

ISG – 11/07/17 - Agenda

Islands Strategic Group
Breascleate Community Centre, Breascleate, Lewis, Western Isles
Tuesday, 11 July 2017 (10:00-12:00)

Paper	Agenda item	Introduced by
	Welcome & Introductions	Minister for Transport and the Islands
Paper 11/07/17/01	Draft Minutes of Meeting on 30 March 2017	Minister for Transport and the Islands
Paper 11/07/17/02	Islands Bill	Minister for Transport and the Islands
Paper 11/07/17/03	National Islands Plan	Minister for Transport and the Islands
Paper 11/07/17/04	Forward Work Programme	Minister for Transport and the Islands
	Any Other Business	Minister for Transport and the Islands

ISG Secretariat, July 2017

Islands Strategic Group
Breasclete Community Centre, Breasclete, Lewis, Western Isles
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ISLANDS (SCOTLAND) BILL

The Islands (Scotland) Bill was introduced to Parliament on 9 June and launched by the Minister for Transport and Islands on 12 June. Copies of the Bill and the accompanying documents are attached separately.

SUMMARY OF BILL CONTENTS

Purpose of the Bill

The purpose of the Bill is to ensure that there is a sustained focus in Government and the wider public sector on improving outcomes for our island communities.

The Government has a good record in working in partnership with island communities, local authorities and other organisations in tackling many of the challenges that our island communities face. This can be seen across the whole of Government in matters such as the £5 million Island Housing Fund, investment in transport infrastructure and services, through our commitments on digital connectivity and our mobile action plan and on the Crown Estate where we are committed to devolving 100% of net revenues to island communities and considering the longer-term management arrangements as part of the forthcoming Crown Estate Bill.

National Islands Plan

This Part of the Bill places a duty on the Scottish Ministers to prepare, lay before the Scottish Parliament and publish a 'National Islands Plan'. The Plan must set out the main objectives and strategy of the Scottish Ministers in relation to improving outcomes for island communities.

The Plan will provide a framework for reporting on the work the Scottish Government and its agencies is taking forward across a wide range of key policy areas to help sustain and support all of Scotland's island communities.

Duties in relation to island communities

This Part of the Bill places a duty on the Scottish Ministers and other relevant public bodies that they must have regard to island communities in exercising their functions. Under the Bill an island communities' impact assessment would need to be prepared when a new or revised policy, strategy or service is likely to have a significantly different effect on island communities from its effect on other communities. For the Scottish Ministers this also includes the development of legislation.

The duty created under the Bill is often referred to as ‘island-proofing’. The importance of island-proofing was recognised in *Empowering Scotland’s Island Communities*:

“The principle of island-proofing is one of building a broad-based islands awareness into the decision making process of all parts of the public sector. Island-proofing consists of considering the particular needs and circumstances of island communities when the Scottish Government and other relevant public authorities are exercising their functions and making decisions.”

Na h-Eileanan an Iar Scottish parliamentary constituency

Currently under Schedule 1 to the Scotland Act 1998, Orkney and Shetland are named as two of the 73 constituencies for the purposes of the Scotland Act 1998. This ensures that there must be distinct Orkney and Shetland constituencies for elections to the Scottish Parliament, protected from variation after any boundary review. The Bill includes provision to provide this statutory protection for the Na h-Eileanan an Iar Scottish parliamentary constituency.

Greater Flexibility in electoral ward design for islands

Under section 1 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 2004 each electoral ward in Scotland has to return 3 or 4 councillors. This can mean that that populated islands may be placed in an electoral ward which also contains a significant proportion, and often a majority, of mainland population. This had led to concerns that the distinct interests of island communities might not be fully represented in council discussions.

The Bill provides the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland the flexibility to recommend to Scottish Ministers electoral wards of 1 or 2 councillors be created covering populated islands, if they deem this appropriate. It would be anticipated that any changes would be implemented in time for the 2022 Scottish Local Government Elections.

Development in the Scottish island marine development area

A commitment was given in the ‘Empowering Scotland’s Island Communities’ prospectus that the Scottish Government would not seek to legislate to diminish the powers of the Zetland and Orkney County Council Acts of 1974, and would progress as required any proposals from Comhairle nan Eilean Siar regarding which provisions from these Acts that would also be relevant and appropriate for the Western Isles to have. The 2015 consultation therefore asked if the Zetland and Orkney County Council Acts should be extended to cover other island authorities.

