

# Community Insight: Campbeltown

Combining place data for deeper  
understanding.

March 2022

In partnership with the  
William Grant Foundation.

## Background

This briefing is part of a joint project from the David Hume Institute (DHI) and the William Grant Foundation using open data to gain new insights into communities in Scotland.

The approach, methodology and source code for analysis of open data to gain insights into Scotland's places can be found on [Github](#) and the findings are on the David Hume Institute [website](#).

A key finding from this analysis was that although quantitative data can provide useful information, there are risks if it is not combined with qualitative data. By using quantitative data and local knowledge together it is possible to gain a more accurate insight.

This community insight briefing brings together open source quantitative and qualitative data from conversations with individuals from Campbeltown as part of the David Hume Institute's [Action Project](#). The aim of this briefing is to increase understanding of risks and assumptions in analysis of data about Scotland's places.

## About Campbeltown

Campbeltown is an historic fishing port of around 4500 residents in the local authority of Argyll and Bute. The town sits on the Kintyre peninsula at the head of Campbeltown Loch, a deep sea loch. It is one of just five areas in Scotland categorised as a distinct malt whisky producing region and was once proclaimed the 'whisky capital of the world'. Alongside whisky producing distilleries, the shipbuilding and fishing industries play an important role in Campbeltown's history and this is documented at the [Campbeltown Heritage Centre](#).

## What people in Campbeltown said (qualitative data)

In January 2021, DHI reached out to community members in Campbeltown through [Inspiralba](#) and the Kintyre Community Resilience Group to take part in a conversation about their thoughts on the actions needed to build a Scotland that is sustainable, prosperous, inclusive and fair.

What came through clearly in the conversation was the strong sense of community in the area and the pride in the local heritage. Campbeltown was described as a place with a "friendly buzz" and a "big heart". The illustration below shows other key points from the conversation.

Residents of Campbeltown expressed how they enjoy sharing the proud history of the town and the town's heritage has been passed down through different generations, but people thought it could also be taught more in schools.



Figure 1. Illustration of the Action Project community conversation in Campbeltown January 2021.

People said that the town can often feel isolated and felt the area lacks support from political institutions. There was a sense of frustration coming from the feeling that “things don’t seem to change” and people questioned how much authorities really listened to communities like theirs. The problems with the A82 were cited as an example: “if there were more people and votes here, the main lifeline road in and out wouldn’t keep being shut”.

Following the Action Project conversation people wanted to take further actions to create a stronger community with more opportunities for all. This included supporting the elderly and young people through advocacy, befriending and helping with daily tasks, increasing access to technology in the community and networking groups to share knowledge and skills with the town hall as a hub, and sharing local history with young people and tourists.

## What does the quantitative data tell us

The intermediate zone of Campbeltown is in the fourth decile of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). There are ten deciles and each make up 10% of the index. The first decile is

defined as the most deprived and the tenth the least. This means that Campbeltown falls between the 30% and 40% most deprived areas in Scotland, as described by the SIMD.

Female life expectancy is 80 years, compared to a Scottish average of 82. Male life expectancy is 76 years, compared to a Scottish average of 77.

Our data shows Campbeltown has more charities, businesses, and community spaces per 1000 people than the Scottish average. For analysis, we used the intermediate zone called Campbeltown.

From analysis of public data, Campbeltown has more community assets and infrastructure than Scotland as a whole (Scotland average in brackets):

- 50 businesses per 1000 people (40.5 businesses per 1000 people)
- 8.62 charities per 1000 people (2.66 charities per 1000 people)
- 1.33 community spaces per 1000 people (0.56 community spaces per 1000 people)

