

**MINUTES of MEETING of ARGYLL AND BUTE HSCP INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD (IJB)
held ON A HYBRID BASIS IN KINTYRE COMMUNITY EDUCATION CENTRE, STEWART
ROAD, CAMPBELTOWN AND BY MICROSOFT TEAMS
on WEDNESDAY, 28 JANUARY 2026**

Present:

Graham Bell, NHS Highland Non-Executive Board Member (Chair)
Councillor Dougie McFadzean, Argyll and Bute Council (Vice Chair)
Councillor Kieron Green, Argyll and Bute Council
Councillor Ross Moreland, Argyll and Bute Council
Councillor Gary Mulvaney, Argyll and Bute Council
Emily Austin, NHS Highland Non-Executive Board Member
Karen Leach, NHS Highland Non-Executive Board Member
Janice Preston, NHS Highland Non-Executive Board Member

Evan Beswick, Chief Officer, Argyll and Bute HSCP
Linda Currie, Associate Director AHP, NHS Highland
James Gow, Head of Finance, Argyll and Bute HSCP
Louise Bussell, Director of Nursing, NHS Highland
Julie Hodges, Independent Sector Representative
Kenny Mathieson, Public Representative
Kevin McIntosh, Staffside Lead, Argyll and Bute HSCP (Council)
Takki Sulaiman, Chief Executive, Argyll and Bute Third Sector Interface
Kirstie Reid, Carers Representative, NHS Highland
Fiona Thomson, Lead Pharmacist, NHS Highland

Attending:

Charlotte Craig, Business Improvement Manager, Argyll and Bute HSCP
Eilidh Gallacher, Head of Primary Care, NHS Highland
Nikki Gillespie, Head of Complex Care and Registered Services, Argyll and Bute HSCP
Jennifer Graham, Change Partner, NHS Highland
Kristin Gillies, Head of Strategic Planning, Performance and Technology, Argyll and Bute HSCP
Hazel MacInnes, Senior Committee Officer, Argyll and Bute Council
Gillian Neal, Area Manager – Kintyre and Islay Health and Community Services, Argyll and Bute HSCP
Caroline Robertson, Head of Adults – Hospitals and Community Care, Argyll and Bute HSCP
Saskia Schmitz, Public Health Intelligence Specialist, NHS Highland
Angela Tillery, Principal Accountant, Argyll and Bute Council

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Fiona Broderick, David Gibson, Rebecca Helliwell, Alison McGrory and Angus McTaggart.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest intimated.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Argyll and Bute HSCP Integration Joint Board held on 19 November 2025 were approved as a correct record.

4. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

(a) **Argyll and Bute HSCP Finance and Policy Committee held on 18 November 2025**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Argyll and Bute HSCP Finance and Policy Committee held on 18 November 2025 were noted.

(b) **Argyll and Bute HSCP Strategic Planning Group held on 11 December 2025**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Argyll and Bute HSCP Strategic Planning group held on 11 December 2025 were noted.

(c) **Argyll and Bute HSCP Audit and Risk Committee held on 16 December 2025**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Argyll and Bute HSCP Audit and Risk Committee held on 16 December 2025 were noted.

(d) **Argyll and Bute HSCP Finance and Policy Committee held on 20 January 2026**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Argyll and Bute HSCP Finance and Policy Committee held on 20 January 2026 were noted.

5. CHIEF OFFICER REPORT

The Board gave consideration to a report from the Chief Officer providing an update on activity across the Health and Social Care Partnership since the last report to the Board in November 2025.

Decision

The Integration Joint Board noted the content of the report from the Chief Officer.

(Reference: Report by Chief Officer dated 29 January 2026, submitted)

6. SPOTLIGHT ON KINTYRE

The Board received a presentation on the following topics with a focus on the Kintyre Area

–

Public health/demographic profile
Hospital and community health
Kintyre Care Centre

Decision

The Integration Joint Board noted the content of the presentation.

(Reference: Presentation – Spotlight on the Kintyre Locality)

7. FINANCE

(a) **Budget Monitoring - 9 months to 31 December 2025**

The Board gave consideration to a report providing a summary of financial performance for the first 9 months of the year. The report provided the financial position and forecast to the year end.

Decision

The Integration Joint Board –

1. noted the HSCP had overspent its budget by £1.1m or 0.4% as at M9;
2. noted an overspend of £756k was forecast and that management were seeking to bring spend back in line with budget;
3. noted recovery restrictions remained in place;
4. noted savings of £7.6m had been delivered, 85% of target;
5. noted that the HSCP was proposing to re-allocate a number of earmarked reserves to manage its financial situation; and
6. noted the strategic finance risk in respect of the SLA with Greater Glasgow and Clyde.

