

**Buaidh air Coimhearsnachdan nan Eilean de Shiubhal Bus an-asgaidh do Dhaoine Òga fo 22
Freagairt le Bòrd na Gàidhlig
17 Ògmhios 2021**

**Impact on Islands Communities of Free Bus Travel for Young People Under 22
Response by Bòrd na Gàidhlig
17 June 2021**

1. A bheil thu a' smaoinichadh gun toir solar siubhal bus an-asgaidh do dhaoine òga fo 22 bliadhna buaidh air coimhearsnachdan eileanach a tha gu math eadar-dhealaichte bhon bhuidh air coimhearsnachdan eile ann an Alba?

Is e Bòrd na Gàidhlig am prìomh bhuidheann poblach ann an Alba le uallach airson leasachadh Gàidhlig adhartachadh agus comhairle a thoirt do Mhinistearan na h-Alba air cùisean Gàidhlig.

Tha sinn a' toirt làn thaic do na puingeann a rinn luchd-freagairt don chiad cho-chomhairleachadh:

- Dh'fhaodadh daoine òga a tha a' fuireach ann an coimhearsnachdan eileanach a bhith fo ana-cothrom oir bha aca ri aiseagan a chleachdadh agus chan e dìreach còmhhdail rathaid gus cothroman fhaighinn.
- Bha siubhal air aiseag an-asgaidh deatamach gus dèanamh cinnteach gum biodh co-ionannachd eadar daoine òga nan eilean agus an co-aoisean air tìr-mòr.

Tha seo air sgàth nach eil solar siubhal bus an-asgaidh leis fhèin a' dèiligeadh ri iomlanachd cosgaisean siubhal a tha mu choinneimh dhaoine òga a tha a' fuireach anns na h-eileanan. Tha sin air sgàth gu bheil cuid den turas aca feumach air siubhal air aiseag ge bith an ann gu tìr-mòr no taobh a-staigh sgìre nan eilean aca. Tha mòran de na turasan sin airson siubhal gu cosnadh, seirbheisean, pàirt a ghabhail ann an tachartasan spòrs is cultair agus cothroman eile nach eil rim faighinn air an eilean aca fhèin.

Ann an cuid de dh'eileanan tha seirbheisean bus glè chuingealaichte. Tha seo a' ciallachadh gur e an aiseag am modh còmhhdail phoblaich as cudromaiche do dhaoine òga.

Mar sin, cha toir am moladh làithreach aghaidh gu h-iomlan air na cnapan-starra a thaobh cosgaisean

1. Do you think that the provision of free bus travel to all young people aged under 22 will have an effect on island communities which is significantly different from the effect on other communities in Scotland?

Bòrd na Gàidhlig is the principal public body in Scotland responsible for promoting Gaelic development and providing advice to the Scottish Ministers on Gaelic issues.

We fully support the points made by respondents to the first consultation, that:

- Young people living in island communities could be disadvantaged because they had to use ferries and not just road transport to access opportunities.
- Free ferry travel was essential to ensure parity between island dwelling young people and their mainland peers.

This is because the provision of free bus travel alone does not address the totality of travel costs faced by young people living in the islands. That is because some of their trip making requires ferry travel whether to the mainland or within their island group. Many of these trips are to access employment, services, participate in sporting and cultural events and other opportunities which are not available on their own island.

On some islands bus services are very limited. This makes the ferry the most important public transport mode for young people.

Thus, the current proposal will fail to fully address the transport cost barriers to

