

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Jura Consultants was commissioned by Cumbrae Community Development Company (CCDC), supported by Highlands and Islands Enterprise, LEADER and North Ayrshire Council, to prepare a Community Development Plan for the Island of Cumbrae, known as Great Cumbrae. The plan has been developed in collaboration with the local island community and informed by a review of current strategic documents, a detailed economic overview, an extensive audit of the island, a comparator analysis and consultation with residents, community groups and businesses. The purpose of this research was to inform a development strategy for Great Cumbrae, in an effort to bring together community development activities in a more cohesive and co-ordinated way. The overall aim of the plan is to build a vibrant sustainable community that is economically, environmentally and socially attractive.

The Development Plan will be used by a Local Development Officer, employed to further develop and implement plans agreed by the community. It will also be used as a baseline to measure progress and future success. Furthermore, the document will serve as an introduction for visitors and funders to the island community, and act as guidance for participating residents and community groups, outlining recommendations for where to concentrate activity and how to work together to co-ordinate contribution.

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2.0 OVERVIEW OF GREAT CUMBRAE

This section provides an overview of the current situation on Great Cumbrae, focusing on its history, population profile, economy, local facilities and amenities, and housing stock. The following summarises the key points;

History/Heritage

- Great Cumbrae is important in terms of the number of listed heritage buildings on the island (23), the
 interesting geology, and the variety of local flora and fauna present specifically the diversity of marine
 life.
- Millport conservation area in particular has a very distinct and tangible atmosphere as a relatively untouched Victorian seaside town and has nostalgic links to the bygone era of Clyde steamship cruising.

Population

- The total resident population (2001) is 1,434, of which 46% are male and 54% are female.
- 49% of the population is over the age of 55, resulting in an average island age of 54.
- The population in North Ayrshire is projected to contract by 0.3% in 2021.
- Millport's overall Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation ranking for 2009 is 1,324th, placing it out with the 0-20% percentile (which represents the most deprived areas in Scotland).

Economy

- 73% of the total population are of working age, but only 49.5% are economically active.
- 29% of Great Cumbrae residents are retired, 23% are in full-time employment, 12% are self-employed, and 11% are permanently sick or disabled.
- It is estimated that approximately 52% of the working aged population are employed on the mainland.
- Major island employers include the University Marine Biology Station, National Watersports Centre,
 Lady Margaret Hospital, and Cumbrae Community Care Home.
- Great Cumbrae's economy is highly reliant on the day-trip market, with an estimated 200-220,000 visitors per year.
- The island's key attractions include the nostalgic atmosphere, safety, friendliness, biodiversity, geology, cycling and walking trails, safe sailing waters, and the National Watersports Centre.
- Current barriers to economic development include limited opening hours (highly seasonal), decreasing stock of business accommodation, and the lack of a discussion forum for business owners.

Local Facilities and Amenities

- Great Cumbrae is well serviced by a regular ferry crossing from Largs, however marine landing facilities and onshore facilities for leisure boaters are deteriorated or lacking.
- The bus service is limited to the ferry timetable and does not serve the whole of the island.
- The University Marine Biology Station is an important research facility that attracts approximately 1,500 students per year to study local marine life. It has a state of the art research vessel, recompression chamber, weather station, and runs the museum and aquarium. However, UMBS facilities are deteriorating rapidly and the student accommodation block is no longer suitable.
- The island is well provided for in terms of health care services including a GP surgery with dispensary, Lady Margaret Hospital, Millport Care Centre and Cumbrae Homecare Plus. However, there has not been a residential or respite care facility on the island since 2006, forcing those with more severe or long-term health care issues to move to the mainland.
- There is little up-to-date information in the public realm about how to become more involved in the
 community (i.e. special interest groups, contact information, events schedule etc.) and how to access
 community spaces and facilities. There is also no group/initiative dedicated to protecting or conserving
 the environment or local wildlife.
- While Great Cumbrae boasts an excellent golf course, bowling club and all-weather sports pitch, the
 natural pitch at West Bay and changing/toilet facilities require immediate attention as the field is prone
 to flooding and the changing/toilet facilities have been derelict for some time. Additionally, other public
 toilet facilities on the island have also deteriorated and require attention.
- There is no indoor community facility for residents to access during inclement weather or in the evenings.

