



North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

Audit and Scrutiny Committee

A meeting of the **Audit and Scrutiny Committee** of North Ayrshire Council will be held remotely on **Tuesday, 14 September 2021** at **10:00** to consider the undernoted business.

Arrangements in Terms of COVID-19

In light of the current COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting will be held remotely 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>. In the event that live-streaming is not possible, a recording of the meeting will instead be available to view at this location.

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 the Meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee held on 1 June 2021 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).

3 Petition: Winton Street and Hill Street, Ardrossan

Submit report by the Head of Service (Democratic Services) on the terms of a petition received in respect of the lane between Winton Street and Hill Street, Ardrossan (copy enclosed).

- 4 Audit and Scrutiny Self Evaluation**
Submit report by the Head of Service (Democratic Services) on the outcome of the second self-evaluation of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee undertaken as part of improvement actions identified in the External Audit Interim Report 2018/19 (copy enclosed).
- 5 Annual Assurance Statement to the Scottish Housing Regulator 2020/21**
Submit report by the Executive Director (Place) on the Council's Annual return on the Charter 2020/21 submission (copy enclosed).
- 6 Proactive Approach to Derelict Sites**
Submit report by the Executive Director (Place) on the register of derelict sites across North Ayrshire (copy enclosed).
- 7 Internal Audit Reports Issued**
Submit report by the Head of Service (Finance) on the findings of Internal Audit work completed between May and August 2021 (copy enclosed).
- 8 Internal Audit and Corporate Fraud Action Plans: Quarter 1 Update**
Submit report by Head of Service (Finance) on the progress made by Council Services in implementing the agreed actions from Internal Audit and Corporate Fraud reports as 30 June 2021 (copy enclosed).
- 9 Council Plan Progress Update: Year End 2020-21**
Submit report by Senior Manager (Corporate Policy, Performance and Elections) on progress in relation to priorities set within the 2019-24 Council Plan and providing an update on the response to the Covid-19 pandemic as at March 2021 (copy enclosed).
- 10 Council Plan 2019-24: Delivery Plan Refresh 2021-22**
Submit report by Senior Manager (Corporate Policy, Performance and Elections) on the Council Plan Delivery Plan as at June 2021 (copy enclosed).
- 11 Urgent Items**
Any other items which the Chair considers to be urgent.

12 Exclusion of the Public - Para 1

Resolve 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 item of business on the grounds indicated in terms of Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

Non Disclosure of Information

In terms of Standing Order 19 (Disclosure of Information), the information contained within the following report is confidential information within the meaning of Section 50A of the 1973 Act and shall not be disclosed to any person by any Member or Officer.

13 Investigation Reports Issued

Submit report by the Head of Service (Finance) on investigation reports finalised since the last meeting (copy enclosed).

Webcasting - Virtual Meeting

Please note: this meeting may be recorded/live-streamed to the Council's internet site, where it will be capable of repeated viewing. At the start of the meeting, the Provost/Chair will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being recorded/live-streamed.

You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act 2018. Data collected during the webcast will be retained in accordance with the Council's published policy, including, but not limited to, for the purpose of keeping historical records and making those records available via the Council's internet site.

If you are participating in this meeting by invitation, you are consenting to being filmed and consenting to the use and storage of those images and sound recordings and any information pertaining to you contained in the them live-streaming/recording or training purposes and for the purpose of keeping historical records and making those records available to the public. If you do not wish to participate in a recording, you should leave the 'virtual meeting'. This will constitute your revocation of consent.

If you have any queries regarding this, please contact dataprotectionofficer@north-ayrshire.gov.uk.

Audit and Scrutiny Committee Sederunt

Marie Burns (Chair)
Margaret George (Vice Chair)
Alan Hill
Davina McTiernan
Tom Marshall
Donald Reid
John Sweeney

Chair:

Apologies:

Attending:

At a Meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 10.00 a.m. involving participation by remote electronic means.

Present

Marie Burns, Margaret George, Alan Hill, Davina McTiernan, Tom Marshall, Donald Reid and John Sweeney.

In Attendance

A. Sutton, Executive Director, D. Walkinshaw, Manager and S. Lauder (Head Teacher) (Communities and Education); C. Hope, Senior Manager, Physical Environment and I. Davies, Senior Development Management Officer, Economic Development and Regeneration (Place); M. Boyd, Head of Finance, D. Forbes, Senior Manager (Financial Management), P. Doak, Senior Manager (Internal Audit, Risk and Fraud) and A. Fenton, Team Manager (Finance and Corporate Support); N. McIlvanney, Strategy and Programme Manager (Growth and Investment); A. Fraser, Head of Democratic Services, A. Craig, Senior Manager, Legal Services, I. Hardy, Corporate Policy Service Lead, and A. Little, C. Stewart and D. McCaw, Committee Services Officers (Chief Executive's Service).

Also In Attendance

K. Watt (Deloitte).

Chair

Councillor Burns in the Chair.

1. Chair's Remarks

The Chair welcomed Councillor McTiernan to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee as a replacement for Councillor Brahim.

The Chair also intimated best wishes to Paul Doak, in his new promoted post, and Andrew Fraser, for a long and happy retirement, and thanked them both for their work with the Committee.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest by Members in terms of Standing Order 10 and Section 5 of the Code of Conduct for Councillors.

3. Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee held on 9 March 2021 were confirmed and the Minutes signed in accordance with Paragraph 7 (1) of Schedule 7 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

4. External Audit Report on Audit Dimensions and Best Value for 2021/21

Submitted report by the Head of Service (Finance), and received a verbal report by the External Auditor, on the findings from the External Audit Report on Audit Dimensions and Best Value for 2020/21 which summarised the external auditor's conclusions across four audit dimensions, within the scope of the 2020/21 audit work, and the review of arrangements made by the Council for securing Best Value. The full External Audit Report was detailed at Appendix 1 to the report.

Members were provided with clarification in terms of short- and medium-term financial sustainability around funding gaps and the financial risk and pressures over the medium to longer term.

The Committee agreed (a) to note (i) the findings contained in the External Auditor's very positive Audit Dimensions and Best Value report detailed at Appendix 1 to the report; and (ii) the sector developments as outlined in the report; and (b) to receive the External Auditor's Annual Report on the accounts to the meeting to be held on 14 September 2021.

5. Accounting Policies 2020/21

Submitted report by the Head of Service (Finance) on the Accounting Policies to be adopted in preparation of the Council's Annual Accounts for the year to 31 March 2021. The draft Accounting Policies proposed for adoption were detailed at Appendix 1 to the report.

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

- established principles allowing the carry forward of funds where delays had resulted from the Covid-19 pandemic and on how this would be reflected within accounts;
- narrative reports being provided alongside the Accounts on the impact of Covid-19 on delivery of services and any new services provided as a result of the pandemic; and
- comparison of variances between underspends and overspends which would be detailed in financial performance reports through the course of the year.

The Committee agreed to approve the Accounting Policies as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.

6. Annual Governance Statement 2020-21

Submitted report by the Head of Service (Finance) on the Council's Annual Governance Statement for 2020-21 which would be included within the draft Annual Accounts. The Annual Governance Statement, detailed at Appendix 1 to the report, outlined the governance framework in place and changes which had been made to strengthen the framework during 2020-21.

The Committee agreed to approve the draft Annual Governance Statement as detailed at Appendix 1 to the report.

7. Internal Audit Reports Issued

Submitted report by the Head of Service (Finance) on the findings of Internal Audit work completed during March and April 2021. The findings from eight audit assignments were detailed at Appendix 1 to the report, together with the respective executive summaries and action plans.

Members asked questions in relation to the audits detailed and were provided with further information in relation to the following:-

Parent Pay System

- the lessons learned in terms of rollout of the Parent Pay system in relation to cashless school meal provision;
- the preparation of written procedures for Parent Pay for both school-based staff and parents/carers in order to address the inconsistent approach when dealing with pupil debt;
- provision of a new system regarding cashless school meals currently out to tender;
- confirmation that the debt figure in terms of the cashless school meals system was cumulative, having been accrued over the lifetime of Parent Pay, and was not an annual figure;

Internet and Email Controls

- the lack of guidance and process in terms of shared email boxes within Microsoft Outlook and the removal of employees who should no longer have access;
- the shared email boxes issue being linked to the mover process, with an update to be provided to the Committee through the follow-up process;
- monitoring of Councillor Brahim's email account by Member Services for a short period of time prior to being closed;

Accounts Payable Transaction Testing Q4

- assurances that the correct systems were in place and that no additional controls were required in this regard; and
- three areas being progressed by the service in terms of financial management training, a review to strengthen procedures and a review of approval levels.

The Committee agreed to note the outcomes from the Internal Audit work completed as set out in the report.

8. Internal Audit and Corporate Fraud Action Plans: Quarter 4 Update

Submitted report by the Head of Service (Finance) on the progress made by Council Services in implementing the agreed actions from Internal Audit and Corporate Fraud reports as at 31 March 2021. Full details of 11 actions which were not completed within the agreed timescales were set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

Members were provided with clarification in terms of the procedure when an employee moved jobs or left the Council whereby an action would be reallocated to the direct replacement or to another employee within the service.

The Committee agreed to note (i) the current position with the implementation of Internal Audit and Corporate Fraud actions; and (ii) that those Services which had not implemented actions within the previously agreed timescales would be challenged.

9. Internal Audit Annual Report 2020-21

Submitted report by the Head of Service (Finance) on the work of Internal Audit during 2020-21 and detailing an opinion on the governance, risk management and internal control environment of the Council. The full report was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

The Committee agreed to note (i) the content of the annual report detailed at Appendix 1 to the report and (ii) the opinion of the Senior Manager on the Council's governance, risk management and internal control environment.

10. Corporate Fraud Team Annual Report 2020-21

Submitted report by the Head of Service (Finance) on the work of the Corporate Fraud Team during 2020/21, where 265 referrals for investigation had been received.

The Senior Manager (Internal Audit, Risk and Fraud) highlighted investigations which had been carried out across a range of areas including employee-related matters as well as Council Tax, Discretionary Housing Payments, Scottish Welfare Fund, Blue Badges and Housing tenancy issues. He advised that the Team had commenced formal joint working with the DWP Single Fraud Investigation Service (SFIS) in cases where there were suspected frauds relating to both Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction, although this had been suspended during the Pandemic.

Members were provided with further information in relation to the process in terms of blue badge referrals and on misuse of blue badges. Members were advised by the Senior Manager (Internal Audit, Risk and Fraud) to pass on any concerns in relation to this matter to the Team to investigate.

The Committee agreed to note the work carried out by the Corporate Fraud Team as detailed in the report.

11. Supporting North Ayrshire Together: Update on our response to the Coronavirus Pandemic

Submitted report by the Head of Democratic Services providing an update on how the Council had worked alongside partners and communities to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic as at 23 March 2021 (one year since the initial lockdown period). The full report was detailed at Appendix 1 to the report.

The Committee was advised that this information was being presented to Audit and Scrutiny prior to Cabinet and that the year-end performance information would be presented to Cabinet initially and then to Audit and Scrutiny in terms of the usual process.

The Committee agreed to note the response by the Covid-19 pandemic to 23 March 2021.

12. Growth and Investment Governance Framework

Submitted report by the Director (Growth and Investment) on North Ayrshire Council's internal governance arrangements for managing the Growth and Investment project development stages, including Ayrshire Growth Deal projects. Appendix 1 to the report set out a framework to support internal programme and project management procedures and to provide robust and effective project delivery mechanisms.

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

- the lack of representation of some Council political groups on the Joint Committee, Programme or Project Boards, with Councillor Marshall expressing his dissent in this regard and advising that he would progress this through a different forum;
- the operational and strategic aspects of the Growth Deal Programmes in terms of the elements which would be reported to Cabinet and those which would be progressed by Officers; and
- the Ayrshire Growth Deal proposals were only one of a number of considerations relating to Hunterston and Council had written to Scottish Ministers seeking the establishment of a Taskforce to consider all strategic matters relating to the Hunterston sites

The Committee agreed to approve the Growth and Investment Governance Framework as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.

13. Remote Access Controls: Education Network: Internal Audit Progress Update

Submitted report by the Executive Director (Communities and Education) providing an update on the Internal Audit Report Management Action Plan and the Digital Strategy Review. The full Internal Audit Report was provided at Appendix 1 to the report. Appendices 2 and 3 detailed standard procedures which have been developed and communicated to all schools and ICT technicians and a Working Together Agreement been signed off by Heads of Service from both Education and ICT, respectively.

The Committee agreed to note progress in relation to (i) the execution of the Internal Audit Management Action Plan; and (ii) the Digital Review Strategy, as detailed in the report.

14. Economic Development and Regeneration Services Update: Seafield School, Eglinton Road, Ardrossan

Submitted report by the Executive Director (Place) on the actions being taken in respect of the Former Seafield School, Ardrossan.

In terms of the future use of the site, it was noted that discussions had been held between Council Officers from Economic Development and Regeneration Services and the owner, who had undertaken to produce a Feasibility Study in relation to the type of development which could utilise the site. The Council's Regeneration Delivery Plan sets out sites and places where collaborative working between business and communities could be identified to facilitate regeneration of an area. In line with this, the Council's Economic Development and Regeneration Service had agreed to support the development of a Feasibility Study for the Seafield site.

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

- each locality having met with the Regeneration Team to put forward proposals regarding derelict land and buildings which had been neglected across North Ayrshire;
- the benefit of the establishment of a register of all derelict areas within Town Centres to ensure proactive work to resolve problem areas; and
- there being no requirement by the Committee for a further report in relation to the Seafield School site.

The Committee agreed (a) that the Economic Development and Regeneration Team produce a register of derelict sites across North Ayrshire; (b) that a report be submitted to a future meeting on proposals to tackle the derelict sites on a proactive basis; (c) to note (i) the update provided and (ii) that no further report would be required by the Committee in terms of the Seafield School site.

15. Accounts Commission's Report: Local Government in Scotland: Financial Overview 2019-20

Submitted report by the Head of Service (Finance) of the findings of the recently published Accounts Commission's Report on the Financial Overview 2019/20 of Local Government in Scotland.

The report analysed the annual accounts produced by Councils and IJBs, together with the reports of each body's external auditors, to identify performance, highlight challenges faced and assess responses to those challenges. To support the scrutiny of public bodies' response to the Covid-19 pandemic, Audit Scotland published a guide for Audit and Risk Committees. Links to the full Financial Overview 2019-20 report and the Covid-19 Guide for Audit and Risk Committees were embedded within the report. The impact of the historic Scottish Government funding trend on North Ayrshire was summarised in Appendix 1 to the report.

The Committee agreed to note (i) the findings of the recent Accounts Commission report; and (ii) the current position regarding North Ayrshire and the Integration Joint Board in relation to the findings.

16. Urgent Items

The Chair agreed that the following item be considered as a matter of urgency to allow timeous progression of the matter.

16.1 SEPA Reclassification of North Coast as Area of Potential Flooding

Councillor Hill raised the matter of the reclassification by SEPA of the North Coast as an area of potential flooding and expressed concern in terms of the potential impact on the house market. The possible impact on housing land supply, as well as the overall strategy of the Local Development Plan, was also discussed.

The Committee agreed that this matter be progressed by the Senior Manager Legal Services who undertook to raise the issue with (i) the Flood Team and SEPA in the first instance and (ii) the Senior Management Development Officer in the Planning Service.

The meeting ended at 11.40 a.m.

NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

14 September 2021

Audit and Scrutiny Committee

Title:	Petition relating to the lane between Winton Street and Hill Place, Ardrossan
Purpose:	To advise the Committee of the terms of a petition requesting the Council to take action in resurfacing and lighting the lane which runs between Winton Street and Hill Street, Ardrossan.
Recommendation:	That the Committee considers the terms of the petition and agrees, or otherwise, to make a recommendation to Cabinet.

1. Executive Summary

1.1 In terms of the Scheme of Administration, the Audit and Scrutiny Committee has a remit:

“To receive all petitions and deputations submitted to the Council except those relating to the Council’s planning functions, which shall be considered by the Planning Committee. The arrangements for receiving petitions are as set out in Appendix B to the Standing Orders relating to Meetings and Proceedings of the Council and Committees”.

1.2 This report sets out the background to a petition supported by 308 signatories, which urges the Council to take action in resurfacing and lighting the lane which runs between Winton Street and Hill Street, Ardrossan.

2. Background

2.1 The petition is detailed below: -

“That the council adopt the lane which runs between Winton Street and Hill Place in Ardrossan to allow the undertaking of resurfacing and lighting installation works to take place, given that at present and for the previous few decades the surface has been and continues to be in such a state of disrepair and has inadequate lighting that it is a hazard to residents and all others that use it, in particular the local school children and their families”.

2.2 The Head of Service (Commercial) has provided a briefing note on the background to this matter, which is set out as an appendix to the report.

- 2.3 In terms of the procedure for petitions and deputations set out in Standing Orders, representatives of the petitioners have been invited to attend the virtual meeting to address the Committee. Spokespersons should be restricted to addressing the specific points raised in their petition.
- 2.4 The spokespersons have, collectively, 10 minutes to address the Committee. This may be extended at the discretion of the Chair.
- 2.5 Once the Committee has heard from the spokespersons for the petitioners, the Chair will invite Members of the Committee to ask questions of the spokespersons.
- 2.6 While it is for the Chair to decide the stage at which officers should speak to their briefing, previous Committee practice has been for the Cabinet Member or Officer to speak to this after the Committee has heard from the petitioners. The Cabinet Member or Officer will then respond to any questions that Members of the Committee may have.

3. Proposals

- 3.1 It is proposed that the Committee considers the terms of the petition and agrees, or otherwise, to make a recommendation to Cabinet.

4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial

- 4.1 None arising from this report.

Human Resources

- 4.2 None arising from this report.

Legal

- 4.3 None arising from this report.

Equality/Socio-economic

- 4.4 None arising from this report.

Environmental and Sustainability

- 4.5 None arising from this report.

Key Priorities

- 4.6 None arising from this report.

Community Wealth Building

- 4.7 None arising from this report.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 The Head of Service (Commercial) was made aware of the terms of the petition and provide a briefing note which is attached as an appendix.

Craig Hatton
Chief Executive

For further information please contact **Hayley Clancy, Committee Services Officer**, on telephone number 01294 324136.

Background Papers

Briefing note from Head of Commercial Services

1. Background

- 1.1 The adopted road network within North Ayrshire has a total length of 1,043km. The Council has an approved asset management approach to road maintenance to allocate available road maintenance funds to locations that will offer the most beneficial return on the investment.
- 1.2 Road Condition is measured nationally through the Scottish Road Maintenance Condition Survey (SRMCS). The measure in place, the Road Condition Index (RCI), records the percentage of the Council's roads which should be considered for maintenance. North Ayrshire's current RCI is 37.1 and the estimated carriageway maintenance backlog figure for North Ayrshire is currently £34.8 million. This is a position common across most local authorities in Scotland. The 'steady state' figure for maintaining our roads at present condition is £4.3 million per year. The allocated capital budget supported by revenue funding is £4.3 million for 2021/22 which should maintain our roads at a steady state.
- 1.3 A petition to resurface and light the private lane connecting Winton Street and Hill Place was submitted to the Council on 14 February 2021.
- 1.4 The lane in question is a private road and does not form part of the adopted public road network and is consequently not maintained by the Council as roads authority. Photographs showing the general condition of the lane are attached below.

2. Current Position

- 2.1 Legal Services undertook a title search to establish ownership of the lane between Winton Street and Hill Place and have advised that the lane was part of the Eglinton Estate which was transferred to Fairhold Limited in 1997.
- 2.2 The Roads Service have undertaken an assessment of the condition of the lane and have estimated that the cost of bringing the lane up to a standard suitable for adopting as a public road would cost £28,200 plus VAT. The street lighting element of these works is £6,200.
- 2.3 The Roads Service wrote to Fairhold on 18 May 2021 advising of the petition and the works required to bring the road up to an adoptable standard. Fairhold were advised that the Council would accept an application for the lane to be adopted if the works were undertaken by them. An initial enquiry was received from Fairhold in response to our letter on 25 May 2021 seeking to clarify the location and this was responded to. Following issue of further reminders by Council officers, Fairhold responded to the Council on 3 August 2021 requesting a copy of the Title that shows Fairhold Limited's interest in the land and photographs of the location. The Roads Service replied to this request enclosing a copy of title information retrieved by Legal Services and photographs of the area on 16 August 2021 and await a further response.

3. Proposals

- 3.1 The private road network across North Ayrshire is considerable, and the Council's Roads Service receives regular requests to undertake repairs and/or maintenance to these private assets.

The consistent position which is followed is that an asset will only be considered for adoption if it is brought up to an adoptable standard. The Service does not have budget available to repair or upgrade private assets not within Council ownership, and to do so would compromise resources available for maintenance of the public road network as well as set a precedent for maintenance of other private roads not within the Council's ownership.

It is therefore recommended that the Audit & Scrutiny Committee:

- Notes the efforts undertaken by the Roads Service on behalf of the private residents to date in urging the landowner to meet their responsibilities in respect of the private road
- Instructs the Roads Service to continue to pursue Fairhold on behalf of local residents to undertake improvements and offer up the lane for future adoption as part of the public road network

David Hammond

Head of Commercial Services

Photographs of lane between Hill Place and Winton Street:





NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

14 September 2021

Audit and Scrutiny Committee

Title:	Audit and Scrutiny Self-Evaluation
Purpose:	To report on the outcome of the annual self-evaluation of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee.
Recommendation:	That the Committee (a) notes the findings of the self-evaluation, as set out at Appendix 1; (b) agrees the improvement actions identified in Appendix 1; and (c) agrees to repeat the self-evaluation exercise on an annual basis.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Audit and Scrutiny Committee undertakes self-evaluation of its performance and self-evaluation forms part of its standard operating procedures of. The self-evaluation assessment process is under way having been delayed from last year as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. Members attended a discussion session facilitated by officers on 20 August 2021 to discuss self-evaluation.
- 1.2 The findings of the self-evaluation are set out at Appendix 1.

2. Background

- 2.1 Self-evaluation assessment forms part of the standard operating procedures of the Audit & Scrutiny Committee following recommendations from Deloitte LLP.
- 2.2 The self-evaluation exercise is undertaken in line with best practice frameworks and a toolkit has been prepared by officers to facilitate the process. The first self-evaluation exercise was completed in August 2019 and it was agreed to repeat the self-evaluation exercise on an annual basis. The improvements highlighted in the 2019 assessment have been acted upon. The pandemic meant that the formal self-evaluation process did not take place in August 2020.
- 2.3 The self-evaluation toolkit set out at Appendix 1 comprises 67 questions covering all aspects of the committee's work under the broad headings of:
 - Role of Committee Members
 - Skills and Expertise
 - Behavioural and Operational Aspects
 - Information and Support
 - Activities and Functions:

Governance

Assurance
Risk Management
Internal Audit
External Audit
Financial Reporting
Scrutiny

- Review

2.4 Members of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee were invited to consider the self-evaluation questions independently in the first instance, before coming together for a discussion session, facilitated by the Head of Democratic Services on 20 August 2021.

2.5 Appendix 1 to the report sets out the outcome of the discussion sessions, in terms of collating the consensus responses to the toolkit questions.

3. Proposals

3.1 The Committee is invited to:

- (a) note the findings of the self-evaluation, as set out at Appendix 1;
- (b) agree the improvement actions identified in Appendix 1; and
- (c) agree to repeat the self-evaluation exercise on an annual basis

4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial

4.1 None arising from this report.

Human Resources

4.2 None arising from this report.

Legal

4.3 None arising from this report.

Equality/Socio-economic

4.4 None arising from this report.

Environmental and Sustainability

4.5 None arising from this report.

Key Priorities

4.6 None arising from this report.

Community Wealth Building

4.7 None arising from this report.

5. Consultation

5.1 All Members of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee were invited to contribute to the self-evaluation.

Craig Hatton
Chief Executive

For further information please contact **Hayley Clancy, Committee Services Officer**, on telephone number 01294 324136.

Background Papers

SELF-EVALUATION TOOLKIT FOR THE AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 2021

		Area for focus?	Performing as Expected?	Special Strength?	Evidence for assessment	Improvement Actions
Role of Audit & Scrutiny Cttee Members						
1.	Does the committee have written terms of reference which are subject to periodic review?		X		The terms of reference are set out in the Council's Scheme of Administration (SOA), which is subject to annual review by the Council.	
2.	Is the role and purpose of the committee understood and accepted across the Council?		X		The SOA forms part of the Elected Member induction programme for new Members. The SOA is published on the Council's website and is accessible to Members, officers and the public.	
3.	Do the committee members clearly understand their roles and responsibilities?		X		The SOA forms part of the Elected Member induction programme.	
4.	Do committee members bring an independent mindset to their role?		X		No party whip has been declared at any meetings of the committee and its members are able to bring an independent mindset to their role.	
5.	Does the composition of the committee adequately reflect the political make-up of the Council? Are the majority of its members from outwith the Administration?		X		The committee comprises 7 Members: 3 from the main SNP Opposition Group, 2 from the Conservative and Unionist Group and 2 from the minority Labour Administration. The latter are not members of the Cabinet. There is currently no Independent Member representation, but the membership otherwise reflects the political make-up of the Council, with a majority of Members coming from outwith the Administration.	

		Area for focus?	Performing as Expected?	Special Strength?	Evidence for assessment	Improvement Actions
6.	<p>Is the committee's remit clearly defined in respect of the following?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • performance • value for money • good governance • assurance • risk management and internal control • internal audit • external audit • financial reporting • scrutiny 		X		All of the elements mentioned are included within the committee's terms of reference, as set out in the Scheme of Administration.	
Skills and Expertise						
7.	Is an induction programme provided for new committee members, covering the role of the committee, its terms of reference and the key risk and issues facing the Council, as well as specialised areas such as treasury management?			X	<p>New Members receive a full induction programme which includes the remit of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee. Additional training is also available on specific areas such as cyber security. A number of other relevant topics are delivered to all Members as part of the wider training and development programme.</p> <p>In 2019, the Committee identified further training on interpreting accounting information may be required and this is now included within the programme of Members' development sessions.</p> <p>In 2019, a further improvement action indicated that the Vice-Chair could also attend Pre Agenda meetings.</p>	

		Area for focus?	Performing as Expected?	Special Strength?	Evidence for assessment	Improvement Actions
8.	Are the ongoing training requirements of committee members agreed each year according to their specific needs and developments arising?		X		Members have the opportunity to undertake a PPD exercise annually to identify training and development needs. There is also scope for Members to participate in 360-degree appraisal, as well as one-to-one feedback. Along with other Councillors, Committee Members are regularly consulted on possible topics for Council. The Committee also receives an annual report on Member training which reviews past training and consults on ways to improve.	
9.	Do members feel they can request training if they consider this would help them in their role?		X		Members have the opportunity to undertake a PPD exercise annually to identify training and development needs. There is also scope for Members to participate in 360-degree appraisal, as well as one-to-one feedback. In addition, Members can contact the Monitoring Officer or s95 Officer for any specific assistance they require. Along with other Councillors, Committee Members are regularly consulted on possible topics for Council. The Committee also receives an annual report on Member training which reviews past training and consults on ways to improve.	

		Area for focus?	Performing as Expected?	Special Strength?	Evidence for assessment	Improvement Actions
10.	Does the Chair have appropriate knowledge and skills?		X		The Chair is the Leader of the Council's main Opposition Group and is experienced in chairing this and other meetings. Members of the committee agree that she is knowledgeable and capable in her role as Chair. In 2019, the Committee identified and improvement action whereby chairing skills training would be arranged for the Vice-Chair.	
Behavioural and Operational Aspects						
11.	Is the number of meetings sufficient to meet the committee's role and responsibilities (and not fewer than three per year)?		X		Five ordinary meetings a year are scheduled and there is provision for Special Meetings to be arranged, as required to consider call in requests and to allow more time to consider performance reporting.	
12.	Are committee meetings scheduled in good time in respect of important decisions and financial deadlines? And are the meetings are held to coincide with key dates within the financial reporting and audit cycle? Is there are clear plan for the year to ensure all matters within the committee's remit are covered?		X		The calendar of meetings is agreed following consultation with officers and Members, and to accord with key audit dates. The forward planner of committee business ensures that business is scheduled appropriately. In instances where the volume of business is likely to be onerous, there is provision to arrange additional meetings. Following an improvement action identified in 2019, meetings are no longer scheduled in the same week as a Council meeting.	

		Area for focus?	Performing as Expected?	Special Strength?	Evidence for assessment	Improvement Actions
13.	Does the Agenda allow for flexibility, or for further meetings to be held where appropriate, should the committee need to spend additional time on issues?			X	Yes. See above.	
14.	Are meetings of the committee well-attended, with the majority of committee members present at each meeting?			X	Attendance levels since the start of the current Administration range from 71-94%.	
15.	Are all the committee members fully engaged and participative in meeting discussions? Do members participate in active discussion and debate around key agenda items, with appropriate contribution from each member? Do members ask questions, including 'tough' questions?		X		Members of the committee do engage and ask questions of officers and others attending the committee, and can ask for further clarification or reports, as required. The nature of the questions asked is summarised briefly in the Minutes.	
16.	Has each committee member declared their business interests? Is the register of interests checked on a regular basis? Is the register easily accessible?		X		Members have declared their business interests, which are published on the Council's website. A twice-yearly reminder to update the register of interests is issued and this includes the statutory guidance that Members must update any changes or register any new gifts or hospitality (over £50) within a month.	A quarterly reminder to update the register of interests is being taken forward.

		Area for focus?	Performing as Expected?	Special Strength?	Evidence for assessment	Improvement Actions
17.	Does the committee have good working relations with key people and organisations, including external audit, internal audit and the chief financial officer?			X	The committee has a positive and constructive relationship with officers of the Council and the Council's external auditors. Both attend committee to present their reports and are available to meet with the Chair outwith meetings. This was recognised as a strength in the Best Value Audit report.	
18.	Does the committee hold periodic private discussions with the chief internal auditor and also with the external auditor?		X		Discussion with the chief internal and external auditors take place. These discussions tend to be in public, in the course of committee meetings. In addition, however, the Chair holds Pre-Agenda meetings with officers in private and there is also provision for the chief internal auditor to meet with the Chair if required.	
19.	Does the committee have clear criteria for assessing its effectiveness to inform their annual assessment?		X		The current self-evaluation process offers an opportunity and mechanism for the committee to assess its effectiveness. In 2019, it was agreed that further self-evaluation work be undertaken on an annual basis. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it was agreed to postpone the annual self-evaluation exercise due in September 2020. As a result, the self-evaluation outcomes will be reported to Committee in September 2021, following completion of the self-evaluation process.	

		Area for focus?	Performing as Expected?	Special Strength?	Evidence for assessment	Improvement Actions
	Information and Support					
20.	<p>Do the clerking arrangements for the committee ensure that the members' time is used effectively? For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is there a good reason for each item being on the agenda? • are all papers circulated sufficiently in advance (and none tabled) and distributed in sufficient time for members to give them due consideration? • do the reports prepared for the audit committee members make it clear what they are being asked to do/agree? 		X		<p>The draft Agenda is discussed in detail with the Chair at a Pre-Agenda meeting and the finalised Agenda then issued at least three clear days prior to the meeting. Papers are circulated in advance of the meeting as part of the Agenda. The standard report template includes sections setting out the proposals and detailed recommendations.</p>	
21.	<p>Does the committee have a mechanism to keep it aware of topical legal and regulatory issues and institutional developments, for example, by receiving circulars, training or briefing papers? Is the committee briefed on significant changes?</p>		X		<p>The committee receives ad hoc briefings and updates in respect of topical matters, such as recent Accounts Commission reports on specific topics. In 2019, an improvement action was identified whereby a periodic report to committee summarising key developments and matters of interest could be circulated as necessary. An example of this throughout 2020, was the regular update on the UK Withdrawal from the European Union. For the current year, the Committee has asked for updates on UNCRC, Blackstart and Cyber Security Risks which will be brought forward at an appropriate time.</p>	

		Area for focus?	Performing as Expected?	Special Strength?	Evidence for assessment	Improvement Actions
22.	Do the committee members receive reports that are comprehensive but concise and tailored to their needs? Is the information they receive robust and objective?		X		<p>The volume of business considered can be extensive. However, the format of reporting has been improved to keep the reports as concise as possible, with key points highlighted and further information provided via appendices/links to external material/reference to background papers. The provision of electronic Agendas has assisted in ensuring that Members have the salient information and as well as access to further reading.</p> <p>The appendices to some performance reports are, by necessity, lengthy, although the covering report does identify key messages and highlights.</p>	
23.	Are Minutes taken and appropriately circulated to all committee members in a timely manner, with actions arising noted and their resolution tracked?		X		<p>Minutes include the purpose of the report, a summary of Members' questions, the committee's decision and how it is to be implemented. Committee Services publish the Minute within five working days of the meeting and Members receive an electronic link to the Minute.</p> <p>Committee Services issues action notes to officers responsible for implementation as well as reminders about outstanding actions. A summary of overdue actions is also sent periodically to Executive Directors and Heads of Service.</p>	

		Area for focus?	Performing as Expected?	Special Strength?	Evidence for assessment	Improvement Actions
Activities and Functions: Performance						
24.	Does the committee receive regular detailed reports on the performance of services?		X		Council Plan progress reports are submitted annually and detailed reports on Service performance are considered twice yearly.	
25.	Is the committee involved in setting the strategy for performance review?		X		The committee does review the performance, but it is the Council as a whole which takes responsibility for setting the strategy via the Council Plan. Any concerns may, however, be raised via the committee.	
Activities and Functions: Governance						
26.	Does the committee provide support to the Council in meeting the requirements of good governance?		X		The committee receives an annual Governance Statement prepared by the Senior Manager (Internal Audit, Risk and Fraud) and is able to question/challenge its contents.	
27.	Does the committee oversee an assessment of the governance arrangements of the Council and advise on their effectiveness?		X		See above.	
28.	Does the committee consider reports and recommendations from external audit and regulators/agencies as appropriate and their implications for governance, risk management and control?		X		The committee does receive regular reports from the internal and external audit functions and wider regulatory and inspection agencies.	

		Area for focus?	Performing as Expected?	Special Strength?	Evidence for assessment	Improvement Actions
29.	Does the committee monitor arrangements for ensuring value for money and for managing exposure to the risk of fraud and corruption?		X		The committee receives regular reports on managing fraud and corruption, including an annual corporate fraud report, quarterly updates on corporate fraud action reports and regular reports on the outcome of investigations by Internal Audit and the Corporate Fraud team.	
30.	Does the committee scrutinise and challenge the finance committee (Cabinet) effectively?		X		<p>The committee does hold the Cabinet to account, including via the call-in process. The committee has considered a number of call-in requests in recent years and has, on multiple occasions, recommended to the Cabinet that it reconsiders its decisions.</p> <p>In 2019, an improvement action identified that should the Committee investigate any topic which required further Cabinet explanation, the relevant Cabinet Member should be invited to the meeting to clarify decisions.</p> <p>An example of this is the call in from Cabinet of 11 June 2019 regarding Decriminalised Parking Enforcement and the Introduction of Car Parking Charges which was considered at Audit and Scrutiny on 27 June 2019 with the Cabinet Member addressed the Committee as part of the process.</p>	

		Area for focus?	Performing as Expected?	Special Strength?	Evidence for assessment	Improvement Actions
31.	Is the committee's role in relation to whistle blowing clear? Does the committee review the arrangements by which staff may, in confidence, raise concerns about possible improprieties in matters of financial reporting or other matters?		X		The Council has a whistle-blowing policy and the May 2021 version is available online at https://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/Documents/CorporateServices/HR/whistleblowing-procedure.pdf . The committee, therefore, has assurance that the processes are in place.	
32.	Is the committee's role in relation to the Council's fraud and corruption procedures clear?		X		The committee receives regular reports on corporate fraud investigations undertaken by the Council's internal audit function. It also receives a quarterly update on the implementation of actions identified as a result of investigations undertaken and is invited to challenge Services which have not implemented actions within the agreed timescales.	
Activities and Functions: Assurance						
33.	Does the committee seek to ensure that assurance is planned and delivered?		X		The Senior Manager (Internal Audit, Risk and Fraud) prepares an Annual Governance Statement which is included within the annual accounts and explains how the Council complies with the Code of Governance Framework.	
34.	Does the committee understand what assurance is available to support the annual governance statement?		X		The Council's internal audit service carry out specific audits on the Code of Corporate Governance every 3-4 years and the outcome is reported to the committee.	

