

ISLE OF CUMBRAE

LOCAL ISLAND PLAN

WELLBEING
COMMUNITY | ECONOMY | ENVIRONMENT

A ten-year plan with a long-term strategic focus
developed with and for the community.



Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Iomairt na Gàidhealtachd 's nan Eilean



The Scottish
Government



North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath



WHAT IS THE CUMBRAE ISLAND PLAN?

The Cumbrae Island Plan is a ten-year strategic plan developed with and for the community by North Ayrshire Council.

It articulates the community's vision for the future of Cumbrae, identifying key issues and themes for development.

The Plan connects into local, regional and national policy that has been created to support closer and more coordinated working between island communities, partners, local and national government and agencies.

The Plan also compliments the three-year 'Islands Recovery and Renewal' Pilot, a partnership between North Ayrshire Council, the Scottish Government and Highlands and Islands Enterprise, intended to support the inclusive and green economic recovery and renewal of Cumbrae and Arran following the COVID-19 pandemic.

WHAT WILL IT BE USED FOR?

The Island Plan will be used to help drive the development of Cumbrae between 2022 and 2032.

An Annual Action Plan will be progressed based on the Island Plan that will set out the steps that need to be taken to deliver the vision for the future of the island. The Action Plan will be a live document that will be monitored, reviewed and updated as required.

WHAT ARE THE FINDINGS OF THE PLAN?

The Plan began with an engagement exercise.

Feedback from the community was combined with desk based research. This information was analysed and a set of findings identified.

The Plan sets out a vision for 2032:

Cumbrae is a more sustainable and accessible island with improved infrastructure, transport and housing provision. The island is attracting a more balanced population who enjoy a wider range of employment opportunities and activities.

The Plan goes on to identify three key themes for development. Within each theme a number of priorities are



COMMUNITY

CUMBRAE IS A RESILIENT AND INNOVATIVE ISLAND COMMUNITY

- KEY PRIORITIES -

RELIABLE FERRY PROVISION
AFFORDABLE AND SOCIAL HOUSING
POPULATION - ATTRACT WORKING AGE FAMILIES
PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE
ACCESS TO HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES
EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE
COMMUNITY FACILITIES



ECONOMY

CUMBRAE IS AN ACCESSIBLE, INCLUSIVE AND GREEN ISLAND ECONOMY

- KEY PRIORITIES -

IMPROVING RESILIENCE OF ISLAND BUSINESS BASE
DIVERSIFICATION OF ECONOMY & RELIANCE ON SEASONAL TOURISM
IMPROVED TOURISM & RETAIL OFFER
EDUCATION AND SKILLS AND RETENTION OF YOUNG PEOPLE
RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF EMPLOYEES
EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES



ENVIRONMENT

CUMBRAE IS SUPPORTING A JUST TRANSITION TO NET ZERO

- KEY PRIORITIES -

ADDRESS ENERGY COSTS
CLIMATE ACTION & SUSTAINABILITY
PROTECTION OF NATURAL ENVIRONMENT
BUILT & NATURAL ENVIRONMENT
TOURISM MANAGEMENT
PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE
FLOOD PROTECTION
MARINE/PIER INFRASTRUCTURE

INTRODUCTION

The Isle of Cumbrae is a valuable and unique part of North Ayrshire. North Ayrshire Council and partners are dedicated to working in partnership with island communities and businesses to support Cumbrae and acknowledge the importance of providing specific and tailored focus and support for the island community, its vital economy and its outstanding environment.



THE CUMBRAE LOCAL ISLAND PLAN IS A TEN-YEAR PLAN WITH A LONG-TERM STRATEGIC FOCUS DEVELOPED WITH AND FOR THE COMMUNITY.

North Ayrshire Council identified an opportunity to work in an exciting new partnership with island communities, businesses, and wider stakeholders to develop and facilitate the creation of Local Island Plans to assist in maximising the potential of North Ayrshire's islands.

North Ayrshire Council is participating in an ambitious three-year 'Islands Recovery and Renewal' Pilot in partnership with the Scottish Government and Highlands and Islands Enterprise to support an inclusive and green economic recovery and renewal of North Ayrshire's islands of Cumbrae and Arran, in line with their unique needs. This pilot is aligned to the delivery of the strategic objectives of the National Islands Plan and Community Wealth Building (CWB) principles.

