



Social Enterprise Plan The Storr, Staffin

Hazel Allen
Athena Solutions
21 Urquhart Road, Dingwall IV15 9PE
t. 07824 510647
e. hazelallen@athenasolutions.org

Contents

1. Executive Summary.....	1
2. Vision, Aims, and Outcomes –what are the Trust trying to achieve?.....	3
3. Community Stakeholders and their Needs	5
3.1. Staffin and its Community.....	5
3.2. Community consultation findings	6
4. Institutional Stakeholders	7
4.1. Scottish Government	7
4.2. Highland Council	7
4.3. Scottish Natural Heritage.....	9
4.4. Highlands and Islands Enterprise.....	9
4.5. Scottish Land Fund	9
5. Customers and their needs	10
6. What activities meet Community, Stakeholder & Customer needs?	11
7. What resources do we need to deliver those activities – Assets, funding, skills?.....	12
7.1. Assets	12
7.2. Purchase and Development Costs	15
7.3. Funding	16
7.4. Skills.....	17
8. What income / surpluses can we generate?.....	18
8.1. Income and expenditure.....	18
8.2. Sensitivity Analysis – income	19
8.3. Impact of financing costs	20
9. What are the risks?	21

List of Figures

Figure 1: Allocation of £979,100 development costs	2
Figure 2: Outputs and Measures.....	4
Figure 3: Percentage age ranges of population, Staffin and Scotland.....	5
Figure 4: SIMD ranking for Storr	5
Figure 5: Map of the Storr area.....	11
Figure 6: Plans for the Arrival Site and Key Features	14
Figure 7: Development costs	15
Figure 8: Funding sought.....	16
Figure 9: Seasonal visitor number assumptions	18
Figure 10: Staffing assumptions – hours per day.....	18
Figure 11: Summary 5-year income and expenditure	19
Figure 12: Annual Cash Flow	20
Figure 13: Summary of Key Risks	21

Appendices

Appendix 1: Extract from Audience Profile Report.....	22
Appendix 2: Options Appraisal Summary	24
Appendix 3 Detailed 5 Year Income and Expenditure	25
Appendix 4 Risk Register.....	26
Appendix 5 Skills Audit.....	28
Appendix 6 Local Press Articles on the Storr Site: West Highland Free Press	30
Appendix 7 Extract from Paper Item 6, 2 November 2016, HC Planning and Infrastructure Committee..	31

1. Executive Summary

The Staffin Community Trust (Urras an Taobh Sear) (“the Trust”) is determined to unlock the economic potential of its community, a remote and economically fragile scattered community in the north-east of Skye.

The Trust has a track record stretching back more than 20 years of building community capacity and infrastructure, including the Staffin Slipway project and, more recently, securing significant investment in visitor amenities including the Ceumannan II or “Ecomuseum” project. While these projects have helped bring welcome visitors to Staffin and encouraged them to stay longer, the infrastructure was not built for the amount of traffic and increasing number of visitors which the district now attracts.

The project site at the Storr sees well over 100,000 tourists per year visiting the internationally-famous Old Man of Storr. These people mainly travel by car but they also use tourist buses and public transport. The site, and particularly the arrival zone, where the car park is situated, does not have enough capacity for this number of visitors. The Highland Council, the current owner, has increased parking at the site by providing a tarred layby at the side of the road. This investment was welcomed but is often at over capacity with vehicles and the opposite grass verge, and other side of the main A855 road, has become an unofficial overspill car park. Road safety concerns have frequently been raised by local residents due to the lack of parking spaces, the number of people alighting from cars onto a busy main road and absence of warning signs. Public sanitation concerns have also been raised by the Staffin community, due to the lack of public toilets, in a major consultation carried out by the Trust in November 2015.

The Trust regards this site as a key “gateway” to Staffin, with approximately 70 per cent of visitors to the Storr travelling on to the local community and other scenic sites. The Trust wishes to acquire the site to help meet its outcomes:

- Increase the economic and social benefit of the site to the community;
- Improve the visitor experience to the Staffin site;
- Improve the site’s natural environment; and
- Integrate the interpretation of cultural heritage at the site with the wider Ceumannan project.

The Trust has carried out consultation with its community and stakeholders to consider what parts of the Storr site it should acquire, and how this helps to deliver its vision. It commissioned an Options Appraisal which concluded that only the arrival zone of the site, where the car park is, could deliver on the economic and social benefit outcomes. Other parts of the site would not help deliver economic outcomes and could provide both an economic and regulatory burden on the Trust.

Research carried out by the Trust into visitors to Staffin and to the Storr site identified four groups;

- Independent travellers, who are were either casual walkers or families;
- Organised groups: backpackers, private coach tours, Columba clients and Gaelic students were less likely to visit the Storr currently as there is little cultural heritage interpretation at this site;
- Nature/heritage enthusiasts who tended to visit Staffin’s coastal sites in search of geological heritage;
- The Staffin/wider Skye community, who use the site for walks.

The research identified that most of these groups arrive at the site with certain expectations that there will be parking and footpaths which are safe, secure and well-signed, and some form of interpretation and information relevant to their interests.

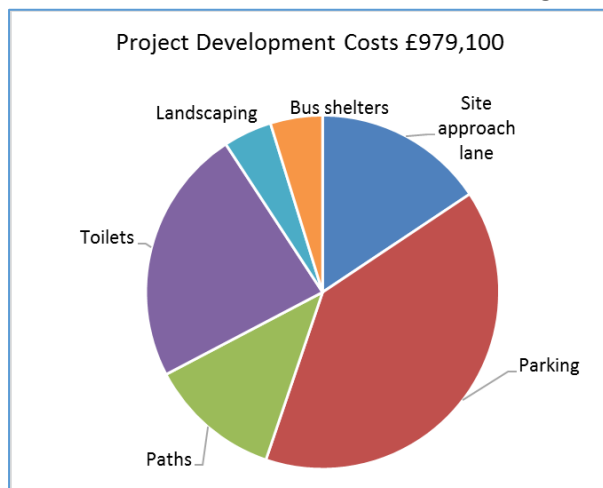
The Trust has commissioned a proposed operations and layout for the arrivals site, which includes the following key features:

1. Increase the economic benefit of the site to the community: people will be encouraged to pay for parking use, to produce a surplus at the site for use by the Trust to achieve community objectives;
2. Increase the social benefit of the site to the community: create employment for 1.8 FTE on average over the year and increasing footfall elsewhere by highlighting other facilities in the area;
3. Improve the visitor experience to the Staffin site: provide 125 spaces for cars and additional spaces for buses, with 30 as overflow spaces; provide shelter for bus users; provide basic toilet facilities, provide paths linking to the main Storr path to avoid visitors walking through the carpark; and provide a short all-abilities trail to a viewpoint.
4. Improve the site's natural environment: Extend and vary the existing native woodland planting around the site
5. Integrate the interpretation of cultural heritage at the site with the wider Ceumannan project: provide a location for interpretation at the site, to be incorporated within the Ceumannan interpretation planning; ensure those employed at the site interact with visitors and provide information on onward travel as required.

The purchase value of the site in its current state has been valued by a surveyor instructed by the Trust at a nominal value of £1,000. Development costs are estimated at £816,000, plus VAT. This is divided into the various areas of expenditure as Figure 1 below:

Figure 1: Allocation of £979,100 development costs

The Trust intends to fund these costs through a variety of sources. It will apply to the Scottish Land



Fund for any balance of the purchase price to the Highland Council, and would intend to make a case for £400,000 for the development costs from Highland Council funds that are presently allocated to site improvements.

The Trust is investigating other potential funds from bodies promoting community sustainability, green landscape improvements, and heritage interpretation. The Trust is also examining the possibility VAT planning for the input VAT of £163,000 to minimise VAT costs.

The Trust forecasts that it will generate a net profit after depreciation of approximately £6,000 per year, with net positive cash flow per year of over £20,000. This requires a compliance rate of 80% on 30,000 car-parking visitors paying on average £2 each; this together with coach and bus parking, will give an income of over £60,000 per year against wages, consumables, and administration costs of just under £40,000 per year. The Trust has carried out sensitivity analysis and determined that these forecasts are robust and achievable.

The Trust is working actively to review and refine forecast costs, determine a phased delivery if necessary, and to identify a mix of grant and community funding.

2. Vision, Aims, and Outcomes –what are the Trust trying to achieve?

The Staffin Community Trust (Urras an Taobh Sear) (“the Trust”) is determined to unlock the economic potential of its community. Staffin is classed as a fragile economic area by Highlands and Islands Enterprise and a lack of permanent employment/affordable housing, an ageing population and the loss of young people in search of work elsewhere are just some of the major challenges it faces. Staffin relies increasingly on tourism as an economic generator and the Trust seeks to ensure that the community can secure long-term benefits from the popularity of the district and enhance the experience of the increasing numbers of visitors.

