

Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy & Tourism

Official: Sensitive: Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board - Policy Objective paper - for Co-Chair clearance

Thank you for your note. I recall the paper that you refer to was produced as a discussion paper for the Suckler Beef Climate Scheme Programme Board and not as policy advice to you as Cabinet Secretary. It is important that it is seen in this context. You have asked me if the material in the paper causes me any concern as Accountable Officer. The paper is helpful insofar as it shows the extent of change that is necessary in agriculture in order to meet emissions reduction targets and how measures from all the farmer led groups will need to be integrated into a coherent approach. However, it pre-supposes (as does the Annex) a general approach to agriculture policy and associated support schemes that is substantially incomplete at present. For this reason it does not provide a sufficiently robust basis to meet the requirements placed upon me as Accountable Officer in the use of public resources to support policy objectives.

My Accountable Officer Assessment (provided to you on 15th March) identified various difficulties in the proposed suckler beef scheme. These difficulties also present in the Board paper as follows.

- From the perspective of regularity (see paragraphs 10 to 20 of my assessment) the approach proposed in the paper cannot be made legal and its conditions effective in a practical way without the requirement for legislation in a future Parliament (see paragraph 11 & 17 of my assessment). By the same token it is unclear that the budget resources available to support the change will be sufficient (see paragraph 13, 17 and 19 of my assessment). In addition, the document does not consider the impact of the proposed measures on other types of agriculture or rural and island communities who are not covered by the proposed approach. It is, however a current legal requirement that the Government considers these impacts in the preparation of all public policy (see for example paragraphs 14 to 16 of my assessment). More generally the Government has not engaged in any systematic consultation on any aspects of the broader change yet this is a matter so substantial that is bound to bring many as yet unidentified risks (see paragraphs 14, 15, 16 & 19 of my earlier assessment).
- From the perspective of propriety (see paragraphs 21 to 37 of my assessment) the paper contains little of the detail necessary to launch measures in the suckler beef industry. By the same token it offers little insight into the practical requirements of other agricultural sectors (see in particular paragraph 28 of my assessment). We have not yet received the thinking from other Farmer Led Groups which would help us form a view or to put in place the necessary pilots and full range of necessary technical advice. In particular, paragraphs 25 to 33 of my earlier assessment seem relevant in this regard. For these reasons we are substantially short of detail in the outline business case that would be needed to create a transformative programme for Scottish Agriculture and the terms of a Just Transition.
- From the perspective of value for money (see paragraphs 38 to 53 of my assessment), the suckler beef scheme proposal has not yet been able to show how incentives will operate to turn the sound technical measures into changed farming practice. Beyond this, the paper says little about the how the objectives of agriculture policy as a whole might be achieved in the most economical, efficient and effective way. All of the considerations present with regard to the proposed suckler beef scheme appear relevant to the wider application of this approach. Whilst we have yet to receive proposals from other Farmer Led Groups it is not possible to make judgements about the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of any one particular aspect of policy in advance of others.

In addition to these issues, I am aware that the policy framework has not been agreed in any detail with the Cabinet Secretary for Environment & Climate Change although it will have a significant impact on the ECCLR portfolio. For these reasons, taken together, I do not think that the paper is a sufficiently strong foundation for the Accountable Officer to support the use of public resources until such time as we are able to make more informed judgements and further work has been undertaken.

Notwithstanding these points I know that you are keen to recognise the work that has been done to date and the progress that has been made. Placing the Board Paper in the relevant section of the SG web-site alongside the reports from other farmer led groups would help to do this. A version of the paper, made available in this way, must, in the interests of transparency and in the absence of an approved ministerial direction, be presented as a work in progress which shows the broad approach, is intended to stimulate discussion about the many issues yet to be resolved, and confirms the need for integration of the work of the various groups, yet to take place. In particular, the material in the annex, (drafted for the eventuality of the AO tests being met) must be marked as being for illustrative purposes only or alternatively removed altogether, in order to avoid misleading stakeholders.

Please let me know how you would like to proceed

Liz

Liz Ditchburn
DG Economy

From: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

Sent: 22 March 2021 09:48

To: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>

Cc: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Burgess WG (George) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board - Policy Objective paper - for Co-Chair clearance

[redact]

Removing external email addresses but adding Kate and comms.

Further to the response below, Mr Ewing does not think this paper contains any material to which would cause any concerns for the Accountable Officer. That is because more work is required to convert it into a programme, and it places no figures on the scheme. So the detail will require to be worked out. This paper though sets the clear direction of travel and as such, whilst not in accordance with his instructions, is a start.

He would welcome confirmation from Andrew and the Accountable Officer during the course of today please.

Kind regards

[redact]

Private Secretary
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism
2N.08
St Andrews House
☎ [redact]
☎ [redact]

All e-mails and attachments sent by a Ministerial Private Office to any other official on behalf of a Minister relating to a decision, request or comment made by a Minister, or a note of a Ministerial meeting, must be filed appropriately by the recipient. Private Offices do not keep official records of such e-mails or attachments.

Scottish Ministers, Special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

From: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot> On Behalf Of Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism
Sent: 22 March 2021 09:41
To: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact]; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>
Cc: Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Burgess WG (George) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact]; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]>; [redact]; [redact] <[redact]>; [redact]; [redact]; [redact]; [redact]; [redact]; [redact]; [redact] <[redact]>
Subject: RE: Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board - Policy Objective paper - for Co-Chair clearance

[redact]

Mr Ewing has considered the paper and wishes to proceed to announcing as SG policy prior to dissolution.

