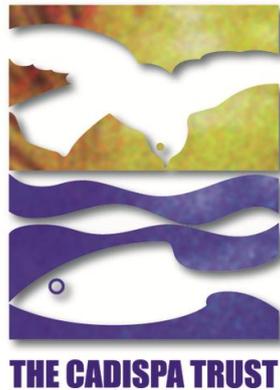


# THE CADISPA TRUST



## SUNART COMMUNITY PLANNING APPRAISAL 2014



Aerial photo of Strontian in 1967



Aerial photo of Strontian in 2009



ACKNOWLEDGED BY



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**AWARDS  
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SCOTLAND**

**LOTTERY FUNDED**

**Dr Geoff Fagan**

**Kylie Fagan**

*In association with Sunart  
Community Action Plan  
Working Group*

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<b>Hazel Dallinger</b>	<b>Janice Mackinnon</b>
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<b>Ronald McIntyre</b>	<b>Iain Cameron</b>

I would like to say a really special thanks to Hazel Dallinger. Without her tireless support and many leg miles in delivering material; helping people to complete their surveys and acting in the capacity of our representative staff member in Sunart, we simply couldn't have achieved the quality result we have. Many thanks, Hazel.

I also need to thank all of those people living in Sunart who participated, filled in and returned a complicated and tiresome questionnaire that took well over the twenty minutes I suggested it would take to complete.

Whilst we were in Strontian, many people made the time available to tell us their stories some of which were truly difficult for them to relay. The young people were fantastic: confident, opinionated and engaged. The very young children, desperate to be a part of what was happening, told us sophisticated and wide-eyed stories of their place helped by their teachers to find the words to describe what was important to them. It was a pleasure to listen.

Lastly, I wish to acknowledge the help and support of two CADISPA Fieldworkers: Rachael Kerr and Kirsten Winch. Their help with data input and the facilitation of Focus Groups was invaluable.

The CADISPA Team sends their collective thanks to all of you.

This research has taken six months to complete. Twenty-one focus groups were held on differing themes and a comprehensive questionnaire was distributed to all residents over the age of eighteen within the Sunart catchment. A bespoke on-line version of the questionnaire was made available to younger people and a special event was held for the children and young people at both the Primary and High schools. In total 49% of all those who received a questionnaire returned them to the CADISPA offices in Paisley. Interviews were held with key stakeholders and many hours of desk research completed to bring forward details of the latest Scottish Parliament legislation and policy directives.

This Final report has within it over a hundred pages of statistics; graphs and narratives about Sunart and the vision of the people living there of their preferred future. It forms the basis of a Sunart Community Development Plan.

This Executive Summary lists and very briefly explores the Recommendations of the CADISPA team. There are fifty-seven in total. As independent researchers it is our duty to report to you what you have told us over the last six months: in effect, we are now telling you what you told us. Some recommendations are very simple whilst others are controversial and recommend change that may be uncomfortable to consider.

In the list below no recommendation is more important than its neighbour. It wasn't possible for CADISPA to prioritise which recommendations are more important than others. This is for the community of Sunart to decide.

### **General recommendations:**

*"I think this is a lovely place to live and there are a fair number of events and facilities. Things can always be improved".*

- If it is felt that some of these recommendations fall outside the remit of the Sunart Community Company we recommend that a **Development Trust** is established to take these forward.
- That steps are taken to address **rural isolation, particularly for the elderly**, and that they are fully included in the day-to-day life of the community.

*"There is a need to have 'a plan' to tackle isolation and loneliness particularly in the elderly".*

- That a **community social hub** feasibility study be completed.
- That Sunart, working with other communities across the peninsula, should investigate the concept of a **local social enterprise owning and running the ferry**.
- That the Sunart community reviews **the NUKA healthcare model** as an alternative system of health care (see: <https://www.southcentralfoundation.com/files/Nuka%20Fundraiser%20Brochure-6pg.pdf>)
- That a short-term working group looks into the **development of a ‘Men’s Shed’** and other community workshop concepts in Sunart.
- That the community considers investing resources in a **local Development Worker**.
- That **local childcare provision is improved** to enable parents to rejoin the workforce more easily, addressing both employment needs and rural isolation concerns.

### Specific recommendations:

#### Transport:

*“it always comes back to transport”*

- Further negotiations take place between Highland Council and the Ardnamurchan communities to **stabilise prices and extend the ferry time-tabled service**.
- Negotiations take place with **Shiel Buses to bring one or perhaps two extra services to the area per day** allowing access to Fort William earlier in the morning – and travel westwards and then eastwards from and to Sunart the same day.
- That the community considers supplementing normal transport arrangements with a **Community Bus and a car-sharing club**.
- That a **‘ferry on/off’ alert system** is put in place to advise travellers of disruption as they leave Strontian.

#### Health:

*“We have no proper GP - it’s a different one every week”*

- **Stabilise and upgrade the present GP arrangements** by working with the Health Board and the GP management practice in Mallaig to better coordinate access to a team of **regularly attending GPs** and for the times of those GPs attending to be available to local people.
- **Upgrade the surgery.**
- That the Health Board be required to **improve mental health care** and support.
- That **the elderly**, in being encouraged to stay in their own home under ‘Care in the Community’ **are more adequately and transparently supported.**
- That negotiation takes place with the NHS about the tension of having **testing equipment in the Belford Hospital when the staff who work the equipment are based in Inverness.**
- **That the NUKA health care model be actively debated** within the community as an alternative to the service provision being made available at this time.

*“In the NUKA model healthcare is owned and largely operated by local people”*

#### **Recreation:**

- That a **swimming pool feasibility study** is carried out.
- That **upgrades to the walking and cycling routes** are carried out.
- That **guides are produced to help visitors and local people use walking and cycling paths.**

#### **Land Use:**

- That discussion takes place to **solve the lack of access to crofting locally for the younger generation.**

*“they won’t share or open that opportunity to the younger generations”.*

- That representation is made to Government in an attempt to **lessen the bureaucratic load of using the Land Reform legislation and working with the Forestry Commission.**

- That the community becomes better informed about the opportunities available to **take woodland – or woodland open space – into community ownership**.
- That the Transfer of Crofting Estates Act is used to **take building land into community ownership** to increase the supply side of land availability with a consequential lowering of local building land prices.
- That **greater use is made of the loch** as a potential contributor to the local economy.
- That **‘Core paths’ in Sunart are clarified and agreed**, or if this proves contentious, the Highland Council Access Officer should be invited to run a local seminar to clarify rights and responsibilities for all parties
- That the Sunart community considers bringing **land into community ownership**.

### Housing:

*“the whole village was up in arms when they started giving out the sheltered housing to anybody”.*

- That Highland Small Communities Housing Trust is invited to **conduct a comprehensive housing needs analysis** in Sunart.
- That a proportion of local housing be ‘tied’ to allow **key workers to be immediately housed** without the fear of losing housing stock to speculation and forced sale.
- That **Sheltered Housing be built and that these units become reserved** housing stock held for those in need of sheltered accommodation.
- That the position of the NHS Dail Mhor **Residential Home for the Elderly be clarified**.

### Education:

- That the **Primary School be substantially upgraded or rebuilt**.
- That the **range of subject choice in the High School is increased** through greater collaboration with both Higher Education and Further Education.
- That the **promotional pathway structure of Highland Council is addressed** to allow for greater flexibility and stability of staffing in the High School.

- That the High School (and Highland Council) considers a **greater integration of non-teacher experts from the locality** to supplement the teaching programme and increase quality and choice for the students.
- That the **impact on students of staff turnover is minimised** and investigations made as to why the turnover rate of the staff appears so high.

*“At the school the teachers keep coming and going”*

- That **education staff be encouraged to live within the school catchment** to enable the extra-curricular programme to flourish and for the local economy to gain from their salaries.
- That more is done to **encourage intergenerational connection** in Sunart.

### **Heritage & Tourism:**

*“The development of the mines as a tourist development is a major opportunity to stress the history and industrial archaeology of the area”.*

- That the **mine site and access be protected for community use** by being brought into community ownership.
- That a **Heritage Centre feasibility study is conducted**.
- That the Highland Council, Visit Scotland and the NHS are brought into discussions regarding the **perceived ‘boundary line’ demarcation** that is the Corran Narrows and the apparently unfair distribution of resources on the peninsula compared with that of Fort William.
- That **Sunart ‘brands’ itself more effectively**, perhaps in partnership with other communities on the peninsula.

### **Business & Employment:**

- That every opportunity is identified for **‘apprenticeships’**.
- That the community is **proactive in helping business start-ups**.

- That employers and government agencies are encouraged to **support local training**.
- That **business advice** is made more readily available and given by those who know the **constraints of living on the peninsula**.
- That **workshops and small industrial or storage units are made available**.

#### Young People:

- That a more **effective link is established** to Higher Education and Further Education to increase options.
- **Local skills training** is available.
- That a more effective knowledge exchange process is put in place to address shortcomings in the **information and counselling services available to young people**, particularly in the area of sexual health.
- That the development of **bursaries** is considered for those attending FE or HE.
- That steps are taken to enable **young people to develop a stronger voice in the community** – particularly in regard to matters on which they are expert.

#### Environment:

*“[Some estate owners] want to live in the community – but not be a part of us”*

- That the benefits of **renewables initiatives on local estates is fairly shared** with the Sunart community.
- That every opportunity to **decrease Sunart’s carbon footprint** is encouraged.
- That **locally-grown food** is encouraged and supported.
- That **wood fuel is encouraged** through a community-owned woodland.

## **Conclusion**

The next stage of this process asks that the community prioritises these recommendations and chooses which ones they would wish the various community organisations to deliver over the short and longer term.

In the Brief for this research, CADISPA was asked to deliver a 'comprehensive community consultation' which would lay the foundations for a community action-plan. Through the cooperation of local people and the intense support of the local Working Group over many months we believe that a quality piece of work has been delivered. The document will prove significantly useful in guiding the development of this community into the future.

*"I like summer time in my village".*

The voice of this young person rings out like a clarion call. This is a lovely place to live and it must be helped to stay that way so that it can be quietly passed on to the next generation in vibrant good health. However, a beautiful place to live doesn't pay the bills: much more has to happen to enable people to stay.

A sustainable community is one that is resilient, engaged and caring for both its people who live there and to the environment that embraces them. The 'evidence for change' that is presented in the full report addresses the notion that change is inevitable – it just keeps coming. This community needs to prepare for that. The document seeks to provide unambiguous information on the development and quality of life preferences of the people who live there. With the skills already on show in the community the Report can be used to shape a future to which local people can easily subscribe. Better this, we feel, than the community having to react or respond to changes that others' have designed. This is its key purpose.

As I'm sure you can tell - we too liked our summer in Sunart.

**Dr Geoff Fagan**

**CEO**

The CADISPA Trust

## BACKGROUND

### Location

The area of Sunart is located on the Ardnamurchan peninsula in the western Highlands of Scotland. It lies at the head of Loch Sunart and is bounded by the district of Ardgour to the east, Morvern to the south and Loch Shiel to the north. Loch Sunart is the longest sea loch in the Highland region and has been designated as part of the Sunart Special Area of Conservation, along with its sidearm, Loch Teacuis, due to the quality of the reefs within this area. Figure 1 shows the broad geographical location of the study area.



Figure 1 – General location of Sunart

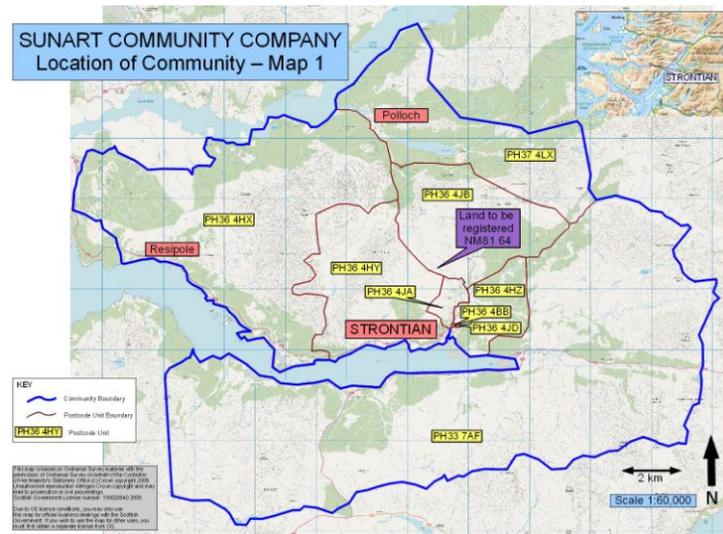


Figure 2 – Detailed location of study area: Sunart Community Company boundary

The small village of Strontian is the main settlement in Sunart, located close to the head of Loch Sunart and extends into the nearby hamlets of Anaheilt, Scotstown and Polloch. The settlements of Resipole, Laudale and Carnoch are also located within the boundaries of the Sunart area. The village name derives from the Gaelic *Sron an T'Sithein*, which translates as the 'point of the fairy knoll or hill' (Ardnamurchan Tourist Association, n.d).

The study area follows the postcode boundaries of the Sunart Community Company and is illustrated in Figure 2 above. This area has a population size of just over 400 people spread out across the main village of Strontian (population estimated at approximately 250 residents) and its surrounding hamlets and rural dwellings.

### Environment

The Sunart area is located within one of the most remote and least populated areas of Britain and is largely made up of small scattered villages, hamlets and individual dwellings.

The landscape is dominated by wild moorland, mountains and large areas of woodland stretching along both sides of Loch Sunart.



Figure 3 – Loch Sunart

These woodland areas are a mix of conifer plantations and large areas of natural (or semi-natural) broadleaved woodlands. These oak woodlands have been designated a Special Area of Conservation in recognition of the fact that this area contains one of the most important concentrations of Atlantic Oakwoods in Europe (Quelch, 2005).

Ownership of these woodlands is split between private and public stakeholders with private landowners - formed from both large estates and smaller scale landholdings - accounting for the majority ownership. A number of public agencies also account for a substantial proportion of the area e.g. Scottish Natural Heritage, Forestry Commission and Department of Agriculture/SGRPID (ibid.).

### **History**

The community of Strontian and surrounding hamlets originally grew up to support the local mining industry in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. There is a history of mining in this area going back 300 years and the village was created in 1724 to provide housing for local mine workers following the discovery of the mineral Galena in the hills above Strontian by Sir Alexander Murray in 1722 (Landless, 1975). In addition to the mineral Galena, between the years of 1722 and 1904, silver, lead and zinc were also extracted from the mines around Strontian.

Over its long history of mining activities, several areas around the village of Strontian have been exploited. Figure 4 illustrates the location of a number of historic mine sites in the area including the Corrantee, Fee Donald, Bellsgrrove and Whitesmith Mines. In the early 18<sup>th</sup> century these mines employed up to 600 men before a decline in productivity occurred in the latter half of this century.



Figure 4 – Location of mine sites around Strontian

However, these lead mines were to be the cause of Strontian's unique claim to fame. In 1790, French prisoners of war sequestered to work in these mines found something that was to be later confirmed as a new element – Strontium (Miers, 2006).

The physicist Adair Crawford and colleague William Cruikshank are attributed with the first discovery of the individual properties of this new element.

They concluded that "... it is probable

indeed, that the scotch mineral is a new species of earth which has not hitherto been sufficiently examined." (Partington, 1942). This element was later isolated and examined in detail by Sir Humphrey Davy, who, in 1808, named it Strontium after the village. The lead mines continued to be worked intermittently during the 1800s and first half of the 1900s. The last mining in the area, the extraction of barite for use in the North Sea oilfields, took place in the 1980s.

The village of Strontian is also notable for being the first community to establish a Floating Church between 1846 and 1847. The concept of a Floating Church was brought about after the 1843 split in the Church of Scotland which led to the formation of the Free Church of Scotland. The history of Sunart's Floating Church was recorded in 1843 by the Reverend Thomas Brown who wrote that, upon the refusal of the local landowner to grant permission to build a church for the newly formed Free Church of Scotland, members of the congregation concocted a plan to worship on a boat sheltered in Loch Sunart. They raised £1,400 to have a specially designed boat built by Port Glasgow based shipbuilder John Reid & Company. The church-on-a-boat was constructed over two floors, was 78ft long, 23ft wide and 17ft high and was designed to accommodate up to 400 people. It is believed that this Floating Church supported the community of Strontian and surrounding areas until 1870 when new premises for worshippers were provided (Miers, 2006; BBC News, 2009).

## **Sunart Today**

### **Economy**

Originally, the area of Sunart (and the village of Strontian in particular) was developed as a settlement for workers in the local mines. With the decline of these in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries the main sources of employment currently lie within the service and tourism industries which account for 48% of local jobs. Aquaculture of both finfish and shellfish has also been a significant source of employment in Lochaber for almost 25 years and there are

extensive leases in both inner and outer Loch Sunart for this industry (Highland Council, 2004).

### **Local Businesses**

The village of Strontian contains the business and service hub for the Sunart area. It has one local shop (containing a cash point), a post office, diesel and petrol pumps, a tourist information office - open from Easter to October - a café in the village centre and a local pottery.

Outside the village centre the Ariundle Centre, situated a mile from the village, contains a cafe/restaurant, craft workshop, gift shop and bunkhouse accommodation. The Sunart Centre, based in Strontian, shares the same premises as the local high school and provides the community with a public library, internet access and also acts as an entertainment venue for various events throughout the year.

The area also has a variety of accommodation options with choices ranging from camping and caravanning, numerous B&B's and 3 local hotels.

Information is usually displayed on the notice board at the shop, and an invaluable source of 'what's on' throughout the peninsula is the monthly magazine, *De tha Dol?*, on sale in local shops.

### **Health & Social Care**

Health and social care for the Sunart area is provided by NHS Highland

- The GP surgery for the area is located in the village of Strontian and is managed by Acharacle Surgery (The Pines Medical Centre).
- Belford Hospital – located in Fort William it is the general hospital for Lochaber, providing accident and emergency care as well a number of general elective treatments. It has close partnerships with Raigmore Hospital in Inverness and Glasgow teaching hospitals. It is located 23 miles from the centre of Sunart.
- Raigmore Hospital – situated 90 miles north-east of Sunart in Inverness - is the only acute treatment centre for the Highland region and provides a number of specialist care services.
- Scottish Ambulance Service – an ambulance station serving the Ardnamurchan Peninsula is located in the village of Strontian.
- Dail Mhor House – a residential care facility located in the village of Strontian. Operated by NHS Highland, it currently has capacity for 6 residents.

## Education



Figure 5 – Ardnamurchan High School

There are two schools, both located in the village of Strontian, that serve as the main education centres for the Sunart area. Strontian Primary School has a current class roll for 2014 of 41 pupils with a class breakdown of 3 pre-school aged children in the Nursery class, 15 in the Infant class (P1-P3) and 23 children within the school's junior class (P4 - P7) (Strontian Primary School, 2014).

Secondary education is provided by Ardnamurchan High School which serves a wide number of communities across Ardnamurchan, Morvern, Ardgour and Moidart. Established in 2002, it is one of the Highland region's newest schools and currently has a pupil roll of 108 students aged 11-18 years (AHS, 2014).

## Road Transport

Road links to the head of Loch Sunart are reasonably good with a twin-track road, the A861, running from the Corran Ferry at Ardgour to the village of Strontian. Outside ferry operating times, access to Sunart is via the single-track road which runs along the south side of Loch Eil and the west side of Loch Linnhe.

West of Strontian, the road along the north shore of Loch Sunart is single-track only and west of Salen it drops from A-class to B-class. This narrow, winding road (the B8007) is a designated tourist route and serves a number of the fish farm shore bases on the north side of the loch. Road access to the south side of the loch is much more limited. Travelling west from the head of Loch Sunart, the road is single-track A-class as far as Liddesdale, then an unclassified single-track road for about two miles to the entrance of Laudale Estate. Thereafter, an estate track – private, narrow and unsurfaced - runs through the forested area and Glencripesdale Wood Nature Reserve to Glencripesdale House (Highland Council, 2004).

## Public Transport

**Bus:** The area is supported by Shiel Buses which operates one local bus from Kilchoan in the West of the Ardnamurchan peninsula to Fort William, travelling through Strontian at around 9.30am each morning and returning in the early afternoon. A return trip to villages further along the Ardnamurchan Peninsula by public transport is therefore impossible to do in a day due to this restricted service (Shiel Buses, 2013).



Figure 6 – Corran Ferry Timetable

**Ferry:** Operated by Highland Council, the Corran Ferry crosses Loch Linnhe at a point 9 miles south of Fort William between Nether Lochaber and Ardgour.

It is one of the few remaining mainland car ferries in the UK and links the Ardnamurchan peninsula to the main A82 trunk road travelling between Glasgow and Inverness. It operates between 6.30am and 9.30pm between Monday and Saturday and has a restricted service on Sundays (8.30am – 9.30pm) (Lochaber Transport Forum, 2014).

## Local Governance & Organisations

The area lies within the ward of Ardnamurchan and Fort William, one of 22 regions of the Highland Council and is represented by the Scottish Parliamentary constituency of Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch. In addition to these regional and national structures the area is supported by the Sunart Community Council which forms the basis of local decision making within the area. In addition to statutory agencies, there are a number of organisations that contribute to the development of the local area.

- Sunart Community Company (originally Strontian Community Company) was formed in 2005 to enable the local community to acquire a number of fishing, land and recreational assets across the Sunart area. The organisation is open for all local residents to join for free and is a registered charity. Currently the fixed assets owned by the SCC include: fishing rights on Loch Doilet and the Strontian and Polloch rivers; the village green in Strontian and two areas with the community woodland near Strontian. The main focus of this organisation at the current time involves the development of a 100 kW community hydro-electric scheme on the Allt nan Cailleach near Anaheilt. As of April 2014, a disused dam had been purchased from Scottish Water and the project is scheduled to be completed by November 2015 (SCC, 2014).

## BRIEF

### Consultant's Brief:

*To work with the Working Group to develop the methodology and timescale for a comprehensive community consultation.*

- 1. To collect information and strategic context for the plan.*
- 2. To write up the Plan in conjunction with the Working Group, providing a draft by the end of 2013.*
- 3. To facilitate consultations with stakeholders and the community to enable a final version of the Plan to be completed by the end of April 2014. (Taken from the Sunart Community Company Brief).*

## METHODOLOGY

### CADISPA Methodology: to develop a comprehensive community consultation

In line with the tender brief, CADISPA has worked closely with the Working Group that was established to deliver the Project. The process we used was informed by current action research methodology and was aimed to develop the knowledge and capacity of the Working Group as part of the process of researching and producing the Action Plan.

The model of place-based research that CADISPA followed was a balanced mixture of qualitative and quantitative methodology. It used the outputs from the survey to inform the agenda for focus groups, structured interviews and 'H' evaluations with young people and children. Issues identified from the survey data and that received from the focus groups, were subjected to interrogation by progressive focusing. All information received was subjected to triangulation to inform the final report. The following has been completed:

**Initial meeting** – This meeting served to introduce the CADISPA team to the Working Group and develop and make any changes to the proposed work plan, timescales, etc.

**Training** – The CADISPA team used the findings of two consultations previously undertaken by SCC as the basis for a training workshop in the design and distribution of questionnaires, carrying out focus groups, interviews and hosting consultation events. Time was also allocated to finalise the work plan and assign roles to members of the Working Group. This process gave these community members a clear understanding of the research process to enable them to actively participate.

**Questionnaire** – CADISPA, in partnership with the working group, developed an 18 page questionnaire which was piloted during the training workshop to provide key information on necessary changes. This was submitted to the Working Group for review and approval before a final version was produced for circulation at the end of November.

**Focus Groups, Stakeholders, Interviews and Consultation Events** – A brief analysis of the initial questionnaire responses was used to develop a programme of focus groups, interviews and events in partnership with the Working Group. In all, 21 focus groups were held and special effort was made to include the harder to reach groups which do not usually participate in community activities of this sort. The CADISPA team was made available to provide support and advice continually to the Working Group during the research.

**Presentation of Findings and World Cafe Event** – CADISPA, in partnership with the Working Group, will present their ‘Findings’ to the community at a public meeting in April 2014. Following this, CADISPA will invite the whole community to take part in a World Cafe event - a participative process designed to promote discussion and help to generate ideas and solutions for the community based on the findings of the research and address the question ‘what happens next?’

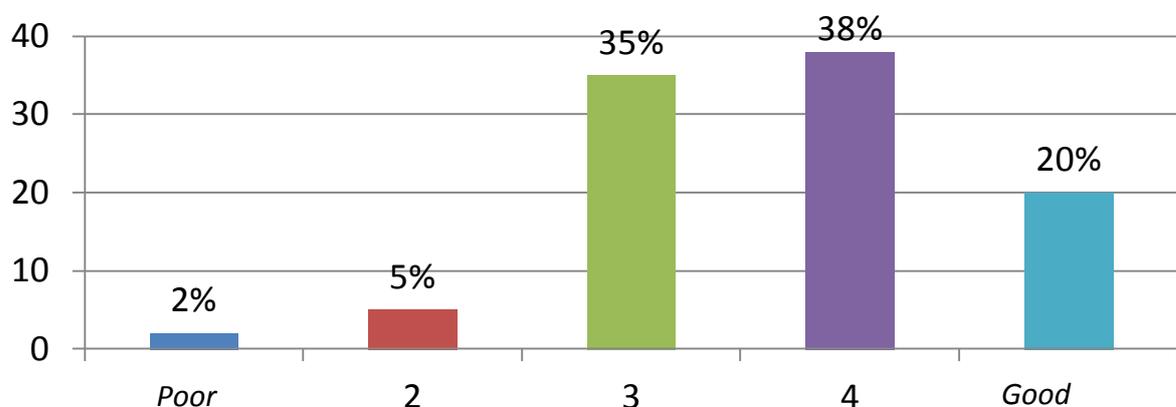
## DATA ANALYSIS: QUANTITATIVE

*NB: For ease of analysis all statistics have been ‘rounded’ to the nearest percent. In some instances this may impact upon the total value displayed on graphs/tables e.g. 99%/101%.*

### Section 1 – The Community

*“The questions below will assess how important you feel social considerations are and what part they should play in the future development of Sunart.”*

- a. **Do you consider that there is a good sense of community in your local area? On a scale of 1-5 (1 = poor, 5 = good):**



58% of respondents indicated that Sunart had a good sense of community (ranking it as 4 or 5 on the scale above). This result demonstrates that over half of respondents hold the opinion that community spirit/sense of community is relatively high across this area. Overall, 7% of respondents gave a negative response to this question of which only 2% gave the local sense of community the lowest available score. The highest percentage of responses ranked the sense of community in Sunart within the 'middle ground' of rankings 3 and 4 (35% and 38% of respondents, respectively).

**b. Do you feel...**

	Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	Don't know
Satisfied with life in your community?	18%	74%	8%	0%	1%
Pride in your community?	15%	70%	10%	0%	4%
Safe in your community?	50%	49%	1%	0%	0%
A sense of belonging to your community?	22%	60%	10%	1%	7%
That there are sufficient opportunities to be involved in local community life?	15%	67%	12%	1%	5%
Community spirit is eroding?	7%	33%	42%	6%	12%

From the results of this question it is clear that the majority of respondents were satisfied with a number of aspects of their life within the community of Sunart. 92% of responses either agreed or strongly agreed that they felt satisfied with life in Sunart, a further 85% indicated that they felt pride in their community and an overwhelming 99% of respondents agreed that they felt safe.

Almost two-thirds (60%) of people who responded to this question also agreed that they had a sense of belonging within the community with an additional 22% of individuals strongly agreeing with this statement.

82% of respondents felt that there were sufficient opportunities to become involved in the local community with around 13% disagreeing.

The last point within this question asked whether people felt that the local community spirit was eroding and answers to this were significantly more mixed than those observed within

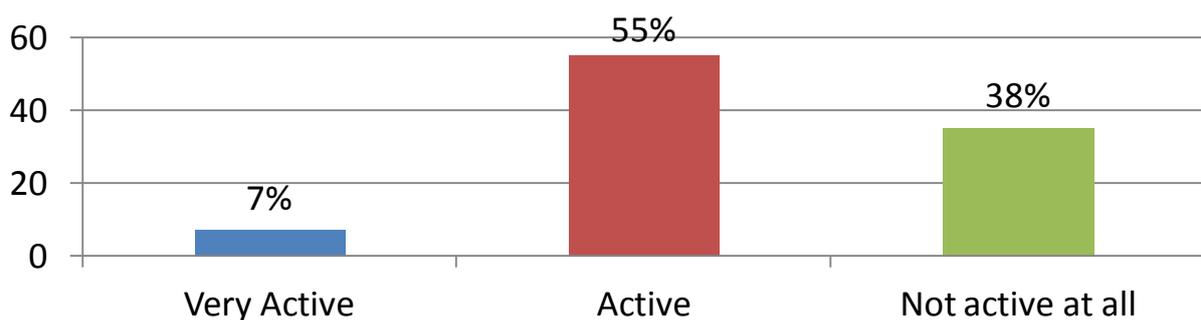
the previous points. Whilst the highest percentage of respondents (48%) indicated that they disagreed or disagreed strongly with this concept; 40% felt that community spirit was eroding.

Across this survey and from group discussions a number of individuals discussed the notion of community and the overarching discussion was positive about the local community spirit in this area. The main discussion surrounded the issue of a local meeting place for people of all ages, with the idea of a community hub being brought up many times as a potential solution for a number of issues.

Some residents chose to make additional comments regarding the issue of community spirit and what might be done to improve it:

- *“The community is eroding. The young cannot wait to leave, the elderly are getting forgotten.”*
- *“One of the best communities I have ever lived in.”*
- *“Need for a community focus area - new hall?”*
- *“There aren't as many community events compared with the past.”*
- *“I have been very involved in the community in the past... we all had to depend on each other in the village to survive.”*

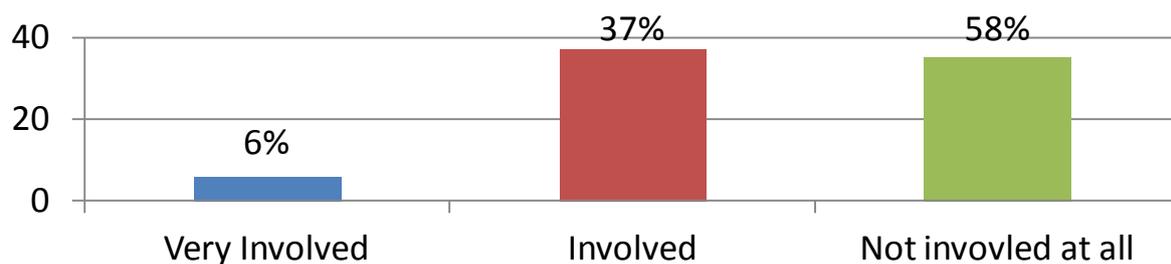
### c. How active are you in taking part in community events and groups?



62% of respondents highlighted that they are actively involved in participating in community events and groups in some way. Over a third of respondents (38%), however, stated that they are not engaged in any community events or groups.

- *“I do enjoy living in this area but it can be improved, i.e. more people getting involved - not the same people every time.”*

**d. How involved are you in helping to organize community groups and events?**



In addition to asking how many local residents attend community groups and local events we also asked how engaged people are in terms of the organisation of these local activities. In response to this, 43% of respondents indicated that they are involved or very involved in the organisational side of these groups and events. A further 58% of respondents, however, highlighted that they aren't involved in the organisation of community events at all. This correlates with discussions had within the local community where it was felt that many of the same individuals were responsible for a number of different groups or community events locally. The issue of 'volunteer fatigue' and the potential loss of community activities due to the lack of volunteer organisers - was mentioned by a number of local residents as something that may be a concern for the area in the future.

**e. What makes your community a good place to live?**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
I am able to earn enough money	4%	49%	26%	13%	8%
My family live nearby	13%	30%	30%	26%	1%
Recreation opportunities are good	8%	55%	28%	3%	6%
I am kept well informed about local events	10%	74%	12%	3%	2%
The community is friendly	23%	70%	4%	1%	2%
Education and training is available	10%	59%	18%	3%	11%
There is little crime	41%	57%	1%	1%	1%
The community comes together often for local events	14%	69%	9%	1%	7%
I can afford to live in the area	13%	71%	13%	2%	1%
Young people are adequately provided for	3%	38%	35%	8%	17%
There are places to meet friends	3%	59%	28%	6%	4%
There is plenty to do	5%	52%	33%	7%	3%
The environment is attractive	57%	39%	4%	0%	1%

Over half the respondents to the first part of this question (53%) indicated that they were able to earn enough money to ensure that this area is a good place to live for them. Almost 40% of responses, however, disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. Within the additional comments attached to this question a number of local residents explained this in more detail:

- *“Living in this area is becoming increasingly difficult with ferry prices increasing.”*
- *“I have to travel a lot for work...I have not been aware of employment opportunities that would keep me in the area but with the same earnings.”*
- *“I can only afford to live here because I stay in my parents’ house.”*
- *“I can afford to live here only because I work away.”*
- *“Can afford to live in area only because I have secured relatively affordable housing. If subject to 'open market' housing, we probably would have left the community by now.”*
- *“Costs of transport and high cost of housing means that it is making it more difficult to live here.”*

Over half of respondents to the second point indicated that their family does not live in the Sunart area. The demographic information gathered from within the questionnaire indicated a number of possible links to this statistic. A large proportion of respondents stated that they are retired and had moved to this area in the last ten years. From this data and from informal group discussions, it is clear that Sunart is a popular area for individuals to retire to, often away from family elsewhere. A secondary involves the loss of young adults seeking employment, training or further education out with Sunart. Many comments highlighted the movement of young people out of the local area with some highlighting this as a concern whilst others recognised this as a natural progression, with the key to a sustainable community lying in attracting these (and other) individuals back at a later stage e.g. starting a family.

63% of respondents indicated that recreational opportunities are good locally with 31% disagreeing and 6% highlighting their lack of knowledge on this issue. A number of additional comments were made regarding leisure and recreational activities locally:

- *“There is plenty to do if you are a walker”*
- *“Socialising seems to revolve around the pub.”*
- *“There is plenty to do - depends upon age and personal preference.”*

- *“Our young folk have very little to keep them here or when they do come home - not a lot is available for them socially.”*
- *“There are places to meet friends if you have money and want to sit and have coffee but not for young folks.”*
- *“There are plenty of opportunities for recreation & leisure and a number of groups operate.”*
- *“It’s a lovely place but obviously being in the middle of nowhere the youths do get bored sometimes.”*

84% of respondents agree or strongly agree that they are kept well informed about local events. However, 15% indicated that they feel this is not the case with someone writing *“living out with Strontian, I feel we are not always informed enough on community issues.”*

An overwhelming majority (93%) felt that the local community in Sunart is friendly. One respondent went on to comment that on moving here *“the people... have been very welcoming and that has helped us get settled here.”*

69% agreed or strongly agreed that education and training is available locally. A further 21% felt negatively regarding the availability of these services. One clarified their position by stating that whilst they believed the availability of education locally was good, the availability of training *“ranked as “poor.”*

The fact that Sunart is little affected by crime was demonstrated by 98% indicating that there was little crime in this area. From discussions within the local community, we observed a number of people attributing this, at least in part, to the presence of the Corran Ferry and the limited access to (and exit from) the local area. One resident recanted the story of how, a number of years ago, the ferry was stopped and held in the midst of its crossing to enable the Police to arrest thieves who had stolen from the Post Office.

83% indicated that they felt that the local community often comes together for local events. However, the link to the desire for a new community meeting space was also highlighted by a number of individuals.

A similar percentage (84%) also indicated that they could afford to live in the area. However, as with a previous question, issues surrounding the increasing cost associated with the Corran Ferry were identified as having the potential to make this area unaffordable to live in.

Opinion was divided on the issue of young people and the provisions made for them locally. 43% did not believe that these current provisions were adequate to support young people in

Sunart but a similar proportion (41%) felt that these facilities and services were adequate at the current level. 17% of the community felt that they did not know enough about this issue to accurately comment on it.

62% agreed or strongly agreed that there are places to meet friends in the Sunart area with 34% indicating that they did not believe this was the case. A number of comments discussed the available facilities with some highlighting reliance on the local pub(s), café and individual houses as meeting places. One wrote *“we need a place for the community to be able to get together, like a social club that is free to go in and has cheap drinks. A place (warm) to chat and relax.”*

Over half (57%) indicated that they felt there was plenty to do in the local area but 40% disagreed. Some discussed the fact that whilst there may be activities for the older generation, they felt the younger generation perhaps lacked things to do.

Almost every respondent (96%) agreed or strongly agreed that the local environment was attractive with one resident stating that *“we chose to come and live here because we were inspired by the environment and the wildlife.”*

**f. How does your community/area score in the following areas? (1 = poor; 5 = good):**

	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of housing for local people	33%	37%	21%	4%	5%
Training and jobs for local people	32%	46%	18%	4%	0%
Healthcare provision	19%	27%	28%	19%	8%
Public transport network	35%	35%	19%	9%	3%
Volunteering levels	10%	16%	51%	20%	3%
Recycling facilities	7%	16%	35 %	27%	16%
Use of renewable energy	20%	31%	32%	14%	3%
Local food production	32%	38%	22%	5%	3%
Internet service	22%	30%	26%	15%	9%
Education and training availability	9%	24%	39%	22%	7%
Facilities for business	35%	42%	18%	4%	1%
Facilities for the elderly	18%	26%	31%	23%	3%
Facilities for young adults	17%	49%	24%	10%	1%
Communication of local information	7%	14%	33%	33%	14%

The aspects of the community that were ranked by the highest proportion of people as 'good' (i.e. 4 or 5 on the table above) were the communication of local information (47%) and recycling facilities (43%). The local volunteering levels were ranked as 'average' (i.e. a score of 3) by 51% and a further 39% also ranked the availability of education and training at this level.

A number of aspects were also judged, by the majority, to be 'poor' (i.e. a rank of 1 or 2 on the scale). 78% ranked 'training and jobs for local people' at this 'poor' level and 77% also ranked 'local business facilities' at this level. 70% classified 'availability of housing for local people', 'the local public transport network' and 'local food production' as 'poor'. A further 66% also chose to rank facilities for young adults at this lower end of the scale and 52% classified the internet service as 'poor'.

