

Cumbrae Local Place Plan

December 2024



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INTRODUCTION

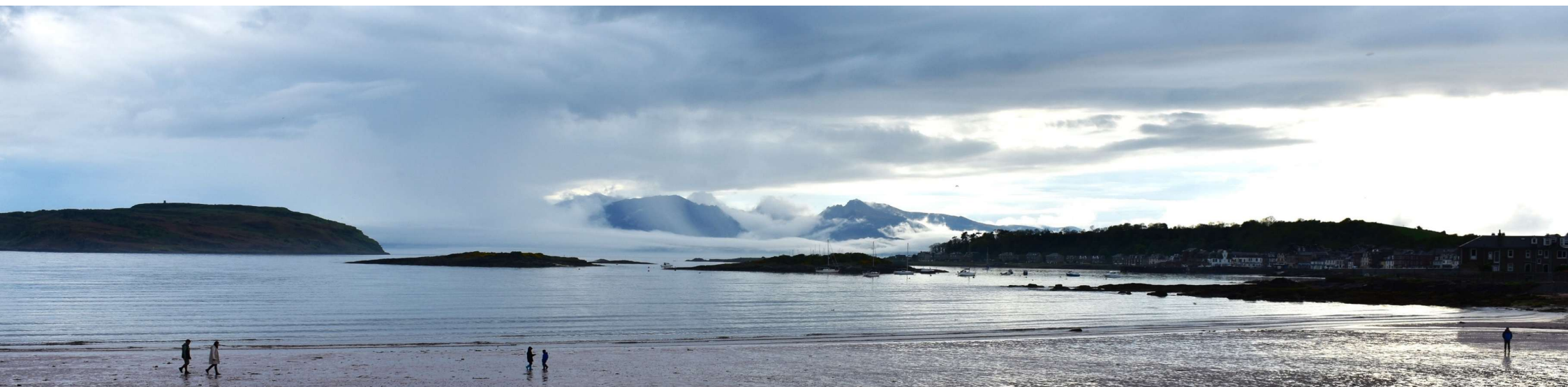
This Local Place Plan sets out our community’s aspirations for planning policy and land use on Cumbrae.

The local community’s experience with a number of recent planning applications convinced Cumbrae Community Council (CCC) that local residents, community groups and businesses need to have more of a say in the way land is used on the island.

Creating a Local Place Plan is an opportunity to consult with the community and create a shared vision for future development. It highlights places that are important to the community, proposes areas that might be suitable for development, and identifies others that are not.

This Local Place Plan was prepared by Cumbrae Community Council and relates to land on the island of Great Cumbrae. It sets out background information about Cumbrae, explains the consultation process that has been undertaken, presents a number of proposals for land use on Cumbrae and provides a series of maps identifying the land that those proposals relate to. It builds on a range of other initiatives and reports, including the Cumbrae Island Plan, the 2021 Isle of Cumbrae Economic Baseline Report and the Carbon Neutral Island (CNI) Project.

This Local Place Plan will be updated over time as the needs and aspirations of the community evolve.



THE PLANNING SYSTEM

The planning system is used to decide whether proposed developments should be permitted. Responsibility for planning generally lies with local planning authorities.

The planning system is plan-led. Plans set out how places will change, where development should and should not happen and places that should be protected. Plans guide decisions on applications for planning permission¹.

The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act prescribes four different levels of plan:

- **The National Planning Framework (NPF)**. This sets out Scottish Ministers' policies and proposals for the development and use of land.
- **Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS)**. Long-term strategies for the strategic development of an area prepared by a single planning authority, or a number of planning authorities working together.
- **Local Development Plans (LDP)**. Prepared by local planning authorities, showing how their area will change, including where development should and should not happen.
- **Local Place Plans (LPP)**. Community-led plans setting out proposals for the development and use of land in a local area.

This Local Place Plan has been prepared in advance of North Ayrshire Council's new Local Development Plan (LDP3)² so that it can influence the development of LDP3.

NB Some areas also have Locality Plans which cover local areas that would benefit most from improvement³. Cumbrae is covered by the North Coast Locality area⁴.

¹ Local development planning guidance, Scottish Government, 24 May 2023. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/local-development-planning-guidance/>

² Local Development Plan 3 (LDP3), North Ayrshire Council. <https://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/planning-and-building-standards/ldp/ldp3>

³ Community planning, Scottish Government. <https://www.gov.scot/policies/improving-public-services/community-planning/>

⁴ Our Localities: North Coast, North Ayrshire Council. <https://northayrshire.community/your-community/north-coast-cumbrae/>

LOCAL PLACE PLANS

Local Place Plans are prepared by, or on behalf of, a Community Council or other community-controlled body. Preparing a Local Place Plan is community-led and collaborative, involving as many people and organisations as possible with an interest in the local area⁵.

The right for communities to produce Local Place Plans was created in 2019 by new planning legislation allowing communities to set out their ideas for the development and use of land in their area. They describe aspirations for the place communities live and suggest ways of tackling the challenges they face.

Local Place Plans are intended to be solutions-focused, realistic, deliverable and as specific as possible. They are a tool for local communities to think about how to improve their local area, agree priorities, and take action.

The Planning Act⁶ and the Local Place Plan Regulations⁷ set out the steps that must be taken in the preparation of a Local Place Plan:

- The Local Place Plan must have regard to other plans (or emerging plans) such as the Local Development Plan, the National Planning Framework and the Locality Plan, where there is one.
- The Local Place Plan must set out in a statement any reasons for considering that the Local Development Plan should be amended.
- It should refer to other local, national or regional plans or strategies which may be relevant, such as the National Islands Plan, as well as planning permissions which may have a significant impact on the local area.
- Local Place Plans should be short, clear and visual, setting out proposals and priorities.

⁵ Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2015/6/contents>

⁶ The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1997/8/contents>

⁷ The Town and Country Planning (Local Place Plans) (Scotland) Regulations 2021. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2021/353/contents/made>

Local Place Plans must:

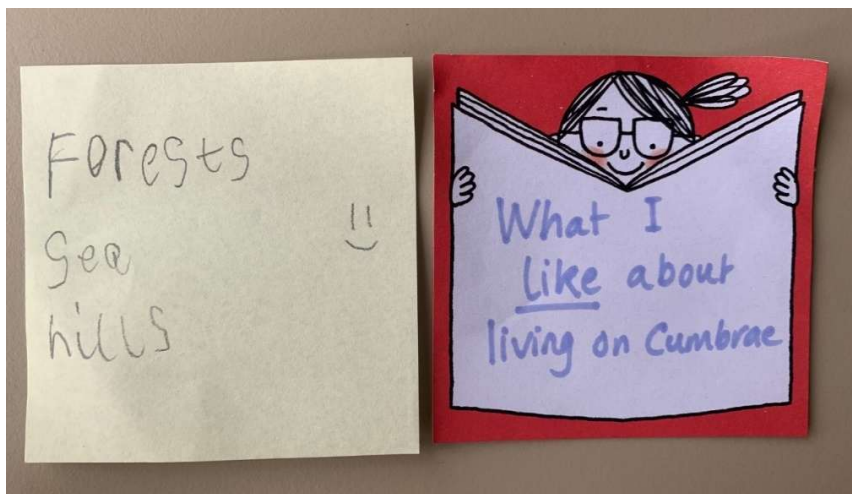
- Identify the Community Body that prepared the Local Place Plan.
- Contain a map that shows the land to which the Local Place Plan relates.
- Contain a statement of proposals about the development or use of land within the Local Place Plan area.

