



UIST WIND COMMUNITY INVESTMENT PLAN

2019-2024

Abstract

These are the conclusions of the North Uist community through the community benefit survey results collated from June to September 2019, from the paper and online survey results, as well as school engagement. This community investment plan will be updated in future years once the project begins to generate a profit for the benefit of the local community.

17th of September 2019

North Uist Development Company (Trading) Limited

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	2
1.1 North Uist – development challenges.....	3
2. The Community Benefit Survey	5
2.1 Results.....	5
3. The Stick-on Posters and School Engagement.....	11
3.1 Bullseye posters	11
3.2 Primary School Responses	12
4. The Community Investment Plan Conclusions.....	13
Appendix 1 – School survey	15

1. Introduction

UistWind is a project of the North Uist Development Company (Trading) Limited which consists of two 900kW Enercon wind turbines, aiming to generate a revenue for the North Uist community with future profits entering a Community Benefit Fund distributed by North Uist Development Company through its charitable aims and guided by the Community Investment Plan. Due to the decrease in Feed in Tariff rates (FiT) over the course of the project's development, the project is not expected to generate enough revenue to create profits in the earlier years of generation; hence any community investment plan produced at this stage is initial guidance and will be updated in future years. North Uist Development Company (NUDC) has an existing local development plan; which will also be updated in future years, and identifies specific aims and objectives for NUDC:

Aim 1 – Foster a Dynamic, Sustainable and Viable Community

- Promote economic development and employment opportunities in the community and promote North Uist as a place to conduct business activities
- Improve our representation on policy-making forums according to the particular needs of North Uist
- Support and encourage community enterprise and locally based business
- Develop renewable energy opportunities and energy efficiency measures to provide community benefit
- Support and promote the creative industries
- Support initiatives that reduce dependence on external inputs, delivering local needs locally
- Support, improve and develop community facilities and infrastructure to meet local needs and contribute to a better quality of life for the North Uist community

Aim 2 - Promote and Protect the Community's Unique Natural and Cultural Heritage

- Protect, promote and enhance our unique natural environment and promote sustainable and innovative use of our natural resources
- Enable local management of new statutory designations
- Protect and promote the historical, archaeological and cultural assets of North Uist, and encourage research
- Retain and exhibit artefacts in a local facility
- Encourage the promotion of cultural activity in the community through Gaelic language, song, dance and music and creative industries
- Support and promote the value of our crofting and fishing industries and their heritage.
- Promote co-operation with other communities.

Aim 3 – Strive for a Demographically Balanced Community

- Welcome and encourage in-migration
- Support initiatives that encourage the relocation of online and remote workers to North Uist
- Support initiatives that encourage retaining youth and encourage young returners
- Promote training opportunities to enable the development of a skilled workforce
- Support equal access to essential services
- Encourage the retention and expansion of services for all age groups in North Uist.

Aim 4 – Make North Uist an Accessible Community

- Support initiatives that protect, enhance, improve, integrate and reduce costs of our transport, both to and from and on the island
- Encourage the development of tourism opportunities that provide economic diversity, sustain vital services and provide local employment as well as being appropriate to the environment, cultural heritage and community wishes.
- Support better internet facilities including campaigning for expansion of the fibre-optic installation for the whole of North Uist

There were also three key projects identified as meeting these aims: North Uist Renewables Project; North Uist Environmental Centre at Lochmaddy School; Promotion of Affordable Housing on North Uist. The first priority is currently coming to fruition and the other two are progressing.

In addition to the NUDC Local Development Plan, there has been considerable work by the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership (OHCPP). The OHCPP was required to prepare and publish a Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) which set out the priority local outcomes it proposes to improve. These link with the 16 National Outcomes which outline what the Scottish Government wants to achieve over the next ten years. The LOIP is for the whole of the Outer Hebrides, however it also initially identified two priority areas where additional focussed effort is required, one of which is North Uist & Benbecula. Using the Community Profile information, the OHCPP identified that North Uist & Benbecula are experiencing poorer outcomes and less improvement than other areas within the Outer Hebrides and within Scotland. The priorities of the LOIP, which directly link with the aims of NUDC, are:

- The Outer Hebrides retains and attracts people to ensure a sustainable population
- The Outer Hebrides has sustainable Economic Growth and all our people have access to appropriate employment opportunities
- The Outer Hebrides offers attractive opportunities that improve the quality of life, wellbeing and health for all our people.

More recently have been consultations for the Islands Plan. The draft report highlights challenges of: Need to Increase Population Levels; Economic Development; Environmental Protection; Health and Wellbeing; Education; Community Empowerment; Transport; Digital Connectivity; Fuel Poverty; Land Management; Biosecurity; Tourism; Wider range of higher education courses; Cycle track; Equitable allocation of finance/resources across islands.

In terms of economic development, funding is also becoming more restrictive with challenges such as Brexit and the end of funds under programmes such as the LEADER programme; therefore, the Community Benefit Fund has an opportunity of providing funds in future years to impact on the challenges of the local community.

