MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OBAN LORN & THE ISLES AREA COMMITTEE HELD BY MICROSOFT TEAMS AND IN THE CORRAN HALLS, OBAN ON WEDNESDAY, 11 MARCH 2026

Present: Councillor Kieron Green (Chair)

Councillor Amanda Hampsey
Councillor Willie Hume
Councillor Andrew Kain
Councillor Jim Lynch
Councillor Julie McKenzie
Councillor Andrew Vennard

Attending: Stuart McLean, Committee Manager
Mark Calder, Project Manager
Elsa Simoes, Infrastructure Design Manager
Douglas Whyte, Team Lead – Housing Strategy
Brendan Docherty, Education Manager
Donald Fiest, Headteacher, Lochnell Primary School
Shirley Stuart, Headteacher, Park Primary School

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillor Martin.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest intimated at this item, however during Public Question Time (Item 4) of the agenda, Councillor McKenzie declared a non-financial interest as she had a personal connection to Lachie Strathern who asked questions during this item. She remained in the meeting but took no part in the discussion or response to Mr Strathern's questions.

3. MINUTES

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

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

(b) Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Community Planning Group - 11 February 2026

The Minute of the meeting of the Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Community Planning Group, held on 11 February 2026, was noted.

(c) Oban Common Good Fund - 15 December 2025

The Minute of the meeting of the Oban Common Good Fund, held on 15 December 2025, was noted.

4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Committee Manager advised that there had been questions submitted by 3 members of the public in advance of the meeting and having noted that some of the members of the public were in attendance, the Chair invited them to ask their questions. The Chair then invited any other members of the public in attendance to submit any questions they may have.

Alison Rennie

Would the Area Committee support the establishment of a multi-agency working group to co-ordinate planning and actions to reduce the risk of further flooding and to improve community resilience in the event of flooding in Oban? Such a group, comprising Council Officers and Oban, Lorn and the Isles members, community representatives from Oban Community Council and BID4Oban, along Scottish Water, to report to the Area Committee at each of its meetings?

The Chair advised that the Committee may want to respond to this question following consideration of item 7 of the agenda (Oban PVA Flood Risk Management Update).

Lachie Strathern

In the absence of Mr Starthern, the Committee Manager read out the below questions which had been submitted prior to the meeting:

I feel that you may have been mis-informed going by the nature of the response to my questions raised at the Area Committee meeting on 10th December?

It is very clear in the drainage report that there are at least two sections of the main surface water drain that are blocked or collapsed?

They are clearly marked in red and it is noted that the camera was unable to go further due to the blockage?

Cleaning the gulleys is fine and I'm aware and appreciate that this has been done. However the water that goes into the gulleys is unable to go anywhere due to the blockage and back fills up, spills out and floods the surrounding area, which happens to be all the rented Council units (not just mine) in my side of Crannog Lane?

I pointed this out at the last meeting and asked if something could be done about it. I don't seem to have a direct answer in your email and wondered if at the Area Committee meeting scheduled for this coming Wednesday, could this be brought up again and a clear idea when works could begin to resolve this, as it is a huge contributing factor to the problems here?

I am also gobsmacked that the Council engineer, who I think was present "remotely", knew nothing of the drains survey that was carried out on the 8th of April 2024? That was some 20 months prior to the December meeting. Maybe they needed to request it under freedom of information as well?

The Project Manager advised that if Mr Strathern has questions relating to his tenancy that these should be directed to the Councils Estates team and confirmed that a gulley machine had been deployed to the Crannog Lane area recently and that the team cleared the gulleys, checked the pipes and reported that they were running satisfactory, at the time of the visit.

Councillor Vennard highlighted that this has been a longstanding issue and that he had sent an email to all Area Committee members suggesting that if the costs were reasonable and affordable that the Council should pay for the works and resolve the issue.

The Chair advised that a response had been provided to Mr Strathern on 23 January 2026 from the Councils Estates and Roads and Infrastructure Teams which read as "*Officers from Roads and Infrastructure Services have considered this and also recently completed gully clearance works and are satisfied that the road surface water drainage is operating appropriately. However, as previously advised, there is an unauthorised connection from your property into the sewage system which requires to be rectified and the council has offered to assist with this but at this stage this offer has not been taken up."*

Councillor Hampsey highlighted that this has been an issue for a number of years and that she had raised concerns with Environmental Health as the flooding is not just surface water, but also contains sewage, she has not received a response from Environmental Health. Councillor Hampsey advised that as with Councillor Vennard, she has engaged with the Councils Estates team and other Council officers to request consideration of the flooding to be dealt with on a no fee basis as there are associated health risks and the Council has a responsibility to retest residents. She highlighted that Mr Strathern is not the only business who has contacted her from Crannog Lane and that this continues to be a health risk which is a great concern and needs to be resolved.