Can confirm I have sought the views of [redact] as co-chair and he is also agreed.

I will be in touch separately on a few other points for consideration.

Kind regards

[redact]

Private Secretary
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism
2N.08
St Andrews House
☎ [redact]
☎ [redact]

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From: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>

Sent: 17 March 2021 17:47

To: [redact]; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>
Cc: Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of
ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Burgess WG (George) <[redact]@gov.scot>;
[redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; [redact]
<[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact]; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] [redact]
<[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]>; [redact]; [redact] <[redact]>;
[redact]; [redact]; [redact]; [redact]; [redact]; [redact]; [redact]; [redact] <[redact]>

Subject: Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board - Policy Objective paper - for Co-Chair clearance

To: Co-Chairs of the Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board – [redact] and Cabinet Secretary for the Rural
Economy and Tourism,

I was grateful to receive final comments from Board members on the SBCGPB Policy Objective paper over the last
few days. In general terms, board members are content with the paper with this attached version reflecting their
overall consensus and takes on board the additional comments which focused mainly on wording and
presentational aspects rather than content.

I would be therefore grateful if the co-chairs would now review this version of the document and confirm if you are
content to sign this off on behalf of the SBCGPB,

If signed off, a copy will be sent to the chairs of the other Farmer Led Groups

Regards
[redact]

[redact]

From: "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>
Date: Monday, 15 March 2021 at 13:37
To: "[redact]" <[redact]>, "CabSecRET@gov.scot" <CabSecRET@gov.scot>, [redact] <[redact]>,
"[redact]" <[redact]>, "[redact]" <[redact]>, "[redact]" <[redact]>, [redact] <[redact]>, [redact]
<[redact]>, [redact] <[redact]>, "[redact]" <[redact]>, [redact] <[redact]>, [redact] <[redact]>,
[redact] <[redact]>, "[redact]" <[redact]>, [redact] <[redact]>
Cc: "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "DDRPID@gov.scot" <DDRPID@gov.scot>,
"DDISD@gov.scot" <DDISD@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>,
"[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>,
"DirectorARE@gov.scot" <DirectorARE@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>,
"[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>,
"[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board - redrafted policy paper -

Dear SBCGPB Members,

Many thanks to all Board Members for their additional comments and suggestions on the draft
policy board paper to those made at the Board meeting of 9th March. The attached redrafted version
looks to address the issues raised and I would be grateful if members could review this version and
signal if they are content with paper. Once the Suckler Beef Board is content with the paper a copy
will be shared with chairs of the other Farmer Led Groups.

I would be grateful if you could get back to me at your earliest opportunity and ideally by noon
tomorrow if possible.

Regards
[redact]
Secretariat

[redact]



Please see note below from Mr Ewing;

“This morning I asked the AO for a proposal to be agreed which would in my view, prevent potential substantial damage to the SG and embarrassment on a major scale, by supporting a compromise proposal on the climate change farmer led group initiative.

It is not the proposal which I instructed (and I must stress that). It is far less than that, so it is not what I believe what should have happened had my instructions been followed as I believe they should but were not.

But nonetheless, the modified and compromised proposals are ones which would allow us to proceed now without potential implosion of the whole initiative which implosion now, in my judgement a serious risk. Were that implosion to occur, then, again in my view (and a view that my officials well know because I have expressed it on innumerable occasions) the risk is that the ability of any government to work with farmers to achieve climate change over the next five years, having spurned their voluntary work now and over the past year - is zero. In short trust would be destroyed and any proposals for change would likely be embroiled in dissent and political controversy.

Today, I have not heard anything from the AO despite requesting that I get a reply.

I will of course raise these issue with my colleagues including the FM and DFM. But I do hope that the compromise can be agreed as surely is the only sensible course of action.

All these issues are already well considered so disappointed that I have not heard a reply from Liz Ditchburn or Andrew Scott.

FE”

Kind regards

[redact]

Private Secretary

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

2N.08

St Andrews House

☎ [redact]

☎ [redact]

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From: DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>

Sent: 22 March 2021 10:00

To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>

Cc: Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Burgess WG (George) <[redact]@gov.scot>;

[redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board - Policy Objective paper - for Co-Chair clearance

Thanks [redact]

As Accountable Officer, I will consider the paper and proposal from Mr Ewing as suggested and come back to you.

Liz

From: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

Sent: 22 March 2021 09:48 **From:** [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

Sent: 22 March 2021 09:48

To: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>

Cc: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Burgess WG (George) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board - Policy Objective paper - for Co-Chair clearance

[redact]

Removing external email addresses but adding Kate and comms.

Further to the response below, Mr Ewing does not think this paper contains any material to which would cause any concerns for the Accountable Officer. That is because more work is required to convert it into a programme, and it places no figures on the scheme. So the detail will require to be worked out. This paper though sets the clear direction of travel and as such, whilst not in accordance with his instructions, is a start.

He would welcome confirmation from Andrew and the Accountable Officer during the course of today please.

Kind regards

[redact]

Private Secretary

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

2N.08

St Andrews House

☎ [redact]

☎ [redact]

(copy to PS/First Minister for the attention of John Somers)

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

In my note of 10th March, I said I would give you more detailed advice this week on the extent to which the Accountable Officer tests of regularity, propriety and value for money are currently met in a way that would allow the launch before 25th March of baseline data gathering and suckler beef support schemes.

