

North Ayrshire Council

“Straight Talking 2010”

**Report by the
Liddell Thomson Consultancy**

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SECTION 1

Introduction

This report aims to capture the objectives, process and insights gained through the **Straight Talking** project carried out by North Ayrshire Council (NAC) during October – November 2010.

It seeks to highlight the challenges community representatives are facing and to make some recommendations about how NAC, its partners and the community might address them.

It attempts to capture the input of more than 350 individuals representing a wide range of organisations across North Ayrshire.

Our thanks go to everyone in North Ayrshire who contributed to the process personally or on behalf of a group or organisation, to the team from NAC who made it all happen, to the facilitators and topic experts from NAC and from partner organisations. We'd also like to acknowledge the many others who attended or participated in the events held in Ardrossan, Arran, Irvine, Kilbirnie and Largs (including Cumbrae) often ignoring inclement weather conditions to make sure they contributed to the **Straight Talking** discussions.

It was a fascinating, lively and challenging series of events which has provided a wealth of ideas about how people in North Ayrshire might work differently together to create and deliver key services across the area.

We have endeavoured to reflect the range of opinions expressed and to highlight the creative and practical approaches suggested by those who attended the six events.

Straight Talking Objectives

NAC wished to engage in meaningful dialogue with organisations and special interest groups who are already active in communities across the area to inform its rolling 3-year forward budget process (April 2011-2014).

To achieve this more than 600 people were invited to participate in one of six **Straight Talking** sessions. Given the current financial climate, the Council was keen to engage with a wide cross-section of people to share the challenge, to listen and to generate ideas that could assist the Council with ensuring that priority services are delivered as efficiently as possible.

NAC held six **Straight Talking** workshop events across North Ayrshire with the aim of attracting 100-150 people to each session.

The objectives were to:

- highlight the tough choices that will be necessary to deliver a viable budget from 2011 onwards
- provide information about the new and evolving financial context North Ayrshire Council will be operating in
- explain the process the Council will follow to achieve the necessary change
- provide the opportunity for the Council to listen directly to opinions and views about priority services from those individuals and groups representing North Ayrshire's communities
- discuss new, innovative or radical ways to deliver priority services
- provide valuable stakeholder feedback in the form of a report from NAC

The topics included in the sessions were:

- Community Services - Facilities & Libraries
- Education 3-18 Years
- Environment and Public Spaces
- Independent Living for Older People
- Prevention and Health Inequalities

Straight Talking Project Process

Invitations were issued by NAC to potential participants on 17 September 2010. Once acceptances were received, participants were sent a briefing pack that included information on:

- the budget constraints facing NAC
- key challenges facing NAC
- specific information on the topic workshops they had signed up for

Considerable effort was put into organising each event to make sure each participant would have the opportunity to contribute and that topic experts were on hand to support each workshop session. Each session followed the same format – excepting Cumbrae* – see below.

- after registration, each participant was directed to their specific group table – on several occasion there were two groups per topic
- Leader of North Ayrshire Council, David O'Neill welcomed all participants and introduced the purpose of the event
- Chief Executive, Elma Murray highlighted the key challenges facing NAC; the process the Council had put in place to address this and explained the format for the event

- Corporate Director of Finance and Infrastructure, Alasdair Herbert gave an overview of the budgetary context setting out some of the tough choices facing NAC
- Lesley Thomson, Director Liddell Thomson introduced the workshop sessions and managed the facilitation of the workshop groups and feedback session

Each workshop group had a facilitator (either from Liddell Thomson or from NAC) to prompt discussion and to record the key points made by the group. In addition topic experts were on hand to provide further information, advice or clarification.

Councillors were invited to attend as observers as were NAC's key partners from, for example, the NHS and Strathclyde Police.

Each group was provided with a flipchart, topic briefing notes, copies of the key presentations by the Leader of the Council, Chief Executive and Corporate Director of Finance and Administration; feedback forms and a summary sheet to capture the key points from the group discussions.

Facilitators were provided with discussion prompts and asked to summarise the group discussion at the end of the session.

These summaries were then passed to Lesley Thomson of Liddell Thomson who presented an overall summary to the entire meeting prior to the NAC Council Leader and Chief Executive thanking everyone and closing the meeting.

A commitment was made at the end of each meeting to provide copies of the report to all participants and to continue the discussions in future.

Cumbrae: Given the timescales and logistics involved Cumbrae representatives were invited to attend the **Straight Talking session in Largs. The Cumbrae Workshop, which was held prior to the Largs session, covered all five topics. The workshop session was held prior to the main presentations. This enabled those attending to hear the key presentations and leave in time for a return ferry to Cumbrae.*

SECTION 2

Feedback and Recommendations

This section of the report brings together some of the key feedback points emerging from all six **Straight Talking** events and makes some recommendations that may be helpful to NAC and its partners when prioritising initiatives and projects as part of the long-term budget planning process. Separate summary reports for each of the six sessions are included later in the report.

The location reports will help NAC to identify and respond to opportunities within different communities and, where possible, to make early progress with some of the issues raised.

Straight Talking Concept

The single most powerful aspect of the **Straight Talking** initiative was that it allowed people playing key voluntary roles in the community to discuss issues of genuine importance to the area and to be listened to.

This was an opportunity welcomed by most participants and on most occasions those involved felt that more time could have been allocated to enable a fuller, more detailed discussion.

***Recommendation** - Most of the discussions were lively and well-informed. While community group representatives are concerned about the potential impact of cuts on their community, there is clearly an opportunity for NAC to build more constructive, productive relationships with a wide range of people who are active and well-informed about how to make a difference in North Ayrshire. It will be important going forward to maintain regular contact, including face-to-face dialogue, with the groups and individuals who are committed to their community and who have the relationships, ideas and energy to make a real difference.*

Efficiency

Many of the groups across all six sessions were keen to see greater efficiency around the delivery of public services in their area. On several occasions participants proposed that all three Ayrshire local authorities should work together more closely. Groups were keen that NAC, the NHS and other key agencies should find ways to merge, co-locate or co-ordinate services where this would make sense to create centres that could become key hubs for the community with something to offer all age groups.

***Recommendation** - More could be done to make communities aware of the areas where local authorities are already sharing services and resources. A clear message emerges from this which is that, providing services and facilities are provided in a way that respects the needs of different areas and*

is delivered in a quality manner – there appears to be little concern about the organisation or agency leads in providing them.

Working in Partnership

At every event participants expressed a willingness to engage differently with NAC in future and, where possible, to share problem-solving. This ranged across all five topics discussed and, while there were some differences in terms of priorities between communities, the majority of those attending took the view that there were many opportunities to work differently with NAC in future.

Recommendation - *NAC should emphasise its commitment to developing closer working relationships with relevant community groups by identifying areas where it could move quickly to a new partnership or Trust arrangement in order to get some demonstration projects up and running within the financial year. There are some excellent models within North Ayrshire that could lead the way and provide a model for others to follow.*

Volunteers

North Ayrshire already benefits from a network of highly-active and committed volunteers. The need for even more motivated, highly-skilled volunteers is likely to increase in future. Many of the **Straight Talking** participants were involved with supporting more than one organisation in their area and they often felt that they had little support or encouragement either from NAC or their community.

As they are likely to play an even more significant role in maintaining and developing services, NAC and its partners such as NHS will not only need to encourage and support existing volunteer networks but also support the recruitment and development of new volunteers.

Many participants expressed a view that there are significant barriers to attracting volunteers. The reasons for this are not only the perceived bureaucracy surrounding the process but also the fact that many potential volunteers lack self-confidence and do not believe they have relevant experience or skills to put themselves forward. Participants frequently stated that it would be beneficial for people to better understand that volunteering can be a positive pathway to work.

Recommendation - *If there is to be an increasing need and role for volunteers, there should be:*

- *greater clarity about the role they are expected to play*
- *support with tackling the administrative challenges*
- *help with recruitment and development of volunteers*
- *advice on how to set up Trusts*
- *greater awareness and recognition of the role of volunteers*

NAC should consider bringing together a small short-term working group to analyse and address these issues and to put in place a plan of action to

address these concerns as soon as possible. There is an opportunity for NAC to support and champion the work of North Ayrshire's volunteers by encouraging positive, local media coverage; considering better ways to promote local activities and through recognising the significant achievements of volunteers and those they work with.

Buildings

Almost every group at every session recognised the importance of making existing buildings work harder whether they are schools, libraries, churches, community or health centres or care homes. While participants realise that there are some limitations or restrictions, most feel that greater effort should be made to make sure that buildings are used to maximum capacity making them lively, engaging, accessible, affordable hubs for the whole community.

Recommendation - *NAC has a number of initiatives underway to explore co-locating services and will be reporting on these in the near future.*

NAC could consider what role it could play in challenging any barriers (real or perceived) in the interests of the community as a whole. NAC could explore which community groups might have the capacity, skills and resources to take over specific centres and find ways of supporting this through the creation of contracts or setting up Trusts.

Environment

Participants value the way the area looks and recognise the importance of this when attracting people to live, work or invest in the area. On a number of occasions, community groups or representatives offered to play a greater role with, for example maintaining floral displays> However they would like proper agreements in place to ensure there is clarity between NAC and communities about how responsibility is going to be shared. In addition to believing this is important to sustain tourism and attract new residents and investors, participants felt that maintaining green spaces is important for the health and well-being of local communities.

There are areas where NAC could do less and still enjoy the support of local communities – this includes reviewing some of the Council's maintenance programmes particularly in terms of beach cleaning and cutting grass verges.

Most participants agreed that tackling litter and dog fouling are priorities and are keen to see NAC exercise its powers to address what is viewed as anti-social activity.

While well-maintained public toilets are seen as critical, many participants were open to looking at different ways to enhance or manage existing provision.

Recommendation - It would be welcome if NAC were able to respond as soon as possible to those groups or members of the community who expressed an interest or willingness to work differently with the Council.

Early moves could be made to discuss the possibility of reducing the availability of some public toilets during winter months while seeking out partners in the business or voluntary sector who might be willing or able to make existing facilities available to the general public.

NAC should consider reviewing, where possible, the frequency and nature of some beach cleaning and grass cutting programmes in order to introduce a new programme of work as soon as possible.

It would be useful if NAC were able to offer early guidance or training to community groups to help with preparing and planting flower beds or maintaining hanging baskets.

Older People

Given the current and projected future demographic of North Ayrshire there was considerable interest in the **Straight Talking** groups discussing independent living for older people. There was passionate debate about the needs of older people and a shared ambition to ensure that some of the most vulnerable members of the community do not lose out as services change. Concerns about isolation, the availability of and access to suitable housing, the quality of care, support in terms of aids for independent living and, importantly ensuring that those least likely to ask for help, get the support that is available for them.

Recommendation - This is a huge issue for NAC and its partners such as the NHS and one that requires particular care and sensitivity. There are many voluntary groups already working hard to support older people living at home however they are often limited in what they can do and, because they act in a voluntary capacity, often poorly supported. For instance there are volunteers who feel unable to take time off they feel there is no-one to support what they do when they are not able to be around.

NAC could consider responding to the concerns about isolation by encouraging and supporting a “buddy” system. This concept was proposed at a number of sessions and there seemed to be a willingness to explore how this idea would work in practice. The scheme would have the ambition to ensure that elderly people, living at home would have a regular visit from their “buddy” to ensure that they are taking care of themselves and accessing the support they are entitled to. There may be examples of this model in action and, if so, NAC could work with the NHS to explore ways to introduce a demonstration project.

Young People

Many participants raised concerns about the lack of opportunities for young people in terms of work, training and social activities. There were serious concerns about young people being raised in homes where there is no pattern of work and also for those young people who had worked hard at school and gone on to college or university only to find they end up unemployed.

Lack of employment opportunities and low self-esteem are viewed as key contributors to some of the social and health problems experienced in North Ayrshire. Some pointed to opportunities to address this e.g. encouraging more young people to become volunteers; providing training opportunities through voluntary work. Gardening, horticultural skills, supporting older members of the community and participating in activities or initiatives run from the proposed community hubs, were all given as examples.

Concern was expressed by participants that few young people had attended the **Straight Talking** sessions, however those who did participate made extremely useful and thought-provoking contributions.

***Recommendation** - NAC with key partners and the voluntary sector should work together to address these issues. There is no single answer or response to the complex problems addressed by participants, however with the combined resources skills and experience of those with a passion to address the problems facing younger people considerable progress could be made.*

A starting point must be to engage actively with younger people so that their voices are heard as part of this process and to ensure that they are able to access to opportunities, resources and support available to them.

This should be done as soon as possible through a variety of techniques including facilitated discussion groups; on-line polling and the development of appropriate communication channels.

Education

The challenge facing all communities who wish to provide high quality education at a time of constrained resources is considerable. The drive for efficiencies is likely to affect schools and many participants were concerned to ensure that children in North Ayrshire do not suffer from loss of opportunity.

While it is recognised that there is separate work underway to look at school provision, groups were keen to explore ways to use resources more effectively. There were many positive ideas about how schools could play a greater role in communities and for the community to have a closer relationship with their local schools.

Every group discussing education at the **Straight Talking** sessions felt that education was of vital importance and that providing a high-quality experience for young people should be a priority. Education, in the view of many

participants brings wider benefits, such as developing self-esteem, and, therefore improvements in health.

Recommendation - NAC and its partners should explore what opportunities there might be to make school resources more widely available to the community or to co-locate other community resources within school buildings. The opportunity or willingness expressed to look at sharing resources amongst schools - whether this be facilities or teaching expertise - should be explored as should the opportunity to bring skills into schools from the wider community in order to enrich the learning experience and to build better inter-generational links.

Health

Those groups discussing Prevention & Health Inequalities often highlighted the importance of education in addressing some of North Ayrshire's health issues. Developing self-esteem was seen as critical in order for people to want to take care of themselves and their families. There was concern about a perceived over-provision of cheap fast food – making it easier for people to choose to eat less healthy food rather than more expensive, less easily available healthier options.

Recommendation - There are some groups already trying to tackle this topic – for instance groups who run cookery classes. It would be worth exploring what other interventions the voluntary sector could make to help address some of these issues early on – for instance in ante natal classes. Perhaps these opportunities could be developed to cover a wider range of issues in ante natal classes that would help people choose healthier lifestyle options for themselves and their families.

Communication

The feedback gathered at the end of the **Straight Talking** sessions shows that the vast majority of participants found the sessions useful and felt better informed about NAC and the challenges it is facing. See charts following summary reports.

Recommendation - NAC should look at ways to build on the positive feedback from the **Straight Talking** sessions to improve communications with individuals and groups who are active in their community.

It would be worth developing appropriate mechanisms and tools to maintain regular face-to-face dialogue as well as to ensure that communication at other times is available and accessible to as wide a cross section of the community in North Ayrshire as possible.

SECTION 3

North Ayrshire Council

“Straight Talking 2010”

Summary Reports

“Straight Talking 2010”
Ardrossan Summary Report

Venue: Ardrossan Civic Centre
Date: 18/10/2010

Ardrossan Introduction

The first **Straight Talking** event was held in Ardrossan and attracted a most encouraging response with more 89 people representing 42 groups in the area. To accommodate this, a total of 10 workshop discussions were held with two groups discussing each topic.

There was a very positive energy in the groups and the lively atmosphere seemed to encourage even greater debate.

This summary report seeks to capture:

- the overall feedback from the discussion groups
- the workshop commentary captured on flipchart notes during each group discussion
- an analysis of the feedback forms completed by participants
- learning points to inform future events

The Ardrossan feedback has also been reviewed to inform the overall Feedback and Recommendations section of this report. See pages 5 – 10.

NAC will be reflecting on the feedback from the Ardrossan **Straight Talking** session to identify key areas for a response and to seek opportunities for early action. Once this work has been completed this will be fed back to participants.

NAC and Liddell Thomson would like to thank everyone who participated in the Ardrossan **Straight Talking** session as well as those who helped with arrangements at the venue.

Feedback

A summary of the 10 group discussions was given at the end of the evening. Facilitators agreed the summary points with their groups and completed feedback forms to capture the key points.

Key themes emerging from the Ardrossan **Straight Talking** session included:

- 1. Rather than lose services there are opportunities to merge or co-locate services (e.g. schools / community centres / health facilities / colleges) creating “one-stop-shops” that can become vibrant centres for the whole community.**
- 2. There is a need for more genuine partnership working between NAC / NHS / voluntary sector organisations / churches etc.**
- 3. As there will be greater demand for more volunteers, help will be needed with recruiting and training volunteers and with setting up Trusts to take over and run community facilities or services. There is a need to communicate the benefits of volunteering to prospective volunteers.**
- 4. Maintaining the attractiveness of the area is important for residents, businesses, visitors and potential investors. NAC and the local community need to find ways to work together to ensure that the overall look of the area is sustained. Local groups and businesses could be involved.**
- 5. Looking after people both in terms of early years (to encourage better parenting, healthier lifestyles and better self esteem) and for older people (living independently) are priorities. There are opportunities for the community to support activities however NAC / NHS support will be needed.**

Community Services – Facilities & Libraries

Discussion Prompts

- It is clear that we will no longer have access to the same resources to support these services – yet they are services that we all value...Looking ahead to 2015 – what do you think the library service of the future might look like? Try to think of around 3 ideas.
- Discuss the main library and community services people think should be provided by NAC
- Do they see any opportunities for merging functions or services?
- Could some of these services be provided by other agencies / groups? (e.g. private sector / community groups ?)
- Are there opportunities for volunteers to become more involved?
- In terms of learning – what opportunities would you like to see being made available locally?

Workshop Commentary

The key themes emerging from the discussions on Community Services

– Facilities & Libraries were as follows:

- **Lack of space and oversubscribed groups**
- **A skills shortage for running Trusts**
- **Invite others to share spaces e.g. NHS, Police, Starbucks - to help meet costs**
- **Libraries and community centres are the heart of communities - don't want to lose them**
- **Voluntary groups/charities could take on running some centres**
- **There is a need to merge services - 'one stop' facilities**
- **There is a need for change**
- **There should be more flexibility in use of community services**

The full workshop commentary captured on the flipcharts follows:

- There was a strong view that in order to keep libraries running in the future they would have to be multi functional. Some ideas included sharing space with a coffee shop like Starbucks and Citizens' Advice.
- A sexual health team for young people working out of libraries was one idea from the group. This would be a useful way to build relationships with youth services.
- There are opportunities to provide more information services for the public within libraries, especially for young people
- Drug and alcohol abuse areas could be incorporated into libraries or community centres - this could help the criminal justice sector
- NAC should be looking at a wide range of options to ensure community services are able to continue

- Extremely strong view that Libraries and Community Centres should not be lost - they are the heart of the community, NAC should continue to help communities to provide these services.
- Merging of services and facilities such as libraries and community centres was also mentioned as was the potential to centralise resources creating a community 'hub'
- Sports facilities could become multi-purpose venues used by schools and for events like community meetings.
- There is a need to encourage volunteering for community centres and libraries - there may be opportunities for some groups or charities to take over the running of some facilities. However, volunteers need more training and support - particularly with filling in and returning paperwork
- Volunteer positions could be offered as work experience for people not in employment.
- There is a worry that volunteers are being pushed into roles that they are not trained for and they are scared of Trusts and funding applications. More information on available funding is required - it was suggested that a good idea would be to source match funding.
- Chargeable services were suggested for example for libraries so that book group members would pay to join.
- A problem that the libraries are facing is that they are currently running at capacity and have a lot of functions, but operate in a small space.
- The point was raised that although there are enough facilities in the area the efficiency of some facilities could be improved, for example opening times may require a rethink.
- There is a need to engage the community now to give clear information about possible closures and the options going forward. There were also concerns that the **Straight Talking** sessions could be tokenism and people wanted to see the outcomes of the session.

Education 3-18 Years

Discussion Prompts

- Think of today as the first day of a new baby's life. Just hours old...what do you think school will be like for our new baby when they start their education in 2015?
- Write down what you think their experience of education might be like...try to think of around three ideas
- Expand the conversation exploring some of the following:
where will children go to school (a school building? other facilities e.g. libraries / community halls / distance learning...)
- What ways of learning might be more cost-effective and what activities do we think will be most valuable to their learning?
- What steps do we need to start taking now in order to achieve this?

Workshop Commentary

The key themes emerging from the discussions on Education 3- 18 Years were as follows:

- **Community centres and libraries could be merged - schools and libraries could be merged**
- **Community centres could be run by charities**
- **Schools could be merged to save money**
- **Partnership working needs to be improved as does the use of money invested in the voluntary sector**
- **Communication needs to improve between NAC, community planning partners and the community**
- **Parental involvement is crucial**
- **Schools need to be safe, welcoming and fully equipped – embrace new technology**
- **Vocational skills should be delivered by the right organisations, not just teachers**

The full workshop commentary captured on the flipcharts follows:

- There will be no nursery places and more private nurseries
- Community centres will run playgroups and toddler groups in the future
- Higher qualifications will be needed for childcare which could be an issue for volunteers
- Bookstart is a good programme and may lose resources - could NAC and volunteers work together?
- Health and Education need to work together much more to develop parenting role
- Young people should be supported by a wide range of providers - improved partnership working is required
- There was concern that children will have fewer choices - there will be fewer schools and they will have to travel further

- Adult learning is important as is retraining in the community for people facing redundancy
- Better communication is needed between NAC, community planning partners and communities
- There needs to be more interaction / involvement of parents and better information on children's performance at school
- Schools should be safe, welcoming and fully equipped in terms of staff and resources

In order to be cost effective the groups came up with the following ideas:

- Public and school libraries could be combined - this would also help to unite the young and the old
- Libraries and community centres could be merged
- Schools could be closed if they are under capacity - e.g. close three schools and build one that is bigger and better
- Over capacity also needs to be addressed in some areas
- What will be the impact on class sizes and will classroom assistants be available?
- Transport would have to be available to bus children and young people to school if they have to travel further as a result
- Vocational skills could be delivered by partnership organisations
- Schools need to harness new technology - training is needed in this area
- The community should make maximum use of school facilities

Environment & Public Spaces

Discussion Prompts

- It is clear that we will no longer have access to the same resources to support these services – yet they are services that we all value...How might we prioritise the things that really matter to us?
- Individually – please take a couple of minutes to write down your top 5 services in order of priority
- Expand the conversation picking up on key themes
- Invite discussion around the following:
Are there any services we feel that the Council should not provide
Are there services that would be better provided by someone other than the Council – if so whom?