A copy of the proposed Local Place Plan and an information notice must be sent to each councillor for the Local Place Plan area, and any Community Council that adjoins the Local Place Plan area.

The Local Place Plan can then be submitted to the planning authority. This must include a statement about how it has had regard to other plans and policies and how it might align with or differ from them.

It should also include a statement setting out a view of the level and nature of support for the Local Place Plan and the basis on which this view has been reached, including any consultation.

If a Local Place Plan meets the legal requirements set out in the legislation the local planning authority must accept and register it and then they must take it into account in the preparation of their own local development plan⁸.



⁸ Planning circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans. Scottish Government. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/circular-1-2022-local-place-plans/>

BACKGROUND ABOUT CUMBRAE

History of development

The Isle of Cumbrae, also known as Great Cumbrae or Cumbrae, occupies an area of 11.68 km² in the Firth of Clyde⁹. It is approximately 5 kilometres long and 3 kilometres wide, rising to a maximum height of 127 metres above sea level. At just 1.5 miles from the Scottish mainland, it is one of Scotland's most accessible islands.

Cumbrae has been inhabited since the last ice age around 10,000 years ago. Millport is the only town on the island, located at its southern end. Millport was established following a 1634 decision to base a revenue cutter in the Firth of Clyde to collect duties and prevent smuggling. The Garrison was built in 1745 as the soldiers' barracks and the Captain's mansion.

The 'Old Town' of Millport was originally defined by the intersection of Cardiff Street, Stuart Street and Clyde Street. The New Town to the east of the Garrison developed from the 1840s, and subsequently rows of Victorian villas were developed around Kames Bay, Marine Parade, and along West Bay Road.

A more modern housing estate was developed to the west of Ferry Road from the 1950's, with the latest phase of 18 new homes completed at Lady Margaret Court in 2023.

Fast steamers and the railways led to a growth in tourism on the island and from the 1860's Millport became a popular resort town. New hotels, guesthouses, and recreational facilities were developed. The Cathedral of the Isles was established in 1851 and a Marine Biological Station opened in 1885.

The emergence of cheap package holidays in the mid-20th century resulted in a shift towards more day trips, but the island has remained a popular tourist destination, particularly for cycling, walking and water sports.

⁹ Scotland's Census 2001, Statistics for Inhabited Islands, General Register Office for Scotland, 28 November 2003.

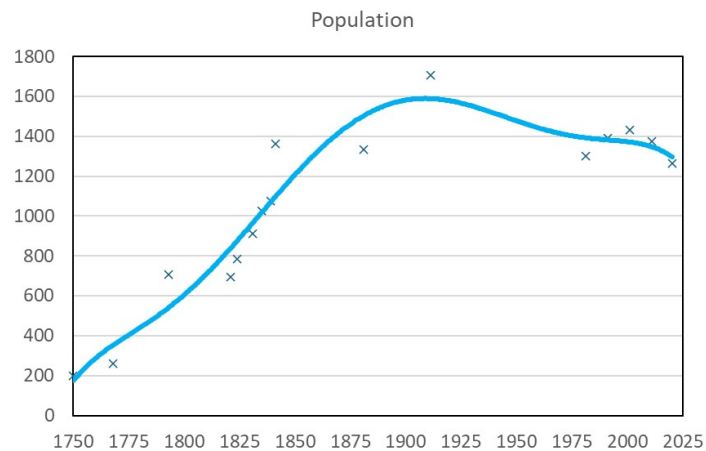
To cater for these changing needs, new holiday parks and campsites were established around Millport, and Garrison House was redeveloped into a community hub, housing a museum, café, and library.

The island has recently benefited from the development of a £48 million flood defence scheme, and a marina is planned within the newly-sheltered bay. The Town Hall is also being refurbished, the Field Studies Council (FSC) centre has been redeveloped and there are plans to develop the College buildings associated with the Cathedral.

In addition, the island has been selected by the Scottish Government to be one of six carbon neutral islands.

Population

The population of Cumbrae peaked around 1900, and has slowly declined since then, with a current estimate of 1,376^{10 11 12 13 14 15}.



¹⁰ Scottish Islands Typology: overview 2024, Scottish Government. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-islands-typology-overview-2024/pages/7/>

¹¹ Island and parish of Cumbray, 1840, The Rev. James Drummond. <https://stataccscot.ed.ac.uk/data/pdfs/account2/StAS.2.5.69.P.Bute.Cumbray.pdf>

¹² Report on the twelfth census of Scotland, A vision of Britain through time. <https://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/census/S1911POP/3>

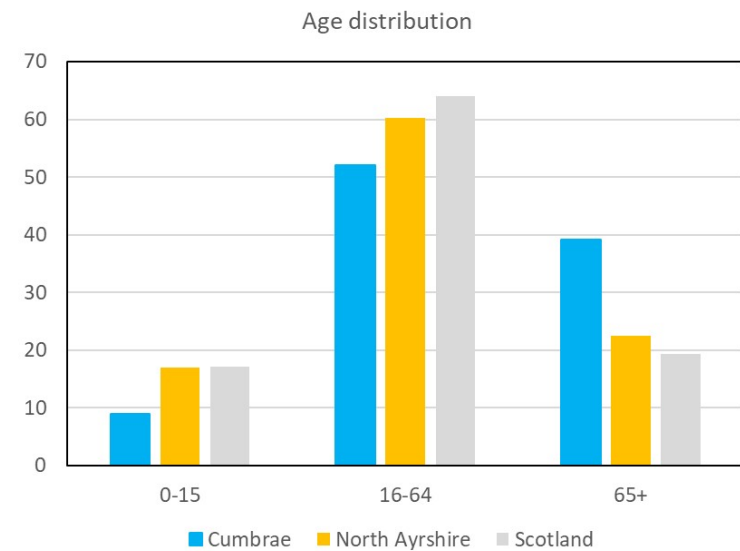
¹³ Scotland's Census 2001, Statistics for Inhabited Islands, General Register Office for Scotland, 2003.

