

**North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership
Peoples Panel**

Focus Groups Report 2016

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1.0 Introduction

This report details the main findings to emerge from focus group research carried out by Lowland Market Research on behalf of North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership with regard to issues raised in the recent Peoples Panel consultation.

1.1 Background

The North Ayrshire People's Panel consists of a representative cross section of approximately 2,000 North Ayrshire residents who have volunteered to providing feedback to the partners of the North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership through a postal survey and other research methods. This feedback is intended to guide the work and priorities of the Partnership and its individual partners.

The most recent survey of the Panel took place in the autumn of 2015 and provided information on public views and priorities across a range of thematic areas; 1,317 panel members responded to this questionnaire. A large-scale postal survey such as this often gives rise to a need for further interpretation and investigation. To facilitate this additional research requirement, a programme of six focus groups has been developed, one within each of North Ayrshire's Locality Partnership areas.

1.1 Objectives and Methodology

The broad thrust of the focus groups is to ascertain people's views and opinions regarding a variety of topic areas contained within the recent panel questionnaire. These included,

- e-cigarettes
- Physical activity
- Mental health
- Alcohol
- Child and adult protection
- Anti social behaviour
- Community justice
- Performance reporting and information
- Engagement
- Young people and issues facing them

Lowland Market Research recruited participants for a programme of six focus groups (one group in each of the six Locality Partnership areas). It was endeavoured to have each group contain 8 participants and each was developed within the confines of the research budget to reflect a broad cross section of the population covering both socio- demographic indicators such as age and employment status as well as from the different geographical areas. As the table on the following page outlines, 43 people took part across the 6 focus groups.

The table below summarises the group composition and the geographic area where the group participants come from.

Group Composition

Group	Locality Planning Area	Location	Group Composition	Number of participants
1	North Coast	Largs	Cross section of age, gender and employment status	7 participants
2	Irvine	Irvine	Cross section of age, gender and employment status	5 participants
3	Three towns	Ardrossan	Cross section of age, gender and employment status	8 participants
4	Garnock Valley	Kilbirnie	Cross section of age, gender and employment status	7 participants
5	Arran	Brodick	Cross section of age, gender and employment status	8 participants
6	Kilwinning	Kilwinning	Cross section of age, gender and employment status	8 participants

1.2 Topic Guide

The topic guide has been structured using the following themes that have been highlighted in the recent People's Panel questionnaire.

Health

e-cigarettes

The use of e-cigarettes has increased in recent years.

- Are you or someone you know using e-cigarettes to stop smoking
- Are you one someone you know using e-cigarettes when unable to smoke normal cigarettes
- Have you or someone you know switched from smoking cigarettes to smoking e-cigarettes
- Do you consider someone who uses e-cigarettes to be a smoker or a non smoker, why is this

Physical activity

- During the past 7 days, on how many days did you do moderate physical activities
- Are you aware of how much physical activity is good for health and wellbeing
- What would encourage you to be more physically active
- What do you feel prevents you from being more active
- How could the community planning partnership support you to overcome these barriers to being more active

WEMWBS (Mental Health)

- People seem to be reporting better mental health in North Ayrshire, why do you think this might be the case
- What do you think could be done to improve people's mental wellbeing

Alcohol

- Are people aware of new guidelines on alcohol consumption – people safest drinking less than 14 units of alcohol per week and should have several days per week when they do not drink at all
- Do they remember that the guidance included information about the link between alcohol and cancer
- Is this information useful
- What else would be helpful to know
- Which population groups do they worry are most at risk of alcohol related illnesses
- What can be done to help these groups

Child protection (and adult protection)

- Have you ever been worried that a child or vulnerable adult might be, being abused or neglected
- Have you or would you report your concern
- If you did not/would not report it what would prevent you from doing so
- How could the Community Planning Partnership support you to overcome these barriers
- Ask the group to comment on the usefulness of the "Protecting Children and Young People from Abuse and Neglect" leaflet

Anti-Social behaviour

- For people who have reported an anti-social behaviour issue we would like to hear about their experience of this process
- For those that have not reported an anti-social behaviour issue we would like to hear how they would like to report it and how they expect to be treated

Community Justice

- In the recent People's Panel survey, prison was the main type of sentence that respondents thought would make an offender less likely to commit a crime in the future. Other types of sentencing can be more effective – are you aware of these other type of sentences such as community payback orders.
- What would be the best way of informing you about the benefits of these different types of sentences.

