

30th October Arran Recovery Group Notes. (Draft)

Summary:

- 1) We have had Covid Infection on the Island. Our local Test, Track and Trace is working well. Follow the rules and continue the strong community spirit.
- 2) The combination of Arran's high dependency on year-round tourism, winter demand from the central belt and the current Tiering restrictions, combine to make our tourism economy and its direct and indirect supply chain non-viable. This again underscores Fraser of Allander findings. We need a tailored financial support package, for Islands in general and Arran in particular. Specific suggestions to follow.
- 3) Assuming numbers and local HSPC support, it is not clear if a lower Tier would be provide any support for business. First pass suggests it could do the opposite. Work ongoing to understand implications and inform opinion.
- 4) Survey analysis will be available by early next week to let us better understand Business and the Community position in current crisis.

1. Introduction

TT welcomed everyone to the call and tendered apologies from RB, VY and mentioned BC would be late joining the call.

2. HSCP

TT delivered the Arran HSCP update on behalf of RB; there had been over 500 tests carried out on approx. 300 people. There had been cases of Covid 19 but the situation was being managed effectively. There has been an adverse and fearful reaction by some residents which has on occasion become personal and unfriendly. Personal health records will remain private and confidential as I am sure everyone will expect. By and large, this was not the Island we know, and Ruth reminded us this was a global pandemic. Blame was inappropriate understanding and compassion was appropriate and more in keeping with the Island we know.

Arran has peaks and troughs on normal demand for HSPC services. With the people putting things off and the effects of long periods of isolation the services have been operating at a sustained peak for some time. Eight months of high Covid alert, sustained peaks in non Covid demand means that folks are tired. The system continues to function well, but it is fragile.

In summary, we are better placed than many local and Island Communities. We have our own test, track and trace resources that are working well. A community based integrated

service and if we need it, a 12 bed hospital and our ICU beds in Crosshouse, less than 1 hour away.

The best thing we can do is to practice the basics: Hand Wash, Masks, and Distance and Book a Test and Isolate, if you have any of the 3 main symptoms, a new cough, temperature or loss of taste or sense of smell. We must all support one another and work to maintain our strong community spirit to get through the Winter and this unprecedented time.

3) Funding v Projects:

Cameron and John gave a quick overview of a prioritised project plan v funding and positioning against Community Wealth Building (CWB) when appropriate. It is not the finished article but a good start. To move this to the next step, the project owners need to:

- 1) Review your project and change as required. Pay particular attention to where you are with CWB and specifically what help you are asking for.
- 2) Your supporting project plans. This may vary from a large book (Affordable Housing) to a couple of pages (Fisherman's Walk). Whatever is appropriate.

This needs to be done before the next ARG review with NAC on the 9th November. Programmes with the necessary supporting project plans will be put forward as the priorities. Please provide your updates to the spreadsheet through Cameron.

4. Ferry Capacity

BC update: These are interim numbers awaiting release but doubt very much they will change.

<u>Carrying Numbers - Total Arran</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>Delta %</u>
Passengers	66035	91122	-27.5%
Cars	22736	24228	-6.2%
HGV Mtr	9733	8842.8	10.1%

The forward capacity looks like demand has dropped significantly even before the announcements today with availability this weekend going off with vehicles only lightly restricted but foot passengers have unrestricted availability. Going into November there are only 4 sailings onto the island unavailable and they are the 07:00 from Mon -Thursday Going off, only 7 sailings are unavailable to book for the next week and thereafter every sailing on and off is available until year end!

5. Survey Updates (Business)

AD mentioned that there had been 86 responses so far to the business survey but had been based on historic data and circumstances. If a new survey were to be commissioned, the

landscape of results would appear very different due to the constant rate of change. Responses had been received from an excellent cross section of the business sector (self-catering, retail, manufacturing, restaurants/cafes etc). Arran needs to be recognised as “different” and not just part of NA or Scotland. Fraser of Allander study did this by emphasising the Islands primary dependency on tourism. Publishing of the survey currently was questioned and it was suggested a new survey may be more appropriate after the 10th of November to take account of the new guidelines for business. It was agreed further analysis of the current results was required before a decision on the level of detail to publish to whom.

Action: John/Alastair

Community:

SG/JK reported on the community survey which had received 291 responses to date and shared the current results on screen with the group. Some comments had been received that the survey was “too difficult/complicated” but overall it was a positive response. It was agreed to share the results mentioning “the ferry” with the Arran Ferry Committee for reference. There had been a low response from the younger population in general. It was agreed the results should now be analysed and a zoom call with the Arran community organised by SG/JK. It was also agreed that this zoom call should have a theme in order to focus on relevant items. An additional incentive for participants was also mentioned. It was also suggested that the ARG’s achievements to date should be republished.

- Look for professional help to analyse the survey as first choice: Vicky
- Second choice: Issue standard formats to topic owners for data analysis. Need first pass by the 7th November. Jude/Sheila

6. Tiering System

This discussion came about as we try to understand the impact of the Tiering System on Business and the Community. Also in recognition that Arran is different from most other Islands in that we have a year-round tourist business.

There was a suggestion that the Islands could be placed in a different Tiering from the mainland if the numbers and the community supported it. The questions: 1) Will this increase the risk of Covid infection on the Island.? If no: What would be costs and benefits? On balance, is this a good idea? To be clear, in any scenario we will remain with Ayrshire and Arran Health Board with Crosshouse as our primary hospital. If we were all convinced that this was a two/four week discussion, probably not worth having, but it is almost certainly with us to the Spring.

- 1) 75% of Arran Winter Tourism business comes from the Central belt. 20% comes from NA. Present guidelines say that accommodation providers should only accept bookings from NA. This level of business will not sustain accommodation providers.
- 2) Current guidelines say that as well as no non-essential movement between Local authorities there is also no non-essential movement between Tiers. Tier 1 and 2

demand amounts to 10% of winter demand for accommodation. It would also require an amended summer service on the Lochranza ferry.

- 3) Lower tiering (2 or 1) could mean more freedom for retail, restaurants and other hospitality activity and the community at large. However, it is unlikely that local demand is enough to maintain most of these businesses.
- 4) It is probable that changing Tiering from NA would mean increased restrictions on travel to and from the Island. How would this impact the community and business.?
- 5) At face value, the lower the Tiering the better for the Health and Well Being of the community. However, employment is part of Health and Well-being and lower tiering would mean more job losses, with current support packages.
- 6) Again, at face value, it looks like Arran's current tiering, with only NA as its market (20% of winter demand) will not sustain the accommodation business's. Also Tier 3 effectively closes non accommodation hospitality business e.g. restaurants and bars.

The combination of Arran's high dependency on year-round tourism, winter demand from the central belt combined and the current Tiering restrictions, combine to make our tourism economy and its direct and indirect supply chain non-viable. This again underscores Fraser of Allander findings. We need Islands a tailored financial support package for Islands in general and Arran in particular.

The next steps are to pull some of the data together so that the community can take an informed position which we can push for. With help from other I will get something out later this week. When issued please review and feedback to make sure we have the correct communication for the wider community.

It would be useful to get some HIE help with this discussion and process.

Thanks to everyone for their active participation and patience in trying to figure out the best way forward.

Tom Tracey
November 3rd.