

2019



Infrastructure Commission for Scotland – Call for Evidence

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL RESPONSE

WELCH, JONATHAN

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Introduction | 2 |
| Infrastructure Barriers to Economic Growth | 3 |
| Economic Drivers for Argyll and Bute | 3 |
| Connecting – Critical Infrastructure | 5 |
| Routes to Market / Transport | 5 |
| Roads | 5 |
| Air Infrastructure | 7 |
| Ferry and Port Infrastructure | 8 |
| Rail Infrastructure | 9 |
| Active Travel Infrastructure | 9 |
| Low Emission Vehicles | 9 |
| Digital Connectivity | 10 |
| Energy Grid Enhancements | 10 |
| Attracting – Critical Infrastructure | 11 |
| The provision of key worker housing to support economic growth | 11 |
| Business Cluster Infrastructure | 11 |
| Expanding our Local Further and Higher education offer | 11 |
| Creating investor ready places through transformational change to our outstanding Built Environment | 12 |
| Growing – Critical Infrastructure | 13 |
| Tourism | 13 |
| Expanding our engineering, renewables, defence & marine industries | 13 |
| Inform and Influence government policy | 13 |
| Rural Growth Deal | 14 |
| Appendix 1: Public and Private Sector Investment Maps | 15 |
| Map of Private Investment in Argyll Region (circa £635M) | 15 |
| Map of Public Investment in Argyll Region (circa £300M) | 16 |
| Appendix 2 – Supporting Documents | 17 |
| Appendix 3 – Argyll and Bute Council Transport Priorities | 18 |

Introduction

Argyll and Bute brings together much of what is best about Scotland – natural resources that drive national and international business markets, expertise that inspires innovation, and people committed to developing the prosperous future the area needs and deserves. Argyll therefore provides opportunities for economic growth that would benefit life in Argyll, Scotland and the UK.

To turn opportunity into success we must reverse the decline in our population. Forecasts estimate that by 2027 Argyll will need another 10,000+ more people to drive forward business development and deliver services for Argyll and the West Coast of Scotland.

A prosperous and inclusive economy lies at the heart of council priorities and this is reflected in the **Argyll and Bute Outcome Improvement Plan 2013 – 2023** that has been agreed with the Scottish Government. The overarching vision of the **Argyll and Bute Outcome Improvement Plan 2013 – 2023** that has been agreed with the Scottish Government is:

“Argyll and Bute’s economic success is based on a growing population.”

Argyll has sufficient natural resources that could be an economic driver for growth for both the local and for the wider UK and Scottish economies. It is considered that the region possesses factors of competitive advantage in the following key sectors that have significant potential to drive future economic growth in Argyll and Bute:-

- Tourism;
- Food and drink production including aquaculture;
- Marine Science;
- Education and skills;
- Renewable energy;
- Defence industries;
- Space industries;
- Agriculture, fishing and forestry;
- Construction; and
- Culture, heritage and arts.

In order for Argyll and Bute to meet its economic potential it is essential to align future infrastructure investment with the strategic economic priorities that will help drive a step change in economic activity in the area. There are significant opportunities to build upon the estimated £635m already secured through private investment in the last decade and estimated £300m of public committed investment. **(Appendix 1)**

Argyll and Bute Council have recently developed the following 3 strategic documents in order to help align future infrastructure investment where it will best develop Argyll as an economically successful region and driver for Scotland and the UK:-

- Argyll and Bute Council Single Investment Plan (SIP);
- Rural Growth Deal – Argyll the Natural Choice (RGD);

- Argyll and Bute Economic Strategy and associated Action Plan.
- Argyll and Bute Council – List of Key Transport Priorities

These documents form the basis of this response and all are included as additional supporting evidence in Appendix 2 and 3 respectively.

Infrastructure Barriers to Economic Growth

There are significant opportunities to drive economic growth in Argyll and Bute which can benefit the wider Scottish and UK economies. However, in order for this to happen there is a need for additional infrastructure investment that helps to address some of the following critical barriers to growth in the region:-

- **Mobile and broadband connectivity** – vital for businesses to access customers and markets, lack of coverage the key constraint to attracting new business to Argyll and Bute;
- **Housing / Business Accommodation**- Availability and mix of housing required to accommodate staff. Lack of business premises also identified as weakness by businesses which impacts opportunities for growth, high cost of developing rural sites due to servicing costs e.g. access roads, sewerage and water connections;
- **Transport links** – Essential given rural geography of Argyll, numerous lifeline services to islands, provides links to key markets and for local people to access local employment opportunities;
- **Availability of learning and training opportunities** – Lack of learning opportunities pushes young people out of the area, important to provide training tailored towards local employment opportunities.
- **Availability of skilled labour** – Access to and availability of skilled labour crucial to facilitate growth in key sectors.
- **Ageing and declining population;**
- **Higher levels of underemployment** and lower wages than the national average (particularly for females).