Performance Reporting and Information

- The council produces an annual performance report which contains a variety of information about the activities of the Council. What type of information would you like to see about the Council and how would you like this information provided

Engagement

- Do you know what the Council and the other Community Planning Partners do and how they work together
- Would you like to know more about what the Community Planning partners do? How could their awareness of the CPP be raised
- How would you like to engage with the Community Planning Partners – online consultation, comment on postcard, community meetings etc.
- What are the key issues/priorities for people living in these North Ayrshire communities
- Focus on inequalities. Are there particular challenges faced by people in your community, because of: the circumstances of your community (e.g. legacy of declining employment opportunities) or; the types of people who live in your communities (e.g. more older people)

Young people and issues facing them

- What sort of issues/problems do young people face in North Ayrshire - get comments from young people as well as the perceptions of the other members of the focus groups
- How could these issues be addressed

The discussion guide used in each focus group was the same. The report endeavours to outline the areas where members of the different groups have common view experience with regard to the issues discussed and where their experiences contrast.

1.3 Report Structure

The following sections of the report are structured around the topic guide used and outlines in both narrative and bullet points the types of responses and comments received during the focus groups. The bullet points give rich examples of specific perspectives with regard to the subject matter highlighting clearly and contextualising the more general narrative.

Qualitative research by its nature produces a large amount of information; the report has therefore been segmented into discrete sections to aid understanding. **Readers should be careful, however, not to view each section in isolation but maintain an awareness that many of the issues are inter-linked and should be assessed and actioned in a joined up manner.**

2.0 Research Outputs

2.1 Health

e-cigarettes

In all 6 of the focus groups there were either people who used e-cigarettes or they knew someone who had switched from smoking cigarettes to smoking e-cigarettes. In each of the focus groups 1 or 2 people were smokers and used e-cigarettes. Several people stated that they smoked both cigarettes and e-cigarettes depending on the circumstances. The majority of the people who said that they smoked e-cigarettes within the focus groups were 40+ years of age.

All of the people who stated that they used e-cigarettes considered themselves to be smokers, even when using an e-cigarette as a replacement for a real cigarette. Everyone, in all of the focus groups had the view that if they saw someone with an e-cigarette then that person was a smoker trying to give up or using an e-cigarette as an alternative due to the smoking laws.

Everyone took the view that people who used e-cigarettes would have been a smoker first. There was a slight discussion about the potential for some younger people to be using e-cigarettes, not having used real cigarettes but this was thought to be very limited at the moment.

Physical activity

The majority of people in each of the focus groups indicated that they regularly participated in some form of moderate physical activity. For many people this was on a daily basis often out for a walk or walking the dog. Other activities undertaken several times per week included going to the gym, swimming, playing football and golf.

Overall, more than half of the focus group participants were aware of how much physical activity is good for their health and wellbeing. In all of the groups there were several people who stated 30 minutes of moderate physical activity per day, 5 days per week. Once this had been discussed most other group members said they were aware of this but could not recall it unprompted.

People in general stated that they did not follow government advice to the letter. There was a view that the advice put out by government can change on a regular basis. They cited different advice on the consumption of red meat, dairy products and red wine to name but a few. The general view was that most things in moderation is a sensible way to approach a healthy lifestyle, combined with some physical exercise.

The ways in which people could be encouraged to be more physically active included the following;

- The initial comment in all of the groups was that more motivation and better weather would encourage them to be more physically active. The view was that they live in Scotland and for a lot of the time it is cold, wet and dark.
- A medical or healthcare professional telling them that they are unfit. One person in the Largs focus group stated that if you get a GP referral then you can use the swimming and other sports facilities at a reduced price.
- The Largs group also stated that the prices at Vikingar are expensive and that the facilities are limited. There was a view that they needed better leisure facilities.
- If there were more group activities they could join such as walking groups. People assumed that these were available but were not sure how to find out about them. More information and better communication regarding the types of activities that are available and how to take part in them would be helpful.
- One person in the Irvine groups stated that the playing fields at Quarry Road needed improved.
- In Arran, a variety of comment were made regarding issues that would either encourage them to become more physically active or are a barrier. These included poor public transport around the area, poor lighting on roads and road surfaces poor for cycling. They also spoke about the shared leisure facilities on the island and how this needs to be improved. The fitness classes at Auchrannie Spa are only on in the summer, there needs to be activities on in the winter months as well. The shared community facilities at Lamlash High School are primarily only available during term time and people would like more availability in the summer.
- Sport and leisure facilities in general across all of the groups were thought to be expensive and it would encourage people to be more active if the prices to participate were reduced.
- Mothers with younger children stated that a crèche or child care would help them be more active.
- Some of the younger males in the groups who wanted to play football said that it can be difficult to get lets. The pitches are booked weeks/months in advance. There is either a requirement for more pitches or a different letting system to allow more people access to the facilities.

WEMWBS (Mental Health and Wellbeing)

In almost all of the groups, people were unsure if mental health was improving in North Ayrshire. No-one really had a basis on which to judge if people in their area had improving mental health or not. There was also a view that in winter in Scotland when it is cold, dark and wet for much of the time then people's mental health can be poorer.

The one group that had a different opinion to the other five was that on Arran. This group stated that it was different on the island compared to places like Kilwinning, Saltcoats and Irvine for instance. They stated that Arran has a strong and supportive community that lends itself to a feeling of wellbeing. There is lots of socialising and community involvement which makes people feel valued and welcome.

Members of the focus groups gave a variety of suggestions as to what could be done to improve people's mental wellbeing.

- In all of the groups there was discussion regarding the need for gainful employment and how this helps people's mental wellbeing. In most of the groups such as in Kilbirnie, Ardrossan, Kilwinning and Largs there was a view that there were few if any good local jobs. Most people said that you had to travel to get a job, often up to Glasgow. More local employment would help. The focus group on Arran stated that there was lots of potential employment on the island. This was not an issue although the level of pay was, as was the availability of affordable housing.
- The closure of much of the large industries in the different communities. People still spoke about the steelworks, coal fields and chemical industries. There needs to be more employment for everyone in these communities especially the young people. In places like Kilbirnie, Ardrossan and Kilwinning there was a feeling of deprivation and lack of ambition which had a negative effect on people's mental wellbeing.
- The Irvine group spoke about depression and eating disorders, one person had experience of this. He said that the general public needs to be made more aware of these issues and that the medical profession needs to provide better therapies. In his view there needs to be less skirting round the issues and a more direct approach.
- All of the groups were of the view that getting outdoors and active in the fresh air and sunlight is great for people's mental wellbeing. There needs to be more groups that people can join to go for walks or other activities. This will get people out of their houses and not only getting active but socialising, meeting and talking to people.

Alcohol

When asked about the new guidelines regarding alcohol consumption, most people in the groups thought it was about the reduction in the alcohol limit for safe driving. For most people the need to keep their driving licence was the most important issue and although consumption of alcohol and their health was important it was a secondary consideration to their driving licence.

Most people had some recollection that they may have heard something about a reduction in safe drinking limits. They could state that the limit was 21 units a week for a man and 14 for a woman. They were not sure how this had changed recently, although they assumed that it had gone down.

No more than one person per focus group was able to say that the safe drinking limit was less than 14 units per week and with several days when they did not drink at all. One of the big issues that people cited was a lack of understanding as to what a “unit” of alcohol was. For instance people asked “How big a glass of wine is a unit”, “What strength lager or beer does it refer to”.

The guidelines with regard to safe alcohol consumption are treated in a similar manner to those for exercise. People had the view that so much “advice” comes out from the government and that it changes on a regular basis that they are not sure of its value. One person stated “Whatever you like, they say is bad for you”, another said “It doesn’t matter what you eat or drink – sugar, butter, bacon etc, it all seems to be bad for you”. Once again people take the view that drinking in moderation is best.

Guidance regarding the linkage between alcohol and cancer is not well remembered. Once again there is a vague recollection when prompted but nothing extensive. One person in the Irvine group said that they thought that there was an increase in the likelihood of contracting throat and pancreatic cancer through excessive drinking.