¹⁴ Isle of Cumbrae Economic Baseline Report, North Ayrshire Council, October 2021. <https://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/Document-library/economic-baseline-cumbraes.pdf>

¹⁵ Cumbraes, Buteshire, Scotland Genealogy, Family Search.

https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Cumbraes,_Buteshire,_Scotland_Genealogy

Cumbrae has a relatively elderly population, with a significantly lower percentage of younger people than North Ayrshire or Scotland. This means it has a greater need for accessibility and care provision than many other communities.



The population is approximately 50% male and 50% female¹⁶.

Economy

Millport is in the most deprived 20% of all areas in Scotland¹⁷.

Cumbrae faces a number of challenges common to many Scottish islands, including an elderly population, population decline, economic decline, access problems caused by an unreliable ferry service, and ease of access to supermarkets and other shops on the mainland resulting in a loss of shops on the island.

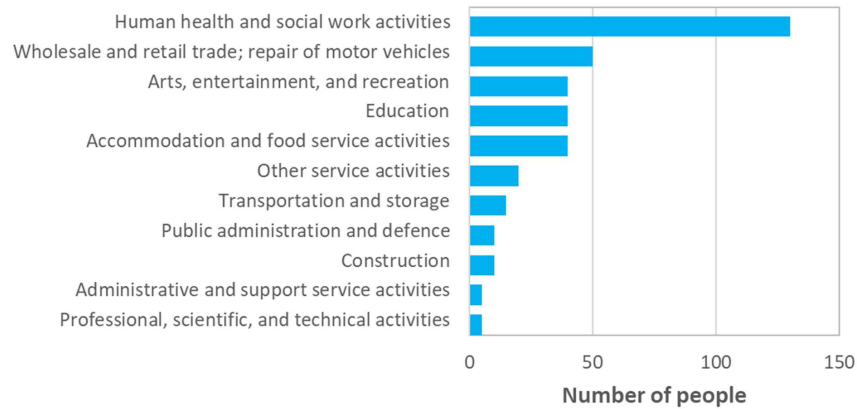
The relatively elderly population of the island is reflected in the local economy, as a large proportion of residents are retired, and the main source of employment relates to health care and social work activities¹⁸.

¹⁶ Isle of Cumbrae Economic Baseline Report, North Ayrshire Council, October 2021. <https://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/Document-library/economic-baseline-cumbraes.pdf>

¹⁷ Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, Scottish Government, 2020. <https://simd.scot/>

¹⁸ Isle of Cumbrae Economic Baseline Report, North Ayrshire Council, October 2021. <https://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/Document-library/economic-baseline-cumbraes.pdf>

Employment by sector



Note: The available data excludes agriculture and the increasing number of people who spend much of their time working from home on the island.

Whilst tourism is not identified specifically within the available data, the sectors traditionally related to tourism account for 25% of all employment¹⁹ and 25% of local GVA²⁰ (Gross Value Added – this is the measure of the value of goods and services produced). However, while good for businesses and for local employment, tourism is not viewed positively by everyone, as some residents do not see any personal benefit, only inconvenience²¹.

Housing and energy

The two main architectural styles in Millport are Georgian and late Victorian.

There are 17 listed buildings in Millport; 1 at category 'A', 5 at category 'B' and 11 at category 'C'.

Much of the town is within the Millport Conservation Area which was established in 1971 in recognition of the quality of the historic townscape and to tackle the loss of

¹⁹ Isle of Cumbrae: Local Island Plan, North Ayrshire Council, 2022. <https://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/Document-library/cumbrae-local-island-plan.pdf>

²⁰ Isle of Cumbrae Economic Baseline Report, North Ayrshire Council, October 2021. <https://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/Document-library/economic-baseline-cumbraes.pdf>

²¹ Isle of Cumbrae: Local Island Plan, North Ayrshire Council, 2022. <https://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/Document-library/cumbrae-local-island-plan.pdf>

architectural detail, insensitive alterations and insertions, and the use of inappropriate materials²².

The age of much of the housing stock means it has relatively poor energy performance compared to more modern buildings. Most of the properties have a solid external wall construction, making them prone to damp and difficult to insulate. This can result in high heating bills, and for those on low incomes can make heating their homes to a comfortable level unaffordable.

These problems are difficult to treat and are typically not suitable for approaches that might attract grant funding or loans, which generally involve insulating the inside or outside of external walls and the installation of heat pumps and solar panels.

External insulation would not be permitted in the conservation area, and internal insulation is generally disruptive and results in the loss of original features that give many properties their special character. Without insulated walls, heat pumps become impractical. In addition, North Ayrshire Council made clear in 2024 that they will not support the installation of solar panels on the primary elevations of properties in the conservation area.

This leaves the community with no practical solutions, despite the designation of the island as part of the Carbon Neutral Islands project, which for the most part has had to focus on non-domestic buildings and more modern properties outside the conservation area.

Research data published by the Scottish Government in 2021 estimated the total number of dwellings on Cumbrae was 1,342, of which, 811 were occupied²³.

It was reported in 2018 that there were 492 second homes on Cumbrae. In the zone covering the centre of Millport, 341 out of 796 homes were second homes. At 42.8%, this is the highest rate for any zone in Scotland²⁴ ²⁵. A significant number of these properties are short-term lets for visitors.

This is perceived by some as reducing the number of homes available for local people, pushing up house prices and private rent charges. However, others feel that second homeowners and visitors staying on the island tend to be relatively affluent and so bring significant revenue. It is also apparent that there is insufficient employment on the island to provide work for a large number of people, and that

²² Millport Conservation Area Appraisal, North Ayrshire Council, 2013. <https://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/Document-library/millportcaa.pdf>

²³ Isle of Cumbrae Economic Baseline Report, North Ayrshire Council, October 2021. <https://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/Document-library/economic-baseline-cumbraes.pdf>

²⁴ Greens urge action on second homes in Arran and Cumbrae, 2018. <https://greens.scot/news/greens-urge-action-on-second-homes-in-arran-and-cumbrae>

²⁵ Council to consult with islands over second home council tax. Largs & Millport Weekly News, 22 February 2024. <https://www.largsandmillportnews.com/news/24135306.council-consult-islands-second-home-council-tax/>

many of the properties on the island have been converted into small flats that are not suitable for working families.

Landscape and habitats

The majority of the island outside the town of Millport is agricultural. In addition, there are a number of beaches around the perimeter of the island and a golf course to the west of the town. Two freshwater reservoirs at the centre of the golf course are used for fishing.