**g. Please list any community facilities, services or opportunities that you feel are currently lacking in your area.**

**Facilities:**

50% identified a lack of sports facilities and over three-quarters of these individuals specifically mentioned the lack of a local swimming pool. Other recreational facilities identified as lacking or in need of improvement were: footpaths (8%), bike paths (8%), boat moorings (3%) and an improved gym (2%).

The lack of a community hub or social centre was also identified by a large proportion of respondents with 22% stating that a new centre for community events was an important future development. One individual commented:

- *"If it was affordable it would be great to have a facility that combined a social club with a small swimming pool. Perhaps lottery money could build it and hydro money could pay to run it. It should be very cheap for locals so the elderly, young people and unemployed could use it as often as they wanted. A place to meet and start building back up the community spirit that used to exist here. Then it would be easier to address other issues."*

Other facilities discussed within this section included an improved doctor's surgery (11%), more affordable housing locally (9%), greater availability for small business space (7%), and a new or upgraded Primary School (5%).

**Services:**

The highest proportion of responses (52%) highlighted the lack of adequate public transport with 24% mentioning the inadequate bus service that operates in the area.

Many respondents also mentioned the cost and timetable of the Corran Ferry service as an illustration of the limited local public transport service.

- *“In desperate need of decent public transport. 1 bus a day, nothing on Sunday. Impossible to go anywhere by public transport.”*

In addition to this, many highlighted the local healthcare provision as an example of poor local service provision. 34% highlighted some aspect of local healthcare that they believed was to be lacking. The issue surrounding the lack of a permanent was the concern most often raised in relation to healthcare with two thirds of these individuals highlighting this as an area of concern.

Other services that were included: adequate internet service (18%), elderly care (5%) and local childcare services (5%).

### **Opportunities:**

The highest number of respondents identified ‘employment opportunities’ as lacking (43%) with over a third specifically mentioning youth employment as a main concern. Local training and apprenticeship schemes were also highlighted as an area that is currently lacking, with 19% mentioning the lack of these opportunities:

- *“Apart from tourist orientated seasonal jobs there is little for the younger people to do. Very few job opportunities for school leavers.”*
- *“Very few jobs in the local area especially for young people.”*
- *“Training for young adults and adults who would like to retrain.”*

The lack of available business units has also emerged as an issue with 19% of respondents indicating that there could be opportunities linked to provision of such units in the future.

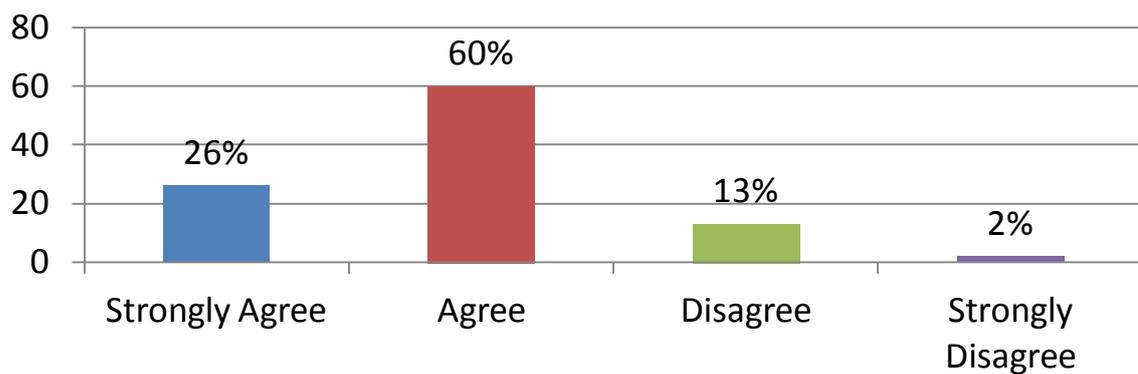
The development of a heritage centre devoted to local history and culture is something that has emerged from this research as a potential opportunity. 10% of respondents specifically mentioned the potential for such a development and greater utilisation of the area’s history – with particular reference to mines – is something that was repeatedly raised in group discussions:

- *“There is no celebration of local heritage, culture or mining obvious. We need to encourage these links, including the element Strontium and educational visits.”*
- *“No opportunities for small businesses. Lack of premises and lack of funding.”*
- *“Workshop facilities for public use - e.g. car maintenance; woodworking; recycling furniture.”*

## **Section 2 – Local Economy**

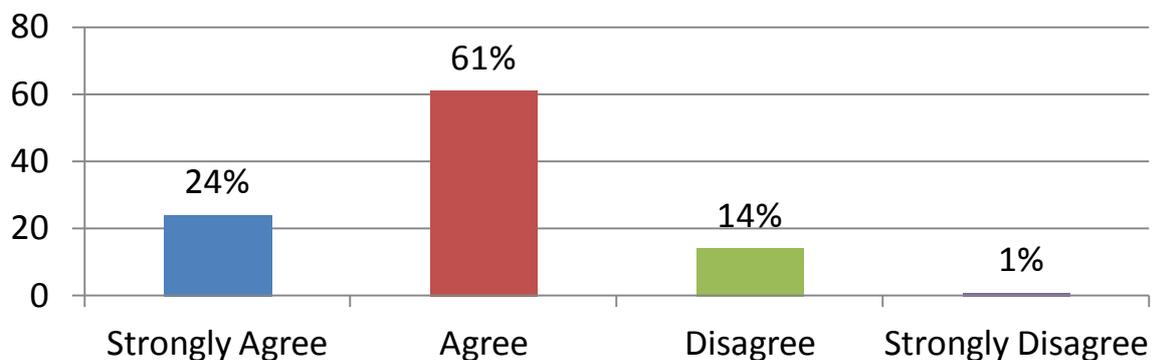
*“The following questions try to assess how important you feel factors such as employment opportunities, tourism and the role of private enterprise are and what role you think they should play in Sunart’s development.”*

### **a. Economic considerations must be the key component of any future development plans for the Sunart area.**



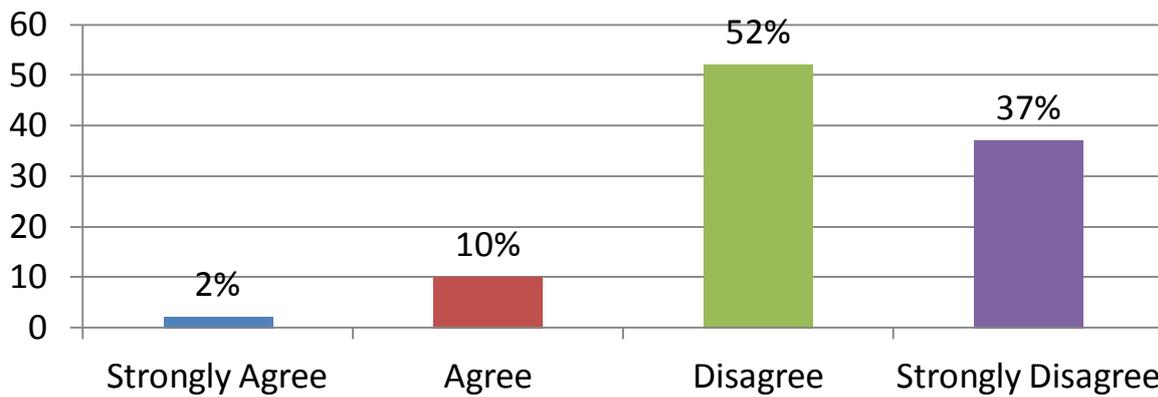
86% either ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ that ‘economic considerations must be at the heart of any future development plans’.

### **b. Economic growth across Sunart can be achieved by emphasising environmental and eco-sensitive development.**



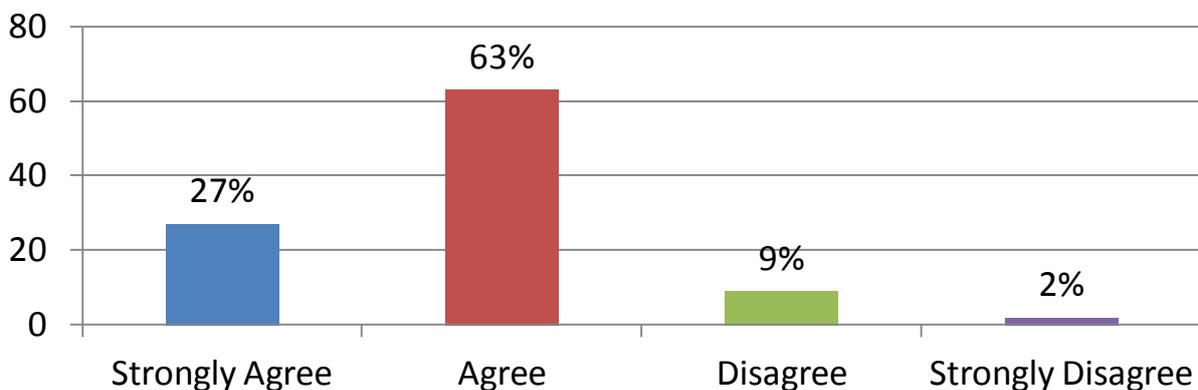
A similar percentage (85%) responded positively either 'agreeing' or 'strongly agreeing' that achieving economic growth in Sunart can be done by emphasising development that is sensitive to the local environment.

**c. Development means economic improvement and the way that it is done is not important.**



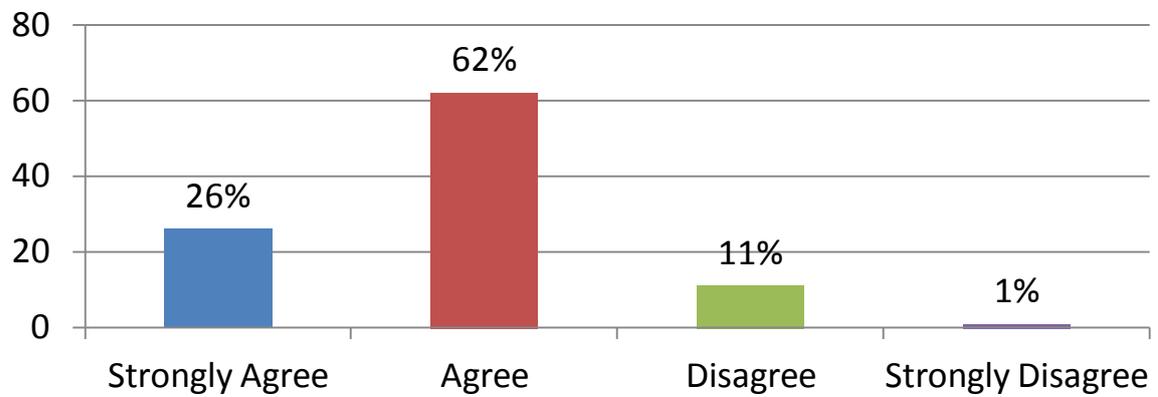
A strong majority (89%) disagreed that the manner in which economic growth is achieved is not important. Of these, 37% disagreed strongly.

**d. Economic improvement depends on expanding employment opportunities in the Sunart area.**



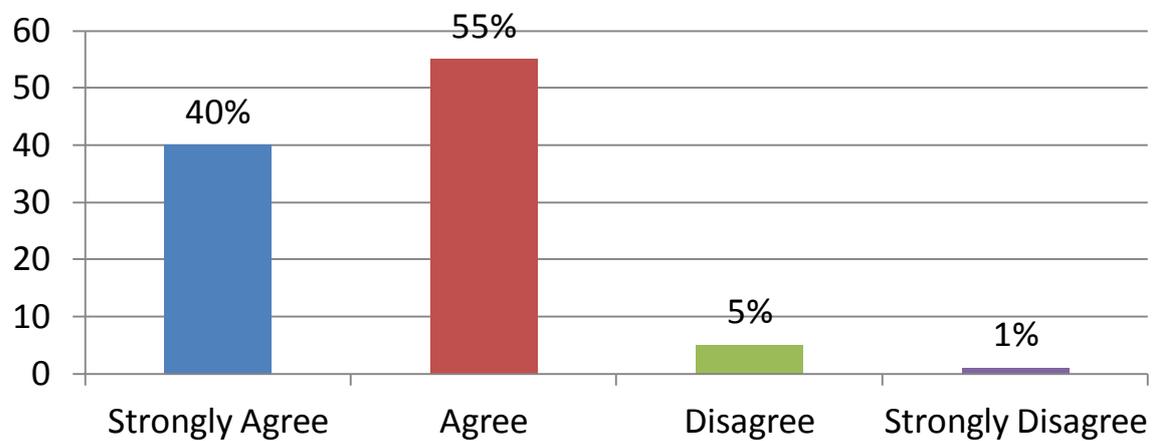
The graph above illustrates that the majority of respondents (90%) felt that economic improvement was dependent on the creation of employment opportunities.

**e. Encouraging private enterprise in the Sunart area is essential for economic improvement.**



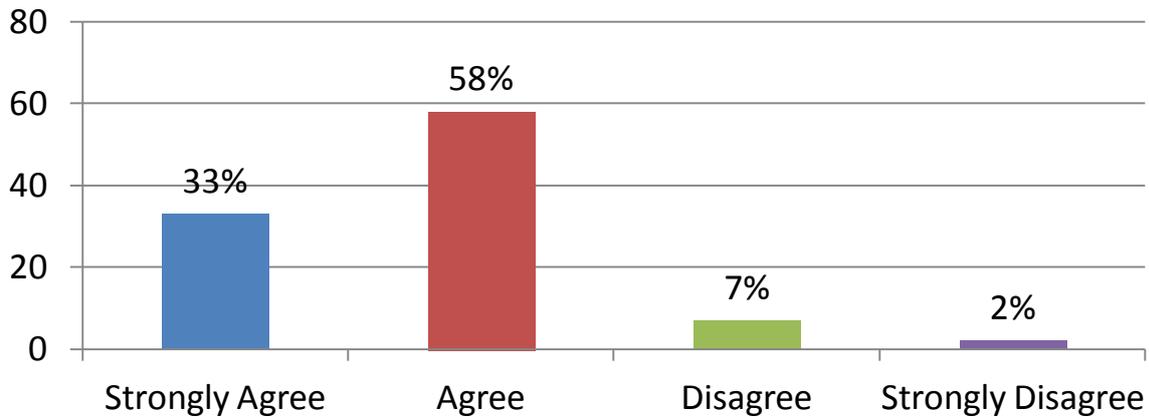
A similar spread of results as the previous question indicates that encouraging private enterprise is essential for the area's economic growth, with 88% indicating that this is important.

**f. Encouraging tourism in the Sunart area is essential for economic improvement.**



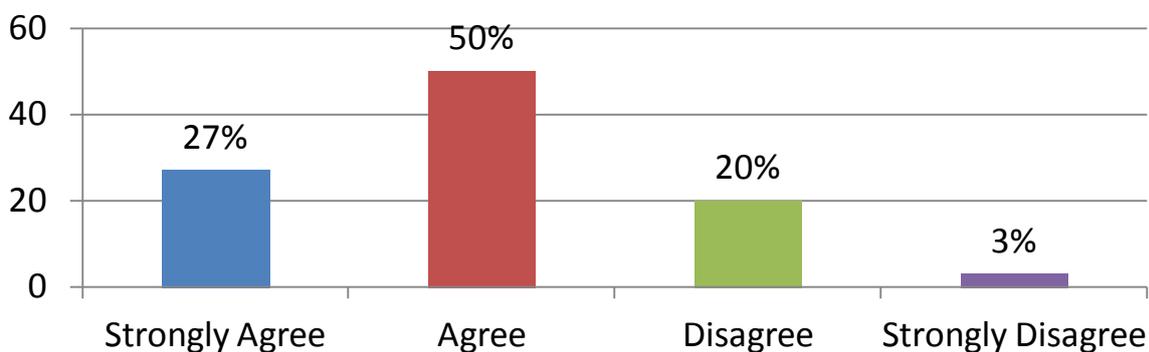
6% felt that encouraging tourism was not an essential element to local economic growth with 55% agreeing and 40% strongly agreeing that it was.

**g. Increased marketing and branding of the area is essential to local economic improvement.**



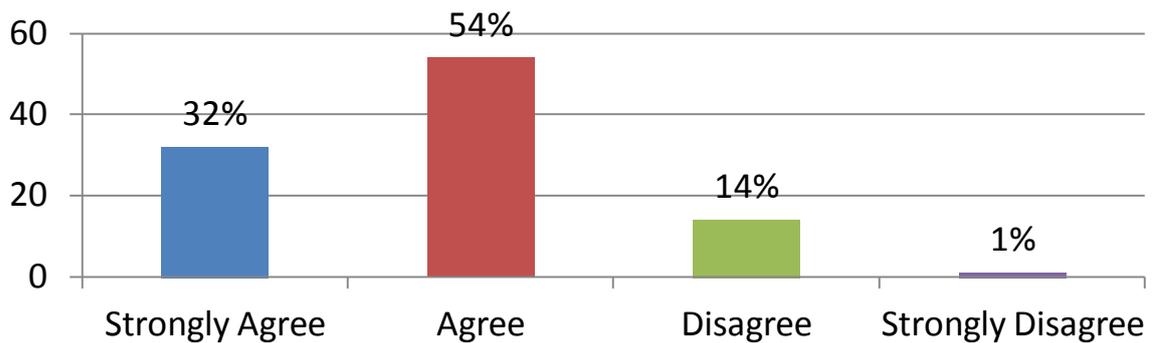
Better marketing and branding of the area was highlighted as an important issue. 91% felt that these factors were key to the economic improvement of the area.

**h. Lack of adequate connectivity (mobile, broadband) limits economic development in the area.**



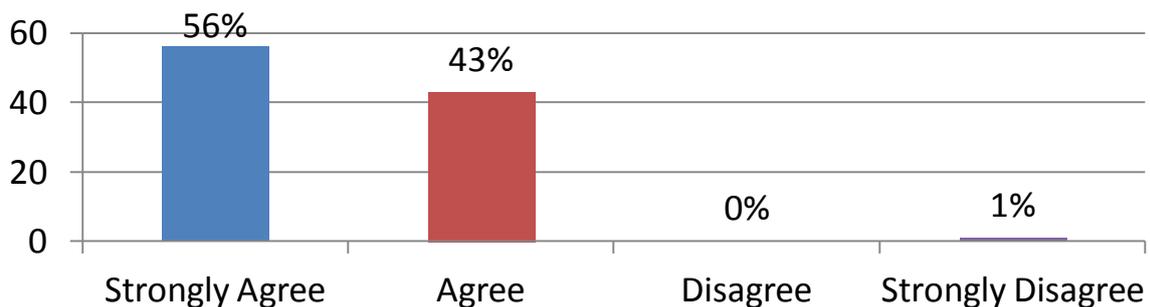
The issue of mobile phone and broadband connectivity generated a split in opinion with 77% believing that a lack of connectivity limits economic development. Focus groups and interviews indicated that the lack of mobile phone coverage was a widespread concern for locals and tourists alike, and the lack of mobile service (both phone and mobile internet) was discussed as a potential barrier to tourism development. The level of broadband internet provision for residents was recognised by many as vital, both personally and professionally, due to the rural nature of the area. Both level of provision and broadband speeds were reported as variable across the community and depended on locality. There was some hope that plans for broadband service improvement may already be in place but there was uncertainty as to the nature of these plans and whom it may affect.

**i. Economic development is dependent on local transport improvement.**



86% believed that improvements to the local transport network are a critical factor for economic development. Issues surrounding public transport have emerged throughout this survey and across community-wide focus groups. Section 4 explores this issue in more detail.

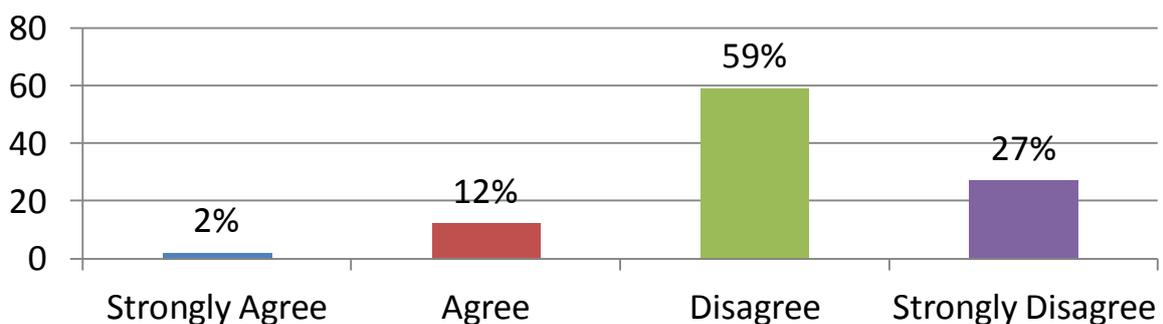
**j. Any development in the Sunart area must balance environmental, economic and quality of life considerations.**



Almost every respondent (99%) agreed with the statement above.

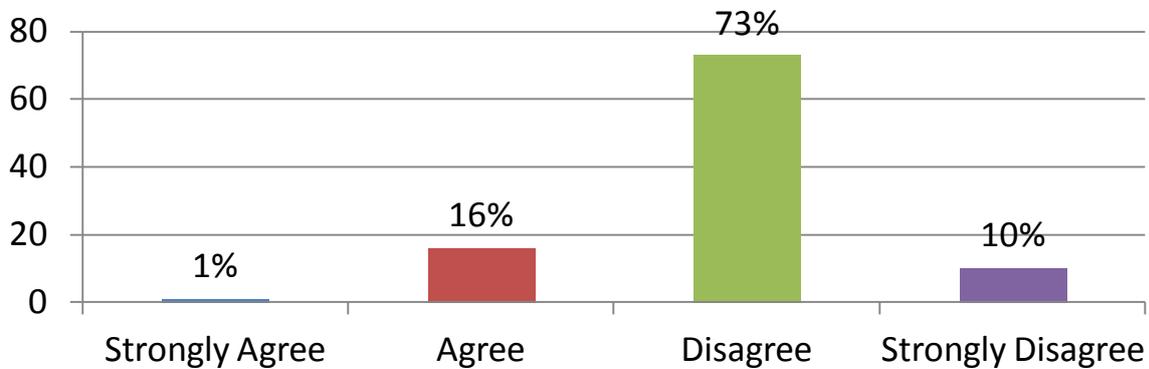
**Employment**

**k. There are sufficient job opportunities in my area.**



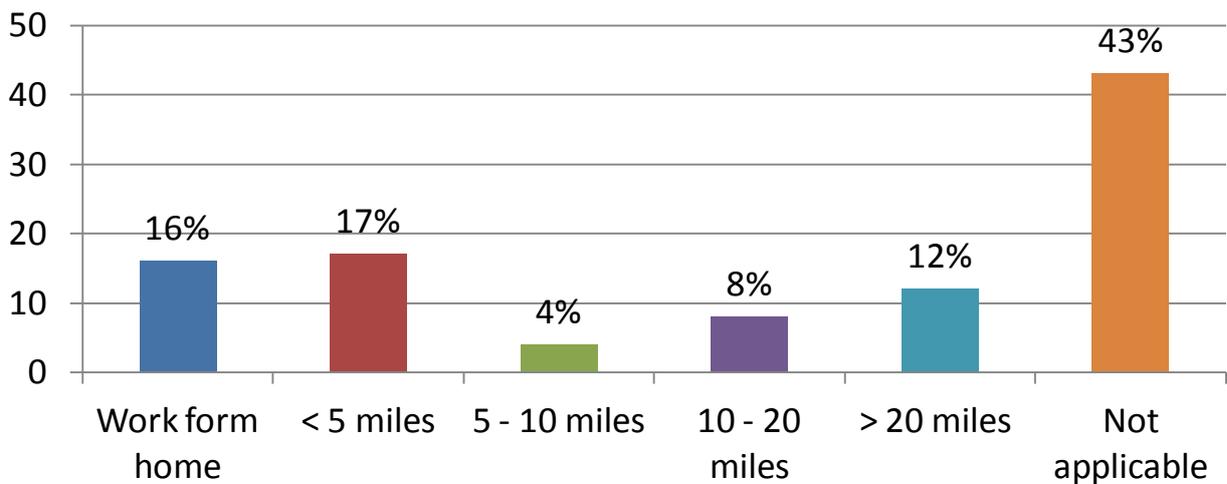
86% 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed' with the notion that there were sufficient job opportunities locally.

**I. There are sufficient training opportunities in Sunart.**



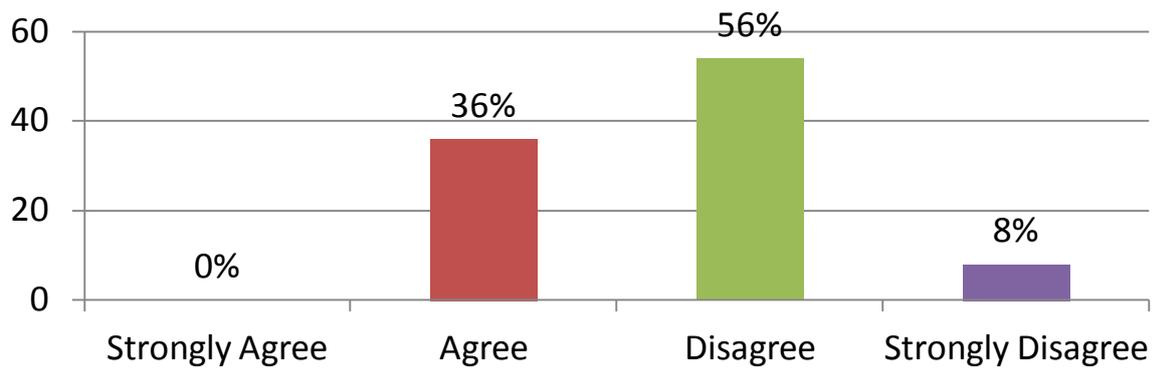
83% of respondents indicated a lack of available training opportunities in Sunart.

**m. How far do you travel to work (one way)?**



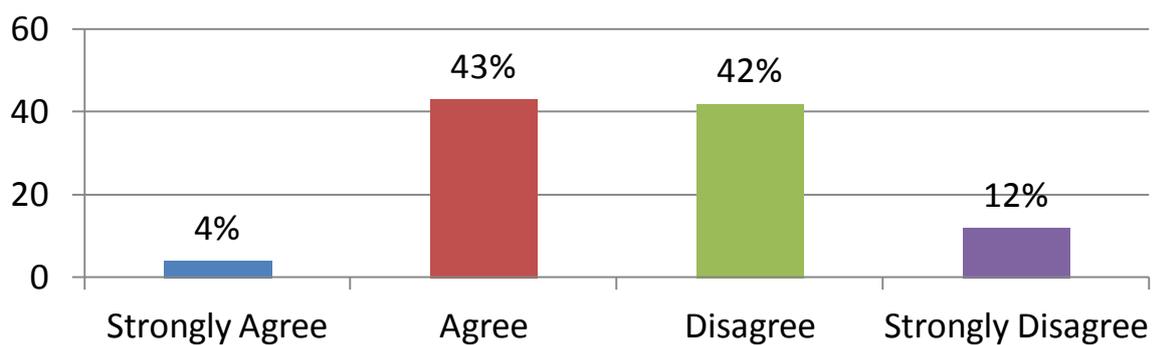
This result supports evidence gathered from neighbourhood statistical data and from focus group discussions that indicates that there are a high number of retirees in Sunart. The results also illustrate that over a third of respondents either work from home or within 5 miles of home. Some indicated that flexible working patterns were key for them – shifting between working from home and travelling longer distances and, as such, couldn't classify themselves into one category

#### n. There is a strong local business community.



The results indicate that the majority (64%) felt that there is not a strong local business community. From information gathered in group discussions, however, many people indicated that while there was no formal forum for local businesses, ‘informal networks’ do exist locally and recommendations and referrals between local businesses were relied upon.

#### o. There is sufficient available land locally to support new enterprises.



Opinion over land was divided with 47% agreeing that there was sufficient land available to support new enterprises and 54% indicating that they didn’t believe this was the case. Group discussions based around the issue of land use also demonstrated that the issue was often linked to issues of affordability, lack of awareness surrounding what land is available and concerns over restrictions in terms of planning and land ownership.

#### Comments

- *“Not only availability but price of land/buildings makes establishing new enterprises uneconomic.”*
- *“Community owned affordable workshops etc. are non-existent but could be a viable on community-owned ground.”*

- *“Our limited suitable agriculture land should not be built on. It could/should be used for food production.”*
- *“The area is lovely as it is. I am worried about change and would rather enhance than progress.”*
- *“While the Ferry continues to increase in cost our area will never have enterprise or successful local businesses.”*
- *“Employment opportunities are the key to maintaining a strong local community. Without them it'll turn into a retirement village. We must ensure that the conditions are as good as possible for business investment and for folk to want to stay here or new arrivals.”*
- *“There is enough land but will permission be granted for usage?”*
- *“Any land that is available for development is not locally affordable.”*

### **Section 3 – Housing**

*“In this section we would like to assess your views on the need for the development of housing in the Sunart area.”*

#### **a. There is a need for additional housing in my area to accommodate (5 = highest priority):**

	1	2	3	4	5
Local people	7%	3%	16%	19%	55%
Those wishing to move to the area	25%	17%	28%	17%	13%
Key workers (GP/dentist/nurse/teacher)	11%	4%	12%	22%	52%
Young single people	11%	9%	28%	25%	28%
Young families	7%	3%	14%	36%	41%
Elderly/sheltered	11%	6%	19%	30%	35%
Those with additional needs	17%	4%	23%	34%	21%

Over half (55%) of respondents indicated that housing for local people was of the highest priority. A similar percentage (52%) also ranked housing for key workers (teachers, doctors, etc) at the highest priority level for the local area. An additional 41% felt that housing needs for young families were not currently being met and should also be a priority for future housing developments.

**b. New housing developments should enable people to (5 = highest priority):**

	1	2	3	4	5
Rent from private landlord - short/long term	19%	10%	43%	19%	10%
Rent from council - short/long term	5%	7%	26%	29%	34%
Rent from a community enterprise (social housing)	5%	3%	18%	30%	44%
Purchase/owner occupier	8%	6%	31%	32%	23%
Purchase land	11%	13%	29%	24%	24%
Co-own	6%	11%	41%	24%	17%
Self build	8%	7%	34%	22%	29%
Live sustainably (green credentials)	6%	6%	23%	30%	35%

44% felt that new housing developments should enable people to rent from a community enterprise or social housing scheme. The ability to live sustainably, with green credentials, was also ranked highly with 35% indicating that this was of the highest priority to them. A similar percentage (34%) also felt that a high priority in any future housing development should enable both short and long-term rental from the Highland Council.

Of those options ranked as the lowest priority development - i.e. ranked at level 1 or level 2 – 29% indicated ‘rental from a private landlord’ and 24% highlighted ‘the purchasing of land’ as their lowest priorities for future development.

**c. New housing developments should be led by (5 = highest priority):**

	1	2	3	4	5
A community enterprise/co-operative	10%	6%	18%	29%	38%
Housing association	5%	6%	23%	31%	35%
Local authority	4%	10%	29%	27%	30%
Private developer	39%	14%	29%	13%	5%
Self build	9%	11%	35%	21%	24%

Responses illustrate that local housing need should be led by a community enterprise (38%), local housing authority (35%) or the Local Authority (30%). There were a number of responses that highlighted, however, a lack of understanding about the different options in terms of housing providers.

- *“I'm not sure who should take the lead on housing”*
- *“I don't know enough about the different options.”*

The comments section provided an opportunity to voice concerns or issues on this topic. A large proportion highlighted the need for affordable housing for local people with 22% specifically discussing this issue. A concern regarding house prices has also emerged with many indicating that they are priced out of the market. This has been attributed to wealthy incomers, holiday homes, land prices and the building of large, unaffordable homes in the Sunart area.

- *“Affordable rental accommodation is needed for young singles and couples, as is the capacity to build/own homes due to prices being outside the reach of locally employed people.”*
- *“Difficult for those with small local income to compete with wealthy incomers/holiday home buyers.”*
- *“Low wage economy puts building/owning own home out of the reach of local people.”*

In addition, the issue of affordable housing for key workers, such as teachers and doctors, was also mentioned by 13%.

The need for small, affordable homes for single occupancy was also highlighted as a priority to keep young people in the local area and to attract people to jobs in the area with 16% highlighting this as an area concern to them.

- *“Need for single bedroom accommodation so 3-bed houses are not taken up by sole tenants.”*

Some indicated that they wished development to be led by individuals/groups with previous experience in this area with the Highland Small Communities Housing Trust being specifically named as a preferred organisation:

- *“Experience in housing developments such as Highland Small Communities Trust, would be a preferred route.”*
- *“Housing question should only be answered with access to well researched (professional) statistics.”*

The number of derelict/disused properties locally was highlighted – with comments indicating that they be brought under community ownership to ensure that they are renovated.

- *“There are several derelict local properties that the local authority or community needs the power to enforce renovation back into full-time use or assume ownership if no action is taken.”*

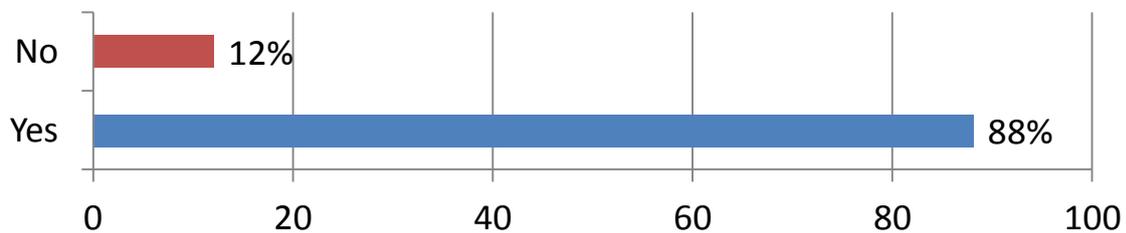
It should also be noted that around 9% of responses indicated that there was no need for additional housing in Sunart.

- *“This area is over-supplied with housing for all purposes.”*
- *“I don't see the need for speculative building in the area, the majority of housing in the village is council or social housing. There are building plots and private housing for sale in the area, some have been on the market for years.”*

## **Section 4 – Transport**

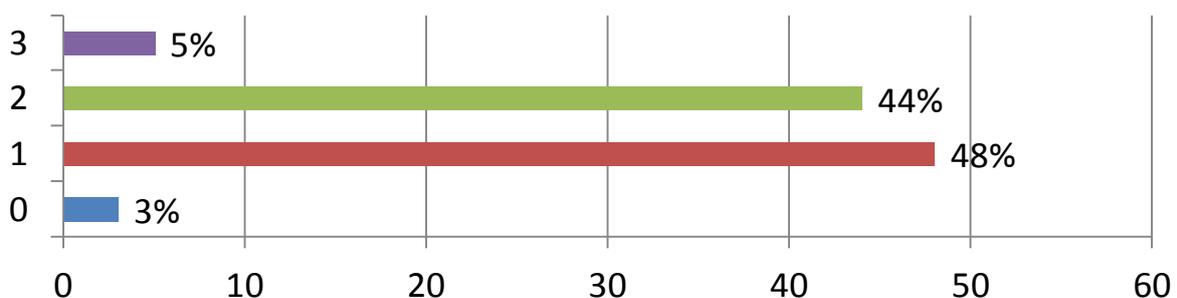
*“This section aims to explore how you feel about transport and local infrastructure issues.”*

### **a. Do you have access to a car?**



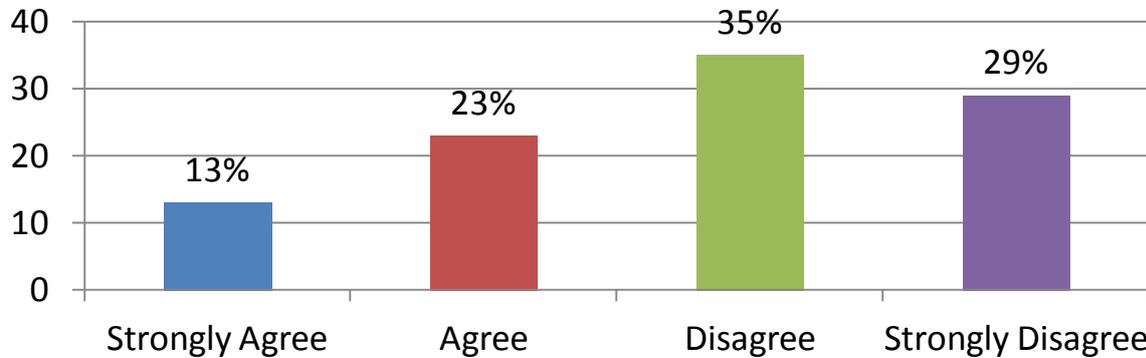
88% indicated that they had access to a car with many commenting that having access to a car is essential for day-to-day life.

### **b. How many cars are there in your household?**



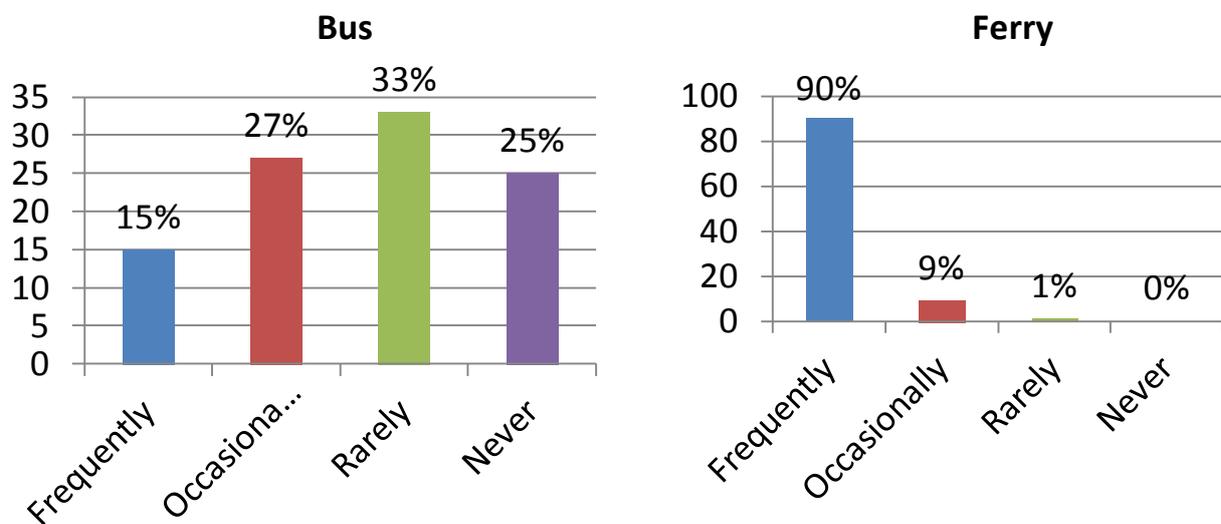
97% indicated that they had at least one car in their household and just under half (44%) highlighted that they had two cars.

