

Bute Island Alliance Case Study

Case Study

July 2018

1. Background

Originating from the Scottish Regeneration Forum (SURF) Alliance for Action (AFA) partnership-based community engagement process, SURF was originally commissioned by the Highland and Islands Enterprise (HIE) to undertake a feasibility study in 2014¹ for the establishment of an AFA in Rothesay on the Isle of Bute. A local stakeholder group was formally constituted in 2015 to provide a focus for collaboration across the Bute community, focused on the town centre of Rothesay and including its historic core extending to the Pavilion Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) project (Figure 1). The Bute Island Alliance (BIA) Charette² took place between January and March 2016 and the BIA Scottish charitable incorporated organization (SCIO) was formally constituted in October 2016.

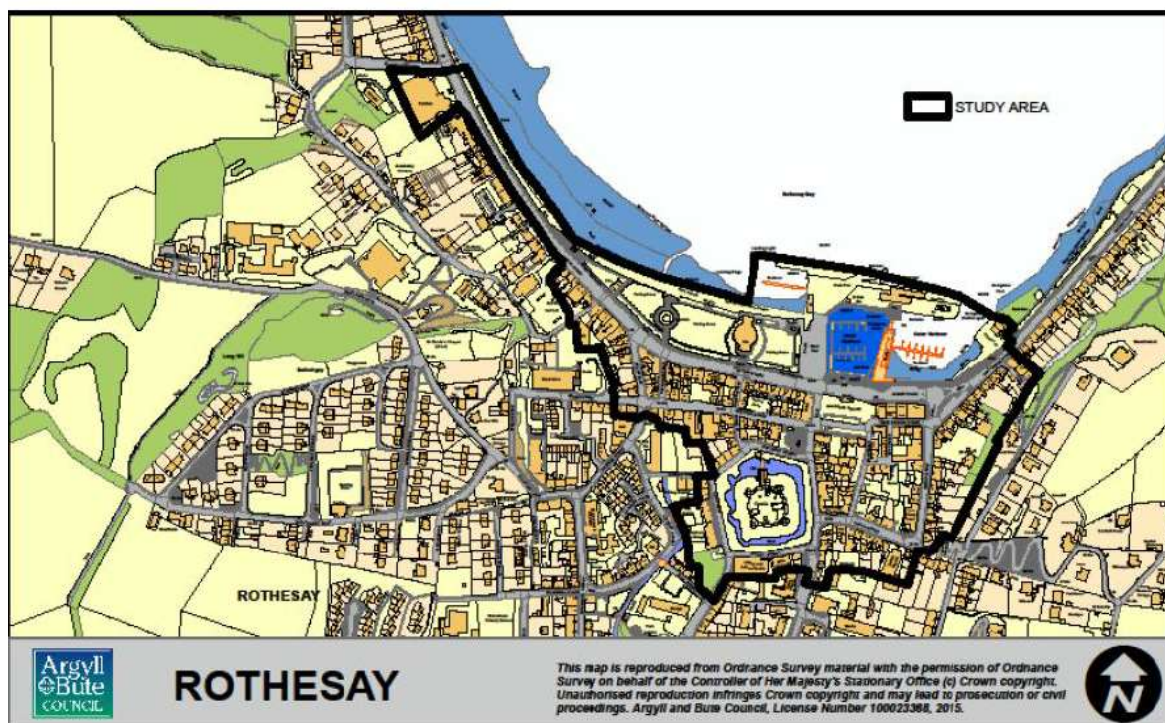


Figure 1: The location and scope of Rothesay Alliance Charrette. Source: Rothesay Charrette Proposal. SURF (2015: 3).

¹ Feasibility Study commissioned by Highlands & Islands Enterprise *Exploring an Alliance for Action for Rothesay*, SURF (2014)

² Constitution of Bute Island Alliance SCIO

1.1 Socio-economic challenges and opportunities

The Isle of Bute lies in the Firth of Clyde as part of the sea lochs of southern Argyll, some 15 miles long by approximately four miles wide. Bute is less than two hours from the city of Glasgow; its main town, Rothesay, is located on the east side of the island and, for years, was a prime holiday destination for many Glaswegians.

The island of Bute is uniquely recognised as an urban environment on a small island, and managed as part of the wider Argyll and Bute Council (ABC) area. Bute as the main town on the island has a population of around 6,498 (of which Rothesay accounts for around 4,859 (2011 Census)). However, a challenge for the area is that, according to census 2011 figures, population on the island has seen a continued decline of around 10 per cent since 2001.

Rothesay's Victorian and Edwardian seaside resort is historically the main attraction supporting its tourism sector from the early 19th century onwards. The principal shopping street (Montague Street) in Rothesay town and the surrounding area is characterised by a number of historic buildings, reflective of a prosperous past of social and economic growth. Rothesay's economic profile is characterised by its distinctive seaside, island-resort identity and tourism base, including a well-established historic retail core.

Farming is a major industry on the island and Bute Estate and Mount Stuart, the seat of the Marquis of Bute, is a key asset and visitor attraction in Scotland, with some 20,000 visitors in 2014 and Rothesay's 12th century castle around 9,000³. Mount Stuart is one of the island's main landowners, with some 1,300 hectares afforested for a range of woodland types and the remainder featuring an active dairy agriculture and over 40 agricultural tenants including 13 dairy farms. The remaining farms include a variety of enterprises ranging from largely arable to hill stock farms.

However, similar to the experience of many other UK seaside resorts, Rothesay has experienced significant social and economic decline since the latter half of the 20th century due to its island location exposing it to reduced tourism, depopulation and overall lack of investment. A key issue impeding future development and investment in Rothesay is the ability to unlock the complexities of land ownership across a large number of small sites. Furthermore, falling milk prices have led to a reduced dairy industry on the Island.

Although Rothesay has conservation area status aimed at 'preserving and enhancing its architectural and historic appearance'⁴, the area's general appearance is characterised by elements of long-term neglect and disuse, combined with an ageing building stock, decaying fabric and under-used vacant/derelict land. Rothesay is also included in the 15% most deprived small areas in Scotland due to the declining social and economic prosperity and overall dysfunction of the town and its tourism sector.

