MINUTES of MEETING of OBAN LORN & THE ISLES AREA COMMITTEE held BY MICROSOFT TEAMS AND IN AN FURAN GAELIC CENTRE, CORRAN HALLS, OBAN on WEDNESDAY, 10 DECEMBER 2025

Present: Councillor Kieron Green (Chair)

Councillor Amanda Hampsey
Councillor Willie Hume
Councillor Andrew Kain
Councillor Jim Lynch (from Item 5)
Councillor Luna Martin (from Item 4)
Councillor Andrew Vennard

Attending: Michelle Mundie, ACHA Chief Executive
Melissa Stewart, Democratic Services Manager
Mark Calder, Project Manager, Roads and Infrastructure
Elsa Simoes, Infrastructure Design Manager
Victoria Weir, Project Officer, Roads and Infrastructure

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillor Julie McKenzie**.**

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest intimated.

3. MINUTES

(a) **Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee - 10 September 2025**

The Minute of the meeting of the Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee, held on 10 September 2025 was approved as a correct record.

(b) **Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Community Planning Group - 12 November 2025**

The Minute of the meeting of the Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Community Planning Group, held on 12 November 2025 was noted.

(c) **Oban Common Good Fund - 11 August 2025**

The Minute of the meeting of the Oban Common Good Fund, held on 11 August 2025 was noted.

(d) **Special Meeting of the Oban Common Good Fund - 10 October 2025**

The Minute of the special meeting of the Oban Common Good Fund, held

on 10 October 2025 was noted.

4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chair advised, with agreement of the Committee, and subject to governance advice, that he intended to have two public question time sessions to provide a further opportunity for supplementary questions later in the meeting. The Democratic Services Manager advised on procedure and the committee agreed that they would take questions now and would then continue the session until later in the meeting.

The first 5 questions were received in advance of the meeting and submitted to the relevant departments for responses.

Question 1 – Phil Hamerton

Should responsibility for decision-making in regard to Control Areas in Argyll & Bute be delegated to local Area Committees, as is done in Highland Council areas?

The Chair advised that Argyll and Bute Council are in the process of drawing up a consultation on Control Areas within the Local Authority. It would, in his view, be important that any Control Areas introduced in the area are based on the responses to the consultation and evidence based as this would give a degree of confidence should there be any legal challenge. Any suggested delegation could be fed in through that consultation process.

Councillor Vennard advised that there is nothing decided concerning Control Areas and these would fall under the remit of Planning and Licensing Committee and full Council.

It was agreed that the next 4 questions which were submitted prior to the start of the meeting would be taken together as they related to the same issues of flooding.

Question 2, 3 & 4 – Alison Rennie, Oban Community Council

2. What is the clearance work referred to in para 4.2 of the Oban Flooding Update report to the Area Committee, as follows: "Subject to the necessary permissions it is proposed that some clearance work is carried out."

3. Does the Council accept the statements in the 2019 Flood Study that:
   - “The Black Lynn has been identified as the only reach where vegetation or sediment accumulations currently have potential to impact upon flood risk.” (Argyll & Bute Council - Oban Flood Study; Report 3A: Options Appraisal - Long-List to Short-List: Waterbody Engineering); and
   - "water levels in the channel may have been elevated (in 2018) by 0.3m or more due to this effect." (Argyll & Bute Council - Oban Flood Study; Report 2B: Black Lynn Flood Modelling 5.4.2)?

4. Regarding the meeting referred to in the Oban Flooding Update report to the Area Committee states in para 4.10 (the first one numbered thus) that: "An Oban Local Flood Resilience Group has been established by volunteers with an initial meeting held with Council officers.":

- who was involved;
- when did this take place;
- is there a record of the meeting; and,
- what were the outputs?

Question 5 – Lachie Strathern

The business premises which I lease from the Council continue to flood with surface water and sewage, which runs from Crannog Lane whenever we have heavy rain.

On 8th April 2024 a survey was conducted of the surface water drainage of Lochavullin Road and Crannog Lane by an external contractor on behalf of the Council. This clearly identified an obstruction of the surface water drain in Crannog Lane, and a further possible obstruction of the larger drain downstream in Lochavullin Road.

