
NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

1 June 2021

Audit and Scrutiny Committee

Title: Supporting North Ayrshire Together – Update on our response to the Coronavirus pandemic

Purpose: To provide an update on our response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Recommendation: That the Audit and Scrutiny Committee notes our response to the Coronavirus pandemic so far.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The “Supporting North Ayrshire Together – Update on our response to the Coronavirus pandemic” report attached at Appendix 1 provides an update to the original “[Supporting North Ayrshire Together](#)” report presented to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee on 9th March 2021. It provides an overview of how our Council has worked alongside partners and communities to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic as at 23rd March 2021 (one year since the initial lockdown period).

2. Background

- 2.1 At Quarter Two our half yearly performance progress reporting was enhanced to include a comprehensive update on our response to the Coronavirus pandemic. The Quarter Two report was approved by Cabinet before being presented to Audit and Scrutiny on 9th March 2021.
- 2.2 The Audit and Scrutiny Committee requested an update to the report for their meeting on 1st June 2021. The Corporate Policy, Performance and Elections Team have created the attached report to include information up to 23rd March 2021, marking a full year since the initial lockdown period.
- 2.3 Due to lead in times the report has not been viewed by Cabinet. Therefore, to ensure Cabinet have full visibility of the updated report it will be included in our end of year Council Plan Progress Report as an appendix. In addition, we have been mindful to only include updates relating to our Covid-19 response in this report rather than Council Plan progress.

3. Proposals

- 3.1 That the Audit and Scrutiny Committee notes our response to the Coronavirus pandemic so far.

4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial

- 4.1 There are no financial implications.

Human Resources

- 4.2 There are no human resource implications.

Legal

- 4.3 There are no legal implications.

Equality/Socio-economic

- 4.4 There are no equality/socio-economic implications.

Environmental and Sustainability

- 4.5 There are no environmental and sustainability implications.

Key Priorities

- 4.6 This report helps to demonstrate delivery of our Council's strategic priorities.

Community Wealth Building

- 4.7 There are no community wealth building implications.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 Feedback from the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) informed the content of this report.

Andrew Fraser
Head of Democratic Services

For further information please contact **Isla Hardy, Corporate Performance Services Lead (Corporate Policy, Performance & Elections)**, on IslaHardy@north-ayrshire.gov.uk.

Background Papers

Our Response to the Coronavirus Pandemic and Progress Report September 2020



Supporting North Ayrshire Together

Update on Our Response to the Coronavirus Pandemic

March 2021



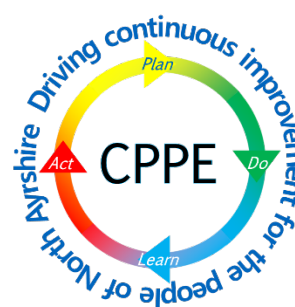
North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

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The Corporate Policy, Performance and Elections Team welcome any feedback you may have. We strive to make our Council and reports as accessible as possible and appreciate opportunities to discuss how this can be achieved. For further information please contact:

The Corporate Policy, Performance and Elections Team
Tel: 01294 324648
Email: NorthAyrshirePerforms@north-ayrshire.gov.uk



Our Response at a Glance

During their first year, our
Community Hubs

Received **33,152 calls**
(65% for food access)

Made **96,465**

food deliveries

Collected **13,713**
prescriptions

We provided
**60,000 shopping
vouchers worth
£1.7million**

to children eligible
for free school
meals

Holiday Hunger provided food
for eligible children during
school holidays plus

**£100 Christmas &
Spring Hardship
Payments**

**We visited 1,247
children a total of
7,333 times**
(September to December)

To ensure our pupils
could access online
learning we provided

**3,194 iPads,
Chrome Books,
Wi-Fi routers &
SIMs**



Childcare Hubs cared for
an average of

1,002 children
in January & February



Since April we've provided over

**4 million items
of PPE**

including over
1 million masks

**Over £14 million
in grants
distributed to local
businesses since
September**

**We supported 285
residents into
employment & aim
to secure 50
Modern
Apprenticeships**
(2020-21)

Up to
560 visits per week
to our
**Health & Wellbeing
Hubs**
for Care Home & Care At
Home employees

Average of
240
**Environmental
Health &
Trading Standards
interventions per
month**
to protect our residents

Welcome

This report marks a full year since we entered lockdown in March 2020. Throughout the past 12 months we have witnessed the dedication of our teams, communities and private, public and third sector partners in supporting the people of North Ayrshire in the most difficult of circumstances. We continue to be incredibly grateful to everyone for continuing to support our communities and businesses during this exceptional time.

