

A young child, likely a toddler, is the central focus of the image. They are wearing a bright yellow hooded raincoat, a blue knitted hat with a pom-pom, and dark blue gloves. The child is smiling and holding a long, thin wooden stick vertically in their right hand. They are standing on a sandy beach with some seaweed or driftwood visible in the background. The overall tone of the image is soft and natural, with a slightly muted color palette.

DRAFT

PLANA ÀITE IONADAIL SHLÈITE LOCAL PLACE PLAN FOR SLEAT

Comhairle Choimhearsnachd Shlèite
Urras Coimhearsnachd Shlèite

Sleat Community Council
Sleat Community Trust

Sleat Community Council and the Sleat Community Trust are grateful to everyone who has contributed to the creation of this plan. We'd like to thank An Crùbh, Armadale Stores, Bun-sgoil Shlèite, Fearann Eilean Iarmain, Nicola NicThomais and Sabhal Mòr Ostaig for their support and help.

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This is a draft version of the Local Place Plan. Please provide any comments or corrections to the Sleat Community Council (info@sleatcommunitycouncil.org.uk).

Version 1.1 / Published in draft 13-Dec-2024

Table of Contents

Quick Read	1
Geàrr-iomradh	3
Introduction	5
About Local Place Plans	6
Area Covered by the Local Place Plan	7
Description and Context of the Area	9
Community Engagement	14
Our Vision for Sleat	15
Community Priorities	16
Community Wellbeing	18
Infrastructure and Essential Services	20
Housing and Development	22
Economic Development	24
Crofting, Farming, Fishing and Food	26
Environment and Sustainability	28
Transport and Connectivity	30
Governance and Community Planning	32
A Place-based Approach to Community Development	34
Housing and Economic Development	34
Integrated Community Hubs	35
Tourism and Environmental Management	35
Transport and Services Integration	35
Cultural and Economic Integration	35
Taking our ideas forward	36
Implementation Considerations	37
Critical Success Factors	38
Strategic Alignment of the Local Place Plan	39



Quick Read

We have created an ambitious plan to shape Sleat's future. Through community conversations, we've developed a vision that looks at different local challenges and opportunities over the next 10 years.

Our community faces several significant challenges. Housing is a major concern — there aren't enough homes for local people, especially young families and workers, and many feel that there are too many holiday homes. Rather than just building houses, we want to look at ways to combine new homes with workspaces, renewable energy projects and community facilities.

The area has strong cultural roots, particularly in Gaelic language and education through Sabhal Mòr Ostaig. About 46% of people in Sleat can speak, read or write Gaelic. Instead of treating culture as separate from other developments, we suggest weaving Gaelic language and heritage throughout new projects – from tourism and business development to community activities.

Basic services need improvement – the water supply is reaching its limits, energy costs are too high and internet coverage is patchy. Transport is another concern, with a need for better bus services and more reliable ferries. We need access to better sports and leisure facilities, and improved healthcare services, particularly for our older residents, who make up nearly a third of our population.

On the positive side, there's a strong community spirit, outstanding natural surroundings and good potential for renewable energy projects. We have successful community-owned shops, a community-owned woodland at Tormore and recent housing developments include new affordable homes at Armadale and Kilbeg. Traditional industries like crofting and fishing remain important to our area, alongside tourism and education.

Looking ahead, we want to create joined-up solutions, such as:

- Community hubs that combine housing, services and cultural spaces
- Creating better links between tourism, environmental protection and local food production
- Improving transport and access to services
- Supporting traditional industries like crofting and fishing alongside new business opportunities
- Using community-led renewable energy projects to benefit the whole of Sleat
- Developing better facilities for sports, leisure and healthcare

Our plan works alongside Highland Council's wider development plans and Scotland's national planning policies. By taking a joined-up approach, we aim to make better use of resources while ensuring developments truly serve local needs. Strong community organisations working together will be key to making this happen.



Geàrr-iomradh

Tha sinn air plana àrd-amasail a chruthachadh airson Slèite san àm ri teachd. Tro chòmhraidhean sa choimhearsnachd, tha sinn air lèirsinn a leasachadh a choimheadas ri na diofar dhùbhlain agus chothroman ionadail a dh'fhaodadh èirigh anns na 10 bliadhnaichean a tha romhainn.

Tha dùbhlain mhòra ron choimhearsnachd againn. Tha taigheadas na adhbhar dragh – chan eil taighean gu leòr ann airson daoine ionadail, gu h-àraid do theaghlaichean òga agus luchd-obrach, agus tha cuid a' faireachdainn gu bheil cus thaighean air an cleachdadh mar thaighean do luchd-turais. Seach a bhith dìreach a' togail thaighean, tha sinn a' coimhead air dòighean taighean a thogail le àiteachan-obrach, pròiseactan ath-nuadhachail agus goireasan coimhearsnachd nan lùib.

Tha freumhan cultarail làidir san sgìre, gu h-àraid a' Ghàidhlig agus foghlam tron t-Sabhal Mhòr. Tha comas labhairt, leughaidh no sgrìobhaidh aig 46% de mhuintir Shlèite. Seach a bhith a' dèiligeadh ri cultar mar rud a tha fa leth bho leasachaidhean eile, tha sinn a' moladh gum bi a' Ghàidhlig agus dualchas na sgìre air an snìomh tro phròiseactan ùra – bho thurasachd agus leasachadh gnìomhachais gu tachartasan coimhearsnachd.

Tha ùrachadh a dhìth air seirbheisean bunaiteach – tha an solar uisge againn an ìre mhath air ruith a-mach, tha cosgaisean connaidh ro àrd, agus chan fhaighear eadar-lìon, no eadar-lìon math, anns a h-uile ceàrn den sgìre. Tha còmh-dhail cuideachd na adhbhar dragh le feum air seirbheis bus nas fheàrr agus seirbheis aiseig nas earbsaich. Tha feum air goireasan spòrs agus chur-seachadan, agus air seirbheis shlàinte nas fheàrr, gu h-àraid dhan fheadhainn as sine san sgìre, a tha mar an treas cuid de mhuintir an àite.

