

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

**Local report on the Single Outcome Agreement
consultation within Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area**

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SUMMARY

This is a report on the recent consultation exercise by the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) in Argyll and Bute designed to identify priorities at local level and inform the Delivery Plans of the ten-year Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) 2013-23. This exercise was undertaken across Argyll and Bute. The focus of this report is on findings within the Oban, Lorn and the Isles (OLI) area. The Argyll and Bute wide report is available online¹

Recent census data demonstrated that the population of Argyll and Bute had declined by 3.4%. Population change within OLI is +5% with significant local variation. This coupled with the recognition that a successful economy is critical to a thriving Argyll and Bute has led to the overarching outcome for the SOA: 'Argyll and Bute's economic success is built on a growing population'.

The consultation 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 with four held in the OLI area.

The findings in OLI highlighted local concerns with employment, housing, land ownership issues, transport links, more support for small business, mobile and broadband connectivity. Although the overall population for the area has increased, there is significant variance across the area and consultations were held in Oban, Tiree and Mull to gather a good cross-section of views and the report highlights localised issues as well.

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

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

BACKGROUND

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

The figures from the census of 2011 were published and highlighted Argyll and Bute as the highest area in terms of percentage population decline, and this was seen as the greatest challenge for all community planning partners. The census data for Oban, Lorn and the Isles confirms a population increase over 2001 to 2011. Detail below:

Admin Area	Area	Population 2001	Population 2011	Percentage change
OLI	Oban North and Lorn	9,651	9,744	+1.0%
OLI	Oban South and the Isles	9,513	10,248	+7.7%
	Argyll and Bute	91,306	88,166	-3.4%

The datazone with the greatest population increase is in Oban (S01000812). Between 2001 and 2011, the population increased by 103.5%. The increase is associated with new housing development over the last ten years. An exception is Tiree, where the population has fallen by 15% over the period 2001 to 2011. Mull, Argyll and Bute's third largest island by population, has shown an increase of 133 people (+5%). It is clear that the increases has an impact on the demographics in terms of age cohort, as can be seen from the table below.

Number of households by Multi-Member Ward

Admin Area	Multi-Member Ward	Households		Percentage change
		2001	2011	
OLI	Oban North and Lorn	4,139	4,294	+3.7%
OLI	Oban South and the Isles	4,121	4,620	+12.1%
	Argyll and Bute	38,969	40,125	+3.0%

Population changes in Oban, Lorn and the Isles 2001 to 2012

Oban, Lorn and the Isles	Number of people		Percentage change 2001 to 2012	Proportion of age cohort within total population (%)	
	2001	2012		2001	2012
Age cohort					
0-15	3,702	3,347	-9.6	19.3	16.7
16-24	1,553	1,925	24.0	8.1	9.6
25-44	5,268	4,535	-13.9	27.5	22.6
45-64	5,301	6,135	15.7	27.7	30.5
65-74	1,746	2,385	36.6	9.1	11.9

75+	1,565	1,766	12.8	8.2	8.8
Total population	19,135	20,093	5.0	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:

Principal outcome:

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

To achieve the principal outcome a set of supporting 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 has been developed for each of the six outcomes.

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

A parallel online survey was undertaken with over 500 responses across Argyll and Bute, including 95 from the OLI area. In addition, a Youth Consultation was undertaken on 23rd and 24th of November 2013 by Argyll and Bute Youth Forum, attended by 50 young people, including 10 from OLI. Full details of these findings can be found in the main Argyll and Bute report².

Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership is grateful to Education Scotland for its support in part-funding this consultation process, which in turn meets the recommendation contained in the Strategic Guidance for Community Planning Partners: Community Learning and Development.

² <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 Oban, Lorn and the Isles.

Noteworthy comments include that islanders on Tiree feel peripheral to public sector decision making (interest in forming a community council on the island has been expressed since the event and elections are scheduled). Questions were also raised as to why Argyll and Bute are not eligible for Special Islands Needs Allowance and examples of good practice in the Western Isles and Norway cited at both the island events.

A brief description of the main headlines from the Argyll and Bute wide perspective followed by detail on local issues and priorities within the Oban, Lorn and the Isles consultation follows.

Outcome 1 - The economy is diverse and thriving

Argyll and Bute

Four main issues were raised in Outcome 1 workshops:

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

Oban, Lorn and the Isles

Key areas raised in OLI were around the economy, support for small business and land ownership issues (on Mull and Tiree).