In September we provided a summary of our joint response during the first six months of the Covid-19 pandemic in our report "[Supporting North Ayrshire Together](#)". Now, in March 2021, most of our teams are working remotely, while some frontline services continue and others find innovative new ways of providing services.

This report provides an update on our response to the pandemic. Progress on the delivery of our Council Plan priorities will be provided separately through our end of year performance reporting.

Supporting Our Communities

Community Hubs

Our Community Hubs continue to support our residents by providing access to food, prescriptions and other assistance. During their initial year they have received 33,152 calls, made 96,465 food deliveries, collected 13,713 prescriptions and directed 3,746 enquiries to other services. Each team has worked tirelessly to support their communities including some of our most vulnerable residents.

Access to food has by far been the most common reason for our residents to contact our Community Hubs, amounting to 65% of all calls received. This is followed by isolation support (13%) and health advice (6%). The Community Hubs also offer support with financial advice, period poverty and signposting to other services.

Due to the impact our Community Hubs have had and our long standing partnership with the Carnegie UK

Trust, we contributed to the Trust's [Covid-19 and Communities Listening Project: A Shared Response report](#). The report explores the experience and knowledge gained from the response to the Covid-19 pandemic as well as potential new ways of working.

Food Provision

"To All of you,

...We can't thank you all enough. There are simply no words to describe how devastating this has been for everyone and for a team of hard working people to keep my family fed and make sure everyone in North Ayrshire has help is more than I could have ever imagined.

The staff put themselves at risk to support my family and many many others in a time of uncertainty in their own lives... ...I wish there was another way of thanking you all??

Please take care, stay safe and know that my family will never forget what the Council and its hard-working hands of staff have done!"

In addition to Community Hubs, our Food Hubs led by our Physical Environment Service and supported by our Contact Centre, have provided 60,000 shopping vouchers for children eligible for school meals since July 2020, worth £1.7 million.



The Three Towns Community Hub Team

Prior to the move to a voucher scheme, our Food Hubs delivered the equivalent of 1.26 million meals to families across North Ayrshire.

For children and young people returning to school in August 2020, we ensured a good selection of hot meals were available from the first day to encourage pupils back into the dining halls. We recognise the importance of social activity within dining halls in supporting our school children's wellbeing. To aid this, we introduced staggered lunch breaks to manage bubbles safely and ensure children felt safe in their environment.

Our **Holiday Hunger initiative** continued to help feed families during the October and Christmas school holidays by providing vouchers worth £20 per week for each child. We also provided £100 payments for each child in receipt of free school meals in December to help support them over the Christmas holidays. This was followed in March by £100 Spring Hardship Fund payments for eligible families including those with pre-school children.

During the phased return of secondary school pupils in early 2021, we provided a full menu selection in schools as well as £20 shopping vouchers to all pupils eligible for free school meals.

The pandemic further highlighted that many of our residents need better access to good quality

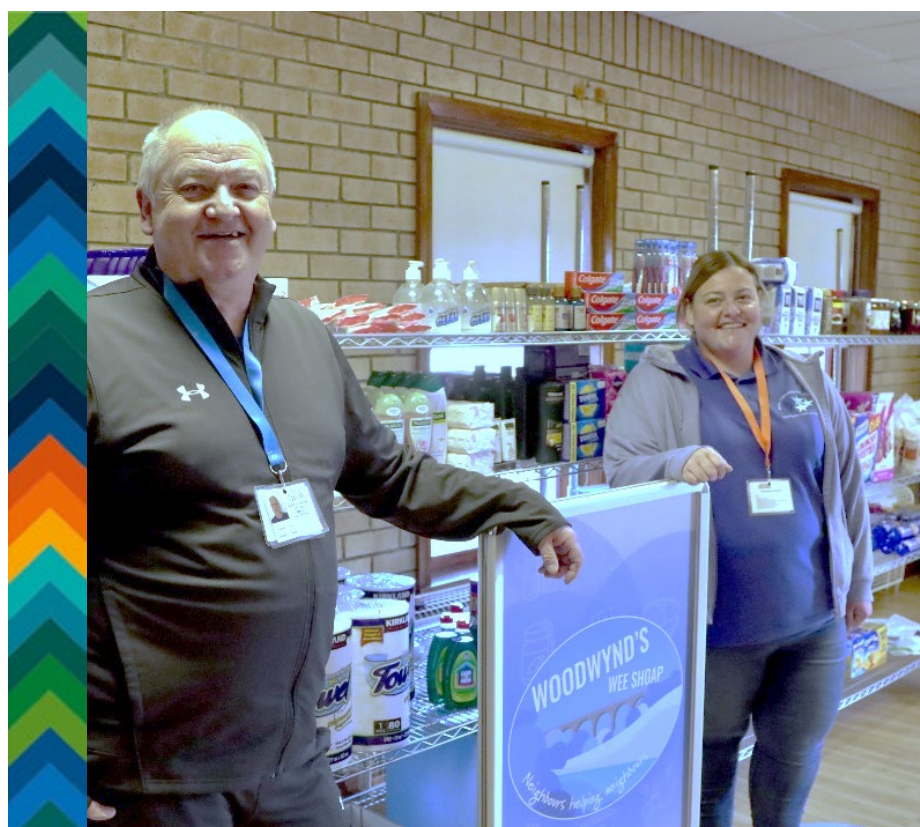
affordable food. Our North Ayrshire Food System network has been launched as **"North Ayrshire Fairer Food"** to meet this ongoing need. The Whitlees Quaint Larder, Ardrossan South Larder, Woodwynd's Wee Shoap and Cranberry's Community Larder introduced their pantry initiatives, with more planned from April.

