

Topic Paper 11: Local Living and Design, Quality and Place

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

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

- Section 15(5) The principal physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district; and the principal purposes for which the land is used.
- Section 15(2A) A statement of the planning authority's policies and proposals as to the provision of public conveniences
- Section 15(2B) A statement of the planning authority's policies and proposals as to the provision of water refill locations.

NPF4 requirements for LDP:

Policy 14: Design, Quality and Place

LDPs should be place-based and created in line with the Place Principle. The spatial strategy should be underpinned by the six qualities of successful places. LDPs should provide clear expectations for design, quality and place taking account of the local context, characteristics and connectivity of the area. They should also identify where more detailed design guidance is expected, for example, by way of design frameworks, briefs, masterplans and design codes.

Planning authorities should use the Place Standard tool in the preparation of LDPs and design guidance to engage with communities and other stakeholders. They should also where relevant promote its use in early design discussions on planning applications.

Policy 15: Local Living and 20-Minute Neighbourhoods

LDP's should support local living, including 20-minute neighbourhoods within settlements, through the spatial strategy, associated site briefs and masterplans. The approach should take into account the local context, consider the varying settlement patterns and reflect the particular characteristics and challenges faced by each place. Communities and businesses will have an important role to play in informing this, helping to strengthen local living through their engagement with the planning system.

Links to Evidence:

National

- [National Planning Framework 4 \(Scottish Government, 2023\)](#)
- [Local Living and 20 minute neighbourhoods: planning guidance \(Scottish Government, 2024\)](#)
- [Creating Places A policy statement on architecture and place for Scotland \(Scottish Government, 2013\)](#)
- [Place and Wellbeing Outcomes \(Improvement Service\)](#)
- [Improvement Service & Public Health Scotland – Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme Dunoon Project Town 2022-2024](#)
- [The Place Principle \(Scottish Government, 2019\)](#)
- [Climate Xchange & Ramboll's 20 Minute Neighbourhoods in a Scottish Context \(2021\)](#)
- [HITRANS/Sustrans Living Well Locally: 20 Minute Communities in the Highlands and Islands \(HITRANS/Sustrans, Nick Wright Planning, 2022\)](#)

Local

- [Argyll and Bute Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2024 – 2034](#)
- [Community Action Planning | Argyll and Bute Council](#)

- [Argyll and Bute Sustainable Design Guidance \(x4 + Coll and Tiree\)](#)
- [Argyll and Bute Council – Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans \(found within link\)](#)
- [Argyll and Bute Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy](#)
- [Argyll and Bute Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy: a 20 Minute Neighbourhood Rapid Scoping Assessment](#)
- [Argyll and Bute Local Living Report \(Appendix 1\)](#)

Datasets

- [How Good is Your Place?](#) (Argyll and Bute Council, 2019)
- Place Standard Tool Engagement (Argyll and Bute Council, 2026) (results to be published prior to formal submission of Evidence Report)
- [Find out what young people think is good and what needs improved in Lochgilphead! \(Aspiring Places, 2025\)](#)
- [Find out what young people think is good and what needs improved in Oban! \(Aspiring Places, 2025\)](#)
- [Find out what young people think is good and what needs improved in Rothesay! \(Aspiring Places, 2025\)](#)
- [Find out what young people think is good and what needs improved in Tarbert! \(Aspiring Places, 2025\)](#)
- [Find out what young people think is good and what needs improved in Tobermory! \(Aspiring Places, 2025\)](#)
- [The Scottish Living Locally Data Portal](#) (Scottish Government, 2022)
- [Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation](#) (Scottish Government, 2020)
- [Scottish Water: Find My Nearest Tap](#)
- Bus timetables – West Coast Motors, Garelochhead Coaches, First, Islay Coaches, Citylink, D.A. & A.J. Maclean (used in the Local Living project)

Summary of Evidence

Introduction

Design, Quality and Place and Local living are considered in this topic paper. Both topics are linked through placemaking and creating, safe, sustainable and high-quality places, and ensuring that all residents are able to meet their daily needs.

The Council's adopted LDP2 aligns with the principles of the Scottish Government by ensuring that new development is well designed and supports sustainable living. The Scottish Government and Argyll and Bute Council have both declared a climate and housing emergency.

Appendix 1 provides further detail on how local living, and 20-minute neighbourhoods where applicable, have been considered in Argyll and Bute. The appendix provides a high-level overview of the Facilities and Amenities available across defined network areas. During the stages of mapping, it was clear that many of the larger settlements and populations of scale act as hubs for the key services and facilities across the local authority area. Therefore, network areas have been created around primary school catchment areas. Mapping is included as part of the report

The concept of local living, and design, quality and place are cross cutting through a number of policies. The policies highlighted below are particularly relevant when considering local living and place:

Topic 01: Climate Change

Topic 04: Historic Assets and Places

Topic 05: Vacant and Derelict Land

Topic 07: Transport

Topic 09: Housing

Topic 10: Infrastructure

Topic 11: Green and Blue Infrastructure

Topic 14: Economy, Culture, Creativity and Community Wealth Building

Topic 15: Town Centres and Retail

Topic 19: Rural Development and Tourism

NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

Design Quality and Place

National Planning Framework 4 Annex D – Six Qualities of Place

Annex D of NPF4 sets out the six qualities to create successful places. These are:

1. Healthy: Supporting the prioritisation of women's safety and improving physical and mental health.
2. Pleasant: Supporting attractive natural and built space
3. Connected: Supporting well connected networks that make moving around easy and reduce car dependency
4. Distinctive: Supporting attention to detail of local architectural styles and natural landscapes to be interpreted into designs to reinforce identity
5. Sustainable: Supporting the efficient use of resources that will allow people to live, play, work and stay in their area, ensuring climate resilience and integrating nature positive biodiversity solutions
6. Adaptable: Supporting commitment to investing in the long-term value of buildings, streets and spaces by allowing for flexibility so that they can meet the changing needs and accommodate different uses over time

The annex also provides further guidance on how to apply these qualities to create successful places. This includes using the Place Standard Tool (PST) as an engagement tool to consider and assess the quality of new and existing places. As part of the engagement strategy for the Evidence Report, a public consultation using the tool was

used to gain opinions on how residents feel about the places they live, work and play. Further detail on the engagement, as well as previous PST engagements are provided in the topic section below.

Creating Places: A policy statement on architecture and place for Scotland

In 2013, the Scottish Government produced a statement setting out their position on architecture and place. The policies, at the time of the publication of the statement, were considered material planning considerations. The statement focuses on the relationship between architecture and place, helping support high-quality, sustainable places which contribute to national outcomes. Policies within the document include:

- Investment: decisions informed by place
- Developing our potential
- Design for a low carbon economy
- Cultural connections
- Engagement and empowerment

Place and Wellbeing Outcomes

The Place and Wellbeing Outcomes provide a consistent and comprehensive focus for where place impacts on the wellbeing of people and the planet. The tool can be found on the Improvement Service website and was developed through the Place and Wellbeing Collaborative. These include representatives from the Improvement Service, Public Health Scotland, Directors of Public Health, Heads of Planning, COSLA, and Health Improvement Managers. Scotland faces reducing life expectancy, a climate crisis and worsening inequalities. The Place and Wellbeing Outcomes are five categories that every place needs to consider creating communities that stay healthy and thrive: **Movement, Spaces, Resources, Civic and Stewardship.**

Figure 1 provides more context on the five categories, including areas that can be improved to increase health and wellbeing in Scotland. By using a comprehensive and consistent set of outcomes, it can help reduce Scotland's significant inequalities and ensure that all areas of Scotland use a consistent approach in decision-making to contribute to happier, healthier places.



Figure 1: Place and Wellbeing Outcomes

The three principles of the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes include:

- Equitable outcomes for all
- Achieving net zero, sustainability and biodiversity
- Supporting the system

Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme

The Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme aimed to enhance community wellbeing in Scotland by adopting a place-based approach to reduce health inequalities and improve communities' quality of life. One of the project towns featured in the programme includes Dunoon. Dunoon is one of the largest, main towns in the Argyll and Bute Council, though suffers with high pockets of deprivation, including some of the most deprived areas in Scotland, according to [SIMD data](#).

The programme ran from 2022-2024 with the aim of identifying those people most impacted by inequalities and what they needed from their place, in order to support data-led decision making. The project found that 24% of Dunoon's population lives in the most deprived SIMD quintile, which is significantly higher than the Argyll and Bute average of 8.7%. The study also identified health, crime and employment inequality indicators were higher than average. Key findings from the programme are listed below:

- People in Dunoon are living fewer years in good health than in comparable areas in Scotland. The death rate for ages 15-44 is almost twice the rate as the Argyll and Bute average.
- 22% of children in the town live in poverty, higher than the average of 17% across Argyll and Bute.
- Universal credit, out of work benefit claims and personal independence payment rates are markedly higher, indicating sustained economic and health pressures
- Whilst the overall crime rate is decreasing, the figure remains higher than the Scottish and Argyll and Bute average.