Topic	Issue	Potential Solutions
Small Business Development	High rates and rent Lack of suitable premises Regulations as barriers to business development (particularly in regard to Tiree and Mull, where the perception is that planning does not take account of local circumstances)	More targeted support at early stages More affordable business units in key localities. More flexible use spaces to be used as workshops/offices etc. Financial incentives such as rent caps, rates relief, start-up grants.
Promoting Argyll and Bute	Need to attract people to the area – potential residents and businesses	Communications to get positive message across Need to promote the area according to its strengths: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• As a place to stay• For its lifestyle

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For its scenery • Good education • Good place to bring up children • Safe place <p>Need infrastructure to keep people once they come</p>
Housing	<p>Affordability</p> <p>Conflict between permanent residences and holiday homes</p> <p>Shortage of housing</p> <p>Range of house types available (numbers of bedrooms)</p> <p>Lack of tenure choice, (particularly Tiree)</p>	<p>Change the Council Tax regime</p> <p>Initiatives to encourage new housing</p> <p>Grants</p> <p>Different ranges of size options</p> <p>Tied housing (e.g. for teachers on Tiree); key worker housing.</p>
Employment	<p>Farming / Crofting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slaughter costs 	Reduce costs of getting beasts to slaughter
Employment	Tourism	<p>Promote high end Tourism</p> <p>Improve attractions and physical fabric of the area to make Argyll and Bute more appealing</p> <p>Local produce mentioned in Tiree and Mull – initiatives to support local branding and sales</p>
Land Ownership (Island workshops including Mull and Tiree)	Estates control what can be done. Council and community can plan, but land owners can prevent implementation of plans.	<p>Community buy outs, Land Release.</p> <p>Council should lobby Scottish Government about land reform review.</p>

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

Oban, Lorn and the Isles

In addition, transport issues were seen as having knock-on effects with regard to Tourism, Accessing health care (see integrated transport, below) and Costs to businesses, both in terms of direct costs and in terms of their failure to recruit people. Understandably, ferries were key issues in the Mull and Tiree consultations, but less so in Oban. Comments were made in Tiree regarding a document Hi-Trans have produced that they feel includes a lot of detail about Barra but very little on Tiree. Participants from Tiree therefore fear that their needs, which are not the same as those for Barra, will not be adequately accounted for.

Topic	Issue	Potential Solutions
Transport -	Timetabling	

Buses	<p>§ reduced services during school holidays</p> <p>§ Lack of evening services</p> <p>Capacity – some full buses don't stop for additional passengers, leaving them stranded</p>	
Transport - Air	<p>No Oban link to Glasgow / Edinburgh</p> <p>Cost</p> <p>Lack of freight service from Oban airport</p> <p>There is a fear on Tiree that the needs of the island will be neglected in favour of those of Barra. (This relates to the type of aircraft.)</p>	
Transport - Ferries	<p>Cost and reliability of the ferries</p> <p>Timetabling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheduling of ferries (the inability to commute from Craignure to Glasgow was mentioned on Mull) • Inability to live on Mull and commute to Oban <p>Road Equivalent Tariff</p>	<p>Norway stated as example of good practice, and may be worth exploring. (Mull)</p> <p>Advance notice of the timetable to allow for business and events planning. (Tiree particularly wanted timetables to be published a year in advance)</p>
Integrated Transport	<p>Transport services do not link up.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on access to other services e.g. health services. 	Council should review whole transport structure
Transport - Roads	<p>State of roads</p> <p>Lack of education about cycling and driving on single-track roads (on Tiree and Mull)</p>	<p>Improve the quality of repairs (Mull and Tiree participants felt quality of patching inadequate)</p> <p>Increase awareness raising / education on ferries for drivers and cyclists visiting the islands</p>
Transport - Rail	Train service from Oban – Glasgow is too slow	
Renewables	<p>Growth of renewables impeded by infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grid Connection (Mull) • Underwater cabling (Tiree) 	<p>Council co-ordinate demand / constraints and lead on negotiations with national bodies and involving community organisations</p> <p>Better multi-level governance (Mull)</p> <p>Need for newer, bigger, underwater electricity cable to / from Tiree</p>
Electricity	<p>Limit to capacity and reliability of cabling and supply (Tiree)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electricity connection unreliable • Regular repairs required • Power surges 	Need for newer, bigger, underwater electricity cable to / from Tiree - Initial high costs may be offset by long-term repeat repair costs.
Broadband	Slow roll out and patchy coverage hindering small business growth and	

	inbound mobility Increasingly, services are being accessed via the internet e.g. Health (Oban)	
Mobile Phone Signal	Poor in many areas hindering small business growth and inbound mobility Need for more mobile broadband coverage / 4G (Oban) Very poor coverage (Ross of Mull and Tiree)	Identifying alternative models – e.g. Coll is getting a new phone mast which the Trust will maintain