Staffin is one of the Gaelic heartlands of Skye. It has the biggest percentage of Gaelic speakers in Skye, with 50 per cent of the population fluent in the language.

The Trust’s objective is to improve Staffin’s economic prospects, stimulate social and cultural activities and improve services, with the Gaelic language an integral part of its vision.

The Old Man of Storr is an iconic landmark in the Isle of Skye which enjoys a national and international profile. Year-on-year it attracts increasing numbers of people and more than 121,000 visitors were recorded in 2015, up by approximately 30,000 people from 2014. In 2016 approximately 150,000 people were estimated to have visited the Storr. The Trust views the Storr as a vital entry point and economic driver for the community in the north-east of the island. Around 70 per cent of Storr visitors continue their journey north along the A855 road to visit Staffin and further afield.

The Highland Council’s paper to the Asset Management Board noted that:

“This is an exciting project with potential to deliver significantly to a variety of Council priorities, not only realising the full potential of communities, involving and empowering communities in new and better ways through both partnership working and community land ownership, but also delivering positive rural impacts in this remote location, enabling best use of opportunities for external funding, supporting the economic benefits derived from tourism through improvements in visitor experience, contributing to health improvements through promotion of access to the countryside; and supporting communities to do things for themselves.”

The Storr Project is the latest in a series of significant infrastructure projects undertaken by the Trust. The Trust continues to deliver the Skye Ecomuseum (Ceumannan) project which seek to enhance the visitor experience and interpret cultural heritage at key landmarks in Staffin, and the Slipway project, which seeks to enhance vital infrastructure to enhance the economic prospects of the area. The Trust is also working with its partners to deliver six new affordable houses and business unit in Staffin.

The Trust’s aims for this project are to:

- Increase the economic and social benefit of the site to the community;
- Improve the visitor experience to the Staffin site;
- Improve the site’ natural environment; and
- Integrate the interpretation of cultural heritage at the site with the wider Ceumannan project.

The Trust has identified the measurable Outcomes, Outputs and Measures for the project, in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Outputs and Measures

Outcome	Outputs	Who will benefit?	Measurement
1. Staffin will achieve increased sustainable economic development through the acquisition and redevelopment of the Storr site.	Direct creation of employment training and volunteering Indirectly through increased footfall for local business, linked directly to activity at the site	People of working age in Staffin and locality (250)	Direct jobs increased by 1.8 FTE Indirect jobs increased by 2 FTE
2. Staffin will achieve increased sustainable social development through the acquisition and redevelopment of the Storr site.	Increased economic activity enabling the retention of people and families	People of all ages in the community (500)	Community purchase of asset to generate income of £20,00 by year 5 for social benefit
3. The Staffin community, and in particular the Trust, will be more empowered, and have a greater capacity to lead and control the development of the Storr site	Continued development of a strong Board to provide effective leadership Continuing community engagement in the development of the site	People of all ages in the community (500)	Effectiveness of Community consultation on site development at least annually at AGM and before each phase of development
4. Staffin’s natural heritage will be better managed and in better condition	Preparation and delivery of a development scheme which maintains and enhances the site’s natural heritage	People of all ages in the community (500) Visitors to the site (120,000)	Asset development and funding as per business plan, to maintain and managed assets in better condition Positive comments and feedback by visitors e.g. Tripadvisor
5. Visitors will learn about Staffin’s cultural heritage	Incorporation of the Storr site into the Ceumannan interpretation programme	Visitors (120,000)	Positive comments and feedback by visitors e.g. Tripadvisor
6. Residents and visitors to the site will have had an enjoyable experience	Improved visitor infrastructure; parking, facilities, manned site, interpretation	Visitors (120,000)	Positive comments and feedback by visitors e.g. Tripadvisor

3. Community Stakeholders and their Needs

3.1. Staffin and its Community

Staffin has a resident population of more than 500 people who live in 23 different crofting townships dotted around Staffin Bay and the Trotternish Ridge. Staffin is a community still experiencing significant net outmigration. Staffin’s resident population fell by 30 people from 608 residents to 568 individuals, between 2009 and 2013; a drop of 4.9 per cent. Meanwhile, Portree, which has had significant housing developments built in recent years, has seen its population grew by 11 per cent in the last decade.

Staffin also has a significantly ageing population, with a population gap as young people leave the area in search of education, training or employment. Some return and others enter the population in their 50s, either returning to the family croft once their parents are no longer able or willing to manage, or “downsizing” from another region.

Figure 3: Percentage age ranges of population, Staffin and Scotland

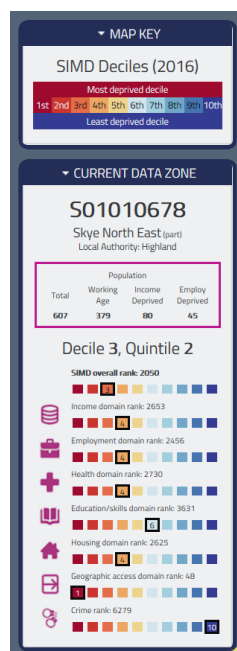
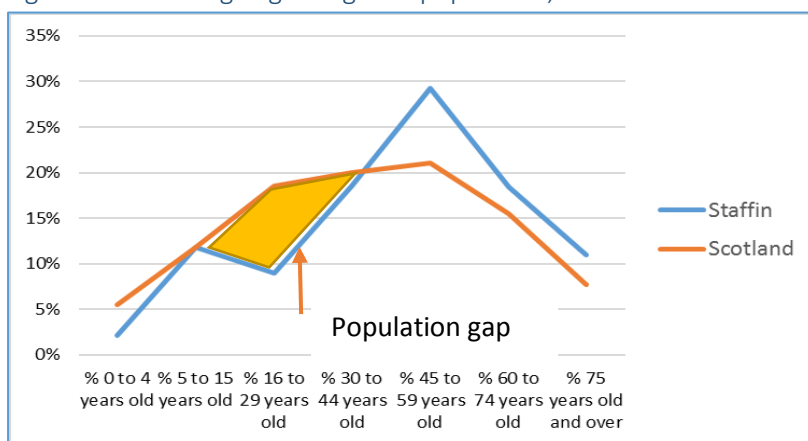


Figure 4: SIMD ranking for Storr

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation confirms the picture of a society with significant challenges. Overall, Staffin is in the lower third of Scottish Society. Income, employment, health, and housing are all below the Scottish average. The population is above average for educational attainment, although only 5% of its young people go on to full time higher education; there is a very low crime rate, but the community are very remote from large centres of population and the services and economic opportunities that go with them.

The averages also hide a wide variety of individual situations. 22% of working age adults are income deprived (receiving income-related benefits), and 12% are unemployed and seeking work.

The Highland Council has submitted evidence¹ to the Scottish and UK Governments on poverty in its region; key findings are that:

- The SIMD does not capture or reflect the scale of the problem within rural areas. The index itself shows that in Highland 90% of income and employment deprived people live outwith the areas where deprivation is

¹ 2006 Evidence to the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmselect/cmsscota/ucxxx/00117.htm>

concentrated; and

- High fuel costs, high but essential transport costs, higher food costs, and hard-to-heat homes, coupled with poorly paid part-time and full-time work, all mean that the cost of living is far higher in remote rural areas than in urban areas with the same measures of SIMD; and that extreme fuel poverty (where more than 20% of income is spend on heat and light) is prevalent in remote areas in the Highlands and particularly in Skye.

The focus of the Trust, on behalf of its community, is to ensure that income generated in Staffin stays in Staffin, providing maximum benefit to the community. This project will contribute significantly to that outcome.

3.2. Community consultation findings

The economic opportunity identified by the Trust was not the main concern driving engagement by its community. The community were primarily reacting to the visitor management issue at the Storr site. The survey carried out by the Trust in late 2015 focussed on:

- Potential improvements at the Storr car park;
- Support for the Trust managing, leasing, or purchasing the site;
- Parking and toilets; and
- Refreshments.

The survey had a 55% response rate, of 140 households from 255 hand-delivered to households. The excellent number of responses were noted in the survey's conclusion which stated that "having the Directors and the Trust's Local Development Officer discuss the project on doorsteps while delivering the survey undoubtedly encouraged residents and business owners to ensure that their voices were heard".

Key findings were:

- Very significantly in favour of the community purchasing managing the site, with 86% in favour;
- Very significantly in favour of a larger car park, with 96% of people agreeing that lack of parking created congestion and road safety issues. 63% supported charging for parking, particularly if the income was going towards the upkeep of the Storr and other local projects, with a fee of around £1-£2
- Significantly in favour of providing toilets at the site, with 88% agreeing;
- Significantly in favour of promotional information on Staffin businesses; with 61% rating this of high or very high importance. The respondents were by a smaller margin in favour of paid advertising;
- In favour of interpretation of geology, history, and wildlife.

People were also strongly in favour of safety signs on the road to slow traffic, and a bus stop at the site.