Place Principle

The Place Principle was adopted by The Scottish Government and COSLA to overcome organisational and sectoral boundaries, by improving collaboration, community involvement, improve the impact of combined energy, resources and investment. It aims to promote a shared understanding of place, emphasising the need for a collaborative approach to place's services and assets to achieve better outcomes for communities. It requires all people responsible for providing services and looking after assets to work and plan together with communities, to improve lives, support inclusive and sustainable economic growth and create more successful places.

LOCAL POLICY CONTEXT

Argyll and Bute Council – Place Standard Assessment

Two Place Standard Tool engagements by Argyll and Bute Council have been completed within the last two Local Development Plan periods, to better understand residents and visitors' perception of places within Argyll and Bute. The first engagement was completed in 2019, and provided a detailed analysis on a settlement level, with comments on what communities had to say on what is good within their area, as well as identifying areas that require improvement.

The Place Standard Tool engagement session completed in 2026 follows a similar format, asking people to score the 14 themes from 1 to 7, with comments welcomed on what is good and what can be improved in settlements. The 2026 engagement ran for a shorter time period therefore is less comprehensive in terms of level of results and settlements covered. However, by using a similar methodology, the engagements can be analysed against each other to see if there are reoccurring trends between the two time periods. The engagements also allow for a comparison to people's perception of place prior to and after the Covid-19 pandemic, and if there has been any shift with opinions on themes such as access to the natural environment.

A summary of each PST engagement and a comparative analysis between the two are detailed below.

How Good is Your Place?

In 2019, Argyll and Bute Council's Community Planning Partnership published the results of a Place Standard Tool engagement they undertook asking residents to score the settlement they live, work or play in. The survey ran from May 2019 – October 2019 and received 1588 responses, across 76 settlements across Argyll and Bute. The total number of settlements includes responses within Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority boundary, such as Arrochar and Lochgoilhead. Helensburgh had the largest number of respondents with 172, followed by Oban (132), Dunoon (108) and Campbeltown (100). Some settlements, for example Loch Awe, returned a single

response. The results of those settlements with a single response were still recorded, with the caveat that these responses were viewed within the context of the engagement with an understanding that they may not represent the full views of the community.

The engagement identified Moving Around, Public Transport and Work and Local economy as the lowest ranked themes across the local authority area. Conversely, natural space scored the highest, followed by feeling safe and identity and belonging. A breakdown of the average score per theme is noted in figure 2.

Place Standard Tool Theme	Average Score
Natural Space	6.00
Feeling Safe	5.92
Identity and Belonging	5.16
Streets and Spaces	4.60
Social Contact	4.34
Play and Recreation	4.31
Care and Maintenance	4.26
Facilities and Amenities	4.06
Influence and Control	4.01
Housing and Community	3.88
Traffic and Parking	3.88
Work and Local Economy	3.57
Moving Around	3.43
Public Transport	3.40

Figure 2: Average score of 14 themes in the PST (How Good is Your Place, 2019)

Despite the engagement receiving a variety of responses from urban, rural and remote rural settlements, much of the perceived problems remained the same across the board. For example, Helensburgh, Dunoon and Campbeltown all identified work and the local economy as one of the key issues, which was identified as one of the most common issues across all responses.

A full summary of the tool results are broken down to settlement level and are found [here](#).

2026 Place Standard Tool Engagement

An area-wide engagement on people's opinions of place has been carried out using the Place Standard Tool (PST) The engagement ran from March 16th 2026 – April 30th 2026 asking respondents for their scores and comments across the 14 themes of the tool. This engagement was run in a similar style to the previous engagement to allow for some comparative analysis. However, settlements outwith the planning authority area, including those in Loch Lomond and The National Park authority, were excluded for this engagement.

This follows the work which had been completed through the '*How good is your place?*' project completed by Community Planning Partnership in 2019. The engagement allows for an assessment of any potential change in of communities feeling and sense of their place post-pandemic. In the previous engagement completed in 2019, the themes of natural space, feeling safe, identity and sense of place and social contact came out with the highest scores, needing the least improvement when considering Argyll and Bute as a whole.

A total of 146 responses to the survey were received, with the town of Helensburgh providing the largest number of respondents with 29. A breakdown on the number of respondents per Local Living Network Area, and Administrative Areas are detailed below.

Local Living Network Area	Number of Respondents
Bute	6
Campbeltown	15
Cardross	2
Coll	0
Colonsay	1
Dalmally/Taynuilt	10
Dunbeg	1
Dunoon	7

Local Living Network Area	Number of Respondents
Helensburgh	29
Inveraray	6
Islay/Jura	3
Lochgilphead	12
Lochnell, Strath of Appin, Barcaldine	11
Oban	15
Rosneath Peninsula	15
South Mull	4
Tarbert	2
Tighnabruaich	1
Tiree	0
Tobermory	6

Figure 3: Number of respondents by local living network area in Argyll and Bute

Administrative Area	Number of Respondents
Bute and Cowal	16
Helensburgh and Lomond	46
Mid Argyll and Kintyre	36
Oban, Lorn, and the Isles	46

Figure 4: Number of respondents by administrative area in Argyll and Bute

The response, in comparison to the 2019 survey, had a much fewer number of respondents, and therefore when reviewing the data this should be accounted for. In all settlements, scores are not representative of how the entire community feel, however, larger sample sizes may provide some opinion on the issues within each settlement and community. Therefore, feedback has been retained and considered as part of the overall analysis.

The engagement identified Feeling Safe as the strongest theme, with an average score of 5.17 out of 7 across all responses. Natural Space and Identity and Belonging make up the top three highest scoring themes.

In terms of lowest average scores, Influence and Sense of Control was the lowest ranked at 3.39. Work and Local Economy and Public Transport also scored poorly. Figure 5 shows each of the themes average score across the entire engagement.

Place Standard Tool Theme	Average Score
Feeling Safe	5.17
Natural Space	4.92
Identity and Belonging	4.71
Social Contact	4.66
Streets and Spaces	4.24
Housing and Community	4.14
Facilities and Amenities	4.09
Care and Maintenance	3.92
Traffic and Parking	3.80
Play and Recreation	3.69
Moving Around	3.67
Public Transport	3.64
Work and Local Economy	3.59
Influence and Sense of Control	3.39

Figure 5: Average score of 14 themes in the PST (Place Standard Engagement, 2026)

In a cross comparison with the 2019 survey, the average range between all scores is slightly less in the 2026 survey, ranging from 5.17 in the highest theme to 3.39 at the lowest.

Between the two PST engagements, the COVID-19 pandemic led to people spending more time in the places that they live, which may have improved their connection with the local environment, including reliance on key community spaces and nearby amenities. Identity and Belonging, Feeling Safe and Natural Space all scored high in both the 2019 and 2026 engagement, however, scored less in the most recent engagement. This could be attributed to more volatile scoring at settlement level, though the consensus is still that these particular categories scored positively despite a slight drop off.

Much of the scoring remained consistent in the areas deemed poor in the 2019 survey. Scoring of Public Transport, Moving Around and Work and Local Economy remained poor across both surveys, though there was marginal improvement in all these categories in the 2026 responses.

The comparison also showed themes with the greatest variance in scoring. For example, Natural Space, despite scoring highly in the most recent engagement relative to other themes, saw a drop in the average scoring of 1.08, from 6.00 to 4.92. Figure 6 shows the categories with the largest change in scoring between the 2019 and 2026 engagement sessions. The change in scoring for Influence and Sense of Control was significant enough for the theme to rank the lowest out of all 14 scored in the 2026 engagement.

Place Theme	Standard	2019 score	2026 score	Change
Natural Space		6.00	4.92	-1.08
Feeling Safe		5.92	5.17	-0.75
Influence and Sense of Control		4.01	3.39	-0.62

Figure 6: Three themes with largest change in scores between 2019-2026

A radar chart showing the change in scoring across all themes between the 2019 and 2026 engagement is shown in figure 7.

