Inverclyde Alliance

AGENDA ITEM NO: 1

Report To:	**Inverclyde Alliance Board**	**Date:**	**18 March 2019**
Report By:	**Corporate Director Environment, Regeneration & Resources**	**Report No:**	
Contact Officer:	**Scott Allan**	**Contact No:**	**01475 712761**
Subject:	**Repopulation Group – Project Update**		

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Alliance Board on progress within the Repopulation Group with respect to the Repopulation Action Plan, funding allocations and the wider regeneration strategy.

2.0 SUMMARY

2.1 At the last meeting of the Alliance Board, it was updated that EKOS consultants were progressing a report on the Repopulation Strategy and Action Plan. A draft report was considered by the Repopulation Group on 25 January 2019, a copy is attached to this report. The report sets out the social economic profile of Inverclyde in respect of demographic trends, the labour market, businesses, input and output, workforce skills, the housing market etc. It also sets out the strategic and policy context with respect to the implications of depopulation, national performances and the wider strategic environment. The consultants have engaged extensively with consultees across Inverclyde to assist in the preparation of a Repopulation Strategy. Included within the report is a section setting out EKOS's considered views and priorities on key issues with respect to repopulation and the relevant priorities.

2.2 In summary, the key emerging themes are improving marketing and communication, growing the housing market, achieving growth in the private sector, driving the concept of Inverclyde as 'region for all people', improvement of infrastructure and branding Inverclyde as a centre for culture and leisure.

2.3 The Repopulation Group considered the content of the report and through a workshop format drafted an Action Plan (attached as an appendix) for consideration by the Alliance Board. The Action Plan seeks to achieve early wins and has costings against specific measures. It will also however form the basis of a longer and wider economic strategy. The next aspect of work to be carried out by the Repopulation Group will involve identifying the key players who will lead on the various actions.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 It is recommended that the Inverclyde Alliance Board notes the work of the Repopulation Group and endorses the Action Plan as attached, for detailed consideration by the Repopulation Group.

Scott Allan
Corporate Director
Environment, Regeneration & Resources

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 N/A.

5.0 PROPOSALS

5.1 N/A.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Legal: There are no legal implications associated with this report.

6.2 Finance: There are no finance implications associated with this report.

6.3 Human Resources: There are no HR implications associated with this report.

6.4 Equality and Diversity: There are no equality and diversity implications associated with this report.

6.5 Repopulation: A set out in report.

6.6 Inequalities: There are no inequalities implications associated with this report.

7.0 CONSULTATIONS

7.1 N/A.

8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 N/A.

APPENDIX

Inverclyde
Re-Population Strategy and Action Plan

January 2019

Draft V2.0

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1. Foreword

1.1 Introduction

Inverclyde has many positive features which will help support a prosperous economic future, it does however, also have the particular challenge of a declining and aging population which will have implications in terms of the scale and nature of the future workforce and local demand for public and other services.

In recognising this issue, the Inverclyde Local Outcome Improvement Plan[1] [LOIP] has identified addressing population decline as their Priority 1:

- *"Inverclyde's population will be stable and sustainable with an appropriate balance of socio - economic groups that is conducive to local economic prosperity and longer term population growth".*

In support of this, the Inverclyde Alliance[2] (Repopulation Theme Group) has commissioned research to develop a robust evidence base to support the development of a Strategy and action Plan to address the challenge.

Much is already known about the causes and consequences of population decline and some early actions are already being delivered by Inverclyde Council and through the Repopulation Outcome Delivery Group and its associated Delivery Plan[3].

A detailed evidence base is provided as a standalone document with a summary overview provided in this report.

While much of the report highlights the challenges, the consequences of these are not inevitable and it will be possible to seek to halt and reverse these and secure a prosperous future.

But positive action will be required NOW.

[1] https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/council-and-government/community-planning-partnership/inverclyde-outcome-improvement-plan
[2] https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/council-and-government/community-planning-partnership
[3] https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/assets/.../09%20New%20Repopulation%20ODP-3.pdf

1.2 Research Objectives and Approach

The overarching objectives of the research is to develop an Inverclyde Repopulation Strategy and Action Plan, delivery of which will halt the decline in population in the short term and engender an increase in the longer term in order to secure a prosperous future.

The completed research which has informed the Re-population and Strategy and Action Plan has focused on three main elements:

- development of a detailed socio-economic evidence base to establish the scale and nature of the opportunities and challenges;
- a review of the current policy and strategy framework in Inverclyde to ensure consistency and support; and
- structured interviews with a wide range of stakeholders including elected members; local employers, local communities, the housing and education sector; and young people living in the area.

In particular, views were sought on the scale and nature of the socio economic challenges and opportunities for Inverclyde; the causes (the key issues) that are driving the demographic shifts and potential solutions to address these challenges.

The report is formatted in two parts as follows:

- Part 1: Strategic Framework:
    - Chapter 2: Inverclyde Repopulation Strategy
    - Chapter 3: Repopulation Action Plan
- Part 2: The Evidence Base:
    - Chapter 4: Overview of socio economic profile;
    - Chapter 5: Strategy and policy context;
    - Chapter 6: Stakeholder engagement;

Addiotnal appendices are provided and referenced through the report. A separate socio economic review is provided as a stand-alone document.

2. A Repopulation Strategy

2.1 Introduction

This Chapter sets out a brief summary of the main strategic insights gained from the primary and secondary research, and sets out a proposed Strategic Framework.

2.2 The Strategic Priorities

The analysis and stakeholder engagement has identified 10 priorities which will set the context for the Re-Population Strategy and Action Plan.

These are highlighted below.

1. In order to have a prosperous and long term sustainable future Inverclyde must reverse the recent and forecast demographic trends through a mix of retention, return and attraction opportunities.

2. The image of Inverclyde continues to suffer from some negative perceptions. Developing a robust and comprehensive marketing and communications plan should be the foundation of the Repopulation Strategy.

3. Inverclyde requires to provide a wider and greater mix of housing types and tenures with an emphasis on increasing the range of private housing.

4. Inverclyde should focus on growing private sector employment in its indigenous SME business base while encouraging new starts and supporting inward investors.

5. Inverclyde should provide a compelling offer to both those who wish to live in the area but work elsewhere as well as to those who wish to both live and work locally. It should not be either a wholly dormitory town or one that it completely internalised.

6. There will be a key role to market the specific benefits of Inverclyde to its wide range of stakeholders and to help make the case for future engagement. Clearly define a future role for Inverclyde.

7. The spatial priority for future investment continues to focus on East/ Central Greenock and Port Glasgow. They are and are likely to remain the places of both greatest opportunity and need.

8. The public sector will continue to be a major employer and must make the optimum use of their collective assets as a driver of future growth. The public sector in Inverclyde must both co-ordinate and collaborate.

9. While connectivity will remain a major issue, the key focus should be on improving the existing trunk road network rather than seeking some new and costly solution.

10. Inverclyde is seen as having a strong culture and leisure offer and this should be used as a driver of future growth and a foundation activity.

These strategic challenges and opportunities provide the basis for developing the supporting Action Plan.

2.3 Broad Operating Principles

Prior to developing the detail of the Re-Population Strategy and Action Plan, it is important to set out some of the <u>broad principles</u> which will underpin operations:

- The concept of inclusive growth will be a key driver for the Strategy and Action Plan. This will seek to achieve growth that combines increased prosperity with greater equality, creates opportunities for all, and distributes the benefits of increased prosperity fairly[4].
- There is a clear recognition that no single organisation can address all the challenges and opportunities. While it is clear that the Council will have a lead role this must be shared with the wide range of other public, third sector and private sector organisations. Early discussions with the key partners should be an early action as people resources are required to move forward.
- Any progress will require time and all stakeholders need to recognise that it will take years to turn around the long term trends. The plan should therefore have a clear timeline with some initial actions to ensure early wins.

[4] https://www.gov.scot/policies/economic-growth/inclusive-growth/

- There must be a clear recognition of the role of the private sector in terms of their investment/ development activities as well as in providers of employment opportunities. How the Strategy will seek to engage them should be an early consideration.
- Funding the action plan will be a key challenge. It is recognised the squeeze on (particularly) Local Authority funding and that there is little value in developing a range of activities which cannot be funded. A review of funding opportunities should therefore be a key early action.
- It is recognised that there will need to be two follow up stages. Firstly, further more detailed project development work will be required to define in more detail and scope out the specific activities prior to Stage 2 delivery. This will require access to development resources at an early stage.
- There is broad consensus that there should be a manageable number of actions as there is an inherent risk that if there are too many it will be difficult to give each one sufficient attention. The key to success will be for partners to focus their time and efforts on delivering against key priorities;
- It is important to draw on current actions [Projects and Programmes] from partners/ stakeholders, and seek to “bend” their activities to meet the priorities set out in the Strategy - what resources can they make available;
- It will be important to set out short, medium, and longer-term actions, as having some early deliverables and quick wins is considered crucial;
- Commitment will need to be confirmed from key delivery organisations on actions before final sign-off, including ensuring clarity over roles and responsibilities (i.e. who is leading on what, by when, resource requirements, etc);
- The effectiveness of the Strategy and Action Plan must be monitored. Considerations must be given to how partners measure success, and how partners know what has been achieved.