<p>còmhdhail gus na h-amasan ainmichte aig Còmhdhail Alba a choileanadh:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A' meudachadh neo-eisimeileachd dhaoine òga. • A' cuideachadh dhaoine òga gus faighinn gu foghlam, cosnadh agus cur-seachad, gu sònraichte dha teaghlaichean le teachd-a-steach ìosal. <p>Tha seo ann an co-theacsa chosgaisean bith-beò nas àirde mar-thà airson luchd-còmhnaidh nan eilean an taca ri tìr-mòr na RA¹.</p> <p>Tha dùbhlain aig mòran eileanan ann a bhith a' cumail / a' tàladh àireamhan gu leòr de dhaoine òga. Mar eisimpleir, eadar 2011 agus 2018 thathas a' meas gun do thuit na h-àireamhan anns a' bhuidheann aois 16-24 8% ann an Uibhist agus 10% ann an Leòdhas. Tha sin ann an co-theacsa far a bheil cuibheann nas ìsle den t-sluagh iomlan eadar 16-24 aig an dà eilean seo na cuibheasachd na h-Alba².</p> <p>Chan eil ro-innsean sluaigh o chionn ghoirid rim faighinn ach aig ìre ùghdarras ionadail. Tha dùil gum bi tuiteam de 6.1% ann an àireamh-sluaigh Innse Gall eadar 2018 agus 2028. Tha sin mòran nas àirde na an tuiteam a thathar an dùil sa Ghàidhealtachd agus na h-Eileanan (1.2%) agus an t-àrdachadh a thathar an dùil a bhios ann an Alba (1.8%).</p> <p>Tha an àireamh de dhaoine òga a tha a' fuireach anns na h-eileanan an urra ri grunn nithean. Ach, tha rannsachadh³ airson Iomairt na Gàidhealtachd agus nan Eilean mu bheachdan is mhiannan dhaoine eadar 15 agus 30, a' nochdadh cho cudromach sa tha còmhdhail mar fheart a tha a' toirt buaidh air tarraingeachd na sgìre. Tha an aithisg sgìreil airson Innse Gall ag ràdh:</p> <p>“A dh'aindeoin faraidhean aiseig Cosgais Co-ionann ri Rathad (RET)... tha cosgais siubhail taobh a-muigh nan eilean fhathast na chùis chudromach. ”</p>	<p>achieving Transport Scotland's stated aims of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing young peoples' independence. • Helping young people access education, employment and leisure, particularly for low-income families. <p>This is in a context of already higher living costs for island residents compared to the UK mainland¹.</p> <p>Many islands face challenges in retaining/attracting sufficient numbers of young people. For example, between 2011 and 2018 the numbers in the 16-24 age group are estimated to have fallen by 8% in Uist and by 10% in Lewis. That is in a context where these two islands already have a lower share of total population aged 16-24 than the Scottish average².</p> <p>Recent population forecasts are only available at local authority level. There is a projected fall of 6.1% in the population of the Outer Hebrides between 2018 and 2028. That is much higher than the projected fall in the Highlands and Islands (1.2%) and the forecast increase in Scotland (1.8%).</p> <p>A range of factors account for the numbers of young people living in the islands. However, research³ for Highlands and Islands Enterprise into the attitudes and aspirations of people aged between 15 and 30, highlights the importance of transport as a factor affecting the attractiveness of the region. The area report for the Outer Hebrides states that:</p> <p>“Despite Road Equivalent Tariff (RET) ferry fares....the cost of off-island travel remains a significant issue”</p>
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¹ www.hie.co.uk/media/6441/aplusminimumplusincomeplusstandardplusforplusremotepusruralplusscotlandplus-plusapuspolicyplusupdateplus2016.pdf

² Source: Office for National Statistics

³ <https://www.hie.co.uk/research-and-reports/our-reports/2018/may/31/yp-research/>



Lorg iad cuideachd gum feumadh còrr air trì chairteal de dhaoine òga (78%) ann an Innse Gall gabhail ri droch sholar còmh-dhail mar cho-rèiteachadh a dh'fheumadh iad a dhèanamh gus fuireach anns na h-eileanan. Bha am figear airson Uibhist agus Barraigh eadhon nas àirde (87%). Chaidh còmh-dhail aig prìs ruigsinneach, a bha earbsach agus le deagh chlàr-ama a ghairm le còrr air dàrna leth (59%) mar fheart a dh'fheumar gus a' Ghàidhealtachd agus na h-Eileanan a dhèanamh na àite tarraingeach airson fuireach, obair agus ionnsachadh.

Bheir tarraingeachd nan eilean do dhaoine òga buaidh air na co-dhùnaidhean aca a bhith a' fuireach ann no an àiteigin eile. Bheir an ìre de chosgaisean còmh-dhail buaidh air co-dhùnaidhean mar sin. Mar sin, tha e a' toirt buaidh air beairteas agus seasmhachd coimhearsnachdan nan eilean san àm ri teachd.

Tha Riaghaltas na h-Alba mu thràth ag aithneachadh nan cosgaisean còmh-dhail a bharrachd a tha fa chomhair luchd-còmh-naidh nan eilean. Mar eisimpleir, tro bhith a' toirt a-steach faraidhean aiseig Cosgais Co-ionann ri Rathad agus faraidhean adhair nas ìsle tron Sgeama Lasachadh Adhair.

