

ARDGOUR LOCAL PLACE PLAN

INDEPENDENT REPORT OF CONSULTATION ON DRAFT PLAN, NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2023

Prepared by Nick Wright, Local Place Plan facilitator, December 2023.
Publicly discussed and accepted by Ardgour Community Council on 11th January 2024.

HEADLINES

Consultation on the draft Local Place Plan took place over a six week period between 3 November and 13 December 2023, promoted by door to door flyers to every household in the Community Council area, posters in public places, social media, an e-bulletin reaching over 150 people, and the [Local Place Plan website](#).

The draft plan was available at Ardgour Memorial Hall and online at www.ardgourcommunitiestogether.net/draftplan. People were encouraged to comment on the plan using an online survey form, email, letter or telephone to a named contact.

440 different people looked at the draft Plan on the website and had the opportunity to comment. Others viewed hard copies in Ardgour Memorial Hall.

Of those 440+ people who looked at the draft Plan, 25 people commented on it: 16 using the online survey form and 9 by email. Of the 16 people who used the online survey form to comment, 15 said the draft Plan was ready to be submitted to the Council; 4 of them said it needed some changes first.

Many thanks to all those who viewed and commented on the draft Plan.

The remainder of this report contains more detailed information:

- Section 1 (page 2) contains more information on the consultation.
- Section 2 (pages 3-15) summarises all comments received, how they were taken into account in finalising the Plan, and how the final Plan changed from the draft.
- Section 3 (pages 16-18) contains responses to the section of the online survey that asked people to say which proposals they most and least supported, and what work should be prioritised.

1 THE CONSULTATION

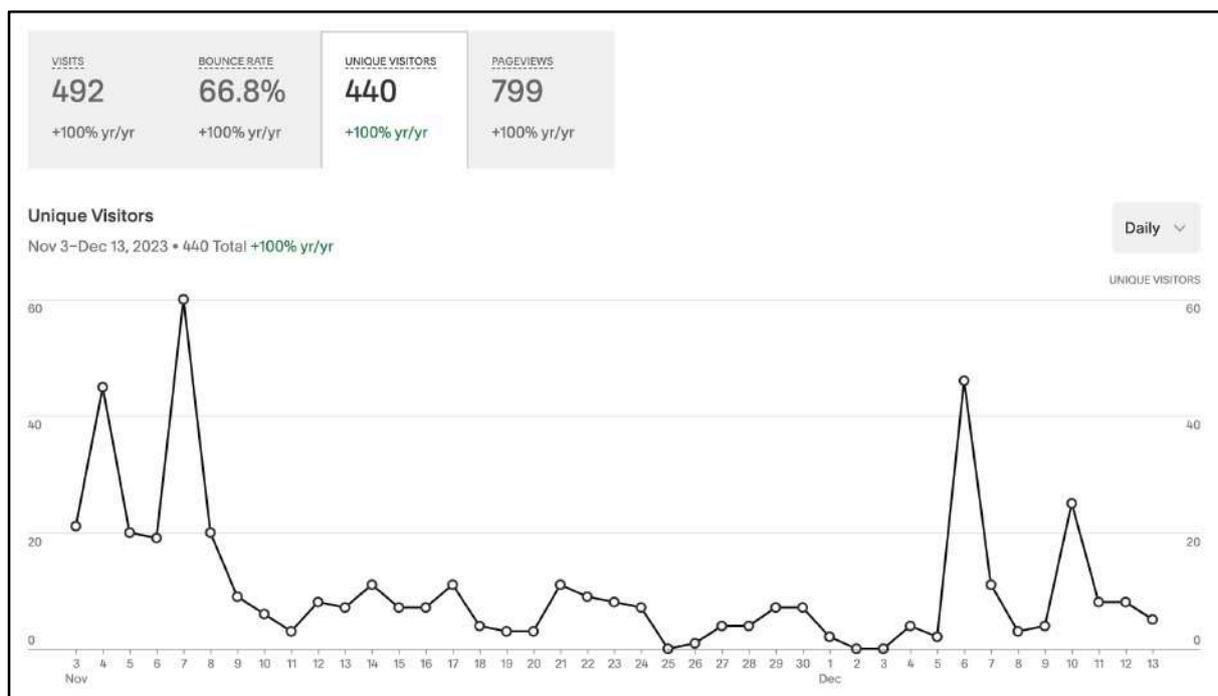
Consultation on the draft Local Place Plan took place between 3 November and 13 December 2023.