Housing

- 40% of all household spaces on Great Cumbrae are classed as second homes or holiday accommodation.
- 70% of all occupied households are owner occupied.
- 45% of households are occupied by single inhabitants, 23% by married couples and 14% by pensioners.
- Median house prices on the island have increased 141% to £77,250 since 2007.
- The average number of annual house sales is 60.
- Most people experiencing housing difficulties have indicated that this is attributed to finding a suitable home for mobility/health problems (62%), followed by affordability (31%).
- The total additional housing need on Great Cumbrae from 2008 to 2013 is approximately 10 45 households. The majority of properties required would be for 1 2 person households and would need to have ground floor access.

3.0 COMPARATOR ANALYSIS

A review was undertaken that looked at a number of comparator settlements and community initiatives as case study examples for Great Cumbrae. This focused on other small islands such as Mull, Jura, Arran and Bute, as well as comparable rural settlements across Scotland. Initiatives have included a range of activities such as tourism, renewable energies and waste reduction, built and natural heritage conservation, social enterprise, harbour management, care for the elderly, fuel provision etc.

Each of these initiatives has started from within the community for the community. Key success factors for these projects have included;

- A targeted approach to capitalise on local strengths/assets and address local issues.
- Partnership working between residents, community organisations and larger public sector bodies (i.e. Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Scottish Natural Heritage, local authority).
- Funding generated from a number of sources including personal contribution and investment from local residents and businesses.
- Achievements are not only recognised and promoted but built on and adapted to continue for the long-term.

4.0 CONSULTATION

Extensive public consultation was undertaken between October 2009 and January 2010. In total, it is estimated that approximately 240 individuals were consulted. The following table outlines audiences consulted and the number of responses gathered from each. However, this is only indicative, as figures below represent both individuals and groups. Additionally, members of the public had the opportunity to participate in more than one consultation event.

TABLE 1.0 CONSULTATION RESPONSE				
Audience	Interview	Questionnaire	Workshop	
Stakeholders	21	-	-	
Residents	-	179	16	
Youth	-		40	
Community Groups	7	15 groups	32	
Businesses	9	9	19	

Surveys focused on the following key discussion points;

- 1) The island's strengths and weaknesses.
- 2) Potential development opportunities for community and tourist products/facilities, services, and activities/events.
- 3) Key development constraints.
- 4) Strategic objectives and priorities (where appropriate).

Feedback received has been extensive and varied however there has been clear direction from the community of Great Cumbrae on what they consider the strengths and weaknesses of the island are and where opportunity and priority for collaboration, development and improvement lie. The following provides an overview of the key comments made by all audiences (not ordered for priority).

Strengths

- · Beautiful scenery, flora and fauna, beaches.
- Nostalgic, charming atmosphere.
- · Safe.
- · Friendly community.
- Pace and quality of life.
- Remote but accessible.
- Facilities/amenities GP surgery, hospital, golf course, Garrison House.
- Events Country & Western Festival, Cathedral Summer Concert Series.

Weaknesses

- Lack of coordination between community groups and between businesses.
- Economy is heavily reliant on day-trip tourism and is highly seasonal.
- Limited opening hours of facilities and businesses.
- Much of island income is lost to mainland retailers/businesses.
- Town centre is rundown and tired-looking.
- A static and aging population, with no long-term care facility.
- High level of second homes (40%) which are often unoccupied for a long period of time.
- Perceived poor working relationship with North Ayrshire Council.
- Fragmented and divergent marketing of the island.
- No indoor space with appropriate storage.
- No local fuel provision.
- Loss of tennis courts, paddling pool and pitch & putt.
- Limited evening and weekend ferry schedule.
- Facilities/amenities public toilets/changing rooms, moorings/pier, road/pavement surfaces, ATM.

