

# Argyll & Isles Strategic Tourism Partnership Visitor Economy Recovery & Growth Strategy FY2022-25



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# Introduction

The visitor economy of Argyll & the Isles is a major pillar of the regional economic growth agenda. It impacts every visitor, every resident and indeed every community. Individuals and businesses contribute to local and regional prosperity, take responsibility for protecting the environment and support ambitions for civic sustainability. Visitors – locally and globally – are drawn to the stunning landscapes and variety of opportunities to experience something special in this incredibly beautiful part of the world.

The Argyll & Isles Strategic Tourism Partnership (AISTP) was established in 2009 to coordinate product and destination development across a diverse geography and undertake marketing activities to appeal to potential visitors worldwide. Through challenging circumstances, the partnership continues to work hard within the parameters of this cohesive strategy to support infrastructure improvement, encourage tourism, recreation and leisure products and markets, and promote the region's outstanding assets. It sets out an

integrated approach to priority actions identified through past experiences, changing consumer habits and realistic assessments of industry capacity.

Collaboration is absolutely critical for destinations to succeed, and I am confident that this partnership of Argyll & Bute Council, Argyll & Isles Tourism Co-operative, Highlands & Islands Enterprise and VisitScotland will continue to support the business community in making leading contributions to economic revival and social stability as well as progressing towards net zero ambitions.

## **Alison McRae, Chair**

Independent Chair AISTP  
Senior Director Glasgow  
Chamber of Commerce  
Board Director Scottish  
Tourism Alliance

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# Strategy & Action

This document is intended as strategic guidance for the third of three annual Action Plans and has been devised to respond to changes in strategic or operational priorities. The Year 3 Action Plan outcomes have been agreed to complement projects supported by the Argyll & Bute Council Rural Growth Deal but are not dependent on significant infrastructure investment. Accordingly, emphasis on regional marketing and industry development activity will support the partnership's ambitions for a competitive and sustainable visitor economy.

The region and the industry have faced significant challenges in recent years, but national strategic objectives and changing global visitor trends have combined to present significant opportunities for Argyll & the Islands. Recovering international and domestic markets have increased pressure on travel, transport, and accommodation in some destinations; supply chain deficits and high energy costs are affecting the business community's ability to deliver quality experiences; and a rapidly

changing and uncertain regulatory framework will inevitably lead to further reduced availability of service providers across the region.

However, Argyll & the Isles is enviably placed to take advantage of certain assets and systems in response to consumer habits and emerging holiday trends; and make important contributions to Scotland's ambitions for leading practice in key areas:

- Responsible Tourism
- Sustainable Tourism
- Fair Work

New tourism product opportunities are developing through diversification as businesses look to improve and further monetise their visitor offering. Examples are businesses collaborating to produce new products, business owners offering new Aires spaces for motorcaravans and farms and crofts producing food & fibre creating working farm visits & experiences.

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# Strategy & Action

Practice in key areas:

## **Responsible Tourism**

A collaborative effort to re-establish and increase the value of tourism in ways that improves destinations for local communities, visitors and the environment. Priorities include supporting transition to a low carbon economy; promoting inclusive tourism and events; ensuring tourism and events contribute to thriving communities; and supporting the protection and considerate enjoyment of natural and cultural heritage.

## **Sustainable Tourism**

Practical measures to reduce negative impacts at destination level. Priorities include minimising resource consumption and waste; reducing the impact of transport; consideration of regional and local capacity, market demand fluctuations and pressure points; and improving the quality of tourism jobs.

## **Fair Work**

Effective voice (open and safe dialogue platforms); opportunity (access and progression), security (pay, contractual stability and employment rights), fulfilment (support culture, skills and personal development) and respect (workplace, employee, work/life balance).

New tourism product opportunities are developing through diversification as businesses look to improve and further monetise their visitor offering. Examples are businesses collaborating to produce new Aires spaces for motorcaravans and farms and crofts producing food & fibre creating working farm visits & experiences.



# The New Economic Landscape: Global, National & Regional Influences

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Recovery has faced obstacles and delays with changing restrictions and regulations since 2020 and there have been inevitable business adaptations and casualties, but the tourism industry is resilient and there is an appetite to re-establish and re-set destination appeal and sustainability. Adherence to the triple-bottom line sustainability (economic, social, and environmental) will redefine quality in pursuit of increasingly demanding and influential visitors, and encourage local collaborations in primary production, supply, energy, waste management and customer focus.

Improved tourism products and experiences will be increasingly responsive to communities' aspirations and sensitive to an outstanding environment. Targeted and sustained marketing efforts will be necessary to raise and maintain the profile of the destination's offers effectively; and attract visitors to enjoy Argyll & the Isles while treating the region and its communities with care and respect.

AISTP continues to develop this strategy to align activities around growth priorities and to ensure the most

appropriate use of partner resources. The strategy is aligned to national strategic imperatives: Scotland Outlook 2030 National Tourism Strategy (SO2030), and the **National Strategy for Economic Transformation >** (NSET) and headline priority actions have been identified where all three overlap. Some of the areas for action are particularly appropriate for the region as a whole and can be expertly delivered by business communities across local destinations.



The areas for action focus on creating and maintaining conditions for deliverable products, services and experiences that contribute to business and community sustainability and meet or exceed the expectations of our visitors.

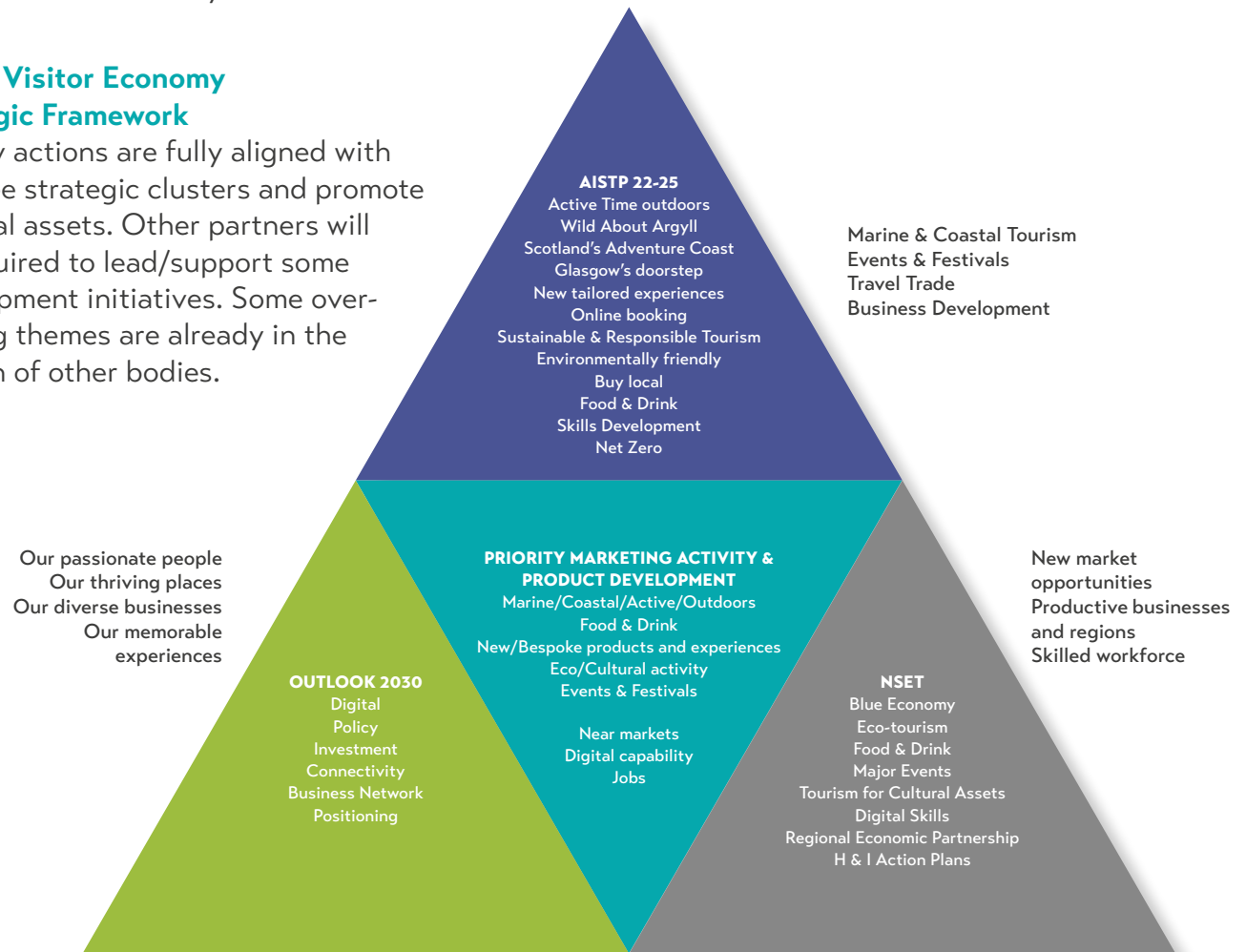
Recovery planning will address existing and emerging pressures and the need to inform visitors on what to expect, encouraging socially and environmentally responsible behaviour. Recovery planning will also influence and be ready to respond to changes in market requirements, particularly at short notice. Each workstream will be influenced by, focus on and/or acknowledge the critical importance of near markets, digital capability and the recruitment and retention of high-quality jobs; and meet place-based commitment to Destination Net Zero.

