

ISLE OF ARRAN

LOCAL ISLAND PLAN

ECONOMY | COMMUNITY | ENVIRONMENT

A ten-year plan with a long-term strategic focus
developed with and for the community.



Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Iomairt na Gàidhealtachd 's nan Eilean



The Scottish
Government



North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

INTRODUCTION

The Isle of Arran is a valuable and unique part of North Ayrshire. North Ayrshire Council and partners are dedicated to working together with island communities and businesses to support Arran and acknowledge the importance of providing specific and tailored focus and support for the island community, its vital economy, and its outstanding environment.



ECONOMY



COMMUNITY



ENVIRONMENT

THE ARRAN LOCAL ISLAND PLAN IS A TEN-YEAR PLAN WITH A LONG-TERM STRATEGIC FOCUS DEVELOPED WITH AND FOR THE COMMUNITY.

Recognising these differences, the Council identified an opportunity to work in an exciting new partnership with island communities, businesses, and wider stakeholders to develop and facilitate the creation of Local Island Plans to assist in maximising the potential of North Ayrshire's islands.

North Ayrshire Council is participating in an ambitious three-year 'Islands Recovery and Renewal' Pilot in partnership with the Scottish Government and Highlands and Islands Enterprise to support an inclusive and green economic recovery and renewal of North Ayrshire's islands of Arran and Cumbrae in line with their unique needs. This pilot is aligned to the delivery of the strategic objectives of the National Islands Plan and Community Wealth Building (CWB) principles.

The pilot has facilitated the development of this first Arran Local Island Plan (LIP) and the partners will continue to support and work with the community and stakeholders as the plan is implemented, delivering actions and improving outcomes for the economic, community and environmental wellbeing of Arran.

The Arran Local Island Plan is a ten-year plan with a long-term strategic focus developed with and for the community, and whilst the aims and objectives of the Plan may remain for the duration of the plan, the associated actions will be reviewed annually and updated as required.

THE PROFILE OF ARRAN

The Isle of Arran is the seventh largest Scottish island with around 4537 residents and is the largest island in the Firth of Clyde with an area of 432 square kilometers, Arran is 19 miles long by 10 miles wide. It is the most southerly populated of the Scottish islands with Brodick, Lamlash and Whiting Bay on the east coast of the island being the main settlements.

Nestled between the Ayrshire coast and the Mull of Kintyre, Arran and is around an hour's ferry ride from mainland Scotland and is served by a ferry service between Ardrossan and Brodick, as well as from Lochranza on the north of the island to Claonaig in Argyll and Bute.






There is a wonderful array of successful food producers and award-winning produce to indulge in, from cheeses, chocolates, oatcakes and chutneys to delightful breweries, botanicals and distilleries producing beers and ales, gins and cassis and whisky galore, using the very best locally sourced ingredients and due to the incredible quality and popularity of the produce, Arran companies export widely to the Scottish mainland, nationally and internationally.

In 2020 the Council commissioned and published research from the Fraser of Allander Institute (FAI) on the disproportionate economic impact of Covid-19 on the Arran economy. The work also provided an outline socio-economic baseline for Arran to support the evidence of need to help understand the long-term challenges the island economy faces and provide tailored support to the island.





Arran is an exceptional island and owing to its industrial mix has made it particularly exposed to the Covid-19 pandemic. Many businesses on Arran depend upon so-called 'social spending' and its tourism industry along with tourism-facing industries have been disproportionately impacted by lockdown measures and subsequent capacity constraints in restaurants, bars and cafes.

Arran is reliant upon its ferry services to transport residents and visitors to and from the island and to access medical and social services, to visit family and friends and for leisure purposes. The Fraser of Allander Institute report 'The Impact of Covid 19 on the Arran Economy' estimated that, on average, each day, the ferries contribute just under £170,000 to the island's economy. With passenger numbers almost falling to zero, during lockdown restrictions, the impact of Covid-19 on the local island economy has been severe. This also demonstrates the social and economic lifeline that the ferry provides to the island communities and businesses.

**EACH DAY, THE
FERRIES CONTRIBUTE
JUST UNDER £170,000
TO THE ISLAND'S
ECONOMY**

As we emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic, the true impact on the economy, community and environment is becoming clear and the issues and priorities prior to COVID have become more urgent or magnified as a result.

No places are unaffected by the impact of climate change and in 2019 North Ayrshire Council declared a climate emergency. Small low-lying islands such as Arran are under threat from climate change and predicted sea-level rises and are therefore at risk of facing some of the most severe effects of climate change including increased instances of flooding and coastal erosion.

A joint approach with stakeholders and partners to local climate action, that reflects the island's circumstances and challenges and builds on their natural capital, will mean Arran is well placed to develop innovative solutions to ensure a just transition to net zero.

It is vital that stakeholders continue to build on good quality data for Arran that can provide an accurate evidence base for future decision-making and prioritisation of resources including financial investment. It is intended that the information contained within this plan will be monitored and updated throughout the life of the plan.







KEY FINDINGS




THE KEY FINDINGS OF THE FRASER OF ALLANDER REPORT ARE:

-  The current outlook for economic growth in Arran is dominated by the immediate impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and whilst many of these economic shocks may be temporary, there is a risk that these shocks have longer-term implications
-  In 2018, the estimated Gross Value Added of Arran was £77.1million
-  Arran, like most island economies, is limited by its infrastructure and rurality and is highly dependent on its ferry service
-  The Fraser of Allander Institute report estimates that, on average, each day of ferry operation contributes just under £170,000 to the Arran economy
-  Due to its prevalent tourism industry, Arran has been disproportionality impacted by lockdown restrictions. The capacity constraints in bars, cafes and restaurants meant that whilst lockdown restrictions eased, businesses in the tourism industry are still reliant on government support






ECONOMIC INDICATORS OF ARRAN - DEMOGRAPHICS

-  In 2019, the total population of Arran was 4,537, this represents a 10% decline in the total population of Arran since 2001
-  55% (2,499) of the population is of working age, a 4-percentage point decline since 2001
-  8% of the population is aged 16-24 (a 1-percentage point increase since 2001), 47% are aged 24-64 (down 5-percentage points since 2001), and 33% is aged 65 and over (a 9-percentage points increase since 2001)
-  Improvement Service forecasting, using 2018 National Records of Scotland data, estimates that Arran's population will decrease by a further 2% between 2018 and 2030

SCOTTISH INDEX OF MULTIPLE DEPRIVATION (SIMD)

-  All but one of Arran's data zones¹ rank above the median (average) for the overall domain² ranking.
-  The access to services domain has some of the lowest domain ranks for Arran's data zones, with five out of seven data zones ranking below the median, and two of those among the bottom 10%
-  The housing domain also highlights some key challenges on Arran, with six out of the seven data zones ranking below the median

LABOUR MARKET

-  In 2019 the total employment count on Arran was approximately 2,070
-  Tourism related employment³ accounted for over one in three jobs in Arran, in 2019
-  Key employing sectors on Arran are: 'accommodation and food service activities' (645 employments; 31%), 'wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles' (275 employments; 13%), and 'transportation and storage' (180 employments; 9%)
-  Public sector employment accounts for approximately 440 employments and human health and social work activities account for approximately 150 employments
-  As of July 2021, Arran's claimant count (estimate of people claiming unemployment related benefits) as a proportion of the working age is 3.2%, up 1.8-percentage points since February 2020⁴

ESTIMATES OF ECONOMIC OUTPUT (GVA) BY SECTOR

-  In 2018, the estimated GVA⁵ of Arran was £77.1million⁶
-  The top three performing sectors regarding economic output on Arran are: 'manufacturing' (£18.5 million; 24%⁷), 'wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles' (£9.4 million; 12%), and 'accommodation and food service activities' (£8.1 million; 11%)

¹ Data zones are the key geography for the distribution of small area statistics in Scotland and are widely used across the public and private sector. Data zones are large enough that statistics can be presented accurately without fear of disclosure and yet small enough that they can be used to represent communities.

