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Scottish Local Authority News

December 2021

HYDROGEN SUPPORT "FILLS-UP" AT COP-26

BORD NA GAIDHLIG ON GME

DELOITTE'S ON CENSUS 2022

SGN ON DECARBONISING SCOTLAND

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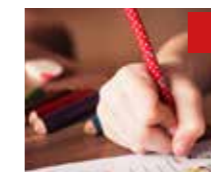
FEATURES

SPECIAL FEATURES THIS ISSUE

- P4** DELOITTE'S ON CENSUS 2022
- P6** TIME TO COMMIT TO ZERO-EMISSION TRANSPORT
- P9** DECARBONISING SCOTLAND.
- P12** GAELIC MEDIUM EDUCATION IN FOCUS.



HOUSING
P14



EDUCATION
P18



TOURISM & LEISURE
P28



COMMUNITIES
P34



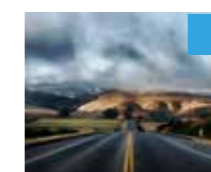
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
P44



THE ARTS
P52



ENVIRONMENT
P56



ROAD & TRANSPORT
P61



HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE
P66



TOP PEOPLE ON THE MOVE
P70

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CENSUS 2022: WHAT ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES?

In the first of an occasional series, Lesley Smillie, Consulting Partner at Deloitte, examines how the forthcoming Census, the first to be predominantly digital in nature, will significantly affect the provision of vital services by Scotland's Local Authorities.

Census statistics most obviously and immediately have a direct correlation to the block grant agreement from Scottish Government, which local authorities receive to fund a range of vital public services. However, they are also responsible for the provision of consistent and reliable insights and contextual information, such as for small areas and population groups, that ultimately will evidence the local need for services such as schools, roads and healthcare. By knowing how many people live in an area, as well as other critical information such as commuting patterns, age demographics etc., local authorities can identify the services and facilities which local communities will most need and make informed decisions accordingly.

With that in mind, having a Census which accurately reflects our communities across Scotland, and especially one that captures the nuances of the hardest to reach communities, is paramount to the design of a future world which seeks to deliver a fair and vibrant society. The Christie Review (2011) highlighted the need for well-aligned, fully joined-up public service provision, to secure occasional preventative measures, and where necessary, to take early interventions on behalf of society as a whole. Thus, Scotland's citizens can only be adequately served, with the assistance of an accurate and up to date record of the region's population.

These preventative and early intervention services in 2011 were estimated to deliver cost savings for the Scottish Government over a 15 year period at a ratio of 10:1 for each £1 spent. If Scotland at a local, regional and national level is to fully capitalise upon the Christie report conclusions for such preventative services, then it must grasp the scale of the task at hand. A critical understanding of those harder-to-reach communities within Scotland is therefore imperative for this to be a success.



SO HOW DOES CENSUS 2022 OFFER THE OPPORTUNITY TO RESHAPE SCOTLAND'S COMMUNITIES FOR THE BETTER?

In the decade since the Christie report, Scotland's landscape has fundamentally changed. In addition to a dramatically shifting political world and near-seismic digital revolution, the past two years have also been blighted by a global pandemic. Although these unprecedented times have forced new and innovative service delivery for many of our communities, they have also laid bare some of the stark realities of modern Scotland. The stories of Scotland's communities rallying together to support individuals and families survive associated hardships, have unfortunately become more commonplace because of underlying inequalities faced across every Region. Indeed, our recent **'State of the State Report'** found this is only set to get worse, with 45% saying that they think inequality between regions is likely to increase in coming years.

The 2022 Census will be the first predominantly-digital Census. This marks one of the final major government programmes to adopt the digital-first approach. The use of digital data capture enables quicker capture and sharing of information, but it also must not leave behind our digitally isolated and vulnerable communities, many of whom are still unable to access basic digital service provision.

Our experiences across Scotland in responding to the Covid pandemic have taught us how utterly invaluable the existing support networks, provided by and coordinated through, the thirty two Local Authorities, can already be. That engagement, driven at Council level, has clearly delivered a very significant impact right across the country. This position of strength however, and the enormous level of goodwill harnessed through pandemic-related support, must be built upon to help drive up completion rates across Scotland.

It is precisely in keeping with this crucially important theme that the National Records of Scotland is looking to work closely with Scotland's Local Authorities across the following areas:

- Working with established community groups to enhance completion rates
- Liaising with the 3rd sector and Third Sector Interfaces network to assure individuals of the importance of Census
- Supporting with shared communications and key messages with regards to Census
- Covid-restrictions permitting, the facilities across local government (e.g. libraries etc.) may be available to support assisted completions.

Census 2022 will not be a success without effective collaboration across public partners; with local government being key, in tasking to increase completion rates across Scotland.

The subsequent impact to local authorities of achieving those goals, whilst perhaps not possible to quantify precisely, will assuredly come nonetheless. Funding which is much more likely to be both appropriate and sustainable, based upon data which more accurately reflects the true nature of the country in which we live.

Lesley Smillie
Chris Watt Photography





Linde hydrogen refuelling station, Unterschleissheim, Germany

NOW IS THE TIME TO ACT ON ZERO-EMISSION HYDROGEN TRANSPORT

Whether the 1.5 C goal is still alive or not, the clear message from the COP26 summit is that we need to act now to curb greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. With 20 of the 32 Scottish unitary authorities having already declared climate emergencies, Scotland should be in a strong position to deliver on its commitments to achieve net zero.

HYDROGEN VS BATTERY

Overall, transport accounts for roughly a quarter of net emissions in Scotland, making it the largest single source of emissions, but early investment in zero-emission vehicles and infrastructure use will go a long way to delivering on net-zero goals.

The options available to decarbonise fleets of larger vehicles like buses and lorries are the same as for cars – battery electric (EV) or hydrogen-fuelled fuel-cell vehicles. Hydrogen fuel-cell vehicles offer longer range and shorter refuelling times compared to battery electric vehicles, as well as offering zero emissions and quiet operation. These benefits are magnified for large and heavy vehicles like buses, making hydrogen an attractive fuel for councils and local authorities looking to decarbonise their transport networks.

THE HYDROGEN REFUELLING STATION

Momentum around hydrogen is gathering among Scottish councils, with several committing to develop green hydrogen refuelling stations (HRS) to decarbonise bus and council vehicle fleets.

BOC worked closely with Aberdeen City Council to develop the Kittybrewster



'Chris Hampton - Product & Business Development Manager - Hydrogen, BOC'

HRS. The station was originally designed to serve a fleet of 8 council buses plus gritters and refuse trucks, it has since been scaled up to accommodate more buses as well as private and commercial vehicle refuelling.

A HRS can use hydrogen generated from electrolysis, either on-site or off-site with delivery to the refuelling station. Electrolysis uses electricity, preferably renewable, to extract hydrogen from water. With Scotland meeting over 97% of its 2020 electricity demand using renewables, a network of HRS will also help boost the country's ability to store more of its renewable output.



SCALING UP

Hydrogen refuelling can operate on a small scale, but the costs come down with increasing volumes. When the refuelling facility is scaled up to meet the needs of an increased number of vehicles across a range of users, the cost per kilogramme reduces.

Taking a modular approach to the design and build of the refuelling station helps to address the difficulty of forecasting potential demand and enables a project to scale up in phases to reflect growing demand.

Bringing together multiple organisations to share a hydrogen refuelling facility creates regular demand for hydrogen, which can make the station more cost efficient. In Aberdeen, the Kittybrewster HRS has increased the volume of vehicles it serves adding double deck buses and private vehicles to its list of customers.

CHOOSING A SITE

As well as dispensing pumps and an area to refuel the vehicles, a refuelling station will need space to store the hydrogen. Where the hydrogen is produced on-site, space for an electrolyser will be needed unless it is produced off-site and delivered to the station. Typically, the space needed is no bigger than a traditional petrol forecourt.

PROVEN TECHNOLOGY

Developing a hydrogen refuelling hub may feel like a big step, but with support from an experienced partner, it is both realistic and achievable for local councils and authorities.

Linde has already installed close to 200 hydrogen refuelling stations and 80 hydrogen electrolysis plants worldwide.

TAKING ACTION

If a council decides hydrogen refuelling is the right solution to decarbonise its transport fleets, the first step is to find the right partner. BOC covers every link in the hydrogen value chain and is experienced in managing the whole project, from assessing specific needs to advising on funding, design and development, and operating and maintaining the facility.

Download BOC's useful guide for councils and local authorities **Decarbonising Transport with Hydrogen Hubs**. Get your guide at BOCOnline.co.uk/hydrogen-energy or email h2refuelling@boc.com to discuss your hydrogen refuelling needs.



BOC hydrogen refuelling station, Kittybrewster, Aberdeen



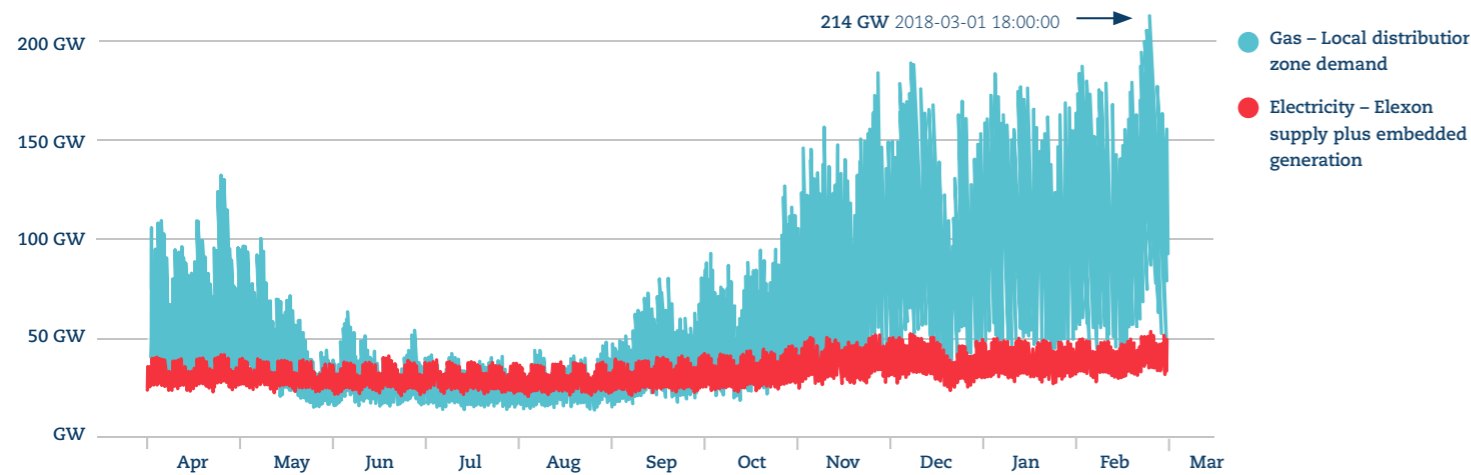
STABLE PROGRESS TO DECARBONISING SCOTLAND'S HOMES, BUSINESSES AND INDUSTRY

BY COLIN W. THOMSON
 REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT MANAGER,
 SGN (CHARTERED ENGINEER).
 EMAIL: COLIN.THOMSON@SGN.CO.UK



The Scottish Government's target is to achieve 75% greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction by 2030 and net zero by 2045. Our customers tell us they want stable progress to net zero which allows them to continue to receive the benefits they currently get from their energy. This means we need to strive for decarbonisation options which give us the security, resilience and affordability we have now, if not better.

There is widespread consensus from the Climate Change Committee (CCC), UK and Scottish Governments that this can only be achieved by a mix of complementary decarbonised gas and electrification options. While an increase in electrification will be needed, it will also create a range of system-wide challenges. Taking 2018's Beast from the East as an example. During that period demand for gas, delivered by the gas distribution networks, peaked at around 214GW, compared with 52GW from electricity at the same time. So, it's clear one fuel source won't be enough to get us to net zero. We're going to need a more flexible and resilient energy system that works on a whole system basis all year round.



A graph showing Scotland's gas and electricity demand in 2018 including during the Beast from the East' With kind permission of UKERC

COULD LOW CARBON GAS BE PART OF THE ANSWER AND A CRUCIAL INGREDIENT IN THE MOSAIC OF SOLUTIONS REQUIRED?

Firstly, a low carbon gas network integrated with the electricity network can give us an energy system that's resilient and flexible helping us to meet energy demand that varies significantly throughout the year.

Secondly, great progress has already been made to prepare the existing gas network for decarbonised gas. Large parts of the

distribution network, which delivers the majority of gas into buildings, have transitioned to polyethylene pipes which can safely transport hydrogen. We are also investigating the potential to re-purpose our local transmission network – the larger gas mains delivering gas between towns and cities – to transport hydrogen. Thirdly and most importantly, in domestic and commercial heating biomethane and hydrogen offer a more direct low-disruption

replacement for natural gas than the alternatives. Our customer research tells us customers want to keep a gas connection to their homes and changing the gas supplied feels a natural and pragmatic forward step. They also want to be able to continue to turn their heating up as and when they need it and don't want to move to a system where they won't have control over this. With a series of industry projects and pilots underway, the 2020s will be critical to providing policymakers with the evidence they need on costs, safety and feasibility to accelerate and roll out hydrogen for homes in the next decade. H100 Fife is our world-first project

on the east coast of Scotland in Levenmouth where around 300 homes will be connected to a hydrogen network in 2023. Our ambition is to build upon this, extending the hydrogen industries evidence base by developing plans for a hydrogen village trial by 2025, and beyond into a hydrogen town.

Switching a large proportion of all homes and buildings to low carbon hydrogen would provide a substantial contribution to meeting Scotland's ambitious 2030 and 2045 climate targets.

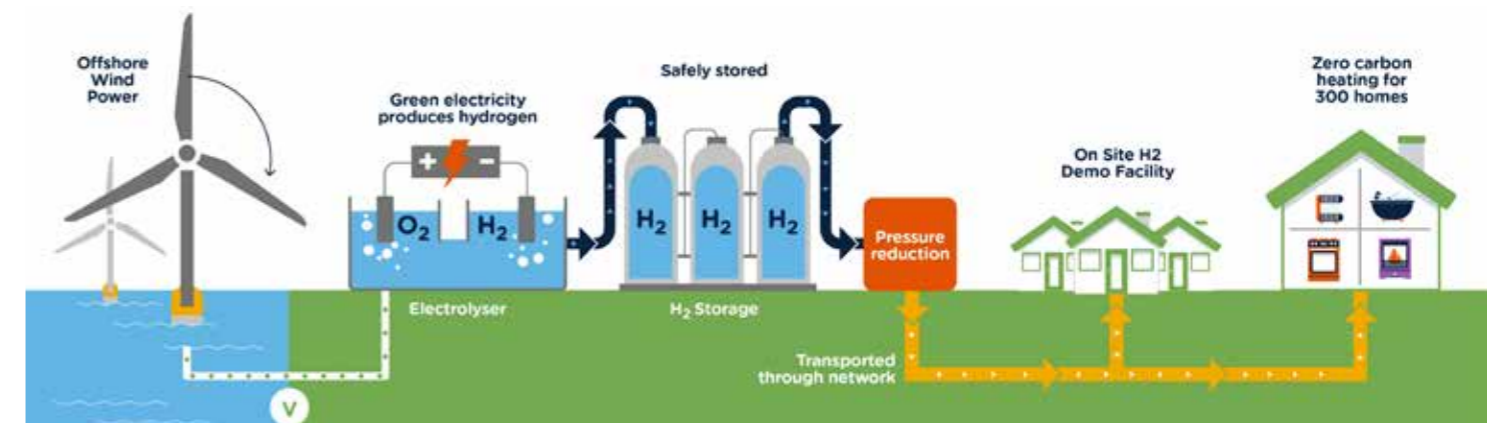


Diagram showing the end-to-end system being planned for SGN's H100 Fife project – 100% green hydrogen, produced by electrolysis using green electricity from an offshore wind turbine, will be stored and transported to provide zero carbon heating for the project demonstration facility and customer homes.

SO, HOW DO WE GET THERE?

We've already begun transitioning our gas network. In fact, we've been on the journey to net zero for over a decade. In 2010, we connected the UK's first biomethane plant to the gas network and have connected around 35 more plants since, including most recently, Brewdog's facility at Ellon in Aberdeenshire. With biomethane, we're targeting to deliver the equivalence of almost half a million decarbonised homes by 2026.

Increasing the amount of biomethane in the gas grid will help to reduce emissions. This is great progress but would be limited to approximately 150,000 homes.

Blending hydrogen into the gas network could also help to reduce emissions quickly. In the UK, it could save around six million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions every year – that's equivalent to taking 2.5 million cars off the road. For domestic appliances, up to a 20% volume of hydrogen can be blended with natural gas without needing to convert the appliances to hydrogen-ready alternatives – which by the way – have already been developed by leading manufacturers.

Blending trials in England such as HyDeploy are already underway and could start reducing emissions greatly in 2023. Ultimately, the only way to move further towards a low carbon gas network would be to move to 100% hydrogen.

CAN IT BE DONE?

Earlier this year, engineering design firm Wood conducted research which was commissioned by SGN to establish the feasibility of delivering an accelerated pathway for hydrogen in Scotland and the potential to convert large areas of the network in Scotland to 100% hydrogen by 2030.

The report also outlines the practical steps needed to make the accelerated pathway for 100% hydrogen a reality for Scotland, including a case study on the potential conversion of a city the size of Aberdeen. This would mean converting a large portion of homes and business and the largest industrial carbon emitters in

Scotland's north-east and central belts to 100% hydrogen. To put it into context, these industrial clusters emit 11.9Mt of CO2 every year, the equivalent CO2 of roughly all the cars in Scotland.

The report shows we'll need low carbon and renewable hydrogen to achieve this.



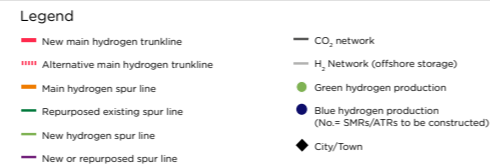
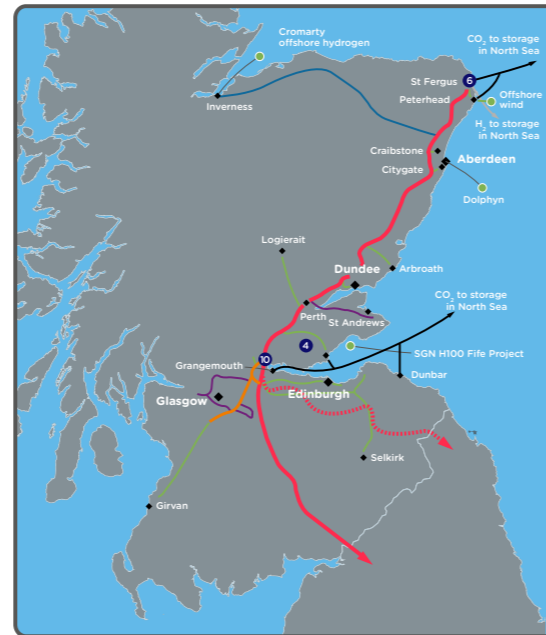
Renewable hydrogen is zero carbon and is produced via the electrolysis of water using renewable electricity. Low carbon hydrogen is produced from the reformation of natural gas with the carbon created captured and stored.

Scotland's abundant renewable energy resources can provide the renewable energy we'd need, including around 25% of Europe's offshore wind and tidal resource. It also has well-developed onshore and offshore oil and gas infrastructure, and the presence of offshore geological stores which would be ideal for safely storing the carbon captured from low carbon hydrogen production.

In our vision of a hydrogen gas network, multiple sites supplying renewable and low carbon hydrogen would mean a greater network resilience, a reliable gas supply and flexibility in how the network would be built. More importantly, customers would be able to choose to keep their gas supplies so they can continue to enjoy instant heat and full control over the temperature in their home.

For Scotland's industry, the onshore hydrogen transmission pipeline offers opportunities to connect early adopters and fits well with current project plans for the Aberdeen area, including the carbon capture and storage (CCS) project Acorn. This is just the first phase of this project. We're expecting more plans for other major emitters in the area in phases two and three. Piped hydrogen also offers more opportunities for supplying the marine, road and aviation transport sectors, utilising the existing infrastructure consumers have already paid for.

Crucially, an onshore hydrogen transmission system with offshore CO2 removal is likely to stimulate faster hydrogen uptake amongst industrial, commercial, and domestic customers, helping to make a contribution to decarbonise heat in one million homes by 2030 in line with the Scottish Government's target.



The transformational and accelerated pathway to 100% hydrogen for Scotland's gas networks

HOW DO WE CONVERT CUSTOMERS TO HYDROGEN?

Decarbonising homes with hydrogen offers stable and pragmatic progress for customers. This will ultimately lead to more people taking the actions needed to help us get to net zero more quickly.

Moving domestic customers from natural gas to 100% hydrogen will take, on average, one day per customer.

Gas boilers and appliances will need to be converted to their hydrogen equivalents. They take up the same amount of space as they do currently and work in the same way. They have also already been tested to the same high safety standards. Importantly for customers, most of the existing heating system inside homes, including radiators and pipework, doesn't need to be changed making hydrogen gas the least disruptive option for decarbonising heating.

We need to move on from the debate of which technology will "win" to understanding what customers want and really figuring out how we deploy zero carbon solutions to Scottish homes and businesses at pace. The scale of the engineering and logistical challenge to decarbonise heat is huge. So, we need to keep all our options on the table as we work through the transition.



Hydrogen ready boilers, like this one from manufacturer Baxi, can be fitted as direct replacements for conventional units.

