



# **Argyll and Bute: A good place to live, work and play?**

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**Local report on the Single Outcome Agreement 2013-2023  
consultation within the Helensburgh and Lomond Area**

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## SUMMARY

This is a report on the recent public consultation exercise by Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership (CPP) which was designed to inform the delivery plans for the new 10 year Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) 2013-23. This exercise was undertaken across Argyll and Bute. The focus of this report is the findings within the Helensburgh & Lomond (H&L) area. The Argyll and Bute wide report is available online<sup>1</sup>

Recent census data indicated the population of Argyll and Bute had declined by 3.4% between 2001 and 2011. Population change within H&L has proved to be a contentious issue locally, with a drop of 7.5% stated as the figure from the 2011 census (with significant local variation) and used in the SOA. Helensburgh Study Group adjusted the figure to -5.2%, stating that different ways of calculating Navy personnel in the two censuses had created a discrepancy.

The CPP recognises that for Argyll and Bute to become more prosperous, tackling population decline and cultivating an environment where the economy can thrive are the CPP's top priorities. Thus the overarching outcome for the SOA is **'Argyll and Bute's economic success is built on a growing population'**.

The public consultation process was entitled: **'Argyll and Bute - A Good Place to Live, Work, and Play?'** and comprised an online survey and 15 events across Argyll and Bute, including two in Helensburgh.

The findings in H&L highlighted local concerns around a number of issues including enabling and supporting businesses (especially start-ups), better quality and affordable housing, more and better quality leisure and entertainment facilities for families, difficulties accessing further and higher education and the lack of an accident and emergency service in Helensburgh.

Suggestions to tackle these concerns include setting a target for a desired population size within H&L (and the wider Argyll and Bute) with parallel work on planning for population growth localities and the alignment of services to support this growth.

The data from this and the full Argyll and Bute wide report will feed into the strategic Population Summit to be held later this year to consider ways of addressing the population decline in Argyll and Bute.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/good-place-live-work-and-play>

## BACKGROUND

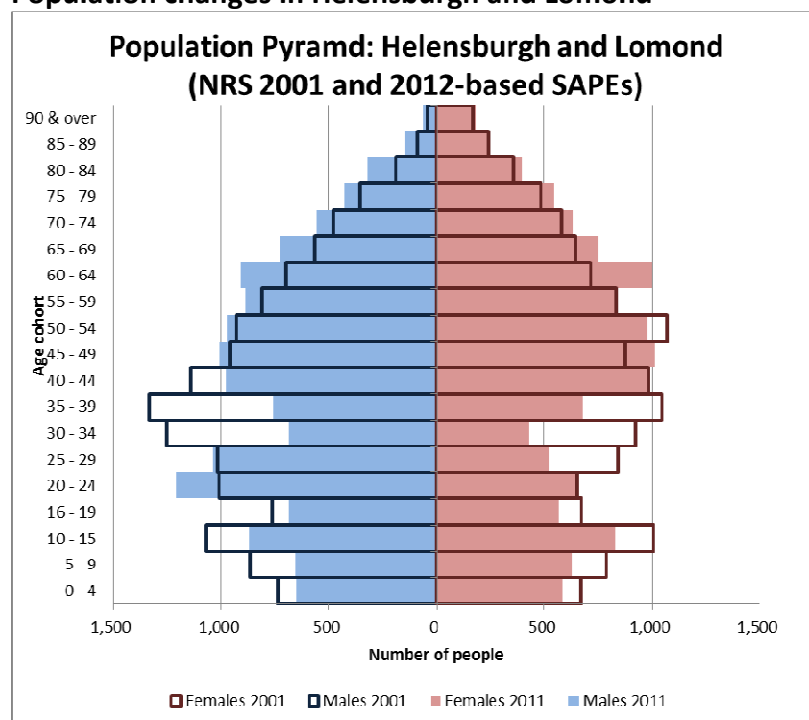
In August 2012, Argyll and Bute CPP agreed to consultations on the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) to ensure communities had a say in how the Partnership can achieve its outcomes.

