



Argyll and Bute Council
Comhairle Earra-Ghàidheal Agus Bhòid

Executive Director: Douglas Hendry

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22 August 2019

NOTICE OF MEETING

A meeting of the **ARGYLL ISLANDS STRATEGIC GROUP** will be held in the **COLUMBA CENTRE, BOWMORE, ISLE OF ISLAY** on **THURSDAY, 29 AUGUST 2019** at **10:30 AM**, which you are requested to attend.

Douglas Hendry
Executive Director

BUSINESS

- 1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**
- 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
- 3. MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE ARGYLL ISLANDS STRATEGIC GROUP HELD ON TUESDAY, 28 MAY 2019 (Pages 3 - 6)**
- 4. UPDATED KEY PRIORITIES OF ARGYLL ISLANDS STRATEGIC GROUP (Pages 7 - 12)**
Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth
- 5. ADDRESS BY THE MINISTER FOR ENERGY, CONNECTIVITY AND THE ISLANDS**
- 6. ISLAND (SCOTLAND) ACT**
 - (a) National Islands Plan and Islands Impact Assessment Consultation (Pages 13 - 38)

Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth
 - (b) Update by the Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands
- 7. ISLANDS TRANSPORT FORUM**

- (a) Minutes of the previous meeting of the Islands Transport Forum as held on 9 May 2019 (Pages 39 - 46)
- (b) Verbal Update by Head of Development and Economic Growth
- 8. VESSEL REPLACEMENT AND DEPLOYMENT PROGRAMME - TO FOLLOW**
Report by Transport Scotland
- 9. ARGYLL AIR SERVICES PSO TENDER** (Pages 47 - 48)
Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth
- 10. SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT ISLAND LIAISON DIRECTORS UPDATE** (Pages 49 - 50)
Report by Scottish Government Liaison Directors
- 11. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION WITH THE MINISTER FOR ENERGY, CONNECTIVITY AND THE ISLANDS**
- 12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**
The date of the next meeting to be agreed.

Argyll Islands Strategic Group

Councillor Robin Currie (Chair)	Councillor Mary-Jean Devon
Councillor Anne Horn	Councillor Sir Jamie McGrigor
Councillor Jean Moffat	Councillor Aileen Morton
Councillor Elaine Robertson	Councillor Len Scoullar (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Jim Lynch	Councillor Alastair Redman

Shona Barton, Area Committee Manager, Tel: 01436 657605

Contact: Lynsey Innis, Senior Committee Assistant; Tel: 01546 604338

MINUTES of MEETING of ARGYLL ISLANDS STRATEGIC GROUP held in the COUNCIL CHAMBERS, KILMORY, LOCHGILPHEAD on TUESDAY, 28 MAY 2019

Present: Councillor Robin Currie (Chair)

Councillor Anne Horn	Councillor Len Scoullar
Councillor Jean Moffat	Councillor Jim Lynch
Councillor Aileen Morton	Councillor Alastair Redman
Councillor Elaine Robertson	

Attending: Pippa Milne, Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure Services
Fergus Murray, Head of Economic Development and Strategic Transformation
Shona Barton, Area Committee Manager
Stuart Green, Corporate Support Manager
Iain MacAllister, Island Liaison Partner, Scottish Government
Jon Rathjen, Island Liaison Partner, Scottish Government
Ralph Throp, Island Liaison Partner, Scottish Government
Don Morrison, Islands Team, Scottish Government

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and general introductions were made.

There were no apologies for absence intimated.

The Area Committee Manager advised that Councillor Horn had been delayed and would join the meeting in due course.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest intimated.

3. MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE ARGYLL ISLANDS STRATEGIC GROUP HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 27 FEBRUARY 2019

The Minute of the previous meeting of the Argyll Islands Strategic Group held on Wednesday, 27 February 2019, was approved as a true record.

4. SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT ISLAND LIAISON DIRECTORS UPDATE

The group gave consideration to a report which provided an update on the progress made by the Scottish Government Island Liaison Directors since their introduction to the Council and their work with island communities across Argyll and Bute. Mr Throp outlined the expectations of the role which encompassed both strategic and local levels and the key learning and ongoing challenges together with the priorities for the next quarter. Discussion took place in respect of a pilot scheme run by the Scottish Government in assisting with payments for young people who reside on the islands to attend sporting events on the mainland. The Chair advised that despite having being included in the initial discussions through COSLA, it would appear that Argyll and Bute have been excluded from the pilot. Mr Throp agreed to feedback the comments to the appropriate Policy team within the Scottish Government.

Decision:

The Argyll Islands Strategic Group agreed to note the information provided.

(Ref: Report by Scottish Government Liaison Directors, dated 28 May 2019, submitted.)

5. ISLANDS (SCOTLAND) ACT

The group gave consideration to a verbal update from Don Morrison of the Scottish Government's Islands Team. Mr Morrison provided information on the configuration of the team and outlined the basics of the Islands (Scotland) Act, which came into force in October 2018.

Mr Morrison outlined the engagement strategy of the team and the consultation process which was launched by the Scottish Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands on 6 April 2019. He advised of the emerging themes of the consultations which have already taken place which included poor connectivity; lack of affordable and sustainable housing; population decline; poor transport links; community empowerment and fuel poverty. Mr Morrison provided information on the development and timescales involved in publishing the National Islands Plan and the ongoing work involved in producing guidance and templates for Islands Communities Impact Assessments.

Discussion took place in respect of the promotion of the online consultation process through social media; the requirement of Ministers to consult with island authorities and those who represent island communities; the links between the Democracy Bill and the Islands Plan particularly in relation to Parliamentary timescales; ferry issues and the forthcoming Biodegradable Municipal Waste Ban.

Mr Morrison agreed to feedback the comments of the group in relation to the consultation of local authorities and provide clarification as to whether Island Communities Impact Assessments could be applied retrospectively by Local Authorities or if this would only apply to the Scottish Government. Mr Morrison also agreed to circulate the full consultation schedule to the group by email.

The Chair thanked Mr Morrison for the information provided.

Decision:

The Argyll Islands Strategic Group agreed to note the information provided.

Councillor Anne Horn joined the meeting at 11.10am during discussion of Agenda item 5.

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6. UPDATE ON ISLANDS TRANSPORT FORUM

The group gave consideration to a report outlining updates on the National Transport Strategy and Strategic Transportation Projects Review 2; the Islands Scotland Act 2018; Ferries and the HIAL Strategy together with the points raised at the Islands Transport Forum at their meeting on 9 May 2019 with the Minister of Energy, Connectivity and the Islands. Discussion took place in respect of the ports and ferry infrastructure and the possible implications of the biodegradable municipal waste landfill ban on the ferry service.

Decision:

The Argyll Islands Strategic Group agreed to note the updates provided at the Islands Transport Forum and the points raised.

(Ref: Report by Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure Services, dated 28 May 2019, submitted.)

7. NATIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY

The group gave consideration to a report outlining the process and progress of the National Transport Strategy and associated Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR) together with the top transport priorities for Argyll and Bute to support economic growth and social inclusion.

Decision:

The Argyll Islands Strategic Group agreed:-

1. to note Appendix 1 as top transport priorities for Argyll and Bute to support economic growth and social inclusion; and
2. that Appendix 1 is to be used and referred to in pursuing support from the Minister of Transport and will feed into the response to consultation on NTS2/STPR.

(Ref: Report by Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure Services, dated 28 May 2019, submitted.)

8. FUEL POVERTY (TARGET, DEFINITION AND STRATEGY) (SCOTLAND) BILL UPDATE

The group gave consideration to a report highlighting the response to the Island Communities Impact Assessment (ICIA) for the Fuel Poverty (Target, Definition and Strategy) (Scotland) Bill which indicates the additional uplift and concerns over the revised fuel poverty definition. Discussion took place in respect of the possibility that the Island Communities Impact Assessment for the Fuel Poverty Bill be used as a template for the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 and the possibility that the target of no more than 5% fuel poor households in Scotland by 2040 be broken down to reflect the statistics on the islands. The Scottish Government Island Liaison Directors agreed to feed back the comments of the group to their Fuel Poverty Policy colleagues.