					Also the wider programme of Internal Audit work, as defined in the Annual Audit Plan, all feeds into the assurance available to support the AGS, as well as some other sources of assurance, most notably the work of External Audit. The output from Internal and External Audit's work (i.e. audit reports) are presented to the committee at the next available meeting after publication	
35.	Does the committee seek clarity regarding what assurance is required?		X		Yes. For example, at a meeting of the full Council, the Chair queried a change to the risk rating associated with climate change and this was identified as a possible subject of future scrutiny by the committee. Climate Change report was submitted to the Committee on 28 January 2020 by the Executive Director (Place).	
36.	Does the committee gain assurance that the Council's risk management, control and governance arrangements are adequate and effective?		X		Yes. See above.	
Activities and Functions: Risk Management						
37.	Does the committee keep risk management on its agenda throughout the year?		X		The committee receives an annual report on Strategic Risk Register together with a Mid-Year report.	
38.	Does the committee monitor how the Council assesses risk? Does it review the Council's risk register on a regular basis?		X		The Cabinet approves the Council's Risk Management Strategy. However, the committee does receive an annual report on the Risk Register and is able to question/challenge its contents. The committee receives reports on specific areas of risk, including	

					cyber security and Brexit. A report on Blackstart will be brought forward this financial year once a resilience exercise has been undertaken.	
39.	Is the nature, source, format and frequency of information on risk management and internal control submitted to the committee fit for purpose?		X		Yes. See above.	
40.	Is the committee aware of the Council's cyber risk activity? Does it receive regular updates on management and mitigation of cyber risk? Has it received appropriate training to meet its responsibilities?		X		External auditors have reported on the outcome of the national cyber risk survey. Performance reporting by the Finance and Corporate Support Service has included information on action taken to ensure appropriate cyber security arrangements and training are in place. The committee has received reassurance that the Council achieved 'Cyber Essentials Plus' accreditation in September 2018. Members have also received specific briefings on cyber security.	It is proposed that further IT Security Training is provided to Elected Members.
Activities and Functions: Internal Audit						
41.	Does the committee monitor and review the effectiveness of internal audit?		X		The committee receives an annual audit report, together with reports on the outcome of audits and is, therefore, able to question/challenge the work of the team. The Chair also meets with the Senior Manager (Internal Audit, Risk and Fraud).	
42.	Does the committee approve, annually and in detail, the internal audit strategic and annual plans? Does it ensure that the internal audit plan is aligned to the key risks of the business?		X		In January 2021, the committee was invited to approve the Internal Audit plan for 2021-2022 and agree the indicators and targets set out in the report.	

		Area for focus?	Performing as Expected?	Special Strength?	Evidence for assessment	Improvement Actions
43.	Does the committee consider the actions management have taken to implement the recommendations of internal audit? Are follow up audits by internal audit monitored by the committee?		X		Yes. These are the subject of quarterly reports.	
44.	Does the committee receive regular progress reports from the internal audit service summarising internal audit activity?		X		The committee receives regular reports on internal audit reports issued. These include the key findings of audits undertaken and the management response. There is also a mid-year update on progress delivering the Annual Audit Plan and the Annual Report reviewing the year's work.	
45.	Is the internal audit plan sufficiently flexible and dynamic to help identify and address new risks and promptly meet the emerging needs of the audit committee?		X		The indicative programme of work will be reviewed each year and may change to reflect the priorities at that time. The plan always has a contingency of time set aside for flexibility such as emerging risks. Proposed changes to the plan may be brought to the Committee at the mid-year update. Due to the Covid-19 crisis, several audits in the 20-21 audit plan were unable to be completed as planned and therefore the start of the next plan was brought forward to February 2021 to allow greater flexibility in the timing of audits, with the agreement of the Committee.	
46.	How does the committee ensure that a professional relationship is maintained between internal and external audit?		X		The Chair is able to meet separately with internal and external audit representatives.	

		Area for focus?	Performing as Expected?	Special Strength?	Evidence for assessment	Improvement Actions
47.	Does the committee review the adequacy of internal audit staffing and other resources?		X		The committee receives information on audit staffing as part of the audit plan and the audit annual report.	
48.	Does the committee, in conjunction with the internal audit service and management, have a role in establishing and maintaining appropriate performance indicators to measure the work of the internal audit service?		X		The annual audit plan which is reported to committee includes performance indicators.	
Activities and Functions: External Audit						
49.	Are follow up audits by external audit monitored by the committee?		X		The Committee receives progress reports on action plans arising from external audit.	
50.	Does the committee consider the adequacy of implementation of external audit recommendations?		X		The external auditors include in their current report information on the action which has been undertaken by the Council to implement recommendations from the previous audit and this is duly presented to the committee. In addition, the Chair meets with the external auditors.	
51.	Do the external auditors present their audit plans and strategy to the committee for review?		X		The committee receives an annual report on the External Audit plan.	
52.	Does the committee assess the performance of external audit?		X		External auditors attend the committee to present their reports and are, therefore, open to questions and challenge.	

		Area for focus?	Performing as Expected?	Special Strength?	Evidence for assessment	Improvement Actions
53.	Is the committee clear regarding its role in the rare event of external audit qualifying the Council's financial statements?		X		If the Council's accounts were qualified, the committee would require a further report and would undertake a review of areas qualified to ensure adequate improvement actions had been put in place.	
Activities and Functions: Financial Reporting						
54.	Does the committee monitor the integrity of financial statements and announcements and review significant financial reporting judgements?		X		In addition to the reports initiated by officers, the committee may also raise any other significant matters. In 2019, an improvement action agreed that officers produce more focussed reports in future. Reporting formats have been improved in response. The Committee has confidence in the content of the reports provided and in relying on specialist input from internal and external audit.	
55.	Does the committee review the financial statements, external auditor's opinion and reports to members, and monitor management action in response to the issues raised by external audit?		X		This information is presented to committee for consideration.	
56.	Does the committee consider significant accounting policies and any changes to them? Does it at least annually assess whether the Council has adopted appropriate accounting policies?		X		The committee approves Accounting Policies annually.	

		Area for focus?	Performing as Expected?	Special Strength?	Evidence for assessment	Improvement Actions
57.	Does the committee receive reports on significant matters such as Brexit and are the consequential risks and uncertainties in the political environment adequately reflected?		X		<p>The committee has requested, and receives, quarterly updates on EU-Exit and the anticipated impact on the Council/community. The Council as a whole also receives reports on the long term financial overview for North Ayrshire.</p> <p>In 2019, it was agreed as an improvement action that EU Exit reports be submitted to every Committee meeting.</p> <p>They were received to every meeting thereafter until March 2021, the reason being that following the deal being signed, the immediate risks to NAC significantly lessened, albeit there remain longer term risks if the economic impact is as expected.</p>	
58.	Does the committee consider whether the financial statements satisfy all statutory and regulatory requirements to which the Council is subject?		X		<p>The committee is guided by the professional advice of the officers presenting these reports but is able to question/challenge if appropriate. Proposed revised response – “The external auditors annual report provides assurance on the financial statements compliance with all statutory and regulatory requirements.</p>	

		Area for focus?	Performing as Expected?	Special Strength?	Evidence for assessment	Improvement Actions
Activities and Function: Scrutiny						
59.	Does the committee consider key matters of their own initiative rather than relying solely on the work of the internal/external auditor or responding to call-in requests?		X		<p>Although the committee has not formally initiated any reviews, scrutiny work has been undertaken on subjects such as Brexit, the financial monitoring of the Health and Social Care Partnership and a summary of finding from external regulators and inspectors.</p> <p>In 2019, it was proposed that the committee consider a programme of annual scrutiny activity and it was suggested that reports arising from smaller scale scrutiny activity (e.g. regular reporting on Brexit) were more clearly highlighted on Agendas as scrutiny activity.</p> <p>It was also suggested that committee members have an informal discussion following each meeting to discuss future agenda items. Recently a report was specially commissioned for the Committee, ahead of Cabinet, on the Councils handling of the pandemic. A report on preparing a register of vacant and derelict sites was also called for by the Committee. Reports have recently been requested on UNCRC and risks from Cyber Attack and Blackstart.</p>	

		Area for focus?	Performing as Expected?	Special Strength?	Evidence for assessment	Improvement Actions
60.	Does the committee agree an annual programme of scrutiny and review activity?	X			Officers have been asked to submit an annual report to the committee proposing a programme of scrutiny and review work.	It is proposed there will be a standing agenda item for areas of Scrutiny.
61.	Does the committee have sufficient resources to undertake investigations or review work?		X		The committee has received an assurance that the necessary resources would be made available to it in order to conduct reviews.	
Review						
62.	Does the committee assess its performance and effectiveness on a regular basis? Do members assess how they could carry out their business more effectively, e.g. timetabling of business?		X		The committee intends to conduct self-evaluation work on an annual basis. See previous comment re appropriateness of this level of frequency. As mentioned previously, in 2019, it was agreed that further self-evaluation work be undertaken on an annual basis. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it was agreed to postpone the annual self-evaluation exercise due in September 2020. As a result, the self-evaluation outcomes will be reported to Committee in September 2021, following completion of the self-evaluation process	
63.	Are there KPIs in place against which committee members can assess their performance?		X		The committee does not consider that KPIs are necessary given that the external auditor's interim and final reports, internal audit reports and best value reports provide necessary assurance.	

		Area for focus?	Performing as Expected?	Special Strength?	Evidence for assessment	Improvement Actions
64.	Has the committee evaluated whether and how it is adding value to the Council?		X		The committee has not sought to evaluate the value it adds to the Council. Members are unclear on how such an evaluation might be undertaken. In 2019, Officers were tasked with investigating whether there was any other good practice elsewhere. This has not been taken forward in the light of the pandemic but will be taken forward.	
65.	Does the committee produce an annual report and have an action plan to improve any areas of weakness?		X		The committee does not currently produce an annual report or action plan. Members consider that to do so would represent duplication, in that its Minutes set out all of the business which has been transacted and this information is placed in the public domain.	
66.	Has the committee obtained feedback on its performance from those interacting with the committee or relying on its work?		X		The committee has not formally sought feedback on its performance. Members feel it would be difficult to establish who would be surveyed and how the outcome might be usefully interpreted. For instance, a petitioner attending a meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee to speak to their petition, or an Elected Member attending to present a call-in request, might be satisfied with the committee's work if they achieve their desired outcome, but this in itself will not necessarily be an effective gauge of the committee's effectiveness.	

		Area for focus?	Performing as Expected?	Special Strength?	Evidence for assessment	Improvement Actions
67.	Does the committee benchmark its performance against good practice for committees elsewhere in local government/more widely as appropriate?		X		<p>The committee tends to rely up officers (chiefly Section 95 and Monitoring Officer) to keep it advised on best practice elsewhere.</p> <p>In 2019, an improvement action identified that the Chair would in future meet with the Section 95 officer and Monitoring Officer on an annual basis to formalise the discussion on good practice. This would have regard to the content of the external auditor's report re governance and scrutiny in the annual report, as well as wider reports.</p>	

NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

14 September 2021

Audit & Scrutiny Committee

Title: Annual Assurance Statement to the Scottish Housing Regulator 2020/21

Purpose: To advise the Committee of the Council's Annual Return on the Charter 2020/21 submission, and request endorsement of the Annual Assurance Statement to be submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

Recommendation: That the Committee: (i) notes the Annual Return on the Charter submission 2020/21; (ii) notes the supporting evidence provided to demonstrate compliance with the regulatory framework; (iii) notes the Council's non-compliance with our legal gas safety responsibilities due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but also notes that all outstanding gas safety checks for 2020/21 have now been carried out; and (iv) authorises the Chair to sign the Annual Assurance Statement at Appendix 1.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Scottish Housing Regulator's framework for the regulation of social housing in Scotland includes the requirement for an Annual Assurance Statement to be submitted alongside the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC). The statement must be approved by the appropriate Committee within the organisation prior to submission.
- 1.2 This report provides information on performance reported in the ARC, highlighting areas of high or improving performance, declining performance or requiring improvement, and one area of non-compliance directly attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic. The report also provides information on how the Council gains assurance that it is compliant with the Regulatory Framework.
- 1.3 Endorsement of the Annual Assurance Statement will ensure that the Council complies with regulatory requirements set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 sets out the statutory objectives, functions, duties and powers of the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR), a non-ministerial department responsible for regulating social housing in Scotland.

- 2.2 In 2012, the Scottish Government's Social Housing Charter was established. It sets out the standards and outcomes that tenants, homeless people, homeowners and gypsy/travellers can expect from social landlords. This is monitored via landlords' ARC submissions to the SHR.
- 2.3 In February 2019, the Scottish Housing Regulator issued a revised framework for the regulation of social housing in Scotland. The new framework includes the requirement for landlords to submit an Annual Assurance Statement which has been agreed by a Board or Committee within the organisation. The Council must provide assurance that it complies with the relevant requirements of Chapter 3 of the Regulatory Framework.
- 2.4 The Assurance Statement is confirmation that, as a landlord, the Council:
- meets all legal duties and responsibilities, and adheres to relevant guidance and the requirements of other regulators
 - meets its statutory duties to prevent and alleviate homelessness
 - adheres to statutory guidance from the Scottish Housing Regulator
 - takes account of regulatory advice from the Scottish Housing Regulator and from other regulators
 - Complies with all regulatory requirements.
- The Council must also confirm plans to fix any instances where there is a material non-compliance and notify the SHR about any material changes in their level of assurance during the year.
- 2.5 In August 2020, the Scottish Housing Regulator published advisory guidance to assist landlords to adapt their approach to the submission of the AAS to reflect the impact of the pandemic. They requested that landlords include their position in relation to equalities and human rights in the 2021 Annual Assurance Statement. At that time it was anticipated that the guidance on equalities data collection would be available to landlords, however the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has slowed the production of that guidance, and it is not yet available. The Regulator is also producing guidance on equalities data collection, and jointly developing a briefing on the right to housing.
- 2.6 In recognition of this position, the SHR has requested that landlords provide assurance in their Statement that they have appropriate plans to implement an effective approach to the collection of equalities information and that they have started to consider how they can adopt a human rights approach in their work.

Performance

- 2.7 The revised performance framework issued in early 2019 resulted in the removal of some historical indicators, introduction of new performance measures and changes in some methods of calculation.
- 2.8 Whilst comparative information from other local authorities for the 2020/21 ARC is not yet available, the 2019/20 comparisons from the Scottish Social Housing Charter show that North Ayrshire Council remains a high performing local authority housing service. Of the 37 indicators reported in 2019/20 ranked against other Scottish local authorities, North Ayrshire is in:
- The top quartile for 21 indicators (56.76%)

- The second quartile for 5 indicators (13.51%)
- The third quartile for 7 indicators (18.92%)
- The bottom quartile for 4 indicators (10.81%)

- 2.9 It was reported in the 2019/20 Annual Assurance Statement report that levels of performance were unlikely to be maintained or improved in the 2020/21 ARC return, due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This position should, however, be reflected nationally. When the 2020/21 comparisons are published, indicators will be scrutinised to determine areas where this is not the case, and improvement plans developed.
- 2.10 The areas highlighted below key areas of high/improving performance and areas where there has been a decline or improvement is required.

Areas of high or improving performance

- 2.11 Tenant satisfaction is high in terms of overall services as a landlord, and opportunities for tenants to participate and keep informed about services and decisions. Performance in this area is based on our tri-annual tenant satisfaction survey, which is currently being undertaken to provide an updated position for the 2021/22 ARC submission.
- 2.12 The percentage of tenancy offers refused during the year has reduced from 49.61% to 32.99%. Whilst this is a positive change, it may be attributable to the fact that 58% of lets during 2020/21 were to homeless customers.
- 2.13 There has been some improvement in the adaptations process, with a reduction in the number of households waiting on an adaptation to their home from 84 in 2019/20 to 12 in 2020/21. The average number of days to complete an approved adaptation has also reduced from 62.96 to 54.79. A joint improvement group involving Housing, Building Services and Property Management and Investment Services, alongside the Health and Social Care Partnership, has been reviewing this process to consider ways to achieve the best outcome for tenants.
- 2.14 The Homeless Service continues to support services users to positive outcomes, with an 8.41% increase in tenancy sustainment for formerly homeless tenants from 2019/20 to 2020/21. Tenancy sustainment across all applicant types has also increased by 4.73%. Our cross-service response to service delivery has ensured we have been able to meet our statutory duty to provide temporary and permanent housing to people who are homeless.

Areas with a decline in performance or requiring improvement

- 2.15 The average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs increased from 2.96 hours in 2019/20 to 3.45 hours, and from 6.30 to 9.75 days for non-emergency repairs. This is directly attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic, with repairs taking longer due to safe systems of work and sanitising processes being put in place to ensure the safety of tenants and staff. Only emergency repairs were undertaken for the majority of 2020/21 due to the COVID-19 restrictions in place. When non-emergency repairs were reinstated, there was a substantial backlog which impacted response times, and satisfaction levels. Supply of materials also impacted some repairs. The 9.75 days for completion includes repair requests kept open during

periods of restriction, despite Building Services being unable to attend for health and safety reasons.

- 2.16 Satisfaction levels of tenants who had repairs or maintenance carried out in the last 12 months has decreased from 95.50% to 86.73% during the same period. This is based on responses from 98 tenants in 2020/21, compared to 1,534 the previous year due to the survey process being impacted during the pandemic. The wait times for non-emergency repairs during restriction periods is likely to have reduced satisfaction levels.
- 2.17 Whilst it appears that the number of court actions resulting in eviction has significantly increased from 6.77% in 2019/20 to 33.33% in 2020/21, this is because only a small number of court actions were initiated in line with COVID-19 guidance, for antisocial behaviour or other reasons.
- 2.18 The average time taken to re-let properties has increased from 26.26 days in 2019/20 to 27.13 days in 2020/21. This is in part due to the additional time required during the initial lockdown before operatives could safely enter a property prior to the introduction of electrostatic cleaning. Void performance has increased over recent years, partly attributed to the additional void works carried out for new tenants being rehoused through regeneration initiatives, where decoration, floor coverings and blinds are provided. A review of the void process is ongoing to identify improvements.
- 2.19 The percentage of antisocial behaviour cases reported during 2020/21 which were resolved was 82.97%, similar to the previous years' performance of 83.55%, when North Ayrshire were positioned in the third quartile. The method of calculation for the ARC was revised for the 2019/20 submission but does not consider that cases may open close to the end of the reporting year, or may be complex, and are therefore not closed in the same reporting year. Our internal performance reporting confirms that 98.3% of cases were resolved within target during 2020/21. There has been a 3% increase in reported antisocial behaviour since 2019/20, in the main due to reported breaches of COVID-19 restrictions.
- 2.20 Gross rent arrears as a percentage of rent due has increased from 3.65% in 2019/20 to 5.46% in 2020/21 despite ongoing communication with, and support to, tenants in arrears throughout the pandemic. Although we can see a slightly improved position in recent months, rent arrears accrued within the first 12 months of the pandemic are at a level where it will be extremely difficult for many households in North Ayrshire to recover from, given the impact COVID-19 has had on the economy and employment prospects.
- 2.21 During 2020/21 there was a 27% increase in tenants claiming Universal Credit. Whilst this increase is broadly similar to that of the previous financial year, the arrears attributed to these tenants (with technical arrears removed) has risen by 108%, in comparison to 35% the previous year. A review of our welfare rights and debt advice cases indicates that tenants in employment prior to the pandemic are experiencing significant financial difficulty due to the sudden unexpected reduction in income, which may explain the drastic rise in arrears for tenants claiming Universal Credit.

Area of non-compliance

- 2.22 1,228 properties did not receive their annual gas safety check within the statutory timescales in 2020/21. Our contractor initially ceased works due to concerns around the safety of their employees and their interpretation of the Scottish Government guidance. Following negotiation, safe working practices were put in place to minimise risk to tenants and employees. Notwithstanding this, there was an ongoing reluctance by some tenants to grant access to their property due to their concerns about risk of COVID-19 transmission.
- 2.23 Under normal circumstances, this level of non-compliance would be deemed material and merit a notification to the Regulator. We informed the SHR of the difficulties we were experiencing in April 2020. It was also recognised by the Scottish Housing Regulator that it may not be appropriate to proceed with forced entries and gas supplies, but that 'best endeavours' should be used to ensure compliance. As this non-compliance was a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic and all efforts were made to ensure compliance at the earliest opportunity, it is not considered material. All outstanding gas safety checks from 2020/21 have now been carried out.

Assurance

- 2.24 The overall performance of the Housing Service is continuously reviewed by the Head of Service and Housing Senior Management Team, with key performance information and action plans presented to the North Ayrshire Network, Business Plan Implementation Group and Council's Cabinet regularly during each year.
- 2.25 Some ARC indicators also form part of the corporate performance monitoring framework, scrutinised by Chief Officers and elected members.
- 2.26 The Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA) Self Assurance Toolkit has also been utilised as a further method of self-assessment. The toolkit provides guidance to social landlords on gathering evidence to demonstrate compliance with regulatory requirements and standard and focuses on questions that governing bodies should ask to gain assurance that this is being achieved.
- 2.27 The ARC 2020/21, which can be accessed at [Annual Return on the Charter \(north-ayrshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/annual-return-on-the-charter), demonstrates the Council's performance against the outcomes in the Scottish Social Housing Charter.
- 2.28 Supporting evidence to demonstrate compliance with the regulatory framework and relevant legislation can be accessed at [AAS Supporting Evidence \(north-ayrshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/aas-supporting-evidence).
- 2.29 The Annual Assurance Statement, which is attached at Appendix 1, confirms that the Council has complied with the regulatory framework, all standards and outcomes. It highlights North Ayrshire's non-compliance with our legal responsibilities around gas safety. It also confirms the equalities data currently captured, and that North Ayrshire is considering how to adopt a more human rights approach into our work. This Statement will be made available to tenants as part of the Council's performance reporting process.

3. Proposals

- 3.1 It is proposed that the Committee (i) notes the Annual Return on the Charter submission 2020/21; (ii) notes the supporting evidence provided to demonstrate compliance with the regulatory framework and relevant legislation; (iii) notes the Council's non-compliance with our legal gas safety responsibilities due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but also notes that all outstanding gas safety checks for 2020/21 have now been carried out ; and (iv) authorises the Chair to sign the Annual Assurance Statement at Appendix 1.

4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial

- 4.1 None

Human Resources

- 4.2 None

Legal

- 4.3 Approval of the Annual Return on the Charter submission 2020-21 and supporting evidence, and signature of the Annual Assurance Statement, will ensure that the Council complies with regulatory requirements set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010.

Equality/Socio-economic

- 4.4 None

Environmental and Sustainability

- 4.5 None

Key Priorities

- 4.6 None

Community Wealth Building

- 4.7 None

5. Consultation

- 5.1 Consultation has taken place with Services within Physical Environment, Directorate Performance, the Health and Social Care Partnership and the Scottish Housing Regulator during the preparation of the Annual Return on the Charter and Annual Assurance Statement.

RUSSELL McCUTCHEON
Executive Director (Place)

For further information please contact **Jacqueline Cameron, Senior Manager (Housing Strategy & Development)**, on **01294 485652**.

Background Papers

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North Ayrshire Council Annual Assurance Statement 2020/21

North Ayrshire Council complies with the requirements set out in Chapter 3 of the Regulatory Framework. North Ayrshire Council is assured that we:

- ✓ Adhere to relevant guidance and the requirements of other regulators;
- ✓ Meet our statutory duties to prevent and alleviate homelessness;
- ✓ Adhere to statutory guidance from the Scottish Housing Regulator;
- ✓ Take account of regulatory advice from the Scottish Housing Regulator and from other regulators; and
- ✓ Comply with all regulatory requirements, encompassing:
 - Assurance and notification
 - Tenant and service user redress
 - Whistleblowing
 - Equalities and human rights
 - Scottish Social Housing Charter Performance.

We did not meet our legal obligations around tenant and resident safety as we did not comply with gas safety legislation for 1,228 properties during 2020/21. Our contractor initially ceased works due to concerns around the safety of their employees and their interpretation of the Scottish Government guidance. Following negotiation, safe working practices were put in place to minimise risk to tenants and employees. Notwithstanding this, there was an ongoing reluctance by some tenants to grant access to their property due to their concerns about risk of COVID-19 transmission. As this was fully attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic and all efforts were made to ensure compliance at the earliest opportunity and appropriate records were kept, we have not considered this a material non-compliance. We did, however, notify the Scottish Housing Regulator of the difficulties we were experiencing in carrying out these checks in April 2020.

As a landlord, we collect data relating to protected characteristics for existing tenants, new tenants, people on waiting lists, governing body members, staff, people who apply to us as homeless and service users on our Gypsy/Traveller site. We are currently undergoing a system review and have incorporated equalities data into the brief to further develop our approach. We have also begun to consider how we can adopt a human rights approach in our work. We await guidance from the Scottish Housing Regulator to inform this further.

North Ayrshire Council's Audit and Scrutiny Committee has considered sufficient evidence to give this assurance. The Annual Assurance Statement was approved by Audit and Scrutiny Committee on 14 September 2021.

Authorised by: _____
Chairperson of the Committee

Printed name: _____

Date: _____

NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

14 September 2021

Audit and Scrutiny Committee

Title: **Economic Development and Regeneration Services
Update: Proactive approach to derelict sites**

Purpose: To provide an update on the June 2021 Committee request for:
a) The production of a register of derelict sites across North Ayrshire; and
b) A report on proposals to tackle such sites on a proactive basis.

Recommendation: That the Committee notes the update and progress to date.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The June 2021 meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee requested the production of a register of derelict sites across North Ayrshire and a report on proposals to tackle such sites on a proactive basis. This report provides an update on progress to date.

2. Background

- 2.1 Vacant land and buildings are currently recorded nationally through the Vacant and Derelict Land Register and Buildings at Risk Register. The development of the Regeneration Delivery Plan and Local Development Plan also identified several sites which are not in positive use and are viewed as a blight on our communities. It is recognised that there is overlap between these records. Combined the records identify over 250 sites in need of redevelopment, most of which are in private ownership.

Vacant and Derelict Land

- 2.2 Vacant land is defined by the Scottish Government as “Vacant land within a settlement that has been previously developed, without physical constraint, and which the planning authority has indicated is available for redevelopment”. Derelict land is defined as land “damaged by development, so that it is incapable of development for beneficial use without some remedial works”. Both are sometimes referred to as ‘brownfield’ sites.
- 2.3 The Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey (SVDLS) provides a national data source for vacant and derelict land. In 2019, there were 10,962 hectares of vacant and derelict land in Scotland. North Ayrshire contains the fourth highest level of vacant and derelict land in Scotland with 1,187 ha of land, 12% of the Scottish total, across 210

sites. This includes large sites such as at Ardeer (407ha), Riverside at Irvine Enterprise Area (111ha), Hunterston (67ha) and Lochshore (40ha).

Buildings at Risk Register

- 2.4 The Buildings at Risk Register has been in operation since 1990. It was developed in response to a concern at the growing number of listed buildings and buildings in Conservation Areas that were vacant and had fallen into a state of disrepair.
- 2.5 The Register is maintained by Historic Environment Scotland. It provides information on properties of architectural or historic merit considered to be at risk. As of June 2021, there are 46 North Ayrshire properties listed on the Buildings at Risk Register.

Local Development Plan

- 2.6 The Local Development Plan for North Ayrshire sets out how the Council aim to guide development and investment in the area over the next 20 years. Development proposals are assessed against the principles set out in the spatial strategy. All development proposals must also comply with Policy 2: Placemaking and other relevant policies as applicable. The Plan identifies eight Strategic Development areas including: Hunterston; Ardrossan Harbour and North Shore; and i3, Irvine.

Regeneration Delivery Plan

- 2.7 The Regeneration Delivery Plan (RDP) sets out the Council's priorities for delivering on the ambitions of the Council Plan and Community Wealth Building Strategy. It aims to redevelop strategic regeneration sites and places, working in partnership with communities. It focuses on the delivery of physical regeneration between 2021 and 2026 with a rolling action plan reported to Cabinet on an annual basis.
- 2.8 Over 40 sites were identified through the development of the RDP. In several cases, these require regular input from the Council and other Community Planning Partners to tackle issues such as vandalism and anti-social use. The RDP recognises that landowners are not always able to address the site and seeks to work with landowners and communities to tackle these. It provides a proactive approach to identifying potential uses and delivery mechanisms to tackle these sites. The actions provide clarity on priorities for intervention and/or investment on the sites and include:
- Review priority vacant and derelict sites and buildings with Locality Partnerships to assess the potential for development, redevelopment or promotion through planning;
 - Review the identified sites including the case for the purchase of third-party land to address a recognised problem or facilitate positive development – including sites identified through the RDP; and
 - Commence a programme of place-based frameworks to direct future investment through the Investment Fund and external funding.
- 2.9 The RDP has informed applications to the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund to advance the delivery of the regeneration of the Lochshore and North Shore sites. It has also informed applications to the UK Government's Community Renewal Fund for a pilot project to develop Place Frameworks for Largs and Saltcoats.

- 2.10 The RDP has also informed the proposals for the expenditure of the Council's 2021/22 allocations under the Scottish Government's Place Based Investment Programme and Vacant and Derelict Land Fund. The allocations aim to contribute to the RDP's proactive approach by providing support to landowners and community organisations to deliver on local priorities and bring buildings and land back into positive use.
- 2.11 The Scottish Government has established a £325m Place Based Investment Programme (PBIP) for the next five years. Underpinned by the Place Principle, this aims to support community-led regeneration, town centres and the 20-minute neighbourhood ambitions. The Council has received a £1.26m allocation under the programme to support place based investment. This aims to build on the investment made through the Town Centre Fund in 2019/20 in building repair and shopfront improvement schemes and bringing sites and buildings back into positive use.
- 2.12 The Vacant and Derelict Land Fund (VDLF) forms part of this Programme and aims to tackle long term vacant and derelict land. It provides funding to authorities where the issue and its impact on communities is greatest. Funding is limited to sites that have been vacant for at least 15 years and are between 0.1ha and 99ha in size, with a preference of Council ownership or a landowner agreement in place.
- 2.13 North Ayrshire has benefitted from access to the fund since 2016/17 and received a total of £9.672M between 2016/17 and 2021/22. Allocations have been informed by the Council's Vacant and Derelict Land Strategy (2014) and by Cabinet agreement in May 2017 to prioritise investment in four sites: Irvine Enterprise Area, Ardrossan North Shore, Lochshore and Irvine Harbourside. Funding to date has helped to inform our knowledge of the condition of the sites, develop proposals and lever in other sources of funding to deliver physical improvements.
- 2.14 The allocations under the PBIP and VDLF are summarised as follows. Officers are developing arrangements for delivery:

Source	Allocation	Activity
PBIP	£60,000	Development of a Place Framework for Kilwinning to identify physical improvements and CWB opportunities to support recovery and development within the town centre.
	£40,000	Delivery of capital actions identified through the CRF Place Frameworks pilot project for Largs and Saltcoats.
	£75,000	Communities' Project Fund to support community led place-based project development and implementation across North Ayrshire.
	£60,000	Development of proposals and detailed designs for PBIP implementation in future years.
	£830,000	A pilot town centre living project at 36 Bank Street, Irvine and Howgate, Kilwinning.
VDLF	£50,000	Minor Improvements Fund to support minor greening or site improvements to sites within a 20-minute town boundary.
	£120,000	Development work including minor investigation works and design studies to identify the potential of privately-owned sites and inform long-term strategies.
	£50,000	Refresh of the Vacant and Derelict Land Strategy to align with the priorities of the Community Wealth Building strategy, RDP and Economic Recovery and Renewal Approach.

	£50,000	Tree planting works on vacant and derelict site(s) to regenerate the site(s) and support the Tree Planting Strategy.
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- 2.15 These activities will inform the actions and priorities for the RDP in the coming years. This will include the expenditure of future any allocations of the PBIP and VDLF and funding applications to external partners to support delivery.

Powers and Legislation

- 2.16 The Council has a range of existing powers and legislation which it can utilise in relation to derelict sites. This includes interventions under Planning, Building Standards and Housing legislation. Enforcement action will only be taken as a last resort, where advice and assistance has been ineffective, where the problem has not been addressed in a reasonable period of time; and after taking account of all circumstances. The need for such intervention will continue to be monitored by the relevant services.
- 2.17 Officers continue to promote to Scottish Government and others the need for additional policy, legislation, guidance, and investment to strengthen the Council's ability to do more locally to address dereliction and problem sites. This is most recently reflected in our response to the Scottish Government Town Centre Action Plan review and engagement with the Scottish Land Commission.

3. Proposals

- 3.1 That the Committee notes the update and the progress to date.

4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial

- 4.1 The cost of the outlined approach will be met from the Council's current allocations under the PBIP and VDLF.

Human Resources

- 4.2 A dedicated temporary resource is currently being recruited for the PBIP. The delivery of the VDLF funded activities will be undertaken by the Regeneration Team.

Legal

- 4.3 The legal implications of all projects delivered through this approach will be considered through their development. Legal agreements will be developed on a project by project basis as required with support from Legal Services. Where negotiation is required in relation to land and building acquisitions this will be carried out with support from the Council's Legal Services and PMI. Mechanisms such as Compulsory Purchase Orders will be considered on a case by case basis, where considered appropriate.

Equality/Socio-economic

- 4.4 The outlined approach will assist in meeting our socio-economic duty as set out in the Fairer Scotland Duty. It seeks to reverse economic, social and physical decline and reduce socio-economic disadvantage. It will tackle long-term vacant and derelict land and buildings thereby reducing their levels and impact on communities. It aims to build community wealth and tackle local deprivation through the regeneration of our communities by maximising the potential of our land and assets and those of anchor institutions.

Environmental and Sustainability

- 4.5 The outlined approach aligns with the Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy.

Key Priorities

- 4.6 The outlined approach will contribute to achieving the Council Plan priority outcomes and will contribute to the ambitions for: an inclusive, growing and enterprising economy; North Ayrshire to be well-connected with effective infrastructure; and for a sustainable, vibrant, welcoming and attractive environment.

Community Wealth Building

- 4.7 The outlined approach will support equitable land development and the development of underutilised assets for community use.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 The Regeneration Delivery Plan was informed by workshops with Council Officers; workshops with Elected Members; reports to and feedback from North Ayrshire Ventures Trust and the Community Wealth Building Expert Panel; and public engagement via Consul. It was also informed by the Locality Partnerships' priorities and previous public consultation exercises including Charettes. The review of the Vacant and Derelict Land Strategy will be informed by extensive consultation.

RUSSELL McCUTCHEON
Executive Director (Place)

For further information please contact **Louise Kirk, Senior Manager, Regeneration**, on **07919 298217**.

