

Arran Report



Island: Arran

Date: 22/05/2019

This report has been produced by the Strathclyde Centre for Environmental Law and Governance (SCELG) and Scottish Island Federation (SIF) in the framework of their collaboration with the Islands Team of the Scottish Government. The goal of this report is to capture the essence of the discussions that have taken place at the consultation event on Arran. The report will be sent out to participants who authorised us to do so in order to receive further comments and feedback. The report is not to be considered as an indication of what will ultimately go into the National Island Plan, but it will inform the latter. The report is also not to be considered as an indication of the position of Scottish Government on any of the points mentioned therein.

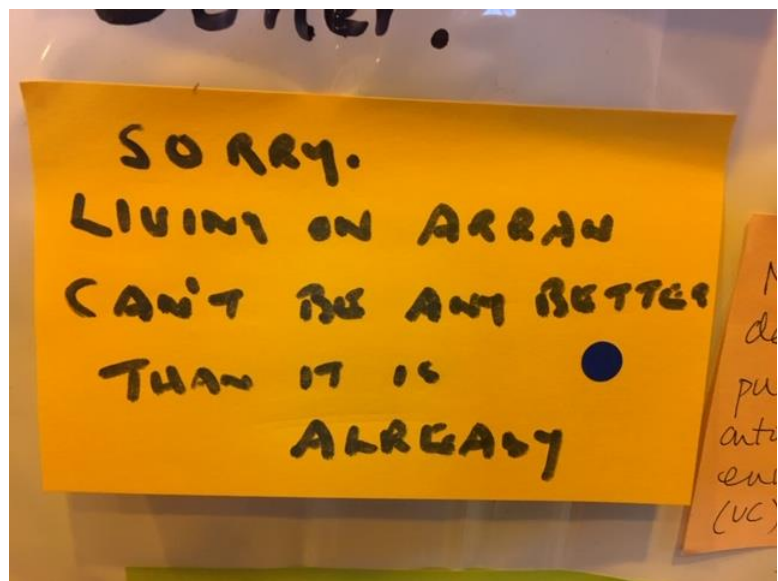
Introduction

On 22 May 2019 a consultation event took place on Arran between 7:30pm and 10:00pm. The event was attended by 51 people and the goal was to capture both what works well on the island and the challenges faced by the community on Arran. The consultation is required by the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018, as a means to inform the National Islands Plan that Scottish Government will be presenting to Scottish Parliament on 4 October 2019.

Arran as a great place to live

The consultation highlighted the following things that make living on Arran great:

- Community
- Quality of life
- Safety
- Environment
- Health and well-being
- Education



Participants to the Arran event highlighted Arran as an island with a strong community and with a high quality of life. Participants also underlined the natural beauty that permeates Arran and is indeed one of the reasons why people love living on the island and why it attracts so many visitors. Good health services and good education was also praised as key aspects present on Arran and that participants highlight as important on the island.



Challenges on Arran

The consultation moved on to discuss the current challenges on Arran and the main concerns of the island community. The following are the main issues that were shared by the participants at the event (see Annex for more details):

- Depopulation
- Economic Development
- Environmental Protection
- Health and wellbeing
- Community empowerment
- Transport
- Digital Connectivity
- Fuel Poverty
- Land management
- Shop monopoly
- No further degrading of public services into a digital environment
- Cyclists off-road
- More social housing
- Prevent inappropriate development of fish-farm at Lochranza



The National Islands Plan and the Response from the Participants

During the consultation, several key challenges were discussed in greater detail. We wish to make it very clear that a more in depth focus was undertaken for the purposes of the face-to-face consultation, and should not be considered as any indication of prioritisation in the framework of the National Islands Plan.

The areas discussed more in depth were:

- Transport
- Community Empowerment
- Economic Development
- Health and well-being
- Depopulation

For each, participants were asked to provide more details about the challenge, their proposed solution, next steps, who should undertake these next steps and when. The following are the suggestions that we believe stemmed from the participants present at the consultation on Arran:

Challenge	Suggestion from participants
Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Better understanding of effective transport decisions and infrastructure in order to inform future decisions ▪ Explore the possibility of alternative fleets that respond better to island community needs, for example smaller, faster ferries
Health and well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Care services with a view to developing systems to support island led care



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore funding that takes into account the higher cost of island living to support recruitment and retention of skilled staff on the island
Community Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a system that enables decisions to be taken as close as possible to where the affects would be felt • Apply participatory budgets in order to enable the island community where to invest • Undertake further research on good practices of community empowerment elsewhere
Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revision of current housing policy in order to consider all housing stock including derelict properties and options for compulsory purchase • Development of a planning policy for the island that is local and flexible and informed by community needs • Promoting sustainability at the heart of the economy and considering the development of a multi stakeholder forum to address complexity in creating a sustainable island economy
Depopulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a housing policy that responds to the needs of the island community including specific needs of the ageing population • Consider a programme of incentivization that priorities young working families

Arran Vision

Island communities know that good governance requires an integrated and holistic approach to policy. We wish to stress once again that the National Islands Plan and its implementation will not address specific issues in isolation, but rather will consider all factors together whilst taking into account their crosscutting nature. In addition, each island has its own unique character and

its own unique challenges. From the consultation on Arran we have identified the following specific traits to Arran:

Firstly, Arran is a prime example of how many, if not all, outcomes that need to be improved are inter-linked and need to be considered together. Above all is community empowerment. The participants made it abundantly clear that they want decisions that affect them directly to be taken as close as possible to them. While there are some changes on the horizon, with Arran becoming an electoral ward by itself in 2021, there still is a widespread feeling that the island community is not appropriately informing decisions or services that affect them. Locality partnerships were also mentioned as promising avenues to better empower communities when it comes to public participation. Another means that could be further explored are participatory budgets whereby the community decides how to spend part of the budget allocated to Arran.

