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# NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

7 November 2023

## Cabinet

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**Title:** National Islands Plan Review consultation response

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**Purpose:** To provide an update on the Council's engagement in the consultation on the review of the National Islands Plan by the Scottish Government and to seek approval for the proposed consultation response.

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**Recommendation:** That Cabinet:

- a) Notes the Scottish Government's consultation on the review of the National Island Plan;
- b) Approves the proposed consultation response provided at Appendix 1; and
- c) Notes the submission of separate consultation responses on behalf of the Island Plan Steering Groups on both islands.

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## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 A consultation to review the National Islands Plan (NIP) is required under section 6 of the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018. The Scottish Government launched the consultation on 18 July 2023 with responses being sought by 7 November 2023.
- 1.2 The review aims to assess the impact of the NIP since its publication in 2019. This will potentially inform a new NIP, to be published in 2025, if the consultation responses evidence the requirement for this. Essentially, the NIP review consultation provides an opportunity for island communities to highlight the issues they are currently facing and ensure that these are directly reflected in the next iteration of the Plan.
- 1.3 The proposed Council response to the consultation, for which this report seeks approval, is provided at Appendix 1. Separate responses are being submitted on behalf of the Island Plan Steering Groups on both islands.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 The National Islands Plan (NIP) was launched twelve weeks before the Covid-19 pandemic struck in March 2020. It was published before the UK's exit from the EU, and before the onset of the cost of living crisis. Combined with the wider impacts of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, these issues have had a significant impact on Scotland's island communities.

- 2.2 The Act requires a review of the Plan within 5 years of initial publication. Given the circumstances, the NIP review consultation is timely in providing the Scottish Government, their partners and island communities with an opportunity to reflect on changes in circumstance since 2019.
- 2.3 In 2021, the Council commenced a three-year Islands Recovery and Renewal Pilot in partnership with the Scottish Government and Highlands and Islands Enterprise. This aims to support an inclusive and green economic recovery and renewal of North Ayrshire's island communities in line with their unique challenges and opportunities. This pilot is strongly aligned to the delivery of the strategic objectives of the current NIP and to Community Wealth Building (CWB) principles.
- 2.4 Whilst developing the 10-year Local Island Plans during 2021/22, the Council sense checked feedback previously gathered from 2019 onwards to ensure that the challenges and main concerns for each island were still relevant and remain the priorities of each island post-pandemic. Informed by Arran and Cumbrae's extensive input during the development of the NIP, the Local Island Plans reflect synergies with all the Strategic Objectives of the NIP. They also take a distinct locality focus, ensuring complementarity and avoiding overlap or duplication of other local and regional activities, plans, strategies, and funding sources.
- 2.5 A key focus for the pilot has been strengthening the partnership with our island communities, island businesses, and wider stakeholders to facilitate and commence delivery of the Local Island Plans to maximise the islands' potential and improve outcomes and benefits for our islanders. As these plans are implemented, they are contributing to and delivering improved outcomes for the community, economic, and environmental wellbeing of Arran and Cumbrae.
- 2.6 The findings from Scottish Government consultation and any revised or new National Islands Plan will require to be reflected in the current Local Island Plans, in due course. The Scottish Government is seeking submissions by 7 November 2023. Following the end of the consultation period, they will analyse the data gathered from both the online consultation responses and engagement events to inform, if needed, the drafting of a new NIP.
- 2.7 The consultation is being carried out by the Scottish Government Islands team with support from Scottish Islands Federation, delivering a series of virtual and face to face engagements with island communities and stakeholders. An engagement workshop on Cumbrae was held at Garrison House on Thursday 28 September with sixteen people attending. A similar engagement workshop for Arran was originally scheduled for Friday 29 September but was postponed until 25 October due to ferry cancellations.
- 2.8 The proposed response provided at Appendix One has been informed by the experience of and feedback obtained through the pilot project. This includes feedback through the North Coast Locality Partnership and Islands Plan Steering Group. Not all questions within the consultation lend themselves to a local authority response as they are more citizen focused. For these questions, a response has been recorded as not applicable, or where appropriate, a brief comment provided.
- 2.9 Through the islands pilot, Officers have supported the Scottish Islands Federation and Scottish Government Islands team to encourage participation in the consultation. This has included promoting participation in local workshops and completion of the review online via the consultation portal. Awareness has been raised through the provision of

information to island stakeholders including Community Councils, Locality Partnerships, Local Island Plan Steering Groups, Elected Members and Council officers. Several communication methods have been used including email, social media posts, posters, and word of mouth.