Opportunities

- Development of existing and new indoor facilities could benefit both residents and tourists.
- Sustainable increased use of the natural environment for outdoor activities such as walking, cycling, sailing, watersports etc. but also for natural heritage such as geology, ornithology, marine life, island flora and fauna.
- Improved town and island aesthetic i.e. streetscape, beaches, landscaping etc.
- Potential to capitalise on local built heritage (i.e. Millport streetscape), 'nostalgic' experience and visitor memory to brand the island.
- Consolidate and improve the overall branding and marketing of Great Cumbrae both on and off the island.
- Consolidate island community groups and encourage partnership working to create quality project proposals and unite fundraising activities.
- Potential to link with development of Little Cumbrae.
- Become more autonomous and independent by taking on more responsibility for the management of island facilities and services (i.e. grass cutting, management of the harbour etc.).
- Development of a variety of 'Made on Great Cumbrae' products or crafts.

Priorities (2-5 years)

- Safeguarding current businesses, facilities and employment levels while looking to create new employment opportunities and experience.
- Becoming a year-round destination and encouraging day-trippers to stay longer.
- Stopping the spending leakage to the mainland i.e. encourage more residents and tourists to spend their time and money on the island.
- Encouraging holiday accommodation providers and holiday home owners to invest in improving their properties and let out properties to visitors.
- Balancing new modern development/services whilst maintaining charm within the SSSI/conservation area designation.
- Reducing the cost of doing business on the island. (i.e. move old stock, transport cost of goods and staff)
- Ensuring appropriate infrastructure is in place to support community, business and tourism development. (i.e. holiday accommodation, business development support, pontoon system, fuel provision etc.)
- Increasing young adult and youth participation in community groups, activities and events.
- Sourcing appropriate grants and funding for short-term projects and generating sustainable levels of financial support for long-term projects.
- Finding an appropriate and viable model to enable long-term care of the elderly on the island.

This information, combined with desk-based research, has been used to populate the SWOT analysis table included in the full text of the Community Development Plan Report.

5.0 ACTION PLAN

5.1 Vision

By 2020 Great Cumbrae will be a thriving, attractive and sustainable "green island", well known for its unique natural and built heritage, outdoor activities and a strong sense of community spirit. Great Cumbrae will be;

- · A green, competitive and sustainable island that;
 - Has a thriving local economy.
 - Actively cares for and respects the natural and built environment.
 - Encourages sensitive access to marine life, wildlife and rare plant life in and around the island.
 - Is able to adequately provide for the current and future population.
 - Has one or more "home grown" iconic product(s).
 - Has fewer car journeys and less pollution.
 - Is renowned for its marine education and research programme and facilities, as well as excellent watersports facilities and expert tuition programme.
- A healthy, well-serviced and accessible island that;
 - o Is peaceful, tranquil and relaxing.
 - Has access to good health care services for all ages, particularly the elderly.
 - Is well served with appropriate public, private, community and voluntary services that are accessible to all.
 - Provides a variety of healthy outdoor and indoor activities.
 - Can cater for all capabilities from less-able to elite athletes.
 - Has adequate transport and communication networks.

- · A welcoming, vibrant and confident island that;
 - Has a strong identity, sense of community and economy.
 - Is a safe and attractive place to live, work and visit.
 - o Encourages development of skills and knowledge.
 - o Takes pride in its island, town and community.
 - Welcomes all visitors and newcomers, providing them with a quality experience.
- · An inclusive, fair and caring island that;
 - o Cares for the older population.
 - o Is fully accessible to all.
 - Provides opportunities for everyone to influence decisions and affect positive change on the island.
 - Is inclusive of all people and groups.

