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## INVERARAY PROJECT PRELIMINARY MASTER PLAN **CONSULTATION SUMMARY**



Prepared by  Urban Animation  
for Argyll Estates

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## 1.0 Introduction

This Report summarises consultation activities undertaken in mid 2010, when community and public views were sought on the Preliminary Master Plan for the Inveraray Project.

The findings of this Report will be used to shape the proposals as they develop in detail. It will be issued to Argyll & Bute Council Planning Department, local press and media, the Community Council, a database of local people who provided email addresses during the consultation and made available for view and comment at [www.urban-animation.com](http://www.urban-animation.com).

## 2.0 Events and Publicity

Public consultation sessions were held at the Nicoll Hall, Inveraray from 2pm-4pm on Friday 18th June and from 10am-noon and 2pm-4pm on Saturday 19th June. All sessions were hosted by Richard Heggie and Susan Galloway of Urban Animation, with assistance from Antony Duthie on Friday and Nick Wright on Saturday. Andrew Montgomery, the Argyll Estates Factor also attended the Friday session.

The events were informal drop in sessions, with copies of the Preliminary Master Plan available and the key graphics from the document on display in large scale format. An easily understood questionnaire was made available and all visitors were requested to complete a copy. Sticky notes were available to allow comments to be noted on drawings and plans. Discussion was encouraged.

The public consultation sessions were advertised in a local newspaper, the Argyllshire Advertiser, on 11th and 18th June 2010 (attached as Appendix 1). The popular local news website [www.forargyll.com](http://www.forargyll.com) also listed the events, as did the local community website [www.visit-inveraray.co.uk](http://www.visit-inveraray.co.uk).

Editorial coverage was printed in several national and local papers and websites including :

- The Scotsman
- Argyllshire Advertiser/Campbeltown Courier
- Dunoon Observer/Argyllshire Standard
- [www.forargyll.com](http://www.forargyll.com)
- [www.urbanrealm.com](http://www.urbanrealm.com)
- [www.scottishproperty.co.uk](http://www.scottishproperty.co.uk)

Press releases were also sent to the Herald and the Oban Times, although it is not known if these publications mentioned the events. Posters were placed in local shops and buildings such as the Post Office and community buildings (see Appendix 2). Emails were sent to several individuals or groups who had been contacted previously in connection with the Project.

Project and consultation information was available at [www.urban-animation.com](http://www.urban-animation.com), including details of the events and a copy of the questionnaire, which could be filled in online and emailed, or printed off and posted. This website was mentioned in all publicity for the events.

Richard Heggie of Urban Animation briefed the Inveraray Community Council on the Project and the Preliminary Master Plan at its meeting on 1st June 2010.

Following the events, both the Argyllshire Advertiser and Dunoon Observer ran two further articles discussing the Project and reminding readers of the importance of recording views and opinions in writing. An article was also published by [www.forargyll.com](http://www.forargyll.com) providing further information and again urging local people to register their views in writing. Copies of the questionnaire were made available in a number of local shops.

The consultation period ran from 18th June to 9th August, having been extended from the initial end date of 31st July to encourage more people to return the questionnaire.

## 3.0 Approach to Information Gathering

Whilst the 'red line' Project site is the focus of the study, there are a number of broader considerations and issues which set the context for the proposals. Some of these are relevant to Inveraray as a whole, others relate to the MAKI area (mid Argyll, Kintyre and Islay). The consultation exercise therefore aimed to set the Project within the wider context, ensuring that local people were aware of those matters the Project could control and others which might only be influenced, relying upon other private, public or community interests for action.

It was important to illustrate knowledge of Inveraray and local issues to give members of the public confidence that their views are understood. The efforts of the team to gain this local knowledge through visits, discussions and background reading appeared to be appreciated.



## 4.0 Response to Consultation Exercise

It was clear from discussions with numerous local people over the weekend of the events that there was good awareness of the Project and the consultation sessions amongst the population. Most people appeared to be aware of the events. Equally, as the consultation period ran towards its conclusion it was clear that many local people were aware of the key ideas set out in Preliminary Master Plan and realised there was a formal opportunity to comment.

Numbers attending the consultation event sessions were :

Friday afternoon	- 18
Saturday morning	- 23
Saturday afternoon	- 21
Total	- 62

The Urban Animation office also took several emails and calls asking about the Project.