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

Argyll and Bute

Main issues raised in the Outcome 3 workshops:

- 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

Oban, Lorn and the Isles

Topic	Issue	Potential Solutions
Secondary Education	Difficult to recruit teachers (Tiree) Limited range of subjects (Tiree / Mull) Lack of accommodation for teachers (Tiree) Secondary education is geared to getting pupils into university, and not to preparing them for trade / employment.	Provision of tied accommodation (Tiree) Could children from Coll attend Tiree school and stay there, and those from the Ross of Mull attend and stay in Tobermory, rather than Oban? (Tiree and Mull) Better links needed between school and businesses
Further Education	Limited, or no, opportunities so people move away to access education. Predominance of part time contracts within the sector. Unqualified staff teaching. Numbers to run courses	Wider user of video conferencing Increased use of distance learning, with mentor support being provided.
Lifelong Learning	Provision of adult education has been reduced in the area. University of the Third Age (U3A) not operating in all areas.	U3A operating in Oban and Coll, and could be developed.
Skills & Training	Apprenticeships	Support for businesses to take on apprentices and awareness raising among young people of the benefits of taking up a place.

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 raised in Outcome 4 workshops:

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

Oban, Lorn and the Isles

Topic	Issue	Potential Solutions
Childcare	Lack of childcare is a barrier to employment § Generally § Wraparound § After school care. Cost of childcare Regulations put people off	Assist development of locally owned childcare facilities
Facilities	Somewhere for youth to 'hang out' Sports facilities Play parks Soft play (Tiree, where it appears that equipment has already been bought, but there is nowhere to use it.)	

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 OLI area.

Oban, Lorn and the Isles

The importance of social interaction for people's independence and good mental health was mentioned in Oban, as was the need for better links between care providers. Transport to access activities came up in all three consultations.

Topic	Issue	Potential Solutions
Access to health service	Transport is an issue <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timetables can make travelling to and from hospitals time consuming and difficult – appointments don't always take location into account • Travel time spent by care providers significant Ambulance response time (Mull)	Volunteer car scheme might help (Oban) More consultants and clinics should come to the area, rather than having patients having to travel to the central belt Could GPs do more things as hospital services are moved further away? Out of hours GPs would help make the

		area more attractive to working age people.
Employment in Health	<p>Gaps in provision –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of dentistry services (Mull; Tiree) • Lack of podiatry (Tiree) • Day-care for vulnerable adults (Tiree) 	
Healthier Lives	<p>Physical activity</p> <p>§ modern lifestyles a barrier to keeping active</p>	<p>Need to promote walking and cycling (Oban)</p> <p>Create footpaths around Oban to make it quicker to walk than to drive around town.</p> <p>There is a need for activities other than sports.</p> <p>There is a need for more transport to enable people to access activities.</p> <p>The cost of both the activities themselves and of transport to access them can deter people from being active</p> <p>Use facilities with active schools coordinators in the evenings</p> <p>Integrate teenagers with older people, rather than segregating them (Oban)</p>
Healthier Lives	<p>Obesity / Overweight issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What school children eat at lunchtime • Attractiveness of school cafeterias was questioned (Oban) • Cost of eating well <p>Lack of, and cost of, land for small scale farming; lack of crofts for rent (Mull)</p>	<p>Fizzy / energy drinks should not be sold to under 16s in schools, even if they do provide a revenue stream.</p> <p>There is a role for older generations to educate younger ones</p> <p>There is a roll for schools to education children</p> <p>Need to know about good nutrition and the impact this has on people.</p> <p>Growing your own / allotments need to be encouraged</p> <p>Community Education has a role to play in educating people to grow their own food as well as cooking.</p>
Models of Care	<p>Social care provided is only about personal support (e.g. eating; medication). It does not include enabling people to do hobbies (Oban)</p>	<p>Conflict between progressive care versus contracting out services.</p> <p>Care in the community must be part of the provision of health care, but it needs coordination.</p> <p>It is easier to prevent hospitalisation in islands and villages due to the better community links in these areas (Oban)</p>

		<p>Self-Directed Support - positive for isolated people who will be able to take control of their own care</p> <p>Dementia awareness training for communities</p>
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Outcome 6 - People live in safer and stronger communities

Argyll and Bute

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

Oban, Lorn and the Isles

The desire to see a visible police presence was raised in Oban, particularly with regards the town centre. The provision of centralised services was seen to be detrimental to rural areas.