Extensive research and public engagement together with investment trends over recent years has identified our key economic opportunities and also the main barriers to growth which we need to overcome to reach our full potential. This in turn has helped identify the Key Priorities we need to address in order to deliver our vision working with our strategic partners across all sectors.

Economic Drivers for Argyll and Bute

Both Argyll's Rural Growth Deal proposals and new Economic Strategy set out the following 3 key themes which are considered to be critical drivers for the region's economic success:

- **Connecting:** our high value business sectors with national and international business markets; our local economic successes with national strategic priorities;
- **Attracting:** additional skills, training and learning opportunities; new residents, visitors and businesses;
- **Growing:** doing more of what works; making more of our natural and built resources.

This response will now summarise some of the key infrastructure priorities linked to the 3 themes set out above.

Connecting – Critical Infrastructure

Routes to Market / Transport

Argyll and Bute is characterised by its geographic diversity with a large land area, dispersed populations and 23 inhabited islands making transport provision essential but also very challenging. Argyll has a wide range of public transport services including lifeline ferry and air links, local and regional bus services, rail, trunk and public roads. Creating reliable, resilient and secure routes to market is a top priority for the Argyll and Bute's business community. The principle way to do this is through our transport network.

Improving our transport connectivity is a top priority for our council and critically important for the future of Argyll and Bute in terms of quality of life as a place to live, to learn, to visit and to do business. Key benefits of increased investment in our transport corridors and services that make use of them include:-

- Improved connectivity for our residents;
- Improved reliability and access for employment, goods and services to key markets e.g. whisky/aquaculture products;
- Improved connectivity for our visitors;
- Improved safety and resilience on our strategic routes.

The Council will therefore continue to work with the Scottish Government and our national and regional transport partners to influence where future investment is prioritised in order to facilitate improvements to our transport infrastructure that best addresses the above issues. To this end, Argyll and Bute Council are currently liaising with Transport Scotland to provide evidence in support of the inclusion of a number of critically important national transport interventions that we consider should be included as part of the new Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR). A list of key transport priorities is also included in **Appendix 3** of this response.

Roads

Argyll and Bute Council are also seeking funding via a Rural Growth Deal (RGD) to undertake STAG assessments on the A83 strategic trunk road corridor to investigate where enhancements could be made to improve road safety, resilience and journey times on these key arteries. The focus of the STAG assessments will be on where future investment is required to support growth in key sectors and such as tourism and food and drink production with a focus on exports and key routes to market for goods and services.

Similarly Argyll and Bute Council want to undertake appraisals/technical feasibility work for the re-routing of the A85 in Oban to allow for the future strategic housing and business development. This will include refreshing the STAG appraisal for Oban undertaken in 2010

which explored the transportation issues facing the town and options to realign the A85 with associated traffic management measures to:-

- Enable the efficient and reliable operation of the road network in Oban by reducing the occurrence of network problems like congestion, queuing and delays; and
- Allow all currently planned development in and adjacent to Oban to take place with no net detriment to the transport network.

Whilst the trunk road network is not maintained by Argyll and Bute Council we are committed to working in partnership with the Scottish Government, Transport Scotland and key stakeholders to ensure that these critical arteries are safe, resilient and futureproofed to support the growth of our population and economy.

The Argyll and Bute Transport Connectivity and Economy Research Report commissioned by HIE has identified the following five key transport issues in Argyll:-

- Long journey times by road between Oban and Glasgow;
- Uncompetitive journey times between Oban and Glasgow by rail;
- Poor resilience of journeys between Lochgilphead, Campbeltown and Glasgow by Road due to impacts of landslides and accidents on the A83.
- Disproportionate journey times between Lochgilphead on Oban due to sub-standard geometry of the A816;
- Disproportionate journey times for the distance across Cowal between Dunoon, Bute, (via Colintraive) and Kintyre (via Portavadie), where much of the road is single track.

The transport issues identified in the HIE study (<http://www.hie.co.uk/regional-information/economic-reports-and-research/archive/argyll-and-bute-transport-connectivity-and-economy-research.html>) are considered to be constraining the economy of the area and, as such, it will be essential that there is significant investment in local transport infrastructure to support improved economic performance. Transport investment should in particular focus on improving journey times, reliability and resilience between Argyll and Scotland's Central Belt and internally between key local settlements.