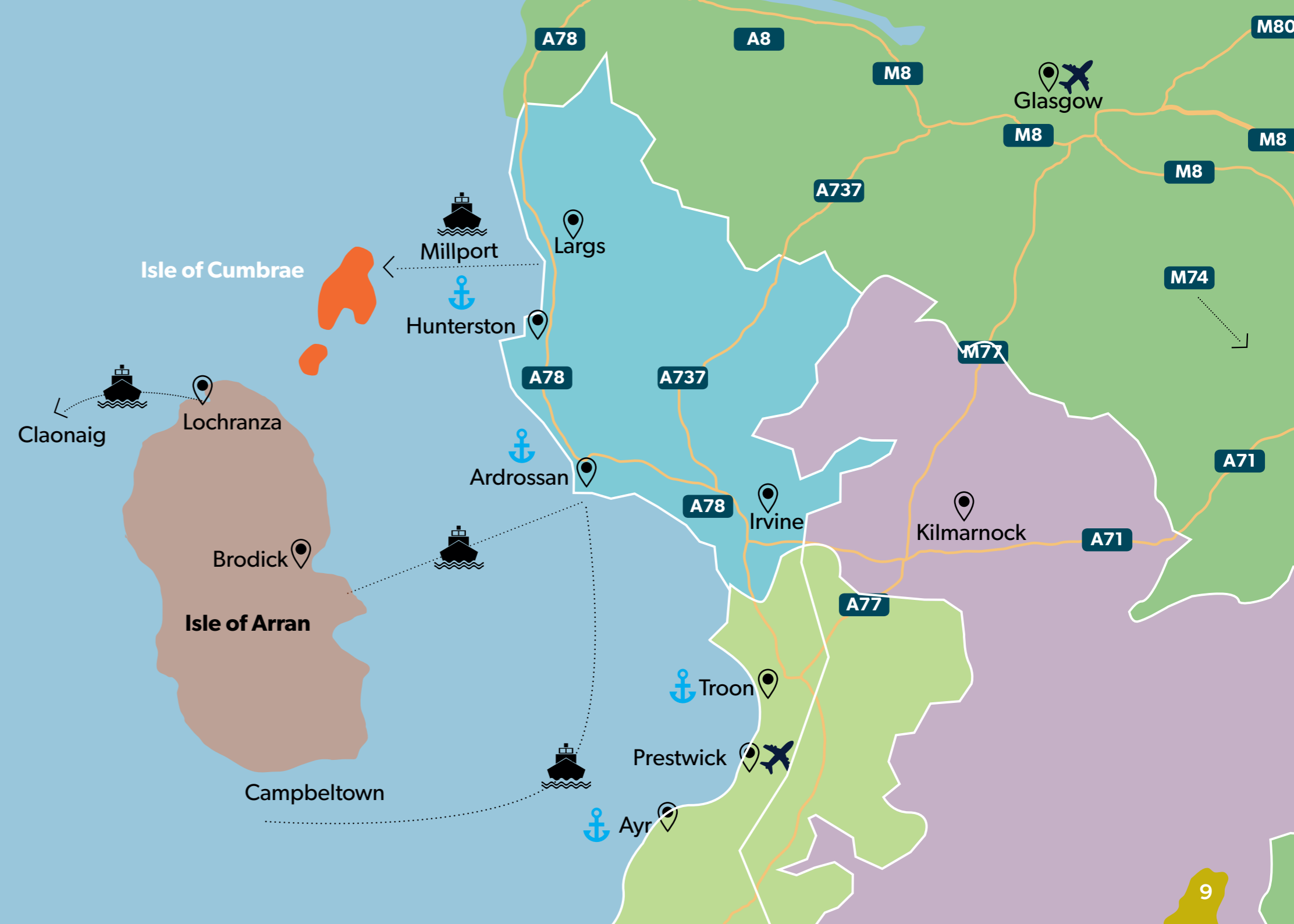
The pilot has facilitated the development of this first Cumbrae Local Island Plan and the partners will continue to support and work with the community and stakeholders as the plan is implemented, delivering actions and improving outcomes for the community, economy and environmental wellbeing of Cumbrae.

The Cumbrae Local Island Plan is a ten-year plan with a long-term strategic focus developed with and for the community, and while the overall vision and themes are expected to remain in place until 2032, the associated actions will be reviewed annually and updated as required.

ABOUT CUMBRAE

The Isle of Cumbrae, also known as Great Cumbrae, lies on the Ayrshire coast and is approximately four miles long and two miles wide.

An eight-minute ferry trip from Largs, Cumbrae is Scotland's most accessible populated island and as such the island represents an important and unique island economy in North Ayrshire.





Millport is the only settlement on Cumbrae, a picturesque seaside town with a Victorian promenade, curving around an attractive hilly bay on the south coast. Millport is home to Britain's smallest cathedral; the Cathedral of the Isles, and Garrison House, home to the Museum of the Cumbraes.

The island has an active and engaged community with a wide range of interest groups represented in the many clubs and associations on the island.





The island offers many leisure opportunities, including walking, wild swimming, golf, bowls and watersports. Nature-lovers and wildlife watchers enjoy the island's stunning land and coastline which is home to over 125 species of birds, seal colonies, porpoises, and basking sharks. Cumbrae also benefits from a range of food and drink venues, scenic gardens, geological sites of interest, safe beaches, and children's play areas.

CUMBRAE IS HOME TO OVER 125 SPECIES OF BIRDS, SEAL COLONIES, PORPOISES, AND BASKING SHARKS.

The island has a reputation as an attractive visitor destination and is famously popular among cyclists of all ages thanks to a safe 10-mile, mostly flat, circular loop around the island.

As we emerge from the pandemic, the true impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economy, island society and environment are becoming clear, and the issues and priorities which were evident prior to the pandemic have become more urgent or magnified as a result.

In mid-2021, North Ayrshire Council prepared an economic baseline report reviewing the available economic data for the Isle of Cumbrae to inform the development of a Cumbrae Local Island Plan. There were a number of challenges around obtaining accurate data for Cumbrae due to the relatively small size of the community which has not been separated from the mainland in statistics and the relatively complex makeup of its population (second homeowners and or remote workers who do not currently register in the statistics etc).

The Council and island stakeholders agree that it is vital to continue to build on good quality data for Cumbrae. This will provide an accurate evidence base for future decision-making and the prioritisation of resources including financial investment. It is anticipated that the information contained within the Isle of Cumbrae Economic Baseline Report will be developed as one of the first priorities in the annual Action Plan set for 2022.

KEY FINDINGS

THE 2021 CUMBRAE ECONOMIC BASELINE REPORT IS PROVIDED AS APPENDIX 2. SOME OF THE KEY FINDINGS ARE:

- It is estimated that the 2018 economic output¹ of the Isle of Cumbrae was £10.2 million, of which 30% came from the health sector.
- Total employment² on the Isle of Cumbrae is estimated at 400, of which a third work in the health sector and a quarter work in tourism related sectors.
- The experimental claimant count (estimate of people claiming unemployment related benefits) as a proportion of the working age population for the Isle of Cumbrae increased by 1.5-percentage points to 6.6% between February 2020 and 2021.
- Due to its economic make-up, the Isle of Cumbrae is estimated to be acutely impacted by the pandemic. The effects of the pandemic and the lockdowns will have had a profound negative economic impact upon the Isle of Cumbrae's tourism-related sectors.
- The economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic worsened the already difficult position regarding the level of income deprivation on the Isle of Cumbrae, the incidence of which is 29% higher than the Scottish average level.
- Despite its unique strengths, the Isle of Cumbrae faces significant demographic challenges. Between 2001 and 2019, the total population of the Isle of Cumbrae contracted by 10% – from 1,431 to 1,295.
- The percentage share of the total population of working age is 11-percentage points lower than the Scottish level (53% compared to 64%), and the percentage of the population that is aged 65 and over is double the Scottish rate (38% compared to 19%).

