

# Inveraray Community Action Plan

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# Introduction



## Purpose

This plan contains the local community's vision for Inveraray and the priority activities that could turn their vision into a reality.

The plan has been created following discussions and conversations with local people from across the demographic spectrum: from Primary School students to Senior Citizens.

The aim of the plan is to facilitate change that can positively impact on the everyday lives of residents and produce long term community and economic benefits.

The plan considers opportunities in four areas:

- Business and Commerce
- Infrastructure and Environment
- Health and Wellbeing
- Community Cohesion and Pride

The intention is that the activities described in the plan are delivered collaboratively by the local community, stakeholders, and partners. Over the next 5 to 10 years activities will be implemented that are a balance of long term, complex strategic initiatives, and shorter-term quick wins.

Being able to evidence the aims and objectives of the community to stakeholders and funders should help residents secure necessary resources, commitment, and funding.

The information contained in the plan can also help interested parties in the public, private and third sectors to understand where to focus their activity to:

- develop and deliver services
- invest in Inveraray for the long term good of the community.



To ensure the plan spoke to the whole community, different groups and ages contributed to its development.

A range of tools and techniques were employed to ensure that individuals could use either an online or traditional communication method to record their thoughts and ideas.

Overall 83 residents were reached via quantitative methods and 24 via qualitative methods, plus group activities were carried out with Inveraray Primary School which has a head count of 60 pupils. **This is a total of 167 respondents accounting for 28% of the**

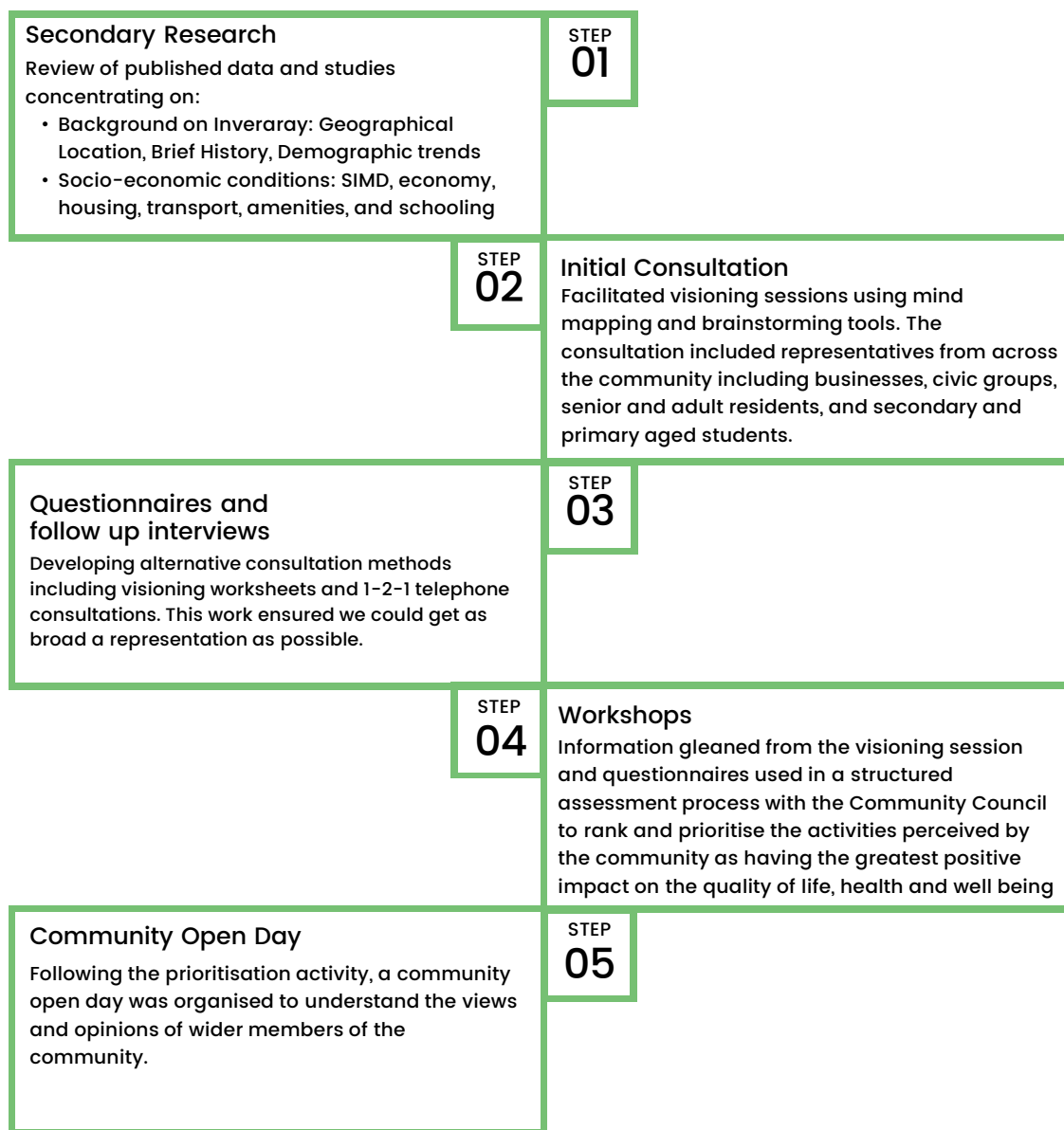
**community population.** Appendix 1 and

Appendix 2 shows the input received.

An outline of how the final plan was developed is shown.

Residents have been given the opportunity to:

- come together and enjoy wide ranging conversations
- highlight their views and thoughts in a considered way.