The Government is keen to provide all island local authorities have the opportunity to have more control in the development of the seas around their island communities. The Bill provides a regulation-making power so that should a local authority with inhabited islands wish to become a licensing authority then a licensing scheme can be established by Ministers through secondary legislation to enable them to do that.

Any regulations will require full and proper consultation and the agreement of Parliament.

The delegated power within the Bill provides what any regulations would cover in the set-up of any scheme including the application procedure to be followed, fees chargeable, appeals, inquiries, enforcement and remediation, penalties and consultation.

BILL TIMETABLE AND PROCESS

The timetable for the passage of the Islands Bill through parliament is for the parliament itself to decide. The expected timings are:

Introduction Date	9 June 2017
Publication/Launch Date	12 June 2017
Stage 1 Evidence Period	September to December 2017
Stage 1 Debate	February 2018
Stage 2	March 2018
Stage 3	April 2018
Royal Assent	May/June 2018
Commencement	July 2018 (earliest realistic date)

The lead committee in the parliament is the Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee. They issued a call for written evidence on 30 June 2017 with a deadline for responses of 25 September 2017.

<http://www.parliament.scot/newsandmediacentre/105516.aspx>

During the autumn of 2017 we would expect the Committee to take further evidence from island stakeholders on the Bill which will culminate in questions to the Minister for Transport and Islands based on the evidence received. The Finance Committee and the Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee will also scrutinise the Bill and report to the lead committee.

The Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee will then produce a report and make recommendations to Parliament. A debate will be held in the chamber where the Parliament will be asked whether they agree to the general principles of the Bill and pass to Stage 2.

Stage 2 is the first amending stage. Amendments can be brought forward by the Government and MSPs to be scrutinised by the lead committee who then vote on whether to accept the amendments.

Stage 3 is the final amending stage. Stage 3 is held in the chamber and is the last opportunity to amend the Bill. The Parliament will then vote on whether to pass the Bill.

Once a Bill is passed it must wait a statutory period of 4 weeks to allow for any issues of competence to be raised by Scots and UK Law Officers before it is passed to the Queen for signature. There is usually a gap between Royal Assent and commencement but certain provisions may come into force upon Royal Assent.

Next Steps

As can be seen from the timetable above there is still plenty of opportunities for discussion about the Islands Bill and the potential for changes to be made. The Group has previously discussed potential additions and the Government will continue to engage over the coming months in tandem with the Parliamentary process. The Group may want to consider:

- The potential impact of the Bill and how it could lead to changes in outcomes for island communities
- Any improvements that they believe could be made to the current provisions
- Any new proposals and suggestions for amendments

Islands Bill Team
July 2017

Islands Strategic Group
Breascleite Community Centre, Breascleite, Lewis, Western Isles
Tuesday, 11 July 2017 (10:00-12:00)

NATIONAL ISLANDS PLAN

Purpose

1. To seek the Group's initial views on the structure and content of the proposed National Islands Plan.

Background

2. A key provision of the Islands (Scotland) Bill will see a duty placed on Scottish Ministers to prepare, lay before the Scottish Parliament and publish a National Islands Plan.

3. The purpose of the Plan will be to set out the main objectives and strategy of Scottish Ministers in relation to improving outcomes for island communities.

4. Activity to improve outcomes takes place across the whole range of policies, strategies and services provided by the Scottish Government and the wider public sector and the national plan will link these aspects together.

5. The national plan will provide an agreed strategic direction, not only for the Scottish Government, but for all Scottish public authorities that have an interest in improving outcomes for island communities. The plan will seek to focus resources and, where necessary, provide targets for key areas of activity.

6. The Plan will also provide the structure for reporting on the work the Scottish Government and its agencies are taking forward across a wide range of key policy areas to help sustain and support all of Scotland's island communities.

7. It will help ensure that the momentum and focus that has been generated by the Our Islands Our Future campaign, the work of the Islands Strategic Group, and the passage of the Islands Bill itself, is maintained going forward.

Timescales and Consultation

8. The Bill provides that the first Plan must be laid before the Scottish Parliament within 12 months from the date on which the Act comes into force. Scottish Ministers would then be able to review the Plan at any time but they must begin a review of the Plan before the end of five years from the date the last Plan was published.

