

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

STRATEGIC PLAN

2022 – 2027



Foreword

Welcome to East Ayrshire Council's Strategic Plan 2022 – 2027, setting out our high-level ambitions and priorities for the next five years. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to its development and to all of the community organisations and partners who work with us, to support the needs and aspirations of those we serve across all of East Ayrshire's communities.

The Strategic Plan underpins the kind of Council we strive to be – caring, kind and connected, with people at the heart of all that we do. It focuses on our strengths and demonstrates how together we will address the challenges that we face. It aligns to our Financial Strategy and Workforce Strategy, ensuring that our services are financially sustainable into the future and that we continue to use the resources we have wisely.

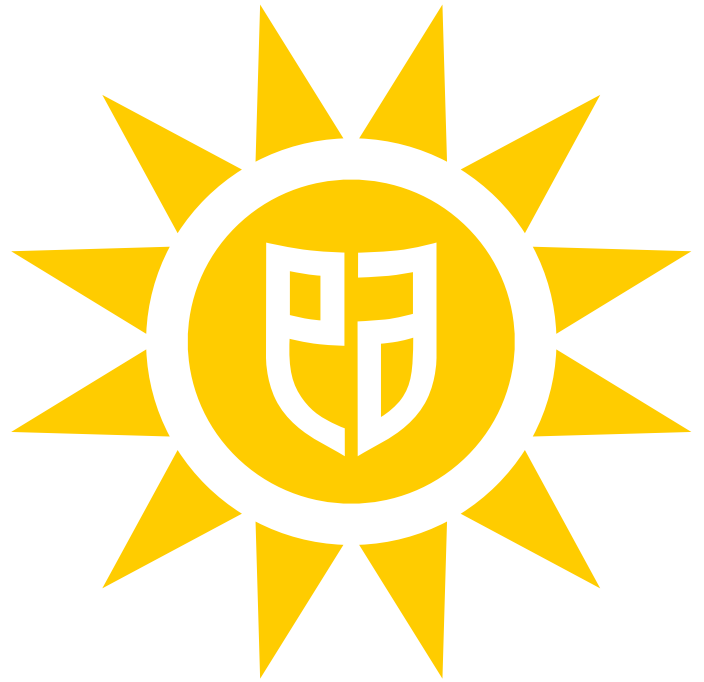
Together with our Community Planning Partners, we want East Ayrshire to be a place with strong, safe and vibrant communities, where everyone has a good quality of life and access to opportunities, choices and high quality services, which are sustainable, accessible and meet people's needs.

We have tremendous assets, including some of Scotland's most spectacular scenery, a rich industrial and social heritage, good transport links, five star tourist attractions, a strong work ethic and vibrant and passionate communities. Like everywhere else, however, we have our challenges. Unemployment rates continue to be higher than the Scottish average, too many working families live in poverty and life expectancy and quality of life vary hugely depending on where you live – all of this compounded by recent rises in the cost of living. This is unacceptable to us and as a local authority, we are committed to tackling inequality and to making a positive difference in the communities we serve.

Over the last ten years we have invested in essential services and undergone significant transformation. We have shown innovation, taken decisive action and delivered significant, quantifiable savings, to ensure the Council's financial sustainability. Through our ambitious and far reaching Capital Investment Programme we have delivered new and refurbished schools, improved sports, leisure and cultural opportunities and ensured investment in roads, housing, regeneration and economic development.

We know that great things can be achieved when people come together and we are committed to working with our communities and our partners to realise our ambitions. Our transformation journey, alongside the strength of our communities helped to ensure that we responded at pace to the Covid-19 Pandemic and it was inspiring to see people help one another with kindness, compassion and pride.

We want to build on that strong track record of transformation, investment and community power, ensuring that we take a place based approach, working with our communities to support aspirations and to make the changes we need to see. The vibrancy of our communities gives us great hope for the future and we will continue to grasp every opportunity for innovation and improvement.



Councillor Douglas Reid
Leader of the Council

Eddie Fraser
Chief Executive

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Introduction

This plan sets out our priorities for the communities of East Ayrshire over the next five years and describes the context in which our services will work collaboratively with each other, our communities and our partners to drive forward the actions needed to achieve our aims.

This will include prioritising the resources that are entrusted to us and continuing to find new and innovative ways of working, to ensure the delivery of services that are affordable, sustainable and which best meet the needs of those we serve.

The Plan recognises the strengths and assets that exist within East Ayrshire and highlights the ambitions we have for our communities. However, it is written against a backdrop of what are unprecedented challenges for both our Council and for those we serve. These challenges include:

- **Rising inflation and increases in the cost of living**
- **Increased demand for services**
- **Restrictions in funding**
- **Pandemic Recovery and Renewal**
- **Public Sector Reform**
- **The impact of EU Exit**

The content of our Plan has been informed by feedback from our communities and builds on our strong track record of service delivery and transformation over the past 10 years. Our Plan sets out how we will work with our communities and our partners to address these challenges, while ensuring that we continue to deliver improved outcomes.

We will review and report on our progress on an annual basis and update our plans to take account of any changes and developments.



Our Vision and Our Values

Our communities are at the heart of everything we do and the vast range of services we deliver are designed to support our communities to be strong, safe and vibrant, ensuring that we provide universal services for all of our residents, whilst at the same time protecting and meeting the needs of the most vulnerable among us.

Our overarching vision for our communities is that which we share with our Community Planning Partners:

"East Ayrshire is a place with strong, safe and vibrant communities where everyone has a good quality of life and access to opportunities, choices and high quality services which are sustainable, accessible and meet people's needs"

We are proud of our role at the heart of local decision-making and democracy, championing East Ayrshire and working for the benefit of those who live, work, visit and do business in the area. Through effective service delivery and improvement of provision, there is a continued commitment to providing the best services that we can offer.

We are hugely ambitious for those we serve and the Council's founding values of Quality, Equality, Access and Partnership remain as relevant today, as they were in 1996. These core values underpin all that we do and reflect our commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and social inclusion for all.

We strongly believe that reducing the impact that inequalities have on local people and communities is of paramount importance and we are committed to delivering services that are fair for all and to upholding our responsibilities as specified in the Equality Act 2010 and Fairer Scotland Duty.

