



Rum Report



Island: Rum

Date: 13/05/2019

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 Rum. 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 13th May 2019 a focus group took place on Rum between 3.30pm and 6pm. The event was attended by 7 people, and 3 children from the local primary school, and the goal was to capture both what works well on the island and the challenges faced by the community on Rum. 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.

Rum as a great place to live

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

- Community Spirit
- Safe
- Way of Life
- Landscape & Environment
- Infrastructure
- Community Ownership

It is evident that there are many things that make Rum a fantastic place to live. The list above only affords a glimpse, but it does highlight that there is a true sense of community on the island, which ensures it is a great place for children to grow up and affords a particular way of life that is far removed from the stresses of city living. The participants also enjoy the natural environment of the island, and the wildlife it supports. Additionally, the community is served with great digital connectivity, which they attribute to a combination of Mowi (fish farm company) infrastructure, Isle of Rum Community Trust expanding said infrastructure to service specific homes and the introduction of HebNet as a digital service provider.

The consultation moved on to discuss the current challenges on Rum 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
- Health and Wellbeing
- Community Empowerment
- Transport
- Biosecurity
- Fuel Poverty
- Land Management
- Zero waste
- Community Apathy



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:

- Transport
- Education
- Zero Waste

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 Rum:

Challenge	Suggestion from participants
Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Revise current transport services and infrastructure with a focus on island community needs and particularly, ensuring joined up timetabling between services. ▪ Recognise that boosting economic development on an island requires joint thinking with other policies such as, for example, housing, transport, digital connectivity. ▪ Review and reform of the ferry/public buses (transport policy) in line with island communities' interests and priorities, which means an island base ferry service. ▪ Need for integrated transport policy and timetable as transport for island communities is not just a service, it's a lifeline, it's a right). ▪ Introduction of public subsidies for travel costs for islanders ▪ Development of legally binding minimum requirements for road infrastructure that builds upon the needs of island communities ▪ Revision of RET to include commercial vehicles, freight & to apply for transportation between islands, not just to the mainland.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Revise current education policy to ensure it takes into account the specific needs of island communities. ▪ Explore the possibility of different ways of educating secondary school children on islands, including online webinars and virtual learning.



Zero Waste

- Revise current waste/recycling policy to better serve islands, with more frequent pickups and transparent recycling routes from island to mainland.
- Revision of current recycling/waste disposal system to adequately support islanders who wish to have autonomy over own waste schemes.
- Consider specific funding stream to undertake research on recycling on small islands in order to better understand the waste patterns and potential of a circular economy in its disposal.

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

Firstly, it is essential to note that Rum has gone through a phased transfer of land and assets in and around Kinloch Village from Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) to Isle of Rum Community Trust ownership. It is evident that the islanders are extremely proud of this. However, it was also stated that a revision of current policy is necessary to allow for better support for community buy-outs, with a need for a dedicated strategy which takes into consideration the uniqueness of the situation on the island both during the buyout phase, and after.

The transport sector, and particularly the current ferry timetabling, highlights the discrepancy and ineffectiveness of policies adopted and sought by non-islanders. There is a need to revise this sector 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. Specifically,



participants highlighted that whilst the current timetable affords decent travel for those wishing to stay over on the island or on the mainland, it fails to provide adequate timings to support day trips (both from the island and to it) which would boost the local economy and allow residents to make more frequent trips to the mainland for essential items and services. Additionally, the current service does not offer adequate service between islands, but rather is extremely mainland focused.

On that note, recent changes to the CalMac health and safety policy have resulted in islanders being unable to order frozen food from the mainland based Coop, which has significantly reduced what they are able to purchase without actually being present at the shop themselves. It should be noted that the Coop should be applauded for its flexibility in facilitating the needs of the island community, but that dialogue must be opened with CalMac to try and resolve this issue to ensure that islanders are able to receive both fresh and frozen produce through the ferry service.

It is also evident that environmental concerns are crucial to the island community, with a specific emphasis on the need for a zero waste strategy. Consequently, there is a need to recognise the potential of islands to act as research hubs going forward, both in terms of going zero waste and the promotion of on island recycling as a good practice from a circular economy perspective – with the likes of recycling not just seen as an environmental issue, but as an economic opportunity that island communities could benefit from if afforded the proper support. An immediate revisal of the current waste/recycling policy is necessary, to better serve islands, with more frequent pickups and transparent recycling routes from the island to the mainland.

Finally, current education services, at both nursery and secondary school level, were highlighted as a key challenge by participants. Specifically, that there is a need to allocate resources to explore the possibility of different ways of educating secondary school children on islands, including online webinars and virtual learning, to encourage families to remain as part of the island community. Additionally, the community on Rum is currently lacking a nurse teacher, and feels that the current advertisement by the Highlands Council has been sub-standard. It is

therefore essential to revise current education policy to ensure it takes into account the specific needs of island communities.



What now?

First and foremost we wish to thank those who attended the consultation events on Rum. 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/>