A detailed assessment of the current state of the proposals and associated appraisal and delivery readiness work against these tests is attached.

In summary, there remain significant regularity, propriety and value for money risks and issues outstanding that cannot be resolved in the time before 25th March to meet your preferred timing and announcements. If having reviewed the information I am providing, you wish to proceed to commit public funds and launch the scheme in this timeframe, then, in accordance with the Scottish Public Finance Manual, as Accountable Officer, I will be required to request written direction from you to proceed. This would need to be separately reviewed by the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, and then cleared by the DFM and FM.

As you know, much work has been done by stakeholders in the Suckler Beef Climate Group and the subsequent Programme Board and by officials in ARE. There has been much progress and there are many strengths in both the engagement and the quality of the vision and ideas for agricultural transformation and the detailed improvements that can support farmers to reduce emissions, increase efficiency and improve biodiversity. As you have observed, the level of engagement with some elements of the industry with climate change is higher than ever before. But the detailed work to turn these ideas into fully worked up, costed, appraised and deliverable schemes is just not complete, and in my view, launching schemes now would not be consistent with the proper performance of my accountable officer duties. That does not mean however, that schemes, consistent with the standards of propriety, regularity and value for money, could not be developed and launched later in the year. However, it is not possible to give assurance on these matters now with the information available to us.

If the beef industry were unable to access any support currently, or all existing support schemes were about to cease this year, there might be a stronger case for taking a higher risk approach to emergency funding. However, the industry is currently receiving both Basic Payments and Voluntary Coupled Support, and participating farmers are making improvements to reduce herd emissions through the Beef Efficiency Scheme.

Since completing this assessment, I note that the First Minister has expressed her view that there could be an announcement before the pre-electoral period in principle and of intent, setting out a clear direction of travel and with a recognition that further work is required.

I have given a first outline below of how such an announcement might be framed in a way that is consistent with the requirements of the Scottish Public Finance Manual. It could:

- celebrate the progress made in the Suckler Beef Climate Group in particular and give an update on the other Farmer Led Groups
- commit to a whole agriculture approach;

- describe the general principles of future agricultural and rural support together with an indication of the overall financial envelope available and the intention to commit both capital and resource;
- describe a coherent vision of how all farming sectors will benefit and how we will implement a Just Transition approach;
- lay out the path through all the Farmer Led Groups to the launch of a “Green Gateway” enrolment and baselining scheme later in the year;
- show how this can be combined with pilot testing of schemes and the early recruitment of a cohort of farmers and crofters to work with us on service design; and
- confirm how broader stakeholders and Parliament will be able to engage.

It would need to stop short of specific financial commitments for individual schemes or detail such as payment rates to particular sectors. However, the feedback from the Chairs Group on Friday 12th March indicates that an announcement that demonstrates strong momentum, creates clear signposts and commits to a whole agriculture approach, thus avoiding industry division, could be welcomed by the majority.

Please let me know how you would like to proceed

Liz

From: DG Economy

Sent: 10 March 2021 20:03

To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>; Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>

Cc: DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Chief Financial Officer <cfo@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: IMMEDIATE: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance

Mr Ewing

Thank you for recognising the hard work and commitment of officials as they seek to produce a scheme for suckler beef support that will deliver the benefits required and capture the energy and enthusiasm for climate change action you describe.

You have asked for unqualified and unequivocal assurance from Andrew and I that two schemes, baseline data gathering and suckler beef support, are ready to be launched within the next ten days with firm financial commitments. Given all the work still ongoing, I am not yet in a position to give you that assurance and I am concerned that it may not be possible to complete all the detailed work required to produce such an assurance in the time you have stipulated. I realise this will be unwelcome news but felt I should share it as soon as possible so that you can consider a range of options. As you know from my previous notes, there are a number of AO considerations at play here, across the full set of regularity, propriety and value for money tests; the speed with which we are seeking to develop this proposal also means that our normal processes for the necessary impact and equalities assessments, public consultation, or Parliamentary engagement have not been possible. The direct engagement of farmers in this work provides some protection against challenge but leaves other risks unaddressed. There are also some questions of feasibility of delivery that you will

want to consider given the learning from the CAP payments challenges that both of us worked on.

In terms of a path forwards, the team are fully engaged in continuing to work through the detailed design with the Suckler Beef Implementation Board. They also continue to work with all the other farmer led groups and the Farming and Food Production Future Policy group to advance your broader agricultural policy objectives. Based on their work, I will be in a position to give you more detailed advice next week. At that point, I would expect to be able to offer a detailed assessment against the AO tests. Should the tests be met, I understand your strong expressed preference is to proceed to launch. Should the tests not be met, I would intend to offer alternative approaches that could mitigate the risks sufficiently. Should you not wish to proceed with any of the alternatives, you will of course have the option to issue a written Ministerial Direction to proceed with the schemes as you have indicated below. I have asked my team, with support from finance colleagues, to work through the detailed procedures involved in ministerial direction as laid out in the Scottish Public Finance Manual to ensure this option is available to you if required. My office can provide more detailed information if helpful, including the roles set out for the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, the Deputy First Minister and the First Minister, together, if direction is issued, with subsequent letters to the Auditor General and the Clerk to the Public Audit and Post-legislative Scrutiny Committee. Given her Principle Accountable Officer role, I have made the Permanent Secretary aware of this and this email is copied to her and the Chief Financial Officer.