1.1 North Uist – development challenges

North Uist is defined as the area encompassing the islands of Berneray, North Uist and Grimsay or in the HS6 postcode. It supports a population of 1619 (2011) of which 26.1% are aged 65 and over and 12.2 are aged under 16. The area is experiencing long-term population decline, an ageing demographic and low birth rates. Statistics show that between 2001 and 2008 there was a decrease of 7.4% in the total number of children and an increase in the number of residents of pensionable age – the highest in the Outer Hebrides.

The Hebrides including North Uist has a weak economic base which is concentrated on a narrow range of sectors and especially reliant on primary industries and the public sector. Comhairle nan Eilean Siar is the largest employer in the Outer Hebrides, and has recently suffered from budget cuts. The MoD, through its military base and private partnerships, employs over 100 people. These sectors are insufficiently diverse to sustain a young, educated population and, coupled with a lack of well-paid jobs, means those in the age range 15 – 29 years figure disproportionately among those who chose to leave the island.

Local businesses suffer from a lack of diversity. An audit of local businesses in North Uist was carried out in 2011. It is estimated that around 54% of the businesses identified fall within the tourism and culture sectors (5 hotels; 24 B&Bs; 44 self-catering businesses; 16 arts related businesses; 3 visitor centres; 5 sporting related businesses).

Level 4 qualifications and above are held by 28.3% of the population, higher than the Outer Hebrides average. In island areas North Uist has the highest percentage of those with level 4 and above qualifications.

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) is the government's official tool for assessing smaller population zones (average population 800) with the lowest levels of deprivation in the country. The SIMD is used to focus and inform policies and resources to tackle social inequalities in Scotland. Datazone S01009022 encompasses Benbecula and North Uist. The domain's geographic access score is 135 placing it in the 2% most deprived in Scotland with regards to accessing services. The datazone information also indicates 3.4% of the population as being employment deprived, and 9.6% as being income deprived.

Additionally, with regards to childhood health, it is noted that Body Mass Index statistics published by National Statistics for Scotland show that the Western Isles Health Board has the highest rate of childhood obesity amongst Primary 1 pupils nationally, with 26.7% of P1 pupils being overweight (5.3% above the national average).

The Scottish Rural Policy Centre (SRUC) published a report in 2014 entitled Rural Scotland in Focus, which looked to monitor how rural Scotland is changing. It focuses on population trends, the lives of young people, the levels and experiences of poverty and disadvantage and how use of our finite rural land resource is negotiated through planning and other means. It is important to consider the aspects of rural inequalities, which, as listed below create challenges to living that are not experienced by communities within larger urban areas. In reviewing employment in rural areas, the SRUC report highlights a significantly larger percentage of those in part time or smaller contract jobs, often with lower hourly rates or salaries than counterparts in urban population centres. Many rural areas have become increasingly reliant on the Tourism Industry, and thus many jobs are seasonal in demand.

Living outwith larger urban areas is likely to increase the costs of goods overall – primarily due to the cost of the supply chain network required. This can be seen in the cost of petrol and diesel with a predominant market of independent providers, unable to offer the prices of larger national outlets. This issue raises a secondary cost to residents, with rural communities relying more on private transport, and often having to travel further for services.

The Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership predicts a need for a minimum of 1500 jobs for sustainable population to prevent the ongoing decline, with the reversal of population decline and retention of young people being the primary aim of local development plans.

The demographic imbalance illustrated by the reducing number of young people and increasing number of people in the upper age bands, along with the reliance on public sector and primary industries, and tourism among local businesses, presents a challenge for all the agencies with responsibility for the future sustainability of North Uist.

2. The Community Benefit Survey

There have been various stages of consultation with the local community. The Community Benefit Survey was launched on the 27th of May 2019 at the Uist Wind construction BBQ with paper surveys, posters and post-it notes for people to use. The Community Benefit Survey was also shared at the North Uist Highland Games on Friday the 19th July 2019 and North Uist Agricultural Show, Thursday 25th July. The same survey was also placed online, closing on the 10th of September 2019. 49 participants completed surveys, with 35 online surveys, providing a total of 84 responses. Responses were also collected from the children at Sgoil Uibhist a Tuath – see section 3.

2.1 Results

Of the survey participants, 30% were between 60-75 and 26% between the ages of 25 and 39, with 2 under 16. When asked various options for how they would like the community benefit funds administered: through quarterly funding rounds was the most popular answer, and by committee after application (Figure 1). There were some who felt there could be quarterly funding rounds for smaller applications, and annual rounds for larger applications, but there were also comments about minimising the administration burden whilst maximising impact through criteria-based application processes. There were also some comments regarding ensuring the application is not overly complicated, and one comment stating funding should not be dependent on match funding due to difficulties acquiring match funding.

