



University of  
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# Sustainable Island Futures

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# Progress so far

- Literature and policy review.
- 17 interviews.
- Three one-week fieldtrips: Isle of Arran; Orkney Islands; and Shetland Islands.
- Observations.



# 'Islandness'

- Diversity of geographies, communities, identities and governance systems.
- Multiple lens or ways of seeing 'islands', each with complex dynamics and ambiguous foundations (Foley et al., 2023) .
- Identify and evaluate the political and policy work of multiple efforts to 'categorise' islands (Lidderdale, 2026).

# Diverse islands but shared challenges?

- Evidence points to repeated challenges taking different forms across the islands:
  - Inequality and Cost of Living - Energy
  - Social care
  - Housing
  - Transport
  - Finance
  - Workforce

# Place sensitive policies or ‘the average is not the actual’

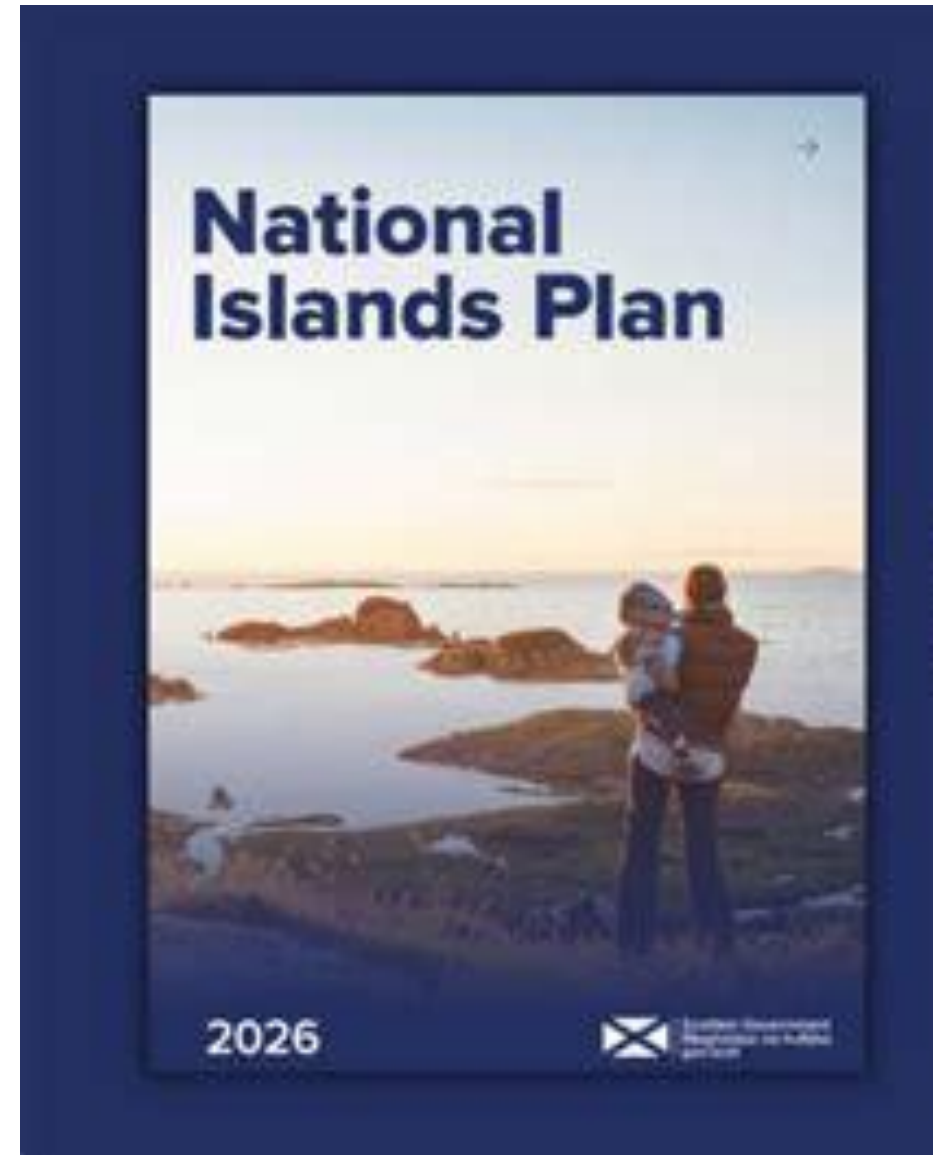
- ‘Additionality’ or place challenges of delivering services across islands – take for example, gritting, housing repair or burial services.
- ‘Amplification’ or interconnected nature of the challenges – take for example housing and workforce recruitment.
- ‘Ambiguity’ or uncertainty of policies – take for example energy (wind farms) and tourism via cruise ships.

# National Islands Plan

To what extent does appeal to ‘distinctiveness’ displace responsibility for action onto islands? And without concrete plans and adequate resources for implementation?

Community Wealth Building (CWB) – how far can it address interconnected problems across different tiers, without shifting responsibilities onto communities and overplaying characteristics of resilience and resourcefulness?

“Don’t romanticise us... we are just a place like all other places” (Interview 14).



# Conclusions

- Next steps
- Emerging lessons
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