls occur within the site that have the potential to impact on development.

Illustration of some of the boards used at the Public Consultation Event

1.12   Public Consultation & Engagement

The Masterplan was drafted and reviewed by Council Officers in advance of progressing consultation and local engagement with local groups and communities.

A Great Harbour draft masterplan public consultation was progressed in March and April 2023 to ensure the development framework and Ayrshire Growth Deal (AGD) investment in the redevelopment of the Irvine Harbourside aligns with local priorities and meets local needs. The consultation included events within Harbourside (HAC) and by providing copies of the information boards at the Council offices, libraries and community buildings. The consultation material and methodology were developed with the involvement of local community representatives through a Stakeholder Reference Group.

As a result of feedback in order to distinguish between projects funded by AGD investment and those presenting future opportunities, the latter are indicated in this masterplan by a coloured page frame.

Feedback and Community Responses (Full Report in Appendices)
The consultation sought to be as open and inclusive as possible and invited comment and views from across the community. The views were gathered via online and paper surveys during the public events and displays, and also presentations and walkarounds provided to local groups and stakeholders. A total of 152 responses were submitted. In addition, a dedicated workshop was organised focusing on specific issues around access and activity on water and within open public spaces. Workshops were also carried out with young people and hard to reach groups and will continue throughout the next development phases.

Main Issues
The majority of responses were supportive of all the varied proposals recognising the opportunity for the regeneration of the harbourside and included very constructive advice reflective of local context. There was overall support to improve the public realm and access along the Harbourside and the activity hubs proposed.

The site, which attracted the most balanced views regarding options, was the Waterfront site at Beach Drive. Options included leaving the car park area as existing or developing the site for housing at some time in the future and subject to funding being available. The future development options at the Portland site received more support.

The main concerns from the feedback focused on:

- sufficient provision of public amenities, including toilets, along the Harbourside;
- adequate traffic management recognising access needs of vehicles towing watercrafts and improving perceived safety for non-vehicle users;
- adequate maintenance;

- adequate waste management and introducing recycling; and
- protection of place assets, including heritage and cultural assets.

Some respondents also expressed a level of disbelief that all of the proposals could be delivered.

Changes & Adoption of Local Views into the Masterplan
The consultation allowed community groups and residents to comment and feedback on their thoughts and have informed the draft masterplan. The main changes to the masterplan are as follows :

AGD Delivered Projects:-
- The Maritime Mile public realm proposals were over-whelmingly supported and these proposals along with the Coastal Hub and Play Facility will be addressed as a priority for delivery.

Masterplan Elements delivered by Partners:-
- Housing proposals for a section of the waterfront between Beach Drive and the River Irvine have not been progressed with new housing limited to the Portland-Beach Drive site.
- Housing / Leisure or a Mixed-Use re-development of the former Portland site was supported and all options have bene retained within the masterplan and include for small local convenience retail / support services
- Car parking spaces have been retained and the main parking area for the waterfront, Beach Park and Coast has been retained in its current location.
- The need for public transport accessibility and active travel (safe walking / cycling routes) has been reinforced within the report.

01 **Maritime Mile**

02 **Harbourside Housing**

03 **Leisure Related Development**

2.0

Masterplan Detailed Elements

2.0 Masterplan Detailed Elements

Building quality places requires both innovative planning and a creative and coherent design process. The process should be inclusive, forward looking and should build on local history and community aspirations to allow the plan to grow, evolve and be self-sustaining. Urban place-making works when it creates value for both resident and visitor and envisions a quality of place where the whole delivers a value greater than the sum of the parts.

Harbourside is an existing community. It includes homes, businesses, the Scottish Maritime Museum, Beach Park and coast and a range of community organisations and activities. The core of the Harbourside is a designated Conservation Area. New investment should further strengthen Harbourside as a place to live, work, visit, learn and play. The masterplan includes provisions to retain existing user and interest groups and looks to work with local interests to unlock further investment that supports participation and creates activity within the site.

Sustaining and growing the community needs a balance that supports existing activity whilst encouraging and managing new elements and new investment. An important element of place quality and a positive user experience is site maintenance and management. While the design proposals do seek to adopt a low maintenance approach (stainless steel / non-painted finishes/ durable materials /etc), standard streetscene operations, such as litter collection, cleansing and repairs, will require additional resource alongside existing operations and management.

The core elements that the masterplan addresses are summarised below:

2.1: **Maritime Mile**
Investing in the public realm to create an appealing waterfront connection between the Station and the Coast, creating an attractive and appealing waterfront public realm developed around three key destination hubs.

2.1.1 **The Maritime Mile Waterfront**
A high quality and unified public realm along the entire route. Treatment of waterfront elements including the Wharf.

2.1.2 **Coastal Hub**
Building a quality play facility and upgrading existing beach facilities to extend the appeal of the Beach Park & Coast .

2.1.3 **Marine & Creative Arts Hub**
A mix of arts venues, leisure, food & drink outlets and watersports clustered around an events space to create an activity hub.

2.1.4 **Maritime Heritage Hub**
Extending and rebuilding the Puffer Café with an Educational/Arts/Creative space for the Scottish Maritime Museum alongside a refurbished café.

2.2: **Harbourside Housing**
Housing developed on the brownfield site in a strong well connected location, reinforcing 20 Minute Neighbourhood.

2.3: **Leisure Related Developments**
Overlapping with the Maritime Mile hubs (2.1 above).

2.3.1 **Beach Park Event Space / Arena**
Developing the existing Harbourside-Beach Park Event Arena space extending from the Play Park to the Boating Pond and offering the capacity for Irvine to host major national/regional outdoor events.

2.3.2 **Harbour Master's Office – Mixed-Use Tourism & Leisure**
Developing the Harbour Master's Office and immediate local area for Mixed-Use Tourism & Leisure Uses (arts & crafts / food and beverage /heritage) compatible with the Harbourside could include small craft based retail, food and beverage and leisure and tourism related small business and enterprise activity and could also operate as a small event and exhibition space and venue for other community/commercial activities.

2.3.3 **Harbour Point – Community Hub & Restaurant**
Developing a hub clustered around the Beach Pavilion working with Coastwatch and others to create a new purpose-built facility providing a range of services for the Beach/ Beach Park and potential commercial café/restaurant operating from the upper floor.

2.3.4 **Portland Leisure Development Site**
Portland offers opportunity for housing or a mixed-use with commercial leisure. Ideas based on a hotel/leisure/watersport/conference facility have been explored by a private sector developer. This would be an alternative to the site being advanced for housing.

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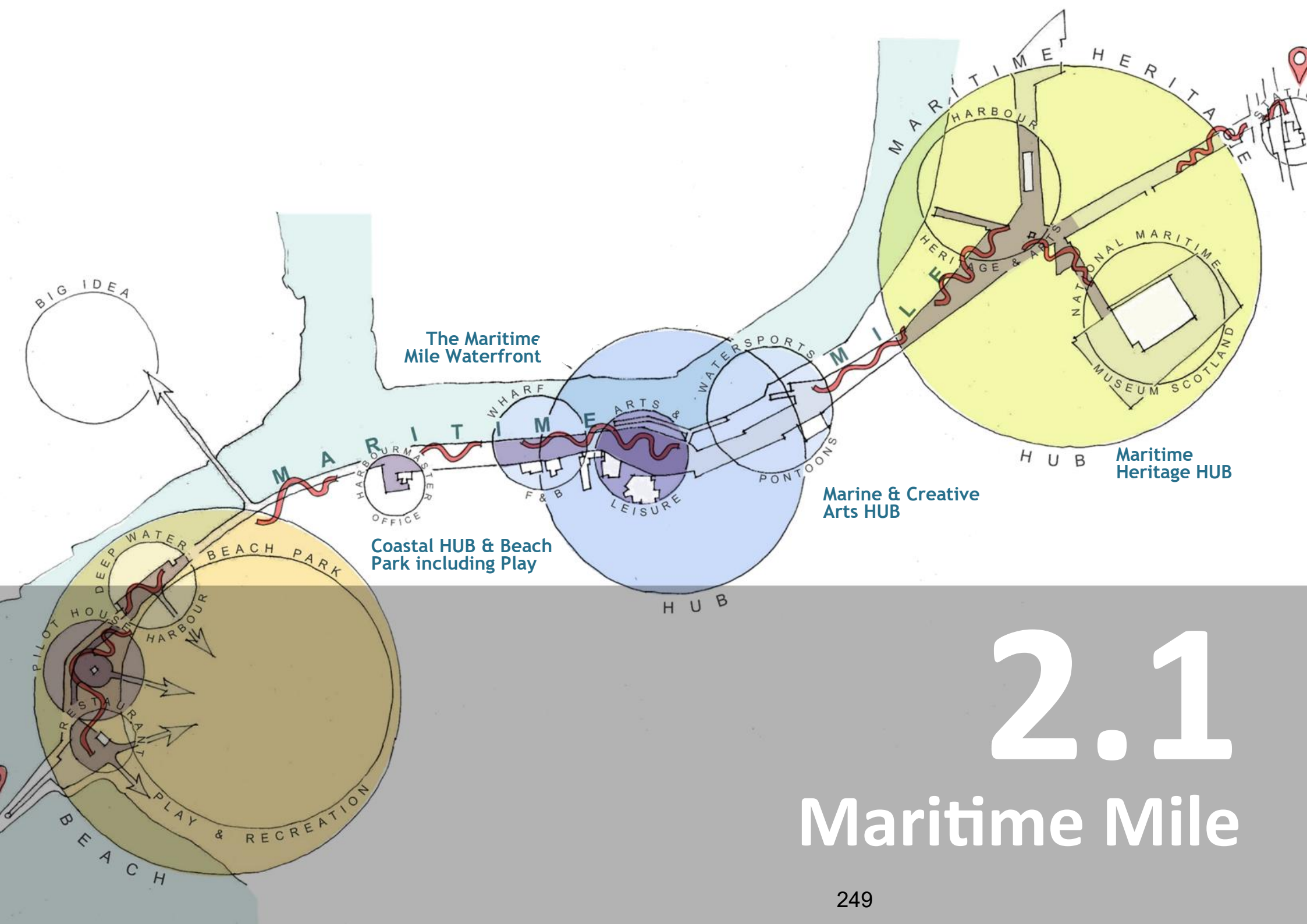
The Maritime Mile Waterfront

Coastal HUB & Beach Park including Play

Marine & Creative Arts HUB

Maritime Heritage HUB

BIG IDEA

MARITIME MILE

DEEP WATER HARBOUR

PILOT HOUSE

RESTAURANT

BEACH PARK

PLAY & RECREATION

BEACH

HARBOURMASTER OFFICE

WHARF

F & B

ARTS & LEISURE

HUB

WATERSPORTS

PONTOONS

HARBOUR

HERITAGE & ARTS

NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM SCOTLAND

HUB

MARITIME HERITAGE

STATION

2.1

Maritime Mile

249

2.1 Maritime Mile

The Maritime Mile connects Irvine Town Centre with the Coast through a single, connected, high quality public realm, highlighted along its length with points of interest, activity and animation clustered around three core hubs. Each hub makes a distinctive contribution to the experience of the Harbourside, ensuring that the 'Maritime Mile' is a linear waterfront of regional appeal and with the capacity to drive additional local and visitor activity and footfall that supports place-making and regeneration.

Central to the strategy for Maritime Mile is the creation of a 'string-of attractions' that draws the visitor from coast-to-town and from town-to-coast facilitating a range of experiences and events. The experiences collectively add up to a memorable visit, encouraging return visits and further engagement with all the Maritime Mile offers. The Maritime Mile will establish a public infrastructure to connect the core attractions and become the catalyst for further private, public and third sector investment. The three key focal points will consist of:

- **The Maritime Mile Waterfront -** creating a single, coherent, and connected waterfront public realm route that provides an attractive and appealing link between the Town Centre and the Coast. Also forms a means of connecting the following three activity hubs.

- **Coastal Hub** (West) – where the river meets the sea, connections to the coast, Pilot House and Beach Park facilities incorporating a major new regional play and event arena within a new park setting.

- **Marine & Creative Arts Hub** (Centre) – a point where direct access to the river is made at the pontoons and an events space can be formed around arts venues, leisure, F&B and watersports activities.

- **Maritime Heritage Hub (**East) – a location where SMM can connect to the river to showcase its heritage vessels, introduce Harbourside's heritage and fully exploit and communicate its maritime connection.

A series of connecting public realm and active travel links join these Hubs to each other and connect with the Railway Station/ Town Centre and the Maritime Museum. The legibility of the Maritime Mile route is signalled and strengthened with a common family of materials and detailing.

The Maritime Mile strengthens existing assets and develops and extends a range of opportunities, experience, facilities, and activities which build on the unique qualities and place and heritage assets of the Harbourside. These include:

- Quality of built heritage & Conservation Area designation
- Strong local community with many local groups (Residents/ Heritage Groups/ Watersport/ etc)
- Active water-sports club/ marina and pontoon facilities/ slipway - and club infrastructure (IWSC/ISAC)
- Arts & Culture offering – at Harbour Arts Centre (HAC) & Wasp Studios including secondary arts/craft retailing including new gallery at the extended Puffer Café operated by the SMM
- Established independent local food and beverage businesses of quality
- Beach Park open space with strong and growing events programme
- Position and connections to the National Coastal Route
- Access to one of West of Scotland's finest and longest beach frontages

Investment seeks to support new and additional private and third sector enterprise and promote future inward investment in event, tourism, residential and mixed-use development that can add to and strengthen the Harbourside area and provide for its long-term sustainable future.

2.1.1
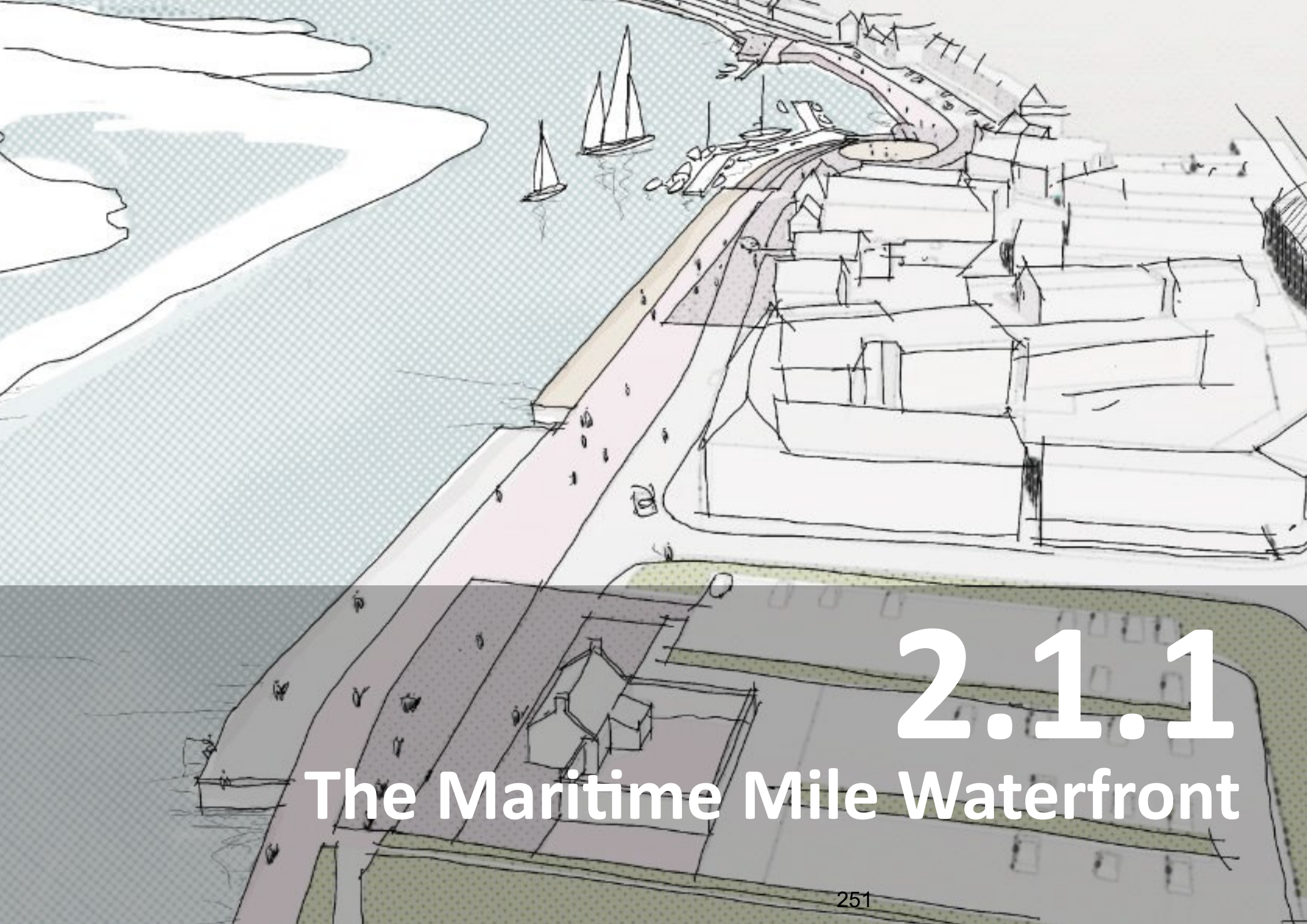
The Maritime Mile Waterfront

2.1.1 The Maritime Mile Waterfront

The Waterfront is Irvine's strongest place asset and is the primary route connecting the Town Centre, Rail and Bus interchanges with the Beach Park and Coast. The route is aligned from the Rail Station along Montgomery Street to Harbour Street and past the Pilot House to the Harbour Point. The route extends to approximately 1600 metres (1760 yards) with the waterfront pedestrian experience effectively starting at the Maritime Museum / Puffer Café and terminating at the Beach Pavilion with open views to the north and west along Harbour Street.

The waterfront needs to celebrate its place qualities and create a public realm that both unites and connects its diverse attractions to create a sense of place that can make the most of its views, capacity for water access, facilities and vibrancy. Critical to this element of place-making will be:

- Enhancing the waterfront 'edge' or waterfront balustrade as a quality uniting element to connect the varied places, spaces and activity zones within a single waterfront promenade.

- Developing the concept of the 'string of pearls' as three major hubs that carry the visitor through the three hubs - heritage / hospitality / play as represented by the SMM@Great Harbour, Marine & Creative Arts Hub and new Play Facility within the Coastal Hub – Beach Park.

- Developing a high quality, and low maintenance, family of street detailing and furniture (bollards / seating / water-edge and boundary details) that adds character and animation to the waterfront experience and enhances the Conservation Area.

- Promoting community enterprise activity within 'waterfront kiosks' as summer franchise facilities (coffee / ice-cream/ snacks / etc) or small community spaces.

- Making use of innovative lighting to support early evening activity and the evening economy and offer safe active travel routes and add additional character and vibrancy.

- Addressing traffic movement on Harbour Street by reducing through traffic, limiting visitor car parking, introducing a 20mph zone and promoting active travel including re-balancing road/parking space to improve pedestrian and cycle facilities and support reduction in short/non-essential trips .

- Re-integration into the public realm the areas of industrial dereliction (wharf / laydown areas) and land adjacent to the slipway.

- Repainting and addressing the externals to the Harbour Pilot House to allow its incorporation within and upgraded landscape setting as part of the Coastal Hub and secure opportunity for longer-term uses.

The Maritime Mile is more than the connecting elements between the activity hubs. It creates the structure around which residents and visitors can enjoy and celebrate the waterfront and it needs to demonstrate that this 'connecting ribbon' has a recognised place value and defines a linear public realm and active travel corridor connecting town and coast where events, activity and hospitality are all part of the experience and the public are encouraged to enjoy and explore.

2.1.2
Coastal Hub

2.1.2 Coastal Hub

**Developing a Coastal Hub and Enhancing the Beach Park**
The Beach Park is a major asset for Irvine and the Harbourside with the intent of the masterplan to enhance this space to ensure it better meets the needs of local communities whilst contributing to the destination and adding enhanced facilities for those visiting the coast, beach, and Ayrshire Coastal Path.

Coastal Hub masterplan objectives:
- Enhance the Beach Park as an open, accessible greenspace and public realm asset
- Develop inclusive facilities to extend its value and use for all including improving disability access
- Protect the open space and open qualities and flexibility of space for casual and informal activity
- Create quality, barrier free inclusive play facilities for all ages and interests
- Provide an Events Arena for larger Harbourside events
- Make stronger connections with the coast, facilities and other waterfront attractions
- Create a Beach Park that is accessible, safe and that encourages exploration and supports active travel
- Improve the infrastructure and accessibility (all modes)
- Upgrade and improve existing facilities alongside the new facilities
- Create an enhanced park with enhanced biodiversity and ease of management.

The Coast, Beach Park and Waterfront collectively create a place of appeal, fun and family experiences focussed on the Harbour Point, Beach, Pilot House and connections across the wider Beach Park.

Parks and greenspaces are important for physical health and well-being including mental health and contact with natural eco-systems and nature. Making the Beach Park more attractive with the introduction of new play and park facilities should also consider how best to balance the needs for quiet space, informal recreation together with the need to provide for a range of local event activities including seasonal large events such as Making Waves or similar.
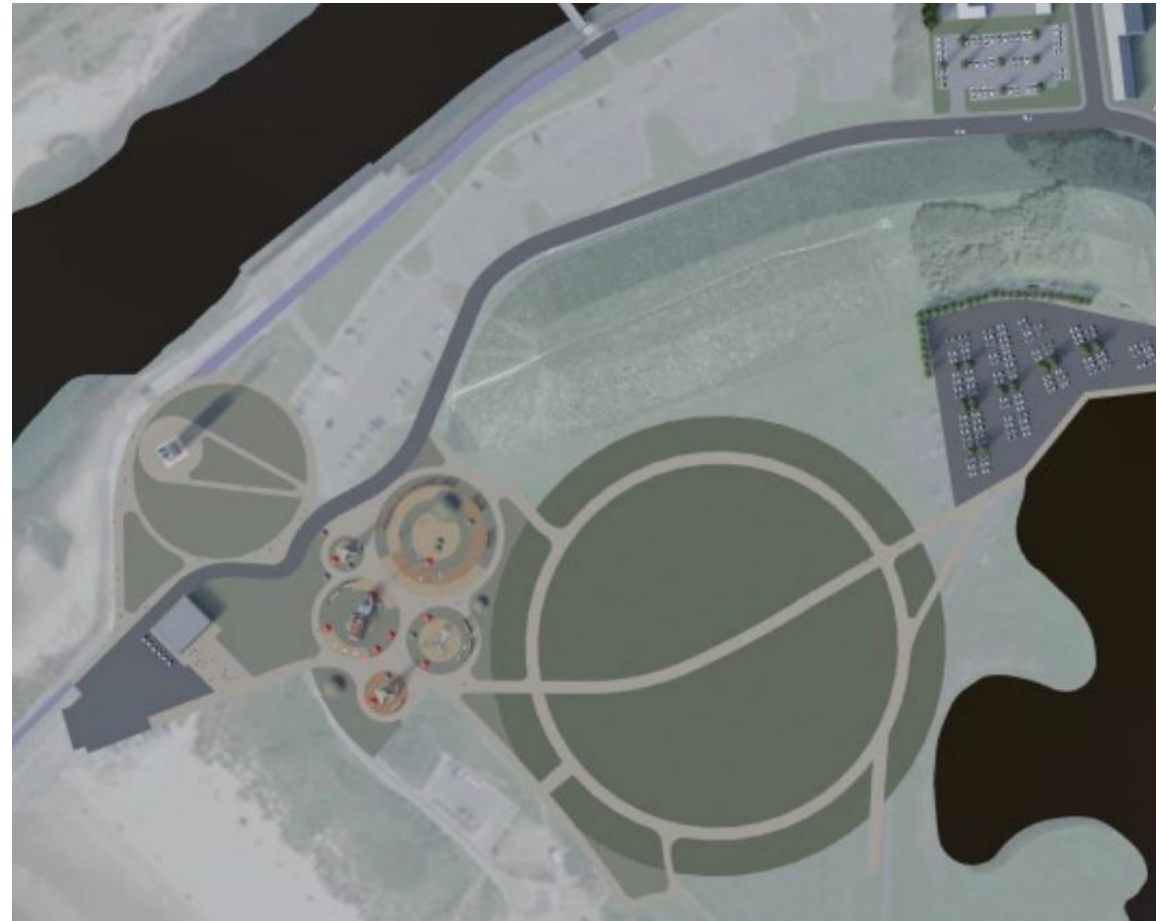
Coastal Hub includes a new Play Park, upgraded Event Space and Beach Park.

254

Play Design

A major element of the project proposals is the development of a quality play facility within the Coastal Hub. Play is essential to children and young people's physical, social and cognitive development and the design will look to develop unique opportunities for innovative play experiences. Councils are now required to complete Play Sufficiency Assessments and the new play park will add to both the quality and range of facilities available within the area.

Innovative & Inclusive Play Facilities

Play facilities help children to establish relationships with other children in their community and have a positive effect on community cohesion. Play has an important role in developing social networks both for children and adults and can have a significant role in community-based regeneration. Today's children and young people generally have fewer opportunities for outdoor play than previous generations due in large part to increasing traffic levels, concerns about risk, and negative attitudes towards young people. The challenge for play design is to provide the best possible play opportunities, and to create play spaces which will attract children, capture their imagination and give them scope to play in new, more exciting, and more creative ways.

The masterplan looks to embrace best practice and adopt the key principles underpinning successful play spaces.

These include:

- Design: providing bespoke design solutions and limiting standard manufacturer product
- Location: securing a good well connected, safe and accessible location with supporting facilities
- Local: meeting local needs and serving and supporting local communities
- Diverse: provide a wide range of play experiences that combine the use of natural elements
- Unsegregated: allow children choice and the opportunity for different ages to play together
- Inclusive: are accessible to all users including disabled and non-disabled children
- Challenging: offer opportunities to experience risk and challenge
- Maintained: are well maintained and are of durable, sustainable quality
- Community: support the needs of local community and carers
- Adaptable: provide for adaptability and events/semi-organised activity

Access to the outdoors also gives children more space to explore, challenge themselves, develop skills and encourages activity supporting health and well-being. The Play Park facility should easily connect with the wider assets of the Coast / Beach Park / Event Arena that offer further informal and incidental play spaces supporting exploration as part of a visit and range of experiences suitable for all age and ability groups.

Concept ideas and draft proposals for the new Beach Park Play Park have been part of the project early consultation and engagement. Local communities through the consultation events for both the Great Harbour Masterplan and Play Park have positively supported the need and value of a major play facility within the Beach Park complementing the wider attractions of the coast, beach and Harbourside.

256

The Coastal Hub a Destination & Gateway to the Beach Park

The centrepiece elements of the Coastal Hub will be the Play Park, Pilot House and its upgraded park setting together with the Beach Pavilion providing readily accessible toilets and facilities. The proposals promote wider unstructured play and leisure uses (walking-jogging/ cycling/ skating /climbing /dog - walking /sightseeing) and would readily incorporate innovation around ideas for outdoor gym and play-exercise activity, public arts and trails. Active leisure, trim trails and outdoor gym facilities are being incorporated into the Beach Park.

