

## Tiree Report



Island: Tiree

Date: 26/06/2019

*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 Tiree. 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 26<sup>th</sup> of June 2019 two National Island Plan consultation events took place on Tiree; one with the general community and another with a group of pupils from Tiree High School. The public event was attended by 32 people and the goal was to capture both what works well on the island and the challenges faced by the community on Tiree. 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.

## Tiree as a great place to live

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

- Community
- Safety
- Infrastructure/Services
- Volunteer Sector
- Natural Environment
- Culture
- Mixed demographic
- Tiree Community Development Trust and wind turbine
- Transport to mainland
- Watersports
- Potential
- Music
- Facilities



It is evident that there are many things that make Tiree 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



current services available, with specific mention of ‘cradle to grave’ care and the possibility to be educated on Tiree until 18 years of age. The participants also highlighted that they particularly enjoy the natural environment of the island and the opportunities it affords for outdoor activities; specifically in relation to watersports. The culture of the island is also integral to island residents, with the school pupils in particular emphasising the importance of local music, whilst the willingness of the community to volunteer was hailed as being crucial to sustaining life on the island.

The consultation moved on to discuss the current challenges on Tiree 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
- Community Empowerment
- Transport
- Land Management
- Digital Connectivity
- Fuel Poverty
- Biosecurity
- Security of education provision
- Future of crofting assistance
- Future proofing of renewables
- Develop understanding of uniqueness
- Outreach programme to bring other cultural experiences
- Improve quality of education in school



## 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:

- Increasing Population
- Community Empowerment
- 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 Tiree:

Challenge	Suggestion from participants
<b>Increased Population</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop an island centric housing policy that fully takes into consideration the unique situation and needs of each island community.</li> <li>▪ Revise current policy to promote the repopulation of the island by an economically active demographic:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Focus on affordable housing and diverse job opportunities.</li> <li>- Ensure sustainability of current care home and upgrade to mainland standards.</li> <li>- Improve linkages with higher education and career opportunities, specifically in relation to vocational jobs.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support innovative development of local resources and economy that specifically focus on increasing economic opportunities for young people.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Community Empowerment</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Explore the possibility of revising the current governance structure to ensure that decision-making is taken as close as possible to where the effects are felt (island centric, to the specific island in question).</li> <li>▪ Consider revising current democratic process to ensure that islands are properly represented.</li> <li>▪ Increase funding routes and opportunities for local democratically elected groups (possibly community councils) to take on a greater decision-making role.</li> <li>▪ Identify and promote island successes at both local and national level, to encourage community pride and the exchange of good practices.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Economic Development</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Explore funding options for business space and training that can promote the entrepreneurial potential of island communities.</li> <li>▪ Including, a direct funded route from education to apprenticeships which are based on island.</li> <li>▪ Recognise that boosting economic development on an island requires joint thinking with other policies such as, for example, housing, transport, digital connectivity.</li> <li>▪ Explore the possibility of supporting the local community in creating a Tiree brand to adequately promote the uniqueness of the island and encourage economic development and further tourism.</li> </ul>



## Transport

- Revise current transport services with a focus on, and inter- island community needs:
  - For Tiree, this should include the possibility of ensuring there are reserved spaces for both residents in general (lifeline service) and in case of emergencies.
- Revise current transport links to ensure better connectivity between islands to encourage integration between island communities.
- Consider using the likes of Shetland car sharing as a good practice and extending this practice to Tiree as a pilot study .
- Consider the possibility of developing an island focused/centric transport policy that benefits island communities.

## Tiree 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 Tiree we have identified the following specific traits to Tiree:

Firstly, the current lack of community empowerment was repeatedly raised as a challenge by participants, and is a clear example of an issue which, if improved, would have a ‘ripple effect’ on many other areas including economic development and the repopulation of the island by an economically active demographic; if measures are put in place to deal with this “specific” issue, it will inevitably have wider positive effects. Currently, residents of Tiree feel that they lack a clear political voice despite having a community council, and that the democratic process, which is based on population size, does not allow them to convey their views effectively. It is therefore essential that the current democratic process is revised to ensure that islands are properly

represented, with the possibility of devolving current councils to allow for more autonomy of decision making at the local level considered as a potential commitment going forward.