² SIMD looks at the extent to which an area is deprived across seven domains: income, employment, education, health, access to services, crime and housing.

³ Employment in 'accommodation and food service activities' and 'arts, entertainment and recreation'.

⁴ February 2020 is used as the pre-COVID-19 benchmark as it was the last full month before the effects of the lockdown were felt.

⁵ Fraser of Allander Institute (2020) | ⁶ 2016 prices. | ⁷ Percentage of Total GVA

TOURISM RELATED
EMPLOYMENT
ACCOUNTED FOR
OVER ONE IN
THREE JOBS IN
ARRAN, IN 2019



Population of Arran (2019):

4,537



Total Economic Output of Arran (2018):

£77.1m



Claimant Count Rate of Arran (July 2021):

3.2%



Total Employment on Arran (2019):

2,070

EXAMPLE EMPLOYING SECTORS ON ARRAN



ACCOMODATION AND
FOOD SERVICE ACTIVITIES

31%



WHOLESALE &
RETAIL TRADE

13%



TRANSPORTATION
& STORAGE

9%

SETTING THE SCENE

At a national level, the Arran Local Island Plan (LIP) is set within the context of The Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 and the corresponding National Islands Plan.

At a local level, the LIP takes account of the Arran Locality Partnership priorities and details from the Arran Recovery Group final recovery plan, it is further supported through the work of the Island Recovery and Renewal Pilot, North Ayrshire Council's Economic Recovery and Renewal approach, Community Wealth Building Strategy and the island engagement activity.

Further details of the inter-dependencies of the LIP with existing policies, plans and strategies can be found on pages 24 and 25.



THE ISLANDS (SCOTLAND) ACT 2018

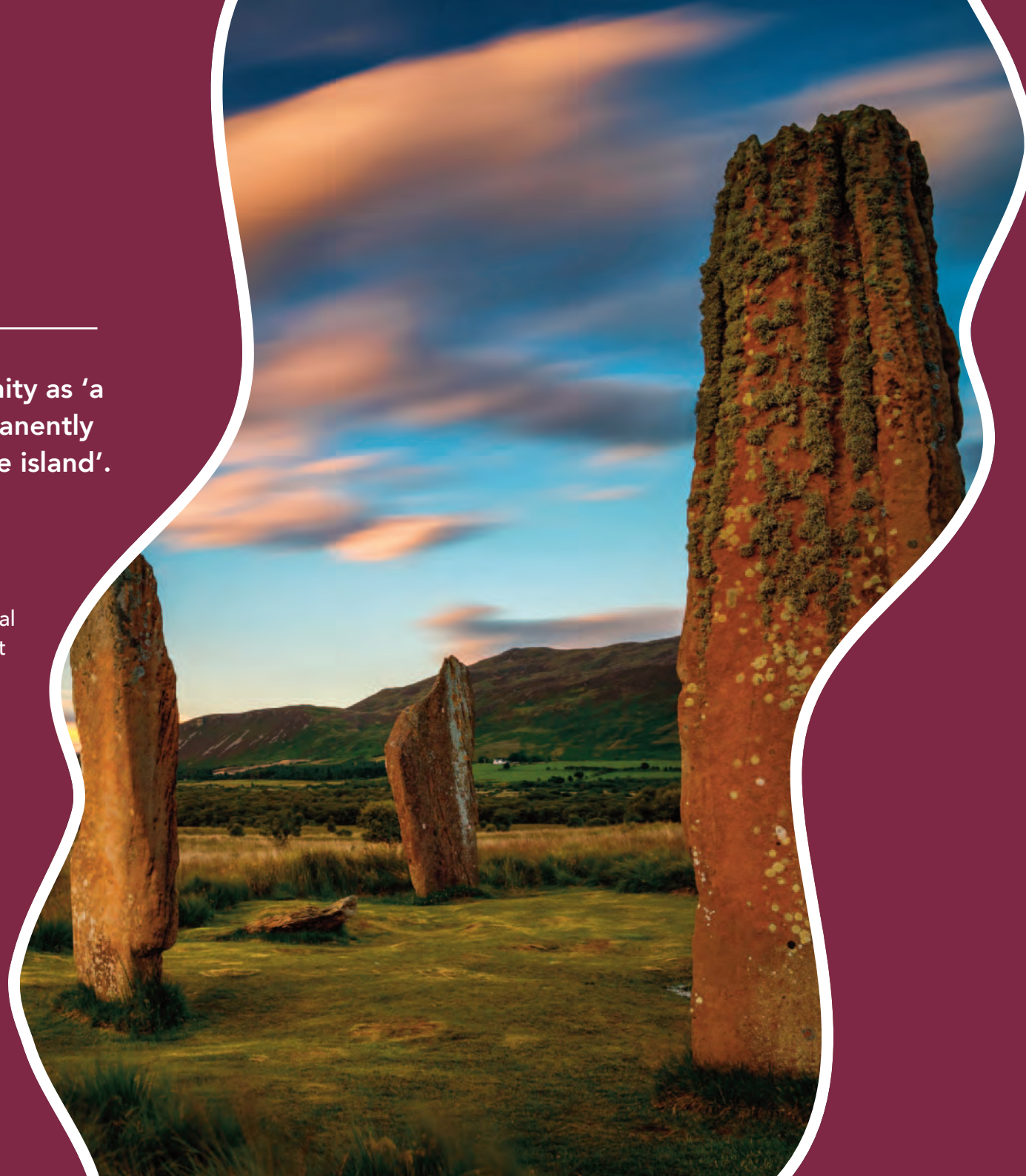
The Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 defines an island community as ‘a community of two or more people, all of whom live permanently on the island with a common interest in the identity of the island’.

The Act was granted Royal Assent in July 2018 and introduces a range of measures to support and help meet the unique needs of Scotland's islands now and in the future. It will also seek to help create the right environment for sustainable economic development and empowered communities.

A provision within the Act requires the Scottish Ministers to develop a National Islands Plan (NIP). According to the Act, the purpose of the Plan is ‘to set out the main objectives and strategy of the Scottish Ministers in relation to improving outcomes for island communities that result from or are contributed to by the carrying out of functions of a public nature’.

The Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 and the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 empowers communities to shape their individual and collective futures and to make it easier for islanders to develop their own economies, wellbeing and environments.

It also places duties on local public services to work together with communities to improve outcomes on themes that are priorities for the islanders.



THE NATIONAL ISLANDS PLAN

In December 2019, Scottish Ministers published the first ever National Islands Plan, which was created with the input from many islanders, including those on Arran. The Plan sets out 13 Strategic Objectives which are practical yet critical to improving the quality of life for island communities.

The 13 strategic objectives (SOs) set out in the National Islands Plan are as follows.

To address population decline and ensure a healthy, balanced population profile

To improve and promote sustainable economic development

To improve transport services

To improve housing

To reduce levels of fuel poverty

To improve digital connectivity

To improve and promote health, social care and wellbeing

To improve and promote environmental wellbeing and deal with biosecurity

To contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation and promote clean, affordable and secure energy

To empower diverse communities and different places

To support arts, culture and language

To promote and improve education for all throughout life

To support effective implementation of the National Islands Plan

ARRAN LOCALITY PARTNERSHIP

Locality planning was introduced in the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, under Part 2: Community Planning and is about reducing inequalities and enabling communities to participate in decision making at a local level.

It is one of the ways local communities work together with public and third sector organisations to improve residents' lives and localities. In North Ayrshire, Locality Partnerships are how the Community Planning Partnership fulfill its duties under the Community Empowerment Act to have locality arrangements.

There are six Locality Partnerships in North Ayrshire which cover the whole local authority and Arran Locality Partnership is the partnership that covers the whole of the island of Arran. It is therefore important that the development of the Arran Island Plan aligns to the Arran Locality Partnership and the important and valued work the partnership undertakes.

Arran has a unique joint Locality Partnership approach, bringing together the Community Planning and Health and Social Care Partnership, which is the first such arrangement in Scotland and provides support for the island to help them do what is needed to tackle the issues that they have identified as priorities for their local area. It is important to note that the Arran Locality Partnership, at time of writing, is undertaking stakeholder engagement to refresh their local priorities.