Questionnaire responses from the events and over the consultation period were as follows :

At public events	- 20
By post	- 5
By email	- 4
Total	- 29

In some cases, couples filled in only one form. Some took forms away and promised to return them by post. Most people attending the sessions stayed for at least 15 minutes. Many stated for at least half an hour and some for longer. Most people participated fully in good natured and lengthy discussion of the issues at hand.

The number of questionnaires returned is a little lower than hoped, particularly since extensive efforts have been made through publicity and press coverage to stress the importance of written responses. Having said that, there has been significant discussion with local people which has provided useful feedback, suggesting that the written feedback is representative of wider opinion.

A number of local people have suggested that a limited number of residents felt the need to record their comments since they generally support the principle of development at Inveraray, in the location proposed. Whilst this cannot be quantified, it is certainly true that publicity was widely available and comparable consultation carried out by Urban Animation in other locations has resulted in a greater written response. Further consultation will be carried out by Argyll & Bute Council, should the proposals be included in its forthcoming Main Issues Report. This will allow further insight into local opinion.

## 5.0 Feedback and Analysis

The following summary takes each question posed in the questionnaire and sets out the range of responses, records the number expressing a view and an initial analysis of findings. Points recorded on 14 sticky notes deposited at the consultation sessions are included here.

### Q1. What do you think is good about Inveraray?

- Attractive appearance (13)
- Good location / setting (13)
- Active community / good community spirit (7)
- Good sized town, not too big or too small (6)
- Friendly people (4)
- Good restaurants (4)
- Interesting history of the town (4)
- Safe place to live / peaceful / good architecture and buildings (3 each)
- Festivals and music (3)
- Good distance from Glasgow and other towns (2)
- Good primary school, good shops, good walks (2 each)
- Good garage, good surgery, shinty, pipe band (1 each)
- Clean, good climate, good wildlife, outdoor visitor centre (1 each)
- Mixed population / easy to get around on foot (1 each)
- Popular visitor destination / too much tartan tat (1 each)
- Compact / disjointed (1 each)

The most popular responses suggest a general appreciation of the attractive location and appearance of the town. Some responses highlight a positive community spirit, whilst a number of specific facilities, attractions or aspects of life are mentioned as strengths.

Protecting and enhancing the appearance and setting of the town will clearly be important to the local community. Involving local people in the detailed development of the proposals might build upon the existing community spirit. Providing additional facilities and supporting those which already exist might help to consolidate the attractions of living in the town.

## Q2. What new services and facilities do you think Inveraray needs?

- Health / medical centre / doctor's surgery (13)
- Dental facilities (12)
- Indoor leisure / sports centre (12)
- Better / larger / more local shops (9)
- New community hall / community centre (8)
- Jobs opportunities / business and office space / craft and artist workshops (7)
- Affordable housing / rental housing (6)
- Children's play area (6)
- Upgrade the existing community hall (6)
- Community activities for youths and young people (5)
- Ambulance station (4)
- Bigger police station / full time policing (3)
- Improved sewage system (3)
- Swimming pool (3)
- Shinty pitch / supermarket / parking / community garden (2 each)
- New fire station / better maintenance of historic buildings (2 each)
- Professional services / vet / library / creche / larger school (1 each)
- Sports field / all weather pitch (1 each)
- Road bypass / better roads / better public transport (1 each)
- Active use of Loch Fyne for leisure and transport (1)
- Don't spoil character of town (1)

There is a well known local demand for health and dental facilities and a recent proposal to provide a centre for these services fell through. The Inveraray project presents an opportunity to work with the relevant public authorities to explore options for meeting community aspirations for local provision of these important facilities.

Improved community, leisure, play and sports provision is also a popular item, with both indoor and outdoor facilities sought. There is an issue with the community hall, which is in poor condition. The Project may help to stimulate discussion with relevant parties regarding options for upgrading the building or providing new facilities at other buildings or within the site. Public expenditure constraints are a significant hurdle but economies of scale, or shared uses of buildings may be a topic for discussion with the Council and Community Planning Partnership.

Affordable housing has been mentioned here and elsewhere as an important issue. Many people suggest provision should meet local need, not accommodate families from further afield.