1. 2016 prices | 2. 2019 data



Population of Cumbrae (2019):

1295



Total Economic Output of Cumbrae (2018):

£10.2m



Claimant Count Rate of Cumbrae (May 2021):

6.6%



Total Employment on the Isle of Cumbrae (2019):

400



HEALTH

33%



EDUCATION

10%



TOURISM RELATED ACTIVITIES

25%

TOP EMPLOYING SECTORS ON CUMBRAE

Note: Data is sourced from the Office for National Statistics' 'The Business Register and Employment Survey' (BRES). The estimates provided only account for employment estimates by industry and does not look at full time versus part time. Employment estimates are based on the location of the enterprise.

WHAT THE COMMUNITY SAID

ISLAND ENGAGEMENT IN THE PLAN

In August 2021, North Ayrshire Council commissioned a short, focused exercise engaging with the community on Cumbrae to assess perceptions of how, and if, COVID-19 had changed the priorities for the island.

The exercise was to understand how things may have changed because of COVID-19 and what that could mean for Cumbrae's priorities, building on the substantial evidence and insight from earlier engagement exercises and from other evidence sources.

From late August until mid-September, the consultant SKS Scotland CIC, undertook the following activities:

- 1 Desk-based analysis and summary of previous island engagement and consultation
- 2 Launch of short-life engagement website
- 3 Contact with community organisations, business networks and other stakeholders to arrange discussions
- 4 Open short-term survey to allow people to have their say (with paper copies made available on key island locations)
- 5 One public online community conversation for Cumbrae
- 6 A final public online discussion - where islanders came together to discuss the short, medium and longer-term priorities that will inform Cumbrae's 10-year Island Plan



The engagement process was supported by the Island Plan Short Life Working Group, with representation from each island (membership included representatives from Connected Communities, Communications, Cumbrae Community Council, North Coast and Cumbraes Locality Partnership and the Arran Recovery Group).

The role of the group during the engagement process included: clarifying expectations of the engagement process and outputs; providing relevant knowledge, contacts and to share any local sensitivities; monitoring and agreeing any amendments to the approved work programme; approving content for all project related communications and sharing communications with relevant networks.

The range of activities undertaken during a short period of time was well received and illustration 6 provides details of the responses received.

illustration 6



325
responses to the survey

24 
organisations invited to contribute input



Verbal update on island plan engagement provided to North Coast & Cumbrae Locality Partnership



471
unique website visits (across both islands)



Island Elected Member input sessions held



24
attended final online discussion



12
attended the first online discussion



9 further individuals directly contacted SKS to input (across both islands)

KEY FEEDBACK FROM THE ENGAGEMENT EXERCISE

THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON CUMBRAE

The impact of the pandemic was not always immediately apparent in the engagement feedback, and it was common for respondents, particularly in the survey, to make no explicit mention of the effect of the pandemic, but to simply describe their view of the priorities for Cumbrae.

There was also some rejection of the idea that there had been a real and substantial impact from COVID-19.

Although some factors may have changed, these are mostly inextricably linked with broader, and longer standing action required for sustainability of island life on Cumbrae. Many priorities and actions pre-date the pandemic and are still at least as great, if not, a greater priority.

However, there is evidence of how some things changed because of the pandemic, and that the experience, real and perceived, has created a new sense of community strength and urgency for action on Cumbrae.

“ You saw people more often and had more time to stop and talk to them. And people helped each other. A lot of that was through organised groups, but a lot of it was just people helping each other. I felt more like the island was a community than before.”

CUMBRAE ENGAGEMENT EXERCISE



WHAT CHANGED THROUGH THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC?

The overall experience of COVID-19 has highlighted both the resilience and the challenges Cumbrae has overcome during the pandemic and while island life has survived the challenges, the pandemic has exposed its fragility and tested the limits of the island through a combination of related factors including island accessibility, tourism tension, population profile, community resources and economic diversification.

None of these factors should or can be considered in isolation as any action or inaction to address one or more of these issues will have an impact on the others. Further it is important that there should be no 'hierarchy' of importance due to the co-dependency of the issues.



“ All of these things are interlinked. If more people are living here, there will be more opportunities and more economy which will create jobs and apprenticeships, more clubs and things to do – it creates a market for it. There’s nowhere to go after 5pm, but that’s due to the demographic of people who live here and day trips.”

CUMBRAE ENGAGEMENT EXERCISE

ISLAND ACCESSIBILITY

The ferry service has been regarded as problematic before the pandemic, however it has exacerbated the challenges for islanders through

- Sailings being cancelled through ferry staff exposure to COVID-19.
- Ferry capacity being reduced to accommodate social distancing restrictions.
- Journey times, waiting times and frequency of ferries being reduced to accommodate a cleaning regime.



THERE ARE MULTIPLE IMPACTS OF THE UNRELIABILITY AND CAPACITY OF THE FERRY SERVICE

- Residents who use this mode of transport as a life line service are unable to confidently plan for trips on and off Cumbrae.
- Residents are unable to make journeys at short notice.
- All users spend excessive amounts of time in queues at Largs or Cumbrae.
- Residents may find themselves stranded on the mainland.
- Potential future residents may choose not to move to the island, including working age families and professionals in essential health, care and education services. This means that the population profile is skewed towards older people. It also means that essential services staff tend to live off island, with the consequent risk to service delivery on-island, and there are fewer people of working age living on the island.
- Suppliers of goods to the island may apply an additional premium to compensate for the unreliability of the ferries. This cost is passed on to the consumer, creating a higher cost of living on the island.

The above list is not intended to be comprehensive but to give an insight into the scale and variety of the impact of an unreliable ferry service.

TOURISM TENSION

A tension between the economic benefits of visitors to the island and the impact of those visitors on the quality of life of residents was a long-standing feature of Cumbrae life before the pandemic.

“Also, with the rise in staycations, tourist business has possibly never been so good. It’s been limited mainly by ferry capacity. That may not last though.”

CUMBRAE ENGAGEMENT EXERCISE

During COVID-19, the contrast between the reduction in visitor numbers seen during the earlier lockdown when travel within the UK was restricted, and the increase in visitor numbers seen when the restrictions on UK travel were lifted but travel outside the UK was still regulated, highlighted for many residents, the inconveniences and impacts of high visitor numbers.

There was a sharp increase in visitor numbers to Cumbrae, in a number of instances beyond the capacity of the island infrastructure or the hospitality venues on the island. On a number of occasions CalMac refused to carry more day trippers across to Cumbrae due to the volume of visitors on the island who would need to return.