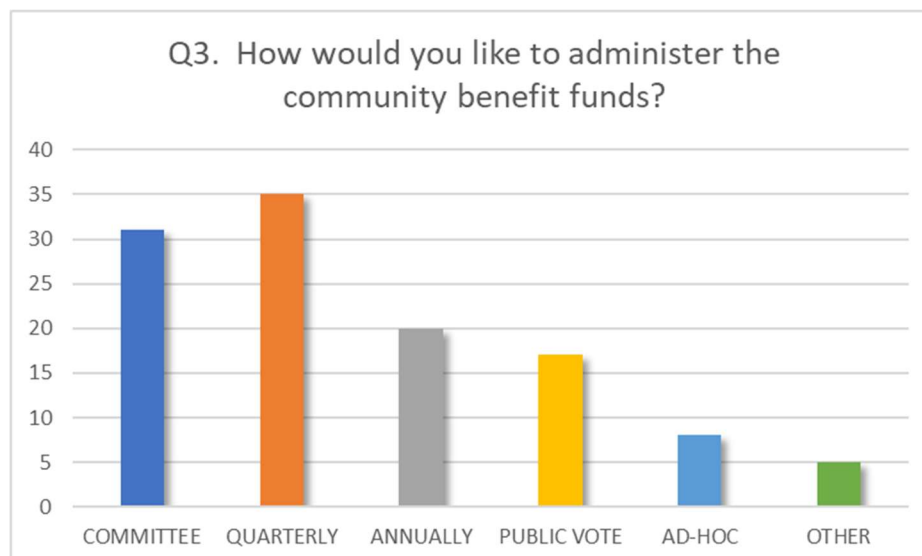


Figure 1. Q3 results from online and paper surveys

For Question 4, people were asked to rank what they like most about living in Uist, with 1 being the least and 10 being the best thing the like about living in Uist. The online survey results show people enjoy quality of life, the natural environment/wildlife, rural living and culture and heritage the most. Learning and career opportunities and entertainment appeared to be the lowest scoring (Figure 2).

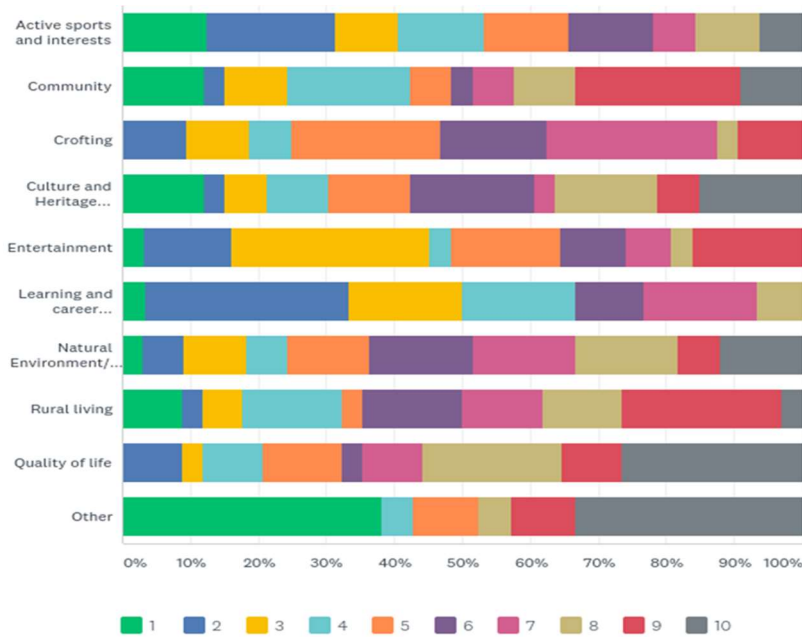


Figure 2. Q4 ranking on online survey

There were similar results shown in the paper surveys, with “Other” scoring the least but this is skewed by the low numbers of people choosing the other option. In the paper surveys, community came first, followed by quality of life and natural environment/wildlife.