**c. I often use public transport to travel locally.**



Almost two thirds of respondents (64%) indicated that they did not use local public transport often. During group discussions, many highlighted that it was, in fact, the limited public bus service that they rarely used, with the ferry being relied upon as a lifeline service.

**d. If applicable, what forms of public transport do you commonly use?**



The dependence on the Corran Ferry service was also demonstrated with 90% indicating that they frequently used this service. Importantly, while 9% said that they utilised the ferry crossing on an occasional basis - only 1% indicated that they rarely used the ferry. With every response indicating some level of use of the Corran Ferry it is unsurprising, therefore, that this service was repeatedly described as a lifeline to the community. The bus service, however, shows a marked difference in usage patterns compared to the ferry service. Only 15% indicated that they used the public bus frequently while a quarter of responses pointed out that they never used it. Many comments stated that it was impossible, or at least very

difficult, to use public transport as a means to travel both locally and further afield. Many indicated that they would like to use public transport locally both for recreational activities and commuting if services were improved.

**e. The current provision of public transport limits the following aspects of my life.**

	Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly
Work	22%	20%	35%	23%
Social	25%	35%	29%	11%
Accessing services e.g. healthcare	21%	30%	37%	13%
Accessing shops	22%	31%	37%	10%
Accessing job training	19%	29%	32%	19%
Accessing nearby towns	25%	34%	32%	9%
Children's needs	16%	46%	28%	11%
Young people's needs	23%	50%	17%	10%
Needs of the elderly	31%	44%	19%	7%

The majority indicated that the current provision of public transport restricts the mobility of the elderly (75%), young adults (73%) and children (62%) to the greatest extent. Alongside the needs of specific demographic groups, over half of the responses to this question felt that local public transport limited social aspects of their life (60%); their ability to access local towns (59%); accessing shops (53%) and accessing services such as healthcare practitioners (51%). Interestingly, the majority of residents indicated that transport services did not limit their ability to access work (58%). However, many individuals underscored the importance of having a car, thus effectively negating their dependence on public transport for the purpose of accessing work. Many comments highlighted how difficult they felt accessing work may be if they had to rely on the bus service for transport.

**f. Which aspect of public transport, if any, do you find restrictive?**

Frequency	58%
Linking up of services e.g. ferry	34%
Inconvenient timetable	45%
Availability of routes	32%
Cost	29%

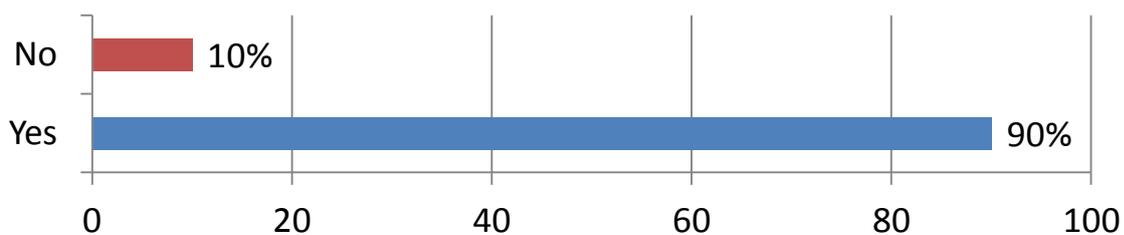
58% indicated that the frequency of the local public transport service was restrictive. From this questionnaire and discussions within the community, frequency is a concern for both the ferry and bus schedules with the ‘one bus a day’ service to Fort William inadequate for the needs of many of the local residents.

45% felt that the timetable was inconvenient and restrictive with many identifying the last ferry at 9.30 pm and the mid-morning bus to Fort William as limiting to both leisure and employment opportunities.

The availability of bus routes and linking up of services received a similar scoring - 32% and 34% respectively. The linking of the bus service to Glasgow with the Corran Ferry could be improved and the lack of bus services from Sunart to both the ferry and the rest of Ardnamurchan were also seen as a potential barrier to tourism development.

Only 29% indicated that the cost of public transport was a restrictive factor. This is, however, contradictory to many comments across both the questionnaire and discussion groups that stressed the rising cost of the Corran Ferry as a major concern for many residents.

**g. A community transport service can range from a timetabled bus service controlled by local people to car/taxi sharing schemes and organised lift giving. Do you feel that there a need for this type of community transport scheme in Sunart?**



90% indicated that there was a need for some form of community transport provision. Discussions around this topic agreed that a community-run minibus would not only increase the flexibility of transport options but may also enable greater employment opportunities if, for example, a commuter minibus transferred workers to and from Fort William on a daily basis. It was also suggested that a car pool or minibus scheme may be one solution to the issue of rising Corran Ferry costs.

- *“On a car trip into Fort William, we inevitably meet other folk from the village. A coordinated approach would be greener and save individuals money.”*
- *“This is an idea well worth following up. It would be particularly useful for elderly people and those with frequent appointments in Fort William outwith usual bus times.”*

#### **h. Do you have any concerns relating to transport/travel/safety in your area?**

The main concerns relating to transport largely revolve around the rising cost of the Corran Ferry, with many individuals commenting that this single factor was the main concern to them locally. Comments included:

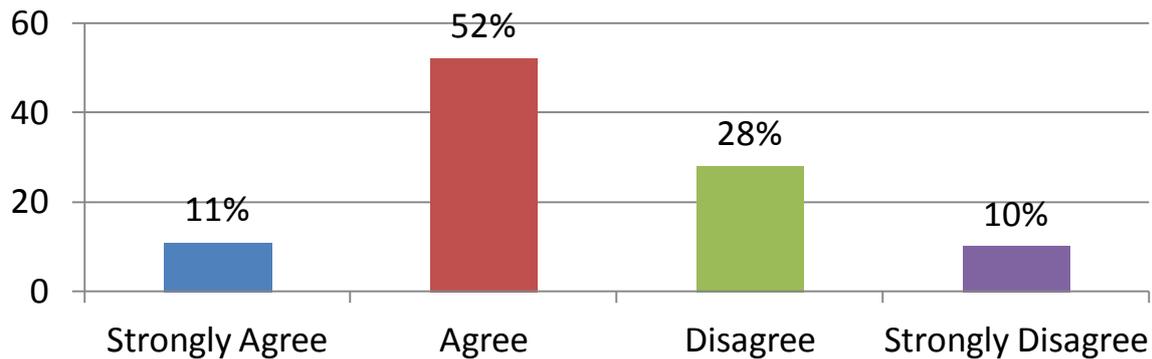
- *“The ferry at Corran is an inadequate provision at an exorbitant cost.”*
- *“The increasing fares on ferry are very worrying.”*
- *“I am concerned that if the price of the Corran ferry keeps going up I will have to start swimming to work.”*
- *“If cost of Corran Ferry remains so high, or increases further, the potential for increase in tourism will be seriously affected.”*
- *“Obviously increasing ferry costs...may mean at some point no longer financially viable to access work in Fort William. “*
- *“Should be free like other key crossings (Skye/Forth/Clyde) or heavily subsidized like island ferries.”*

Regarding local safety, a number of residents highlighted speeding through Strontian as an issue which could lead to a serious accident if not tackled more effectively. Additionally, a number of respondents called for better pavement provision throughout the area to increase road safety for pedestrians.

## Section 5 – Healthcare & Support Provision

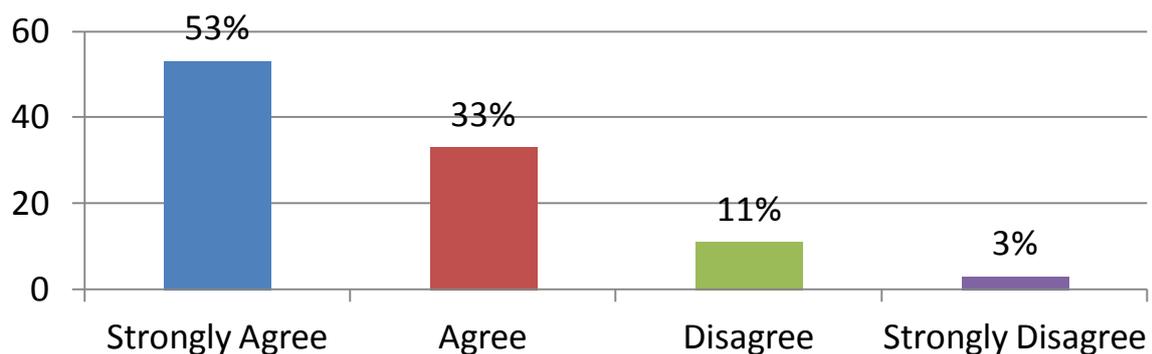
*“The questions in this section ask for your opinion on the quality of health care and support services in your area and how these could be improved.”*

### **a. I have access to quality healthcare services in my area.**



The majority of respondents (63%) felt that they had access to quality healthcare. From written and verbal comments the issue of local healthcare is a complex one – the nuances of which are examined in greater detail in the following questions.

### **b. The continuity of local healthcare services i.e. seeing the same practitioners on each visit, is a concern for me in Sunart.**



Overwhelmingly, 86% indicated that continuity of healthcare was an issue of real concern for them. This issue has arisen many times throughout this research with the main crux revolving around the lack of a permanent doctor for the local GP surgery. The inability to see the same doctor was highlighted as a concern for many residents, particularly for those suffering from a long term health condition or with mental health concerns.

**c. Out of the following options are there any services that you would like to see improved locally? (5 = highest priority):**

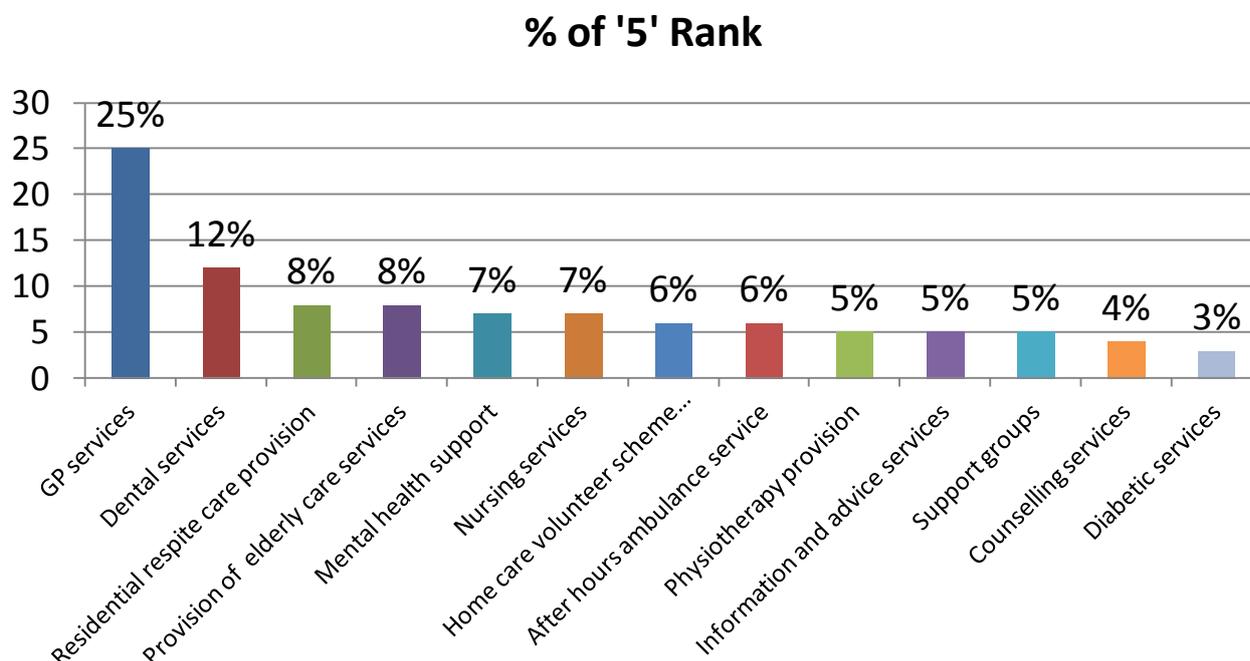
		1*	2*	3*	4*	5*	% of '5' Rank
1	GP services	4	2	5	6	40	25%
2	Dental services	4	4	7	9	20	12%
3	Residential respite care provision	3	3	6	3	13	8%
4	Provision of elderly care services	4	3	7	6	12	8%
5	Mental health support	4	3	7	5	11	7%
6	Nursing services	5	4	10	6	11	7%
7	Home care volunteer scheme for the elderly	3	4	5	8	9	6%
8	After hours ambulance service	5	3	8	4	9	6%
9	Physiotherapy provision	2	7	8	6	8	5%
10	Information and advice services	3	3	5	4	8	5%
11	Support groups	3	3	6	3	8	5%
12	Counselling services	3	4	8	2	6	4%
13	Diabetic services	3	4	6	2	5	3%

*\*shows number of respondents*

This question, along with a number of others, asked participants to choose their top 5 answers and rank them according to priority (with 5 being the highest available score). The table above has been ranked according to the percentage of the '5' ranking i.e. the option with the most respondents ranking it as their top priority. Unlike the majority of questions within this study, the table above shows actual respondent numbers as opposed to percentages. This type of analysis enables the main issue regarding to emerge from these 'ranking questions' – that of question completion. Out of 179 respondents - 160 responses were recognised as valid e.g. maximum of 5 choices filled in with non-duplicated rankings.

It was apparent, however, when examining respondent numbers that the majority of individuals only filled in their highest priority (5). Whilst all 160 individuals chose to rank their top priority, only around 30% of these chose to complete the full ranking system 5 – 1. For statistical security, the analysis of this question (and those following a similar format -

see: 5(d); 6(m); 7(g) and 8(c)) have been based on the rank of 5 only. The chart below shows the percentage breakdown of the highest rank (5) across the 13 available options.



The improvement of GP service can be seen to be the highest healthcare priority for Sunart with 25% choosing to classify it at the highest possible rank. Dental services and residential respite care/elderly care services (jointly) make up the rest of the top three priorities receiving 12% and 8%, respectively. The issue of elderly care may be linked to fears over the possible closure of the local residential care home, Dail Mhor House, with no confirmation as yet received regarding its on-going status

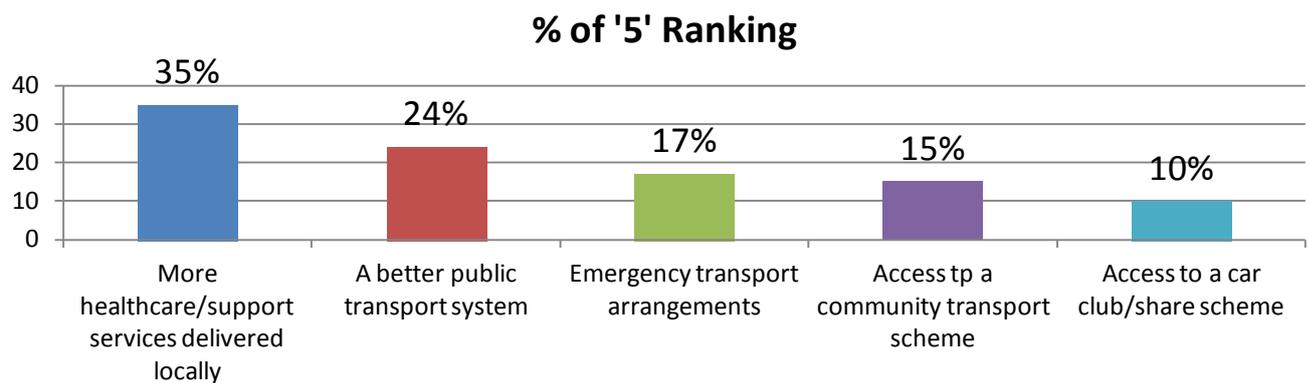
**d. Which of the following, if any, would make it easier for you to access local health/ social care and support provision? (5 = highest priority)**

		1*	2*	3*	4*	5*	% of '5' Rank
1	More healthcare/support services delivered locally	3	4	3	6	36	35%
2	A better public transport system	2	3	7	11	25	24%
3	Emergency transport arrangements	4	4	7	7	17	17%
4	Access to a community transport scheme	3	7	6	7	15	15%
5	Access to a car club/share scheme	6	4	10	4	10	10%

\*shows number of respondents

As with the results from the previous question, participants were invited to rank their answers on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 indicating their highest priority. As discussed in Question 5(c) issues surrounding question completion have also impacted on the analysis of this question with results based on the ranking of the highest rank of '5' alone.

As illustrated on the graph below 'more healthcare/support services delivered locally' and 'better public transport system' received 35% and 24% (respectively) of the highest ranking available, indicating that these options would contribute most to enabling easier access to healthcare and support services.



**e. If you had to choose, which services do you feel are a critical priority to maintain at the current level in Sunart?**

Over 65% mentioned the local GP service. However, when examined in relation to the results of previous questions and from numerous discussions, these results may be misleading. There appears to be a divergence between individuals who have identified services that need to be maintained at the current level, those who feel this level of service provision needs to be improved and those who identified areas where there is no current service provision.

Regarding the issue of GP services, many people expressed a desire for this service to be improved. It should also be noted, however, that many indicated that they wished to maintain the presence of a doctor within the local area:

- *“GP - though there are problems at the moment which need resolved.”*
- *“It would be good to get GPs in post to provide consistency of care but at least locums are providing care.”*

17% identified the local ambulance station as a critical local service that should be maintained at the current level. An additional 9% of responses highlighted elderly care as a

critical priority for the area and expressed a desire for the continued provision of this service. This result may be linked to the uncertainty over the future of the residential care home facilities at Dail Mhor House.

- *“Ambulance based in Sunart area for emergency and out of hours cover. “*
- *“...continued residential care home.”*

Out with the issue of healthcare 14% identified the local public transport system within their responses to this question. The quotes below, however, demonstrate that these responses are linked to a desire to see these services improved as opposed to their maintenance at the current level:

- *“More public transport.”*
- *“Access to dental services- this is all right if you have a car, not so easy via public transport.”*
- *“I think the one bus a day, which costs upwards of a fiver just to get out of Ardnamurchan and connect to other buses, needs to be improved.”*

In addition to issues surrounding public transport, 8% also highlighted childcare services and education in response to this question. One individual specifically mentioned the local nursery as a critical local service that needs to be maintained, with the Primary School also discussed in terms of improvements needed.

- *“Primary School upgrade [is an] urgent priority.”*

24% stated that improvements need to be made to local health and support services with some simply stating that most local services require some level of improvement.

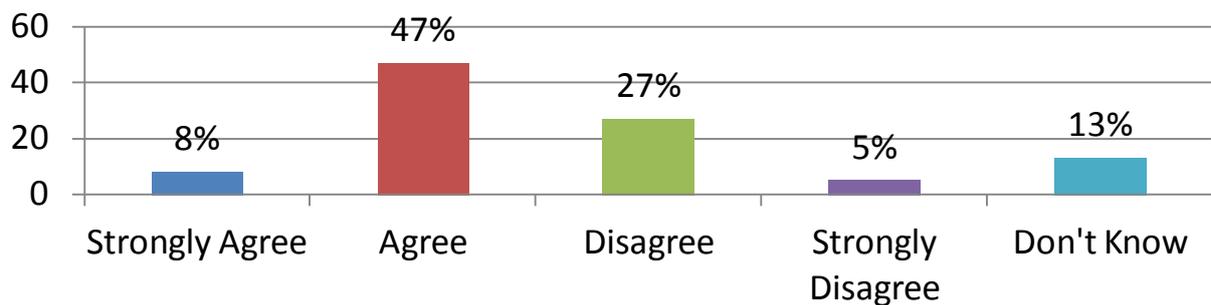
- *“The current levels of most services, health care, public transport, ferry etc. are not satisfactory as they are so the answer to this question is that none of them should be maintained at the current level. They are all in need of improvement!”*
- *“What services there are need to be improved on not kept at same level. Particularly, the lack of permanent GP’.”*
- *“GP service is initial priority for improvement.”*
- *“I think that all current services could do with some improvement to be honest.”*

## Section 6 – Learning

*“The questions in this section aim to assess what learning opportunities are available to you locally and seek your opinion of schools, childcare provision and opportunities for young people in your area.”*

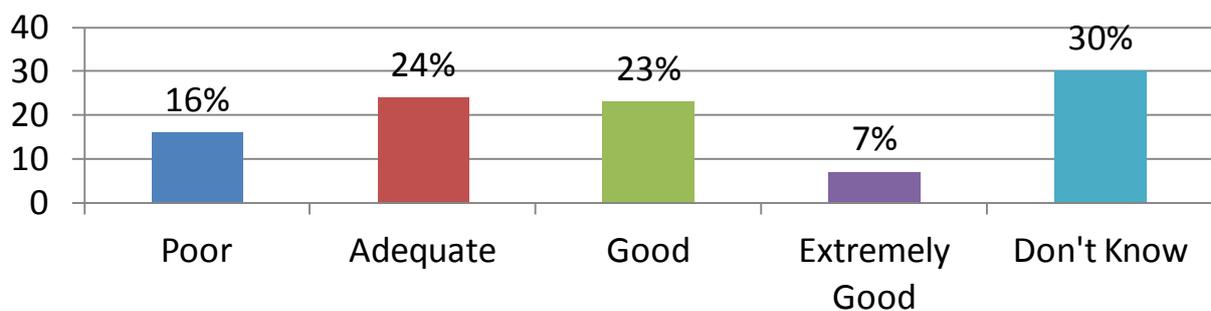
### Learning Opportunities

**a. Do you feel that the current provision of learning opportunities in the area is adequate?**



Just over half (55%) indicated that the current provision of learning opportunities was adequate. 32%, however, ‘disagreed’ or ‘strongly disagreed’ and 13% felt that they didn’t know enough about the subject to answer this question.

**b. The learning opportunities for Gaelic in the local area, in my opinion, are:**



Interestingly, 30% indicated that they didn’t know what Gaelic learning opportunities were available in Sunart. Of those able to answer this question, 16% felt that Gaelic language learning opportunities were poor and 7% felt that they were extremely good. The majority of respondents indicated that the availability of learning opportunities for the Gaelic language were either ‘good’ (23%) or ‘adequate’ (24%). In community discussions the issue of Gaelic language teaching was discussed in a number of contexts, mostly in relation to the High School, the choir and the potential for evening classes in this subject. There was a mix of opinions as to the importance of Gaelic to the area with some residents expressing the

desire for this facet of Sunart’s heritage to be passed on to the next generation while others prioritised other learning opportunities.

**c. Are you currently enrolled or interested in the following learning opportunities?**

	Enrolled	Interested
Non-formal education (family/leisure/evening classes)	8 (10%)	72 (90%)
Vocational education (learning/training for work)	4 (8%)	45 (92%)
Learning in community groups	1 (3%)	33 (97%)
Further education (college)	0 (0%)	27 (100%)
Higher education (university)	4 (17%)	20 (83%)

These responses show a high degree of interest in the potential for a variety of educational opportunities within Sunart. Only eight individuals indicated that they were currently enrolled in non-formal education - with many comments mentioning the need to travel to these classes. The highest positive response, however, came from people interested in local non-formal education such as evening or leisure classes. Seventy two individuals indicated that they would be interested in this form of learning if the opportunity arose in Sunart.

Respondents also indicated that the creation of vocational learning opportunities would be of interest to them. Only four respondents confirmed that they were currently enrolled but there was positive response to the possibility of these being created – with a further forty-five people indicating they would be interested in such an opportunity.

The numbers of respondents interested in college or university level opportunities were of a similar level (27 individuals and 20 individuals respectively). No-one indicated that they were currently enrolled in any sort of college-level learning opportunity with four currently enrolled at higher education (university) level.

**d. What, if anything, prevents you from accessing learning opportunities?**

The largest proportion (30%) indicated that the lack of locally available courses was their main barrier to accessing learning opportunities. Out with the issue of availability, 21% highlighted distance as a barrier to them, with many mentioning that courses in neighbouring areas can be difficult to access without transport and, in the case of Fort William, are largely impacted by the timetable and cost of the Corran Ferry. Overall, 13% specifically highlighted the ferry as a barrier to accessing learning opportunities. Other issues included time (and the lack of it) with 20% simply stating they were either too busy to

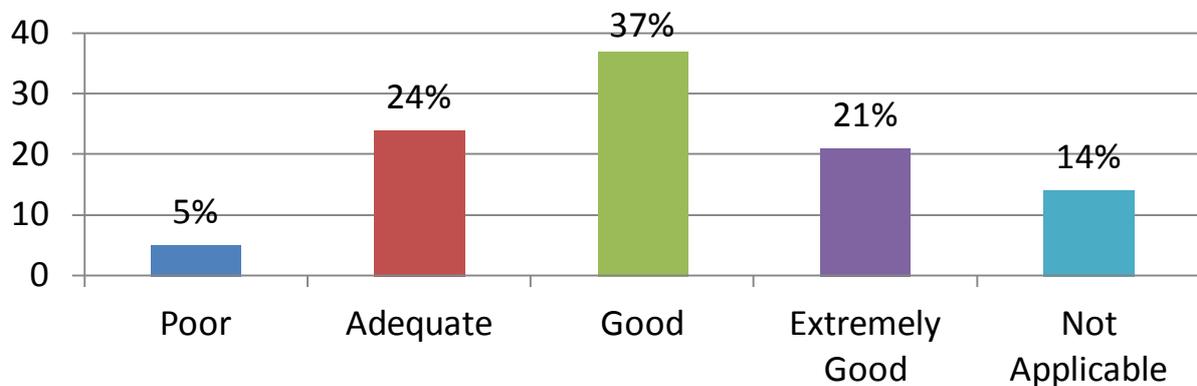
attend or that available opportunities were a inconvenient times for them; a lack of knowledge and advertising regarding courses was also highlighted with 9% indicating that this prevented them from accessing learning opportunities and the same percentage indicating that it was simply their age that acted as a barrier to them.

**e. Please list below any course/s not currently available in Sunart that would be of interest to you.**

A wide range of responses were received to this question with some indicating that they would be interested in different courses if available in the local area. 30% highlighted that a range of art and design classes such as drawing, painting, pottery making, embroidery and craft work would be of interest. A further 18% mentioned that they would be interested in vocational courses such as woodwork, brick-laying, joinery, plumbing, tree surgery and mechanics. 18% mentioned that modern language courses such as French, Italian and Spanish would be valuable and a further 13% mentioned the desire for a local Gaelic language course. Recreational and IT courses were also highlighted as possible options for learning opportunities by 13% with classes in history or wildlife receiving 15%. Cookery and music classes were also highlighted by 8% and 5%, respectively.

**School Education**

**f. What is your opinion about the provision of school education in Sunart?**



The overall results from this question indicate that the majority of respondents feel positive about the provision of local school level education available in Sunart with only 5% rating it 'poor'. The highest proportion (37%) responded that school education locally was 'good' with 21% classifying it as 'extremely good'. However, comments were made, both in the questionnaire and group discussions that the local Nursery, Primary School and High School should be examined individually and the issues concerned with these separate educational entities are examined in more detail in the following sections.

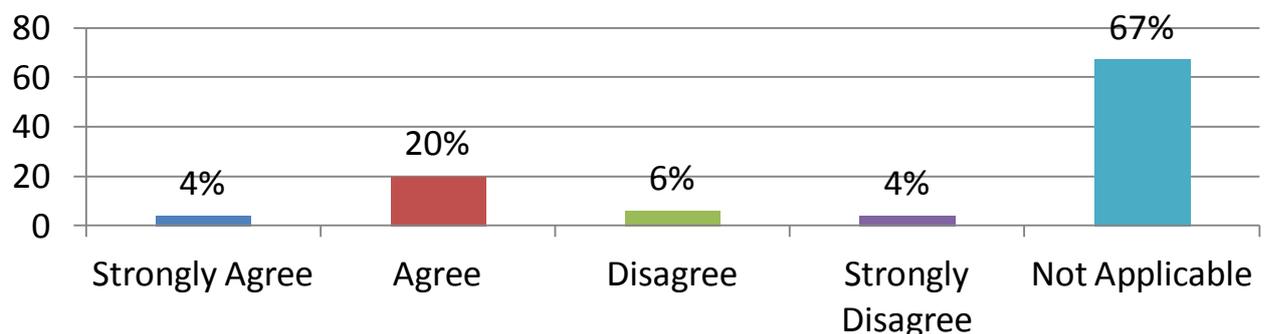
**g. Education for children and young adults could be improved by:**

*“When examining potential improvements to Ardnamurchan High School, Strontian Primary School and the local Nursery (situated within the same building as the High School) respondents were asked to examine these facilities separately.”*

- **Ardnamurchan High School:** 58% of respondents felt that the main issue for the high school lay in attracting and keeping teachers for the long term. 37% felt that the limited course choice available for pupils could be improved upon. Some recognised the difficulty associated with this (especially when linked to the issue of teacher retention) and suggested the possibility of further links with local schools, colleges or even online courses. 12% mentioned incentive schemes to attract local teachers to live and work in the area with the lack of affordable housing options as one of the main issues for the sustainability of the High School.
- **Primary School:** The teaching at the Primary School was largely praised as excellent with most suggested improvements relating to the school building. 79% identified an upgraded school building as the main source of improvement needed for the Primary School. Many highlighted the lack of space – both indoor and outdoor – and 9% mentioned the need for a new school playground. 9% also mentioned that the continuity of teaching is disrupted due to the annual turnover of probationary staff and suggested that hiring another permanent staff member would be beneficial.
- **Nursery:** The main issue that respondents highlighted for the local Nursery was falling attendance numbers due to the lack of young children and families in the local area. The majority of respondents (60%), however, stated that the Nursery was ‘good’ or ‘perfect’ and overall the feedback on this facility was overwhelmingly positive.

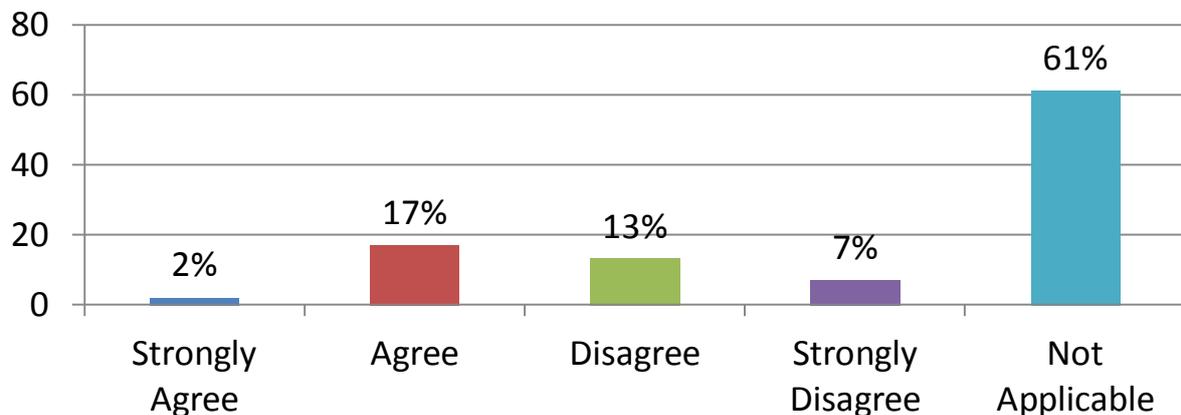
**Childcare**

**h. Childcare and learning provision for 0-5s in the local area is adequate for my needs.**



67% felt that this was 'not applicable' to them. A further 24% were positive about the local provision of these services. However, 10% indicated that they either disagreed or strongly disagreed that the current level of provision was adequate for their needs.

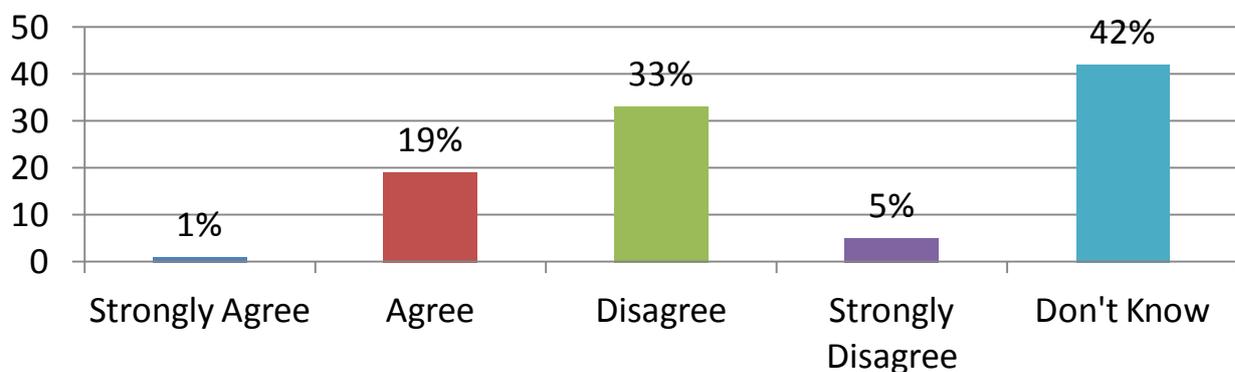
**i. The standard of local childcare provision is good.**



61% felt this question was 'not applicable' to their circumstances. A similar response was received between those who said that local childcare provision was good (19%) and those who disagreed with this statement (20%). This negative response was also reflected in comments with some expanding on this critical view of local childcare provision. 87% of comments indicated that there was a problem with childcare with a further 43% specifically highlighting the difficulty of being in employment and having young children. Many simply stated that it was impossible to work and have children under school or nursery age in Sunart and a number of these also commented that provision outside nursery hours was non-existent.

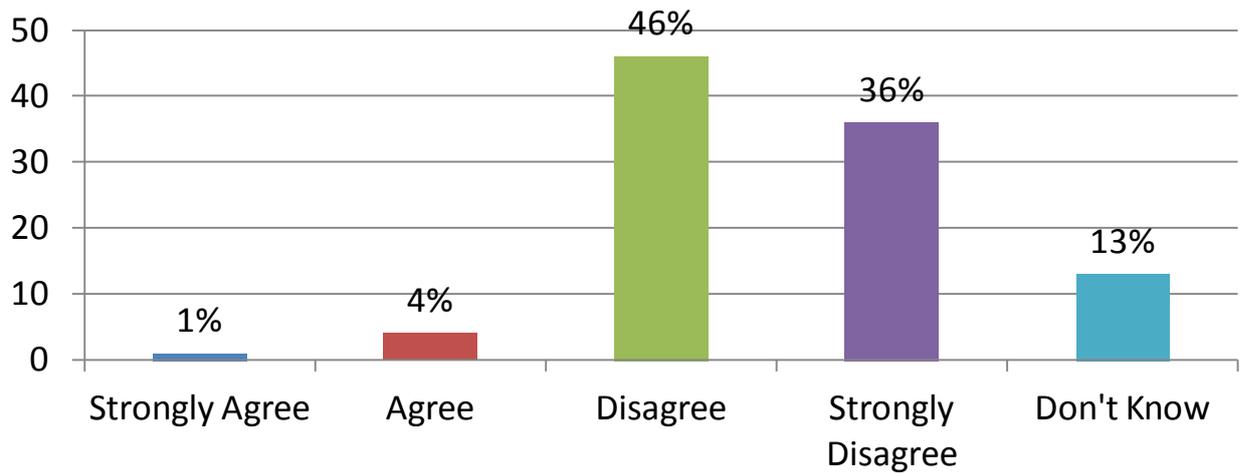
**Young Adults (11 - 18 years old)**

**j. There are adequate facilities and support services for young adults in the Sunart area.**



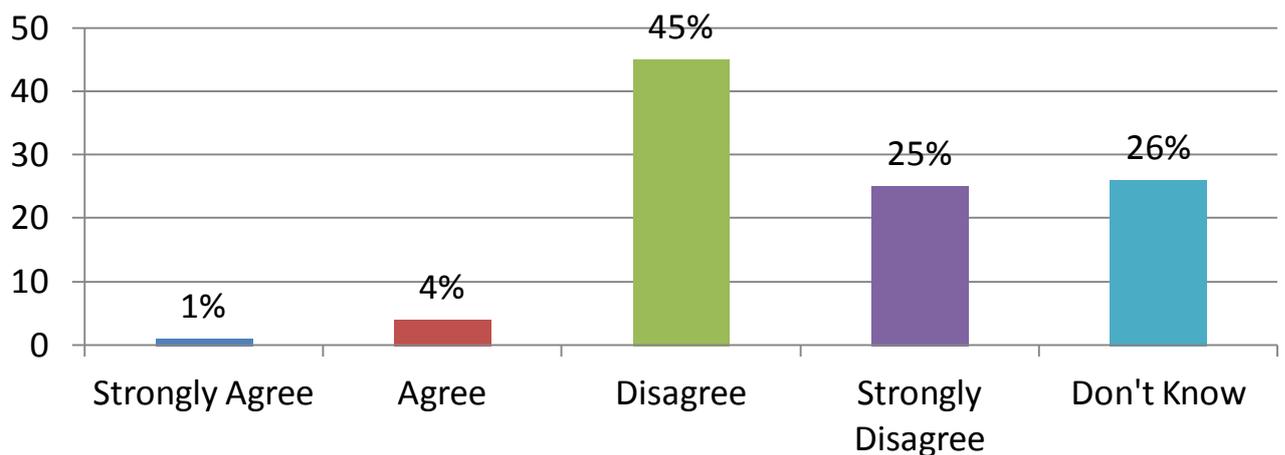
42% said they didn't know whether there were adequate facilities and support services for young adults in Sunart. 38% disagreed or strongly disagreed that these facilities and services weren't adequate for the young adults living locally with only 20% responding in a positive manner.