Air an làimh eile, tha iomadach rud math mu dheidhinn Slèite. Tha spiorad coimhearsnachd againn a tha gu math làidir, àrainneachd a tha dìreach eireachdail agus comasan gu leòr againn airson pròiseactan ath-nuadhachail. Tha sinn, mar choimhearsnachd, air sealbh

fhaighinn air bùithtean agus air coille agus tha taigheadas ann an Armadal agus anns a' Chill Bhig am measg nan leasachaidhean às ùire san sgìre. Tha croitearachd agus iasgach fhathast cudromach dhan àite, a bharrachd air turasachd agus foghlam.

A' coimhead air adhart, tha sinn airson a bhith ag obair còmhla a dh'ionnsaigh fhuasglaidhean, mar a leanas:

- Taigheadas, seirbheisean agus àiteachan cultarail an lùib a chèile
- Ceanglaichean nas treasa eadar turasachd, dìon na h-àrainneachd agus fàs biadh san sgìre
- Seirbheisean còmhdhail nas fheàrr agus barrachd chothroman air seirbheisean san fharsaingeachd.
- A' cumail taic ri obraichean nas traidiseanta a leithid croitearachd is iasgach cho math ri cothroman airson ghnìomhachasan ùra
- A' cleachdadh phròiseactan ath-nuadhachail coimhearsnachd gu math na sgìre air fad
- A' leasachadh ghoireasan nas fheàrr airson spòrs, chur-seachdan agus slàinte.

Bidh am plana againn a' suidhe ri taobh plana Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd agus planaichean nàiseanta na h-Alba. Le bhith a' co-obrachadh aig na diofar ìrean, tha sinn ag amas air barrachd feum a dhèanamh à goireasan na coimhearsnachd gu math feumalachdan na sgìre. Tachraidh seo tro cho-obrachadh èifeachdach am measg nam buidhnean coimhearsnachd.

Introduction

Situated at the southern tip of the Isle of Skye, Sleat is a vibrant community of just over 1,000 people. Our area combines stunning natural beauty with a rich Gaelic heritage and a diverse economic base spanning crofting, fishing, tourism and education. This Local Place Plan has been developed by Sleat Community Council and Sleat Community Trust to help us shape our community's future over the next decade. Like many Highland communities, we face significant challenges around housing, infrastructure and economic development. We also have remarkable opportunities through our strong cultural heritage, natural resources and community spirit.

Our plan takes an innovative approach by looking at how different local issues connect and influence each other. Rather than treating challenges like housing, employment and services separately, we explore how joined-up solutions could better serve our community's needs.

The plan begins with a brief overview, followed by a detailed exploration of our area and community. The main body presents our vision for Sleat's future and frames community input against eight key themes: community wellbeing; infrastructure and essential services; housing and development; economic development; croft, farm, fish and food; environment and sustainability; transport and connectivity; and governance and community planning. For each theme, we outline current challenges and opportunities, alongside specific proposals for both immediate action and longer-term development.

The last sections examine how different proposals could work together to create stronger solutions, consider practical implementation issues, and show how our local vision aligns with broader regional and national planning frameworks. By presenting this comprehensive yet integrated approach, we aim to guide development in ways that support and serve our community's needs and aspirations, while making the best use of resources.



About Local Place Plans

Local Place Plans (LPPs) are a chance to help shape the future of an area. Introduced by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, they give communities like ours the right to develop a plan as part of the new Scottish planning system. The community's proposals for the development and use of land in their area are at the core of LPPs and, once approved, become something Highland Council must note when making planning decisions.

LPPs are based on people's aspirations, priorities and projects, co-designed within the community through a process of engagement and consultation. The LPP process encourages us to talk about what matters and to create a vision for the future.

Having a Local Place Plan:

- Helps residents of Sleat look to the future and create a vision for where we live, work and play
- Helps the Community Council, Highland Council and other statutory bodies consider the impact of future planning applications and development decisions affecting Sleat.
- Supports the Sleat Community Trust and other local community organisations.
- Supports landowners to develop or update Land Management Plans
- Informs Highland Council's new Development Plan.
- Influences funding and investment by the Scottish Government, Highland Council, other public bodies, funders, landowners and businesses in ways that better support our local community.



Area Covered by the Local Place Plan



This local place plan covers the area defined by the boundaries of the Sleat Community Council, namely the Sleat Peninsula in South Skye within the Highland Council region.

Sleat occupies a distinctive peninsula at the southern end of the Isle of Skye, extending southwest for 21 km from an isthmus between Loch Eishort and Loch na Dal to the Point of Sleat. Loch Eishort bounds the peninsula to the northwest and the Sound of Sleat to the southeast. The relatively gentle terrain of Sleat, with its fertile land and low hills, is the origin of its name: Shlèite comes from the Old Norse 'sléttr', meaning smooth or even.

The peninsula's land is predominantly held within two estates, Fearann Eilean Iarmain and Clan Donald

Lands Trust. The Sleat Community Trust owns Tormore on behalf of the community. Settlement is mainly on the southeastern coastline along the Sound of Sleat. The main settlements in this area, moving from northeast to southwest, are:

- Duisdale/Dùisdeal
- Isleornsay/Eilean Iarmain
- Camuscross/Camus Croise
- Teangue/An Teanga
- Saasaig/Sàsaig
- Ferindonald/Fearann Dòmhnail
- Kilmore/A' Chill Mhòr
- Kilbeg/A' Chill Bheag
- Armadale/Armadal
- Ardvasar/Àird a' Bhàsair
- Calligarry/Caileagaraidh
- Aird of Sleat/Àird Shlèite

Communities at Achnacloich/Achadh na Cloiche, Tarskavaig/Tarsgabhaig, Tokavaig/Tocabhaig and Ord/An t-Òrd are situated on the northwestern side of the peninsula along Loch Eishort. Drumfearn/Druim Fhearna sits at the far northwestern end of Sleat.



Description and Context of the Area

Understanding Sleat's population helps us plan for our community's future. Over the past two decades, our community has grown and changed, bringing both opportunities and challenges. The area is notable for its strong crofting and Gaelic heritage, but diversity is increasing, and the age profile of residents is changing. Housing and



employment patterns reflect both traditional island life and modern working practices. These demographic shifts shape our community's needs and inform how we plan for essential services, housing and economic development.