The proposals for a refreshment kiosk were polarised. While there was an overall majority in favour of a kiosk to support the running costs of the site, there was a significant minority strongly against this provision as it would compete with existing providers in Staffin.

The comments made in the survey made it clear that the community were very aware of the potential conflict between the "wild" experience anticipated by visitors, and the necessity of appropriate provision for over 100,000 visitors per year.

4. Institutional Stakeholders

4.1. Scottish Government

The Scottish Government has two key strategies which this project helps to deliver.

Firstly, "[Tourism Scotland 2020](#)" focused on driving growth in Scotland's key markets by strengthening key assets and building the industry's capabilities. The 2016 mid-term review identified four focused priorities going forward, including the following:

- Enhance the Quality of the Visitor Experience
- Influence Investment, specifically.....built infrastructure, ...and business growth finance.

The Storr is a nationally important site and economic driver for international visitors to Scotland. It has featured in billboards in Australia and India in VisitScotland campaigns and countless films, magazines, commercials etc giving a significant boost to this country's tourism industry.

One of this project's key aims is to ensure that "residents and visitors to the [Storr] site will have had an enjoyable experience" through "improved visitor infrastructure; parking, facilities, manned site, interpretation" (see section 2 above).

The site is currently under significant pressure from the number of visitors; this has been reported in the Highland media (see [Article](#) from August 2016 on a local petition, and Appendix) and has been brought to the attention of Ministers by the local MSP.

Secondly, the Scottish Government is committed to communities being supported to do things for themselves – [community empowerment](#). The Staffin community, represented and supported by the Trust, proposes to make use of the powers provided in the Community Empowerment Act relating to community asset transfer, in order to ensure that a local asset is managed directly by and for the economic and social benefit of the community most impacted by its management.

The Trust, through this project, seeks to deliver three outcomes which directly relate to community empowerment (See Section 2):

1. Staffin will achieve increased sustainable economic development through the acquisition and redevelopment of the Storr site;
2. Staffin will achieve increased sustainable social development through the acquisition and redevelopment of the Storr site;
3. The Staffin community, and in particular the Trust, will be more empowered, and have a greater capacity to lead and control the development of the Storr site.

One of the Scottish Government's main agencies for the delivery of this strategy is the Scottish Land Fund, which has specific targets and outcomes relating to community ownership of assets (see Section 4.5 below).

4.2. Highland Council

The Council is the landowner for the Storr Woodland and arrival zone sites. Both Councillors and officers have indicated broad and very positive support for increased community management of the Storr sites. They recognise the potential benefits to the Staffin community of asset ownership and management, and this Social Enterprise Plan will demonstrate how those benefits will be secured. In considering community asset transfer, the Scottish Government requires through the

Community Empowerment Act that the Council consider whether asset transfer would promote or improve:

- economic development;
- regeneration;
- public health;
- social wellbeing;
- environmental wellbeing; and/or
- reduce inequalities; and
- involve people experiencing disadvantage.

The outcomes set out by the Trust for this project relate to economic development; community regeneration; social wellbeing; and involve people experiencing economic disadvantage; and therefore deliver the Scottish Government's requirement for asset transfer.

The Council also has a duty to ensure public health and safety; and to consider economic development of the region. They wish to ensure that the proposals address current road safety concerns, residents' public sanitation concerns, and the potential adverse impacts on any part of the Storr site of any proposals. There is also a strategic issue that by focusing on the Storr site, or the Storr and other sites in Staffin, these sites are managed without a view of the visitor experience to North Skye as a whole.

The Council has been proactively working with the Community Trust to find a solution for the visitor management issues at the Storr site. Council officials presented a report to the Planning, Development, and Infrastructure Committee at its meeting on 2nd November 2016. The Report (included in Item 6) stated:

6 Storr Woodland, Staffin

6.1 Works are ongoing to secure the establishment of new native woodland on the approach to the Old Man of Storr. The popularity of this site continues to grow with approximately one hundred and fifty thousand (150,000) visitors in 2016.

The site is of very great significance to tourism and economic development in this relatively remote area of Highland. Designs are in preparation for significantly enhanced parking capacity in order to alleviate traffic congestion.

6.2 The P&F team continues to work very closely with the Staffin Community Trust in developing proposals for greater community involvement, which interest has been separately reported to the Asset Management Project Board (19 April 2016). The **shared vision is that innovative partnership working between the Council and the Trust will enable both to deliver more than either could achieve alone**. This will enable the community to utilise the Council's capital allocation for parking improvements as match funding to secure additional external investment for the provision of much needed toilet facilities and other visitor management improvements. In addition it will create local employment and contribute to sustainable community development. The Trust is expected to be in a position to confirm detailed community aspirations to the Council by December 2016.

6.3 **This project supports the Council's Priorities outlined in paragraph four above**. It also makes a significant contribution to improvements in the quality of visitor experience and related issues at a time when these are under immense pressure from increasing visitor numbers, particularly on Skye.

(bold format added for emphasis in this Plan)

4.3. Scottish Natural Heritage

SNH has a strong interest in the Storr site, as it is part of the Trotternish Special Area of Conservation and as the woodland area is a Special Site of Scientific Interest managed by Highland Council under an agreement with SNH. SNH's previous SAC Site Condition reports have noted their concerns relating to grazing pressure on the Trotternish Ridge and crofted area, and around the Old Man of Storr itself as paths erode the vegetation.

SNH is a statutory consultee for any planned changes to the site infrastructure.

4.4. Highlands and Islands Enterprise

HIE has a three-fold approach to enabling economic growth and strengthening communities across the Highlands and Islands. This is:

- investing in building community capacity, confidence and business skills;
- empowering communities to acquire, manage and exploit community assets for community benefit;
- enabling sustainable growth in the social economy through strong social and community enterprises.

HIE has provided support to the Trust both in funding and by providing support through its Community Account Management and Maximising Community Assets programmes.

The outcomes set out by the Trust for the site relate to building community capacity and sustainable growth through the acquisition and economic development of an asset and therefore support HIE's objectives.

4.5. Scottish Land Fund

The SLF helps to fund asset purchase by community groups. The Land Fund will fund the purchase of land or land assets which can contribute to the overall sustainability of a community; ensure that communities have a stronger role in their own development; and that assets are well managed and financially sustainable. The strongest projects will:

- demonstrate broad community support
- serve a wide range of people and needs
- generate an income for the community
- make a clear contribution to the overall sustainability of the community.

The outcomes set out by the Trust for the site have been widely supported by the community at a series of community events. The Trust carried out a major consultation survey in November 2015. Two drop-in events were held in Staffin during the Options Appraisal, as well as regular updates to Staffin Community Council by the Local Development Officer and frequent updates via a local newsletter, the Trust website and press releases featured in the local media. The proposals would generate an income for the community and, by using the site as a direct link to other enterprises in the community, make a clear contribution to its overall sustainability. While the site itself will be primarily set to meet visitor needs, the income and employment benefits from the site will be enabled by the Trust to meet the wider needs of its community.

5. Customers and their needs

The Trust carried out extensive research work into visitors to Staffin, most recently as support for the Ceumannan II project to improve and enhance the visitor experience at other key Staffin sites. The Trust carried out visitor surveys, questioning more than 100 people, in August 2014 at three key Ceumannan sites: Kilt Rock, Lealt Waterfall and the Storr. An Audience Profile report written by the Trust and the consultants Muir Associates reviewed existing research and information, and compiled the results of the visitor surveys. It stated that: *“There has been a steady increase in visitors to the Storr, from approximately 25,000 people passing electronic counters 10 years ago to more than 90,000 people in 2014. Of that total, it was calculated by Highland Council’s transport department following traffic surveys that 70 per cent of those visitors will travel further north and explore the rest of Staffin.... It is expected that recent parking improvements at the Storr will see the site register more than 100,000 visitors by the end of 2015.”*

The Audience Profile report identified four main groups and their needs (please see Appendix 1 for more detail):

Independent travellers, who are were either casual walkers or families. These two groups preferred easy access to the sites, stayed on the beaten track, and arrive at the sites with certain expectations that there will be parking, and footpaths which are safe, secure and well-signed.

Organised groups: backpackers, private coach tours, Columba clients and Gaelic students. These groups visited the site for their own particular focus. Backpackers and private coach tours in particular were unlikely to have time for the full walk to the Old Man or Storr. Columba clients were young people undertaken organized outdoor adventure activity, who may walk to the Old Man; Gaelic students were less likely to visit the Storr currently as there is little cultural heritage interpretation at this site.

Nature/heritage enthusiasts who tended to visit Staffin’s coastal sites in search of geological heritage.

The Staffin /Skye Community, who visited the site for walks and recreation.

For these groups, there is a clear expectation that give the relatively short space of time spent at any site, from 15 minutes for organised tours to a maximum of three hours for causal walkers:

- The sites are accessible;
- The signage is clear
- Footpaths and activities appropriate to their interests are at sites which they have researched beforehand;
- There is interpretation in their own area of interest.