These use a membership system to provide a mini supermarket-like environment where our residents have the opportunity to choose their own food and top up their weekly food shop. This dignified approach to addressing food insecurity helps make our residents' money go further by giving them access to good food at lower cost.

Childcare Hubs

Our schools and Arran Community Hub became Childcare Hubs for children of key workers as well as our children and young people who required more support. They enabled our key workers to continue with their crucial frontline services knowing their children were being looked after, while supporting our vulnerable children and young people.

The average number of pupils attending the Childcare Hubs during the first lockdown period was 523. This rose to 1,002 across our primary, secondary and additional support needs schools in January and February 2021.



Woodwynd's Wee Shoap

Children who attended our Childcare Hubs were given the same schoolwork as those learning from home, with class teachers providing remote learning.

Education

Our schools moved to remote learning in January, with a mix of online and paper-based resources provided. Pupils in need of digital devices were provided with them alongside internet access. Phased reopening of our schools commenced on 22nd February.

All our schools have access to asymptomatic Covid-19 testing kits. The voluntary home testing programme aims to reduce related risks in schools and help keep our teams, children and young people as safe as possible.

We continue to work towards our vision of being a nurturing authority through our “Nurturing North Ayrshire’s Recovery” approach by building emotional resilience in children and developing stronger relationships. Following lockdown, it was found children who had experienced nurture approaches coped well with the return to school.

To ensure our pupils could access online learning we provided:

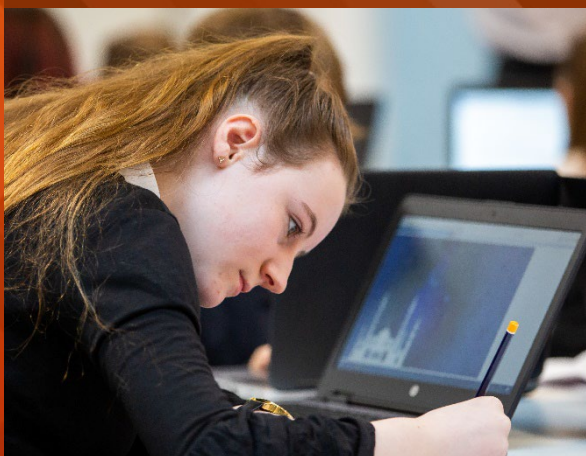
1217 Wi-Fi iPads

189 cellular iPads

306 Wi-Fi units

900 Chrome Books

582 anywhere SIMs



In 2021 our senior pupils’ final grades for Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) qualifications will be estimated grades based on pupil class work and tests. Each grade will be quality checked in school and through SQA sampling. Estimated grades will be submitted to the SQA in June and pupils will receive their awards in August 2021.

The Professional Learning and Leadership Development initiative within the Communities and Education Directorate launched a new podcast “Let’s Chat Leadership”. In each episode, they discuss current issues influencing educational leadership including the power of facilitation and coaching.

Period Poverty

Our pupils were offered a subscription service for two to three months’ supply of free period products. This allowed primary and secondary school pupils to register for products, including sustainable options, for delivery to their home address.

Our Young People

Our first fully online Joint Cabinet took place in November and involved 110 young people from across our secondary schools. They were joined by our Council Cabinet, senior officers, Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYP) and the Youth Council Executive. Our young people shared their views on the issues that really matter to them including their community, digital connectivity, employability and health and wellbeing. These will inform our post Covid-19 recovery and renewal.

