

Summary of the Report from the Argyll and Bute Economic Forum 2016

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Falling population

- **Argyll and Bute 3.4% decline in its population**
- **A long term trend of decline from the 1960s**
- **Projected steep fall if we do not challenge this**
- **Rapidly aging population 31.4% over 60 – Scottish average 24%**
- **Key issue loss of 25-44 age group and need to address this**

Single Outcome Agreement 2013 to 2023

Setting the Vision

- Partnership focus for priorities
- First ten year plan
- Ambitious and holistic

‘Argyll and Bute’s economic success is built on a growing population’



CPP 6 Priority Outcomes

1: The economy is diverse and thriving

2: We have 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

How do we deliver outcomes 1, 2 and 3?

Economic Summit October 2014

- The Community Planning Partnership hosted the Economic Summit
- Nearly 200 delegates drawn from the public, private and voluntary sectors
- Some key messages from the event
 - Focus on working together to deliver our key economic priorities.
 - Build on our strengths and opportunities
 - Better promotion and marketing of our area
 - Focus on transport, digital connectivity, housing, employment, better communication with business sector, community led regeneration
 - Establish the Argyll and Bute Economic Forum to help guide our strategic direction with the economy and addressing our population challenges.

Establishing the forum...

Chronology...

- **February 2015**
 - Chairperson appointed
- **March 2015**
 - inaugural meeting and 3 sub groups created;
 - Tourism
 - Food and Drink/Aquaculture
 - Youth and Education
- **May 2015**
 - Initial feed back from sub groups
- **Baseline...**

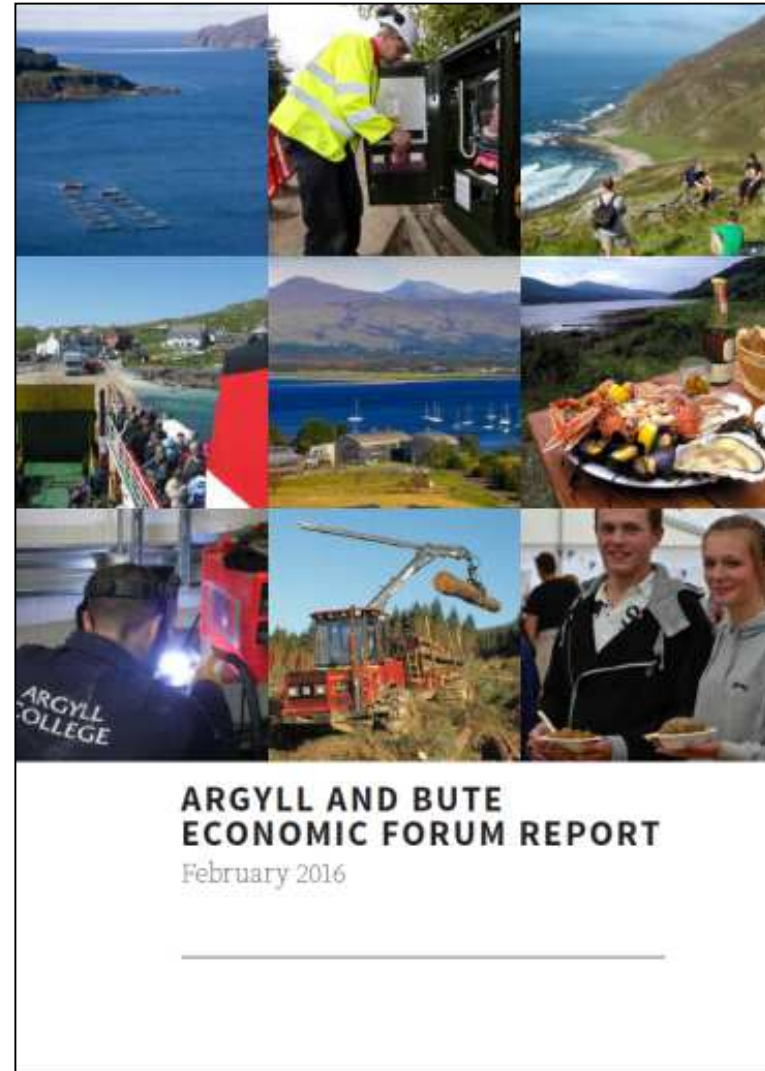
Nicholas Ferguson CBE



Chronology continued...