Can the Committee please enquire what remedial action has been taken to clear these obstructions to allow surface water to drain properly, and is the survey and report to be considered under Agenda item 6 at this meeting?

Ms Stewart advised the Committee that in regard to question 5 from Mr Strathern, this was not a question for the infrastructure design team and due to officer leave there was no-one available at this time to provide a response. On this basis a response would be pursued and sent on to Mr Strathern in due course.

Elsa Simoes advised that modelling of the Black Lynn was carried out to establish if it could be dredged. It turned out after the modelling that it could not be dredged and if it could then it was not known the how the existing walls etc would hold up as there are no records available of the existing structures. It would be a very costly exercise to search out culverts as the existing culverts under the car park and out to the South of the Bay would not cope with the excess water.

Ms Simoes went on to say that the only solution would be to create ponds and storage areas above the business park area and below the Hospital grounds to collect the rainwater and discharge when the tide is low.

The Japanese Knotweed will be cleared under a different fund which was not part of the flooding work.

Ms Simoes went on to say it is a Council obligation to clear the burn, and it was cleared late 2024 from the South Bay up to Jackson's Quarry. Further clearance will take place early in the new year to remove obstructions within the burn.

Regarding the Resilience Group, Ms Simoes stated that she was made aware that a meeting took place in 2024 but has no further information available of who was involved.

The Chair went back to the members of the public who had asked the questions if they had any further queries?

Mr Strathern advised that he had seen mention of a Resilience Flood Group but had no idea who they were and if he had been he would very much have liked to attend the meeting. He also advised that he did not agree with the negatives that Ms

Simoes mentioned, and he thought that the dredging of the burn's built-up silt would go a long way to alleviate the flooding issue.

Councillor Martin spoke regarding the removal of Japanese Knotweed this would not be removed under the current funding but funding of £104k had been allocated from the Nature Restoration fund and Mr Murphy had assured Councillor Martin that members of his team were currently undergoing training on the injection of Japanese Knotweed with a view to undertaking works in March.

Ms Simoes responded to the further comment about dredging and advised that early next year she would come back to the Area Committee with the modelling which will be a visual of what would exactly happen if the sediment in the burn was removed and making the burn deeper.

Councillor Martin advised that the Cabinet Secretary had been invited to attend on the issue of flooding last year but declined. Councillor Martin indicated that she would raise this again later in the month at the Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee.

Mr Hamerton advised that the Flood Resilience Group was mentioned in a report to the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee in June 2024, and that this was not accurate. Oban Community Council had previously invited Councillors and Council Officers to a flood resilience meeting with a view to forming a group but there had been no response. Mr Hamerton questioned the existence of a group commenting that if there was information of a meeting taking place then it was not in the scope of Oban Community Council.

There being no further questions at this time, the Committee agreed to continue the item until later in the meeting.

5. ARGYLL COMMUNITY HOUSING ASSOCIATION (ACHA) UPDATE

Consideration was given to a presentation by the Chief Executive of ACHA, which provided an update on a number of areas including the investment programme for 2025/26, that delivered replacement kitchens and bathrooms and the upgrade of lighting and decoration in common closes; the Scottish Government Grant of £750,000 which has allowed the progression of 25 adaptations and essential aids for the most vulnerable customers across Argyll and Bute with a further 11 due to be completed by end of December; and how they had successfully obtained £13m through the Energy Efficiency Programme allowing the improvement on energy efficiencies within home that are EPC rated E, D and Low C. Further information was provided on the extensive renovations at Dunallan House in Connel, that has now been leased to the HSCP for visiting staff; The Welfare Rights Team's success in securing unpaid benefits and grants to tenants of up to £2.4m, and awards totalling £68,355 for 472 tenants from the Housing Association Community Trust (HACT) fuel fund; major improvements are planned for the gypsy travellers site at Bayview Ledaig; and distributions of funding from the ACHA's 10-10-10 initiative, and ACHA's Community Action Fund to Rockfield Primary School and Oban's Riding for the Disabled Group respectively.

Decision

The Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee considered and noted the information provided in the presentation.

(Reference: Presentation by Chief Executive, Argyll Community Housing Association Ltd, dated December 2025 submitted)

Due to an issue with the connection, it was agreed that the items on the agenda would be taken out of sequence. The minute reflects the order which items were taken at the meeting.

6. ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STRATEGY

The Committee gave consideration to a presentation by the Project Manager on the Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy, and the list of current and proposed locations for electric vehicle chargers.

Discussion followed during which concerns were outlined as to maintenance of the equipment and generating sufficient capacity, with the Project Officer responding by outlining the modelling tool used to help inform decisions subsequently fed into area energy plans used to inform SSEN. The Project Manager advised that more information on costs would be submitted to the Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee in March, followed by a further report to Area Committees which would give opportunity for a more informed discussion.

Decision

The Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee noted the information provided.

(Presentation by Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services, dated 20 October 2025, submitted)

7. OBAN FLOODING UPDATE

The Committee gave consideration to an update on Flooding within Oban as a result of coastal, fluvial (water course), surface water and combined sewer overflows. The report highlighted a localised hotspot at Lochavullin Car Park bounded by Soroba Road, Tesco and Lochavullin Road and that preventing future flooding would require significant works, for which there was no funding identified.

Decision

The Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee:-

1. considered and noted the submitted report;

2. endorsed the proposals by officers to lobby for funding and to explore external funding opportunities, and

3. agreed that quarterly progress updates be provided to future meetings of the Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee.

(Reference: A report by Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services, dated 10th November 2025, submitted)

8. ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE UPDATE

The Committee gave consideration to a report which provided links to the recent activities of Roads and Infrastructure Services.

Decision

The Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee noted the contents of the report.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services, dated 30 October 2025, submitted)

9. AREA COMMITTEE QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORTS – FQ2 2025/26

The Committee gave consideration to the Area Performance Report for financial quarter 2 of 2025/26 (July to September 2025) which illustrated the agreed performance measures for this period.

Decision

The Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee noted the performance and supporting commentary as presented and commended the local planning team on their exceptional performance in achieving an average 5.1 week determination of householder planning applications during the FQ2 period.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Customer Support Services, dated 7 November 2025, submitted)

10. APPOINTMENT TO OBAN & LORN COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE LTD (ATLANTIS LEISURE)

The Committee considered a verbal update from the Democratic Services Manager on this item, which was continued from the September Area Committee meeting. Ms Stewart advised the Committee on the dates and timings of board meetings and that they were in person meetings, although the Board may be open to review this on the basis that there were two categories of Directors, with council appointments being ex-officio. Nominations were sought for an additional Member to sit on the Board of Oban & Lorn Community Enterprise Ltd.

Decision

No nomination was forthcoming and it was agreed that the vacancy would remain unfilled at this time.

11. CHARITABLE TRUSTS, BEQUESTS AND TRUST FUNDS

The Committee gave consideration to a report which provided details on proposals relating to the ongoing management and proposed distribution arrangements for Charitable Trusts, Bequests and Trust Funds for which the Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee are Trustees.

Decision

The Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee:

1. noted the financial position of the Charitable Trusts, Bequests and Trust Funds as of August 2025;

2. agreed that the charities and trust funds, that have historically been awarded to Council Departments and Allied Partners, are awarded on the basis outlined in paragraph 5.5 and defined within appendix 1;

3. agreed to make available all unrestricted funds from the Dugald McPhail Memorial Fund to Roads and Infrastructure and thereafter to place a moratorium on the fund;

4. agreed to invite representatives from the Health and Social Care Partnership to consider submitting an application form to the Miss Flora McLucas and Miss M M Cameron Bequests; and

5. noted that the Mrs Mellors Bequest has no identified beneficiaries and that this fund is subject to ongoing consideration by officers.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with Responsibility for Legal & Regulatory Support, dated November 2025, submitted)

12. HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE PARTNERSHIP - PERFORMANCE REPORT FQ1 2025/26 (APRIL- JUNE)

Consideration was given to the Health and Social Care Partnership Performance Report for financial quarter 1 of 2025/26 (April to June).

Decision

The Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee noted the:

1. revised suite of 77 Key Performance Indicators within the Integrated Performance Management Framework for 2025/26;

2. performance for FQ1 2025/26 (April – June 2025);

3. Delayed Discharge Sitrep as of 30 Jun 2025, as at Appendix 1 of the report and

4. latest performance against the National Health & Wellbeing Outcomes and Ministerial Steering Group Integration Indicators, as at Appendix 2 of the report.