- 2.10 Separate responses have been prepared on behalf of the Island Plan Steering Groups for both islands, for submission individually to the consultation, by the Chair of each Group with support from the Senior Officer- Islands. These responses have been informed by community feedback directly from island residents, enabling a full response to the consultation questions.

### **3. Proposals**

#### 3.1 That Cabinet:

- a) Notes the Scottish Government's consultation on the review of the National Island Plan;
- b) Approves the proposed consultation response provided at Appendix 1; and
- c) Notes the submission of separate consultation responses on behalf of the Island Plan Steering Groups on both islands.

### **4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty**

#### **Financial**

- 4.1 None.

#### **Human Resources**

- 4.2 None.

#### **Legal**

- 4.3 None.

#### **Equality/Socio-economic**

- 4.4 The NIP aims to work with islanders to contribute to the creation of a fairer, healthier, happier nation for all of Scotland and supports the work of the group of Wellbeing Economy Governments.

#### **Climate Change and Carbon**

- 4.5 Several strategic objectives of the NIP contribute to climate change and carbon and align with the Council's Environmental Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy. These include to improve and promote environmental well-being and deal with biosecurity; and to contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation and promote clean, affordable and secure energy.

#### **Key Priorities**

- 4.6 The strategic objectives of the NIP align with and contribute to the priorities and key activities of the Council Plan including supporting the delivery of Islands Plans. The proposed consultation response will contribute to ensuring that the specific needs of

our island communities continue to be addressed within the Plan.

### **Community Wealth Building**

- 4.7 There are no direct implications for Community Wealth Building, however the Island Recovery and Renewal pilot embeds CWB principles throughout its approach to island development and as such, the proposed consultation response is informed by the Council's wider approach to CWB.

### **5. Consultation**

- 5.1 Consultation has taken place with the Cabinet Member for Communities and Islands as Chair of the Cumbrae Island Plan Steering Group. The proposed response has been informed by the experience of and feedback obtained through the pilot project. This includes feedback through the Locality Partnership and Islands Plan Steering Group.

RUSSELL McCUTCHEON  
Executive Director (Place)

For further information please contact **Sarah Baird, Senior Officer- Islands**, on 07919 162039 or via [sarahbaird@north-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:sarahbaird@north-ayrshire.gov.uk).

### **Background Papers**

National Islands Plan, 2019

Respondent Information Form

**Please Note** this form **must** be completed and returned with your response.

To find out how we handle your personal data, please see our privacy policy:  
<https://www.gov.scot/privacy/>

Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

- Individual  
 Organisation

Full name or organisation's name

North Ayrshire Council

Phone number

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The Scottish Government would like your permission to publish your consultation response. Please indicate your publishing preference:

- Publish response with name  
 Publish response only (without name)  
 Do not publish response

**Information for organisations:**

The option 'Publish response only (without name)' is available for individual respondents only. If this option is selected, the organisation name will still be published.

If you choose the option 'Do not publish response', your organisation name may still be listed as having responded to the consultation in, for example, the analysis report.

We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

- Yes  
 No

## Introductory Comments

North Ayrshire Council (NAC) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Scottish Government consultation on the National Islands Plan (NIP). NAC is the first Scottish island authority to work in partnership with the Scottish Government and Highlands & Islands Enterprise to deliver an Islands Recovery & Renewal Pilot. The pilot builds on NIP actions and interprets and delivers these at locality level through the development and delivery of Ten-Year Island Action Plans and is coordinated by the Senior Officer-Islands. The Senior Officer- Islands works across Council services to ensure a joined-up delivery to Island Plan actions.

The response has been informed by the experience of and feedback obtained through the pilot project. This includes feedback through the Locality Partnership and Islands Plan Steering Group. We are not able to fully answer all the questions in the consultation due to a number being targeted towards feedback from island citizens. We have therefore answered relevant questions and highlighted where questions are better suited to resident responses.