As a Council we are committed to place-based working and to community power, ensuring that the people and the communities we serve are at the very centre of our work and are able to shape and influence the services they require. We believe that only by working together with our communities can we achieve our ambitions and address the challenges we face. We want to unlock the skills and talent that exist in our communities and to harness community power to help people to live happier, healthier and longer.

Our workforce is dedicated, caring and compassionate and our employees have identified the following FACE qualities and behaviours that best represent all employees of the Council.

- **Flexible** adaptable and positively embrace changes to our roles and working practices.
- **Approachable** open, honest and friendly.
- **Caring** show that we care about the people we serve and our colleagues.
- **Empowered** have the confidence to make decisions and take responsibility for our own engagement and development.



About East Ayrshire



LAND AREA

490 square miles

Urban Land: **3.5%**

Rural land: **96.5%**



ECONOMY

73.4% adults in employment

3,220

businesses operating across
the area



LARGEST TOWNS

Kilmarnock population:
46,034

Cumnock population:
8,558

East Ayrshire is a diverse area covering 490 square miles with a population of 122,010 spread over both urban and rural communities, where affluence and poverty can sit side by side. Kilmarnock is the largest town, with a population of over 46,000. The rest of the population live in smaller communities, ranging from less than a hundred people in some villages and rural areas to just under 9,000 in Cumnock, the second largest town.

Situated in south west Scotland, East Ayrshire has a varied natural environment, a rich and diverse cultural heritage, a proud industrial history and a range of leisure activities, recreation and hospitality, which attract residents and visitors alike.

The challenges are many and varied, with unemployment levels that are above the national average, health inequalities that give cause for concern and changing demographics which present significant challenges for the shape and delivery of our public services. However, we also have tremendous assets and strengths and we are incredibly ambitious for our communities.

East Ayrshire is one of 32 Scottish Councils, responsible for a broad range of public services, including education, housing, waste management, roads, planning, licensing, environmental health and trading standards, economic development and health and social care services, which are delivered through the Health and Social Care Partnership.

Since our formation in 1996, our Council has established itself as an ambitious, forward-looking and high-performing council dedicated to the people who live and work in the area. We have strong relationships with partners and an excellent track record of delivering improvements. Through effective service delivery, transformation and continuous improvement we have an ongoing commitment to providing the best services that our Council can offer.

Our Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2021–2024 demonstrates a clear, evidence based and strong understanding of local needs, circumstances and aspirations of local communities. We recognise that to make a difference and deliver long and lasting change, there is a need to work in partnership.

Our Transformation Journey

Over the past 10 years we have transformed our services while continuing to put people and communities at the heart of everything we do. With the support of our communities and our partners, we have consistently delivered the best possible services, with and for our communities, whilst making the savings necessary to achieve balanced budgets.

- We have developed strong relationships and partnerships with the communities we serve, building on local strengths and assets.
- We have prioritised early intervention and prevention approaches.
- Our workforce is flexible, approachable, caring and empowered - these qualities and behaviours shape how we behave as a Council.
- We now have more of our services available online and we have reduced the number of workplaces to make more efficient use of property and office space.
- We have embraced the integration of Health and Social Care Services, focusing on early intervention and prevention and ensuring a person-centred, human rights and equality based approach to improving service delivery.
- We have implemented new ways of working, including establishing an external Arms-Length Organisation for our Leisure Services and setting up the Ayrshire Roads Alliance, in partnership with South Ayrshire Council.
- We have kept our strong focus on community power, building on:
 - local strengths and talents
 - early intervention and prevention
 - community-led regeneration
- We have supported communities to develop their own community led action plans, rolled out participatory budgeting and transferred 60 assets to local communities.

The benefits of our partnership approach were never more evident than during the pandemic. Our communities were at the heart of our local response and showed us, more clearly than ever before, the value of having local services rooted in local places and local communities. They demonstrated their resilience and capacity to look after each other and their local knowledge and understanding of the needs of communities was vitally important to our response.

Going forward we will want to build on this and to reflect on where we have developed new and better ways of working, ensuring that successful approaches can be continued.

Current Context

We want the best for the people we serve, but we know that we face significant challenges in the years ahead.

Budget

The Council continues to face significant financial pressures and uncertainty beyond the financial year 2022/23. The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan update in February 2022 highlighted a financial gap of £57 million by 2026/27 and recognised that transformational change and service redesign will be needed to close the gap.

Scottish Government Resource Spending Review

The Scottish Government's Resource Spending Review was announced in May 2022, confirming a flat cash settlement for local government over the period 2022/23 through to 2025/25. This will inform the Council's Financial and Resource Planning, together with the other factors detailed here.

Economy

The economic outlook is uncertain and the effects of the pandemic on communities, individuals and families is starkly reflected within the economic data, with rises in unemployment and in residents claiming universal credit. Sustainable economic growth is one of the key drivers that will underpin the future prosperity of our communities. The UK Government's Levelling-Up Agenda and proposals for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund have been kept under close review to ensure the Council is in the best possible position to access the opportunities these funds provide. The Scottish Government has published a 10 year National Strategy for driving Scotland's economic transformation as the country recovers from the Pandemic and transitions to a net zero economy. There will be a continued focus on regions and this will inform and build on our work in relation to Community Wealth Building.

Cost of Living

The cost of living has been increasing greatly for individuals and families. The combined effect of rising inflation, increasing fuel and food costs, coupled with the latest interest rate increases and the substantial increase in the energy price cap are having a significant impact across East Ayrshire. The Council continues to work in partnership to provide financial support and advice to our communities and to ensure a focussed determination in supporting families and households across East Ayrshire.

Covid Pandemic

The Pandemic has had and continues to have a profound impact on our communities, on the delivery of services and on the Council's budget. We all rely on the services delivered by local government, however, it will be recognised that many of the services we deliver are especially important for those who are struggling. The Council is seeing new and emerging demands in some service areas, as a result of the Pandemic and this will inform our priorities.

Climate Change

The Council approved its first dedicated Climate Change Strategy in 2021 and is committed to becoming a Net Zero Council by 2030 based on technological innovation and the availability of resources. An extensive programme of engagement has informed the development of actions around energy, transport, waste and the natural environment.