People were encouraged to view and comment the draft Plan in a number of ways:

- Online at www.ardgourcommunitiestogether.net/draftplan, which contained summary and full versions of the draft Plan and an online comment form.
- Hard copies at Ardgour Community Hall in Clovullin.
- Through direct contact with the plan facilitator, Nick Wright (e.g. by letter, phone or meeting).

440 different people viewed the draft Plan webpage and invitation to comment during the consultation period.

Figure 1: Visits to the consultation webpage during the consultation period



25 people commented on the draft Plan (16 using the online survey form and 9 by email; no responses were received by letter, telephone or meeting). Of the 16 people who used the online survey form to comment, 15 said the draft Plan was ready to be submitted to the Council; 4 of them said it needed some changes first.

2 COMMENTS AND CHANGES

Comments received and changes to the Plan are summarised in the tables on this and subsequent pages. The table headings reflect the sections used in the Plan; each section starts on a new page:

General comments	page 4
Call for Action 1: Services and facilities	page 5
Call for Action 2: Better connections	page 6
Call for Action 3: Community, culture and landscape	page 7
Call for Action 4: Affordable homes for all	page 8
Clovullin	page 10
North Corran	page 11
Camusnagaul	page 12
Achaphubuil	page 13
Kingairloch	page 14

Comments are summarised in the left-hand column of each table together with a note of which section of the plan they refer to. They have been summarised in order to respect confidentiality and focus on the essence of the comments. Every effort has been made not to lose the primary focus of people's comments.

Changes to the Plan, where appropriate, are summarised in the right-hand column of each table.

Please note that the Plan has only been changed where there is a compelling reason to do so and where changes fit with the overall vision of the Plan. This is to avoid disenfranchising the large number of people who shaped the draft Plan during the various stages of community engagement since Spring 2023, bearing in mind also that approximately 95% of the people who looked at the draft Plan chose to make no comment on it.

All section references relate to the draft Plan unless otherwise stated.

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GENERAL COMMENTS

COMMENT SUMMARY	CHANGES TO THE PLAN
Support for the high level vision of creating communities, protecting the natural environment and retaining cultural and community ethos. (1 respondent)	<i>Expresses support - no change needed.</i>
Make clear that the actions under Calls for Action are suggestions and aspirations; some may not materialise. (1 respondent)	<i>Chapters 1, 3 and 9 have been updated to emphasise that delivery depends on funding and resources being available.</i>
The plan seems a lot to ask, funding-wise. (1 respondent)	<i>The plan is ambitious, as it says on the first page. Unfortunately we cannot predict which particular elements of the plan might be attractive to funders in the future; removing specific initiatives at this stage might deprive the community of action in the event of unforeseen funding. Chapters 1, 3 and 9 have been updated to emphasise that delivery depends on funding and resources being available.</i>
Concern that only some settlements in the area are covered by the detailed maps in chapter 8, suggesting that the rationale for selection is unclear and that the entire area should be covered in detail. (1 respondent)	<p><i>The text at the start of chapter 8 has been amended to clarify that the focus is on places where the Calls for Action in chapters 3 to 7 are likely to have the greatest impacts. The aim is to illustrate how Clovullin, North Corran, Treslaig, Achaphubuil and Kingairloch could look in the future. This section should also be useful to help guide the Highland Council's next Local Development Plan.</i></p> <p><i>It is not necessary, desirable or feasible for the Local Place Plan to produce detailed maps of the entire Community Council area. There is plenty of information in the plan as a whole to guide landowners and developers to develop in locations and ways that the community would support.</i></p>
Who is going to deliver each project needs further attention? (1 respondent)	<i>All projects will need further work on delivery. [NB - section 3 of this report contains a summary of survey responses on future priorities.]</i>

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CALL FOR ACTION 1: SERVICES AND FACILITIES