Background Papers

North Ayrshire Regeneration Delivery Plan (2021)

North Ayrshire Local Plan (2020)

North Ayrshire Vacant and Derelict Land Strategy (2014)

NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**14 September 2021****Audit and Scrutiny Committee**

Title:	Internal Audit Reports issued
Purpose:	To inform the Committee of the findings of Internal Audit work completed between May and August 2021.
Recommendation:	That the Committee considers the outcomes from the Internal Audit work completed.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Council's local Code of Corporate Governance requires effective arrangements to be put in place for the objective review of risk management and internal control. Internal Audit is an important element in this framework as it reviews internal controls and offers Elected Members and officers an objective and independent appraisal of how effectively resources are being managed.
- 1.2 The remit of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee includes the monitoring of Internal Audit activity. The submission and consideration of regular reports assists the Committee in fulfilling this remit.

2. Background

- 2.1 This report provides information on Internal Audit work completed between May and August 2021. Internal control reviews have been completed in respect of the areas detailed in Appendix 1 to this report. The aim of these reviews is to provide assurance that the internal control framework within the areas examined is appropriate and operating effectively.
- 2.2 The findings from each audit assignment have been notified in writing to the Chief Executive, the Section 95 Officer and the relevant Executive Director and Head of Service on the completion of each assignment. Where appropriate, this has included an action plan with recommendations for improving internal control. Appendix 1 includes the report and action plan from each audit.

2.3 The findings from eight separate audit assignments are detailed at Appendix 1 to this report and the levels of assurance for each are noted in the table below:

Audit Title	Assurance Level
IJB Governance	Substantial
Supply Teachers	Reasonable
Sustainability	Substantial
Temporary Posts and Contracts	Creation of posts: Substantial Management of Posts and Contracts: Limited
Waste Management	Substantial
Sustainability Payments to Care Providers	Substantial
Aids and Adaptations	Limited
Procurement Cards	Limited

2.4 The key findings are as follows:

- Within the temporary posts and contracts review, 139 temporary posts were found to have passed their end date, meaning that services had not formally confirmed that they had the budget to pay for the employees in post. Furthermore, 528 contracts had expired and hadn't been extended, even though the employees were still working for the Council in these posts.
- For aids and adaptations, the checks carried out highlighted that the follow up process had not always been properly recorded. In some cases where the follow-up was properly requested and recorded, there was a significant delay between the job completion and the follow-up being carried out. There is a risk that clients' aids or adaptations might not have been checked promptly to ensure they meet the client's needs, and the clients may be struggling to manage the new equipment.
- Procurement card transactions should be reviewed and approved within 28 days. There are currently considerable delays in this process being completed, resulting in budget lines not being timeously updated. Procurement emails the individual which does not always quickly resolve the issue. Furthermore, online purchases do not indicate where items are being delivered from and analysis of procurement trends is difficult. Although limited assurance, no fraudulent activity around the use of procurement cards was found during the course of the audit.

3. Proposals

3.1 It is proposed that the Committee considers the outcomes from the Internal Audit work completed between May and August 2021.

4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial

4.1 None.

Human Resources

4.2 None.

Legal

4.3 None.

Equality/Socio-economic

4.4 None.

Environmental and Sustainability

4.5 None.

Key Priorities

4.6 The work of Internal Audit helps to support the efficient delivery of the strategic priorities within the Council Plan 2019-2024.

Community Wealth Building

4.7 None.

5. Consultation

5.1 The relevant Services are consulted on Internal Audit findings during each audit assignment.

Mark Boyd
Head of Service (Finance)

For further information please contact **Laura Miller, Senior Manager (Audit, Fraud, Safety and Insurance)**, on **01294-324524**.

Background Papers

None.

IJB GOVERNANCE

1 Background

- 1.1 This audit was undertaken as part of the Audit Plan of the IJB Performance and Audit Committee. Governance arrangements for the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) were previously audited in 2016, a year after establishment of the partnership.

2 Objectives and Scope

- 2.1 The main objectives of the audit were to ensure that:
- roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and communicated in order to enable good governance and strong accountability
 - arrangements support effective decision making
 - suitable challenge, scrutiny and review processes are in place to aid decision making and improvement
 - engagement with stakeholders supports real accountability.

3 Findings

Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.1 Roles and responsibilities of IJB members and key officers are outlined in the Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegation. These documents are both publicly available documents. The Standing Orders were reviewed in 2019 but the Scheme of Delegation has not been updated since 2015. It contains several financial limits and references to legislation and it therefore seems appropriate that it should be reviewed. **(Action a)**
- 3.2 The Standing Orders include a section on Codes of Conduct and Conflicts of Interest at Section 7, describing the process for declarations of interest at IJB meetings. This section also states that IJB members shall subscribe to and comply with the Standards in Public Life - Code of Conduct for Devolved Public Bodies, published by the Standards Commission Scotland.
- 3.3 A register of interests is published on the HSCP website, but the most recent declaration is dated August 2019. The Team Manager - Governance stated that they hadn't updated the declarations in 2020 due to pressures of the pandemic, but that they were in the process of sending out the register to board members for completion and return at the time of writing.

Effective Decision Making

- 3.4 The decision-making mechanisms of the IJB are defined in the Integration Scheme, Standing Orders and the Scheme of Delegation. There is a Governance Map, which illustrates some of the mechanisms and inter-relationships. However, the map has not been revised since the establishment of the HSCP in 2015 and the subgroups shown do not match those currently in operation, therefore the Governance Map requires to be updated or withdrawn if no longer required. **(Action b)**

- 3.5** Agendas and minutes from IJB meetings are published on North Ayrshire Council's website. It can be seen from these agendas and minutes that the decisions of the IJB are supported by reports prepared by officers from the relevant professional background and officers attend the meetings to answer any questions that the board members may have.
- 3.6** Terms of Reference and minutes from the Performance and Audit Committee, Strategic Planning Group, Clinical Care and Governance Group, Staff Partnership Forum and Transformation Board were reviewed. The agenda items for these groups were appropriate to the remits laid out in the Terms of Reference. The Terms of Reference for the Transformation Board mentions several officers who no longer work for the HSCP and requires to be updated. The Interim S95 Officer stated that a revised Terms of Reference will be taken to a future meeting.

Scrutiny and Review Processes

- 3.7** The IJB's Performance and Audit Committee fulfils the roles of audit and scrutiny functions.
- 3.8** The HSCP provides information on financial and performance monitoring to the Council, which is reported to the Council's Cabinet and Audit and Scrutiny Committee. The HSCP also provides regular reports to the NHS Risk Committee, NHS Performance Governance Committee and NHS Staff Governance Committee.
- 3.9** The IJB's risk register was reviewed by the IJB on 18th March 2021. This was done with reference to the Risk Management Strategy which was approved by the IJB on 27th June 2019.

Engagement with Stakeholders

- 3.10** The HSCP undertakes a wide variety of consultation and feedback activities to obtain the views of stakeholders. There is a Participation and Engagement Strategy, which is being updated during the current financial year. Locality Partnership Forums have been established and provide an important mechanism for engaging with local communities.
- 3.11** Consultation information on the HSCP website had not been updated since 2019, but several consultation exercises had taken place since. The website was updated during the course of the audit.
- 3.12** As per the Standing Orders, IJB meetings would normally be open to the press and public and this was the case up until March 2020. The meetings are also webcast live and the webcasts are archived on the Council's website, allowing the public to view the meetings live or in retrospect. Webcasting of IJB meetings was approved by the IJB in June 2019. Although the meetings have been online meetings since June 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the meetings have continued to be webcast.

4 Internal Audit Opinion

- 4.1** Overall, substantial assurance was obtained with regard to the governance arrangements for the Integration Joint Board.

Definitions of Assurance Levels:

Substantial	The framework of governance, risk management and control is adequate and effective.
Reasonable	Some improvements are required to enhance the adequacy and effectiveness of the framework of governance, risk management and control.
Limited	There are significant weaknesses in the framework of governance, risk management and control such that it could be or could become inadequate and ineffective.
None	There are fundamental weaknesses in the framework of governance, risk management and control such that it is inadequate and ineffective or is likely to fail.

NB The level of assurance given is at the discretion of Internal Audit.

KEY FINDINGS AND ACTION PLAN IJB GOVERNANCE

Action	a
Finding	The Scheme of Delegation has not been updated since 2015.
Action Description	The HSCP should consider reviewing the Scheme of Delegation to ensure it remains up-to-date.
Risk	Legislation referred to has been superseded or new legislation enacted since the last review is not taken into account. Financial limits included in the scheme lead to sub-optimal processes due to price inflation and other changes over time.
Priority (1, 2, 3)	2
Paragraph Reference	3.1
Managed by	Caroline Cameron, Director (HSCP), Andrew Fraser, Head of Service (Democratic Services)
Assigned to	Aileen Craig, Senior Manager (Legal Services) & Ruth Wilson, Team Manager (Legal Services)
Due Date	24-12-21
Management Comment	It would be best to align this with the Council's Scheme of Delegation to Officers, which also contains these delegations to the Director of the HSCP. This will be reviewed as part of the annual review of the Council's Governance documents

Action	b
Finding	The Governance Map has not been updated since 2015 and the subgroups shown do not match those currently in operation.
Action Description	The HSCP should update the Governance Map or withdraw it if it is no longer required.
Risk	Public information regarding the governance arrangements of the HSCP is inaccurate.
Priority (1, 2, 3)	3
Paragraph Reference	3.4
Managed by	Caroline Cameron, Director (HSCP)
Assigned to	Karen Andrews, Team Manager - Governance
Due Date	30-6-21
Management Comment	The governance map will be updated and aligned with the lead partnership governance arrangements in relation to mental health.

Priority Key used in Action Plan

1 (High)	Control weakness where there is a material impact on the achievement of the control objectives, generally requiring prompt attention.
2 (Medium)	Control weakness which needs to be rectified, but where there is no material impact on the achievement of the control objectives.
3 (Low)	Minor weakness or points for improvement.

SUPPLY TEACHERS

1 Background

- 1.1 Supply teachers are recruited to join the supply bank as casual employees throughout the academic year. Supply teachers from the supply bank can be engaged on a short-term (1-2 days) or fixed term (up to 8 weeks) appointment. Long-term appointments within a school, lasting over 8 weeks are classed as temporary posts and appointed through a separate recruitment process.
- 1.2 The SEEMIS Click and Go module which is currently used for booking supply teachers is to be withdrawn in June 2021. North Ayrshire Council is participating in a Scotland-wide exercise to procure a new booking system, via Scotland Excel.

2 Objectives and Scope

- 2.1 The main objectives of the audit were to ensure that:
 - sufficient checks are undertaken before adding staff to the supply bank register
 - supply staff are being booked in accordance with procedures
 - supply staff are being paid accurately

3 Findings

Supply Bank Register

- 3.1 There is currently no up-to-date written procedure for adding supply teachers to the bank register. Education Resources intend to produce new procedure manuals, once they have procured a system to replace the supply booking functionality currently used in SEEMIS. **(Action a)**
- 3.2 A sample of 10 teachers added to the supply bank in August 2020 was tested to ensure that General Teaching Council (GTC) registration, Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) checks and contracts issued were recorded in the CHRIS HR and Payroll system. The HR Resourcing team provided copies of identity documents, references and proof of previous salary. Proof of previous salary was only provided for 2 of the sample teachers. This means that the teachers will by default be appointed to salary spine point 1 if they have full GTC registration or spine point 0 if they are a probationer teacher. Education Resources stated that there are often corrections to spine points, including underpayments, required at a later date when it becomes apparent that a proof of previous salary should have been provided. All other evidence was provided. **(Action b)**
- 3.3 It was identified that one teacher was initially appointed to spine point 0 but this was changed to spine point 1 because the registration information from the GTC had been slow coming through. One of the teachers with a proof of previous salary was put onto an obsolete spine point, because her previous employer had stated that this was her salary on the form. These errors were both corrected and neither teacher had undertaken any supply work, so they hadn't been paid at the incorrect spine point. The HR Resourcing team gave assurance that these errors would have been picked up during routine checks.

Booking of Supply Teachers

- 3.4** A report was extracted from CHRIS showing teachers who had been paid for fixed or short-term supply work and a sample was selected of 6 fixed-term and 7 short-term engagements of teachers who were on a casual contract at the time (to exclude permanent or temporary teachers working additional hours). A second report provided details of teachers on temporary contracts and teachers who were on the supply bank register prior to that were identified. A sample of 7 teachers was selected from this report.
- 3.5** The auditor contacted the Education Business Officers (EBOs) for the relevant school clusters and asked whether the teachers had been booked out through SEEMIS. The long-term engagements do not require to be booked out through SEEMIS because they are appointed through a separate recruitment process, but in fact 1 short-term and 1 long-term appointment were the only sample items which had been booked through SEEMIS. Although the EBO's weren't asked for a reason why the teachers weren't booked in the system, several provided reasons which included technical problems with the system, the teacher was already booked out on another appointment, the school office weren't informed of additional days or that staff had forgotten to book them out. **(Action a) (Action c)**
- 3.6** A recent Payroll Transaction Testing audit identified a supply Early Years Worker who was not engaged following the correct procedures. This resulted in an audit action which was followed up during the period of this audit. Education Resources supplied a copy of the e-mail sent by the Head of Service on 4th September 2020 to Head Teachers, in order to fulfil the audit action. This made it very clear that it was an audit finding of a serious breach and that supply staff must be booked through SEEMIS. **(Action c)**

Payment of Supply Teachers

- 3.7** The short-and fixed-term appointments are paid by timesheet for hours worked. The long-term appointments are autopaid as per the contracted hours for the post.
- 3.8** 12/13 fixed and short-term supply teachers were paid at the correct rate. The 13th had initially been underpaid but this had been corrected by Payroll and the shortfall had been paid.
- 3.9** 12/13 of these teachers had been correctly paid for the hours in the timesheets. One teacher had been double-paid for 28 hours. 2 of the employee's timesheets had been submitted twice by the school, as the first time the e-mail had not been copied into the Headteacher, but Payroll had input the timesheets from both e-mails. This was corrected during the course of the audit.
- 3.10** Of the 21 timesheets for these 13 teachers, 1 timesheet had not been copied into any authorised signatory. Payroll officers were reminded during the course of the audit to ensure that all timesheets are copied into an authorised signatory before they are input to CHRIS.
- 3.11** For the 7 long-term appointments, copies of contracts and payroll amendment forms were obtained. The start and end date of the appointments and the number of weekly hours in CHRIS, in the contracts and in the amendment forms matched for all the appointments. All the amendment forms were authorised by an authorised signatory.

- 3.12** For 5/7 the rate of pay in CHRIS, the contract and the amendment matched. In 2 cases there was a mismatch. In both cases the CHRIS amendment form stated spine point 1 but in one case the contract stated spine point 1 but the employee was being paid at spine point 5. A subsequent CHRIS amendment form was identified describing the change to spine point 5 as a correction. In the other case the contract and the CHRIS salary screen both stated spine point 2. A subsequent CHRIS amendment form was identified showing that the employee had received an increment. **(Action b)**
- 3.13** Confirmation was received from either the EBOs or the Education Resourcing team that all the 7 long-term appointments had been subject to interview.

4 Internal Audit Opinion

- 4.1** Overall, reasonable assurance was obtained with regard to recruitment and payment of supply teachers.

Definitions of Assurance Levels:

Substantial	The framework of governance, risk management and control is adequate and effective.
Reasonable	Some improvements are required to enhance the adequacy and effectiveness of the framework of governance, risk management and control.
Limited	There are significant weaknesses in the framework of governance, risk management and control such that it could be or could become inadequate and ineffective.
None	There are fundamental weaknesses in the framework of governance, risk management and control such that it is inadequate and ineffective or is likely to fail.

NB The level of assurance given is at the discretion of Internal Audit.

KEY FINDINGS AND ACTION PLAN SUPPLY TEACHERS

Action	a
Finding	There is currently no up-to-date written procedure for adding supply teachers to the bank register or booking out teachers on SEEMIS.
Action Description	Education should ensure that written procedures for recruiting and engaging supply teachers are produced when the replacement system for SEEMIS Click and Go has been procured.
Risk	Inputting errors. Inconsistent use of the system. Lack of business continuity if staff members familiar with the system are unavailable.
Priority (1, 2, 3)	2
Paragraph Reference	3.1, 3.5
Managed by	Andrew McClelland, Head of Service (Education)
Assigned to	Carole Devoy, Education Resources Manager
Due Date	31.12.21
Management Comment	The existing SEEMIS supply booking system is being retired in June 2021. The Council is currently in the process of procuring a replacement booking system and will develop written procedures for recruiting and engaging supply teachers when a new system is procured. The due date of 31.12.21 is based upon successful procurement and implementation of a system prior to this date.

Action	b
Finding	Proof of previous salary was only provided for 2/10 of the sample of teachers newly added to the bank register. For 2/7 long-term appointments in the sample test, they were initially set up on the default spine point and the spine point required to be amended.
Action Description	HR Resourcing should review the communications sent to new supply teachers to emphasise the requirement for the previous salary forms and ensure that it is followed up where it hasn't been returned.
Risk	Supply teachers are incorrectly set up at the default spine point and this requires to be corrected, requiring additional administrative work. Teachers are underpaid.
Priority (1, 2, 3)	2
Paragraph Reference	3.2, 3.12
Managed by	Fiona Walker, Head of Service (People and ICT)
Assigned to	Jackie Hamilton, Senior Manager Employee Services
Due Date	Complete
Management Comment	The Resourcing Team's supply procedure and email templates on Talentlink have been updated to reflect a new step to chase up the confirmation of salary form when this has not been returned with the recruitment pack. Resourcing Team have been briefed on changes to procedure.

Action	c
Finding	Only 1/13 short and fixed-term appointments in the sample had been booked through SEEMIS, despite a reminder sent by the Head of Service in response to a previous audit action.
Action Description	Schools and EBOs should be reminded to ensure that short and fixed-term supply teachers are booked through SEEMIS. Consideration should be given to what management information and checks can be put in place when the new system is implemented.
Risk	Supply teachers who are not on the bank register could be appointed, meaning that they may not have undergone the appropriate checks. The teachers would appear to be still available to other schools who are seeking to engage a supply teacher.
Priority (1, 2, 3)	1
Paragraph Reference	3.5, 3.6
Managed by	Andrew McClelland, Head of Service (Education)
Assigned to	Carole Devoy, Education Resources Manager
Due Date	31.12.21
Management Comment	An immediate reminder will be issued to schools and EBOs to ensure that supply teachers are appropriately booked through the existing SEEMIS supply booking system. The functionality of the replacement booking system will be reviewed to assess any additional measures that can be taken.

Priority Key used in Action Plan

1 (High)	Control weakness where there is a material impact on the achievement of the control objectives, generally requiring prompt attention.
2 (Medium)	Control weakness which needs to be rectified, but where there is no material impact on the achievement of the control objectives.
3 (Low)	Minor weakness or points for improvement.

SUSTAINABILITY

1 Background

- 1.1 North Ayrshire Council has set itself the ambitious target of being carbon neutral by 2030.

2 Objectives and Scope

- 2.1 The objective of this audit was to ensure that the Council: -
- Has robust processes in place for monitoring and reporting on the Scottish Government's carbon reduction targets,
 - Has detailed plans, and a robust monitoring framework, in place to support the achievement of the 2030 carbon neutral target.

3 Findings

Scottish Government Targets

- 3.1 The Scottish Government requires councils to complete a 'Climate Change Reporting Duties Return' (CCRD) each year.
- 3.2 This return requires the Council to provide details on its consumption of various resources - such as electricity, water, fuel, landfill space, biomass products. These consumption figures are then converted using a predefined calculation into a carbon emission figure.
- 3.3 Internal Audit reviewed the sources of the consumption data to ensure that accurate figures are being reported. All data sources were found to be robust.
- 3.4 Quarterly reports from the Council's performance management software (Pentana) keep Cabinet updated on progress towards sustainability targets.

2030 Target

- 3.5 An updated version of the Council's Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy (ESCCS) covering the period 2021-2023 was approved by Cabinet in May 2021.
- 3.6 This strategy was written with the 2030 target in mind.
- 3.7 In terms of monitoring progress towards the target, the approval of the new strategy will result in:-
- the creation of a Climate Change Steering Group. This group will have decision making powers and have representation on planning committees, partnership meetings etc to ensure greater awareness and reporting of the sustainability agenda
 - the development of a detailed implementation plan supporting the Net Zero Carbon Roadmap, including targets, timescales and CO2 reduction.
 - progress against the Roadmap being reported quarterly to the Executive Leadership Team.

4 Internal Audit Opinion

- 4.1** Overall, substantial assurance was obtained with regards the Council's processes for monitoring progress towards key sustainability targets.
- 4.2** It is clear that detailed planning on how to achieve future targets is being undertaken. Obtaining 'buy-in' from all services is key if the ambitious 2030 target is to be met. The new Steering Group should help to raise and maintain the profile of the sustainability agenda, and in doing so, ensure its consideration in all business decisions.

Definitions of Assurance Levels:

Substantial	The framework of governance, risk management and control is adequate and effective.
Reasonable	Some improvements are required to enhance the adequacy and effectiveness of the framework of governance, risk management and control.
Limited	There are significant weaknesses in the framework of governance, risk management and control such that it could be or could become inadequate and ineffective.
None	There are fundamental weaknesses in the framework of governance, risk management and control such that it is inadequate and ineffective or is likely to fail.

NB The level of assurance given is at the discretion of Internal Audit.

EMPLOYEE SERVICES – TEMPORARY POSTS AND CONTRACTS

1 Background

- 1.1 Temporary posts and contracts provide services with an efficient way to supplement their workforce when additional manpower is only required for a fixed period of time.

2 Objectives and Scope

- 2.1 The objective of this audit was to ensure that:-
- Temporary posts are being properly authorised prior to their creation
 - Temporary posts and contracts are being actively managed, particularly as they approach their end date

3 Findings

Creation of Temporary Posts

- 3.1 Services can request the creation of a temporary post either via:-
- A Temporary Requisition Form (if the new post is for less than 23 months and is the same as an existing post)
 - A Structure Change Authorisation form (if the above is not appropriate)
- 3.2 A Temporary Requisition Form must be authorised by both the Head of Service and the Service Accountant. A Structural Change Authorisation Form must be authorised by the Head of Service, Head of Finance, Head of People & ICT and the Chief Executive.
- 3.3 Audit selected a sample of 12 newly created temporary posts and confirmed the appropriate authorisation had been acquired. No issues were noted during testing.

Management of Temporary Posts

- 3.4 When requesting a temporary post, Services must confirm they have the budget available to fund the post to its end date.
- 3.5 Services must then either take steps to end the post on this date, or request the post be extended (which requires confirmation from the Service Accountant that the budget is available to fund this).
- 3.6 Employee Services provide a monthly list of all temporary posts, including their end date, to Services to assist with post management.
- 3.7 A review of all current temporary posts (as per the report for May 21) highlighted that 139 of these have passed their end date. This means there are 139 posts where Services have not formally confirmed they have the budget to pay for the employees in post. **(action point a)**
- 3.8 The following table highlights the composition of the 139 posts, in terms of the Directorate and the calendar year in which the post should have ended.

3.9	Service	Year the post was due to end	Number of posts
	Children, Families & Justice	2021	1
	Commercial	2021	16
	Connected Communities	2021	2
	Education	2021	46
	Health & Community Care	2021	8
	Health & Community Care	2020	58
	Health & Community Care	2019	1
	People & ICT	2021	6
	Physical Environment	2021	1
	TOTAL		139

Management of Temporary Contracts

- 3.10** Each Service within the Council is responsible for managing the temporary contracts of its own staff.
- 3.11** Employee Services provide a monthly list of all temporary contracts, including their end date, to assist Services with this process.
- 3.12** Services can extend temporary contracts by instructing Resourcing to issue a contract extension to the employee.
- 3.13** A review of all existing temporary contracts (as per the report for May 21) found 528 contracts that had expired and hadn't been extended, even though the employees are still working for the Council in these posts. These 528 employees have out of date contracts. **(action point b)**
- 3.14** The following table highlights the composition of the 528 posts, in terms of the Directorate and the calendar year in which contract was due to end.

3.15

Directorate	Year the contract was due to end	Number of posts
Children, Families & Justice	2021	19
Children, Families & Justice	2020	2
Commercial	2021	32
Commercial	2020	2
Connected Communities	2021	6
Connected Communities	2020	3
Democratic	2021	2
Education	2021	160
Education	2020	3
Health & Community Care	2021	87
Health & Community Care	2020	20
Health & Community Care	2019	18
Health & Community Care	2018	12
Health & Community Care	2017	21
Health & Community Care	2016	6
Health & Community Care	2015	6
Health & Community Care	2013	1
Mental Health	2021	2
People & ICT	2021	5
Physical Environment	2021	79
Physical Environment	2020	42
TOTAL		528

4 Internal Audit Opinion

- 4.1 Overall, substantial assurance was obtained with regard to the process for creating temporary posts.
- 4.2 However, limited assurance was obtained with regard the management of temporary posts and contracts. It is clear from the tables noted at 3.9 and 3.15 above that Services are not always fulfilling their responsibility to manage their own temporary posts and contracts. The introduction of an escalation process will give Employee Services a route to highlight to each Head of Service instances of missed deadlines.

Definitions of Assurance Levels:

Substantial	The framework of governance, risk management and control is adequate and effective.
Reasonable	Some improvements are required to enhance the adequacy and effectiveness of the framework of governance, risk management and control.
Limited	There are significant weaknesses in the framework of governance, risk management and control such that it could be or could become inadequate and ineffective.
None	There are fundamental weaknesses in the framework of governance, risk management and control such that it is inadequate and ineffective or is likely to fail.

NB The level of assurance given is at the discretion of Internal Audit.

KEY FINDINGS AND ACTION PLAN
EMPLOYEE SERVICES – TEMPORARY POSTS AND CONTRACTS

Action	a
Finding	Temporary posts are not always being extended even though the post is still in use
Action Description	<p>Employee Services to implement an escalation process which will highlight all posts that are 2 months past their end date to the relevant Head of Service.</p> <p>Services should be reminded of their responsibility for ensuring all temporary posts approaching their end date are considered and extended if necessary.</p>
Risk	Financial risk as services have not confirmed they have the budget to pay for the post
Priority (1, 2, 3)	1
Paragraph Reference	3.5
Managed by	Fiona Walker, Head of People & ICT
Assigned to	Jackie Hamilton, Senior Manager Employee Services
Due Date	<p>Action 1 – Completed</p> <p>Action 2 – 31/3/22</p>
Management Comment	<p>Action 1 – An email will be issued to Directors and Heads of Service advising of the audit findings and requesting that they ensure their managers respond in a timely matter to requests seeking confirmation if a temporary post should cease or be extended</p> <p>Action 2 – Explore the development of an automated report to Heads of Service highlighting posts which expired 3 months prior (3 months allows for processing time of data on both the Service and Resourcing side).</p>

Action	b
Finding	Temporary contracts are not always being extended, even when the employee continues to work for the Council
Action Description	<p>Employee Services to implement an escalation process which will highlight all contracts that are 2 months past their end date to the relevant Head of Service.</p> <p>Services should be reminded of their responsibility for ensuring all temporary contracts approaching their end date are considered and extended if necessary.</p>
Risk	Legal implications arising from employees not having up to date contracts, some temporary employees may be entitled to a permanent contract (dependent upon on meeting certain criteria)
Priority (1, 2, 3)	1
Paragraph Reference	3.9
Managed by	Fiona Walker, Head of People & ICT
Assigned to	Jackie Hamilton, Senior Manager Employee Services
Due Date	<p>Action 1 – Complete</p> <p>Action 2 – 31/3/22</p>
Management Comment	<p>Action 1 – An email will be issued to Directors and Heads of Service advising of the audit findings and requesting that they ensure their managers respond in a timely matter to requests seeking confirmation if a temporary contract should cease or be extended</p> <p>Action 2 – Explore the development of an automated report to Heads of Service highlighting temporary contracts which expired 3 months prior (3 months allows for processing time of data on both the Service and Resourcing side).</p>

Priority Key used in Action Plan

1 (High)	Control weakness where there is a material impact on the achievement of the control objectives, generally requiring prompt attention.
2 (Medium)	Control weakness which needs to be rectified, but where there is no material impact on the achievement of the control objectives.
3 (Low)	Minor weakness or points for improvement.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

1 Background

- 1.1** The Scottish Government aims to make Scotland a zero-waste society with a circular economy. This means maximising the population's demand on primary resources and maximising the reuse, recycling, and recovery of resources, rather than treating them as waste.
- 1.2** The Council has a responsibility to contribute to achieving this national goal by maximising the amount of recycling and reuse within North Ayrshire. The Council does this by offering kerbside recycling schemes for residents and commercial properties, and through Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) which are designed to allow residents to split waste into specific recyclable streams. SEPA records for 2019 record North Ayrshire generating 77.44k tonnes of waste, of this 10.77k (16.62%) is diverted from landfill, 44.73 tonnes (27.03%) landfilled and 44.69K (56.34%) is recycled
- 1.3** There is wide coverage within North Ayrshire with 4 Household Waste Recycling Centres and 22 mixed recycling bank locations. The landfill site is located in Shewalton.
- 1.4** The current targets are to:
- reduce total waste arising in Scotland by 15% against 2011 levels
 - reduce food waste by 33% against 2013 levels
 - recycle 70% of remaining waste
 - Send no more than 5% of remaining waste to landfill

2 Objectives and Scope

- 2.1** The main objectives of this audit were to:
- ensure that contracts relating to recycling are being managed in accordance with Council Standing Orders
 - ensure that reports received from the contractor are reviewed, their accuracy is assessed and that they provide adequate backup to support invoices and transactions
 - ensure that invoices are accurate and controls are in place such that checks are robust
 - ensure that waste management performance is properly recorded, and that information is being used to achieve Scottish Government 2025 targets

3 Findings

Management of Contracts

- 3.1** The treatment and disposal of assorted waste was issued as a mini competition on the Scotland Excel Dynamic Purchasing System for Recyclable and Residual Waste in February 2021. This was broken down into 11 lots. Audit testing confirmed that this process complied with the standing orders on Contracts.

Contractor reporting

- 3.2** Management information recorded on spreadsheets is complex. Using the Microsoft Excel analysis tool Inquire, a detailed check was performed on these spreadsheets to identify any anomalies in formulas. Testing identified some changed formulas; however, investigation confirmed that these reflected the commencement of a contract mid period and the apportionment of charges on another.

Invoicing

- 3.3** Testing on a sample of 12 invoices confirmed accuracy, verified to spreadsheet records held by the service, that they had been reviewed and authorised, and timeously paid within the council's payment target.

Achieving targets

- 3.4** To achieve the Scottish Government's zero waste to landfill targets, North Ayrshire Council along with 4 other local authorities have contracted Viridor to build and manage the Clyde Valley residual waste project located in Bargeddie, North Lanarkshire. This waste is transferred to Viridor's Dunbar Energy Recovery Facility to generate low carbon electricity. During the financial year 20/21 (April to February) over 24,000 tonnes was diverted from landfill in this manner.
- 3.5** With the introduction of purple plastic and glass recycling bins, there was an increase from 2018 to 2019 of over 500 stage 1 complaints, reflecting the difficulties in introducing waste reduction schemes and personal impact. This has now settled down.
- 3.6** The Recycling Improvement Fund will allow local authorities to apply for part of the £70 million available for improvements in recycling in their area. North Ayrshire Council has raised an expression of interest.
- 3.7** July 2022 will see the introduction of the Deposit and Refund scheme, managed by Circularity Scotland. This will encourage the return of cans and bottles via restaurants and shops.

4 Internal Audit Opinion

- 4.1** Overall, substantial assurance was obtained with regard to the management, of contracts, recording of performance and achievement of reducing waste in line with Central Government policy.

Definitions of Assurance Levels:

Substantial	The framework of governance, risk management and control is adequate and effective.
Reasonable	Some improvements are required to enhance the adequacy and effectiveness of the framework of governance, risk management and control.
Limited	There are significant weaknesses in the framework of governance, risk management and control such that it could be or could become inadequate and ineffective.
None	There are fundamental weaknesses in the framework of governance, risk management and control such that it is inadequate and ineffective or is likely to fail.

NB The level of assurance given is at the discretion of Internal Audit.

SUSTAINABILITY PAYMENTS TO CARE PROVIDERS

1 Background

- 1.1** The Scottish Government has made sustainability funding available to support care providers who have been directly financially impacted by Covid.
- 1.2** The Council is responsible for administering this scheme on behalf of the Government.

2 Objectives and Scope

- 2.1** The objective of this audit was to ensure that:-
 - All claims from care providers are being reviewed and assessed against COSLA/Scottish Government guidance
 - sufficient evidence of the review process is being retained

3 Findings

- 3.1** There are 2 main areas being funded under this scheme:-
 - under occupancy in care homes directly due to Covid
 - additional costs being incurred by all social care providers as a result of Covid
- 3.2** COSLA guidance makes it clear that this funding is to be accessed only once providers have exhausted all national and business grants available to them and have also reduced all business costs as much as possible.

Under Occupancy in Care Homes

- 3.3** Care homes are able to claim support for under occupancy only if this is a direct result of Covid.
- 3.4** The % of under occupancy that can be reclaimed has varied throughout the year, in line with changes to the COSLA/Scottish Government guidance.
- 3.5** Under occupancy levels are assessed in comparison to average occupancy during January to March 20 (i.e. pre Covid).
- 3.6** A detailed occupancy calculation spreadsheet is being maintained, which calculates the movement from the baseline for each provider, and the under occupancy payment due, on a month by month basis.
- 3.7** For a sample of 5 care homes, Audit:-
 - confirmed the baseline occupancy figures per the spreadsheet to the original provider submission
 - agreed the calculation of under occupancy and payment due (ensuring the correct % has been used)
 - reviewed the correspondence with the care provider confirming the amount of funding to be provided.
- 3.8** Whilst reviewing the monthly occupancy figures for the sample 5 care homes, several instances of occupancy figures not tying back to the total number of beds in the home were noted. Whilst these errors didn't affect the level of payment due to the provider, there is a risk that they could have.

- 3.9** As a result of this finding, the Service agreed to review all occupancy figures since the scheme began and whilst further errors were identified, none of these had any financial implication for either the care homes or the Council.
- 3.10** The Service added check totals to the spreadsheet to ensure any future errors were timeously identified.

Other costs incurred by Social Care Providers

- 3.11** Care providers can claim support for additional costs that have been incurred due to Covid, with guidance quoting increased staffing costs, sickness costs, PPE and infection control as examples of reasonable costs.
- 3.12** Whilst the guidance gives some examples of additional costs, there is an element of interpretation and judgement required. Council Officers can seek advice and opinions from other councils via the Chief Finance Officers network, or from COSLA.
- 3.13** The team that manage the claims meet weekly to discuss all ongoing claims. This helps to ensure a consistency in the approach to claims. A tracker of the key decisions taken at the meeting is maintained.
- 3.14** A sample of claims from social care providers was selected for detailed testing (with the sample covering claims that had been paid in full, part paid and rejected). A review of the evidence to justify the Council's decision was undertaken.
- 3.15** During the review it was clear that each case had been considered in detail prior to a decision being made, with evidence of:-
- providers being asked for more evidence of expenditure
 - providers being asked to provide copies of management accounts to allow the team to assess whether financial hardship was evident
 - providers being asked in for meetings with the team to clarify claims
 - reasonableness checks being undertaken by comparing claims to the prices that the Council can secure services for
- 3.16** All claims are followed up with a letter from the Council setting out the original claim and explaining what elements the Council is willing to fund, with explanations given for any areas of the claim rejected.
- 3.17** No issues were noted during testing.

4 Internal Audit Opinion

- 4.1** Overall, substantial assurance was obtained with regard to the Council's handling of sustainability claims from social care providers.
- 4.2** Processes are in place to ensure consistency in the treatment of claims. Evidence of detailed reviews being undertaken prior to accepting a claim was available for review.