Path connections focus on connections between the Pilot House - Play Park – Beach Pavilion creating safe crossings around traffic calmed access/service roads and car parks. A 20-mph zone with appropriate speed restricting measures and segregated walkways /cycleways form part of the proposals. The Coastal Hub and Play Park will form the initial phase of investment for the Maritime Mile with the intent that this is part of the early contract delivery and is fully operational by 2026.

Pilot House Park
Significant events venue

Pilot House
Heritage Works

Existing car park

Biodiversity enhancement on mound

Beach park

Beach Play Park
3 play zones, toddler to teen

Climbing tower

Beach Play Park

Accessible parking

Link to beach park

New steps & terrace

Native tree planting

New beach car
Access to beach, restaurant & play park park

Boardwalk access
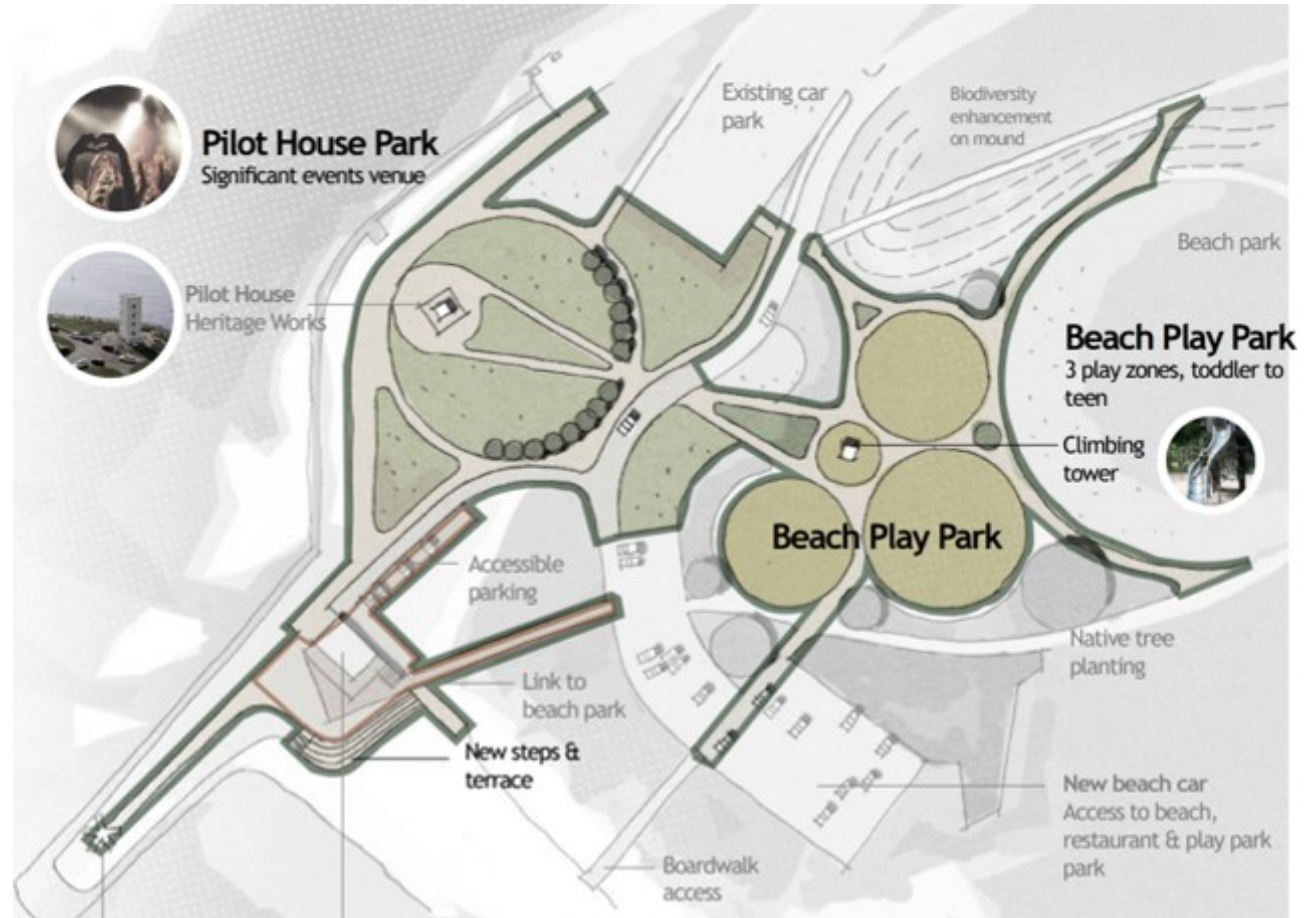
The Beach Pavilion is tired, near the end of its useful economic life and in need of replacement. The proposals look to retain all existing activities and upgrade the facilities under the existing NAC/Coastwatch management arrangement whilst adding a new café-restaurant. This would operate from the first floor with an open extended balcony offering hospitality with view across Outer Clyde to Arran. The Pilot House Point Car Park would be retained.

The area around the Pilot House will include a new landscaped park setting that reflects the coastal location and celebrates the heritage of the Irvine Waterfront and Pilot House. Use of boulders, sand and gravels, marine elements and native grasses, native wildflowers and herbaceous materials will create a distinctive palette of materials contributing to local biodiversity. The Beach Park in addition to its local park function has also hosted major summer events (Radio 1 Roadshow / Making Waves). The design development of the park needs to enhance the location for small/medium/larger events. Details of 'Lessons Learnt' and feedback from the Making Waves 2022 Event has been incorporated into the developing design. Proposals for the Beach Park Events Arena are set out below in section 2.3.1.

258

Coast & Waterfront Access

The beach and coastal access between Irvine and Troon are an important asset for recreation and biodiversity with opportunity to enhance both assets. The main recreational walk follows the Ayrshire Coastal Path along sandy beaches, pavements and tracks. The Irvine to Troon section is circa 10 kms and provides a 3 hour walk or 40-60 min cycle. Local environment (grassland /dunes /dune slacks /beach) offer a rich and varied flora and fauna of high visual interest

Enhancement and managed access to the beach to control erosion and minimise habitat disturbance may be required in areas of high visitor use (Irvine Harbour Point / South Beach Car Park.

Local art / public realm projects provide points of interest on the route. These elements (The Dragon) could be enhanced though additional surfacing, signage and waymarking.

Biodiversity Enhancement

The Ayrshire Coastal margin and its habitats (sand dune system / salt marsh) are important elements of a geo-environmental ecosystem that protects the coastal margins and provides a natural defence to coastal flooding.

The National Planning Framework (NPF4) seeks all developments to protect and enhance local biodiversity with opportunities both within development and in the management of greenspace and open space networks.

The Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) identifies priority habitats and species (NALBAP 2019-31) including Coastal Habitats and the four inter-connected elements of: Coastal sand dunes / Coastal vegetated shingle / Coastal Salt Marsh / Maritime Cliffs and slopes. The following task/actions are identified:

- Task 3.1: Establish ways in which the Council can measurably contribute to the growth of the Irvine to Girvan Nectar Network (IGNN), which aims to improve pollinator habitat management
- Task 3.2: Consider implementation of planting and management regimes developed through Irvine to Girvan Nectar Network and Garnock's Buzzing projects for vacant land sites and where possible close to coastal habitats such as beach parks.

Intensification of activity and improved access to the coast and coastal assets will introduce additional pressures on the coastal margin and sand dune system. This could introduce risks of sand dune and coastal erosion and may require further interventions, public access control and visitor management. Interventions to assist sustainable management and minimise impacts on habitat, dune stability and erosion should be considered in areas of increased public use.

Protecting natural systems and providing for ecosystem management will protect habitat and create opportunity to provide for biodiversity. Dune systems are sensitive to erosion with chestnut pale fencing, limited ecological planting and a greater awareness of areas of habitat sensitivity in higher footfall areas would all contribute to habitat protection and enhancement.

259

Developing the Pilot House

The Pilot House was a tidal marker station patented by Martin Boyd and a unique element of maritime heritage. The fifty-foot tower which housed the system was completed in 1906. The system along with the commercial activity in the Harbour declined in the early 1970s and the building stands today as an iconic symbol of innovation. The Pilot House will be a feature element of the enhanced park and support community based activities.

The Pilot House needs investment to restore the building as a feature of the park. The building is very small and historically operated simply as a tower or elevated platform to provide line-of -sight for vessels entering the harbour. A number of ideas have been promoted but most important is simply ensuring the building is in good condition, visually attractive and well interpreted as part of the Pilot House Park, with ideally a replica 'signal device' expressing its historical purpose. The building is of historic importance with its unique contribution to harbour pilotage and should be celebrated as a 'unique local place-reference or marker' within the Maritime Mile.

The proposal would be to work with the Harbour Authority, Community Groups and others with an interest in maritime heritage to as a minimum externally restore the building and integrate it into the park and to work with local organisations to make a Heritage Lottery Fund application / Your Heritage application to provide a restoration of the rooftop apparatus (Balls / Lights / Eclipsers) re-establishing this small piece of unique local history. A quality park setting, feature lighting and heritage interpretation will offer a foundation as enabling works on which Community Groups and others can look to make further use of the buildings ground floor (and possibly upper reinstated floors) for local community-based activity.
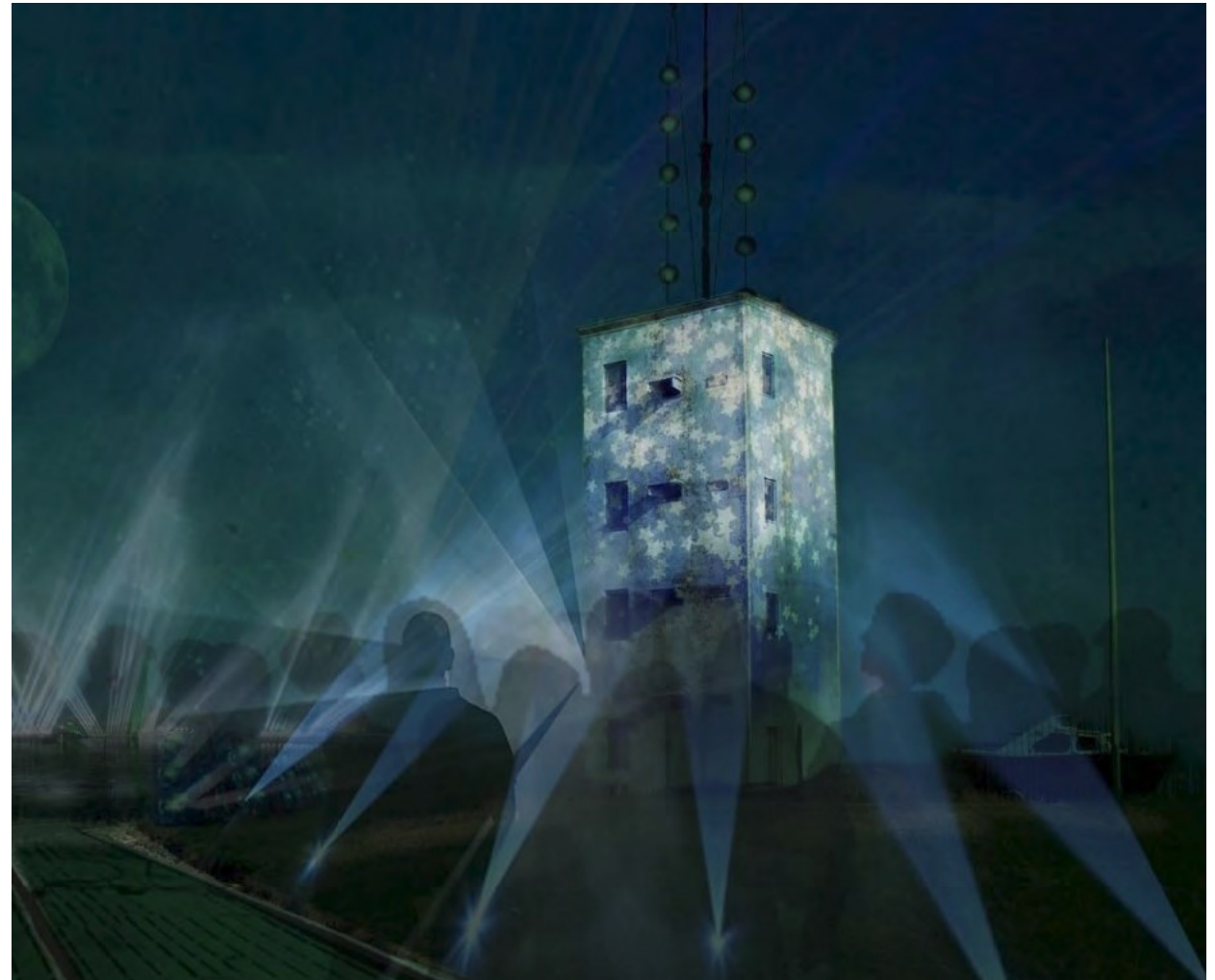
Coast & Beach Park Arrival & Parking

The Coast Hub forms a major visitor destination terminating the Maritime Mile. The Coastal Hub includes the Pilot House, Beach Park Play Facility, Event Arena and together with the beach and coast / coastal walks form a complementary group of attractions. Critically these need to offer good safe and appealing connections with the wider Harbourside and Town Centre and integrate with capacity for active travel, public transport and car-based access. The planning and design for the Coastal Hub has focussed on creating a zone with safe, legible connections meeting the needs of both residents and visitors and encouraging exploration of the area's wider heritage, place and environmental assets.

Vehicular access to the Beach Park would be best signed and directed to use Harbour Road, Portland Road and Marine Drive accessing Beach Drive at the gateway created by the Portland Roundabout. Consideration should be given to restricting through movement on Harbour Street either through seasonal traffic management measures or a permanent street closure at the Marine & Creative Arts Hub.

The primary desire lines are along the Maritime Mile within and around the Pilot House and Harbour Point including the Coastwatch facility, and both access to and walks along the coast. Active travel connections into and through the Beach Park and between main points of arrival and the Play Park, Event Arena and current and future Harbour Point facilities are a primary consideration alongside planning for car, vehicular and emergency service access.

The masterplan proposes the retention of the existing car parks and car parking capacity to support tourism and event activity and avoid conflicts with residential amenity. It would be hoped that opportunity may exist to improve public transport services within the area as the demand grows.

The masterplan envisages a phased transition that will help contribute to the national target to reduce car kilometres by 20% by 2030 providing strong support for active travel, promoting additional public transport connections and looking to ensure car parking reflects the destination requirements whilst not encouraging car-based access.

Parking requirements will be actively monitored to align with the development of facilities/attractions and events with the intent of maximising opportunity for active travel modes and extending sustainable travel choice and public transport.

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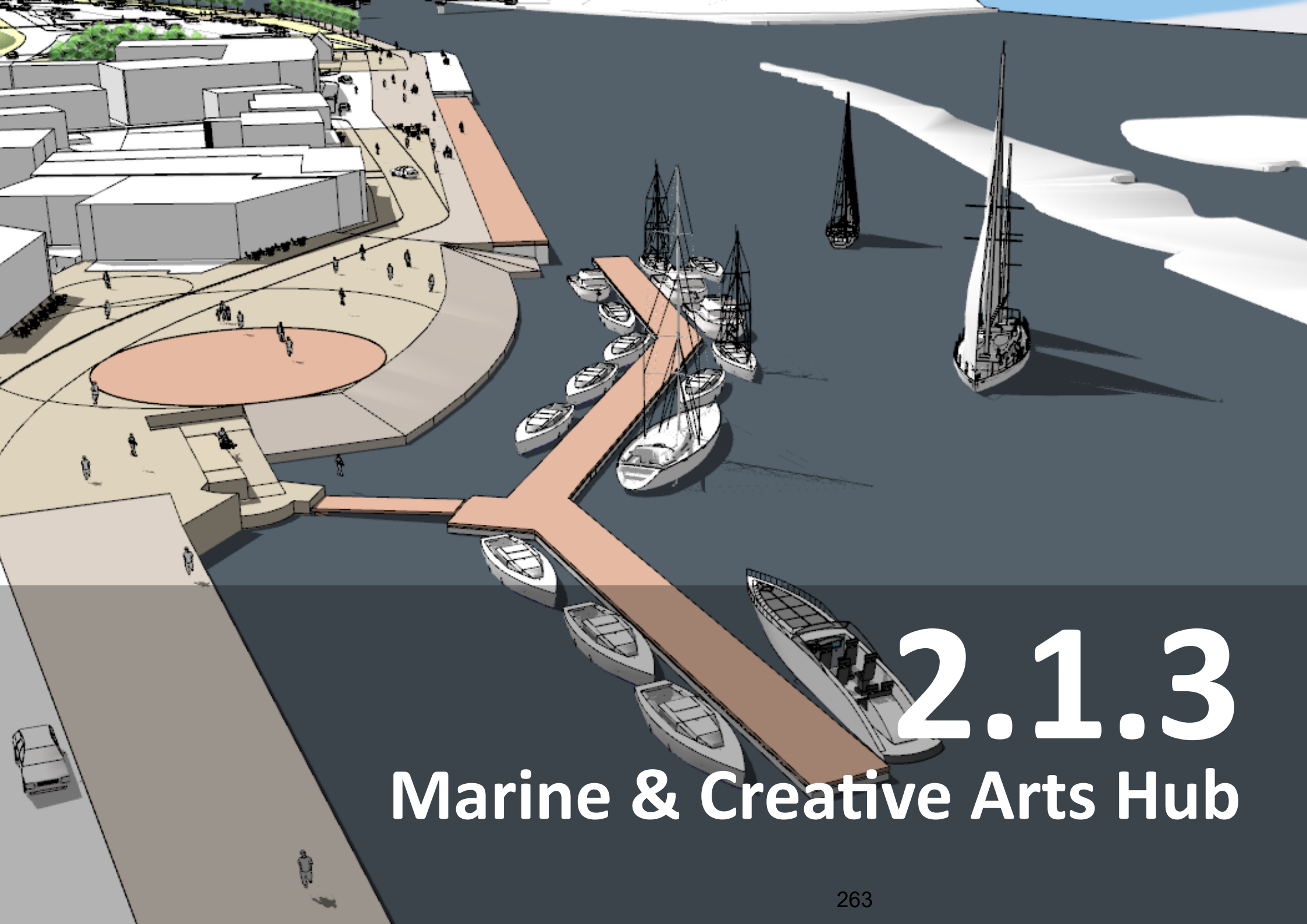
2.1.3
**Marine & Creative Arts Hub**

2.1.3   Marine & Creative Arts Activity Hub

The Marine and Creative Arts Hub will look to build on the existing harbour activity addressing, within a pedestrian-friendly and connected area of public realm, the waterfront wharf, slipway and pontoons facilities and all the supporting visitor facilities of the HAC/ Wasp Studios, Gro Coffee and other food and beverage offers (Harbour Master's Office redevelopment).

The Hub will form a vibrant activity zone offering riverside access, an event and activity space and strong local services creating a destination at the mid-point of the Maritime Mile.

The hub will incorporate a large single surface plaza that will encourage spill-out and outdoor activity from the Ship Inn, HAC Café, HAC Arts & Gallery, WASP Studios and Marine Hotel and link to GRO Coffee and to co -located areas created by the Wharf and the River Irvine Slipway. The main elements will include:

- New plaza & frontages– defining a large events/ gathering space supporting food and beverage offerings with attractive river outlook with open views to the floating pontoons, moorings, and marina activity.

- The Heritage and Leisure Craft Moorings to the pontoons will be retained and extended whenever funding allows to support water-based activity (heritage moorings / leisure craft) with enhancement to the Community Watersports Slipway –a focus for leisure activity with improved new facilities supporting Irvine Water Sports Club.

- Street improvements to create an Active Travel Corridor along the waterfront extending footways and addressing historical clutter and under-maintained waterside edges to create a safe pedestrian environment with new Off-Street car parking accessible from Beach Drive to the rear of the HAC and the Harbour Master's Office. The Active Travel Corridor will connect to the Core Path network and new residential areas.

264
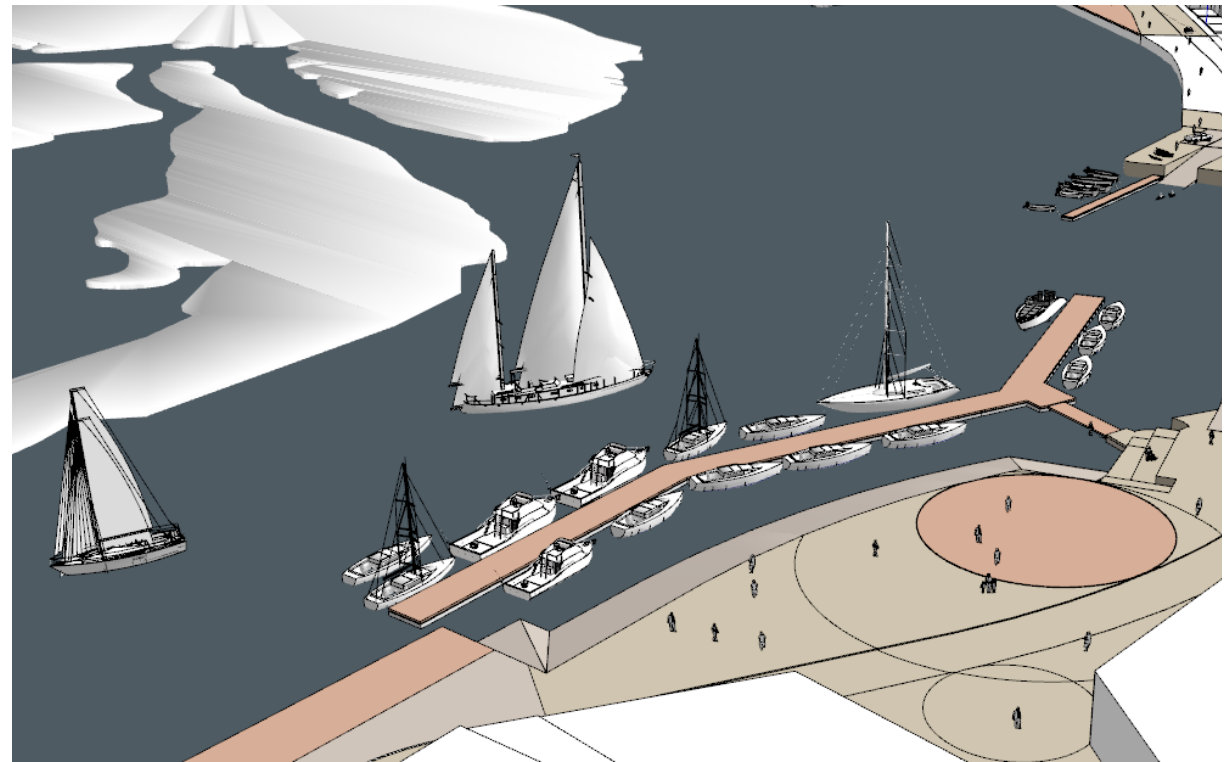
The Wharf

The Wharf is a sectional timber and concrete berthing structure on two levels extending from the Ship Plaza westward to the Harbour Master's Office and extends for some 238 metres alongside the River Irvine. The Wharf forms part of the original deep-water berth of the River Irvine and is currently unutilised and fenced off due to the condition of the timber deck.

The first 150m of the wharf is made up of greenheart timber boards supported on greenheart piles and larch timber members. The secondary wall is another 88m metres that is constructed of sheet piles and supports a concrete deck with timber cope beams. The Harbourside is no longer used as a commercial port/harbour for freight or goods and the wharf structure has therefore not been maintained.

Irvine Harbour wharf consists of two main sections. The eastern end of the wharf is constructed from a variety of timber boards and struts, which form to a timber board deck. Timber trim boards are installed at approximately 4.0m below the timber deck, to form a retaining wall structure. Rock armour / stone is shown as a sloping revetment to the back of the timber wharf. Front timber piles are found at approx. 1.9m centres along the length of the timber structure. The western end of the wharf is of sheet pile wall construction, consisting of sheet piles continuously, with timber fenders at approx. 2.0m centres.

Harbour Master's Square to Coast with placemaking and wayfinding *'look-ootery'*
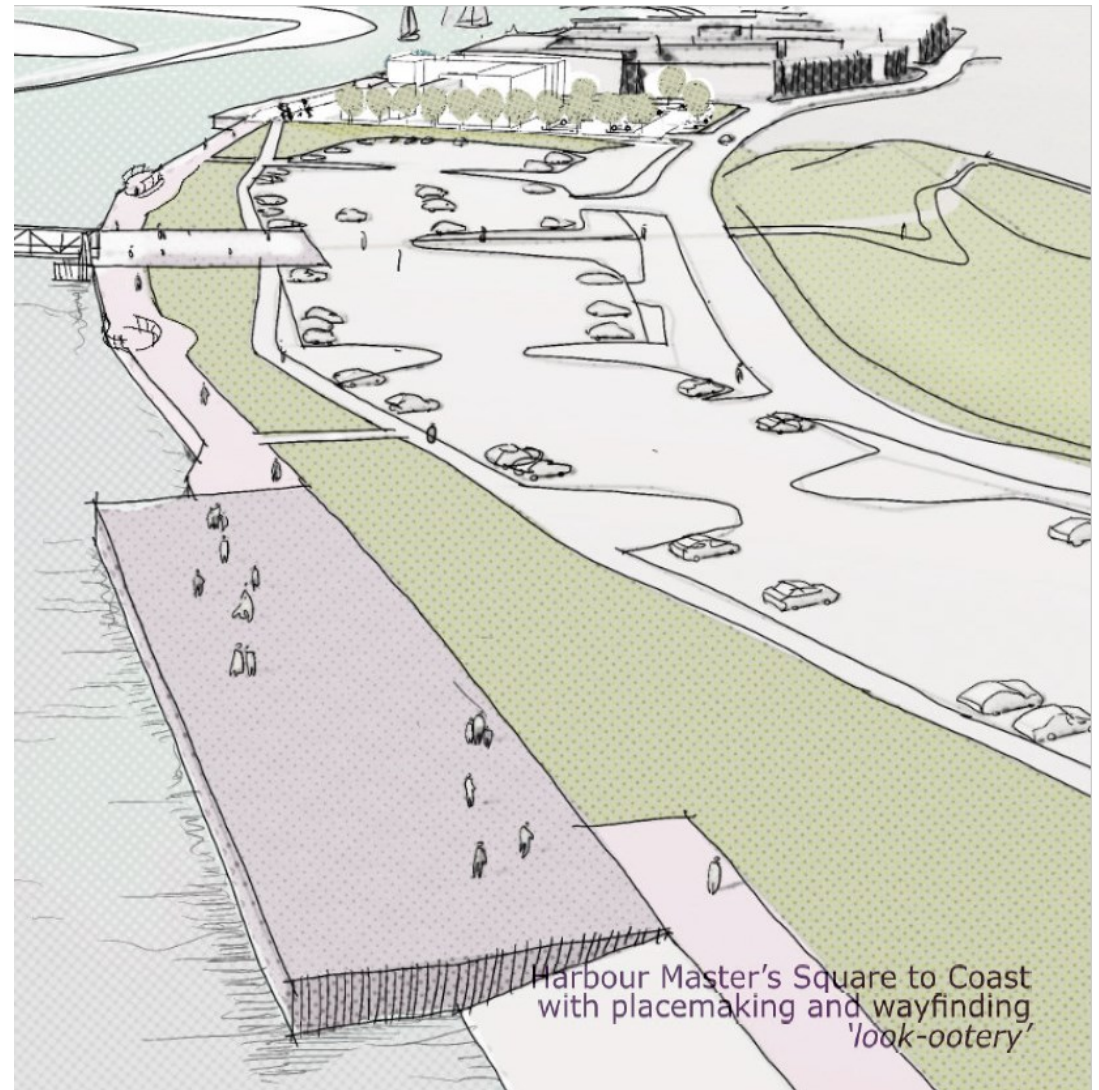
NAC completed a comprehensive non-intrusive engineering assessment of the condition of the wharf in 2019 (RPS Structural & Condition Assessment). The main findings were:

- The timber wharf sub-structure is in generally acceptable/ fair condition
- The wharf deck (Chg. 0-150metres) requires complete replacement
- Additional works are required to the sub-structure and diagonal bracing together with replacement works for some piles/joist, cope beams and structural members
- Refurbishment of bollards/mooring ring/ ladder furniture.