Decision:

The Argyll Islands Strategic Group agreed to note the contents of the report.

(Ref: Report by Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure Services, dated 28 May 2019, submitted.)

9. UPDATE ON ARGYLL AIR SERVICES

The group gave consideration to a report outlining the interim contract details for the provision of Air Services between Oban and the Islands of Coll, Colonsay and Tiree which

is operated by Hebridean Air Services Ltd (HASL) for the period 16 May 2019 until 15 September 2019.

Decision:

The Argyll Islands Strategic Group agreed to note the details of this paper and the award of an interim contract to Hebridean Air Services Ltd covering the period 16 May 2019 until 15 September 2019.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure Services, dated 28 May 2019, submitted.)

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Argyll Islands Strategic Group noted that the date of the next meeting will be confirmed in due course following confirmation of a date which allows the Scottish Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands to be in attendance.

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

ARGYLL ISLANDS
STRATEGIC GROUP

DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

29 AUGUST 2019

Updated key priorities of Argyll Islands Strategic Group

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 On the 23 January 2014, the Council agreed to the setting up of a short life working group to investigate the issues affecting our islands and to develop a vision statement as well as key actions necessary to address the issues. Following on from the working group the Argyll Islands Strategic Group (AISG) was set up. This report provides details of the key issues/priorities for the Group which have been updated to reflect the discussion and decision of the AISG at its meeting on 27 February 2019. These are detailed at Appendix 1.

1.3 In June 2015, Council approved the following vision for the islands:

It is recognised that our islands play a vital role in delivering economic growth across our area. We want to see our islands prosper and grow, providing education and employment for our young people, supporting and growing our businesses and communities and benefiting from the communication and transportation infrastructure and services necessary for them to be sustainable and prosper.

1.4 Argyll and Bute Council is a member of the Scottish Government's Strategic Islands Group (a successor to the Island Area Ministerial Working Group) and as a consequence we have been able to engage directly with the Scottish Government during the preparation of the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 and following the Act coming into force have continued that engagement including responding to a number of the islands consultations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1.5 It is recommended that the Argyll Island Strategic Group approve the amended priorities (Appendix 1) as discussed and amended at their meeting on 27 February 2019.

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

ARGYLL ISLANDS
STRATEGIC GROUP

DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

29 AUGUST 2019

Updated key priorities of Argyll Islands Strategic Group

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 On the 23 January 2014, the Council agreed to the setting up of a short life working group to investigate the issues affecting our islands and to develop a vision statement as well as key priorities/areas of focus necessary to address the issues. This was against a background of falling populations on many of our islands and awareness of the need to promote and lobby at a strategic level for the issues affecting our islands. The council then subsequently agreed to set up the Argyll Islands Strategic Group (AISG) to further progress the work undertaken.
- 2.2 Following consideration of the original priorities by the AISG at its meeting on 27 February 2019 a number of amendments were made to the original priorities including the inclusion of an additional priority relating to waste and specifically the landfill ban and disposal of biodegradable waste. This report provides the amended priorities identified by the AISG as being critical to our islands. These priorities will provide the focus of the AISG work plan.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Argyll Island Strategic Group approve the amended priorities (Appendix 1) as discussed and amended at their meeting on 27 February 2019.

4.0 DETAIL

- 4.1 In June 2015, in recognition of the importance of our islands, the Council approved the following vision for our islands:

“It is recognised that our islands play a vital role in delivering economic growth across our area. We want to see our islands prosper and grow, providing education and employment for our

young people, supporting and growing our businesses and communities and benefiting from the communication and transportation infrastructure and services necessary for them to be sustainable and prosper.”

- 4.2 The existence of the Argyll Islands Taskforce, which was then replaced by the Argyll Islands Strategic Group (AISG), coincided with Scottish Government work focusing on islands including the publication of the Scottish Government's Empowering Scotland's Island Communities (the Islands Prospectus) in June 2014 and Consultation on Provisions for a Future Islands Bill in September 2015. An Argyll and Bute Council response to this document was submitted to the Scottish Government following approval by Council on 26 November 2015. In addition the Council was also invited to sit on the Scottish Government's Strategic Islands Group (a successor to the Island Area Ministerial Working Group) and as a consequence was able to engage directly with the Scottish Government whilst it prepared the Islands Bill which resulted in the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 and will allow input to continue as the different elements of the Act are taken forward.
- 4.3 In addition to the above the Council also sought to work in partnership with North Ayrshire and Highland Councils to ensure that representatives of the west of Scotland islands were able to contribute to the discussions at a strategic level. As a result of the discussions with North Ayrshire Council and The Highland Council a number of priorities were identified and agreed as being the key areas of focus for the work of the Taskforce and then the AISG. These priorities were recently reviewed by the AISG at its meeting on 27 February 2019 to assess their relevance and validity given the time that has lapsed. Amendments were made and the newly agreed updated priorities are detailed within Appendix 1

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The AISG, previously the Argyll Islands Taskforce, has provided a focus on island communities within Argyll and Bute and through the work of the Group key issues and priorities have been highlighted which affect our island communities and their opportunities for growth and development.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy – lobbying for positive policy and resource support for our islands fits with the objectives of the Single Outcome Agreement, Economic Strategy and Local Development Plan which seek to deliver sustainable island communities.
- 6.2 Financial –staff resources.

- 6.3 Legal – none.
- 6.4 HR – staff resource from the Economic Development and Strategic Transportation Service as well other Council services and Community Planning Partners.
- 6.5 Equalities/Fairer Scotland Duty – none.
- 6.6 Risk – To do nothing would leave our island communities at a disadvantage and the identification of the key priorities allows a clear platform from which the council can work closely with our island communities, lobby UK and SG and work closely with key stakeholders.
- 6.7 Customer Service – none.

Pippa Milne - Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth
Policy Lead – Councillor Currie

August 2019

For further information contact: Audrey Martin, Transformation Projects and Regeneration manager

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Priorities and Actions Feb 2019

Appendix 1 - PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS – APPROVED FEB 2019

At its meeting on 27 February 2019, Council noted the following priorities (1-11). The table below sets out initial actions required to progress these priorities

To continue to progress the work streams shown below will continue to require support from across the Council, and will require the necessary available resources to support this activity and should the AISG support this approach we will need to obtain agreement from the relevant services and Policy Leads.

The blue highlighted rows indicate the current priorities and the white rows are the tasks identified to help to progress the issue. The tasks set out below will evolve and change as more specific actions associated with moving forward each issue are identified.

Ref	Priority	SOA Outcome	AISG Meeting
1	To ensure that the future disbursement of powers and income, including income from The Crown Estate, to our island communities is equal to the three island communities.	1	TBC
1a	Maintain a watching brief on the interim and long term arrangements in relation to the Crown Estate in Scotland		
2	To obtain Scottish Government capital investment in key island infrastructure such as ports, ferry terminals vessels and road infrastructure in order to facilitate the needs of RET and secure the future economic prosperity of our islands.	2	
2a	Identify island infrastructure currently available		
2b	Highlight any current or likely future issues		
2c	Work with SG ferries unit		
2d	Determine strategy for seeking capital investment where required		
2e	Explore RET charging mechanisms and seek amendments where this causes inconsistencies to our island communities		
3	To secure the integration of essential transport networks including ferries, buses, air and rail connections to minimise journey times to and from our island communities.	2	
3a	Identify public transport routes and how they integrate		
3b	Highlight any current or likely future issues		
3c	Invite public transport providers, SPT and HI Trans (as appropriate) to speak to Taskforce		
3d	Determine a strategy for lobbying for changes where required		
4	To lobby for parity for our island communities with regard to mail order delivery surcharges.		
4a	Consider action required within Argyll and Bute		
4b	Determine strategy for additional lobbying if required		
5	To lobby for maximum investment in our digital connectivity for our island communities, including superfast broadband, modern mobile phone signal and exploring the possibility of opening up public digital networks to the wider community.	2	
5a	Lobby SG and providers		
6	To lobby for the removal of water and waste water constraints from our island communities to facilitate	2	

	economic growth.		
6a	Liaise with Scottish Water		
6b	Determine strategy for lobbying for additional investment		
7	To lobby for innovative approaches to recruit and retain adequate GP coverage for our island communities.	5	
7a	Work with NHS Highland		
7b	Determine strategy for lobbying for alternative approaches		
8	To seek innovative and cost effective affordable housing for our island communities.	2	
8a	Identify island housing needs		
8b	Work with housing associations and community groups		
8c	Determine strategy for lobbying for affordable housing to meet identified need		
9	To address fuel poverty for our island communities.	4	
9a	Identify issues		
9b	Determine strategy for lobbying for additional support if required		
9c	To build on the renewable energy capacity of our island communities		
10	To work with the three island authorities to identify common economic challenges across our islands and opportunities for joint working to address these.	1	
10a	Determine strategy for joint working/lobbying		
11	To lobby and work with partners to seek to address issues relating to the disposal of waste to landfill affecting our island communities		
11a	Landfill ban and disposal of biodegradable waste		
11b	Develop new waste strategy		

