

Local Place Plan for Harris - Statement

(Harris Forum, EK 27/08/2025)

Content

- 1. Contact details**
- 2. Background**
- 3. Process**
- 4. Related documents**

1. Contact details

Harris Forum
Room 12
Former Primary School
Tarbert
Isle of Harris
HS3 3DG
General Enquiries – info@harris-forum.co.uk
Development Officer – eva@harris-forum.co.uk

2. Background

Harris Forum

The Forum held its inaugural meeting on the 3rd of October 2017. The formation of the Forum came about following a meeting in 2015 of a group of representatives from community development organisations, land trusts, community councils and other community representatives across Harris who met to discuss the creation of a new development plan for Harris. The group was approached by the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership to take part in a pilot scheme to show how working in partnership could add value to development. This led to the formation of the Harris Forum.

The Harris Forum is a constituted group that aims to carry out the following:

- Discuss and promote social and economic matters which affect the whole of Harris.
- Come to an agreed "whole of Harris" decision on specific topics and issues.
- Support individual projects, particularly those needing support for funding applications.
- Promote communication and cohesion between the various groups operating in the Harris community.
- Develop the Harris Plan.
- Improve communication within the community, advising them of the work of the Harris Forum, its Development Officer and its Member Organisations.

Local Place Plan for Harris - Relation to the Local Development Plan and National Planning Framework

The Local Development Plan was taken into consideration as a starting point when creating the Local Place Plan for Harris. The hope is that the Local Place Plan for Harris will guide and influence the new Local Development Plan, creating a prosperous future for Harris. The Local Place Plan for Harris is based on the National Islands Plan and its themes. The plan aims to contribute to the following six outcomes of National Planning Framework 4:

- Meeting the needs of people living in Scotland, including the housing needs of older and disabled people
- Improving health and wellbeing
- Increasing the population of rural areas
- Improving equality and eliminating discrimination
- Meeting targets relating to reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- Securing positive effects for biodiversity.

These targets will be achieved through the proposed changes, which are based on feedback from the Harris community. The Local Place Plan for Harris and its recommendations will ensure that any change or developments in the area are managed responsibly. The decisions must focus on the community and be made by the community.

3. Process

Consultation with Councillors and Community Councils

The Harris Forum is a member organisation with local organisations, community councils, as well as the councillors present at the regular meetings.

The process of creating the Local Place Plan for Harris was closely monitored by the councils, councillors, local organisations, community groups, and the local community in general. Regular meetings were held with the Harris Forum and the Community Councils, in which both Harris councillors participated.

Process of the Local Place Plan for Harris

Over the last year, multiple community consultations were conducted in the form of questionnaires and public meetings. The process consisted of three parts:

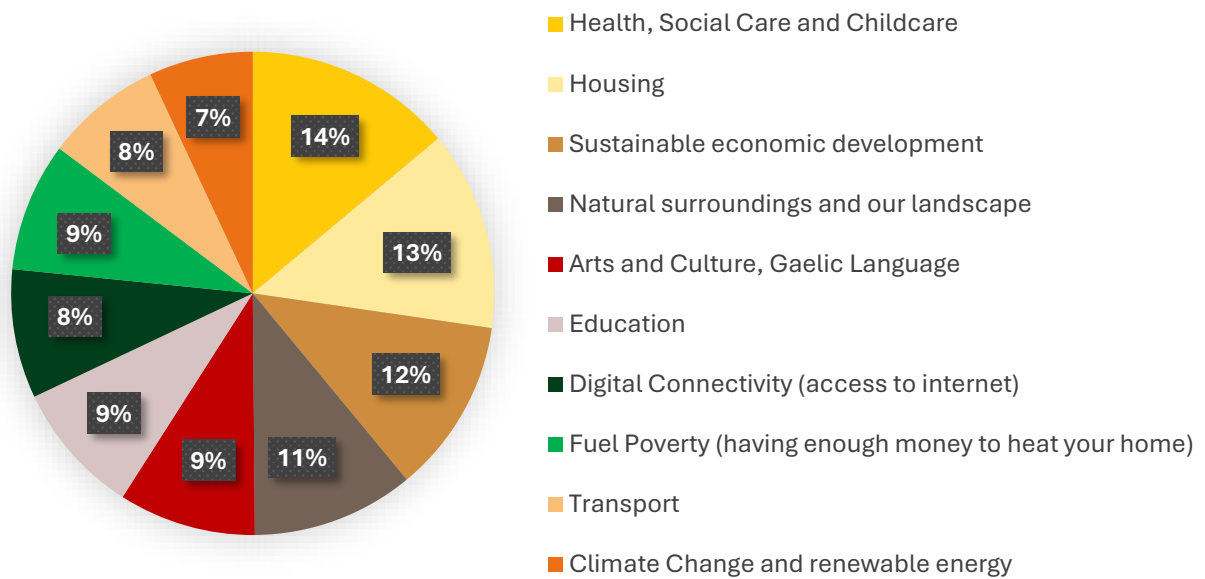
- Part 1: Questionnaire
- Part 2: In-person community consultations in eight different locations
- Part 3: Exhibiting the proposed Local Place Plan to gather general feedback to produce the final plan.