In addition to Trunk Roads, the RGD seeks investment for strategic local transport corridors that are critical to the local economy. For example the A816 is approximately 37 miles long and forms a main connection on the west coast of Scotland between Lochgilphead on the A83 and Oban on the A85. It starts at a roundabout junction with the A83 trunk road on the western fringes of Lochgilphead and ends at Argyll Square in the centre of Oban where it meets the A85, close to Oban Railway Station and CalMac Oban ferry terminal, passing through Kilmartin Glen along the way. Lochgilphead is the main administrative area of Argyll with the closest town centre, Oban. However due to the horizontal and vertical alignment of

sections of this route, the average time to drive this “A” class corridor is approximately one hour with average speeds below 40mph.

A STAG appraisal undertaken in 2008 identified other constraints along this corridor including:-

- Poor visibility which limits overtaking opportunities;
- HGVs and coaches find it difficult to manoeuvre on the road;
- The A816 is important to local industries as it is one of the few routes north of Kintyre suitable for timber extraction and vehicles serving industries such as fishing;
- The condition of the road is constraining the growth of tourism in the area.

Upgrading substandard sections of the A816 would improve access to Oban for businesses located in the Lochgilphead area and further south in Kintyre, and enhancing this strategic route will improve accessibility across Mid Argyll making this a more attractive area to visit and do business. This is also a key road traffic route linking some of Scotland’s busiest ferry terminals (Oban (serving Mull, Tiree, Iona, Coll, Barra, Lismore, Kerrera, Uist) and Kennacraig (serving Islay, Colonsay and Jura)) in addition to a number of smaller ports where ferry services operate between the islands of Luing and Easdale. The STAG appraisal undertaken in 2008 identified a package of preferred measures to upgrade the route costing in the region of £10m that would result in benefits in excess of £28m.

Given the challenging economic conditions and reduction in local government budgets, Argyll and Bute Council recognises the need to continue to work in partnership with Transport Scotland and the Regional Transport Partnerships to secure increased investment in key transport infrastructure and services. This will ensure that the area remains a competitive and attractive place to live, work, visit and do business. This is particularly important at this time given that authorities across Scotland and indeed the rest of the UK are benefiting from additional Government investment via city and regional growth deal funding.

Air Infrastructure

In addition to local road infrastructure, Argyll and Bute Council Argyll and Bute Council are seeking an investment of £3.5m via the RGD to further develop air links in the region by:-

- Developing infrastructure at Oban Airport; and
- Supporting new air services to allow Oban Airport to achieve its full potential as a regional airport hub on the west coast of Scotland.

It is considered that investment to develop local air infrastructure and services would result in the following benefits to the local and national economy;-

- Increase in national and international tourism/visitor numbers with increased expenditure through Oban and Argyll with the inner Hebridean islands being made more accessible;

- Increased opportunities for high value tourism and business travel via charter flights. And improved links for the cruise ship market which is worth over £1M to the Argyll economy. Increase business operational efficiency and reduce operating costs;
- Improve rural patient access to NHS healthcare located within the Central Belt;
- Improve UK business access into Argyll and Highland region, for example such as investment plans for expansion of the smelter site at Lochaber;
- Enhanced efficiency of the Scottish Association of Marine Science together with other businesses being able to more easily access clients, and suppliers internationally;
- Provide resilience for fragile communities through improved transport connections to the Central Belt, particularly in light of disruption on the trunk road network due to road closures, accidents and lengthy diversions;
- Provide and open up opportunities for the development of Oban Airport Business Park and attract more overseas students to live and study in Oban University Town;
- Increased business rates, Council Tax. Increased Corporation Tax and increased Income Tax and National Insurance;

Ferry and Port Infrastructure

Investment by the Scottish Government in certain transport services can place additional pressure on other fragile local infrastructure (e.g. RET places increased demands on fragile local road infrastructure). Increased economic activity is welcomed but additional investment is needed to futureproof local infrastructure to accommodate predicted increases in traffic / passengers resulting from growth in sectors such as tourism.

There is often a disconnect between proposed new vessels, existing port infrastructure and the time required to upgrade these ports. Some communities would favour smaller vessels with more frequent operation which could assist with the resilience of the network, require less capital funding to accommodate at the port and dilute the impact on fragile island roads. The importance of local transparency of these important capital decisions for remote rural and island communities should not be underestimated

It is also essential that there is investment in local ferry and port infrastructure to ensure this is futureproofed to accommodate increased patronage generated by the predicted growth in tourism and local industries such as food and drink including aquaculture and whisky. These sectors are critically important to Scotland's economy and it is therefore critical to invest in local transport infrastructure to address some of the existing barriers to economic growth in the region.

Additional public sector investment will in turn encourage increased levels of inward investment by the private sector stimulating growth in the local economy and generating positive rates of return to the Scottish and UK Governments from key sectors such as whisky, tourism, aquaculture, life sciences etc.