Workshop Commentary

The key themes emerging from the discussions on Environment & Public Spaces were as follows:

- **The overall look of the area is important to attract new businesses / new residents and to create a more positive outlook**

- **Street cleaning is a priority**
- **Removing litter / tackling dog fouling are priorities - education and enforcement are important**
- **Maintenance of public spaces is important**
- **Low priorities are motorway hedges, Christmas displays, hanging baskets and floral displays - partnership working could be introduced to maintain these.**

The full workshop commentary captured on the flipcharts follows:

- Cleaning of streets, highways and beaches should be maintained as a priority and specifically beaches due to the tourism link
- Maintenance of cemeteries was also seen as important
- Perception of the area was seen as important and the overall look of the area is important in terms of safety, community spirit, civic pride, inward investment and ensuring the attraction of new residents to the area as well as retaining current residents
- If a reduction in services is necessary then local businesses and residents could play a part in providing some of these services e.g. maintaining hanging baskets
- Education regarding littering and dog fouling is important (and we need to educate all age groups, not just young people), but also that staff and resources that are already available should be utilised in this area
- Need to ensure that North Ayrshire is vibrant and marketable – the environment is therefore a priority
- Maintaining parks and sports facilities was seen as important in terms of health and positivity.
- A well-maintained path network was also discussed as a way to attract new visitors to the area
- Some streets could be closed to traffic to allow young people to use their streets as an informal play area
- Developers and shop keepers do not always maintain their properties as they should
- Public toilets should be safe and clean, but not all toilets are necessary e.g. Saltcoats seafront toilets in winter. There could be fewer, but better maintained public toilets.
- Grants could be given to establishments with customer toilets and in return they could let the public use these toilets
- The groups felt that there might be an opportunity to have fewer, but better play park facilities as long as they were evenly located
- Reducing the frequency of maintaining highway hedges and verges was also discussed in the groups as a way to save funds
- Partnership working between the community, NAC and public and private sector organisations will be important in the future. There are opportunities for different groups of people to take on roles within their local area.
- Partnerships with colleges was another idea which was shared in the groups and there could be training opportunities associated with this

Independent Living for Older People

Discussion Prompts

- How do we ensure that people are able to do what most want to do – that is to live independently for as long as possible? Please take 2 minutes to write down three ways you think we could help support people to live independently for longer?
- Expand the conversation exploring some the following:
How can we help to prevent falls or admissions to hospital?
Are there better ways for the Council / NHS to work with older people and their carers?
What service support do you think is necessary – and what do you feel are the priorities?
- How can we help older people remain active for longer?

Workshop Commentary

The key themes emerging from the discussions on Independent Living for Older People were as follows:

- **Communication should be a big priority - opt-in 'donor card' type buddy system where volunteers are paired up with an older person to keep in contact with them and check that they are ok**
- **More joined up approach needed with the NHS. e.g. the flu jab programme would be a good opportunity as there will be a lot of older people in the same place at the same time**
- **Fit for purpose accommodation is important with aids and adaptations – services could be more efficient and effective**
- **Tailored care is important - one size does not fit all - people need to have access to appropriate services**
- **Early intervention should be a priority in terms of activity, care and support for independent living - older people want to do things for themselves, but with support.**
- **Budget should match the demographics**

The full workshop commentary captured on the flipcharts follows:

- Elderly people, particularly single elderly people need regular contact and for someone to check that they are ok. There needs to be an accurate list of who is in this position
- Distance from services and therefore accessibility hinders independent living
- There are problems communicating with older people - NAC needs to be more strategic in getting information to the elderly. Web-based information not always suitable - information needs to be shared with families, carers and volunteers so they can pass it on.
- A local info centre was suggested - a place that could be used to provide internet access for 'silver surfers'. An older people's directory was also an

idea that came through in the discussions

- Aids and adaptations to homes would help – sometimes too much time is spent waiting for these changes
- Community spirit and people looking out for one another was considered a priority by the groups.
- More local sheltered housing is needed
- Identifying those who want and need help can be a problem - people can be too proud to ask for help.
- There should be a system to match up housing and housing needs so that when a house becomes available (perhaps with adaptations that would suit an older person) this should go to another older person rather than ripping the adaptations out and putting a young family in.
- A more joined up approach between the NHS and NAC was highlighted. Older people could be consulted more on what they need to help them stay healthy and independent e.g. at flu jab programme or bowel screening programme
- More social activities would help with independent living, but accessing them might be a problem

Prevention & Health Inequalities

Discussion Prompts

- NAC has one of Scotland's highest levels of poor health. (higher than average rates of heart disease / stroke and high levels of drug-related conditions)
- NAC and its partners are committed to tackling this by taking a preventative approach. Already there are a number of initiatives up and running e.g. Smoking cessation / healthy eating / exercise programmes)
- Given the ambition to improve this record – how would you go about improving health in North Ayrshire? Try to think of around 3 ideas. Then broaden the discussion to include:
 - To prevent poor health where do you think funds should be focussed? (E.g. early years / young people / families?)
 - What should the priorities be?
 - What do you think is causing North Ayrshire's poor record on health?

Workshop Commentary

The key themes emerging from the discussions on Prevention & Health Inequalities were:

- **Giving people hope and raising self esteem is important**
- **There should be an early years / good parenting focus**
- **A place for people to find friendship is important**
- **More volunteers are needed and it should be made easier to become a volunteer**

- **There should be more support to get people into employment which would have a knock-on effect in terms of health and self esteem**
- **Better communication is needed around the support / advice / services available**
- **Better collaborative working is required between NAC / NHS / voluntary sector / churches**

The full workshop commentary captured on the flipcharts follows:

- Poor diet, poverty, unemployment, lack of knowledge, lack of hope, homelessness, pollution, peer habits/pressure, alcohol and drugs, lack of exercise, no ethos of personal responsibility, years of acceptance that poor health is the norm, lack of ambition to change.
- Early support for families would help improve things
- A 'Positive Parenting Programme' was put forward as an idea for improving health and it was also suggested that there could be a teenage version of this programme
- Links with nurseries and primary schools should be a priority
- Need to be more creative and think of innovative ways to engage people e.g. street football and peer educators
- Existing nursing / social service / education staff could work more flexibly
- There should be stronger relationships between NAC and the voluntary sector as they can access different funds. NAC could procure services from the voluntary sector.
- Education is important and there should be a curriculum for excellence around physical / emotional / mental health
- Resources should be targeted to programmes that are successful
- Addressing the 'benefit trap' and getting people back into employment would help improve health
- Small business and social enterprises directed at addressing these problems should be encouraged and supported
- Barriers to volunteering were discussed including physical barriers like paperwork but also mental barrier such as lack of confidence. Supporting people in this area would make a difference
- Need to address the lack of hope that people feel - people don't care about themselves and there is a cycle of people abusing their bodies
- Needs to be an attitude shift to focus on what we can do and capture community spirit
- Communications need to improve on two levels
People are not aware of local groups and what's going on in the area.
People are also not aware of volunteering opportunities or what it means to be a volunteer
- Friendships and places to go are important - a community café was one idea put forward and volunteers could have a part to play in this. Equally there is a need to involve professionals and we need to think of better ways to address issues such as addiction and dependency
- Involving the community in planning and designing of facilities and services as well as enabling them to take over the running of centres was something the groups felt could be a good solution

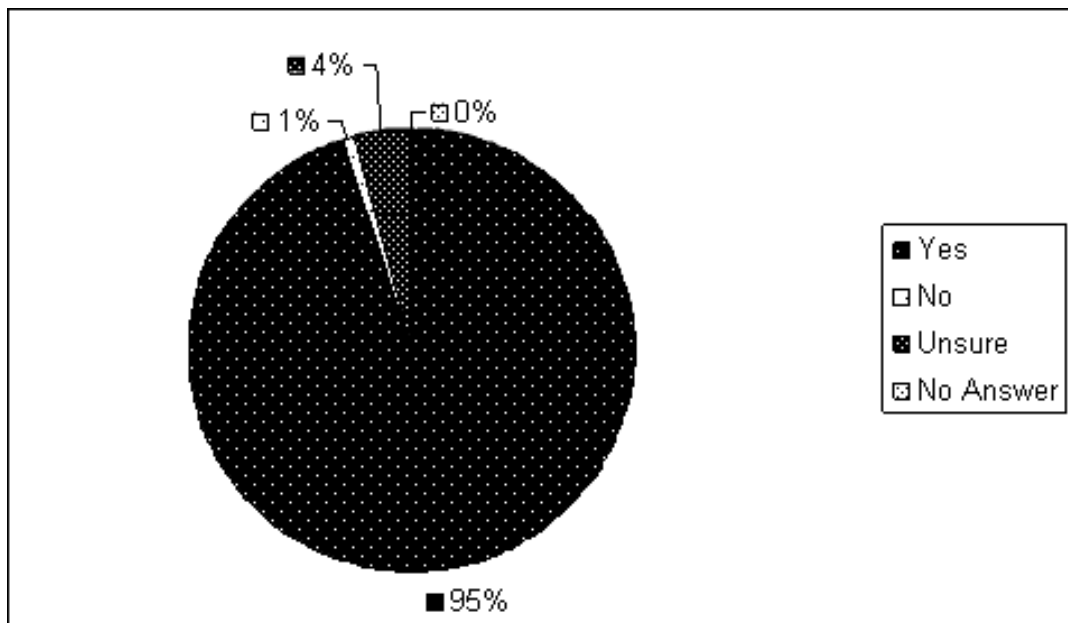
Participant Feedback

Ardrossan

At the end of each session every participant was asked to fill out a short feedback form (see Appendices Section 4) to seek their views on the session. There were five specific questions and space was provided to capture any further comments. Results for the Ardrossan session are below:

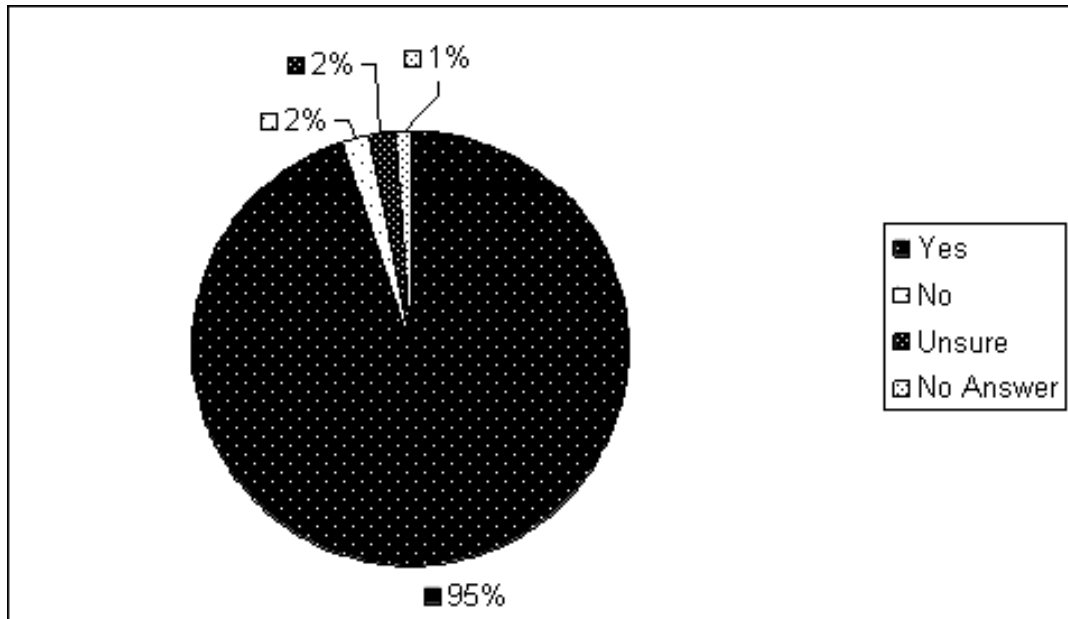
Question 1

Do you feel better informed about the Council's challenges and choices to be made over the coming 3 years?



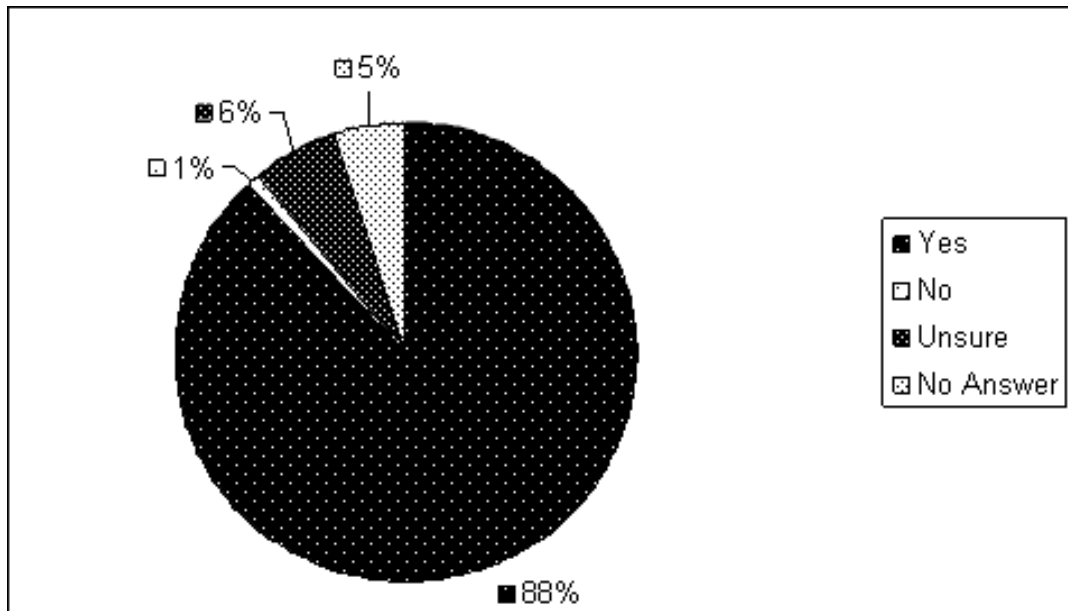
Question 2

Do you feel that the evening was well organised and efficiently run?



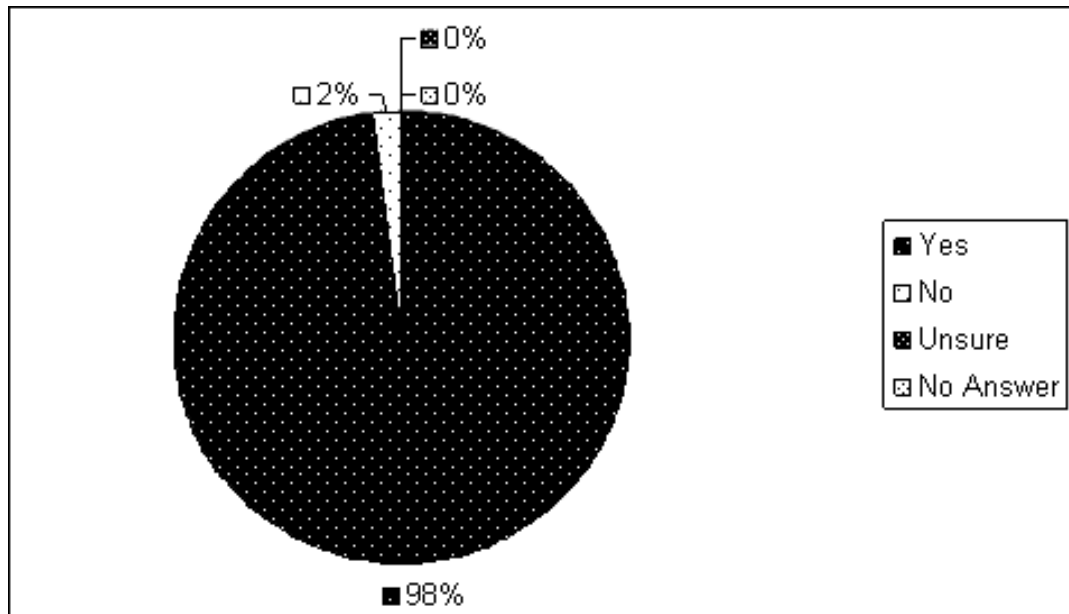
Question 3

In your opinion, is this type of forum valuable?



Question 4

Would you be interested in attending future events?



Question 5

How would you prefer to learn about progress of the Council with budget priorities?

NAC Website
Local Newspapers
Email
Letter

The response to this question was split with participants favouring a variety of ways of receiving this information.

- Local Newspapers and Email were the most popular choice
- NAC Website and Letter were not favoured quite as much.
- Email - 46%
- Local Newspaper - 44%
- NAC website - 35%
- Letter - 34%

Other comments

- It was very noisy in the venue which made it difficult to hear what was being discussed in the groups
- More time was needed for the group workshops in order to be more productive and in-depth
- The session was a good start to what should be a continuing initiative
- There should have been more information on areas already earmarked for cuts

Ends

“Straight Talking 2010”

Isle of Arran Summary Report

**Venue: Brodick Hall
Date: 19/10/2010**

Arran Introduction

The second **Straight Talking** event was held in Brodick on Arran. There was a most encouraging response with 56 people representing 32 groups attending. On this occasion the groups were as follows:

- Community Services – Facilities & Libraries – 1 group
- Education 3-18 Years – 1 group
- Environment & Public Spaces - 2 groups
- Independent Living for Older People on Arran – 1 group
- Prevention & Health Inequalities – 1 group

The groups generated some very positive ideas and made several offers to NAC about how to work differently in future to maintain and develop services on the island.

The Arran report seeks to capture:

- the overall feedback from the discussion groups
- the workshop commentary captured on flipcharts during the group discussions
- an analysis of the feedback forms completed by participants
- learning points to inform future events

The Arran feedback has also been reviewed to inform the overall Feedback and Recommendations section of this report. See pages 5 – 10.

NAC will be reflecting on the feedback from the Arran **Straight Talking** session to identify key areas for a response and to seek opportunities for early action. Once this work has been completed this will be fed back to participants.

NAC and Liddell Thomson would like to thank everyone who participated in the Arran **Straight Talking** session as well as those who helped with arrangements at the venue.

Feedback

A summary of the group discussions was given at the end of the session. Facilitators agreed the summary points with their groups and completed feedback forms to capture the key points.

Key themes emerging from the Arran event included:

- 1. Participants would like to see appropriate facilities on the island - such as schools, the library and the new Montrose House - becoming more multi-purpose. This would make them more welcoming and valuable to a wider cross section of the population, creating vibrant hubs for the island.**
- 2. Given that tourism is so important to Arran, maintaining the attractiveness of the island is critical. Community groups would be willing to carry out some local services subject to having formal agreements with NAC about how this would operate.**
- 3. There is a need to involve more people of all ages (particularly young people) as volunteers. Community groups would appreciate help with removing or tackling some of the existing barriers or bureaucracy surrounding the process of people becoming volunteers and with recruiting and developing new volunteers.**
- 4. Communication needs to be improved both in terms of NAC and the local community, between communities on the island and also through improved use of technology. Better mobile technology would be a real asset to all members of the community.**
- 5. Participants would welcome better health facilities and would like to see NHS / NAC collaborating more to support the needs of people of all ages.**

Community Services – Facilities & Libraries

Discussion Prompts

- It is clear that we will no longer have access to the same resources to support these services – yet they are services that we all value...Looking ahead to 2015 – what do you think the library service of the future might look like? Try to think of around 3 ideas.
- Discuss the main library and community services people think should be provided by NAC
- Do they see any opportunities for merging functions or services?
- Could some of these services be provided by other agencies / groups? (e.g. private sector / community groups ?)
- Are there opportunities for volunteers to become more involved?
- In terms of learning – what opportunities would you like to see being made available locally?

Workshop Commentary

The key themes emerging from the discussions on Community Services Facilities & Libraries were:

- **Facilities would benefit from easier volunteering access - less paperwork and less barriers**
- **Libraries could be a learning hub for skills we are in danger of losing**
- **mobile connectivity and internet access is a problem on the Island and would make a difference if improved**
- **Improved communications around library services would be beneficial**
- **Shared facilities could be an option - school library service and other facilities**
- **Concern among community members that those making the cuts do not have local experience**
- **Information should be shared on the island community to community**
- **Community teams could care, shop and clean for others - based around the English model: self directed support initiative**

The full workshop commentary captured on the flipcharts follows:

- The library could be a great centre for information and could be used to integrate NAC / NHS / Social Services
- Access points for library services could be changed - could there be a home library service?

- NAC could tap into the resource of young, skilled people who are happy to volunteer - for example those that work at the castle
- There is a need to address the barriers to volunteering such as admin / paperwork. Could be made easier if support was offered
- The school library could be used by the community if this could be done without disrupting school days
- There is a danger of a skills loss as apprenticeships are less available - could libraries become learning hubs to prevent skills from dying out?
- Local history could be featured more in the library instead of in a museum
- The bank van could integrate its services with the libraries and sponsor the library
- Information should be more accessible and an example of how this could be done was through computers with internet on the mobile libraries. Better internet and communications services are needed on the island and another mobile mast is needed to improve communications
- A genealogy service could be a commercial opportunity for libraries and museums to create extra revenue
- Festivals and community activities on the Island should be better promoted
- Communities on the island should be sharing information with each other - a focus group could be created to share ideas and information

Education 3-18 Years

Discussion Prompts

- Think of today as the first day of a new baby's life. Just hours old...what do you think school will be like for our new baby when they start their education in 2015?
- Write down what you think their experience of education might be like...try to think of around three ideas
- Expand the conversation exploring some the following:
where will children go to school (a school building? other facilities e.g. libraries / community halls / distance learning...)
- What ways of learning might be more cost-effective and what activities we think will be most valuable to their learning?
- What steps we need to start taking now in order to achieve this?

Workshop Commentary

The key themes emerging from the discussions on Education 3 – 18 Years were:

- **School is not just about being in a classroom**
- **Maintaining high standards is important**

- **Encouraging free play opportunities and use playgrounds outside of school hours**
- **Joined up working between schools and the community is important**
- **There should be a cross-generational element to education**

The full workshop commentary captured on the flipcharts follows:

- Joined up working between schools and communities
- Playgrounds could be use outside school hours
- Parents should be involved more
- Education and NHS Should work together
- Teachers should be following best practice
- Schools supply a social element which is equally important - particularly for rural schools
- We need to maintain high standards
- Vocational skills should be brought into schools
- Involve the clergy in the classroom - not just to add to assemblies
- Encourage young people to 'use' the island
- Use technology - but there must be a balance
- Encourage cross generational work. People of all ages could use resources in schools
- Delaying the school starting age could be an option
- Organisations could play a bigger part in education such as Brownies etc.

Environment & Public Spaces

Discussion Prompts

- It is clear that we will no longer have access to the same resources to support these services – yet they are services that we all value...How might we prioritise the things that really matter to us?
- Individually – please take a couple of minutes to write down your top 5 services in order of priority
- Expand the conversation picking up on key themes
- Invite discussion around the following:
Are there any services we feel that the Council should not provide
Are there services that would be better provided by someone other than the Council – if so whom?