The entire island is designated a Special Landscape Area (the terminology is now changing to Local Landscape Area), and large parts of the coastal fringe are designated Local Nature Conservation Sites, as are Barbay Hill and Ballikiliet Woodland at the top of the island.

Kames Bay is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) as it is an historic site for the study of intertidal marine biology, having contributed more to the understanding of marine biology than any other stretch of beach in Scotland²⁶.

Ballochmartin Bay is also designated an SSSI, as the most varied section of coast on the island, which is important for research and teaching marine biology²⁷.

The island is home to extensive wildlife and important habitats.

Studies of Minnemoer undertaken as part of, or in response to, the planning application for a large solar farm at the top of the island, identified twenty endangered species of bird on the RSPB red and amber lists²⁸. This included two species (skylark and common linnet) on the priority species list in the North Ayrshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan²⁹, and eight (dunlin, curlew, linnet, lesser redpoll, cuckoo, swift, black-headed gull and northern lapwing) on the Scottish Biodiversity List³⁰. In addition, there were seven Scottish Biodiversity List Priority Habitats including upland heathland and upland flushes, fens and swamps, semi-natural broadleaved woodland and wet woodland³¹.

²⁶ Kames Bay Site of Special Scientific Interest, Strathclyde Region, Cunninghame District. SSSI Citation 825, NatureScot. <https://sitelink.nature.scot/site/825>

²⁷ Ballochmartin Bay Site of Special Scientific Interest, Strathclyde Region Cunninghame District. SSSI Citation 132. NatureScot. <https://sitelink.nature.scot/site/132>

²⁸ Representation regarding planning permission appeal DPEA ref: PPA-310-2039, Cumbrae Community Council, 2023. <https://cumbrae.org/assets/files/Cumbrae-CommunityCouncil-representationPPA-310-2039.pdf>

²⁹ North Ayrshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2019-2031, North Ayrshire Council, 2019. <https://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/Document-library/approved-lbap.pdf>

³⁰ Scottish Biodiversity List, NatureScot, 2020. <https://www.nature.scot/scotlands-biodiversity/scottish-biodiversity-strategy-and-cop15/scottish-biodiversity-list>

³¹ Solar Farm, Isle of Cumbrae, Extended Vegetation Survey, EnviroCentre Limited, January 2023, Executive Summary. https://www.eplanning.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/OnlinePlanning/files/945C3E75C0605517719EC8901CC53436/pdf/23_00114_PP-Extended_Vegetation_Survey-1127089.pdf

Despite this, North Ayrshire Council planning officers recommended that the planning committee approve the application for the solar farm. The committee unanimously rejected the application, but it was nonetheless approved on appeal.

It is clear therefore that further protection is needed for Cumbraes' important landscapes, habitats and species.

There are also a number of stands of Japanese knotweed on the shore side of the coast road. This is an invasive non-native species that is damaging to infrastructure and biodiversity, and work is being undertaken to ensure it is eradicated³².



³² Japanese knotweed map, Cumbrae Community Council, 2023. <https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1Nvcoe41TMPpHCoi777UonSg8mFQybufH&usp=sharing>

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

CCC sought the views of the local community to inform development of this Local Place Plan. A brief summary of the consultation process and findings is presented below.

A digital survey was launched at the end of March 2024, open for all of April. The survey was promoted through:

- Announcements at CCC public meetings.
- A campaign on social media.
- Posters in shops, on the CCC noticeboard and on the bus.
- An article in the Largs and Millport News.
- Emails to 300 subscribers to the CCC mailing list.

The survey took approximately 20 minutes to complete, and 545 responses were received.

In addition, CCC and members of The Cumbrae Forum held drop-in sessions for those who wanted to complete the survey in person on 9 April, 11 April and 13 April, and an open consultation for the whole island was held on 13 April.

A stakeholder consultation was held on 19 April with input sought from key island stakeholder groups:

- Police
- HM Coastguard
- Isle of Cumbrae Tourism Association (IOCTA)
- Cumbrae Community Development Company (CCDC)
- The Cumbrae Forum
- Millport Motors
- Millport Golf Club
- The Cumbrae Primary
- Field Studies Council (FSC)
- Ferry Users Group (FUG)
- Religious organisations on the island
- Millport Bowling Club

- Millport Town Hall
- Millport Care Centre

The Boys' Brigade held a stakeholder consultation on 17 April and Cumbrae Primary School held a full school assembly followed by a stakeholder consultation with P4-5 on 29 April.

Members of CCC also conducted in-depth 1-2-1 interviews with 7 islanders.

A first draft of the proposals for this Local Place Plan were shared with North Ayrshire Council in June 2024. A second draft was then published in October 2024, and a meeting was held with Local Councillors on 4 October. A community consultation meeting was held on 5 October.

On 10 November 2024 the proposed Local Place Plan was shared with Largs Community Council, Fairlie Community Council and Local Councillors, who were given 28 days to make representations, as required by the Town and Country Planning (Local Place Plans) (Scotland) Regulations 2021.



Summary of the survey findings

- In general, respondents felt positive about Cumbrae in relation to safety, community, and views.
- Respondents were negative about the ferry service, North Ayrshire Council, business opening hours, some aspects of tourism and the proposed solar farm.
- They expressed a desire for improved amenities, fewer cars and motorhomes and a greater proportion of people visiting the island as foot passengers.

Development

- **53.3%** of respondents did not think development should be allowed beyond the town's boundaries (30.6% disagreed and 14.1% did not know).
- **82.2%** did not think development should be allowed on the shore side of the coast road (11.1% disagreed and 6.6% did not know).
- **63.8%** thought there are other parts of the island that should be protected from development, such as sites where development would spoil the skyline of the island (14.6% disagreed and 21.6% did not know).
- **49.2%** felt there were parts of the island where new developments could be allowed (27.5% disagreed and 23.3% did not know). Suggestions included:
 - Parts of Ferry Road and Golf Road
 - Parts of the land behind Bute Terrace
 - The land between the new houses at Lady Margeret Court, Ballikiliet Farm and the hospital
 - Parts of Kames Street and College Street
 - Ninian Park
 - Land between Ravenscraig and the FSC
 - The former Watersports Centre
- **80.1%** felt the conservation area should be retained, (8.3 disagreed and 11.6% did not know) but concerns were raised that it is only enforced selectively by North Ayrshire Council.
- **63.6%** felt that buildings in the conservation area should be allowed to have solar panels on their roofs facing towards the sea (25.2% disagreed and 11.2% did not know).
- **46.5%** believed the island needs more housing, in particular family homes, affordable housing, social housing and sheltered housing (29.6% disagreed and 23.8% did not know).