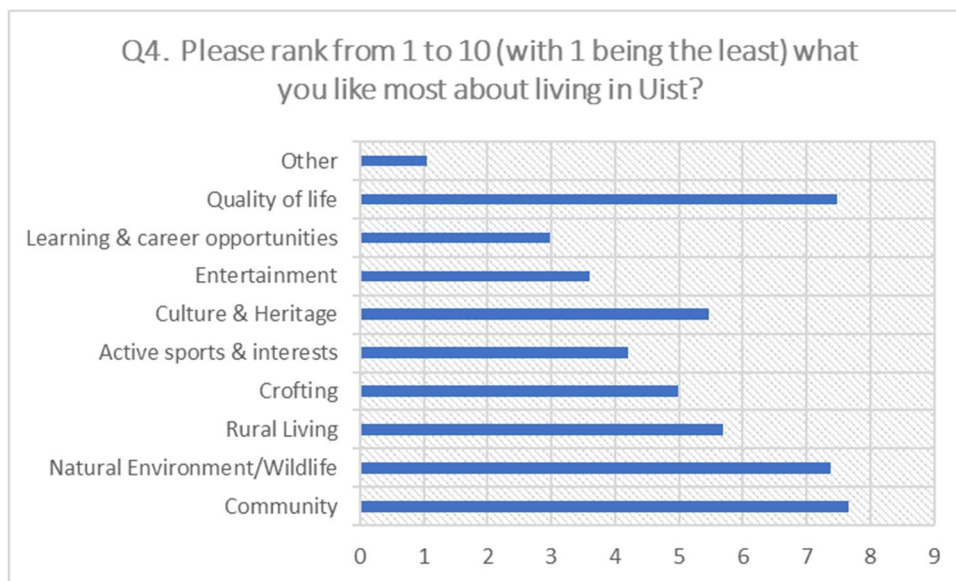


Figure 3. Q4 paper survey results

Question six online (5 in paper survey) followed this by asking what people would like to improve on Uist, with 1 being least, and 10 what they would like to improve the most. The online results showed that people would like to improve career/job opportunities the most, followed by housing, learning opportunities/education, care and support and transport (Figure 4). Specific comments asked for improvement to infrastructure, such as public toilets, markings, litter bins; improved hospital and medical facilities; clarity in funding decisions; community engagement and support for the elderly.

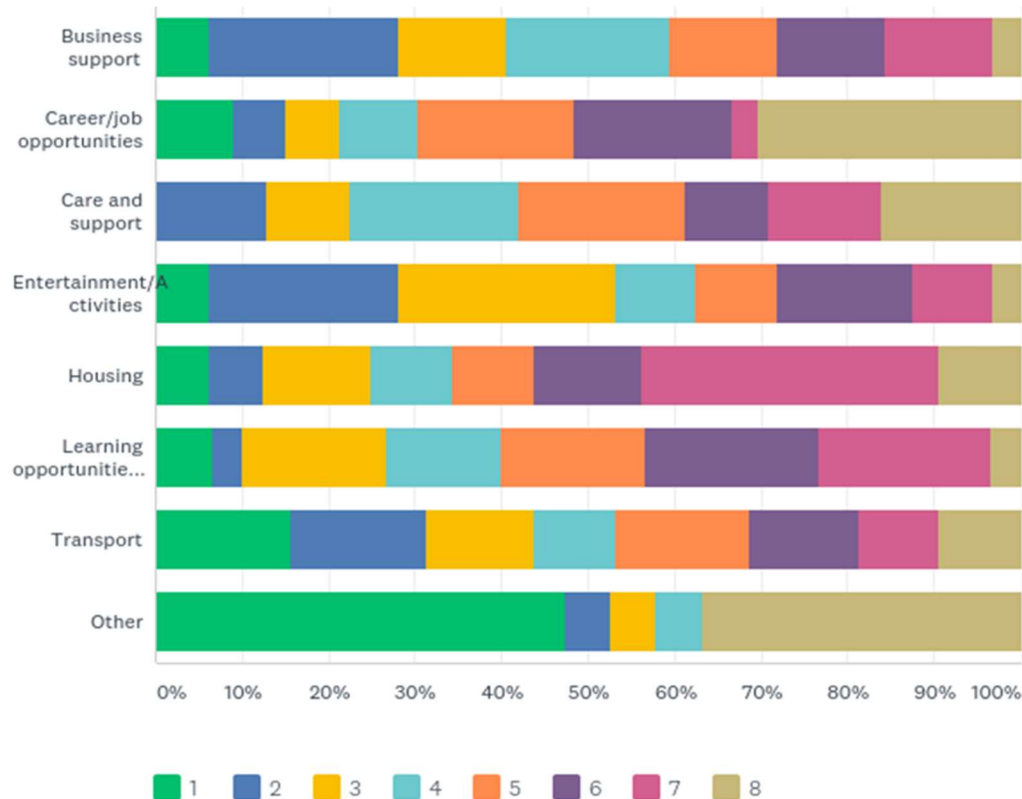


Figure 4. Q6 online survey results ranking what people would like to improve on Uist.

In the paper survey, on a weighted average basis, the most popular answer for what people would like to improve on Uist was career/job opportunities, followed by transport, entertainment and care and support (Figure 5). As with the other results, “Other” is skewed by the small number of responses.

There were some specific responses to other improvements people would like to see across Uist, including improvements in roads such as double lanes, increase in cycle paths to remove cyclists from the dangerous roads, support for communities in coastal erosion areas, increase electric charging points to enable electric vehicles, reinstatement of an outdoor centre, encouragement of local food production and many comments regarding problematic transport including ferries, expensive flights and poor bus transport. Additional comments including concern there was lack of appreciation by the Scottish Government of difficulties faced by island communities and concerns surrounding future climate change impacts.