9. In preparing the new or any revised plan Scottish Ministers must consult people and communities in the islands and those who will likely be affected by the proposals in the plan. Scottish Ministers must lay a proposed Plan before the Parliament and then publish it after parliamentary consideration.

10. In addition, Scottish Ministers must prepare and publish a National Islands Plan Progress Report on an annual basis following the publication of a new or revised plan. The Progress Report must provide an update on the progress towards achieving improved outcomes for island communities and any other information Scottish Ministers consider appropriate.

11. The progress report must also provide information on island-proofing activity that has occurred over the previous year. The progress report must be laid before the Parliament by Scottish Ministers and then published.

Potential Structure/Content

12. In considering the model for the plan, thought needs to be given specifically to structure and content. On structure, this may take the form of a policy subject based approach similar in nature to the British Sign Language (BSL) National Plan (see paragraph 17 below). Alternatively, the structure could be linked in some way to an existing model such as the National Performance Framework (**see Annex A**).

13. Equally a thematic approach could also be adopted similar to that used for the **'Empowering Scotland's Island Communities Prospectus'**. This was themed across three key headings of:

- *'Promoting Islands Voice'*;
- *'Harnessing Islands Potential'*; and
- *'Enhancing Islands Wellbeing'*

14. These headings were also used to form the structure of the **'Empowering Scotland's Island Communities Update'** publication which was issued in March 2016. This document in some respects gave an early preview of the format and content of what a future plan might look like so for continuity purposes there may be merit in sticking with the three themes identified above.

15. It is anticipated that the plan would cover all key policy areas falling under the responsibility of Scottish Ministers. It would also incorporate relevant commitments from the Empowering Scotland's Island Communities Prospectus; Manifestos; Programme for Government; and other new and existing policy initiatives.

16. Structure and content were key areas commented on in responses to the 2015 consultation. **Annex B** therefore contains an extract from the consultation analysis by way of background.

Examples of Current Plans/Strategies

17. There are already a number of existing plans and strategies that could be looked at to help develop the model for the new National Islands Plan:

- **The National Gaelic Language Plan** – sets out the strategy for promoting, and facilitating the promotion of, the use and understanding of the Gaelic language, and Gaelic education and Gaelic culture;
- **British Sign Language (BSL) National Plan** - framed around ten long term goals (these relate to public services as a whole; early years; school education; post-school education; employment; Health mental health and social care; transport; culture, leisure, sport and the arts; justice; and democracy). The plan covers the period 2017-2023 and sets out more than fifty actions we will take over the next six years.
- **National Planning Framework (NPF)** - sets the context for development planning in Scotland and provides a framework for the spatial development of Scotland as a whole. Key outcomes include economic growth and regeneration; sustainable and well-designed places; a reduction in carbon emissions; supporting better transport and digital connectivity; and protecting and enhancing our natural cultural assets for sustainable use.
- **National Transport Strategy (NTS)** - sets the long term vision for our transport policies.

Conclusion

18. The group are invited to offer initial views on the development of the National Islands Plan.

ISG Secretariat
July 2017

NATIONAL PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

NATIONAL PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

THE GOVERNMENT'S PURPOSE

To focus government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth

HIGH LEVEL TARGETS RELATING TO THE PURPOSE

Growth Productivity Participation Population Solidarity Cohesion Sustainability

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

	WEALTHIER & FAIRER	SMARTER	HEALTHIER	SAFER & STRONGER	GREENER	
NATIONAL OUTCOMES	We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe					NATIONAL OUTCOMES
	We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people					
	We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation					
	Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens					
	Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed					
	We live longer, healthier lives					
	We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society					
	We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk					
	We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger					
	We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need					
	We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others					
	We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations					
	We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity					
	We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production					
	Our people are able to maintain their independence as they get older and are able to access appropriate support when they need it					
Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs						

National Performance Framework – Measurement Set

Increase Scotland's Economic Growth	Improve Productivity	Improve Economic Participation	Increase Population Growth
PURPOSE TARGETS			
Population – Increase Healthy Life Expectancy	Solidarity – Reduce Income Inequality	Cohesion – Reduce Inequalities in Economic Participation across Scotland	Sustainability – Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions

NATIONAL INDICATORS	Increase the number of businesses	Improve the quality of healthcare experience	NATIONAL INDICATORS
	Increase exports	Reduce the percentage of adults who smoke	
	Improve digital infrastructure	Reduce alcohol related hospital admissions	
	Reduce traffic congestion	Reduce the number of individuals with problem drug use	
	Improve Scotland's reputation	Improve people's perceptions about the crime rate in their area	
	Increase research and development spending	Reduce reconviction rates	
	Improve knowledge exchange from university research	Reduce crime victimisation rates	
	Improve the skill profile of the population	Reduce deaths on Scotland's roads	
	Reduce underemployment	Improve people's perceptions of the quality of public services	
	Reduce the proportion of employees earning less than the Living Wage	Improve the responsiveness of public services	
	Reduce the pay gap	Reduce the proportion of individuals living in poverty	
	Increase the proportion of pre-school centres receiving positive inspection report	Reduce children's deprivation	
	Increase the proportion of schools receiving positive inspection reports	Improve access to suitable housing options for those in housing need	
	Improve levels of educational attainment	Increase the number of new homes	
	Increase the proportion of young people in learning, training or work	Widen use of the Internet	
	Increase the proportion of graduates in positive destinations	Improve people's perceptions of their neighbourhood	
	Improve children's services	Increase cultural engagement	
	Improve children's dental health	Improve the state of Scotland's historic sites	
	Increase the proportion of babies with a healthy birth weight	Improve access to local greenspace	
	Increase the proportion of healthy weight children	Increase people's use of Scotland's outdoors	
	Increase physical activity	Improve the condition of protected nature sites	
	Improve self-assessed general health	Increase the abundance of terrestrial breeding birds: biodiversity	
	Improve mental wellbeing	Increase natural capital	
	Reduce premature mortality	Improve the state of Scotland's marine environment	
	Improve end of life care	Reduce Scotland's carbon footprint	
	Improve support for people with care needs	Increase the proportion of journeys to work made by public or active transport	
	Reduce emergency admissions to hospital	Reduce waste generated	
		Increase renewable electricity production	

NATIONAL ISLANDS PLAN – EXTRACT FROM CONSULTATION ANALYSIS

1. As part of the responses to the 2015 consultation exercise over 85% of those who expressed views highlighted their support for the Scottish Government to introduce a National Islands Plan. Perceived benefits of such a plan included:

- Potential to address issues facing island communities, as well as to keep a focus on these, and tackle changing needs; and
- An accountable framework for identifying objectives, actions and responsibilities.

2. Many respondents to the consultation commented on what they saw as additional requirements for a National Islands Plan, e.g. that it should recognise the overall context and existing work; that local communities and relevant organisations should be involved and that there should be mechanisms for accountability, reporting and review.

3. The most commonly suggested lifespan for a National Islands Plan was five years, although other suggestions were made. Among the perceived benefits of a five-year period were that it would align with the timescales for parliamentary and political cycles. It would also allow time for longer term strategies to be put in place.

Overall requirements for a National Islands Plan

4. Many respondents (most, but not all of whom were in favour of a National Islands Plan) commented on what they saw as particular requirements for this. Common themes were:

- Recognition of existing work and the overall context.
- Inclusion and involvement of local communities and relevant organisations.
- Accountability, reporting and review.
- The general nature of a Plan.

Recognition of existing work and the overall context

5. Several respondents suggested that a National Islands Plan should be similar to other plans and should focus on individual islands' needs and key areas.

6. Some also stated that it should fit with the existing structure, and with Locality Planning. A few stated that it should be aligned to the development of Community Plans, Single Outcome Agreements, and Local Outcomes Improvement Plans, as well as being consistent with UK and Scottish Government plans and proposals. It was also stated that it should underpin, and be underpinned by, island-proofing.

7. A further issue raised was that a Plan should recognise the differences between islands, and the diversity of their circumstances and priorities.

Inclusion and involvement of local communities and relevant organisations

8. A further very common requirement for a Plan was that local communities and relevant organisations should be involved in preparing and monitoring this. Comments included the need to avoid a "top-down" approach, and for input at a local level (including, for example: consultation; local formulation of a Plan; and collaboration). A few respondents expressed a specific wish to be involved.

9. A small number of comments were made on specific roles. One respondent, for example, suggested that local Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) should play a key role in facilitating national and local links. One respondent suggested that it would be useful if community development work was led by one body.

