Non-residents Survey Report

Dr L. Cleland for DCT, April 2025

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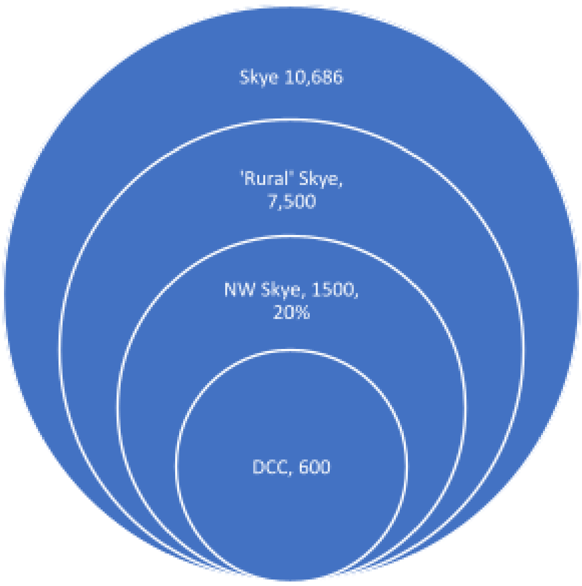
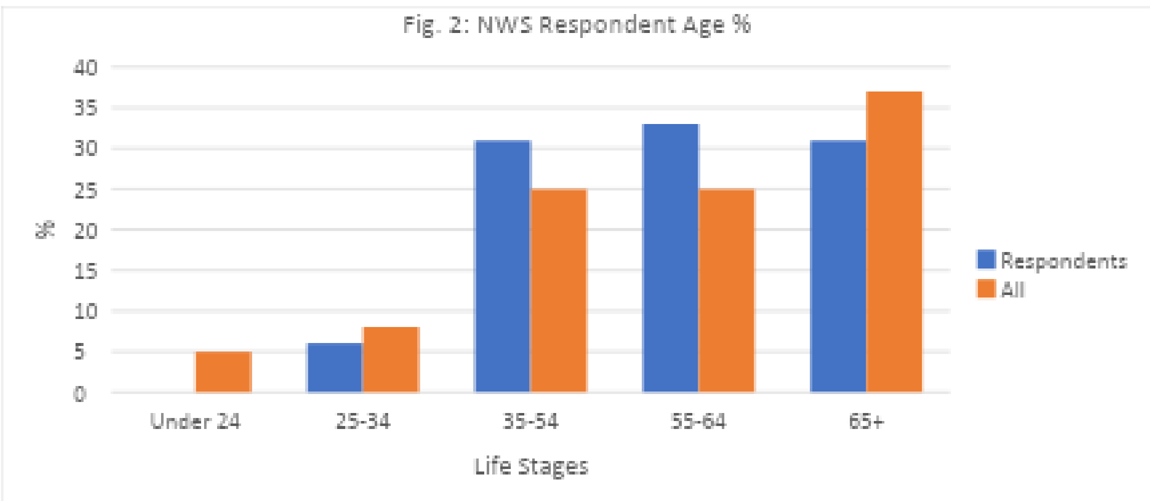
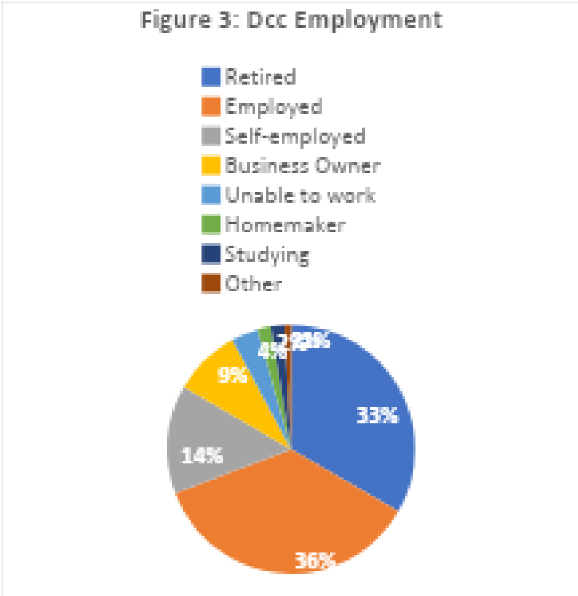
NR 1. Demographics: 73 responses are split almost equally between the rest of IV55 8 (Glendale 23%, Waternish 25%) and our broader catchment (Struan 41%, Edinbane 6%). There were also a further 4% of respondents from elsewhere on Skye, and one from the rest of the world. (We invited the Clan MacLeod society to share this survey with their international Parliamentarians, but if they did so, none responded.) It is worth reminding ourselves how NW Skye fits in to the island:

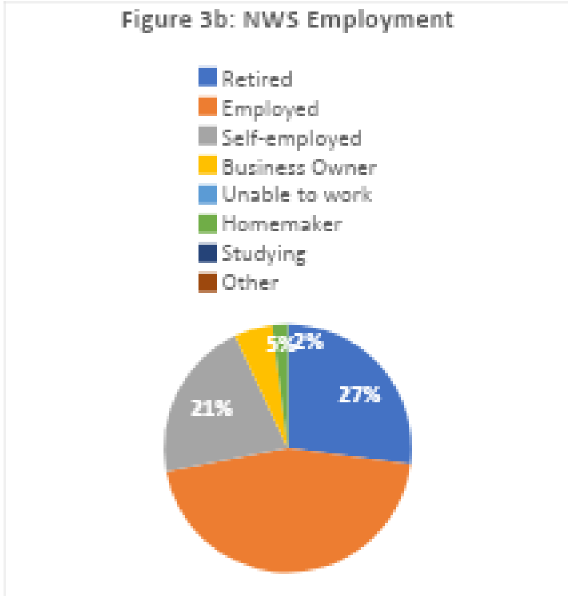
Figure 1: Skye Populations



A fifth of all islanders living outside the 'town' centres of Portree and Broadford, live in NW Skye. Two-fifths of all those living in NW Skye live within DCC. Overall, a majority of our non-resident responses (33%) are from people aged 55-64 followed by 35-54 (31%, despite this being the broadest range) 65+ (31%) and 25-34 (6%). We will hopefully capture under-24 responses with the teenagers' survey and highschool outreach.