Programme for Government

The Scottish Government's Programme for Government is published annually and sets out the Government's legislative programme and actions planned for the year ahead. This includes delivery of priorities and policies in which local government has a vital role to play. A 'Fairer, Greener Scotland: Programme for Government 2021 – 2022' includes priorities in respect of health and social care, education, net zero ambitions, economic transformation, people and place, wellbeing and of course Covid-19 recovery, all of which rely on the contribution of local government. In addition, the Scottish Government has published its prospectus for an Independent Scotland, with an indication that a referendum could take place in October 2023.

Public Sector Reform

Proposals for a National Care Service for Scotland represent one of the most substantial pieces of public sector reform in many years and could have significant implications for the Council and for our Partners. The Scottish Government has also recently confirmed that over the course of the Parliament, there will be significant changes to functions currently delivered in full or in part by local authorities and it is understood that this is not restricted to the creation of the National Care Service.

Most recently, the Scottish Government has announced a National Discussion on education, which will inform wide-ranging plans for education, including the creation of three new education bodies and a review of qualifications and assessment. This follows the publication of a report by the Scottish Government's independent advisor on education reform, Professor Ken Muir, which set out recommendations on the future of Scottish Education. Our education service, currently going through significant redesign, and in conjunction with other services, will seek to lead developments to ensure that our young people have an holistic educational experience that sees them ready for the rapidly changing world ahead of them.

EU Exit

Our local businesses continue to face some uncertainty due to current economic conditions and the UK's withdrawal from the European Union. There is also a need to be aware of the impact of the UK's withdrawal on council services and communities. It will be noted that EU Structural Funds will continue to be received by councils until December 2023 and the UK Government has committed to at least matching EU grants through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

In recent years, we have adopted a transformational approach to the delivery of public services in East Ayrshire and we have worked proactively with our communities and wider partners to seek out opportunities for more efficient and effective ways of working. The following are examples of areas where there is the potential to deliver significant benefits for communities across East Ayrshire.

Community Planning

We remain committed to our community planning vision for East Ayrshire and to the shared values and guiding principles articulated within our Community Plan. Our communities are at the heart of everything we do and our approach to community planning will continue to be founded on community engagement, collaboration and empowerment to ensure that we maximise all the assets and resources available to support and protect our communities.

Community Power

Throughout both of our previous transformation strategies, the contribution of our communities has been essential. People will continue to be at the heart of our approach and we will continue to harness community power and community led regeneration. We also remain committed to place based and multi-disciplinary approaches, working strategically with our local communities to maximise the impact of our collective resources: our people, our budgets and our physical assets, ensuring that the right services are available in the right place at the right time.

Digital

Digital participation and tackling digital exclusion will continue to be a vital area of work as the digital landscape evolves and we seek to support our services and communities to maximise the benefits of digital participation. Technology can play a key role in helping individuals and their families to enjoy a better quality of life and smart supports and technology enabled care are supporting people to live independently at home.

Capital Investment

The Council's Capital Investment Plan will continue to deliver new assets such as schools, housing, investment in town centres, roads and enhancing existing assets, whilst balancing the revenue implications and affordability of borrowing. The Council's Capital Plan for 2022/23 will deliver benefits to our economy, lead to increased employment and local spend and grow further our plans for Community Wealth Building. In addition work will continue on several of the projects contained within the £251.5m Ayrshire Growth Deal and the NHS Caring for Ayrshire Change Programme, demonstrating again the scale of the overall spend and the ambition of the Council to invest in our assets and in our communities.

Ayrshire Growth Deal

The £251.5m Ayrshire Growth Deal is part of our wider Ayrshire Economic Strategy and will support us to attract and develop more innovative and internationally focused companies; improve key elements of our strategic transport and digital infrastructure; and work with communities to raise aspiration and ambition, provide employment and skills support and improve access to jobs. The scale of this deal will galvanise efforts to develop key strategic sites and key sectors in Ayrshire, and aims to facilitate private sector investment of more than £300m into the region and to support up to 7,000 new jobs. Through both the Growth Deal and our wider economic growth ambitions, is our commitment to deliver local benefits through Community Wealth Building.

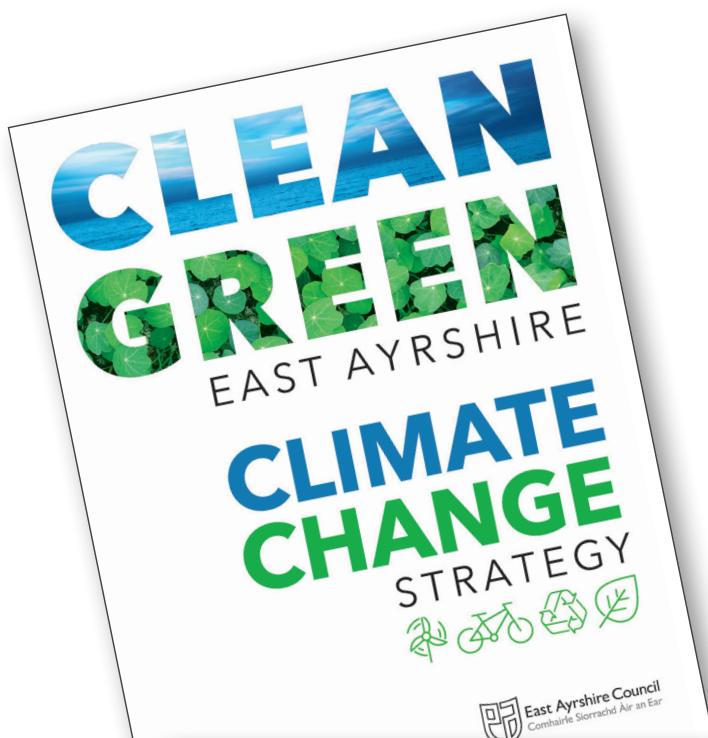
Caring for Ayrshire

We know that the cumulative economic and health impacts of the pandemic can only be addressed collectively and in order to meet the demands of the future, our shared approach to wellbeing will include greater emphasis on health improvement, prevention and community based intervention. Caring for Ayrshire sets out the framework for the redesign of our health and social care services, which effectively articulates our shared partnership commitment to ensuring that the right care is available in the right place, as close to home as possible.



