

Topic Paper 07: Transport

Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section:

The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended:

- Section 15(5)(d) *The infrastructure of the district (including transport);*
- Section 15(5)(e) *how that infrastructure is used*

The Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2023:

- Regulation 9(2)(e) *The planning authority are to have regard to the following plans and strategies, insofar as relating to the local development plan area:*
 - Any regional transport strategy*
 - Any local transport strategy*

NPF4 requirements for LDP:

NPF4 Policy 13: Sustainable Transport

LDPs should prioritise locations for future development that can be accessed by sustainable modes. The spatial strategy should reflect the sustainable travel hierarchy and sustainable investment hierarchy by making best use of existing infrastructure and services.

LDPs should promote a place-based approach to consider how to reduce car-dominance. This could include low traffic schemes, shared transport options, designing-in speed controls, bus/cycle priority, pedestrianisation and minimising space dedicated to car parking. Consideration should be given to the type, mix and use of development; local living and 20-minute neighbourhoods; car ownership levels; the accessibility of proposals and allocations by sustainable modes; and the accessibility for users of all abilities.

LDPs should be informed by an appropriate and effective transport appraisal undertaken in line with relevant transport appraisal guidance. Plans should be informed by evidence of the area's transport infrastructure capacity, and an appraisal of the spatial strategy on the transport network. This should identify any potential cumulative transport impacts and deliverable mitigation proposed to inform the plan's infrastructure first approach. Where there is likely to be an impact on the trunk road or rail network, early engagement with Transport Scotland is required.

Links to Evidence:

Strategies and Reports

National

- National Planning Framework 4 (Scottish Government, February 2023)
- Planning Circular 4/2025 – Planning Obligations and Good Neighbour Agreements (Scottish Government, December 2025)
- National Transport Strategy 2 (NTS2) (Transport Scotland, February 2020)
- Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 Final Summary Report (STPR2) (Jacobs & AECOM for Transport Scotland, December 2022)
- Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 Final Technical Report (STPR2) (Jacobs & AECOM for Transport Scotland, December 2022)
- Programme for Government 2025-26 – Building the Best Future for Scotland (Scottish Government, May 2025)
- Scotland’s Draft Climate Change Plan: 2026-2040 (Scottish Government, November 2025)
- Achieving Car Use Reduction in Scotland: A Renewed Policy Statement (Transport Scotland, June 2025)
- Cycling by Design (Transport Scotland, Sustrans & SCOTS, September 2021)
- Sustainable Travel to Stations (Network Rail, 2023)
- Sustainable Travel to Stations – Practitioners’ Guide (Lauder, October 2023)
- Rail Services Decarbonisation Action Plan (Transport Scotland, 2020)
- Islands Connectivity Plan - Strategic Approach (Transport Scotland, May 2025)
- Islands Connectivity Plan – The Vessels and Ports Plan for the Clyde and Hebrides and Northern Isles Networks 2025 – 2045 (Transport Scotland, May 2025)
- Local Development Plan Evidence Report Transport Scotland Baseline Information (Transport Scotland, May 2025)
- A National Mission with Local Impact: Infrastructure Investment Plan for Scotland 2021-22 to 2025-26 (Scottish Government, 2021)
- Scotland’s Road Safety Framework to 2030: Together, making Scotland’s roads safer (Transport Scotland, 2021)
- The A83 Trunk Road (Lochgilphead) (Temporary 20mph Speed Restriction) Order 2025
- The A83 Trunk Road (Arrochar) (Temporary 20mph Speed Restriction) Order 2025
- The A83 Trunk Road (Campbeltown) (Temporary 20mph Speed Restriction) Order 2025
- The A85 Trunk Road (Oban) (Temporary 20mph Speed Restriction) Order 2025

- The A828 Trunk Road (Benderloch) (Temporary 20mph Speed Restriction) Order 2025
- Introduction of 20mph Speed Limits on Argyll and Bute Trunk Roads – Briefing Note (letter from Transport Scotland, October 2025)
- The A83 Trunk Road (Ardrishaig) (Temporary 20mph and 40mph Speed Restrictions) Order 2025
- The A82/A83 Trunk Road (Tarbet) (Temporary 20mph and 30mph Speed Restrictions) Order 2025
- The A85 Trunk Road (Connel) (Temporary 20mph Speed Restriction) Order 2025
- The A83 Trunk Road (Tarbert) (Temporary 20mph Speed Restriction) Order 2025
- The A83 Trunk Road (Inveraray) (Temporary 20mph Speed Restriction) Order 2025
- Fastline Faslane: Detailed Options Appraisal (Stantec for HITRANS, July 2024)
- Development Planning Transport Appraisal Guidance (DPTAG) (Transport Scotland, October 2025)

Regional

- HiTrans Regional Transport Strategy for Submission to Ministers (Stantec for HiTrans, January 2024)
- HiTrans draft Active Travel Strategy (HiTrans, January 2018)
- SPT – A Call for Action - Regional Transport Strategy 2023-2038 (SPT)
- SPT Regional Transport Strategy Delivery Programme (SPT, September 2024)
- SPT The Regional Active Travel Strategy for the west of Scotland 2024-2038 (SPT, July 2023)
- SPT Regional Bus Strategy - draft for consultation (SPT, February 2025)
- SPT – Delivering for Argyll and Bute (SPT, March 2022)

Local

- Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan 2 (ABC, February 2024)
- Argyll and Bute draft Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy (ABC, September 2020)
- Argyll and Bute Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2024-2034 (Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership)
- Argyll and Bute Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2024-2034 Support Document (Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership)
- Argyll and Bute draft Economic Strategy Refresh 2024-2034 (ABC, March 2024)
- Argyll and Bute SMART Economic Strategy Action Plan 2024-2027 - working document (ABC, September 2024)
- Argyll and Bute Active Travel Strategy – draft for comment (ABC, November 2024)

- Argyll and Bute Transport Connectivity and Economy Research Report (HIE, June 2016)
- Proposed Local Transport Strategy – report to Committee (ABC, June 2025)
- Options Assessment Report A816 Bealach Mor (Geo-Rope for Argyll and Bute Council, February 2025)
- Review of Roads and Infrastructure Services – Update – report to Committee (ABC, March 2025)
- Road Capital Reconstruction Programme 2025/26 – report to Committee, plus Appendix (ABC, March 2025)
- Helensburgh Town East, Active Travel Route (Emerging) – RIBA Stage 2 Report (Civic Engineers for Argyll and Bute Council, March 2025)

Datasets and other sources of information

- [Hands up Scotland 2023](#)
- [Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification 2022](#)
- [Census 2022](#)
- [Transport Scotland Statistics](#), including Scottish Household Survey
- [Mid-2024 population estimates - National Records of Scotland \(NRS\)](#)
- [SIMD 2020](#)
- Bus timetables – West Coast Motors, Garelochhead Coaches, First, Islay Coaches, Citylink, D.A. & A.J. Maclean
- [Hebridean Air Services](#)
- [Charge Place Scotland](#)
- Transport and Travel in Scotland: [Results from the Scottish Household Survey 2023](#)
- STPR2 Appendix H
- Office for Road and Rail [Estimates of station usage | ORR Data Portal](#)
- Drakewell
- INRIX
- [Road Safety Data - Department for Transport \(DfT\)](#)
- [Core Paths Network](#)
- [A83 Rest and be Thankful | Transport Scotland](#)
- Parking Survey Data August 2023 (not publicly published)
- Stations in Context v18.4 (available from Network Rail)

Summary of Evidence

Introduction

This Topic Paper is informed by Argyll and Bute's transport baseline including a review of existing transport infrastructure capacity and condition, as well as planned transport infrastructure (both within the Argyll and Bute Planning Authority area and that which serves it). This is as per the requirements set out in Transport Scotland Baseline Information Report. The Evidence Report does not contain every detail of evidence, but provides a summary of the evidence as well as what this means for LDP3, as set out in the LDP Guidance.

The Topic Paper first sets out the [geography and key facts](#) of the area. This is followed by an overview of [National](#) policy and guidance, insofar as they are of particular relevance to Argyll and Bute, leading on to an overview of the relevant [Regional and Local](#) policy applicable in the area. Finally, modes of transport are considered in order of the Sustainable Travel Hierarchy, with [Active Travel](#) addressed first, then [Public Transport](#), [EV charging](#) and [Parking](#), then finally the [Road Network](#).

The Council is committed to undertaking a proportionate Transport Appraisal to support and inform the development of LDP3. The baseline information contained within this Evidence Report Topic Paper will inform the Transport Appraisal which will be carried out during the preparation of LDP3, in alignment with the new DPTAG which was published in October 2025. Continuing and detailed discussions on the nature and scale of the appraisal will be held with Transport Scotland throughout this process.

Transport is a cross cutting policy. Particular NPF4 policies which have some level of interlinkage with this paper are:

- Policy 1: Tackling the Climate and Nature Crises
- Policy 2: Climate Mitigation and Adaption
- Policy 15: Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods (which will include the public perception of transport issues)
- Policy 18: Infrastructure First

Argyll And Bute – Geography and Key Facts

Argyll and Bute is a sparsely populated local authority area in the West of Scotland. It covers a large geographic area of just under 7,000km² making it the second largest local authority by area in Scotland, and covering almost 9% of the total Scottish land area (Census 2022). The Scottish Government's 6 Fold Urban / Rural Classification is based on two main criteria:

- Population: as defined by the National Records of Scotland (NRS) which defines areas based on population density within postcodes that make up settlements; and
- Accessibility: based on the drive time analysis to differentiate between accessible and remote areas in Scotland an urban area, which analysis is used to differentiate between accessible, remote and very remote areas (as defined in the classification document)

These criteria lead to the division into six categories:

- Large urban areas – 125,000+ people
- Other urban areas – 10,000 to 124,999 people
- Accessible small towns – 3,000 to 9,999 people within a 30 minute drive of an urban area
- Remote small towns – 3,000 to 9,999 people with over a 30 minute drive time to an urban area
- Accessible rural areas - <3,000 people within a 30 minute drive of an urban area
- Remote rural areas - <3,000 people with over a 30 minute drive time to an urban area

The 6-fold map overleaf and subsequent table, show that the majority of Argyll and Bute is Remote Rural, with 41.8% of the population living in Remote Rural areas (compared with only 4.6% of the overall Scottish population).

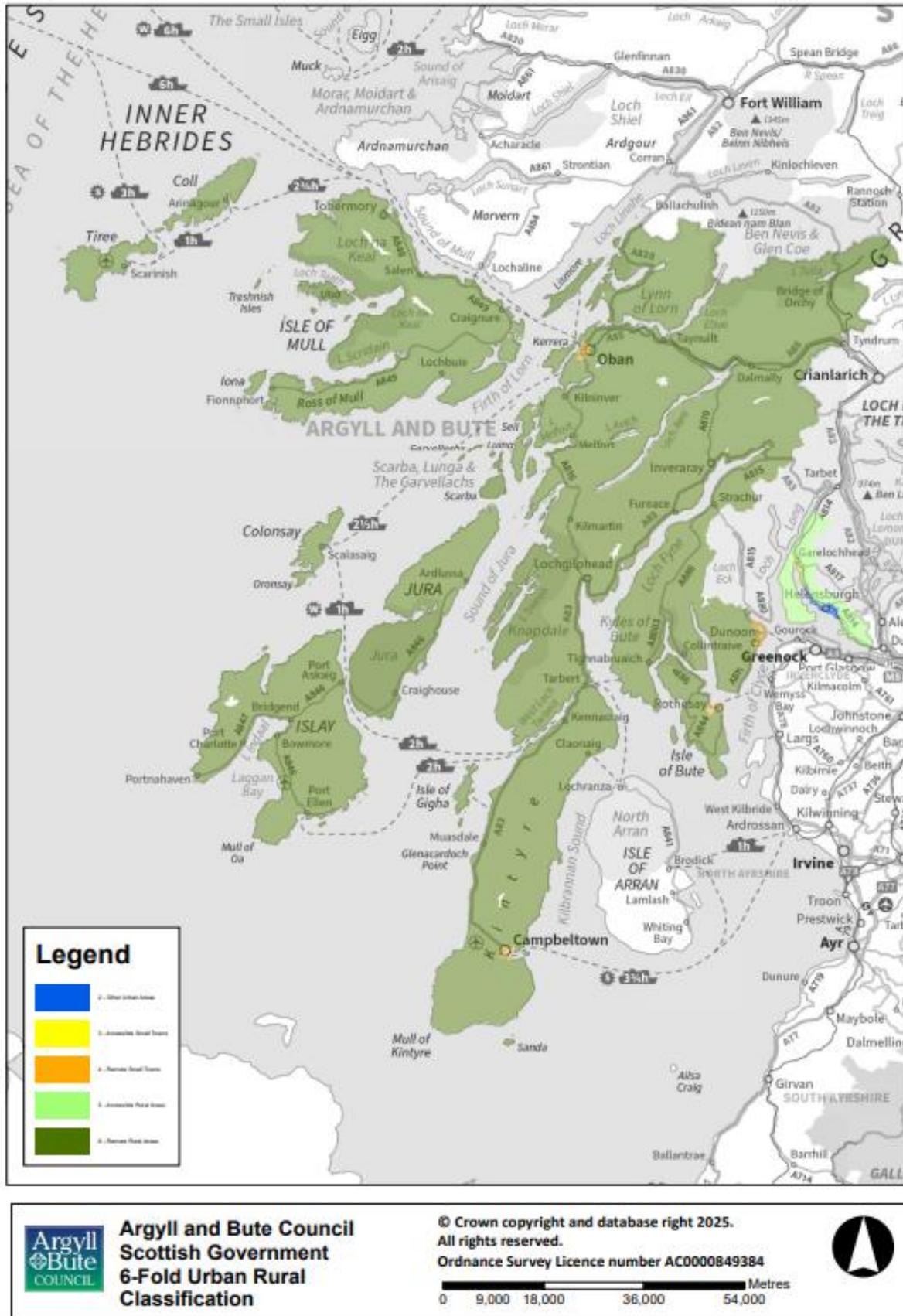


Figure 03: 6- Fold Urban Rural Classification

Areas	Large urban areas	Other urban areas	Accessible small towns	Remote small towns	Accessible rural areas	Remote rural areas
Argyll & Bute	0.0%	18.7%	2.0%	29.8%	7.7%	41.8%
Scotland	40.8%	30.9%	9.7%	1.9%	12.1%	4.6%

Figure 04: Percentage of population in each of the 6-Fold Urban Rural categories (source: Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification 2022)

Argyll and Bute lacks a single dominant employment and service centre, and rather incorporates six main towns dispersed across the large geographic area. These are: Lochgilphead (the administrative centre) located in mid-Argyll; Oban to the north west of the area; Campbeltown in south Kintyre; Rothesay on the Isle of Bute; and Dunoon on the Cowal peninsula. Finally Helensburgh, the largest town, has far greater transport connectivity and proximity to Glasgow.

The drive times and distances between the 5 main towns on the mainland (those listed above but excluding Rothesay which is on the Isle of Bute), and Glasgow and Edinburgh is shown overleaf.

<i>Distance (miles)</i>							
<i>Time (in minutes)</i>	Campbeltown	Dunoon	Lochgilphead	Helensburgh	Oban	Glasgow	Edinburgh
Campbeltown		114 169	51 75	114 169	88 128	134 203	179 255
Dunoon	114 169		63 94	57 85	76 113	28 95*	75 152*
Lochgilphead	51 75	63 94		64 94	37 54	83 127	129 182
Helensburgh	114 169	57 85	64 94		77 114	24 38	70 92
Oban	88 128	76 113	37 54	77 114		92 145	126 175
Glasgow	134 203	28 95*	83 127	24 38	92 145		
Edinburgh	179 255	75 152*	129 182	70 92	126 175		

**Includes Ferry Travel*

Figure 05: Drive times and distances between key mainland towns / cities (Source: The Automobile Association)

The Scottish Household Survey 2023 shows that 7% of journeys within Argyll and Bute were 40km (25 miles) or over (compared to 4.1% for Scotland as a whole).

Argyll and Bute has 23 inhabited islands (Bute, Islay and Mull being the largest by population), more than any other local authority in Scotland, and 17% of the Regions' population inhabit these islands. The age profile of many island populations in the 2011 Scottish Government Census was different to the mainland, with higher proportions of people aged over 65 (e.g. over 30% on Lismore and Luining) and smaller proportions of children (source: STPR2 Appendix H). These islands are serviced by a network of vehicle and passenger ferries. There are also a number of ferry services connecting parts of the Cowal peninsula. There are 6 regional airports in Argyll: Campbeltown, Coll, Colonsay, Islay, Oban, and Tiree.

The 2022 Census enumerated the population of Argyll and Bute at 86,000. The National Records of Scotland (NRS) more recent mid-year estimates calculated Argyll and Bute's population to be 87,690 (NRS Mid Year Estimate 2024).

- Argyll and Bute has the fifth sparsest population of the 32 Scottish local authorities, with an average population density of 13 persons per hectare. This compares to a Scottish average of 71 persons per hectare (NRS 2024 -based Mid Year Estimates).
- A major overriding issue for the area is depopulation which needs to be tackled by (amongst other things): improving our connectivity both in terms of transport and digital connectivity
- 41.8% of Argyll and Bute's population live in areas classified as 'remote rural'; 7.7% live in areas classified as 'accessible rural'.
- According to the 2022 Census, approximately 17.5% of Argyll and Bute's population live on islands (15,055 people).

Owing to its topography and widely dispersed population, Argyll & Bute is characterised as an area where movement is hampered by a highly indented coastline and/or mountainous terrain. It is also the case that many Argyll & Bute communities are reliant on a single means of access, and without adequate investment to maintain and develop their transport links, other policies and initiatives of the Council could be put at risk.

Reflecting the rural nature of much of the region, car ownership rates are higher than the Scotland average. This implies a high degree of car dependence for many and the requirement to own and run a car ('forced' car ownership) will undoubtedly have a significant negative impact on some households' finances. Moreover, some households will require a second car if the primary car is away from the property for most or all of some days, given the absence of alternatives in many places. (source: HiTrans Regional Transport Strategy)

	Scotland	Percentage	Argyll and Bute	Percentage
Households	2,372,777	100.00	40,125	100.00
No cars or vans in households	724,144	30.52	9,385	23.39
1 car or van in household	1,002,344	42.24	18,306	45.62
2 cars or vans in household	512,836	21.61	9,675	24.11
3 cars or vans in household	101,685	4.29	2,085	5.20
4 or more cars or vans in household	31,768	1.34	674	1.68
Total cars or vans in the households	2,475,376	104.32	46,941	116.99

Figure 06: Car and van ownership percentages for Scotland compared with Argyll and Bute (Source: Census 2022)

Conversely, while vehicle ownership is high and includes “forced” ownership, those without a vehicle can struggle with the infrequent and unreliable public transport services available across parts of Argyll and Bute.

Argyll and Bute Council own and operate a significant network of local transport infrastructure including an extensive rural and island road network, four lifeline ferry services, 39 piers and harbours, three airports and lifeline air services to some of Scotland’s most economically fragile island communities. Key transport actions required within the area relate to Trunk Road improvements; intra-regional road improvements (these are more significant in the remote rural context with network resilience being critical to the regional economy and community well-being); improvements to the capacity and resilience of ferry services across the network; and maintaining air links (lifeline links) with the central belt or to Oban.

Growth Areas

Two major areas of existing growth potential are identified in LDP2.

Tobermory-Oban-Dalmally Growth Corridor is Argyll's only area of existing natural demographic growth. Oban plays a key role as a nodal gateway to the islands for commerce, residents and tourists. The corridor has relatively good connectivity to both the central belt and the highlands and has a wide range of existing and potential employment opportunities.

Helensburgh and Lomond Growth Area has excellent connectivity to the central belt and beyond whilst still enjoying the high quality environment of the remainder of Argyll and Bute. Recent investment in private housing development has been in recognition of Helensburgh's potential as a commuter location for the Clyde Area via its rail and road links. In addition, the development of HMNB Clyde as the UK's single base for submarine operations is seeing unprecedented levels of investment and development within the base and involving significant numbers of military and civilian staff and their families relocating to the area. These factors represent huge opportunities to see new investment, development and the repopulation of the Helensburgh and Lomond Area, and support the multi-decade, multi-billion pound Clyde 2070 programme, for which an initial £250 million of funding was committed in July 2025.

These growth areas cannot fulfil their potential to support repopulation without a number of strategic level infrastructure actions.

Travel Patterns

The Scottish Household Survey (2023) shows that 70% of employed adults in Argyll and Bute do not work from home (compared to 71.1% across Scotland). Of these adults, the percentages using each method of travel to work are shown in the table below, showing that active travel (walking / bicycle) is higher in Argyll and Bute than Scotland as a whole – 24% compared to 14.7%. However public transport (bus / rail) usage is lower – 5% compared to 15.6%. Trends over the 10 year period show an increase in car usage, and decreases in bicycle and rail usage.

Method	Walking	Driver Car/Van	Passenger Car/Van	Bicycle	Bus	Rail	Other	Sample size
Argyll & Bute 2013	20.6%	53.9%	5%	2.7%	4.2%	6.9%	6.8%	181
Argyll & Bute 2018	19%	64%	6%	2%	3%	6%	1%	90
Argyll & Bute 2023	20%	69%	6%	0%	4%	1%	1%	70
Scotland 2013	13.2%	61%	5.8%	2.3%	10.7%	4.2%	2.9%	8,260
Scotland 2018	11.8%	62.9%	4.8%	2.8%	10.1%	5.5%	2.2%	3,910
Scotland 2023	11.8%	62.8%	4.7%	2.9%	10.3%	5.3%	2.1%	3,350

Figure 08: Percentage of adults travelling to work by each method (source: Transport Scotland Statistics 2023 – Scottish Household Survey)

However, care must be taken when considering these figures as the sample size in 2023 was very low (70 people) and it's not clear the geographic and demographic distribution of those surveyed.

Similar data is collected through the Scottish Census, and is presented in tables overleaf. The 2022 Census notes that there are 40,291 people aged 16 or over in employment the week before the census, with 13,279 working mainly at or from home (33%). The data has been presented in the same order as per the Scottish Household Survey above, for easier comparison, with the additional options of taxi and motorcycle added to the end of the table. The census also considers underground, subway or tram, however this is not an option within Argyll and Bute so the numbers from this column have been amalgamated into "other". Again, for easier comparison with the results of the Scottish Household Survey, the numbers from the Census have been converted into percentages (of those who *do not* mainly or wholly work from home).

Method	Walking	Driver Car/ Van	Passenger Car/ Van	Bicycle	Bus	Rail	Other	Taxi	Motorcycle
Argyll & Bute 2011	5,930	21,187	2,319	503	1,260	1,324	762	119	141
Argyll & Bute 2011 % (of 33,545)	17.7%	63.2%	6.9%	1.5%	3.8%	3.9%	2.3%	0.4%	0.4%
Scotland 2011	238,263	1,344,272	139,114	33,821	240,804	89,293	34,907	14,008	6,882
Scotland 2011 % (of 2,141,364)	11.1%	62.8%	6.5%	1.6%	11.2%	4.2%	1.6%	0.7%	0.3%
Argyll & Bute 2022	4,075	18,451	1,529	474	801	721	796	90	78
Argyll & Bute 2022 % (of 27,015)	15.1%	68.3%	5.7%	1.8%	3.7%	2.7%	2.9%	0.3%	0.3%
Scotland 2022	184,335	1,163,667	90,101	34,473	145,266	57,530	38,417	14,745	4,485
Scotland 2022 % (of 1,733,019)	10.6%	67.1%	5.2%	2.0%	8.4%	3.3%	2.2%	0.9%	0.3%

Figure 09: Number and percentages of adults travelling to work by each method (source: Census 2011 and 2022)

Some differences can be noted between the census figures compared with those from the Scottish Household Survey (when comparing 2022 with 2023, and similarly comparing 2011 with 2013). This is likely due to the small sample size used by the Scottish Household Survey leading to less accurate results. However, trends remain

broadly the same, with the most popular method of travel to work being to drive. Bus patronage is notably lower for Argyll and Bute than for Scotland as a whole.

The census also collects data on the distances travelled to work. Given the complex geography of Argyll and Bute this data is considered to be particularly relevant to understanding the transport baseline of the area. As noted above, the 2022 Census notes that there are 40,291 people aged 16 or over in employment the week before the census, with 13,279 working mainly at or from home (33%). The table below shows the number of people travelling each set of distances to work, and how this compares to Scotland as a whole. Again these are percentages of the total who to work, with those who work mainly or wholly from home excluded from the total count.

Distance	Less than 2km	2km – 5km	5km – 10km	10km – 20km	20km - 30km	30km – 40km	40km – 60km	60km +	Other
Argyll & Bute 2011	11,397	3,651	3,957	3,837	1,670	1,577	1,006	1,721	4,729
Argyll & Bute 2011 % (of 33,545)	34.0%	10.9%	11.8%	11.4%	5.0%	4.7%	3.0%	5.1%	14.1%
Scotland 2011	403,215	422,694	388,166	348,178	148,588	68,602	51,363	47,678	262,880
Scotland 2011 % (of 2,141,364)	18.8%	19.7%	18.1%	4.7%	6.9%	3.2%	2.4%	2.2%	12.3%
Argyll & Bute 2022	6,718	3,490	3,223	3,172	1,266	949	632	1,293	6,272
Argyll & Bute 2022 % (of 27,015)	24.9%	12.9%	11.9%	11.7%	4.7%	3.5%	2.3%	4.8%	23.2%
Scotland 2022	217,711	326,630	299,710	273,526	118,675	52,534	37,449	35,571	371,215
Scotland 2022 % (of 1,733,019)	12.6%	18.8%	17.3%	15.8%	6.8%	3.0%	2.2%	2.1%	21.4%

Figure 10 (on previous page): Numbers and percentages of adults travelling to work by distance (source: Census 2011 and 2022)

There has, as would be expected post-Covid, been an increase in people working from home. In Argyll and Bute this increased from 17.9% in 2011, to 33% in 2022. In Scotland, people working from home increased from 10.8% to 31.6%. Argyll and Bute had (in 2011), and still has, (in 2022) significantly higher percentages of people working both less than 2km from home, and more than 60km from home.

The Hands Up Scotland (2023) survey results note that **only 35.2% of children use a mode of active travel to get to school (30.1% walk, 3.6% cycle, 1.5% scoot/skate), compared to 49.3% for Scotland as a whole (41.3% walk, 4.7% cycle, 3.3% scoot/skate)**. Full details, with comparison to 5 and 10 years ago (2018 and 2013) are shown in the table below, showing that the percentage of children using a mode of active travel has broadly remained the same over the 10 year period (35.8% up to 37.4% then back down to 35.2%). However the percentage of children being driven to school has notably increased from 27.5% to 35.7% over the 10 year period, while children using the bus has decreased from 27.5% to 20.6%.

Method	Walk	Cycle	Scoot / skate	Park & stride	Driven	Bus	Taxi	Other
Area & date								
Argyll & Bute 2013	30.6%	3.7%	1.5%	7.2%	27.5%	27.5%	1.6%	0.5%
Argyll & Bute 2018	33.5%	2.8%	1.1%	6.9%	30.2%	22.8%	1.5%	1.3%
Argyll & Bute 2023	30.1%	3.6%	1.5%	6.8%	35.7%	20.6%	1.1%	0.7%
Scotland 2013	44.1%	3.5%	2.8%	7.5%	21.4%	18.8%	1.6%	0.4%
Scotland 2018	42.5%	3.8%	2.4%	9.8%	23.1%	16.2%	1.7%	0.5%
Scotland 2023	41.3%	4.7%	3.3%	9.7%	22.5%	16.4%	1.6%	0.6%

Figure 11: Travel modes – all schools (excluding nursery) (source: Hands Up Scotland)

The National Policy Context

National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)

NPF4 Policy 13 – Sustainable Transport aims to encourage, promote and facilitate developments that emphasise sustainable travel methods (such as walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport). In order to achieve this it sets out that LDP’s should prioritise locations for future development that can be accessed by such sustainable methods. Policy 13 also requires that the spatial strategy should reflect the Sustainable Travel and Sustainable Investment hierarchies by making best use of existing infrastructure and services. These hierarchies can be found in the National Transport Strategy 2 (NTS2) and are shown below and overleaf.



Figure 01: The Sustainable Travel Hierarchy (source NTS2)



Figure 02: The Sustainable Investment Hierarchy (source NTS2)

Policy 13 of NPF4 requires that LDP's should promote a place-based approach to consider how car dominance could be reduced. The NPF4 suggests that this could include low traffic schemes, shared transport options, designing in speed controls, bus/cycle priority, pedestrianisation, and minimising space dedicated to car parking. It further sets out that consideration should be given to the type, mix and use of development; local living and 20 minute neighbourhoods; car ownership levels; the accessibility of proposals and allocations by sustainable transport methods; and the accessibility for users of all abilities.

Finally, NPF4 Policy 13 states that LDP's should be informed by an appropriate and effective Transport Appraisal, undertaken in line with relevant Transport Appraisal Guidance. Policy 13 sets out that LDP's should be informed by evidence of the area's transport infrastructure capacity, and an appraisal of the spatial strategy on the transport network. The NPF4 notes that this should identify any potential cumulative transport impacts and deliverable mitigation that may be proposed to inform that LDP's Infrastructure First approach. Where there is likely to be an impact on the trunk road or rail network, early engagement with Transport Scotland is required. As set out in the Introduction of this Topic Paper, the Council is committed to undertaking a proportionate Transport Appraisal to support and inform the development of LDP3, and commits to undertaking continuing engagement with Transport Scotland throughout the LDP3 process. The Transport Appraisal will be carried out in alignment with the new DPTAG which was published in October 2025.

Planning Circular 4/2025 – Planning Obligations and Good Neighbour Agreements provides guidance on using planning obligations to facilitate the delivery of necessary infrastructure alongside other development.

National Transport Strategy 2 (NTS2)

The NTS2 provides the national transport policy framework, and advocates a Vision for Scotland’s transport system over the next 20 years that will help to create great places- this being a sustainable, inclusive, safe and accessible transport system. Key features within the NTS2 are the Sustainable Transport and Sustainable Investment hierarchies, which have been included earlier in this paper.

The NTS2 does not identify or present specific projects, schemes, initiatives or interventions, but sets out a strategic framework for decision making.

Importantly for Argyll and Bute, the NTS2 recognises Scotland’s regional differences. It recognises that remote, rural and island communities are likely to face different transport challenges than those living in urban areas. The second section of this paper demonstrates the characteristics of Argyll and Bute’s remote, rural and island nature. This evidence is then considered throughout the Active Travel, Public Transport, Electric Vehicle Charging, Parking, and Roads Network sections, setting out particular transport challenges which, as recognised by the NTS2, differ from those in other parts of Scotland.

Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 (STPR2)

The STPR2 sets out the transport investment required to deliver the vision, priorities and outcomes that are set out in the NTS2. The majority of these recommendations are not location specific, but are broader aspirations that apply across Scotland. These include:

- Recommendation 30 – Trunk road and motorway safety improvements to progress towards “Vision Zero”
- Recommendation 31 – Trunk road and motorway climate change adaptation and resilience
- Recommendation 37 – Improving active travel on trunk roads through communities
- Recommendation 42 – Investment in port infrastructure to support vessel renewal and replacement, and progressive decarbonisation

Of particular note in Argyll and Bute, STPR2 recommends that work continues on developing a more reliable route at the A83 Rest and Be Thankful (Recommendation 29). Whilst this part of the A83 is outwith the Argyll and Bute Planning Authority area (it is in the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park), it is of strategic importance to this area, connecting fragile remote communities to the central belt. Evidence in terms of the A83 and its strategic importance for the Argyll and Bute economy and Planning Authority is set out within the Roads Network section.

A further recommendation of particular note is STPR2 recommendation 41, which is for a potential fixed link between Mull and the mainland. This is set out in more detail in the Islands Connectivity Plan (draft for Consultation), and within this paper is discussed within the Ferries and Ports part of the Public Transport section.

However, the Council notes that many of our rural island and peninsular communities are entirely reliant on Local Authority roads for local connectivity and these communities will be largely excluded from investment via STPR2.

Each of these SPTR2 recommendations is referred to within the relevant section of this paper.

An associated STPR2 Delivery Plan is in development and Argyll and Bute Council recognises the importance of taking cognisance of its contents, where possible, throughout the proposed Plan process. Officials continue to develop the Strategic Transport Infrastructure Investment Plan (STIIP) which will act as the STPR2 Delivery Plan. It will set out a clear vision for our future infrastructure that continues to prioritise our capital investment to achieve net zero and to maintain high quality public infrastructure and services in Scotland.

Programme for Government 2025-26

This programme outlines the Scottish Government's priorities for the year ahead. It sets out that domestic transport remains Scotland's largest source of emissions. Of particular relevance to Argyll and Bute, the Scottish Government commits to the introduction of a new rural and island EV infrastructure grant, and to work with regional transport partnerships to develop delivery plans, reflective of individual place. The Scottish Government further commits to continue to deliver major vessels (ferries) expected by summer 2026, and begin work to deliver new electric ferries. Within this programme, the Scottish Government commits to progress delivery of the next phase of improvements at the Rest and Be Thankful (A83) and on the statutory authorisation process for remaining medium term improvements and the long term solution.

Finally, within this, the Scottish Government also sets out that they will deliver 20mph speed limits on appropriate roads by the end of 2025/26. This has been / is being implemented across various points on the A82, A83, A85 and A828 as noted within the Roads Network section of this Topic Paper.

Scotland's Draft Climate Change Plan: 2026-2040

The draft Climate Change Plan builds upon the Programme for Government and commits that by 2045 they will (amongst others) support transport services, people and businesses to reduce their emissions.

Key policy drivers in terms of transport include policies to reduce car use, such as free bus travel, investment in public and active transport, and local schemes; consumer incentives to encourage EV uptake; early investment in HGV infrastructure; and Sustainable Aviation Fuel production and use.

The draft is open for consultation until 29th January 2026, and will be taken into account during the preparation of LDP3.

Achieving Car Use Reduction in Scotland: A Renewed Policy Statement

This Renewed Policy Statement replaces the (2022) Route Map to Achieve a 20 per cent Reduction in Car Kilometres by 2030. This is a strategic document that reaffirms a commitment to achieving sustainable car use reduction in Scotland. Whilst recognising that the original target of a 20% reduction is highly unlikely by 2030, this document sets out a commitment to develop a new, longer-term target which will support the 2045 net zero target.

Of particular relevance to Argyll and Bute, the Statement recognises that Scotland is largely a rural, sparsely populated country, and that vehicles including private cars, will always be needed in some capacity to enable people, goods and services to get around. There is commitment that the policy approach will be a regional and differentiated one which takes into account place-specific measures to enable positive change in rural and island communities.

Cycling by Design

Cycling by Design (2019) is the primary reference for the design of cycling infrastructure in Scotland. This sets out network planning and design guidance to be implemented within the wider context of planning, delivering and maintaining cycle schemes, cycle networks or other cycle facilities developed in the built environment. The decision to develop a cycle route or cycle network should be the product of a multi-modal or strategic appraisal process that has identified and appraised potential transport interventions to address evidenced-based transport problems or opportunities.

Sustainable Travel to Stations / Sustainable Travel to Stations – Practitioners’ Guide

The Sustainable Travel to Stations (STtS) strategy presents a vision and sets a mission to help increase passenger numbers, contribute to a net zero economy, and help people to live locally. The strategy is a practical guide for all statutory bodies, and private developers planning developments on or near the rail network.