Workshop Commentary

The key themes emerging from the discussions on Environment & Public Spaces were:

- **NAC needs to be mindful when considering future service that Arran is reliant on tourism. Therefore, clean beaches, well maintained**

public areas and clean public toilets are a priority

- **Volunteer support is vital on Arran and much of what is currently provided is delivered with the help of volunteers - funding for developing volunteers is therefore important**
- **Real community and Council partnership is vital and this should be formalised through an official agreement**
- **Play parks are also very important and funding should not be reduced for maintaining these areas.**

The full workshop commentary captured on the flipcharts follows:

- Refuse collection is a priority for action in terms of efficiency and collection schedule - could private contractors be a viable option? It would make sense to have a landfill site on the island
- Food waste composting / wormeries were also discussed - the island needs a simple system for dealing with this type of waste
- The island is reliant on tourism so play areas; public toilets; beaches and the overall environment are priorities
- It is vital that NAC help to maintain / sustain /develop the local economy
- The environment is also important for its impact on the richness and quality of life; health and wellbeing
- On Arran a substantial number of activities are already supported by volunteers - therefore there should be support to develop the skills of volunteers
- Perhaps the Council could provide the funds for materials and equipment and the community could provide the labour?
- NAC should look at the materials used e.g. plants should be perennial and hardy, similar to the Lengthsman Scheme
- Local money is currently provided to support play park facilities (alongside local funding) and only one hall is currently funded by NAC.
- Educating people not to drop litter is important - this should start at nursery age
- Partnership working will be even more important in future - there is a need for better communication between NAC and the community in order to develop this collaborative approach
- A public information campaign could be used to inform visitors about how they could play their part

Independent Living for Older People

Discussion Prompts

- Please take 2 minutes to write down three ways you think we could help support people to live independently for longer? Pause for 2 minutes to allow participants to complete their response
- Then expand the conversation exploring some of the following:
How can we help to prevent falls or admissions to hospital?
- Are there better ways for the Council / the NHS to work with older people and their carers?
- What service support do you think is necessary – and what do you feel are the priorities?
- How can we help older people remain active for longer

Workshop Commentary

The key themes emerging from the discussions on Independent Living for Older People were:

- **Integration of the NHS / Council Services needed - Medical and home care teams including residential care**
- **Transport to help the elderly in getting around is a priority**
- **Communication and community spirit - There should be recognition of the value of informal networks. A buddy system could be used for checking people are ok**
- **Flexible housing should be a priority. Aids and adaptations and particularly heating and insulation would help people to stay in their own homes for longer. Enabling people to be safe and warm in their own homes for longer would save money in the long run**

Specific comments relating to Montrose House included:

- **Create a new centre with a community feeling - Drop in/day centre as well residential**
- **Needs to be a one stop shop and cater for all levels of care e.g. dementia sufferers, respite care, and include a social aspect**
- **Should be a totally integrated unit - NHS & Council Services**
- **NAC needs to ensure that information regarding the services Montrose House offers gets to the right people**

The full workshop commentary captured on the flipcharts follows:

- There should be integration of medical and home care teams (including residential care teams) and the NHS and the Council and volunteers should liaise more
- Making sure homes are fit for purpose should be a big priority. Aids /

- adaptations / heating are important to enable independent living
- Home help services should be provided – they should be regular with continuity of carers
- Transport to help older people to get out and about should be a priority
- There is a need for joined up services - would like to see NHS / NAC services offered in a one-stop shop situation.
- Elderly people need regular contact to make sure they are ok -daily or weekly at the very least. People should not be living in isolation.
- Need for support and encouragement for informal networks and community groups.
- Support for older people during the transition from independent living to sheltered housing

Montrose House

- There should be a community feeling at Montrose House -a drop-in or day centre for people who aren't residents to add a social aspect - somewhere where they can have a coffee and a chat
- There should be a qualified nursing team at Montrose House with fewer transfers to other homes. Montrose House should be able to provide a broad range of services and residents shouldn't have to be moved if, for example, they are suffering from dementia
- Montrose House should offer different levels of care i.e. residential / respite / drop in - the care package should be appropriate to the individual

Prevention & Health Inequalities

Discussion Prompts

- NAC has one of Scotland's highest levels of poor health. (higher than average rates of heart disease / stroke and high levels of drug-related conditions)
- NAC and its partners are committed to tackling this by taking a preventative approach. Already there are a number of such initiatives up and running e.g. Smoking cessation / healthy eating / exercise programmes)
- Given the ambition to improve this record – how would you go about improving health in North Ayrshire? Try to think of around 3 ideas. Then broaden the discussion to include:
- To prevent poor health where do you think funds should be focussed? (e.g. early years / young people / families?)
- What should the priorities be?
- What do you think is causing North Ayrshire's poor record on health?

Workshop Commentary

The key themes emerging from the discussions on Prevention & Health Inequalities were:

- **There is a great need for a new, modern hospital on Arran**
- **Older people need support in order to be active citizens**
- **Increased partnership working is important**
- **Bureaucracy surrounding volunteering needs to be reduced in order to encourage new volunteers**
- **Support should be provided to new mums and young parents**
- **There should be better information and communication about what services are available**
- **Inter-generational sharing of knowledge should be encouraged**

The full workshop commentary captured on the flipcharts follows:

- The group came up with a number of contributors to poor health including: Parenting, environment, diet, education, illiteracy, cannabis use and smoking, alcohol pricing, lifestyle, dependency, unemployment, poor housing, isolation, mental well being, lack of facilities, low self esteem, and the islands old, outdated hospital
- Parental and child education was an important factor in tackling health inequalities. Cooking lessons and classes on growing your own food were ideas put forward by the group
- Support for new mothers was important
- Reducing barriers to partnerships was seen as important as well as reducing barriers to volunteering
- Access to services in different parts of the island was an issue raised by the group and transport should be looked at
- Social activities would reduce isolation and fitness classes were mentioned as an idea to consider
- Finding ways to involve older people in activities would improve health in that demographic
- The group also felt that regular health checks and visits to the GP should be encouraged
- The group stated that resources for local groups would be needed in order for them to help tackle health problems

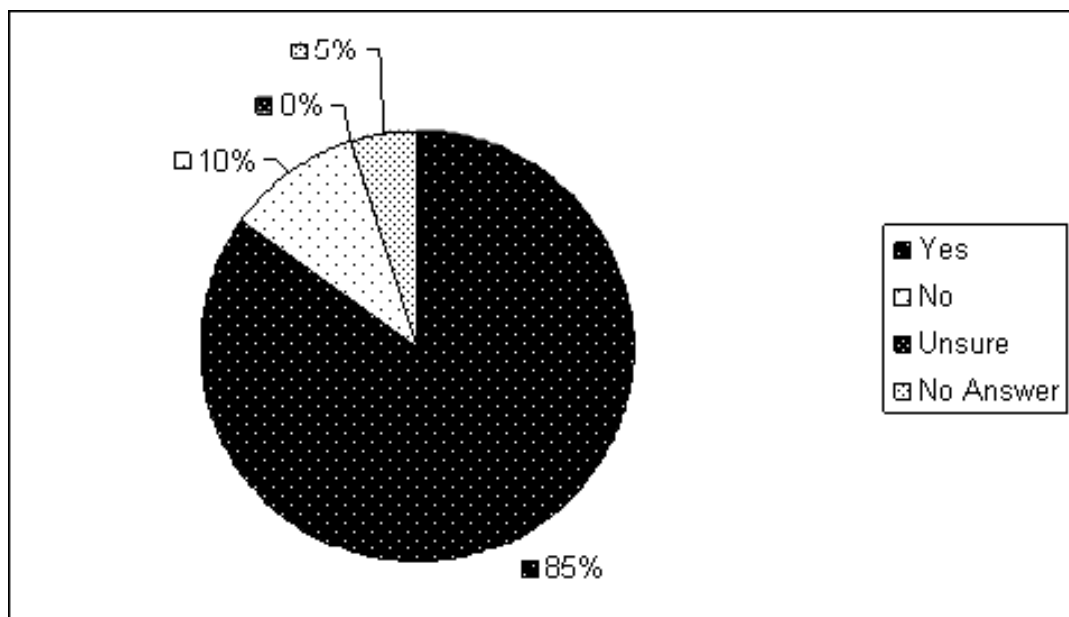
Participant Feedback

Arran

At the end of each session every participant was asked to fill out a short feedback form (Appendices – Section 4) to seek their views on the session. There were five specific questions and space was provided to capture any further comments. Results for the Arran session are below:

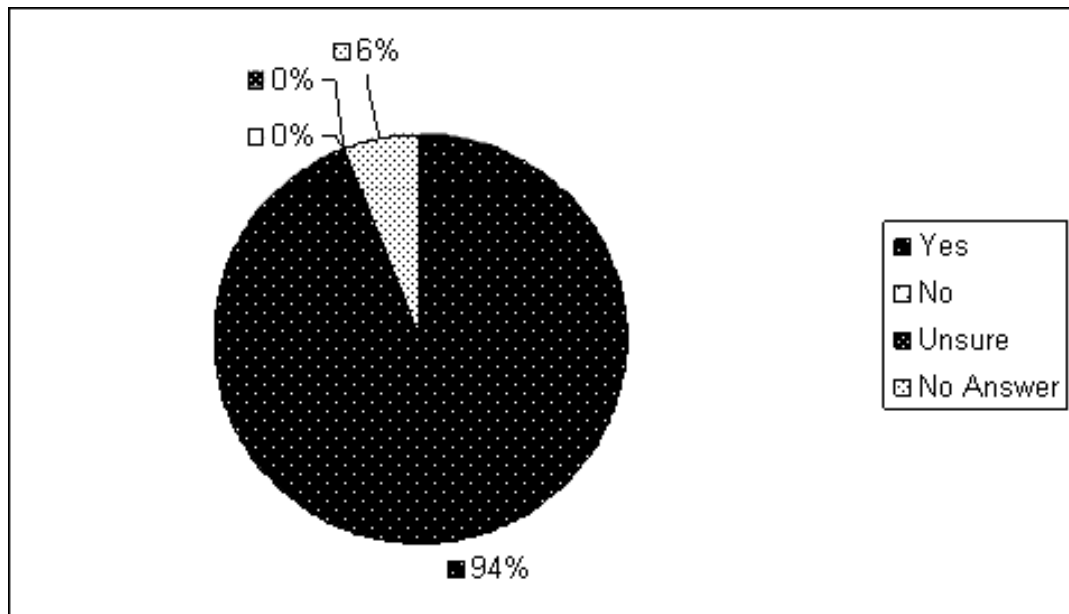
Question 1

Do you feel better informed about the Council's challenges and choices to be made over the coming 3 years?



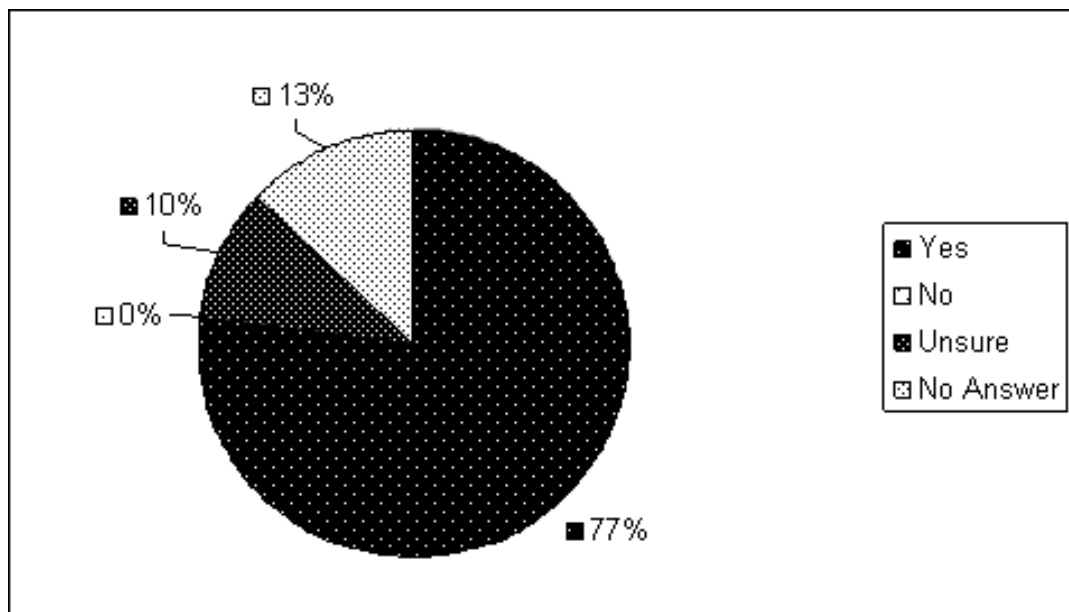
Question 2

Do you feel that the evening was well organised and efficiently run?



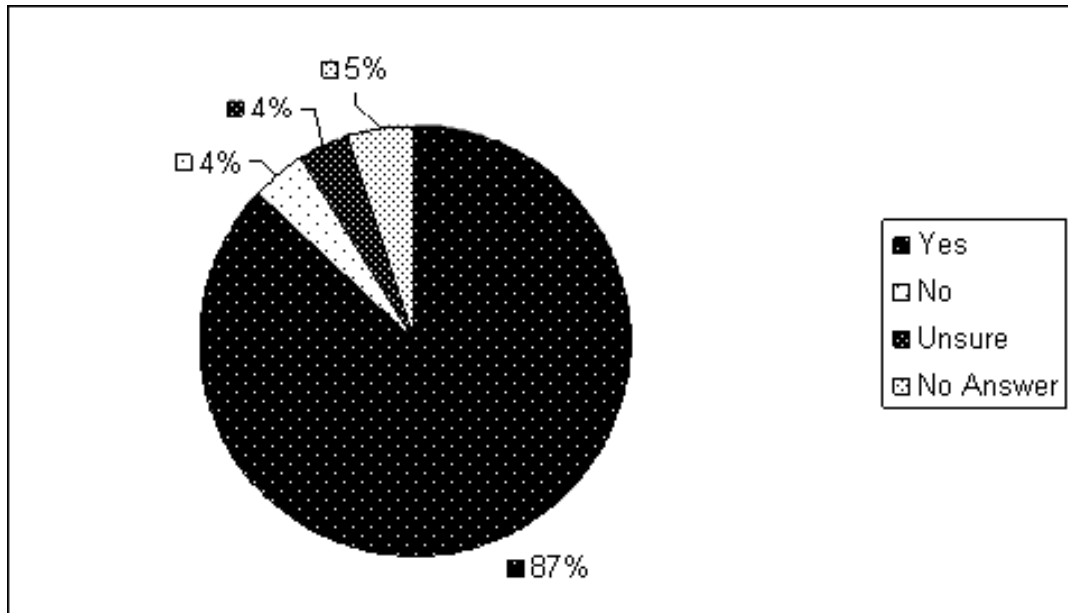
Question 3

In your opinion, is this type of forum valuable?



Question 4

Would you be interested in attending future events?



Question 5

How would you prefer to learn about progress of the Council with budget priorities?

NAC Website

Local Newspapers

Email

Letter

- The NAC website and Local Newspapers were the most popular choice for learning about the Council's progress with the budget priorities. Letter was favoured least by the participants.
- Local Newspapers - 60%
- NAC Website - 40%
- Email - 33%
- Letter - 23%

Other comments

- It was too noisy in the venue and smaller groups would have worked better
- There should have been more time for the group workshops
- The facilitators were good
- It would have been more helpful if the workshops were done after the Chancellor's statement

- The events are a good initiative
- There should have been more information in the presentations that referred to Arran, rather than North Ayrshire as a whole, due to the specific nature of Arran's needs

Ends

“Straight Talking 2010”
Cumbrae Summary Report

Venue: Largs Academy
Date: 28/10/2010

The third **Straight Talking** event was for Cumbrae participants. The event was held in Largs. There was a most enthusiastic response. To accommodate the multiple interests of those attending, one large group discussed all five topics.

- Community Services – Facilities & Libraries
- Education 3 -18 Years
- Environment & Public Spaces
- Independent Living for Older People on Arran
- Prevention & Health Inequalities

There was a lively discussion around all topics, resulting in some positive ideas and offers as well as clear messages particularly around facilities for older people living on Cumbrae.

To accommodate travel times the Cumbrae workshop was held prior to participants attending the key presentations. The feedback forms were issued and completed prior to the presentations explaining some of the results.

The Cumbrae group felt that they would have appreciated it had the session been held on the island rather than in Largs. NAC explained that diaries and logistics had prevented this on this occasion but that every attempt would be made in future to hold **Straight Talking** discussions on Cumbrae.

The Cumbrae summary report seeks to capture:

- the overall feedback from the group
- the workshop commentary captured on flipcharts during the group discussion
- an analysis of the feedback forms completed by participants
- learning points to inform future events

The Cumbrae feedback has been reviewed to inform the overall Feedback and Recommendations section of this report. See pages 5 – 10.

NAC will be reflecting on the feedback from the Cumbrae **Straight Talking** session to identify key areas for a response and to seek opportunities for early action. Once this work has been completed this will be fed back to participants.

NAC and Liddell Thomson would like to thank everyone who participated in the Cumbrae **Straight Talking** session as well as those who helped with arrangements at the venue.

Feedback

A summary of the group discussions was given at the end of the session. Facilitators agreed the summary points with their groups and completed feedback forms to capture the key points.

Key themes emerging from the Cumbrae event included:

- 1. The next Straight Talking session should be held on Cumbrae allowing more time for detailed discussions about the key issues for people living on the island.**
- 2. A major concern for the participants attending from Cumbrae is the lack of facilities to enable older people to continue living independently on the island or to stay there once they need full time care. While participants recognise there are financial constraints they would like to work with NAC and its partners to develop an appropriate scheme for the island that would enable Cumbrae to begin addressing this once when resources are available in future.**
- 3. Strong views were expressed about the cost and accessibility of some facilities on the island. It would be a major bonus to groups of all ages if NAC could address these points by providing extended hours cover and reducing the costs of hiring of facilities at, for example, the school.**
- 4. Community groups already carry out a significant range of services that might otherwise be provided by NAC, however there is willingness to discuss and agree different ways of working with NAC or its partners. Tourism is vital to the island, so participants feel it is essential to maintain Cumbrae's attractiveness as a visitor destination by ensuring that green spaces and floral displays etc are properly maintained. The group would also like to explore different arrangements for running the museum.**
- 5. Concern was expressed about the future of the primary school on the island. Participants felt that more could be done to ensure its future by involving a wider cross section of the community in supporting activities or learning. Participants would like to work with NAC to explore what could be done to address this in future.**

Community Services – Facilities & Libraries

Discussion Prompts

- It is clear that we will no longer have access to the same resources to support these services – yet they are services that we all value...Looking ahead to 2015 – what do you think the library service of the future might look like? Try to think of around 3 ideas.
- Discuss the main library and community services people think should be provided by NAC
- Do they see any opportunities for merging functions or services?
- Could some of these services be provided by other agencies / groups? (e.g. private sector / community groups ?)
- Are there opportunities for volunteers to become more involved?
- In terms of learning – what opportunities would you like to see being made available locally?

Workshop Commentary

The key themes emerging from the discussions on Community Services

- Facilities & Libraries were:

- **There is a need for an all purpose/all weather pitch on the island**
- **Facilities need to be more affordable for the community**
- **There is a will on the island to help with the running of facilities, but NAC need to support this**
- **The library is superb and it needs to be maintained after the community fought so hard for it**
- **After school activities are an issue especially for senior school pupils who have to attend school in Largs as ferry times restrict what they can be involved in**

The full workshop commentary captured on the flipcharts follows:

- There were very strong views that Cumbrae needs an all-weather pitch suitable for playing a number of different sports. This is what the community asked for but instead they were given a small pitch suitable for five-a-side football, but nothing else
- The group felt that NAC needs to work with the community in order to make facilities affordable as there is no other choice for the community. They have to use the facilities on the island and they need the Council to work with them and support them
- The museum on the island is not manned, but the general view is that the community would take on the running of this if they knew where the archives were kept and they had access. There is a will in the community

to take this task on, but they need access to do it.

- The group believe that the library is superb and that it should be maintained. It was also pointed out that the community fought for this facility
- There is a need to support senior school pupils who miss out on after-school activities in Largs because they have to leave to travel home on the ferry.

Education 3-18 Years

Discussion Prompts

- Think of today as the first day of a new baby's life. Just hours old...what do you think school will be like for our new baby when they start their education in 2015?
- Write down what you think their experience of education might be like...try to think of around three ideas
- Expand the conversation exploring some the following:
where will children go to school (a school building? other facilities e.g. libraries / community halls / distance learning...)
- What ways of learning might be more cost-effective and what activities we think will be most valuable to their learning?
- What steps we need to start taking now in order to achieve this?

Workshop Commentary

The key themes emerging from the discussions on Education 3 – 18 Years were:

- **The community want to know if they will still have a primary school**
- **Advancements in technology/E-learning can be used, but it is still important that teachers are there to make sure that Children are learning and understanding and we need to remember that this kind of learning may not incorporate social development**
- **Parental involvement is vital and there is a problem on the island in that it is felt that it is almost discouraged**
- **The fact that teachers are not resident on the island can cause problems**
- **There are people with a wide range of skills across the island that could be utilised for teaching in schools**
- **We should make better use of the school building**

The full workshop commentary captured on the flipcharts follows:

- The group wanted to know if there would still be a primary school
- It was pointed out that there are already differences in pre-school and

primary school provisions in different countries and that nursery and primary school experiences differ. The group questioned if there could be a different way of doing it in North Ayrshire

- Advancements in E-learning were discussed and the group identified an opportunity here to integrate technology into learning. However the problem discussed was that this doesn't incorporate development of social skills
- Although learning through using technology is a possibility there was a strong view that teachers still need to be there making sure that children are learning and understanding
- There was a strong feeling that it is still important for primary school children to have one-to-one support and it is necessary to remember that kids develop at different rates
- The group felt that the role of schools is to prepare pupils for life and it is not apparent that this is happening at present
- There was a strong view that parental involvement in education is key and could be utilised in areas such as sports. However, the group felt that this was almost discouraged
- There are a range of different skills across the island and the group felt that there is an opportunity to use these skills e.g. people could volunteer to teach in schools or in the evenings
- There was a strong view that the school building could be used for more, but that it is too expensive to hire as well as constraints with when the janitor is available
- The fact that teachers are not resident on the island is a problem. The group felt that it particularly impacts on after school activities as teachers have to get the last ferry back to the mainland and it is volunteers who have to teach sports etc
- There was major concern within the group as to the longevity of the school due to Argyll & Bute's announcement

Environment & Public Spaces

Discussion Prompts

- It is clear that we will no longer have access to the same resources to support these services – yet they are services that we all value...How might we prioritise the things that really matter to us?
- Individually – please take a couple of minutes to write down your top 5 services in order of priority
- Expand the conversation picking up on key themes
- Invite discussion around the following:
Are there any services we feel that the Council should not provide
Are there services that would be better provided by someone other than the Council – if so whom?