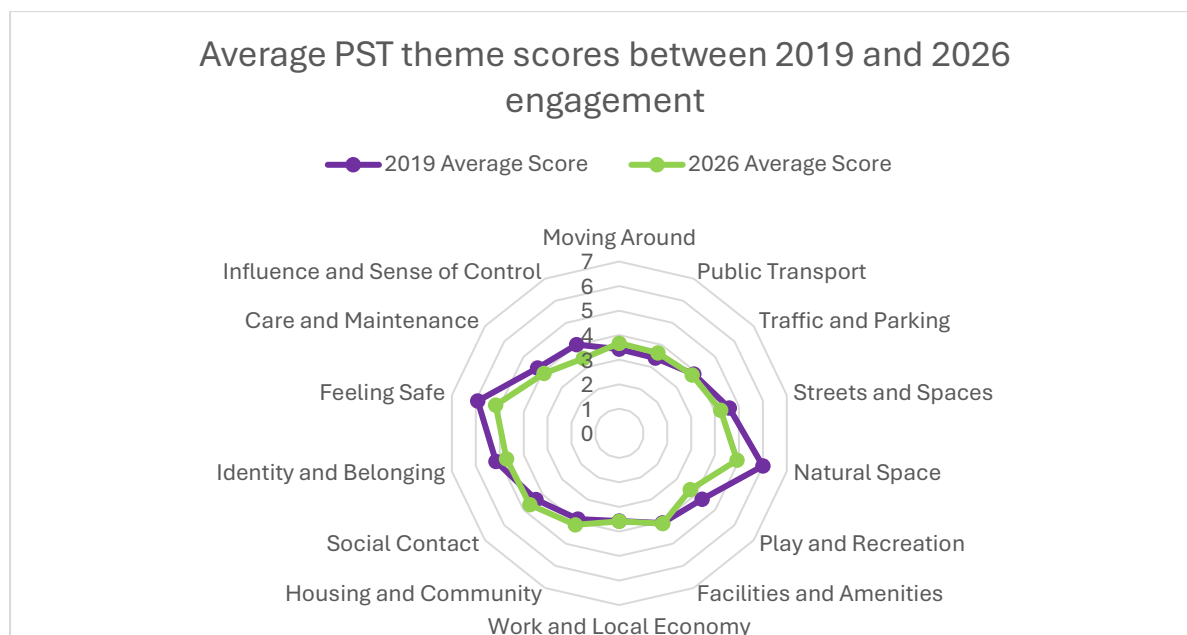


Figure 7: Average PST theme scores between 2019 and 2026 engagement

During the participation of the engagement, respondents were asked, but not required, to provide additional information relating to their age, gender, ethnicity and other protected characteristics. This was to ensure that the engagement reached as many respondents from all backgrounds as possible.

A full report on the number of responses, including information relating to settlements, demographics, and the audience reached will be available for the submission of the Evidence Report to the Scottish Government.

The 2026 provided an insight into the key areas for improvement across Argyll and Bute, and the trend that many of poorly scored themes from the previous engagement remained low in the second round of engagement is apparent. Communities in Argyll and Bute would like to see improvement in local public transport provision and safer roads, and greater access to employment opportunities to help support the fragile rural economy.

Aspiring Places

Aspiring Places is a digital space for community groups and organisations throughout the local authority area to share information on the projects they would like to carry out. A number of proposals have come through as part of the project, which can be found in the [Project Bank](#).

In 2024, the Argyll and Bute Council Aspiring Places programme worked with S3 students across high schools in the Council area, engaging with them on what young people think is good and what needs improved within towns across Argyll and Bute using the PST. In total, 5 towns were surveyed: Lochgilphead, Oban, Rothesay, Tarbert and Tobermory. Each group of students used a different methodology to score the standardised PST, including identifying places in their community that were good, ok, and bad, or identified a specific place in the town to score. Each of the results showed a varying degree of opinion, however, themes which typically scored high across the board include moving around, feeling safe and natural space. Traffic and parking was the key area identified as needing improvement across all of the five engagement sessions. Despite specifically engaging with a younger audience, many of the same concerns arise within each of the themes, such as traffic being a major concern.

Summary of engagements

From all PST engagements undertaken by the local authority, key areas for improvement were identified, including access to public transport, increasing the number of jobs and boosting the local economy, improving the housing stock in Argyll and Bute and providing opportunities to improve communities influence and sense of control. Three of the identified themes, housing, community and wellbeing, and transport, were also identified in the Argyll and Bute Outcome Improvement Plan, highlighting the importance of these issues to residents. The ABOIP, along with LDP3 seek to address PST themes for improvement in the area.

Argyll and Bute Outcome Improvement Plan (ABOIP)

Community Planning Partnerships (CPP) have a statutory obligation to create a 10-year Outcomes Improvement Plan under the provisions of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. The plan has been developed through community engagement, requiring residents to choose three key themes for the ABOIP to tackle. Implemented in 2024, the current ABOIP covers the area from 2024-2034 and replaces the 2013-2023

outcome improvement plan. The engagement with the public to establish key priorities was done in the period post-Covid to ascertain the issues the community deal with after a global pandemic, current cost-of-living crisis and a climate emergency.

As part of the engagement, responses totalled over 2000 and identified three key issues that communities feel are affecting their place. These are:

- Transport Infrastructure
- Housing
- Community Wellbeing

As aforementioned, transport and housing ranked as key themes that residents feel require improvement. This follows a similar outcome as that of the 2019 engagement, highlighting that they are still important issues that the Council can help tackle.

Within the ABOIP, Argyll and Bute CPP set out the steps that they will take to improve both transport infrastructure and housing in the area. To improve transport infrastructure will be achieved by enhancing community and accessibility within the region. Improving access and ensuring availability of housing stock can help improve

Transport Infrastructure

- Working with partners and communities to create a reliable, accessible, affordable and integrated public transport system for Argyll and Bute
- Working with partners and communities to ensure a resilient, well-maintained and safe road and active travel network across Argyll and Bute
- Working with partners to enhance provision of bespoke transport services for those experiencing the greatest inequality in ease of movement
- Contributing to local and national strategic transport plans to ensure the needs of communities experiencing inequalities in transport infrastructure are acknowledged and addressed
- Co-producing partners' plans for elements relating specifically to tackling inequalities in transport infrastructure

Housing

- Working in effective partnerships to ensure that everyone living and working in Argyll and Bute has access to affordable, warm homes of the right size, in the right place with access to the services, amenities and economic opportunities that communities need to thrive
- Ensuring that plans and policies are informed by communities' needs and aspirations, especially those facing the greatest inequalities in housing related outcomes
- Working with partners and communities to ensure that everyone has the ability to have a say in shaping what housing looks like for their place
- Reviewing partners' land and property assets to ensure resources are used effectively to support the provision of housing for key workers and others
- Working together to identify opportunities for the prevention of homelessness through early intervention

The planning authority will take into consideration the actions led by the CPP to help improve transport provision and access to housing through allocations.

Community Action Planning

The local planning authority supports community-led action planning as a respected method for helping community representatives identify issues and needs in their communities. The process allows for the clear identification of issues and for communities to address on their own directly, or through partnerships with other agencies. A range of organisations (often led by community development trusts) in some communities have successfully used or completed a Community Action Planning (CAP) process since 2008. A SWOT analysis of the main themes are highlighted in figure 8. The dates of preparation of the CAP's should be taken into context when reading.

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Access to high quality natural environment	Limited access to reliable, public transport links	Opportunity for community-led environmental projects, such as food growing, crofting and forestry management	Development of additional housing in remote rural areas can increase pressure on established infrastructure
Number of local businesses which play an important role in smaller communities	Reliable ferry service for island communities	Development and expansion of existing and new community facilities	Waste and litter affecting natural assets
Sense of place and community togetherness	Lack of safe, active travel routes for walking and cycling	Create micro-generation energy schemes using natural assets	Lack of sustainable transport links can hinder economic growth opportunities in remote-rural communities
Historic assets and heritage	Poor mobile and internet connectivity	Provide educational opportunities for communities to gain better understanding of sustainable development	Increasing ageing population and net outward migration to urban areas
Access to cultural and community	Access to varied, affordable housing	Make full use of current community	Overtourism limiting access to

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
venues, enhancing community wellbeing	stock for young families and the older population	assets to promote a range of meetings, services and facilities open to residents	additional housing stock and affecting maintenance of historic and natural assets
	Issues relating to geographical access limit economic growth	Regeneration of town centres or settlements	Climate change is increasing the risk of flooding in coastal communities
			Access to immediate healthcare

Figure 8: SWOT analysis of CAP key themes

Details of all existing CAP processes in Argyll and Bute Council, including those focusing on place and placemaking, can be found [here](#).

Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan 2

Section 4.0 of the current adopted Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan 2 provides the policy context for design and placemaking principles for all proposals. LDP2 recognises that good quality places are successful and sustainable, low carbon, natural and resilient, well-connected and places people want to live, work and visit. Policy 05 – Design and Placemaking, Policy 08 – Sustainable Siting, Policy 09 – Sustainable Design, and Policy 10 – Design: All Development are the main policies directly retaining to design, quality and place. Policy 11 – Conversions and Change of Use and Policy 12 – Shopfront Design, help promote good design principles in specific proposals in Argyll and Bute. Together, along with the sustainable design guidance detailed below, they set out the overarching principles and key aspects to be considered for successful placemaking.