## 2 Inveraray Now



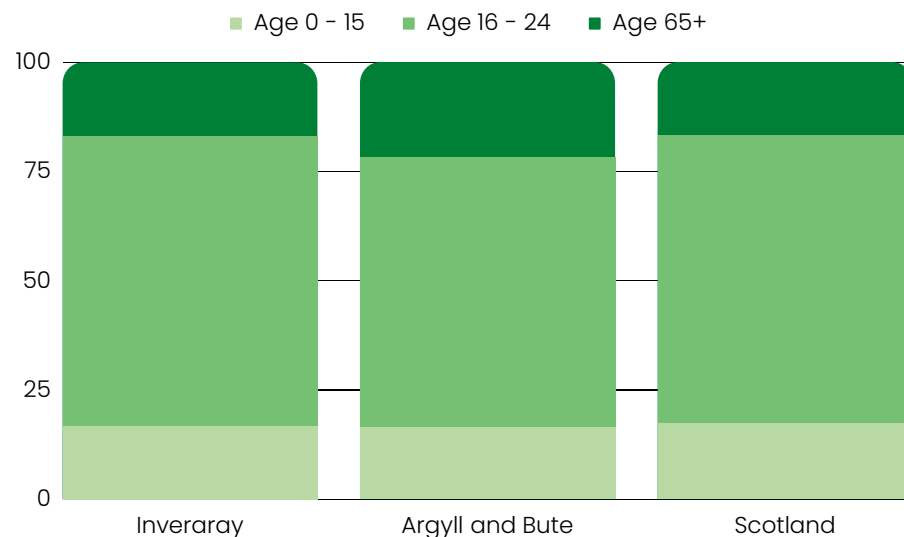
## Overview

### Location

Inveraray is the largest settlement in the immediate area, with Furnace to the south and Cairndow and the Loch Fyne Oyster Bar to the north. It is part of the Argyll and Bute Council area; Inveraray is classified as a remote rural community.

### Population and demographics

The population of Inveraray is 596 according to the 2011 census, this is split almost evenly between men and women. The age group split is very typical for Scotland. This is different from the rest of Argyll & Bute where there is a higher proportion in the 65+ age group.



### History and heritage

Inveraray is a town (former royal burgh) lying on the shoreside at the North end of Loch Fyne. In Scottish Gaelic Inveraray is Inbhir Aora, meaning mouth of the Aray. Inveraray was built as a planned Georgian town and retains several historical buildings including Inveraray Castle and Inveraray Jail. Given its historical significance the Inveraray Conservation Area was designated in 1972 as a unique example of 18th century town planning by an improving landowner. The Inveraray Conservation Area includes the original planned town, the Newtown area, the entirety of the original avenue, and the key approaches to the town.

### Community Facilities

Inveraray has one primary school, a doctor's practice, two churches (which provide community space), and a golf course. Recently however the town has lost important community facilities such as the Post Office, the Bank and Tourist Information Office. Its community hall located in the centre of the town has been out of use for many years. The local pier, another focal point of the town, is in dire need of repair. The community are proud of their town but there is a danger of decline.

## Transport

The A83 is the main road through the town, a trunk road linking Mid Argyll and Kintyre to the rest of Scotland. As a remote rural area far from other major settlements Inveraray has a high proportion of car and van owners.

There is a significant percentage of workers who travel over 30km to work which is again unsurprising. With no rail links the only public transport available is bus.

Ongoing challenges with the Rest and Be Thankful can mean the town is effectively cut off for extended periods.

## Business and economy

Inveraray has a high level of economic activity with 80% of the population being economically activate, compared with 69% in Argyll & Bute and Scotland.

The town relies heavily on tourism, having received roughly 26,000 visitors in 2019. Many businesses cater to visitors with the top 3 employment sectors being:

- Wholesale and retail trade
- Accommodation and food services
- Construction.

### Positives

- The 2020 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation shows strengths in employment, health, and income.
- Pride in the town and a desire to see positive change to improve social and economic outcomes.
- Nationally recognised significant townscape.
- Inveraray is the largest settlement in the area with a large economic catchment area.
- Key tourist attractions include Inveraray Castle and Inveraray Jail. This has a strong positive effect on the local economy, bringing money into the area and providing jobs. The town lies on the A82, which is a major route to Glasgow. Travelers passing through may use local shops and services boosting the local economy.

### Negatives

- The 2020 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation shows challenges in geographical access to services, education and housing.
- The ongoing challenges with the Rest and Be Thankful are a major barrier to the growth of the community.
- Poor connections and long travel time to large settlements.
- Poor infrastructure and a limited variety of amenities or services.
- There is a lack of opportunities in Inveraray with no further or secondary education in the immediate area and a lack of high skilled jobs.
- There is a very small population in Inveraray. This means there is a small workforce and local economy. It also makes it difficult to attract external investment.



# 3

## Vision and Projects

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## **Establishing a vision**

A clear vision for the future of Inveraray emerged from community engagement. Five workshops were held which included a total of 24 residents. The participants formed a solid representation of the area, with participants from local businesses (hospitality and tourism), social groups, health professionals and young people. Further activities were developed in partnership with Inveraray Primary School to establish the opinions of the youngest in the community. These workshops and activities focused on four predefined themes that had been highlighted from previous consultation. The four themes are:

- Business and Commerce
- Infrastructure and Environment
- Health and Wellbeing
- Community Cohesion and Pride

Within each of these four themes the community produced SWOT Analyses. This highlighted where there were opportunities to fix weaknesses and combat threats through understanding the community's strengths. These opportunities began to highlight potential projects:

# Business and Commerce

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Great representation of independent shops on the high street. Broad range of quality products.</li> <li>• Visitor footfall is significant.</li> <li>• High level of awareness of the town within the wider west coast population – national recognition through Downton Abbey, and Duke of Argyll.</li> <li>• High levels of employment.</li> <li>• Visitors have a positive view of the town and the high street.</li> <li>• Strong historical background and attractive tourist sites such as the castle and the jail.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No single business/commercial voice or vision.</li> <li>• Recruitment issues – getting people can be hard – plenty of jobs but people not keen on the jobs and working hours.</li> <li>• Low wage economy.</li> <li>• Reliance on the tourism and hospitality industry – this makes the town vulnerable to downturns.</li> <li>• Vacant shop fronts affect the image of the town.</li> <li>• Issues with parking – not enough spaces for tourists to have ease of access to high street. Equally residents are frustrated by the inability to nip in and out of shops.</li> <li>• Lack of sit in coffee shops means people don't stay as long in the town as they could.</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide an experiential visit whether shopping or sightseeing.</li> <li>• Encourage the development of creative businesses, using the strong brand that the town already has. Use their skills to market and promote the town further.</li> <li>• Develop a Business and Tourism forum – improve communications and symbiotic relationships.</li> <li>• Establish a community Post Office.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-op has taken people away from the main street, beginning to decrease footfall and alter the experiential feel of the high street.</li> <li>• Concern about introduction of other high street brands</li> <li>• Impact of online shopping is a threat to the physical presence of traders.</li> <li>• Lack of high skilled and managerial jobs in Inveraray particularly in construction and tourism &amp; hospitality; two of Inveraray's largest employers.</li> <li>• Covid 19 pandemic reducing visitor footfall.</li> </ul>

# Infrastructure and Environment

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of townscape.</li> <li>• High quality of marine and terrestrial environment.</li> <li>• Conservation area status.</li> <li>• Inveraray Castle and grounds.</li> <li>• Overall local people can be provided for by local suppliers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conservation area status.</li> <li>• Dereliction and blight – Pier, Community Hall, vacant premises.</li> <li>• Lack of activity space for young people.</li> <li>• Dalmlally Archway upkeep has been limited, this focal point needs attention.</li> <li>• North entrance to the town is underdeveloped.</li> <li>• Lack of disposal sites leads to fly tipping and dumping of waste.</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town painted a single 'white' to improve visual aesthetic.</li> <li>• Community space – need for community owned and managed space.</li> <li>• Green spaces – improve the biodiversity of the available spaces.</li> <li>• Re-development of pier to boost the economy and sporting activities.</li> <li>• Demolish Community Hall and create a Town Square allowing access between the Avenue and the High Street.</li> <li>• Improve and tidy up town. Ensure that everything is as aesthetically appealing as possible (tap into Instagram promotion).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rest and Be Thankful.</li> <li>• Properties being purchased as holiday homes and short term lets. Challenge for people to get appropriate housing.</li> </ul>



# Health and Wellbeing

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People enjoy walking. Routes around the estate.</li> <li>• Karate club, pony club (lack of Inveraray folk, but drawing from other areas), music groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issues around obesity and alcoholism.</li> <li>• Vandalism – affecting how much time people want to invest.</li> <li>• High levels of social isolation.</li> <li>• No counselling services.</li> <li>• Relatively few clubs/associations.</li> <li>• No advertising and signposting for clubs.</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop cycling and walking paths – connect to wider network.</li> <li>• Establish a befriender's service.</li> <li>• Launch outreach programme to support individuals with chronic physical and mental health challenges.</li> <li>• Develop waymarked and interpreted Heritage/Wildlife Trail.</li> <li>• Improve green space to encourage sport and activities.</li> <li>• Launch a 'Men's shed' initiative.</li> <li>• Publish What's On directory.</li> <li>• Maintain a dedicated community noticeboard.</li> <li>• Extend use of social media and web communications.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draw of bigger events/clubs at Lochgilphead.</li> <li>• Ownership and access of some of the relevant green spaces.</li> </ul>

# Community Pride and Cohesion

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pride in belonging to the community of Inveraray.</li> <li>• Good underlying community spirit.</li> <li>• World pipe band champions.</li> <li>• The Fair.</li> <li>• Highland Games.</li> <li>• Shinty club.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The summertime becomes tourism obsessed. No time for the community.</li> <li>• No civic or outdoor space.</li> <li>• Lack of community facilities.</li> <li>• Limited numbers of volunteers, committee members and not enough support for the committees.</li> <li>• Not catering to those outwith Inveraray town.</li> <li>• No community meeting point.</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Festival Calendar.</li> <li>• Community Awards.</li> <li>• Members appeal to get more people involved in community action.</li> <li>• Encourage investment in community assets.</li> <li>• Skatepark or sheltered area in park for teenagers to meet.</li> <li>• More youth attending Community Council meetings.</li> <li>• Post Covid chance to reimagine the future.</li> <li>• Inveraray and District Community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential for Volunteer Burnout.</li> </ul>

## Discovering projects

To turn this vision into reality, ten priority projects were developed during the community engagement. The table on page 16 shows how they contribute to the vision themes.

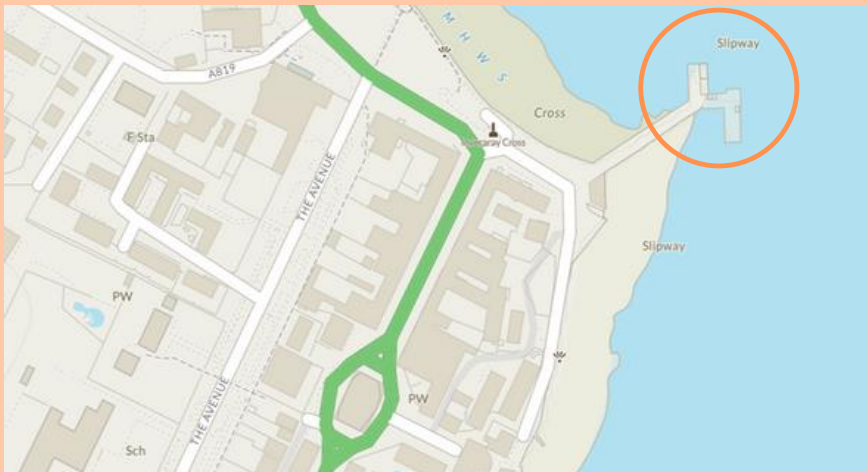
Each priority project is described in this section, with illustrative proposals and images. The priorities should be seen as a flexible framework for collaborative, community-led action. The details may need to flex over time in response to opportunities and available support. The basic aims of the ten priorities should, however, form a robust framework for action over the next five to ten years.