³ Argyll And Bute Economic Forum Report.(February 2016)

⁴ Rothesay is one of nine heritage Character Areas forming the expansive Rothesay Conservation Area running along the east coast of the Isle of Bute from Port Bannatyne to Ascog. Rothesay Conservation Area: Town Centre Character Area Management Plan, Argyll and Bute Council (May, 2010)

To achieve the ambitions of the Rothesay AFA, there is the need to address a number of social and economic challenges in the Island, including⁵:

- **Falling population:** 4,637 in 2011 (down 9.2% from 2001). Rothesay's population loss in absolute terms was 469 people.
- **Large ageing population:** 25.2% of the Rothesay population aged 65 and over in 2011, compared with Argyll and the Islands (23.8%), the Highlands and Islands (19.4%) and Scotland (16%).
- **Larger proportion of adults with no qualifications** compared to other areas and fewer qualified with degree-level qualifications.
- **Low levels of economic activity:** 62.2% of the Rothesay population aged 16 to 74 economically active in 2011, compared to Argyll and the Islands (67.9%), the Highlands and Islands (71.3%) and the Scotland rate of 69%.
- **Large number of Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) claimants:** the JSA count rate was 6.8% in Rothesay in 2013, compared to Argyll and the Islands (3.2%), Highlands and Islands (2.4%) and Scotland (3.7%).
- **Large number of out-of-work claimants:** 540 people aged 16 to 64 years old in Rothesay claiming out-of-work benefits (i.e. 20.4% of the working age population), compared to Argyll and the Islands (11.3%), the Highlands and Islands (9.2%) and Scotland (12.9%).

Regardless of the social and economic context identified in Rothesay, the area benefits from a wealth of community spirit and a range of assets and opportunity relating to the surrounding environment (both natural and built).

1.2 Previous interventions/approaches

Argyll and Bute Council (ABC) is responsible for the overall Local Development Plan (LDP) and local government administration of the Isle of Bute. Rothesay is managed as a conservation area based on a shared ownership approach, involving a Steering Group comprised of a number of key stakeholders to assist, manage and implement the Rothesay Conservation Area Management Plan.

The numerous challenges faced by the Isle of Bute, including falling population levels and its fragile economy, are reflected in ABC's Local Development Plan and in the Single Outcome Agreement and Community Plan for Argyll and Bute, which emphasise a focus on revitalising the town centre and waterfront to take full advantage of Rothesay's built heritage. The latest ABC LDP (May 2015) emphasizes a strategic focus on: town centre regeneration, strengthening tourism, aquaculture and associated industrial and research activity; and improving connectivity to the Glasgow conurbation and beyond.

Notable projects in the area over the last decade include (although not limited to):

- CHORD projects i.e. a regeneration programme focused on five towns, including: Campbeltown, Helensburgh, Oban, Rothesay and Dunoon.
- The many community-led groups and festivals - the Isle of Bute Community Audit in 2011 identified some 77 community groups - identified on Bute.
- Mansion House redevelopment

⁵ Rothesay Profile, May 2014. Highlands and Island Enterprise (HIE).

- Road Equivalent Tariff
- Fyne Futures and Zero Waste Bute
- Vital Spark social enterprise incubator
- Bute Community Forest
- Gap site on Bridgend Street
- Montague Street Gap Site (stalled spaces)
- Paths for All
- ABC Participatory Budgeting
- Redevelopment of the Royal Hotel
- The Old Bakehouse, 10 East Princes Street
- Litter Strategy (Fyne Futures)

What has proved effective in the area?

Significant Bute/Rothesay-specific studies have been carried out in recent years, including:

- Rothesay Alliance Survey (2015)
- Rothesay THI Evaluation (2015)
- Bute Marine Tourism Study (2015)
- SURF Alliance for Action Feasibility Study (2014)
- HIE Rothesay Profile (2014)
- Town Centre Health Check (2011, 2012, 2013)
- Isle of Bute Local Community Audit (2011)
- Town Centre Character Area Appraisal
- Rothesay Historic Shop Appraisal (2010)
- Placemaking Report (2010)
- CHORD Programme Ekos Socio-Economic Baseline (2010)

Key findings from recent research suggest Rothesay has a well-established civic life comprised of a number of voluntary and community-based organisations (i.e. some 72 voluntary organisations on Bute) with a shared interest in the management of Rothesay through, for example: 'Bute Beyond 2000'; the Mount Stuart Trust, and the 'Bute 2020'. Rothesay is believed to benefit from a strong community spirit reflected by the number of existing voluntary organizations and the interest for community involvement in the Rothesay AFA and the demand for a new approach to community-led regeneration on the island.

Furthermore, a key objective of the Economic Forum for Argyll and Bute⁶, established in 2015, is for Rothesay to be to Glasgow what Bath is to London: to be a regular and popular destination for visitors (and to those from further afield), attracted by its architecture, as a long term target as an upmarket visitor destination and weekend home base leading to an increased permanent population.

⁶ Argyll And Bute Economic Forum Report (February 2016).

What has proved ineffective in the area?

Rothesay's community involvement in the ongoing and future redevelopment for the area is principally managed as part of ABC's community planning structures, including the Bute and Cowal Area Committee and Bute and Cowal's Local Community Planning Group.

Recent consultation in the area has highlighted an apparent lack of a dedicated strategic economic development approach/plan focused on the specific requirements, or context, of Rothesay, beyond current major planned investments. For example, no clear Development Plan/Master Plan, Vision Statement or Action Plan is available that focusses solely on the Rothesay town centre, or indeed, on Bute as an island.

Furthermore, feedback from the series of community engagement events during a SURF Feasibility Study process in 2014 highlighted the need for a different, more specific and additional approach to regeneration in the area, to better recognize the interdependent nature of Rothesay and Bute to help ensure social and economic gains are shared across the town and island. The Feasibility study also suggested that existing levels of community involvement on the island lacked sufficient leadership, knowledge and skills to adequately progress the future needs of the Island.

Further challenges for the Isle of Bute identified by the Argyll and Bute Economic Forum in 2016, suggest some key issues⁷:

- Tidy up the town: good progress has been made with the implementation of the Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) and work planned for the pavilion and the square, but more can be done.
- Permit converting abandoned retail units into residential units. There are too many shops for Rothesay's current population and many shop owners are seasonal and simply close their shops for six months plus a year
- Greater engagement with Mount Stuart to encourage greater investment into developments on the island, including expanding the display of the Mount Stuart Collection.
- Increase developer(s) interest in the elegant, run-down buildings and turn them into upmarket flats, duplexes or houses, and improve the restaurant offer without displacing locals, and ensure the continued support for local affordable housing.
- Improve brand and marketing for the island through: a festival of food and drink at Mount Stuart, music festivals, changing the current marketing style.

2. Origins of Current Approach

2.1 Brief description of current approach

The Bute Island Alliance (BIA) established in 2016 was the result of SURF's community engagement AFA approach and culmination of growing local and national agency support over a three-year period since 2014. At the national level, the Scottish Government supported SURF's AFA programme and wider Charrette Mainstreaming Programme across Scotland, to promote the use of interactive

⁷ Argyll And Bute Economic Forum Report (February 2016).

design processes to town planning. Highlands and Island's Enterprise (HIE) sought to endorse the Scottish Government's approach by working closely with SURF as Scotland's independent regeneration network to better link communities to spatial planning approaches⁸. In cooperation with Scottish Government colleagues and with the support of relevant national Alliance partners, including Architecture and Design Scotland, Scottish Futures Trust, Carnegie UK Trust and PAS, SURF was able to secure £25,000 of Scottish Government funding for the establishment of a charrette planning process focused on Rothesay town centre.