Secondly, health is another example of a service that would work better if it were in hands of the island community. By this, participants meant having, for example, a senior manager position leading on care resident on the island. Health is also an example of how housing becomes a trait d'union between so many outcomes that need to be improved and that will find their way into the National Islands Plan. Health on Arran will get better, especially care for the ageing population, only if there is adequate housing for health professionals and if their jobs are remunerated taking into account the increased cost of living on Arran compared with the mainland.

Thirdly, housing is also clearly related with both depopulation and economic development. In order to increase Arran's population, in particular its youth population, housing policy needs to be more flexible and tailored to families with young children. When it comes to economic development, it was made clear by the participants that what is needed is sustainable economic development, which is actually what is stated in section 3(3) of the Act. Fish farms in Lochranza were highlighted as a controversial economic activity, which was not seen by many to be sustainable and should not be supported. In order to better explore what sustainability means



for Arran a suggestion was made to establish and promote an adequate forum for this purpose. Housing, as mentioned above, was also considered essential to increase economic development. A more relaxed and island tailored housing policy allowing the community to build houses with local produce (wood) and reclaim abandoned properties was suggested, amongst other possibilities.

Fourthly, transport was discussed in all of its forms, ferries, roads and buses. There is a sense that transport is tailored more for visitors than for locals. There are two ferries operating in the summer but not in the winter and locals do not have a priority or a discount on the ferry service. Faster and smaller ferries were suggested as a solution to the problems that current ferries are facing, such as not being able to sail in difficult weather conditions. An integrated timetabling that better links ferries and other travel systems is needed as well as improvements in the bus services on the island and its roads.





What now?

First and foremost we wish to thank those who attended the consultation events on Arran. We encourage you to fill in the on-line consultation at <https://consult.gov.scot/agriculture-and-rural-communities/national-islands-plan/>. You can find the consultation document that provides background information about the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018, the National Islands Plan and the Islands Communities Impact Assessment at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-islands-plan-islands-communities-impact-assessment-guidance-consultation/>.

More importantly, please send us any comments/feedback on this report at n.crook@strath.ac.uk

The National Islands Plan will only be useful if it is truly informed by the island communities and by all those who have an interest and a stake in Scottish islands. Thanks to your participation in the consultation event and your comments and feedback, we are confident that the work being undertaken towards the National Islands Plan is capturing the voice of island communities. We are also sure that this is only the beginning and that, together, we can make sure that the National Islands Plan is not just “another” plan, but “The Plan” that works for island communities in Scotland.

Useful links:

- *On-line consultation* - <https://consult.gov.scot/agriculture-and-rural-communities/national-islands-plan/>
- *Consultation document* - <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-islands-plan-islands-communities-impact-assessment-guidance-consultation/>
- *Islands (Scotland) Act 2018*
- *Strathclyde Centre for Environmental Law and Governance (SCELG)* - <https://www.strath.ac.uk/research/strathclydecentreenvironmentallawgovernance/>
- *Scottish Island Federation (SIF)* - <http://www.scottish-islands-federation.co.uk/>



- *SCELG portal on the consultation -*

<https://www.strath.ac.uk/research/strathclydecentreenvironmentallawgovernance/ourwork/research/labsincubators/eilean/islandsscotlandact/consultations/>



Annex

Challenges about living and working on Arran

-Depopulation	-Economic Development	-Transport
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Housing ➤ Affordable housing to buy and rent ➤ To attract young people to live here ➤ Available affordable housing ➤ Affordable housing for young families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Houses ➤ Keeping the youth on the island and encourage young people ➤ Attracting young folk – need reliable full year jobs with decent pay ➤ Too many tourists – need more young folk ➤ Affordable housing ➤ Island specific housing allocation policy 	<p>Ferries - lifeline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reliable ferry service ➤ 2 ferries all year ➤ Dedicated ferry service for locals ➤ Increased capacity for locals ➤ Reduced ferry fares for young people ➤ Improved ferry connectivity with other islands and kintyre <p>Roads</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Improved transport infrastructure ➤ Improvement to roads ➤ Joined up transport service ➤ Improved roads and cycle paths <p>Buses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Improved bus service



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Improved transport service – integrated timetable ➤ Community transport
<p>-Digital Connectivity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Mobile phone internet upgrade – poor in some areas ➤ Good broadband 	<p>Environmental Protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Art Centre 	<p>Land management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Making land available
<p>-Community empowerment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Local determination of budgets ➤ Relax planning – more specific island planning ➤ Education – island allocation £ to help retain and attract more teachers and subjects offered ➤ Control of Arran budget by Arran community ➤ 	<p>-Fuel poverty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Island cost of living 	<p>- Shop monopoly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Greater choice of food shops <p>Affordable food 15% premium at Coop even with RET</p>
<p>Cycling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Cycle paths 	<p>More social housing</p>	<p>Health and well-being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Residential homes – urgent ➤ Home care – urgent



		➤ Cost of living to level out
Prevent inappropriate development of fish-farm at Lochranza – not wanted by islanders		