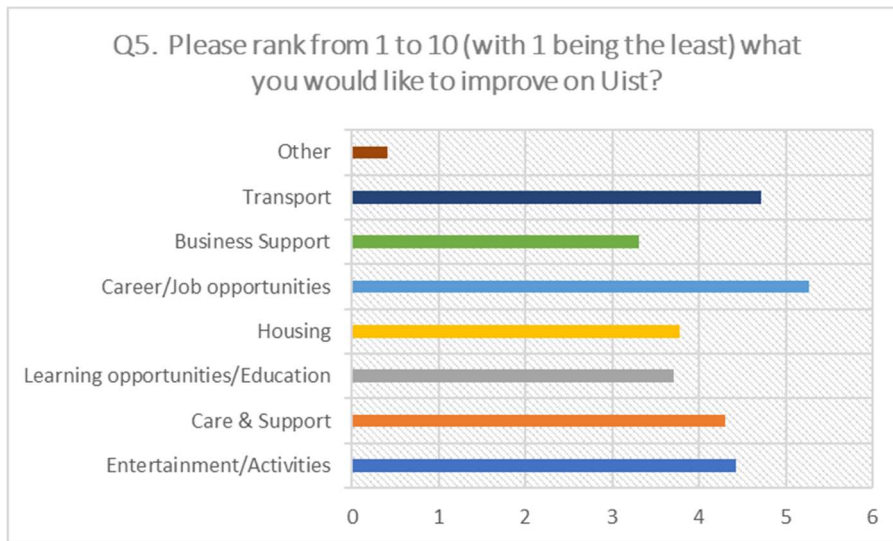


Figure 5. Q5 weighted average paper survey results

Question 6 of the paper survey and question 8 of the online survey asked what people would like the community benefit income to be spent on. The combined online and paper survey results are shown in Figure 6. The most popular topic was projects to support young people on the island, which also matches that of the priorities of local development plans, to sustain the local population by encouraging the support of young people staying on the island. Start-up funds was the next most popular option, followed by four options with very similar results: local charities, local environmental projects, tourism infrastructure and local care and support projects.

Specific ideas on where funds should be spent included: Facilities and opportunities for young people; Sports venue funding (new pitches and courts etc); Lower residential electricity bills; Support for Gaelic and Heritage projects; Car parks at ends of Heb way paths and events such as the Feis; Activity sessions for retired and elderly (not just lunch and shopping); men’s shed type of activity. Ideas also included: EV chargers at every place people park for more than 2 hours; Archaeological/Historical preservation; Economic development projects rather than arts and conservation; Community shops and local businesses; commercial units to lease; gardening projects; housing, small business units, facilities for families with young children’s; community transport to events and facilities; Depending on Brexit focus may need to change to support crofting, fishing. There was also a comment funding should focus on projects where funding is currently lacking. Fishery projects were the least popular proposed option for use of the community benefit funds.

Free community energy for those in fuel poverty has also been proposed; which unfortunately is not currently possible due to the current energy market regulatory system; however, with changes in policy and regulations, this is something NUDC-T may be able to look at in the future with an additional turbine in a world without FiTs.

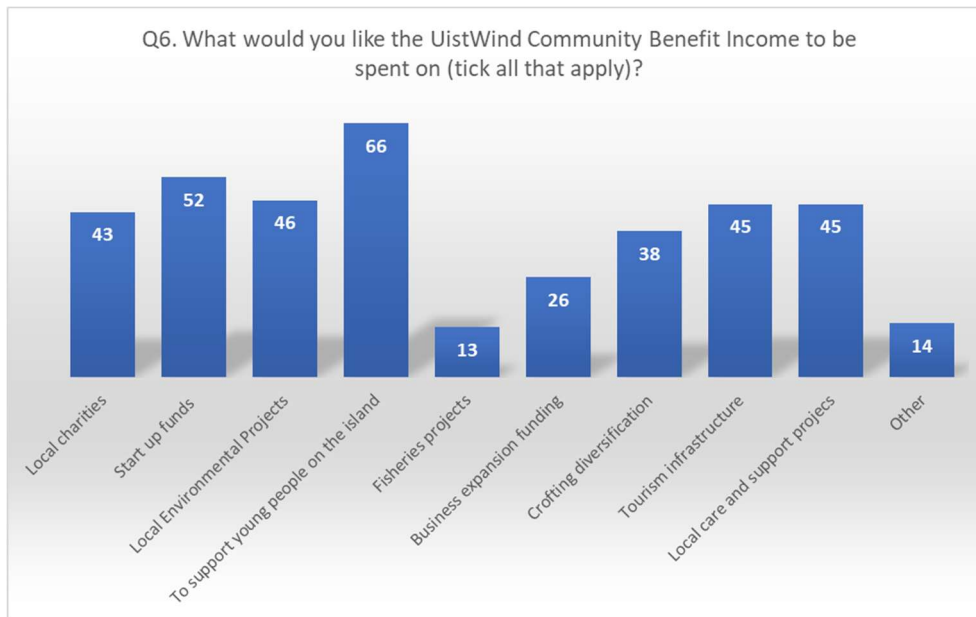


Figure 6. Combined results on what people would like the community benefit funds spent on.