Alongside the relevant design policies, the planning authority also has six published sustainable design guidance documents for all new developments, including those specifically related to housing in Argyll and Bute. These were published in 2006.

These guides promote good quality, sustainable and contemporary building design and where appropriate innovative solution, suited to the distinctive landscapes, towns and villages of Argyll and Bute.

The general sustainable design guidance for Argyll has been split into four documents:

- [Topic 1 - Small Scale Housing Development](#)
- [Topic 2 - Larger Housing Development](#)
- [Topic 3 - Working with Argyll and Bute's Built Heritage](#)
- [Topic 4 - Case Studies - Sustainable Materials and Technologies](#)

Each of the documents contain the key principles of quality design and sustainable development. They provide points to consider when siting and designing buildings to minimise landscape impact, or townscape setting. The guidance helps to develop a common sustainable design framework that can be referred to in the decision-making process. A summary of each of the guidance documents are provided below:

Topic 1 – Small scale housing development

- Individual new houses and developments of up to 5 houses in the countryside
- Asks applicants to consider the landscape and built setting.
- Notes that Argyll and Bute consists of an “*intricate relationship of different landscape and settlement types that give the area its distinctive character, and it is important that this is not lost as development is introduced*”.
- Sets out siting and design considerations to successfully integrate rural development into the landscape
- Discusses appropriate materials, proportion and scale for rural locations

Topic 2 - Larger housing development

- Extending existing settlements / forming standalone settlements
- Notes that “in order for rural towns within Argyll and Bute to develop further, new buildings and infrastructure will need to relate well to their landscape setting” and advises against piecemeal development
- Provides detail on sustainable access and linkage between existing settlements and new housing schemes and use buildings to shape urban spaces
- Emphasises the importance of neighbourhood character, with details on orientation and siting of new developments
- Gives context for applicants to consider smaller scale components such as building line, massing, proportion and appropriate selection of materials

Topic 3 – Working with Argyll and Bute’s built heritage

- Developments and buildings within distinct urban areas, villages and towns, including the alteration of listed buildings and developments in conservation areas
- Work to retrofit and sympathetically enhance existing buildings, including preservation, where possible
- Balance conservation with modern needs ensuring sustainability goals are met without detrimentally impacting the building’s historic value or integrity
- Explains good urban design with regards to shopfronts in conservation areas

Topic 4 – Case studies - sustainable materials and technology

- Provides good examples of sustainable, successful design proposals in Argyll and Bute and across Scotland
- Highlights the importance of making efficient use of resources available
- Incorporate renewable energy solutions where appropriate to exploit the areas natural resources and contribute to the local economy

- Proposals should minimise environmental impact and support healthy places, creating well-ventilated spaces and access to open, external space where practical

Specific sustainable guidance documents have been produced for the Islands of [Coll](#) and [Tiree](#). More information relating to these specific design guides can be found in Topic Paper 03: Landscape.

Although all 6 documents are around 20 years old, the landscapes of Coll and Tiree have not changed significantly, and the general principle of how to integrate good design into the landscape remains. There would however be merit in refreshing the design guidance in order to align with current policy and provide up to date case studies.

Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans

Argyll and Bute Council currently has 7 approved Conservation Area Appraisals that cover the following 8 conservation areas. These Conservation Area Appraisals and management plans identify areas of special interest and the changing needs of each area. The plans were produced to be used by applicants, agents, and the planning service to help manage change in a conservation area and support development proposals which enhance the character of these areas. The following areas have an established appraisal or management plan that should be taken into account for proposals situated within the respective conservation areas.

- Dunoon
- Rothesay (Town Centre Character Area only)
- Helensburgh Upper
- Helensburgh Hill House
- Lochgilphead
- Inveraray
- Easdale
- Ellenabeich

These appraisals are still in draft format for other conservation areas in Argyll and Bute:

- Campbeltown – this appraisal dates from 2009 and would require a full review
- Helensburgh Town Centre – this was drafted in 2020 and could potentially be taken forward for Member approval, subject to minor updates
- Tarbert (public consultation complete - expected to be presented to PPSL for approval in June 2026)

NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

Scottish Government Local Living planning guidance

Scottish Government Planning Guidance: Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods, published Spring 2024, provides detailed guidance on assisting and supporting planning authorities, communities, businesses and others who have key roles in helping to deliver local living and 20-minute neighbourhoods. The idea of local living and 20-minute neighbourhoods is to create compact and connected communities where people can meet most of their daily needs within a reasonable walking, wheeling or cycling distance from their homes.

The guidance presents the Local Living Framework as a consistent structure on how local living can be supported in a place. The framework takes inspiration from the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes and Place Standard Tool, which are inter-related resources structured about how place impacts on health and wellbeing. Figure 9 shows the framework and how local living fits into the context and themes from both the place and wellbeing outcomes and the PST.



Figure 9: Local Living Framework, which aligns with the Place Standard Tool and the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes (Scot Gov, 2024)

The Government acknowledge that a large proportion of Scotland's residents live in areas deemed as rural or remote rural and therefore may struggle to adopt the concept of 20-minute neighbourhoods. In rural circumstances, it is important to consider the relationships between settlements as well as the individual place.

The guidance is clear that rural and island areas require flexible and innovative approaches to support living well locally and that where populations are distributed more widely, a networked approach can support local living within settlements. The guidance provides linkage to NPF4's emphasis on climate action, reducing inequalities, and enhancing health and well-being. It promotes local living as a key spatial principle and provides detailed advice for planning authorities and communities.



Figure 10: Scottish Government example of a network approach to local living in rural and island communities

The key takeaway from the guidance was to create an innovative assessment of local liveability throughout the whole of Argyll and Bute which was flexible beyond the 20-minute walkability suggestions.

20 Minute Neighbourhoods in a Scottish Context

ClimateXChange conducted a study in 2021 on the adaptability of the 20-minute neighbourhood across Scotland, with how the concept could potentially be adapted for different settlement patterns, including in urban, rural and remote rural areas.

The baseline assessment shows that the majority of communities across Scotland have the required services and infrastructure to perform as 20-minute neighbourhoods in both urban and rural environments. However, in some instances, these services may not be of the quality or have the appropriate infrastructure in place and cannot perform as a 20-minute neighbourhood. The study concludes by making eight recommendations across policy, national and local delivery and further research.



Figure 11: Outcomes of a 20 minute neighbourhood (Climate XChange, 2021)

- Use the development of the 4th National Planning Framework to rationalise and coordinate the policy landscape to support delivery of the 20 minute neighbourhood concept.
- A greater emphasis on reducing private car journeys. This can be done through providing high-quality active travel infrastructure as part of reallocating space away from private cars to other modes, and via the reimagining of public transport to be more flexible in rural and urban settings.
- Defining concept, framework, and funding at a national level
- Defining local ambition, delivery, and community participation
- Further assessment on a number of demonstration areas, selected to ensure diversity of type of neighbourhood; including locations, current score across quantitative features and qualitative indicators, and levels of deprivation.
- A national survey on walkable distances and visual perceptions should be undertaken to nuance the 20 minute neighbourhoods' concept and help design guidance for implementation.
- Mapping to establish a detailed baseline which can be used to both support development of national and local plans and monitor national and local

outcomes. Review whether the Place Principle is being operationalised by Local Authorities, to identify barriers and mechanisms to overcome these.

The document highlighted key takeaways for rural local authorities, such as Argyll and Bute, including that qualitative scoring, such as community satisfaction was greater than qualitative scores (access to services). Furthermore, the term neighbourhood is not typically applicable to rural communities, as some of the neighbourhoods measured in the study would never act as a service hub, given low densities. The study also highlighted the stark contrast in walking distance to key services between urban and rural neighbourhoods. It is recognised that in rural areas that distance is only one barrier. Poorer public transport provision, more dangerous roads, and topography for active travel can all play a part in increasing travel times to these services. The report also emphasises the importance of community engagement in developing a 20-minute neighbourhood strategy, and that a one-size-fits-all model is not applicable to unique communities, such as remote rural settlements.

Living Well Locally: 20 Minute Communities in the Highlands and Islands

The Living Well Locally: 20 Minute Communities in the Highlands and Islands is a report published in June 2022 by HITRANS and Sustrans (now Walk, Wheel, Cycle Trust) around how the concept of a 20-minute neighbourhood can be adapted for rural and island communities across Scotland. The study looks at the concept of 20 minute neighbourhoods, some of the key policy and research relating to the topic, challenges of implementing the concept in rural and island settings, and the key features of 20 minute communities in the Highlands and Islands. One of the ideas to make the tool adaptable to areas in the islands and highlands is to re-name the concept to 20 minute “communities” rather than “neighbourhoods” which is considered to be more inclusive for rural settlements and has fewer urban connotations as a concept.