Workshop Commentary

The key themes emerging from the discussions on Environment & Public Spaces were:

- **The funding that Cumbrae receives does not reflect the fact that it is a popular tourist spot**
- **Facilities such as public toilets are important for tourists**
- **The cleaning of roads and beaches should be a priority**
- **Areas such as mowing of grass verges are possibly over-manned**
- **There is a willingness in the community to help with the maintenance of planters and hanging baskets**
- **More dog bins are required and there should be separate sections in household bins to enable more recycling**

The full workshop commentary captured on the flipcharts follows:

- The group felt that cleaning of the streets, roads and beaches should be a priority
- Mowing of grass verges and cutting hedges was an area that the group felt was over manned
- More dog bins are required and there is already a list with the Council which needs to be agreed
- An idea that was discussed was that bins could be split to allow items to be sorted for recycling
- The placement of memorial benches was another issue discussed as there was a general feeling that there are too many. The group were keen to know who actually approves them. There was also concern expressed about the memorial garden
- It was suggested that there should be a review of needs with regards to beach cleaning so that money is not wasted
- The group felt that play parks were currently well maintained
- There was a strong view that public toilets are important especially for tourists but there could possibly be some acceptable closures in winter
- The group felt that there should be a reduction in grass cutting in wet weather
- Another suggestion was that the Community Council could take on half of the cost of hanging baskets
- It was pointed out that because of the transient population, maintaining facilities is important
- There was a strong feeling that volunteers cannot volunteer forever and they therefore need to be kept engaged
- There was a very strong feeling that the Council need to establish a fair baseline for funding as the group felt that Cumbrae is a popular tourist spot and this brings its own challenges, but the funding that the island receives does not reflect this

Independent Living for Older People

Discussion Prompts

- Please take 2 minutes to write down three ways you think we could help support people to live independently for longer? Pause for 2 minutes to allow participants to complete their response
- Then expand the conversation exploring some of the following:
How can we help to prevent falls or admissions to hospital?
- Are there better ways for the Council / NHS to work with older people and their carers?
- What service support do you think is necessary – and what do you feel are the priorities?
- How can we help older people remain active for longer

Workshop Commentary

The key themes emerging from the discussions on Independent Living for Older People were:

- **Housing is not currently suitable for older population**
- **The island desperately needs amenity housing and long term care facilities due to the age of the population**
- **Ground floor flats could be adapted for use as amenity housing**
- **The fact that Council plans don't currently feature any new builds for Cumbrae is a big concern**

The full workshop commentary captured on the flipcharts follows:

- The group raised the issue of the dearth of amenity housing - 42% of the island's population is over 60 and the provision is not adequate to cope with this
- Accommodation is not suitable for some older people as flats and houses with stairs can be a problem
- There was a strong view that the island needs long term care facilities to keep elderly on the island as there is a feeling that although elderly people want to stay they are 'farmed out' to the mainland because there is no care home and no facilities
- A system needs to be developed around using current housing stock plus some new builds
- One suggestion was that ground floor flats could be adapted for use as amenity housing
- A big concern was that the current Council plans don't appear to feature any new builds on Cumbrae

Prevention & Health Inequalities

Discussion Prompts

- NAC has one of Scotland's highest levels of poor health. (higher than average rates of heart disease / stroke and high levels of drug-related conditions)
- NAC and its partners are committed to tackling this by taking a preventative approach. Already there are a number of such initiatives up and running e.g. Smoking cessation / healthy eating / exercise programmes)
- Given the ambition to improve this record – how would you go about improving health in North Ayrshire? Try to think of around three ideas. Then broaden the discussion to include:
- To prevent poor health where do you think funds should be focussed? (e.g. early years / young people / families?)
- What should the priorities be?
- What do you think is causing North Ayrshire's poor record on health?

Workshop Commentary

The key themes emerging from the discussions on Prevention & Health Inequalities were:

- **Exercise is important and therefore more suitable facilities are needed**
- **There is concern over what school children are eating at lunch time**
- **Facilities and halls are not affordable and this is prohibitive to activities being run**
- **A better variety of sports facilities are needed e.g. a swimming pool**

The full workshop commentary captured on the flipcharts follows:

- The group felt that exercise is important but playing fields are not important and more facilities are needed
- There was a strong feeling that we should be encouraging young people to exercise but they need the right facilities
- There was concern over what school children are eating at lunch times and an example was discussed in the group of a scheme in Finland where school meals were changed
- Rents for halls and indoor facilities was another issue that was discussed as there is a need for affordable access and high rents are prohibitive to people being able to run activities in the community
- There was also a strong feeling that a better variety of sports facilities is needed for young people e.g. a swimming pool

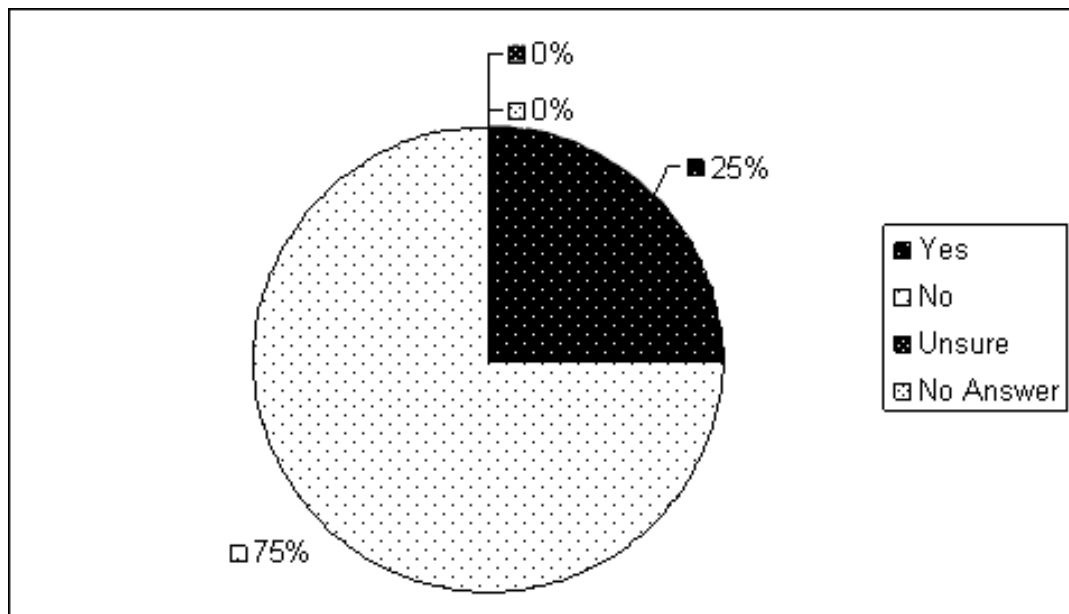
Participant Feedback

Cumbrae

At the end of each session every participant was asked to fill out a short feedback form (See Appendices – Section 4) to seek their views on the session. There were five specific questions and space was provided to capture any further comments. Results for the Cumbrae session are below:

Question 1

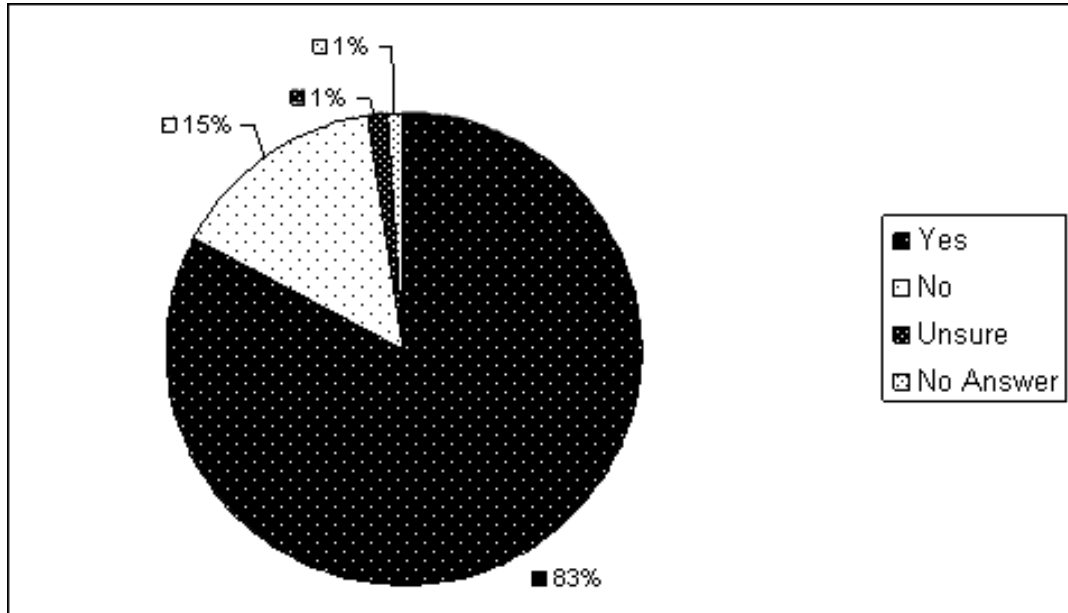
Do you feel better informed about the Council's challenges and choices to be made over the coming 3 years?



Please note: Cumbrae participants completed their feedback forms at the end of their workshop session and prior to the presentations explaining the challenges North Ayrshire Council is facing. All other groups were able to hear the presentations prior to the workshops.

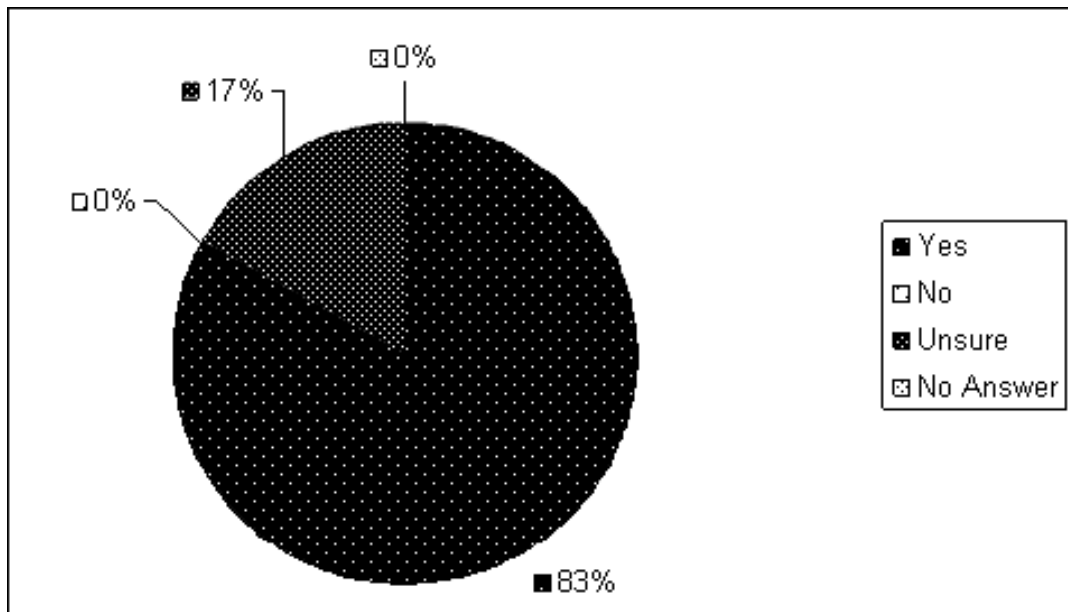
Question 2

Do you feel that the evening was well organised and efficiently run?



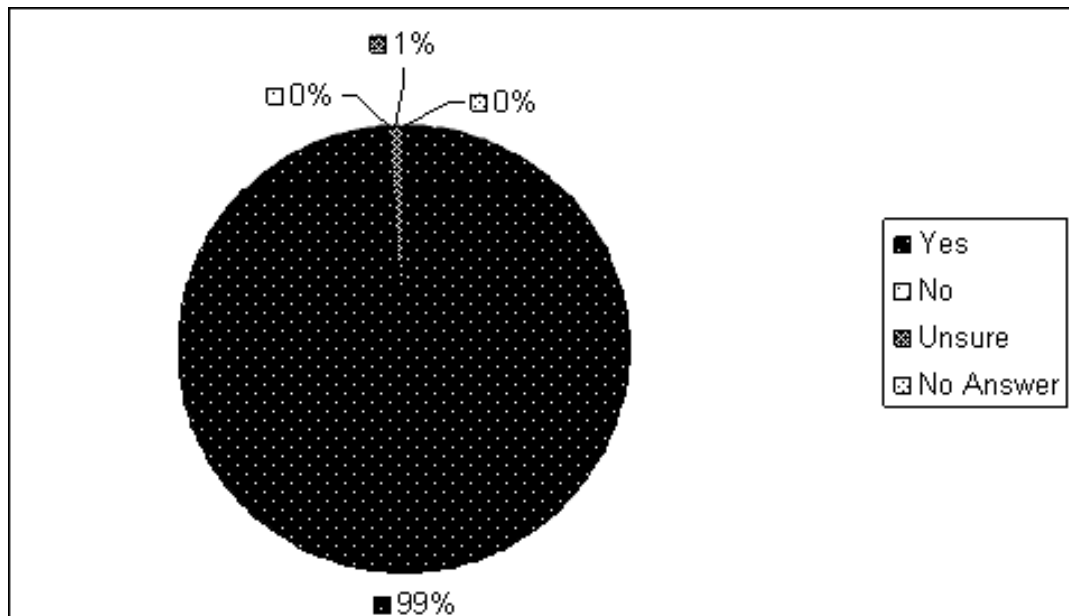
Question 3

In your opinion, is this type of forum valuable?



Question 4

Would you be interested in attending future events?



Question 5

How would you prefer to learn about progress of the Council with budget priorities?

NAC Website

Local Newspapers

Email

Letter

Email and Letter were options favoured the most for communication from the Council about the budget priorities. NAC website and local newspapers were not as popular a choice.

- Email - 58%
- Letter - 50%
- NAC Website - 42%
- Newspaper - 42%

Other comments

- The event should have been on Cumbrae
- Participants would like to see positive action after the sessions and a more positive attitude towards Cumbrae
- People feel that Cumbrae is already not receiving a fair cut of the budget and that this will only get worse with the new cuts

Ends

“Straight Talking 2010”

Largs Summary Report

**Venue: Largs Academy
Date: 28/10/2010**

Largs Introduction

The fourth **Straight Talking** event was for Largs participants. Held at Largs Academy the venue accommodated both the Largs group and an earlier **Straight Talking** session discussing Cumbrae. There was a most encouraging response with 76 people representing 24 groups attending. To allow everyone to participate, some topics had two groups – see below:

- Community Services – Facilities & Libraries – two groups
- Education 3-18 Years – two groups
- Environment & Public Spaces – two groups
- Independent Living for Older People – one group
- Prevention & Health Inequalities – one group

There were lively discussions around all topics resulting in some positive ideas and offers of support as well as clear messages about priorities for the area.

The Largs summary report seeks to capture:

- the overall feedback from the group
- the workshop commentary captured on flipcharts during the group discussion
- an analysis of the feedback forms completed by participants
- learning points to inform future events

The Largs feedback has been reviewed to inform the overall Feedback and Recommendations section of this report. See pages 5 – 10.

NAC will be reflecting on the feedback from the Largs **Straight Talking** session to identify key areas for a response and to seek opportunities for early action. Once this work has been completed this will be fed back to participants.

NAC and Liddell Thomson would like to thank everyone who participated in the Largs **Straight Talking** session as well as those who helped with arrangements at the venue.

Feedback

A summary of the group discussions was given at the end of the session. Facilitators agreed the summary points with their groups and completed feedback forms to capture the key points.

- 1. Partnership was a key theme emerging from most of the groups at the Straight Talking session in Largs. There is a real strength of feeling from participants that they would like to see much more collaboration between NAC / NHS / voluntary sector and better multi-use facilities that provide a range of services such as health, job centres, citizens' advice, libraries. This was viewed as a way of creating vibrant community hubs and saving money.**
- 2. Volunteers will be needed in greater number to support a range of topics including providing support for older people living at home, caring for the local area and supporting schools. Participants expressed the need for support on a range of fronts including recruitment and training, technical back-up particularly with administrative requirements and support for volunteers to ensure they do not become over-burdened.**
- 3. Groups expressed a desire to see more joined-up working between the local authorities in Ayrshire to minimise the loss of local services and to save money that can be directed into services.**
- 4. A theme emerging from some of the groups was the concern about the cost of hiring some facilities. Participants would like to see more reasonably priced access to enable more groups to make use of existing facilities in future. One way of achieving this could be to allow more facilities to be run by the community. Participants would also appreciate help with insurance and caretaker costs.**
- 5. Local amenities need investment and are vital to sustain local communities. There were several areas highlighted where community groups could play a different or increasing role such as the maintenance of flower beds; beaches and walking routes. In order to achieve this new ways of working would need to be developed and agreed. Support would be required with advice and expertise; equipment and training.**

Community Services – Facilities & Libraries

Discussion Prompts

- It is clear that we will no longer have access to the same resources to support these services – yet they are services that we all value...Looking ahead to 2015 – what do you think the library service of the future might look like? Try to think of around 3 ideas.
- Discuss the main library and community services people think should be provided by NAC
- Do they see any opportunities for merging functions or services?
- Could some of these services be provided by other agencies / groups? (e.g. private sector / community groups ?)
- Are there opportunities for volunteers to become more involved?
- In terms of learning – what opportunities would you like to see being made available locally?

Workshop Commentary

The key themes emerging from the discussions on Community Services – Facilities & Libraries were:

- **Shared community services is an idea for the future - communities working together to have quality, varied services in shared spaces**
- **Library usage should be reviewed as there is an opportunity to create a shared information point for health, jobs, citizen's advice etc.**
- **NAC could hand libraries, community centres and museums to communities to run**
- **The local community don't want to lose what they have and are ready to work together to make it work**
- **There is a need to make better use of partnerships in order to deliver youth services, adult learning etc.**
- **There is an opportunity for volunteer development especially for retired people**
- **Museums are small, but important to communities**
- **Communities need continued help and technical support in order to deliver important services**

The full workshop commentary captured on the flipcharts follows:

- The groups felt that community groups needed the support of the Council
- There was a strong view that there should be access to reasonably priced accommodation for facilities - some halls that are available to hire and could be used for all sorts of purposes are too expensive
- The groups expressed the need for fit for purpose facilities
- There was a really strong view that if there are not good facilities for

young people then the bill would increase for the Police

- The groups felt that it is important to encourage people to use their skills and experience to help their community
- Support for volunteers was said to be vital in terms of recruitment and training and the groups felt that volunteers can only do so much and should not be overburdened
- The groups felt that merging libraries and community centres could be an option, however the reduction in floor space would be a problem
- There was also concern expressed over child protection issues with volunteering
- One idea that came through in the groups was that adult learning could be offered at community level in partnership with the community organisations
- There was a strong view that the partnership with volunteers is undervalued at present and there needs to be greater recognition from the Council
- The groups discussed the fact that the third sector is growing and that the Council should encourage this growth with a greater level support so that:
 - Halls and centres could be community run
 - Libraries could be merged with community centre
 - Opportunities in retirement could be harnessed
 - Café provision could be considered
 - Volunteer training and placement can be organised
 - Youth provisions can develop
- There was also a strong view that where there is duplication, facilities should be merged
- There was a very strong feeling that the library should be a 'hub' for community activity and encompass learning and volunteering
- An amalgamated, shared library systems across all of Ayrshire was an idea that was discussed as a way of reducing costs
- The groups felt that there was an opportunity for community centres to be a real focus in the community
- The problem of insurance for halls was raised as the need for NAC caretakers increases costs - could the insurance be changed to permit volunteer/community caretakers?
- The groups felt that a survey of when the libraries are used would be useful so that opening hours can be adjusted
- It was also suggested that other buildings could be used to provide internet access later in the evenings such as village halls
- There was a strong feeling that libraries could be turned into information centres and incorporate things like Citizen's Advice, health information, jobs, commercial lets and classes like Zumba and weightwatchers
- Communities could have access to schools in the evenings and at weekends in order to use their facilities
- Could museums be run by the community or be merged with libraries
- There was a strong view that if museums are lost then this could take away from the local area and that museums and culture are still felt to be important and communities don't want to lose what they have

Education 3-18 Years

Discussion Prompts

- Think of today as the first day of a new baby's life. Just hours old...what do you think school will be like for our new baby when they start their education in 2015?
- Write down what you think their experience of education might be like...try to think of around three ideas
- Expand the conversation exploring some of the following:
where will children go to school (a school building? other facilities e.g. libraries / community halls / distance learning...)
- What ways of learning might be more cost-effective and what activities we think will be most valuable to their learning?
- What steps we need to start taking now in order to achieve this?

Workshop Commentary

The key themes emerging from the discussions on Education 3-18 Years were:

- **Education should be a top priority**
- **NAC could create an education centre that covers education from start to finish and incorporate formal education, social development and informal learning**
- **Schools should be used and owned by the community**
- **The Council should consider different funding models e.g. private money**
- **Early intervention is key as early (as pre-two-year-olds) to create the workforce of the future**

The full workshop commentary captured on the flipcharts follows:

- The group wanted the Council to know that education should be a top priority
- One idea that was introduced in the group was that the Council could create an education centre for 3-18 year olds that could support formal education, social development and informal learning and the whole community could have access to these education centres
- The group also felt that there needed to be flexibility in support for education in terms of transport and special learning
- There was also a strong view that learning should also come from other sources in the community and that there was an opportunity for inter-generational involvement in schools
- It was also pointed out that although North Ayrshire has an ageing population, many are healthier and fitter than they perhaps would have been in previous generations and have a lot to offer to the community

- A management downsize was also suggested and the group felt that the three Ayrshire Councils could amalgamate their education management
- It was also suggested that there might be a case for merging religious schools
- The group also had a discussion around whether education should be free or not. Some felt very strongly that it should be free whereas others questioned whether more affluent families could be asked to contribute in some way
- The subject of early intervention was raised and there was a strong view that this should begin with children before the age of two
- The group also introduced the suggestion that local businesses could be asked to contribute to education
- The groups felt strongly that there should be community ownership of educational facilities

Environment & Public Spaces

Discussion Prompts

- It is clear that we will no longer have access to the same resources to support these services – yet they are services that we all value...How might we prioritise the things that really matter to us?
- Individually – please take a couple of minutes to write down your top 5 services in order of priority
- Expand the conversation picking up on key themes
- Invite discussion around the following:
Are there any services we feel that the Council should not provide
Are there services that would be better provided by someone other than the Council – if so whom?