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GAELIC BELONGS TO ALL OF SCOTLAND

One of the key messages in the National Gaelic Language Plan 2018-2023 is that Gaelic belongs to the whole of Scotland, and at the heart of this is delivering on the commitments contained in the Plan to increase the learning and usage of Gaelic across the country.

Gaelic Medium Education (GME) is one of the key ways to develop the Gaelic language and it is currently available in 15 Local Authorities in Scotland. As demand increases, there are many opportunities and professional support and advice available for all councils as they develop their GME provision.



The Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education produced by Bòrd na Gàidhlig in 2017 contains information on the assessment process LAs must follow when they receive applications from parents who wish to establish GME in their area. There is a national parents' organisation, Comann nam Pàrant, which supports parents and Bòrd na Gàidhlig offer professional support and advice to LAs throughout the consultation process, from detailing their responsibilities to co-hosting public information meetings with LAs to answer any questions from interested parties.

As parental interest in GME grew in Fife and Renfrewshire, in November 2021 Bòrd na Gàidhlig held online meetings with LA representatives, delivering a presentation on the benefits of GME and answering questions from prospective parents. 2021 also saw a successful application from parents result in the establishment of new GME provision in North Ayrshire, for example, where Bòrd na Gàidhlig's Education Team provided LA Officers and the School Leadership Team with the support required to recruit staff and source funding through the Capital Grants and Specific Grants Schemes to design and deliver GME within their local context. The growth of GME in an authority can also boost an interest in English-medium primary schools for Gaelic as an L3 as part of the 1+2 languages initiative. There are not only opportunities but indeed numerous benefits for LAs to consider developing Gaelic Learner Education (GLE) where pupils learn Gaelic as a modern language.

There are other organisations which can help councils provide this cultural expansion through the delivery of L3, such as Fèisean nan Gàidheal, who offer Gaelic language and culture sessions delivered primarily through expressive arts.

To build on primary L3 provision, Modern Languages staff can become GTCS registered in Gaelic and able to teach Gaelic as a secondary subject through undertaking the new Gaelic Additional Teaching Qualification currently in its pilot year at the University of Strathclyde. This 14-month Career Long Professional Learning course began in November 2021 with 10 places fully funded by Bòrd na Gàidhlig. Upon completion, practitioners will take up a GLE post in their authority, resulting in an increase in the number of Gaelic learners at secondary level.



Following on from the commitment in the National Gaelic Language Plan to prioritise Gaelic teacher promotion and retention, Bòrd na Gàidhlig recently launched a new campaign entitled #DèanDiofar (make a difference) encouraging people to consider a career in Gaelic teaching. Showcasing videos and information from six teachers currently teaching in Gaelic education, the campaign highlights the advantages and opportunities in a career in Gaelic, as well as the different paths the teachers have taken into Gaelic teaching – from those who were educated through GME themselves and now work in the system, to those who were experienced teachers who undertook immersion courses to improve their language skills to reach fluency and teach in GME.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig offer a number of funding schemes to support those who wish to teach in GME, from the Gaelic Education Grants Scheme supporting student teachers into GME, to funding for Gaelic language courses at each level including courses offered by the National Centre for Gaelic Language and Culture, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and a full-time immersion course delivered by the University of Glasgow. Full details of our funding schemes are on Bòrd na Gàidhlig's website (www.gaidhlig.scot), and further information can be provided to LA Officers with staff interested in improving their Gaelic skills and teaching in GME.

To guide practitioners through the different routes into Gaelic teaching and the courses available a Padlet has been created, in addition to the GTCS booklet 'So you want to teach in Gaelic?'. The digital noticeboard can be accessed by scanning the QR code on the education pages of our website and users can assess their level of Gaelic and choose a Gaelic language course suitable for their needs. For ease, pathways have been grouped according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and whether users are looking to study Gaelic at undergraduate or postgraduate level, teach Gaelic as a subject, teach a secondary subject through Gaelic or are a qualified teacher looking to transfer into GME, the Padlet contains all the information they need.



Throughout the recent consultation on education reform in Scotland Bòrd na Gàidhlig has worked closely with education staff, parents and Gaelic organisations to ensure that Gaelic voices were heard and views represented. As we hear the findings of the process in the months to come Bòrd na Gàidhlig will continue to provide professional support and guidance on the development of both GME and GLE across the whole of Scotland.



#DÈANDIOFAR

Tha iomadh slighe a-steach gu teagasg sa Ghàidhlig.

There are many routes into Gaelic teaching.

www.gaidhlig.scot/deandiofar





Affordable housing recently completed in Renfrewshire by the council at Dargavel Village and Johnstone Castle



GO AHEAD FOR 1,000 HOMES PLAN

A financial plan setting out how more than 1,000 new affordable homes will be built in Renfrewshire by 2027 has been given the go-ahead by councillors.

Members of Renfrewshire's Communities Housing and Planning Board have approved the area's latest Strategic Housing Investment Plan, which sets out where the council and its housing association partners plan to build in the next five years.

Renfrewshire is expected to receive more than £90m of grant support from the Scottish Government to help build affordable housing in that time and the SHIP sets out how that money will be used.

Some of the projects to be part-funded through the programme which are set to complete in 2022 or 2023, include:

- 101 new council homes in Ferguslie Park and 39 at Auchengreoch Road in Johnstone;
- 131 new homes in Glenburn in Paisley by Sanctuary Scotland and Paisley Housing Association for social rent and low-cost ownership;
- 58 social rented homes within Bishopton's Dargavel Village by Loretto Housing Association
- the final phase work to bring the former Arnotts site in Paisley back into use, with Link Group building 81 new flats to add to those already built;
- the next phase of a long-term plan to transform Paisley's west end, with Sanctuary Scotland building 22 new homes in Sutherland Street and 13 in Underwood Lane;
- a social housing development of 42 homes at Albert Road in Renfrew by Williamsburgh Housing Association;

The plan also includes a shadow programme of other planned projects which could be funded if others do not progress as expected.

The new homes will build on the success of recently-completed developments such as the council's award-winning development of 95 new homes in Johnstone Castle and the 132 new homes built by Sanctuary Scotland on the site of St Mirren's former Love Street stadium.

All new homes will be built to high energy-efficiency standards – to help residents save money on fuel bills and contribute to the area's targets to tackle climate change.

Councillor Marie McGurk, convener of Renfrewshire Council's Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board, said:

"We want Renfrewshire to continue to thrive as an attractive place for people to live and to move to.

"Key to that is making sure there is a supply of new housing people can afford, whether buying one, or as a tenant of the council or one of our housing association partners.

"This plan sets out how we will do that, while making sure there is a range of different size and type of house in each area, and which meets the different and changing needs of local people.

"It's a really positive plan for the future of housing in Renfrewshire and I look forward to seeing the projects it contains develop over the years ahead."

HANDOVER OF NEW COUNCIL HOMES IN STRATHPEFFER

The Highland Council is delighted to have taken possession of a further ten new homes at Kinellan in Strathpeffer.

The phased handovers of small groups of properties in the Kinellan development have added a total of twenty-one new homes to the Council's housing stock, including a range of wheelchair accessible properties and a number of family homes.

Funding for the new-builds has come from The Scottish Government and The Highland Council.

Thanks goes to HHA, Bracewell Stirling, Compass Building and Construction Services, Stuart Burke and Kiloh Associates, Helica and Armour and Partners for their dedication to this project of delivering affordable and energy-efficient homes in the Highlands.

Chair of the Council's Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Committee, Councillor Ian Cockburn visited the site to look around the last properties to be handed over.



He said: "It's great to see the development finished and tenants moving in. We are short of good social housing in the Highlands, so this is an excellent addition to Strathpeffer and Ward 5. I hope to see an introduction of more social housing to Ward 5 in the future."

DUNDEE STRATEGIC HOUSING INVESTMENT

Dundee's Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) outlines the city's affordable housing priorities over the next five years and will be put to Councillors for consideration next week.

The Scottish Government's Affordable Housing Investment Programme has contributed over £89.1 million to the city for the period of 2022 to 2027.

In the period from 2015 to 2021, there have been a total of 556 new build social rented units completed in Dundee. The level of social rented house completions has been impacted by a number of issues including growing pressures, including material, labour and supply chain challenges, in the construction market.

The latest iteration of the SHIP highlights that there are a healthy number of housing units either on site or due on site in the near future and also identifies potential future developments across the city.

The SHIP outlines the ambitions of the City Council and its Registered Social Landlord partners to increase the supply of affordable accommodation in the city.



Neighbourhood Services Convener Councillor Anne Rendall, said:

"Work is about to be or is currently being carried out to provide a further 599 new affordable homes for Dundee residents within this financial year and to add to those already completed by the Council and its partners.

"Affordable homes will be delivered on ten different sites, including Ellengowan Drive, South Victoria Dock Road, and the former Primary Schools of Charleston and St Vincent's. This will give us more homes fit for the 21st century that people want to live in.



Ollier Smurthwaite Architects

UPDATE ON CITY CENTRE HOUSING PROJECTS

Part of the Draft Inverness City Centre Masterplan discussed during the City of Inverness Area Committee highlights the provision of more quality homes within the city centre. Two key projects are currently underway which, when completed, will provide 61 homes for rent as well as creating new business units.

Over the last few months significant progress has been achieved on the development of the former Arnotts store on Union Street by HHA and The Highland Council.

The newbuild section has been erected on Baron Taylor's Street and fit out of the original Arnotts building is well underway. The layouts of the 53 flats are becoming visible as the internal walls are installed and the whole building will be wind and watertight over the next two months.

Funding has come from the Scottish Government, the Highland Council, and the Inverness and Highland City-Region Deal with borrowing supported by rental income.

HHA and the Council, along with the contractor are working hard to complete the project in late summer 2022, dealing with challenging conditions associated to the refurbishment of an old building in the City Centre.

The development also includes 6 new retail units – 4 on Union Street and a further 2 fronting on to Barron Taylor's

Street. These are being developed and funded by Forthpoint Ltd.

The transformation of the former Chisholms shop on Castle Street into 8 flats for HHA is also progressing well. The funding package for this development has also come from the Scottish Government, Highland Council, Inverness and Highland City-Region Deal and borrowing supported by rental income. Included in the development will be one retail unit fronting Castle Street.

Operating within a tight site area, below Inverness Castle, the works include rebuilding the stone façade with the original stone and bringing back into use a building which had stood vacant for some time. Despite this the contractor, Compass Building and Construction Services Ltd, have achieved key development milestones and the project is on track to complete next summer.

Chair of the Council's Environment and Infrastructure Committee, Cllr Trish Robertson said:

"Both housing developments are going to be of a very high quality and will provide much needed homes into the heart of the city. Importantly they are also bringing new life into two iconic buildings that we would have felt sad to lose. The new retail units included will also contribute to the regeneration of the City Centre as a retail destination.

It's great to hear good progress is being made and I am really looking forward to seeing the finished flats next year."

Gail Matheson, Chief Executive of HHA said:

"We are delighted to have been able to preserve a part of Castle Street and bring back into use a building which had lain vacant and derelict. Working within the City Centre is challenging, but we believe that the finished building will be a great asset to Castle Street and the city centre. It has been exciting to be part of the Union Street project and seeing new homes being created from the empty shop space. We will be advertising the apartments for both Castle Street and Union Street in 2022 on our social media pages and expect there to be huge demand for both."



DIGITAL HOUSING STRATEGY FOR GLASGOW PRESENTED TO COUNCIL

Glasgow City Council has recently considered a Digital Housing Strategy for the city.

This is the first such strategy for Glasgow, and its purpose is to tackle digital exclusion; outline the benefits and challenges from switching to digital platforms; promote these platforms to expand choice in accessing services and housing, and enhance services and the quality of housing; work to ensure Glasgow residents have an affordable broadband connection in their home and can access online services - around 65% of Glasgow households currently have a broadband connection; improve the collection and analysis of housing data; and highlight good practice examples of digital projects and services.

While Glasgow's Registered Social Landlords such as housing associated expanded their digital services during the pandemic, it should be emphasised that the Digital Housing Strategy (DHS) does not aim to replace traditional forms of communication and service delivery such as face-to-face and telephone contact, but to improve residents' choice and the service available to them.

The aims identified within the DHS - arrived at through consultation with the public and partners in the housing sector - align with both the Glasgow Housing Strategy and the Digital Glasgow Strategy.

Ensuring that people in Glasgow have a broadband connection is important economically and socially - digital exclusion, which happens for a variety of reasons, disproportionately affects the following groups: older people; the unemployed, or those on a lower income; people with disabilities; the homeless; and households with a lower educational attainment.

Registered Social Landlords in Glasgow have identified that the use of online services results in quicker application processing times for the customers; the ability to connect with tenants who do not usually engage; improved data security; enhancing how tenants can choose to access services; improved business planning; and the ability to allocate resources to support tenants that require greater assistance.

- In terms of the priorities of the DHS, the main aims are to:
- Expand the range of housing services that are available online
- Reduce the number of households living in Glasgow that are digitally excluded
- Enhance the collection, analysis and display of data using digital systems
- Deliver effective partnership working to implement digital technology, improve connectivity and online services that will improve the lives of Glasgow's citizens
- Contribute towards reducing levels of deprivation, and
- Promote health and wellbeing

A 10-point Action Plan to meet these aims would be delivered by Glasgow City Council, Glasgow Health and Social Care Partnership, Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and other partners, and some of these actions include the establishment of a Digital Housing Working Group; the expansion of the provision of online housing services for all RSL tenants; working with partners to increase fibre broadband connectivity to existing properties and new build homes; the development of a Digital Housing Guide that outlines best practice relating to promoting digital inclusion, implementing new systems and online services, new technology and collecting/managing data; and the development of a Digital Common Housing Register for Glasgow to improve access to housing, data collection and delivery of online services.

Councillor Ruairi Kelly, Chair of the Neighbourhoods, Housing and Public Realm Committee at Glasgow City Council, said:

"The Digital Housing Strategy for Glasgow offers the chance to not only improve the quality of housing services in the city in a number of ways, but also bring economic, health and wellbeing benefits to those who those unable to access digital services. The development of this strategy is a significant development for Glasgow."

The draft DHS - available at <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=27544> - will now be referred to the council's City Administration Committee for approval.



NEW BUILD NURSERY SCHOOLS TO INCORPORATE GREEN TECHNOLOGIES

Four brand-new Early Years establishments currently under construction at Govanhill, Broomhill, Carntyne and Tollcross Park will incorporate innovative green technologies in their design to help mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change.

Air source heat pumps and supporting infrastructure will enable all four of the new nursery schools to receive their warmth and hot water from electricity - a low carbon source of energy, whilst Govanhill and Broomhill Nursery Schools will also have Smart grey water systems installed to mitigate localised flood risk by maximising underground rainwater storage capacity ahead of a storm event.

The inclusion of sustainable technology in the new-builds - deliverable through match-funding from the Scottish Government's Low Carbon Infrastructure Transition Programme (LCITP), will support Glasgow's Climate Emergency Plan and desire to achieve net zero carbon in the city by 2030. Longer term, incorporating this type of green technology will also contribute towards meeting the national Net Zero Carbon target by 2045.

As part of the council's overall programme of Early Years investment to deliver the Scottish Government's commitment of 1140 hours of flexible early learning and childcare, the Generation 5 new build programme will provide over 300 childcare placements as well as support the registration of a number of outdoor Early Learning and Childcare placements.

The Early Years Expansion programme will be the first council new builds to embrace these new technologies in order to make the transition to a low carbon estate - highlighting our commitment to reducing carbon emissions and to lead by example in the delivery of low carbon solutions. The LCITP funding of £329,313 will not only

help to increase the number of buildings within the estate operating low carbon technologies but will also provide a platform for new skills and knowledge to be gained and embedded across the council's technical teams.

Cllr Anna Richardson, City Convener for Sustainability and Carbon Reduction said:

"I'm delighted that the council has been awarded LCITP funding, which means we can incorporate technology into these new builds which will help reduce our carbon footprint and help us prepare for the effects of climate change.

"Delivering childcare places in a lower carbon way complements the council's wider sustainability work in this area. The introduction of these green technologies also supports many of our other environmental strategies that seek to protect the environment. These projects will have a particularly positive effect on the local communities concerned by helping to lessen flood risk and reduce emissions from heat."

Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport Michael Matheson, said: "I'm hugely pleased that our Low Carbon Infrastructure Transition Programme can support Glasgow City Council in ensuring the new nurseries will rely on low carbon energy sources for their heating and electricity consumption. It is important that facilities like these that play a valuable role in our communities align with the Scottish Government's and Glasgow's net zero commitments."

All four new builds are currently under construction through principal contractor City Building (Glasgow) LLP - with all grant funded works to be completed by the end of March 2022.



ANOTHER 'PARTNERSHIP MILESTONE' AS PURPOSE BUILT ELC UNVEILED IN GREENOCK

A NEW £3 million state-of-the-art nursery has been unveiled in Greenock.

Work is now complete on the purpose-built Larkfield Early Learning Centre, which can accommodate up to 100 young people.

It was created for Inverclyde Council by contractors CCG and delivered alongside the local authority's development partners hub West Scotland.

Councillor Jim Clocherty, deputy leader of Inverclyde Council and convener of education and communities, said:

"This is another excellent facility to add to our first-class portfolio of schools and nursery buildings.

"Children in Larkfield and surrounding areas now have a bright and modern building for learning indoors and with plenty of outdoor space as well.

"Giving our children and young people the best possible start in life and to their education is a key aim of the council and plays an important role in improving their outcomes later in life.

"I wish staff, children, parents and the wider Larkfield community success in their new home."

The £2.9m Larkfield Early Learning Centre was built in tandem with the £2.4m extension of Rainbow Family Centre in Port Glasgow, which was completed in August.

Both were delivered by the council alongside hub West and CCG and designed by architects Holmes Miller.

Iain Marley, chief executive of hub West Scotland, said:

"Larkfield Early Learning Centre is a new build nursery to replace the existing facility currently located in the former Sacred Heart Primary School.

"This is the second early learning centre to be completed in partnership with Inverclyde Council this year, and provides another high quality learning environment that will play a key role in shaping children's future development.

"We are excited to continue to strengthen our relationship with Inverclyde Council

and look forward to opportunities to collaborate and help deliver high quality projects and benefits for local communities in the future."

Staff and young people are now busy packing up at their temporary home in the nearby former Sacred Heart Primary, which will now be demolished as part of the overall project.

David Wylie, CCG managing director, said:

"The completion of the Larkfield Early Learning Centre is yet another significant milestone in CCG's partnership with Inverclyde Council and hub West Scotland.

"Together, we are creating high-quality learning space for young children across the local authority and have done so for a number of years now.

"It is a testament to the council for their show of commitment and investment in youth education and we are delighted to have played our part."



£2M FRASERBURGH ACADEMY REFURBISHMENT COMPLETE

Young people at Fraserburgh Academy are enjoying access to a range of impressive new practical learning spaces following completion of a £2m refurbishment project at the school.

Pupils can now enjoy state-of-the-art drama, art, home economics and additional support for learners facilities which are fully accessible, windows across the estate have been replaced and access as well as lighting has been improved in other areas too.

Head Teacher Irene Sharp explained what the improvements mean for young people and colleagues. She said:

"We are delighted the refurbishment programme is now complete and very much look forward to showing these off to parents, friends and the wider community, at a later date. Pupils and staff are very pleased with the finished work which has greatly enhanced learning and teaching in the school.

"Art and drama used to be taught in the old Fraserburgh Academy building at the bottom of our drive which necessitated a brisk 5 minute walk for learners and staff alike. Now that we have accommodation for these subjects within the main school, for the first time in the history of Fraserburgh Academy all learning is under one roof, which has made a huge contribution to the positive ethos within the school.

"We're also enjoying our new Conference Room, now situated near the front door for easy access for parental and other meetings, the new staff room with modern facilities for all staff, new ceilings and lighting for classrooms, and the enhancement of fire doors for ease of use by disabled learners. All windows across the school have been upgraded too which has made a big difference to the ability of staff to control ventilation."

Aberdeenshire Council's Learning Estates team led the re-development of the facilities and commissioned Bancon Construction and CHAP Construction to undertake work as part of the two-phase project. Work on the first phase started in summer 2019, was delayed in 2020 due to the onset of the pandemic and the 12-week phase two programme was undertaken from May to August this year.



WANT TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT GAELIC EDUCATION IN FIFE?



Bòrd na Gàidhlig is inviting Fife parents and carers along to an online information session to find out more about Gaelic-medium education.

Gaelic-medium education means that children are taught primarily in Gaelic with English being used as a second language.

Jim Whannel, Director of Gaelic Education, at BnG, will deliver a short presentation on the benefits of Gaelic-medium with parents and carers able to ask questions afterwards.

There will be representatives from Fife Education Service there too, who will also be able to answer any questions.

Nicola Masterson, Quality Improvement Officer -Curriculum, said:

"We want to raise the awareness of GME in Fife and we'd like to hear from parents what they think. If you are interested and would like to find out more, please come along and we'll try to answer any questions."

Fife Council will co-host the meeting along with representatives of Comann nam Pàrant, the national organisation which offers advice and support on Gaelic medium education to parents.

ARGYLL AND BUTE WINS NATIONAL LEARNING AWARD

Argyll and Bute Council fought off stiff competition from across the country to win the hotly contested Early Years and Childcare Development category at last night's Learning Places Scotland Awards.

This prestigious award recognises excellence and innovation in the briefing, design, development and delivery of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) facilities. It was presented to the Council's education and property teams for their work in delivering 1140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC), particularly the development of outdoor learning spaces.