Information about the background of the Local Place Plan, as well as updates on the various stages of the Plan, were published in the local newspaper *Dè Tha Dol?* and on the Harris Forum website.

For more information on the Local Place Plan for Harris and its different stages, please visit the Harris Forum website: <https://www.harris-forum.co.uk/harrisplanmap>

Parts 1 and 2: Issues revealed by initial consultations

The topics covered in the National Islands Plan formed the basis of the consultation process. From the questionnaire responses, the majority see the biggest issues within health, social care and childcare, closely followed by housing, sustainable economic development, as well as natural surroundings and landscape.



The pie chart above shows the ratio of topics selected by the 68 participants of the questionnaire, and how important these topics are to them.

Overall topics in combination with identified missing topics

During the consultation process, the wider community identified topics that needed to be expanded upon, as well as additional topics that should be included in the Plan. Some topics, such as Arts, Culture, Music and the Gaelic Language, Education and Free Time Activities, and Transport and Infrastructure, needed to be broadened. Others needed to be added as individual topics, such as climate change, renewable energies and tourism.

One dominant topic was the impact tourism has on the island. It provides a good income source for the islanders through holiday homes and other types of accommodation, boosts the local economy, and brings income into the local area. However, the number of tourists visiting the island in a short space of time comes at a price. The infrastructure is suffering under the incredible number of travellers.

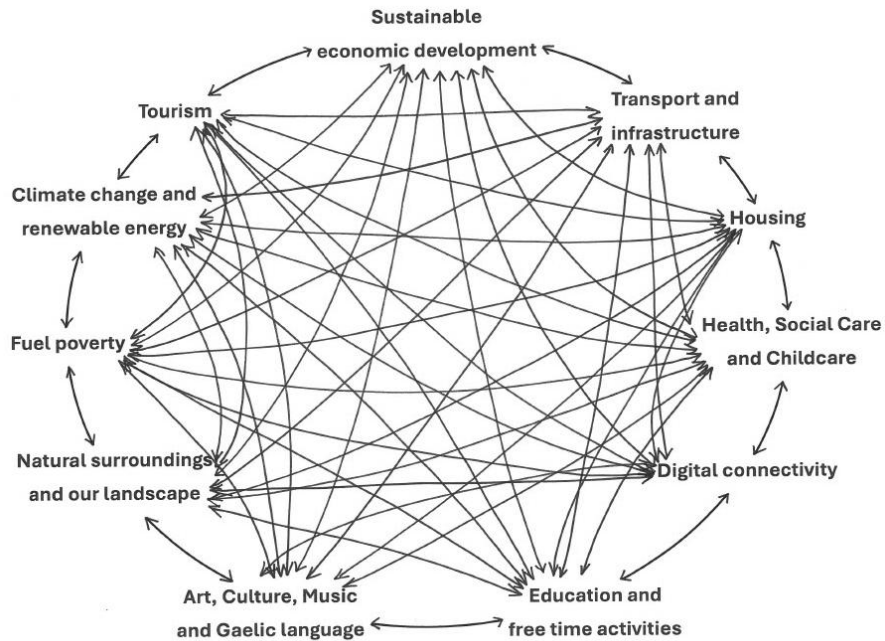
All main topics are closely interwoven, relying on each other and must be considered together.