The refurbished wharf will retain a significant element of the waterfront heritage, provide a deck for viewing, moorings and water access with the intent of encouraging event and leisure uses including spill-out from food and beverage and gallery/ art studios on Harbour Street. The potential for provision of a further kiosk (see: IDC Waterfront Kiosks) as a service point and outlet on the hardstanding to the frontage of Gro-Coffee would be considered acceptable if commercial operators advised interest. The facility would help provide additional animation of the space during the summer months and supported with outdoor seating create could offer an additional outdoor eating space – subject to NAC Licensing.

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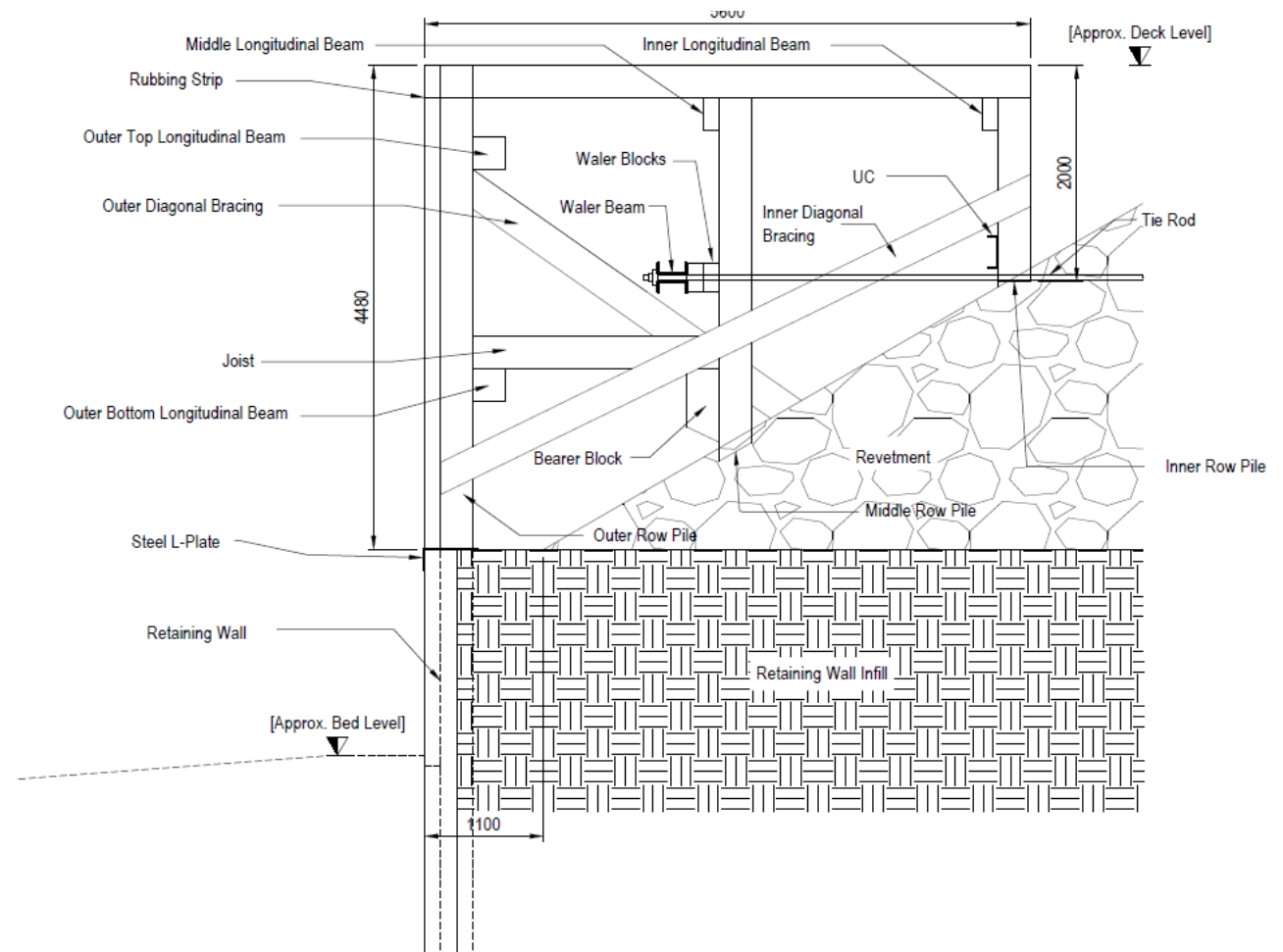
2.1.4
Maritime Heritage Hub

2.1.4 Maritime Heritage Hub

An important element of the Harbourside and proposals for the Maritime Mile is the development of the Scottish Maritime Museum's presence on the waterfront and the ability for marine heritage to support a new vibrant Harbourside setting.

The proposals for SMM @ Great Harbour are an important project element of the Ayrshire Growth Deal that can support place-making and regeneration. The Growth Deal funding looks to support a waterfront destination that can transform the tourism and the visitor potential of Ayrshire and the Clyde Coast.

The Scottish Maritime Museum share an ambition to celebrate the Maritime Mile with a new visitor attraction building audiences, inclusive participation and education around maritime heritage and arts. The new facility will complement the Linthouse Museum. The SMM is a stand-alone organisation with a national remit to research, collect and curate Maritime Arts as part of Scotland's maritime heritage. The SMM owns and holds a collection of national significance. The SMM art collection and interpretation of Maritime Arts is limited within the Linthouse Building with SMM seeking to develop a specialist facility alongside the facilities on the waterfront.

SMM are seeking to develop a flexible multi-use 'Community based flexible Exhibition & Gallery Space' creating a new waterfront focus for the SMM and a clear new 'destination point' on the Maritime Mile. The main facility will house the gallery, shop, café, and a training/education space. The facility's new public realm arrangements make a provision for a dry dock/slipway allowing for exhibiting of existing and visiting heritage vessels to become part of the heritage external exhibition and the education and training provision.

SMM are also keen to be a hub for wider community and 3rd sector activity and will also look to house community-based organisations within basic workshop units to the rear car-park areas with ability to access toilets and shared facilities / utilities.

268

Exhibition Gallery Space

The new facility combines elements of gallery, community, education and harbour services sharing many of these functions with the Puffer Building and creating a new inclusive 'hub' on the waterfront that supports the maritime arts collection and the remit of SMM whilst also supporting the interpretation of maritime heritage and supporting the SMM's educational remit together with community programmes and visitor interest.

The Gallery Space will add to the facilities and be complementary to space within the Linthouse Building and will provide a single gallery for maritime arts exhibits, exhibitions and community arts projects. The single gallery concept will extend the functionality of the Puffer Cafe facilitate and continue to use Puffer as the services facility (restaurant / café / retail) for the extended project.

The extended Puffer/Exhibition space has been designed to provide:

- A Puffer Café redevelopment and extension making full use of the waterside location with low level vernacular fisher-shed styled buildings clustered around the amended slipway.
- Create a single gallery space of circa 300-400 m2 incorporating reception/ orientation / educational space and toilets.
- Retain the low extended form of the Puffer Café building and integrate the upgraded building to create a single multi-user facility.
- Create an external public realm, education, training and event space to the frontage connecting into the Maritime Mile.
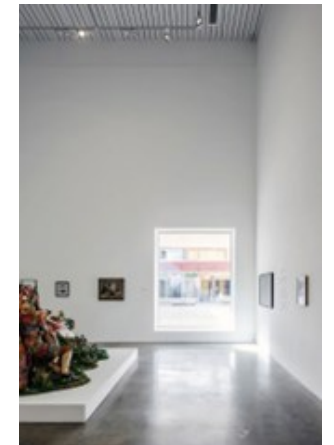
The Gallery element of the building has been designed to provide:

- A single gallery with barrier free access showcasing the SMM's maritime arts collection and visiting maritime history exhibitions.

- Indirect northern natural lighting. Objects are protected from unnecessary exposure to UV and direct light, e.g. when the museum is closed. Storage areas are kept dark when not in use.

- Temperature humidity control: The gallery aims to maintain conditions which are as stable as possible, within the range 12 – 20°C and 45 – 60% RH.

Kitchen / Plant / Deliveries
45m²

Cafe
145m²

Shop
145m²

Galleries
300m²

Arrival / Foyer/Reception / WC/ Lockers
100m²

Puffer

Extension

Kitchen / Plant   Café   Shop   Galleries   Arrival / Foyer/ Reception / WC/ Lockers

Deliveries

Kitchen / Plant   Café   Shop   Galleries   Foyer   Reception / Arrival   Lockers etc.   WC   VIEWS

270
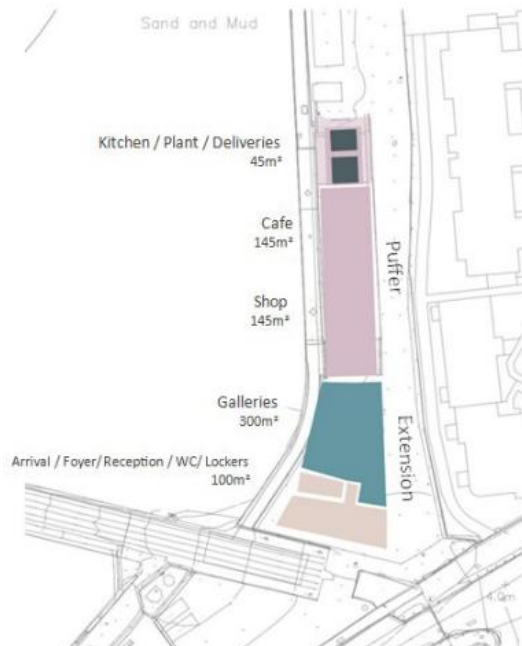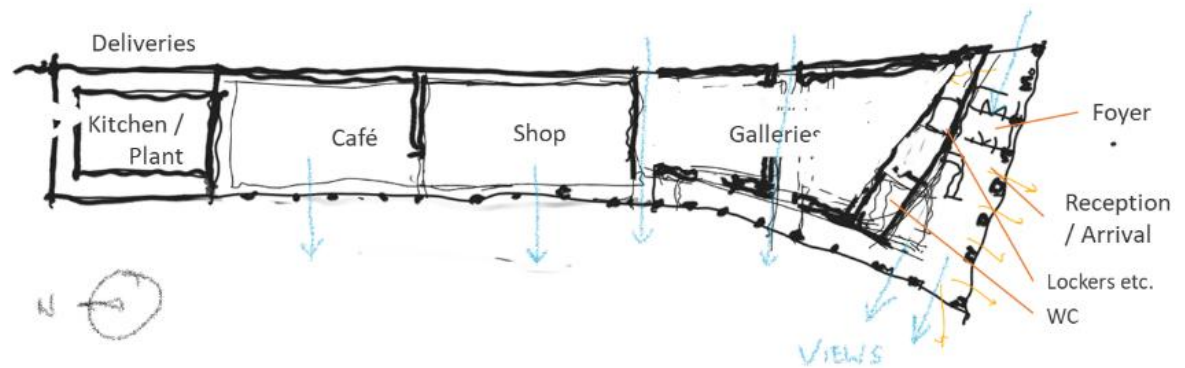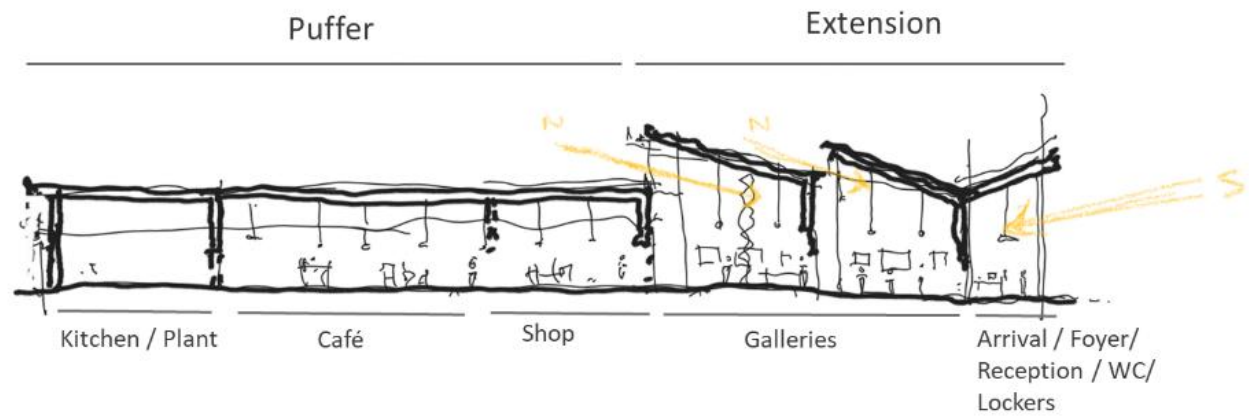
Puffer Café - Retail & Café Restaurant Space

The Puffer Café will be retained and redeveloped under the proposals to provide a waterfront café-restaurant linked to the gallery but retaining its independence of operation and capable of offering a mix of services (food & beverage / retail / toilets & services) alongside the gallery. The SMM would continue to manage the facility under licence / lease as appropriate.

The site will be serviced as existing from Harbour Street with rear parking/servicing. The redeveloped Puffer Café building form will be maintained (height/scale) and be the reference for contemporary new build elements. The collective building assemblage will provide a welcoming and active frontage at the Harbour Street / Montgomery Street junction creating a stronger more positive sense of welcome.

The existing scale of Cafe/Retail space (circa 280-300m2) will be retained but redeveloped to provide an open frontage with glazed pivot glass screen walling to the waterside offering access to a deck / outdoor sitting creating an alfresco lunch and dining area. Design development will ensure the site and facility is fully barrier free in terms of less abled/disabled access and that the gallery and educational spaces are flexible and adaptable for a wide range of artistic and creative arts-based events. The external public realm will provide an important smaller event space supporting local events and waterfront activity.
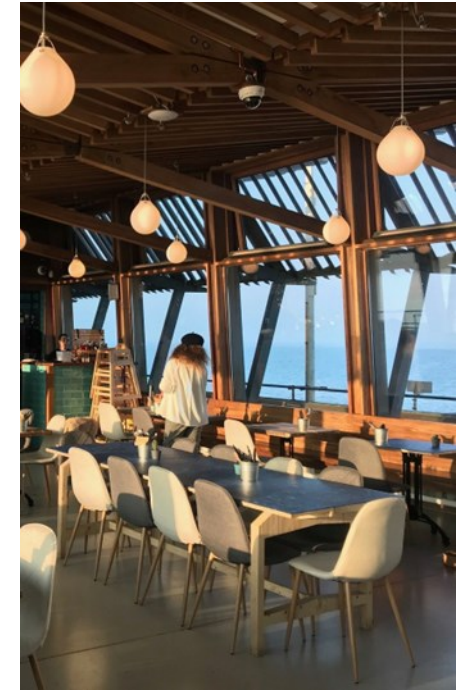
The building concept provides a redevelopment of the Puffer Café as a simple vernacular waterfront building with integrated Exhibition & Gallery space. Building scale and height will be similar to existing with

Kitchens and service support areas including vehicular loading/servicing and waste management will be retained to the northern gable area along with staff/site toilet and washroom facilities. Disabled parking provision (4 spaces); staff parking and service deliveries are provided and will be retained to the north of the site.

Moorings, Slipway & Docking Pocket

The proposals seek to enhance the display of the SMM heritage 'Puffer Collection' with capacity to improve the display, access and educational use of the historic Puffers as a focal point and attraction to the Gallery frontage. Discussions are being advanced with SMM on developing the Slipway to create a Berth Pocket effectively allowing the Spartan/ Kyles to be displayed at quay level. Eg. With Puffer deck level sitting circa 1m above public realm height.

A Dry Berthing Pocket would allow one of the SMM's heritage 'Puffers' to be displayed and allow all age groups to both view deck / derricks / wheelhouse and winches and allow the deck /wheelhouse to form part of the outdoor classroom / / training and educational space of the SMM@Gt Harbour. The existing slipway would be re-graded to a shallow inclined plane creating a retained docking pocket/graving dock with vessels winched into the berth on a standard boat cradle. Detail of the proposals are subject to design development with SMM. It is anticipated that other visiting vessels / visiting exhibition vessels could use the space to create additional interest or underpin an exhibition or event. Any additional berthing or vessel exhibition space will be explored during detail design. The proposals are not considered material to the Harbour, and it is not anticipated the works would involve a Harbour Revision Order.

The Slipway would no longer function as SMM's primary marine access slip with SMM and other uses utilising the Harbour Slipway on Harbour Street adjacent to the Irvine Water Sports Club. SMM has used both slipways in the past and are satisfied that all SMM needs can be met by the public slipway adjacent to the pontoons.

Irvine Water Sports Club (IWSC) is an important local sports club offering a range of facilities to its many members and to visiting users (Membership circa 180 Members). The club has hospitality and training facilities and hardstandings for boat storage /repairs and maintenance along with associated facilities. The IWSC work with wider groups and boat users. Moorings on the River Irvine provide for circa 40 floating moorings and compliment private moorings , fishing boat activity and the SMM heritage vessels.

- Gallery & Heritage Boat co-location set within <u>dry dock</u>

272
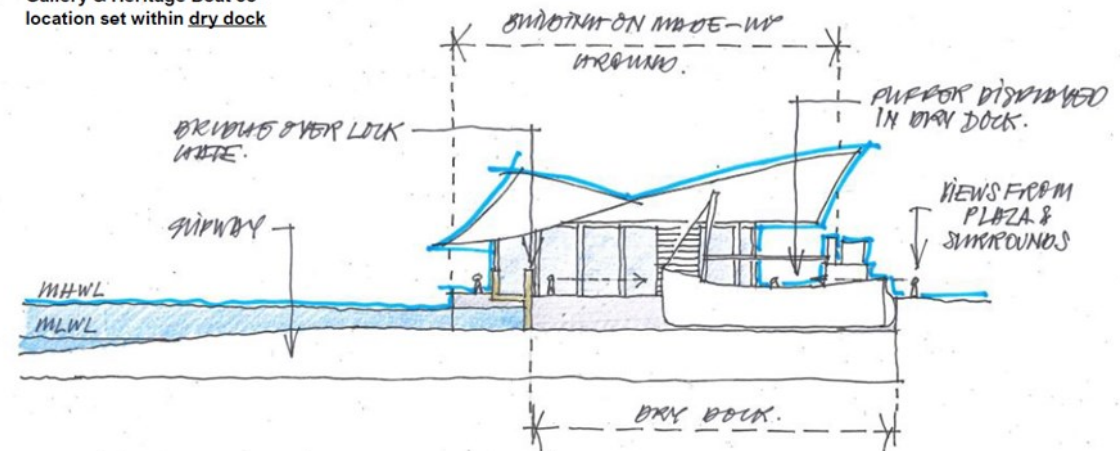
2.2
Harbourside Housing

2.2 Harbourside Housing

North Ayrshire Council are committed to quality place-making as set out within the Local Development Plan (LDP2) and as further reinforced through the adoption of the National Planning Framework (NPF4). Strategic Policy 2v sets out a commitment to placemaking to ensure the delivery of Local Outcome Improvement Plan priorities (LOIP) that looks to make North Ayrshire safer and healthier by ensuring that all development contributes to making quality places. New housing will be expected to contribute to and enhance the quality of place and to build on the design references of the Irvine Development Corporation and more recent NAC Housing.

The policy framework safeguards and looks to enhance place and environmental quality through the quality of architecture, neighbourhood planning and avoidance of unacceptable adverse environmental or amenity impacts. A key element of the policy is that all housing and neighbourhood developments meet the six qualities of successful places that is further supported through the NPF4 around climate change, biodiversity and the creation of 'liveable' places

Quality places and place-making requires engagement, sensitive designed and positive partnerships for delivery. The quality of local neighbourhoods and homes affect quality of life, civic cohesion and impacts on housing choice and opportunity. Strong sustainable and inclusive communities are shaped by quality places where people want to live, work and invest in both now and in the future. Placemaking, high quality sustainable development and support for net zero are all key components of good design.

Irvine Harbourside needs to be designed to be sensitive to the context and environment and make a contribution to the quality of life of the community by ensuring homes are well planned, well connected, inclusive, safe, and built and managed to offer equality of opportunity with good local services for all.

Scottish Planning Policy and the key policy documents of the National Planning Framework (NPF4); Designing Places, Designing Street, Liveable Neighbourhoods; Policy on Architecture for Scotland, and the Climate Change Act sit alongside and are closely referenced to the North Ayrshire Council LDP2 key policy documents.

274

Key Principles

A Placemaking Approach

A people-centric place that is specifically designed to accommodate Mixed Use and which provides for local needs on site and encourages people to live, work, learn and celebrate 'their place' and activate their environment.

Integration of Mixed-Uses

Creating a new 'Living Quarter' which creates a new model for contemporary urban living right in the heart of Irvine with access to all services whilst creating a strong sense of place, based on a central greenspace and integration of adjacent uses.

Enhancement of Greenspace

Integrating safe routes and greenspace as a core element of the development creating a 'park' for residential and the town that is closely linked to the networked greenspace of the coast and infrastructure corridors.

Key Principles
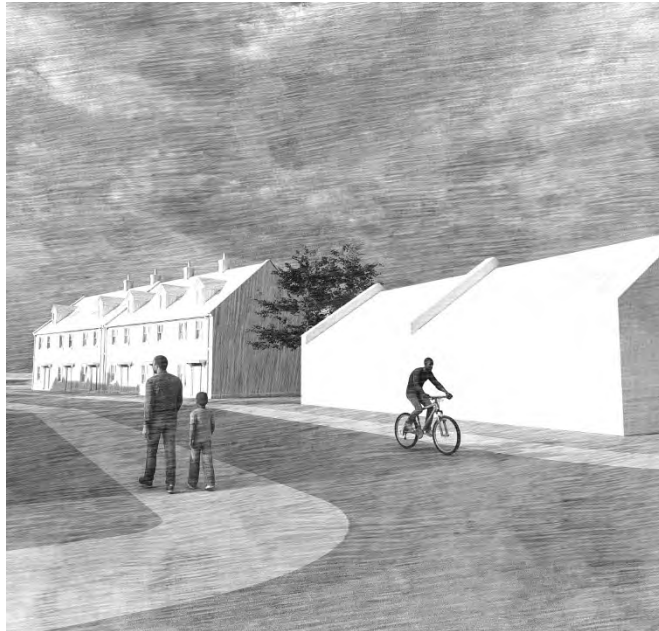
Net Zero & Support for 20 Min Neighbourhoods

Supporting through passive and quality of building design net zero through energy conservation; material specification (and reuse) and integrating strong Active Travel and connections, reducing car dependency and promoting 20 Minute Neighbourhoods

Creating a Connected Place

Strengthening links between the Town Centre and the Railway Station and wider green network links with a permeable well connected and readily accessible path network and creating safe routes.

Safe Routes Active Travel and Streets for People

Promoting pedestrian and cycle connectivity to the town centre, local amenities and services. Ensuring ready access to public transport use and designing streets and public spaces to encourage pedestrians and cyclists to use them safely in a connected network of non-vehicular movement.

Designing Places sets out the principles to create neighbourly, sustainable places which are:

- **Healthy:** Supporting the prioritisation of women's safety and improving physical and mental health

- **Pleasant:** Supporting attractive natural and built spaces

- **Connected:** Supporting well connected networks that make moving around easy and reduce car dependency

- **Distinctive:** Supporting attention to detail of local architectural styles and natural landscapes to be interpreted into designs to reinforce identity

- **Sustainable:** Supporting the efficient use of resources that will allow people to live, play, work and stay in their area, ensuring climate resilience and integrating nature positive biodiversity solutions

- **Adaptable:** Supporting commitment to investing in the long-term value of buildings, streets and spaces by allowing for flexibility so that they can meet the changing needs and accommodate different uses over time

Placemaking Objectives

Successful placemaking can be shaped around the six qualities of successful places as set out in the Scottish Policy – Creating Places.

These qualities should ensure all design elements are shaped to create a neighbourhood that is healthy, pleasant, connected, distinctive, sustainable and adaptable. In developing the masterplan, the plan seeks to enhance the Harbourside's quality of place and enhance the Harbourside as a strong local neighbourhood that can help to support local housing needs, promote the special qualities of place and further develop the Harbourside community as an attractive, liveable and appealing place to live and visit. Critical to this ambition is:

- Supporting the need for new homes with a mix of housing types in liveable neighbourhoods
- Providing well-designed homes
- Promoting place quality with designs referenced to existing neighbourhood architecture
- Creating housing with high quality of external detailing, public realm and supporting facilities,
- Supporting a 20 Minute Neighbourhood with safe, ready access to local/ town centre facilities/services.
- Creating spaces to support physical activity, relaxation and play and to celebrate culture, diversity and heritage.
- Providing for enhanced street environments and stronger and safe connectivity
- Securing energy efficient /low carbon housing to reduce energy use.

Places are for people and people help makes spaces safe, active and sociable. For Harbourside the key element is to secure housing that meets existing and future resident needs and feels like a really good place to live.

The masterplan promotes a scale and density of housing similar to the existing harbourside area. Townhouses and terraced form have been aligned to offer a tight urban grain and create strong and active street frontages. Variations in roof lines and height, building external treatment and detailing reflect existing architecture form and pattern and create a family of design references. Additional ancillary non-residential (local convenience retail / café / small service/home-office space) will be encouraged/ supported at a limited number of locations with good accessibility.

Provide clear and continuous active building frontages, to provide both a suitable degree of enclosure to streets and public spaces and promote natural surveillance.

Promote adaptable building forms, which are adaptable, barrier free and accommodate all ages and are accessible and can easily cater for future needs and disabilities.

Use buildings form together with sensitive boundary treatments to enclose garden ground, create safe internal parking courts and screen service areas from public view.