	Business and Commerce	Infrastructure and Environment	Health and Wellbeing	Community Cohesion and Pride
The Pier	✓	✓		✓
Community Hall and Town Square		✓		✓
Youth Voice				✓
Toilet Block and Service Station	✓	✓		
Local Residents/Housing needs survey			✓	✓
Active Travel		✓	✓	
New Parking Strategy	✓	✓		✓
Social History and Environmental Trail		✓	✓	✓
Business and Tourism Forum	✓			✓
Community Growing		✓	✓	✓



## The Pier

- Complete feasibility study to ascertain the costs of redevelopment of the pier. Identify the social and economic benefits that could accrue from refurbishment including visits from small cruise liners, watersports, and increased yacht traffic.
- If feasibility study shows that acquisition and refurbishment is viable, develop business plan and create funding strategy.



## Community Hall and Town Square

- Create a masterplan that explores the opportunities that could accrue from demolition of the derelict Community Hall and creation of a town square.
- Establish a clear community stance on the future of the community hall.
- This area could be used for community gatherings, alfresco dining, growing spaces, performance, farmers' markets and ad hoc social events and include both covered and open spaces.



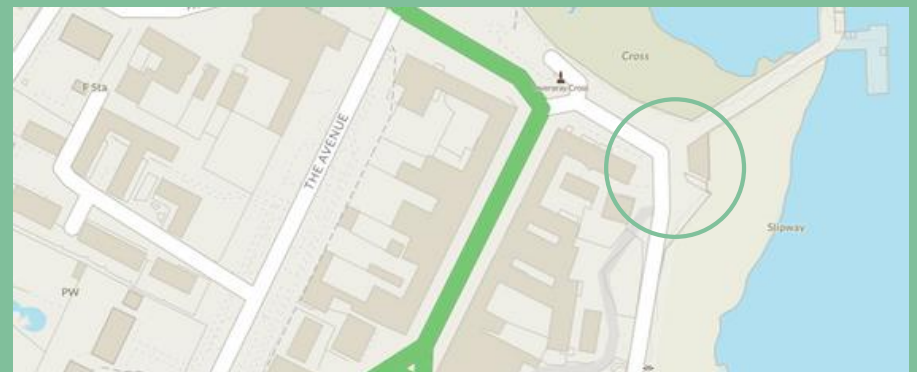
## Youth Voice/Astro Pitch

- Explore and create more opportunities for young people.
- Launch a programme of cultural, sporting, social and creative opportunities specifically aimed at those below the age of 18. This could help to address physical and mental health challenges.
- Throughout consultation the youth voice in Inveraray has been strong. They have clear aspirations of what they want. Creating more opportunity for youth involvement in community projects would be welcomed.
- The Youth Voice at consultation highlighted that their main priority was the implementation of an Astro Pitch that could be enjoyed by young people and their families in the area.



## Toilet Block and Service Station

- Assess the feasibility of securing ownership of the toilet block by Asset Transfer from Argyll & Bute Council.
- Amenity could be improved by installation of facilities aimed at those involved in hiking, cycle touring, water sports and yachting. There could be further opportunities by providing a service point for RVs and yachts making Inveraray a desirable overnight location.





## Local Needs Survey (Housing and Residents)

- Survey residents to identify gaps in the current business and commercial offering and develop a strategy to close identified gaps.
- A housing needs survey is an essential part of planning for future housing requirements. It is an independently produced document, which gives an unbiased report on the type, size and tenure of dwellings that are needed in the community.



## Active Travel

- Develop a masterplan and create a network of linked, accessible paths and routes to allow residents and visitors to travel and explore the town and its environs by foot and by bike.
- Explore the potential for bike repair stand, and e-bike hiring services.