Improved community empowerment can also assist with the development of local resources and improve the island economy, as well as the revision of current healthcare policy to ensure that essential services are appropriately island proofed in order to retain/improve the current level of healthcare on Tiree. Additionally, a current lack of affordable, fit for purpose housing on the island, largely due to the multitude of holiday homes, is acting as a barrier to increasing the local economy and population, resulting in the need to develop an island centric housing policy that fully takes into consideration the unique situation and needs of the island community.

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. However, participants on Tiree emphasised that a lack of available business space, and adequate support and training for young people, were key barriers to sustainable economic development on the island. The allocation of dedicated funding streams, for both appropriate business space for local entrepreneurs and a direct route from education to apprenticeships which are based on island, would drastically boost the current economy of the island whilst simultaneously creating jobs to encourage young people to remain, or return, to Tiree. It should also be noted that improvement to digital connectivity across the island is viewed as being essential to any economic development.

Transport, both on and off island, is also an issue which, if improved, would have transformative effects for residents. Currently, islanders are unable to make use of both ferry and plane services due to a lack of capacity as a result of the high volume of visitors using these services at peak times. Consequently, 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 Tiree, this should include the possibility of ensuring there are reserved spaces for both residents in general and in



case of emergencies, and an exploration of the feasibility of increased interconnections between islands, which would have both cultural and economic benefits for all islands involved. Additionally, current public transport on the island itself does not operate out with office hours, severely limiting the movement of those members of the community who do not own, or are unable to drive, a car. A rethink of the current bus schedule would go some ways to improving this, as would the introduction of a car share programme if the appropriate funding and support could be provided.







## What now?

First and foremost we wish to thank those who attended the consultation events on Tiree. 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](mailto: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 Tiree

<p><b>Depopulation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Second home policies</li> <li>• Affordable housing</li> <li>• Equality of school curriculum with mainland</li> <li>• More social housing</li> <li>• More housing to rent or buy</li> </ul>	<p><b>Economic Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business facilities</li> <li>• Business training for school leavers on the island</li> <li>• Business support (financial stimulus)</li> <li>• Better electricity</li> <li>• More opportunity of fulltime employment</li> <li>• Better energy infrastructure</li> <li>• More vocational training</li> <li>• More support enterprise</li> <li>• Permanent (non-seasonal) jobs</li> <li>• Government start-up incentives to counteract increased costs of island living</li> <li>• Extended grid capacity for renewables</li> </ul>	<p><b>Environmental Protection</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less marine litter</li> <li>• Harnessing solar energy for the community</li> <li>• Managing impacts of tourism</li> </ul>
<p><b>Health and Wellbeing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Security of provision for care of elderly on the island</li> <li>• A new old folks home</li> </ul>	<p><b>Community Empowerment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You can't an island owned by a Duke</li> <li>• Not being part of Argyll &amp; Bute island based council</li> <li>• Political voice</li> <li>• More flexible use of money for local services on island</li> </ul>	<p><b>Transport</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More flexible/sensible travel links</li> <li>• Transport resilience</li> <li>• Better harbours for bigger ships</li> <li>• Improved late night transport</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rubbish local authority</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infrastructure upgrades</li> <li>• Reserved capacity for residents to travel</li> <li>• Capacity for emergency travel</li> <li>• Breakwater at Gott Bay</li> <li>• More interconnections between islands which will help culturally &amp; economically and support education sustainability</li> <li>• Make it easier for residents to travel during summer</li> <li>• Electric vehicle hook ups</li> <li>• Better roads</li> </ul>
<p><b>Digital Connectivity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved communications infrastructure</li> <li>• Better connectivity</li> </ul>	<p><b>Fuel Poverty</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More affordable fuel</li> <li>• Lower transport costs</li> </ul>	<p><b>Land Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community land ownership</li> <li>• Young croft entry</li> </ul>
<p><b>Biosecurity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep rabbits and other alien species off the island</li> </ul>	<p><b>Other</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep what we have</li> <li>• Security of education provision</li> <li>• Future of crofting assistance</li> <li>• Future proofing renewables</li> <li>• Develop understanding of uniqueness and 'milk it'</li> <li>• Outreach programme to bring other cultural experiences</li> <li>• Improve standard of education in school <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Better teachers in school</li> <li>- Don't put S1 and S2 together</li> <li>- Less change in school</li> <li>- Upgrade school building</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ensure that current benefit system is island proofed</li> </ul>	



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