



Skye Report



Island: Skye

Date: 12th & 13th June 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 events that took place on Skye. 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.



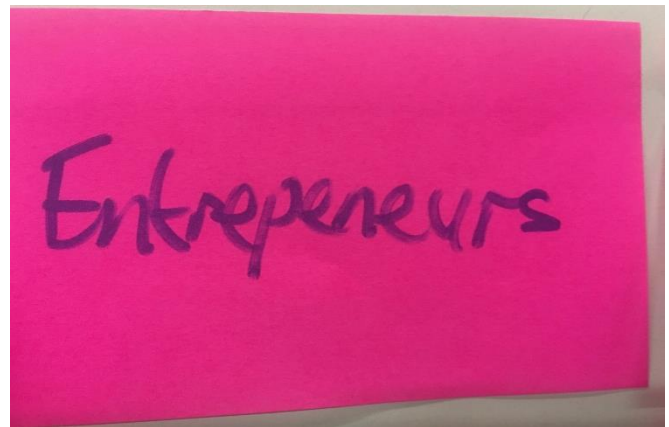
Introduction

On 12 June 2019 a consultation event took place in Dunvegan, Isle of Skye, between 7:30pm and 10:00pm. The event was attended by 8 people and the goal was to capture both what works well on the island and the challenges faced by the community on Skye. A second consultation was held on the 13th June between 9:30am and 10:30am at Portree High School. This event was attended by 18 pupils with the same purpose: to capture from a pupil's perspective what works well for them on Skye and identify challenges. The consultation events are 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. This report captures and discusses the outputs of both events.

Skye as a great place to live

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

- People
- Culture
- Entrepreneurs
- Environment
- Food and Drink
- Tourism
- Access to Mainland
- Gaelic Language



Participants to the Dunvegan event highlighted Skye as a creative island with a strong sense of community and culture. Participants also underlined the access to the mainland as a positive, whilst also celebrating the islands unique environment and peace and quiet. Quality of life was also highlighted, and together with the strong community provides a good social life, and is good for children with the natural landscape allowing them to be 'free range'. This latter point was echoed by the school pupils of Portree who highlighted the sense of 'freedom' they felt in growing



up on Skye. Supported by the natural environment, pupils also highlighted the wealth of outdoor activities they are able to enjoy. Pupils also feel safe in what they consider as an 'accepting' community that looks out for one another, and feel a strong cultural connection.

Challenges on Skye

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

- Depopulation
- Economic Development
- Environmental Protection
- Health and wellbeing
- Community empowerment
- Transport
- Digital Connectivity
- Land management
- Housing
- Public toilets – more required
- Local democracy
- Local strategic planning via Scottish planning policy
- Treat island as a heritage site, with coordinated planning

Many of the issues above were also echoed by the participants at Portree High School, who also shared the following additional specific challenges for young people:

Schools

- Better quality primary schools
- More money into primary schools
- Better education (Uni – as you have to leave the Island)

Facilities

- Lack of Youth clubs
- Need opportunities for sports other than football and Shinty e.g. running for juniors



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 at the Dunvegan and Portree events were:

- Transport
- Economic Development
- De-Population

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 events in Dunvegan and Portree High School:

Challenge	Suggestion from participants
Transport	<p>Dunvegan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the possibility of a gradual reduction in private road traffic whilst simultaneously investing in and developing year round integrated public transport • Promote and invest in an island pool of electric vehicles that takes advantage of surplus renewable energy generated on the island • Develop a plan to manage tourist hotspots on the island by exploring the feasibility of integrated pooled transport to key sites, e.g. park and ride 'shuttle services'. <p>Portree High School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop agile and responsive systems for road repair and maintenance. • Consider increasing investment and training to support road workers and incentivize higher quality and pride of work to develop higher quality, more resilient road infrastructure
Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring together stakeholders to develop a strategy for sustainable economic development underpinned by a strong 'Skye brand' and informed by local needs • Explore opportunities to further develop skills training on the island in wide range of sectors linked to the above mentioned strategy



De-population

- Support and invest in leisure activities and sporting infrastructure, designed and informed by youth, and taking into consideration repurposing of existing infrastructure.