There was an increase in the number of visitors who engaged in anti-social behaviour or failed to observe VisitScotland’s #RespectProtectEnjoy guidance or the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

There was an increase in the number of visitors using mobile home vehicles, and problems caused by inconsiderate parking. There was concern that visitors using mobile home vehicles may contribute less to the local economy and create more inconvenience to local people as well as environmental damage. The new motorhome facilities at Garrison House may resolve the motorhome problem to some extent.

During the pandemic there was an increase in the frequency of wild camping and of spoiling of locations with waste, fires, damage to the environment etc.

The impact of spikes in visitor numbers on the local infrastructure and on transport provision and hospitality sector capacity, on occasion, may have led to both residents and visitors potentially having a poorer quality experience on Cumbrae.

There is a reputational risk that this will cause long-term damage to the island brand, with a consequent impact on the island’s reputation as a desirable place to live as well as on visitor numbers.

“Wild camping. This privilege is being abused by many visitors.

Despite the introduction of the motorhome site on the grounds of the Garrison many motorhome owners are still parking on the town streets, outside people's homes or blocking access points for the public to the beaches on the west side of the island.

A motorhome parking on the street is NOT wild camping.”

CUMBRAE ENGAGEMENT EXERCISE

POPULATION PROFILE

The fact that Cumbrae has an older population profile has meant that, in relation to the pandemic, the impact of isolation and limited access to on-island health and care service was a greater concern than in pre-pandemic times.

“ We are serving the needs of a largely retired community needing pastoral care. Most of the islands calls for progress largely forgets this”

CUMBRAE ENGAGEMENT EXERCISE

Where people had medical appointments on the mainland, the increased unreliability and inaccessibility of the ferry service during the pandemic regularly prevented people from attending these appointments. This was often at short notice, producing challenges for the patient in rescheduling the appointment and, presumably, for health providers in relation to the number of appointments which could not be re-allocated.

“ The crisis also introduced new and potentially beneficial ways of working in particular the delivery of medical services, with virtual consultations by GPs and consultants. The Health Board is already starting to implement telephone or video consultations in patient’s homes.

A private space in the Town Hall could be set up for those with no digital facilities at home, with technical support as necessary. Community members would benefit by avoiding long journeys from the island for what are often very short face-to-face professional consultations and the NHS would save on the expensive Patient Transport Service.”

CUMBRAE ENGAGEMENT EXERCISE



COMMUNITY RESOURCES

There is strong demand on the island for an increase in the quality and variety of community facilities, resources and services. The experience of being effectively island-bound during periods of restriction on movement highlighted, for many islanders, the value of the available resources and the absence of those that are unavailable or in short supply.

“ Availability of private sector services (retail, hospitality) is poor. Nowhere to go after 4pm. Shops close at 6pm / 8pm.

Not possible to maintain a household's grocery needs from local shop offer. Local shops geared to tourists.”

CUMBRAE ENGAGEMENT EXERCISE

The move to online health service consultations is regarded as a risk to the availability of health services and health professionals located on the island.

Islanders fear that the online consultations introduced during the pandemic will be part of the 'new normal' and there will be no return to earlier models of face-to-face health provision.

“ Care for elderly at end of life... heartbreaking to see people who have lived here all their lives have to leave at the end of their lives. We have a hospital here, seems unused... could put 4 beds in it...”

CUMBRAE ENGAGEMENT EXERCISE

In addition to community resources, there is a demand for more, and more varied, facilities for tourists and an improvement to the tourism offer. Better and more public toilets is a common demand, but there is also a desire for more recreational facilities and entertainment to attract and retain tourists, particularly overnight provision.

There are calls for the establishment of a passenger ferry facility between the town of Millport and the mainland.

There is substantial interest in the establishment of a marina and other waterfront infrastructure. This is seen as improving the tourist offer at the same time as contributing to new employment and enterprise on the island.



ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION

The experience of the pandemic and the effects of restrictions and of the relaxation of restrictions, increased islanders' awareness of the dependence of the island economy on tourism, and the risk that an economy with this level of dependence presents to the sustainability of island life.

“ Employment is really difficult, if someone has COVID, then there is a very limited pool of alternate / emergency cover. Sometime none, leading to business closure.”

CUMBRAE ENGAGEMENT EXERCISE

There is a recognition that many of the private sector businesses which islanders need may only be financially viable with the additional income from tourists. Equally however, there is a perception that, because of the restrictions on movement and a local desire to support local business, some retailers may have enjoyed a greater than usual level of trade.

Nonetheless, a key COVID-related insight for many residents has been the overall dependence on tourism, and the need to create a more diverse economic base for the island.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

With an eight-minute ferry journey to the mainland, Cumbrae is unique in its proximity to major Scottish conurbations. This closeness shapes the island's resilience as well as causing its fragility, and further data needs to be sought to better understand the impacts and consequences of location on the effective functioning of Cumbrae.

The overall experience of COVID-19 has highlighted both the resilience of Cumbrae in that island life has survived the challenges, and the fragility of the island in exposing and testing the limits of island resilience which are threatened by a combination of interrelated issues.

Dependence on a limited number of industries to support both employment and the availability of services for islanders, with limited employment opportunities for islanders and for people of working age to consider moving to the island, and a mismatch between the current ferry service and the needs of islanders.

As a result, the population profile has more older people and fewer younger people, meaning there is a greater demand for care services from older people, but a lower supply of people to provide these services, and challenges in attracting skilled care staff to the island. Older people may be unable to access care at home, or even care on the island and may have to move off-island to obtain health and social care, with a consequent further impact on island population.

There are fewer business start-ups, fewer opportunities for start-ups to contribute to diversifying the economy and fewer and less diverse employment opportunities for islanders which leads to young people leaving the island to seek employment elsewhere, further exaggerating the population profile imbalance.

An undersupply of good quality housing, high numbers of second and holiday homes and demand for more social housing also affects the ability of Cumbrae to attract people of working age. Combined with the limited options for energy supply results in a higher proportion of household income being spent on fuel, again with an impact on the disposable income of existing residents and their ability to spend in local businesses, further increasing local business reliance on the tourist trade.

