

Spiorad na Mara

Community Benefits Consultation Final Report - October 2025

CO-CHOMHAIRLE MU BHUANNACHD COIMHEARSNACHD
AITHISG DHEIREANNACH - AN DÀMHAIR 2025



Executive Summary

This executive summary presents the findings of a comprehensive and independently delivered public consultation undertaken by Aquatera Ltd on behalf of Spiorad na Mara Ltd which was carried out to inform the development of community benefit structures associated with the proposed Spiorad na Mara Offshore Wind Project off the west coast of the Isle of Lewis. This is a major infrastructure project, with a planned installed capacity of 900MW. The project partners have committed to a community benefit fund of £4.5 million per annum over the operational lifetime of the project (anticipated to be up to 35 years) for the west coast of the island (covering Council wards 6 and 7) and to exploring the potential for other, wider benefits to be realised for the island and the Western Isles. This consultation process was structured to ensure that local voices shaped the future of community benefit delivery, and that the consultation was inclusive, accessible, and conducted in a neutral space by an independent consultant.

The consultation was divided into two distinct strands. Strand 1 focused on the West Coast Fund, a £4.5 million annual Community Benefit Fund for communities in Council Wards 6 and 7, closest to the development site. Strand 2 explored broader opportunities for benefits that could be delivered across Lewis and the Western Isles. The consultation ran from February to April 2025 and was timed to avoid overlap with statutory planning consultations, thereby reducing confusion and engagement fatigue.

Aquatera Ltd was appointed through a competitive tendering process involving a proposal, interview, and presentation to a Steering Group comprising representatives from the Spiorad na Mara project team and the West Side Estates Group. Aquatera conducted all consultation activities and analysis independently, with regular updates and occasional input from the Steering Group on local and project-specific decisions.

The methodology was structured around five key tasks: stakeholder mapping and engagement planning, community consultation delivery, data analysis and thematic prioritisation, development of governance options, and final consultation and refinement.

Work began with scoping and an engagement plan, followed by the development of materials and activities to ensure inclusive consultation. Feedback was gathered through surveys, events, and outreach, then analysed using thematic and descriptive methods.

Key points of engagement and data collection:

- Engagement informed by existing knowledge, community initiatives, and reports.
- Materials developed: surveys, posters, digital content, event resources.
- 10 public events across Lewis, surveys (English & Gaelic), youth engagement.
- Promotion via social media, newspapers, noticeboards, and a dedicated website.
- Accessibility emphasised, with efforts to reach marginal and hard-to-reach groups.
- Two surveys: West Coast Fund (92 responses) and wider community benefits (59 responses).
- Analysis combined thematic coding of qualitative feedback with descriptive survey data (demographics, Likert scales, governance views).

Although it was too early to finalise a governance model for the West Coast Fund, the consultation produced a summary of emerging themes, community priorities, and key considerations for the future design and administration of the fund. Draft findings were presented at in-person and online events in April 2025, where further feedback was gathered and incorporated into the report.

As with any consultation of this nature, there were limitations and challenges. Some engagement fatigue was evident due to multiple concurrent wind farm consultations on Lewis, and some events attracted limited attendance, particularly those focused on wider benefits. The fact that the project is still at an early stage and the availability of funds remains several years away may also have affected engagement levels. Nonetheless, participants provided valuable insights, and youth consultees in particular responded positively to the focus on long-term opportunities. Despite a tight delivery timeframe, the process achieved broad coverage and produced a robust evidence base to inform future work.

The Strand 1 questionnaire received 92 responses, with the largest age group being 35–54 years. While responses from younger people were limited, input from a youth-focused consultation provided valuable qualitative insight. Most respondents identified as private individuals, with smaller proportions as business owners or community representatives/other.

When asked about the importance of pre-identified community themes for potential funding, 'Long-term economic sustainability', 'Community wealth building', and 'Wellbeing' received the highest support, whereas 'Tourism' and 'Active travel and connectivity' were comparatively less endorsed. Regarding preferred beneficiaries, most respondents prioritised local community groups and voluntary/charitable organisations, with fewer supporting statutory groups.

The results are summarised here by theme. The full detail of the prioritisation or 'popularity' of these themes within the consultation data should be read in the full report. The themes listed here are not in order of prioritisation.

- | | |
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| • Theme 1: Heating and Energy | Theme 10: Social Capital |
| • Theme 2: Housing and Accommodation | Theme 11: Community Endowment Fund |
| • Theme 3: Education and Employment | Theme 12: Care for Children, Elderly, and Vulnerable People |
| • Theme 4: Tourism | Theme 13: Environmental Protection, Nature, and Biodiversity Conservation |
| • Theme 5: Wellbeing | Theme 14: Infrastructure Projects |
| • Theme 6: Active Travel and Connectivity | Theme 15: Internet and Fibre Connectivity |
| • Theme 7: Preservation and Promotion of Local Heritage, Culture, Language, and Values | Theme 16: Relocation Packages |
| • Theme 8: Long-Term Economic Sustainability | Theme 17: Support for Statutory Groups |
| • Theme 9: Community Wealth Building | |

The consultation process confirmed strong community support for the proposed West Coast Fund, alongside the identification of clear priorities, preferred approaches to governance, and wider considerations.

- The majority of participants welcomed the establishment of the West Coast Fund and recognised the significance of Spiorad na Mara's £4.5 million annual community benefit commitment.
- Governance of the fund was identified as a central concern, with a strong preference for an independent, community-led body. Participants emphasised the importance of transparency, accountability, fairness, and professional administration, and expressed opposition to the governance of the fund being led by the local council.
- Priority areas of investment included:
 - Addressing the cost-of-living crisis through support for energy efficiency, and measures to reduce fuel poverty.
 - Supporting young people by improving access to housing, employment, apprenticeships, and opportunities to remain in or return to the area.
 - Sustaining crofting and local culture, including support for young crofters and the productive use of crofts.

- A proportion of responses related to compensation for visual impacts, calls for an increase in the scale of the fund, or general opposition to offshore wind. These were recorded and shared with the project team but did not inform recommendations.
- Feedback on wider community benefits (Strand 2) was more limited, though young people highlighted the urgency of issues relating to housing affordability, energy costs, and climate change. Concerns were also expressed regarding the simultaneous development of multiple offshore wind projects and the need for coordination to manage impacts on communities and supply chains.

Recommendations and Next Steps

- Prepare a forward plan for the West Coast Fund, aligned with project milestones, to provide clarity on progress and maintain momentum.
- Undertake further consultation to explore governance, legacy, and investment options in greater depth, potentially through workshops or focus groups.
- Establish an independent governance group and commission a review of existing structures in the Western Isles and beyond to inform design.
- Recognising the scale of work required, establish a funded role in advance of the fund's launch to oversee governance development and ensure robust systems are in place.
- For wider community benefits:
 - Strengthen collaboration with other developers to coordinate approaches and maximise benefits across the Western Isles.
 - Engage with local trusts and development bodies to identify opportunities for partnership and to learn from existing practice.
 - Continue to monitor evolving priorities across the islands to ensure that the fund remains responsive to community needs.



Geàrr-chunntas Gnìomhach

Tha an geàrr-chunntas gnìomha seo a' taisbeanadh toraidhean co-chomhairle phoblach coileanta agus neo-eisimeileach a ghabh Aquatera Ltd os làimh às leth Spiorad na Mara Ltd, a chaidh a dhèanamh gus fiosrachadh a thoirt do leasachadh structaran buannachd coimhearsnachd co-cheangailte ri Pròiseact Gaoithe Mara Spiorad na Mara a tha air a mholadh far costa an iar Eilean Leòdhais. 'S e pròiseact bun-structair mòr a th' ann, le comas stàlaichte de 900MW san amharc. Tha com-pàirtichean a' phròiseict air gealltainn maoin buannachd coimhearsnachd de £4.5 millean sa bhliadhna a thoirt seachad thairis air fad-beatha obrachaidh a' phròiseict (a thathar an dùil a mhaireas suas ri 35 bliadhna) airson costa an iar an eilein (a' còmhachadh uàrdan Comhairle 6 agus 7) agus gus sgrùdadh a dhèanamh air a' chomas airson buannachdan eile, nas fharsainghe a thoirt gu buil airson an eilein agus nan Eileanan Siar. Chaidh am pròiseas co-chomhairleachaidh seo a structaradh gus dèanamh cinnteach gum biodh guthan ionadail a' cumadh àm ri teachd libhrigeadh buannachdan coimhearsnachd, agus gum biodh an co-chomhairle a' toirt a-steach a h-uile duine, ruigsinneach, agus air a stiùireadh ann an àite neodrach le comhairliche neo-eisimeileach.

Chaidh an co-chomhairleachadh a roinn ann an dà shreath eadar-dhealaichte. Bha Sreath 1 ag amas air Maoin a' Chòsta an Iar, Maoin Buannachdan Coimhearsnachd bhliadhnail de £4.5 millean a thathar a' moladh airson coimhearsnachdan ann an Uàrdan Comhairle 6 agus 7, as fhaighe air an làrach leasachaidh. Rannsaich Sreath 2 cothroman nas fharsainghe airson buannachdan a dh'fhaodadh a bhith air an libhrigeadh air feadh Leòdhais agus nan Eileanan Siar. Mhair an co-chomhairleachadh bhon Ghearran chun Ghiblein 2025 agus chaidh a chlàradh gus casg a chuir air for-chòmhachadh le co-chomhairlean dealbhadh reachdail, agus mar sin a' lùghdachadh troimh-chèile agus sgìths conaltraidh.

Chaidh Aquatera Ltd a chur an dreuchd tro phròiseas tairgse farpaiseach anns an robh moladh, agallamh, agus taisbeanadh do Bhuidheann Stiùiridh anns an robh riochdairean bho sgioba pròiseict Spiorad na Mara agus Buidheann Oighreachdan Taobh an Iar. Rinn Aquatera a h-uile gnìomhachd co-chomhairleachaidh agus mion-sgrùdadh gu neo-eisimeileach, le ùrachaidhean cunbhalach agus beachdan bho àm gu àm bhon Bhuidheann Stiùiridh air co-dhùnaidhean ionadail agus sònraichte don phròiseact.

Bha am modh-obrach air a structaradh timcheall air còig prìomh ghnìomhan: mapadh luchd-ùidh agus dealbhadh conaltraidh, libhrigeadh co-chomhairle coimhearsnachd, mion-sgrùdadh dàta agus prìomhachas cuspaireil, leasachadh roghainnean riaghlaidh, agus co-chomhairle agus leasachadh deireannach.

Thòisich an obair le raon-sgrùdaidh agus plana conaltraidh, agus an uair sin leasachadh stuthan agus ghnìomhachdan gus dèanamh cinnteach à co-chomhairle a bha a' gabhail a-steach a h-uile duine. Chaidh fios-air-ais a chruinneachadh tro sgrùdaidhean, tachartasan, agus ruighinn a-mach, agus an uair sin chaidh a sgrùdadh le bhith a' cleachdadh dhòighean cuspaireil agus tuairisgeulach.

Prìomh phuingeann conaltraidh agus cruinneachadh dàta:

- Ceangal air a stiùireadh le eòlas a th' ann mar-thà, iomairtean coimhearsnachd, agus aithisgean.
- Stuthan air an leasachadh: sgrùdaidhean, postairean, susbaint didseatach, goireasan tachartais.
- 10 tachartasan poblach air feadh Leòdhais, sgrùdaidhean (Beurla is Gàidhlig), conaltradh òigridh.
- Sanasachd tro na meadhanan sòisealta, pàipearan-naidheachd, bùird fios, agus làrach-lìn sònraichte.
- Ruigsinneachd air a cur ris, le oidhirpean gus buidhnean air an iomall agus duilich an ruigsinn a ruighinn.
- Dà sgrùdadh: Maoin a' Chòsta an Iar (92 freagairt) agus buannachdan coimhearsnachd nas fharsainghe (59 freagairt).
- Chuir an anailis còdadh cuspaireil de bheachdan càileachdail ri chèile le dàta sgrùdaidh tuairisgeulach (deamografaigs, sgèilean Likert, beachdan riaghlaidh).

Ged a bha e ro thràth airson modail riaghlaidh a chrìochnachadh airson Maoin a' Chòsta an Iar, thug a' cho-chomhairle geàrr-chunntas air cuspairean a bha a' tighinn am bàrr, prìomhachasan coimhearsnachd, agus prìomh bheachdachaidhean airson dealbhadh is rianachd na maoine san àm ri teachd. Chaidh dreachd de na co-dhùnaidhean a thaisbeanadh aig tachartasan pearsanta agus air-loidhne sa Ghiblean 2025, far an deach barrachd fios-air-ais a chruinneachadh agus a thoirt a-steach don aithisg.

Mar a tha le co-chomhairle sam bith den t-seòrsa seo, bha cuingealachaidhean agus dùbhlain ann. Bha beagan sgìths conaltraidh follaiseach air sgàth iomadh co-chomhairle tuathanas gaoithe aig an aon àm ann an Leòdhas, agus tharraing cuid de thachartasan frithealadh cuibhrichte, gu sònraichte an fheadhainn a bha ag amas air buannachdan nas fharsaing. Dh'fhaodadh an fhìrinn gu bheil am pròiseact fhathast aig ìre thràth agus gu bheil maoineachadh fhathast grunn bhliadhnaichean air falbh buaidh a thoirt air ìrean conaltraidh cuideachd. A dh'aindeoin sin, thug com-pàirtichean beachdan luachmhor seachad, agus fhreagair co-chomhairlean òga gu sònraichte gu deimhinneach ris a' fhòcas air cothroman fad-ùine. A dh'aindeoin clàr-ama teann libhrigidh, choilean am pròiseas còmhach farsaing agus chruthaich e bunait fianais làidir gus fiosrachadh a thoirt do obair san àm ri teachd.

Fhuair ceisteachan Sreath 1 92 freagairt, leis a' bhuidheann aoise as motha eadar 35 agus 54 bliadhna a dh'aois. Ged a bha freagairtean bho dhaoine òga gann, thug beachdan bho cho-chomhairleachadh a bha ag amas air òigridh sealladh càileachdail luachmhor. Chomharraich a' mhòr-chuid de luchd-freagairt gur e daoine prìobhaideach a bh' anna, le cuibhreannan nas lugha mar luchd-seilbh gnìomhachasan no riochdairean coimhearsnachd/eile.

Nuair a chaidh faighneachd dhaibh mu cho cudromach 's a tha cuspairean coimhearsnachd a chaidh a chomharrachadh ro-làimh airson maoineachadh a dh'fhaodadh a bhith ann, fhuair 'Seasmhachd eaconamach fad-ùine', 'Togail beairteas coimhearsnachd', agus 'Sunnd' an taic as àirde, ach cha robh taic cho mòr ri 'Turasachd' agus 'Siubhal gnìomhach agus ceangal'. A thaobh luchd-tairbhe as fheàrr leotha, thug a' mhòr-chuid de luchd-freagairt prìomhachas do bhuidhnean coimhearsnachd ionadail agus buidhnean saor-thoileach/carthannach, le nas lugha de bhuidhnean reachdail a' toirt taic. Tha geàrr-chunntas air na toraidhean an seo a rèir cuspair. Bu chòir làn fhiosrachadh mu phrìomhachas no 'mòr-chòrdte' nan cuspairean sin taobh a-staigh dàta a' cho-chomhairleachaidh a leughadh san aithisg slàn. Chan eil na cuspairean a tha air an liostadh an seo ann an òrdugh prìomhachais.