A strategic investment framework is detailed below which seeks to build on the activities already delivered through the partners and most notably the Council.

2.4 Inverclyde Strategic Investment Framework

A proposed Strategic Framework is detailed below.

Strategic Framework	
Overarching Goal	To halt and reverse the de-population of Inverclyde by 2025 through improving the employment, housing and infrastructure offer
Strategic Objectives	• Develop and communicate an image for Inverclyde that reflects its many strengths and opportunities • Focus on attracting and retaining young people and families to live in Inverclyde • Increase the level of private house building in spatial priority areas in Inverclyde • Increase the number of private sector jobs and the number of new start businesses in Inverclyde • Increase the contribution which the cultural and leisure assets in Inverclyde make to economic growth • Maximise the potential of the workforce though better engagement with young people, older workers and disadvantaged groups

Strategic Outcome Theme		
OT 1: Marketing and communication	OT 2: Growing the housing market	OT 3: Growing local jobs
OT 4: A place for people of all ages	OT 5: Supporting and enabling infrastructure	OT 6: A Centre for culture and leisure

Cross Cutting Themes		
CT1: Monitoring	CT2: Governance and delivery	CT3: Funding the Action Plan

Strategic Fit

Strategic Priorities

Strategic Outcome Theme	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
2	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓			
3	✓						✓	✓		
4	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	
5	✓	✓			✓			✓	✓	✓
6	✓								✓	✓

3. Strategic Outcomes and Early Actions

3.1 Introduction

This section sets out the rationale for, and potential outcomes of the proposed Themes together with some key early actions. The Outcome Themes and the analysis is based on the evidence presented in the detailed evidence report and crucially through inputs from key stakeholders.

The individual actions and activities within each Strategic Outcome Themes are a specific response to addressing the challenges and opportunities identified through the research.

The themes/ actions have been set out in order of recognised priority together with an initial allocation (year 1) funding.

3.2 Key Early Actions

OT 1: Marketing and communication

Rationale	Desired Outcome	Early Actions	Lead and Support
The image of Inverclyde continues to suffer from some negative perceptions. Developing a robust and comprehensive and factual marketing and communications plan will help to ensure that all stakeholders have a clear and common understanding The Plan will target both internal and external stakeholders.	All stakeholders have a consistent, accurate and detailed understanding of Inverclyde the Place and what it can do to support and meet their specific requirements. A positive change in wider image and perception of Inverclyde as a place to live, work and play.	1. Develop a scope and specification for an Inverclyde Marketing and Communications Plan. 2. Undertake baseline analysis and report 3. Secure appropriate resources to develop Plan. 4. Year 1 delivery of Plan	TBA Notional Allocation £100K

OT 2: Growing the Housing Market

Rationale	Desired Outcome	Early Actions	Lead and Support
The evidence shows that while Inverclyde has successfully developed parts of its housing offer it has not produced an appropriate range and mix of private housing required to maximise its attractiveness to everyone. Inverclyde needs more private houses.	An overall increase in the number of new houses being built in Inverclyde. An expansion of the range of private housing opportunities and options. Increase in local retention and in-migration.	1. Develop a private housing strategy with targets 2. Review private housing land supply 3. Identify development opportunities in East Greenock/ Port Glasgow - Eastern Gateway 4. Identify local developer/ investor liaison officer contact 5. Developer engagement plan	TBA Notional Allocation £200K

OT 3: Growing Local Jobs

Rationale	Desired Outcome	Early Actions	Lead and Support
Inverclyde is overly reliant on the public sector and large international companies for employment. To provide a sustainable future it should seek to grow the private sector SME base and associated employment The focus to be on indigenous companies, new start business and self-employment	An increase in the proportion of private sector jobs in Inverclyde. An increase in the absolute number of private sector companies. Increase in start-up, enterprise and innovation activity sector focus to include: health and social care; marine and environment; and business services.	1. Increased resources for Business Gateway support for local SMEs growth 2. Complete review of public sector opportunities in terms of employment; procurement; community benefit; and local physical assets 3. Inverclyde Enterprise Initiative - high growth start programme.	TBA Notional Allocation £100K

OT 4: A region for people of all ages

Rationale	Desired Outcome	Early Actions	Lead and Support
The number of young people in the region is declining as a result of demographic changes and increase in number choosing to move out of the area. There is a clear need to provide a more compelling case for them to stay or return to the region.	More young people choosing to stay in or return to the region. More young people taking up local post-school education opportunities; More young people taking up employment and apprenticeships with local employers Increase in labour market engagement with other groups including older and disengaged	1. Strategic Skills Investment Plan and Actions. 2. Work with DYW to expand education/ business links. 3. Review option of a relocation office to provide support to those moving into Inverclyde 4. Work with HSCP to review opportunities for older workers	TBA Notional Allocation £50K

OT 5: Enabling Infrastructure

Rationale	Desired Outcome	Preparatory Actions	Lead and Support
In order to achieve a sustainable future Inverclyde will require a range of supporting and enabling infrastructure to encourage future investment	Growth in Inverclyde is not constrained by lack of appropriate and suitable infrastructure. To include: business property; trunk roads land assets, and Greenock town centre	1. Continue to press case for trunk road upgrades 2. Review vacant and derelict land in line with future community opportunities 3. Review business property portfolio and identify opportunities for small business. 4. Role for the College	TBA Notional Allocation £50K

OT 6: A Centre for Culture and Leisure

Rationale	Desired Outcome	Early Actions	Lead and Support
Inverclyde has a range of cultural and leisure assets which can be used to drive economic activity and support the perception and awareness of the local area. Culture as an economic hook.	Provides support for marketing strategy Inverclyde is recognised widely as having a high quality culture and leisure offer Increase employment and economic contribution from leisure and cultural sector	1. Review opportunities for increasing employment in culture and leisure sector 2. Develop supporting actions	TBA Notional Allocation TBA

3.3 Cross Cutting Themes

In addition to the six Strategic Outcome themes, there are a number of cross-cutting issues which should be included within the Action Plan and which will be critical for a successful delivery.

These include:

- governance and delivery structures:
  - identify key partners and stakeholders;
  - define governance and delivery structures including defining roles and responsibilities for all partners/ stakeholders;
  - while the Alliance will continue to be the key focus, it may be helpful to identify and recruit a high-status private sector lead
- monitoring and reporting:
  - develop appropriate monitoring protocols
  - develop appropriate reporting protocols
- funding the action plan
  - identifying and securing funding will be a key issue. While it is possible to identify potential sources of funding in a general sense, it would be more appropriate to wait till projects/ programmes are more fully developed
  - an early action should be to review the current funding regime and pull together current and future sources. A useful starting point is https://www.scotlandstowns.org/funding_support but this would require further work/ research to identify other sources.

3.4 Developing the Action Plan

A detailed Action Plan will require that individual projects and programmes are worked up in more detail in order to obtain funding/ support.

The next stage will be to develop a more detailed implementation plan for the individual projects and which will include consideration of:

- Detailed project/ programme description;
- Objectives;
- Market assessment/ analysis;
- Project/ programme costs;
- Funding approach and sources;
- Work plan with timescales and milestones;
- Delivery (roles and responsibilities);
- Resources (financial and people);
- Interim outcomes;
- Longer term impacts; and
- SMART targets.

At this stage, the Plan has provided a high level assessment only, but it is recognised that more detailed development work will be required in the short term in order to achieve progress.

In many ways this will require a "business case" approach to ensure that projects are sufficiently appraised to be considered for funding form a wider range of sources.

4. Socio-Economic Profile

4.1 Introduction

This Chapter provides an overview of the socio economic baseline of Inverclyde and provides information and an evidence base to support the development of the re-population stagey for Inverclyde. A more detailed socio-economic profile is provided as a standalone report and should be refereed to for more detail.

In reflecting on our analysis, it is important to recognise that while the data is based on assumptions the direction of travel does appear consistent and overall, Inverclyde has similar issues and challenges to much of the rest of West central belt.

4.2 Inverclyde Demographic Trends[5]

In 2017, the total population of Inverclyde was 78,760, comprising 38,848 households, and the largest settlement is Greenock, with a population of 40,954 (52%). Table 2.1 presents the most recent population data available for Inverclyde (2017) showing sub regional and age profiles.

