



Argyll and Bute: A good place to live, work and play?

**Local report on the Single Outcome Agreement
consultation within Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands Area**

CONTENTS

SUMMARY2

BACKGROUND3

WORKSHOP FINDINGS5

- Outcome 1 - The economy is diverse and thriving
- Outcome 2 - We have an infrastructure that supports sustainable growth
- Outcome 3 - Education, skills and training maximises opportunities for all
- Outcome 4 - Children and young people have the best possible start
- Outcome 5 - People live active, healthier and independent lives
- Outcome 6 - People live in safer and stronger communities

CONCLUSION 10

APPENDIX 1 11

SUMMARY

This is a report on the recent consultation exercise by the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) in Argyll and Bute designed to identify priorities at local level and inform the Delivery Plans of the ten-year Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) 2013-23. This exercise was undertaken across Argyll and Bute, however, the focus of this report is on findings within the Mid Argyll Kintyre and the Islands (MAKI) area.

The Argyll and Bute wide report is available online¹

Recent census data demonstrated that the population of Argyll and Bute had declined by 3.4%. Population change within MAKI is -3.6% with significant local variation. It is recognised that for Argyll and Bute to become more prosperous tackling this population decline and cultivating an environment where the economy can thrive are of the highest importance. Attentive to these themes the CPP has agreed the overarching outcome for the SOA: 'Argyll and Bute's economic success is built on a growing population'.

The consultation was entitled: **Argyll and Bute - A Good Place to Live, Work and Play?** and comprised an online survey and 15 events across Argyll and Bute with five held in the MAKI area.

The findings in MAKI highlighted local concerns with employment, housing, land ownership issues, transport links, more support for small business, and assistance in transforming primary resources, encouraging growth in high income tourism and developing improved internet connections. With such a geographically diverse area there were other more localised issues, for example: decline in use of Lochgilphead town centre; lack of support and extra care facilities in Tarbert; demand for second homes on Islay driving increases in house prices with ensuing local resident affordability issues; and the desire for an all year round reliable ferry service from Campbeltown to Ardrossan and northern Ireland.

Suggestions include placing a target on desired population within MAKI (and the wider Argyll and Bute) with parallel work on planning for population growth localities and the alignment of services to support this growth, a focus on finding a long term solution to the issues of the A83 and connectivity more generally, enhancing support to small and or emerging businesses and raising the rate of superfast broadband roll out across MAKI.

The data from this and the full Argyll and Bute wide report will feed into the strategic Population Summit to be held later this year, to consider ways of addressing the population decline in Argyll and Bute.

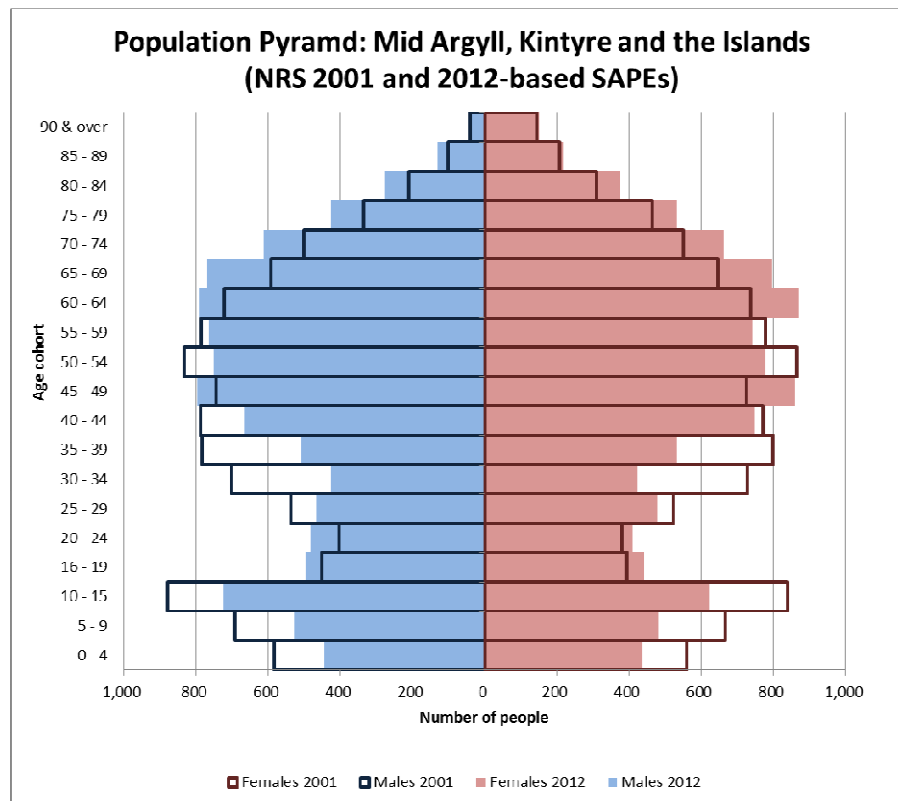
¹ <http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/good-place-live-work-and-play>