The implementation of a Transient Visitor Levy (TVL) by Argyll & Bute Council could represent the most significant opportunity to support infrastructure and industry since the withdrawal of EU Structural Funds. AISTP collectively represents key public agencies and the regional industry body, and is perfectly placed to make expert recommendations throughout the entire process:

- Consultation on rate(s) of levy Framework for collection.
- Proposals for ring-fencing revenues.
- Prioritisation of expenditure (capital projects and revenue support).
- Shared accountability for decisions.

### AISTP Visitor Economy Strategic Framework

Priority actions are fully aligned with all three strategic clusters and promote regional assets. Other partners will be required to lead/support some development initiatives. Some overarching themes are already in the domain of other bodies.



# Partnership Background and Record of Achievement 2021-2023

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The AISTP was set up in 2009 to provide industry direction immediately after the dissolution of the Argyll, the Isles, Loch Lomond, Stirling & Trossachs Tourist Board. Following a summit event in Oban in 2011, AITC was established as the delivery vehicle for regional strategic marketing campaign activity, product development and industry communications. AITC was established as a cooperative with membership

drawn from 12 local marketing groups and businesses operating across Argyll & Isles, plus sectoral associates Food from Argyll (FFA) Culture, Heritage & Arts Argyll (CHArts) and the Business Improvement Districts (BIDSs) from Oban, Dunoon and the Isle of Bute. Businesses have had the opportunity of direct membership since 2020. The Destination Organisation is entirely industry based and represents approximately 1,000 business interests at regional and national forums.

Argyll and Bute Council, working in partnership with local communities and funding bodies, has successfully completed several large place-based projects with the aim of enhancing the local built environment. These projects involve securing many millions of pounds worth of funding from a variety of sources and often delivering to very tight timelines. A few of these projects are listed on the following page.



- Kilmartin Museum upgrade – completed 2023 and funded by Regeneration Capital Grant Fund & ABC.
- Helensburgh Waterfront Development – Phases 1 and 2 completed 2023 and funded by ABC, SportScotland and Crown Estate Scotland.
- Campbeltown Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) – completed 2021 and funded by Historic Environment Scotland and ABC.
- Rothesay TH/CARS - completed 2023 and funded by Historic Environment Scotland, HLF and ABC.
- Dunoon CARS – completed 2023 and funded by Historic Environment Scotland and ABC.
- Gigha Community Campsite – completed 2023 and funded by Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF), HIE and ABC.
- Glen Orchy Car parking upgrade design works – completed 2023 and funded by RTIF, Forestry and Land Scotland and ABC.
- Hermitage Park upgrade and new Pavilion building – completed 2020.
- Oban Transient Visitor pontoons – completed 2018 and funded by ABC.

- Rothesay Pontoons – completed 2023 and funded by ABC and Crown Estate Scotland.
- Lochgilphead Front Green/ Ardrishaig Public Realm – completed 2023.

Strategic programmes have delivered demonstrable growth and outcomes since 2012, and the successes of campaign activities, commercial partnerships and market positioning are a matter of public record. Each has helped create a strong foundation on which to build recovery of the visitor economy across Argyll & the Isles. Industry standard Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor (STEAM) data models from 2009 to 2019 show a clear pattern of growth, notably well above the Scottish average.

Since then, industry-changing global and domestic events conspired to present dramatic challenges to sustainability and growth:

- Full implications of UK withdrawal from the EU.
- Covid-19 global pandemic.
- Russian invasion of Ukraine.
- Scarcity of raw materials.
- Energy price rises.

- Cost of Living and doing business crisis.
- Global environmental crisis.

The partnership will support businesses as they navigate routes to recovery and growth, including signposting them to partners who can assist with improvement of green credentials, understand new regulatory schemes affecting tourism and hospitality sectors, skills; and how to overcome critical staff shortages.

During the pandemic the overall economic impact of tourism dropped by 79.9% to £41.95m. This was a devastating period for the industry.

STEAM data for 2022 suggests continued significant recovery with economic impact reaching £572.16m from all visitor types.

An improvement of 54% from 2021. Visitor days have also increased to 2.491m visitors.

A number of areas in our destination have had significantly improved international visitors during 2023. However, many tourism and hospitality businesses have had profits significantly reduced in the same period. Continuing to build our tourism economy remains a key priority for the partnership.



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# Sector & Market Focus

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Even in the face of significant losses there have been clear signs of innovation and entrepreneurialism by existing and new businesses, and investments in new infrastructure and improved products.

Major changes to the marketplace and consumer trends necessitate significant action at individual business and destination levels. Accordingly, there is an immediate and significant opportunity to invest in new and meaningful marketing activity to build on the success of time limited partnership-funded campaigns and activity delivered over the last two years.

AITC have continued to build on the success of promoting the destination over the last decade. Through development of its digital platforms, re-design and content refresh of the Wild About Argyll & Love Oban websites, campaigns and investment in Search Engine Optimisation, the destination is being presented to the largest number of potential visitors ever achieved.

Working in partnership with local DMOs and VisitScotland, the content has been developed with key visitor insights and to celebrate Argyll & the Isles hero products.

AISTP will continue to promote regional adventure and food and drink products and use trails and itinerary ideas as the principal methods of business engagement and consumer activity throughout FY24-25.