5.2 ACTION PLAN

5.2.1 Introduction

The vision, objectives and actions outlined in the action plan have been compiled with consideration for the future vision of the island and using the information gathered through a strategic review, a review of the existing infrastructure, and through consultation with residents, businesses and community groups. This review and consultation process ensures that the community has been involved in the planning procedure and that development plans and activities are responsive to, and organised around, their specific needs. The action plan provides clear guidance for residents, organisations, businesses and newcomers about the vision for the community, priority areas for action and future goals, as well as outlining opportunities for involvement, without being prescriptive about responsibility and how activities should be carried out.

Timescales have been set for the recommended actions in order to illustrate where the priorities are – i.e. for the short-term (1-3 years), medium-term (4-5 years) – and to assist with future monitoring and evaluation. The long-term (5-10 years) has not been the focus of this action plan. This is due to the nature and level of development required on the island. Long-term planning for the island will be highly reliant on the success of the short/medium-term activities and therefore can only be addressed after significant headway has been made. It is also important to note that this is a living document that must change and adapt to events, achievements and future requirements. It should be reviewed on an annual basis to update figures and statistics, as well as addressing any changes in policy. After 3 years, additional development planning should take place in order to set down longer-term objectives and actions required.

5.2.2 Implementation

It will be essential that an up-to-date Community Development Plan document is available in the public domain and is as accessible as possible. Its use must be encouraged and widely promoted. A formal response to and commitment from each local group and business on the island is desirable. It is recommended that Cumbrae Community Development Company take responsibility for spear heading activity and co-ordinating key community groups to form partnerships and "take ownership" of relevant projects/activities. The Development Manager in partnership with the new Local Development Officer should assist the community and groups to implement the Community Development Plan, brokering relationships between groups, and giving advice on a range of subjects including business planning, training opportunities and fundraising.

The action plan has been constructed from the comments and aspirations received during the consultation process. It is for the individual groups and businesses involved to decide what projects, activities, events, and initiatives to take on in order to progress the identified actions. Should groups wish to seek assistance in achieving their aims, the Local Development Officer would be available to advise, seek assistance from another group to help or where a combination of groups would be better equipped to take any actions forward then they could assist in facilitating the organisation of that combination.

5.2.2 Action Plan

The table on the following pages outlines the action plan for Great Cumbrae.

OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	TIMESCALE	OUTCOMES
Community Resources: Improve and enhance existing community facilities, amenities and	Facilities Improve key public toilet & changing facilities at West Bay, Kames Bay and the Pier.	SHORT	 West Bay changing rooms and other public toilets are upgraded and operational by April 2011. New community facility plan by June 2012. Island maintenance group established and constituted by January 2011, in order to take on maintenance programme for summer 2011.
	 Encourage North Ayrshire Council to provide improved elderly care services, including care at home, hospital & day centre services. 	MEDIUM	
	 Advocate to North Ayrshire Council the need for investigation into the options for long-term residential care provision on the island. 	MEDIUM	
infrastructure to meet the current needs of island	Reinstate lost facilities including tennis courts, pitch and putt, and paddling pool.	MEDIUM	
residents.	 Develop plans for an indoor community facility with a larger hall, accessible storage, soft play and sports facilities with a programme of courses and activities for youth, young adults and seniors. 	SHORT	
	Implement the Cumbrae Community Initiative's plan for a community garden.	MEDIUM	
	Establish a social drop-in centre for elderly residents.	MEDIUM	
	Amenities		
	Advocate that the existing bus and ferry service is maintained.	SHORT	
	Encourage Cumbrae Coaches Ltd to extend current services to the back of the island	MEDIUM	
	(Fintry Bay), top of the island (hospital/golf course/bowling green) and West Bay.	MEDIOM	
	Advocate to CalMac the need for an earlier ferry service on Sundays (before 9am) & later evening services.	MEDIUM	
	Retain existing banking provision & lobby Bank of Scotland to address current limitations of cash point system	SHORT	
	- Maintain current access to primary level education & quality teaching provision.	SHORT	
	Investigate feasibility of reinstating fuel provision on the island.	MEDIUM	
	 In consultation with NAC, create local group to take over maintenance of island (grass cutting, flower beds, beach clean up, dog fowling etc.) and other amenities. 	MEDIUM	
	Infrastructure		
	Sustain current levels of investment in maintenance of existing piers and mooring facilities.	SHORT	
	Lobby North Ayrshire Council for improved road and pavement surfaces.	MEDIUM	
	Encourage CalMac to improve gradient of pathway to ferry for foot passengers, particularly elderly and disabled.	MEDIUM	
	Encourage North Ayrshire Council to provide affordable housing (1-2 bedroom starter & family homes) for purchase or rent/lease.	MEDIUM	
	Create an area for dedicated car and coach parking.	MEDIUM	

OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	TIMESCALE	OUTCOMES
Community Engagement Encourage greater community involvement, engagement and co- operation at all levels.	 Create an open day event where all community groups are able to promote and exhibit their work/activities, talents and achievements with a view to generating better awareness of island groups and greater interest in becoming involved. 	SHORT- MEDIUM	 Increase the number of community events and opportunities available across Great Cumbrae by 5% by end 2012. Townscape Heritage Initiative or Landscape Partnership application submitted by June 2011. 95% participation from local groups and 10% participation from independent
	 Mount a Townscape Heritage Initiative or Landscape Partnership application to the Heritage Lottery Fund to assist in the improvement of heritage buildings in the conservation area and the natural heritage in the surrounding landscape. 	SHORT	
	 Undertake a local skills audit to create an inventory of local groups and individuals identifying their skills, knowledge and experiences. 	SHORT	
	Establish a training and skills development programme for groups and businesses.	MEDIUM	residents in skills audit.
	 Establish an environmental conservation initiative that will take a survey of all local flora and fauna, create a conservation management plan, implement waste reduction initiatives such as a local charity shop, recycling of garden waste, alternative transport etc, and investigation of renewable energy sources for the island. 	SHORT- MEDIUM	 Environmental conservation group established and constituted by September 2010. Survey of local flora and fauna completed by November 2011. Community information and event network established and operational by September 2010. At least 3 mainland schools visit the island each year. 75% buy-in from all local groups and businesses to accept the Great Cumbrae Community Development Plan. Community development plan reviewed and updated annually.
	Develop a central community information network including co-ordinated calendar of events, database of active groups and activities, skills audit & volunteer bank.	SHORT	
	 Engender positive cultural change to encourage greater use of local businesses, community services & facilities, and greater involvement in events/activities and decision making. 	SHORT	
	 Encourage mainland schools to use island facilities such as the University Marine Biology Station, National Watersports Centre, Cathedral Music Centre etc. for school trips instead of travelling unnecessarily to other locations further away. 	MEDIUM	
	Co-operation Official recognition by and commitment from all community groups and businesses to accept the Great Cumbrae Community Development Plan.	SHORT	
	Consolidate community groups currently engaged in similar/overlapping activities.	SHORT	

OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	TIMESCALE	OUTCOMES
Support existing businesses and encourage expansion and development of new sustainable enterprise on the island, creating employment opportunities for young people.	Support Existing Business Prevent further reduction of business accommodation stock by advocating the new Local Development Plan include restrictions on converting commercial property to residential use.	SHORT	 0 business/commercial properties are converted to residential. Pilot of 'buy local' scheme for Christmas 2010. All residents spend at least £10 per year in each local business. Increase business development and sustainable business start-ups – target of 5 start up businesses by the end of March 2012. UMBS student accommodation upgraded and operational by 2013. UMBS increases number of students by 30% by 2018. Local business forum established by September 2010. Local business forum to initially have 65% of local businesses as members. increasing to 85% by 2015. Establish second home owner initiative by September 2011. Second home owner initiative booking system to have 4 properties by April 2012, increasing to 10 by 2020. Coordinated local business hours agreement in effect by March 2011. Create at least 5 new employment and 3 new training opportunities by 2015.
	Encourage more 'remote working' by improving broadband service and access to IT facilities such as computers, printers, video conference etc.	MEDIUM	
	Pilot a 'Buy Local' loyalty scheme to encourage residents and visitors to support local shops.	SHORT- MEDIUM	
	 Encouraging Development & New Enterprise Investment in and commercial development of University Marine Biology Station. (priority = student accommodation) 	SHORT- MEDIUM	
	Develop a local business forum (with assistance from North Ayrshire Council and Business Gateway) to encourage networking, co-ordination and collaboration.	SHORT	
	 Advocate the need and benefit of having the ferry to Little Cumbrae located on Great Cumbrae and encourage partnership working for promotion and development. 	MEDIUM	
	 Encourage second home owners to let their properties through initiatives such as a website where properties can be advertised and bookings taken, employment of a dedicated property manager to oversee lettings, maintenance and cleaning etc. 	SHORT- MEDIUM	
	 Encourage current accommodation providers to invest in upgrading properties, collaborate on a central booking system and coordinate with catering services. 	MEDIUM	
	Create small office or workshop spaces for starter businesses.	SHORT	
	 Encourage businesses to adopt increased or linked opening hours to ensure resident and visitor access to local products and services. 	SHORT	
	Encourage development of quality iconic 'island products'.	MEDIUM	
	Creating Employment Opportunities Ensure that core island businesses maintain current levels of employment particularly the University Marine Biology Station, Lady Margaret Hospital & Cumbrae Care Home.	SHORT	
	 Encourage local youth development by providing internship, apprentice or training opportunities with local businesses. 	MEDIUM	

OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	TIMESCALE	OUTCOMES
Tourism: Develop existing tourist base to increase dwell time, encourage repeat visits and overnight stays.	Developing Existing Tourist Base Ensure that current levels of tourism do not decline and increase visitor numbers, through development of a cohesive island-wide marketing plan which addresses the issue of Millport vs. Great Cumbrae, establishes an appropriate brand identity (nostalgia) and outlines a coordinated promotional plan.	SHORT- MEDIUM	 Marketing plan implemented by January 2012. New website live by January 2012 with all businesses and attractions listed in the directory. Increase the number of tourists visiting Cumbrae in 2009 (Cumbrae Tourist Association 200,000 visitors) by 10% by 2015 3 new walking routes established by 2014.
	Consolidate existing websites to prevent confusion.	SHORT	
	Advocate to North Ayrshire Council the need for improved management of Millport Bay (moorings, pier etc.) and enforcement of boating regulations.	MEDIUM	
	Reinforce safe cycling to visitors, enforce regulations and investigate the potential for a dedicated cycle route around the island.	MEDIUM	
	Develop and promote new walking routes of varying degrees of difficulty around the island.	MEDIUM	Encourage minimum day visit dwell time of
	Promote outdoor activities available on Great Cumbrae such as cycling, golf, walking, bowling, marine and wildlife study, camping, yachting, watersports etc.	MEDIUM	 6-8 hours and tourist visit of 1-2 nights. Increase PS Waverley disembarkation by 25% by 2015. Provision of at least 2 landing pontoons for visiting yachts in Millport Bay. Quality assurance framework in place by 2012.
	Develop bird watching product, (provision of hides, guide books, excursions etc.)	MEDIUM	
	Increase Dwell Time • Provision of appropriate signage and visible tourist information service in key areas. (i.e. Largs and Cumbrae ferry slips, town centre etc.)	SHORT	
	Encourage PS Waverley and CalMac to better promote Great Cumbrae on their ships, website, promotional materials, and at their ticket offices.	MEDIUM	
	Establish basic "step-ashore" facilities for leisure boaters, including pontoons, toilets, changing facilities and refuse facilities.	SHORT	
	Encourage Repeat Visits and Overnight Stays Encourage partnership working with Largs Regatta Weekend and the Sail Round the Cumbraes event.	SHORT	
	 Increase number of organised, family-friendly events appropriate to the island throughout the season. 	SHORT	
	Construct a camp site and short-stay caravan park.	MEDIUM	
	Employ quality assurance manager. To ensure that the visitor offer on the island is an appropriate and unified standard.	SHORT- MEDIUM	