Question 7 of the paper survey or Question 9 of the online survey asked: How do you think funding should be prioritised. The top three answers for the combined paper and online survey results were: by impact – population; by impact – local economy; by impact – wellbeing; therefore, easily deciding on the criteria for prioritisation of applications (Figure 7).

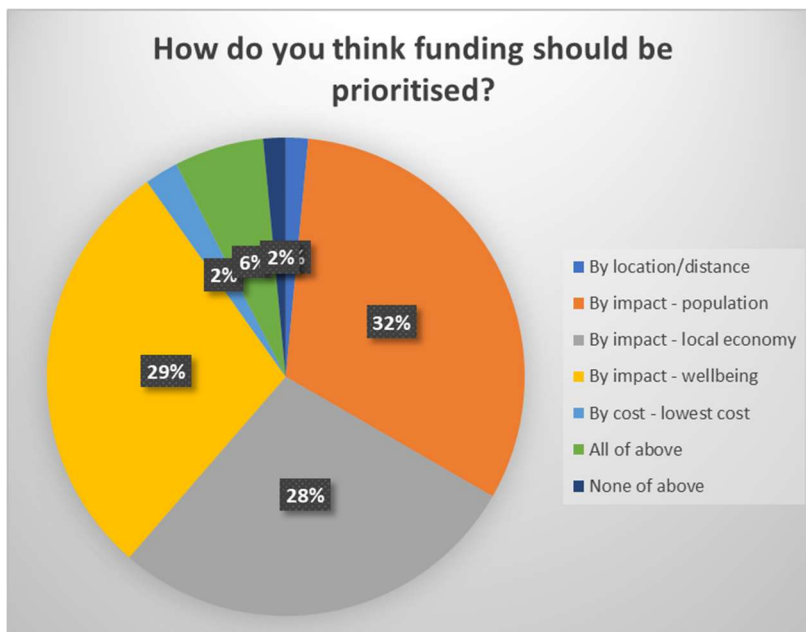


Figure 7. Combined results for Q7 of paper survey & Q9 of the online survey

The next question asked what people felt the maximum amount of funding should be for an individual project. The paper survey showed a preference for a maximum of £15,000; however, when combined with the online results, the results show a much more even split (Figure 8). There appears to be an overall slight preference for £15k, £10k and £5k; and the

results also show there is a general trend of a preference for different levels of funding available for different types of projects.

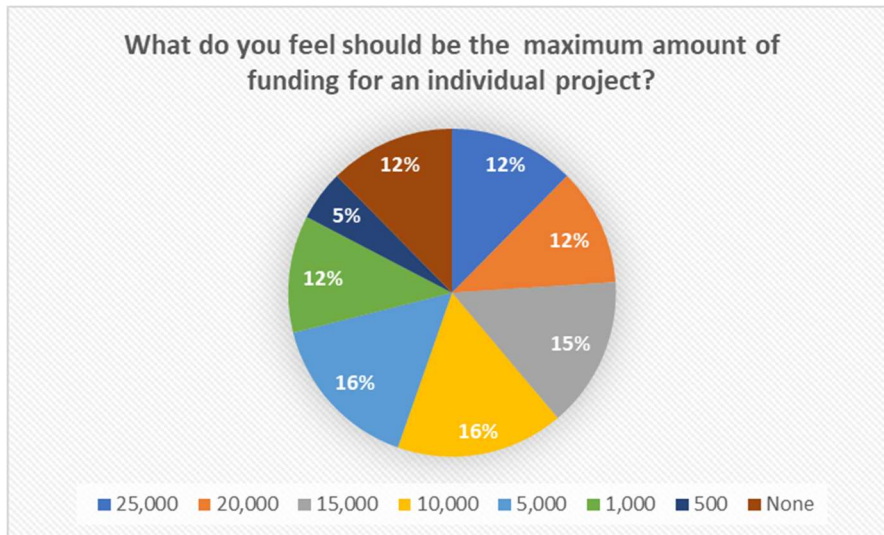


Figure 8. Results of Q8 of the paper survey/Q10 of online survey

Comments were also provided stating some didn't feel there should be a maximum amount of funding set, and it should be dependent upon the amount required to meet the needs of the project. It is important to state at this point, that the levels of funding will of course depend upon the amount available in a given year, and a debt reserve, in addition to other prudent reserves, will need to be available during the lifetime of the project in addition to the community benefit fund. It may be that smaller levels of funding will be available when profits begin to emerge later in the project, and larger funding pots are available at a later stage of the project, after 10 years plus. It will also vary with re-financing and clearance of the junior loan, as well as investor funds and any associated interest payments.