Terry Hegarty

How exactly does Argyll and Bute Council reconcile the legal rights of children to enjoy the benefits of family life and equality of educational opportunity with continuing reliance upon mainland hostel arrangements for children resident in south west Mull attending High School in Oban?

Are any or all members of the Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee prepared to commit themselves to finding out the legal justification for Argyll and Bute Council's official position in relation to its evident disregard for children's rights in law in the matter of its preferred location for a new 2-18 educational campus, and its poorly evidenced insistence upon the unaffordability of a centrally located High School to meet the learning needs and important legal rights of all secondary school pupils on Mull?

The Committee Manager advised that on receipt of Mr Hegarty's questions he had passed them onto colleagues within Legal and Regulatory Support and Commercial Services who are preparing comprehensive responses which will be sent to Mr Hegarty once available.

Councillor Kain highlighted that he is very engaged in this subject and that as far as he is aware the legal requirement allows the Council to take into account the economics and practicalities of it and that it would not be appropriate to disadvantage the majority to placate the minority.

Councillor Vennard advised that to the best of his knowledge there are no issues around the use of hostels for education and this model is used in other areas and by other councils, including Highlands.

Councillor Hampsey highlighted that she is absolutely engaged and committed to understanding the legal basis and children's rights, which she is undertaking at the moment. Councillor Hampsey advised that she would be delighted to meet with Mr

Hegarty to discuss the matter, and that it was her understanding that within children's rights, affordability does not mitigate the requirement for adhering to children's rights.

Councillor MacKenzie highlighted that she is committed to getting a definitive answer on how the requirements under the UN Convention on Rights of a Child sit with the Councils legal requirement.

The Chair highlighted that he is committed to finding out all information regarding this.

The Committee Manager confirmed that Mr Hegartys questions were the last of the questions submitted prior to the commencement of the meeting. Having noted that there were members of the public in attendance, the Chair invited them to submit any questions they may have.

Tracy Mayo

It is my understanding that the Tobermory Campus project will go back to full Council on 29 April 2026 for consideration. Will this simply be to nod the project to proceed or will there be options to be considered such as a refurbishment?

The Chair responded that members could not comment as they have not seen the report.

Ms Mayo asked that the Community find out at the earliest possible moment if a refurbishment is on the table.

The Committee Manager advised that all the reports that will be considered on 29 April at full Council will be publicly available on the Council's website on 22 April. The Committee Manager highlighted that this is a legislative requirement, specifically that reports are made publicly available 3 clear days before the meetings and that Argyll and Bute Council goes beyond that requirement.

Neil MacIntyre

If the Council decides in April to pursue a refurbishment of Mull Campus rather than a new build, will the funds awarded by the Scottish Government for a new build, be returned to the Government?

The Chair reiterated that no member has seen the report which will be considered at full Council in April and that the money which is being set aside by the Council is for the purpose of the Campus which can be used for a number of things but would be required to support the new campus as approved by the Council at Tobermory South. The Chair advised that the Scottish Government could still withdraw the funds due to missed timescales.

Councillor Hampsey highlighted that it was her understanding that the Scottish Government were very clear that they were committed to funding the campus and that she would be writing to the Scottish Government looking for clarity and assurance on that basis.

Councillor MacKenzie highlighted that she was sure that the Scottish Government was amenable at looking at an extension to the project funding if the Council wished.

Roddy McCuish

Question 1

At a meeting of the Area Committee some time ago, the Area Committee unanimously granted £40,000 for a bridge at Mossfield. Has this gone out to tender, where are we with that, and when will this bridge be installed? If the Mossfield Development Group take over the lease at Mossfield and the bridge lies within its boundaries, will the Development Group have the lease of the bridge?

Question 2

At a recent meeting of the funders of the Scottish Rugby Union (SRU), the Scottish Football Association, the Camanachd Association and Mossfield Development Group, the spokesperson for the SRU reported that the road at the back of blaze park was good to go but I cannot find any planning application or neighbourhood consultation. Could you provide clarity on this?