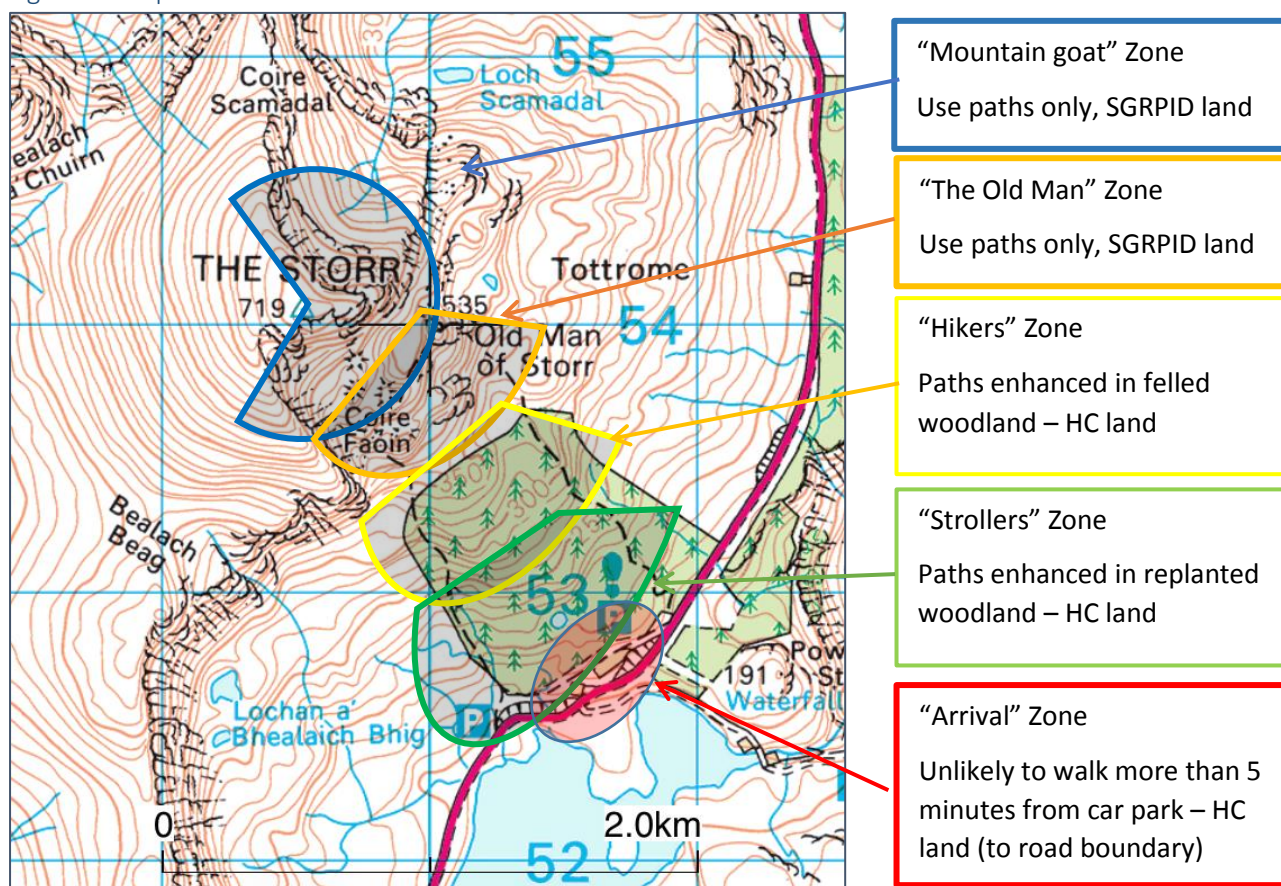
For all these groups at the Staffin site, the first part of the site they will experience is the car parking itself. All visitors, whether or not they continue the walk up towards the Old Man of Storr or beyond, stop at the arrivals part of the site. There is a tendency to consider car parking provision at the Storr simply as necessary infrastructure; there is an opportunity instead to enhance the experience of each visitor to the Storr.

6. What activities meet Community, Stakeholder & Customer needs?

The Trust commissioned a Feasibility Study and Options Appraisal to consider what activities at the site, or combination of activities, best met its needs and those of its community, while intersecting with those of its stakeholders. It is worth reiterating that the Trust’s primary concern is to deliver its objective of unlocking the economic potential of its community. In so doing, it should at best enhance and at least not adversely affect the interests of the other stakeholders in the project. To achieve that economic objective, the Trust should ensure that the customers have their needs met by the services it provides.

The Options Appraisal considered the Storr Site in five parts, relating to access and ownership. These are shown diagrammatically on the map below.

Figure 5: Map of the Storr area



The Options Appraisal considered the outcomes that could be delivered from the various areas of the Storr sites, against the likely costs and risks, including ownership/ tenancy risks. Please see Appendix 2 for a summary of the Option Appraisal findings.

The Options Appraisal concluded it was that only the arrival zone of the site which would enable the Trust to deliver direct economic benefit to its community, although enhancements to this part of the site were likely to cost the most to deliver. This was also the only part of the site where every visitor could engage with cultural interpretation; other parts of the site would be inaccessible due to time or walking abilities. While the remainder of the Storr site is clearly under some visitor pressure, for example at the Old Man itself where SNH has raised concerns about path erosion, this is manifestly not adversely affecting the visitor experience to such an extent that it reduces visitor numbers to Storr or to Staffin. Outcomes relating to visitor experience can be delivered through improving their arrival point at the site.

7. What resources do we need to deliver those activities – Assets, funding, skills?

7.1. Assets

The community and stakeholder consultation identified the requirement for key enhancements to the Arrival Zone in terms of the outcomes sought:

1. Increase the economic benefit of the site to the community:
 - Ensure that the arrival site had a sufficient positive visitor impact that people were encouraged to pay for parking use, to produce a surplus at the site;
2. Increase the social benefit of the site to the community;
 - Ensure that the mechanisms for managing the site created direct employment in site management and indirect employment in encouraging visitors to travel north;
3. Improve the visitor experience to the Staffin site;
 - Provide adequate parking for cars and buses while restricting overnight use of the site by campervans by providing height restrictions at the entrance;
 - Provide shelter for bus users;
 - Provide basic toilet facilities, with cold running water and no heating, encouraging use but not encouraging overnight stays;
 - Provide paths linking to the main Storr path to avoid visitors walking through the carpark;
 - Provide a short all-abilities trail to a viewpoint.
4. Improve the site' natural environment;
 - Ensure that the site design fitted in to the wider landscape;
 - Extend and vary the existing native woodland planting around the site, to hide the carpark from sight and instead provide a continuum of woodland from the higher hill sites
5. Integrate the interpretation of cultural heritage at the site with the wider Ceumannan project;
 - Provide a location for interpretation at the site, to be incorporated within the Ceumannan interpretation planning;
 - Provide a location for other visitor amenities to be advertised at the site;
 - Those employed at the site to interact with visitors and provide information on onward travel as required.

