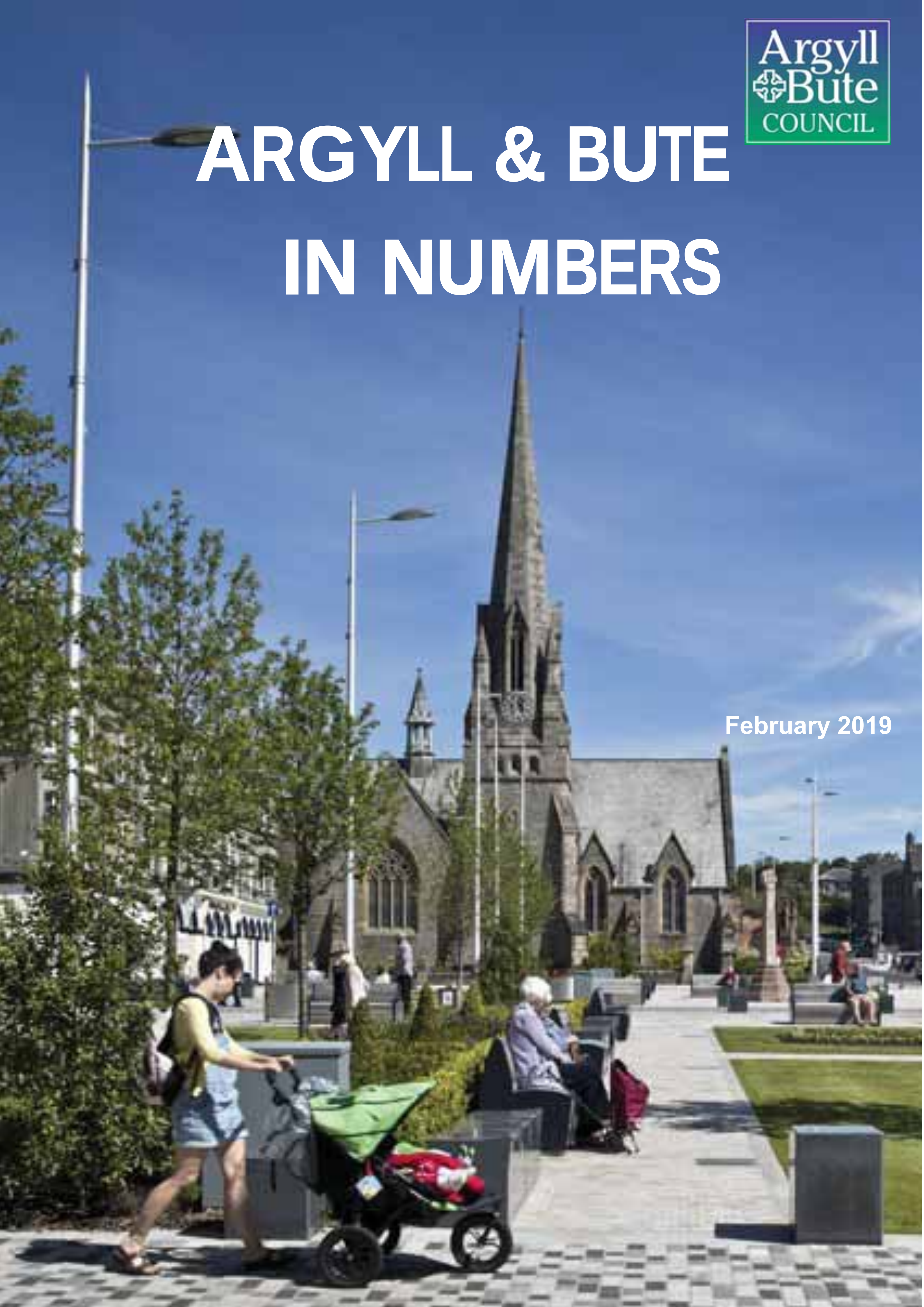
ARGYLL & BUTE IN NUMBERS

February 2019



A Rural Growth Deal for Argyll and Bute

Campbeltown New Quay

The council is committed to delivering a Rural Growth Deal for Argyll and Bute that involves all key stakeholders in developing a deal that can be supported by both the Scottish and UK Governments. The focus of the deal has to be delivering innovative and inclusive economic growth for Argyll and Bute.

The Rural Growth Deal will follow similar principles to the city deals either agreed or in development for other local authority areas in Scotland. The focus of the deal has to be on delivering innovative and inclusive economic growth for Argyll and Bute that will help stem population decline and deliver a prosperous future for our residents and our businesses.

Following discussions with the UK and Scottish Governments, we have developed a draft vision and key themes which we believe support examples of potentially transformational projects.

Areas for potential growth

- Food and drink exports
- Tourism
- Innovation (for example, marine science, renewable energy, aquaculture)
- Culture/sense of place (for example regeneration of our towns, history)

Areas where we need to develop

- Transport and infrastructure
- Skills
- Digital connectivity
- Accommodation
- Natural energy

88,100 total population
Population **declining**
1,700 EU nationals
25% of population is 65+

£558 average weekly wage
12.3% self employed
1.6% unemployment rate

94.7% of school leavers
go on to positive destinations

13% of houses ineffective
66.5% owner occupied
89.6% connected to fibre
28th among LAs for broadband

33% increase in visitors
£480m income from tourism
Over **4,000** employees

165,000ha afforestation
1/3 of land is woodland

595 aquaculture jobs
More than **£12m** in salaries
More than **£31m** GVA

£313m income from food & drink
820 businesses
3,995 employees
£124m Gross Value Added

Over **1GW** of operational and
consented renewables (2017)
Argyll and Bute Council has developed
a **Renewable Energy Action Plan (REAP)**

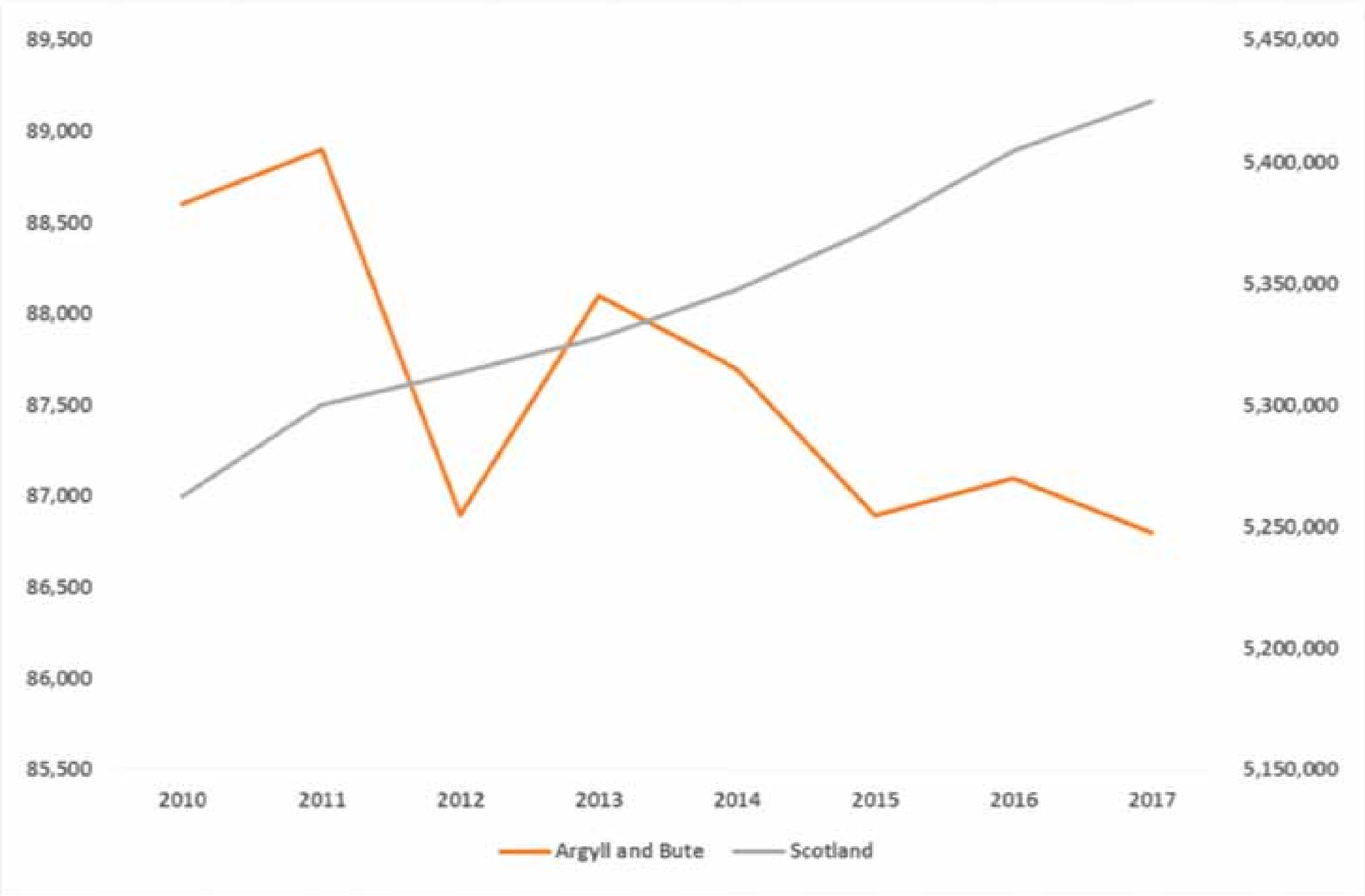
- Downward population trend
- 1,700 EU nationals
- Aging population


Colquhoun Square, Helensburgh

As can be seen in Figure 1, Argyll and Bute has a rapidly declining population – notably so from 2013 where the population was 88,100. This is in contrast to Scotland, where the population is increasing.