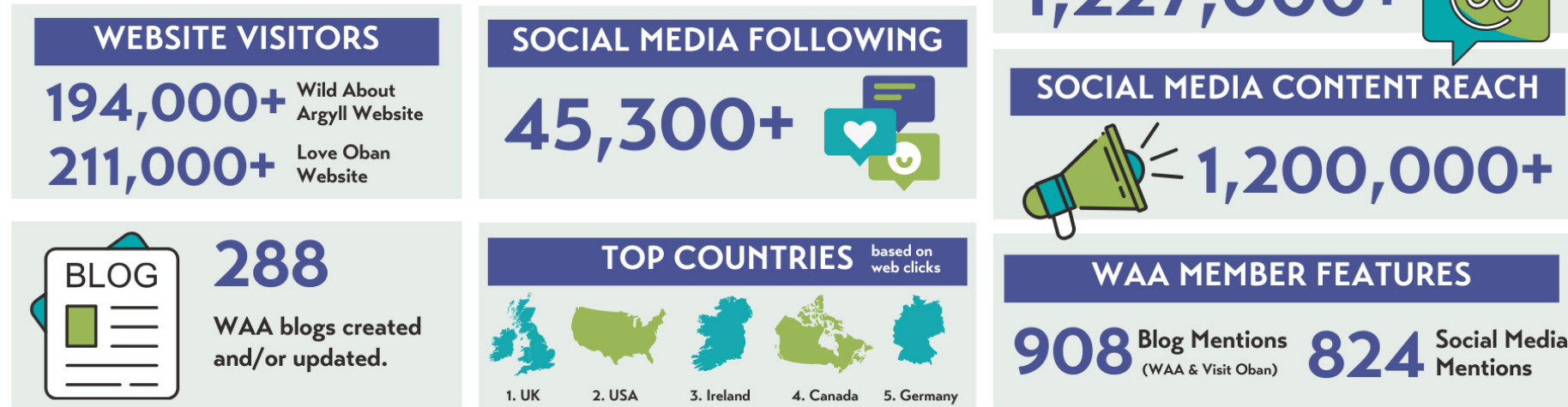
Inter-connected active travel experiences should be integral and the partnership will aspire to have options available to book online via business operators' own digital channels and [wildaboutargyll.co.uk](http://wildaboutargyll.co.uk), [oban.org.uk](http://oban.org.uk) and [visitscotland.com](http://visitscotland.com)



# Promoting the Destination & Members

## Our Digital Presence

These digital insights below showcase the channel performance of Wild About Argyll and Love Oban (Feb'23 - Feb'24).



# Strategic Priorities Delivery



# Strategic Priorities Delivery

Argyll & the Isles must compete as a destination to maintain and sustain its loyal customer base and attract new visitors. AISTP, through its delivery partners AITC and VisitScotland, has developed a tactical and agile marketing plan to position Argyll & the Isles as Scotland's Adventure Coast and broaden that positioning to celebrate all the destination has to offer. Combined industry and consumer research suggests:

- the primary motivation for taking a trip is to go somewhere to get away from it all, although connecting with friends/relatives, enjoying the outdoors, going back to a previous favourite place, and wanting to stay close to home are all crucial motivations for a Scottish break for the domestic market.
- an at-home holiday will also deliver benefits – 75% of potential visitors felt it would aid mental health and wellbeing, and two-thirds would visit places not visited for a long time.
- for international visitors, 60% seek curated experiences tailored to themselves.

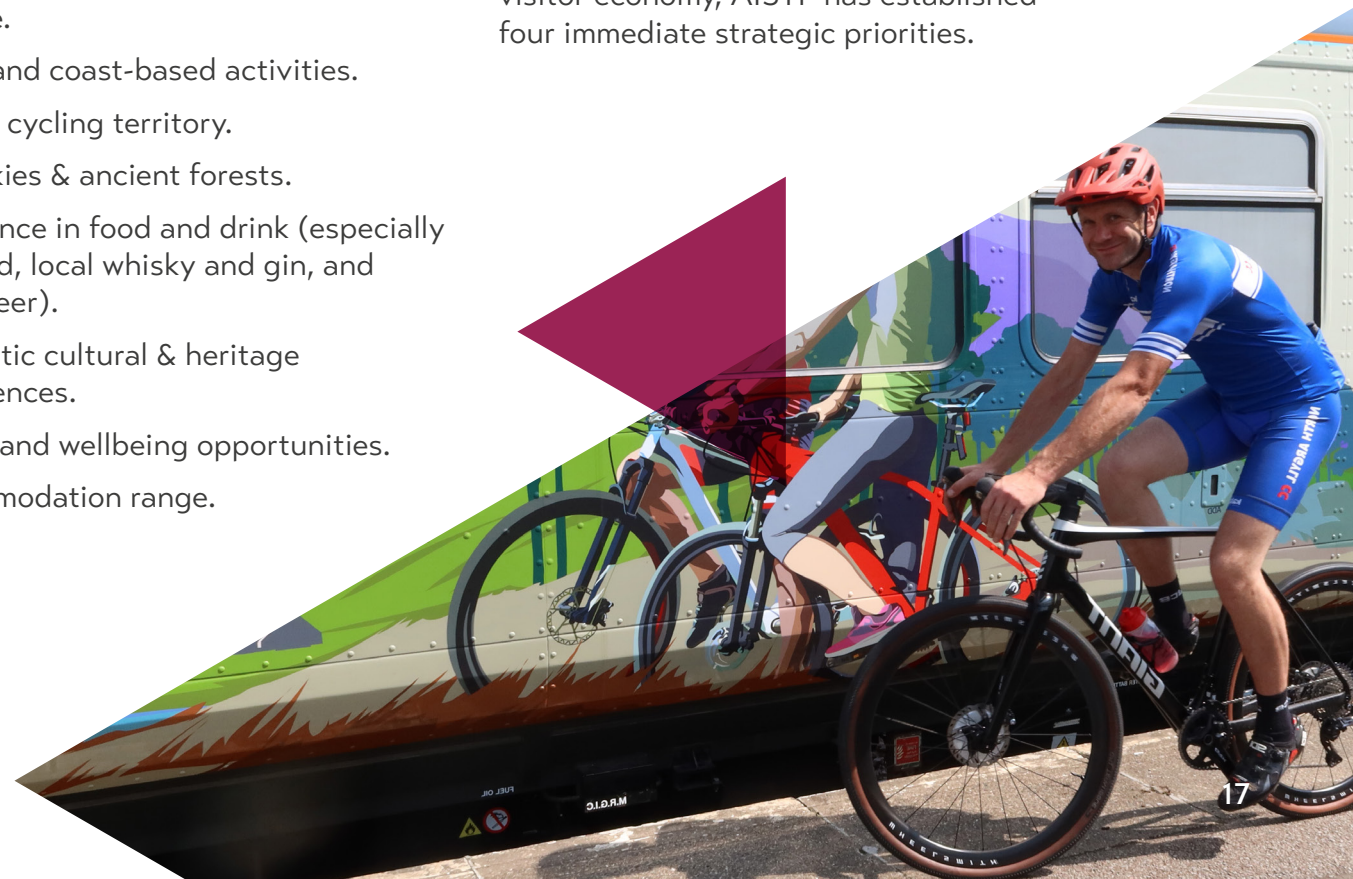
- 2022 booking.com survey: 71% of those surveyed wanted to make more effort to travel sustainably, and 78% wanted to stay in more sustainable accommodation.

The partnership anticipates continued emphasis on the destination's hero products:

- the natural environment and iconic wildlife.
- water and coast-based activities.
- unique cycling territory.
- dark skies & ancient forests.
- excellence in food and drink (especially seafood, local whisky and gin, and craft beer).
- authentic cultural & heritage experiences.
- health and wellbeing opportunities.
- accommodation range.

The region's additional advantages of proximity to Scotland's central belt and improving accessible inbound transport options render it ideally placed to appeal to domestic holidaymakers with reduced budgets and those travellers reluctant to holiday far from home.