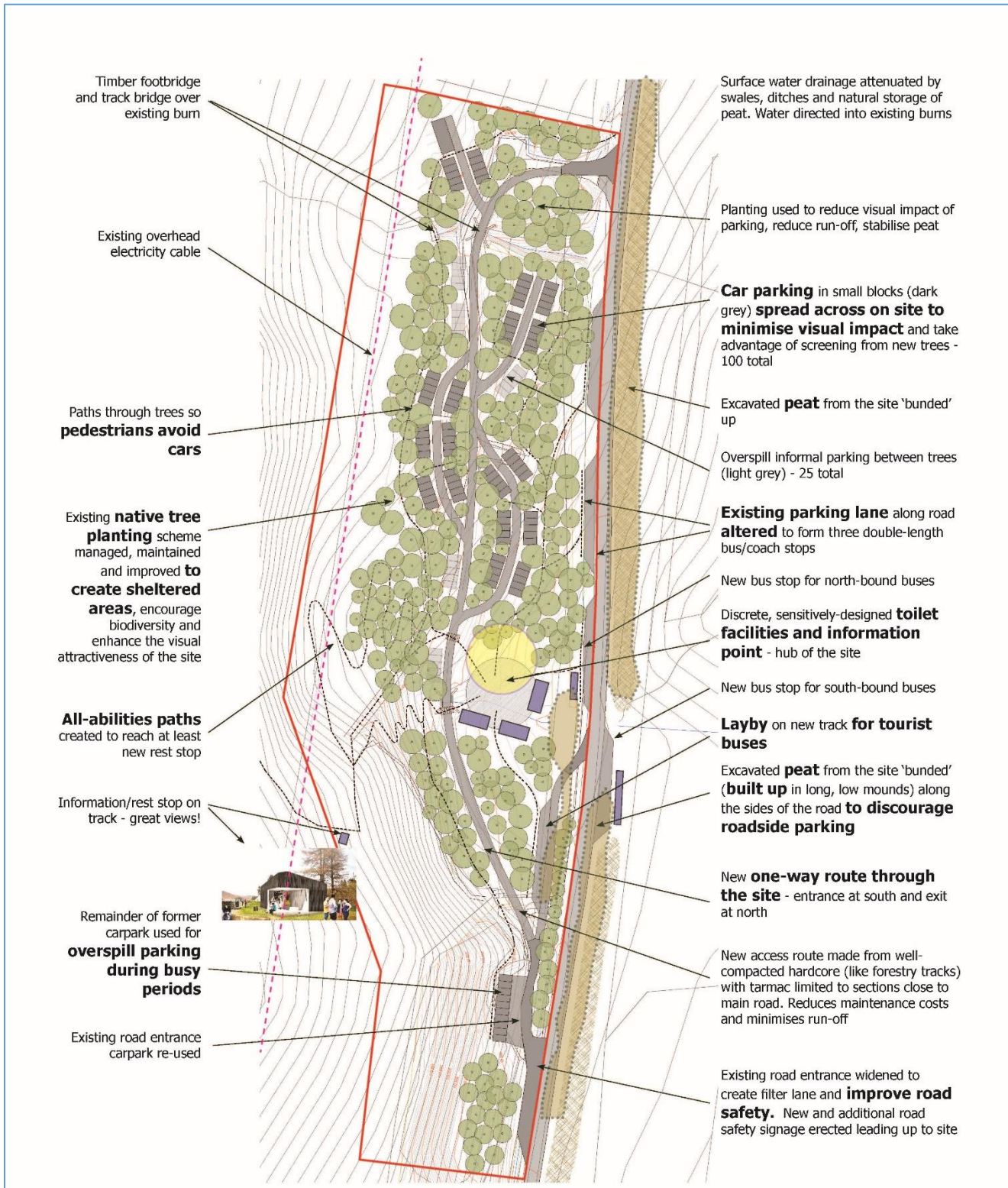
The community were consulted on the draft and pre-final site layouts, to capture their ideas for how the Arrival Site might be best set out to incorporate these requirements. Stakeholders including Highland Council members, planning and roads officials, SNH, the residents living next to the site, SEPA, SGDRIP, Police Scotland, VisitScotland and the Skye Mountain Rescue Team have also been consulted. Any comments made have been incorporated in the design; as the project progresses and more information is available, for example on ground conditions and peat types and depths, amendments may be required.

The Staffin Community Trust has reached the final design selection through a long concerted public consultation approach which took into consideration the extensive public feedback leading to a design that is fit for purpose, sustainable and sufficient to cope with the increased demand on the site. The size and cost of the project reflects the importance of the site for tourism within Skye and should be considered as strategically important and worth of the investment.

The proposed design and key constructions are as shown in the design provided over at Figure 6.

The site will provide parking for 100 cars, with another 20 accommodated in the existing carpark and “overspill” of 25 as informal parking between the trees. The total of 145 spaces far exceeds the current total of around 75 and addresses the issue of dangerous parking on the roadside. The capacity is sufficient to address current requirements although maximum reported use at peak weekends of 150+ cars will not be accommodated and the parking attendants must manage this. There will be separate parking for buses and coaches in the current laybys at the side of the road.

Figure 6: Plans for the Arrival Site and Key Features



7.2. Purchase and Development Costs

The purchase valuation of the site is £1,000.

Development costs have been separated in terms of the elements of the Arrival Site, to take account of restricted or outcome-specific funding sources.

These costs are from a Quantity Surveyor cost based on a per square metre estimate using the layout drawing; and information from the Highland Council's peat depth survey. The Trust instructed two Quantity Surveyors to ensure robust costing for this exercise, and is using the costs derived from a locally-based QS who has recent experience of building projects in North Skye. More accurate costs will be derived from a full ground and peat survey, and from more detailed architectural drawings, as the project develops.

The estimated costs are shown below.

Figure 7: Development costs

	£	£
Site approach lane	98,535	
Parking & tracks	248,612	
Paths	76,125	
Toilets	73,750	
Interpretation (1 hut, gathering space)	73,750	
Landscaping	28,000	
Bus shelters	30,000	
Total build cost		628,595
Preliminaries 8%	50,288	
Contingencies 10%	62,860	
Design team fees 10%	74,174	
Total net cost		815,916
VAT 20%		163,183
Total cost		979,100

These costs exclude:

Project management; Statutory fees;
All works associated with interpretation and local information

Costs allow for all necessary building up of sub-bases etc below tracks to avoid kerbs and piped drainage systems

Cost estimate for buildings includes provision of hot water ONLY for cleaning and health & safety provision for any staff

Design includes for up to 125 parking spaces, drop off space for coaches within the site, tarmacked entrance/exit points

Proposed buildings do not include heating or hot water.

7.3. Funding

The Board are considering a variety of funding sources to assist in this ambitious project.

The Scottish Land Fund will assist with the costs of additional detailed surveys and architectural plans, to further the development of the site.

Highland Council has set aside £400,000 to improve the amenities at this site, and have indicated that this funding may be available to assist in a project that delivers their outcomes for the site. The Trust has been asked to submit a proposal to the Asset Management Board for consideration.

Elements of the site relating to heritage and interpretation could be fundable by sources including those already supporting Ceumannan II. The Trust secured £10,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund in September 2016 to design and deliver an attractive “welcome”/gateway” interpretation structure and a new site panel.

The Green Infrastructure Fund, although primarily aimed at urban communities, is also aimed at communities of multiple deprivation such as Staffin. This project could contribute to Outcome 3 – Increasing community engagement and participation in green space; and Outcome 4 – Increasing place attractiveness and competitiveness. Interpretation, landscaping, and paths may come under this heading.

The new [Social Economy Growth Fund](#) may also provide part funding for this site, given the SIMD and fragile economic status of the north-east of Skye.

The Trust is also considering VAT planning to assist in the fundability of the site. Under the Capital Goods Scheme, the Trust should consider if it plans to have any supplies of exempt services using the asset, which will then restrict recovery of input VAT on construction. As it will be used entirely to generate VAT able income, VAT advice provided through the DTAS – funded advisory service is that the Trust should consider registering this business for VAT, reclaiming the VAT on the build costs of £163,183, and then losing VAT on the income for the 10-year period required by the CGS – a total of £107,000. Overall, this would result in a net reduction in the gross costs VAT payable of £56,000 and also reduce the up-front funding required by 20% of costs.

Figure 8: Funding sought

Total net cost		815,916	
Total cost		979,100	
VAT 20%		163,183	Funded by VAT registration
Total net cost		815,916	
Assumed funding from Highland Council	400,000		
Funding to be found	415,916		

7.4. Skills

The SCT Directors are highly skilled and experienced, and many have previous and current experience in designing, developing, and managing community assets. A full skills audit is shown at Appendix 5.

SCT Directors have significant experience in:

- Funding and fundraising: organising events, sourcing grants, and preparing reports and claims;
- Managing people: recruitment, employment contracts, managing staff, managing volunteers, working with young people (under 16), performance management, employment law, disclosure requirements and regulations.
- Governance & management: chairing/facilitating meetings, directors' responsibilities, managing a business, negotiating contracts and agreements, solving disputes / mediation, preparing business strategies and plans.
- Project management: project development, project management, risk management.
- Buildings: managing a facility (bookings, usage), managing a facility (organising repairs and maintenance), overseeing building repairs, managing new build.
- Other relevant skills: visitor management, land management, and community engagement

SCT Directors have less collective experience in the following, but have members who do have significant experience:

- IT skills
- Communications
- Financial book-keeping and reporting
- Companies House and Charity Returns

SCT Directors have little experience in contract preparation, land transfers, and conveyancing but use the Trust's lawyers to assist in these matters.

8. What income / surpluses can we generate?

8.1. Income and expenditure

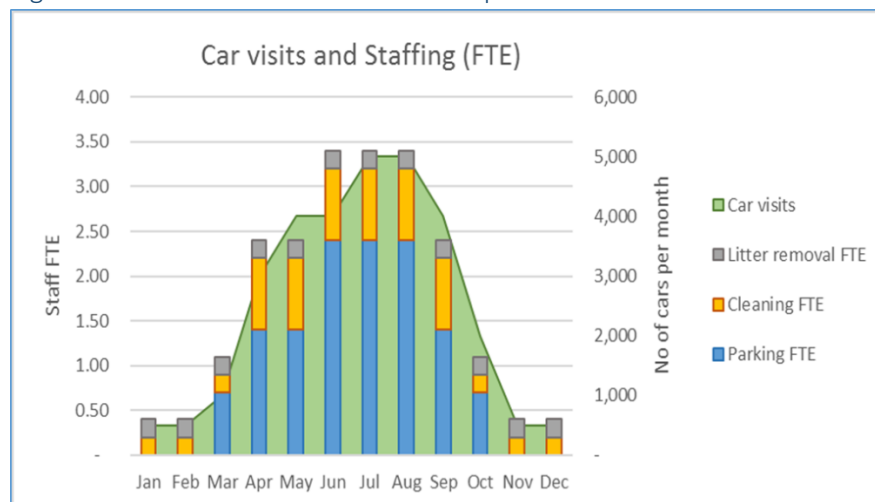
The Storr site is visited by over 100,000 people a year, and this number continues to grow as pictures of the iconic “Old Man” are seen around the world via social media and international VisitScotland advertising campaigns. The Ceumannan project will continue to assist the improvement of the visitor experience in Staffin, and almost every visitor will have driven past, and may well have stopped at, the Storr site.