In 2022, Sleat had a population of 1,031 people, an increase of 32% since 2001, and it is changing:

- Our population is older: In 2022, 29% of the people living in Sleat were aged 65 or over, versus 20% across Scotland and a 78% increase in this population group since 2001.
- Our older residents are active both economically and in the community.
- Our school-age population remains relatively stable: round 14% of the population who are aged 15 or under. In 2011 it was 14.6%.
- Sleat is a heartland of Gaelic: The number of people who can speak, read or write Gaelic remains constant at 46% (in 2001 it was 45.6%).
- We are more diverse: The number of people in Sleat who were not born in Scotland has increased by 36% since 2001, making up 36% of the population.

Housing is a key issue for much of the Highlands and Islands and Sleat is no different. We have seen a 37% increase in the number of households between 2001 and 2022. This is reflected in the 50% increase in owner-occupied homes (including co-ownership) and, significantly, a 57% increase in social rented accommodation. Notably and highly significant for Sleat given the level of tourism in the area, private rented accommodation in the community has fallen by 13% between 2001 and 2022. It is also notable that 77% of

households comprise two people or fewer. It is difficult to determine how much of the property market in Sleat is unavailable for permanent occupation, however, a 2019 Scottish Government report¹ suggested that 19% of housing stock in Skye was in use as short-term lets (versus 1.2% nationally). In a survey carried out by Highlands and Islands Enterprise in 2022², 85% of respondents on Skye said there were too many second homes and 81% that there were too many short-term lets.

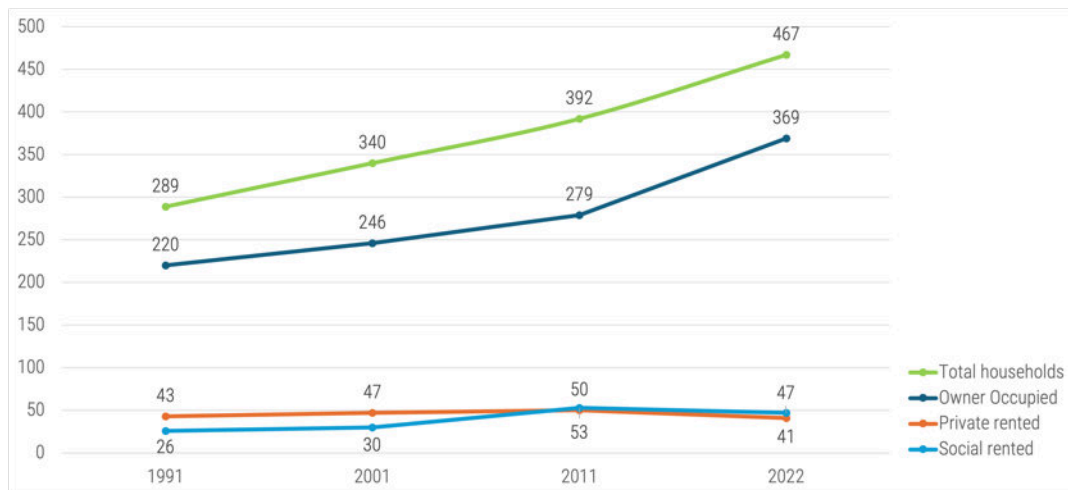


Figure 1 - Households in Sleat 1991-2022

Excluding students, 53% of people over 16 in Sleat are economically active in the 2022 census, 16% are self-employed. A further 30% of this population reported that they were retired, significantly higher than the overall figure of 23% for all of Scotland.

There is a diverse employment base with a mix of service, professional and traditional occupations, broadly:

- Administrative and service roles make up the largest share
- Professional and managerial positions form a strong second tier
- Traditional skilled trades maintain a significant presence
- Healthcare and personal services represent a smaller but important segment

Notable local employers include Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Fearann Eilean Iarmain, Clan Donald Lands Trust, Sonas Collection (Duisdale House and Toravaig House), Kinloch House Hotel and Torabhaig Distillery. Further afield in Skye and Lochalsh, key employers include NHS

¹ Scottish Government (2019). People, communities and Places: Research into the impact of short-term lets on communities across Scotland.

<https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/research-and-analysis/2019/10/research-impact-short-term-lets-communities-scotland>

² Highlands and Islands Enterprise (2022). My life in the highlands and islands research.

<https://www.hie.co.uk/media/12899/my-life-in-the-highlands-and-islands-lochalsh-skye-and-wester-ross-report.pdf>



Highland, Highland Council, QinetiQ, fish farming and aquaculture companies, and construction firms. Crofting, farming and fishing are all significant to the area.

According to the 2022 census, the largest occupational category is Elementary Administration and Service Occupations at 11.1%. Professional roles are well

represented, with Business/Media/Public Service Professionals (7.9%), Teaching Professionals (6.5%), and various other professional categories making up significant portions.

Traditional industries are present through Skilled Agricultural Trades (5.9%) and various skilled trades categories. Management roles are notable, with Other Managers and Proprietors at 6.7% and Corporate Managers at 4.8%.

In 2022, 39% of people over 16 in Sleat worked from home and a further 25% work within 10Km of their home. Though we have an aging population in Sleat, many remain economically active, working crofts and contributing to the wellbeing of the community through volunteering and taking on grandparent responsibilities that enable others to work.

Sleat connects to the mainland via the Mallaig-Armadale ferry and is within a 30-minute drive of the Skye Bridge. The area is well served for education. Fàs Mòr provides early years childcare, including after-school and holiday services, and our primary school, Bun-sgoil Shlèite, offers both Gaelic and English-medium education. Sleat has no secondary school, most students attend either Àrd-sgoil Phortrìgh/Portree High School or Àrd-sgoil a'Phluic/Plockton High School, with some boarding.

Further education is available through the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI), particular in Broadford, Portree and Mallaig. At the heart of higher education is Sabhal Mòr Ostaig (SMO) – Scotland's national centre for Gaelic studies. They support and promote local, national and international culture, music and the arts. Through the rich diversity of our community and community-based organisations, such as SEALL, Sleat is host to a wide and varied range of musical and cultural events.

The Sleat Medical Centre is a vital satellite service of Broadford Medical Centre, offering GP and nursing care. The nearest hospital is in Broadford, but notably, there is no dental service in Sleat, which remains a significant gap in local healthcare provision.

While Sleat benefits from many natural outdoor spaces, local sports and leisure facilities are limited. Most organised activities such as football, swimming and martial arts take place outwith the community in Broadford, Portree or Kyle of Lochalsh. However, the community is served by several indoor venues, including An Crùbh and community halls in Ardvasar, Tarskavaig and Duisdale.