Definitions of Assurance Levels:

Substantial	The framework of governance, risk management and control is adequate and effective.
Reasonable	Some improvements are required to enhance the adequacy and effectiveness of the framework of governance, risk management and control.
Limited	There are significant weaknesses in the framework of governance, risk management and control such that it could be or could become inadequate and ineffective.
None	There are fundamental weaknesses in the framework of governance, risk management and control such that it is inadequate and ineffective or is likely to fail.

NB The level of assurance given is at the discretion of Internal Audit.

AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS

1 Background

- 1.1 Through the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), the Council assists adults living with illness, disability or frailty to maintain their independence, by offering equipment and adaptations which allow them to continue living in their own homes.
- 1.2 On receipt of a referral, screening and triage will be carried out and if a need is identified, the referral will be allocated to the appropriate team. An Occupational Therapist (OT) will assess the service user and complete an OT specialist request form via the CareFirst system detailing the aids or adaptations required. A senior OT will approve the OT specialist request forms.
- 1.3 Jobs relating to Council tenants will either be carried out by Building Services or an external supplier. If the job is allocated to Building Services, a job is raised on the Building Services URM system.
- 1.4 Owner occupiers and private tenants can apply for financial assistance for aids and adaptations. Grants for Improvement/Repair are given by Local Authorities under a framework set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006. This process requires the applicant to submit 3 quotes to the Council, which will be checked to ensure that the proposal meets their needs. Approval to progress the application will be granted by a Senior OT.

2 Objectives and Scope

- 2.1 The main objectives of this audit were to ensure that:
 - Detailed procedures exist for the Aids and Adaptations process
 - Adequate controls are in place for the assessing and awarding of aids and adaptation jobs for council tenants. In particular, to ensure that the work and payment is properly approved and follow-ups are carried out on a timely basis.
 - Adequate controls are in place for the grant application process for homeowners and private tenants. In particular, to ensure that all paperwork is completed and retained, the work and payment is properly approved and follow-ups are carried out on a timely basis.
 - Appropriate budget monitoring is in place and procurement rules are being followed when appointing contractors to carry out adaptations on behalf of the Council.
- 2.2 The period covered by the audit is 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021.

3 Findings

Aids and Adaptations Process for Council Tenants

- 3.1 The admin team are currently working on standard operating procedures to cover the full process for Council tenants and those completed during the audit were provided to the auditor for review. **(action a)**

- 3.2** The admin team are required to update the budget monitoring spreadsheet, an operational access database and the CareFirst system at each stage of this process for all council tenant jobs. All serve a different purpose. This is very time consuming for staff and increases the risk of keying errors being made. In addition, the access database is not supported by IT Services. **(action b)**
- 3.3** Building Services provided a report from the URM system of all completed and invoiced Aids and Adaptations jobs from 01/04/20 to 31/03/21. This report highlighted that 28% of the jobs were invoiced over a month after the completion date. In addition, 26% of jobs were completed more than 30 days after being logged on the URM system and 15% were completed more than 100 days after being logged.
- 3.4** There were 346 completed jobs on the main budget monitoring spreadsheet for 2020-21 and 1,024 open jobs on this spreadsheet. Some of the open jobs dated back to 2017. During the audit, the Admin Assistant advised that the team has started to monitor the Building Services Work in Progress report which will allow them to be more pro-active in chasing up outstanding jobs. In addition, receiving the completed jobs report will allow the jobs on the spreadsheet to be closed off sooner. Some of the delay can be explained by the restrictions put in place during lockdown.
- 3.5** The auditor selected a sample of 10 jobs. The checks carried out on the follow-up process highlighted that in 5/10 cases the follow up process had not been properly recorded on CareFirst and in 4 of these cases there is no evidence of when the follow-up was carried out. In 3/5 cases where the follow-up was properly requested and recorded on CareFirst, there was a significant delay between the job completion and the follow-up being carried out. **(action c)**
- 3.6** There were 3 cases where the price on the referral or quote is lower than the price charged when the job is keyed to the Building Services URM system. **(action d)**
- 3.7** In addition, there were 2 cases with a major delay between the specialist request form being completed and the job being completed (16 months and 15 months).

Aids and Adaptations Process for Owner Occupiers/Private Tenants

- 3.8** The auditor reviewed the grants budget monitoring spreadsheet for 2020-21 which contained 343 referrals for a grant application and there were 169 forms with an applicant that had not progressed to the next stage. The Clerical Officer advised there is currently no process in place to chase up this paperwork or to close it off if it is no longer required. **(action e)**
- 3.9** The auditor selected a sample of 10 grants marked as complete and paid, to test all relevant paperwork was completed, proper approval was obtained, a follow-up was carried out on a timely basis and CareFirst was updated in line with the Grants Standard Operating Procedure. This testing highlighted the following:
- There were 4 instances where the relevant observation had not been added to CareFirst.
 - There were 4 instances where there was no evidence on CareFirst that a management decision activity was added and received confirming the quotes received from the applicant were approved by the Senior Occupational Therapist.
 - There were 7 instances where a CareFirst activity was not added to request that follow up is undertaken by an Occupational Therapist; however, in all cases, post inspection paperwork was completed by the Occupational Therapist and this

completed paperwork was recorded as an observation on CareFirst by the Clerical Assistant.

- There was only 1 case in the sample that included an increase in price from the original quote and there was no evidence this price variation was recorded and approved on CareFirst. The Clerical Officer advised it would not have progressed without the Senior Occupational Therapist approving the higher price and it must have been approved via email.

(action f)

- 3.10** The auditor tested a sample of 10 transactions from the Improvement Grants Integra general ledger code and found there is an adequate audit trail to allow the payment to be traced back to the grant application using the grant reference. It should be noted that there were 2 sundry payment requests approved by the Development Manager that were above their approval limit of £10,000 (the values were £10,490 and £13,810). The Development Manager was contacted during the audit and advised they should only approve within their agreed limit and if the limit needs to be amended this needs to be agreed by their Head of Service.
- 3.11** The auditor selected a sample of 10 transactions from the Improvement Grants general ledger code to ensure each transaction could be traced to the 2020-21 grants monitoring spreadsheet. In 5/10 cases the transaction could not be traced to this spreadsheet. They were traced to the 2019-20 grants monitoring spreadsheet, but admin advised any jobs not complete at year end should be carried forward to the new year's spreadsheet. **(action g)**

Budget Monitoring and Procurement Rules

- 3.12** Weekly budget meetings are held to discuss the relevant budgets and decide what work can progress. There is currently no reconciliation between the general ledger and the budget monitoring spreadsheets maintained by the admin team. Admin advised they will start doing monthly reconciliations to the ledger for all budget monitoring spreadsheets.
- 3.13** There is a feeder between the Building Services URM system and Integra to recharge aids and adaptations jobs to the correct ledger code. The feeder is set to consolidate the total per finance code so each individual transaction cannot be traced to Integra, making a reconciliation difficult. For the Aids and Adaptations Building Services reconciliation to be carried out, the team should consult with Building Services to set up the correct reports from the URM system to assist with this reconciliation. **(action h)**
- 3.14** The auditor reviewed the Integra approval plans for purchase orders relating to all requisition points used by the Independent Living Services team. This check identified 2 employees that have left the Council and 1 employee that has moved jobs. This has been passed to the HSCP service representative and the Development Officer to rectify. **(action i)**

4 Internal Audit Opinion

- 4.1** Overall, limited assurance was obtained with regard to the aids and adaptations process. An area of concern is the delay in a follow-up being carried out and the lack of evidence that a follow-up has been carried out.

Definitions of Assurance Levels:

Substantial	The framework of governance, risk management and control is adequate and effective.
Reasonable	Some improvements are required to enhance the adequacy and effectiveness of the framework of governance, risk management and control.
Limited	There are significant weaknesses in the framework of governance, risk management and control such that it could be or could become inadequate and ineffective.
None	There are fundamental weaknesses in the framework of governance, risk management and control such that it is inadequate and ineffective or is likely to fail.

NB The level of assurance given is at the discretion of Internal Audit.

KEY FINDINGS AND ACTION PLAN AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS

Action	a
Finding	The admin team are currently working on standard operating procedures to cover the full process for Council tenants and those completed during the audit were provided to the auditor for review.
Action Description	The admin team should ensure that all areas of this process are documented in standard operating procedures and issued to all relevant members of the team.
Risk	Inconsistent approach by staff, possible key tasks not being carried out and lack of business continuity if staff familiar with the process are not available.
Priority (1, 2, 3)	2
Paragraph Reference	3.1
Managed by	David Thomson, Head of Service (Health & Community Care)
Assigned to	Lynn Kirkland, Business Development Officer
Due Date	31 December 2021
Management Comment	The team are aware of the importance of this, and currently working through standard operating procedures to cover all areas of this process. These will be disseminated to the full team once complete.

Action	b
Finding	The admin team are required to update the budget monitoring spreadsheet, an operational access database and the CareFirst system at each stage of this process for all council tenant jobs. In addition, the access database is not supported by IT Services.
Action Description	The team should liaise with the Transformation team to streamline this part of the process and reduce the number of times the same information must be keyed.
Risk	Inefficient use of staff time and increased risk of keying errors.
Priority (1, 2, 3)	2
Paragraph Reference	3.2
Managed by	David Thomson, Head of Service (Health & Community Care)
Assigned to	Lynn Kirkland, Business Development Officer
Due Date	31 December 2021
Management Comment	This issue is being addressed through the work with the transformation team. This to be a key change of process to avoid incorrect spend taking place and to assist with reducing under / over projection. If use of spreadsheet to continue, consistency of use between staff will be key; making the spreadsheet tamper proof in terms of data input and deletion and training regards Pivots etc may help. Use of access database and interface with other systems is being reviewed as part of the transformation team work.

Action	c
Finding	The checks carried out on the follow-up process highlighted that in 5/10 cases the follow up process had not been properly recorded on CareFirst and in 4 of these cases there is no evidence of when the follow-up was carried out. In 3/5 cases where the follow-up was properly requested and recorded on CareFirst, there was a significant delay between the job completion and the follow-up being carried out.
Action Description	Staff should be reminded to request follow-up via a CareFirst activity, the OT should be reminded to record the outcome of the follow-up on CareFirst and there should be monitoring to ensure follow-up is carried out in a timely manner.
Risk	Clients aids or adaptations have not been checked to ensure they meet the client's needs, and the clients may be struggling to manage the new equipment.
Priority (1, 2, 3)	1
Paragraph Reference	3.5
Managed by	David Thomson, Head of Service (Health & Community Care)
Assigned to	Alan Rew/Elaine Dodds/Nicola Dowse, Senior Occupational Therapists
Due Date	31/ 10/2021
Management Comment	Staff will be reminded via all staff email, and individually via supervision of need for follow up process to be followed, and for such contact to be documented within Carefirst in line with local and professional standards.

Action	d
Finding	There were 3 cases where the price on the referral or quote is lower than the price charged when the job is keyed to the Building Services URM system.
Action Description	The admin team should query the reason for the price difference before the job progresses.
Risk	Unauthorised financial expenditure.
Priority (1, 2, 3)	2
Paragraph Reference	3.6
Managed by	David Thomson, Head of Service (Health & Community Care)
Assigned to	Lynn Kirkland, Business Development Officer
Due Date	31/10/2021
Management Comment	Adaptation's admin team are no longer approving quotes that exceed the original quote. Adaptations Team will work jointly with building services colleagues to agree standard operating procedure to enable appropriate authorisations and minimise duplication and inefficiency

Action	e
Finding	There were 169 forms with the applicant that had not progressed to the next stage.
Action Description	Consideration should be given to implementing a process to chase up applications sent out, to determine if the application should be progressed or closed off as no longer required.
Risk	A client is continuing to struggle without the aids or adaptations required to maintain their independence.
Priority (1, 2, 3)	2
Paragraph Reference	3.8
Managed by	David Thomson, Head of Service (Health & Community Care)
Assigned to	Lynn Kirkland, Business Development Officer; and Alan Rew, Senior Occupational Therapist
Due Date	31/10/2021
Management Comment	It is worth highlighting that the legislation details that clients have a year to complete works once approved. We will, however, consider potential for alternative process and support with this part of process, including role of 3 rd sector. We will review and update admin processes to cleanse lists and keep up to date.

Action	f
Finding	The auditor selected a sample of 10 grants marked as complete and paid. This testing highlighted several instances where CareFirst was not updated in line with the Grants Standard Operating Procedure, particularly in relation to no evidence of a management decision for the review of quotes to allow the job to progress.
Action Description	Relevant staff should be reminded to update CareFirst with observations and activities in line with the Grants Standard Operating Procedure.
Risk	Lack of evidence on CareFirst for approval of quotes to allow the job to progress.
Priority (1, 2, 3)	2
Paragraph Reference	3.9
Managed by	David Thomson, Head of Service (Health & Community Care)
Assigned to	Alistair Reid, AHP Senior Manager
Due Date	31/10/2021
Management Comment	Senior OT staff responsible for approvals and documentation of these will be reminded via supervision of need for agreed process to be followed, and for such contact to be documented within Carefirst in line with local and professional standards.

Action	g
Finding	The auditor selected a sample of 10 transactions from the Improvement Grants general ledger code to ensure each transaction could be traced to the 2020-21 grants monitoring spreadsheet. In 5/10 cases the transaction could not be traced to this spreadsheet.
Action Description	Admin staff should be reminded that any jobs not complete and paid at year end should be carried forward to the new year's grants monitoring spreadsheet.
Risk	Inaccurate figures for budget monitoring.
Priority (1, 2, 3)	3
Paragraph Reference	3.11
Managed by	David Thomson, Head of Service (Health & Community Care)
Assigned to	Lynn Kirkland, Business Development Officer
Due Date	31/10/2021
Management Comment	Plan now in place with SOP to support a consistent approach to this. This is being progressed via Transformation team work.

Action	h
Finding	There is a feeder between the Building Services URM system and Integra to recharge aids and adaptations jobs to the correct ledger code. The feeder is set to consolidate the total per finance code so each individual transaction cannot be traced to Integra, making a reconciliation difficult.
Action Description	For the Aids and Adaptations Building Services reconciliation to be carried out, the team should consult with Building Services to set up the correct reports from the URM system to assist with this reconciliation.
Risk	Lack of audit trail for Integra transaction.
Priority (1, 2, 3)	3
Paragraph Reference	3.13
Managed by	David Thomson, Head of Service (Health & Community Care)
Assigned to	Lynn Kirkland, Business Development Officer
Due Date	31/10/2021
Management Comment	Team will work jointly with building services colleagues to agree standard operating procedure to request correct reports as outlined above.

Action	i
Finding	The auditor reviewed the Integra approval plans for purchase orders relating to all requisition points used by the Independent Living Services team. This check identified 2 employees that have left the Council and 1 employee that has moved jobs.
Action Description	The approval plan should be updated.
Risk	Delays in purchase orders being approved. Inappropriate approval of purchase orders by someone who no longer works in the team.
Priority (1, 2, 3)	2
Paragraph Reference	3.14
Managed by	David Thomson, Head of Service (Health & Community Care)
Assigned to	Lynn Kirkland, Business Development Officer; and Lorraine Dyet, Team Manager HCC – Comm Care Serv
Due Date	Complete
Management Comment	Review completed of personnel and approval limits across the various budgets, to ensure the appropriate approvals of purchase orders.

Priority Key used in Action Plan

1 (High)	Control weakness where there is a material impact on the achievement of the control objectives, generally requiring prompt attention.
2 (Medium)	Control weakness which needs to be rectified, but where there is no material impact on the achievement of the control objectives.
3 (Low)	Minor weakness or points for improvement.

PROCUREMENT CARDS

1 Background

- 1.1 North Ayrshire Council uses purchase cards provided by the Royal Bank of Scotland. All transactions are recorded via the bank's transaction system, Smart Data Online (SDOL). The cardholder, approver and card controller all have access to SDOL, where they should review and approve their expenditure as well as providing an appropriate description.
- 1.2 To allow an overview of spend prior to and during COVID 19 restrictions, audit testing was carried out on procurement card transactions in the period 2018 through to March 2021. Spend analysis was completed using Microsoft Power Pivot and Power BI. Due to the large amount of data reviewed, most analysis was carried out in calendar rather than financial years.

2 Objectives and Scope

- 2.1 The main objectives of the audit were to ensure that:
- Procurement cards are being used in compliance with procedures
 - Adequate controls are in place to prevent invoices being paid via procurement card, and ensure card transactions are within set limits, only valid Council purchases are made and on contract spend via card is agreed and monitored

3 Findings

- 3.1 The procedures and guidance documentation have been recently updated, reflecting previous audit advice.
- 3.2 There are 375 cardholders, 92 of whom are imprest holders. Procurement have realigned credit limits to standard amounts and identified accounts to be closed.
- 3.3 Training is carried out online; from 2016, 153 people have completed the approver course and 47 have completed the cardholder course. Audit selected a random sample of ten procurement card holders of which only four responded. Survey responses revealed that three of these card holders did not know their single and monthly transaction limits. **(Action a)**
- 3.4 Analysis of online purchases indicated deliveries from all over the world highlighting the fact that when purchasing online, there is often no indication of the origin of the items being purchased. Amazon purchases in 2021 have increased in number from 2019 by 8,000 transactions with a total value of £516,007. **(Action b)**
- 3.5 Procurement guidance state that procurement cards must not be used for transactions made over the internet through intermediary payment agencies such as PayPal, WorldPay, or similar payment organisations. Crown Commercial Service has recognised there are serious implications regarding the use of such payment intermediaries. Audit analysis of PayPal transactions have averaged £14k each year from 2018, in the first 4 months of 2021 there had been 52 transactions valued at £14,666. **(Action c)**

- 3.6** Procurement card statements for the 6-month period 28th April 2020 to 28th October 2020 totalled £3,220,110. Each statement is paid by Direct Debit at the beginning of the next month. Finance reconcile statements and complete monthly journals to the relevant budget. Procurement card purchases are not matched to the relevant budget till this process is completed. The Corporate Procurement team email individuals to expediate review time. Analysis of time taken to review and authorise transactions identified that over £200k is late in being reviewed and authorised. **(Action d)**
- 3.7** Procurement card spend averaged £5.5m for the financial periods 2018/19 and 2019/20. During the COVID 19 period 2020/21, spend reduced by £1m. Place usually accounts for 60% of spend; however, in the last financial year both Chief Executive's and Health & Social Care Partnership have incurred increased expenditure.
- 3.8** There were 7,693 cash transactions totalling £504,241. Where cash has been withdrawn from a bank cash machine, a cash advance fee is charged. There were 1,601 cash withdrawals incurring a cash advance fee of £14,419.
- 3.9** The audit period included COVID 19 spend, and 536 related purchases were identified with a value of £286,957.

4 Internal Audit Opinion

- 4.1** Overall, limited assurance was obtained with regard to controls around procurement cards. No fraud was found during audit testing; however, the actions identified will help tighten controls around procurement cards and empower procurement to ensure compliance with procedures.
- 4.2** Spend and compliance with the procedures lies with the services; using data analytics will help Corporate Procurement to track noncompliance and provide a reporting tool that will provide consistency of information and enhance value for money purchasing.

Definitions of Assurance Levels:

Substantial	The framework of governance, risk management and control is adequate and effective.
Reasonable	Some improvements are required to enhance the adequacy and effectiveness of the framework of governance, risk management and control.
Limited	There are significant weaknesses in the framework of governance, risk management and control such that it could be or could become inadequate and ineffective.
None	There are fundamental weaknesses in the framework of governance, risk management and control such that it is inadequate and ineffective or is likely to fail.

NB The level of assurance given is at the discretion of Internal Audit.

KEY FINDINGS AND ACTION PLAN PROCUREMENT CARDS

Action	a
Finding	Online training is available, many procurement cards holders have completed their training in previously held face-to-face sessions. Evidence obtained during the audit showed that there was a lack of awareness of limits for single and monthly transactions.
Action Description	Refresher training/guidance should be put in place for all employees for every three years, this will ensure that there is evidence of awareness.
Risk	Employees are unaware of procedural changes or have developed working practices which put the council at financial, contractual, or reputational risk.
Priority (1, 2, 3)	2
Paragraph Reference	3.3
Managed by	Mark Boyd, Head of Service (Finance)
Assigned to	Anne Lyndon, Senior Manager (Corporate Procurement)
Due Date	31/12/21
Management Comment	This should be a mandatory course for all Pcard holders/approvers and should be administered by HR, as with other mandatory courses. A questionnaire document will be issued to all Pcard holders/users to assess their current training status and those who have not completed the appropriate on-line training course requested to do so as soon as possible. This process will be completed prior to the issue of new cards on an ongoing basis with non-completion of the course resulting in a delay in new Pcards being issued to users.

Action	b
Finding	Online purchases do not indicate where items are being delivered from and analysis of procurement trends is difficult.
Action Description	Procurement should make use of Power suite analysis tools available on Microsoft Excel (PowerPivot and Power BI) to identify and monitor procurement trends and track online spend.
Risk	There is no overview of items purchased and value for money is not achieved. The council's carbon footprint is not managed. Ethical procurement practices are not followed, and the council is subject to reputational damage. The ease of procuring items online increases the risk that on contract items are purchased.
Priority (1, 2, 3)	1
Paragraph Reference	3.4
Managed by	Mark Boyd, Head of Service (Finance)
Assigned to	Anne Lyndon, Senior Manager (Corporate Procurement)
Due Date	30.12.21
Management Comment	eProcurement will work with IT to develop some Power BI reports to help identify procurement trends and track online spend patterns.

Action	c
Finding	Purchases made on unsafe sites.
Action Description	Using reporting tools procurement should track online transactions and notify users where these are with unsafe third-party suppliers. Where these transactions have been made with procurement authorisation, then a register is held of what the transaction, location and card details have been used. In the event that these accounts are used without authority, appropriate action is taken.
Risk	Council loses control of its data and is unaware where it is stored. The card details are not protected and could be used or sold on. Refunds cannot be completed.
Priority (1, 2, 3)	3
Paragraph Reference	3.5
Managed by	Mark Boyd, Head of Service (Finance)
Assigned to	Anne Lyndon, Senior Manager (Corporate Procurement)
Due Date	30.12.21
Management Comment	eProcurement will issue a reminder to all Pcard users that payments are not permitted to PayPal and Worldpay. The reminder will also state that purchasing from Amazon and eBay is only permitted in exceptional circumstances and must be pre-approved from Procurement. Procurement will monitor the usage quarterly and report to Senior Managers for review and action.

Action	d
Finding	Transactions should be reviewed and approved within 28 days. There are currently considerable delays in this process being completed resulting in budget lines not being timeously updated. Procurement emails the individual which does not always quickly resolve the issue.
Action Description	Corporate Procurement should ensure that there is an escalation process in place for transactions which have not been approved and approved within the set timescales and monitor to ensure that this is being followed. Each service should provide an escalation contact who has sufficient authority to resolve the issue and respond. If the status of a transaction is a refund or incomplete order this should be recorded and tracked
Risk	Budget lines are not updated in time and over/underspends are not identified. Transactions are not recorded in the correct time period. Fraudulent activities remain undetected for long periods of time.
Priority (1, 2, 3)	1
Paragraph Reference	3.6
Managed by	Mark Boyd, Head of Service (Finance)
Assigned to	Anne Lyndon, Senior Manager (Corporate Procurement)
Due Date	31.09.21 to develop report and send first report to Senior Managers.
Management Comment	eProcurement will develop an escalation report for Senior Managers to review and action outstanding transactions. The report will be provided quarterly and any individuals who persistently do not reconcile transaction timeously may potentially have their PCard withdrawn.

Priority Key used in Action Plan

1 (High)	Control weakness where there is a material impact on the achievement of the control objectives, generally requiring prompt attention.
2 (Medium)	Control weakness which needs to be rectified, but where there is no material impact on the achievement of the control objectives.
3 (Low)	Minor weakness or points for improvement.

NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

14 September 2021

Audit and Scrutiny Committee

Title:	Internal Audit and Corporate Fraud Action Plans: Quarter 1 update
Purpose:	To advise the Audit and Scrutiny Committee on the progress made by Council Services in implementing the agreed actions from Internal Audit and Corporate Fraud reports as at 30 June 2021.
Recommendation:	That the Committee (a) notes the current position with the implementation of Internal Audit and Corporate Fraud actions; and (b) challenges those Services that have not implemented actions within the previously agreed timescales.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The CIPFA document 'Audit Committee Principles in Local Authorities in Scotland' highlights that Audit Committees should monitor and review the progress made in implementing audit recommendations.
- 1.2 Service managers are responsible for ensuring that agreed actions arising from Internal Audit and Corporate Fraud reviews are implemented. This provides assurance that identified control weaknesses have been addressed and are being managed effectively.
- 1.3 All actions are monitored on the Pentana system and service managers are responsible for updating Pentana as they progress each action. This enables Internal Audit to monitor progress on a 'real-time' basis and address any delays in implementation.
- 1.4 This report details the position at 30 June 2021.

2. Background

- 2.1 The last report to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee on 1 June 2021 highlighted that there were 27 actions outstanding at the end of March 2021: 11 that had not been started or were only partially implemented and 16 where the due date had not yet passed.
- 2.2 In addition to these 27 'carried forward' actions, there have been 22 new actions agreed, giving a total of 49 action points for review.

- 2.3 Services have completed 22 actions since the last report. All Council Services are required to retain evidence of work carried out in completing their actions and Internal Audit carries out 'spot-checks' on a sample of completed actions on an ongoing basis.
- 2.4 Of the remaining 27 actions, five were either not started or only partially complete at 30 June and the remaining 22 were not due for completion until after that date.
- 2.5 Appendix 1 to this report provides the Committee with full details of the five actions that were not complete within the agreed timescales.

3. Proposals

- 3.1 It is proposed that the Committee (a) notes the current position with the implementation of Internal Audit and Corporate Fraud actions; and (b) challenges those Services that have not implemented actions within the previously agreed timescales.

4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial

- 4.1 None.

Human Resources

- 4.2 None.

Legal

- 4.3 None.

Equality/Socio-economic

- 4.4 None.

Environmental and Sustainability

- 4.5 None.

Key Priorities

- 4.6 The effective implementation of agreed Internal Audit and Corporate Fraud actions helps to support the efficient delivery of the strategic priorities within the Council Plan 2019-2024.

Community Wealth Building

- 4.7 None.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 Council Services are consulted during the completion of each Internal Audit and Corporate Fraud review and have also provided updates on progress made in implementing action points.

Mark Boyd
Head of Service (Finance)

For further information please contact **Laura Miller, Senior Manager (Audit, Fraud, Safety and Insurance)**, on **01294-324524**.

Background Papers

None.

Actions due by 30th June 2021 but not started or partially complete

Code	CFT2250b	Description	The Service should identify and recover any overpayment by the Council to the care provider		
Priority	2	Latest Note	Payment not yet settled as provider is disputing payment. A further meeting has been arranged with the provider to resolve. Anticipated completion date 30 th September 2021.		
Progress Bar	<div><div>90%</div></div>	Original Due Date	31-Dec-2020	Due Date	30-Jun-2021
Parent Code & Title	CFT2250 Allegation against contracted care provider			Managed By	Caroline Cameron
				Assigned To	Caroline Cameron

Code	IA2017PA020b	Description	Data protection information awareness for schools training should be agreed and implemented as soon as possible.		
Priority	1	Latest Note	This training cannot be carried out until school staff are allowed to sit in a meeting due to COVID. Estimated completion date April 2022.		
Progress Bar	<div><div>94%</div></div>	Original Due Date	01-Jun-2018	Due Date	30-Jun-2021
Parent Code & Title	IA2017PA020 Email Controls In Education			Managed By	Andrew McClelland
				Assigned To	Rosslyn Lee

Code	IA2019PA014b	Description	Social Work Resources should complete and publish the ' HSCP Eligibility for Transport Assistance' Policy.		
Priority	2	Latest Note	Meeting taking place in the next few weeks to review this policy. Following that, it will then go through the Health and Social Care Partnership governance structures. Sign off is expected by October.		
Progress Bar	<div><div>75%</div></div>	Original Due Date	31-Mar-2019	Due Date	30-Jun-2021
Parent Code & Title	IA2019PA014 Transportation			Managed By	Thelma Bowers
				Assigned To	Jan Thomson

Code	IA2020PA031c	Description	<p>Audit Action: A risk analysis to identify all the potential issues with moving from PCs to tablets and other portable devices should be undertaken. Options to mitigate these risks should be investigated before going ahead with the rollout.</p> <p>Audit Finding: There are new risks to the Service which need to be considered when planning a move from PC suites to tablets.</p> <p>Risk: Theft of tablets; loss of corporate browser filtering allows inappropriate or illegal activities to be undertaken using Council IT facilities</p>		
Priority	2	Latest Note	A risk analysis has been created for individual laptop use connected to the public network and approved by Audit on 22/7/21. Library and Information Service are liaising with IT Services to develop a risk analysis for using laptops with the public wi-fi in a group setting, with a deadline of 30/9/21.		
Progress Bar	<div><div>50%</div></div>	Original Due Date	31-Mar-2021	Due Date	30-Jun-2021
Parent Code & Title	IA2020PA031 Library and Information Service			Managed By	Rhona Arthur
				Assigned To	Heather Benson; Alison McAllister

Code	IA2021PA014a(2)	Description	Audit Action: Detailed written procedures should be completed for system users within Education. Audit Finding: Written procedures are not available for users of ParentPay Risk: Errors are made due to a lack of written guidance for ParentPay users; inconsistent approach when dealing with pupil debt		
Priority	2	Latest Note	This project is co-dependent on the procurement and implementation of the new cashless catering system- currently scheduled for Oct 21. The revised completion date is October 2021.		
Progress Bar	<div><div>50%</div></div>	Original Due Date	31-May-2021	Due Date	31-May-2021
Parent Code & Title	IA2021PA014 Facilities Management ParentPay System			Managed By	Andrew McClelland
				Assigned To	Lynn Taylor

14th September 2021**The Audit and Scrutiny Committee**

Title: **Council Plan Progress Update – Year End 2020-21****Purpose:** To advise the Audit and Scrutiny Committee on our progress on the priorities set within our 2019-24 Council Plan and provide an update on our response to the Covid-19 pandemic as at March 2021.**Recommendation:** That the Audit and Scrutiny Committee agrees to: (a) Note the progress of the Council Plan as at 31st March 2021 including replacement of an indicator (section 4.6) and target amendment (section 4.8); and (b) note our response to the Covid-19 pandemic so far.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Our Council Plan 2019-24 Progress Update (Year End 2020-21) and accompanying appendices provide detailed information on the progress being made towards our strategic priority outcomes and includes key highlights, areas of focus, case studies and best in class examples. It provides an overview of performance in the six months up to 31st March 2021.

2. Background

- 2.1 [Our Council Plan 2019-24](#) was approved by Council on 26th June 2019 and sets out our vision and priorities for five years. [Community Wealth Building](#) is central to our activities so we can provide the best outcomes for our residents in North Ayrshire.
- 2.2 Our Council Plan 2019-24 Progress Update (End-Year 2020-21) (Appendix One) provides details of our progress for each of the priorities – Aspiring Communities, Inspiring Place and a Council for the Future. The update also provides key highlights, areas of focus, case studies and best in class examples.
- 2.3 The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has been captured separately as at 23rd March 2021, one year since the start of the first lockdown. This report “Supporting North Ayrshire Together – An Update on Our Response to the Coronavirus Pandemic” complements the half-year report and is included in Appendix Two. It was produced following a request from the Audit and Scrutiny Committee for an update on our response for their meeting on 1st June 2021. Care was taken to ensure as far as possible updates relating to our response, rather than the delivery of our Council Plan, were included in the report.
- 2.4 In order to provide a full overview and enable effective scrutiny of our performance during the last six months of 2020-21, the Council Plan Progress Update Report should be viewed alongside the “Supporting North Ayrshire Together” March 2021 report.

- 2.5 As we enter a period of recovery and renewal and our response to the pandemic and recovery becomes embedded in our activities, reporting during 2021-22 will return to the standard Council Plan reporting. Our response to the pandemic and recovery will be woven throughout these reports rather than separately.

3. Performance Summary

3.1 Key Highlights

- Our response to the Covid-19 Coronavirus pandemic has been the principle focus in terms of what we have provided and how our partners have responded. From September to March this included:
 - 33,152 calls received by our Community Hubs and 96,465 food deliveries made.
 - 60,000 shopping vouchers worth £1.7million provided to children eligible for free school meals.
 - 3,194 pieces of IT equipment such as Chrome Books, iPads, Wi-Fi routers and SIMs provided to our pupils to access online learning.
 - An average of 1,002 children were cared for at our Childcare Hubs during January and February.
 - Over four million items of PPE were supplied including over one million masks during the year.
 - £14million of grants has been distributed to local businesses since September. This is in addition to £24.16million of business grants and £312,000 of newly self-employed hardship grants provided to our residents during the first six months of the pandemic.
 - We contributed to national projects such as the Carnegie UK Trust's Covid-19 and Communities Listening Project.
 - Our first fully online Joint Cabinet saw 110 of our young people share their views alongside our Council Cabinet, senior officers, Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament and the Youth Council Executive.
 - We assisted 285 residents into employment.
 - We supported our workforce's wellbeing to ensure they could continue to provide high quality services including through the introduction of Wellbeing Warriors, employees trained in mental health first aid, to support colleagues and Health and Wellbeing Hubs for care teams.
- The £251million Ayrshire Growth Deal was ratified.
- Our Community Wealth Building Anchor Charter has been launched.
- A £3million Ayrshire Growth Deal Community Wealth Building Fund was approved.
- A £500,000 Green Jobs Fund to support North Ayrshire's Economic Recovery and Renewal Approach was approved in partnership with the North Ayrshire Ventures Trust (NAVT). The fund provides financial intervention of up to £10,000 for each business to support the creation of green jobs, address climate change and support Community Wealth Building.
- Our Cost of the School Day initiative was introduced which will see £500,000 invested annually to help local families.
- We confirmed we will deliver 1,140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare provision from August 2021, following substantial work to complete 25 projects to ensure we provide inspiring and safe places for our children.
- £188,546 has been awarded from the Community Investment Fund including:
 - £45,226 to support the Young People's Mental Health Project led by Arran Youth Foundation and Arran High School Parent Council.
 - £43,320 for Ardrossan Community Sports Hub to establish a community gym at the Seafield School site.
 - £100,000 for Raise Your Voice With Ardeer to support the establishment of a community hub at the Beach Park, Stevenson.
- We launched our Food Growing Strategy in order to provide access to food with dignity and increase food security for our most vulnerable residents.

- We implemented the Young Person's Suicide Support Pathway as a preventative and early intervention approach to supporting vulnerable young people who have made a significant attempt to take their own life.
- We commenced our multi-million-pound council housing development in October 2020 at Irvine harbourside which is complemented by the £14million plans to develop the Great Harbour at Irvine, through the Ayrshire Growth Deal. Once complete the site will provide 24 general needs homes, eight wheelchair suitable homes, 11 amenity bungalows and 28 homes within a sheltered housing complex.
- Cabinet approved the development of a £6.768m solar PV farm installation at Nethermains former landfill site.
- Our flood protection schemes are progressing despite the pandemic, with work on the Upper Garnock Valley Flood Protection Scheme on schedule. Work has begun in two locations near Kilbirnie and is due to begin in Glengarnock and Dalry with overall completion estimated for April 2022. In addition, the final Millport Flood Protection Scheme was approved by Cabinet in November.
- We have progressed all four recommendations from our very positive Best Value Assurance Audit published in June 2020.