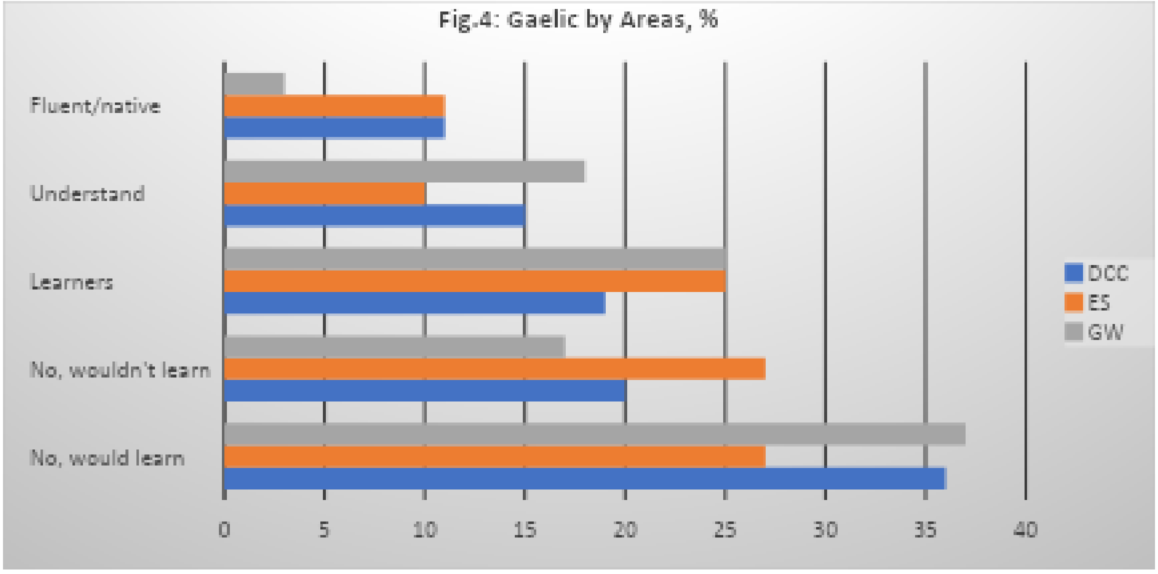


71% are working (including 5% as business owners/employers, 21% self-employed). Retirees (27%) and homemakers (2%) are also represented. (No respondents described themselves as 'unable to work' but responses to other questions include current needs indicating some disabled people responded.) 54% make £26k/a or less, 20% around £31k/a, and 27% more. 46% have one paid role, but almost as many (44%) have two, and a significant minority (10%) have three or more paid roles.

This analysis will also note where the two main groups (Glendale & Waternish, GW vs Edinbane & Struan, ES) differ from each other (or the overall resonse) by 5% or more. In many cases, this will be matters of circumstance, i.e. the latter communities are much closer to Portree than the former, and Glendale & Waternish are both freehold not tenanted. In others, there are differences of perception, e.g. the particularly strong response rate from Struan may reflect having completed their own CAP, and/or a sense of chosen connection to Dunvegan as a local hub rather than Portree or Carbost.

We can note, therefore, that total GW responses were 32% for under-55s (8% under 35) whereas for ES this was 37% (but just 4% under 35). We can also note that compared to the overall rate, respondents from GW were 7% more likely to be self-employed rather than employed (total in-work rates were 70% in both areas). Similarly, 63% of GW respondents made c.£26,000/pa or less, compared to 45% of ES. The areas had similar proportions making c.£31,000/pa, but 35% of respondents from ES made 'more' vs just 16% from GW. This may reflect both the higher rate of middle-age respondents, and a greater proportion commuting to employment in Portree from Struan and Edinbane.

A final demographic aspect to consider both overall and in detail is Gaelic. Overall, the largest group have no Gaelic but would like to learn (31%). However, for GW and ES this is 37% and 27% respectively. 54% of respondents in both areas have no Gaelic, but half of these in ES do not wish to learn. Proportions of existing learners are around a quarter in both areas. There are more native/fluent respondents from ES (11% vs 3%).



NR 2. Land & Sea: 99% overall support DCT owning land to respond to future community needs. Likewise, there was a general perception (Q55) that residents have insufficient access to land, sea/shore, and buildings. In GW this lack was considered particularly severe for business premises (83%) and land for communal/social use (68%). ES respondents were not concerned about business premises, but moreso about communal/social land (73%) buildings for sport/leisure (69%) and land for business ventures (68%). For land, cost was the main obstacle (83% overall: 79% in GW but 90% in ES). For sea/shore, access was the primary issue (82%), whereas for buildings it was cost (86%) although access/availability was also identified by over half (GW 56%, ES 62%). It is notable that these perceptions do not reflect the different income patterns above.