Local priorities have been decided by each locality, based on national data, local statistics and the views of local people gathered through the North Ayrshire People's Panel survey, wider consultation and the Place Standard tool.

ARRAN RECOVERY GROUP (ARG)

Arran Recovery Group is a short-term voluntary local response group focused on tackling the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Arran and undertook work to establish a final recovery plan for the island including surveys and engagement.

The final plan of their work, titled 'Island in Balance', aims to balance three strands of island life: Community, Environment and Economy. The aim of the final recovery plan is not to give priority to specific agendas, but to better understand how they all connect and complement each other. Members of the Arran Recovery Group are individuals representing the following organisations: Health and Social Care Partnership, Arran Community Council, VisitArran, Auchrannie Hotel, A Taste of Arran, Arran EcoSavvy, Arran Development Trust, Arran High School, Arran Community and Voluntary Service, Arran Ferry Committee, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, and Arran Economic Group members.

COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING

North Ayrshire Council has shown economic leadership with the launch of Scotland's first Community Wealth Building strategy in May 2020 which sets out a bold new economic model focused on wellbeing and inclusion.

This strategy sets out how the Council will deliver this by focusing on their Community Wealth Building mission of 'Enhancing local wealth and the creation of fair jobs and maximising the potential of all our places through working in partnership with our communities and businesses'.

North Ayrshire Council has set out six objectives to deliver Community Wealth Building:



PROCUREMENT

Progressive procurement develops dense local supply chains of local enterprises, small and medium sized enterprises, employee-owned businesses, social enterprises, cooperatives and other forms of community owned enterprise.



FAIR EMPLOYMENT

Recruitment from lower income areas, commitment to paying the living wage and building progression routes for workers are all examples of the actions to stimulate the local economy and bring social improvements to local communities.



LAND AND ASSETS

Anchors are often major land holders and can support equitable land development and the development of under-utilised assets for community use.



FINANCIAL POWER

Community Wealth Building seeks to increase flows of investment within local economies by harnessing the wealth that exists locally.



PLURAL OWNERSHIP OF THE ECONOMY

Democratic Ownership of the Local Economy - Cooperatives, mutually owned businesses, small and medium sized enterprises, social and community enterprises and municipally owned companies enable the wealth generated in a community to stay in that local area.



ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND RENEWAL APPROACH (GREEN NEW DEAL)

In response to the widespread economic and social impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, in September 2020 the Council launched its Economic Recovery and Renewal Approach (Green New Deal) to build back better, fairer and greener. The approach is based on the foundation of Community Wealth Building and sets out a Local Green New Deal for North Ayrshire.

The twin priorities of a North Ayrshire Green New Deal are:

1

To ensure an inclusive economic recovery by delivering our Community Wealth Building mission; and

2

To ensure a green economic recovery focused on achieving our net zero carbon ambitions through the creation of sustainable infrastructure and regeneration projects and creating fair jobs.

North Ayrshire Council's refreshed Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change strategy (2021-2023) sets out seven workstreams for how the Council will achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030. These workstreams are intrinsically linked to economic recovery through their alignment to the Community Wealth Building approach and Green New Deal aspirations.



ISLAND RECOVERY & RENEWAL PILOT

The development of the Arran Local Island Plan complements the idea of testing new ways of working across local government, Scottish Government, Highlands & Islands Enterprise, Community Planning Partners, island communities and businesses to deliver the ambitious objectives outlined in the National Islands Plan, as well as sharing this learning with other island areas.

As part of the three-year Island Recovery and Renewal Pilot, a new post of Senior Officer (Islands) has been created within North Ayrshire Council to contribute to the ongoing development and delivery of islands' policy, working in a more coordinated way across the public sector with island communities, businesses and with a range of external stakeholders to tackle long-standing place-based issues relating to island communities ensuring the understanding and representation of the unique needs of islands' communities in local and national policy development.

Further, the pilot will support the recovery and renewal of the islands from the social and economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic including the development of 'Island Plans' for Arran and Cumbrae aligned to the strategic objectives of the National Islands Plan and the principles of Community Wealth Building.

The Arran Local Island Plan sits within the broad context of local, regional and national setting and has a clear link with a range of local, regional and national plans, strategies and frameworks with further examples shown in illustration 4 on page 24.

ISLAND SPECIFIC

Arran Locality Partnership Priorities
Arran Community Council
Island in Balance – draft recovery plan
Arran’s Food Journey
ARRAN LOCAL ISLAND PLAN
Arran Community and
Voluntary Service (ACVS)

LOCAL

North Ayrshire Council Plan 2019-24
Economic Recovery & Renewal Approach
Community Wealth Building Strategy 2020-25
Environmental Sustainability & Climate Change Strategy 2021-23
Local Outcomes Improvement Plan
(LOIP) 2017-22 - New plan forthcoming
Strategic Plan for Community Learning & Development 2021-24
Let’s Deliver Care Together:
North Ayrshire Health & Social Care Strategic Plan 2018-21
Youth Participation & Citizenship Strategy
Youth Employment Strategy
Local Child Poverty Action Plan
MAKING Waves in North Ayrshire Tourism Action Plan
Ayrshire Shoreline Management Plan
Vacant and Derelict Land Strategy
Regeneration Plan
Local Development Plan 2
Local Housing Strategy
Local Transport Strategy
Visitor Management Strategy and Action Plan - forthcoming

REGIONAL

Ayrshire Growth Deal
Highlands & Islands Enterprise Strategy & Operating Plan
Regional Spatial Strategy - forthcoming
Regional Economic Strategy - forthcoming
Ayrshire Regional skills investment plan - forthcoming
Regional Visitor Economy Strategy - forthcoming

NATIONAL

National Performance Framework
National Island Plan
National Strategy for Economic
Transformation - forthcoming
Climate Change Plan 2018-32
Marine Tourism: Giant Strides 2025
Scotland Outlook 2030
Food Tourism Action Plan 2030
Programme for Government
Early Learning Provision
UN Sustainable Development Goals

LOCAL ISLAND PLAN ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

ISLAND ENGAGEMENT IN THE PLAN

In August 2021, SKS Scotland CIC were commissioned by North Ayrshire Council to conduct a short, focused exercise engaging with Arran to assess perceptions of how, and if, COVID-19 had changed the priorities for the island.

The exercise was to understand how things may have changed because of COVID-19 and what that could mean for Arran's priorities, building on the substantial evidence and insight from other evidence sources including those detailed in illustrations 3 and 5 and earlier engagement exercises including:

From April to July 2019, Scottish Government embarked on a participative and inclusive consultation to capture the dreams, aspirations and concerns of those who live on and those who have an interest in islands and their communities, as well as an on-line survey, an event was held in Arran following which a local event report was produced summarising the main points raised by participants.

North Ayrshire Council submitted a response to the Scottish Government's consultation on the National Islands Plan and Island Communities Impact in June 2019. The response was compiled with contributions from Council and community partners, including participation in the Scottish Government's community engagement events referred to above.

The 'National Islands Plan (NIP) through a Covid Lens Survey' was undertaken between 18 June and 10 July 2020 in recognition of the impact of COVID-19.

North Ayrshire Council and the other five main local authorities (LAs) with islands, provided responses to consider the impact of the (COVID-19) pandemic on the delivery of National Island Plan commitments and how these should be prioritised going forward.





The National Islands Plan Implementation Route Map has been created following Scottish Government consultation with island communities and local authority partners and was published in March 2021, marking a key milestone in the implementation of the National Islands Plan.

It provides a Route Map of how Scottish Government aim to deliver their priorities over the lifetime of the National Islands Plan and identifies the methods they will use to monitor progress towards achieving outcomes, setting out how they will deliver their work over the short, medium and long-term.

Further, the aim of the engagement was to allow communities to test, build on and develop existing issues, aspirations, actions in the current context.