The study recognises that access to Facilities and Amenities in rural and remote-rural settlements requires long travel times, often by private car journeys, therefore the limit of a 20-minute walk is too strict to apply to the context of Highlands and Islands. As such, the concept of 20-minute communities looks at access to these services by not

only walking, but also by using sustainable transport, including public transport and cycling.

Some of the research referenced, including work by Lucy Styles referenced in the document, demonstrates how smaller rural settlements can work together spatially to create hubs where key services and facilities are located.

A case study example of how this approach could be implemented in Islay is presented in the report. Islay functions as a network of small villages rather than a single centre. Most of the island's residents are within reach of at least one village but the services on the island are unevenly distributed. However, the island's main settlement Bowmore acts as the main hub with the high school, hospital and other core services for the island located here. Bowmore is located centrally within the island, meaning the majority of residents can reach it within 30 minutes' drive. Though most of the main services are located in Bowmore, smaller settlements act as local functions, such as Port Ellen containing a primary school and a convenience store.

The case study concludes that to enable the local community to function as a network of rural 20 minute neighbourhoods, a number of investments are required, including:

- Essential facilities in each settlement, such as a community centre, play park and green space. If a shop or health centre is not viable, mobile provision may be appropriate.
- Safer walking and cycling infrastructure in and between settlements.
- A network of community and public transport.
- Strengthened support for local jobs and enterprise across the island, including improved digital connectivity.
- Continued investment in building affordable homes in villages.
- Continued improvements to mainland connections.

A map of how Islay could function as a 20 minute community is highlighted in figure 12. Islay demonstrates that in rural island contexts, 20 minute communities are best delivered through a connected network of settlements supported by transport, digital services and community-led infrastructure, rather than a single compact neighbourhood.

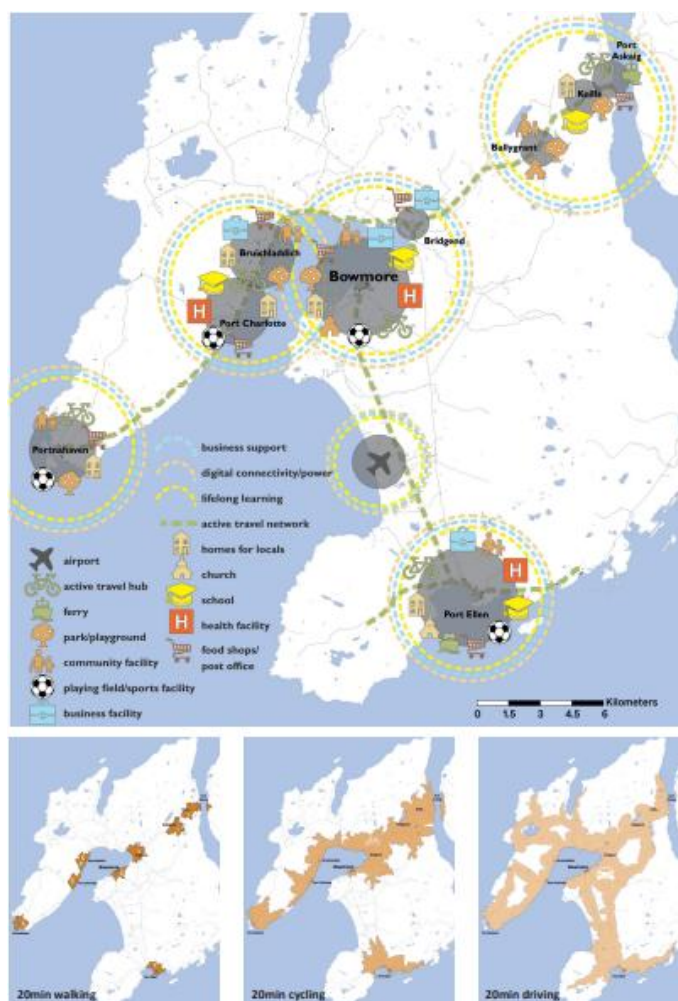


Figure 12: Map showing 20-minute communities in Islay, including travel times from walking, cycling and driving (SusTrans & HiTrans, 2022)

Scottish Living Locally Data Portal (SLLDP)

The Scottish Government, in association with Glasgow University, produced the SLLDP which is an interactive map that identifies whether residential properties across Scotland have access to 12 key local facilities. Data within the portal is available at postcode level and is aggregated to show the proportion of residential properties with access to each facility across each data zone. The 12 identified facilities are:

1. Healthy food retail
2. Public transport

3. High frequency public transport
4. Primary healthcare
5. Recreational resources
6. Primary school
7. Financial
8. Pharmacy
9. Accessible public open space
10. Social and Cultural
11. Eating establishments
12. Super-Fast Broadband

Argyll and Bute Council were unable to access the mapping and data and as such this is highlighted as an evidence gap. Should the planning authority be able to access the mapping, the scores will be taken into consideration for the preparation of LDP3.

Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)

The [Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation \(SIMD\)](#) is a relative measure of inequality across approximately 7,000 small areas, called data zones. It is a national approach to identify areas of multiple deprivation, and the tool is regularly used to inform the delivery of policy decision making. SIMD data covers seven categories: income, employment, health, education, housing, geographic access and crime. It should be noted that in rural areas, deprivation levels may be higher due to the natural constraints which restrict geographical access, as well as lower incomes than urban areas. Typically, rural areas often have lower crime rates relative to urban populations which positively effects the overall figure.

Many of top 20% of deprived areas in Argyll and Bute are situated in the larger towns and settlements, such as Campbeltown, Dunoon, Lochgilphead, Helensburgh, Rothesay

and Oban. These areas typically have the highest geographic access rank, though rank poorly in employment, income and crime. Of the 125 data zones located in Argyll and Bute, two are categorised as the top 5% most deprived areas in Scotland. These are:

- Dunoon (S01007366)
- Helensburgh East (S01007399)

However, based on an overall, area-wide assessment, Argyll and Bute is trending as having relatively low deprivation levels compared to other local authorities in Scotland. The mapping shows that Argyll and Bute has few data zones in the most 10-20% deprived nationally, though data zones which are classed in this category are more dispersed and less concentrated. Many of the data zones fall in the middle SIMD deciles, with more moderate scores across the board.

As of 2020, 19.1% of Argyll and Bute's population live in areas classed as more deprived (deciles 1 to 3). The majority of the population live in deciles 5 to 7, influenced largely by geographical access constraints which affect much of the planning authority population, due to dispersed settlement patterns. This means that many have limited access to services or longer journeys to work, healthcare and education. Argyll and Bute ranks as one of the worst local authorities for Scotland in the geographic access category.

The SIMD map shows that many of the socio-economic issues relate to accessibility, service availability and dispersed settlement patterns.

All data zones in Argyll and Bute have been collated and will help form the production of LDP3. Other chapters, including Topic 14: Economy, Culture, Creativity and Community Wealth Building refer to SIMD data.

THE LOCAL POLICY CONTEXT

Argyll and Bute Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy: a 20 Minute Neighbourhood Rapid Scoping Assessment

This report details the outcomes of a workshop in 2021 considering the impacts of the [Argyll and Bute Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy](#) (iRSS) on the wellbeing of the people who live in the area. The Argyll and Bute iRSS sets out the regional priorities for development in Argyll and Bute and provides a high-level, long-term vision for growth, investment and infrastructure up until 2050. The iRSS seeks to bring together existing Council strategies, such as LDP2 and the Economic Strategy, to form a holistic approach to development and growth in the region. Some of the key priorities set out in the iRSS include reversing depopulation, delivering sustainable economic growth and supporting community wealth building.

The Improvement Service's rapid scoping assessment covers the relevance of a 20 minute neighbourhood concept in a rural and island context. The report was carried out by the Improvement Service, in partnership with public health bodies and Argyll and Bute Councils planning department, focusing on dispersed settlements, rural mainland and island communities across the planning authority area. The assessment was driven by policy context, including NPF4, the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes and a need to re-think how spatial planning can support local living, reduce inequality and improve place-based outcomes.

The assessment found that an indicative Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) has the potential to deliver positive outcomes, through repopulation, economic development and improved connectivity, for example, through increased sustainable transport provision, but only if key challenges are addressed.

The report highlighted that the standard 20 minute neighbourhood model is not applicable in rural communities within Argyll and Bute and instead should be adapted into a network of local living hubs. The report recommended that growth should be focused in accessible settlements, improving public and community transport and strengthen the integration of health, inequality, and climate outcomes within spatial planning. Overall, the report emphasises that a coordinated investment and a tailored

approach to rural communities is essential for an RSS to successfully support sustainable communities and reduce inequality in the area.

Argyll and Bute Local Living Appendix

This report provides a representation of the services and facilities accessible to settlements and communities within Argyll and Bute. The general approach looks at all of Argyll and Bute (excluding the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park) providing a snapshot of how local living works in rural and remote rural areas.