Rail Infrastructure

Argyll and Bute Council are committed to working with Transport Scotland, Network Rail and the Regional Transport Partnerships to investigate where local rail infrastructure can be upgraded to enable more frequent and reliable rail connections to some of our key towns. This includes options for more frequent / faster rail connections to Oban on the Highland main line and the potential introduction of rail services to HMNB Clyde in light of the MOD's £1.3bn Maritime Change Programme.

Active Travel Infrastructure

Argyll and Bute Council are committed to growing active travel within the region however, it should be noted that the remote geography, dispersed population and nature of much of the local road network (A and B class roads, national speed limits, unlit and narrow in places) in Argyll make growing the number of journeys undertaken by active travel particularly challenging.

The current economic climate has placed considerable pressure on local authority budgets and this is making it increasingly difficult to invest in sustainable transport infrastructure projects. In Argyll this issue is compounded by the fragile condition of large parts of the local road network which is so vital to the region. As such, Argyll and Bute Council rely heavily on grant funding such as Cycling Walking Safer Streets (CWSS) and Sustrans Community Links funding to deliver active travel infrastructure projects in the region. Grant funding conditions can however occasionally make projects unviable to deliver e.g. the requirement to provide 2.5m (minimum) wide sealed surface cycleways which whilst desirable can be difficult to achieve in some locations due to land constraints. Grant funding also generally requires to be matched by Local Authorities and the requirement to provide up to 50% of total project costs will often make projects financially unviable for Local Authorities to deliver.

Grant funding for new cycling infrastructure is welcomed by the Council however, it should also be noted that there are associated maintenance implications which must be considered. The continued reduction in Council budgets can make Local Authorities reluctant to adopt new active travel infrastructure due to the associated maintenance costs. There is a risk that over time local active travel infrastructure will deteriorate if not properly maintained and this will do little to encourage increased levels of walking and cycling. As such, we would request that the Scottish Government consider allowing a proportion of grant funding to be spent maintaining existing infrastructure to reduce the pressure on Council budgets.

Low Emission Vehicles

Although Argyll and Bute Council are working to grow the local economy and encourage more visitors to the area we are also keen to limit the impact of increased levels of travel on our natural environment. As such, the council have been working with Transport Scotland to install a network of electric vehicle charging points at strategic locations across Argyll. We

would also agree that as electric vehicles become more popular there will be a requirement to develop a consistent national and/or regional strategy regarding the responsibility to provide and maintain vehicle charging infrastructure. At present the Council meet the costs associated with electricity and after 3 years will meet all maintenance costs. This is considered to be unsustainable given existing pressure on local authority budgets.

Digital Connectivity

Having access to modern, fit for purpose and affordable, digital infrastructure is now essential for most people to choose to live in a place and support a prosperous and inclusive economy. The Council will continue to influence and coordinate work with our key stakeholders such as the UK and Scottish Governments, BT, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Digital Scotland to deliver the roll out of National digital programmes for broadband and mobile connectivity. In addition, the Council will be seeking to significantly expand the provision of fibre to fibre technology through investment secured via bids to Government funding and the RGD with a focus on strategic business sites, the delivery of telecare and medicare health services, town centres and educational premises. Argyll and Bute Council are also seeking investment via the RGD to improve 4G mobile connectivity and mast infrastructure as this is not always commercially viable for mobile operators to provide in rural areas. A key part to Scotland's Economic Strategy is to deliver future proofed infrastructure that will establish world class digital connectivity across the whole of Scotland by 2020. It is therefore vital to ensure that rural areas are futureproofed to take account of advances in mobile and digital technology such as 5G. The roll out of 3G and 4G connectivity has been slow in rural areas such as Argyll and this represents a key barrier to economic growth in some of the country's most economically fragile areas.

Energy Grid Enhancements

Argyll and Bute produces over 1 GW of clean energy including on shore wind, solar, hydro and mini-hydro. This energy largely feeds into the national grid with limited benefits to the local area save for the local distribution of community benefits. The local grid is currently constrained and there is a need to modernise it to enable greater flexibility in how it is used to address local energy issues such as fuel poverty.

We will continue to work with our partners through the Argyll and Bute Renewables Alliance (ABRA) with a focus on tackling strategic issues that currently limit our potential to generate, distribute, allow local people to take up employment opportunities and makes best use of clean energy in our communities. This work will be informed by our Renewable Energy Action Plan (REAP) that will be kept up to date together with offering on-line advice to local communities in receipt of income from renewable energy generators and others who want to take advantage of renewable energy in the future.