From late August until mid-September the following activities took place:

1

Desk-based analysis and summary of previous island engagement and consultation

2

Launch of short-life engagement website

3

Contact with community organisations, business networks and other stakeholders to arrange discussions

4

Open short-term survey to allow people to have their say (with paper copies made available on key island locations)

5

One public online community conversation for Arran

6

A final public online discussion - where islanders came together to discuss the short, medium and longer-term priorities that will inform Arran's 10-year Island Plan



The engagement process was supported by the Island Plan Short Life Working Group with representation from each island (membership includes representatives from North Ayrshire Council, Arran Locality Partnership, Cumbrae Community Council and the Arran Recovery Group).

The role of the group during the engagement process included: clarifying expectations of the engagement process and outputs; providing relevant knowledge, contacts and share any local sensitivities; monitoring and agreeing any amendments to the approved work programme; approving content for all project related communications and sharing communications with relevant networks.

The range of activities undertaken during a short period of time was well received and illustration 6 provides details of the responses received.

Illustration 6



551
reponses to the survey



471
unique website visits
(across both islands)



22
attended the first
online discussion

31

organisations invited
to contribute input



Island Elected Member
input sessions held



Verbal update on island
plan engagement
provided to Arran
Locality Partnership



30
attended final
online discussion

9

further individuals
directly contacted
SKS to input

KEY MESSAGES AND FEEDBACK FROM THE ENGAGEMENT EXERCISE

The messages that participants provided demonstrate that priorities for Arran have not changed because of the Covid-19 pandemic but have been magnified, intensified and made more obvious and critical. In fact, it was common for participants to make no reference to the Covid-19 pandemic but simply to describe what they consider to be the priorities for Arran.

**“IT’S NOT SO
MUCH THAT THE
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ARRAN ENGAGEMENT EXERCISE



WHAT CHANGED THROUGH THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC?

The overall experience of COVID-19 has highlighted both the resilience and the challenges Arran has overcome during the pandemic and whilst island life has survived the challenges, the pandemic has exposed its fragility and tested the limits of the island through a combination of related factors including affordable housing, transport both on and off the island, labour shortages and risk to business, demographic changes and erosion of public and private sector services.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

During the engagement exercise, the responses received from participants indicated that national housing market conditions were resulting in a perceived high proportion of island housing being purchased as second homes or for holiday let and that house prices are being pushed up beyond the means of most working islanders, or of people who may wish to move to the island for employment.

Existing data reveals that the second home rates on Arran are 25% (Source: Council Tax Reg/HNDA20) and 65% of Arran houses are sold to people from off-island (source: LHS Data Pack from SG/HNDA20).

“Housing of working aged people. Covid has made a difficult situation worse as house prices are further inflated due to people fleeing urban areas.

There is a lack of reasonably priced houses for people looking to get on the property ladder. Financial incentives should be offered for local builders to build simple, smaller or apartment style homes. Alternatively, land could be designated for residential mobile homes/tiny houses with electricity hook ups etc.”

ARRAN ENGAGEMENT EXERCISE

The private sector housing to let is in short supply as owners may generate a greater income from holiday lets and as a result rent in the private sector properties are being pushed higher through the effects of high demand and low supply.

“Cost of housing is impossible due to demand and closing dates. No private lets available as they're all holiday lets. I want to fight for rights of next generation on island for affordable housing and employment on island.”

ARRAN ENGAGEMENT EXERCISE





An undersupply of affordable housing means that it is difficult to attract people of working age to live or remain on the island as they are unable to obtain housing at an affordable cost, resulting in the island demographic having proportionately more older people and fewer people of working age.

People of working age are more likely to have children and families and therefore there are proportionately fewer families on Arran. Fewer families on the island results in the demand for public sector services, particularly schools and childcare may be lower, with a consequent perceived risk that these services will be withdrawn.

The Arran demographic means that there is likely to be a greater demand from older people for health and social care services while at the same time, there is a lower supply of younger people to meet this demand and may result in older people being unable to access care at home, or even care on the island, therefore having to move off-island to obtain health and social care, with a consequent further impact on island population.

Unreliable ferry transport to and from the mainland has a further impact on the quality of life for islanders, and the potential of the island to attract new residents.

An absence of professionals and tradespeople to live on the island means that these services must be imported from the mainland resulting in higher costs for goods and services i.e. island premium costs.

COVID-19 and the restrictions on travel highlighted the vulnerability of the island to the undersupply of essential goods which influences the capacity of local business to deliver services.

Throughout the COVID-19 period, there have been examples of businesses being forced to close or reduce working hours due to staff shortages and reduction in access to businesses and services/goods have an impact on the quality of life for residents and on the experience of visitors.

Higher costs of living on the island means that income is not as valuable as on the mainland, further reducing the attractiveness, particularly for people in lower income jobs.

Prior to COVID-19, each of these factors existed in an unstable state of balance and the stress placed on each factor exposed the dependencies and weaknesses in the 'system'.

“

We are in crisis. Things were always a challenge, but we managed it and even made progress.

COVID set us back. It exposed just how delicate the island economic ecosystem is, and if things were to get much worse... if, for example a key business were to choose to close, then the whole thing could collapse. Even if that doesn't happen, you need a certain density of population to make the island work. The demographic is a timebomb... We need more working families.”

ARRAN ENGAGEMENT EXERCISE

MOBILITY

During periods when there were legal restrictions on the movement of people, getting on or off the island was monitored by CalMac and the ferry operator either did not sail, or required evidence that a journey was essential prior to allowing people to board. This experience is regarded as different to that of people on the mainland, who were subject to the same legal restrictions, but these restrictions were not as effectively enforced by a public transport provider with a control over an essential route.

TOURISM

During the lock-down period when there were more severe restrictions on the movement of people, the number of recreational visitors to the island reduced to an effective nil. This had a significant impact on the income of local business.

Many local businesses were able to access relief programmes and funding provided by government or government agencies to support them during the pandemic.

During the period when restrictions on travel within the UK were relaxed, but restrictions on travel outside the UK were retained, there was an increase in visitor numbers, in some cases beyond the capacity of the island infrastructure or the hospitality sector on the island, and consequently there was an increase in anti-social or disruptive behaviour.



DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE

A number of young people who had been living, studying or working off-island returned to the family home on Arran. The trend in provision of online further and higher education tuition across the globe may make it more feasible and more attractive for young people to stay at home whilst studying in future.

LABOUR MARKET

Multiple effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have exacerbated existing challenges associated with attracting adequate numbers of people to fill vacant posts on the island particularly in the hospitality and care sectors.

THE CONSEQUENCE OF THESE UNFILLED VACANCIES INCLUDES LIMITATIONS TO OPENING HOURS OF RESTAURANTS AND BUSINESSES RESTRICTING ACCESS TO FACILITIES FOR THEIR OWN GUESTS, AFFECTING BUSINESS INCOME, VISITOR EXPERIENCE AND ON QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ISLANDERS

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

An exacerbated undersupply of care staff has reportedly led to an increased burden on family and other kinship carers, and a consequent impact on the economic activity and quality of life of those providing unpaid care.

The restrictions associated with COVID-19 led to an increase in the provision of online GP and other medical consultations. These are not universally regarded as being of a similar level of efficacy as face-to-face consultations and there is concern that, as the restrictions associated with COVID-19 are relaxed, there will not be a correlative return to face-to-face consultation. There is further concern that the greater availability of technology which more easily facilitates online consultation will contribute to a business case which mitigates against the location of health and social care services on the island.

Where people had medical appointments on the mainland, the increased unreliability and inaccessibility of the ferry service during COVID-19 regularly prevented people from attending these appointments. This was often at short notice, producing challenges for the patient in rescheduling the appointment and, presumably, for health providers in relation to the number of appointments which could not be re-allocated.

ISLAND BRAND

A combination of factors including the reliability of the ferry service and hospitality sector capacity limits may lead to a risk of a longer term damage to the island brand, resulting on the impact on visitor numbers.

ISOLATION

The COVID-19 pandemic required people to isolate and limit movement which created a greater quality of life impact for islanders than on comparable areas of the mainland. This was partly related to the challenges of public transport on the island which limited the ability to visit people who were isolated in more remote locations.