Table 2.1: Population Breakdown (2017)

	Children (0-15)	Working Age (16-64)	Pensionable Age (65+)	Total
Gourock	1,451 (13%)	7,127 (64%)	2,607 (23%)	**11,185**
Greenock	6,627 (16%)	26,043 (64%)	8,284 (20%)	**40,954**
Port Glasgow	2,567 (17%)	9,188 (62%)	3,004 (20%)	**14,759**
Rest of Inverclyde	2,056 (17%)	7,418 (63%)	2,388 (20%)	**11,862**
Inverclyde	12,701 (16%)	49,776 (63%)	16,283 (21%)	**78,760**
Scotland	917,442 (17%)	3,494,791 (64%)	1,012,567 (19%)	5,424,800

Source: National Records Scotland

[5] The data presented are based on estimates by NRS using 2011 census data uprated each year to account for various factors such as births, deaths, migration.

The age profile in Inverclyde is broadly in line with Scotland, although with slightly smaller young and working age proportions. Within Inverclyde, the most notable sub regional difference is the lower younger and higher over 65 population in Gourock.

We also note a recent trend at the national level with Scotland as a whole having an ageing population although this trend appears to be more pronounced within Inverclyde, with over one fifth of the population (21%) of pensionable age.

The total population in Inverclyde has reduced by 22% from 1981 compared to a national increase of 4%. The decline across Inverclyde is equivalent to a decrease of c, 22,000 people over the previous 35 years. Interestingly the decline has not been uniform across the region as there has been a small increase in the rest of Inverclyde (which excludes the main settlements of Greenock, Port Glasgow, and Gourock). The largest decrease has been in the number of young and working age residents (47% and 22% respectively) and this is significantly above national trends.

In looking to the future[6], the Scottish population is projected to increase by 5% over the period 2016 to 2041, while over the same period Inverclyde is projected to continue to decline by 11%, which is equivalent to a loss of over 8,500 people. Over the same period, Inverclyde is also projected to experience a large increase (30%) in the pensionable age population.

It is also clear that the decline in population is made up of a number of factors:

- net migration while largely negative is relatively small and improving in the recent past. The main area (by far) for residents to relocate to is Renfrewshire;
- while the absolute number of deaths have decreased, the proportionate rate has remained significantly higher than Scotland and overall life expectancy is among the lowest in Scotland;
- the decline in birth rates is more than double the Scottish decline and this is at the same time as marriage rates have decreased significantly. The data show a 21% decrease in Scotland compared to a more than double 44% decrease in Inverclyde.

[6] The 2016-based population projections for Scottish areas are based on the latest estimated population at 30 June 2016 for each area. A set of demographic assumptions about future fertility, mortality and migration, based on analysis of trends, are used to project future births, deaths and migration.

There is therefore no single driver of the decline but instead it is complex and multi-faceted. See also https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistics-by-theme/population/population-projections/uses-and-limitations-of-population-projections

4.3 Inverclyde Labour Market

Overall, employment rates in Inverclyde have remained slighted below national levels while unemployment has remained slightly above. Total employment in Inverclyde in 2017 was just under 30,0000 with the largest employing sectors being:

- Health and social care (20%);
- Retail (12%);
- Education (8%); and
- Business services (10%).

At the Inverclyde level the total employment has decreased by a total of 425, representing a slight decline of 1% since 2009.

This compares with a 6% increase across Scotland. Changes in employment are detailed further below.

- Increases within (major) employment sectors:
    - Business administration, +50%, 1,000 employees;
    - Transport and storage (incl. postal), +40%, 500 employees; and
    - Construction, +33%, 200 employees.
- Decreases within (major) employment sectors:
    - Information and communication, -38%, 750 employees;
    - Education, -17%, 500 employees;
    - Heath, -14%, 1,000 employees; and
    - Retail, -13%, 500 employees.

Interestingly, despite a reduction in health, education and retail these still remain as the overall largest sectors of employment.

The most recent available data, from Census 2011, shows just under two thirds of Inverclyde residents (65%) work within Inverclyde or are mainly based at home. The main commuter destinations are Glasgow (12%) and Renfrewshire (9%).

Looking at those who commute to a workplace within Inverclyde, three quarters (75%) come from another location within Inverclyde, while 8% travel from Renfrewshire, 6% from North Ayrshire and 4% from Glasgow. However, caution should be attached to this data as it is now relatively out of date.

In terms of unemployment, the Claimant Count measures the number of people that are not in employment including those actively seeking work and claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) or Universal Credit. As at September 2018, Inverclyde was double that of Scotland, with high levels in Greenock and Port Glasgow.

4.4 Inverclyde Businesses

In 2018, there were approximately 2,200 local business units in the Inverclyde area; over half (51%) of these were based in Greenock. The largest sector is professional, scientific and technical services – representing 19% of the business base, and is nearly twice as big as the next biggest sector (construction, 11%). Other industries well represented in Inverclyde are construction (11%), accommodation and food services (10%), retail (10%); and Arts (9%).

It is worth noting that while professional, scientific and technical services comprises the majority of companies, the vast majority are small or micro ones and are not major employers in the local area. Of the 2,200 businesses based in Inverclyde, the majority of these can be classed as 'micro-businesses' (88%) - employing fewer than nine employees. Self-employment among Inverclyde residents rose form 7.9% in 2007 to 8.9% in 2017 with an increase of 300 units. Self-employment in Scotland on the other hand rose form 10.4% to 12.4% with Inverclyde therefore 28% lower.

Overall business density (per 10,000 residents) is 240 in Inverclyde compared to 325 across Scotland. The largest local employers are highlighted below.

- Inverclyde Council
- NHS
- RBS Mortgage Centre
- EE
- Amazon
- Ferguson Marine
- River Clyde Homes
- Webhelp UK
- West College Scotland
- McGills
- Concentrix
- Caledonian MacBrayne
- McLaren Packaging
- British Polythene Ind
- CICS
- Cigna UK
- McLaren Packaging
- IBM
- Tesco

4.5 Income and Output in Inverclyde

In 2018, the weekly gross earning for a full time worker in Inverclyde was £663, which is above the Scottish average of £563.

The average salary across the region has fluctuated since 2010 but overall (2010-2018) the average salary has increased by 38%.

GVA per worker is almost identical to Scotland although GVA per head [population] is somewhat lower, reflecting the slightly lower employment rate.

4.6 Inverclyde Workforce and Skills Profile

In comparison with Scotland, Inverclyde has a lower proportion of the workforce with (higher level) NVQ4+ level. In addition, over the 10 year period, the proportion of workforce with a higher level qualification (NVQ4+) has increased in Scotland by a similar level to Inverclyde.

In comparison to Scotland, Inverclyde has:

- a slightly higher % of managers, professionals and skilled trade jobs;
- fewer professional jobs; and
- slightly more sales and care jobs.

Scotland has a slightly higher proportion of the workforce operating within professional and administrative occupations, this in part might help to explain, the higher proportion of the workforce that has an NVQ4+ qualification at the national level.

Overall, the proportion of school leavers entering a positive destination (education, training or employment) is the same for Inverclyde as the Scottish average, 92%. That being said, there are differences between the region and Scotland as a whole. In particular, almost three quarters (71%) of school leavers in Inverclyde enter into education compared with 68% of school leavers at a national level.

Further, 21% enter into training or employment, whilst the proportion is higher for Scotland – 24% of school leavers.

4.7 Regional Asset Audit

The detailed evidence report provides a comprehensive analysis and a brief summary is provided below.

- Housing Profile[7]
    - In 2017, there were 38,848 dwellings in Inverclyde with an occupancy rate of 95%. The vacancy rate of households in Inverclyde is 4.2%, slightly above the national average of 3.1% vacant households.
    - Almost half of households in Inverclyde are flats (49%). In comparison with Scotland, the region has a lower proportion of detached and semi-detached housing
    - In 2017, the average house price in Inverclyde was c. £129,000 compared to £180,000 across Scotland
    - The market for new housing development peaked in 2011 at about 275 new builds that year but has since decreased to 90 by 2017.
- Education Profile
    - Inverclyde has a population of approximately 3,700 children who are below primary school age. There are 20 nurseries/'early year establishments' across Inverclyde with demand being around 1.4 times available supply capacity.
    - Inverclyde has 6 secondary and 20 Primary schools with a modern school estate
    - FE is provided by the Two Campuses in Greenock of West Scotland College.

