



Yell Report



Island: Yell

Date: 05/06/2019

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 Yell. 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 5 June 2019 a focus group took place in Yell between 7:30pm and 10:00pm. The goal was to capture both what works well on the island and the challenges faced by the community on Yell. 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.

Yell as a great place to live

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

- Good schools
- Community learning partnerships
- Natural beauty
- Aquaculture (major employer, sustainable employment)
- Safe
- Community spirit
- Good health services
- Good volunteer support throughout the community
- Oil money (and what it has done for the infrastructure)
- Spring clean – environmental cleaning that is done locally with school and kids

Yell is considered a very safe and pleasant place by the participants to the focus group. Some things that were highlighted were the good health services and the presence of good employment through the aquaculture that provides well-paid jobs. Infrastructure on the island is of good quality thanks to the deployment and good management of revenues stemming from the oil sector.



Challenges on Yell

The consultation moved on to discuss the current challenges on Yell 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
- Housing

- Education
- Inequality

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:

- Depopulation (lack of childcare provision)
- 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 focus group on Yell:

Challenge	Suggestion from participants
Depopulation of (lack of childcare)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recognising the huge impact that lack of effective childcare has on retaining people within a community and attracting new people. ▪ Consider education facilities (and facilities more in general) as one of the hubs for the community within an integrated policy for island regeneration.
Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement an integrated timetable that works for island communities. • Explore the feasibility of fixed links between islands building on past studies, also by drawing on examples elsewhere.



- Frame transport as a lifeline and enable island communities to input into transport decisions that affect their island.
- Explore community based solutions that can be flexible enough to accommodate transport need of the local population for all ages.

Yell 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 focus group on Yell we have identified the following specific traits:

Firstly, whilst Yell has a strong population in numbers, people have seen some residents leave (dentists, doctors, and teachers) because of the lack of childcare. The presence or the absence of the latter can be a decisive factor in retaining population or attracting new residents, or even trying to get back young folks who have left the island. In order to have more childcare, an integrated approach by local decision makers need to take place that provides for more childminders, but also free public transport to nurseries and, finally, a better use of the existing facilities on Yell.

Secondly, transport, as in many other islands, is quite contentious. Although the islands boasts a relatively high number of ferry links per day and bus links to the mainland, the latter are not always easy to reach and the former are not always reliable. The long-term solution to the ferries could be fixed links, although there is clearly a high initial capital cost. Some feasibility studies were done in the past, but these need to be updated and community input needs to be present. When it comes to transport within Yell, a community bus scheme was suggested, as well as better integrated timetables.

There were a number of other critical areas, such as the possibility of boosting tourism. The latter has seen a rise in number when it comes to marine tourism, but there could be more to attract people just passing through Yell. A big renewable energy / wind power scheme is under approval in North Yell. There seems to be a mix of opinions as to the benefits that this operation will have on the island. However, there is a sense that because of Scottish Government climate change and energy policy, these large scale renewable energy projects are difficult to oppose.



What now?

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

-Depopulation	-Economic Development	-Transport
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of childcare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Planning restrictions ➤ Access to trades people - nobody available ➤ Lack of local skills training ➤ More expensive to get trades people from the mainland ➤ Lack of childcare (teachers, doctors and dentists have left because there is no childcare) ➤ Recognise that the islands are different from mainland and that it can be more expensive and the needs are different ➤ Not a choice of electricity supplier if you have a specific storage heater rate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Fixed links would transform the island ➤ Better internal and local transport links / affordability of transport links ➤ Electric cars ➤ If you are poor you cannot pre-pay the 10 ticket bundle



<p>-Digital Connectivity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ better broadband ➤ community broadband 	<p>- Environmental protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 17 turbines planning currently being applied for. It will have a negative impact on the environment. Some of the investment has come from local businesses and only 3 from the community council can expressed views as the others have declared an interest. ➤ Manage the sea against the wide variety of negative impacts – fishing, pollution, tourism and fish farming 	<p>Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There are some second homes but still housing is reasonably available
<p>-Community empowerment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Community councils not enough credibility locally 	<p>-Fuel poverty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Genuine assessment needed ➤ Not a choice of electricity supplier if you have a specific storage heater rate 	<p>Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 16 year olds having to go to Lerwick for senior secondary school
<p>Health and well-being</p>	<p>Inequality</p>	



➤ Needs to be continued investment in NHS locally and especially for looking after the elderly

➤ If you are poor you cannot pre-pay the 10 ticket bundle and you cannot take advantage of cheaper shopping options on the mainland