HARRIS | FORUM

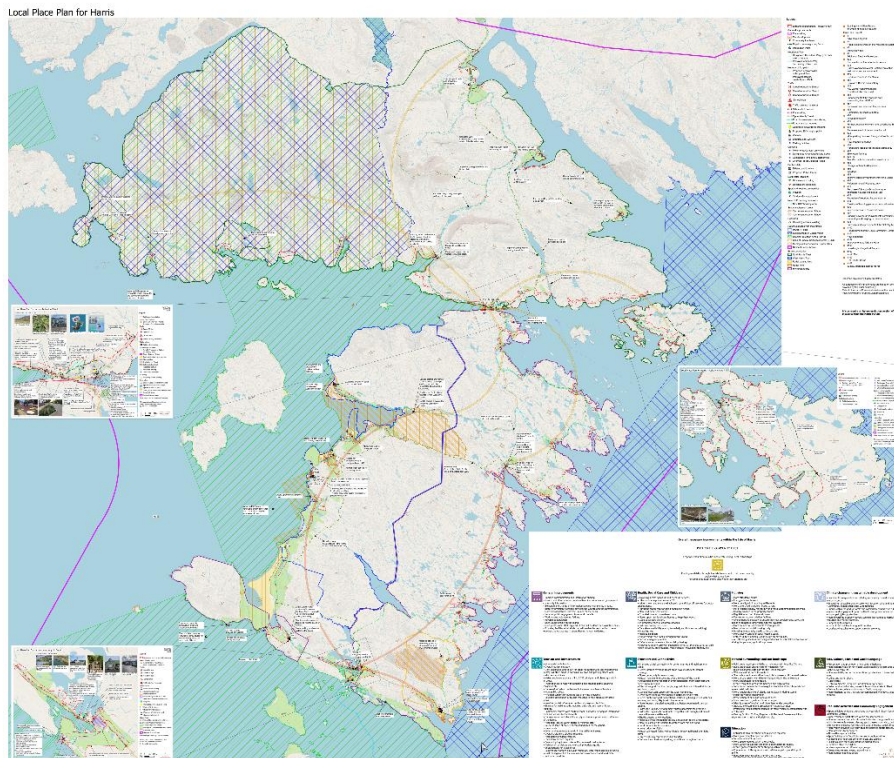
*Progress | Partner | Protect
Adhartas | Cairdeas | Dion*

Pursuing development through community connection



Part 3: Transforming the results of the consultations into a Local Place Plan for Harris

During the final stage of the consultation process, all contributions from the wider community were compiled into a single Local Place Plan for Harris. The final plan was exhibited in various locations throughout Harris, inviting comments from the public. All of these comments have been included in the final version of the Local Place Plan for Harris that was submitted.



Reasons to amend the Local Development Plan, considering the Local Place Plan

In order to secure the island's future, the community needs to have a greater say in new developments and improvements. At the same time, the suggestions in the Local Development Plan need to be more specific and localised to improve island life and protect our landscape. The Local Development Plan should incorporate suggestions from the community to improve the overall approach and specify necessary changes. In particular, the islands need a clear definition of settlement boundaries, protected areas and locations for amenity spaces. Throughout the consultation process, the topics that were most brought up were health, social care and childcare; tourism and infrastructure; transport and connectivity; housing; climate change and sustainable development; natural surroundings and our landscape; arts, culture and the Gaelic language; education; free time activities; and community engagement. All suggestions and improvements relating to these topics should be considered in the new Local Development Plan to help the islands withstand future challenges.

4. Related documents

All related documents are available to download from the Harris Forum website. This ensures that the wider community has direct access to the relevant documents for the plan.

<https://www.harris-forum.co.uk/harrisplanmap>

- National Islands Plan
- National Islands Plan Implementation Route Map 2020 – 2025
- Outer Hebrides Design Guide
- Tarbert Active Travel Masterplan
- P.L.A.C.E. Code
- Upland Paths
- Nature Scot sites definition
- Overview of participation in the consultation process