Landscape

- **92.7%** of respondents thought that views and panoramas on the island are very important or extremely important, and **84.3%** thought there are views that should be protected.
- **92.7%** of respondents felt that monuments such as the crocodile rock, standing stone, Indian rock and lion rock should be protected.

Amenity

- **75.1%** of respondents felt there were parts of the island in need of immediate attention, such as; potholes, pavements, some areas of the town and the public toilets.
- **58.2%** felt there is not enough for young people to do (12.3% disagreed and 29.6% did not know). Young people themselves expressed a desire for informal activity spaces such as a skate park.
- **82.2%** felt that public bins should include recycling and **75.5%** felt there should be a household recycling centre on the island.
- **76.7%** supported a call for a care home on the island so that elderly people are not forced to leave the island when they need care (the existing Care Centre provides specialist care for adults with extremely complex needs).

Transport

- **67.6%** felt there should be a cycle lane from the FSC to the ferry slip (24.4% disagreed and 8% did not know).
- **61.4%** felt there is not enough parking on the island (29.5% disagreed and 9.1% did not know). Many respondents thought visitors should be encouraged to come to the island by public transport rather than bringing a car, in order to free up space for residents and those with accessibility needs as well as helping the island meet sustainability targets.
- **79%** felt there should be a second ferry crossing to the island with enough parking on the mainland to encourage day trippers to come to the island as foot passengers. (12% disagreed and 9% did not know)

Energy and infrastructure

- **57.1%** believed it is extremely important or very important to have a community energy project on the island, owned by the community. However, there were strong calls for this to be in a more sensible location than the proposed solar farm.

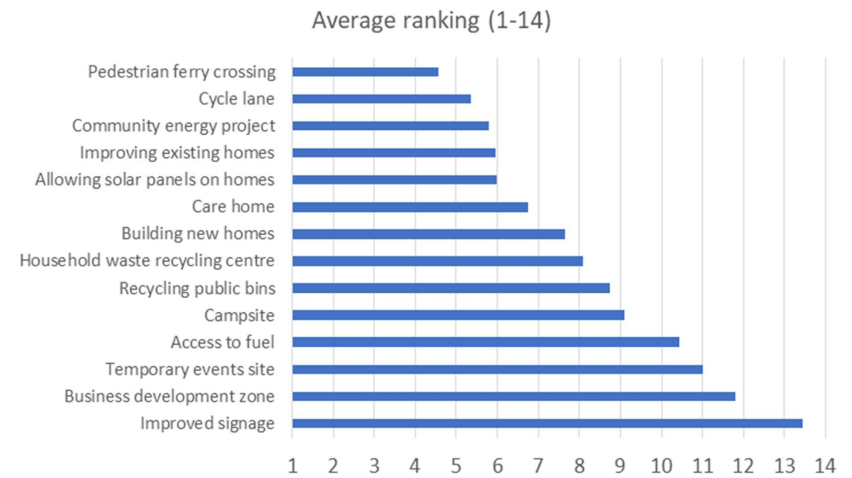
- **51.6%** felt there are particular problems with housing on the island, including its age, size and tenure and difficulties retrofitting properties (17.9% disagreed and 30.6% did not know).

Business and tourism

- **57.9%** did not support an increase in the second home council tax, suggesting it would kill the economy, second homeowners would leave the island, and local businesses would suffer (28.4% disagreed and 13.8% did not know).
- **54.7%** felt the island needs more tourism (18.5% disagreed and 26.8% did not know). There was a strong preference for an increase in foot passengers and a reduction in vehicular traffic. Respondents also felt the island should be seeking greater economic return from tourism, but with less disruption.
- **68%** believed the tourism offer could be improved (9% disagreed and 22.9% did not know). Issues raised included; unreliable opening hours, the availability of food in the evenings and the need for wet weather facilities. Suggestions for more diverse provisions included more ecological tourism (terrestrial and marine), sailing and other watersports activities, arts and crafts activities, enhanced walking and cycling experiences and a marina.
- **82.5%** said they would support a controlled campsite on the island, for example at the Garrison, or the former Watersports Centre. (10.9% disagreed and 6.6% did not know)
- **52.9%** felt there should be a business development zone to support the marina (10.3% disagreed and 36.8% did not know).
- **44%** believed there are initiatives which could be developed to create more jobs (5.2% disagreed and 50.8% did not know). Suggestions included more accommodation for workers, business start-up facilities, business support provision and better promotion of business opportunities.

Priorities

Survey respondents were asked to rank the importance of a range of possible improvements to Cumbrae. The results are set out to the right, with the most important at the top.



THE PROPOSALS

The views of the community have been distilled into the following proposals. These proposals will be updated over time to ensure they continue to properly reflect the views of the community.

Note: Where potential development sites are identified, this plan is not suggesting those sites definitely will be developed, it is simply indicating preferred locations for any such developments.

Development

Proposal 1

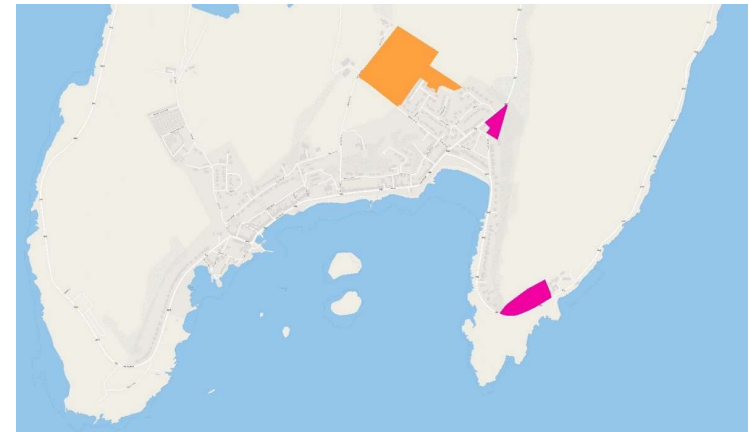
Oppose development on the shore side of the coast road and outside the Millport town boundaries, other than on sites identified in the proposals below.

This policy re-states a long-standing principle that has been applied to the consideration of proposed developments. Its purpose is to preserve the compact character of Millport, which creates a focus of activities at the south of the island, and to prevent it from sprawling along the coast. This protects the countryside on the rest of the island and preserves important views and habitats from development.



Proposal 2

Support the development of new housing on sites identified on the map, in particular sheltered and affordable housing, family homes and a care home.



Note The areas marked in orange are suitable for housing only, whereas the areas in magenta might be suitable for either housing or business uses (see also [Proposal 3](#)).