[7] See also next section

- Commercial Properties
    - Inverclyde has a range of industrial estates and business Parks although these constitute only a small proportion of the total commercial floorspace, the majority of which is located in town centre offices/retail properties and standalone industrial/workshop units.
    - current allocations for business and industry use in Inverclyde, is 20.6 ha. The range of development land intends to cater for different sectors and business sizes from large scale sites such as Spango Valley and Inchgreen to smaller sites such as Baker Street. The majority of development land is set aside for Greenock with no industrial development opportunities in Gourock, Kilmacolm, or the smaller coastal settlements of Inverclyde.
    - The LDP and the CLYDEplan Strategic Development Plan set out the strategic priorities within Inverclyde with Greenock Waterfront classed as a strategic economic investment location and Greenock Ocean Terminal as a strategic freight transport hub.
- Transport and Connectivity
    - Overall, 79% of Inverclyde's population are satisfied with the quality of public transport in the region[8]. This is significantly higher the national average of 69%.
    - Inverclyde is serviced by a range of train, bus, ferry services and Glasgow Airport is around 10 miles away.
    - Traffic count data indicates that there has been a slight increase in the volume of vehicles on the road over the last two decades, within the context of a declining population. While the picture is mixed, notably there has been a 12% increase in vehicles each day on the A8 between Port Glasgow and Langbank, from 2000 to 2017.

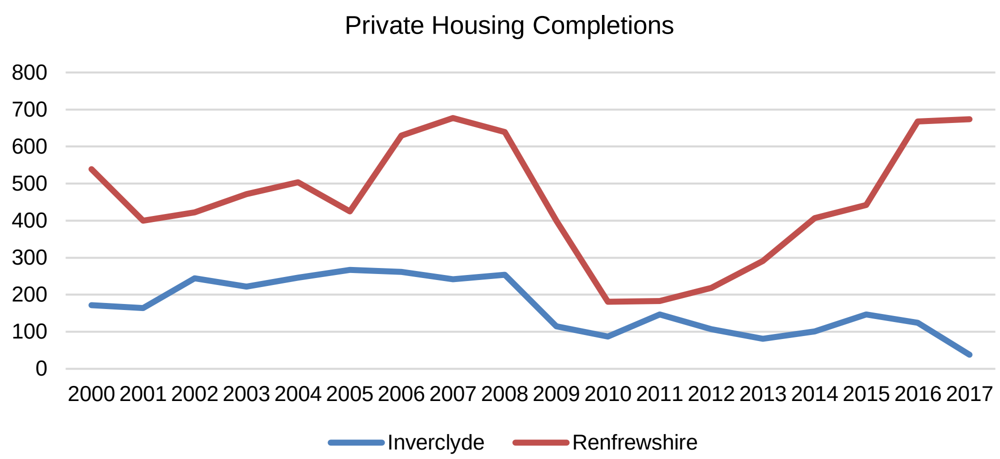
8 Scottish Household Survey (2017)

- Visitor Attractions and Accommodation
    - In 2017, there were 2,000 people in sustainable tourism employment in Inverclyde. This represented 7% of the workforce at the time. The sustainable tourism GVA for the region in 2016 was £26.8 million.
    - Greenock has become a major port for cruise ships and this is currently being expanded.
    - Inverclyde has a developing range of visitor attractions and events.

4.8 Inverclyde Housing Market

Given the prominence placed on housing as a key driver we have highlighted below some additional data analysis. These show that Inverclyde has produced far fewer new homes than neighbouring Authorities and that it also had the highest decrease in house prices in Scotland over the last 10 years.

Figure 2.1: New Private House Completions 2000-2017



Source: National Records Scotland

Table 2.2: Total House completions per 1,000 population 2000-2017

	Total Completions	Pop (1,000)	Houses per 1,000
SCOTLAND	284,409	5,243	54
Glasgow City	26,332	605	44
Inverclyde	3,020	82	37
Renfrewshire	8,172	176	46
West Dunb.	3,133	93	34

Source: National Records Scotland

Table 2.3: Average House Price Changes

Local authority area	Average house price change 2007-2017
Inverclyde	-6.3%
West Dunbartonshire	+3.6%
Glasgow City	+7.5%
Renfrewshire	+10.3%

Source: National Records Scotland

4.9 Inverclyde Socio Economic Benchmarking

In order to measure progress, the technical report has produced a detailed benchmarking analysis.

In this report, we have detailed below a range of benchmarks and provided comparison with Glasgow, Renfrewshire, North Ayrshire, West Dunbartonshire and Scotland.

We have also highlighted a RAG-R [traffic light] system which can be used to measure direction of travel to show change over time.

A more detailed assessment is provided in the Technical Report.

Inverclyde Benchmarking

Indicator	RAG-R
Employment rate (%) (Apr 17 - Mar 18)	
Economic activity rate (16-64) (%) (Apr 17 - Mar 18)	
Jobs density 2016	
Median weekly Earnings - full-time employees (£) - 2017	
Workless households (%) 2017	
Commuting out of home Local Authority (%)	
Commuting time to nearest city, mins (if applicable)	N/A
Individuals reporting fairly/very strong sense of belonging to community, 2016	
People living within 500m of a derelict land site (%) 2016	
Public transport (Public Perception % Favourable) 2016	
Schools 2016 (Public Perception % Favourable), 2016	
% of 16-64 year olds with SCQF 7-12	
% of school leavers in positive destination 2016/17	
Degree qualification (%), 2017	
Net Migration 2015/16	
No qualifications (%), 2017	
Total population 2017	NA
Working age change (%) 2016 to 2041	
GVA per head, 2016 (£)	
Business start-up rate 2016 (per 10,000 resident adults)	
Business Survival Rate (per 10,000 population)	
GVA per Worker	
GVA per working age person (£s)	
Number of Registered Enterprises, per 10,000 population 2017	
Total GVA (£m) (2016)	NA
All persons employed in private sector as % of all persons in employment	

Green = better than comparators; Orange - similar to comparators; Red = behind comparators

- Inverclyde currently performs well in terms of:
  - perception of community, local services and schools;
- medium well in terms of:
  - qualifications; employment/economic activity and GVA per worker
- less well in terms of:
  - business density, levels of start-up and private sector jobs

4.10 Strategic Pointers

The data show that Inverclyde has both a declining and aging population with trends projected to continue in the future (policy-off). Recent job creation has been slower than national and the area is currently highly dependent on the public sector for employment, although it is clear that there is increasing levels of out-commuting.

The data analysis highlights to a number of key pointers to reflect upon:

- a declining population will impact on the demand for local services (including retail) and must eventually impact on long term inclusive sustainability
- while the absolute decrease in population is a challenge, an increase in older (potential) workers offers an opportunity to ensure a future supply of skilled and experienced employees;
- Inverclyde has a low business density with a strong focus on public sector jobs highlighting the need to focus on small (SME) private sector employers and jobs to ensure a more sustainable and mixed business structure;
- the absolute and relative level of private house building has been low and will require to be addressed in order to attract or retain aspirational individuals and families;
- educational attainment, a school estate and positive destinations are improving although this is not yet being fully drawn through to the wider workforce; and
- Inverclyde has a range of infrastructure and assets which provide a strong base from which to grow the economy. These will have an enabling role to play in the future.

5. Strategy and Policy Context

5.1 Introduction

This Chapter provides a brief overview of the strategy and policy context within which Inverclyde currently operates and the strategy and action plan is being developed.

5.2 Implication of De-population [9]

The implications of a continuing decline and aging of population at the projected levels are potentially serious for Inverclyde and are likely to have a number of implications:

- declining population impacting on long term sustainability of local public services such as schools/ college/ leisure facilities/ roads and transport;
- growing decrease in local spending and impact on already challenged local retail sector and related town centres;
- declining demand for housing with impact on housing development viability through low values;
- a decrease in funding for local services through declining block grants and lower council tax and business rates contributions;
- an increase in older people with complicated health and social care issues leading to additional pressures on health and social care;
- a smaller workforce making it less attractive for companies to locate or grow;
- fewer resources to invest in infrastructure and environment resulting in a declining asset base.

This has the potential to perpetuate a **spiral of decline** with a diminishing "local offer" leading to a further loss of population - overall de-generation - the opposite of regeneration.

[9] See also - https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/council-and-government/community-planning-partnership/inverclyde-outcome-improvement-plan

If the demographic trends continue as projected, this will result in[10]:

- a further net decline of around 9,000 residents over 25 years (2016-2041);
- based on ONS household spend this would remove over £100 million per annum [excluding council tax] from the local (but not national) economy[11];
- the net changes would comprise a loss of around 14,000 young and working age residents; and
- an increase of almost 5,000 older people with consequent health and social care issues.

These changes will clearly ensure that the trends we have seen in the local economy continue into the future, perhaps at an accelerating rate.

5.3 An Evolving Policy Framework

In developing a response to the demographic challenges it will be important to be consistent with and supportive of the wider policy framework and architecture [see Appendix B].

A detailed policy critique is outside the scope of this report but is important to highlight a few critical aspects:

- Enterprise and Skills Review and related Economic Strategy;
- National Performance Framework;
- Evolving regional geographies; and
- Inverclyde Local Outcome Improvement Plan.

The Repopulation Strategy and Action Plan, once agreed will be sense checked against this policy background.