At the time of the engagement exercise, there was, a high level of fear and susceptibility to rumour in relation to COVID-19 risk levels and as older people are more likely to isolate and to have fears about COVID-19 risk, one consequence of this is that there may be resistance to having visitors to the island as they are perceived as a risk.

TRANSPORT

The ferry service has been regarded as problematic prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. During the period in which COVID-19 restrictions were in force there were greater challenges and an increase in islander dissatisfaction with the service, including:

-  Sailings being cancelled through ferry staff exposure to COVID-19
-  Ferry capacity being reduced to accommodate social distancing restrictions
-  Places being booked in advance by island visitors, preventing residents from travelling when ferries are at capacity
-  Occasional staff shortages causing ferries to run in cargo mode, i.e. without passengers
-  Perceived unreliability of older vessel
-  Concern about drift of timescales for delivery of planned new infrastructure¹



Before COVID we had resilience issues with the ferry system. Through covid we struggled. As we leave COVID it seems like we are going back to old ways.”

ARRAN ENGAGEMENT EXERCISE



THE FOLLOWING LIST IS NOT INTENDED TO BE COMPREHENSIVE BUT TO GIVE AN INSIGHT INTO THE SCALE AND VARIETY OF THE IMPACT OF AN UNRELIABLE FERRY SERVICE.

FERRY SERVICE IMPACT

- People choose not to move to the island, including hospitality staff and professionals in essential healthcare and education services. This means that staff either live off island, with the consequent risk to service delivery on-island, and there are fewer people of working age living on the island.
- People are unable to confidently plan for trips on and off island
- People are unable to make journeys at short notice
- Visitors may find themselves stranded at either terminal. This is exacerbated by the limited capacity in accommodation available on the island, meaning that people may be stranded overnight with nowhere to stay
- Suppliers of goods to the island apply an additional premium to compensate for the unreliability of the supply chain. This cost is passed on to the consumer, creating a higher cost of living on the island
- Producers and suppliers of goods from the island have to increase costs to compensate for the risk of additional cost if drivers / vehicles / goods have a longer than planned waiting time. This could place them at a competitive disadvantage to producers on the mainland

TENSION BETWEEN ISLAND INTERESTS

The economy of Arran relies, to a great extent, on tourism and the hospitality industry designed to serve those visitors and the Fraser of Allander Institute report provides greater detail on the place of tourism and hospitality in the economy of Arran.

However, there is a perception among some islanders that the place of tourism and the hospitality industry receives a disproportionate level of priority from the public sector and from community organisations to the detriment of the availability of resources for other services.

Tourists can create challenges to the capacity of infrastructure and services on the island and some residents feel that they can be inconvenienced and occasionally displaced by tourists. This creates some potential tension between sections of the community who have differing views on the importance of investment in tourism and the hospitality sector.



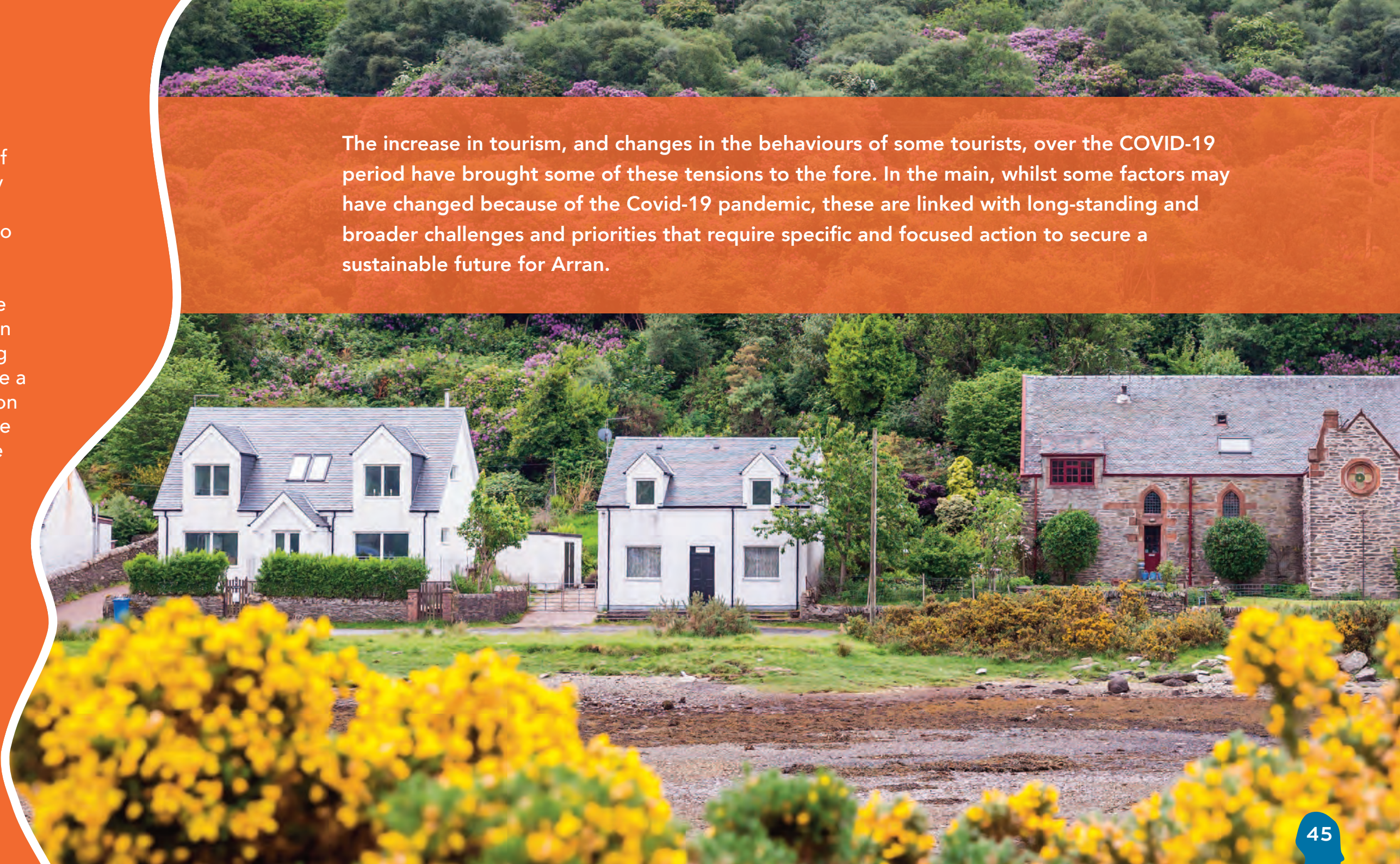
"The most difficult is the getting rid of the hundreds and hundreds of holiday lets, that are driving up house prices, causing houses that could be homes to sit empty.

Whilst absentee owners make massive profits, paying nothing to the Island. In turn causing homelessness and driving locals off the Island. There needs to be a changing of the 'we need an infestation of tourists to survive' mindset, that the 'haves' are driving, whilst ignoring the needs of the 'have nots'.

In truth, holiday lets, and hordes of tourists, are killing our communities, decimating our villages and widening the gap between the have and have nots. It is time for change."

ARRAN ENGAGEMENT EXERCISE

The increase in tourism, and changes in the behaviours of some tourists, over the COVID-19 period have brought some of these tensions to the fore. In the main, whilst some factors may have changed because of the Covid-19 pandemic, these are linked with long-standing and broader challenges and priorities that require specific and focused action to secure a sustainable future for Arran.



SURVEY PRIORITIES

The engagement survey asked people to rank a set of themes of concern which were identified from summaries of earlier work on the themes of concern for island life. The ranking below is drawn solely from the survey question on this topic and not assessed against the available evidence. Therefore, the ranking below should not be regarded as a final judgment on a hierarchy of importance.