10. Two respondents stressed a need to ensure that the nature of consultation was understood, and to avoid tiring people of this (e.g. by the Scottish Government combining their efforts with development trusts and councils).

11. A few respondents mentioned the particular importance of local decision-making, and one stated that they would not support a Plan that reduced subsidiarity or constrained the current powers and responsibilities of local government. Another stated that a Plan should not give Scottish Ministers the power of direction that may conflict with local decision-making.

12. A small number of respondents stressed that a Plan should not increase bureaucracy. A few stated that it would need resources, or an identified budget, and one expressed the view that there should be no additional financial burden on councils as a result of a Plan, unless fully funded by the Scottish Government.

Accountability, reporting and review

13. Some respondents mentioned the need for mechanisms for accountability, reporting and review. A few expressed specific support for a requirement for Ministers to report annually to the Scottish Parliament on progress with the Plan. A few stated specifically that the Plan should demonstrate and report on community benefit, while a few suggested particular measures (e.g. the assessment of well-being of individuals or communities; and the use of population as a measure of success).

The general nature of a Plan

14. Comments were also made on the general nature of a Plan. Additional perceived requirements for a National Islands Plan (mentioned by small numbers in each case) were that it should be:

- Active and "working".
- Ambitious.
- Clear and focused.
- Flexible.
- Outcome-focused.

- Realistic and deliverable.
- Rolling.

15. A small number of respondents raised concerns about the terminology. A few stated that it should not be called "national", or suggested that it should be named a "Scottish Islands Plan". One respondent suggested the use of the term "Islands Charter". One respondent suggested that there should be greater guidance on the purpose and desired outcome of a Plan.

Areas for a Plan to cover and report on - Overall views

16. Most of the comments focused on identifying the areas respondents felt should be covered and reported upon in a National Islands Plan.

17. A small number of respondents made reference to their answers to previous questions and did not provide further comment. A few stated that it should be for the island local authorities themselves to determine the specific nature of the content.

18. Among those who provided details, three common overall themes emerged. These were the need for the Plan to cover and report upon:

- Overall challenges affecting island areas.
- Issues relating to specific policy areas.
- The general coverage and approach of the Plan.

Overall challenges affecting island areas

19. Many respondents stated that a Plan should cover and report on overall challenges facing island areas. Among those identified, the three issues mentioned most commonly were population, overall sustainability and service delivery issues.

20. Some respondents, for example, mentioned the overall importance of population issues, or the general need to understand how island communities were monitoring pressures and planning for demographic change. Several mentioned the need to include specific population issues such as: the age balance of the population; depopulation; sparsity; out-migration; and the retention and attraction of population (including young people).

21. Several respondents mentioned the need to include sustainability issues, both in specific policy areas (discussed below) and more generally. Comments were made, for example, about: the general need to promote island sustainability; the need for infrastructure to support this; and the need for sustainability of communities, culture, economy and specific services.

22. Many comments were made about planning and delivery of services in specific policy areas, and these are discussed below. Some respondents also made comments about a general need for a Plan to cover and report on the service challenges for island areas. Issues raised included: the delivery of key public services; the level of services; access to services; service charges and equality of public and private services; and the need to include third sector and volunteering services.

23. Other overall challenges facing island areas identified for inclusion (by a small number of respondents in each case) were:

- Cost and affordability of island living.
- Isolation and remoteness.
- Weather and climate.
- The negative impact or unintended consequences of some previous initiatives (with a few examples provided).

24. A small number of respondents stated that the uniqueness and reality of island life should be emphasised within a Plan. One respondent suggested the inclusion of a baseline analysis of "what an island is".

Issues relating to specific policy areas

25. A further very common theme was the identification of specific policy areas and issues that a Plan should cover and report upon.

Specific policy areas

26. Among them, those mentioned most frequently for inclusion in a National Islands Plan were: transport; economic development and planning; education, arts and culture; communications; and energy and power. Health and social care, and housing and building were also common suggestions. Also mentioned were the other policy areas of: community safety; employment and benefits; environment and tourism; finance; and waste management.

27. Within each of the policy areas, as was the case in relation to the statutory guidance, respondents highlighted particular issues they felt a National Islands Plan should cover and report upon.

Issues identified by policy area

28. The most common **communications** issues mentioned for inclusion in a National Islands Plan were broadband and mobile coverage, as well as general digital infrastructure and connectivity. A few respondents mentioned the need for inclusion of telecommunications generally, and a few postal services.

