



Argyll & Bute Transport Connectivity and Economy Study

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Study Objectives

- Identify problems - assess the extent to which transport connectivity between the five main population and economic centres (Campbeltown, Dunoon, Lochgilphead, Oban and Rothesay), and to these from the Glasgow/Inverclyde area, has a real impact on businesses, service providers, and the potential for future economic growth.
- Identify opportunities - consider the scope for major transformative investments in transport infrastructure to produce transformative economic impacts.

What was done....

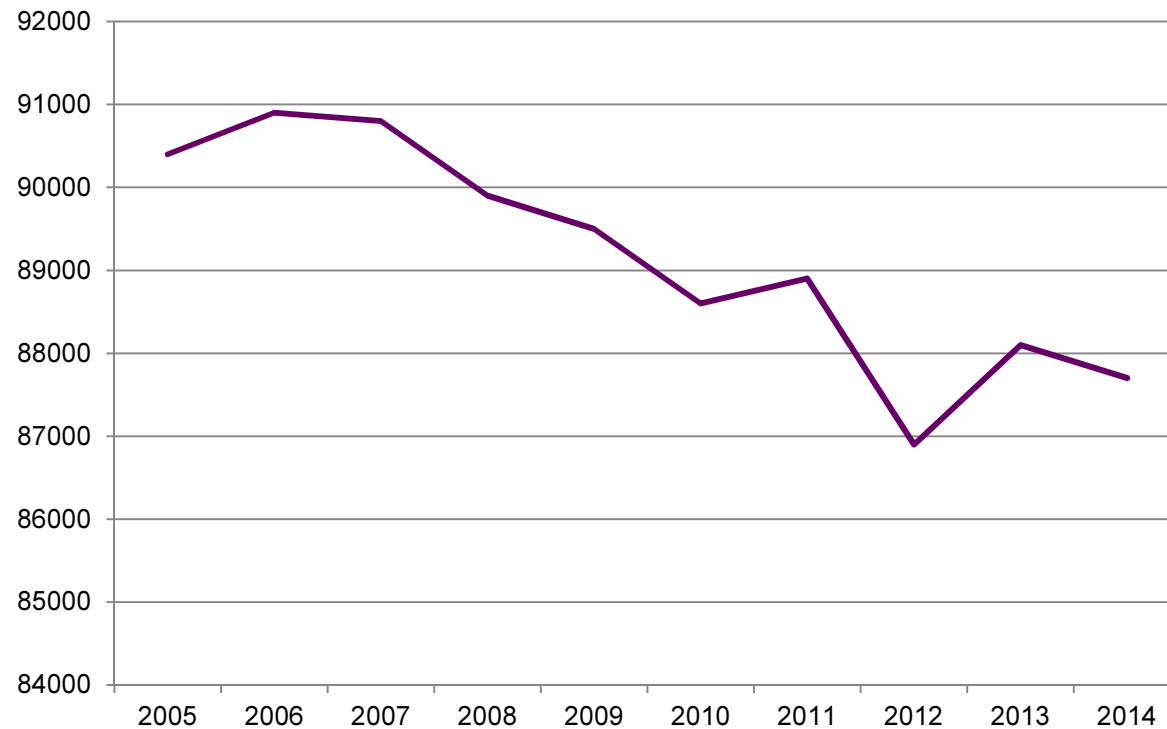
HIE commissioned ekosgen and Reference Economics in 2015 to undertake the study.

Fieldwork included:

- A desk-based review of population and employment trends and of the transport network e.g. journey times, mode data
- In-depth consultations with 15 key organisations and 23 businesses - 1,700+ private sector business employees
- Review of existing studies/ planned investment, including A82, A83 trunk roads and the Scottish Ferries Plan
- Definition of transport problems and objectives

Socio-Economic Context (1)

- 3% **population** decline in A&B in decade to 2014
- 4% rise in H&I; 5% in Scotland over same period



Socio-Economic Context (2)

Population Change in the Five Main Settlements, 2001-2011				
Town	2001	2011	% change	Net change
Oban	9,448	9,974	5.6%	+529
Dunoon	9,803	9,960	1.6%	+157
Lochgilphead	3,708	3,825	3.2%	+119
Campbeltown	6,751	6,423	-4.2%	-284
Rothsay	5,106	4,637	-9.2%	-470

- Varied picture within A&B
- Significant population rise in Oban (twice national average)
- Modest increase in Lochgilphead – but below regional and national rates
- Decline in Campbeltown (-4%)
- Ageing population in all key settlements

Socio-Economic Context (3)

- Dependent on Public Sector employment, and traditional sectors including Primary industries, Forestry, Construction and Tourism – all reliant on transport network.
- Number of economic growth opportunities e.g. Food & Drink, Tourism, Renewables

Existing Transport Infrastructure

Most road journeys are 50 miles or more. In part this reflects the dispersed nature of the area.