Improved provision for shopping and office or business space is also requested. Some local businesses mentioned that there is a shortage of space within the Main Street area. New development should not undermine the retail and commercial centre of the town but the Project can offer opportunities for space to support the set up or expansion of local businesses.

The need for an ambulance depot is well understood locally and lack of police presence was mentioned in this section and in discussions with a number of local people.



### Q3. Do you have any views on roads, parking, walking and cycling in and around Inveraray?

- Concern over parking charges (9)
- Paths and pedestrian routes are fine (9)
- Provide better / more footpath and cycle routes (7)
- Many roads and paths require resurfacing or upgrading (5)
- Resident and visitor parking is a problem / need more (5)
- Inveraray needs a bypass road for A83 (4)
- Roads are too dangerous and in poor condition (4)
- Cycling provision is fine (4)
- There is adequate parking (3)
- Reopen Estate roads for walking and cycling (3)
- Provide cycleways / paths from caravan park to town centre (2)
- Provide better paths and cycleways at lochside areas (2)
- Reduce area of main car park / keep main car park as it is (1 each)
- Map needed showing local walks / keep local walks informal and quiet (1 each)
- Provide caravan parking in town / provide better bus parking (1 each)
- Main Street very busy / traffic bottlenecks in centre (1 each)
- Reduce on street parking in Main Street / improve pedestrian safety (1 each)
- Too many road signs / provide seating and garden area at community hall (1 each)
- Road at Barn Park needs widened (1)

The parking charges in Inveraray are a source of significant local irritation, stemming from the difficulties the Council has in managing the mix of resident and visitor traffic using the centre of the town and The Avenue car park. The Project cannot solve this issue but may offer improved arrangements south of the Primary School, where adjustments to the car parking area are proposed.

The possibility of a bypass leading the A83 around the town has been investigated previously. There are significant issues in finding a suitable route around Inveraray Castle. The Project is unlikely to be able to solve this problem but could provide an option to take traffic from the A819 away from Main Street and the narrow junction with the A83 in the long term. The proposals would not prevent reconsideration of the bypass option at a later date, although the cost and environmental impact may ultimately prove insurmountable.

A number of options for improved routes, access and parking are raised and these can be considered as the proposals are designed in greater detail.

### Q4. Is there an opportunity to build on the success of Inveraray as a visitor and tourist destination?

- Buildings and old parts of town need repairs and repainting (5)
- Need more / better specialist shops and less 'tartan tat' (4)
- Improve facilities for boat users and increase leisure use of Lochs (3)
- Need better restaurants and carry out options and use more local produce (3)
- Focus on history and uniqueness of Inveraray (2)
- Attractions good for short visits / need visitors to stay for longer (2)
- Need to market Inveraray and its attractions more effectively (2)
- More events / better hotel / beach at Loch / picnic tables at car park (1 each)
- Need more / better attractions to compete with other destinations (1)
- Need a visitor centre / activities for young children / cheaper retail floorspace (1 each)
- Need opportunities for local arts and craft businesses (1)
- Don't encourage more visitors (1)
- People like town as it is / don't make it much bigger / don't change it too much (1 each)
- Town too busy in summer / better value for money needed (1 each)
- Hotel at front of site may spoil views (1)
- Need map showing local paths and walks (1)
- Control dog fouling (1)

The importance of the tourism industry is widely recognised by residents but the need to improve the quality of the visitor experience is noted by many. Some identify greater potential to capitalise on visits to the town, whilst the need to maintain the fabric of the older buildings is also highlighted. A small number of people want to keep the visitor numbers no higher than at present.

The theme of providing better housing, job prospects and facilities for local people suggests Inveraray needs to build upon its successes. Tourism and visitor trips seems to provide scope for increased economic benefits for the town, but this must be managed to ensure local amenity does not suffer. Influencing the movement of visitors through the sensitive distribution of land uses, routes and spaces will be important.

Further discussion of tourism potential is set out following Question 7 in this section.