Data

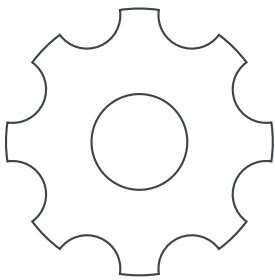
We will want to take a fresh look at how we proactively use research and data to inform our approaches and this will be integral as we take forward implementation of a programme management office and benefits realisation. Our community planning partners are keen to work closely with us in this, ensuring that collectively we make best use of the available data and supporting analysis to understand future demand for services and the impact of our work. This will support us to adapt our future activity to ensure continued delivery against our shared ambitions for East Ayrshire.



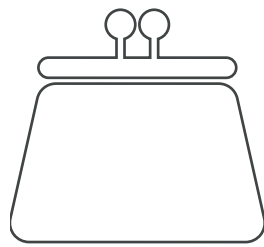
Our Priorities

The Strategic Plan priorities take account of the communities we serve, including local needs, circumstances and aspirations; the current internal and external context in which the Council operates; national and local drivers for change, including risks, challenges and opportunities; governance arrangements; programme management and performance measurement.

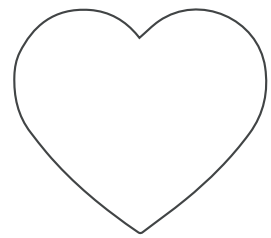
Our priorities build on the work of our previous two Transformation Strategies and our Covid-19 Recovery and Renewal Dynamic Action Plan. It is important to recognise that there are commonalities and interdependencies across and between our priorities.



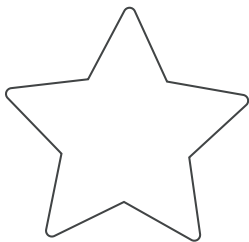
**Building a
Fairer Economy**



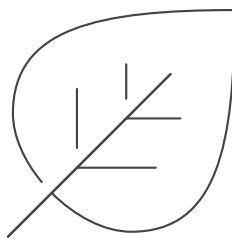
**Tackling Poverty
and Inequality**



**Improving
Community Wellbeing**



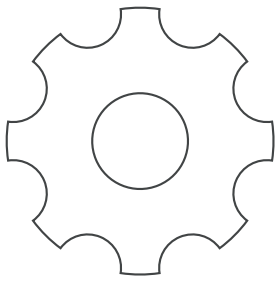
**Supporting Children
and Young People**



**Delivering a Clean,
Green East Ayrshire**



**Ensuring Financial
Sustainability
and Resilience**



Building a Fairer Economy

We will work with our communities and partners to build a fairer economy, which is strong, sustainable and people-centred and where wealth is redirected back into the local economy, ensuring everyone has the opportunity to benefit from economic growth.

We have a vital role to play in driving forward inclusive economic growth to enhance wealth, secure fair and meaningful work opportunities and create successful places throughout East Ayrshire.

The Ayrshire Growth Deal is providing significant investment in our communities and will help attract and develop businesses and improve key elements of our strategic transport and digital infrastructure. We will work with communities to raise aspirations and ambition, provide employment and skills support and improve access to jobs.

Our Community Wealth Building approach harnesses existing resources to support the local economy, with more local employment and a larger and more diverse business base. We will work alongside partners to facilitate community wealth building activities across the public, private and social economy on procurement, employment, assets and ownership, linking with existing local service delivery.

Employability support includes our Developing the Young Workforce Hub which provides a single door approach to support young people furthest from the Labour Market, at the earliest possible opportunity, where continued engagement depends on building sustained relationships and drawing on support from a range of partners.

We are also investing £6m in the creation of 200 apprenticeships in the Council and with partner organisations and local businesses. These will boost meaningful employment opportunities across East Ayrshire and have a positive impact on our local economy both now and in the longer term.

What we heard from our communities

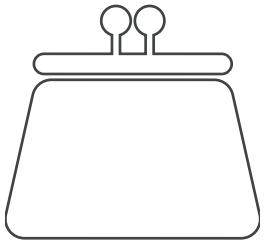
- The importance of employability and training, including opportunities for young people, taking account of future skills demand.
- The importance of high street regeneration, job opportunities and market fairs, including supporting and promoting local businesses.
- The need for good transport links, including infrastructure and public transport,
- The importance of the 'Ayrshire brand', particularly in areas such as tourism and hospitality, food and drink and textiles.

Our Key Priorities

We will work with our communities and our partners to ...

- Maximise the opportunities arising from the Ayrshire Growth Deal
- Support local businesses to thrive and grow
- Promote Community Wealth Building and Fair Work
- Support the development and implementation of the Ayrshire Regional Economic Strategy
- Promote access to employment and training programmes
- Continue to promote and develop community-led regeneration
- Invest in new, sustainable transport infrastructure that improves the transport network, public transport and accessibility, particularly in our rural communities.
- Continue to ensure that our young people are well prepared for the world of work via a relevant, engaging and inclusive school and ECC curriculum, complemented by meaningful vocational experiences and opportunities.





Tackling Poverty and Inequality

We are committed to securing a fairer, kinder and more connected East Ayrshire, working with our communities and partners to tackle the damaging effects of poverty and inequality.

Poverty affects people in many ways and can have long term effects on an individual's health, the education of our young people and future employment opportunities. We are committed to addressing the inequality that exists within our communities and will continue to prioritise work that addresses the causes of poverty and mitigates and undoes its effects on our most vulnerable residents.

The rate of relative child poverty in East Ayrshire has continued to rise in recent years, with considerable variation across our communities. In addition, the claimant count for East Ayrshire as at May 2022 was 4.5% compared to 3.3% for Scotland

Free school meals are available to families receiving benefits or tax credits, and since the start of 2022, every child from Primary 1 to Primary 5 is now entitled to free school meals. We also collaborate with our communities to improve food security and make healthy and nutritious food accessible. We will continue to build on the community resilience that worked so well throughout the pandemic to redouble our efforts to tackle economic and health inequalities in our communities.