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| ● Cuspair 1: Teas agus Lùth | ● Cuspair 10: Calpa Sòisealta |
| ● Cuspair 2: Taigheadas agus Àite-fuirich | ● Cuspair 11: Maoin Dìleab Coimhearsnachd |
| ● Cuspair 3: Foghlam agus Cosnadh | ● Cuspair 12: Cùram do Chloinn, Seann Daoine, agus Daoine So-leònte |
| ● Cuspair 4: Turasachd | ● Cuspair 13: Dìon na h-Àrainneachd, Nàdar, agus Glèidhteachas Bith-iomadachd |
| ● Cuspair 5: Sunnd | ● Cuspair 14: Pròiseactan Bun-structair |
| ● Cuspair 6: Siubhal Gnìomhach agus Ceanglaichean | ● Cuspair 15: Ceangal Eadar-lìn agus Fibre |
| ● Cuspair 7: Gleidheadh agus Brosnachadh Dualchas, Cultar, Cànan agus Luachan Ionadail | ● Cuspair 16: Pasganan Ath-shuidheachaidh |
| ● Cuspair 8: Seasmhachd Eaconamach Fad-ùine | ● Cuspair 17: Taic do Bhuidhnean Reachdail |
| ● Cuspair 9: Togail Beairteas Coimhearsnachd | |

Dhearbh am pròiseas co-chomhairleachaidh taic làidir bhon choimhearsnachd airson Maoin a' Chòsta an Iar a chaidh a mholadh, còmhla ri comharrachadh phrìomhachasan soilleir, dòighean-obrach riaghlaidh as fheàrr leotha, agus beachdachaidhean nas fharsaing.

- Chuir a' mhòr-chuid de chom-pàirtichean fàilte air stèidheachadh Maoin a' Chòsta an Iar agus dh'aithnich iad cudromachd gealladh buannachd coimhearsnachd bliadhnail de £4.5 millean Spiorad na Mara.

- Chaidh riaghladh na maoine a chomharrachadh mar phrìomh adhbhar dragh, le roghainn làidir airson buidheann neo-eisimeileach, air a stiùireadh leis a' choimhearsnachd. Chuir com-pàirtichean cuideam air cho cudromach 's a tha follaiseachd, cunntachalachd, cothromachd agus rianachd proifeasanta, agus chuir iad an aghaidh riaghladh na maoine a bhith air a stiùireadh leis a' chomhairle ionadail.
- Am measg nan raointean prìomhachais tasgaidh bha:
 - A' dèiligeadh ri èiginn cosgais-bith-beò tro thaic do èifeachdas lùtha, agus ceumannan gus bochdainn connaidh a lùghdachadh.
 - A' toirt taic do dhaoine òga le bhith a' leasachadh ruigsinneachd gu taigheadas, cosnadh, preantasachdan, agus cothroman fuireach san sgìre no tilleadh thuice.
 - A' cumail croitearachd agus cultar ionadail, a' gabhail a-steach taic do chroitearan òga agus cleachdadh cinneasach croitean.
- Bha cuibhreann de na freagairtean co-cheangailte ri dìoladh airson buaidhean lèirsinneach, gairmean airson àrdachadh ann an sgèile a' mhaoin, no cur an aghaidh gaoithe far-oirthir san fharsaingeachd. Chaidh iad sin a chlàradh agus a cho-roinn leis an sgioba pròiseict ach cha do chuir iad ri molaidhean.
- Bha fios-air-ais air buannachdan coimhearsnachd nas fharsainge (Sreang 2) nas cuingealaichte, ged a chuir daoine òga cuideam air cho èiginneach 's a tha cùisean co-cheangailte ri ruigsinneachd taigheadais, cosgaisean lùtha, agus atharrachadh cliomaid. Chaidh draghan a chur an cèill cuideachd a thaobh leasachadh ioma-phròiseact gaoithe far-oirthir aig an aon àm agus an fheum air co-òrdanachadh gus buaidhean air coimhearsnachdan agus slabhraidhean solair a riaghladh.

Molaidhean agus na Ceumannan a Leanas

- Ullaich plana air adhart airson Maoin a' Chòsta an Iar, a rèir chlachan-mìle a' phròiseict, gus soilleireachd a thoirt seachad air adhartas agus gus spionnadh a chumail suas.
- Barrachd co-chomhairle a dhèanamh gus roghainnean riaghlaidh, dìleab agus tasgaidh a sgrùdadh nas doimhne, is dòcha tro bhùthan-obrach no buidhnean fòcais.
- Stèidhich buidheann riaghlaidh neo-eisimeileach agus coimiseanaidh ath-sgrùdadh air structaran a th' ann mar-thà anns na h-Eileanan Siar agus nas fhaide air falbh gus fiosrachadh a thoirt don dealbhadh.
- A' tuigsinn sgèile na h-obrach a tha a dhìth, stèidhich dreuchd mhaoinichte mus tèid am maoin a chuir air bhog gus sùil a chumail air leasachadh riaghlaidh agus dèanamh cinnteach gu bheil siostaman làidir nan àite.
- Airson buannachdan coimhearsnachd nas fharsainge:
 - Neartaich co-obrachadh le luchd-leasachaidh eile gus dòighean-obrach a cho-òrdanachadh agus buannachdan a mheudachadh air feadh nan Eileanan Siar.
 - Ceangail ri urrasan ionadail agus buidhnean leasachaidh gus cothroman airson com-pàirteachas a chomharrachadh agus gus ionnsachadh bho chleachdadh a th' ann mar-thà.
 - Lean air adhart a' cumail sùil air prìomhachasan a tha ag atharrachadh air feadh nan eilean gus dèanamh cinnteach gu bheil am maoin fhathast a' freagairt ri feumalachdan a' choimhearsnachd.

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1 INTRODUCTION - RO-RÀDH

As the renewable energy sector in Scotland scales up and the number of projects harnessing green energy from natural resources of wind, water and sun are rapidly growing, there is an ongoing need to ensure that the public benefit drawn from these developments is maximised and that communities across Scotland benefit in a meaningful way.

There are many ways in which communities can benefit from hosting renewable energy projects, for example, employment opportunities, supply chain growth, investment in the local economy, upskilling of the local workforce, and infrastructure development. In addition, there are community benefit schemes¹, which have become a well-established, integral part of renewable energy developments in Scotland, particularly in onshore and increasingly in offshore wind developments.

The aim of this scope of work was to deliver two strands of consultation on community benefits associated with the proposed Spiorad na Mara offshore wind project off the Isle of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides, ensuring that local and wider community members and landowners were involved meaningfully and had a voice in shaping these proposals.

Strand 1 of the consultation, the **West Coast Fund Consultation**, was aimed at the local communities along the west coast of Lewis, the area closest to the proposed offshore wind development site. With a population of 4,400, the west coast spans two council wards: Council Ward 7 in the Northwest, An Taobh Siar agus Nis, and Council Ward 6 in the mid-Southwest, Sgir' Uige agus Carlabhagh. The partners in the proposed Spiorad na Mara development have committed to contribute £4.5 million annually to a Community Benefit Fund, for the operating lifetime of the project (anticipated to be up to 35 years), known as the West Coast Fund, for these two council wards.

Strand 2, the **Wider Community Benefits Consultation**, was a consultation for the wider community in Lewis – including those on the west coast – which aimed, more generally, to explore the potential for wider benefits to be delivered by, or through, the project.

The role of Aquatera Ltd was to organise, facilitate and publicise an independent consultation process that encouraged people to think broadly and creatively about long-term, sustainable benefits for the community, both through the management and use of the West Coast Fund and the delivery of wider potential benefits for the island. Our key objective was to help shape the delivery of community benefits that directly reflect local needs, aspirations, and priorities, while ensuring fair and equitable distribution of funds. This process involved comprehensive stakeholder engagement, the results of which are presented in this report.

We liaised closely with the local community, landowners and local support agencies and authorities, managing a consultation process that ran separate from – but complemented – the ongoing statutory processes. Additionally, we coordinated with the consultants undertaking social impact assessment work for the project, to ensure coherence and minimise confusion between the different lines of consultation among stakeholders. Achieving this goal required a clear and well-defined approach, which guided us through the timeline, from inception to completion.

¹ It should be noted that, for offshore wind development in Scotland, community benefit fund arrangements are separate from the planning process and there are no provisions associated with such funds which require either support for the project or prohibit any objections to the project.

1.1 THE PROJECT TEAM - SGIOBA A' PHRÒISEICT

Aquatera was established in 2000, in the Orkney Islands, at the heart of a highly diverse and intense blue economy and community-driven area.

Aquatera's international work focuses strongly on sustainability and community development, especially on decarbonising energy generation and facilitating energy security for local communities and regions. This commitment encompasses working with small, rural, island-based communities and support for community benefit and involvement. Aquatera undertakes sustainable development and energy transition projects in countries as diverse as Chile, Japan, Indonesia, Singapore and Kazakhstan: all tackling issues of energy security, climate resilience and the development of 21st Century energy infrastructure.

Aquatera staff have renowned experience in producing effective consultation strategies and engagement materials. The project team for this consultancy have decades of experience and knowledge surrounding project management, stakeholder engagement, training and capacity building, strategic research planning and management, and quality assurance. Project team members also have skills in social science, engagement and community place making, literature review and multi-party coordination.

1.1.1 Communication with Stakeholders

As a small company with extensive experience working in island and rural areas, we are attuned to the dynamics and challenges communities can face. We prioritise open, respectful, and sensitive communication in our engagements. Our approach is designed to foster collaboration and minimise conflict by understanding the unique concerns and priorities of each stakeholder. Where potential conflict arises, we are committed to addressing it openly and constructively, working together with stakeholders to find practical solutions.

When planning and undertaking this consultation, we understood that some attendees may not be accepting of the information provided and may have wished to challenge certain aspects of the engagement materials. Aquatera were prepared to receive comments and feedback of all kinds from local community members. The team aimed to listen to all individuals or groups to fully understand their concerns and listen to their challenges.



2 METHODOLOGY - MODHAN-OBACH

2.1 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES - AMASAN

The aim of this scope of work was to deliver two strands of consultation as a first step in helping to ensure that the proposed Spiorad na Mara project delivers long-term, sustainable socio-economic improvements that reflect the needs and priorities of local community members and landowners through meaningful and inclusive consultation and engagement.

In achieving this aim, the specific objectives of the scope of work were:

- To plan, deliver and report on consultation with communities:
 - across the west coast of Lewis, to gather their views on the governance, administration and uses of the West Coast Fund (**West Coast Fund Consultation**);
 - across the Isle of Lewis, to gather their views on potential wider benefits that could be delivered – for specific areas of Lewis outside the west coast, for the whole of Lewis and for the Western Isles – as part of the Spiorad na Mara project (**Wider Community Benefits Consultation**);
- To ensure both strands – **West Coast Fund Consultation and Wider Community Benefits Consultation** – were as accessible as possible, by offering a variety of digital, in-person and written consultation opportunities and ensuring marginal and hard-to-reach groups were offered an opportunity to interact and respond;
- To ensure the West Coast Fund Consultation activities were confined to the west coast communities, whilst also ensuring those same communities could participate in the Wider Community Benefits Consultation;
- To create an evidence base to record the needs and aspirations of local communities in relation to community benefit, including a requirement for separate data collection and recording for the two strands, or feedback relating to both strands;
- To identify and assess alternative options that could help to meet these needs and aspirations;
- In the case of the West Coast Fund Consultation, to identify the preferred model(s) of governance and administration, in line with identified needs and aspirations.

The report outlines:

- Indicative funding areas/themes based on the needs and aspirations expressed by communities;
- Potential governance approaches to ensure fair and inclusive oversight, including early thinking on eligibility and funding criteria and initial considerations around evaluation, decision-making, and transparency;
- Recommendations and next steps to support the continued development of the approach in collaboration with local stakeholders and the Spiorad na Mara project team.

This output is intended to inform future stages of work, providing a structured foundation for further consultation and refinement of the West Coast Fund and wider community benefits associated with the Spiorad na Mara project.

2.2 METHODOLOGY - MODHAN-OBACH

The project methodology was structured around five key tasks, designed to provide a clear framework for the work, while recognising the importance of flexibility and responsiveness throughout the process.

- Task 1. Initial Project Scoping, Stakeholder Mapping and Engagement Plan
- Task 2. Community Consultation Process
- Task 3. Data Analysis and Thematic Prioritisation
- Task 4. Development of the preferred West Coast Fund model/structure
- Task 5. Final Consultation and Refinement

2.2.1 Task 1. Initial Project Scoping, Stakeholder Mapping and Engagement Plan

The purpose of this task was to understand the landscape of stakeholders involved in the West Coast Fund Consultation (Strand 1), of which there was a foundation of information and engagement prior to commencing this work. This was utilised to create a detailed engagement plan. The engagement plan captured existing knowledge on key community members, local landowners, community groups, local businesses, and relevant public bodies. Ongoing community initiatives, development plans, and concerns were also mapped out that could have intersected with the proposed West Coast Fund. This set the foundation for tailored engagement efforts and ensured that no group was overlooked in the consultation process.

In doing so, consultation with the Spiorad na Mara project team was undertaken as well as with the associated social impact assessment consultants (Atlantic58) and existing reports were reviewed, to gather initial insights and minimise duplication of stakeholder outreach.

As part of the detailed engagement plan, we prepared materials to be used in stakeholder engagement activities which included a slide pack, social media post templates, other advertisement templates (newspaper advertisement, community noticeboard advertisement), signage for events, information posters and infographics, digital and physical forms to gather feedback and input from stakeholders.

A survey pertaining to each strand was a critical element of the consultation, to capture nuanced insights whilst allowing quantitative analysis. To this end, the Strand 1 survey was structured to allow for detailed analysis through utilisation of Likert scale² responses, multiple choice and ranking questions, and demographic and background information response collection. Strand 1 and Strand 2 surveys can be found in 5 and 0 respectively.

An initial list of themes was produced by Aquatera, based on a review of renewable energy community benefit reports across Scotland and informal consultation undertaken by the West Side Estates Group with local community councils in their respective estate areas in November 2024. This identified general key priorities and best practice and were used as the basis for the surveys that were produced. These themes were sense checked with the Spiorad na Mara project team and against previous Western Isles community reports and plans to ensure the questions being put to the community were relevant and engaging.

² The Likert scale is a five (or seven) point scale that is used to allow an individual to express how much they agree or disagree with a particular statement.

Table 2.1 List of existing themes and definitions around Community Benefit

Theme	Definition
Active travel and connectivity	Improvements and maintenance of walking and cycling routes to enhance safe, accessible, and sustainable travel within and between communities.
Community Endowment Fund	A long-term fund where the principal is invested, and only the returns or interest are used to support community projects, ensuring ongoing benefits
Community wealth building	Strengthening of a local economy by supporting local businesses, cooperatives, and services that keep money circulating within the economy
Education and employment	Initiatives that support access to training, skills development, and employment opportunities for people of all ages.
Heating and energy	Projects focused on energy efficiency and renewable energy, including home and community building insulation, and community- or household-level energy generation.
Housing and accommodation	Development of new housing, regeneration of existing stock, and exploration of fair allocation or ownership models that meet local needs.
Long-term economic sustainability	Support for initiatives that generate lasting employment, local enterprise, and independent income streams, reducing reliance on temporary or external funding.
Preservation and promotion of local community heritage, culture, language and values	Initiatives that celebrate, protect, or revitalise local traditions, language, history, and values, including cultural events, education, or heritage conservation projects.
Social capital	Investment in activities that foster community connection, trust, and collaboration—such as community hubs, volunteer networks, peer support, and skills-sharing programmes.
Tourism (including sustainable tourism)	Development of tourism-related infrastructure, services, and experiences that attract visitors while protecting local environments, culture, and quality of life.
Wellbeing	Projects that enhance quality of life and social connection, including support for youth, families, older people, and activities addressing social isolation and mental health.