## Q5. What other issues does Inveraray face and how might new development address these?

- Need more employment opportunities locally (9)
- Need local / affordable housing options for rent and purchase (9)
- Avoid young people leaving town / don't become a retirement town (8)
- Don't dump tenants from elsewhere in new housing - use it to meet local need (4)
- Good community hall required / events and activities (3)
- Limit numbers of second homes (2)
- Need better quality shops / jobs and developments (2)
- Premises needed for professional services (2)
- Need to encourage entrepreneurs (2)
- Need affordable workspace / workshops for small businesses (1)
- Town must remain competitive as a visitor destination (1)
- Need more facilities / better parking for residents and visitors (1 each)
- Lack of community spirit / Integrate newcomers into community (1 each)
- New development is not needed / new development will bring jobs (1 each)
- Reinstate Avenue trees / protect Avenue trees (1 each)
- Encourage biomass heating system (1)

The sustainable future of the town is identified by many as the key issue, whether through access for local people to jobs, housing or services and facilities. In discussions, there was often a suggestion that little development has taken place in Inveraray in recent times and that the vitality of the town is slowly fading.

There are concerns that the town needs to retain its young people by offering them opportunities, otherwise the age profile of the population may shift towards an excessively proportion of older people. The result could be the inability of the town population to support the services and facilities Inveraray already has, aside from the new ones its residents would like.

## Q6. The Preliminary Master Plan suggests a centrally located development. What do you think?

- Agree this is the best site (17)
- Development must be compatible with old town and surroundings (7)
- The development will not improve Inveraray (1)
- Don't compete with Main Street (1)
- Prefer this area to land further south (1)

There is clear and widespread support for locating any new development in the central part of the town, expressed through formal responses to the questionnaire and also in informal discussions with those attending the consultation sessions. However, residents are seeking a development solution which respects the character of the old town and the amenity of adjacent residents.



## Q7. Do you have any other comments on the Preliminary Master Plan?

- Interesting / good / clever / thoughtful proposal addresses issues (4)
- Don't block views from existing houses / protect amenity of existing residents (3)
- Hotel could nuisance to existing residents (2)
- Houses and facilities should be for local people (2)
- Ensure access roads and parking are adequate (2)
- Is another hotel required (2)
- Planned approach may help Scottish Water deal with infrastructure issues (1)
- Slow pace of development preferred (1)
- Keep hotel away from existing residents (1 each)
- Central point for bus parking would benefit Main Street businesses (1)
- Provide a central play area for residents and visitors (1)
- How will greater population benefit local people (1)
- Hotel will only attract seasonal jobs (1)
- Incongruous mix of housing, commercial and hotel uses (1)
- There is an air of desperation about the whole proposal (1)
- Hotel too near school and will be a haven for paedophiles (1)

A number of issues are raised although none stand out as key concerns. The possibility of a new hotel attracts a variety of negative comments, although only a small number of people see this use is a potential problem - typically local residents who have concerns over amenity.

The market for a new hotel is not established and this requires further assessment in conjunction with existing proprietors in the town, potential operators, Visit Scotland and local people. No clear picture has emerged on the degree to which the town should seek to build upon its attraction as a visitor destination, or otherwise. This is a topic which could be explored through the Council's forthcoming Main Issues Report - the first stage of its Local Development Plan for Argyll and Bute.

The location of any hotel could be chosen to ensure minimum impact on local residents and typical planning considerations would control factors of amenity, privacy and nuisance should a planning application for this use be made at some point in the future.



## Q8. Are there any other points you would like to make? What questions do you have?

- The focus should be on the old part of Inveraray, which needs improved (2)
- Consultation will not change anything (2)
- Proposal is a muddle, adding a new village to one that already exists (1)
- Project is just aiming to make money for Argyll Estates (1)
- Danger in large numbers of incomers failing to integrate with community (1)
- Project might bring the regeneration Inveraray needs (1)
- Where will new jobs come from for residents of the development? (1)
- Maintenance of new development must be better than at older part of town (1)

Only a few general issues are raised, with most points covered elsewhere in the questionnaire.



## 6.0 Key Findings

The consultation exercise as a whole has enabled the Project team to gather a significant amount of feedback through a number of channels. The local community and other interested parties have had an opportunity to comment on the Project at an early stage, before any detailed proposals have been prepared. The volume of written responses has been somewhat disappointing but the views expressed in the questionnaires are considered to be representative of the wider mood.