To make practical contributions to the recovery and growth of the regional visitor economy, AISTP has established four immediate strategic priorities.



# 01 Strategic Priority: Extending the season and spreading visitors across the destination.

Argyll & Bute Council has invested over £800,000 in staycation activities since 2020 to encourage responsible tourism, examples include:

- a new Staycation Project Officer to engage with communities, businesses, and partners on a range of visitor management issues.
- information in all public toilets signposting to a wastewater disposal facilities map, preventing irresponsible disposal and creating safe black water waste points.
- recruitment of four new wardens to help raise awareness of responsible camping and littering across 120 car parks and other essential visitor sites in each of the administrative areas for 2021 and 2022.

Eleven temporary toilets were established at five locations (Westport, Bridge of Orchy, Glen Orchy, Kilchurn Castle, and Victoria Bridge) during the summer periods of 2021 and 2022. These were recommissioned for 2023. Funding has

been provided to Friends of Loch Lomond to provide temporary toilets at Arrochar and Luss to help ease visitor pressure while work continues on long-term solutions.

In 2023, additional interventions have been implemented to sustain responsible tourism, including car park upgrades, new signage, and business support for motorcaravan overnight parking. These measures will help protect Argyll and Bute's environment and scenery and promote responsible tourism.

Extending the season will only be possible for communities that can, or have the potential to, offer appropriate visitor facilities and experiences that are available from January-March to September- November (in addition to the traditional holiday periods in the Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Christmas/New Year). The partnership will focus on destinations that present those opportunities and demonstrate viable levels of commitment from local businesses. The Rural Tourism

Infrastructure Fund has supported – and continues to support – regional projects to address particular issues. The council is also exploring investment in tourism and places through the Rural Growth Deal.

Improving visitor circulation around the region will also positively impact pressure points and introduce business opportunities for “alternative” destination choices. Moving off the beaten track has enormous consumer appeal, and AITC will lead in encouraging visitors to explore the whole destination supporting sustainable and existing and emerging markets.

**Over the last twelve months, AITC and VisitScotland have worked independently and cooperatively to develop Travel Trade business opportunities for Argyll & the Isles.**



**In every case, AISTP is fully committed to local community needs and ambitions. Partnership focus on place is an integral element of strategic economic development; and underpins local marketing activity and the introduction of new products and experiences.**

Seasonal adjustments to consumer messaging encourage visitors to explore less busy locations, avoid congesting places already under pressure; and emphasise the joy of experiencing certain destinations during quieter periods.

The partnership will support local and regional marketing messages to take account of disruptions to the travel network, pressure from certain visitor groups; and appeals from destinations or sectors to maintain demand.

Seasonal adjustments to consumer messaging encourage visitors to explore less busy locations, avoid congested places already under pressure, and emphasise the joy of experiencing specific destinations during quieter periods.

The partnership will actively promote relevant regional marketing messages to take account of disruptions to the travel network, pressure from certain visitor groups, and appeals from destinations or sectors to maintain demand.

#### **Areas for Action**

- Accommodate evident consumer desire for active and well-being time in the great outdoors, build on the success of Wild About Argyll and Love Oban marketing activity and product development, and continue to position Argyll & Isles as Scotland's Adventure Coast on Glasgow's doorstep.

This maximises appeal to a younger, more adventurous, and experience-driven demographic.

- Encourage new tailored experiences for individuals and small groups that celebrate Argyll & the Isles' critical points of differentiation that can be booked online. Large group, coach, and cruise audiences are not ignored but managed within the appropriate destination and resource clusters.
- Respond to and accelerate the objectives of Scotland Outlook 2030, with a clear focus on sustainable and responsible tourism practices. Communities must be better integrated into local tourism decision-making and delivery of area-specific tourism offers.
- Demonstrate an environmentally friendly approach to tourism business development, including industry-wide carbon footprint reduction and promoting active travel and "buy local" consumer behaviour.

## 02 Strategic Priority: Reaching new audiences. Marine & Coastal Tourism

With Argyll & Isles at its heart, the West of Scotland has long been established as one of the world's best sailing and boating locations. ABC and HIE have recognised maritime infrastructure and access improvements as investment priorities, including the UK and Scottish Government backed Rural Growth Deal projects, which are set to build and focus on the region's enviable marine and coastal assets.

Scotland's Adventure Coast perfectly encapsulates the wealth and diversity of the region's marine and coastal tourism products and experiences, and opportunities exist to cement the region's reputation as the most vibrant and customer-focused marine tourism destination in Europe.

Maintaining industry and public sector partners focus on immediate and future visitor requirements will deliver visitors to Argyll & Isles who are enthusiastic about being on or near the water and responsible for interacting with maritime, terrestrial, and community environments.

The emphasis on maritime and coastal tourism development has been informed by years of research commissioned by Scottish Enterprise, HIE, British Marine Scotland, and VS Insights.

[Awakening the Giant pdf >](#)

[Giant Strides pdf >](#)

[Coastal Tourism pdf >](#)

Sensitive and appropriate marine and coastal tourism development aligns perfectly with NSET's well-being economy ambitions and potentially utilises existing community assets. Community scale step-ashore facilities open destinations to water-borne visitors and create opportunities for residents to participate in water-related recreational and sporting activities.

Prospects for terrestrially based business operators, community groups, and public health stand to improve from closer leisure-oriented relationships with the sea, and significant opportunities exist to integrate commercial fisheries,

aquaculture, and offshore energy operations with the regional visitor economy.

Such is the appeal of Argyll & Isles' maritime environment that Oban will be a host port for the Clipper Round the World Yacht Race in 2024. This prestigious global sporting event presents outstanding showcase opportunities for the region and the potential for Oban to host the fleet in the future. Successfully delivered, Clipper represents the marketing value of events and festivals in general and upholds the principle of celebrating regional traditions: maritime activity; food and drink, Gaelic; music, song, literature, and art; cultural heritage and historical significance.





Oban will also host the 2024 Royal National Mòd, organised by An Comunn Gàidhealach (The Highland Association). Scotland's premier Gaelic festival provides opportunities for people of all ages to perform across a range of competitive disciplines including Gaelic music and song, highland dancing, instrumental, drama, sport and literature.



**An Comunn Gàidhealach**  
Organisers of The Royal National Mòd®

### Positioning of Argyll & Isles Hero Products

Hero products and consumer-facing campaigns will entice and educate visitors to consume experiences without creating social or environmental problems by emphasising the links between travel, accommodation, activities, food, and drink and the triple-bottom-line sustainability of the communities that deliver them. The visitor-facing strategic marketing focus will be given around the following key propositions:

- **Argyll & Isles as Scotland's Adventure Coast;** people-powered adventures (cycling, walking, sailing, and other water activities). Responsible tourism-focused activities to be discovered across the destination's varied locations.

A range of activities for first-time triers to specialists and everything in between.

- **Argyll & Isles excels in local provenance,** from foraging to food production to Michelin listed restaurants and an abundance of high quality handmade goods. Argyll & Isles excels in providing local provenance, and its characterful makers and producers are a crucial element of the visitor experience.
- Argyll & Isles is an ideal destination for responsible tourism; the goal is to offer many ways to enjoy the beautiful landscape responsibly. Businesses can demonstrate ideas for reducing their environmental impact and increase opportunities for visitors to create lasting memories without leaving a trace. This message will resonate with informal and wild campers, camper vans, and motorhome users.