Given the uncertainty around the level of assurance that can be provided in the time available, you may wish to consider stopping short of the launch of a detailed scheme at present, maintaining momentum through technical work in the farmer led groups.

As ever, Andrew and I would be very happy to discuss.

Liz

From: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot> On Behalf Of Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

Sent: 08 March 2021 21:27

To: Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: IMMEDIATE: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance

Andrew

Please see reply below from Mr Ewing;

"I appreciate your exchanges with [redact] today.

I also appreciate that many officials are working very hard. What I do need though, is unqualified and unequivocal assurances from both you and Liz Ditchburn that we will deliver both schemes pre-dissolution - not just the initial data baseline gathering exercise but also the suckler beef scheme. That is essential and that is what I have made clear and asked for most of the last year and in the

PfG, with the support of the DFM and FM, as I said in my letter to you over the weekend which letter I gather you got this morning.

That remains what, as Cabinet Secretary, I instruct happens. Whilst I appreciate that there is more work to be done, I believe that we are now essentially ready and able to announce a scheme next week. That is substantially because of the quite unprecedented amount of pro bono work that has been done mainly by [redact] - but also by the farmer led groups.

Not only has [redact] done more for the SG for Agriculture than any person I can recall in my fourteen years as Minister. I actually doubt that any single person in Scotland has done more to help us - at no cost to us - since our time in Government. I think we should bear that in mind.

We now have a bank of good will which, if thwarted, will set us back, in my view, for years because all involved in the farming world will believe they were led up the garden path by me and the Scottish Government. Trust is hard won and quickly lost. Look at the farm payments fiasco in 2015/16. It has taken 5 years to win back that trust and on my part thousands of hours, along with enormous and successful work by RPID officials.

Incidentally, I gather also that the Banks are now starting to say they won't lend in future unless farmers farm sustainably - and [redact] has told me he has presented his ideas to one major bank very recently and they are very enthusiastic about it. So, again, that carries with it the possibility that if we fail, farmers won't be able to borrow money from banks! So, Andrew, there are very high stakes here.

Key is this: If you or Liz have any problems with that, I MUST know immediately. If there remain any issues, I will then have no choice but to formally approach the DFM and or FM - although they have other things on their plate right now. I am copying this to my special adviser to share with her colleagues.

It does genuinely pain me to be so blunt, but given that I have for so long, issued crystal clear instructions to you as minister, and with the DFM FM support, I think that I am entitled to this clarity now, since they have not as yet been obeyed.

The action to be taken re unproductive cows, which [redact] envisages, answers the points that Liz has - in spades. By contrast, if we don't do this, then nothing will happen for years as farmers dig into the trenches.

So, in conclusion, I do appreciate the assurance that you and your senior team will deliver the outcomes that we have agreed in our innumerable earlier discussions. Tomorrow is clearly another step on that journey. We will need the details of the scheme and announcement substantially agreed by the end of this week.

By doing that, my belief is that we will be placing Scottish Agriculture in exactly the right place at the right time - ready to tackle climate change - and ready to support food production at the high quality end. That is where we are at in Scotland and therefore if my plan does not work we will falter and fail and this will be identified as the moment where we collectively dropped the ball.

We have a unique opportunity to take farmers with us. If this is squandered then the battle against climate change in agriculture will be lost.

I have for the last year set this out clearly and I am determined we will not fall at the last hurdle

On that basis I am happy that the amended paper be issued to the suckler beef group and I, [redact] and Tracy will say that there shall be delivered the beef scheme this year .

FE

Monday 8 March”

Kind regards

[redact]

Private Secretary
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism
2N.08
St Andrews House
☎ [redact]
☎ [redact]

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From: Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>

Sent: 08 March 2021 20:14

To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: IMMEDIATE: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance

Cabinet Secretary

The whole senior team in ARE is working very hard to deliver the detail and assurance that you require for a successful announcement before the pre-election period begins. Discussion of the paper at tomorrow’s Board meeting provides the foundation for this work. I have asked Tracy McIntyre to say something at tomorrow’s meeting about a possible payment mechanism.

In his note to you of earlier this evening [redact] said that the legal foundation and the AO issues had been resolved. I am keen to avoid creating impediments to progress (and the perception of them) but the assurance that I gave [redact] was that we would work very hard to resolve the relevant issues and that there was progress. There is more to do. The only route to their resolution is to establish the detail in the short time that is left prior to Recess. We will work with you and [redact] to achieve this goal.

Andrew

Andrew Scott,
Director of Sustainable Land Use & Rural Policy,
The Scottish Government,

P1, Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh, EH11 3XD,
Telephone [redact],
Mobile [redact]
Email: [redact]

From: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot> On Behalf Of Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism
Sent: 08 March 2021 18:58

To: Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: IMMEDIATE: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance

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Before agreeing to issue the paper Mr Ewing would welcome your clear commitment that you work together to develop the payment details so that they are announced pre-dissolution.

He is entirely confident that we can do this, and moreover if we do not we are moving into very difficult territory, which he does not want to do.

Further he would point out that removing 90,000 non-productive cattle (over the next few years) is something that we can deliver through the configuration of the scheme and is a kind of control mechanism. You can discuss with [redact] if you need any further detail.