Skye 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 consultations on Skye in both Dunvegan and Portree we have identified the following specific traits to Skye:

Firstly, Skye 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. Tourism accounts for a considerable proportion of Skye's economy. A strong tourism industry is facilitated by a fixed connection to the mainland. However, tourism also creates considerable challenges in managing Skye's transport infrastructure. Hence managing transport and tourism in the context of economic development are intrinsically linked. Participants consider the need for a gradual reduction in the volume of private cars on Skye, particularly in peak tourist season. A number of innovative solutions were proposed to achieve this, whilst also supporting tourism. These included the development of 'shuttle' services to key tourist attractions to provide pooled transport to and from hotspot areas. Investment in, and integration of, public transport is essential to allow tourists to visit and get around without the need for individual private cars. Participants also recognize Skye as an island with a wealth of renewable energy potential, which at the moment is not being optimized as a result of lack of energy storage and the need to manage energy 'surge' to the grid. As a long term ambition, participants considered how this surplus of energy could be harnessed and converted to power, for example, electric vehicles, and provide a 'pool' of energy efficient low carbon vehicles on the island, fueled by island renewable energy.



In the short term however, the large number of cars is putting pressure on the road system, causing increased erosion and potholes, together with an increase in accidents as a result of tourists being unaware of the nature of the roads and a lack of good signage. Pupils at Portree consider that road maintenance should be given priority and recognized as a highly skilled and highly valued job, which should be reflected in pay to road workers which would in turn lead to greater pride in their work and higher quality repairs. Greater prioritization and recognition of the importance of good road networks in supporting the islands economy would also lead to repairs being prioritized and attended to in good time. In addition, investment is urgently required in signage and road markings to help tourists and other road users.

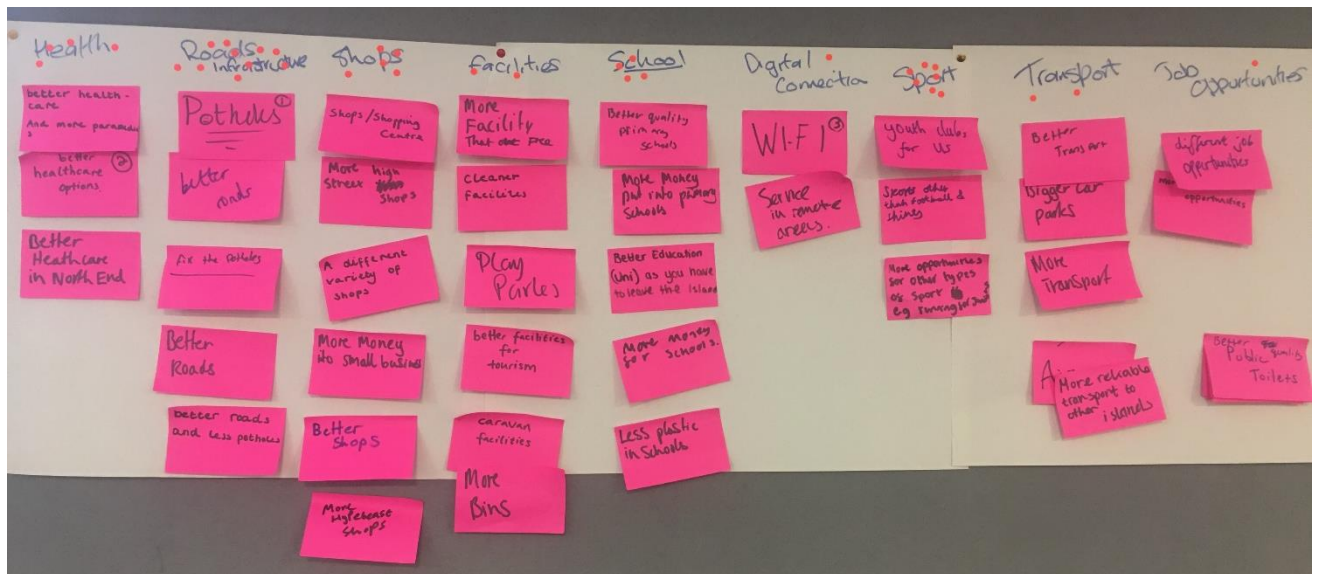
Intrinsically linked to the transport challenge is one of economic development. At present the economy is heavily reliant upon tourism, and whilst this is recognized as a positive, there is a feeling that a more strategic approach to economic development is required. An integrated strategy for sustainable economic development is required, which could be centered on a 'Skye Brand' to promote a coherent and 'joined up' approach to economic development. There is also a need to retain, and not 'commoditize' Skye's culture and heritage. On island training is also required which should be linked to the economic development strategy to provide the skilled workforce required across a number of sectors, not just tourism, such as green crofting. This need for on island training was also raised by pupils at Portree High School who would like to see greater opportunities for further education on the island as many will be obliged to leave Skye to attend university.