Council Leader Robin Currie said:

"Argyll and Bute Council was shortlisted in not just one, but three categories at the Learning Places Scotland Awards. This in itself is a great honour, but to win this prestigious title when there was such a high calibre of entries – that is just tremendous.

"Everyone involved in the expansion of 1140 hours in Argyll and Bute worked tirelessly to get the scheme up and running, so it is extremely rewarding to see their efforts recognised at a national level. Well done to all."

The Council's Policy Lead for Education, Councillor Yvonne McNeilly, agreed:

"I am absolutely delighted. Over the last few years a tremendous amount of work has been carried out to prepare for delivering these additional hours, including the creation of two new dedicated outdoor nurseries, complete with hobbit houses and environmentally friendly toilets.

"Outdoor learning is vital to our children's development and I believe that Argyll and Bute is leading the way in this. Congratulations to all our dedicated, hardworking staff who made this possible."



NEW PARTNERSHIP TO BENEFIT CITY CHILDCARE

Parents and children have welcomed a new contract secured by the council with Flexible Childcare Services Scotland (FCSS) ahead of the opening of Tillydrone and Cummings Park Nurseries.

FCSS, a national charity who already manage settings across Scotland, was created after it was found that parents were unable to accept offers of employment due to a lack of high quality, flexible, and accessible childcare services.

Councillor M. Tauqeer Malik, convener of the Educational Operational Delivery Committee, said:

"We are delighted to be in partnership with Flexible Childcare Services Scotland to help transform young lives and support the development of our city's youth to give them the best start in life.

"Children can have the opportunity to make new friends and learn together through these centres, and by doing so are able to enjoy themselves and have fun, making it a great environment to learn in."

Susan McGhee, Chief Executive Officer at FCSS said:

"We are extremely excited to be working

with Aberdeen City Council within these two new sites."

"By offering a flexible model, families can maximise the benefit of their funded entitlement, reducing the need for them to purchase wrap around hours."

"It will help families to save money, it will allow parents and carers to continue working, and therefore children are more likely to attend and experience the benefits that high quality early learning and childcare brings."

Tillydrone and Cummings Park Nurseries will open in the new year accommodating 56 and 80 children respectively.

Thanks to Aberdeen City Council's commitment to continue with the roll out of 1,140 hours, FCSS is offering fully funded, flexible early learning and childcare to eligible 2-5-year-olds. This equates to 30 hours per week during the school term for families.

The expansion of hours will help support child development through the provision of high-quality services. The programme will also help parents and carers return to work or study, as well as supporting child development through the provision of

high-quality services.

Families have the choice to access 1,140 hours of ELC at school nurseries, as well as private nurseries and childminders in partnership with Aberdeen City Council.

The council will further welcome the opportunity to participate in the Scottish Government's project to pilot an additional year of funded ELC for children who defer their primary one start.

From August 2023, all families will be able to access a further year of funded ELC if they wish their child to defer entry to primary school.

Outdoor nurseries are also due to be completed in December at Hazlehead and Duthie Park, subject to weather. The council will be one of only two authorities delivering a full outdoor ELC, the other being in Midlothian.

A video showing the benefits of the expansion of funded Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) across Aberdeen was released.



GAELIC MEDIUM EDUCATION (GME) IN HIGHLAND



A report on the current provision, and future development, of Gaelic Medium and Gaelic Education across Highland was discussed by Members at a recent Education Committee meeting.

In the introduction to the report it was noted that The Highland Council is a leader in terms of the Gaelic Learner curriculum. Nationally, 61% of Gaelic Learners in secondary schools are in Highland Schools and this number has grown faster than the national rate in the last three years. Attainment has likewise improved at a fast rate across the board over the same period.

There are 20 GME primary schools located in The Highland Council area, accounting for one third of all GME primary school provisions in Scotland. Within this primary GME provision, The Highland Council has 3 standalone GME schools and 2 Gaelic schools with English Medium provision.

Additionally, Highland has 20 secondary schools in total which are currently providing Gàidhlig for fluent and/or Gaelic learners.

An online map of locations in Highland offering GME is available on the Council's website.

Education Chair Cllr John Finlayson said:

"The report today on Gaelic Medium and Gaelic Education has given a robust overview of the current provision available to Gaelic learners in Highland. The Highland Council has the largest number of school provisions that offer Gaelic and Gaelic Medium education in Scotland within one authority. We have a strong focus on GME as the Council has made a commitment to increase Gaelic usage, increase the number of Gaelic speakers, enhance the profile of Gaelic and to generate a positive image of the language."

The Council has promoted GME in schools by producing a short video which provides information on GME for parents interested in the benefits of Gaelic education. The video is available to watch on the Council's website at www.highland.gov.uk/gaelic.

Gaelic Chair Cllr Calum Munro said:

"It was important that this report on GME and GLE education was brought to Highland Council's Education Committee and it gives a clear indication of current developments and successes in GME and GLE in Highland and places that in a national context. The report also outlines Highland Council's strategic commitment to and positional vision for the future of GME".

The Executive Chief Officers, Education Strategic Leads and the Gaelic Development Manager are currently undertaking a further review of the next steps to form an in-depth action plan and strategic vision for the wider considerations for Gaelic Education growth and sustainability across Highland.



Councillor Malik (Convener of Education) and Councillor Marie Boulton (Convener of Capital Programme Committee) with representatives from Robertsons Construction and Riverbank Parents Teachers Committee join Pupils from Riverbank Primary School cut turf at the site of their new school.

CEREMONY MARKS OFFICIAL START OF COUNTESSWELLS SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION

A special sod-cutting ceremony today (Wednesday 17 November) marked the official commencement of work on the new £17 million Countesswells School and Nursery got underway today (Wednesday 17 November).

Preparatory work on the new school began in October and today's ceremony attended by Aberdeen City Council's Educational Operational Delivery Convener, Councillor M Tauqeer Malik, Vice-Convener Claire Imrie gave future pupils the opportunity to visit the site of their new school for the first time.

The new primary school and nursery is due for completion in 2023 and will serve the growing Countesswells community.

Councillor Malik said

"This is a proud day for me to perform today's sod cutting ceremony. The delivery of Countesswells Primary School will help to grow Aberdeen as a city of learning that will empower local residents to put lifelong learning at the heart of the community.

"The new school, once built, will provide a two-stream primary school with a capacity for 434 pupils, Early Learning & Childcare provision for 60 pupils a 3G 7 a-side-pitch and external outdoor play and learning spaces".

Councillor Malik added

"Countesswells Primary School will provide the potential for enabling people to learn and develop themselves in ways that meet their needs, interests and ambitions.

I am confident the creation of Countesswells Primary School presents an exciting opportunity to design education provision into the fabric of the place, recognising the central role which schools and learning play in the life of our communities."

Councillor Imrie said:

"This is the first step towards building a school and nursery that will create social cohesion in the rapidly growing Countesswells community as well as providing first-class facilities for young pupils and pre-school children alike."

"Countesswells Primary is one of a number of schools as well as community hubs the council is delivering across the city. We are committed to providing much-needed homes, including affordable units, as well as supporting infrastructure.

"We're certain the school will be enjoyed by young learners and the wider Countesswells community for many years to come."

Preparatory work at the school, situated in the area north of Countesswells overlooking Cults Burn Park sees the creation of vehicle access and boundary fencing.

Hub North Scotland are the council's development and delivery partner for the school. Project Director, Peter Ramsay, said

"This is a key moment for the new Countesswells community and we are looking forward to delivering a fantastic school which will be enjoyed by families for generations to come."

Colin Milne, Project Director for Morrison Construction North East, commented: "We are delighted to be underway on this much-needed school for local children. We have a strong track record in providing high quality educational facilities in partnership with both Hub North Scotland and Aberdeenshire Council and we look forward to building on that here at Countesswells together with Aberdeen City Council."

A spokesperson for Countesswells Development Limited, said:

"We welcome this significant milestone in the delivery of the much-anticipated primary school at Countesswells.

It's an important element of the social and physical infrastructure of the growing community which benefits from award-winning infrastructure including extensive landscaping, ultra-fast broadband provision and road improvements."

Pupils living in Countesswells – where 600 new houses have been built so far – are currently being taught in the former Hazlewood School.

WORK ON NEW RIVERBANK SCHOOL GETS UNDERWAY WITH SOD CUTTING CEREMONY

Aberdeen City Council's Education Operational Delivery Convener, Councillor M Tauqeer Malik was joined today (Monday 06 December) by local pupils, Parent Council members and representatives of construction company Robertson Limited, at a special sod-cutting ceremony marking the official start of work on the new replacement Riverbank School in Tillydrone.

The new school, which is due for completion in summer 2023 is being built partly on the site of its predecessor and on part of the St Machar School site and will increase local Primary School capacity to cater for families moving to new housing developments in the area as well as offering 100 new Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) places.

Councillor Malik said:

"Today's ceremony sees the beginning of a new chapter in the local community and our ongoing commitment to putting learning and empowerment in at the heart of communities across the city through the provision of a modern schools' estate.

"Once completed our new school will provide a capacity for a total of 651

pupils, a 3G seven-a-side football pitch and external outdoor play and learning facilities.

"We have also ensured that the design of the new school is flexible in order to respond to any possible changes in the needs of the pupils, community or in the local demographic profile in future."

Gordon Milne, regional managing director, Robertson Construction Eastern, which is delivering the new learning environment at Tillydrone through Scottish Procurement Alliance framework said:

"As the construction delivery partner of choice, we are pleased to continue our on-going relationship with Aberdeen City Council as it realises its ambitions of putting learning and empowerment at the heart of communities.

"As part of our commitment throughout the build, we will continue to engage with pupils, staff, parents and the wider community as we deliver this important project that will be enjoyed by many for years to come."

Councillor Marie Boulton, convener of Capital Programme Committee, said:

"We have invested tens of millions in new schools in recent years with a further £23 million being invested in nursery settings as part of our commitment to deliver first class educational facilities across the city which will give our young people the best starts in life.

"The new replacement Riverbank School will not only be a school to accommodate the changing demographics of the area, but it will also be a first-rate community asset for this generation and future generations."

AYR GRAMMAR PRIMARY SCHOOL WINS AWARD FROM GLASGOW INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

South Ayrshire Council is delighted to announce that the new Ayr Grammar Primary School has won the 'Award for Conservation' from the Glasgow Institute of Architects (GIA).

The GIA Design Awards are open to buildings completed in the UK and Ireland by architects based in the West of Scotland.

The school moved to the iconic Ayr Academy building last year, following an extensive programme of works to transform the historic structure into an inspiring, modern facility.

Designed by BDP Architects, the new school boasts facilities for more than 400 pupils; an early years centre; community facilities; and South Ayrshire's Archive Centre.

The award was presented at a ceremony last week where judges praised the school in their assessment, saying:

"Rather than let this fine building languish, or redevelop for residential or commercial use, South Ayrshire Council seized a

fantastic opportunity to create a new community focused development that allowed them to preserve the original use on the site, and expand the offer to the wider community."

Councillor William Grant, South Ayrshire Council's Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People said:

"I'm delighted that the judging panel recognised the fantastic facilities that the new Ayr Grammar Primary School provides, and selected us as winners for this prestigious award.

"We're committed to ensuring all young people in South Ayrshire get the best possible start in life, and part of this is providing vibrant and engaging places to learn.

"Ayr Academy has been a local landmark on Fort Street for generations and the new Ayr Grammar Primary School has secured the long-term future for this much-loved building."



TIER 1 CONTRACTORS APPOINTED FOR PEEBLES AND GALASHIELS PROJECTS

Tier 1 construction contractors have been appointed to deliver two new major school projects for Peebles and Galashiels following a thorough bid and evaluation process.

BAM Construction Ltd will be responsible for the construction of a new state-of-the-art campus in Peebles, replacing the High School which was seriously damaged in a fire in late 2019, whilst Morrison Construction has been appointed to deliver the Galashiels Community Campus, a replacement for the outdated Galashiels Academy building.

Scottish Borders Council has also confirmed the continuation of their partnership with development partner Hub South East who will oversee both projects through the various development phases.

Both contractors will begin to familiarise themselves with the respective construction sites, stakeholders and designs that have been developed to date with planning applications due to be submitted next year.

A period of further design development for the projects will then follow with construction works anticipated to commence at both sites in late 2022.

Scottish Borders Council has placed a major focus on investing in the futures of young people in recent years and a learning estate programme was created to prioritise the accessibility of high-quality educational facilities across the Borders.

As a part of this effort to modernise the school infrastructure, Galashiels Academy and Peebles High School had been identified as two priority projects.

In the last five years new school facilities have been built for Kelso - Kelso High School - and Jedburgh - Jedburgh Grammar Campus, both successfully delivered in partnership with Hub South East.

Councillor Carol Hamilton, Executive Member for Children and Young People, said:

"The appointments of BAM Construction and Morrison Construction as tier 1 contractors and the announcement of our continued partnership with Hub South East marks an important step in the progression of these two major projects.

"We believe their respective track records in successfully delivering projects of this scale can help the Council achieve its ambition of providing world-class education facilities for young learners across the Borders."

Greig Jamieson, Hub South East's Commercial Director, said:

"Hub South East is excited to continue working with Scottish Borders Council, a partnership that has already successfully delivered a number of impressive educational facilities, most recently the fantastic Jedburgh Grammar Campus.

"We are proud to be entrusted with this significant investment in learning estate in the Borders, delivering these new facilities

as part of the Scottish Government's Learning Estate Investment Programme.

"We look forward to building upon the Council's aspirations and making these a reality for both Galashiels and Peebles."

Martin Cooper, Construction Director for BAM, said:

"BAM are delighted to have been selected for the construction of the new Peebles High School.

"Not only will we deliver very sustainable, highly modern and extensive facilities for students and staff, but BAM will use our time here to work with the community and local firms to make sure we give something back beyond creating a great building.

"It's a great opportunity for us all and we will be reaching out to our partners so that we can all make the most of it."

Eddie Robertson, Managing Director of Morrison Construction Building Central, said:

"We are delighted to have been appointed to this fantastic new project in Galashiels.

"We have a strong track record in delivering major new education campuses in partnership with Hub South East, and we very much look forward to working again with Scottish Borders Council to provide high-quality facilities for local students and the wider community."



WORK BEGINS TO INSTALL PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE DEFIBRILLATORS AT EVERY SCHOOL IN RENFREWSHIRE

Every school in Renfrewshire will have soon have access to a life-saving defibrillator as work begins to fit publicly accessible devices at all 50 primary schools.

The emergency resuscitation devices are already available at all secondary and additional support needs (ASN) schools across Renfrewshire but will be relocated if they are currently within the building to ensure 24-7 community access to the life-saving equipment

Each defibrillator includes simple-to-follow instructions on how to use them in the event of an emergency and the device locations are registered with the national network to help the emergency services when responding to 999 calls.

Kirklandneuk Primary School parents Rachael Cosgrove and Michael Stewart led the charge to have the defibrillator installed at the school after watching Christian Eriksen fall ill at the European Championships.

Michael said:

"It's a fantastic day for the school to be leading the way and driving change.

"We never expected this to happen so quickly, especially in the midst of a pandemic, so my thanks go to the Council for making this happen.

"Hopefully we never have to use these defibrillators, but it is reassuring for the staff and local community to know they are there and I'd urge local people to familiarise themselves with the defibrillator so they know how and when to use it.

"It really could be the difference between life and death."

The new defibrillators are in addition to those already in place in Council buildings, town halls and local leisure facilities throughout Renfrewshire.

Councillor John Shaw, Convener of Renfrewshire Council's Finance, Resources and Customer Services Policy Board, said:

"The importance of these devices cannot be understated as they can be crucial in saving someone's life.

"While we hope it is never required, this significant investment will ensure that children and staff at our schools will have direct access to this equipment should they need it - as will the local community as we are ensuring they are all publicly accessible.

"I'm delighted to have been able to take this ask from Kirklandneuk parents and expand it to all our schools across Renfrewshire."

Work is underway initially in Renfrew to install the devices in each school by the end of the year and all other primary schools will see their device installed in early 2022.

Education and Children's Services Convener Councillor Jim Paterson added: "It's great to see work begin on installing these life-saving devices at all our schools as we know how important they can be in an emergency.

"It's fantastic that the local community will have close access to a defibrillator and I'm looking forward to the work being completed early next year."

COUNCIL LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE TO PROMOTE SOUTH AYRSHIRE



South Ayrshire Council has just launched a new dedicated website to help boost tourism in the area.

'Destination South Ayrshire' www.destinationsouthayrshire.co.uk showcases everything the region has to offer, from long sandy beaches, and market towns to world-class golf, and award-winning local food and produce.

There are some key features on the new website, such as giving South Ayrshire tourism businesses the opportunity to have a free listing. There are dedicated pages for all towns and villages, and communities are encouraged to provide content. The website also allows visitors and locals to sign up for a free e-newsletter.

The popular 'Ayr Through the Ages' app www.ayrthroughtheages.com has also been relaunched. The app is location-aware and guides you through Ayr's rich and colourful past from the 13th to the 21st century, with over 80 locations and points of interest around the auld town. Included in the App are the Blue Bonnet Trails; Tam's Trail and Alloway Trail which feature an interactive map and videos, giving you the chance to walk in Tam O'Shanter's footsteps from the town centre to Alloway.

We are also developing a Tourism and Events Strategy, and there will be opportunities for communities to contribute to this. Further information will be provided on the Destination South Ayrshire website when available.

Councillor Chris Cullen, Economy and Culture Portfolio Holder for South Ayrshire Council said:

"We are keen to be on the front foot and promoting South Ayrshire despite the COVID-19 pandemic. As with everywhere else, our tourism sector has struggled, and we are determined to rejuvenate South Ayrshire as a tourist destination. The new website, together with the strategy will certainly help us achieve this ambition, as we strive to connect our rich history and culture to the modern day and put South Ayrshire back on the world map."



Scottish Local Authority News

ACCESS RANGER ROLES CONTINUE THROUGHOUT WINTER

Access Ranger roles continue throughout winter

A team of seven Highland Council Access Rangers will continue to patrol and carry out countryside, core path and visitor preparation works throughout winter.

During summer the Council's Seasonal Access Ranger team patrolled much of the Highland Council area and helped reduce the impact of thousands of visitors on local environments and communities. The Access Rangers have welcomed and engaged with nearly 20,000 people, informed them about the area and available services and advised them of responsible behaviour. They encountered 8,600 tents and 24,500 motorhomes and identified and removed the remains of 3,500 fires, 4,200 toileting sites and over 2,000 bags of dropped litter.

There has been extensive positive feedback from communities, members, organisations, and visitors for the Access Rangers' work with calls for the service to be continued in 2022.

Council Members recognise the benefits that the Access Rangers provide and committed to extend the Visitor Management Plan funding into 2022 by a one-off investment of £1.5m. Consultations will be held with Council services to determine specific funding allocations.

Funding allocated to the Outdoor Access team for the remainder of this financial year will allow five Access Rangers to continue employment until April 2022. They will assist the Access Officers in carrying out countryside site and core path improvements. The work programme is to be confirmed but paths at Ceannabeinne and Melvich in Sutherland, Swinney Hill in Caithness, Fyrish, Torridon and Strathpeffer in Ross-shire, Tomich and Fort William are likely to see maintenance works.

In addition, a further two Access Rangers will continue employment until April 2022 through other funding opportunities. One in partnership with Visit Inverness Loch Ness and SSE, who will continue to work in the Loch Ness area and the other will help identify opportunities for biodiversity enhancements and community food growing on Council managed land.

Destination plans for hotspot areas including Morar/Arisaig, Durness and Glen Brittle will be produced in preparation for the 2022 season. Other maintenance works will likely take place at Ardvreck, Strathy, Duntelchaig, Duntulm, and Gruinard with other areas to be confirmed.

STATUE PLANNED FOR FIRST WORLD WAR HEROINE

The City of Edinburgh Council has passed a motion in support of fundraising activities taking place next year to raise funds for a statue in tribute to the life and work of pioneering Edinburgh doctor Elsie Inglis.

At a meeting of the Full Council on Thursday 28 October, members unanimously agreed the motion to give "full and unequivocal support" to fundraising activities including the Girlguiding sponsored 'Sit Still' in the Meadows and a series of afternoon teas to be held in the City Chambers and the Royal College of Surgeons Edinburgh.

Widely regarded as a heroine of the First World War and an advocate for women's rights, Elsie Inglis was instrumental in setting up the Scottish Women's Hospitals for Foreign Service Committee, an organisation funded by the women's suffrage movement for the Allied war effort.

Representing Girlguiding Edinburgh, Susan Brown made a deputation to Councillors highlighting the importance and inspiration the Dr Elsie Inglis legacy has for the Capital's young women and outlined the array of fundraising events



and activities planned by dedicated and passionate supporters.

Susan Brown from Girlguiding Edinburgh said:

Girlguiding Edinburgh are delighted to be involved in this project to recognise such a dedicated, determined and inspirational lady. Her characteristics and actions make her an excellent role model for the young members in Girlguiding today. In Girlguiding we empower girls to learn about the world, form their own viewpoints and speak out for the change they want to

see in their communities. Just as Elsie did when she didn't "Go Home and Sit Still" after her offer to the British War Office to create a medical unit staffed entirely by women, was rejected.

At our "Sit Still" in the Meadows, in March, we definitely don't plan to sit still all the time – we are using many activities from the Girlguiding programme that fit in with much of Elsie's life – first aid, wartime activities, camping, and opportunities for young members to speak out about what is important to them.

Commenting, the Lord Provost said:

There is no doubt that Dr Elsie Inglis – war hero, pioneering medic, advocate of women's rights – is a truly revered and treasured figure in Edinburgh's history, so I am delighted that as we look ahead to 2022 there are plans afoot to raise funds to make sure a fitting tribute is achieved.

