



**Leader: Steven Coutts**

Nicola Sturgeon MSP  
First Minister  
The Scottish Government  
St. Andrew's House  
Regent Road  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3DG

**Town Hall**  
Lerwick, Shetland  
ZE1 0HB

Telephone: 01595 693535  
Fax: 01595 744509

[www.shetland.gov.uk](http://www.shetland.gov.uk)

If calling please ask for  
**Steven Coutts**  
Direct Dial: 01595 744502  
Email:  
[councillleader@shetland.gov.uk](mailto:councillleader@shetland.gov.uk)

Our Ref: SC/DP  
Your Ref:

Date: 17 September 2020

Dear

*First Minister,*

I write following the resounding support of our Council to explore the options for Self-determination for Shetland. This follows a meeting held on the 9th September 2020, where the vote was 18-2 in favour of the motion to pursue Self-determination options.

The strength of feeling demonstrated by the vote highlights that the status quo is not tenable. The current arrangements undermine the prosperous and fair future for Shetland residents we want to see.

Shetland is proud of our past and continuing wider contribution to the UK, through its strategic location and natural resources. As we look forward in the areas of energy, fisheries and vertical satellite launch we can continue to provide that role.

However, we need recognition that additional fiscal and political powers at a Shetland level are essential to maximising these opportunities and achieving the thriving island community we aspire to.

The Council intends to conduct extensive research into the most attractive future model and would formally request a meeting with you and relevant senior Ministers to discuss options in early course.

Yours sincerely  
[redacted]

Cllr Steven Coutts  
Political Leader



T : 0300 244 4000  
E : scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Cllr Steven Coutts  
CouncilLeader@shetland.gov.uk

Our Reference: [redacted]  
Your Reference: SC/DP

6 October 2020

Dear Steven,

On behalf of the First Minister, I would like to express my most sincere thanks to you for your letter of 17 September 2020.

As I understand it, in your letter you wish to highlight the result of the vote on pursuing options for self-determination for Shetland, and wish to discuss options for further autonomy for Shetland with the Scottish Government.

The vote in favour of the motion to pursue options for self-determination is undoubtedly a significant event, and has understandably generated a high level of interest in the ambition of Shetland.

Whilst the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 introduces a number of measures to support and enhance local decision making such as the Additional Powers Request (Scotland) Regulations 2019, we understand that you wish to conduct extensive research into the most attractive future model of autonomy for Shetland and would welcome an update in due course.

As I am sure you understand, the immediate priority for the First Minister and members of the Cabinet is the response to, and recovery from, the extraordinary impact of COVID-19.

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See [www.lobbying.scot](http://www.lobbying.scot)



However, I have instructed officials to identify a suitable time for a meeting involving Shetland Islands Council, the Minister for Europe and International Development, Jenny Gilruth, and myself as Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands.

[redacted]

**PAUL WHEELHOUSE**

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See [www.lobbying.scot](http://www.lobbying.scot)

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG  
[www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot)



INVESTORS  
IN PEOPLE

Accredited  
Until 2020