We have engaged with the Island Plan Steering Groups on both islands to assist them to prepare and submit their own separate responses. This has included attending Scottish Government consultation workshops on Cumbrae and on Arran, supporting the groups to engage with members and more widely across the island communities, and assisting with preparing responses.

A key area of focus of the pilot has been strengthening the partnership with our island communities of Arran and Cumbrae, island businesses, and wider stakeholders to support the development of applications to local and national funding schemes including the Scottish Government Islands Programme and to facilitate and commence delivery of 10-year Local Island Plans to maximise the potential of North Ayrshire's islands, improve outcomes and benefits for our islanders. As these plans are implemented, they are contributing to and delivering on improved outcomes for the community, economic, and environmental wellbeing of Arran and Cumbrae.

Through ongoing engagement with our island communities on Arran and Cumbrae, the following key priorities, while not exhaustive, were identified as recurring themes. These were expressed in 2021 through the development of the Local Islands Plans and remain today. They are listed in no order of importance or priority:

- Economic growth, investment, and sustainability
- Reliance on seasonal tourism and the need for diversification
- Community capacity and empowerment
- Transport
- Recruitment and retention of employees
- Housing
- Health and social care
- Energy and energy costs
- Connectivity/digital
- Planning policy
- Preservation of heritage and cultural identity
- Protection of natural environment
- Education and skills and retention of young people
- Meeting the needs of older people

- Population and depopulation
- “Island premium” costs
- Marine planning
- Resilience

These priorities should therefore be considered within the review of the NIP.

## The Consultation

### Question 1

**How much would you say you know about the current National Islands Plan?**

- Nothing at all
- I have heard of it but know nothing about the content
- I know a little about it
- I know a lot about it

The Council knows a lot about it.

### Question 2

**Has the current National Islands Plan affected your life in any way?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Please feel free to expand on your answer in the box below.

It is noted that this question is primarily targeted towards island citizens. From a Local Authority perspective we would however provide the following feedback. Through the introduction of the NIP in 2018, the Council identified an opportunity to test new ways of working across island communities and businesses, local and national government, community planning partners and Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

In 2021, the Council commenced a three-year Islands Recovery and Renewal Pilot in partnership with the Scottish Government and Highlands and Islands Enterprise. This aims to support an inclusive and green economic recovery and renewal of North Ayrshire's island communities in line with their unique challenges and opportunities, led by a Senior Officer- Islands post. The pilot is strongly aligned to the delivery of the strategic objectives of the current NIP and to Community Wealth Building (CWB) principles, contributing to the Council's CWB Strategy and reflecting our pioneering approach to economic development in Scotland.

The focus of the pilot to date has been on the creation of the Island Plans for each of the North Ayrshire islands. The plans were developed in 2021/22 and both reflect synergies with the Strategic Objectives of the NIP whilst creating a locality focus for Arran and Cumbrae. The success of the pilot has led to a two-year extension from the Scottish Government and Highlands & Islands Enterprise commencing March 2024. This will allow NAC to match this continued support and to create a longer-term Islands Recovery and Renewal Programme, reflective of the need for a longer timescale to implement actions from the plans.

During the development of the Local Island Plans, the Council commissioned and



published research from the Fraser of Allander Institute on the [‘The impact of Covid-19 on the Arran economy’](#) and the Council undertook an economic profiling exercise for the Cumbrae economy. Both reports provided an outline socio-economic baseline for Arran and Cumbrae to be updated and monitored to inform an evidence-based approach to policy development and funding bids.

It is recognised however, that there are challenges around obtaining accurate data, specifically relating to Cumbrae. This is due to the relatively small size of the community, which has not been separated from the mainland in statistics and the relatively complex makeup of its population. Both Arran and Cumbrae island stakeholders have expressed the importance of continuing to build on good quality data for each island, ensuring an accurate evidence base for future decision-making and the prioritisation of resources including financial investment.

One possible solution to addressing this concern being explored through the Ayrshire and Highlands and Islands Regional Economic Partnerships is the potential of creating Regional Intelligence Hubs. This approach would support regional and local data analysis, relevant policy research and support strategy development, covering a broad range of economic issues facing our region including demographics, economic growth, skills, housing, and employment.

### Question 3

**Has the effect of the current National Islands Plan on your life been positive, negative or not at all?**

**Positive**

Negative

It has not affected my life

Please feel free to expand on your answer in the box below.