Enhance the attractiveness and character of the area through good quality architecture, materials and including quality street and public realm detailing closely referenced to existing neighbourhoods.

Design new buildings to face the public realm, with a prominent and welcome entrance, and enhance safety particularly where housing abuts public realm and along pedestrian routes.

Minimise the opportunity for crime (Secure by Design), by designing-in high levels of security for new buildings and creating strong frontages offering positive passive surveillance to safe streets.

Adopt Designing Streets principles and Active Travel measures as integral elements of residential street design and create and enhance the network of active travel routes.

Urban Design Principles

Promoting a Vibrant Mixed Use Place

The development of Harbourside looks to build on the scale and form of the existing Harbourside neighbourhoods with the new developments taking design reference from the Irvine Development Corporation (IDC) and North Ayrshire Council housing on Harbour Drive. The indicative housing layouts and the housing mix provide a framework as to how Harbourside can continue to meet local housing needs and integrate closely both with existing neighbourhoods, the waterfront and the Beach Park.

Creating vibrant mixed-use places is however more about the space and activity external to buildings and most importantly the connectivity and walkability of the local environment. The waterfront with the upgrading provided by the Maritime Mile and Beach Park creates opportunity to sensitively integrate through the development of small gap-sites new residential development and small-scale service/café/retail.

The Harbourside offers a natural 20 Minute Neighbourhood where most residents will be able to meet their core needs within a short walk or bike ride from home. The Town Centre, Rail & Bus interchanges, Beach Park, Coast are all readily accessible.

Proposed Mixed-Use Development illustrating Project Opportunities

Housing Mix

The masterplan aims to ensure that there is a mix of dwelling types and sizes to meet a range of housing needs as this helps build strong neighbourhoods and sustainable communities. Developers will be encouraged to provide a range of house sizes and types, reflecting similar new residential infill development (NAC 2022) which enhances place quality and enhances the Conservation Area.

North Ayrshire Council Housing has recently completed a 71 house development on Beach Drive. This development is based on similar masterplan and neighbourhood planning / place-making principles. In addition the private sector developments at Dublin Quay / Belfast Quay have been successfully completed over several phases and the old Jewson Builders Merchant's site on Gottries Road has planning concent for 28 new homes.

The masterplan sets out the detail for a new residential opportunity on the Portland- Beach Drive site. The site represents brownfield land and is supported for residential development within the Local Development Plan.
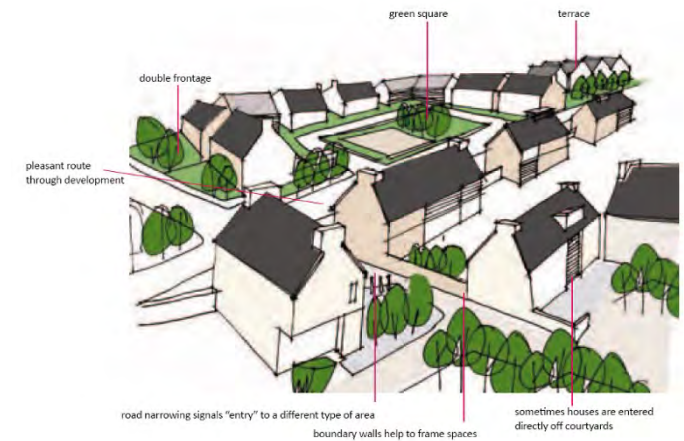
Housing Typology & Urban Structure

Urban form and structure along with the mix of buildings and housing tenure are an important element of urban design. The relationship between buildings, streets and spaces has a significant impact on whether a place will feel welcoming and comfortable for all users.

Buildings should positively define and enclose streets and open spaces by fronting onto them with windows and entrances/doors facing towards them; this will provide active frontages and passive surveillance.

Short terraces reflect local forms and help to define streets and offer the capacity to secure medium density residential development with high amenity. Terraced town houses in variable blocks of 4-6-8 units create a clear and consistent architecture typology.

Plot depths of 35-50 metres will enclose private and semi-private greenspace and provide, where appropriate, in-curtilage private residential parking. Building lines and setbacks should be variable and emphasise the spaces that the buildings address and reflect the character of their location. The strong existing building lines of Beach Drive/Harbour Street offers an excellent model to be reflected and reinforced in the new development.

Plot layouts for housing can be broken down into blocks of variable scales and allow for a variable mix of two, three and four bed homes with variable private garden ground. Plot layouts can be adjusted to suit the development boundaries with plots positioned to respond to the site, key views and boundary uses.

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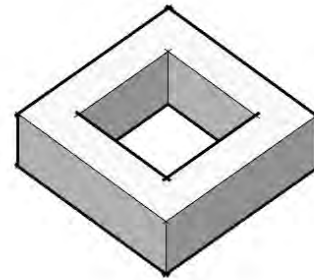
Courtyard
Most dense typology
approx. 45 apartments
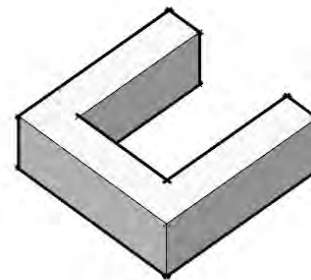
Horse Shoes
approx. 42 apartments
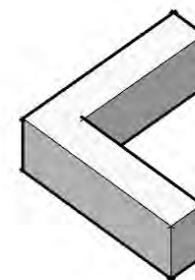
L Shape
approx. 25 apartments
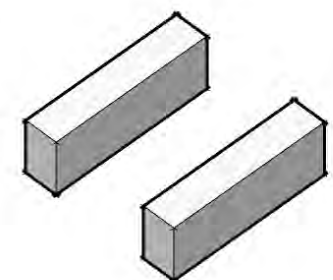
Rectangular
approx. 14 apartments
Per block

60.00 m

60.00 m
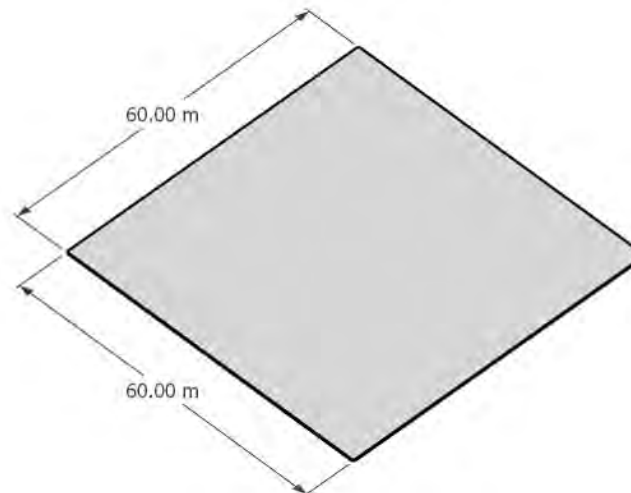
Footprint of Medium Density Residential Development Plot

Front Gardens

Street

Back Gardens
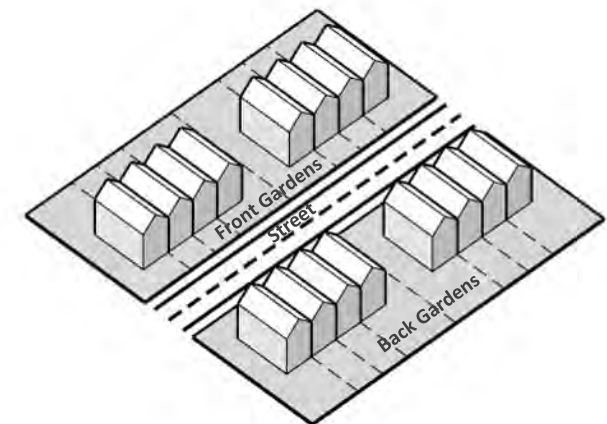
Example Buildings within Plot

Height, Massing, & Density

Mixed-use development is appropriate for Harbourside as it fits with the existing urban pattern and will help to enhance the vibrancy of the extended neighbourhood and promote interest, variation and walkability. The masterplan provides for the inclusion of small compatible ancillary uses such as local shops, creche-nurseries or leisure facilities as ancillary uses within the residential mix.

The masterplan actively promotes a mixed-use approach within Harbourside seeking to incorporate smaller non-residential use (convenience retail / support services) at ground floor level particularly on the main street frontages and on prominent corner sites.

Building massing, spacing and orientation of buildings takes their cue from the existing Harbourside neighbourhoods with strong frontages whilst allowing buildings to address issues such as solar orientation to ensure resource efficiency and provide opportunities for domestic renewable energy generation.

Housing units are typically town house and cottage units aligned in short terraces and defining streets and the main public realm corridors. The building typology would look to reference to the recent successful NAC Housing on Harbour Drive. Building heights of maximum 3 floors with corners articulated with 3 1/2 levels and providing 18m separation between directly facing windows of habitable rooms and generous gable to gable spacing to ensure amenity, allow connections and provide for the privacy of residents.

Housing typology with mixed heights and detailing
- 1-1.5 Storey
- 2-2.5 Storey
- 2.5-3 Storey

Medium Density Residential reflecting Harbourside (20 and 35 units per hectare)

Medium density housing is proposed for the residential housing sites. Housing will provide frontage development to streets with residential units providing a mix of terraced town houses with varied combinations of semi-detached and terraced units. Housing will establish a common typology to create distinctive and recognisable character areas within a common architectural vocabulary. The layouts will look to provide:

- terraced, semi-detached housing to support a diverse range of housing types
- perimeter block layouts framing streets and public realm space supporting 'safe by design' principles
- Street and movement layouts adopting 'Designing Streets ' and 'Cycle by Design' principles
- good pedestrian connectivity and integrated greenspace including provision for surface water management (SUDS)
- integrated landscape proposals, making use of street trees and amenity planting within gardens.

282

Sustainability & Net Zero

The masterplan framework sets out to ensure a best practice approach to sustainability and net zero both with regard to materials re-use, embedded energy, passive and positive environmental management and compliance with all Building Regulations and standards.

Additionally, the masterplan seeks to reduce car dependency and promote active travel choices. The aim is to ensure the overall efficacy of all measures through energy efficient design and management. The proposals seek to do this through:

- Creating layouts that support passive solar gain and can incorporate renewable energy infrastructure
- Minimise residential energy demand and enable renewable energy as part of the building envelope
- Maximising the thermal efficiency of building envelopes within the housing typology
- Recycling and re-purposing buildings/ materials and reducing generated waste
- Reducing short and non-essential car journeys by promoting active travel / enhanced access to public transport including promoting extended public transport bus services.
- Retaining greenspace and enhancing parks / path networks
- Incorporating sustainable urban drainage and incorporating permeable surfaces
- Integrating sustainable drainage within greenspace with a focus on amenity and opportunities for biodiversity
- Requiring Construction Environment Management Plans as part of good practice

North Ayrshire Council declared a climate emergency in June 2019 and is committed to achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2030 with the Council looking to lead the way in reducing emissions from buildings, transport and waste, whilst increasing the use of renewable technology. In order to achieve the net-zero target, significant reductions in area-wide and Council estate emissions are required.

Working towards Net Zero and supporting behaviour change involves planning for change and making it easier for residents and visitors to make more sustainable choices. Better facilities and infrastructure (common waste facilities/stores; resident and visitor bike storage; good, safe pedestrian and cycle connections; SUDs and greenspace integration; permeable surfaces and where appropriate tree planting) all support climate change resilience and encourage and support low carbon living.
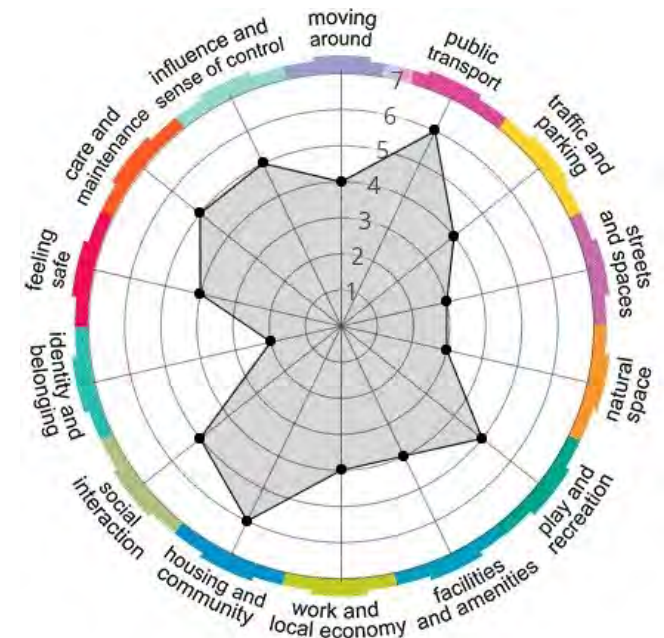
Street Design

Successful places have streets integrated within the public realm and are designed to meet the needs of all users addressing place before movement and creating streets rather than roads designed solely for the efficient movement of vehicular traffic.

Designing Streets (National Policy adopted by NAC) places the needs of pedestrians and cyclists at the top of the street design hierarchy and alongside other design measures seeks to encourage active travel and sustainable travel modes. All layouts and amendments to existing streets will comply with NAC's Roads Development Guidance (NAC Roads Development Guide). Streets design with residential homes providing active building frontages create attractive and safe walking routes that are direct, and well connected to existing routes, public transport connections, local places of interest and the wider Harbourside street network. A permeable network of streets and connecting paths supports active travel and healthier more active communities. The street detailing at detail design stages will be required to incorporate best practice to naturally limit speed as an integrated package of measures including junction geometry, material detailing, at-grade pedestrian crossings, throttles and speed tables to be agreed with NAC as the Roads Authority to address the principles of 'Designing Streets' whilst ensuring compliance with roads standards and to ensure safe pedestrian environments. All designs will be required to comply with the NAC Roads Design Guide and be agreed with NAC Transportation Team. Throughout movement corridors have been planned as multi-user streets with the street design reflecting movement needs incorporating pedestrian, cycle,

public transport and service needs alongside the need for vehicular access and being cognisant of traffic volumes. Streets design and detailing (vertical /horizontal shifts) throughout the Harbourside should aim to secure maximum speeds of 20mph with street detail design reflecting Designing Streets and the NAC Road Development Guide.

Specific measures are proposed in the following locations:

Harbour Street: Promoting Harbour Street as a Local Residential / Tertiary Street
Promoting Harbour Street as a quiet residential street for local access with traffic seeking to access Beach Park and Coast signed and directed to Harbour Road / Harbour Drive. Street design incorporating public realm integration to balance the needs for walking, cycling and wheeling and local access and wider visitor use. This will introduce a 20 mph Zone for Harbourside and incorporate raised surface treatments around key connections such as: Montgomery St/ Harbour Street/ Gottries Road (Puffer Café) and similar at the Marine Activity Hub and Harbour Master's Office redevelopment. Improved pedestrian and cycle provision are included within the Maritime Mile proposals and connect to wider Core Path and Active Travel corridors linking leisure routes and the new residential areas.

Beach Drive including Portland Roundabout : Promoting Harbour Drive as a Primary Street
Incorporating 'Designing Streets' measures to Beach Drive from and including the Portland Roundabout (Gateway feature) to narrow the street to 6.0 metres and incorporate into the design proposals raised tables and at grade pedestrian crossings at junctions, continuous footways and on-street parking and street trees. The character of Beach Drive will be reshaped as a Primary Street / Residential Core Road (NAC Roads Hierarchy) incorporating as integral to the design measures to reduce

traffic speed (max 20 mph) and create an environment with better amenity which is more supportive of walking and cycling. A narrowed carriageway, providing for direct residential access, on-street parking interspersed with public realm and street trees will help to define a 'street' quality. The whole of Harbourside would form part of the 20mph Zone from Portland Roundabout which through design measures can provide a 'Gateway Feature' signalling the change in the road hierarchy and changing driver behaviour. All details will be agreed with NAC Roads during the design stage and comply with the Council's Roads Design Guide.

Pedestrian routes have been designed to increase passive surveillance and provide for safe movement. Integrating active travel measures within the street adds to the 'eyes on the street' which provide a safety benefit for all users. Cycling provision, including the re-routing on NCR7 is incorporated into the masterplan offering safe, continuous, with the new route offering a combination of off-road / quiet road links and incorporating the guidance set out in Cycling by Design (LTN 1/20). The proposals promote a primary active travel route that connects paths and points of access and the Beach Park path network to the Ship Inn.

284
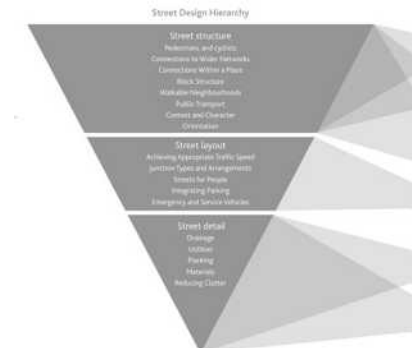
Portland - Beach Drive Residents Parking
Internal Parking Courts / in curtilage parking
Capacity 240 Spaces

285

Residential Parking & Cycle Provision

Residential parking within Harbourside needs to recognise that the Harbourside, Beach Park and Coast are also visitor destinations and parking during the summer season can reach peak levels

Residential parking needs to be integrated within housing neighbourhoods and the masterplan looks to minimise potential conflicts between resident/visitor parking in an area of high visitor activity.

Parking provision within the masterplan adopts the NAC Roads Development Guidance (Parking Design Standards) and the advice of planning/transport managers. Parking provision for residential development will be predominately off-road and provides dedicated spaces for individual use. Parking includes for the needs for cycle parking and storage and with the overall aim of reducing car dependency, promoting active travel and encouraging modal shift.

A Transport Assessment will be required with the future developer also required to submit a Travel Plan to outline measures to encourage a reduction in the number of single occupancy trips made by car and support measures for active travel. Convenient and secure cycle parking is critical to increasing use of cycles. The masterplan looks to ensure that access to cycle parking is at least as convenient as access to car parking.

The detailed planning application(s) will define individual site housing mix with North Ayrshire Council advising on specific parking requirements at the pre-planning stage.

- Car parking provision of 2 allocated spaces per residential dwelling (2-3 bed units) plus 0.25 unallocated spaces are provided for within the residential masterplan for resident's needs. For 1 and 4 bed units the appropriate parking standard (NAC Road Dev. Guide) should be applied.

- Cycle parking provision of 2 spaces per residential dwelling (2-3 bed units) is provided for within the residential masterplan for resident / visitor needs.

Cycle Parking:
Cycle parking provision of 1.0 short term(visitor) and 1.0 long term spaces (resident secure storage) per residential dwelling. Secure cycle parking seeks to ensure that access to cycle parking is at least as convenient as access to car parking.

Car Parking:
Parking provision of 2.25 (allocated/un-allocated) spaces per residential dwelling is provided for within the residential masterplan for resident's needs. All parking and street layouts will comply with the NAC Roads Design Guide. Layouts for spaces are described in 'Designing Streets' Standard dimensions for a car parking space will be: - Length: 5.0 metres Width: 2.5 metres. Internal court resident parking should include provision for electric car charging points.

286

Amenity & Garden Space

Amenity and garden space and the extent of private open space within new residential developments has been shaped by the housing layouts within the masterplan and will be developed with the detailed housing layout and design.

The masterplan addresses front and rear gardens differently maintaining provision of limited private amenity space to areas of significant movement (Portland - Beach Drive) with rear gardens and shared space within the perimeter block design layouts.

Detached, semi-detached and terraced properties should be provided with rear gardens in proportion to their size. Rear gardens will be expected to be a minimum of 1½ times the size of the ground floor area for detached and semi-detached dwellings and no less than 100m². This will generally include rear and side dwellinghouse gardens enclosed by fence/wall/hedge. For terraced dwellings the same rule will apply whereby the ratio provided should be 1.5 times the ground floor area of the property with a minimum area of 60-70m² or as agreed with NAC Planning.

The masterplan outlines a minimum rear garden depth of 6-10 metres with local relaxations at corner plots and plots with two or more frontages. Front garden space frequently fronts streets or public realm and is addressed to offer significant flexibility from small privacy frontages (3metres) to deeper front garden space where in-curtilage resident parking is provided (8metre)

Amenity Space: The masterplan provides per 50 units:
0.2 ha per 500 population. (4m² per person). Based on national household statistics = 2.25 per household
Number of units proposed = 50 Calculation: 2.25 x 50 = 112.5 x 4m² = 450m²

Garden Space: The masterplan provides per unit:
Variable front garden space dependent upon design layout with 'privacy zone' to all properties with public realm or movement corridor frontages. Garden ground 1.5 x GFA with minimum 6 metre rear gardens – where gardens are provided.

Residential Play Provision

High quality play space suitable for varied age groups and interests is available within the Beach Park and will offer a range of play provision

Children play in many different ways according to their own interests and abilities and enjoy different forms of play at different times and places. The residential areas within the masterplan will provide a range of play experiences and offer a safe play environment with good oversight, ready access and remote from primary vehicular corridors.

The play area will sit within a single level at the natural connecting point for pedestrian routes. The play space will be a S75 responsibility on the developers and should be progressed in discussion with NAC Officers. The masterplan provides younger age groups (toddlers and children) offering a range of equipment, located within housing areas to ensure that the new housing contributes towards the play area needs.

The provision within the masterplan provides for:

- Neighbourhood children's play areas provided at a ratio of 0.1 hectares per 500 population
- a LAP (Local Area for Play) /LEAP (Local Equipped Area for Play) level of specification provided through a combination of LAPS /LEAPS /NEAPS) dependent upon the scale of development
  - LAPS provide primarily for under 6's within immediate proximity of home
  Typical up to 100m2 and fenced to enclose and prevent dog access
  - LEAPS provide wider range of play challenges / opportunity
  Typically up to 400m2 and fenced to enclose and prevent dog access
  Equipped play with range of play equipment (6 units) / seating / litter bins
  - NEAPS provide a full neighbourhood level of provision
  Typically sized to reflect number of units / populations min.1,000m2
  Equipped with play (9 units), seating litter bins and active sports / games court facilities

Developers of residential units will be required to provide LAPs/LEAPS as required as a planning consent condition requirement together with any wider contributions to active sport and recreation or other developer contributions.

288

2.2.1

Portland - Beach Drive Housing

2.2.1 Portland - Beach Drive Housing

A quality residential site with capacity to offer a range of town centre living in a highly attractive, accessible and central location. Close to the town centre, employment sites and public transport services the location is well suited to mixed-use low-carbon residential development.

Urban Context
The site is located west of the Portland Roundabout on the edge of the settlement envelope and adjoining the Beach Park open space to the south and west. Formerly the Magnum Sports and Leisure Centre the site has a frontage to Beach Drive and an outlook across the Beach Park Boating Pond to the west.

The site is a brownfield site levelled and re-seeded following demolition of former buildings and has no specific features or assets requiring protection or enhancement. The analysis focussed on the area context (urban form /layout/ architectural context) and landscape context (local topography /views /boundary features) which contribute to character, views and landscape interest. These references inform the development layout with landscape boundary features retained and integrated into the plan. Although at the edge of the settlement the site is closely tied into the existing neighbourhoods and offers within a 20 Minute walk accessibility to the town centre, employment and all local services.

The location has good local connectivity to primary services (education /health /transport) and access to both convenience and comparative retail. Incorporation of a local retail element (1-3 small convenience retail units) would positively contribute to the Harbourside and neighbourhood facilities. The location supports contemporary urban lifestyles (live-work environment) and excellent access to quality greenspace.

Landscape Setting
The site sits adjacent to the Beach Park with open views across the greenspace to the south and west. Boundary shelterbelt planting takes advantage of subtle landform change to the south and east with established semi-natural woodland. Views are very open to the west and south with foreground detail created by the Boating Pond and dominated by the open skyline and views to the coast. Tree blocks on Beach Drive terminate important vistas and should be retained.

Opportunity & Vision
The design approach looks to build on local assets giving recognition to the sensitivity of how the development addresses the urban edge and integrate closely with adjacent housing areas. The successful new NAC Housing on Beach Drive reflects the approach adopted securing a scale and variation in building/architectural treatments that reflects an organic style of growth of the settlement.

Vision
The development of the Beach Drive site will be a distinctive and sustainable extension to Harbourside creating housing within easy reach of the Town Centre and significant employment areas. Designed as a small new neighbourhood it will accommodate a range of homes of varying sizes and types and support ancillary local convenience retail uses. Design referenced to the surrounding residential and architectural character and by taking advantage of its Beach Park boundary location the development will create an appealing addition location for contemporary urban living.

Urban Character
Housing frontages face the street allowing for the flexible adoption of both on-street and in-curtilage parking. The approach breaks down the site into a series of smaller units creating streets defined by building frontages and building elevational frontages defining the park edge and street form rather than roads. Housing garden ground and semi-private shared space and parking are all internal along with service buildings (bin stores/bike storage sheds local amenity space). Variable building heights, units, materials add variability with colour and consistent local detailing (fenestration/dormers/porch/external finishes) creating an attractive and appealing neighbourhood building on the adjacent urban character. Local convenience retail integrated with housing and located to the Beach Drive / gateway access frontage would be supported.

Housing Numbers & Mix

The indicative masterplan provides for a range predominantly of 2-3 bed homes in varied configuration. The site mix will be agreed with the housing developer as part of the wider Planning process. It includes a family of housing types predominantly comprising townhouses, terraced and cottage units similar to surrounding neighbourhoods.

Housing typology with mixed heights and detailing
- 1-1.5 Storey
- 2-2.5 Storey
- 2.5-3 Storey

Housing	No	
Anticipated Housing No	110-120	Medium density 25-35 per ha
Housing Mix		The site mix will be agreed with the housing developer as part of the wider Planning process.
Local Convenience Retail	1-3	Small neighbourhood convenience retail supporting local 20min neighbourhood / grocery & local services

Residential Amenity	Perimeter block housing with internal courts offering residential greenspace; bin stores, secure cycle storage and local play with non-adopted facilities under maintenance agreements.
Residential Streets	Combination of Residential Primary / Secondary and Tertiary Streets reflecting NAC Transport Guidance (Roads Development Guide) incorporating shared surfaces with variable width and streetscape detailing.
Garden Space	3-4 bed properties minimum 80m2 2-3 bed properties minimum 60m2 Rear depth garden space 6-9metres
Car & Cycle Parking	NAC Roads Development Guide 2-3 Bed housing 2 allocated car spaces plus 0.25 unallocated or 1 allocated plus 0.65 unallocated Additional: 1 secure cycle stands (Sheffield stands) per property 1 No. hinge top unit per 10 residential units Masterplan Provision 240 parking spaces
Play Space / Seating / Greenspace	1 No Locally Area Play space (informal/formal) (LAP)

2.3

Leisure Related Developments

2.3 Leisure Related Developments

The Harbourside with its industrial port-related past retains a strong mix of uses with most industrial activity now replaced by leisure and tourism use of the harbour and the supporting commercial tourism and hospitality mix of uses alongside significant heritage / cultural activity SMM /HAC / Wasp Studios/ IWSC). The area has been identified within the Ayrshire Growth Deal as having significant capacity for area regeneration and as a project that could support Community Wealth Building, promote new investment and develop as a strong regional economic catalyst.