	COMMENT SUMMARY	CHANGES TO THE PLAN
4.1	Support hall improvements at Treslaig and Ardgour. (1 respondent)	<i>Expresses support - no change needed.</i>
4.2	Although Ardgour Hall needs upgrading, not convinced a new hall is appropriate (2 respondents) - unless there is funding available (that view was expressed by 1 of those 2 respondents).	<i>If funding were to become available in the future, a new Ardgour hall would enable more fit-for-purpose premises to be created and new opportunities to be realised. This should not prevent necessary repairs to the existing hall; section 4.1 is updated to reflect that.</i>
4.3	Support for upgrade of Primary school pitch. (1 respondent)	<i>Expresses support - no change needed.</i>
4.4	A shop for essentials is desperately needed in the area (1 respondent), but concerned that it is not commercially viable (1 respondent) and re-opening the shop in the same shop building in Ardgour could be problematic. (1 respondent)	<i>A shop was one of the most popular aspirations in the community survey. Viability would of course be a challenge, but is unknown without it being tested (especially for a community-run enterprise). A specific building is not suggested. No change needed.</i>
4.8	Support for respite and residential care at Dail Mhor in Strontian. (1 respondent)	<i>Expresses support - no change needed.</i>
4.9	Support for child care, suggests there should be a Lochaber register. (1 respondent)	<i>Text amended to include suggestion of a register.</i>
4.11	Support for community first responders. (1 respondent) No need for community first responders – cost is not justified as there is an ambulance in Strontian. (1 respondent)	<i>No change. If funding and volunteers become available, community first responder(s) could save lives.</i>
4.12	There is also a defibrillator in Treslaig hall. (2 respondents)	<i>Text updated.</i>

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CALL FOR ACTION 2: BETTER CONNECTIONS

	COMMENT SUMMARY	CHANGES TO THE PLAN
-	Support for proposals for ferries (5.1-5.4), public /community transport (5.6-5.7) and walking, cycling and road safety (5.8-5.12), community filling station (5.13) and broadband (5.14). (1 respondent)	<i>Expresses support - no change needed.</i>
-	Support for electric charging points and improvements to cycling safety. (1 respondent)	<i>Expresses support - no change needed.</i>
5.3	Camusnagaul ferry (5 respondents) – support more ferry services (including to Corpach); safety improvements to pier and better car park maintenance needed.	<i>Text amended to reflect suggestions on left and the comments summarised in ‘Camusnagaul’ section below)</i>
5.5	All proposed ferry slipways and fixed link options should be identified for Highland Council to safeguard. (1 respondent)	<i>Text amended on pages 18, 26 and 27 to refer to need for safeguarding of land for future ferry infrastructure and fixed link options.</i>
5.8	Safe walking route from North Corran to Clovullin would be good for the general public and tourists, but we could lose school transport to the Primary School. (1 respondent)	<i>Expresses support. Proposal retained, with updated text to stress the need to retain school transport.</i>

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CALL FOR ACTION 3: COMMUNITY, CULTURE & LANDSCAPE

	COMMENT SUMMARY	CHANGES TO THE PLAN
-	Support for investigating events and activities proposals (6.1-6.3), Gaelic (6.5), tourism initiatives (6.6-6.7), paths proposals (6.8), habitat restoration (6.9) and tackling pollution (6.10-6.11). (1 respondent)	<i>Expresses support - no change needed.</i>
6.13	Skills and training initiative needs to feed into current review of UHI NWH learning centre at Strontian. (1 respondent)	<i>Text updated.</i>
6.14	Support for rural weighting, suggest linking to increased cost of energy, housing etc. (1 respondent)	<i>Expresses support; text updated as suggested.</i>
6.16	Support for community purchase of Ardgour Hotel, for flats and restaurant. (1 respondent)	<i>Expresses support; text updated to broaden options.</i>
6.17	Enhance energy production proposals to include creation of a locally-powered micro-grid and link with electric vehicles to provide storage, so reducing energy costs / carbon emissions and increasing resilience. (1 respondent)	<i>Text updated (and moved to paragraph 6.12 in the final Plan)</i>

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CALL FOR ACTION 4: AFFORDABLE HOMES FOR ALL