**k. There are sufficient job opportunities for young adults in Sunart.**



82% responded in a negative manner to this question. Overall, only 5% of respondents agreed with this statement.

**l. There are sufficient training opportunities for young adults in Sunart.**



Only 5% of respondents indicated that they agreed with this statement with a further 70% disagreeing and 26% felt that they did not know enough to answer.

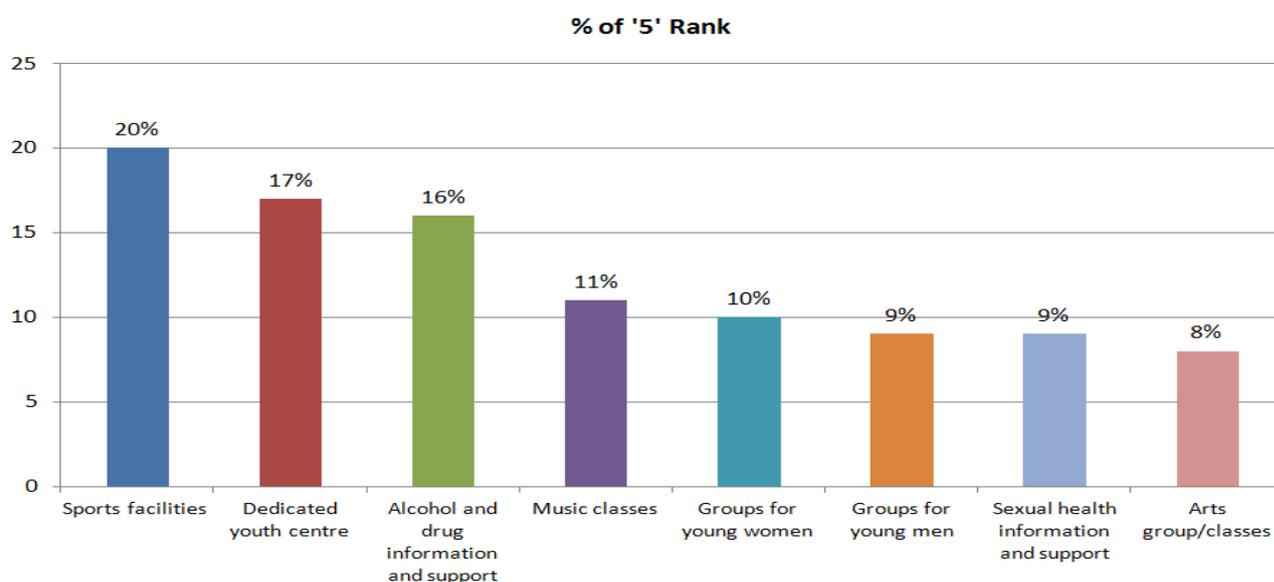
**m. What activities and/or facilities are required for young adults in the area? (5=highest priority):**

		1*	2*	3*	4*	5*	% of '5' Rank
1	Sports facilities	3	5	9	14	25	20%
2	Dedicated youth centre	9	6	6	12	22	17%
3	Alcohol and drug information and support	9	4	10	13	20	16%
4	Music classes	4	8	10	9	14	11%
5	Groups for young women	7	4	13	12	12	10%
6	Groups for young men	7	2	13	11	11	9%
7	Sexual health information and support	6	8	10	9	11	9%
8	Arts group/classes	7	4	14	10	11	8%

*\*shows number of respondents*

Respondents to this question identified a number of facilities or activities that they felt were of the highest priority for the young adults within Sunart. Overall 126 responses were valid for analysis of this question with just over 40% choosing to complete the full ranking system from 5 down to 1. Due to these limitations – recognised with similar questions (5(c), 5(d), 7(g) and 8(c)) the analysis of this question are based on the breakdown of the responses to the highest rank available – 5.

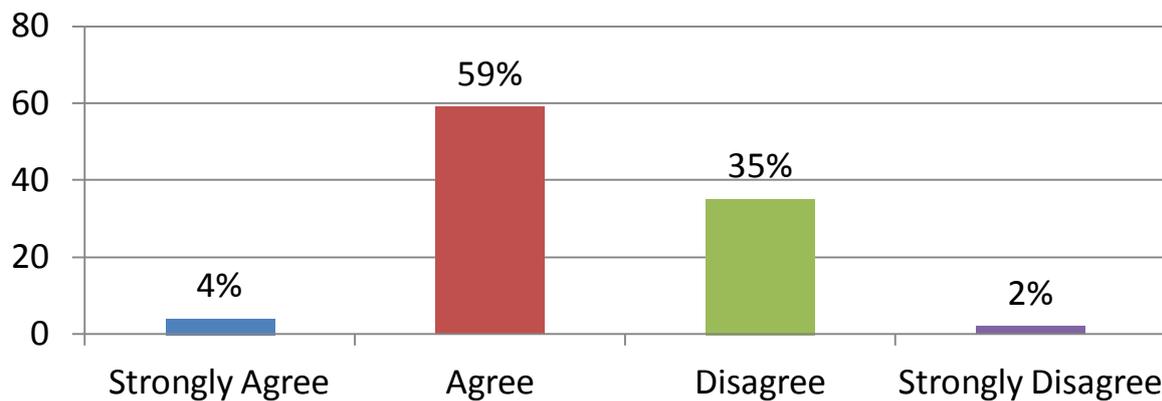
The three highest priorities were 'more sport facilities' (20%), 'a dedicated youth centre' (17%) and 'greater alcohol and drug information and support' (16%) as illustrated on the graph below.



## Section 7 – Tourism, Culture, Heritage & Leisure

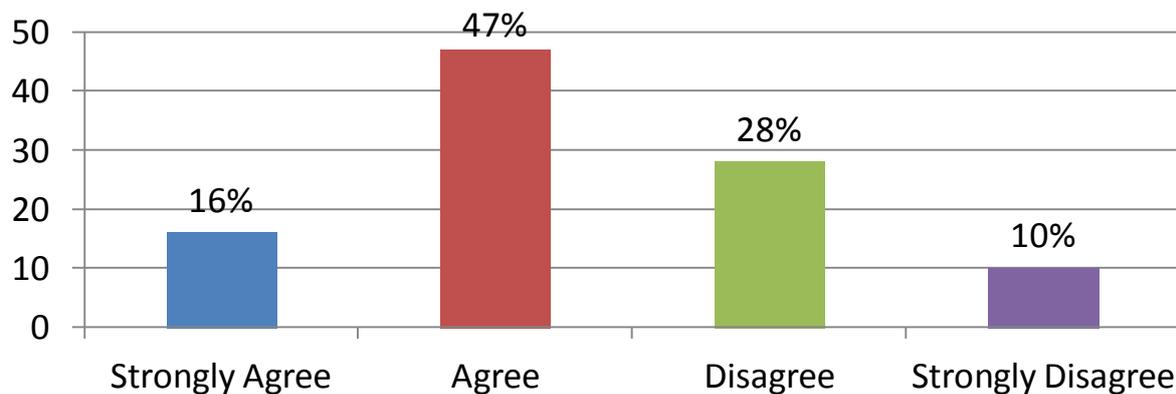
“The questions below assess how important you think these issues and tourism are to the development of the area.”

### **a. There are ample opportunities for me to take part in cultural and leisure activities.**



63% either agreed or strongly agreed that there are ample local cultural and leisure activities. However, 37% disagreed with this statement and community discussions indicated how accessing cultural and leisure activities could be improved.

### **b. The Gaelic language should be better promoted as part of Sunart’s cultural heritage.**



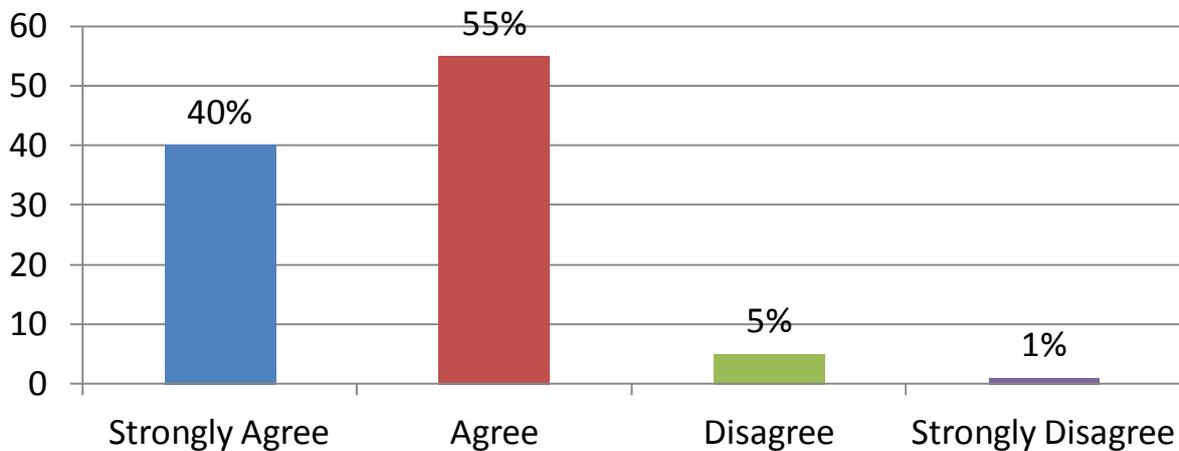
63% felt that Gaelic should be better promoted as an aspect of Sunart’s cultural heritage. This issue received mixed responses in the “additional comments” section and across other areas of the questionnaire with some questioning whether this should be a priority for the local area.

**c. I would like to see more activities concerned with:**

Of those who identified activities that are currently limited or lacking in Sunart, 43% highlighted activities that greater utilised the outdoors and natural environment as their priority for any recreational development. 22% of respondents specifically mentioned water based activities on Loch Sunart, 12% highlighted more activities or experiences associated with local wildlife, a further 12% mentioned more footpaths, walking tracks and better way\_ marking of routes and 8% prioritised biking and bike paths across Sunart.

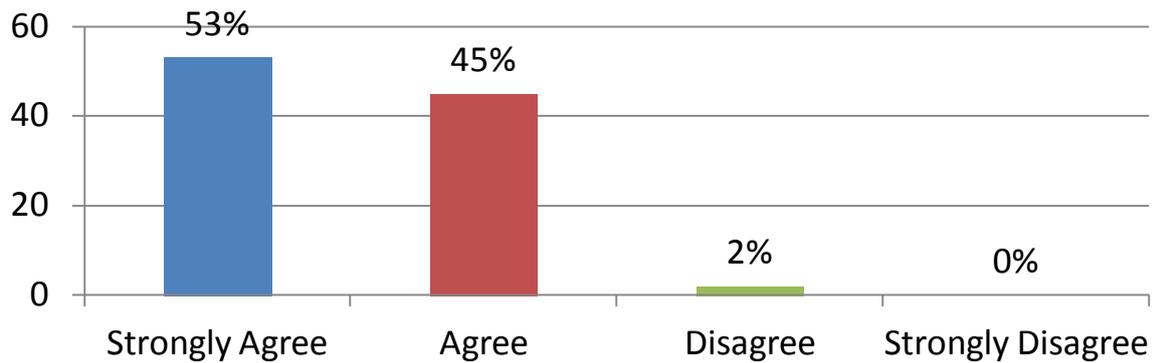
29% highlighted opportunities associated with local history with 8% specifically mentioning greater use of the mines for educational and tourism purposes. Other common themes included greater provision of entertainment such as film or cinema nights (10%) and more opportunities for learning and performing music (9%) while 6% discussed the potential benefits of building a local swimming pool.

**d. The culture and heritage (e.g. crofting, mining, archaeology, language etc) of Sunart is an economic asset and should be protected.**



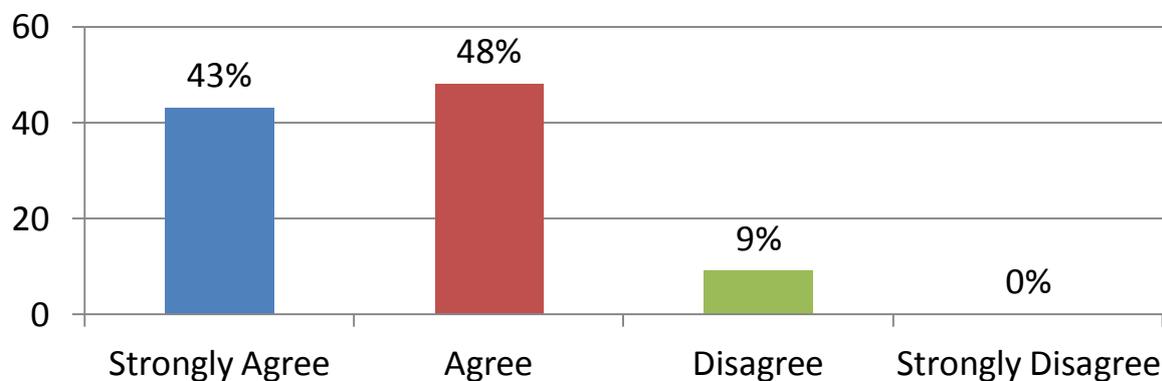
95% of respondents believe that the culture and history of the local area is an asset to the community and should be protected. 40% indicated that they strongly agree with this statement.

**e. Tourism is crucial to the long-term sustainability of the area.**



98% believed that the tourism industry is vital to the long term sustainability of the local area. These results also support group discussions about the importance of tourism to the local economy, with many participants indicating that they believed that tourism employed the majority of local workers.

**f. The promotion of local heritage should be central to the future development of tourism in Sunart.**



Only 9% disagreed with this statement. These results also indicate a high level of support for the further development of cultural and historical aspects of Sunart. One area that has received particular focus is the potential for a heritage information centre at the mine site. The possibility of linking this facility to educational centres both locally and further afield, such as the existing link with the University of Edinburgh's Geology Department, was also highlighted.

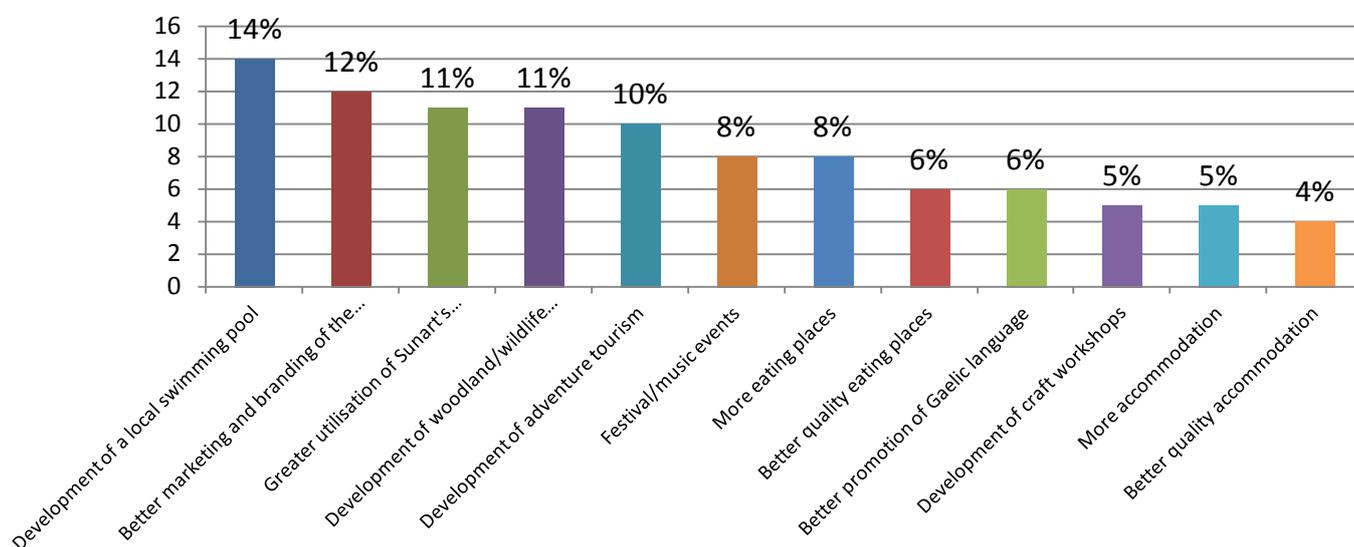
**g. The leisure experience could be improved by (5= highest priority):**

		1*	2*	3*	4*	5*	% of '5' Rank
1	Development of a local swimming pool	5	3	3	6	20	14%
2	Better marketing and branding of the area	3	3	4	8	17	12%
3	Greater utilisation of Sunart's cultural heritage	1	6	8	5	16	11%
4	Development of woodland/wildlife tourism	2	5	8	9	16	11%
5	Development of adventure tourism	2	5	7	7	14	10%
6	Festival/music events	6	2	5	9	12	8%
7	More eating places	5	2	6	7	11	8%
8	Better quality eating places	4	2	5	7	9	6%
9	Better promotion of Gaelic language	7	2	6	4	8	6%
10	Development of craft workshops	3	5	7	9	7	5%
11	More accommodation	4	1	7	6	7	5%
12	Better quality accommodation	2	3	4	6	5	4%

*\*shows number of respondents*

In response to this question, participants chose to highlight their priorities for future leisure developments locally. This table is based on 142 valid responses with approximately 30% completing the 5 – 1 ranking system.

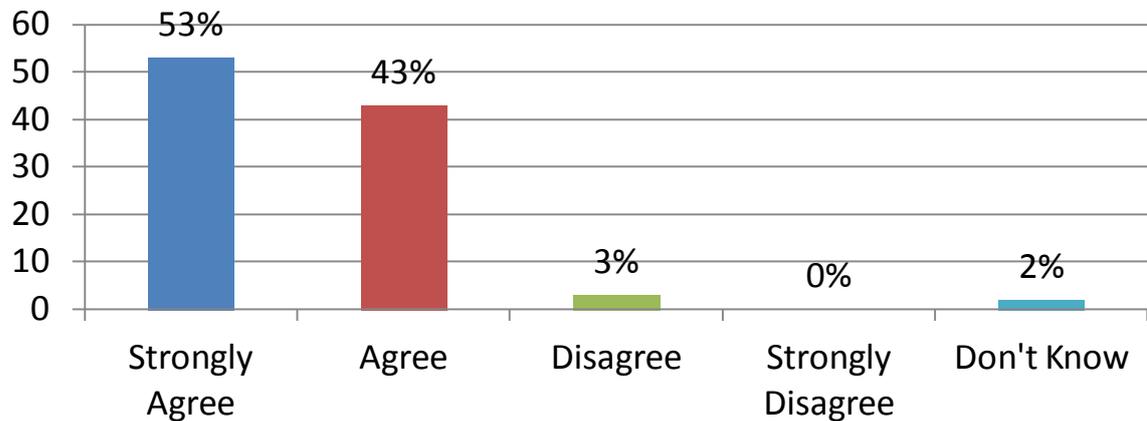
'Development of a local swimming pool' received the most respondents ranking it as their highest priority (14%). This was closely followed by 'better marketing and branding of the area' (12%). The development of a local swimming pool is one that has emerged from various aspects of this research, with many individuals expressing divergent opinions on this matter. 'Greater utilisation of Sunart's cultural heritage' and development of both nature based and adventure tourism were also ranked highly by respondents.



## Section 8 – Environment

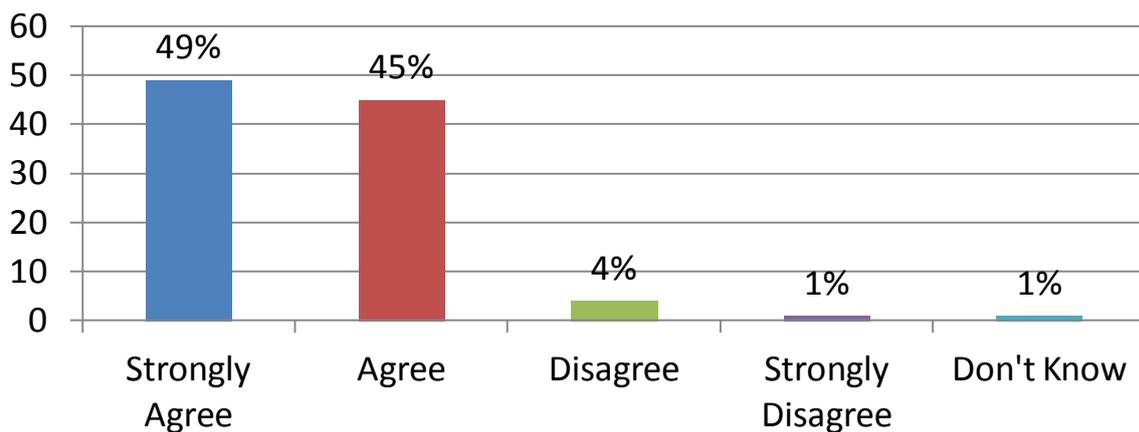
*“This section explores how you feel about the environment in your area.”*

- a. **The conservation of the environment should be a priority when considering future development proposals.**



96% of respondents indicated that the conservation of the environment should be a priority when considering future development proposals.

- b. **The conservation and protection of the local environment is essential to encourage tourists to the area.**



The link between the local environment and tourism was highlighted in the responses collected to this question with 94% indicating that conservation of the environment was essential to local tourism development.

c. Which, if any, of the following environmental issues are of concern to you locally (5 = highest concern):

		1*	2*	3*	4*	5*	% of '5' Rank
1	Crofting absenteeism and neglect	4	6	7	8	19	13%
2	Fish protection	4	6	7	8	17	12%
3	Invasive plant species	4	5	8	9	17	12%
4	Waste disposal	5	5	9	11	14	10%
5	Recycling	4	5	9	11	12	9%
6	Pollution	5	4	10	9	12	9%
7	Climate change	6	3	9	8	12	9%
8	Infrastructure development	5	4	7	7	11	8%
9	Development of forestry land	5	5	7	10	10	7%
10	Carbon reduction	5	4	7	7	9	6%
11	Development of wind-farms	11	4	6	3	9	6%

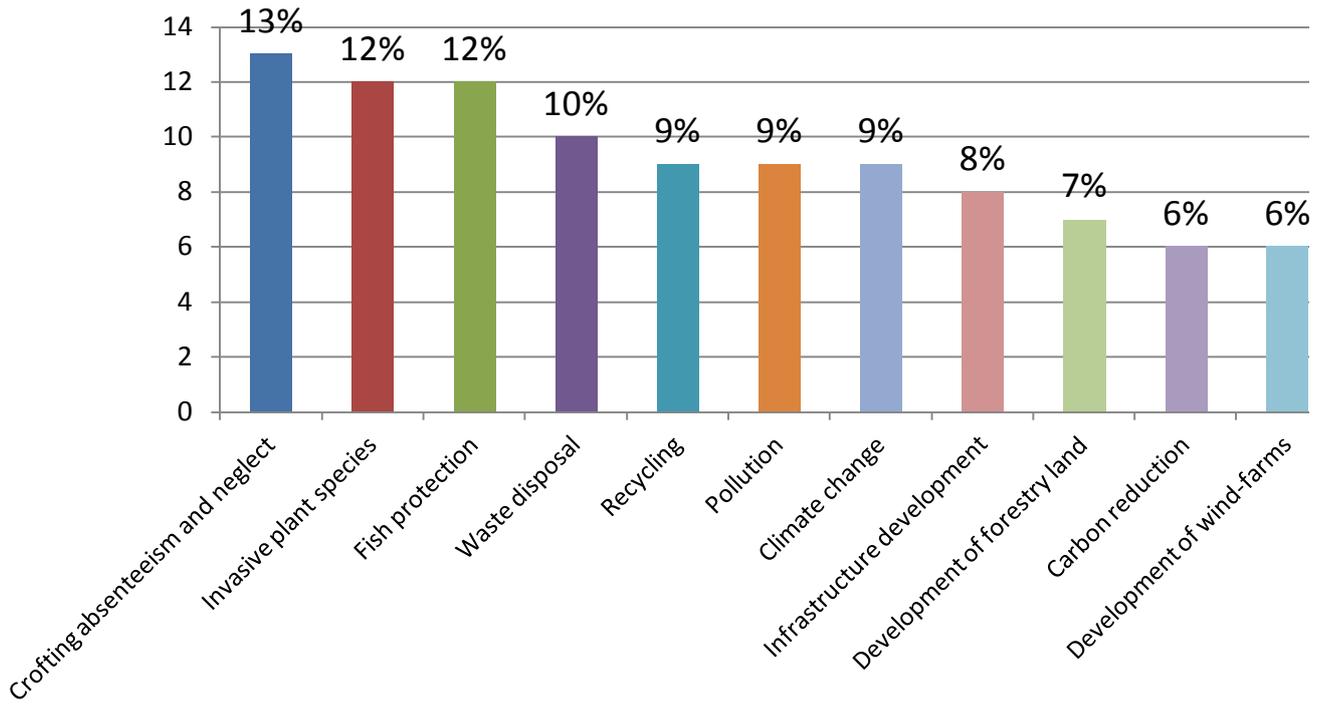
*\*shows number of respondents*

The analysis of this question is based on 142 responses, of which, approximately 40% completed the full 5 – 1 ranking system.

The responses to this question indicated that the greatest environmental concern locally was linked to the impact of crofting absenteeism and neglect with 13% of the total responses indicating this as the highest priority issue. Other important issues that have emerged as a high priority locally involves 'fish protection' in Loch Sunart (12%) and the impact of 'invasive plant species' (12%). Invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed also emerged as an issue a number of discussions with many identifying it as one of their main environmental concerns for Sunart.

The percentage breakdown of the highest '5' rank is illustrated in the following graph.

### % of '5' Rank



**d. Reducing the carbon footprint of the community may be important to the future of the Sunart area. Which of these do you do?**

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
Recycle	79%	17%	4%	0%
Actively reduce my energy consumption	49%	36%	16%	0%
Buy produce with reduced packaging	25%	41%	31%	4%
Buy locally produced food	13%	27%	52%	8%
Reduce household waste e.g composting	57%	21%	10%	12%
Use public transport where necessary	13%	7%	48%	32%
Use green energy	16%	23%	33%	29%
Cycle and/or walk where possible	29%	30%	33%	8%

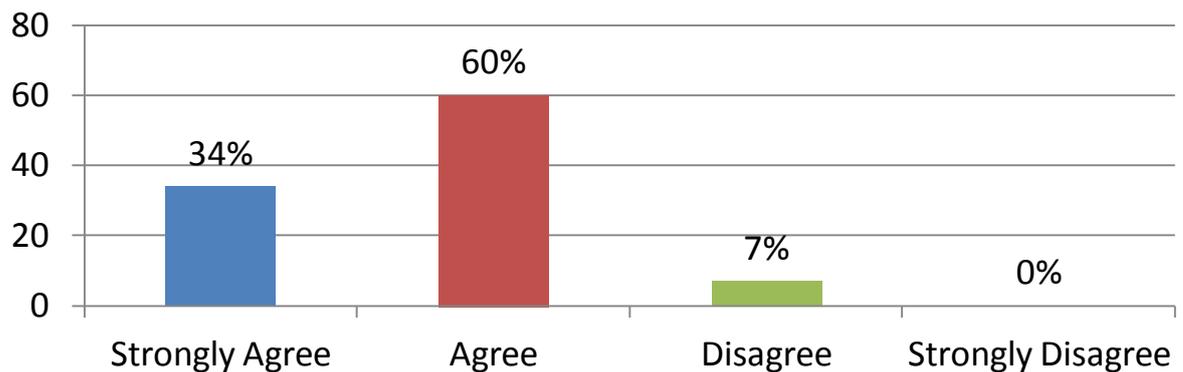
The results from this question indicate:

- A high level of recycling with 79% stating that they always recycled and 17% that they often do so. Interestingly, no-one indicated that they never recycled.
- Almost 50% aimed to actively reduce their energy consumption which links to discussions regarding the impact of rising fuel costs and fuel poverty in Sunart. The issue of a local wood fuel scheme was also mentioned with some highlighting the potential for the use of local woodland for community fuel.
- Over 40% stated that they often bought reduced packaging products with only 4% indicating that they never did this.
- 52% stated that they sometimes bought locally-produced food with 13% always doing so and 8% stating that they never bought local produce. Some the lack of availability of locally produced food and indicated they would purchase more if it was available.
- 57% indicated that they tried to reduce household waste through measures such as composting.
- The results show that the majority rarely use public transport (48%) or never at all (32%) and it was made clear that public transport is almost synonymous with the local bus service - as opposed to the Corran Ferry – with previous responses indicating a high level of use for the ferry service. Issues with the frequency of the bus service were flagged up as one of the main barriers to its regular use.
- The use of green energy gave similar results across all four categories with 16% indicating that they always used green energy (with some highlighting their own solar panels for the basis of this; 23% stated they often used green energy; 33% that they sometimes did and 29% that they never used green energy as a source of power).
- 92% indicated that, at least occasionally, they cycled or walked where possible with 8% stating that they never do so. Comments highlighted the lack of pavements, footpaths and cycle paths as a factor that limited these activities.

## Section 9 – Role of Government/External Agencies

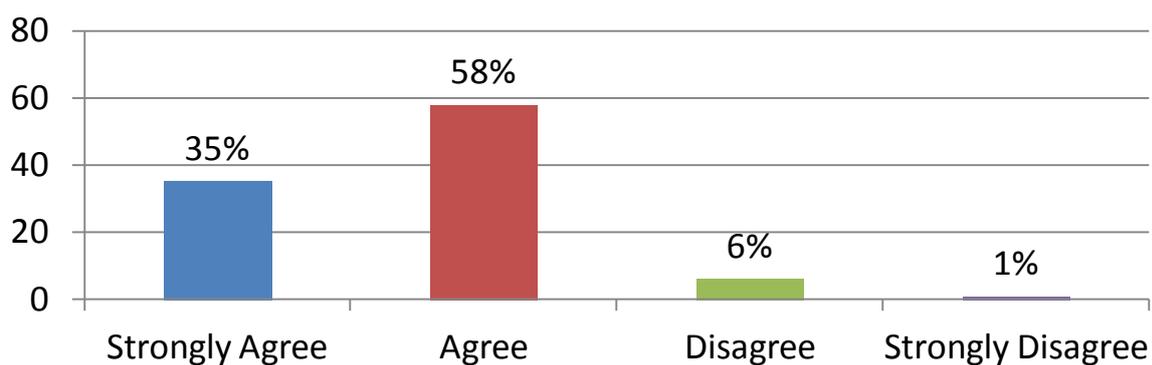
*“This section aims to assess your views on the role of government and external stakeholders when planning for development in Sunart (e.g. Forestry Commission, Highland Council, Lochaber Housing Association, etc.).”*

### **a. Local people should lead local development.**



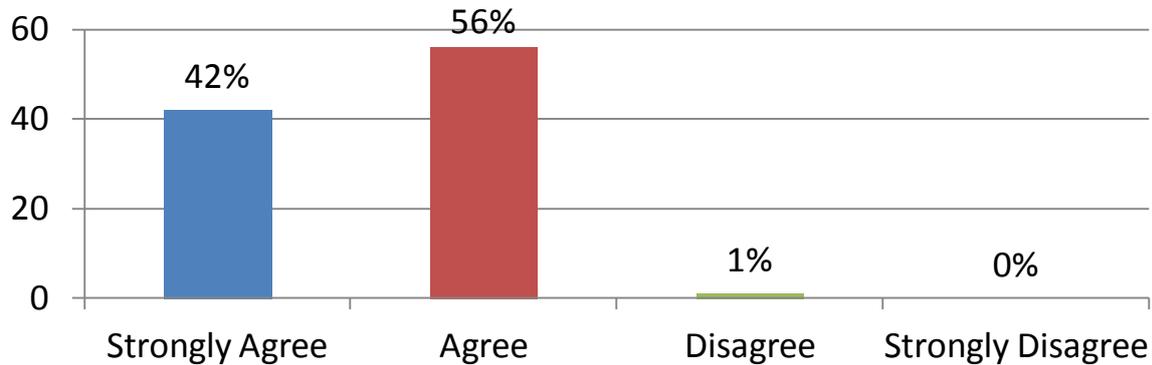
94% indicated that they either agreed or strongly agreed that local people should lead development in Sunart, with only 7% disagreeing with this statement.

### **b. Successful development must be based on a partnership between Government, agencies and the local community.**



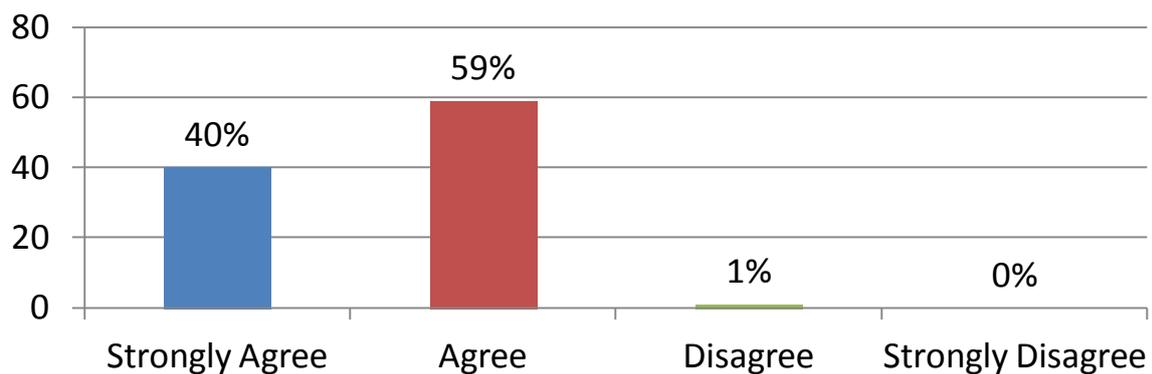
93% agreed that successful development can be achieved through a partnership with other actors such as external agencies or Government.

**a. Local people could play an active part in community development if Government and agencies allow them.**



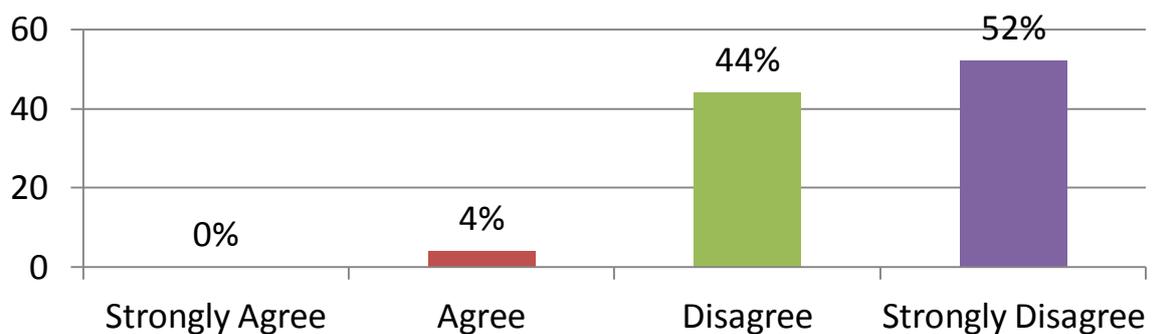
98% felt that local people had the capacity to play an active role in community development if they were allowed to do so.

**b. Local people can play an active part in community development if Government and agencies provide support and advice.**



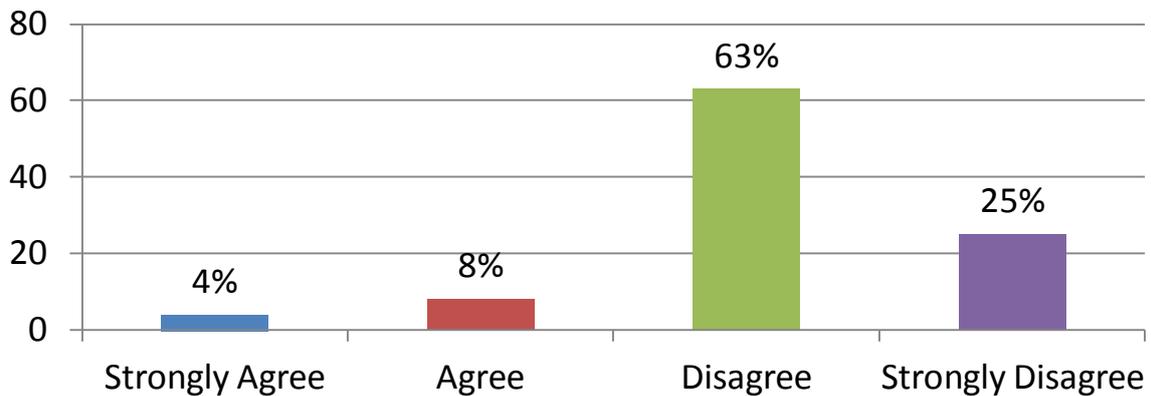
99% felt that with the provision of support and advice from Governmental and external agencies local communities could be active in their own sustainable development.

**c. Government alone should be responsible for carrying out development of the Sunart area.**



96% indicated that they disagreed that Government alone should be responsible for development in Sunart. 52% strongly disagreed with this statement.

**d. There is no place for Government or external agencies in the development of the Sunart area.**



88% disagreed that Government had no part to play in Sunart’s development, indicating that the majority believe a supportive partnership that involves local people, external agencies and Government is the appropriate model for most local development.

**e. If you feel that there are a variety of roles that Government and external agencies can play in the development of Sunart, please outline below what this should be:**

44% describe the role of Government or external agencies to be one of advice, support and potentially leadership. This was apparent in terms of legal expertise, with one respondent highlighting this role:

- *“Their legal knowledge and our local knowledge can work together”.*

Others highlighted the role of Government or external agencies in providing financial support or funding for projects (22%), road repair & maintenance (15%), the provision of a bridge to replace the Corran ferry (15%) and the long-term solution to the lack of continuity within local healthcare (11%).

## Section 10 – The Future

*“This section aims to identify the positive and negative aspects about life in your area and to ask some general questions about your thoughts for the future.”*

### **a. What do you feel are the most important issues for the future of your area?**

Creating employment was seen as one of the most important issues facing the Sunart area with 35% of the 129 responses referring to this. The creation of jobs for young people was a key part of this concern with over half of these focused on the creation of jobs for young adults. Additionally, a large proportion of respondents (35%) also highlighted the concerns surrounding public transport in the local area. The majority of these indicated that the ferry price was a major concern and linked this to the overall economic sustainability of Sunart for both locals and tourists. Some discussed the possibility of a bridge over the Corran Narrows as a long-term solution. Other issues that emerged relating to transport were the lack of local buses and inconvenient timetable and the timing of the last ferry.

