

The Outer Hebrides Community Appraisal Survey – Supplementary report for Benbecula

Research report for
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar &
Benbecula Community Planning Partnership



Ipsos MORI

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Introduction

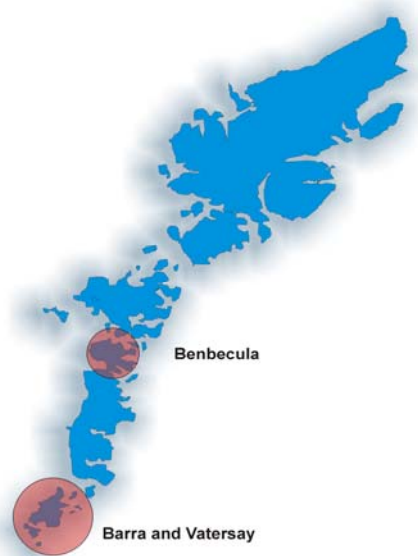
This report contains the findings of the Benbecula Community Planning Partnership area questions included in the Outer Hebrides Community Survey 2007. This survey was conducted by Ipsos MORI Scotland on behalf of the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership.

The survey was the first island-wide survey designed to gather information from all residents to inform the future development of the islands and local communities. It represented the key consultation device for the Partnership in their commitment to actively engage with local residents towards improving community vitality throughout the Western Isles.

As part of this, the Benbecula sustainable community area included a number of questions that were asked only of Benbecula residents (see figure 1 for boundaries of the Benbecula Sustainable Community Area). These include: support for further land ownership and the provision of housing on common grazing land in the Benbecula area; perceptions of potential future developments in the area; level of support or opposition for the construction of a fixed link between Harris and North Uist; perceptions of the church's role in the local community; prospective household attendance of events and classes if they were provided at the Benbecula Community Centre; and awareness of developments to crofting and land management in the Benbecula area.

Figure 1: Boundaries of the Benbecula Sustainable Community Area

Benbecula Sustainable Community Area
Barra and Vatersay Sustainable Community Area



Structure of the report

All households in the Outer Hebrides were invited to participate in the Community Survey by completing a paper questionnaire. Thirteen different versions of the questionnaire were designed, comprising of a core section of questions asked of all households in the Outer Hebrides and an additional section specifically designed to inform the unique local issues and challenges of each Sustainable Community Area. The additional section for Benbecula enabled local residents to be asked about issues that were specific to the local community.

The core report documents the major findings from questions contained in the core section of the questionnaire and indicates the overall picture of residents across the whole of the Outer Hebrides. This report provides supplementary analysis of the results from the questions asked specifically of residents in Benbecula. The data tables, available from Comhairle nana Eilean Siar, also provide a comparison of responses to the core questionnaire between residents on Benbecula and those in the rest of the Outer Hebrides.

Benbecula Community Questions

This chapter focuses on the responses from residents living in Benbecula regarding a number of topics specific to their local area. It details their views on a number of suggested developments in Benbecula, as well as the construction of a fixed link between Harris and North Uist. It considers their opinions towards community land ownership and the provision of new housing in the area. In addition, it outlines whether residents would be interested in attending classes and events if they were provided at the Benbecula Community Centre and local residents' perceptions of the church. Finally, it outlines levels of awareness of developments to crofting and land management in the Benbecula area

Satisfaction with living in the Outer Hebrides

At the start of the questionnaire, residents were asked if they were satisfied with living on the islands. Most residents (92%) living in Benbecula are satisfied with the islands as a place to live. The overall satisfaction level across the Outer Hebrides was 94%. This difference is not statistically significant.

Around two fifths (43%) of residents say they are very satisfied, while around half (50%) say they are fairly satisfied with the islands as a place to live. Only 7% of residents who returned a questionnaire say that they are dissatisfied.

Priorities for a range of suggested development in Benbecula

Asked how much of a priority should be given to three suggested developments in the Benbecula area, residents are most likely to say that medium priority should be given to all proposals (Figure 2 overleaf). Just under a third (30%) of residents to say high priority should be given to developing local history activities and information (30%). Around 1 in 5 residents say that a high priority should be given to providing community Christmas decorations (21%). A similar proportion say that developing archaeological and heritage sites (19%) should be a high priority.

Two fifths (42%) either do not support or say low priority should be given to plans to provide community Christmas decorations.

Figure 2: Prioritising developments in Benbecula

Q *A number of developments have been suggested for Benbecula. How much of a priority, if any, should be given to the following in the area?*



Base: All respondents (105)

Source: Ipsos MORI

Community land ownership and Housing in the Benbecula area

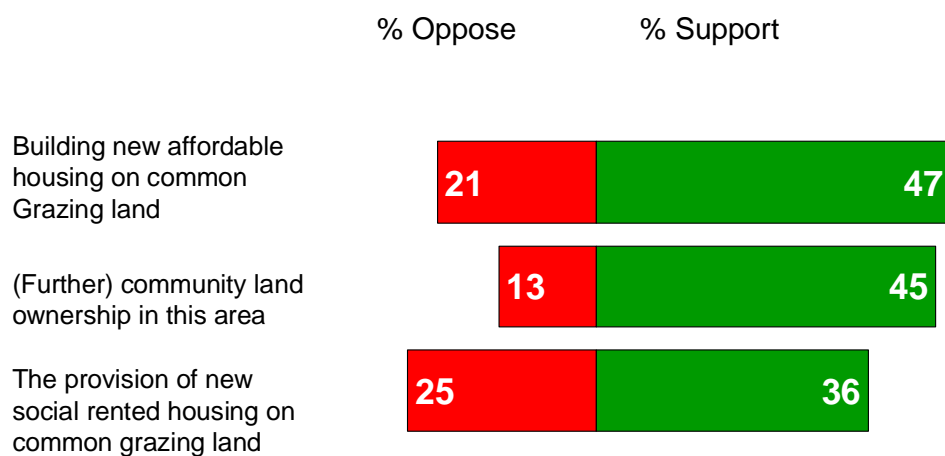
Around half (47%) of residents in Benbecula support proposals to build new affordable housing on common grazing land, while 21% oppose this proposal (Figure 3).

Under half (45%) of residents support community land ownership in the area, while 13% of residents oppose this proposal.

Just over a third (36%) of residents support the provision of new social rented housing on common grazing land. Around a quarter (25%) of residents opposed this proposal.

Figure 3: Levels of support for community land ownership and the provision of housing on common grazing land

Q *In principle, how strongly would you support or oppose the following.....?*



Base: All respondents (105)

Source: Ipsos MORI

These questions were asked in most Community planning areas across the Outer Hebrides. The level of support for these proposals was lower in Benbecula than most other Community planning areas (see Table 1).

Table 1: Levels of support by area

<i>In principle, how strongly would you support or oppose the following?</i>													
	Barra and Vatersay	South Uist and Eriksay	Benbecula	North Uist and Bernera	Harris	Paic and Kinloch	North Lochs	Stornoway	Point	Broadbay	Uig and Bernera	West Side	Ness
<i>Base: All</i>	111	216	105	180	264	110	97	666	217	309	132	377	211
<i>% Support</i>	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
(Further) community land ownership in this area	54	-	45	33	50	62	46	-	-	-	54	50	-
Building new affordable housing on common grazing land	59	60	47	48	58	60	53	-	49	51	61	60	46
The provision of new social rented housing on common grazing land	55	54	36	40	52	50	41	-	37	39	55	47	36