The population figures from the 2011 census had highlighted that Argyll and Bute was one of only four Council areas in Scotland with a declining population, and that the reduction here had been the steepest in the 10 years since the last census in 2001. This was identified as a significant threat to the sustainability of the area by CPP partners. Since the publication of the 2011 Census, National Records of Scotland (NRS) has published:

- 2011 rebased Mid-Year Estimates and Small Area Population Estimates
- 2012 Mid-Year Estimates and Small Area Population Estimates

Figures for Helensburgh and Lomond using the more recent NRS stats are detailed below:

### Population changes in Helensburgh and Lomond



### Population changes in Helensburgh and Lomond

Age cohort	Number of people		Percentage change 2001 to 2012	Proportion of age cohort within total population (%)	
	2001	2012		2001	2012
0-15	5,134	4,389	-14.5	18.4	17.6
16-24	3,098	2,640	-14.8	11.1	10.6
25-44	8,539	5,302	-37.9	30.6	21.3
45-64	6,896	7,441	7.9	24.7	29.8

65-74	2,273	2,885	26.9		8.2	11.6
75+	1,929	2,284	18.4		6.9	9.2
Total population	27,869	24,941	-10.5		100.0	100.0

In August 2013, the first stage of Argyll and Bute’s Single Outcome Agreement was approved by the Scottish Government. This included the principal outcome:

**“Argyll and Bute’s economy is based on a growing population”**

To achieve this outcome a set of supporting long long-term outcomes were agreed:

- 1. The economy is diverse and thriving**
- 2. We have an 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**

In order to achieve these outcomes, a delivery plan is being developed for each of the six outcomes and named ‘outcome leads’ have been identified to take responsibility for delivering them.

The community consultation was designed to enable local communities to inform on the content of delivery plans for each of the six outcomes, in addition to contributing to setting and achieving localised outcomes.

In addition to the consultations, a parallel online survey was undertaken with over 500 responses across Argyll and Bute, including 79 from the H&L area. A youth consultation was also undertaken on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of November 2013 by Argyll & Bute Youth Forum, attended by 50 young people (including 4 from H&L). Full details of these findings can be found in the main Argyll and Bute report<sup>2</sup>.

Argyll and Bute CPP is grateful to Education Scotland for its support in part-funding this consultation process, which in turn will feed into the strategic guidance on Community Learning and Development.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/good-place-live-work-and-play>

## Workshop Findings

### Introduction

Many of the key Argyll & Bute wide issues were reflected in Helensburgh and Lomond.

Noteworthy comments include the feeling that the SOA needed to consider setting a desired target population, programmes that could be implemented to encourage growth and the impact this may have in planning service provision. For example certain areas could be targeted for growth with local initiatives designed to encourage inbound migration such as a multi-layered approach to housing, targeted business support, safeguarding the environment and developing appropriate infrastructure.

A brief description of the main headlines from the Argyll and Bute wide perspective, followed by detail on local issues and priorities within the Helensburgh and Lomond consultation, follows. Potential solutions to the issues raised are based on participants' views and comments.

### **Outcome 1 - The Economy is Diverse and Thriving**

Argyll and Bute

Four main issues were raised in the Outcome 1 workshops:

- Enabling (small) businesses / start-ups
- Promoting Argyll and Bute
- Housing
- Land ownership

**Main issues in Helensburgh & Lomond:**

- **Enabling and supporting businesses (esp start-ups)**
- **Better quality, affordable housing**
- **More, better quality leisure and entertainment facilities for families**
- **More investment in enhancing the environment throughout H&L**
- **Better links with the Faslane Naval Base community**

Topic	Issue	Suggested Potential Solutions
Business Development	Lack of business incentives and support, lack of suitable premises and infrastructure. Empty shops. Lack of parking.	More targeted support for start-ups, better variety of affordable business units in key localities. Incentives scheme. More links between Base and Town. Manufacturing/Industrial units.
Employment	Lack of opportunities for graduates.	Make H&L an attractive location for business.
Employment	Tourism	Promote high end tourism, short-stays and day trips.
Employment	Income Deprivation	Adopt Living Wage Across CPP partners
Employment	Access to Jobs	Develop Career Fairs, open days with local employers.
Land	Lack of availability	Community buy outs, Land release

Ownership		
Town Centre	Empty retail units in Helensburgh	Assess business rate levels.
Housing	Lack of good quality, affordable housing	Release land. Housing expo. Support rented sector.
Leisure & Entertainment Facilities	Lack of variety and quality of entertainment and leisure facilities	Working with and support private sector providers.