Members of the focus groups who drank stated that they will tend to consume alcohol on one or two nights a week and may drink more than the 14 units recommended but would drink nothing on other nights. Their alcohol consumption is not evenly spread throughout the week. For some there is a view that this may be construed as binge drinking although they would not consider themselves to be binge drinkers. Participants in the groups would like more information on the definition of a binge drinker and how this may affect their health.

The population groups that members of the focus groups worry are most at risk of alcohol related illnesses include the following;

- People who do not realise they are consuming a lot of alcohol. For instance people who drink a few glasses of wine with their evening meal every night. They think they are drinking in moderation and in a controlled manner without realising the damage they could be doing.
- People with mental health issues who may turn to alcohol due to stress or other issues.

- Older/retired people. There was a view that a lot of older people drink quite heavily because information on health issues relating to alcohol was not as well publicised when they were younger and as such they have developed drinking habits that much of the population may no longer think acceptable. Older people may tend to drink more at home, effectively hiding the quantity of alcohol they consume.
- Unemployed/poorer people. There was a feeling that people who were not working or who lived in areas of deprivation may turn to alcohol.
- Young people. Overall, young people were probably the group that members of focus groups were least likely to be concerned about. They did state that some young people seem to drink to excess and binge on alcohol but probably no more than other population groups. The issue is that they are probably more likely to be visible in their excessive drinking, more so than other groups. The focus group on Arran said that young people are not big drinkers (unlike in the past). They are more likely to want to be mobile on the island and as such require a car and their driving licence. They don't want to drink excessively to jeopardise this.
- Weekend drinkers. People who drink heavily at the weekend and then nothing during the week

The types of support or action that could be undertaken to assist the above groups could be as follows;

- More education on the issues that excessive alcohol consumption can bring to your physical health and mental wellbeing. This will include the strain that people will put on their liver and pancreas if they drink heavily at the weekend.
- Make alcohol less visible in a similar manner to what they have done with cigarettes. Remove alcohol from supermarket shelves so that children don't think of it as the same as breakfast cereals or crisps.
- Make alcohol less readily available, possibly only available to purchase in specialist shops – "off sales".
- Make it more expensive to buy. People in the focus groups said that alcohol should not be cheaper than water to buy. They also stated that a higher alcohol price should be used to invest in health by bringing down the price of fresh fruit and vegetables and other healthy foods.

2.2 Child protection (and adult protection)

Most people in the focus groups said that they had not been worried that a child or vulnerable adult might be, being abused or neglected.

Examples of abuse or neglect with regards to a child or vulnerable adult that people have been aware of have included;

- Witnessing someone beating a wee boy
- Odd time with mother and child in street
- Possibly older people being neglected.

Almost all members of the focus groups said that if they were worried that a child or vulnerable adult was being abused or neglected they would report their concern. Those that said they would report it would do so to the following agencies/people;

- Social services
- Police
- School (if a child involved)
- Call main Council number
- Contact the family or parent of child first to raise concern

The reasons people gave which would prevent them from reporting an issue included;

- Not knowing who to contact
- Sometimes they take it for granted that someone else will notice and report the issue
- Don't want to get involved in issues that might bring trouble to their door
- Fear that they will get blamed for something
- Not wanting to apply their values to other people's lives
- Not having 100% proof, being 100% sure. Don't want to get things wrong
- Not sure if what they see is abuse or neglect
- Would want it to remain confidential

Participants in the focus groups were asked "How could the Community Planning Partnership support them to overcome these barriers" and also to comment on the usefulness of the "Protecting Children and Young People from Abuse and Neglect" leaflet.

All of the members of the focus groups thought that the leaflet answered all of the issues that they raised and in doing so would help them overcome the barriers mentioned. They said that the leaflet helped in a variety of ways including;

- Definitions of abuse and neglect and the signs of abuse and neglect such as children being afraid, quiet or withdrawn.
- Reminding people that it is not just up to the professionals and that members of the public need to help.
- Contact phone numbers for social services

- The leaflet states that you do not have to be 100% sure. Social services professionals will assess and make a decision.
- Members of the focus groups liked the fact that they could remain confidential.
- The case studies at the end of the leaflet were upsetting to people but good in that they could see real examples of people who benefited from an intervention by social services and also the consequences of not intervening.