Ann an **Cunntas-sluaigh 2011** bha àireamh-sluaigh iomlan de mu 58,000 aois 3 bliadhna no nas sine anns na 31 eileanan fa leth air a' Ghàidhealtachd, Earra-Ghàidheal is Bòd, Siorrachd Àir a Tuath agus na h-Eilean Siar. Dhiubh sin bha timcheall air 22,000 (39%) le cuid de sgilean ann an Gàidhlig – gu math os cionn cuibheasachd na h-Alba de 1.7%. Bha am figear meadhanach thar nan 31 eilean 26%.

Ann an 12 de na h-eileanan bha a' chuibhreann de luchd-còmh-naidh le beagan sgilean Gàidhlig còrr air 40%. Bha iad sin gu ìre mhòr taobh a-staigh nan Eilean Siar (10), a bharrachd air Ratharsair agus Tìriodh.

Tha beagan sgilean Gàidhlig aig beagan a bharrachd air dàrna leth (51%) de dhaoine aois 16-24 anns na h-Eilean Siar – an coimeas ri cuibheasachd Albannach de 2%.

Gu h-iomlan, tha na h-eileanan seo air a' chosta an iar a' dèanamh suas c1% de shluagh na h-Alba 3 bliadhna no nas sine – ach barrachd air cairteal (26%) de luchd-còmh-naidh na h-Alba aig a bheil cuid de sgilean Gàidhlig. **Mar sin, chan e a-mhàin gu bheil a' Ghàidhlig cudromach dha na h-eileanan sin, ach tha seasmhachd nan eilean sin deatamach airson seasmhachd is fàs leantainneach na Gàidhlig.**

It also found that more than three quarters of young people (78%) in the Outer Hebrides have had to accept transport provision as a compromise they had to make to live in the islands. The figure for Uist and Barra was even higher (87%). Affordable, reliable and well-scheduled transport was cited by more than half (59%) as a factor required to make the Highlands and Islands an attractive place to live, work and study.

The attractiveness of the islands for young people will affect their decisions to live there or somewhere else. The level of transport costs will influence such decisions. Thus, it affects the future prosperity and sustainability of the island communities.

Scottish Government already recognises the additional transport costs that island residents face. For example, through the introduction of Road Equivalent Tariff ferry fares and reduced air fares through the Air Discount Scheme.

In the **2011 Census** the 31 individual islands in Highland, Argyll and Bute, North Ayrshire and Eilean Siar had a total population of around 58,000 aged 3 years or above. Of these around 22,000 (39%) had some skills in Gaelic-vastly above the Scottish average of 1.7%. The median figure across all 31 islands was 26%.

In 12 of the islands the proportion of residents with some Gaelic skills was over 40%. These were largely within Eilean Siar (10), plus Raasay and Tìree.

Just over half (51%) of people aged 16-24 in Eilean Siar have some Gaelic skills-compared to a Scottish average of 2%.

Overall, these west coast islands account for c1% of the Scottish population aged 3 years or above-but for more one quarter (26%) of Scottish residents with some Gaelic skills. **Therefore, the Gaelic language is not only important to these islands, but these islands' sustainability is essential to the continued sustainability and growth of the Gaelic language.**



Tha seo air aithris ann am **Plana Nàiseanta nan Eilean aig Riaghaltas na h-Alba**⁴:

“Tha Riaghaltas na h-Alba ag aithneachadh cho cudromach sa tha a’ Ghàidhlig do mhòran choimhearsnachdan eileanach, agus cho cudromach sa tha coimhearsnachdan Gàidhlig nan eilean do mhaireannachd agus seasmhachd na Gàidhlig ann an Alba”.

Is e am prìomh amas aig **Plana Cànan Nàiseanta na Gàidhlig 2018-2023**⁵ gum bi Gàidhlig “air a chleachdadh nas trice, le barrachd dhaoine agus ann an raon nas fharsainghe de shuidheachaidhean”. Tha e ag ràdh gu bheil “cùisean eile a’ toirt buaidh air an amas seo”. Tha iad sin a’ toirt a-steach cùisean eaconamach agus bun-structarail agus tha am Plana a’ toirt fa-near gum bi am Bòrd “a’ dèanamh cinnteach gu bheil a’ bhuidh aca air a’ Ghàidhlig air aithneachadh agus gun tèid dèiligeadh ris”.

Le sin, tha sinn a’ freagairt a’ cho-chomhairleachaidh seo airson gu bheil sinn ag aithneachadh gu bheil feum air dòigh-làimhseachaidh coileanta airson coimhearsnachdan seasmhach nan eilean agus mar sin airson a’ Ghàidhlig a chumail a’ dol.