The guiding principles of the Rothesay AFA Charrette process related to creating:

- Positive self image
- Collaborative decision-making
- Active and maintained buildings and spaces
- Accessible and easy to get around
- Fostering opportunities
- A place for families

The guiding principles of the Rothesay AFA Charrette are consistent with the ABC Local Development Plan, specifically:

- Objective A: to make towns more attractive places where people want to live work and invest.
- Objective C: to work in partnership with local communities in a way that recognises their particular needs to deliver successful and sustainable local regeneration.

Fuller details of the long-term objectives developed during the charrette process can be found in ANNEX 2: Charrette Long-term Objectives ANNEX 2: Charrette Long-term Objectives.

During the charrette engagement process, discussions were focused on delivery and ability to secure resources for Rothesay, including how to achieve charrette outcomes from the BIA aims and objectives.

The first stage in progressing an approach for Rothesay started with HIE commissioning SURF to undertake a feasibility study in 2014. The feasibility study identified a number of key issues affecting the area, mainly: the town's general appearance; lack of focussed strategies for the area; complex property ownership issues restricting development, including redundant/listed building issues, and restrictive planning policies for future development opportunity in the area. The SURF feasibility study highlighted the need for a new approach to community development in Rothesay and Bute, through the use of an external facilitator to address key issues. The Single Outcome Agreement and Community Plan for Argyll and Bute has been updated with a Local Outcome Improvement Plan, highlighting the need for a pro-active approach to dealing with the social and economic challenges.

To help leverage community involvement in Rothesay's future development, the second stage in the Rothesay process was the establishment of a SURF-led Rothesay AFA partnership. Strong support for a Rothesay AFA culminated in the establishment of a local stakeholder group in 2015, supported and coordinated by SURF and involving HIE, ABC, community planning partners, local business leaders and third sector organisations, demonstrating partners' commitment to establishing an inclusive town partnership approach for Rothesay. SURF was commissioned to help initiate a programme of

⁸ Charrette Mainstreaming Programme Fund 2015-16

shared learning and engagement between local Rothesay stakeholders and SURF’s already well-established networks of local and national organisations. The overall ambitions of a Rothesay AFA were to build local capacity and strengthen local resilience, whilst linking local knowledge to a regeneration approach in a holistic, well-connected, manner.

As part of the on-street conversations during the charrette community engagement process in 2016, the design team visited a number of the key businesses across the area, involving some 30 conversations with town centre businesses. Business consultation was key to the process, providing an opportunity to distribute flyers and promotional material more widely, and to engender increased interest in the process.

A series of key strategic themes (see Figure 2) emerged through the first stage of consultations during the feasibility study in 2014.

Strategic themes			
Rothesay’s Built Environment	Redefining Rothesay: A Distinctive Town for Residents and Visitors	Rothesay: Driving Enterprise and Innovation	Reactivating Rothesay: Promoting an Active, Healthy Community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Built form: place-mending; ii. Building on a sense of place; iii. Reuse of redundant buildings; iv. Increased public use of space; v. Development of live/work and mixed-use spaces. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Culture is key to our sense of identity as individuals in our communities; ii. Cultural factors encourage visitors and locals to visit towns, and culture is a significant component of growing town economies; iii. Meeting and gathering spaces, sense of history and progress, area identity and imagery all contribute to distinctiveness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Supporting existing business; ii. Investing in business infrastructure; iii. Enterprise and start-ups; iv. Skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Social infrastructure: allowing communities to come together ii. Social capital: network and build relationships.

Figure 2: Rothesay Feasibility Study: Strategic Themes. SOURCE: Rothesay Feasibility Study (2014)

During the second phase of the Rothesay AFA, public consultation was used to develop a vision statement for Rothesay - *Building a Better Bute* – and develop a charrette. The Remaking Rothesay Charrette developed between January until April 2016 in Rothesay and across the Isle of Bute. The Charrette brought together residents, businesses, schoolchildren, visitors and organisations with an interest in Rothesay to understand how the town wanted to move forward. The report includes a vision, spatial strategy and a roadmap of short-term actions and long-term

The BIA is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) constituted in late 2016, originating from the work of Rothesay AFA which assisted the group to make a successful bid to the Scottish Government for charrette funding to gain their formal incorporation status as a SCIO. The BIA’s key role is to help deliver an action plan reliant on the collective commitment of various organisations, charities, businesses and people on Bute, to ensure the BIA meets the shared ambitions of the

collective. The BIA became formally constituted in response to the Charrette, to principally take forward the outcomes and actions from Charrette process.

2.2 Key national and/or local political commitments

Following an initial series of public meetings which included representatives from a variety of local groups including business, community and third sector organisations, the Rothesay AFA led an earlier community engagement process to identify key issues, ambitions and priorities for social and economic development of Rothesay. The Rothesay Charrette was then drafted and submitted to the Scottish Government in 2015. With the support of ABC and HIE, SURF began a process of connecting the local community with regional/national partners as part of SURF's wider AFA work. The SURF AFA work brought together a Rothesay and Bute focused stakeholder group and the number and range of businesses, charitable organisations and community involvement steadily increased, leading to the establishment of a local stakeholder group formally constituted as the Bute Island Alliance (BIA) in 2016 aimed at 'providing a sustainable focal point of collaborative action across the Bute community'⁹.

Policy enablers:

In line with the Council's strategic ambitions, a key finding from the SURF feasibility study was to establish a Rothesay AFA based on a 'Town Centre First' principle for 'a holistic approach to town centre development, seeking to maximise opportunities for community participation'¹⁰ and help secure new agency partnership activity and provide access to additional funding opportunities, with a focus on, for example:

- Architecture Design Scotland (i.e. Place-based reviews; Stalled Spaces Fund)
- Argyll and Bute Council (i.e. Town Centre Investment Zone; Simplified Planning Zone; Town Centre Planning zone);
- Scottish Government (i.e. Charrettes Fund to support active /coordinated community engagement in envisioning and planning; Small Business Bonus Scheme; Business Rates Incentivisation Scheme).