BACKGROUND

In August 2012 Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership agreed to annual consultations on the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) to ensure communities had a say in how the Partnership can achieve its outcomes.

The figures from the census of 2011 were published and highlighted Argyll and Bute as the highest area in terms of percentage population decline, and this was seen as the greatest challenge for all community planning partners. The population changes in Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands are as follows:

Population changes by age and gender



Population changes in Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands

Age cohort	Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands Number of people		Percentage change 2001 to 2012	Proportion of age cohort within total population (%)	
	2001	2012		2001	2012
0-15	4,218	3,230	-23.4	19.4	15.6
16-24	1,630	1,831	12.3	7.5	8.9
25-44	5,632	4,250	-24.5	25.9	20.6
45-64	6,189	6,349	2.6	28.4	30.7
65-74	2,290	2,841	24.1	10.5	13.8
75+	1,814	2,147	18.4	8.3	10.4
Total population	21,773	20,648	-5.2	100.0	100.0

In August 2013, the first stage of Argyll and Bute's Single Outcome Agreement was approved by the Scottish Government. This included:

Principal outcome:

“Argyll and Bute's economy is based on a growing population”

To achieve the principal outcome a set of supporting long-term outcomes were agreed:

- 1. The economy is diverse and thriving**
- 2. We have an infrastructure that supports sustainable growth**
- 3. Education, skills and training maximises opportunities for all**
- 4. Children and young people have the best possible start**
- 5. People live active, healthier and independent lives**
- 6. People live in safer and stronger communities**

In order to achieve these outcomes, a delivery plan has been developed for each of the six outcomes.

The community consultation was designed to enable local communities to inform the content of delivery plans for each of these outcomes in addition to contributing to setting and achieving localised outcomes.

A parallel online survey was undertaken with over 500 responses across Argyll and Bute, including 186 from the MAKI area. In addition, a Youth Consultation was undertaken on 23rd and 24th of November 2013 by Argyll and Bute Youth Forum, attended by 50 young people, including 19 from MAKI. Full details of these findings can be found in the main Argyll and Bute report².

Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership is grateful to Education Scotland for its support in part-funding this consultation process, which meets the strategic guidance on Community Learning and Development.

² <http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/good-place-live-work-and-play>

WORKSHOP FINDINGS

Introduction

Many of the key Argyll & Bute wide issues were reflected in Mid Argyll Kintyre and the Islands.

Noteworthy comments include a desire for the SOA to consider a specific target population; to implement programmes to encourage growth; and to consider the impact this may have in planning service provision. For example, certain areas could be targeted for growth with local initiatives designed to encourage inbound migration such as a multi-layered approach to housing, targeted small business support and developing appropriate infrastructure. It was noted at some workshops that other rural areas in Scotland were experiencing growth (for example Western Isles) in population and a suggestion was to learn from their experiences where appropriate.