None of the members of the focus groups had ever seen the “Protecting Children and Young People from Abuse and Neglect” leaflet. They feel that it would be worthwhile for it to be distributed widely throughout North Ayrshire or possibly elements of it put into the local newspaper to remind people of the issues and what they can do.

2.3 Anti-Social behaviour

Very few people have reported any type of anti-social behaviour. Only three people in all of the focus groups said that they had reported anti-social behaviour. One person who worked in a hotel on Arran said that there is some anti-social behaviour by visitors who come over and think they can do what they want. She said that they call the Police and the issue is dealt with.

Another person said that in the past they had complained about the noise that a neighbour was making. He contacted the Council and the people in question received an ASBO. These people took it seriously and the issue was resolved.

A third person said that in Kilbirnie there is a repeated issue of young people setting fire to litter bins. He has not reported it but his view was that “Its Kilbirnie, nothing gets done about it”.

Some participants in the focus groups said that they don’t report issues of antisocial behaviour for fear of retribution.

Most people have not witnessed or experienced any antisocial behaviour and as such have not had a cause to report anything.

As stated previously, the majority of people said that they had not reported an issue of antisocial behaviour. If they were to report an issue, people stated that they would expect to be treated as follows;

- They should be believed
- People should be treated courteously
- Opportunity to remain anonymous
- Action should be taken and the complainant kept informed of any progress

2.4 Community Justice

Members of the focus groups had a limited awareness of other types of sentencing other than prison. There was however, a general feeling that sentences involving community payback is a lighter, softer option than punishment through being sent to prison. People tend to view all crimes as being of a serious nature such as murder, serious assault and robbery. They look at people as being criminals rather than an individual who has broken the law and requires to be punished. It is with this in mind that their view of community payback orders is coloured.

Respondents indicated that they would like to have the following information through which they would be able to assess the benefits and usefulness of these types of sentences;

- Explanation of the type of crime and its associated punishment.
- Explanation of the statistics regarding the re-offending rates depending on the type of punishment received. People need to see positive results.
- Case studies of people who have offended and how they have turned their life around. How community payback orders have provided them with skills and experience.
- Show the benefit of these punishments to the communities in which people live. For example the beach being cleaned or buildings being painted/maintained.

This type of information could be provided to the community in the following ways;

- Provide information in the local newspaper about the type of work that offenders are undertaking to improve the area.
- Put up signs in the area informing people that certain actions have been undertaken by people on community payback orders such as cleaning the beaches, parks and other open spaces, painting and repairing fences and other activities of benefit to the community.
- Make people on community payback orders more visible possibly wearing hi-vis jackets.
- Flyers and newsletters could be put through peoples letter boxes
- Information on the Council website regarding the activities undertaken and the benefits both to the community and the person undertaking the community payback order.

2.5 Performance Reporting and Information

Members of the focus groups were asked to look at the North Ayrshire Council, Annual Performance report. Everyone in all of the groups stated that they did not want to receive a report of this size and complexity through their door.

The type of information they would like to see was as follows;

- Levels of spending on services within the authority, not just as a whole but in each of their communities.
- Spending on staff and councillors expenses.
- Jobs created for young people in each local area.

- How local services and amenities are being improved. More positive information about what the Council does.
- Information about how people in each area are consulted on the issues they see as being priorities and how these issues are being addressed.
- Education – attainment levels, additional resources for special needs, resources to develop all children not just pass exams.
- Roads and pavements –repair programme, reduction of potholes.
- The facilities for young people particularly children such as play parks.
- Housing – repair and maintenance programme.
- Leisure, sports services. How much it costs, The quality and content of the facilities,
- How do the council get money back with people who have council tax arrears or rent arrears? Do they arrest wages?
- They want to know how good the council is at insuring that the money owed is paid to them properly.
- How quickly the council responds to certain things, how long for instance a repair stays outstanding within the council housing service, road repairs, repairs to street lighting etc.
- It is important to show how good or bad the authority is compared to other local authorities. People need the information that is being provided to be put into context.