Mr Ewing will await your commitment before clearing the paper for circulation.

Finally, he is confident that the co-chairs can take the other group leaders along with them.

Kind regards

[redact]

Private Secretary
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism
2N.08

St Andrews House

☎ [redact]

☎ [redact]

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Sent: 08 March 2021 18:32

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Subject: RE: IMMEDIATE: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance

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- i) work takes place on an intensive basis over the next week to iron out the necessary details of ahead of an announcement;
- ii) we include discussion on a possible payment mechanism at the Board tomorrow.

I said that I had no difficulty with these points – although I explained that the payment mechanism was at an early stage. [redact] said that he recognised this. We have made some small changes to annex to reflect the work on payment mechanisms.

If you are content then [redact] will issue the paper to the Group this evening.

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Director of Sustainable Land Use & Rural Policy,
The Scottish Government,
P1, Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh, EH11 3XD,
Telephone [redact],
Mobile [redact]
Email: [redact]

From: Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy

Sent: 05 March 2021 21:03

To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: IMMEDIATE: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance

Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy & Tourism

Copies as above.

Thanks for your note. We have invested a lot of time working with [redact] to turn his ideas into scheme with clear and realistic goals that have the prospect of fitting with the other requirements of wider agriculture.

The Suckler Beef Implementation Board has not yet developed much of the detail that is needed to deliver a programme. There is, for example, no agreed approach on the Board as to the size of conditional payments nor for measuring the outcomes for which Government will pay. The paper that we have drafted for Tuesday's Suckler Beef Implementation Board gives you an approach that sets out the big picture – based on [redact]'s ideas – and it sets out all the other issues that are relevant to creating agreement and the detail of a beef scheme. It also sets out a process for dealing with them.

Where decisions affecting beef production have implications for other parts of agriculture the draft paper also identifies where we need to make practical connections. This is essential to deliver a reliable service to farmers. At present, although [redact] says that he recognises these issues, the more we develop the process

to address them, the less faith he has in our commitment to it. A successful scheme cannot be addressed without these questions being addressed. The team are working hard on your behalf. Your support in addressing these issues with [redact] would enable us to make more rapid progress.

In our conversations with [redact] he has emphasised the priority he attaches to the Government making a detailed commitment to provide public funds. He wants £16m for the suckler beef industry in the near future and his approach is to divide this sum of money between as many farmers as apply to the new scheme. Coupled with the issues above, you will quickly see the difficulties this causes for a detailed announcement: the more farmers that apply the less each farmer will get and so the incentive attached to the suckler beef scheme and its sustainability will diminish.

[redact] believes that unless we make a detailed financial commitment now his work will be wasted. You and I can assure him that this is not so – and show him that your broader policy is consistent with his thinking. We can now talk about what the scheme is designed to achieve. You can point to the development of the common enrolment gateway on which his scheme (and others depend) and the data exchanges with SRUC that are necessary for the beef scheme to function. We are trying very hard to go further – though time is short.

These things apart, we are making reasonably positive progress with the legal foundation of a suckler scheme: we will send you advice on Monday.

I am happy to discuss over the weekend if it would help.

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Telephone [redact],
Mobile [redact]
Email: [redact]

From: Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy

Sent: 05 March 2021 16:49

To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: IMMEDIATE: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance

[redact],

Thanks for your note. I tried to call. I will set out the state of play for Mr Ewing this evening but I cannot do that by 5pm.

Andrew

Andrew Scott,
Director of Sustainable Land Use & Rural Policy,
The Scottish Government,
P1, Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh, EH11 3XD,
Telephone [redact],
Mobile [redact]
Email: DirectorRPSLU@gov.scot

From: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot> On Behalf Of Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

Sent: 05 March 2021 15:54

To: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>

Cc: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>; Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>

Subject: IMMEDIATE: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance

Importance: High

Removing [redact] – please see comments from Mr Ewing in response to the earlier submission;

“The submission that was sent to me by [redact] does not contain what Andrew Scott promised.

I warned Andrew and Liz Ditchburn that [redact] was fed up with the failure to deliver my wishes. I have to say I am hugely frustrated and now I have been advised that [redact] will resign shortly because he has been mucked about.

I warned officials - senior officials - that this was a risk. I was thereafter promised by Andrew that a scheme would be brought forward and I discussed with him that this scheme must involve payment for non-breeding beef cows.

That is the proposal we need to deliver and that was the proposal I discussed with Andrew and that was what I was promised. Moreover, there has been in the clearest terms instruction from the DFM and FM to deliver.

Unless I can get by 17:00 confirmations that this will be done, I will need to make a full a report to the DFM and FM of the situation.

FE”

[redact]

Private Secretary

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

2N.08

St Andrews House

☎ [redact]

☎ [redact]

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From: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>

Sent: 05 March 2021 14:11

To: [redact] <[redact]>; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance

Co-chairs of the Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board (SBCGPB),

[redact]/Cabinet Secretary RET,

Following on from the email below please find attached the proposed board paper that has been redrafted as a result of the discussion held with [redact] and SRUC colleagues on 04/03/2021. This paper now also contains an Annex on how to take forward Suckler Beef Specific Service Design. With your agreement we can issue later this afternoon to board members for wider discussion at the board on 09/03/2021.