A brief description of the main headlines from the Argyll and Bute wide perspective followed by detail on local issues and priorities within the Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands consultation follows. Potential solutions to the topics and issues raised are based on participants views and comments put forward at workshop and Question Time events.

Outcome 1 - The economy is diverse and thriving

Argyll and Bute

Four main issues were raised in Outcome 1 workshops:

- Enabling (small) businesses / start-ups
- Promoting Argyll and Bute
- Housing
- Land ownership

Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands

Key areas raised in MAKI were around the economy, support for small business and land ownership issues. Housing was raised as a priority and this is included in Outcome 2 - Infrastructure.

Topic raised	Issue discussed	Potential solutions raised as part of engagement process
Local Control	Community Plans	Adopt Community Plans to help lever in funding
Small Business Development	Small Business Support, lack of premises Infrastructure	More targeted support at early stages, more affordable business units in key localities
Employment	Harnessing Natural Resources	Support on transforming primary resources locally
Employment	Farming / Crofting	Initiatives to support these areas
Employment	Tourism	Promote high end Tourism
Employment	Income Deprivation	Adopt Living Wage across CPP partners
Employment	Access to Jobs	Develop Career Fairs, open days with local employers
Land Ownership	Lack of Availability	Community buy outs, Land Release

Town Centres	Lack of Use e.g. Lochgilphead	Local Strategies for Redevelopment, BIDs, emulate Campbeltown
--------------	-------------------------------	---

Outcome 2 – We have an infrastructure that supports sustainable growth

Argyll and Bute

Four main issues were raised in the Outcome 2 workshops:

- Transport,
- Broadband and internet
- Mobile coverage
- Electricity / grid

Mid Argyll Kintyre and the Islands

MAKI in the main broadly reflected concerns as highlighted in other areas with some localised issues.

Topic raised	Issue discussed	Potential solutions raised as part of engagement process
Transport	A83	Long term solution found quickly – E.g. Tunnel; develop alternative routes; bridge Cowal – Kintyre peninsula
Transport	Improved ferry services would potentially encourage population and economic growth.	Year round ferry services Campbeltown to Ardrossan & Ireland
Transport	Ferry reliability	Increase lobbying via SG and other routes
Renewables	Grid Connections impeding growth	Develop Argyll and Bute plan with milestones
Renewables	Develop more community owned projects (E.g. Islay Energy Trust)	Appropriate support provided
Renewables	Visual / local Impact	Due consideration given to each development, local community plans encouraged and adopted
Broadband	Slow roll out hindering small business growth and inbound mobility	European Funding, Research innovative models, community ownership models, Lobby for faster rollout
Mobile Phone Signal	Poor in many areas hindering small business growth and inbound mobility	Alternative models, lobby
Housing	Affordability, location, size	More appropriately sized and located affordable housing
Housing	Lack of appropriate housing for key professionals needed in area	Develop program for reintroducing tied housing for high demand skilled staff
Housing	Demand for second homes pushing house prices to unaffordable levels	Increase tax on second homes
Housing	Lack of Land for self-build	Program to release land for self- build + training courses

Outcome 3 - Education, skills and training maximises opportunities for all

Argyll and Bute

Main issues raised in the Outcome 3 workshops:

- Barriers to accessing education, skills and training opportunities
- Secondary education, particularly with regard to where this leads and how it relates to future careers
- Access to, and availability of, further and higher education
- Skills gaps between the workforce and job opportunities
- Need for apprenticeships, career progression and work experience opportunities

Mid Argyll Kintyre and the Islands

Lifelong learning and issues relating to skills and training were prominent issues raised in the MAKI area.