3.2 Areas of Focus

We will:





- Present findings from our review into Libraries, Community Halls and Lets to Council for approval.
- Welcome the opening of our Additional Support Needs school at Lockhart Campus.
- Implement universal free school meals for primary four pupils commencing in August 2021 and plan for the roll out to further primary year groups by August 2022.
- Launch our Cost of the School Day Conference and policy in June.
- Implement the £500k Business Transition Fund and Green Route Map to support businesses.
- Continue to implement the 'Better Off Hub' demonstrator project to provide holistic financial support for our residents.
- Implement the funding of over 450 jobs as part of our Kickstart programme.
- Continue to adapt our proactive and reactive Protective Services to deal directly with Covid-19 as well as reintroducing, on a risk based and nationally guided approach, other critical public safety services such as food premises inspections.
- Work with communities to develop two Island Plans for Arran and Cumbrae as part of the Islands Recovery and Renewal Pilot, including the publication of a Cumbrae socio-economic profile to inform the Cumbrae Island Plan.
- Progress major projects across the Housing and General Services Capital programmes.
- As part of the Ayrshire Growth Deal:
 - Progress plans to launch the Digital Process Manufacturing Centre (DPMC) as part of the programme of development at i3, Irvine.
 - Develop detailed plans for the first phases of development at Great Harbour.
 - Develop a strategic proposition for Hunterston Strategic Development Area with a wide range of public and private sector stakeholders.
- Progress the Sheltered Housing Re-provisioning Programme, which includes the refurbishment of the remaining sheltered housing complexes across North Ayrshire.
- Progress Garnock Valley projects from the Estate Based Regeneration Programme to rehome residents and regenerate 48 flatted properties.
- Progress the development of c£150m of projects as part of the Ardrossan Coastal Quarter including proactively engaging with Scottish Government to progress Ardrossan Harbour proposals to tender stage and progressing proposals to develop the International Marine Science Centre (IMSE).
- Develop the communication plan for climate change awareness prior to the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in November.

- We will roll out a new cashless catering and online payment system later this year for school meals.
- Develop Our Future Working Environment project as part of our Renewal Programme, to ensure we learn from current working practices and continue to deliver high quality services to our residents and businesses.
- Provide recovery and renewal support to communities through bids to the UK Government Levelling Up Fund to support regeneration and cultural assets and act as the lead authority to submit bids to the UK Government Community Renewal Fund on behalf of local partners.

4. Performance Indicators

- 4.1 Appendix Three details Performance Indicators from the Council Plan Performance Framework, showing (where available) targets and a traffic light (**Red**, **Amber**, **Green**) symbol to show whether: the target level of performance has been achieved (**Green**); is slightly adrift of target (**Amber**); or is significantly adrift of target (**Red**).
- 4.2 Analysis of the indicators is outlined in Table 1 below. Where data is not available for 2020-21, the most recently available data up to the annual figure for 2019-20 is used. 78.1% of indicators where the status is known are on target or slightly adrift of target. This is slightly below the previous year, when 80.7% of indicators had this status, however fewer indicators had data available at time of reporting that year.

Table 1

2020-21 Summary of Performance Indicator Status		
Traffic Light	2020-21	2019-20
 on target	19 (59.4%*)	18 (69.2%**)
 slightly adrift	6 (18.7%*)	3 (11.5%**)
 significantly adrift	7 (21.9%*)	5 (19.2%**)
 status unknown or data only	2 (5.9% of all Council Plan indicators)	8 (22.2% of all Council Plan indicators)

*of the 32 indicators where status is known

**of the 26 indicators where status was known

- 4.3 Of the two indicators where status is unknown or data only, CP_04 “Percentage of children achieving their developmental milestones at the time the child starts primary school”, will not be updated for the 2019/20 time period (most recent available) as the data was not collected nationally during that academic year due to Covid-19.
- 4.4 **Data Updated – CP_08 % of Children living in poverty (after housing costs)**
The nationally sourced data calculation method for this indicator changed in 2019 and a further data refresh was released in May 2021. The May 2021 data updated historical data back to 2014/15 and our information on Pentana, our corporate performance management system, has been updated in line with this, however no current or historical statuses have changed as a result.
- 4.5 The refresh provides a much more accurate source of information as prior to 2020, estimates of local child poverty rates in the UK had not been able to draw on direct calculations of incomes at local area level. The new calculation looks directly at most of the income sources

reported for tax, tax credit and benefit purposes and can therefore be considered at a very local level. The effect of housing costs was modelled by area on child poverty rates, by looking at household survey data alongside statistics on private rent levels by local area.

4.6 Data Updated - CP_10 - % of procurement spent on local enterprises

This indicator reflects the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) calculation of local procurement spend. Prior to the most recent release of LGBF data, we used a provisional figure at Quarter Two reporting which was based on the same comprehensive spend source. As a result, the figure for 2019/20 has been amended from 19.94% to 16.65% to reflect the LGBF calculation of procurement spend on local enterprises. However, we are aware that the LGBF calculation excludes certain spend, most notably it excludes all supplier spend below £1,000 and excludes all suppliers not categorised as core trade organisations. This is therefore not an accurate reflection of the economic activity within North Ayrshire. As we have access to the source data used by the LGBF we are able to capture all spend data and refine the calculation at a local level to better capture our spend with local enterprises and shorten the time delay in reporting. As a result, it is proposed we replace the CP_10 LGBF indicator within the Council Plan with a new version based on our own calculations (CP_10a). This shows procurement spend with local enterprises as 19.98% for 2019/20. The annual spend analysis for 2020/21 will be available in the next quarter reporting.

4.7 Data Updated – CP_34 Employee Engagement Level – Council Wide

2018/19 status amended to “unknown” as no survey was planned to take place that year. The status from the survey conducted the previous year had been used. The reporting approach is now in line with other Council Plan indicators.

4.8 2023/24 Target Amendment Request – CP_02 Council budget directed via participatory budgeting methods

The current target for 2023/24 is 2%, however it is proposed this is reduced to 1.5% due to the coronavirus pandemic and the associated changes in public sector finances.

4.9 We are the only local authority meeting the Scottish Government and COSLA target of 1% at 2021 (our 2020/21 figure was 1.13% and 1.11% in 2019/20). Additionally, [in a joint letter to local authorities in January](#), the Scottish Government and COSLA confirmed a more flexible approach to the 1% target due to the pandemic, illustrating how ambitious we continue to be with the proposed target of 1.5% in the current environment.

5. Delivery Plan

5.1 There are 41 overall actions within the Council Plan. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic a Delivery Plan for 2020-21 featuring sub-actions was not produced. (Previously in 2019-20 there were 116 sub-actions supporting the overall actions.)




5.2 The Corporate Policy, Performance and Elections team have worked with services to gain an understanding of progress against the Council Plan overall actions and provide an estimate of performance status. This included considering information available through Council Plan Progress and Supporting North Ayrshire Together reports. This is attached in Appendix Four.

5.3 In two cases, an overall action would technically be marked as amber on the Pentana system due to an amber (slightly adrift of target) sub-action extending from 2019-20 to year end 2020-21. However, after reviewing information it is felt these sub-actions were superseded by the work with communities in response to the pandemic during 2020-21 and to set these two actions as amber wouldn't present a fair or accurate reflection of the performance of services involved. As a result, it is proposed the statuses of the following two overall actions are set to green (on target) for 2020-21:

- CP_17 We will work with partners to support our vulnerable residents and communities.
- CP_16 We will work with individuals and communities to support positive lifestyle choices which improve health and wellbeing.

5.4 Including the above overall actions as green, based on information available 95.1% of actions are either on target or slightly adrift of target at 2020-21 year end compared to 100% in 2019-20.

Table 2

2020-21 Summary of Overall Action Status		
Traffic Light	2020-21	2019-20
 on target	34 (82.9%)	28 (68.3%)
 slightly adrift	5 (12.2%)	13 (31.7%)
 significantly adrift	1 (2.4%)	0
X off programme*	1 (2.4% of all Council Plan actions)	0

*CP_28 "We will form a partnership with other Councils to introduce a low-cost energy offer" - Following a decision by Nottingham City Council to sell their not-for-profit energy company following an audit identifying significant financial losses, this action is being reviewed and may not be taken forward. However, we continue to focus on providing low cost green energy for our council estate. This is detailed in the separate Council Plan Delivery Plan Report for the Audit and Scrutiny Committee on 14th September 2021.

6. Proposals

6.1 The Audit and Scrutiny Committee are requested to (a) note the progress of the Council Plan as at 31st March 2021 including replacement of an indicator (section 4.6) and target amendment (section 4.8); and (b) note our response to the Covid-19 pandemic so far.

7. Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial

7.1 None.

Human Resources

7.2 None.

Legal

7.3 None.

Equality/Socio-economic

- 7.4 The report outlines the Council's commitment to fulfilling its statutory duty in terms of Equalities and Socio-economic duties.

Environmental and Sustainability

- 7.5 The report highlights the Council's commitment to Environmental and Sustainability priorities as outlined in the Council Plan priorities.

Key Priorities

- 7.6 The report provides information on our performance progress against the key Council Plan priorities.

Community Wealth Building

- 7.7 None.

8. Consultation

- 8.1 The Executive Leadership Team discussed and approved the Council Plan Progress Report and appendices.

Craig Hatton
Chief Executive

For further information please contact **Barry Tudhope, Senior Manager (Corporate Policy, Performance and Elections)** on **01294 324113**.

Background Papers

Council Plan 2019-24

Council Plan 2019-24
Progress Update
(Year-End 2020-21)

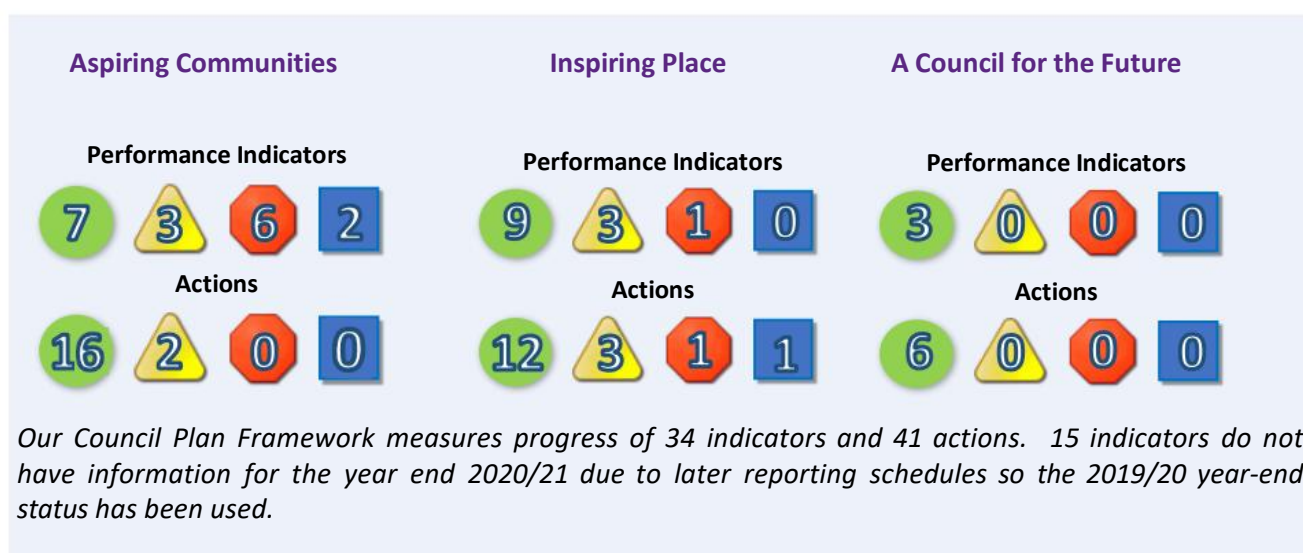
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Welcome to our six-monthly progress report on our **Council Plan 2019-24**. This report details the performance of North Ayrshire Council during the second half of the financial year 2020-21. The information in this report demonstrates performance as at 31st March 2021.

The Covid-19 (coronavirus) pandemic continues to impact on every aspect of the lives of our residents and employees and has changed the way many of our services have been delivered. This is captured within our Quarter Two report "[Supporting North Ayrshire Together – Our Response to the Coronavirus Pandemic](#)" as well as the 23rd March 2021 update which marks one year since the first lockdown. The update is attached as appendix two of this report. Both recognise how essential our partnerships with our communities, private, public and third sector are and how together we have mobilised an exceptional response to protect our most vulnerable residents in extremely difficult circumstances. Thank you all for your continued support.

This progress report specifically focusses on the delivery of our Council Plan and should be read alongside the "Supporting North Ayrshire Together" reports, to get a full understanding of the impact of our services and delivery of our priorities.

A summary of the performance indicators and actions within the Council Plan is below, with more detail in the [Performance Summary](#) section of this report and in appendices three and four.



We have maintained a good level of performance in many services, with others such as attendance at leisure facilities and house building, directly impacted by the pandemic. Recovery is a central theme in this report as we look to support our residents, businesses and services, with many initiatives launched as part of our [Community Wealth Building Strategy's Economic Recovery and Renewal Approach](#) to enable this. Support includes a £500,000 Green Jobs Fund and £350,000 Covid Intervention Fund to support outdoor and residential learning. This is complemented by a £3million Ayrshire Growth Deal Community Wealth Building Fund across North, South and East Ayrshires and a £250,000 Islands Recovery and Renewal pilot project. We will be introducing a "Better Off Hub" for the next two years, building on our very successful Better Off North Ayrshire work to provide personalised holistic financial advice that provides short and long term financial stability for our residents. As part of the Kickstart programme, we are aiming to fund 450 new jobs in North Ayrshire by the end of 2021.

Although our focus has been on the response to the pandemic, we have managed to deliver our Council Plan priorities. Our Employability Service has secured employment for over 285 residents, despite significant reductions in opportunities. We announced we will be delivering 1,140 hours of free childcare from August this year following substantial work that included completing 25 projects to ensure we provide inspiring and safe places for our children to learn and be nurtured. Participatory budgeting saw 187 community initiatives funded across the categories of locality, arts and culture and youth projects. In addition, we awarded

£188,546 from the Community Investment Fund. Our Cost of the School Day working group was established and £500,000 has been committed to support local families. Our Youth Participation and Citizenship Strategy “Step Up, Speak Out” was launched for the next four years, driving our commitment to ensure the voices of our young people are heard through a culture of “nothing about us without us”.

We have secured substantial funding for active travel and transport, including £1.31million from Strathclyde Partnership for Transport Capital Programme to improve active travel and public transport across North Ayrshire. Many of our capital projects have reached significant milestones, with residents living in new homes in Watt Court in Dalry and Flatt Roads in Largs. Meanwhile we have begun a multi-million-pound council housing development at Irvine Harbourside, due to be complete in 2022.

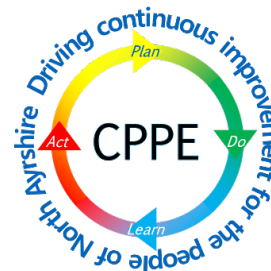
As we look towards a sustainable future we have complied with our Bio-Diversity Duty and Public Bodies Climate Change Duties and have received approval for a solar PV farm installation at the former landfill site at Nethermain. Work on the Upper Garnock Valley Floor Protection Scheme is on schedule despite the pandemic, with work commencing at two other locations at Kilbirnie and more planned at Glengarnock and Dalry in the new financial year.

We really are committed to delivering the best service to the people of North Ayrshire and will continue to work alongside our communities and businesses as we enter this period of recovery and renewal.

***Together we will deliver our vision,
a North Ayrshire that is “Fair For All”.***

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 Priorities

Aspiring Communities

- ▶ Active and strong communities
- ▶ Children and young people experience the best start in life
- ▶ Inclusive, growing and enterprising local economy
- ▶ Residents and communities enjoy good life-long health and well-being
- ▶ Residents and communities are safe

Inspiring Place

- ▶ Well connected with effective infrastructure
- ▶ Homes that meet residents' needs
- ▶ Vibrant, welcoming and attractive environment
- ▶ A sustainable environment

Our Vision

A North Ayrshire
that is 'Fair For All'

Our Mission

Working together to
improve well-being,
prosperity and
equality in
North Ayrshire

A Council for the Future

- ▶ An accessible Council that puts residents and communities at the heart of what we do
- ▶ An efficient Council that maximises resources and provides value for money
- ▶ A valued workforce that delivers high quality services
- ▶ A powerful and respected voice



**Year-End
Illustration
2020-21**

1140 hours

childcare
provision
from
August

£188,546

awarded from
Community
Investment
Fund

**Community
Wealth Building
Anchor Charter
launched**

**£3million Ayrshire Growth
Deal Community Wealth
Building Fund approved**

**£251million
Ayrshire Growth Deal
ratified**

£500,000

invested to help
families with the
**cost of the
school day**

£7.66m project

created **45 new homes**
and three units at Watt Court,
Dalry

187

community
projects funded
through
participatory
budgeting

**25-year lease to
Garnock Valley Men's Shed
to address social isolation**

Kickstart
programme will fund
450 jobs
in 2021



Our response to the Covid-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic during the second half of this year is detailed within the appendix “Supporting North Ayrshire Together – Update on Our Response to the Coronavirus Pandemic”. In order to achieve full visibility of the work that has been undertaken under this priority, this section should be viewed alongside the appendix.

► Active and strong communities

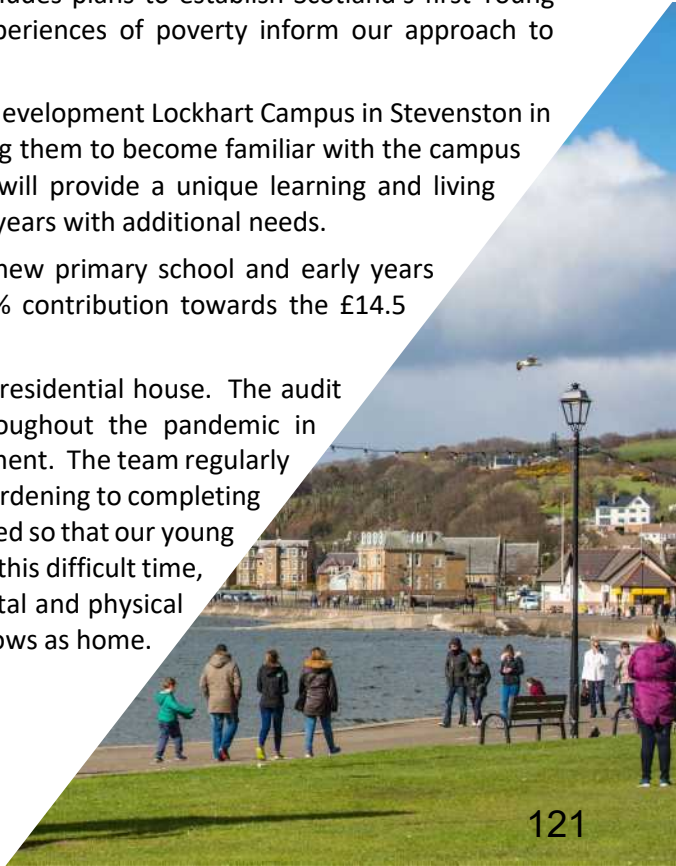
- We progressed the third stage of our consultation into how libraries, community centres and halls deliver their services in future. We worked hand-in-hand with our residents to ensure they have a real voice in the consultation.
- We supported Community Associations by working with groups letting our buildings to provide critical services during the pandemic. These groups received the Restart Toolkit Guidance developed by Community Facilities to assist with the delivery of safe, consistent, and effective working practices. The Toolkit has been useful guidance for new organisations setting out including the Community Food Systems.
- **Community Investment Fund (CIF)**
 - The Young People’s Mental Health Project led by Arran Youth Foundations and Arran High School Parent Council, was awarded £45,226 from the CIF to provide innovative projects to improve the wellbeing of all children and young people in Arran.
 - The Ardrossan Community Sports Hub was awarded £43,320 to operate the Seafield School site under community ownership. They plan to establish a community gym supported by qualified coaches and a range of volunteers.
 - Raise Your Voice With Ardeer were awarded £100,000 from the CIF towards a community hub at the Beach Park in Stevenston. This, alongside £130,000 from the Regeneration Capital Trust Fund, means construction on the hub including a café, workshop and classroom can begin. We are also assisting the charity in securing a Community Asset Transfer so they can take ownership of the site.
 - We have worked in partnership with Friends of Millport Town Hall in a successful application for £1.5m of Regeneration Capital Trust Funding to regenerate the hall into a purpose-built community hub. This is in addition to £200,000 CIF funding approved in August 2019 and £118,852 from the Crown Estates Funding for Coastal Communities. The hall will be used as a Community Hub, Arts/Culture Centre, starter Men’s Shed, main staged hall and three holiday let flats.
- North Ayrshire Venture Trust provided £30,000 to both the Irvine Cricket Club and Garnock Rugby Club to support Development Officers.
- We completed a community asset transfer of the Almswall Pavilion and Football Ground to Kilwinning Community Football Academy. This provides an opportunity to expand their family club and provide a base to run their local youth football provision and community activities. We also transferred a 25-year lease of the former Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance Depot to Garnock Valley Men’s Shed to be used as a community asset to address loneliness and social isolation amongst men in the Garnock Valley.
- Our Participatory Budgeting (PB) Fund for 2020/21 invited community groups to bid for funding to support their projects. There were three strands of PB: Locality with £97,000 available, Youth with £60,000 available and Arts & Culture with £10,000 available. There was no voting this time for Arts or Locality, due to the pandemic, but six Locality steering groups shortlisted and the groups who met



the criteria were funded. Youth PB went to a vote where 3,500 young people aged 8-25 years took part. Locality PB received 113 applications with 90 funded up to the value of £1,200, Youth PB received 87 applications with 74 funded up to the value of £1,000, Arts and Culture PB received 34 applications with 23 funded up to the value of £400. Projects funded included: Café Solace, Irvine Youth Forum Digi Festival, Arran Wellbeing CIC, Eglinton Community Gardens and Ayrshire Cancer Support.

► Children and young people experience the best start in life

- Following a full review of our 1,140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare provision in light of pandemic, we announced we will deliver 1,140 hours of childcare provision from August 2021. All our refurbishments aim to create indoor and outdoor learning environments to support play and learning.
- Though we are one of nine Challenge Authorities within the Scottish Attainment Challenge identified as facing some of the most significant challenges to attainment due to deprivation, [we are making good progress in raising attainment and closing the poverty related attainment gap](#). Literacy and numeracy in our schools has improved according to recently published 2018-19 data (2020 data collection was suspended due to the pandemic).
- As part of our 2021/22 Budget approval process we have agreed to invest £350,000 in a Covid Intervention Fund to support Outdoor and Residential Learning.
- Our Children's Services Plan and Children's Rights Report were approved and submitted to the Scottish Government alongside our Child Poverty Action Plan. Tackling child poverty is a key driver of our Council and we approved a Cost of the School Day (COSD) initiative which will see us invest £500,000 annually to help local families cope with the cost of the school day. This will include £250,000 investment in digital support, £150,000 for food and £100,000 for clothing and sustainability support. The group aims to launch a COSD Conference in June, hoped to be the first of a series of annual events, to share good practice and review actions.
- Our Youth Participation and Citizenship Strategy 2021-25 "Step up, Speak Out" has been launched to ensure the voices of all our children and young people are heard, respected and influence our Council's work through a culture of "nothing about us, without us". The strategy includes plans to establish Scotland's first Young People's Commission to ensure our young people's lived experiences of poverty inform our approach to addressing it.
- Our children and young people due to move to the new £30m development Lockhart Campus in Stevenston in May have experienced it virtually through 3D headsets, allowing them to become familiar with the campus before it opens. A first of its kind in Scotland, the campus will provide a unique learning and living environment for 200 of our young people aged from two to 18 years with additional needs.
- We have begun our statutory consultation on the proposed new primary school and early years centre at Montgomerie Park, Irvine. We have secured a 50% contribution towards the £14.5 million project from the Scottish Futures Trust.
- A partnership working audit was completed for The Meadows residential house. The audit highlighted how the care team have been exceptional throughout the pandemic in supporting our young people and retaining a nurturing environment. The team regularly organised activities for our young people from campfires and gardening to completing Joe Wicks fitness classes. They ensured birthdays were celebrated so that our young people had fun and had events to look forward to. Throughout this difficult time, The Meadows care team have continued to create a safe mental and physical space for our young people, ensuring that they view The Meadows as home.



► Inclusive, growing and enterprising economy

- During Challenge Poverty week in October 2020, the Ayrshire Community Wealth Building Commission launched the Ayrshire [Community Wealth Building \(CWB\) Anchor Charter](#). This charter commits organisations with strong roots in Ayrshire due to their history, assets and local arrangements, to support an inclusive local economy through activities such as procuring locally, fair employment practices and using assets to support communities. It has been signed by key Ayrshire Anchor Institutions including North, South and East Ayrshire Councils, NHS Ayrshire and Arran, Ayrshire College, Scottish Enterprise and The Ayrshire Community Trust (TACT).
- The £3 million Ayrshire Growth Deal Community Wealth Building (CWB) Fund was approved in February. The funding will establish new CWB Officers across North, South and East Ayrshire to support local businesses and community organisations to delivery CWB activities. In addition, it will fund a dedicated Fair Work Ayrshire team who will work with anchor institutions - key local organisations.
- A new £500,000 Green Jobs Fund to support North Ayrshire's Economic Recovery and Renewal Approach was approved at Cabinet in February 2021 in partnership with the North Ayrshire Ventures Trust (NAVT). The fund provides financial intervention of up to £10,000 for each business. This is part of an investment fund being utilised to address climate change, sustainable infrastructure investment and Community Wealth Building and will support local businesses to make a green transition through business adaption or creation of green jobs that support renewable or circular economy investments.
- We have led the development of a major Kickstart programme. Approval has now been granted to fund over 450 jobs for our young people and the jobs will be advertised and filled from March to December 2021.
- We have initiated a two-year financial inclusion demonstrator project 'Better Off Hub' following Cabinet approval in October 2020. The project will see the creation of a Public Social Partnership to develop a new model through co-production with the third sector. The Better Off Hub will deliver vital financial advice services, in a new holistic way, focused on the whole person and set out with an objective to build capacity and reduce future demand on services. The proposals align with Community Wealth Building ambitions and support our economic recovery.
- To enable Ayrshire College to provide a purpose-built facility focussing on courses on construction, engineering and the innovative field of SMART technology (self-monitoring, analysis and reporting technology), we have transferred an area of land to the College in Kilwinning. This transfer builds on our £200,000 contribution to the £1.5million project and will help our local residents progress further in occupations which are key to our North Ayrshire economy.

► Residents and communities enjoy good, life-long health and well-being

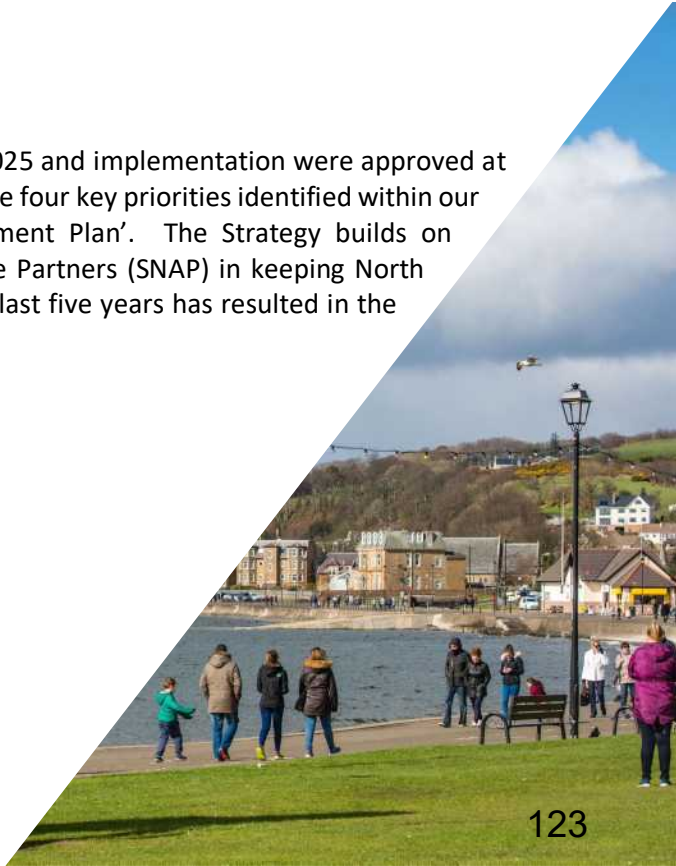
- Following local consultation, including with the North Ayrshire Food Forum, we launched our Food Growing Strategy and action plan in order to provide food with dignity and increase food security for some of our most vulnerable residents.
- We supported Challenge Poverty Week in October for the fifth consecutive year. Council Leader Joe Cullinane hosted a live discussion on Facebook focussing on Community Wealth Building and how it can address poverty and achieve a wellbeing economy. Our social media engagement during Challenge Poverty Week was very positive: Twitter - 26 Tweets with 96,396 impressions; Facebook - 19 posts with 191,234 impressions; and LinkedIn - 5 posts with 3,940 impressions.



- Together with our partners, we supported the [White Ribbon](#) 16 Days of Action campaign online. We highlighted the support available to stop violence against women through a series of films, books, television programmes and podcasts. The campaign aims to enable people to recognise the signs of abuse, begin a conversation in relation to domestic abuse and violence and thereby increase awareness.
- We implemented the Young Person's Suicide Support Pathway as a preventative and early intervention approach to supporting vulnerable young people who have made a significant attempt to take their own life. The pathway represents the steps taken by Social Services Service Access and Multi Agency Assessment Screening Hub (MAASH) employees when a young person is referred to them following a suicide attempt. The pathway reflects a robust, meaningful and young person-centred response to supporting our young people's mental health and emotional wellbeing. Referrals can be from Emergency Departments, GPs, Housing and family.
- A newly reformed Pan Ayrshire Choose Life Strategic Group has been re-established. The group are currently in the process of ratifying a Pan Ayrshire suicide prevention action plan, with key strategic outcomes for Suicide Prevention. As part of this action plan, a training plan has been developed, aiming to reach across all populations as highlighted within the national strategy as "everyone's business not just frontline staff". To fully coordinate and provide this training programme, new training and development posts have been identified, created and are currently in the process of recruitment.
- We have established a parent's reference group in 'Pathways to a positive future'. This group has been established to support parents deal with the trauma and grief of having a child removed from their care. Support is provided by a Health Visitor (not linked to the situation) over a six to eight week period to listen and acknowledge the parent's distress and offer a safe space to explore their emotions and needs. A pathways Social Work Assistant is also allocated to provide additional person-centred support. Our Parents Reference Group will inform practice developments and Scottish Government are very keen to learn more about this approach.
- Despite the significant challenges presented by the pandemic, our Transport Hub Service worked to maintain our fleet of essential vehicles to ensure that critical frontline services could be delivered to protect vulnerable people. This extended to wider initiatives to support partners and communities, for example the provision of vehicles for individuals requiring transport for dialysis, and also the delivery of a shuttle bus service in Largs for those travelling to their vaccine appointments.

► Residents and communities are safe

- The priorities within our Safer North Ayrshire Strategy 2020-2025 and implementation were approved at Cabinet in December 2020. 'A Safer North Ayrshire' is one of the four key priorities identified within our Community Planning Partnership 'Local Outcomes Improvement Plan'. The Strategy builds on significant progress already made by the Safer North Ayrshire Partners (SNAP) in keeping North Ayrshire safe. The integrated efforts of the partners over the last five years has resulted in the following improvements in community safety:
 - 20.6% reduction in all crimes and offences
 - 6.5% reduction in violent crime
 - 8% reduction in dwelling fire casualties
 - 47.8% reduction in housebreaking
 - 8.8% reduction in drug related crimes
 - 16.5% reduction in dishonesty crimes
 - 17.9% reduction in vandalism



- Our Protective Services continue to lead on partnership working arrangements across multiple agencies to ensure a joint approach to community safety, regulation, enforcement and general operational requirements, both in relation to the pandemic and business as usual activities. Partners include Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue, ACCT and CALMAC as well as community organisations, the business community and other Council services. The enhanced levels of collaboration continue to be increasingly productive and targeted action has included:
 - Joint oversight of arrangements for problematic events, public gatherings and other activities.
 - Proactive and reactive joint visits to licensed premises to check and enforce COVID compliance as well as provide guidance and support to help businesses.
 - General oversight and sharing of information on the pandemic statistics and other situational awareness which informs operational activities.
 - Provision of mutual support across agencies and partners to maximise reduced resource due to the current restrictions.
 - Sharing intelligence and joint problem solving such as how to deal with an increase in visitors to North Ayrshire, the easing of restrictions and the impacts on our communities and partner agencies.
- In October 2020, Cabinet approved the move to the next phase of our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP), to further reduce hostel accommodation and renovate the hostel at Princes Street, Ardrossan. We have increased our supply of dispersed furnished flats to meet the demand created by the hostel closure. This accommodation model greatly improves outcomes for people who find themselves homeless and reduces their risk of becoming socially isolated. Further, it also enables households to reside within a community, helping to build their social networks and develop their independent living skills, in turn reducing the risk of repeat episodes of homelessness.
- Our North Ayrshire food system network “North Ayrshire Fairer Food” supported the provision of food with dignity for our residents. Please see case study below.

Case Study – Community Food Provision

We are committed to tackling food inequality in North Ayrshire. Our Food Growing Strategy sets out how we can use our land and assets to support new community gardens, raised beds and allotments to increase local food growing as part of a strategic approach to increase access to food for our most vulnerable. This includes a network of food cooperatives, community fridges and larders.

North Ayrshire Fairer Food, seeks to give people more affordable access to food. We support dedicated community groups and projects in North Ayrshire running food-based initiatives such as: Whitlees Quaint Larder; Woodwynd’s Wee Shoap; Cranberry’s Community Larder, Kilwinning; and Ardrossan’s Quaint Larder.

For a small membership fee, the larders enable residents to access food at reduced cost in a dignified environment. They are able to select produce themselves in a supermarket-like environment.

The weekly membership fee is £3.50 and in return they can select a choice of groceries to the value of £15. The pantries are not emergency food provision and do not require a referral. More pantries will be introduced from April.



In the **next six months** we will work towards progressing the actions that will deliver the priority outcomes falling under **Aspiring Communities**, a society where everyone has the same life chances to grow, prosper and have fulfilling and healthy lives.

► Active and strong communities

We will:

- Present findings from our review into Libraries, Community Halls and Lets to Council for approval.
- Implement the changes from the Libraries, Community Centres and Halls Review following community consultation, to deliver library, community centres and halls in a post-Covid world.
- Continue to support food with dignity through our Food Growing Strategy and local pantry, larder and shop initiatives.

► Children and young people have the best start in life

We will:

- Welcome the opening of our Additional Support Needs school at Lockhart Campus.
- Deliver 1,140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare for our residents from August.
- We will implement free school meals for primary four pupils commencing in August 2021 and plan for the roll out to further primary year groups by August 2022.
- Launch our Cost of the School Day Conference and policy in June.

► Inclusive, growing and enterprising local economy

We will:

- Produce our first Community Wealth Building Annual Report outlining the range of achievements and practical action since the launch of the Community Wealth Building strategy in May 2020.
- Implement the Ayrshire Growth Deal £3 million Community Wealth Building Fund.
- Implement the Local Authority Discretionary Business Support Fund to provide financial support to businesses in need to protect jobs.
- Deliver the new £500k Business Transition Fund for businesses impacted financially by Covid-19 restrictions that are unable to finance new ways of working or new processes.
- Implement a Green Route Map to categorise and support businesses through five 'green' categories to identify where further resource could be allocated from the Green Jobs Fund.
- Implement the 'Better Off Hub' demonstrator project to provide holistic financial support.
- Implement the funding of over 450 jobs as part of our Kickstart programme.