Similarly, lack of opportunity/facilities was identified as the overwhelming reason (83%) for relative lack of sea-based activities. 80% overall had not used the community pontoon: 76% among GW respondents (3% regular users, 21% occasional), 84% among ES (no regular, 16% occasional). Glendale and Waternish have their own active slipways, Edinbane and Struan do not. (Comments generally revealed that folk either did not know where the pontoon is, or assumed it was private.)

In terms of future development, there was high demand for Dunvegan-based boat trips/water taxi (84% overall) and canoeing (71%) with majorities also interested in paddle-boarding (58%) and fishing (56%). However, there was a significant difference in boat-trip demand between the main areas: 90% of GW respondents, vs 75% of ES. Again, there are trips already available in Glendale and Waterrnish, so in terms of sea-based activities, familiarity seems to increase demand. (Or it may be that for ES residents, existing well-developed facilities in Carbost, Portree or Uig meet the need.)

NR 2.1. Infrastructure: We asked respondents to rate physical infrastructure relative to evolving demand. Connections most-perceived as stable were electricity, 59% water 61% and parking 46%. 33% considered broadband to be better recently, 26% mobile signal. Perceptions of eroding infrastructure were led by roads (91%) followed by parking (51%) and public transport (41%).

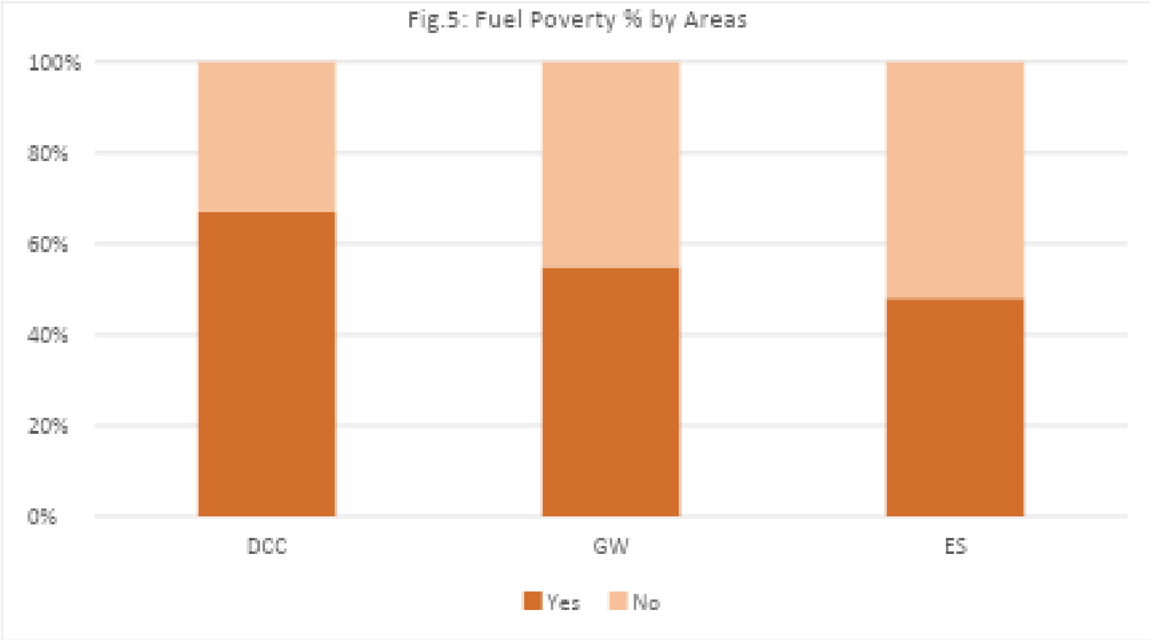
However, aside from roads, there were notable area-based differences. Broadband was the second most-common concern in ES, rated worse by 66%, while public transport was a closer third concern at 56% (Struan is not served by a non-school bus). Meanwhile, broadband actually topped the GW perceptions of improvement (64%). Issues like this show that local service provision is not simply determined by 'very remote rural' or 'fragile' status, or by distance from 'centres' although these are often assumed or used to excuse.

On social infrastructure, there was particular concern everywhere about dental services (80% rated worse) and sheltered housing (49%). Third place for worsening differed: care at home in GW (39%, although 55% said 'don't know') but social opportunities in ES (42%) Delivery and medical services were the main aspects regarded as relatively stable (52% and 49%). Delivery was seen by some as improving (20% overall, but 16% GW vs 26% ES). Again the latter is probably due to being closer to Portree, and it should be noted that improvement may be relative to the breakdown in services over summer 2024.

On heating and fuel poverty, a majority (48% overall) had oil-fired central heating, most (72%) being happy with it. Stoves were next most common at 28%, with 88% satisfaction, then no central heating or electric central heating (22% each, but only 8% happy with none, 67% with electric). 14% of respondents had heat pumps, with 100% satisfaction.

However, responses indicate considerable differences in the housing stock between areas. In GW, as many respondents had no central heating as oil-fired (31% each) and while 82% were happy with the latter, 92% wanted to change from no central heat. 17% of GW respondents use stoves, 83% being happy with them. In ES, 39% had oil heating (69% happily) 27% stoves (89% happy) and 15% each had heat-pumps or electric central heating. Just 4% of respondents from ES had no central heat.

Overall, 60% of respondents said they could easily keep a main livingroom at 21 C all year, but for 53% this would cost more than 10% of income. In GW, only 53% found it easy to achieve 21 degrees, and doing so would result in fuel poverty for 55%. In ES two-thirds of respondents easily achieve that temperature, and 'only' 48% would be left in fuel poverty.



21% of respondents had access to domestic renewables. Of the rest, 30% were happy with this, 44% were not, but unable to change it due mainly to cost. Again, rates varied widely between communities: just 11% in GW vs 31% in ES had renewable technology at home (Struan social housing was an early adopter of geothermal technology). Only 22% in GW were happy without, whereas two-thirds faced barriers (found by just 25% in ES, where 44% were uninterested in installing).

Finally, on potential community shared-ownership, there was especially high support for transport, 94%, sports/leisure facilities (91%) and housing (89%). There was no significant opposition to the concept on any measure, but respondents were particularly unsure about land/forestry management partnerships (45%) and more business units (18%). Housing need was emphasised by GW respondents (94%) transport in ES (97%).

NR 2.2. Volunteering & Support: In terms of needing paid support in the coming decade, 48% felt they would need home care and drivers/help with transport, 46% handypersons. Home helps, handypersons and home carers were anticipated needs for over 50% of respondents. (15% needed handyperson help now, with other current needs for gardeners, 11% and let-cleaners 5%. Respondents from GW reported a high current need for childcare, 7%.)

There was generally support for training in all the options, but comments focused on home care. It is also notable that the overall figures above conceal a notable difference between areas: 39% for all in ES, vs anticipated needs of 60% for homecare and drivers, 55% for handypersons, and c.50% for homehelps and gardeners in GW. This is not just an issue of training: these figures can be projected into a representative-estimate of how many key workers will need to be attracted to and housed in our area as the current population ages across the decade.

NR 2.3. Land, Sea & Infrastructure Projects: The current housing project was rated as essential by 59%, further housing as essential by 52%, and the traffic survey by 45%. Investing in the Hall (68%) Pier upgrades (60%) and foreshore access (57%) topped the desirables overall. These were broadly similar between areas, although ES respondents showed greater consensus on the desirability of foreshore access (64%) and watersports (58%).

NR 3. Transport: The majority of respondents (31%) drive to Portree 2-3x weekly, with 73% weekly or more often. 95% of all go for shopping, 54% for social/leisure, 38% for work/study, 37% for medical or dental care. The majority of ES respondents, 35%, only go weekly, but 52% go more often, for a total of 87% weekly+. The same 35% in GW go 2-3x a week, but only 61% in total go weekly+. Only respondents from Edinbane village (6%) have any alternative to driving there.

There was therefore high support for all the suggested forms of alternative transport, with two-thirds saying they would use a new public bus route, 53% additional footpaths, while 47% would use boat-trips/water taxi.

Support for new bus routes was highest in ES (71% vs 60% in GW) while the opposite was true of footpaths (68% GW vs 39% ES, both communities having reasonable pavements). Off-road mobility devices led the 'Don't need but support' category (79%) with a shuttle bus (65%) and more community minibus routes (60%) strongly supported. There was minimal opposition (12%) to conducting traffic surveys, with 29% saying they would give a few hours to this. Support was particularly high in GW (97% including 10 volunteers).

A slight minority - 47% - agreed that they would need to rely less on cars by 2035, 45% that although they have a car it is difficult/expensive to meet all the household's travel needs. 84% disagreed that the current public transport arrangement – buses only serve Dunvegan Village – is okay. Almost three-quarters disagreed that they could cope with becoming unable to drive. Overall, only 39% felt that transport was no problem for their household, though just 37% in GW, yet 52% in ES.

NR 4. Environment: Asked about local access to local attractions, 71% still enjoy Dunvegan Castle woods, 68% Orbost, 53% Coral Bay. A third no longer enjoy the Castle Gardens, 40% Neist Point and 42% Coral Bay. The Three Chimneys, Seal Boats and Castle interior were least accessed. There were no significant patterns between the local areas. Tourist volume topped the barriers rated very important (68% very important, 91% total importance). Cost was rated important by a total 69%, but traffic/transport topped that at 89%. Lack of interest was the only factor significantly rated not at all important (52%). A quarter of respondents support HC's visitor levy in its current form, 24% a different levy. 51% oppose the current form (just 43% in GW – the most-affected areas – vs 58% in ES). Regardless, all bar one ES respondent agree that such funds must be ring-fenced to the area collected (98%).

The top locally important climate-change impacts across all areas were increasing fuel costs (90%) more frequent severe wind/cold (78%) and coastal erosion (73%). GW respondents rated these higher (93%, 90% and 80%). In contrast, new connectivity-requiring tech (71%) and windfarms (69%) were special concerns for ES after fuel costs (86%).

The impacts regarded as irrelevant were droughts (33%), transition to EV (32%) and onshore windfarms (15% each). The impacts of least certainty were increased lifestyle migration (40%) droughts (32%) and flooding (30%). Broadly, therefore, the former need actions and the issues folk are less certain about need investigation. 79% of respondents are somewhat or more worried about climate change, fewer than one in ten unworried.

NR 4.1. Environment Projects: There was broad agreement on what to do in our area, with the practical options of better access to local food (72%), community renewables (67%) and waste reduction facilities (65%) coming top. Home energy efficiency advice was also strongly supported (63%-59%).

NR 4.2 Transport Projects: Lobbying for better transport infrastructure dominated the projects chosen as essential: improved roads (93%) and disabled accessibility in the Village (59%), as well as our own community transport (53%). Popular practical actions the community could take were our own shuttle buses (51%) and community-owned energy (59% in ES).

NR 5. Sports & Leisure: Potential priorities for a new pitch were variety of ages (85%) and maximum amount of year/weather (80%) although only audience-appeal was notably less important. For desirable sports, football (60%) and circuit-training/HIIT (47%) topped the wishlist everywhere, with GW respondents adding tennis (27%) ES shinty (37%).