2.2.2 Task 2. Community Consultation Process

The aim of this task was to engage with the community in a transparent and inclusive manner, gathering their views, priorities and concerns regarding the distribution and use of community benefit funds. The objective of this task was to carry out a consultation process that encouraged broad participation, collected diverse input, and informed the subsequent phases of the project.

As part of the consultation process, we gathered input from stakeholders on two key aspects: the themes that community benefit should address, and how the West Coast Fund should be governed (managed, administered, and evaluated). This involved:

- **Themes and Priorities:** Stakeholders were asked to identify the areas they felt were most important for community benefits to support (See example themes in the table above).
- **West Coast Fund Governance:** Feedback was collected on how the West Coast Fund should be structured and governed.

A multi-channel consultation process was implemented, ensuring inclusivity by offering both digital and in-person participation options. This included:

- Public Meetings and Workshops: Facilitated sessions in local areas to gather input on community priorities.
- Online and On-Paper Questionnaires: Providing an accessible online platform or physical paper questionnaire.

We worked with local partners to ensure wide promotion and awareness of the consultation through social media, newspapers and community noticeboards. Our team ensured that the questions asked were open, clear, and designed to elicit actionable feedback related to community needs and potential uses for the benefit fund and wider potential benefits. All aspects of consultation were noted. A summary of the engagement events can be seen in Table 2.2 below.

Table 2.2 Summary of engagement events

Date	Event	Location
4-6 Feb 2025	Pre-consultation engagement	Carloway Community Centre
12 Mar 2025	Public open event (Strand 1)	Barvas and Brue Community Centre
13 Mar 2025	Public open event (Strand 1 and 2)	An Lanntair, Stornoway
13 Mar 2025	Public open event (Strand 1 and 2)	Youth Event
14 Mar 2025	Public open event (Strand 1 and 2)	Breasclete Community Centre
15 Mar 2025	Public open event (Strand 1 and 2)	Bernera Community Centre
15 Mar 2025	Public open event (Strand 1 and 2)	Uig Community Centre
19 Mar 2025	Online event (Strand 1 and 2)	Online webinar event
15 Apr 2025	In person and online results presentation (Strand 1 and 2)	Breasclete Community Centre
16 Apr 2025	In person and online results presentation (Strand 1 and 2)	Barvas and Brue Community Centre

Mechanisms for sharing information on consultation

A number of mechanisms were used to share information on the consultation events and the request for completion of the survey. Further information on the advertising of the survey can be found in Table 2.3 below.

- Dedicated Spiorad na Mara Community Benefit Consultation Website (<https://spioradnamaracommunity.uk/>)
 - All information on the consultation on the proposed Spiorad na Mara Community Benefit Fund
 - Questionnaires and events information
- Social Media
 - Use of Facebook to advertise and promote the questionnaires and consultation events
 - In English and Gaelic
 - Posted on all the relevant groups and pages from the west coast of Lewis, and wider groups such as Hebridean Hub
- Printed Materials
 - Printed posters with events information distributed across Lewis
 - Materials for consultation events – posters, pull-ups, etc.

Table 2.3 Details on issue and availability of West Coast Fund Consultation Questionnaire and Wider Community Benefits Consultation Questionnaire

Questionnaire	Issue details
Strand 1 – online	<p>Available online from 06 March– 01 April 2025.</p> <p>Advertised through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spiorad na Mara Community Benefit Consultation website • Isle of Lewis community and local news Facebook groups (17 groups via direct page posting or sharing post from Aquatera’s social media) • Traditional media advertorials/press releases (Fios, We Love Stornoway, Hebrides News) • Northland Power website
Strand 2 – online	<p>Available online from 06 March – 01 April 2025.</p> <p>Advertised through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spiorad na Mara Community Benefit Consultation website • Isle of Lewis community and local news Facebook groups (17 groups via direct page posting or sharing post from Aquatera’s social media) • Traditional media advertorials/press releases (Fios, We Love Stornoway, Hebrides News) • Northland Power website
Strand 1 & 2 – paper versions	<p>Available for collection and submission at the following locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Lanntair, Stornoway • Cross Stores, Ness • Galson Business Centre • Barvas and Brue Community Centre • Old School Shawbost • Carloway Community Centre • Uig Community Shop

2.2.3 Task 3. Data Analysis and Thematic Prioritisation

The goal of this task was to analyse the data gathered (in both Strand 1 and Strand 2 consultation activities) during the consultation process and identify key themes and priorities that reflected the collective aspirations and needs of the community in relation to the West Coast Fund and its governance, and in relation to wider community benefits. This step was crucial to ensure that the recommendations put forward at the end were data-driven and representative of stakeholder input.

The analysis of the qualitative consultation data was carried out using a thematic analysis approach. The dataset comprised qualitative material gathered through multiple channels, including survey responses, notes and post-it contributions collected at community events, and detailed notes taken during discussions. Together, these provided a substantial body of text-based feedback for analysis.

Thematic analysis was undertaken in several iterative rounds. Initially, responses were reviewed and assigned to an emerging set of themes. This process involved reading through the material, grouping similar points together, and beginning to identify recurring patterns. The preliminary set of themes was then refined through repeated rounds of coding, during which themes were reviewed, adjusted, and tested against the data to ensure they reflected the substance

of participants' contributions. Over successive iterations, the thematic framework was refined until a clearly defined set of themes was agreed and consistently applied across the full dataset.

Each line of data was assigned to a theme. Where a single contribution was relevant to more than one theme, the text was divided into separate rows to ensure it could be coded appropriately under each relevant theme. As a result, the number of rows of data does not correspond directly to the number of individual participants. One person may have raised points across multiple themes, meaning that their input was captured in several parts of the dataset. This approach enabled a fuller and more accurate reflection of the breadth of topics raised.

**Public Community Benefit Consultation
for Spiorad na Mara**

**This independent consultation will help shape the
proposed Spiorad na Mara's community benefit fund**

**Cuidichidh a' cho-chomhairle neo-eisimeileach seo le
bhith a' cumadh maoin buannachd choimhearsnachd
Spiorad na Mara a tha san amharc**

The proposed development has ringfenced a community benefit fund of £4.5 million annually for 35 years for the communities along the West coast of Lewis, for residents in council wards 6 and 7. This consultation will inform and shape how this fund is allocated.

Share your ideas, have your say!

The consultation for the wider community of Lewis will be an exploratory exercise which would then shape the application of a community benefit scheme for the wider community across Lewis.

Share your ideas!

Find out more about this consultation:

Faigh tuilleadh a-mach mun cho-chomhairle seo:

Who are we?

Aquatera is an environmental consultancy who has been appointed to carry out this public consultation independently for the community. Aquatera is a multidisciplinary company, providing a range of environmental services and products, operating internationally from a hub based in Stromness, Orkney.

Figure 2.1 Example of poster used to advertise consultation events

The analysis was guided initially by a pre-established set of themes (as seen in Table 2.1). However, through the consultation process, participants raised additional topics that were not fully captured within this original list of themes. These new areas were incorporated into the analysis, leading to an expanded list of themes. The final thematic structure therefore represents both continuity with earlier stages of work and responsiveness to the specific input provided during this consultation.

The survey also included a number of structured, quantitative questions designed to gather demographic information and headline views on key topics. These included questions on respondents' age group and the capacity in which they were completing the survey (for example, as a private individual, business owner, or representing a community group). In addition, respondents were asked for their views on the governance of the community benefit fund, including which types of organisations should be responsible for administering it, and whether they would personally be interested in becoming involved in its governance.

Responses to these closed questions were collated and analysed descriptively, focusing on simple counts and percentages to provide an overview of the distribution of views across different categories. This quantitative analysis complements the qualitative thematic analysis by providing a clearer picture of the composition of respondents and their preferences in relation to fund governance.

2.2.4 Task 4. Development of the Preferred West Coast Fund Model/Structure

In discussions with the Steering Group (which included representatives of the Spiorad na Mara team and of each of the four estates in the West Side Estates Group (WSEG) during the course of the work, it was recognised that it is too early to finalise the model or structure for the West Coast Fund at this stage. At a minimum, further engagement and consultation will be required before the full details and framework of the fund can be agreed. As such, this task therefore focused on presenting a summary of findings from the consultation to date, alongside a discussion, conclusions, next steps, and initial recommendations to inform the future development of the scheme.

The output of this task is a summary and analysis of the consultation findings to date, presented in this report, covering both Strand 1 (West Coast Fund Consultation) and Strand 2 (Wider Community Benefits Consultation). It identifies emerging themes, community priorities, and key considerations for the future development of the West Coast Fund and wider potential community benefit initiatives.

2.2.5 Task 5. Final Consultation and Refinement

The draft results were presented at online and in-person events on 15 and 16 April. The questions and feedback received have been incorporated into the presentation of findings in this report.

2.3 LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES - TEÒRAIDHEAN AGUS DÙBHLAIN

As with any consultation of this nature, there are a number of methodological considerations to note. The study draws on thematic analysis to explore qualitative feedback, which is a well-established approach for identifying patterns in stakeholder responses. While this method naturally involves interpretation, care was taken to ensure consistency through a structured coding process, the use of a small and consistent analysis team, and regular peer discussion throughout the development of themes.

The quantitative element of the study, based on Likert scale survey responses, provided useful directional insights into stakeholder perceptions. While this type of data does not allow for in-depth statistical analysis, results were used in combination with qualitative data to build a more comprehensive picture of stakeholder experiences.

The consultation aimed to include a wide range of stakeholder views. While participation was voluntary, efforts were made to ensure balanced representation across stakeholder types. Where numbers were smaller, data was treated proportionately and used to identify indicative trends rather than definitive conclusions.

Finally, as with all self-reported data, there is the possibility of response bias. However, the study design encouraged open, anonymous input, and the findings are strengthened by the consistency of themes emerging across multiple sources and stakeholder groups.

There has been a relatively large amount of public consultation within Lewis given that there are some large onshore wind farm projects as well as associated infrastructure planned around the same timeframes as the Spiorad na Mara project. This has inevitably led to an element of engagement fatigue. This was observed within the consultation process, with some events being poorly attended particularly around the Wider Community Benefits Consultation events. This strand is less defined, which may have added to this effect. Given this issue, the level of engagement from those who did attend was very welcome and allowed the team to get a broad range of views and suggestions logged.

Feedback from the consultees also highlighted that this project is at a very early stage, given that it is potentially over five years before it will become operational and therefore the funds will become available to the community. It was welcomed that this work had started, for early planning, but some frustration was also noted that potential initiatives would not be funded for a number of years. Discussions with the youth group were more positive as they viewed the longer-term benefits as beneficial to them.

Overall, delivery of the consultation was completed within a very tight timeframe. It was important to deliver the consultation in between the wind farm's two substantive statutory consultations (which were delivered in September/October 2024 and June 2025), in order not to confuse what this community benefit consultation was asking with the planning process and also to minimise consultation fatigue for local communities.



3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION - TORAIDHEAN AGUS DEASBAD

3.1 WEST COAST FUND CONSULTATION (STRAND 1) QUESTIONNAIRE DATA - DÀTA CEISTEACHAIN MU CHOMHAIRLE MAOIN A' CHÒSTA AN IAR (SREATH 1)

There were 92 responses to the Strand 1 questionnaire.

Figure 3.1 represents the age demographics of West Coast Fund Consultation (Strand 1) questionnaire respondents. The largest group of respondents was the 35-54 age group, constituting 37% of the total response. The smallest group of respondents was young people aged under 24 years (3% of total responses) and the 75 and over age group (4% of total responses). Whilst the questionnaire response from the under 24 group was somewhat modest, this group was targeted in a youth-focussed consultation event, providing in-depth input to the qualitative data gathered in the consultation.

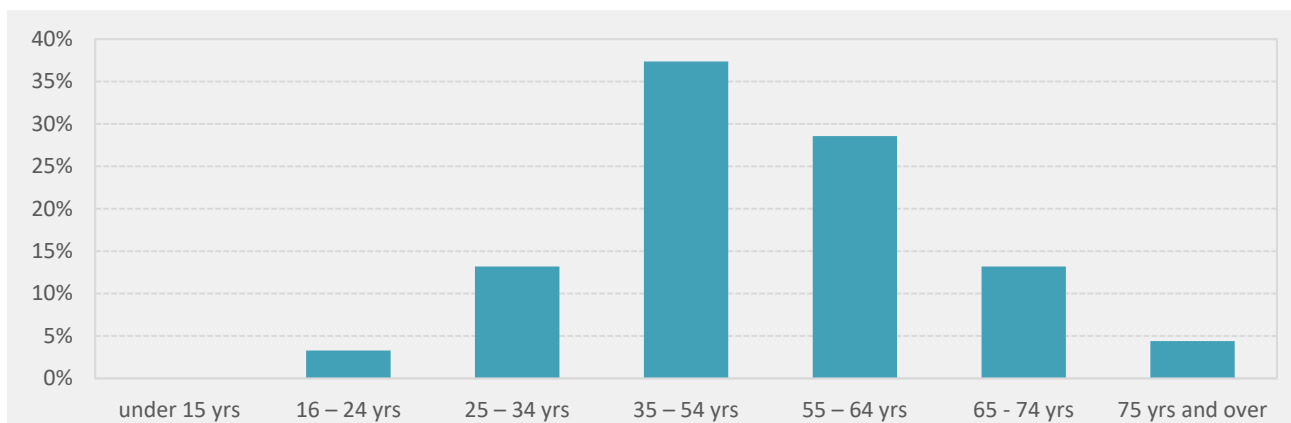


Figure 3.1 Responses to the Strand 1 Survey question 'Which age group are you in? (n = 91)?'

Demographics were also collected on respondents' stakeholder interest, illustrated in Figure 3.2. The majority of respondents (81%) identified themselves as private individuals. 10% responded as a private business owner, and 5% identified as community organisation representative or 'other' (Crofter, Journalist, Registered Society (not for profit), Local Authority Worker, UDT). Note that as respondents were asked to 'tick all that apply' the total number of responses is larger than the number of respondents because some ticked more than one category identifier.

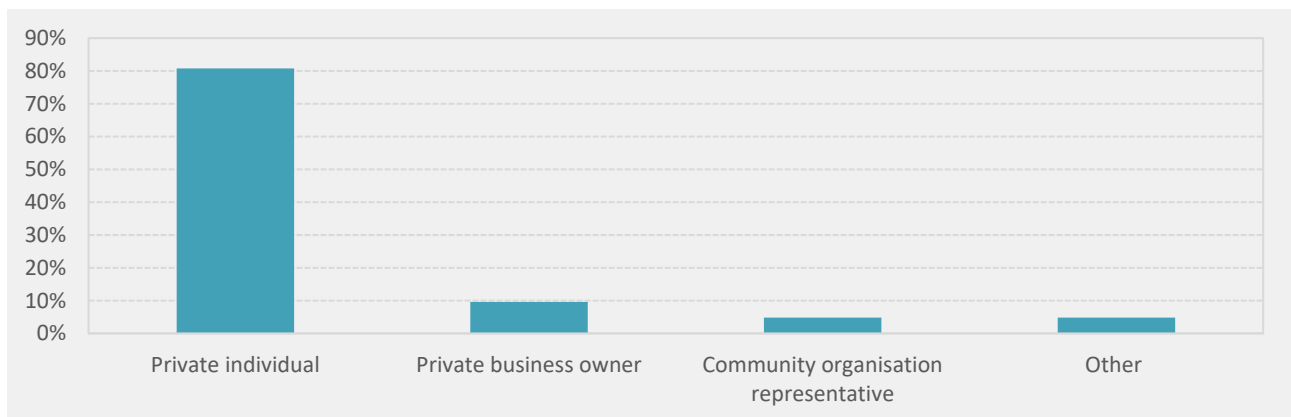


Figure 3.2 Responses to the Strand 1 Survey question "Are you completing this survey as a (select all that apply)..." (n=106). 'Other' represents responses including Crofter, Journalist, Registered Society (not for profit), Local Authority Worker, UDT.