My thanks to everyone involved in this project, including the dedicated group of enthusiastic volunteers who are working tirelessly organising the fundraising initiatives with Girlguiding Edinburgh.

Scottish Local Authority News



FINAL PHASE OF INSHES PARK COMPLETED

The third and final phase of the Inshes District Park main path infrastructure has recently been completed and is now open to the public.

The £358K contract which forms part of the third phase of development at Inshes District Park was awarded to Pat Munro Ltd of Alness and work began on site in April this year. This contract has seen the construction of a surfaced footpath linking the pedestrian bridge on Inshes Road with Elmwood Avenue in Milton of Leys.

The path provides an attractive and more protected off-road route for both cyclists and pedestrians and provides the final link in the active travel and recreational route between Sir Walter Scott Drive and Milton of Leys. A planting and landscaping contract for Phase 2 and 3 will follow on from these works as funding becomes available.

Inshes Park is funded through developer contributions collected over the past number of years from adjacent housing developments. Sustrans Scotland have provided a £277K grant towards Phase 3 as part of their 'Places for Everyone Programme'.

The programme aims to create safe, attractive, healthier places by increasing the number of trips made by walking, cycling and wheeling for everyday journeys. The scheme is funded by the Scottish Government through Transport Scotland and is administered by Sustrans.

Sustrans Scotland have also previously contributed £274K through their Community Links Programme for the earlier Phase 2 section of path, linking Stevenson Road with Inshes Road.

Sjoerd Tel, Infrastructure Coordinator for Sustrans Scotland said,

"We have been pleased to be able to fund the final phase of the traffic-free route between Inshes Park and Milton of Leys through our Places for Everyone scheme.

The new space for walking, wheeling and cycling will make it easier for people to travel between communities, as well as to access local bus services and amenities. Spending time in green space can be good for people's health and the safer crossing at Inshes Road will enable more people to do that here."

The Ward Members, Councillors Carolyn Caddick, Ken Gowans, Andrew Jarvie and Duncan Macpherson are all delighted to see the final phase of the park is already proving popular with families and people of all ages and abilities, from cyclists, dog walkers, joggers, wheelchair users, parents with prams and pushchairs, to runners

They said:

"It's great to see this final phase opened, each of the phases provides a different user experience. Inshes Park is not only a fantastic amenity for everyone in Inverness South, but it has also become a destination park for those from well

beyond and for people of all ages and abilities. Our appreciation goes to the team at Highland Council who have worked hard to deliver all of the phases and to those in the community who have supported the project. Given the huge amount of housing development in east of Inverness, we are crying out for more sports and leisure facilities in the area in future."

Thomas Prag, Chair of Inshes Community Association said:

"We should thank the councillors and officers who had the foresight to set aside this land as a new park 20 years ago! I took a look recently and the path is already in regular use with commuters, buggy pushers, joggers and dog walkers—it must be the biggest and most varied park in the city with big views and plenty of room to breathe. And there's more to come as the park provides opportunities for many community led projects such as the recently installed picnic tables and the proposed wheel park."



FACILITIES UPGRADE DUE FOR LOCHORE

A major investment in Fife's most popular free visitor attraction, Lochore Meadows Country Park, will see its popular play area get a much-needed upgrade.

Councillors at the Community and Housing Services sub-committee have agreed to invest £500,000 towards replacing the play area and creating a brand-new inclusive destination playpark.

Swings designed to be used by children with disabilities and a sensory tunnel will be amongst a range of new equipment coming to the park, carefully planned to let all children play together in one place. New fencing at key locations near the loch and through the wooded area, as well as CCTV, will help keep visitors safe and a new pathway will connect the play area to the visitor centre, giving easy access to the café and toilet facilities.

The project has drawn on the knowledge and skills of partners in the council, health and third sectors. Local communities shared their views on the proposed designs when they went on show in the visitor centre during the summer. Those from further afield were able to see them online.

Cllr Judy Hamilton, Community and Housing Services sub-committee convenor, said:

"Improved facilities for physical activity and sport are a key priority for the council and, as part of this ongoing commitment, a one-off investment of £750,000 from the 2017- 2027 Capital Plan for Improving Health through Leisure and Sport has

been allocated towards Lochore Meadows Country Park.

"The first phase is to use £500,000 from this funding for the play park experience whilst the balance of £250,000 will be reinvested in smaller capital projects.

"Lochore Meadows has been enjoyed by generations of Fifers and our commitment to improve the facilities there will ensure that it can continue to be enjoyed by generations to come"

Park manager Iain Laing said:

"Lochore Meadows will be a destination park, a place where families can spend the whole day without costing the earth, but with plenty to keep everyone occupied. It's one of the jewels in our crown and we want people to keep coming back. The new playpark will be something special, there won't be anything like it nearby.

"We've worked closely with the NHS and play park designers to carefully plan and develop a much-improved play area that's accessible and inclusive.

"Our play area has always been first class and the current facility has been enjoyed by hundreds of children every day for many years, but this amount of use takes a heavy toll on the equipment.

"The time has come to refresh the area for the benefit of the next generation of children with a greater emphasis on inclusive play allowing all children to play together as one."

A further £250,000 has been earmarked for infrastructure works which will support and complement existing facilities. The council's locality team along with stakeholders are considering different initiatives to improve the visitor experience in the park.

The total cost of the project could be in the region of £800,000. The council is working with partners to secure other funding and has a further a one-off investment of up to £200,000 from the council's tourism and community asset to fall back on.

The project is expected to go out to tender in November, with a contractor being appointed by the end of the year. Work should start in January 2022 and be completed by April, weather permitting.

The investment comes as outdoor venues like Lochore Meadows have enjoyed increased footfall as Fifers enjoyed some fresh air and open space during the pandemic. Lochore Meadows saw visitor numbers reach 900,000 over the last year. The new play area will enhance the extensive facilities already on offer, which also include a new energy efficient visitor centre, built in 2017, with a cafe and toilet facilities, golf, mountain bike trails, water sports, woodland walks, a picnic and barbeque area and plenty of wildlife.

Over the summer, staycationers were welcomed to the park with motorhomes able to rent a pitch for an overnight stay as they toured through Fife.



CRUISE SEMINAR DOCKS IN GREENOCK

A CRUISE seminar bringing together representatives from the travel, tourism and hospitality sectors docked in Greenock to help businesses in Inverclyde and west-central Scotland prepare for visitors next year.

The first of two events took place at the Beacon Arts Centre recently to help organisations get ready for what is shaping up to be a busy cruise call season in 2022.

It was organised by CruiseForth with support from Inverclyde Council and Inverclyde Tourist Group through the 'discover Inverclyde' call to action and brought together representatives from the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors, port operators, cruise lines, public transport providers and tourism bodies to help businesses become 'cruise friendly'.



Provost Martin Brennan, who opened the event, said:

"It was wonderful to see so many different sectors and organisations represented and all with a common goal of showcasing what we have to offer here in Inverclyde and west-central Scotland to a wider audience.

"The number of cruise ship passengers, and indeed crew, docking at Greenock Ocean Terminal has grown substantially in recent years and will increase even further with the new cruise ship visitor centre, which is currently under construction.



"With that comes great opportunities for businesses to capitalise on and encourage our overseas or out of town guests to discover Inverclyde and surrounding areas and ensure they get that famous warm welcome to make them want to revisit time and again."

The event featured keynote speakers, discussions with experts, question and answer sessions, and networking opportunities looking at areas such as excursions, foreign language excursions, marketing and voluntary groups.

For more information about visiting Inverclyde, log on to www.discoverinverclyde.com.

FIFE COAST VISITOR NUMBERS SEE SIGNIFICANT RISE

VISITOR numbers to Fife's coast and countryside are at record levels as people rediscover the benefits and beauty of the great outdoors.

Councillors at a meeting of Fife Council's Community and Housing Services sub-committee noted Fife Coast and Countryside Trust's (FCCT) annual report which highlights that, over the course of the pandemic, visitor numbers have risen by 500% in some areas.

FCCT is responsible for managing Fife's 14 award winning beaches and 117 miles of coastal path. Overall the Trust manages more than 60 coast and countryside sites for the council, including most of Fife's Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), access routes and core paths and the Lomond Hills Regional Park.

Committee Convener Cllr Judy Hamilton congratulated staff and volunteers on the way the Trust has risen to the significant challenges faced by the organisation over the last 18 months and thanked all those involved in keeping Fife's coast and countryside safe and accessible.

She added:

"FCCT team members have gone above and beyond to make sure that, as far as possible, essential facilities were safe and available to visitors throughout the pandemic. The rise in visitor numbers has been incredibly challenging but also brings new tourism opportunities, and the council and the Trust will continue to work together to make sure we take full advantage of these."

FCCT Chief Executive Officer Jeremy Harris commented:

"I am so proud of the team at FCCT for all they have delivered in extraordinary circumstances. The year in question has seen FCCT complete a significant strategic re-alignment, experience exponential growth in visitor pressure at the sites we manage, and deal with numerous severe weather and other challenges. All of this is on the backdrop of a constantly changing world rocked by a global pandemic.

"If there is a silver lining to the pandemic, it is how broadly the outdoors has been recognised for the many benefits it offers; the improvement of mental and physical



Other projects include:

wellbeing, the community spirit fostered through shared access and care, and the deeper spiritual reprieve it provides to so many. Our responsibility now as those who care for it is to ensure that we are unflinchingly committed to ensuring appropriate financial backing while taking a creative and entrepreneurial approach in our activities where appropriate."

Now in partnership with the council, FCCT is investing over £1m to deliver the first phase of the Fife Outdoor Tourism 29

Infrastructure Programme (FOTIP). A rolling programme of works, designed in consultation with communities includes investigating the challenges and opportunities presented by "Freedom camping" by campervans and motorhomes in popular locations across Fife.

- 38 coastal safety markers sponsored by members of the community, to make the Fife Coastal Path a safer place for years to come. The markers help identify coastal locations for emergency services when called out to emergency situations
- New gateway panels for Fife's Pilgrim Way installed at North Queensferry and Dunfermline and the final gateway panel will be installed in the grounds of Holy Trinity Church, St Andrews in the near future
- Working in partnership with SEPA to connect green spaces along the Lynne Burn in Dunfermline, improving the habitat for wildlife, assisting with flood prevention, and improving water quality

More information here: <https://fifecoastandcountryside.co.uk/about-us/corporate-information/>

COUNCIL'S WORKING4U SERVICE RECOGNISED FOR HIGH QUALITY OF ADVICE

West Dunbartonshire's Working4U service has been praised nationally for the high standard of welfare rights and money advice it provides residents.

The service successfully gained accreditation in the Scottish National Standards for the Information and Advice Providers (SNSIAP).

It comes after a rigorous review was undertaken by the Scottish Legal Aid Board on behalf of the Scottish Government, giving consideration to how the service is managed, as well as its planning, competence, accessibility and customer care.

The first phase of the process involved a detailed review of casework against the SNSIAP framework to ensure advisers have the necessary skills and knowledge, and are competent in a range of topics to deliver advice to the public.

The second phase of the process was an extensive audit on a broad range of the service's policy and business management processes.

Following completion of those steps, Working4U was successfully awarded accreditation in all three levels available.

This accreditation will be retained until August 2024 and will be reviewed on a 3 yearly basis.

Councillor Diane Docherty, Convener of Housing and Communities, said:

"This accreditation recognizes the hard work and effort that goes into continually providing a high standard of advice and support through our Working4U service.



"The services it provides are vital to our residents and can really support people through difficult times by giving them the tools to help themselves."

Councillor Ian Dickson, Vice Convener of Housing and Communities, added:



"Well done to the Working4U team on achieving this important accreditation. This process has shown we have a service we can be very proud of and one that helps our residents in a meaningful way, with high quality debt, housing, welfare benefits and money advice."



TWO MORE SCOTS CANDIDATES FOR CITY STATUS

Fife Council has confirmed it will support two submissions for city status as part of the civic honours competition to celebrate the Queen's platinum jubilee in 2022.

Convener of the Policy & Coordination Committee and Council Co-leader David Alexander said:



"Both Dunfermline and St Andrews are keen to see their heritage recognised and their historical status officially restored, and we're happy to support both these bids.

"Our community manager is coordinating the submission for Dunfermline, and the St Andrew's bid is being led by the town's community council, who will contact our officers for any extra support they need."

Co-leader, Cllr David Ross added:

"Work has been underway for some time to prepare submissions that reflect the history, diversity and future aspirations of these communities.



"Our towns are strong contenders. The ancient capital of Scotland for over 400 years, Dunfermline is now one of the fastest growing towns in Europe. And St Andrews, known worldwide as the home of golf and Scotland's first university, historically had city status."

The respective area committees will review and approve the final submission documents at their next meetings so that bids can be entered before the 8 December deadline.

ISLANDS TEST FOR LOCAL ACTION GROUPS

The Outer Hebrides, Orkney and Shetland LEADER Local Action Groups (LAGs) have been awarded funding through the Scottish Governments 'Rural Communities Testing Change' fund to jointly explore the development of Youth Local Action Groups and their potential as a sustainable model that can be replicated in other Scottish LAG areas.

The project aims to test, explore, and identify the most appropriate, inclusive, and transparent methods of developing and operating a Youth Local Action Group that would be available to utilise a range of funding options including government and non-government funding opportunities.

To deliver this Project the LAGs, for which the Outer Hebrides is the primary contact, seek to make a number of temporary appointments including a suitably experienced person to the Consultant Youth Local Action Group Co-ordinator post. They will be responsible for the overall delivery of the Project and the management of graduate placement positions who will be located, ideally, within the participating Island regions.

Matt Bruce, Chairman of the Outer Hebrides LAG, said:

"Having fully spent our LEADER funding, we are lucky to have secured funding to help prioritise the next phases of



investment. This funding is to prioritise projects across the islands which will help young people aged 16 to 40."

Outer Hebrides LEADER Co-ordinator, Kathlene Morrison, said

"This project will provide graduates with first-hand experience whilst also giving the islands young people an opportunity to have a say in project decisions and community-led local development."

The Graduate Placement posts will support the work of the Consultant Co-ordinator and are fantastic opportunities for a recently qualified person(s), or similar, looking to gain relevant and significant working experience. There are three Placement positions available, ideally, one to be located in each participating regions of Orkney, Outer Hebrides and Shetland, however this can be negotiated depending on knowledge of the local area.

Positions are on self-employed, consultancy basis and are fixed term until March 2022 and further information can be obtained either on the Public Contracts Website or by contacting the Outer Hebrides LAG at outerhebridesleader@cne-siar.gov.uk

COUNCIL PROGRESS GAELIC LANGUAGE AND BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE LOCAL PLANS

South Ayrshire Council has made progress on the objectives of the Gaelic Language Plan (GLP) and British Sign Language (BSL) Local Plan.

The Gaelic Language Plan sets out how we intend to raise awareness and help secure, promote and develop the Gaelic language, heritage and culture in the area over the next five years. In the last year alone, over 120 pupils have achieved SQA Hi5 awards* in topics such as Gaelic culture and weaving. Many young people are also beginning to use the language, and can introduce themselves in Gaelic and describe a favourite Scottish topic of conversation - the weather.

In partnership with the Ayrshire Roads Alliance, we have erected more village signs which reflect their Gaelic name; and our new school campuses will also have

bilingual signage incorporated in their development.

The Ayrshire Shared BSL Local Plan sets out what we will do to support BSL users in Ayrshire. As a member of the Ayrshire Equality Partnership, we work with colleagues in East Ayrshire Council, North Ayrshire Council, NHS Ayrshire and Arran and other partners to deliver the plan which covers early years and education; training and work; health, mental health and wellbeing; transport; culture and the arts; and justice and democracy.

The importance of sharing BSL information has been highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring public health information is accessible in a range of formats.

Councillor Chris Cullen, South Ayrshire Council's Portfolio Holder for Economy and Culture said:

"The inclusion of the Gaelic Language Plan and British Sign Language Local Plan within the equalities work of the Council, recognises and takes into account the principles of fairness, equality and respect.

"We are committed to ensuring this important work is mainstreamed within the Council, and I'm pleased with the progress we have made so far. These plans will help us to support BSL users across Ayrshire and ensure we continue to promote the Gaelic language and raise awareness of the important role it plays in our culture."



You can find out more about our Gaelic Language Plan and British Sign Language Local Plan on our website: <https://archive.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/equalities/>



Glen Cinema Entrance

MEMORIAL TO 71 VICTIMS OF GLEN CINEMA DISASTER TO BE UNVEILED

A memorial to the 71 children who lost their lives in one of Scotland's worst ever human tragedies is to be unveiled in Paisley town centre next week.

The Glen Cinema Disaster of 31 December 1929 remains known as Paisley's Black Hogmanay – yet until now the town centre did not have a permanent memorial for the victims and survivors.

Artists Kerry Stewart and Rachel Lowther were commissioned to work with the local community on a suitable memorial as part of the 90th anniversary of the tragedy.

And their now-finished statue – entitled Rattle/ Little Mother – will be sited in the town's Dunn Square, across the road from the site of the former cinema, in Dyer's Wynd.

The tragedy happened when a smoking film canister caused a panic during a packed children's matinee with more than 600 children present.

The metal gates on the main exit doors had been pulled shut, stopping it from opening, leading to a crush where 71 children died, and more than 30 were injured.

The memorial will be unveiled at a small ceremony led by Renfrewshire's Provost Lorraine Cameron next Tuesday (30 November) at 1pm, joined by members of the local community.

To create the memorial, Kerry and Rachel met with community groups including the STAR Project, Paisley Community Trust,

and pupils from Paisley Grammar School, with a working group formed to help drive the project.

An important part of the process was meeting with the two remaining survivors of the tragedy, and their families.

Community activist Tony Lawler – one of the organisers of the annual ceremony to mark the tragedy which takes place every Hogmanay – was a member of the working group.

He said:

"It's important the town centre has a memorial – as it's about more than remembering the 71 who died, it's for the survivors and their families too.

"For a long time, people didn't really talk about the Glen Cinema – the survivors were sent away to convalesce and didn't get the support they would have if it happened now.

"The existing memorial at Hawkhead isn't accessible for everyone, so having one in the town centre is important as it will give people a place to go to reflect.

"Since the 80th anniversary we've held community-led memorial ceremonies at the Cenotaph but it has a different purpose. This memorial will provide a new focus dedicated to the Glen Cinema."

Artists Kerry Stewart and Rachel Lowther said:

"Having met with survivors Emily Brown and Robert Pope and processed, through research and community engagement, what happened on that terrible day, we wanted to produce something that spoke to and of the children.

"We have tried to create a sculpture that is playful yet serious, that hovers between a nostalgic lost object – a portal to the children of Paisley, 1929 – and a sacred or devotional object, carrying the story of the children as their own protectors."

The memorial was funded by the Rotary Club of Paisley and through Future Paisley – the council-led programme of events and activity using the town's unique culture and heritage to transform its future.

Provost Lorraine Cameron said:

"The Glen Cinema remains printed in Paisley's collective memory as perhaps the darkest day in the history of the town.

"It is important the events of that horrific day should never be forgotten and that's why this permanent memorial means so much.

"This has been a real community effort – the artists and the groups they have worked with have done a fantastic job to create a sensitive reminder of the tragedy, and all involved deserve praise for their efforts.

"I would invite any members of the local community to join us on Tuesday to see the memorial unveiled."



CHARITY LAUNCHES FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND ANTI-BULLYING APP FOR PUPILS

A first-of-its-kind app has been developed by Renfrewshire pupils and a hate crime charity to support their mental health and wellbeing.

Launching Friday 19 November, the Keep Safe Kids app is available to all Renfrewshire children and young people and allows them to report bullying and wellbeing concerns directly to their school – the first app in the UK designed to do so.

More than 60 children and young people from primary schools Arkleston, Kirklandneuk and St James' (Paisley) and high schools Castlehead, Paisley Grammar and Renfrew worked with the award-winning I Am Me Scotland team to develop the app.

Pupils can make reports at any time of day or night, including making anonymous



reports, and their school will pick them up during school hours. This gives pupils more control over how and when they report concerns to their teachers, something that pupils told the charity that they wanted.

The app also gives children and young people

access to a wide range of mental health and wellbeing support, information and guidance from local and national wellbeing organisations.

Craig Orr, a sixth-year pupil, said he loved being part of the app's development.

"As a young person, I love that I have this information at my fingertips and all in one place. I think that it is also great that you can hid that you are using the app if you don't want others to see you are on it.

"I think being able to get support and report any issues when we are away from school is a real benefit to lots of young people. I know that some of my friends might not talk to teachers or anyone at home, but the app gives them a brand-new way to reach out.

"It also allows parents and carers to support young people with new resources that they maybe were not aware of, or just to reinforce how they are supporting them."

Charity founder, Carol Burt, says putting children and young people in control of how they report bullying was a priority.

"Putting pupils in control of how they report bullying was essential, as ensures that they can easily access support and advice. There is a fantastic wealth of information already available, however, young people may not always know how to access it. That's why it was important that children and young people were directly involved in the design of the app, including how it looked and what information was available, and as such they have developed



a ground-breaking app that can be made available across Scotland."

Education convener for Renfrewshire Council, Councillor Jim Paterson, praised how the team developed the app with pupils.

"There's no doubt the pandemic has impacted many of our young people with many different challenges and as a council, we are committed to the supporting the social, emotional and mental wellbeing of our children and young people. We have a robust anti-bullying policy in place, which we developed with anti-bullying charity RespectMe, and this app is a further development of our commitment to ensuring we educate and support children and young people to treat each other with respect."