Recent research carried out using NOMIS shows Argyll's population dropping by over 1,000 in the five years to 2017. There was, however, a slight rise in 2016 which may be due to changes in the number of troops at Faslane, net in-migration from the rest of the UK and Argyll and Bute hosting Syrian refugee families on Bute. If no interventions are taken to halt the decline, and the trend holds true, Argyll and Bute is destined to continue to lose significant numbers of its population – perhaps another 1,000 over the next five years. Brexit may have a knock-on effect to this as there are currently 1,700 EU nationals living in Argyll and Bute.

Figure 1: Population Trends 2010 - 2017 (Nomis)



Part of this population loss can be put down to net migration. Net migration between 2015 and 2016 for 15-24 year olds from Argyll and Bute accounted for 191 individuals, with the highest number from the 19-19 age bracket. The majority of these are likely to be young people moving away to study and almost two thirds of these are young females. Conversely there are a significant number of individuals leaving Argyll and Bute in the higher age brackets. Some 203 individuals aged 70+ left Argyll and Bute, possibly to be nearer young family or into care. In the 80-84 age group, 74 individuals moved away from Argyll and Bute.

Despite this net migration by older people, Argyll and Bute has an ageing population with 25% of the population in the 65+ age group. However, as can be clearly seen in Figure 2, the largest percentage of the population is 8% (7,000 individuals) which is in the 50 to 54 age group. It is important to note that less than one percent of the population consists of babies less that one year old. Figure 3 clearly shows that this trend will worsen in the next decade.

Figure 2: Argyll and Bute age profile (National Records of Scotland)

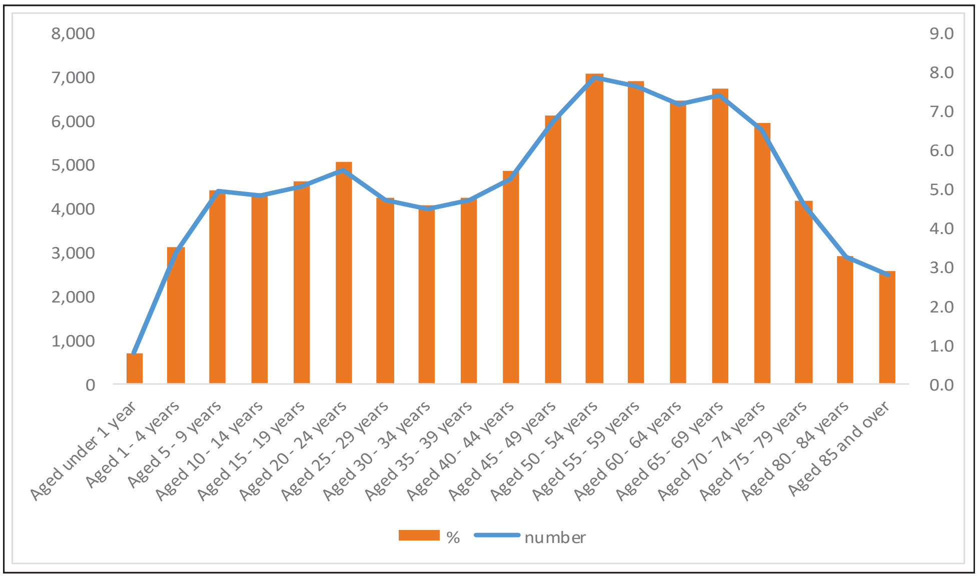
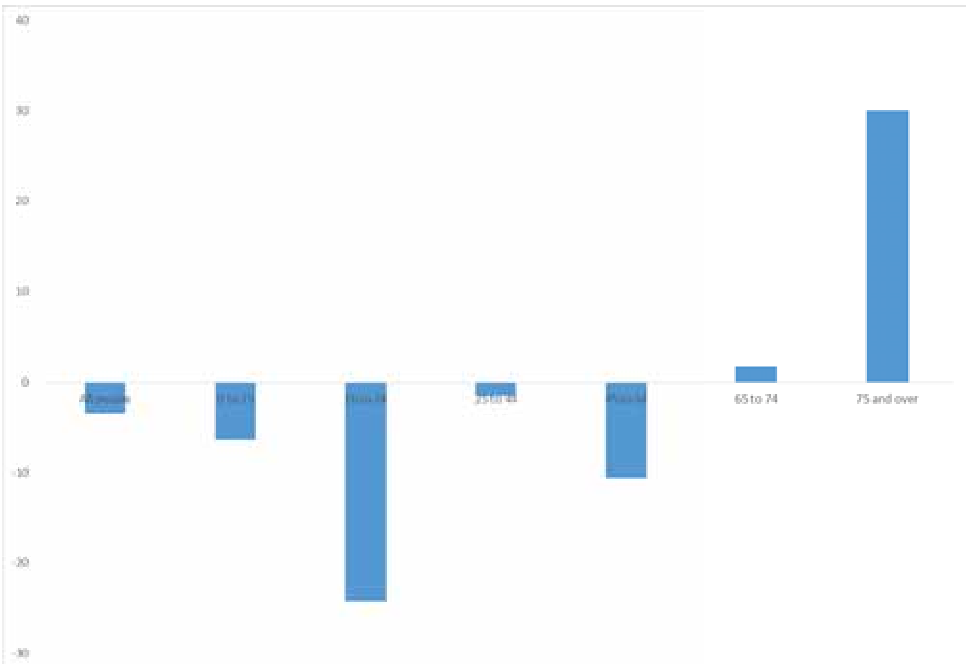


Figure 3: Predicted percentage population change by age group for Argyll and Bute between 2016 and 2026 (National Records of Scotland)



North Pier Pontoons, Oban

In common with Highlands and Islands (see Fig. 4 over), tourism is one of Argyll and Bute's most important sectors and has shown a 33% increase in visitor numbers (Fig. 5, over). In 2017 the total direct economic impact of tourism was £341,620,000, add to this the indirect economic impact of £138,030,000 to get a total of £479,650,000. The largest contributions to the economy within the sector comes from the accommodation (28.5%) and food and drink (16.4%), with the lowest being recreation (6%).

Recent trends show a slight drop in employment within this aggregated sector. However, the accommodation sector has shown a modest increase since 2016 of 1.4%, giving a total of 4,173 employees. The food and drink sector has shown a marked increase in employment of 5.7% with a total of 1,301 employees.

The greatest area of growth within the sector is that of visitors staying in non-serviced accommodation (self-catering), which grew by over 26%.

In response to the recent rise in marine tourism Argyll and Bute Council has developed waterfront developments throughout the area. These include new transit berthing facilities in Campbeltown and Oban, improved public realm in sea front towns and match-funding for improvements at Tarbert Harbour.

- 33% increase in visitor Numbers
- £480m economic impact
- Over 4,000 employees

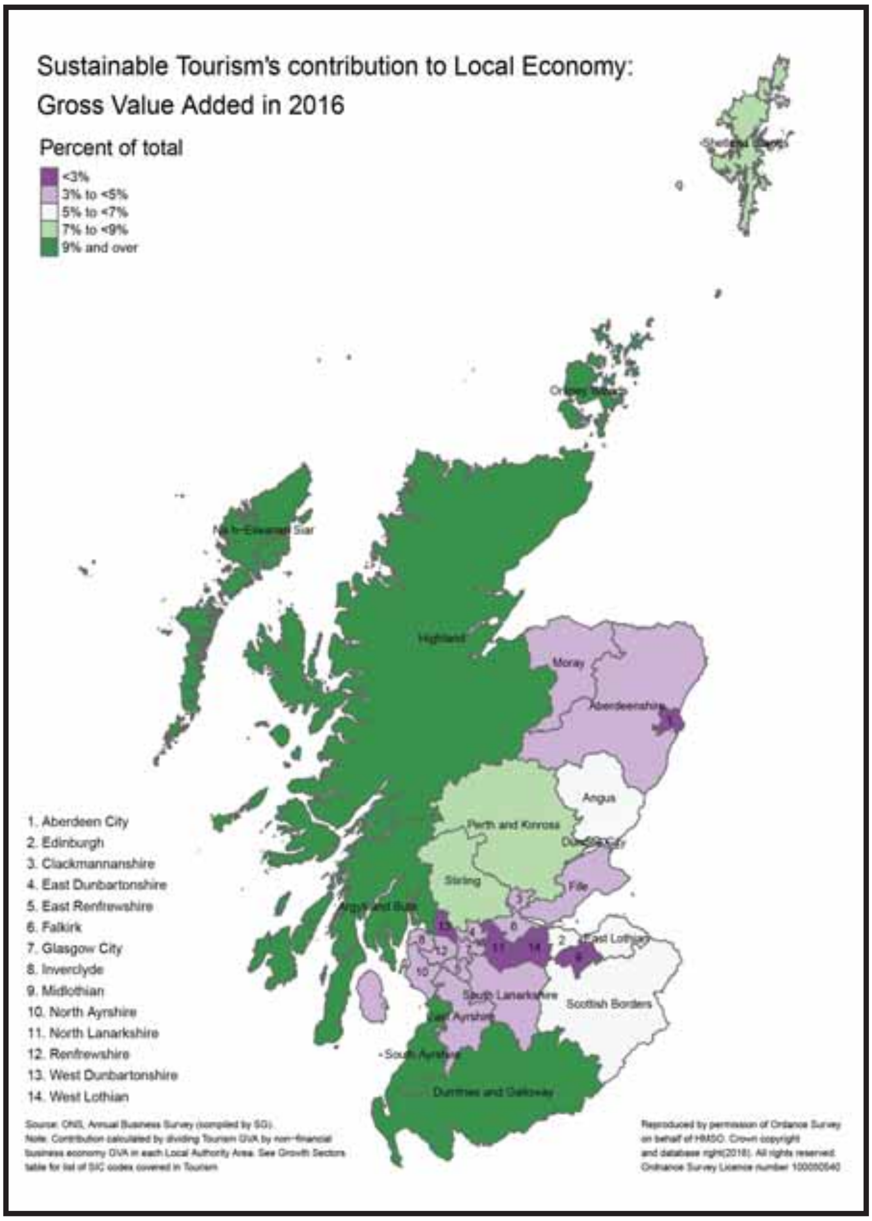


Fig. 4

Fig. 5: Visitor numbers in Argyll and Bute (National Records of Scotland)