► Residents and communities enjoy good, life-long health and well-being

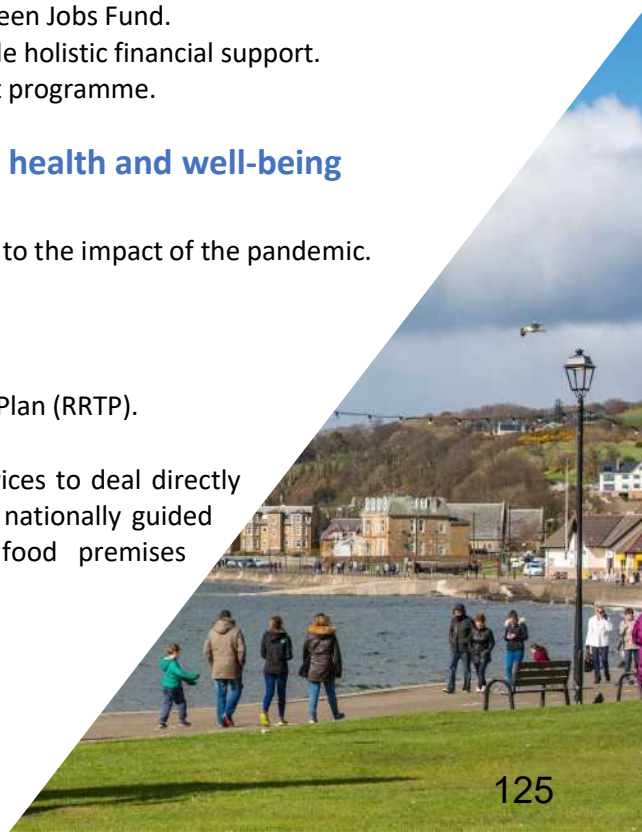
We will:

- Work with KA Leisure on their Recovery and Renewal Plan due to the impact of the pandemic.

► Residents and communities are safe

We will:

- Implement the next phased of our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP).
- Implement our Safer North Ayrshire Strategy 2020-25.
- Continue to adapt our proactive and reactive Protective Services to deal directly with Covid-19 as well as reintroducing, on a risk based and nationally guided approach, other critical public safety services such as food premises inspections.



► Well connected with effective infrastructure

- On 19th November the implementation and financial arrangements for the £251million [Ayrshire Growth Deal](#) were ratified by the Scottish Government.
- Cabinet approved the delivery of a £250,000 Islands Recovery and Renewal pilot project. Further details are within the appendix “Supporting North Ayrshire Together – Update on Our Response to the Coronavirus Pandemic”.
- We began a consultation with our communities in Largs and Cumbrae on investment proposals to improve access to the Largs - Cumbrae Ferry.
- Our Lochshore Regeneration Project will see the creation of a major regeneration, Community Wealth Building and placemaking investment in the Garnock Valley. In November Cabinet approved the transfer of land owned by Scottish Enterprise to our Council at nil value and the proposed implementation of early phase projects including the Garnock Visitor and Community Hub, access improvements and play facilities. It will create a regional outdoor visitor destination, health and leisure opportunities, active travel connections and business opportunities. The Lochshore Regeneration Project will be key to demonstrating our Community Wealth Building and inclusive and green economy ambitions, with wellbeing and climate change principles central to its development. A funding package including £1.779m from the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund (RCGF) is being developed.
- An additional £507,000 in Town Centre Funding announced in September was allocated by Cabinet: £300,000 will be used for asset acquisition, development and environmental works; £120,000 is allocated to Millport CARS; £30,000 to Dalry Pavilion improvements; £17,000 for 2 Mainstreet, Kilbirnie for improvement of the site; and £10,000 for Garnock Street, Kilbirnie for improvement and heritage works.
- We have secured £1.31million for 2021-22 from Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) Capital Programme towards the delivery of active travel and public transport improvements across North Ayrshire. This includes the Ardrossan Harbour Interchange, Brodick to Corrie Cycle Path, bus corridor improvements, Cumbrae Ferry bus stop and queuing facilities, Irvine Cycle Friendly Town and Pennyburn Roundabout bus lane.
- We secured £400,000 from Sustrans Scotland’s Spaces for People programme for temporary projects to reallocate road space for safe walking, wheeling and cycling during the Covid-19 pandemic. New cycle parking, a range of initiatives to encourage more active travel and path works to reclaim full path widths will be completed by May 2021.
- We’ve developed a partnership project with Sustrans Scotland to design and deliver high quality public space in the town centre and upgrade the National Cycle Network (NCN). The ‘Ardrossan Connections’ project will be delivered over three years, with construction planned to commence in 2022/23. It will provide safe an attractive walking and wheeling routes between Ardrossan and the Three Towns, celebrate the heritage of Ardrossan to provide a sense of place and alleviate transport poverty through enabling more of our residents to access active and sustainable travel.
- Two community led partnership projects secured £1.63million of funding through the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund. The Millport Town Hall Charity leads on regeneration of the Town Hall which will receive £1.5million for a new accessible entrance and flexible use spaces incorporating a Community Hub, Arts / Culture Centre, starter Men’s Shed, staged hall and three holiday led flats. Raise Your Voice With Ardeer received £130,000 to develop the Stevenston Beach Hub in addition to Community Investment Funding.



- We have reviewed all projects across the capital plan to ensure the programme impact of Covid-19 delays has been fully assessed, allowing financial and operational plans to be adjusted accordingly. Major projects being progressed by both the Housing and General Services Capital projects teams have reached several milestones including:
 - Residents have moved into new Council homes at both Watt Court in Dalry and Flatt Road in Largs.
 - Tenders have been received for the replacement of Moorpark Primary School.
 - We have appointed sustainability and information manager consultants to assist with the development of the new Ardrossan Campus.
 - The new-build Montgomery Park Primary School received part funding from the Scottish Government as part of phase two of the national Learning Estate Investment programme.
- We continue to implement the 'root and branch' changes to the Planning System, introduced by the Planning Act 2019. We've submitted consultations to the Scottish Government on pre-application consultation, permitted development rights, mediation, short term lets and Scottish Planning Policy and housing. Our Planning decision-making process has provided continuity during the pandemic. The Service has delivered major case work within Development Management to support our communities, businesses, regeneration and Covid-19 recovery, through the implementation of the Local Development Plan 2.
- Our Early Learning and Childcare Expansion Programme has completed 25 separate projects and a contractor has been appointed to carry out the refurbishment of the recently acquired Marress House, Irvine – the most significant project within the programme.
- Overall, we have improved the condition of the classified road network that may require maintenance from 37.3% to 37.1%. The following figures show our improvement on our A, B and C class roads:
 - A class roads, improved by 2.5% to 36.3%
 - B class roads, improved by 4.2% to 32.6%
 - C class roads, improved by 2% to 44.9%

► Homes that meet residents' needs

- We commenced our multi-million-pound council housing development in October 2020 at Irvine harbourside which is complemented by the £14million plans to develop the Great Harbour at Irvine, through the Ayrshire Growth Deal. Once complete the 71-unit development will showcase the very best in modern, affordable and energy-efficient housing and provide 24 general needs homes; eight wheelchair suitable homes; 11 amenity bungalows; and 28 homes within a sheltered housing complex. A key pillar of our commitment to building new council homes is to ensure they are built in places where people want to live. They are due for completion in autumn 2022.
- The Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2021-2026 (SHIP) was approved by Cabinet in November 2020, for submission to the Scottish Government for agreement on the latest North Ayrshire development programme. This plan links closely to the Green New Deal and sustainability agenda and contributes to our Council Plan priority to build 1,732 new homes by March 2024. In the last six months we have completed supported accommodation at Watt Court, Dalry. The £7.66m project created 49 new units, comprising of a Sheltered Housing Complex (22 homes), amenity bungalows (eight homes), supported accommodation (15 homes plus one employee base) and a new local housing office for Dalry (three units). The heating for the sheltered housing complex and bungalows is provided by a sustainable biomass district heating system which also serves Dalry Primary School.



- We have received overwhelmingly positive feedback from residents involved in three Estate Based Regeneration Programme projects within the Garnock Valley. The projects will see the regeneration of 48 flatted properties, beginning in 2021-22. So far 19 of the properties are empty and 10 tenants currently have an offer of alternative housing. Cabinet approved projects in Lanburnum Avenue, Beith, Newhouse Drive, Kilbirnie and an increase in the former Garnock Academy site which in total will provide 48 new homes.

► Vibrant, welcoming and attractive environment

- We have taken ownership of the of the 30-acre site in Ardrossan where ambitious development proposals include the Education Campus, swimming pool, housing and commercial facilities. The development of the North Shore site is part of a wider £150m regeneration programme including Ardrossan Harbour, an extended marina, a marine sciences centre, coastal path and new connections which together have the potential to transform the town during the next five to ten years.
- Streetscene and our Planning Service are conducting an open space audit to identify and address any gaps or deficiencies in the quality or quantity of open spaces across North Ayrshire. The project started in December 2020 when we began collating the data required for the audit. Analysis is currently being carried out with the findings and report expected by Spring/Summer 2021.

► A sustainable environment

- Our North Ayrshire's 2030 Woodland: A Tree Planting Strategy was approved at Cabinet in January 2021. Our afforestation initiative will aim to plant around 108,000 trees, covering over 40 hectares, in order to help us meet our net-zero ambition by 2030. In addition, planting schemes will be designed to support employment and training for our residents, provide health and wellbeing benefits, improve biodiversity and provide natural flood risk management and better air quality.
- In January, Cabinet approved the development of a £6.768m solar PV farm installation at Nethermain's former landfill site.
- We have complied with the requirements of the Biodiversity Duty and the Public Bodies Climate Change Duties and submitted reports to the Scottish Government in December 2020.
- We secured £1.372m from European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Low Carbon Travel and Transport Challenge Fund towards the £1.96m Ardrossan Low Carbon Hub project. This will create a low carbon hub for Ardrossan across two locations: Harbour and North Shore. This includes: a coastal path at North Shore, active travel connection between town and harbour, Electric Vehicle and e-bike charging facilities and active travel infrastructure. The ERDF element of the project will be delivered by September 2022.
- The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) published the national household waste recycling performance figures on 27th October 2020 for the calendar year 2019, which saw our recycling rate increase to 56.3% from 54.6% (+1.7%), compared to the 2018 calendar year performance. We are currently the 6th highest performing local authority for recycling in Scotland. During 2020/21 we were one of the few waste authorities that provided uninterrupted kerbside collections throughout the pandemic.
- Work on the Upper Garnock Valley Flood Protection Scheme is still on track to complete within timescale, despite the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Work has started at two locations around Kilbirnie and is due to begin in Glengarnock and Dalry. Overall completion is planned for around April 2022.



- The final Millport Coastal Flood Protection Scheme was approved by Cabinet in November. The preferred design solution will provide offshore breakwaters connecting the small islands in Millport Bay, plus onshore flood walls along the Millport shoreline. As well as providing the required flood protection, the design will also create an area of sheltered water supporting the potential for development of a marina with step ashore facilities under the auspices of the Ayrshire Growth Deal.
- The decarbonisation of our fleet continues, with a further roll-out of 14 electric vehicles and 11 workplace charging points during 2021 to support the transition to electric and low emission vehicles.

Case Study – Watt Court, Dalry

In April 2018 we embarked on a £7.66million project to build on the former Watt Court and Dalry Primary School site in Dalry.

The project has seen the creation of 49 new units, comprising of:

- a Sheltered Housing Complex (22 homes)
- amenity bungalows (eight homes)
- supported accommodation (15 homes plus one-unit staff base)
- new local housing office for Dalry (three units)

The last 15 supported accommodation homes at the former Dalry Primary School site, now known as Bessie Dunlop Court, completed in December 2020.

The heating for the sheltered housing complex and bungalows is provided by a sustainable Biomass district heating system which also serves Dalry Primary School.

This project aligns with the Green New Deal and Sustainability and contributes to our Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2021-26 to build 1,900 new homes.



In the **next six months** we will work towards progressing the actions that will deliver the priority outcomes falling under **Inspiring Place**, an enterprising, vibrant and sustainable environment, appealing to investors, attractive for visitors and a place our residents are proud to live and work in.

► Well connected with effective infrastructure

We will:

- Work with communities to develop two Island Plans for Arran and Cumbrae as part of the Islands Recovery and Renewal Pilot, including the publication of a Cumbrae socio-economic profile to inform the Cumbrae Island Plan.
- Progress major projects across the Housing and General Services Capital programmes.
- As part of the Ayrshire Growth Deal:
 - Progress plans to launch the Digital Process Manufacturing Centre (DPMC) as part of the programme of development at i3, Irvine.
 - Develop detailed plans for the first phases of development at Great Harbour.
 - Develop a strategic proposition for Hunterston Strategic Development Area with a wide range of public and private sector stakeholders.
- Work in partnership with East Ayrshire Council and South Ayrshire Council to implement the first Regional Spatial Strategy for Ayrshire.
- Continue our Early Learning and Childcare Expansion Programme.
- Implement our 2021/22 roads investment programme, with £1million additional capital funding allocated to help further improve network condition.
- Develop and deliver projects under the Place Based Investment Programme, informed by the Regeneration Delivery Plan

► Homes that meet residents' needs

We will:

- Implement the Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2021-2026 (SHIP), contributing to our Council Plan priority to build 1,732 new homes by March 2024.
- Progress the Sheltered Housing Re-provisioning Programme, which includes the refurbishment of the remaining sheltered housing complexes across North Ayrshire.
- Progress Garnock Valley projects from the Estate Based Regeneration Programme to rehome residents and regenerate 48 flatted properties.

► Vibrant, welcoming and attractive environment

We will:

- Complete our consultation on Ardrossan Harbour proposals as part of the Ayrshire Growth Deal.
- Progress the development of c£150m of projects as part of the Ardrossan Coastal Quarter including proactively engaging with Scottish Government to progress Ardrossan Harbour proposals to tender stage and proposals to develop the International Marine Science Centre (IMSE).
- Progress the Millport Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) project.
- Support the delivery of the Millport Town Hall and Stevenston Beach Hub Regeneration Capital Grant Fund (RCGF) funded projects.
- Publish the findings and report of the Open Space Audit by Spring/Summer 2021.



► A sustainable environment

We will:

- Seek Cabinet approval of our third Environment Sustainability and Climate Change (ESCC) Strategy and first Electric Vehicle (EV) Strategy, with a focus on stimulating a green economic recovery.
- Progress our Solar PV Farm project and investigate further opportunities such as Shewalton Solar PV Farm, i3 Innovation Park, Energy Masterplan and wind energy potential.
- Develop the communication plan for climate change awareness prior to the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in November.
- Consult on the 2nd Cycle Ayrshire Flood Risk Management Plan, and progress our existing Upper Garnock, Millport Coastal Flood Protection Schemes and bring the latest scheme Millburn, Millport, to confirmation stage.
- Deliver the LUNAR 2 LED energy savings initiative on around 5,000 of our lighting units throughout 2021/22 to reduce our carbon footprint and energy use on street lighting.
- Progress a review of our Zero Waste Strategy, in advance of publication of a refreshed version in 2022, as part of further waste sector changes including the new Deposit and Return Scheme and Extended Producer Responsibility.
- Progress a new Fleet Decarbonisation Plan aligned to our Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy and Fleet Asset Management Strategy. This will complement our ongoing work as part of the transport and travel transformation initiative.
- Finalise design of various tree planting schemes for implementation in the 2021/22 growing season.



Our response to the Covid-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic during the second half of this year is detailed within the appendix “Supporting North Ayrshire Together – Update on Our Response to the Coronavirus Pandemic”. In order to achieve full visibility of the work that has been undertaken under this priority, this section should be viewed alongside the appendix.

► An accessible Council that puts residents and communities at the heart of what we do

- Many of our supporting services had to move online and / or be operated remotely during the pandemic. A summary of how this has been achieved is contained in the “Our Council Operations” section of the appendix “Supporting North Ayrshire Together – Update on Our Response to the Coronavirus Pandemic”.
- Our [Equalities Mainstreaming and Outcomes Report 2019-20](#) was approved by Cabinet. Key highlights identified in the report include: fairness and inclusion is embedded across our Council Plan and key strategies such as our Community Wealth Building Strategy; we introduced safe leave for employees experiencing domestic abuse; Mental Health First Aid training was made available to employees becoming “Wellbeing Warriors” to support their colleagues; and with partners, we have increased the number of “I Am Me” Keep Safe Sites from one location in North Ayrshire to 14.

► An efficient Council that maximises resources and provides value for money

• Best Value Recommendations

Following our very positive Best Value Assurance Audit findings published in June 2020, we have progressed all four recommendations:

1. **Transformation plans and benefits realisation tracker** – The Transformation and Renewal Programme continues to be progressed and a broad outline of the programme was included in the Budget report to Council on 4th March 2021. The monitoring framework to track progress has been developed and will be presented to our Executive Leadership Team on 26th May 2021.
 2. **Evolution of workforce planning** – Our workforce planning approach was paused to enable us to focus on the response to the pandemic. We utilise a variety of tools and techniques to ensure our workforce requirements such as future skill needs and capabilities are met. This includes: exploring opportunities for succession planning and career development; modern and graduate apprentice recruitment; identifying skills gaps; technical and professional development; coaching; and recruiting new employees. Workforce planning is due to recommence from April with plans in place for each service by the end of July 2021.
 3. **Work with Locality Partnerships to clarify the intended impact of Locality Plans** – We began a public consultation on locality priorities using our online tool “Shaping North Ayrshire”. This was extended due to the second wave of the pandemic and a new and more direct approach was developed which included working with schools. The results of the public consultation and the intended impacts will be considered by Locality Partnerships in June 2021 and is due to be complete by the end of 2021.
 4. **Review of our online Performance Portal** – A replacement Performance Dashboard was developed inhouse using Power BI and launched on 28th February. (Please see case study below.)
- We have completed a tender process that will enable advertising on roundabouts from the summer. This will give local businesses an opportunity for sustainable, effective, and affordable promotion.

► A valued workforce that delivers high quality services

- We recruited 40 Modern Apprentices for areas such as youth work, early learning and childcare, professional cookery and business administration. The programme is aimed at 16 to 19 year-olds living in North Ayrshire and is designed to provide our young people with the opportunity to learn key skills through work and training to begin their career.
- We achieved all the baseline security controls recommended in the Scottish Government's Cyber Resilience Framework and are actively working towards implementing the target level recommendations.

► A powerful and respected voice

- Our Council has contributed to national reports and discussions across many areas including our response to the coronavirus pandemic and our approach to Community Wealth Building. These are detailed in the [Best in Class](#) section below.
- Our cyber incident management plan was a key success factor in responding effectively to a significant cyber-attack and preventing data from being breached. This response received positive feedback from the Scottish Government and the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC).

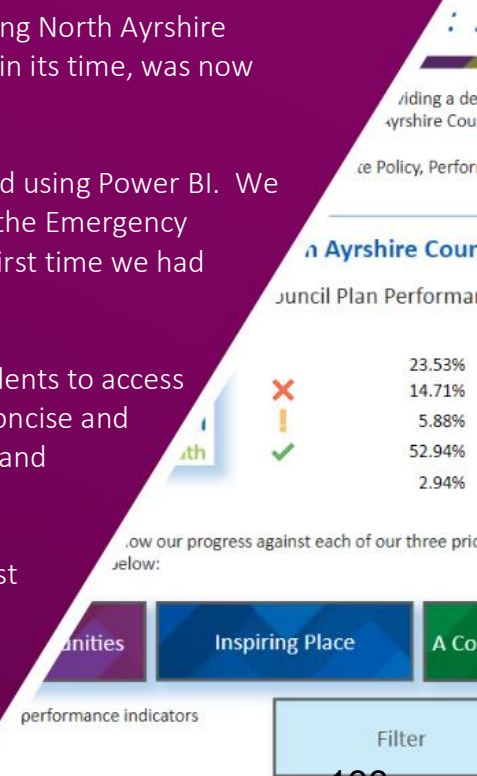
Case Study – Performance Dashboard

A recommendation from our Best Value report was to review and replace the existing North Ayrshire Performs public facing performance portal. The portal, which had been innovative in its time, was now outdated and difficult to navigate.

Following research, the most effective solution was to create an in-house dashboard using Power BI. We had learned to use Power BI to manage large quantities of high frequency data for the Emergency Management Team during the first few months of the pandemic, but this was the first time we had used it in the public domain to power a website.

The dashboard provides a much more user friendly and accessible way for our residents to access performance data. We have reviewed the information available to ensure it is as concise and relevant as possible, that it contains a link to the national LGBF Benchmarking Tool and includes our contact details.

Our Performance Dashboard was launched on 28th February 2021, is one of the first Power BI Council Performance dashboards in Scotland and has generated interest from Angus Council and other local authorities. As it is an in-house solution, we have full control of its evolution and will continue to make improvements as we receive feedback and develop our service.



In the **next six months** we will work towards progressing the actions that will deliver the priority outcomes under a Council for the Future. These are:

► **An accessible Council that puts residents and communities at the heart of what we do**

We will:

- Learn lessons from the challenges of Covid-19, promoting a system that utilises the strengths of North Ayrshire to the benefit of all North Ayrshire's residents and businesses.
- Deliver a Covid-safe Scottish Parliament Election on 6th May.
- Under our Renewal Programme, we will explore the Customer to Citizen Journey, transforming how we work, engage and co-design solutions with our communities.
- Review our Digital Strategy to be launched later in 2021.

► **An efficient Council that maximises resources and provides value for money**

We will:

- Support KA Leisure to enhance the performance management of their recovery and renewal strategy.
- Undertake a review of housing systems to identify more streamlined ways of working across the Service.
- Roll out a new cashless catering and online payment system later this year for school meals.
- Conduct a review of the Local Employability Partnership and develop an improvement plan.
- Continue to develop business cases for specific income generation opportunities aligned to our Community Wealth Building pillar of maximising the use of our land and assets.
- Roll-out a Workforce Information Tool using Power BI. This will give managers more accessible and relevant information on their teams including overtime, absence management and training.
- Migrate our intranet to SharePoint, giving our employees a better integrated and more efficient information sharing environment with the ability of teams to manage their own content directly.
- Progress the implementation of our customer management system which will replace our local customer account with the national My Account and provide opportunities for further development to enhance the customer experience.
- Establish a hybrid format of in person and virtual attendance across all our committees.

► **A valued workforce that delivers high quality services**

We will:





- Develop Our Future Working Environment project as part of our Renewal Programme.
- Implement the Building Standards Workforce Strategy, the Competency Assessment System and other outcomes from the Building Standards Futures Board as they are agreed.

► **A powerful and respected voice**

We will:

- Continue to implement Scotland's first Community Wealth Building Strategy and contribute to national discussions.
- Continue to implement Ayrshire Growth Deal projects to attract inward investment to North Ayrshire.
- Support our recovery and renewal through bids to the UK Government Levelling Up Fund to support regeneration and cultural assets.
- Act as the lead authority to submit bids to the UK Government Community Renewal Fund on behalf of local partners.

Key

-  On target
-  Slightly adrift of target
-  Significantly adrift of target
-  Data only / Status Unknown

Aspiring Communities

- ▶ Active and strong communities
- ▶ Children and in life
- ▶ Inclusive, growing and enterprising local economy
- ▶ Residents enjoy good, life-long health and well-being
- ▶ Residents and communities are safe

Performance Indicators



Actions



Inspiring Place

- ▶ Well connected with effective infrastructure
- ▶ Homes that meet residents' needs
- ▶ Vibrant, welcoming and attractive environment
- ▶ A sustainable environment

Performance Indicators



Actions



A Council for the Future

- ▶ An accessible Council that puts residents and communities at the heart of what we do
- ▶ An efficient Council that maximises resources and provides value for money
- ▶ A valued workforce that delivers high quality services
- ▶ A powerful and respected voice

Performance Indicators



Actions



Performance Indicators Adrift of Target

Our Council Plan Framework measures progress of 34 indicators. 15 indicators do not have information for the year end 2020/21 due to later reporting schedules. For the purposes of this report 2019/20 year-end data has been used. Seven indicators are showing significantly adrift of target and six indicators are slightly adrift of target.

► Aspiring Communities

● CP_02 - % of Council budget directed via participatory methods

The percentage of Council budget directed via participatory methods during 2020/21 was 1.13% which is £4,044,679. This is below the target of 1.2%. The levels of participatory budgeting activity have been impacted by the pandemic due to the nature of restrictions on community group activities which would normally result in submissions for funding. Lower levels of activity are being monitored to see if the pandemic is having a long and sustained impact.

● CP_08 - % Children living in Poverty (after housing costs)

Most recently available data relates to 2019/20 and shows an increase in the percentage of children in poverty after housing costs of 0.8% since 2018/19, bringing the total to 27.9%. Addressing Child Poverty is central to our Council Plan 2019-24 as well as our Community Planning Partnership. We published our Local Child Poverty Action Plan in October 2020 which outlined how we will address the three main drivers of child poverty including through our Community Wealth Building approach which is embedded within the recently ratified £251million Ayrshire Growth Deal, both of which will help create new good quality local jobs. We will maximise income available to our residents from benefits through our Money Matters service (which generated £15.3m of income for residents that year) and reduce the cost of living by increasing the availability of affordable housing. Our Better Off Hubs will provide holistic support to help families manage their finances. Our Food Hubs and Holiday Hunger initiative during the pandemic in addition to our North Ayrshire Fairer Food Network ensured our local families have affordable access to good food. Additional areas being explored include the recently introduced Cost of the School Day policy which will provide a recurring annual investment in a Children and Families Fund of £500,000 to support families. This work will begin to be reflected in this indicator in future updates however it will also be affected by the Covid-19 Coronavirus pandemic.

Please Note: The calculation method for this data changed in 2019 and a further data refresh was released in May 2021. The May 2021 data updated historical data back to 2014/15 and our information on our performance management system Pentana has been updated in line with this, however no current or historical statuses have changed as a result. It provides a much more accurate source of information as prior to 2020, estimates of local child poverty rates in the UK had not been able to draw on direct calculations of incomes at local area level. The new indicator looks directly at most of the income sources reported for tax, tax credit and benefit purposes and can therefore be considered at a very local level. The effect of housing costs was modelled by area on child poverty rates, by looking at household survey data alongside statistics on private rent levels by local area.

● CP_10 - % of procurement spent on local enterprises

This indicator reflects the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) calculation of local procurement spend. Prior to the most recent release of LGBF data, we used a provisional figure at Quarter Two reporting which was based on the same comprehensive spend source. As a result, the figure for 2019/20 has been amended from 19.94% to 16.65% to reflect the LGBF calculation of procurement spend on local enterprises. However, we are aware that the LGBF calculation excludes certain spend, most notably it excludes all supplier spend below £1,000 and excludes all suppliers not categorised as core trade organisations. This is therefore not an accurate reflection of the economic activity within North Ayrshire. As we have access to the source data used by the LGBF we are able to capture all spend data and refine the calculation at a local level to better capture our spend with local enterprises and shorten the time delay in reporting. As a result, it is proposed we replace the CP_10 LGBF indicator within the Council Plan with a new version based on our own calculations (CP_10a). This shows procurement spend with local enterprises as 19.98% for 2019/20. The annual spend analysis for 2020/21 will be available in the next quarter reporting.

● **CP_12 - Percentage of learning disability service users accessing employment support activities**

Annual data shows the most recent quarter. During Quarter Four (January to March) there were no hours delivered due to Covid 19 restrictions. However in Quarter Three 24.15% of learning disability service users accessed employment support activities, slightly below the Quarter Three target of 25%. It is estimated that during 2020-21 approximately 127 people were supported.

● **CP_13 - Percentage of children with BMI centile >91 at 27 month review**

The percentage of children with BMI centile > 91 at 27 month review was 13.86%. This is still breaching the target of 10.5%. Due to data validation processes, this indicator is reported one month in arrears, therefore this information is representative of Quarter Three. Universal Early Years is currently planning an additional programme of support for identified families. This will involve complementary visits by the support team to provide timely information and practical role modelling of parenting aspects e.g. more detailed weaning information to try and support weaning at six months. This is still in very early stages.

● **CP_15 Number of attendances at indoor sports & leisure facilities (excluding pools)**

The 2020/21 year end attendance for indoor sports and leisure facilities was 71,913 compared to 1,859,843 in 2019/20. The ongoing restrictions as a result of the pandemic has had a significant impact on attendances at our indoor venues. In 2021/22 as restrictions permit, our indoor sports and leisure facilities will reopen using a pre-booking system to allow our customers to return and use our facilities. KA Leisure has developed a Recovery and Renewal Plan in response and is working closely with our officers.

▲ **CP_05 - Average total tariff score of pupils living in SIMD 30% most deprived areas (19/20 figure)**

Average total tariff score has increased despite the pandemic that had a significant impact on learning and teaching in March-June 2020, particularly for children in households facing a high level of deprivation. The increase in performance in graded courses (seen nationally when exams were replaced with school assessments) only partly contributed to the increase, as the pupil needs to be presented and completing the course in order to achieve an award. We have relaxed the policy for the maximum number of presentations in senior phase and most schools have taken the opportunity to present S4 pupils for more than six courses in 2020. However, this was restricted by the pandemic conditions.

▲ **CP_06 - Average tariff score: All Leavers (19/20 figure)**

Average total tariff score has increased despite the pandemic that had a significant impact on learning and teaching in March-June 2020. The increase in performance in graded courses (seen nationally when exams were replaced with school assessments) only partly contributed to the increase, as the pupil needs to be presented and completing the course in order to achieve an award. We have relaxed the policy for the maximum number of presentations in senior phase and most schools have taken the opportunity to present S4 pupils for more than six courses in 2020. However, this was restricted by the pandemic conditions.

▲ **CP_07 - % of school leavers entering positive destinations (19/20 figure)**

The proportion of school leavers entering positive destinations has decreased considerably in 2020. The pandemic had a significant impact nationally, but much more so in North Ayrshire, due to the higher level of general socio-economic deprivation and particularly in terms of employment within the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. While the proportion of school leavers going into education and training has increased slightly, the proportion of school leavers going into employment has decreased in 2020 by three percentage points compared to 2019 and by even more than that compared to previous years. In 2019/20 the percentage of school leavers entering positive destinations was 92.45% which is slightly lower than the target of 96%. In 2019/20 we ranked 22/32 Scottish Local Authorities and have improved from the fourth quartile to the third quartile. The Scottish Average in 2019/20 was 93.34%.

► Inspiring Place

● CP_23 Number of new build Council housing units reaching completion (cumulative)

The target for 2020/21 of 374 has been added to the 2019/20 finish of 381 to create the target of 755 for 2020/21. In 2020/21 the impact of lockdown had an effect on the house building programme with 56 new homes being built, well under the 374 proposed within the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP).

▲ CP_19 Proportion of operational buildings that are suitable for their current use (LGBF indicator)

This indicator has been updated from 90.91% to the official 2019/20 LGBF result of 90.89% against a target of 93%. The Scottish average for 2019/20 was 82.47%. We ranked 10/32 Scottish Local Authorities and remain in the second quartile. Rationalisation of the Additional Support Needs school estate and integration of Health and Social Care Partnership locality teams within secondary schools will improve overall performance.

▲ CP_21 Proportion of properties receiving superfast broadband

The 2019/20 Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) result was 94.1% against a target of 97%. We monitor this indicator and continue to work with the Scottish Government to progress this. It forms part of the national R100 programme which is a commitment to provide access to superfast broadband of 30Mbps to every home and business in Scotland. This data has been updated from the previously reported figure of 96.8%. The difference in figure is due to the LGBF using the Scottish Government definition of 30Mbps, whereas the replaced figure was based on a slightly slower speed of 24Mbps.

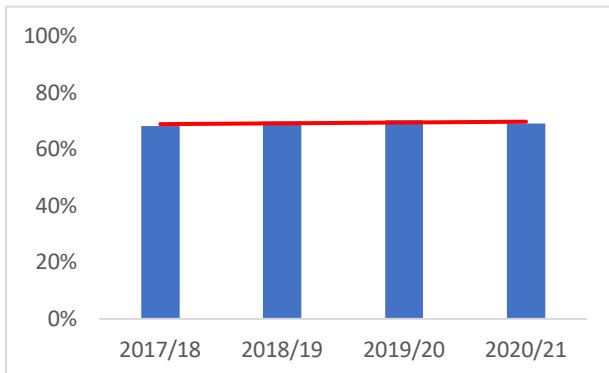
▲ CP_24 Number of empty homes brought back into use (cumulative)

Empty homes work was paused during the pandemic, resulting in our target of 600 new homes being brought back into use by the end of 2020/21 not being met.

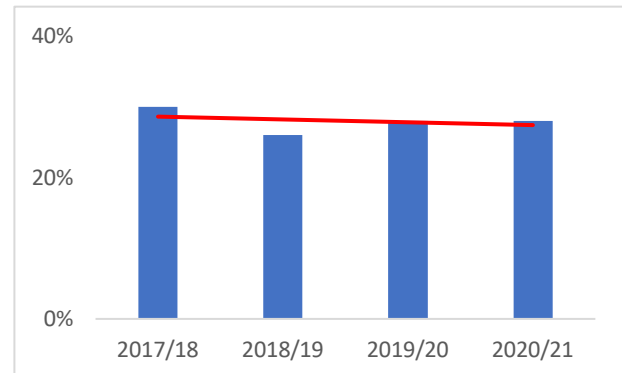
► A Council for the Future

- There are no exceptions.

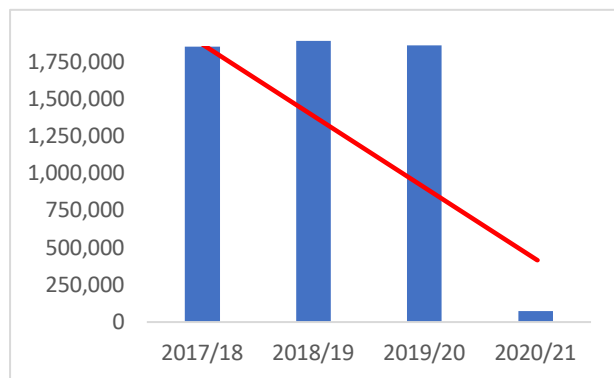
Further information on all indicators within the Council Plan can be found in [Our Performance Dashboard](#). **Trendline** tracks performance as at year end each year.



