

**Minutes of the
Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership Management Committee
held in Council Chambers, Kilmory and online via MS Teams on Thursday 12
January 2024 at 1030**

Present:	
Pippa Milne, Argyll and Bute Council (Chair)	Morag Goodfellow, Highland and Island Enterprise (HIE)
Fergus Walker, Argyll and Bute Council (ABC)	Takki Sulaiman, Argyll and Bute TSI
Cllr Robin Currie, ABC	Fiona Davies, Argyll and Bute HSCP
Stuart Green, ABC	Paul Ashworth LiveArgyll
Rona Gold, ABC	Stuart McLean, ABC
Anthony Standing, SDS	Iain MacInnes, ABC
Laura Evans, Police Scotland	John McLuckie, ABC
Samantha Campbell, NHS Highland	Amie Dow, ABC
Charlie Murphy, CLES	Neil McInroy, Democracy Collaborative
Ross Hamilton, OFCOM	Andy Macpherson, ACT
Alex Wilde, Improvement Service	Graham Bell, NHS Highland Board
Patricia O'Dowd, DWP	Nicola Reaney, ABC (Secretary)
Apologies	
Joe McKay, Scottish Fire and Rescue	Fergus Murray, ABC
Kirsty Flanagan, ABC	Cllr Alistair Redman, ABC
Shona Barton, ABC	Lucy Dunbar, ABC
David Moore, Helensburgh and Lomond AGPC	Chief Superintendent Lynn Ratcliff, Police Scotland
David Adams-McGilp, Visit Scotland	Stan Philips, NatureScot
Ranald Robertson, HiTrans	David Gibson, HSCP

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM AREA COMMUNITY PLANNING GROUPS (STUART MCLEAN)

Stuart gave an overview of [his report](#) and highlighted that there had been successful meetings across all areas in October and November 2023. Colin Buchanan was appointed as Vice Chair of the Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Community Planning Group (ACPG) and both Bute and Cowal and Helensburgh and Lomond ACPGs will seek to appoint new Chairs at the meetings scheduled in February 2024. Stuart noted that the terms of reference and membership of all groups will be considered at the next round of meetings.

Following concerns around road safety within Sandbank, the Council's Roads and Infrastructure Services will submit a report to a future Bute and Cowal ACPG for consideration of the introduction of possible safety measures in that area. Luing Community Council shared a report on flooding risk on the Island at the Oban, Lorn and the Isles ACPG. They are in the process of setting up advice and assistance on this but lack the technical knowledge to navigate ownership of different parts of the island. Cllr Kain offered to facilitate contact between Roads and Infrastructure and the Community Council to discuss what support can be given to them.

Pippa thanked Stuart for his report that highlights how the updates from Partners, Community Councils, Development Trusts and Community Groups are closely linked to the Argyll and Bute Outcomes Improvement Plan (ABOIP) key priority areas of Housing, Transport Infrastructure and Community Wellbeing.

Cllr Currie was concerned that none of the ACPG Chairs or Vice Chairs were able to attend the meeting. Pippa noted that the late rearrangement of the meeting date may have contributed to that, and should not be taken as lack of commitment. Rona added that the ACPG Chairs and Vice Chairs had been heavily involved in participation over the past week in the Education Scotland Audit of Community Learning and Development, and gave a full and positive view of their contributions in those roles as a voice for their community members.

4. COUNCIL AREA PLANS (STUART GREEN)

Stuart gave [a presentation](#) on the work he is leading on the development of 8 area plans across Argyll and Bute to identify local service prioritisation and investment opportunities in our communities.

able to take greater advantage of, and capitalise on, future available funding and investment opportunities. The plans seek to promote projects that align with the Council's strategic plans, however the inclusion of a project within a plan is not a guarantee of funding. The plans will also align with existing work in the area in relation to Community Wealth Building opportunities.

Stuart advised that there will be direct community engagement and consultation moving forward with Community Councils and Development Trusts, but mindful of consultation fatigue, will also look to take advantage of existing data from previous consultations and community plans and complete a gap analysis first. £200,000 has been allocated from the Council's Priorities Investment Fund for this work and recruitment for project team members will commence in January 2024. The projected timeline of approval of all 8 area plans is January to September 2025.

Pippa thanked Stuart for his presentation and welcomed the intention to gather information from various plans into one place to ensure a cohesive approach and prevent conflicts of effort when funding becomes available. Takki noted from recent attendance at Community Council meetings where there had been a presentation on significant community benefits from an energy provider, that communities had expressed concern at a lack of "shovel ready" projects to spend upcoming funding on. He agreed that it would be really beneficial to bring together information held in various stakeholder and Council plans. Takki also noted that community members hold the information on local need, but do not necessarily have access to the information to back up their plans / aspirations. Takki was happy to support the work on the plans and commit TSI resources towards this work. Andy noted the significant parallels with Climate Change work that he is doing and he is really keen to support the project wherever possible e.g. mapping tools and benefit from the intelligence gathering.

ACTION Stuart Green to follow up with Andy MacPherson on local plans and project co-operation.