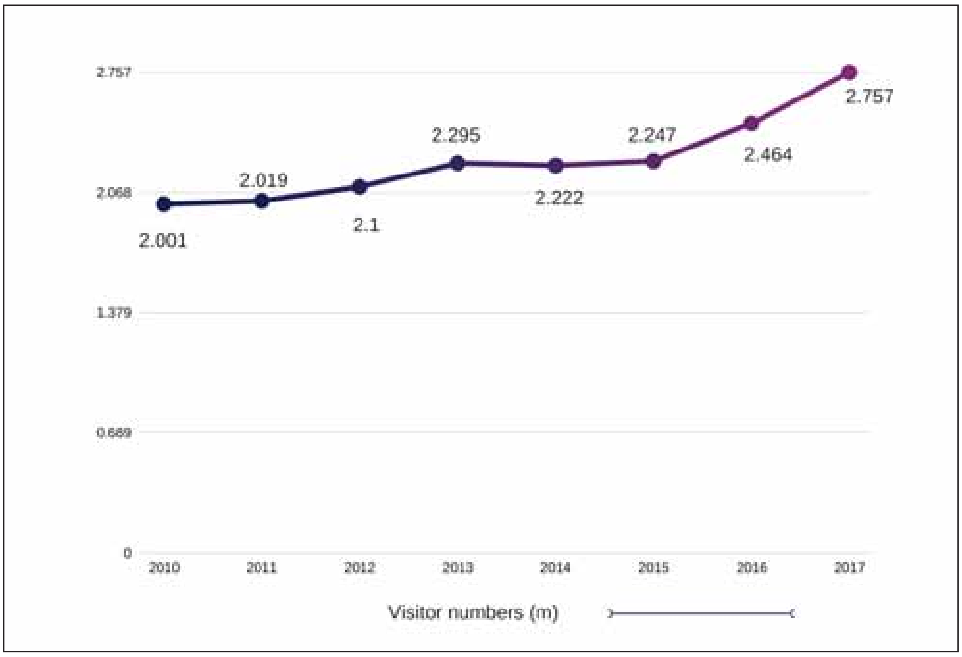


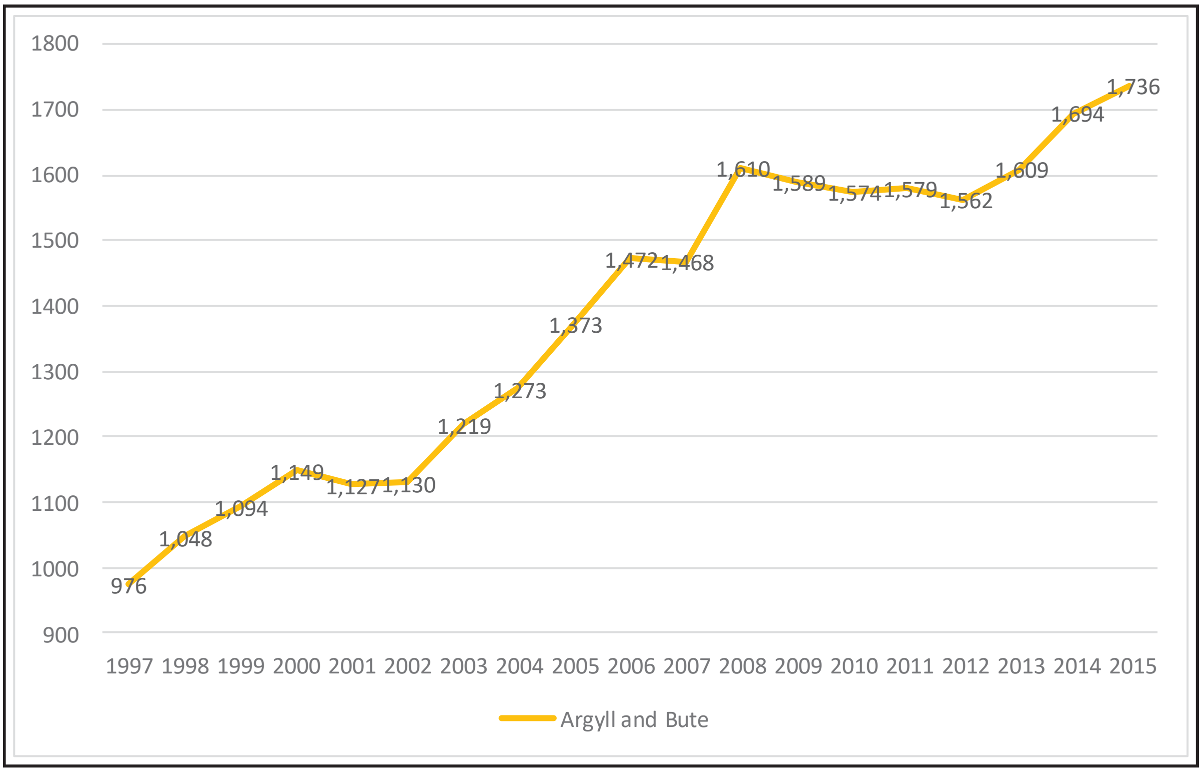
Table 1: Average weekly wage (Nomis)

Year	Male (av. FT and PT)		Female (av. FT and PT)		Total (av. FT and PT)		Full Time Workers	
	Argyll and Bute	Scotland	Argyll and Bute	Scotland	Argyll and Bute	Scotland	Argyll and Bute	Scotland
2010	£591.30	£563.50	£327.20	£368.70	£448.50	£462.70	£566.60	£568.80
2011	£561.80	£563.90	£327.60	£369.90	£436.10	£464.30	£553.80	£571.90
2012	£545.00	£574.40	£312.60	£373.60	£418.00	£472.10	£537.70	£585.60
2013	£577.50	£595.20	£319.30	£385.50	£423.80	£485.40	£527.10	£600.60
2014	£570.50	£584.10	£309.00	£390.10	£420.80	£482.70	£540.60	£598.90
2015	£618.00	£594.40	£356.10	£396.50	£475.80	£490.40	£578.50	£607.60
2016	£588.90	£612.80	£343.20	£410.10	£446.90	£507.60	£556.90	£625.10
2017	£537.60	£623.70	£336.30	£419.40	£418.00	£517.60	£558.80	£638.60

Table 1 above shows that the average weekly wage for full time workers in Argyll and Bute has dropped slightly between 2010 and 2017, compared with Scotland as a whole which has risen considerably.

However, Fig. 6 shows a clear growth in Gross Value Added (GVA) based on income from 1997. There were a couple of periods where GVA growth was slow or dipped slightly, the longest of these corresponds with the recession that started in 2008 and goes on until 2012 where it recovers and grows steadily.

Fig. 6: Argyll and Bute Gross Value Added (Income Approach) 1997-2015 (National Records for Scotland)



The Gross Value Added per head in manufacturing for Argyll and Bute is low and is in line with much of the rest of rural Scotland. This reflects the fact that Argyll and Bute's rural nature and transport distances provide a barrier to manufacturing. Tourism, However contributes a significant amount to Argyll's GVA (Fig. 7 over the page) . The largest sector in terms of GVA is public administration (Fig. 8). This is not surprising as there is a heavy dependence on the public sector in Argyll and Bute for employment. As the public sector receives less and less government funding each year the dependence for jobs will shift to other sectors. It is interesting to note that the GVA of some of our areas of growth such as forestry and fisheries are amongst the lowest value.

