

National Islands Plan Review

July 2023

Introduction

Scotland's first ever [National Islands Plan](#) was published in 2019. It is now being reviewed as required by the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018, which may lead to the publication of a new National Islands Plan. The Scottish Government wants to work together with local authorities, island communities and relevant sectors and partners to ensure this process is as thorough and effective as possible, providing us with vital feedback from those most impacted by the National Islands Plan.

Background

The Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 received Royal Assent on 6 July 2018. The first Commencement Regulations were laid on 20 September 2018 and came into force on 4 October 2018. The Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 introduces several measures to underpin the Scottish Government's objective of ensuring that there is a sustained focus across government and the public sector to meet the needs of islanders - now and in the future, with the aim of improving outcomes for communities. One of the first provisions introduced was a duty on Scottish Ministers to prepare a National Islands Plan.

The National Islands Plan

The purpose of the National Islands Plan (the Plan), as set out by the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 (the Act), 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". In preparing the Plan, the Scottish Ministers must have regard to the distinctive geographical, natural heritage and cultural characteristics (including the linguistic heritage) of each of the areas inhabited by island communities.

Section 3(3) of the Act provides a number of areas for improving outcomes for island communities, including: a) increasing population levels; b) improving and promoting: sustainable economic development; (ii) environmental wellbeing; (iii) health and wellbeing, and (iv) community empowerment; c) improving transport services; d) improving digital connectivity; e) reducing fuel poverty; f) ensuring effective management of the Scottish Crown Estate (that is, the property, rights and interests to which section 90B(5) of the Scotland Act 1998 applies); and g) enhancing biosecurity (including protecting islands from the impact of invasive non-native species).

As required by the Act, and after an ambitious consultation exercise across more than 40 islands involving over 1,000 participants, the current National Islands Plan was published in December 2019. It sets out 13 Strategic Objectives and over 100 commitments, which must be delivered over the five-year lifetime of the Plan.

The Plan was launched just 12 weeks before the Covid-19 pandemic struck in March 2020. It was published before the UK's exit from the EU, and before the onset of the cost crisis. Combined with the wider impacts of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, these issues have had a huge impact on Scotland's island communities.

The Act requires a review of the Plan within 5 years of initial publication. This review is therefore timely and provides the Scottish Government and their partners with an opportunity to reflect on changes in circumstance for island communities since 2019.

Consultation

The Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 requires that a consultation must take place as part of this review. This will provide us with information on what may need to be revised before the Plan is laid before parliament.

The aim of this review is twofold. Firstly, it will provide a detailed overview of the impact of the current National Islands Plan since its publication. Secondly, it will inform (if the review tells us we need one) a new National Islands Plan.

The Scottish Government firmly believes that the review of the National Islands Plan should be informed by the views of those on our islands, to the greatest extent possible. Details about this part of the consultation and how the results will be processed can be found later in this consultation document.

The results of the written consultation will be combined with quantitative and more qualitative data gathered through a series of meetings with key partners across the islands and direct engagement with island communities.

This consultation provides everyone with an interest in Scotland's islands the chance to provide us with their views and, if required, to shape the next iteration of the National Islands Plan. It takes about 30-40 minutes to complete.

This consultation is aimed at:

People who live in Scotland's islands, and any groups who represent them.

People who have an interest in Scotland's islands.

Organisations and people working on and with Scotland's islands, across the public, private and third sectors.

Developing a New National Islands Plan after this Review

Following the analysis of this consultation, and subject to the recommendations it makes, Ministers may decide to revise or develop a new National Islands Plan. The consultation process for this will be dependent on the outcome of this initial consultation, and the degree to which it indicates that the current National Islands Plan needs to be redrafted.