Pippa reiterated that the intention of this work is not to take over projects from the community, but to support them by holding relevant information in one place and support feasibility of projects. Cllr Currie was keen to see the work on this progress at pace, and Stuart advised that he would be taking every available opportunity to accelerate the project, where possible.

Morag added that it is vital to ensure community expectations are managed in this process saying that realistically £20 million in funding may only equate to expenditure on 3 capital projects, and asked how engagement with business partners will take place. Stuart responded that Isabel Bremner, Economic Development Manager, will be managing engagement with businesses.

ACTION Stuart Green to report on progress on local plans to future CPP Management Committee meetings.

5. CROSS CUTTING THEMES

(a) Climate Change (Andy MacPherson)

Pippa opened by paying tribute to the work that Stan has done on the Climate Change Working Group (CCWG) and his tenacity on moving this work forward, noting that Rona has taken over as interim Chair of the CCWG.

- Scottish Welfare Fund. From 1 April to 30 November 2023, £428,416 has been spent against the 2023/24 funding allocation of £458,284 and there is projected overspend of £200,000 for the year.
- Discretionary Housing Payment. Up to 30 November 2023, £803,862 has been spent from the initial tranche 1 funding of £869k. Fergus is responding to a Scottish Government consultation on potential changes to this fund.
- Flexible Food Fund. Up to 31 October, 2279 households facing food and fuel insecurity in Argyll and Bute had benefitted from this fund with an average client gain of £1416 per household. £204k has been granted from Shared Prosperity Funding that will allow the project to continue to 2025.
- School Clothing Project. Work continues to introduce this to Mid-Argyll and the Isles. There is now a [live website](#) for this project and Fergus is looking to work with Community Development to help identify and fill gaps in project coverage. The reuse of clothing also ties into climate goals.
- Scotland Loves Local cards / Support for Islands. From £141,000 funding provided by the Scottish Government, 1300 cards have been issued to islanders, each with a value of £85. Grant payments of £4000 have been paid to island based foodbanks. Cllr Currie noted there is a large amount of funding that remain unspent on these cards. Fergus advised that the funds on un-activated cards have been returned to the Council and have been used to

increase of gigabit capable connectivity and an increase in 5G mobile connectivity. 84% of households in Scotland are covered by at least one of the four main network providers for 4G mobile connectivity. In Argyll and Bute, superfast broadband has seen a 4% increase, meaning over 1400 more properties can now access superfast broadband compared to 2022. Harder to reach areas in Scotland are seeing an

OFCOM leadership are very attuned to these issues too and that climate change was included for the first time in the December Connected Nations report.

ACTION CPP to write to OFCOM and OFGEM highlighting concerns around connectivity and cost of living pressures in Argyll and Bute for telecoms, broadband and smart metered utilities provision.

Takki reiterated concerns around network resilience and the link between broadband access, telephone lines and power. A recent 16 hour power cut in his home area led to over 800 households all trying to utilise the existing poor 4G framework at the same time which highlighted the lack of resilience in the system. He added that providers really need to be planning for the rise in extreme adverse weather conditions and associated impacts on networks. Takki also expressed concern that the criteria for social tariffs may not include those who are working but still in poverty and in the reduction of postal services across Argyll and Bute. Ross advised that OFCOM regulate Royal Mail, who have had significant challenges, and they have levied a £5.5 million fine on them for failing to meet delivery targets.

Andy was keen to continue discussions with Ross off table as Argyll and Bute has a lot of isolated communities who will be heavily dependent on resilience but are likely to have the least resilient infrastructure.

ACTION Andy and Ross to meet offline to discuss how telecoms providers assess risk for vulnerability versus likelihood of outages.

Paul then provided an update on the HMIE Community Learning and Development (CLD) Inspection which took place on 8th and 9th January. The auditors provided a positive response to the inspection and found that the self evaluation was accurate and well structured and advised they would not be returning. Inspectors noted that the team is looking at developing the reporting structure of the CLD Plan and that the new strategic plan for CLD should be available in September 2024. The final HMIE report will be published in 6 – 8 weeks.

Rona reiterated the involvement of the ACPG Chairs and Vice Chairs in the audit in a focus group on Community Voice, which is part of the Community Empowerment priority within CLD. She also noted that the CLD has been promoting social tariffs as part of its links to digital skills, and it has been included in both CPP and Community Development bulletins. In community planning, and particularly at ACPGs, the discussions that happen are very much a part of community learning and development and in raising digital awareness in communities.

Pippa gave thanks to everyone involved in the audit.

ACTION Paul to circulate HMIE Inspection report when available.

6. ABOIP (RONA GOLD / JOHN MCLUCKIE)

Rona gave a presentation on the Argyll and Bute Outcomes Improvement Plan (ABOIP) for 2024 – 2034. The ABOIP is being created as a short vision document highlighting the 3 outcomes (transport infrastructure, housing and community wellbeing) with a longer document providing more detail, and an FAQ document covering points such as ‘what is community planning?’ and ‘what is an Outcomes Improvement Plan?’. These will be published on the [CPP website](#) at the end of

January 2024. The presentation contained high level statements of intent, in order of priority, under each of the outcomes. Rona reminded the meeting that seven areas were identified and included as part of the extensive consultation (the additional priorities were financial inclusion, climate change, digital inclusion and diverse economy / skilled workforce) but the three in focus here came out as the priorities. This does not mean the other areas are not important to the CPP, however it is important to be

some may need legislative support from the Scottish Government. He then provided a reminder on the 5 main pillars of CWB (Spending, Workforce, Inclusive Ownership, Finance and Land and Property).