The following general points summarise the main findings :

**There is broad local support for the principle of new development at Inveraray;**

**New development would be best located on the Project site;**

**The quality and setting of the original planned village must be protected;**

**The amenity of existing residents should be protected;**

**New development should primarily meet the needs of local people.**

These principles should be key design drivers shaping the proposals in greater detail as the Project moves forward. Three additional matters require further consideration:

- 1. How should Inveraray respond to the opportunity to expand its tourism and visitor function?**
- 2. How can the Project build partnerships with the community, public agencies and investors to deliver the housing, employment, services and facilities Inveraray needs?**
- 3. Is the community willing to engage more fully with the planning process, to help shape the Inveraray Project proposals to meet local needs?**

## Appendix 1 :

Argyllshire Advertiser Advert and Article  
18 June 2010



### DEVELOPMENT IN INVERARAY WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Argyll Estates has prepared a Preliminary Master Plan for future housing, facilities, open space and routes at Inveraray. Local people, groups and businesses are invited to view and discuss the document and comment on local issues and opportunities at Inveraray.

Open Public Consultation Sessions at

**Nicoll Hall, Inveraray**

from 2pm-4pm on Friday 18th June 2010

10am-noon and 2pm-4pm on Saturday 19th June 2010

All comments will be fully considered and will help to shape the Final Master Plan document. Later in 2010, Argyll and Bute Council will consider the proposals for inclusion in the first stage of its Local Development Plan.

The Preliminary Master Plan is also available at [www.urban-animation.com](http://www.urban-animation.com) where comments and questions can be submitted by email. Written comments can be sent to Urban Animation, 22 Westhall Gardens, Edinburgh, EH10 4JQ, tel. 0131 477 0676.

# Inveraray development plans aired

## Bold bid to unite historic and modern parts of town

PEOPLE in Inveraray will have the chance to view plans for a proposed 'mixed use' development in the Royal Burgh.

A consultation event is being held today (Friday) and tomorrow to gauge public opinion on The Inveraray Project.

Argyll Estates have appointed Urban Animation and Neil Sutherland Architects to lead the master planning work, which could see a mix of new housing as well as employment and tourism opportunities.

The project hopes to establish a long-

term framework for development in and around Inveraray.

Urban Animation Director, Richard Heggie, said: 'Inveraray is a truly unique village but there's a serious danger that short term thinking will continue to undermine the quality of the place.'

### **Bold**

'The Inveraray Project is a rare opportunity for bold urban planning to enrich a historic legacy and create something of equally lasting quality.'

A Preliminary Master Plan has now been issued for discussion.

This proposes uniting the historic and modern parts of the town as well as providing a full mix of house types and sizes,

including affordable options. Opportunities would also be provided for employment, tourism, community and recreation uses, enabling the Royal Burgh to accommodate new services and facilities. A site for community allotments is also proposed.

The public consultation event takes place in the Nicoll Hall, Inveraray.

Argyll and Bute Council will consider the proposals for inclusion in its forthcoming Main Issues Report - the first step in the replacement of its Local Plan.

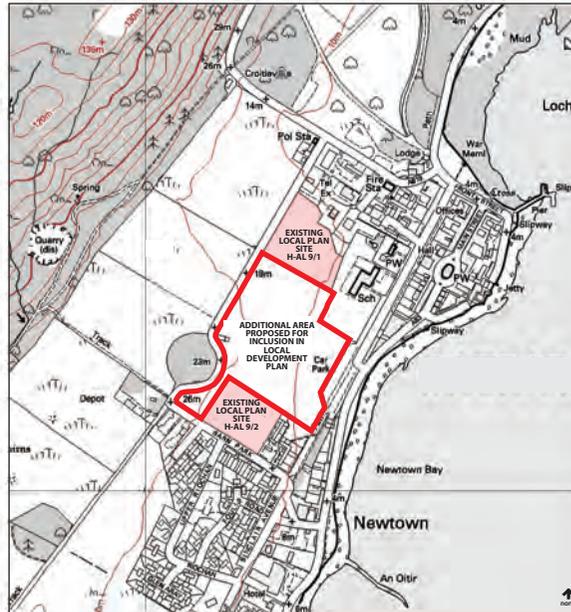
The Preliminary Master Plan is available at the Urban Animation website at [www.urban-animation.com](http://www.urban-animation.com)

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Appendix 2 :

Poster advertising public sessions