Respondents were asked “The current community themes that have been gathered from consultation to date are listed below. How important are these themes to you?” Figure 3.3 below shows the results, which utilised the Likert Scale Response to measure respondents’ opinions on the different themes under which the proposed fund might be spent (As presented and defined in Table 2.1). The darker and lighter blue colours represent strong and moderate agreement respectively. A neutral opinion of the theme is shown in grey. The darker and lighter red indicate strong and moderate disagreement with potential funding being utilised for the given theme. Please note that this question did not entail a ranking *between* the themes. This question asked respondents how important the themes were to them in relation to the proposed fund - a participant could answer ‘strongly agree’ to all themes, without needing to prioritise one theme over another.

Themes yielding the most numerous strong or moderately positive ratings were ‘**8. Long-term economic sustainability**’, (total 72% positive response) closely followed by ‘**9. Community wealth building**’ (69%) and ‘**5. Wellbeing**’ (69%). The themes considered least important by respondents were ‘**4. Tourism**’ (41% positive response) and ‘**6. Active travel and connectivity**’ (48%).

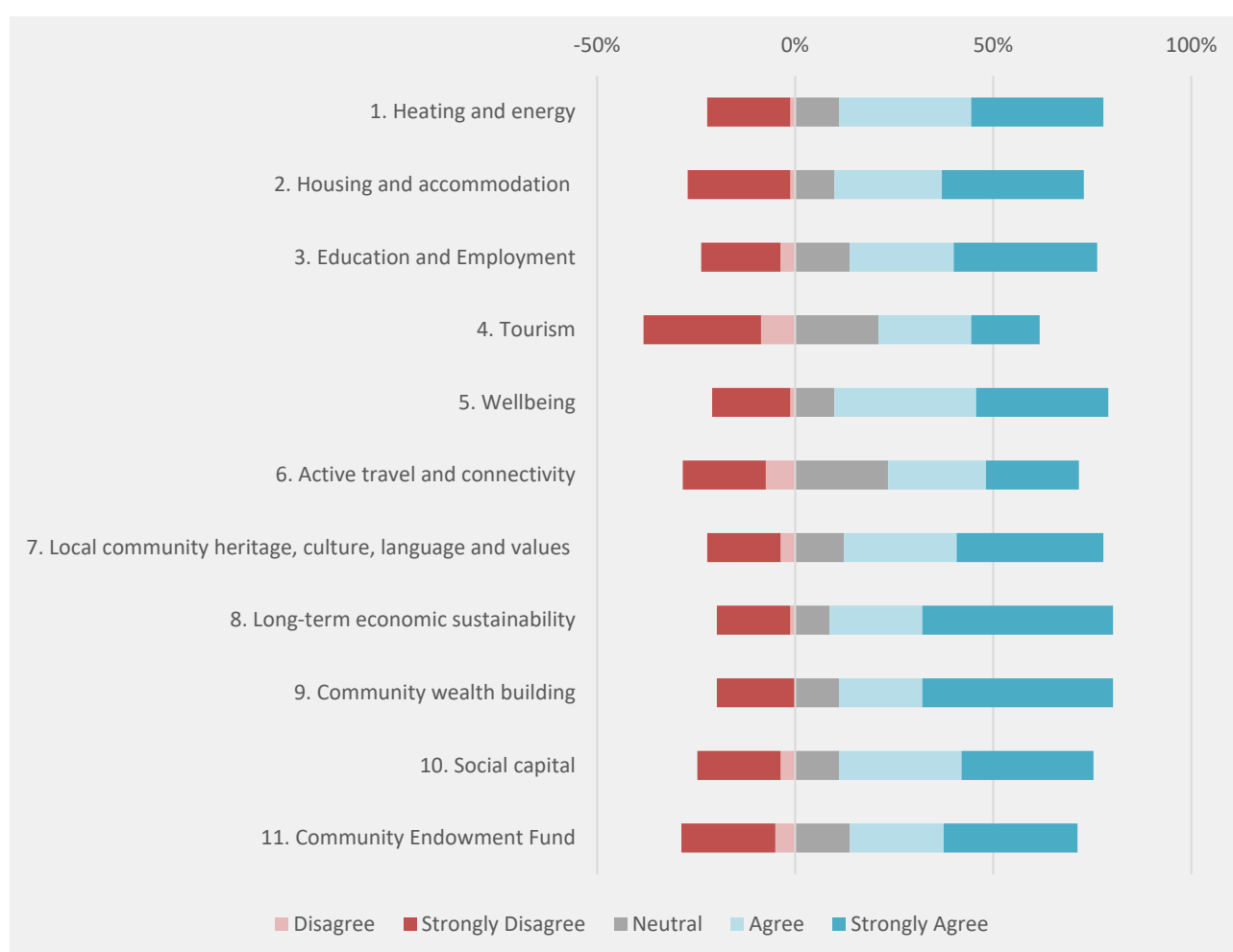


Figure 3.3 Strand 1 questionnaire respondents were asked “The current community themes that have been gathered from consultation to date are listed below. How important are these themes to you?” Results are shown here from Strongly Agree in red on the left to Strongly Agree in dark blue on the right. See the full definition of themes in Table 2.1

Respondents within Strand 1 were also asked to identify the types of organisations they think should be supported by the West Coast Fund, shown in Figure 3.4. This question gave respondents a pre-determined list of organisation types, based on the initial scoping completed in advance of the consultation, but also allowed for respondents to suggest 'other' organisations in an open-text response box. Respondents could choose as many categories as they agreed with. The most frequently identified organisation types were **'local community groups'** and **'local voluntary/charitable organisations'**, with 20% and 18% of responses respectively. **'Statutory groups'** was the least selected option, with just 5% of respondents wishing for the proposed fund to support groups like the Local Authority. 12% of respondents gave open-text responses. Some respondents focused on practical uses of the fund, for example suggesting support for "home owners – not holiday lets – e.g. insulation, solar panels & batteries" or "individuals through a pay back scheme for those visually impacted." Others proposed that funding should be targeted geographically, with suggestions that "monies should be spent within Ward 6 and 7," or used to provide services such as "care in the community for the elderly and ill" and "support for families with children who have additional support needs."

A number of comments also raised concerns around governance and representation, noting that statutory groups already receive government funding, or questioning whether the right negotiations and agreements are yet in place. For example, some respondents emphasised that "the estates do not represent the residents". Where relevant, these comments were incorporated into the qualitative data analysed through thematic analysis and presented in the next section of this report.

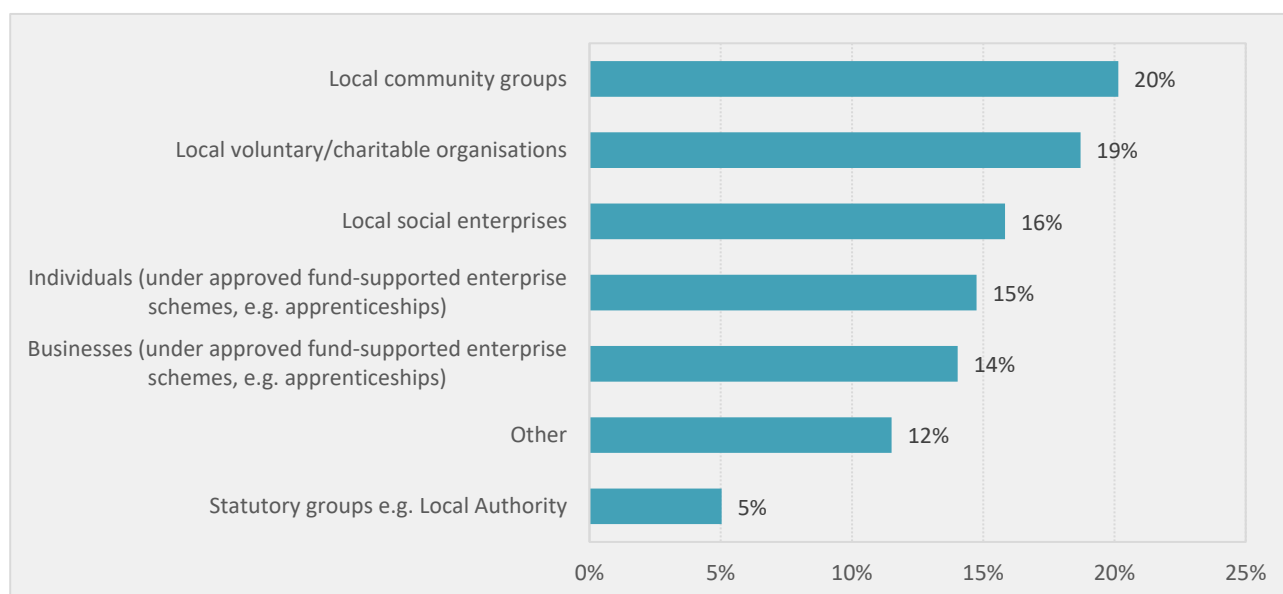


Figure 3.4 Strand 1 questionnaire responses to the question "Which types of organisations should be supported by the community benefit fund (Choose all that you agree with)?" (Total responses 85, total data points 278)

3.2 WEST COAST FUND CONSULTATION (STRAND 1) AND WIDER COMMUNITY BENEFITS CONSULTATION (STRAND 2) - THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF FUNDING THEMES (QUALITATIVE DATA)

CO-CHOMHAIRLE MAOIN A' CHÒSTA SIAR (SREATH 1) AGUS CO-CHOMHAIRLE AIR SOCHAIREAN COIMHEARSNACHD NAS FHARSINGE (SREATH 2) - MION-SGRÙDADH CUSPAIREACH AIR CUSPAIREAN MAOINEACHADH (DÀTA CÀILEACHDACH)

As described in the methodology, the qualitative data gathered across questionnaire responses and consultation events moved through several stages of analysis to allow for the following results to be produced. Notes from in-person and

online consultation events, and open text questionnaire responses, were compiled and reviewed multiple times to gain a broad understanding to allow for the generation of a group of initial themes. Codes were grouped into potential (existing and new, where appropriate) themes based on patterns and shared meanings, which were then reviewed and refined to ensure categorisation of responses was consistent across the dataset. As these results are presented, direct participant illustrative quotes have been selected to support and represent each theme or highlight particularly salient points. The below sections discuss themes in numerical order (not necessarily in order of popularity).

Figure 3.5 illustrates the results of the thematic analysis from both Strand 1 and Strand 2 focused events and questionnaire data. The darker blue bars represent existing themes from the consultation's initial scoping stage – notably including heating and energy, wellbeing, social capital, housing, and education and employment. The light blue bars represent newly identified themes, including environmental protection, relocation packages and care for vulnerable groups, amongst others. The number of responses categorised under each theme is indicated by the x-axis. The total number of responses within this dataset was 318. The themes are numbered to align with the numbering of existing themes with new themes added and numbered randomly.

Figure 3.6 and Figure 3.7 then present the data for Strand 1 and Strand 2 separately, allowing differences in emphasis between the two strands to be more clearly seen.

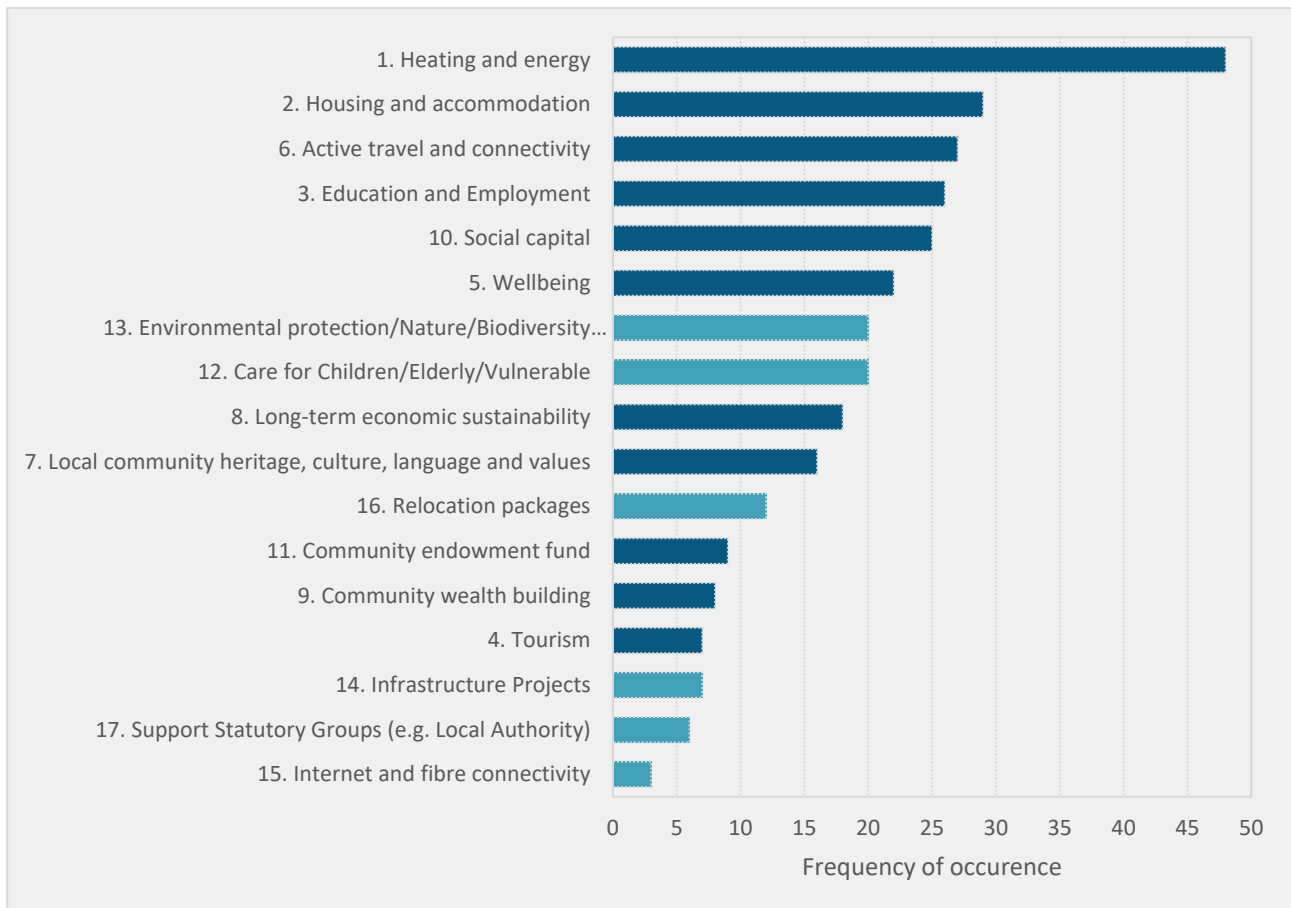


Figure 3.5 Frequency of occurrence of themes identified from Strand 1 and Strand 2 qualitative data. Total number of responses analysed was 318. Those in dark blue indicate existing themes as have been presented previously, and those in light blue indicate new themes. Themes are numbered randomly