The analysis will show areas that are successful in achieving local living, with adequate resources meeting the communities' daily needs. Conversely, the mapping provides context on communities where there are issues supporting accessibility to services to achieve local living. The overall aim of the report is to provide evidence to support decision-making. It is recognised that, due to the geography and sparse population within parts of the council area, local living aims need to be balanced with other policy considerations to positively enhance areas and support communities.

As set out in the guidance and other relevant core documents, there needs to be a degree of flexibility in applying the concept of 20-minute neighbourhoods and local living. The standard 800-metre buffer (10-minute walk) used in other analysis and studies is applicable to urban areas and larger settlements, however, is incredibly difficult to implement in rural and remote rural areas, as well as islands. Many of the settlements in Argyll and Bute are compact enough to walk around, however lack services and facilities to sustain local living. In addition, due to the limited viability of the walking between settlements in Argyll and Bute, the planning authority looked at the examples of creating networks, similar to the examples in the Scottish Government guidance and HITRANS/Sustrans Living Well Locally report and devised a methodology creating networks of population clusters. The methodology uses these network zones to provide analysis of under provisioned areas, as well as the networks that are performing well in a local living context. As walking distances beyond smaller settlements are challenging, the need to travel using public transport or a private car to reach services is the norm and

it is important to understand the distances people may have to travel for both essential and desirable services.

The network areas that have been adopted for this approach are listed below and are shown geographically in figure 14. Figure 15 provides mapping context of each of the network areas. These have been calculated using non-denominational primary school catchments, approximate travel time, and sustainable transport links to main settlements within the Local Authority Boundary. These network areas provide a general overview and are loosely defined, as it is expected many people may travel to other areas for their daily needs, particularly for larger, regional services or for a better-quality service.

Network Zone	Admin Area	Primary School Catchments
Cardross	HAL	Cardross
Helensburgh	HAL	Colgrain, John Logie Baird, Hermitage, Rhu
Rosneath Peninsula	HAL	Garelochhead, Rosneath, Kilcreggan
Dunoon	BAC	Dunoon, Kirn, Toward, Innellan, Sandbank, Strone
Rothesay	BAC	Rothesay/North Bute
Tighnabruaich	BAC	Tighnabruich, Kilmodan
Inveraray	MAKI	Furnace, Inveraray
Lochgilphead	MAKI	Lochgilphead, Ardrishaig, Tayvallich, Glassary,

		Kilmartin, Craignish, Achahoish
Tarbert	MAKI	Clachan, Tarbert
Campbeltown	MAKI	Castlehill, Drumlemble, Dalintober, Glenbarr, Carradale, Rhunahaorine, Gigha
Islay/Jura	MAKI	Islay/Jura
Colonsay	MAKI	Colonsay
Coll	OLI	Arinagour
Tiree	OLI	Tiree
Oban	OLI	Luing, Easdale, Kilninver, Rockfield, Park, Lismore,
Dalmally & Taynuilt	OLI	Dalmally, Bridge of Orchy, Taynuilt
Dunbeg	OLI	Dunbeg,
Lochnell, Strath of Appin, & Barcaldine	OLI	Lochnell, Strath of Appin, Barcaldine

South Mull	OLI	Iona, Buinessan, Lochdonhead
Tobermory	OLI	Tobermory, Dervaig, Ulva, Salen

Figure 14: Network areas by administrative area used for local living project

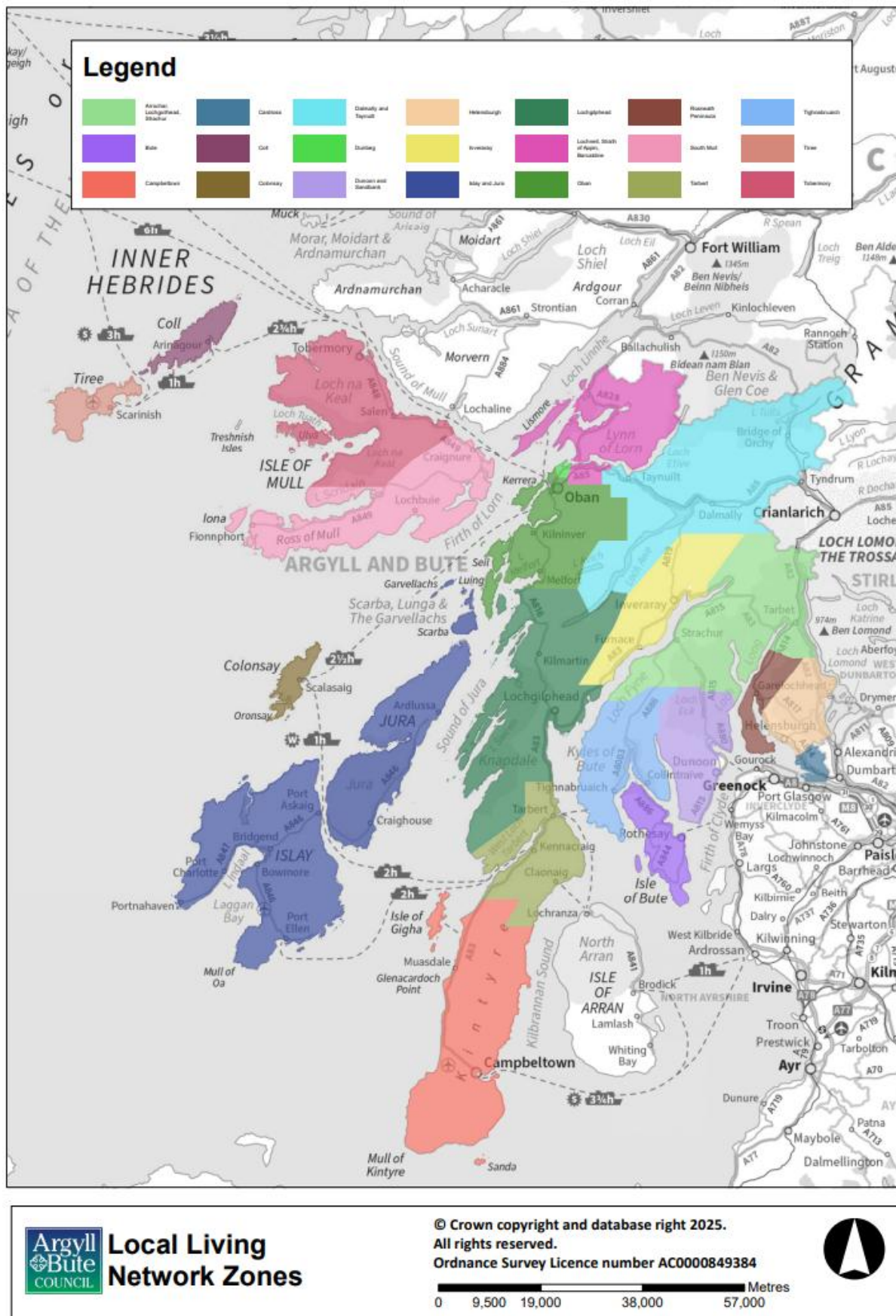


Figure 15: Map of local living network areas within Argyll and Bute

To report on each network area, the services and facilities related to local living have been split into five categories:

- Employment & Commercial
- Healthcare
- Education
- Leisure & Recreation
- Sustainable Transport

The full categorisation of the services can be found below in figure 16:

Employment & Commercial	Healthcare	Education	Leisure & Recreation	Sustainable Transport
Supermarket/Convenience Store/Specialist Food Store	GP Practice	Primary School	Open Space	Railway Station
Post Office	Dentist	High School	Play Space	Ferry Port
Employment Zone	Pharmacy	Nursery & Early Learning Childcare	Playing Field	Bus Stops
Town Centre Zone	Hospital		Community Centre/Hall	Cycle Routes
			Leisure Centre	Core Paths
			Golf Course	
			Allotment	
			Library	

Figure 16: Categorisation of services mapped and used in local living project

The report found that local living is incredibly difficult to achieve in remote rural areas due to the lack of services and facilities. The findings show that many of the main towns can sustain local living and the 20-minute neighbourhood concept can be applied, however, it is increasingly difficult for more remote rural communities. In addition, the mapping shows that whilst many communities do have access to public transport services, in most cases they are infrequent services, or are too expensive to use regularly, therefore, unable to support reliable transport to services and facilities in key populated areas to promote local living.

Note: Between the completion of the local living project and draft topic paper being produced, the Scottish Government announced a £2 bus fare cap in the highlands and islands, helping more people travel for less. This may, in turn, present people with a greater opportunity to use more affordable public transport to access key services across Argyll and Bute.

Many of the larger settlements act as regional hubs where smaller local communities feed into these towns, with many of the public transport routes feeding into the towns from remote rural areas. The towns often provide the highest quality and variety of services, from larger supermarkets to providing the main healthcare and education facilities for the regional or administrative area. An example of this is shown in figure 17, which provides the infographic for the Campbeltown network area.

