

## DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH SERVICE - Service Annual Performance Review 2021/22

DELIVERING OUR OUTCOMES – Our case studies help illustrate the positive contribution the Service has made to our communities and provides examples of good service delivery.

Corporate Outcome – People Live Active, Healthier and Independent Lives

Business Outcome BO103: We Enable A Choice of Suitable Housing Options

a)

With systems already in place for agile working, the EHO has been able to provide advice and assistance throughout the whole pandemic. Whilst site visits were restricted, we could engage by alternative means to ensure delivering an efficient service as possible, even participating in Zoom calls with owners on our personal devices to accommodate I.T. compatibility.

Within the Council the EHO has strived to establish strong and meaningful working practices across a number of internal services all of which contribute to

Worked in conjunction with Mull and Iona Community Trust to undertake joint communication exercise with all registered empty home owners on the Island.

- x Hebridean Trust in Tiree supported by the EHO to drive forward plans for the long term use of all their buildings whilst assisting them to bring six listed empty flats back into use. Due to the scale of scheme, the EHO established a working group of relevant partners to maximise support to take this project forward.
- x The EHO is working with Islay Development Initiative to bring two empty flats back into use as affordable housing. This also provides unique opportunity to consider a plug and play model on the grounds of property for additional housing provision.
- x Regular Shelter Best Practice Group contribution and also provided support and shared go

## Corporate Outcome - People Will Live In Safer and Stronger Communities

### Business Outcome BO104: Our communities and supported and protected

National Covid restrictions to businesses and communities were still in place in April 2021, and these changed over the reporting year. This placed additional responsibilities on the Councils Environmental Health service to support and enforce standards within businesses to ensure compliance with relevant public health control measures.

The changing landscape of controls made this work challenging and an example of this was the introduction of the vaccine certification scheme affecting some 220 licensed premises in Argyll and Bute. Through a proactive approach, businesses adapted their activities to develop compliance plans or bring their operation out with these requirements in a two-week period.

In the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022, the environmental team carried out 862 Covid interventions and investigated 773 business enquiries and complaints. Compliance levels were high with 7 formal notices issued.

This is excellent performance by the environmental health team in challenging times, when they also were involved in the management of Covid outbreaks with NHS Highland and referrals through the Test and Protect regime.

Planning and Regulatory Services retained their Customer Standards Excellence accreditation in 21/22 with the number of compliance-plus criteria increasing from 4 to 7, and 2 other partial criteria classified as fully compliant. This is a very positive outcome, particularly as services had to introduce new ways of working during the Covid pandemic.

Demand on Regulatory Services to respond to customer service requests increased during the pandemic, from 1,549 in 2019/20 to 2444 in 21/22 (excluding export health certificates), an increase of 56%. This was particularly challenging and resource intensive, but the team responded well achieving 70% (increasing to 85% with export health certificates) resolved within service targets. Given the increasing workload, a demand reduction

project to review our triaging system for service requests will be carried out in 22/23, which may result in some complaints types not being investigated or being

The Council continues to have a significant interest and provide support to the national effort as it continues to improve communication infrastructure across our rural areas. The Council's Strategic Transportation and Infrastructure Team continues to provide support acting as a single point of contact for Government Officials, Industry bodies and numerous external consultants by providing assistance when it is required. Feedback from consultants has been complimentary of the processes which the council has implemented to assist in the progress of digital connectivity. With the numerous Government and Commercial programmes currently active, even through the difficult national lockdown the free flow of information, continuous communication and support has provided dividends with these national programmes. Our cross departmental working continues to play a major role in the successful development of digital connectivity across the area.

Active Travel is an overarching term covering journeys made by a physically active means, for example walking, wheelchair, cycling or scooting. Active Travel projects 57 (a)2.5 (s).4 (-0.6 (c) (.).6.1 (l)-0.-0.014Td())TjEMC /L(t)4(s)-o-02.9 (s)-3.5(n)-0.6 (t)g9 (,)-2-1.6 (n)49 ( phy)4 ( p)-0.6 (r).6 (es)-3.5 70.014Td())TjEMCgh3 (a)-1.9 ( ph(a)-2







## Corporate Outcome - Our Economy is diverse and thriving

### Business Outcome BO110: We Support Businesses, Employment and Development Opportunities

A jewellery designer based in Cardross, Argyll and Bute, has enhanced its e-commerce offering in response to the Covid pandemic, with support from Business Gateway via DigitalBoost, Scotland's national digital upskilling programme, and grant support from Argyll and Bute Council.

Led by husband-and-wife team Linda and Matt Scott, Linda Macdonald Jewellery specialises in hand-

The Business Gateway Local Growth Accelerator Programme is funded by Argyll and Bute Council and the European Regional Development Fund 2014-20 Structural Funds Programme.

Linda said: "It's been great to have the support of Business Gateway during what has been a very challenging period to run a business. Through



## Business Outcome BO111: We Influence And Engage With Business And Policy Makers

A survey of businesses which were subject to Covid enforcement interventions concluded that 95% of businesses were satisfied or very satisfied with the response of officers within Regulatory Services and believed they were treated fairly. This is an indicator of good enforcement practices by Regulatory Services.

The UK withdrawal from the European Union on the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020, introduced new arrangements for the export of food to EU countries. This was particularly challenging for food exporters in Argyll and Bute (primarily fish and shellfish) and to the Council Environmental Health service, who must certify that the product is compliant with food safety legislation and fit for human consumption. The creation of commercial hubs in central Scotland mitigated demand at a local authority level for export health certificates for EU consignment with the main exporters in Argyll and Bute using these hubs. To support business and meet our statutory requirements as a food authority, audits of the main exporters have been undertaken and attestations issued every 3 months to these key exporters to allow them to continue exporting to the EU using commercial hubs. In addition, the Council issued 1284 export health certificates in 21/22 to businesses to export to non-EU countries (e.g. China, Middle East etc.) and 195 certificates to exporters services to export to EU countries.

## Business Outcome BO112: Argyll And Bute Is Promoted To Everyone

A Rothesay Townscape Heritage (TH) grant of £311,601 supported the comprehensive-

Traditional materials and methods of repair were used to ensure best practice, and align with Historic Environment Scotland's Advisory Standards of Repair. Works encompassed roof works, including leadwork, chimney and skew repairs, as well as substantial masonry works to front, rear an

SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES – These are the significant challenges faced by the Service during 2021/22. These challenges either created pressures on the Success Measures or impacted on delivery. Specific additional activity or mitigating actions were carried out to reduce the negative impact on service delivery.

Corporate Outcome - People Live Active Healthier And Independent Lives

Business Outcome BO103: We Enable A Choice of Suitable Housing Options



In 2020/21, Regulatory Services and Building Standards carried out a number of stakeholder surveys to attain their views on specific issues aimed at making service improvements. These included: