

Spean Bridge, Roy Bridge and Achnacarry SCIO



COMMUNITY
ACTION PLAN
2023 - 2027

www.srascio.scot



Glen Roy Panorama

INTRODUCTION

Within the largest Community Council area in Scotland, our far-flung residents face many ongoing challenges linked to employment choices, the availability of housing, and simple geography - the sheer distances involved in connecting with one another and facilities in Fort William and Inverness.

This Action Plan distills the outcomes of the Community Survey and Consultation over the second half of 2022, the first of its kind in our area. More importantly, it sets out a blueprint for directing our charity's future activities. Its purpose is straightforward: to provide a snapshot of our community, to identify charitable projects favoured by our residents, and to map out a strategy to deliver on these priorities in stages over a five-year period from 2023-27 as funds allow.

More than a decade after its foundation, our community development trust is now fully regulated and authorised to take advantage of community asset transfer and community right to buy opportunities. Informed by our Consultation, yet still receptive to new ideas, we can now pursue viable projects knowing that we have our community's support. Some projects will be easy wins, some will require complex, lengthy and sensitive negotiations and some are currently aspirational.

Within this plan we explain how we identified proposals, how we scored the more popular projects, and how we plan to progress and deliver the priority schemes.

Our Route Map:

CANVASS the community	Jul-Dec 22
IDENTIFY viable proposals	Jan-Apr 23
SECURE funding and ownership	May-Sep 23
DELIVER preferred projects and their benefits	Oct-Dec 23
MANAGE activity and income	Jan 24 onwards

A WORD FROM THE CHAIR

Offering our entire funds unconditionally to the volunteers supporting our communities during the first COVID Lockdown in 2020 radically changed the ethos and direction of Spean Bridge, Roy Bridge and Achnacarry SCIO. Such an unselfish act raised our charity's status in the eyes of prospective funders and the community at large. Previously we had concentrated on persuading micro hydro and windfarm developers to pay Community Benefit for distribution to local organisations.

The Trustees however eyed new opportunities and recognised that community empowerment legislation would give us the freedom to undertake new developments for the benefit of our residents. We have significantly altered our constitution, secured two-year funding to employ a Community Development Officer, set up a website and carried out a Community Consultation.

It was essential for our charity going forward that our community was consulted from the outset, so that the community's priorities are the ones that we take forward for the future. There may be funding windfalls, but our Trustees armed with your priorities will also be able to access national, local government and private funding to make a difference to our rural community.

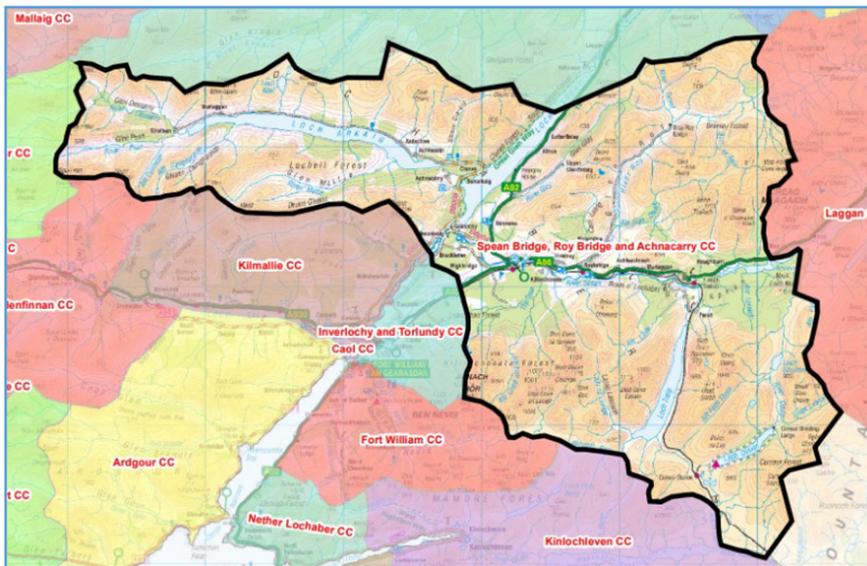
This Community Action Plan outlines the direction we will take from now on. Some projects will be achievable, some won't and others we may have to adjust, but we will endeavour to keep you in touch with developments.

John Fotheringham
Chairman

SETTING THE SCENE

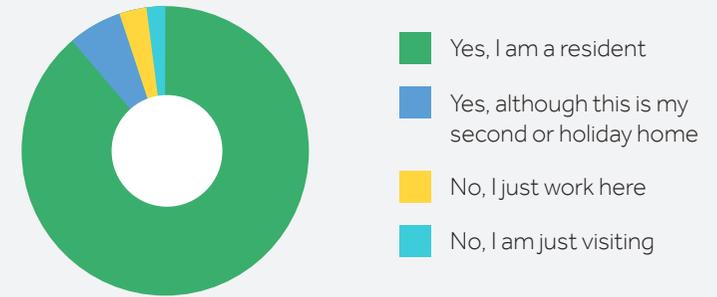
Spean Bridge, Roy Bridge and Achnacarry From Corroul to Glen Dessarry via the Braes of Lochaber, the Great Glen and Loch Arkaig

Within our 1,000 sq km – the largest community council area in Scotland - we have something for everyone including 14 challenging Munros and four magnificent freshwater lochs. Despite the abundant wilderness, two major trunk roads cross our area, the Caledonian Canal passes through the Great Glen and we are still served by four fully operational railway stations. It's no exaggeration to say we are literally the Hub of the Highlands.

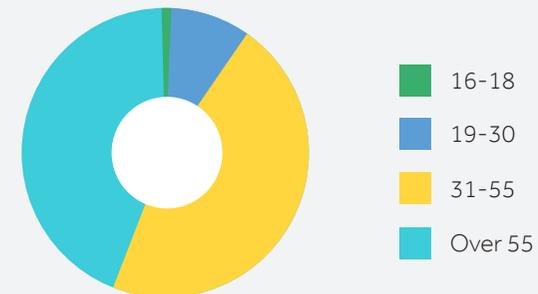


Our vast size contributes to our challenges: ageing residents in deeply rural areas with no public transport face radically different needs to young families within our two major villages of Spean Bridge (585 inhabitants) and Roy Bridge (225). Our permanent population is estimated at 1,585 with a further 275 or so making regular use of second homes, or 1,860 in all. Almost 10% of our housing stock of 830 properties is available for short-term letting.