Respondent Information Form

Please Note this form must be completed and returned with your response.
To find out how we handle your personal data, please see our privacy policy:
<https://www.gov.scot/privacy/>

Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

- Individual
 Organisation

Full name or organisation's name

Phone number

Address

Postcode

Email Address

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

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

Information for organisations:

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

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

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

- Yes
 No

The Consultation

Question 1

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

Nothing at all

I have heard of it but know nothing about the content

I know a little about it

I know a lot about it

Question 2

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

Yes

No

Don't know

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

Question 3

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

Positive

Negative

It has not affected my life

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

Question 4

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

Positive
Negative
None

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

Question 5

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

	No progress	Minimal progress	Satisfactory progress	Progress exceeding expectations
Strategic Objective 1				
<i>Population</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strategic Objective 2				
<i>Sustainable Economic Development</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strategic Objective 3				
<i>Transport</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strategic Objective 4				
<i>Housing</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strategic Objective 5				
<i>Fuel Poverty</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strategic Objective 6				
<i>Digital</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Strategic Objective 7

Health, Social Care and Wellbeing

Strategic Objective 8

Environment and Biodiversity

Strategic Objective 9

Climate Change and Energy

Strategic Objective 10

Empowered Communities

Strategic Objective 11

Arts, Culture and Language

Strategic Objective 12

Education

Strategic Objective 13

Implementation

Question 6

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

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

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

Question 7

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

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

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

Question 8

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

Question 9

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

Question 10

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

Yes / No / Don't know

Please explain your reasons

Question 11

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

Refresh the current National Islands Plan but keep the same format

A whole new plan is needed

Something else

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

Contribution to Impact Assessments

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

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

Responding to this Consultation

We are inviting responses to this consultation by midnight 7 November 2023

Please respond to this consultation using the Scottish Government's consultation hub, Citizen Space (<http://consult.gov.scot>). Access and respond to this consultation online at <https://consult.gov.scot/agriculture-and-rural-economy/national-islands-plan-review-consultation>. You can save and return to your responses while the consultation is still open. Please ensure that consultation responses are submitted before the closing date of 7 November 2023.

If you are unable to respond using our consultation hub, please complete the Respondent Information Form to:

Islands Policy Team
Scottish Government
Longman House
Inverness
IV1 1SF

Handling your response

If you respond using the consultation hub, you will be directed to the About You page before submitting your response. Please indicate how you wish your response to be handled and, in particular, whether you are content for your response to be published. If you ask for your response not to be published, we will regard it as confidential, and we will treat it accordingly.

All respondents should be aware that the Scottish Government is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and would therefore have to consider any request made to it under the Act for information relating to responses made to this consultation exercise.

If you are unable to respond via Citizen Space, please complete and return the Respondent Information Form included in this document.

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

Next steps in the process

Where respondents have given permission for their response to be made public, and after we have checked that they contain no potentially defamatory material, responses will be made available to the public at <http://consult.gov.scot>. If you use the consultation hub to respond, you will receive a copy of your response via email.

Following the closing date, all responses will be analysed and considered along with any other available evidence to help us. Responses will be published where we have been given permission to do so. An analysis report will also be made available.

Comments and complaints

If you have any comments about how this consultation exercise has been conducted, please send them to the contact address above or at info@islandsteam.scot

Scottish Government consultation process

Consultation is an essential part of the policymaking process. It gives us the opportunity to consider your opinion and expertise on a proposed area of work.

You can find all our consultations online: <http://consult.gov.scot>. Each consultation details the issues under consideration, as well as a way for you to give us your views, either online, by email or by post.

Responses will be analysed and used as part of the decision making process, along with a range of other available information and evidence. We will publish a report of this analysis for every consultation. Depending on the nature of the consultation exercise the responses received may:

- indicate the need for policy development or review
- inform the development of a particular policy
- help decisions to be made between alternative policy proposals
- be used to finalise legislation before it is implemented

While details of particular circumstances described in a response to a consultation exercise may usefully inform the policy process, consultation exercises cannot address individual concerns and comments, which should be directed to the relevant public body.



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The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
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EH1 3DG

ISBN: 978-1-83521-147-2 (web only)

Published by The Scottish Government, July 2023

Produced for The Scottish Government by APS Group Scotland, 21 Tennant Street, Edinburgh EH6 5NA
PPDAS1330522 (07/23)

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