Members of the focus groups indicated that the way they would like to have this information made available to themselves and to other people in their community and across the wider North Ayrshire included;

- A large detailed document such as the one already produced that could be accessed in libraries and other council buildings as well as available to download from the Council website. This could be used by people wishing to assess the performance of the Council in a detailed manner such as community activists or interested and involved members of the public.
- A simple and straight forward 2 page summary of the larger document again to be made available in libraries, council buildings and on the council website. This information could be inserted into local newspapers or distributed with council tax bills.
- Participants in the focus groups were of the opinion that not only should there be an annual report but they also want something that provides the information and performance reporting on a more regular basis. This may consist of what the council are doing, when are they going to do it in a quarterly report and then come back and say this is what we have done, this is what we haven't done and this is where we are going to do better.
- Some people in the focus groups would like the information put through their door as a leaflet, others would be content with it being in the local newspaper or on the internet.
- Roadshows or stands in local shopping centres might be quite a good way of informing people about the types of things that happen in the council. It is also the opportunity to explain and give some of the stories behind the numbers. That seems to be very important, not just the numbers but what and why things are happening.
- Another way of giving people information could be having adverts at bus shelters.

2.6 Engagement

There is a vague knowledge and understanding that the public services provided in their areas work or should work together in a joined up manner. Members of the public spoke about the Council, Police and Health services as being the main agencies that they are aware of. There is limited understanding regarding the interaction of the local enterprise company or the interaction with the third sector for instance. When prompted the members of the focus groups can see how these organisations plus others such as Strathclyde Fire and rescue, Job Centre Plus and Skills Development Scotland to name but a few should be working together it's just that they are unaware of how and where they do so.

Respondents in the Arran and Irvine focus groups said that they were aware of some of the joined up working that the Police undertake. This was primarily through the Police Scotland Facebook page which provided information in quite an informal manner.

There was also a view in many of the focus groups that they are not sure if these different organisations actually listen to each other or if they just pay lip service to working together. Peoples lack of knowledge and understanding of the workings of the various organisations means they have little basis on which to make a valid judgment on how well the community planning partners work together.

All of the members of the focus groups would like to know more about what the Community Planning partners do. They want to know

- The relationship that the organisations that provide services and in their area have with each other and how they work in a joined up manner. This could be the Police, Council and health.
- People want to know how much it costs to Police or to repair the vandalism etc that is caused by young people when for another certain amount of money there could be facilities provided that reduce that type of vandalism and damage and reduce the associated costs.
- People want to see those links; they want to see organisations working in that way and they want that to be highlighted.

Participants in the focus groups said that their awareness of the Community Planning Partners could be raised in the following ways;

- Facebook posts by the various partner organisations
- Adverts or announcements in the local newspapers
- Newsletters and leaflets through their doors
- Posters or signs in local communities announcing services or facilities that are provided in communities by these partners.
- More interaction in communities themselves such as roadshows at community events such as gala days, sporting events and summer fairs as well as in shopping areas, supermarkets and sports facilities.

Most people in the focus groups would like their opinion heard with regard to issues that they perceive to be important in their community. They are however, not that enthusiastic about spending too much of their time becoming involved in these issues. They would like to engage with the Community Planning Partners in the following ways;

- Some people would like to attend a public meeting/discussion but the feeling was that this would only be of value if the issue/topic was suitably important.
- Mostly people would like to comment via Facebook, text, email or an online survey through the partners' websites.
- The opportunity to chat informally with representatives of the partnership would also be welcomed. People were keen to see partnership staff in their area that they could talk to about the services being provided and the issues they see as being important. As mentioned previously this could be at roadshows in shopping areas, supermarkets, gala days etc.

Issues/Priorities/Challenges

The issues and priorities people felt were important for their area included;

Ardrossan

- More job opportunities, long term secure jobs
- Support local communities, encourage people to be neighbourly and supportive of each other. There is a feeling that this is failing.
- Publicising and encouraging groups such as the Scouts, BB's, Youth Clubs, Mothers and Toddlers etc.
- Support and care for older people
- More apprenticeships for young people such as sales and construction. There needs to be more of a focus on the needs of young people to provide them with opportunities to stay in the area.