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**ARGYLL ISLANDS
STRATEGIC GROUP****DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH****29 AUGUST 2019**

**NATIONAL ISLANDS PLAN AND ISLANDS IMPACT ASSESSMENT
CONSULTATION**

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 was granted Royal Assent on 6 July 2018 with the first set of provisions coming into force on 4 October 2018. The Act introduces a number of measures to underpin the Scottish Government's key objective of ensuring that there is a sustained focus across Government and the public sector to meet the needs of island communities now and in the future.
- 1.2 The Act itself introduced a number of duties that are placed on the Scottish Ministers and Local Authorities in order to deliver the measures and objectives. This current consultation specifically relates to the duties detailed in Part 2 and 3 of the Act. Part 2 places a duty on the Scottish Ministers to prepare a National Islands Plan. Part 3 relates to duties in relation to island communities and requires Local Authorities and Scottish Ministers to have regard to island communities in carrying out their functions and where relevant to undertake a an island communities impact assessment .
- 1.3 The Act requires Ministers to consult with local authorities, as well as representatives of island communities in preparation of the National Islands Plan (Part 2) and before issuing guidance relating to the duties detailed under Part 3.
- 1.4 The national islands plan and islands impact assessment consultation and associated questionnaire, which was launched in April 2019, formed part of this requirement however it should also be noted that the on-line results will be combined with more qualitative data gathered through a series of events that will be carried out by Scottish Government throughout islands in Scotland including those in Argyll and Bute. The consultation, closing date was 24 July 2019. <https://consult.gov.scot/agriculture-and-rural-communities/national-islands-plan/>

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the AISG consider and note the response, as detailed in Appendix 1, which was submitted to the consultation and formed the Councils formal response.

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

**ARGYLL ISLANDS
STRATEGIC GROUP**

DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

29 AUGUST 2019

**NATIONAL ISLANDS PLAN AND ISLANDS IMPACT ASSESSMENT
CONSULTATION**

3.0 INTRODUCTION

3.1 The Islands (Scotland) Bill 2018 received Royal Assent on 6 July 2018. The first Commencement Regulations for the Island Act were laid on 20 September 2018 and came into force on 4 October 2018.

3.2 The national islands plan and islands impact assessment consultation relates specifically to the duties detailed in Part 2 and Part 3 of the Act namely the preparation of a National islands Plan by Scottish Ministers and the requirement of relevant authorities, including local authorities and the Scottish Ministers, to have regard to island communities in carrying out their functions, often referred to as island proofing.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 That the AISG consider and note the response, as detailed in Appendix 1, which was submitted to the consultation and formed the Councils formal response.

5.0 DETAIL

5.1 Part 2 of the Act relates specifically to the National Islands Plan and places a duty on Scottish Ministers to prepare, lay before the Scottish Parliament and publish a 'National Islands Plan', which will set out the main objectives and strategy of the Scottish Government in relation to how relevant authorities might help to improve outcomes for island communities. The first draft of the Plan must come before Scottish Parliament within 12 months of Part 2 of the Act coming into force, this means that a draft of the Plan must be submitted by 4 October 2019. Ministers will report on the Plan annually to monitor progress and to consider where outcomes may or may not have been delivered. Ministers will review the Plan before the end of the period of 5 years beginning with the day on which the plan was published.

- 5.2 The National Islands Plan must truly responds “to the distinctive geographical, natural heritage and cultural characteristics (including the linguistic heritage) of each of the areas inhabited by island communities.” - The aim of the Plan is to shape government policy in a way that will improve outcomes for island communities, Island Communities Impact Assessments serve a more immediate role.
- 5.3 The Islands (Scotland) Act requires that Scottish Ministers *must consult* “each local authority listed in the schedule, such other persons as they consider represent the interests of island communities, and such persons (including members of island communities and other persons) as they consider likely to be affected by or have an interest in the proposals contained in the plan”.
- 5.4 Part 3 of the Act is specific to duties in relation to island communities: These provisions require relevant authorities, including the majority of public bodies including Local authorities and the Scottish Ministers, to have regard to island communities in carrying out their functions. To comply with this duty, the relevant local authorities, which include Argyll and Bute, must make arrangements to review their policies, strategies and services and either prepare an Island Communities Impact Assessment where that is required or otherwise assess or take appropriate steps in relation to the policy, strategy or service in question.
- 5.5 In undertaking an Island Communities Impact Assessment, Scottish Government, local authorities and relevant authorities will “island proof” legislation, policy, strategies and services where those are considered likely to have an effect on an island community which is significantly different from its effect on other communities. In those cases, Island Communities Impact Assessments will ensure that the obligation according to which “[A] relevant authority must have regard to island communities in carrying out its functions” is met. And, it will be through Island Communities Impact Assessments that the interests of island communities are formally taken into account when decisions are made.
- 5.6 The Islands (Scotland) Act clarifies that an Island Communities Impact Assessment will be carried out by a relevant authority when a policy, strategy or service “is likely to have an effect on an island community which is significantly different from its effect on other communities (including other island communities) in the area in which the authority exercises its functions.”
- 5.7 As previously advised there is a power for Ministers to issue guidance in relation to this duty. This is not currently present in the Island (Scotland) Act

and the Act enables Ministers to develop guidance about the duty to have regard to island communities, of which the Island Communities Impact Assessment forms part. The Scottish Ministers are also required to develop regulations “about reviews of decisions of relevant authorities relating to island communities impact assessments.” As a Council we would want island impact assessments to coordinate with other impact assessments that we are required to undertake wherever possible.

- 5.8 This consultation will inform the development of the guidance on how an Island Communities Impact Assessment should be carried.
- 5.9 According to the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018, the purpose of the Plan is “to set out the main objectives and strategy of the Scottish Ministers in relation to improving outcomes for island communities that result from, or are contributed to by, the carrying out of functions of a public nature”. Section 3(3) of the Act provides a number of areas for improving outcomes for island communities, including:
- a) increasing population levels;
 - b) improving and promoting: (i) sustainable economic development; (ii) environmental wellbeing; (iii) health and wellbeing, and (iv) community empowerment;
 - c) improving transport services;
 - d) improving digital connectivity;
 - e) reducing fuel poverty;
 - f) ensuring effective management of the Scottish Crown Estate (that is, the property, rights and interests to which section 90B(5) of the Scotland Act 1998 applies); and
 - g) enhancing biosecurity (including protecting islands from the impact of invasive non-native species).
- 5.10 Scottish Ministers have advised that this list is not exhaustive and there is a specific section in the consultation seeking views on the list and any additional areas that our communities’ believe should be considered. This is the opportunity for both our communities and the council to highlight the issues and challenges our communities are facing and to ensure that these are reflected in the Plan. Both the consultation responses and the face to face meetings with island communities will be used to inform the areas of focus of the Plan. The alignment with community planning outcomes and other key strategic documents, policies and strategies is key. The Single Outcome Agreement, Economic Strategy and Local Development Plan require to be considered as these seek to deliver sustainable island communities. In particular the priorities of the AISG have been used to inform the response and the Plan.