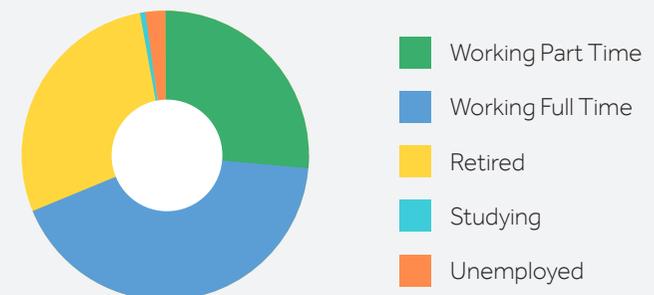
Residency Status



Our Residents' Ages



Working Status



Source: Community Consultation 2022

The Wider Picture

As at the 2011 Census, our population split by postcode was:

PH34 (Spean Bridge and Achnacarry): 1075 individuals in 431 households

PH31 (Roy Bridge): 552 individuals in 232 households

PH30 (Corrour): 11 individuals in 7 households

Total: 1638 residents (some part-time) in 670 households

Completed small scale developments, principally in Spean Bridge, and new individual houses across our area have contributed to the uplift in the population and household numbers since 2011.



In common with many other Highland communities we have an ageing indigenous population with many long-term residents now no longer able to contribute economically or increase their income, yet faced with soaring heating and vehicle fuel costs. The area's beauty and accessibility contribute to its appeal to the retired, boosted by our proximity to a regional hospital at Fort William: we have almost five times as many residents from the rest of the UK as the Scottish average. For those working, there is an over-reliance on the hospitality and accommodation sectors and a lack of job diversity within our boundaries.

Nevertheless, there are opportunities. The political climate at Holyrood favours not only community involvement in important decisions at a local level, but also community ownership of land and buildings where there is obvious collective benefit.

Olsen windfarm at Culachy in the Corrieairack Pass and an extension to the existing SSE windfarm at Cloich. If commissioned, then even greater funding opportunities are likely to arise, including for capital projects. In all these cases, final decisions on planning and construction are not expected before 2024.

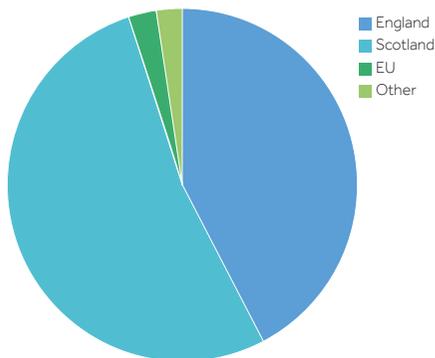
More specifically, SSE Renewables intend to create a major hydroelectric pumped storage scheme at Coire Glas, just to the North of our community's boundaries but with huge impacts for our residents, especially during the construction phase. Exploratory works are underway in early 2023. It will represent the largest civil engineering project in Lochaber for decades and could trigger significant community benefit over an extended period.

Mindful of these potential income streams, our community development trust carried out a Community Consultation in the Summer and Autumn of 2022, in order to inform this Community Action Plan of early 2023.

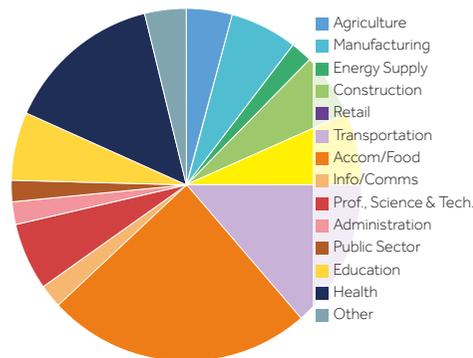
Other nearby large scale renewable proposals include a pumped hydro project by Gilkes at Earba close to Loch Laggan, a new Fred

Its purpose is straightforward: to provide a snapshot of our community, to identify charitable projects favoured by our residents, and to map out a strategy to deliver on these priorities in stages over a five-year period from 2023-27 as funds allow.

Place of Birth



Employment Sector



Source: 2011 Census

OUR CHARITY IN THE COMMUNITY

The Spean Bridge, Roy Bridge and Achnacarry SCIO (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation) was established in 2012 when the prospect of community benefit from micro hydro schemes locally first arose. Its initial income was modest as schemes were slower than anticipated to bring to fruition. However, by 2020 our SCIO had begun to receive long-term Community Benefit from two hydro schemes at Nevis Range and Allt Mhuic for their expected lifetime as well as from a SSE windfarm just out of area at Stronelaig, the latter for three years only. Occasionally, welcome donations from individuals and local stakeholders have been made, as well as from the Scottish Government's Supporting Communities Fund in 2020-21 in recognition of the SCIO's outstanding contribution to local resilience during the most challenging months of the COVID pandemic.

Our SCIO's Trustees, all residents within our area, are keen to deliver the trust's objectives.

Our Objectives

- Encouraging sustainable development
- Relieving poverty
- Advancing education
- Preserving buildings and sites of historical importance
- Supporting recreational facilities
- Protecting the environment
- Improving connectivity between the different areas of the community



Allt Leachdach above
The Lairig

Wishing to be more ambitious with future projects, especially if bolstered by community benefit from the Coire Glas pumped storage hydro scheme, in late 2022 we canvassed our community on preferred schemes during a four-month **Community Consultation**. We aim to deliver maximum benefit to deserving, sustainable projects having established there is an appetite within the community for such activities.

Furthermore, our SCIO's constitution has recently been revised to ensure full compliance with Scottish Land Fund eligibility, confirmed by the Scottish Government in early March 2023. Importantly, this will allow us to access any Community Right to Buy opportunities which may arise in the months ahead. With evidence of sufficient support from residents we may now also register a formal note of interest through the Scottish Government in any property which may be of interest to the community, or obviously abandoned, allowing a "first right of refusal" in the event that the property is offered for sale. These options are significant game-changers to our community's ability to influence our immediate and wider environment.

We are a registered Scottish Charity No SC 044101 and regulated by OSCR (The Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator).

SCIO or Community Council – Who Does What?

Whilst our SCIO has been operating continually for ten years, the Community Council for Spean Bridge, Roy Bridge and Achnacarry re-formed in February 2022 after 27 months in abeyance. Each organisation operates within identical boundaries. There is some understandable confusion about the roles of each, which we seek to clarify here:



SCIO

A membership organisation, registered with and regulated by OSCR

Fundraising and spending on charitable projects. May hold its own assets

Aims: promoting sustainable development, recreational facilities, education/training, environmental conservation and heritage, poverty relief, connectivity

Liaison with Highlands & Islands Enterprise and renewables operators

Meets quarterly with Autumn AGM

Trustees elected by members for 3 years

SSE Major Grants up to £10,000 (from May 23 if approved)

Community Council

The only officially recognised statutory body representing area

Holds operational funds but cannot own assets

Activities: liaison with Highland Council, NHS Highland, BEAR (trunk roads), Network Rail, Police Scotland. Complaints handling

Statutory right to be consulted in Planning

Meets monthly with Summer AGM

Councillors publicly elected for 4 years

SSE Microgrants up to £500

Our Funding Sources

As at early 2023, we have three recurring income sources:



SSE Renewables' Stronelaig Windfarm Community Fund provided a total of £150,000 in community benefit over 2018-23, managed by SSE. This is awarded to eligible projects via Major Grants of up to £10,000 assessed via a regional appraisal panel meeting quarterly and via Microgrants of up to £500 administered directly by our Community Council.

From mid-2023 any unspent balance may be transferred to our SCIO, to be awarded on identical criteria.



Koehler's Allt Mhuic hydro scheme generates community benefit of £4,850 pa, to be spent specifically on education, environmental projects or improving outdoor spaces.



Green Highland Renewables operate a micro turbine at Nevis Range releasing around £3,000 pa of community benefit. Our SCIO has discretion over how these funds are distributed.

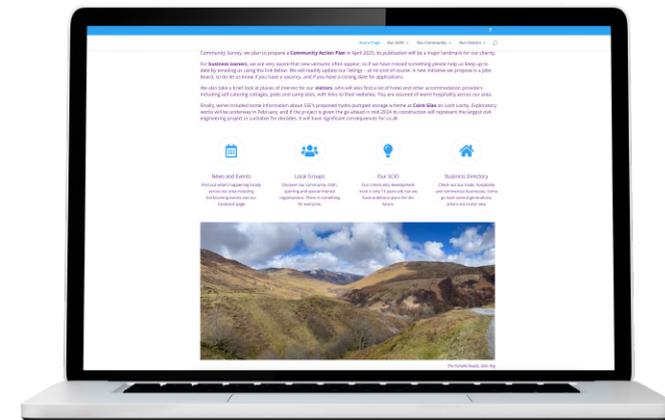
Furthermore, we could not serve our community without the generous financial support of individuals and organisations locally. Many donations have been anonymous.

Community Development Officer



Highlands and Islands Enterprise

We were fortunate to receive funding over a two-year period from January 2022 to December 2023 from Highlands and Islands Enterprise for 50% of the costs of a part-time Community Development Officer to create a website, carry out a community consultation, draw up a community action plan, and begin the implementation of preferred projects. The remaining 50% was awarded from SSE Renewables' Stronelaig Community Fund.



As at March 2023, our Facebook page has 186 followers.

Our website, launched in July 2022, is at www.srascio.scot. It is a crucial channel for us to set out our charity's vision, to showcase our activities, to provide a useful accommodation forum for our visitors and of course to update our community on progress with our chosen projects.

OUR COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Our consultation over the Summer and Autumn of 2022 was designed to reach those who live within our boundaries, those who visit here and those who work here. Whilst the chosen projects may well bring advantages to all these groups, there was a clear priority for schemes which benefit our residents.

To ensure as wide a reach as possible, we consulted in three ways:



1. Community Survey:

A flyer was sent by mail to each residential and business address inviting an on-line questionnaire response via our website at www.srascio.scot. A hard copy option was available.

Posters on four community noticeboards at Spean Bridge, Roy Bridge, Gairloch and Achnacarry signposted links to completing the questionnaire, also promoted on our website and Facebook pages. Prominent roadside signage and banners also encouraged replies.

From 832 addresses across our community, a remarkable 385 survey returns were received.



2. Community Engagement:

Drop-in sessions for residents took place at Roy Bridge Memorial Hall, Achnacarry Village Hall, Spean Bridge Community Centre and for small business owners at Kilmonivaig Church Hall. These sessions clarified our aims, sought views and were designed to supplement the questionnaire for those who preferred to meet face-to face.

We also sought views from the Community Council, churches and youth and sporting groups including the shinty club, the Scouts and the golf club. At Spean Bridge Primary School we offered the children a say in a simpler format questionnaire looking at "good things about the local area", "not such good things" and "what would you like to see".



3. Stakeholder Meetings

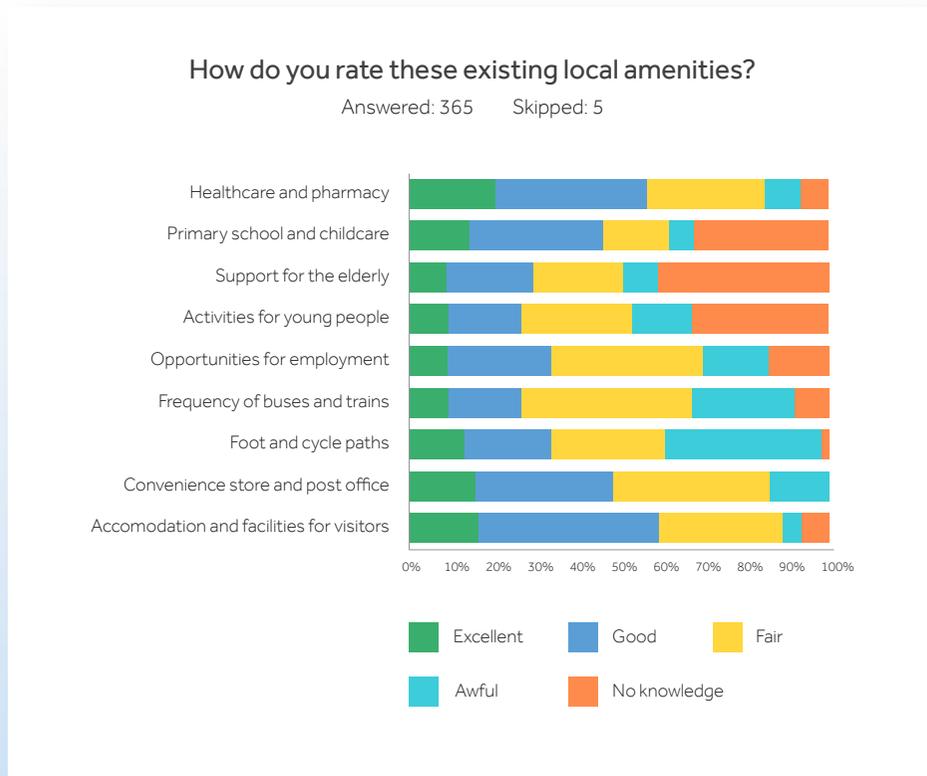
These encouraged ideas and sought to identify potential future sponsors. We approached our local estates, existing funding partners (SSE Renewables, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Koehler, Green Highland Renewables), local businesses, accommodation providers and relevant public bodies including Highland Council and Forestry and Land Scotland.

We also consulted with voluntary bodies, including the Commando Association and the West Highland Community Rail Partnership.

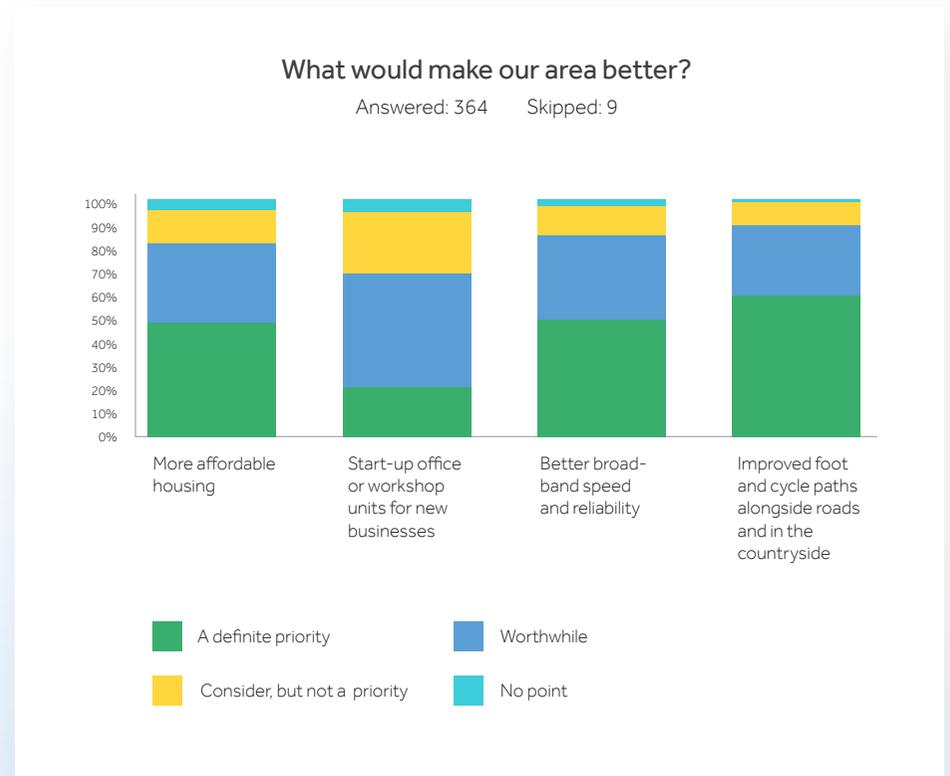
WHAT EMERGED FROM OUR CONSULTATION?

Where We Are Now

Our first question in the survey was a direct one:



Towards the start of the survey, we asked:



Hence, 91% of the replies felt that improved foot and cycle paths were a definite priority or worthwhile, and 83% felt equally in favour of affordable housing.

WHAT EMERGED FROM OUR CONSULTATION?

Where We Would Like To Be

We then asked some more open questions, to identify our priorities for action.

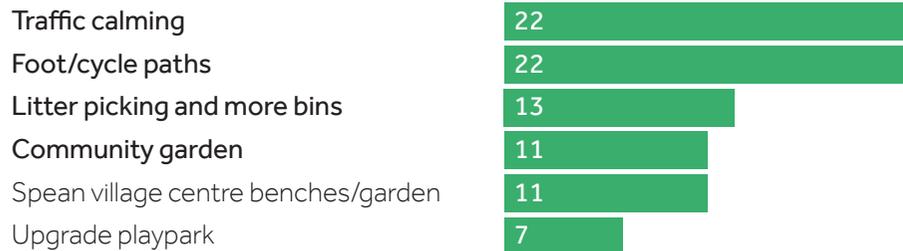
Firstly, we asked the community to nominate projects which we could undertake within our current income stream as *“One Small Thing We Could Do Now With Our Existing Resources”*.

Secondly, and looking ahead, we hope to draw on funding from the Scottish Land Fund and other sources of significant project capital, including the Heritage Lottery Fund. Our constitution now allows us to legitimately explore opportunities which would have been beyond our resources previously.