	COMMENT SUMMARY	CHANGES TO THE PLAN
-	<p>“What we’re aiming for” section should state that people need to be able to stay and move here, otherwise we will not have a community. That means having a range of affordable good quality homes across a range of tenures and ensuring people can afford to live in them.</p>	<p><i>Amend wording.</i></p>
-	<p>Agree with most of the housing proposals particularly 7.1-7.2, 7.5-7.17. (1 respondent)</p>	<p><i>Expresses support - no change needed.</i></p>
7.3	<p>Disagree that all new housing should be affordable (3 respondents). More detail:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This would remove the incentive for anyone to build houses and stop investment (2 respondents) • The proposal is illegal, unworkable and nonsensical (2 respondents) • A requirement for say 80% would be more appropriate (1 respondent) 	<p><i>The wording of this particular point 7.3 has been edited to stress that is an aspiration for future national and local policy. This complements the explanation at the start of the chapter that all the numbered points are potential starting points to achieve what we’re aiming for, rather than concrete proposals.</i></p> <p><i>Affordable housing was flagged up in the community survey and subsequent engagement as a top priority, as in much of rural Scotland. It would be inappropriate to dilute its importance.</i></p> <p><i>Current initiatives are simply not tackling the issue – more radical action is needed.</i></p> <p><i>The aspiration that all new homes should be affordable has been proved to be both workable and realistic elsewhere in the UK. The North Wales arrangements cited in the Plan have been operating for a number of years and have proved workable. Their introduction here would need changes in national and local planning policy, as the Plan states; part of the purpose of Local Place Plans is to inform such policy changes. Experience in N Wales is</i></p>

		<p>that there is still demand for housing, which continues to be built; the industry adapts to the new arrangements.</p> <p>Delivering the aspiration does of course need more work by national and local government for it to be implemented in Scotland.</p>
7.4	<p>Estates should be encouraged to build houses for local people. (1 respondent)</p> <p>Match every new Estate-built home with a new affordable home is too high (3 respondents).</p> <p>Two of those respondents suggest it should be deleted (because it is unworkable, unnecessarily targets estates and would result in very few affordable homes being built).</p> <p>Another respondent suggests a lower ratio of 1:3 or 1:4 over a 10 year period.</p>	<p>Delete the proposal relating to estates. Instead, encourage estates to build more affordable homes in line with section 7 of the Plan, with amended text in point 7.1 of the Plan.</p>
-	<p>Commuted sums paid by developers in relation to affordable housing should be invested on housing in the Community Council, not elsewhere such as urban areas (1 respondent)</p>	<p>Add as an extra point (new point 7.4 in the finalised Plan)</p>
-	<p>Re-introduce the old policy of the old Lochaber planning committee policy that 1 in 3 sites or houses in a development were sold to a local person at an affordable price, which worked for about a decade. (1 respondent)</p>	<p>Add as an extra point (new point 7.5 in the finalised Plan)</p>
7.8	<p>Concern that limiting development of agricultural/crofting land will prevent development of new homes on crofts at reasonable prices. (1 respondent)</p> <p>High quality agricultural/crofting land should be retained rather than lost to development. (1 respondent)</p>	<p>Heading and text amended to focus on retention of highest quality agricultural land and protection of landscape setting and at Clovullin, Treslaig and along south Loch Eilside.</p>
7.12	<p>Concern that preventing change of use of existing homes to holiday lets will prevent people from earning money from holiday lets in a tourist area. (1 respondent)</p>	<p>Affordable housing was flagged up in the community survey and subsequent engagement as a top priority, as in much of rural Scotland. Current initiatives are simply not tackling the issue so stronger policies are needed.</p>

		<p><i>Short Term Let Control Areas have been introduced nationally for this very purpose and would help to tackle the problem. The Community Council has recently decided in principle to favour long term occupation of homes.</i></p> <p><i>No change to the plan.</i></p>
7.13	Support for tax increase on second homes but needs to be a 10-fold increase on Council tax to pay for affordable housing for local people (excluding long term family croft houses). (1 respondent)	<i>Expresses support; text amended to be clearer.</i>
7.15	Housing points criteria need hardening so that local need is paramount along with the need for key workers. (1 respondent)	<i>Expresses support; text amended to be clearer.</i>
-	Build up evidence of local housing demand, encouraging people to join the housing list and doing a local survey of housing need (1 respondent)	<i>Added as an extra action (new action 7.16)</i>
-	Avoid people being removed from the housing waiting list if they turn down homes that are not local, so they are not deterred from joining the waiting list or feel forced to accept homes elsewhere (1 respondent)	<i>Added as an extra action (new action 7.17)</i>