Our Universal Credit and Financial Inclusion teams already work closely with other statutory and third sector bodies to address a wide range of issues, such as child poverty, debt, fuel poverty, rent arrears, homelessness and housing issues and employability. With this plan we will continue to address these issues in partnership with our communities and other sectors.

Our Strategic Housing Investment Plan is a five year rolling plan that sets out how we plan to deliver more new build affordable homes, support and facilitate regeneration and deliver suitably designed properties for those with different needs. The Plan is informed by our Housing Asset Management Framework and Local Housing Strategy. Our Housing Improvement Programme ensures improvements are made to existing housing stock, with tenants' homes meeting Scottish Housing Quality Standards.

The pandemic and continual increases in the cost of living have put even greater pressure on many individuals and families in East Ayrshire. We are deeply concerned at the impact this is having and know that a holistic approach is required to tackle the cumulative economic and health impacts of the pandemic.

We have committed to work collaboratively to build on the community resilience that has been so clearly demonstrated in our pandemic response and to provide the economic and social conditions necessary to facilitate recovery and renewal – conditions which will also allow us to lift more children out of poverty.

We have also committed to redouble our efforts to tackle inequality within our communities, particularly those economic and health inequalities which have been exacerbated by the pandemic.

Access to digital tools and connectivity was crucial during the Pandemic and showed the benefits that digital inclusion can have. We are committed to ensuring that people and families who are vulnerable or socially disadvantaged are digitally included at home or in their community and are supported to access online opportunities safely.

What we heard from our communities

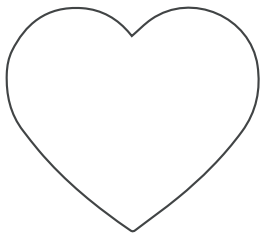
- They are concerned about families falling below the poverty line and the impact that this has on mental health and sustainability of employment. Some specific concerns were also raised in relation to Universal Credit sanctions
- Additional challenges are faced by those with disabilities and increases in cost of living can have a hugely disproportionate impact

Our Key Priorities

We will work with our communities and our partners to ...

- Tackle the causes and effects of poverty and inequality, including child poverty.
- Understand the impact of the pandemic on services and communities and use learning to mitigate the harm caused.
- Take action to support those most affected by increases in the cost of living
- Develop high quality new social housing and invest in existing stock to ensure everyone has access to good quality, energy efficient housing, within safe, healthy and vibrant communities.
- Provide good quality advice and assistance to tenants and ensure they are settled in their homes and linked in to all appropriate partnership services and community supports
- Continue to deliver healthy, sustainable and locally sourced food in schools and work with partners and suppliers to provide a range of community food options
- Promote digital inclusion and increase digital participation
- Ensure that financial inclusion services have maximum reach to tackle poverty and provide early advice and support.
- Maximise opportunities through the Pupil Equity Funding to ensure equity for all young people.





Improving Community Wellbeing

We are committed to working together with all of our communities and partners to improve and sustain wellbeing, care and promote equity.

Our approach to wellbeing focuses on addressing health inequality, through health improvement, prevention and community based intervention, drawing on the commitment and support of our Community Planning Partners.

We have developed a broad range of initiatives that have been shaped through focused conversations with people who have lived experience of wellbeing issues. This includes targeted work on:

- **mental health and addiction**
- **suicide prevention**
- **social isolation and loneliness**
- **financial inclusion**
- **food poverty**
- **physical activity**

Our Vibrant Communities Team also deliver a broad range of activities, including sports and physical activity, health checks, social groups, parental play and engagement, community investment, volunteering and befriending.

We want to make the most of opportunities for collaboration and joint working with people, families and carers to achieve their outcomes through a shared commitment to human rights based service redesign, delivery and practice. We want to ensure place based and multi-disciplinary approaches to organising and running community wellbeing programmes, supports and initiatives. We will further develop engagement and involvement for people who use our services and we will participate in new and innovative local and national initiatives that seek to test new ways of working and collaborative working.

Through our public protection arrangements, we seek to raise awareness of the services available, and give advice on what to do if individuals are worried about themselves or others. It is also about people finding ways to help keep themselves safe, and supporting those who may be vulnerable to harm to feel safer in our communities. There are a number of multiagency Partnerships with responsibilities around keeping people safe in our communities, and the work they are involved in supports the delivery of the East Ayrshire Community Plan and helps everyone in our communities to stay safe and protected

In response to the pandemic, our recovery and renewal work has focused on helping our most disadvantaged individuals and families dealing with many challenges including social isolation, mental health and recovery from drugs and alcohol.

We have improved online access to a wide range of services and we are building on opportunities presented by technology enabled care, including using digital solutions to support people to confidently self-manage a range of health conditions at home. We are committed to tackling digital exclusion, making it easier for everyone to access web based platforms and information. This will continue to be a vital area of work as the digital landscape evolves and we support our services and communities to reap the benefits of online participation.

We have also established a Trauma Advisory Board and anticipate that work and training around trauma will be further developed, recognising the impact that Adverse Childhood Trauma and trauma more generally has on people, has been amplified during the pandemic.

The innovative NHS Caring for Ayrshire transformational change programme sets out a framework for the redesign of our health and social care services, making sure that the right care is available in the right place, as close to home as possible.

One of the most substantial pieces of public sector reform in many years is the proposal for a National Care Service for Scotland. This could have significant implications for the Council and for our partners. We will keep taking every opportunity to promote the success and effectiveness of integration in East Ayrshire, promoting prevention, early intervention and promoting individual choice in the care that people may need.

What we heard from our communities

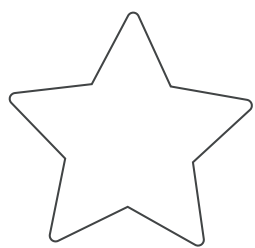
- They are supportive of action in relation to mental health and addiction, including alcohol, gambling and drug use, but wanted to see more done to advertise activities and services available, with some raising concerns about programmes that no longer run.
- The importance of the physical environment for improving wellbeing, with a focus on the value of street-art and murals that can brighten an area and also of maintaining roads and pavements.
- The importance of sporting and leisure facilities and the need for free access for young people.

Our Key Priorities

We will work with our communities and our partners to ...