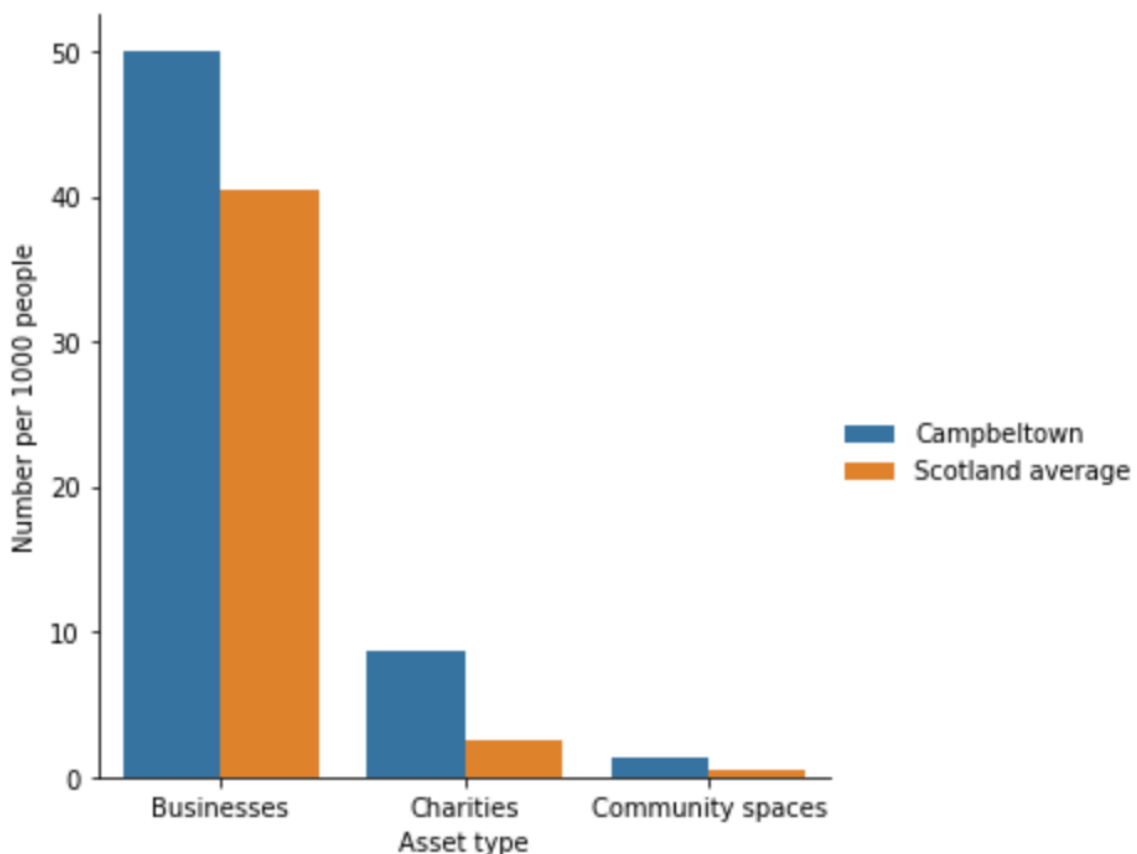


Figure 2. Graph to show organisations and community spaces per 1000 people in Campbeltown compared to the Scotland average.

Our data shows Campbeltown has more community spaces for people to meet than the Scottish average. This was not an issue raised in community conversations and a wide range of community activities is noted as a strength of the town.

However, it is important not to make assumptions based solely on data, as this could mean reaching conclusions which local people do not recognise. Although Campbeltown has good access to community infrastructure, it faces challenges associated with rural isolation. This is particularly important given that geospatial data is often used by charities and governmental organisations to directly inform policy and service delivery.<sup>1</sup> However, the community insights demonstrate that datasets alone do not give a full picture of Campbeltown. That is why it is useful to match both SIMD data and our own data on community infrastructure with our findings from community conversations undertaken as part of The Action Project.

## Continuing community action

In Campbeltown there has been a collaboration between Inspiralba, South Kintyre Development Trust, Campbeltown Community Council and Architecture and Design Scotland to create a [Community Action Plan](#).

The Community Action Plan has been informed by extensive community engagement carried out since the Action Project conversations took place. This created short term employment for three local young people and included a community survey which attracted 879 responses.

Information from the Action Project community conversation was used to help shape the survey questions, and the survey was promoted extensively through posters, local radio, the local newspaper and social media. The feedback was categorised based on seven themes, including 'Employment, Education and Training', 'Resilience' and 'Roads, Transport and Infrastructure'.

A series of four workshops were held to share the survey results and involve local people in developing future actions to benefit the area. Participants included local residents, Campbeltown Grammar School pupils, representatives from third sector organisations, a tenants and residents association, an elected member, local heritage, hobby and sports clubs, local businesses, representatives from Argyll & Bute Council and Highlands & Islands Enterprise.

Based on the results of the survey and the subsequent workshops, the community voted on further actions and these were put into the Community Action Plan. People were also asked to make one wish for what they would like Campbeltown to be like in 2030. An example was "a happy, healthy, and prosperous community that is well connected by great transport links".

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<sup>1</sup> Bowles (2021). [How charities can use geospatial data](#). Catalyst. Online. Accessed 9th March 2022.

## Overall insights

Data alone provides a snapshot at a point in time and there is often a time lag between collection, publication and use. It risks giving a narrow understanding of communities as it can be hard to capture the full extent of community action which is constantly evolving.

Measures of deprivation such as the SIMD rely on a choice of domains and indicators, which are open to value judgements. The weightings given to these domains and indicators can also be based on subjective decision making.<sup>2</sup>

In the case of Campbeltown, this point seems particularly relevant in the 'Geographic access to services' domain of the SIMD, where it is placed in the 8th decile. This is calculated based on journey times by car and public transport to a variety of essential locations including GP surgeries, schools and shops, as well as from the percentage of premises that do not have access to superfast broadband.

The SIMD implies that access to general infrastructure in Campbeltown is better than at least 70% of places in Scotland. The access to services domain makes up just 9% of the overall SIMD, but access to services might be considered the most pressing issue in rural areas.<sup>3</sup> Some aspects of access such as the cost and frequency of public transport are excluded from the domain.

In both our community conversation and the community survey, people raised transport and connectivity issues as key challenges faced by the community. This included road access, ferry services and public transport. Good connectivity can support and enable community activity and brings a wide range of benefits to places. However the data does not highlight this, showing the importance of listening to community voices.

The SIMD access to services domain also does not take into account proximity to services that are outside the data zone. Communities that are very close to larger settlements might be better positioned to access services than a geographically remote area, but the SIMD does not reflect this.

Another potential problem with using data without listening to community voices is the way that varying population patterns across rural and urban areas can impact findings. Scotland's rural population is more dispersed than its urban population and this means that data zones and intermediate zones can be much larger in rural areas. Similarly, deprivation is often dispersed more widely in rural areas compared to urban areas, where deprivation tends to be more geographically concentrated.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, deprivation mapping tools that are based on

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<sup>2</sup> Clelland and Hill (2019, Sage). [Deprivation, policy and rurality: The limitations and applications of area-based deprivation indices in Scotland](#). Local Economy Vol. 34(1) pp.33-50. Online. Accessed 9th March 2022

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

these spatial boundaries can mask socio-economic variation within rural communities. Making funding decisions without considering these factors can be problematic.