The Keep Safe Kids app can be downloaded from iOS and Android

NEW LEGISLATION FOR ANIMAL BREEDERS

Members of Fife Council Environment and Protective Services subcommittee heard recently about new legislation to license animal breeders.

The new regulations came into effect on 1st September 2021, introducing for the first time the need for cat and rabbit breeders, animal rehoming and animal welfare premises to require licences to operate. Dog breeders who have more than three litters in a year will also need licences down from four litters previously.

The way in which licences are issued will also change. Previously they were issued annually but this has changed to licences being issued based on a risk assessment system. The licence can now be granted for up to a period of three years for premises which go well beyond the expected standards.

Cllr Ross Vetraino Convener Environment and Protective Services Sub Committee said:

"The new legislation is aimed at controlling the way animals are bred for sale. The changes support good breeders who go well above the minimum standards to care for and breed their animals. The new rules will also help manage new breeders who are springing up to meet the spike in demand for dogs and puppies during the Coronavirus pandemic. Encouraged by the huge prices that dogs and particularly puppies are commanding, illegal puppy farming is big business across the UK and is estimated to be worth £13m in Scotland alone. Puppies must not be treated like a commodity and bred in large numbers with little regard for their welfare. This legislation will help regulate and scrutinise the conditions that these animals are being kept in.

I encourage anyone who is interested in getting a dog or a puppy to go to Scottish SPCA Assured Puppy Breeder Scheme to be sure their puppy has had a good start in life.



<https://www.saynotopuppydealers.co.uk/becoming-a-scottish-sPCA-assured-puppy-breeder/> ."

Applying for a dog breeding licence in Fife is straight forward and is a fully online process.

SSPCA Chief Superintendent Mike Flynn said: "We want to encourage the public to buy puppies that are healthy and have grown up with their siblings and parents in a clean and safe environment. We always encourage people to rehome animals but we know that the public demand for puppies grows at a much faster rate than what is legally available. This means people often turn to buying their pet online.

<https://www.fife.gov.uk/kb/docs/articles/business2/licences-and-permits-for-business/animal-licences/dog-breeders-licence>

Unfortunately, this has led to a rapid growth in the illegal puppy trade and dogs are often kept in horrendous conditions with puppies removed from their mothers far too young. They are rarely vaccinated or health screened and often unsocialised, all of which commonly lead to medical and behavioural problems.

A further report will be presented to this Sub-Committee within 12 months to provide an update on the effectiveness and regulatory and resource impacts of the new legislation and to identify how many new premises have been licensed as in scope.

I urge anyone considering getting a puppy to use our Assured Puppy Breeding Scheme and help stop cruelty to dogs and puppies."

MORE THAN 280 LICENSED PREMISES BENEFIT FROM SIX-FIGURE INVESTMENT FROM RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

Licensed premises in Renfrewshire have benefitted from more than £100,000 after their licence fees were covered by Renfrewshire Council.

During the periods of lockdown last year, many on-sales licensed premises were unable to trade. To support their recovery, the Council agreed to cover the cost of their liquor licence fee from discretionary grant funds – with a total of 281 premises benefitting from the investment.

This forms a further part of the support provided by the Council during the pandemic, with Council teams working tirelessly to award more than £53million in business grants and its Business Gateway team continuing to offer tailored assistance and lifeline support for start-up and established businesses.



Councillor Andy Steel, Convener of Renfrewshire Licensing Board, said:

"The Coronavirus pandemic has been hugely challenging for premises due to their inability to trade for an extended period of time so we want to support them where we can.

"Businesses who were not purely off-sales did not get the benefit from their liquor licence last year, so we decided as a Council to reimburse them their annual fee to support their recovery.

"It's important that we do what we can to support our businesses in Renfrewshire and I'm glad that this was able to add to the millions of pounds in grant funding that we have awarded to businesses in Renfrewshire during the pandemic."

The annual liquor licence fee is due every October and applies to all premises with a licence to sell alcohol.



SEARCH FOR GLASGOW'S CARERS CHAMPION

The search is on for a new Carers Champion to represent the interests of Glasgow's unpaid carers.

Glasgow's Health & Social Care Partnership (GCHSCP) is looking for someone with experience as an unpaid carer or of supporting carers, who is passionate about championing their views and interests.

Volunteers are sought with previous or current knowledge of the daily challenges faced by those who care for a loved one and views on what would make life easier. Role-share applicants are welcome to enable more people to apply and expenses will be paid to the successful candidate/s.

The closing date is January 17th, 2022 and applicants must live in Glasgow. The Carers Champion will be appointed following interviews. Applications containing full contact details should be emailed to mhairi.hunter@glasgow.gov.uk

The Carers Champion will represent carers at GCHSCP and council meetings as well as working closely with the Carers Reference Group and local carers organisations. They'll be consulted on policy development and practice and also convene quarterly meetings of the citywide Carers Forums.

Councillor Mhairi Hunter, Glasgow's Convener for Health & Social Care, said:

"The experience of the pandemic has reinforced the vital role played by family carers and how important it is that carers are at the table when decisions are taken that affect them.

"We are looking for a person or people with the best interests of carers at heart who can liaise with local groups and take part in meetings of the IJB and Council. This is an important role with real influence which can help ensure unpaid carers have a strong voice in decision-making.

"Support will be provided to enable the successful candidate/s to take up the role. I'd encourage anyone interested to email me with a personal statement about their relevant experience and why they are keen to apply."

SOUTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL EMPLOYEE AWARDED ROYAL LIFESAVING SOCIETY LONG SERVICE MEDAL

South Ayrshire Council are delighted to announce that a member of their Sport and Leisure team has been awarded the Royal Lifesaving Society UK (RLSS*) Long Service Medal.



Alistair Jardine is one of our longest serving Facility Supervisors. He joined the team at Girvan Swimming Pool as a qualified lifeguard in the early 1980s and became a member of Girvan Lifesaving Club and the RLSS around the same time. Alistair has progressed in his career, over the years - from a lifeguard, to lifeguard trainer, to a national trainer assessor. Alistair now oversees all of our training centres for the Pool Lifeguard Awards.

Alistair recently attended a ceremony at Worcester Cathedral where he received the Service Cross Medal in recognition of over 20 years' service with the RLSS.

Councillor Chris Cullen, South Ayrshire Council's Portfolio Holder for Culture said:

"This is a fantastic achievement and I'd like to congratulate Alistair for receiving this medal.

"The skills that people can learn from working as a lifeguard, such as CPR, first aid, communication skills and teamwork are so valuable, and I'm sure Alistair has made a difference to many young people who have gone through their training. He is a credit to the Council's Sport and Leisure team and should be extremely proud of his achievement."

Alistair said:

"It is a privilege to work with the RLSS and South Ayrshire Council. I can't count how many lifeguards I've put through these awards over the years, and to be recognised for my service is outstanding."

If you'd like to become a lifeguard, or get involved in lifesaving, you can contact our Sport and Leisure team by emailing slgadminteam@south-ayrshire.gov.uk

*The RLSS is the UK's leading provider of water safety and drowning prevention education."

SHAPE THE FUTURE OF GAELIC IN INVERCLYDE



A **CONSULTATION** is being launched for Inverclyde residents to help shape the future of Gaelic language delivery in the area.

The council is inviting people to have their say on a proposed new five-year plan aimed at sustaining and developing the language locally.

The draft Inverclyde Gaelic Language Plan for 2022-27 has been produced taking into account three key themes of: increasing the use; increasing the learning; and promoting a positive image of Gaelic.

Councillor Stephen McCabe, leader of Inverclyde Council and convener of policy and resources, said: "As a council, we recognise Gaelic as an official language of Scotland and afford it equal respect with the English language.

"We already have an excellent Gaelic offering here in Inverclyde, most notably through the excellent Gaelic medium education delivered at Whinhill Primary in Greenock, but we're always striving to improve and do more.

"The new five-year plan sets out our aims and ambitions around that but it's vitally important that residents are involved in that process and have their say and I encourage as many people as possible to take part in the consultation."

Feedback received will be used to shape the final draft plan, which will be presented to the council's policy and resources committee in February 2022, prior to being submitted for final consideration to Bòrd na Gàidhlig, the principal public body in Scotland responsible for promoting Gaelic development.

FORCES CHAMPION IS PRESENTED WITH GOLD AWARD

Cllr Roddy Balfour, The Highland Council's Armed Forces and Veterans' Champion has been invited to a reception held at Edinburgh Castle to receive the Council's Gold award for the Defence Employers' Recognition Scheme.

To win an award Organisations must also advocate the benefits of supporting those within the Armed Forces community by encouraging others to sign the Armed Forces Covenant and engage in the Employer Recognition Scheme.

They must also provide 10 extra paid days leave for Reservists and have supportive HR policies in place for veterans, Reserves, and Cadet Force Adult Volunteers, as well as spouses and partners of those serving in the Armed Forces.

The event's principal host was the Governor of Edinburgh Castle, Major General Alastair Bruce OBE and the Council's Gold Award was presented by Lieutenant General James Swift OBE, The Ministry of Defence's HR Director.



Pictured accompanying Cllr Balfour to receive the Gold award presented by Lieutenant General James Swift OBE, The Ministry of Defence's HR Director, are Jim McCreath and Jane Henderson from the Council's Human Resources team.

Speaking after his trip to Edinburgh to collect the Award, Cllr Balfour said: "It was a huge honour to be presented with this award as it recognises the work that staff in Highland Council have carried out with colleagues in Highland and Moray and in the Military Liaison Group.

"The continued support to Armed Forces personnel past and present and their families is vital to the wellbeing of our communities.

"The gold award represents the highest badge of honour, and everyone involved should feel very proud."

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GREEN LIGHT FOR FREE HGV DRIVER TRAINING

FREE training is being provided to Inverclyde residents to help recruit in-demand HGV drivers thanks to an innovative council scheme.

Inverclyde Council are offering people who are over 18 and have a full car driver's licence to join a 10-week, comprehensive programme to become an HGV (heavy goods vehicle), also known as a large goods vehicle (LGV), driver.

There is a guaranteed job interview at the end when the licence – a Category C – is obtained.

The local authority has teamed up with specialists GTG Training to deliver the programme, which is being launched amid a shortage of HGV drivers across various sectors.

Councillor Michael McCormick, Inverclyde Council's convener of environment and regeneration, said:



"This is a fantastic opportunity for any of our residents who are interested in becoming an HGV driver or who are looking for work to get a wonderful helping hand into the industry.

"There's never been a better time to become an HGV driver with so many jobs available and I'm delighted we're able to support people with their training, for free.

"This is one of a raft of initiatives the council is rolling out as part of our ongoing Inverclyde Works campaign to get residents into work and, in turn, improve their life chances."

The programme is open to Inverclyde residents only and will be delivered part-time over 10 weeks covering all aspects of HGV driver training, including provisional licence application, theory test, practical training and practical test, as well as medicals and drug and alcohol testing.

Applicants must hold a full driver's licence and have no more than three penalty points, be over 18 and be unemployed or looking to change career.

CONTRACTOR APPOINTED TO DELIVER REPAIRS TO NETHERDALE STAND

An important next step has been taken in the refurbishment of Gala Fairydean Rovers' iconic Netherdale Stand with the appointment of a main works contractor.

Concrete Repairs Limited (CRL) has been appointed to carry out a range of improvements to the category A listed building. The work includes concrete repairs to the stand and turnstiles, drainage improvements and aesthetic enhancements around the stand to restore some of its original features.

The works on the Peter Womersley designed building will be funded by SBC within this year's capital budget along with a contribution from the Gala Fairydean Rovers Football Community Trust.

The Netherdale Stand has been closed since winter 2018 due to significant public health and safety concerns associated with spalling concrete. A structural assessment by CRL was initially conducted in 2019 highlighting the required repairs needed to the stand.

Councillor Gordon Edgar, Executive Member for Roads and Infrastructure for Scottish Borders Council, said:

"Anyone who is familiar with the town of Galashiels will recognise the iconic architecture of the Netherdale Stand and its importance to the town.

"I'm extremely excited to see work on repairing the building to its former glory progress with the appointment of an experienced contractor.

"Ensuring its long-term future by carrying out these necessary refurbishments will allow future generations to benefit from it and return the stand to its former glory."

Murray Souter, Regional Director for Scotland at Concrete Repairs Limited, said:

"Concrete Repairs Limited are delighted to be entrusted with the refurbishment of this iconic structure and our team are looking forward to spending the spring and summer months of 2022 in Galashiels working.

"Together with Scottish Borders Council and their design team, we will return the stand to its original glory, looking great, structurally sound, and ready to cope with a full complement of excited Gala Fairydean Rovers fans."

Ross Buchan, Chairman of Gala Fairydean Rovers Community Trust, speaking on behalf of the Gala Fairydean Rovers Family, the Football Club and the Community Trust, said:

"The Stand Repair Project has been a long journey which began for us in October 2017. The Stand is part of our architectural and historic heritage and it's listing places a duty on us, the community, to preserve the structure for future generations.

"We have now reached a significant stage on this journey, where, Scottish Borders Council have appointed of the Principal Contractor to carry out the works. We welcome Concrete Repairs Limited (CRL) onto the project and look forward to working in cooperation and partnership with them also.

"It will be a day to celebrate when the Stand is opened to the Public, Club and Community where we can once again make full use of this very important facility.

"The project has benefitted from working in cooperation and partnership with Scottish Borders Council, Historic Environment Scotland, Fallago Environmental Fund, Live Borders, Gala Fairydean Rovers Football Club, Gala Fairydean Rovers Football Club Community Trust and our very experienced Design Team."

The anticipated completion date of the refurbishment is August 2022.



LONG-TERM PLANS FOR FUTURE OF OBAN BAY TAKE ANOTHER STEP FORWARD



The findings of an independent options appraisal into long-term arrangements for managing Oban Bay will be considered by Argyll and Bute Harbour Board next week.

The report by Caledonian Economics outlines the best options available at this time to address safety concerns in the bay and move to a Statutory Harbour Authority (SHA) within the shortest timeframe.

It identifies that either CMAL or the council progresses a Harbour Order to assume responsibility for Oban Bay and its approaches.

The report however does not rule out the SHA being transferred to a Trust Port in the future. It suggests this is a way reach the key objective: delivering safety improvements as soon as possible while looking forward to the long-term sustainable future of Oban Harbour.

Councillor Rory Colville, Policy Lead for Roads and Infrastructure Services, said

: "I'd like to thank Caledonian Economics for this detailed report. It's given us a lot to think about and a route towards reaching objectives which everyone supports.

"Our main focus has to be continuing to improve safety in Oban Bay and what's best for all the communities Oban Harbour serves - businesses, residents, island communities and visitors.

COUNCIL AGREES SALE OF DUMBARTON'S ARTIZAN CENTRE

West Dunbartonshire Council will buy the Artizan Shopping Centre for **£1.7million** to progress plans to regenerate and transform Dumbarton town centre.

Plans for the pedestrianised shopping precinct formed a key part of the Council's Levelling Up funding bid, which was granted last month.

Officers have been in discussion with the current owners of the centre, which sits in a prominent position in the town's High Street, and have now negotiated the sale.

At a meeting of the Infrastructure, Regeneration and Economic Development committee this week, members approved the temporary use of Council capital budgets to finance the purchase until Levelling Up Funding is received.

It means plans for the future of the Artizan Centre can progress, and officers will begin looking at potential development opportunities for the centre.

Consideration will be given to how the site can be enhanced to introduce a better link to the town centre and encourage future investment on the High Street.

Officers will also begin engagement with existing tenants, as well as providing them with regular updates.

Councillor Iain McLaren, Convener of Infrastructure, Regeneration and Economic Development Committee, said:

"Regenerating Dumbarton Town Centre has always been a Council priority and we are doing all we can to help our high streets to thrive.

"The purchase of the Artizan fits with our ambitions and our desire to make Dumbarton town centre a vibrant, attractive place which is easily accessible by walking, wheeling and cycling."

Diane Docherty, Vice Convener of Infrastructure, Regeneration and Economic Development, added:

"I am delighted that the Council was awarded additional funding for this project, and completing the purchase of the Artizan will allow us to consider how we can redevelop the site in order to boost footfall in the town centre and encourage future investment.

"We are committed to making these enhancements work for our residents and businesses and will work with them closely as this progresses."



CONTRACTOR TO START ON UPGRADE WORKS AT UIG HARBOUR

RJ McLeod (Contractors) Ltd are starting works at Uig Harbour this week where the ferry terminal will be upgraded with new infrastructure.

This forms a key part of the Skye Triangle upgrade where The Highland Council have been working closely with Transport Scotland, Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd (CMAL), CalMac Ferries Ltd and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar to deliver the Uig works with the ongoing upgrade works at Tarbert and Lochmaddy.

The infrastructure improvements at Uig have been presented to the local community through a number of public consultation and community engagement events and will include an extended marshalling area, berthing structure strengthening and widening, linkspan replacement, approach way repair and widening, a relocated new waiting shelter, a new terminal building (to be tendered separately and constructed during the main works), dredging and utility provision.

The community will be informed of further details of the construction works and traffic management arrangements through locally held liaison meetings over the next month and throughout the project, the Highland Council Project website - www.highland.gov.uk/uig-harbour-redevelopment (external link), community Facebook pages and on noticeboards located around the local community.

Chair of the Council's Skye and Raasay Committee, Cllr John Gordon said:

"I am pleased that the Uig Harbour Redevelopment works are now due to start on site. Construction of such a major harbour infrastructure scheme will no doubt create disruption for the community and harbour users so I am pleased Highland Council and RJ McLeod staff will be holding regular and frequent community and harbour user liaison meetings, as well as having progress updates posted on a dedicated Uig Harbour Redevelopment website and on social media. It is important that residents and harbour users are clear what to expect and are able to communicate easily with the contractor. We all want to see disruption well managed for the project."

RJ McLeod, Director, Sandy Osborne, said:

"We are very pleased to be working again with The Highland Council to deliver this important infrastructure project which will accommodate the new vessel on the Skye Triangle. It will follow our soon to be completed pier redevelopment in Tarbert where our works have delivered a boost to the local economy, not only in terms of employment with an established local highland Contractor, but also in terms of the extensive and valuable local supply chain of goods and services. An integral part of the project will be community liaison and protection of the environment

and we will follow and build on the good practices developed in recent projects."

RJ McLeod will be working closely with the Skye and Lochalsh Job Centreplus to target recruitment and training opportunities locally. The site team will be engaging with the neighbouring schools and colleges to deliver educational support and careers inspiration across Skye.

Construction works are expected to be complete in Summer 2023 with an outage period (required to construct the linkspan and outer roundhead, during which there can be no ferry service to/from Uig) programmed from 12 September 2022 to 3 February 2023. CalMac Ferries Ltd are currently assessing options associated with alternative ferry service arrangements during the closure period of Uig to provide capacity for this vital ferry link and will consult with relevant communities in the coming weeks.

TRANSFORMATIVE REGENERATION OF ABERDEEN CITY CENTRE GIVEN THE GO-AHEAD

A once-in-a-generation exciting transformative regeneration of Aberdeen's city centre, former market, and beach front was given the go-ahead at a council committee meeting recently.

The multi-million projects include the pedestrianisation of Union Street Central, the creation of a new city market, and the revitalisation of the beach area, with plans for a pier, new green hub, and a state-of-the-art sports area which could include a new stadium for Aberdeen FC.

The go-ahead for the plans was today hailed as 'exciting' and 'transformative' by the committee convener and Aberdeen City Council's Leader.

Aberdeen City Council City Growth and Resources Committee Convener Councillor Ryan Houghton said:



"Exciting changes are happening in Aberdeen and they are a hugely ambitious statement of intent.

"These multi-million-pound projects will create a more vibrant and people-friendly city centre with a fantastic new feature in the new Aberdeen Market as well as create an open and more accessible beachfront with new facilities.

"The plans will not only act to heal the city from the economic damage inflicted by COVID-19 by breathing new life into our city centre, boosting job creation, and promoting a wealth of opportunities to allow businesses and traders to thrive."

Council Leader and Vice-Convener for City Growth and Resources Committee Councillor Jenny Laing said:

"These projects are truly transformative for the city centre and the beach area and show the depth and breadth of our ambition.

"They will bring real, positive



change for the people of Aberdeen, and we look forward to hearing the updates in the months to come. We have listened to the very businesses we are trying to help who have said we need to do these works to ensure these areas are attractive places to go to and spend time in.

"These plans are only the beginning of a process that we envisage will turn Aberdeen into a city that not only residents of the north-east but indeed the whole of Scotland will be proud of."

The report to city growth and resources committee stressed that although the works are split into projects - city centre including Union Street and the West End, Aberdeen Market, Queen Street, the beach area, and combined city and beach areas - there are interdependencies of many of the work packages which will require them to be sequenced together.

The report to committee said there had been stakeholder engagement to date with regards accessible parking, cycle facilities, bus stops and routing, taxi ranks and servicing arrangements, and traffic management in the city centre and beach areas. The committee agreed engagement should continue with stakeholders across the city, including children and young people and the Disability Equity Partnership.

The report also noted local businesses took part in a stakeholder survey and the project team undertook several interviews with businesses face-to-face. Several

organisations representing businesses in Aberdeen including Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce, Aberdeen City and Shire Hotels Association, Aberdeen-based McGinty's Group, and international commercial property firm CBRE, have written letters of support for the plans.

For the city centre, the committee agreed to fully pedestrianise the central section of Union Street from Market Street to Bridge Street, except for cyclists and time limited servicing.