**Outcome 2 – We have an infrastructure that supports sustainable growth**

Argyll and Bute

Four main issues were raised in the Outcome 2 workshops:

- Transport
- Broadband and internet
- Mobile coverage
- Electricity / grid

**Main issues in Helensburgh & Lomond:**

- **Better recreational facilities for young people, families, low income families, visitors**
- **Broadband**
- **Poor access to healthcare**
- **Affordable, good quality housing**
- **More attractive Helensburgh town centre/seafront and environmental protection**

Topic	Issue	Potential Solutions
Access to Healthcare	Transport issues. Perception that H&L is sandwiched between two healthcare authorities and neither wants to take responsibility. No A&E	Consider timings of appointments for people who don't drive.
Broadband	Slow Roll Out hindering small business growth and inbound mobility	European Funding, Research Innovative models, community ownership models, Lobby for faster rollout
Attractive, affordable recreation facilities	Need to attract young people and facilities. With new attractions, more 'trendy' shops, more attractive seafront, wet weather cover, sports and community facilities.	Make better use of existing facilities. Encourage commercial enterprise.
Housing	Affordability, location, size	More appropriately sized and located affordable housing
Helensburgh Town centre	Seafront seen as a 'wasted opportunity'. Old fashioned	Provide shop-front improvement incentives for owners. Attract retailers

and Seafront	shops not geared to young people	that focus on young people and families
Recognise and safeguard H&L's coastal and inland scenic areas	Beaches and loch sides in particular are spoiled by litter and other debris. Train journey to Helensburgh spoiled by litter/	Extend Love Loch Lomond's Respect campaign. Raise awareness of the impact of litter and dumping in schools and elsewhere. Support third sector and community initiatives to clean up their areas.

**Outcome 3 - Education, skills and training maximises opportunities for all**

Argyll and Bute

Main issues raised in the Outcome 3 workshops across Argyll and Bute related to:

- Barriers to accessing education, skills and training opportunities
- Secondary education, particularly with regard to where this leads and how it relates to future careers
- Access to, and availability of, further and higher education
- Skills gaps between the workforce and job opportunities
- Need for apprenticeships, career progression and work experience opportunities

**Main issues in Helensburgh & Lomond:**

- **Transport is a barrier to accessing education, skills and training opportunities for people in rural areas**
- **Secondary education, particularly with regard to where this leads and how it relates to future careers**
- **Lack of access to, and availability of, further and higher education**
- **Skills gaps between the workforce and job opportunities**
- **Need for apprenticeships, career progression and work experience opportunities**

Topic	Issue	Potential Solutions
Lifelong Learning	Lack of Opportunities	Improved broadband connections, more local provision
Skills and Training	Lack of appropriate Training e.g. forest husbandry, fish farming, tourism	More H&L focused training - work more closely with businesses to align training
Skills and Training	Support for those returning to work	Program / project to support those returning to work
Skills & Training	Work Experience – Lack of programme	Develop placement program with businesses
Skills & Training	Apprenticeships	Develop program with businesses to create H&L pilot Apprenticeship Program
Skills & Training	Use of Online Resources	Significant scope to increase online learning, need to increase rollout of high speed internet, Create post dedicated to expansion of access to online learning



## **Outcome 4 - Children and young people have the best possible start**

Argyll and Bute

The discussions in the workshops appear to have concentrated on childcare issues and the lack of activities and facilities for children and young people.

Main Issues discussed in Outcome 4

- Childcare
- Facilities and Activities
- Volunteering
- Engagement with Young People

**Main issues in Helensburgh & Lomond:**

- **Bigger variety and better quality leisure and sports facilities and activities**
- **Need more childcare, after school care, summer holiday activities**
- **Development of Helensburgh Seafront**
- **Transport issues in outlying areas**

Topic	Issue	Potential Solutions
Sports and Leisure Facilities and Activities	No enough affordable activities for young people. Why no cinema, beach, Helensburgh community centre, family centre, drop-in facility, place for young people to hang out other than pubs and Costa?	Work with private enterprise. Support the third sector to develop resources.
Child Care	No after school care in some schools. Mother & toddler groups need support.	Support for private enterprise and the third sector to provide care.

## **Outcome 5 – People live active, healthier and Independent Lives**

Argyll and Bute

Areas highlighted in the Argyll and Wide report include the needs of specific groups, the value of social interaction and issues relating to access, most of which were also raised in the H&L area.

**Main issues in Helensburgh & Lomond:**

- **No A&E in H&L**
- **Demands of an ageing population**
- **Transport issues for people who do not have cars**

- **Lack of opportunities for young people to learn about healthy living**

Topic	Issue	Potential Solutions
Lack of A&E	Access to acute medical services needed on this side of the Clyde. Need enhances community services to compensate for centralisation of acute services. Hospital system puts people off living in H&L.	
Ageing population	Need to raise awareness about dementia and support communities to take more responsibility for the older people who live there.	
Transport issues	No consideration given to appointment times for people who use public transport. Vale Hospital difficult to get to by public transport. Too much time being spent travelling vs providing care. How can healthcare planners take on board the practical aspects associated with access to healthcare?	
Young people and health lifestyles	Barriers to eating in the school canteen. Children choosing to eat lunch out of school. Access to unhealthy food too easy, even within schools.	