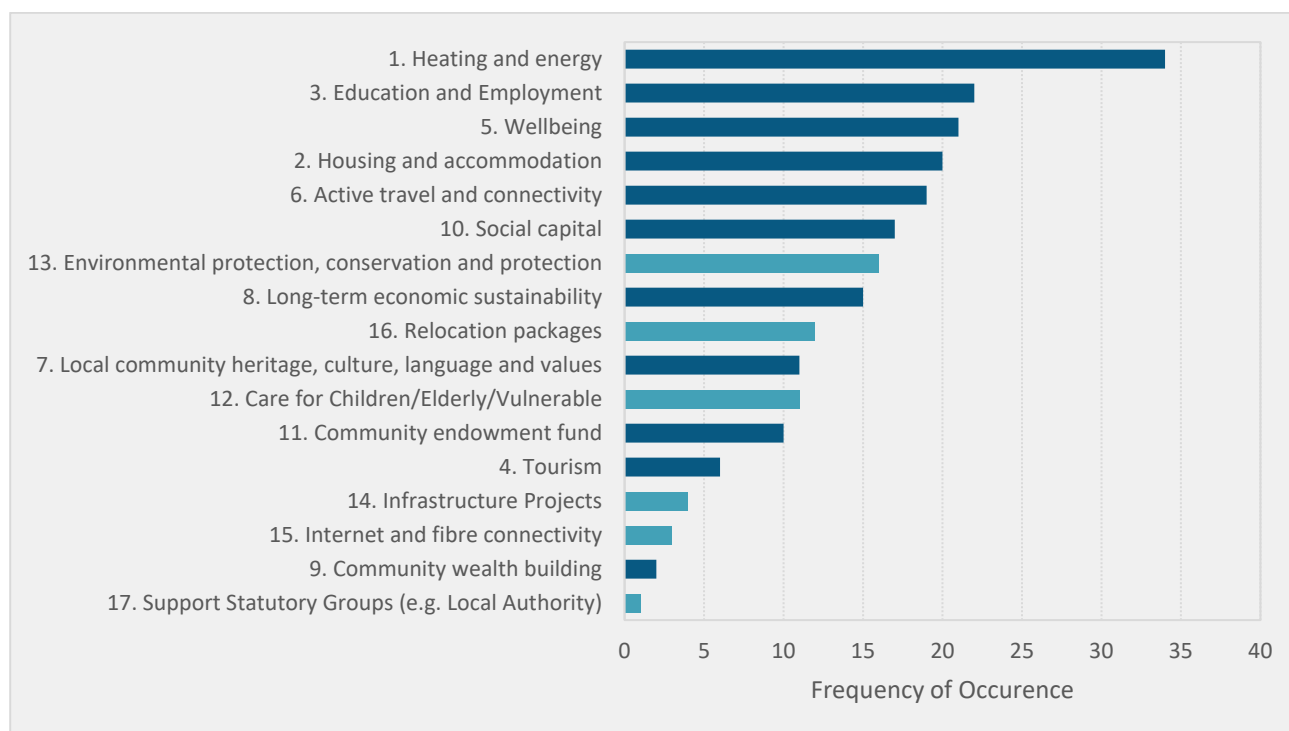


Figure 3.6 Frequency of occurrence of themes identified from Strand 1 data. Total number of responses analysed was 238. Dark blue indicate existing themes as have been presented previously, and light blue indicate new themes. Themes are numbered randomly.

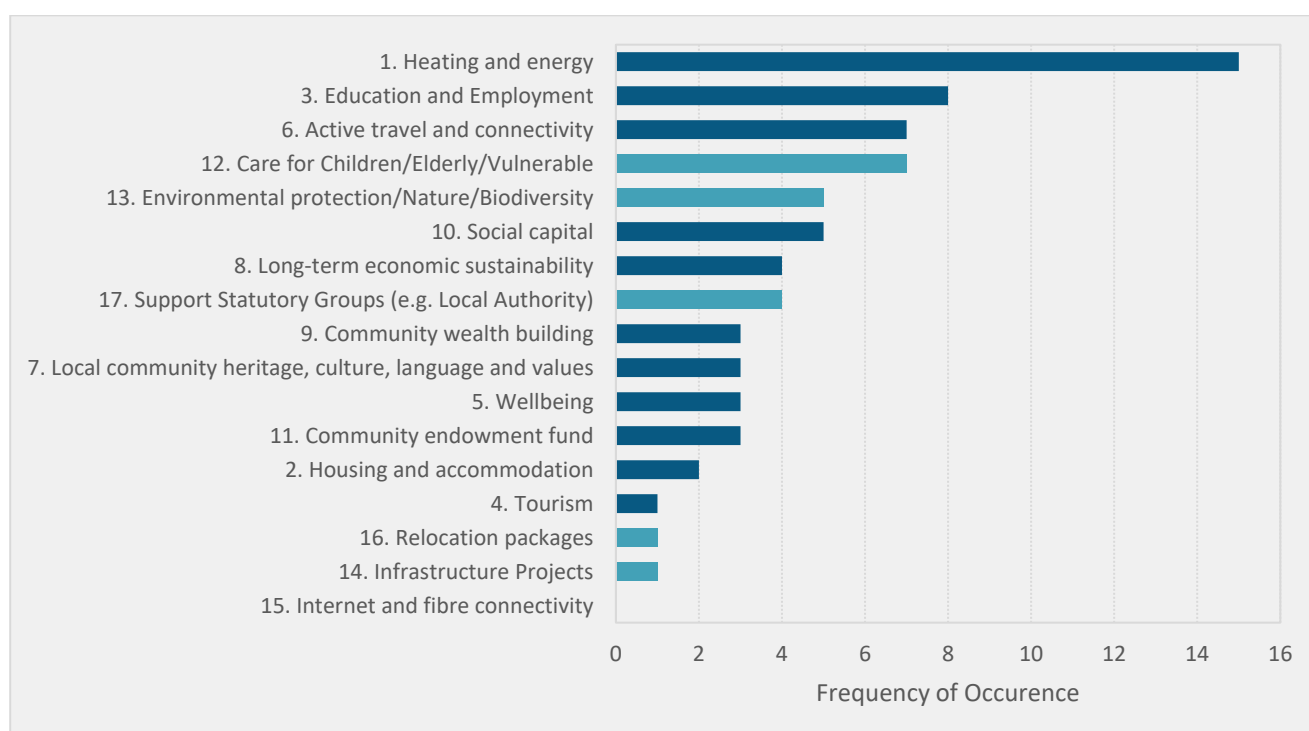


Figure 3.7 Frequency of occurrence of themes identified from Strand 2 qualitative data. Total number of responses analysed was 73. Dark blue indicate existing themes as have been presented previously, and light blue indicate new themes. Themes are numbered randomly.

3.2.1 Theme 1. Heating and Energy

Heating and energy emerged as the single most significant issue across both strands. Rising costs, limited options, and the perceived unfairness of local communities bearing high bills while living beside large-scale renewable developments were recurring concerns. Respondents did not simply highlight the burden of energy costs but also proposed a range of practical, structural, and community-led solutions, reflecting both immediate needs and longer-term ambitions for greater local benefit.

In Strand 1, responses often centred on the household level. The most urgent theme was affordability: *"Help with energy/heating bills"* was a repeated call, underlining the acute pressures of fuel poverty. Many also suggested investment in home upgrades, with *"Help to insulate homes"* appearing as a core idea to reduce ongoing costs. Alongside this, people linked renewables directly to household relief, proposing *"Community-owned renewable schemes to lower household energy bills"* and *"Support for people to install solar panels or other renewable energy sources."* In this way, immediate financial relief and longer-term efficiency improvements were both seen as priorities.

In Strand 2, the emphasis shifted toward fairness, sustainability, and community benefit at a wider scale. Several participants stressed the importance of directing support to those most affected: *"Targeted support to those most in need with high energy costs."* Others framed the issue structurally, highlighting the need for measures like *"Home insulation and energy efficiency measures to reduce reliance on expensive heating"* and *"Community energy projects that return profit locally."* A recurring concern was that while large-scale renewable energy developments take place, local people continue to pay disproportionately high costs. One contribution captured this sentiment clearly: *"Cheaper electricity for local people affected by development."*



3.2.2 Theme 2. Housing and Accommodation

Housing and accommodation featured strongly across both strands, reflecting both the direct impacts of renewable development on households and the broader, long-standing challenges facing communities. Respondents highlighted issues ranging from the condition and affordability of existing housing to opportunities for investment in new stock that could serve young people, families, and older residents into the future.

In Strand 1, the focus was predominantly on two areas: mitigation and affordability. A significant proportion of contributions related to the need for support to protect homes from the impacts of the windfarm, including *"sound proof the homes of the island residents," "retro fit of sound insulation ... to reduce the impacts..."* and proposals for funds to cover *"any damage that occurs to the houses from having such large turbines so close to villages."* Some respondents also raised the possibility of purchasing properties at *"pre-turbine valuations for people who want to leave,"* underlining the depth of concern about quality of life near the development.

Alongside mitigation, affordability and accessibility of housing emerged as a central theme. Respondents called for *"affordable appropriate housing"* for young people, affordable rental options such as *"flats in the communities"*, and schemes including *"rent to buy"* and *"housing deposit for first home."* Some suggested linking new provision to community needs, for example *"a nice block of 1 bedroom flats, and beside it a 4-5 person care home,"* designed to keep people embedded in their communities. Others proposed reinvestment models where income from low-rent housing could be recycled into further community funds.

In Strand 2, there were relatively few responses on this theme. Where comments were made, they emphasised leaving a long-term asset from construction activity, for example: *"... investment in the massive amount of accommodation that will be required during the construction phase so that it has at least a 50-year life (ie, it is built to Scottish Building Standards) rather than being designated 'temporary', would be a massive residual benefit to the island."* A second contribution captured the desired direction succinctly: *"Legacy housing."*

Across both strands, housing was seen as both a pressure point and a potential legacy. Strand 1 placed weight on mitigating immediate impacts and tackling fuel poverty through affordable and accessible housing options, while Strand 2 highlighted the opportunity to embed housing investment into the long-term benefit of the community. Taken together, the responses indicate that housing is not only a practical necessity but a key determinant of whether younger generations remain in island communities and whether local people feel the benefits of renewable development are being equitably shared.

3.2.3 Theme 3. Education and Employment

Participants frequently emphasised the importance of using the project to create local employment opportunities and enhance skills within the community. There was strong support for initiatives targeting young people, local labour, and the development of long-term educational and training pathways.

In Strand 1, respondents focused on practical measures to ensure local benefits. Many highlighted the need to prioritise local labour and suppliers, with comments such as *"Local island labour and suppliers"* and *"Use local contractors/subcontractors and labour/employees where possible."* There was also interest in creating or repurposing facilities to provide training opportunities, for example: *"Could old school or Fish store become training college for specialist job creation (IT, renewables, crofting...) creating teaching jobs and student placements"* and *"Development of fish store into energy efficient multi use building with two stories. Including: workshops, co-working space, social areas, powered by renewables."* Respondents stressed the need to support young people in particular, noting that *"training/employment for younger people are vital"* and *"I would be strongly in favour of initiatives which encouraged young people and young families to stay, or be drawn to, the area...by offering opportunities to undertake apprenticeships locally or support business ideas."* Other suggestions included basic life skills support (*"Basic life skills support (banking, tax, food, driving license)"*), STEM education (*"STEM education in schools"*), and funding streams prioritising renewable energy roles (*"Funding stream priorities change, esp. upskilling roles and roles for renewables."*). Strand 1 also included proposals to ensure immediate job creation and local retention, with comments such as *"Skills programme funding AHEAD of the project, starting so that when the project is going to begin, they hire people from Lewis rather than bringing people from mainland who will then leave..."*

In Strand 2, the data focused on broader, strategic approaches to sustaining local employment and skills development. Respondents highlighted local workforce planning and education alignment with project opportunities, for example: *"Work with the CNES Apprenticeship & Employability team to connect the long-term job opportunities with local people. Find ways to offer roles as apprenticeships or work with the local college and Schools to tailor the curriculum to these jobs to encourage local young people to move into these roles rather than flying over mainland workers."* There was also support for STEM and climate-related education (*"STEM development"*; *"Support for public education around climate change issues and how they affect our islands."*) and financial support for students studying off-island (*"Support for young people going to University/College on mainland"*).

Overall, both strands reinforce the community's desire for the project to support local employment, upskill residents, and retain young people within the area.



3.2.4 Theme 4. Tourism

Relatively few respondents highlighted tourism as a theme compared with others, and most of these responses came from Strand 1. Comments focused on supporting local tourism infrastructure and ensuring safe, accessible facilities for visitors. Suggestions included providing *"safe & secure amenities for tourists, such as the Harris trust provides for campers/campervans,"* creating *"overnight stopover points, e.g. campervan/motorhome waste disposal facilities especially over the off season,"* and offering *"funds for small businesses so they can combat losses induced from reduction in tourism."* More broadly, some respondents simply highlighted the need for *"tourism infrastructure"* and noted that existing support was insufficient, stating that tourism *"support – in terms of what's being devalued by the project, not matching or not being enough, in what's being offered."*

In Strand 2, there was just one response, which emphasised the importance of monitoring and mitigating potential negative impacts on tourism. The respondent argued that current approaches to defining negative impacts are too

narrow and may underestimate the real effects on local communities. They suggested that more robust monitoring should be undertaken after the development is in place, particularly given recent reviews that tourism activity in the vicinity of wind farms may be more affected than previously assumed (reviews not cited). Such monitoring, they proposed, would allow targeted funds to be directed towards those most impacted.

Overall, while tourism attracted fewer comments than many other themes, respondents consistently highlighted the need for practical support for visitors and local businesses engaged in tourism, as well as robust monitoring of potential project impacts. Strand 1 focused on facilities and funding to support tourism directly, whereas Strand 2 emphasised ongoing oversight and mitigation to ensure tourism benefits are maintained.

3.2.5 Theme 5. Wellbeing

Wellbeing was one of the more frequently mentioned themes, with a large number of responses falling under Strand 1. Respondents emphasised supporting the health, social care, and recreational needs of local communities. Examples included support for carers, youth, and people with disabilities, as well as investment in facilities and activities that promote physical and mental wellbeing. Respondents highlighted the importance of existing services, suggesting that funding should build on what is already available, for instance: *"Funds should be fluid and about development and changing priorities for disabled people and there are some initiatives set up already, community café, all sorts of directions and avenues for support there that already exist."*

Other Strand 1 responses focused on practical measures and facilities, such as: *"Surf club/watersports equipment, outdoor centre in West coast of Lewis + funding and training; supporting what's there,"* and *"Eoropie playpark needs maintenance & upgrades."* The perceived health impacts of industrialisation were frequently raised, with respondents noting both physical and mental health concerns: *"Pay the mental and physical health and welfare costs of people adversely affected by the industrialisation of Lewis"* and *"Money for private counselling, especially for mental health, would be a good idea due to the huge and deep negative psychological impacts this is having on the individuals and communities in the western isles and indeed across the nation."* Youth-focused initiatives were also widely suggested, including *"Teens need an indoor skatepark, or somewhere that involves being active and sociable,"* *"Youth club funding,"* and *"Youth engagement & facilities - but as decided by them, not adults."*

Strand 2 received fewer responses around this theme, but emphasised community infrastructure and longer-term support. Suggestions included using project facilities for local use, *"Make site/project transport, canteen, meeting rooms etc, available for use by local people where practical,"* and investments in local development, such as *"High street regeneration funding"* and youth sports development: *"Youth development for sport including Football teams, we at Ness FC have had a donation and would invite more help to assist with our 5 year plan for our capital project to upgrade changing rooms, stands around the ground and also development of our junior players."*

Overall, Wellbeing was clearly a high-priority theme, with Strand 1 dominated by health, social care, and recreational needs, and Strand 2 focused on broader community infrastructure and long-term development.