Attracting – Critical Infrastructure

The provision of key worker housing to support economic growth

A key barrier to growing our population and delivering sustainable, economic growth is the provision of affordable housing in the places people want to live and work. Argyll and Bute has a strong track record in the delivery of social rented housing with a substantial programme of new projects identified for the next five years delivered through our housing partners including the Scottish Government and partly funded through our own Strategic Housing Fund. The focus of Strategy in this area is delivering additional housing choice, particularly for key workers working in our main business sectors, to facilitate sustainable economic growth and it is intended to take this forward through a range of partners and funded primarily through the emerging Rural Growth Deal.

Business Cluster Infrastructure

To remain competitive in the global economy Argyll businesses need to play to their main strengths and continue to add value to the services they offer and their products through innovation, often involving academic collaboration. In Argyll our areas with greatest potential lie with aquaculture, marine science, creative industries, food and drink products and engineering associated with the defence industries. Consequently, we are looking to develop a number of business clusters that can accelerate growth through mutual cooperation, creating higher value jobs requiring greater skill sets and add to our key economic outputs.

It is not always viable for the private sector to create high quality business space due to high construction costs which can often outweigh end market value. This acts as a restraint on private sector led development unless the public sector can help support the growth of business sector clusters and meet the demand for growth. Funding is being sought via the proposed RGD to deliver key business cluster sites and assist with delivery of critical infrastructure such as office and industrial space, access roads and utilities as the costs associated with this can often act as a barrier to business growth in rural areas.

Expanding our Local Further and Higher education offer

Argyll College UHI and the University of the Highlands and the Islands (UHI) provides the vast majority of Argyll's local further and higher education offer at this current time. Argyll College operates from 15 centres ranging from Tobermory in the north to Campbeltown in the south, Tiree in the west and Helensburgh in the east. The numbers of students attending these centres and the Scottish Association of Marine Sciences (SAMS) at Oban has risen steadily in recent years but an opportunity now exists to extend the education offer and attract people to study in Argyll from outside our region. The key places where this can be achieved is expanding the academic offer at SAMS as part of the Oban a University Town project; the creation of an aquaculture excellence hub at MACC (Machrihanish Airbase Community Company) Business Park with involvement of Stirling University and in Helensburgh linked to the expansion of HMNB Clyde and involving Strathclyde University.

Expanding our local Higher education offer also has the advantage of attracting new businesses to our area to take advantage of graduating students, academic research and enable greater collaborative working to accelerate business growth as businesses cluster together.

[Creating investor ready places through transformational change to our outstanding Built Environment](#)

The council has taken forward an ambitious capital regeneration programme over the last decade which has helped to stimulate further public and private sector investment. Projects ranged from the provision of new schools, bringing buildings back into productive use and upgrading public realm. These council investments have attracted a substantial level of external funding that has helped transform a number of our town centres securing residents homes for the future, restoring civic pride, bringing redundant property back into productive use and enabling new businesses to open. It is intended to continue to undertake transformational, capital regeneration schemes in Argyll which can include assisting local communities in accessing sources of funding. However, given our limited capital resources this ambition will be highly dependent on the availability of future match funding and also securing additional, external funding through the likes of future Conservation Area Regeneration Schemes, Heritage Lottery Fund and the Rural Growth Deal.

Growing – Critical Infrastructure

Tourism

The growth of tourism has been a major success in recent years in Argyll and Bute supported by our Economic Growth Team and key partners such as the Argyll and the Isles Tourism Cooperative (AITC). This key sector provides circa 25% of all private sector jobs in Argyll and since 2008 there has been a 33% increase in visitor numbers with tourism worth £479.6m in 2017 to our economy. Given our outstanding natural and built environment Argyll will always have a lot to offer tourists visiting our area. That said, this is a global industry that is constantly investing in its visitor experience and if we are to remain competitive over the medium and longer terms the council and our partners will have to continue to support the growth of this important sector.

Industry led and supported by the council and HIE areas of focus include the improvement of our accommodation offer particularly in our main towns, targeted promotion and marketing activity utilising digital platforms, working in collaboration with the likes of Glasgow Tourism Agencies and boosting our adventure, food and drink, and marine tourism offers.

Expanding our engineering, renewables, defence & marine industries

Argyll and Bute has a strong tradition in engineering activity from boat building, aquaculture, energy and defence works. There is real potential for further expansion linked to our marine industries including areas that can offer innovation and working with academic partners such as SAMS or Stirling University to create business clusters that can help generate higher value jobs and investment opportunities. The Maritime Change Programme also represents a significant expansion of the activities of HMNB Clyde with £1.3bn capital investment up until 2030. This expansion linked to new training opportunities with the base and with potential to expand in the wider community offers a hugely significant opportunity to both grow our population and create a full range of new job opportunities including in highly technical areas.