Topic raised	Issue discussed	Potential solutions raised as part of engagement process
Lifelong Learning	Lack of opportunities	Improved broadband connections, more local provision
Skills and Training	Lack of appropriate Training e.g. forest husbandry, fish farming, tourism	More Argyll focused training, smaller groups, use of VC, work more closely with businesses to align training
Skills and Training	Support for those returning to work	Program / project to support those returning to work
Skills & Training	Work Experience – lack of programme	Develop placement program with businesses
Skills & Training	Apprenticeships	Develop program with businesses to create MAKI pilot Apprenticeship Program
Skills & Training	Use of online Resources	Significant scope to increase online learning, need to increase rollout of high speed internet, Create post dedicated to expansion of access to online learning

Outcome 4 - Children and young people have the best possible start

Argyll and Bute

The discussions in the workshops appear to have concentrated on childcare issues and the lack of activities and facilities for children and young people.

Main Issues raised in Outcome 4 workshops:

- Childcare
- Facilities and Activities
- Volunteering
- Engagement with Young People

Mid Argyll Kintyre and the Islands

Childcare was a key issue in the MAKI area, It is noteworthy that many felt school provision was considered to be generally of a high standard. Enabling young people

to access extracurricular activities in rural areas was an issue that was raised across MAKI.

Topic raised	Issue discussed	Potential solutions raised as part of engagement process
Childcare	Lack of affordability of childcare, acute in some locations e.g. Islands	Assist development of locally owned childcare facilities
Access to Extra Curricular Activities	Rural residing children have difficulty in accessing, lack of transport	Open classes to adults in addition to children (as was previously), website dedicated to car sharing

Outcome 5 - People live active, healthier and independent lives

Argyll and Bute

Areas highlighted in the Argyll and Bute report include the needs of specific groups, the value of social interaction and issues relating to access, most of which were also raised in the MAKI area.

Mid Argyll Kintyre and the Islands

The majority of comments from the area workshops fall into two broad categories:

- Access to Health Services – difficulty in accessing a range of appropriate health services in certain rural localities.
- Healthier Lives – Initiatives to help residents stay healthy

Topic raised	Issue discussed	Potential solutions raised as part of engagement process
Access to health service	Rurality is an issue	Increase use of internet based support
Employment in Health	Attracting and retaining health professionals	Can be difficult in rural areas; develop improved conditions for needed professional's e.g. tied housing, free subsidised transport, support with fuel costs, improved training for local people to access positions
Healthier Lives	Lack of activities	Develop more local activities for all age groups
Healthier Lives	Obesity / Overweight issues	More targeted positive programmes to encourage take up
Healthier Lives	Isolation	More and new ways to connect, better partnership working

Outcome 6 - People live in safer and stronger communities

Argyll and Bute

General agreement across Argyll and Bute and in MAKI that the area was safe and secure with a vibrant third sector. This was generally acknowledged to be a significant strength in developing programmes to encourage inbound migration

Mid Argyll Kintyre and the Islands

A number of local issues were identified within the MAKI area including continuing support for the vibrant third sector, access to services for those in rural areas and more generally access to services for those with disabilities.

Topic raised	Issue discussed	Potential solutions raised as part of engagement process
Fire Service	Recruitment issues with Retained Fire fighters (acute in Islay & some other areas)	Emulate Campbeltown model
Third Sector, Development Trusts	Need for continued support as significant sector in MAKI	Better partnership working, adaptation of local community plans by CPP
Third Sector	Lack of Partnership Working, competition for same funds	More meaningful ways for sector to work together, Forums, Local Community Plans
Community Cohesion	Fragile Rural communities suffering from depopulation	Programme to address depopulation
Community Cohesion	People with disabilities	Integration into communities, improve access to services

CONCLUSION

The consultation highlighted the participants' wish to prioritise developing the economic potential of Argyll and Bute through harnessing the strengths of our rich natural resources and heritage. Supporting small to medium enterprises through a range of measures including additional support at the early stages, more suitable premises and support to transform primary produce locally also came through as a strong view. It was thought that this should be supported by a better connected Argyll and Bute with fast reliable road, ferry and air connections and placing higher importance on the roll out of superfast broadband and improved mobile phone signal in our rural communities.