Fig. 7: Sustainable Tourism's contribution to Local Authority GVA, 2015

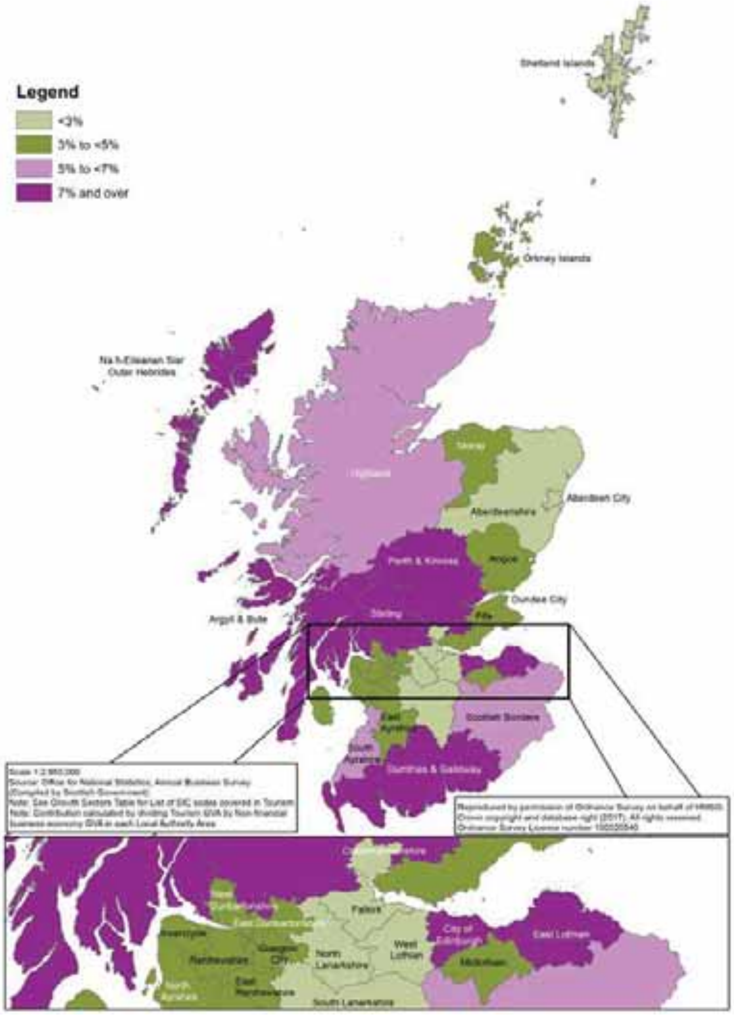
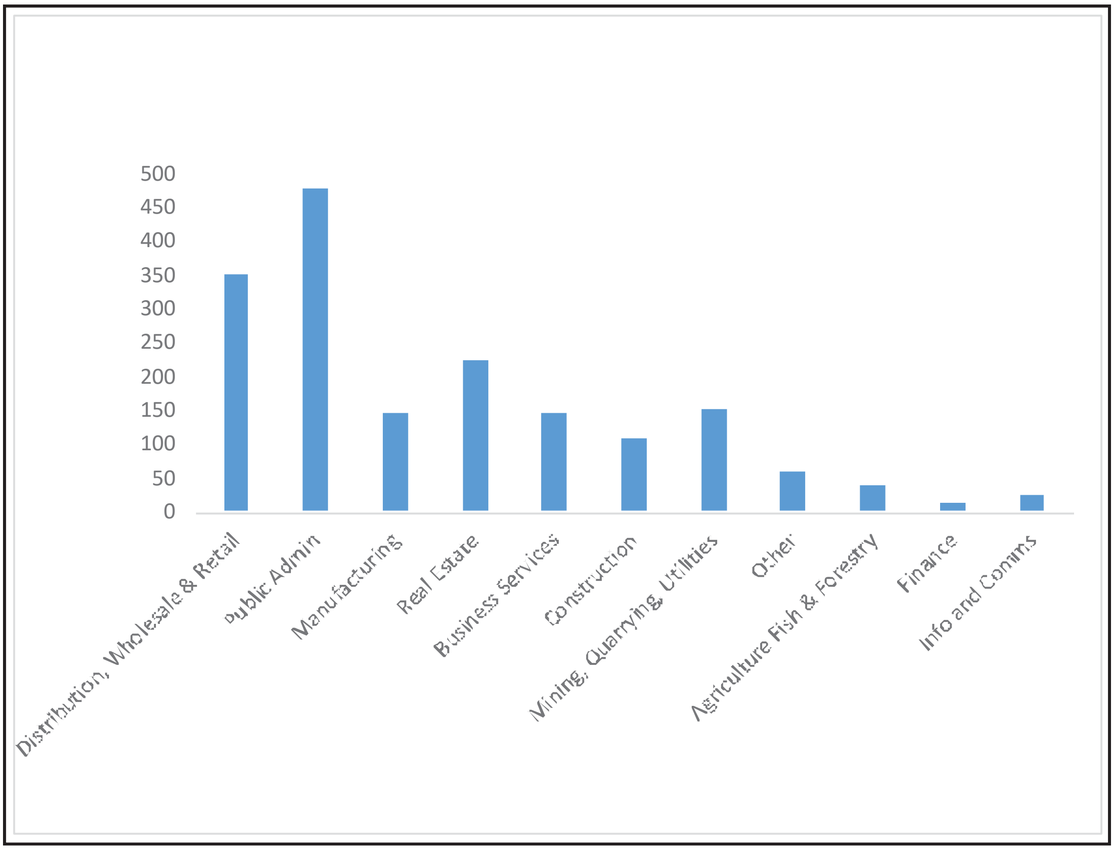


Fig. 8: Argyll and Bute GVA by sector (£m) 2015 (National Records for Scotland)



Although the total number of business units dropped slightly between 2008 and 2015 (Table 2), the number of employees per business unit has risen. Argyll and Bute has an entrepreneurial population and this is reflected in the high percentage of the population that is self-employed (12.3%) compared to the rest of Scotland (8.2%) and indeed Great Britain as a whole (10.6%). Argyll and Bute has an employment rate of 76.9%, compared with 74.3% for Scotland. The Public Sector is the largest employer at 31.9%.

The percentage of young people in employment in Argyll and Bute dropped in the years following the recession until 2013/14 where it started to rise again to 54.7% in the 16-19 age range and 75.9% in the 20-24 age range. When we compare this with Scotland at 41% for 16-19 and 0.7% for 20-24 year olds, Argyll and Bute performs significantly better. This aligns well with the increased uptake of Modern Apprenticeships which rose from 243 in 2012/13 to 331 in 2016/17.

Table 2: Total number of business units compared with private sector employees (Nomis)

	Business Units		Private Sector employees	
	2008	2015	2008	2015
Argyll and Bute	3,782	3,673	25,200	27,000

Unemployment

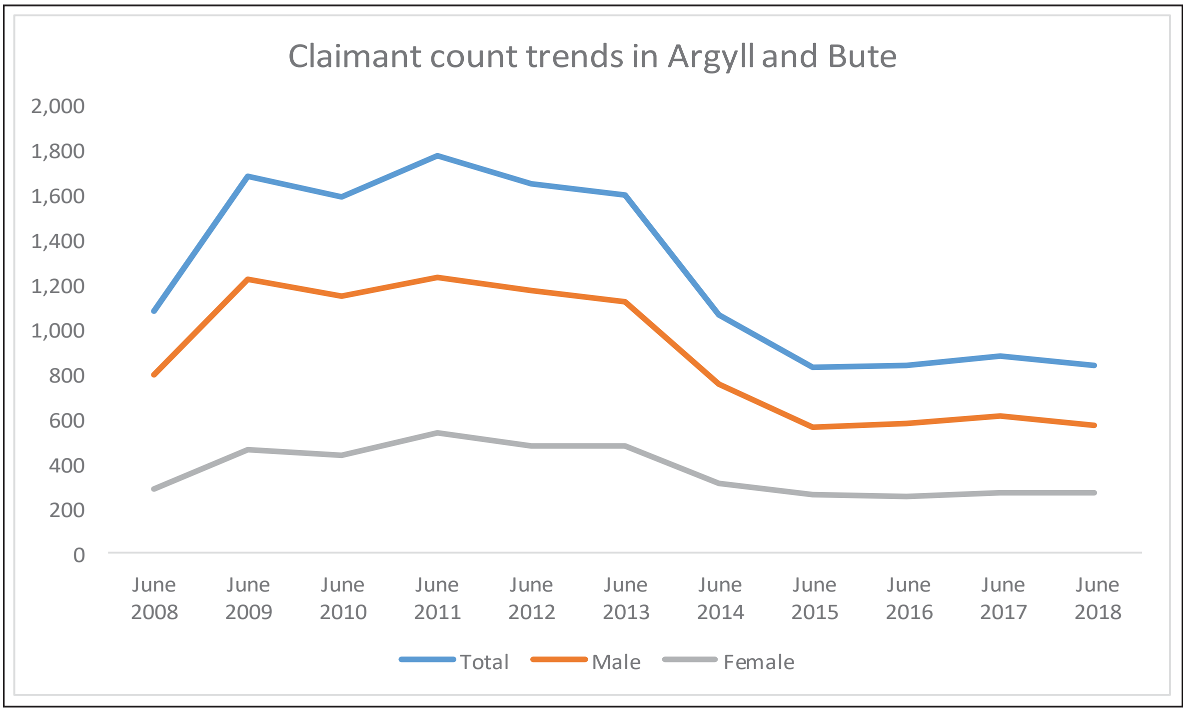
Argyll and Bute has a low percentage of the population registered as claiming unemployment benefits. At 1.6% in June 2018 this is a full 1% lower than the equivalent figure for Scotland. In line with Scotland the 50+ group represents a significant percentage of claimants, almost double that of the 16-24 age group (Table 3).

Table 3: Young people and people over 50. (Nomis)

Age	Argyll and Bute	Scotland
All categories: Age 16+	845	91,980
Aged 16-24	155	18,680
Aged 50+	300	23,595

Fig. 9 shows the claimant count trend has been steadily dropping from 2011 following a rapid rise since the 2008 recession. The trends are very similar for men and women, although men consistently make up the majority of claimants.

Fig. 9: Claimant Count trends in Argyll and Bute (Nomis)



When we consider the claimants by electoral ward, Bute and Dunoon have consistently been the one with the highest percentage of claimants by population (Table 4).

Table 4. Claimant count by Electoral Ward, October 2018 (number in rackets indicate change since September 2018)		
Argyll and Bute Electoral Ward	**Claimants aged 16-64**	**Claimants as a % of residents aged 16-64**
Cowal	70	1.9
Dunoon	145 (-5)	3.2 (-0.1)
Helensburgh Central	110 (+5)	2.2 (+0.1)
Helensburgh & Lomond South	35 (+5)	0.8 (+0.1)
Isle of Bute	140 (+15)	4.1 (+0.5)
Kintyre and the Islands	30 (+10)	0.8 (+0.2)
Lomond North	60	0.9 (+0.1)
Mid Argyll	80	1.7 (-0.1)
Oban North and Lorn	50 (+5)	0.8
Oban South and the Isles	70 (+10)	1.1 (+0.2)
South Kintyre	75 (+5)	2.1 (+0.1)
Argyll and Bute	860 (+40)	1.6
Scotland	94,320 (+65)	2.7
(Nomisweb.co.uk) (figures are rounded to nearest 5)		

Bucking the trend for Scotland, Argyll and Bute's claimant count is decreasing and as of June 2018 is in the bottom 30% of claimants per population in Scotland (Fig. 10). However, it does score relatively high levels of underemployment (Fig. 11), sitting at 11%, which is above the Scottish average (9.9%).