It is noted that this question is primarily targeted towards island citizens. From a Local Authority perspective we would provide the following feedback.

We consider the current National Islands Plan to have contributed positively for our island communities. It has provided direct effects and benefits specifically through the support and delivery of the Islands pilot and the dedicated resource and funding provided, to achieve a range of specific outcomes aligned to the islands’ priorities. Examples include:

- The development, ongoing support and monitoring of Local Islands Plans for both Arran and Cumbrae.
- Formation of new Island Plan Steering Groups creating collaborative, inclusive and place-based partnerships taking a progressive role in local development and action planning for their islands.
- Specific support provided for island communities to address their priorities and support the identification and preparation of bids to access external funding for example through the Scottish Government Islands Programme, funding for North Ayrshire Islands Skills Initiative pilot and Islands Cost of Living Emergency Crisis funding.
- The pilot is contributing to closer and more coordinated working between the

island communities, community planning partners, national and local government and our collective approach to improve island wellbeing, including in areas such as housing where the Arran Housing Task Force has also recently been established.

#### Question 4

**What are your views on the content of the current National Islands Plan?**

**Positive**

Negative

None

Please feel free to expand on your answer in the box below.

The current NIP has informed the development of our Islands Recovery and Renewal Pilot and Local Islands Plans. The strategic objectives covered all the key priorities for island communities informed by the consultation exercise across more than 40 islands including on Cumbrae and Arran and involving over 1,000 participants. However it is recognised that the current National Islands Plan was published in December 2019, just months before the pandemic and as a result the focus for delivery has had to be flexed to support island communities through this exceptional period.

The content of the current plan is effectively presented, clear, concise. The Plan is recognised as being a high-level strategic plan, however it would benefit from improved simplified language and reduction of public sector terminology. In addition, the current plan is lengthy and would benefit from an accompanying abridged version going forward in the new version that would be more accessible to island communities.

#### Question 5

**In your opinion, has the current National Islands Plan made progress towards achieving its Strategic Objectives to address:**

No progress	Minimal progress	Satisfactory progress	Progress exceeding expectations
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##### **Strategic Objective 1**

*Population*

##### **Strategic Objective 2**

*Sustainable Economic Development*

##### **Strategic Objective 3**

*Transport*

**Strategic Objective 4**

*Housing*

**Strategic Objective 5**

*Fuel Poverty*

**Strategic Objective 6**

*Digital*

**Strategic Objective 7**

*Health, Social Care  
and Wellbeing*

**Strategic Objective 8**

*Environment and  
Biodiversity*

**Strategic Objective 9**

*Climate Change and  
Energy*

**Strategic Objective 10**

*Empowered  
Communities*

**Strategic Objective 11**

*Arts, Culture  
and Language*

**Strategic Objective 12**

*Education*

**Strategic Objective 13**

*Implementation*

We welcome the progress of the National Islands Plan to date however we recognise that further significant action and investment is required to fully deliver on the strategic objectives. This is particularly the case in relation to population, transport, connectivity and housing, which are the key priorities for our island communities. We would also highlight that the island communities are best placed to respond to this question from an islander's perspective.

From a Local Authority perspective there are several key examples of positive progress being made locally toward the national strategic objectives including:

**SO1 Population:** through our involvement with the Convention of Highlands and Islands Population Working Group, the Council secured funding to develop and deliver the North Ayrshire Islands Skills Initiative pilot to address population decline and ensure a healthy and balance population profile.

**SO2 Sustainable Economic Development:** through the facilitation and delivery of the Local Island Plans to maximise the islands' sustainable economic potential.

**SO4 Housing:** through the recent establishment of a new Arran Housing Task Force by the Council, involving a wide range of partners to address the housing issues facing island residents and businesses.

**SO5 Fuel Poverty:** through the Scottish Government Cost of Living Crisis Emergency Fund, we are providing Energy Smart funding for tailored advice, support and grants and Money Matters support to provide specific money and debt advice to help island households manage higher energy costs and to address the urgency of the cost crisis.

**SO10 Empowered Island Communities and Strong Local Partnerships:** through the creation of Island Plan Steering Groups taking a progressive role in local development and action planning for their islands, to empower diverse communities and different places and through Island Programme funding to support the delivery of community led projects.