This lack of further education also contributes to the de-population of Skye and reduction in young people and family residents. Pupils at Portree High School highlighted the need for more facilities for young people to support school pupils and attract more young families. For example, pupils would welcome a youth club or similar indoor space where they can gather to be with their friends. Whilst investment would be required, pupils highlighted a number of disused buildings (former community halls) that could be repurposed and redesigned in collaboration with young people themselves. Such spaces are required not just in Portree but in other areas of





the island to allow young people to come together outside of school. Whilst pupils saw the natural environment as a great space to explore and be 'free', there is a desire to have a greater variation in sporting opportunities, which at the moment are geared only towards football and shinty. Athletics for example are not supported at present and pupils need to travel to Inverness for the nearest athletics track which for many is too far for families to travel. Again, repurposing and making best use of existing infrastructure could be a cost effective way of developing such a facility which would make a big difference for young people.



What now?

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

-Depopulation	-Economic Development	-Transport
<p>Dunvegan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ More 'breeding pairs' ➤ Social housing ➤ Housing affordable <p>Portree</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Youth clubs ➤ Sports other than football and Shinty ➤ More opportunities for other types of sport, e.g. running for juniors <p>Schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Better quality primary schools ➤ More money into primary schools ➤ Better education (Uni – as you have to leave the Island) ➤ More money for schools 	<p>Dunvegan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strategic planning ➤ Use more locally produced renewable energy ➤ Abattoir ➤ Business Start-up finance ➤ Skye banded pool ➤ Competition (Coop/Boots etc) ➤ Friendlier customer service <p>Portree</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Shops/shopping centre ➤ Nandos ➤ Cheaper shops – Coop is too expensive ➤ More high street shops ➤ A different variety of shops ➤ Fastfood 	<p>Dunvegan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Public transport ➤ My bus <p>Portree</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Potholes ➤ Better roads ➤ Cleaner pavements ➤ Fix the potholes ➤ Better carparks for tourists ➤ Better roads and less potholes ➤ Better transport ➤ Bigger carparks ➤ More transport ➤ More reliable transport to other islands ➤ Airport



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ More money into small businesses ➤ Better shops ➤ Different job opportunities ➤ More job opportunities <p>Facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ More facilities that are free ➤ More bins ➤ Hotel for tourists ➤ Better quality public toilets ➤ Playparks ➤ Cleaner facilities ➤ Better facilities for tourism ➤ Caravan facilities 	
<p>-Digital Connectivity</p> <p>Dunvegan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Superfast 5G ➤ Superfast broadband <p>Portree</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Better WiFi ➤ Service in remote areas 	<p>Environmental Protection</p> <p>Dunvegan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Re-vitalise crofting ➤ Improve infrastructure for visitors ➤ Abattoir <p>Portree</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Less plastic in school 	<p>Land management</p> <p>Dunvegan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Land Law



<p>-Community empowerment</p> <p>Dunvegan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strategic planning ➤ Maintain small schools ➤ Community ownership 	<p>-Fuel poverty</p> <p>Dunvegan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 	<p>Health and well-being</p> <p>Dunvegan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Retain hospital ➤ Combat loneliness <p>Portree</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Better healthcare ➤ More paramedics ➤ Better healthcare options ➤ Better healthcare in the North end
<p>Dunvegan: additional aspects not included in section 3 (3)</p>		
<p>Constitution (two Kingdoms)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free up constitution from ancient treaties • Local democracy 	<p>Reduce carbon footprint</p>	<p>Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contrast between older and young people • Integration of indigenous and new residents
<p>Infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ UHI-training ➤ Low cost business start-up facilities ➤ Housing ➤ Public toilets – more required 	<p>Local strategic planning via Scottish planning policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat island as a heritage site, with coordinated planning 	