The Rothesay Feasibility Study triggered a commitment from the HIA to request that SURF help to coordinate the ambitions of the community into a strategic plan through the establishment of a charrette supported by various local policies. The significant focus on the regeneration of Rothesay in the Single Outcome Agreement is a fundamental supporting policy statement for the establishment of Rothesay AFA, in terms of seeking to engage with the community planning partners. The Community Planning Partnership for Argyll and Bute also identified major issues for the area for resolution through the Single Outcome Agreement. Argyll and Bute Council allocated additional policy resources to Bute during 2015 including a dedicated Community Development Worker for Argyll and Bute area.

⁹ Remaking Rothesay: Charrette Report, May 2016. The Bute Island Alliance.

¹⁰ SURF Feasibility Study: Exploring an 'Alliance for Action' for Rothesay (December 2014, p3)

ABC also recently undertook a rationalising process of its property assets against the background of a ‘Town Centre First’ principle, acknowledging the need for a holistic, joined-up approach to communities, emphasising the need to develop and facilitate the process through the Community Planning Partnership and the community.

At a national level, Scottish Government policies on place-based approaches to regeneration provided the backdrop to a supportive approach to community based town planning. For example, the Town Centre Action Plan contains policy initiatives and strategies designed to encourage town centre regeneration across the country. The focus on partnership working in many of the Scottish Government’s documents also act to support the Rothesay AFA approach, supporting further investment focus on Rothesay from Scottish Government investment including Regeneration Capital Grant Fund allocations to the Townscape Heritage Initiative Pavilion Project.

Funding enablers:

One of the first funding enablers for the AFA was via SURF’s facilitation of the process to secure funding to establish a town centre charrette for the development of the Bute Island Alliance (BIA). The AFA was able to secure some £30,000 in total funding to establish a charrette and to help establish a process for defining a vision for future development of the area, coordinating the outputs from the various consultations undertaken across the Bute community, to establish a clear set of strategic ambitions and action plan. A further £5k investment was negotiated by SURF with the Mount Stuart Trust as a pro-active Alliance partner¹¹.

Funding for the formalisation of the BIA was secured from a partnership of Scottish Government, SURF and Mount Stuart on behalf of the Rothesay AFA. Icecream Architecture was commissioned to deliver the Charrette. Additional funding outwith the initial charrette funding included icecream architecture securing a £5,000 Activation Pot from Caledonian MacBrayne for the community to initiate some of the early actions arising from the charrette.

In total, as shown in Figure 3, the Rothesay AFA helped to leverage funding between the period 2014 and 2017, leading up to the establishment of the BIA.

Funder – Activity	Funding received
HIE – Stage 1 Rothesay AFA Feasibility Study	Not available
Scottish Government - Charrette programme	£25,000
ABC – Charrette programme	£5,000
MST – Charrette Programme	£5,000
Caledonian MacBrayne – BIA Activation	£5,000

Figure 3: Public funding leveraged via the Rothesay AFA (2013 - 2017)

¹¹ Rothesay Alliance For Action Interim Report at December 2015

Learning from elsewhere in developing the approach

Following a programme of interactive engagement events over the course of 2011-12¹² led by Scotland’s independent regeneration network (SURF), supported by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) and the Scottish Government, SURF’s *Alliance for Action* (AFA) programme was first established in Govan (Glasgow) and east Kirkcaldy (Fife), aimed at exploring the relationship between local circumstances, knowledge and assets and national regeneration agencies, policies and resources.

A key learning outcomes from the Rothesay AFA feasibility work was the realisation and emphasis on the need to help better connect Rothesay’s community regeneration activity. In line with SURF’s AFA Theory of Change model (see Figure 4), a key aim of the Rothesay AFA was to build on the learning from SURF’s earlier AFA work in line with a Theory of Change approach, recognising how best outcomes can be achieved through the AFA process and the key enablers and barriers to achieving them.

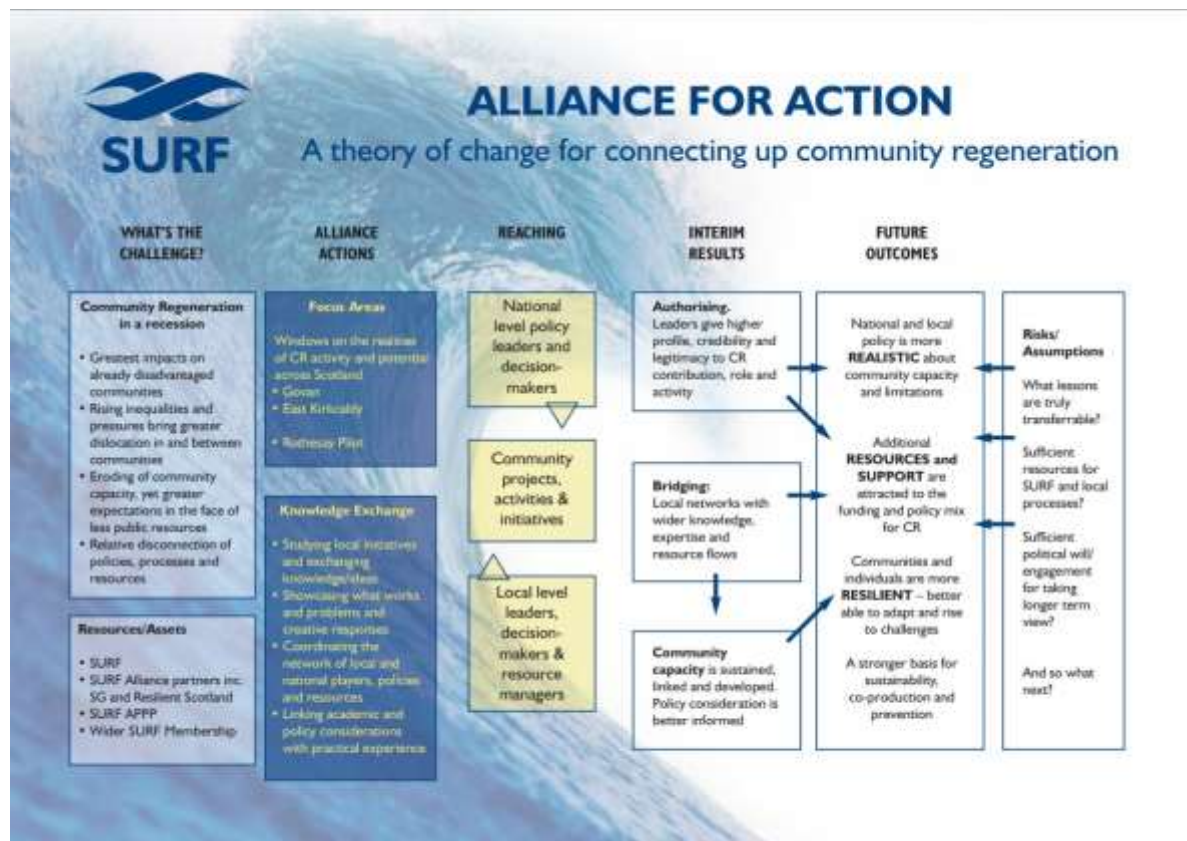


Figure 4: SURF Alliance for Action Theory of Change Diagram. Source: <https://www.surf.scot/alliance-for-action/>