Recommendations include :

SPENDING PILLAR

- Establishing a CPP Procurement Working Group, bring together lead procurement officers and the VCSE sector to update on challenge and opportunities,
- Building collective market intelligence, working with SMEs and focussed towards the social economy,
- Publishing a procurement pipeline so CPP partners can make procurement more accessible and clarify bid requirements,
- CPP Meet the Buyer events, creating an opportunity where local suppliers can engage and get feedback and navigate the challenges of public sector procurement,
- Develop a procurement framework, for business support organisations to pull resources and explore good practice.

Pippa noted that all partners need to commit to working on this, although she understands that there are some limitations regarding tie-ins to national procurement frameworks and was keen to understand from CLES how that has been overcome in other areas. Takki advised there is a current review of the Procurement Reform Act 2014 and partners may want to take the opportunity to make submissions to the Economic Committee before it looks at this on the 28 February 2024, although he also thought it was worth exploring what can be done within existing legislative and regulatory frameworks. Neil thought that the Scottish Government would be interested to hear how existing policy and legislation is hampering progress on CWB.

Andy noted that in terms of developing a Climate Change Strategy in the area, procurement managers are typically under pressure to deliver value in the short term and the organisational procurement footprint is often much larger than local operations. He felt setting up a procurement working group would provide a joint approach and prevent the need to discuss this with individual partners.

Samantha felt there was so much potential for CWB to provide a transformational shift in the power dynamic and support to communities. She also thought the 5 pillars of CWB should underpin the plans and strategies of CPP partners to ensure systemic change and has potential to improve social determinants of health.

WORKFORCE PILLAR

- Developing pathways into work programs, how can partners come together to create good employment opportunities,
- Explore adaptations to a value based recruitment approach, organisations that can support local people, and young people, into employment,
- Partners mapping job families, compare and simplify the approach to recruitment and creation of applicant pools,
- Argyll and Bute Employment Charters, partnering with local business representative and organisations, acknowledging that many may want to improve their recruitment practices.

INCLUSIVE OWNERSHIP PILLAR

- Identifying ownership opportunities in growth sectors,

- Employee ownership, connections between in-place experts and ecosystem support for new start social economy enterprises and the support of institutional partners,
- Opportunity to create links between procurement and social and inclusive ownership within the economy.

Andy highlighted the housing priority in the ABOIP as a great example of connected activity as it links to climate change (mitigation and adaptation), skills shortages in the region and potential pathways for business development and career prospects. Pippa agreed that business opportunities was a key part of the CWB context.

FINANCIAL PILLAR

- Mapping alternative financial infrastructure, bring together and understand the range of alternative financial mechanisms that already exist and can be accessed,
- Mapping community benefits, how to pull community benefits together for greater impact,
- Develop a local finance initiative proposal, developing an outline business case for a local community owned finance institution to connect with government funding streams to fund CWB.

LAND AND PROPERTY PILLAR

- Affordable workplace strategy, grow local community ownership in sectors and identify available business premises and future demand,
- Vacant and derelict land, not limited to typical workspaces but also social community sites, ensure communities have access to properties and land without overburdening them,
- Realisation of the public estate, partners understanding were co-location opportunities exist to free up the public estate for use by social enterprises,
- Convening a Local Landowners' Forum, with support from Scottish Government policies on land reform to engage with landowners on future land use.

Charlie recognised there are a number of challenges in Argyll and Bute, but CWB can be intrinsic to the area's economic strategy and can be driven by the CPP to address issues like the housing emergency and depopulation. He said that responsibility for CWB delivery should not fall solely on the CPP, however partners do have an important role to play and work with other groups to promote CWB. To drive CWB forward, Charlie proposed setting up two-time limited groups to take forward action-focussed work to build on the report. He also highlighted two case studies on building employee ownership and building community shared ownership of the energy transition.

Pippa thanked Charlie and Neil for their presentation. Partners were asked to submit any comments on the report and recommendations, with the intention to finalise that at the April CPP MC. The recommendations were accepted by the CPP MC in principle. Rona thanked Takki and CLES for the work that has been done on this.

ACTION

8. PARTNER WINTER UPDATES (CHAIR)

Pippa advised this item may have been more relevant had the meeting gone ahead as planned in December, however, partners can send any updates they want to share to the CPP team.

ACTION Partners can send any winter updates to cppadmin@argyll-bute.gov.uk by 31st January.

9. AOCB (CHAIR)

(a) Update on Argyll and Bute Climate Action Network (Takki Sulaiman)

Pippa noted that Takki had covered this as part of an earlier item.

(b) National Community Planning Review and next steps (Rona Gold)

Pippa said the CPP MC will be keeping an eye on this work and contributing to that where relevant.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The MEETING