Income and expenditures for the site are based on the experience of other community and landowning bodies who charge for parking at natural heritage sites. Key factors in the successful collection of income from visitors are provision of an added-value experience at the site; information that the site is run by the community to benefit the community; and manning the site to encourage compliance. It is also important to have enough functioning ticket machines.

Income calculations are based on 30,000 car visits per year, with 80% compliance and an average parking charge of £2; and 1,200 bus or coach visits per year at £10. The parking charges are expected to range from £1 for an hour or less, £2 for over an hour up to 3 hours, and £3 for the full day.

The carpark income will be seasonal, reflecting the pattern of visits to Skye. Locals report that the months of April and October are increasingly busy as visitor numbers increase, particularly visitors who are not tied to school holidays and are seeking out more solitude than is possible in the busy summer months. Visitor numbers are shown graphically in Figure 5 below.

Figure 9: Seasonal visitor number assumptions



The staffing model has been built to reflect the visitor numbers, please see Figure 6 below. Staff will be required to manage the site and monitor ticket purchase; to clean the toilets; and to help maintain the site free of litter.

Figure 10: Staffing assumptions – hours per day

Staffing Hours per day, 7 days per week				
	Nov to Feb	Mar, Oct	Apr, May, Sept	June, July August
Parking		3.5	7	12
Cleaning	1	1	4	4
Litter removal	1	1	1	1

It is anticipated that parking staff and cleaning staff will be available for more hours, with doubling of staff at peak times, during the summer months. During the winter, there will be no presence at the site except a daily visit to clean the facilities and to collect any litter. This daily visit will also help ensure that any weather-related maintenance issues are quickly identified for remediation.

The other costs to run the site will include maintenance of the parking machines, consumables for the WCs, and ongoing maintenance of the site. Feedback from organisations running visitor carparks built to this specification is that maintenance requirements are minimal and require only a “scrape and fill” operation annually.

Other costs relate to the administration of the organisation and include accounting fees, administration costs for managing the staff and the purchasing, and site and officer insurance.

Revenue is lower in the first year as it is assumed that the site is transferred by the start of the main tourist season in June 2017, and run as it is for that period. Improvements will be made in the autumn and winter of 2017/18, weather permitting, and be fully operational in April 2018.

Income, costs, and surpluses are shown in Figure 7 below. A detailed income and expenditure is given at Appendix 3.

Figure 11: Summary 5-year income and expenditure

Year ending March:	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Revenue – cars	22,400	48,096	49,539	51,025	52,556
Revenue – bus	2,000	12,000	12,360	12,731	13,113
Total revenue	24,400	60,096	61,899	63,756	65,669
Wages	10,465	25,166	26,217	28,060	28,996
Operating expenses	4,575	8,100	8,100	8,100	8,100
Administration costs	2,650	3,200	3,200	3,200	3,200
Net earnings	6,710	23,630	24,382	24,396	25,373
Depreciation	8,525	17,800	17,800	17,800	17,800
Net surplus (Deficit)	(1,815)	5,565	6,220	6,472	7,573

The surplus generated will be important to the future of the Trust and for other projects it seeks to undertake for the economic and social benefit of its community, building on its successful track record with the Ceumannan project in significant investment in tourism infrastructure and enabling the Trust to gain financial viability.

8.2. Sensitivity Analysis – income

The Trust has carried out sensitivity analysis on the income and expenditure. It has considered 4 variances as below.

Reduction in compliance rates: these are assumed at 80%, based on the experience of other community trusts elsewhere. Every reduction of 5% in compliance costs the Trust £3,000 in lost income.

Car park tickets at £1 per visit – this would reduce income by £24,000 per year and is not affordable. Breakeven analysis is that revenue must be at £55,000 per year to meet the running costs and to cover depreciation.

Car park tickets at £3 per visit – this would potentially increase income by £24,000 per year but compliance is likely to drop below 80%. If it dropped to 60% there would still be an increase in income of £6,000.

Increase in staff hours in the low season weekends: if staff were employed for 3 hours per day in the low season weekends (November to February) this would increase costs by £900 per year. This would be affordable, would increase compliance in the off-season, and may reduce ongoing maintenance by early identification of issues and with winter maintenance.

8.3. Impact of financing costs

The Trust has considered alternatives to grant funding, including loan funds. These are becoming increasingly available to asset-owning community bodies with a strong economic case. The Trust has a strong positive cash flow per year, as Figure 8 below.

Figure 12: Annual Cash Flow

Year ending March	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Baseline profit	(1,485)	5,565	6,220	6,472	7,573	8,965
Add back depreciation	8,525	17,800	17,800	17,800	17,800	17,800
Deduct meter HP repayments		(3,107)	(3,328)	(3,565)		
Cash generated per year	6,701	20,258	20,692	20,707	25,373	26,758

However, the high capital costs mean that significant loan funding is very unlikely. For example, if the Trust borrowed £150,000 per year at 5% for 15 years to assist with development costs, this would cost £14,200 in interest and repayments per year, taking up two-thirds of the cash surplus and costing £63,400 in interest over the loan period.

If the Trust registered for VAT, this would save £163,183 on VAT on construction costs and lose 20% of income – just under £10,000 per year. This would cost £107,000 for 10 years before the Trust could de-register for VAT.

In the worst case, the Trust could both register for VAT and borrow £100,000 (requiring £9,500 repayments plus interest per year) but this would reduce the cash surplus to almost £nil each year.

9. What are the risks?

The Trust has considered the risks to the purchase, the build development, and to ongoing activity. These are provided in full in the risk register at Appendix 4. The Trust has identified a number of “high” risks and mitigations, which are set out in Figure 9, below. Any costs of mitigating actions are included in the financial forecasts.

Figure 13: Summary of Key Risks

Risk	Issue	Mitigation
Funding packages cannot be obtained	Site/building/purpose not perceived by funders as delivering sufficient benefit /financial viability compared to capital cost Council unable to provide £400,000 earmarked funds to project	Discussions with funders at early opportunity Clarify “essential” and “nice to have” in build programme to reduce costs if necessary Obtain VAT advice to ensure minimum possible VAT impact Identify separate funders for different aspects of build costs
Construction /not complete in projected timescale	Delay in construction / refurbishment due to weather affecting build timescale/delays in permissions	Maximise extent of off-site construction and prefabrication of any building elements to minimise construction period on site Time allowed for construction is 6 months; extension to 9 months until June 2018 will delay but not critically impact operation and gain.
Construction costs higher than anticipated	Peat surveys /ground conditions/island transport costs	Early commissioning of ground survey, peat survey; obtain sufficient detailed architectural drawings to obtain tenders
Site capacity reached early and is too full	Visitor numbers rise due to external factors	The Trust has had early consideration of the need for a holistic visitor management plan in Staffin /Trotternish, including “hop on, hop off” community run bus service.

Appendix 1: Extract from Audience Profile Report

The following analysis is extracted from the Trust's Audience Profile Report for the Ceumannan II project identifying the visitor groups and their needs.

1. INDEPENDENT TRAVELLERS

Casual walkers - Ceumannan's "mainstream market" includes middle-aged to older people (aged between 40-75-years-old) and couples (aged between 25 and 55) who have travelled to the Highlands, and specifically Skye for a general "do it all" holiday. During their holiday, they will try and visit as many popular Skye locations as they can and a trip to the north of the island/Staffin is a key part of that. They will be mostly reliant on private cars ... At most, a three-hour walk with ample opportunities to take photographs of the scenery will be undertaken. The landscape and the vistas are what engages them.

Families – Ceumannan attracts families with toddlers and children up to the age of 12. They're looking to explore Staffin, find easily accessible walks and something to do with their children. They will walk for a daily total of about three hours but with ample stops for photographs, food and refreshments.

These two groups enjoy the easy access to the sites which are close to the A855, like the Storr, Lealt Waterfall, Kilt Rock and Quiraing, and are not so adventurous about going off the beaten track. They arrive at the sites with certain expectations that there will be parking, footpaths which are safe, secure and well-signed. The Ceumannan interpretation panels and waymarking are appreciated by this audience.