“Something needs to be done about the energy costs in the island. With no access to gas, our electricity prices are astronomical compared to the mainland. As a family with young kids this is something that would make us leave the island. I have already contacted MSPs to take this forward and not got any further.”

CUMBRAE ENGAGEMENT EXERCISE

Fewer people of working age results in fewer families with children, resulting in less demand or need for education and children's services, therefore a risk that there is insufficient demand to support private sector suppliers, and a perceived risk to the business case for public sector provision. Erosion of private and public sector services and resources makes the island even less attractive as a location for people of working age, particularly those with families.

The additional costs of haulage for goods to the island creates higher prices for everyday groceries than on the mainland, further aggravating the imbalance between low income and high cost of living further reduces the attractiveness of the island, particularly for people in lower income jobs.

Prior to the pandemic, each of these factors existed in an unstable state of balance, with COVID exposing the dependencies and weaknesses in the system.

Despite all these factors, Cumbrae persevered through the pandemic, local people formed groups, delivered services, checked in on and helped neighbours and made things work. There is evidence that the capacity created and networks strengthened through this period will remain in place and will help ensure that Cumbrae has the resilience to navigate to recovery.

SURVEY PRIORITIES

The engagement survey asked people to rank a set of themes of concern which were identified from summaries of earlier work on the themes of concern for island life.

Economic growth, investment and sustainability

Education and skills and retention of young people

Health and social care

Transport

Reliance on seasonal tourism and the need for diversification

Protection of natural environment

Recruitment and retention of employees

Meeting the needs of older people

Energy and energy costs

Community capacity and empowerment

Preservation of heritage and cultural identity

Housing

Marine planning

Island premium costs

Population and depopulation

Resilience

Planning policy

Connectivity/digital

ACTIONS

The engagement survey asked people to rank a set of actions which were identified from earlier reports from community engagement and planning.

Pier Modifications / Pier Upgrading / Old Pier Upgrading

On-island waste / recycling facilities

Upgrade / maintenance of road surfaces and pavements

Improving visitor facilities (including toilets)

Managing visitor car numbers

Millport marina development with shoreside facilities

Car parking at rear of town

Waverley / passenger ferry services into Millport

Good community facilities in 'fit for purpose buildings'

Supporting Millport as a location for small business

Safe cycle / active travel routes

Improved play and recreation facilities

Investment in public realm (benches, bandstands, etc)

More appropriate housing options

Other marine hospitality and leisure

Business park / units / support for new local enterprise

Improved on-Island public transport

Festivals

Built and natural heritage interpretation features

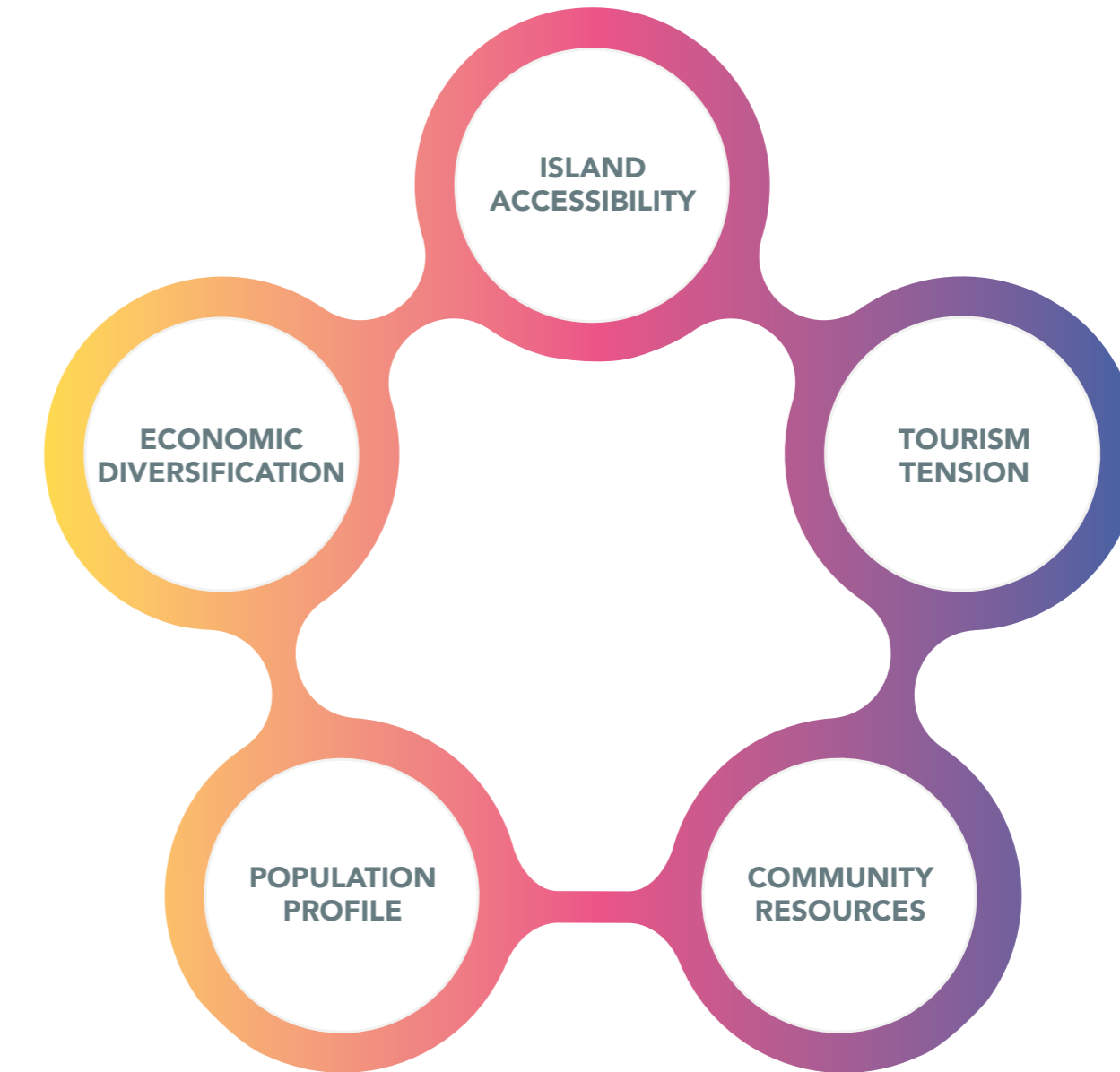
Public wireless internet connectivity (Wi-Fi)

PRIORITIES INTO ACTION

There is a general consensus across all feedback that the recovery of Cumbrae and the longer-term sustainability of island life is dependent on 5 key strands.