Mar a tha am Plana ag ràdh, “tha eaconamaidh fhallain, gu sònraichte ann an coimhearsnachdan Gàidhlig dùthchail agus eileanach, deatamach airson àm ri teachd na Gàidhlig”. Tha e cuideachd ag ràdh:

“Feumar cumhachd a thoirt do na coimhearsnachdan eileanach agus dùthchail a tha a’ bruidhinn Gàidhlig ann an dòigh a chumas agus a tharraingeas daoine òga. Feumaidh seo fuasglaidhean innleachdach ... (a’ gabhail a-steach)... cothrom air ceanglaichean còmhdaile earbsach aig prìs ruigsinneach.”

Tha **Plana Nàiseanta nan Eilean** cuideachd a’ toirt iomradh air a’ cheangal eadar seasmhachd eaconamach agus deamografach coimhearsnachdan eileanach agus seasmhachd na Gàidhlig:

- “Dèan cinnteach gu bheil poileasaidhean ag amas air luchd-labhairt na Gàidhlig a chumail agus a thàladh gus fuireach agus obair ann an

This is stated in **Scottish Government’s National Islands Plan**⁴:

“Scottish Government recognises the importance of the Gaelic language to many island communities, and the importance of the Gaelic speaking island communities to the survival and sustainability of Gaelic in Scotland”.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig’s **National Gaelic Language Plan 2018-2023**⁵ has the overall aim that Gaelic “is used more often, by more people and in a wider range of situations”. It goes on to state that “other issues impact on this aim”. These include economic and infrastructural issues and the Plan notes that the Bòrd “will ensure their impact on Gaelic is recognised and addressed”.

Hence, we are responding to this consultation because we recognise that a holistic approach is required for sustainable island communities and thus for sustaining the Gaelic language.

As the Plan states, “a healthy economy, particularly in island and rural Gaelic-speaking communities, is vital to the future of Gaelic”. It also states that:

“Gaelic-speaking island and rural communities must be re-energised in a way that will retain and attract young people. This will require innovative solutions... (including)...access to affordable and reliable transport links”

The **National Islands Plan** also refers to the link between economic and demographic sustainability of island communities and the sustainability of the Gaelic language:

- “Ensure that policies aim to retain and attract Gaelic speakers to live

⁴ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-plan-scotlands-islands/>

⁵ <https://www.gaidhlig.scot/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/BnG-NGLP-18-23-1.pdf>



coimhearsnachdan eileanach a tha a' bruidhinn na Gàidhlig".

- "Ann an sgìrean le dualchas Gàidhlig, bu chòir beachdachadh air a' Ghàidhlig an-còmhnaidh ann an cùisean leasachadh eaconamach".
- "Is e a' phrìomh cheist deamografach airson sgìrean le àireamhan-sluaigh ìosal... an àireamh caran beag de chloinn is dhaoine òga."
- "Mar phrìomhachas, bidh sinn a' co-leasachadh bheachdan agus ghnìomhan gus taic agus brosnachadh a thoirt do dhaoine òga a bhith a' fuireach air na h-eileanan, a' gluasad air ais no a' tilleadh".
- "Dèan cinnteach gu bheil libhrigeadh a' Phlana a' beachdachadh air ùidhean agus prìomhachasan dhaoine òga".

Geàrr-chunntas:

Mura tèid dèiligeadh ri cosgaisean faradh aiseig do dhaoine òga, cha bhi eileanan far a bheil Gàidhlig ga labhairt cho tarraingeach an coimeas ri sgìrean tìr-mòr. Mar sin, tha seo a' toirt buaidh air seasmhachd coimhearsnachdan eileanach Gàidhlig san àm ri teachd. Bheir seo droch bhuidh air cleachdadh na Gàidhlig chan ann a-mhàin anns na h-eileanan air a bheil buaidh ach cuideachd ann an Alba gu h-iomlan. Mar sin, cha choilean am moladh a th' ann an-dràsta amasan Còmhdhail Alba, am Plana Gàidhlig Nàiseanta no Plana Nàiseanta nan Eilean.