For example, SURF-funded research into the availability of, access to, and use of, community regeneration resources by previous initiatives and individuals in case study areas were used to guide SURF’s Rothesay AFA process. Through SURF’s existing network of regeneration experts, they were able to draw upon a panel of academic and regeneration experts to support the practice-based AFA

¹² Report commissioned by The Joseph Rowntree Foundation, ‘Reality, Resources and Resilience: Regeneration in a Recession’, SURF (2013).

approach through SURF's APP (Academic, Policy and Practice Panel), involving representation from various expert institutions including: Heriot Watt University's Centre for Research into Socially Inclusive Services; Napier University's Employment Research Institute; University of Dundee's Geddes Institute; and Urban Studies at the University of Glasgow.

Furthermore, there is thought to be added value from having an impartial, independent organisation (i.e. SURF) facilitate and support the coordination of a focused approach to collaboration on place-based regeneration, acting to leverage potential investors' and policymakers' input into the opportunity for better engagement in local Rothesay regeneration context. For example, funders are thought to welcome 'shared commitment' resulting from other investors being involved, whilst policymakers are able to widen their understating of local dynamics affecting their strategies.

Therefore, SURF's AFA approach in Govan and east Kirkcaldy produced learning from the significant benefits in enhanced practical cooperation and coordination of investments in the two previous case study areas. The Rothesay AFA builds on SURF's previous learning from the approach, by building on a now 'widely ingrained orthodoxy of partnership processes actively promoted in advice, legislation and practice by the Scottish Government in recent decades'¹³.

2.3 Any resistance to chosen approach?

There were initial challenges to gaining senior commitment to the development of a Rothesay AFA process. For example, a key aim for SURF was to host a collective senior stakeholder level workshop to identify the various opportunities for developing an AFA approach within Rothesay. Introductory engagement with senior partners was key to confirming that there was adequate local community and institutional 'buy in' to the proposed collaborative process. A meeting with the Senior Management Team of Argyll & Bute Council did not take place at the early stages leading to slight delay in the process than originally intended. However, the agreed feasibility report gained full support on being presented at a later meeting in the Council¹⁴.

2.4 Partners involved in developing the AFA approach

Community / residents - The consultation process:

The consultation process during the Feasibility Study involved face-to-face interviews with over 20 individuals drawn from the Community Council, the third sector, local SMEs, major employers, members of the Community Planning Partnership and officials of both Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Argyll and Bute Council. As a result of the process, the community members championed the establishment of a charrette as a key mechanism for Rothesay.

Key outputs from that process emphasised three key areas of required action from the AFA:

- Instill and broker collaboration and a cohesive plan by bringing together organisations and services to focus on improvements and investment.
- Align and review the collection of town centre, tourist and business data across Bute.
- Foster existing partnerships with Council and National Agencies / Community Planning Partners

¹³ SURF Feasibility Study: Exploring an 'Alliance for Action' for Rothesay (December 2014: 17)

¹⁴ SURF Feasibility Study, 2014

A significant outcome from the feasibility and establishment of the Rothesay AFA was the successful application to the Scottish Government for funding for the establishment of the Rothesay Charrette and the utilisation of SURF's support and established networks.

The charrette planning process was based on an inclusive and intensive community process, with the support from a number of relevant agencies including ABC and HIE. Engagement during the development of the Charrette proposal during 2015 and 2016 involved: public meetings, postcard surveys and an online survey to gain wider community feedback on Rothesay and Bute's ambitions for economic development in the area. The consultation during the development stage of the BIA programme was designed in line with the format and concept of a charrette, based on a series of facilitated sessions to develop key themes and topics, alongside findings taken from a number of previous studies and surveys carried out prior to the charrette. The consultation during the charrette development process involved key stakeholders, businesses, community groups, schools and members of the public, involving some 180 people, and a far-reaching social media process. The main outputs from the process have been used to guide and steer the current strategic direction of the BIA going forward.

The charrette consultation process also utilised the Place Standard tool to assess the needs of the local community and plan activities and priorities for action for Bute (See ANNEX 3: The Place Standard tool: Results for a summary of the results). The Place Standard tool was developed by Scottish Government, NHS Health Scotland and Architecture and Design Scotland to help identify areas performing well or requiring improvement, and to ascertain the existing and potential strengths of a place in order to inform good decision-making¹⁵. The Place Standard Tool provides a quantifiable overview of residents' perceptions of Rothesay and The Isle of Bute, highlighting:

- a strong sense of identity and belonging, high levels of social interaction and a feeling of safety
- a positive sense of community
- significant access to natural space and the outdoors
- concerns regarding public spaces within Rothesay linked to traffic and parking issues
- a negative perception of community involvement in local decision-making
- concerns related to accessibility of business opportunities and sustainable employment.

BIA has since secured a facilitator to actively progress the ambitions of the organisation and the community, taking a key role in collaborating on the development of the TH bid for Rothesay (i.e. submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund on 3rd March 2017). The intention is that the BIA will continue to be an active partner working closely with local stakeholders in the delivery of projects going forward, to facilitate and ensure continuous community involvement.

¹⁵ Inverclyde Community Safety Partnership. 'Broomhill Area Reassurance Initiative' (2016).
<https://www.placestandard.scot/#/home>

3. Detailed Descriptor of Current Approach

3.1 Lead delivery organisation(s)

In May 2015 SURF commissioned Brian MacDonald Associates to deliver the first phase of an Alliance for Action initiative in Rothesay and Bute, to begin the practical development of the Rothesay Alliance for Action process, specifically:

- to develop an adequately shared vision and a suitably relevant and coherent set of projects and priorities
- undertake that process via the Alliance for Action process and partners over the six months to October 2015.
- to further consolidate and enhance the reasonably broad support and consensus gathered through the feasibility consultations.
- initiate a programme of collaborative consultations towards an adequately shared vision, process, and set of practical priorities.

A key aim of the AFA was to establish a consistent communication with the town to enable it to:

- collect town centre, tourist and business data
- monitor the impact of the Alliance for the town and get feedback on direction and strategy
- distribute information about projects and events
- develop a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework to regularly appraise the Alliance for Action

During the first phase of the Rothesay AFA, SURF was the main facilitator of the process, commissioned and supported by HIE and ABC. The SURF AFA process represented the interests of a variety of groups including business, community and third sector representatives, aimed at encouraging groups to work together on agreed issues. A local facilitator was engaged by SURF between March 2016 and September 2016 to support the development of the AFA steering group into a formally constituted organisation (i.e. BIA) to act as a support for delivery of the charrette. Thereafter, the BIA SCIO was established.

