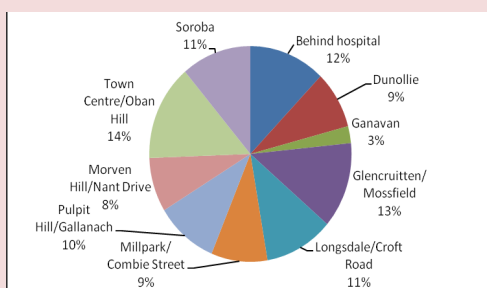


Oban Community Action Plan

The results...so far

The Oban Community Action Plan Steering Group was formed in December 2011 to pull together a community profile and to undertake a survey to gather the views of the people who actually live in Oban and to find out what was important to them.

There were 1,074 completed forms returned. The forms were distributed in three ways: within the Oban community by volunteers, to Oban High school pupils during school time



There are several existing projects and organisations operating in the town which will be best placed to act on the views expressed which relate to their area of expertise and to help to address the issues raised. Some linkages are obvious and projects are already underway e.g. Oban BIDs (improving businesses) Oban Phoenix (re-opening the cinema) CHORD (beginning to ease traffic congestion) whereas others will become clearer following discussion with the relevant groups involved

What do you like about Oban?

People living in Oban have a positive view of their town and their community. The most frequently made comments (39%) related to liking its size, the views, the bay, the facilities and services available, the shops and the variety of places to eat out- one comment *“small enough to be cozy – big enough to be interesting”* sums up the feeling of many.

The fact that everything was within walking distance was viewed positively as was being

beside the sea, having wonderful scenery, views from McCaig’s Tower and Pulpit Hill, beaches and walks through the woods at Dunollie and Glencruitten. Facilities and services such as Atlantis Leisure, the hospital, the fact there is a college were all commented on as was the variety and quality of the restaurants and fish and chip shops and the number of shops available compared with other small towns. Positive comments were also made about the town gardens *“which are beautifully kept and a credit to the gardeners”* (2) and the hanging baskets.

Festivals, cultural activities and sports activities taking place within the town also were mentioned positively by 5%. Events such as the Winter Festival, Oban Hogmany, The Big Strip, the Pipe band playing in the square and the shinty at Mossfield all being individually commented on by some respondents. People also commented on Oban being a tourist town. This was generally positive but there were some comments giving the view that it should not be ‘all about the tourists’ and that the needs of people who live in Oban should not be overlooked.

What do you dislike about Oban?

Concerns about drugs within the town were also raised by a small number of individuals and a town centre resident commented specifically on *'the number of sirens day and night'*.

Unexpectedly, 2% of respondents identified 'the seagulls' as something they disliked about the town.

Mossfield Park, The Black Lynn, Argyll Square and Station Square were identified as areas that would benefit from improvement and 4% of respondents felt that a park would be beneficial as it provide an informal meeting place and a green space within town. Others commented that more use could be made of the beaches, with the Esplanade being mentioned as well as Ganavan, and cautioned against losing access to the hills and sea around the town.

34% of respondents commented on shopping opportunities and eating places. This category featured in the top three most frequently made comment across all age ranges with comments on the number of empty shops, the need to cater for locals as well as tourists - the lack of places to buy men's clothing specifically mentioned by several people - and a lack of well known fast food outlets (viewed as positive by some and negative by others) being made. The general impression given by the responses was that improved shopping facilities would improve the town as would a general upgrade of the phys-

ical environment which was thought to be fairly poor.

The poor condition of the roads, traffic congestion, parking and broken/uneven pavements was the top issue identified by the between 25 and 64 and the over 65's. The need for a multi storey car park was mentioned and some of the parking issues raised related to inconsiderate behaviour such as parking on pavements in residential areas. Dog dirt and litter were also frequently mentioned.