Kilbirnie

- Improve the shops in the main street, provide a reason for people to shop locally.
- Keep the place clean and tidy of litter, broken glass and dog mess.
- Encourage people to be ambitious, particularly the young people. Don't just let them settle for what they are used to.
- More housing that people can afford to either buy or rent
- Improved bus service
- Better care for older people

Irvine

- More town centre regeneration, improved upkeep of Irvine town centre
- Clearing glass and litter from paths
- More public engagement in decision making
- Encourage people to take part in leisure activities to improve their health
- More employment opportunities. People discussed the loss of ICI and the fact that these types of industrial jobs have gone.

Kilwinning

- Improved roads
- Street lights
- Dog dirt
- Parking
- Local jobs
- Better bus service, more frequent services and less expensive
- More opportunities for young people
- Improved availability of affordable housing

Arran

- More affordable housing to rent and buy
- Improved roads
- More reliable ferry service
- Better sport and leisure facilities, improvement in the availability of the shared use facilities
- Improved care for the elderly, there is a perception that the local social work service does not have an adequate budget or care workers available.
- Better public transport service (Bus)

Largs

People in the Largs focus group stated that Largs is viewed as being an affluent area and as such in their opinion don't get the same services and support that the less affluent more deprived areas of North Ayrshire receive.

- Better public transport links across North Ayrshire. At the moment there is only one train an hour to Glasgow and many buses stop running at 6pm.
- Dog warden patrolling the sea front
- More affordable rented housing
- Staffed local Police station
- More parking
- More job opportunities for young people with disabilities
- More jobs, apprenticeships and work experience for young people

2.7 Young people and issues facing them

The issues that young people face are similar across all of the six locality planning areas. These are primarily the requirement for a good education, leisure activities, good quality employment opportunities and housing in good strong communities.

Ardrossan

- Activities to keep young people off the street and out of trouble. These may be sport related activities or other arts and cultural activities
- More employment opportunities for young people such as apprenticeships and other long term sustainable jobs.
- Encourage young people to undertake college or university courses
- Ensure that young people have the right skills, training and qualifications from school to meet the needs of employers.
- More affordable housing to both buy and rent.

Kilbirnie

- People said that there was very little for young people to do and there needed to be more things on offer to keep them occupied and off the streets.
- Lack of ambition was again mentioned. Young people need to be made aware that they can achieve things and not just to think “well this is my lot” and just get on with it.
- More local jobs are required for young people right across the employment spectrum from shop and office work to apprenticeships and skilled technical jobs. If this does not happen then the able and capable young people will leave the area.

Irvine

- There is a perception that drinking is quite a problem with young people in Irvine.
- There needs to be more activities and services available for young people to divert them from drinking alcohol and potentially being less disruptive.
- Young people need to be supported and encouraged to do well at school and get a good job.
- There needs to be job opportunities developed in North Ayrshire for young people otherwise they will move away to where the jobs are. The group stated that over the last 30 years all of the industrial jobs have gone from the area and they need to be replaced with good quality sustainable alternatives.

Kilwinning

- There is a perception that the schools in the area are OK but could be improved.
- More support from teachers for the young people that want to learn in schools.
- Better job opportunities. Young people need to be more ambitious in their expectations of the jobs they can get and the life they can lead.
- More facilities and services to give young people things to do in the evenings and weekends.

Arran

- Very little for young people to do at the weekend and evenings. There needs to be more services and facilities available.
- Job opportunities are limited on the island and this limits the attraction of the island
- Young people beyond school age will tend to leave the island for further and higher education and job opportunities. There needs to be something done to encourage young people to stay.
- The above issue results in an ageing population on Arran and there will be issues in the future with regards to care for these people.
- Housing is expensive for young people who live on the island and many live in caravans. Affordable housing needs to be developed both to buy and rent
- Travel and transport for young people round the island is difficult. The bus service is poor and needs to be improved.

Largs

- Boredom is a big issue for young people in Largs. They stated that there is not much to do.
- There is a view that there is easy access to drugs and this is an issue for young people.
- There is a lack of good job opportunities in the area. There needs to be more and better quality jobs on offer for young people to want to remain in the area.
- Bus and train transport was commented on and young people stated that it was expensive and not frequent enough.