Fig. 10: Claimant Count per Local Authority expressed as a percentage of the population June 2018 (Nomis)

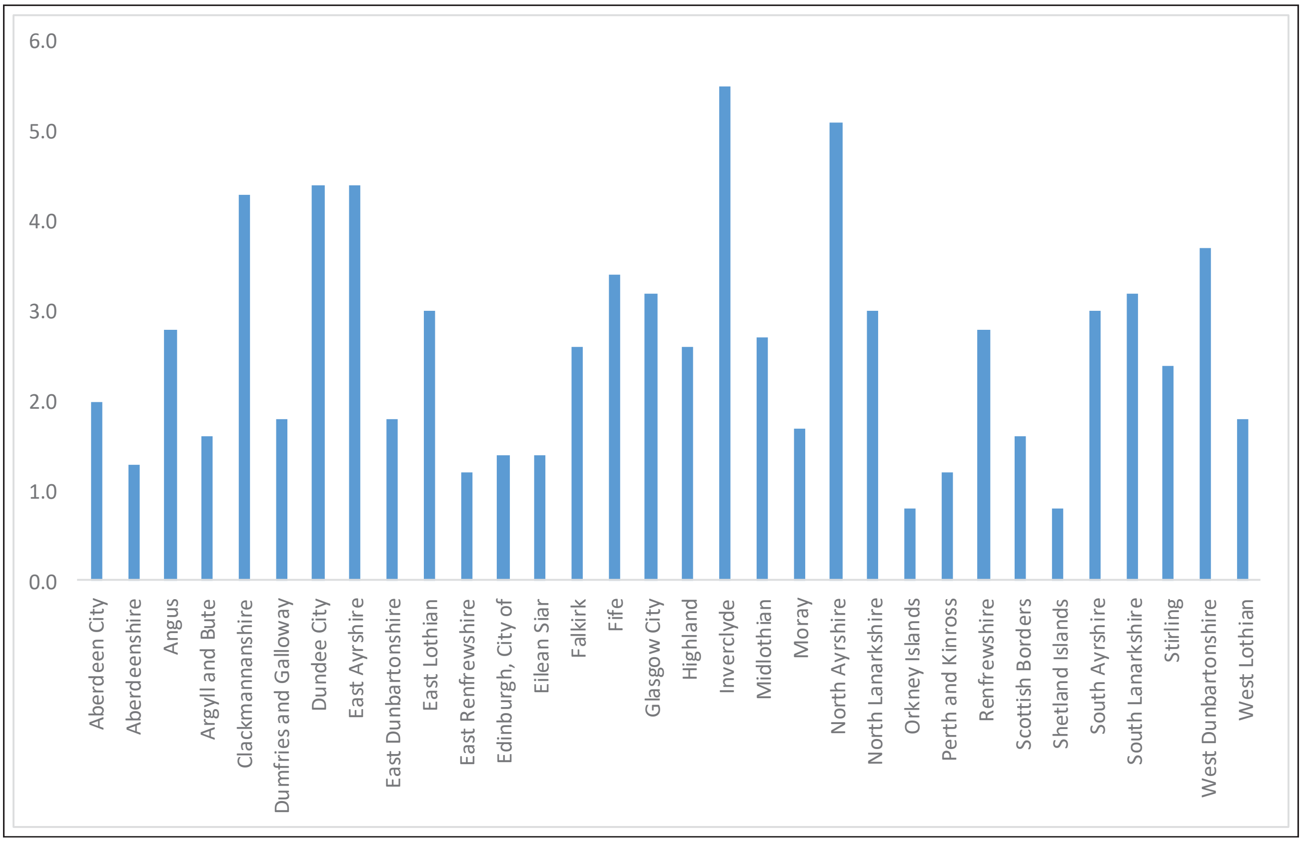
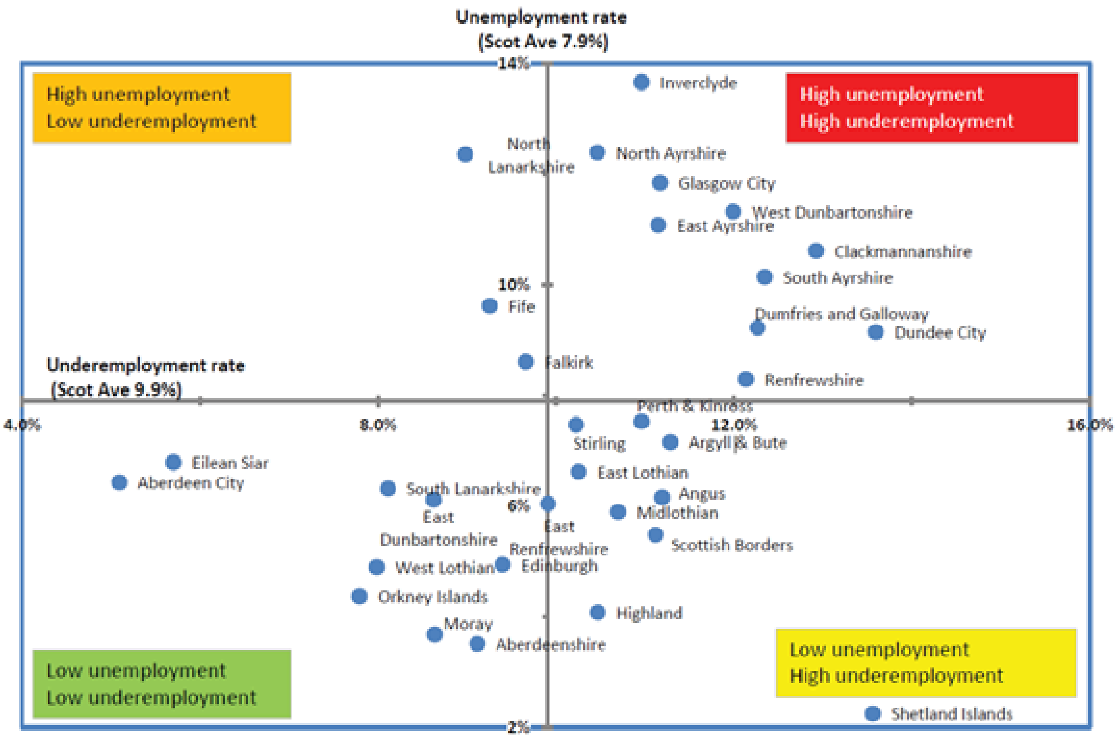


Fig. 11 Underemployment rates per local Authority area (National Records for Scotland).



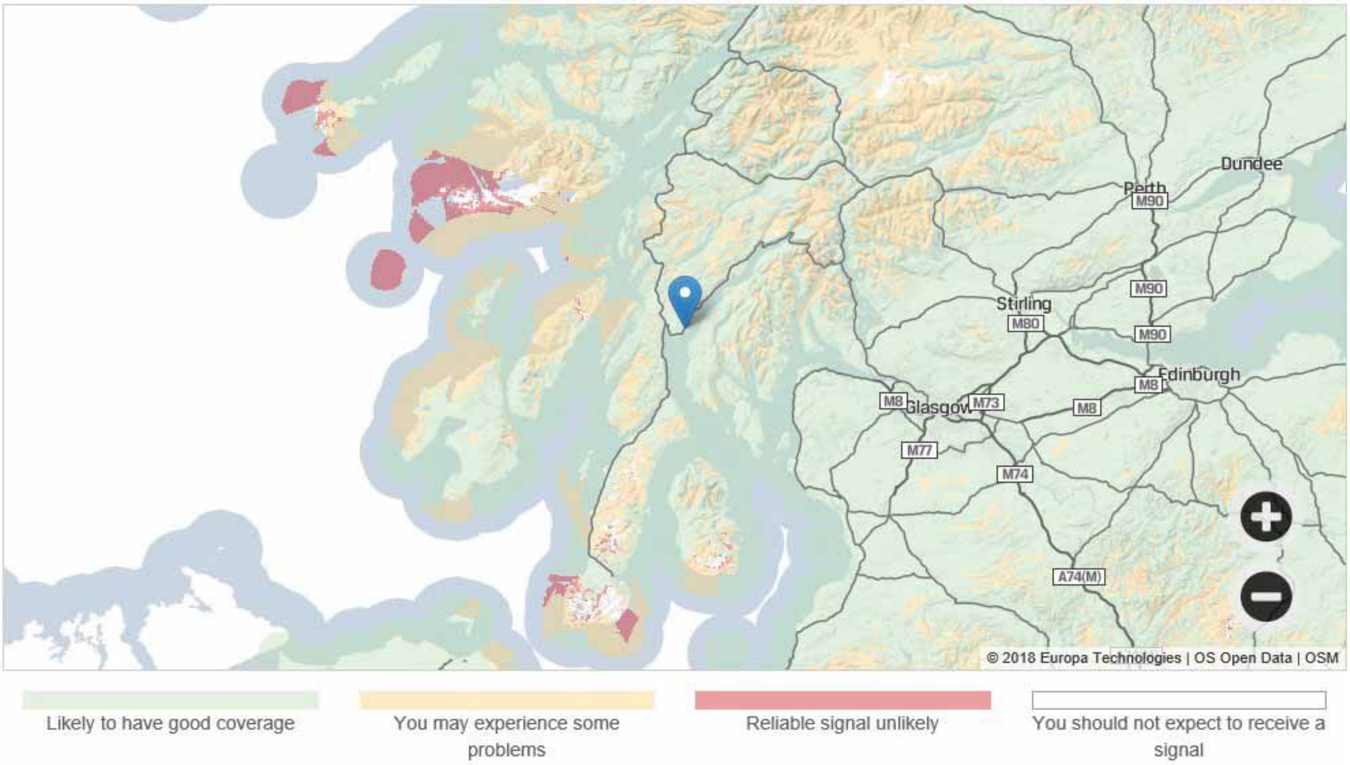
Source: Annual Population Survey, Oct'11-Sep'12

Argyll and Bute has historically had unreliable geographic mobile coverage with 3/4G limited to larger towns. However, following a push from the public sector it has seen a major improvement in 4G coverage, especially along the major roads. Fig. 12 illustrates mobile cover for Argyll and Bute.