2. ORGANISED GROUPS: backpackers, private coach tours, Columba clients and Gaelic students.

This market relates to four sub-groups: The backpackers' bus market; locally-run people carrier/minibus private hire tours, Columba 1400 clients and SCT's Gaelic in the Environment course participants.

Central-belt based companies, such as Rabbie's Trail Burners and Haggis Adventures, run regular overnight bus tours to Skye, with Staffin a popular stopping point. The backpackers are generally younger people, aged between 18-35. They are looking to see the Highlands over three or four days but have a rigid schedule the company has devised. They are regular and at times prolific users of social media. Sharing their visitor experience during and afterwards, again by using images on their personal accounts, is very common for this audience. The views and scenery are the big reason to stop, although the walks are also of importance, but they have limited time in which to go on a major long walk.

The Skye-based tours are generally targeted at groups of about eight people and are aimed at families/group of couples who are on holiday together and want to see the island without using private car or bus. The tours generally take a day. The customers are generally aged 40-65-years-old. They are looking to see the main attractions but at their own pace and are also keen to access the unique local knowledge and information that the driver can provide.

The Staffin-based leadership centre, Columba 1400, and its client groups are frequent users of Ceumannan. <http://www.columba1400.com/> Around 300 people annually attend Columba for its programmes. This audience is generally in the age bracket 16-25, mostly from urban backgrounds in the UK. Outdoor activities, mostly in and around Ceumannan locations, forms an integral element of Columba's teaching and consistently ranks high on their former students' feedback afterwards.

SCT has been running Gaelic immersion courses for several years, and Ceumannan is the integral setting to the teaching. The 10-day environment course spread over two months is aimed at fluent Gaelic speakers and advanced learners. This market is generally aged between 28 and 65, with a background in, or command of Gaelic. The students learn to recognise plants and animals by their

Gaelic names, and in their natural habitats.

3. NATURE/HERITAGE ENTHUSIASTS

Staffin comes under several major national environmental designations and is a key destination for “nature tourists” who have an interest in landscape, wildlife, fauna and geology. This audience is generally an older age group who travel by private car and have done some research into Staffin beforehand, or have a long-term knowledge of the area. They will generally seek out Ceumannan II’s coastal sites including An Corran, Brogaig and Loch Shianta, where the prospect of searching for fossils excites them.

4. THE STAFFIN COMMUNITY

Local residents (non-crofters) and the Staffin crofting townships. SCT’s board has been delighted by the use of the Ceumannan pathways by local crofters, at all times of the year. The feedback from the townships in Staffin is that they have become invaluable. Another audience is the residential Staffin community who take walks as a leisure activity, or with their pet dogs.

Appendix 2: Options Appraisal Summary

		Outcomes sought by Staffin Community Trust:					
	Owner-ship	Increased economic and social sustainability to Staffin	Natural Heritage in better condition	Visitors will have learnt through interpretation	Visitors will have had a better experience by improving:		Comment
Part of Storr site					Paths	View / landscape management	
Storr summit	SGRPID	None	Walkers not noted by SNH as causing damage	Small – most do not visit the summit	Low	Low	Mountain path costs likely to be very significant
Old Man of Storr	SGRPID	None	Path erosion noted by SNH	Medium	Medium	Low	Estimated at £70,000 by Trust – removed from Ceumannn II bid
Upper (now felled) woodland	Highland Council	None	SSSI management agreed with SNH	Low – may increase if regeneration allows natural heritage interpretation	Low - Medium	Medium – high May regenerate naturally	Paths improved as part of HC woodland management in 2013-14 Other action would require change to Forest Plan
Lower replanted woodland	Highland Council	None	SSSI management agreed with SNH	Medium –high: archaeological interpretation possible All but organised tours likely to visit	Medium if all-ability paths	Medium – high ("green screening")	Paths improved as part of HC woodland management in 2013-14 Other action would require change to Forest Plan
Arrivals site	Highland Council	Charging	Requires consultation with SNH re SAC	High – stopping off point for all visitors	High	Medium - high	Highest cost but only element of project with a direct economic return

Appendix 3 Detailed 5 Year Income and Expenditure

Year Ending March	2018 (B)	2019 (F)	2020 (F)	2021 (F)	2022 (F)	2023 (F)
Revenue						
Car tickets	22,400	48,096	49,539	51,025	52,556	54,132
Bus tickets	2,000	12,000	12,360	12,731	13,113	13,506
Total Revenue	24,400	60,096	61,899	63,756	65,669	67,639
Net Operating Expenses						
Total Salaries & Wages	(10,465)	(25,166)	(26,217)	(28,060)	(28,996)	(29,581)
Machine maintenance	(1,575)	(2,100)	(2,100)	(2,100)	(2,100)	(2,100)
Consumables	(3,000)	(4,000)	(4,000)	(4,000)	(4,000)	(4,000)
Car park maintenance	-	(2,000)	(2,000)	(2,000)	(2,000)	(2,000)
Total Operating Expenditure	(4,575)	(8,100)	(8,100)	(8,100)	(8,100)	(8,100)
Professional fees	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)
Administration Costs	(900)	(1,200)	(1,200)	(1,200)	(1,200)	(1,200)
Insurance	(750)	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)
Total Other Expenses	(2,650)	(3,200)	(3,200)	(3,200)	(3,200)	(3,200)
Net Operating Expenses	(17,690)	(36,466)	(37,517)	(39,360)	(40,296)	(40,881)
EBITDA	6,710	23,630	24,382	24,396	25,373	26,758
Total Depreciation & Amortisation	(8,525)	(17,800)	(17,800)	(17,800)	(17,800)	(17,800)
EBIT	(1,815)	5,830	6,582	6,596	7,573	8,958
Net Interest Expense	-	(265)	(362)	(124)	(0)	(0)
Net Profit Before Tax	(1,815)	5,565	6,220	6,472	7,573	8,958

Appendix 4 Risk Register

Risk	Issue	Likelihood	Impact on project	Rating to project	Mitigation
1. Pre-purchase Risks					
1.1	Purchase price requires additional fundraising	High valuation and Council does not transfer at an undervalue	Medium	Low	Purchase price immaterial compared to overall capital cost; site is currently a concern and issue to the Council that requires more investment than Council funds allocated.
1.2	Community does not pass ballot for purchase	Fear of risks; concerns over displacement of income	Low	High	Low Community engagement indicates that this is a low probability. Maintain ongoing engagement during purchase and fundraising process.
2. Project Delivery Risks					
2.1	Funding packages cannot be obtained	Site / building / purpose not perceived by funders as delivering sufficient benefit / financial viability for high capital costs	High	High	High Discussions with funders at early opportunity Clarify “essential” and “nice to have” in build programme to reduce costs if necessary Obtain VAT advice to ensure minimum possible VAT impact Identify separate funders for different aspects of build costs
2.3	Construction/not complete in projected timescale	Delay in construction / refurbishment due to procurement, consents, and regulations	Medium	High	High Maximise extent of off-site construction and prefabrication of any building elements to minimise construction period on site Time allowed for construction is 6 months; extension to 9 months until June 2018 will delay but not critically impact operation and gain.
2.4	Construction costs higher than anticipated	Peat surveys/ground conditions/island transport costs	Medium	High	High Early commissioning of ground survey, peat survey; obtain sufficient detailed architectural drawings to obtain tenders

Risk	Issue	Likelihood	Impact on project	Rating to project	Mitigation	
3. Delivery risks						
3.1.	Road safety issues not remedied	Car park capacity insufficient for future visitor numbers	High	Low	Medium	Trust have had early discussions on the need for a holistic visitor management plan in Staffin /Trotternish, including “hop on, hop off” community run bus service.
4. Overall costs						
4.1	Expenditure higher than estimated	Staff requirements and wages costs higher than anticipated	Medium	Low	Low	Flexible staff arrangements are critical to success.
4.3	Expenditure on repairs & maintenance higher than expected	Inappropriate build materials/specification leads to much higher wear and tear	Low	Medium	Medium	Involvement of forest road engineers to ensure construction and specifications are appropriate.