3.2.6 Theme 6. Active Travel and Connectivity

Improved travel and connectivity were central concerns for both strands, reflecting frustrations with existing infrastructure and a desire for safer, more accessible, and more sustainable options. Respondents discussed everything from roads and public transport to cycling facilities, ferries, and walking paths, underlining how essential transport is to daily life and community wellbeing.

In Strand 1, many comments highlighted practical barriers to mobility. Some respondents stressed the lack of reliable transport options: *"Currently you need a car because no regular bus service/any form of public transport. Either don't*

go places or aren't regular enough." Others saw opportunities for community-led solutions, such as *"Community mini-buses for groups to book out"* and calls for *"Cycle/walking path along line of cables across Barvas Moor."* Alongside road upgrades and better infrastructure, ideas extended to affordable transport, with one suggesting *"More discount on ferries and planes (on top of Air Discount Scheme)."*

In Strand 2, the focus broadened to longer-term planning and accountability. Some emphasised the responsibility of developers to offset potential impacts of the development: *"Roads: while the road infrastructure is the council's responsibility, argument that these developments are going to cause a significant amount of the damage – so them to foot the bill."* Others pushed for forward-looking investment, such as *"Improved/new path network to improve accessibility and connectivity for communities affected by renewable energy developments in their area... providing a cycle lane separate from the main road which would transport walkers and cyclists safely from Leurbost to Stornoway."* Practical but smaller-scale requests also appeared, including *"Larger dog friendly stile access on the coastal walking routes."*

Taken together, both strands underscored that connectivity is not simply about travel convenience but about fairness, safety, and future sustainability. The west coast community concentrated on immediate, everyday challenges like bus services, road safety, and affordable transport, while the wider community framed connectivity within broader responsibilities and long-term infrastructure planning.



3.2.7 Theme 7. Preservation and Promotion of Local Community Heritage, Culture, Language and Values

Strand 1 responses largely focused on crofting, youth engagement, and ensuring essential local services. Contributors highlighted the need to support young crofters and families, stating *"Crofters (culture + heritage); young crofters; access to buy land; money to fund things like fencing, equipment, machinery, barns, salaries"* and *"All projects should aim to*

increase the number of younger people and families living and/or working on the West coast of Lewis." There was also emphasis on reducing centralisation, as one participant noted, *"De centralise, de centralise, de centralise. Centralising resources to Stornoway area is killing the wider communities."* Language and culture were key concerns, with responses including *"Gaelic language + culture development"* and *"Support and encouragement for Gaelic."*

Strand 2 responses pointed to broader cultural development and creative industries, with contributors suggesting support for traditional industries and arts initiatives, such as *"Traditional industries: crofting, fisheries, tweed"* and *"Development of culture and the creative arts that are rooted in island life, such as helping the expansion of Taigh Dhonnchaidh."*

Overall, responses underline a strong desire to maintain and revitalise local heritage and culture, support younger generations in crofting and traditional industries, and ensure that essential services remain accessible across the wider community.

3.2.8 Theme 8. Long-term Economic Sustainability

Responses in Strand 1 emphasised the importance of establishing lasting support and planning for the future. Several contributors highlighted the need for *"consistent long-term funding and support (it's always short-term)"* and *"grants for projects that have a lasting impact"*. Others focused on strategic planning and skills development with some overlap with the education and employment theme, noting that it is important to *"lay out a multi-year plan that doesn't create inflationary pressures. Look to develop skillsets locally that can support this work. Look to review how operation & maintenance skills can be developed for both onshore & offshore wind turbines. Look at what investments can be made to develop a marine base within Wards 6 & 7 that can support the offshore fields (quay/harbour facilities)."* The strand also included suggestions for fostering local enterprise and supporting community organisations, for example, *"support local groups/organisations who have employees living and working in the area - support their salaries, (currently depending on grant funding year on year)."* Contributors underlined the significance of planning for the long-term legacy of projects: *"Legacy funding - there must be a plan for the benefit being felt beyond the 30 years of the project's life. Sustainable economic development - the future of the economic viability of the community must be considered, there's no point in it becoming a museum or a retirement home."*

In Strand 2, responses focused on innovation and building self-sufficiency. Ideas included *"innovation - there have been some initiatives but this needs more support"*, potential for community-owned energy projects *"GB energy have a pot for community benefit & it could match fund, if a fund was set up in Strand 2 to support building community turbines or renewables that would bring in long term benefit"*, and strengthening local supply chains *"local supply chain. Island(s) need to be more self-supporting, certainly with food stuffs."*

Overall, while Strand 1 highlighted the need for structured, enduring funding and support to sustain existing organisations and stimulate local enterprise, Strand 2 pointed to opportunities for innovation and building long-term self-reliance through energy and supply chain initiatives.

3.2.9 Theme 9. Community Wealth Building

This theme attracted a smaller set of responses, reflecting how community benefit could be channelled into strengthening the local economy and supporting community-led organisations. There was also clear overlap here with other themes, particularly infrastructure projects, long-term economic sustainability, and the establishment of a community endowment fund.

In Strand 1, responses focused on building capacity at the community level, with an emphasis on supporting local facilities and enterprises. Suggestions included *"salaries for volunteer-led community halls or cafes or venues or activities"*, underlining the need to secure the future of important community spaces that currently rely on precarious

voluntary labour. Others called for direct support to *"sustainable local small business"*, pointing towards a vision where investment in grassroots economic activity could create lasting value and resilience.

In Strand 2, there were few comments too, but they carried a broader framing. Respondents called for *"better services; better facilities"* and *"better infrastructure"*, emphasising the importance of wider improvements that could underpin local prosperity. Another specific suggestion was for *"Stornoway Area Forum – annual payments"*, signalling an interest in structured, ongoing financial support for representative community bodies.

Taken together, both strands suggest that community wealth building is not only about creating new economic opportunities but also about sustaining the institutions, spaces, and networks that hold communities together. Strand 1 emphasised practical support for local facilities and small businesses, while Strand 2 pointed more towards systemic improvements and formalised mechanisms of redistribution.



3.2.10 Theme 10. Social Capital

This theme ranked in the top half of all themes, with many respondents placing a strong emphasis on the need to support local communities through investment in facilities, activities, and personnel that strengthen social cohesion. In Strand 1, comments focused on the importance of well-maintained community spaces and practical support for volunteers and organisations. Respondents highlighted the role of local sports clubs and halls in bringing people together, with one noting, *"Carloway FC have been looking to build a clubhouse/social club ahead of its centenary year to host home supporters and accommodate travelling teams... This would be a quick win for Spiorad na Mara."* Others spoke more generally about the benefits of community infrastructure, including halls and centres, explaining, *"Improving community halls & community centres – insulation, renewables, staffing, running costs"* and *"Community hall development."* Several contributions also recognised the strain on volunteers, suggesting that funding could support paid staff, for example, *"Employment of workers to ease volunteer fatigue."* Alongside infrastructure, respondents identified broader opportunities to enhance community engagement through projects, events, and enterprise, with comments such as,

"Also helping events like the annual Carloway Show and Highland Games which is entirely volunteer led would be lauded," and "Funds for community land trusts to engage with the community in projects that will allow ongoing jobs for locals."

In Strand 2, the focus was on longer-term resilience and inclusivity within communities. Many respondents highlighted the importance of sustaining community engagement and youth participation. Suggestions included funding for youth clubs and officers, with one respondent explaining, *"Anything done needs to have a long-term aim of assisting community to thrive into the next generations. Projects to fund community engagement officers to sustain a sense of place and resilience in supporting each other in our communities."* Others noted the need to support voluntary organisations and groups, particularly for young people, with comments such as, *"... It's the addition of some youth engagement opportunities out with education. Maybe some funding for youth clubs or a youth board,"* and *"Support the Outer Hebrides YLAG (youth group) to achieve long term economic viability, and to act as the delivery mechanism for the youth element of any community benefit fund."*

Taken together, the two strands demonstrate a shared recognition of the value of both physical and social infrastructure. Strand 1 emphasised immediate, practical improvements to community spaces and staffing, while Strand 2 highlighted the importance of long-term support and planning to sustain engagement, particularly for younger residents. The combined perspectives underline that investment in community facilities, events, and engagement officers would deliver visible and lasting benefits, strengthening social cohesion and resilience across the islands.

3.2.11 Theme 11. Community Endowment Fund

Falling in the lower half of ranked themes, respondents discussed the idea of establishing a long-term financial mechanism to ensure that community benefit funds deliver ongoing and sustainable support. There was a clear emphasis on both immediate assistance for those directly affected and longer-term investment to generate lasting value for the community.

In Strand 1, respondents highlighted the need to support local businesses and individuals directly impacted by the project. For example, one respondent suggested, *"A fund should be established for small businesses so that when their profits drop due to the impact on tourism, they aren't forced to shut down."* Others proposed splitting funds between immediate projects and long-term investments, with comments such as, *"Half to be spent on projects per year; half to be put in an investment fund,"* and *"Part of Strand 1 pot to be invested."* There was also interest in using the fund to encourage self-sufficiency, with ideas including *"Investments that aid self-sufficiency for islanders,"* or even acquiring a share of the wind farm: *"The community benefit fund should be used to purchase a share in the Spiorad na Mara wind farm."* Overall, Strand 1 emphasised a combination of targeted compensation and sustainable investment that benefits the local area over the long term.

In Strand 2, discussion focused more broadly on the wider community, with proposals to create mechanisms that provide sustained, collective benefit. Respondents suggested structured approaches to ensure that funds are not wasted and that benefits endure, such as: *"I would like any money to be spent with proper cost benefit analysis... The set up of an Island wealth fund would be a good idea where the interest is used to support projects that have equal funding and if possible money is paid back into."* Other ideas centred on community ownership and revenue sharing, including, *"The community as a whole (Lewis/Harris) should own a % share of the wind farm, with revenue used to support the above,"* and *"Payback of an agreed percentage of profits to support local services."*

Overall, both datasets show that there is thought in the community for investment-focused approaches to community benefit. Strand 1 results emphasised targeted support for those directly affected, combined with mechanisms for future projects, while Strand 2 emphasised long-term, collective approaches to ensure sustained value. Together, these views

suggest that a community endowment fund—carefully structured, potentially including ownership stakes or revenue-sharing arrangements—could deliver both immediate and enduring benefits.

3.2.12 Theme 12. Care for Children, Elderly, and Vulnerable People

Many respondents placed a strong emphasis on social care, childcare, and support for elderly and vulnerable groups. The comments highlight gaps in current provision and stress how vital reliable, local facilities are for families, carers, and individuals across different stages of life.

In Strand 1, there was repeated reference to the need for residential and day care for older people, with suggestions such as *"A care home on the west side"* and calls for *"Providing care facilities for elderly in their communities, like we used to have."* Concerns also centred on families with children who have additional support needs. One respondent explained, *"Childcare is a big issue for working parents that have children with additional needs... parents are unable to work due to caring responsibilities... outwith school there is no after school clubs for children with ASN."* Alongside care provision, there were also ideas for broader support, such as community groups to improve accessibility and *"Community ladders that offset the increasing and unaffordable costs of healthy food."*

In Strand 2, the discussion also focused on gaps in childcare and long-term support for young people with additional needs. One respondent noted, *"After school support for working parents who have children with additional support needs... Once the child turns 18 years old, there are few services for young people. It is a worry for aging parents, who will care for their children as they get older."* Others echoed the importance of both elderly and child care, for example through straightforward appeals like *"Elderly care"* and *"Child care."* The need for improved infrastructure for families with disabled members was also raised: *"Lack of resources, infrastructure and transport for families with a disabled member."*

Overall, both strands strongly agreed that investment in care is a pressing priority, with Strand 1 particularly emphasising new or expanded facilities within local communities and Strand 2 highlighting the life-course challenges families face as children with additional needs grow older. Together, these perspectives underline how support for care services would deliver direct and visible benefits to families and communities.

3.2.13 Theme 13. Environmental Protection, Nature, and Biodiversity Conservation

Respondents across both strands consistently emphasised the importance of protecting the natural environment, but the focus and framing of ideas differed between Strand 1 and Strand 2.

In Strand 1, the discussion largely centred on monitoring and safeguarding local ecosystems, often with a strong observational or preventative approach, for example observation and monitoring of whale and other cetaceans and marine species over time. Alongside monitoring, respondents highlighted active conservation measures such as peatland restoration, tree planting and woodland development: *"Peatland restoration & native tree planting (using pollen analysis to establish what grew here a millennia ago)"*. Some comments reflected broader concerns about the cumulative impact of development on local culture, heritage, and tourism: *"DO NOT build all over the island on top of the proposed development... A focus on protecting and enhancing the natural environment is key to such a wild place renowned for its natural beauty."*

In Strand 2, responses tended to emphasise structured, partnership-driven conservation efforts and active interventions, often linking environmental protection with community engagement. For example, several respondents suggested collaborative projects with national and local organisations: *"Marine environment - fisheries - to receive support: e.g. hatchery for lobsters and/or scallops to link with MPA and managed fishery"* and *"Marine conservation and coastal monitoring in partnership with national and local charities... Coastal Ranger roles in partnership with local community"*

trusts and national charities... Wildlife rescue and sanctuary support in partnership with local initiatives and charities." Climate change mitigation and restoration projects were also highlighted: *"Climate change action: partnership with NatureScot for nature restoration (flood mitigation; peatland restoration; machair protection)."* Additionally, there was a clear emphasis on practical, community-oriented interventions such as beach clean-ups and maritime protection: *"Ocean clean up and maritime protection. Beach clean ups."*

3.2.14 Theme 14. Infrastructure Projects

While relatively few responses were directly categorised under this theme, respondents highlighted the need for investment in local infrastructure, focusing on both community facilities and practical services. In Strand 1, there were calls for improvements and maintenance to existing community spaces. Suggestions included *"Improvements to Barvas and Brue Community Centre: Staffing + extension"* and *"Cemetery Maintenance"*, emphasising the importance of well-maintained local hubs and essential services. Respondents also considered financial management for community projects, with one noting: *"50% of the fund should be used to defray energy costs... The other 50% should be invested in a wealth fund... the interest from the accruing wealth fund can start to be used on medium or small projects"*, reflecting a desire for both immediate and longer-term community benefit. Strand 1 also included a broader call for *"Capital infrastructure projects only"*, suggesting a focus on larger-scale improvements alongside smaller initiatives.

Strand 2 just had one response that related to this theme *"Utilise what's THERE: UHI make it better and expand on"*, which highlights an interest in building on current resources rather than creating entirely new facilities.

3.2.15 Theme 15. Internet and Fibre Connectivity

Relatively few responses were noted under this theme. Respondents in Strand 1 highlighted the importance of digital infrastructure, particularly broadband and full-fibre connectivity, as a priority for community development. Comments focused on ensuring that all areas receive reliable access, with one respondent noting *"Digital connectivity and facilities."* Others pointed to specific gaps in planned coverage, such as the remark *"Fund full fibre to Breanish as Rìod Project won't cover this,"* while another suggested pairing connectivity improvements with environmental projects: *"Environmental restoration projects, specifically non-native species management. Rolling out broadband to the entire community."*

No responses under this theme were noted within Strand 2 data.