Mindful of these possibilities, a question in our community survey asked residents to suggest *“One Big Thing We Could Do with Access to Grant Funding”*.

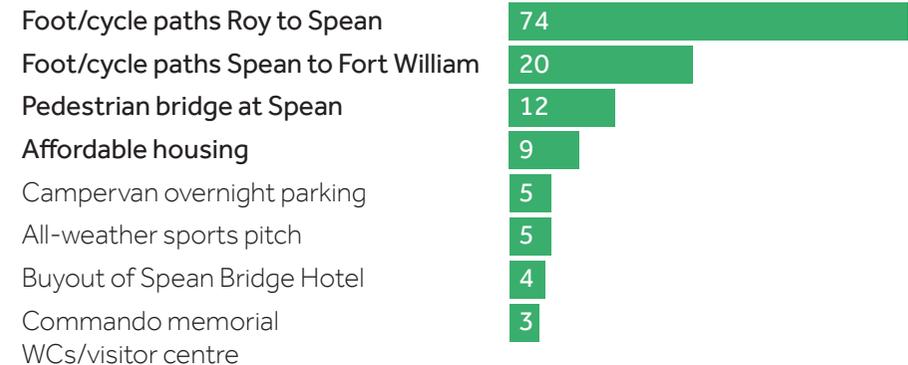
One small thing with existing resources

(228 replies):



One big thing with access to grant funding

(237 replies):



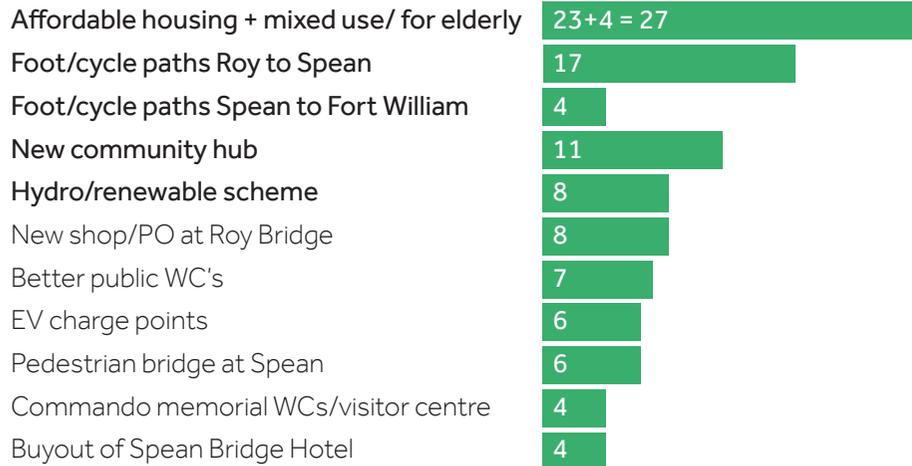
WHAT EMERGED FROM OUR CONSULTATION?

Finally, we are conscious of the community benefit that could potentially be available if SSE Renewable's huge Coire Glas hydroelectric pumped storage scheme on Loch Lochy is given the go-ahead in mid-2024. As the largest civil engineering project in Lochaber for decades, we could enjoy a significant income stream for the duration of its construction period. Although this is estimated at 7 years, we may be able to drawdown the funds over a lengthier period.

With this in mind, we asked for suggestions of *"One Long-Lasting Benefit Assuming a 15-Year Income Stream"*.

One long-lasting benefit with 15-year income stream

(209 replies):



Loch Arkaig



WHAT EMERGED FROM OUR CONSULTATION?

Preferred Projects – Old and New

In the same vein, we sought respondents' views on a number of projects which had already been floated, as well as any new suggestions.

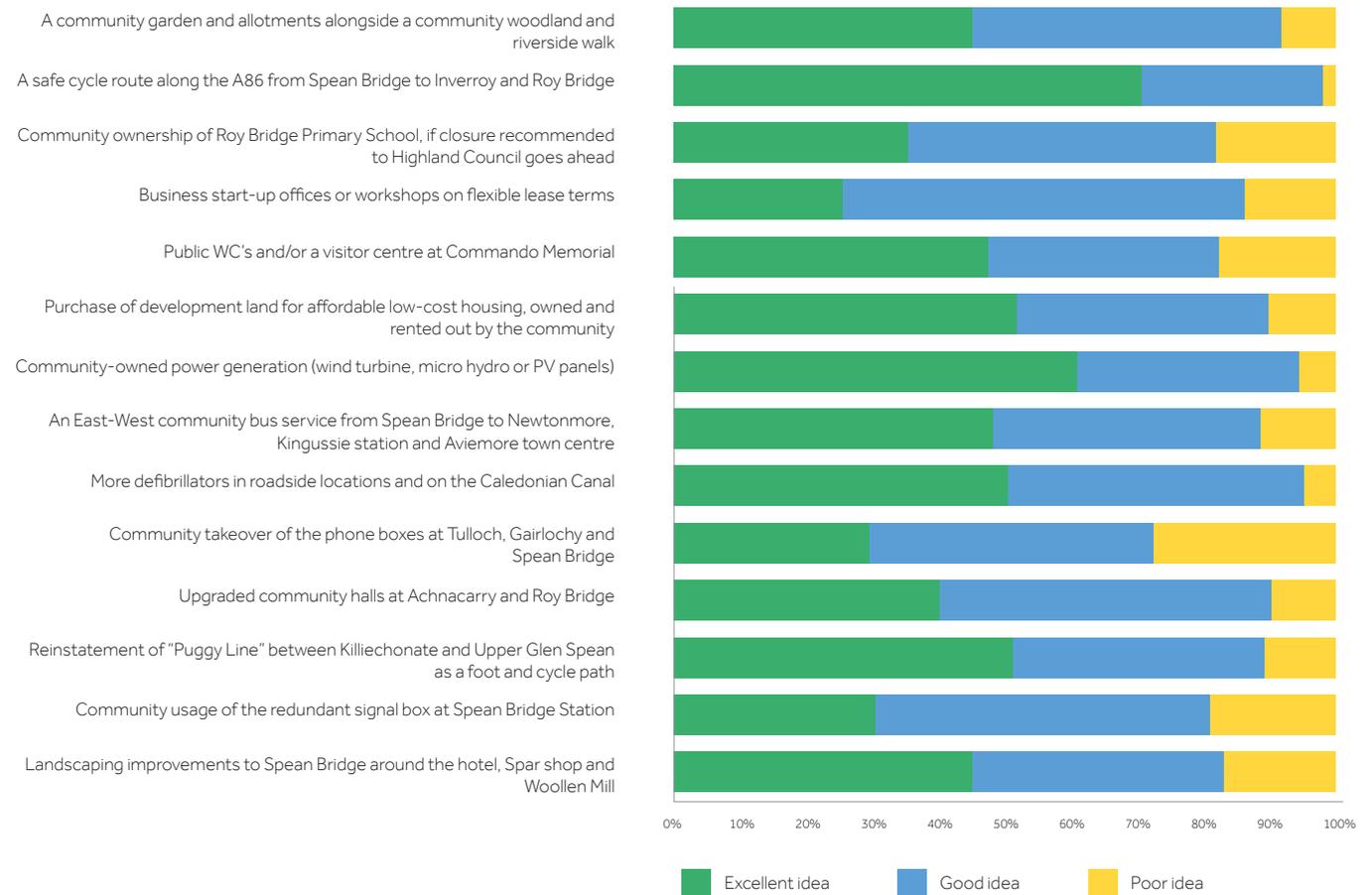
Firstly, we asked about existing proposals.