It advises that planning to integrate a station into its community, so that it does not sit in isolation and getting to it is easy either actively or sustainably is timely is relevant within the context of the Helensburgh Strategic Development Framework and expansion of HMNB Clyde.

The strategy is supplemented by a guide for (among others) local authorities.

Rail Services Decarbonisation Action Plan

This action plan focusses on decarbonising transport through modal shift to rail, and decarbonising rail traction energy through the removal of diesel passenger trains from the Scottish network by 2035.

The plan builds on work undertaken as part of the Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 (which will inform transport investment in Scotland for the next 20 years).

Islands Connectivity Plan (ICP) - Strategic Approach, and Islands Connectivity Plan – The Vessels and Ports Plan for the Clyde and Hebrides and Northern Isles Networks (2025-2045)

The purpose of the ICP is to set out how ferry services, supported by other transport modes, will be delivered (and strengthened). The Plan has a long term Vision supported by priorities and defined outcomes for people and places. It sets out a commitment to review and promote integration between ferries and other modes of transport on the mainland and islands, with a view to better facilitating the use of active, public or shared transport.

The Plan considers aviation as well as freight, passenger-only, and vehicle ferries. It also (as noted in STPR2 – Recommendation 41) considers a fixed link to Mull which “could offer a high level of transport connectivity, albeit at a substantial upfront cost”. The second section of this paper sets out Argyll and Bute’s remote, rural and island geography in more detail, but which is characterised by numerous peninsulas separated by deep sea lochs and includes 23 inhabited islands. This Plan is therefore a key piece of evidence that must be considered throughout the LDP process and is discussed further in the Public Transport (Ferries and Ports) section of this Topic Paper.

As part of the ICP, Transport Scotland is undertaking a series of Community Needs Assessments to inform decisions on future development and provide evidence for future investment business cases.

A National Mission with Local Impact: Infrastructure Investment Plan for Scotland 2021-22 to 2025-26

The Infrastructure Investment Plan covers 2021-22 to 2025-26 and aims to deliver the National Infrastructure Mission commitment to boost economic growth. This Plan includes the enabling infrastructure of transport, energy, water, telecoms, digital and internet, to permit the ready movement of people, and aims to support safe active travel as well as investment in bus and rail decarbonisation.

Of particular relevance to Argyll and Bute, the Plan aims to deliver a safe and sustainable, integrated and resilient strategic transport system including the A83 Rest and be Thankful.

Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2030: Together, making Scotland's roads safer

The Framework advocates a vision for Scotland to have the best road safety performance in the world by 2030. To help achieve that vision, the framework sets out five strategic outcomes which describe the road safety environment it aims to deliver. These outcomes align with the five pillars of the Safe System: Safe Road Use; Safe Vehicles; Safe Speeds; Safe Roads and Roadsides; and Post-crash Response.

The Framework explains that COVID-19 has had a profound impact on transport. Car traffic levels dropped to around 25% of 2019 levels between 9 March and 6 September 2020, but had recovered to 91% of 2019 levels by the end of the six month period. The reasons for how, why and when people travel have fundamentally changed. There has been a mass shift to home working in some professions. Sustained remote and local working practices could promote a better work/life balance and result in less exposure to air pollution, while also causing less congestion.

Fastline Faslane: Detailed Options Appraisal

This report comprises of a Detailed Options Appraisal, the final stage in the STAG1 process, with the purpose of undertaking more detailed appraisal of potential transport interventions for improving connectivity to HMNB Clyde, more colloquially known as Faslane where (at July 2024) more than 7,000 employees contribute to the Base's operations. Additionally, on average the Base receives 2,500 visitors per month.

A Case for Change had been completed in early 2020, reflecting a 2019 Baseline, which has been reviewed within the Detailed Options Appraisal to reflect an up to date position post Covid.

Regional and Local Policy

Argyll and Bute is included in two Regional Transport Partnerships (RTP's):

- HITRANS covers all of Argyll Bute with the exception of Helensburgh and Lomond.
- Strathclyde Partnership for Transport covers the Helensburgh and Lomond area.

Transport Scotland defines the role of Regional Transport Partnerships as follows:

“To strengthen the planning and delivery of regional transport developments. RTPs bring together local authorities and other key regional stakeholders to take a strategic approach to transport in each region of Scotland.”

HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy

The Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (HITRANS) is the statutory Regional Transport Partnership (RTP) covering Eilean Siar (Western Isles), Orkney, Highland, Moray and most of the Argyll and Bute area.

The original Regional Transport Strategy was published in 2008. The Strategy was refreshed in 2018 but following the publication of NTS2 in 2020, HITRANS took the decision to undertake a full update of the Strategy to ensure it reflects the current policy landscape and wider regional priorities. HITRANS is currently seeking Ministerial approval of the finalised Regional Transport Strategy. Once approved, this will provide the strategic framework for the development of transport in the region for the next 20 years.

Its aim is to deliver a transport system that contributes to the priorities of the National Transport Strategy 2 (NTS2) through reducing inequalities, taking climate action, delivering inclusive economic growth and improving health and wellbeing.

Subsequent to the adoption of the Regional Transport Strategy, an accompanying Action Plan is expected to be developed, focusing on actions that are regionally significant in nature - i.e., those which are large scale or cross-boundary, either between authorities within the HITRANS region or between the HITRANS region and other RTP areas. Unlike the Regional Transport Strategy itself, HITRANS expects the Action Plan to be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect the changing status of projects, their differing stages in the project lifecycle and the need for new or amended actions to support a policy (e.g, in response to the emergence or development of new technology).

HITRAN Active Travel Strategy

The Strategy sets out the benefits of Active Travel Walking and cycling, which are:

- Walking and cycling can be quick, low-cost (or free), convenient and enjoyable ways to travel.

- Active journeys can make a substantial contribution to mental and physical wellbeing, and everyday walking or cycling can support achieving recommended levels of physical activity.
- Where walking or cycling are chosen instead of travel by other modes, there can be additional benefits in the form of reduced emissions and improved air quality, and reduced traffic congestion.
- In the HITRANS area, congestion can also relate to the finite capacity for carrying vehicles on ferry routes.

SPT A Call to Action: The Regional Transport Strategy for the West of Scotland 2023-2038

In 2023, SPT published the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) which sets the long-term direction for transport in the region. The RTS, entitled ‘A Call to Action: The Regional Transport Strategy for the West of Scotland (2023 – 2038)’, outlines the following vision to define the future transport system for the people, communities and businesses in the region:

“The west of Scotland will be an attractive, resilient and well-connected place with active, liveable communities and accessible, vibrant centres facilitated by high quality, sustainable and low carbon transport shaped by the needs of all.”

Although the SPT refers to the region as “the west of Scotland”, it is only the Helensburgh and Lomond area to the south-east of Argyll and Bute which falls within this region. The west of Argyll (including the western coast and islands) is actually in the HITRANS region.

“A Call to Action”, was approved by Scottish Ministers in July 2023 and sets out a 15 year strategy in order to help mitigate climate change, support inclusive economic growth and, ensure everyone has access to the opportunities they need to lead fulfilling lives.

SPT – Regional Transport Strategy Delivery Plan

The Delivery Plan for SPT’s Regional Transport Strategy was presented before the Partnership in September 2024, and covers the periods 24/25 and 26/27.

The only key project within the Plan that affects Argyll and Bute is the Garelochhead – Faslane – Helensburgh – Dumbarton regional route (comprising multiple projects), however while this gets recognition within the RTS Delivery Plan, this is being delivered by Argyll and Bute Council.

SPT: The Regional Active Travel Strategy for the West of Scotland 2024-2038

SPT's Regional Active Travel Strategy (ATS) forms part of SPT's co-ordinated approach to achieve the Vision, Priorities and Targets set out in their Regional Transport Strategy. Active Travel Infrastructure is set out in the "Enabling Active Travel" Policies (13 to 17) of the RTS, as well as policies 8, 11, 12, 28, 29 and 30, which link to related Active Travel themes.

The ATS notes that, at the time of writing, Argyll and Bute Council is the only local authority within the SPT area without a developed or developing Active Travel Strategy or Action Plan. However, Argyll and Bute are now in the process of developing a local ATS.

The image overleaf is taken from SPT's ATS, showing the part of the route prioritisation exercise (called The Prioritised Network) that falls within the Helensburgh and Lomond area of Argyll and Bute. This shows medium priority links between HMNB Clyde and Helensburgh; Garelochhead and HMNB Clyde; and Kilcreggan and Garelochhead; and a top priority link between Helensburgh and Dumbarton.

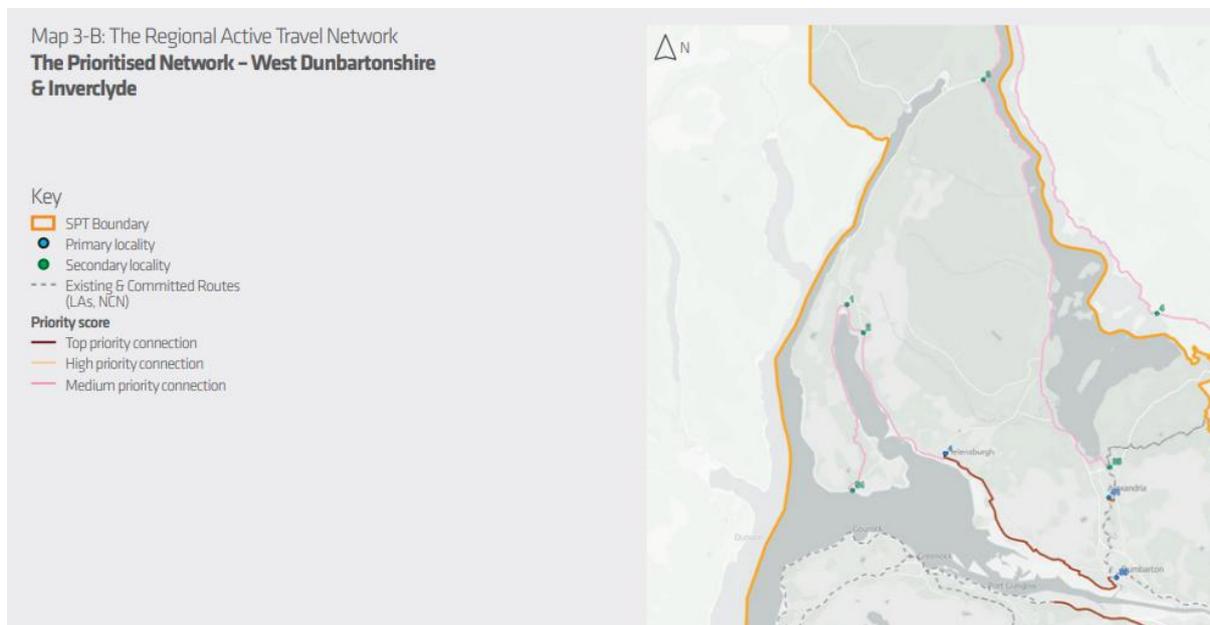


Figure 12: Part of the SPT Prioritised Active Travel Network within Argyll and Bute (source: SPT: The Regional Active Travel Strategy for the West of Scotland 2024-2038)

SPT Regional Bus Strategy (draft for consultation)

SPT's draft Regional Bus Strategy sets out that more frequent, more reliable, more affordable, and easier to use buses are needed within the Strathclyde region. The draft strategy sets out measures to meet 3 objectives:

- Consistent and improved level of service across the region
- Bus travel to be affordable, safe and accessible for all
- Attractive, integrated and sustainable bus network

SPT: Delivering for Argyll and Bute

This document explains what SPT do specifically within Helensburgh and Lomond, and projects for which they have provided funding. This has included bus infrastructure upgrades, cycleways, and Helensburgh Park and Ride.

Argyll and Bute indicative Regional Spatial Strategy (iRSS)

An indicative Regional Spatial Strategy (iRSS) was prepared by Argyll and Bute Council in 2020. This covers all of Argyll and Bute except that area lying within the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park which will have its own iRSS. It was prepared to inform the preparation of the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) and help to shape a national vision for 2050.

Argyll and Bute (excluding the National Park Area) took the decision not to produce a joint iRSS with other planning authorities, as the area does not readily relate on a strategic scale to any other single administrative area, having both influence and connections to the north, the south and also to the other island authority areas. Consequently, it was decided to produce a single iRSS for Argyll and Bute as a stand-alone area. Notwithstanding this, cognisance was taken of the strategic relationships which exist with neighbouring administrative areas during its preparation.

The iRSS identifies that improved access to key global markets and lifeline services is critically important to the region as without this, businesses and population may relocate out of the area if they feel that their access routes are not fit for purpose or resilient enough. Key transport actions relate to Trunk Road improvements; intra-regional road improvements (these are more significant in the remote rural context with network resilience being critical to the regional economy and community well-being); improvements to the capacity and resilience of ferry services across the network; and maintaining air links (which are lifeline links with the central belt or to Oban).

Pinch points / areas for improvement identified are:

- A85 pinch points
- Re-routing of A85 around Oban (Oban Development Road)
- Roundabout at Dunbeg
- Improvements to Oban port and Craignure ferry terminal
- Improvements to air connectivity
- Capacity in rail network on West Highland Line
- A82 pinch points (Tarbet to Inverernan)
- A83 Rest and be Thankful
- New railway station at Shandon

Argyll and Bute Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2024-34 and Support Document

This is a statutory 10 year Outcomes Improvement Plan produced by the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) under the provisions on the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. It sets out three outcomes for 2024-2034, one of which is Transport Infrastructure.

The associated Support Document provides further information related to each of the outcomes, and clarifies that many of the issues raised through the consultation process for the new Outcomes Improvement Plan are not new, having been raised through research on transport and the economy conducted by Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Argyll and Bute Council in 2016. It is noted that while some of the data may be a few years old, much of it can still be considered relevant and there are several salient points which link to consultation responses around resilience, timetabling, public transport and specifically the A83 trunk road.

The CPP sets out to consider a range of existing and new strategies and plans which may impact on the delivery and implementation of the transport elements of the new Outcomes Improvement Plan, including the Argyll and Bute Active Travel Strategy and Argyll and Bute Economic Strategy which are both expected in 2024, the CMAL Corporate Plan and the Argyll and Bute Visitor Economy Recovery and Growth Strategy.

Argyll and Bute Economic Strategy Refresh 2024-34

The 10 year strategy sets out the drivers of economic growth across four strategic key “pillars”, one of which is “Place”. This notes a need to invest in our towns, rural and remote rural communities, including our islands and peninsulas, to attract new people

and businesses. It also outlines a need to pursue external funding opportunities and invest in critical economic infrastructure to create a place-based and people-centred economy that delivers shared prosperity and sustainable business growth through innovation and collaboration.

Argyll and Bute Economic Strategy Action Plan 2024-27

A 3 year Action Plan has been developed to implement and deliver the 2024-2034 Economic Strategy. This is a working document that takes account of changes in Government economic policy direction, prioritising resources to make the greatest impact.

This document sets out commitments to prepare both an Argyll and Bute Transport Strategy, as well as an Argyll and Bute Active Travel Strategy, both of which are currently in draft format and are detailed below. The Economic Strategy Action Plan also notes the importance of a permanent and fully funded solution to the Rest and be Thankful to be delivered by the Scottish Government.

Argyll and Bute proposed Local Transport Strategy

Argyll and Bute does not currently have a Local Transport Strategy (LTS) however improving our transport connectivity is a top priority for both Argyll and Bute Council as well as the Community Planning Partnership (CPP). A report was therefore presented to Members of the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee on 19th June 2025 setting out why an LTS for Argyll and Bute is vital:

- **Efficiency:** It ensures that different modes of transport (public transit, cycling, walking, etc.) work together seamlessly, reducing travel times and improving connectivity between, and within, our communities.
- **Sustainability:** By promoting public transport and non-motorised options, it helps reduce traffic congestion and lower greenhouse gas emissions, contributing to environmental sustainability.
- **Economic Development:** A well-planned transport system can boost local economies by improving access to jobs, vital services, and amenities, making areas more attractive to businesses, visitors, and residents.
- **Social Equity:** A cohesive strategy addresses the needs of all community members, ensuring that transport options are accessible to everyone, including vulnerable members of our community.

- Public Health: By encouraging active transport modes like walking and cycling, it can improve public health outcomes through increased physical activity and reduced air pollution.
- Safety: A coordinated approach can enhance safety measures, increasing resilience to climate change/severe weather events, reducing accidents and improving overall community well-being.

Having an LTS will also help the council communicate its transport priorities to both Governments and relevant key agencies, as well as informing the LDP3. The scale of investment and change required is beyond the resources of the council which makes increased collaboration and partnership working critically important.

Key issues have been identified which will inform the rationale, content and future implementation of an LTS. These are:

- Climate change impacts on our essential transport infrastructure
- Supporting economic growth
- Journey to net zero
- Reducing the need to travel
- Improving places through increased transport choice

A consultation is currently open to all transport partners together with the public over a six week period from 7th October 2025 to 18th November 2025, after which an LTS will be prepared for Member approval.

Argyll and Bute draft Active Travel Strategy

Argyll and Bute are currently developing an Active Travel Strategy which will set out the policy and strategic context for the development and delivery of active travel across the whole of the area. Subsequent to this, an Active Travel Delivery Plan will be developed which will identify the specific projects to be developed to achieve the ambition set out in the Strategy.

The draft Active Travel Strategy sets out the following aims, objectives and actions:

- Dedicated walking and cycling paths – separated, marked cycle lanes; well-maintained, wide, and safe pedestrian paths; and multi-use paths where cyclists and pedestrians share the same space
- Cycle Parking and Storage – cycle racks, shelters, lockers and stations

- Crossings and junctions – safe, clearly marked pedestrian crossings, dedicated cycle crossings; traffic lights that prioritise cyclists; pedestrian islands and refuge areas
- Traffic calming measures – speed humps/bumps; narrowing lanes or streets; chicanes; pedestrian-only zones
- Public transport integration – cycle racks at bus/train stations and ferry terminals; park and ride facilities with bike parking; secure bike parking at public transport stations

The draft strategy also sets out to adopt Cycle by Design (2021) and any updates of this, as Argyll and Bute Council design policy.

Active Travel

Introduction

Active travel sits at the top of the Sustainable Travel Hierarchy, and comprises walking, wheeling, and cycling. This can include the use of adaptive bikes and other mobility aids. As noted earlier in this Topic Paper, Argyll and Bute is currently producing an Active Travel Strategy (which is at draft stage).

Improving safety through good design, in particular to protect more vulnerable individuals, pedestrians and cyclists, reduces injuries from car collisions (Public Health Scotland, 2022). Where people choose to travel actively to make a journey instead of using a private car, this reduces the number of car movements which makes streets cleaner, improves air quality, reduces traffic congestion and reduces demand for space to park in key hotspots.

Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2030 points out that, as the active travel agenda unfolds (traffic estimates suggest a marked increase in cycling on Scottish roads since 2008, Scotland may face the so-called 'safety in numbers' effect which can be defined as follows: with significant increases in walking and cycling, the safety rate improves, but the actual number of pedestrian and cyclist casualties may increase. This could be exacerbated by the current lack of knowledge of the Highway Code among road users in relation to ensuring the safety of cyclists and pedestrians.

Transport poverty is defined as households and individuals who spend a significant percentage of their income to make the journeys they need (UK Government, 2019). In Argyll and Bute, where a higher than Scottish average of the population have low

incomes (SIMD 2020), the cost of travel is a significant barrier to a substantial number of the community. This is highlighted by the higher than Scottish average number of households that have multiple cars but shorter than Scottish average journey distances to work/study (2022 census), indicating that a significant number of households own multiple cars to travel short distances. Walking, wheeling (mobility aids/child prams) and cycling are much cheaper than running a car or using public transport, and improving opportunities to choose to walk/cycle for essential journeys can improve access to essential services, reduce social exclusion and increase opportunities to access education and employment.

Argyll and Bute Council provide free school transport to some pupils on safety grounds. This is in cases where pupils live less than the legislative minimum distance from school to qualify for free school transport provision, but where there is no safe active travel route to school. Where new active travel infrastructure creates a safe route to school (where one did not previously exist) it could reduce the requirement to provide school transport on safety grounds, thereby creating a revenue saving to the Council. The Hands Up Scotland (2023) survey results note that only 35.2% of children use a mode of active travel to get to school (30.1% walk, 3.6% cycle, 1.5% scoot/skate), compared to 49.3% for Scotland as a whole (41.3% walk, 4.7% cycle, 3.3% scoot/skate). Further details of the Hands Up Scotland data is included in the Travel Patterns section of this Topic Paper.

Argyll and Bute Statistics

In Bute and Cowan (B&C) 26% of households (2,758 households) do not have access to a motor vehicle and are therefore reliant on public transport and active travel modes. Within the key settlements the proportion of households without access to a motor vehicle is 41% (947) in Rothesay, 26% (1,370) in Dunoon, Innellan and Sandbank, 15% (50) in Blairmore, Kilmun and Strone and 13% (40) in Tighnabruaich. (2022 census)

In Helensburgh and Lomond (H&L) 18% of households (1,952 households) do not have access to a motor vehicle and are therefore reliant on public transport and active travel modes. Within the key settlements the proportion of households without access to a motor vehicle is 20% (1,481) in Helensburgh, 19% (120) in Garelochhead, 19% (106) in Rosneath, 10% (95) in Cardross and 9% (52) in Kilcreggan. (2022 census)

In Mid Argyll, Kintyre and Islay (MAKI) 20% of households (2,042 households) do not have access to a motor vehicle and are therefore reliant on public transport and active travel modes. This increases to 34% (800) of households in Campbeltown, 26% (103) in Bowmore, 25% (152) in Tarbert and 24% (302) in Lochgilphead. (2022 census)

In Oban, Lorn and the Isles (OLI) 18% of households (1,755 households) do not have access to a motor vehicle and are therefore reliant on public transport and active travel modes. Within the key settlements the proportion of households without access to a motor vehicle is 29% (1,153) in Oban, 19% (80) in Dunbeg, 14% (70) in Tobermory and 11% (25) in Connel. (2022 census)

Despite this, according to the Scottish Household Survey 2023, only 52% of adults surveyed had used walking as mode of transport within the previous 7 days (compared to 66.1% across Scotland).

Active Travel Routes in Argyll and Bute

National Cycle Network (NCN) routes 75 and 78 can be found within the HITRANS area of Argyll and Bute, providing predominantly on-road cycle provision. However, NCN 78 (The Caledonia Way) also features extensive traffic free sections which have been developed between Oban and Fort William.

Several of Scotland's Great Trails and long-distance walking routes are wholly or partially within Argyll and Bute including: The Cowal Way; West Island Way; West Highland Way; The John Muir Way; and Three Lochs Way.

Funding of Active Travel

The Scottish Government's Infrastructure Investment Plan 21/22 to 25/26 commits to supporting investment in active travel infrastructure projects mainly through the Places for Everyone programme with £352m (In addition, £119.5m goes direct to local authorities and together with £31.5m of resource funding makes up the total five year active travel commitment of £502.5m).

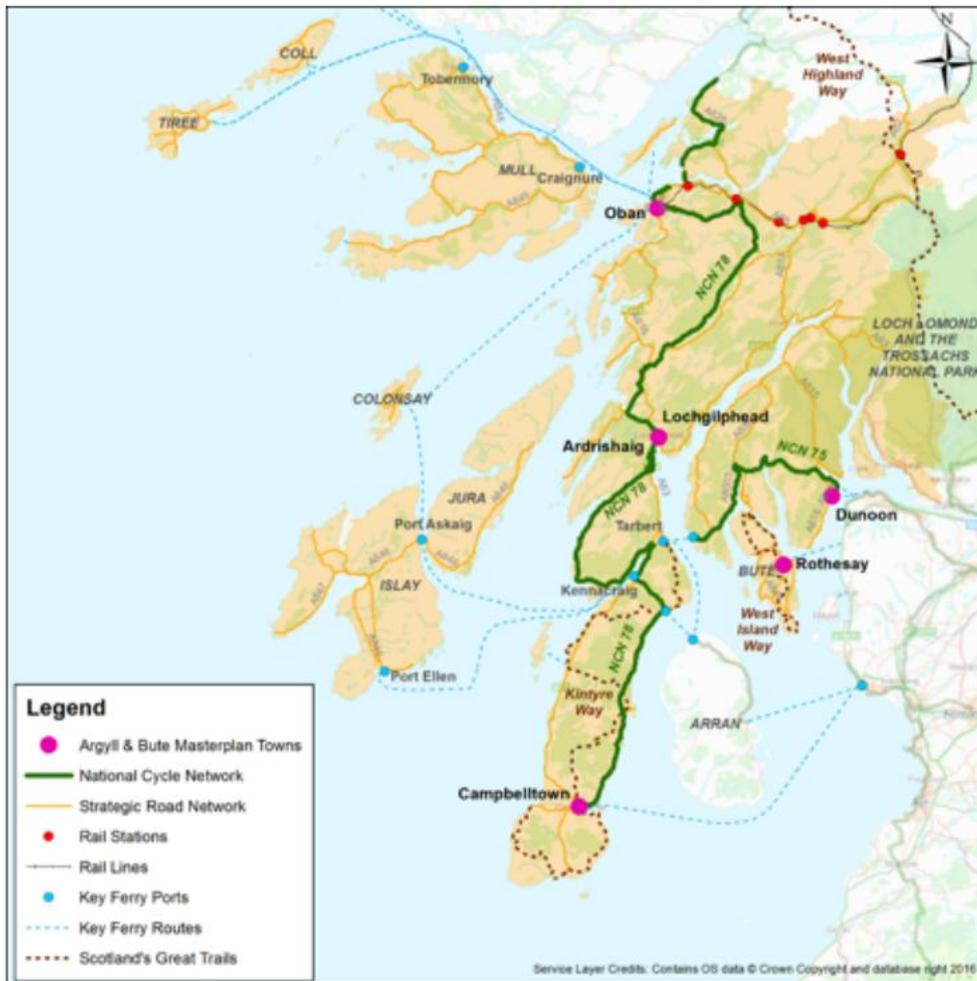


Figure 13: Active Travel Routes within Argyll and Bute (source: HITRANS Active Travel Strategy)

Development / delivery of Trunk Road Active Travel Projects within Argyll and Bute

STPR2 recommendation 37 is to improve active travel on trunk roads through communities. This recommendation focuses on improving active travel infrastructure along trunk roads where they pass through communities. The aim is to make walking, wheeling and cycling safer and more accessible for local residents and visitors. The planned Trunk Road Active Travel Schemes in Argyll and Bute are-

- A83 Kinloch Road, Campbelltown - Scheme planned
- A85 Connel to Dunbeg - Under investigation
- A828 Benderloch NMU Crossing - Under investigation

Development / delivery of Active Travel Projects by Argyll and Bute Council

In 2024/25 Argyll and Bute Council plans to develop and deliver a number of projects across Argyll and Bute. Details of these area as follows:

BUTE AND COWAL (B&C)

1. Dunoon to Hunters Quay Active Travel Route - This project seeks to improve the strategically important corridor between Dunoon and Hunters Quay that connects the ferry terminal at Hunters Quay with Dunoon Town Centre and the Dunoon Ferry Terminal for pedestrians and cyclists. The project also seeks to introduce a series of improved crossing facilities at key locations along its length in order to create safer accessible links over the A815 thereby improving the connection for everyone including those with limited mobility between the route which runs along the seaward side of the A815 and facilities and residential areas that are located on the landward side of the A815. The project also seeks to introduce public realm improvements at key locations such as the Kirn Shops to help emphasize Kirn as a destination and create an improved sense of place. This project is at the technical design stage, with construction anticipated between 2026 and 2030.
2. Rothesay Town Centre to Joint Campus - This project has developed a preferred option for a safe route between Rothesay Town centre and the Joint Campus along the B881 High Street, and in 24/25 it is planned to develop the preferred option to a fully constructible set of designs. This will deliver on the community ambition to create a safe route between the town centre and the Joint Campus, and it will create an important active travel route that will link in with the health centre, hospital, leisure centre, town centre, ferry terminal and other key services/destinations. This project is at the technical design stage, with construction anticipated between 2026 and 2030.
3. Rothesay Pavilion to Albert Pier - This project will undertake extensive community engagement to develop options and designs to improve the walking, wheeling and cycling environment along the A844 Victoria Street, including the provision of links into the neighbouring communities and destinations along the route, from the Rothesay Pavilion to the Rothesay Ferry Terminal and on to Albert Pier. This route is a key commuter and community link that will provide a safe active travel route to places of employment, essential services, residential areas, transport hubs, key recreational facilities and a range of retail services. The designs will include appropriate place making elements to enhance the route and offer wider public benefits along the route corridor. The designs will also improve pedestrian links into

Rothesay Town Centre, Discovery Centre and the Rothesay Pavilion, and make allowance for potential future active travel connections, including onward on the A844 and the planned active travel improvements between Rothesay Ferry Terminal and the Joint Campus. This project is at the technical design stage, with construction anticipated between 2026 and 2028.

4. Dunoon Castle Gardens Path Upgrade - Financial support to Economic Development colleagues to support upgrading paths within Dunoon Castle Gardens as part of the wider Castle Gate Lodge project to improve links to the newly refurbished Gate Lodge and improve walking, wheeling and cycling links through the Castle Gardens to improve active travel links between Dunoon Ferry Terminal, Town Centre and Promenade and the large residential areas behind the Castle Gardens.

5. Rothesay Pavilion to Albert Pier - Development of concept proposals to improve the walking, wheeling and cycling environment along the A844 Victoria Street, including the provision of links into the neighbouring communities and destinations along the route, from the Rothesay Pavilion to the Rothesay Ferry Terminal and on to Albert Pier. This route is a key commuter and community link that will provide a safe active travel route to places of employment, essential services, residential areas, transport hubs, key recreational facilities and a range of retail services. The designs will include appropriate place making elements to enhance the route and offer wider public benefits along the route corridor. The designs will also improve pedestrian links into Rothesay Town Centre, Discovery Centre and the Rothesay Pavilion, and make allowance for potential future active travel connections, including onward on the A844 and the proposed active travel improvements between Rothesay Ferry Terminal and the Joint Campus. This project is at the technical design stage, with construction anticipated between 2027 and 2031.

HELENSBURGH AND LOMOND (H&L)

6. Helensburgh – Cardross – Dumbarton Cyclepath (Phases 1 & 2) - Design and construction of a safe, accessible walking and cycling path linking Helensburgh with the settlements of Cardross and Dumbarton to the east. Once completed, this path will provide a safe and accessible alternative to the A814 to enable local residents and visitors to choose to walk or cycle to access essential services, shops and leisure facilities. Officers have worked closely with staff from the design consultants, Connected Transport Planning (CTP), to engage with landowners to re-introduce the project and seek agreement to undertake necessary surveys. Following securing the agreement of landowners the necessary ecological and topographical surveys commenced in August 2025. This will enable progress to be made to develop the

designs in discussion with the landowners. As appropriate due diligence, following survey data collection the route options will be reviewed by CTP staff to ensure the alignment being developed remains the most deliverable and attractive option. Officers have submitted an application to the highly competitive Transport Scotland Active Travel Infrastructure Fund (ATIF) Tier 2 challenge fund to enable work to progress in 25/26. A new application will require to be made in late 25/26 for the next financial year, 26/27, as ATIF funding is only awarded for a single financial year. Work to identify potential sources of construction match funding, estimated to require a minimum of £3M to complete the route (phases 1, 2, and 3 combined). (SPT Reference R/R_10)

7. Helensburgh – Cardross – Dumbarton Cyclepath (Phase 3) - Design and construction of a safe, accessible walking and cycling route linking the centre of Helensburgh with the constructed section of Phase 1 of the route at Morrisons Supermarket. Once completed, this route will provide a safe and accessible option to enable local residents and visitors to choose to walk or cycle to access essential services, shops and leisure facilities. Civic Engineers (CE) have completed the Concept Design for Phase 3 of the project as part of the Helensburgh Town East project (Appendix 2). Subject to securing funding it is proposed to tender for a design team to progress the design of Phase 3 through the final developed and technical design stages. Officers have submitted an application to the highly competitive Transport Scotland Active Travel Infrastructure Fund (ATIF) Tier 2 challenge fund to enable work to progress in 25/26. A new application will require to be made in late 25/26 for the next financial year, 26/27, as ATIF funding is only awarded for a single financial year. Work to identify potential sources of construction match funding, estimated to require a minimum of £3M to complete the route (phases 1, 2, and 3 combined). Members approved the draft Phase 3 concept design at Committee on 9th September 2025 – this is as per the Helensburgh Town East Active Travel Route (Emerging) RIBA Stage 2 Report. (SPT Reference R/R_10)
8. Helensburgh – Garelochhead Cycleway - The Helensburgh – Garelochhead Cycleway project will design and construct a segregated, accessible walking and cycling route linking the centre of Helensburgh to Rhu, Shandon, HMNB Clyde and Garelochhead. It is anticipated that funding applications will be submitted to the Active Travel Infrastructure Fund (ATIF) to fund the construction of the route. Due to the length of the route it has been split into 5 separate construction phases as the ATIF funding is an annual fund only. The phases of this are as follows:
 - Phase 1 – Helensburgh Town Centre – This starts in Helensburgh Town Centre and ties into the existing high-quality public realm and segregated cycle track that has recently been completed along the Waterfront, from Glasgow Street to Cumberland Avenue.

- Phase 2 – Rhu South - This phase consists of a two-way segregated cycle track continuing on the east side of the carriageway from Rhu Road Higher to the Yacht Club. This section has a particularly constrained cross section due to existing buildings and the coastline. Significant progression has been made in relation to the constrained areas of route that were identified during previous design stages. The design has looked to establish the extents and nature of four proposed ‘boardwalk’ areas where the existing route is too narrow to provide a fully segregated active travel route.
- Phase 3 – Rhu North - Phase 3 runs from the Royal Northern & Clyde Yacht Club to north of Queens Point. Due to the space constraints on the A814 at the yacht club, the route is proposed to continue through land adjacent to the A814, segregated from the carriageway. This will provide a high level of service to route users, given that this continuous, segregated active travel route will be delivered in line with project aims. During the design stages, various landowners have been consulted to ensure future plans of the area are aligned to incorporate the active travel route. Additional surveys, including a tree survey, have been conducted to ensure route viability. Further engagement will be required with all relevant landowners to secure final agreement.
- Phase 4 – Shandon - Phase 4 provides a two-way cycle track on the east side of the road on predominantly reallocated existing verge space. Accesses and side roads have been treated in a consistent way to provide coherence and predictability to the route.
- Phase 5 – Faslane - Phase 5 runs from the Faslane Peace Camp to Faslane Roundabout and continues to provide a two-way cycle track on the east side of the road.

The Transport Scotland announcement of which ATIF 2025/26 applications have been successful is awaited. (SPT References 83/83_10 and 84/84_10)

9. Rosneath – Castle Caravan Park Cyclepath - Delivery of a community desired route linking the centre of Rosneath to the Castle Caravan Park junction along the B833. Phase 1 of the route was constructed in 2018, with the phase within Rosneath town planned for construction in 2024/25 and the final phase around Camsail Bay being designed in partnership with the community. This project is at the technical design stage, with construction hoped in 2028/29, however is subject to securing funding.