**"AITC and VisitScotland will work closely to develop relationships with the travel trade and encourage the industry to build appropriate products across the destination. The primary driver will be quality of experience rather than discounted rates."**

### **Attracting new visitor types through partnerships**

As travellers of today and tomorrow make destination choices not just on value for money but on sustainable and ethical tourism businesses and ways to enjoy leisure time responsibly, AITC will continue to foster partnerships that focus on developing visitor products that enable this. For example, SCOTO – is the organisation leading community-led tourism, and Agritourism – is the organisation leading the development of new farm and croft-based tourism products.

### **Events and Festivals**

Argyll & the Isles' based events have accelerated over 2022 and 2023, with more significant events such as ButeFest and the Cowal Highland Gathering being well attended and economically prosperous. Food from Argyll held its first independent event for several years with over 1,000 attendees. It was a welcome return for this popular event.

AITC has continued to invest in a relationship with The LIST and has further developed technology to enable all events to be listed on AITC, VS, and The LIST programmes with a link to ticket booking.

### **Travel Trade Business Development**

Argyll & the Isles is an attractive destination to the Travel Trade market, particularly as operators move away from extensive coach tours to small groups with tailored itineraries. Of particular interest is the region's ability to deliver experiences focusing on:

- Activity and adventure on water and land.
- Local food and drink and experiences.
- Luxury breaks; wellness, spa and off the-beaten track.
- Wildlife, nature, and sustainable tourism.
- Walking, heritage, and cultural experiences.

The Travel Trade is interested in ready-made itineraries and ideas for immersive experiences. The region presents many options for travel, accommodation, attraction, and activity packages based on the above experiences and combinations of local destinations.



## 03 Strategic Priority: Improving the Offer

For Argyll & the Isles to compete with other destinations, the partnership should continue to build on the improvements achieved in the last ten years. Argyll & Bute Council has made significant investments in our places and essential visitor infrastructure at numerous sites, creating benefits for visitors and residents.

The customer journey can be a long chain with potential weak links that need to be addressed by individual businesses and collectively.

- The journey starts with destination marketing activity that presents clear and compelling reasons to visit (and move around) Argyll & Isles. AITC has an established history of producing first-class content for web and social media platforms and understands the efficacy of multiple edits for use in different formats across various campaigns. The global reach of VS will be a beneficial partnership asset, and AITC will work on the compatibility of content for sharing on VS platforms and imagery to share on the Digital Media Library.

- Customers expect direct booking capability because it saves time and money. The regional tourism offer will improve economic returns and destination reputation if most businesses can conclude a transaction online. To deliver that objective, AITC will work with the industry on affordable and manageable system adoption.
- Private car travel remains the default position for many visitors. The trunk road network faces significant challenges and delays are to be expected. Disruptions to the ferry network continue to frustrate passengers, and the partnership is committed to ensuring accurate and up-to-date travel information is available across all channels.
- Most visitors interpret the offer as the direct encounters and experiences associated with their valuable leisure time. Customer service and value for money rank highly in traditional satisfaction surveys, as do authenticity, choice, quality, cleanliness, and personal safety.

Research has shown that employee well-being is critical to creating a productive and efficient workforce and reduces workplace attrition. To achieve first-class customer service aspirations across the sector, it will be essential to embed fair work practices. Honest work is defined as work that offers a compelling voice, opportunity, security, fulfilment, and respect. These need not involve a cost and may realise a financial benefit to employers.

**HIE's support for business and communities is driven by the National Strategy for Economic Transformation, with HIE's strategy being based on the four pillars of Place, Planet, People, and Prosperity. Covered under the People pillar all assistance from HIE carries with it obligations around fair work, and within the Planet pillar obligations around the journey to Net Zero are planned.**

The tourism offer in Argyll & the Islands makes an effective contribution to each of these and support from HIE can be available where a project enhances the economic and/or social impact for the region.

**HIE engages with several businesses and social enterprises using a place-based approach which in recent years has resulted in a number of community-based projects including Tobermory Harbour Association's Aros Park development of an outdoor access hub.**

There is an increasing focus on Planet as a key part of HIE's delivery. HIE's strategy, particularly as it relates to tourism, aims to support the sector to transition to net zero with an ambition to be recognised as a sustainable visitor destination. This saw the launch in 2023 of their Green Grant fund, which in its initial year had a focus on tourism, creative industries, and third-sector projects. This enabled businesses across the region to deliver both carbon reductions and cost-savings through the installation of such as enhanced double-glazing, more efficient and greener heating and ventilation systems, etc.

HIE's People approach is detailed as part of the next section of this strategy relating to skills development but is very much focused on a Fair Work approach.

Each of these strands feeds into the drive to create greater Prosperity across the region. A significant contributor to the growth of prosperity in any economy is innovation. At its core, innovation means making changes that will improve business. Examples include process changes to improve productivity, adaptations to business models to

reach customers, waste reduction, and operational efficiencies to achieve sustainability or business diversification to open new markets. The HIE team is on hand to support businesses to identify or implement the changes necessary for growth:

- Research and development.
- Developing new products or services.
- Improving productivity.
- Identifying new opportunities for your business to explore.
- Developing a new strategy for future innovation.
- Protecting your intellectual assets.

HIE and their team of Innovation specialists can help to get new ideas off the ground and implement new products or processes.

Other partners are positioned to support businesses to innovate and grow sustainably.



## Recruitment & Retention

Continuous improvement of the offer is dependent on a culture of education and inspiration. Tourism operators must understand the advantages of continued investment in their own businesses to sustain visitor growth and commercial rewards. This includes improving the skills of existing staff and attracting new entrants into the industry. Public agency support is available at a national level, and innovative regional solutions are being sought to meet industry and community needs. AISTP will signal development opportunities through partner communication channels and is open to partnerships with schools, colleges, universities and other training providers.

AITC will offer a programme of events, either directly or through partners, focusing on practical ways businesses can grow and develop.

Highlands and Islands Enterprise has developed a support programme for businesses to understand how to implement fair work practices. For tourism employers, HIE has extensive help to ensure working practices inspire and support the workforce. Tourism businesses in the region are often the lifeblood of their communities, providing many jobs that help keep young people

and families in the area. Owners and managers often work with or employ people and families they have known for years, so reputation is critical. Fair work is especially applicable, and HIE has published a guide relevant to your organisation and employees. Further details and a link to register for the guide are [here >](#)

Priority skill development areas for 2024 and 2025 are defined as follows:

- Improving digital marketing skills.
- Product creation & innovation.
- Reducing carbon & improving sustainable practices.
- Attraction & retention of staff.

AITC has partnered with UHI Argyll to launch a destination-wide Ambassador programme to showcase the range of available careers and case studies showcasing individual types of jobs across Argyll & the Isles.

**"Highlands and Islands Enterprise has developed a support programme for businesses to understand how to implement fair work practices. For tourism employers, HIE has extensive help to ensure working practices inspire and support the workforce."**



## 04 Strategic Priority: The journey towards net zero

The partnership is supporting and enabling several initiatives to help reduce the region's carbon footprint, which is already one of the lowest in the UK. This includes installing EV charging points across Argyll and Bute, supporting reforestation projects, and installing renewables and building insulation programmes.

VisitScotland leads the national tourism industry initiative. The Scottish tourism sector is asked to prioritise responsible, low-carbon growth and join the journey to Destination Net Zero. By acting, operators will reduce costs, build resilience, and meet increasing consumer demand for sustainable businesses focused on delivering responsible tourism. The AITSP partners will share the resources available for region-wide destination and sector development projects and emphasise Argyll & Isles' environmental credentials and consumer responsibilities in marketing and promotional material.