For daily shopping needs, Sleat has two community-owned shops with post offices: An Crùbh and Armadale Stores. The nearest supermarket is in Broadford, and while mail-order delivery is increasingly available, it can be slow, unreliable and sometimes expensive due to our location.

Sleat is the southern gateway to Skye and tourism plays a vital role in Sleat's economy, with cafes, five hotels with restaurants and two pubs serving the area, as well as many privately operated short-term lets. However, many of these operate seasonally, with reduced or no services during winter months. The community maintains a strong social fabric through various societies and clubs, supported by two community trusts – the Sleat Community Trust and the Camuscross and Duisdale Initiative. The area is also home to two churches, adding to its community infrastructure.

As part of the evidence gathering process for the new Highland Local Development Plan³, Highland Council used the Scottish Government's Place Standard to assess perceived quality of life across the region. Looking at the results for Skye and Raasay as a whole (shown below), based on a limited cohort of 75 responses, the average score (2.7 out of 5) is the joint-lowest among sub-regional areas of Highland. This data echoes the findings of our own consultation.

Skye and Raasay score highly for: Nature & Parks (4.4); Feeling Safe (4.3 – highest in Highland); Identity & Belonging (Pride in Place) (3.4). We score poorly for Public Transport (1.6); Traffic & Parking (1.9); Housing & Community (2.0); Walking, Wheeling & Cycling (2.1). Notably, and important to this plan and the future aspirations of the community, this area scores lowest in Highland for Influence & Sense of Control (2.3).



³ Highland Council (2024). Highland Local Development Plan - Emerging Evidence.

Isle of Skye and Raasay

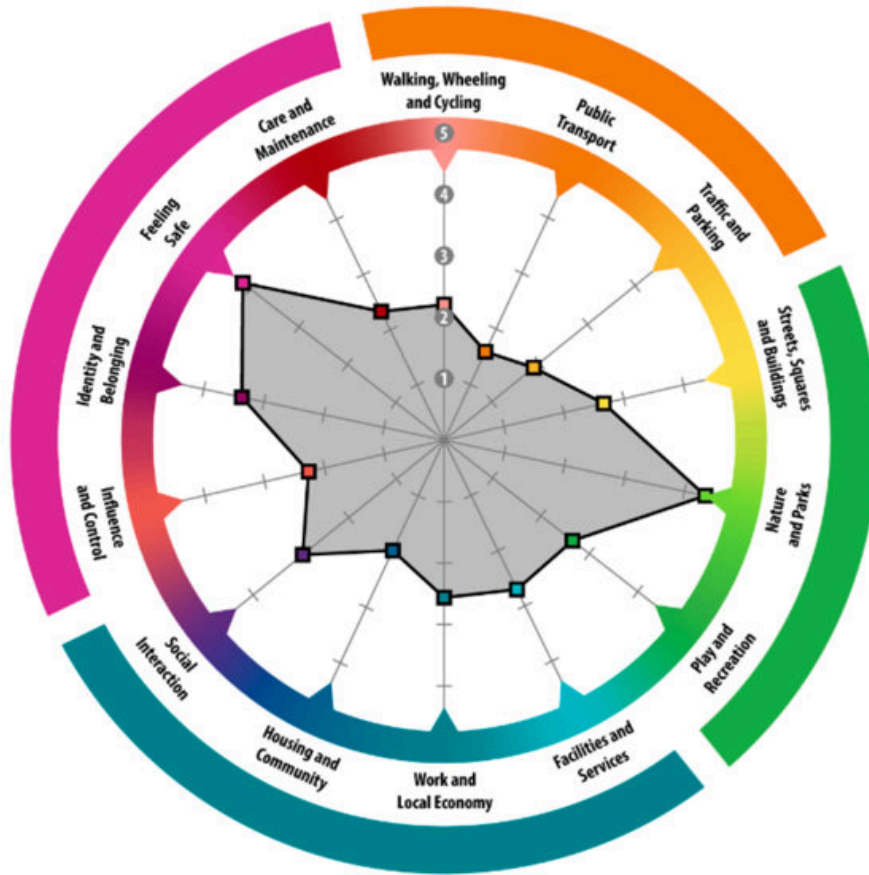


Figure 2 – Place Standard consultation results for Skye & Raasay (Highland Council, 2024)

Community Engagement

This plan has been created based on the comments received during several community engagement events.

Face-to-face engagement encouraged the community to submit comments and suggestions at the June Community Council AGM and meeting in Ardsvar and the September meeting in Tarskavaig. Engagement events took place at Armadale Stores, An Crùbh and the Community Café, Ardsvar. SCC and SCT used their social media, the Sleat community Facebook page, and the community newsletter to promote an online

survey. Posters were put up around Sleat advertising the survey and the link emailed to over 350 recipients of the Sleat newsletter, to specific community groups, general crofting grazings groups, the moorings association and to the Camuscross and Duisdale initiative. Beyond this, informal conversations were held with local community groups, businesses and individuals, including pupils at Bun-sgoil Shlèite.

Over 650 comments were received and analysed, grouping them into several emergent categories. (Some submissions crossed over multiple categories.) We presented these categories at the November meeting of the Community Council. From here, submissions were reviewed and analysed thematically to identify:

- Key themes – positive and negative
- An overview of the current situation
- Short-term proposals
- Medium/long-term proposals

This qualitative data set was then used to generate the eight thematic areas identified in the 'community priorities' section of the plan and to define key issues (positive and challenges) and proposals (short term and medium/long term). This community-generated data forms the basis for this Local Place Plan. A second round of consultation was held in December 2024 with events at An Crùbh and in the Sleat Community Trust offices. This was used to seek comments on the initial draft plan and to allow people to identify important features on maps.