**SO11 Arts, Culture and Heritage:** through securing funding to appoint a dedicated Island Culture & Heritage Officer to support arts, culture and language on Arran and Cumbrae.

The Council welcomes the Annual Report presented to the Parliament each year setting out the progress made and the publication of an annual implementation route map (IRM) that addresses each of the 13 strategic objectives (SO) and accompanying commitments. However, the IRM could benefit from detailed SO case studies including pictures and lead organisation information that brings the commitments and actions to life, island communities can identify with and that can be used as tangible examples of best practice, showcasing the activities taking place across Scottish Islands.

### Question 6

**There are 13 Strategic Objectives in the current National Islands Plan. What is your opinion on the number of strategic objectives?**

- Just right
- Too Many
- Too Few
- No opinion

Please feel free to expand on your answer in the box below.

The number of strategic objectives should be proportionate to and reflect the needs of island communities and the Plan's commitments. This should be informed by the feedback from the consultation process and be deliverable within the context of the Plan and associated resources. It should however be noted that the strategic objectives are interrelated with several of the 13 identified being dependent on the delivery of the Transport, Housing and Population objectives. A smaller number of objectives could therefore be considered on this basis.

### Question 7

**There are 134 commitments in the current National Islands Plan What is your opinion on the number of commitments?**

- Just right
- Too Many
- Too Few
- No opinion

Please feel free to expand on your answer in the box below.

The number of commitments should be proportionate to and reflect the objectives of the Plan. This should be informed by the feedback from the consultation process and be deliverable within the context of the Plan and associated resources.

### Question 8

**Overall, what do you has think worked well in the current National Islands Plan?**

It is noted that this question is primarily targeted towards island citizens, the Council is supporting the preparation of separate consultation responses from each of the Island Plan Steering Groups for Arran and Cumbrae that will be submitted by the Chair of each group, with support from the Senior Officer, Islands, allowing for a full response to all consultation questions from North Ayrshire islands. These separate responses will ensure that the feedback comes

directly from island residents on what they think worked well in the current National Islands Plan.

We would however offer the following feedback from a Local Authority perspective. The provision of funding through the various funding streams has been welcome including the Islands Infrastructure Fund, Islands Programme, and Islands Communities Fund. Through this funding, our islands have benefited from a range of investment to date. Through time it is envisaged that these projects will support the islands to continue to be attractive, compelling, and economically viable places to remain or relocate through investment that improves, creates, or safeguards locally developed and delivered projects, that ultimately contribute to measurable population retention and repopulation.

The projects that are being delivered via the Islands Programme will have a long-term impact in the communities and are critical to community growth and development. As well as delivering capital infrastructure, the services provided via these projects will enable a range of well-being, environmental and quality of life benefits to the communities. We would envisage that their delivery will lead to benefits such as job creation, increased tourism, improved infrastructure, increased accessibility and enhanced local service provision.

The support provided for the Islands Recovery and Renewal pilot from Scottish Government (SG), Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) and North Ayrshire Council, as a result of the current National Islands Plan, has been fundamental to enabling the development of Local Island Plans. Arguably this would either not have happened or not at the scale, scope or pace it has, without this direct support.

To demonstrate an example of what has worked well, the 3-year Islands Recovery and Renewal pilot (2021-2024) has been extended by a further 2 years to the end February 2026, demonstrating the Council, HIE and SG's recognition of the importance of this resource in supporting our islands. There is a continuous focus through the dedicated Islands pilot on identifying economic opportunities on Arran and Cumbrae including progressing improved alignment in investment, taking opportunities as they arise, tackling obstacles and identifying and delivering on the islands shared priorities.

## **Question 9**

**Overall, what do you think could have worked better in the current National Islands Plan?**

It is noted that this question is primarily targeted towards island citizens. The Council are supporting the preparation of separate consultation responses from each of the Island Plan Steering Groups for Arran and Cumbrae that will be submitted by the Chair of each group, with support from the Senior Officer, Islands, allowing for a full response to all consultation questions from North Ayrshire islands representation. These separate responses will ensure that the feedback comes directly from island residents on what they consider could have worked better in the current National Islands Plan.