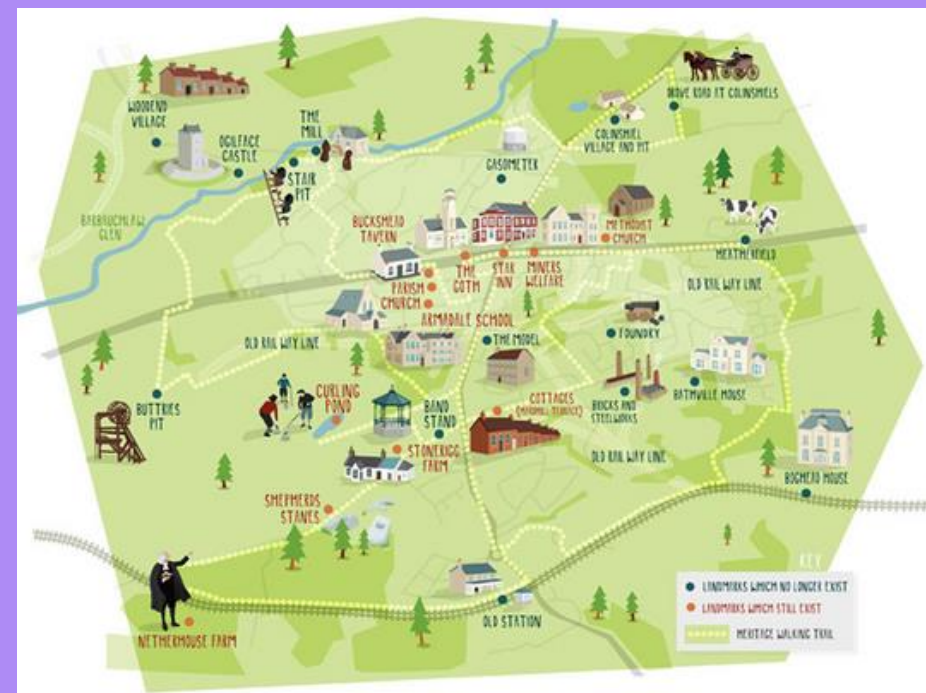
## New Parking Strategy

- Engage with council and begin discussions surrounding potential alternatives to current parking provision. This could focus on, the creation of alternative free parking spaces for workers, altering the use of parking on the High Street, increasing signage and information surrounding parking.



## Social History and Environmental Trail

- Develop an interactive trail that tells the stories of Inveraray and its environs.
- Social history can augment and enrich the understanding of residents and visitors of the town and the landscape it sits within.





## Business and Tourism Forum

- Create a Business and Tourism Forum to help the Inveraray business community to further their aspirations. Activities could include:
- ***Establishing a robust brand for the town and launch a promotion and marketing strategy to attract year-round, high value visitors. This could include establishing a year-round events calendar focused on the shoulder and low seasons.***
- ***Establishing a training and mentoring programme to help traders and businesses realise increased physical and digital sales.***



## Community Growing

- ***Growing fruit and vegetables is becoming more and more popular as a community activity both in urban and rural locations. This activity produces multiple health and wellbeing benefits. Bute provides a good local example of what can be achieved.***
- Secure land to allow community growing.





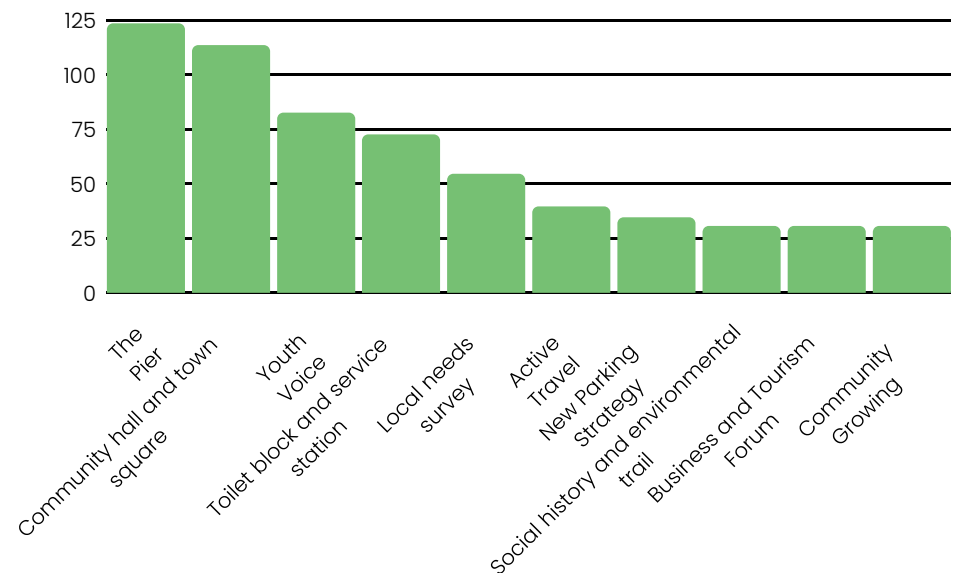
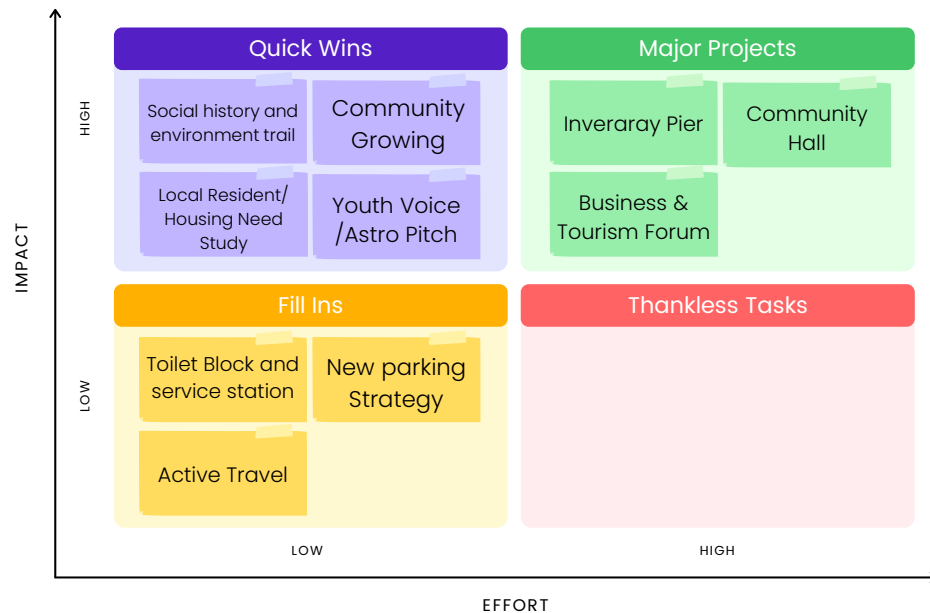
## Prioritisation

Having identified potential projects for the community of Inveraray the next step is to prioritise these with input from the wider community and community council. To do this an Impact/Effort Matrix and secret voting ballot was used.