None of the key strands should or can be considered in isolation as any action or inaction to address one or more of these issues will have an impact on the others. Further it is important that there should be no 'hierarchy' of importance due to the co-dependency of the issues.

To address the challenges and priorities identified through the engagement process, a vision, key themes and action plan have been developed to support the recovery and renewal of Cumbrae.



THE ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY IDENTIFIED MANY INSPIRING AND INNOVATIVE CUMBRAE PROJECTS WHICH ARE BEING UNDERTAKEN BY THE COMMUNITY AS WELL AS THE THIRD, PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTOR.

MILLPORT COASTAL FLOOD PROTECTION SCHEME

ONGOING BUSINESS SUPPORT TO BUSINESSES VIA COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING, DIGITAL BOOST, BUSINESS GATEWAY FUNDING AND THE NEW GREEN JOBS FUND

DEVELOPMENT OF A MARINA / MARINE FACILITIES AT MILLPORT

REFURBISHMENT OF THE MASONRY PIER AT MILLPORT HARBOUR IN 2019

CUMBRAE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMPANY (CCDC) HAVE CREATED A NEW MOTORHOME PARK WITHIN THE GROUNDS OF GARRISON HOUSE

1 CASE STUDY

The Millport Support Group

During COVID, the main community groups on Cumbrae worked together to ensure the response on the island was well-co-ordinated. **The Millport Support Group (MSG)** was formed at the start of the pandemic, bringing together volunteers from the main island community groups to organise local support.



Representatives from **Churches Together**, the **Boy's Brigade**, **Cumbrae Community Council**, the **Cumbrae Forum**, **North Ayrshire Locality Partnership** and **local businesses** co-ordinated a fantastic team of over 40 local volunteers who did everything from manning a helpline, to delivering and exchanging books from the Forum shop, to supplying needles and wool for knitting lockdown rainbow blankets and running 'Zoom' coffee afternoons.

Volunteers helped with shelf-stacking and grocery deliveries during the first lockdown as local retailers stepped up to cater for the sudden massive increase in demand while the 'stay at home' advice was in place. They delivered 'helping hand' food parcels as **Cumbrae Parish Church** became a distribution centre for donations from **Morrisons** and the **Cumbrae Food Bank** and the Group successfully appealed to **North Ayrshire Council** to give funding rather than supplies for support including school meals, so that it would be spent locally in island businesses.

The Group applied for, distributed and set up digital devices so that more vulnerable community members could stay in touch with family and local groups as well as making sure a local diabetic dog got her insulin supplies from the vet in Largs.

A community newsletter, the **CROC (Covid Response on Cumbrae) Talk**, was started up with funding from **Highlands & Islands Enterprise** and delivered by volunteers to every household on the island to keep everyone up to date on the support available to them. Two years on, the helpline remains open, Millport Support Group now co-ordinates community resilience and continues to publish and deliver the **Croc Talk** as a community newsletter.

The 3 island churches – **The Cathedral of the Isles**, **The Parish Church** and **Our Lady of the Isles** provided a network of pastoral care and provided knowledge of the elderly and infirm in their congregations in order to identify needing special or urgent needs in the initial stages of the pandemic whilst the Millport Support Group was setting up and this specialist knowledge of local residents was invaluable in getting relevant support to where it was needed.

2 CASE STUDY

Plant to Plate Garden

The **Plant to Plate Garden** is a project set up by **Cumbræ Primary School**, **Cumbræ Parish Church** and **Cumbræ Community Garden** to engage local children in growing and using vegetables.

The garden is in the grounds of **Cumbræ Parish Church** and has a seating area open to the community to enjoy. Another community group, the **Cumbræ Forum**, recently secured grant funding from **Foundation Scotland** to install an irrigation system at the garden, making life easier for the group of volunteers who maintain the garden during the school holidays.

The whole project is a great example of island community groups working together and will continue to progress new projects that further develop and enhance this wonderful initiative through securing **Healthy Islands** funding through **Scottish Government's Islands Programme**.

3 CASE STUDY

The Millport Support Group Resilience Team

Millport Support Group Resilience Team is a group of volunteers, drawn from all sections of the local community and members have a wide range of backgrounds and skill sets but each team member shares a common purpose - to assist the community if called upon in times of need.

Community Resilience is a measure of the ability of **Cumbræ** to use its available resources, local knowledge and assets to respond to, withstand, and recover from adverse situations, whatever they may be. Their main role is to support the **Local Authority & Emergency Services** in their response to emergencies and major incidents.

In a serious situation they may be asked to do just about anything, from helping to open a rest centre for vulnerable residents, providing welfare facilities for emergency service personnel in the event of a serious incident on the island, right through to helping the local police and Coastguard to search for a missing or vulnerable person.

Community is a big part of what the team do and can be asked to get involved in other beneficial projects such as cleaning up after floods, heavy snowfall, storms or attending community events, etc in an emergency such as a fire, flood, storm or snow and they work with other local groups and **North Ayrshire Council** services to identify people who may become vulnerable during such events and put systems in place to help those in the **Cumbræ** community who are most in need.

4 CASE STUDY

Millport
Town Hall

Millport Town Hall is a historic building on the At Risk register within a Conservation Area. Dating from 1878, it is a key building for the community and has played an important part in the history of the island and its residents over the past 140 years.

Moves are afoot by the community to preserve this building and bring it back into sustainable use for many years to come.

Working with individuals, groups, North Ayrshire Council and many other organisations to make sure that the building offers what the community would like and need and with the project having faced increasing challenges in 2021 due to the complexity of funding, the pandemic and the resultant increase in material prices, they are demonstrating true resilience, passion and placing the heart of the community in what they are accomplishing on a week by week basis.

5 CASE STUDY

Active
Schools

After consulting with young people and their families on Cumbrae, Active Schools delivered a summer programme of activities on dates, times and venues that they identified.

Sessions were full and meant young people did not need to leave the island to take part in sport and physical activity opportunities over the summer period resulting in saving time and money and ensuring access to local opportunities.





WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE...

VISION FOR 2032

Cumbræ is a more sustainable and accessible island with improved infrastructure, transport and housing provision. The island is attracting a more balanced population who enjoy a wider range of employment opportunities and activities.

KEY THEMES

To realise Cumbrae's vision of becoming a sustainable and accessible island, three plan themes determine the Island Plan with a set of key priorities and related actions that build on the existing strengths of the island and minimize risk and further fragility to the community, economy and environmental wellbeing of Cumbrae.



COMMUNITY

A thriving community where people's needs are understood and supported.



ECONOMY

A resilient economy which meets the aspirations of residents, businesses



ENVIRONMENT

A sustainable infrastructure which protects the Victorian heritage and unique environment.

An Annual Action Plan 2022/23 is included in Appendix 1 to accompany the Local Island Plan. For each priority theme there are key actions, potential teams, groups, businesses, agencies or partners who may work together to ensure effective delivery, the required timescales, fit with National Islands Plan, how actions contribute to Community Wealth Building and Net Zero and indicators to measure progress.

As the Annual Action Plan progresses, further actions will be developed or revised for each key theme. Methods of measurement will also be refined over the duration of the Plan to identify key data sources.



COMMUNITY

CUMBRAE IS A IS A RESILIENT AND INNOVATIVE ISLAND COMMUNITY

- KEY PRIORITIES -

RELIABLE FERRY PROVISION
 AFFORDABLE AND SOCIAL HOUSING
 POPULATION - ATTRACT WORKING AGE FAMILIES
 PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE
 ACCESS TO HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES
 EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE
 COMMUNITY FACILITIES



ECONOMY

CUMBRAE IS AN ACCESSIBLE, INCLUSIVE AND GREEN ISLAND ECONOMY

- KEY PRIORITIES -

IMPROVING RESILIENCE OF ISLAND BUSINESS BASE
 DIVERSIFICATION OF ECONOMY & RELIANCE ON SEASONAL TOURISM
 IMPROVED TOURISM & RETAIL OFFER
 EDUCATION AND SKILLS AND RETENTION OF YOUNG PEOPLE
 RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF EMPLOYEES
 EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES



ENVIRONMENT

CUMBRAE IS SUPPORTING A JUST TRANSITION TO NET ZERO

- KEY PRIORITIES -

ADDRESS ENERGY COSTS
 CLIMATE ACTION & SUSTAINABILITY
 PROTECTION OF NATURAL ENVIRONMENT
 BUILT & NATURAL ENVIRONMENT
 TOURISM MANAGEMENT
 PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE
 FLOOD PROTECTION
 MARINE/PIER INFRASTRUCTURE



HOW THE ACTION PLAN WILL BE DELIVERED

SUCCESSFUL DELIVERY OF THE CUMBRAE LOCAL ISLAND PLAN REQUIRES IT TO BE:

- Developed by and with the Cumbrae community
- Adopted and delivered by the community, island businesses, and third and public sector partners
- Inclusive and participatory
- Feasible and realistic
- Flexible and responsive
- Action focused
- In line with the delivery of the National Islands Plan
- In line with the principles of Community Wealth Building
- In line with the transition to Net Zero

Success will depend on a broad participation of stakeholders from Cumbrae who will be the driver of delivering and monitoring progress of the Plan, ensuring there is an all-inclusive opportunity for everyone to be involved.

A key area of focus for the Island Recovery and Renewal Pilot is to contribute to closer and more coordinated working between the island communities, partners and national and local government and agencies to ensure stronger island-focused partnership and to work collaboratively to unlock the knowledge, resources and support necessary to bring the Cumbrae Local Island Plan to life.

Key to the implementation stage of the Plan will be the governance model with responsibility either collectively or individually for the delivery of the actions outlined in Appendix 1.

Participation in the development and influencing of the Plan has not, and will not, be limited to the early stages of the process. Participation will be necessary and widely encouraged throughout the delivery phase.

Whilst it is important that governance of the Island Plan aligns to the North Coast & Cumbraes Locality Partnership structure, there is also a need for thematic expertise and wider islander input.



Figure 1. Final governance model for further consideration

The Local Island Plan Delivery Group could be the central partnership driving delivery for this Island Plan.

The group may comprise public, private, third sector and community representation to bring knowledge and understanding of the priorities and to reflect the range of stakeholders with an interest in Cumbrae.

They may take primary responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the agreed actions throughout the life of the Plan, with the purpose of improving the outcomes for Cumbrae, with responsibility to include:

- Take lead responsibility for delivering specific identified actions
- Provide expertise to inform how action can be delivered to maximise impact
- Ensure the wide communication of actions and progress
- Communicate with Cumbrae stakeholders to ensure input to actions on an ongoing basis
- Act as ambassadors and champion a place-based approach to delivering action for the benefit of Cumbrae
- Monitor, review and report progress against the Local Island Plan and Action Plan to the North Coast & Cumbraes Locality Partnership



HOW THE LOCAL ISLAND PLAN FITS INTO LOCAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL POLICY

At a national level the Cumbrae Local Island Plan is set within the context of The Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 and the corresponding National Islands Plan. At a local level, the Local Island Plan takes account of the North Coast & Cumbraes Locality Partnership priorities and is further supported through the work of the Island Recovery and Renewal Pilot, North Ayrshire Council's Economic Recovery and Renewal approach, Community Wealth Building Strategy and the island engagement activity.



THE ISLANDS (SCOTLAND) ACT 2018

The Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 defines an island community as ‘a community of two or more people, all of whom live permanently on the island with a common interest in the identity of the island’.

The Act was granted Royal Assent in July 2018 and introduces a range of measures to support and help meet the unique needs of Scotland's islands now and in the future. It will also seek to help create the right environment for sustainable growth and empowered communities.

A provision within the Act requires the Scottish Ministers to develop a National Islands Plan (NIP). According to the Act, the purpose of the Plan is ‘to set out the main objectives and strategy of the Scottish Ministers in relation to improving outcomes for island communities that result from or are contributed to by the carrying out of functions of a public nature’.

The Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 and the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 empowers communities to shape their individual and collective futures and to make it easier for islanders to develop their own economies, wellbeing and environments.