Investment in local benefits and place-making is also anticipated to drive wider partner investment with local businesses, 3rd sector, and new private sector investments seeking to share and contribute to the growth and success of the Harbourside. Re-investment by existing businesses will create additional local jobs and extend the range and quality of services such as cafes, restaurants, arts and craft retailing and event and excursion activity seeking to capture visitor spend.

North Ayrshire Council has been approached by a number of existing businesses as well as regional companies with ideas to invest in the Harbourside. Early interest has been associated with food and beverage (café /restaurants) and events, but it is anticipated that wider investment from the hospitality sector (hotel investment /travel and tourism accommodation) and leisure operators will be forthcoming.

The masterplan has sought to anticipate and address future needs and to build a strong and sustainable framework that helps direct and focus investment in areas that support the Maritime Mile and strengthen the destination as a special place to visit – throughout the year. The masterplan provides for future leisure related development in the following areas:

- Beach Park Event Space / Arena
- Harbour Master's Office– Mixed Use Tourism/ Leisure
- Harbour Point – Community Hub & Restaurant
- Portland Roundabout Leisure Development

Developments within these sites will be subject to future masterplan developments as projects are developed with wider partners. The masterplan briefs outlined provide an indication of the potential scope and opportunity that leisure investment can make in providing job, services and helping to provide the activity and animation of a vibrant destination.

294
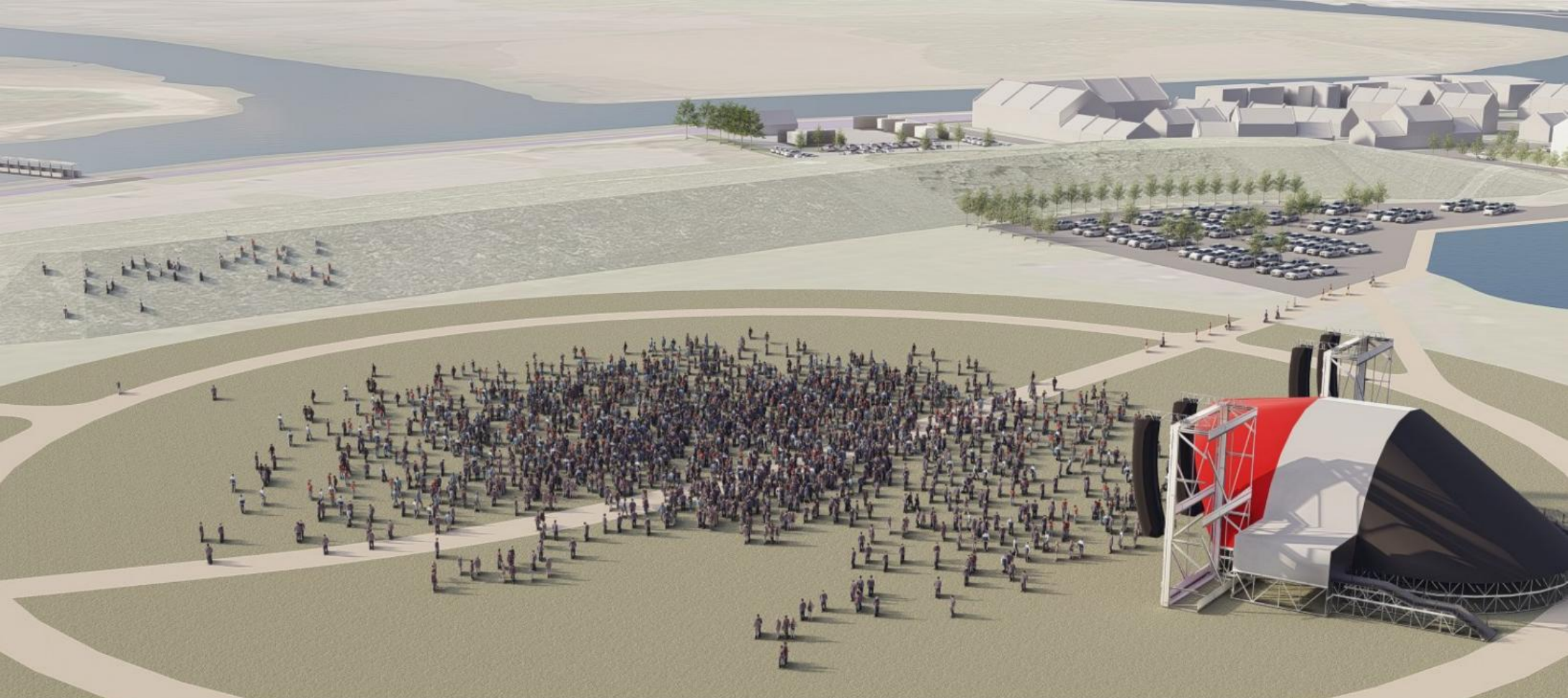
2.3.1
Beach Park Events Space / Arena

2.3.1 Beach Park Event Space / Arena

Events are an important part of animating the place and making Harbourside a destination. Past and more recent events have shown what a good location the Beach Park is for major events and the potential for both the Council and others to celebrate Ayrshire's coast with summer events and activity.

Importantly the Events Arena needs to be an integral part of the Beach Park and to provide an attractive, flexible and multi-user space as part of the park for the vast majority of the time that it is not in use for events.

Creating an Events Arena
The Events Arena is essentially a large flexible space that is designed to reflect the opportunities and lessons learnt from past events (Radio One Roadshow / Cyclocross / Ayrshire Cross Country Championships / Circus Events / Shows / Making Waves) and provide an accessible large event space. Making Waves (2022) was a great success with the intent to look to make such events a regular attraction. The event was well supported and included a series of additional smaller and local events and activities alongside the main concert venue. Building the destination around an Event Arena and with smaller Harbourside events encouraging community participation, free events and water-based activity all add (rather like 'The Fringe') to the destination.

Range of Event Spaces – Local & Regional
The concept therefore is to integrate smaller events spaces within the Maritime Mile (Pilot House Park, Marina Creative Arts Hub, SMM@Gt Harbour) and a major Events Arena within the Beach Park.

The Events Arena will take advantage of the natural topography and the viewpoint of the Blue Billie Bing to shape an amphitheatre space extending down to the Boating Pond with a capacity for 12,000 to 15,000 but typically perhaps being a viable event arena for 2,000-6,000 and capable of holding a 2-3 day festival event. Supporting infrastructure to allow the erection of temporary stands / stages/ lighting etc is provided by the flanking car parks equipped with service connections and providing hardstandings for vehicles and service needs.

The Event Arena offers excellent sightlines and ready accessibility with the benefit of the ability to secure the area whilst retaining Beach Park access. All event infrastructure (stages / lighting / toilets /seating /furniture/ etc) would be temporary and provided by the event organiser. Health and Safety requirements and temporary parking and access arrangements would be assessed on an event-by-event basis. Developing better path connections that would allow remote parking (accessed from Portland Roundabout) and good walk/ cycle routes all add to the Beach Park accessibility and would facilitate the management of major events with reduced potential for impact on local amenity.

North Ayrshire Council has completed an assessment of the opportunities for small local and larger Beach Park events that has informed the masterplan. The report identifies the following event spaces:

Maritime Mile - Waterfront Event Spaces

Location	Scale m2	Potential Capacity & Infrastructure
Puffer Café Entrance Area / Harbour Street	1,000	1000 persons 3 Phase Power Supply Hi Speed Broadband Water & drainage connections Barrier free access / dropped kerbs
Marine & Creative Arts Hub	2,000	2000 persons 3 Phase Power Supply Hi Speed Broadband Water & drainage connections Barrier free access / dropped kerbs
Harbour Master Office Frontage & Wharf	2,500	2500 persons 3 Phase Power Supply x 2 Hi Speed Broadband Water & drainage connections Potential Stepped access Lower Level Road Management /Controls
Pilot House	800	Variable incorp. Pilot House public realm 1000-1500 persons 3 Phase Power Supply Hi Speed Broadband Water & drainage connections Barrier free access / dropped kerbs

Beach Park—Events Arena Space

Location	Scale m2	Potential Capacity & Infrastructure Need
Beach Park Event Arena	20,000	12,000-15,000 persons 3 Phase Power Supply x2 Hi Speed Broadband Water supply & drainage connections Hardstandings for Stage Hardstandings for Services / Support facilities Secure Access / Security

The Event Arena would create a permanent, serviced event space of approximately 20,000m2. The masterplan integrates the space with the development of the Beach Park creating an open grassed area reflecting the area historically used for the recent Making Waves Festival and typical marquee type events, e.g., Irvine Circus. When BBC Radio One Roadshows used the core site the area spilled out onto adjoining areas of the Beach Park.

2.3.2
Harbour Master's Office - Tourism / Leisure / Arts & Crafts

2.3.2 Harbour Master's Office - Tourism / Leisure / Arts & Crafts

The Harbour Masters Office is Category C Listed by Historic Environment Scotland but sits outside the Irvine Harbourside Conservation Area

The building has been vacant and is in a poor state of repair and is on the Historic Environment Scotland 'At Risk' Register. Works to the building(s) including refurbishment or any demolition of outbuildings would require Listed Building Consent.

The Harbour Master's Office has the potential to provide active frontage to the Maritime Mile waterfront, integrate with the Maritime Mile public realm works and enhance the Harbourside setting. Essential repair works should be undertaken sensitively with a conservation architecture approach, retaining the original character of the building.

Further work to advance this project includes:

- Promotion of a mixed-use 'Tourism, Arts & Craft and Visitor Leisure redevelopment
- Initial dialogue Historic Environment Scotland
  - Scope for Amendment/Extension to Harbour Master's Office and change in use
  - Scope of Listing and the assessment of heritage value of ancillary buildings
    - ISAC Shed / Former Lifeboat Building
    - Walls and boundary elements
- Develop the layout reflecting commercial advice on potential scale of units /capacity
  - Mixed Use tourism uses including potentially a mix of uses including arts and crafts , tourism retail, food and beverage uses
  - Other supporting and ancillary activity including heritage and event activity
- Market and seek to establish lead commercial partner interest.

Provision of landscaped open space, including outdoor seating within the rear courtyard and/or a single-storey extension of the building in sympathetic style and materials has been explored with NAC and local tourism /leisure interests. The scale of facility should look to reflect and be complementary to the development of visitor infrastructure along the Maritime
Mile that will seek external delivery partners and currently includes for:

- Puffer Café Upgrade – Café /Restaurant and event space
- Existing Food and Beverage offers along Harbour Street including future investment / expansion and upgrading of facilities to allow growth of existing businesses
- Enhancement and development of the Water Activity Hub at the Ship / HAC Plaza with spill out leisure and visitor activity based around extended food and beverage offers (Marine/ HAC-Duncan's Bar & Bistro / Ship Inn)
- Expansion of Gro-Coffee and the use of the Wharf as café/ event and leisure space
- Development of facilities at Pilot House Point associated with the Beach Services building.

300

2.3.3
Harbour Point: Community Hub & Restaurant

2.3.3 Harbour Point: Community Hub & Restaurant

The Beach Pavilion comprises a single storey building at Harbour Point, set within the dunes behind the beach and adjacent to the Harbour Point car park.

The facility is operated by Coastwatch (3rd Sector Charitable Trust) and provides public toilets, a first aid facility and operational space for Coastwatch. Coastwatch operate a small kiosk/shop selling ice-creams/drinks during summer months. The site is located within the Adopted Local Development Framework (LDP2) SDA 4 (Irvine Harbourside) as part of the Beach Park - Strategic Tourism Asset.

Redeveloping the Beach Pavilion reflects that the building is past its economic useful life and requires replacement to maintain services for the Beach/Beach Park. Coastwatch are currently the operator and have a valued operational role in coastal management, training, coastal safety and community participation. The Beach Pavilion, and Beach car park site occupies the prime coastal site on the Ayrshire coast has been identified as the site with the strongest potential to secure a café/restaurant operator to support the destination and provide opportunity for new investment and support for local community services and activity.

The masterplan envisages development of the Beach Pavilion to provide a new building of high-quality and sustainable design, which creates a multi-use Beach Pavilion Building providing the public toilets and Coastwatch facilities of the existing building as well as providing new space for a contemporary restaurant operator to create a high-quality food & drink offer at the endpoint of the Maritime Mile. The building would provide upgraded public facilities including public services/facilities with a café-restaurant situated above benefitting from views over the beach and Irvine Bay.

Design Masterplanning

- The Beach Pavilion would provide a 2-storey building, with a clear division of use between restaurant at first floor and public/community facilities at ground. At first floor, additional terracing/balcony could be included to the west and south elevations to provide additional space for the restaurant and to extend over the ground floor curtilage providing shelter. It is anticipated that the footprint of the building would be circa 350-375sqm, providing c700-750 sqm total (excluding balcony/terrace).

- The building could be developed through a range of models either in partnership with a developer, operator or advanced as a NAC project with a potential revenue stream from the commercial operator funding the capital cost. A Feasibility Study and Business Case will be required.

- The high-level plan would envisage the Ground Floor being devoted to community uses (potentially Coastwatch / Sub-Aqua Club / Toilets / Changing Facilities / Hospitality Outlet) on a nominal value lease with the Upper Floor offering a circa 150 cover restaurant / cafe with kitchen and outdoor terrace. A feasibility study would finalise the scale/range of facilities advanced in consultation with end user interests.

- The new Beach Pavilion would be positively integrated with works to improve the pedestrian and visitor environment / facilities around Pilot House Park, Beach Park and the routes to/from the beach and its car park. The facility would form the main services building for the Beach Park and Coast.

- Exemplary design and energy performance should form part of the design specification including energy efficiency measures and ensuring the building is fully accessible at all levels for all users.

302

2.3.4
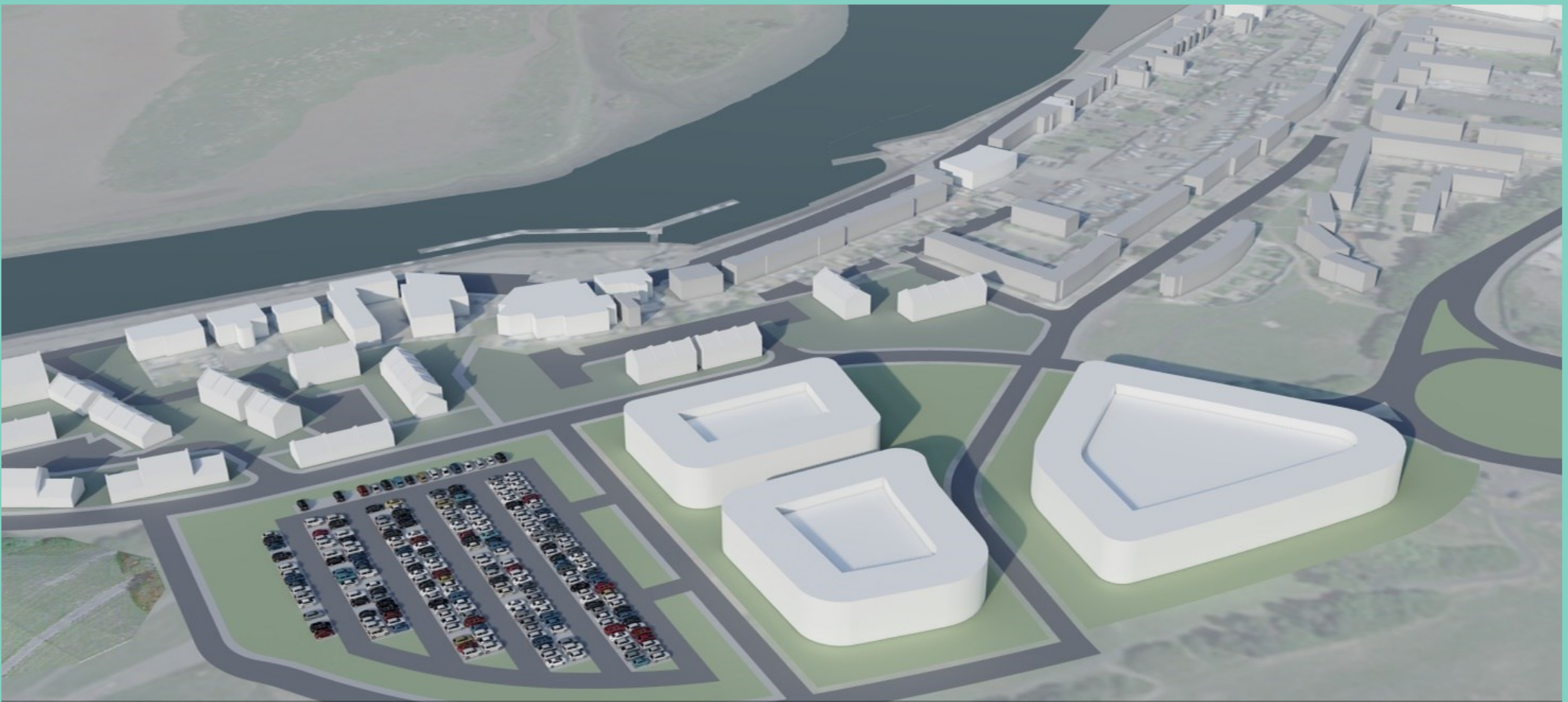
Portland Leisure Development Site

2.3.4   Portland Leisure Development Site (Potential Alternative to Proposed Housing)

The Portland Roundabout /Beach Drive site has been identified as a strong Harbourside location for housing offering good access to the Town Centre and good amenity. The site has excellent connectivity to the Beach Park and could also offer the potential for other leisure (sports / leisure / creche) and related commercial (hotel / conference / gym) type of uses. North Ayrshire Council have not undertaken any marketing or promotion of the site but are aware of potential speculative market interest for leisure uses.

Masterplanning for site redevelopment must be mindful of 'Town Centre First' principle. The Local Development Plan (LDP2) Spatial Strategy promotes investment in North Ayrshire's town centres. The policy supports the social and economic functions of our town centres by adopting a town centre first principle that directs major new development and investment to town centre locations as a priority including supporting town centre living. The LDP2 also looks to prioritise the re-use of brownfield land over greenfield land by supporting a range of strategic developments. The LDP2, alongside this masterplan, supports quality place-making and recognises that any re-development proposals for Beach Drive (former Magnum Site) should be sensitive to the location and context and support the strengthening of the Harbourside as a Liveable/20 Minute Neighbourhood.

Site master planning should therefore look to establish an urban design framework that:

- Requires a bespoke and exemplary design and building specification / energy performance that forms part of a detailed design brief aligned to a more detailed vision and plan the identified uses.
- Encourages development of appropriate scale that protects the amenity of new 1-2 storey developments on the north side of Beach Drive whilst creating a strong terminal view from Gottries Crescent and Portland roundabout.
- Promotes all major traffic access direct from the Portland Roundabout (existing spur) with any high intensity use promoting access and servicing from Marine Drive / Portland Road / Harbour Road) and subject to a full Transport Impact Assessment including regional network capacity (eg. Bellfield Interchange, Kilmarnock).
- Ensures that the development can accommodate all needs (parking /servicing) within the site (including the Beach Drive Car Park) and with no extensions or intrusions into the Beach Park
- Creates strong perimeter and active frontages to Beach Drive and introduces street detailing to Portland Roundabout/ Beach Drive to create a 'Gateway' to the Beach Park and setting a threshold for the 20mph zone
- Addresses through scale/massing and sensitive architectural detailing the Beach Park frontage by close attention to the west and south-west frontages as they overlook the Beach Park to integrate the development within its wider context

304

3.0
Infrastructure & Phasing

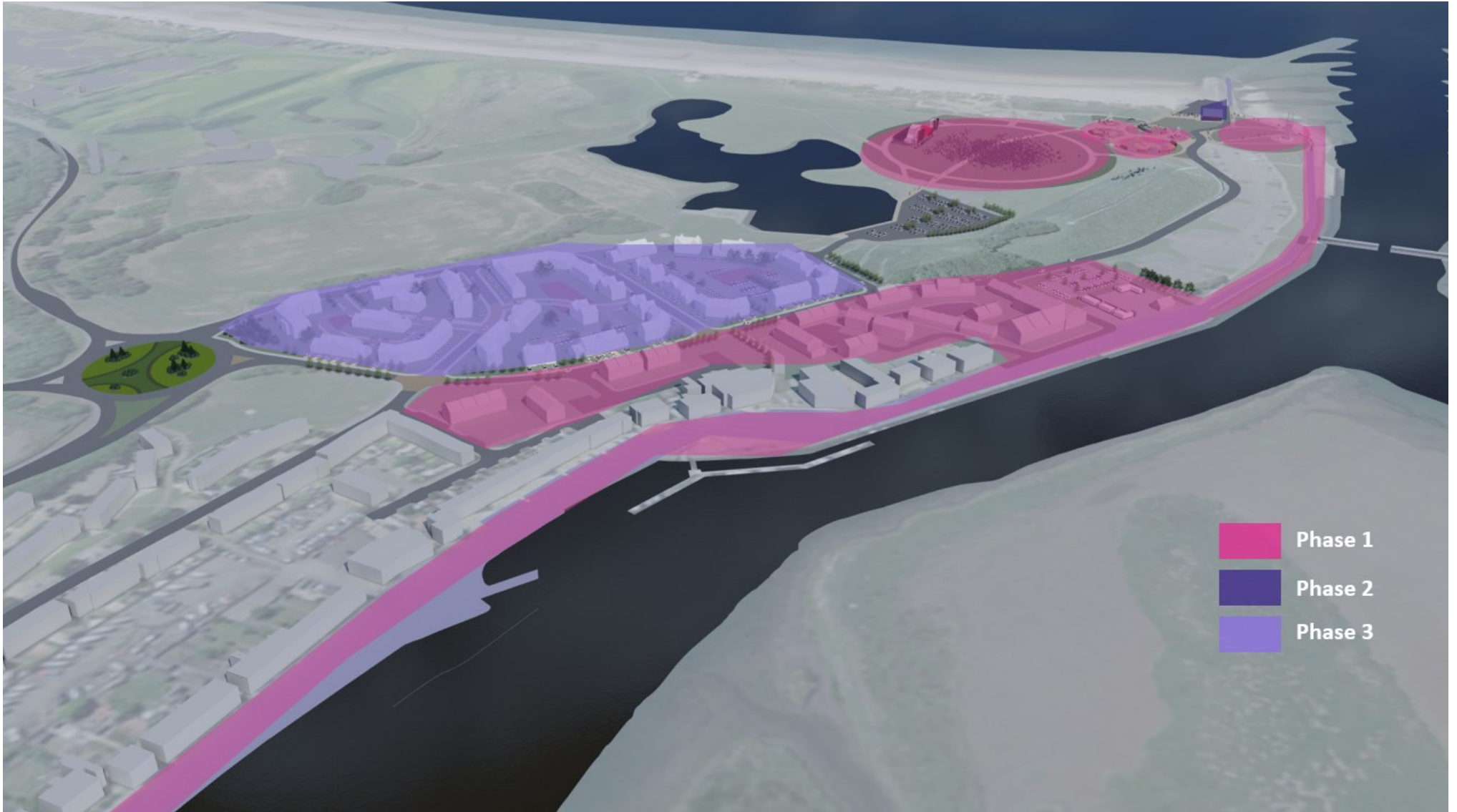# 3.1 Outline Delivery Programme

Great Harbour is a long-term vision that will be delivered over a number of years, across a large area and involving multiple partnerships and stakeholders. Therefore, in addition to outlining the spatial and partnership elements of Great Harbour, the Framework has sought to identify a broad programme and sequence of delivery for the projects that will make up the Destination.

Individual projects have been identified as likely to be delivered in the short, medium, or longer term, depending on their location within Great Harbour, their relative complexity, and the partnership arrangements necessary to deliver them.

The programme is developed with the goal that certain projects (Beach Park Play /Maritime Mile /SMM) should be prioritised and delivered as early phase 'wins' that establish a renewed sense of place and build confidence and positive perceptions around Great Harbour, and to which later development projects will subsequently build on and add to through delivery of housing and other complementary commercial/leisure uses.

Subject to productive discussions with partners and stakeholders, the establishment of necessary Development Agreements and funding, and positive further design development, the earliest core elements of the Great Harbour Framework could be delivered by Q1 2024.

Programme Delivery & Phasing

01 Maritime Mile	Engage	Design Stage	Phase 1 2024-2025	Phase 2 2026-27	Phase 3 2028-2029
o The Maritime Mile Waterfront			(yellow)	(yellow)	
o Coastal Hub	2022 Initial Engagement		(orange)		
o Marine & Creative Arts Hub				(yellow)	
o Maritime Heritage Hub					(yellow)
02 Portland-Beach Drive Housing					
o Portland-Beach Drive Housing					(grey)
(red band)					
03 Leisure Related Developments					
o Beach Park Event Space / Arena Events			(grey)		
o Harbour Master's Office– Mixed Use Tourism & Leisure			(grey)	(grey)	
o Harbour Point – Community Hub & Restaurant				(grey)	(grey)
o Portland Site Leisure Development (Alternative to Housing)					(grey)

Legend:
- (orange) NAC Priority Delivery /Early Action Design & Implementation
- (yellow) NAC AGD Great Harbour Programme
- (grey) Wider Programme Implemented with/by Partners

Phase 1

Phase 2

Phase 3

Strengthening Local Economy

The Great Harbour Programme looks to encourage investment and promote new business and enterprise activity within the Harbourside. A core element of the public realm enhancement and support for neighbourhood development is also to secure additional local demand for goods and services that will ensure local businesses and 3rd sector organisations are more resilient and can extend and become more inclusive within their areas of activity. Additional footfall, dwell time and increased local spend (secured through additional residents / day visitors and regional tourism) will support and sustain small local businesses and commercial and 3rd sector activity.

Community Wealth Building.

Community Wealth Building will utilise the AGD, partner and wider bodies and institutions to coordinate economic activity and ensure investment focusses on developing more resilient, inclusive local economies, with more local employment and a larger and more diverse business base, ensuring that wealth is locally owned and benefits local people. To this end the Great Harbour Programme:

- Builds a programme with clear local benefits and with a focus on local needs.
- Seeks to secure growth for local enterprise (SME's / Micro-Businesses /3rd Sector organisations) and ensure they can participate in commercial/enterprise opportunity.
- Identifies growth opportunities associated with tourism/hospitality/arts/crafts to encourage small business participation.
- Seeks to encourage the establishment of a Community Interest Company (Trust) with support funding to enable local groups (community enterprise/ 3rd sector) to promote events, develop local facilities and support community participation and engagement.

The CWB programme seeks to 'Keep it Local'. The Maritime Mile and Great Harbour Programme will look to support local activity, investment and employment. Procurement and contract provisions will secure community benefits and support local employment. A key element of the programme is around place enhancement and building on the key assets of the site for local residents and visitors. Direct and indirect investment will help to support a stronger local economy. The Council would be keen to see the development of a local business and user group forum to support engagement and highlight areas of opportunity and coordinate investment programmes.