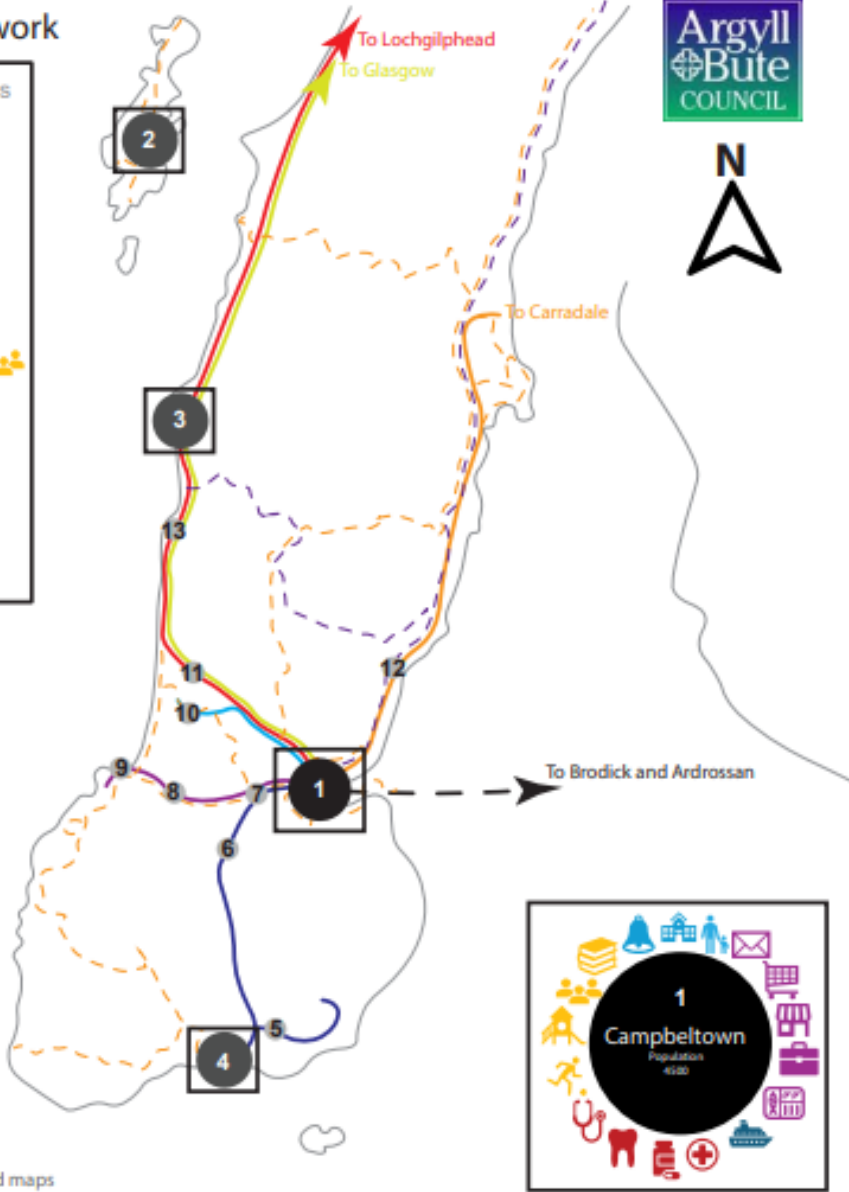
Campbeltown Network

- Villages/ Minor Settlements
- 5 Millpark
 - 6 Killeonan/Knocknaha
 - 7 Stewarton
 - 8 Drumlemble
 - 9 Machrihanish
 - 10 RAF Machrihanish
 - 11 Kilchenzie
 - 12 Peninver
 - 13 Bellochany

2 Ardmish

3 Glenbarr

4 Southend



Please note that annotated site features are indicative for general information only and do not replace the need for full and detailed maps

Legend

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Primary School | Employment Area | Community Hall/Centre | Key Settlement |
| High School | Hospital | Golf Course | Key Rural Settlement |
| Nursery/ ELC | GP | Sports Pitch | Village/ Minor Settlement |
| Post Office | Dentist | Leisure Centre | Bus Route 200,442 |
| Convenience Store | Pharmacy | Ferry Port | Bus Route 300,445 |
| Supermarket | Library | Train Station | Bus Route 443 |
| Speciality Food Store | Playpark | Core Path | Bus Route 444 |
| | | Cycle Network | Bus Route 449 |
| | | Ferry Routes | Bus Route 926 |
- If population not listed =<1000

Figure 17: Infographic example of Campbeltown network area showing services available in each settlement.

Ultimately, car dependency plays an important role in day-to-day lives in Argyll and Bute, and whilst the planning authority understands and recognises the importance of local living, including the promotion of sustainable travel, there is a lack of population density to sustain key Facilities and Amenities in all settlements. Therefore, similar to the conclusion of studies undertaken regarding local living in Argyll and Bute, larger, main towns and key rural settlements act as hubs for most residents to access the services set out in the report.

Appendix 1 provides an overview of each network area, including services available, active bus routes and an overview comparison between each area.

Strategic Development Frameworks

Strategic growth has been proposed in LDP2 at four locations within Argyll and Bute. The proposed expansion in Helensburgh and Oban is anticipated to be of significant scale in and around existing settlements. Two smaller strategic development frameworks are planned in island communities, specifically Bowmore on Islay and Tobermory of Mull.

With planned expansion in these areas, it is imperative that there are sufficient facilities and capacity in place to cope with the expected growth. The areas being considered are situated within close proximity to existing settlement areas, therefore, reduce the need for car travel and promote active and sustainable travel in line with the 20-minute neighbourhood concept.

Scottish Water public taps

There are eight Scottish water taps located within Argyll and Bute, located in the main towns of Dunoon, Helensburgh, Rothesay, Campbeltown, Tarbert, Lochgilphead, Inveraray and Oban. Scottish Water has published a map of all the locations in Scotland which can be found [here](#).

Currently, only mainland settlements have access to public water taps. Argyll and Bute Council's planning authority will liaise with Scottish Water as part of the evidence report

process to establish potential areas to increase the number of water taps in Argyll and Bute, specifically island communities.

Public Toilets

The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended) requires the local authority to review its public toilet provision. Mapping shows that many of the main towns in Argyll and Bute contain public toilets. Those in areas serviced by CalMac ferries can also make use of toilets located in ferry terminals. A map showing all the public toilets is shown below in figure 18. Each public toilet on the map is categorised by ownership. Not all toilets within Argyll and Bute are free to use, which may be a barrier to access for people living and visiting in Argyll and Bute.

The planning authority does not expect a requirement to increase provision, with a number of stakeholders already managing public toilets in both the key mainland settlements, and populated island communities.