A summary of the key activities during the Rothesay AFA approach between 2014 and 2017 are summarized in Figure 5.

Key events	Timeline
SURF Alliance for Action Feasibility Study	October 2014
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bute Community Council “Depopulation” public meeting - SURF Rothesay Alliance for Action Initiative proposal begins 	January to March 2015
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bute Alliance for Action formed - SURF Pavilion event 2/9/15 - “public brainstorm” to identify SURF key themes - Online Survey to identify SURF key themes - Follow up event 1/10/15 to refine SURF key themes 	September to December 2015
The Rothesay Charrette submitted to the Scottish Government and project initiated	December 2015

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local SURF Coordinator Appointed - Charrette Community Engagement Process - Charette outputs final public feedback meetings at Discovery Centre - Group decision to incorporate as a SCIO in response to charrette findings - Business Register initiated - SURF key themes agreed - Business Space and Needs Analysis commissioned - Surf Baseline interviews started - Food Group initiated - Charrette Final Report delivered - Tourism Group Initiated - Final constitution approved and SCIO application sent - Agreement to act as Town Heritage pilot delivery partner brokered by SURF - Application for Transport Scotland ERDF feasibility study made by BIA - Business Space and Needs Analysis Final Report - SURF funding for AFA finishes 	February to September 2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bute Island Alliance (BIA) structure and outline working governance agreed - SCIO status approved - Active travel potentials explored with HITRANS feasibility study for European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) funding by BIA 	October to December 2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'Marketing Works' tourism projects initiated with University of Strathclyde by BIA - Town Heritage pilot project report delivered – comprising pilot business hub learning; creative business needs refinement; route branding survey on route to and from Bute - Final SCIO setup completed (banking, elections etc) - Coordinator funding through TH ends 	January to February 2017

Figure 5: Timeline of key events in the study area (2014 – 2017)

The BIA Spatial Strategy

The BIA¹⁶ was formed to support future social and economic development work on the island of Bute, including:

- promote and facilitate a collaborative working
- promote urban and rural regeneration
- promote community development

¹⁶ Constitution of Bute Island Alliance SCIO

The charrette is intended as a vehicle for capitalising on previous investments in the area and help activate community-led improvements in the town. For example the charrette played a significant part in shaping the stage two HLF bid.

The charrette includes a spatial strategy to take account of the discussions and actions discussed throughout the charrette process, focussed on Activating Rothesay and Building Rothesay. The charrette strategy gives an overall view of spatial conversations for considered in future detailed planning of buildings, spaces and movement throughout the town.

The guiding principles of the charrette process include:

- collaborate on decision-making and action across services and organisations
- communicate a positive self-image at all times, both on and off the island
- activate and maintain buildings and spaces – restoring built heritage to make a more attractive and lively town centre
- foster opportunities for skills sharing and development, jobs, entrepreneurialism and business growth
- make Rothesay accessible and easy to get around
- ensure Rothesay is a place for families: reinforcing the offer of schools, housing, leisure and play, health and well being with an environmental and intergenerational attitude

Additional physical projects planned in the area are summarised in Figure 6 below.

Project outline
<p>The Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) Heritage Lottery Funded (HLF) projects 1 and 2 at Guildford Square, overseen by the CHORD Programme and led by a Board comprised of local representatives to oversee its development and implementation. The second phase THI project at Guildford Square is focussed on the Royal Hotel (owned by a local developer), subject to further analysis. In 2009 Argyll and Bute Council made a successful Stage 1 application to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) grants scheme, recognizing Rothesay’s built heritage value and the need for investment in the built fabric of the town centre. Rothesay’s THI focuses on the heart of the town around Guildford Square, adjacent to the Rothesay’s medieval royal castle. Numerous regeneration projects will be undertaken to improve the area making it a more attractive place for local people and to attract visitors.</p>
<p>The Mount Stuart Trust (MST) masterplan, including investment in refurbishment of historic buildings in the Town Centre.</p>
<p>The Rothesay Pavillion (RP) community facility (i.e. a grade A heritage art déco building) is owned by ABC, due to open in 2018.¹⁷</p>

Figure 6: Key projects in the study area

¹⁷ Bute And Cowal Economic Development Action Plan, 2016/21, ABC (2016).

4. Partnership structures and management arrangements

SURF's key role in stages one and two during the feasibility study and AFA process, meant progressing the necessary administrative and procurement processes and providing pro bono support along with ABC during the Rothesay AFA process. The selection and briefing of consultants to deliver the charrette process (icecream architecture) was also coordinated by SURF via the AFA stakeholders group.

SURF simultaneously coordinated the recruitment, induction and support of a dedicated Rothesay AFA facilitator, who was recruited to support the AFA programme and partners in conjunction with appropriate continuing SURF management and networking support.

SURF also establish a community-based consultative reference group to inform and develop the Alliance for Action in Rothesay, based on a fluid membership of approximately 30 members incorporating community organisations and young people.

The establishment of priorities and key performance indicators were decided at the initial AFA community steering group, including, pro bono governance advice accessed via the expertise of Stephen Phillips of Burness LLP. Agreement on the appropriate model and set of KPIs is expected to follow. The AFA establish a series of quarterly on line surveys ('I'm a resident' 'I'm a visitor' 'I'm a business') to target consistent data collection from the area during their consultation process.

5. Impact of Current Approach

5.1 Positive impacts on the economic regeneration of the case study area:

Given the BIA project is still in the early stages of its implementation, some of the key outputs from planned activity relate to the following:

The Mount Stuart Trust (MST) masterplan

ABC and the BIA are working closely with the MST to assist in securing a facility to develop an education/research campus in Rothesay, aiming to progress local educational links to meet the needs of the community.

The Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI)¹⁸

- A successful stage two submission of a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the THI project at Guildford Square was submitted in March 2017 under the charrette guiding principles to help find a sustainable future for Royal Hotel subject to analysis from SURF and options appraisal funded through the Rothesay TH fund. ABC secured £2million additional funding from and £109,700 development funding.
- The plan is to complete the Rothesay TH project by 2022.