Developing the report

- **Summer 2015**
 - Industry engagement
- **November 2015**
 - Town visits
 - Report headings established
- **February 2016**
 - Publishes report



Forum Members

1. **Nicholas Ferguson, CBE, Chairman, Chairman of Sky plc*/ Savills**
2. **Alistair Barge, Managing Director, Gigha Halibut**
3. **Neil Wells, Managing Director, Lochs and Glens Holidays**
4. **Iain Jurgensen, Director, Portavadie (AITC)**
5. **Cathy Craig, Commercial Director, ScotRail (AITC)**
6. **John Forteith, Head of Business Development, Bidvest Foodservice Scotland**
7. **Jane MacLeod, Company Secretary, M&K Macleod Ltd and Secretary of Mid Argyll Chamber of Commerce**
8. **Dr Tracey Shimmiel Managing Director, SAMS Research**
9. **Neil Francis, Director, Scottish Enterprise**
10. **Sally Loudon*, Chief Executive, Argyll and Bute Council**
11. **Alex Paterson, Chief Executive, Highlands and Islands Enterprise**
12. **Cllr Aileen Morton, Policy Lead for Sustainable Economic Growth, Argyll and Bute Council**
13. **Gordon Wales, Director of Financial Management, Scottish Government**

Approach of the Economic Forum

Looking at Argyll and Bute as if it were a business

- What are the parts of the business that are growing, attracting sustained investment and which can grow further, producing larger numbers of high quality jobs?
- What could be done to accelerate that growth?
- What are the barriers to that growth which need to be removed or reduced?

Tourism – Opportunity for Growth

Context

- Argyll's largest private sector employer with 25% of all private sector jobs
- High growth area (Scotland 6%) with 30% new employment in Argyll
- £150 million of planned investments

Key recommendations

1. Marketing and promotion
2. Seasonality
3. Marine tourism
4. Cultural attractions
5. Events and festivals
6. Active travel networks

Food and Drink - Growth Opportunity

Context

- Growth industry; 6% p.a. in real terms worldwide
- Natural assets – environment
- Area of strength – provenance e.g.
 - Farmed salmon/smokeries
 - Shellfish
 - Whisky
 - Hill Lamb, beef, game
 - Cheese*

Recommendations

Aquaculture

- Liaise with industry
- Streamline consenting process
- Encourage widening of species
- Raise Argyll's share - added value
- Collaboration with academic sector

Food

- Promote the 'Argyll' food brand
- Develop high value 'niche' sectors
- Accreditation
- Meat processing plant in Argyll

Young People and Education

Context

- Signs young people want to stay in Argyll
- Student numbers at Argyll College and SAMS risen dramatically over last 10 years

Recommendations

- Increase links between employers and schools.
- Increase young enterprise schemes in schools.
- Increased apprenticeships
- Expand Argyll College/SAMS
- Oban as a University Town

Small Business and Barriers to Growth

Small Business

- Maximise public sector contracts to local firms.
- Finance for small firms.
- Mentoring scheme
- Wood chip/pellet plant in Argyll

Barriers

- Mobile connectivity
- Continued investment in affordable and/or private sector housing
- Rest and Be Thankful
- Upgrade A816 Lochgilphead to Oban
- Upgrade A8003 Dunoon to Portavadie
- Fixed link between Bute and mainland
- New flights between Argyll and Glasgow/Edinburgh

argyll and bute

communityplanningpartnership



Helensburgh

Context

“Following a big improvement to the look of the town led by the Council, new businesses are starting and a big expansion in house building is underway.”

- CHORD
- Release of green belt
- New central office
- Housing growth
- St Peters Seminary
- Submarine Museum
- Faslane Maritime Change Programme
- Helensburgh waterfront/leisure



Dunoon

Context

“Dunoon has the advantage and disadvantage of being very near the central belt. There are good signs of businesses developing...and... there is a clear opportunity for visitor offerings.”

- **CHORD**
 - Queens Hall/ Pier
- **Ardyne**
- **Sandbank Business Park**



Campbeltown

Context

“The town has suffered greatly from industrial job losses... and there is a strong entrepreneurial spirit and a series of investments in the town... which is encouraging”.

- **CHORD + CARS 2**
- **Ferry**
- **Picture House**
- **Aquaculture**
- **Wind Towers Ltd**
- **Machrihanish – enterprise zone**



Rothesay

Context

“Rothesay ...beautiful...what it needs is a strong vision of what it could be and... the people of Bute are working on their own vision ‘Building a Better Bute’”.

- CHORD + TH 2
- Rothesay Pavilion
- RAFA; Building a Better Bute



Oban

Whilst it was recognised that Oban is not without its own challenges, Oban was examined as an area with a thriving population and economy when compared to the other towns in Argyll and Bute.

- **CHORD**
 - public realm/ berthing facility
- **Lorn Arc**
- **Airport**
- **University Town**
- **SAMS + Student Accommodation**
- **European MS Park**
- **Upgrade A816**



A Shared Vision

- Report focuses on areas of greatest opportunity;
- Addressing principal barriers to growth;
- Critically – *“Requirement for a Joined up approach from everyone including business people, MSPs, MPs, Councillors, Agency leaders, newspaper editors, journalists and others”.*



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