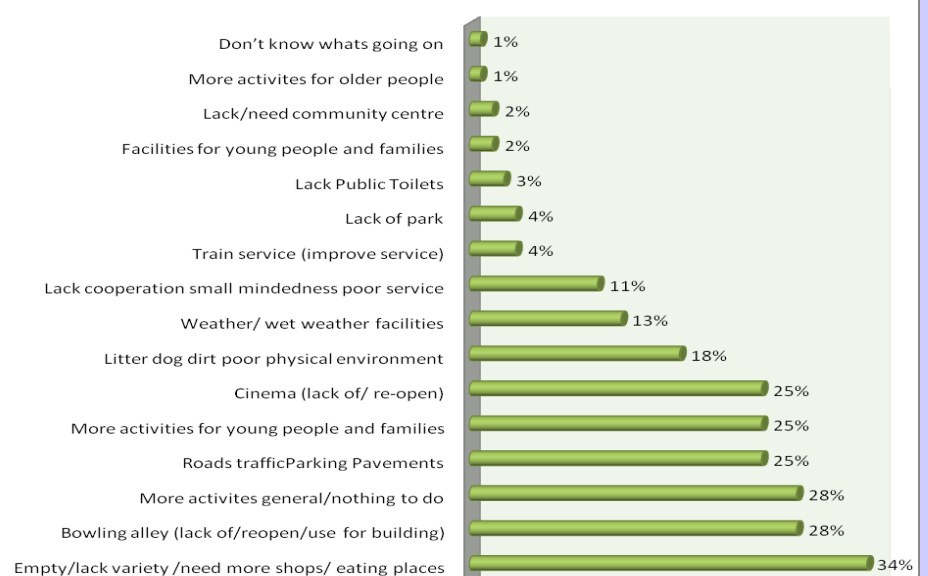
There were many comments around lack of activities, however there were also positive suggestions as to how this could be improved – many coming from young people – such as a bike park, more cycle paths, ice rink and paint ball. It was mentioned that there was a lack of places for teenagers to meet informally and 'just hang out'. The need for a 'proper' night-club was identified and there was support for more cultural activities as well as sports activities which were thought to be well catered for. There was a good level of support for the cinema re-opening (25%) and many

people (28%) commented on the bowling alley – some on the need to have a bowling alley, others on the fact that it had been lying unused for some time and suggesting alternative uses for the building.

Although the friendliness of people and the community spirit were rated highly, a significant number of comments (11%) related to more negative attitudes such as lack of co-operation, small mindedness and poor service. It was felt that more working together would be beneficial as would better coordination of activities. Using a large electronic notice board to let people know what was going on was suggested as was more use of the Oban Town Diary.

The weather was frequently commented on as was the need for wet weather facilities – covering George Street was perhaps the most radical suggestion. The train service was felt to be inadequate (too slow too infrequent) and as one under 25 year old commented *"the expense of getting to Oban from anywhere is not manageable for students"*.

Chart 1: what was disliked/could be improved by % age commenting (all Oban respondents)



What do others think of Oban?

Although the purpose of the report is to collate the views of those living in Oban, it is also useful to remember that Oban is the main service town for Lorn and acts as a hub for the area. This was reinforced by the number of people from out with Oban who completed and returned the survey

When answering the question *What do you like about Oban?*, 47 per cent of comments related to liking its size, the views, the bay, the facilities and services available, the shops and the variety of places to eat out. 28 per cent of comments related to the friendliness of the people and 4% of comments related to festivals, cultural activities and sporting activities which generally correspond with the views of the Oban people.

The comments made on what was disliked or could be improved as shown in the chart below.

Chart 2: Comments from people outwith Oban on what they dislike/could be improved in Oban



Next Steps

There are several existing projects and organisations operating in the town which will be best placed to act on the views expressed which relate to their area of expertise and to help to address the issues raised. Some linkages are obvious and projects are already underway e.g. Oban BIDs (improving businesses) Oban Phoenix (re-opening the cinema) CHORD (beginning to ease traffic congestion) whereas others will become clearer following discussion with the relevant groups involved