Alcohol and drugs was raised as an issue in Oban, and specific areas identified where generally people feel unsafe.

Topic	Issue	Potential Solutions
Road Safety	Increased accidents / road closures in Summer season	Better education for visiting drivers
Policing	Police provision varies according to shifts etc and difficult to recruit "Specials" (Tiree)	
Community Cohesion	Access to activities	<p>Lots of community activities available – need to get info out there</p> <p>Develop Intergenerational activities</p> <p>Support for volunteers</p> <p>Community Council needed (Tiree)</p>
Community Cohesion	Fragile Rural communities suffering from depopulation	Short term working group formed to address depopulation issues affecting Tiree
Community Cohesion		<p>Integration into communities, improve access to services</p> <p>The council should support non-statutory services</p> <p>North/South divide (Mull)</p>

CONCLUSION

The consultation highlighted the participants' wish to prioritise developing the economic potential of Argyll and Bute through harnessing the strengths of our rich natural resources and heritage.

Main points related to:

- Supporting small to medium enterprises through a range of measures including additional support at the early stages, especially through the provision of more suitable and flexible premises.
- Transport connectivity, relating to economic development and access to services. A range of needs and solutions were suggested.
- The importance of consistent, quality broadband provision and improved mobile phone signal in our rural communities to support business and personal needs.
- The focus on building stronger communities in the area through supporting provision of and access to a wide range of community activities.

Challenges include how to ensure our health service meets the need of a geographically dispersed ageing population and pressures on local education provision as demographics alter.

Encouraging new ways to listen to local communities aspirations, for example through the recognition and formal adoption of local Community Plans, presents its challenges not least in areas such as planning, yet may also provide the resources to our rural communities to thrive. There was general recognition that young people seeking wider experiences may move out of the area and more should be done to both encourage those who wish to stay or who may be considering returning as they progress through different stages of their lives.

Developing a range of practical incentives designed to encourage inbound mobility and provide the appropriate infrastructure to retain people in the area includes housing challenges, economic development and service provision that Community Planning Partners, working together to maximise resources and co-ordinating forward planning, can address.

APPENDIX 1

Consultation events occurred in four locations across Oban, Lorn and the Isles as follows:

Location	Date	Times	Venue
Tiree Workshop in partnership with TCDT	Sat 1 February	2.00 - 5.00pm	An Talla, Crossipol
Oban Workshop	Tue 4 February	2.00 - 5.00pm	Corran Halls, Oban
Oban Debate	Tues 4 February	6.30 - 8.30pm	Corran Halls, Oban
Mull Workshop in partnership with MICT	Mon 10 February	1.30 - 4.30pm	Craignure Hall, Criagnure

The attendance at events was as follows:

Location	Dates	Attendance		
		CPP	Third Sector/Community	Total
Tiree	01 February 2014	6	35	41
Oban	04 February 2014	24	32	56
Mull	10 February 2014	16	27	43
Oban, Lorn and the Isles – Question Time Event	04 February 2014	26	9	35

The online survey responses were as follows

Area	No of responses
Oban, Lorn and the Isles	95

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 are as follows:

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?	74%	18%	6%	2%
	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?	6%	39%	32%	23%
	Very good	Good	Poor	Very poor
How would you rate the opportunities to discuss issues in the workshops?	36%	52%	10%	2%
	Better than I expected		As I expected	Less than I expected
Did the event meet your expectations?	39%		52%	9%
	Excellent	Good	Not very good	Poor
How would you rate the event overall?	18%	72%	9%	2%
	Important	Quite important	Not really important	Not important at all
How important is it that we provide you with a summary of the points raised at the event?	80%	14%	5%	1%

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

- Time too short to discuss BIG issues
- Consultations – do these more often

- Dwelt more on the negative rather than solutions
- Communications of event – if you want more people to attend need to advertise more and provide more information on your website
- Need to hear from local business
- Panel took defensive rather than investigative approach
- Need for questionnaires to be sent out to households and businesses to consider their views – not everyone has time to come to meetings