



Cumbrae Report



Island: Cumbrae

Date: 23/05/2019

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 Cumbrae. 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.





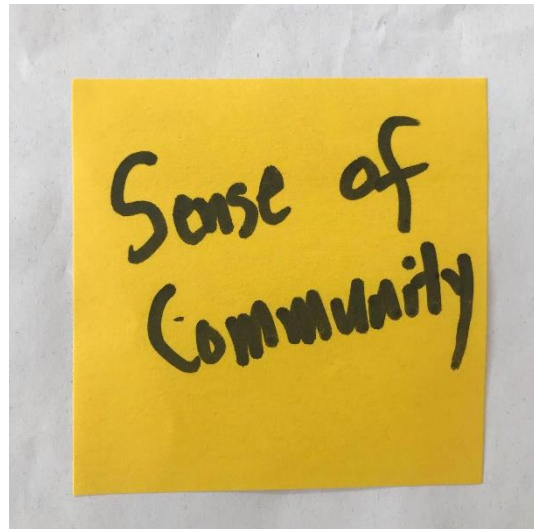
Introduction

On 23 May 2019 a consultation event took place on Cumbrae between 7:30pm and 10:00pm. The event was attended by 15 people and the goal was to capture both what works well on the island and the challenges faced by the community on Cumbrae. 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.

Cumbrae as a great place to live

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

- Community
- Safety
- Environment
- Education
- Accessibility



Participants to the Cumbrae event highlighted Cumbrae as a safe island with a friendly and welcoming community. Participants also underlined the close proximity of the island to the mainland as enabling residents to enjoy the benefits of island life whilst being able to access the mainland. The natural environment was also highlighted as one of the great aspects of Cumbrae, Education at the local school was also praised as key aspect that participants considered important on the island.



Challenges on Cumbrae

The consultation moved on to discuss the current challenges on Cumbrae 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
- Need a campsite place for motorhomes
- More festivals, Celtic music to promote culture – link with international companies/airlines
- Archaeology funding to promote historical significance
- Incomplete cycle path
- Lack of community Centre for young to elderly
- Authority – should be part of islands team, not North Ayrshire





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
- Economic Development
- Health and well-being

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 Cumbrae:



Challenge	Suggestion from participants
Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider possibilities for managing car numbers whilst supporting tourism, and sharing best practices with other island communities, for example the possible use of car permits. ▪ Review ferry infrastructure, service provision and cost, particularly at peak times with a view to developing services and infrastructure that respond better to island community needs and capacity ▪ Consider availability of funding and support for on island transport such as buses.
Health and well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider on island care home plans and opportunities, including the long term financial modelling • Consider the development of an island specific group with a remit to inform care planning affecting the island
Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a start-up or entrepreneurial support unit to offer infrastructure and support to new business opportunities with a focus on fund raising and networking • Development of an island specific sustainable economic development plan that is informed by community needs

Cumrae 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 Cumrae we have identified the following specific traits to Cumrae:



Firstly, Cumbrae 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. At the centre of all activity and life on Cumbrae is the ferry: the ferry connection is critical to both locals and tourists. However, there is a sense that current ferry provision 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 in ferry queues or boarding, including to buy tickets which cannot be booked in advance. As an island just 2 miles from the mainland, hundreds of thousands of tourists flock to Cumbrae every year. The majority of which are day-trippers that bring cars onto the island, which during weekends (especially bank holidays with nice weather) can cause queues of up to 2 hours for the ferry on both sides of the channel. Parking is also a main concern, together with the impact that this is having on the roads and environment. The community are acutely aware of the reliance of the economy on tourist trade, however there is an eagerness to learn from other islands where restrictions on car use on the island are in place. For example, it is considered necessary to have priority for locals (in particular elderly and disabled) on ferry services, possibly through the use of permits and limiting the number of cars allowed by tourists. The possibility of a foot passenger service by another ferry operator was considered as a way of reducing cars and enabling locals to more easily access the mainland. Reducing the numbers of tourist cars however requires close integration with the community in Largs where parking is also very restricted.

Intrinsically linked to the transport challenge is one of economic development. At present the economy is heavily reliant upon tourism, however this is seasonal and is considered enough to 'maintain' the current economic position. There was a sense that new opportunities were required to 'boost' the economy and business environment. Ideas that were explored include: an international Celtic music festival (making the most of the island proximity to Glasgow Airport), a marina or other marine sector development, micro-brewery, crafts. There is a feeling that support from business/entrepreneurial expertise was required in order to navigate funding and enable the development of robust, scalable and sustainable businesses on the island. In addition, the provision of a start-up 'incubator' space to provide new businesses with infrastructure and support to get started was highlighted.



Health and wellbeing was also considered as a key challenge for Cumbrae. As part of North Ayrshire Council (NAC), the local community do not feel that the unique needs of the island are considered in health service decision making. As a specific topic, the discussion at the event focused on the proposed Care Home to support the islands ageing population. This requires ongoing and long term financial support from the NHS and NAC, and for both bodies to work closely with the island's Elderly Forum. The community also highlighted the need for 'cradle to grave' healthcare to support and retain the population, particularly young families and pregnant women. The overwhelming message from the community was that decisions relating to healthcare on the island should be better informed, or taken by, the island community.



What now?

First and foremost we wish to thank those who attended the consultation events on Cumbrae. 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 Cumbrae

<p>-Depopulation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ More young families ➤ Facilities for teens ➤ Attract young families 	<p>-Economic Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ More employment ➤ Start-up funding ➤ Less fragile economy ➤ Micro-brewery ➤ More accommodation ➤ Pier restored ➤ 5 ferries route ➤ Hotels etc ➤ Marina ➤ Investment in marine infrastructure 	<p>-Transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Petrol station/garage ➤ Park and ride ➤ Local bus service ➤ Limit car numbers ➤ Review RET – Foot passengers only ➤ Electric vehicles only ➤ Remove RET or have a designated area for parking ➤ Park and ride either at ferry or mainland ➤ Save the pier ➤ Alternative foot passenger service
<p>-Digital Connectivity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Public WiFi at Lady Margaret 	<p>Environmental Protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Parking restrict ➤ Local recycling centre 	<p>Land management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Community land buy-out
<p>-Community empowerment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Investment in local businesses ➤ Change cultural mindset 	<p>-Fuel poverty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Local energy sources 	<p>Health and well-being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Free kids passes on ferry for sports/cultural activities



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ More autonomy from NAC – control of local budgets ➤ Local governance ➤ More community space ➤ More independent decision making 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Care home ➤ Swimming pool ➤ Town hall for community events ➤ Indoor sports ➤ Care hub ➤ Create a small business/craft units park ➤ More carers' for the elderly ➤ Emergency back-up plan boat & helicopter
<p>Campsite place for motorhomes</p>	<p>More festivals, Celtic music to promote culture – link with international companies/airlines</p>	<p>Archaeology funding to promote historical significance</p>
<p>Part of islands team, not North Ayrshire</p>	<p>Complete cycle path</p>	<p>Community Centre for young to elderly</p>