

Luing Report



Island: Luing

Date: 11/07/2019

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 Luing. 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 the 11th of July 2019 a National Island Plan consultation event took place on Luing, which was attended by 28 people. The goal was to capture both what works well on the island and the challenges faced by the community on Luing. 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.

Luing as a great place to live

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

- Sense of community
- Environment, scenery & landscape
- Wildlife
- Safe for all
- History and slate make Luing unique
- Great social scene
- Creative lifestyle
- Acceptance of diversity of the population
- Easy access to mainland



It is evident that there are many things that make Luing a fantastic place to live. The list above only offers a glimpse, but it does indicate that there is a supportive community on the island, which also affords a high level of safety for residents. Additionally, island residents value the natural environment and the wildlife on the island, whilst the history and culture of Luing are viewed as making the island unique in many ways.



The consultation moved on to discuss the current challenges on Luing 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):

- Increasing Population Levels
- Economic Development
- Environmental Protection
- Health and Wellbeing
- Transport
- Land Management
- Digital Connectivity
- Fuel Poverty
- Biosecurity
- Renewables to benefit community
- Improved cultural offers



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 prioritization in the framework of the National Islands Plan.

The areas discussed more in depth were:

- Depopulation
- Economic Development
- Transport

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 Luig:

Challenge	Suggestion from participants
Increased Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Revision of local service funding to develop facilities that encourage the retention and integration of young families into the community. ▪ Revisal of current housing policy taking into account the specific needs of the island community. ▪ Explore ways to incentive second home owners to integrate their homes into the local market when they are not in use. ▪ Revise current connectivity policy (both transport and broadband) with input from Transport Scotland & mobile phone providers to ensure that 'island centric' services are provided.



Economic Development

- Recognise that boosting economic development on an island requires joint thinking with other policies and opportunities beyond those directly focusing on the island.
- Provide support for island communities to explore economic opportunities both within their islands.
- Explore the possibility of funding schemes to encourage the development of small, local businesses on the island.
- Explore funding options for business space and training that can promote the entrepreneurial potential of island communities.

Transport

- Revise current transport services with a focus on island community needs.
 - For Luing, this should include the possibility of either a free or subsidised ferry service with extended operating hours.
- Revise current transport links to ensure better connectivity between island and the mainland.
 - For Luing this includes scheduled bus links that allow for continued travel from the ferry to Oban.
- Consider the possibility of developing an on island public transport system based on the use of electric vehicles and on island charging facilities.



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

Firstly, participants to the consultation event made it extremely clear that they view depopulation, economic development and transport as being intrinsically linked. In fact, many of the issues and potential solutions were similar across all three of the sectors.

Transport, both on and off island, is an issue which, if improved, would have transformative effects for residents in many different ways. The key focus areas related to the current restricted sailings on the ferry (especially during the shortened winter timetable) and the current lack of available public transport on Luing itself, although it should be noted that the need for better road maintenance and the potential for a fixed link to the mainland were also mentioned. It is evident that there needs to be an urgent rethink of current transport strategies at policy level, to ensure that they are driven by island communities, and that they are recognized as being a 'lifeline' service for islanders rather than just an economic service. For Luing, this includes exploring the possibility of extending the current ferry timetable and taking stock of the capabilities of the current ferry in terms of capacity, whilst exploring the possibility of a subsidised ferry fare for residents. Additionally, residents indicated that they wished the ferry service to be viewed as an 'extension of the road system', with joined up timetabling and increased public transport (both on the island and the mainland) to allow easier access to the likes of Oban for both the facilities present there and the employment opportunities.

In general, it is crucial that Scottish Government recognises that boosting economic development on an island requires joint thinking with other policies such as, for example, housing, transport,



digital connectivity. It was highlighted that a revision of the current transport system as described above would be transformative for both businesses on the island and those commuting to the mainland for work. Additionally, the allocation of dedicated funding streams, for both appropriate business space for local entrepreneurs and increased support and funding for on island businesses in general, would drastically boost the current economy of the island whilst simultaneously creating jobs to encourage young people to remain, or return, to Luing.

Finally, the issue of increasing the younger demographic of the currently ageing population is crucial to the longevity of the island community, and is very much reliant on improving both the current transport and economic sectors. Additionally, increasing the amount of available, fit for purpose housing available on the island is vital to all three of the previously mentioned sectors, with participants indicating that the majority of current housing does not suit families, and that there is a large proportion of second home owners in the current housing market. A revision of current policy to take into account the specific needs of the island community, and incentives to encourage second home owners to make their homes available to the local market, would greatly increase the housing stock on Luing and subsequently allow for more families to move or return to the island permanently.





What now?

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

<p>Depopulation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More affordable family housing • Guarantee that school will remain open • Need a younger population balance • Better access to encourage population increase 	<p>Economic Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social housing and business units • Harbour services (pontoon, etc.) • Future proofing infrastructure • Financial support for establishing facilities • Better wages • More work • Financial help & mentorship for businesses 	<p>Environmental Protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New septic tanks • Reliable refuse collection & better recycling facilities • Energy self-sufficiency (sea source pumps)
<p>Health and Wellbeing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved evacuation for ill • Improved council services (bins, etc.) • Crafts & artist studio • Community sports facilities & pool 	<p>Land Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More community benefit 	<p>Transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better road maintenance • Better transport links on mainland • Daily island bus service • Car ferry extended all year for workers and travelers • Free ferry • Fixed link
<p>Digital Connectivity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ultrafast broadband and 5g • Reliable broadband • Better connectivity in general 	<p>Fuel Poverty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free electric cars and charging points 	<p>Biosecurity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fish farming causes lice and pollution that is affecting native wildlife
<p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renewables to benefit community • Improved cultural offers 		



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