Nearly half of small businesses in rural Scotland say they suffer from poor broadband connectivity, new research has found.

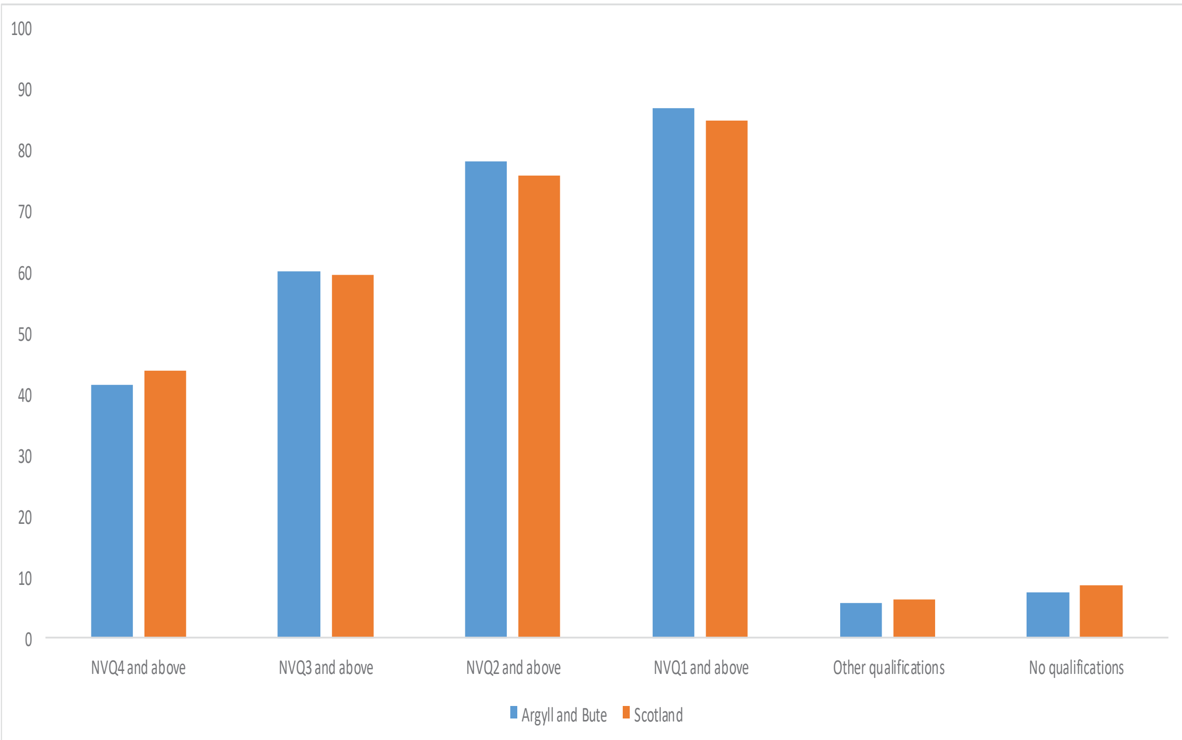
Citizens Advice Scotland (CAS) reports that a third of SMEs across Scotland say they have poor or variable broadband services, but this rises to 45% of small businesses in rural areas. 89.6% of Argyll and Bute premises are connected to the fibre network with 81.5% having access to Superfast Broadband. Although this is a vast improvement on where we were prior to the DSSB programmes Argyll and Bute still languishes behind a vast majority of Scottish LAs being placed 28th out of 32. Current take-up figures for Argyll and Bute are currently around 43% which is above the Scottish average.

Fig. 12: EE mobile voice coverage in Argyll and Bute (Offcom)



As previously noted, Argyll and Bute Council area has a decreasing population. This said, our populace has levels of academic attainment that are comparable to Scotland as a whole (Fig. 13). Within Argyll and Bute the spread of qualifications will vary greatly. For example, Oban houses the Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS). This academic institute has a large number of undergraduate and post graduate students and this will therefore skew the local data in favour of higher level qualifications. A high number of Argyll and Bute school leavers (94.7%) go on to a positive destination, compared with 92.9% for Scotland as a whole.

Fig. 13: Argyll and Bute percentage of the population with levels of attainment compared with Scotland



According to the 2011 Census, around 13% of Argyll and Bute's housing stock is deemed "ineffective", this means that it is unavailable to meet local housing needs; comprising of second/holiday homes or long term vacant properties. This is more than three times the national average (4%). The majority of homes in Argyll and Bute are owner occupied at 66.5%, which is higher than the national average (61.9%). It is interesting to note that only 61.5% of homes are purchased by local residents.*
In terms of social housing, the waiting list in 2015 comprised 3,000 applicants. There is not enough housing stock of the correct size and type to meet this demand and many social housing applicants go on to seek private rented accommodation. The 2011 census shows us that 18.9% of occupied households are in the social housing sector which is lower than the national figure at 24.3%. However, the private rented sector is higher than the national figure of 11.1% at 12.5%.

In 2017 the majority of homes in Argyll and Bute were in the higher Council Tax bands of A-C (56.5%) with fewer in the D-E bands (28.3%) and fewer still in the F-H bands (15.2%). This trend is in line with the rest of Scotland, however, the percentage of homes in bands D-E and F-H are slightly higher in Argyll and Bute than the rest of Scotland. These homes typically have higher value than those in A-C

Valuation Band		Council Tax payable before discount.
A	up to £27,000	808.89
B	£27,001 – 35,000	943.71
C	£35,001 – 45,000	1,078.52
D	£45,001 – 58,000	1,213.34
E	£58,001 – 80,000	1,594.19
F	£80,001 – 106,000	1,971.68
G	£106,001 – 212,000	2,376.12
H	over £212,000	2,972.68

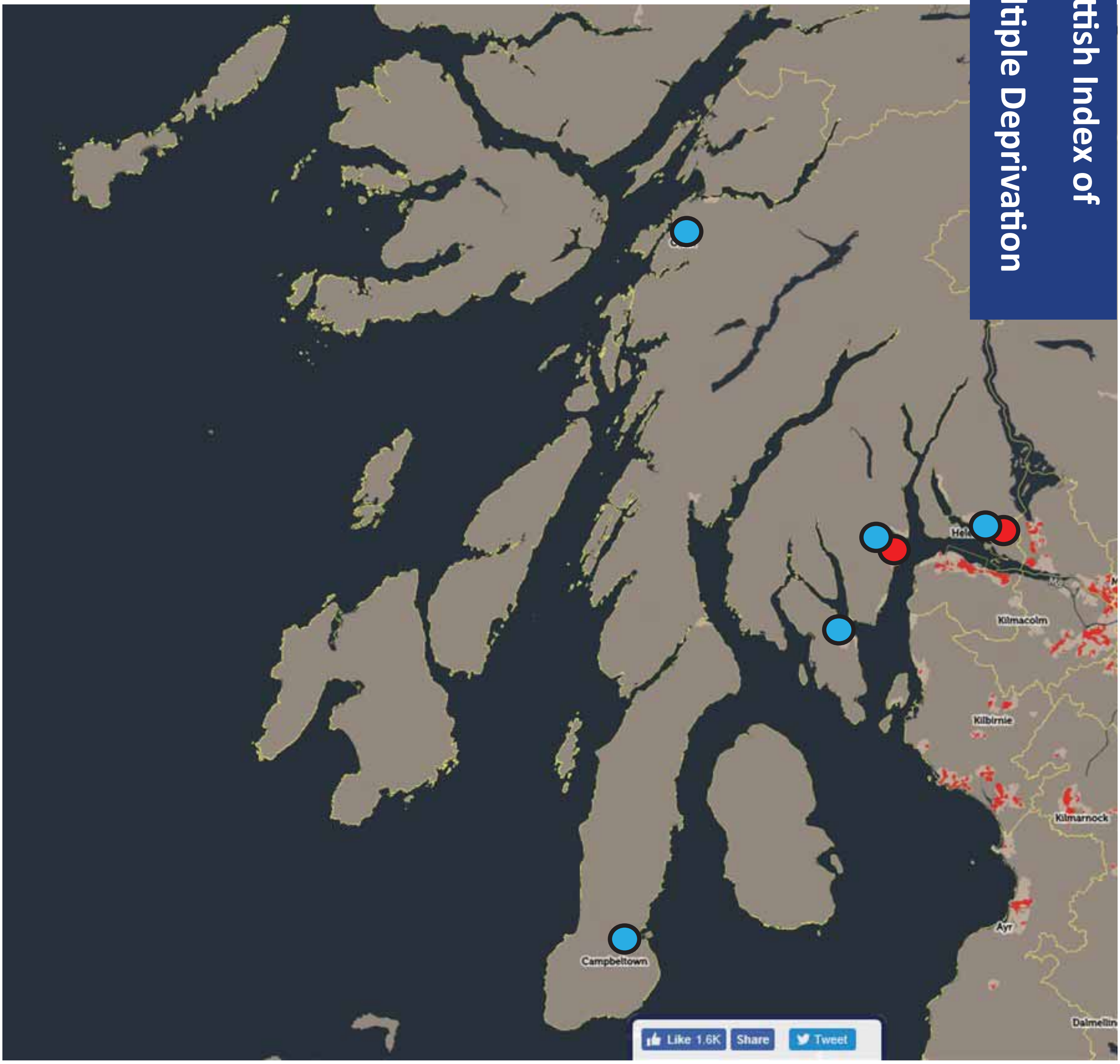
(Source: https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/housing/council-tax)

Changes in the value of homes because of the general movement of house prices over the years will not affect the banding.