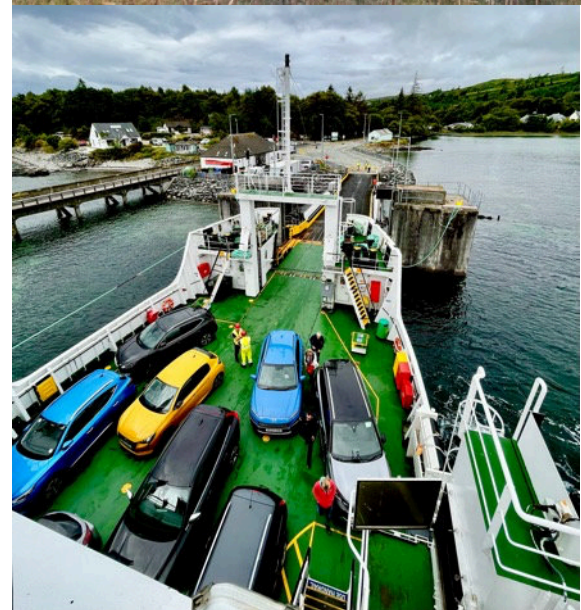


Our Vision for Sleat

Sleat will be a thriving, sustainable community where traditional culture and modern innovation come together to create opportunities for all. Reliable infrastructure, diverse housing options and robust local services that support both year-round residents and visitors will strengthen our community. We envision a place where:

- There are plentiful opportunities for developing careers, building a business and for diverse creative and artistic expression
- Traditional industries like crofting, farming and fishing work in harmony with new enterprises and sustainable tourism
- Gaelic language and culture flourish at the heart of contemporary community life
- Young people and families can build their futures through suitable housing and meaningful employment
- Older residents can live well within their community, supported by appropriate housing and care
- Our exceptional natural environment is protected and enhanced, while supporting community needs
- Community-led renewable energy projects and efficient infrastructure benefit local people directly
- Active travel and reliable public transport connect our communities
- Strong links and positive relationships exist between local estates and the community
- Community ownership and decision-making ensure local people shape Sleat's future

Through careful stewardship of our natural and cultural heritage, coupled with forward-thinking development, Sleat will strengthen its position as a distinctive and resilient part of Skye, the Highlands and Scotland. Our community will be increasingly self-reliant while maintaining strong connections to neighbouring areas, creating a place where people of all ages can live, work and thrive.





Community Priorities

This section presents a comprehensive analysis of community priorities and proposals for the future development of Sleat. Drawing from extensive community engagement, it sets out a strategic framework for action across eight key thematic areas that together encompass the community's vision for sustainable development.

The eight thematic areas are:

- **Community Wellbeing:** Encompassing recreation, cultural heritage and healthcare to support a thriving community.
- **Infrastructure and Essential Services:** Examining water security, energy systems and digital connectivity as fundamental building blocks for community development.
- **Housing and Development:** Addressing the complex balance of residential needs, from affordable housing to elderly care provision, whilst managing the impact of tourism.
- **Economic Development:** Focusing on business support, tourism management and traditional industries to build a resilient local economy.
- **Crofting, Farming, Fishing and Food:** Supporting traditional industries like crofting, farming.
- **Environment and Sustainability:** Addressing environmental protection, climate action and waste management for current and future generations.
- **Transport and Connectivity:** Considering public transport, active travel and infrastructure improvements to enhance accessibility.
- **Governance and Community Planning:** Examining how the community can effectively manage and deliver positive change.

The analysis for each theme presents:

- A situational analysis describing the current context
- Key issues, highlighting both positive aspects and challenges
- Short-term proposals for action (1-3 years)
- Medium to long-term proposals (3-10 years)

This framework provides a structured approach to community development whilst recognising the interconnected nature of these themes. It aims to support decision-making and resource allocation whilst maintaining flexibility to respond to changing circumstances and opportunities. Some proposals can be delivered locally, some require significant external funding, and others will be the responsibility of external organisations. In some cases, the community's role may be to advocate to changes to policy or legislation.

Following this section, the plan will identify synergies and opportunities to combine potential solutions and discuss implementation considerations that cut across all themes. It will then set out critical factors for successful delivery of the community's vision.



Community Wellbeing

The Sleat community emphasises the importance of comprehensive wellbeing provision, encompassing physical, cultural, and social needs across all age groups. There is strong recognition of the need to balance traditional cultural preservation with modern community requirements.

Key Issues

Positive:

- Strong Gaelic cultural foundation
- Active community groups and organisations
- Existing community facilities, such as An Crùbh and Tormore
- Strong sense of community identity
- Nationally recognised excellence in Gaelic-medium childcare provision through Fàs Mòr

Challenges:

- Limited sports and leisure facilities
- Need for enhanced youth provision
- Gaps in healthcare services, particularly dentistry
- Concerns over social isolation
- Gaps in local communication and knowledge
- Volatility of funding for community groups

Short-term Proposals (1-3 years)

Recreation and Leisure

- Enhanced sports facility provision, working with neighbouring communities
- Structured youth activities programme
- Expanded community activity spaces

- Development of outdoor recreation areas
- Improved access to existing facilities

Cultural Heritage

- Enhanced Gaelic language initiatives
- Development of cultural events programme
- Support for traditional arts and crafts
- Creation of heritage education programmes
- Enhancement of local archives

Healthcare and Social Support

- Expanded local healthcare services
- Mental health support programmes
- Community care coordination
- Enhanced support for elderly residents
- Youth wellbeing initiatives

Medium/Long-term Proposals (3-10 years)

- Multi-purpose sports and leisure complex, in partnership with SMO and others
- Comprehensive cultural centre
- Integrated healthcare facility
- Enhanced social care provision
- Intergenerational activity programmes



Infrastructure and Essential Services

The Sleat community identified significant concerns about infrastructure capacity, particularly regarding water and energy systems. A complex balance exists between enabling development and ensuring essential services remain resilient and sustainable for current and future needs.