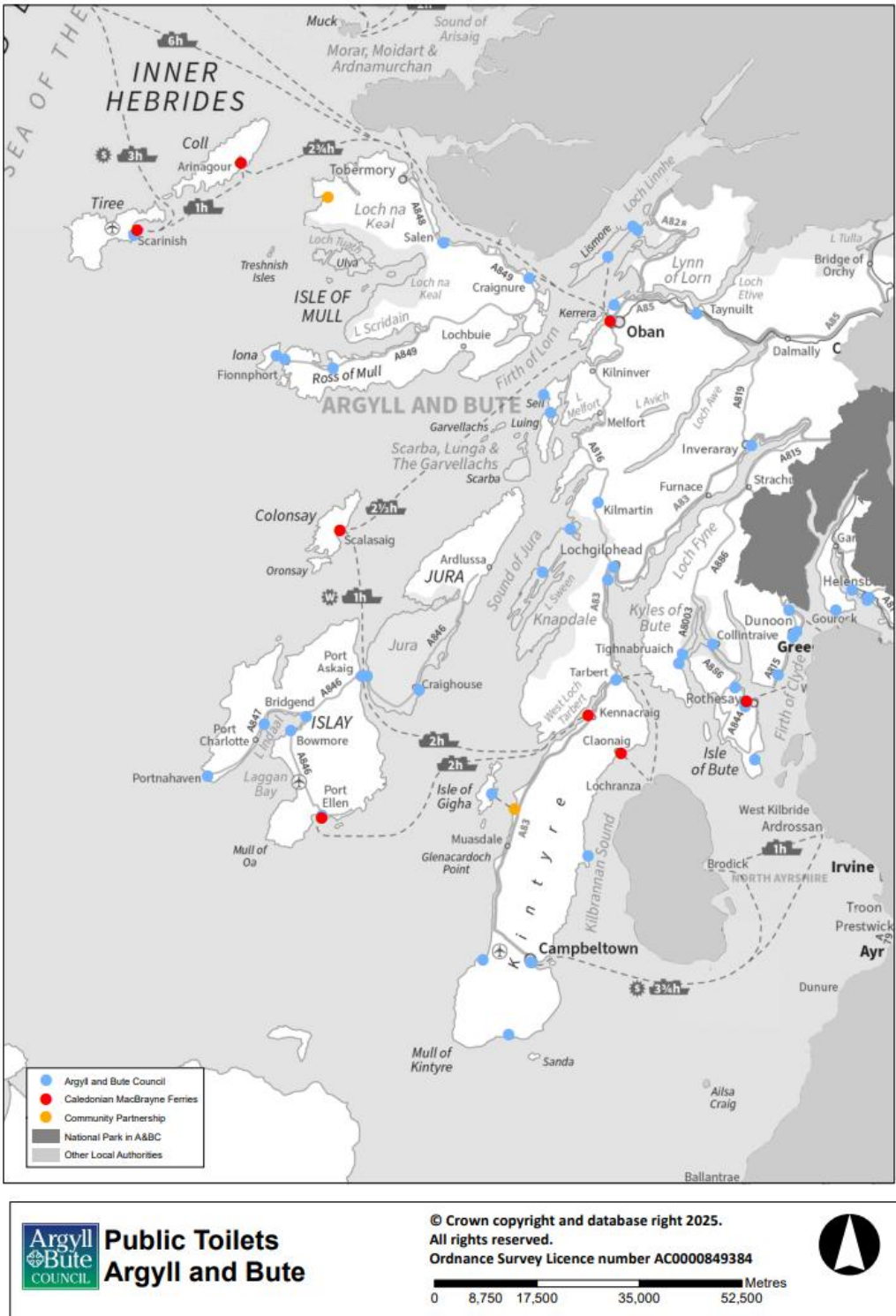


Figure 18: Map of public toilets, including ownership, in Argyll and Bute

Local Place Plans

Luing

There is no direct reference to local living or 20 minute neighbourhoods, however, the community projects outlined look to support a sustainable island community. Project 3.1 seeks to create a walking route to protect and celebrate Luing's unique cultural and natural heritage, with project 3.3 looking to address the climate crisis through making their community more resilient. Project 3.2 focuses on delivering homes in existing settlements, and projects 3.4 and 3.5 providing opportunities for community development and improving the local economy. All the proposals are situated in, or within proximity to settlements, helping to create local living communities.

Design principles are highlighted throughout with the key aim to sensitively design projects to minimise the impact on both the natural and cultural environment on the island.

Cove and Kilcreggan

The LPP highlights the need for sensitive development that follow flexible design guidelines within key sites, such as proposals in the heart of Kilcreggan village. Whilst there is no direct reference to local living and 20-minute neighbourhoods, the general vision and key actions seek to protect key assets which are identified in the local living appendix. These include, but are not limited to, the local pharmacy, local shops, community spaces and the primary schools located in the LPP area.

Furthermore, the LPP refers to the safeguarding of key public transport modes, such as the Kilcreggan Ferry, and improving economic sustainability in Kilcreggan village.

Ford (not yet validated)

The LPP provides context for the settlement of Ford, noting that it has lost key services and facilities over time, notably the school, hotel and bar, local shop and post office and more recently the church. Ford ranks in the lowest decile for access to services in the SIMD analysis for Argyll and Bute. The LPP also makes reference to the number of long car journeys required to reach key services, such as a convenience store.

As a result of the above, the LPP focuses on community projects within the settlement.

These include:

- A village hall available for both residents and the wider community
- A community that has access to services and events
- A well connected community, outward and forward with strong internal cohesion
- Improved community infrastructure including the creation of a village honesty shop.
- Access to green space and play space

All of the above proposals conform with the principle of local living and helping create sustainable communities.

There is no specific reference to design within the LPP.

Gigha

The LPP does not make reference to local living nor specifically mentions design.

Despite this, many of the issues the LPP seeks to tackle relate to island living and sustainable, well-connected communities. This includes improving digital connectivity on the island, retaining and enhancing cultural assets, and improving public transport infrastructure.

Helensburgh (not yet validated)

Helensburgh's draft Local Place Plan presents a number of proposals that conform with Policy 15: Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods of NPF4. A list of proposals within the LPP that are relevant to Policy 15 are detailed below:

- PROPOSAL 3: Manage density of development and protect Green Belt including Empress Fields
- PROPOSAL 4: Preserve and improve the biodiversity of Helensburgh's Green and Blue Spaces
- PROPOSAL 6: Identify and acquire sites for Growing Spaces
- PROPOSAL 7: Develop Helensburgh Pierhead Site as a Community and Leisure Space

- PROPOSAL 8: Regenerate Helensburgh Pier
- PROPOSAL 9: Develop policies to support independent retail and businesses in Helensburgh to maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of Helensburgh Town Centre
- PROPOSAL 10: Restore and enhance the historic streetscape of Helensburgh
- PROPOSAL 11: Save The Tower Arts Centre
- PROPOSAL 12: Develop Indoor Multi-Use Facilities
- PROPOSAL 13: Establish a Youth Centre for recreation, wrap-around care, health and wellbeing
- PROPOSAL 14: Build a permanent Skatepark on the Pierhead Site
- PROPOSAL 15: Improve and maintain Outdoor Sports and Play Areas
- PROPOSAL 16: Establish a Community Sports Centre and Educational Outdoor Learning Base at the old Hermitage Primary Annex
- PROPOSAL 17: Develop a Pump Track and Active Play Area at Kirkmichael, with Community Space
- PROPOSAL 18: Prioritise affordable housing and smaller housing units
- PROPOSAL 19: Developments should be sustainable and carbon neutral
- PROPOSAL 21: Maintain roads and consider additional measures to ensure safety of all users
- PROPOSAL 23: Develop a network of Active Travel routes across the town and improve signage
- PROPOSAL 24: Improve accessibility through upgrading and repair of pavements and dropped kerbs

Design and quality of place is also referenced within each of the proposals where the topic is relevant. The LPP identifies opportunities to manage design to improve the quality of the place, conserve existing historical assets and shop fronts, and promote sustainable travel through placemaking.

Summary of Engagement

From March 16th, 2026, to April 30th, 2026, the planning authority ran a Place Standard Tool engagement to inform the evidence report on key themes which are performing well, underperforming and need improvement, and to compare if there has been any significant change in the results from the previous engagement using the PST in 2019.

A summary of some of the key issues raised within the PST engagement is detailed below:

- Services within the area are becoming increasingly strained or are no longer available in some instances. Many participants would like to see an increased range and accessibility to services in Argyll and Bute.
- Increase the range and availability of housing stock, including affordable housing, and limit the number of short-term lets.
- Improve options for safe, accessible, active travel routes across Argyll and Bute.
- Public Transport options in the region are limited and could be improved by increasing the frequency across a number of routes
- Low levels of employment opportunities available. Work to expand employment opportunities, support new or small businesses, and support opportunities for digital infrastructure improvements to allow people to work remotely

A full report, including comments received during the engagement stage will be available before the submission of the Evidence Report to the Scottish Government.

Key agencies and stakeholders that were consulted but the Council received no response from are:

- NHS Highland (Argyll and Bute HSCP)
- Scottish Water

The Council remains committed to working collaboratively with key agencies and welcome any comments they may have during the public engagement stage.

Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan

LDP3 will need to consider to what extent Policy 14: Design, Quality and Place of NPF4 replace LDP2's existing design policies. Currently, NPF4's design policies focus on the wider placemaking with little consideration of detailed design. LDP2's existing policies focus on detailed design adding value beyond NPF4 policy 14. LDP2's policies may need amendment to align with the Place Principle, and the six qualities of a successful place whilst retaining more added value as it currently has with regard to design

LDP3's spatial strategy will be place-based and community-led local place plans will be considered in the preparation of the new plan.

LDP3 will have regard to Argyll and Bute's Outcome Improvement Plan and the three strategic priorities. The plan should consider how the spatial strategy can contribute to reducing these inequalities.

LDP2 has no defined local living policy. Consideration will be made as to whether a local living policy should be included in LDP3 that is aligned to Policy 15: Local Living and 20-minute neighbourhoods of NPF4. On the basis of the evidence set out within this Topic Paper and its Appendix, an LDP3 policy should not have strict requirements; however, it should reflect local context with regard to travel time and method of transport.

Evidence gathered shows that local living can be supported through a network or hub-based approach. Growth should continue to be prioritised in communities that are considered accessible or well-connected to other smaller settlements.

Engagement undertaken through the Place Standard Tool for the preparation of LDP3 identified that areas to improve within the area include public transport, work and local economy, and housing and community, whilst positive scores were recorded for natural environment, feeling safe and identity and belonging. Responses will be considered as to where improvements should be made and whether LDP3 can directly influence improvement within these areas.