[Discover more here >](#)

The journey to net zero will be achieved through changed business practices and exploiting Argyll & the Isles' enviable location on the doorstep of the central belt. This has given the area a Visitor Economy Recovery and Growth Strategy 2022-25 competitive edge, initially through the Heart & Soul campaign before Covid-19 and enhanced by the surge in staycation activity. The Scotrail investment in the Highland Explorer carriage operating twice daily on the Glasgow-Oban line in 2021 – the first in the UK – is a measure of confidence in this market.

Better understanding of emissions and actions to reduce them are business priorities. HIE provides a Net Zero Toolkit, which covers funding and loans, understanding carbon footprints, and reducing the carbon impact of operations, utilities, products, and services: environmental impact and waste management.

[Discover more here >](#)



The partnership understands the significance of green business practices and outweigh the costs of making changes in most circumstances. Reduced utility bills will have a significant impact on cash flow and operating profit, and positive green credentials are increasingly important to consumers.

Accordingly, the partnership will promote green business practices and signpost business operators to appropriate resources to help them achieve the highest practicable levels of environmental sustainability. Businesses have an opportunity to innovate in this space and adopt green and circular business models which will not only increase their market competitiveness but also potentially save money in the longer term.

By adopting energy and waste efficiencies, the Argyll & Isles tourism business community will contribute to the region's climate emergency response, and maintain fitness to qualify for public funds, commercial loans, or planning consent that may be conditional on meeting certain ecological standards.

By adhering to these principles, the strategy will also deliver against the National Strategic Priorities on behalf of the partnership:

- Our thriving places.
- Our passionate people.
- Our memorable experiences.
- Our diverse businesses.

The partnership will provide strategic support for new product development anywhere in the region if it can demonstrate positive effect on the community, commitment to investment and measures to minimise the impact on the environment.

By adapting the content and/or the timing of consumer messaging the partnership can support destinations and the tourism business community in pursuit of optimum demand from specific markets in certain places and at particular times of year.

The reputation of Argyll & the Isles as a destination capable of providing whole experiences and innovative ways of connecting with nature and cultural heritage will be further enhanced by ease and flexibility of booking for different types of traveller.



**Alison McRae, Chair**

Argyll & the Isles Strategic Tourism Partnership

**Cathy Craig, Chief Operating Officer**

Argyll & the Isles Tourism Co-operative Ltd

**David Adams McGilp, Regional Director**

VisitScotland

**Fergus Murray, Head of Economic Development**

Argyll & Bute Council

**Morag Goodfellow, Area Manager, Argyll & the Isles**

Highlands & Islands Enterprise



[wildaboutargyll.co.uk](http://wildaboutargyll.co.uk)



# Appendix - AITC delivery plan

The year three action plan builds on the momentum achieved throughout the second year of delivery of the Visitor Economy Recovery & Growth Strategy launched by the Argyll & Isles Strategic Tourism Partnership in June 2022. As per Year 2, the plan has been built to respond to the visitor's emerging needs and make the most of Argyll's natural assets and new product offers.

The latest STEAM data demonstrates the combined efforts of all the agencies and businesses are improving the visitor experience and numbers. Compared with 2021, there have been improvements in every metric measured.

In planning for the year '24/'25, we have taken account of the context into which AITC (and VisitScotland are delivering). The key insights and challenges are outlined here:

- Changing traveller habits; sector insight gathered in the last twelve months indicates the following.
  - Short booking timeframes (and short cancellations) and short breaks dominate Argyll & Isles rather than the weeklong breaks we have enjoyed in the past (especially island breaks)- particularly in the domestic market.

- Continued travel risk aversion (context of rail and air strikes) and ongoing ferry challenges are driving Argyll & Isles visitors to choose mainland or alternative destinations.
- Reduction in domestic visitors to Scotland; taking shorter breaks and spending less when in destination.

STEAM REPORT FOR 2011-2022 - FINAL ARGYLL & BUTE										Comparing 2022 and 2021 All £'s Historic Prices			COMPARATIVE HEADLINES						
KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS BY TYPE OF VISITOR - COMPARING 2022 & 2021 - IN HISTORIC PRICES																			
KEY		Staying in Paid Accommodation						Staying with Friends and Relatives (SFR)			All Staying Visitors			Day Visitors			All Visitor Types		
		Serviced			Non-Serviced			2022	2021	+/- %	2022	2021	+/- %	2022	2021	+/- %	2022	2021	+/- %
2022	2021	+/- %	2022	2021	+/- %	2022	2021												
<b>Visitor Days</b>	M	2,038	1,239	64.5%	2,022	1,869	8.2%	0.462	0.331	39.4%	4,523	3,439	31.5%	0.863	0.418	106.6%	5,386	3,857	39.6%
<b>Visitor Numbers</b>	M	1,186	0,704	68.6%	0,339	0,323	4.8%	0,102	0,069	49.2%	1,628	1,096	48.6%	0,863	0,418	106.6%	2,491	1,513	64.6%
<b>Direct Expenditure</b>	£M																407.49	262.47	55.3%
<b>Economic Impact</b>	£M	323.71	187.21	72.9%	180.30	149.53	20.6%	17.94	12.04	49.0%	521.95	348.79	49.6%	50.21	22.83	120.0%	572.16	371.62	54.0%
<b>Direct Employment</b>	FTEs	3,964	3,119	27.1%	2,700	2,358	14.5%	178	129	38.1%	6,842	5,606	22.0%	494	245	102.1%	7,336	5,851	25.4%
<b>Total Employment</b>	FTEs																9,496	7,396	28.4%

- **Strong international visitor presence:** most Argyll & the Isles areas have benefitted from solid international visitors, particularly North America and nearby Europe. Our Travel Trade work has yielded 11 new tour operator trips to Argyll & the Isles, and interest in the area remains strong.
- **Challenges for business owners:** the last year has been particularly challenging for many Argyll and the Isles business owners. Numerous challenges are being navigated by Argyll & Isles Business owners (cost of doing business, STL, Tax increases, Rates increase), all of which will continue to impact the visitor proposition across the destination. Small B&Bs and some larger hotels and restaurants are closing or reducing their product. We will likely see a reduction in accommodation provision overall in the next 12 months.
- **New opportunities:** as a resilient and innovative sector, some of our businesses are rising to the challenge, innovating around their products, and working collaboratively with others to secure joint business. Several new companies have opened, bringing new products and opportunities to the

destination. The chance to support Argyll & Isles businesses with product development and to improve their marketing continues.

AITC and VisitScotland have several interventions to support this work. Insight-driven marketing; utilising UKSPF funding, AITC has invested in its analytics and SEO content development.

This work has improved our reach and ranking in search engines and informs our marketing planning for the coming year. Through this work, we have understood where our marketing is performing well and which areas need further development.

## Outcomes Achieved

In the last 12 months, AITC has launched two new websites with improved visitor content and accessibility. Together with our digital marketing strategy, we have significantly enhanced our reach and engagement with our target audiences.

- 190,000 Wild About Argyll website visitors.
- 210,000 Love Oban website visitors.
- 8,620,000 total website impressions.
- 16% increase in social media followers to 44,000.
- 1,000,000 social media content reach.
- 226 new blogs developed featuring Argyll & Isles businesses 979 times.
- 472 events promoted.

- We responded to 24 media requests, developed our own press releases and secured the following activity.
  - iPaper included Basing Shark Scotland in a story about Winter activities.
  - The Times Calendar featured McKinlay Kidd's Island Hopping break.
  - The Sunday Times listed sailing activity provider Provident in their list of best adventure holidays for 2024.
- Focus on less visited areas; campaigns for Gigha, Mid Argyll.
- Sustainability focus: promotion of responsible visitor messaging and active travel options.