- Protect and improve health and wellbeing, to help people live longer, healthier lives at home or in a homely setting
- Embed a place-based and multi-disciplinary approach to the planning and delivery of community wellbeing programmes, supports and initiatives, including Technology Enabled Care.
- Support communities to address the impact that inequalities have on the health and wellbeing of our residents
- Transform how we support adults and older people through a shared commitment to human-rights based service redesign, delivery and practice
- Promote and develop self-management approaches to mental health and wellbeing
- Continue to support suicide prevention activity, through local prevention and early intervention activities
- Continue to progress partnership actions on social isolation and loneliness, including supporting communities to build positive social networks and connections
- Address the stigma and discrimination faced by people in recovery from addiction including alcohol, gambling and drug use and improve access to treatment services and community supports
- Support transformational change in health and social care as part of the Caring for Ayrshire Programme and deliver the right care, in the right place, as close to home as possible
- Continue to develop and expand our wellbeing supports for young people including therapeutic interventions and school counselling





Supporting Children and Young People

We are committed to working with our communities and partners to ensure that in East Ayrshire, our children and young people grow up loved, safe and respected so that they realise their full potential.

We want to make sure that every young person in East Ayrshire has the best start in life and that they are supported to be safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, responsible, respected and included. This means giving them the support they need, when and where they need it, to help them to achieve their aspirations and potential.

The services we provide are essential in supporting, encouraging and facilitating learning within our communities to develop generations of young people who are equipped to succeed in life and work in the modern world. The East Ayrshire Children and Young People's Services Plan 2020-23 sets the local long term strategic intent for improvement in outcomes for all children and young people and sets out key activities to deliver on priority areas. Implementation of 'The Promise' is central to the Plan and key areas are identified to make a difference to the lives of our children and young people, their carers and families.

We have made demonstrable progress in raising attainment and we are working hard to reduce the poverty related attainment gap and to support our young people into positive destinations. We have invested in our schools and early childhood centres and we are equipping our young people for the world of work through work experience, modern apprenticeships and internships.

Through partnership working we will also make sure our young people have the skills that they need, and can benefit from Ayrshire Growth Deal opportunities to meet the demands of the future world of work.

All our early childhood centres (ECC) and partner providers now offer 1140 hours of funded early learning and childcare (ELC). This means that all three and four year olds, and eligible two year olds, can now benefit from the expansion of this service. The Scottish Government has an ambition to expand funded early learning and childcare. The first step on the journey - to develop a year-round system of affordable childcare for families - is planned for summer 2023, with a long-term aim to help tackle child poverty, help close the attainment gap and give parents/carers who want to get in to work, a chance to work, train or study more flexibly.

We're committed to developing a new multi-disciplinary, community facing approach in our communities. These will provide the best possible all-inclusive wellbeing for our children and their families. We'll keep listening and including children and young people in the decisions that affect their lives, recognising that they are experts and amongst our strongest assets.

Around 30% of pupils in East Ayrshire schools are recorded as having an Additional Support Need and the number of children and young people requiring specialist educational provision has increased. Additional resources are being allocated to support learners in schools in their own communities coupled with a requirement to expand the number of places in specialist provisions.

A whole system approach will ensure that children and their families can receive the right support at the right time with early intervention to remove barriers to learning arising from social and emotional needs and family circumstances.

Our Child Protection Committee plays a key role in the continuous improvement of our child protection policy and practice. The multi-agency partnership's core functions include strategic planning, continuous improvement, public information and communication.

In addition, our Children's Services Wellbeing model represents a transformational approach to improve how children and families are supported in East Ayrshire. The model has been given the name 'HEART' (Help Everyone at the Right Time) and seeks to ensure that children and families can access support at an early stage in their local community, in a way that challenges discrimination and stigma, with the model incorporating multi-disciplinary team working and the Getting It Right For Every Child principles.

The Pupil Equity Fund and Scottish Attainment Challenge have provided us with extra funding to support improved attainment and outcomes for our most disadvantaged learners and to close the poverty related attainment gap. However, the reclassification of the Scottish Attainment Challenge Fund will see the Council's share of the funding reduce significantly over the coming years and we will be looking at how we can continue to offer effective support.

Our Vibrant Communities Team empowers members of our communities, young and old, to live happy, healthy, connected and fulfilling lives. Working with East Ayrshire Leisure and other partners, we provide a variety of activities to keep young people active and engaged, including sports and physical activity, youth clubs and youth forums. Our Children and Young People's Cabinet is helping to make real changes, in areas such as net zero and the economy.

What we heard from our communities

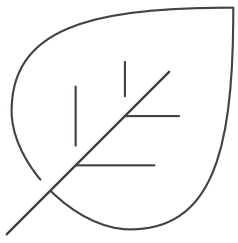
- The importance of focusing on learning and teaching, and in particular support for children with additional support needs.
- The importance of leisure and sporting opportunities, particularly during school holidays and the benefits of classes to encourage positive parenting skills.

Our Key Priorities

We will work with our communities and our partners to ...

- Respect and promote the rights of children and young people and involve them in all decisions made about them by embedding the UNCRC in our policies and practices
- Deliver high quality Early Learning and Childcare experiences for all eligible children
- Continue to develop a new multi-disciplinary, community facing approach which will provide the best possible all-inclusive wellbeing for our children and their families
- Prepare for, and implement, significant educational reform that supports young people to achieve their utmost potential
- Tackle the poverty related attainment gap
- Support the Young Person's Guarantee by ensuring that every young person has access to a job, education, training or development programme
- Scale up prevention, early intervention and wellbeing-focussed models of service delivery for all children, young people and families that promote resilience and better emotional, mental and physical health, ensuring timely access to appropriate, locality focussed services
- Ensure young people are safe and protected
- Keep The Promise and ensure that our most vulnerable children feel loved and have the childhood they deserve





Delivering a Clean, Green East Ayrshire

We are committed to working with our communities and our partners to cut emissions both within the Council and in the wider area, to help build a stronger post-carbon, post-Covid economy, with community wealth building, equality of opportunity and improved quality of life for all at its heart.

Climate change affects us all and we can all make changes to our lifestyles and working practices which can help reduce harmful carbon consumption and emissions.