Source: Ipsos MORI

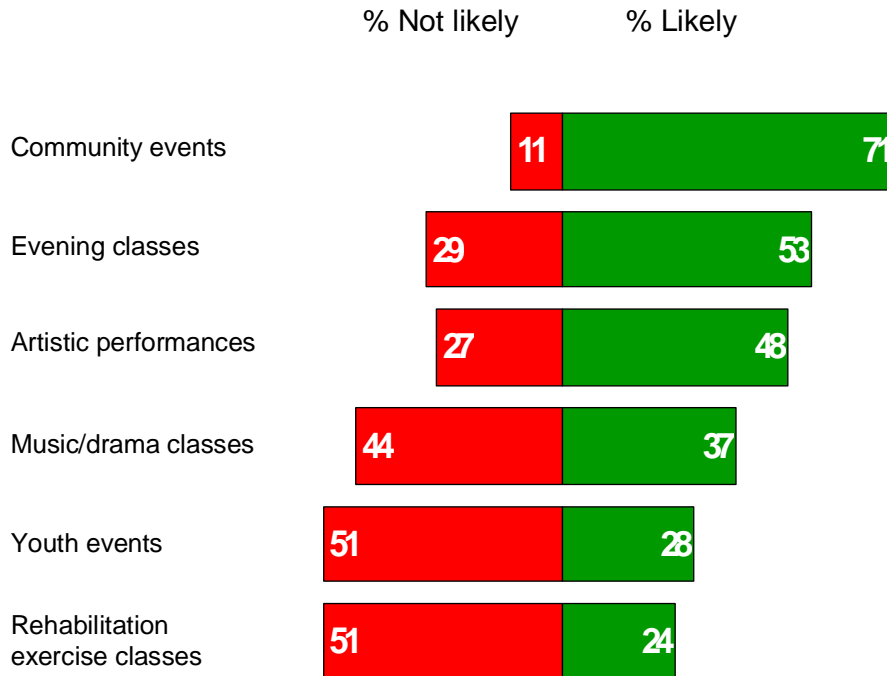
Attending the Benbecula Community Centre

Asked how likely they or their household would be to attend shows or classes if they were provided at the Benbecula Community Centre, majorities of residents say they would be likely to attend community events (71%) and evening classes (53%). Around half (48%) said that would be likely to attend artistic performances.

Fewer residents said that they or a member of their household would be likely to attend music and drama classes (37%), youth events (28%) or rehabilitation exercise classes (24%).

Figure 4: Attending the Benbecula Community Centre

Q *How likely, if at all, would you, or anyone in your household be to attend the following if they were provided at the Benbecula Community Centre?*



Base: All respondents (105)

Source: Ipsos MORI

Fixed Link between Harris and North Uist

Overall, a majority of Benbecula residents (66%) support the construction of a fixed link between Harris and North Uist. Two fifths (43%) strongly support the proposal, while 23% tend to support it. Around one in ten residents (11%) oppose the proposal.

Support for the proposal is largely in line with that of residents in other areas where this question was asked- Harris, North Uist and Berneray, South Uist and Eriksay (See Table 2).

Table 2: Levels of support by area

How strongly would you support or oppose the construction of a fixed link between Harris and North Uist?

	All four areas	Benbecula	Harris	North Uist and Berneray	South Uist and Eriksay
<i>Base: Selected Areas</i>	765	105	264	180	216
<i>% Support</i>	63%	66%	60%	58%	69%
<i>% Oppose</i>	15%	11%	17%	22%	9%

Source: Ipsos MORI

The role of the church in Benbecula

Residents were asked whether they feel that the role that the church currently plays in decisions affecting the lives of local people is positive, negative or neutral.

The majority of residents (55%) said that the role the church currently plays in affecting the lives of local people is positive. Very few (2%) said that it is negative. Around 1 in 7 (14%) think the church's role is neither positive or negative, while a quarter of residents (26%) said they do not know or do not have an opinion.

Awareness of Crofting and land management

Asked how well informed they feel about developments to crofting and land management in the Benbecula area, residents are nearly twice as likely to say they are not informed than informed (50% compared with 28%). Only 8% of residents say they feel fully informed.

Appendix: Benbecula Questionnaire