Question 3

The group developing the proposed skatepark pump park have advised that they are ready to begin the development within a month, which is a concern as it lies in the middle of a floodplain and I still cannot find any application relating to this. Could the Area Committee confirm if a planning application has gone through as we have not been able to support or object to the application?

The Committee Manager advised that, regarding the 'Mossfield bridge' that he would pass Mr McCuish's questions onto the relevant officers for a response after the meeting and provide any responses to Mr McCuish and the Area Committee members.

The Project Manager advised that no plans have been submitted to the Roads Department relating to the road at the back of the blaze pitch, and that there are no planning applications submitted in this regard. The Project Manager highlighted that in terms of the lease at Mossfield, it would be too early to say what would be included and it would be negotiated with the tenant.

The Project Manager advised that in terms of the £40,000 that a report came to the Area Committee in September 2025 and with the Chairs agreement it may be useful to bring a further report to the next meeting.

Mr McCuish advised that the group have followed up with an expression of interest but would like to know what they are leasing and what they aren't. The Project Manager advised that what is contained within a title could be different from what is being leased, and asked Mr McCuish if he had received a response to his expression of interest and if any discussions are ongoing. Mr McCuish highlighted that he is currently working with the Oban, Lorn and the Isles Community Development Officer who is liaising with the relevant Council departments on their behalf. The Project Manager committed to getting clarity for Mr McCuish on the situation.

Councillor Vennard added that in terms of a lease it would be normal for a map to be included that would clearly define the boundaries of the area, fixtures and fittings and rights of access.

The Chair highlighted that if the group had a strong requirement for the bridge to be included within the lease, that they should formally request it.

The Project Manager highlighted that if there is a group who wishes to lease the area then they would set out what area they would like to lease and the Council would discuss the request.

The Chair clarified that planning applications are available online and that there are none for the Mossfield area.

Neil Macintyre

I contacted the Councils and Scottish Government legal departments around any planning development at the blaze pitch, I was advised that this formed part of the agreement to develop the new high school and that it should have been replaced with a grass park. Clarity is needed around this agreement, specifically should any development be taken forward without a grass pitch being available?

Referring to the Planning Portal the Chair confirmed that the last planning application for the Mossfield site was for the blaze pitch and that this had been submitted in 2016.

Councillor MacKenzie highlighted that this matter would be for the Planning department.

Nigel Burgess

Tracy Mayo advised that she had been sent a question by Mr Burgess and read it out on his behalf.

Why has Argyll and Bute Council taken down the renewable energy action plan from their website? This does not reflect well on their net 0 commitments when 2/3^{rds} of all UK Councils admit they will not reach their targets by 2045.

The Chair and the Committee Manager advised that a response would be provided to Ms Mayo and Mr Burgess following the meeting.

5. PRIMARY SCHOOL ATTAINMENT REPORT: OBAN, LORN AND THE ISLES

The Committee gave consideration to a report and a presentation which provided a range of key information about primary school provision in the Oban, Lorn and the Isles area during the school session August 2025 to January 2026 and reported the national collection of attainment and achievement data from June 2025.

Decision

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

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Education, dated March 2026, submitted)

6. HOUSING SERVICES ACTIVITY UPDATE - STRATEGIC HOUSING INVESTMENT PLAN (SHIP) - ANNUAL UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report which provided an update on Housing Services activity and the delivery of the Local Housing Strategy within the Oban, Lorn and the Isles area.

Decision

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

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth, dated January 2026, submitted)

7. OBAN PVA FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE

The Committee gave consideration to a report which provided an update on Flood Risk Management within the Oban Potentially Vulnerable Area and the progress on proposed short-medium term and medium-long term Actions.

Motion

The Area Committee note and consider the contents of the report.

Moved by Councillor Green, seconded by Councillor Kain.

Amendment

The Area Committee note and consider the contents of the report with concern.

Moved by Councillor McKenzie, seconded by Councillor Hampsey.