The mean house price for Argyll and Bute in 2017 was £157,430, which is considerably lower than the Scottish average at £180,663. A considerable number of the 47,974 dwellings* are second homes. At 6.8% this gives over 3,000 second homes. Essentially this means that over 3,000 homes are not available to the local populace. For Scotland the percentage of second homes sits at 1%.

*Argyll and Bute Local Housing Strategy 2016-2021
**www.statistics.gov.scot

Fig. 14 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) locations of area of high deprivation in Argyll and Bute. (SIMD.Scot)



Top 5% SIMD ranking   Top 20% SIMD ranking

As shown in Fig. 14 above there are only two locations within Argyll and Bute which are in the top 5% most deprived. These are Helensburgh East (S01007399) which has high incidences of crime, low levels of employment, health, income and education. One part of Dunoon (S01007366) has low levels of income, employment and health.

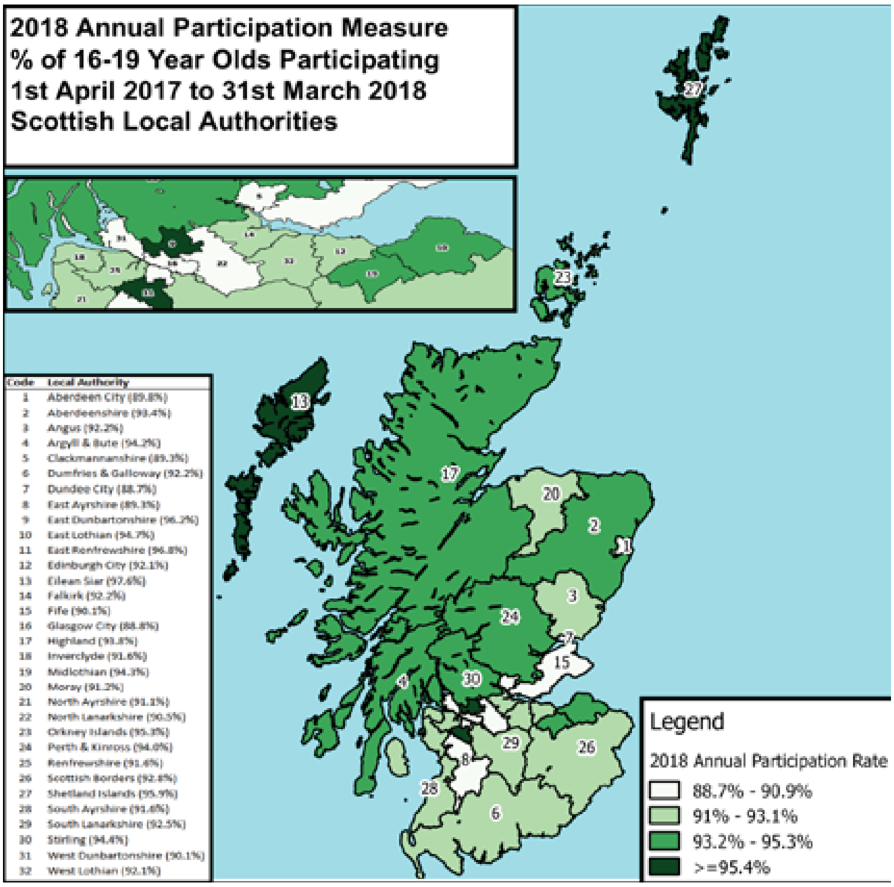
However, there are 11 locations within Argyll and Bute that fall within the top 20% most deprived. These are to be found in Helensburgh (three areas), Oban south, Campbeltown (two areas), Rothesay (two areas) and Dunoon (three areas).
The greatest challenge for Argyll and Bute is its remoteness and geographic accessibility using public transport/roads network.

info

Apprenticeships

The participation level for 16 to 19 year olds in Argyll and Bute (below) is eighth in Scotland at 94.2% in a positive destination (work, training, FE/HE or volunteering). This is a very respectable rate for a remote rural area. Indeed, there has been a high increase in the percentage point change between 2017 and 2018. The increase considerably higher than the national change of 0.7% at 1.2%. *

All schools in Argyll and Bute offer vocational courses aligned to local needs and student wishes. Under the banner of “Skills for Work” these include: Rural Skills, Sport and recreation, Maritime skills, Hospitality, Construction and Education and childcare to name a few.**



*Annual participation measure for 16-19 year olds in Scotland 2018 Skills Development Scotland

**https://www.argyll.uhi.ac.uk/courses/

Aquaculture

Key facts and figures

Sector set to grow export business by >25%over

595 Jobs in Argyll (Full and part time)

>£12million in salaries

Total GVA estimates at >£31million, plus processing and retail

Maintains rural populations through employment

Aquaculture in Scotland is diverse, from the farming of salmon and other finfish species, to the production of mussels and oysters, to the harvesting of seaweed. It contributes over £1.8bn annually to Scotland's economy and sustains the economic and social fabric of the Highlands and Islands in particular. But the potential contribution of farming Scotland's seas is far greater. Research points to a potential annual contribution of £3.6bn or more by 2030. The number of jobs supported by the sector could reach 18,000*.

Argyll and Bute demonstrates pockets of intensity of impact in aquaculture and on balance there are strong positive views on the contribution of aquaculture to human and financial capital and provides for rural populations to be sustained as it is a rural and coastal industry. For example, Ford in Argyll and Bute has a significant proportion of housing linked to aquaculture**.

One of the major issues surrounding fish farming in Argyll and Bute is the availability of affordable family housing. However, the challenges that exist with digital connectivity, mobile phone coverage and roads networks are significant, but not insurmountable. As seen earlier in the publication 89.6% of Argyll and Bute premises are connected to the fibre network with 81.5% having access to Superfast Broadband.

Mobile coverage is also improving with a commitment to give full 4G coverage along all major routes in Argyll and Bute by the end of 2018.

There is currently a world class aquaculture facility being built at Barcaldine in a multi million pound investment by Scottish Sea Farms. It is proposed that this facility will use 80% fresh water, double the size of fish before going to sea nets and improve production by aiming for a 95% survival rate of fish from farms.

Huge progress is being made in the farming of salmon. It is now possible to use minimal chemical control of sealice by using natural predators such as Wrasse and Lumpfish. Advances in nutrition allow for food conversion rates 1kg meat to 1.75 kg feed.

Scottish farmed salmon was voted best in the world in 2014 by retail and foodservice buyers

£600M salmon and seafood exported annually

- Aquaculture growth to 2030. Scotland Food and Drink

Average turnover (Ex Agriculture) in 2016 = £313m

GVA (Ex Agriculture) in 2016 = £124m

GVA per head (Ex Agriculture) in 2016 = £89,600

Sector employed 3,995 in 2016

820 businesses in 2017

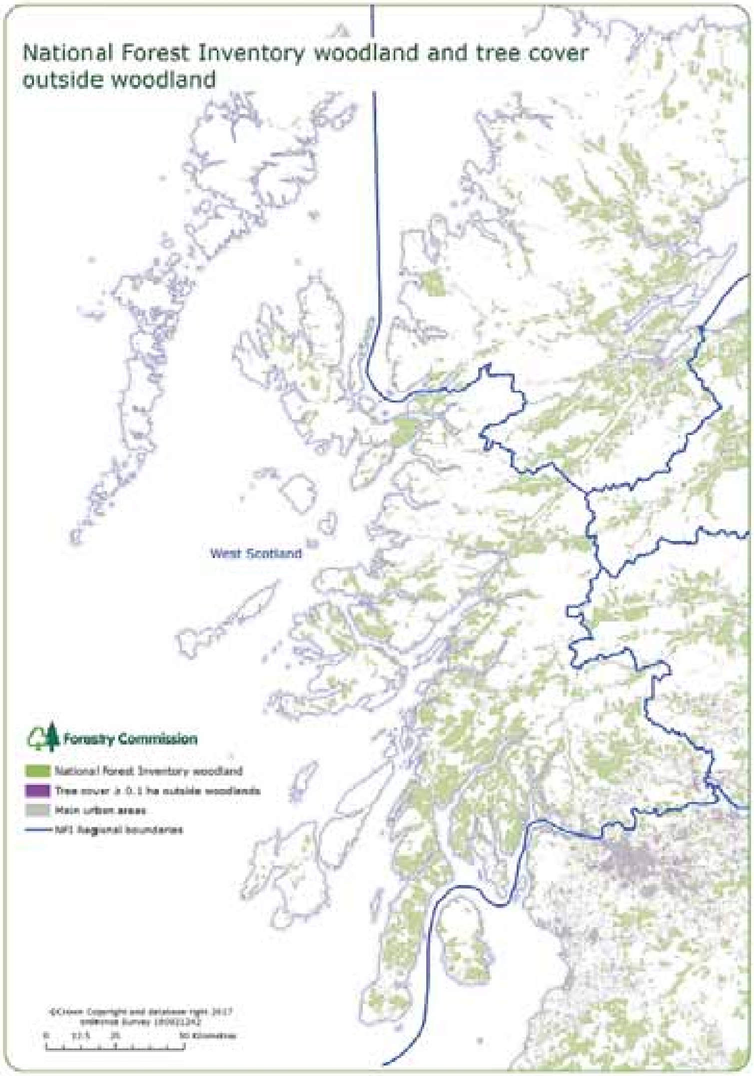
550 sole enterprises in 2017

5 businesses had more than 250 employees in 2017

Scotland's food and drink industry is identified in Scotland's Economic Strategy as one of the growth sectors in which Scotland can build on comparative advantage and increase productivity and growth. Accordingly, Argyll and Bute's food and drink industry was recognised in the Economic Forum Report and the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (formerly the Single Outcome Agreement) as a growth sector, given the region's pristine natural environment and long standing tradition of whisky distilling. Expansion of the brewing and distilling industries has shown good expansion, with several new food companies, a significant expansion of production for our distilleries, new gin distilleries on Kintyre, Jura, Colonsay, Mull, and Loch Fyne Ales increasing production by 53% over the last two years.