Our Clean Green East Ayrshire Climate Change Strategy sets out our ambitions for the next 10 years to support local, national and international action on climate change and within the resources available to us, make East Ayrshire Council a net zero council by 2030 where technological innovation and available funding allows. We are following the Scottish Climate Change Declaration as part of our commitment to lead by example and work with our partners and our communities to do what we can to minimise the effect of climate change.

We are making sure that all of our new buildings use zero carbon heating systems and have a clear pathway to being zero carbon by 2030. We are also decarbonising our fleet of vehicles, while encouraging active travel through walking, cycling and public transport.

Household and commercial waste accounts for 42% of our carbon footprint and we are continually looking at how we can reduce, reuse, recycle and recover waste to improve resource efficiency whilst working towards a circular economy.

We recently consulted on our Climate Change Strategy and have received excellent feedback which will inform our work in this area. Our strategy for cutting emissions both within the Council and in the wider area will help build a stronger post-carbon, post-Covid economy, with community wealth building, equality of opportunity and improvement quality of life for all at its heart. The strategy focuses on four themes:

- Energy
- Transport
- Waste
- Natural Environment.



What we heard from our communities

- They are supportive of recycling and the circular economy, but want to see more action on plastic and textile recycling, reusable products and packaging and reuse of items
- They support a move to greener and renewable energy sources and are interested in a Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy being examined
- They are concerned about the reliability of public chargers for electric vehicles, with some indicating that there should be financial charges for using public chargers.

Our Key Priorities

We will work with our communities and our partners to ...

- Reduce the consumption of energy, promote energy efficiency and increase the proportion of power and heat from low and zero carbon technologies.
- Bring our wider communities' emissions in line with net zero
- Tackle fuel poverty as a way to drive forward green recovery and combat climate change
- Promote active travel and ensure that public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure can support the 'greening' of the area's economy over the longer term.
- Manage waste sustainability by reducing, reusing, recycling and recovering waste to improve resource efficiency whilst working towards a circular economy
- Use the educational reform opportunities to ensure that our young people have opportunities to prepare for roles in, and gain qualifications that support, the environmental sector and their communities and families.
- Decarbonise the Council's fleet and minimise grey fleet mileage whilst encouraging active travel through walking, cycling and public transport.
- Ensure our communities, green networks and infrastructure are adaptable to a changing climate and reduce the risks and vulnerability to unavoidable impacts





Ensuring Financial Sustainability and Resilience

We will be a financially sustainable Council, with a clear commitment to best value and meeting the diverse needs of our communities. We will continue to work with our communities to extend opportunities to strengthen community power.

We still face significant financial pressures and uncertainty beyond the financial year 2022/23. Our medium term financial plan highlights a financial gap of £57m by 2026/2027 and transformational change and service redesign will be needed to close the gap. Collaborative working will be vital and people will always be at the heart of our approach.

Our key plans and strategies are aligned with those of our partners and there is a focus on place, a commitment to reducing inequalities, promoting community empowerment, and delivering community led regeneration. We have made effective arrangements to keep up our continuous improvement in performance with regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness, equal opportunities and sustainable development.

Workforce planning has been a key component in service redesign, making sure our services to achieve greater flexibility and embed an empowered approach. The Workforce Plan is shaping our workforce for the future and has opened up new career change pathways for staff.

We value and respect our third and independent sector partners and work closely to design and deliver services across our communities. We operate, organise, support and commission a range of services with partners, always remembering to focus on people and families first.

Across East Ayrshire there are many examples of community power working successfully, including:

- **volunteering**
- **community led regeneration**
- **place based investment**
- **community asset transfer**
- **participatory budgeting**

We want to build on this, to effect change and demonstrate improved outcomes for people who use our services.

Our Capital Investment Programme reflects our recovery and renewal priorities, with investment in projects including:

- schools and early year investment
- economic development
- Ayrshire Growth Deal
- town centre regeneration
- carbon reduction
- housing
- community
- leisure
- health and social care

These investments will help bring benefits to our local economy, boost local employment and local spend and grow plans for community wealth building, however, this will need to be balanced with the revenue implications and affordability of borrowing.

Our Place Based Investment Programme, funded by the Scottish Government, is supporting community led projects which are reflected in local Community Action Plans, Place Plans, community engagement or other community led regeneration activity. Working with our local business associations, we introduced our innovative East Ayrshire Gift Card scheme designed to help boost local trade and encourage people to “Love Local” in their shopping habits and boost the local economy.

The recognition that our employees are at the very centre of our transformation and recovery and renewal has been at the forefront of service redesign. The FACE Framework was developed and approved by Cabinet in June 2019 and has led to improved outcomes for our communities and, in some cases, a reduced demand for services.

Workforce planning has been a key component in service redesign, which supports services to achieve greater flexibility and to embed an empowered approach. The Workforce Plan is shaping our workforce for the future and has opened up new career change pathways for staff.

Leadership structures are being redesigned with operational teams based around Place and the principles of empowered working, enabling greater flexibility and ‘future proofing’ services.

What we heard from our communities

- There is a need to raise awareness of the work that we are doing and to demonstrate the positive outcomes that are being achieved.
- Many of the issues faced in our communities are connected and cut across more than one of the priority themes identified within our Strategic Plan.

Our Key Priorities

We will work with our communities and our partners to ...