Inform and Influence government policy

Argyll and Bute's population continues to decline in common with a number of Scotland's west coast local authorities. A key priority of the council is to reverse this long term trend and have a growing economy, which is fundamental if we are to attract and retain people to our region. The council, often working with our key partners, has taken forward a number of initiatives to invest in our community including new schools, building hundreds of new affordable homes, supporting the growth of businesses, attracting significant external capital funding to improve our critical infrastructure, improving peoples' skills for work, investing in our roads, supporting a host of community regeneration projects, providing grants to help people to move to Argyll and improving our built environment through area regeneration initiatives.

Rural Growth Deal

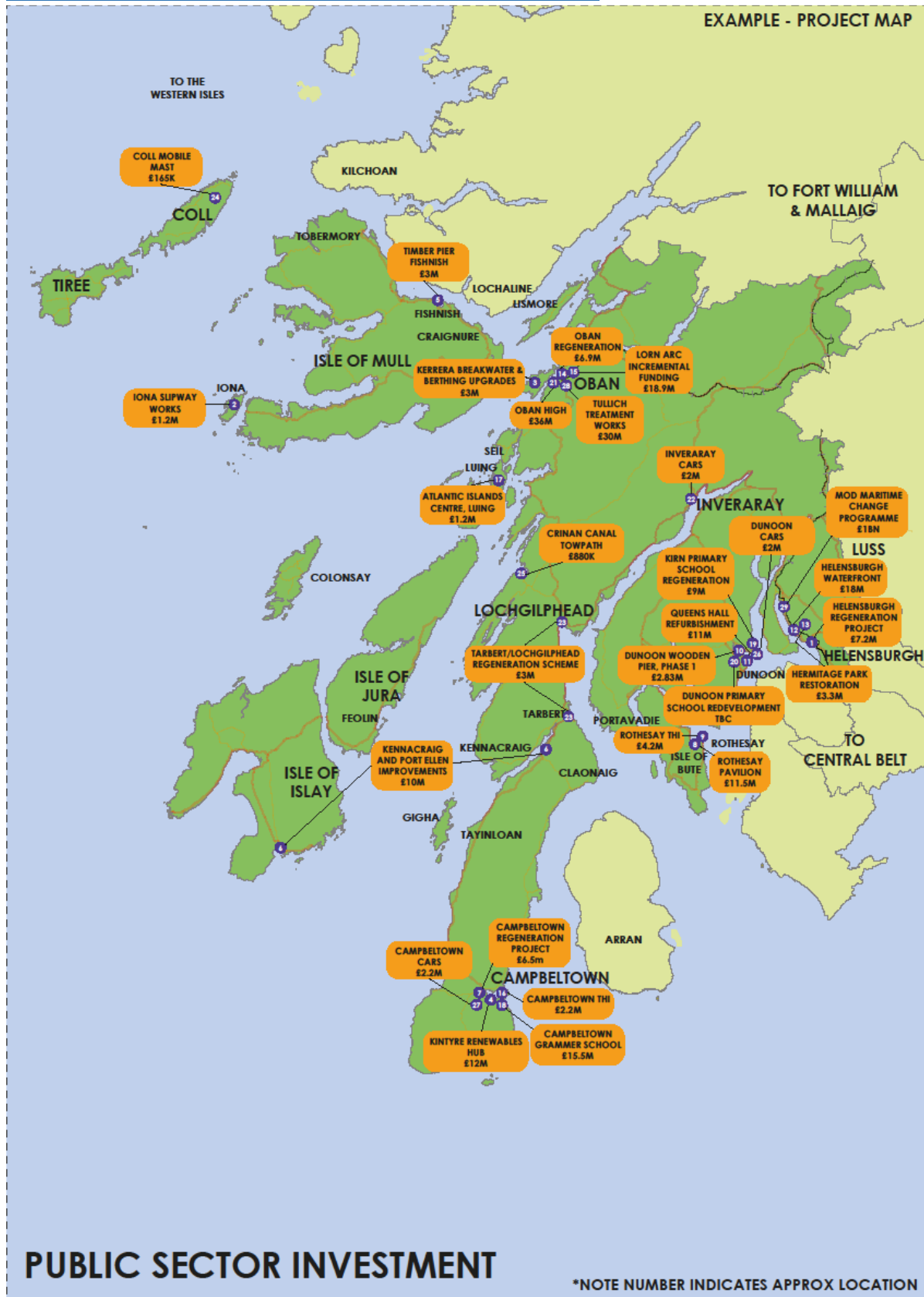
The council understands that investment to date is not sufficient on its own to address our demographic challenges hence the compelling need convince the Scottish and UK Governments of the strategic importance of the rural economy and mainstream it within policy and decision making processes. There is also a need to secure a RGD for Argyll and Bute to attract additional private sector investment and also to influence national decision makers on future policy and investment decisions that affect our region.