The lack of affordable housing was another major concern with 26% referring to it as an important issue. Responses indicated the need for affordable housing for young people and young families (10%), key workers (3%) and local people (2%). Many also indicated that future housing developments need to be sensitively done to ensure the “village feel” isn’t lost.

Concerns over local health and social care provision also emerged with 24% referring to this. 14% highlighted the lack of a permanent GP at the surgery in Strontian. Some highlighted elderly care services as an issue for the future.

Other issues included the maintenance and protection of the local culture and environment (24%); encouraging tourism and the development of tourist facilities (17%), greater opportunities and support for local business development (12%); building community cohesion and spirit (8%) and road maintenance across Sunart (4%).

A selection of respondents’ comments covering key issues raised:

- *“The ferry fares! Continued increases make living here harder financially and affects the economy by putting tourists off coming.”*

- *“Maintain the beauty of the area...balance this with development, tourism and provide adequate services so that Sunart does not become a retirement village with the retired being afraid to progress and sustain growth.”*
- *“Employment and housing so young people can move back. Keeping ferry prices at an affordable level.”*
- *“Escalating ferry costs, lack of housing for teachers & families, lack of business units and undeveloped heritage tourism.”*
- *“A better health service.”*
- *“GP, affordable ferry, small business help, care of environment - protect what is here.”*
- *“Education, employment and social housing - wanting the next generation to stay.”*
- *“Remove the financial and time limited stranglehold of the ferry at Corran and improve road network. Provide GP and local hospital facilities on the peninsula. Provide adequate shopping provision without the need to go outwith the area (cross Loch Linnhe) i.e. make the area self-sufficient as far as possible.”*
- *“Better roads.”*
- *“Good GP and healthcare, Affordable Ferry fares, opportunities for small business development, care of environment/protect what we have.”*
- *“Development of tourism and tourist related facilities.”*
- *“Encouraging tourist by marketing and development of local unique selling points e.g. mines to be developed as an educational resource.”*
- *“Projects which draw the community together. Wet weather activities locally for tourist (and locals!).”*
- *“Utilisation of local resources i.e. mining, woodland, hills, Loch Sunart, wildlife.”*
- *“Need for housing to enable working people and families to live, work and contribute to this area. “*
- *“New primary school and utilise old school to make a better care home and doctor and nurse centre.”*
- *“Re-building community spirit. Getting folk to know each other better which will - hopefully - get everyone working towards common goals.”*

- *“Employment training availability for young people. Financial assistance for possible apprentices. Assistance with small workshops encouraging people to stay in the area.”*
- *“Broadband (essential for modern tourism).”*
- *“A proper GP service i.e. not locums. Provision of a swimming pool, new primary school, new doctors surgery. Training, jobs and housing for our young people.”*
- *“Maintain the tranquillity of the area. A permanent GP or 4 GPs to cover the whole peninsula. “*
- *“Provision for young people through training, employment and education.”*
- *“Create jobs for local people in the area especially the younger generation. Keep the village within current boundaries to preserve the beauty of the surrounding area.”*
- *“Make crofting profitable- sell and use products locally; produce more locally with a lot less dependence on tourism. “*
- *“One umbrella - not different groups.”*
- *“Improved broadband so that people can work from home (probably also mobile phone network).”*
- *“Lack of housing for young families. Lack of job opportunities. No childcare (crèche or child-minding). “*
- *“More housing for teachers as we can't seem to keep them here. “*

## **b. What changes would you like to see happen in Sunart?**

### **Short-Term (0 – 5 years)**

The short-term changes most desired were the need for more affordable housing (28%) followed by improvements in the local healthcare service (27%). Within the issue of housing, there was a need for more flexible, affordable housing options, with individuals highlighting rental options, smaller properties and vacant properties being brought back into use. The issue of healthcare improvements correlates with other results from this questionnaire that details a need for continuity of care within the GP service and an improvement in the surgery facility itself.

Improvements within the local transport network received a high proportion of responses (22%), with ferry prices again being highlighted as of concern for residents alongside more buses and greater information regarding the status of the ferry service i.e. through a text system, recorded message service or local electronic signage.

Greater recreational facilities were also identified as an area that could be improved over the next 5 years, with respondents highlighting improvements to both indoor and outdoor recreational opportunities. 20% identified the development of a swimming pool as one of their main priorities over the next 5 years. Other responses referred to an upgrade in walking paths, development of bike paths and greater advertising of the outdoor opportunities in Sunart.

Other short-term changes included: the development of a community social hub (16%); road and pavements upgrades (12%); more employment opportunities (11%); upgraded Primary School facilities (10%); more green energy schemes (9%); local business development (6%); improved mobile phone and broadband service (5%); education improvements at High School (5%) and the removal of invasive plant species (3%).

In addition to these points, some highlighted that it was difficult to identify future changes in Sunart due to the uncertainty relating to the Scottish Independence referendum.

A selection of comments covering key issues:

- *“Business units/development, swimming pool, upgrade of village hall, improvement of heritage/tourism, activities - kayaking & mountain biking.”*
- *“Sort out GP service so it's adequately resourced. Build a swimming pool and heritage centre. Build more affordable/co-owned housing (we need families to keep the school vibrant).”*
- *“Construction of community centre and local food network.”*
- *“Swimming pool, outdoor access.”*
- *“Affordable housing available for rent, Upgraded broadband/wifi.”*
- *“Better medical services - perhaps a dedicated centre for GP, dentist, nurses.”*
- *“Better medical services. Development of mines for interpretation. “*
- *“Regular ceilidh/community events. More social, affordable housing. Increase in secondary school roll. Permanent medical staff committed to the communities. “*

- *“Development of premises for business opportunities, perhaps swimming pool with additional rooms for sub-letting to increase activities both for locals and tourists.”*
- *“More transport, better healthcare, more advertising of the area and more focus on the history of the area.”*
- *“More than 1 bus a day and possibly a bus to Oban. “*
- *“Free ferry or toll-less bridge.”*
- *“New primary school. Transport links developed. Develop employment opportunities for young people and housing choices. “*
- *“Absentee crofters relieved of their crofts to allow young local people the opportunity to get into crofting. “*
- *“Access to local timber for fuel which is otherwise going to waste because it is uneconomic to harvest commercially.”*
- *“It would be good if we had access to a community building that was open most days for people of all ages to meet for tea/coffee, games room for teenagers etc. that welcomed all, local & tourist (somewhere to go in bad weather!).”*
- *“Housing for teachers - tied to contract i.e. leave post at AHS and automatically lose house. Need to stop constant drift of teachers.”*
- *“Swimming pool so that children can learn to swim and adults can maintain/increase health and fitness.”*

### Long-Term (5 years +)

Long-term issues identified were broadly similar to those described as short-term aims. Increasing the recreational opportunities available (24%) and developing facilities and activities for community cohesion (22%) were the most common responses, with the development of a local swimming pool (19%) and a community or heritage hub (10%) proving to be popular. However, improving employment opportunities – especially for the younger generation – was also highly regarded (18%). A similar percentage highlighted that improved access to the ‘mainland’ was a change they would like to see (18%) whether it be through the development of a bridge or tunnel (12%) or heavily subsidising the crossing for locals and developing the ferry as a social enterprise (4%).

Others indicated a need for more affordable housing (15%); improved medical services (11%); improved education (9%); more community renewable projects (7%) and greater community ownership of land (6%).

- *“Empty/neglected houses sold back to local people.”*
- *“More jobs for youth, Sunart tourism - more sustainable, mountain bike tracks linked to Fort William mountain biking. “*
- *“Develop the ferry as a social enterprise. Build one or two community owned wind turbines to ensure community income. “*
- *“Bus service and GP service.”*
- *“Employment for local people.”*
- *“Consolidation of the village centre into a hub for social and economic activity.”*
- *“Should the joint communities of Ardnamurchan and Morvern take over the Corran ferry or build a fixed link? All publicly owned land...should be taken into community control and managed for local public benefit.”*
- *“Building a swimming pool ... if income from Hydro Scheme allows.”*
- *“A better Primary School building and playground.”*
- *“Retaining the Highland culture.”*
- *“Health centre - Doctors, Dentists, Nurses Chiropodist, Physio etc. under one roof.”*
- *“Try not to lose the village aspect of Strontian.”*
- *“Heritage centre at local mines.”*
- *“More community activities and help for the aged.”*

### **c. What aspects of life in your area would you like to remain the same?**

38% felt the beauty of the surrounding countryside and its wildlife and the community spirit (31%) were the most important aspects of life they wished to preserve. Other common themes included the small rural ‘village feel’ (26%), living in a safe environment (22%), peace and tranquillity of the area (9%) and local quality of life (3%). 6% also indicated that they want to preserve the remote feeling of Sunart and felt keeping the ferry crossing at

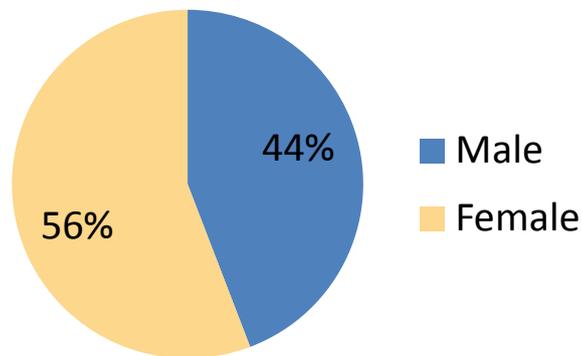
Corran (as opposed to a bridge or tunnel development) was essential to this feeling. 9% also indicated that they would like to preserve most things in the local area just as they are.

A selection of respondent's comments:

- *"The feeling of safety and sense of community."*
- *"The ability to work from home."*
- *"Close knit community."*
- *"The amount of wildlife in the area and open spaces."*
- *"Quality of life - care of environment, I like my life here and don't want it to change."*
- *"Unspoilt beauty."*
- *"Small population where you know who else lives here...keep it quaint and quirky - a different sort of place."*
- *"Peace and quiet."*
- *"The size of village. I don't want it to get too big."*
- *"The tranquillity must remain the same where the sun sets later and the pace is slower!"*
- *"Keep the Ferry, never build a bridge."*
- *"The good cooperation of all the people whatever projects are being promoted at the time."*
- *"The remote feeling and the lack of crime which is linked to having a ferry journey connecting us with most other places."*

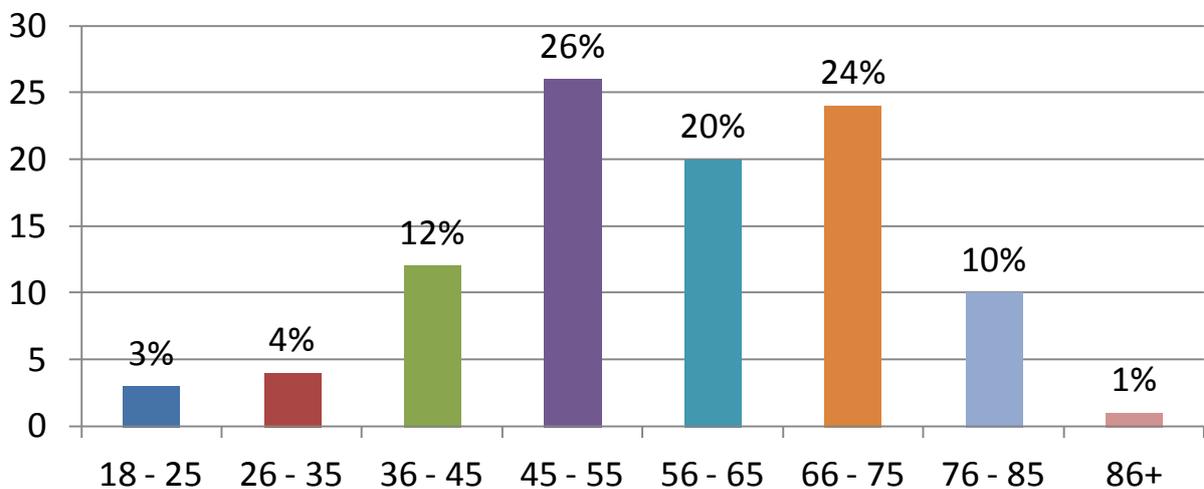
## Section 11 – Demographics

### a. Gender:



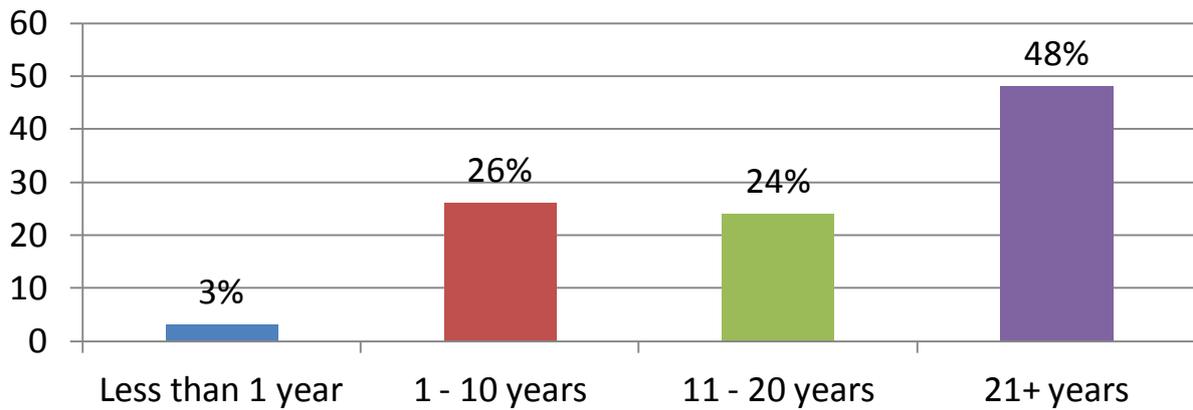
The split between men and women was fairly even, with 56% being female. 96% of respondents chose to identify their gender (172/179 individuals).

### b. Age:



The majority fell into the 46-55 year old age bracket (26%), followed by 24% within the 66-75 year old age group and 20% within the ages of 56-65. In total 70% of respondents were aged between 46 and 75 years old. The lowest percentage returned lay within the 86+ age group (1%), the 18-25 age group (3%) and the 26-35 age group (4%). In a similar manner to the previous question, only 7 people who completed their questionnaire chose not to identify their age.

**c. How long have you lived in the area?**



Almost half of all respondents (48%) indicated that they had lived in the local area for 21 years or more with the remaining respondents made up of those living in Sunart for 1–10 years (26%) and between 11–20 years (24%). Only 3% indicated that they had lived in the local area for less than one year.

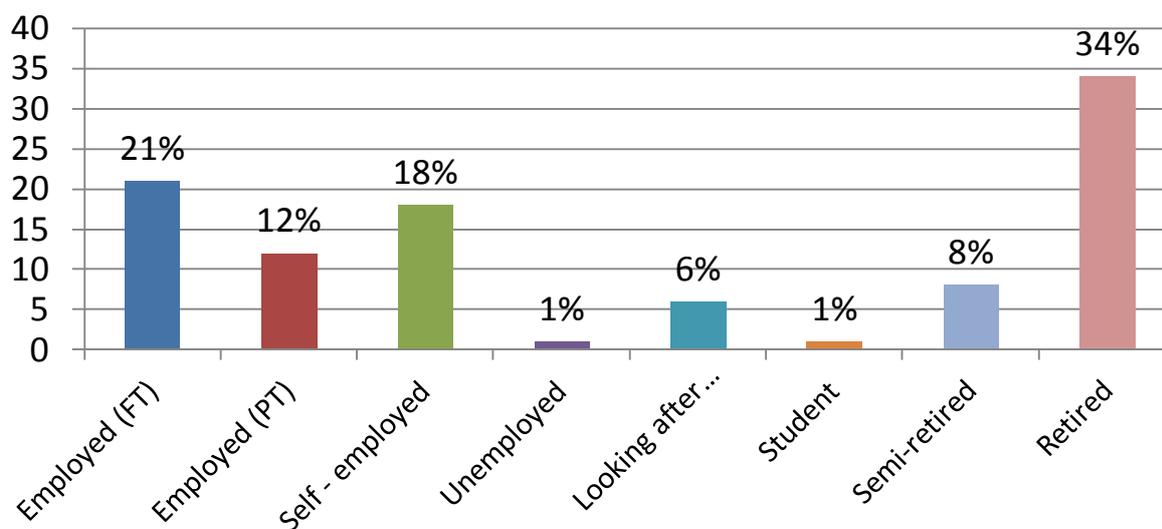
**d. Do you speak any other languages?**

Nearly half of those who chose to answer this question (22 of 47 individuals) highlighted that they spoke Gaelic in addition to English. One individual identified Gaelic as their first language. 21 people mentioned that they also spoke French to some degree, with some highlighting that this was at a basic or intermediary level. Other languages mentioned also included German (7), Italian (4), Arabic (1) and Yorkshire (2!).

**e. Please indicate how many dependents you have in the following categories:**

8 people indicated that they had dependants within the pre-school category with 6 indicating they only had one child at this age. Within school-aged children, 33 responded that they had dependants in this category. The majority (22) indicated that they had 2 dependants within this age category. 13 indicated that they had dependants in further or higher education with a large majority of these (10) identifying only 1 dependant at this stage. A similar number (14) identified a number of adult dependants, the majority of which (12) were one adult dependant.

#### f. Employment status:



The highest proportion identified themselves as retired (34%) with a further 8% in some form of semi-retirement. 21% indicated that they were employed full-time with a further 18% self-employed and an additional 12% in part time work. 6% were currently looking after home/family, 1% were students and 1% were unemployed.

#### g. If you are employed, please indicate your area of work?

Education	16%
Farming/forestry/fishing	9%
Tourism	20%
Services (sales, retail, hospitality etc)	11%
Health and social care	14%
Finance/insurance	0%
IT/Design	4%
Trades	8%
Arts	8%

20% identified tourism as their area of work, representing the largest sector of employment. Additional areas of work were education (16%); health and social care (14%); Services – sales/retail/hospitality (11%); farming/forestry/fishing (9%); trades (8%); arts (8%) and IT/design (4%). Others also identified the Church, local estates, aquaculture and renewable energy.

The questionnaire was supplemented by a series of focus groups and interviews with stakeholders and formed the basis of this study's qualitative analysis. This process offered an alternative means through which the community could take part in the study and allowed CADISPA to drill down into key issues that arose from the community questionnaire. This information was gathered from across the community of Sunart and enabled the gathering of information from a wide range of perspectives. The information collected from these focus groups was analysed, grouped into common themes and is presented in the section below, in no particular order.

### Health

Improving health care provision was seen by many participants as the most important issue for the community. The area of most concern to many local residents has been the inability to retain a local GP for Sunart and the resulting lack in continuity of care.

The current reliance on ever-changing, locum doctors was seen to be inadequate for the needs of the local community and whilst the care given by locums was largely felt to be good in itself, the ability to see the same doctor on each visit was felt to be an important aspect of a good healthcare service. This was highlighted as particularly important for individuals with long-term illness or mental health conditions. Individuals suffering from mental health problems, in particular, were highlighted as being especially vulnerable as a result of the inconsistency of healthcare in Sunart with a number of participants believing that people in that position *"can't cope with starting again."*

It has been highlighted that communication and the passing on of information has been poor in the past with each visit to a different GP not only involving a long recap of an individual's medical history but also often resulting in a different opinion and a different course of action. This lack of continuity is felt to have been at the heart of many delays experienced by local residents.

It was also reported that residents were being sent to Inverness for clinical tests when adequate equipment existed at the Belford in Fort William. It was suggested that a lack of qualified staff in Fort William was at the root of this problem. If true, matching qualified staff to available equipment and better coordination of staffing resources would improve the patient experience.

The lack of tied-housing, transport and ferry costs were thought to be part of the issue in retaining GPs.

The facilities within the GP Surgery in Strontian and the building itself were also highlighted as an area of concern for local residents. It was described as “*outdated*” and “*tiny*”. The provision of a local GP surgery in Sunart was felt to be very important and as such a number of participants recognised that it was “*better than nothing*” but the potential for an upgraded facility with more than one examination room, a pharmacy and auxiliary services such as a local nurse, physiotherapy and other visiting professionals attached was felt to be greatly beneficial to the area.

The availability of pharmacy facilities was also highlighted as potentially problematic for some residents with the dispensing of prescription medicines limited to a single time slot of 3.30pm-4.30pm Monday to Friday. A number of residents indicated that this system was difficult for people who worked outside of the local area and had less flexibility to access this service during these times.

Emergency transport in the area was seen to be excellent with the local ambulance station in Strontian described as a “*lifeline*” and one resident stating that “*I wouldn’t fault it at all.*” It was also highlighted, however, that unless you are very ill and therefore needed to utilise the ambulance service (and potentially the out-of-hours ferry that is mobilised alongside this) accessing healthcare can be difficult for local residents.

Transport to get to appointments at the hospital in Fort William or in Inverness can be very difficult especially for residents who don’t drive or have access to a car. In addition to this many participants indicated that accessing healthcare services after the ferry service has ceased to operate (after 9.30pm) is challenging and involves a long drive around Loch Linnhe and Loch Eil, adding around 25 miles onto the distance travelled (each way).

People without their own transport often have to rely on the support of informal arrangements with neighbours, friends and family to get to appointments which are not in the local area. One resident stated that “*people don’t usually mind doing that, but I don’t like to ask too often and put people out their way.*” It was thought there might still be one ‘volunteer’ driver and car in the village which is useable by people needing help but many respondents were unsure as to whether this was still operational. A number of participants highlighted the possibility of a community transport scheme that could help fill the gap and allow residents easy access to healthcare outside of Sunart.

It was felt that the health care and support facilities needed for residents of Sunart should be provided by the Local Authority and NHS Highland. It was recognised that improvement in the service may not happen if left solely to the agencies due to the reduction in their funding. There was mixed opinion regarding the role of the community in the improvement

or provision of healthcare services locally with views highlighting that local money shouldn't subsidise services that have already been paid for through taxes.

However, a number of residents believed that improvements in healthcare in Sunart will only be driven forward by the people who live in the area and therefore the local community do have some role to play in shaping the future of local healthcare services. Other participants indicated that perhaps there needs to be a rethink of the expectations of what health service a rural community can expect - with some local people indicating whilst having local services such as a dentist would be excellent - travelling to the nearest town for these may have to be expected.

### **Mental Health**

The issue of mental health was one that emerged from many community discussion groups. Many participants felt that mental health problems were commonplace across rural Scotland and as such there was a need to both improve services available locally to support people within their own communities and also to reduce the stigma associated with mental health conditions. It was suggested that Sunart and the rest of the Ardnamurchan Peninsula may suffer higher degrees of social isolation and loneliness and the mental health problems that are often associated with these issues.

A participant informed us that there is only one psychiatrist, based in Fort William, which can result in difficulty of access and potentially a long wait to get a referral. One participant highlighted that *"you can wait months and months and months to be seen and a person can get better or worse in that time."* Many people discussed the need for more support services to be delivered in Sunart with one participant especially concerned about the reduction in funding associated with a number of mental health programmes across the Highland area.

The current provision of counselling or support for people with mental health problems falls to a local, informal support group – Ewen's Room – which many participants highlighted as a vital support network within the community. Ewen's Room is a peer support group for people coping with mental health issues. This group provides an informal 'meeting place' to meet and talk in a familiar community setting, not in a health-related one. There was concern, however, that this local support group was solely reliant on individuals, volunteers and their fundraising efforts. A need was expressed to secure Ewen's Room financially especially since the group has also started to provide outreach services to the local High School regarding the importance of good mental health.

Others also mentioned concerns regarding confidentiality and stigmatisation within the community as one respondent highlighted *"people know what meeting you are going to"* regarding the weekly Ewen's Room gatherings. Local residents also indicated the need for

the community to better understand the causes of mental health problems, be reassured about their effects and break down the stigma associated with these. It was felt by one participant that the stigma attached to mental health difficulties could be particularly prevalent in West Highland villages, judging by the way they have heard people talk or misunderstand it.

An important aspect of this debate involves social isolation with residents highlighting both the elderly and young parents as particular areas of concern. Participants highlighted the *“importance of the local mothers and toddlers group for social interaction for both the children and Mums who go along”* and described it as *“a life-saver.”*

#### What could be done to improve Mental Health provision and support those suffering?

The idea of a community hub was seen as a fantastic resource for mental health support groups to meet in a discreet way, away from the critical eye of local people and the relaxed social meeting space could contribute to prevention of mental health issues arising in the first place. Overall, it was strongly felt that the provision of a social meeting space would be of benefit to the whole community in bringing people together - especially those who may lack opportunities to meet people through social support structures of work, children or church groups.

A number of participants highlighted that the development of a community workshop might combat isolation in many pockets of the local community. The concept of a ‘Men’s Shed’ – a community workshop whereby skill-sharing and informal learning enables local people to come together to complete individual, community or charitable projects was discussed as a potential project for the Sunart area. It has been used as a model to tackle social isolation and loneliness in later life in many countries across the world.

Participants felt that it would be very beneficial if waiting times to see a psychiatrist could be reduced and a good support mechanism locally could be developed to visit people in their own homes, so that when they are feeling too low to go anywhere, they still have social contact and someone to look out for them.

Participation in the Mental Health Arts and Film Festival was thought to be very positive, “a beginning” to mental health being spoken about in the community. The process of discussing mental health and the de-stigmatisation of mental illness was seen as key to helping people recognise it, get help with it and support those in the community.

A suggestion was made for a Highland-wide action group to be established, with the primary role of lobbying the government on the issues of mental health provision in rural areas.

## Housing

The problem with housing was price, availability (in forms that could be used) and limited self-build options. Average wages were considered far too low to be able to afford a house of an appropriate size and the competition was usually fierce. It was felt impossible to compete with those retiring into the area – particularly from the south where property price inflation was historically higher and which gave them greater advantage.

However, there was confusion expressed as to why local teachers (on a good salary) couldn't afford to live in the village and there was a suggestion that perhaps there were other reasons why teachers and other professionals don't live in the immediate area of their work.

The background to the building of new housing stock was a factor. When the new High School was built it was felt that the roll would reach 200 pupils. Housing was planned to meet this demand, however, the pupil roll did not reach this level and the houses were never built. It was suggested that building a new Primary School was a priority given that the present school wasn't considered to be fit-for-purpose. However, there was a concern that if the Primary School was ever moved out of the building it occupies the effect of this would be the closure of the Care Home. It was felt that the elderly Care Home was vital both to the elderly people who lived there – but also for the number of jobs it offered local people. It was a significant local employer.

There's a need for housing for key workers on the peninsula. Professionals with reasonably good salaries seem unable to afford housing.

- *“Can't contribute [to the community] because they can't find anywhere to live.”*

With teachers 'commuting in' the area is losing all of the social, cultural benefits of having them as residents rather than commuters. The salaries of these prime job holders need to be spent in the villages – teachers, etc. must therefore be enabled to live in the village.

There was a lack of affordable and single/double occupancy houses – the mix was wrong and the options limited. There were also plenty of unoccupied houses – or houses that were unoccupied for long periods of the year. They were kept this way for visits 'home', as second 'holiday' homes or for rental to holiday makers.

Rents were applied on a competitive basis. The rent for a week as a holiday home could easily outstrip the monthly rent of a short term lease to a Key Worker.

The local housing priorities were suggested as:

- Make Sunart a place people live in, as opposed to a dormitory place for work.

- Encouraging the Highland Small Communities Housing Trust (HSCHT) to become more active and to seek the repossession and renovation of empty houses. The suggestion was that HSCHT should reclaim the empty houses and use them on a temporary basis (e.g. by key workers) to address the housing shortage.

There should be one waiting list for whole of housing in the area: a shared list housing scheme between both the HSCHT/Lochaber Housing Association. It was also felt that more flexibility in housing stock/quality/size and greater opportunities for shared equity would help the lower paid to get access to ownership. It seemed an anomaly to some that Lochaber Housing Association offered shared equity in every area except Sunart due to the cost of housing being too high in Sunart. The impact of this was that those people living on the peninsula were at a disadvantage when compared with others living on the Fort William side of the Corran Narrows.

The trans-Highland Council waiting list system was felt to be unfair on local people struggling to address the price and availability issues in Sunart. In terms of housing allocation there was a need to put your name forward early – really before housing was necessary – a need to play the system astutely to ensure that you got housing where you needed it.

Living on a peninsula was felt to be (far) worse than being on a small island. Sunart was treated as an island without having the status and access to support that an island enjoys. The Small Island Development Trust was an example of differing status.

Housing was seen to be an issue of more accommodation options not necessarily of land release.

A specific issue of empty Council Houses was raised and it was felt that steps should be taken to take them back into public ownership. The police houses were an example. Some ex-Council houses had been ‘abandoned’. It was recognised that holiday homes were difficult to legislate against without being discriminatory.

### Sheltered Housing

The options for housing the elderly are too limited. Elderly people are being encouraged to stay in their own homes without the necessary support until they became a ‘critical’ concern. It was felt there was a demand for good quality sheltered housing as a half-way house and as a way of increasing the options available to older people. It was reported that

- *“the whole village was up in arms when they started giving out the sheltered housing to anybody”.*

There was a link suggested between the need for support from good quality carers for the older population still living in their own homes and mental well-being. The older population who may be socially isolated and “desperately lonely”, only seeing people on the odd occasion, needed as much support as it is possible to give. The desire for the Elderly to stay in their own homes came out of a survey by the Highland Health Board twelve years ago. However, that evidence is meaningless unless the second part of the equation is given equal status – that of good quality care being available to support the Elderly who choose to stay at home.

Dail Mhor Care Home was highlighted as one of the biggest employers in the area.

It was felt that the church(es) could take a much higher profile in addressing the issue of housing (particularly in relation to the Elderly and Sheltered Housing). Partnership possibilities were suggested with Sheltered Housing being reserved for those in need of shelter. Housing was being allocated to younger people when there was a need for it to go to the Elderly.

### **Transport**

Aspects of local transport were discussed and local residents indicated that the current levels of provision were limited. It was suggested that the operating hours of the Corran Ferry service could be extended to enable more flexibility for local residents and visitors. The last ferry at 9.30pm was repeatedly mentioned as limiting in terms of recreation, leisure and entertainment.

One resident indicated that she had observed tourists turn up to the ferry – but having seen the prices, drive away. Concerns surrounding the increasing fares on the Corran Ferry were highlighted by almost every resident we spoke to. Many felt that in addition to discouraging tourists there may come a point where it is no longer economical to live on this side of the Ferry. However, there was mixed opinion over the potential development of a bridge over the Corran Narrows with many residents enjoying the protection and remoteness that the ferry provides. The majority of residents felt strongly that the ferry should be treated in the same way as the Skye Bridge - it is a key part of the road system and as such should be toll free.

Linked to the concerns surrounding the ferry service many also commented on the frequency of the local bus service – with one bus a day to Fort William thought to be completely inadequate for both locals and visitors to the area. In addition to issues surrounding frequency of service, some participants indicated that more bus routes between local villages would be useful, especially following community events and dances.

It was also felt that a community-run transport system could improve this current level of provision. A number of options were highlighted including a ferry shuttle bus service, commuter minibus, local taxi and car share schemes. Training opportunities for local people to take on local community transport schemes were also mentioned as an important aspect of this with minibus driver training used as an example in this case.

It was widely agreed that it was almost impossible to live and work in this area without access to a car. People without their own transport have to largely rely on the support of informal arrangements to travel out of the Sunart area. It was felt that there was a need for a car share register and future developments within the area could include electronic power-refill stations across the peninsula - attracting a specific and growing audience of 'green tourists'.

### **Education & Learning**

It was felt that a greater number of teachers were key to improved learning within the school environment. Many highlighted greater subject choice and greater learning opportunities as a result of this. The notion of bringing in members of the community who may be willing to share experiences and skills was also discussed with a number of individuals believing there could also be the potential to have local people trained to be teachers in the school. This would overcome the issue of being able to attract professionals from outside Strontian to come and work in the area. It was also felt that there was also a need to reshape the promotion structure of the schools in the local area to allow greater flexibility - giving more people an opportunity to share in the benefits of an increase in salary that promotion brings. As a means to attract people to stay and work in the local schools on a longer term basis it was felt that the potential for career progression could be vital.

The complexities of this were also recognised, however, and many participants felt the key to addressing teacher shortage and retention was to tackle the interconnected issues of affordable housing and transport in the local area. The potential to visit other local high schools and colleges was also highlighted as a way to ensure students have greater flexibility in terms of subject choice and availability.

The link from high school to further and higher education was also brought up by participants of a number of community focus groups with greater career support and better transition to college/university highlighted as important for young people in this area. The potential for a grant or bursary facility was also proposed as a vital level of support that could be made available local students studying at the colleges and universities away from home.

Another main concern that arose was the current condition of Strontian Primary School with many individuals highlighting that the building itself, and the facilities within it, were “*not fit for purpose*”. An upgrade of these premises was highlighted as a main priority for many people in the community.

Issues such as evening classes, apprenticeship schemes and other training opportunities were also highlighted as important priorities for the community. The lack of local apprenticeships and training courses was an area that many participants felt could be improved upon in Sunart and may be extremely valuable in terms of keeping young people and families in rural areas such as this.

### **Employment**

The main sources of employment in the local area were thought to be in tourism, forestry, fish farming and in the public sector. Indeed a number of participants believed that Sunart was “*heavily dependent*” on the public sector for employment e.g. Primary & Secondary Schools – both teachers and auxiliary staff such as cleaners and Dail Mhor House were highlighted as key places of local employment. It was also felt that the public sector was cutting back on staffing levels to save money and this was a key concern for many of the participants of these community focus groups.

It was felt that a number of local projects could help provide employment with the hydro scheme, the potential development of a community hub and recreational facilities such as a swimming pool highlighted as potential methods through which employment opportunities could be created in Sunart. Increased employment opportunities were seen to be vital for the maintenance of a viable high school in the local area. With teacher numbers directly correlated to the pupil roll, attracting young families to the area through the creation of employment opportunities, could potentially address a number of educational concerns already highlighted.

A number of participants also pointed out that many local jobs were only available on a part-time basis with individuals often having more than one job to get by or odd-jobs to increase their income. One participant thought the average income for people working within Sunart was between £15,000 and £20,000. The high number of retirees in this area was also highlighted by a number of participants and estimated that 30% of the population was over 65 and either retired or semi-retired.

It was felt there were not huge unemployment issues in the area, perhaps due to the higher percentage of retired individuals, and that most people could at least find a part-time job in the area if they so desired. It was, however, strongly felt across many sections of the community that unless a job was local there was a need to travel quite a distance. The timing, availability and cost of public transport were seen to be barriers in terms of

accessing employment opportunities outside the local area with the lack of buses to Fort William at the correct times for commuters and the cost of the ferry highlighted as particular areas of concern for local people.

The lack of available childcare locally was also seen to be a major barrier for employment with the lack of local childminders and the cost of childcare (out with the area) having to be balanced with wages earned. Many participants highlighted the vicious circle many parents faced when local wages were too low to cover the cost of childcare (if a job were even available in Sunart) and the cost of travelling to Fort William often negated the increase in wages. It was suggested that some form of community transport scheme might aid in decreasing travel costs for commuters to Fort William.

The retention of young people was also linked to employment opportunities. Apprenticeship schemes were seen to be an important aspect of this retention, especially for young adults who choose not to go on to further or higher education. It was highlighted that a number of training schemes had previously existed in Sunart but that these no longer existed. It was felt that trades-based businesses come and go on the peninsula – and with them the opportunities for those young people interested in apprenticeships. A number of participants believed that greater links to apprenticeship schemes in Fort William could provide part of the solution to this but that transport for these young people would prove to be a major barrier in the successful implementation of these.

It was also recognised that many young people are keen to leave the area and participants felt this was normal and healthy. It was pointed out that after 10-15 years away from the area many may want to come back and settle but that this was dependent on there being jobs, housing and other services present for them to come back to.

### **Recreation & Leisure**

The issue most discussed in relation to recreation was the potential development of a swimming pool in Sunart. There was a high degree of overall support for the project with participants highlighting the positive addition it would make to the community in terms of physical and mental health and community safety (children and swimming lessons). Many, however, had reservations regarding the economic viability of such a project. It was suggested that, if built on sustainable grounds, it could be heated by solar power or a bio-mass boiler thereby potentially rendering it affordable on a long-term basis. A number of respondents felt it could be integrated into any community hub development. However, most responses regarding this issue agreed that more information regarding the viability of this project was required.

It was highlighted that a lot of visitors are attracted to Sunart for the walking, wildlife and cycling and any future development needs to be balanced and environmentally sensitive to

the character of the local area. A number of participants felt there was a need for upgrading of walking and cycling paths with all local routes mapped and published to enable ease of access for both local people and visitors to the area. Some tracks are in need of maintenance such as the Loch Doilet circular bike trail built by the Forestry Commission – but now thought to be unsafe. Many residents highlighted potential outdoor activities that could be developed in the area such as water sports or recreation on Loch Sunart. Others felt that there was huge potential for more wildlife clubs and related activities in the area.

Entertainment facilities were also described as ‘limited’ in Sunart. The ‘Screen Machine’ – a mobile cinema that travels across rural Scotland - was thought to be very good and there was a desire for this to come more often. It was felt that the local film club should be resurrected if possible and potentially show films in the proposed community hub as a regular film night. The library was considered to be a very good facility with good opening hours, friendly staff and a wide catalogue of books and DVDs.

Greater usage of Loch Sunart for recreation and tourism was also discussed by a number of participants. There was mixed opinion on whether developing a new jetty or bringing the old one back into commission would be economically viable. Many felt that the current slipway was inadequate and too far out of the village for it to work as a recreation or tourist base and the possibility of a new facility nearer the centre of Strontian may increase the usage. Following the model further down the loch at Salen, it was felt it may be possible to link visitor moorings and a pontoon to one of the local hotels. However, there was doubt as to whether this was a realistic possibility. Many local residents agreed that increasing water sports such as sailing and canoeing on the loch would be beneficial to the area with one respondent indicating that *“if it could be made to work it would be great”*.