MID ARGYLL AND KINTYRE (MAKI)

10. Campbeltown Limecraigs Road Cycleway - The Limecraigs Road section will link the existing sections at Ralston Road/Meadows Avenue (Phase 1a) to The Cutting shared use path (Phase 2), which will provide a link to Campbeltown Town Centre and onwards to the Esplanade and Kinloch Park (Phase 4). In 2025/26 the Council anticipates securing the land agreement and updating designs, with construction anticipated in 2026/27.
11. Campbeltown Esplanade and Kinloch Park Active Travel Improvements - This phase of the project will improve active travel connectivity around the Esplanade, through Kinloch Park and on adjacent roads to improve active travel connectivity between the north side of Campbeltown and the Town Centre, Schools and other amenities. This project is at the technical design stage, with construction anticipated in 2027/28.
12. Bowmore to Bridgend Path Design, Islay - Working in partnership with Islay Community Access Group (ICAG) to develop a walking/cycling path linking Bowmore to Bridgend, including the UHI Columba Gaelic Centre. At present there is no walking or cycling route linking Bowmore to Bridgend construction with the only option being a busy 60mph rural road with no footway. Creation of this path will increase access to Bowmore with its range of retail, leisure, employment opportunities, Bowmore Primary and Islay High School; as well as the community facilities at UHI Columba Gaelic Centre and the settlement of Bridgend with hotel, shop and visitor facilities at Islay House Square.
13. North Islay Path - Working in partnership with Islay Community Access Group (ICAG) and the local community to develop a shared use path linking Port Askaig (ferry terminal) & important settlements of Keills (with Primary School), Ballygrant & Bridgend to enable residents and visitors the opportunity to choose to walk/cycle along the key route which is currently only served by the fast & busy A846 main road and does not have a footway or cycling facilities. The path will also join onto Bowmore - Bridgend Path, thereby providing a continuous, safe route linking Port Askaig to Bowmore. This project is currently at concept design stage, with construction anticipated between 2028 and 2032.
14. Craighouse to Corran Sands Active Travel Route, Jura - Working closely with the community to develop plans for a route linking the existing community constructed Corran Path to the centre of the main settlement on Jura, Craighouse, as identified in the Community Action Plan. This route will also provide a safe route to the Small Isles Primary School, Jura Distillery, Jura Hotel, Jura Service Point, Community Shop,

Community Hall, Church, Playpark and the majority of dwellings on Jura. This project is currently at technical design stage, with construction anticipated in 2028/29.

15. A83 Tarbert to Whitehouse Active Travel Route - The project will develop an off-road shared use path linking Tarbert (main town in mid-Kintyre) and strategic ferry terminal at Kennacraig and the quiet B8001 which links to the Claonaig – Arran ferry. The section of route between Tarbert and Whitehouse is only linked by the very busy and high speed A83 Trunk Road which has suffered a number of serious crashes involving pedestrians and/or cyclists. Working closely with the Community Council and the wider community, school pupils, Transport Scotland, landowners and local businesses, this will be a community focused project to ensure the final design best suits local needs and environment. The route will link to the key transport hub at Kennacraig; provide the opportunity for pupils to walk/cycle to Primary / Secondary School at Tarbert and enable residents in the area to access services, retail, employment, church, graveyard and leisure facilities actively with the associated improvement in accessibility and health equality. The route will also serve the popular leisure 5 Ferries Route and Caledonia Way (ex-NCN78) named route, significantly improving safety by providing an alternative to the highest risk section of these routes. This project is currently at technical design stage, with construction anticipated between 2028 and 2031.
16. Lochgilphead Front Green to Crinan Canal Active Travel Route - This project will deliver an active travel route that links the Lochgilphead Front Green with the Crinan Canal (NCN 78). The new route will align with the separate but related project developing a new active travel route between Lochgilphead Town Centre and the Lochgilphead Joint Campus (see 17 below), thereby creating a safe and direct active travel link between Ardrishaig, the Canal, Lochgilphead and the Joint Campus, the Sports Centre, Kilmory Industrial Estate and Argyll and Bute Council HQ. This project is currently at technical design stage, with construction anticipated in 2028/29.
17. Lochgilphead Town Centre to Joint Campus Active Travel Route - This project will deliver a new active travel route linking Lochgilphead town centre and Front Green with the Lochgilphead Joint Campus. The project will deliver numerous road safety and street scape improvements. The route strategically aligns with the design of a new active travel route Lochgilphead Front Green and the Crinan Canal (see 16 above). This project is currently at technical design stage, with construction anticipated between 2025 and 2029.

OBAN, LORN AND THE ISLES (OLI)

There are no current active travel infrastructure projects ongoing in the OLI area.

Other Work

Pedestrian and Cycle Counters - Argyll and Bute Council operate a network of automated pedestrian and cycle counters with 36 installed across the Council area. The data from these counters is used to monitor changes in pedestrian/cycle numbers, including from new routes, and by partners to support compilation of national statistics.

Helensburgh to Cardross / West Dunbartonshire cycleway (Regional Route 42) – this is an important route linking Helensburgh, Cardross and Dumbarton, allowing active travel opportunities to connect from Helensburgh into established routes (John Muir Way, Three Lochs Way, as well as routes to Glasgow). Argyll and Bute Council continues to work with landowners to acquire land, design works, and implement sections of the route as funding is secured.

Provision of an off-road route for entire length of NCN78, The Caledonia Way, linking Campbeltown to Lochgilphead, Oban and Fort William. This is a key ‘spine’ route for the Council area and wider West of Scotland. In addition to the NCN longer distance route, shorter sections of the route are heavily used for more local journeys, for example Ardrishaig to Lochgilphead, as well as part of other routes, for example the section from Kennacraig to Tarbert forms part of the popular 5 ferries route. The council will continue to work with Transport Scotland (for sections alongside A83/A85/A828 trunk roads and sections on old Connel to Ballachulish Rail Line), Sustrans (as NCN route), local communities, landowners and other stakeholders.

Pilgrims Way: Iona – Mull – Oban – Tyndrum – St Andrews. Entire route should be constructed to a suitable standard for walking and cycling. This national walking and cycling route linking the international destinations of Iona and St Andrews, while also providing active travel links between local communities, requires significant focus to deliver, particularly given the distance and therefore cost and number of authorities and landowners involved. The Council is currently working with local communities in the Fionnphort area of Mull on the development and delivery of a cyclepath route which would provide approximately 1.9km of the route. Within Argyll & Bute the Pilgrims Way would also provide important links within Mull and between Oban and Tyndrum. The council will continue to work with local communities, landowners, active travel bodies (e.g. Sustrans), Transport Scotland (for trunk roads, e.g. A85 Oban to Tyndrum) and

the Scottish Government to develop and deliver sections of this nationally important route.

Active Travel Islay - Following the successful delivery and positive reaction by local residents, businesses and visitors to the 3 distilleries path on Islay there is a strong desire to build upon this success by the construction of active travel routes linking other key settlements, employers and tourist destinations on Islay. The council will work with Islay Community Access Group, local communities, local businesses, active travel groups (e.g. Sustrans, walking groups), landowners and the Scottish Government to develop and implement a network of high-quality walking and cycling routes on Islay. These routes will provide an alternative to the private car for local residents and visitors.

Develop Cycle Tour routes, e.g. 5 Ferries route (Arran / Kintyre Peninsula (Clanaig – Kennacraig – Tarbert) / Cowal Peninsula (Portavadie – Colintrave) / Bute (Rhubodoch – Rothesay), to provide attractive, high-quality cycle route suitable for families/tourists. There are a number of popular cycle tour routes within Argyll & Bute, most notably the 5 ferries route with dedicated ferry tickets available from CalMac for the route. At present these routes are primarily promoted to keen sportive cyclists as a single day activity, however with each of the routes having a total distance of under 55 miles if correctly developed these would offer an attractive weekend/multi-day activity for families/less dedicated cyclists thereby bringing significant economic benefit to these areas. To be attractive to these groups the route would require to be entirely on high-quality segregated infrastructure or on [perceived as] safe, quiet and low speed minor roads. The council will work with local communities, businesses, landowners, active travel bodies (e.g. Sustrans), Transport Scotland (for trunk roads, e.g. A83 Kennacraig to Tarbert), CalMac and the Scottish Government to develop and deliver attractive, high-quality walking and cycling touring routes.

Core Paths

The Council has designated 1,200 miles of Core Paths to give sufficient access for public access throughout Argyll & Bute. These paths cater for all types of users, walkers, cyclists, and horse riders, of all abilities. A Core Path can be a trod path through long grass, a Public Right of Way, farm or forestry track, an old drove road, a minor road, or the footway beside a major road. There is also a Core Path on water along the Crinan Canal.

Core paths form a part of Scotland's overall active travel provision, but active travel also encompasses paths not designated as "core," and the benefits of active travel extend

beyond a specific network. On the other hand, while Active Travel by definition, is limited to travel with a purpose, Core Paths also support recreational journeys.

To see the Core Paths Network - [Where to Go Outdoors - Argyll and Bute Paths Map](#) . The extent of these paths can be seen below:

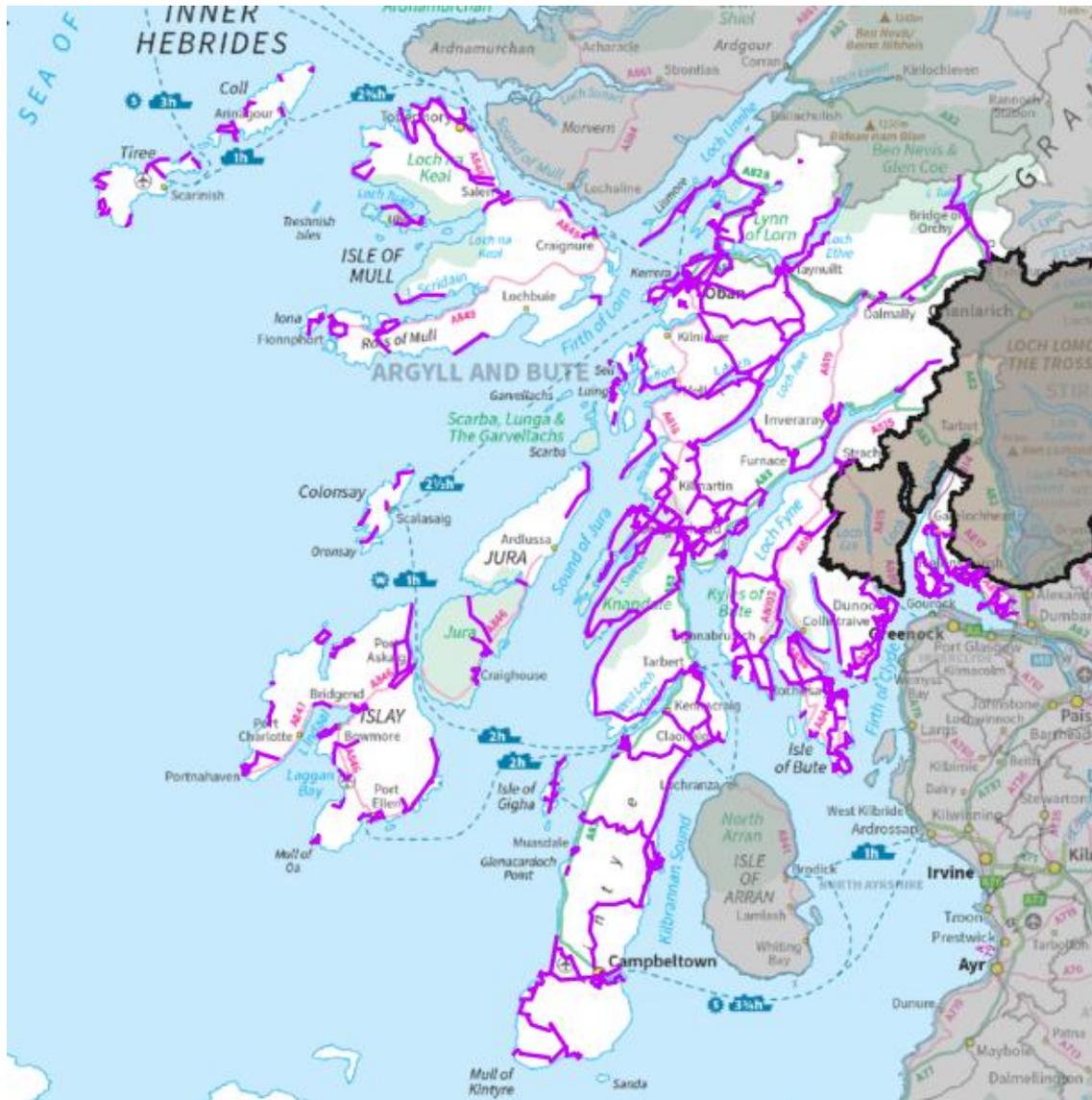


Figure 14 (previous page): Core Path routes in Argyll and Bute

E-bikes

There is no nationwide public network of universal e-bike chargers, and no network in Argyll and Bute.

HMNB Clyde – Active Travel Considerations

Stantec's Detailed Options Appraisal for HITRANS noted that the previous Case for Change had highlighted the inadequacies in both the availability and quality of cycling infrastructure leading to the Base from Helensburgh and Garelochhead, as well as on the Base itself. Concurrently, Argyll and Bute Council had initiated a study to examine ways to enhance cycling conditions and to create a dedicated active travel pathway connecting Helensburgh and Garelochhead (SPT References 83/83_10 and 84/84_10). The phasing and current status of this was outlined earlier within the Helensburgh and Lomond section.

Stantec note within the Detailed Options Appraisal that additional discussions with HMNB Clyde representatives have revealed that there are plans to incorporate improved active travel infrastructure within the secure areas of the Base. These enhancements are to be integrated into the broader redevelopment plans scheduled for the Base in the upcoming twenty years. However, while active travel is an option for some, there are limited options to park and bike in close proximity to the Base.

Strategic Development Frameworks – Active Travel Considerations

Phase 1, 2 and 3 of the Helensburgh – Cardross – Dumbarton Cyclepath, which is ongoing, will feed in the Helensburgh Strategic Development Framework.

The A85 active travel route from Connel to Dunbeg, which is under investigation by Transport Scotland (STPR2 Recommendation 37), will feed into the Oban Strategic Development Framework.

Public Transport

Introduction

Argyll and Bute given is the second largest geographic area of any Scottish Local Authority but with less than 2% of the total population of Scotland.

As noted earlier, the area is also characterised by its diverse geography with 23 inhabited islands and long peninsulas. As such, lifeline ferry networks are essential to support a sustainable, well-connected economy. Reliability and resilience of lifeline

ferry services is critical as communities are often completely reliant on these to access key services, education and employment opportunities.

Many of the communities have very limited public transport options. There is an extremely limited range and frequency of bus and rail services for people accessing work, services and medical appointments within and outwith Argyll and Bute.

Buses

The council subsidises 96% of all local bus services operating across Argyll and Bute at a considerable cost and at a time when passenger numbers are falling.

The tables below provides an overview of the bus routes within Argyll and Bute for each of the 4 admin areas. It was not considered worthwhile to map the routes in this topic paper, as while these would show the geographic distribution of the bus services, they would not show the frequency of the services. The routes are however mapped within the Local Living and Design, Quality and Placetopic paper, which provides more detail of these.

Bus Number	Bus Operator	Route	Weekday Frequency (Schooldays)	Weekday Frequency (School Holidays/Non School days)	Saturday Frequency	Sunday Frequency
471	WCM	Tighnabruaich, Kames and Portavadie local service	Tuesday and Thursday service only. 3 full services a day.	Tuesday and Thursday service only. 3 full services a day.	N/A	N/A
473	WCM	Tighnabruaich – Otter Ferry	4 services a day (schooldays only).	More services operational during school holidays and Thursdays.	N/A	N/A
477	WCM	Rothesay – Kames	1 service a day (Monday/Wednesday/Friday on schooldays only)	N/A	N/A	N/A
478	WCM	Dunoon – to Colintrave & Portavadie	Up to 10 services a day.	5 services a day	4 services a day	N/A
484, 486	WCM	Inveraray/Carrick Castle – Dunoon	10+ services a day	10+ services a day	10+ services a day	N/A
491/492	WCM	Rothesay town	10+ services a day	10+ services a day	10+ services a day	4 services (summer) 2 services (winter)
90, 490	WCM	Rhubodach – Kilchattan Bay	10+ services a day	10+ services a day	10 + services a day	10 + services a day
302	Garelochhead Coaches	Helensburgh – Carrick Castle	3 services a day	3 services a day	3 services a day	N/A

Figure 15: Bus Routes and frequency within Bute and Cowal

Bus Number	Bus Operator	Route	Weekday Frequency (Schooldays)	Weekday Frequency (School Holidays/Non School days)	Saturday Frequency	Sunday Frequency
302	Garelochhead Coaches	Helensburgh – Carrick Castle	3 services a day	3 services a day	3 services a day	N/A
315	Garelochhead Coaches	Helensburgh settlement	10+ services a day	10+ services a day	10+ services a day	5 services a day
316	Garelochhead Coaches / Wilsons of Rhu	Helensburgh – Coulport	10+ services a day	7 services a day	10+ services a day	7 services a day
1B	First	Helensburgh - Glasgow	10+ services a day	10+ services a day	10+ services a day	10+ services a day

Figure 16: Bus Routes and frequency within Helensburgh and Lomond

Bus Number	Bus Operator	Route	Weekday Frequency (Schooldays)	Weekday Frequency (School Holidays/Non School days)	Saturday Frequency	Sunday Frequency
421	WCM	Ford – Port Ban via Lochgilphead	7 services a day (various routes and dates only)	5 services a day (various routes and dates only)	2 services a day	N/A
422	WCM	Lochgilphead – Ardrishaig local service	10 services a day	9 services a day	7 services a day	N/A
428	WCM	Inveraray – Ardrishaig	4 services a day	N/A	N/A	N/A
429	WCM	Ardrishaig – Kilmartin	2 services a day	2 services a day	N/A	N/A
443	WCM	Campbeltown - Sound of Kintyre	4 services a day	3 services a day	1 service a day	N/A
444	WCM	Campbeltown - Southend	6 services a day	3 services a day	N/A	N/A
447	WCM	Tarbert – Port Ban	2 services a day	N/A	N/A	N/A
448	WCM	Lochgilphead/Tarbert – Skipness	5 services a day	3 services a day	2 services a day	N/A
449	WCM	Lochgilphead – Campbeltown	4 services a day	N/A	N/A	N/A
456	Garelochhead Coaches	Isle of Jura	9 services a day	8 services a day	6 services a day (some routes only serviceable on request.)	N/A
500	WCM	Campbeltown – Kilkerran Park	2 services a day	N/A	N/A	N/A
926	Citylink	Campbeltown - Glasgow	5 services a day	2 services a day	6 services a day	6 services a day
200, 442	WCM	Campbeltown – Machrihanish	7 services a day	5 services a day	One service operational on school holidays and Saturdays.	N/A
23, 423	WCM	Ardrishaig - Oban	5 services a day	3 services a day	2 services a day	N/A
300, 445	WCM	Campbeltown - Carradale	5 services daily	5 services daily	5 services daily	N/A
425, 426	WCM	Lochgilphead – Carsaig & Achnamara	8 services a day	2 services a day	2 services a day	N/A
450, 451	Islay Coaches	Isle of Islay	10+ services a day	10+ services a day	10+ services a day	N/A
484, 486	WCM	Inveraray/Carrick Castle – Dunoon	10+ services a day	10+ services a day	10+ services a day	N/A

Figure 17: Bus Routes and frequency within Mid Argyll and Kintyre

Bus Number	Bus Operator	Route	Weekday Frequency (Schooldays)	Weekday Frequency (School Holidays/Non School days)	Saturday Frequency	Sunday Frequency
401	WCM	Soroba - Dunollie	10+ services a day	10+ services a day	10+ services a day	9 services a day (varying routes)
403	WCM	Oban – Dalmally	4 services a day (Schooldays only)	N/A	N/A	N/A
408	WCM	Oban – Bonawe	4 services a day	3 services a day	3 services a day	N/A
415	WCM	Oban – Dalavich	2 services a day	2 services a day	2 services a day	N/A
416	WCM	Oban Town Service	10+ services a day	10+ services a day	10+ services a day	N/A
417	WCM	Oban Town Service via Ganavan, Pulpit Hill, Nant Drive	10+ services a day	8 services a day	8 services a day	N/A
418	WCM	Oban – Ellenabeich/North Cuan	8 services a day	5 services a day	1 service a day	N/A
494	WCM	Tobermory – Calgary	4 services a day	4 services a day	4 services a day	N/A
918	Citylink	Oban – Fort William	2 services a day	2 services a day	2 services a day	2 services a day
918	Citylink	Oban – Fort William	2 services a day	2 services a day	2 services a day	2 services a day
978	Citylink	Oban - Edinburgh	1 service a day	1 service a day	1 service a day	1 service a day
005, 405	WCM	Oban – Appin	10+ services a day	10+ services a day	10+ services a day on Saturdays	8 services a day
23, 423	WCM	Ardrihaig - Oban	5 services a day	3 services a day	2 services a day	N/A
495, 95	WCM	Craignure - Tobermory	Up to 9 services a day	Up to 8 services a day	Up to 8 services on Saturdays	4 services a day
496, 96	WCM	Craignure – Fionnphort	6 services a day	4 services a day	3 services a day on Saturdays	2 services a day
498/499	A.J. MacLean	Isle of Tiree	Up to 5 services a day	N/A	N/A	N/A
975, 976	Citylink	Oban – Glasgow	4 services a day (5 in summer)	4 services a day (5 in summer)	4 services a day (5 in summer)	4 services a day (5 in summer)

Figure 18: Bus Routes and frequency within Oban, Lorn and the Isles

The tables show that whilst numerous bus services run across the area, many local routes are of limited frequency throughout the day, as well as being limited to schooldays.

Bus services have longer journey times than car trips. Those between the five principal mainland settlements are of limited frequency. In some cases the passenger has to connect with another bus en-route (e.g. Dunoon-Lochgilphead), or there is no timetabled service at all (e.g. Campbeltown-Oban).

Bus services within Argyll and Bute are provided mainly by West Coast Motors. Longer distance routes are covered by Scottish Citylink (which is also operated by West Coast Motors). Services on on Tiree by D.A. & A.J. MacLean, on Islay by Islay Coaches, and on Jura by Garelochhead Coaches. Garelochhead Coaches (along with Wilsons of Rhu) also provide services from Helensburgh to the Rosneath peninsula, Carrick Castle, and within Helensburgh itself. First Bus runs a service to Glasgow via Cardross.

Additionally Fishers Tours run the 222 bus between Oban and Arbroath in Angus. However as this service only run fortnightly.

According to the Scottish Household Survey 2023, 77% of adults surveyed had not used a local bus in the previous month (compared to 62.2% across Scotland). The same survey showed that 60% of adults in Argyll and Bute surveyed were satisfied with public transport, and only 25% dissatisfied (14% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied)*

*assumed the missing 1% is due to rounding

A bus survey was run between 19th March 2025 and 30th April 2025. The responses are currently being compiled and a report will be written and published in autumn 2025. This Topic Paper will be updated with a summary of the results as soon as they are available.

Trains

There are 12 train stations within the Argyll and Bute Planning Authority area.

- Cardross
- Craigendoran
- Helensburgh Central

These 3 stations are on the Glasgow to Helensburgh line, where there is a frequent service on the SPT supported network operated by ScotRail.

- Helensburgh Upper
- Garelochhead
- Dalmally
- Loch Awe
- Falls of Cruachan
- Taynuilt
- Connel Ferry
- Oban

These are on the West Highland Line between Glasgow and Oban which has a restricted service. This line takes a spur from the Fort William line at Crianlarich. These stations were included in a platform extension programme to allow longer trains on the West Highland Line. This work has now been completed and Network Rail have confirmed the first 7 car passenger train ran on the West Highland Line on the 11th of March of this year, which was a direct benefit of the platform extension programme.

- Bridge of Orchy

This sits on the West Highland line to Fort William which has a restricted service.

These stations are mapped below. Note, Arrochar & Tarbert, Ardlui, Crianlarich, Tyndrum Upper, and Tyndrum Lower are within Argyll and Bute however sit within the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Planning Authority area.

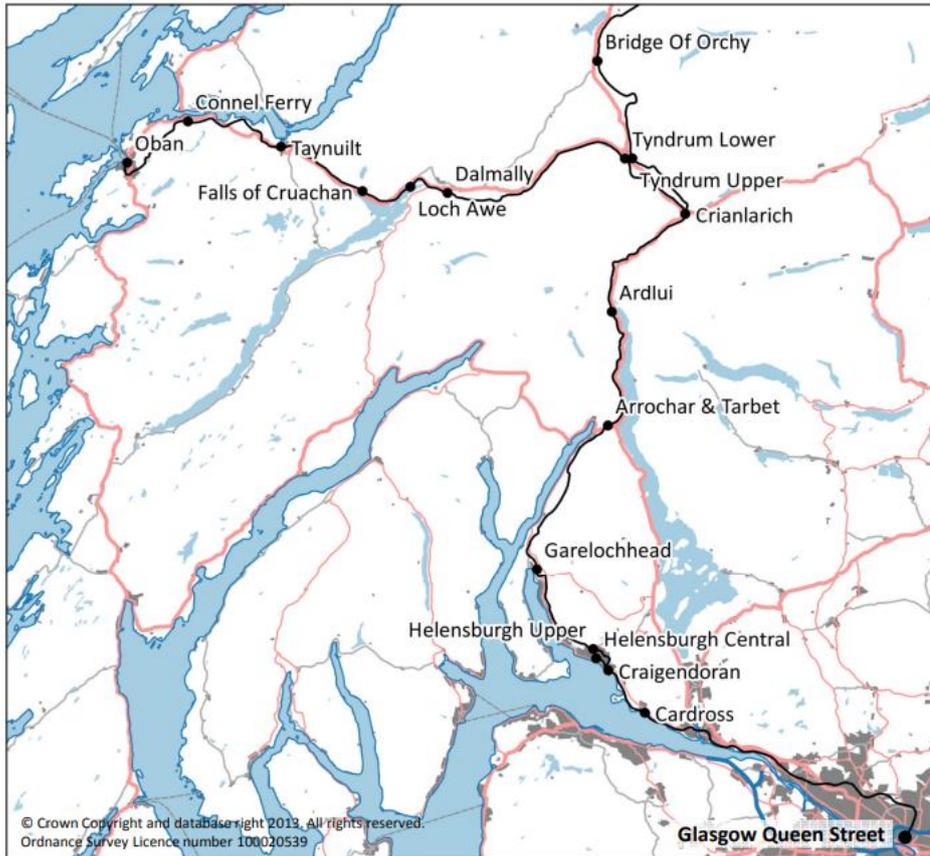


Figure 19: Train Routes within Argyll and Bute (source: HIE Connectivity Report)

The table overleaf shows estimates of usage of these 12 stations, between April 2023 and March 2024, as provided by the Office of Road and Rail (ORR).

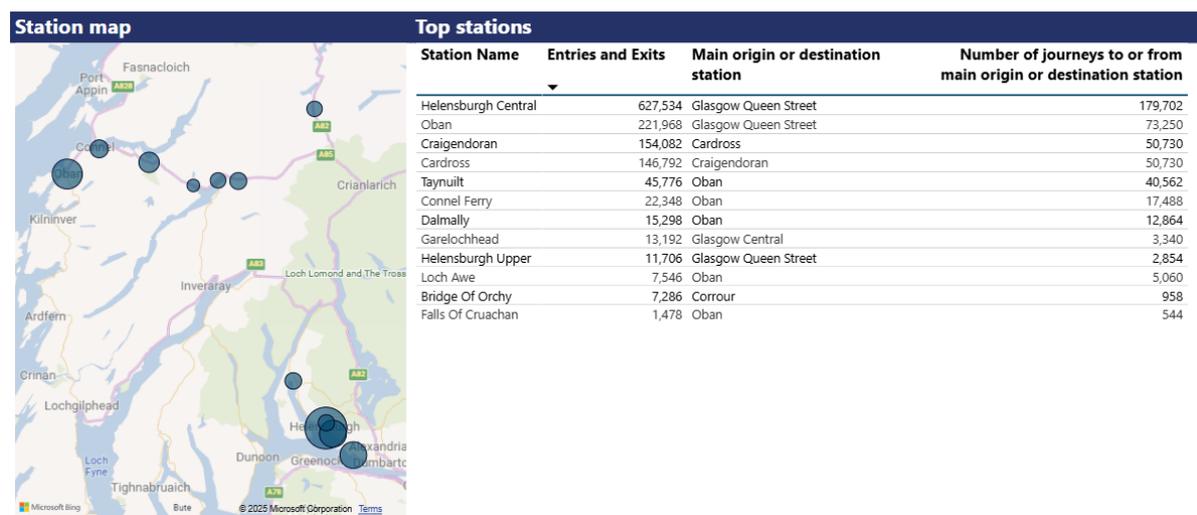


Figure 20: Entries and exits from Argyll and Bute stations 2023-24 (source: ORR)

Historic data for comparison

Stations	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Helensburgh Central	753,118	716,864	81,510	370,770	499,674	627,534
Oban	177,522	169,174	89,004	154,970	186,138	221,968
Craigendoran	119,170	127,380	70,988	122,892	141,704	154,082
Cardross	145,428	121,228	68,212	110,812	126,248	146,792
Taynuilt	22,472	18,416	35,054	35,456	42,026	45,776
Connel Ferry	6,996	7,220	14,552	15,630	18,620	22,348
Dalmally	6,588	6,524	12,996	13,132	13,632	15,298
Garelochhead	8,818	8,594	1,678	8,478	10,030	13,192
Helensburgh Upper	14,046	13,372	1,520	6,916	9,320	11,706
Loch Awe	5,002	5,512	4,562	7,010	8,394	7,546
Bridge of Orchy	6,490	5,906	986	4,126	5,390	7,286
Falls of Cruachan (summer only)	538	626	134	492	888	1,478

Figure 21: Entries and exists between 2018-19 and 2023-24 (source: ORR)

Note – new school train service on Oban branch line from Connel Ferry , Taynult , Loch Awe and Dalmally from 20-21 has caused a significant increase in train patronage at these stations. This has also affected Oban station itself.

Patronage from Helensburgh Central and Helensburgh Upper have decreased since pre-Covid. This is likely due to increased working from home.

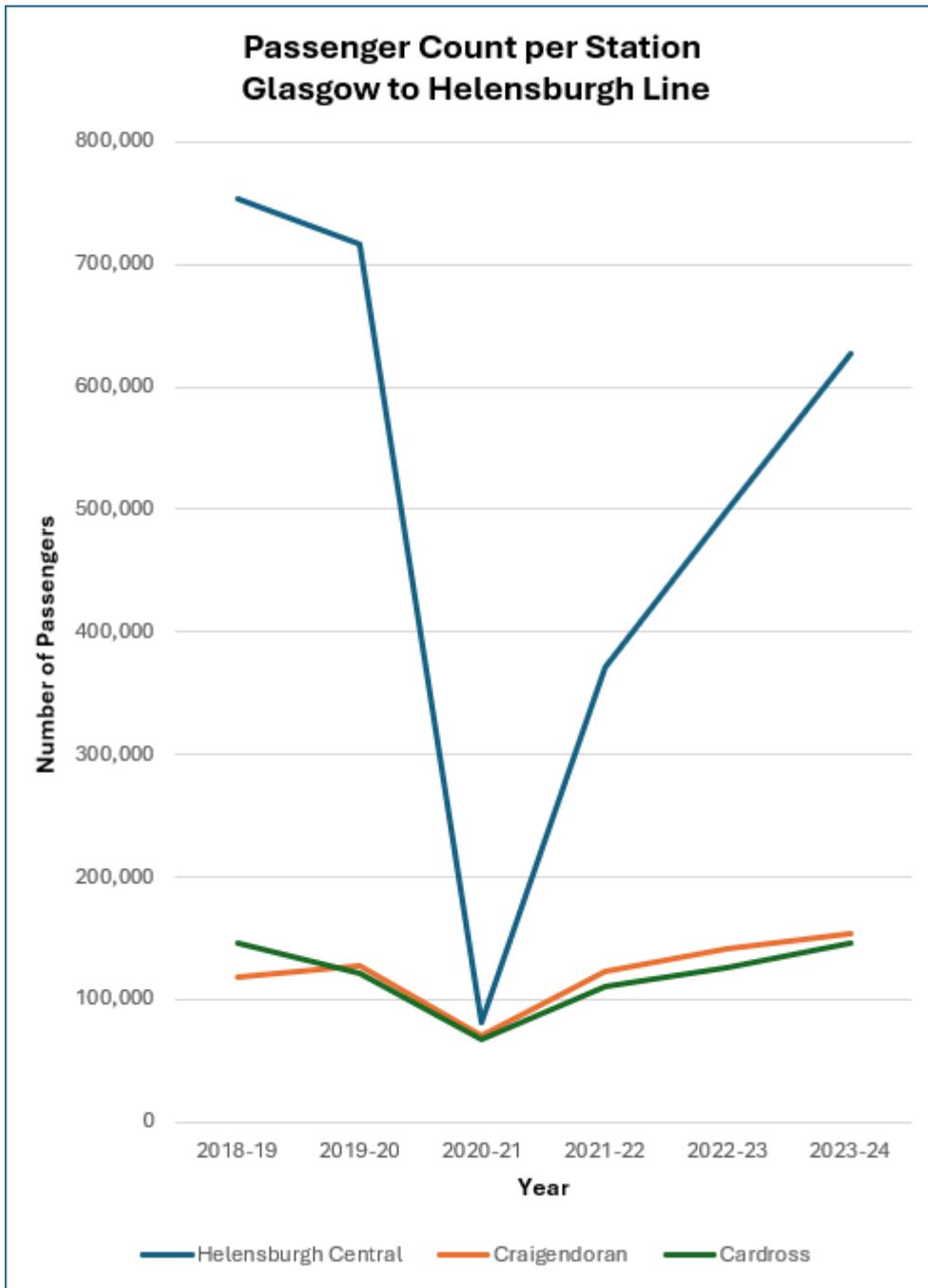


Fig 22: Passenger Count – Glasgow to Helensburgh Line

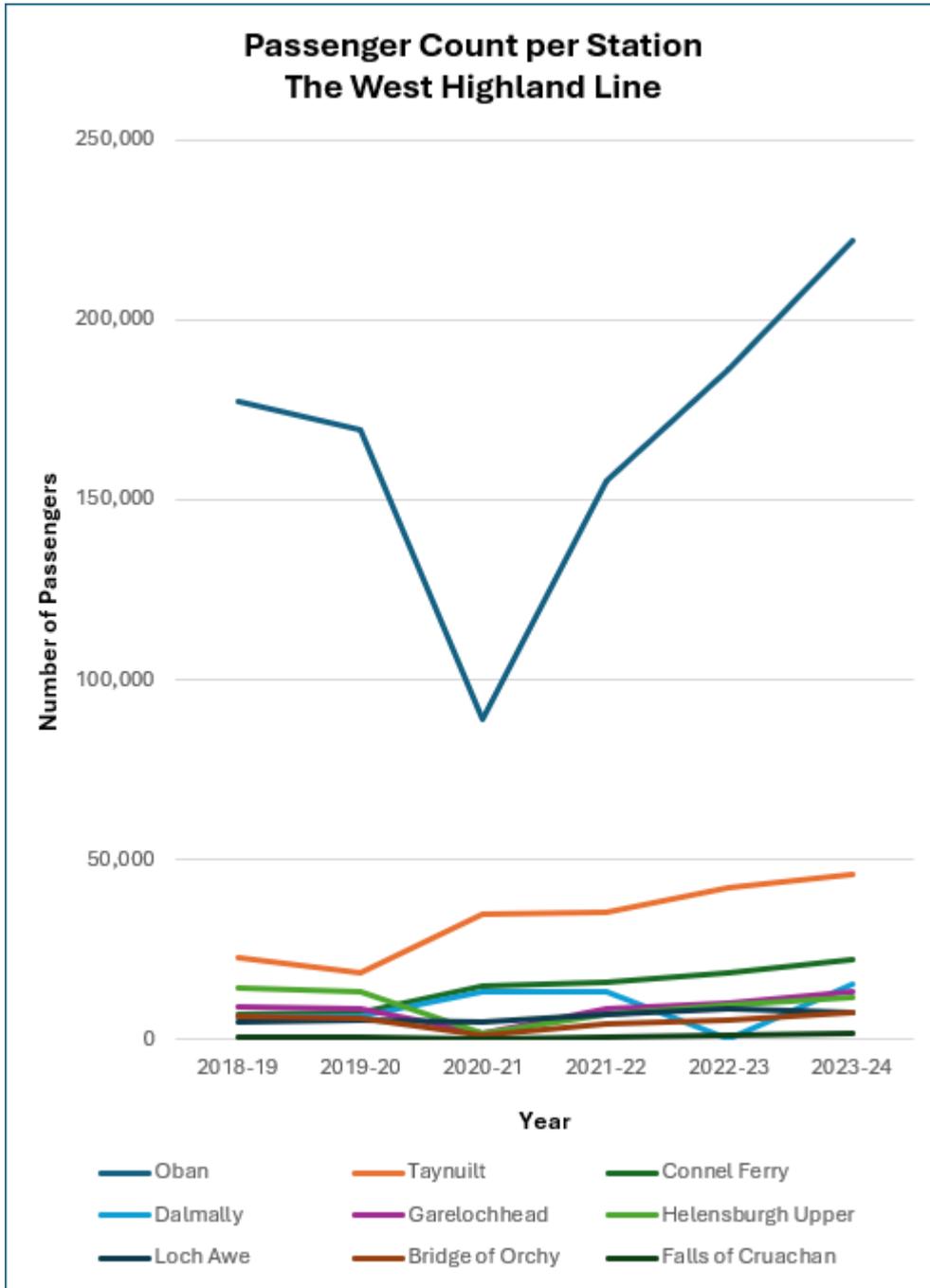


Fig 23: Passenger Count – West Highland Line

Helensburgh Central, Cardross and Craigendoran have frequent ScotRail services to central Glasgow and beyond. The journey time to central Glasgow is around 45 minutes from Helensburgh and slightly less from the other two stations.