However, challenges of distance exacerbated by the following:

- **Limitations and quality of the road network**, resulting in low average speeds (below 40 mph on some key routes, including parts of the A85, A816 and B836/A8003).
- **Bus** services – often low frequency and longer road journey times than car trips.
- **Long crossing times and limited frequency of sailing on ferry services** to some of the more populous islands (e.g. Islay, Tiree).
- **Air can only meet some travel needs.**

Other Transport Issues

- Resilience/ Lack of Alternative Routes
 - For some routes, resilience regarded by many consultees as poor, mainly as a result of closures (roads) or cancellations (ferry).
 - Unforeseen event (a landslip, a road accident) can mean very long diversions. E.g. A816 Oban Lochgilphead, diversion adds over an hour to the journey.
- Seasonality and Conflict between Transport Users
 - Tension tourist and non-tourist users
 - Quality and fit for purpose of B roads and minor A roads (dual users tourists and heavy industry/ daily deliveries)
- RET issues (capacity)

Role of Transport

- **Staff travel to and for work** – most live quite local (necessity)
– can be issue recruiting/attracting staff
- **Goods inward (suppliers)** – need to build in time, some internal A&B issues (e.g. food produce)
- **Goods outwards (products)** – most find a way to deal with this using existing network (some reliability issues)
- **In-bound tourists** – *generally* not seen as major issue; but quality of internal network concerns and may miss “impulse” market
- **Other business visitors** – journey times can be prohibitive
- **Service delivery** – reaching customers, users

Key A&B Transport Movements

A83 – Rest & Be Thankful

A82/85 – Oban to Glasgow

A816 – Oban to Lochgilphead

Dunoon to Inverclyde

Other key MAKI corridors:

- Tarbert – Portavadie ferry
- Campbeltown – Ardrossan ferry

A83 Rest & Be Thankful (1)

- Feedback that this the principal thoroughfare and that *reliability* is the main issue
- The lack of alternatives is critical
- Necessary for all those in mid-Argyll and Kintyre
- Strong desire for permanent solution
- Can be compounded by seasonality – twice the number of cars in peak months
- Otherwise A83 seen as largely adequate bar Campbeltown to Tarbert slow

A83 Rest & Be Thankful (2)

- No choice for businesses to accept the unreliability
- Loss of productivity and profitability
- Significant service delivery challenges
- Some businesses have moved away – long journey times plus unreliability
- Likely to be a disincentive to investors

A816 Lochgilphead - Oban

- Road poor – 1 hour to cover 37 miles
- Impacts on deliveries, business, reaching customers (e.g. BT), service delivery
- Journey times and reliability (and stress)
- Conflict between different user types (car use of 75% higher in peak months)
- Lack of alternative routes

Other MAKI Transport Corridors

Tarbert to Portavadie

- Significant for business travel by organisations with an area-wide remit and who may also have offices distributed throughout Argyll and Bute e.g. the local authority.
- However, poor transport links from Portavadie to Dunoon with various single track sections

Campbeltown to Ardrossan

- Introduction of ferry service regarded as helpful by key local businesses, largely by tourism businesses

Overall Conclusions

Strong case for investment in A&B transport infrastructure

Study noted current and planned investment underway at the time e.g. £10M R&BT landslide risk reduction measures; A83 improvements at pinch points; Ferry network planned changes.

In the short to medium term the following identified as worthy of further consideration:

- **A816** – to remove the constraints caused by poor carriageway width and alignment, and improve journey times between Oban and Lochgilphead (and onward to Kintyre)
- **A85/Oban** access improvements
- **Dunoon- Colintrave – Portavadie** route upgrade
- **Glasgow to Oban rail service** to improve journey times

Long term aspirational package of investment to develop new east-west route, including fixed links across Clyde and Loch Fyne

- Issue very high cost – complete route package in excess £1billion

National Transport Strategy (NTS)

Transport Scotland currently undertaking review of NTS, involving wide programme of engagement

ABC's 'Top Transport Priorities' for A&B, feeding into NTS consultation and subsequent Strategic Transport Projects Review, includes:

- A83 Road Upgrade – need for comprehensive programme of investment to improve road resilience, safety and journey times
- A83 R&BT – need for “once and for all solution”
- A816 Oban to Lochgilphead – remove pinch points, improve road alignment and excessive bends
- Dunoon – Colintraive – Portavadie Road Upgrades
- Replacement of Council Ferries – ageing vessels on Islay Jura route and Appin to Lismore
- Extension of ferry services e.g. Tarbert – Portavadie ferry
- Improve capacity and resilience of Islay ferry service – concerns given expansion of whisky and tourism industries

Rural Growth Deal

ABC's RGD proposition, based on 3 key drivers – *Connecting; Attracting; Growing*

Connecting, includes **Roads Infrastructure proposal** to develop key routes to market and business development

- **Circa £0.5M for feasibility studies** for A83 improvements, realignment of A85 and improvements to other identified local strategic economic routes.
- Following appraisals, critical where the findings for evidence-based improvements are substantiated **circa £40M implemented on enhancements to strategic routes**



Any Questions?



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