The Joint Cabinet session announced two successful funding bids totalling £120,000 from the Youth Work Education Recovery Fund for youth projects in North Ayrshire. A joint funding submission with the National Portrait Gallery, North Ayrshire Alcohol and Drugs Partnership, our Health and Social Care Partnership and our Youth Services team was successful in securing £60,000 from the Youth Recovery Fund. This will explore artist interventions that could be used in local communities to improve mental health and wellbeing. The remaining £60,000 will be targeted towards a range of smaller initiatives benefitting our young people, including family learning, mental health support, food provision and outdoor experiences.

With libraries and community centres closed, Library Services worked alongside the Health and Social Care Partnership to coordinate the Christmas Gift Appeal and allocate gifts to families across North Ayrshire.

DigiDream Digital Quiz

During lockdown all face to face youthwork activities were cancelled. Having consulted with our young people and partners we created the live Wednesday online quiz on Facebook. This allowed us to host the quiz and have live chats with our young people including answering any questions.

We adapted the format of the quiz to include two British Sign Language interpreters, to support our deaf young people taking part.

The Wednesday Quiz has had 46,559 attendances with 4,648 people interacting with the posts. We have 35 to 40 families regularly taking part in the quiz.

Covid-19 Testing and Vaccination

Our Health and Social Care services continue to adapt and change their normal working practices to ensure compliance to the national restrictions whilst continuing to deliver essential services to our most vulnerable residents.

We saw increased levels of Covid-19 testing across Health and Community Care services, including the introduction of lateral flow testing in care homes for employees and essential visitors.

We established rapid Covid-19 testing centres for those who are not experiencing symptoms to identify positive cases more quickly.

Our Covid-19 employee vaccination programme began with the first priority groups such as Care Home employees. This will be extended further to other employee groups.

Partnership working across teams has remained essential, with Connected Communities venues and employees working within vaccination centres to support the successful delivery of the vaccination programme. Approximately 900 vaccinations are given each day at one site.

Many of our employees were seconded to the NHS for the delivery of the Test and Protect service for a period of six months.

Child Protection

Between September and December our Children and Families Team visited 1,247 children a total of 7,333 times. Of these visits, 3,965 related to particularly vulnerable children. We also made 4,219 telephone calls and 222 online contacts.

The Child Protection Committee offered a range of e-learning modules for employees and partners to ensure all our teams are confident in recognising the signs of a child or young person at risk of harm and how to report this. In addition, we launched a social media campaign to raise awareness of child protection. This resulted in an increase in the number of calls relating to child welfare from members of our public.

In February our Fostering Service publicised the need for additional foster parents for children as a result of the pandemic.

Further Activities

In March a £100,000 Community Renewal and Recovery Fund was launched to support the third sector due to the challenges faced during the pandemic. The short-term fund from the North Ayrshire Ventures Trust will help organisations over a six-month period while more sustainable funding solutions are explored.

We supported the White Ribbon 16 Days of Action campaign online with our partners by showcasing a series of films, books, television programmes and podcasts, addressing issues of violence against women.

We launched our 'Let's Do This' campaign in November asking everyone to support North Ayrshire in suppressing the virus.

KA Leisure provided access to online classes and limited use of gym facilities, swimming pools and some indoor sports between October and December. The pandemic continues to have a significant impact on KA Leisure's operations.

On Tuesday 23rd March we marked the National Day of Reflection on the one-year anniversary of lockdown by collectively pausing for a minute's silence. The flags at our headquarters in Cunninghame House were flown at half-mast. We illuminated Saltcoats Town Hall and the Portal in a symbol of respect and solidarity to all those who have been affected by the pandemic.

Since April 2020 we have distributed
over 4 million items of PPE

to care providers, care homes, unpaid carers and personal assistants. This includes:

2,223,600
gloves

714,906
disposable
aprons

1,086,150
masks

7,377
bottles of
sanitiser
(1,531.7 litres)

13,445
pieces of
eyewear

958
lateral flow
tests
(since January)

Access to Culture

With our venues currently closed to the public, we have been finding new ways of providing access to our services.

Our Harbour Arts Centre has hosted a series of [virtual exhibitions](#).

Our Culture and Heritage Team worked with Irvine Burns Club to produce a Virtual Burns Celebration.

[Our Library Borrow Box](#) is available for residents to borrow eBooks and eAudiobooks online or through the app. The Home Library Service restarted in May to December and supported our most vulnerable residents. A call, click and collect service was established across our libraries from August to December.

We introduced Climate Kindness during the October holidays where the Arts, Heritage, Countryside Rangers and Library teams developed a series of environmental challenges on social media.