It also places duties on local public services to work together with communities to improve outcomes on themes that are priorities for the islanders.



THE NATIONAL ISLANDS PLAN

In December 2019, Scottish Ministers published the first ever National Islands Plan, which was created with the input from many islanders, including those on Cumbrae. The Plan sets out 13 Strategic Objectives which are practical yet critical to improving the quality of life for island communities.

The 13 strategic objectives (SOs) set out in the National Islands Plan are as follows.

To address population decline and ensure a healthy, balanced population profile

To improve and promote sustainable economic development

To improve transport services

To improve housing

To reduce levels of fuel poverty

To improve digital connectivity

To improve and promote health, social care and wellbeing

To improve and promote environmental wellbeing and deal with biosecurity

To contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation and promote clean, affordable and secure energy

To empower diverse communities and different places

To support arts, culture and language

To promote and improve education for all throughout life

To support effective implementation of the National Islands Plan

NORTH COAST & CUMBRAES LOCALITY PARTNERSHIP

Locality planning was introduced in the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, under Part 2: Community Planning and is about reducing inequalities and enabling communities to participate in decision making at a local level.

It is one of the ways local communities work together with public and third sector organisations to improve residents' lives and localities. In North Ayrshire, Locality Partnerships are how the Community Planning Partnership fulfill its duties under the Community Empowerment Act to have locality arrangements. There are six Locality Partnerships in North Ayrshire which cover the whole local authority and North Coast & Cumbraes Locality Partnership is the partnership that covers the island of Cumbrae.

It is desirable that the development of the Cumbrae Island Plan aligns to the North Coast & Cumbraes Locality Partnership and the important and valued work the partnership undertakes.

Local priorities have been decided by each locality, based on national data, local statistics and the views of local people gathered through the North Ayrshire People's Panel survey and the Place Standard tool.

The North Coast & Cumbraes Partnership priorities currently are:

- Improving access to financial services
- Increasing social inclusion
- Improving mental wellbeing
- Supporting skills and work opportunities



CUMBRAE GROUPS

The island has a broad range of active and engaged community groups including Cumbrae Community Council, Cumbrae Community Development Company and Millport Town Hall who worked collaboratively with the Council during the preparation of the Cumbrae Economic Baseline report and supporting sharing of information during the development of the Cumbrae Local Island Plan to improve outcomes for Cumbrae over the next ten years.

ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND RENEWAL APPROACH (GREEN NEW DEAL)

In response to the widespread economic and social impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, in September 2020 the Council launched its Economic Recovery and Renewal Approach (Green New Deal) to build back better, fairer and greener. The approach is based on the foundation of Community Wealth Building and sets out a Local Green New Deal for North Ayrshire.

The twin priorities of a North Ayrshire Green New Deal are:

1 To ensure an inclusive economic recovery by delivering our Community Wealth Building mission; and

2 To ensure a green economic recovery focused on achieving our net zero carbon ambitions through the creation of sustainable infrastructure and regeneration projects and creating fair jobs.

North Ayrshire Council's refreshed Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change strategy (2021-2023) sets out seven workstreams for how the Council will achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030. These workstreams are intrinsically linked to economic recovery through their alignment to the Community Wealth Building approach and Green New Deal aspirations.



ISLAND RECOVERY & RENEWAL PILOT

The development of the Cumbrae Local Island Plan complements the idea of testing new ways of working across local government, Scottish Government, Highlands & Islands Enterprise, Community Planning Partners, island communities and businesses to deliver the ambitious objectives outlined in the National Islands Plan, as well as sharing this learning with other island areas.

As part of the three-year Island Recovery and Renewal Pilot, a new post of Senior Officer (Islands) has been created within North Ayrshire Council to contribute to the ongoing development and delivery of islands' policy, working in a more coordinated way across the public sector with island communities, businesses and with a range of external stakeholders to tackle long-standing place-based issues relating to island communities ensuring the understanding and representation of the unique needs of islands' communities in local and national policy development.

Further, the pilot will support the recovery and renewal of the islands from the social and economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic including the development of 'Island Plans' for Cumbrae and Arran aligned to the strategic objectives of the National Islands Plan and the principles of Community Wealth Building.

The Cumbrae Local Island Plan sits within the broad context of local, regional and national setting and has a clear link with a range of local, regional and national plans, strategies and frameworks with further examples shown in illustration 5.

COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING

North Ayrshire Council has shown economic leadership with the launch of Scotland's first Community Wealth Building strategy in May 2020 which sets out a bold new economic model focused on wellbeing and inclusion.

This strategy sets out how the Council will deliver this by focusing on their Community Wealth Building mission of 'Enhancing local wealth and the creation of fair jobs and maximising the potential of all our places through working in partnership with our communities and businesses'.

North Ayrshire Council has set out six objectives to deliver Community Wealth Building:



PROCUREMENT

Progressive procurement develops dense local supply chains of local enterprises, small and medium sized enterprises, employee-owned businesses, social enterprises, cooperatives and other forms of community owned enterprise.



FAIR EMPLOYMENT

Recruitment from lower income areas, commitment to paying the living wage and building progression routes for workers are all examples of the actions to stimulate the local economy and bring social improvements to local communities.



LAND AND ASSETS

Anchors are often major land holders and can support equitable land development and the development of under-utilised assets for community use.



FINANCIAL POWER

Community Wealth Building seeks to increase flows of investment within local economies by harnessing the wealth that exists locally.



PLURAL OWNERSHIP OF THE ECONOMY

Democratic Ownership of the Local Economy - Cooperatives, mutually owned businesses, small and medium sized enterprises, social and community enterprises and municipally owned companies enable the wealth generated in a community to stay in that local area.





WE HOPE THAT YOU RECOGNISE AND SHARE THE VISION, PRIORITIES AND AMBITIONS IN THE CUMBRAE ISLAND PLAN AND 2022/23 ANNUAL ACTION PLAN THAT HAVE BEEN PREPARED WITH ISLAND STAKEHOLDERS.

We would like to thank everyone who has provided input and comments in the preparation of this document and to ensure that the community of Cumbrae will be at the heart of delivering this plan.

To find out more about how the plan is progressing please visit:

www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/islands

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Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Iomairt na Gàidhealtachd 's nan Eilean



The Scottish
Government



North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Air a Tuath