- 5.11 In June 2015 The Council agreed a vision for our island communities. The vision is as follows

It is recognised that our islands play a vital role in delivering economic growth across our area. We want to see our islands prosper and grow, providing education and employment for our young people, supporting and growing our businesses and communities and benefiting from the communication and transportation infrastructure and services necessary for them to be sustainable and prosper.

- 5.12 In addition the Councils Argyll Islands Strategic Group (AISG) recently reviewed the key issues/priorities for the Group in regard to our islands and amendments were agreed by the AISG at its meeting on 27 February 2019. These are listed at Appendix 1 and reflect the views gathered from our island communities over a number of years and more recently at an islands and as part of the consultation process on The Islands (Scotland) Bill 2018.
- 5.13 Both the vision and the priorities have been used to inform the consultation response.
- 5.14 In addition to highlighting challenges and issues Ministers are keen that The Plan should also be a space to celebrate islands and island communities as successful places and thriving environments. There is a section in the consultation specifically seeking examples of good practices that can be shared amongst island communities. Across our 23 islands there is a wealth of great examples of such good practice.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 This consultation was an opportunity for both our island communities and the council to highlight the key issues and priorities which affect our island communities and their opportunities for growth and development.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Policy – Responding to this consultation will allow the council to seek positive policy and resource support for our islands all of which fits with the objectives of the Single Outcome Agreement, Economic Strategy and Local Development Plan which seek to deliver sustainable island communities.
- 7.2 Financial –staff resources.
- 7.3 Legal – none.
- 7.4 HR – None
- 7.5 Fairer Scotland Duty
 - 7.5.1 Equalities–There is common ground between the aims of the Fairer Scotland Duty and the Islands Act. Both have been reflected in the council’s EqSEIA process. If the outcome of the consultation is to adopt a national approach to carrying out islands impacts, this may affect our wider approach to impact assessment
 - 7.5.2 Socio Economic Duty – as above
 - 7.5.3 Islands – this consultation is specific to our islands and the issues and challenges facing them.
- 7.6 Risk – To not respond would leave our island communities at a disadvantage and the identification of the key priorities allows a clear platform from which the council can work closely with our island communities and SG and work closely with key stakeholders. It is important to ensure that our islands and our area is not disadvantaged by greater weight being given to other areas.
- 7.7 Customer Service – none.

Pippa Milne Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth

Policy Lead – Councillor Aileen Morton

August 2019

For further information contact: Audrey Martin, Transformation Projects and Regeneration manager

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – AISG priorities

Appendix 2 –Consultation questions and response

Appendix 1 - PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS – APPROVED FEB 2019

At its meeting on 27 Feb 2019, Council noted the following priorities (1-11). The table below sets out initial actions required to progress these priorities

To continue to progress the work streams shown below will continue to require support from across the Council, and will require the necessary available resources to support this activity and should the AISG support this approach we will need to obtain agreement from the relevant services and Policy Leads.

The blue highlighted rows indicate the current priorities and the white rows are the tasks identified to help to progress the issue. The tasks set out below will evolve and change as more specific actions associated with moving forward each issue are identified.

Ref	Priority	SOA Outcome	AISG Meeting
1	To ensure that the future disbursement of powers and income, including income from The Crown Estate, to our island communities is equal to the three island communities.	1	TBC
1a	Maintain a watching brief on the interim and long term arrangements in relation to the Crown Estate in Scotland		
2	To obtain Scottish Government capital investment in key island infrastructure such as ports, ferry terminals vessels and road infrastructure in order to facilitate the needs of RET and secure the future economic prosperity of our islands.	2	
2a	Identify island infrastructure currently available		
2b	Highlight any current or likely future issues		
2c	Work with SG ferries unit		
2d	Determine strategy for seeking capital investment where required		
2e	Explore RET charging mechanisms and seek amendments where this causes inconsistencies to our island communities		
3	To secure the integration of essential transport networks including ferries, buses, air and rail connections to minimise journey times to and from our island communities.	2	
3a	Identify public transport routes and how they integrate		
3b	Highlight any current or likely future issues		
3c	Invite public transport providers, SPT and HI Trans (as appropriate) to speak to Taskforce		
3d	Determine a strategy for lobbying for changes where required		
4	To lobby for parity for our island communities with regard to mail order delivery surcharges.		
4a	Consider action required within Argyll and Bute		
4b	Determine strategy for additional lobbying if required		
5	To lobby for maximum investment in our digital connectivity for our island communities, including superfast broadband, modern mobile phone signal and exploring the possibility of opening up public digital networks to the wider community.	2	
5a	Lobby SG and providers		
6	To lobby for the removal of water and waste water constraints from our island communities to facilitate	2	

	economic growth.		
6a	Liaise with Scottish Water		
6b	Determine strategy for lobbying for additional investment		
7	To lobby for innovative approaches to recruit and retain adequate GP coverage for our island communities.	5	
7a	Work with NHS Highland		
7b	Determine strategy for lobbying for alternative approaches		
8	To seek innovative and cost effective affordable housing for our island communities.	2	
8a	Identify island housing needs		
8b	Work with housing associations and community groups		
8c	Determine strategy for lobbying for affordable housing to meet identified need		
9	To address fuel poverty for our island communities.	4	
9a	Identify issues		
9b	Determine strategy for lobbying for additional support if required		
9c	To build on the renewable energy capacity of our island communities		
10	To work with the three island authorities to identify common economic challenges across our islands and opportunities for joint working to address these.	1	
10a	Determine strategy for joint working/lobbying		
11	To lobby and work with partners to seek to address issues relating to the disposal of waste to landfill affecting our island communities		
11a	Landfill ban and disposal of biodegradable waste		
11b	Develop new waste strategy		

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Appendix 2

Consultation questions and response – Argyll and Bute Council 24.7.19

We want the National Islands Plan to be a document that builds on what works well on Scottish islands, and which addresses the challenges faced by islands and their communities. The Plan will set out how the Scottish Government, local authorities and other public agencies might work to improve outcomes for island communities. Scottish Ministers will be asked to report back to Scottish Parliament every year on progress towards the goals included in the National Islands Plan.

The Plan, therefore, is key to how we will all work together with island communities in the future. It is therefore vital that as many people as possible who live, work and interact with Scotland’s islands and their communities take part in this consultation. We want to hear people’s experiences and especially, their views about what we can build on and do differently in the future. The questions set out below aim to give people the chance to shape the National Islands Plan in a way that truly responds to their interests and aspirations. Please take part.

Q1. If applicable, which island(s) do you live on or do you relate to?

Comment

Argyll and Bute Council covers the second largest local authority area in Scotland and has responsibility for 23 permanently inhabited islands all of which are unique in their own right both from a physical (topography, demographics, size and scale) as well as from a socio economic perspective.

Our 23 inhabited islands (2011 census) are as follows

Bute; Coll; Colonsay; Danna; Easdale; Eilean da Mheinn; Erraid; Gigha; Gometra; Inchtavannach; Innischonon; Iona; Islay; Jura; Kerrera; Lismore; Luing; Mull; Oronsay; Seil; Shuna (Luing); Tiree; Ulva.

As is evident from the table below the population range across our 23 islands is large ranging from a population of 1 to 6,498

Approximately 17.1% of Argyll and Bute’s population live on islands (Census 2011).

Table 2: Population and households by island (2011 figures)

Island	Population Households	
Bute	6,498	3,387

Coll	195	87
Colonsay	124	70
Danna	1	1
Davaar	-	-
Easdale	59	29
Eiean da Mheinn	1	1
Erraid	6	4
Gigha	163	74
Gometra	2	1
Inchtavannach	3	1
Innischonon	5	2
Iona	177	69
Islay	3,228	1,479
Jura	196	93
Kerrera	34	19
Lismore	192	93
Luing	195	98
Lunga (Luing)	-	-
Mull	2,800	1,271
Oronsay	8	4
Sanda	-	-
Seil	551	252
Shuna (Luing)	3	1
Tiree	653	316
Ulva	11	6
Total	15,105	7,358

(Source: Census 2011)

In recognition of the importance of our islands, the Council set up the Argyll and Islands Strategic Group (AISG) to specifically focus on issues affecting our island. In addition in 2015 the Council approved the following vision for our islands:

“It is recognised that our islands play a vital role in delivering economic growth across our area. We want to see our islands prosper and grow, providing education and employment for our young people, supporting and growing our businesses and communities and benefiting from the communication and transportation infrastructure and services necessary for them to be sustainable and prosper.”