(Reference: Report by Head of Finance dated 28 January 2026, submitted)

(b) **Budget Update**

The Board gave consideration to a report providing an update on the process associated with the preparation of the 2026/27 budget. The report outlined the position in respect of the savings plans and gave an initial summary of the implications of the Scottish Government draft budget published on 13 January 2026.

Motion

Budget 2026/27 – Protecting Prevention and Community Capacity

The Integration Joint Board notes that:

- A. The Budget Update (agenda item 7b) for 2026/27 identifies an opening budget gap of £16.4m, savings proposals of £6.0m, and a remaining gap of £10.4m, alongside an explicit acknowledgement that proposed service reductions will have “significant adverse impacts” on communities and partners and risk undermining national policy priorities.
- B. The same report recognises a strategic risk that short-term financial measures may damage preventative capacity, reduce the effectiveness of the care system and increase future demand and cost pressures.
- C. Current £6m savings proposals include reductions to third sector contracts and

grants, preventative services, carers centres and other community-based provision that are designed to reduce hospital admissions, delay escalation of need and support unpaid carers.

- D. The Budget Update also highlights additional and emerging cost pressures of up to £8m in-year and potentially £14–16m in 2026/27 associated with acute Service Level Agreements with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, which represent a material risk to the financial sustainability of services delivered locally in Argyll and Bute.

The Integration Joint Board believes that:

- A disproportionate focus on reducing preventative, early-intervention and community-based services risks storing up greater cost and harm elsewhere in the system, including increased delayed discharge, higher-cost care packages, greater reliance on unpaid carers and worsening health inequalities.
- This approach is inconsistent with the Partnership's stated strategic direction, the Population Health Framework, the National Health and Wellbeing Outcomes and the emerging Joint Strategic Plan, all of which emphasise prevention, community capacity and demand reduction.

The Integration Joint Board therefore agrees to:

1. Move away from the current emphasis of savings proposals that fall primarily on prevention, early intervention, carers centres and community provision, and request that these areas as a whole are explicitly protected within the 2026/27 budget.
2. Pause the consultation and the current savings proposals (pending work on item 4 below) that directly undermine preventative and community-based services, pending fuller consideration of system-wide impacts and cost avoidance.
3. Adopt an alternative approach to financial recovery, drawing on the six principles points set out in a letter to the Chief Executive, but specifically focusing on the following:
 - prioritising prevention and early intervention;
 - embedding Public Service Reform and Christie principles in practice;
 - progressing a whole-system transformation programme (as per February 2025 decision) focused on pathways from community to hospital/social care; and
 - engaging the third sector, carers and communities as equal partners throughout learning from models developed [elsewhere](#).
4. Urgently require additional due diligence and scrutiny of the Greater Glasgow and Clyde acute SLAs, including the scale, assumptions and value for money of the proposed increases, before further reductions to community-based provision are progressed.
5. Request officers to report back to the IJB - in a February meeting if required - on revised budget options that better balance financial sustainability with the protection of preventative and community capacity.

Moved by Takki Sulaiman, seconded by Kirstie Reid.

Amendment

The Integration Joint Board agree the recommendations as contained within the submitted report –

The Integration Joint Board is asked to:

- Note the update in respect of the forecast budget gap in advance of final funding allocations being made by Government and Partners.
- Note the budget gap before savings is £16.4m.
- Note savings proposals totalling £6.0m are being developed with a remaining budget gap of £10.4m.
- Note that work on the savings plan is continuing in partnership with the Council and NHS Highland with each taking a different approach to addressing the shortfall.
- Consider the scale of service reduction that is likely to be required to achieve financial balance.
- Note expenditure control measures and financial recovery actions continue to be in place.
- Note that additional SLA costs for acute services delivered by Greater Glasgow and Clyde are an additional cost pressure of up to £16m in 2026/27.
- Endorse progressing to public consultation on the budget proposals.

Moved by Councillor Gary Mulvaney, seconded by Councillor Ross Moreland.

As the meeting was being held on a hybrid basis, the vote required to be taken by calling the roll and members voted as follows –

Motion

Amendment

Graham Bell
Councillor Kieron Green
Councillor Dougie McFadzean
Councillor Gary Mulvaney
Councillor Ross Moreland
Janice Preston
Karen Leach
Emily Austin

Decision

The Amendment was carried unanimously by 8 votes to 0, and the Integration Joint Board resolved accordingly.