There are presently seven ScotRail departures on weekdays from Oban: six are to Glasgow, with the other to Dalnally. There are six departures to Glasgow on Saturdays.

There is a reduced frequency on Sundays, with four trains between Oban and Glasgow in the summer months and two during the rest of the year. Almost all journey times between Oban and Glasgow Queen Street are over 3 hours. This is well above the road journey time of around 2 hours and 20 minutes, making it an uncompetitive journey time.

The overnight Caledonian Sleeper service between London and Fort William calls at each of Bridge of Orchy, Ardlui, Arrochar & Tarbet, Garelochhead, and Helensburgh Upper. Those travelling to/from stations between Oban and Dalmally can connect with the sleeper by using a ScotRail train to/from Crianlarich.

The two stations with the highest usage (as per Figure 14), demonstrate the capabilities of both Helensburgh and Oban to facilitate strategic growth over the next Plan period and beyond. However improvements are required in relation to both lines:

- There is a need for a more detailed study to identify scope for journey time reduction on the West Highland (Oban) line
- HITRANS Regional Transport Partnership are reported to be taking forward a study to look at options to provide an improved transport hub in Oban town centre, focusing on the railway station and ferry marshalling area (Source: [Transport Scotland](#))
- There is a need to provide better public transport to HMNB Clyde, either through the creation of a new station at Shandon, re-establishment of passenger access to the West Highland line at Craigendoran, or through an enhanced public bus service. Transport Scotland has noted that a Local Rail Development Fund application containing transport options for HMNB Clyde has been submitted. The review of the Detailed Options Appraisal has nearly been completed (August 2025) and Transport Scotland expects to issue a response to Argyll and Bute Council in due course.
- Transport Scotland has confirmed that there are long term plans to decarbonise the rail lines within Argyll and Bute by 2045, but at present, no active projects are underway.

Whilst outwith the planning authority area, rail stations at Gourock and Wemyss Bay are important for travel to/from Dunoon and Rothesay, respectively. They offer total rail/ferry journey times of:

- Around 1 hour 15 minutes and upwards between Dunoon and Glasgow.
- Around 1 hour 30 minutes and upwards between Rothesay and Glasgow.

Stations in Context

Network Rail provided Argyll and Bute Council with a spreadsheet called “Stations in Context v18.4” which provides an overview of the context around stations. Key data from this is included in the tables below.

Population and station information:

Station	8 Fold Urban-Rural Class. System (note 1)	Projected pop. change across Argyll and Bute to 2030	Projected pop. change across Argyll and Bute to 2040	Approx train frequency between 7am and 8pm (weekday 2023)	No. of ticket vending machines	Station staffed?
Helensburgh Central	2	-6.80%	-12.90%	Hourly to half hourly	0	Y
Oban	5	-6.80%	-12.90%	Less than 2 hourly	0	Y
Craigendoran	2	-6.80%	-12.90%	Hourly to half hourly	1	N
Cardross	6	-6.80%	-12.90%	Hourly to half hourly	0	Y
Taynuilt	8	-6.80%	-12.90%	Less than 2 hourly	0	N
Connel Ferry	8	-6.80%	-12.90%	Less than 2 hourly	0	N
Dalmally	8	-6.80%	-12.90%	Less than 2 hourly	0	N
Garelochhead	3	-6.80%	-12.90%	Less than 2 hourly	0	N
Helensburgh Upper	2	-6.80%	-12.90%	Less than 2 hourly	1	N
Loch Awe	8	-6.80%	-12.90%	Less than 2 hourly	0	N
Bridge of Orchy	8	-6.80%	-12.90%	Less than 4 hourly	0	N
Falls of Cruachan (summer only)	8	-6.80%	-12.90%	Less than 2 hourly	0	N

Figure 24: Population and station information (source: Network Rail)

Note 1:

Ranking of station context from 1 (large urban area) to 8 (very remote rural area):

1. Large Urban Areas: Settlements of 125,000 people and over.
2. Other Urban Areas: Settlements of 10,000 to 124,999 people.

3. Accessible Small Towns: Settlements of 3,000 to 9,999 people, and within a 30 minute drive time of a Settlement of 10,000 or more.
4. Remote Small Towns: Settlements of 3,000 to 9,999 people, and with a drive time of over 30 minutes but less than or equal to 60 minutes to a Settlement of 10,000 or more.
5. Very Remote Small Towns: Settlements of 3,000 to 9,999 people, and with a drive time of over 60 minutes to a Settlement of 10,000 or more.
6. Accessible Rural Areas: Areas with a population of less than 3,000 people, and within a drive time of 30 minutes to a Settlement of 10,000 or more.
7. Remote Rural Areas: Areas with a population of less than 3,000 people, and with a drive time of over 30 minutes but less than or equal to 60 minutes to a Settlement of 10,000 or more.
8. Very Remote Rural Areas: Areas with a population of less than 3,000 people, and with a drive time of over 60 minutes to a Settlement of 10,000 or more.

Accessibility:

Station	Population with disability within 1km	Population with disability within 5km	Moving around the station (note 2)	Getting to the platform (note 3)	Boarding and finding a space (note 4)
Helensburgh Central	23.1%	23.1%	Amber	A	Amber
Oban	20.1%	18.9%	Amber	A	Amber
Craigendoran	22.4%	24.3%	Amber	A	Red
Cardross	20.1%	24.7%	Amber	B1	Green
Taynuilt	17.1%	17.1%	Amber	B2	Amber
Connel Ferry	17.1%	17.3%	Amber	B2	Red
Dalmally	17.1%	17.1%	Amber	B2	Red
Garelochhead	16.5%	17.2%	Red	C	Green
Helensburgh Upper	23.0%	22.0%	Amber	B2	Green
Loch Awe	17.1%	17.1%	Amber	B2	Red
Bridge of Orchy	17.1%	17.1%	Amber	C	Amber
Falls of Cruachan (summer only)	17.1%	17.1%	Amber	C	Red

Figure 25: Accessibility (source: Network Rail)

Note 2:

Scored based on help points, wayfinding signage, Passenger Assist meeting point, ticket counter, audio-visual customer information system, staff availability, CCTV coverage, provision of toilets, food and drink availability, seating, sheltered seating, and audio-visual announcements. The Pillar 2 data was broken down into subcategories: signage, wayfinding, assistance, information, ticketing, waiting & shelter, comfort & safety. Each of these Pillar 2 categories was assigned a score, then all categories were averaged to determine the overall Pillar 2 score

Note 3:

A: This station has step-free access to all platforms / the platform

B1: Step-free access to all platforms - may include long or steep ramps. Access between platforms may be via the street.

B2: Some step-free access to all platforms - please check details

B3: Some step-free access, may be in one direction only - please check details

C: This station does not have step-free access to any platform.

These scores are subject to change after results from re-classification following the National Rail Accessibility audit

Note 4:

Scored based on platform height suitability for ramped boarding, platform height suitability for future level boarding, and tactile warning surfaces on platform edges

Mode of Travel:

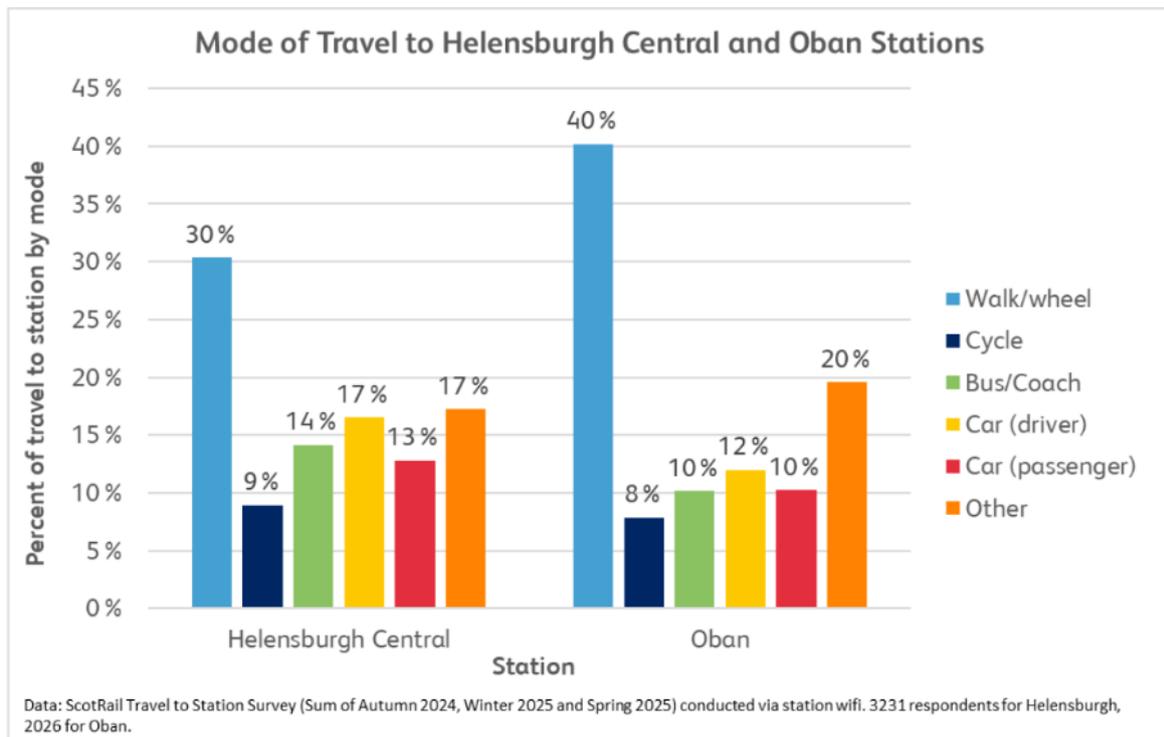


Figure 26: Mode of Travel to Helensburgh Central and Oban Stations (Source: Scotrail Travel to Station survey, provided by Network Rail)

Car Parking:

Station	Car Park Summary	Car Park Occupancy (audit conducted over 4 visits)	Blue Badge Occupancy (audit conducted over 4 visits)
Helensburgh Central	Busy	87.5%	37.5%
Oban	Busy	95%	0%
Cardross	Busy	80%	0%
Taynuilt	Moderate	62.5%	N/A
Connel Ferry	Busy	80%	N/A
Bridge of Orchy	Quiet	40%	N/A

Figure 27: Car Parking at Stations (source: Network Rail)

Sustainability

Network Rail are currently working on a Rural Strategy that will help to identify what is required to encourage more people to use the train on the West Highland Line, and to make it a more passenger-friendly experience.

Network Rail encourage a focus on facilitating both active travel and sustainable travel, as well as integrating travel modes to benefit residents of and visitors to Argyll and Bute. This is in line with the Sustainable Travel to Stations Strategy, as well as the associated Practitioners' Guide. Network Rail have suggested that the council look to ensure that routes to all their stations are accessible and sustainable, particularly for school pupils who use the line to travel to school in Oban from outlying villages. This has therefore been included as an implication for LDP3, and particularly in relation to the OSDF.

As of early 2020 around 40.7% of Scotland's railway track was electrified (source: Rail Services Decarbonisation Action Plan)



Map showing railway electrification in Scotland, 2020

Electrification in Scotland 2020

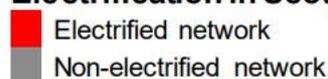


Fig 28: Map showing electrification in Scotland by 2020 (source: Transport Scotland)

The line to Helensburgh Central was electrified prior to 2020.

The West Highland Line to Oban is non-electrified. Based on fleet expiry dates, and rolling stock interworking, the West Highland Line is considered (by Transport Scotland in the Rail Services Decarbonisation Action Plan) as appropriate for the early introduction of an alternative traction technology as a permanent solution. This workstream will be expedited and routes considered together as a package whilst taking account of the distinct requirements of each of the lines.

The rationale for alternative traction models - Alternative traction options will be needed to provide passenger services either before full electrification can be delivered on some lines or on other predominantly rural lines, where full electrification may be inappropriate due to cost or environmental factors.

Use of alternative traction technologies include:

- electric units with batteries installed – one type of bi-mode train
- the use of non-diesel units/alternative traction types (battery or hydrogen)
- the provision of infrastructure for the storage and supply of hydrogen to trains

Ferries and Ports

Given its highly indented coastline and 23 inhabited islands, many communities within Argyll & Bute are dependent on ferries for their principal link with other areas. This is clearly illustrated by the fact that, of the 26 services listed in the Caledonian MacBrayne timetable, 16 either originate or terminate within Argyll & Bute. In addition, the Council itself operates 4 ferry services with a further 3 being operated by private contractors.

In many instances the ferry terminals are owned and maintained by the Council and discussions take place with the ferry operators, (principally Caledonian MacBrayne) in order that any necessary infrastructure investment can be incorporated within the Council's Capital Programme.

The Scottish Government's Infrastructure Investment Plan commits to providing loans to Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd. (CMAL) for procurement of vessels. Proposals cover Islay; Gourock to Dunoon/Kilcreggan; the small vessel replacement programme; and Oban to Craignure. The Investment Programme also provides grants to fund operators (but other than local authorities) for improvements to piers and harbours. This includes a proposed project at Kennacraig, and an Oban Masterplan.

STPR2 (Recommendation 41) identifies a potential fixed link between Mull and the mainland. The STPR2 sets out that replacing ferry services with fixed links (bridges, causeways and/ or tunnels) can improve reliability, connectivity, capacity and travel times and allow for the wider reconfiguration of ferry services. STPR2 recommends that further work is undertaken on business cases to better understand the benefits, costs and challenges associated with these options. These studies would further consider the feasibility of improving island connectivity through additional fixed links by replacing existing ferry services currently delivered by CalMac Ferries Ltd as part of the Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Services (CHFS) contract. These studies would also analyse in further detail the potential long-term savings associated with the public sector funding required to maintain the ferry services and would involve input from communities that may potentially be affected. However, given the potential detrimental impact of increased vehicular traffic on Mull's single-track roads from a fixed link, there needs to be a joined up approach, taking into account the local authority infrastructure.

The table overleaf shows traffic volumes on each of the ferry routes within Argyll and Bute, for passengers, cars, and coaches/commercial vehicles. This data has been extracted from Transport Scotland 2023 Statistics for 2022. The 2024 Statistics for 2023 were not used as there appears to be an error in the data whereby the car numbers

(table 9.15b) have been used again in table 9.15 (instead of the foot passenger numbers).

Traffic Volumes, 2022 (000's)				
ROUTE	OPERATOR	PASSENGERS	CARS	COACHES / COMMERCIAL VEHICLES
Colintraive-Rhubodach	CalMac	175.8	80.6	7.5
Gourock - Kilcreggan	CalMac	47.7	N/A	N/A
Gourock-Dunoon	Argyll Ferries	196.1	N/A	N/A
Tarbert-Portavadie	CalMac	86.4	29.9	0.2
Tarbert/Claonaig-Lochranza	CalMac	76.4	29.2	1.0
Wemyss Bay-Rothesay	CalMac	613.1	190.5	8.7
Fionnphort-Iona	CalMac	204.6	8.5	0.6
Kennacraig-Islay/C'say/Oban	CalMac	18.2	6.7	0.7
Kennacraig-Islay	CalMac	202.3	75.5	14.3
Oban-Coll/Tiree/Castlebay	CalMac	55.8	2.0	0.2
Oban-Colonsay	CalMac	12.7	5.4	0.3
Oban-Lismore	CalMac	24.8	8.2	0.3
Oban-Castlebay- Lochboisdale	CalMac	46.3	18.4	1.1
Oban-Coll/Tiree	CalMac	55.8	20.1	1.8
Oban-Craignure	CalMac	550.5	156.4	7.7
Tayinloan-Gigha	CalMac	70.5	23.8	1.2
Tobermory-Kilchoan	CalMac	44.4	11.4	0.0
Appin-Lismore	ABC	41.2	N/A	N/A
Islay - Jura	ABC	68.0	27.0	5.2
Cuan-Luing	ABC	33.1	17.8	1.2
Seil-Easdale	ABC	24.9	N/A	N/A
Gourock-Dunoon	Western Ferries	1,226	610	27.8

Figure 29: 2022 Traffic Volumes (in thousands) (source: Transport Scotland Statistics)

All ferry tickets are available on a first come, first served basis at present. Space for vehicles on busy ferry routes fills up quickly at popular times, especially in summer. This makes it difficult for residents of those islands, and visiting key workers, to travel with a vehicle at short notice

Issues that need to be considered within Argyll and Bute are:

- Ferry and port suitability and capacity
- Improve capacity and resilience of ferry services across the network
- Improve ferry reliability between Dunoon and Gourock with the re-introduction of vehicular option
- Ageing ferries on some routes e.g. Islay to Jura and Appin to Lismore
- Need to make greater use of ferry services at key crossing points e.g. Tarbert to Portavadie
- Upgrade piers and berthing facilities

The HiTRANS Regional Transport Strategy also highlighted problems with aging vessels and clarifies that the ‘rule of thumb’ in relation to vessels operating in Scottish waters is that they should be replaced when they are circa 30-years old. However, there are now a considerable number of vessels which are older than this, with many others between 20 and 30 years old. The Strategy also sets out that networks operated by Argyll & Bute Council have not seen a newbuild vessel introduced to their fleet this century. However, the Programme for Government 2025-26 commits to deliver the major vessels expected by summer 2026, and to begin work to deliver 7 new electric ferries.

SPTR2 Recommendation 42 is for investment in port infrastructure to support vessel renewal and replacement, and progressive decarbonisation. Transport Scotland have advised that planning authorities (and developers) are expected to carefully appraise any potential impact that major future developments may have on existing ferry services. These impacts should be considered as part of the wider appraisal of effects on the strategic transport network. Transport Scotland also stated (in advice provided on 24th July 2025) that Argyll and Bute areas are a key focus of Scotland’s upcoming Island Connectivity Plan, which will help shape how ferry services develop in the future for places like Mull, Islay and Kintyre.

Freight:

It should be noted that there are successful examples of freight being transported by sea rather than rail in Argyll and Bute. Much of the region lacks any rail infrastructure and the West Highland Line is already constrained due to much of this being single track. Timber in certain rural areas is now shipped directly from floating pontoons or using landing craft to avoid high frequency haulage operations on fragile local road networks. In addition, the Scottish Government continue to support the Timberlink project where timber is shipped from Ardrishaig, Campbeltown and Sandbank resulting in approximately 8,000 fewer lorry journeys (roughly 1,000,000 less miles) on busy local roads on the west coast of Scotland.

Argyll and Bute Operated Ferries:

Argyll and Bute has two routes which are operated with car ferries – Cuan ferry (sailing between Isle of Seil and Isle of Luing) and Jura ferry (sailing between Isle of Islay and Isle of Jura). Both ferries operating these routes are deemed as no longer fit for purpose due to their carrying capacity and regularly require additional 25% to 30% sailings to meet demand. Additional sailings are a combination of physical vehicle size increases, tourist traffic, commuter traffic and island business demands. Jura ferry has been in service since 1998 and Cuan ferry has been in service since 1972.

Both car ferries do carry hazardous freight (fuel oil for domestic use on both islands, LPG cylinders for use on both islands, petrol & diesel for resale on Jura, fuel oil for use in Jura distillery and whisky coming from Jura distillery) where each of the car ferries can only carry the hazardous goods vehicle – no other vehicles are permitted on the ferries when carrying hazardous goods . This naturally contributes to the need for additional sailings to meet demand.

Argyll and Bute Council is about to begin work on a project to produce a concept design for a replacement ferry for Jura.

The other two ferry routes operated by Argyll and Bute Council are Lismore ferry (Port Appin to Lismore Point) and Easdale ferry (Ellenabeich, Isle of Seil to Easdale Island) both of which are passenger only ferries. A new ferry was built for Lismore route and has been in service since April 2022 with passenger carrying capability of 23 passengers. There are a small number of occasions, especially during summer months, where we need to provide additional sailings due to demand on Lismore route.

Easdale vessel is a small 10 person open deck workboat and similar to the Lismore route there are a small number of occasions where additional sailings are required to meet demand mainly during summer months. The one big event early September each year on Easdale Island is the World Stone Skimming Championship where approx. 1,000 people are ferried on and off Easdale Island for this event.

Airports

Argyll and Bute Council operate three licensed aerodromes at Oban, Coll and Colonsay. Highlands and Islands Airport Limited Group (HIAL) operate airports at Campbeltown, Islay and Tiree.

Oban airport's runway is approx. 1200m in length whereas the runway on Coll and Colonsay island is 500m in length, therefore larger aircraft can land at Oban. Campbeltown airport runway is approximately 3000m in length. Islay and Tiree each have a main runway of approx. 1500mm. Each of Islay and Tiree also have additional shorter runways.

Hebridean Air provide flights between Oban and Tiree, Coll and Colonsay. These services are operated by 8-9 seat single pilot Britten-Norman Islander aircraft. These aircraft are ideally suited to the operating environment on these islands but are

challenging to access for Persons of Reduced Mobility as any passengers carried must be able to self-evacuate the aircraft.

The summer and winter timetables are included below:

Hebridean Air Services																								
Summer Timetable 30th March - 26th October 2025																								
Oban Services																								
					OBN = Oban					CSA = Isle of Colonsay					* Scholar flights operate during school term time only.									
					COL = Isle of Coll					TRE = Isle of Tiree					* Booking available from the Wed two weeks prior to date of departure									
WEDNESDAY					THURSDAY					FRIDAY					SATURDAY					SUNDAY				
FLT No.	Depart	FROM	TO	Arrive	FLT No.	Depart	FROM	TO	Arrive	FLT No.	Depart	FROM	TO	Arrive	FLT No.	Depart	FROM	TO	Arrive	FLT No.	Depart	FROM	TO	Arrive
201	08:40	OBN	COL	09:10	301	08:25	OBN	CSA	08:50	201	08:40	OBN	COL	09:10	301	09:00	OBN	CSA	09:30					
201	09:20	COL	TRE	09:35	301	09:05	CSA	TRE	09:30	204	09:20	COL	OBN	09:50	304	09:40	CSA	OBN	10:10					
201	09:50	TRE	OBN	10:25	301	09:40	TRE	OBN	10:10															
Scenic Flight May-Sep					Scenic Flight May-Sep					Scenic Flight May-Sep					Scenic Flight May-Sep									
111	11:00	OBN	OBN	11:30	111	11:00	OBN	OBN	11:30	111	14:00	OBN	OBN	14:30	111	14:00	OBN	OBN	14:30					
										Scholar flights *					Scholar flights *									
207	14:50	OBN	TRE	15:25	307	15:00	OBN	TRE	15:40	211	16:30	OBN	COL	17:00	307	14:40	OBN	CSA	15:10	211	16:30	OBN	COL	17:00
207	15:40	TRE	COL	15:55	307	15:50	TRE	CSA	16:10	212	17:10	COL	OBN	17:40	308	15:20	CSA	OBN	15:45	212	17:10	COL	OBN	17:40
207	16:10	COL	OBN	16:40	307	16:20	CSA	OBN	16:45															

Figure 30: Hebridean Air Services summer timetable (source: Hebridean Air Services)

Hebridean Air Services																			
Winter Timetable 27th October 2024 - 29th March 2025																			
Oban Services																			
					OBN = Oban					CSA = Isle of Colonsay					* Scholar flights operate during school term time only.				
					COL = Isle of Coll					TRE = Isle of Tiree					* Booking available from the Wed two weeks prior to date of departure				
WEDNESDAY					THURSDAY					SATURDAY					SUNDAY				
FLT No.	Depart	FROM	TO	Arrive	FLT No.	Depart	FROM	TO	Arrive	FLT No.	Depart	FROM	TO	Arrive	FLT No.	Depart	FROM	TO	Arrive
201	08:40	OBN	COL	09:10	301	08:25	OBN	CSA	08:50	211A	08:25	OBN	COL	08:55					
201	09:20	COL	TRE	09:35	301	09:05	CSA	TRE	09:30	212A	09:05	COL	CSA	09:35					
201	09:50	TRE	OBN	10:25	301	09:35	TRE	OBN	10:05	213A	09:45	CSA	OBN	10:10					
										Scholar flights *									
															Scholar flights *				
207	14:00	OBN	TRE	14:30	307	14:10	OBN	TRE	14:40	211A	14:10	OBN	COL	14:40					
207	14:40	TRE	COL	14:55	307	14:55	TRE	CSA	15:20	212A	14:50	COL	CSA	15:10					
207	15:10	COL	OBN	15:40	307	15:30	CSA	OBN	15:55	213A	15:30	CSA	OBN	16:00					

Figure 31: Hebridean Air Services winter timetable (source: Hebridean Air Services)

Between Glasgow and each of Campbeltown and Tiree, Loganair operate two return flights per day Monday to Friday, allowing day return trips. Flights are also operated at weekends, although for Campbeltown these are limited to a single rotation on Sundays from May to September. Loganair also operate a commercial air service connecting Glasgow with Islay, similarly providing two return flights per day Monday-Friday, plus a single rotation on each of Saturday and Sunday.

Data from the Civil Aviation Authority website shows terminal and transit passengers at each of the HIAL airports (for 2024):

- Campbeltown 7,028
- Islay 30,535
- Tiree 10,026

Note: no data is available for Oban, Coll or Colonsay airports.

Air can only meet some travel needs. This is due to the value that many place on accompanying their own vehicle, as well as air fare levels and limited flight frequency. Thus, air can only partly address the long surface journey times to the likes of Islay, Tiree and Campbeltown, with air passenger numbers far below those for surface modes. Air does, however, play an important role in facilitating day trips and business travel and providing access to specialist healthcare.

Issues that need to be considered in Argyll and Bute are:

- Improvements to air connectivity – Oban Airport to be promoted as a west coast of Scotland Hub for compliance operations and future drone technology. Delivering on the business park potential and new infrastructure to make services more efficient and resilient will support economic growth through the growth of tourism, research and environmental monitoring.
- Maintaining air links – The airfields across this remote rural area provide lifeline links with the central belt or Oban. They provide an alternative mode of connectivity for Argyll's fragile island communities
- Need to establish a scheduled flight connection to the central belt to provide a faster transport alternative for local people and businesses together with visitors. Assist the delivery of economic growth in Oban and Lorn.

The Scottish Government's Infrastructure Investment Programme commits £35m to address current and future operational and regulatory challenges by modernising air traffic control, improving service resilience and air traffic provision through the introduction of surveillance at six HIAL airfields controlled by a combined surveillance centre. This has the aim of safeguarding future connectivity and lifeline services for island and remote communities.

HMNB Clyde – Public Transport Considerations

Within the Detailed Options Appraisal for Faslane, it is noted that the 316 bus service is the only local bus service that operates between Helensburgh, HMNB Clyde, Garelochhead and the Rosneath Peninsula / Coulport. Two different operators (Wilson's of Rhu, and Garelochhead Coaches) share provision of this service, covering the same route but operating alternative timetables, departing Helensburgh Railway Station on the hour. Neither operator accepts the other's tickets.

The Detailed Options Appraisal sets out 2 options that could be progressed to an Outline Business Case (OBC) for more detailed development and assessment:

- Local Bus Service Options
- Rail Options

Local Bus Options

The Appraisal sets out that existing local bus network falls short in providing the necessary connections for staff living outside the Base in the nearby areas, or for those opting to commute via train. An examination of the current bus schedules showed that the afternoon and evening service is sufficient, offering connections for staff whose shifts end between 1600 and 1700. However, it is the morning service that presents a significant limitation. The main change would be the introduction of a new bus stop, just south of the entrance to the north gate at HMNB Clyde. 5 options are considered and discussed within the Appraisal.

Rail Option

Douglas Binns Limited was commissioned with investigating an option for a new railway station at the "North Gate" to produce an Outline Feasibility Study. The proposed station would be located 7 miles and 58 chains along the West Highland line.

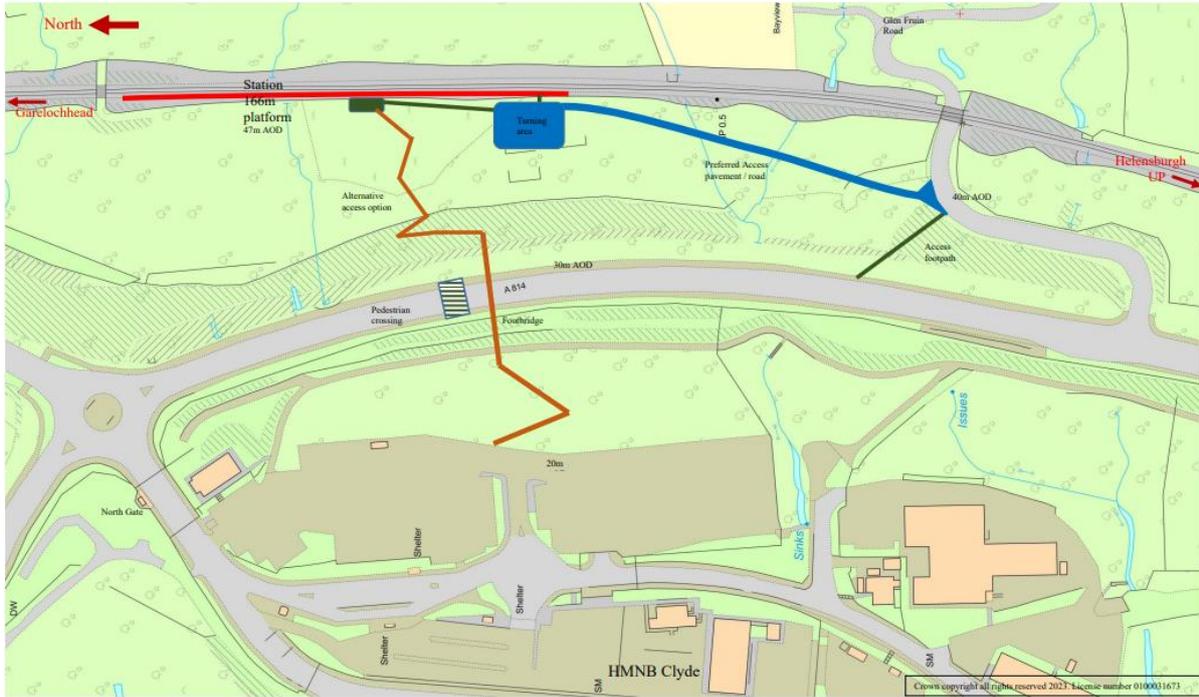


Figure 1: Faslane Proposed Station and Access

Note: Indicative levels shown only

Figure 32: Plan showing potential new station and access (source: Stantec for HITRANS)

In January 2024 SLC Rail assessed the costs associated with constructing a station as described, estimating it to be £12 million.

3 options were considered, with a commuter service from Dumbarton to Garelochhead noted as the most feasible within the Detailed Options Appraisal.

Strategic Development Frameworks – Public Transport Considerations

The Sustainable Travel to Stations Strategy notes that, not only has a focus on car parking has overshadowed improving the active travel experience, integrating bus travel to stations has been similarly overlooked with only a few positive exceptions. Network Rail have recommended that Argyll and Bute Council look to ensure that routes to stations are accessible and sustainable, including for school pupils. This will affect both the Helensburgh and Oban Strategic Development Frameworks, although Network Rail suggested a particular focus should be on the link from Oban Railway Station to the ferry terminal.

Electric Vehicle Charging

The geographic nature of Argyll & Bute with a distinct spread of settlements and remote rural islands does create a challenge of providing a comprehensive network of electric vehicle (EV) charging across the region. HITRANS have highlighted the remote nature of the region presents challenges to manufacturers and suppliers in maintaining infrastructure.

Despite this, Argyll and Bute Council's ongoing commitment to tackling the climate emergency is being evidenced through our ongoing EV infrastructure programme. Underpinning this drive is the Scottish Government's pledge to end the sale of new petrol and diesel cars from 2030 and phase out the need for petrol and diesel vehicles.

A key project contributed positively towards the above targets is the Council's Local Authority Installation Programme (LAIP). Funded by Transport Scotland, this programme developed the EV public charging network so that EV drivers can confidently travel throughout Scotland – in both urban and rural areas.

The Council is committed to expanding its electric vehicle charging network, to date we have:

- secured funding from Scottish Government to install more than 30 electric vehicle charging points across the region
- installed a mixed infrastructure provision; fast and rapid chargers in our towns and villages

As vehicle ownership in the HITRANS region is 18% higher, and average distances travelled by road are estimated to be around 20% higher than the Scottish average investing in Electric Vehicle Chargers provides an opportunity to enhance the connectivity of people to each other and remove barriers to accessing employment, education, leisure activities and essential services. The low population densities in the area mean that private car use will remain a necessary mode of transport for many people and businesses.

Within Argyll and Bute it is therefore important to encourage the use of electric vehicles through charging infrastructure. The Programme for Government 2025-26 commits to the introduction of a new rural and island EV infrastructure grant which may assist with this.

Parking

In the move towards a net zero economy Argyll and Bute Council aim is to reduce travel by siting significant high traffic generating developments in the Main Towns and Key Settlements which are more widely accessible, including by public transport. Controlling parking is another tool to help manage travel, encouraging walking, wheeling and the use of public transport where possible.