The key areas and initiatives for CWB for the Great Harbour will include:

- **Procurement:** Where we can, we will buy and spend locally and support North Ayrshire businesses to do the same.
- **Employment:** We encourage employers to create fair and meaningful jobs by paying the living wage and developing home-grown talent.
- **Land and Assets:** Working with our communities and businesses, we will use our land and property assets for the common good to support the regeneration of our communities.
- **Financial Power:** We will invest locally and encourage others to do the same.
- **Local Participation / Plural Ownership:** We want the wealth generated in our area to stay in our area so we will support new and existing businesses, including social and community enterprises, cooperatives and employee ownership.

308

3.2 Partnership Delivery

North Ayrshire Council are advancing the Great Harbour Programme as a project within the Ayrshire Growth Deal funded through Scottish Government and North Ayrshire Council. The project forms part of the wider programme within the Ayrshire Growth Deal and has a specific governance and funding approval structure alongside the North Ayrshire Council approvals and consenting requirements. The core programme for delivery is as follows:

Great Harbour	Engagement Advanced	Masterplan Planning	Design Dev	Delivery Programme	Potential Partner
The Maritime Mile Waterfront	�(grey)	�(grey)	▣ (orange)	▣ (yellow)	
Coastal Hub	▢ (grey)	▢ (grey)	▣ (orange)	▣ (orange)	
Marine & Creative Arts Hub	▢ (grey)	▢ (grey)		▣ (yellow)	
Maritime Heritage Hub	▢ (grey)	▢ (grey)	▣ (orange)	▣ (yellow)	
Leverage / Partner Projects					
Active Travel Harbourside Network			▣ (orange)		Sustrans
Portland-Beach Drive Housing	▢ (grey)			▣ (blue)	NAC/ Dev.
Coastal Hub Commercial Café/Restaurant	▢ (grey)			▣ (blue)	TBC
Harbour Master's Office Mixed-Use Tourism/Leisure	▢ (grey)	▢ (grey)		▣ (blue)	TBC
Portland Site Leisure Development	▢ (grey)	▢ (grey)		▣ (blue)	Optional
Other Tourism & Leisure Developments				▣ (blue)	various

Programme	
▣ (orange)	Early Priority for Delivery (Phase 1)
▣ (yellow)	AGD Core Programme (Phase 2)
▣ (blue)	Wider Programme Implemented with/by Partners

The Outline Business Case defined a range of budgets for the programme and projects. These have been further developed alongside the masterplan to define Programme Budgets for all of the component elements.

Priority design elements are now being advanced within the programme budget and will form the structure for completing the Final Business Case (FBC) submissions to the Ayrshire Growth Deal.

A range of partners sharing the same vision for the Harbourside have been engaged from the early stages of development of the proposals. Scottish Maritime Museum main interests lays around the new facility at the riverfront, development of which they will be leading on, and also the wider maritime heritage interpretation relating to the Destination. Crown Estate Scotland are supporting the proposed improvements to the Harbourside and its assets. Sustrans provided funding for feasibility of the enhanced Active Travel infrastructure and potential to develop active travel routes and integrate NCR7 within the Harbourside.
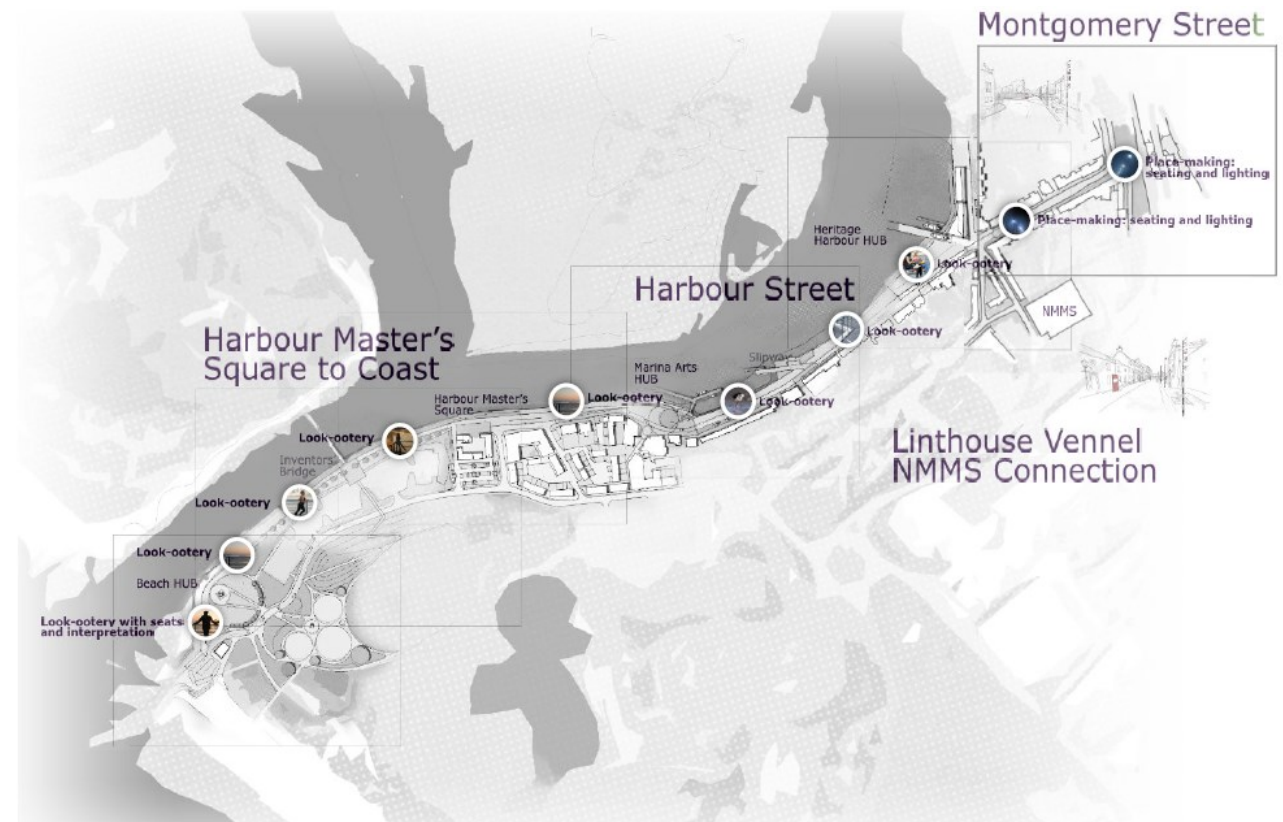
Phase 1 The Maritime Mile Waterfront

310

311

Appendices

313

1. Community Engagement Report

North Ayrshire Council

Great Harbour

Consultation Report

Growth and Investment

May 2023

Masterplan

Background

A public consultation was undertaken in March and April 2023 on proposals for the Great Harbour Masterplan to ensure the development framework and Ayrshire Growth Deal (AGD) investment in the redevelopment of the Irvine Harbourside aligns with local priorities and meets local needs.

The consultation material and methodology were developed with the involvement of local community representatives through a Stakeholder Reference Group.

The views were gathered via online and paper surveys during the public events and displays, and also presentations and walkarounds provided to local groups and stakeholders. A total of 152 responses were submitted. In addition, a dedicated workshop was organised focusing on specific issues around access and activity on water and within open public spaces. Workshops were also carried out with young people and hard to reach groups and will continue throughout the next development phases.

This report outlines the main outcomes and recommendations to be considered and/or implemented during the further development of the proposals. The report should be read in conjunction with the Great Harbour Masterplan which can be viewed at https://northayrshire.community/events/great-harbour-project-irvine/

Next steps

The next phase of development works will see the Coastal Hub designed to technical detail followed by tenders for construction works. Alongside this, the concept for public realm improvements and remaining activity hubs along the harbourside will be developed and presented for public consultation in due course.

> *North Ayrshire Council would like to thank all respondents for the time taken to provide their views and for the constructive feedback provided.*

1

Feedback summary

The majority of responses were supportive of all the varied proposals recognising the opportunity for the regeneration of the harbourside and included very constructive advice reflective of local context. There was overall support to improve the public realm and access along the Harbourside and the activity hubs proposed.

A level of confusion was noted on distinction between the proposals to be delivered with the investment from AGD and those proposals outside the allocation of AGD funds that provide a future development framework to supplement the Local Development Plan.

The site which attracted the most balanced views regarding options was the Waterfront site at Beach Drive. Options included leaving the car park area as existing or developing the site for housing at some time in the future and subject to funding being available. The future development options at the Portland site received more support.

The main concerns from the feedback focused on:

- sufficient provision of public amenities, including parking and toilets;
- adequate traffic management recognising access needs of vehicles towing watercrafts and improving perceived safety for non-vehicle users;
- adequate maintenance;
- adequate waste management and introducing recycling; and
- protection of place assets, including heritage and cultural assets.

Some respondents also expressed a level of disbelief that all of the proposals could be delivered.

About You

Your postcode * Word cloud ⚙

Show table

Answered: 152 Skipped: 0

Your relationship to the area * Column Bar
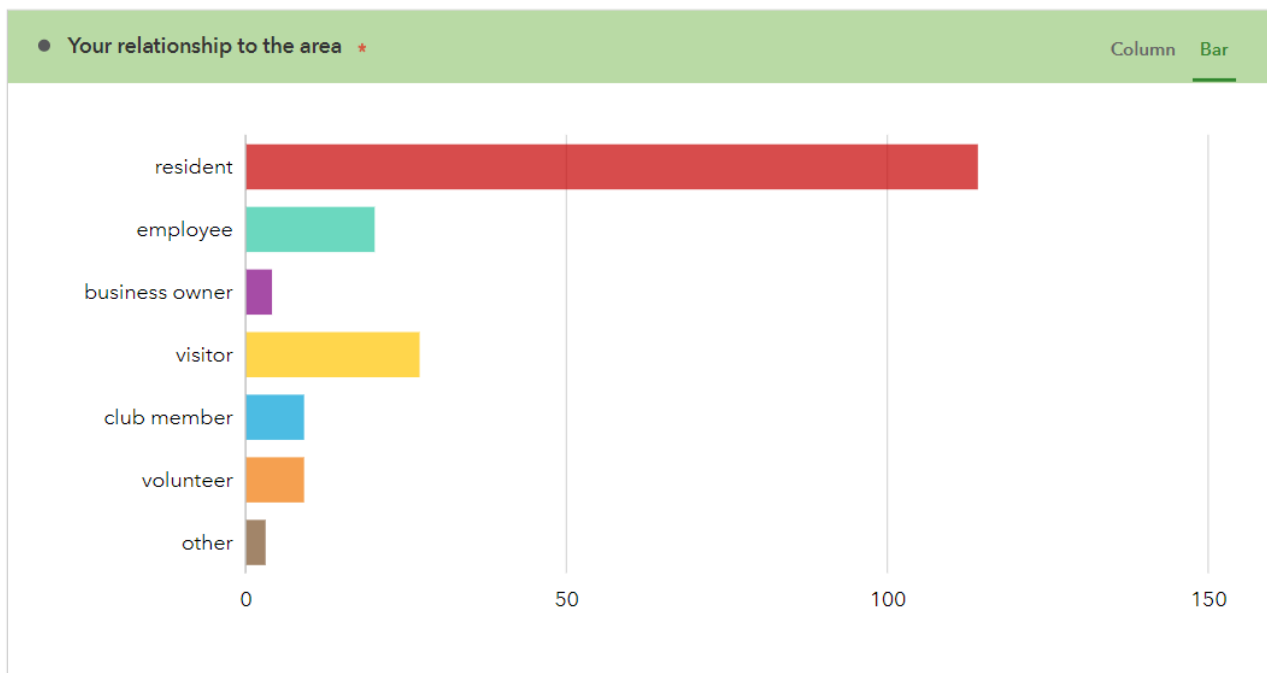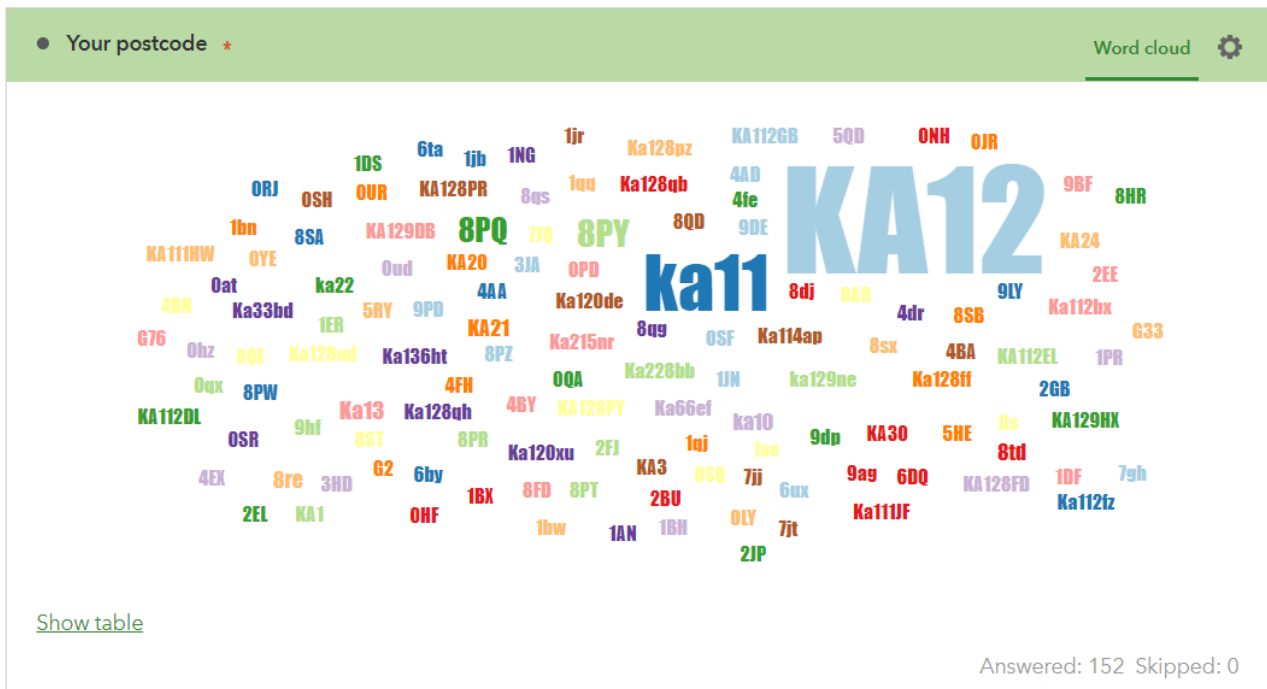
Waterfront - housing development option

What are your thoughts?

neutral positive negative
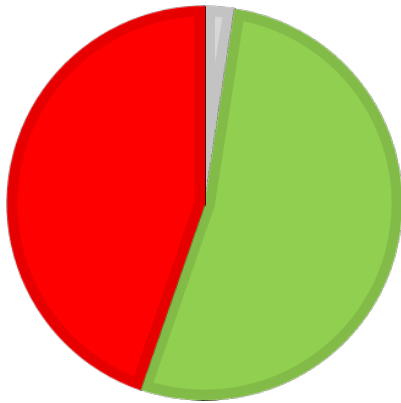
Would colourful frontages (like Tobermory) be appropriate?

23% 52%

- yes
- no
- other
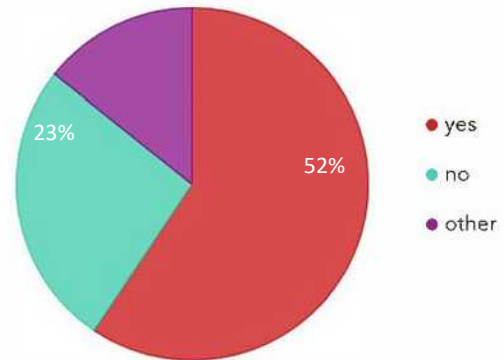
If housing is permitted would full replacement of parking be required?

Column Bar Pie Map

- yes
- no
- other
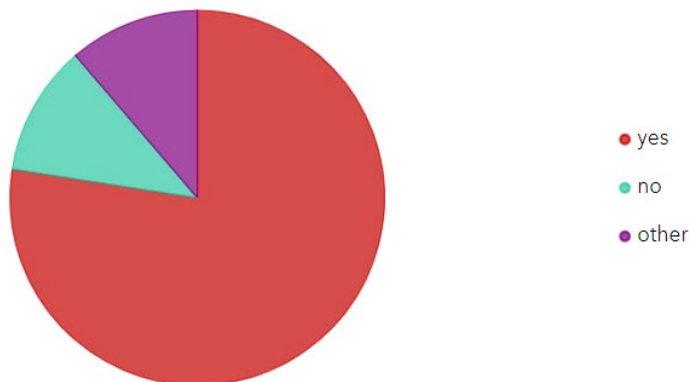
Main comments

The views on principal of allowing more housing offer with residential parking provision at this location were very balanced. Some concerns were raised over loss of view and pressure on existing services if the site was developed for housing. Most of those opposing this option stated loss of parking for current and future use of the area as a tourism destination.

Recommendation

The masterplan will not promote this site for housing in near future. Instead, we'll carry out some works to maximise the capacity of the existing carpark. This will not affect the existing Local Development Plan allocation.

The masterplan already highlights the need to replace and extend, when possible, any sacrificed public parking provision within vicinity of the area but at the less prominent sites, which were identified.

Portland – housing development option

What are your thoughts?

neutral   positive   negative

Are there other uses for the site?

no
yes

Should this housing be similar to the recent Council development?

yes
no
other

Should the design be similar with the mixed housing meeting local needs?

yes
no
other
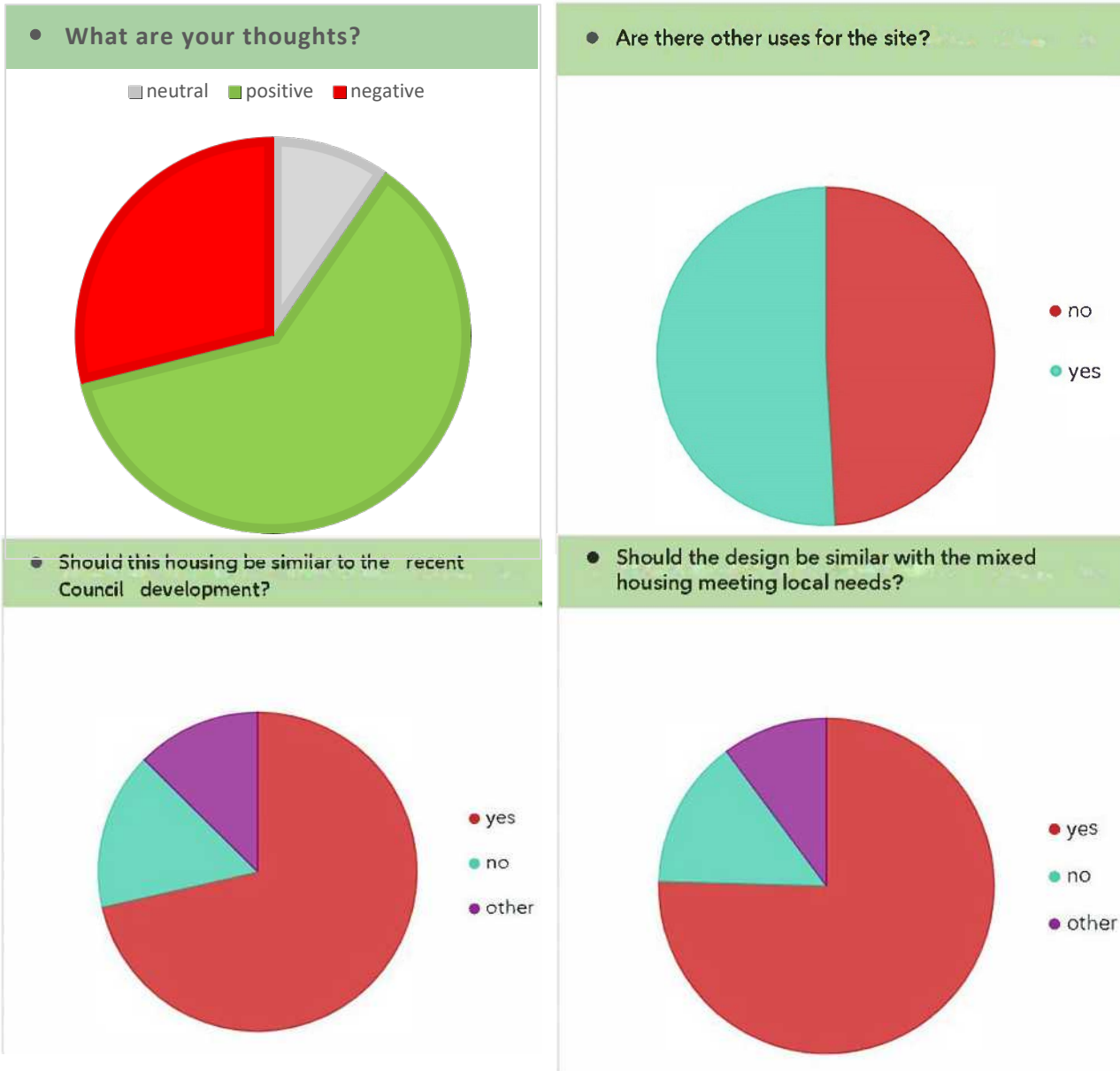
Main comments

The majority of respondents had positive views on allowing more housing offer with residential parking provision at this location while stressing the need to ensure quality over numbers. The current Council development near this location was positively viewed as a template for the proposals. Some concerns were raised over pressure on existing services and traffic along Beach Dr. Most of those opposing this option stated loss of open green space and close vicinity to the proposed events arena.

Recommendation

The development proposal on this site is an option that supplements the current Local Development Plan. The feedback will be reflected within the masterplan and will be proposed to become design guidance for the future development opportunities on this site. The site is classified as a brownfield and Local Development Plan supports its development as a part of Strategic Development Area. The masterplan also addresses the traffic impact by changing the type of the road to residential with associated calming measures.

Portland - leisure development option

What are your thoughts?

neutral   positive   negative
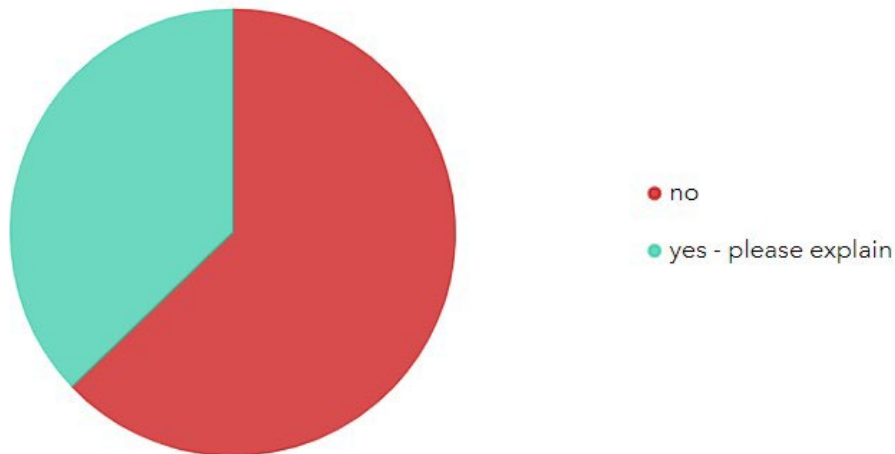

21%   22%   57%
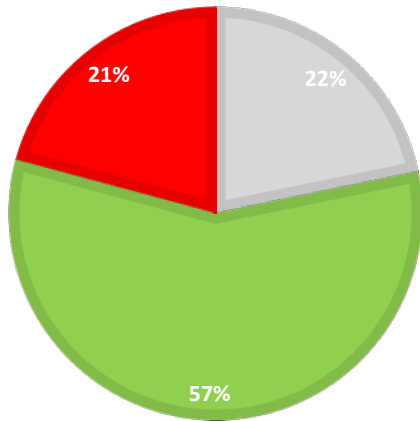
Would the development of this type & character add to the qualities of harbourside?

• yes
• no
• other
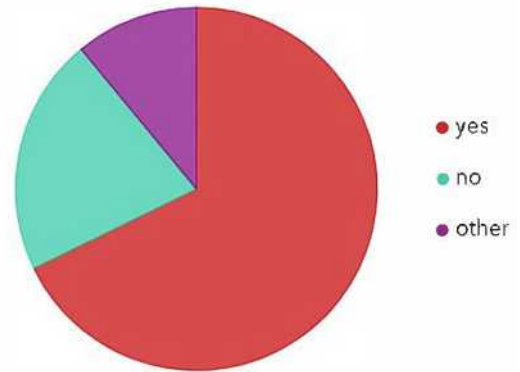
Are there other uses for the site that are more appropriate?

Column   Bar   Pie   Map

• no
• yes - please explain

Main comments

The majority of respondents had positive views on allowing a leisure offer with associated parking provision at this location, while views were split on the potential type of facilities. Most of those opposing this option stated loss of open green space.

Recommendation

The feedback will be reflected within the masterplan to guide future development proposals on this site. Please note that this site is identified for development by the Local Development Plan but there's no investment proposed for development from AGD.

The site is classified as a brownfield and Local Development Plan supports its development as a part of Strategic Development Area. The masterplan also recognises the potential traffic impact by adequate street design with embedded traffic calming measures.

Maritime Mile Waterfront

How can we make the Waterfront a great space for events and local activity? Word cloud

Are safe walking and good seating areas and lighting key requirements?

- yes
- other
- no
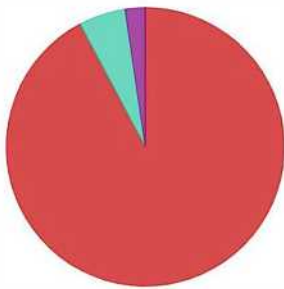
What facilities would you like to see? Word cloud

Main comments

Decluttered promenade designed sympathetically to the local context and recognising its historic importance celebrated with public art. Adequate wayfinding and signage from the Town Centre and the Irvine Train Station. Provision of public amenities including toilets, seating/shelters and outdoor cafés taking advantage of the views. Improved paving and access facilitating inclusive space use and encouraging walking, cycling and wheeling, supported by good lighting. Improved access to the water to facilitate more water-based activity, including the timber wharf repairs for use as public space and mooring. Better traffic management and parking optimisation to improve safety for users at strategic points also for users towing boats and similar crafts. Provision of multi-purpose public spaces with events infrastructure and adequate street furniture. Long-term maintenance and waste management.

Recommendation

The masterplan already recognises and provides recommendations on the majority of the aspects raised by the respondents, which will be considered further during development of the public realm improvements. In addition, the Council is working with Sustrans to explore the potential for further improvements to active travel provision and improved accessibility along the Harbourside and connectivity with the Beach Park. The maintenance plan will be created following the construction works to aid Council services in future maintenance of the area and the associated budgetary requirements will be highlighted to the relevant services. We will continue to work with all relevant Council services to plan appropriate levels of maintenance, waste management and enforcement.