National Islands Plan

Q2. If applicable, what is good about living on your island? Please state 3 things that you like about living on your island.

Comment

Our island communities are best placed to advise on this matter and it is hoped that many of our communities will respond to the on-line consultation and will also have the opportunity to attend one of the face to face events being held in Argyll and Bute.

There is some useful information that the council gathered from our island communities at the Island Connections, Island Symposium, an event focused on our islands, which took place on 20 October 2016 and was attended by approximately 70 delegates and speakers. A separate report on the event was presented to the Argyll Islands Taskforce meeting on 20 March 2017 and can be found at

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=554&MId=7409&Ver=4>.

The event aimed to cover issues which had been highlighted as most significant by our island communities:

- Health care for island communities
- Supporting economic growth
- Transport and island infrastructure
- Sustainable island homes
- Digital islands

Each of the topic sessions was introduced with a series of presentations and was covered in An Addressing Island Issues workshop session at the end of the day. All of this can be found in the attached report.

Q3 If you've moved away from your island, please tell us why you left (for example, was it for work opportunities or for education)?

Comment

Again our island communities will be best placed to respond to this but the island connections report does provide details of the issues faced by many of our island communities which may be instrumental in individuals deciding to leave their island home

Q4. If you've moved away from your island, please tell us what, if anything you miss about island life.

Comment

Q5. If possible, please can you give us some examples of good local initiatives/projects/activities, etc?

Comment

Argyll and Bute island communities can demonstrate a significant wealth of strong local projects and initiatives based on strong, innovative and resilient communities. Our island communities are focused on doing things for themselves with support from partners and in securing income and employment to ensure their sustainability into the future. Below is just some examples of excellent local initiatives/projects as well as links to a number of our island Development Trusts which are often instrumental in taking forward community projects and initiatives covering a wide range of themes from energy/renewables, digital and IT, business development, community facilities and enterprise, health and education and environment on behalf of the wider community with a focus on securing sustainable communities.

Energy Focused projects

Garmony Hydro, Mull

Tiree Renewable Energy - Tilley Community Turbine, Windfall Fund,

Gigha Turbines

Islay energy Trust wind turbine

Iona SEEPS

Argyll Renewable Communities (ARC) Consortium,

ACCESS project, Mull

Digital projects

Tiree Broadband

Coll Mobile Phone Mast

Business facilities

Tiree Business Centre

Tobermory Light Industrial Development, Mull
Jura Business Units

Community/Enterprise support/Facilities

Tiree Hall,
Port Mor Community Café, Port Charlotte,
An Cridhe Isle of Coll's community centre <https://ancridhe.com/an-cridhe/>,
Jura Community shop,
Tiree community shop,
Ross of Mull and Iona Community Transport
Gigha Heritage Trust – community owned island

Culture and Heritage

Colonsay and Oronsay Heritage Trust – community owned island
Ionad Chialum Chille – Gaelic centre Islay

Health and Education

MacTaggart Community Pool
Port Ellen Playing Fields

Environment

Tiree ranger service
Mull and Iona Ranger Service
MESS (Mull and Iona Environmentally Sensitive Solutions),
North West Mull Woodland,

Physical Infrastructure

Tobermory Harbour Association
Port Ellen Harbour association
Tiree Community Maritime Assets Ltd redevelop and upgrade both Milton and
Scarinish Harbours.

Tiree Community Development Trust - <http://www.tireetrust.org.uk/>

Mull and Iona Community Trust <https://www.mict.co.uk/>

Islay energy Trust <https://islayenergytrust.org.uk/>

Bute Island Alliance <https://www.buteislandalliance.org.uk/>

Community owned Island of Gigha <http://www.gigha.org.uk/viewItem.php>

Development Coll <https://developmentcoll.org.uk/>

Isle of Jura Development Trust <https://juradevelopment.co.uk/>

The Island Connection events report also includes good examples of island projects and links to the presentations below provide further details of these projects

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=554&MIId=7409&Ver>

Q6. The Islands (Scotland) Act lists a number of areas that are relevant for islands and island communities. Please rank these in order of priority for you:

- Depopulation
- economic development
- environmental protection
- health and wellbeing
- community empowerment
- transport
- digital connectivity
- fuel poverty
- land management
- biosecurity

Do you feel that this list covers all aspects of island life?

- Yes No Don't know

Q7. If you answered no, is there anything else that you believe the National Islands Plan should address?

Comment

It is very difficult to rank the list (which it is noted is not exhaustive) in regard to priorities as the issues identified all impact in some way on our island communities with the resulting effect of a reduction in the population of a number of our islands. Transport, fuel poverty, housing, health and wellbeing, employment and education are certainly issues raised by many of our island communities. These are also reflected in the priorities identified by the Council Argyll Islands Strategic Group (AISG) has identified a number of priorities which are listed below and should be considered as part of the national islands plan. – See Appendix 1

In addition consultation with our communities through the Island Connections, Island Symposium event and also through other engagement events and consultations including Fuel Poverty Bill, have identified the following challenges and these should be taken into consideration although it is important to point out that this is not an exhaustive list.

Variety of different challenges/access issues facing our islands including

- Limited access to goods and services
- Limited options and access to low cost fuel, often high cost due to transport issues and limited choice of supplier
- Limited transport options leading to a high level of car

ownership and resulting additional costs to householders and businesses

- Limited access to skilled and well paid employment opportunities
- Often housing is an issue both in regard to availability and also quality. On some islands such as Islay there is a high demand for housing to meet the demand for an increasing workforce. On Islay and in locations such as Mull consideration is being given to modular housing to try and meet the immediate demand.
- Limited training opportunities
- Issues in access to effective broadband – cost implications and options and resulting cost both to businesses as well as domestic and this can also impact on energy supply.
- Limited options in regard to healthcare provision and impact of difficulty of recruiting GP's /health professions. Growing number of elderly population also puts further strain on the service
- Cost and time of attending hospital appointments on the mainland needs to be considered to ensure that those on islands are not disadvantaged
- Limited childcare and education provision in some islands has been highlighted as a key issue

Q8. If applicable, are there any specific challenges about living on your island? Please state 3 challenges about living on your island.

Comment

Each island and its community is unique both in regard to its demographics and geography however many share similar economic and social challenges particularly in regard to good transport links and integration of transport services, fuel poverty, higher cost of living as a result of travel costs as well as higher costs of purchasing good, and services, often limited access to skilled employment. In addition the council would seek to reinforce the AISG priorities at Appendix 1 and those expressed in the Island Connections report and in the fuel Poverty Bill response and previous consultations relating to the Island Bill

In addition please find below a link to a report presented to the AISG meeting in May 2019 relating to Fuel Poverty bill which also clearly highlights some of the challenges faced by our island communities

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s137904/Fuel%20Poverty%20U>

Q9. If you've moved away, please tell us about any challenges that you experienced whilst you were living on your island.

Comment

N/A

Q10. If applicable, what could be done to make living on your island better?

Comment

This links back to addressing the key challenges and issues expressed by our communities and detailed under Q7 & 8 in order to reverse the population decline that we are seeing in a number of our islands, reduce fuel poverty and the high cost of living on many of our islands, increase employment opportunism, housing availability and access to good quality education, child care and social care provision and reduce transport costs to allow our island communities to become vibrant and sustainable.

Q11. How do you feel the National Islands Plan should address and respond to the distinctive geographical, natural heritage and cultural characteristics (including the linguistic heritage) of local island communities, including the needs of Gaelic speakers within those communities?

Comment

Whilst each island is unique there are many challenges and issues that are shared across our island communities and these should inform the priorities for the Plan going forward

National Islands Plan: General Questions Section:

So as many people and agencies as possible have an opportunity to help us shape the National Islands Plan, we would like to capture the views of relevant authorities, national, local and community groups, development trusts and other such partners with an interest in islands,

Q12. What should be the main objectives for the National Islands Plan?