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**
Councillor Green	Councillor Hampsey
Councillor Hume	Councillor McKenzie
Councillor Kain	
Councillor Lynch	
Councillor Vennard	

Decision

The Motion was carried by 5 votes to 2 and the Committee resolved accordingly.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services, dated February 2026, submitted; and Amendment by Councillor McKenzie, seconded by Councillor Hampsey, tabled)

8. ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES 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 report.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services, dated February 2026, submitted)

9. AREA COMMITTEE QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORTS – FQ3 2025/26

The Committee gave consideration to the Area Performance Report for financial quarter 3 of 2025/26 (October to December 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.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Customer Support Services, dated 10 February 2026, submitted)

10. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Phil Hamerton

The roads report presented highlights the use of weekly updates to members which are available to the public on the website. Could all the pages of the website be dated and updated as there has not been an update posted since January 2026?

It was noted that the Chair would follow up with a response from the Project Manager in this regard.

11. CHARITABLE TRUSTS, BEQUESTS AND TRUST FUNDS - DISTRIBUTION ARRANGEMENTS - MISS FLORA MCLUCAS AND MISS M M CAMERON BEQUESTS

Consideration was given to a report inviting the Trustees to make awards from the Miss Flora McLucas and Miss M M Cameron Bequests.

Decision

The Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee agreed to award:

1. £2,539 from the Miss Flora McLucas Bequest to the Health and Social Care Partnership/Mull and Iona Community Hospital and thereafter place a moratorium on this fund; and

2. £345 from the Miss M M Cameron Bequest to the Health and Social Care Partnership/Mull and Iona Community Hospital and thereafter place a moratorium on this fund.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support, dated February 2026, submitted)

12. NOTICE OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDER 13

The following Notice of Motion was before the Committee for consideration –

Pontoons at North Pier Oban

The OLI Area Committee resolves and agrees as follows:

1. Council Officers are hereby instructed to prepare a report on the repairs to the pontoon facilities at the North Pier in Oban which have been required as a result of Storm Éowyn, which said report shall include:

   (a) A summary of the works which have been completed to date;
   (b) A summary of the works which may be required in due course;
   (c) Estimates of the timescales for the completion of any relevant works;
   (d) Estimates of any relevant costs for the works involved;

2. That the said report shall be provided for the next ordinary meeting of the Area Committee (being the meeting of the OLI Area Committee which is scheduled to take place on 10 June 2026).

3. Further notes that and acknowledges that reports in relation to the repairs to the pontoon facilities at the North Pier in Oban as a result of Storm Éowyn (and other marine assets of the Council) may also be reported to meetings of Council, the Policy and Resources Committee, the EDI committee, and the Harbour Board, in due course, with relevant recommendations for consideration by Members at those meetings, if required.

Moved by Councillor Vennard, seconded by Councillor Hampsey.

Decision

The Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee agreed the terms of the Motion.

(Reference: Notice of Motion Under Standing Order 13, moved by Councillor Vennard, seconded by Councillor Hampsey, submitted)

13. NOTICE OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDER 13

The following Notice of Motion was before the Committee for consideration –

Argyll Square Project Consolidated Financial Report and Delivery Update

This Committee notes:

- That there has been expenditure in relation to improvement works at Argyll Square, and that some elements of the works remain to be completed;

- That no report covering the financial position and delivery status of the project has yet been presented to the Area Committee.

The Committee therefore agrees:

1. To request that the Executive Director, in their capacity as Section 95 Officer, submit a consolidated report to a future meeting of the Area Committee setting out:

    - The approved budget for the works and any agreed variations;
    - Total expenditure to date;
    - The cost centres and/or project references to which expenditure has been recorded;
    - A breakdown of expenditure by category;
    - The basis upon which any overheads or internal recharges have been applied.

2. That the report also include a delivery update summarising:

    - Works completed and works outstanding;
    - The anticipated programme for completion;
    - The remaining approved budget available.

Moved by Councillor Hampsey, seconded by Councillor McKenzie.

Decision

The Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee agreed the terms of the Motion.

(Reference: Notice of Motion Under Standing Order 13, moved by Councillor Hampsey, seconded by Councillor McKenzie, submitted)

14. DRAFT 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 11 March 2026)

15. JOHN OF LORN BEQUEST FUND AWARD RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee gave consideration to a report regarding a number of applications that had been received and processed for support from the John of Lorn Bequest. The report confirmed that following the establishment of the new distribution arrangements in 2020 more than £16k has been awarded to qualifying individuals that live within the Burgh of Oban and that at present, the total funds available for distribution are less than £50.

Decision

The Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee noted the number of awards made since December 2025 and agreed to place a moratorium on the fund.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support, dated February 2026, submitted)