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CLOVULLIN

COMMENT SUMMARY	CHANGES TO THE PLAN
<p>Label the areas around the Primary School as school parking, school playground etc. Only the field is accessible to the community out with school hours, all the rest is school grounds. (1 respondent)</p>	<p><i>Map 5 amended to make clear that the community field is currently publicly accessible out with school hours. The aspiration is to open up the parking and playground to wider community use.</i></p>
<p>Add a direct pedestrian link to the community field for access out with school hours, not via the school grounds (1 respondent)</p>	<p><i>Map 5 amended to include a direct pedestrian link.</i></p>
<p>Support for proposals except that there should be a plan without a new village hall. (2 respondents)</p>	<p><i>Text amended on pages 16 and 25 to make clear that this is a long term proposal and the other elements of the plan do not depend on it.</i></p>

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NORTH CORRAN

COMMENT SUMMARY	CHANGES TO THE PLAN
Ardgour war memorial and its view would be a great place for picnic tables. (1 respondent)	<i>Map 6 updated to show the war memorial and viewpoint</i>
Support for the proposals. (1 respondent)	<i>Expresses support – no change needed.</i>

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CAMUSNAGAUL

COMMENT SUMMARY	CHANGES TO THE PLAN
<p>Concerns about the proposed viewpoint structure (4 respondents) – including additional noise and pollution from increased footfall, traffic and marine activity, impact on the view and setting, little benefit for locals, future maintenance challenge, previous structure was used as a toilet.</p> <p>Suggested that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance of the area should be improved • The pier should be made safer for passengers • There should be more ferry services • Outdoor storage should be retained in the sheltered area where it is currently, out of the wind and screened from view • No need for a low speed feature (there is now a 30mph limit) • A viewpoint could be located at ‘Picnic Corner’ at the other end of the bay, a superior position away from houses • Marina proposal is inappropriate 	<p><i>Map 9 has been removed from the plan due to concerns from the local residents about the proposed viewpoint structure in particular.</i></p> <p><i>Section 5.3 (Getting About) has been amended to take account of the suggestions on the left.</i></p>
<p>Support for the proposals. (1 respondent)</p>	<p><i>Expresses support - no change needed.</i></p>

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ACHAPHUBUIL

COMMENT SUMMARY	CHANGES TO THE PLAN
Support for the proposals – the site of the proposed greenspace improvements is unsuitable for housing and could be connected with the adjacent ancient native woodlands (<i>1 respondent</i>)	<i>Expresses support – no change needed.</i>

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KINGAIRLOCH

COMMENT SUMMARY	CHANGES TO THE PLAN
Support the proposals from the new owners after decades of conversion of permanent homes into holiday lets. To be long term sustainable, the houses need to become independent of the estate with rural housing burdens. (1 respondent)	<i>Expresses support - no change needed.</i>
More detailed proposals provided by the estate of how to create a sustainable community at Kingairloch. (1 respondent)	<i>Text amended accordingly.</i>
As well as reference to Scottish Land Commission protocols, add reference to Scottish Land and Estates Landowners' Commitment	<i>Text amended accordingly.</i>

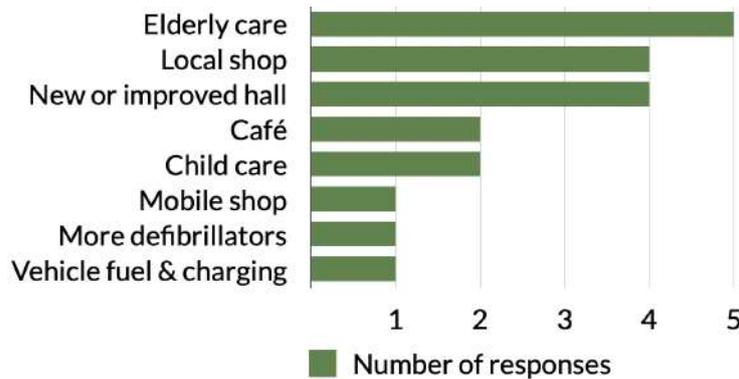
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3 PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