Comment

It would be beneficial for the islands to develop a National Islands Plan setting out a vision for the islands and the activities to be undertaken during the period of the plan to support the islands and ensure that they develop and prosper. It will be critical to ensure that the necessary SG resources are aligned to the delivery of the Plan and any associated actions.

Q13. What should be the key priorities for the Scottish Government in relation to the National Islands Plan?

Comment

The Plan should consider the key challenges and issues affecting our island communities and how these can be overcome and necessary resources aligned to deliver this. These challenges including the following :

- The disbursement of powers and income, including income from The Crown Estate, to our island communities;
- Scottish Government capital investment in key island infrastructure such as ports, ferry terminals and vessels and also in corresponding mainland ports;
- Investment in training and employment incentives for island based companies to boost island employment and help in the retention of young people;
- The integration of transport networks including ferries, buses, air and rail connections to minimise journey times;
- Parity for our island communities with regard to mail order delivery surcharges;
- Digital connectivity;
- Water and waste water infrastructure;
- Adequate GP and health worker provision; recruitment can be a serious issue as is the cost in accessing mainland hospitals
- Adequate child care and care provision
- Innovative and cost effective affordable housing;
- Fuel poverty and high cost of living
- Access to good quality education, recruitment can be an issue and it is important that the education offering is high and island pupils are not disadvantaged in relation to quality or breadth of subjects
- Access to services

See also Q7 & 8

Q14. What should be taken into account in terms of the functions of relevant authorities within the National Islands Plan?

Comment

It is critical that any Plan takes account of and reflects the current statutory plans of the relevant authorities including the following

Argyll and Bute Local Development Plans, LDP2 is due for adoption 2020

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/ldp2>

The Argyll and Bute Outcome and Improvement Plans 2013-23

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/council-and-government/community-plan-and-single-outcome-agreement>

Argyll and Bute Economic Strategy

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/news/2019/may/council%E2%80%99s-economic-strategy-outlines-vision-success>

The impact on resources as a result of the National Islands Plan should also be carefully considered in regard to the councils current functions and responsibilities

Q15. How can we measure outcomes in relation to the National Islands Plan?

Comment

It will be critical to be able to demonstrate the difference that the Plan has made to our island communities. This will require there to be measurable targets in regard to outcomes over the 5 year period of the plan and any associated targets that are set against the actions within the Plan. These should reflect the key challenges and priorities identified by our island communities

Over a 5 year period it will not be possible to measure impacts on issues such as population given that the census is every 10 years and data zone boundaries do

not align to our individual islands

Q16. If you have any further comments or points that you think should be taken into account in the development of the National Islands Plan, please state these below.

Comment

Island Communities Impact Assessment

Island Communities Impact Assessments will be one way in which relevant authorities can consider the impact of new laws, policies, strategies or services on islands. Guidance will be developed on how these impact assessments will operate and we believe that your input to this consultation can help us with this:

Q17. Can you name any policies, strategies or services that don't work very well for your island? Why do you feel they don't work well?

Comment

No comment

Q18. On the other hand, can you name any policies, strategies or services that **DO** work well for your island? Please tell us what it is about these that works so well.

Comment

Q19. How can Scottish Ministers and other relevant authorities involve island communities in assessments?

- online surveys
- focus groups
- public meetings
- paper documents
- other (please comment)

Comment

It is important that communities feel that they are being listened to and have the option to engage on a number of ways and therefore it is considered that on line and focus group and public meetings held on the islands are the best means by which to engage with the communities

It is important that involvement is visible.

Reliance on online surveys is likely to miss population groups. Not everyone is able or willing to engage with online tools. For this reason, a range of techniques should be used.

Q20. Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

Comment

Island Communities Impact Assessments – General Questions Section:

Guidance on how an Island Communities Impact Assessment should be carried out is not present in the Islands (Scotland) Act. Rather, the Act enables Ministers to develop guidance about the duty to have regard to island communities, of which the Island Communities Impact Assessment forms part.¹ The Scottish Ministers are also required to develop regulations “about reviews of decisions of relevant authorities relating to island communities impact assessments”.

So as many people and agencies as possible have an opportunity to help us shape guidance and templates for Island Communities Impact Assessments, we would like to capture the views of relevant authorities, national, local and community groups, development trusts and other such partners with an interest in islands.

Q21. What should be the main objectives for Island Communities Impact Assessments?

Comment

The islands across Scotland whilst offering significant opportunities and benefits also have significant challenges associated with living and working on them. It is appropriate for the Scottish Government to consider whether their proposals are likely to adversely impact or disadvantage these areas and if so whether any mitigation measures or amendments are required to ensure that all of the islands around Scotland remain vibrant and viable communities which can compete with the rest of Scotland for new businesses, residents and visitors.

Q22. What do you think needs to be considered in the guidance and templates which will be developed to support the carrying out of Island Communities Impact Assessments by relevant authorities?

Comment

Whilst we recognise that it will not always be possible to achieve the same level of services on all islands, as it is not possible to deliver the same level of services to all areas of the mainland, we consider that an island-proofing process would be beneficial to ensure that the specific needs of islands are taken into consideration by other public bodies as they go about their operational duties and the islands are not disproportionately disadvantaged as a result of policy.

This statutory guidance should, whilst requiring consideration of the impacts associated with operation on the islands, retain some flexibility to enable those public bodies to deliver their functions and duties in an appropriate way for both the island(s) and any other locations where they are also exercising their functions and duties. The statutory guidance should require an island-proofing process to be undertaken so that decisions on service delivery can be made with an awareness of the implications for island communities so that they are not specifically disadvantaged.

Island-proofing should take into consideration all the Scottish islands acknowledging the variances between them and their relationships with the mainland and each other. There is not a one-size-fits-all solution and this should be recognised within the process.

Any guidance should recognise / make links with other assessments that we are required to carry out. This would ensure that approaches are integrated, and outputs from assessments carried out independently of each other come to conflicting conclusions. In particular, it would be helpful to make links with the Fairer Scotland Duty. (The Fairer Scotland Duty Interim Guidance makes explicit mention of islands when it talks about Communities of Place.)

Q23. What should be taken into account in relation to the reviews of decisions of relevant authorities relating to Island Communities Impact Assessments?

Comment

As a local authority responsible for both islands (23 inhabited) and mainland areas we are constantly seeking to ensure that our polies do not disadvantage one area

over the other and seek to develop and deliver our functions in a manner that ensures that this is done e equality, as much as possible, between island and mainland areas without favouring one location over another. It is important that this is taken into consideration when considering this matter. Consideration also needs to be taken of available resources and what is reasonable and practical and this is another reason for using an integrated approach to impact assessment.)

Q24. If you have any further comments or points that you think should be taken into account in the development of Island Communities Impact Assessments, please state these below.

Comment

- Publish response with name
- Publish response only (without name)
- Do not publish response

Info for organisations:

The option 'Publish response only (without name)' refers only to your name, not your organisation's name. If this option is selected, the organisation name will still be published.

If you choose the option 'Do not publish response', your organisation name may still be listed as having responded to the consultation in, for example, the analysis report.

We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

(Required)

- Yes
- No

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ISLANDS TRANSPORT FORUM**Sixth meeting – 9 May 2019****Note of meeting****Attendees**

Paul Wheelhouse, Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands
Cllr Aileen Morton, Argyll and Bute Council – by audio link
Moya Ingram, Argyll & Bute Council – by audio link
Cllr Uisdean Robertson, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Iain Mackinnon, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Cllr Allan Henderson, The Highland Council – by audio link
Cllr Joe Cullinane, North Ayrshire Council – by audio link
Louise Kirk, North Ayrshire Council – by audio link
Cllr Graham Sinclair, Orkney Islands Council
Gavin Barr, Orkney Islands Council
Cllr Steven Coutts, Shetland Islands Council
Maggie Sandison, Shetland Islands Council
Cllr Ryan Thomson, Shetland Islands Council
Michael Craigie, Shetland Islands Council and ZetTrans
Ranald Robertson, HiTrans
Chris Wilcock, Transport Scotland
Richard Hadfield, Transport Scotland
Heather Cowan, Transport Scotland
Michael Bratcher, Transport Scotland
Brian Gordon, Transport Scotland
Don Morrison, Scottish Government – by audio link
Ravi Grandhi, Transport Scotland
Maria Pabolaza, Transport Scotland – by audio link
Val Ferguson – Transport Scotland (note taker)

Item 1 – Welcome and Introductions

1. Mr Wheelhouse welcomed everyone to the sixth meeting of the Islands Transport Forum and invited those in the room and on the phone to introduce themselves.