A number of people, however, highlighted the peace and quiet as one of the benefits of living in this area and that any large scale developments may spoil the aesthetic quality of Sunart. A number of locals also felt that for such a small area the facilities were quite good, they were available to all ages and that there was good range of activities and classes. It was acknowledged that there was a need to travel to enjoy a number of activities or experiences that weren’t available locally and access to this for those without a car may be a difficult.

### **Economy**

Overall participants felt that there were a number of potential opportunities for the development of the local economy especially with regards to local arts, crafts and tourism. Two main concerns surrounding the Sunart’s economy were the need for greater connectivity and more business space. Both broadband speed and the lack of mobile 3G connectivity were highlighted as factors that could inhibit to local economic development.

Local residents indicated that the development of small studio spaces or expansions of existing ones could create and encourage small, local businesses to set up or expand in Sunart. However, a number of individuals were unsure as to the level of demand for premises for new businesses in the area. They felt it would be worth doing some 'market research' to find out the demand for business premises, storage and workshop space.

It was also believed that Sunart can be a difficult place to promote to new business start-ups due to the challenges faced regarding transport and its remote location. Improved speed and consistency of local broadband service was highlighted as not only vital for local businesses but also for normal life for all inhabitants of rural areas. Some discussed potential plans by a large internet provider to upgrade the local broadband service, however, details were unclear.

It was suggested there might be demand for a locally run minibus, driven by local people, to enable people to access work in town. This, it was suggested, could be a small minibus, leaving Sunart in time to arrive in Fort William for 9am and returning after 5pm. It was highlighted that this would be both cost effective (10 people across in the ferry in one vehicle) and also environmentally sound.

It was acknowledged that there are no formal business networks in Sunart. However many participants felt that there may not be a need for a formalised system as informal networking and community referrals are commonplace.

### **Tourism**

Tourism was seen as a vital part of the local economy with a number of discussions highlighting this as potentially the main source of employment in Sunart.

Despite many participants agreeing that businesses were well supported by the number of visitors to the local area, it was felt that the tourism potential of Sunart could be developed and utilised to a much greater degree. Marketing was felt to be a key component to encouraging tourists to visit the area. Many thought that materials produced by Visit Scotland and the Highland Council did little to help attract tourists to the area. It was widely felt that these brochures and websites focused on the area around Fort William and elsewhere in Lochaber and largely overlooked the Ardnamurchan peninsula. Many residents indicated that more could be made of Strontian's tourist office especially if better links can be forged between this and the Ardnamurchan Tourist Association, which was felt to be very good and potentially the main source of tourist bookings to the area.

Tourism based on the natural beauty and environment was felt to be the main attraction for visitors with many highlighting the importance of both promoting and preserving this aspect of the area. Greater provision of certain tourist facilities was, however, also discussed in depth. Suggestions included new information boards for walking routes, the development of

local tours and the employment of tour guides, a user-friendly, updated version of the website and greater leisure or recreational activities for both tourists and locals.

The lack of cycle paths for safe cycling was also highlighted by participants as an area of concern for them. It was felt that the promotion of cycling and the investment in cycling paths locally would be of great benefit to the community. With the popularity of cycling and mountain biking within the Fort William area, it was felt that this addition would not only be of benefit to locals but may also help to attract tourists to the area.

The development of a leisure centre was also discussed with the potential for a swimming pool and/or gym in the local area. It was also felt that the natural environment could be perfect for the development of local clubs involved in rock climbing, hill walking and canoeing.

The cost of the Corran Ferry was felt to be a potential barrier to tourists and future tourism development especially if the cost of this service continues to increase. It was highlighted by many that whilst local people can take advantage of a subsidised book of ferry tickets this does not help tourists visiting the area who often comment on the expense of the ferry as 'off-putting'. It was widely felt that the ferry should be treated in the same way as toll-free bridges such as the Skye Bridge as it is a vital part of the road system and is ultimately a lifeline to the communities on the Ardnamurchan peninsula. Despite this, a number of participants expressed reservation regarding the notion of a bridge over the Corran Narrows to replace the ferry service.

### **Local Community**

Overall, many indicated that they felt Sunart was a good place to live, peaceful and with a nice sense of community. A number of the young people indicated, however, the lack of activities and clubs available locally. One participant highlighted the fact that many clubs over the years had been shut down because of lack of funding and it was felt that a locally managed fund that individuals and groups could apply to would be of benefit.

People reported a recent degradation in community spirit and there was a sense of loss associated with this. Large numbers of outsiders, mainly retirees, were now resident in the area and they seemed keen to retain their own personal space. They were always made welcome but were rarely found actively supporting the community or driving change (with one or two exceptions). It was felt that there was a need to re-create a sense of belonging.

The four churches in Sunart were now working better together (compared with the past). However, the church was not seen as a driver for local change. The church was always welcoming but only seems to attract a senior age group. The churches' principal purpose was seen as helping everyone to 'hear the Gospel message and believe it' and to 'know Jesus'. The contribution of the church to the community was expressed as:

- 'Messy-church'
- A location for pre-school provision – play/crafts and lunchtime meetings.
- A support to the elderly.
- An agency that provides a food bank in Fort William for those who can't afford the costs.

A change was reported in personal behaviour where 'entertainment at home' rather than seeking entertainment outside the home had become the norm. Community spirit was not what it once was and there seems to be little interaction between those who had just arrived into the communities – and those who had lived there a long time.

The isolation of elderly people was 'a terrible problem' particularly when they are encouraged to stay in their own homes and not go into residential care. There seemed to be little support for them – particularly if no family were living nearby.

- *"There is a need to have 'a plan' to tackle isolation and loneliness particularly in the elderly".*

#### Community Hub – the social centre:

People spoke of the need for a social hub as community spirit was dropping. "The Hub" in Fort William was illustrated as a good model which works well. If there was a community 'drop-in' it was suggested that this is something the Church would very much want to be involved in. Every person within the area would benefit and it would provide a place for people to meet and would be a platform for teaching and inter-generational work.

The Youth Club was reported as being successful and non-denominational. A need for more inter-generational connections was identified – although there were some good examples already established. It was reported that the elderly and the isolated might really benefit from the provision of a social hub as a sort of 'Men's/community shed'.

Young or new parents (specifically young women) need a social space to come together and support each other. The nursery was considered to be good way in which this was achieved but there is a need to extend this kind of facility to others not with young children

Some suggestions for increased inter-generational work were: collecting stories of the past that might inform the future; hidden history from people's attics on show with a narrative attached and a celebration of traditional skills through a process of getting the older generation to teach the younger generation (should they wish) the skills that they held. It was felt that there was no place or location yet for this to happen.

It was felt that the need for Disclosure was a barrier to inter-generational work.

### Sunart Centre:

The Sunart Centre prices were rising and (as a consequence?) the building was underused. The Centre was felt to be under-utilised by adults but was well used by young people. It was essentially a good centre with an innovative programme which included entertainment and music nights.

With the High School sharing the building there is a need to 'negotiate' use and the School was understandably protective of its interests and displays. Also, with the new arrangement in Highland Council (Hi-Life Highland as a separate, independent organisation from the Council) the Centre Manager was being asked to cover too wide an area. The leisure programme, adult education and youth work was sponsored by Hi-Life Highland – a charitable social enterprise. As a social enterprise it was recognised that Hi-Life had a responsibility to make money and it was a constant battle for the community to keep the prices low. It was felt very important that Hi-Life didn't become a fully commercial enterprise. The after-hours service of the Sunart Centre was felt to be expensive but would become much more so if Hi-Life was allowed to charge what it wanted. The touring arts programme had been cut under Hi-Life due to reductions in public subsidy.

The use of the Centre hinges on transportation being available or made available. The Rural Community Transport Initiative (RCTI) has contributed to the success of the Centre. RCTI had a long history of success in servicing transport needs of the area. The barriers to participation in the Sunart programme were identified as: geography; mobility and economics.

### Community Spaces:

This included open spaces/paths etc. owned by the Highland Council. It was thought that, in time, these may be offered for development. There was a suggestion that the contract for the management of these spaces should be offered to the local Community Council (or another community organisation) rather than a Glasgow-based management company.

Access to suitable land is the key problem and more land needed to be made available. It was reported that only two generations ago many communities like Sunart were self-sustaining in food and only bought produce from the local trader that they couldn't grow themselves. Food sustainability, as a facet of community resilience, would seem to have been lost.

### Community Transport:

One person in the area was identified as potentially still operating 'volunteer' transportation for hospital appointments etc., however it was felt that there was a need to develop an area-wide car club or 'lift sharing scheme' to reduce carbon emissions and to make

travelling easier for local people. This connected with the 'multiple-use' track development - the use of forestry tracks as bike and walkways. Interestingly it was felt that transport was Fort William-centric and that this needed to be addressed. There were repeated suggestions that a Community Minibus would be of great benefit.

Delivery to the local area of previously ordered food would make life much easier particularly for those who were reliant on public transport. It was suggested that a 'collective community pick-up' of on-line orders from Fort William using community transport would be beneficial. A number of local residents, however, highlighted the importance of the local shop in Strontian and did not want their trade to suffer as a result of this.

A number of safety concerns were also highlighted by local residents. Speeding was considered to be a problem through the village and, although Sunart was surrounded by water the fact that there was nowhere for children to learn to swim in the local area was indicated as a concern for many parents. The issue of drug use and heavy drinking (across the population) was light – but it was acknowledged that, as with many areas in West Scotland, it was an ever-present issue.

#### Community Networking and Communication:

Communication to residents flowed effectively through the schools by letter or email; Sunart Centre and community newsletter. The community newspaper – '*De tha Dol?*' - was well received. It was considered to be regular and informative. Informal networks worked well in spreading information and the Notice Boards in the Sunart Centre (the Library and the school) were felt to be as effective as they could be in disseminating information. There was a considerable range of community festivals; shows and events which were well supported. It was felt that all the information is "*out there, but people don't always see to see it or notice it*".

The local postal service was considered brilliant and was a life-line for many elderly people.

Several people reported that it would be helpful if there was some sort of ferry alert system to give information as to the ferry status before leaving Strontian. An electronic sign in the village or a recorded message or text system similar to that used by the schools would be of great help to local people and visitors alike.

#### Community Festivals; Shows and Events:

The Three Lochs Book and Arts Festival, a celebration of arts and literature, was well received with food, cheap beer, a 'come and meet the authors' event and comedians. It brings the community together with authors and creators.

There were a range of other events across the year in different locations including a Woodland Festival and Christmas celebrations. Village sports events were popular although it was now difficult to raise a full eleven-a-side team to play other teams. Other events included: line dancing; quizzes; choral singing; ceilidhs, etc.

### **Heritage**

The mines were described by one resident as *“the most significant opportunity for this community”* with the potential development of these into a Heritage and Information Centre utilising the local, historically important discovery of the element Strontium. It was highlighted that the area had been visited by various academic institutions such as the University of Edinburgh for field trips to the site and it was felt that a heritage centre could make further use of these existing links to attract visitors. Many participants felt that further examination of the potential to develop this area should be a priority for the community.

It was recognised, however, that such a development would need a dedicated person to manage the project with this seen as a role that a local development officer, employed by the local community, could potentially undertake. It was suggested that a heritage centre of this sort could be financed through grant making bodies, private investment or potentially through the finances generated via the Hydro scheme although more investigation on this issue was felt to be needed.

### **Land Use**

Very few people are neutral about the issue of land and land reform. Although there is no significant pressure for land release many people talked about the high cost of land especially for building. There was recognition that by increasing the supply side of the equation – the price of land locally would fall (the demand side). There was significant opposition for further building in the village and a suggestion that some owners in the area failed to understand the law of trespass in Scotland and the need to provide access to the public.

Tracing the ownership of land was a problem. It was thought that the large landowners had only a marginal interest in their host community:

- *“they want to live in the community – but not be a part of us”*

A suggested link was reported between the release of land and greater local employment and new business start-ups although it was recognised that help for start-up companies was required. It was noted that local fish farming was dominated by big commercial players and it was suggested that there was a need for others to be enabled to play in this market too. It

was also thought that the area would support another Mussel Farm and that this would offer apprenticeship opportunities to young people. There was also a clear need to attract young families to the area and it was thought that crofting diversification could help with this.

It was thought that holiday home owners should be more active in informing their renters about what services were locally available. Very often it was felt that visitors brought everything up with them rather than spending in local shops when there was simply no need for this. It was felt that if visitors didn't actively support the local economy by buying services and food from local stores their contribution was otherwise minimal.

It was suggested that people are holding on to crofts whether they were used or not. This meant that there is a lack of opportunity for young people to come into crofting.

- *“Crofters are very traditional in their view.”*
- *“it’s irrational how people hang on to their ‘bit’. It puts a spoke in the works as they won’t share or open that opportunity to the younger generations”.*

A lack of action by the Crofting Commission was seen to be the norm – with one person suggesting that they had lost interest. Significant upheaval was reported to Crofting practice with amendments made to crofting legislation in recent years.

Crofting legislation now requires that a croft be ‘cultivated’ or put to other ‘purposeful’ use, and not neglected or misused, and the Crofting Commission are required to enforce this. Hopefully, this would provide a better balance of intergenerational crofting and an equitable, fairer framework for Croft allocation. The emphasis in crofting was now on using the land. It didn't just have to be for crofting in a traditional sense – it could now be ‘purposeful use’.

The position of ‘Owner Occupier’ crofters has changed in that they are now largely treated in the same way as croft tenants, and are subject to the same key obligations. It was, however, recognised that although much more emphasis had been placed on enforcement, with such a huge backlog to work through, there was little evidence as yet to show a willingness to use the enforcement powers. Enforcement was also seen as the last resort.

It was reported that there was huge pressure to keep crofts in the family whether or not they were being used. However, as there was a broad definition of ‘purposeful use’ this was considered helpful to the retention of family crofts.

A new development facilitated by legislation and supported by policy was the ‘Woodland Croft’ (rather than the traditional farming croft) where a small segment of forest could be crofted for trees and wood related activity (Forestry Commission Scotland, 2014). This was welcomed.

It was noted that under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 the local community has the right to buy land off the landowner in the event that it is put up for sale and develop it for community use. It was felt though that the Act was a sledgehammer designed to crack a nut. The bureaucracy was overwhelming with many hundreds of volunteer hours being used to make application to buy land – even small pieces of land with little value. It is recognised that great care had to be used to ensure the safe transfer of assets from the public to community domain – but the processes and difficulties involved would seem disproportionate.

The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 comprises three parts with Part 2 and Part 3 associated with community land ownership. Part 2 deals with purchase of land by community groups in the event that it is put up for sale whilst Part 3 of the Act deals with the proactive right of crofting communities to purchase their croft land (which isn't on the market but which the crofting community wish to buy – with or without the landowner wanting to sell).

It was suggested that the Transfer Crofting Estates (Scotland) Act 1997 was much simpler and had the same potential outcome (for crofters, where crofting estates were in government ownership) - see: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1997/26/contents>. Only one community has used this Act so far - the West Harris Trust - but it is generally understood to be an easier way to proceed than by using the Land Reform Act.

It was suggested that the Crofting Commission needs further reconstruction to more adequately reflect Crofting as it now is. There was a sense of urgency to this request. A fear was also expressed that all matters associated with crofting were being centralised and that local representation was minimal.

Key to the above processes is that the land cannot be bought by an individual – it must, in effect, be transferred to a 'recognised community body'

#### Scotstoun Common Grazings:

A number of issues were raised specifically about these Common Grazings. These included the need to retain access to the Mine site and its importance to the development of a potential Heritage/educational Centre there. There was also a question as to whether, with an increase in commodity prices; the Mine itself would be viable again in the near future offering the potential for increased employment. It was felt important to keep that option open.

#### The Forestry Commission:

The bureaucracy in dealing with Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) was seen to be overwhelming – particularly when it came to the application of safety codes and the

endorsement of machinery that was allowed to access forest land. It would seem that the FCS was keen to protect you from yourself.

The National Forest Land Scheme was established to allow communities to buy or lease local woodland. To do so, public benefit required to be demonstrated and a community organisation had to meet certain criteria. If eligible it was possible to apply to buy or lease forest land. It could be all or a part of a forest – or simply non-wooded FCS land on which other activity could take place. Raising finance for purchase was however a significant challenge.

#### Larger Landowners:

Some larger landowners across Scotland were seen to be making noises about wishing to be involved with local communities – but there was only one really good example of this in the area. Most landowners were not engaged but this, in one sense was felt to be understandable as many were absent and did not reside locally on a permanent basis.

- *‘It’s always been the same in the Highlands’.*
- *‘They would be welcomed with open arms’*
- *‘They want to live in the community – but not be a part of us’*

Some examples were reported of renewables development currently occurring (or in development) on local estates where it was felt there should have been an opportunity for Community Benefit to be shared with the local communities – but this had not happened. This would seem to have reinforced a perception of non-involvement.

The following barriers to land use development were described:

- Ownership and cost
- Right to buy legislation including the Land Reform Act – too bureaucratic and long winded.
- Money – where does it come from?
- Local Plan at odds with what local people want. Highland Council seemed reluctant to support development on the peninsula
- Significant opposition to building inside the village.
- Some people believe that the land they have bought is ‘private’ and access to local people is denied.

- 4 to 5 plots are available in Strontian for house self-build – but are considered really expensive (£90k) for those on the average local wage (£16,500 per annum).
- Land release (needed to bring the supply side into balance with the demand and to force the price down to make the possibility of self-build possible).
- Very often it was difficult to know who owned the land so that it could be moved on.
- An attitude of ‘that’s the way it’s always been – and so it shall remain’ – was hindering engagement.
- They (the landowners) have a right to live in a separate world to us.

Some solutions were suggested:

More land for housing released by landowners, or the community actively providing more land by buying local estates (where possible) and selling land at affordable housing value, subject to the community retaining a right of pre-emption. There was felt to be a need for the community to control the release of land – so that it could be targeted at key workers and local families and offered at a realistic price.

There is also a need to inform some members of the community of the right of responsible access in Scotland as laid out in the Land Reform Act (part 1). Those people that reported on this issue felt strongly that the difference between English and Scottish law over the matter of public access should be made clear.

## Young People



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 Figure 7 -Participation at Strontian Primary School

The views and opinions of young people living across the Sunart area were also invited in the study to ensure that the voices of this generation were heard within this community research. To achieve this, a number of focus groups were run within Strontian Primary School and the local Youth Group based in Ardnamurchan High School. These focus groups were broken into the following groupings – the Infant class (P1 – P3), the Junior class (P4 – P7) and the Youth Group (S1 – S6). We also designed and published a short online survey for the young adults aged between 11 and 17 to enable people who were not able to attend the youth group meeting to contribute their views to the study.

## Strontian Primary

Approximately 20 pupils across both classes of Strontian Primary School took part in focus groups that asked a number of questions about life in the Sunart area.

- ***When asked what they liked about living in Sunart*** they indicated that one of the things they like most was the local scenery and environment with some highlighting that there was plenty of open space for walks and bike rides. Others enjoyed the peace and quiet of the area, the beach, having friends nearby, the fresh air, the play park, the mountains and the School.
- ***When asked what they did not like about living in this area*** the majority highlighted the bad weather and rain as a downside of living in Sunart. Others mentioned the distance to other towns and facilities, lack of shops, the midges, the lack of things to do, the poor Primary School facilities, the lack of phone signal, how dark and scary it was at night and the fact that their family members had to travel away for work.
- ***When asked what they would like to see change*** the majority highlighted a bigger playground, more facilities at the school and more sunshine as the things they would most like to change about the area. They also mentioned an upgraded village play park, a BMX or bike park, a swimming pool, more animals, improved road safety, more trees, more bridle paths, trampolines, a football pitch, a bridge at Corran and no police station!
- ***When asked what they would like to stay the same*** they wanted the scenery, the youth club, local walks, the school, the play park, Strontian Horse Show, the library, the post office, the nursery, family and friends and the number of trees to stay the same. A number of participants simply said that they wanted most of it to be kept as it is.

We also asked three more questions of the older class in Strontian Primary and their responses to these additional questions are outlined below:

- ***We asked what do you want to be when you are older*** and the responses from the Junior class (P4 – P7s) highlighted a wide range of aspirations. Teacher, hairdresser, the local postie, artist, musician, actor, comedian, animal rescue worker and ‘in the army’ were all popular responses from this group of young people. Others also included; fireman, chef, doctor, palaeontologist, scientist, engineer, magician, astronaut, shop-keeper, pilot, author, fashion designer, make-up artist, footballer, vet, superhero, Top Gear presenter and King!

- **We asked in 10 years time – what will have changed in this place?** Opinion was divided as to whether there would be more or fewer people living in the area with a number that there will be more older people living here. They also felt that the Corran ferry may have been replaced with a bridge and that the Primary School will have moved or expanded. Other answers included; more houses, more businesses and shops, a sports centre, more activities, new public toilets and some felt that global warming will impact on Sunart in the next 10 years.
- **We asked what are the big issues that you face today** - the answers highlighted a high level of understanding from the pupils regarding a large number of complex global issues. A number of the young people mentioned pollution, climate change, bankruptcy of high street shops, the recession, speeding, rising crime levels, floods and the dumping of rubbish. Other issues included the lack of a swimming pool in the local area, bad TV signal, the lack of things to do, the cost of the ferry, school work and isolation of some people who live outside of Strontian village as examples of issues that young people face living in Sunart.

### **Senior Youth Group – Ardnamurchan High School**



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Figures 8 &9 – Youth Group discussions



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We also ran a focus group with participants from the Senior Youth Group that operates out of the Sunart Centre on a Thursday evening. There were approximately 15 participants, mostly aged between 15 and 17 years old.

Initially, we undertook a prioritisation exercise with the whole group attaching a scoring of 1–9 points on a range of topics. The overall ranking was as follows:

- 1) Education & Training
- 2) Employment
- 3) Transport
- 4) Leisure & Recreation
- 5) Healthcare & Advice
- 6) Power & Decision-making
- 7) Smart and the Future
- 8) The Environment
- 9) Other issues

### **Education & Training**

The issue that emerged most prominently within this topic revolved around the lack of teachers in Ardnamurchan High School and the desire for greater variety in school subjects taught.

Greater opportunities for ‘useful learning’ also emerged as an issue. Practical lessons or work experiences that tackled issues such as living away from home and preparing for the transition to College, University or working in larger towns/cities were identified as areas that would be extremely useful. Others highlighted additional skill building courses such as First Aid, Duke of Edinburgh etc. to get out of the classroom and build practical ability. Better broadband and internet connectivity to enable more distance learning was also highlighted.

### **Employment**

The lack of full-time, well paid jobs in the local area was highlighted as a key issue. Many indicated that going into employment straight out of school would be difficult – lack of apprenticeships in the local area was also an issue. A number went on to discuss the fact that local jobs are largely hospitality/aquaculture/trades-based and therefore it was *“difficult to find a job you enjoy in this area”*.

Many of the young people in this focus group recognised that jobs in rural areas are generally less well paid and commented that they felt there was quite a gender bias with women tending to work in hotels, cleaning companies or the local elderly residential home.

### **Transport**

There was a general consensus that the poor level of public transport in the area meant that young people were entirely reliant on parents for lifts. Buses were described as extremely

limited locally and this was restrictive for opportunities surrounding education, recreation and employment opportunities amongst others.

They also highlighted that to learn to drive you had to go to Fort William and, as such, were again reliant on parents taking them to town and waiting whilst they had lessons. A number of participants felt that learning to drive was so vital to rural areas that it should form part of the school curriculum. The issue of transport was also linked to after-school clubs and revision evenings and many said these evenings were the ones they looked forward to as there was something to do after school. There was also a discussion about the potential of linking the Youth Club buses with rest of the Ardnamurchan population, potentially helping to subsidise this Club. Overall, participants felt that *“it always comes back to transport”* and *“if they cut the buses to youth club then there is nothing to do”*.

### **Leisure & Recreation**

Many felt that better recreational facilities were needed in the local area. Suggestions included; mountain bike tracks, a swimming pool and greater chances to play sport with teams outside of the local area. Many indicated that there was “not much to do”.

### **Healthcare & Advice**

The main point that was highlighted correlated with that of the wider community – that more GPs and continuity were needed in the local healthcare system. Many commented on how doctors ‘come and go’ and that it would be nice to see the same one on each visit.

Within the High School, participants desired PSE (Personal & Social Education) classes to be split along male/female lines for topics such as sex education to make it less embarrassing and more open to questions. They also highlighted that due to the nature of such a small community it would be more comfortable and productive if they could learn certain subjects within PSE classes from an outside expert rather than a teacher. Skype lessons were discussed as a possibility for enabling access to specialist teaching in sensitive issues that they may not feel comfortable discussing with a teacher they know well outside school. Peer-led learning was also mentioned with many participants believing that discussions led by individuals who were closer to their own age would be of more benefit to them. They also claimed that some issues were slightly repetitive and ‘overkill’ on some aspects of health teaching e.g. drug education.

### **Power and Decision-making**

Overall, the majority of the young people felt that they didn’t really have a voice in the local area; however, there was recognition that a number of attempts to incorporate the views of

the younger generation in the wider community had previously been made. Many participants highlighted that despite having a voice on the Pupil Council; very little action was ever taken forward on any ideas that had been proposed. The idea of having a youth representative (or two) on the SC Company/Council was discussed as a possibility and the role of a 'youth mayor' for Sunart was also put forward as a method through which young people could have a greater voice on local issues.

### **Sunart and the Future**

The idea of communities working together – across the whole of the Ardnamurchan peninsula was a popular idea with a number of participants identifying this as a positive way forward. The issue of better broadband and mobile connectivity (phone/3G/4G services) was also highlighted as vital to the future of the area – for the benefit of both locals and visitors to the area. It was felt that more family and child-friendly facilities were needed to attract people to area and that, at the moment; people came to 'settle' in the area rather than drive improvement or change locally.

### **Environment**

Many highlighted the need for more rubbish bins, especially around the High School, to improve the current littering problem. There was also a discussion surrounding the greater use of green energy into the future with a high level of support for the current hydro scheme but reservation about future developments that involve wind turbines.

### **Other Issues**

Other issues that participants identified as areas of concern included local improvements in the road network, the provision of storage spaces/lock ups in Strontian and potential bursaries or grants for local students attending higher or further education.

### **Sunart Youth Survey**

11 young adults aged between 11 and 17 years old chose to take part in the online youth survey. One of these indicated that he had taken part in the focus group that had been run with the Senior Youth Group; however, a number indicated that they had not been involved in this session - especially within the 12 – 15 year old age group.

**Section 1:**

a. Please prioritise the following areas in terms of importance to you (1 = lowest priority; 8 = highest priority):

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Education & Training (e.g school, uni, apprenticeships etc...)	9%	0%	0%	0%	0%	27%	9%	55%
Healthcare & Advice (GP's, sex education, dentist etc...)	9%	9%	9%	9%	9%	9%	18%	27%
Transport (Bus, ferry, taxi's, driving lessons etc...)	18%	0%	0%	0%	27%	18%	9%	27%
Leisure & Recreation (plenty to do/lack of things to do)	9%	0%	9%	18%	9%	9%	9%	36%
Employment (locally in Sunart/further afield?)	0%	0%	0%	10%	10%	20%	40%	20%
Power & Decision making (having a voice locally)	9%	0%	18%	0%	18%	9%	27%	18%
Environment (built and natural, green energy, roads or infrastructure etc...)	36%	0%	18%	27%	9%	0%	0%	9%
Sunart & The Future (community, local services or facilities etc...)	18%	18%	0%	0%	18%	46%	0%	0%

'Education & training' emerged as the issue of most importance to the young people who undertook this survey with 55% of responses ranking this as their highest priority.

Other issues that emerged from the table above included 'leisure & recreation', 'transport' concerns and 'healthcare & advice'. On further breakdown; 'employment', 'power & decision making', 'Sunart and the future' and the 'environment' rounded off the remaining results, largely correlating with the rankings attributed by the participants of the Senior Youth Group.

## **b. Any other areas of importance or concern to you locally?**

- *“Litter and rubbish, wearing down of forestry tracks.”*
- *“I already made my comments at the meeting at the high school.”*
- *“None.”*
- *“The students in the high school would like more funding for educational trips to see places.”*
- *“Not enough sporting things - swimming pool, football matches against other teams not just Mallaig & Kinloch.”*

### **Section 2:**

In addition to the ranking exercise detailed above we also asked for open responses to the issues of education & training, employment, healthcare & advice, transport, leisure & recreation, power and decision making, Sunart and the future and the environment. The results of these open questions are detailed below:

#### **Please describe any issues/concerns you may have with:**

##### **- Education & Training in Sunart**

- *“The teachers in my school are in low numbers, and in the time that I've been in high school there have been about 13 teachers to come and go. Particularly the Maths department is a concern for a lot of pupils. I'm a senior in the school and I feel that it's actually a bit of a joke, my most recent Maths teacher's been announced to leave on the weekend before my prelim week! This obviously makes me feel worried as it's so close to exam time, and I feel my education was better in primary school, and if I was kept at the same momentum, especially in Maths, I would be doing very well in classes. I have a couple problems with my current head teacher as I feel he concentrates on silly issues instead of bigger ones (such as very FEW teachers!!). This as a whole makes me feel very unhappy with my school, although it is a lovely building and there are some fantastic teachers. I worry that I won't get the grades I need because of poor leadership and changing teachers, to go onto higher education at University.”*
- *“For this there is a concern about Ardnamurchan High School's staff. The staff are constantly leaving before the crucial exam times and thus leaving myself and other pupils falling behind on work. Because of teachers constantly leaving in departments such as Maths many pupils and I now struggle in this area. This needs to be rectified. Also the computing department situation has now made me and other classmates have to drop down from National 5 to National 4, due to the school not being able to provide constant IT teaching in our class room. We have one face to face lesson with*

*the IT teacher a week and the other is a Skype lesson. This is not good enough for a school with over 100 pupils. Also this subject is in contention for Higher; this is compromising my future and my classmates' future."*

- *"At the school the teachers keep coming and going making us very behind in almost every class and they're leaving just because the school is bad and they hate it."*
- *"The school is good but I haven't really started thinking about further education yet as I am only S3."*
- *"Not enough good teachers in high school."*
- *"Because we live in a rural area we struggle with teachers coming in to support our need in school – Maths is a big problem with teachers leaving us at important times in the year."*

- **Employment:**

- *"I want to move away as soon as I can! Where it's nice for children to grow up, it's not very fun for young adults. I wouldn't be looking for a job here after school, but there are lots of opportunities for pupils of the high school such as waitressing, cleaning, baking, giving lessons of instruments etc."*
- *"There are some jobs on offer but they're only like waitressing and washing up."*
- *"I want to stay in the area. The Sunart community could have a mini job centre to help people get jobs."*
- *"Trips to educational and possible employment places."*
- *"There is only the basic thing for careers around the area - hotel work, fish farm, etc and most of the jobs older people need so there isn't enough for everyone."*

- **Healthcare & Advice:**

- *"We have only been briefly told about sexual health clinic in the village. I don't know where, or times or who the nurses are. This makes it very unlikely that anyone would go, even though I am aware some people I know have wanted to. (Also rules about telling parents or confidentiality aren't explained which makes people hesitant)."*

- *“You just ring them up and since it’s a small area it’s easy to get appointments.”*
- *“It is so annoying how when you phone for a prescription, you have to phone on a certain time on certain days of the week, even though the old folks home staff are there all the time. Also, the doctor is not open every day. However, they are easy to get to and the doctors are great. But it is quite annoying not having a dentist/optician nearby, although they are not too far away.”*
- *“We have no proper GP - it’s a different one every week? Only certain days we can go to the doctors in Strontian and its difficult if it's an emergency to get to Acharacle if you don't drive.”*

- **Transport:**

- *“I think transport is OK, into Fort William etc. Although sometimes the buses miss Ardgour on the weekend, meaning they don't get as good an opportunity (not Sunart, but still annoying).”*
- *“Need more transport because at New Year some people went to town to celebrate so then they got stuck there for like 3 days because no buses were running, and I have no idea.”*
- *“Don't drive.”*
- *“I think maybe there should be more buses.”*
- *“There should be another bus going from and to Fort William and not just the 9am bus going through Strontian, another one going to fort William at about 2pm or something.”*

- **Leisure & Recreation:**

- *“There is a shinty pitch, football pitch, games hall with sports, and a gym. They are OK, but not really my thing. I would have preferred a swimming pool. We had an option to get that instead of the shinty pitch, and I think it would've appealed to more people. Most of my friends just sit in their rooms all day, including me. Weather is definitely a problem but that can't be helped. There is a lot on at the Sunart Centre on Tuesday and Thursday nights which is good.”*

- *“They are good.”*
- *“We have the youth club and that which are good but nothing needs improving here to me.”*
- *“There are Youth Clubs and sport. However everything is based on sport. We should have more things like: Highland dancing classes (for beginners of all ages), more films that are not foreign on at more frequent times (i.e. once a week although that might be hard), the gym open more often and faster internet and better/4G signal.”*
- *“Swimming pool.”*
- *“Swimming trips and other sports for education.”*
- *“Yes, the gym is too small so not many people go to it, you need better/more equipment in it also.”*

- **Power & Decision Making:**

- *“I don't think we are listened to in relation to our school. We can attend certain meetings concerning our community, but I wouldn't like to speak out in a room full of adults.”*
- *“Well I think its fine really and most people end up leaving anyway and new people come in and such.”*
- *“Not really. Most of the people who make decisions are councillors/adults. Asking more kids for their thoughts and ideas would help.”*
- *“Kids do get a say in things around the area but they never actually do anything we want or think would be good.”*

- **Sunart and the Future:**

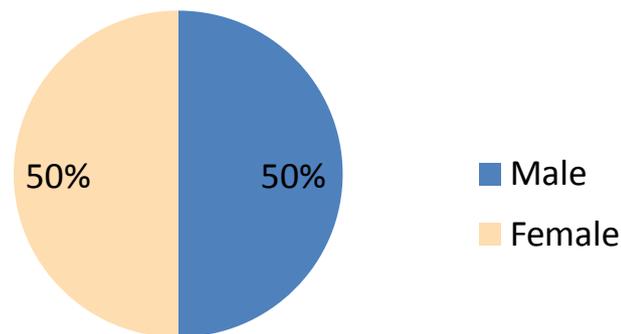
- *“I like summer time in my village because you get a real sense of community, particularly during the Village BBQ, Sports days, and ceilidhs and agricultural shows. Its good fun and I'd like that to stay.”*
- *“I would like to see Sunart become more modern in the sense of more jobs and more sporting opportunities, as there are no opportunities to go far in sport here.”*
- *“Everyone looks out for each other and all work together well.”*

- *“There is a great community spirit in Sunart. The community works well together mostly. Changes in Sunart - more things on like Highland dancing and films. I would like the shop to stay the same but with a launderette. And a bridge to get to Fort William and faster internet and better phone signal (4G).”*

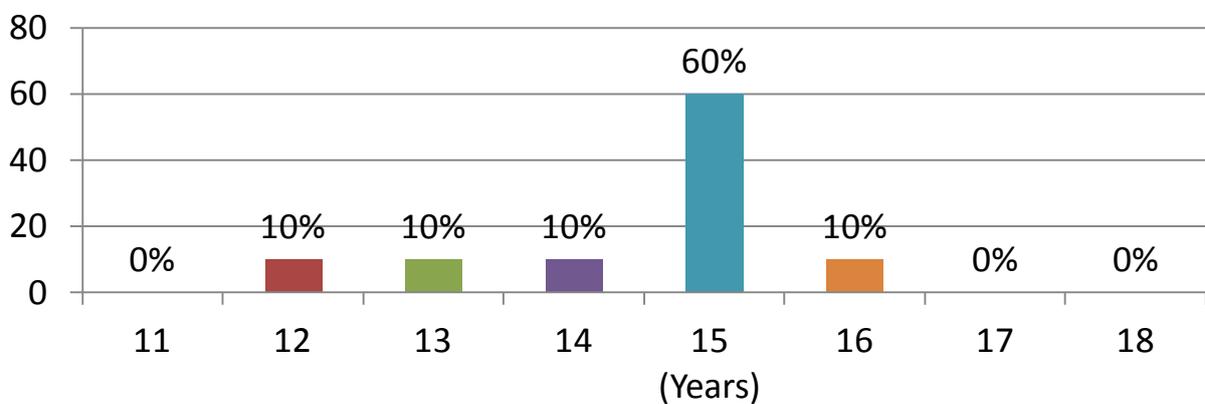
- **Environment:**

- *“No. There is lots of litter though. Some people in the school just do it near bins, it's stupid.”*
- *“No.”*
- *“No, I think the local natural environment is great.”*
- *“Try to keep littering less.”*

**Gender (Youth Survey):**



**Age (Youth Survey):**



**‘Inside Healthcare in Sunart’ – the views of medical professionals concerned with the provision of medical services to the Sunart area.**

**General Situation**

The background into the change in GP care to the Sunart peninsula has a long history. Much of it stems from the new contract that doctors were asked to embrace – which rationalised the hours they were required to be on duty – and particularly the ‘Out of Hours’ service. Doctors on the old contract had been ‘on call’ 24/7 and this was deemed unworkable and unhealthy. For a doctor on the peninsula to be called out to a patient late at night – sometimes meaning a long journey before getting to the patient, a short consultation and then a long drive back. Sometimes the doctor would repeat this twice in a night.

One of the reasons for the change in contract was that there was little time for a doctor to keep themselves abreast of the new developments in medicine; attend Professional Development training courses or engage in critical conversations with colleagues about new developments in treatment. There was also very little time for family life outside the demands of the job.

Much effort was expended by the Health Board in Fort William in trying to attract doctors. Even with the new contract in place this has proved to be very difficult. Seemingly, when the job of a doctor in a rural constituency is compared to that of a doctor in a city – the quality of life is essentially worse. Even with a very attractive salary few newly-trained doctors had been tempted by the position.

**What prompted the difficulty in Sunart to be resolved in the way that it was?**

The Health Board recognises that it must find a solution to the difficulties in retention and service provision in Sunart. Several ‘stop-gap’ solutions have been tried. The solution being tried at the time is to have the medical needs of the Peninsula serviced by the Medical Practice in Mallaig on the basis of visiting locums. The criticism that *‘starting the narrative over each time a consultation takes place’* is recognised as an issue of coordination (the locums are scheduled to visit regularly on a two-week cycle – so seeing the same doctor should be possible). However, the Out-of-Hours service still has to be addressed and the Health Board are looking for a viable solution.

