



Urram's response to: Redevelopment of Dail Mhor Site, Strontian Feasibility Study

We are grateful to Duncan MacPherson and Faye Macleod, as well as Alan Dickson of Rural Design architects for carefully examining the physical and financial options for providing residential care, a medical care facility, new village hall, and sheltered houses on the Dail Mhor site in Strontian. We want to thank all those who contributed, from the NHS Highland, Highland Council, the Communities Housing Trust and with special thanks to all the members of our communities who contributed their time and energy to provide the ideas and support that will be essential to developing the facilities available across Acharacle, Ardgour, Morvern, Sunart, and West Ardnamurchan.

This feasibility study received financial support from; Highland Council, NHS Highland, Highlands & Islands Enterprise, The Ardgour Glensanda Trust, Morven Community Trust, and the Sunart Community Benefit Fund.

The study builds on the earlier community consultation (<https://tinyurl.com/3a4t9zcu>) which showed overwhelming support to redevelop the Dail Mhor site. The study is only the next step in what will undoubtedly be a long process, but it was essential to consider what is currently feasible and what will require additional support.

This response document describes what we think Urram's next steps should be and what role we are able to take in the provision of care based at the Dail Mhor site. The future provision of care across Acharacle, Ardgour, Morvern, Sunart, and West Ardnamurchan will involve multiple stakeholders, so the report describes the care services and support currently provided by Urram and others.

Recommendations from the feasibility study are in the boxes and **our response follows:**

1. Dail Mhor Care Home

Dail Mhor Care Home. It is technically feasible to develop a modern home on the site, but it is impractical from a financial point of view. Policy is moving away from care home provision to enhanced homecare provision with shorter periods of nursing care in a nursing home or a hospital at end of life. The rates being paid by NHS Highland for care home provision are insufficient to create a financial model for a small care home with a maximum of 10 beds. We cannot therefore recommend that Urram attempts to build and operate a small new care home facility at this time.

All available evidence suggests that Urram is not able to run a community-led care home on the Dail Mhor site at this time.

1.1

We will therefore continue to work with NHS Highland and other partners, such as Highland Hospice, to explore alternative models. We want to enable people on the peninsulas to live here and to live well, whatever their support needs, including palliative and end of life care. We acknowledge that the model of care provided across Scotland is moving away from residential care to care at home.

1.2

We will investigate what support Urram can provide to future models of care, including:

- A partnership between NHS Highland and Highland Hospice to provide more care and support to people in their own homes.
- A palliative care-suite and additional care facilities incorporated in a new GP surgery.
- Social enterprise models for residential care homes such as the Killin Care Trust.
- Social enterprise models for care at home such as Tagsa Uibhist.
- Respite care provided in one's own home or in community settings.
- Support services for carers.

1.3

We know that there a strong desire from the local community for residential care to continue on the Dail Mhor site, although Dail Mhor's Care Home registration ceased in 2017 and it has been operated as a short stay Respite Centre for the last 5 years We know that the staff at Dail Mhor are seen as providing the highest level of care to residents. Urram, as a volunteer-led community organisation, does not have the resources to provide residential care and the feasibility study confirmed this. We will continue to press NHS Highland to ensure the continuity of high-quality care across Acharacle, Ardgour, Morvern, Sunart, and West Ardnamurchan. We know that it has been exceptionally difficult to ensure a safe level of staffing at Dail Mhor and we are supporting NHS Highland to try and resolve this.

We acknowledge the significant challenges involved and that we are unlikely to provide the perfect outcome desired by all community residents, but Urram remains focussed on our Vision:

Urram aspires to enhance the lives of those in our rural communities by ensuring individuals and families have the opportunity and support to be nurtured, stay healthy, and experience excellent quality of life at all ages.

2. Home Care Opportunities

Exploring and developing new home care opportunities. These arise from the move to Self- Directed Support and the willingness of NHS Highland to work with Urram to develop locally led solutions to local needs. There could be three elements to this:

- Using local knowledge, including existing staff knowledge to redesign the delivery of services to match needs and provide enhanced service delivery.
- Using local knowledge, community networks and community solidarity to enhance the recruitment, training, and retention of care workers (including those wishing to work only limited hours or support a specific client) to provide improved coverage and bespoke packages of service.
- The staff at Dail Mhor have an excellent reputation for the work that they do and redeployment of these staff to assist in providing enhanced care at home could be part of the solution. Some people who would formerly have received respite care in Dail Mhor could receive that care in their own homes if the necessary support is provided.

We anticipate that care in people’s own homes and self-directed support will play an ever-greater role in the network of care across Scotland. The population density across Ardnamurchan, Morvern and Ardgour and travel distances involved mean that it will be particularly challenging to continue the high standard of care provided within Dail Mhor in a care at home setting. We have begun discussions with Highland Hospice for an additional home care service and will continue these throughout 2023. We will also investigate the options for providing support for carers that will encourage the flexibility and variety of care services that will be required across the peninsulas. We will work to ensure that any service or support provided by Urram compliments the statutory services provided by NHS Highland.

3. Preventative Health Activities

Preventive health activities. Preventing people from becoming in need of care and maximising their years of healthy living is an area in which community groups such as Urram can play a significant role. Urram should explore with NHS Highland what physical and mental health promotion activities and services it could provide that meet local needs as part of the overall redesign of services.