Additional comments included: Depends on the project, some may need more funding than others; could be a percentage of funds available; Flexible depending on demand e.g. if the funding limit was 10k, would have to decide whether to fund more smaller cost projects or larger ones that would take up the full 10k; Depends entirely of the project, larger projects need more funding but just because it's a larger project does not make it necessary; I would be happy for more than £25000 to go to a specific project if I felt that the project would have a broad positive impact on all islanders; There should be no limit. Funding should be by merit against agreed criteria; Maybe smaller grants could be offered for macro businesses, to buy specific equipment; 15 K for capital projects only.

Question 9 of the paper survey and 11 of the online survey offered the opportunity for raising any other points. These comments included:

"It is important to ensure openness and transparency in everything to do with the community investment plan."

"Rather than funding, low interest loans should be offered. This would allow a loan fund to build up over time."

“Congratulate NUDCT and all concerned in getting the project to this stage”

“Well done. Good survey. Good way to engage lots of people. Good way to get wide input to types of application that come forward.”

“Annual funding grants of 20k. Biannual grants of £500 for smaller projects”

“Would want NUDC to have full access to recipients’ books to avoid possibility of fraud/mis management”

“Transparency and regular accounting necessary. No political activities. No vanity projects.”

“Funds should be spread between projects that will increase jobs and population and housing.”

“Not convinced there should be a limit. Consideration will need to be given to the structure of the committee which makes decisions”

3. The Stick-on Posters and School Engagement

3.1 Bullseye posters

At the BBQ, Show and Games, bullseye posters (Figure 9) were used with pictures for people to prioritise what they feel is most important to improve in Uist. The results are quite mixed, but with the environment as a top priority in all the engagement sessions. The need for jobs and career opportunities is also prioritised in one of the posters alongside business support. Children’s activities appear as a priority in two of the posters, and housing near centre in two. Paths, parks, trees, education, mother and baby support, education, entertainment and transport are further out from the centre; highlighting prioritisation of environmental projects, jobs, housing and children’s activities.

More specific ideas were mentioned in post-it notes. These included “start up funds for small businesses” “improve hebridean way cycle and walking paths to free up roads” “cycle and walking paths” “disability access to beaches and heritage attractions” “projects which balance the local natural environment with need to provide facilities for visitors and young families”.

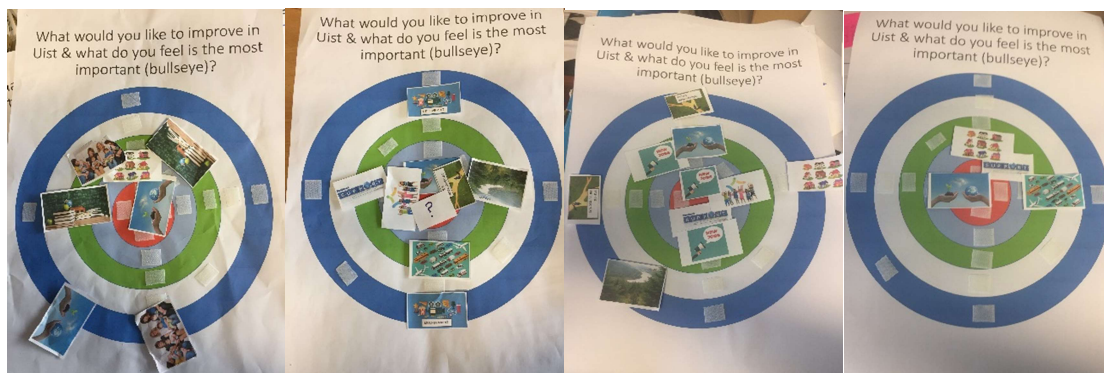


Figure 9. Bullseye posters asking to prioritise what people in the community would like to improve in Uist.

These results highlight the need to provide tourism infrastructure for the increasing demand, a need to incorporate the environment at the heart of development; whilst ensuring activities, facilities, support services, transport, housing, education and career opportunities meet the needs of the local community whilst encouraging a sustainable population.

3.2 Primary School Responses

There was an entire day spent with the entire primary school (therefore all age groups) on the 26th of June; which included a video on climate change, what is energy sessions with Community Energy Scotland, the wind turbine design challenge with Strathclyde University, the climate change poster challenge, an Enercon engagement session, the community benefit fund engagement sessions and presentations for the winning groups. In the community benefit engagement sessions, the children were provided with two posters, one with pictures and stickers asking them to put smiley face stickers on their favourite options (with each child receiving 3 stickers each) on: what would you like to improve on Uist and what do you feel is the most important?; as well as post it notes for: what would you like the Uist Wind community benefit income to be spent on?

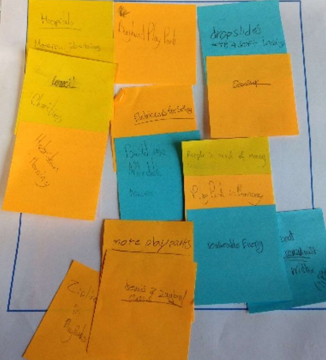
The most popular response for what the primary school children in North Uist would like to improve most and what they feel is the most important was the picture showing outdoor play parks at 43 responses, with care and support for the elderly coming second at 40 responses. The school children also felt quite strongly about the environment, children's activities, housing and trees (Figure 10).