(Reference: Report by Senior Manager Performance and Improvement, Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership, dated 10 December 2025, submitted)

13. SAKURA CHERRY TREE PROJECT UPDATE

A report providing an update on the next stage of Argyll and Bute's Sakura Cherry Tree Project was before members for information.

Decision

Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee noted the contents of the report.

(Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support, dated 7 November 2025, submitted)

14. OBAN, LORN AND THE ISLES AREA COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

The Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee workplan was before members for information.

Decision

The Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee noted the contents of the workplan.

(Reference: Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee workplan, dated 10 December 2025, submitted)

PUBLIC QUESTIONS PART 2

The Chair asked if there were any further questions from the public.

Mr Frank Roberts, Oban Community Council

Mr Roberts referred to Mr Strathern's previous question which mentioned a survey report that was published about 20 months ago which clearly identified drainage of surface water and clearance of obstructions from the drains around Lochavullin Business Park, and questioned whether anything had actually been done on the results of that report?

Mr Calder advised that he was not aware of the specifics of the report but his colleague, Ms Simoes may be in a position to respond. With regard to road side verges those were regularly attended to to ensure gullies are running clearly.

In noting Ms Simoes was not attending at that time, Ms Stewart advised that Ms Simoes had confirmed that this was not a question she could answer and it would have to be referred back to Estates and/or Property Services for their input.

Mr Strathern advised that the report from 20 months ago states that the main drains have collapsed and/or blocked and he is surprised that no one is aware of this report. He continued it is all very well clearing the gullies but the surface water has no where to run as these main drains are blocked and he has highlighted this for sometime now. What is required is a high pressure washer to go through the drains or the road dug up to ascertain how these blockages could be cleared, until this is done the water cannot go anywhere except back up into business premises.

Mr Calder advised again that if the question is referring to specific premises that are rented from the Council, then he is not in a position to respond to that as it does not fall under the remit of Roads and Infrastructure.

Mr Phil Hamerton

Mr Hamerton asked if the Community Council was to attempt to reconvene a Flood Resilience Group meeting again, to whom within the Council should the invitation be sent?

The Chair advised that the Community Council would be welcome to invite Councillors directly and as for invitations to Council Officers the best avenue would be to roadsandinfrastucture@argyll-bute.gov.uk which would then allow the service to identify the an available person to attend.

Mr Hamerton then asked does the benefit cost ratio take into account the wider community of Argyll, particularly the Islands who shop at the supermarkets in the flood area and recognise the true cost?

The Chair advised his understanding of how funding is allocated is that residential property is prioritised.

Mr Calder agreed with the Chair's view and stated that he understood that the economic impact of flooding to the wider community and that was an important point, but he was unsure how it feeds into the National Flood Fund process.

Mrs Alison Rennie, Oban Community Council

Mrs Rennie stated that this would have been a question for Ms Simoes who has now left the meeting, regarding her earlier statement with reference to the development of ponds or storage tanks above the business park. Is anyone aware of the offer of land from the developers of a large development at Arinagour, South of Oban, where trees were being planted.

The Chair advised that there would need to be a detailed study of the best place to store rainfall, it wasn't possible to just accept a site just because it was offered, the site would be required to intercept rainfall. In his view, the most appropriate locations to intercept were behind the hospital or alternatively putting in a raised car park at Lochavullin, with storage below, given nature had suggested that this is where the water wanted to go.

Councillor Hume had raised a question earlier in the meeting which Mr Calder had suggested Ms Simoes, who was not present at the time, may be able to pick up under the reconvened Public Question Time session. In Ms Simoes absence he asked that his question regarding the timescale for opening of the B8035 and whether this would be in time for 2 main events next year, that had already submitted through Member Zone, be picked up and responded to as a priority.

15. JOHN OF LORN BEQUEST FUND AWARD RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing information on the number of applications that have been received for support from the John of Lorn Bequest.

Decision

The Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee noted the number of awards made from the John of Lorn Bequest since the last meeting of the Area

Committee in September 2025.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support dated 10 December 2025, submitted)