For potential leisure activities, dance, music and art options all scored above 85%. There is clearly the demand to sustain all these if they can be organized, and the above monetary/climate costs of driving to Portree would justify paid leaders. A majority of respondents (46%) chose supporting new groups/classes as their first priority (vs new physical facilities, 42% or paid leaders, 45%). New groups were particularly important to GW respondents at 59%. Statistical analysis of comments on preferred leisure activities shows walking mentioned by 30%, with swimming a notable secondary pursuit.

NR 5.1. Music & Culture: Relatively few respondents made weekly use of the Hall (none from GW, nor monthly) most attending a few times a year as a user (78%) or organizer (18/26, 66%). Each of the NW Skye communities has its own Hall, but Dunvegan is most commonly used for gigs and events. All cultural options (music, art, dance, drama) were well-supported, especially for children. For non-trad music, 76% were interested, including 7 players. 72% anticipated attending a Feis, including 18% (n. 10) participating. The majority were unsure-but-interested in accessibility of SMO/UHI, but while 25% had used successfully, 35%

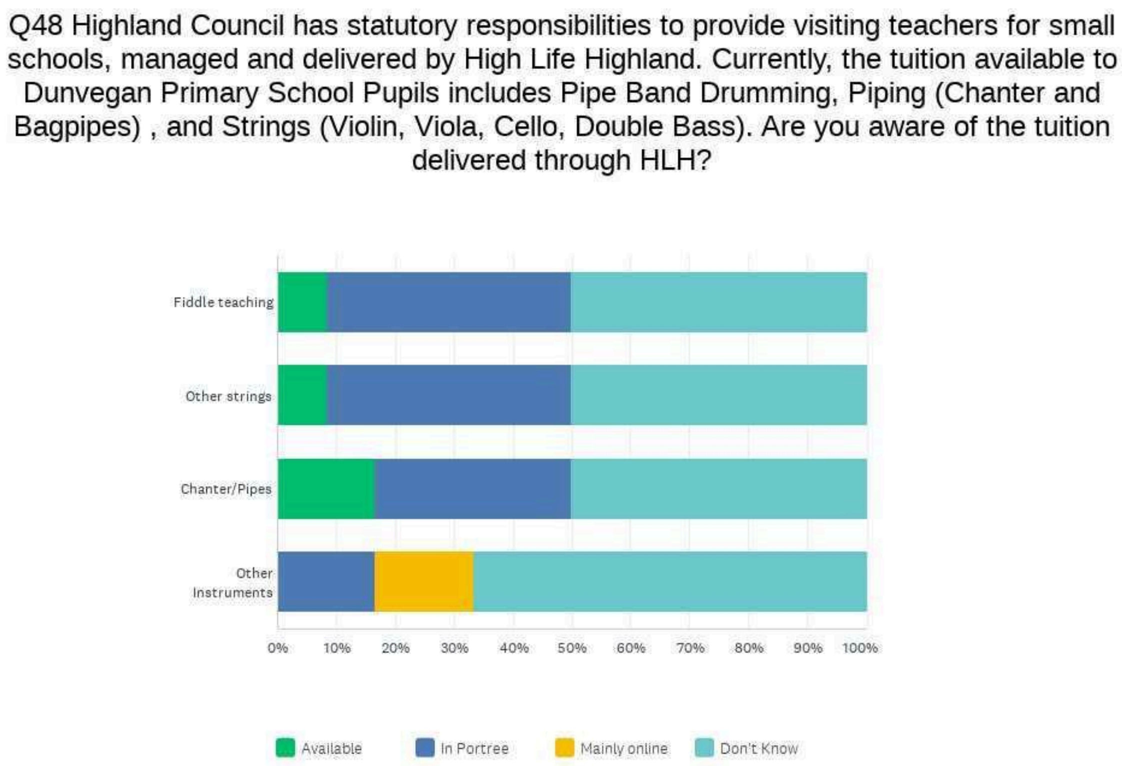
had problems accessing this resource (area differences were on success using vs not yet tried, the same proportion had problems).

NR 5.2. Potential Projects: Investing in Hall was essential to the majority, 55%, followed by regular events in smaller community spaces or outdoor gatherings (48%) and a community pub (or cozy space) 45%. Craft groups were desirable to 62%, a bookswap/community library to 65% (both n.35) and a local history/genealogy group to 59% (n.33).

NR 6. Children & Families: 15% of respondents have children, 8% do not but care for those in their extended family. (77% are fully childfree.) 85% of those caring for children have found accessing formal childcare locally difficult/impossible. 90% of those with children therefore rely on family/friends. ES respondents were particularly childfree (82%) although this is not reflective of the communities.

The only age-range for which local facilities/activities were not overwhelmingly rated poor was pre-school age. For social opportunities, 40% found these okay for pre-school age (vs 60% poor) but 80-87% found them poor for all older children.

Figure 6: Awareness of HLH



NR 7.1. Health & Resilience: We asked respondents to rate 10 aspects for import to their overall wellbeing, their mental health and their physical health. For wellbeing, majorities selected opportunities to socialize (76%) opportunities to exercise (57%) and counselling/advice (44%). The top for physical health were opportunities to exercise (89%), and social opportunities (25%). For mental health, the latter was top (73%),

then gardening/outdoor (64%) with joint-third exercise and cultural/creative opportunities (50%). It is interesting that the same factors are so often repeated, and suggests a notable deficit. Mental health was impacted by the widest range of the designated options.