Regards
[redact]

[redact]

From: [redact]
Sent: 03 March 2021 15:32
To: '[redact]' <[redact]>; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>
Cc: Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>
Subject: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper (draft) - for discussion 04/03/2021

Co-chairs of the Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board (SBCGPB),

[redact]/Cabinet Secretary RET – following on from the series of conversations between [redact] and SG officials over the last several weeks please find attached a proposed draft policy objective paper to be sent to the board which consolidates these discussions. The paper would provide the Board with full context and is presented as a series of propositions that Board members are asked to make judgement on. In due course this paper would also be sent to the chairs of the other Farmer Led Groups to inform their thinking on the cross cutting issues raised in the paper.

Also attached is paper from RESAS titled “Analysis of cattle numbers: An analysis of cattle numbers to support the development of a suckler beef scheme” that provides further context to the proposed draft board paper.

The aim is to discuss this draft paper with [redact] tomorrow in the scheduled call (10:30 to 11:30) and to note that both [redact] and [redact] have been invited to contribute to the discussion.

Regards
[redact]

[redact]

Andrew

In addition Mr Ewing has commented the programme board discussion yesterday indicated that the farming community will fight to the end any scheme that sets out to cull or remove hundreds of thousands of cattle - but also agreed with the approach that he and [redact] set out - of a payment scheme, which can contain a cap mechanism, focuses on payment for productive animals and which excludes those who choose not to join up.

From his engagement last night the NFUS support this approach entirely as they also want to see progress.

He would like to advise Cabinet in a written SCANCE note and make the announcement in the course of next week.

Kind regards

[redact]

Private Secretary
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism
2N.08
St Andrews House
☎ [redact]
☎ [redact]

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From: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot> On Behalf Of Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism
Sent: 10 March 2021 17:36
To: Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>
Cc: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: IMMEDIATE: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance

Hi Andrew,

I will issue a diary invite for 11:45 tomorrow (Thurs 11th) and will get Mr Ewing to call you directly.

Many thanks,

[redact] [redact] | Deputy Private Secretary
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism
☎: 07867 375 282

Room 2N.08 | St. Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG

From: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot> On Behalf Of Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism
Sent: 10 March 2021 13:45
To: Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>
Cc: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: IMMEDIATE: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance

Andrew

Mr Ewing would welcome a call today to discuss the outcomes of the meeting yesterday and delivery of his instructions on announcement pre-dissolution of the two phases - enrolment and payment.

[redact] will be in touch to offer a time.

Kind regards

[redact]
Private Secretary
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism
2N.08
St Andrews House
☎ [redact]
☎ [redact]

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Sent: 05 March 2021 16:49

To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

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Subject: RE: IMMEDIATE: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance

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Mobile [redact]
Email: DirectorRPSLU@gov.scot

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Sent: 05 March 2021 15:54

To: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>

Cc: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>; Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>

Subject: IMMEDIATE: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance

Importance: High

Removing [redact] – please see comments from Mr Ewing in response to the earlier submission;

“The submission that was sent to me by [redact] does not contain what Andrew Scott promised.

I warned Andrew and Liz Ditchburn that [redact] was fed up with the failure to deliver my wishes. I have to say I am hugely frustrated and now I have been advised that [redact] will resign shortly because he has been mucked about.

I warned officials - senior officials - that this was a risk. I was thereafter promised by Andrew that a scheme would be brought forward and I discussed with him that this scheme must involve payment for non-breeding beef cows.

That is the proposal we need to deliver and that was the proposal I discussed with Andrew and that was what I was promised. Moreover, there has been in the clearest terms instruction from the DFM and FM to deliver.

Unless I can get by 17:00 confirmations that this will be done, I will need to make a full a report to the DFM and FM of the situation.

FE”

[redact]

Private Secretary

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

2N.08

St Andrews House

☎ [redact]

☎ [redact]

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From: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>

Sent: 05 March 2021 14:11

To: [redact] <[redact]>; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance

Co-chairs of the Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board (SBCGPB),

[redact]/Cabinet Secretary RET,

Following on from the email below please find attached the proposed board paper that has been redrafted as a result of the discussion held with [redact] and SRUC colleagues on 04/03/2021. This paper now also contains an Annex on how to take forward Suckler Beef Specific Service Design. With your agreement we can issue later this afternoon to board members for wider discussion at the board on 09/03/2021.

Regards

[redact]

[redact]

From: [redact]

Sent: 03 March 2021 15:32

To: '[redact]' <[redact]>; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>

Subject: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper (draft) - for discussion 04/03/2021

Co-chairs of the Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board (SBCGPB),

[redact]/Cabinet Secretary RET – following on from the series of conversations between [redact] and SG officials over the last several weeks please find attached a proposed draft policy objective paper to be sent to the board which consolidates these discussions. The paper would provide the Board with full context and is presented as a series of propositions that Board members are asked to make judgement on. In due course this paper would also be sent to the chairs of the other Farmer Led Groups to inform their thinking on the cross cutting issues raised in the paper.

Also attached is paper from RESAS titled “Analysis of cattle numbers: An analysis of cattle numbers to support the development of a suckler beef scheme” that provides further context to the proposed draft board paper.

The aim is to discuss this draft paper with [redact] tomorrow in the scheduled call (10:30 to 11:30) and to note that that both [redact] and [redact] have been invited to contribute to the discussion.

Regards

[redact]

[redact]

Andrew

Please see reply below from Mr Ewing;

"I appreciate your exchanges with [redact] today.