Item 2 – Notes of fifth meeting – matters arising – review of actions

2. The notes of the meeting on 25 October and the follow up call on 19 December were agreed.
3. Mr Wheelhouse reviewed the action points as indicated in the chart appended to this note.
4. Matters arising included :-

- The additional information from CalMac on block booking savings was welcomed
 - Cruise passenger checks was no longer a major issue. Members agreed to alert Chris Wilcock if this became an issue in future. Maggie Sandison agreed to check the current situation with Lerwick port authority. It was noted that in Orkney local engagement with Border Force has been good.
 - Ferries budget figures were welcomed as useful reference and the Minister recognised the importance of ferry spending to islands.
5. Final point on CMAL provision of information is to be taken up with CMAL in future and **the action was carried forward**

Item 3 – National Transport Strategy (NTS) Review & Strategic Projects Review STPR2

6. The Minister introduced Heather Cowan who gave an overview of the paper issued before the meeting. Heather highlighted the aim to publish the consultation at the end of July with policy work ongoing and noting the need to minimise cost for connectivity for rural and island communities. The strategy will reflect the need for spatial variation. She confirmed that regional groups have been established for STPR2 including one to be taken forward for Shetland Islands.
7. Discussion on the paper followed with points noted:-
- Highlighted the age of current ferries and the need to be cleaner/smarter in future but in the short term a replacement program should be progressed to facilitate longer term aims.
 - Mapping out short term solutions was needed.
 - Aviation appeared disjointed from the process rather than integrated
 - The view was expressed that aviation is a core part of transportation dynamic and priorities for Islands and it should therefore be included within STPR. It was confirmed that Island Connectivity was within scope for STPR and that the regional transport working groups including the opportunity to identify priorities for regions including highlighting the importance of aviation.
 - Call for STPR2 to give recognition to internal air services and needs of local airports as these need to be recognised for investment.
 - Need for more agile ferries, lower crewing, environmentally friendly.
 - Previous scoping paper on air services and funding on air service would be useful moving forward.
 - Need to take account of neighbouring council collaboration.
8. The Minister noted comments tended to major on ferries, the next phase of the pipeline of investment for ferries procurement and internal services and he highlighted the commitment to work with passenger groups locally. Business cases will inform the capital needs of all fleets in Scotland with more integration.
9. Other points noted:-
- The need to look at transport down the line and how car traffic is likely to change
 - STPR is not the only delivery mechanism for NTS
 - islands connectivity priorities to feed in from regional groups
 - multi modal transport approach will be adopted to a problem and fixed links fall under evidence base of potential solutions in options that emerge

- Next Ferries Plan will be within the policy context in NTS – no timescale yet though needs to be in place no later than December 2022.
- RET has exceeded expectation in growth of vehicle carryings and tourism levels
- Evaluation of RET is underway
- Ferry system has evolved from moving people to moving vehicles with fewer ferry travellers using public transport links
- Need to rebalance towards travel for people, including vehicle users, and freight.
- The National Islands Plan will also be part of policy context for the next Ferries Plan
- Are there short term (3-5 years) solutions that can be done with existing fleet?
- Should be possible to build ferries faster (Isle of Wight ferry cited as recent example)
- Age of some current vessels - do not meet disability needs
- Cessation of ferry service would contribute to depopulation for internal ferries in Shetland
- RTPs had met the Infrastructure Commission and had made the case for short term ferries infrastructure investment
- The need for climate change consideration in the context of alternative or electric options for aviation

10. The Minister confirmed he was looking at more standardised design and engaged in discussion on the impact on harbour infrastructure.

Item 4 – Islands Act/Plan update

11. Mr Wheelhouse invited Don Morrison to summarise the paper issued ahead of the meeting. Following engagement with key community stakeholders the stage 2 consultation was launched on 6 April and closes 6 July. Face to face events are being held on 40 islands to inform the draft plan. Work on Island Community Impact Assessments (ICIA) guidance and templates is being carrying out at same time and will be integrated into consultation by end of year.

12. Issues emerging so far include:-

- Feedback indicated integrated timetabling was not happening
- Freight issues.
- Roads quality issues – Jura cited.
- Updates to be provided to Highlands and Islands leaders group in June –and to Islands Strategic Group in August

13. The Minister requested that interactions with transport and other policy areas ie housing materials and tourism be highlighted. Other comments included:-

- positive feedback locally on consultation
- first stage was less good on engagement with councils
- local transport partnerships need to be engaged going forward
- deeper consultation and ownership with councils needed
- national plan so must have national focus
- internal discussions are ongoing on the framework of the plan
- issues on comprehensive engagement are being addressed
- event feedback is being followed up with individuals and reports produced after the event

- individual islanders may not be aware of all the links to other services or the impacts
 - impact assessments must be put in place sooner than later
 - Ministers must act in the spirit of the Act now
14. The Minister recognised challenge and noted once ICIAs are in place they can be applied retrospectively. Fuel Poverty Targets Bill and Planning Bill are taking this into account. NTS work will also be in the spirit of the Act.
15. It was confirmed that HIAL is undertaking ICIAs for relevant projects at present and have been engaging with Islands Team officials to ensure that their ICIAs meet the requirements. A discussion between officials, HIAL and SG location director for Western Isles was suggested.

Item 5 – Ferries Paper

16. Mr Wheelhouse invited comments on the paper as it was confirmed all updates in it remain current.
17. On the Islay route local resistance to a larger vessel was highlighted and it was confirmed any replacement vessel will be no bigger than MV Finlaggan with design being developed within that footprint so as to fit existing port infrastructure. Fuel and internal design were being considered.
18. Craignure port discussions led by Argyll & Bute Council were ongoing on size of the pier to berth a range of vessels for resilience however a large pier did not commit to scheduling large vessels.
19. It was noted under NIFS procurement that an appeal has been lodged ahead of receipt of the written determination by the judge who found in favour of the Scottish Government so no comments could be made. Thanks were expressed to ferries officials for the support in allowing islands stakeholders to put their views before the court. Mr Wheelhouse thanked everyone for their input.
20. Tenders being reviewed this week and a decision is awaited on the complaints made to the EU commission.
21. On internal island services it was noted that lines of communication with all councils interested in transfer of responsibilities continues.

Item 6 – Update on HIAL strategy

22. Mr Wheelhouse confirmed the Scottish Government is committed to the continuation of the ADS and has renewed it until 31 December 2020. However we do not have the financial resources to extend the Air Discount Scheme to business users.
23. As part of the recent renewal of the scheme we have extended the geographic coverage of the scheme around Wick Airport. In addition, we

have amended the Terms and Conditions to remove the exclusion relating to students studying in the eligible area but whose main residence is not in the eligible area.

24. He invited Michael Bratcher to add anything on the HIAL update paper issued ahead of the meeting. It was confirmed that the strategy work would continue in parallel with work on NTS towards the shared vision of same day travel to Edinburgh from everywhere. HIAL are holding a consultation day today and one to ones continue with stakeholders.

25. Comments included :-

- A query on whether HIAL is restricted to SG and HIAL areas or will it include Argyle and Orkney internal services PSO? It was confirmed that HIAL's work is considering issues across the Highlands and Islands and is not limited to HIAL's airports.
- Disappointment was expressed that the HIAL paper 'A network business risk and resilience study for Highlands & Islands Airports Ltd' did not contain reference to HITRANS' previous work on Public Service Obligations (PSOs). The outputs of this previous work should be considered as part of the wider discussion around service provision.
- Noted a need to look at air services as a whole. It was accepted that the current delivery model was fragmentary and inefficient and confirmed that this was one of the areas that the HIAL work would be expected to look at. Attendees were encouraged to feed their thoughts into HIAL through HIAL's stakeholder engagement work.