29. Many respondents mentioned **economic development and planning** issues for a Plan to cover and report on. Those mentioned most frequently were: general opportunities for economic development and growth; and support for businesses and social enterprises. Comments were also made on specific sectors, such as: fishing and fisheries; agriculture; crofting; planning (and marine planning); food, drink and tourism. A small number of respondents stated that there should be recognition in a Plan of wealth generation on the islands and of the added value Scottish islands products can bring.

30. Many respondents mentioned **education, arts and culture** issues for inclusion in a Plan, and the most common was the protection and promotion of island cultures, languages and dialects. Other issues suggested included: educational attainment; and rural education and schools (including funding, roles and quality).

31. Several respondents mentioned **employment and benefits** issues for inclusion in a Plan, such as: general employment and unemployment issues; income levels; opportunities for young people; apprenticeships; volunteering; feeding the local employment pipeline; job creation; and investment in training and employment incentives for island-based companies.

32. A further commonly mentioned area for inclusion was **energy and power**, and the most common issues mentioned for a Plan to cover were: power grid and connectivity; measures to address fuel poverty and energy costs; energy production and export; support for innovative energy solutions; renewables; emerging technologies; and energy ownership and regulation.

33. A few respondents mentioned **environment and tourism** issues for inclusion in a Plan, such as: natural resources and protection of the marine and coastal environment; the local community environment; and the needs of the changing environment. One respondent suggested that the Plan should consider National Park status for Shetland (an issue mentioned previously). A few commented on the general need to include tourism, and to develop and encourage sustainable tourism (related to economic development, as noted above).

34. A small number of respondents mentioned **financial issues** for inclusion in a Plan, and the issue raised most frequently related to Crown Estate monies and their disbursement to island communities. Other financial issues suggested were: development funding (including EU funding); investment (e.g. in island infrastructure); procurement; island subsidies; and funding for service provision.

35. Several respondents mentioned **health and social care** issues for inclusion. Several focused on the general need to cover these issues, with specific comments on the need for a Plan to cover: rural surgeries; GP and health worker provision (including out of hours); maternity care; mental health care; care for older people; and the ambulance service.

36. A further policy area mentioned by several respondents was **housing and building** issues. Comments were made on the need for a Plan to cover affordable, innovative, cost-effective and appropriate housing (including rented housing), as well as: planning regulations; building standards; housing standards; housing repairs; and housing grants.

37. A few respondents highlighted **community safety** issues, and those mentioned for a Plan to cover and report on were: police; fire and rescue services; and the coastguard.

38. Many respondents suggested that a Plan should cover and report upon **transport** issues. Common issues mentioned included: general transport provision and development (including air, ferry and bus services); transport links, integration and connectivity; and fares (particularly air and ferry fares). Other issues mentioned included: freight and haulage; transport infrastructure; "lifeline" services; and RET.

39. **Waste management** issues were mentioned by a small number of respondents, with a suggested need for a Plan to include water and waste water infrastructure, and zero waste and circular economy strategies.

The general coverage and approach of a Plan

40. The third very common theme was the general coverage and approach of the Plan. Within this, the issues raised most frequently were: the overall areas for inclusion (policy and geographical); proposals and measures; empowerment and inclusion; and equality.

Overall areas for inclusion

41. Many respondents made comments on the overall areas for inclusion in a Plan. Several stated, for example, that it should address all aspects of community life, or all areas of policy, planning, economic and cultural development. A small number stated that it should be based on the issues which emerged from the "Our Islands, Our Future" campaign.

42. Several respondents expressed the view that a Plan should cover all public services or the work of all public bodies. A few stated that it should cover all areas of devolved Government, or the issues and responsibilities held at Scottish level. Some suggested that it should recognise not only issues controlled by the Scottish or UK Government, but also EU issues.

43. A small number of comments were also made on the geographical coverage of a Plan. These included the suggestion that it should cover the whole Highlands and Enterprise area, and the suggestion that it should include provision not only for island authorities, but also for islands within local authorities. A few respondents stated that the coverage of a Plan should be extended to other remote and rural communities.

Proposals and measures

44. Many respondents stated that a Plan should detail the proposals for island communities, as well as the measures and activities undertaken (by all relevant parties). Comments included, for example, that it should include a vision for Scotland's islands, and that it should develop a set of priorities (national and local). It was also suggested that it should include long term commitments.