3.2.16 Theme 16. Relocation Packages

Strand 1 responses focused on providing financial support to allow residents, particularly younger people and families, to move away from the island if the proposed development adversely affects their quality of life or property values. Contributors suggested measures such as *"Money should also be set aside for communities that will have the value of their houses massively reduced so that should they wish to leave..."* and *"A relocation package so people can move away from the island and be resettled on the mainland."* Several participants emphasised the importance of avoiding financial burden in such relocations, for example: *"Helping people move from the island and settled on the mainland without financial burden."*

Strand 2 noted just one response of similar sentiments.

3.2.17 Theme 17. Support for Statutory Groups (e.g. Local Authority)

While relatively few respondents commented on this theme in Strand 1, the single response highlighted the challenges councils face in supporting services for vulnerable groups. The respondent explained, *"There would still be their statutory requirement but a better use of money, council funding streams for funding but they couldn't exist on the voluntary funding that they have. But council don't have to fund all of the students there. Great facility but don't have the money to fund that for children with high level disabilities and having to outsource. And that was an example of where the council couldn't step away."* This comment points to the difficulty of balancing statutory responsibilities with limited funding and the reliance on external support for certain services.

In Strand 2, more responses were received, focusing on mechanisms to strengthen the capacity of statutory groups and ensure sustainable delivery. Suggestions included using project revenue to support local authority management, funding planning services to prevent bottlenecks, and recognising the pressures councils face due to constrained budgets. For example, one respondent noted, *"Revenue coming in from the project so that the council can manage and distribute – arrangement,"* while another highlighted, *"Fund cost of planning services, which is significant and already underfunded, leading to bottlenecks."* The need for dedicated support was also reflected in broader statements on governance and local authority oversight, including, *"Important to see support for council given recent budget pressure. Understand resistance towards cash going to council but this could be ringfenced fund to support particular issues or priorities."* Taken together, these responses underline that statutory groups would benefit from adequate funding and support, even though feedback in Strand 1 was limited. Strand 1 highlighted immediate operational challenges with current funding arrangements, while Strand 2 emphasised mechanisms for longer-term sustainability and oversight. Together, they indicate that investment in statutory groups could help ensure robust project management and equitable benefits for communities.

3.2.18 Additional Comments

Additional comments were received in two areas that are not listed here as themes. The first is in relation to direct compensation (particularly for those who may experience view disruption) and the second is in relation to those comments received to petition for the West Coast Fund amount to be increased. These topics are not included as themes as they do not directly relate to how the West Coast Fund should be directed but are tangentially relevant and hence noted here.

The topic of direct compensation to those who may have their view disrupted generated some strong feelings, particularly in Strand 1, with respondents emphasising that those most directly affected by the development, especially those whose homes, businesses, or daily lives would be impacted by the loss of views, should receive compensation. Comments reflected a sense of unfairness and frustration, often framed in very personal terms.



In Strand 1, responses ranged from practical proposals to more forceful demands. Some highlighted direct financial support: *"Pay compensation to everyone whose business is adversely affected by the wind farm"* and *"People with a visual impact should get more money."* Others referenced examples elsewhere, such as *"areas down south [that] have a kind of corridor from the site to highlight the people who would benefit from a rebate."* Suggested forms of compensation included rebates on energy bills, support with energy costs, or provision of measures to mitigate impacts, such as *"blackout curtains/blinds for every household against the light pollution caused by the wind farm."* At the more extreme end, some respondents called for *"purchase [of] everyone's houses from them at pre-wind farm prices"* to allow those who no longer wished to live with the development to leave. These views underscored a strong sense of imposition: *"Yes support the families and residents that are going to have to live with this eyesore that is being created on our doorstep without taking our views and concerns into consideration."*

In Strand 2, there was just one response under this theme, echoing the same themes of fairness and recognition, *"All houses and families that are going to be affected by this should be well looked after..."*

All responses under the topic of petitioning for an increase in the size of the West Coast Fund fell under Strand 1, with contributors emphasising the need for significantly increased funding. Several participants highlighted the inadequacy of the current offer, stating *"MORE MONEY in the community benefit fund"* and *"there needs to be a real investment, a much larger amount than is being offered currently..."* Others suggested negotiating additional funding streams, such as *"negotiate a wealth fund as well as, on top of, the £4.5 million"* and *"negotiate more to come in community benefit fund (Inverness 7,000 per KmW) Because community detriment far outweighs benefit proposed."*

Overall, the responses consistently reflect a desire among some sections of the community for a higher level of financial support, indicating that the current proposal is viewed as insufficient to meet the community's needs.

3.3 CHALLENGES AND BROADER OBJECTIONS - DÙBHLAIN IS GEARAN

This consultation was undertaken specifically to gather feedback to inform the design, governance and potential uses of community benefits associated with the proposed Spiorad na Mara offshore wind development. However, a proportion of responses focused more broadly on objections to the wind farm itself, or expressed general opposition to offshore

wind development, rather than addressing the purpose of the West Coast Fund Consultation or Wider Community Benefits Consultation.

While these responses have not informed the recommendations made in the main body of this report, they were fully recorded and a summarised and anonymised version shared with the Spiorad na Mara project team, as such views are a matter for them to consider. The role of Aquatera Ltd was to carry out consultation, independently, according to the specific aims and objectives set out in this report.

3.4 WEST COAST FUND CONSULTATION (STRAND 1) – GOVERNANCE COMHAIRLE MAOIN A' CHÒSTA AN IAR (SREATH 1) – RIAGHLADH

The results from two questions were combined into the results graph below (Figure 3.8); “Which of the options below do you think are most suitable for the management of the community benefit fund?” and “Is there a specific or existing organisation/community group you feel should manage these funds? (Please specify)”. The categories provided are shown in the graph below.

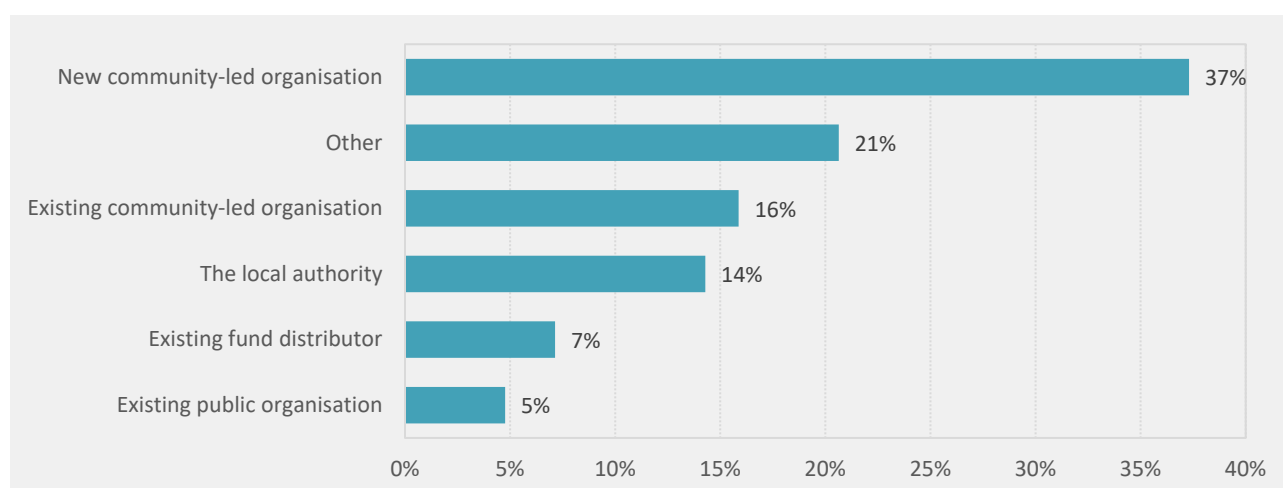


Figure 3.8 West Coast Fund Consultation (Strand 1) questionnaire responses to the question “Which of the options below do you think are most suitable for the management of the community benefit fund? You can select more than one and you can make additional suggestions.” Combined with responses to the question “Is there a specific or existing organisation/community group you feel should manage these funds? (Please specify)”

The responses illustrate that community-led, rather than public/governmental management bodies were largely favoured by respondents; 37% of respondents felt that a new community-led organisation should be created to manage the fund, 16% felt that an existing community-led organisation should take on this responsibility.

21% of respondents’ answers did not fit into categories presented in the question and were categorised as ‘other’. Respondents suggested a variety of options for managing the West Coast Fund, with a strong emphasis on local control and experience in fund administration. Several groups were proposed, including existing community trusts and estates such as “Galson Trust,” “Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn,” “Uig Development Trust,” and the “West Side Estate Group.” Local councils and community councils were also mentioned, though with some caution: “Don’t put it towards Comhairle nan Eilean Siar or even the Community Council. They have their own priorities hence the local distrust.”

There was widespread support for ensuring that fund managers are experienced and professional, with accountability for allocated funds: “It is important that whoever distributes the funds has experience of doing so and that they are

independent. The decision on how to spend the fund needs to be controlled locally,” and “CNES special program department with properly trained & professional employees to whom the bodies that receive funds are answerable regarding the use of allocated funds.”

Youth engagement and local participation were also highlighted, with suggestions such as allocating a portion of the fund through an electoral process to encourage community involvement: *“Maybe a specific allocation to youth projects? Different projects could be nominated by 14–17-year-olds and they could vote on them.”* Other ideas focused on directing funds to existing services or initiatives that support local development: *“Existing services could benefit as list above. Community based services to support development on the westside and Ness.”*



Other open text responses that were not proposing or supporting a specific category or organisation to govern the fund can be summarised as follows. The responses indicate a strong preference for the community benefit fund to be managed by an independent organisation rather than the local council or any existing statutory body. There was widespread distrust of the local authority noted, with some stating that council involvement would risk mismanagement, political influence, or the fund being absorbed into general services rather than directly benefiting affected communities. Respondents frequently emphasised the need for impartiality, transparency, and accountability, with decision-making processes free from political or financial bias. Several people suggested that a new, lean, community-led organisation should be established, drawing representation from affected areas and including independent oversight to ensure fairness. Some also noted that any existing local groups or trusts were too narrowly focused or potentially conflicted to manage a fund of this scale effectively. A few respondents highlighted that distribution should consider both the level of impact on individual households and the broader community, allowing flexibility for residents to decide how their portion of the fund is used. Overall, the priorities expressed were independence, fairness, direct community involvement, and avoidance of bureaucracy or political interference.

When asked if interested in being involved in a group to manage community benefit funds, as illustrated in Figure 3.9, the majority of respondents (43%) inferred that they were not in a position to commit to aiding in the governance of the proposed community benefit fund, while 35% stated they would consider joining a governance group. Twenty individuals (24% of responses) stated their interest in being part of a governance group.

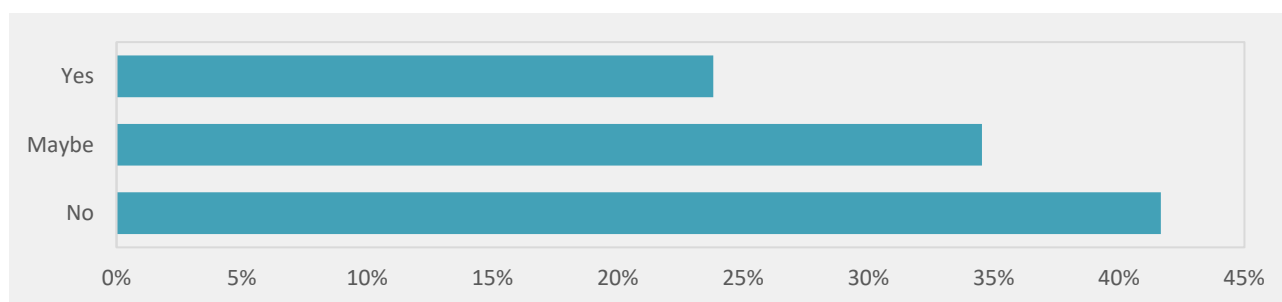


Figure 3.9 West Coast Fund Consultation (Strand 1) questionnaire responses to the question “Would you be interested in being involved in a group to manage community benefit funds?” n=84

This quantitative data, when analysed along with the qualitative data received through discussion and notes at events, shows a strong preference for community-led management rather than council control. Many respondents expressed concern that if the council managed the fund, it could be absorbed into existing responsibilities, used for purposes it was not intended for, or fail to address local needs. One person noted, *“It’s a democracy, it needs to be led by the community. A real fear is that the council will think there is the money already so they don’t do it.”* Others echoed this, emphasising the need for independence and transparency, with funds administered directly to local people or community groups.

The majority of contributors suggested setting up a new organisation, supported by paid staff to handle administration and governance. As one participant explained, *“A new body with elected members from the area...with employees that administer the fund...needs to be set up years in advance of the first payment.”* Paid coordinators and legal/administrative support were seen as essential to prevent the responsibilities from overwhelming volunteers.

Representation was considered crucial, with suggestions for including all affected areas, young people, and community councils. One person highlighted, *“Community Councils should be represented on the group/org that decides how the money is spent,”* while another stressed that the council should have no governing role: *“The council should not have any representation on the group/org that decides how the fund is spent.”*

Participants also emphasised the need for clear structures and decision-making processes. Several mentioned learning from other island communities and considering existing models, with one noting, *“Be good to tap into other remote communities and learning from them...so that Lewis can get some ideas.”* Discussions within local communities were seen as essential to determine how funds are distributed and what the priorities should be, ensuring fairness and local relevance.

Overall, the consensus is for a community-led, independent, and transparently managed fund, supported by a dedicated organisation with elected representatives and paid administrative staff, ensuring that local voices guide how the money is used and that it directly benefits those impacted by the project.

4 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS - CO-DHÙNAIDHEAN AGUS MOLAIIDHEAN

4.1 INSIGHTS AND CONCLUSIONS - LÈIRSINN AGUS CO-DHÙNAIDHEAN

4.1.1 Strand 1

- Overall, the feedback showed that stakeholders understood that the West Coast Fund proposed was beneficial for the west coast of Lewis. Despite some protest responses received, the majority of responses were supportive of the proposed fund and constructive in the feedback provided.
- Spiorad na Mara is the first of the Scotwind participants to announce a community benefit amount (£4.5m per year for the operational lifetime of the project). Other projects, some of which are more advanced, have not committed to the community benefit they would be offering. It was noted that many participants saw this as a very welcome announcement.
- Key issues that stakeholders would want the fund to address are outlined below.
 - Energy projects are seen as welcome to both tackle fuel poverty as well as the cost-of-living situation. The cost-of-living crisis the country is experiencing was highlighted through all the consultation events. Energy costs, insulation and renewable developments can all be part of the mitigation to the crisis and therefore a scheme that would tackle these challenges and support opportunities in these areas would be welcomed.
 - Support for youth initiatives, including jobs and accommodation. Respondents were very supportive of any projects that would encourage young people to either stay in or move into the area.
 - Crofting was specifically discussed at events as an area that should also be supported but there is a general understanding of how difficult that can be. If the fund could unlock some of the barriers to getting crofts back into use, including a foothold for young crofters, this would be welcomed. Crofting faces a number of challenges but is an integral part of the area's culture and so finding ways that this fund could support crofting by either allowing young people to take on crofts or getting redundant crofts back into good heart would be a welcome output from the fund.
- Governance structures need further work to fully develop the details of how the fund would be administered and managed and how decisions would be made. Some clear guidance can be taken from the data gathered.
 - Strong views from the majority of the stakeholders that the local council should not be involved in delivering the fund. Although some respondents understood that the council is facing very challenging settlements from the Scottish and UK Governments, they would like to see the fund being completely separate and controlled outside the local council. This does not mean that the fund might not be able to help some local council priorities if these were focused on the west side and not replacing local council funding but augmenting what the council can afford.
 - Equally strong views were noted that the fund should be controlled locally on the west coast by a new, independent organisation. Independence from any established organisations was also very important to respondents. It was felt that this fund can work alongside some already established funding options or established projects but, as with the local council, this funding should be controlled by its own organisation and follow its own priorities.
 - The feedback also highlighted that there is quite a bit of work required to set up the governance and the processes needed to ensure that when funding is available these are robust and able to function. This is recognised by the Spiorad na Mara team and as a further phase of this work, funding would potentially be made available in advance to allow for the set-up of this governance structure. The work required is well beyond volunteer capacity so would need to be professionally administered and managed to deliver a meaningful and efficient structure.