Workshop Commentary

The key themes emerging from the discussions on Environment & Public Spaces were:

- **Look at having less, but better maintained and safer toilets**
- **Maintenance of walking routes could be taken on by local groups**
- **Grass verge in Inness Road needs to go**
- **Maintenance of flower beds and beaches could be taken on by local groups if NAC provide the equipment**
- **Better education about litter is needed.**
- **Dog bins should be more accessible to bin lorries**
- **Local amenities need investment are vital to sustain communities numbers**

- **Volunteers should be supported better but should not be used as the main solution to cutbacks**
- **Local authorities could be joined up to incorporate the whole of Ayrshire - administration and management structures could be streamlined**
- **We should be looking for opportunities to put in place formal and informal contracts for local groups**
- **Individuals could help deliver services for the Council but would also like to receive something back e.g. skills/grants/self esteem**
- **There should be a wider range of recycling bins**
- **Local groups like the Scouts, Boys Brigade and Girl Guides could be involved**
- **It's about education and the new generation have a part to play**

The full workshop commentary captured on the flipcharts follows:

- The groups felt that one local authority for the whole of Ayrshire would save a lot of money
- There was a feeling that new technology is not always the best and most efficient or environmentally friendly e.g. street sweepers
- There was a strong view that collection of bins was not always efficient in the town centre
- The groups felt that litter was a problem in the town centre
- It was suggested that the whole community should be involved in the development of green spaces - Fairlie community garden is an example of good practice
- It was mentioned that more information was needed on the Lengthmans fund
- There was a strong view that insurance, health and safety and legal issues are a barrier to creating multi purpose games areas and are also a barrier to facilities being run volunteers
- It was suggested that land is available in some areas, but there is a lack of associated facilities such as changing rooms and toilets
- The groups felt that dog fouling was an issue that needs to be kept on top of. It was also suggested that the dog license should be brought back
- There was a strong feeling that local amenities are good for vibrant, sustainable communities and are important to retain residents and increase the local population
- There was also a feeling that there should be no more flats built as housing developments
- The groups suggested that better facilities for young people would result in less vandalism
- The groups mentioned that public toilets were often shut, particularly in Ardrossan. It was suggested that there were perhaps too many toilet facilities and that there should be less, but better maintained and with improved availability
- There was a suggestion that community councils could be more involved and that partnerships should be looked at. A schedule of activity could be developed for things such as maintaining of walking routes
- There was a strong view that the grass verge at Innes Road in Skelmorlie

is not a priority and should be removed

- The issue of inaccessible sports facilities and lack of football pitches, particularly in Largs was mentioned and community council involvement was mentioned again in terms of helping to keep facilities open
- It was suggested that residents could maintain their own hedges and grassed areas
- There was a general feeling that if the Council provided equipment such as skips, rakes and gloves then community groups could take over the maintenance of some green spaces
- There was a strong view that more education is needed about litter as there has been a culture shift around eating habits
- It was suggested that floral societies and/or volunteer groups could maintain floral displays and it was also mentioned that perhaps annuals should not be used
- The groups felt that a best practice approach was necessary to ensure continued provision of services.
- The groups mentioned problems with the football pitch flooding in Dalry and they also felt there was a lack of Astroturf access in the area
- In Kilbirnie, the groups mentioned problems with flooding at Radio City
- Littering was an issue discussed and the groups felt that it was particularly bad in the Dalry Cross area
- The groups felt that refuse collection was generally ok, but there is a need for more recycling bins to include different types of recyclable rubbish
- One thing which the groups would like to see in the future is plastic bag collection
- There was a general feeling that street sweeping needs to be improved, particularly in some areas. Cunningham Housing Association was mentioned
- The groups felt that the amount the Council charges for rubbish to be uplifted is a barrier to the uptake of this service
- There was a strong view that young people should get involved with the community and we need to encourage responsibility
- The group felt that there could be volunteering opportunities, particularly in parks and outdoor areas and that this could also be used as work experience
- There was a strong view that there could also be learning opportunities for example horticulture and if there was wider access to places like allotments then people could learn new skills
- There was a strong feeling that the Council should be liaising with the local community on issues such as planting and cleaning
- The groups suggested that there could be a campaign to encourage volunteers to get involved. There is a need to make it attractive and show the benefits that individuals can gain from volunteering
- It was suggested that local businesses could take on the provision and maintenance of hanging baskets
- One idea put forward was that young people groups like the Girl Guides and Scouts could get involved with some elements
- The groups felt very strongly that this is about the new generation and that providing education and opportunities is very important

- There was a strong feeling that if the Council could provide materials and equipment then there would be a will in the community to take on some of the tasks
- The groups felt very strongly that the Council could take a lead role and work more closely with local groups

Independent Living for Older People

Discussion Prompts

- Please take 2 minutes to write down three ways you think we could help support people to live independently for longer? Pause for 2 minutes to allow participants to complete their response
- Then expand the conversation exploring some of the following:
How can we help to prevent falls or admissions to hospital?
- Are there better ways for the Council / NHS to work with older people and their carers?
- What service support do you think is necessary – and what do you feel are the priorities?
- How can we help older people remain active for longer

Workshop Commentary

The key themes emerging from the discussions on Independent Living for Older People were:

- **There needs to be some kind of communication or contact for older people living alone.**
- **A buddy system could be put in place so that people know that someone is there**
- **Better communication is needed so that people know what help is out there**
- **Carers are seen as a vital cog in the wheel and they should be utilised as a network for gathering intelligence**
- **Residential care homes should be used as hubs and should be venues for social events**

The full workshop commentary captured on the flipcharts follows:

- There was a strong feeling that housebound people need contact with the outside world - WRVS and the meals on wheels service was identified as one existing way that this is achieved but there is a need for more of these kinds of services
- It was also felt that there was not sufficient knowledge of the services available amongst older people
- The fact that older people are sometimes too proud to ask when they

need help or information was identified as a problem by the group

- The group identified some opportunities to engage with older people including churches, elderly forums, age concern and the Hope Project
- The group also felt that transport was an issue as there was very little community transport offered and people need to be able to get to the facilities
- Fear of crime was mentioned as an issue, especially at night. The group felt that this was also an issue for the whole community
- There was a strong view that residential homes could be used as a hub and that it would be good if they could co-ordinate activities and be a place to socialise for day visitors as well as residents
- Carers were seen by the group as very important and the general feeling was that there should be more support and recognition for carers
- There was a strong feeling that homes need to be fit for purpose and things like alarms, access ramps, and hand rails etc. are important aids in preventing falls and trips to the A&E. The group felt that there should also be more information about who is entitled to these adaptations and that an idea would be to use age as a trigger to assess people's needs in this area
- The time lag between hospital release and home visits was raised as a concern and there should be more communication between the NHS and NAC.
- A 'Helping Hands' service was another idea that the group came up with whereby volunteers could help with tasks like replacing light bulbs or putting up curtains.
- A pool of trusted trades people was another suggestion that would be helpful in enabling people to stay in their own homes for longer
- The group felt very strongly that contact with the outside world is important and that a befriending scheme with a mixed demography would be useful.
- A home swap scheme was another suggestion that came out of the discussions whereby older people could opt to swap their home if it was too big for them
- Carers were identified by the group as a good communication channel as they know the issues first
- The group felt that direct mail should be balanced with new media as not all older people are comfortable with new technology. The fact that the NAC newsletter was stopped was raised as this could be useful in communicating with older members of the community

Prevention & Health Inequalities

Discussion Prompts

- NAC has one of Scotland's highest levels of poor health. (higher than average rates of heart disease / stroke and high levels of drug-related conditions)
- NAC and its partners are committed to tackling this by taking a preventative approach. Already there are a number of such initiatives up and running e.g. Smoking cessation / healthy eating / exercise programmes)
- Given the ambition to improve this record – how would you go about improving health in North Ayrshire? Try to think of around 3 ideas. Then broaden the discussion to include:
- To prevent poor health where do you think funds should be focussed? (e.g. early years / young people / families?)
- What should the priorities be?
- What do you think is causing North Ayrshire's poor record on health?

Workshop Commentary

The key themes emerging from the discussions on Prevention & Health Inequalities were:

- **There is a need to focus in pre-birth and early years**
- **There should be support for pregnant women and their partners on issues such as diet, lifestyle and health options**
- **There needs to be a review of the role of community health care teams in order to identify the best person for the job**
- **Improved information and communication is needed around what is available in terms of services, help and advice**
- **Limit the number of fast food outlets and pubs in every town**

The full workshop commentary captured on the flipcharts follows:

- The group noted the following contributors to poor health: Fast food diet and high number of fast food/take away outlets leading to temptation; Lack of health/dietary education in children and parents; unhealthy lifestyle; price of fast food vs. healthy food; high unemployment; link between fast food and obesity
- There was a strong feeling that education is important in tackling health inequalities and that it should be more innovative
- Early years and pre birth intervention was seen to be important by the group
- There was a suggestion that ante-natal classes could be used as a means to influence lifestyle and diet of mums and babies and to tackle smoking in pregnant women

- An idea shared in the group was that breast feeding could be incentivised - e.g. food vouchers
- The group felt that more partnership working was necessary between public agencies and the community and that local experience should be harnessed
- There was a strong view that the role of health visitors should be reviewed in order to give more support to mums and that specialists should be identified who can give expert help in the early stages
- The group felt very strongly that nurseries and primary schools have an important role to play and that parents should also be involved more e.g. learning together how to cook healthy meals
- The group felt that there should be more promotion in the community of opportunities to exercise
- It was also mentioned that there should be more of a focus on mental health problems
- Preventative screening of older people was also thought to be important to improving health and it was suggested that a pilot scheme could run in deprived areas
- Street nurses was another idea that the group came up with as they could visit residents and run health checks
- The group felt very strongly that there should be a focus on quality of life for older people - befriending is an idea that could be used as well as support for older people to form physical activity groups and art groups in the community and in sheltered housing
- There was a strong view that inter-generational work would benefit and visits by young people to older people in hospital was one idea shared in the group

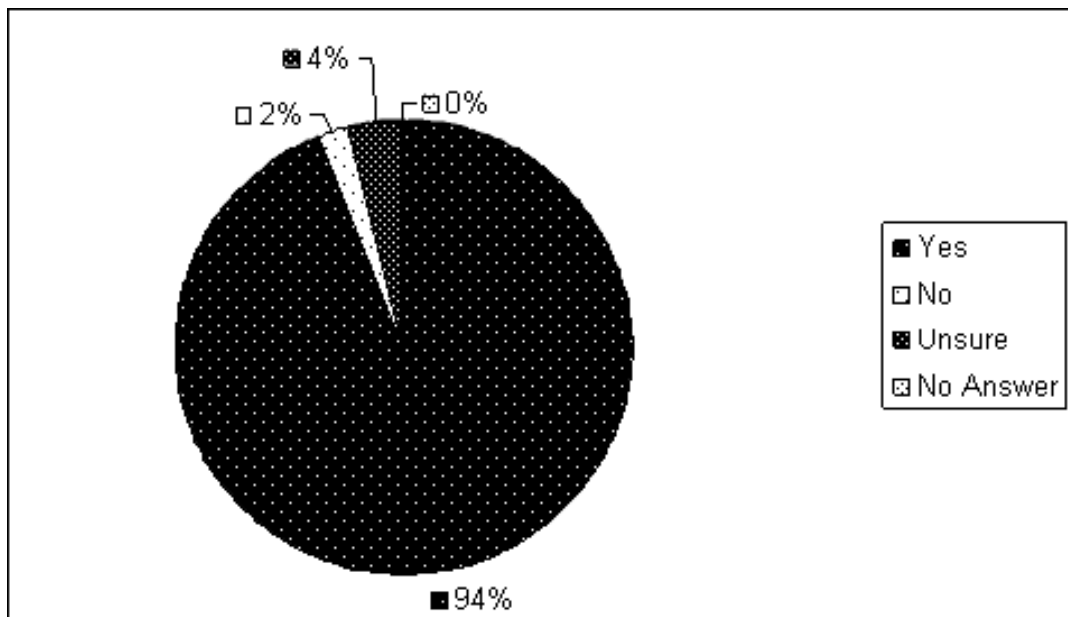
Participant Feedback

Largs

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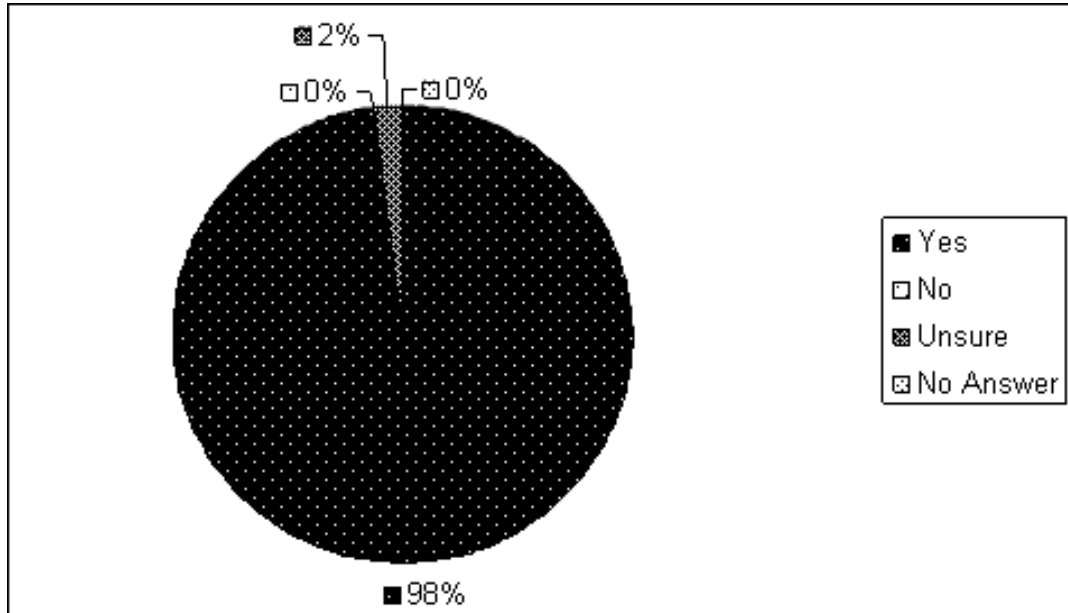
Question 1

Do you feel better informed about the Council's challenges and choices to be made over the coming 3 years?



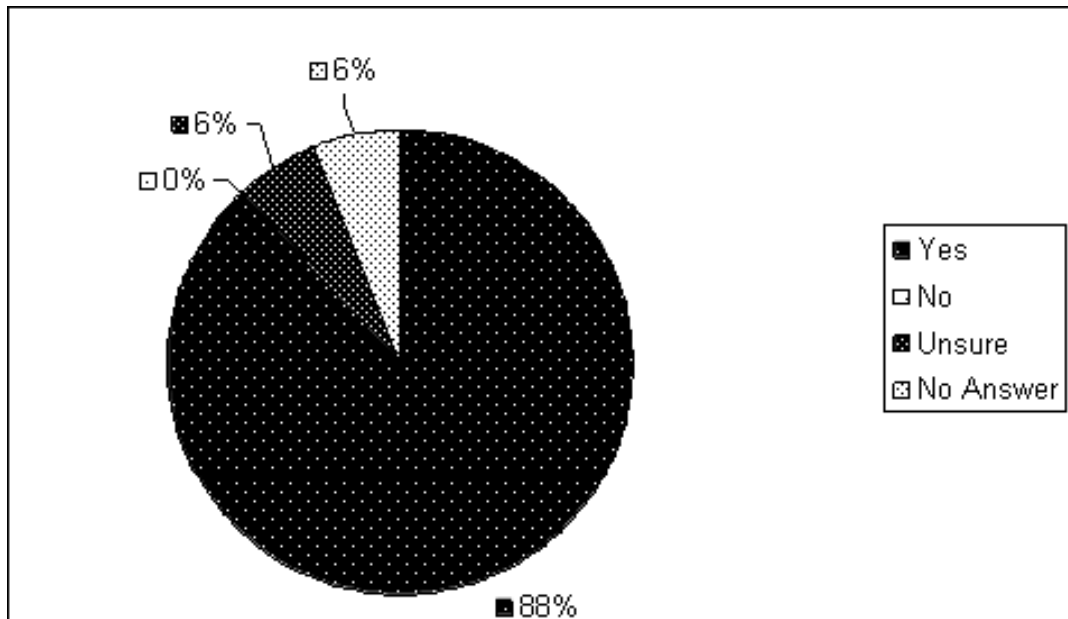
Question 2

Do you feel that the evening was well organised and efficiently run?



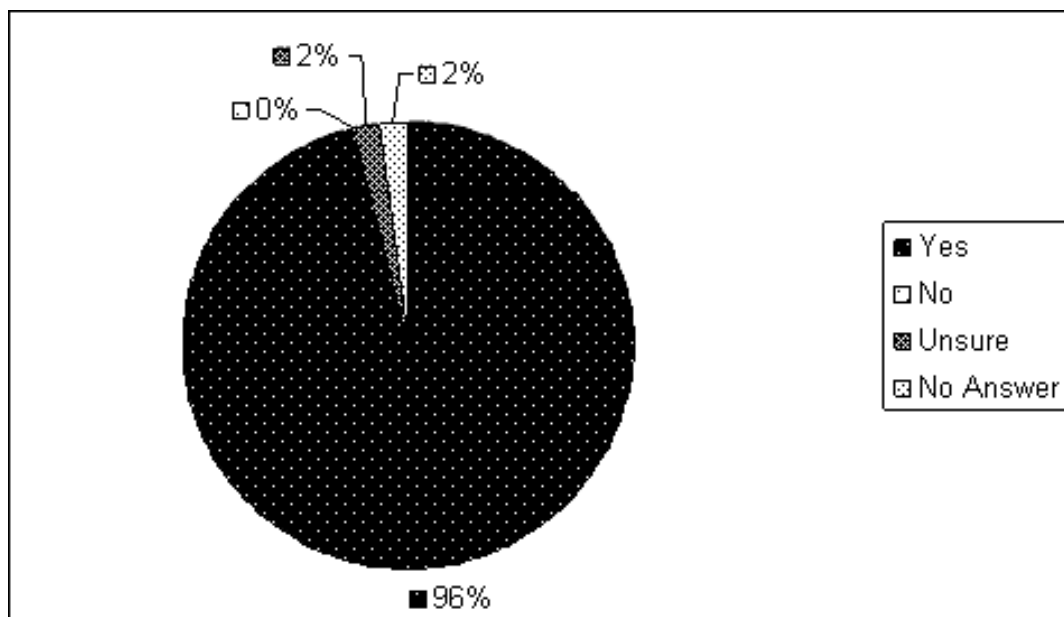
Question 3

In your opinion, is this type of forum valuable?



Question 4

Would you be interested in attending future events?



Question 5

How would you prefer to learn about progress of the Council with budget priorities?

NAC Website

Local Newspapers

Email

Letter

The NAC website and the local newspaper were the most popular choice with the Largs participants, closely followed by email. Letter was favoured least by those who attended the session.

- NAC Website - 49%
- Local Newspapers - 49%
- Email - 41%
- Letters - 29%

Other comments

- The Council should reduce spending on consultants
- There were positive comments about the facilitators
- This type of meeting should happen regularly
- The session was enjoyable and informative
- Smaller groups would be better to get a better quality of conversation
- There were too many points to cover in the allocated time

Ends

“Straight Talking 2010”
Kilbirnie Summary Report

Venue: Walker Hall
Date: 01/11/10

Kilbirnie Introduction

The fifth **Straight Talking** event was for Kilbirnie participants. Despite appalling weather conditions there was an enthusiastic response with 48 people representing 21 groups attending. To allow everyone to participate, some topics had two groups – see below:

- Community Services – Facilities & Libraries – two groups
- Education 3-18 Years – two groups
- Environment & Public Spaces – two groups
- Independent Living for Older People – one groups
- Prevention & Health Inequalities – one group

There were lively discussions around all topics resulting in some positive ideas and offers of support as well as clear messages about priorities for the area.

The Kilbirnie summary report seeks to capture:

- the overall feedback from the group
- the workshop commentary captured on flipcharts during the group discussion
- an analysis of the feedback forms completed by participants
- learning points to inform future events

The Kilbirnie feedback has been reviewed to inform the overall Feedback and Recommendations section of this report. See pages 5 – 10.

NAC will be reflecting on the feedback from the Kilbirnie **Straight Talking** session to identify key areas for a response and to seek opportunities for early action. Once this work has been completed this will be fed back to participants.

NAC and Liddell Thomson would like to thank everyone who participated in the Kilbirnie **Straight Talking** session as well as those who helped with arrangements at the venue.

Feedback

A summary of the group discussions was given at the end of the session. Facilitators agreed the summary points with their groups and completed feedback forms to capture the key points.

Key themes emerging from the Kilbirnie **Straight Talking** groups included:

- 1. Participants would like to see more co-located or joined up services. Not only because this approach would save money but also because this response would help to create lively community hubs able to address a wide range of topics and offer support to people of all ages.**
- 2. While there is a lively volunteering scene in and around Kilbirnie there will be a need for more volunteers in future. Participants would like help to create a coherent volunteer policy to help recruit and incentivise people to become volunteers. There was also a strong sense that those who are already volunteering feel they lack recognition and support.**
- 3. Support for young people was a strong theme with several groups expressing concern about facilities for young people; support for those of school age who need someone to talk to; opportunities to develop or acquire skills (particularly when there are few job opportunities in the area). The group discussing Prevention & Health Inequalities went as far as saying that there needs to be a focus on ensuring that young people feel valued and to help them to build their self confidence.**
- 4. Older people in the community need more help from well-trained carers able to spend enough time when they are on visits. A network of well-trained community volunteers could help to ensure that older people living at home independently received regular visits to ensure that they are ok.**
- 5. There is concern about the area's poor record on health. A number of issues were raised including the availability of cheap, fast food with healthier alternatives being considered too expensive and less readily available. A way of tackling this could be through education – showing people that cooking can be fun. Often existing approaches do not hit the right tone or those delivering them lack credibility.**

Community Services – Facilities & Libraries

Discussion Prompts

- It is clear that we will no longer have access to the same resources to support these services – yet they are services that we all value...Looking ahead to 2015 – what do you think the library service of the future might look like? Try to think of around 3 ideas.
- Discuss the main library and community services people think should be provided by NAC
- Do they see any opportunities for merging functions or services?
- Could some of these services be provided by other agencies / groups? (e.g. private sector / community groups ?)
- Are there opportunities for volunteers to become more involved?
- In terms of learning – what opportunities would you like to see being made available locally?

Workshop Commentary

The key themes emerging from the discussions on Community Services – Facilities & Libraries were:

- **Joint management of services has to be considered for Ayrshire as a whole**
- **We need to make sure that communities are not left without a ‘hub’ facility**
- **Registry office, library, community centre and Council office could be in the same place so as to create a one stop shop**
- **Some community centres are fully used by many groups and we need to think of the consequences of closure**
- **We need a coherent volunteer policy with incentives for people to participate**
- **Learning should be available throughout life as people’s circumstances change**
- **Communities can manage facilities as an alternative to Council management**

The full workshop commentary captured on the flipcharts follows:

- The group agreed that community centres, libraries, sports facilities and museums were all highly valued
- One idea the group felt should be considered is the merging of school and community libraries although it was identified that there could be an issue with child protection due to adults being in the school

- The group felt it was important to remember that libraries provide more than just books and there are many other groups and activities that take place in libraries
- Another idea put forward by the group was to locate the registry office and library in the same building
- The group pointed out that buildings need to be fit for purpose
- There was a strong feeling that the Council needs to look at all of its current property use in terms of efficiency - could they for example merge two primary schools which would release one building
- The group felt very strongly that the Council need to consider the level of deprivation before they close anything
- The group also felt that it is vital that no community should be left without a facility
- It was mentioned that public transport is an issue locally
- The group felt that joint management of services between local authorities in Ayrshire should be considered - some departments could be merged
- Although volunteers can help with some services, there was a strong feeling that they are often asked to do too much
- The group suggested that community managed services may be a way ahead
- There was a strong view that we need to get more young people involved in their community
- The group felt that adult learning is important
- It was suggested that Dalry Community Sports Group is successful and is a good example of how things can work
- The group felt that halls and centres were not in as good condition as they should be
- An issue identified in the group was that volunteers need support in terms of recruitment, training and retention
- There was a strong feeling that involvement in volunteering needs to be simplified and there should be less red tape
- The group felt that there needs to be some thinking around whether we can provide some sort of incentive for young people to get into volunteering
- It was also suggested that libraries could consider expanding their services

Education 3-18 Years

Discussion Prompts

- Think of today as the first day of a new baby's life. Just hours old...what do you think school will be like for our new baby when they start their education in 2015?
- Write down what you think their experience of education might be like...try to think of around three ideas

- Expand the conversation exploring some the following:
where will children go to school (a school building? other facilities e.g. libraries / community halls / distance learning...)
- What ways of learning might be more cost-effective and what activities we think will be most valuable to their learning?
- What steps we need to start taking now in order to achieve this?

Workshop Commentary

The key themes emerging from the discussions on Education 3 – 18 Years were:

- **We need to create more opportunities for parental involvement**
- **Communication to parents needs to be improved**
- **Concerns were expressed over the future funding opportunities for organisations e.g. Prince's Trust**
- **The community should be able to use the school for a range of purposes if practical**
- **There is a need to examine the support system for secondary pupils**
- there is a need for support groups and someone to talk to
- **It is important to keep the existing educational maintenance allowance in order to keep kids motivated to go to school**
- **We should be bringing skills from other areas of the community into schools**

The full workshop commentary captured on the flipcharts follows:

- The group expressed concerns over where funding would come from in the future and the condition that some schools will be in after the next five years
- There was a suggestion that class sizes need to be reduced
- The group felt that staffing levels need to be maintained
- There was a strong feeling that special schools need to be kept
- The group felt that there was perhaps an opportunity to consider some of the school buildings for use by other community groups
- Breakfast and afterschool clubs were seen as important
- Withdrawal of school buses was a concern that was discussed
- The group felt that Joint campuses and shared services could be considered if the provision was still kept to the same level and no current services were lost as a result
- There was a strong feeling that there should be a better support mechanism for young people such as a group share programme or buddy system
- The group felt that there was an opportunity to bring the skills of other members of the community into schools e.g. languages etc
- There was a strong view that parental involvement and communication to parents needs to improve
- It was also suggested that school websites need considerable improvement

- The group felt that it was also important to maintain the music provision in schools
- It was suggested that private and voluntary services also need a voice
- The group felt that the educational maintenance allowance was useful as it motivates young people to stay in school
- The idea of community groups taking on the management of halls and community centres was also discussed in the group

Environment & Public Spaces

Discussion Prompts

- It is clear that we will no longer have access to the same resources to support these services – yet they are services that we all value...How might we prioritise the things that really matter to us?
- Individually – please take a couple of minutes to write down your top 5 services in order of priority
- Expand the conversation picking up on key themes
- Invite discussion around the following:
Are there any services we feel that the Council should not provide
Are there services that would be better provided by someone other than the Council if so whom?

Workshop Commentary

The key themes emerging from the discussions on Environment & Public Spaces were:

- **We would save a lot of money if we join up as one Ayrshire authority**
- **Development of volunteers is vital in terms of finance, training and recognition**
- **Equipment needs to be made available to volunteers**
- **Involvement in volunteering could lead to employment opportunities**
- **Feedback and engagement strategies at Council level needs to be strengthened**

The full workshop commentary captured on the flipcharts follows:

- The group felt that street cleaning should be a priority - the school area is problematic
- It was suggested that educating parents should be a priority in the first instance
- The group felt that community programmes and volunteers can help with education
- There was a suggestion that criminal justice/rehabilitation programmes could be utilised for support with street cleaning/community projects etc.

- It was mentioned that retailers are using too much packaging and that this should be addressed if possible
- Broken glass in play parks was another problem which the group brought up as well as the fact that there are limited bins available due to them being set on fire (fire proof bins was an idea)
- The group discussed the fact that many smaller play areas had already been taken away
- An example was provided of community partnership with the Council - Beith Play Park Action Group
- A model that was suggested was that the community could provide the funds for equipment and the Council could maintain the facilities
- The groups felt that there was some thinking needed around what is needed in terms of resource and funding and the capacity of community representatives has to be considered
- There are a number of things that the groups felt should be addressed in terms of volunteering - training and development is needed and there were also concerns about legal issues such as insurance that volunteer groups need support with
- Civic pride is very important and the groups felt that this relates to all areas of the discussion
- Dog fouling was also identified by the groups as a major issue - dog wardens are not visible and they should be enforcing their powers
- The groups felt that having the right equipment available to street cleaners would make this area more effective
- One idea for the future put forward was to use income from fines for dog fouling to feed back into community programmes
- Another suggestion was to generate 'ownership' within communities which will boost civic pride and aid in all aspects of service provision
- The groups felt that not enough local 'big business' contribute to the local community
- There is a need for more information on the Lengthsman Scheme
- There was a suggestion put forward that turning off street lighting at certain times would save money
- Beach cleaning was mentioned and it was suggested that it is not effective at the moment
- There was a strong feeling that the groups wanted another opportunity to discuss more environmental issues like climate change

Independent Living for Older People

Discussion Prompts

- How do we ensure that people are able to do what most want to do – that is to live independently for as long as possible? Please take 2 minutes to write down three ways you think we could help support people to live independently for longer?
- Expand the conversation exploring some the following:

How can we help to prevent falls or admissions to hospital?
Are there better ways for the Council / NHS to work with older people and their carers?
What service support do you think is necessary – and what do you feel are the priorities?

- How can we help older people remain active for longer?

Workshop Commentary

The key themes emerging from the discussions on Independent Living for Older People were:

- **There is a need for quality carers**
- **Carers are a critical link and there is often not enough time for visits**
- **Volunteers need to be supported and kept safe**
- **There is a need for better opportunities and training for volunteers**
- **It is vital to have regular checks on older people**

The full workshop commentary captured on the flipcharts follows:

- The group felt that quality carers and choice of care are vital
- There was a strong view that there should be financial help for aids that are needed in the home and that there needs to be special assessments to identify what help is needed
- One idea put forward by the group was a community self help group involving neighbours
- The group felt that patient transport should be a priority
- There was a strong view that de-cluttering houses would be a great help and that there needs to be advice and support to enable older people to do this
- The group felt strongly that we need to encourage older people to get out of the house on days out and promote social contact
- It was also suggested that there is a need to address apathy and self-interest in the community
- One issue that the group raised was that carer visit time is restricted to 15mins and this is not necessarily enough time in all circumstances
- It was also suggested that there is a need to address any barriers that prevent older people from taking the help that they need
- The group felt that the relationship between older people and carers is important and there is a need for consistent support - training and recruitment are important
- Concern was expressed about loss of quality in services if some were put out to tender
- The group felt that in order to put more money into vital services, something else might have to give e.g. introducing a minimal charge for bus fare
- There is a need for more volunteers offering services like the Red Cross and for young volunteers to help and interact with older people

Prevention & Health Inequalities

Discussion Prompts

- NAC has one of Scotland's highest levels of poor health. (higher than average rates of heart disease / stroke and high levels of drug-related conditions)
- NAC and its partners are committed to tackling this by taking a preventative approach. Already there are a number of such initiatives up and running e.g. Smoking cessation / healthy eating / exercise programmes)
- Given the ambition to improve this record – how would you go about improving health in North Ayrshire? Try to think of around 3 ideas. Then broaden the discussion to include:
 - To prevent poor health where do you think funds should be focussed? (e.g. early years / young people / families?)
 - What should the priorities be?
 - What do you think is causing North Ayrshire's poor record on health?

Workshop Commentary

The key themes emerging from the discussions on Prevention & Health Inequalities were:

- **There is a concern that existing approaches are not getting through and that the focus should be on younger people**
- **We need to fund ways to show them that they are valued and that education matters - recognise the disconnection with job opportunities**
- **We need to show young people that we are listening and we want to encourage them to have more self confidence**
- **Personal recommendations and word of mouth is a better way of informing about activities**
- **There is a need for better facilities, tailored to young people's needs**
- **There should be a reduction in the number of fast food outlets**
- **Things should be made enjoyable - people don't want to feel like they are being preached to**
- **Society needs to recognise and value the good things that young people do**

The full workshop commentary captured on the flipcharts follows:

- The availability of fast food outlets was identified in the group as a concern
- The group felt that income pressure in particular has a major impact on people leading healthy lifestyles
- The group identified that there is a need to make things fun e.g. cooking and other activities
- There was a strong view that telling people that they are obese is not helpful
- The group felt that some exercise facilities are too expensive and that some activities are not very well supported e.g. swimming
- The group felt that it was important to get the messages right
- There was a strong view that people are not aware of opportunities as they are not well publicised and even when they are well publicised people don't respond. Word of mouth encouragement is better
- There was a strong feeling that lack of confidence in young people is a problem and that size zero pressures and celebrity role models are adding to the problem
- The group identified the problem that the future is uncertain and jobs are scarce and that children and young people are not valued in the same way
- It was suggested that promises are not being delivered with regards to higher education and that too many young people going to university and not finding work
- There was a strong view that the media focus on bad elements and that society doesn't appreciate all the good stuff going on e.g. young volunteers
- There was a general feeling that there is not enough things for young people to do
- Heavy use of alcohol and cigarettes was identified as an issue in the community
- There was a strong view that we should be listening to young people and asking them what they want to do
- It was suggested that there is a need for anger management sessions
- Drugs were also identified as an issue through lack of self confidence and peer pressure - it takes guts to say no
- There was a strong feeling that it is sometimes difficult to get the message across

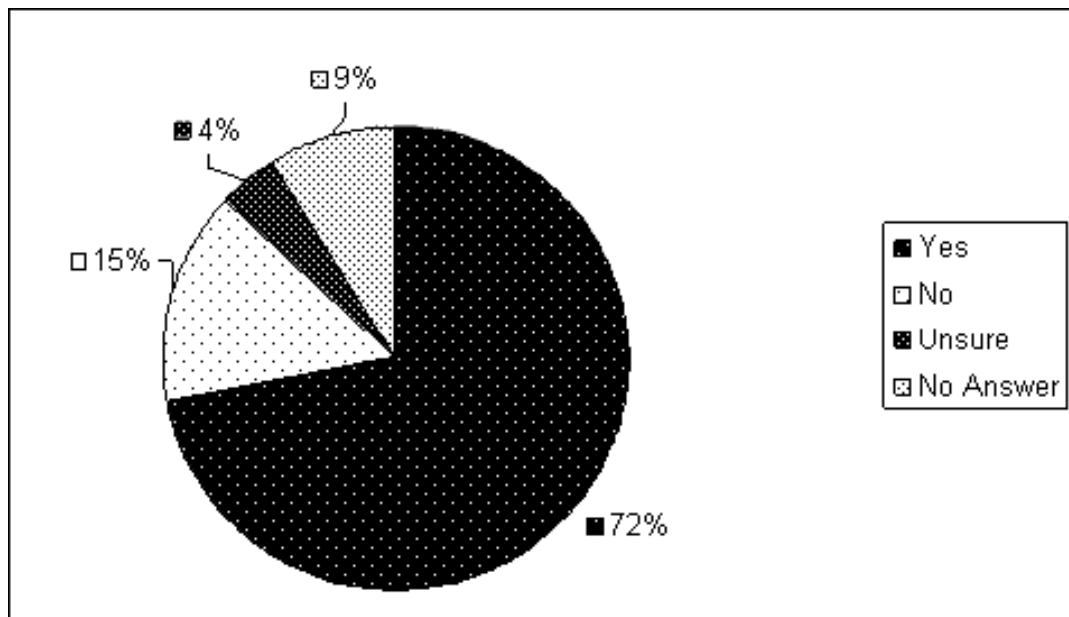
Participant Feedback

Kilbirnie

At the end of each session every participant was asked to fill out a short feedback form (See Appendices – Section 4) to seek their views on the session. There were five specific questions and space was provided to capture any further comments. Results for the Kilbirnie session are below:

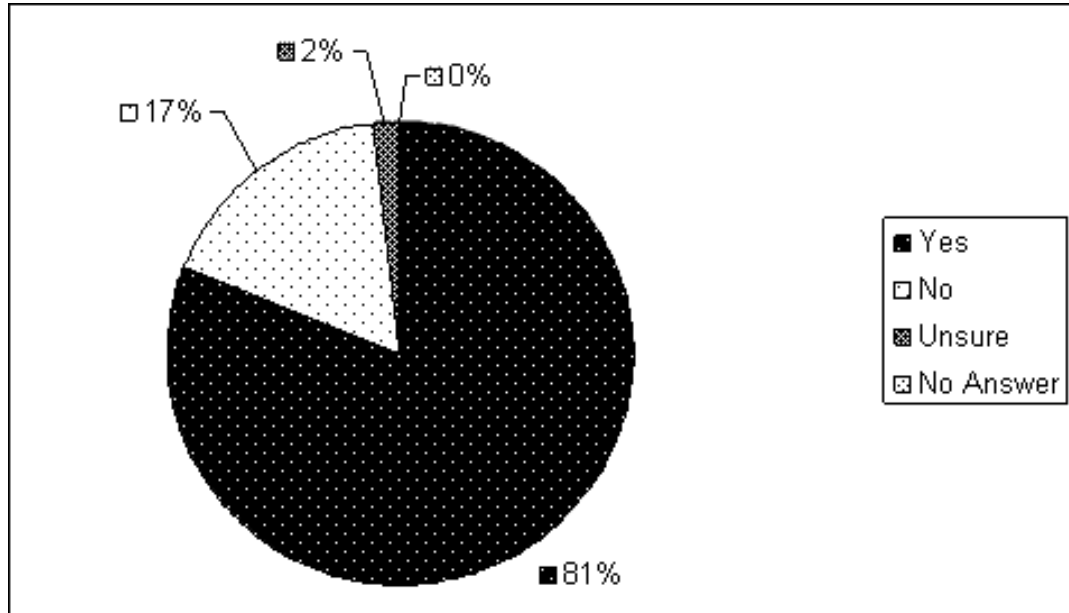
Question 1

Do you feel better informed about the Council's challenges and choices to be made over the coming 3 years?



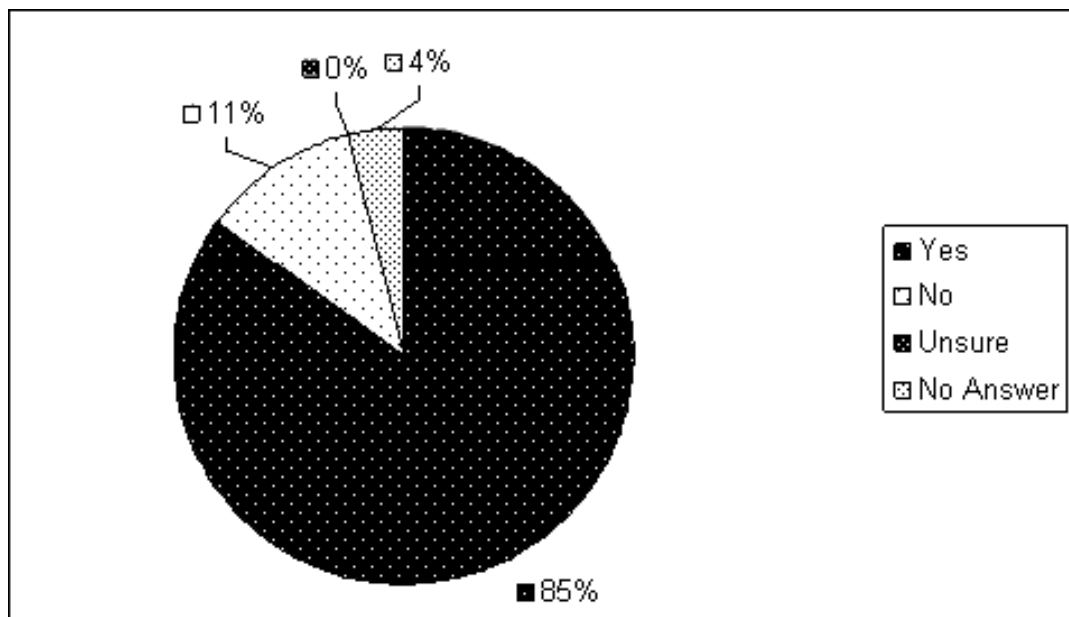
Question 2

Do you feel that the evening was well organised and efficiently run?



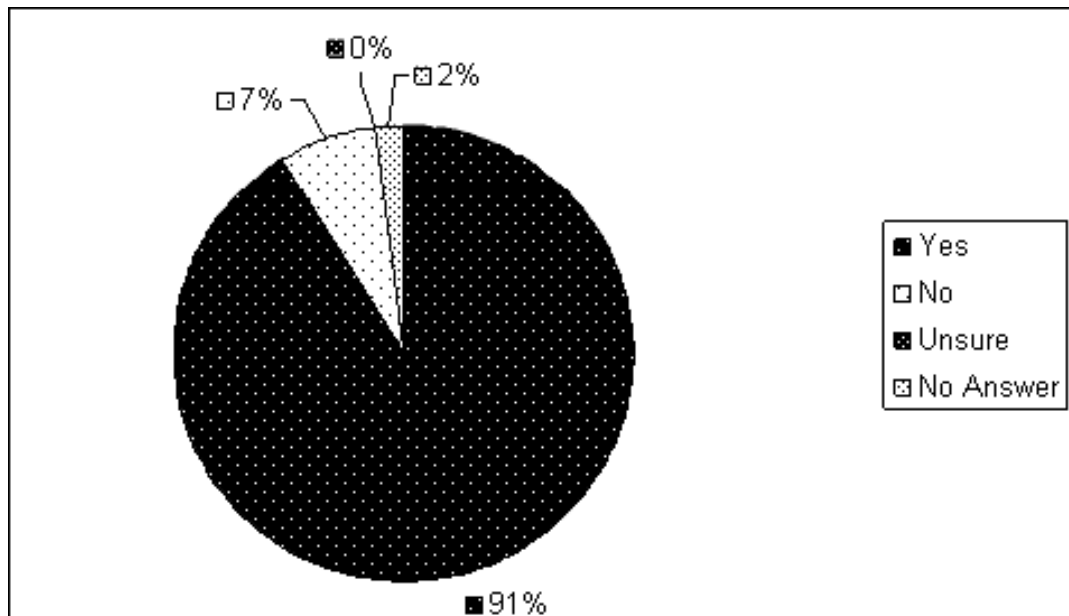
Question 3

In your opinion, is this type of forum valuable?



Question 4

Would you be interested in attending future events?



Question 5

How would you prefer to learn about progress of the Council with budget priorities?

NAC Website

Local Newspapers

Email

Letter

Email was the most popular choice as a way of learning about the Council's progress, followed by local newspapers. The NAC website and letter were favoured less by the Kilbirnie participants

- Email - 49%
- Local Newspapers - 40%
- NAC Website - 38%
- Letter - 34%

Other comments

- The meetings should have been open to the public rather than invitation only
- Concern was expressed that this was a one off
- The hall was not suitable as it was too noisy
- There was too much time given to the speakers and not enough time to the group discussions
- It was a good forum for discussion

Ends

“Straight Talking 2010”

Irvine Summary Report

**Venue: Cunninghame House
Date: 02/11/10**

Irvine Introduction

The final **Straight Talking** event was for Irvine participants. There was an enthusiastic response with more than 77 people attending representing 39 groups. To allow everyone to participate, some topics had two groups – see below:

- Community Services – Facilities & Libraries – two groups
- Education 3 -18 Years – two groups
- Environment & Public Spaces – two groups
- Independent Living for Older People – two groups
- Prevention & Health Inequalities – one group

There were lively discussions around all topics resulting in some positive ideas and offers of support as well as clear messages about priorities for the area.

The Irvine summary report seeks to capture:

- the overall feedback from the group
- the workshop commentary captured on flipcharts during the group discussion
- an analysis of the feedback forms completed by participants
- learning points

The Irvine feedback has been reviewed to inform the overall Feedback and Recommendations section of this report. See pages 5 – 10.

NAC will be reflecting on the feedback from the Irvine **Straight Talking** session to identify key areas for a response and to seek opportunities for early action. Once this work has been completed this will be fed back to participants.

NAC and Liddell Thomson would like to thank everyone who participated in the Irvine **Straight Talking** session as well as those who helped with arrangements at the venue.

Feedback

A summary of the group discussions was given at the end of the session. Facilitators agreed the summary points with their groups and completed feedback forms to capture the key points.

Key themes emerging from the Irvine **Straight Talking** groups included:

- 1. There was a strong feeling from participants that they would welcome better communication in future between elected members and Council staff and partners. In addition groups felt that communication could be improved in terms of letting people know what is happening in and around the area.**
- 2. A number of areas were mentioned as having the potential to save money for the community including: more joined up services; smarter purchasing of equipment; “one-stop shops” able to provide a range of services in a single location and joint purchasing of books for libraries and schools.**
- 3. Communities are already doing a lot of volunteering so volunteers will need support with the change required to move towards different ways of working. This will include getting the message out to communities that they can be empowered to take things on such as running community centres; recruiting and training volunteers; educating young people about the benefits of volunteering; help with providing one-to-one contact and getting older people out and about and using facilities.**
- 4. Support for young people through the education system is vital however bold decisions will need to be taken to transform education in light of budget constraints. Partnership / voluntary organisations could play a bigger role in the delivery of school activities (such as technical, music and language skills) and in demonstrating that volunteering provides opportunities to develop new skills and creates pathways to employment opportunities.**
- 5. There was a strong sense that NAC and its partners need to play a role in increasing pride in the community – involving community groups, local businesses and public sector partners in ensuring that use is made of existing community skills and that important services such as play parks, beach cleaning and floral decorations can continue to be delivered**

Community Services – Facilities & Libraries

Discussion Prompts

- It is clear that we will no longer have access to the same resources to support these services – yet they are services that we all value...Looking ahead to 2015 – what do you think the library service of the future might look like? Try to think of around 3 ideas.
- Discuss the main library and community services people think should be provided by NAC
- Do they see any opportunities for merging functions or services?
- Could some of these services be provided by other agencies / groups? (e.g. private sector / community groups ?)
- Are there opportunities for volunteers to become more involved?
- In terms of learning – what opportunities would you like to see being made available locally?

Workshop Commentary

The key themes emerging from the discussions on Community Services – Facilities & Libraries were:

- **We need community services; they are integral to building strong communities**
- **There could be ‘one place provision’ on an area basis with the involvement of a range of partners**
- **One size won’t fit all**
- **Communities need to be empowered, supported and resourced to make the changes**
- **There is a need for better education of young people to ensure future volunteering**
- **Are the Council’s targets ambitious enough for smarter purchasing and equipment**
- **There should be different fees for different groups**
- **More thinking is needed around how we get an ageing population out and about and using facilities**

The full workshop commentary captured on the flipcharts follows:

- The groups felt that there was an opportunity for some services to be centralised for all of Ayrshire e.g. book purchasing
- The question was posed in the groups of if we even need libraries or could the community have access to school libraries - barriers could be space limitation and the fact that adults need different stock
- The groups felt that libraries were important for social interaction as well as providing books that are accessible and affordable

- An idea that was discussed in the groups was that a 10p borrowing charge could be introduced as a revenue source
- There was a strong feeling that better use could be made of libraries e.g. volunteer led storytelling sessions
- It was also suggested that libraries could be 50% computers to attract the younger generations
- The groups felt that perhaps other Council services could be offered in libraries
- Is the ratio of libraries to population correct?
- As libraries are seen as important to older people perhaps other departments / organisations should be contributing to the library budget e.g. social services
- Donation of second hand books to the library was another idea
- The loss of community centres was a big issue for the group. There was concern that while the community believes it is to lose its centre, nothing official has been communicated by NAC
- The general feeling was that community centres should be for all groups and all ages
- There was also a strong view that there was a lack of consultation around the loss of community facilities
- It was suggested that the scale of rents needs to be looked at and there could be different charges for different groups
- The changing demographic and how this is already affecting the use of the facilities was discussed. It would be important to find ways to encourage older people to get out and use facilities. Supervised transport was suggested as was a scheme where volunteers could escort older people when they are going out in the evening
- It was suggested that Trusts could take over the running of museums or there could be a partnership where the community and the Council provide the services together
- The groups felt that there was a value for tourism in having the museums and that partnership working could be introduced to create exhibitions
- There was a strong view that there may be a volunteering gap in the future and we should therefore be promoting it to younger people - priming young people in school for volunteering was a suggestion that was made
- There is a lack of information on restrictions to volunteering such as drawing welfare benefits and volunteering
- The groups would like to see a facility or resource that helps people to find out what is available or happening in their area
- There is also a need for a facility that can provide community learning i.e. adult literacy, arts and crafts, ICT
- It was pointed out during the discussions that elderly support is important and that some amount of this support could be provided through informal support networks - making friends can improve quality of life
- There was a general feeling that the Council sometimes restrict development and that local people could do more
- A flatter structure within the Council was also suggested by the groups as a way of saving money

- There was a strong view that communities need to be empowered through: partnership support; secondment of Council staff; and more support for volunteers
- The groups felt that crucial services require consistent support and it is not always possible to rely on volunteers
- One idea that was discussed within the groups was that community facilities could be used to train young people in work and social skills in order to help their employability
- The point was made that one size does not fit all for every community and that services should be area based
- There was also a strong feeling that communities and partners need to share resources
- The groups felt that social enterprises should be encouraged

Education 3-18 Years

Discussion Prompts

- Think of today as the first day of a new baby's life. Just hours old...what do you think school will be like for our new baby when they start their education in 2015?
- Write down what you think their experience of education might be like...try to think of around three ideas
- Expand the conversation exploring some of the following:
where will children go to school (a school building? other facilities e.g. libraries / community halls / distance learning...)
- What ways of learning might be more cost-effective and what activities we think will be most valuable to their learning?
- What steps we need to start taking now in order to achieve this?

Workshop Commentary

The key themes emerging from the discussions on Education 3 – 18 Years were:

- **There is a need to build on the positive elements within the current education system**
- **There should be additional support for children and young people with a range of needs**
- **The delivery of the curriculum should be supported by partnership groups and agencies**
- **Development and communication is needed around the Curriculum for Excellence and 'getting it right for every child'**
- **Technology is changing the way education is delivered and there is a need to adapt and develop ways to use technology**
- **The aim should be to create an employable workforce and produce bright young people who have ideas for the businesses of the future**

- **Apprenticeships are still important**
- **Young people should be involved in curriculum choices and should be in charge of their own education**

The full workshop commentary captured on the flipcharts follows:

- There was a strong feeling that there should be additional support for children and young people with behavioural problems and learning difficulties as well as investment for inclusion of those with difficulties
- The groups felt that after school activities should be a priority and that partnership organisations could provide support for the delivery of this service
- Access for all to a good basic education was seen as important
- The point was raised that a proposal should be developed for a mainstream curriculum in special schools
- Consultation is important and people should be given the opportunity to be involved from the outset
- With regards to the Curriculum for Excellence there should be more emphasis on getting it right for every child
- There was a strong view that learning from birth is important and that nursery places for the under 3's should be available. Learning for the 3-5's is also invaluable
- There was a general feeling that it is important to maintain professional standards in teaching
- The point was made that bigger schools are not always better and that school buildings should be used 24hrs a day
- There was a strong feeling that children and young people should be involved in curriculum choices
- The issue of technology was raised in the groups and it was emphasised that there needs to be a change in the mindset to incorporate things like the internet. There is an opportunity to deliver education differently
- The groups felt that education should be a key factor in future employability and we need as many bright people young people as we can get - we need their ideas
- It was also mentioned that apprenticeships are still needed
- There groups felt that there needs to be a bold transformation in education services in light of the budget cuts

Environment & Public Spaces

Discussion Prompts

- It is clear that we will no longer have access to the same resources to support these services – yet they are services that we all value...How might we prioritise the things that really matter to us?
- Individually – please take a couple of minutes to write down your top 5 services in order of priority

- Expand the conversation picking up on key themes
- Invite discussion around the following:
Are there any services we feel that the Council should not provide
Are there services that would be better provided by someone other than the Council if so whom?

Workshop Commentary

The key themes emerging from the discussions on Environment & Public Spaces were:

- **There is a really vibrant and large volunteer community in Irvine, but they need funding and support in order for them to develop and grow**
- **The Council should consider moving some services over to the third sector to gain savings and efficiencies as they have access to grants**
- **NAC should look closely at their workforce as there may be opportunities to up-skill people, enabling them to work across services**
- **NAC should make sure that losing skilled people isn't a false economy**
- **There should be initiatives to bring back pride in the town**
- **Private sector sponsorship of floral displays could be used**
- **Young offenders could be involved in rehabilitation schemes that could deliver some services**
- **Local business could provide toilet facilities**
- **A point system could be introduced to reward volunteers and local people for things like recycling - they could collect points towards money off their Council tax bill**
- **There should be fines for dog fouling and littering which the Council should be enforcing at a local level**

The full workshop commentary captured on the flipcharts follows:

- The groups felt there needs to be more communication between elected members and Council staff
- An idea put forward is that the Council could be working with the unemployed and people going through a rehabilitation programme in order to deliver some services e.g. grass cutting
- The groups wanted to make the point that communities are already doing a lot through volunteering
- Another idea discussed was a 'club card' points system where people were rewarded for things like recycling and volunteering. The incentive could be a discount on Council tax
- There was a strong view that there is a need to bring back a sense of pride in the town and in community initiatives
- Community groups could do more if the Council provided them with the equipment and supplies
- The groups felt that sponsorship of flower displays by the private sector could be an option and that business could also maintain floral displays

and hanging baskets near their premises

- There was also a strong view that the Council should be looking to their own workforce to increase their skills so that they can deliver a wider range of services
- The groups felt that NAC should push harder on the issue of recycling
- Parks were seen to be very important
- With regards to public toilet provision the groups felt that this could possibly be provided on some level by local businesses
- There was a strong view that littering and dog fouling should be a priority and that NAC should be issuing more fines to discourage people
- It was also suggested that there could be some level of community and/or private sector involvement in Christmas decorations and lights
- There was a strong view that the Council need to focus at local level and provide funds to develop local services through real partnerships
- There was a general feeling that there was a perception of Council vans sitting in lay-bys doing nothing
- Due to the ageing population, the groups felt that there might be an opportunity to look to older people to get involved in community projects
- Challenges were identified by the groups with regards to volunteering including: commitment issues and the mindset of 'I pay my Council tax'
- It was suggested that there is a need to formalise volunteering and that there should be a structure and some sort of contract involved. The groups felt that a lot of work would be needed initially to develop volunteering
- In terms of support for volunteers it was felt that funding, training and volunteer network were needed
- There was a strong view that parks, open spaces and facilities should be maintained as a priority as they are vital for healthy communities in terms of mental and physical health
- Street cleaning was also brought up in the groups and there was a general feeling that this should be a priority as it helps to build a sense of civic pride and helps to keep people in the area. It is also important for safety
- Community wardens were discussed as something that works well
- Privatising some environmental services was another idea that was proposed
- There was a strong view that politics should be taken out of the discussion

Independent Living for Older People

Discussion Prompts

- How do we ensure that people are able to do what most want to do – that is to live independently for as long as possible? Please take 2 minutes to write down three ways you think we could help support people to live independently for longer?
- Expand the conversation exploring some the following:

How can we help to prevent falls or admissions to hospital?
Are there better ways for the Council / NHS to work with older people and their carers?
What service support do you think is necessary – and what do you feel are the priorities?
- How can we help older people remain active for longer?

Workshop Commentary

The key themes emerging from the discussions on Independent Living for Older People were:

- **The priorities are: security; eating well; being allowed to be independent and better links between NHS and social services**
- **There is a need for research into the prevention of dementia**
- **Suitable housing should be a priority i.e. no upstairs toilets. Maybe there should be a house swap scheme**
- **Proper planning of Council investment is important e.g. don't waste money re-painting buildings that are going to be knocked down**
- **Isolation is an issue - Communication and one to one contact is vital and it is important to encourage community spirit**
- **Inter-generational work would be useful and there should be better use of schools and community centres for older people**
- **Services need to be specific to each person's individual needs**
- **Older people's voices need to be heard and there needs to be an opportunity for them to challenge decisions**

The full workshop commentary captured on the flipcharts follows:

- There was a strong view that people need housing which is adequate for their needs and that adaptations to homes which allow independent living are important. Waiting lists are too long for aids/adaptations and house swaps should be considered
- The groups felt that support for tasks around the home e.g. gardening; housework and DIY would also be helpful
- Community spirit and involvement in community activities was also mentioned as something that is very important and there needs to be a sense of people looking out for each other
- A big problem is that older people living in isolation and an alarm system should not be a substitute for human contact and having someone there to check that older people are ok.
- There was a strong feeling that communication needs to improve between the NHS and NAC.
- Information on the services available was mentioned as something that should be greatly improved and getting information to family members is also important as they need to know who to contact in different circumstances
- There was a very strong view that there should be no cuts in elderly spending

- Respite services are seen as important and the groups felt that this is a service that should be protected
- The groups raised the point that NAC and NHS need to work in partnership with older people and their carers
- There was a strong view that safety, health and well-being for older people should be a top priority for NAC
- The groups felt that priorities should be: eating properly; staying well enough to live independently; better assessment of individual needs; improved services and better links between the NHS and NAC
- The groups felt that transport was also an issue and that improvements should be made to help get older people out and about
- Freedom of choice and enabling older people to be independent was discussed in the groups as something that is very important
- The groups felt that community centres could be used to encourage more of a social aspect
- There was a strong view that staff consistency is important as is regular contact from health / social work professionals. This will help to build up confidence in these members of staff. All should be trained properly with consistent terms and conditions and standards in place
- It was also mentioned that it would be beneficial to encourage more men into care positions
- The groups felt that fear of crime is still an issue
- Intergenerational work was brought up in the groups as something that would be helpful
- There was a strong view that there should be investment for research into dementia and that improvements to day care services and encouragement of a healthy lifestyle would also be beneficial
- There was a strong view that NAC need to reassess spending in some areas as there was an opinion that money was being wasted on vans that are unused etc.
- More police on the street was something that the groups felt would be beneficial
- The issue of alcohol and drug misuse in older people was also raised as something that needs to be tackled
- Groups were concerned about older people being isolated as when people are not ill there is no perceived need for contact - this needs to be addressed. There is an opportunity to encourage volunteers to keep in regular contact with older people and help them to get out and about and socialise

Prevention & Health Inequalities

Discussion Prompts

- NAC has one of Scotland's highest levels of poor health. (higher than average rates of heart disease / stroke and high levels of drug-related conditions)
- NAC and its partners are committed to tackling this by taking a preventative approach. Already there are a number of such initiatives up and running e.g. Smoking cessation / healthy eating / exercise programmes)
- Given the ambition to improve this record – how would you go about improving health in North Ayrshire? Try to think of around 3 ideas. Then broaden the discussion to include:
- To prevent poor health where do you think funds should be focussed? (E.g. early years / young people / families?)
- What should the priorities be?
- What do you think is causing North Ayrshire's poor record on health?

Workshop Commentary

The key themes emerging from the discussions on Prevention & Health Inequalities were:

- **Early Intervention at ante-natal / nursery level is vital**
- **There needs to be a systematic approach to volunteering and the benefits of volunteering should be promoted**
- **Funding should be focused on getting new jobs and developing small businesses**
- **Anti-poverty strategies need to be promoted e.g. credit unions and financial inclusion**
- **There should be more information on healthy eating and legislation on food and alcohol**
- **Community centres need to be utilised as sources of information**

The full workshop commentary captured on the flipcharts follows:

- The group felt that poverty and unemployment were a major problem
- There was a strong view that the learned behaviour amongst 2nd and 3rd generations needs to be tackled. This includes: diet, lack of exercise, lifestyle, computers, lack of things to do, lack of community spirit and lack of participation
- There was a general feeling that people don't know and look out for each other in the community any more and that people are concerned or worried about getting involved
- Lunchtime eating habits are a concern
- There was a strong feeling that children learn at a young age that there is

no hope

- Smoking and drug and alcohol abuse were seen as major problems and it was pointed out that they are often a consequence of early experience and low self esteem
- The group mentioned that some people use cigarettes to suppress their appetite
- The point was made that it is not always easy to buy healthy food. People living with tight budgets may need help to learn how to eat well with a limited budget. Education could help with this issue.
- Some classes are already available, but concern was expressed about whether they would still be available if centres close
- Working with nurseries on healthy eating and lifestyle was one idea put forward in the group
- A challenge that was raised was how we give people the tools to be good parents
- There was a general feeling that the earlier we catch people, the better and that we should start as early as possible
- It was also suggested that those with the greatest need should be targeted
- The group posed the question of whether there are lessons that could be learned from models in other areas
- There was a strong view that health visitors are critical
- It was mentioned that there is a role for credit unions and one idea was that this role could be promoted in schools and nurseries
- Another idea that came through was to improve the accessibility of good healthy food e.g. through food co-ops
- Allotments could have a role to play and the group felt that the availability needs to be improved and groups should be encouraged
- The issue of fast food outlets was raised and there was a view that their number should be limited
- The group felt that perhaps there was too much choice and that we need to help people to make better choices
- More partnership collaboration and combined services was proposed
- Working people struggling on minimum wage was an issue raised in the group
- It was suggested that there is a lack of employment opportunities in the area and that there is a need to attract work and investment business
- Tele care and warden services help to keep people living in their own homes, however they are not always used properly
- There was a strong view that people need to do things to keep minds and bodies active - it was pointed out that there is a lot going on but people don't always know about it
- It was suggested that there are success stories to learn from such as church lunch clubs
- There was much discussion around volunteering in the area:
 - Volunteering can lead to employment.
 - Volunteering needs coordination.
 - Do young people know how to volunteer?
 - Do they know they have something to offer?

Do job centres tell people about volunteering?

People need to know that volunteering is interesting

- There was a strong view that there is a need to reach out to young people in care and let them know that they have a contribution to make
- The group were positive about their community centre and feel that it is a good facility. It was also mentioned that the pub is being turned into a community resource including a training kitchen and information centre
- There was a strong view that the housing provision is not always suitable and it needs to be more appropriate to current needs
- The group felt that there should be more places to run around for children and more places for young people

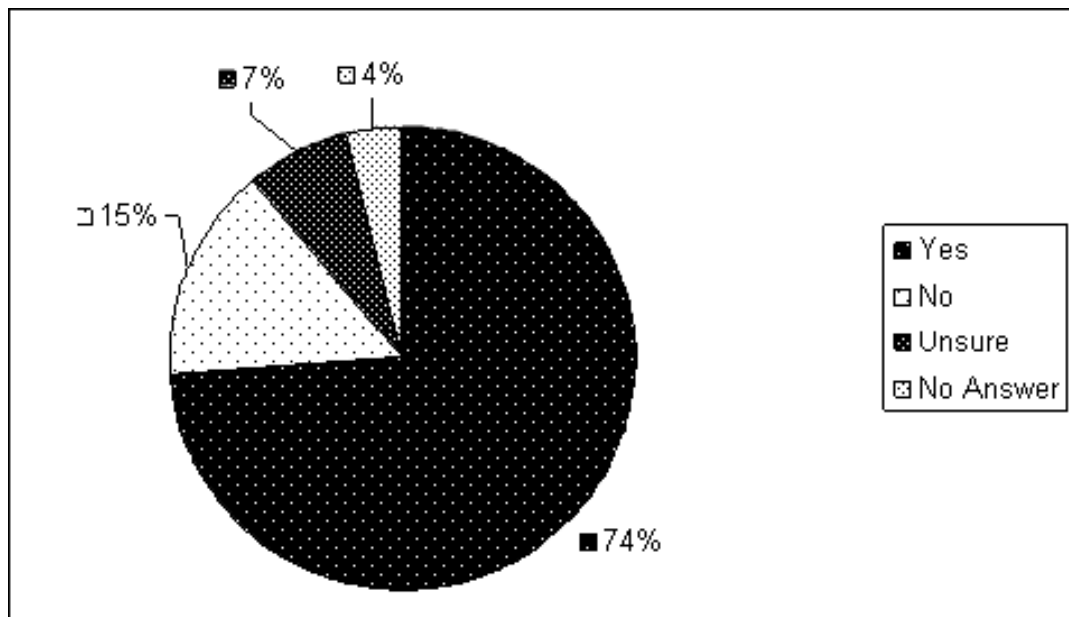
Participant Feedback

Irvine

At the end of each session every participant was asked to fill out a short feedback form (See Appendices – Section 4) to seek their views on the session. There were five specific questions and space was provided to capture any further comments. Results for the Irvine session are below:

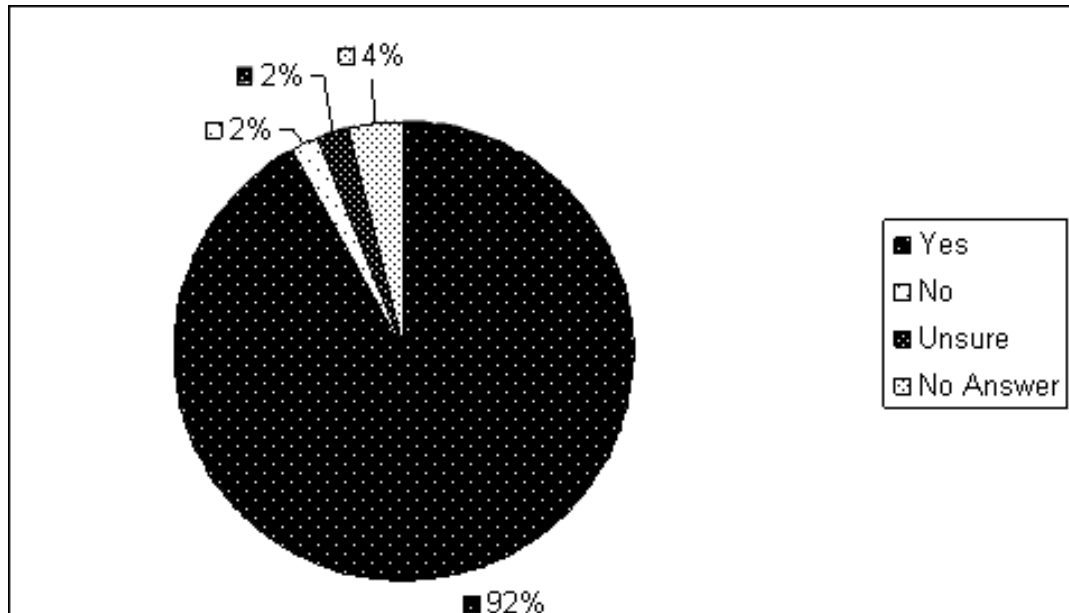
Question 1

Do you feel better informed about the Council's challenges and choices to be made over the coming 3 years?



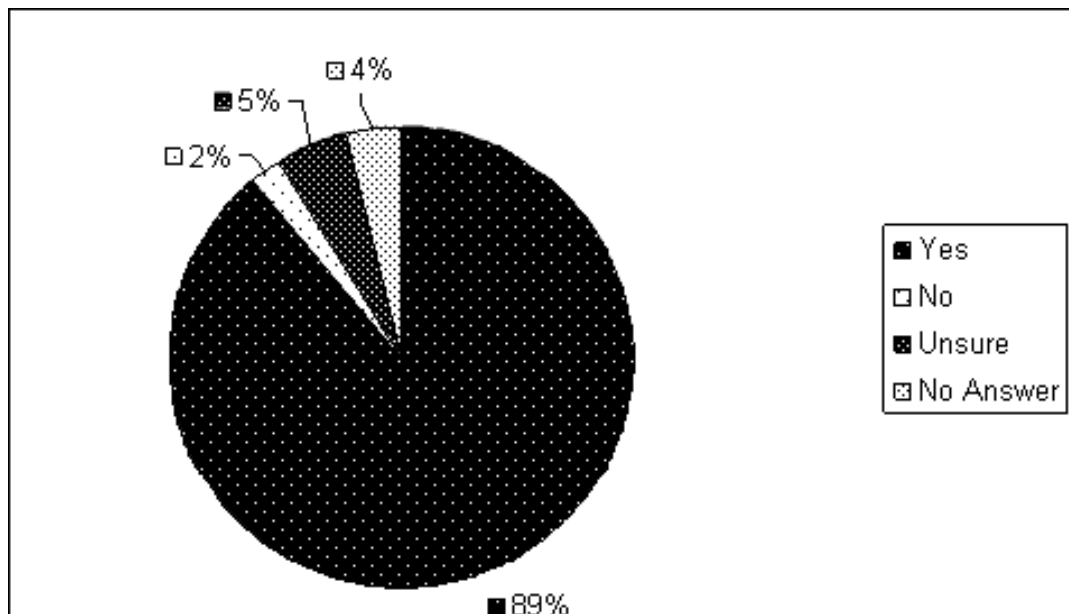
Question 2

Do you feel that the evening was well organised and efficiently run?



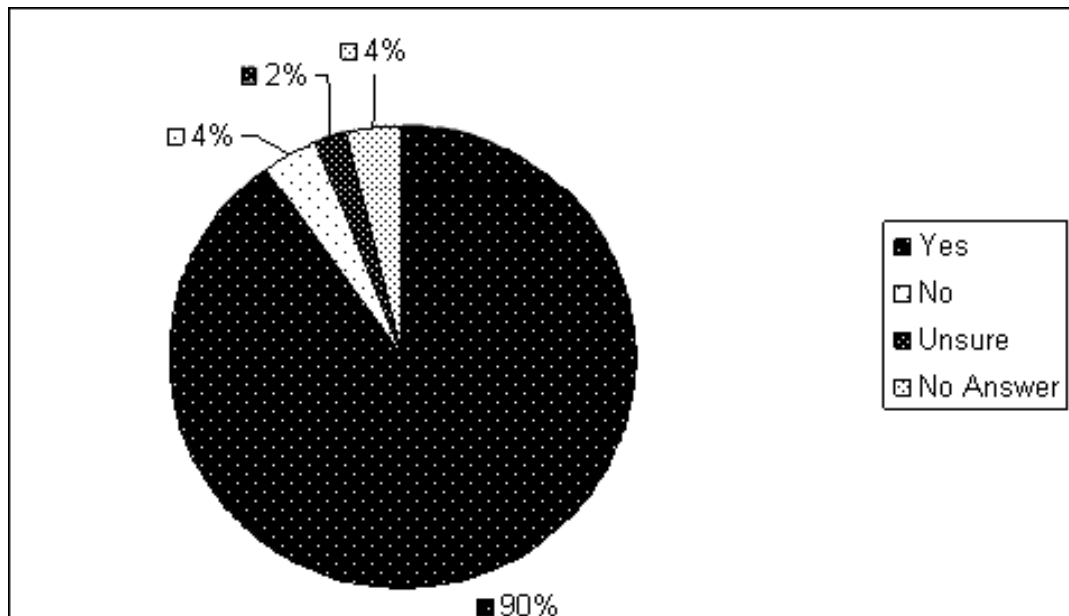
Question 3

In your opinion, is this type of forum valuable?



Question 4

Would you be interested in attending future events?



Question 5

How would you prefer to learn about progress of the Council with budget priorities?