Employability Services

Employability services have moved their services to mostly digital forms of engagement since the pandemic began. The team have provided vital wellbeing support to vulnerable residents and has also managed to secure employment for over 285 residents by the year end despite a significant reduction in opportunities locally.

We have continued to deliver our Modern Apprenticeship programme to ensure opportunities for young people to work within our Council are sustained during the pandemic. Priority has been given to opportunities in the outdoor environment with the aim of fulfilling the annual 50 apprenticeships target.

We are a Gateway provider of the Kickstart programme, a national programme established in response to increasing levels of unemployment. By the end of March this year, local businesses had come forward seeking Kickstart support for over 400 jobs. These are currently in the system with significantly more to follow.

New funding streams have been secured to assist employability services to respond to the expected rise in unemployment in the next year and plans are in

development to build capacity across the service including additional redundancy support, key worker capacity, significant new incentives for employers to recruit and provision of laptops for young people to address digital exclusion.

Supporting Our Businesses

Financial Support

Due to Covid-19 restrictions and the need to assist in the management and distribution of additional financial support to businesses, the Business Team has diverted normal activity to assist with the distribution of Business Support schemes on behalf of the Scottish Government. The Business Team and Revenues Team have managed and administered the following Business Support Schemes since September:

Large Self-Catering Grant

This £2,000 per property grant was available for businesses with a property that accommodates seven or more people

for which they pay Non-Domestic Rates. We have been allocated £182,000 for this fund and estimate that this will be fully allocated. Applications are still being processed and the final figure will be confirmed in early April.

Exclusive Use Properties Grant

This £10,000 grant is for businesses evaluated by the Scottish Assessors Association as an "Exclusive Use Venue" providing overnight accommodation and who pay Non-Domestic Rates. The Scottish Government identified eligible properties, of which one is within North Ayrshire.

Coronavirus (Covid-19) Restrictions Fund

The purpose of this fund was to support hospitality and other businesses (excepting takeaways) required to close by extended Covid-19 restrictions up to 2nd November 2020. The Business Development Team and Revenues Team assessed, approved and administered 194 grants to eligible applicants via this Fund totalling £598,880.

Strategic Framework Business Fund

The Strategic Framework Business Fund (SFBF) provides grants to businesses that were required to close by law, or significantly change their operations due to Covid-19 restrictions from 2 November 2020.

The Business Team and Revenues Team assessed, approved and administered support to over 1,100 businesses via this fund totalling £12,873,700 (including Top Up Payments for Retail, Hospitality and Leisure businesses).

Furlough Top Up Fund

This fund relates to the 20% contribution that businesses were initially expected to make towards October employee furlough payments. The decision was reversed and companies were compensated. The Business Team and Revenues Team assessed, approved and administered 99 grants to eligible applicants via this fund totalling £163,350.

North Ayrshire Council Discretionary Fund

This fund was established to support businesses that were ineligible for support under the SFBF Fund. This fund provided a payment of £2,000 to eligible applicants. To the end of March this year, 126 Grant awards had been processed, totalling £252,000.

Bed and Breakfast Support

This support was offered in three stages. The first two stages consisted of a £2,000 per four-week period grant for eligible Bed and Breakfast businesses that do not pay Non-Domestic Rates but pay Council Tax. This support ran from early January to 31st March 2021 and is in addition to earlier Covid-19 support for the eight eligible businesses in North Ayrshire.

The third stage is to benefit eligible businesses not benefitting from stages one and two. So far, we have administered £60,000 of grants under this stage of the scheme.

Keep It Local

We encouraged our residents to spend locally at Christmas and use local supply chains to support our local economy. The 'Keep it Local' campaign is part of the Council's wider Community Wealth Building approach to encourage local spend and investment to support employment.