As part of these works, bus, taxi (and private hire) and cycle priority route is to be implemented on Bridge Street, Market Street, and Guild Street, Schoolhill/Upperkirkgate is required to be pedestrianised between Harriet Street and Flourmill Lane, and right turns prohibited except for buses, taxis (and private hire) and cycles from Union Terrace into Rosemount Viaduct.

The committee approved the detailed design principles for Union Street Central and they will proceed to the next stage of works including detailed design, stakeholder engagement, contractor engagement, and applications for statutory consents.

The committee agreed design works for public realm improvements from Aberdeen Market to Guild Street in association with ongoing design work for Aberdeen Market would be progressed.



It also agreed all Spaces for People measures in the city centre should be removed with the exception of Union Street central, the Belmont Street/Back Wynd area, and Schoolhill/Upperkirkgate, by the end of this month. (November 2021)

The committee also agreed the design development undertaken for the Belmont Street and Back Wynd area and which will now be developed into a full business case and operational model in consultation with local traders.

The committee approved the updated Outline Business Case for the new Aberdeen Market which will now be progressed with design development to include early contractor engagement.

The committee further approved the demolition and site clearance of the former Police Scotland Headquarters, 6-12 Shoe Lane and 5 West North Street, and provide a market analysis, a development appraisal and development brief, for the Queen Street area.

As part of the ongoing design work for the Beach Masterplan, the remaining beach Spaces for People intervention is to be considered for inclusion for any permanent scheme.

Several short-term items for the beach area are to be progressed to an outline business case, including a new amphitheatre, a new events field, new urban park areas, new sports areas, a pump track, landscaped

mounding features, reconfiguration works/beach landscaping, interventions/upgrades along beach, and public realm works at Broadhill.

Medium-term items to be progressed towards the detailed design/planning consent stages include significant upgrades for the Beach Ballroom, a gateway building, a hub Building; a beach pavilion building, new canopy features, a new amphitheatre with canopy structure, a Beach Ballroom plaza, a secret garden, and structures on Broadhill.

Long-term items to be progressed to detailed design/public consultation/planning consent stages include a new AFC stadium; a new leisure facility, a boardwalk, and a new slipway. The committee agreed an outline business case for a joint facility with AFC that it considers a funding model that requires both the Council and

Aberdeen Football Club to fund their share with no cross subsidy.

The city centre, new Aberdeen Market, and Queen Street projects are part of the City Centre Masterplan (CCMP), a regeneration blueprint which is transforming the city centre with 50 projects involving the public and private sectors while conserving its proud heritage.

Since it was approved in 2015, the CCMP has already delivered several achievements to date including completion of Provost Skene's House, the completion of Aberdeen Art Gallery, the Music Hall, Marischal Square, and Broad Street. Over the coming months, the regeneration of Union Terrace Gardens will finish providing a wheelchair-accessible multi-function space in the city centre park including a playpark for the first time.

CLYDEBANK FRAMEWORK DEVELOPED TO RE-ESTABLISH THE HEART OF TOWN CENTRE

A new framework for Clydebank has been created to ensure development generates longstanding improvements in line with community aspirations.

The development framework sets out a 15-year vision for Clydebank, with the aim of re-establishing a distinct town centre heart in the area between the Canal and the railway station.

The proposals outline a number of projects in Phase 1 of the framework, including the creation of a residential-led development on the site of the former Playdrome; a new transportation hub incorporating Clydebank Central train station, the bus station and active travel infrastructure; the redevelopment of Sylvania Way; a new park; new indoor and outdoor spaces for community activities; and enhancing use of the historic Co-Op building to make it the focal point of a new public square and marketplace.

In addition, if appropriate funding was available, consideration would be given to whether a new primary school could be introduced within the wider town centre.

The improvements were shaped by extensive consultation and community charrettes in which the Council asked residents to share their aspirations for Clydebank.

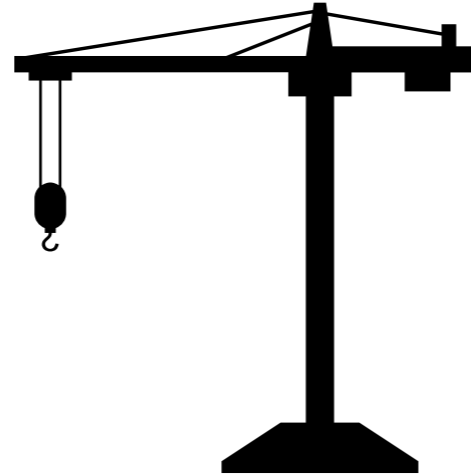
As part of the Framework, recommendations for the parts of the town outside the centre which could be subject to longer-term improvements are included, with details on planned phasing.

Councillor Iain McLaren, Convener of Infrastructure, Regeneration and Economic Development, said:

"The future of Clydebank town centre will be shaped by a number of different factors over the coming years, including changing shopping habits. I am glad that as a Council we are already thinking of what Clydebank needs to be for its communities and visitors going forward, and how we can ensure this is achieved.

"The local business owners and community are already a huge asset to the town and contribute heavily to its vibrancy. Approving this Framework and the vision for the future sends out a strong message of a sustainable future for Clydebank town centre, making it an attractive prospect for new investors for both land and property."

The Framework will now be presented to the Planning committee to seek approval and adoption into the planning guidance.



Thought the Framework does not constitute a funding commitment from the Council, discussions on how the framework proposals could be delivered will continue, and further information will be shared at a future Council meeting.



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CHILDREN'S CREATIVE ARTS FESTIVAL PROMOTES POSITIVE HEALTH

Pupils from Gigha Primary School are preparing to host a creative arts festival for children on the island next year as part of innovative approach to promote positive health and wellbeing through creative activities.

The project has been awarded £13,500 following a competitive application process to Education Scotland's Creative Wellbeing Fund and will see Gigha pupils joining forces with children from Clachan, Achahoish, Rhunahaorine and Glenbarr primaries, to work in partnership with specialist artists and performers in the run up to the main event.

The project, which will take place in **May 2022** will be led entirely by pupils and will include a variety of creative arts, including performance poetry and stand-up comedy.

Argyll and Bute Council's Policy Lead for Education, Councillor Yvonne McNeilly, said:

"This sounds like a wonderful, fun project that will challenge and empower pupils, and will give them a great sense of achievement.

"Creative arts are renowned for boosting confidence, and helping the social, cognitive and emotional development of young people. They stimulate the imagination and provide a centre stage for pupils to express themselves.

"We are committed to ensuring the positive health and wellbeing of our children and young people in Argyll and Bute and creative arts are a tremendous way of doing this. I can't wait to see what plans the children have and seeing them come to fruition in May."



STEVENSON FAMILY BIBLE DONATED TO WRITER'S MUSEUM COLLECTION

Museums & Galleries Edinburgh (MGE) is delighted to reveal important new donations to the Writers' Museum collections, relating to the family and life of author Robert Louis Stevenson.

Among the donations are the Stevenson family Bible, bible box and a family genealogical record written by Stevenson's grandfather, Robert, the first of the famed lighthouse engineers. The family record lists personal details of births, deaths and marriages in the family over many generations, while the bible has fascinating marks and notations from years of heavy use.

Councillor Donald Wilson, Culture and Communities Convener said:

These are fantastic additions to our collections, offering our residents and visitors such lovely and important further insights into such an iconic family. I have no doubt this generous contribution will generate much interest and the city's lasting gratitude.

Curator Anna MacQuarrie said:

Our Stevenson collections speak to the life and experiences of this great writer, both as a young boy and his later days spent in the South Seas. These new donations are a wonderful addition to the collection, allowing us to imagine what kind of influence these objects might have had on his young life and later inspirations. We are sincerely grateful to the donor for their generosity, enabling the wider public to better understand Stevenson and his family background.

The donor said:

I was touched by the gracious, enthusiastic attitude of the curators to whom I recently passed on family items, pertaining to Louis/RLS and the lighthouse engineer side of our family. Gifting was made easier by the knowledge and assurance that a wider public would benefit from being able to see other pieces in the familial, Stevenson jigsaw puzzle. It was a relief to realise that the items would be honoured and cared for - and subsequently appreciated by many other interested parties.

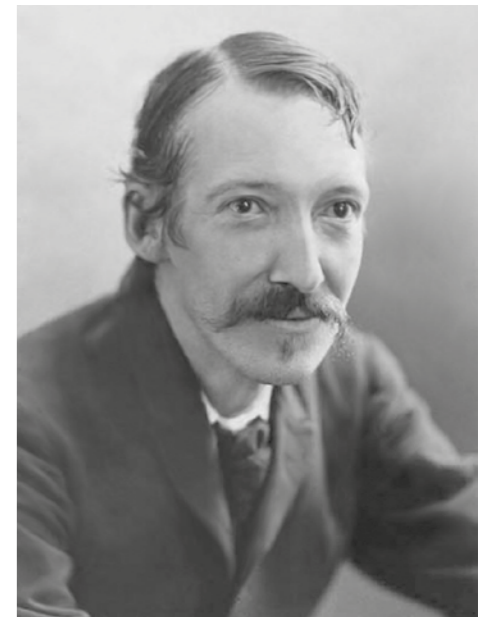


Jeremy Hodges, Robert Louis Stevenson biographer and co-ordinator of the annual RLS Day celebrations, said:

Despite the international fame of RLS as an author, he always felt slightly guilty about not following in his father's footsteps as a builder of lighthouses - a proper job of more importance than making stories.

He remedied this in part by writing Records of a Family of Engineers, drawing on the kind of genealogical material that forms part of this bequest. The family Bible would have been treasured by the devout Robert Stevenson and his descendants, including Robert Louis - despite his announcement in his early twenties that he no longer believed in the Christian religion, a confession that led to traumatic rows with his God-fearing parents.

To further celebrate Robert Louis Stevenson day online MGE has an online talk on 'Island Characters' by Jeremy Hodges from the Robert Louis Stevenson Club, and a podcast (link to go live on 13 Nov) discussing the renowned Stevenson photo albums and new donations. These objects, and many more, can be viewed on the Capital Collections website.



SAOGHAL NA CLOINNE BIGE

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar have welcomed the launch of Saoghal na Cloinne Bige. The twenty-six songs, which are targeted at the early years stage, were commissioned by the Comhairle and produced by Fèisean nan Gàidheal. Many of the songs have been specially written for the resource and take you through many of the daily tasks in the life of a child; from waking in the morning, a trip to the shops, a visit to granny's and, eventual, bed time – it's all covered in **Saoghal na Cloinne Bige!**

Evelyn Coull MacLeod, Gaelic Education Manager at Comhairle nan Eilean Siar said:

"We are absolutely delighted with this new resource and certain that they will be received well by a local, national and global audience. The songs are beautifully crafted and as we know the role of song in creating a language rich environment in the home and educational settings is hugely important. It's never too early to start singing with your children and these songs will be great for both fluent and learners of the language".

Eilidh Mackenzie, Fèisgoil Manager at Fèisean nan Gàidheal added:

"Working on such a lovely project with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar has been a real joy. The five young Gaelic singers we brought on board all did a fantastic job, ably accompanied by musician engineers Pablo Lafuente and Barry Reid. From the outset we were keen to ensure that the resource was a mix of traditional, but less well-known, Gaelic songs as well as new material. This included setting some poems written by Mairead Hulse to new melodies, some songs by singer and presenter Linda Macleod, as well as Fèisgoil staff writing completely new songs, to cover a full day in the life of a baby/toddler."



The songs are available to download for through Apple, Amazon, Spotify and also available on You Tube. You can access them via <https://www.foghlamgaidhlig.com/gaidhlig-saoghal-na-cloinne-bige/>. In the coming months animations will be produced to accompany each song. The songs, along with many other resources, will also feature on an app which is currently under development by the Comhairle. If you would like a CD copy of the songs please contact evelyn@gnes.net.



INVERNESS CITY ARTS PROJECT COMPLETED

A final annual report of the Inverness City Arts Working Group (ICArts) was presented to Highland Council's City of Inverness Area Committee recently – marking the completion of the ICArts Programme and its final project – the Gathering Place (My Ness).

Councillors noted the completion of the construction of the Gathering Place art installation with additional adjustments and arrangements made for improved disabled access.

The total funding for the entire River Arts Programme is £0.790m. This includes

£0.027m of additional funding from Creative Scotland, to enhance disabled access at the Gathering Place.

Councillors noted that the ICArts Working Group has discharged all its functions and that all other approved and fully funded projects under the Inverness City Arts Project Programme, have been concluded in terms of governance set by the City of Inverness Area Committee.

Members agreed to dissolve the Inverness City Arts Working Group with immediate effect.

Provost of Inverness and Area Cllr Helen Carmichael said:

"I would like to thank the many people who took part in the Inverness City Arts project over the years since it was launched in 2013, including the artists, public, councillors, Highland Council and High Life Highland staff and contractors for their support. I would also like to thank the funding partners who invested in the provision of public art in our city and in particular for the support received from Creative Scotland without which the final elements of the project could not have been delivered."

The funding partners are: Creative Scotland; City of Inverness Common Good Fund; Highland Council Cities Gateway and Development & Infrastructure; and Highlands and Islands Enterprise.



CLYDE CLIMATE FOREST CONTINUES TO GROW



A new woodland spanning 19.5 acres will be created in Renfrewshire with the planting of more than 1,800 trees in Gleniffer Braes Country Park.

It forms part of the Clyde Climate Forest, a Glasgow & Clyde Valley (GCV) Green Network Initiative, which aims to deliver climate and ecological benefits to the Glasgow City Region by planting more than 18 million trees over the next decade, equating to ten trees for every man, woman and child in the region.

Renfrewshire Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and set out the aim of the area becoming carbon-neutral by 2030 and it is estimated the woodland will remove more than 55 tonnes of CO2 from the atmosphere every year of its lifespan.

Councillor Cathy McEwan, Convener of Renfrewshire Council's Infrastructure, Land and Environment Policy Board, was on site with Paisley Natural History Society to help plant the first of the new trees and is keen to see more trees planted throughout the region moving forward.

Councillor McEwan said:

"We recognise the importance we need to place on climate change which is why every decision taken by this Council has climate change as a consideration.

"Projects like the Clyde Climate Forest will remove a substantial amount of CO2 from the atmosphere and we're actively looking at more locations throughout Renfrewshire where we can add trees.

"With COP26 taking place, now is the time to push forward with our climate ambitions and do all we can to reach our ambitious aim of Renfrewshire being

carbon-neutral by 2030."

The Clyde Climate Forest, which is part of the GCV Green Network, will breathe new life across the eight local authorities in the region as around 18 million trees will be planted over the next decade, increasing woodland cover from 17% to 20%.

Max Hislop, Director of the Clyde Climate Forest said:

"It's really great to see Renfrewshire Council taking positive steps to address the climate and ecological crises by planting so many trees.

"This new woodland will become an important addition to the Clyde Climate Forest. It is also a great example of the kind of collaboration between organisations that will be necessary to bring about a step change in delivery against our ambitious targets for woodland creation."

The planting of the trees in Renfrewshire is also taking place as part of the Brownside Braes Lesser Whitethroat Project, part of the Renfrewshire Biodiversity Action Plan 2018-2022.

The project aims to provide the correct environment for the rare breeding bird to nest successfully and, in addition to the trees, will see hawthorn, gorse, dog rose and bramble planted.

It is a long-term collaboration between the Council and the Paisley Natural History Society, with funding support from external sources including NatureScot, Scotland's Nature Agency, and the current phase of work is supported by Trees for Cities - a UK charity working at a national and international scale to improve lives by planting trees.

GREEN CANOPY TREE PLANTING CEREMONY COMMEMORATES THE QUEEN'S PLATINUM JUBILEE



Pupils join the Lord Lieutenant of Aberdeenshire Mr Alexander Manson (r) and Elizabeth Shepherd (l), Head Teacher of Midmar Primary School



The Lord Lieutenant of Aberdeenshire Mr Alexander Manson with a selection of pupils from Midmar School

Fruit trees were planted at Midmar Primary School to mark Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

The Lord Lieutenant of Aberdeenshire Alexander Manson was a special guest who oversaw the planting of the trees at the Green Canopy ceremony, a series of events marking The Queen's latest milestone of her reign which began in 1952.

The royal visitor was joined by head teacher Elizabeth Shepherd, teachers, and pupils as the trees were planted on the school grounds.

Mrs Shepherd said: "It was a delight to welcome Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant for Aberdeenshire Mr Alexander Manson. The children were really excited about this special event. The trees will not only act as a symbol of Her Majesty The Queen's enduring reign but also be useful for outdoor learning too."

There are several Green Canopy tree planting ceremonies taking place across schools in Aberdeenshire to mark The Queen's Platinum Jubilee. The event will be officially commemorated on Saturday, June 4, 2022.



The Lord Lieutenant of Aberdeenshire Mr Alexander Manson planted fruit trees when he visited Midmar School as part of the Green Canopy ceremonies

COUNCILLORS UPDATED ON WASTE INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

An update on waste management projects was presented to Members of The Highland Council's Communities and Place Committee recently.

The Council is undertaking a number of projects aimed at meeting its responsibilities for disposal of waste collected from around 110,000 households and 5,800 businesses. The Council must find a long-term solution for 80,000 tonnes of residual biodegradable waste each year that cannot be recycled nor landfilled in Scotland after 2025.

An operating licence has been applied for a Waste Transfer Station at Aviemore where works are nearly complete.

Work is also under way for a Waste Transfer Station at Inverness Longman on a site access road, gullies, and drainage. The waste transfer station is scheduled for practical completion in early 2023.

Members were updated on the situation regarding the development of a Waste Transfer Station in **Fort William**. A new lease is required for the existing Household Waste Recycling Centre at Ben Nevis Industrial Estate and the Council is liaising with the landowner. Land surveys have been carried out on the preferred site for the new Transfer Station adjacent to the Recycling Centre and the Council awaits detailed results to inform whether site remediation works will be required and what the associated costs would be.

Regarding the long-term management of waste in Highland, the Committee was informed that the Council's Member Waste Strategy Working Group had met to discuss the proposed phasing of work

to develop a detailed project plan for the Green Energy Hub proposed for the Longman site. This will provide members with the detail on costs, benefits, risks and other issues to inform future decision on whether and how to proceed.

Councillors noted that all 7 applications to the Scottish Government's Recycling Improvement Fund totalling £7.616m have met the criteria for second stage applications.

EASTER ROSS AREA CHAIR ENCOURAGES LOCAL GROUPS TO APPLY FOR SSE'S SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND

Community Groups in Easter Ross are being encouraged to apply for SSE's (Scottish and Southern Energy) new Sustainable Development Fund.

This fund supports strategic projects in regions where SSE is operating and it allows the benefits of its renewable energy developments to be accessible to a wider area. This round of the fund is worth £1 million and has a focus on supporting the net zero ambitions of the region. There is a minimum application value of £30,000 and awards will be made in the Spring of 2022. Groups can apply using the application form before 19 January 2022.

SSE say they are happy to discuss applications with eligible groups and Members of today's Easter Ross Area Committee have also said they are available to discuss the funding opportunities.

At today's Easter Ross Area Committee, Chair Cllr Fiona Robertson, said:

"I am delighted to say that SSE's Sustainable Development Fund will be available to eligible community groups in Easter Ross.

"There are a number of groups which could benefit from this funding and I would encourage them to get in touch with either their local member or SSE directly to discuss an application."

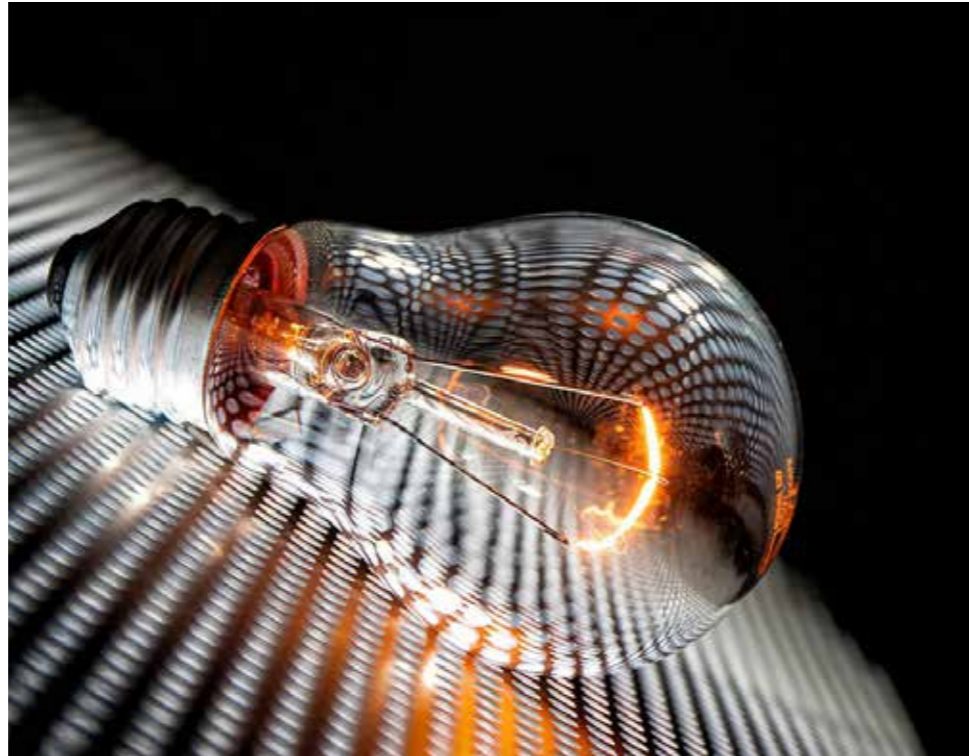
She added:

"The funding provides a great opportunity for local groups to further their net zero ambitions and do their bit to tackle the ecological and climate emergency whilst also improving assets and resources in the area."