4.1.2 Strand 2

- There was less data overall in relation to Strand 2. It is likely that this is due to a combination of stakeholder engagement fatigue and the questions asked being less specific, and more indicative and speculative. There was less specificity in relation to the details of the funding available which likely contributed to less feedback received also.
- The option of involving the Western Isles Development Trust (WIDT) as part of the governance framework for potential Lewis-wide initiatives was discussed (although governance of the Wider Community Benefits Consultation was not specifically covered within the scope of this report). This suggestion received a mixed response, as WIDT is often viewed as council led.
- In addition to the note on WIDT above, there may be other organisations capable of supporting the delivery of Lewis-wide initiatives, some of which are already doing so to a certain extent.
- The youth event highlighted several areas of concern, particularly around housing and the difficulties of getting onto the property ladder. Participants noted that competition from second homeowners bidding for plots or renovation opportunities often prices out first-time buyers. Coupled with the high deposit levels now required by mortgage providers, this makes home ownership extremely challenging. The youth group also highlighted climate change and fuel poverty as areas that are important to them, and they would very much like to see any Strand 2 initiative having some impact on these areas across the island.
- Across this consultation there was a nervousness about multiple large renewable energy projects being undertaken at roughly the same time. The respondents would welcome seeing some coordination across projects to reduce the impact each individual project will have, particularly around Stornoway. It was also highlighted that although these large projects were located within Lewis there would be an impact across all the Western Isles with workers and subcontractors being attracted to these projects leaving smaller projects without contractors to take them forward.
- There was some feedback that the local council should support the coordination of these projects, which the Aquatera team discussed with officers and councillors and got assurances that they were aware of this and involved in the process already.



4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS – MOLAI DHEAN AGUS NA H-ATH CHEUMANNAN

Having analysed all the feedback received through both strands of consultation and considering all the insights and conclusions highlighted in Section 4.1 above, below are a number of recommendations for the Spiorad na Mara project team to consider in the coming years. The purpose of these recommendations is to provide a pathway to guide progress on the development of a suitably-resourced, properly-governed and robust structure to manage the West Coast Fund, and to progress consideration of wider community benefits that could be delivered by, or through, the project.

4.2.1 Strand 1

- Stakeholders emphasised the importance of maintaining momentum. With the initial community feedback now gathered, it would be beneficial to develop a forward plan, even if it spans a long timeframe leading up to the implementation of the Community Benefit Fund. Such a plan would provide a clear reference point when people ask about progress. It could also be aligned with key project milestones, such as the granting of planning permission, one year prior to construction, and one year prior to the commencement of operations.
 - **Recommendation** – Develop a forward plan for the West Coast Fund linking the results of this consultation to a timeframe around Spiorad na Mara project milestones. This should include governance structure options and a scheme that sets out priorities and funding criteria.
- More focused consultation on some of the key themes raised such as project ideas, governance, legacy and/or investment options may prove fruitful. This work could take a more targeted approach than the work undertaken here, such as through focus group discussions or workshops, for example.
 - **Recommendation** – Set up a focus group for the West Coast Fund as part of the development of the forward plan mentioned above and also keep abreast of further developments across the west coast area as these will change while the Spiorad na Mara project is going through development.
- An independent governance group should be established to review options for a governance structure that is independent of other island funding groups and the local council. There are a wide range of possible structures, as well as hybrid structures, so establishing an appropriate structure in advance of the funding being available is important. There are a number within the Western Isles that are already in place, and these should be reviewed to see what works well and any challenges they have faced.
 - **Recommendation** – Commission a piece of work to review governance structures and options for the West Coast Fund. This should include a review of structures already in place in the Western Isles and northern isles and potentially other areas within Scotland.
- The Spiorad na Mara project is some time away from being fully commissioned and hence the West Coast Fund being in place. It should form part of the forward plan that a salaried role be funded prior to the full funding becoming available as the work required to deliver a strong, independent, well-governed group is well outside the scope of volunteers. This could start as a commissioned piece of work but should lead to dedicated resources.
 - **Recommendation** – Within the forward plan, build in funded role to fully develop the governance and start the process of setting up structures such as funding evaluation criteria, administration etc.

4.2.2 Strand 2

- Develop relationships further with other developers on community benefit. It is in everybody's interests to discuss this topic collaboratively rather than individual developers developing their own offers. The existing developer forum could be used as a platform for this, with the aim of ensuring that overall community benefit is optimised for all communities, rather than individual approaches competing.

- **Recommendation** – Participate fully in the existing major developments forum and encourage a more proactive and coordinated approach to consideration of community and around community benefits.
- Complete further discussions with relevant groups, e.g. Western Isles Development Trust and other local trusts about their plans and governance. There are a number of community benefit structures, including trusts, that are already supporting the community. It is important to learn from them how they work and what has gone well and any challenges they have faced. There could also be useful examples in other areas such as in the northern isles and on the Scottish mainland. The discussions with the other organisations should include how the Spiorad na Mara project could support some of their initiatives and how that could be organised.
- **Recommendation** – Commission work (as per recommendation for Strand 1 fund) to review the structures of existing local trusts and other non-statutory funding streams and how they might interact with any funding from the Spiorad na Mara project.
- Complete further research on Western Isles-wide projects that funding could support. This might just be a watching brief at this stage but could also be more proactive. There will be an ever-changing situation over the next few years, and the community priorities could well change, particularly given the amount of construction that is planned for the island. The Spiorad na Mara team should ensure they keep abreast of these developments and be ready to further investigate options for some kind of Strand 2 support.
- **Recommendation** – Investigate ways for ensuring the Spiorad na Mara team are aware of changing community priorities. which could include a regular forum as suggested for Strand 1. However, these would be separate as they are distinct areas with different priorities and the only dedicated long-term fund that has been committed to by the project – at this stage, at least – is the West Coast Fund.



5 APPENDICES - LEAS-PHÀIPEARAN

APPENDIX A SPIORAD NA MARA COMMUNITY BENEFIT FUND CONSULTATION – WEST COAST OF LEWIS - LEAS-PHÀIPEAR A CO-CHOMHAIRLE MAOIN BUANNACHD COIMHEARSNACHD SPIORAD NA MARA – CÒSTA AN IAR LEÒDH AIS

Thank you for taking the time to visit this page and complete this survey.

Tapadh leat airson an ùine a ghabhail tadhal air an duilleig seo agus an suirbhidh seo a lìonadh.

This survey is part of an independent consultation process being led by Aquatera Ltd. regarding the community benefit fund which has been ringfenced for communities in Council Wards 6 and 7 on the west coast of Lewis. The Spiorad na Mara project has committed to providing £4.5 million annually for the operational life of the project, which is anticipated to be for a period of 35 years, should the project proceed.

Tha an suirbhidh seo mar phàirt de phròiseas co-chomhairleachaidh neo-eisimeileach a tha air a stiùireadh le Aquatera Ltd. a thaobh a' mhaoin buannachd coimhearsnachd a chaidh a shònrachadh do choimhearsnachdan ann an Uàrdan Comhairle 6 agus 7 air costa an iar Leòdhais. Tha pròiseact Spiorad na Mara air gealltainn £4.5 millean a sholarachadh gach bliadhna airson beatha obrachaidh a' phròiseict, a thathar an dùil a mhaireas 35 bliadhna, ma thèid am pròiseact air adhart.

This fund could make a significant **positive impact** in these communities and your input – as a resident of either Council Wards 6 or 7 – on how to allocate the fund could help shape a have a lasting **legacy**, create **opportunities for the region's young people**, and improve the lives of all members of the community.

Please note that we will be carrying out some **events and consultation sessions from Wednesday 12 to Saturday 15 March**, which you are welcome to attend to find out more and meet the Aquatera team. All the information is on the website: <https://spioradnamaracommunity.uk/>

Your Privacy Matters: All responses received will be anonymised in any reporting on this project and all personal data gathered will be used in accordance with our privacy standards.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in this survey is entirely voluntary. You can choose to skip any questions you are not comfortable answering and can withdraw at any time.

Estimated Time: The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Thank you again for your participation. As a member of the community on the west coast of Lewis, your input is important in ensuring that the needs and views of all sections of the community are reflected in how this fund is administered and governed and in its potential uses.

If you would like any support in completing the survey, please contact Claudia at claudia.sans@aquatera.co.uk

- 1. Please provide your postcode. (We are collecting this information to make sure we are reaching all groups within the community and capturing all voices.)**

- 2. Which age group are you in? (We are collecting this information to make sure we are reaching all groups within the community and capturing all voices.)**

- ☐ Under 15
- ☐ 16 – 24
- ☐ 25 – 34
- ☐ 35 – 54
- ☐ 55 – 64
- ☐ 65 – 74
- ☐ 75 and over

- 3. Are you completing this survey as a (select all that apply)**

- ☐ Private individual
- ☐ Private business owner
- ☐ Community Organisation Representative
- ☐ Politician (local authority councillor or member of a parliament)
- ☐ Other:

- 4. Which types of organisations should be supported by the community benefit fund? (choose all that you agree with).**

- ☐ Local voluntary/charitable organisations
- ☐ Local social enterprises
- ☐ Local community groups
- ☐ Individuals (under approved fund-supported enterprise schemes, e.g. apprenticeships)
- ☐ Businesses (under approved fund-supported enterprise schemes, e.g. apprenticeships)
- ☐ Statutory groups, e.g. Local Authority
- ☐ Other:

5. The current community themes that have been gathered from consultation to date are listed below. How important are these themes to you?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Heating and energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Housing and accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education and employment (including skills development)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tourism (including sustainable tourism)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wellbeing (youth activities, family friendly activities, social isolation action projects)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Active travel and connectivity (path/route upgrades and maintenance)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Preservation and promotion of local community heritage, culture, language and values	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Long-term economic sustainability (supporting projects that create lasting jobs, businesses, or income streams, reducing reliance on short-term funding)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community wealth building (strengthen local economies by supporting local businesses, cooperatives, and services that keep money circulating within the economy)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social capital (Investing in initiatives that build strong community networks, trust, and collaboration, such as local hubs, training programmes, or volunteer groups)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community Endowment Fund (A long-term fund where the principal is invested, and only the returns or interest are used to support community projects, ensuring ongoing benefits)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- 6. Are there specific things that you would like the community benefit fund to be used for, or to support? (This can be a specific idea, for example a project or group that needs support, or it could be a theme such as fuel poverty, sustainable tourism or travel and transport). Put down as many ideas/themes as you like.**

- 7. Which of the options below do you think are most suitable for the management of the community benefit fund? You can select more than one and you can make additional suggestions.**

- ☐ Existing public organisation
- ☐ Existing fund distributor
- ☐ Existing community-led organisation
- ☐ New community-led organisation
- ☐ The local authority
- ☐ Other:

- 8. Is there a specific or existing organisation/community group you feel should manage these funds? (Please specify)**

9. Would you be interested in being involved in a group to manage community benefit funds?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

10. Are you in agreement with the provision of the West Coast Fund (i.e. Council Wards 6 and 7) by the Spiorad na Mara partners? (Should the project go ahead?)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

11. Would you be willing to take part in other consultation events or activities?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

12. If you would like to provide your name, please do so here:

13. If you are happy to be contacted by us, please provide an email address or phone number:

14. What are your preferred channels of communication to receive information about the community benefit fund in the future? (Please select all that apply)

- ☐ Email
- ☐ Social media
- ☐ Website
- ☐ Radio/TV News
- ☐ Community Newspaper
- ☐ Public/Community events
- ☐ Other:

APPENDIX B SPIORAD NA MARA COMMUNITY BENEFIT FUND CONSULTATION – WIDER POTENTIAL COMMUNITY BENEFIT - LEAS-Phàipear B Co- Chomhairle Maoin Buannachd Coimhearsnachd Spiorad na Mara – Buannachd Coimhearsnachd nas fharsinge

Thank you for taking the time to visit this page and complete this survey.

Tapadh leat airson an ùine a ghabhail tadhal air an duilleig seo agus an suirbhidh seo a lìonadh.

The partners in the proposed Spiorad na Mara offshore wind project have committed to a ringfenced fund for the west coast of Lewis – £4.5 million annually for the operational life of the project, anticipated to be 35 years – if the project goes ahead. In addition to this, they are eager to explore the potential for wider benefits, for the Isle of Lewis generally, that could be delivered by, or through, the project, either directly or indirectly.

Tha na com-pàirtichean anns a' phròiseact gaoithe aig muir Spiorad na Mara a tha san amharc air gealltainn maoin chinnteach airson costa an iar Leòdhais – £4.5 millean gach bliadhna airson beatha obrachaidh a' phròiseict, agus thathar an dùil a mhaireas 35 bliadhna – ma thèid am pròiseact air adhart. A bharrachd air an seo, tha iad gu mòr airson sgrùdadh a dhèanamh air a' chomas airson buannachdan nas leudaichte, airson Eilean Leòdhais san fharsaingeachd, a dh'fhaodadh a bhith air an libhrigeadh leis a' phròiseact, no tron phròiseact, gu dìreach no gu neo-dhireach.

Aquatera Ltd have been appointed to lead an independent consultation with the wider community of Lewis on these potential wider benefits. This strand of consultation is exploratory, aimed at gathering ideas and suggestions which you would like to see considered.

We are committed to being broad and inclusive in our engagement through this consultation process, and to making it as accessible as possible to all communities and residents across Lewis.

Please note that we will be carrying out some **events and consultation sessions from Tuesday 11 to Saturday 15 March**, which you are welcome to attend to find out more and meet the Aquatera team. All the information is on the website: <https://spioradnamaracommunity.uk/>

Your Privacy Matters: All responses received will be anonymised in any reporting on this project and all personal data gathered will be used in accordance with our privacy standards.

Voluntary Participation:

Your participation in this survey is entirely voluntary. You can choose to skip any questions you are not comfortable answering and can withdraw at any time.

Estimated Time:

The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Thank you again for your participation. If you would like any support in completing the survey, please contact Claudia at Claudia.sans@aquatera.co.uk

15. Please provide your postcode. (We are collecting this information to make sure we are reaching all groups within the community and capturing all voices.)

16. Which age group are you in? (We are collecting this information to make sure we are reaching all groups within the community and capturing all voices.)

- ☐ Under 15
- ☐ 16 – 24
- ☐ 25 – 34
- ☐ 35 – 54
- ☐ 55 – 64
- ☐ 65 – 74
- ☐ 75 and over

17. As part of our consultation work to date some of the suggested benefits which could arise from the Spiorad na Mara project are listed below:

- Long-term jobs for local people
- Skills development, education and training
- Maximising the use of the Local Supply Chain
- Local Supply Chain development
- Enhanced local infrastructure
- Local accommodation/housing
- Environmental enhancing initiatives

Are there any other specific themes or initiatives that you would like the Spiorad na Mara project to consider supporting, either on their own or in partnership with other developers or local support agencies? Please be as specific as possible.

18. If you would like to provide your name, please do so here:

19. If you are happy to be contacted by us, please provide an email address or phone number:

z

This study was completed for:

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