Spean Bridge Mill

How do you rate these suggestions for projects?

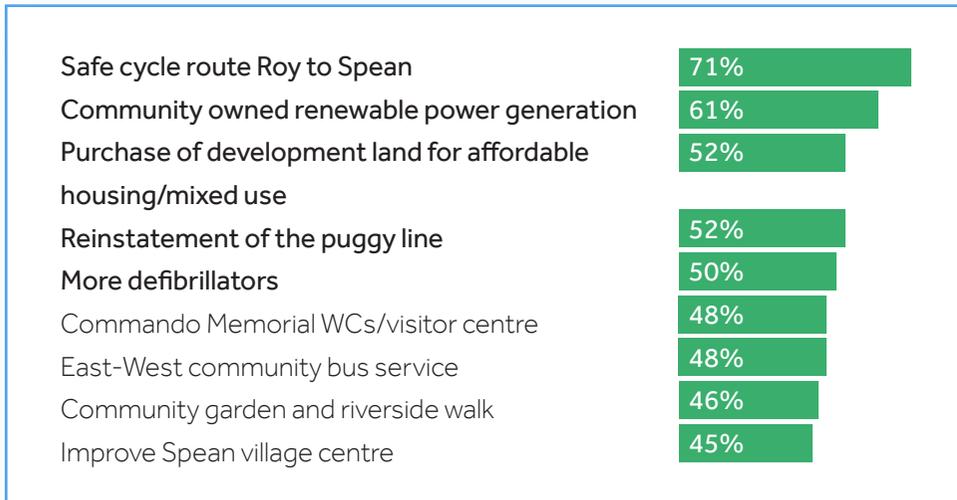
Answered: 320 Skipped: 50



WHAT EMERGED FROM OUR CONSULTATION?

In summary, when analysing these suggestions to arrive at the most popular projects, we were able to identify some clear priorities.

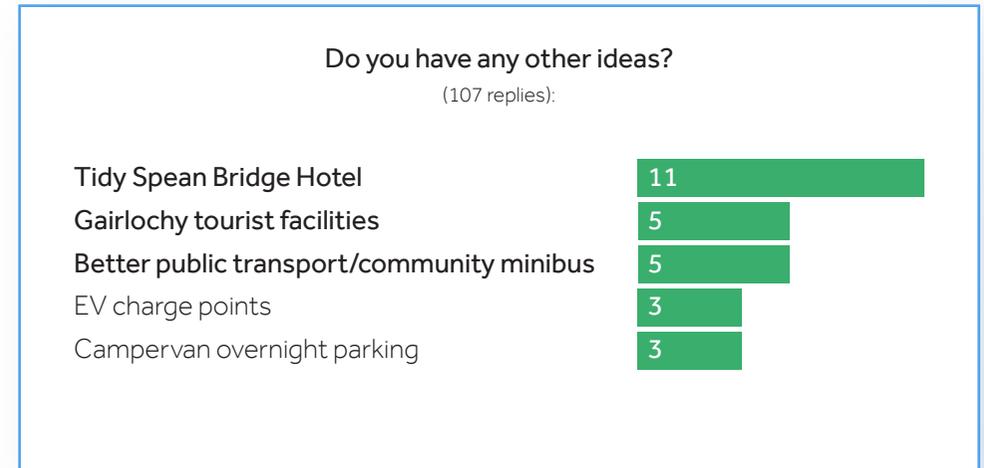
How many respondents felt the projects were an *“excellent idea, put in place soon”*:



Interestingly, views were polarised on the idea of creating visitor facilities at the **Commando Memorial**, estimated to receive over 150,000 visitors annually, and on a year-round basis. This footfall far exceeds any other attractions within our boundaries, yet our community derives no direct benefit. In 2016 a feasibility study was carried out by our SCIO into the provision of WC's at the Memorial car park; the idea was taken no further at that time due to budgetary constraints. Initial soundings during

our wider Community Consultation among Royal Marines veteran organisations were broadly in favour of an on-site museum. However, support across the community was muted, with endorsement at less than 50% and only 3 respondents seeing it as “one big thing” we could do with grant funding. Some residents went further, opposing any development of an unsullied site with an unbroken history of dignified commemoration and quiet reflection.

We also actively sought **new suggestions**. There were over 100!



Other elements in the wider Community Consultation were illuminating. For example, the **West Highland Community Rail Partnership** were keen to see graded, disabled access to Roy Bridge Station together with fill-in trains between local stations to appeal to commuters and visitors and were fully in favour of re-purposing the otherwise redundant Spean Bridge Station signal box.