Themes of Importance

Housing
Education and skills and retention of young people
Transport
Health and social care
Economic growth, investment and sustainability
Protection of natural environment
Recruitment and retention of employees
Reliance on seasonal tourism and the need for diversification
Population and depopulation

Energy and energy costs
Community capacity and empowerment
Meeting the needs of older people
Island premium costs
Connectivity/digital
Resilience
Preservation of heritage and cultural identity
Marine planning
Planning policy

ACTIONS

The engagement survey asked people to rank a set of actions which were identified from earlier reports from community engagement and planning exercises on Arran. The ranking below is drawn solely from the survey question on this topic and again not assessed against the available evidence. Therefore, the ranking below should not be regarded as a final judgment on a hierarchy of importance.

Alternative fleets that respond better to island community needs, for example smaller, faster ferries
Create affordable housing to buy and rent
Improved roads and cycling infrastructure
More joined up public transport
Action to address skills shortages in education, health, hospitality and social care
Increase fuel economy of homes on the island to address fuel poverty
Develop a housing policy that responds to the needs of the ageing population
Increase availability of locally produced food
Island uplift to salaries / wages to attract more people to work and relocate on the island
Improved mobile internet and broadband availability across the island

Increase in availability of care options particularly home care
Ensure capacity in mental health services on the island
Reduce island waste through recycling and repair
Greater choice of retail options, particularly in relation to food and other essentials
More environmentally friendly transport options (car share, bike hire, Electric Vehicle charging points, etc.)
Establish an early years centre
Undertake carbon audit to set baseline for action to reduce carbon emissions
Create mobile home parking areas
Programme of arts and cultural activities including festivals
Establish a dedicated arts hub / exhibition space

RESPONSES TO OPEN SURVEY QUESTIONS

Our survey also asked people to offer a narrative on what they thought were the most urgent, most effective and most difficult things that should be done to ensure Arran has a strong recovery from COVID-19.

MOST URGENT:

Ferries
Affordable housing
Early years provision
Health and social care
Attracting labour and economic diversification

MOST EFFECTIVE:

Ferries
Affordable housing
Access to labour
Health & social care
Public transport
Climate action & sustainability

MOST DIFFICULT:

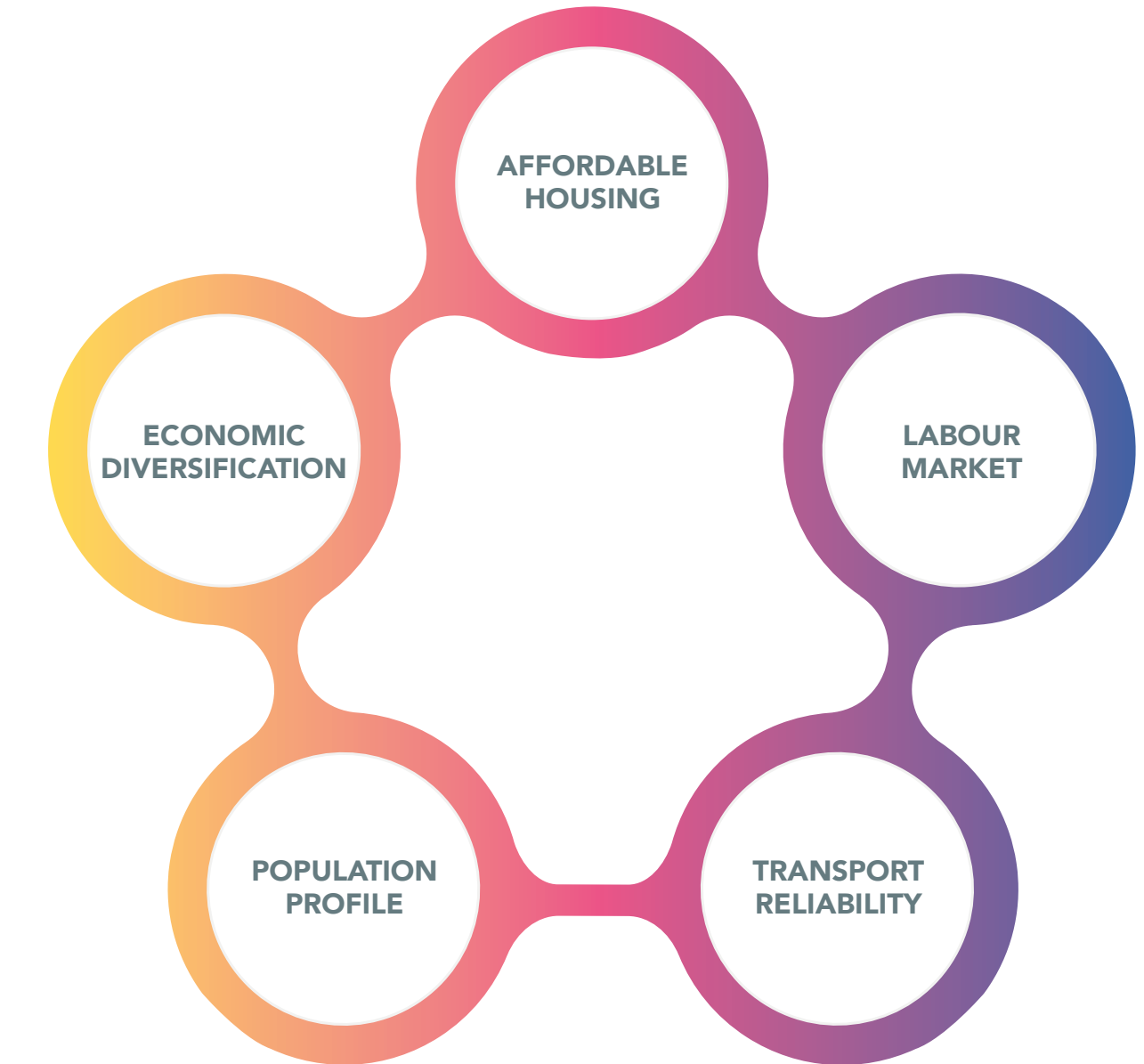
Ferries
Affordable housing
Cycle paths
Attracting labour
Tourism management
Depopulation

PRIORITIES INTO ACTION

There is a general consensus across all feedback that the recovery of Arran and the longer-term sustainability of island life is dependent on 5 key themes.

None of the 5 key themes should or can be considered in isolation as any action or inaction to address one or more of these issues will have an impact on the others. Further it is important that there should be no 'hierarchy' of importance due to the co-dependency of the issues.

To address the challenges and priorities identified through the engagement process, a vision, mission, key themes and Action Plan have been developed to support the recovery and renewal of Arran.





2032 VISION OF ARRAN & KEY THEMES

VISION

It is 2032, Arran has responded to the diverse and unique challenges faced over the last decade, demonstrating resilience, passion and innovation in achieving a successful island in balance of economic, community and environmental wellbeing.

MISSION

Arran will be an inclusive and green island economy with a vibrant, engaged, ambitious and resourceful island community who are pioneering in the transition of Arran to net zero by 2030.

KEY PLAN THEMES

To realise Arran's vision of becoming an island in balance, three key plan themes determine the Island Plan with a set of key priorities and related actions that build on the existing strengths of the island and minimize risk and further fragility to the economy, community and environmental wellbeing.



ECONOMY

a model of an inclusive and green island economy



COMMUNITY

a vibrant, engaged, ambitious and resourceful island community

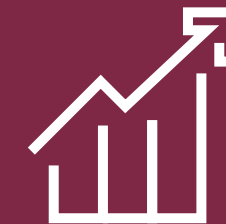


ENVIRONMENT

pioneering in the transition of Arran to net zero by 2030

The Arran Island Plan 2022/23 Annual Action Plan is included in Appendix 1 to accompany the 10 year Island Plan. For each priority theme there are key actions, potential teams, groups, businesses, agencies or partners who may work together to ensure effective delivery, the required timescales, fit with National Islands Plan, how actions contribute to Community Wealth Building and Net Zero.

As the Annual Action Plan progresses, further actions will be developed or revised for each key theme. Methods of measurement will be refined over the duration of the Plan to identify key data sources.