● Are there any other activities we should encourage on the waterfront?
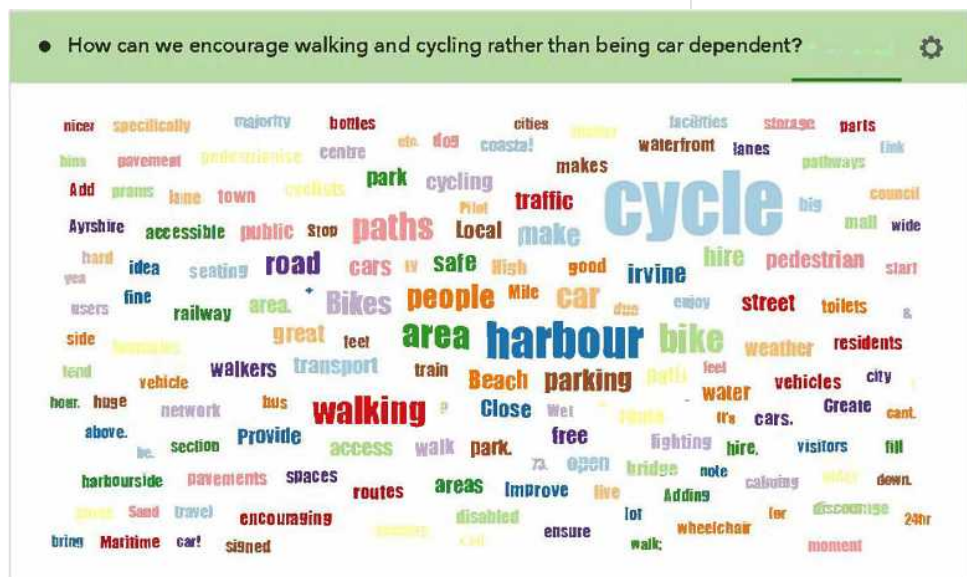
Word cloud ⚙
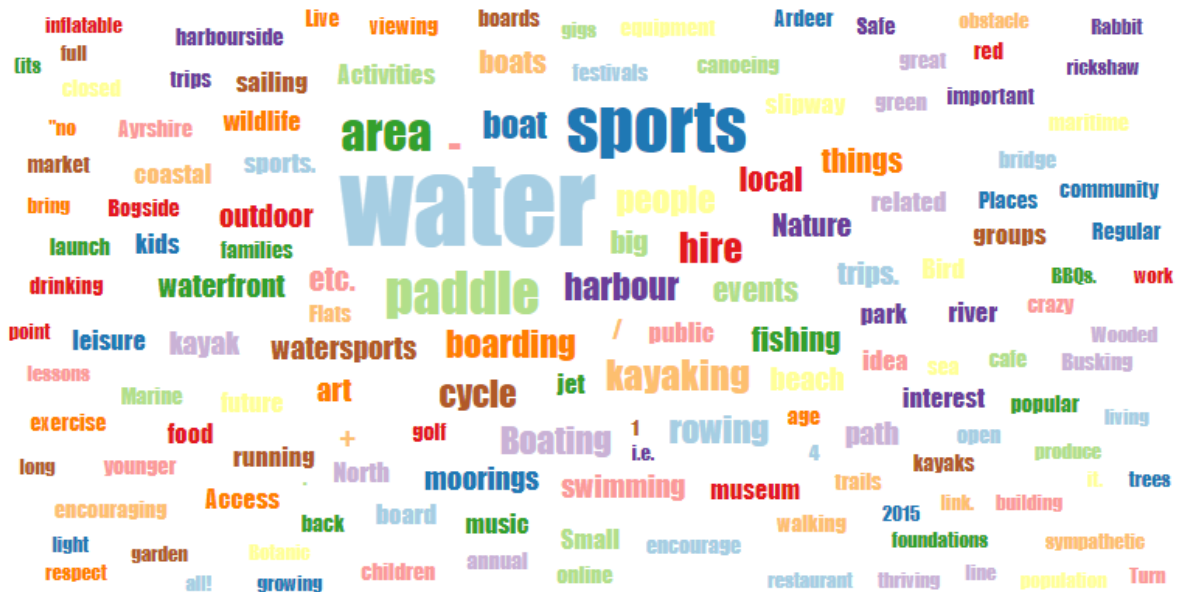
Main comments

Water based activity, like water sports and leisure, were the most common activities suggested in relation to more use by local clubs and groups but also with respect to commercial provision, like taster sessions, regular lessons, equipment hire and boat trips. Other activities included nature watching, fishing, art projects etc. More regular events in the area were also mentioned, like games, boat races, runs, themed walks, activities for children, art exhibitions, music events and busking, street markets. There was a general safety concern raised over access for jet skis, which was viewed negatively as a conflict to other water uses and the rich wildlife.

Recommendation

The masterplan already recognises and provides recommendations on some points raised by the respondents, which will be considered further along with all the feedback at the next development phases. In addition, the Council is working with the local groups, clubs and providers with interest in water-based and outdoor activity to identify opportunities and barriers for increased activity and provision.

The Council is also developing a programme of activities for the Harbourside to enhance and supplement the existing offer in the area, with the first large scale music festival, Making Waves, delivered successfully in summer 2022.

We're also looking into options regarding the administration of the public slipway and will work with the Irvine Harbour Authority on this.

8

323

What would make the area more accessible for all? — Word cloud

How can we encourage walking and cycling rather than being car dependent?

Main comments

Active travel improvements with repaired paving and levelled crossings to key amenities supported by good lighting. Provision of stopovers/points of interest supporting less able users. Bike hire, e-bike charging points and bike parks along the Harbourside. Better public transport provision and links. Adequate wayfinding and signage from the Town Centre and Irvine Train Station. Provision of public amenities including toilets, seating/shelters. Better traffic management to improve safety for users and address congestion at problematic points also for users towing boats and similar crafts. Parking optimisation along the prime promenade prioritising less able users. Long-term maintenance and waste management.

Recommendation

The masterplan already recognises and provides recommendations on the majority of the aspects raised by the respondents, which will be considered further along with all the feedback at the next development phases. In addition, the Council is working with Sustrans to explore the potential for further improvements to active travel provision and improved accessibility along the Harbourside and connectivity with the Beach Park.

We will continue to work with all relevant Council services to plan appropriate levels of maintenance, waste management and enforcement, when necessary.
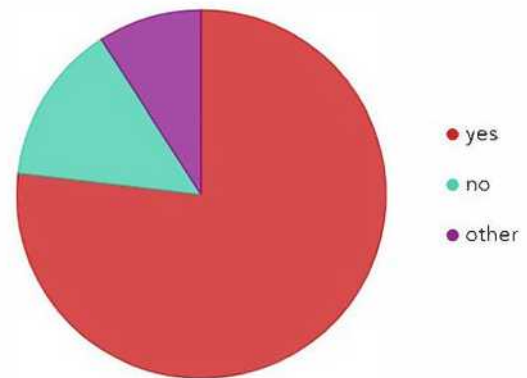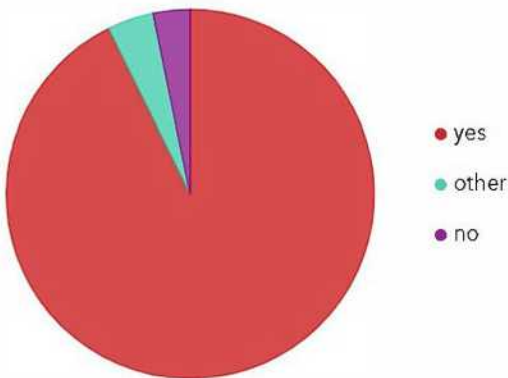
Coastal Hub

What facilities are important for this hub in addition to play? Word cloud ⚙

Should the play area include traditional swings and adventure play?

- yes
- other
- no

Should the play park be enclosed?

- yes
- no
- other

How can play park meet needs of all ages? Word cloud ⚙

Recommendation

To be considered and implemented during the next design phases.

Marine & Creative Arts Hub

● How can the plaza be made into a vibrant local space?   Word cloud ⚙

● Is a small event space, adjacent to the HAC, a good idea in this area?

- yes
- no
- other

● Should we encourage more street-side/plaza outdoor cafe space?

- yes
- no
- other

Main comments

More events, street entertainment, outdoor cafes. Incorporate seating/shelter supported by lighting into a flexible open public space. Introduce public art and colour appropriate to local context. Restore heritage assets. Better traffic management and calming to improve safety for users and address congestion at problematic points. Parking optimisation along the prime promenade to free more space for people over vehicles. Long-term maintenance and waste management.

Recommendation

The masterplan already recognises and provides recommendations on the majority of the aspects raised by the respondents, which will be considered further along with all the feedback at the next phase related to public realm improvements.

The Council is also developing a programme of activities for the Harbourside to enhance and supplement the existing offer in the area, with the first large scale music festival, Making Waves, delivered successfully in summer 2022. We will continue to work with all relevant Council services to plan appropriate levels of maintenance, waste management and enforcement, when necessary.

How can we better use the Upper Wharf?

Word cloud ⚙

Is better access to the slipway required?

- yes
- no
- other
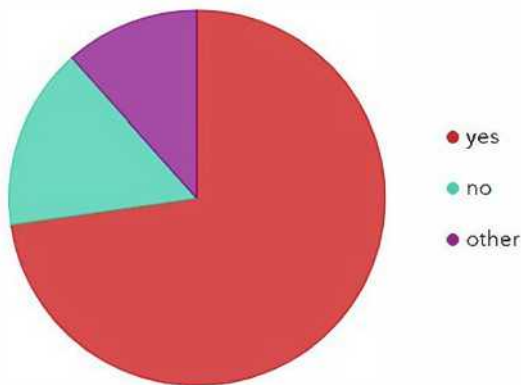
Main comments

Wharf repaired and brought back to use as extension to public realm with seating/shelter and potential for outdoor café spill-out. Potential to be used for mooring vessels, like boat trips offer, or to be utilised by visiting vessels for berthing and landing, although considerations would have to be given to reinstatement of the visitor craft access and maintenance to the navigation aids and dredging. Lowering the wharf for water access was also mentioned.

Recommendation

The masterplan already recognises and provides recommendations on some points raised by the respondents, which will be considered further along with all the feedback at the next development phases. In addition, the Council is working with the local groups, clubs and providers with interest in water-based and outdoor activity to identify opportunities and barriers for increased activity and provision. We're also looking into options for administration of the public slipway and will also continue to engage with the Irvine harbour authority on this.

Maritime Heritage Hub

Will the upgrading of the Scottish Maritime Museum site enhance the waterfront?

- yes
- no
- other
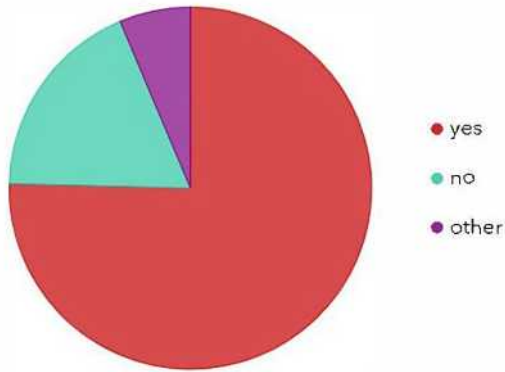
Would the Gallery Arts & Community Space add to the waterfront appeal?

- yes
- no
- other
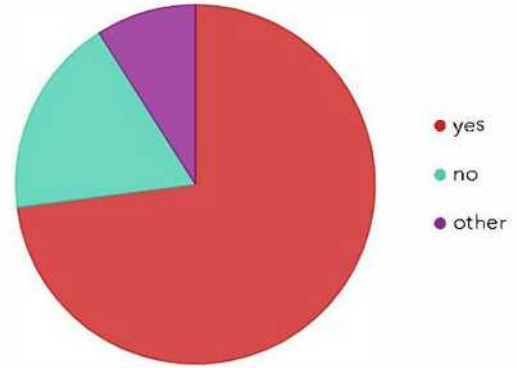
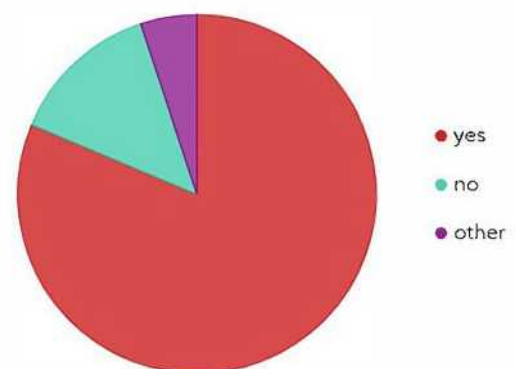**Will the SMM new Gallery & Education space support more waterfront activity?**

- yes
- no
- other
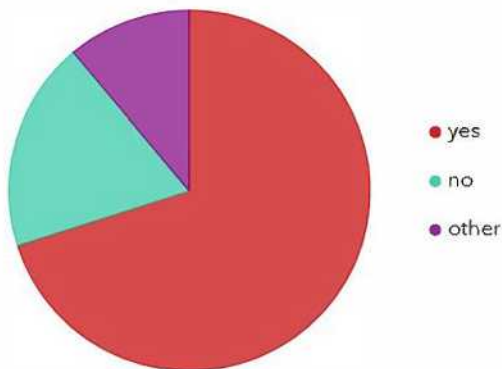
Should the Puffer's Café be upgraded to offer extended provision as a restaurant?

- yes
- no
- other
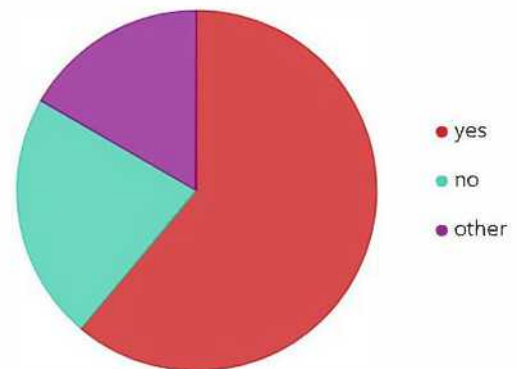
Should the retail/café and toilets be retained?

- yes
- other
- no
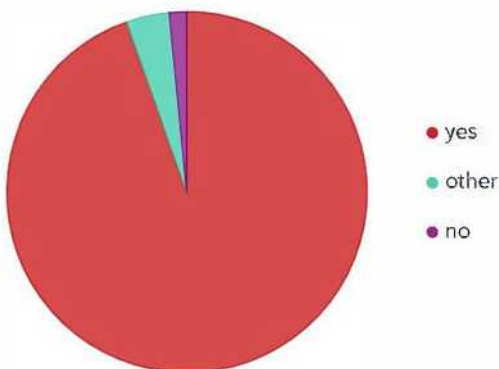
Should the community space be included?

- yes
- no
- other

Maritime Heritage Hub

Recommendation

To be considered and implemented during the next design phases.

Beach Park Events Arena

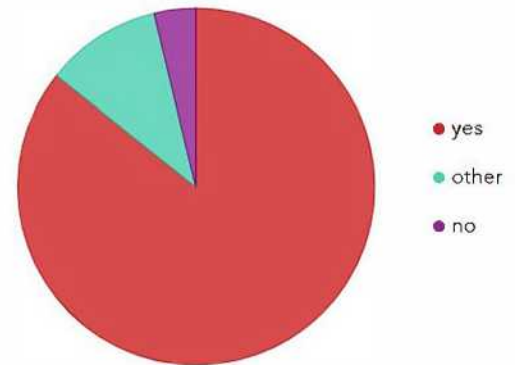Do you think the Beach Park as a major events space works well?
- yes
- no
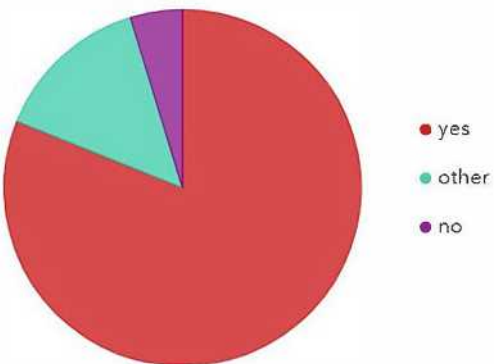- other
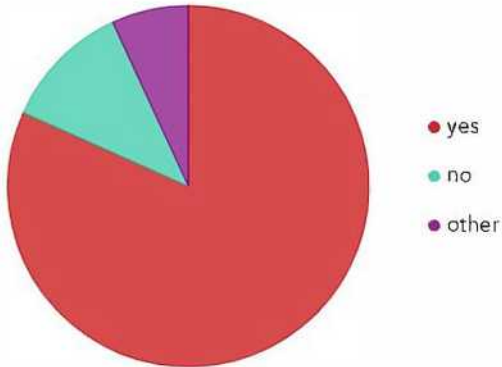
Should the Beach Park provide for a major event space?
- yes
- other
- no
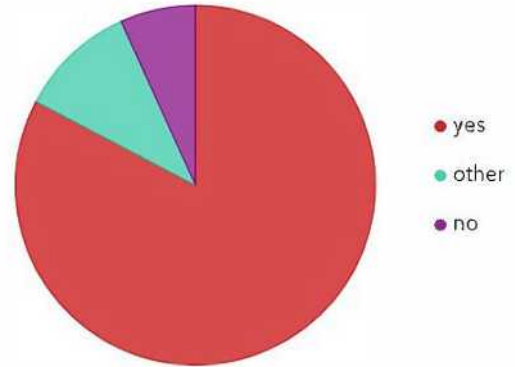
Is the events space in the right location?
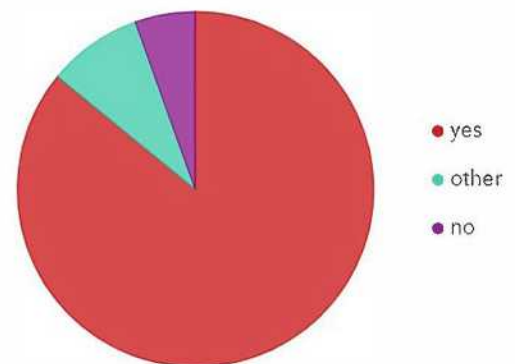- yes
- no
- other
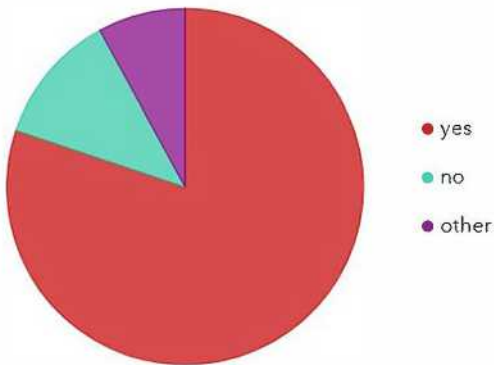
Is it important this is complemented with toilets and parking?
- yes
- other
- no

Do you think 'Making Waves' event was good for the Harbourside/Irvine?
- yes
- other
- no

Should this or something similar be a regular event?
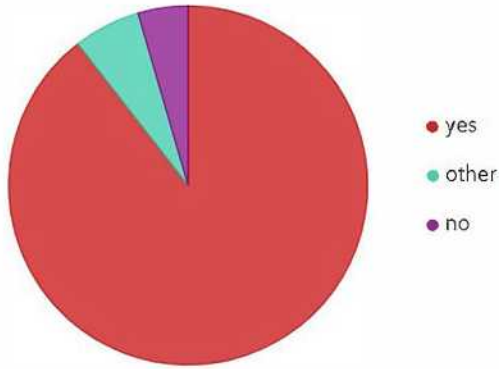- yes
- other
- no

Recommendation

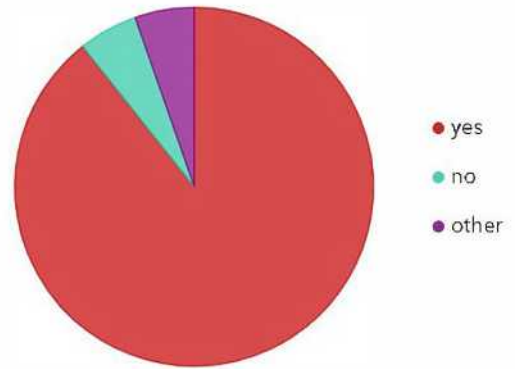To be considered and implemented during the next design phases.

14

Former Harbour Master's Office

Should the Harbour Master's Office be restored?

- yes
- other
- no

Could the Harbour Master's Office be a new attraction for the waterfront?

- yes
- no
- other

What would be a good use for this building?   Word cloud ⚙

Would a food/ craft outlet be a good idea?

- both
- food outlet
- craft outlet
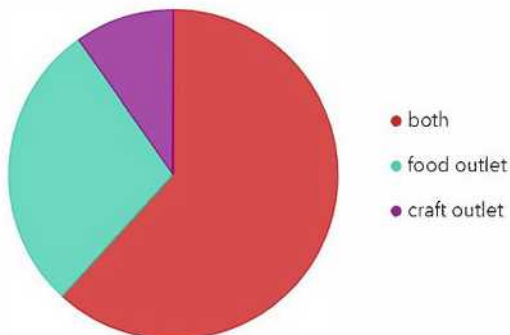
Would an additional car park to rear work?

- yes
- no
- other
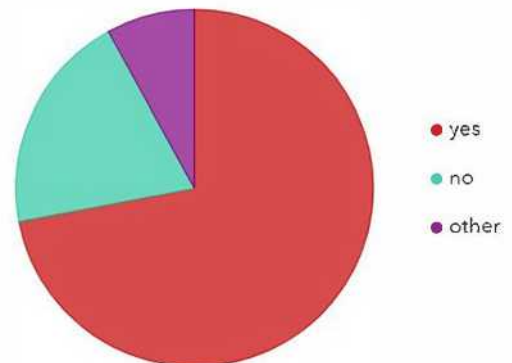
What other issues or needs do we need to consider?   Word cloud ⚙

Main comments

Potential extension sympathetic to the building as an important heritage asset, with provision of outdoor seating. Food outlet enhancing current offer in the area and space for seasonal pop-up street food. Community enterprise to be considered. Re-location of the parking from the front to remove noise and CO_2 pollution and open the area up for public use taking advantage of the views over the river. Long-term maintenance and waste management. Some concerns over loss of open green space to the rear for parking were raised.
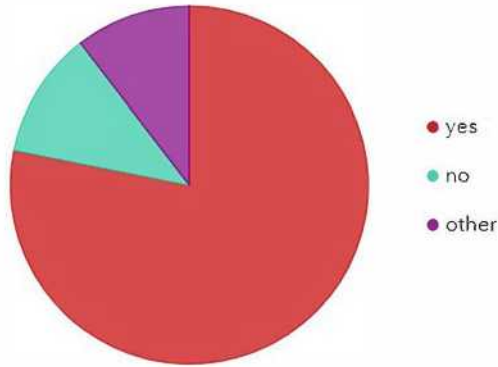
Recommendation

The masterplan already recognises and provides recommendations on some points raised by the respondents, which will be considered further along with all the feedback at the next development phases. Since the site is classified a vacant and derelict land, Local Development Plan supports its development. We will continue to work with all relevant Council services to plan appropriate levels of maintenance, waste management and enforcement, when necessary.

Harbour Point facility

Should the Beach Pavilion be replaced by a new facility?

- yes
- no
- other

Is this the right location for a new restaurant/cafe?

- yes
- no
- other

What uses would need to go into this building?

Word cloud ⚙

Would ground floor community facilities & first floor restaurant/cafe work?

- yes
- no
- other

Recommendation

To be considered and implemented during the next design phases.

● How can beach access and safety be improved?   Word cloud ⚙

Main comments

Anti-social behaviour and associated safety concerns with requests for more lifeguards and wardens, police presence in summer and also CCTV provision and lockers/storage. Disabled/wheelchair and buggy access to the beach, like ramps and boardwalks, with a potential of rental of beach 'buggies'. There was a general safety concern raised over access for jet skis, which was viewed negatively as a conflict to other water users. Better safety information. Waste management adequate to the demand.

Recommendation

To be considered and implemented during the next design phases, although very limited intervention could be implemented in relation to dune erosion, which is a natural and unavoidable process. The Council is working with Sustrans to explore the potential for improved and inclusive beach access. We will continue to work with all relevant Council services to plan appropriate levels of maintenance, waste management and enforcement, when necessary. We will also continue working with the Police and other relevant services.
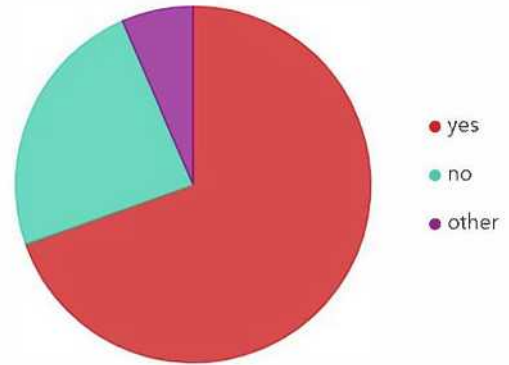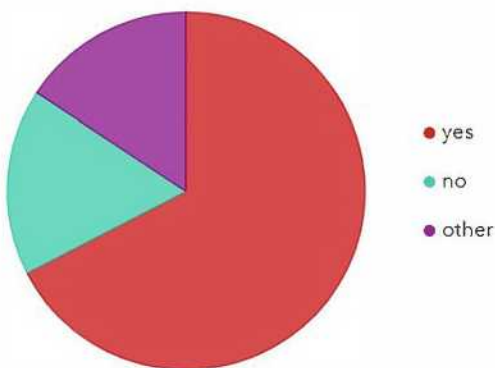
Any additional comments — Word cloud ⚙

Main comments & recommendations

Potential for transformation and an economic boost encouraging private investment. Need to protect natural heritage and wildlife and promote as a visitor attraction. Need to ensure public amenities, including toilets along the Harbourside. Concerns over loss of open green space to development within the Beach Park. Concerns of overdevelopment of the area and sustainability of the proposals. Concerns over proposed Scottish Maritime Museum gallery extension affecting views for some residents at Dublin Quay. Need to ensure the unique character of the place, with a unique experience and with a focus on local built and natural heritage.

All feedback and concerns will be considered during the next development phases facilitating statutory consultation process, if required, and improvements will be implemented where possible and appropriate. Any proposals, through AGD investment or future development frameworks will align with the Local Development Plan.

Anti-social behaviour in summer at the beach and the Beach Park is a conflict for families with small children. Better traffic management, maintenance and waste management.

We will continue to work with all relevant Council services to plan appropriate levels of maintenance, waste management and enforcement, when necessary. We will also continue working with the Police and other relevant services.

Recognition of health and wellbeing benefits relating to the Beach Park, coast and riverside. Treatment of the Boating Pond and re-introducing its use. Re-introduce more activity, previously lost, at the Beach Park and at the river.

We will continue to work with all relevant Council services and also with local clubs, community groups and providers to explore the full potential for such provision.

More activity on the river including facilities for boat owners and visitors, which would require dredging and navigation signalling. Big Idea potential for a visitor attraction or other. Opening of the Inventors Bridge allowing public access to the Ardeer Peninsula. Provision of camping/caravan facilities. Ayrshire Mental Works site should be developed. Improved public transport.