We delivered a digital campaign focusing on driving awareness of Cowal. This campaign delivered:

- 1.62m Impressions.
- Reached 347.1K Individuals.
- Generated 18.2K links to Wild About Argyll website.

## Marketing Target Audience 24/25

The target audience for Argyll & Isles remains essentially the same as in previous years, enticing domestic visitors to explore all the area has to offer and creating itinerary ideas for our international visitors. AITC uses the same visitor segmentation as VisitScotland (see table below).

Adventure Seekers	Curious Travellers	Cultural Enthusiasts	Food Loving Culturalists
<b>156,000</b>	<b>209,000</b>		<b>240,000</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age 25-54</li> <li>• Central belt, Northern England, Greater London</li> <li>• Affluent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age 25-44</li> <li>• Majority in England</li> <li>• Affluent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over 55</li> <li>• Mostly retired</li> <li>• Mid affluence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age 25-54</li> <li>• Most affluent segment</li> </ul>

In particular, we will use the VisitScotland insights to underpin our activity.

### Marketing & PR Activity

The following marketing campaigns and activities are planned for delivery. We will work closely with relevant partners to ensure cohesive and effective delivery.

Strategic Priority	Marketing Key Focus (organic & campaign)
<p><b>Extending the season and spreading visitors across the destination</b></p>	<p><b>1. Experience Scotland’s Adventure Coast your way</b> Continued development of web content and social media content based on insights and trends:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solo Travel</li> <li>• Wellness</li> <li>• Unique experiences</li> <li>• Events - especially Clipper Race and Royal National Mod</li> </ul>
	<p><b>2. Argyll’s Natural &amp; Marine Environment:</b> Highlight ways to enjoy the natural coasts and waters of Argyll &amp; the Isles. New walks and itineraries, exploration via sustainable transport, highlighting particular areas and ways to enjoy wildlife in its natural habitat. Presentation of conservation efforts and continuing visitor education on how to enjoy the destination responsibly.</p>
	<p><b>3. Celebration of Argyll &amp; Isles Coasts and Marinas,</b> highlighting The Clipper Race Oban port call and opportunities to visit many marinas' destinations and participate in its water activities.</p>
	<p><b>4. Low season / off the beaten track:</b> A range of blogs highlighting the benefits of visiting Argyll &amp; Isles in low season and focus on areas not often featured. e.g. small isles, smaller towns.</p>
	<p><b>5. Discover the Islands:</b> Discover the many islands' natural beauty and rich history through an island-in-focus series, e.g., working with influencers and Island stakeholders to showcase the offering through a creative campaign to drive people to each island to explore.</p>



Strategic Priority	Marketing Key Focus (organic & campaign)
<b>Reaching new audiences</b>	<b>6. Slow down and maximise your time in Argyll &amp; the Isles:</b> Upweighting individual destination guides into short break guides. Helping visitors plan their break according to time and interests.
	<b>7. Propositions for value-conscious visitors:</b> Presentation of Argyll & Isles low budget/value for money breaks aimed at the cost-conscious domestic market.
	<b>8. Luxury Getaways:</b> Tapping into the wealthy international markets to attract high-spend visitors. Creation of luxury web content on the WAA website and luxury itineraries for those willing to spend a little extra.
	<b>9. Family Focus:</b> Development of family guides featuring indoor attractions, outdoor family activities, and family-friendly eating and drinking locations.
	<b>10. Argyll's Makers &amp; Culture Showcases</b> Highlighting different ways to get involved with the artists, producers, and makers. Promotion of the 2024 Oban MOD.
<b>The Journey to Net Zero</b>	<b>11. Ongoing marketing of sustainable travel options and responsible visiting.</b>
	<b>12. Promotion of sustainable businesses:</b> Showcasing how A&I is becoming a destination proud in taking initiatives to give the visitors a more eco-friendly and sustainable experience as the operators move to net zero.

## Support for Businesses

In addition to the marketing activity outlined above, AITC has scoped new initiatives focussing on supporting businesses to attract and retain staff and implement sustainable practices.

- Argyll & Isles Ambassador programme: A series of events and interventions working in partnership with UHI Argyll to enable businesses to input to UHI Argyll tourism and hospitality courses directly. Development of a series of case studies showcasing individual types of careers available across Argyll & the Isles.

- Green Tourism; How To Guides: Working in partnership with Green Tourism, produce a series of How To Guides and Argyll & Bute-based business's best practices and case

studies to enable businesses to adopt practices to improve their green credentials. These will be focussed on enabling cost savings for businesses, attracting sustainability conscious visitors, and achieving outcomes that are better for the planet.

### Budget

The budget requested to support the overall delivery of the marketing

activities for 24/25 comes from several different sources and will be delivered by the AITC team and specialist partners as required. Funds will be drawn from membership fees paid to AITC, £75,000 fund from Argyll & Bute Council, and may include grants from VisitScotland if available. The £75,000 Argyll & Bute Council Grant is anticipated to be apportioned as follows.

It should be noted that some tactical changes may be necessary as the world tourism market recovers. The partnership will approve adjustments to activities and budgets.

Adventure Seekers	Budget	Outcomes
PR & media – Destination positioning	5,000	Reach new audiences
Bloggers, Influencers	10,000	Reach new audiences, island focus
Paid social promotion	5,000	Boost marketing reach across all campaigns
New format, license-free photography	10,000	Assets that can be shared with VisitScotland, A&BC & and AITC Members
SEO Copywriting & and new content development	10,000	Insight-based new content across all Wild About Argyll & Love Oban areas
Campaign delivery	30,000	
Business support initiatives	5,000	

# Case Study 1 - Port Bannatyne Marina

**Area / Business / Infrastructure Name:**

Port Bannatyne Marina Enhanced Facilities

**Overview of project / initiative including amount of investment:**

Port Bannatyne Marina are expanding the visitor facilities at their site on Bute. Their marina currently has 80 permanent berths and 25 visitor berths. Current shower and toilet facilities are housed in temporary portacabins which are not accessible to all. PBM are replacing these facilities with new enhanced facilities, based on recycled shipping containers. Total investment c£178k, of which HIE contribution of £29,350 specifically towards battery storage linked to solar power generation.

**Description of key improvements / investments made:**

This project will deliver enhanced accessible facilities to sailing visitors to the Island of Bute. The Clyde and West Coast of Scotland are the most popular sailing waters in the UK and the provision of enhanced facilities encourages more visitors to visit, and spend time on, the Isle of Bute, with the consequent opportunities for other island based tourism businesses.

**Description of visitor / community benefits:**

Visitor benefits – Provision of modern, accessible shower and toilet facilities for sailing visitors to the island.

Wider benefits - Facilities created will have a low carbon environmental impact.

The facilities provided enhance the visitor offering, reduce the operating costs of the business, and reduce the carbon impacts of the business by c25%.

# Case Study 2 - Isle of Gigha Camp Site



### Area / Business / Infrastructure Name:

The Isle of Gigha Camp and Motorhome site at Gigha Ferry Car Park, Ardminish, Isle of Gigha, Argyll, PA41 7AA

### Overview of project / initiative including amount of investment:

A community-led project that attracted £412,000 of funding to create 5 electric hook-up pitches, 5 non-electric hook-up pitches, 30 tent pitches, 30 car parking spaces, 5 accessible parking/pitches. The site is within close proximity to the ferry terminal and is the 'hub' to meet and greet visitors and it is close to bike hire, island shop, pontoons, and restaurants. It prevents unnecessary use of single-track roads by giving motorhomes and campervans a place to park and it also prevents them from camping on inappropriate and sensitive sites and laybys on the island.