Bheir fàilligeadh ann an dèiligeadh ri cosgaisean aiseig do dhaoine òga buaidh eadar-dhealaichte air cuid de choimhearsnachdan eileanach an taca ri eileanan neo-Ghàidhlig agus tìr-mòr na h-Alba. Is e sin, droch bhuidh air a' Ghàidhlig. **Cha deach a' bhuidh seo a ghlacadh anns a' chiad cho-chomhairle aig Còmhdhail Alba.**

A dh'aindeoin seo, chan eil riatanas sam bith ann an **Stiùireadh agus Seata-innealan Measadh Buidh Choimhearsnachdan Eileanach** gus beachdachadh air buaidh mholaidhean air a' Ghàidhlig. A dh'aindeoin seo, bhiodh sinn a' coimhead ri Còmhdhail Alba gus dearbhadh gum bi buaidh a' mholaidh làithrich air a' Ghàidhlig air a ghabhail a-steach san ICIA seo.

and work in Gaelic speaking island communities".

- "In areas that have a Gaelic heritage, Gaelic should always be considered in matters of economic development".
- "The key demographic issue for sparsely populated areas is ...the relatively small number of children and young people"
- "As a priority, we will co-develop ideas and actions to support and encourage young people to remain on, move to or return to the islands".
- "Ensure that the delivery of the Plan fully considers the interests and priorities of young people".

Summary:

Failing to address ferry fare costs for young people will make Gaelic speaking islands less attractive compared to mainland areas. Thus, it affects the future viability of Gaelic speaking island communities. This will have a negative impact on the use of the Gaelic language not only in the affected islands but also in Scotland as a whole. Therefore, the current proposal will not fully meet the objectives of Transport Scotland, the National Gaelic Plan nor the National Islands Plan.

The failure to address ferry fare costs for young people will have a significantly different impact on some island communities compared to non-Gaelic speaking islands and mainland Scotland. That is, a negative impact on the Gaelic language. **This impact was not captured in Transport Scotland's first consultation.**

Despite this, there is no requirement in the current **Island Communities Impact Assessments Guidance And Toolkit** to consider proposals' impact on the Gaelic language. Notwithstanding this we would look to Transport Scotland to confirm that the impact of the current proposal on the Gaelic language will be included within this ICIA.



Tha a' bhuidh air a' Gàidhlig a bharrachd air na buaidhean sin a chaidh a ghlacadh anns a' chiad cho-chomhairle aig Còmh-dhail Alba. Gu sònraichte, a' cheist mu chothromachd làimhseachaidh dhaoine òga anns a h-uile coimhearsnachd ann an Alba.

2. Ma tha, a bheil ceumannan ann a dh'fhaodadh Riaghaltas na h-Alba beachdachadh gus droch bhuidh sam bith air coimhearsnachdan eileanach a lughdachadh a thaobh a bhith a' toirt seachad siubhal bus an-asgaidh gu òigridh fo aois 22 gu sònraichte?

Faodar dèiligeadh ris an droch bhuidh air coimhearsnachdan nan eilean agus air a' Ghàidhlig le bhith a' toirt a-steach siubhal air aiseag an-asgaidh a bharrachd air siubhal air bus an-asgaidh. Ann a bhith a' dèanamh seo, choileanadh Ministearan na h-Alba an dleastanas aca:

“Dèan measadh air an ìre gun urrainnear an reachdas a leasachadh ann an dòigh a bheir piseach air... airson coimhearsnachdan eileanach, na toraidhean a thig bhon reachdas.”⁶

Bu chòir seo a bhith a' buntainn ris a h-uile seirbheis aiseig eileanach a' toirt a-steach an fheadhainn a tha taobh a-staigh sgìre eileanach (m.e. Beàrnaraigh-An Tòb, Èirisgeigh-Barraigh) a bharrachd air slighean gu tìr-mòr.

The impact on the Gaelic language is in addition to those impacts captured in Transport Scotland's first consultation. In particular, the issue of equity of treatment of young people in all communities in Scotland.

2. If so, are there measures that the Scottish Government might consider to mitigate any adverse effects on island communities in relation to the provision of free bus travel to under 22s specifically?

The adverse effects on the islands communities and the Gaelic language can be addressed by including free ferry travel in addition to free bus travel. In doing so, Scottish Ministers would meet their obligation to:

“assess the extent to which the legislation can be developed in such a manner as to improve ...for island communities, the outcomes resulting from the legislation”⁶

This should apply to all island ferry services including those internal to an island group (e.g. Berneray-Leverburgh, Eriskay-Barra) as well as island-mainland routes.

⁶ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/stakeholder-consultation-document-island-communities-impact-assessment/>