NAC Website

Local Newspapers

Email

Letter

Email was the most popular of the choices with the Irvine participants, closely followed by the NAC website and by letter. Local newspapers was the least favoured option

- Email - 54%
- NAC Website - 44%
- Letter - 43%
- Local Newspapers - 31%

Other comments

- It was too noisy where there were two groups in the one room
- It should have been an open meeting rather than by invitation
- The NAC website is too difficult to navigate and find information
- Final decisions should include all immediate and future impacts and should be transparent

Ends

SECTION 4

Appendices

North Ayrshire Council
Straight Talking 2010 Sessions - Organisations Attending

- 1 Access Ability
- 2 Access Panel
- 3 Add it Up
- 4 Allotment Group (Kilbirnie)
- 5 Alzheimers Scotland
- 6 ANCHO Housing
- 7 Annick Community Association
- 8 Ardeer Community Council
- 9 Ardrossan Academy Parent Council
- 10 Ardrossan Community Council
- 11 Ardrossan Highland Games
- 12 Ardrossan Sea Cadets
- 13 Ardrossan Winton Rovers F.C
- 14 Argyle Community Council
- 15 Arran Access Trust
- 16 Arran Antiquarians
- 17 Arran Bike Club
- 18 Arran Cancer Support Trust
- 19 Arran Civic Trust
- 20 Arran Community Council
- 21 Arran Council for Voluntary Service
- 22 Arran Deer Management Group
- 23 Arran Elderly Forum
- 24 Arran Free Church of Scotland
- 25 Arran Health Services Consultative Group
- 26 Arran Hospital Supporters League
- 27 Arran Library Users
- 28 Arran Theatre & Arts Trust Ltd.
- 29 Arran Transitions
- 30 Arran Visual Arts
- 31 Auchendarvie Academy Parent Council
- 32 Ayrshire Association of Businesswoman
- 33 Ayrshire Breastfeeding Network
- 34 Ayrshire Chamber of Commerce of Industry
Ayrshire Minority Ethnic Community Association/Ayrshire Sikh
- 35 Association
- 36 Ayrshire Thai Family Support Group
- 37 Barrmill Community Association
- 38 Beccleuch Club House
- 39 Beith Community Association
- 40 Beith Community Council
- 41 Beith High Nursery
- 42 Beith Library Member
- 43 Beith PS Parent Council
- 44 Beith Respite Centre
- 45 Beith Town Centre Initiative
- 46 Borderline Theatre Company
- 47 Braefoot Nursery

- 48 Brisbane PS Parent Council
- 49 British Trust for Conservation Volunteers
- 50 Brodick Castle, Garden & Country Park
- 51 Brodick Community Association
- 52 Brodick Improvements Committee
- 53 Brodick Nursery Eco Group
- 54 Busy Bees Nursery
- 55 Communities & Partnerships (NHS)
- 56 Castlepark & Eglinton Tenants and Residents Group
- 57 Castlepark Community Association
- 58 CEIS Ayrshire
- 59 Children First
- 60 CLASPS Project
- 61 Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park
- 62 Community Horizons (Scottish Association for Mental Health)
- 63 Community Housing Advocacy Project
- 64 Cornerstone
- 65 Corrie & Sannox Community Body
- 66 Corsehill Community Association
- 67 Cumbrae Community Council
- 68 Cumbrae Initiative
- 69 Cunninghame Housing Association
- 70 CVSna
- 71 Dalry Action Group
- 72 Dalry Burns Club
- 73 Dalry Community Association
- 74 Dalry Community Council
- 75 Dalry PS Parent Council
- 76 Dalry Thistle F.C
- 77 Darg Road Area Tenants & Residents Association
- 78 Disability Equality Forum
- 79 Dreghorn Community Association
- 80 Dreghorn PS Parent Council
- 81 Duke of Edinburgh
- 82 Dyslexia Ayrshire
- 83 Enable Scotland Ayrshire Services
- 84 Evolution Skatepark
- 85 Fairlie Community Council
- 86 Friends of Montrose House Association
- 87 Friends of the Museum Association
- 88 Fullarton Community Health House
- 89 Fullarton Tenants Association
- 90 Garnock Academy Parent Council
- 91 Garnock Valley Disability Forum
- 92 Glebe PS Parent Council
- 93 Greenway Consulting
- 94 Health & Homelessness (NHS Ayrshire & Arran)
- 95 HIFAR Community Trust Ltd.
- 96 Holy Cross Catholic Church
- 97 Hope Project
- 98 Impact Arts
- 99 International History Society
- 100 Irvine Bay Regeneration Company

- 101 Irvine Burns Club
- 102 Irvine Community Council
- 103 Irvine Housing Association
- 104 Irvine Incorporated Trades
- 105 Irvine Senior Forum
- 106 Irvine West Ward
- 107 Isle of Arran Guide Division
- 108 Isle of Arran Homes
- 109 Isle of Cumbrae Tourist Association
- 110 James Watt College
- 111 KA Leisure
- 112 Kat O Chinese Association
- 113 Kilbirnie & Glengarnock Community Council
- 114 Kilbirnie Community Football Club
- 115 Kilbirnie Town Centre Initiative
- 116 Kildonan Fun Week
- 117 Kilmarnock College
- 118 Kilwinning and District Preservation Society
- 119 Kilwinning Carnival / 3 Towns Fireworks
- 120 Kilwinning Community Council
- 121 Lamrash Church of Scotland
- 122 Lanfine & Braehead Community Association
- 123 Largs Community Council
- 124 Largs Development Trust
- 125 Largs Library Member
- 126 Largs Museum
- 127 Largs Pre School Playgroup
- 128 Largs Viking Festival
- 129 Lochranza Gala Weekend
- 130 Lochranza Village Choir
- 131 MACKAN Tenants and Residents Association
- 132 Millport Country and Western Festival
- 133 Momentum (Head Injuries) Group
- 134 Moorpark Out of School Care
- 135 Museum of Ayrshire Life and Costume
- 136 NAFCA
- 137 National Autistic Society (Local Parent Support)
- 138 National Trust for Scotland
- 139 Nethermains Community Association
- 140 NHS Ayrshire & Arran
- 141 North Ayrshire Amateur Swimming Club
- 142 North Ayrshire Citizens Advice Service (NACAS)
- 143 North Ayrshire Community Health Partnership (CHP)
- 144 North Ayrshire Elderly Forum
- 145 North Ayrshire Open Arts Group
- 146 North Ayrshire Volunteer Centre
- 147 North Ayrshire Womens Aid
- 148 North Ayrshire Young Carers
- 149 North Ayrshire Youth Participation
- 150 North Ayrshire Outdoor Access Forum (NAOAF)
- 151 Opportunities in Retirement
- 152 Owl & Pussycat Nursery
- 153 Pennyburn Community Association/ Neighbourhood Compacts

- 154 Playtime Nursery
- 155 Promoting Kilwinning
- 156 Pryde
- 157 Quarriers
- 158 Radio City
- 159 Redburn Community Association
- 160 Richmond Fellowship Scotland
- 161 Riding for Disabled
- 162 Rotary Club of Kilwinning
- 163 Rotary Club of Ardrossan and Saltcoats
- 164 Rotary Club of Irvine Seagate
- 165 Royal British Legion
- 166 SACRO
- 167 Saint Bride's
- 168 Saltcoats Community Council
- 169 Saltcoats Library Book Group
- 170 Scottish Association for Mental Health
- 171 Scottish Natural Heritage
- 172 Scottish Youth Parliament
- 173 Shiskine Drama Club
- 174 Shiskine Golf & Tennis Club
- 175 Skelmorlie Community Association
- 176 Skelmorlie Community Council
- 177 Skelmorlie Tenants & Residents Association
- 178 Sport North Ayrshire
- 179 SportsScotland National Centre
- 180 St Bridget's PS Parent Council
- 181 St John's Church
- 182 St John's PS Parent Council
- 183 St Mark's PS Parent Council
- 184 St Peter's in Chains
- 185 St Winning's PS Parent Council
- 186 St. Margarets Scottish Episcopal Church
- 187 St. Mary's Church
- 188 Stanecastle School Parent Council
- 189 Stanley PS Parent Council
- 190 Strathclyde Police
- 191 Sustrans
- 192 Three Towns Disability Forum
- 193 Treetops Too Nursery
- 194 Vision Africa Aid Organisation
- 195 Visit Arran
- 196 West Kilbride Community Association
- 197 West Kilbride Community Council
- 198 West Kilbride Community Initiative Ltd
- 199 West Kilbride Village Nursery
- 200 Whitehirst Park Community Association
- 201 Whiting Bay Improvements
- 202 Whiting Bay Thursday Club
- 203 Whiting Bay Village Hall
- 204 Whitlees Community Centre Association
- 205 Who Cares
- 206 Woodlands Senior Citizen Club



Straight Talking Sessions The Council Budget

North Ayrshire Council, like the rest of the public sector, is faced with some tough financial challenges over the coming years. As a result, we need to make smarter, more innovative use of our resources.

The facts:

Around 80% of the Council's finances come from the UK Government via the Scottish Government, whilst the remaining 20% is generated through Council Tax and non-domestic rates and fees.

At the moment, it costs in the region of £345 million to deliver the services we provide. This is divided up as follows:

- Education and Skills (schools, community facilities, libraries etc) - **£143m**
- Social Services and Health (social care for vulnerable members of our community as well as housing) - **£90m**
- Finance and Infrastructure (roads, cleansing and benefits) - **£33m**
- Corporate Service (IT, customer service, regulatory services) - **£24m**
- Joint Boards (partnership working with agencies such as health board, fire and police) - **£34m**
- Loan charges (interest on monies borrowed for capital projects such as new schools) – **£21m**

However, indications are that the amount of money we receive from the UK Government in the coming years will be reduced.

Early indications suggest that we will require to find savings of £64 million over the next three years, although we will not know the full extent of the reduction until after the UK Government's Public Spending Review later this year.

Tackling the challenges:

We are planning for a 6% reduction in our budget each year and have already identified £7m efficiency savings for 2011/12 and a further £5m in 2012/13.

This still leaves us with almost £52 million of efficiencies to find between now and 2014.

It is important that you are aware of the challenges and difficult decisions that lie ahead. However, despite a reduction in our budget, we will still have a significant amount of money each year to allow us to deliver good quality services to the people of North Ayrshire.

Therefore, we want your views on which services are most important to you and what you would be prepared to do for yourself and for the wider community.

Community Services - Facilities & Libraries – Workshop Briefing Paper

Setting the scene:

North Ayrshire Council's community services consists of culture, arts and leisure provision including libraries, museums, art centres, sports facilities and community halls and centres.

North Ayrshire Council owns and manages a number of these facilities whilst others are owned and maintained by the Council but managed by third parties. These include North Ayrshire Leisure and Community Associations. In addition, some of our facilities are leased.

The Council's 2010-2011 budget included the proposed closure of community facilities over the next three years. However, an external review of libraries, community development, community facilities (halls and centres) and North Ayrshire Leisure was commissioned to look at the ways in which these services could continue to be delivered in the future. Any review about the future of library provision in North Ayrshire would look at:

- Providing the best possible service in local communities
- Retaining a reputation for providing quality services
- Making savings in order to meet the budget constraints faced by the Council.

The Council is also working with North Ayrshire Federation of Community Associations and local community trusts to develop a sustainable model for the future retention of some halls and centres in local communities.

We are also developing a range of learning centres to include libraries and community learning centres. The range of learning opportunities available to communities is in the process of being reviewed and extended and we would like your views.

The workshop will discuss:

- What you think should be the main services offered by libraries and community facilities in North Ayrshire
- The possibility of merging functions with other Council services or external organisations or other local authorities
- How appropriate or helpful would it be for community centres/facilities to be delivered by outside agencies
- How communities or volunteers could be more involved in community centre/facilities type provisions
- How other community buildings could be used in delivering the library service
What kind of learning opportunities you would most like to be made available locally



Education 3- 18 Years – Workshop Briefing Paper

Setting the scene:

We provide education for approximately 20,000 pupils across our five local nurseries, 53 primary schools, nine secondary schools and four special schools.

The Service employs nearly 2200 staff including teachers, nursery nurses, technicians, administrative and clerical staff, classroom assistants, librarians, and educational psychologists. The annual cost of delivering these educational services is around £135 million. However, our Education and Skills Service is responsible for much more than that (please see the table below).

Our Service provision supports:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early years • Primary schools • Secondary schools • Additional support needs • Quality Improvement Service • Psychological Service • School transport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School and educational facility buildings • Libraries • 50 community centres and halls • North Ayrshire Leisure
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What will your workshop discuss?

In five years time with a revenue budget 80% of what we have at present, what kind of service would we want for 3 -18 year olds?

Currently many aspects of the service i.e. class size, hours of attendance, the curriculum are governed by national agreements.

Things to consider:

- What are the key requirements of a sustainable education system?
- How to make best use of the properties, schools, libraries, community centres and halls etc?
- How can we deliver better services in a more cost effective way?
- What activities contribute most to young people's development and how can we do more of them?

Environment and Public Spaces - Workshop Briefing Paper

Setting the Scene:

Environment and Public Spaces are the things you see and experience when walking along the street or visiting our public parks.

Our Streetscene Teams manage and maintain our environment and public spaces and it costs the Council in excess of £11 million to deliver the following services:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaning of streets, highways and beaches • Mowing of highway verges and hedges • Removal of litter/graffiti/fly posting/fly tipping etc. • Emptying of litter bins/dog waste bins etc • Education and enforcement in the areas of litter/graffiti/fly posting/fly tipping etc. • Maintenance of cemeteries and burial grounds • Forestry and tree management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance of parks and recreational areas • Provision of hanging baskets and floral displays • Memorial benches and street furniture • Maintenance of sports pitches, tennis courts, bowling greens etc. • Provision and maintenance of play-parks and facilities • Provision and maintenance of Public conveniences • Allotments • Christmas displays
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We would like your views on which of these services are priorities for local communities and how, in your opinion, communities could help deliver services more efficiently. The workshop will discuss:

- Whether communities can adopt flower beds or areas of land that they can maintain themselves
- How the 'Lengthsman' Scheme – a small grant provided by the Council – can help local community organisations undertake environmental repairs and maintenance within a specific area
- The possibility of businesses taking on the maintenance of hanging baskets on their own premises
- Local street audits, which will enable the Council to focus resources on key areas of concern
- The idea of community clean-ups, where communities undertake regular programmes to clear areas with support from the Council.

Independent Living for Older People – Workshop Briefing Paper

Setting the scene:

People in the UK are living longer and over the coming years, the elderly population in North Ayrshire will have increased significantly. We estimate that by 2024:

- The number of local people aged 65 years will increase by 42% to almost 34,000
- The number of people aged 85 and over will increase by 83% to around 4,800
- The number of local people aged over 90 years will increase by 94% to 1,700

The Council currently provides intensive levels of care, both at home and within a residential setting, for approximately 1300 older people. Even by 2012, we anticipate that an additional 300 will require this kind of care.

While the number of older people will increase, so too will their expectations of healthier living, living longer and living safer in their own homes. This will have a direct impact on how public agencies like North Ayrshire Council, and independent care organisations plan, commission and provide services.

Building capacity in the home care service is a key piece of work which will help shift the balance of care and supporting people in their own homes for as long as possible.

There is already a range of services available to older people to support them in their own home. These services include shared assessment, community alarms, telecare, community equipment, intermediate care, District nurses, Homecare, Re-ablement services and respite care.

The Council also works very closely with NHS Ayrshire & Arran through the North Ayrshire Community Health Partnership. Joint Commissioning Strategy for Older People's Services was completed in 2009, which sets out the priorities to be address over the next 5 years, this includes making best use of existing resources and improving models of care. The partnership has made steady progress towards working in a collaborative way, making joint decisions about investing funds and developing a shared approach to shifting the balance of care.

In the workshop, we will discuss:

- How we can improve older people's independence and stay at home for as long as possible.
- Keeping older people active
- Preventing situations such as falls and admissions to hospital that could lead to the deterioration of health.
- Working in partnership with older people and their carers
- The expectations of older people and how they would like to be supported at home.
- What would keep older people independent for longer?
- What are the types of service supports you feel are necessary and what your priorities are if we do not have the resources to do everything

Independent Living for Older People on Arran - Workshop Briefing Paper

Setting the scene:

Due to the rural nature of Arran, the island requires a service that is flexible and responsive to the needs of vulnerable older people who require permanent care or 24-hour care for short, intermediate periods.

In March this year, the Council agreed to build a facility that would be fit for purpose and meet the needs of Arran's older population now and in the future rather than simply refurbishing the existing Montrose House.

We also need to work with our partners in NHS Ayrshire & Arran, to develop an integrated 24-hour care model to meet the needs of older people.

Based on an analysis of need, the future model of care home provision on Arran would aim to:

- Support people who require residential care
- Support people who require permanent nursing care including those with dementia who display challenging behaviour
- Support people who are terminally ill and require good quality end of life care
- Provide short breaks/respite for people who are being cared for at home and whose carers needs a break or become unable to care for a short period
- Provide residential assessment and rehabilitation facilities for people being discharged from hospital or for people living in the community who are experiencing difficulty and need additional support and assessment.

The workshop will seek your views on:

- The expectations of older people and how they would like to be supported at home.
- What would keep older people independent and living in their own home.
- What kind of services should a new Montrose House provide.
- What are the priorities if we do not have the resources to do everything.

Prevention and Health Inequalities Workshop Briefing Paper

Setting the scene:

North Ayrshire has one of the highest levels of poor health in Scotland. The number of local people dying from heart disease and stroke is significantly higher than the Scottish average and we have the fourth highest rate of people hospitalised for drug-related conditions in the country.

Poor health can be linked to lifestyle behaviours associated with alcohol, tobacco, obesity and mental health, but it is also affected by many other factors including our environment, social and economic factors and personal and family circumstances. The strongest link, however, is to poverty and deprivation.

We, along with our partners, are committed to improving health and tackling health inequalities.

By shifting our resources away from dealing with the consequences of poor health towards services that could prevent these difficulties at an earlier stage in life, we can stop the continuing decline of health in North Ayrshire.

We can prevent health inequalities through early intervention with very young children and their families, by helping people into work and by encouraging people to remain active in later life.

There are already several initiatives to tackle health inequalities such as promoting smoking cessation, physical exercise and healthy eating. In North Ayrshire we are now considering a more radical approach to prevent the damage caused to our health and your views on how we achieve this are important.

In the workshop, we will discuss:

- What you consider is contributing to the poor health of our communities
- What different/new ways you think we could tackle health inequalities
- Where you consider funds should be focused at an earlier stage to prevent poor health in later life
- What our priorities should be in seeking to improve health and wellbeing.



NORTH AYRSHIRE
COUNCIL

Straight Talking Public Consultation - Group Feedback Form

Facilitator Name.....

Event.....

Key Issues raised by the group included:

Are there any members of the group that require specific follow up? If so please record details below:



NORTH AYRSHIRE
COUNCIL

Straight Talking Public Consultation - Feedback Form

Name.....

Organisation.....

Event Attended.....

Question	Yes	No
Do you feel better informed about the Council's challenges and choices to be made over the coming 3 years?		
Do you feel that the evening was well organised and efficiently run?		
In your opinion, is this type of forum valuable?		
Would you be interested in attending future events?		

How would you prefer to learn about progress of the Council with budget priorities?	NAC Website	Local Newspapers	Email	Letter
Please select				

Do you have any points you would like to raise that you feel you didn't have the opportunity to during the workshop session?
Please ensure you provide contact details if you would like to be contacted with a response. (email, telephone or address)

Please use reverse if further space required

Emerging Themes

A short, fast response paper was provided to NAC immediately following the Straight Talking events to capture some of the emerging themes from the 6 sessions. See below:

- **Volunteering**
North Ayrshire has a vibrant culture of volunteering
People are willing to do more / work differently with NAC and its partners
Volunteers want support in order to take on wider roles
Proper contracts need to be created between NAC and communities (Environmental activities)
- **Volunteers**
Need to feel valued / appreciated
Opportunity for NAC to recognise and support their work
NAC / partners / Third sector need to work together to demonstrate benefits of volunteering – self-esteem / new skills / pathways to work
- **Places**
Communities want / need vibrant places to act as hubs of activity – could be schools / libraries / community centres
The more activity going on / the more age groups using a building the better
Access should be affordable for local people
Take opportunities to generate income from more commercial sources
Volunteers willing to take on wider role to help deliver this
- **Spaces**
Most communities keen to become involved in helping to keep their area attractive
Link between how the area looks and success of local economy is recognised Attracting jobs / investment / encouraging small businesses is a priority for most communities
One size does not fit all – different priorities for different communities
- **Health**
Agreement that early intervention is key
Must encourage better parenting – perhaps broaden role of ante natal care
Teach young parents how to provide healthy lifestyle for their children
Messengers must be credible – not acceptable for smoker / obese professional to “lecture” others about weight / smoking cessation
Need to make better choices easy for people – e.g access to better affordable food / make living a healthy lifestyle fun / reduce or limit fast food outlets / limit access to fast food for school children

- **Young people**
 Need to be given hope / told they are valued / help build self esteem
 High / rising rates of smoking / alcohol / drug use all stems from lack of self esteem / hope
 Have not delivered on our promises to young people – eg good education will help you get a job
 Young people not well represented at sessions – alternative routes are being explored

- **Education**
 Recognition that teaching / learning will evolve and technology will play greater role
 Difficult for some of the older consultees to work out what this might mean
 Opportunity to use community skills and expertise to support school activity
 Schools need to share expertise / resources more effectively

- **Older People**
 Concern about isolation – need face-to-face contact
 Opportunities to develop buddying support services
 Volunteer carers need more support – respite
 Concern in some communities about lack of suitable housing / facilities

- **Efficiency**
 Want to see evidence of Local Authorities / partners need to find ways to collaborate more effectively
 Willingness from volunteers to collaborate with NAC to deliver services / run centres / public toilets (in some places) / museums / lunch clubs etc
 Want better trained frontline staff – some care services viewed as patchy / staff able to work across various areas / able to respond more quickly to enquiries / requests for support

Venues and Timings

Straight Talking Session 1 - Ardrossan	Monday 18th October 2010	6.30 p.m. – 9.00 p.m.	Ardrossan Civic Centre, Ardrossan
Straight Talking Session 2 - Arran	Tuesday 19th October 2010	3.30 p.m. – 6.30 p.m.	Brodick Hall, Arran
Straight Talking Session 3 - Cumbrae	Thursday 28th October 2010	4.30 p.m. – 6.15 p.m.	Largs Academy, Largs
Straight Talking Session 4 - Largs	Thursday 28th October 2010	6.30 p.m. – 9.00 p.m.	Largs Academy, Largs
Straight Talking Session 5 - Kilbirnie	Monday 1st November 2010	6.30 p.m. – 9.00 p.m.	Walker Hall, Kilbirnie
Straight Talking Session 6 - Irvine	Tuesday 2nd November 2010	6.30 p.m. – 9.00 p.m.	Cunninghame House, Irvine

Contacts

NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

Chief Executive Service / Communications
North Ayrshire Council
Cunninghame House
Irvine
KA12 8EE

T: 01292 324137
F: 01292 324154
communications@north-ayrshire.gov.uk
www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk

LIDDELL THOMSON

Lesley Thomson
Director
Liddell Thomson
225 West George Street
Glasgow
G2 2ND

0141 221 5775
info@liddellthomson.com
www.liddellthomson.com

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