Key Issues

Positive:

- Strong grassroots momentum behind community-led renewable energy projects
- Proven success of existing community hydro scheme
- Generally reliable basic utilities across most settlements, including community-delivered internet
- Importance of local petrol/diesel at Armadale Stores

Challenges:

- Local water supply approaching capacity limits
- Grid infrastructure restricting renewable development potential
- Disproportionately high energy costs affecting residents
- Patchy broadband and mobile coverage
- Limited resilience in critical utility networks
- Erosion of the community's right to be consulted over major infrastructure proposals

Short-term Proposals (1-3 years)

Water Infrastructure

- A comprehensive capacity study of Loch Carmichael/Loch Mhic Charmhiceil
- Development of a water management strategy for new-builds
- Investigation into restoring historical water sources, particularly Loch Dhughail
- Enhanced monitoring of water quality and supply patterns

Energy Systems

- Community-wide energy audit
- Feasibility study for hydro scheme expansion
- Establishment of energy advice service
- Advocacy for fair rural energy tariffs

Digital Connectivity

- Systematic mapping of connectivity gaps
- Support programmes for digital inclusion
- Enhanced mobile coverage in black spots

Medium/Long-term Proposals (3-10 years)

- Strategic expansion of water supply capacity
- Portfolio of community-led renewable projects
- Local smart grid management systems for resilient power infrastructure
- Resilient backup systems for critical infrastructure
- Universal full fibre broadband coverage



Housing and Development

Housing is a critical priority, with particular emphasis on balancing tourism accommodation with residential needs. While recent affordable housing developments show progress, significant challenges remain in providing homes for workers and older residents. Given the capacity of available land, further major housing development should be limited to Kilbeg, not extending south beyond the Tarskavaig road and, if demand exists, to a single location around Camuscross/Duisdale.

Key Issues

Positive:

- Successful delivery of new affordable homes at Armadale and Kilbeg
- Clear community vision for housing needs
- Land identified for development opportunities
- Innovative examples of business-led staff housing solutions

Challenges:

- Imbalance created by holiday homes and short-term lets
- Severely restricted private rental market, further negatively impacted by legislation
- Absence of supported housing for elderly residents
- Limited access to housing market for young families
- Worker housing shortage impacting local businesses
- High cost of building new houses
- Storm run-off to main roads from paved driveways
- Inability to obtain mortgage funding for self-builds, particular those with a Rural Housing Burden attached

Short-term Proposals (1-3 years)

Immediate Housing Needs

- Creation of centralised rental property register
- Streamlined planning for staff and season worker accommodation
- Local buyer shared equity scheme
- Revision of social housing allocation policy to better reflect local needs
- Protection of green-field sites and consideration for development impact on 'dark skies'
- Ensure redevelopment of Armadale ferry terminal by CMAL includes widespread and genuine public consultation, and that the end-result produces tangible benefits for the community

Housing for Older Adults

- Detailed needs assessment for current and future provision
- Site identification for supported-housing development
- Investigation of intergenerational housing models
- Integration of housing with care provision

Holiday Home Impact

- Reform of holiday let regulations
- Primary residence requirement for new developments
- Tourism levy scheme with funds kept in the community
- Strategy for vacant property utilisation

Medium/Long-term Proposals (3-10 years)

Development Programme

- Mixed-tenure housing developments
- Purpose-built sheltered housing complex
- Innovative multi-generational housing schemes

Policy Framework

- Local occupancy conditions, such as rural burden
- Defined affordable housing quotas
- Sustainable community planning framework
- Strategic population management plan

Infrastructure Support

- Alignment of utilities with housing growth
- Integrated community facilities
- Enhanced transport connectivity
- Coordinated service provision



Economic Development

We recognise Sleat's unique economic and cultural position as a Gaelic education hub and its strong tourism potential, while acknowledging the need to diversify and strengthen year-round employment opportunities. Traditional industries and emerging sectors both play vital roles in the community's economic vision. There is a need to look at economic development that supports people in building their careers locally.

Key Issues

Positive:

- Strong educational institution presence through Sabhal Mòr Ostaig
- Established tourism destination status
- Active traditional industries including crofting and fishing
- Strong creative, music and arts sectors
- Potential for growing the creative and digital sectors

Challenges:

- Seasonal nature of many businesses
- Limited workspace for new enterprises
- Restricted availability of skilled trades
- Need for better coordination of tourism management
- Negative impact of tourism, from housing to irresponsible visitor behaviour
- Challenges in maintaining traditional industries

Short-term Proposals (1-3 years)

Business Support

- Creation of flexible workspace hub and trades-focused business units, ideally at existing sites, such as Ardvasar old sheds, around Armadale or within the Kilbeg development.

- Recognise and support key businesses in Sleat including retail, food, hospitality and services.
- Enhanced support to encourage seasonal businesses to open for longer
- Digital skills development programme

Tourism Management

- Coordination of a visitor management strategy
- Development of sustainable tourism infrastructure
- Creation of a local tourism partnership
- Implementation of tourism levy schemes with a direct and proportional local return
- Enhancement of shoulder season offerings
- Monitor visitor impact and consider access advice to visitors at key tourist locations, such as Point of Sleat
- Promotion of resources to educate visitors and highlight responsibilities for protecting and respecting the area
- Establish a ranger service, working with landowners, Highland Council and others to improve visitor behaviour and reduce impact at, for example, Tormore, Armadale woods, Tokavaig foreshore, Gillean beach, Mill Bay and Ord
- Protect and interpret significant historic sites and built heritage, such as Knock Castle, Dunscaith and Capisdal

Traditional Industries

- Support programme for active crofters
- Development of local food production network(s)
- Enhancement of a fishing infrastructure
- Creation of traditional skills training programmes, in partnership with educational providers such as SMO and the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI)

Medium/Long-term Proposals (3-10 years)

- Purpose-built business centre
- Year-round tourism economy
- Integrated traditional and modern business hub
- Enhanced marine industry facilities
- Comprehensive local food system



Crofting, Farming, Fishing and Food

Traditional industries like crofting, farming and fishing are vital to Sleat's identity and economy, though they face significant challenges. These sectors offer opportunities for sustainable local food production and maintaining cultural practices while supporting biodiversity and landscape management.