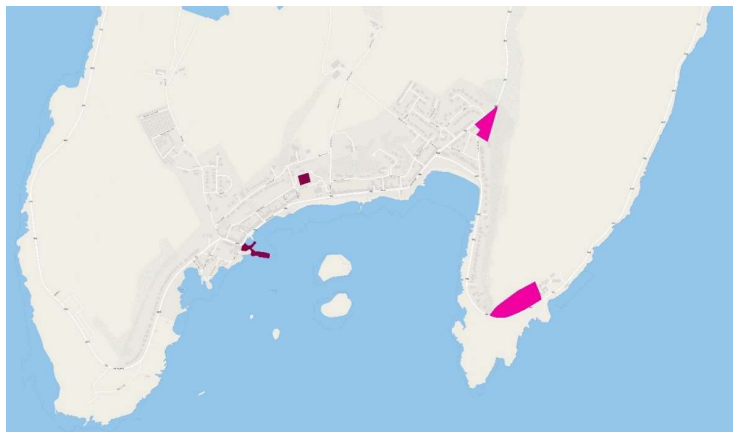
The majority of the existing housing stock on the island is relatively old, energy inefficient and difficult to heat. It also has access challenges for people with disabilities. In addition, many properties have been subdivided into small flats that are unsuitable for families. There is a need for more modern housing, and in particular, accommodation suitable for families and for older people, people with disabilities and people requiring care, so they are not forced to leave the island as their needs change.

It is important that any new development is accompanied by suitable infrastructure, in particular sustainable urban drainage solutions (SUDS), as the existing drains are already easily overwhelmed, resulting in local flooding.

See also [Proposal 19](#).

Proposal 3

Support the creation of business development zones on sites identified on the map and the creation of business start-up facilities and business support provision.



Note The areas marked in purple are only suitable for business uses, whereas the areas in magenta might be suitable for housing or business uses (see also [Proposal 1](#)).

The availability of the internet and the acceptance of working from home by employers means it is easier than ever to work or establish a business on the island. This is an opportunity to change the demographics of the island, to attract young families and diversify the economy so it is less reliant on seasonal tourism.

The area currently occupied by the huts on the Garrison site would make a particularly good location for business start-up facilities, and the proposed development of the marina makes the area around the existing pier and harbour an important business opportunity.

Proposal 4

Retain the conservation area to prevent the loss of architectural detail, insensitive alterations and insertions and the use of inappropriate materials.

It has been suggested that the conservation area should be abolished to make it easier for residents to get permission to install solar panels on the roofs of their homes. Solar panels are currently only a permitted development (meaning that planning permission is not required) outside the conservation area, or on the rear of roofs within the conservation area (in Millport the rear of roofs tends to face away from the sun).

However, the consultation made clear the community is supportive of the conservation area, and feedback noted there could be unintended consequences if it is abolished. Instead, other ways should be found to permit solar panel installations within the conservation area.

See also [Proposal 5](#) and [Proposal 19](#).



Proposal 5

Support the installation of solar panels on the primary elevation of domestic properties within the conservation area.

The installation of solar panels on the primary elevation of domestic properties in the conservation area is not a permitted development. A planning application is required to seek approval.

Cumbræ Community Council, which is a statutory consultee for planning, will support such applications.

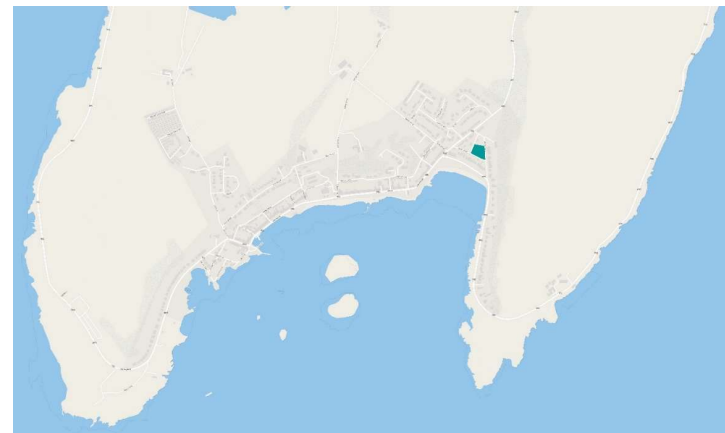
See also **Proposal 4** and **Proposal 19**.



Amenity

Proposal 6

Promote the creation of an informal play area for young people on a site identified on the map.

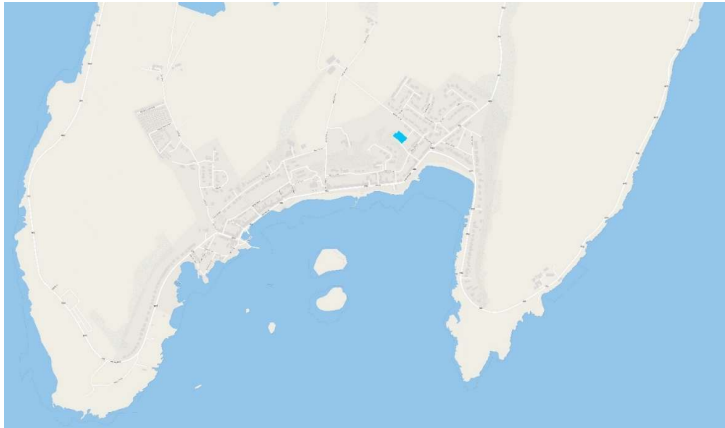


During the consultation process, young people made clear they would welcome an informal play area where unstructured activities could take place – with a particular desire for a skate park.

Ninian Park, shown on the map above, currently has a small playground at its northern end, but it is largely unused and the whole area is in need of improvement.

Proposal 7

Promote the creation of a household waste recycling centre on a site identified on the map, and the provision of public recycling bins.



At present there is no household waste recycling centre on Cumbrae. This means that those with access to transport have to leave the island and take their waste to the mainland. Those without transport have to pay for an uplift from the council. Waste is often left in the street while it is waiting to be removed.