Any successful application must fit in to at least one of these areas:

Creating opportunities – Create or enhance opportunities for education and employment through activities that develop skills and improve an individual's chance of entering the workplace.

Empowering communities – Empower communities to become more resilient and protect vulnerable residents



through measures which demonstrate long-term social, environmental or economic improvements.

Sustainable places – Stimulate meaningful regeneration to improve or enhance local infrastructure, landscape, biodiversity or heritage and make a lasting difference to the places we live, work and visit.

The SSE contact for Highland is Marianne Townsley, Community Investment Manager, Tel: 01738 341839, email:marianne.townsley@sse.com

COUNCIL APPROVES GROUNDBREAKING COMMUNITY CAMPUS MODEL FOR THE CITY'S FUTURE SCHOOLS

Aberdeen City Council has approved a bold new community-based education model for the city's future schools.

Committee Convener, Cllr M Tauqeer Malik said

"This is an exciting, transformational strategic approach to education in Aberdeen which puts the community at the heart of learning and helps us achieve our vision of the city as a place where everyone can prosper and based on the principles of self-sufficient sustainable communities.

"The Community Campus model adopts a collaborative and place-based approach to our public services, incorporating the shared aims of Aberdeen City Council and our key partners such as NHS Grampian and Police Scotland in meeting local needs employing net zero carbon and digital transformation strategies".

The place-based approach has been adopted by Aberdeen City Council in collaboration with strategic partner Hub North Scotland and builds on the views expressed in consultations with stakeholders such as pupils and teaching staff as to learning settings and preferences.



The Education Operational Delivery agreed the plans that will see Community Campus model principles underpin future education and service provision within the city and reflected in the School Estate Plan scheduled for presentation to the committee in June 2022.

The model entails a 'one campus' approach with spaces in future schools designed to support the entire learning journey for a child from 3-18 years old, breaking down traditional age and stage ownership of spaces and allowing staff skills and specialisms to be shared across the campus.

The report presented to the committee outlined how the model could be applied to education provision in the growing Countesswells catchment area to cater for the increasing school-age population.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

More than £476,000 worth of improvement works to the city's parks could be approved by city councillors next week. The proposals include the supply and installation of a new play area at Gillies Park which caters for a wide range of ages and abilities. This will include play equipment such as a basket swing and an agility trail, a wheelchair-accessible footpath from the main footpath, grass mounds and shrub & sensory wildflower plantings.

A variety of enhancements have also been identified following the recent internal and external Green Flag assessments carried out at parks and greenspaces with Clatto Country Park, Hilltown Park, Finlathen Park, Templeton Woods, Magdalen Green, Downfield Park, and others benefiting. The proposed works would see infrastructure Improvements delivered to the spaces, such as path works, fencing works, signage and new plantings.

If the plans are approved, Camperdown Park would also benefit from a number of hard and soft landscaping improvements, including new paving and gazebos, railings, stone benches and planting areas.

Neighbourhood Services Convener Councillor Anne Rendall said:

"It's important that we continue to invest in our outdoor areas to make them attractive places for local residents to visit and enjoy. Our commitment to spend to maintain and improve the current offering in the city is paramount and allows many to get outside and enjoy their Neighbourhoods.

"There was a significant increase in the use of our parks and green spaces during the different lockdown periods due to COVID-19 and people visited spaces they had never been to either for some time or ever. These spaces are so important for both our physical and mental health so I am delighted that we are investing in maintaining and enhancing them.

email: paul.turner@dundee.gov.uk

"I'm also delighted to see we are putting a range of inclusive play features into Gillies Park and we hope to see more of these introduced into our parks going forward."

It is also proposed that over £122,000 worth of general improvement works be carried out to Camperdown Park North-East, North and Camperdown House car parks, as well as works to the existing tennis courts.

An additional £27,000 is proposed to be spent on traffic calming measures at both Balgay Park and Clatto Country Park.

The Neighbourhood Services Committee will consider the proposals at its next meeting on Monday 22nd November.

Full details of the environmental improvement proposals can be found on the Dundee City Council website: <https://www.dundee.gov.uk/>

NIGG MULTI-MILLION INVESTMENT WELCOMED "NOW" BY HIGHLAND COUNCIL LEADER



Leader of The Highland Council, Margaret Davidson has welcomed the announcement today by the First Minister of Scotland, Nicola Sturgeon in relation to the much anticipated Nigg Offshore Wind ("NOW") tower rolling factory.

The £110m project proposed by Nigg Offshore Wind Asset Company Limited (NOW) - a joint venture by Global Energy Group and leading European tower manufacturer, Haizea Wind

Group, Bilbao - was announced Friday 3 December.

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said:

"We need bold, collective action to tackle the global climate emergency, and the growth of our renewables sector over the next ten years will be truly transformative, helping to deliver a just transition to net zero and a greener, fairer future for us all.

"This significant investment in Scotland's energy sector is testament to the skills, expertise and innovation within our industry. We are delighted to financially support this cutting edge offshore wind towers facility, through Highlands & Islands Enterprise, as it reaches this significant milestone, that will deliver high value, green jobs and bring multiple benefits to communities across the Highlands and beyond while playing a pivotal role in delivering offshore renewables growth in Scotland and further afield."

Councillor Davidson joined the First Minister for the announcement at the Port of Nigg today.

She said:

"I am delighted to hear first-hand today about the plans and timeline for a state of the art tower manufacturing facility which will propel Scotland and in particular, the Highlands, to the forefront of the green industrial revolution. This is a first for Scotland, and I am very proud that Highland has been chosen as the prime location which clearly supports Opportunity Cromarty Firth's ambition for the Cromarty Firth to become an 'Green Port' - Scottish Freeport."

"This new facility will bring much needed jobs and prosperity to the Highlands and will enhance our economic viability for years to come. This initiative also fits with our Council's ambitions for Highland to be a Green Hub for Scotland as set out in our Future Highland Health and Prosperity Plan which was approved by Council in September."

The Council's recommended approach to the development of a net zero strategy and action plan, including clear targets and performance indicators, is set out in a report to Council for members' consideration on 9 December.

SOUTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL GRANTED £90K TO IMPROVE RECYCLING FACILITIES

South Ayrshire Council is one of the first local authorities in Scotland to be awarded funding from the Recycling Improvement Fund.

The Council has been granted £90k from Zero Waste Scotland, as part of the Scottish Government scheme.

The funding will make a real difference to recycling options on the go in the area. It will be used to introduce 'recycling-on-the go bins' to our parks and green spaces, making it easier for residents and visitors to recycle their waste when they're out and about.

As part of our commitment to make South Ayrshire a better place to live, in recent years we've made a number of significant changes to improve the recycling service we offer. The rollout of the new bins will begin in spring next year in the high footfall areas such as Rozelle and Belleisle Estates; The Low Green and Pavillion Play Area at Ayr beach; and Fullarton Woods in Troon.

Councillor Ian Cochrane, South Ayrshire Council's Portfolio for Environment said:

"I'm delighted that we've been awarded this funding. We want to make sure that residents have more opportunities than ever to recycle their waste, regardless if they are at home or out enjoying the beautiful scenery South Ayrshire has to offer.

"We're committed to making South Ayrshire a better place to live, and this funding is another step towards achieving our recycling target of 70% by 2025."

Iain Gulland, Chief Executive, Zero Waste Scotland said:

"Congratulations to South Ayrshire Council on being among the first councils to be awarded funding from the new Recycling Improvement Fund.

"The bid, which will see recycling-on-the go bins introduced to help the public recycle when they're out and about, was really strong, and is a great example of

the innovative thinking we need to boost recycling and move towards a more circular economy in Scotland."



LIFELINE FERRY SERVICES MUST BE MAINTAINED

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar has called on Scottish Ministers to step in to ensure the lifeline ferry services to North Uist and Harris are maintained at the level committed to in the Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Services Contract that Ministers awarded to CalMac Ferries Limited.

This follows a proposal being submitted to local stakeholders that the island ferry MV Hebrides capacity is reduced by 20% by removing the capacity available on the ferry's mechanical Mezzanine deck. This followed the widespread rejection of a proposal to amend the timetable to North Uist and Harris reducing frequency and moving sailings to unsocial hours.

Due to COVID concerns CalMac previously removed the Mezzanine deck earlier in 2021 which caused major capacity constraints on the routes across the Little Minch even in times when travel demand was suppressed by lockdown restrictions.

The proposal from CalMac will mean the communities who have already suffered from lost capacity due to the failure to complete the new vessel being built at Ferguson Port Glasgow that should have entered service on the routes in 2018 now face the hammer blow of a reduction in the capacity that was already recognised as insufficient a decade ago. The routes operated by MV Hebrides are already the third most capacity constrained on CalMac's network and the certain consequence of this proposal will be to mean the routes become impossible to book at busy periods of the year.

It is understood that the proposal has arisen as the demand for travel on the route has seen an increase in the frequency of Mezzanine deck deployment with CalMac identifying a need for additional crew to support this activity and maintain the timetable and there is an unwillingness to meet this cost.

Cllr Uisdean Robertson, Chair of Transportation said:

"This proposal to reduce capacity on MV Hebrides is completely unacceptable and I am asking the Transport Minister to step in and ensure that this proposal is overturned. If this means additional crew is needed then these crew members must be found. Whether this cost falls on CalMac or Transport Scotland is immaterial to islanders who should rightly expect a lifeline ferry service contract to be maintained on the terms it was awarded. The only option that is acceptable is to maintain the timetable and vessel capacity that was committed to under the contract."



Cllr Roddie Mackay, Leader of the Comhairle added:

"A failure to act on the issue of a ferry fleet whose capacity is insufficient and timetables are too infrequent is preventing islands from developing. This proposal is worse as it shows a Government contract deliberately altered to save money with no consideration of the damage it will do. This Government proudly implemented an Islands Act in 2018 that promised to support islands and meet their unique needs. This proposal is completely at odds with the Act and Ministers must complete a full Islands Impact Assessment so they understand the harm that will be caused and their legal obligation under the Act to step in to prevent this."





NEW CONTRACTOR BEGINS WORKS ON BANFF HARBOUR REPAIRS

Works have resumed on vital repairs to Banff Harbour following the appointment of a new contractor.

Philip McKay, Head of Roads and Infrastructure, with responsibility for Harbours, said:

Following the termination of the previous contract, Aberdeenshire Council have announced that Shearwater Marine Services Ltd are now on site to progress the project.

The specialist company will initially be working on the East Pier to ensure its structural stability before winter.

Work to complete the remainder of the repairs to the Railway Jetty and reinstate the masonry cladding to both the pier and jetty will then proceed.

"Shearwater have been undertaking dive surveys and inspections and are now mobilised on site, taking delivery of the materials and supplies required for this project much of which has been sourced locally.

"The internal construction of the pier will be a combination of in-situ concrete and precast concrete blocks to allow for a rapid re-construction of the inner wall of the pier. The placing of infill material between inner and outer walls will

complete the stabilisation of the pier by the end of November.

"This approach will see the wall built up in layers with each additional layer further strengthening the pier. On completion of the infilling of the pier a temporary concrete deck surface will be laid to protect the infill from washout in the event of over-topping."

"Moving forward, we are continuing our discussions with both Shearwater and other suppliers to look at the rebuilding of the stonework of both the East Pier and Railway Jetty and we will, of course, provide harbours users with updates in due course."

CONON BRIDGE FLOOD DEFENCES IMPROVEMENT WORKSHOP START

The Highland Council have awarded the Conon Bridge Flood Defences Improvement contract to Strath Civil Engineering Ltd who will soon be on site to start work.

The project is required to upgrade the existing flood defence bund to the south of River Conon between the A862 road bridge and the Network Rail bridge. The current flood protection for a 1 in 100 year flood event, is to be increased up to SEPA's latest requirement of defence against a 1 in 200 year flood event.

Ground investigation works carried out over the last two years have identified the requirement of a cut off trench to reduce seepage from under the bund. The Works shall include heightening the existing bund from its current level of approximately 6.2m to a height of 7.1m with a seepage cut off ditch.

In the interest of public safety, the core path RC09.01, also known as the Ladies Walk, which runs beside the River Conon between the former Drouthy Duck public house and Conon Mains Farm will be closed off between the Drouthy Duck and the Network Rail bridge for the duration of the works.

A council spokesman said:

"We apologise for any inconvenience caused and will open the path as soon as the flood protection improvements works are completed."

Signs will be erected at both ends of the Ladies Walk informing the public of these closures along with the latest updates for this project.



NEW TOWN CENTRE LINK TO INNOVATION DISTRICT

A transport project improving links between Paisley town centre and Scotland's manufacturing innovation district AMIDS has secured almost £40million in Levelling Up Funding.

Renfrewshire Council's AMIDS South project, which includes a 1.7km 'gateway route' along the White Cart river, has received £38.7million from the UK Government Levelling Up Fund.

That is the third highest award of all the UK-wide projects being supported in the first round of the fund confirmed by the Chancellor during his UK budget announcement on Wednesday (27 October).

This will provide around 90% of the funding for the project to develop a network of road, cycling and walking links from the town centre train station and bus interchange to Glasgow Airport, AMIDS and onto Inchinnan.

It will also strengthen the links to the significant investment well underway in Paisley town centre cultural venues, which includes a £42million transformation of Paisley Museum and the £22million refurbishment of the town's A-listed Town Hall, as well as a new learning and cultural hub on the High Street.

Economic projections found the project could bolster the local economy by an additional £136million and cut carbon emissions by 21,700 tonnes while help existing and new companies to grow, creating new job opportunities for years to come.

The gateway route from Paisley town centre along Abercorn Street, Harbour Road and Inchinnan Road to Glasgow Airport and the manufacturing district AMIDS includes new cycle routes and landscaping as well as a bridge crossing at Paisley Harbour for pedestrians, cyclists and road traffic.

Also included in the brief is an east-west road link from Renfrew Road joining onto the new route, increasing connectivity to the manufacturing district and improving accessibility to the proposed new Paisley Grammar community campus, West College Scotland and Gallowhill area as well as the new Scottish Leather Group factory and many other businesses in the Abercorn area.

And traffic calming works on Love Street will improve the environment for local residents and pedestrians, the area

benefiting from a reduction in traffic flow due to the new routes.

Funding will also enable improved walking and cycling on Greenock Road between Inchinnan Business Park and AMIDS.

Renfrewshire Council Leader Iain Nicolson said:

"Development of Scotland's manufacturing innovation district AMIDS is a huge coup for Renfrewshire, attracting many new jobs and opportunities and it's vital that we ensure the infrastructure is in place which enables residents in the surrounding areas to be able to access these jobs.

"This project does just that, better connecting communities to education and employment, enabling economic growth, helping to cut congestion and supporting our commitment for Renfrewshire to be carbon neutral by 2030.

"Clearly, our bid to the Levelling Up fund put forward a compelling case, backed by business, enterprise and education leaders from across Renfrewshire and I'm pleased that we can now progress it and ensure it delivers for our communities."

Levelling Up fund bids required the support of the constituency MP for the area, and Gavin Newlands MP, said: "This additional funding for the AMIDS South project is welcome and having supported this bid I am now keen to see this project delivered as soon as possible.

"The vision shown by Renfrewshire Council and Scottish Enterprise in developing AMIDS is reaping real rewards for Paisley and Renfrewshire and boosting our local economy through the kind of high-skill,

high-value jobs that will drive innovation for the future.

"Combined with the transformational increase in active travel spend recently announced by the Scottish Government, it's clear Renfrewshire is playing its part in the transition to a net zero society – a world-leading objective in the run up to COP 26 in Glasgow."

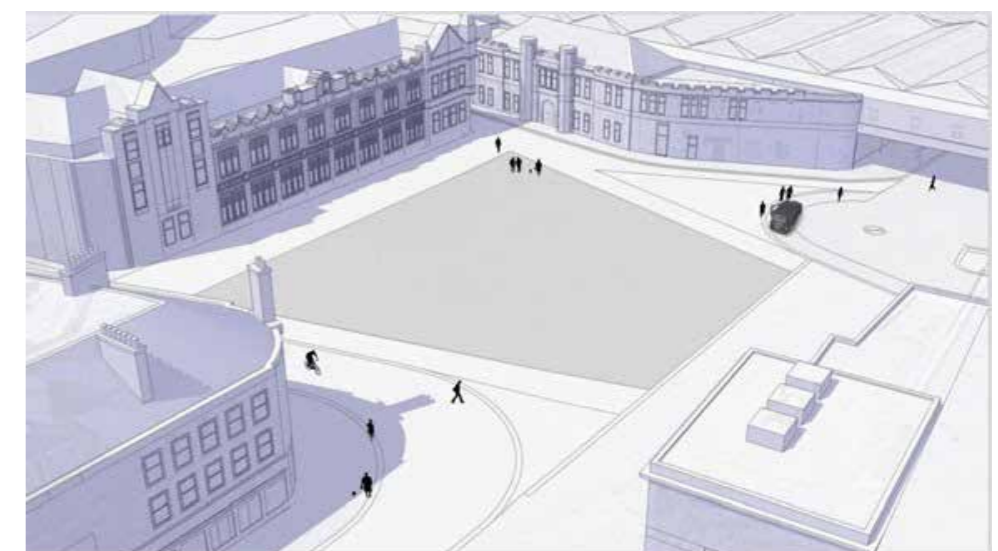
The Council's bid included letters of support from local businesses, with the infrastructure complementing other works being progressed including an active travel route between Paisley and Renfrew and the Glasgow City Region City Deal funded project building an opening road bridge over the River Clyde at Renfrew.

Bob Grant, Chief Executive of Renfrewshire Chamber of Commerce, said:

"Renfrewshire is open for business and is bouncing back from the huge impact of the Coronavirus pandemic. Investment in infrastructure at this scale highlights how something special is happening here and we look forward to the inclusive growth and boost it brings to our local economy."

Liz Connolly, Principal and Chief Executive of West College Scotland, said:

"We are working on plans to develop our Paisley campus and these new transport links will bring great benefits to our students and to the local community accessing our facilities. Having the advanced manufacturing district nearby offers fantastic opportunities for our young people to develop their skills here and it's pleasing that everyone will have greater choice to walk and cycle to their studies."



COMHAIRLE SECURES BRIDGE MONEY

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar welcomes the announcement from Scottish Government on the allocation of capital grants from its Local Bridge Maintenance Fund.

The £32m fund received 131 applications from 25 local authorities, oversubscribing the scheme by £75.7m. The Comhairle was however successful with 6 applications amounting to £6.66m, the highest allocation to any individual authority.

The allocation to Comhairle nan Eilean Siar includes £2.62m towards the £3.1m cost of replacing the bridge to Bernera, which will be fully open to traffic early December 2021. The other successful applications will enable essential works to be undertaken at, Calbost, Maaruig, Scalpay Bridge, North Ford and Loch an Obe. These works will either replace or increase the life of existing bridge structures.

Comhairle Leader Roddie Mackay said:

"Some time ago we were assured of Scottish Government support for the works on Bernera Bridge after we made the case for additional funding being required. So it is pleasing to see that now coming forward just prior to the full opening of the replacement Bridge at the beginning of December.

"In addition the funding for Scalpay, which is our largest bridge structure, and the other areas is most welcome. An area such as the Islands relies upon critical transport links such as bridges and causeways for social and economic resilience between communities."



INVERCOE BRIDGE REPLACEMENT WORKS TO START DECEMBER 2021



The Highland Council have awarded a £5.5million contract for the replacement of B863 Invercoe bridge to Story Contracting Ltd with works commencing presently.

A Highland Council spokesperson said:

"We are looking forward to working with Story Contracting Ltd to deliver this exciting £5.5m project. The existing Invercoe Bridge, serves a significant access route and was built around the 1930's. Its replacement is integral to the sustainability of local communities. We ask that the public be patient whilst the work is carried out and apologise for any inconvenience caused."

The project is required to replace the existing Invercoe Bridge, which is in a poor condition and currently restricted to single lane traffic. The works include the demolition of the existing four span reinforced concrete bridge and the construction of a new two span steel and concrete bridge in its place. A temporary bridge will be installed alongside the existing structure to maintain road and pedestrian access across the river during the works. Traffic lights and single way working will be in place for the duration of the construction.

Story Contracting Ltd will be starting replacement works from December 2021 with the new bridge planned to open in Autumn 2022. Due to environmental restrictions, in water based works will continue until March 2023.

The project has recently been awarded £4.137m grant from the Scottish Governments Local Bridge Maintenance Fund.

CONTRACT AWARD FOR GOVAN - PARTICK BRIDGE PROJECT APPROVED

A Glasgow City Council committee today (25 November) awarded the contract for the Govan - Partick Bridge project to Farrans (Construction) Limited. This a Glasgow City Region City Deal project, with funding from the Scottish and UK Governments.

The £29.5million project includes the construction of a new pedestrian/cycle bridge over the River Clyde between Water Row in Govan and Pointhouse Quay in Partick, a connection that will re-establish the historic link between the two areas.

The bridge will be economically, environmentally and socially important as it will create a link between communities, visitor attractions and institutions of national economic importance, and is a key part of the active travel route between the University of Glasgow's campus at Gilmorehill and the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital.

Works are expected to begin on-site in January 2022, with project completion towards the end of 2023.