ECONOMY

ECONOMY

ARRAN IS A MODEL OF AN INCLUSIVE AND GREEN ISLAND ECONOMY

- KEY PRIORITIES -

BUSINESS RESILIENCE
DIGITAL AND GREEN INNOVATION
LOCAL SUPPLY CHAINS
CIRCULAR ECONOMY
SKILLS DEVELOPMENT
RETENTION AND ATTRACTION OF WORKING AGE POPULATION
DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY
MARINE INFRASTRUCTURE
ARRAN AS A DESTINATION
TOURISM MANAGEMENT



COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY

ARRAN IS A VIBRANT, ENGAGED AND RESOURCEFUL ISLAND COMMUNITY

- KEY PRIORITIES -

FERRY PROVISION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
AFFORDABLE HOUSING TO BUY & RENT
TRANSPORT CONNECTIVITY
HEALTH AND WELLBEING
COMMUNITY CAPACITY, EMPOWERMENT AND GOVERNANCE
MAXIMISING LAND AND ASSETS
COMMUNITY FACILITIES



ENVIRONMENT

ENVIRONMENT

ARRAN IS PIONEERING IN THE TRANSITION OF THE ISLAND TO NET ZERO BY 2030

- KEY PRIORITIES -

CLIMATE ACTION & SUSTAINABILITY
NATURAL CAPITAL
ENERGY PROVISION AND ENERGY COSTS
MARINE PLANNING & PLANNING POLICY
ACTIVE TRAVEL

DURING THE ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY WE HEARD OF MANY INSPIRING AND INNOVATIVE PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES THAT ARE BEING UNDERTAKEN ON ARRAN BY THE COMMUNITY AND THE THIRD, PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTOR.

HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF JUST A FEW FANTASTIC ACTIVITIES HAPPENING ON THE ISLAND AND THE DIFFERENCE THEY ARE MAKING.

THE ARRAN PIONEER PROJECT HAS BEEN WORKING TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY GROWING INITIATIVES IN SEVERAL LOCATIONS ACROSS THE ISLAND. THIS MAY HELP TO ADDRESS THE RISK OF VULNERABILITY TO SHORTAGES OF FOOD ITEMS.

THE HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PARTNERSHIP IS ENGAGED IN A REVIEW AND REDESIGN OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PROVISION WHICH INCLUDES PROPOSALS FOR A CO-LOCATION OF SERVICES IN A SINGLE BUILDING, RESULTING IN STAFF EFFICIENCIES AND INCREASED AVAILABILITY OF CARE. IT ALSO INCLUDES A PROPOSAL FOR AN ISLAND COST OF LIVING PREMIUM TO OFFSET THE HIGHER COST OF LIVING ON THE ISLAND.

THE ARRAN DEVELOPMENT TRUST IS WORKING ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING INITIATIVES. IMPLEMENTATION IS DESIGNED IN PHASES AND DEPENDENT ON SUCCESSFULLY ATTRACTING CAPITAL FUNDING.

IN ADDITION TO ONGOING BUSINESS SUPPORT TO BUSINESSES VIA COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING, DIGITAL BOOST, BUSINESS GATEWAY FUNDING AND THE NEW GREEN JOBS FUND, NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL IS ALSO WORKING WITH PROCUREMENT ON AN AWARENESS RAISING EVENT FOR A FORTHCOMING PMI ARRAN ALL TRADES TENDER.

ARRAN ECOSAVVY HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO A FUNDING APPLICATION TO SUPPORT THE COSTS OF A 'GREEN AUDIT' WHICH WILL PROVIDE A BASELINE FOR THE CARBON EMISSIONS OF THE ISLAND. THIS CAN THEN INFORM THE DESIGN OF A PLAN FOR THE ISLAND TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF NET ZERO CARBON EMISSIONS TARGETS.

1

CASE STUDY

Arran Mountain Bike Club

Active Schools support **Arran Mountain Bike Club** providing training, volunteers and funding to make sure the club goes from strength to strength.

Having supported the club with funding applications to wider organisations it has resulted in the club being recognised on a national platform.

The partnership has developed and has resulted in Scottish Cycling choosing the Arran Mountain Bike Club to be a national priority and will be used to highlight cycling across Scotland.

2

CASE STUDY

Arran Eco Savvy

Arran Eco Savvy have been Food Share partners with the Co-op for some time. The Food Share ran as a collect and distribute model from 2018-March 2020. Initially it was held in 2 locations on Arran twice a week.

Over time the volunteer network expanded to over 50 volunteers covering collections every day which were distributed in 7 island villages. Orange-label, short life food which would otherwise be binned was collected by the network of volunteers who then took it back to their villages and ran Food Share events, primarily in community halls, where the food would be distributed.

The scheme has multiple environmental benefits as when food is thrown away it is not only the food itself that is wasted but also all the resources that went into growing, processing, transporting, storing, packaging and displaying it. By keeping food from landfill methane emissions that are caused by decomposition are avoided.

As well as this the Food Share became a social event within the community. From March last year this scheme had to be adapted in line with COVID restrictions and the Food Share moved in-store to the Lamlash and Brodick Co-ops where the food is now put into Food Share fridges to be collected by the community from 8.15pm daily in both stores.

Arran Eco Savvy donated a freezer to the Brodick Co-op so that any food which wasn't collected and could be frozen can be accessed whenever the shop is open from the freezer. To date the Food Share has diverted 38 tons of food with a value of over £219,000 from landfill!

3 CASE STUDY

VisitArran

VisitScotland have been delighted to support the work of VisitArran through the pandemic.

They have provided **Scottish Government** funding, specialist digital marketing consultation and support to Arran's new **See, Feel, Be Arran** marketing campaign with a strategic focus to ensure that Arran is promoted in autumn and winter to spread visits across the year beyond core summer months.

Further, VisitScotland are partnering with industry and public partners in the delivery of a new visitor economy strategy for Ayrshire & Arran.

4 CASE STUDY

Arran Farmers Market

Arran Eco Savvy work with Bellevue Farm and Arrans Food Journey to revive the Arran Farmers market.

The first was held on September 2021 and the second on December 2021 with the intention to run them quarterly on an ongoing basis. There were over 900 visitors at the late summer market and more than 600 at the December one.

The market has obvious economic benefits to local producers as they attract visitors and locals alike. There are also environmental benefits associated by shortening supply chains and spending on locally produced products.

Post market surveys with attendees have indicated that they are more likely to support local producers having attended the markets. There are plans to run further markets on a quarterly basis during 2022.



5 CASE STUDY

Arran Community and Voluntary Service (ACVS)

Arran Community and Voluntary Service (ACVS) have been involved in ongoing conversations about social isolation and access to services and activities. To date actions have been around innovative solutions to improve outcomes for people affected by social isolation.

As social wellbeing has now become a focus for more community groups locally, the need to address that gap has lessened for the organisation allowing focus on planning and introduction of a Community Transport pilot. Its aim is to transport people affected by the barriers identified above to island medical appointments. Particularly those affected by a lack of viable public transport or the timing of that transport in more rural parts of the island.

The pilot will be running in partnership with Arran Medical Group and Arran War Memorial Hospital to identify those most in need of the service. Initially it will be rolled out to relevant identified partners for medical related transport and inclusion of socially isolated residents to appropriate events.

It is envisaged that this will positively impact on the quality of life and lead to increased social activity over time. Volunteer drivers currently use their own car for which they are reimbursed for mileage. Full health and safety training is given, PVG process and risk assessments carried out and PPE are supplied.

Ongoing recruitment of volunteer drivers will ensure availability of transport to fulfil island residents needs as well as succession planning as part of the process. Mapping and identifying which areas volunteers are needed or lacking in villages is vital to the success of the pilot.

Working with the Community Transport Association to exchange best practice with experienced community transport providers as well as other Scottish Island community transport schemes is ongoing. Understanding what is planned nationally and locally helps to measure the progress and success of the pilot.