### Description of key improvements / investments made:

£451,757 with £10,000 Council, £125,000 Highland and Islands Enterprise and £125,857 Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust contribution. Created: 6 electric hookup points for motorhomes, 4 non-electric pitches for motorhomes, 15 camping pitches, New toilet facilities including male and female, 4 shower cubicles and no outdoor shower. 1 accessible toilet and shower room, 1 chemical waste point, Outdoor covered cooking area with 3 sinks.

### Description of visitor / community benefits:

The site is owned by IGHT and is run by Gigha Trading Limited (GTL) – the established trading arm of the Trust with staff having experience in managing holiday properties.

The creation of a campsite helps to enhance visitors' experience by reducing the impact of indiscriminate parking, dumping of waste, and blocking of access to beaches and roads for all users including the emergency services. The implementation of the campsite enhanced the visitor experience by upgrading the poor public toilets and developing island recycling facilities.

### Description of visitor / community benefits:

The new campsite also encourages more people to stay overnight and spend in Boathouse restaurant and Island Hotel which is also community-owned, as well as the shop and visit Achamore Gardens. This new facility offers a wider range of accommodation options for visitors to the island and supports sustainable tourism growth and a corresponding boost to the local economy.

Consequently, the development of the campsite enabled IGHT to further strengthen its financial position by generating sustainable income through the new facility.

The campsite project fits in with the IGHT 10-year strategy plan which aims to develop the environment and create a more diverse local economy with lower seasonal dependencies.

The restriction of motorhome and campervan access across the island will also encourage more walking and cycling on the island which is being further enhanced through an expansion of the island's path network.

The architects design followed a sustainable approach including minimal energy usage, vernacular local design and sympathetic use of traditional materials to respect the location of the development in the landscape of Gigha.

The campsite creates employment for up to 3 individuals.

# Case Study 3 - Helensburgh Waterfront Development

### Area / Business / Infrastructure Name:

Helensburgh Waterfront Development (HWD)

### Overview of project / initiative including amount of investment:

A Circa £22.5million investment in Helensburgh Town Centre to complement the work previously delivered through the CHORD programme and Place based funding. The principal funder was Argyll and Bute Council, supported by other parties including, £5million from the United Kingdom Government's LIBOR Fund, £330k Crown Estate and Place based funding, and £100,000 from SportScotland.

The project delivered a new state of the art Leisure Centre, improved flood defenses to take account of revised Climate Change predictions, and car parking and public realm improvements.

### Description of key improvements / investments made:

- Construction of a new fully accessible Leisure Centre, incorporating: a 6-lane, 25m long, main pool; training pool; wet and dry change facilities; catering outlet; fitness suite/gymnasium; multi-functional space; staff accommodation; and appropriate plant, equipment and ancillaries.
- Construction of enhanced flood protection measures to the site perimeter at West Clyde St, Helensburgh G84 8SQ.
- Construction of a 265 space car park, including designated coach parking, Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCP), and dedicated cycle routes and parking.
- Improvement to the existing public realm with the construction of a perimeter walkway and flexible open space;
- Demolition of the existing Leisure Centre, and safeguarding of an area for future development, by others, including the potential development of a 28,000ft retail opportunity.

Description of visitor / community benefits:



New Leisure Centre and car parking



Improved Flood Defences – raised and extended Rock Armour, new sea wall, and raised ground levels across the site



Description of visitor / community benefits:



Main pool and training pool – main pool is 6 lanes x 25m, with starting blocks and electronic timing equipment for swimming competitions/galas. The training pool has a moveable floor which enables the depth to be changed depending on the required use, making it flexible enough to cater for parent/toddler groups, swimming lessons, and adult swimming.

## Description of visitor / community benefits:



Changing Places Facility - Standard accessible toilets do not meet the needs of all people with a disability. People with profound and multiple learning disabilities, as well as people with other physical disabilities such as spinal injuries, muscular dystrophy and multiple sclerosis often need extra equipment and space to allow them to use the toilets safely and comfortably. These needs are met by Changing Places toilets. The Changing Places toilet provides:

### The right equipment

- a height adjustable adult-sized changing bench, which can be used for both changing and showering
- a tracking hoist system
- Shower facilities

### Enough space

- adequate space in the changing area for the disabled person and up to two carers
- a centrally placed toilet with room either side
- a screen or curtain to allow some privacy

### A safe and clean environment

- wide tear off paper roll to cover the bench
- a large waste bin for disposable pads
- a non-slip floor

## Description of visitor / community benefits:



The Neptune Suite - Fitness and Free Weights Suite, dedicated to the Royal Navy and commemorating its longstanding relationship and involvement with Helensburgh.



Multi-purpose Suite – flexible use including sports training, Zumba, children’s soft play equipment

The original Live Argyll business model was predicated on securing some 2,000 active memberships for the new Leisure Centre. It opened to the public in the summer of 2022, and by November 2023 it had some 7,250 active memberships, which equates to some 10,000 members.

From 2013 until the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, public sector penetration rates in the Leisure Sector remained above the 5 per cent mark; the current rate of 4.9 per cent was last seen in 2012. Although the last 12 months have seen public sector penetration rates begin to recover from its post-COVID dip, it is yet to fully rebound (Source: State of Leisure Industry report). The Helensburgh Leisure Centre is currently operating at upwards of 15.0 per cent in terms of penetration rates, attracting visitors from out with Helensburgh.

# Case Study 4 - Aros Waterfront Development

### Area / Business / Infrastructure Name:

Aros Waterfront Development – refurbishment of pier

### Overview of project / initiative including amount of investment:

The Aros waterfront development is a long-term, multi-phase project with an overarching objective to create a hub for community well-being, outdoor activities, and educational opportunities, as well as opportunities for new enterprises and sustainable outdoor tourism experiences. Aros has huge potential for multiple guided/instructor led outdoor activities. Before works commenced, this community asset was not being maximised but works underway seek to transform use of the site and ensure it contributes to the vibrant community of Tobermory both socially and economically. A high-level assessment estimated the redevelopment of the site could bring £1.5m in additional local spend per annum, creating 28 new jobs.

The initial phase of works has focused on making safe and bringing back into use the existing pier as well as providing a pontoon and slipway, the cost of doing this has been in the region of £530,000. Funding was kindly received from the Scottish Government's Islands Infrastructure and Place Based Investment Funds and Highlands and Islands Enterprise with the remainder of funding provided by Tobermory Harbour Association.

### Description of key improvements / investments made:

This phase of works has included:

1. Repairs to the pier to make a safe and attractive viewing point towards Tobermory.
2. Installation of a new pontoon to allow small boats to land safely.
3. New slipway for launching kayaks, SUP's, sailing dinghies and provide wild swimmers a safe entry and exit point to the water.



### Description of visitor / community benefits:

This phase of works will enable the use of the existing pier and new infrastructure to facilitate sports and leisure activities such as kayaking, dinghy sailing, swimming etc.

It will also provide a focus for those walking through to Aros Park from Tobermory including a viewpoint back to the town.

It is hoped that a water taxi can be established to link the site to Tobermory town centre.

The pier restoration works will be complemented by phase 2 which is now underway, this will include redevelopment of the boathouse into an outdoor activity hub which will provide a training room/meeting space, café kiosk, showers/toilets/ changing rooms/lockers thereby supporting a range of outdoor activities both land and water based. Accessible walkways to allow wheelchair users access to the site for the first time and creation of outdoor storage compounds for commercial let and community storage. This phase of is expected to be completed by Autumn 2024.

Aros Pier before



Aros Pier completion