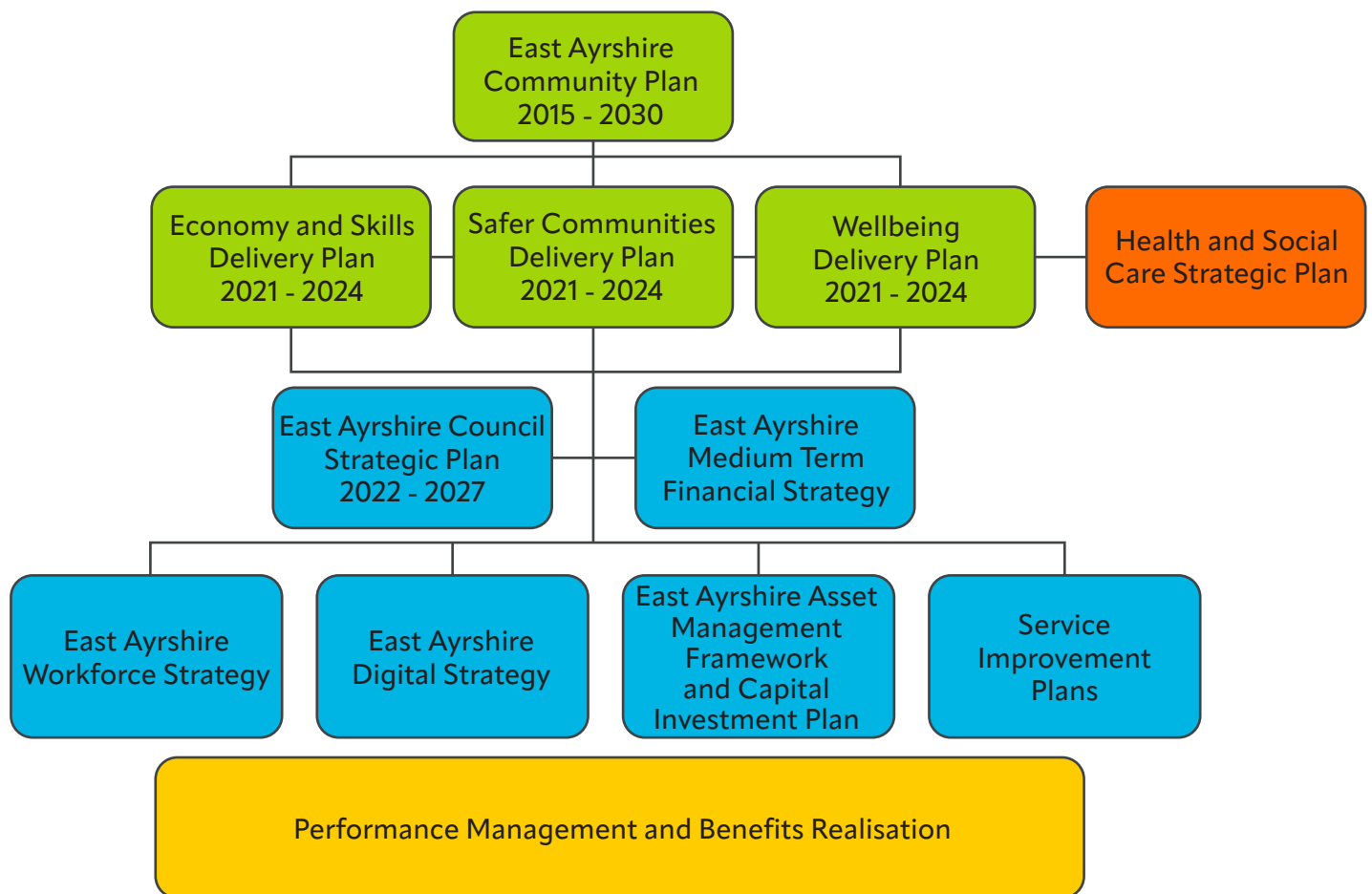
- Manage our financial resources to ensure that our services are financially sustainable into the future and that we continue to use our resources wisely
- Improve service delivery, innovation and design by empowering frontline teams and the communities we serve and ensuring that early intervention and prevention are at the heart of what we do
- Lead the way in community power, ensuring individuals and communities have more control over decisions that will affect their lives and more say in what we do and how we do it
- Build on new ways of working, based on what has worked well, including evaluating new service models and learning lessons from Covid-19
- Deliver Placemaking and Local Place Plans and build more resilient, fairer, healthier and stronger communities and places.
- Respond to public sector reform in Scotland, including proposals for a National Care Service and Education, ensuring that East Ayrshire is best placed to lead and develop change.
- Identify new opportunities to further develop collaborative commissioning, new contract arrangements and support for social enterprises with the third sector, independent care sector and community partners
- Continue to place our workforce and workforce development at the heart of our approach and ensure we have effective leadership and the right people, with the right skills in the right place at the right time
- Ensure that our Capital Investment Programme: Building a Future East Ayrshire continues to reflect our priorities and that we have safe, sustainable and efficient assets that meet the needs of existing and future users and communities.
- Drive improvements in the use of data, including data quality and timeliness and use of data skills
- Impact assess our policies, strategies, functions and plans and take into account the needs, experiences, circumstances and barriers that different people and groups in our communities face



Policy and Planning Framework

Our governance arrangements build on a long-established culture of self-assessment, bench-marking, performance reporting and external inspection, all of which help us to do better.

Our financial planning and budget setting processes have been recognised as strong and effective by External Audit and we can point to a number of positive inspections by Audit Scotland, Care Inspectorate, Scottish Housing Regulator and Education Scotland.



How will we know we are making a difference?

The key priorities noted against each of the themes in the Strategic Plan, will be developed in to a detailed Action Plan. The Action Plan will allocate lead officers and Project Sponsors, indicative delivery timescales and will provide the framework for future reporting arrangements to the Council Management Team and Elected Members.

We will build on our current performance management reporting arrangements to review and report regularly on progress against our Strategic Plan. We will use quantitative and qualitative measures, along with feedback from consultation and engagement with our communities, employees, partners and external inspection agencies.

The Council's Programme Management Office (PMO) will be responsible for setting, maintaining and ensuring standards for project management across the Council, promoting best practice and tracking project status and direction, all in one place.

The PMO will provide a source of advice and guidance for programme and project management, as well as being the information hub of the programme, fulfilling a monitoring role and overseeing and co-ordinating activities for the programme.

The Council Management Team will be accountable for the delivery of Programme Management and will provide the overall strategic direction, including monitoring, evaluation and reporting to Council. Each project or workstream will have a dedicated Sponsor and Lead drawn from the membership of the Council Management Team.

An important element of the PMO approach is Benefits Realisation Management (BRM) being the 'process of organising and managing so that potential benefits arising from investment or change, are achieved'. It is a continuous management process running throughout projects.

Any project requires a constant focus on the intended benefits (measurable improvements) if it is to successfully deliver organisational change or improve outcomes for our communities. BRM aims to make sure that desired outcomes have been clearly defined, are measurable, provide a case for investment and ensure that the outcomes are actually achieved.