Throughout the peninsulas we are already running:

- A Befriending service (supported by Highland Hospice)
- Hospital Transport Service
- Social tea and chat sessions
- Lunch club in Strontian (in partnership with the Sunart Community Council’s Resilience Committee)
- Lunch club in Lochaline (we have applied for funding to continue this)
- Yoga class in Treslaig (aiming to establish this as a regular event).

3.1 We know that social groups, activities and opportunities for gathering together are of great benefit for our mental health and wellbeing. We will continue to develop these activities, groups and networks as well as connecting and working with existing groups and activities to offer real choice. We aim to meet

with the local GP's to consider how we can support social prescribing. **We will continue conversations with NHS Highland and other partners about alternative activities and services that could be provided. Most importantly, we will keep listening carefully to the desires and needs of our communities.**

4. Carers

Enhanced Carer Provision. Urram should work with NHS Highland to enhance support for unpaid local carers, in order to improve their quality of life and to enable them to continue caring for their loved ones. This could be a combination of provision of respite care at home services and funding of personal needs and services.

4.1 We are exploring the options to support both those who are employing personal assistants as part of self-directed support as well as supporting the personal assistants themselves. We will learn from examples, such as Tagsa Uibhist, who are providing community-led support for residents.

5. Community Hall

Community Hall. Consideration of the requirements of a new hall should be developed in the light of community health activities identified and planned to be delivered under 2.3.

5.1 We whole-heartedly support the development of a new community centre based in Strontian as the current hall approaches the end of its useful life, however Urram cannot build a new village hall for Sunart in isolation. All of the five community council areas across the peninsulas are involved in Urram's current work. Any new hall or community social space needs the support of the Sunart community, in the form of a steering and fundraising group, to drive this portion of the development forward. We would like to work closely with this group in designing the facility especially as we hope to develop wider social care services and potentially new models of day care based in the new hall. This could provide both an income stream for the "hall" and support for residents with a preventative approach to declining health. Community meetings are planned for Spring 2023 to encourage discussions within the community about how to progress construction of a new village hall.

5.2 It is likely that communities across the peninsulas will develop their own 'hubs' of social groups and preventative health activities to meet their needs. We are already running groups across the peninsulas and hope that with appropriate volunteers, funding and support, these will grow and form a network of support across the five communities.

6. Medical Facilities

Enhanced Medical Facilities in Strontian. The existing facilities are clearly not fit for purpose. Urram should work with the NHS to design a new facility that fully meets community needs. This ought to

include provision for co-location of the district nursing team, facilities for the provision of additional services such as physiotherapy and podiatry. Provision could also include space for Scottish Ambulance Service personnel.

Community provision of healthcare facilities. Urram and/or another community group should investigate with the NHS the viability of the community constructing and leasing a healthcare facility if it would provide an enhanced facility where the NHS was unable to do so within a reasonable timeframe. The community should only do this if it has sufficient capacity to deliver such a project, the financial agreement allows for a reasonable return to the community and the facility provides improved healthcare outcomes.

6.1 We will work with the NHS Highland primary care team to explore options for construction, ownership and rental of a new space in Strontian. The community has demonstrated strong support for option 3 of the designs given in the feasibility study. This showed an enhanced facility providing space for: GP's, district nurses, the Scottish Ambulance Service and additional treatment. We will use this option as a starting point for our conversations.

7. Housing

Dail Mhor Housing. The site study has shown that 6 units of housing can be developed at the north end of the site regardless of whatever other building solutions are ultimately delivered elsewhere on the site. An allocation has already been made in the Strategic Housing Investment Plan for housing on this site. Therefore, detailed design should start at the earliest opportunity in order to enable the start of build in 2023-4.

7.1 We will start immediate discussions with Highland Council for these housing units. These houses were accounted for in the SHIP (Strategic Housing Investment Plan) and therefore the funds should be available. A similar model has been developed in Fort Augustus and we will ensure we learn from their experience. We are aware that all of our communities have differing housing needs and we aim to support comparable housing developments across the peninsulas.

7.2

We are very aware of the chronic housing needs across our communities and are awaiting the outcome of Lochaber Housing Associations housing needs analysis of the area.

Other Housing Opportunities. There are two elements to this. First, the provision of better-quality housing will enable more people to live healthier for longer and potentially require less care through living in better designed homes. Secondly, the crisis in health care recruitment is driven in part by the severe lack of affordable housing opportunities in the area. A reduced number of young families means fewer people in the workforce today and in the future. Therefore, everything possible should be done to address the housing shortage. Key actions could include:

- Carrying out a full housing needs analysis of each local community.
- Considering additional housing provision on the Dail Mhor site if there is no redevelopment of the residential care facility.
- Redeveloping the site of the current district nurse facility for affordable housing once it is relocated to the redeveloped surgery on the Dail Mhor site.
- Identifying, purchasing, and developing new sites in all communities as a priority to meet current

We would like to include housing for key workers in our plans, whether on the Dail Mhor site or elsewhere across the peninsulas. Carers will be instrumental in providing services across this area and we are aware of the need to support people who want to live here and work in these roles.