Appendix 1: Public and Private Sector Investment Maps

Map of Private Investment in Argyll Region (circa £635M)



Map of Public Investment in Argyll Region (circa £300M)



Appendix 2 – Supporting Documents

Enclosed Documents:-

- Argyll and Bute Council Single Investment Plan
- Rural Growth Deal – Argyll the Natural Choice
- Argyll and Bute Council – Economic Strategy

Appendix 3 – Argyll and Bute Council Transport Priorities

| Top Transport Priorities Argyll and Bute to support economic growth and social inclusion | Issue | Action |
|--|--|--|
| ROADS | | |
| A 82 Trunk Road - Road Upgrade | The A82 is a key economic driver for the West Highlands. There is a need to upgrade the Loch Lomond section of road Tarbet to Inverarnan section. | Ensure that the programme of works identified by the Scottish Government is implemented asap. |
| A 83 Trunk Road – Road Upgrade | The A83 is the primary transport corridor into much of Argyll from the central belt. There is a need for a comprehensive programme of investment to improve road resilience, safety and journey times. | <p>Produce a clear timetable of actions to deliver identified problem areas including.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strone point (Underway) • Erines • Dunderave • Balmore Rd. Tarbert <p>Need for enhanced capital/maintenance programme to tackle roads vulnerability to flood and frost damage.</p> |
| A 83 Trunk Road Upgrade – Rest and Be Thankful | Need for permanent solution for R&BT | Action to determine the best “once and for all solution” to address landslip risk public perceptions. |
| A85 Trunk Road Upgrade - Oban to Tyndrum/Oban Development Road | Relatively slow and busy road seen as a high priority for businesses and other stakeholders to improve with additional problems relating to congestion and lack of capacity to grow in Oban. | <p>To identify the range of improvements to reduce journey times and build road resilience by tackling pinch points.</p> <p>To re-examine the need for the Oban Development Road to</p> |

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| | | address congestion issue and capacity to grow as a town. |
| Pennygael Bridge Mull - structural repair/replacement required A848 | Essential bridge serving the Iona community requiring significant investment. | Need to identify funding to repair/replace the bridge. |
| A816 Oban to Lochgilphead Road Upgrade | Key link between Oban and Lochgilphead that suffers from a long journey time due to poor quality road with poor carriageway width and alignment. | Identify key aspects of the road that need action to remove pinch points, improve road alignment and excessive bends. |
| Dunoon – Colintrave – Portavadie Road Upgrade (B836/A8003/B8000) | Key route linking communities across Cowal, Bute and Kintyre (Mid Argyll) with Dunoon also a key timber haulage route. | To look at the feasibility of upgraded road to A road status incorporating physical upgrades to modern carriageway standards i.e. min. 6m wide carriageway with improved alignment to make it a safer and more reliable route. |
| A848 Salen –Tobermory Upgrade | Key route connecting main settlement on Mull with ferry terminal in need of widening to enable removal of passing places. Added pressure in summer from the success of RET. | Identify funding to enable works to proceed to final design and implementation stage. |
| Local road network | GAE levels are insufficient to meet expanding road maintenance needs. | To lobby for a revision of the GAE distribution criteria to ensure that areas of sparse population are better financed to maintain their high mileages of rural road networks. |
| RAIL | | |
| West Highland Line between Oban and Glasgow | Excessive journey time in excess of three hours. | Need to lobby the rail investment programme for Control periods 6-7 (2019-2029). Need for a more detailed study to identify scope for journey time reduction. Refurbished 158s due on line in 2019. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Creation of new station at Shandon to service HMNB Clyde – or enhanced public bus service | Reduce reliance on the car and ease movement of personnel to the base that is currently expanding. | Need to lobby the Scottish Government and Scotrail on the need for this new facility or enhanced public bus service. |
| Oban Integrated Transport Hub | Combination of bus/rail and ferry terminals to ease transport transfer. An added benefit would be to create additional space for vehicle marshalling. | Need to work with Hi Trans and other transport partners to design scheme and attract necessary funding from a range of partners. |
| FERRIES and PORTS | | |
| Dunoon Town Centre to Gourock Town Centre Ferry Link | Need to improve ferry reliability from town centre to town centre and re-introduce vehicular option. | Continue to lobby Transport Scotland for a successful conclusion of the contract award. |
| Replacement of Council Ferries/takeover by Scottish Government | Ageing ferries on the Islay Jura route and Appin to Lismore. Loss making service serving four island communities. | Continue to work with and lobby Transport Scotland on the need to ensure the reliability/affordability of our internal ferries. |
| Extension of Ferry services | Need to make greater use of ferry services at key crossing points. For example, Tarbert -Portavadie ferry. | |
| Argyll and Bute Council Pier upgrades Fionaphort/Iona, Gigha/Tayinloan and Craignure Pier | Need to upgrade pier to take account of climate change/weather and capacity issues. Creation of berthing facility at Fionnphort. | Undertake STAG for Craignure Pier to assess future operations. Determine affordability of business cases through feasibility studies and attract external funding as necessary. |
| Improve capacity and resilience of ferry services across the network | Given the impact of RET and the expansion of the whisky and tourism industries there is growing demands on ferry services across Argyll. | Continue to lobby CMAL and Transport Scotland for suitable investment in the ferry network to ensure greater capacity at peak periods and reliability. |
| ACTIVE TRAVEL | | |
| Helensburgh to Cardross/W. Dunbartonshire cycleway (Regional Route 42) | Need to complete this important route linking Helensburgh, Cardross and Dumbarton allowing active travel opportunities to | Continue to work with landowners to acquire land, design works and implement |