We would however offer the following feedback from a Local Authority perspective. Whilst the funding made available through the Plan has been welcomed additional capital and revenue funding would have further supported the delivery of the plan's priorities. There is also a need to simplify the external funding landscape specifically related to funds linked to the National Islands Plan targeted to island communities and ensuring investment available is proportionate and reflective of the 'premium' costs of living and costs of doing business on islands. This is critical to reducing inequalities, supporting recovery, building resilience, and ensuring sustainable and set-for-success project delivery.

For future funding rounds, the Council would welcome early engagement in the Scottish Government's considerations for distribution options to ensure there is a fair and consistent methodology for the allocation of funds to island communities in Scotland.

For our islands to be in a strong position to fully exploit investment opportunities that the National and Local Island Plans address, there must be a coordination of the Islands Programme to other capital funding and planned initiatives for islands, both at local authority and national level. Our islands need to prepare not react. Funding streams must complement and enhance ongoing planned investment designed to support those living on Scotland's islands and ensure that island communities and stakeholders are central to the decisions on how and where these capital investments are made.

It is important to note that there is also a need for island specific revenue funding for example towards capacity building and project specific delivery staff. This is essential to improve and assist infrastructure/capital projects delivery specifically where statutory and public bodies are not eligible to apply for Island Programme streams for example the Islands Community Fund.

Infrastructure projects by their nature require a significant level of lead in time and development to ensure that the communities and stakeholders are engaged in the process and inform their development. The relatively tight timescales around funding and delivery have constrained the ability to secure match funding to provide additionality and support delivery. Early notice of timelines for future rounds of the fund would further improve the process and enable authorities to work with island communities to develop project pipelines and plan resource around submission dates.

## **Question 10**

**Do you think there should be a new plan for the Scottish Islands?**

**Yes** / No / Don't know

Please explain your reasons

We would propose that a refresh of the current Plan be undertaken which

effectively address input obtained from the consultation process. This should include the feedback received from island communities and Authorities specifically around governance, awareness, and the focus of a National Islands Plan.

## Question 11

**What would you like to see in any future or revised National Islands Plan?**

### **Refresh the current National Islands Plan but keep the same format**

A whole new plan is needed

Something else

Please feel free to expand on your answer in the box below.

This consultation provides an important opportunity to ensure that the plan's objectives still meet the needs of our island communities and reflect the priorities that island communities want Scottish Government and delivery partners to focus on. The plan should promote, support, and harness the voices, resources, and wellbeing of island communities.

The plan should recognise the interconnectivity between the strategic objectives, noting that they are not linear, and all have a dependency and impact on each other for example transport, housing, employment. Consideration of a more thematic or cluster approach to strategic objectives would be encouraged with a Community Wealth Building approach embedded within any future iteration, to ensure maximum local benefit for island communities.

This is a time when Scotland, its communities and residents are all facing severe economic conditions, inflationary burdens, and pressures on resources therefore, a refresh rather than the creation of a whole new plan may be more appropriate and resource and cost effective.

The development and delivery of a future iteration of the NIP needs to be suitably resourced nationally and locally to enable effective delivery of all relevant priorities appropriate to the islands. It must be supported by long term and multi-year funding that enables and creates local opportunity, generates community wealth building, builds momentum, supports change, and delivers economies of scale, value for money and social return on investment for communities and their local economies.

The NIP would benefit from an improved and effective communication strategy and using a variety of communication methods. This could include utilising traditional communication methods including local newsletters, local papers, leaflets, posters etc recognising that not all island community residents wish to or are able to access digital communications. It would be beneficial to have more island community input to NIP Communications Plan for the future.

Consideration should be given to how islands Councils are and can be supported to use existing powers available to them and collaborate with communities to deliver improved, more responsive public services and better outcomes for communities through the NIP. As the Local Authority, we can and do open doors to



communities. An improved partnership approach by Scottish Government across all island authorities to work very efficiently through them will ensure SG meaningfully engage with the people and communities who will be impacted by introduction of a new NIP, relevant policy changes or additions.

### **Contribution to Impact Assessments**

We will be seeking the views of stakeholders and the public for the Island Communities Impact Assessment for this work and on any potential equality issues. We are assessing what impact our islands policies may have across protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010 (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation). Impact assessments will be further developed alongside the drafting of the refreshed National Islands Plan.

If you would like to be engaged in the impact assessment process, please email the Scottish Government's Islands Team at [info@islandsteam.scot](mailto:info@islandsteam.scot).