

Island Communities Impact Assessment – Screening Assessment Draft 2020-23 Corporate Plan

Introduction

Section 7 of the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 sets out a specific duty for relevant public bodies, including Crown Estate Scotland (Interim Management), to “have regard to island communities” in carrying out their functions. A related duty under section 8 of the 2018 Act requires relevant authorities to undertake an island communities impact assessment “in relation to a policy, strategy or service which, in the authority’s opinion, is likely to have an effect on an island community which is **significantly different from its effect on other communities** (including other island communities) in the area in which the authority exercises its functions.”

Crown Estate Scotland considers its draft Corporate Plan to comprise a policy position and as such requires assessment to determine whether it requires an Island Communities Impact Assessment (ICIA). This screening assessment is being carried out for that purpose.

Crown Estate Scotland exercises its function across our four rural estates (Fochabers, Applegirth, Whitehill and Glenlivet), around half of the foreshore and most of the sea bed. This comprises the area which screening assessment is being made against.

At the time of drafting, no guidance has been published by the Scottish Government regarding how Assessments should be carried out, including for screening. Annex 8 of our draft Corporate Plan states that ‘in lieu of formal guidance on ICIA we are working with the Scottish Government team to agree how to best assess this draft plan.’ This assessment is based on similar assessments made by Scottish Government Divisions and available on the Scottish Government web site. Our approach has been agreed with the Scottish Government. Action 34 of our draft Corporate Plan states that we will embed Islands Communities Impact Assessment in strategic decision-making, confirming our commitment to ICIA going forward.

This screening assessment is of the potential impact of the draft Corporate Plan on island *communities*. Island communities are defined in the Act as:

- consists of two or more individuals, all of whom permanently inhabit an island (whether or not the same island), and
- is based on common interest, identity or geography (including in relation to any uninhabited island whose natural environment and terrestrial, marine and associated ecosystems contribute to the natural or cultural heritage or economy of an inhabited island).

The National Plan for Scotland’s Islands (Scottish Government, October 2019) outlines a number of strategic objectives for the islands, reflective of the particular challenges and circumstances they face. Of these, those we see as most relevant to our draft Corporate Plan and Crown Estate Scotland functions

include – fuel poverty, transport, population ageing and need for balance, sustainable economic development, health and well-being, impacts of climate change, and empowering local communities. These are the main areas therefore that this assessment screens against. Impacts can be positive and negative.

Screening Assessment

| Title of Policy/strategy/service | Crown Estate Scotland –Draft 2020 – 23 Corporate Plan |
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| <p>Stage 1 - Planning What is the main aim of your policy/strategy?</p> | <p>Crown Estate Scotland’s draft Corporate Plan sets out our purpose to invest in property, natural resources and people to deliver wider value for Scotland. The draft plan sets out 5 Strategic Objectives which detail the activities that Crown Estate Scotland proposes to undertake over 2020-23 to deliver Crown Estate Scotland’s vision of ‘Communities and businesses thriving through enterprising and sustainable development of property and natural resources.’</p> <p>The draft Plan sets out five strategic objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SO1 - Support the sustainable expansion of Scotland’s blue economy, focussing on marine and coastal development. • SO2 - Develop built environment that strengthens communities and benefits businesses. • SO3 - Invest in innovation and work with tenants to enable sustainable natural resource use. • SO4 - Build partnerships for people and the planet. • SO5 - Develop and deploy our people’s expertise to deliver value and success. <p>Our objectives align with the Scottish Government’s National Performance Framework and the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals.</p> <p>In delivering these objectives, Crown Estate Scotland will apply our values of collaboration, excellence, integrity and commercialism and act as investor, enabler, asset manager and coordinator.</p> <p>The draft Corporate Plan reflects the requirements of the Scottish Crown Estate Act 2019 which provides for Scottish Crown Estate assets to be managed in a way which delivers greater value beyond financial return and enables other bodies to take on management responsibilities.</p> |
| <p>Stage 2 – Evidence What impact will your policy have on island communities?</p> | <p>Crown Estate Scotland has no rural estate on any of the Scottish islands, so no impacts related to forestry or agriculture or to residential leasing, apply. While there are minerals and wild river assets on the islands, none of these are currently let and there are no specific draft Corporate Plan actions directly relevant to these assets.</p> |