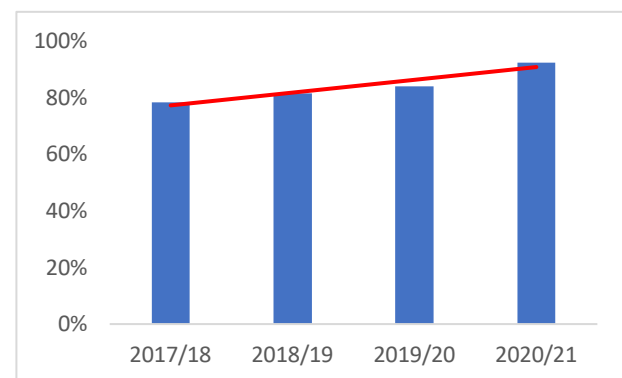
CP_09 Percentage of working age population in employment



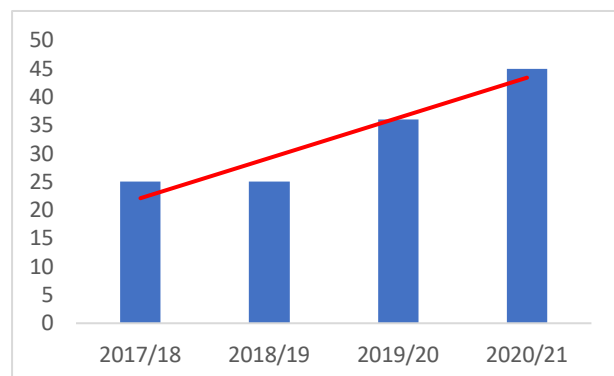
CP_14 - Percentage of households in fuel poverty



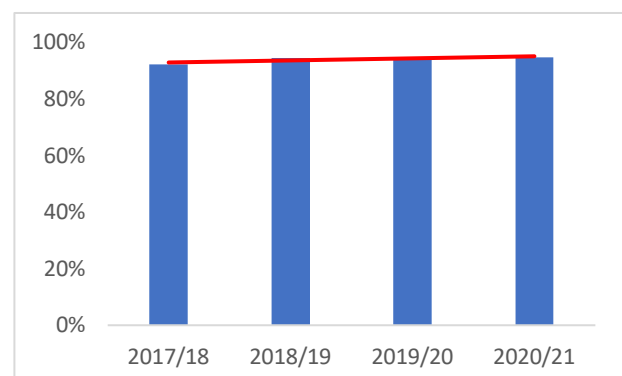
CP_15 Number of attendances at indoor sports & leisure facilities (excluding pools)



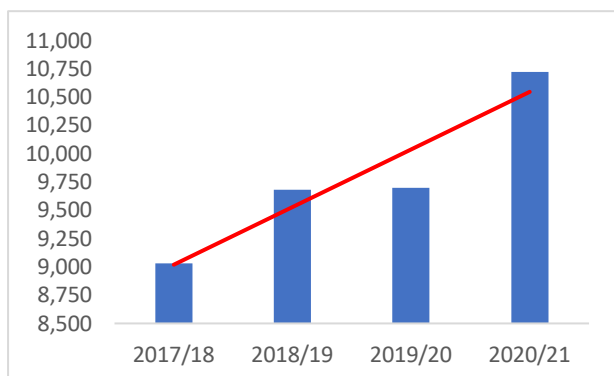
CP_18 - % of new tenancies to applicants who were assessed as homeless sustained for more than a year



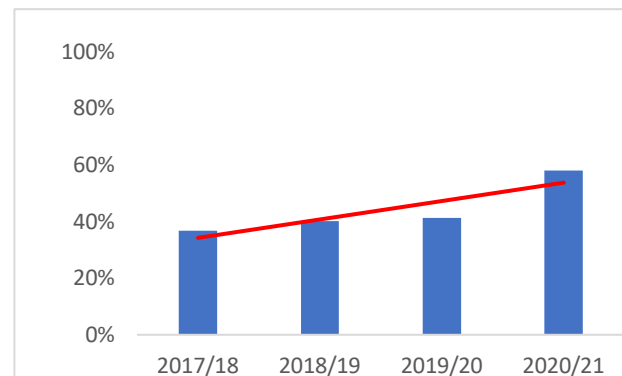
CP_22 - Number of electric vehicle charging points publicly available



CP_27 Street Cleanliness Index - % Clean



CP_30 Total installed capacity of low carbon heat and electricity generation across the Council's estate



CP_33 % of Self-Service Transactions

Best in Class identifies what we do well and where we learn from others to continually improve our performance.

► Sharing Learning

- Our Council Leader Joe Cullinane accompanied by the Chair of the North Ayrshire Community Wealth Building Advisory Panel and Senior Manager for Economic Policy, presented at the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) Annual Community Wealth Building Summit. They demonstrated the leading Community Wealth Building work that we are implementing following our launch of Scotland's first Community Wealth Building Strategy in May 2020.
- The Senior Manager from Economic Policy, was appointed as a member of a UK wide SIPHER (academic health inequalities collaborative research project) Inclusive Economy Advisory Group comprised of leading experts on inclusive economic development from across the UK.
- Our response to the coronavirus pandemic has been featured in reports by the Carnegie UK Trust. [The Carnegie UK Trust reported on good practice](#) within local authority responses to the coronavirus pandemic. They found that the response to COVID-19 has been underpinned by kindness with unprecedented levels of volunteering and community action. This was due to people having the permission, tools and resources to make a difference.
- Local community hubs emerged as a successful model that helped different organisations work together, creating a more flexible and responsive approach to supporting people.
- Our Senior Manager for Homeless and Community Safety presented at the national Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) Conference in March 2021.
- The Streetscene Service and the Data Analytics Team delivered a presentation to the APSE Parks, Grounds and Street Services Advisory Group, to share best practice with other councils. They demonstrated the new and innovative ways of working introduced through embracing mobile technology in our frontline operatives.
- Our Planning Service continues to work with colleagues across Scotland through the Heads of Planning Scotland (HoPS) to deliver change at national level and bring improvements to our service through shared learning with other Councils. The Chief Planner was appointed Junior Vice Chair of HoPS and the Strategic Planning Manager is delivering major workstreams on Local Place Plans and Local Development Plan.
- The Multi Agency Assessment Screening Hub/Service Access teams have been sharing their work with colleagues in Dundee. We had been contacted to learn more about the way our service is run, were very impressed and are now looking to develop our model.
- Our Mid-year 2020-21 report "Supporting North Ayrshire Together – Our Response to the Covid Pandemic and Progress Report" (September 2020) was shared with the Improvement Service following discussions in the national LGBF Steering Group.
- We have provided Angus Council and Dundee Council with details on the development of Our Performance Dashboard (see the case study above). In return, Angus Council has shared additional information which will enable us to develop the dashboard further.



► External Inspections and Self-Assessment Activity

- An Internal Audit was completed of the Sustainability Service with Assurance Level 'Substantial' achieved. The definition of 'Substantial' outcome is: 'Framework of governance, risk management and control are adequate and effective.'
- The annual Planning Performance Framework (PPF) was assessed by the Scottish Government following the approval by our Council's Planning Committee. The Minister for Local Government and Housing responded noting the success of our team in enabling the planning service to continue to operate during the Covid-19 pandemic. The report again showed the high levels of performance across all categories. The report welcomed our approach to early engagement, that we had completed five of the six service improvements from the previous year, undertaken a review of our Supplementary Guidance, developed a protocol for the design and development of council housing and published an indicative timetable for the replacement of the Local Development Plan.

► Accreditations

- Facilities Management experienced a successful external audit by BSI for Quality Management Systems ISO9001. We were praised for our emergency responses to the pandemic and the focus on supporting our community. It was recognised that we have a strong approach to risk management and had handled the frequently changing requirements very well over the last year. No major non-conformities were identified.
- KA Leisure were awarded the RoSPA Gold Award for Leisure Safety which recognises excellence in health and safety management among companies that primarily offer services directly to guests and visitors.



What Our Customers Say

This section captures four selected compliments and comments and one complaint and resolution from our residents and businesses who have contacted the us to highlight any issues they are facing.

"Hello first of all I would like to thank the young man who put forward my request for a replacement light outside of my home. I have been broken into, had my garden tools stolen, been scared to death of persons kicking and or banging on my door as it was pitch black outside without a light.

BUT along came a knight NOT in a shiny suit but in an ORANGE HI VIS suit along with an electrician who installed a security lamp outside my front door. THANK YOU SO VERY MUCH you do not know how safe I feel now. There has been no more knocking or banging on my door at all hours of the night. Please let the young man and the electrician know that I really am very grateful and thank them so very much. Also a very big THANK YOU to NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL for giving the permission to go ahead with the installation of the light. Thank you and God bless you all."

North Ayrshire Resident

"As a regular walker it was nice to see the section of the New Town Trail through Girdle Toll towards Eglinton Park getting a tidy up recently. With all the fallen leaves etc. the drain was backing up and the little stream was virtually blocked. Now the drains have been cleared and the stream dug out... ..the path has dried out and the excess water has somewhere to flow again... ..well done and many thanks"

North Ayrshire Resident

"The ground surrounding Shieldhope Court is looking rundown and is needing a lot of work to get it looking like it should."

North Ayrshire Resident

"The resident called to thank the team for their prompt response saying it 'is looking so much better'".

North Ayrshire Council Representative

"I'd like to pass on thanks to the waste team who attended Stroma Court this morning at around 8.30am. My elderly father was leaving to attend a hospital appointment and the operative who was pulling out his bin noticed us leaving and realised that the vehicle would soon block us in.

Without any prompting the gent moved to the vehicle and asked driver to wait where he was to prevent blocking us in.

This was a very simple but very thoughtful and considerate act that ensured that my father was on time for his appointment. It was really appreciated and I'd be grateful if our message of thanks could be passed on to the crew."

North Ayrshire Resident

Contact Us

For further information please contact:

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Website: www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/performance

Delivering our services with **Focus. Passion. Inspiration.**



North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath



Supporting North Ayrshire Together Update on Our Response to the Coronavirus Pandemic

March 2021

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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
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 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

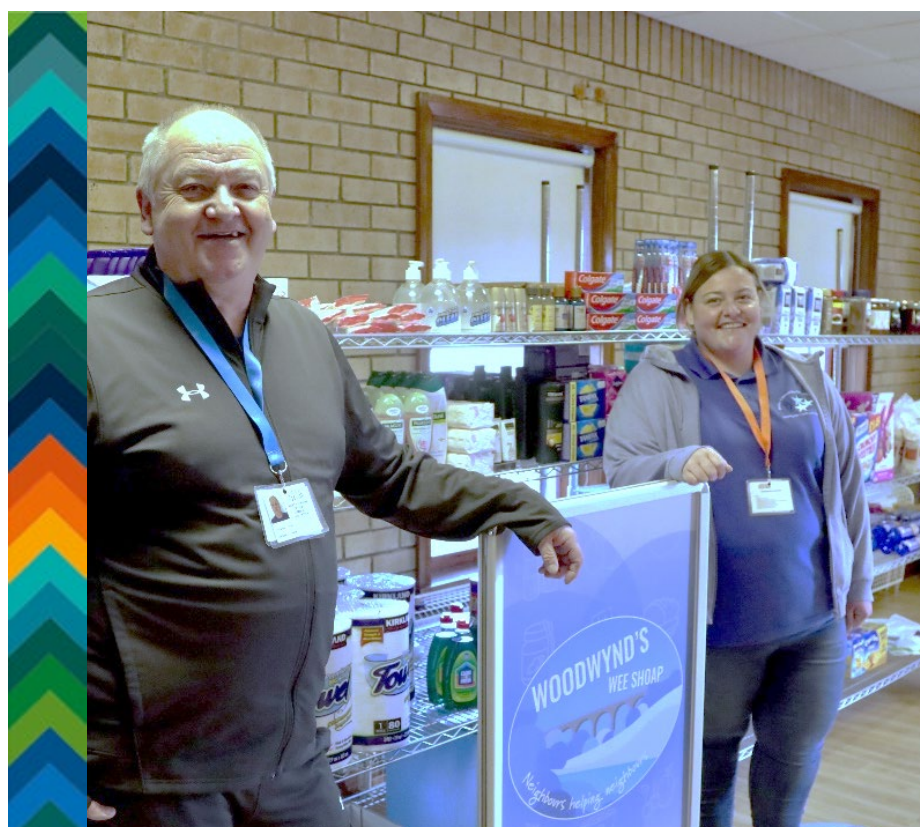
affordable food. Our North Ayrshire Food System network has been launched as **"North Ayrshire Fairer Food"** to meet this ongoing need. The Whitlees Quaint Larder, Ardrossan South Larder, Woodwynd's Wee Shoap and Cranberry's Community Larder introduced their pantry initiatives, with more planned from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

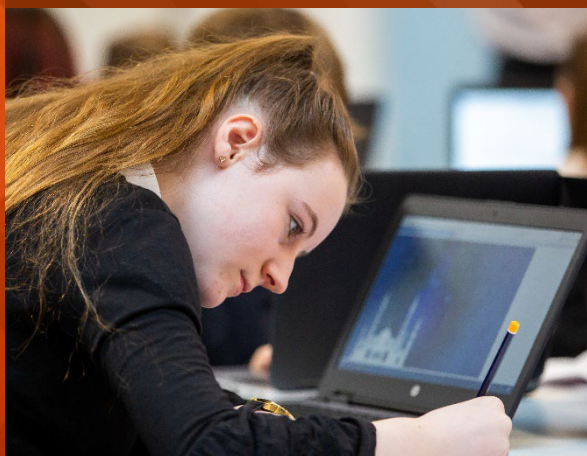
1217 Wi-Fi iPads

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.

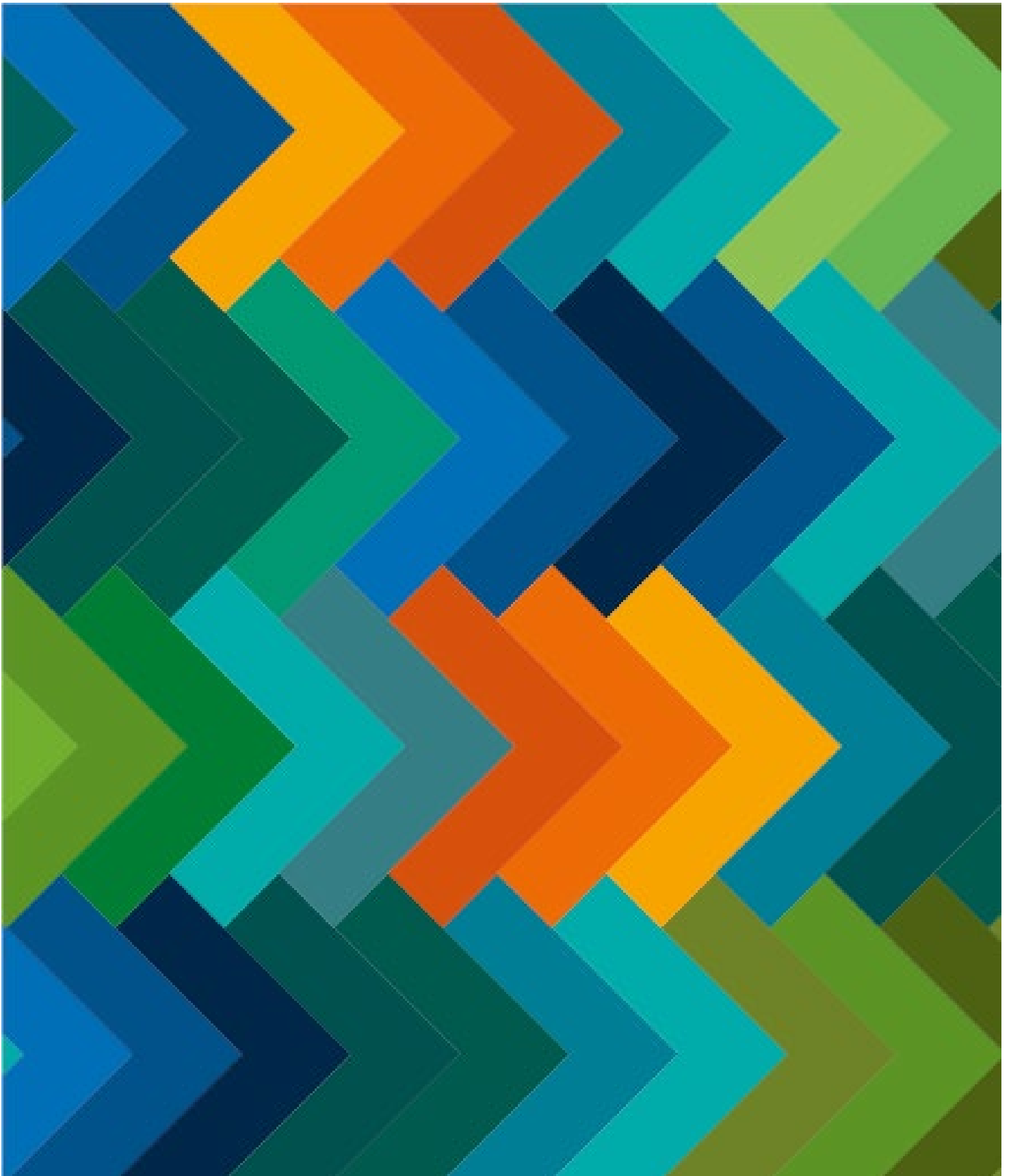
Our DrEAM (Drop Everything and Move) initiative was launched to remind us to take time to be active and ensure that we take appropriate breaks.

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
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Appendix 3 – Council Plan Performance Indicators

Priority - Aspiring Communities

PI Status	
	Significantly Adrift of Target
	Slightly Adrift of Target
	On Target
	Data Only
	Data Not Available

Code & Short Name	2017/18			2018/19			2019/20			2020/21			2023/24
	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Target
CP_01 Percentage of population who are involved in local decision making (see description)	New measure and baseline established for 2018-19			51%			45.53%	60%		6.67%			60%
CP_02 Percentage of Council budget directed via participatory methods	New measure and baseline established for 2018-19			0.62%			1.11%	0.89%		1.13%	1.2%		2%*
CP_03 Percentage of residents who agree they have access to opportunities to participate in their local community	New measure and baseline established for 2018-19			47%			47%	47%		47%	47%		50%
CP_04 Percentage of children achieving their developmental milestones at the time the child starts primary school	77.2%			78%			Data was not collected for 2019/20 academic year due to Covid-19.	79%		Data not currently available	80%		85%
CP_05 Average total tariff score of pupils living in SIMD 30% most deprived areas	709.8	728		638.1	715		685.8	718		Data not currently available	724		745
CP_06 Average tariff score: All Leavers	880.2	880		780.7	885		857.4	895		Data not currently available	900		890

Code & Short Name	2017/18			2018/19			2019/20			2020/21			2023/24
	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Target
CP_07 Percentage of school leavers entering positive destinations	95.6%	95.4%	✓	94%	95.7%	⚠	92.5%	96%	⚠	Data not currently available	96.2%	?	97%
CP_08 Percentage Children living in Poverty (after housing costs)	27.4%	-	?	27.1%	-	?	27.9%	26.5%	✗	Data not currently available	26.5%	?	25%
CP_09 Percentage of working age population in employment	68.2%	64.7%	✓	69.7%	64.7%	✓	70.2%	70%	✓	69%	64.7%	✓	73%
CP_10 Percentage of procurement spent on local enterprises	19.75%	📈		17.43%	📈		16.65%	23%	✗	Data not currently available	23.5%	?	26%
CP_11 Percentage of people earning less than the living wage	24.3%	📈		24.3%	📈		16%	24%	✓	Data not currently available	23%	?	20%
CP_12 Percentage of learning disability service users accessing employment support activities	24.25%	30%	✗	23.88%	30%	✗	23.84%	30%	✗	0%	25%	✗	30%
CP_13 Percentage of children with BMI centile >91 at 27 month review	12.65%	10.5%	✗	9.98%	10.5%	✓	13.19%	10.5%	✗	Data not currently available	10.5%	?	9%
CP_14 Percentage of households in fuel poverty	30%	📈		26%	26%	✓	28%	25.5%	✗	28%	28%	✓	27%
CP_15 Number of attendances at indoor sports & leisure facilities (excluding pools)	1,848,777	📈		1,886,930	📈		1,859,843	1,964,100	✗	71,913	736,915	✗	1,950,000
CP_16 Percentage of people aged 65 and over with long-term care needs who receiving personal care at home	65.8%	📈		66.68%	65.6%	✓	69.42%	66%	✓	Data not currently available	66%	?	65%
CP_17 Emergency Admissions (Number)	20,724	20,639	✓	20,933	20,257	⚠	19,150	20,257	✓	18,837	20,257	✓	20,000

Code & Short Name	2017/18			2018/19			2019/20			2020/21			2023/24
	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Target
CP_18 Percentage of new tenancies to applicants who were assessed as homeless sustained for more than a year	78.28%	81%		81.48%	82%		84.07%	82%		92.48%	85%		82%

**CP_02 Percentage of Council budget directed via participatory methods: It is proposed the 2023/24 target is reduced from 2% to 1.5% due to the coronavirus pandemic and the associated changes in public sector finances. We are the only local authority meeting the Scottish Government and COSLA target of 1% at 2021 (our 2020/21 figure was 1.13% and 1.11% in 2019/20).*

Priority - Inspiring Place

Code & Short Name	2017/18			2018/19			2019/20			2020/21			2023/24
	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Target
CP_19 Proportion of operational buildings that are suitable for their current use	89.91%	91%	✓	91.01%	92%	⚠	90.89%	93%	⚠	Data not currently available	93%	?	93%
CP_20 Overall percentage of road network that should be considered for maintenance treatment	39.1%	39.1%	✓	38.1%	39.3%	✓	37.3%	38.1%	✓	Data not currently available	38.1%	?	38.1%
CP_21 Proportion of properties receiving superfast broadband	92.35%	📊		93.7%	📊		94.1%	97%	⚠	Data not currently available	97%	?	100%
CP_22 Number of electric vehicle charging points publicly available	25	📊		25	25	✓	36	30	✓	45	42	✓	60
CP_23 Number of new build Council housing units reaching completion (cumulative)	232	232	✓	296	296	✓	381	351	✓	437	755	🛑	1,375
CP_24 Number of empty homes brought back into use (cumulative)	57	43	✓	295	60	✓	594	500	✓	594	600	⚠	600
CP_25 Percentage of Council dwellings that meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard	99.14%	98.2%	✓	99.19%	99.4%	✓	99.36%	99.4%	✓	98.83%	99.5%	✓	99.6%
CP_26 Tourism Visitor Numbers	1,506,210	📊		1,519,260	📊		1,599,400	1,534,968	✓	Data not currently available	1,563,726	?	1,650,000
CP_27 Street Cleanliness Index - Percentage Clean	92.2%	94%	⚠	94.5%	94%	✓	94.6%	94%	✓	94.6%	94%	✓	94%
CP_28 Hectares of vacant & derelict land in North Ayrshire	1,294	-	?	1,279	1,269	✓	1,180	1,244	✓	1,204	1,194	✓	1,094

Code & Short Name	2017/18			2018/19			2019/20			2020/21			2023/24
	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Target
CP_29 Overall carbon emissions (tonnes)	43,756	50,198	✓	40,666	45,137	✓	37,508	39,320	✓	22,846	35,127	✓	35,000
CP_30 Total installed capacity of low carbon heat and electricity generation across the Council's estate	9,029	9,000	✓	9,682	9,600	✓	9,700	9,700	✓	10,720	9,800	✓	12,000
CP_31 Percentage of total household waste that is recycled (calendar year as per SEPA)	55.8%	54.5%	✓	54.6%	54.5%	✓	56.3%	59%	⚠	52.1%	52.1%	✓	62%

Priority - A Council for the Future

Code & Short Name	2017/18			2018/19			2019/20			2020/21			2023/24
	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Target
CP_32 Percentage of Customers delighted with the overall Customer Service	84%	77%	✓	81%	77%	✓	81%	77%	✓	Not measured due to pandemic.	77%	?	85%
CP_33 Percentage of Self Service Transactions	36.7%	30%	✓	40.09%	35%	✓	41.26%	40%	✓	58%	45%	✓	50%
CP_34 Employee Engagement Level - Council Wide	71.2%	70%	✓	No survey planned.	70%	?	70.67%	70%	✓	No survey planned.	70%	?	72%

Appendix 4 - Council Plan Actions

Due to the pandemic, no sub actions were set within a 2020-21 delivery plan. The following statuses of the Council Plan 2019-24 actions are based on information available to the Corporate Policy, Performance and Elections team. A Council Plan Delivery Plan for 2021-22 is in development.

Key:



Significantly Adrift of Target



Slightly Adrift of Target










On Target















Unknown





Priority: Aspiring Communities







Ref:	2019-24 Action	Year End 2020/21 Status	Comments
Local Outcome: North Ayrshire will have active and strong communities			
CP_01	We will build stronger relationships between the council, communities and partners.		
CP_02	We will co-produce a local charter with our communities which sets out the things we jointly commit to do for each other, to help each other create a better North Ayrshire.		
CP_03	We will extend our participatory approach, offering communities more opportunities to lead in local decision-making.		
CP_04	We will support communities to achieve what's important to them through strong local networks.		
Local Outcome: North Ayrshire children and young people experience the best start in life			
CP_05	We will expand our early learning and childcare provision to make sure all eligible children are able to access 1140 hours of free care each year.		
CP_06	We will support our children and young people to become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.		
CP_07	We will offer opportunities to our young people and their families to play a more active role in school life and encourage more participation in learning opportunities.		
CP_08	We will work with all young people to build their resilience, supporting their mental health and physical well-being.		
Local Outcome: North Ayrshire is an inclusive, growing and enterprising local economy			
CP_09	We will work with schools, colleges, universities, businesses and partners to deliver education, skills and training, helping people into work and sustaining employment.		Access to services has been impacted by Covid-19, however we have managed to find employment for 285 residents during the year.
CP_10	We will make sure that everyone has the ability and knowledge to participate in the digital world.		
CP_11	We will support our local businesses to become more innovative and competitive.		

CP_12	We will promote fair employment practices.		
CP_13	We will develop and implement a Community Wealth Building (CWB) strategy.		
Local Outcome: North Ayrshire residents and communities enjoy good life-long health and wellbeing			
CP_14	We will continue our work with partners, including the Scottish Government, to explore the feasibility of a Scottish Basic Income Pilot.		Complete as at June 2020.
CP_15	We will let people decide how best to manage their own care needs and support people to live in their own homes for as long as possible		
CP_16	We will work with individuals and communities to support positive lifestyle choices which improve health and wellbeing.		Despite a historical amber sub-action from 2019-20, the wider response to the pandemic outweighs this. An amber status for this action would not have been an accurate reflection of performance.
Local Outcome: North Ayrshire residents and communities are safe			
CP_17	We will work with partners to support our vulnerable residents and communities.		Despite a historical amber sub-action from 2019-20, the wider response to the pandemic outweighs this. An amber status for this action would not have been an accurate reflection of performance.
CP_18	We will extend the 'Housing First' pilot to address homelessness.		Housing First is being implemented, however a Youth Tenancy Sustainment Pilot is on hold due to Covid-19.

Priority: Inspiring Place			
Ref:	2019-24 Action	Year End 2020/21 Status	Comments
Local Outcome: North Ayrshire is well-connected with effective infrastructure			
CP_19	We will provide well-maintained, integrated travel and transport networks, supporting alternative and sustainable transport.		
CP_20	We will work with partners to make sure there is sustained investment in our roads, ports and harbour infrastructure to ensure that travel is resilient and reliable.		
CP_21	We will work with partners to extend public wi-fi and improve our digital connectivity.		Our public buildings have been closed for much for the year due to Covid-19.
CP_22	We will provide an appropriately sized, fit for purpose, energy-efficient and digital- enabled property portfolio, including our schools.		

CP_23	We will attract investment, through the Ayrshire Growth Deal and other means, to support regeneration and job creation at our key development sites of i3 Irvine, Hunterston, Lochshore, Ardrossan Marine Quarter, and the Irvine Great Harbour.		
CP_24	We will support our communities to maximise the use of community assets (such as schools) and encourage Community Asset Transfers.		
Local Outcome: North Ayrshire residents have homes and houses that meet their needs			
CP_25	With our social landlord partners, we will build new, modern, energy-efficient lifelong homes for life, tailored to the needs of tenants.		
CP_26	We will actively promote a mix of homes by facilitating private housing development.		The HOME project has experienced delays due to a review of the financial model and delays in submitting for planning permission.
CP_27	We will work with property owners and landlords to make sure our private housing is suitable for the needs of our residents.		The Private Sector Team continued to work on below tolerable standard issues, however due to the Covid-19 pandemic empty homes work has not been carried out and will commence once lockdown is lifted.
CP_28	We will form a partnership with other Councils to introduce a low-cost energy offer.	Off Programme	Following a decision by Nottingham City Council to sell their not-for-profit energy company following an audit identifying significant financial losses, this action is being reviewed and may not be taken forward. However, we continue to focus on providing low cost green energy for our council estate. This is detailed in the separate Council Plan Delivery Plan Cabinet Report, 31st August 2021.
Local Outcome: North Ayrshire is a vibrant, welcoming and attractive environment			
CP_29	We will provide well-kept public places and town centres which will benefit our residents, visitors and businesses.		
CP_30	We will, where possible, bring empty properties back into use.		
CP_31	We will work with communities to improve the quality of the local environment through a participatory approach.		

CP_32	We will develop North Ayrshire as a coastal and island destination, attracting tourism investment and visitors.		Lockdown prevented the Making Waves event in summer 2020, however plans have continued around the Ayrshire Growth Deal 'Marine Tourism' and 'Developing the Visitor Economy' projects in the meantime.
Local Outcome: North Ayrshire is a sustainable environment			
CP_33	We will support a circular economy by re-using, recycling and generating energy from the waste we manage.		
CP_34	We will develop additional low carbon renewable energy schemes and networks.		
CP_35	We will protect our communities by delivering the Local Flood Risk Management Plan, the Shoreline Management Plan and the Millport and Upper Garnock Valley Flood Protection Schemes.		

Priority: A Council for the Future			
Ref:	2019-24 Action	Year End 2020/21 Status	Comments
Local Outcome: North Ayrshire puts residents and communities at the heart of what we do			
CP_36	We will work with communities and key stakeholders to radically review what we do and how we do it, to deliver cost effective services.		
CP_37	We will provide joined up services across the Council and with partner agencies and communities.		
CP_38	We will use technology to improve access to and delivery of our services.		
Local Outcome: A powerful and respected voice			
CP_39	We will make our case nationally, regionally and locally levels to secure investment to support delivery of our priorities.		
Local Outcome: North Ayrshire maximises resources and provides value for money			
CP_40	We will review what we do and how we do it to ensure we deliver the best possible services		
Local Outcome: North Ayrshire has a valued workforce that delivers high quality services			
CP_41	We will empower and invest in our workforce to develop new and innovative ways of working.		

14th September 2021**The Audit and Scrutiny Committee**

Title: Council Plan 2019-24: Delivery Plan Refresh 2021-22**Purpose:** To advise the Audit and Scrutiny Committee on the Council Plan Delivery Plan as at June 2021.**Recommendation:** That the Audit and Scrutiny Committee agrees to note the Council Plan Delivery Plan for 2021-22.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 [Our Council Plan 2019-24](#) outlines our priorities and outcomes and forms the basis of our statutory reporting. [Community Wealth Building](#) is enshrined throughout our Council Plan priorities and resulting activities.
- 1.2 In order to manage our performance, our Council Plan is supported by the Council Plan Performance Framework (performance indicators) and the Delivery Plan (actions). The Delivery Plan has two levels, the “overall actions” which are long-term up to the lifetime of the current Council Plan and published under each outcome; and the sub-actions which support the overall actions.
- 1.3 During 2020-21, the annual delivery plan was not refreshed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Performance was reported and scrutinised based on our performance indicators, our response to the coronavirus pandemic and its impact on the delivery of our Council Plan.
- 1.4 Following the approval of [Our Performance Strategy](#) by the ELT, the proposed Delivery Plan for 2021-22 (Appendix One) was developed based on existing actions and key strategies where possible with action completion dates aligned to strategy, programme, academic and financial year timescales.
- 1.5 Key strategies were selected based on:
 - The strength of alignment to one or more of our priorities (including our recovery).
 - The potential impact on our residents.
 - The level of resources committed by our council.
- 1.6 Only actions were considered in the scope of this refresh, however it is intended that performance indicators will be reviewed for 2022-23, though not necessarily changed. We are exploring some alignment with the Inclusive Economy Dashboard. Already we can see opportunities for the dashboard to add valuable context to our reporting.

2. Key Delivery Plan Changes

- 2.1 No new overall actions have been added, however out of the 41 existing overall actions it is proposed that three are removed:

Overall Action	Reason for Removal
CP_14 We will continue our work with partners, including the Scottish Government, to explore the feasibility of a Scottish Basic Income Pilot.	This action is complete.
CP_40 We will review what we do and how we do it to ensure we deliver the best possible services.	There is a high amount of overlap with the following existing actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CP_36 “We will work with communities and key stakeholders to radically review what we do and how we do it, to deliver cost effective services.” • CP_37 “We will provide joined up services across the Council and with partner agencies and communities.”
CP_28 We will form a partnership with other Councils to introduce a low-cost energy offer.	This is no longer being pursued following extensive research which included a decision by Nottingham City Council to sell their not-for-profit energy company to British Gas following significant financial losses. However, we continue to focus on providing low-cost green energy for our council estate.

- 2.2 Removing the above would reduce the number of overall actions to 38. An action tracker for all of the overall actions is attached in Appendix Two.
- 2.3 In 2019-20 there were 116 sub-actions (reduced from 118 due to duplication). There are 98 sub-actions proposed for the 2021-22 Delivery Plan. Of these:
- 37 are existing sub-actions from 2019-20 Delivery Plan.
 - Seven are revised sub-actions from the 2019-20 Delivery Plan (where the original action has been edited slightly to provide continuity).
 - 54 are new sub-actions based as far as possible on existing strategy actions.

3. Reporting

- 3.1 Council Plan progress is currently reported six-monthly to Cabinet and the Audit and Scrutiny Committee (Quarters Two and Four).
- 3.2 As many sub-actions align to existing strategies, timescales reflect the activity rather than financial years. This means progress updates should be more accurate and enable more effective scrutiny of performance.
- 3.3 The current six-monthly Council Plan Progress Reporting has been positively received by Elected Members and external auditors. No major changes to the content of the report are proposed.

3.4 To ensure effective scrutiny and efficient reporting, it is proposed that from Quarter Two 2021-22:

- We continue to provide a visual summary of the RAG status (**Red**, **Amber**, **Green**) of the overall actions within the body of the report.
- Only the Council Plan overall action status is reported, not the status of sub-actions unless the relevant overall action is adrift of target (**Amber** or **Red**).
- We introduce a new % RAG status per outcome in the body of the report for actions.
- We include an appendix listing the RAG status of each Council Plan overall action. This would be segmented by priority but would not include notes unless the action was adrift of target (**Red** or **Amber**), as the content would already be covered in the narrative of the report.
- Any actions adrift of target (**Red** or **Amber**) would be listed with a full explanation of the reason for the status and what we are doing to address the issue.

4. Next Steps

- 4.1 The creation of Operational Plans is led by Services and Teams, however the Corporate Policy, Performance and Elections Team will ensure Operational Plans contain the sub-actions supporting the Council Plan, that teams are aware of the linkages and ensure they provide effective updates.
- 4.2 Teams will be trained to update actions with a representation of their current RAG status as well as % complete

5. Proposals

The Audit and Scrutiny Committee are requested to note the Council Plan Delivery Plan.

6. Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial

- 6.1 None.

Human Resources

- 6.2 None.

Legal

- 6.3 None.

Equality/Socio-economic

- 6.4 The report outlines the Council's commitment to fulfilling its statutory duty in terms of Equalities and Socio-economic duties.

Environmental and Sustainability

- 6.5 The report highlights the Council's commitment to Environmental and Sustainability priorities as outlined in the Council Plan priorities.

Key Priorities

- 6.6 The report provides information on our performance progress against the key Council Plan priorities.

Community Wealth Building

- 6.7 None.

7. Consultation

- 7.1 The Executive Leadership Team discussed and approved the Council Plan Delivery Plan.

Craig Hatton
Chief Executive

For further information please contact **Barry Tudhope, Senior Manager (Corporate Policy, Performance and Elections)** on **01294 324113**.