[10] National Records Scotland

[11] https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/personalandhouseholdfinances/expenditure/datasets/householdexpenditurebycountriesandregionsuktablea33

5.4 Enterprise and Skills Review

Main focus to maximise impact on the following drivers of productivity:

- **Investment:** including digital infrastructure, new plant, machinery and equipment, foreign direct investment.
- **Skills:** including investment in our young people through our education and skills system, and the up-skilling and reskilling the existing workforce.
- **Innovation:** including investment in R&D by the private and higher education sectors, knowledge exchange between industry and universities and colleges, the development of 'clusters', and fostering innovative behaviours among businesses across different sectors and within businesses, in the form of workplace innovation.
- **Internationalisation:** including the degree of exposure to international competition and larger international markets through exports and trade.
- **Enterprise:** including entrepreneurship, start-ups, businesses' ambition for growth, and the dynamism of the business base.

However, there is a recognition that in achieving the above we must reflect on a number of factors:

- **Fair work:** including fair wage levels, job security, ownership and management and leadership capabilities.
- **Health and wellbeing:** the health and wellbeing of our workforce underpins our ability to improve labour productivity.
- **Natural resources and sustainability:** the quality and diversity of natural resources available in Scotland and economic effect of transitioning to a more resource efficient, lower carbon economy.
- **Regional-specific factors** such as composition and size of sector mix, business base and supply chains, infrastructure, skills and workforce all contribute driving productivity differences. A more balanced regional economy will enable us to increase our national economic potential.

5.5 Regional Partnerships and Geographies

Included in the ESR is the notion of Regional Partnerships, reflecting the renewed interest in regional approaches, driven by a number of considerations:

- focus on 'functional economic geographies' – this relates in particular to the role of cities and their surrounding areas and markets as drivers of economic growth;
- the rationale for regional approaches to planning in key areas such as infrastructure and transport, both of which have long taken a regional approach;
- the drive towards greater efficiency in public service delivery and the need to improve outcomes, the latter being a key driver of the formation of Regional Improvement Collaboratives in education; and
- the Scottish Government's wish to encourage the development of a connected network of national, regional and local structures to guide economic development and inclusive growth in Scotland.

Clearly the City Deals and Growth Deals have also been a key driver, providing an initial blueprint for the Regional Partnerships in strategic and governance terms. The City and Growth Deal areas form the initial Partnerships with other regional partnerships now in various stages of development.

5.6 National Performance Framework

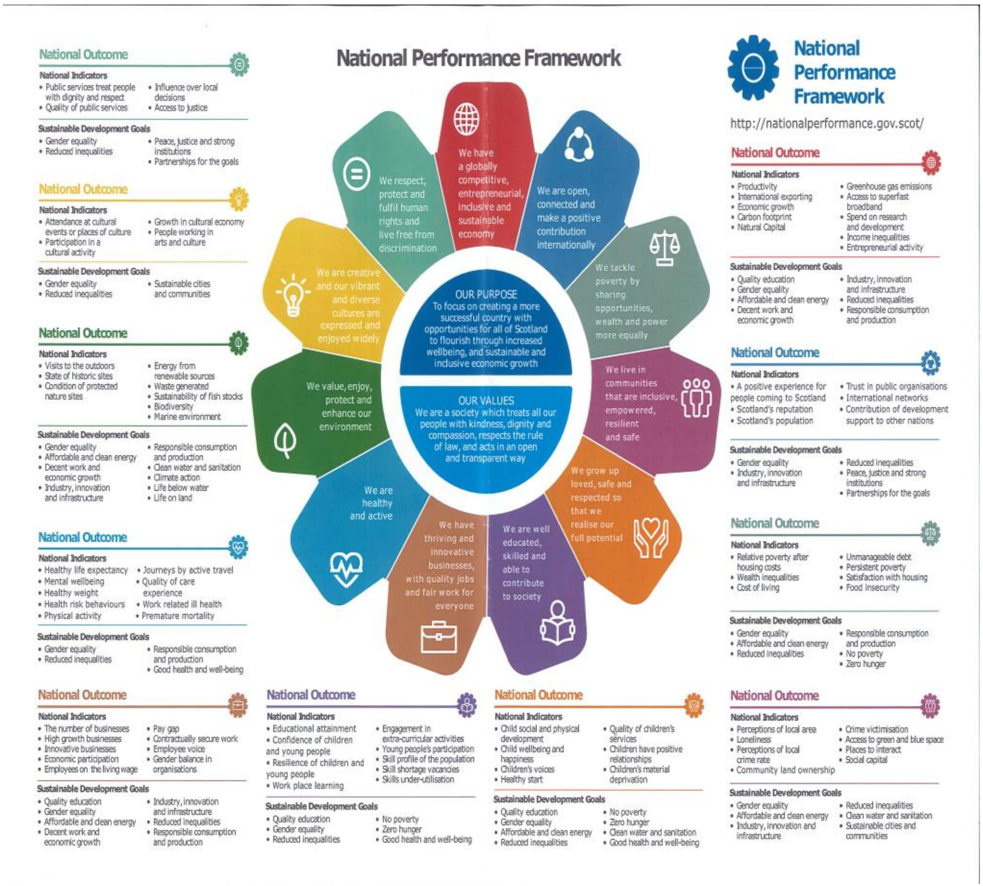
The National Performance Framework sets out the Governments overarching vision for the Country together with a range of desired outcomes and appropriate indicators.

National Indicators

- We grow up loved, safe and respected so that we realise our full potential;
- We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe;
- We are creative and our vibrant and diverse cultures are expressed and enjoyed widely;

- We have a globally competitive, entrepreneurial, inclusive and sustainable economy;
- We are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society;
- We value, enjoy, protect and enhance our environment;
- We have thriving and innovative businesses, with quality jobs and fair work;
- We are healthy and active;
- We respect, protect and fulfil human rights and live free from discrimination;
- We are open, connected and make a positive contribution internationally.

It is clear that any new economic-focused strategy and action plan will deliver against most of these indicators and this should be considered further as the Action Plan is developing.



5.7 Inverclyde LOIP

The Community Planning Partnership vision for Inverclyde is: ‘Nurturing Inverclyde: Getting it right for every Child, Citizen and Community’.

This Alliance is seeking to work in partnership to create a confident, inclusive Inverclyde with safe and sustainable, healthy, nurtured communities, and a thriving, prosperous economy, with active citizens who are resilient, respected and responsible and able to make a positive contribution to the area.

The LOIP has identified three strategic priorities:

- Population
  - Inverclyde’s population will be stable and sustainable with an appropriate balance of socio - economic groups that is conducive to local economic prosperity and longer term population growth
- Inequalities
  - There will be low levels of poverty and deprivation and the gap in income and health between the richest and poorest members of our communities will be reduced.
- Environment, Culture and Heritage
  - Inverclyde’s environment, culture and heritage will be protected and enhanced to create a better place for all Inverclyde residents and an attractive place in which to live, work and visit.

In responding to the population priority, the Alliance developed a Repopulation Outcome Delivery Plan with a focus on:

- vision;
- image;
- housing;
- lifestyle;
- economy; and
- partnerships.

These will be fully reflected in the repopulation strategy and action plan.

6. Stakeholder Perspectives

6.1 Introduction

A wide reaching engagement plan was completed with further details provided at Appendix 1. For reporting purposes we have provided a review as follows.

- Communities of interest, which included:
  - Public sector officials
  - Elected members
  - Education sector
  - Community sector
- Employers;
- Young people; and
- Developers/ investors.

In total we have spoken with around 100 individuals across these interest groups.

6.2 Communities of Interest

Based on the interviews we have provided a commentary across a range of issues raised through the interviews:

- Demographics
- Image and Marketing;
- Housing;
- Education and Skills
- Business and Jobs;
- Public sector leverage;
- Transport and infrastructure;
- Land and Property
- Culture/ leisure/tourism;
- Governance, delivery and priorities.

In particular we sought to understand views and insights into what was driving the de-population and the kinds of areas where intervention may be required to revise trends.

Demographics

There is a unanimous agreement that de-population is perhaps the greatest challenge facing Inverclyde and that it is in everyone's interest to focus attention and resources in addressing the issue for the collective "good".

There was a clear view (supported by the evidence) that there was no single issue driving the de-population and that there were a range of factors (explored in more detail below).

It follows that with many different "causes" of the population trends any solution would have to be multi-faceted and able to address the different potential causes of the decline.

One interesting opportunity may be to see an increase in older people not as a problem but as an opportunity to increase the labour force to compensate for a decline in younger people.

With an increase in state pension age and with many people having poor pension savings, many older people are now choosing or having to choose to work beyond traditional retirement age. This may require specific support around health or wellbeing issue, upskilling or re-training but could provide a source of experienced people into the labour force.

Image and Marketing

There was fairly unanimous agreement that Inverclyde has an image problem. It is believed that it is still perceived by many to be "stuck" in a post-industrial time with significant urban and social deprivation.