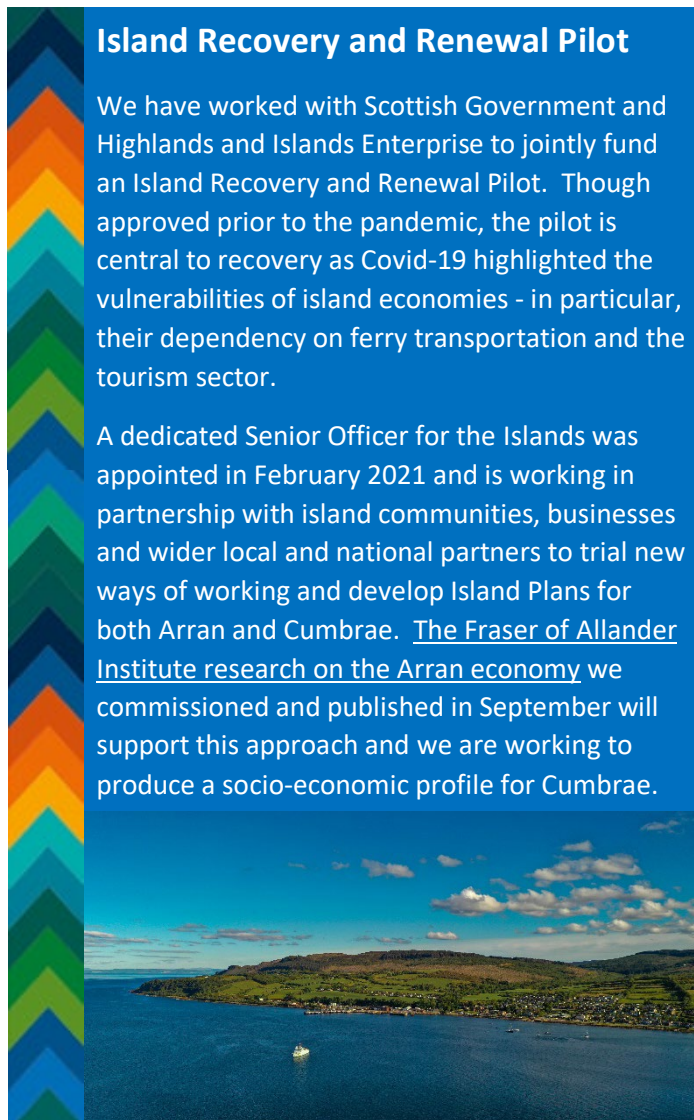
Protective Services

The Trading Standards and Environmental Health teams, in addition to ensuring the general safety of our residents and businesses as usual, have been on the front line of our Covid-19 response. In conjunction with our partners, the teams have been providing both proactive and reactive Covid-19 advice, carrying out compliance visits and taking enforcement action where required. This equates to an average of approximately 240 interventions per month.

Island Recovery and Renewal Pilot

We have worked with Scottish Government and Highlands and Islands Enterprise to jointly fund an Island Recovery and Renewal Pilot. Though approved prior to the pandemic, the pilot is central to recovery as Covid-19 highlighted the vulnerabilities of island economies - in particular, their dependency on ferry transportation and the tourism sector.

A dedicated Senior Officer for the Islands was appointed in February 2021 and is working in partnership with island communities, businesses and wider local and national partners to trial new ways of working and develop Island Plans for both Arran and Cumbrae. [The Fraser of Allander Institute research on the Arran economy](#) we commissioned and published in September will support this approach and we are working to produce a socio-economic profile for Cumbrae.



Our Council Operations

The fast-moving nature of the pandemic and its impact means high quality immediate communication with our residents, businesses and employees continues to be essential. Our website is constantly updated with the most recent information. As well as utilising local media, our social media channels saw substantial growth during this period in terms of followers and engagements, reaching our residents as quickly as possible.

Between April 2020 and the end of February 2021, our social media following grew by 7,750 and our posts have been seen over 13.4 million times an increase of 46% on the previous year. We have issued 1,177 posts relating to Covid-19. These have been seen over 6.8 million times and achieved 686,000 engagements.

Our 2020/21 Budget engagement was carried out online to ensure our communities could contribute to the discussions. Our Council Leader Joe Cullinane and Chief Executive Craig Hatton hosted a [live Question and Answer Session on Facebook](#). This enabled residents to hear directly about our budget plans for 2021-22, our response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the measures we are putting in place to ensure that we build back better as well as providing the opportunity to ask any questions. The session has been viewed over 13,000 times.

Our Sensory Impairment Team launched a new Facebook group to share important updates and information. This includes links to information from the Scottish Government and NHS in British Sign Language (BSL) as well as providing online opportunities for socialising and sharing advice. Our Locality Teams established Virtual Community Centres for each Locality area in order to support local groups and organisations with delivery of events, activities and sharing of information.

Services Update

We are proud to be one of the few local authorities to provide a full waste collection and recycling service throughout the pandemic, despite resourcing challenges and significantly higher amounts of household waste being generated as people adhered to the lockdown restrictions and spent considerably more time at home. Our environmental enforcement teams continued to work tirelessly to tackle fly-tipping and have issued 438 Fixed Penalty Notices to fly-tipping offenders during 2020/21 to deter this.

"I want to thank the staff at Bartonholm. Like everyone, I wasn't feeling particularly jolly today. I was met with pleasant smiles and one man made me laugh out loud with his joke about onion layers. The area is well kept, the staff are helpful and efficient.

So thank you."