However, as previously outlined, in a predominantly rural area levels of public transport and accessibility are lower than those enjoyed in more urban areas. In these areas there is a reliance on car ownership within Argyll and Bute for day to day living. The Council (through LDP2) therefore currently apply a minimum car parking standards for the majority of new development in the context of the Argyll and Bute.

In a report to the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee on 20th March 2025, it was confirmed that, while a strategic review of parking services and options for change should be developed for consideration by Members, this has not progressed beyond Stage 1 recommendations and Stage 2 due diligence, due to capacity.

The majority of car parks in Argyll and Bute offer free car parking, with pay and display car parks in Inveraray, Oban, on Mull, in Arrochar (in LLTNP), Helensburgh, Luss, Dunoon, and Rothesay. Full lists of car parks in each administrative area can be found via the following links:

- [Bute and Cowal](#)
- [Helensburgh and Lomond](#)
- [Mid Argyll, Kintyre and Islay](#)
- [Oban, Lorn and the Isles](#)

A full list of the pay and display car parks in Argyll and Bute is [here](#).

A parking survey was carried out in Oban in August 2023 across 7 days between 7am and 7pm. This assessed 4 car parks (Esplanade, Corran Halls – South, Corran Halls – North, and North Pier), and 6 on-road parking locations (A85 between Esplanade & Dunoile Street, Dunoillie Street, George Street, Stafford Street, William Street, and Corran Esplanade).

For each of these the following was considered:

- Standard bays
- Disabled parking
- EV charging

- Motorcycle bays
- Illegal parking

The standard bays have a total capacity of 278 and operational capacity (85%) of 236. The operational capacity was reached or exceeded at 2pm, 2:30pm and 4pm on an average weekday, and continually between 11:30am and 5:30pm on an average weekend.

The disabled bays have a total capacity of 12 and operational capacity (85%) of 10. These did not reach operational capacity at all on an average weekday or weekend.

The only EV charging (in the areas surveyed) is available at Corran Halls – South car park, with a capacity of 4 and operational capacity (85%) of 3. Operational capacity was not reached at all on an average weekday or weekend.

Motorcycle bays are only available on Dunoillie Road, with a capacity of 4 and operational capacity (85%) of 3. These did not reach operational capacity on an average weekday but did so at 2pm, 2:30pm, 4:30pm, 5pm, 6pm and 6:30pm on an average weekend.

Illegal parking, especially along George Street, was identified as a problem.

Pavement Parking:

The pavement parking prohibitions were introduced by the Scottish Government via the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019. The principal aim of this Act is to improve accessibility, with a particular emphasis on vulnerable road users, by affording walkers and wheelers the ability to use footways and dropped kerbs without being impeded by parked vehicles. Pavement parking exemption orders are permitted within the Act; however, they are noted as being the measure of last resort. Prior to the implementation of any Exemption Order, the Local Authority must undertake an appropriate Equality Impact Assessment to ensure the proposals do not inadvertently discriminate against any protected groups (as defined within the Equality Act 2010).

Road Network Including Bridges

Introduction

Transport Scotland Statistics (23/24) shows that Argyll and Bute has 2,582km (1,604 miles) of public roads within its boundaries. This includes the following four trunk roads for which Transport Scotland are responsible:

- A82 – This runs from Glasgow to Inverness, via Loch Lomond and Crianlarich.
- A83 – This runs from Campbeltown to Tarbet, through the heart of Argyll, via Lochgilphead and Inveraray.
- A85 – This runs from Oban to Perth, via Dalmally, Tyndrum and Crianlarich.
- A828 – This runs from South Ballachulish to Connel where it meets the A85.

These four trunk roads account for 11.5% (296km / 184 miles) of the area's road network. The remainder (amounting to 88.5% of the road network) are the responsibility of Argyll and Bute Council, and are a mix of class of roads as follows:

- A class: 557km;
- B: 614km;
- C: 435km; and
- Unclassified: 726km.

20mph Limits

On 22nd and 29th September 2025, temporary 20mph speed limits came into force on the following sections of the trunk road network:

- A85 – Oban (22nd)
- A828 – Benderloch (22nd)
- A83 – Arrochar (29th) (in LLTNP)
- A83 – Lochgilphead (29th)
- A83 – Campbeltown (29th)

These will cease to have effect on 22nd and 29th March 2027.

On 7th and 9th November 2025, further 20, 30 and 40 mph temporary speed limits came into force:

- Ardrishaig
- Connel
- Inveraray

- Tarbert
- Tarbet (in LLTNP)

These will cease to have effect on 7th and 9th May 2027.

Transport Scotland noted in the associated Briefing Note that Argyll and Bute Council is expected to follow with its own implementation in due course.

Condition

Transport Scotland Statistics (23/24) include the condition of the roads using the UK Standard Road Indicator (RCI). The categories used to indicate the condition of the roads are:

- Amber – further investigation should be undertaken to establish if treatment is required;
- Red – the road has deteriorated to the point at which it is likely that repairs to prolong its future should be undertaken.

The following table shows the percentage of amber and red condition roads within both Argyll and Bute, and Scotland as a whole. The roads are split into the following categories:

- A Roads (“A”)
- B Roads (“B”)
- C Roads (“C”)
- Unclassified Roads (“un”)

Area	A	A	B	B	C	C	un	un	total	total
Argyll and Bute	31%	7%	40%	14%	39%	13%	34%	16%	36%	13%
Scotland	25%	4%	27%	5%	27%	6%	27%	7%	28%	6%

Figure 33: Table showing percentages of amber and red condition roads (source: Scottish Transport Statistics)

From this data it can be seen that the condition of the road network in Argyll and Bute is far poorer than the Scottish average, with over double the percentage of total roads being in red condition compared to Scotland as a whole.

The average RCI in Argyll and Bute between 2014/15 and 2022/23 was 53.54. The average spend (from capital and revenue budgets) between 2014/15 and 2023/24 was £9,044,890.

The focus of the roads reconstruction programme previously has been to recover the network through the delivery of a mix of carriageway resurfacing schemes, patching/surface dressing and in-situ road surface recycling, which follow the principles set out within the Roads Asset Management Plan. A report to the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee on 20th March 2025 set out that the Council has approximately £122M of backlog maintenance (based on figures produced by SCOTS) across the road network. This means that over £122M would need to be invested to bring the road network up to an 'A1' standard. A high level programme has been set out including Surface Dress, Bituminous Surfacing Inlays and overlays, as well as improvements to culverts and ditches.

In line with industry best practice, investment is not necessarily concentrated on all the red roads but instead has been aligned to focus on a combination of red and amber roads to arrest deterioration. This effectively provides a stitch-in-time approach and ensures that we get the best rate of return from the investment available.

Previously by progressing schemes which will provide the best rate of return, taking into consideration the survey results and associated data, the Council has been able to deliver a programme of schemes which maximises the benefits to the travelling public from the available investment. There is also a consideration applied that reflects route classification and hierarchy together with the Road Condition Index.

Argyll and Bute Council allocated £10million to the roads capital programme for 2025/26 (£2million of this being for Storm Eowyn recovery).

The Capital Funding Works are set out in the Appendix to the Roads Capital Reconstruction Programme 2025/26 and has been made available as a core document.

Road miles and journey times

The drive times and distances between the 5 main towns on the mainland, and Glasgow and Edinburgh has already been included in the Geography and Key Facts section of this topic paper, however has been repeated below due to its significance in understanding the difficulties with connectivity in the region.

<i>Distance (miles)</i>							
<i>Time (in minutes)</i>	Campbeltown	Dunoon	Lochgilphead	Helensburgh	Oban	Glasgow	Edinburgh
Campbeltown		114 169	51 75	114 169	88 128	134 203	179 255
Dunoon	114 169		63 94	57 85	76 113	28 95*	75 152 *
Lochgilphead	51 75	63 94		64 94	37 54	83 127	129 182
Helensburgh	114 169	57 85	64 94		77 114	24 38	70 92
Oban	88 128	76 113	37 54	77 114		92 145	126 175
Glasgow	134 203	28 95*	83 127	24 38	92 145		
Edinburgh	179 255	75 152 *	129 182	70 92	126 175		

**Includes Ferry Travel*

Figure 34: Drive times and distances between key mainland towns / cities (Source: The Automobile Association)

This table demonstrates that many trips within Argyll and Bute take well over 1 hour, and any trips outwith the area to major centres such as Glasgow or Edinburgh, on the whole, take over 2 hours. For many remote rural and island residents these journey times to service centres are increased significantly by between 1 and 2.5 hours.

Therefore, there is a need to improve journey times, reliability and resilience between Argyll and Bute and Scotland's Central Belt and internally between key local settlements. Particular issues include:

- Disproportionate journey times between Lochgilphead on Oban due to sub-standard geometry of the A816;

- Disproportionate journey times for the distance across Cowal between Dunoon, Bute, (via Colintraive) and Kintyre (via Portavadie), where much of the road is single track.
- 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)
- Challenging terrain, poor road alignment and carriageway width, volumes of HGV traffic and reduced speed limits when passing through settlements can all affect journey times.
- Due to the importance of tourism to the area, the roads generally see a significant uplift in traffic levels in the summer.

Trunk Road Traffic Volumes – year on year analysis of average daily volumes

Data has been considered from counters at various points on the trunk road network (source: Drakewell). The data from 9 counters have been analysed to demonstrate the year on year trend of the volume of annual average daily traffic (ADT) traffic across the trunk roads. The data extracted is from 2019 to 2024 inclusive. This is to include pre-covid levels. Data from 2025 has not been included as there is not a full year's data available yet. There are some counters on the routes that only include 2025 data – these have not been included. The map overleaf shows the locations of the counters used.

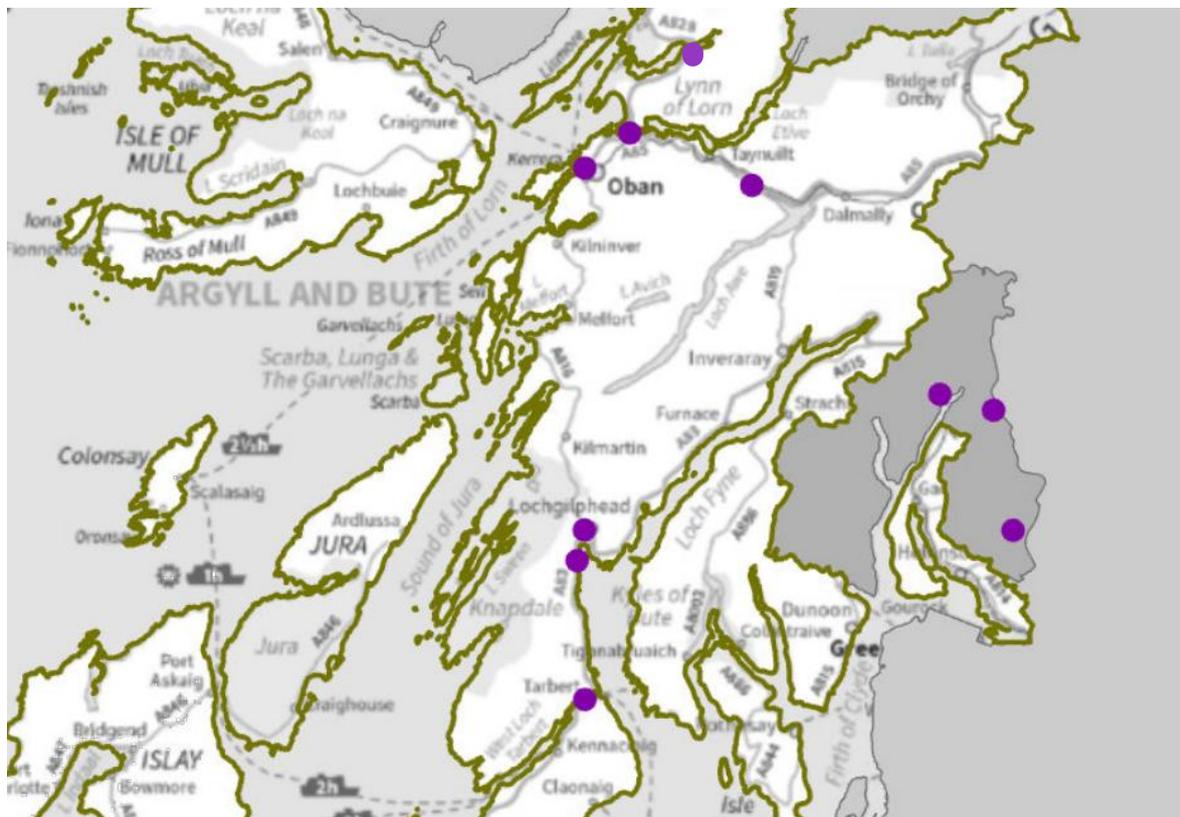


Figure 35 (previous page): Drakewell traffic count points

The counters have the following reference numbers:

- A82 Finlas Water – JCT08223
- A82 Stuckgowan – ATC08119
- A85 South of Bridge of Awe – ATC08059
- A85 Connel – ATC08064
- A85 Oban – ATC08070
- A83 Ardgarten – JCT08338
- A83 Lochgilphead – ATC08075
- A83 South of Ardrishaig – JCT08339
- A83 South of Tarbert – ATC 08058
- A828 – ATC8057

The data (where available) is summarised in the table below:

Node	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
A82 – Finlas Water	14,020	9,743	12,176	12,778	13,244	13,697
A82 - Stuckgowan	9,130	4,963	8,198	8,902	9,115	9,154
A83 – Ardgarten	3,478	2,690	3,711	4,088	4,146	4,223
A85 – south of Bridge of Awe	4,664	3,326	4,242	4,514	4,713	4,683
A85 - Connel	5,384	4,367	5,019	5,219	5,249	5,288
A85 - Oban	*	*	15,496	15,015	16,257	15,957
A83 - Lochgilphead	6,003	4,595	5,388	5,706	5,786	5,666
A83 – south of Ardrishaig	2,233	2,676	2,752	2,831	2,659	2,795
A83 – south of Tarbert	2,278	1,793	2,242	2,399	2,319	2,343
A828 – Creagan Bridge	*	*	2,355	2,252	2,306	2,356

* Insufficient data

Figure 36: Average annual daily traffic volumes (source: Drakewell)

The Lochgilphead and Oban counters are within settlement areas and are likely to include many short journeys within the settlements themselves. This may also be the

case with Connel to a certain extent, however due to the lower population of Connel it is not expected that the data is skewed so much by this factor. The counters at Ardrishaig and Tarbert are on the edge of the settlement areas and are unlikely to be affected by inter-settlement journeys.

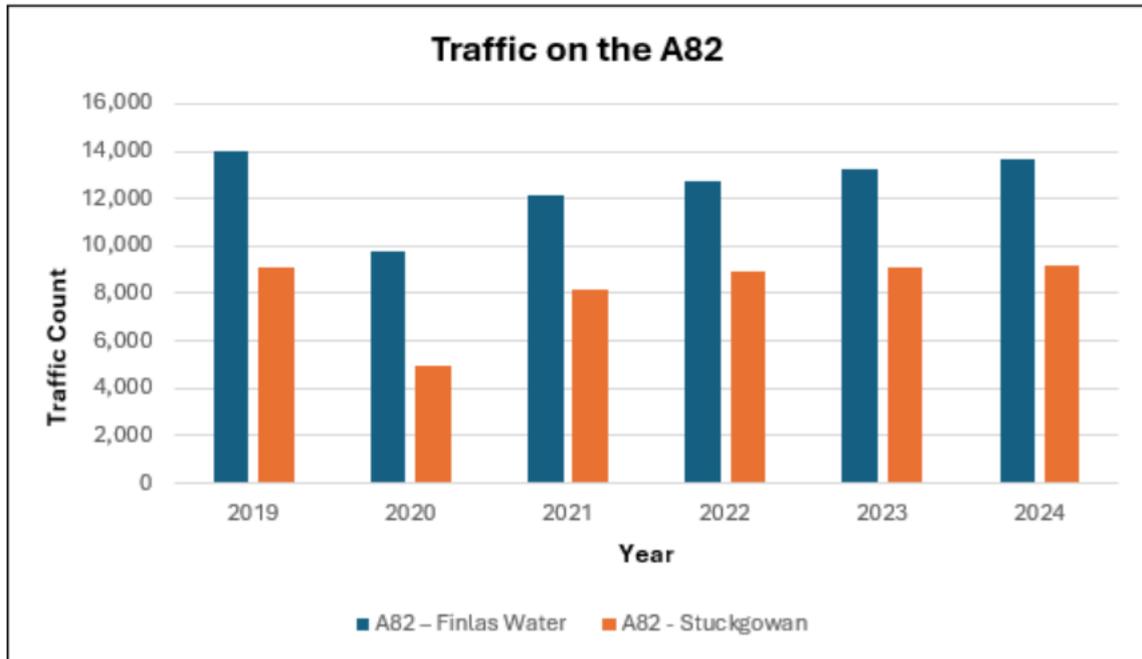


Figure 37: Average annual daily traffic volumes on the A82

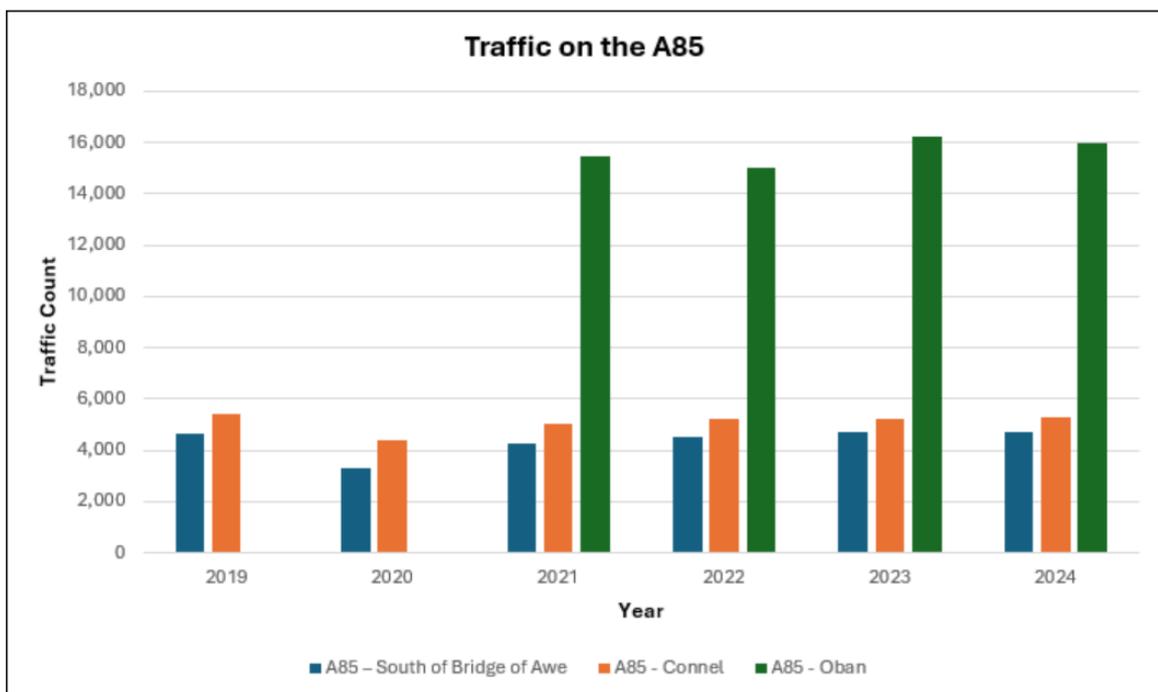


Figure 38: Average annual daily traffic volumes on the A85

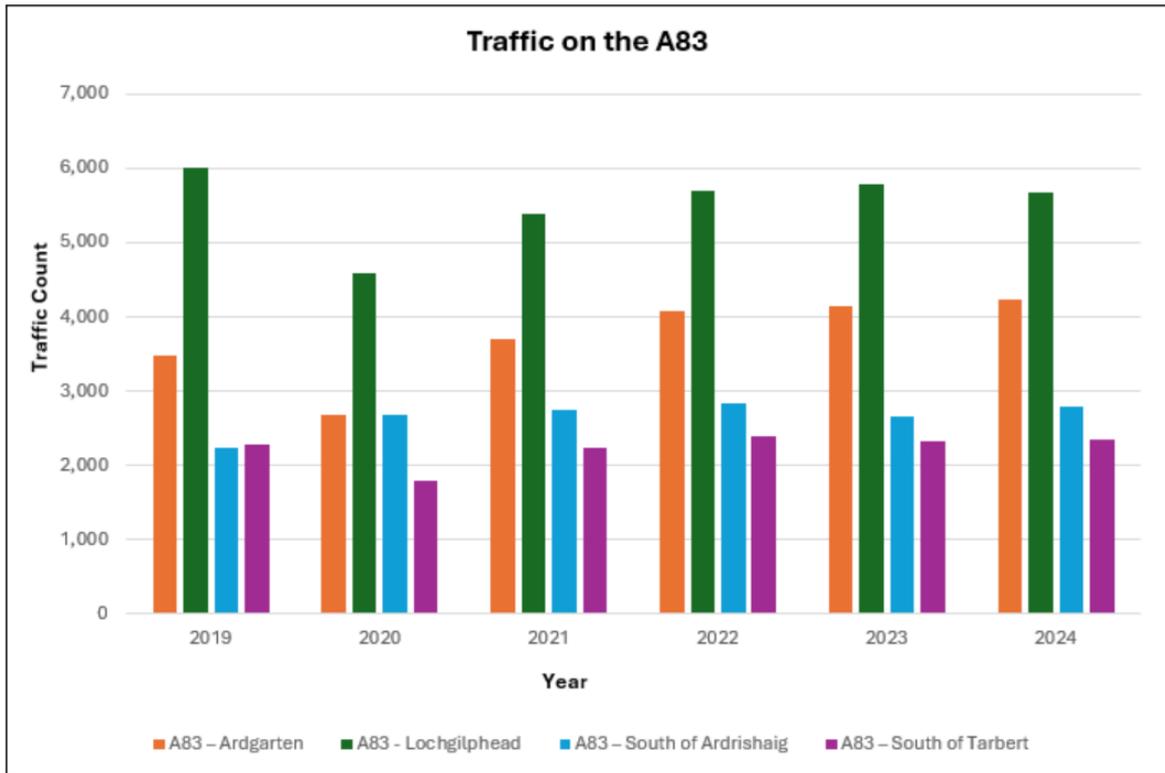


Figure 39: Average annual daily traffic volumes on the A83

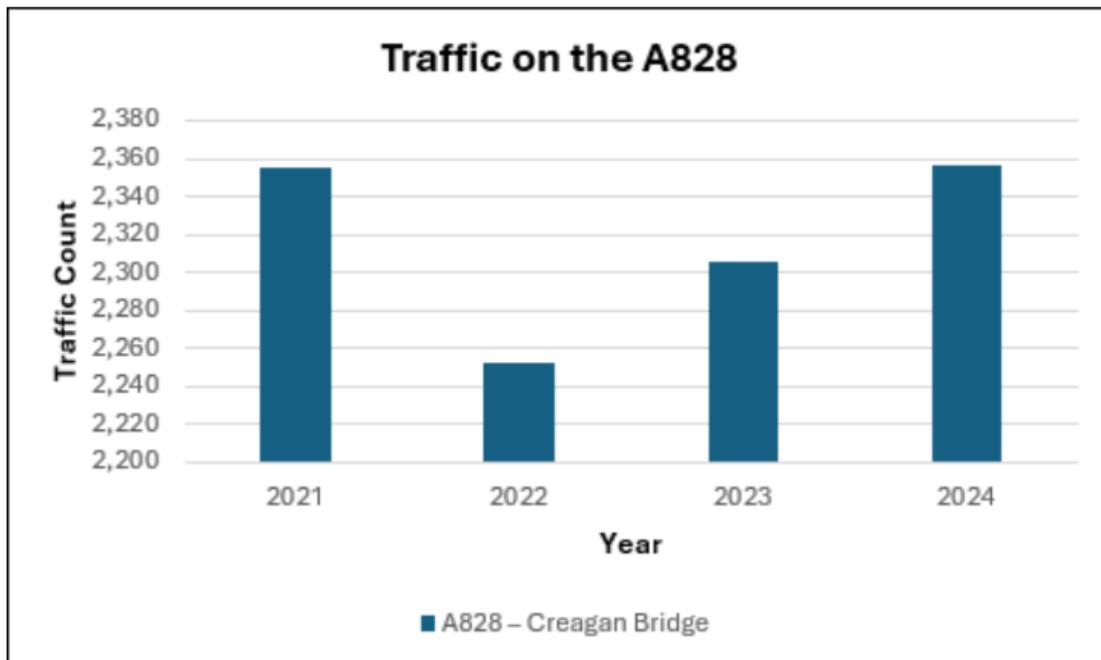


Figure 40: Average annual daily traffic volumes on the A828

Summary of the data

In general traffic has reached or surpassed pre-Covid levels. The highest levels of traffic are at the Finlas Water counter on the A82, and within the Oban area on the A85. These areas are likely to both be affected by the Strategic Development Frameworks (SDF's) for Helensburgh (A82 – Finlas Water) and Oban (A85 – Oban). The high volume of traffic on this section of the A82 would be further pressured should the Loch Lomond Shores (“Flamingoland”) application be consented within the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park.

A more detailed Transport Baselines have been prepared for Helensburgh as part of the SDF work, including in-town analysis (see Appendix A). No Transport Baseline has been proposed by the consultants carrying out the SDF work for Oban – instead there will be Transport Assessments on a site by site basis as the spatial options are developed in spring 2026.

There is not likely to be strategic growth proposed in other locations of Argyll and Bute within LDP3.

Trunk Road Traffic Volumes – seasonal analysis of peak hourly volumes

The data from the same 9 counters have also been analysed to demonstrate the volume of traffic on the trunk road network each day of the week in each of February 2025 (low tourist season) and August 2025 (peak tourist season) and February.

Node	Feb 25 – Fri PM	Aug 25 – Fri PM	% increase	Feb 25 – Sat AM	Aug 25 – Sat AM	% increase
A82 – Finlas Water	1,168	1,650	41.3%	1,096	1,706	55.7%
A82 - Stuckgowan	854	1,252	46.6%	815	1,433	75.8%

Figure 41: Comparative hourly data for nodes on the A82 (Source: Drakewell)

Node	Feb 25 – Fri PM	Aug 25 – Fri PM	% increase	Feb 25 – Sat AM	Aug 25 – Sat AM	% increase
A83 – Ardgarten	404	695	72.0%	346	630	82.1%
A83 - Lochgilphead	552	544	16.7%	373	512	37.3%
A83 – south of Ardrishaig	284	360	26.8%	162	287	77.2%
A83 – south of Tarbert	204	289	41.7%	136	227	66.9%

Figure 42: Comparative hourly data for nodes on the A83 (Source: Drakewell)

Node	Feb 25 – Fri PM	Aug 25 – Fri PM	% increase	Feb 25 – Sat AM	Aug 25 – Sat AM	% increase
A85 – south of Bridge of Awe	406	576	41.9%	297	507	70.7%
A85 – Connel (2024)	448	607	35.5%	353	522	47.8%
A85 - Oban	1,388	1,386	-0.1%	1,151	1,301	13.0%

Figure 43: Comparative hourly data for nodes on the A85 (Source: Drakewell)

Node	Feb 25 – Fri PM	Aug 25 – Fri PM	% increase	Feb 25 – Sat AM	Aug 25 – Sat AM	% increase
A828 – Creagan Bridge	188	262	39.4%	152	240	57.9%

Figure 44: Comparative hourly data for nodes on the A828 (Source: Drakewell)

The above data tables show the comparable traffic volumes at each node using the peak August volumes for both Friday afternoons and for Saturday mornings. The highest August volume for each node, along with the comparable February figure, has been highlighted in yellow, and this data displayed on the graphs below.

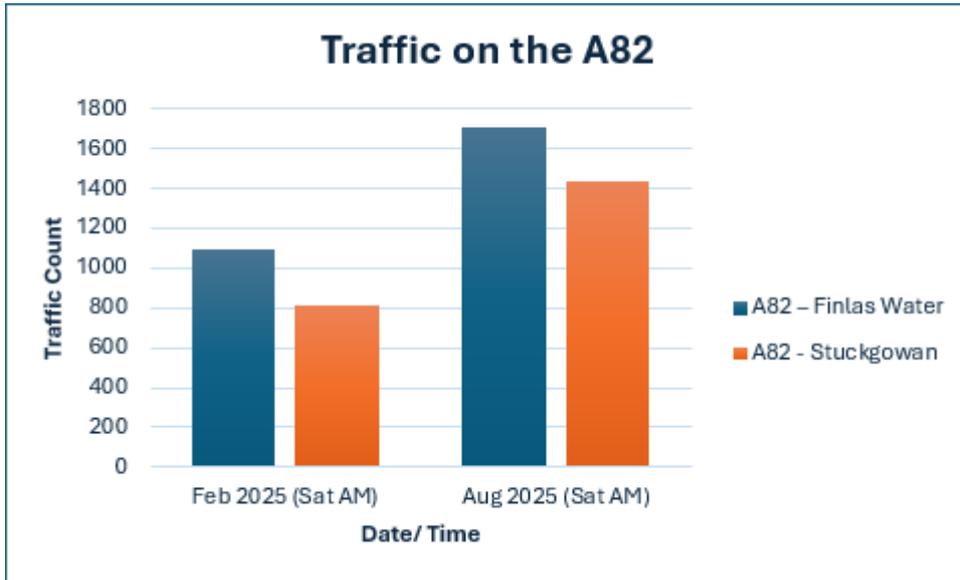


Figure 45: Comparison of peak hour traffic between February and August – A82 (Source: Drakewell)

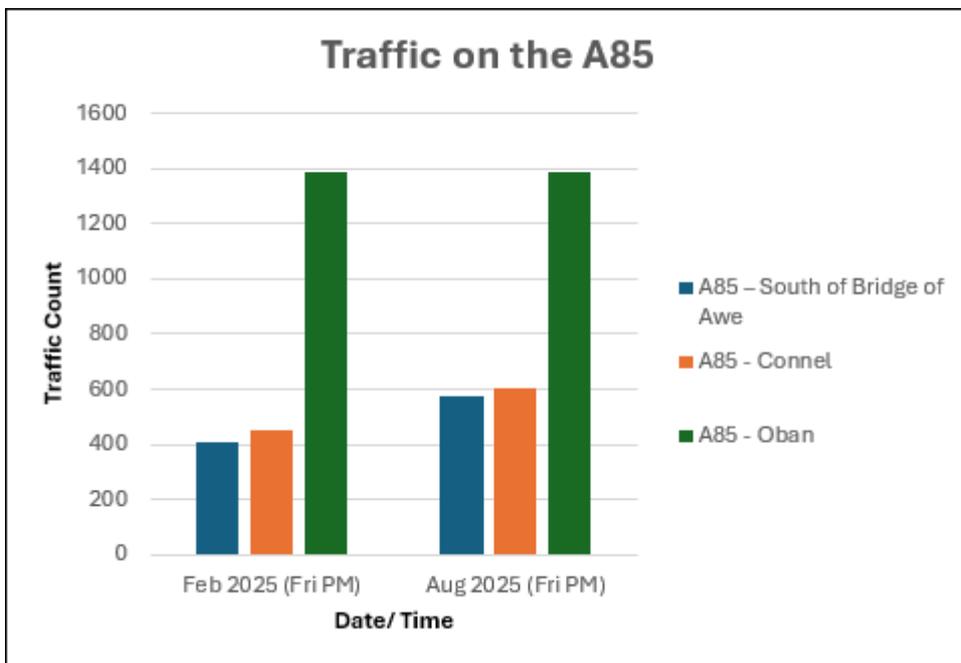


Figure 46: Comparison of peak hour traffic between February and August – A85 (Source: Drakewell)

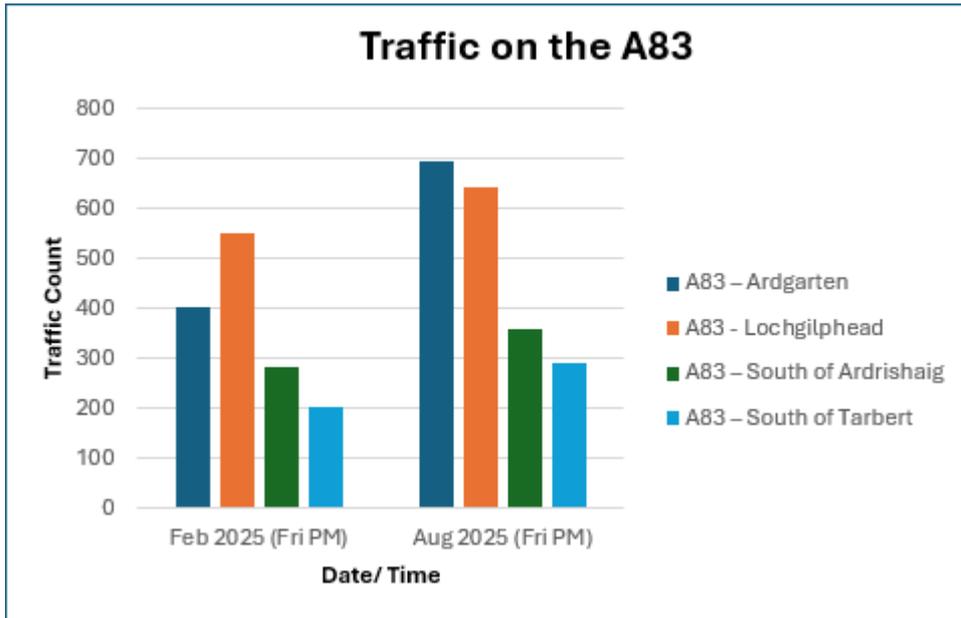


Figure 47: Comparison of peak hour traffic between February and August – A83 (Source: Drakewell)

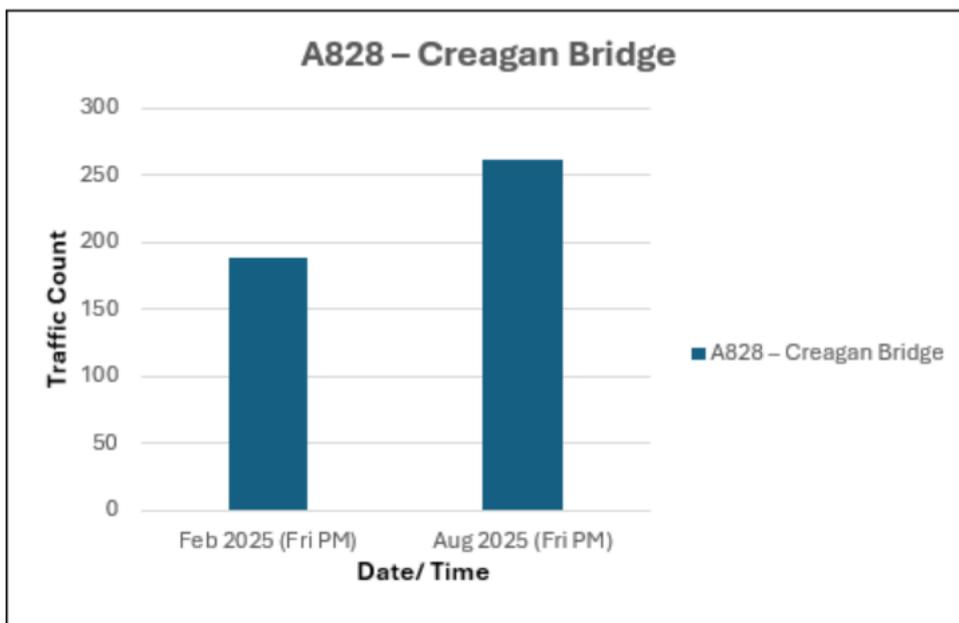


Figure 48: Comparison of peak hour traffic between February and August – A828 (Source: Drakewell)

Summary of the data:

- The southern section of the A82 (Finlas Water) is the busiest section of the road network measured. This part of the road includes not only traffic

heading towards the MAKI, B&C, and OLI areas, but also traffic which will turn off at Luss and continue on the A82 at Tarbet towards Crianlarich. Average Saturday traffic in August at 11am reaches 1706 vehicles. The comparable figure in February is 1096.