It was also felt that Inverclyde gets lots of inaccurate negative media coverage - for example the talking up of high crime levels which is not actually the case.

Image and perception of the area is important for informing the views and actions of a range of stakeholders, including:

- locals residents (potential lavers);
- young people;
- existing businesses;
- local employees;
- those looking to start a business;
- visitors and tourists;
- investors and developers;
- inward investing companies; and
- government and related agencies.

A brief search on a range of search engines Inverclyde Council and its related services; local news websites; tourism/ visitor information; international marketing sites (eg gumtree). Indeed the Scottish Governments main marketing site for people and businesses (Talent Scotland) has no specific mention of Inverclyde.

Previous and current initiatives include:

- Inverclyde Living campaign (previous campaign) focused on attracting people to live in Inverclyde;
- Discover Inverclyde: tourism and events marketing;
- Council funding for the Inverclyde Tourist Group; and
- Riverside Inverclyde marketing activities of property and development opportunities..

It is clear that there is currently no consistent, comprehensive or universal marketing approach for Inverclyde. For example, Renfrewshire has an Invest in Renfrewshire programme targeting individuals, business and communities and North Ayrshire has a similar approach.

Using marketing and communication as a key tool to address the perception and awareness issues was seen by all as a key focus for any Action Plan.

The focus should be on:

- developing an overarching consistent message
- making better use of social media;
- developing specific messages for target sub groups; and
- providing easy access to and signposting to information that tells the true story of Inverclyde.

One final point is that interestingly, those who have moved into or relocated to Inverclyde generally seem more positive about the area than many “locals”. It seems once people/business move to Inverclyde they really appreciate its positives.

It may be appropriate to try and seek endorsements or case studies to be included in any marketing activities.

Housing

There is a consensus that the availability of a mix of housing types, locations and tenures will be a critical factor in both retaining existing residents and attracting new ones to the area.

While it was generally the view that Inverclyde may not have had an appropriate housing offer, there is a belief that the direction of travel over recent years has been positive. Previous focus was seen to be on social housing and upgrading older stock rather than providing new houses.

It is the mix of new housing that is seen as important - one bedroom flats to large detached family homes; mix of tenure - rent to outright purchase; mix of type - social to private; and mix of locations rural to urban.

It is accepted that there has been lesser new house building activity in Inverclyde compared to neighbouring Authorities but also that demand appears to be strong with new housing that has been built selling quickly.

There is a sense that Inverclyde can offer good value for money due to lower house prices (compared for example to Glasgow) but that this in turn will impact on the economics of house building.

This coupled with high development costs due to brownfield land conditions and topography may mean that the net returns to developers/ investors may not be as high as others locations.

We return to this issue in the Action Plan.

Transport

The interviewees expressed mixed views about transport as a major issue. While everyone agrees it is important, there are variations in views as to the constraints placed on Inverclyde as a result of transport-related issues.

The main issues that was raised was the trunk road network between Central Greenock and Port Glasgow, which while everyone recognises the congestion issue at some times during the day, the consequences of this are not agreed upon.

While there has been recent investment and ongoing improvements to the road network it is recognised that there is room for improvements.

Our sense is that while an important issue, we do not detect a strong appetite to try and push for a radical (for that read expensive) solution and that incremental improvements such as lobbying Scottish Government for a “green wave!” approach to improve movement on the trunk road network is preferable and probably more deliverable.

There was a strong consensus that Inverclyde has a relatively strong and well developed and performing public transport network with a mix of buses, trains and (developing) cycleways together with good access to the ferries and airport network.

Business and Jobs

There is a clear recognition of the role and importance which jobs and employment opportunities (and the consequential business base) have on the attractiveness of Inverclyde as a location to live and work.

There is also a clear recognition that Inverclyde is particularly dependent on the public sector and very large international (mobile) companies for employment but has a lower levels of local indigenous SMEs and new business starts. This offers a clear direction of travel for the future of Inverclyde.

- *"Inverclyde should build on the past but look to the future".*

The area is seen as perhaps having an particular reliance on lower value jobs with limited career prospects which kind of bears out the more detailed employment analysis, although it does not tell the whole story.

The future should be focused on trying to attract higher value jobs and growing indigenous companies and new start business. While this is easy to say in a "motherhood" sense it is more difficult to deliver. It is also a potentially pejorative approach which says this jobs good while this job bad.

Realistically, Inverclyde will need a mix of jobs to operate as a local economy, although it is clear that currently there is a clear focus on the higher value jobs.

At this point it is worth highlighting the issue of out-commuting verses "locked doors". There is absolutely no sense in which Inverclyde should focus on the extremes. It should not be either a wholly dormitory town or one that it completely internalised.

There is a strong consensus that Inverclyde should be both - offer a great place to live/ bring up a family/ visit etc for those who commute as well as offering good <u>local</u> employment opportunities and career prospects.

Consideration was also given to those business sectors where it was felt Inverclyde had a competitive advantage and although this has not been tested to any detail, there is an intuitive sense that it is in the right track.

Examples of priority sectors are:

- marine and environment;
- tourism, culture and leisure;
- transport and distribution;
- food and drink; and
- business services.

Of course it is recognised that as current and future major employers the need to secure future talent for the health and social care and education sectors is critical.

One final issue which was raised relates to enterprise and entrepreneurship or rather the lack of it currently and the need to provide a framework to use this as a lever of future growth.

Public Sector Leverage

One issue that was raised a few times was that given the primacy of the public sector, how could we ensure that they are maximising the wider economic impact either through their employment practices, training and staff development protocols or through their supplier purchases.

While we do not know the exact scale and reach of public sector economic footprints in Inverclyde we believe it will be significant and would be a useful lever to use to support future growth.

This approach has been successfully applied in other areas. For example, EKOS undertook a mapping exercise in Fife to assess the footprint of third sector spend and develop an approach to secure more local benefits.

Skills and Education

There is a strong consensus across all stakeholders that the Council have achieved major recent success in improving the quality and outputs from the education sector. As an example of what can be achieved with a clear focus it is a useful role model for the future.

This includes: a new school estate; improved exam results; and better positive destinations for school leavers.

There is also a clear positive direction of travel in workforce qualifications, although the number of those with professional and technical qualifications is well below national averages.

The college (West College Scotland) is seen as a key stakeholder in ensuring Inverclyde residents have the skills and qualifications necessary to secure future meaningful employment. There are however some mixed views as to how effective they have been in the past in supporting skills within Inverclyde

Land and Property

Land and property are seen as necessary factor to secure a prosperous future.

In terms of land, Inverclyde is perceived to have significant levels of vacant and derelict land which is seen both as an ongoing eyesore and as an unproductive (potential) asset.

The example of Belville Community Garden is seen by many as a good example of how to bring derelict land into use through engaging with the local community.

The availability of appropriate land will be a key factor is engaging the housing and employment agenda in the future. In addition, the availability of appropriate business property to meet the needs of small and start-up businesses will be a key part of any Inverclyde mix.

The views expressed by the stakeholders is largely that there is an appropriate range and mix of land and property in Inverclyde. While a detailed audit was outside the scope of this research our sense is that there may be specific areas where new investment will be required.

The Councils planning function and attitude to new development is likely to be a significant factor of future success.

Culture/ leisure/tourism

While it may not be seen externally as a key strength in Inverclyde, the stakeholders beg to differ. It is believed that there are some real opportunities to use the cultural and leisure assets of Inverclyde as one of the key marketing benefits/selling points for the area.

The developments related to the cruise ships in particular is seen as a real opportunity and that it is crucial that the local area is able to maximise the benefits form this sector. We would agree with this contention and suggest that this should be seen as a key priority and a (potential) quick win for Inverclyde.

The approach taken by Renfrew in developing and promoting a cultural offer is seen by many as a useful template which perhaps consideration of how Inverclyde could develop a similar approach.

Governance, Funding and Delivery

While the stakeholders were able to identify specific interventions which could address the de-population issue it was recognised that:

- while it is recognised that the Council will be the key player in any future repopulation plan, it cannot on its own address all the above issues;
- partnerships should be as wide as possible and include: other public sector; government agencies; communities and community groups; and (crucially) the private sector. An inclusive approach was seen as optimum;
- a major challenge will be to obtain funding to deliver interventions and again a partnership approach was seen as appropriate;
- pragmatism should rule - define the art of the possible and deliver. A significantly ambitious vision is all very well and good but can it actually be delivered;
- it was recognised that there will require to be appropriate governance and delivery structures put in place although at this time no favoured approach has emerged;
- while the Council operates within constrained budgets it does have much else to invest in terms of its wider asset base; its regulatory role; its purchasing and employment role; and the professional support of its officers and elected members - an enabling Council;
- while there may be pots of things which could be done and could make a difference there is a need to agree priorities and focus on these albeit recognising that a timeframe will be over many years;
- priority must be given to an inclusive (growth) approach where the benefits are accrued across all stakeholders and communities.