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| | <p>Our main assets of relevance to Scotland’s islands are coastal and marine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seabed leasing or agreement to 12 nm. for aquaculture, telecom and electricity cables, oil and gas pipelines and offshore renewables - wind wave and tidal. • Foreshore/coastal – leasing rights and investment aspirations for ports and harbours, marinas, bridges, moorings and dredging. <p>On this basis, the key actions proposed in our draft Corporate Plan relevant to Scotland’s islands include the following, which are assessed against the key objectives outlined in the National Plan for Scotland’s Islands:</p> <p>Offshore renewables</p> <p><u>Draft Corporate Plan Actions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilitate/support offshore wind investment – ensure leasing in place. - Encourage supply chain growth and development with off shore leasing. - Support development of new offshore renewable technologies – wave, tidal and floating wind – local energy systems, and carbon capture and storage. <p><u>Impact on island communities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development and leasing of offshore renewables could have a positive impact on sustainable economic development on the Islands especially if supply chain opportunities are developed. - Support for economic development has the potential to positively impact population decline and can help balance island age profiles. - Particular opportunities for local energy systems may be apparent on the islands providing new economic opportunities and potentially addressing fuel poverty issues. - Development of renewable energy impacts positively on climate change, which islands may be particularly susceptible to, in the form of sea level rise and coastal erosion. - Offshore renewables have the potential to impact on the environment. Conversely, renewables impact positively on climate change with inherent environmental benefits. Promoting environmental wellbeing contributes positively to community well-being. <p><u>Significantly different from effect on other communities?</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marine Scotland is identifying suitable areas for offshore wind development through their sectoral marine planning process. Crown Estate Scotland will lease in line with the areas identified in the Sectoral Plan (Scotwind Leasing). The leasing process is designed to award sites to developers on the basis of their ability to develop projects. Proposed |
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projects must be within the areas identified by Marine Scotland but other than that, the leasing process will not be influenced by or assess the location of proposed projects. The leasing process itself will not therefore affect island communities differently from other communities. At this stage it is not known where new projects will be developed and how these new projects will relate to island communities. Any potential impacts on island communities associated with new sites are considered to be an indirect effect of leasing rather than a direct effect.

- Marine Scotland is the lead consenting body for offshore wind proposals and as such they will consider any impacts of proposals on island communities. We understand MS are carrying out ICIA screening on their sectoral marine plan.
- In relation to other types of offshore renewables, while the draft Corporate Plan promotes and supports their development, actions outlined are not geographically targeted, and the draft Plan does not include actions to identify where growth might emerge. As such the draft Plan is not considered to be likely to have an impact on island communities which are significantly different from other communities.
- While renewable energy contributes positively to climate change, Crown Estate Scotland is unable to comment on what the impact will be and to what extent island communities and different island communities will be affected in comparison to other communities. This is outwith the scope of the Corporate Plan.

Aquaculture (finfish, shellfish and seaweed)

Draft Corporate Plan Actions

- Review of leasing and terms to encourage sustainable, responsible and productive use of the seabed.
- Contribute to sustainable finfish production
 - o develop knowledge database to inform pre application consultation
 - o protocol to measure lice on wild fish/agree definition of sea lice management areas
- Strengthen economic viability of shellfish opportunities – exploring new market opportunities
- Explore market opportunities in sustainable seaweed cultivation
- Support ways to prevent marine litter.

Potential impacts on island communities

- Aquaculture has the potential to contribute positively to sustainable economic development on the islands, providing employment opportunities in often fragile economies with few other economic development opportunities. This may include downstream opportunities.
- Exploring markets in seaweed cultivation can have similar economic benefit impacts.
- Support for economic development has the potential to positively impact population decline and to balance ageing island populations.

- Action on sea lice has the potential to have a positive impact on biodiversity interests particularly for wild salmon, contributing to environmental wellbeing.
- Measures to address marine litter can improve the environment that communities live in contributing to their sense of place and well-being. The intention is to involve local people in taking marine litter initiatives forward helping empower communities to be involved in local decision making and action to improve the places they live in.

Significantly different from effect on other communities?

- The draft Corporate Plan does not include any actions to specifically promote aquaculture adjacent to Scotland's islands. As such we do not anticipate a significantly different effect on island communities.
- The draft Corporate Plan commits to undertaking a 'root and branch' review of how Scotland's seabed is leased for aquaculture aiming to promote sustainable development and wider value. Reporting is expected in 2021. Given the number of fish farms adjacent to Scottish islands and the importance of aquaculture for island economies, we will ensure that any proposed changes to our leasing activities fully considers implications for Scotland's islands as part of the review.
- Action on sea lice and on seaweed cultivation is not island specific, as such we do not anticipate a significantly different effect from these actions on island communities.
- A pilot project is emerging on marine litter. Islands are unlikely to be a particular feature of the project and as such no significantly different effect on the islands is anticipated.