45. A few respondents expressed the view that it should also identify any additional resources required for its implementation.

46. It was also suggested that a Plan should detail how island-proofing had been addressed, in order to help ensure its effective implementation and measure its impact. A few respondents stated that it should establish core indicators to evidence the outcomes, and that these should be tracked.

47. Several respondents also stated that a Plan should record all legislation and policy development where island-proofing was not considered necessary, and the reasons for this.

Empowerment and inclusion

48. A further area raised frequently for a National Islands Plan to cover and report on was the issue of community empowerment and inclusion. Comments included, for example, the need for it to cover: a greater obligation for consultation by public bodies; community capacity building; community enterprise; community representation on decision-making bodies; community ownership of assets; local decision-making and the principle of subsidiarity.

Equality

49. The need for a Plan to cover and report upon equality issues was also a common theme. Respondents suggested, for example, that it should focus on reducing and preventing inequality and should ensure that islands are treated fairly and equitably, recognising the specific issues they face.

Other comments on general coverage

50. A small number of other comments were made about the general coverage and approach of a Plan. For example, a small number of respondents suggested that it should cover issues such as: managing expectations in the islands; the downsides, as well as benefits of measures; and local accountability.

Islands Strategic Group
Breasclete Community Centre, Breasclete, Lewis, Western Isles
Tuesday, 11 July 2017 (10:00-12:00)

FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

Background

1. At the outset of the new Islands Strategic Group in September 2016 a range of subjects were identified by members as priority areas for future discussion. Categorised under the three key themes of the Empowering Scotland's Island Communities Prospectus, the areas identified were as follows:

Promoting Islands Voice	Harnessing Islands Resources	Enhancing Islands Wellbeing
Islands Bill	Energy – Renewables; Fuel Poverty	Depopulation/Migration
Islands Plan	Crown Estate	Education/Health – (recruitment/provision)
Island-Proofing	Environment (including Waste; Designations; Crofting; Agriculture & Fisheries	EU/Brexit
	Tourism (including Culture)	Digital (Mobile/Broadband)
		Housing
		Economy
		Planning
		Transport (discussed primarily through Islands Transport Forum
		Social Security Reforms

2. To date the group has and will continue to have substantive discussions on all aspects relating to the Islands Bill highlighted under the 'Promoting Islands Voice' theme as part of its work programme. Alongside this there have been substantive discussions on Depopulation/Migration; EU/Brexit; Social Security Reforms. In addition there have also been focussed discussions on Planning and Renewables, with a particular focus on the Contract for Difference/Island Wind issue.

3. With the exception of Renewables, all the subjects discussed to date have been proposed by the Scottish Government. Moving forward it would be hoped the member councils would be willing to play a more leading role in shaping the agenda of future meetings, including the preparation of substantive policy papers for discussion.

Island Areas Ministerial Working Group

4. By way of reference, the following policy issues were discussed as part of the first Island Areas Ministerial Working Group with some subjects being discussed on more than one occasion:

Island Areas Ministerial Working Group 2013-14: Policy Discussion Papers	
Crown Estate	Island Proofing
Energy	Marine Planning
Terrestrial Planning	Fishing & Aquaculture
Transport	Agriculture & Crofting
Enterprise	Tourism
Engineering & Construction	Digital
Single Public Authority	Special Status
Legal & Constitutional Status	Creative Industries
State Aid	Revenues & Funding Settlement
Island innovation Zones	
Island Areas Ministerial Working Group 2015-16: Policy Discussion Papers	
Island Proofing	Digital Connectivity
Crown Estate	Transport
Island Innovation Zones	Renewables – Economic Opps
Fuel Poverty	Energy

Actions

5. Members are invited to consider the list of priority areas highlighted at paragraph 1 and confirm whether they are content with it or wish to see it amended.

6. Members are also asked to agree 2 items for discussion at the next meeting of the Group in September, and a further 2 items that will form the focus of the discussions for the December meeting.

7. It would be proposed that a lead council be identified to take responsibility for co-ordinating the drafting of each policy paper, ensuring the interests of their fellow members were represented. The Scottish Government would also have the opportunity to comment/contribute to the draft paper before it was finalised for formal consideration.

ISG Secretariat
July 2017