Finally, all stakeholder provided some thoughts, insights and ideas on the kinds of actions and interventions which they believe will have a positive impact on the demographic challenge.

6.3 Inverclyde Employers

Telephone interviews were carried out with a mix of employers in Inverclyde, representing a range of sectors including food and drink, transport, health, wholesale, and the public sector. Interviews were completed with ten employers, while informal feedback was also gathered at a meeting of Inverclyde Chamber of Commerce.

A selection of views highlighted during the interviews are:

- most employers rate Inverclyde highly and believe it a good place from which to operate their business;
- several respondents highlighted the affordability of housing in Inverclyde as a positive for the area;
- however, there is a view that the current infrastructure is quite stretched and any growth will require further investment;
- there was a strong perception that education in the area is one of its strengths, punching above its weight in terms in quality of provision. The refurbished/new school estate is highly though of;
- there were some concerns about Greenock town centre and the Oak Mall, particularly around unoccupied retail units and whether the overall number of units is sustainable;
- public transport connections, in terms of the frequency and accessibility of buses and rail, were felt to be good, however there are some concerns over road congestions during peak times, which can both be challenging for PSV operators and also make bus journey times less frequent and more unreliable for users;
- favouring Inverclyde-based suppliers for public procurement would support local employment and wages – raised by one respondent;

- there were mixed views on whether Inverclyde should be comfortable as a "commuter destination", offering good quality education and leisure facilities and attractive housing and transport links, or whether there is a need for large scale jobs growth to drive repopulation. Some businesses mentioned that encouraging start-ups and incentivising local SMEs to expand should be a priority when it comes to job creation;
- there is felt to be a distinct opportunity with Inverclyde's long coastline – several respondents mentioned the view over the Clyde as one of the area's main attributes, and opportunities around recreation;
- all businesses mentioned the environment as one of the key positives but that again most was not being made of it - also make more of opportunities with regards to the River Clyde.
- Inverclyde needs to compete more and better with other areas for people (in particular skilled labour) and investment and, as such, identifying large footprints for development would be key;
- some employers felt that there was a lack of formal wraparound childcare, with grandparents providing such care in some cases;
- while there was a positive view of local business many did not believe the area sold itself well - it needs to do better; one suggestion was that success stories (such as Fergusons) should be promoted to investors and other businesses highlighting Inverclyde as a place to do business and have business not just in Inverclyde but Globally, as well as highlighting the support and incentives available from organisations such as SE and SDI to get established, get your name out there and endorse your products;
- the drop in retail business is having a knock-on effect on transport providers;
- encouraging entrepreneurs, SMEs and start-ups across all sectors (one interviewee mentioned high tech start-ups in particular) and provide the current subsidies to these types of businesses rather than to attract or retain large organisations;
- joint working between certain business sectors and the education sector should continue and grow to dispel certain negative (unfounded) perceptions felt by students to certain sectors, which should aid retention of the young workforce within Inverclyde.

6.4 Young People

Focus groups were held in November 2018 with a mix of S4-S6 pupils in two Inverclyde secondary schools, Port Glasgow High School and St Columba's High School, Gourock, and with a group of students at the Greenock campus of West College Scotland.

Table 4.1: Focus Group Participants

Location	Participants
St Columba's High School, Gourock	8
Port Glasgow High School, Port Glasgow	8
Greenock Campus, West College Scotland	8
Total	**24**

Focus group participants were asked a range of questions on their views of Inverclyde, including the area's strengths and weaknesses, and about their own plans for the future.

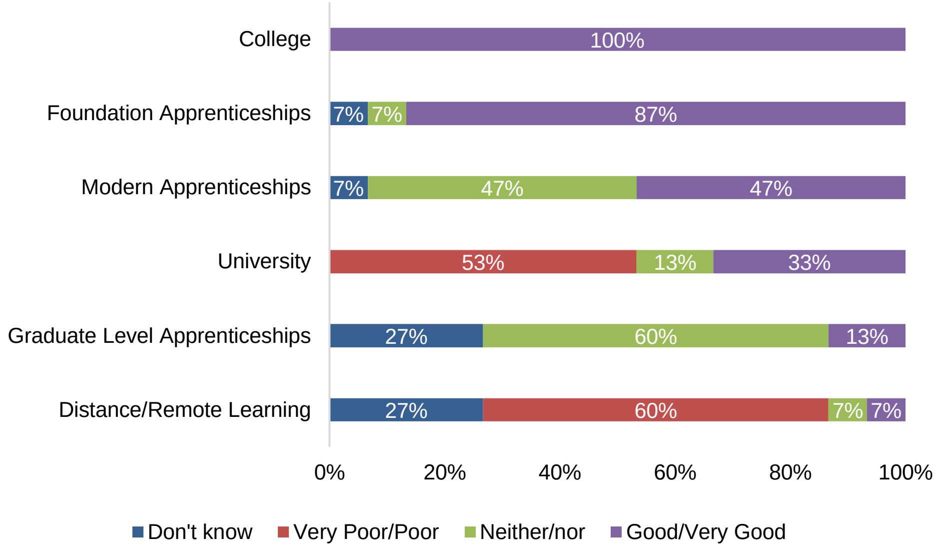
All participants were asked whether they see themselves staying or leaving Inverclyde after they have finished school/college. The largest number of respondents were committed to leaving the area, with most citing education or work as their main reason. Overall, 30% were committed to living in Inverclyde in the future, and a further 13% anticipated 'reluctantly' remaining in the area.

Table 4.2: Future Plans

	Number	%
Committed Leaver: *'I live in Inverclyde, but I plan to leave, and live and work elsewhere.'*	9	38%
Reluctant Leaver: *'I live in Inverclyde. I would prefer to stay, but I don't think I will be able to live and work here.'*	5	21%
Committed Leaver and Returner: *'I plan to leave the area, and live and work elsewhere, but return to Inverclyde at some point in the future.'*	4	17%
Committed Stayer: *'I live in Inverclyde, and I plan on living and working here.'*	3	13%
Reluctant Stayer: *'I live in Inverclyde. I would prefer to leave, but I don't think I will be able to.'*	3	13%
Total	**24**	**100%**

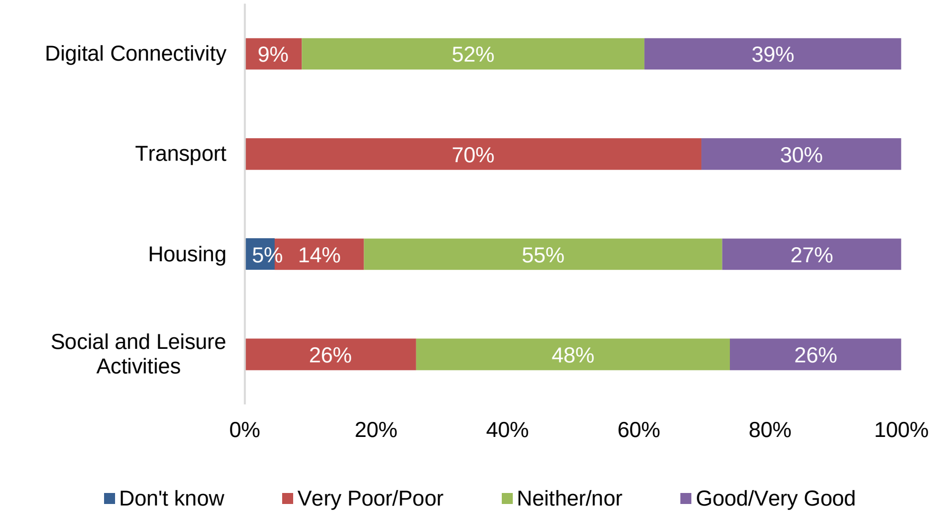
Notably, all participants had a strong understanding of further education opportunities at the local college, and some awareness of apprenticeships. The poor rating of university is largely due to a lack of access within Inverclyde – although several participants who intend to go to university explained that they will commute rather than moving out of Inverclyde.