In terms of the post-it notes responses to the question: what would you like the Uist Wind community benefit income to be spent on? the most popular response was for shops, cafes and restaurants, with numerous high street names mentioned. Activities and entertainment were also very popular include various options such as soft play centres for older children, an activity centre, games hall, a cinema, bowling, arcade, amusement park and play activities for all age groups including the elderly so all can have fun together. A swimming pool in North Uist was also popular, as was a waterpark. Sporting activities such as swimming, a zipline, football pitch, paintball and an outdoor centre. There were numerous responses suggesting more wind turbines, solar panels and renewable energy generally; as well as electric cars. There were also several responses in reference to housing such as more affordable housing, nicer housing association houses and housing for homeless people. Hospitals were mentioned twice, as well as support for those in need such as money or facilities for those with specific needs. Local food production, gardener for the school, more parks with flowers to attract wildlife and cycle paths were also mentioned, as was the need for jobs and businesses. Tree planting/parks were also an attractive option for some, as was better internet provision. There were some cheeky responses such as driving courses for tourists, and a random request for a royal family visit and a mansion.

Table 1. Summary of initial community investment plan; which will be updated in future years.

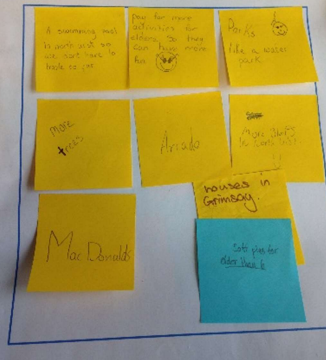
Application process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quarterly funding rounds by applications to an independent committee. - Different levels of funding, initially proposed as £15k, £10k, £5k - Levels of funding to be decided once amount of funds available for community benefit fund confirmed. - Low interest loans may be considered at a later date similar to those provided by the Western Isles Development Trust. - The MC may decide to focus on specific funding rounds as identified in the areas the community wish the funds to be spent on e.g. start-up funds, local environmental projects, tourism infrastructure, care and support projects, local charities, children’s activities. - Consideration should be given to simplicity in application process.
Selection criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Application criteria impact-based focussed on maximum impact on sustainable population, local economy and wellbeing - Identified prioritised area - to support encouraging young people on the island for a sustainable population. - Key criteria and application forms with scoring process to be produced once funds available. - Monitoring and evaluation plan, with impact indicators, will be produced.
Selection Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Representative of local community e.g. different sectors, different townships; involving North Uist Community Council. - Transparent decision process; widely communicated. - Committee to be established by independent volunteers once funds become available in future years. - Given the keenness of young people’s participation in this survey as well as their strong ideas, the MC may wish to appoint junior representatives of the community to empower the younger generation; or a youth board for youth projects. - In accordance with quarterly funding rounds, the Selection Committee will aim to meet 4 times a year for funding decisions; reporting to the wider NUDC-T MC and NUDC Board on the distribution of funds.

What would you like the Uist Wind Community Benefit Income to be spent on?



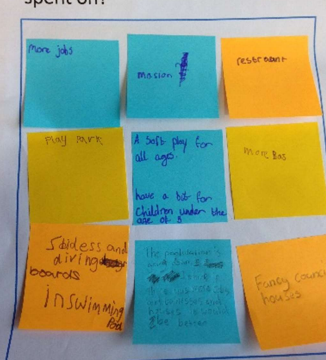
Suggestions include: More jobs, Mission, Restaurant, Buy back, A soft play for all ages, More bus, Have a bit for children under the age of 5, The pub/inn to stay open & have a bit more food, Family Council houses, Subless and diving boards, Insulating, More play areas, More playground, More shops, More houses, More primary, Better shops, An activity centre, More swimming, A games hall, More shops, More primary, More houses, Better shops, An activity centre, More swimming, A games hall.

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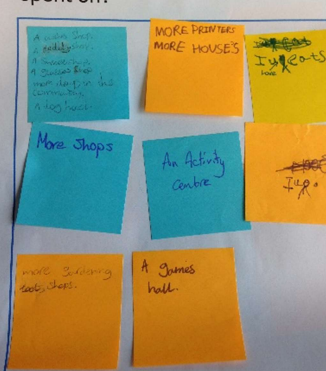
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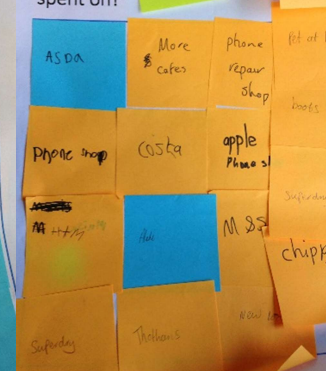
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