The possible categories of the Impact/Effort Matrix are detailed below:

- Quick wins – Give the best return based on the effort
- Major projects – Provide long term returns but may be more complex to execute
- Fill ins – Don't require a lot of effort but neither do they offer many benefits
- Thankless Tasks – Hard work and brings very few rewards.

Additionally, the wider community were asked to prioritise the emerging priorities. The graph shows the results of the 83 responses.



## Making it happen

Project	Key Actions	Potential Partners	Priority
<b>The Pier</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete feasibility study to ascertain the costs of redevelopment of the pier</li> <li>• Identify the social and economic benefits that could accrue from refurbishment</li> <li>• Create funding strategy</li> <li>• Complete Business Plan</li> <li>• Achieve community ownership</li> <li>• Begin restoration</li> </ul>	Scottish Land Fund ABC Crown Estate	High
<b>Community Hall and Town Square</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a masterplan that shows the potential opportunities for the space</li> <li>• Explore demolition of the community hall and subsequent creation of town square</li> </ul>	ABC Landfill communities fund	High
<b>Youth Voice/Astro Pitch</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify an appropriate site for the development of Astro Pitch</li> <li>• Identify potential funding sources</li> <li>• Acquire land for development</li> <li>• Source potential contractors</li> <li>• Ensure youth of Inveraray are involved in the process</li> </ul>	Sport Scotland Landfill communities fund ASDA foundation ABC	High



Project	Key Actions	Potential Partners	Priority
<b>Toilet Block and Service Station</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate similar case-study</li> <li>• Initiate discussions with ABC surrounding ownership of current toilet block</li> <li>• Assess the feasibility of securing ownership of the toilet block by Asset Transfer from Argyll &amp; Bute Council</li> <li>• Conduct feasibility study on development of separate service station</li> <li>• Appoint developers to create plans for service station</li> </ul>	ABC Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund Scottish Land Fund	Medium
<b>Local Residents/Housing needs survey</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey residents to identify gaps in the current business and commercial offering</li> <li>• Develop a strategy to close identified gaps</li> <li>• Commission housing needs survey</li> </ul>	Lottery – awards for all	Medium
<b>Active Travel</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore case-study for rural active travel provision</li> <li>• Begin discussions with Sustrans or another similar expert</li> <li>• Develop an active travel plan for the village and surrounding area</li> <li>• Establish a need for e-bikes in the village</li> <li>• Identify a site for a repair stand</li> <li>• Identify potential funding sources</li> </ul>	Sustrans Cycling UK Paths for All	Medium
<b>New Parking Strategy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create alternative free parking spaces for workers</li> <li>• Make parking on the High Street available to visitors/mobility challenged residents</li> <li>• Increase signage and information surrounding parking.</li> </ul>	ABC	Medium

Project	Key Actions	Potential Partners	Priority
<b>Social History and Environmental Trail</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate appropriate case-study</li> <li>• Work with Inveraray History Society to develop potential content</li> <li>• Conversations with NatureScot surrounding environmental content</li> <li>• Discussions with paths for all surrounding potential funding</li> </ul>	Inveraray History Society Nature Scot Paths for All	Low
<b>Business and Tourism Forum</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a robust brand for the town</li> <li>• Develop and launch a marketing campaign to attract year-round visitors</li> <li>• Explore potential for year-round events calendar</li> <li>• Establishing a training and mentoring programme to help traders and businesses realise increased physical and digital sales.</li> </ul>	Visit Scotland Business Gateway Argyll and the Isles Tourism Co-operative	Low
<b>Community Growing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secure land to allow community growing</li> <li>• Refer to Argyll and Bute Grow Your Own Strategy</li> <li>• Organise informational visits to other community growing sites</li> <li>• Potential to partner with primary school</li> <li>• Create plan for community growing activities</li> <li>• Develop funding strategy to accompany the completion of plan</li> </ul>	Incredible Edible Sustainable Food Places ABC Inveraray Primary School Other community growing sites	Low