- A further node on the A82 was analysed at Stuckgowan. This includes similar traffic volumes to that at Finlas Water, but excludes those journeys which start (southbound) or terminate (northbound) at Luss and other areas along the west coast of Loch Lomond, as well as traffic which turns off onto/on from Glen Fruin Road. Average Saturday traffic in August at 11am reaches 1433 vehicles. The comparable figure in February is 815. This is an increase of 75.8% seasonally.
- On the A83 at Ardgarten the numbers decrease significantly to those counted on the A82 at Finlas Water and Stuckgowan due to the A83 splitting off from the A82 at Tarbet. Additionally, some traffic will start (southbound) or terminate (northbound) journeys at Arrochar. Average Saturday traffic in August at 11am reaches 630 vehicles, with Friday pm traffic higher at 695. The comparable figure in February is 346, with Friday pm traffic is notably higher than this at 404. The Friday PM seasonal increase is 82.1%.
- The counter at Lochgilphead is within the settlement area so will be higher due to inter-settlement journeys in addition to longer distance ones. While Friday PM traffic remains similar in winter and summer, Saturday AM traffic increases by 37.3% in summer.
- A node south of Ardrishaig on the A83 was analysed – this is immediately south of the settlement area in the national speed limit zone. Average Saturday traffic in August at 11am is 287 vehicles. The comparable figure in February is 162 vehicles. This is a seasonal increase of 77.2%. Peak volume on this route is on a Friday afternoon when there are on average 360 vehicles. The comparable figure in February is 284 vehicles.
- South of Tarbet on the A83, average Saturday 11am traffic in August was 227 vehicles. The comparable figure for February is 136 vehicles. Again, peak volume on this route is on a Friday afternoon when there are on average 289 vehicles on this part of the road. The comparable figure for February is 204 vehicles.
- On the A85, south of Bridge of Awe, average Saturday traffic at 11am in August was 507 vehicles. The comparable figure for February is 297 vehicles. Peak volume on this route again is on a Friday afternoon (2pm) when there are on average 576 vehicles on the road. The comparable figure for February is 406 vehicles. The Friday PM seasonal increase is 70.7%.
- Connel - note that there is no available data for August 2025 therefore 2024 was used for both figures to provide a similar seasonal analysis. Traffic

counts increase from 448 to 607 seasonally on a Friday afternoon, and from 353 to 522 seasonally on a Saturday AM.

- Oban figures remain more constant seasonally than others.
- A828 – traffic on the Creagan Bridge is low, only reaching 262 vehicles at peak levels on a Friday PM in August.

Analysis

Seasonal increases on many of Argyll and Bute’s trunk roads are significant, with percentage increases of over 70% on 4 out of the 10 nodes analysed. These are:

- A82 Stuckgowan
- A83 Ardgarten
- A83 South of Ardrishaig
- A85 South of Bridge of Awe

The nodes that did not see large seasonal increases are within the settlements of Oban and Lochgilphead.

A82 Stonemullen to Arden roundabouts

Unfortunately, there is no fixed counter on the A82 between the Stonemollen and Arden roundabouts. Data collection on this road will be required to assess infrastructure requirements for the HSDF (particularly given the potential pressure if the pending Lomond Banks application were approved) as this part of the road is a key route to the Helensburgh area.

There is however a traffic counter south of the Stonemollen Roundabout on the dualled part of the A82 (JTC00016). This does not dot give a complete picture of the volume of traffic north of Stonemollen as some traffic will turn off at / join from Balloch. However, comparing the figures from the node with that north of the Arden roundabout (at Finlas Water) gives a rough picture of the pressures on this stretch of the road:

Node	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
A82 – south of Stonemollen Roundabout	24,275	16,016	21,107	23,225	23,999	24,438
A82 – Finlas Water	14,020	9,743	12,176	12,778	13,244	13,697

Figure 49 (previous page): Comparison of annual average daily data for nodes on A82
(Source: Drakewell)

Node	Feb 25 – Fri PM	Aug 25 – Fri PM	% increase	Feb 25 – Sat AM	Aug 25 – Sat AM	% increase
A82 – south of Stonemollen Roundabout	2,097	2,383	13.6%	2,072	2,433	17.4%
A82 – Finlas Water	1,168	1,650	41.3%	1,096	1,706	55.7%

Figure 50: Comparison of hourly data for nodes on A82 (Source: Drakewell)

Additionally, data has been collated on this stretch of road from INRIX within the “Pinch Points – speed and journey times” section, allowing a sufficient picture to be built up for the purposes of the Evidence Report. In addition to the Transport Appraisal that the council commit to undertake for LDP3, a more specific Transport Appraisal is being carried out for the HSDF.

Pinch Points - speeds and journey times

INRIX data has been used to assess average speeds, and in selected cases journey times across the trunk roads as well as the local roads serving the main towns within Argyll and Bute. The data has been extracted for an annual average (between 1st September 2024 and 31st August 2025), as well as for an August average (1st to 31st August 2025) to demonstrate whether there are any issues caused by peak tourist traffic. For each extract, the data between 3pm and 4pm has been selected as this appears to be generally, one of the busiest times on the routes.

The analysis includes roads within the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park part of Argyll and Bute, as some of the key routes cross this area. This also includes some short stretches of road outwith Argyll and Bute, simply to use an easily identifiable node as a starting point e.g. the Stonemollan Roundabout. Data relating to only one direction of each of these routes has been included, with the exception of the A82 between Stonemollen and Tarbet. This is because the background data shows that there is no notable difference in speeds travelling in each direction, other than at a clear pinch point around the Arden roundabout.

INRIX measures speeds in kmph. These have been converted to mph for consistency across the Topic Paper, and as is generally the normal convention in Britain.



Figure 51 – Colour Thresholds – Speed (source: INRIX, with mph added separately)

A82

The A82 has been split into two sections for consideration, with the first being between the Stonymollen Roundabout at Balloch, and Tarbet, and the second being north of Tarbet to Inverernan.

Stonymollen to Tarbet

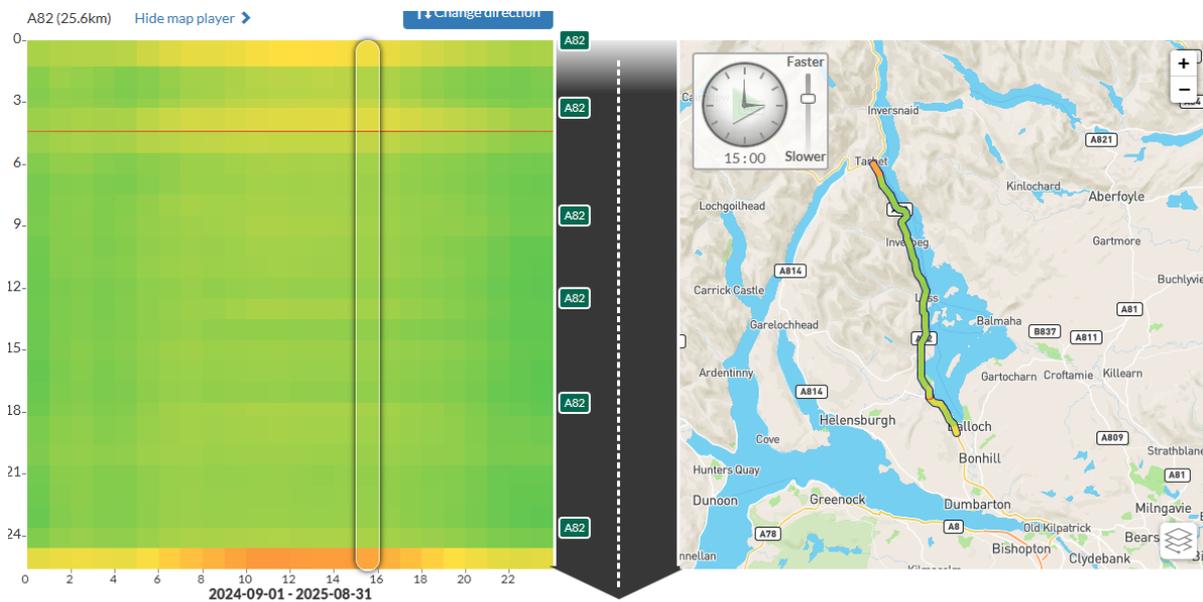


Figure 52: A82 northbound (Balloch to Tarbet) annual average (source: INRIX)

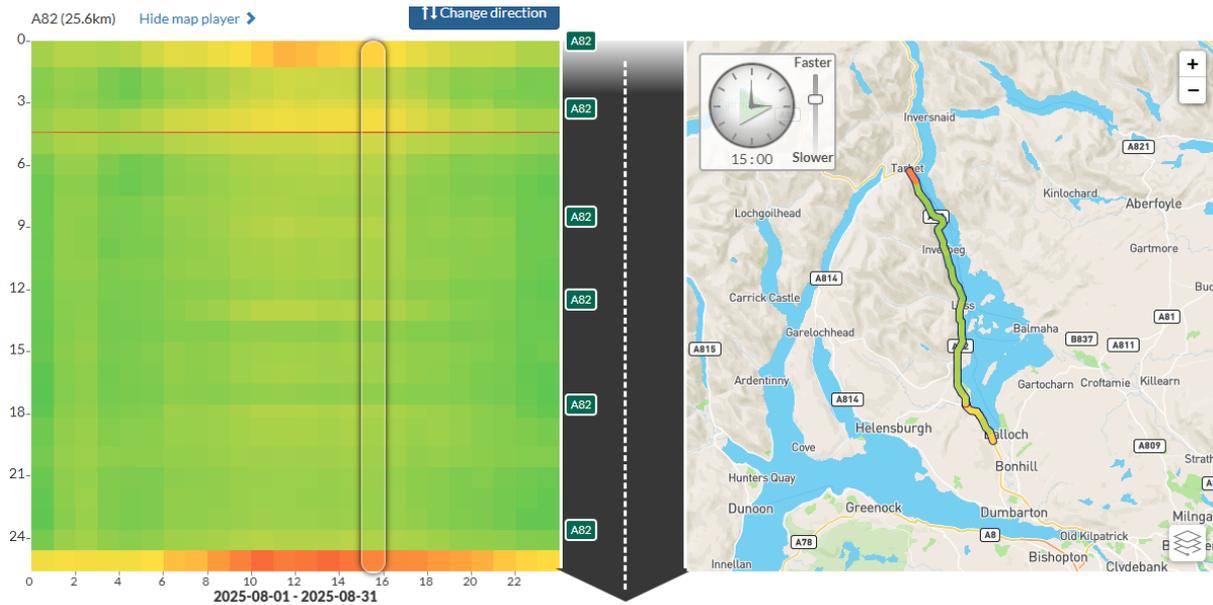


Figure 53: A82 northbound (Balloch to Tarbet) August average (source: INRIX)

The data for the average speeds northbound on the A82 to Tarbet shows that speeds are generally around the 60mph mark (green), with small areas of yellow and orange (down to around 30mph) at roundabouts and in Tarbet. This route is 16 miles in length, with average journey times at 3pm being 18 minutes 34 seconds annual average, and 19 minutes 46 seconds average in August. The 95th percentile in August is 22 minutes 26 seconds.

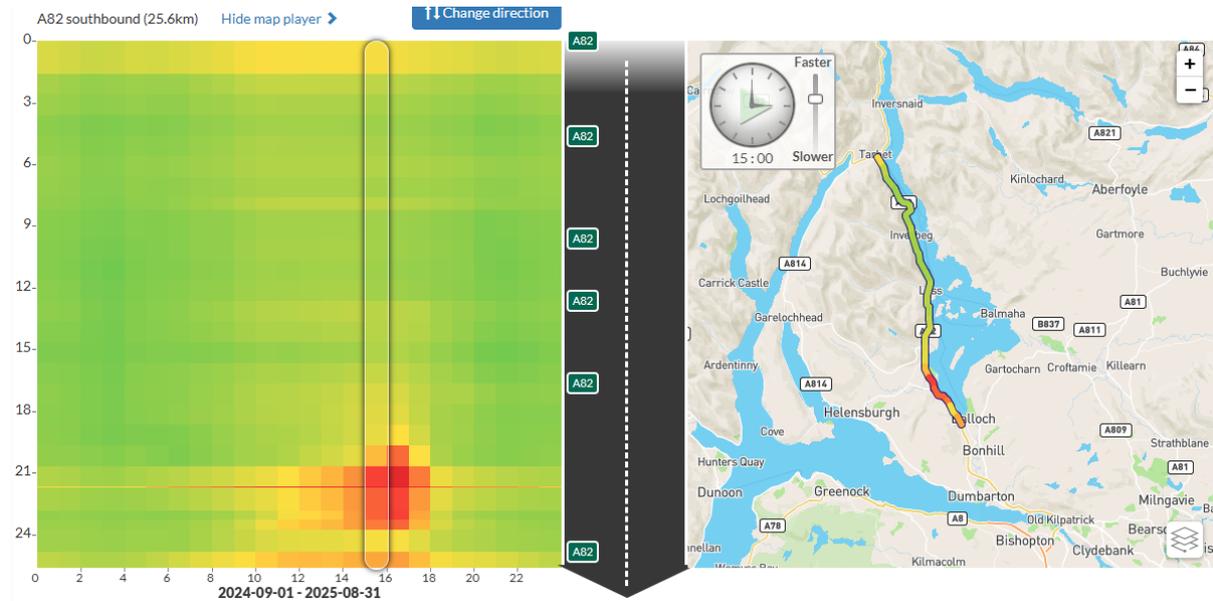


Figure 54: A82 southbound (Tarbet to Balloch) annual average (source: INRIX)

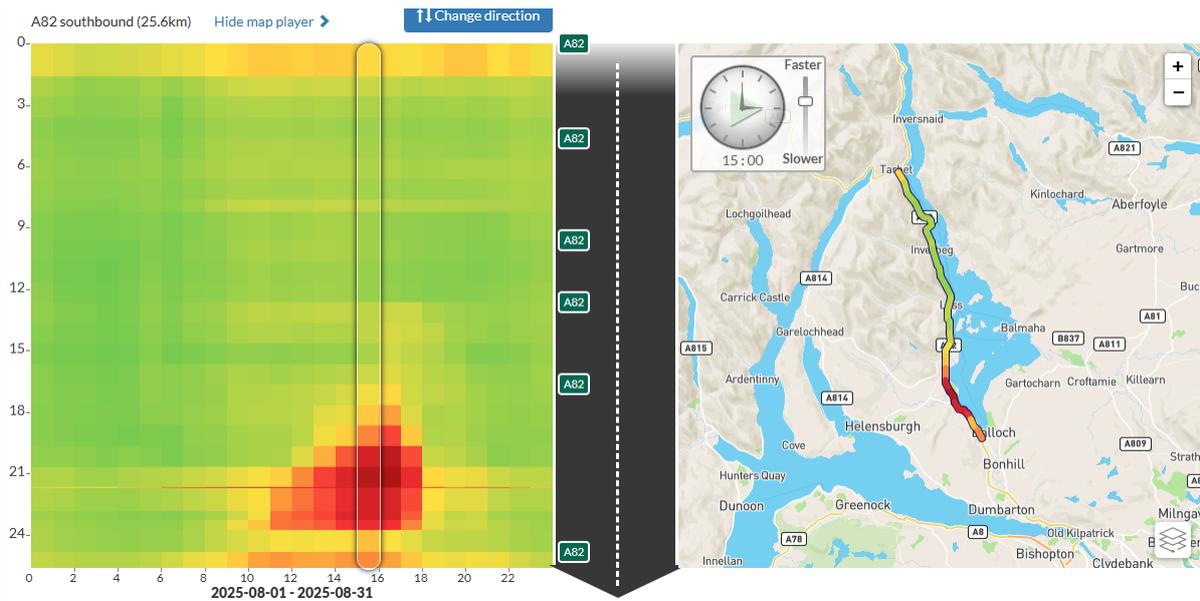


Figure 55: A82 southbound (Tarbet to Balloch) August average (source: INRIX)

The southbound data shows a very different picture, with a clear pinch point on both graphs. At 3pm the annual average speed slows down to 26mph north of the Arden roundabout, with traffic remaining slow after the roundabout. At 3pm in August this is significantly worse, with speeds of around 15mph in this area. Average journey times annually at 3pm are 23 minutes 23 seconds, with 95th percentile of 33 minutes 34 seconds. August journey times at 3pm are 27 minutes 7 seconds, with 95th percentile of 41 minutes 32 seconds.

At 8am where the graph shows no congestion, this road takes on average 20 minutes 4 seconds to travel, meaning an increase of almost **107%** can occur at 3pm in August.

Tarbet to Inverernan

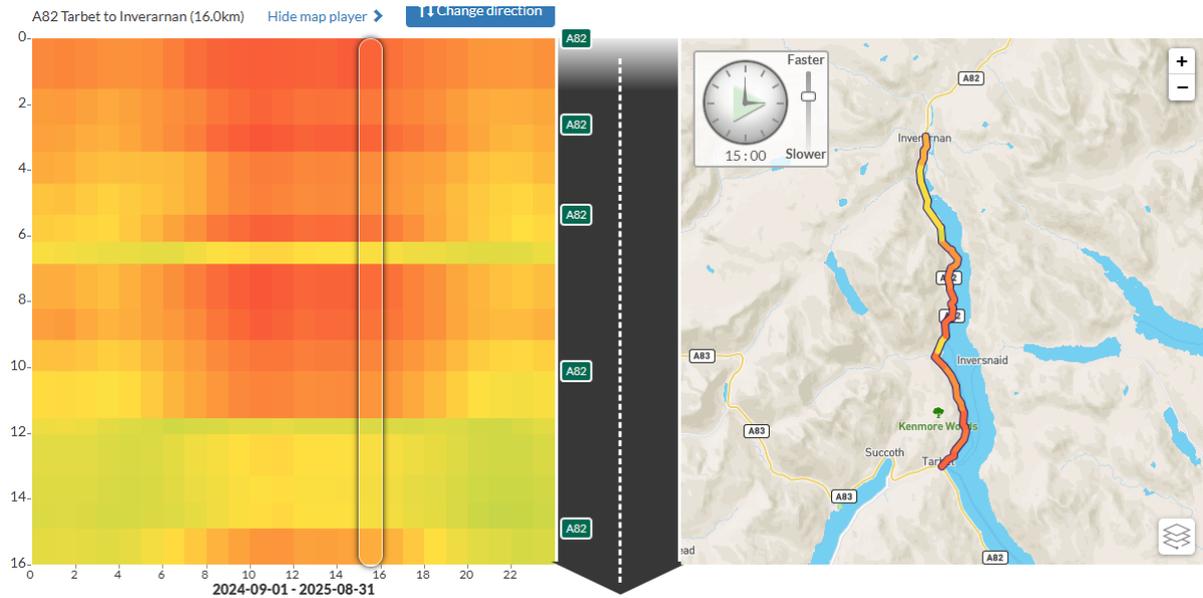


Figure 56: A82 northbound (Tarbet to Inverernan) annual average (source: INRIX)

The data for the average speeds northbound on the A82 to Inverernan shows that speeds are often as low as 29mph (annual) and 27mph (August). There is therefore no significant change in August. This route is 10 miles in length, with average journey times at 3pm being 18 minutes 34 seconds annual average, and the 95th percentile being 21 minutes 4 seconds.

A85



Figure 57: A85 westbound (Tyndrum to Oban) annual average (source: INRIX)

The data for the average speeds westbound on the A85 to Oban shows that speeds are around 50mph (green/yellow) between settlements, and between 26mph and 29mph through the settlements of Lochawe, Taynuilt and Connel. In August speeds are generally only slightly slower. Through the centre of Oban speeds are as low as 12mph annually and 10mph in August. This route is 35.6 miles in length, with average journey times at 3pm being 56 minutes 8 seconds annual average, and the 95th percentile being 1 hour and 4 seconds.

A recent Speed Limit Order has brought into force a 20mph speed limit on part of the A85 between Tyndrum and Oban. A further Speed Limit Order will bring a 20mph speed limit into force in Connel.

A828

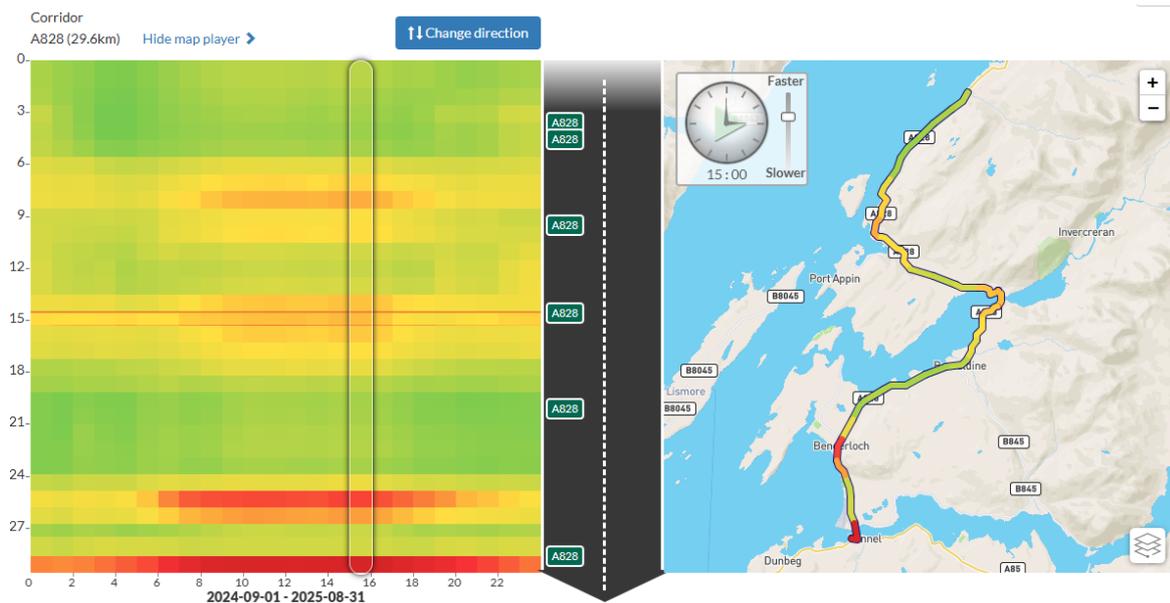


Figure 58: A828southbound (towards Connel) annual average (source: INRIX)

The data for the average speeds westbound on the A828 to Oban shows that speeds are up to 50mph (green/yellow) between settlements, and around 26mph Benderloch. Average speeds around the Connel Bridge are under 20mph, likely due to the single way traffic lighted bridge. In August speeds are generally only slightly slower. This route is 18 miles in length, with average journey times at 3pm being 28 minutes 17 seconds annual average, and the 95th percentile being 30 minutes 50 seconds.

A recent Speed Limit Order has brought into force a 20mph speed limit on part of the A828 at Benderloch.

A83

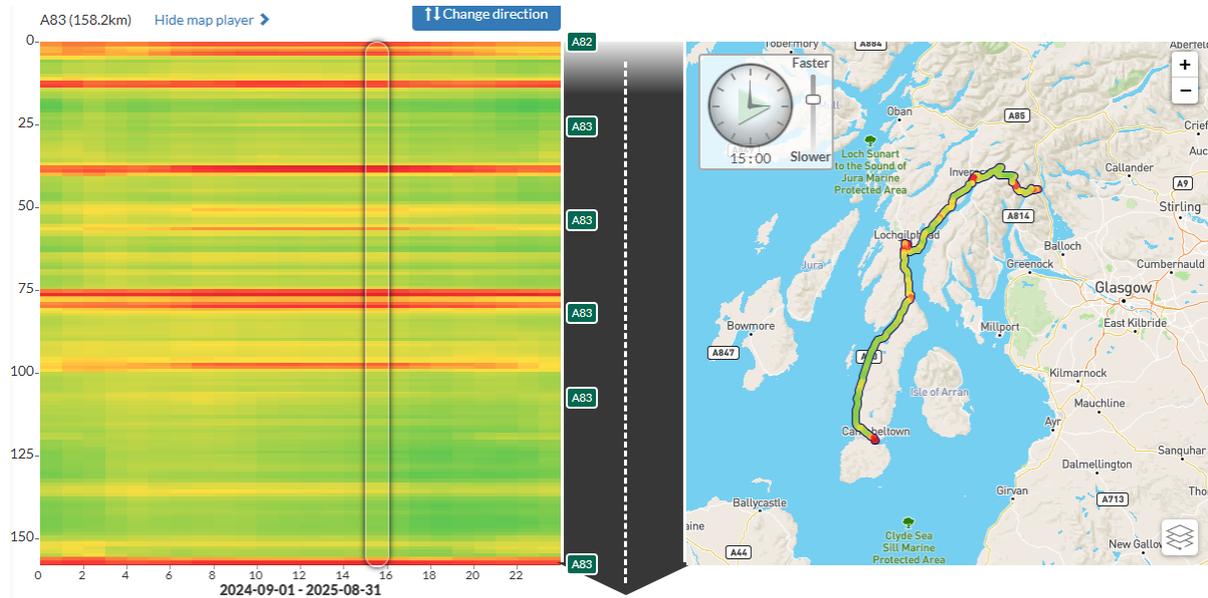


Figure 59: A83 southbound (Tarbet to Campbeltown) annual average (source: INRIX)

The data for the average speeds southbound on the A83 to Campbeltown shows that speeds are around 50mph to 60mph (yellow and green) between settlements, with slower speeds the settlements. Recent Speed Limit Orders bringing into force 20mph speed limits in Arrochar (in LLTNP), Lochgilphead and Campbeltown will further slow down the route. Outwith the settlement areas there is a clear pinch point at the Rest and Be Thankful, where there are ongoing traffic lights, convoys and use of the Old Military Road. In August speeds are generally only slightly slower. This route is 98.3 miles in length, with average journey times at 3pm being 2 hours, 20 minutes and 49 seconds annual average, and the 95th percentile being 2 hours, 28 minutes and 59 seconds.

Recent temporary speed restrictions have come into force in Inveraray, Ardrishaig, Tarbet (in LLTNP) and Tarbert.

A814

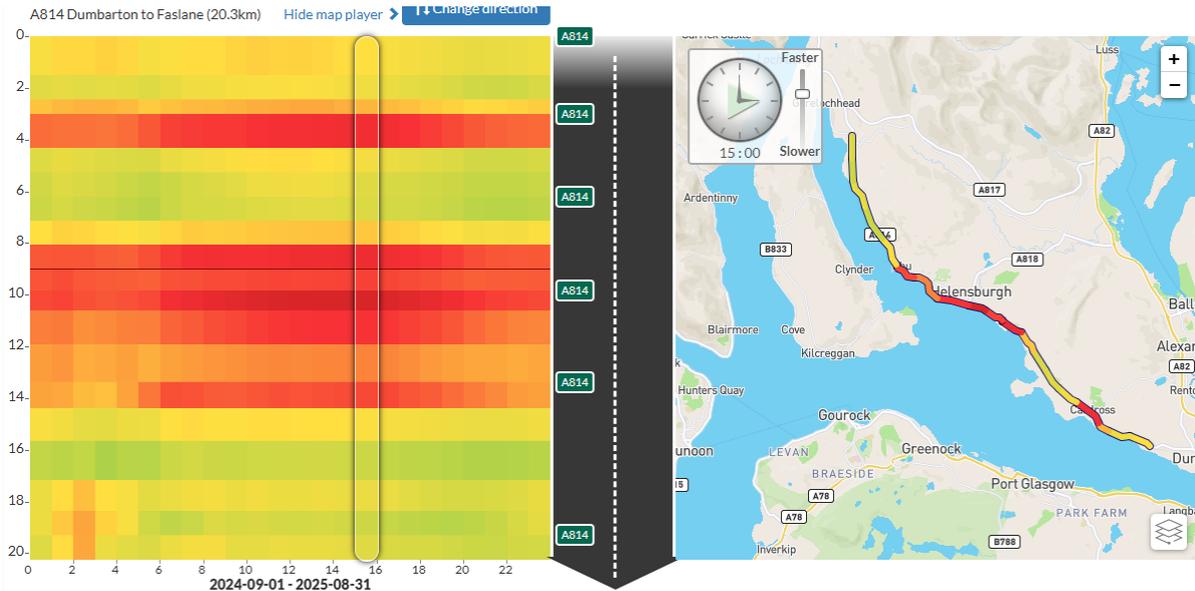


Figure 60: A814 westbound (Dumbarton to Faslane) annual average (source: INRIX)

Note: the northern portion of the A814 between Faslane and Arrochar has been excluded as it does not provide a primary route to or through any of the 6 Main Towns.

The data for the average speeds southbound on the A814 to Faslane shows that speeds are slow across much of the route. This is largely in part to the large proportion of this route being within settlement areas – within Helensburgh average speeds are 21mph. Between settlement areas speeds generally only reach 40-45mph on average. There is no notable difference in August. This route is 12.6 miles in length, with average journey times at 3pm being 23 minutes 46 seconds annual average, and the 95th percentile being 25 minutes 15 seconds.

A815

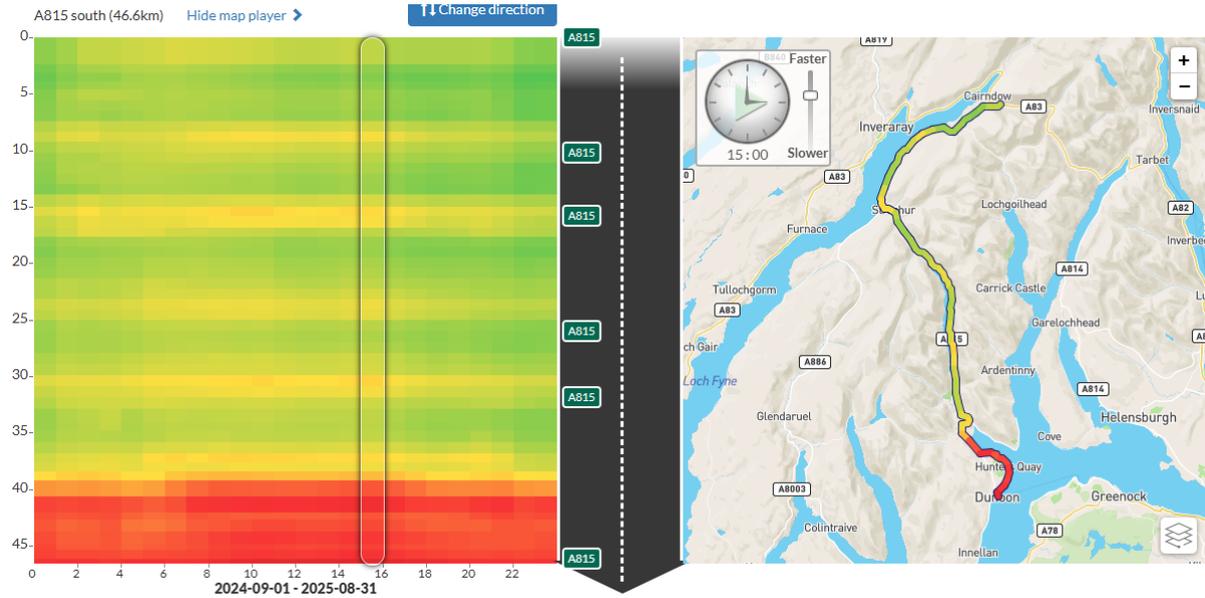


Figure 61: A815 southbound (Cairndow to Dunoon) annual average (source: INRIX)

The data for the average speeds southbound on the A815 to Dunoon shows that speeds fluctuate between around 40mph (yellow) and 60mph (green) across the route, with speeds of around 25mph going through Sandbank and into Dunoon. There is no notable difference in August. This route is 29 miles in length, with average journey times at 3pm being 44 minutes 28 seconds annual average, and the 95th percentile being 48 minutes 7 seconds.

A816

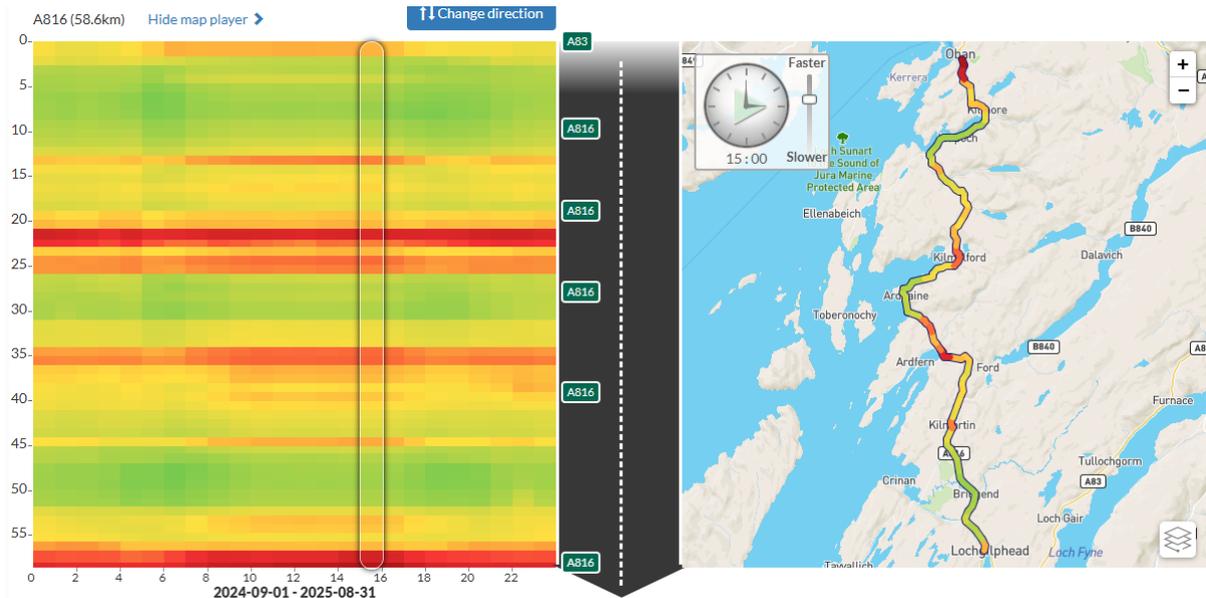


Figure 62: A816 northbound (Lochgilphead to Oban) annual average (source: INRIX)

The data for the average speeds northbound on the A816 to Oban shows that speeds are variable across the route, with particularly slow sections at Ardfern, and going into Oban. Where the landslide was in 2023 (south of Kintraw), resulting in a single way traffic light system, average speeds are around 21mph. At the Barravullin bends speeds are around 29mph. In August speeds are generally only slightly slower. Through the centre of Oban speeds are as low as 14mph annually and 12mph in August. This route is 36.4 miles in length, with average journey times at 3pm being 59 minutes 32 seconds annual average, and the 95th percentile being 1 hour 4 minutes and 45 seconds.