In addition to the construction of the fabricated steel cable stayed opening swing bridge, the project will also see:

Demolition of a section of masonry/concrete quay wall and access stairs at Water Row, Govan;

Construction of a sheet piled quay wall and infilling to finished ground level to extend. Pointhouse Quay to form the north bridge landing, access ramp and public realm;

Construction of a reinforced concrete abutment/quay wall and infilling of the disused. Govan Ferry Inlet at Water Row in Govan to form the south landing;

Construction of bridge approach ramps, retaining walls, provision of drainage and public realm at the north and south bridge landings;

Bridge and public realm statutory and feature lighting;

Diversion of the Scottish Water Combined Sewer Outfall at Pointhouse Quay;

Extension and modification of existing Cathodic Protection Scheme at Pointhouse Quay;

Installation of timber fenders and access for a layby berth at Merklands Quay on Clyde.

10 contractors submitted bids for the contract, with the top five scoring of these invited to submit a tender – three did, with Farrans (Construction) Limited selected for the contract award as the highest scoring on criteria which included price, quality, design, construction impact, quality control and fair work practices.

143 construction jobs will be supported through this project, and significant community benefits will be delivered, including starts for 11 new employees; five new apprentices and a new graduate; school mentoring, work placement, volunteering and work experience opportunities; business mentoring opportunities and supply chain briefings; and community engagement from the contractors, with both financial and non-financial support for local projects.

The investment in the Govan - Partick Bridge is key to, and complements, public and private sector investments such as the £38million UK Government Strength In Places funding to help the University of Glasgow develop the Clyde Waterfront Innovation Campus next to the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital; the Water Row (housing and commercial) development; the proposed £100million Therme development at Glasgow Harbour, and proposals for more than 1,000 homes at Yorkhill Quay.

Following construction of the bridge, there will be 23% increase in jobs that are accessible within a 20-minute walk of Govan Cross and an 87% increase in the number of jobs within a 10-minute cycle of Govan Cross.



Councillor Susan Aitken, Chair of the Glasgow City Region Cabinet, said:

"The award of this contract will mark a key stage in a project which will be transformative for the Clyde waterfront and the city region. The Govan - Partick Bridge will not only provide an active travel connection between the West End and the South Side of the city, but will directly create new jobs, apprenticeships, training and other opportunities, as well as complementing a number of other ongoing or forthcoming major regeneration projects that stretch all the way from the University of Glasgow to the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital."

Final approval of the contract will be considered at the Glasgow City Region Cabinet on 7 December.

The £29.5million Govan - Partick Bridge project in Glasgow city centre is a Glasgow City Region City Deal project, funded by the Scottish and UK Governments. The Glasgow City Region City Deal will see both governments provide £500million of funding for infrastructure projects.



NEW HEALTH & CARE HUB FACILITY



Highland Council members, during their Committee have considered a detailed appraisal of options for taking forward a new Care Facility for the North Coast, to be located in Tongue. This built upon the prior commitments to take forward a new Care Facility to replace the existing Melvich and Caladh Sona care homes operated by NHS Highland.

The Council has agreed that a new Health and Care Hub, delivered by Wildland Limited, and in partnership between the Council, NHS Highland and Wildland was the best option, considering an assessment of all factors, including the financial, risk and community impact.

This milestone decision will see a new Hub, consisting of a new Care Facility and new GP surgery, with an estimated capital cost of £10.4m being developed by Wildland and in turn leased to Highland Council (care facility) and NHS Highland (GP surgery).

NHS Highland will be the occupier, operator and responsible party for the management and delivery of all services provided from the new Hub.

Councillor Linda Munro, Chair of the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Committee, said: "I'm delighted we've reached this significant milestone and can now move forward to get this much needed new facility started. This new health and social care hub will provide a much-needed focus for the community, offering new, modern and environmentally friendly health and

social care facilities, the opportunity to best meet the needs of our community, be a more attractive facility for our staff to work in and attract new staff too, and finally provide a much-needed economic boost to the area."

Michelle Johnstone, North Area Manager for NHS Highland, said:

"This is an exciting development for the local community, and I am pleased to see it reach this stage. This development will ensure we have sustainable services going forward for our local community and for colleagues working within the area and it is very much welcomed."

Tim Kirkwood, Chief Executive of Wildland Limited, said:

"We are pleased to have been able to help The Highland Council in its intent to progress the delivery of a new North Coast Care Hub through partnership with NHS Highland."

He continued: "We have welcomed the opportunity and will continue to support both parties to create a care home and healthcare facility to serve the needs of the community. We wholly embrace the common aim for these vital services to be provided by NHS Highland in a transformed setting that everyone can enjoy and be proud

GROUND-BREAKING FALKIRK COUNCIL PROJECT WINS COVETED DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AWARD

Falkirk Council has been rewarded for safeguarding a life and limb service relied upon by thousands of vulnerable people.

Its Analogue to Digital Telecare project has brought home silverware from The Herald Digital Transformation Awards 2021.

At a recent virtual ceremony, the Council's entry 'Going digital to save lives!' scooped the Digital Communities Award.

The Council was one of six shortlisted in the category which aimed to reward 'an individual, group or organisation who has used technology to help their local community'.

The judges unanimously agreed that the Council's entry was the standout winner, stating they were "very impressed by the work and effort put in by Falkirk Council to ensure the safety of its most vulnerable".

They recognised that the project had never been done before in Scotland and that working alongside partners Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership the Council had been agile, putting in place new infrastructure and overcoming barriers created by outdated technology.

Earlier this year the work of the project team ensured the Council became the first local authority in Scotland to go live with an end-to-end digital telecare service, securing the Gold Level 1 Digital Telecare Implementation Award in March.

Not only has the project broken new ground, but also safeguarded the Council's life and limb Mobile Emergency Care Service (MECS) relied upon by thousands of vulnerable people.

Analogue to Digital Telecare is just one of 30 Council of the Future projects that aim to transform and modernise services and help the Council deliver on its priorities – Communities, Enterprise, and Innovation.

Speaking about the award, Councillor Cecil Meiklejohn, Falkirk Council Leader, said:

"All those involved in the project have worked tirelessly to make it happen – from the project team itself, to those working in MECS, partner organisations and service users. It really has been a team effort and shows what can be achieved when we work together to create positive change. Congratulations to you all. A well-deserved win."



SUPPORT FOR YOUNG CARERS

City efforts to support young carers will be outlined to the next meeting of the children and families services committee.

Councillors will be told that, following a review, the Dundee Carers Partnership has recently launched the new strategy 'A Caring Dundee 2 2021-24'.

Within this, the approach towards Young Carers prioritises working together with them to raise awareness, identify children and young people with caring roles and co-produce support which meets their needs in all primary and secondary schools.

A template partnership agreement was completed for use by the Carers Centre and all secondary schools, outlining minimum expectations on the contribution of partners to support young carers.

Developments for young carers include:

- 31 Young Carer Ambassadors now act as volunteers to inform and contribute towards approaches in every secondary school, alongside Carers Centre and school staff.
- Young Carers co-produced a new leaflet to assist other Young Carers and their families to self-identify. This is now available in all schools and on the Carers of Dundee Website
- Co-production of peer education resources to deliver awareness raising sessions in primary schools and a new resource pack,
- Peer support groups for Young Carers are now run jointly by Ambassadors and staff in all secondary schools and in an increasing number of primary schools



Depute convener of the committee Councillor Roisin Smith said:

"I am pleased to see that this new strategy takes forward support for young carers for the next few years.

"We have come a long way to provide more assistance to these young people and we cannot be complacent."

Cllr Smith added:

"Partners met the various challenges that were thrown up by the pandemic and especially lockdown, and I believe that we have to learn from these experiences for the future.

"Young carers experience unique challenges in their lives, we must do all we can to help them make the most of their education and move on to new opportunities."

Since the enacting of new legislation in 2018, the number of young carers identified and receiving support has increased from 65 in September 2018, to 208 in August 2019 and 298 in August 2020. By September 2021, 483 young carers were identified in schools.

The report also highlights the experience of a young carer looking after their single parent who is suffering from cancer. The young person was able to speak to staff in school and receive support from the Carers Centre, and is now acting as a Young Ambassador to help pupils facing similar challenges.



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GLASGOW APPOINTS NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

Mr Douglas Hutchison, currently Depute Chief Executive and Director of People at South Ayrshire Council, has been appointed as Glasgow City Council's new Executive Director of Education and will take over the responsibilities from Maureen McKenna OBE when she retires at the end of December after 14 years of service.

Maureen announced her intention to retire at the beginning of September and the recruitment process began to find a replacement for the executive director post.

Susan Aitken, Leader of Glasgow City Council said: "I am delighted to announce the appointment of Douglas Hutchison who brings with him a wealth of educational experience, empathy and knowledge and offer him a very warm welcome to Glasgow.

"Douglas will lead our team of senior managers and school staff and continue the innovative work and transformational change of the city's learning and teaching which has resulted in significant increases in attainment and achievement for our children and young people.

"Teaching in a big city like ours can often be challenging – but despite the issues many of our families face – our schools and nurseries have never been more successful and that is down to the hard work, dedication and passion shown by Maureen, her leadership team, head office staff, and all our staff in schools and nurseries.

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank Maureen for her determination and hard work during her time as our education director – she is a dominant force of nature and her legacy will live on in our pupils and their families and continue to impact for many years.

"The baton will now be passed to Douglas to nurture our schools and nurseries and create a new legacy and vision for our children and young people, and I wish him well in his new role."

Douglas Hutchison is currently the Director of People and Depute Chief Executive at South Ayrshire and in this role since 2018 having previously been Director of Educational Services and Head of Education with the Council since June 2013.

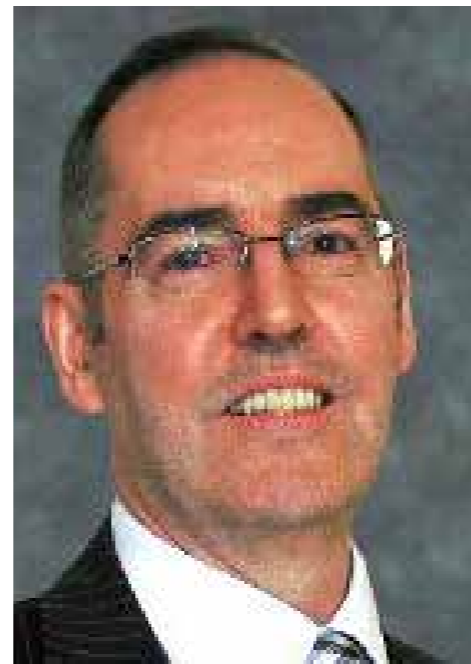
Douglas originally trained as a Religious and Moral Education teacher and then went on to work as a teacher in a residential school for young people with social, emotional and behavioural needs and a Principal Educational Psychologist.

Prior to his South Ayrshire Council roles, Douglas worked as an Inspector with Education Scotland.

Commenting on taking over the reins in Glasgow – Douglas says it's a privilege to carry on the great work and make a difference in the lives of our families.

He said: "It is a privilege to take on this role and I look forward to working with elected members, education colleagues, families, children and young people to build on what is already a very positive story of success in education across Glasgow."

Douglas will take up the post of Executive Director of Education in January 2022.



Scottish Local Authority News

ALAN RUSSELL APPOINTED AS NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE AT RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

Renfrewshire Council's Director of Finance and Resources, Alan Russell, has been appointed as the council's new Chief Executive and will take up post at the end of November

A national recruitment process began after current Chief Executive Sandra Black announced her retirement in August this year after almost 40 years public service.

Alan Russell, aged 50, is currently responsible for the council's Finance and Resources Department which includes corporate finance and operational services, HR and Organisational Development, Legal and Democratic Services, Transformation, Digital and Customer Services and Internal Audit.

He was also recently elected to the role of Chair of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Local Government Directors of Finance (Scotland). The group develops policy and publications for CIPFA members in Scotland and works closely with the local government organisation CoSLA, providing financial advice and support as required.

Council Leader Iain Nicolson said:

"Alan brings a wealth of experience to the post and is perfectly placed to take up the role delivering our ambitions for Renfrewshire, supporting those in need and attracting people to the area to live, work and learn. I look forward to working with Alan as we progress our ambitious plans for the area."

Alan Russell said:

"I am delighted to be appointed as Chief Executive and continue the great work our teams deliver every day to build strong and safe communities and improve opportunities for everyone who lives and works here. The past months have undoubtedly been one of the greatest challenges all of us have faced and it is clear there is much to be done to support people as we start to recover from the pandemic.

"The recent COP26 event in Glasgow has also shone a spotlight on the issues we face to work together to tackle climate change. Like the pandemic, this is likely to impact more on the most vulnerable in our society and this will undoubtedly be a key focus for us now and in the years ahead."



DUNDEE'S HEAD OF EDUCATION PROMOTED TO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Dundee City Council is confirming that Audrey May, Head of Education, is being appointed as interim Executive Director of its Children and Families Service.

Current Executive Director Paul Clancy will retire at the end of the year after nearly five years in the post.

Mrs May was appointed to the role of Head of Education in 2017, having previously served as a head teacher in Perth & Kinross and Fife. She also worked with Education Scotland.

Mrs May, a native of Dundee, began her teaching career in the city.

She said: "I am honoured to be taking on the position of executive director.

"The response of our children and families service to the pandemic shows the

dedication that will be vital in taking us forward and delivering better outcomes for all children and young people across Dundee.

"We have committed teams that are working hard every day and it will be a privilege to lead this service following the many achievements of Paul Clancy."

Councillor Stewart Hunter, convener of the children and families service committee, said: "I would like to congratulate Audrey May on what is an excellent appointment.

"I look forward to continuing our efforts on behalf of the children, young people and families of this city.

"Paul is leaving having developed the council's children and families teams into a joined-up service that is looking forward to the future."



Scottish Local Authority News



NEW BIODIVERSITY CHAMPION JOINS HIGHLAND COUNCIL

The Highland Council's Environment Team is pleased to welcome Nathan McLaughlan into a unique secondment post, jointly funded by NatureScot and the Council. The role of Biodiversity Partnership Officer has been created to support the Council in delivering their commitments on a range of biodiversity issues over the next two years.

Nathan, who was born and raised in Inverness, studied zoology at Aberdeen University. He comes with 13 years of experience with NatureScot, working all over the Highlands. This included managing a national nature reserve, site monitoring and surveys, partnership working and complex development cases. It has included work on species, habitats and geology from coastal habitats to the uplands and everything in between.

In the short-term Nathan will be overseeing the biodiversity mapping exercise aiming to identify possibilities for improving the value for nature of Highland Council owned and managed land. He will also work with the Highland Environment Forum, advise on the Nature Restoration Fund Grant Scheme, and review the Council's biodiversity policies.

Speaking about his new role, Nathan, who previously worked for the Council as a Seasonal Ranger based at Inverness Castle, said

"I'm really excited at the opportunities this

post brings. As a local lad I've always been passionate about the species and habitats of the Highlands. Utilising the strengths of the two partner organisations to benefit the fantastic wealth of biodiversity in the area, I'm looking forward to contributing to a range of exciting nature-based projects."



Welcoming Nathan to his new role Chair of the Council's Environment and Development Committee, Councillor Trish Robertson said:

"Following discussions with Francesca Osowska, Chief Executive of NatureScot it's great to see this new post come to fruition. We wish Nathan all the best in his job which will strengthen the link between our two organisations and help us to deliver a wide range of biodiversity actions over the next couple of years."

NatureScot Area Manager for South Highland, Chris Donald said:

"We are delighted this post is up and running. It provides a wonderful opportunity for the Council and NatureScot to work together even more closely on the twin challenges of the climate emergency and biodiversity loss. Biodiversity underpins healthy natural environments which provide multiple benefits for people and boost our physical and mental health and cohesion. Nature-rich land uses are better for wildlife and help us to mitigate and adapt to climate change. This post is coming at a crucial time and will work at the heart of the Council to deliver positive biodiversity policies and actions in the Highlands."

MARK ROWLEY IS NEW LEADER OF SBC

Councillor Mark Rowley has been appointed as Leader of Scottish Borders Council.

Councillor Rowley, who has represented the Mid-Berwickshire Ward for the Scottish Conservatives since May 2017, replaces Councillor Shona Haslam who announced she was stepping down as Leader earlier this month.

He said:

"Being elected to represent my constituents in Berwickshire was an exceptional privilege and I've relished that role immensely. Leadership of the Council presents new challenges and at a time when the Council faces intense pressures as we recover from the impacts of Covid. There are huge opportunities for our region too, so I'll continue to work hard to maximise those benefits for our residents right across the whole of the Scottish Borders.

"Councillor Shona Haslam led one of the most vibrant and diverse Administrations that SBC has seen. All that talent remains with us and will continue to work to improve lives and ensure our exceptional region thrives as an exciting and flourishing region."

Councillor Rowley's appointment was approved by elected members at the full meeting of the Council today.

Councillor Rowley is the Executive Member for Economic Regeneration and Finance and it is anticipated that proposals for the adjustment of portfolio responsibilities and representation on external bodies will be put forward to the next full meeting of the Council on 16 December.

Councillor David Parker, Convener of SBC, said:

"I would like to congratulate Councillor Rowley on his appointment as Leader. He is well respected across the Chamber and has contributed greatly to the Council, especially in his role as Executive Member for Economic Regeneration and Finance.

"Representing the Council alongside Councillor Haslam on the likes of the Borderlands Partnership, the Regional Economic Partnership and the Convention of the South of Scotland, Councillor Rowley's appointment as Leader provides significant continuity going forward to the next Local Government Elections in May



2022."

For more information contact SBC's Communications and Marketing team: 01835 826632 or communications@scotborders.gov.uk

COUNCIL TO RECRUIT NEW DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

Following the resignation of Douglas Hutchison, Depute Chief Executive and Director – People, a Special Meeting of South Ayrshire Council has taken place to agree arrangements for filling the vacant post.

Council agreed that there is a need to fill the education element of the role as a matter of urgency and to consider how best to fulfil the non-education related aspects of the role at a later date.

In determining how to manage this vacancy, Council took into account the recent Best Value Assurance report, which recommended that the Council should 'assure itself that it has the capacity and skills required to increase its pace of improvement in key aspects of Best Value, such as community planning and empowerment, financial and workforce planning, and transformation'. Council has therefore requested that a paper be brought at a future date with proposals for the non-education remit formerly carried out by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of People.

Next steps will include the Chief Officers' Appointments and Appraisal Panel meeting to agree the timescales for the recruitment and selection process for the post.

Mr Hutchison will take up the post of Executive Director of Education with Glasgow City Council in January next year.

South Ayrshire Council's Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People, Councillor William Grant said:

"I am delighted for Douglas. He has carried out a vast remit with drive, determination and passion. This included, not only Education which is significant in itself, but services like Thriving Communities, Customer Services, Museums, Leisure and Libraries, Culture, Events and Tourism, Sports and Leisure, Communications, Organisational Development, Housing Policy and Strategy, Corporate and Community Planning and Improvement and Community Safety. I am therefore pleased that Council has decided to create a dedicated Director of Education while they consider how to fill the other

parts of his remit.

"Douglas has led vast improvements in education in South Ayrshire, leading a superb team of officers, head teachers, teachers and school staff. I am sure he will excel in his new role."

Leader of South Ayrshire Council, Councillor Peter Henderson said: "Over the last 8 years, Douglas has made a significant contribution to both young people and residents of South Ayrshire. His dedication to South Ayrshire has been truly exceptional and I wish him every success in his new job.

"Our decision to split the extremely broad role of Depute Chief Executive and Director – People, means that we will be able to recruit to the education role as soon as possible and take time to consider how to build more capacity at leadership level, before taking a decision on how to staff the remaining aspects of the remit."

SENIOR EXECUTIVE TO LEAVE COUNCIL AFTER 20 YEARS' SERVICE

Carron McDiarmid, Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place is retiring from The Highland Council after 35 years of public service and 20 years as a senior officer in the Council.

Carron was previously the Council's Head of Policy for many years and led the first phase of Council Redesign. She also undertook a secondment in the role of the Chief Operating Officer for the Scottish Police Authority during 2018/19, prior to taking up her current post of Executive Chief Officer.

Carron said:

"It has been a privilege to work with so many committed and talented staff and Members over the years in the Council. Establishing and leading the new Communities and Place Service since 2019 alongside a great team has been especially fulfilling.

"Their response over the past 20 months has been outstanding; adjusting all our frontline public services for waste, environmental health, amenity, registrar, customer services and bereavement services. Key achievements have also been supporting the visitor management plan and initiating over ten vital COVID-19 projects ranging from running helplines, providing mobile vaccination and testing units and other support for NHS Highland's public health team. We have engaged with over 300 community groups, distributing community grants, and providing food and other support throughout the pandemic.

"I've been fortunate to have had a Lochaber focus too, chairing the Fort William 2040 Board of partners and have been inspired by the communities in Muck, Rum, Eigg and Knoydart from recent engagement visits in the west.

"All of these experiences show there are many ways to be active in community and public life and I am keen to explore new opportunities."



She added:

"I'm glad to have been part of a dedicated senior team under Donna Manson's dynamic leadership."

Donna Manson said:

"Carron has been a high performing chief officer in the Council's Executive Chief Officer team. She is a very experienced, talented and able leader, with a huge amount to offer in any walk of life. She will be very much missed by her colleagues and I know she will stay connected."

CLr Allan Henderson, Chair of the Communities and Place Committee said:

"It has been my pleasure to chair the Communities and Place committee since its inception under the guidance of Carron. She is an exceptional officer with a cool and clear head which works strategically for the whole of the Highlands, along with her brief for Lochaber. This has all been delivered through the Covid period. Carron will be a great success at whatever she chooses to do post council."

Carron leaves her post early in the new year. Applications have been invited internally for an interim post pending permanent recruitment to be arranged.

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