# Appendices

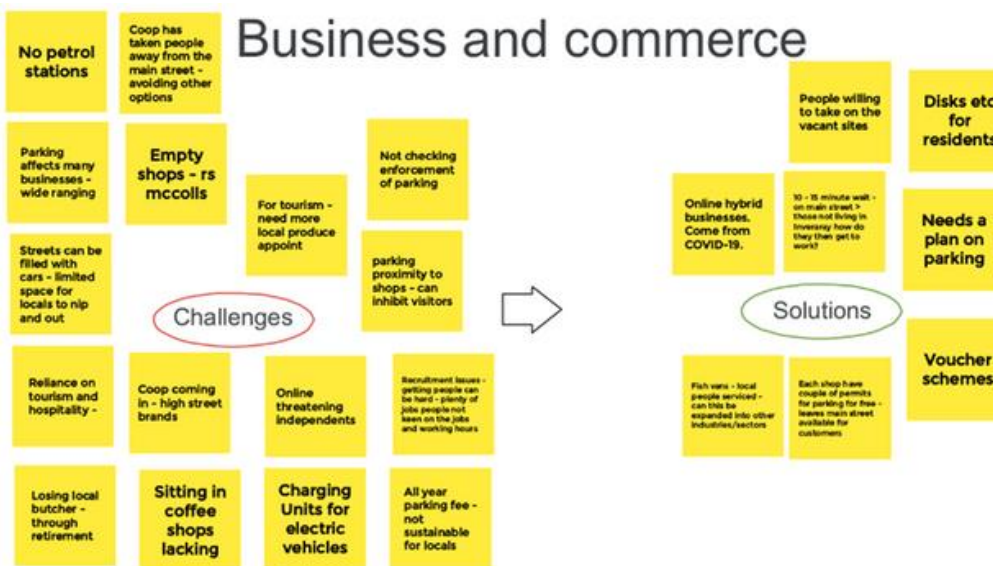


# Appendix 1 – Note from workshops

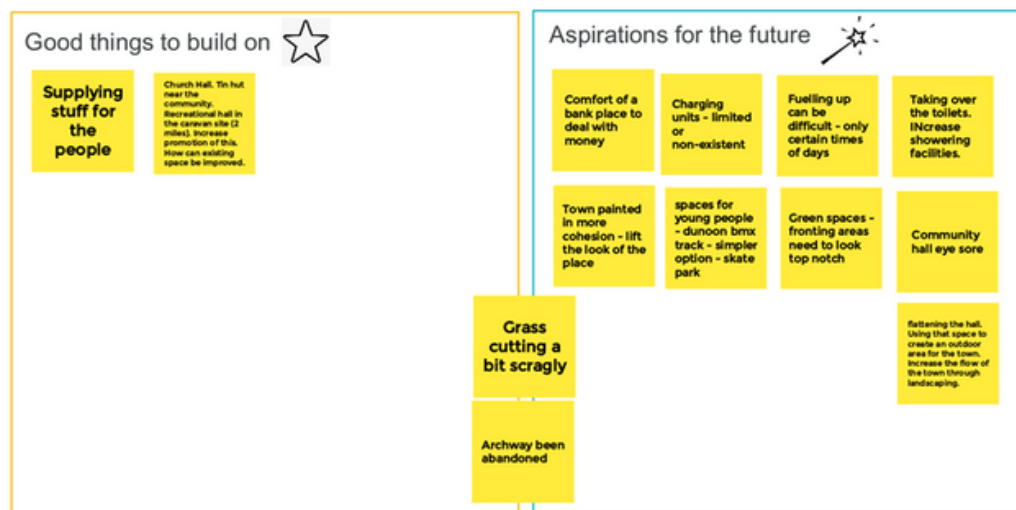
## Business and Commerce



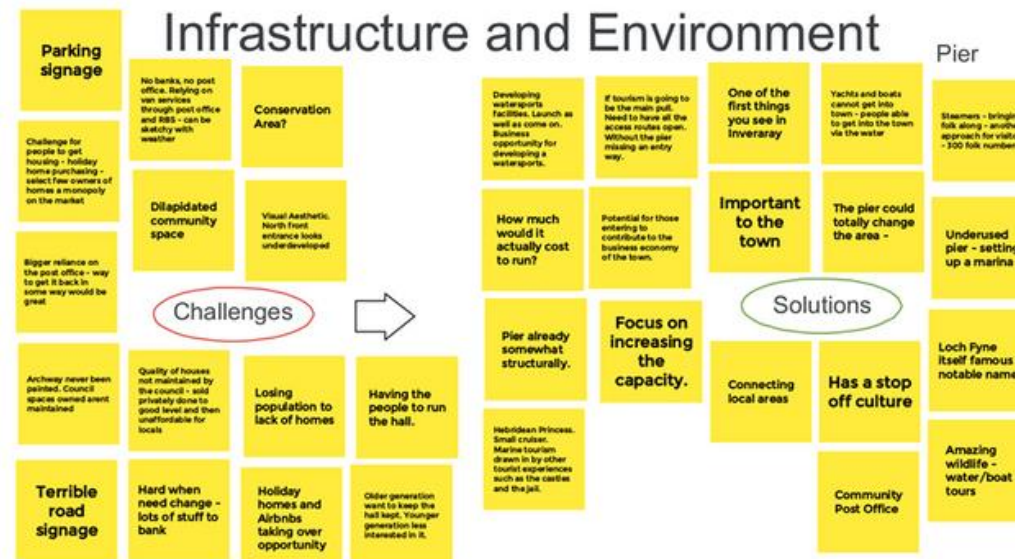
## Business and commerce



## Infrastructure and environment

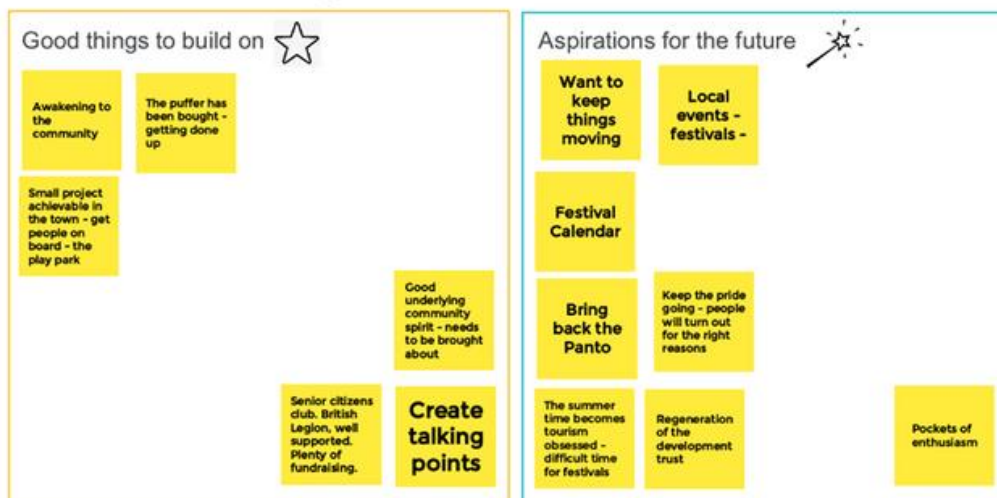


## Infrastructure and Environment

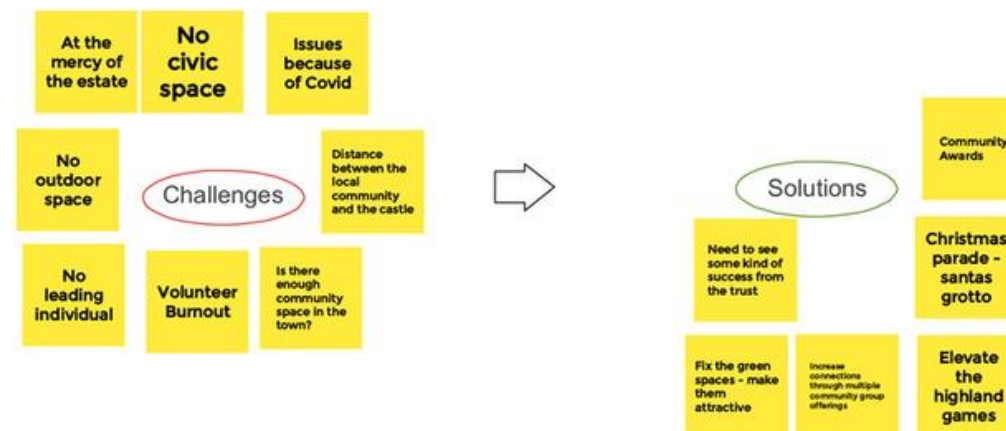




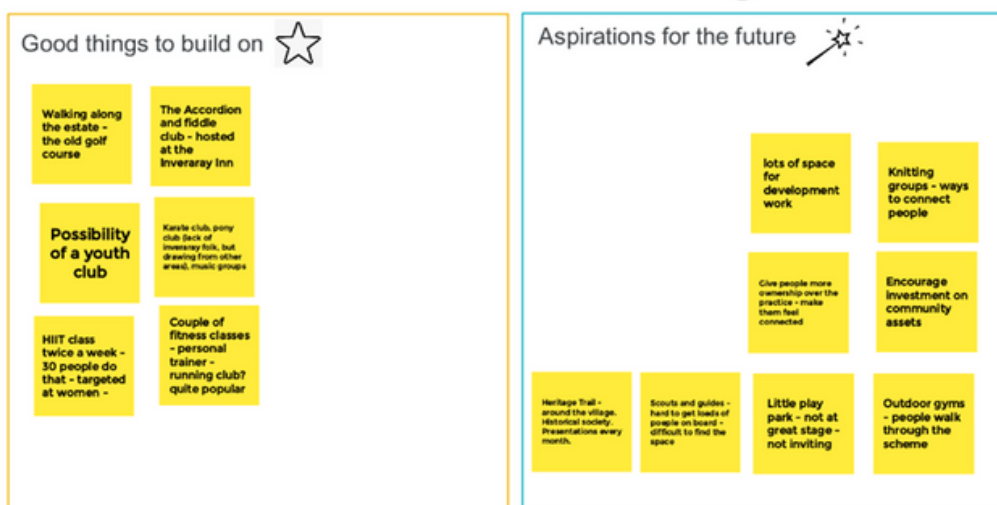
## Community confidence and cohesion



## Community confidence and cohesion



## Health and wellbeing



## Health and wellbeing



## Appendix 2 – Primary School Responses

Our Environment and the things in it.	
Good Things to Build ★ On	Aspirations for the ✂ future
Play Park Families are close. School. Castle. Community events Caves etc Golf course. Great walks!	More shops. A Slide in the park - a bigger one. More roads to more Inveraray (trees) New equipment in the park. A farm for children
What are the key challenges in the area? ✂	What are potential solutions? ✂
Money. Suppliers. Community Voting!	Fundraising. Connections.

Health and Wellbeing in Inveraray	
Good Things to Build ★ On	Aspirations for the ✂ future
Doctors. Shops. Good community. Helpers - Small town	Dentist. Police station.
What are the key challenges in the area? ✂	What are potential solutions? ✂

Our Environment and the things in it.	
Good Things to Build ★ On	Aspirations for the ✂ future
• Park (gym equipment) • Shops - gift shops, restaurant • Church (sale / bring • buy • Bell Tower • Jail • Castle • School • Dinn • Swirch • Walks • Loch Fyne • Front Green • pool • Halls • Horse Riding	• More walks • More playground equipment • swimming pool • Sports facilities • fountain • Fairground - more visits • Garden Centre.