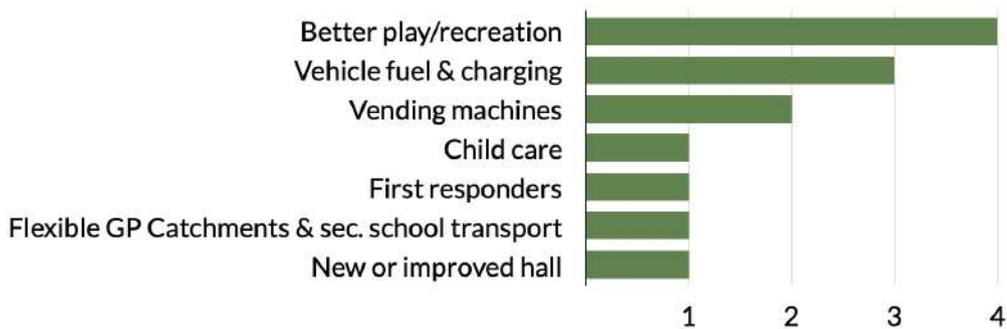
As well as asking for comments on the draft Plan, the online consultation form also asked people which elements of the Plan should be prioritised. This final section of the report has the results of the 16 respondents' answers to those questions.

Call for Action 1: Services and facilities

What do you most support?

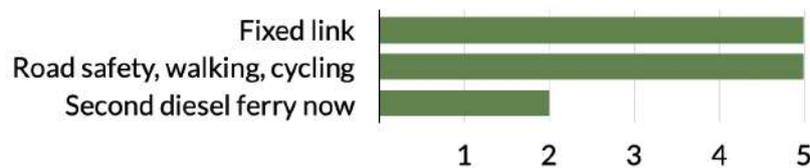


What do you least support?

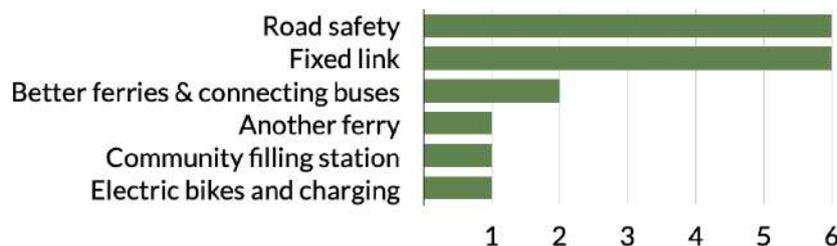


Call for Action 2: Better connections

What do you most support?

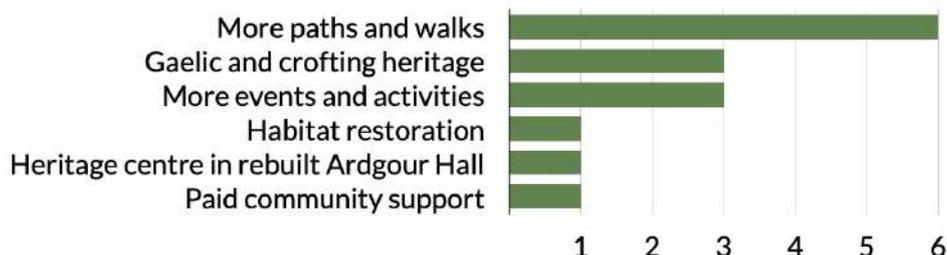


What do you least support?



Call for Action 3: Community, culture and landscape

What do you most support?

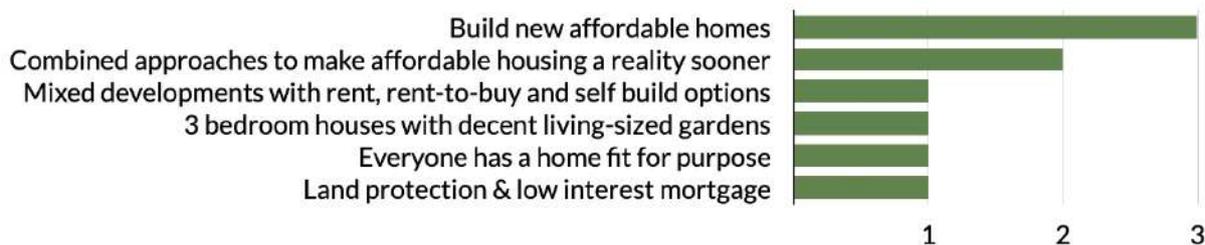


What do you least support?