Figure 4.1: Awareness and Understanding of Local Learning Opportunities



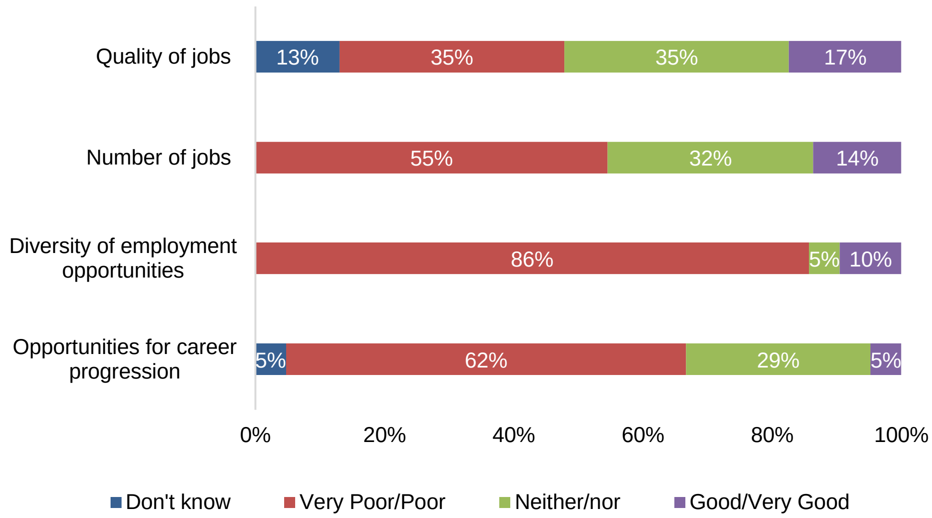
The focus groups were asked to rate wider infrastructure in Inverclyde. Of note, more than two thirds of participants rated transport as very poor (13%) or poor (57%). Reasons for this varied, with some citing quality, reliability or costs of trains and buses, and others the road network. The other aspects received a more mixed rating.

Figure 4.2: Rating of Infrastructure



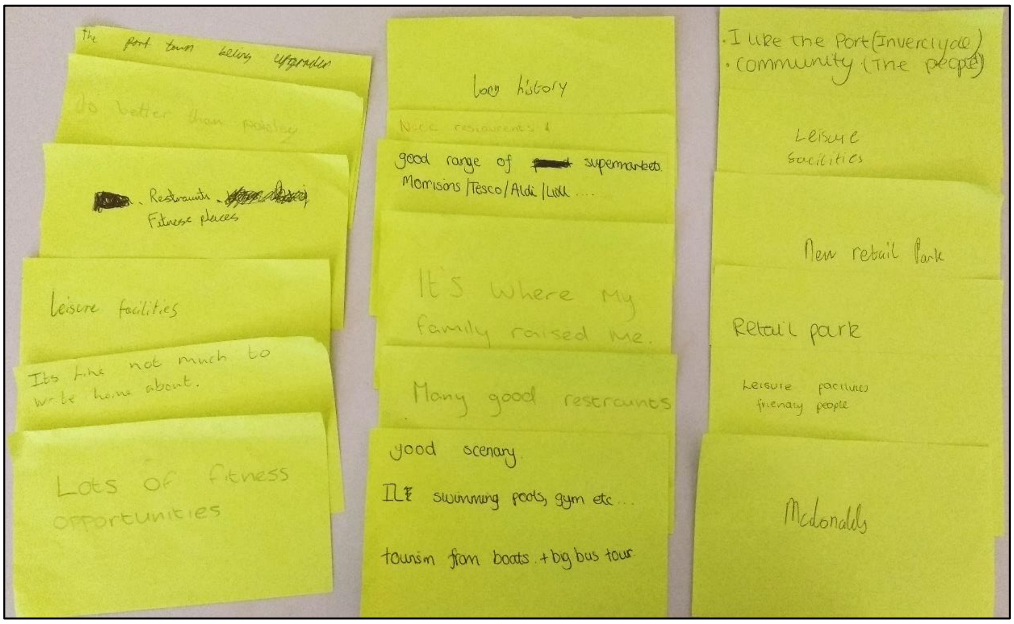
Perceptions of employment opportunities in Inverclyde were generally poor. More than half of focus group participants rated the diversity of jobs (86%), opportunities for career progression (62%), and number of jobs (55%) as very poor or poor.

Figure 4.3: Perception of Jobs in Inverclyde



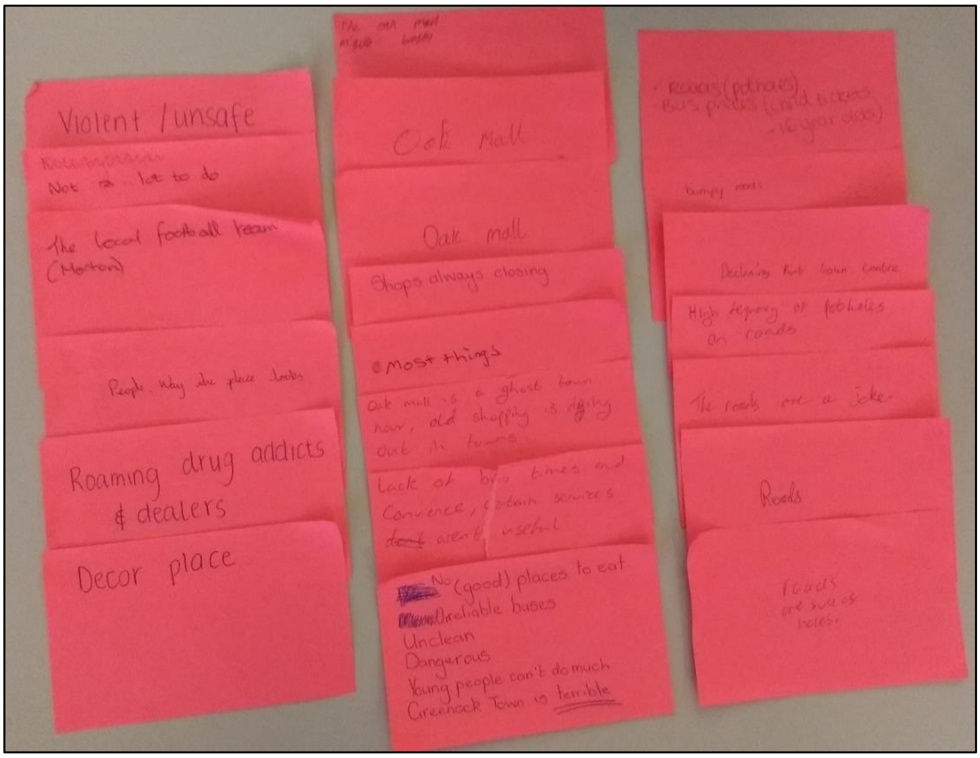
Participants at the two school focus groups were asked to identify strengths and weaknesses of the area. Common strengths included the range of leisure facilities in the area, places to eat out, the new retail outlets in Port Glasgow, the heritage of Inverclyde, and the scenery and coastal views – **Figure 4.4.**

Figure 4.4: Strengths of Inverclyde



Some of the weaknesses were highlighted as the condition of the road network, vacant shops within the Oak Mall, and unreliable public transport – **Figure 4.5.**

Figure 4.5: Weaknesses of Inverclyde



6.5 Developers/ Investors

A telephone interview with a small number of developers/ investors/ contractors was undertaken as part of the primary research.

We would highlight that the sample is small and we should not read too much into this section as there are obvious self-interests to recognise.

There were some interesting views about Inverclyde:

- while it has a perceived to have a "negative reputation" they do not believe this is justified and that Inverclyde is actually quite positive with many attributes;
- comments were made about the usually negative coverage in the local press as colouring views and not helping position the area;
- the lack of new private housing was (perhaps unsurprisingly) seen as the major weakness in the area. There is a view that there is demand but that consents have been hard to obtain in the past;
- there is also the issue of development economics - low values and high costs leading to low margins. The need for some major sites that can compete with places like Bishopton was identified with a view that on a straight completion, Inverclyde has much more to offer;
- however there is also a view that Inverclyde offers "more for your money" and this should be a key selling point;
- we did not pick up any particular negative views about the Council regulation function although the need to be seen to be "pro-business" was highlighted - it is all about attitudes;
- the need to invest in infrastructure (roads) and environment as a catalyst for development interest was highlighted. This highlights a "chicken and egg" situation - with infrastructures/ no private investment and no private investment/ no infrastructure.

Further information to be inputted once interviews completed.

Appendix A: Stakeholder Consultees

To be inserted once final research completed

Appendix B: Strategic and Policy Framework

Inverclyde Policy and Strategy Architecture:

- Inverclyde Single Operating Plan
- Inverclyde Local Housing Strategy 2011/16
- Inverclyde Local Development Plan: Main Issues Report (2017)
- Inverclyde Council Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2017/22
- he Housing Contribution Statement 2016-19
- Inverclyde Community Safety Partnership
- Inverclyde Council Green Charter
- Local Transport Strategy
- Local Biodiversity Action Plan
- Inverclyde Alliance Partners' Communications Strategies
- Glasgow and the Clyde Valley Strategic Development Plan (July 2017)
- Inverclyde Local Development Plan 2014
- River Clyde Homes Business Plan 2014/19
- Transportation and Roads - Staff Travel Plan
- Visit Scotland contract
- Discover Inverclyde
- Regional Transport Strategy 2014/17
- Youth Employment Activity Plan
- Inverclyde Alliance Repopulation Outcome Delivery Plan
- Community Learning and Development 3 Year Plan