We then asked how people saw these opportunities evolving to 2035. Folk were most confident that opportunities to exercise (45%) and socialize (29%) would improve. They were generally least confident in the future of 'help or care at home', which 30% envisaged worsening. Around 1 in 5 were also pessimistic about opportunities to socialize, a quarter about help with transport/mobility.

85% overall and across both areas found development of home care essential, followed by local care home (70%) and home helps/meals (68%). However, respondents from GW were less likely to prioritise a care home (65% vs 73% ES) and more likely to regard home-help as essential (73% vs 62% ES). 48% overall and across both areas knew a few or many people in vulnerable groups who currently need more help. 10% said they themselves need more help, 14% in GW, 8% in ES, which difference may result from remoteness. A majority (49%) saw overall need increasing (less so in GW, 42% vs ES 56%).

NR 7.2. Resilience: Two-thirds of respondents were as involved as they wanted to be in the community generally, 48% felt the same about community decision-making (in which non-DCC residents cannot be involved). The highest rate of dissatisfaction with involvement was with other institutions (49%) and at local government level (47%). The highest level of disinterest was in national politics (35%). There were no notable differences between areas on these issues.

Overall, 95% felt some or all HC decisions/services should be devolved to Skye, 4% to a larger area within Highland. One ES respondent was satisfied with the status quo. Respondents from GW were more likely to desire devolution to a larger-than-Skye area (8%, 92% to Skye, 0% none) whereas ES residents were 97% for devolution to Skye, with the one exception. 76% overall would support projects to address local preparedness and resilience, 1 in 5 might do so. The maybe response was stable across areas, whereas certain support was 80% in GW, 70% in ES.

We also asked about how precarious people felt their circumstances to be in our area. Only 16% felt very sure they could stay should their health/finances/family change radically (just 12% in GW, vs 22% ES). The majority overall were somewhat sure – 45% – but 38% were definitely unsure. Again, however, this varied widely between areas. The majority, a full half, in GW were definitely unsure, just 38% somewhat. In ES, only 26% were unsure, 52% somewhat. Again, we can probably point to the differing remoteness of the area groups.

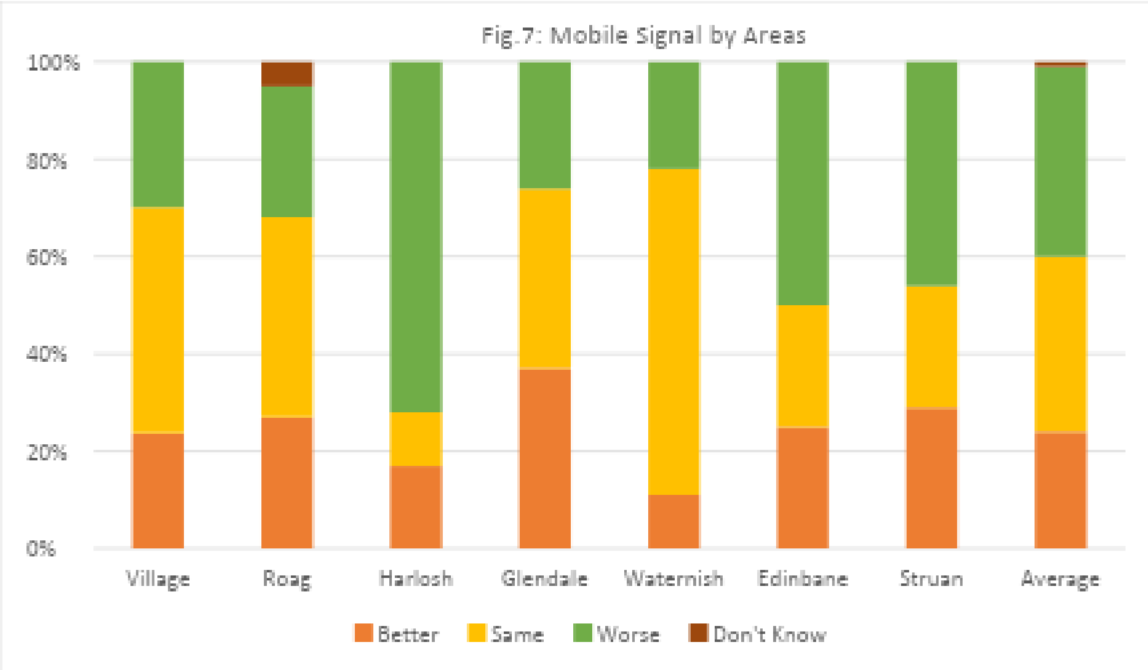
Q61 Apart from the community itself (identified as most-valued in recent surveys) what to you are the best three things about our area?

Q62 And what do you feel are the three most severe lacks here?