Item 7 – Brexit Issues – only if time allows

26. Mr Wheelhouse thanked Maria Pabolaza for her patience in holding on though the meeting and she confirmed she had been in touch with Maggie Sandison about the possible redeployment of NI ferries her reassurance was welcomed.

27. There were no other issues raised.

Item 8 – AOB

28. No other business was raised

Item 9 – Date of next meeting

29. A date in August was agreed to coincide with the next Islands Strategic Group meeting to reduce travel.

30. An update to the Ferries Plan is to be on the agenda.

Action point – for next agenda to include an update on the next Ferries Plan

Summary of actions

Ministerial Engagement with CMAL on provision of information – carried forward from 19 December call.

Next meeting agenda to include an update on the next Ferries Plan

Review of actions from previous meeting

<u>Actions from 25 October meeting</u>	<u>UPDATE</u>
Graham Laidlaw to obtain further details from CalMac on block booking and provide it to members	<p>CalMac have advised that an additional 2688 metres was saved in March 2019. The total space saved figure from 1 October 2018 (the beginning of Contract Year 3) was 27,540.</p> <p>This brings the total space saved to 81,123 metres, the equivalent to 28,464 car spaces which equates to 309 MV Caledonian Isles car decks since October 2017.</p> <p>Last month CalMac issued each customer a report confirming their summer block bookings</p>
Update from NTS team on establishment of regional groups to be obtained and provided to members by TS	Paper issued for 9 May meeting
Mr Wheelhouse agreed to speak to Cabinet Secretary about difficulties on transport governance	Mr Wheelhouse confirm he had raised this with the Cabinet Secretary and would maintain a dialogue going forward.
Specific item to be added to next agenda to reflect island dimension in the discussions – NTS team to present.	Included in NTS paper for 9 May Meeting
TS to confirm engagement on cruise passengers' passport checks to enter UK and whether border force have manpower to cope post Brexit	Border Force works actively with Cruise Scotland and agents within the sector in terms of planning every season. The current arrangements on checks will not change although there is ongoing consultation with the sector at a UK level.
Ferries - figures for relative spend to be provided – by TS	Table with budget figures was issued ahead of the meeting
Mr Wheelhouse to raise the issue of stakeholder engagement with HIAL at his meeting with them on 27 November.	Mr Wheelhouse confirmed this was raised with HIAL and engagement will continue on this issue.
TS to arrange telephone conference on decentralisation of key posts	Telecall took place on 19 December 2018
TS to discuss out line funding for internal ferries for 2019/20 with Ministers	TS engaged with Ministers before Ministers subsequently reached a decision on the allocation of funding for internal ferry services.
Michael Craigie to amend paper with correct ferry operators	Michael confirmed paper was amended
<u>Actions from 19 December Telecall – all</u>	<u>UPDATE</u>

<u>actions relate to decentralisation of posts</u>	
NIFS working group (including some on this call) is due to meet on 20 December and will explore these matters further.	cleared
Minister will discuss further with Mr Matheson as HIAL is his portfolio responsibility.	Mr Wheelhouse to confirm
Minister to take up Erik Ostergard and Kevin Hobbs of CMAL on information sharing .	Minister is still to raise this with CMAL. – carried forward

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**ARGYLL ISLANDS STRATEGIC
GROUP****DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC
GROWTH****29 AUGUST 2019**

ARGYLL AIR SERVICES PSO TENDER

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Following non-compliant tender submission for the initial Argyll Air Services Public Service Obligation (PSO) contract, the procurement had to be abandoned.
- 1.2 After further engagement with market operators a second tender process was undertaken. Following completion of the evaluation process, a compliant tender within the available budget was received from Hebridean Air Services Ltd, the incumbent operator.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that elected members note and consider:

- 2.1 The new contract for Argyll Air Services will commence with the operator Hebridean Air on the 16th September 2019 and operate for a period of 4 years until 15th September 2023 for the sum of £2,048,828.

3.0 DETAIL

- 3.1 The new four year contract will continue on the same timetable as the interim contract. The service offers an amended number of flights, although flights for school pupils travelling to Oban have been secured as a priority. The current interim contract will continue and there will be no break in service from one contract finishing and the other commencing.

4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The new contract for Argyll Air Services will commence with the operator Hebridean Air on the 16th September 2019 and operate for a period of 4 years until 15th September 2023 for the sum of £2,048,828.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 **Policy** - Argyll and Bute Council provide PSO air services to some of our fragile island communities.
- 5.2 **Financial** – Argyll and Bute Council has a budget of £512,207 available per annum (2019-2022) for the provisions of the air services.
- 5.3 **Legal** - Tenders for Public Sector Obligation air services must be compliant with EC regulations.
- 5.4 **HR** – Indirectly through fire cover provision on the islands, potentially as Council employees rather than by Service Level Agreement with Scottish Fire and Rescue.
- 5.5 **Equalities/Fairer Scotland Duty:**
- 5.5.1 Equalities – Argyll Air Services support equality of access to opportunities for residents and businesses on the islands of Colonsay, Coll and Tiree
 - 5.5.2 Socio-economic Duty- protected characteristics Air services provide connections to rural island communities primarily for scholars but are also used by public and private sector services e.g. NHS, ABC, Housing Associations.
 - 5.5.3 Islands - Argyll and Bute Council provide PSO air services to some of our fragile island communities.
- 5.6 **Risk** – Air services to the islands of Coll and Colonsay are dependent on fire cover provision on the Islands.
- 5.7 **Customer Service** - None

**Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth:
Pippa Milne**

Policy Leads - Councillor Aileen Morton and Councillor Robin Currie

August 2019

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Scottish Government Islands Liaison Team Update

At the last Argyll Islands Strategic Group meeting, the Islands Liaison team was asked to make links between Argyll and Bute Council and appropriate Scottish Government policy teams on 2 issues. The following short update summarises progress.

1) Scope for discussions about including athletes from Argyll and Bute island communities in the Scottish national scheme for providing financial assistance to athletes based in the islands to attend mainland events, a.k.a. the Islands Travel Award Scheme pilot.

The scheme is managed by **sportscotland**, who provided the following information and indicated that they were happy to discuss Argyll and Bute's inclusion. This information and contact details were passed to the Group on 26 June.

- The Island Athlete Travel Award Scheme is a £45,000 programme to support talented athletes from Orkney, Shetland and Western Isles with the additional costs of travel for island-based athletes.
- Up to eight athletes from each local authority (24 overall) will benefit from the additional support, with up to £1,500 available per athlete each year over the three years of the pilot programme.
- The investment has been made available by the Scottish Government through **sportscotland**, the national agency for sport, with additional contributions from each local authority.
- Since June 2015, **sportscotland**'s discussions with COSLA and the Island authorities have focused on support for Island-based performance athletes. These discussions have progressed well and resulted in agreement at the Highlands & Islands Regional Sporting Partnership meeting in August 2016 of an outline programme which builds on **sportscotland**'s current provision to the Islands through its local performance development programme and the **sportscotland** Institute of Sport network.
- The application process will be managed by each local partner, with awards made to the first athletes in early 2018. The total number of athletes benefitting will depend on the number of high quality applications received and the size of awards made (all awards will be up to £1,500). We expect to make awards to up to 24 athletes. **sportscotland** will resource £10,000 per local authority with the local authority contributing a minimum of £2,000 cash (to complete £12,000 award fund).

2) The way in which fuel poverty targets are set for island areas, in particular around equity of outcomes for residents of island communities.

The initial contact made by the Liaison team with the SG Fuel Poverty team has been superseded by the Fuel Poverty team's establishing direct engagement through Scotland's first Island Communities Impact Assessment, in support of the national Fuel Poverty Strategy process. Engagement has been carried out with all local authority areas with island communities, including Argyll and Bute. Targets will include national, and local authority level measures. Difficulties with transport meant that the Fuel Poverty team was not able to physically visit Argyll and Bute, however

the team are grateful to Argyll and Bute Council for holding a meeting with stakeholders and feeding their views into the process.