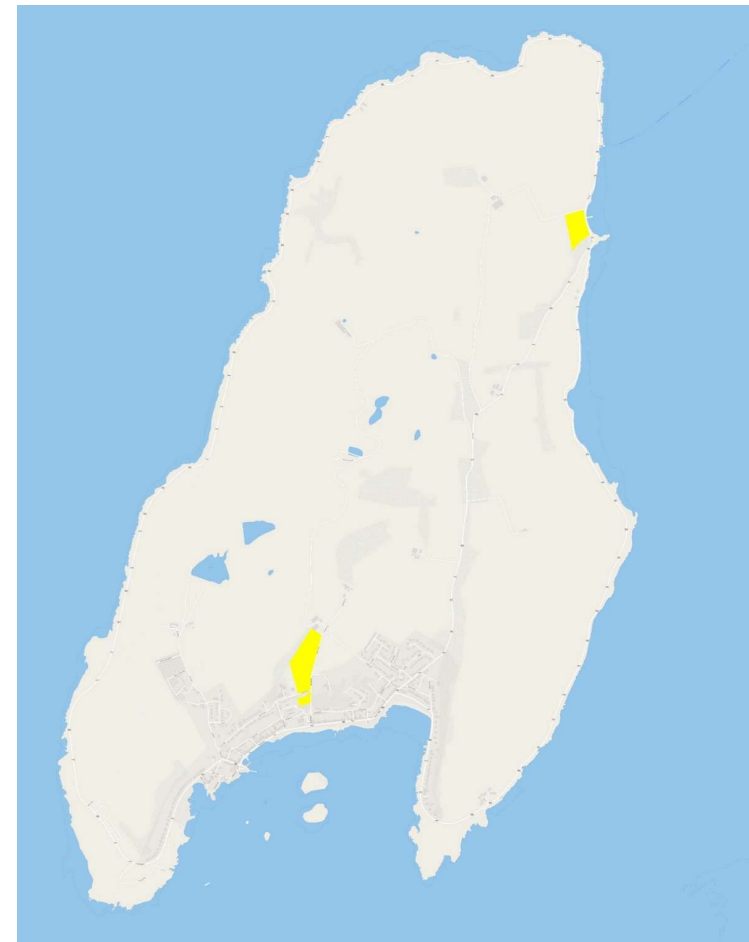
The site at the top of Woodlands Street (the former gas works), would make a suitable location for a household waste recycling centre.

There is also a need for public recycling bins on the island so that visitors are able to dispose of their waste responsibly. The clothes recycling facility at the end of Marine Parade is regularly overflowing, demonstrating demand, and it needs to be complimented by a more extensive and a greater range of recycling capacity.

Both these changes would help contribute to Cumbrae's Net Zero Island project.

Proposal 8

Encourage expansion of the motorhome site at the Garrison and the creation of formal camp sites with parking and other facilities on sites identified on the map.



The number of motorhomes parking overnight in laybys and parking spaces around the island has increased dramatically in recent years, particularly since COVID restrictions limited people's ability to travel abroad. The numbers are now unsustainable, with no suitable facilities, inadequate bins, and motorhomes parked up in large numbers, preventing other people from accessing beaches.

The motorhome site at the Garrison has proved successful and could be expanded. In addition, the field at the back of the Garrison could be used as a motorhome or camping site, as could the former Watersports Centre by the ferry slip.

Not only could these sites provide essential facilities, they would also take a number of cars, motorhomes and campervans off the streets, freeing up more parking for others.

See also **Proposal 16**.

Proposal 9

Support an increase in the range of shops and food outlets so that residents do not have to leave the island to shop, and visitors have a suitable range of options available.

A problem common to many islands is that once people have to go to the mainland to get one thing, they get everything else while they are there. This means that even where items may be available on the island, people often buy them from the mainland.

A broader offer on the island would reduce the number of enforced trips to the mainland, benefitting the community and local businesses.

It would also support a reduction in journeys, contributing to the Carbon Neutral Island project.

Proposal 10

Support improved accessibility, in particular relating to the ferry.

Cumrae has a relatively elderly population, and so accessibility issues are a particular concern. Problems that people encounter are exacerbated by being on an island, and the need to travel to the mainland for some essential services such as medical care.

A number of accessibility issues were raised during the consultation process, in particular relating to the ferry and improvements that could be made to the bus stance, passenger facilities, queuing, the walkway, and the steepness of the slip. Some problems are worse during the summer when there can be large numbers of visitors using the ferry service and long queues. CCC will support the Ferry Users' Group (FUG) in seeking appropriate improvements.

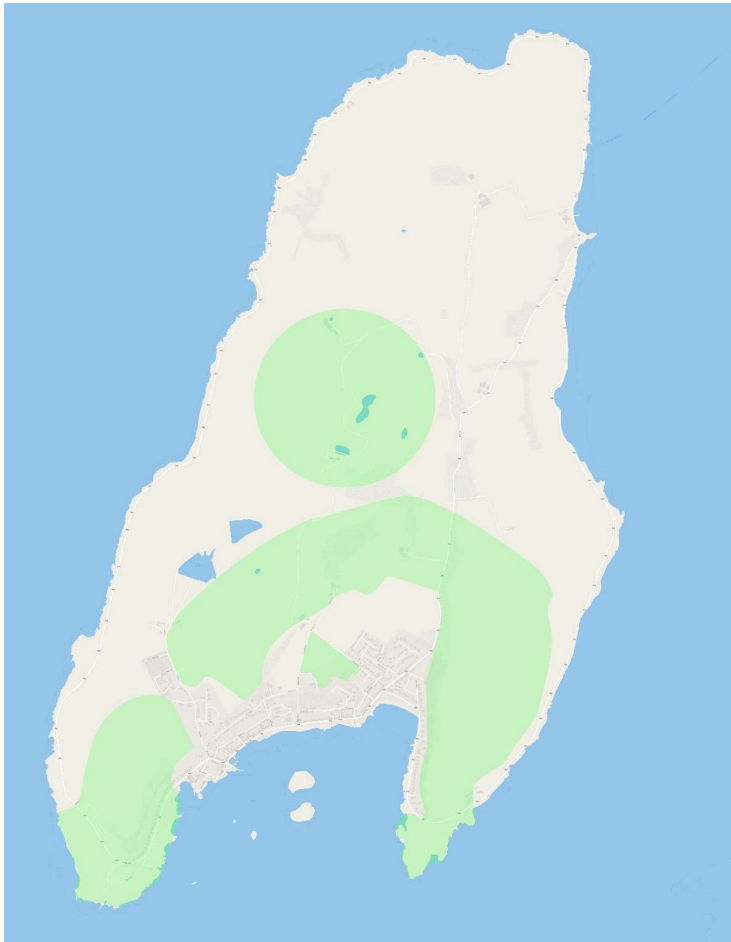
CCC will also champion accessibility issues in its responses to planning applications and in its discussions with North Ayrshire Council.



Landscape

Proposal 11

Protect important views identified on the map.



Many people move to the island or visit it because of its views, so it is crucial to residents and to the tourist economy that they are properly protected. This relates both to views of the island and views from the island.