¹⁸ Bute and Cowal Economic Development Action, Area Committee 7th April 2015

- As part of Town Heritage development, the aim is to develop actions that align with social enterprise activities such as Vital Spark, within a pop-up shop environment to engender creativity on the island, linking specifically to work with young people and capacity-building to not only gauge community and business reaction, but allow feedback and develop ideas to the point of creation of new start-ups, which will then feed into Business Gateway support. The forecast is to increase enterprise and entrepreneurship activity by end of 2018 (evidence-based with 2016).
- THI grant has been awarded to 68 property owners to: repair four tenements; smaller scale repairs to a further eight properties; restore or replace 12 shopfronts; redevelop one prominent gap site. So far, it has been estimated that the TH project has created: four Bute-based jobs (foreman, bricklayer, stonemason and labourer); two Bute-based apprentices; Argyll-based contractors working on 17 projects; Glasgow -based contractors working on three projects.

The Rothesay Pavillion (RP) refurbishment

- The project is funded by a £12m partnership fund (including £5.85m of external funding secured from Heritage Lottery Fund Coastal Communities Fund, Regional Capital Grant Fund, Historic Scotland and HIE).
- The Pavillion project is expected to create a hub for culture, tourism and sports, including a full upgrade of the main hall; creation of a second performance and community venue; new café; mechanical and electrical upgrade; exterior repairs.
- The project is forecast to create up to 15 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs during the management of Pavilion, including up to 12 FTE jobs in rooftop offices to be let to social enterprises, and construction employment of some 80 FTEs (including four apprenticeships).¹⁹

5.2 Statistical impacts

According to the latest figures relating to the latest economic progress of the area, there has been employment growth between 2012 and 2014 in the wider Argyll and Bute area driven mainly by growth in Oban (+4% over the period) whilst at the same time employment growth in Rothesay has been relatively static²⁰.

6. Identifying what works

Focusing on the SURF AFA approach, it is important to recognise the role and approach it has taken towards community engagement, involvement, design and ownership of town planning of the Rothesay area.

Key '**what works**' features, across the overall SURF AFA approach, can be identified as relating mainly to:

- **Facilitating the community engagement process** and improving community capacity
- **Progressing the guiding principles** emerging from the community engagement process
- **Access to established networks** of national organisations

¹⁹ Bute and Cowal Economic Development Action Plan, 2016/21, ABC (2016).

²⁰ Business Register and Employment Survey, 2014.

- **Better connecting the community** with public sector organisations of interest
- **Supportive local and national policy context** and securing charrette funding from Scottish Government
- **Catalyst for change** - as the work of the Rothesay AFA concluded with the establishment of the BIA, the process led to the development of a similar approach for Dunoon and completion of a feasibility study in August 2016, and subsequently supported by SURF in making a successful application to the Scottish Government for charrette funding. In other words, a continuation of the approach demonstrates a commitment to the AFA programme and its continuation as an effective model for community engagement.

It is thought that local communities and organisations are encouraged by the shared AFA processes, providing a focus for shared interests – thought more favourable than conventional connections between individual funders, policymakers, places and specific regeneration projects. Indeed, it is thought that the wider AFA process can help leverage improved investment efficiency climate for cooperation across some historically disconnected local projects and personalities.

Further considering the Rothesay AFA approach, the SURF-led AFA for Rothesay was initially funded by the HIE until the establishment of the BIA charrette following securing funding from the Scottish Government. The key features of that approach can be identified as ‘working’ in bringing about sustainable community involvement in line with a ‘Town Centre First’ principle for a holistic approach to town centre development as part of a regeneration initiative that seeks to maximise opportunities for community participation.

Indeed, the BIA Charrette is thought to be one of the largest community engagement projects in the area in recent years, capturing the ambitions for the town’s future development potential.

Key ‘**what works**’ features relating to the Rothesay BIA include:

- **Clear leadership remit and lead/impartial organisation** – SURF was initially appointed to initiate and lead the establishment of AFA and the development of the charrette and eventual BIA, and hence can be viewed as the lead organisation in the process. A key advantage from the appointment of a lead organisation to progress the work relates mainly to:
 - their impartial, non-political nature;
 - ability to bringing together disparate voluntary/community groups
 - ability to facilitate bridging of public and private sector bodies into constructive dialogue
 - clarity of purpose on driving things forward and
 - clear national and local public sector support for SURF’s involvement.

Although ABC and HIE are responsible for the overall social and economic development planning for the area, SURF was provided a clear mandate to develop a community development approach with ultimate responsibility for the Rothesay AFA’s community development approach on town planning from the outset. There is therefore no ambiguity in SURF’s initial role in facilitating community and business involvement, as the lead organisation for facilitating the Rothesay AFA process.

- **Clarity of purpose** - A key element of the development of the AFA process was the formal constitution and branding of the AFA through the publication of a small ‘declaration of intent for Rothesay’, helping to increase the visibility and credibility of the process, leveraging in additional involvement of other agencies and community in the process.

- **High quality and committed people** – the initial feasibility study identified key issues relating to community capacity and lack of leadership for driving things forward. From the start of the process, there was HIE and ABC commitment for the establishment of an AFA, with the appointment of a SURF officer to lead the work. At the Steering Group level, the community representatives and national partners all expressed commitment in to the process, which facilitated the ability to leverage funding for the establishment of the BIA and eventual hand-over.
- **Seed corn/catalytic funding** – to assist the development of the Rothesay approach, funding was initially contributed by HIE, which acted to leverage funding from further sources, including the Scottish Government and the council, leading to the BIA SCIO being fully constituted.
- **Connectivity/partnership working across key agencies and partnerships** – the second stage of the AFA process allowed for the success establishment of a community focused, cross sector awareness and confidence for practical cooperation for the Rothesay AFA. Throughout the process there was recognition that SURF would enable access to a wide range of networks including both national and local organisations, drawing on their significant experience in facilitating and enabling community involvement and capacity building in other case study areas. Their effective relationship and partnership working with existing networks and organisations helped to leverage in the funding to establish a clear BIA.
- **Meaningful community involvement** – learning from SURF’s earlier work on the AFA programme meant SURF emphasised the importance of putting the communities’ ambitions at the forefront of the planning process for a town plan, and as such, enhanced their credibility with the community and facilitated community involvement in the series of events he lp during the process.
- **Committed community** – there was strong sense of commitment for ‘doing something different’ for Rothesay from the outset of the AFA process. A key asset in the area was an already active community, considered a major asset in terms of supporting the establishment of the AFA. Locally-based facilitation was also key to the process, for maintaining a grassroots approach.
- **Learning from elsewhere** – from the earlier work from SURF’s AFA and from the work of the feasibility study, SURF was keen to draw upon and build on previous SURF-funded research into the availability of, access to, and use of, community regeneration resources by initiatives and individuals in previous case study areas. Indeed this was a distinct objective (number 4) stated in the second stage proposal for the development the Rothesay AFA approach, albeit HIE declined to fund this fourth aim, SURF were able to draw upon their previous research in developing an approach for Rothesay.
- **Creating a brand identity** - The charrette process was elevated by the development of a distinctive brand identity to help increase community and partner involvement, used across all forms of media in order to raise awareness of the forthcoming charrette and associated activities.