(Reference: Report by Head of Finance dated 28 January 2026, submitted; Motion by Takki Sulaiman, seconded by Kirstie Reid, tabled; and Amendment by Councillor Gary Mulvaney, seconded by Councillor Ross Moreland, tabled)

(c) **Climate Change Reporting 2024/25**

The Board gave consideration to a report providing a copy of the Climate Change Report for 2024/25 which had been submitted to the Scottish Government in advance of the 30 November 2025 deadline.

Decision

The Integration Joint Board –

1. noted that the HSCP submitted its Climate Change Duties Report in advance of the 30 November 2025 deadline (appendix 1); and
2. endorsed the partnership approach taken by the HSCP in respect of its Climate Change Duties.

(Reference: Report by Head of Finance dated 28 January 2026, submitted)

The Integration Joint Board adjourned for a 10 minute comfort break at this point.

8. AUDITED ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2024/25 AND EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

The audited Annual Accounts for 2024-25 had been endorsed by the Audit and Risk Committee at their meeting on 16 December 2025 and were before the Board for formal approval.

Decision

The Integration Joint Board –

1. noted that Forvis Mazars had completed their audit of the Annual Accounts for 2024/25 and issued an unqualified Independent Auditors Report;
2. considered the Annual Audit Report prepared by Forvis Mazars and management responses to their recommendations;
3. noted that the IJB was reporting an underspend of £0.9m carried forward in general reserves;
4. approved the letter of representation and the Audited Accounts for signature and publication; and
5. noted that the accounts were prepared on a going concern basis.

(Reference: Report by Head of Finance dated 28 January 2026, submitted)

9. 2026/27 SOCIAL WORK FEES AND CHARGES

The Board gave consideration to a report providing details of the proposed annual Social Work Fees and charges uplifts for 2026/27.

Decision

The Integration Joint Board –

1. reviewed and endorsed the 2026/27 Social Work Fees and Charges proposals so that the proposals could be submitted to Argyll and Bute Council for ratification at its 2026/27 budget meeting;
2. noted the ongoing review to the charging policy surrounding day services, transport and telecare charges with a view to amending charges at a later date following consultation.

(Reference: Report by Principal Accountant dated 28 January 2026, submitted)

10. Q3 WORKFORCE REPORT 2025/26

The Board gave consideration to a report detailing the workforce data of the Health and Social Care Partnership as at 30 November 2025.

Decision

The Integration Joint Board noted the content of the report.

(Reference: Report by Change Partner dated 28 January 2026, submitted)

11. WHOLE SYSTEM APPROACH

A report proposing the development and implementation of a whole system approach to health and social care within two high pressure areas was before the Board for consideration .

Decision

The Integration Joint Board agreed to defer consideration of this item to a development session.

(Reference: Report by Head of Service, Hospitals and Community Care dated 28 January 2026, submitted)

12. PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2026/27

A draft programme of meetings for the year 2026/27 was before the Board for approval.

Decision

The Integration Joint Board approved the draft programme of meetings for the year 2026/27.

(Reference: Draft programme of Meetings 2026/27, submitted)

13. SINGLE AUTHORITY MODEL - OPTIONS APPRAISAL

The Board gave consideration to a report proving an update in respect of the progress in the consideration of a Single Authority Model for Argyll and Bute.

Decision

The Integration Joint Board noted the update on the options for a Single Authority Model as presented to the NHS Highland Board.

(Reference: Report by Business Improvement Manager dated 28 January 2026, submitted)

14. REVIEW OF INTEGRATION SCHEME 2025 - CONSULTATION OUTCOME REPORT

The Board gave consideration to a report providing an update on the outcome of an 8 week consultation on the revised Integration Scheme and the proposed revisions to the scheme as a result of the feedback received during the consultation exercise.

Decision

The Integration Joint Board –

1. noted the detail of the 36 responses received during the 8 week consultation period, set out in appendix 1;
2. noted that reports would be tabled at the NHS Highland Board and Argyll and Bute Council on 27th and 29th January 2026, respectively, to seek approval on the revised Scheme of Integration, attached at appendix 2; and
3. noted that the Chief Executives of the two partner bodies would jointly submit the revised Scheme to the Scottish Government for their consideration and approval, ahead of the 23rd March 2026 timeframe.

(Reference: Report by Directorate Support Officer dated 28 January 2026, submitted)

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Integration Joint Board noted the date of the next meeting as Wednesday 25 March 2026 from 1.00pm, to be held in the Council Chamber, Kilmory, Lochgilphead and by Microsoft Teams.