What are the key challenges in the area? ✂	What are potential solutions? ✂
• Money • Space	• Grants

Community Pride	
Good Things to Build ★ On	Aspirations for the ✂ future
• Welcoming • People - friendly • New housing built • Shops / Tourists • Tourist attractions - Jail • local shop Castle • Resto Bell Tower	• Museum • Improving the beach • Water sports • Improving the Pier
What are the key challenges in the area? ✂	What are potential solutions? ✂
• Money	• Fund Raising • Grants

Health and Wellbeing in Inveraray	
Good Things to Build ★ On	Aspirations for the ✂ future
• Doctors Surgery • Fire Station • Tourism - popular town	• Police station • Water sports • More Shops (food)
What are the key challenges in the area? ✂	What are potential solutions? ✂
• Creating jobs • Space	• Money - grants

Our Environment and the things in it.	
Good Things to Build ★ On	Aspirations for the ✂ future
Main street/Shops Shanty Pitch Park Countryside	• Football goals • Mountain bike tracks • Takeaways • Pet shop • Swimming lessons
What are the key challenges in the area? ✂	What are potential solutions? ✂
No entertainment Lack of clubs for children	Money

Community Pride	
Good Things to Build ★ On	Aspirations for the ✂ future
Beach castle school shanty club walks.	• More events • The school to do things it used to.
What are the key challenges in the area? ✂	What are potential solutions? ✂
The same as the community page.	Money No covid.