Key Issues

Positive:

- Strong agricultural heritage and active crofting townships
- Growing interest in local food production
- Valuable inshore fishing grounds
- Potential for aquaculture development
- Active common grazings committees

Challenges:

- Declining number of active crofters and aging population
- Limited processing and distribution infrastructure
- Complex regulatory environment
- Succession planning difficulties
- Lack of access to markets and equipment
- Potential threats to continued use of common grazings
- Lack of small boat access with suitable vehicle access and parking

Short-term Proposals (1-3 years)

Crofting and Agriculture

- Development of crofting skills programme
- Equipment-sharing scheme for crofters
- Better support for common grazings committees

- Creation of local produce market
- Enhanced agricultural advisory services

Marine Activities

- Infrastructure improvements for small fishing vessels and improvements for boat access
- Local seafood distribution network
- Support for shellfish gathering permits
- Efficient access to marine safety training programmes
- Collaborative fishing management plan

Local Food Systems

- Community processing facility feasibility study
- Producer cooperative development
- Farm-to-school programme with Bun-sgoil Shlèite
- Local food directory creation
- Food handling training programme

Medium/Long-term Proposals (3-10 years)

- Purpose-built community food processing facility
- Comprehensive croft development programme
- Marine infrastructure enhancement
- Integrated local food distribution system
- Agricultural education centre
- Sustainable fishing strategy
- Aquaculture development framework
- Young crofter support scheme
- Collaborative land management programme
- Develop a scheme that allows crofts to sell produce directly to the local market and explore the viability of a local abattoir facility



Environment and Sustainability

Our exceptional natural environment is a crucial asset requiring careful stewardship. Local priorities reflect the need to balance environmental protection with sustainable development, while addressing climate change challenges and promoting biodiversity.

Key Issues

Positive:

- Rich natural heritage and biodiversity
- Strong community environmental awareness
- Successful community woodland project
- Potential for renewable energy development
- Important coastal, woodland and moorland environments
- Nationally important ancient woodland

Challenges:

- Climate change effects on local environment
- Invasive species management needs
- Waste management infrastructure gaps
- Pressure from tourism on natural areas
- Need for enhanced environmental education
- Erosion of public access to seashore and land
- Damage to inshore seabed and fish stocks caused by over-fishing and scallop dredging
- Negative impact on water quality in the Sound of Sleat from dredge sand dumping, cruise ships and poor-quality wastewater discharges.
- Potential impact of future legislation on inshore marine access
- Creeping impact of development on 'dark skies'

- Damage to ancient woodland sites through poor visitor behaviour and animal incursion

Short-term Proposals (1-3 years)

Natural Environment

- Comprehensive woodland management strategy to protect existing woodland and encourage the regeneration of native woodlands with appropriate stock exclusion and deer control.
- Advocate for marine environment protection measures that balance economic and environmental factors appropriately for the local community
- Advocate for the re-instatement of the three-mile trawling limit
- Invasive species control programme
- Wildlife corridor development
- Enhanced path network management
- Coordinated protection of beach, native woodland and salt marsh habitats through Ardvasar and Armadale (Rubha Dubh, Rubha Phòile and Armadale Bay)

Climate Action

- Community carbon reduction strategy
- Local food growing programme
- Energy efficiency improvement scheme
- Climate adaptation planning
- Environmental education programme

Waste Management

- Local recycling facility development
- Community composting scheme
- Marine litter reduction programme
- Enhanced public waste facilities
- Seasonal waste management solutions

Medium/Long-term Proposals (3-10 years):

- Comprehensive nature restoration programme, including potential for landscape-scale partnership woodland regeneration projects.
- Carbon-neutral community strategy
- Circular economy initiatives
- Enhanced marine protection measures
- Integrated environmental education centre



Transport and Connectivity

The community identifies transport and connectivity as fundamental to our social and economic wellbeing. Current provision requires significant enhancement to meet community needs and support sustainable development.

Key Issues

Positive:

- Existing ferry link to mainland
- Growing interest in active travel
- Potential for path network development
- Community transport initiatives

Challenges:

- Ferry service reliability issues
- Limited public transport frequency
- Poor road maintenance
- Inadequate active travel infrastructure
- Winter transport challenges

Short-term Proposals (1-3 years)

Public Transport

- Enhanced bus service frequency
- Improved ferry service reliability
- Community transport expansion
- Integrated transport timetabling (ferry, bus and train – at Mallaig and Kyle of Lochalsh)
- Better transport information systems

Active Travel

- Extended walking path network
- Dedicated cycle routes
- Path maintenance programme
- Safe routes to school
- Promotion and encouragement of active travel

Infrastructure Improvements

- Improved road maintenance programme
- Enhanced parking facilities
- Electric vehicle charging points (new charging points at Armadale in 2025)
- Public transport infrastructure
- Traffic management measures

Medium/Long-term Proposals (3-10 years):

- Comprehensive sustainable transport network
- Enhanced ferry service capacity and short-notice access for residents
- Integrated mobility solutions
- Complete active travel network
- Green transport infrastructure



Governance and Community Planning

Effective local governance and community empowerment are vital to allow us to shape the future of Sleat. Strong partnerships and clear decision-making processes are essential for successful development.

Key Issues

Positive:

- Active community council
- Established community trusts
- Strong voluntary sector
- History of successful community projects
- Engaged local population

Challenges:

- Decision-making processes are complex and too removed from local community
- Complex partnership landscape
- Resource constraints and very limited funding opportunities
- Difficult to communicate broadly across the community
- Capacity to implement projects within the community is limited

Short-term Proposals (1-3 years)

Community Engagement

- Enhanced consultation mechanisms
- Improved communication channels
- Youth engagement programme
- Community capacity building through encouraging more volunteering and offering training for key project skills
- Regular community forums

Developing Partnerships

- Strengthened relationships between estates and the community which support the development of community and crofting-inclusive Land Management Plans
- Enhanced coordination with outside agencies and statutory bodies
- Cross-community collaboration, such as between SCT and CDI
- Business partnership development
- Educational institution engagement

Resource Management

- Develop a community-wide resilience plan
- Develop community benefit frameworks that clearly articulate and advocate for benefit to the community commensurate with negative impact and loss of amenity
- Funding strategy development
- Asset management planning
- Skills development programme
- Increase project delivery capacity

Medium/Long-term Proposals (3-10 years):

- Comprehensive community planning framework to co-ordinate project proposals and activities across Sleat
- Enhanced local decision-making powers
- Sustainable funding mechanisms
- Strong partnership networks
- Effective delivery structures
- More localised decision-making

A Place-based Approach to Community Development

The Scottish Government champions a place-based approach for tackling complex local challenges. This means looking at a community as a whole system rather than dealing with issues separately. It's about understanding how different aspects of community life connect and influence each other, then using these connections to create better solutions. The approach recognises that local people know their area best and should be at the heart of planning and decision-making.



In Sleat, place-based thinking could transform how local challenges are addressed. The current success of community hubs like An Crùbh and SMO/Kilbeg demonstrates how single locations can serve multiple community needs.