A819

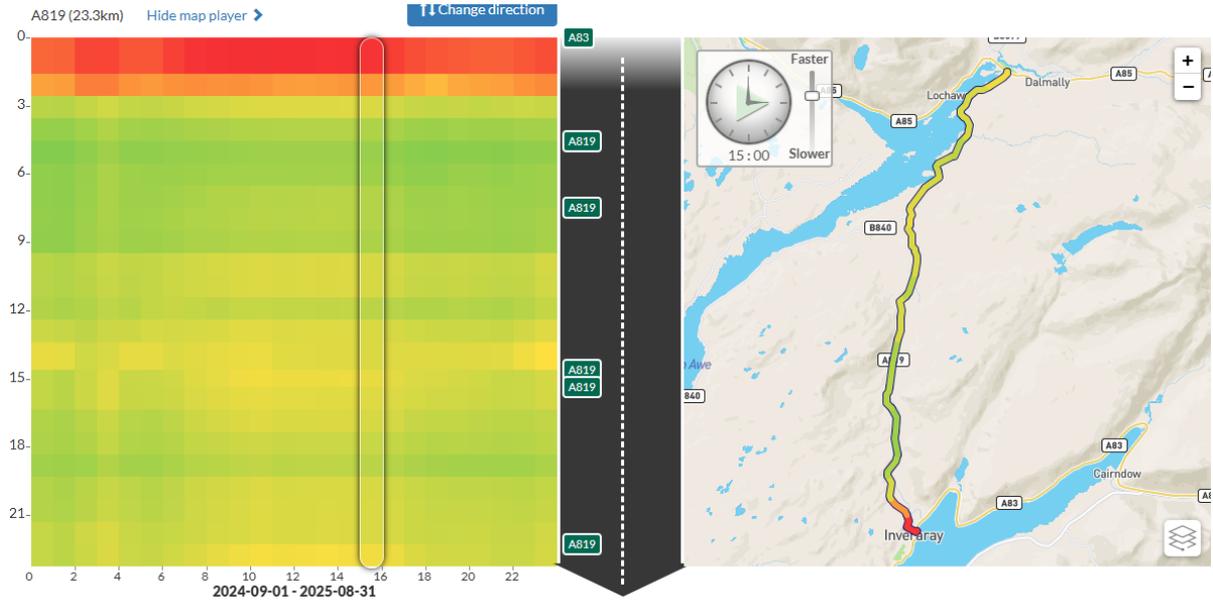


Figure 63: A819 northbound (Inveraray to A85) annual average (source: INRIX)

The data for the average speeds northbound on the A819, linking the A83 to the A85, shows that speeds are around 50mph across the route, with speeds of around 25-32mph coming out of Inveraray. There is no notable difference in August. This route is 14.5 miles in length, with average journey times at 3pm being 20 minutes 55 seconds annual average, and the 95th percentile being 23 minutes 29 seconds.

A886 and A844

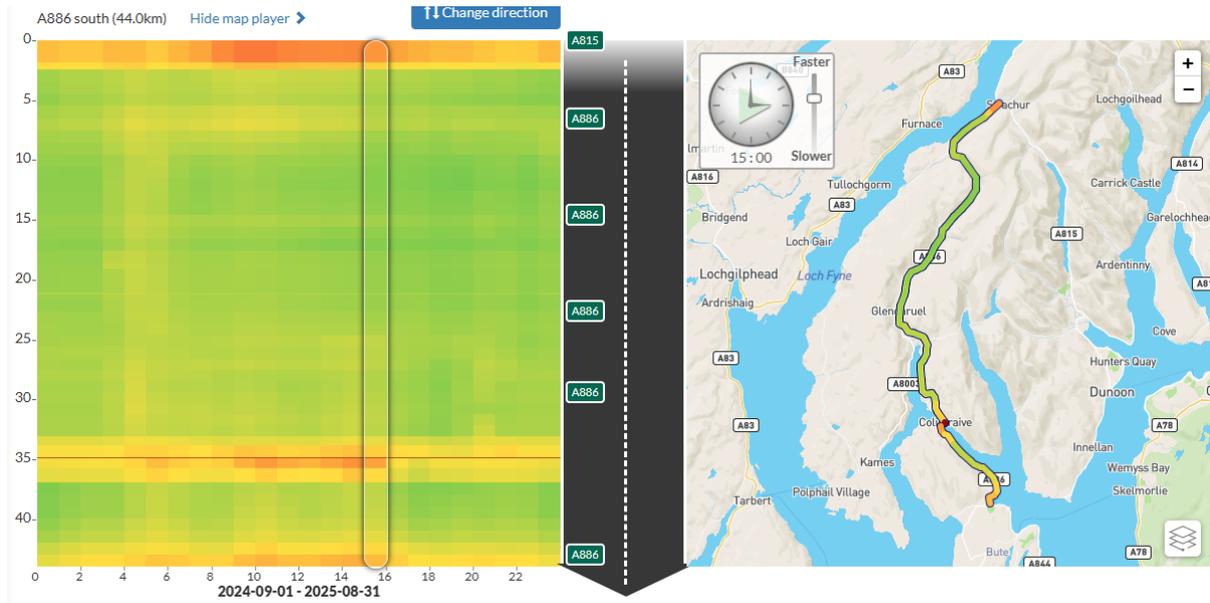


Figure 64: A886 southbound (Strachur to Port Bannatyne) annual average (source: INRIX)

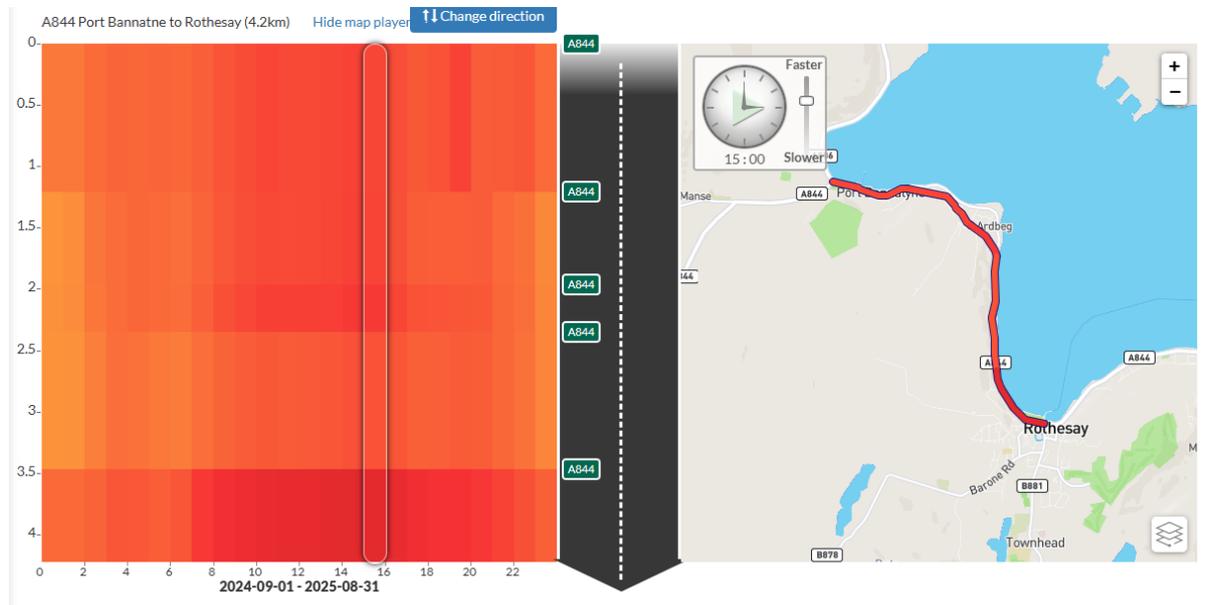


Figure 65: A844 southbound (Port Bannatyne to Rothesay) annual average (source: INRIX)

The data for the average speeds southbound on the A886 to Port Bannatyne shows that speeds are generally around 50mph (yellow-green) across the route, with slower speeds in Strachur, and Colintrave and Rhubodach.

Speeds are slow on the A844 between Port Bannatyne and Rothesay, averaging around 25mph.

There is no notable difference in August on either of these roads.

No travel time has been calculated for this route as it involves a ferry crossing.

Road Safety – Collisions Overview

Collision data is available from the Department for Transport (DfT). Between 1st January 2022 and 31st December 2024 there were 434 recorded traffic collisions across Argyll and Bute. This study area includes the area of the Loch Lomond and Trossachs national Park with Argyll and Bute – although outwith the Argyll and Bute planning authority area, the portions of the A82, A83 and A815 within the Park, are key arteries to the planning authority area.

Of these 434 collisions, 28 were fatal, 171 were serious, and 235 were slight. These are recorded in the table below and mapped on the following pages.

ROAD	LENGTH (MILES) (approx.)	FATAL	SERIOUS	SLIGHT	TOTAL
A82	35.0	3	26	37	66
A83	98.3	6	28	34	58
A85	35.4	8	23	27	58
A8003	8.0	0	1	0	1
A814	23.5	2	8	11	21
A815	27.9	3	10	17	30
A816	36.5	1	19	15	35
A817	8.9	0	4	3	7
A818	4.8	0	2	4	6
A819	14.5	0	1	7	8
A828	16.6	3	4	4	11
A844	22.0	0	2	7	9
A846	47.6	0	3	6	9

ROAD	LENGTH (MILES) (approx.)	FATAL	SERIOUS	SLIGHT	TOTAL
A847	14.7	0	1	0	1
A848	10.0	0	1	1	2
A849	46.0	0	1	4	5
A884	21.6	0	4	7	11
A885	2.7	0	1	3	4
A886	27.0	0	0	2	2
B Roads	-	1 (B845)	15	20	36
Minor Roads	-	0	0	26	26

Figure 66 (above and on previous page): Collision data (summarised from DfT data)

Of the 434 recorded collisions, 102 of these occurred in the summer months of July and August (i.e. 23.5% of collisions happened within 16.7% of the year)

Pinch Points - Collisions

Collisions data has been extracted from the Department for Transport website for the years 2022, 2023 and 2024. This data is shown on the maps in Figures 67, 68, 69, 70 and 71, with fatal accidents in black, serious accidents in red, and slight accidents in yellow. As with previous data, some of this is within the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park planning authority area but has been included due to the importance of these roads serving the Argyll and Bute planning authority area.

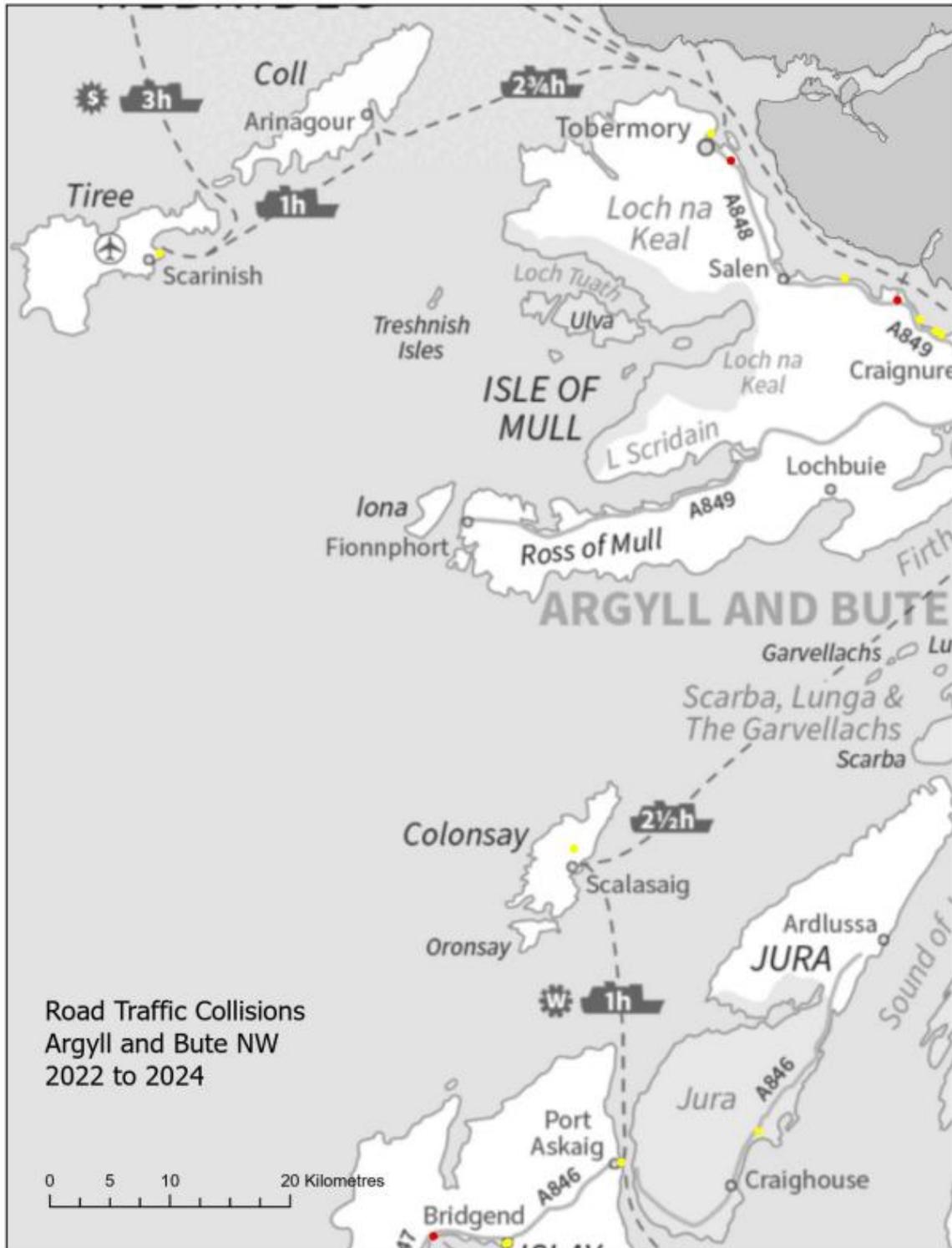


Figure 68: Collision points across NW Argyll and Bute (mapped from DfT data)

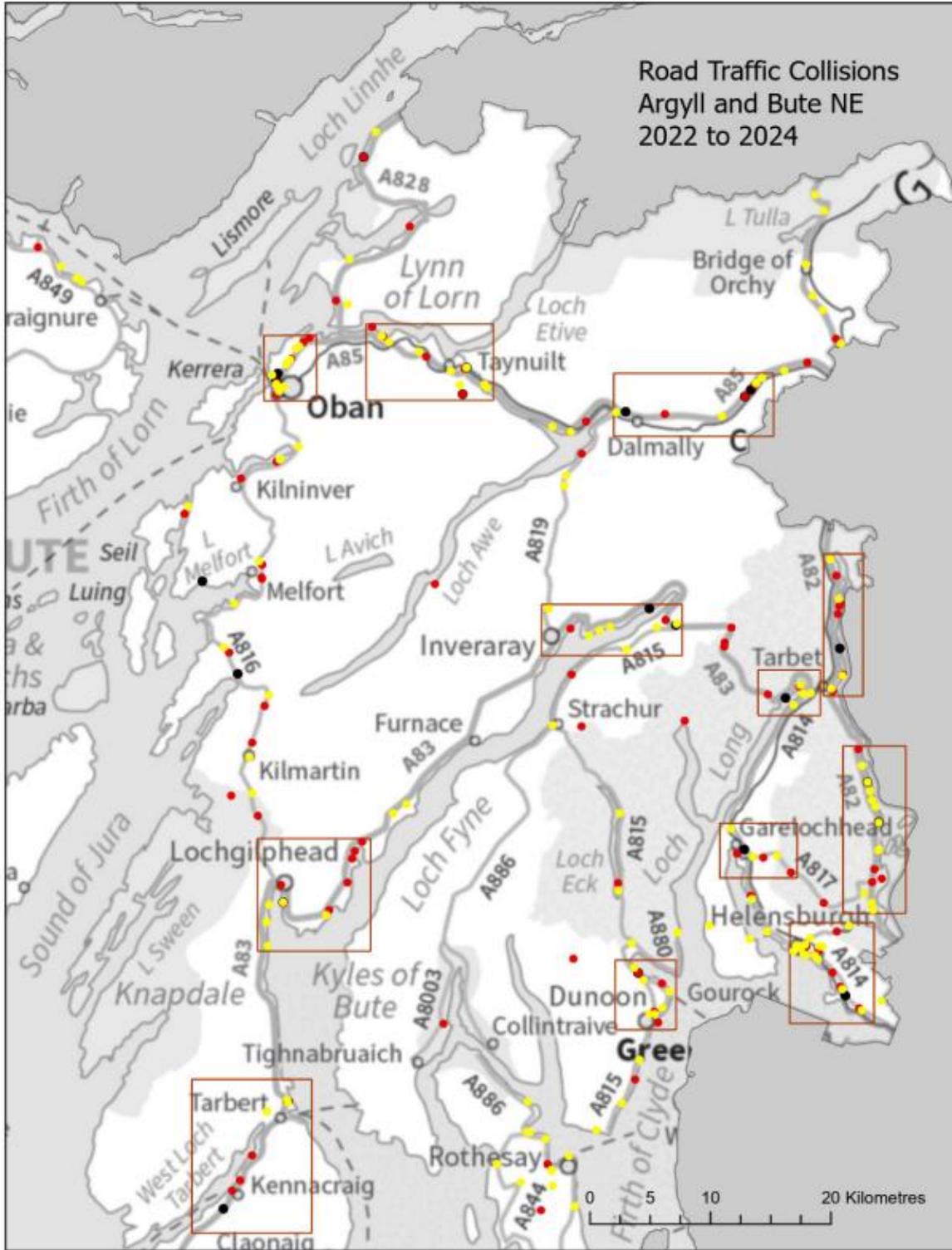


Figure 69: Collision points across NE Argyll and Bute (mapped from DfT data)

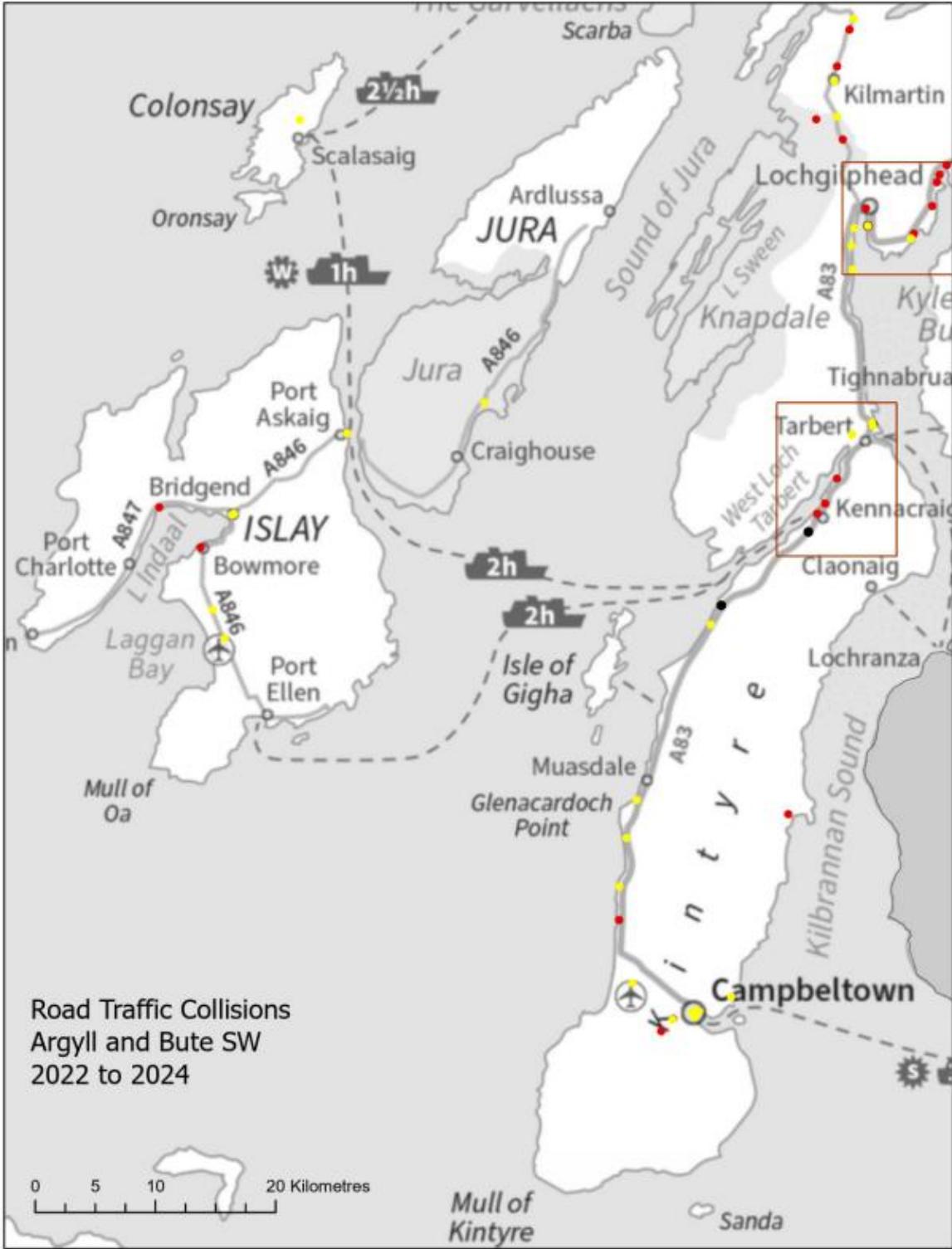


Figure 70: Collision points across SW Argyll and Bute (mapped from DfT data)

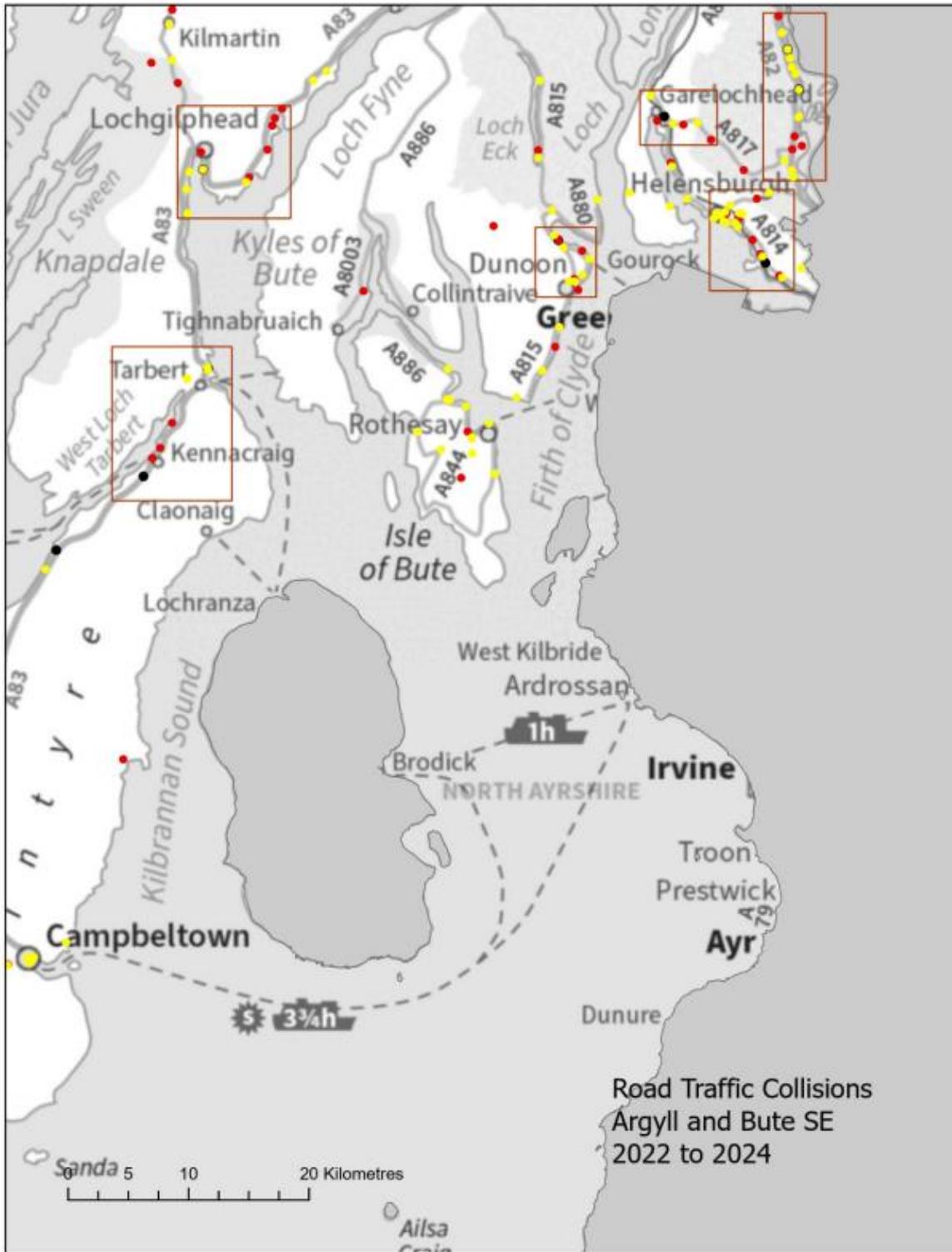


Figure 71: Collision points across SE Argyll and Bute (mapped from DfT data)

12 areas (shown on the maps boxed in brown outlines) have been selected for further analyses. These have been selected because of the clustering of points at areas on the key routes.

Drakewell traffic counters (where available) and INRIX data have been used to provide further information on each of the identified potential pinch points.

Trunk Roads

A82 – Luss area



Figure 72: A82 (Luss) collisions between 2022 and 2024 (source: DfT)

Over the 3 year period 2022 to 2025 there were 16 accidents on this section of the A82. There were 2 fatal accidents (both 2023), 8 serious accidents (3 in 2022, 4 in 2023, and 1 in 2024), and 6 slight accidents (1 in 2022, 2 in 2023, and 3 in 2024). In 2023 there were 3 separate accidents (including one fatal) in close proximity near the Luss junction.

Traffic counts – the nearest traffic counter is JTC08223, where annual traffic volumes were between 12,778 (2022) and 13,697 (2024).

A82 – Tarbet to Inverernan



Figure 73: A82 (north of Tarbet) collisions between 2022 and 2024 (source: DfT)

Over the 3 year period 2022 to 2025 there were 13 accidents on this section of the A82. There was one fatal accident in 2022, 9 serious accidents (6 in 2023, 3 in 2024)), and 3 slight accidents (1 in 2022, 2 in 2023). There have been 3 serious accidents in a cluster at the same corner (between Tarbet and Blairannaich – 2 in summer of 2023 and 1 in the summer of 2024). As noted earlier, speeds on this stretch of road are generally slow.

Traffic counts – the nearest traffic counter is ATCCS001 north of Tarbet, where annual traffic volumes were between 4,468 (2022) and 4,626 (2024).

A85 - Dalmally

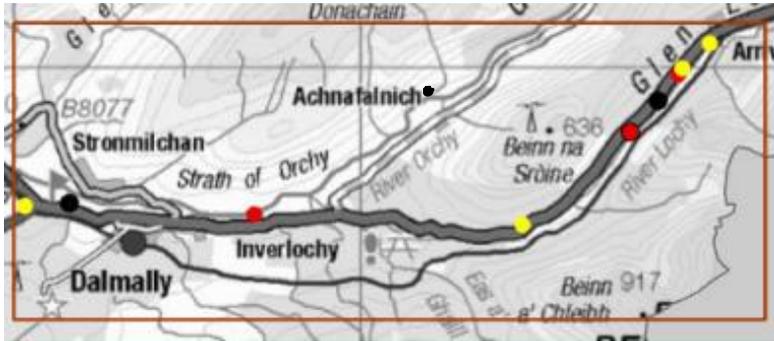


Figure 74: A85 (around Dalmally) collisions between 2022 and 2024 (source: DfT)

Over the 3 year period 2022 to 2025 there were 8 accidents on this section of the A85 (and 1 slight accident near the junction of the A819). There were 3 fatal accidents (all in 2023), 3 serious accidents (2 in 2022, 1 in 2024), and 2 slight accidents (both winter of 2023/2024). There is a noticeable cluster to the west of Arrivain, including 2 fatal collisions.

Traffic counts – the nearest traffic counter is JTC00536, where annual traffic volumes were between 2,722 (2022) and 3,044 (2024).

A85 - Taynuilt

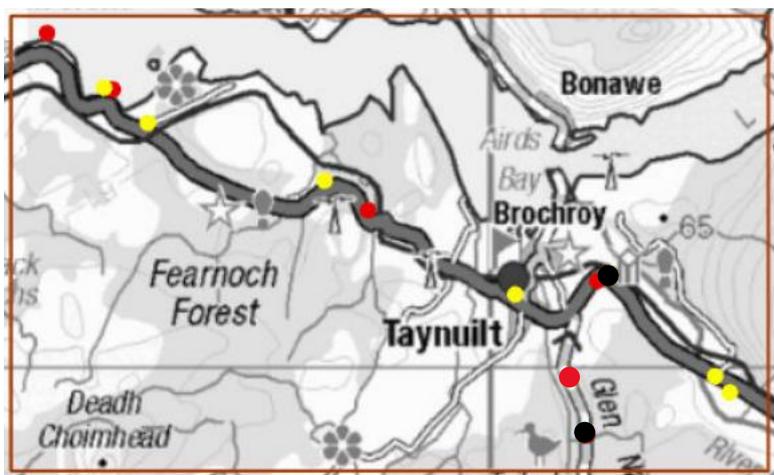


Figure 75: A85 (around Taynuilt) collisions between 2022 and 2024 (source: DfT)

Over the 3 year period 2022 to 2025 there were 11 accidents on this section of the A85 (plus 2 accidents on the B845). There was 1 fatal accident (2024), 4 serious accidents (1 in 2022, 1 in 2023 and 2 in 2024), and 6 slight accidents (1 in 2022, 3 in 2023, 2 in 2024). A fatal accident in 2024 as well as a serious accident in 2022 both happened in close proximity to the corner beside Taynuilt Substation.

Traffic counts – the nearest traffic counter is ATC08059, where annual traffic volumes were between 4,514 (2022) and 4,683 (2024).

A85 - Oban

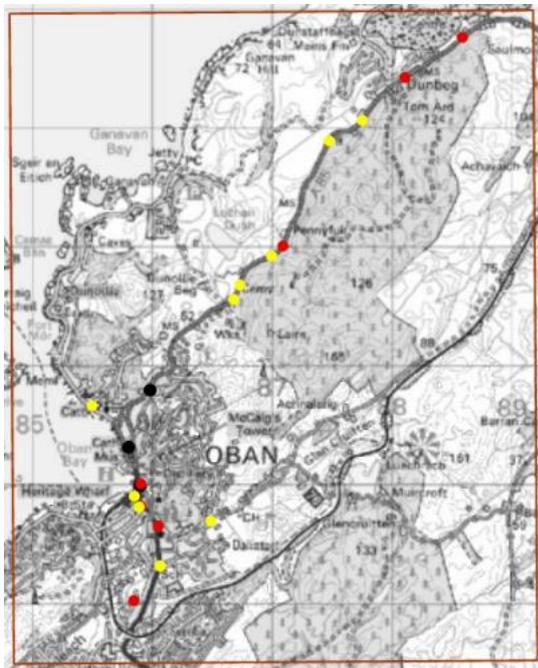


Figure 76: A85 (around Oban) collisions between 2022 and 2024 (source: DfT)

Over the 3 year period 2022 to 2025 there were 17 accidents on this section of the A85 and A816. The collisions on the minor roads are not included in this study. There were 3 fatal accidents (1 in 2023, 2 in 2024), 7 serious accidents (3 in 2022, 2 in 2023, 2 in 2024), and 7 slight accidents (5 in 2022, 1 in 2023, 1 in 2024). 6 accidents involved pedestrians – 2 fatal accidents, 3 serious, and 1 slight, of which 2 of these (including a fatal accident) happened on the same part of the A85 outside Spice World restaurant. The number and severity of pedestrian accidents should be noted, particularly with regard to the Oban Strategic Development Framework. As noted earlier, speeds on this stretch of road are generally slow.

Traffic counts – the traffic counter within Oban is ATC08070 where annual traffic volumes were between 15,015 (2022) and 15,957 (2024). There is likely to be less traffic on the portion of road north of Oban, however, there has not been a traffic count there since 2015, which showed about 50% traffic volumes of that in Oban. However with more recent developments at Dunbeg it is unclear what the volume may now be. It is therefore accepted that this data is not fully accurate and further information may be required as part of the Oban Strategic Development Framework.

A 20mph limit came into force on a stretch of the A85 in September 2025.

A83 – Tarbet to Ardgarten

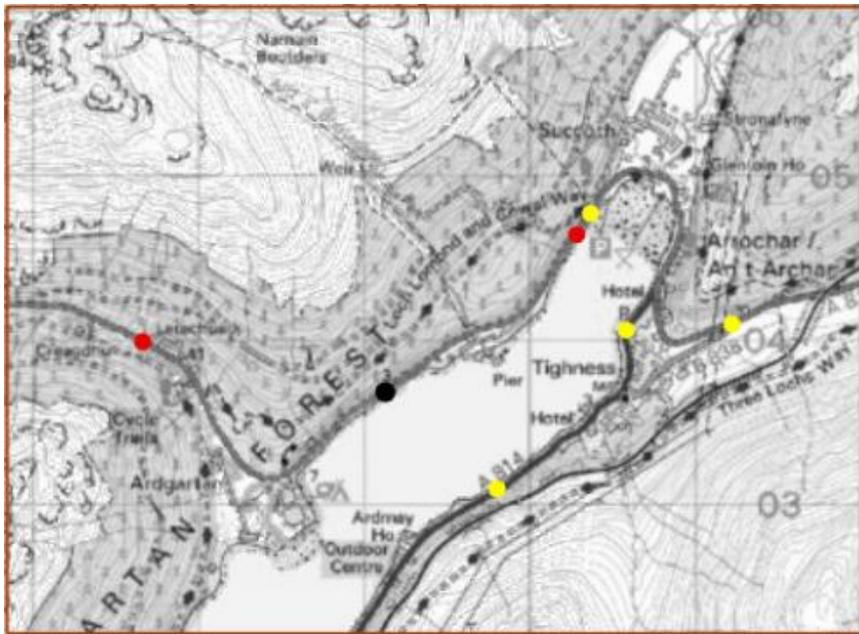


Figure 77: Collisions between Tarbet and Ardgarten between 2022 and 2024 (source: DfT)

Over the 3 year period 2022 to 2025 there were 5 accidents on this section of the A83 (with the further 2 yellow points on the map being slight accidents on the A814). There was one fatal accident in 2022, 2 serious accidents (2022 and 2024), and 2 slight accidents (both 2024). From this, there does not appear to be evidence of any accident hotspots.

Traffic counts – the nearest traffic counter is JCT08338 at Ardgarten, where annual traffic volumes were between 4,088 (2022) and 4,223 (2024).

Since September 2025, a 20mph speed limit has been introduced through Arrochar (in LLTNP). Since November 2025, 20 and 30mph speed limits have been introduced in Tarbet.