I also appreciate that many officials are working very hard. What I do need though, is unqualified and unequivocal assurances from both you and Liz Ditchburn that we will deliver both schemes pre-dissolution - not just the initial data baseline gathering exercise but also the suckler beef scheme. That is essential and that is what I have made clear and asked for most of the last year and in the PfG, with the support of the DFM and FM, as I said in my letter to you over the weekend which letter I gather you got this morning.

That remains what, as Cabinet Secretary, I instruct happens. Whilst I appreciate that there is more work to be done, I believe that we are now essentially ready and able to announce a scheme next week. That is substantially because of the quite unprecedented amount of pro bono work that has been done mainly by [redact] - but also by the farmer led groups.

Not only has [redact] done more for the SG for Agriculture than any person I can recall in my fourteen years as Minister. I actually doubt that any single person in Scotland has done more to help us - at no cost to us - since our time in Government. I think we should bear that in mind.

We now have a bank of good will which, if thwarted, will set us back, in my view, for years because all involved in the farming world will believe they were led up the garden path by me and the Scottish Government. Trust is hard won and quickly lost. Look at the farm payments fiasco in 2015/16. It has taken 5 years to win back that trust and on my part thousands of hours, along with enormous and successful work by RPID officials.

Incidentally, I gather also that the Banks are now starting to say they won't lend in future unless farmers farm sustainably - and [redact] has told me he has presented his ideas to one major bank very recently and they are very enthusiastic about it. So, again, that carries with it the possibility that if we fail, farmers won't be able to borrow money from banks! So, Andrew, there are very high stakes here.

Key is this: If you or Liz have any problems with that, I MUST know immediately. If there remain any issues, I will then have no choice but to formally approach the DFM and or FM - although they have other things on their plate right now. I am copying this to my special adviser to share with her colleagues.

It does genuinely pain me to be so blunt, but given that I have for so long, issued crystal clear instructions to you as minister, and with the DFM FM support, I think that I am entitled to this clarity now, since they have not as yet been obeyed.

The action to be taken re unproductive cows, which [redact] envisages, answers the points that Liz has - in spades. By contrast, if we don't do this, then nothing will happen for years as farmers dig into the trenches.

So, in conclusion, I do appreciate the assurance that you and your senior team will deliver the outcomes that we have agreed in our innumerable earlier discussions. Tomorrow is clearly another

step on that journey. We will need the details of the scheme and announcement substantially agreed by the end of this week.

By doing that, my belief is that we will be placing Scottish Agriculture in exactly the right place at the right time - ready to tackle climate change - and ready to support food production at the high quality end. That is where we are at in Scotland and therefore if my plan does not work we will falter and fail and this will be identified as the moment where we collectively dropped the ball.

We have a unique opportunity to take farmers with us. If this is squandered then the battle against climate change in agriculture will be lost.

I have for the last year set this out clearly and I am determined we will not fall at the last hurdle

On that basis I am happy that the amended paper be issued to the suckler beef group and I, [redact] and Tracy will say that there shall be delivered the beef scheme this year .

FE

Monday 8 March”

Kind regards

[redact]

Private Secretary

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

2N.08

St Andrews House

☎ [redact]

☎ [redact]

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From: Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>

Sent: 08 March 2021 20:14

To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: IMMEDIATE: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance

Cabinet Secretary

The whole senior team in ARE is working very hard to deliver the detail and assurance that you require for a successful announcement before the pre-election period begins. Discussion of the paper at tomorrow's Board meeting provides the foundation for this work. I have asked Tracy McIntyre to say something at tomorrow's meeting about a possible payment mechanism.

In his note to you of earlier this evening [redact] said that the legal foundation and the AO issues had been resolved. I am keen to avoid creating impediments to progress (and the perception of them) but the assurance that I gave [redact] was that we would work very hard to resolve the relevant issues and that there was progress. There is more to do. The only route to their resolution is to establish the detail in the short time that is left prior to Recess. We will work with you and [redact] to achieve this goal.

Andrew

Andrew Scott,
Director of Sustainable Land Use & Rural Policy,
The Scottish Government,
P1, Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh, EH11 3XD,
Telephone [redact],
Mobile [redact]
Email: DirectorRPSLU@gov.scot

From: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

Sent: 08 March 2021 18:58

To: Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: IMMEDIATE: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance

Andrew

Before agreeing to issue the paper Mr Ewing would welcome your clear commitment that you work together to develop the payment details so that they are announced pre-dissolution.

He is entirely confident that we can do this, and moreover if we do not we are moving into very difficult territory, which he does not want to do.

Further he would point out that removing 90,000 non-productive cattle (over the next few years) is something that we can deliver through the configuration of the scheme and is a kind of control mechanism. You can discuss with [redact] if you need any further detail.

Mr Ewing will await your commitment before clearing the paper for circulation.

Finally, he is confident that the co-chairs can take the other group leaders along with them.

Kind regards

[redact]

Private Secretary

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

2N.08

St Andrews House

☎ [redact]

☎ [redact]

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From: Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>

Sent: 08 March 2021 18:32

To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: IMMEDIATE: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance

Cabinet Secretary

I spoke to [redact] this afternoon. He said that he would contact you in the course of this evening indicating his agreement to the paper being issued to the Board on the basis that:

- i) work takes place on an intensive basis over the next week to iron out the necessary details of ahead of an announcement;
- ii) we include discussion on a possible payment mechanism at the Board tomorrow.

