

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

goods and services throughout Argyll and Bute, including retailers, food and drink providers, health and beauty providers, leisure and accommodation providers as well as other service providers. At the time of writing this report, there are a further 28 businesses in the process of registering to join this Scheme.

4.5 **Table 1** provides an overview of transactions to date:-

Table 1: Gift Card Transactions

| No. of cards sold to date | Value of cards sold to date | No. of in store transactions to date | In store spend to date |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| 235 | £12,035.00 | 78 | £2,563.55 |

4.6 COSLA Leaders and Ministers agreed an £80m Local Authority COVID Economic Recovery (LACER) Fund available to Local Authorities, with the intent to support local economic recovery and cost of living impacts on low-income households. At the full Council Meeting of 28th April 2022, members agreed to commit a share of the LACER Fund to the Gift Card. The approved options were:-

Issue Scotland Loves Local Gift Card to households in receipt of Council Tax Reduction Scheme - £797,720;
Fully fund Gift Card for 2022/2023 into 2023/20224 - £30,000;
Marketing budget to promote Gift Card - £10,000.

4.7 There are 6,531 households in receipt of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, and who will receive a Gift Card worth £120. The Gift Card at present can be spent in a number of retailers such as Aldi, Boots, Marks and Spencer, and Semi Chem, as well as a host of independent retailers/businesses. Town Partnership is working to secure other retailers such as Co-op, PayPoint and SPARs in Argyll and Bute, which would allow recipients to spend their Gift Card in locally accessible food and energy providers. It is anticipated that the significant amount of LACER Funds committed will increase business registration across Argyll and Bute.

4.8 With the Gift Card now fully funded until 2023/2024, this will allow the scheme to gather momentum, encourage sign up by more retailers and increase purchase by consumers to spend money locally and support local economic recovery. Officers will the card and will continue to monitor the benefits of the card and report back to members.

4.9 The marketing allocation from the LACER funds will be used to encourage additional business registration across Argyll and Bute. Officers are currently considering options for spend and anticipate marketing activity will be rolled out from the summer months.

4.10 A report will be brought back to members at a future date to update on the progress on the promotion and take up of the Love Local Gift Card in Argyll and Bute.

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