While these matters do not fall under Council's authority or ownership, we will continue to engage with relevant parties to explore the potential for co-operation.

19

334

Main comments & recommendations

Making Waves and more events for cultural boost and visitor attraction.

The Council will develop a programme of events and activities for the Harbourside to enhance and supplement the existing offer in the area, including the Making Waves festival.

Suggested relocation of AGD investment to other projects/areas.

The level of misconception was present in relation to the funding allocation under Ayrshire Growth Deal. This funding is designated by the Scottish Government specifically for the Great Harbour regeneration project with the investment into the Maritime Mile proposals, as consulted and cannot be utilised for any other projects/areas.

Connectivity and better public transport provision. Sufficient allowance for disabled parking and inclusive accessibility of the beach and key areas/attractions.

While the better accessibility for all users is considered within the masterplan and will be reflected in the next design phases, the public transport provision is demand driven. We will continue to engage with the operators to improve the provision in the area.

2. Residential Design Guide

Design Guide: Streets

No. of Dwellings	Not Restricted
Footway	Min. 2m (both sides), raised crossovers at Junctions
Cycleway	On Street, keep priorities at Junctions
Carriageway	6m-9m (including on street cycleway)
Speed Limit	20mph Zone
Target Speed	20mph
Road Marking	Min. statutory road markings, no central lines (details to be agreed
Min. Centre Line Radii	75m
Min. Swept Path Requirement	Bus / Refuse Vehicles
Traffic Calming	Street features at approx. 60m-80m, including place making junction treatments and carriageway narrowing
Verge	Varies
Street Trees	As appropriate – supports traffic calming at Junctions / Internal Courts
On Street Parking	Unallocated formal parking bays, kerb build out, parallel parking and on one-side of street parking only.
Junction	To be treated as main traffic calming feature
Junction Spacing	40m on same side, 20m on opposite side
Junction Radii	10.5m (bus turning corners) / 6m others
Private Strip	Min 2m
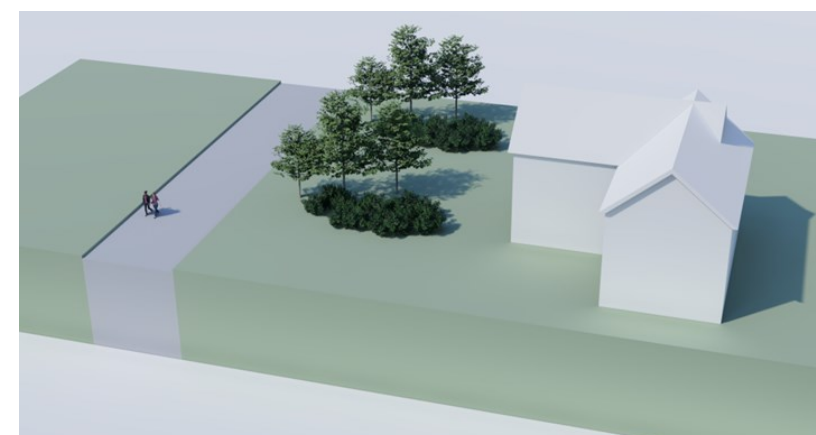
Landscape screen

- Solid landscape edge to Home Zone
- Landscape design to combine visual barrier with habitat enhancement
- Landscape design in native or long introduced species to build on existing assets
- Treatment to contribute to variety as part of Green Network

Regular Tree Grid in Garden Spaces

Building Frontage

Strip of Ecological Planting — Access Road

General Access Road: General access residential roads will provide local access to housing areas.

The main features of this road will be:
- Variable plot width depending on housing density
- Regular landscape grid where possible single
- Speed limit and traffic calming for 20mph

Building frontage and landscape filter:
- Parallel access route
- No direct vehicular access
- Filtered views in housing areas
- Road has minor access status (retaining access to existing buildings only) and becomes a pedestrian route along a positive Green Belt boundary

339

Design Guide: Housing Layouts

Housing Layout 1: Urban Terraces

Appearance

Description

Contemporary urban terraces defining greenspace and streets, developing strong enclosure in 2-3 storey units creating 2-4 bed mixed units including duplex homes. Predominantly town houses but may include a mix of, villa apartments, large duplexes and flats.

Housing Layout 2: Waterfront Townhouses

Appearance

Description

Contemporary urban townhouses framing the waterfront establishing typically medium-larger 3-4 bed family homes. Terraced with buildings defining street /public realm/internal courts with varied height, façade treatments, colour and roofline variation. End units and building returns to allow 3 levels with architectural detailing reflecting visual prominence. Buildings incorporate consistent presentation of windows, doors establishing simple rhythm. Front gardens typically narrow to maximum 2m. fronting public realm.

Housing Layout 3: Detached and Semi-Detached

Appearance

Description

Detached and semi-detached units fronting traffic calmed streets with variable demise lines and frontages creating 3-4 bed family homes. Character secured by introducing variability in units (2.5 storey dormers); materials and colour treatments (render treatments);and frontage detailing.

Housing Layout 4: Specials

Appearance

Description

The housing typology positively supports bespoke housing treatments at site gateways, corner units and to add variety. Indicative locations are provided within the masterplan. Housing choice and variability in layouts and detailing are central to 'The Harbourside' and offering a special quality of place in keeping with the architectural quality of earlier phases of development. The layouts delivered by IBDC and more recently by NAC Housing (Harbour Drive) illustrate the pattern, variability and close integration of scale required for the Harbourside.

Design Guide: Boundary Treatments

Boundary Treatment 1: Metal Railings

Description

Developing strong frontages with front garden setbacks will require consistent boundary treatments within neighbourhoods with metal railings and metal railings on brick/stone plinths supported. Railings shall be galvanised steel and finished micaceous oxide paint. Gates and secondary detailing shall be consistent with all external metalwork (balconies) addressed in the same manner. Typically railings shall be 900-1100mm high. Details that develop a 'family' of design and consistent with local references and benchmarking are likely to be supported.
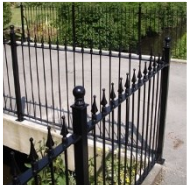
Boundary Treatment 2: Hedges

Appearance

Description

Hedging to courtyard and internal courts shall be supported and defined with metal post and wire estate style fencing finished in powder coated black or white with double staggered hedging within the line of fencing. Hedges shall be consistent using predominantly native species (Beech - Fagus sylvatica; Hornbeam - Carpinus betulus; Hawthorn - Crategus monogyna.

Boundary Treatment 3: Timber Fencing

Appearance

Description

Timber detailing shall be to internal courts only. Contemporary timber external detailing using hardwood and treated softwood materials from sustainable sources. Softwoods shall be stained to provide a consistent neighbourhood colour palette. Gates and secondary detailing (bin stores/ cycle stores/ external building timber) shall be consistently treated.

341

Design Guide: Materials Palette - Carriageways

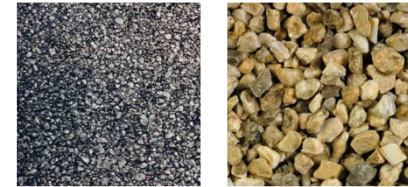**Material Application:** Carriageway surfacing (Main)

Appearance

Material Description
· Asphalt - Black
· Stone Chips – Light Buff Stone (10-14mm)
· Construction to NAC Transportation approval

Material Application: Carriageway surfacing (rumble strips, deterrent surfacing and vehicle overrun)

Appearance

Material Description
· Tumbled silver grey concrete or traditional stone setts
· 100mm depth x 100x150 (+-10mm)
· Granite effect setts laid perpendicular to roadside kerb
· Light grey tones with granite aggregate

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Material Application: Carriageway surfacing (pedestrian crossing & shared space area)

Appearance

Material Description
· Concrete sett paving such as 'Tegula' or similar approved
· 80 depth x various sizes
· Typical acceptable gauges (widths) 130, 165 or 240mm (+- 10mm)
· Stretcher bond in random courses, Soldier bond edging course
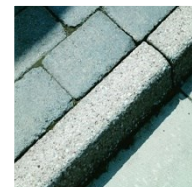· Construction to NAC Transportation approval.
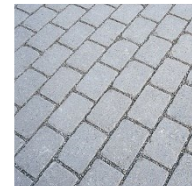
Material Application: Central reservation setts / kerbs

Appearance

Material Description
· Recycled whinstone cobble or tumbled concrete equivalent, to be laid on edge to edge
· Edge setts / kerbs 150 depth x 140 x various lengths (270-330)
· Colour light grey and/ or brown tones
· Construction to NAC Transportation approval.

Design Guide: Materials Palette - Footways

Material Application: Footway surfacing (Main - Type 1)

Material Description
· Asphalt - Black
· Stone Chips - Buff or Light Chips Stone (10-14mm) rolled in
· Construction to NAC Transportation approval

Appearance

Material Application: Footway surfacing (Main - Type 2)

Material Description
· Concrete paving slabs
· 65mm depth x 400 x 400mm textured paving units
· Stretcher and/or Stack bond

Appearance

Material Application: Footway surfacing (non-motorised junctions, focal areas and pedestrian crossings - Type 1)

Material Description
· Tegula block paving
· Specification and Construction to NAC Transportation approval

Appearance

Material Application: Footway Kerbs

Material Description
· Footway Kerbs
· Square edge flush concrete pin kerbs 50mm x 150mm x 915mm (+-20mm)

Appearance

343

Design Guide: Materials Palette - Trees - Landscape & Hedges

Material Application

Small- Medium street trees. Large growing tree species should be avoided within the coastal zone and only considered in to sites with the capacity to accommodate them

Material Description

Medium Street & Garden Tree Species
· Carpinus betulus (Hornbeam)
· Prunus avium 'Plena' (Cherry)

Small Street & Garden Tree Species include:
· Amelachier Canadensis—serviceberry
· Crategus Spp

Appearance

Material Application

Shrubs and Groundcover. These plant types are used to create focal points. Areas shall be limited with preference for more sustainable ground covers see verges/bulbs/native grasses. Where appropriate groundcovers should use native species that establish strong link and have low maintenance.

Material Description

Typical species with encouragement for native species where possible /appropriate:
Cornus spp
· Hebe spp
· Hedera helix

Euonymous spp
· Juniperous spp
· Viburnum helix

Appearance

Material Application

Hedging. Clipped hedging is a very effective natural screen and boundary. As a living material it improves air quality and creates potential habitat /shelter for nesting birds.

Material Description

Hedging species
· Carpinus betulus (Hornbeam) / Crategus monogyna / Fagus sylvatica (Beech)

Appearance

Material Application

Grass verges.

Material Description

· Low maintenance amenity grass mix interplanted with wild flower or seasonal bulbs.
· Native grasslands combined with SUDS swales and stonework detailing.

Appearance

Design Guide: Service & Storage

Servicing in Residential Areas

Description

Provision of adequate space for refuse and recycling bins as well as accessibility will be required. Generally bins should be collected from the front properties with back to back block arrangement. Where bins are to be stored to the rear of the property and within parking courts appropriate bin stores will need to be provided and sized to meet all recycling and residential needs.

Cycle Storage

Appearance

Description

Cycle provision is a key component of the 'The Harbourside' vision. Each dwelling shall have secure storage for at least 1.25-1.50 cycles per residential unit (2-4 bed). Where garages are provided cycle storage should be within garage units. Where no garages are provided external cycle stores shall be integrated with external bin stores and provide safe weather protected and readily accessible secure storage.

Integrated cycle and bin stores shall be located no more than 25m from the adopted highway and a drop kerb installed to establish a transition form pavement to street level. Cycle and bin sores shall be constructed in timber. The recycling facility and store shall normally be out of public view or alternatively architecturally addressed to include slated, pitched roofs and public realm quality detailing. Material detailing and design references for storage shall be complimentary to the neighbourhood material palette and proposed parent building.

Cycle provision shall also include cycle racks at key locations within the development (park entrance/ corner store) and in all parking courts. Cycle rack shall comprise simple stainless steel SUSTRANS recommended cycle racks that allow for secure locking of bikes.

Bin Stores

Appearance

Description

All units shall include for provision within the buildings ground floor for the storage of refuse and provision for recycling. Residential units will require storage for a 2x 240 litre domestic waste wheelie bin and all units with private gardens will require a similar provision for garden waste recycling. All units shall also include for a 2 No. 55 litre recycling boxes. Storage must be sufficient to hold waste assuming fortnightly collections and shall be no more than 25m from the adopted highway or access point. Flats and communal units shall include provision for 2No. Eurobins per 10 flats. Support for sustainable lifestyles shall also seek to promote composting, back court drying, rain water capture and SUDS supported wildlife areas. Provision for compost bins shall be included within detached/ semi-detached properties. Drying greens shall be incorporated into courtyard space for flatted and terraced units.

Design Guide: Gardens Space

Landscape Design	Appearance
Description	
The masterplan provides for a clear distinction between public and private spaces with public frontages and private rear garden ground that supports informal surveillance. High quality landscape areas (design/ materials/ maintenance) shall include hard and soft landscape treatments with native planting.	

Garden Space	Appearance
Description	
Plot widths are typically 6-9m with depths extending to 8-20m. All individual dwellings will have private rear gardens with flatted property provided with amenity space with a minimum area of 2.5m² per bed space.	
Amenity and garden ground shall be completed with appropriate boundary detailing and include completed lawns and tree planting to frontages.	

In-curtilage SUDS	Appearance
Description	
A strategic SUDS framework will be required for both Harbourside Waterfront Housing and Portland - Beach Drive Housing. SUDS provisions shall include site garden ground, amenity areas, parking courts, etc. Porous paving and feature stone detailing, swales and other elements within the SUDS hierarchy shall be adopted. Hard surfacing shall be restricted to a maximum of 25% garden ground or 50% of garden frontages.	

Security	Appearance
Description	
Natural surveillance from properties, streets and movement routes shall overlook all public realm and amenity spaces with development layouts clearly delineating public, semi-public and private ownerships. All building entrances will be visible and accessible from the street and no crime prevention measures that impact on the appearance or quality of neighbourhoods (security grilles/ security fencing) will be acceptable.	
Restricted access to areas of low surveillance (side or rear boundaries) may be provided with fencing and landscape treatments that actively impede access and enhance security.	

Design Guide: Colour Palette

Building Render finish

All the buildings in the development will be finished in render to match the existing buildings in the area. A pastel colour palette will be used to compliment the existing harbourside properties. Roof tiling
Slate effect roof tiles will be used throughout the development to complement the existing slate roofs in the area.
Zinc cladding
Small areas of zinc cladding will be added throughout the development to add a contemporary element to the traditional architecture.
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Metal railings

Traditional metal railings and gates are proposed at the front gardens of the properties within the development. This will match the existing boundary treatment is some of the nearby properties. #

Harbourside Colour Palette

Waterside Colour Palette

NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

5 December 2023

Cabinet

Title:	**Irvine Town Centre: Long-Term Plan for Towns Levelling Up Fund Award**
Purpose:	To update Cabinet on the award of funding for Irvine under the Levelling Up Fund and seek approval for the interim governance structure and early commencement of work to develop a Long-Term Plan for the investment.
Recommendation:	That Cabinet: a) Notes and approves the acceptance of the award of £20m for Irvine under the Levelling Up Fund; b) Approves the interim governance structure and early commencement of work to develop a Long-Term Plan for the investment; and c) Agrees to receive a further report on progress and the updated approach informed by the forthcoming detailed guidance.

1. Executive Summary

1.1 On 30 September the UK Government announced that 55 towns across the UK would benefit from £20 million of investment through endowment style funding over a 10 year period. Irvine was identified as one of seven towns in Scotland to benefit from this funding under the Levelling Up Fund.

1.2 The Long-Term Plan for Towns Prospectus was published on 1 October with further detailed guidance on the operation of the funding anticipated alongside a full toolkit. This report seeks approval for the acceptance of the award and agreement for the initial approach to the development of a Long-Term Plan for the investment. A further report on progress and the updated approach informed by the forthcoming detailed guidance will be brought to a future Cabinet.

2. Background

2.1 The UK Government's Long-Term Plan for Towns Prospectus as part of the Levelling Up Fund was published on 1 October 2023. This will invest £1.1 billion into 55 towns across the UK, of which seven are within Scotland, including Irvine. The other six Scottish towns are Kilmarnock, Greenock, Coatbridge, Clydebank, Dumfries and Elgin. Towns were selected using the Levelling Up Needs Index methodology. This considered metrics covering skills, pay, productivity and health alongside the Scottish

Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), the City and Town Classifications of Constituencies and Local Authorities dataset.

2.2 The provisions within the prospectus currently relate to delivery in England. The prospectus states that UK Government will work with local partners, including local authorities and Scottish Government, to ensure funding and support aligns with other programmes to have the best possible impact. A full toolkit and guidance will be published for Scotland informed by engagement with the Scottish Government.

2.3 The Long-Term Plan for Towns seeks to place local people at the heart of the decision making process and to provide the funding to support delivery. The prospectus provides a high level framework for the investment which includes the:

- Development of a Long-Term Plan to invest in and regenerate the town, based on the priorities of local people and put to local people for consultation.
- Provision of £20 million in endowment-style funding and support over ten years to support the Plan's delivery. This includes capital and revenue funding to provide support and long-term certainty to deliver projects over multiple years and the flexibility to invest in interventions based on evolving local needs and priorities. This aims to ensure a focus on long-term strategic transformation as well as shorter-term improvements.
- Establishment of a Town Board including broad representation across the community, local business, social enterprise, local authority and public sector interests to oversee the development and delivery of the Long-Term Plan.
- Provision of a toolkit of powers in relation to anti-social behaviour, licencing and town centre living.

2.4 The Town Board approach detailed in the prospectus specifically relates to the structures required to support delivery in England. This notes the potential to adapt existing governance structures to fulfil the Town Board function. Detailed guidance on the arrangements required in Scotland is anticipated and it is expected that a similar approach will be adopted. A new High Streets and Towns Task Force is also to be established to provide direct Government support.

2.5 The intention outlined in the prospectus is that the Town Board (or equivalent) will be responsible for identifying the issues and priorities on which the Long-Term Plan will focus and supporting a process of ongoing community engagement. It will work with the local authority to develop the Plan, setting out how local partners will use their knowledge, powers, assets and new funding to deliver for their communities. It will also assist in identifying opportunities to secure additional funding or private investment to support the Plan and oversee the delivery of identified projects.

2.6 The expected timeline for the development of a Long-Term Plan is summarised as follows:

- By April 2024 – Local authorities to bring local partners together to form Town Boards or expand existing arrangements and start the process of setting out a long-term vision based on local priorities.
- Spring 2024 – Once a Town Board (or equivalent) has been formed, capacity funding will be released to support the development of investment plans, including additional community engagement activities. Ongoing engagement will be available from the Towns Taskforce.

- From Summer 2024 – Submission of Long-Term Plans and release of year one funding, subject to assessment of the Plan by DHLUC.

2.7 The prospectus encourages Local Authorities to start bringing together partners who will form part of the Town Board in advance of April 2024 and to begin to set out a vision, formulate investment priorities and engage with local communities. It notes that where an existing Board or structure exists, this can be expanded and adapted. Capacity funding will be available from Spring 2024 where such structures are in place. To ensure that Long-Term Plans reflect local priorities, improvements can be identified under three broad investment themes:

- Safety and Security for example security infrastructure;
- High Streets, Heritage and Regeneration such as repurposing vacant commercial units or improving greenspaces; and
- Transport and Connectivity such as active travel or public transport infrastructure.

2.8 Officers continue to engage with officials of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DHLUC) on the Fund. At present, detail is limited to that available within the prospectus. The proposals for an interim governance structure and initial approach to the development of a Long-Term Plan are therefore informed by the available information. These aim to build on the Council's positive track record of working in partnership with communities and organisations to identify and deliver on local priorities, investment to date in Irvine Town Centre and previous consultation exercises.

2.9 Recognising existing arrangements within localities, it is proposed that a sub-group of the Irvine Locality Partnership be formed including the representation outlined in the prospectus as an interim governance structure. This would include representatives from the local community, local business, social enterprise, local authority and public sector interests. Informed by the forthcoming toolkit and guidance, this group would help co-produce the long term arrangements in terms of governance and the Town Board (or equivalent) structure, consultation and engagement approaches and the programme for the development of the Long-Term Plan for Irvine. This would include an initial review of the previous consultation and engagement outputs and identify requirements for further survey or analysis at this stage. Cabinet will be aware that at its meeting on 17 May 2023, North Ayrshire Council agreed that a working group of local Elected Members and relevant Officers be established to discuss and evaluate options outlining the ownership position and options for bringing the former Forum building, former Ruby Tuesdays building and subsequent surrounding buildings that have fallen into disrepair back into a usable state. The work and findings of the short life Member/Officer Working Group will taken into consideration as part of the development of the Long-Term Plan for Irvine..

2.10 It is proposed the development of the Long-Term Plan for Irvine will adopt a Community Wealth Building approach to the development of the Irvine Framework for investment to ensure that its delivery contributes across the pillars. This aims to contribute to the delivery of a wellbeing economy and will ensure the Plan provides a framework for investment which:

- Provides a clear articulation, evidenced by local engagement, of the priorities of town residents;

- Outlines how the £20 million endowment-style funding and support will be deployed in line with investment themes to support these priorities;
- Identifies how local authorities, anchors, community groups and businesses will use existing assets and resources to support these priorities;
- Illustrates how the Town Board (or equivalent) intends to attract additional funding and investment to support these priorities; and
- Demonstrates how members of the Town Board (or equivalent) will use existing powers and flexibilities to support these priorities.

2.11 An initial update has been provided to the Irvine Locality Partnership on the award. A further meeting will be held in January 2024 to develop the sub-group. Representation on the sub-group will be informed by the prospectus and any published guidance.

2.12 Officers will liaise with UK and Scottish Governments to inform the development of the Scottish toolkit and guidance and understand funding implications. They will also establish relationships with the other Scottish towns to share best practice. A further report will be brought for Cabinet's consideration when the Scottish guidance and toolkit are available. This will set out the updated approach to delivery, formal governance structure and provide further details on the development of the Long-Term Plan, including staffing resource requirements and financial implications.

3. Proposals

3.1 The Cabinet:

a) Notes and approves acceptance of the award of £20m for Irvine under the Levelling Up Fund;
b) Approves the interim governance structure and early commencement of work to develop a Long-Term Plan for the investment; and
c) Agrees to receive a further report on progress and the updated approach informed by the forthcoming detailed guidance.

4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial

4.1 The Long-Term Plan notes the intention to use the Financial Assistance power under Section 50 of the UK Internal Market Act to fund towns directly whilst working with the Scottish Government to determine the most appropriate delivery structure. Further detailed guidance on the operation of the Fund is anticipated. Capacity funding is expected to be released in Spring 2024, the value of which is still be confirmed. It is envisaged that the overall award will include a resource element which will allow for the development of the investment plan, project management costs and any staffing resources required.

Human Resources

4.2 Additional staff resource, for example a Town Centre Manager, will be required to support the delivery of the Fund and the development of a Long-Term Plan for Irvine due to the scale and duration of the award. It is envisaged that the cost of this will be met by resource element of the award. The extent of the staff resource required will be established when further detail is available on the operation of the Fund.

Legal

4.3 The legal implications of the Long-Term Plan for Irvine will be considered through its development and Legal advice taken as necessary. Legal agreements will be developed on a project by project basis as required with support from Legal Services. Negotiation in relation to land and building acquisitions will be undertaken as necessary with support from the Council's Legal Services and Property Management and Investment Service. Mechanisms such as Compulsory Purchase Orders will be considered on a case by case basis, where considered appropriate.

Equality/Socio-economic

4.4 The Fund's methodology for town selection was informed by the Levelling Up Needs Index. The Fund aims to support town centre regeneration and promote economic development. This considers metrics covering skills, pay, productivity and health alongside the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. This approach aims to ensure funding is directly award to the towns which will benefit most. The development and implementation of a Long-Term Plan for Irvine will provide opportunities to:

- Reverse economic, social and physical decline and reduce socio-economic disadvantage within Irvine Town Centre;
- Tackle long term vacant and derelict land and buildings thereby reducing their levels and impact on the community; and
- Build community wealth and tackle local deprivation through the regeneration of the town centre by maximising the potential of land and assets.

An initial screening will be undertaken to establish if an Equality and Children's Rights Impact Assessment is required for individual programme elements on a case by case basis.

Climate Change and Carbon

4.5 The development of a Long-Term Plan for Irvine will enable the delivery of projects aimed at revitalising Irvine town centre. This could include promoting and improving active travel, reducing vacant and derelict land and carbon reduction measures. This aligns with the priorities of the forthcoming Sustainable North Ayrshire Strategy and the commitment to reduce carbon emissions through declaration of a Climate Emergency. This will also contribute to the ambition to achieve net zero by 2030.

Key Priorities

4.6 The development and implementation of a Long-Term Plan for Irvine will support all four of the Council Plan's priorities and strategic aims of:

- Wellbeing: To transition to a wellbeing economy, delivering prosperity, wellbeing and resilience for local people.
- Communities and Local Democracy: We will have active, inclusive and resilient communities.
- Climate Change: To achieve net-zero by 2030.
- A Sustainable Council: A Community Wealth Building Council that is efficient and accessible, maximising investment and focusing resources towards our priorities.

Community Wealth Building

4.7   The Fund has the local community at the heart of its methodology. It aims to ensure investment is targeted at local priorities and will empower local communities to contribute to the regeneration of the town centre. A Community Wealth Building approach will be adopted to the development of the Long-Term Plan to ensure that its delivery contributes across the pillars of:

- Land and Assets: by supporting equitable land development and the development of underutilised assets for community use.
- Procurement: through the inclusion of appropriate community benefit of local supplier clauses within projects; and by considering phasing and programming of projects to create local supply chain opportunities and support delivery by smaller scale and local contractors where appropriate.
- Fair Employment: by supporting the creation of employment opportunities particularly within the construction sector. Where North Ayrshire is procuring services, through our enhanced Community Benefits approach we will seek to ensure the creation of local training and work experience opportunities. Consideration will also be given to delivery through employability programmes where appropriate.
- Financial Power: by investing in the town centre and leveraging additional external investment.

5.   Consultation

5.1   The Long-Term Plan for Towns aims to ensure that local people are at the heart of decisions, through direct membership of the Towns Board (or equivalent) and through a requirement to engage widely on the long-term plan for each town. The Long-Term Plan for Irvine will therefore be developed through co-production with the Towns Board (or equivalent) and extensive engagement with stakeholders. This approach has been informed by engagement with Connected Communities. It will build on work to date, Locality Partnership's priorities, the Regeneration Delivery Plan and previous consultation exercises.

An initial update has been provided to the Irvine Locality Partnership on the Fund. A further meeting will be held in January 2024 to develop the sub-group. Representation on the group will be informed by engagement with the Locality Partnership and Connected Communities.

RUSSELL McCUTCHEON
Executive Director (Place)

For further information please contact **Claire Fitzsimmons, Interim Senior Manager – Regeneration,** on **01294 315305**.

Background Papers
Regeneration Delivery Plan, 2021
Regeneration Delivery Action Programme, 2023
Long-Term Plan for Towns Prospectus, 2023