



## **Update of NW2045 activity**

February and March 2026

This update is taken primarily from the notes from the fortnightly NW2045 Catch Up meetings. Please feel free to share it with all those who may be interested.

### **Funding**

- We have received more information about the 'Pride in Place' funding that has been awarded to Northwest and East Sutherland from UK government. The document is attached separately.
- Recruitment for the Neighbourhood Board Chair will be concluded by May.

### **Housing & Infrastructure**

- A proposal has been submitted for funding for housing consultants to develop a NW2045 housing strategy to support NW2045-wide housing development. Initial proposal was for one year of support, this is now being extended to a proposal for three years of support.
- Two constructive meetings were held with Highlands and Islands Enterprise in Kinlochbervie and Tongue with Martin Johnson (Director of Strategy and Regional Economy) and team. Discussions centred on housing shortages, childcare provision, and local enterprise opportunities. HIE representatives expressed strong interest in working collaboratively with NW2045 partners.

### **Enterprise**

NW2045 is collaborating with North Coast Community Care, Highland Council, NHS and PA's Network Scotland on a programme to promote and support Personal Assistants (PAs)

<https://panetworkscotland.org.uk/>

PAs are increasingly seen as a flexible care solution. There will be a tour across the NW2045 in May to promote the concept.

### **Meetings & Representation**

- NW2045 had a presence at the BBC Debate Night in Ullapool on 18th March.
- Landward filmed in our area with a focus on depopulation. The episode will be on BBC Scotland on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> April @ 8.30pm.

- Constructive NW2045 Steering Group meetings continue to have been held.

### **Childcare**

Councillor Marianne Hutchison attended the first national roundtable on rural and island childcare in Ullapool in March and represented the NW2045 Childcare group.

Attendees included Scottish Government, Highland Council, the Care Inspectorate, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, the Care and Learning Alliance and community trusts and community representatives.

Discussion and ideas centred around the need for flexibility within the current rules to accommodate rural and island needs. Key asks centred on joined-up transport links, support for recruitment and retention of the skilled workforce, flexing the rules on childcare facilities to reflect rural settings and changes to childminding rules to allow for provision to take place in non-domestic settings.

The NW2045 Childcare Group continue to explore the possibilities of new models that could work in our area.

### **Land and Sea**

NorthWest2045 Regional Land Use Partnership Land+ Snapshot Project had funding confirmed and got underway.

A team of 4 local consultants – Natasha Hutchison (Wester Ross Biosphere); Fiona Saywell (Geopark); Mandy Haggith (UHI) and Richard Williams (Wilder Williams Regeneration) - led the work and recruited paid community co-leads across the NW2045 community, who held conversations with people across the area to understand land use issues, challenges, opportunities – and what can be done to overcome challenges / make the most of opportunities.

The results of this work – and the next steps for the NW2045 Regional Land Use Partnership – will be discussed at the NW2045 RLUP Gathering in May in Elphin.

### **Youth, Education & Apprenticeships**

As part of the NorthWest2045 Regional Land Use Partnership Land+ Snapshot Project work and Youth Futures work there were visits to Ullapool, Farr and KLB schools, using the opportunity of being in the schools to gather data for several interlinked projects.

NW2045 are exploring a 'Skills Academy' concept and are gathering information from key stakeholders including schools, young people, Skills Development Scotland and local businesses and estates on what is working well and what not so well for training and development opportunities across the NW2045 area and to see if there is the need for further supports. Apprenticeships, internships and work experience are all being explored.

## **Strategy, Governance and Resource Update**

Joseph Peach is developing a 5 Year Action Plan for the NW2045, building on the Call to Action that was published last June. The NW2045 Steering Group is actively involved in this.

NW2045 had confirmation of supplementary funding from the Addressing Depopulation Fund to support communications and an operating model / governance review.

Aigas Associates will conduct the NW2045 operating model review to be concluded by June.

The NW2045 website will be rebuilt by [Squiggle](#) to be more user-friendly and to incorporate a 'Resource Bank' and social media presence will also increase.

A North by Northwest website (initiated in 2022) will also be developed: a 'one-stop shop' to promote repopulation through showcasing services, lifestyle and opportunities.