In short, the old model of GPs being on-call 24/7 no longer exists. The experience in Sunart is that there are no doctors who would take on the role of a doctor in that model – and all

the doctors attracted by adverts to work on the peninsula (even under the new contract) saw difficulties in being isolated from their colleagues; side-lined in their career and spending long hours travelling. Rural communities across Scotland are experiencing similar difficulties in attracting professionals (Doctors; Dentists; Chiropodists; Paramedics, etc.). It would seem that Sunart and other rural areas face a different future for service provision to that experienced in the past.

It was suggested that all NHS patients (rural or urban) must come to terms with a new way of working. The medical servicing issues in Sunart are, at this time, caught in a moment of structural change. There is a need both for clear information as to what is happening and for the situation in Sunart to be addressed as a matter of urgency. The Out-of-Hours service is the key problem for small, rural (sometimes remote rural) communities.

#### Potential reasons why GPs do not want to work long-term in Sunart:

It could be down to the area's reputation which has "rippled out" into the medical community. Strontian is seen as an unpleasant community in which to work, due to a past GP being 'ousted.' This may or may not be true – but impressions last.

GPs, particularly young locums, are "genuinely terrified" at living in Sunart and being solely responsible for all the health-issues which may arise. Even though there are resident paramedics in Strontian (so the doctor is not the only medical point of contact or the primary professional responsible for midwifery services) the GP is always involved.

Newly trained GPs are used to team-working and appreciate the support and back-up of colleagues. This is not available in a community like Sunart. A past proposal was that there should be a team of 5-7 doctors working to cover the area together to give these professionals the support they need.

Other issues include housing and professional and personal boundaries. Housing is a major issue for key-workers like GPs and teachers in Sunart although the health services have been surprised at the lack of interest. It seems that they don't want to live and work in the same community and have to balance the boundaries of professional/personal relationships with community members. The impact of living in the community as a locally functioning GP raises questions over the impact on their family of living and working in that place. It is a real lifestyle choice coming to work in Strontian (same for all key-workers).

Housing, education, transport availability and effect on family life are the main barriers to GPs and other key workers settling in Sunart.

'What's the problem?' The reported experiences from community members of health provision provided by Locums:

The following were reported:

- Communication issues, where a couple of referrals were made to the wrong hospital, further away.
- One person experienced a delay of a year due to a new locum overriding decisions made by a previous locum.
- There was one man who had breathing difficulties, but on arriving at the GP Surgery, realised it wasn't a certain doctor on duty, so drove off rather than see them.

A previous doctor was clearly struggling to cover all the needs of the community single-handedly. That GP tried to find a solution, approached the health board for help, but seemingly didn't get it.

Every community council has attempted to engage with the issues, and has been open to any solutions or ideas for improvement which the Health Board has raised

Mental Health:

There is good generic mental health support for diagnosed conditions available in Fort William. Core services for conditions like schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and depression are reported as being good. However, there is a gap for 'talking therapies' such as counselling and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy etc.

In the recent past, there was a good self-guided help programme for mental health issues, which had a worker attached to it. However, it was difficult to measure its success and so funding was never replaced for this service. There appear to be no funds available in the NHS local Mental Health budget for this. Funds are being focused by the Scottish Government on dementia care.

However, mental health remains a substantial issue due to the isolation experienced in rural areas. Elsewhere in the peninsula, substantial steps were being taken to try and tackle the loneliness of young parenting especially in remote rural communities – with the added problems of transport. Baby Massage groups and team supporting (of each other) to attend seemed to be a way ahead. This fits in well to the NUKA model (described elsewhere).

There is real importance attached to the support that voluntary community groups are able to give to ensure people with mental health issues have positive social experiences in their community.

### Perceived short-term and long-term solutions:

There is hope that the arrangement being put in place (with the Mallaig Medical Practice providing cover and a regular selection of locums to Sunart) will provide a long-term answer. The Mallaig Medical Practice has recently taken on the servicing of the Small Islands (Rhum, Eigg and Muck) populations – which face a similar situation. The hope is that having both the peninsula and the Small Islands serviced by the same Medical Practice – consistency and coordination can be ensured.

It was stressed that there would be no diminishing in service under this new arrangement. Local people would get to see a doctor and steps would be taken to try and make sure that the same doctor is seen each time. However, with modern record keeping and the immediate access to records they give – it was perfectly possible for a doctor to be familiar with a patient’s background and medical record without having seen them consistently in the past. The same access to a ‘second opinion’ is guaranteed.

However, the Out-of-Hours Service needs to be established on a more effective basis.

### Sexual health information for young people:

It was reported that sexual health isn’t a problem in the area but getting adequate information and counselling to those who might need it, at the right time and in the right manner, could be.

It was suggested that the High School input on sexual health was a brave attempt – but it needed to be taught by medical professionals with full confidentiality and with a counselling service integral to it. Any scheme that preserved the confidentiality of young people and brought immediate and accurate information to them, at the time it was required, would be supported.

The current service was regarded as ‘patchy’ and it was recognised that few people could do this job really effectively – spanning the gap between getting adequate information and effective understanding of the issues. The information transmitted had to address sexual health as an integrated concept within Social Care and Health.

In conclusion, there was a need to emphasise the connectedness of all the elements (transport; housing; key worker settlement deals). All were in some way combined to make a difficulty more difficult. Addressing these was felt to be as important as getting the right professional into post.

Highland NHS was instrumental in addressing this ‘cross-sectoral’ approach with its emphasis on cross-disciplinary working. The NHS is a service in the process of substantial change.

### **Sustainable Development, Local Communities and CADISPA**

The aim of the CADISPA Project is to help small rural communities develop their own solutions to the challenges posed by sustainable development and to meet locally-identified community needs within the definition of sustainability. Development that is sustainable must address the following three key issues:

- **Local Involvement:** Development options should be identified and approved by the local community and the organisational structure of that community must ensure that *all* members are kept informed and have the opportunity to contribute to the development debate.
- **Environmental Sensitivity:** Consideration should be given at all stages of any development project to the environmental implications of the project. This might include using environmentally-friendly building materials, renewable energy sources, and disposing of waste in an environmentally sensitive way.
- **Economic Sustainability:** Development projects must be able to ‘stand on their own feet’ once initial funding has been used. This might mean that projects need to incorporate an income stream, to allow the project to function successfully without continued external funding.

CADISPA aims to enable people living and working in rural communities to become as powerful and informed as their professional counterparts in the various regional and developmental authorities, and for them to be able to work together from a position of understanding and equality. People are central to the identification and prioritisation of their own local agenda, and they must be central to the process of sustainable development.

### **What is a Sustainable Community? The Egan Review**

The Egan Review was published in 2004 by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. Sir John Egan chaired the review and in his foreword to the report he explained that he was seeking to ‘deliver communities in which people want to live and work, and which are sustainable for future generations.’ The Egan Review’s definition of sustainable communities is that they ‘meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, their children and other users, contribute to a high quality of life and provide opportunity and choice. They achieve this in

ways that make effective use of natural resources, enhance the environment, promote social cohesion and inclusion and strengthen economic prosperity.’

The Review described seven components of sustainable communities –

1. **Social and cultural** – vibrant, harmonious and inclusive. This would include such things as a sense of community identity and belonging and low levels of crime and anti-social behaviour.

2. **Governance** – effective and inclusive participation, representation and leadership. This refers to, amongst other things, governance systems that are visionary, representative and accountable that would include a sense of civic values, responsibility and pride.

3. **Environmental** – providing places for people to live in an environmentally-friendly way. Included in this third component would be efficient use of resources, minimising negative environmental impact and having due regard for the needs of future generations.

4. **Housing and the Built Environment** – A quality built and natural environment. This refers to, amongst other things, sufficient range, diversity and affordability of housing and well-maintained public and green spaces with facilities for everyone, including children and older people.

5. **Transport and Connectivity** – Good transport services and communication linking people to jobs, schools, health and other services. This includes issues such as good telecommunications and internet access and safe local walking and cycling.

6. **Economy** – A flourishing and diverse local economy. This refers to, amongst other things, a wide range of jobs and varied training, as well as sufficient land and buildings to support economic prosperity and change.

7. **Services** – A full range of appropriate, accessible public, private, community and voluntary services. This includes areas such as education, health care, and a range of public, community, voluntary and private services.

The remainder of the Egan Review discussed strategies for developing sustainable communities around the UK in both urban and rural settings. Many existing communities fall short of the seven criteria, and the gap between the ideal and reality may be extensive. The importance of John Egan's Review was to get the concept of a 'sustainable community' both discussed and reviewed. However, by not recognising that communities, very often, hold residual within them all the skills necessary to make them sustainable, he failed to tap into a substantial reserve.

The CADISPA approach ([www.CADISPA.org](http://www.CADISPA.org)) is different. It enables communities to harvest the skills and enthusiasm of local people from a bank of residual talent. CADISPA celebrates functionality not dysfunctionality in communities.

For CADISPA, sustainable development is achieved through social and economic regeneration within a framework of social, economic and environmental considerations. We also recognise that local people may need to learn new skills and become more empowered in order to make appropriate decisions for their own future and that of their community.

#### **Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs):**

CPPs are one of the main vehicles in Scotland connecting the community with Government and vice versa. CPPs involve the devolution of certain powers to community level, allowing local people to become involved in making decisions on issues that affect their lives, along with partners (those delivering services), and through the involvement of local councillors. The aim of CPPs is to democratise service delivery and therefore make it more efficient and responsive to community needs.

There is no single model of CPPs as structures and approaches differ across the regions. Community involvement can also vary, existing through pre-existing conduits such as local community councils, community groups, or directly. The involvement of elected members of the group also varies and in some regions they chair CPP meetings and in others they participate. These variations occur according to the community and its size, geographical area etc. Key to this concept is that CPPs are not prescribed.

## **POLICY REVIEW**

The current Scottish Government administration has outlined its key purpose as being to drive sustainable economic growth.

Scotland's budget has been reduced by £1.3 billion for 2011-12 and the UK Comprehensive Spending Review outlines plans to cut public spending by a further £80 billion by 2014-15.

This includes budget reductions of £55 million (9.3%) cuts in the welfare system, amounting to £1.7 billion per annum by 2014-15 in Scotland.

The drive to reduce public spending in the context of an increasingly ageing population has signalled a change in the relationship of state, third sector, and civil society, as outlined in the Christie Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services (2011).

In the Scottish Government's Programme 2011-2012 there is a decisive shift in policy. There is a commitment to building resilient communities through the processes of empowerment and capacity building, with greater emphasis on the role of communities in shaping public services and a statutory duty to support community engagement and community empowerment. This creates both opportunities and threats for any rural community. The potential for collaboration is a positive opportunity. However, inequalities of social vulnerability mean that those in the most disadvantaged circumstances will be most significantly affected. Scotland's population is ageing fast. It is estimated that the number of people aged over 65 will rise from 16.6% of the population in 2008 to 26% by 2031 while the population aged over 75 years old is expected to increase by 84% and the working age population to have fallen by 6.5%.

The number of children aged 0-15yrs is expected to reduce by 8.1% by 2033 compared to the national rate of 1.5%; 57% of population is of working age (national average 63%) and this is predicted to fall by 8% by 2016.

By 2033, Scotland's rural areas (excepting Dumfries and Galloway) will witness faster population growth than the towns and cities. Accessible rural areas have experienced an 11.5% increase since 2000.

There is recognition by the Scottish Government that the population is ageing, and needs strengthened policy commitments. Local opportunities exist for community participation in policy decisions through Community Planning Partnerships within the SOAs, LEADER Local Action Groups (under the new EU 2014 -2020 Leader/SRD), Rural Priorities (also SRDP) and the Scotland National Rural Network. Changes to public sector delivery and services are being developed in the context of the changing population, current provision and workforce. A high percentage of jobs are located in the public sector across rural Scotland which will decrease in the next five years.

There will be a greater role for the Third Sector in the development of new and innovative approaches to rural service delivery, including establishing resourced and sustainable community-based delivery organisations that can take forward important local projects and create jobs from within communities.

Rural Scotland is defined as settlements with a population of less than 3,000. 'Accessible rural' are those with a less than thirty minute drive time to the nearest settlement with a population of 10,000 or more.

Currently the Scottish Rural Development Programme remains, perhaps, the key instrument of rural policy. The Scottish Government's Development Programme contains a number of specific commitments relating to rural areas.

Central to Scotland's current regeneration strategy is the Achieving Change Programme (2011). Like other policy shifts, this programme supports a move towards 'joined up' approaches and partnership working across different sectors. There is recognition of the need for community-led regeneration and there is a focus on working with area-based disadvantage. There is a clear intent to build on local assets to help communities increase sustainable economic growth through increasing locally-controlled enterprising 'anchor' community organisations; supporting locally based organisations to take ownership of viable assets and supporting their capacity building. Central to this is the idea of 'place-making'. This includes a potentially greater role for people in shaping plans for development of their area and re-thinking public sector commitment to, and investment in, communities and their sense of ownership of their surroundings (place / quality).

### **The Context of this Study:**

Ageing population; rural; economic realities; outward migration of young people – inward migration of retirees; changing emphasis of resource allocation; spreading the butter a little more thinly; market and non-market provision; engagement and critical understanding; change and no-change; balancing the need for change against the need to preserve what's here; mutual care: looking after those who need help in one form or another, be they family or acquaintance; collective voice – collaboration with others in similar circumstances – in and outwith Sunart. Council Tax still means an expectation of a minimum level of quality service.

### **Impact of the Christie Commission Report (2011):**

The Christie Commission (2011) is likely to impact significantly on policy in the immediate future. The report argues that Scotland's public services are in need of urgent and sustained reform. This is a response to the estimated rise in cost of social care and justice services by more than £27 billion over the next fifteen years within the context of a £39 billion shortfall. It argues for closer relationships between all actors involved in delivering public services and greater community participation in design and delivery, focusing on outcomes.

Partnership working and competitive tendering for services are now key with proposals for integration across and between sectors (this includes the NHS 'change' and 'Putting you First' agendas). The Scottish Government and COSLA leaders have agreed a Statement of Ambition that effective community planning arrangements will be at the core of public service reform. Examples of these include community planning partnerships and health/social care partnerships.

The push towards 'competitive neutrality' indicates a shift from public sector to third sector provision of services. Central to this shift is the transfer and management of assets and the development of creative social enterprising activities.

Resources will be made available to the following levels: over £500 million investment in preventative spending over the spending review period, and a £250 million Scottish Futures Fund.

Support from Government for community groups to take ownership of assets, projects and services - 148 community groups supported by 31st March 2013, ten new community projects developed by 31st March 2013, and £750k of external funding secured by end of March 2013.

### **Being Rural:**

It is important to recognise that 'being rural' or living in a rural community diminishes the range of services available to residents – but this understandable reduction must not be stretched to include 'no service' or 'poor quality and drastically limited services' by the local authorities or the National Health Service. Living in rural Scotland, expectations of service levels are lower than in the urban context and there is an acknowledgement that 'self and mutual help' is the norm. Looking after each other continues to be important to those living in rural communities although there has been a tendency to wait for others to lead necessary change. Under the proposals of the Christie Commission, local people are expected to engage effectively with the key decision-making processes - and the agencies of the State, in response, are required to develop processes and procedures to allow that to happen.

### **The Power-House of Scotland:** change is really on the way.

Seemingly, rural Scotland is the future 'power-house' of Scotland (and perhaps the UK and Europe). Recognising this opens the way for local businesses to prosper and for jobs to be created and training made available. However, it also places a heavy responsibility (some would say burden) on those living in rural communities who may be asked to accept local development that, in the past, would never have been considered. For some, this will be

very difficult. It seems a conundrum that to promote sustainable urban communities, Scotland's rural communities have to embrace development that impacts local visual amenities and landscape as part of national strategic energy objectives. Without perhaps knowing it, rural Scotland would seem to be in the midst of substantial change, a moment of national redefinition.

### **In Sunart:**

This research has identified key areas of concern as expressed by those who returned their questionnaire and also those who came to the Focus Groups and Open Sessions. In broad terms these were identified as:

- Medical provision – GPs' attendance; the state of the local surgery; lack of provision for those with mental health issues (seemingly 40% of the population, at some time of their lives, will experience poor mental health).
- Isolation of the elderly (they call it 'care in the community') and young parents (especially young women).
- The provision of a gathering place – a social hub where people can meet.
- Socio-medical information of that is appropriate and combined with counselling and support services to young people.
- The Swimming Pool – huge numbers of people mentioned it in their returns.
- Jobs and the provision of a Heritage Centre at the Mine.
- Transport – the ferry: its cost, inconvenience and finishing time.
- The buses – a once-a-day service that simply fails to meet the work schedule for those working in Fort William. The impossibility of 'going west and back' by bus in one day.
- Connectivity: mobile phone connection and strength of signal and Broadband provision.
- The haemorrhaging of young people out of the area and their replacement by retirees (welcome, of course – but not so good at the shinty!).
- Apprenticeships
- Seasonal and part-time jobs and low wages.
- Childcare costs and the release of young parents to work.

- The need for small workshop units.
- Housing – affordability for local people on an average wage (suggested £16,500) with few longer term rentals available is a massive problem for housing key workers and the stability of professional workforce.
- Limited curriculum choice for school students yet no partnership provision with local FE colleges.
- Falling school roll.
- Primary School in need of replacement.
- Land and crofting: the availability of crofts for the younger generation
- The local economy too reliant on tourism
- Commuting daily to Fort William (and back): the expense/the ferry timetable
- The potential loss of Dail Mhor elderly residential home – working for the local authority is recognised as the gold standard of jobs that may disappear if the Home is relocated.

### **Repeated Cross-Sectoral Issues:**

The list above mustn't be understood as though these concerns are separate and isolated. Transport issues impact on medical services. Without easy access, medical provision, however good, is essentially unavailable. Childcare is linked to cost and availability – but also to the availability of jobs, transport and the wage levels being paid for part-time work that fails to pay for the childcare costs. Long school holidays cause cross-sectoral difficulties increasing the need for childcare, time off and flexible contracts of work.

These issues linked as collective problems – but they can also be addressed collectively. Solve the transport issue and childcare and isolation is made easier. Solve the transport issue and teachers and other professionals can get to Sunart easier. Build a social hub – and the support network can flourish – community spirit is improved and isolation mitigated to some degree.

Tackled individually, the problems seem insurmountable. Tackled collectively and in a coordinated fashion, they become more manageable.

## **Tensions:**

No tensions were recognised that were so severe that they impacted on daily life in a truly dreadful way. However, some were notable as causing significant stress to those who were affected.

Some people reported intolerance in the area of those suffering from mental health issues and even stigmatising of those experiencing it. Others recognised that NHS mental health support services are inadequate and need addressing.

There was a clear tension, albeit detached, between those people who came up on holiday (renting holiday homes) and their apparent need to stock up with food and other consumables before they arrived. This was felt to be both unnecessary and a missed opportunity to make a contribution to the local economy. It was felt that more complete information to them could impact positively on this.

We detected a sense of detachment between the local estates (excepting one good example) and local communities. It was suggested that renewable energy projects, based on estate land, should benefit both the land owners and the community through community benefit funding.

Local people suggested that the Corran Narrows were a demarcation line and that the quality of service on the peninsula was markedly different to that on the Fort William side of the Strait. Professionals on the eastern side of the water, however, suggested that the level of service was equal on both sides of the Corran Narrows. True or not – this difference is what many people believe.

The doctor's surgery/GP service was a clear source of tension. In our investigation into what the issues were and why things had deteriorated to such an extent, it was clear that there was a significant gap between what the Health Board felt was possible within the constraints of the funding available and what people in Sunart felt they needed. In the course of our conversations with medical staff, we were pointed towards the NUKA model of health care (an Alaskan example finding favour with the NHS across Scotland) where a team of local people are trained extensively and then asked to partner the medical practitioners and be their 'legs' on the ground. A more complete explanation of the NUKA model of local health care follows later in this report.

The ferry and what was felt to be an inadequate and infrequent bus service is a clear source of tension. The cost of commuting, the ferry timetable and the lack of interconnectedness all impacted on the peninsula across all communities. The impossibility of travelling westwards and back in a day needs an immediate solution. Buying the ferry through a community enterprise was suggested to solve the issue and put local people in control.

However, even without this drastic (and, perhaps, unnecessary) step it should be possible for the ferry and bus operators to find a solution.

In crofting and forestry, the only tensions we identified were the time and bureaucracy involved in working with the Forestry Commission (although the moves recently to allow communities to buy segments of forest for local woodworking and forest management were applauded). Crofting too was in the midst of a revival (albeit painfully slow) with the issue of abandoned crofts now being tackled and crofting being made possible for a younger generation was recognised as a step in the right direction.

The 'Right-to-Buy' legislation (particularly Section 3 of the Land Reform Act), legislation relating to the transfer of Scottish Government estate assets and the Woodland crofting initiative were all applauded as helping local people gain a foothold relating to work and housing opportunities. It was suggested that these schemes could also impact on the amount and type of land available by bringing more plots to the market and increasing the supply side of the equation. It was felt that this might reduce the cost of local self-build land.

However, the 'Right-to-Buy' legislation was criticised as being far too cumbersome and needing vast amounts of voluntary time to achieve something that professionals on the other side of the table were being paid for. It was felt that there was an imbalance here.

#### **'Getting the best out of what we have got':**

It was recognised that, in choosing to live in Sunart, there was a price to pay in terms of services and access. This presented itself as an opportunity not a threat, with people suggesting that there was plenty on the peninsula to give a great quality of life. There were suggestions that the local environment should be used more effectively (paths, trails, way-marking, zoning and information and interpretation) to attract more people to the area and to give them more to do when they arrived.

The loch was seen as an untapped reserve, as was the mine. Strangely perhaps (in view of the criticisms) , the ferry was seen as an asset in this circumstance, lending a uniqueness to the peninsula – almost an element of romance - that could be better branded and marketed.

The greatest concern in this section of the investigation was getting the best for young people given the identified constraints. More opportunities for further education and a wider range of studying opportunities; greater intergenerational contact; specific provision for young people – with expert youth workers and much greater information flow and accuracy for their areas of concern.

Some suggested that with a small amount of funding workshops could be made available and space allocated for storage. It was recognised that most people who worked on the peninsula were either self-employed or were employed by a small business owner. Making it easier for local people to start their own businesses in units made available to them (perhaps at a peppercorn rent for a start-up period) would address a range of agendas from childcare to flexible working hours – and the need to travel to Fort William for work. Working locally would also meet some of the carbon reduction issues raised.

**Alternative Views of the Future:** being brave and thinking the unthinkable.

‘Helping people – help themselves’ – is this the future for rural Scotland? New models of health provision; transport; connectivity; supporting each other; caring for the elderly; considering new models of service provision; self-employment, self-build and self-sufficiency.

**Sunart: Local Organisational Structures:**

This research was commissioned by the Sunart Community Company and it is to this organisation that this report is directed through the Sunart Working Group. Sunart also has an active Community Council as the first rung on the formal democratic ladder and Sunart would seem to be (potentially) well served by both.

However, other models exist and much that is contained within this report does not appear to fall within the remit (the Articles of Association) of the Sunart Community Company. Several possibilities, therefore, flow from this:

- That the Sunart Community Company does whatever it is legally able to do and supports other local voluntary groups to address other aspects of the Report’s recommendations; or,
- That the Sunart Community Company widens its remit to include all the elements of change required; or,
- That a new and separate development trust (with or without charitable status) be established to take forward the Action Plan demitting to the Community Company and the Community Council those elements that fall within their remit;
- That another form of community organisation be developed (e.g. Community Interest Company; Scottish Community Incorporated Organisation, Development Trust etc.) specifically designed to take forward those elements of the Action Plan that the Community Company can’t.

- Instead of relying on volunteer help, perhaps one of the local organisations might consider employing a Development Officer to drive the change agenda forward and, in so doing, prevent or mitigate volunteer fatigue. This model has worked very well throughout this research process.

Not becoming over-reliant on the potential profits from the hydro scheme – and building a broader base to spread the risk would also seem to be more sustainable.

It may be useful for the Community Council or the Community Company to review what others have done across rural Scotland and identify which model best fits the kind of change that local people have identified as necessary.

### **Models of Self-help: Issues of Confidence; Capacity and Resilience:**

The world seems to have recently changed. Whereas in the immediate past it was possible for small rural communities to wait for development to arrive knowing that, eventually, their turn would come and funding would be spent locally to bring service improvement or infrastructure development, that certainty seems to have disappeared. The Christie Commission report and the Scottish Government (which adopted its recommendations without reserve) expected local people to drive change in their communities and to engage in decision-making in a more open way. Many of the small communities that CADISPA has worked with already take this stance and are prepared for the work it involves. It may be that Sunart is ready too.

However, if not, there are issues of skill development, confidence to engage and capacity that need to be addressed. It is one thing to be told that you need to engage more effectively – it is quite another feeling able to engage and building the confidence to do so.

If this is the new world in which we are living, then Sunart must look to its own reserves and, if necessary, grow the talent to enable effective engagement. Without this Sunart will always be ‘running to catch up’ with others who are better prepared.

‘Doing it yourself’ when you have already paid, and are paying, the local authority or NHS to provide services for you, may seem strange. However, conditions dictate that there is a new balance to be struck here. Many people, while praising the NHS for its commitment to ‘free at the point of delivery’ service have criticised it for being too distant or, perhaps by default, enabling patients to become detached from the control of our own personal health agenda. The NHS, like the local authority, is duty bound to address this and, as a consequence, is asking local people to become more involved in the processes of decision-making and resource allocation. This is a new game for everyone. The price local people are being asked to pay in this new ‘contract’ is one associated with substantial changes to the old way of

doing things. We are all being asked to accept changes that, in the past, might have been unthinkable. This model of health care is, of course, heavily reliant on volunteer time. However, if the NUKA model of healthcare is adopted by Highland NHS – perhaps, as in Alaska, there is scope for local healthcare volunteers to be paid for their time at a level that reflects the responsibility they are taking. It is clear however, that the issue of the GP services in Sunart must be resolved to the satisfaction of local people with urgency.

### **NUKA and Local Health Care:**

It may be that Sunart has to consider a new approach to the receipt of services from the NHS with regard to GP service delivery. It seems that the Health Board have genuinely tried to find a way of running services the way that they have always run in Sunart but, because of constraints to the budget and the impact of the new GPs' contract, are struggling to find a way forward acceptable to local people – and within the boundaries of providing a quality service.

It is for these reasons that they are looking at the NUKA model of medical service provision. NUKA developed in Alaska and was a response to providing good quality medical services to rural and rural remote communities there that had failed to attract resident GPs and allied professionals. NUKA model of healthcare for remote rural areas: (see: <http://www.scf.cc/nuka/index.cfm>)

Highland NHS recently invited the key players from the NUKA healthcare initiative in Alaska to talk in a series of seminars across the Highlands, one of which was held recently in Ardnamurchan.

***'Principle: 'an increase in recognition of personal responsibility for health care, backed up by a comprehensive programme of information; education and training to improve a community's ability to look after their own health needs'. (Joanne Matheson, 2013)***

Joanne Matheson prepared a report to the Acharacle Community Council and the following is a synopsis of this report.

In the NUKA model healthcare is owned and largely operated by local people. It is focused on physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellness. Local people are trained to address a multitude of medical complaints. They are trained to a standard that is more than First Responders. All emergencies are managed at the scene by paramedics – and transported out of the area to hospital by the quickest means if necessary. Air ambulance is always available in an emergency.

Visits to the local area are by medical professionals on a coordinated basis 2/3 days twice a year. The GP prescribes remotely and advice and support to the local healthcare team is immediately available on request. Dental provision is made on the same basis. This service from the local Health Aid (local care organisation) unit provides twenty-four hour care to all patients in the catchment. The design of the local service is done by a committee of local people and medical staff.

The local healthcare team get update training for one week every year. (This report is a synopsis of a more comprehensive report written by Joanne Matheson – who gave her permission for this to be reported here.)

It would seem that the NHS is not suggesting that the NUKA model is adopted without being made fit-for-purpose for a Scottish Highland context. There will be elements that will happen more frequently and others that, because of the remoteness of some of the Alaskan communities – would not be appropriate to apply to Sunart. It is the basic 'self-help' nature of the model that would apply.

This model is worth consideration if it addresses the tensions over medical care so many people reported. If it proves to be the case that the NHS cannot provide a service to Sunart in the old style then alternatives must be considered. However, it is a bold step and may be a step too far at this time but, we believe, the model is worthy of investigation if only on the basis that it will provide a quality guaranteed medical service; training and salaries for local people and immediate access to medical care 24/7 all year – albeit of a different nature to that experienced in the past.

### **Continuing the Self-help Theme:**

Of course, all this talk of self-help, building a sustainable community and strengthening the carrying capacity of local people raises the issue of locally owned assets and the potential they allow for stepping aside from market-led development. It is perfectly possible and legitimate for a community mutual society (a Trust) to own assets. However, in owning (say) a suite of workshops; a renewables plant, social housing or a recycling business – it is possible for a local Trust to offer services at cost subsidised from other elements of local business (or grants from Trusts and Foundations, if it has charitable status). Time banks and local bartering schemes could form a part of this business mix – and start-up businesses perhaps given preferential leasing rates to enable them to grow more quickly and be enabled to employ local people through reduced overheads as the Trust owns the asset rather than a private organisation.

## CONCLUSION

Sunart is only twenty-two miles from Fort William yet local people living there reported their concerns in a way that suggested a perception of much greater distance. They talked of a boundary line, real or imagined, called the Corran Narrows. Although very happy with living where they do they identified concerns, some minor but others major, which need to be addressed.

That they live on a peninsula (almost 'an island') should not mean that their quality of life is impacted negatively compared with those living in Fort William. Everyone we talked to recognised that there was a price to pay in choosing to live where they did. However, issues raised suggested the balance of what is considered 'fair' to be out of kilter. We have made reference extensively to these concerns in this report.

We have also made suggestions that might, collectively, address some of the issues: getting the transport issue addressed or the social hub or a swimming pool feasibility study completed should address a collection of concerns. Others, like the medical services issue will need more investigation and the collaboration of the Community Council with the local Health Board to find a solution. There is also a need for local people to be brave enough to consider a new model of healthcare (NUKA) and to critically reflect on whether this model, with appropriate changes, is something that might be of benefit (greater benefit) to local people than the situation that might exist in the future.

The Christie Commission Report and the emphasis the Scottish Government is now placing on bringing local people to the heart of local decision-making will be seen as both a threat and an opportunity. A threat in that local people must work hard to gain the confidence and skills to engage effectively and the consequences if they don't – and an opportunity in that once skilfully engaged they will get to direct the development agenda for their community and have a voice in how resources are allocated. Voice equals choice: not to engage has consequences that will be far reaching for the future of Sunart.

### **Rationale for Recommendations:**

It may seem strange to many people reading this report that the CADISPA Trust, an organisation based in Paisley, could offer recommendations for change to a community living in the Highlands. However, it is this very separateness that creates the value in making recommendations. We are dispassionate and detached from local politics; have no preconceived position on what should or shouldn't be prioritised and do not, in any way, benefit from decisions made on the basis of what we have found out. So, we have no difficulty in offering the following recommendations in the full understanding that the community of Sunart will take or reject them accordingly.

### **Identifying the Recommendations:**

We review all the information gathered, building files that share common issues. We start with the evidence from the survey and, from each segment, draw out common themes and write an analysis of what people have said focusing especially on areas where a number of people have made similar comments. The statistics are a huge help here. However, so are the 'additional comments'. The purpose is to spot trends and common concerns – or similar expressions of support/appreciation or dislike etc.

Very often issues are linked across a number of themes and groups. The Focus Group material is used as a narrative to add weight or clarification to the themes that have been identified from the questionnaire returns. A clearer picture begins to emerge when the information is 'triangulated' and different sets of information from differing perspectives are brought together: the appearance of transport issues within health; recreation within tourism and so on.

Then there is the policy review – to place the information into the national context. All of this is then written up as a discussion and, bit by bit, clear trends emerge. We report these in the conclusions. Of course, these are CADISPA's conclusions taken from the analysis of information as we understood it.

The recommendations stem from the conclusions – and lend focus to the outputs of the research. Our perspective is, as an independent research body entirely separate from the local community, that we must report what people have told us as truthfully, accurately and as fairly as we can. The information has come from a wide variety of people, all living locally, from lots of different perspectives, ages, gender and political persuasions. The conclusions are the amalgamation of the collective themes that we have heard – and this is our way of telling you (the community) what you have (collectively) told us.

Those elements that people have repeatedly told us we recommend to you as 'potential action pointers' that will inform the Community Development Action Plan. Before those choices are made, however, it would be usual for the community to have the chance to discuss the "Findings" and to choose what they wish to support and what should happen next.

What is reported as "Recommendations" are key issues that local people are facing and have articulated to us – and we therefore recommend that they are acted upon by whatever organisational mechanisms exists within the community. We don't recommend what should happen first (or perhaps which are simply ignored) – this is for the community to decide. We don't identify which organisation should take specific tasks forward or which Recommendations are more important than others: the community has to decide this.

The recommendations for action (listed below) simply highlight those concerns that local people have repeatedly told us about and which they consider are of significant importance – and we therefore feel it important that these are passed on to you in as clear a fashion as we can.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### General recommendations:

*“I think this is a lovely place to live and there are a fair number of events and facilities. Things can always be improved”.*

- If it is felt that some of these recommendations fall outside the remit of the Sunart Community Company we recommend that a **Development Trust** is established to take these forward.
- That steps are taken to address **rural isolation, particularly for the elderly**, and that they are fully included in the day-to-day life of the community.

*“There is a need to have ‘a plan’ to tackle isolation and loneliness particularly in the elderly”.*

- That a **community social hub** feasibility study be completed.
- That Sunart, working with other communities across the peninsula, should investigate the concept of a **local social enterprise owning and running the ferry**.
- That the Sunart community reviews **the NUKA healthcare model** as an alternative system of health care (see: <https://www.southcentralfoundation.com/files/Nuka%20Fundraiser%20Brochure-6pg.pdf>)
- That a short-term working group looks into the **development of a ‘Men’s Shed’** and other community workshop concepts in Sunart.
- That the community considers investing resources in a **local Development Worker**.
- That **local childcare provision is improved** to enable parents to rejoin the workforce more easily, addressing both employment needs and rural isolation concerns.

## Specific recommendations:

### Transport:

*“it always comes back to transport”*

- Further negotiations take place between Highland Council and the Ardnamurchan communities to **stabilise prices and extend the ferry time-tabled service.**
- Negotiations take place with **Shiel Buses to bring one or perhaps two extra services to the area per day** allowing access to Fort William earlier in the morning – and travel westwards and then eastwards from and to Sunart the same day.
- That the community considers supplementing normal transport arrangements with a **Community Bus and a car-sharing club.**
- That a **‘ferry on/off’ alert system** is put in place to advise travellers of disruption as they leave Strontian.

### Health:

*“We have no proper GP - it’s a different one every week”*

- **Stabilise and upgrade the present GP arrangements** by working with the Health Board and the GP management practice in Mallaig to better coordinate access to a team of **regularly attending GPs** and for the times of those GPs attending to be available to local people.
- **Upgrade the surgery.**
- That the Health Board be required to **improve mental health care** and support.
- That **the elderly**, in being encouraged to stay in their own home under ‘Care in the Community’ **are more adequately and transparently supported.**
- That negotiation takes place with the NHS about the tension of having **testing equipment in the Belford Hospital when the staff who work the equipment are based in Inverness.**

- **That the NUKA health care model be actively debated** within the community as an alternative to the service provision being made available at this time.

*“In the NUKA model healthcare is owned and largely operated by local people”*

### **Recreation:**

- That a **swimming pool feasibility study** is carried out.
- That **upgrades to the walking and cycling routes** are carried out.
- That **guides are produced to help visitors and local people use walking and cycling paths.**

### **Land Use:**

- That discussion-takes place to **solve the lack of access to crofting locally for the younger generation.**

*“they won’t share or open that opportunity to the younger generations”.*

- That representation is made to Government in an attempt to **lessen the bureaucratic load of using the Land Reform legislation and working with the Forestry Commission.**
- That the community becomes better informed about the opportunities available to **take woodland – or woodland open space – into community ownership.**
- That the Transfer of Crofting Estates Act is used to **take building land into community ownership** to increase the supply side of land availability with a consequential lowering of local building land prices.
- That **greater use is made of the loch** as a potential contributor to the local economy.
- **That ‘Core paths’ in Sunart are clarified and agreed,** or if this proves contentious, the Highland Council Access Officer should be invited to run a local seminar to clarify rights and responsibilities for all parties
- That the Sunart community considers bringing **land into community ownership.**

## Housing:

*“the whole village was up in arms when they started giving out the sheltered housing to anybody”.*

- That Highland Small Communities Housing Trust is invited to **conduct a comprehensive housing needs analysis** in Sunart.
- That a proportion of local housing be ‘tied’ to allow **key workers to be immediately housed** without the fear of losing housing stock to speculation and forced sale.
- That **Sheltered Housing be built and that these units become reserved** housing stock held for those in need of sheltered accommodation.
- That the position of the NHS Dail Mhor **Residential Home for the Elderly be clarified**.

## Education:

- That the **Primary School be substantially upgraded or rebuilt**.
- That the **range of subject choice in the High School is increased** through greater collaboration with both Higher Education and Further Education.
- That the **promotional pathway structure of Highland Council is addressed** to allow for greater flexibility and stability of staffing in the High School.
- That the High School (and Highland Council) considers a **greater integration of non-teacher experts from the locality** to supplement the teaching programme and increase quality and choice for the students.
- That the **impact on students of staff turnover is minimised** and investigations made as to why the turnover rate of the staff appears so high.

*“At the school the teachers keep coming and going”*

- That **education staff be encouraged to live within the school catchment** to enable the extra-curricular programme to flourish and for the local economy to gain from their salaries.
- That more is done to **encourage intergenerational connection** in Sunart.