### ***Outcome 6 - People live in safer and stronger communities***

Argyll and Bute

There was general agreement across Argyll and Bute that the area was safe and secure with a vibrant third sector. This was acknowledged to be a significant strength in developing programmes to encourage inbound migration.

**Main issues in Helensburgh & Lomond:**

- **Facilities for young people to hang out in**

- **Local decision making**
- **Lack of community leaders and volunteers**
- **Police presence in rural areas**

Topic	Issue	Potential Solutions
Facilities for young people	Young people hanging around in parks and on the street. Why is there no 'Centre 81-type' community facility in Helensburgh?	Support for the third sector
Local decision making	Need community engagement in, and consultations about, allocation of resources.	Support local community action planning.
Police presence	Lack of police presence in rural areas	
Lack of community leaders and volunteers	A strong community needs people to take part. Health & Safety and other legislation puts people off. Why can't we get scout leaders?	Support for the third sector.

## **Conclusion**

The consultation highlighted participants' wish to prioritise developing the economic potential of Argyll and Bute through harnessing the strengths of our rich natural resources and heritage. Supporting small to medium enterprises through a range of measures including additional support at the early stages and more suitable premises came through as a strong view.

Challenges include how to ensure the health service meets the needs of an ageing population and people who do not own a car. Leisure, entertainment and sporting facilities for young people and families was a recurring issue, as was access to good quality affordable housing in both the rented and private sector.

Developing of a range of practical incentives designed to encourage inbound mobility includes opening land for development, a multifaceted approach to delivering new, appropriate, housing solutions and a commitment to paying the living wage across Community Planning Partners may all add to the blend that will arrest a falling population and build a longer term sustainable and vibrant economy serving the needs of those who choose to live and work and play in one of Scotland, and the UKs, most impressive, safest, and hospitable areas.

## Appendix

Consultation events occurred in Helensburgh & Lomond on Thursday 6 February as follows:

Victoria Halls	Workshops	2-4pm
Victoria Halls	Debate	7.30-9.45pm

The attendance at events was as follows:

Location	Dates	Attendance			
		CPP	Third Sector/ Community	Other	Total
Victoria Halls	06/02/14, afternoon workshops	26	30	19	75
Victoria Halls	06/02/14, evening debate	19	20	35	74

The online survey responses were as follows:

Area	No of responses
Helensburgh & Lomond	79

## EVALUATION OF EVENTS

In order to assess how participants felt about the events, and how the consultation processes might be improved in future, evaluation of events were carried out. At 8 of 9 workshop events PowerPoint voting was used and results for Helensburgh & Lomond are as follows:

Table 5: Results of PowerPoint voting evaluation at workshops

	Important	Quite important	Not really important	Not important at all
How important do you think it is that we hold events to discuss issues like this with the community?	77.5%	10%	7.5%	5%
	Comprehensive	Adequate	I would have liked more information	I didn't receive any information
How would you rate the information you received prior to the event?	12.5%	42.5%	30%	15%

	Very good	Good	Poor	Very poor
<b>How would you rate the opportunities to discuss issues in the workshops?</b>	39%	45%	13%	3%
	Better than I expected		As I expected	Less than I expected
<b>Did the event meet your expectations?</b>	42.5%		47.5%	10%
	Excellent	Good	Not very good	Poor
<b>How would you rate the event overall?</b>	22%	64%	11%	3%
	Important	Quite important	Not really important	Not important at all
<b>How important is it that we provide you with a summary of the points raised at the event?</b>	79%	13%	8%	%

Evaluation forms were available at the Question Time events and some of the comments received are as follows:

*'Does population growth necessarily lead to economic growth? No discussion on use of housing stock – eg, would population rise if there were fewer homes standing empty for much of the year?'*

*'Excellent organisation and execution.'*

*'Not enough questions were asked or concluded satisfactorily. The 'outcomes' were statements and were not really given enough consideration'*

*'I would get rid of the panel. Use the time to get ideas and suggestions from the audience. The statistical data provided looks at only 2 years (2001 and 2011). It is important to look over a much longer time-period. It does not follow from the stats that H&L needs a larger population.'*

*'...use proper qualitative and quantities marker research'*

*'I am not sure this is the best way to inform the CPP of the views of the community as a whole. It smacks of planning by a non-elected committee of a small number of local people.'*

*'Chamber of Commerce/RSL representation needed.'*