1. What projections have you made in terms of the increasing demand on your Council for services, including interaction with other public service providers?

   The Council reviews both cost and demand pressures as part of its budget process each year. A number of pressures have been identified in relation to Children & Families Services and Adult Care Services however these will be managed through overall budget process.

2. Have you already planned any changes to the ways in which you provide services and work with other public sector bodies? If so, please provide examples.

   The Council is currently investigating shared services across the public sector in Argyll & Bute on a Highland basis with Highland Council and NHS Highland.

3. Has your Council taken any steps to move from a resource-based distribution system to a system which is based on outcomes?

   The Council has prepared its corporate plan on an outcome basis. The corporate outcomes link to service outcomes which are linked to budgets.

4. How will the Draft Budget impact on your revenue income in 2012-13?

   The impact on actual income will not be known until the actual funding to Local Government is allocated to Councils in December.

5. What do you see as the longer-term implications of the three-year settlement, including the implications of continuing the freeze on council tax?

   The three year settlement figures will see a real reduction in spending power for Councils. However it is noted this is the case for the whole of the Scottish Block. The ongoing freeze on council tax does remove one option in terms of raising funding for public services.

   In relation to plans for reducing expenditure the Council has undertaken a 3 year programme of service reviews. These look at a wide range of issues in terms of reducing costs, improving efficiency and redesign of services.

6. What impact has the reduction in capital spending had on your Council’s ongoing capital investment plan?

   The exact impact will not be clear until individual council allocations are known.
7. Have you made provision for potential settlements of equal pay claims and, if so, what proportion of your budget is this likely to represent? How many cases are still outstanding?

The Council has already met the cost of equal pay and single status. There are a relatively small number of cases ongoing.

8. Have you been able to quantify the additional burdens on your Council that will result from the UK Government’s Welfare Reform Bill?

The Council is still assessing the full impact of Welfare Reforms.

I hope these comments are helpful.

Yours sincerely

Sally Loudon
Chief Executive

12 October 2011