Other food producers, such as Bute Island Foods continues to expand their range of vegan products, with exports to North America, Canada, and other markets. Bute island Foods, with support from Argyll and Bute Council are currently entering into a £700,000 phase of expansion and are committed to Bute.

The various food and drink tourism initiatives in Argyll and Bute have also worked well, as has the Food from Argyll opening of the café on Oban Pier. Food from Argyll has also increased its membership from 22 to 30 companies over the period, a major advance.



Argyll and Bute has (2014)

- 128,800 ha of conifer coverage
- 36,300ha broadleaves
- Total 165,200ha afforestation

Woodland covers around 1/3 of Argyll and Bute

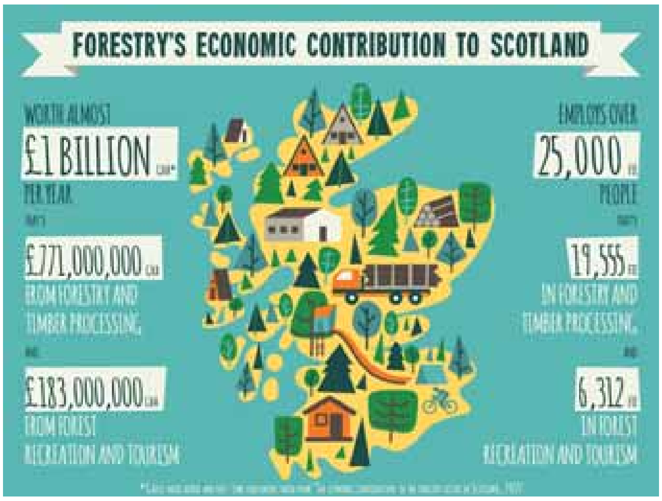
The forestry industry, through planting, harvesting, management and maintenance activities and timber transport makes a major contribution to Argyll and Bute's economy and employs a relatively large number of people, particularly in rural areas. Argyll and Bute has almost twice of the Scottish average of its land area under woodland cover.

Foresters in Argyll and Bute have been very innovative in adapting to the market and economic conditions which, given the terrain and distance from markets, have always been challenging. In addition to the direct economic contribution, tourism and recreation focussed on woodland and forest areas adds an important dimension to regional income.*

The importance of the forestry sector to the economy of Argyll and Bute is shown by the levels of employment it generates. Research undertaken by FCS in 2008 provided estimates for employment generated by the forestry sector at a national level.

Using this information, some *pro rata* estimates for Argyll and Bute can be made. It is estimated that the forests of Argyll and Bute support (in Argyll and Bute and beyond):

- **1292** full time equivalent jobs (Direct employment); and
- **2255** full time equivalent jobs (tourism and recreation).*



*Argyll and Bute Council Woodland and Forestry Strategy 2011

Argyll and Bute Council has developed a [Renewable Energy Action Plan (REAP)] to deliver our vision which is;

"Argyll and Bute will be at the heart of renewable energy development in Scotland by taking full advantage of its unique and significant mix of indigenous renewable resources and maximising the opportunities for sustainable economic growth for the benefit of its communities and Scotland."

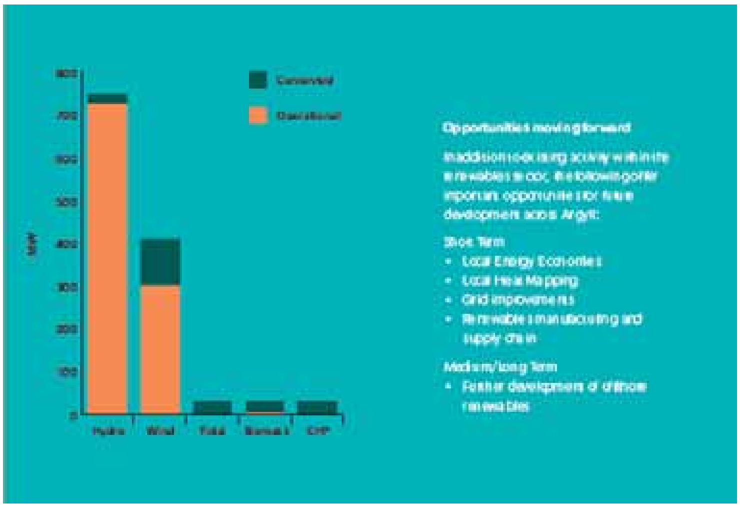
Argyll and Bute has a distinguished track record of pioneering and delivering renewable energy developments, including

- Beinn Ghlas in Lorne, one of the first commercial scale Scottish wind farms; and

- Cruachan Power Station at Loch Awe, Scotland's largest pumped storage hydro-electric power station.

This pioneering spirit is not limited to the private sector; communities in Argyll and Bute have been at the forefront in developing and owning income-generating renewable energy projects since 2004. The residents of Gigha established the world's first wholly community owned, grid connected wind farm to enable them to pay back the loan used to purchase the island and to make improvements to housing stock and services.

With over 1GW of operational and consented renewables, both onshore and offshore, renewable energy is an important economic sector within Argyll and Bute and plays an import role in delivering renewables nationally. Visit the interactive renewables map which shows operational, consented and proposed renewables within Argyll and Bute.



Argyll and Bute is undoubtedly a great place to live, work and do business. The recent advancements in digital infrastructure and a high degree of marketing through campaigns such as the recent "Wild about Argyll" have increased interest in the tourism industry. This is a huge success story but it brings with it an increase in tourist pressure to our roads network, ferry services and most especially to island infrastructure. This pressure is most especially on increased road traffic on roads designed for light use and lack of disposal points for campervan toilet waste.

That said, tourism in Argyll and Bute brings in almost £480million to the local economy, providing much needed jobs in some of our geographically challenged areas such as our 23 inhabited Islands. Tourism needs to be nurtured and promoted, both as of great benefit to the local economy but also as a career choice for young people. At time of writing (October 2018) it is unknown what the effect of Brexit will have on the number of available employees in this sector. Tourism businesses account for 13% of the share of businesses in Argyll, compared with 8% for Scotland (ONS). Anecdotal evidence suggests that European nationals are already less willing to come and work in our tourist sector, with some employers finding it very difficult to find enough staff.

Our population is declining and ageing and this means fewer people to take up jobs, learn skills/trades and it also brings with it the added pressure of the cost of caring for our aging population. In order to address this Argyll and Bute needs to develop a better skills and training package for its young people, allowing them to train and study close to home. Promotion and marketing of the opportunities and support available added to better digital connectivity and housing are key to retaining and attracting people. As of July 2018 Argyll had the eighth lowest unemployment claimants as a proportion of residents aged 16-64 in Scotland at 1.6% (there are 32 Local Authorities). In order of percentage of claimants as a percentage of claimants Bute and Dunoon are consistent unemployment hotspots. Both of these areas also have relatively high levels of crime and drug issues.

Summary ctd..

Argyll and Bute has consistently had a high number of people who are self employed. In March 2018 the self employment rate was 12.3% , compared with 8.2% for Scotland as a whole shows that Argyll and Bute has an entrepreneurial culture. Argyll and Bute also exceeds Scotland in terms of the percentage of the population who are economically active at 78.5% and 77.6% respectively. In order to support and build on it it is clear that we need to address the current issues surrounding affordable and family sized housing, digital connectivity and business premises-which are in short supply.

With over 3,000 second homes in Argyll and Bute and long waiting lines for social housing it is clear that housing pressures are extensive and contributes to additional stresses on the local economy. With many of our sectoral jobs (e.g. forestry/aquaculture) in remote areas with a challenging geography this adds even greater pressures to find accommodation within a reasonable distance from work. House building in Argyll and Bute is relatively low with only 31 new builds completed in Q4 of 2017. One possibility is to encourage self building by streamlining planning processes and providing support through publishing suitable building plots on the council website.

Forestry continues to be a major employer in Argyll and Bute. The network of jobs range from forest managers, felling, haulage and shipping. Enabling access to wood stocks and creating clear timber networks have allowed for a highly successful sector which provides a considerable income to the local economy in terms of salaries etc.

Food and drink businesses continue to provide significant amounts of employment for Argyll and Bute and this is likely to continue to grow in line with the increased number of tourists.

Huge progress is being made in the farming of salmon. It is now possible to use minimal chemical control of sealice by using natural predators such as Wrasse and Lumpfish. Advances in nutrition allow for food conversion rates 1kg meat to 1.75 kg feed. This puts aquaculture near the top of areas for development in Argyll and Bute. By delivering high quality infrastructure and digital support through the Rural Growth Deal we can support this sector to deliver more rural and remote rural jobs for Argyll and Bute.

All of this information feeds the need for a Rural Growth Deal as outlined in the opening section:

Areas for potential growth

- Food and drink exports
- Tourism
- Innovation (for example, marine science, renewable energy, aquaculture)
- Culture/sense of place (for example regeneration of our towns, history)

Areas where we need to develop

- Transport and infrastructure
- Skills
- Digital connectivity
- Accommodation
- Natural energy