The introduction of extensive traffic management and safety measures at our Household Waste Recycling Centres following the national re-opening in June 2021 continues to protect our visitors and employees.

During the winter weather our Roads Service was able to provide our normal gritting service, including throughout a prolonged spell of cold weather in early January when our gritting fleet was out around the clock.

Housing emergency and urgent repairs are being carried out within the approved timescales and our capital programme has continued to be delivered, with some reprofiling of projects to focus on external work where internal work has not been possible. Our Homeless and Community Safety Service continues to ensure our homeless residents and those requiring temporary accommodation are housed safely and are fully supported.

While grounds maintenance focused on essential areas during the lockdown period last year, our open spaces were all quickly recovered back to their normal standard in May 2020 and will be maintained as normal during the spring/summer growing season this year.

Our Transport Hub has provided support to NHS colleagues in transporting patients requiring critical care to and from hospital, and also transported a number of vulnerable residents to their vaccination appointment.


Customer Services

Many of our teams have provided essential support to our frontline services during the pandemic.

The Customer Contact Centre has been closed to the public since March 2020, but adapted to provide critical services online. During the past year it has been:

- Delivering a Registration Service remotely for birth and death registrations, with a seven-day service provided during the peak of the pandemic.
- Managing our support line and National Helpline to assist our most vulnerable and shielding residents.
- Issuing vouchers during school closures to children entitled to free school meals and providing parent support.
- Administering winter and spring hardship payments.
- Making proactive calls to check the wellbeing of self-isolating residents, offer support and administer the Self-Isolation Support Grant Payments.
- Providing support and advice in relation to Council Tax, Benefits and the Scottish Welfare Fund.

In addition, the Benefits Team have worked additional hours to meet the vast increase in their workload and ensure all benefits applications are processed quickly to limit the impact on our claimants.



Our Licensing Service extended licences in relation to taxi and other civic government licences which were about the expire. We agreed to extend these in line with the national extension of MOTs. We also agreed that all holders of premises liquor licences could delay payments due in October 2020, to the end of March 2021.

Scottish Parliamentary Elections

Preparations for a Covid-19 Safe Scottish Parliamentary Election are in progress. The restrictions mean a considerable amount of additional preparation is taking place to ensure a safe environment for voters, candidates and those working at the election.

We have published information on our website and social media channels to assure residents of the steps being taken so they can cast their votes safely on Thursday 6 May 2021. This includes our standard guidance on registering to vote and obtaining a postal or proxy vote.

Our Workforce

Most of our employees have now worked remotely for a full year. Our ICT Team have ensured our employees can continue to collaborate, such as through video calling, throughout the pandemic. The swift transition to home working built on the extensive work already undertaken through our Digital Strategy. This included promoting agile working, the rollout of Microsoft Office 365, creation of “Digi Guru” technical support within teams and the provision of appropriate devices from 2017.

The ability of all our teams to adapt their operations during the past year has been exceptional. This includes our supporting services who have adapted to provide critical services to ensure the core functions of our Council continue. On many occasions employees have been temporarily moved to other roles to ensure we meet the needs of our residents.

Ensuring our employees are supported has been key to delivering services through such a challenging time. We promoted our Covid-19 Frequently Asked Questions every week to all employees. This included a summary of advice regarding Covid-19 as well as other information such as how we would work with our employees to provide flexible working arrangements to support home schooling. This comprehensive document has become the key source of information for our teams.

Our Council Leader Joe Cullinane and Chief Executive Craig Hatton held online ‘Fair Say’ engagement sessions

to update teams on Council business and enable colleagues to ask any questions.

We launched our new Staff News website, making it easier for our teams to receive information including regular video updates from our Chief Executive.

We issued over 50 shout-outs on social media for individual colleagues and teams to recognise their exceptional work throughout the pandemic.

The wellbeing of all our employees continues to be a key priority for our Council. We introduced our Wellbeing Warriors - volunteers from teams who are then trained in Mental Health First Aid to support colleagues through listening or signposting them to services.

All our employees are regularly updated with information on how to support their health and wellbeing. Occupational Health provides information, support services and advice on a range of topics, while our Live Well programme provides opportunities to maintain a healthy lifestyle including mental and physical wellbeing.

Our new more efficient online Occupational Health portal was launched for occupational health referrals and reports. This service provides online access to information and guides for employees and managers and supports our digital agenda.