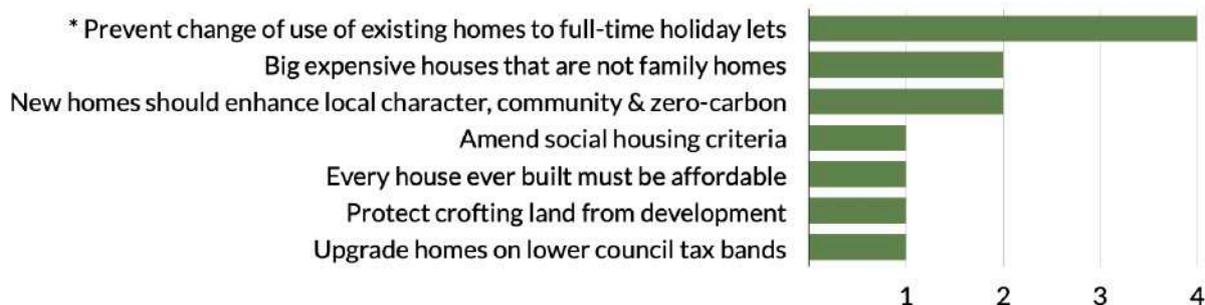


Call for Action 4: Affordable housing for all

What do you most support?



What do you least support?



* One respondent wrote: “I support local people to have a holiday let, I don’t support people from miles away to have a holiday let and then want locals to look after it for them”

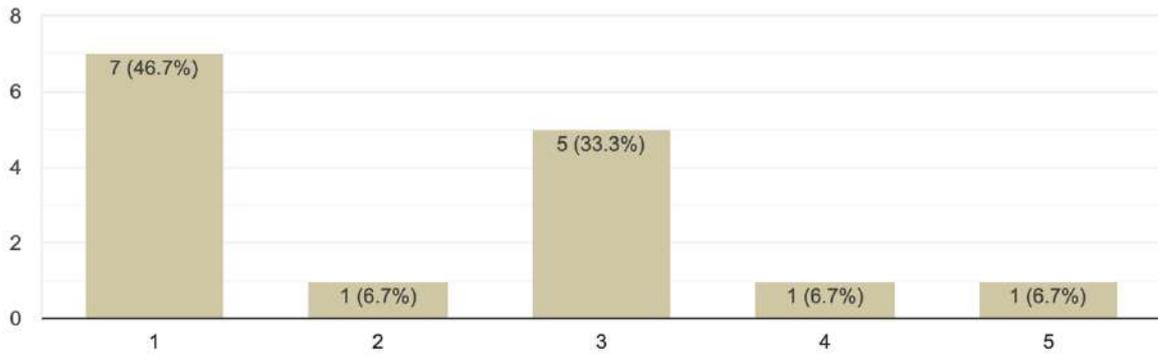
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How important are each of the following factors in selecting priorities for action?

The horizontal axis of each graph shows priority from 1 (high) to 5 (low). The vertical axis shows how many people chose each level of priority.

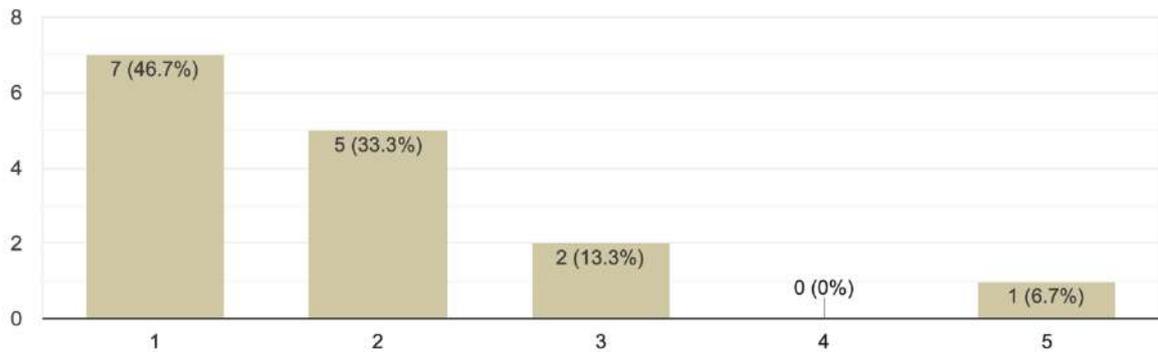
Generating more community income, to implement more of the plan

15 responses



Getting some quick wins, to show that things can happen

15 responses



Getting some paid support, like a part-time member of staff, to avoid overloading volunteers

15 responses

