

## **RATHLIN ISLAND POLICY – RESULTS OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

### **Introduction**

The consultation period for the draft Rathlin Island Policy was officially launched by Conor Murphy; Minister for Regional Development on the 10 June 2009 at an event on Rathlin Island. The event was attended by MLAs, Councillors, and representatives from Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, National Trust, a large number of islanders and members of the press. Over 200 copies of the document were issued to organisations and individuals seeking their views and opinions. To also help publicise the launch of the draft policy; advertisements were placed in a number of local newspapers.

### **Consultation Period**

The consultation period ran for a period of 17 weeks concluding on the 7 October 2009 with a consultation event held on Rathlin Island attended by around two thirds of the islanders.

### **Responses Received**

A total of 15 responses were received from different organisations and individuals with a combined response from the Islanders.

1. **Royal Society Protection Birds**
2. **Ulster Wildlife Trust –**
3. **Mrs Barnes**
4. **Planning Service –**
5. **Judith Annett (Countryside Consultancy) –**
6. **Augustine (Gusty) McCurdy –**

7. **Moyle District Council –**
8. **Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside –**
9. **Ulster Society for the Protection of the Countryside –**
10. **Limavady Borough Council –**
11. **Islanders –**
12. **Northern Ireland Tourist Board –**
13. **National Trust –**
14. **Northern Ireland Environment Agency –**
15. **Northern Ireland Housing Executive –**

### **Summary of Responses**

All the respondents were supportive of the policy, aims, and objectives of the draft Rathlin Island Policy, and also the proposed Forum and Action Plan. A number suggested that the Action Plan acknowledge and take into account other existing strategies and arrangements, e.g. Rathlin Island Sustainable Tourism Strategy 2005-2015, Northern Area Plan, Housing Survey and a Memorandum of Understanding reached between National Trust, RSPB and NIEA. Two individuals responded about repairs to stone walls on the Island and issues about housing, education, and the acquisition of land.

A detailed summary of the responses received is also available.

### **Amendment of the Policy**

The consultation prompted a policy amendment regarding post primary education provision, particularly the lack of boarding schools in the area. This amendment was provided by the Minister of Education.

### **Action Plan**

Work has begun on developing the Action Plan. This will set out in detail how the Policy will be taken forward and how the issues raised will be addressed. A Forum will be established to monitor progress chaired by the Minister for Regional Development and will include Island representatives and senior officials from relevant Government Departments and local bodies.