A83 - Inveraray

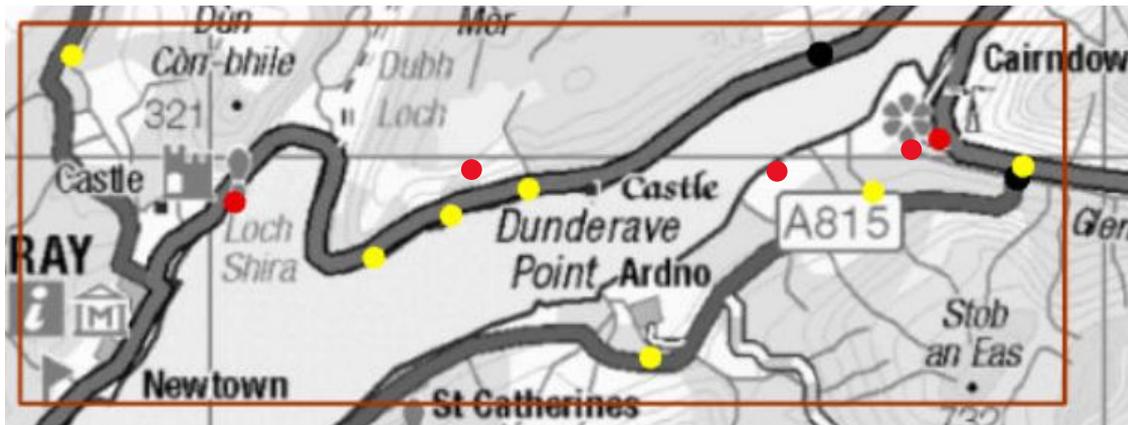


Figure 78: Collisions in the Inveraray/Cairndow area between 2022 and 2024 (source: DfT)

Over the 3 year period 2022 to 2025 there were 7 accidents on this section of the A83. Additionally, there was 1 on the A819 and 3 on the A815, one of which was a fatal collision near the junction of the A83 so has been included in the A83 count. There were 2 fatal accidents (including that near the A815/A83 junction) (1 in 2022, 1 in 2023), 3 serious accidents (1 in 2022, 2 in 2023), and 2 slight accidents (both in 2024). A fatal accident in 2022 and a serious accident in 2024 both happened in close proximity to the junction where the A815 meets the A83. This follows widening works at Strone Point carried out between 2017 and 2018, and there was only 1 slight collision at Strone Point (in 2022).

For comparison, prior to the works at Strone Point there were:

- In 2017 there were 3 serious accidents and 1 slight
- In 2015 there were 2 serious accidents
- In 2014 there was 1 slight accident
- In 2013 there was a fatal accident
- In 2012 there was a fatal accident and a serious accident

Traffic counts – the nearest traffic counter is ATC08063. There is no data from this counter for the years 2022 to 2024. 2025 data is currently being collected and shows a count of 4,126 (taken at 16th October 2025)

Lochgair, Lochgilphead and Ardrishaig

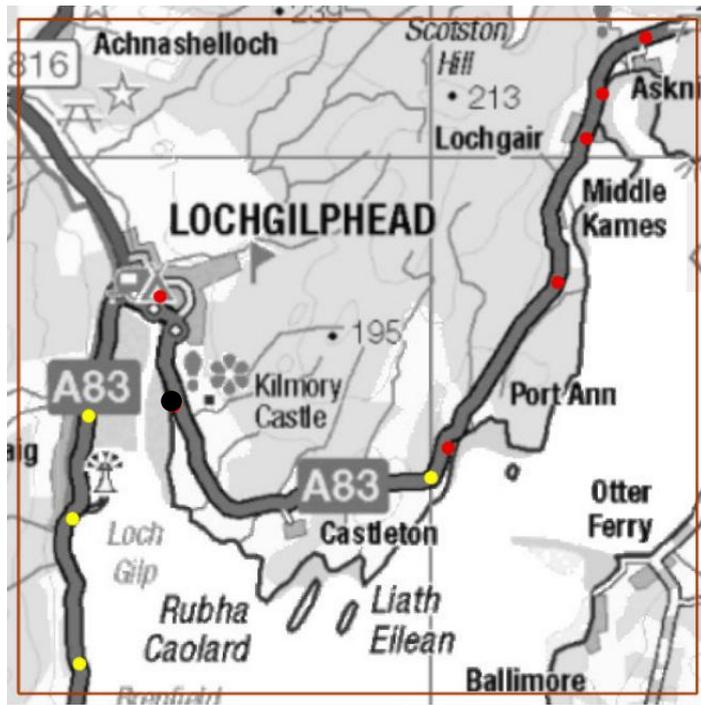


Figure 79: Collisions in the Lochgilphead area between 2022 and 2024 (source: DfT)

Over the 3 year period 2022 to 2025 there were 12 accidents on this section of the A83 (plus 1 serious accident involving a pedestrian on a minor road). There was 1 fatal accident (2024), 7 serious accidents (2 in 2022, 2 in 2023 and 3 in 2024), and 4 slight accidents (2 in 2022, 2 in 2024). 3 collisions (1 fatal and 2 serious) happened in close proximity to or on the Kilmory roundabout. Advance warning signage for the 30mph zone at the Kilmory roundabout has been improved following these collisions, and on this basis this area has not been included as a current area of concern.

Traffic counts – the nearest traffic counter is JTC08339, where annual traffic volumes were between 2,831 (2022) and 2,795 (2024).

A83 - Around Tarbert

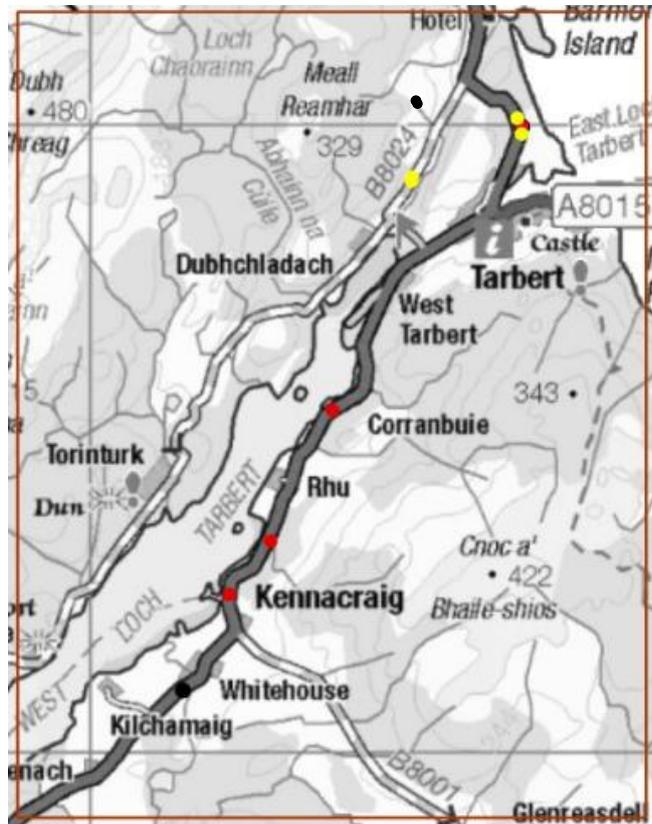


Figure 80: Collisions in the Tarbert area between 2022 and 2024 (source: DfT)

There is a cluster of collisions at Barfad, including a fatal collision in 2023.

Traffic counts – the nearest traffic counter is ATC05058, where annual traffic volumes were between 2,399 (2022) and 2,343 (2024).

Local Roads

A814



Figure 81: Collisions in the Helensburgh area between 2022 and 2024 (source: DfT)

Over the 3 year period 2022 to 2025 there were 14 accidents on this section of the A814 and A818 (data from the minor roads within Helensburgh are not being counted as part of this study). There was 1 fatal accident (2022), 6 serious accidents (2 in 2022, 4 in 2023), and 7 slight accidents (1 in 2022, 5 in 2023, 1 in 2024). The fatal accident, 1 serious accident and 2 slight accidents involved pedestrians. There are no identifiable hotspots from this data, although note should be taken of the number of pedestrian casualties, particularly given the Helensburgh Strategic Development Framework.

Traffic counts – there is no recent traffic counter in the area.

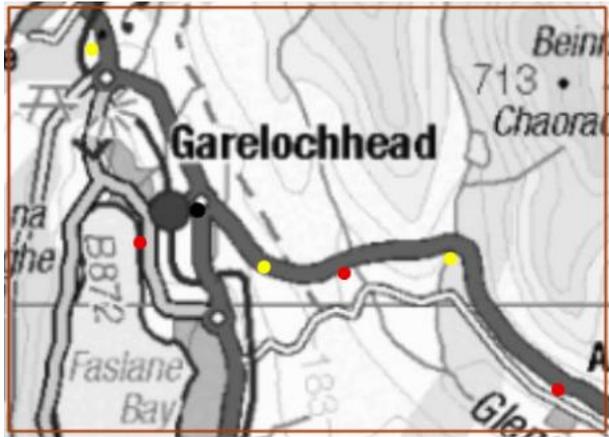


Figure 82: Collisions in the Garelochhead area between 2022 and 2024 (source: DfT)

Over the 3 year period 2022 to 2025 there were 6 accidents on this section of the A814 and A817 (and a further serious collision on the B872). There was 1 fatal accident (2022), 4 serious accidents (2 in 2023, 2 in 2024), and 1 slight accident (2022). There are no identifiable hotspots from this data.

Traffic counts – there is no recent traffic counter in the area.

A815 - Dunoon

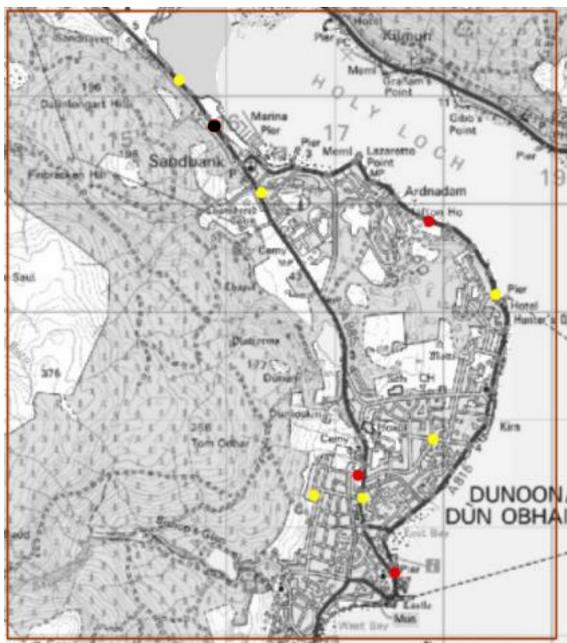


Figure 83: Collisions in the Dunoon area between 2022 and 2024 (source: DfT)

Over the 3 year period 2022 to 2025 there were 9 accidents on this section of the A815 and A885 (and a further slight collision on a minor road). There was 1 fatal accident (2022), 3 serious accidents (1 in 2023, 2 in 2024), and 5 slight accidents (3 in 2023, 2 in

2024). 3 of these accidents involved pedestrians. There are no identifiable hotspots from this data.

Traffic counts – there is no recent traffic counter in the area.

Analysis

Road section	Length of road (miles)	Daily traffic volumes (2024) (Source: Drakewell)	Total accidents over 3 years (serious and fatal) (source: DfT)	Accidents per mile over 3 years (serious and fatal)	Accidents per 10,000 vehicles per mile over 3 years (serious and fatal)
A82 around Luss	8.7	13,697	10	1.15	0.84
A82 Tarbet to Inverernan	8.2	4,626	10	1.22	2.64
A85 east of Dalmally	8.7	3,044	6	0.69	2.27
A85 around Taynuilt	8.5	4,683	5	0.59	1.26
A85 Oban (see earlier note on traffic counts)	4.6	15,957	10	2.17	1.34
A83 Tarbet to Ardgarten	4.5	4,223	3	0.67	1.59
A83 around Inveraray	11.1	4,126*	4	0.36	0.87
A83 around Lochgilphead	11.9	2,795	8	0.67	2.40
A83 around Tarbert	9.7	2,343	6	0.62	2.65
A814 Cardross to Helensburgh, and A818	9.1	Insufficient data	7	0.77	–
A814 and A817 around Garelochhead	4.7	Insufficient data	5	1.06	–
A815 and A885 Dunoon	6.8	Insufficient data	4	0.59	–

Figure 84 (previous page): Comparison table of accident clusters

* count is from 2025 as no 2024 data available

Road Networks – Areas of Concern identified from traffic counts, journey times and collision data

Particular areas of concern noted from the preceding sections are:

ROAD	CONCERN	AREA AFFECTED
A82 – southbound between Arden roundabout and Stonnelymollen roundabout	Significant congestion southbound, with a 107% increase in journey time at 3pm in August compared to 8am	All of Argyll and Bute
A82 – Luss junction	Accident hotspot	MAKI, B&C, OLI
A82 – Tarbet to Inverernan	Slow journey times Accident hotspot between Tarbet and Blairannaich	OLI
A85 and A816 – Oban	High traffic numbers / slow journey times within Oban Accident hotspot	OLI
A85 – corner beside Taynuilt Substation	Accident hotspot	OLI
A85 – west of Arrivain	Accident hotspot	OLI
A83 – Ardgarten	82.1% increase in traffic in summer	MAKI, B&C – also route used sometimes used for OLI
A83 – Rest and be Thankful	Potential landslides – delays with OMR, or long diversion route via A82	MAKI, B&C – also route used sometimes for OLI
A83 - Barfad	Accident hotspot	MAKI
A814 – Dumbarton to HMNB Clyde	Pressure on this route from HSDF and HMNB Clyde expansion	H&L
A816 – south of Kintraw	Landslide - delays	MAKI, OLI

Figure 85 (previous page): Summary of key concerns arising from data collated within road networks evidence

Some of these are noted in STPR2 or other Plans, and are already in the pipeline. These plans are notes in the subsequent sections of this topic paper.

The Rest and Be Thankful

HITRANS (draft) Regional Transport Strategy (2024) includes a case study on the Rest and be Thankful on the A83 trunk road. The Rest and be Thankful sits within the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park, however is a key artery into Argyll and Bute.

Case Study: A83, Rest and Be Thankful

The A83 is one of Scotland's longest trunk roads, departing the A82 at Tarbet on the western shore of Loch Lomond and running all of the way to Campbeltown in the Mull of Kintyre. One of the most notorious stretches of this road is that between Ardgartan, located just south-west of Arrochar, through Glen Croe to the Rest and Be Thankful, a viewpoint at the head of the glen.

This section of road has been affected by a series of major landslips in recent years, requiring the use of the Old Military Road (OMR) (with associated delays) or creating an additional 25-mile detour via Tyndrum (Tarbet to Inverary via Crianlarich and Dalmally). More frequent severe weather events associated with climate change are exacerbating these concerns. The resilience of the RaBT is a key issue for Argyll, and the Scottish Government published the following data in response to an FoI request.

The level of disruption and uncertainty clearly affects communities and businesses which rely on the RaBT. Transport Scotland is currently progressing plans to construct a permanent solution to the issue.

A83 Rest and Be Thankful disruption (Source: FoI Request)

Year	Days with temporary lights in operation	No of Days A83 RaBT closed	No of days OMR in operation	No of nights OMR in operation	No. of days both A83 RaBT & OMR closed with diversion route in operation
2010/11	0	0	0	0	0
2011/12	0	5	0	0	5
2012/13	0	4.5	0	0	4.5
2013/14	0	6	5	5	1
2014/15	0	5	5	7	0
2015/16	0	5	3.5	0	1.5
2016/17	0	0	0	0	0
2017/18	155	0	0	0	0
2018/19	365	9	3.5	2	5.5
2019/20	309	2.5	2	2	0.5

Figure 86: Case Study: A83, Rest and Be Thankful (source: HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy for Submission to Ministers)

Disruption on the A83 can have significant knock-on effects on access to lifeline ferry services to the islands, as a result of long diversions on equally fragile alternative routes. These disruptions increasingly occur as a result of adverse weather conditions, but significantly, are also due to serious and fatal road traffic accidents where poor road geometry, narrow carriageways and road surfaces, all contribute to driver error and fatigue. There is a real risk of lack of resilience and safety in the road network serving the fragile western seaboard of Argyll, to the disadvantage of the communities and economies dependent upon them.

This issue is also noted in the Council’s Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2024-34, as well as the STPR2 (Recommendation 29), and the NTS – 4th Delivery Plan which promises to continue construction of future phases of medium-term works for the A83 Rest and Be Thankful and publish the draft Orders for the long-term solution. Within their Infrastructure Investment Plan for Scotland, the Scottish Government commits to improvements at the Rest and be Thankful as part of their delivery of a “safe and sustainable, integrated and resilient transport system”. Furthermore, within their Programme for Delivery 2025-26 the Scottish Government commits to progressing delivery of the next phase of the medium term improvements at the Rest and Be Thankful, and on the statutory authorisation process for the remaining medium term improvements, as well as the long term solution. A preliminary study assessed 11 possible route corridors. The Glen Croe corridor has been identified as the preferred option.

The position as at December 2024 can be seen on Transport Scotland’s website: [A83 Rest and be Thankful | Transport Scotland](#) which sets out that:

The Scottish Government today signalled its ongoing commitment to tackle the landslide issues at the A83 Rest and Be Thankful by publishing draft Orders for both the long-term solution, including the proposed Debris Flow Shelter, and the medium term solution which delivers further improvements to the Old Military Road to increase its resilience.

Other Trunk Road Improvements

The Scottish Government’s Infrastructure Investment Plan commits to Strengthening Connectivity including at the A82 between Tarbet to Inverarnan with a total estimated capital investment of £250m-£500m.

STPR2 (Recommendation 30) includes examples of locations for road safety improvements on the trunk road and motorway network:

- A82 Balloch to Inverness (excluding Tarbet to Inverarnan which is already being progressed by Transport Scotland);
- A83 Tarbet to Campbeltown;
- A85 Perth to Oban

Below is a list of identified schemes, provided by Transport Scotland, that are being considered for delivery over the next 5 years. Some of these are outwith the Argyll and Bute planning authority area (i.e. are within the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park), but as noted earlier, the A83 is a key artery in Argyll and Bute.

Road	Location	Works
A83	Erines	Road Widening Scheme
A83	Glen Kinglas	Landslide Risk Area
A83	Ardgarten to Cobbler Bridge	Landslide Risk Area
A83	Loch Shira / Inveraray	Flooding / Landslide Risk Area
A83	Furnace	River Erosion
A828	Ledaigh Rock Slope	Landslide Risk Area
A83	Cairndow	Landslide Risk Area
A83	Lochend St to New Quay St, Campbeltown	Improvements to NMU links (Active Travel Scheme)
A85	Ben More	Layby
A83	Loch Fyne Oyster Bar	Improvements to NMU links (Active Travel Scheme)
A83	Rest and Be Thankful	MTS works and ongoing hillside management
A82 / A83 / A85	Locations to be considered	Layby improvements

Figure 87: Identified schemes within Argyll and Bute that are being considered for delivery over the next 5 Years (Source: Transport Scotland)

STPR2 (Recommendation 31) is for trunk road and motorway climate change adaptation and resilience. Climate change is already having far-reaching impacts on Scotland's weather systems, with heatwaves, intense rainfall and floods all increasing in scale and frequency. These events are already directly impacting the trunk road and motorway network, including but not limited to the embankment failure on the A83 'Rest and Be Thankful' set out in more detail earlier.

As set out in STPR2, whilst the location and nature of the improvements on specific routes requires further detailed study, Transport Scotland have confirmed that potential locations and measures include, but are not limited to:

- A85 Glen Ogle – geotechnical and hydrological study
- A77, A82, A83 and A87 – sea wall improvements, strengthening or replacement

Local Road Network – Landslide at A816

The A816 provides the main connection between Oban and Lochgilphead. The road runs along the northern slope of Creag nam Fitheach (214m), A' Bheinn (246m).

On the 7th October 2023 as a result of exceptional rainfall, the wettest 2-days in series from 1891, with 100-150mm rain falling widely across Southern and Central Highlands (Kendon, 2023). Approximately a month of rainfall fell in a 36-hour period in a number of areas within Argyll and Bute. The heavy rainfall fell onto already saturated ground and triggered 3no. separate but closely spaced debris flow events (wet saturated landslides that flow) from the steep slope immediately adjacent to the A816. This deposited approximately 6000 tonnes of material over nearly 200m length of road, with more debris on the surrounding slopes and fields.

Clearance works removed an estimated 10,000 tonnes of debris, from the original event and subsequent debris from later smaller events and erosion / wash out of material remaining on the slope.

Owing to the ongoing movement and potential for further blocks and/or debris to impact the road a temporary bypass route was constructed as the fastest and safest way to reopen the A816. The bypass was opened to the public on the 16th December 2023, following 6 weeks of construction. Due to landowner, environmental, engineering and archaeological challenges and constraints the temporary road is built in a restricted narrow corridor resulting in a single lane with passing places, open ditches with steep side drops, a sharp corner and very steep incline at the western side. This was built as a temporary road i.e. not to highway standard but to Forestry Land Scotland specifications.



Figure 88: Aerial photo of the temporary bypass (source: Geo-rope)

An initial and very early cost estimating exercise was undertaken in early 2024 in order to provide a broad order of cost magnitude. This exercise suggested a cost of £1.1m.

Without the benefit of a full options study this provisional estimate was based on widening the temporary bypass road from circa 3m to 6m (to allow two-way traffic) along an approximately 320m length. At this earlier stage an indicative cost of £1,500/m plus additional costs for consents, licenses, ground investigations, design fees, plus a contingency allowance of 20% to produce a high-level estimated cost of £1.1m.

In April 2025, an Options Assessment Report was put together by Geo-rope (Geotechnical and Rope Access Solutions) and was presented to the Environmental, Development and Infrastructure Committee in September 2025 after the options put forward by the consultants were reviewed by Officers and a shortlist of options for further consideration was produced. The costs of these range from £6.5m to £10m.

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee agreed that the existing budget allocation of £1.1m be used to progress the next phase of detailed business case development required to provide a recommended option with a further and more highly developed budget estimate and outline delivery programme.

Strategic Development Frameworks – Road Network Considerations

Strategic growth has been proposed within LDP2 at 2 locations within Argyll and Bute where there is the capacity to accommodate such growth: Helensburgh and Lomond, and the Oban area.

The Helensburgh and Lomond Area contains the strategically important A82 trunk road which provides lifeline access to the rest of Argyll, the Inner and Outer Hebridean Islands as well as the North West Highlands via the A83 and A85. A further artery into this area is the A814 which is a local road, with part of this being the responsibility of West Dunbartonshire Council. The pinch points identified in this paper of particular relevance to the HSDF are the A82 southbound between Arden and Stonneymollen roundabouts, and the A814.

The Oban area requires improved access to key markets and lifeline services is critically important to the region as without this businesses and population may relocate out of the area if they feel that their access routes are not suitable, fit for purpose or resilient enough. These issues have been raised through PLDP2, the Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 consultation process, and through the Rural Growth Deal. Actions required are:

- Trunk Road safety, resilience and access to markets – addressing A85 pinch points – Transport Scotland have noted delays in delivering the new roundabout access to Dunbeg, which remains the responsibility of the developer and the Council

- Intra-regional network critical to the rural area's economy and community resilience

Discussions have previously taken place with regard to a potential Development Road for Oban, as identified within LDP2. However it is understood that, despite the pressure identified in this paper, this does not fit with current Transport Scotland priorities. Other pinch points identified of particular relevance are those in the A82 and A85 on the connecting route from Glasgow.

Local Place Plans – Summary of Transport Issues Raised

Luing

Notes that the Isle of Luing ferry is operated by Argyll and Bute with challenges being in relation to affordability and timetable restriction. The mainland bus does not co-ordinate with the ferry service. There is no island bus service. Luing's size lends itself to walking and cycling.

Cove and Kilcreggan

Notes threats to the pier and ferry services (owned by Argyll and Bute Council) that underpin Kilcreggan's role as the local transport hub, limited active travel, and parking problems. Would like to see more frequent bus service and alignment of bus and ferry times, as well as electrification and reduction in car dependence.

Ford (awaiting validation)

No transport issues raised

Gigha (awaiting validation)

Notes that the island is currently served by a 12 vehicle capacity ferry and that new and improved jetty facilities and replacement ferry are due within 5 years, which will have double the vehicle capacity (this is currently subject to consultation [Consultation events for Gigha ferry infrastructure improvements](#))

Helensburgh (awaiting validation)

Helensburgh Local Place Plan includes “Getting About” as one of 6 key themes within the LPP. This relates to *“a connected network of active travel routes, removing obstacles, prioritising pedestrians and linking to public transport. Parking to access the town centre, provide for visitors, and connect to public transport. Space for coach parking is essential to encourage tourism.”*

The community wishes to see the following recommendations prioritised:

- Establishing a network of active travel routes connecting to public transport to enable commuting and leisure options for both the community and visitors.
- Setting aside enough parking provision for buses, cars, vans and motorbikes to enable spaces to be available for the community, workers and visitors, encouraging shopping locally and visiting the town’s attractions.

Within this theme 4 proposals have been put forward:

Maintain roads and consider additional measures to ensure safety of all users – The Community Council supports the idea of introducing a standard 20 mph speed limit throughout the residential areas, leaving the A814, A818, and West Montrose Street at 30 for commuting routes. The crossing from the Academy to Morrisons gives cause for concern for safety and more traffic calming measures are sought. Traffic calming measures are also sought at the road passing through Colquhoun Square.

Car, campervan and coach parking, EV charging, and public transport facilities to be improved – The LPP sets out that there is a lack of coach parking near the town centre and no facility for camper vans, as well as limited EV charging provision in town. The LPP considers that EV charging points should be allocated in all new build housing projects – this is covered within LDP2 Policy 34, as well as being embedded in Building Standards.

Develop a network of Active Travel routes across the town and improve signage – the LPP would like to see a network of Active Travel paths developed in and around the town as well as better signage. The current investment and progress on Active Travel routes within the area is outlined in the Active Travel section of the Topic Paper.

Improve accessibility through upgrading and repair of pavements and dropped kerbs.

Transport is also mentioned within the Climate Change Adaptation theme where it is noted that *“road traffic along the A82 and A83 trunk roads and the local A814 is*

increasingly disrupted by weather events driven by climate change". It is further noted that *"local train services are particularly fragile"*.

The Helensburgh LPP would like to see *"Replacement driveways and other areas of hard standing to require planning permission and must have as a condition a fast-draining permeable surface."* A requirement to this effect is already in place for some hard surfaces - [Lay a hard surface outside your house - mygov.scot](#)

Additional Information

[HSDF Transport Baseline](#)

Summary of Engagement

Following engagement with internal council departments (Roads and Economic Development), the following agencies and groups were invited to comment on the first draft Topic Paper between 12th August 2025 and 24th September 2025:

- Transport Scotland
- HITRANS
- SPT
- Network Rail
- Scotrail
- CMAL
- Calmac
- Sustrans
- Highlands and Islands Airports
- Hebridean Air Services
- West Coast Motors
- Citylink
- Garelochhead Coaches
- Islay Coaches

Transport Scotland responded in September 2025 noting gaps in the information provided. Following these points being addressed, a further draft and then a final draft were sent to Transport Scotland in December 2025 and January 2026 respectively.

Transport Scotland provided a formal response on 21st January 2026 confirming they consider this Topic Paper to be sufficient and in accordance with LDP Guidance policies 13 and 18.

Network Rail responded in September 2025 with suggestions for further inclusions, which have been addressed herein.

Copies of the responses will be incorporated within the final Evidence Report submission.

No comments were received from the other agencies / organisations.

Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan

Spatial Strategy

LDP3 will be informed by an appropriate and effective Transport Appraisal, undertaken in line with Transport Scotland guidance and the recently published DPTAG. This strategy will take into consideration (and build on) the issues set out within this Evidence Report Topic Paper, as well as the information gathered throughout the preparation of our Local Transport Strategy. Detailed discussions on the nature and scale of an appraisal can be undertaken with Transport Scotland as the Council gathers its evidence and then moves forward past the Gatecheck. Other key transport stakeholders will also be engaged during this process.

The Transport Appraisal work for each of the Helensburgh and Oban Strategic Development Frameworks (SDF's) are expected to be carried out during 2026 (while the LDP3 evidence gathering and Gate Check processes are ongoing). It is therefore expected that these will precede the LDP3 Transport Appraisal workstream which would likely start from 2027 (but may be later depending on the outcome of Gate Check). The SDF Transport Appraisal work will therefore provide initial focused studies in the Helensburgh and Oban areas which will be joined up by the LDP3 Transport Appraisal, primarily geographically, but also should any other gaps be identified in discussion with Transport Scotland.

The Transport Strategy, and the resultant spatial strategy, will take into account the national, regional and local plans and strategies referenced throughout this paper, and must be deliverable with identifiable potential funding pathways.

The private car remains the dominant mode of transport across Argyll and Bute. In line with national policy (NPF4 Policy 13), LDP3 will aim to prioritise locations for future development that can be accessed by sustainable modes. This will be in particular relation to the Strategic Development Framework's in the Helensburgh and Oban areas, where work is ongoing to identify land for strategic growth in areas where active travel and public transport modes can be prioritised. For the Helensburgh Strategic Development Framework this involves a joined-up approach with HMNB Clyde.

Throughout not only the SDF projects but also the remainder of Argyll and Bute, the application of the sustainable travel and sustainable investment hierarchies (NTS2) will be balanced with other factors including environmental factors and the outcomes of the Local Living analysis (see Topic Paper 08) through which we will consider the varying settlement patterns to inform a spatial strategy which reflects the particular characteristics and challenges faced by each place. The spatial strategy will require to consider the fragility of public transport options to rural and island locations, as well as journey times. This will include the potential impact that major future developments may have on existing ferry services, and as part of the wider appraisal of effects on the strategic transport network.

Active Travel

Proposed active travel route provision by both Transport Scotland and Argyll and Bute Council have been listed in the Active Travel section. All are relevant to development of the LDP3 spatial strategy but those of particular relevance to proposed strategic development areas are:

- The Helensburgh – Cardross – Dumbarton Cyclepath
- The Helensburgh-Garelochhead Cycleway
- The A85 active travel route from Connel to Dunbeg, which is under investigation by Transport Scotland (STPR2 Recommendation 37)

Bus and Rail Networks

The Sustainable Travel to Stations Strategy (STtS) notes that, not only has a focus on car parking has overshadowed improving the active travel experience, integrating bus travel to stations has been similarly overlooked with only a few positive exceptions. Network Rail have recommended that Argyll and Bute Council look to ensure that routes to stations are accessible and sustainable, including for school pupils. This will affect both the Helensburgh and Oban Strategic Development Frameworks, although Network Rail

suggested a particular focus should be on the link from Oban Railway Station to the ferry terminal.

Additionally, Network Rail are currently working on a Rural Strategy that will help to identify what is required to increase patronage on the West Highland Line.

There is a need to provide better public transport to HMNB Clyde, either through the creation of a new station at Shandon, re-establishment of passenger access to the West Highland line at Craighendran, or through an enhanced public bus service.

Development of these options, alongside the HSDF work, will inform the LDP3 through an infrastructure first approach.

Ferries and Ports

Oban plays a key role as a nodal gateway to the islands for commerce, residents and tourists. STPR2 (Recommendation 41) identifies a potential fixed link between Mull and the mainland. This would have significant implications on the Proposed Plan, with the potential to improve reliability, connectivity, capacity and travel times, but with a potential detrimental impact of increased vehicular traffic on the island's single track roads.

SPTR2 Recommendation 42 is for investment in port infrastructure to support vessel renewal and replacement, and progressive decarbonisation. Transport Scotland have advised that planning authorities (and developers) are expected to carefully appraise any potential impact that major future developments may have on existing ferry services. This will be taken into account through the forthcoming Transport Appraisal as required.

The Scottish Government's Infrastructure Investment Plan commits to providing grants to fund operators (but other than local authorities) for improvements to piers and harbours. This includes a proposed project at Kennacraig, and an Oban Masterplan.

Roads

Whilst the sustainable travel and sustainable investment hierarchies will be applied throughout the development of the LDP3 spatial strategy, the strategic nature of the Development Frameworks (Helensburgh and Oban areas) is likely to also require upgrades to the roads network.

HSDF and HMNB Clyde Proposed Expansion –

From the evidence presented in this Topic Paper, a pinch point can clearly be seen southbound on the A82 in the afternoons around the Arden roundabout. The INRIX data presented shows that an increase of almost **107%** can occur between an 8am and a 3pm southbound journey on this stretch of road in August.

Planning appeal reference (DPEA) PPA-002-2021 for land at Pier Road, Ben Lomond Way and Old Luss Road, known as West Riverside and Woodbank House, Balloch, against the decision by Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority included a Planning Condition by the Reporter to widen the A811 (W) approach between Stoneymollan Roundabout and Ballochloan Roundabout to allow for the creation of a 3.5m wide left-hand slip lane. This was in order to offset the proposed increased traffic flow. However no Planning Condition or Developer Contributions were required for the A82. Note - in June 2025, this decision was recalled by the Scottish Government and the final decision is due be made by Ministers in due course.

The above pressure point, with the potential to be exacerbated should development be allowed at West Riverside and Woodbank House, is such that upgrades to the A82 need to be considered as part of the HSDF work and forthcoming Transport Appraisal for this.

OSDF –

Various strategic infrastructure requirements were identified in LDP2 (being I4001 to I4006). The following issues will require to be reviewed throughout the OSDF work and the Transport Appraisal.

- A85 pinch points
- Re-routing of A85 around Oban (Oban Development Road)
- Roundabout at Dunbeg

Other Pinch Points-

Other pinch points on Argyll and Bute's strategic road network include the A83 Rest and Be Thankful (STPR2 Recommendation 29) and A82 Tarbet to Inverernan (which is already being progressed by Transport Scotland as confirmed by email on 24th July 2024). Accident hotspots on the trunk road have been identified within the Collisions section of the paper.

However the Council notes that many of our rural island and peninsular communities are entirely reliant on Local Authority roads for local connectivity and these communities will be largely excluded from investment via STPR2. For example, the A816 as a key route between the main towns on Oban and Lochgilphead, requires between £6.5 and £10m of funding to fix the road following the landslide in October 2023.

Additionally, as set out in this paper, the condition of the road network in Argyll and Bute is far poorer than the Scottish average, with over double the percentage of total roads being in red condition compared to Scotland as a whole. A report to Committee in March 2025 set out that the Council has approximately £122M of backlog maintenance, whereas the Council has only been able to allocate £10million to the roads capital programme for 2025/26 (£2million of this being for Storm Eowyn recovery).

The importance of local roads but the poor condition of them (alongside lack of public transport options for rural communities), mean barriers to growth in rural areas.

Developer Contributions

Circular 4/2025 sets out that LDPs and delivery programmes should be based on an integrated infrastructure first approach. Plans should:

- be informed by evidence on infrastructure capacity, condition, needs and deliverability within the plan area, including cross boundary infrastructure;
- set out the infrastructure requirements to deliver the spatial strategy, informed by the evidence base, identifying the infrastructure priorities, and where, how, when and by whom they will be delivered; and
- indicate the type, level (or method of calculation) and location of the financial or in-kind contributions, and the types of development from which they will be required.

LDP2 Policy 48 (Developer Contributions) notes that “Given the low volume and dispersed nature of development activity across Argyll and Bute there are only limited circumstances where, the Council will expect developer contributions from development proposals.” However, given the proposed strategic development within the Helensburgh and Oban areas, the NPF4 requirement for an Infrastructure First approach, and the issues outlined in this paper, careful consideration will require to be given to Developer Contributions requirements in LDP3. It is expected that the ongoing work of the two Strategic Development Frameworks will identify infrastructure upgrades required, and this will inform policy.

Policies

LDP3 policies which will be effected by the evidence summarised in this paper will be in relation to:

- Active Travel
- Public Transport
- EV Charging
- Parking
- Roads
- Developer Contributions