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| | connect to the main town and link into established routes to loch Lomond (John Muir Way) and the Three Lochs Way and routes to Glasgow. | sections of the route as funding is secured. |
| Provision of an off-road route for entire length of NCN78, The Caledonia Way, linking Campbeltown to Lochgilphead, Oban and Fort William. | This is a key 'spine' route for the Council area and wider West of Scotland. In addition to the NCN longer distance route, shorter sections of the route are heavily used for more local journeys, for example Ardrishaig to Lochgilphead, as well as part of other routes, for example the section from Kennacraig to Tarbert forms part of the popular 5 ferries route. | Continue to work with Transport Scotland (for sections alongside A83/A85/A828 trunk roads & sections on old Connel to Ballachulish Rail Line), Sustrans (as NCN route), local communities, landowners and other stakeholders. |
| Pilgrims Way: Iona – Mull – Oban – Tyndrum – St Andrews Entire route should be constructed to a suitable standard for walking and cycling. | This national walking and cycling route linking the international destinations of Iona and St Andrews, while also providing active travel links between local communities, requires significant focus to deliver, particularly given the distance and therefore cost and number of authorities and landowners involved. A&B Council is currently working with local communities in the Fionnphort area of Mull on the development and delivery of a cyclepath route which would provide approximately 1.9km of the route. Within Argyll & Bute the Pilgrims Way would also provide important links | Continue to work with local communities, landowners, active travel bodies (e.g. Sustrans), Transport Scotland (for trunk roads, e.g. A85 Oban to Tyndrum) and the Scottish Government to develop and deliver sections of this nationally important route. |

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| | within Mull and between Oban and Tyndrum. | |
| Active Travel Islay | Following the successful delivery and positive reaction by local residents, businesses and visitors to the 3 distilleries path on Islay there is a strong desire to build upon this success by the construction of active travel routes linking other key settlements, employers and tourist destinations on Islay. | Work with Islay Community Access Group, local communities, local businesses, active travel groups (e.g. Sustrans, walking groups), landowners and the Scottish Government to develop and implement a network of high-quality walking and cycling routes on Islay. These routes will provide an alternative to the private car for local residents and visitors. |
| Develop Cycle Tour routes, e.g. 5 Ferries route (Arran / Kintyre Peninsula (Clanaig – Kennacraig – Tarbert) / Cowal Peninsula (Portavadie – Colintraive) / Bute (Rhubodoch – Rothesay), to provide attractive, high-quality cycle route suitable for families/tourists. | There are a number of popular cycle tour routes within Argyll & Bute, most notably the 5 ferries route with dedicated ferry tickets available from CALMAC for the route. At present these routes are primarily promoted to keen sportive cyclists as a single day activity, however with each of the routes having a total distance of under 55 miles if correctly developed these would offer an attractive weekend/multi-day activity for families/less dedicated cyclists thereby bringing significant economic benefit to these areas. To be attractive to these groups the route would require to be entirely on high-quality segregated infrastructure or on [perceived as] safe, quiet and low speed minor roads. | Work with local communities, businesses, landowners, active travel bodies (e.g. Sustrans), Transport Scotland (for trunk roads, e.g. A83 Kennacraig to Tarbert), CALMAC and the Scottish Government to develop and deliver attractive, high-quality walking and cycling touring routes. |
| AIR LINKS | | |
| Central Belt to Oban Air Service with potential link to Barra. | Need to establish a scheduled flight connection to the central belt to provide | Continue to undertake feasibility work on viability of bid, speak to air operators and |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| | a faster transport alternative for local people and businesses together with visitors. Assist the delivery of economic growth in Oban, Lorn, Barra and Lochaber. | lobby for subsidy to enable this connection to be established |
|--|--|---|