Appendix 5 Skills Audit

Staffin Community Trust' Board	Skills as of 16.1.17	Donald MacDonald	Sandy Ogilvie	Angus Ross	Gordon Higgins	Dugald Ross	Ian MacDonald	Sine Gillespie	Roddy Gillies	Martin Farquhar
Funding & fundraising	Organising fund-raising events	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
	Identifying grant sources	X		x	x	x		x		
	Preparing funding applications	X		x	x			x		
	Preparing grant claims	X		x	x			x		
Managing people	Recruitment	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Employment contracts	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Managing staff	X	x	x	x	x	x			x
	Managing volunteers	X	x	x	x	x		x		x
	Working with young people (under 16)	X	x	x	x	x	x	x		
	Performance management	X	x	x	x	x	x		x	x
	Employment law	X	x	x	x	x	x		x	x
	Disclosure requirements and regulations	X	x	x	x	x	x		x	x
Governance & management	Chairing / facilitating meetings	X	x	x	x			x		x
	Governance: Directors' responsibilities	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Managing a business	X	x		x	x	x		x	x
	Negotiating contracts and agreements	X	x		x		x	x	x	x
	Resolving disputes / mediation	X	x		x				x	x
	Preparing business strategies and plans	X			x	x	x			x

Staffin Community Trust' Board	Skills as of 16.1.17	Donald MacDonald	Sandy Ogilvie	Angus Ross	Gordon Higgins	Dugald Ross	Ian MacDonald	Sine Gillespie	Roddy Gillies	Martin Farquhar
Project management	Project development	X			X			X		X
	Project management	X			X		X		X	
	Risk management	X			X		X		X	X
IT skills	Using email	X								
	Using Word or similar	X								
	Using Eccel or similar	X								
Communications	Using social media – FB	X								
	Using social media – Twitter									
	Updating websites									
	Designing websites									
Finance	Book-keeping			X						
	Preparing budgets			X						
	VAT returns									
	Financial reporting			X						
Legal and regulation	Charities & Companies House returns ; Legal aspects of Land and Asset purchases							X		
Buildings	Managing a facility (bookings, usage)	X	X			X				X
	Managing a facility (organising repairs and maintenance)	X	X			X			X	X
	Overseeing building repairs	X	X			X	X		X	X
	Managing new build	X				X	X		X	
Other relevant skills	Visitor management	X	X		X	X	X	X		X

editor@whfp.com

comment
beachd

Friday 12 August 2016 15

Editorial

The rise of Skye tourism, and the failure of the authorities to respond

The growth of the Skye tourist industry is a global phenomenon.

As our Focus article this week reflects, Skye is now an international destination. It is possibly the most visited attraction in Scotland after Edinburgh.

The island has had some kind of tourist industry for over 100 years. It has gone from being a favourite of Victorian climbers and socialites to an adventure playground for 20th-century British holidaymakers.

In the early 1970s the late Derek Cooper, who was always eager to look for benefits to his ancestral home, wrote that only in midsummer was it possible to visualise Skye as it might have been back in the middle of the 19th century, when the resident population was over 20,000 and Skye was a very busy place.

As Cooper might have predicted, even those days have now been left behind. British tourists were rapidly augmented by visitors from Europe and America, and as we entered the 21st century people began to arrive from all over the world.

In August 2016 Somerled Square is as cosmopolitan a patch of land as you will find anywhere in the United Kingdom.

Far from attracting 10,000 or 20,000 visitors, now they arrive in their hundreds of thousands.

We may assume that every single visitor to Skye does not go to Dunvegan Castle. But in July this year alone no fewer than 82,000 people, almost ten times the total resident population of the whole of Skye, paid to do just that.

The season is longer, stretching now well into September and even October. The total number of annual Skye tourists can only be estimated, but half a million people would be a reasonable guess.

It is this year affected by such phenomena as the post-Brexit strength of the Euro (and most other currencies) against the pound — overseas visitors to the UK get more bang for their buck.

But regardless of currency exchange rates the overall trend is up, up and up. Skye's regular appearance in lists of the world's must-see islands, its contribution to blockbuster films which showcase its eternal beauty, and the recent dramatic improvements in the quality of its catering all contribute to a trend which shows no signs of slowing down and gives every sign of increasing as the years pass.

That is a good thing. Tourism is a profitable industry. Its rapid growth has contributed enormously to the resurgence of Skye's economy and population. Tourism is easily the island's main source of revenue and employment. Proportionately, more people work in tourism in Skye than anywhere else in Britain.

Skye is a big island with a big heart. It can cheerfully accommodate a few hundred thousand paying customers for part of the year.

Given that we have no control over our temperamental weather, Skye can be trusted not to let itself down. Its people will continue to rise to the challenge.

The same cannot be said of outside authorities.

Scandalously, there is still no air service to and from Skye. That means that almost every visitor to Skye must arrive by road, and will explore the island by road. In doing so, hundreds of thousands of visitors contribute to the deterioration of an already failing road system with which residents have to cope for the rest of the year.

Car parks are crammed or non-existent. Bizarrely, rather than being increased to cope with demand, public toilets are being closed by Highland Council — with the insanitary results that have frequently been reported in these pages.

Ferry services have been undermined and we still have nothing approaching an adequate, integrated public transport system. The island's total number of hospital beds is likely to be reduced.

The people may be bearing up, but the infrastructure of the island is creaking at the seams.

In the face of these evident problems Hugh MacLeod of MacLeod and others have suggested the implementation of a Skye Tourist Tax.

It is an interesting notion which has been applied in such European tourist hotspots as Venice and Ibiza.

Its introduction to Skye would however be fraught with difficulty, chiefly because unlike Venice and Ibiza the island has no autonomous local authority.

Who would set and collect such a tax? Who would distribute the revenue? How could it be invested in such essentials as the roads, which are already the responsibility of Highland Council and the Scottish Government?

More importantly, visitors to Skye already do pay taxes. Every time they buy a meal, or a bed for the night, or a souvenir, tourists contribute something to the exchequers of our regional authority and our two parliaments in Edinburgh and London.

The more tourists there are, the more they contribute. Why should we further burden, and possibly alienate, our visitors by making them pay twice for basic civic services?

The problem is not raising the money but getting it reinvested at source. That is a matter for our elected representatives at all levels.

If the Highlands, and Scotland, and the United Kingdom really want to maintain one of the world's top tourist destinations, they have a responsibility to keep that place in working order.

The island and its people are already playing their part. It is time for local and national government to step up to the mark.

*Appendix 7 Extract from Paper Item 6, 2 November 2016, HC Planning and Infrastructure Committee***Storr Visitor Management (Staffin) £400k**

Designs in preparation for delivery to dovetail with community aspirations for partnership working / ownership.

This allocation is intended to make a substantial contribution to essential, significant visitor management improvements at Storr, which it is anticipated can be delivered through an innovative approach to working in partnership with the local community through the Staffin Community Trust. Whilst the allocation is insufficient in itself to enable delivery, it is intended to enable the community and Council to secure significant external funding.

Staffin Community Trust (SCT) has a strong interest in greater involvement at Storr as a 'gateway to Staffin' and a positive working relationship has been established between Highland Council (including Ward Members), SCT, Highlands & Islands Enterprise Community Assets Team and the Community Ownership Support Service. Members of the Projects & Facilities Team have undertaken a number of research trips together with representatives of SCT in order to explore partnership models for delivery appropriate to Storr and dialogue is continuing with a view to establishing a mechanism for joint delivery.

This is an exciting project with potential to deliver significantly to a variety of Council priorities, not only realising the full potential of communities, involving and empowering communities in new and better ways through both partnership working and community land ownership, but also delivering positive rural impacts in this remote location, enabling best use of opportunities for external funding, supporting the economic benefits derived from tourism through improvements in visitor experience, contributing to health improvements through promotion of access to the countryside; and supporting communities to do things for themselves.

Highland Council ownership at Storr Woodland comprises an 82 hectare site through which passes Core Path access to the Old Man of Storr as well as a more accessible circular path. Native woodland restoration is underway and information and interpretation infrastructure is due for refurbishment (see Storr Native Woodland above). Storr attracts in the region of 120000 visitors per annum. Allowing for an average daily visitor spend of £50 pppn, and given the fact that this is the major tourist attraction in this remote area, it is reasonable to say that the site supports a tourism spend in the region of £6 million per annum. The site ranks third (after Quiraing and Neist Point) on Tripadvisor for 'things to do in Skye'.

There are no toilet facilities at Storr which is to the detriment of both the quality of the environment and the visitor experience.

Current parking provision at Storr is extremely inadequate. The small car park and roadside layby were supplemented in 2015 by an extension to the layby, so doubling the number of spaces from 23 to 46. Traffic survey indicates a peak parking demand approaching 80 cars with vehicle movements are frequently unsafe placing pedestrians at risk. Safety concerns are exacerbated by widespread verge parking which adds to the dangers for both drivers and pedestrians.

Whilst there has been significant past capital investment in this site, it is now recommended that further substantial investment is essential to manage the issues arising out of such high visitor numbers. The intention is not to increase the number of people visiting the site, but to adequately attempt to manage those who are visiting, particularly in respect of road safety and environmental health.

Preliminary investigations have been undertaken and proposals drafted for development of the former timber loading area into a new car parking area providing up to 76 additional parking spaces. Further investigations are underway in relation to these proposals which are complicated by extreme peat depths and slump topography. Early construction cost estimates for the likely preferred option are in the region of £500k.

Research is underway into the most cost effective approach for delivery of toilet facilities at Storr, these now being considered not just desirable, but absolutely essential. Although no cost estimates are currently available, these can reasonably be expected to be significant and with ongoing revenue expenditure implications for running costs.