Background Papers

Council Plan 2019-24

Council Plan Delivery Plan 2021-22



North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

Council Plan Delivery Plan 2021-22

Key: Existing Action Revised Action To Be Added

Priority	Outcome	Ref #	Existing Overall Action	Status	Sub Action Ref #	Sub Action Description	End Date	Sub Action Status (Original Ref #)	Linked Strategy	Assigned To	Comments
Aspiring Communities	Active and strong communities	CP_01	We will build stronger relationships between the council, communities and partners.	In Progress	CP-SUB-1	We will continue to lead and extend the locality planning approach within the CPP, focusing on inequalities.	31/3/2024	In Progress (CP_01b)	Community Empowerment Act	Community Planning	
					CP-SUB-2	We will implement the Tenant Participation Strategy 2017-2022, building on our approach to involving under-represented groups and ensuring our tenants' views are used to shape future service delivery.	31/3/2022	In Progress (CP_01d)	Tenant's Participation Strategy	Housing Services	
		CP_02	We will co-produce a local charter with our communities which sets out the things we jointly commit to do for each other, to help each other create a better North Ayrshire.	In Progress	CP-SUB-3	We will finalise the Local Charter and develop local agreements linked to Locality Plans.	31/3/2022	In Progress (CP_02a and b combined)	Existing 2019 Council Plan Sub Action Community Empowerment Act	Community Planning	

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Aspiring Communities	Active and strong communities	CP_03	We will extend our participatory approach, offering communities more opportunities to lead in local decision-making.	In Progress	CP-SUB-4	We will extend and mainstream our participatory approach to offer communities, including young people, more opportunities to lead in local decision-making.	31/3/2024	In Progress (CP_03a)	Community Empowerment Act	Community Learning and Development	
					CP-SUB-5	We will pilot and implement the use of the Scottish Government Consul platform to increase participatory approaches across the Council and communities. (Shaping North Ayrshire)	31/3/2024	In Progress (CP_03b)	Community Empowerment Act	Community Planning	
		CP_04	We will support communities to achieve what's important to them through strong local networks.	In Progress	CP-SUB-6	We will identify and develop a network of community hubs, to provide timely and preventative local access to information and support.	31/3/2024	In Progress (CP_04a)	Existing 2019 Council Plan Sub Action	Connected Communities	
					CP-SUB-7	We will create and maintain local community signposts and directories to enable and promote community opportunities and access to services.	31/3/2022	Revised (CP_04b)	Existing 2019 Council Plan Sub Action	Connected Communities	Changed to "create and maintain" rather than "create".

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Aspiring Communities	Our children and young people experience the best start in life	CP_05	We will expand our early learning and childcare provision to make sure all eligible children are able to access 1140 hours of free care each year.	In Progress	CP-SUB-8	Deliver major educational new build and refurbishment projects aligned to Scotland's Learning Estate Strategy: "Connecting People, Places and Learning".	31/3/2022	To Be Added	Education Services Plan 2020-22	Education Service	Includes: Lockhart Campus; Ardrossan Education and Community Campus; Moorpark Primary School; New primary school for Irvine East; Marress House ELC; and complete programme of 41 ELC projects across the estate.
					CP-SUB-9	Develop an Outdoor Play Strategy to support Early Years Practitioners to provide excellent learning and developmental opportunities.	31/3/2022	To Be Added	Education Services Plan 2020-22	Education Service	
		CP_06	We will support our children and young people to become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.	In Progress	CP-SUB-10	We will ensure our learning estate provides a safe environment in the context of COVID-19.	31/3/2022	To Be Added	Education Services Plan 2020-22	Education Service	
					CP-SUB-11	In response to COVID-19, we will redesign and implement programmes to achieve excellence and equity for our learners, with a clear focus on reducing the poverty-related attainment gap.	31/3/2022	To Be Added	Education Services Plan 2020-22	Education Service	
					CP-SUB-12	In the context of COVID-19, we will maintain a focus on high quality learning, teaching and assessment in our schools, including in-school and remote learning contexts.	31/3/2022	To Be Added	Education Services Plan 2020-22	Education Service	

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Aspiring Communities	Our children and young people experience the best start in life	CP_07	We will offer opportunities to our young people and their families to play a more active role in school life and encourage more participation in learning opportunities.	In Progress	CP-SUB-13	We will launch our revised Parental Engagement Policy.	31/3/2022	To Be Added	Education Services Plan 2020-22	Education Service	
					CP-SUB-14	We will ensure our children, young people, staff and communities are empowered to shape the education service in our schools.	31/3/2022	To Be Added	Education Services Plan 2020-22	Education Service	
					CP-SUB-15	We will develop and implement a clear communications strategy to ensure all stakeholders are kept informed of developments, strategy and policy.	31/3/2022	To Be Added	Education Services Plan 2020-22	Education Service	
		CP_08	We will work with all young people to build their resilience, supporting their mental health and physical well-being.	In Progress	CP-SUB-16	We will develop a range of wellbeing supports and advice for staff to ensure they are able to meet the needs of our children and young people.	31/3/2022	To Be Added	Education Services Plan 2020-22	Education Service	
					CP-SUB-17	We will develop a comprehensive approach to supporting mental health and wellbeing (of our children and young people) in partnership with other agencies, cognisant of the impact of COVID-19.	31/3/2022	To Be Added	Education Services Plan 2020-22	Education Service	
					CP-SUB-18	We will continue to develop our nurturing approaches and review provision in light of the potential impact of COVID-19.	31/3/2022	To Be Added	Education Services Plan 2020-22	Education Service	

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Aspiring Communities	An inclusive, growing and enterprising local economy	CP_09	We will work with schools, colleges, universities, businesses and partners to deliver education, skills and training, helping people into work and sustaining employment.	In Progress	CP-SUB-19	Continue to work with internal partners such as the employability team and external partners such as Skills Development Scotland, Ayrshire College and Ayrshire Chamber of Commerce to ensure we take a collaborative approach to improving post school destinations and participation for all learners, particularly in light of the additional challenges presented by pandemic.	31/3/2022	To Be Added	Education Services Plan 2020-22	Education Service	
					CP-SUB-20	Ensure all schools take a rigorous approach to developing and supporting future pathways for school leavers, especially for those with additional support needs.	31/3/2022	To Be Added	Education Services Plan 2020-22	Education Service	
					CP-SUB-21	Identify coordinators in secondary schools to support school leadership teams to further develop all aspects of Developing the Young Workforce policies.	31/3/2022	To Be Added	Education Services Plan 2020-22	Education Service	
					CP-SUB-22	Introduce a Quality Improvement Officer with responsibility for Care Experienced Children and Young People to lead improvement activity for this specific group.	31/3/2022	To Be Added	Education Services Plan 2020-22	Education Service	
					CP-SUB-23	We will work in partnership to develop an Ayrshire Regional Skills Investment Plan.	31/12/2021	In progress (CP_09a)	Ayrshire Growth Deal	Employability Service	
		CP_10	We will make sure that everyone has the ability and knowledge to participate in the digital world.	In Progress	CP-SUB-24	We will continue to offer digital access and support through libraries and community centres.	31/3/2024	In Progress (CP_10a)	Existing 2019 Council Plan Sub Action	Information and Culture	
					CP-SUB-25	Provide digital devices and support to enable digitally excluded residents and those on low incomes to get online and access services including training and employment opportunities.	31/3/2022	To Be Added		Information and Culture Education Employability Service	This includes the Connected Scotland Programme and additional support.

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Aspiring Communities	An inclusive, growing and enterprising local economy	CP_11	We will support our local businesses to become more innovative and competitive.	In Progress	CP-SUB-26	We will work with our local businesses and communities to ensure that they can operate as safely as possible during the COVID 19 pandemic.	31/3/2022	To Be Added		Protective Services	
					CP-SUB-27	Procurement - We will use our spend to actively encourage and support a growing, diverse and resilient local business base and to support our net zero ambitions.	31/3/2024	To Be Added	Community Wealth Building Strategy	Economic Policy	This is a pillar of the Community Wealth Building Strategy.
		CP_12	We will promote fair employment practices.	In Progress	CP-SUB-28	Fair Employment - We will encourage the creation of fair and meaningful jobs with progression opportunities to unlock the potential of our residents.	31/3/2024	To Be Added	Community Wealth Building Strategy	Economic Policy	This is a pillar of the Community Wealth Building Strategy.
		CP_13	We will develop and implement a Community Wealth Building (CWB) strategy.	In Progress	CP-SUB-29	Community Wealth Building Council - We will work across all our services and wider local and regional partners to implement Scotland's first approach to Community Wealth Building.	31/3/2024	To Be Added	Community Wealth Building Strategy	Economic Policy	This is a pillar of the Community Wealth Building Strategy.
					CP-SUB-30	Develop and implement the £3 million Ayrshire Growth Deal (AGD) Community Wealth Building Fund.	31/3/2024	Revised (CP_13b)	Community Wealth Building Strategy	Economic Policy	This action is a progression from the 2019 sub action CP_13b "We will work with East and South Ayrshire to co-design the £3m Ayrshire Growth Deal Community Wealth Building Fund with the Scottish Government, informed of North Ayrshire's work with CLES"

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Aspiring Communities	North Ayrshire residents and communities enjoy good life-long health and wellbeing	CP_14	We will continue our work with partners, including the Scottish Government, to explore the feasibility of a Scottish Basic Income Pilot.	This action is complete as at June 2020.							
		CP_15	We will let people decide how best to manage their own care needs and support people to live in their own homes for as long as possible.	In Progress	CP-SUB-31	Re-design Older People's Services - Home First approach.	31/3/2022	To Be Added	HSCP Bridging Strategic Commissioning Plan 2021-22	Health and Community Care	
					CP-SUB-32	Grow Care At Home capacity	31/3/2022	To Be Added	HSCP Bridging Strategic Commissioning Plan 2021-22	Health and Community Care	
					CP-SUB-33	Prioritise Day Services Model and Support for Carers.	31/3/2022	To Be Added	HSCP Bridging Strategic Commissioning Plan 2021-22	Health and Community Care	
					CP-SUB-34	Prioritise integrated Island services, including unscheduled care.	31/3/2022	To Be Added	HSCP Bridging Strategic Commissioning Plan 2021-22	Health and Community Care	
					CP-SUB-35	We will help individuals to have better choice and control of their support at an early stage by reinvigorating Self-Directed Support and the HSCP charging policy.	31/3/2022	In Progress (CP_15b)	Existing 2019 Council Plan Sub Action	Health and Community Care	

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Aspiring Communities	North Ayrshire residents and communities enjoy good life-long health and wellbeing	CP_16	We will work with individuals and communities to support positive lifestyle choices which improve health and wellbeing.	In Progress	CP-SUB-36	We will provide opportunities for people to be more active more often, through the Active Communities Strategy	31/3/2024	In Progress (CP_16a)	Active Communities Strategy 2016-26	Community Learning and Development	
					CP-SUB-37	We will work with Scottish Government as a trailblazer site for the whole systems approach to diet and healthy weight (public health priority)	31/3/2022	In Progress (CP_16b)	Scottish Government and COSLA Public Health Reform	Community Learning and Development	
					CP-SUB-38	Prioritisation of children and young people receiving support from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.	31/3/2022	To Be Added	HSCP Bridging Strategic Commissioning Plan 2021-22	Mental Health, Learning Disability and Addiction Service	
					CP-SUB-39	Prioritise community mental health services supporting people within their communities.	31/3/2022	To Be Added	HSCP Bridging Strategic Commissioning Plan 2021-22	Mental Health, Learning Disability and Addiction Service	
					CP-SUB-40	We will place Mental Health Practitioners into GP practices to offer triage calls, urgent and routine face to face assessments as well as directing patients to the most appropriate support without unnecessary referrals to mental health services.	31/3/2022	In Progress (CP_16f)	Existing 2019 Council Plan Sub Action	Mental Health, Learning Disability and Addiction Service	
					CP-SUB-41	We will improve emotional and mental health and wellbeing through physical and social participation in community activities, including for young people.	31/3/2024	In progress (CP_16d)	Active Communities Strategy 2016-26	Community Learning and Development	

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Aspiring Communities	North Ayrshire residents and communities are safe	CP_17	We will work with partners to support our vulnerable residents and communities.	In Progress	CP-SUB-42	Work closely with colleagues in Acute Services and Police Scotland to address the levels of unscheduled care in mental health.	31/3/2022	To Be Added	HSCP Bridging Strategic Commissioning Plan 2021-22	Mental Health, Learning Disability and Addiction Service	
					CP-SUB-43	Protect and invest in Early Intervention and Prevention work.	31/3/2022	To Be Added	HSCP Bridging Strategic Commissioning Plan 2021-22	Children, Families and Justice Service	.
					CP-SUB-44	We will implement the Safer North Ayrshire Strategy 2020-2025 along with our Community Planning Partners.	31/3/2024	Revised (CP_17e)	Safer North Ayrshire Strategy 2020-25	Housing Services	Slight rewording to remove "develop" and update the strategy timescale.
					CP-SUB-45	We will roll-out the Child and Adult Mental Health Service (CAMHS) wellbeing model piloted in Kilwinning locality to all localities.	31/3/2022	In Progress (CP_17d)	Existing 2019 Council Plan Sub Action	Mental Health, Learning Disability and Addiction Service	
					CP-SUB-46	Introduce a Better Off Hub to provide holistic short and long term financial stability for our residents and reduce impact on services.	31/3/2023	To Be Added	Community Wealth Building Strategy	Employability Service	
					CP-SUB-47	We will ensure all our residents are able to access food with dignity.	31/3/2024	To Be Added	Food Growing Strategy	Facilities Management Connected Communities Streetscene	
		CP_18	We will extend the 'Housing First' pilot to address homelessness.	In Progress	CP-SUB-48	We will implement a 'Housing First' approach in our provision of homelessness services, providing mainstream, settled accommodation for our tenants as quickly as possible.	31/3/2022	In Progress (CP_18a)	Local Housing Strategy 2018-2022	Housing Services	
					CP-SUB-49	We will further improve support to young people to enable them to sustain their tenancies.	31/3/2022	In Progress (CP_18b)		Housing Services	

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Inspiring Place	Well-connected with effective infrastructure	CP_19	We will provide well-maintained, integrated travel and transport networks, supporting alternative and sustainable transport.	In Progress	CP-SUB-50	We will support the development of the Ayrshire Regional Transport Appraisal.	31/12/2021	In Progress (CP_19a)	Ayrshire Growth Deal	Regeneration	
					CP-SUB-51	We will implement active travel and transport projects including the promotion of strategic active travel projects with partners including Sustrans and Strathclyde Partnership for Transport.	31/3/2024	In Progress (CP_19b)	Climate Change Strategy Electric Vehicle Strategy	Regeneration	
					CP-SUB-52	We will implement an Electric Vehicle Strategy, and work in partnership with government agencies to deliver further electric charging infrastructure throughout North Ayrshire.	31/3/2024	Revised (CP_19c)	Climate Change Strategy Electric Vehicle Strategy	Corporate Sustainability	Changed to “implement” rather than “develop and implement”.
		CP_20	We will work with partners to make sure there is sustained investment in our roads, ports and harbour infrastructure to ensure that travel is resilient and reliable.	In Progress	CP-SUB-53	We will ensure the resilience of our road network and associated infrastructure through a robust Roads Asset Management Plan.	31/3/2024	In progress (CP_20c)	Roads Asset Management Plan	Roads	
		CP_21	We will work with partners to extend public wi-fi and improve our digital connectivity.	In Progress	CP-SUB-54	We will explore further rollout of public Wi-Fi, taking account of building access due to the pandemic and budget implications.	31/3/2024	To Be Added	Council Plan commitment	Information Technology Connected Communities	
					CP-SUB-55	We will drive digital economic recovery and renewal, maximising opportunities from digital infrastructure, the Ayrshire Growth Deal digital fund and Community Wealth Building.	31/3/2024	To Be Added	Recovery and Renewal Approach	Regeneration	This includes the recruitment of a Digital Renewal Manager.
					CP-SUB-56	We will support the implementation of R100 to ensure super-fast broadband access to 100% of premises in North Ayrshire.	31/3/2024	In Progress (CP_21a)	National R100 Programme	Regeneration	

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Inspiring Place	Well-connected with effective infrastructure	CP_22	We will provide an appropriately sized, fit for purpose, energy-efficient and digital-enabled property portfolio, including our schools.	In Progress	CP-SUB-57	We will manage our assets effectively by: maximising the efficiency of our property estate; rationalising surplus assets; increasing occupancy levels and income within the Council's commercial estate, and; measuring and improving the condition and suitability of our operational estate.	31/3/2024	In progress (CP_22a)	Asset Management Plans Climate Change Strategy	Property Management and Investment	
		CP_23	We will attract investment, through the Ayrshire Growth Deal and other means, to support regeneration and job creation at our key development sites of i3 Irvine, Hunterston, Lochshore, Ardrossan Marine Quarter, and the Irvine Great Harbour.	In Progress	CP-SUB-58	Ayrshire Growth Deal - Progress I3 Digital Innovation Campus.	31/3/2024	To Be Added	Ayrshire Growth Deal	Growth and Investment	Milestones are reported to ELT regularly.
					CP-SUB-59	Ayrshire Growth Deal - Progress Hunterston Strategic Development Area.	31/3/2024	To Be Added	Ayrshire Growth Deal	Growth and Investment	
					CP-SUB-60	Ayrshire Growth Deal - Progress Great Harbour.	31/3/2024	To Be Added	Ayrshire Growth Deal	Growth and Investment	
					CP-SUB-61	Ayrshire Growth Deal - Progress Ardrossan Coastal Quarter including International Marine Science and Environment Centre. (IMSE).	31/3/2024	To Be Added	Ayrshire Growth Deal	Growth and Investment	
					CP-SUB-62	Ayrshire Growth Deal - Develop Marine Tourism.	31/3/2024	To Be Added	Ayrshire Growth Deal	Growth and Investment	
					CP-SUB-63	Progress the Lochshore Regeneration Project including the development of a site masterplan to create a parkland destination, construction of new community and leisure hub and further phases of placemaking investment subject to securing funding support.	31/3/2024	To Be Added	Community Wealth Building Strategy Economic Recovery and Renewal Approach	Regeneration	
		CP_24	We will support our communities to maximise the use of community assets (such as schools) and encourage Community Asset Transfers.	In Progress	CP-SUB-64	We will work with communities and through Locality Partnerships to raise awareness of and support Community Asset Transfers.	31/3/2024	In Progress (CP_24a)	Community Asset Transfer Policy	Community Learning and Development	

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Inspiring Place	Provide our residents with homes and houses that meet their needs	CP_25	With our social landlord partners, we will build new, modern, energy-efficient lifelong homes for life, tailored to the needs of tenants.	In Progress	CP-SUB-65	We will build a total of 630 new Council homes by March 2022 to contribute to the overall SHIP target of 1,575 Council homes by March 2026.	31/3/2022	Revised (CP_25a)	Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2021-26	Housing Services	The original action was CP_25a "We will build a total of 1,732 new homes by March 2024, with 384 Council homes completed by March 2020". This contained the 2024 figure as at the 2020 refresh of the SHIP of 1,732. This figure changes annually and is no longer the 2024 target. In addition, the 1,732 target contained non-Council homes, meaning our performance was impacted by external housing provision so action has been revised.
					CP-SUB-66	We will work with partners to ensure we develop, as far as possible, homes for life.	31/3/2024	In progress (CP_25b)	Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2020-25	Housing Services	
		CP_26	We will actively promote a mix of homes by facilitating private housing development.	In Progress	CP-SUB-67	We will deliver an alternative affordable housing model – HOME – in one of our most pressured localities.	31/3/2023	In progress (CP_26b)	Local Housing Strategy 2018-2022	Housing Services	

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Inspiring Place	Provide our residents with homes and houses that meet their needs	CP_27	We will work with property owners and landlords to make sure our private housing is suitable for the needs of our residents.	In Progress	CP-SUB-68	We will help private sector residents to improve the condition of their homes by implementing the actions within the North Ayrshire Scheme of Assistance.	31/3/2022	In progress (CP_27a)	North Ayrshire Local Housing Strategy 2018-22	Housing Services	
		CP_28	We will form a partnership with other Councils to introduce a low-cost energy offer.	This is no longer being pursued following extensive research which included a decision by Nottingham City Council to sell their not-for-profit energy company to British Gas following significant financial losses. However, we continue to focus on providing low-cost green energy for our council estate.							
	A vibrant, welcoming and attractive environment	CP_29	We will provide well-kept public places and town centres which will benefit our residents, visitors and businesses.	In Progress	CP-SUB-69	We will seek opportunities to develop affordable housing in our town centres through our Strategic Housing Investment Plan.	31/3/2024	In progress (CP_29a)	Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2021-26	Property Management and Investment (PMI)	
					CP-SUB-70	We will deliver the actions arising from the Open Space Strategy and the Litter, Fly Tipping and Dog Fouling Prevention Strategy.	31/3/2024	In progress (CP_29b)	Open Space Strategy 2016-26 Litter, Fly Tipping and Dog Fouling Prevention Strategy	Streetscene	
					CP-SUB-71	We will develop Decriminalised Parking Enforcement to manage town centre traffic.	31/3/2023	In progress (CP_29c)	Town Centre Car Parking Strategy	Roads	
		CP_30	We will, where possible, bring empty properties back into use.	In Progress	CP-SUB-72	We will purchase empty homes through our Strategic Housing Investment Plan and bring them back into the affordable housing supply.	31/3/2024	In Progress (CP_30a)	Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2020-25	Housing Services	
					CP-SUB-73	Land and Assets - We will support the wider regeneration of our communities by maximising all of our land and assets including through alternative uses for community and business benefit.	31/3/2024	To Be Added	Community Wealth Building Strategy	Economic Policy	Pillar of the Community Wealth Building Strategy.

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Inspiring Place	A vibrant, welcoming and attractive environment	CP_31	We will work with communities to improve the quality of the local environment through a participatory approach.	In Progress	CP-SUB-74	We will engage with tenants and empower them to make decisions about improvement projects in their local neighbourhoods, through our: Estate-based Regeneration Programme; and Tenant-led Budgets.	31/3/2022	In Progress (CP_31a)	Tenant Participation Strategy 2017-22	Housing Services	
		CP_32	We will develop North Ayrshire as a coastal and island destination, attracting tourism investment and visitors.	In Progress	CP-SUB-75	Develop Island Plans for Arran and Cumbrae as part of the Islands Recovery and Renewal Pilot, including the publication of a Cumbrae socio-economic profile to inform the Cumbrae Island Plan.	31/3/2022	To Be Added	Islands Recovery and Renewal Pilot	Economic Policy	
					CP-SUB-76	Ayrshire Growth Deal - Develop Marine Tourism.	31/3/2024	To Be Added	Ayrshire Growth Deal	Growth and Investment	
					CP-SUB-77	Ayrshire Growth Deal - Develop Visitor Economy.	31/3/2024	To Be Added	Ayrshire Growth Deal	Growth and Investment	
					CP-SUB-78	Ayrshire Growth Deal - Develop Blue Economy.	31/3/2024	To Be Added	Ayrshire Growth Deal	Growth and Investment	
					CP-SUB-79	We will work collaboratively to maximise grants and income opportunities to invest in tourist destinations and infrastructure.	31/3/2022	To Be Added	Recovery and Renewal Approach	Growth and Investment Recovery and Renewal Regeneration	
Inspiring Place	A sustainable environment	CP_33	We will support a circular economy by re-using, recycling and generating energy from the waste we manage.	In Progress	CP-SUB-80	We will implement actions within the Zero Waste Strategy which will incorporate the implementation of enhanced waste and recycling services and move towards becoming a 'Plastic Free Council' by reducing use of single use plastic.	31/3/2022	In Progress (CP_33a)	Zero Waste Strategy 2018-22	Commercial Services	

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Inspiring Place	A sustainable environment	CP_34	We will develop additional low carbon renewable energy schemes and networks.	In Progress	CP-SUB-81	We will develop further district heating schemes in new housing developments as part of our Strategic Housing Investment Plan.	31/3/2024	In Progress (CP_34a)	Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES)	Corporate Sustainability	Slightly revised as original action stated "two further district schemes".
					CP-SUB-82	We will continue to implement a programme of retrofit solar panels on our Council housing.	31/3/2024	In Progress (CP_34c)	Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES)	Corporate Sustainability	
		CP_35	We will protect our communities by delivering the Local Flood Risk Management Plan, the Shoreline Management Plan and the Millport and Upper Garnock Valley Flood Protection Schemes.	In Progress	CP-SUB-83	We will develop and deliver flood protection schemes for the Upper Garnock Valley, Millport and Mill Burn and progress other studies and schemes as part of the 2 nd Cycle of the Ayrshire Flood Risk Management Strategy and Plan.	31/3/2024	Revised (CP_35a)	Flood Risk Management Plan 2016-22 Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy 2021-23	Roads	Revised to include Mill Burn and emphasise 2 nd cycle of Ayrshire Flood Risk Management Strategy and Plan.

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A Council for the Future	An accessible Council that puts residents and communities at the heart of what we do	CP_36	We will work with communities and key stakeholders to radically review what we do and how we do it, to deliver cost effective services.	In Progress	CP-SUB-84	We will work in partnership with our communities and the Third Sector to co-design and co-deliver services, enabling us to meet their needs whilst delivering a cost-efficient service.	31/3/2024	Revised (CP_36a)	Revision of existing action in Council Plan 2019-24	Recovery and Renewal Connected Communities	Slightly reworded to emphasise partnership rather than "we will involve".
					CP-SUB-85	Ensure the voices of all our children and young people are heard, respected and influence the work of our Council through a culture of "Nothing about us without us".	31/3/2024	To Be Added	Children's Services Plan Youth Participation and Citizenship Strategy 2021-25 "Step up, Speak Out"	Community Learning and Development	Will include: Our Executive Youth Council; review of Joint Cabinets; UNCRC; Youth Forums; seldom heard groups; and digital connectivity (access and training).
					CP-SUB-86	Address child poverty and inequality including through establishing Scotland's first Young People's Commission to ensure our young people's lived experiences of poverty inform our approach to addressing child poverty.	31/3/2024	To Be Added	Children's Services Plan Youth Participation and Citizenship Strategy 2021-25 "Step up, Speak Out"	Communities and Education Directorate Health and Social Care Partnership	This will capture current workstreams such as Cost of the School Day.

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A Council for the Future	An accessible Council that puts residents and communities at the heart of what we do	CP_37	We will provide joined up services across the Council and with partner agencies and communities.	In Progress	CP-SUB-87	Mitigate the financial impact of the Coronavirus pandemic through our Financial Recovery Plan including supporting North Ayrshire Leisure Ltd through a recovery and renewal programme.	31/3/2022	To Be Added	Covid-19 Financial Recovery Plan 2020/21	Financial Services	
					CP-SUB-88	We will develop a Whole Systems Approach with our communities to make it easier for citizens to contact us for advice, support and information.	31/3/2022	To Be Added	Recovery and Renewal Approach	Recovery and Renewal	
					CP-SUB-89	We will identify opportunities for more integrated service delivery through implementation of the Council's Medium-Term Financial Planning Framework.	31/3/2024	In Progress (CP_37a)	Medium Term Financial Planning	Recovery and Renewal	
		CP_38	We will use technology to improve access to and delivery of our services.	In Progress	CP-SUB-90	Implement Cloud solutions where appropriate giving consideration to business need, solution availability, viability of business cases, cyber security and information governance.	31/3/2024	To Be Added	Technology Strategy	Information Technology	
					CP-SUB-91	Support Service re-design through the use of digital and technology solutions.	31/3/2024	In Progress (CP_38d)	Technology Strategy	Information Technology	
					CP-SUB-92	Deliver Cyber Resilience Digital Services to support technological innovation and provide confidence in the security of our infrastructure, data management and technology.	31/3/2024	To Be Added	Technology Strategy	Information Technology	
					CP-SUB-93	We will review, refresh and re-launch the Digital Strategy taking account of learning from the Covid-19 pandemic.	31/3/2022	To Be Added	Recovery and Renewal Approach	Recovery and Renewal	
					CP-SUB-94	We will work collaboratively with our communities to streamline the benefits process – helping residents maximise income opportunities and build relationships to support them.	31/3/2022	To Be Added	Recovery and Renewal Approach	Recovery and Renewal	

Priority	Outcome	Ref #	Existing Overall Action	Status	Sub Action Ref #	Sub Action Description	End Date	Sub Action Status (Original Ref #)	Linked Strategy	Assigned To	Comments
A Council for the Future	A powerful and respected voice	CP_39	We will make our case nationally, regionally and locally levels to secure investment to support delivery of our priorities.	In Progress	CP-SUB-95	Progress our initial £45m bid and future bids for the UK Government Levelling Up Fund and implement associated projects to support town centre regeneration, local transport and cultural and heritage assets.	31/3/2024	To Be Added		Regeneration	
					CP-SUB-96	As North Ayrshire lead authority, submit bids of up to £3m for the UK Government Community Renewal Fund on behalf of local partners and manage fund implementation with successful applicants.	31/2/2022	To Be Added		Finance	
	An efficient Council that maximises resources and provides value for money	CP_40	We will review what we do and how we do it to ensure we deliver the best possible services.	<p>It is recommended that this action is removed as there is a high amount of overlap with the following existing overall actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CP_36 “We will work with communities and key stakeholders to radically review what we do and how we do it, to deliver cost effective services.” CP_37 “We will provide joined up services across the Council and with partner agencies and communities.” 							
	A valued workforce that delivers high quality services	CP_41	We will empower and invest in our workforce to develop new and innovative ways of working.	In Progress	CP-SUB-97	We will strengthen leadership across the Council.	31/3/2024	In Progress (CP_41a)	Our People Connect	Human Resources and Organisational Development (HR & OD)	
					CP-SUB-98	We will support our people to develop, perform and thrive.	31/3/2024	In Progress (CP_41c)	Our People Connect	Human Resources and Organisational Development (HR & OD)	

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

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North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

Council Plan Action Tracker – As at Year End 2020-21

*2021 status based on information available rather than specific sub-actions.

Priority	Outcome	Ref #	Existing Overall Action	2019-20				2020-21*	2021-22				2022-23				2023-24			
				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year End Estimate	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Aspiring Communities	What we' Il do to make active and strong communities	CP_01	We will build stronger relationships between the council, communities and partners.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓												
		CP_02	We will co-produce a local charter with our communities which sets out the things we jointly commit to do for each other, to help each other create a better North Ayrshire.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓												
		CP_03	We will extend our participatory approach, offering communities more opportunities to lead in local decision-making.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓												
		CP_04	We will support communities to achieve what's important to them through strong local networks.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓												
	What we' Il do to ensure our children and young people experience the best start in life	CP_05	We will expand our early learning and childcare provision to make sure all eligible children are able to access 1140 hours of free care each year.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓												
		CP_06	We will support our children and young people to become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.	✓	✓	✓	⚠	✓												
		CP_07	We will offer opportunities to our young people and their families to play a more active role in school life and encourage more participation in learning opportunities.	✓	✓	⚠	✓	✓												
		CP_08	We will work with all young people to build their resilience, supporting their mental health and physical well-being.	⚠	✓	✓	✓	✓												

*2021 status based on information available rather than specific sub-actions.

Priority	Outcome	Ref #	Existing Overall Action	2019-20				2020-21*	2021-22				2022-23				2023-24			
				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year End Estimate	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
	What we' ll do to have an inclusive, growing and enterprising local economy	CP_09	We will work with schools, colleges, universities, businesses and partners to deliver education, skills and training, helping people into work and sustaining employment.																	
		CP_10	We will make sure that everyone has the ability and knowledge to participate in the digital world.																	
		CP_11	We will support our local businesses to become more innovative and competitive.																	
		CP_12	We will promote fair employment practices.																	
		CP_13	We will develop and implement a Community Wealth Building (CWB) strategy.																	
	What we' ll do to make sure North Ayrshire residents and communities	CP_14	We will continue our work with partners, including the Scottish Government, to explore the feasibility of a Scottish Basic Income Pilot.						Complete											
		CP_15	We will let people decide how best to manage their own care needs and support people to live in their own homes for as long as possible.																	
		CP_16	We will work with individuals and communities to support positive lifestyle choices which improve health and wellbeing.																	
	What we will do to ensure North Ayrshire	CP_17	We will work with partners to support our vulnerable residents and communities.																	
		CP_18	We will extend the 'Housing First' pilot to address homelessness.																	

*2021 status based on information available rather than specific sub-actions.

Priority	Outcome	Ref #	Existing Overall Action	2019-20				2020-21*	2021-22				2022-23				2023-24			
				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year End Estimate	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Inspiring Place	What we' ll do to make North Ayrshire well-connected with effective infrastructure	CP_19	We will provide well-maintained, integrated travel and transport networks, supporting alternative and sustainable transport.	✓	✓	▲	▲	✓												
		CP_20	We will work with partners to make sure there is sustained investment in our roads, ports and harbour infrastructure to ensure that travel is resilient and reliable.	✓	✓	✓	▲	✓												
		CP_21	We will work with partners to extend public wi-fi and improve our digital connectivity.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗												
		CP_22	We will provide an appropriately sized, fit for purpose, energy-efficient and digital- enabled property portfolio, including our schools.	✓	✓	✓	▲	✓												
		CP_23	We will attract investment, through the Ayrshire Growth Deal and other means, to support regeneration and job creation at our key development sites of i3 Irvine, Hunterston, Lochshore, Ardrossan Marine Quarter, and the Irvine Great Harbour.	✓	✓	▲	✓	✓												
		CP_24	We will support our communities to maximise the use of community assets (such as schools) and encourage Community Asset Transfers.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓												
	What we' ll do to provide our residents with homes and houses that meet their needs	CP_25	With our social landlord partners, we will build new, modern, energy-efficient lifelong homes for life, tailored to the needs of tenants.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓												
		CP_26	We will actively promote a mix of homes by facilitating private housing development.	✓	✓	✓	▲	▲												
		CP_27	We will work with property owners and landlords to make sure our private housing is suitable for the needs of our residents.	✓	✓	✓	✓	▲												
		CP_28	We will form a partnership with other Councils to introduce a low-cost energy offer.	✓	✓	✓	✓	Off Programme	This is no longer being pursued following extensive research which included a decision by Nottingham City Council to sell their not-for-profit energy company to British Gas following significant financial losses. However, we continue to focus on providing low-cost green energy for our council estate.											

*2021 status based on information available rather than specific sub-actions.

Priority	Outcome	Ref #	Existing Overall Action	2019-20				2020-21*	2021-22				2022-23				2023-24			
				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year End Estimate	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
	What we' ll do to make North Ayrshire a vibrant, welcoming and attractive environment	CP_29	We will provide well-kept public places and town centres which will benefit our residents, visitors and businesses.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓												
		CP_30	We will, where possible, bring empty properties back into use.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓												
		CP_31	We will work with communities to improve the quality of the local environment through a participatory approach.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓												
		CP_32	We will develop North Ayrshire as a coastal and island destination, attracting tourism investment and visitors.	✓	✓	✓	✓	⚠												
	What we'll do to make sure we all live in a sustainable environment	CP_33	We will support a circular economy by re-using, recycling and generating energy from the waste we manage.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓												
		CP_34	We will develop additional low carbon renewable energy schemes and networks.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓												
		CP_35	We will protect our communities by delivering the Local Flood Risk Management Plan, the Shoreline Management Plan and the Millport and Upper Garnock Valley Flood Protection Schemes.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓												

*2021 status based on information available rather than specific sub-actions.

Priority	Outcome	Ref #	Existing Overall Action	2019-20				2020-21*	2021-22				2022-23				2023-24			
				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year End Estimate	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
A Council for the Future	An accessible Council that puts residents and communities at the heart of what we do	CP_36	We will work with communities and key stakeholders to radically review what we do and how we do it, to deliver cost effective services.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓												
		CP_37	We will provide joined up services across the Council and with partner agencies and communities.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓												
		CP_38	We will use technology to improve access to and delivery of our services.	⚠	⚠	⚠	⚠	✓												
	A powerful and respected voice	CP_39	We will make our case nationally, regionally and locally levels to secure investment to support delivery of our priorities.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓												
	An efficient Council that maximises resources and provides value for money	CP_40	We will review what we do and how we do it to ensure we deliver the best possible services.	⚠	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recommended that this action is removed as it duplicates CP_36 and CP_37.											
	A valued workforce that delivers high quality services	CP_41	We will empower and invest in our workforce to develop new and innovative ways of working.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓												