Challenges include how to ensure our health service meets the need of a geographically dispersed ageing population which may, in time, be mitigated as set targets for increasing population in identified localities are aligned to services to these growing population centres. Similarly pressure on local education provision may be relaxed as suitable population growth areas develop.

Encouraging new ways to listen to local communities aspirations, for example through the recognition and formal adoption of local Community Plans, presents its challenges not least in areas such as planning, yet may also provide the resources to our rural communities to thrive. There was general recognition that young people seeking wider experiences may move out of the area and more could be done to both encourage those who wish to stay or who may be considering returning as they progress through different stages of their lives.

Options for practical incentives designed to encourage inbound migration include opening land for development, a multi-faceted approach to delivering new, appropriate housing solutions, and a commitment to paying the living wage across Community Planning Partners. All, or some, of these may begin to address the falling population and build a longer term sustainable and vibrant economy, serving the needs of those who choose to live, work and play in one of Scotland's most impressive, hospitable, and safest areas.

This report also suggests there is scope to develop local area action plans for the MAKI Community Planning group in parallel with the high level Single Outcome Agreement delivery plans. Such a move would demonstrate a commitment by partners to ensure the priorities of local communities are both listened to and transformed into meaningful action.

APPENDIX 1

Five consultation events occurred in four locations across Mid Argyll Kintyre and the Islands as follows:

Islay and Jura Workshop in partnership with IJCVS	Wed 29 January	7.00 - 9.00pm	Gaelic Centre, Bowmore
Kintyre Workshop in partnership with KIWG	Fri 14 February	3.00 - 5.30pm	Campbeltown Town Hall
Mid-Argyll Workshop	Tues 18 February	3.00 - 5.30pm	Tarbert Academy
Mid-Argyll, Kintyre & Isles Debate	Tues 18 February	7.00 - 9.00pm	Tarbert Academy (VC to Islay)
Colonsay Focus Group in partnership with CCDC	Tues 25 February	6.00 – 8.00pm	Service Point, Colonsay

Attendance at events was as follows:

Location	Dates	Attendance		
		CPP	Third Sector/Community	Total
Campbeltown Workshop	14 February 2014	17	11	28
Colonsay Focus Group	25 February 2014	1	7	8
Islay and Jura Workshop	29 January 2014	9	21	30
Mid-Argyll, Kintyre & Islands – Question Time Event	18 February 2014	17	20	37
Tarbert Workshop	18 February 2014	16	26	42

Online survey responses were as follows

Area	No of responses
Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands	186
• <i>Mainland</i>	<i>168</i>
• <i>Islands</i>	<i>18</i>

EVALUATION OF EVENTS

In order to assess how participants felt about the events, and how the consultation processes might be improved in future, evaluation of events were carried out. At 8 of 9 workshop events, PowerPoint voting was used, and results are as follows:

Results of PowerPoint voting evaluation at workshops

	Important	Quite important	Not really important	Not important at all
How important do you think it is that we hold events to discuss issues like this with the community?	74%	18%	6%	2%
	Comprehensive	Adequate	I would have liked more information	I didn't receive any information
How would you rate the information you received prior to the event?	6%	39%	32%	23%
	Very good	Good	Poor	Very poor
How would you rate the opportunities to discuss issues in the workshops?	36%	52%	10%	2%
	Better than I expected		As I expected	Less than I expected
Did the event meet your expectations?	39%		52%	9%
	Excellent	Good	Not very good	Poor
How would you rate the event overall?	18%	72%	9%	2%
	Important	Quite important	Not really important	Not important at all
How important is it that we provide you with a summary of the points raised at the event?	80%	14%	5%	1%

Evaluation forms were available at the Question Time events and some of the comments received are as follows:

- Time too short to discuss BIG issues
- Consultations – do these more often
- Dwelt more on the negative rather than
- Panel took defensive rather than

solutions

- Communications of event – if you want more people to attend need to advertise more and provide more information on your website
- Need to hear from local business

investigative approach

- Need for questionnaires to be sent out to households and businesses to consider their views – not everyone has time to come to meetings