7. Conclusions

The BIA case study represents a focus on a small town centre -led regeneration project, largely steered by community aspiration and involvement. The project is still in the relatively early stages in terms of producing long-term outcomes.

However, as is often the case with many community-based regeneration projects, achieving effective and ongoing engagement between community and public sector agencies can be challenging and key to achieving sustainable regeneration outcomes. Aside from an initial lack of community and stakeholder resistance concerning the project, considerable local community, political and policy commitment for the area has been achieved, ultimately ensuring an open, enthusiastic and proactive engagement process across a range of key stakeholders.

A substantial part of the work in Rothesay has also been the facilitation, provided via SURF, in overcoming and promoting increased cross sector collaboration and enhanced mutual understanding of respective perspectives, priorities and capacities. Indeed, the committed, collaborative participation of the local authority in supporting community-led regeneration has been a particular outcome for the project, as well as involvement of wider partners and networks. As a result, the BIA will be integral to achieving the council's continuing efforts to improve community engagement as a priority for the area²¹, building on community involvement towards growing the communities' previous lack of trust.

Going forward, aside from the extensive efforts of the project to grow community and wider stakeholder involvement, a clearer set of KPIs and governance arrangements for the BIA will be required, if to ensure a sustainable strategic focus on delivery over the longer term, and to ensure a clearly articulated, transparent and aligned strategy with wider public policy and strategies for the area as a whole.

This case study supports the findings of the research report *Economic Regeneration in Scotland Past Lessons; Current Practice; Future Challenges*.

Read and download the full report on the What Works Scotland website at:

whatworksscotland.ac.uk/publications/economic-regeneration-in-scotland-past-lessons-current-practice-future-challenges

²¹ Audit Scotland Best Value Review of Argyll and Bute Council, 2015.

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ANNEX 1: Case study approach

A range of professionals were interviewed drawn from the partner organisations involved in developing and delivering the BIA, including:

- Andy Milne, SURF
- Paul Duffy, SURF
- Donna and Donald (Mount Stuart Project)
- Reeni (Fyne futures recycling project)
- Julie Omlow (Rothesay Pavilion Project)

Interviews were recorded and transcribed; the key points from the interviews with the young people were captured through notes. Interpretation and analysis of the interviews was undertaken using standard qualitative methodology.²²

All the facts of the case study were checked with the key informants. Responsibility for interpretation, analysis and any errors lies with What Works Scotland.

²² Silverman D., 2013. Doing qualitative research: A practical handbook. London: Palgrave.

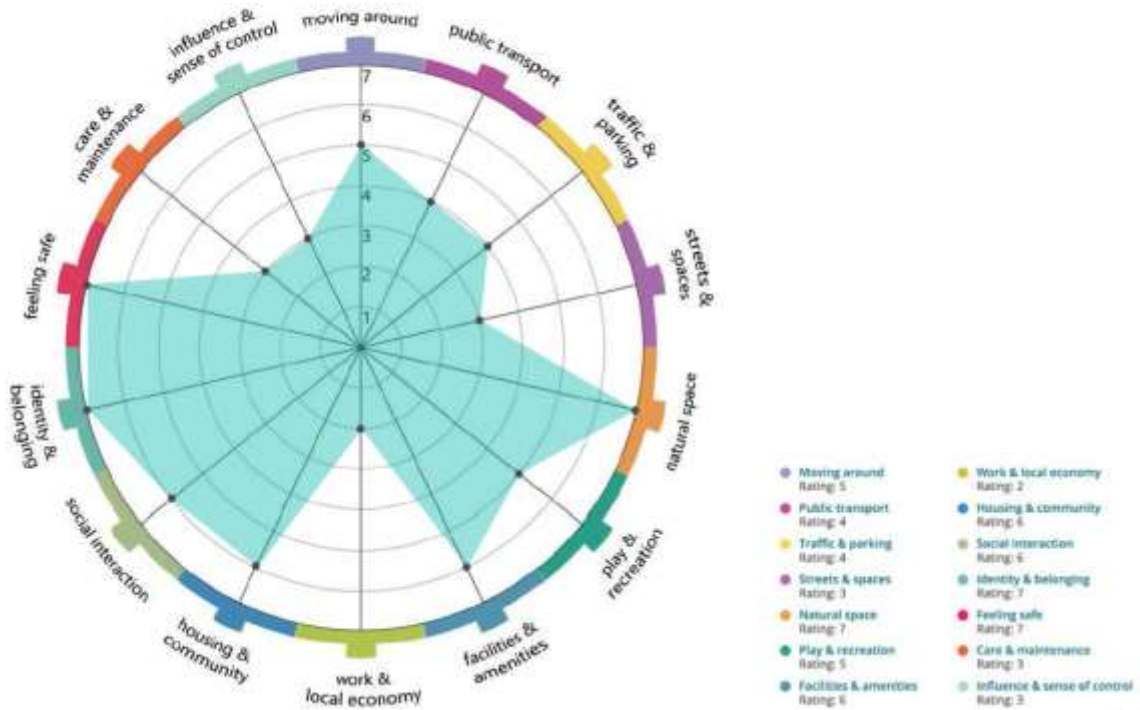
ANNEX 2: Charrette Long-term Objectives

To work together
Align and review the collection of town centre, tourist and business data across Bute
Foster existing partnerships with Council and National Agencies / Community Planning Partners
Collective promotion of a 'Bute Brand' and the town's offer
Reigniting the Discovery Centre as a central hub for locals and tourists.
Create a shared booking system and align various Bute Calendars into one
Programming and Development of public spaces
Create a live space audit
Support property owners to restore properties on the buildings at risk register
A community and owner-led improvement scheme for shopfronts, public buildings and pavements to complement TH investment and ongoing Council maintenance.
Redesign of circulation and wayfinding between harbour and town
Detailed reconfiguration of movement and parking across the wider town
Connected transport and active travel
Space to work
Support the growth of local produce and creative industries
An apprenticeship scheme that responds to and supports local businesses and young people
An active group to support and steer businesses
Attract more businesses and entrepreneurs
Reliable opening hours and seasonal alternatives for consistent jobs and space usage
Build confidence in our teenagers
Programmed facilities and increased activities for locals and tourists
Emphasis on environmental and intergenerational wellbeing
Affordable Housing for young families and more local social care for the elderly

Source: Rethinking Rothesay: Charrette Report, May 2016

ANNEX 3: The Place Standard tool: Results

This is the average of 18 Place Standard studies carried out during the Remaking Rothesay Charrette



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See the Place Standard tool online <https://www.placestandard.scot/>