DELIVERING THE PLAN

THE MAIN AIMS OF THE ARRAN LOCAL ISLAND PLAN:

- That islanders are at the heart of the plan
- Delivered across island communities, island businesses, third and public sector partners
- Inclusive and participatory
- Feasible and realistic
- Flexible and responsive
- Action focused
- Supports the delivery of the National Islands Plan
- Supports the principles of Community Wealth Building
- Supports the transition to Net Zero

The success of the Plan will depend on a broad participation of stakeholders from Arran who will be the driver of delivering and monitoring progress of the Plan, ensuring there is an all-inclusive opportunity for people to be involved in the ongoing review and successful implementation of the Plan.

A key area of focus for the Island Recovery and Renewal Pilot is to contribute to closer and more coordinated working between the island communities, partners and national and local government and agencies to ensure stronger island-focused partnership working and will work collaboratively to unlock the knowledge, resources and support necessary to bring the Arran Local Island Plan to life. What will be key to the implementation stage of the Arran Local Island Plan will be the governance model that will have responsibility either collectively or individually for the delivery of the actions

outlined in Appendix 1. Participation in the development and influencing of the Island Plan has not, and will not, be limited to the early stages of the process. Participation will be necessary and widely encouraged throughout the delivery phase.

Whilst it is important that governance of the Island Plan aligns to the Arran Locality Partnership structure, there is also a need for thematic expertise and wider islander input. A final governance model for further consideration and exploration is included within the Plan, with an appointment process to be established to ensure appropriate and inclusive representation.

This ‘delivery group’ approach has recently been taken by Scottish Government for the delivery of the National Islands Plan.

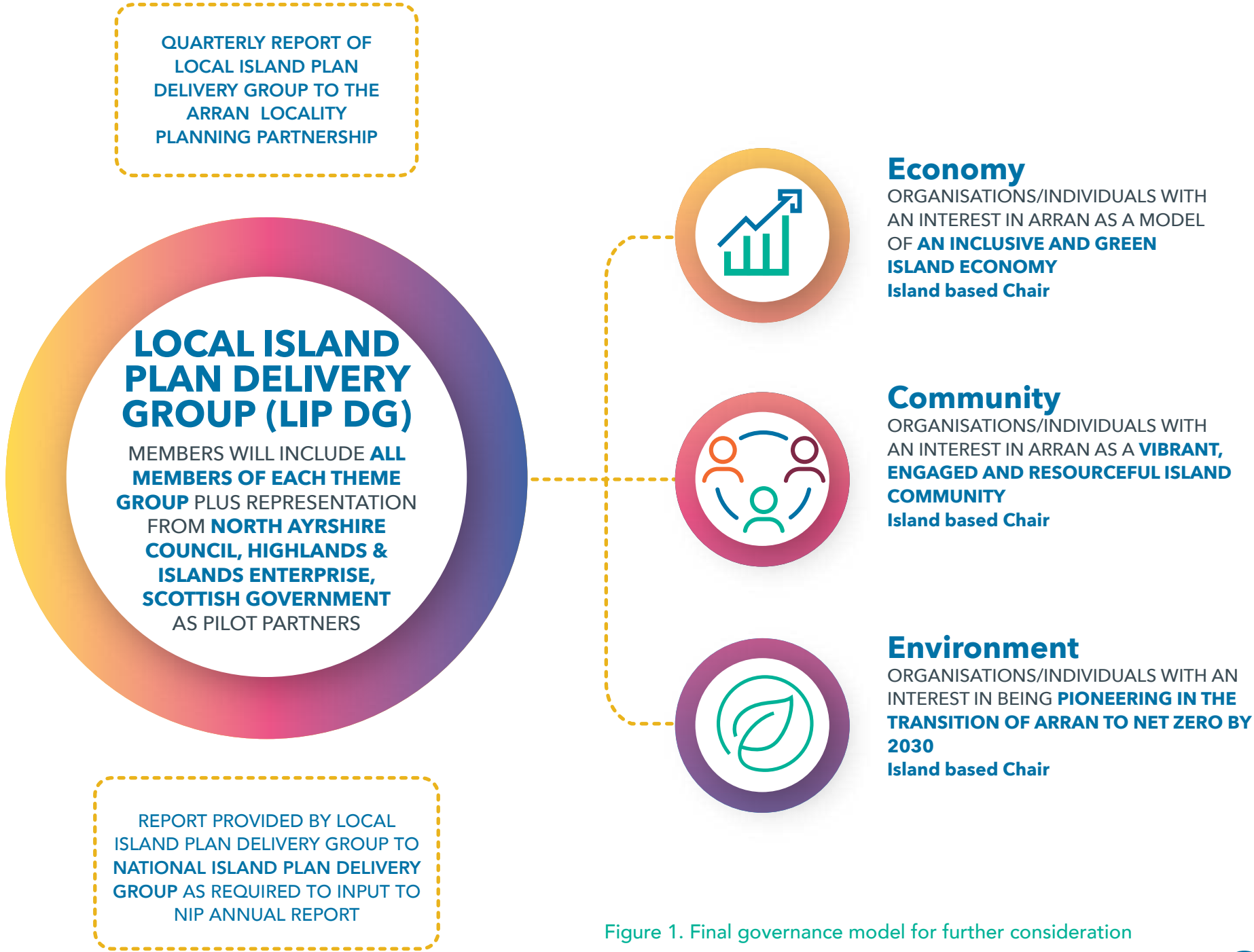


Figure 1. Final governance model for further consideration

The Local Island Plan Delivery Group would be the central partnership driving delivery for this Island Plan which is firmly grounded on the needs of the island community and address key economic, community and environmental wellbeing priorities.

The group should comprise public, private, third sector and community representation appointed to bring the knowledge and understanding of the priorities and to reflect the range of stakeholders with an interest in Arran.

They would take primary responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the agreed actions throughout the life of the Plan, with the purpose of improving the outcomes for Arran, with responsibility to include:

- Take lead responsibility for delivering specific identified actions
- Provide expertise to inform how action can be delivered to maximise impact
- Ensure the wide communication of actions and progress
- Communicating with Arran stakeholders to ensure input to actions on an ongoing basis
- Act as ambassadors for their thematic group and champion a place-based approach to delivering action for the benefit of Arran
- Monitor, review and report progress against the LIP and Action Plan to the Arran Locality Partnership

An open and transparent appointment process will be explored to ensure appropriate and inclusive representation is sought for the LIP Delivery group and thematic groups.

The LIP and Action Plan will be overseen by the Delivery Group and will, for the first two years be coordinated, monitored and supported by the Senior Officer (Islands) as part of the ongoing Island Recovery and Renewal Pilot.

It is anticipated that the vision, mission and key themes of the plan should remain for the life of the plan and to ensure the collective vision of the island remains an accurate reflection and takes account of any key changes locally, regionally, nationally, or internationally and the action plan will be reviewed annually as part of the process in preparing the annual report.

The Action Plan includes:

- Actions already being delivered or planned by island communities
- Actions already being delivered or planned by the Council
- Actions already being delivered or planned by partners for example Scottish Government and Highlands and Islands Enterprise etc.

The Island Plan Delivery Group will measure progress and success towards delivering the actions identified.

IT WILL BE IMPORTANT TO LEARN FROM AND COOPERATE WITH OTHER ISLANDS BEYOND NORTH AYRSHIRE INCLUDING EXPLORING OPPORTUNITIES OF A SHARED ‘CLYDE ISLANDS’ APPROACH IN IMPLEMENTING RELEVANT ACTIONS, TRIALLING NEW IDEAS, AREA-BASED STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS AND NATIONAL POLICY RESPONSES.



**WE HOPE THAT YOU RECOGNISE
AND SHARE THE VISION,
PRIORITIES AND AMBITIONS IN
THE ARRAN ISLAND PLAN AND
2022/23 ANNUAL ACTION PLAN
THAT HAVE BEEN PREPARED
WITH ISLAND STAKEHOLDERS.**



We would like to thank everyone who has provided input and comments in the preparation of this document and to ensure that the community of Arran will be at the heart of delivering this plan.

Photography used in this publication by:
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Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Iomairt na Gàidhealtachd 's nan Eilean



The Scottish
Government



North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Storrachd Àir a Tuath