Coastal

Draft Corporate Plan Actions

- Develop a coastal assets strategy to support the development of ports and harbours, marine tourism and other coastal infrastructure.
- Identify opportunities for investment with a focus on ports and harbours, boat-based tourism, and coastal development land.
- Funding support for a programme of projects that promote sustainable development and regeneration – to be launched in year of Coasts and Waters 2020

Impact on island communities

- Regeneration activity, promotion of marine tourism and coastal development can contribute positively to sustainable economic development on the islands, providing employment opportunities.
- Support for economic development has the potential to positively impact population decline and age balance on the islands.

- Regeneration activity can have a positive impact on place making and associated feelings of community wellbeing.
- New coastal funding provides an opportunity to support local economies and empower communities to support their aspirations.
- Marine recreation provides an opportunity for island communities to become involved in maritime sport and recreation contributing positively to their health and wellbeing.

Significantly different from effect on other communities?

- Decision making on Crown Estate Scotland investment priorities is ongoing and the coastal asset strategy is still to be developed. It is not possible at this stage to identify where new coastal development and regeneration will be focussed and to know how this may affect the islands.
- Work is ongoing regarding the development of support for coastal communities. Funding will be available across the estate and will not specifically include or exclude island areas.

Strategic Objective 4 – Build partnerships for people and the planet

Draft Corporate Plan Actions

- Support and encourage local empowerment by implementing the Local Management Pilots Project. Under the scheme, communities and councils across Scotland were invited to apply to take on greater responsibility in managing assets to help them deliver projects that boost local economies or the environment. The scheme, which stresses the importance of applicants consulting locally including with existing tenants, aims to give communities more say and influence over what happens in their area.
- Meaningful collaboration with communities to shape and deliver projects and initiatives – formalising our approach to community engagement making a clear commitment to how we will work with others at a local level.

Impact on island communities

- Positive impact on community empowerment and involvement in decision making. This in turn can have positive impacts on community wellbeing.
- Local communities and authorities can make asset management decisions most attuned to their objectives and to local circumstances with the potential to positively address a range of islands challenges.

Significantly different from effect on other communities

- The Pilots project was an open application scheme across all of the Scottish Crown Estate. Island communities had the opportunity to (and did) apply. Four successful projects have emerged, with three of these being on Scottish Islands - Orkney, Shetlands and the Western Isles. The focus of the Pilots is to explore how delegated management of the

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| | <p>Scottish Crown Estate might work. While it is clear that these island areas will be affected by the pilots, given that the relevant local authorities have proactively chosen to participate in the pilots scheme and will largely control how the scheme is actually implemented in their jurisdiction, it is not considered appropriate for this assessment to undertake a detailed analysis of the potential impacts on island communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formalising our approach to community engagement is not specific to island communities and it is not anticipated that any formalised approach would have a significantly different effect on the islands. |
| <p>Stage3 – Consultation What consultation have you had with the island communities on your policy etc</p> | <p>The draft Corporate Plan was out for public consultation from 31 August until 9 December. It was publicised on our web site and in tenant and corporate correspondence and publications. Crown Estate Scotland attended a number of stakeholder conferences and arranged a bespoke engagement event in Edinburgh. As part of consultation on the draft Plan we received responses from Shetland Islands Council, Argyll and Bute Council and from island interests including - Mull and Iona Community Trust; Highlands and Islands Enterprise; Scottish Fishermen’s Federation; Harris Development Ltd.; Northmaven Community Council; and the Association of Scottish Shellfish Growers</p> <p>The majority of comments received on the plan from these groups was positive and referenced the value of the draft plan in setting out and clarifying Crown Estate Scotland’s approach, recognising the high-level nature of the document. There is nothing from the consultation responses that highlights or refers to a significantly different effect from the draft Corporate Plan on the islands in comparison to other communities.</p> |
| <p>Stage 4 Decision Does your policy etc require an Island Communities Impact Assessment?</p> | <p>On the basis of the assessment set out in Stage 2 and the consultation responses received we do not consider that the draft Corporate Plan is likely to have an effect on island communities which is significantly different from its effect on other communities, including other island communities, and on that basis, we do not consider that an Island Communities Impact Assessment is required.</p> <p>The need for an ICIA will be considered for any new policies or strategies that are developed during the implementation of the Corporate Plan and where appropriate, an ICIA will be undertaken.</p> |