At the **Primary School**, there were 37 replies to our simplified questionnaire,

mostly from P6/7 pupils, and all refreshingly frank. When asked “What do you like about our area?” the parks, the Highbridge Path, the fresh air and views and the Spar shop often cropped up. When the question “What don't you like?” was posed, then rubbish, dirty loos and dog poo were recurring themes. Finally we asked “Do you have any ideas?” and the replies focussed on more footpaths and pavements, zebra crossings, additional litter bins and a huge show of support for zip lines!

OUR COMMUNITY'S PRIORITIES

There were four clear themes running through the Community Survey and wider Community Consultation:

Theme 1: Connectivity

An overwhelming desire to see our three settlement centres better connected via safe routes for walking or cycling was the overriding priority, with a staggering 98% of survey respondents seeing this as an excellent (71%) or a good idea. Cycle and footpaths were named in 94 out of 237 replies as the “one big thing” to tackle with grant funding, almost eight times as popular as the second favoured option, a footbridge at Spean Bridge – itself on the same theme.

The safety of residents and visitors on our roads and pavements, especially alongside the A82 and A86 trunk roads, also emerged as a concern, although traffic calming measures in Spean Bridge are not within the SCIO's orbit.

An East-West community bus service, not only operating a potentially viable Fort William to Aviemore route twice weekly (48% saw this as an *excellent idea*) but also linking Gairloch, Achnacarry, Bunarkaig and Clunes with Spean Bridge was also popular.



Pedestrians alongside A86

Theme 2: Housing

The magnificent Lochaber scenery, our proximity to Fort William and the explosive popularity of staycations and second homes in the West Highlands have propelled housing prices well beyond the budget of younger, locally based individuals and families. Many would like to stay and support the school but simply cannot afford to live here.

The Highland Housing Register maintained by Highland Council illustrates the huge shortfall between demand and supply:

	No. on List	Available Houses	No. of Units Re-let Apr21-Mar22
Roy Bridge			
1-bed	41	2	1
2-bed	9	10	1
3-bed	6	10	1
Spean Bridge			
2-bed	36	30	2
3-bed	15	15	0
4-bed	6	1	0

The release of apartments on mid-market rents by Lochaber Housing Association at Ferguson Court in Spean Bridge from late 2022 has eased but by no means eliminated this need. A convincing 89% of respondents viewed affordable housing as an *excellent* (52%) or a *good idea*.

OUR COMMUNITY'S PRIORITIES

Theme 3: Roy Bridge School

Mothballed in 2017 after the new cluster school opened in Spean Bridge, the decision to permanently close Roy Bridge Primary School was finally taken by Highland Council in October 2022. This outcome was endorsed by the Scottish Government in December 2022, on condition that "Highland Council should work with the community to explore how to make best use of the former Roy Bridge Primary School".

This applies to the buildings and grounds not leased to Taigh na Sgoile, already in charitable use.

This was a popular project during the Consultation, with 82% seeing re-use as an *excellent* (35%) or a *good idea*. Given that only a third of our community is based in and around Roy Bridge, this level of response suggests that the argument for a thorough appraisal of options for the site is therefore particularly compelling.

Theme 4: Environment

Many respondents (45%), businesses and accommodation providers felt that the centre of Spean Bridge could benefit from a good tidy-up, as well as re-landscaping and additional litter bins around the Woollen Mill, Spar shop, postal sorting office and the Spean Bridge Hotel. Similar improvements were also echoed in the "one small thing" responses, as well as within "other ideas". Our primary schoolchildren also felt strongly on this issue.

Some residents wished to go further, floating a community buyout of the Spean Bridge Hotel, described

within the national press as recently as January 2023 as "an eyesore". However, the SCIO's Trustees are conscious of the significant initial and ongoing investment required and feel that a change to more community-focussed management by an experienced operator may well come about through simple economics.

Meanwhile, a community garden in Spean Bridge combining allotments, open space and a riverside walk was a very popular project, with 92% of responses in favour of its creation, including 46% citing it as an *excellent idea*.

SCORING THE PROJECTS

We analysed the 385 community survey responses and the outcomes from our wider consultation to glean the projects which were most popular.

Each proposal was then objectively scored by a working group of our SCIO's Trustees on five criteria:

- Is it aligned with our objectives?
- Is it a priority for the community?
- What is the timescale?
- Is it sustainable and able to fund itself after inception?
- Is it genuinely viable?



Are the Most Popular Projects Aligned with our Objectives?

Work and sustainable enterprise	Housing and standards of living	Transport and connectivity	Recreation and amenity	Conservation and environment
Renewable energy schemes	Affordable Housing	Foot/cycle paths	Community garden	Litter picking/bins
Development land purchase	Defibrillators	Traffic calming	New community hub	Village centre
Gairlochy tourist facilities		Pedestrian bridge	Puggy line	Spean Bridge Hotel
		Community minibus		

SCORING THE PROJECTS



Priority for the community	Timescale	Sustainability	Viability
Foot and Cycle Paths	Foot and Cycle Paths	Foot and Cycle Paths	Foot and Cycle Paths
Affordable Housing	Affordable Housing	Affordable Housing	Affordable Housing
Community Garden	Community Garden	Community Garden	Community Garden
Development Land Purchase	Development Land Purchase	Development Land Purchase	Development Land Purchase
Roy Bridge School	Roy Bridge School	Roy Bridge School	Roy Bridge School
Defibrillators Spean and Canal	Defibrillators Spean and Canal	Defibrillators Spean and Canal	Defibrillators Spean and Canal
Footbridge at Spean	Footbridge at Spean	Footbridge at Spean	Footbridge at Spean
New Community Hub	New Community Hub	New Community Hub	New Community Hub
East-West Bus Service	East-West Bus Service	East-West Bus Service	East-West Bus Service
Tidy up Spean Centre	Tidy up Spean Centre	Tidy up Spean Centre	Tidy up Spean Centre
Renewable Energy Schemes	Renewable Energy Schemes	Renewable Energy Schemes	Renewable Energy Schemes
Litter Picking and Bins	Litter Picking and Bins	Litter Picking and Bins	Litter Picking and Bins
Very high High Medium Low Very low	Quick Within two years Slow burn	Standalone from inception Initial support only Requires long term funding	High Medium Low

Not feasible for SCIO:

Spean Bridge Hotel Improvements, Puggy Line Reinstatement, Traffic Calming, Gairloch Tourist Facilities.