Building on this foundation, several integrated opportunities emerge:

Housing and Economic Development



Rather than building homes in isolation, developments could incorporate business spaces, community-owned renewable energy schemes and training facilities linked to Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and UHI. Such an approach would simultaneously provide homes for local workers, create employment opportunities, reduce living costs through renewable energy and develop local skills. This aligns with the Scottish Government's vision for '20-minute neighbourhoods' where people can meet their daily needs close to home.

Integrated Community Hubs

A carefully planned development could combine elderly housing with healthcare facilities and community spaces. Such a hub could provide sheltered housing with built-in care facilities, flexible spaces for visiting healthcare services, and community areas for cultural activities and youth programmes. By incorporating renewable energy systems and ensuring good public transport links, the hub would be both sustainable and accessible.



Tourism and Environmental Management



A comprehensive tourism infrastructure could combine properly managed camping and motorhome facilities with local food outlets showcasing produce from crofts and fishing boats. This could be integrated with environmental initiatives – for instance, a community ranger service could maintain path networks and heritage trails while providing cultural interpretation and helping to educate visitors. Woodland management could provide local fuel whilst supporting tourism

activities and training in traditional skills. There may also be opportunities to harness the economies of scale of the large estates to better support small local tourism enterprises.

Transport and Services Integration

An integrated transport system could coordinate ferries, buses and community transport. Walking and cycling routes could be linked and more electric vehicle charging points provided at community hubs, supporting sustainable transport options.

Cultural and Economic Integration

Cultural development could be woven through economic initiatives, with a cultural enterprise hub combining Gaelic language learning spaces with tourism facilities, creative business units and performance areas. For recreational and leisure facilities, where local provision might prove



uneconomic, partnerships with neighbouring communities could provide sustainable solutions, such as shared use of the South Skye Community Campus in Broadford and the Lochalsh Leisure Centre in Kyle of Lochalsh. It is noted that there are no purpose-built indoor sports facilities and this might be something that could be accommodated at Kilbeg and shared with neighbouring areas.

Taking our ideas forward

To implement this approach effectively, Sleat needs stronger local governance. A coordinated decision-making forum could bring together key organisations, while regular community planning sessions would help identify connections and opportunities. This aligns with the Scottish Government's Local Governance Review and emphasis on community empowerment.

By adopting an integrated approach, Sleat can create solutions that are more than the sum of their parts. This would not only make better use of limited resources but would help build a more resilient community with stronger connections between different groups and activities. Most importantly, it would help create year-round opportunities and sustainable solutions that serve local needs while remaining firmly rooted in local knowledge and circumstances.



Implementation Considerations

The community places strong emphasis on an implementation approach that harnesses existing strengths and builds upon successful local initiatives. This approach must remain adaptable, allowing swift responses to changing circumstances whilst ensuring the benefits reach all members of the community equitably. By considering whole-life costs and long-term sustainability, alongside prioritising initiatives that deliver multiple benefits, the community can make best use of resources. Such strategic thinking supports the delivery of individual projects and programmes in a way that meaningfully contributes to Sleat's broader vision for the future, creating lasting positive change for the whole community.

We recognise that successful delivery of these proposals requires careful consideration of several cross-cutting factors. A coordinated approach to implementation would strengthen outcomes across all thematic areas. Essential elements to this strategy include:

- Sustainable and diverse funding streams, including community benefit funds, public sector investment, and innovative financing models
- Clear governance structures that maintain local accountability whilst enabling efficient decision-making
- Robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks to measure progress and enable adaptation
- Inclusive participation mechanisms ensuring all community voices contribute to implementation
- Building skills and strengthening the community's ability to deliver projects





Critical Success Factors

We identified several interconnected considerations that are vital to successful implementation.

Resource Management:

- Efficient allocation of limited resources across competing priorities
- Balance between immediate needs and long-term aspirations
- Sustainable staffing models for project delivery
- Volunteer capacity and succession planning

Partnership Working:

- Strong relationships with statutory bodies and neighbouring communities
- Effective coordination between local organisations and initiatives
- Clear protocols for engagement with landowners and businesses
- Integration with regional and national frameworks

Delivery Mechanisms:

- Appropriate legal structures for different projects
- Risk management and mitigation strategies
- Phased implementation to build momentum and maintain progress
- Regular review and adjustment of priorities

Strategic Alignment of the Local Place Plan



The Local Place Plan shows strong alignment with regional and national planning frameworks, from local community initiatives to Scotland’s National Planning Framework. This analysis examines how the LPP connects with four key planning contexts: the Camuscross and Duisdale Initiative (CDI) 2023 consultation, Highland Council’s WestPlan, the Skye and Raasay Future report, and National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4). These alignments position Sleat’s community vision within the broader development landscape while maintaining its distinct local character.



The LPP shares fundamental priorities with all major planning frameworks. Housing affordability emerges as a central concern across every level, with particular focus on young families, workforce housing and accommodation for the elderly. The protection and promotion of Gaelic language and culture (centred around Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Bun-sgoil Shlèite, Fàs Mòr and SEALL) features prominently in both local and regional strategies.



Community feedback from the CDI’s consultation reinforces the LPP’s priorities, particularly regarding infrastructure improvements, youth facilities and path networks. These local priorities connect directly to broader regional objectives outlined in the WestPlan and Skye and Raasay Future report, especially regarding sustainable development and community facilities.



The WestPlan provides practical support for the LPP’s vision through specific development allocations at Kilbeg (multi-stage, in progress) and Armadale (now developed), while sharing the community’s commitment to environmental protection and sustainable tourism. The Skye and Raasay Future report further validates local initiatives by incorporating Sleat-based projects, including the community’s electric bus service, into its regional strategy.



At the national level, NPF4 offers policy backing for many LPP priorities, particularly in renewable energy, rural housing solutions and sustainable tourism management. This alignment creates opportunities for community projects to access national support while maintaining local control.

While alignments are strong, some aspects require careful navigation. Development pacing, particularly regarding tourism and housing, shows varying emphases across different frameworks. The community generally favours measured, infrastructure-led growth, while regional and national frameworks sometimes envisage faster development. Similarly, the balance between tourism growth and environmental protection requires ongoing attention.

Given the community's views on potential large-scale wind farm development in Skye, the UK Government's proposals to limit community input into major infrastructure planning decisions is a significant cause for concern, with strong potential to severely undermine local democracy by undermining public trust.