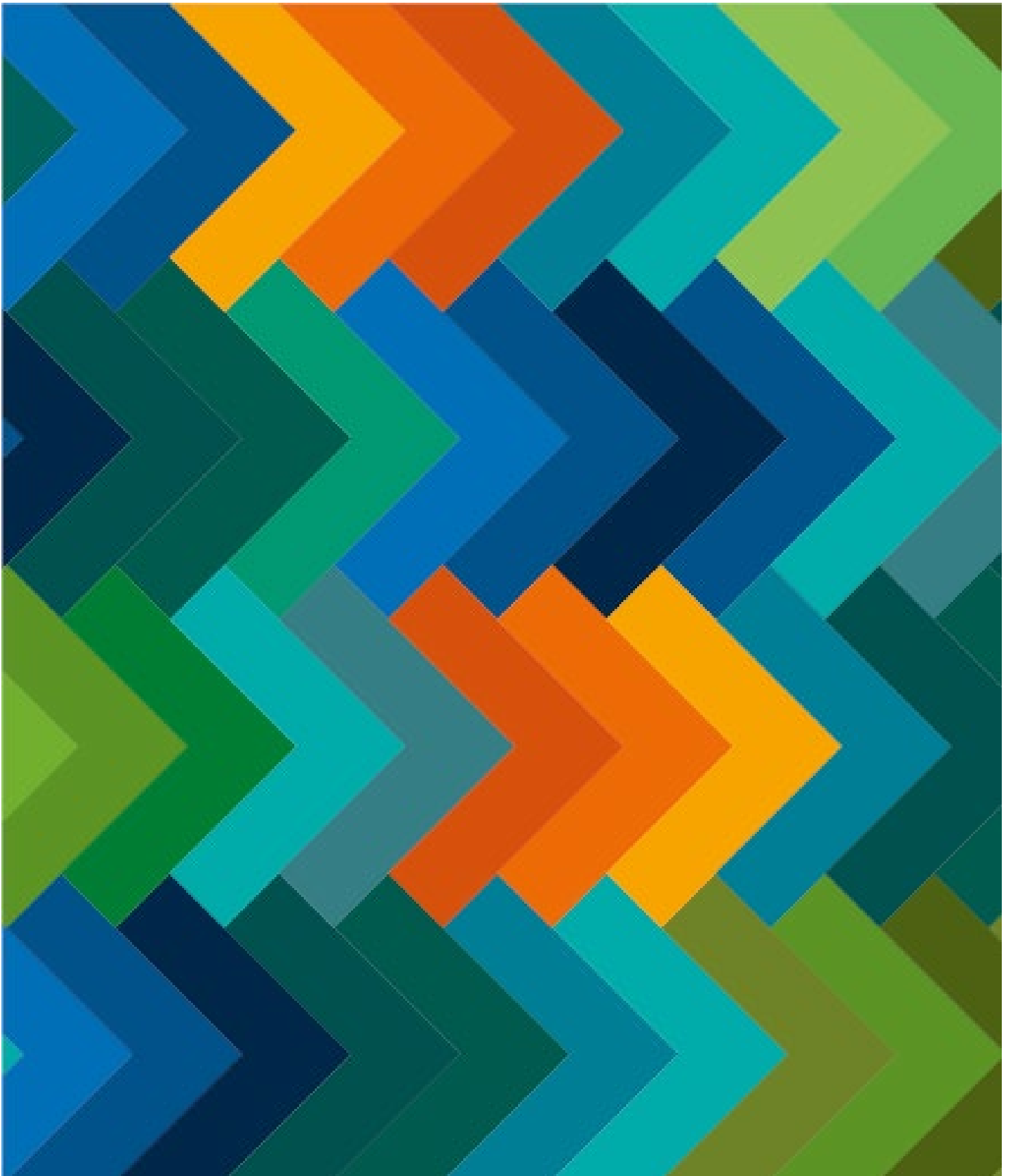
Our DrEAM (Drop Everything and Move) initiative was launched to remind us to take time to be active and ensure that we take appropriate breaks.

Our Health and Social Care Partnership Staff Wellbeing Hub at the Training Centre, Ayrshire Central, remained open to all our partnership employees. The Hub operated a drop-in service with teams experienced in offering confidential peer support.

Five of our libraries hosted our Health and Wellbeing Hubs for care home and care at home employees. There were up to 560 visits per week. This has been highlighted in the Carnegie UK Trust report [Making a Difference: Libraries, Lockdown and Looking Ahead](#).

We have signed up to the Scottish Government’s Coronavirus Fair Work statement, which ensures our employees will get time to attend their vaccination appointment.

All of this support puts our teams in the best position to continue to deliver excellent services alongside our partners during this exceptional time.



For further information please contact:

The Corporate Policy, Performance and Elections Team
Tel: 01294 324648
Email: NorthAyrshirePerforms@north-ayrshire.gov.uk