There are many well-loved views, too numerous to mention, but two stand out:

1. The view from the highest point: The highest point of the island provides a rare 360° view of the Clyde. Its importance to residents and visitors was highlighted by the strong negative reaction to the planning application for the proposed solar farm on Minnemoer.
2. The hills behind Millport: The Landscape Capacity Assessment published by North Ayrshire Council in 2008 identified the importance of protecting the hills that surround Millport. It stated: "These hills help to enclose the settlement of Millport and reinforce the form of the bay itself; providing a background horizon to the landscape setting of the town and bay. These areas help to enclose the settlement of Millport; providing a distinctive background horizon to the landscape setting of the town and development in these remote areas would be highly visible and likely to lead to adverse effects."



Proposal 12

Ensure designated landscapes and habitats identified on the map are protected from development and seek additional protections where appropriate.



Cumbrae has a many much-loved landscapes that include important habitats and provide homes to species identified on the Scottish Biodiversity List and in the North Ayrshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan. The whole island is designated a Candidate Local Landscape Area (previously a Special Landscape Area).

The areas marked on the map have additional designations as either Local Nature Conservation Sites, or Sites of Special Scientific Interest and should be protected from development.

Despite these designations however, the planning application for the solar farm on Minnemoer was approved. CCC will therefore seek measures that give these landscapes additional protection.

Proposal 13

Eradicate invasive non-native species such as Japanese knotweed.

Japanese knotweed is present in several locations on the shore side of the coast road. Japanese knotweed is an invasive, non-native species that spreads easily and is difficult to get rid of. It can grow through concrete and poses a risk to wildlife as it reduces biodiversity.

CCC has created an online map showing the locations of Japanese knotweed around the island³³ and North Ayrshire Council is working with the community to eradicate it.

³³ Japanese knotweed map, Cumbrae Community Council, 2023.
<https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1Nvcoe41TMPpHCoi777UonSg8mFQybufH&usp=sharing>

Proposal 14

Protect important monuments identified on the map and seek legal designations where appropriate.



Cumbrae is well-known for its famous 'rock' monuments that are a feature of any trip around the coast road. There are also a number of less well-known rocks and stones on the island, as well as four memorials.

These monuments should be protected so they can be experienced and enjoyed by future generations, and where appropriate legal protections should be sought.

Transport

Proposal 15

Promote a second ferry crossing.

The large number of day tripper visitor cars could be limited by having an appropriate park and sail ferry service, with adequate car parking on the mainland. This could operate from an alternative location on the mainland away from Largs pier where a parking area could be built, and a passenger only, or limited car and passenger service could operate to a new landing location on the east of Cumbrae, or to a passenger berth at the new marina.

The design for the marina currently includes a berth large enough to accommodate a passenger ferry, and while there are no proposals for such a service at present, the marina is an opportunity to ensure appropriate infrastructure is in place.

This could also provide an alternative service for when the existing ferry is inoperative.

Proposal 16

Seek new protections to discourage visitors staying overnight in campervans and motorhomes outside of designated sites.

Developing the motorhome site at the Garrison was the first step toward reducing the very high numbers of motorhomes and campervans parking overnight around the island where there are no facilities.

The installation of 'no overnight parking' signs around the island was the second step.

Further measures may be required to relieve pressure on the countryside outside of Millport, where waste, fires, lack of toilet facilities and long-term occupation of a limited number of parking spaces are an increasing problem for the island.

See also **Proposal 8**



Proposal 17

Support the creation of a cycle lane from the FSC to the ferry on a route identified on the map.



Cumbrae is renowned for its cycling, with a relatively flat coast road that is a manageable 10 miles round. With stunning views and countryside, it is one of the main draws for people visiting the island.

However, cyclists currently share the road with vehicular traffic, particularly between the Field Studies Council (FSC) and the ferry slip. A cycle lane along this stretch of the coast road would improve safety and make the journey more pleasant for cyclists.

North Ayrshire Council is currently investigating options for such a cycle lane.

Energy and infrastructure

Proposal 18

Support the development of a community energy scheme in a suitable location.

While the local community was strongly against the proposals for the solar farm on Minnemoer, this was because of the location, and the fact that the scheme would not benefit local people, not because of an objection to renewable energy in principle.

CCC would support the development of a more appropriate scheme that benefits the community and will support the work of the Carbon Neutral Island project to assess feasible options.

Proposal 19

Support upgrading the existing housing stock and the development of a pilot project to test the viability of low carbon and energy-saving technologies.

Many of the existing buildings on the island are relatively old and are difficult and expensive to heat.

They are also generally not able to benefit from schemes that could improve their energy efficiency. They are not suitable for external wall insulation, many owners and occupants are reluctant to face the disruption, cost and loss of features that would be associated with internal wall insulation, and without those, technologies such as heat pumps would not be efficient. In addition, solar panels are not a permitted development on the roofs of the primary elevation of properties within the conservation area. This leaves the community with very limited available improvements.

A pilot project to test alternative technologies that might be suited to the types of property on the island is necessary to find viable solutions and help take residents out of fuel poverty.

See also: **Proposal 5** and **Proposal 2**



COMBINED MAP



-  Habitat to be protected
-  View to be protected
-  Monument to be protected
-  Preferred site for housing
-  Preferred site for business uses
-  Preferred site for housing or business uses
-  Preferred site for camping / motorhomes
-  Preferred site for play area
-  Preferred route for cycle lane
-  Preferred location for household waste recycling centre

APPENDIX 1: REGARD TO OTHER PLANS

In preparing this Local Place Plan, CCC has had regard to:

- The National Planning Framework.
- The adopted Local Development Plan, LDP2 and the proposed LDP3.
- The North Coast & Cumbraes Locality Partnership, Locality Action Plan 2023/24.

This Local Place Plan is broadly aligned with those plans and the framework.

The Local Development Plan might be amended as LDP3 is developed in line with this Local Place Plan and in particular to:

- Reflect the preferred development sites shown on the map.
- Strengthen the presumption against development outside the town of Millport, other than sites identified on the map.
- Identify the area around the pier and harbour as a strategic development area in order to provide services for the proposed marina.
- Identify Ballikillet Woodland as a Local Nature Conservation Site, as it is on the Review of Local Nature Conservation Sites (LNCS), but not within LDP2. Ref <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/d037001e221a4760ab8bcad7a16284ac>

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ABOUT CUMBRAE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Community Councils are the most local tier of statutory representation in Scotland (ie their purpose is set out in law). They bridge the gap between local authorities and local communities.

Their main purpose is to represent their local community, gathering community opinion and sharing the views of the community with the local authority and other public bodies.

Information about the daily workings of Cumbrae Community Council, along with further updates to this Local Place Plan can be found at www.cumbrae.org.