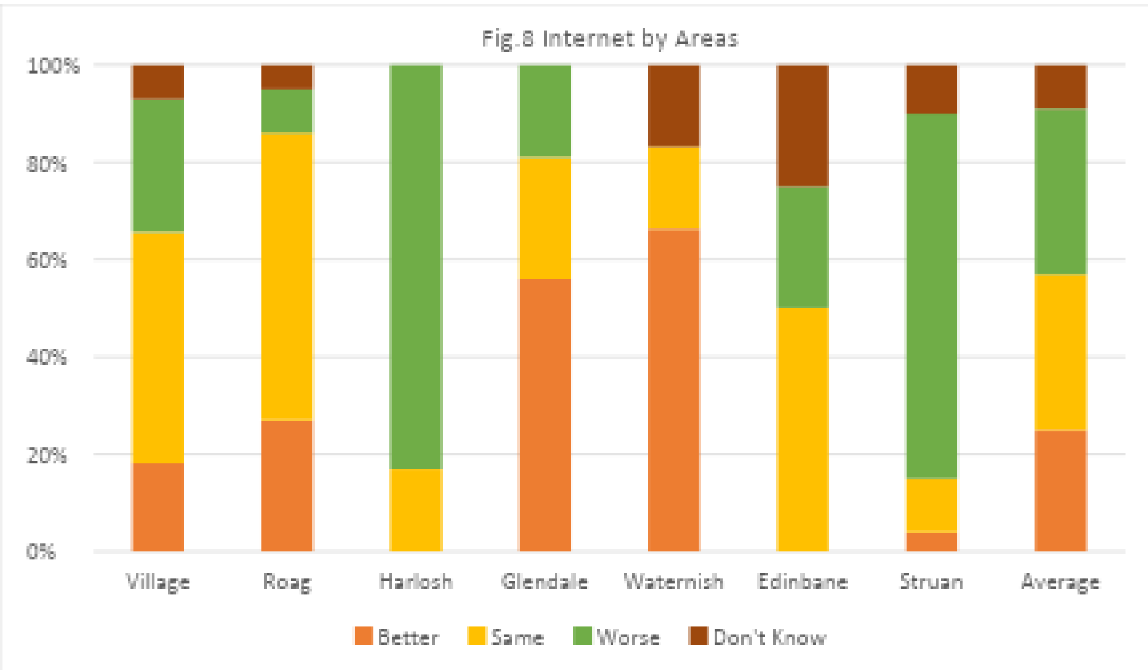
NR 7.3. Resilience Projects: Paths/cycle routes topped the essentials (49%) followed by a local directory (41%) and traffic surveying (40%). Renewables workshops (67%) and disaster resilience (63%) topped the overall desirables, while a community garden/allotments was desirable to 57%. Areas differed mainly in emphasis: GW respondents felt footpaths especially essential (58%) traffic surveying less so (31%) whereas this topped the ES essentials at 50%.

NR 8. Area Breakdowns

We can also look at how respondents from different areas within NW Skye experience basic infrastructures

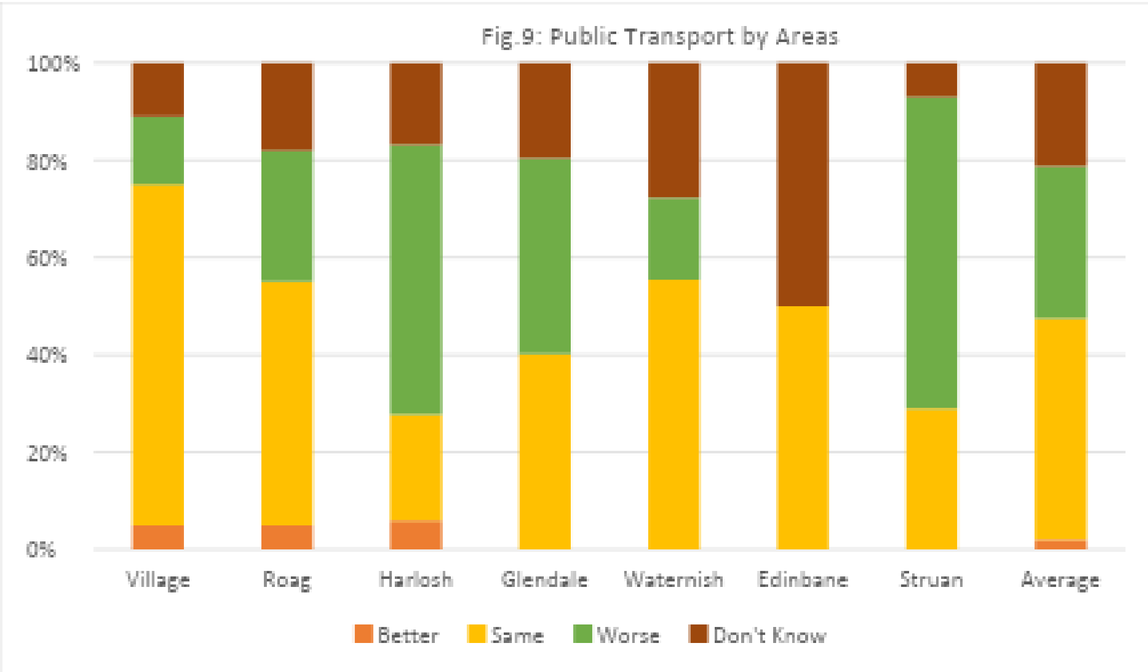


This chart shows how the overall figures (far right) obscure significant differences within NW Skye. On average – of percentages across communities, so not skewed by size – 4 in 10 people feel mobile signal is getting worse relative to demand. But in some places, like Edinbane and Struan, this is closer to half, and in Harlosh, almost three-quarters. Meanwhile, parts of Glendale and Struan are experiencing significant improvements over the 25% average. Few in Waternish feel their signal is improving, but around double the average think it is keeping pace with demand.