DELIVERING ON OUR COMMUNITY'S PRIORITIES

Looking at the scoring grid, it is clear that some projects can be seen as “quick fixes” and should be readily deliverable using our existing, limited resources over 2023 or early 2024.

Others will require careful appraisal, before applying for and securing external grant funding. Some projects will require a partnership approach and may involve assembling complex titles in multiple ownership. And of course some of the more high profile proposals may require access to significant resources for an extended period before they can be delivered and income streams begin to flow.

None of these complications or potential delays will deter us, as long as the project is supported by our community and can deliver clear, sustainable benefits. Throughout, we are aware that we should also be receptive to new opportunities which may emerge, where they are aligned with our community's priorities. And sometimes we must be brave enough to pass on initially attractive schemes which do not stack up to close scrutiny.

What Do We Plan to Deliver Over 2023-24?

Spean Bridge Community Garden

Create allotments and polytunnel with adjacent riverside walk close to the Community Centre. Complete community asset transfer from Highland Council, oversee design and layout and co-ordinate allotment allocations. Path re-surfacing and landscaping could be done by the operators of the temporary workers' camp as a community benefit. After a successful pilot in Spean, it may well be possible to repeat the garden model in Roy Bridge and at Clunes, assuming supportive landowners.

Former Roy Bridge Primary School

Investigate options, enable community asset transfer, co-ordinate funding for adaptations to buildings and oversee works. Invite expressions of interest, arrange tenancies and troubleshoot initial issues with occupiers. This could provide a secure long-term income source for our charity.

Roy to Spean Cycle and Foot Path

Work with the separate Active Travel SCIO to lobby strongly for the delivery of a foot/cycle path from Roy to Spean Bridge. BEAR Scotland, the agency responsible for trunk roads, has indicated that the Active Travel feasibility study, the level of community support demonstrated during our Consultation and ongoing political approval at regional and national level should see the first part of this project complete by August 2023. This will link the existing path network from Fort

William to Leanachan with the centre of Spean Bridge and on to the Commando Memorial. We believe strongly that the momentum should be maintained to connect our two principal settlements safely off-road.

Defibrillators

Source and install additional defibrillators on the Caledonian Canal at Gairloch close to the 'phone box and notice board and at Spean Bridge Spar or Woollen Mill.

Other Ongoing Activities

Support local groups with **applications for funding** including Spean Bridge Primary School, the Highbridge Path and Roy Bridge Gardens.

Arrange periodic **litter picking squads** and **sponsoring of additional bins and floral planters**, with **landscaping improvements** to Spean Bridge village centre.

Co-ordinate **winter soup lunches** and our **community food larder**.

Investigate funding for a part-time **Countryside and Woodland Ranger/Village Officer** to improve visitor engagement, host guided access walks and keep our village centres tidy, a proposal which has arisen after our Consultation.

Scrutinise eligibility and distribute timber from the **Community Firewood Bank**. An initial stock of felled larch arrived at Killiechonate Woodlands in March 2023, where it will dry prior to deliveries over Winter 2023-24.

Register and monitor any **community notes of interest** in relevant assets locally.

Maintain and update the **community website** at www.srascio.scot to keep our community advised on progress with projects.

What Do We Envisage for 2024-27?

Mindful of the longer lead-in times, from early 2024 we envisage making progress on:

Mixed Use Development Land and Affordable Housing

Identify opportunities in Spean or Roy Bridge zoned within the Local Plan, negotiate with landowners, Communities Housing Trust and Lochaber Housing Association with a view to creating affordable housing (some homes to be owned and leased by our SCIO with community-driven allocation policies) and workshop/office units, as well as investigating a new community hub and/or a motorhome stopover. This is an exciting project with high

visibility, valuable long-term financial returns and clear benefits for local households finding difficulty securing accommodation as well as for visitors and community social life.

Renewable Energy Schemes

Investigate viability and identify sites, especially micro hydro projects on Forestry and Land Scotland estate where community asset transfer is possible. This could also provide long-term income although we will avoid bank loans to fund plant.

Community Bus

Stress-test feasibility of lease/purchase of a community bus for an east-west service from Fort William to Aviemore, and for linking the remoter parts of our area north-west of Gairloch.

Throughout, we will remain receptive to new ideas and to gauge our community's appetite for new, previously unidentified opportunities which may arise.

These projects will be the responsibility of the Community Development Officer, acting with the direction of the Chair of our SCIO and supported by our Trustees.



Loch Linnhe at sunset from Glenfintaig © Gordon Smith

MONITORING PROGRESS

How Will We Keep in Touch and How Can You Help Us Achieve our Goals?

Our website at www.srascio.scot has been specifically set up to inform our community, our funding partners and any interested parties of our aims and our activities. It is the ideal medium to keep all our residents and stakeholders informed as the most popular and feasible projects we have identified are assessed, acquired and delivered.

Our Facebook Page "Spean Bridge, Roy Bridge and Achnacarry SCIO" also has a regularly updated feed into the News and Events section of our website.

Watch out for developments here. Noticeboards at Spean Bridge, Roy Bridge, Gairloch and Achnacarry also promote our activities.

Our SCIO's members and followers can also expect quarterly newsletters on progress towards our charity's objectives.

To help us, please consider becoming one of our members. It is easy to join our SCIO, is completely

free of charge, involves no commitment whatsoever and actively supports the work we do across our area. Although those able to offer time or specific expertise are welcome to contribute, we make no call on our new or existing members. Not surprisingly, the more members we have then the more representative we are of our community and the greater our prospects of external funding. The easiest way to join is online via the "Become a Member" page of our website.



Commando Memorial