## Heritage & Tourism:

*“The development of the mines as a tourist development is a major opportunity to stress the history and industrial archaeology of the area”.*

- That the **mine site and access be protected for community use** by being brought into community ownership.
- That a **Heritage Centre feasibility study is conducted**.
- That the Highland Council, Visit Scotland and the NHS are brought into discussions regarding the **perceived ‘boundary line’ demarcation** that is the Corran Narrows and the apparently unfair distribution of resources on the peninsula compared with that of Fort William.
- That **Sunart ‘brands’ itself more effectively**, perhaps in partnership with other communities on the peninsula.

## Business & Employment:

- That every opportunity is identified for **‘apprenticeships’**.
- That the community is **proactive in helping business start-ups**.
- That employers and government agencies are encouraged to **support local training**.
- That **business advice** is made more readily available and given by those who know the **constraints of living on the peninsula**.
- That **workshops and small industrial or storage units are made available**.

## Young People:

- That a more **effective link is established** to Higher Education and Further Education to increase options.
- **Local skills’ training is available**.
- That a more effective knowledge exchange process is put in place to address shortcomings in the **information and counselling services available to young people**, particularly in the area of sexual health.
- That the development of **bursaries** is considered for those attending FE or HE.

- That steps are taken to enable **young people to develop a stronger voice in the community** – particularly in regard to matters on which they are expert.

**Environment:**

- That the benefits of **renewables initiatives on local estates are fairly shared** with the Sunart community.

*“they want to live in the community – but not be a part of us”*

- That every opportunity to **decrease Sunart’s carbon footprint** is encouraged.
- That **locally-grown food** is encouraged and supported.
- That **wood fuel is encouraged** through a community-owned woodland.

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### Additional Comments from Questionnaire (Section 12)

*“Please feel free to use this section if you wish to make any further comments.”*

- *“Use of surrounding hills, mines and forestry tracks for mountain biking/walking/downhill tracks. Wildlife and nature tours - training for youngsters in this area to be guides. More regular and co-ordinated activities in Sunart each week to encourage community participation. Gym/studios to exercise - yoga/tone-zone classes. Community bus. Better and more social enterprise. Development/growth of agricultural show and various other existing community events. Courses to prepare kids who want to go off into the world to study - how to leave Strontian confidently.”*
- *“Swimming pool really important - long term health concerns, safety i.e. children learning to swim, winter activity, good for tourism.”*
- *“Sorry - many questions unanswered, but as a disabled OAP newly arrived here, I do not feel qualified to make judgments, nor do I yet have good knowledge of the district. But congratulations on all you are doing!”*
- *“The word 'local' has been used. In this area you're not a local unless you were born and bred here! Maybe resident would have been better. As some 'locals' that have moved away but still have a connection here have not been asked their views, after all we do want them to come back. Would be nice if the local shops didn't whack such a huge increase on products, all this means is that locals are in touch with Tesco's etc. to deliver out here and this will result in local shops suffering. Visitors to this area often remark on how expensive the shops are. Nothing was mentioned about ferry costs, shame as this I'm sure you would have had a lot of feedback. Good questionnaire though!”*
- *“I believe the tenet of my response is clear. No matter how well intentioned, the decline in the Sunart area is largely outwith the scope and influence of the Sunart Community Council. If SCC is to have a role being rearranging the pictures on the prison cell wall, or even worse, the deck chairs on the Titanic, it needs to take the issues outwith the community and ultimately to Government. I say this because, with regard to the ferry at Corran, Highland Council seems to be part of the problem not part of the solution. I would make the same claim about NHS highland. What is not outwith the capabilities of man is certainly outwith the abilities of two organisations. Where there are problems, they see not solutions but self-justifying ways of continuing with the problem.”*

- *“As already stated - bus service, GP services and a better road surface up Anaheilt.”*
- *“Would it be possible to use the electricity from the community hydro scheme to provide free energy directly to the community? Shellfish production and micro-cultures from seaweed culture, both involving production, processing and packaging would be an appropriate local business for the community - or at least a serious business plan looking to scope the potential. Loch Sunart is a large resource for this as well as for recreation.”*
- *“We came to Strontian in 1989 and bought the caravan park at the back of the village. When we retired and sold the park we decided to stay in the village as we loved it here and were very happy. We have no reason to change our minds!”*
- *“Many questions in this survey require detailed or expert information to answer properly. Hence there are gaps. I worry that if others offer such opinions without knowledge, you could get a distorted outcome.”*
- *“The local church building, used by CoS and Episcopal's, is important to the community (e.g. funerals) but has to be maintained by a very small number of members (~30 people). This is not sustainable. Major repairs cannot be financed.”*
- *“All educational opportunities cannot be provided in a village environment. Employment opportunities cannot be fulfilled in a village environment. People have to travel. Training opportunities cannot be fulfilled in a village environment. The development of the mines as a tourist development is a major opportunity to stress the history and industrial archaeology of the area. Development of walking routes around the peninsula and within Sunart. Publication to inform people. Better promotion of the area.”*
- *“Any new development/enterprise must have provision of capital and /or income for long term maintenance. No more street lighting. Someone to build a pavement or path on main Rd round post office. Replace 'tin box' in show field with wooden cabin or at least paint more suitable colour. Same with toilet block. Any new housing should target single occupancy and should include garden area. Don't use any potential veg ground for building. If police house is to be empty use for overnight emergency services or housing for teachers. Put some local funds aside for paying for educational lecturers who could be brought in.”*
- *“I feel it's important to advertise to tourists who are keen on nature and geography and history. Then capitalise on natural beauty wildlife etc. Make it a wilderness retreat. Very important to protect Loch bed from being raked by illegal fishing boats. Very important to stop invasive plants or what we have will disappear. Stop building*

*huge one-and-a-half storey homes for second homers. Village as craft village/green village. Making wood crafts, green furniture, willow work. Woodland crafts."*

- *"Good luck."*
- *"The proposed hydro scheme is a wonderful idea. However, I have a few reservations I would like to share. £85,000 is not much money to use for good causes. The money will be swallowed up by expense accounts of administration of people offering the spending of it. Unless it's put into a long term trust fund and invested wisely for a future project it will be no use. Also what if the hydro scheme needs major repairs and investment to maintain production of electricity, where will the money come from? And can we be assured the government won't change the goal post so to speak, and lower the profits local communities can hope to gain? This could turn it into a debt rather than a profit making venture. Also does this scheme employ anyone long-term - if so who pays for their income? There are more questions unanswered."*
- *"The survey needed a consistent approach to allow for don't know/not applicable."*
- *"The Highlands is a wonderful place to live however the high cost of living and low wage economy is making it an increasingly difficult place to live particularly so when your children feel they have to leave the area to find work and somewhere to live."*
- *"Difficult to answer some questions as have only been here 8 months. I think broadband and community website essential communication tools without which the rest is made harder."*
- *"I consider this questionnaire a total waste of time."*
- *"Corran Ferry should be free to locals."*
- *"This focuses a little too much on the potential negative aspect that arises when living in a remote rural area. I would like to see more focus on building on the positive aspect of living in this area - the culture and local Gaelic culture would seem to be key here. Lots of things this place cannot be but we have assets on which we can build. I trust the next part of this process will focus on these assets. One thing to consider is how we use Hydro more, to generate more, lots of investment opportunities and that is key. Once we have a significant income we can start to look at subsidising and/or replacing many of the services that we seem to be losing in rural areas."*
- *"Sunart is a very varied community - some with great wealth and comfort, alongside people who are genuinely struggling. Often the former are unaware of the latter's plight, and they articulate 'needs' which are really 'wants' or luxuries. The priority should be to address need. The better off must accept that all the community needs*

*to be lifted to basic standards of comfort and security before progressing the 'icing on the cake' amongst projects. To do otherwise is insensitive, unfair and risks opening divisions within the community. This community planning process is positive and healthy but it has highlighted this issue, which must be handled carefully. Also, we should not forget the 'hidden' needs - people who have left the community because they had no choice on account of lack of housing, jobs, etc. The community we have now is increasingly 'self-selected' by those who are unaffected by these issues. (Many in greatest need however have actually left the community as per last paragraph)."*

- *"As an elderly 'Incomer' with no children I do not feel qualified to put forward suggestions for the future of the area but do think any decisions about the use of money accruing from the hydro scheme should be left until there is more certainty about its success and the possible amount to be generated. "*
- *"As a local, my biggest concern is the dilution of local culture. Although welcome, unfortunately people move into an area because they fell in love with it when on holiday. As soon as they come to live here they demand all they left behind, i.e. street lighting, swimming pools etc. This is a small Highland village - please let it remain so."*
- *"Tourism is all very well but not everyone wants a job cleaning up after them i.e. holiday cottage cleaning, litter picking after them. The big drawbacks to getting tourists here are the A82 as an access road and the ferry costs although the boys do an excellent job."*
- *"Development and local economy: I don't think it's a good idea to rely solely on tourism for local economic development. Need more non-service based enterprise and industry. I think we need to become more self-supporting e.g.: more opportunities to grow food locally and encouragement to generate power (hydro, solar, geo-thermal). Wind-turbines should impact on the local landscape as this could affect tourism! Without job opportunities our local area will be populated by wealthy people who want holiday homes here or homes to retire to. Young people won't move here unless there are jobs. Our priorities are: 1) Jobs and employment 2) affordable local housing. If we can develop these, we will have a thriving and energetic community."*
- *"I think the proposed hydro scheme is an excellent idea and thought should be given to creating more from the many good burns we have in Ardnamurchan. Please do not build any wind farms in this area as they ruin the beauty of the scenery."*
- *"I would like to see improved footpath/cycle way links around Strontian & greater Sunart. e.g. 1) From the village to Ardnastaing beach along the shore line. 2) From*

*the High Road to Polloch on the old miners track. 3) Up Ben Resipole from Strontian side. A cycle park for the kids to develop off-road-cycle skills."*

- *"I think this is a lovely place to live and there are a fair number of events and facilities. Things can always be improved. I am a bit concerned about teaching not being as available as it should be in the High School. There seems to be a lack of teachers which will mean a poorer education for children which may result in people not reaching their potential. I think part of the problem is a lack of accommodation for staff. There are not many job opportunities and no childcare - especially not jobs that pay enough for childcare! Assuming we stay here long enough to see our children through school I don't really see how they would be able to find suitable work to stay here themselves. The huge costs a lot for local people to travel to anywhere and access shops, healthcare, leisure facilities, etc. It costs even more for others to come here - whether to visit family/friends or as tourists. This makes it much more isolated for people to live here as it is an added expense for visitors and must surely be off-putting to many potential tourists. A swimming pool could provide employment opportunities and health and well-being, and perhaps encourage tourists too."*
- *"Sorry I am not filling this form in, it's too long. I love this area as it is. I don't like busy communities, that's why I live here. Governments and committees always want to mend things that aren't broken. I say leave well alone. My husband and I both think the same. So returning both forms unanswered."*
- *"I would like to see all croft houses occupied although croft land in Strontian must be some of the worst in the Highlands & Islands when you consider the millions of pounds that is paid to owners of good arable land for non-production. Heritage and culture is a very important part of this village - mining and floating church, Strontium 90 and losses in the First World War. We require a building to house all the info and records. Promote training in the building trade. We all know that this is a good area to retire in, however, we must ensure that we must provide opportunities for young people to remain and work in this village as this is the future. Possible purchase of the old mine workings to promote it as a geology centre. Requirements of a new doctor's surgery (company has available land)."*
- *"On consideration of these questions, I have realised that my main discontent with this area is the poor service the community is currently receiving from 'the powers that be' i.e. Highland Council. Police Scotland...we are almost 'after thoughts' in any planning/provision considerations, it seems. I sincerely hope the feedback from this exercise will prove that the locals are not willing to lie down and take what they're given; that we know what we want that we are determined to get it and by pulling*

*together we can achieve great improvements for this community rather than simply putting up with the lot we are currently being served.”*

- *“I apologise for the lack of information I have provided, however, I would like to jot down a few things that would improve my quality of life and that of my family while living here. In the 3 years I have been here, as a working mum of 2 young school age children, provision of some sort of service (i.e. text) to tell me if ferry is running - this has implications for me with regards to childcare and getting to work. In addition to this some form of child care facility i.e. breakfast club or after school club - 5.30pm would allow me to be independent of grandparents for child care. With regards to leisure facilities a swimming pool would be of ultimate value, allowing children to learn to swim for their health, safety and general wellbeing without parents having to pay for an extra ferry crossing and fuel costs. Furthermore, with the obesity crises adults and children need the facility to maintain and adopt a healthy lifestyle.”*
- *“The Sunart community needs to retain its identity because I feel historical and cultural facts have been lost and to retain this we need to have something permanent where people can visit easily such as hub/centre of village. Housing needs to be developed in a sensitive way and not over-developed. Health and social care services to older people needs to be developed as well as for people with other disabilities or needs. We need a permanent GP to ensure continuity. More school and further education to attract people to area and also help local residents find something which is of interest. Swimming pool and other sports facilities, outdoor pursuits etc, to promote healthy living.”*

**CONFIDENTIAL****NUMBER:****QUESTIONNAIRE****SUNART COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN**

Please remember that there are no right or wrong answers to the questions asked, we are simply interested in your personal opinions. Please complete as much of the form as you can.

You'll see that there is a number on the top right hand corner of this sheet. This will enable CADISPA to identify you so that we can make sure that all ages and groups in the community are represented. **Only CADISPA will know who you are** and what you have said. Any information you provide will be treated with the **strictest confidence**, securely stored at the CADISPA offices and destroyed after five years. If you feel more comfortable returning the questionnaire without the number, please feel free to cut it off.

Completed questionnaires must be received by CADISPA by the **7<sup>th</sup> February 2014**. Please use the enclosed stamped / addressed envelope (The CADISPA Trust, 3015 Abbeymill Business Centre, 12 Seedhill Road Paisley, PA1 1JS).

**SECTION 1 – COMMUNITY**

The questions below will assess how important you feel social considerations are and what part they should play in the future development of Sunart.

**a. Do you consider that there is a good sense of community in your local area?**

On a scale of 1-5 (1= poor; 5 = good):

**b. Do you feel:**

	Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	Don't know
Satisfied with life in your community?					
Pride in your local community?					
Safe in your community?					

A sense of belonging to your local community?					
There are sufficient opportunities to be involved in local community life?					
Community spirit is eroding?					

**Please tick one box:**

**c. How active are you in taking part in community events and groups?**

Very Active	Active	Not Active at all

**d. How involved are you in helping to organise community groups and events?**

Very Involved	Involved	Not Involved at all

**e. What makes your community a good place to live?**

	Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	Don't know
I am able to earn enough money					
My family live nearby					
Recreation opportunities are good					
I am kept well informed about local events					
The community is friendly					
Education and training is available					
There is little crime					
The community often comes together for local events					
I can afford to live in the area					
Young people are adequately provided for					
There are places to meet friends					

There is plenty to do					
The environment is attractive					

**Comments**

**f. How does your community/area score in the following areas?**

*Please rate each of the following on a scale of 1 to 5:*

	<b>Poor</b>			<b>Good</b>	
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Availability of housing for local people					
Training and jobs for local people					
Healthcare provision					
Public transport network					
Volunteering levels					
Recycling facilities					
Use of renewable energy					
Local food production					
Internet service					
Education and training availability					
Facilities for businesses					
Facilities for the elderly					
Facilities for young adults					
Communication of local information					

**g. Please list any community facilities, services or opportunities that you feel are currently lacking in your area.**

Facilities:
Services:
Opportunities:

**SECTION 2 – LOCAL ECONOMY**

The following questions try to assess how important you feel factors such as employment opportunities, tourism and the role of private enterprise are and what role you think they should play in Sunart’s development.

**Local Economy**

***Please tick one box:***

**a. Economic considerations must be the key component of any future development plans for the Sunart area.**

Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly

**b. Economic growth across Sunart can be achieved by emphasising environmental and eco-sensitive development.**

Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly

**c. Development means economic improvement and the way that it is done is not important.**

Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly

**d. Economic improvement depends on expanding employment opportunities in the Sunart area.**

Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly

**e. Encouraging private enterprise in the Sunart area is essential for economic improvement.**

Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly

**f. Encouraging tourism in the Sunart area is essential for economic improvement.**

Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly

**g. Increased marketing and branding of the area is essential to local economic improvement.**

Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly

**h. Lack of adequate connectivity (mobile, broadband) limits economic development in the area.**

Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly

**i. Economic development is dependent on local transport improvement.**

Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly



### **SECTION 3 - HOUSING**

In this section we would like to assess your views on the need for the development of housing in the Sunart area.

***Please prioritise each statement (1= low priority; 5 = high priority):***

**a. There is a need for additional housing in my area to accommodate.....**

	Low				High
	1	2	3	4	5
Local people					
Those wishing to move to the area					
Key Workers (GP/dentist/nurse/teacher)					
Young single people					
Young families					
Elderly/sheltered					
Those with additional needs					

**b. New housing developments should enable people to:**

	Low				High
	1	2	3	4	5
Rent from private landlord- short/long term					
Rent from council - short/long term					
Rent from a community enterprise (social housing)					
Purchase/owner occupier					
Purchase land					
Co-own					
Self build					
Live sustainably (green credentials)					

**c. New housing developments should be led by:**

	Low				High
	1	2	3	4	5
A community enterprise/co-operative					
Housing association					
Local authority					
Private developer					
Self build					
Other (please specify):					

**Comments**

**SECTION 4 – TRANSPORT**

This section aims to explore how you feel about transport and local infrastructure issues.

**a. Do you have access to a car?**

Yes  No

**b. How many cars are there in your household?**

*Please indicate your choice by ticking one box:*

**h. I often use public transport to travel locally.**

Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**i. If applicable, what forms of public transport do you commonly use?**

	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
Bus	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ferry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify):	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

***Multi-choice questions***

**j. The current provision of public transport limits the following aspects of my life.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Social				
Accessing services e.g. healthcare				
Accessing shops				
Accessing job training				
Accessing nearby towns				
Children's needs				
Young people's needs				
Needs of the elderly				
Other (please specify):				

**k. Which aspect of public transport, if any, do you find restrictive? *Tick those that apply.***

Frequency	
Linking up of services e.g. ferry	
Inconvenient timetable	
Availability of routes	
Cost	
Other (please specify):	

**g. A community transport service can range from a timetabled bus service controlled by local people to car/taxi sharing schemes and organised lift giving.**

Do you feel that there a need for this type of community transport scheme in Sunart?

Yes

No



<b>Comment</b>
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**h. Do you have any concerns relating to transport/travel/safety in your area?**

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## **SECTION 5 - HEALTHCARE AND SUPPORT PROVISION**

The questions in this section ask for your opinion on the quality of health care and support services in your area and how these could be improved.

**a. I have access to quality healthcare services in my area.**

Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly

**b. The continuity of local healthcare services i.e. seeing the same practitioners on each visit, is a concern for me in Sunart.**

Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly

***Please indicate your top five choices and rank them according to priority (5=high priority)***

**c. Out of the following options are there any services that you would like to see improved locally?**

	<b>Rank (1 – 5)</b>
GP services	
Dental services	
Nursing services	
After hours ambulance service	
Mental health support	
Counselling services	
Diabetic services	
Physiotherapy provision	
Provision of elderly care services	
Home care volunteer scheme for the elderly	
Residential respite care provision	
Support groups	
Information and advice services	
Other (please specify):	

**d. Which of the following, if any, would make it easier for you to access local health/ social care and support provision? Please choose and rank 5 options (5 = high priority)**

	<b>Rank (1 - 5)</b>
More health care/support services delivered locally	
A better public transport system	
Access to a car club/share scheme	
Access to a community transport scheme	
Emergency transport arrangements	
Not applicable	
Other (please specify);	

**e. If you had to choose, which services do you feel are a critical priority to maintain at the current level in Sunart?**

***Well done! You are halfway through the questionnaire, please keep going!***

## **SECTION 6 – LEARNING**

### **Learning Opportunities**

**These questions aim to assess what learning opportunities are available to you locally and seek your opinion of schools, childcare provision and opportunities for adults.**

**a. Do you feel that the current provision of learning opportunities in the area is adequate?**

Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	Don't know

**b. The learning opportunities for Gaelic in the local area, in my opinion, are:**

Poor	Adequate	Good	Extremely Good	Don't know

**c. Are you currently enrolled or interested in the following learning opportunities?**

	<b>Enrolled</b>	<b>Interested</b>
Non-formal education (family/leisure/evening classes)		
Vocational education (learning/training for work)		
Learning in community groups		
Further education (college level)		
Higher education (university level)		

**d. What, if anything, prevents you from accessing learning opportunities?**

**e. Please list below any course/s not currently available in Sunart that would be of interest to you.**

**School Education**

**f. What is your opinion about the provision of school education in Sunart?**

Poor	Adequate	Good	Extremely Good	Not applicable

**l. Education for children and young adults could be improved by:**

High School	
Primary School	
Nursery School	

## **Childcare**

**h. Childcare and learning provision for 0-5s in the local area is adequate for my needs.**

Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	Not applicable

**i. The standard of local childcare provision is good.**

Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	Not applicable

### **Comments**

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## **Young Adults (11 - 18 years old)**

**j. There are adequate facilities and support services for young adults in the Sunart area.**

Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	Don't know

**k. There are sufficient job opportunities for young adults in Sunart.**

Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	Don't know

**l. There are sufficient training opportunities for young adults in Sunart.**

Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	Don't know

**m. What activities and/or facilities are required for young adults in the area?**

	<b>Rank (1 – 5)</b>
Dedicated youth centre	
Sports facilities	
Art groups/classes	
Music classes	
Support groups for young women	
Support groups for young men	
Sexual health information and support	
Alcohol and drug information and support	

**SECTION 7 – TOURISM, CULTURE, HERITAGE AND LEISURE**

The questions below assess how important you think these issues and tourism are to the development of the area.

**a. There are ample opportunities for me to take part in cultural and leisure activities.**

Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly

**b. The Gaelic language should be better promoted as part of Sunart’s cultural heritage.**

Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly

**c. I would like to see more activities concerned with:**

**d. The culture and heritage (e.g. crofting, mining, archaeology, language etc) of Sunart is an economic asset and should be protected.**

Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly

**e. Tourism is crucial to the long-term sustainability of the area.**

Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly

**f. The promotion of local heritage should be central to the future development of tourism in Sunart.**

Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly

**Please indicate your five choices and rank them according to priority (1=low priority; 5 = high priority):**

**m. The leisure experience could be improved by:**

**Rank (1 – 5)**

More accommodation	
Better quality accommodation	
More eating places	
Better quality eating places	
Better marketing and branding of the area	
Greater utilisation of the cultural heritage of Sunart	
Development of woodland/wildlife tourism	
Development of adventure tourism	
Development of craft workshops	
Development of a local swimming pool	
Festival / music events	
Better promotion of the Gaelic language	

**SECTION 8 - THE ENVIRONMENT**

This section explores how you feel about the environment in the area.

***Please tick one box:***

- a. The conservation of the environment should be a priority when considering future development proposals.**

Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	Don't know

- b. The conservation and protection of the local environment is essential to encourage tourists to the area.**

Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	Don't know

***Please indicate your five choices and rank them according to priority (1 = low; 5 = high):***

- c. Which, if any, of the following environmental issues are of concern to you locally. Please choose and rank 5 options (5 = high priority) in each column.**

	Rank (1-5)		Rank (1-5)
Climate change		Fish protection	
Pollution		Crofting absenteeism and neglect	
Waste disposal		Development of forestry land	
Recycling		Development of wind farms	
Carbon reduction		Infrastructure development	
Invasive plant species		Other (please specify):	

***Please tick those that apply:***

- d. Reducing the carbon footprint of the community may be important to the future of the Sunart area. Which of these do you do?**

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
Recycle				

Actively reduce my energy consumption				
Buy produce with reduced packaging				
Buy locally produced food				
Reduce household waste e.g. composting				
Use public transport where possible				
Use green energy				
Cycle and/or walk where possible				

<b>Comments</b>

**SECTION 9 – THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT/EXTERNAL AGENCIES**

This section aims to assess your views on the role of government and external stakeholders when planning for development in Sunart (e.g. Forestry Commission, Highland Council, Lochaber Housing Association, etc.).

***Please tick one box***

**a. Local people should lead local development.**

Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**b. Successful development must be based on a partnership between Government, agencies and the local community.**

Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**c. Local people could play an active part in community development if Government and agencies allow them.**

Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**d. Local people can play an active part in community development if Government and agencies provide support and advice.**

Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly

**e. Government alone should be responsible for carrying out development of the Sunart area.**

Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly

**f. There is no place for Government or external agencies in the development of the Sunart area.**

Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly

**If you feel that there are a variety of roles that Government and external agencies can play in the development of Sunart, please outline below what this should be:**

***You're nearly finished – just a few questions to go!***

**SECTION 10 - THE FUTURE**

This section aims to identify the positive and negative aspects about life in your area and to ask some general questions about your thoughts for the future.

**a. What do you feel are the most important issues for the future of your area?**

**b. What changes would you like to see happen in Sunart?**

<b>i. Short-term (0-5 years)</b>
<b>ii. Long-term (5 years +)</b>

**c. What aspects of life in your area would you like to remain the same?**

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**SECTION 11 - DEMOGRAPHICS**

*Please indicate your choice by ticking one box*

**a. Gender:**

Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
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**b. Age:**

16-25 yrs	<input type="checkbox"/>	26-35 yrs	<input type="checkbox"/>	36-45 yrs	<input type="checkbox"/>	46-55 yrs	<input type="checkbox"/>
56-65 yrs	<input type="checkbox"/>	66-75 yrs	<input type="checkbox"/>	76-85 yrs	<input type="checkbox"/>	86+	<input type="checkbox"/>

**c. How long have you lived in the area?**

Less than 1 year		11-20 years	
1-10 years		21 years+	

**d. Do you speak any other languages? Please specify:**

**e. Please indicate how many dependents you have in the following categories:**

Pre-school children	
School age children	
Young people in further/higher education	
Adult dependents	
None	
Other (please specify):	

**f. Employment status:**

Employed full time		Unemployed	
Employed Part-time		Student	
Self employed		Semi-retired	
Looking after home/family		Retired	
Other			

**g. If you are employed, please indicate your area of work?**

Education		Farming/Forestry/Fishing	
Tourism		Services (sales, retail and hospitality etc)	
Health and Social care		Financial/Insurance	
IT/Design		Trades	
Other (state)		Arts	

## **SECTION 12 - ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

Please feel free to use this section if you wish to make any further comments (and continue on the back if you need more space).

**You're finished! Many thanks.**

**If you've left the Questionnaire Number on the front page it will be entered into a prize draw for the chance to win one of **four cash prizes of £50.****

## APPENDIX III

### Timeline of Events

DATE	PURPOSE	ATTENDANCE
Friday 15 <sup>th</sup> Nov & Saturday 16 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Sunart Launch Event: Introduction to the project and initial consultation exercise.	Sunart community
Saturday 30 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Training Day with members of Working Group	CADISPA & Sunart Working Group
Tuesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> Dec	Development of questionnaire; 1 <sup>st</sup> Draft	CADISPA & Sunart Working Group
Thursday 12 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Refinement & final agreement of questionnaire	CADISPA & Sunart Working Group
Friday 13 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Questionnaire sent for printing	CADISPA
Friday 27 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Focus Group discussion	Sunart Working Group & 18- 25 age group.
Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup> Dec – 3 <sup>rd</sup> Jan	Questionnaire published and distributed (362 questionnaires sent out).	CADISPA & Sunart Working Group
Tuesday 14 <sup>th</sup> Jan (morning)	Strontian Primary School visit: exploring what's important to the young people of Sunart	CADISPA, staff of Strontian Primary School and Infant class (P1-3).
Tuesday 14 <sup>th</sup> Jan (morning)	Strontian Primary School visit: exploring what's important to the young people of Sunart	CADISPA, staff of Strontian Primary School and Junior class (P4-7).
Tuesday 14 <sup>th</sup> Jan (evening)	Sunart Youth Group: working with young people.	CADISPA, Youth Group volunteer staff and 13 – 17 age group.
Wednesday 15 <sup>th</sup> Jan	Focus Group discussion	Specific consultation
Monday 20 <sup>th</sup> Jan	Interim Report sent to Working Group	CADISPA
Friday 31 <sup>st</sup> Jan	Development of online Youth Survey	CADISPA
Friday 31 <sup>st</sup> Jan	Development of online questionnaire	CADISPA
Friday 7 <sup>nd</sup> Feb	All questionnaires returned (179/362 - 49%)	CADISPA
Sunday 9 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Closure of online Questionnaire & Youth Survey	CADISPA
Thursday 20 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Working Group Meeting	CADISPA & Working Group
Friday 21 <sup>st</sup> Feb	Housing Focus Group (1)	General public

	Health Focus Group (1)	General public
	Recreation Focus Group (1)	General public
	Transport Focus Group (1)	General public
	Land Use Focus Group (1)	General public
	Tourism & Business Focus Group (1)	General public
	Employment Focus Group (1)	General public
	Community Focus Group (1)	General public
<b>Friday 21<sup>st</sup> Feb (evening)</b>	Open Discussion Session	General public
<b>Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> Feb</b>	Housing Focus Group (2)	General public
	Health related interview	
	Recreation Focus Group (2)	
	Transport Focus Group (2)	General public
	Land Use Focus Group (2)	General public
	Tourism & Business Focus Group (2)	General public
	Employment Focus Group (2)	General public
	Community Focus Group (2)	General public
<b>Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> Feb (evening)</b>	Open discussion session	General public
<b>Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb</b>	Open discussion session	General public
<b>Friday 4<sup>th</sup> April</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> full draft Report to Sunart Working Group	CADISPA
<b>Friday 11<sup>th</sup> April</b>	Feedback & Comments from WG	Sunart Working Group
<b>Friday 18<sup>th</sup> April</b>	Final Report to Sunart Working Group	CADISPA
<b>Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> April</b>	Presentation of Findings	General public
<b>Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May (2 sessions)</b>	World Cafe Event(s); discussion of report & priorities for future	General public

### World Cafe Prioritisation Results

On Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May two 'World Cafe' events were held in Strontian Village Hall to prioritise the list of recommendations made by the CADISPA team so that modified lists could be circulated to every household in Sunart to enable all residents to vote on their preferred recommendations. The result of this exercise would identify what priority the community placed on each of the recommendations.

The events took a similar format: the first session was a series of table discussions about the recommendations. This was a clarification exercise to enable people, at the end of the first session, to vote 15 – 1, against their preferred recommendations. This was followed, in session two, with an open discussion addressing the question 'what happens next'. The outputs of the discussions and the voting exercise are included below:

From the World Cafe table-top discussions, some very interesting and helpful suggestions were made:

1. That the Community Company might combine all the hard developments into a single feasibility study.
2. It was suggested that the community might support a pluri-centre to include the Pottering Shed (a workshop gathering place); social hub; Swimming pool and business workspace in one place.
3. Concern was expressed that the return on community woodland might come in many years time. (Suggest the group looks at the SROI literature).
4. A suggestion that the bigger projects are initiated first – although there was a clear need for a quick win.
5. There was a need to maintain the impetus.
6. Some suggested that a skills audit tied to a 'work that needs to be done' register – may help in bringing people to the fore. There was a clear need for a Steering Group to manage the process and monitor progress.
7. Volunteer fatigue was a recognised problem.
8. Now that the community had a first taste of renewables and their benefits – perhaps there was scope to discuss extending renewables provision in the area.
9. There was a suggestion that a guiding emphasis should be placed on a developments potential to create jobs (whether self employed; apprenticeships).
10. A suggestion that the vacated village hall and PS should be redeveloped as a Health Centre.
11. The ferry should be seen as a part of the roads network.

12. To make proper use of the Loch a jetty needed to be built inside the village perimeter.
13. Some people reported that Meals on Wheels was often a bridge to the relief of loneliness in the Elderly.
14. It was suggested by others that staff at the school were not employed on permanent contracts – and this had an impact on whether they bought a house in the area.
15. It was suggested that there were five ways of increasing the number of people who were engaged:
  - Coffee mornings where there was no threat or risk to taking part;
  - Information hand-outs whilst the community is at social events: ceilidhs, shows and festivals.
  - Marketing and information sessions at the Sunart Shop;
  - Better Branding of the area – and keeping the message out there and fresh.
  - Recruiting people to do only specific jobs; and,
  - A skills audit matched to jobs that needed doing.
16. There was a need to get the Community Council and the Community Company working effectively together.
17. There was a need expressed to bring the various Community Councils on the Peninsula together around a shared set of issues.
18. Control of local development should rest in the hands of local people. It was felt that the community could come up with far greater and more creative solutions than the large Agencies.
19. Some suggested that a ‘Common Good Fund’ should be started.
20. There was also suggested that the community should identify its assets and develop/protect these:
  - The Loch
  - Mine Site
  - Walking paths
  - Etc.
21. There was also a need to ‘capture the culture’.
22. Concern was expressed over the deterioration in health servicing and some people suggested that a start to rectifying this would be to make Sunart attractive to Doctors and other professionals.
23. Some suggested that there might be an extension to Lochaber College on the Peninsula that could take responsibility for local training including business start-up training; vocational training targeted at jobs opportunities in the area and Crofting training – particularly for the young.

**The voting exercise resulted in the following priority list:**

## Sunart Community Appraisal – Prioritising Result

Results (in order of priority)	No.
That the Primary School be substantially upgraded or rebuilt	481
Stabilise / upgrade the present GP arrangements by working with Health Board / Mallaig GP Management to better coordinate access to a team of regularly attending GPs and for their times to be available.	398
That a community social hub feasibility study be completed.	252
That a Heritage Centre feasibility study is conducted.	246
That workshops and small industrial or storage units are made available.	212
That a proportion of local housing be 'tied' to allow key workers to be immediately housed without the fear of losing housing stock to speculation and forced sale.	203
Further negotiations take place between Highland Council and the Ardnamurchan communities to stabilise prices and extend the ferry time-tabled service.	191
That the mine site and access be protected for community use by being brought into community ownership.	168
That the community considers supplementing normal transport arrangements with a Community Bus and a car-sharing club.	163
That Sheltered Housing be built and that these units become reserved housing stock held for those in need of sheltered accommodation.	161
That a more effective link is established to Higher Education and Further Education to increase options.	156
That the position of the NHS Dail Mhor Residential Home for the Elderly be clarified.	152
That the elderly, in being encouraged to stay in their own home under 'Care in the Community' are more adequately and transparently supported.	152
That every opportunity is identified for 'apprenticeships'.	149
That the impact on students of staff turnover is minimised and investigations made as to why the turnover rate of the staff appears so high.	141
That wood fuel is encouraged through a community-owned woodland.	141

That greater use is made of the loch as a potential contributor to the local economy.	140
Upgrade the surgery	132
That upgrades to the walking and cycling routes are carried out.	133
That a swimming pool feasibility study is carried out.	130
That steps are taken to address rural isolation, particularly for the elderly, and that they are fully included in the day-to-day life of the community.	126
That a short-term working group looks into the development of a 'Men's Shed' and other community workshop concepts in Sunart.	120
Local skills training is available	103
That discussion takes place to solve the lack of access to crofting locally for the younger generation.	102
That Highland Small Communities Housing Trust is invited to conduct a comprehensive housing needs analysis in Sunart.	100
That the development of bursaries is considered for those attending Further Education or Higher Education.	92
Negotiations take place with Shiel Buses to bring one or two extra services to Sunart per day allowing access to Fort William earlier in the morning – and travel west and then east from and to Sunart the same day.	85
That education staff be encouraged to live within the school catchment to enable the extra-curricular programme to flourish and for the local economy to gain from their salaries.	82
That the benefits of renewables initiatives on local estates is shared fairly with the Sunart community.	78
That the Sunart community reviews the NUKA healthcare model as an alternative system of health care	78
That the Estates Transfer Scheme (and the Land Reform legislation) is used to take building land into community ownership to increase the supply side of land to lower local building land prices.	78
That guides are produced to help visitors and local people use walking and cycling	76

paths.	
That the community is proactive in helping business start-ups.	67
That locally-grown food is encouraged and supported.	66
That the range of subject choice in the High School is increased through greater collaboration with both Higher Education and Further Education.	62
That the HC, Visit Scotland and the NHS discuss the perceived 'boundary line' demarcation of the Corran Straits (Narrows) and the unfair distribution of resources on the peninsula compared with that of Fort William.	59
That the community considers investing resources in a Local Development Worker.	54
That Sunart 'brands' itself more effectively, perhaps in partnership with other communities on the peninsula.	52
That the promotional pathway structure of Highland Council is addressed to allow for greater flexibility and stability of staffing in the High School.	52
That the Sunart community considers bringing land into community ownership.	49
That a 'ferry on/off' alert system is put in place to advise travellers of disruption as they leave Strontian.	48
That the community becomes better informed about the opportunities available to take woodland – or woodland open space – into community ownership.	48
That 'Core paths' in Sunart are clarified and agreed, or if contentious, the Highland Council Access Officer should be invited to run a local seminar to clarify rights and responsibilities for all parties	45
That negotiation takes place with the NHS about the tension of having testing equipment in the Belford Hospital when the staff who work the equipment are based in Inverness.	45
That every opportunity to decrease Sunart's carbon footprint is encouraged	44
That more is done to encourage intergenerational connection in Sunart.	37
That steps are taken to enable young people to develop a stronger voice in the community – particularly in regard to matters on which they are expert.	35
That representation is made to Government in an attempt to lessen the bureaucratic load of using the Land Reform legislation and working with the	35

<b>Forestry Commission.</b>	
<b>That the High School (and Highland Council) considers a greater integration of non-teacher experts from the locality to supplement the teaching programme and increase quality and choice for the students.</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>That a more effective knowledge exchange process is put in place to address shortcomings in the information and counselling services available to young people, particularly in the area of sexual health.</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>That the Health Board be required to improve mental health care and support.</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>That local childcare provision is improved to enable parents to rejoin the workforce more easily, addressing both employment needs and rural isolation concerns.</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>That a Development Trust be established</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>That Sunart, working with other communities across the peninsula, should investigate the concept of a local social enterprise owning and running the ferry.</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>That business advice is made more readily available and given by those who know the constraints of living on the peninsula.</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>That employers and government agencies are encouraged to support local training.</b>	<b>24</b>

Dr Geoff Fagan

CEO

The CADISPA Trust

21<sup>st</sup> May 2014