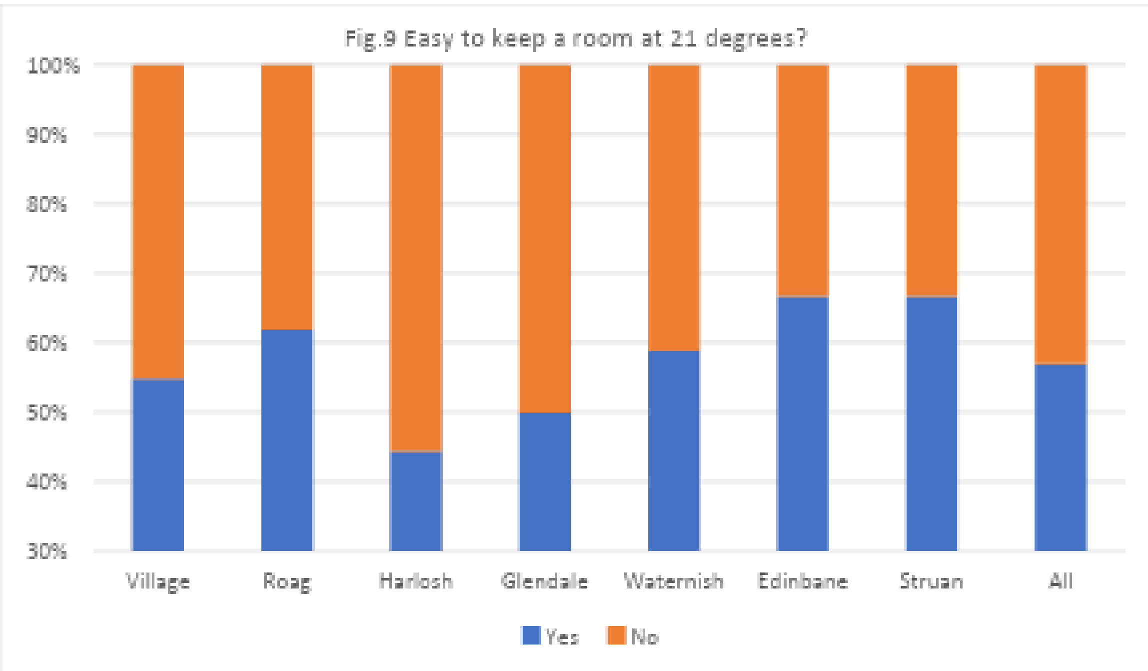
Similarly, despite an average 25% feeling internet service in NW Skye is improving, no-one in Harlosh or Edinbane finds it so. On the other hand, few in Roag or Glendale, and none in Waternish, feel this is getting worse, whereas three-quarters of those in Harlosh and Struan find it so.

NR 8.1 Public Transport Considerable numbers across the board do not engage with public transport, but almost no-ome feels it is improving.

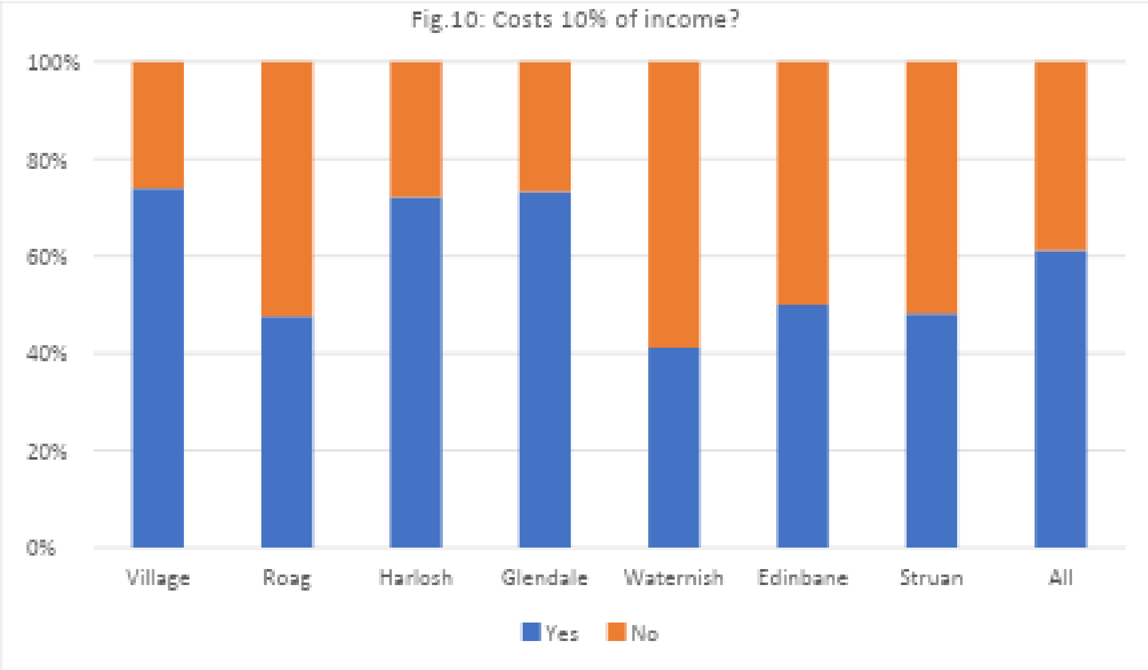


There are major differences between areas where the majority feel transport is worsening – Harlosh and Struan – and those where similar proportions feel it is stable, like the Village, Roag, Waternish and Edinbane (although the first and last are served, the middle pair not).

NR 8.2. Home Heating.



On average (this time numerical) just over 55% of people in NW Skye can easily keep one room at 21 degrees centigrade all year. Yet this ranges from just 45% in Harlosh and 50% in Glendale, to 65% in Edinbane and Struan.



Overall, 3 in 5 people in NW Skye live in fuel poverty (defined as costs of 10% of income or more, regardless that income). But again, the range is from near three-quarters in the Village, Harlosh and Glendale to under 50% in Roag. Struan and Waternish.