I said that I had no difficulty with these points – although I explained that the payment mechanism was at an early stage. [redact] said that he recognised this. We have made some small changes to annex to reflect the work on payment mechanisms.

If you are content then [redact] will issue the paper to the Group this evening.

Andrew

Andrew Scott,
Director of Sustainable Land Use & Rural Policy,
The Scottish Government,
P1, Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh, EH11 3XD,
Telephone [redact],
Mobile [redact]
Email: DirectorRPSLU@gov.scot

From: Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy

Sent: 05 March 2021 21:03

To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: IMMEDIATE: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance

Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy & Tourism

Copies as above.

Thanks for your note. We have invested a lot of time working with [redact] to turn his ideas into scheme with clear and realistic goals that have the prospect of fitting with the other requirements of wider agriculture.

The Suckler Beef Implementation Board has not yet developed much of the detail that is needed to deliver a programme. There is, for example, no agreed approach on the Board as to the size of conditional payments nor for measuring the outcomes for which Government will pay. The paper that we have drafted for Tuesday's Suckler Beef Implementation Board gives you an approach that sets out the big picture – based on [redact]'s ideas – and it sets out all the other issues that are relevant to creating agreement and the detail of a beef scheme. It also sets out a process for dealing with them.

Where decisions affecting beef production have implications for other parts of agriculture the draft paper also identifies where we need to make practical connections. This is essential to deliver a reliable service to farmers. At present, although [redact] says that he recognises these issues, the more we develop the process to address them, the less faith he has in our commitment to it. A successful scheme cannot be addressed without these questions being addressed. The team are working hard on your behalf. Your support in addressing these issues with [redact] would enable us to make more rapid progress.

In our conversations with [redact] he has emphasised the priority he attaches to the Government making a detailed commitment to provide public funds. He wants £16m for the suckler beef industry in the near future and his approach is to divide this sum of money between as many farmers as apply to the new scheme. Coupled with the issues above, you will quickly see the difficulties this causes for a detailed announcement: the more farmers that apply the less each farmer will get and so the incentive attached to the suckler beef scheme and its sustainability will diminish.

[redact] believes that unless we make a detailed financial commitment now his work will be wasted. You and I can assure him that this is not so – and show him that your broader policy is consistent with his thinking. We can now talk about what the scheme is designed to achieve. You can point to the development of the common enrolment gateway on which his scheme (and others depend) and the data exchanges with SRUC that are necessary for the beef scheme to function. We are trying very hard to go further – though time is short.

These things apart, we are making reasonably positive progress with the legal foundation of a suckler scheme: we will send you advice on Monday.

I am happy to discuss over the weekend if it would help.

Andrew

Andrew Scott,
Director of Sustainable Land Use & Rural Policy,
The Scottish Government,
P1, Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh, EH11 3XD,
Telephone [redact],
Mobile [redact]
Email: DirectorRPSLU@gov.scot

From: Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy

Sent: 05 March 2021 16:49

To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: IMMEDIATE: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance

[redact],

Thanks for your note. I tried to call. I will set out the state of play for Mr Ewing this evening but I cannot do that by 5pm.

Andrew

Andrew Scott,
Director of Sustainable Land Use & Rural Policy,
The Scottish Government,
P1, Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh, EH11 3XD,
Telephone [redact],
Mobile [redact]
Email: DirectorRPSLU@gov.scot

From: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

Sent: 05 March 2021 15:54

To: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>

Cc: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>; Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>

Subject: IMMEDIATE: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance

Importance: High

Removing [redact] – please see comments from Mr Ewing in response to the earlier submission;

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I warned Andrew and Liz Ditchburn that [redact] was fed up with the failure to deliver my wishes. I have to say I am hugely frustrated and now I have been advised that [redact] will resign shortly because he has been mucked about.

I warned officials - senior officials - that this was a risk. I was thereafter promised by Andrew that a scheme would be brought forward and I discussed with him that this scheme must involve payment for non-breeding beef cows.

That is the proposal we need to deliver and that was the proposal I discussed with Andrew and that was what I was promised. Moreover, there has been in the clearest terms instruction from the DFM and FM to deliver.

Unless I can get by 17:00 confirmations that this will be done, I will need to make a full a report to the DFM and FM of the situation.

FE”

[redact]

Private Secretary
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism
2N.08
St Andrews House

[redact]

[redact]

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From: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>

Sent: 05 March 2021 14:11

To: [redact] <[redact]>; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>;

[redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance

Co-chairs of the Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board (SBCGPB),

[redact]/Cabinet Secretary RET,

Following on from the email below please find attached the proposed board paper that has been redrafted as a result of the discussion held with [redact] and SRUC colleagues on 04/03/2021. This paper now also contains an Annex on how to take forward Suckler Beef Specific Service Design. With your agreement we can issue later this afternoon to board members for wider discussion at the board on 09/03/2021.

Regards

[redact]

[redact]

From: [redact]

Sent: 03 March 2021 15:32

To: '[redact]' <[redact]>; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>;

[redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>

Subject: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper (draft) - for discussion 04/03/2021

Co-chairs of the Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board (SBCGPB),

[redact]/Cabinet Secretary RET – following on from the series of conversations between [redact] and SG officials over the last several weeks please find attached a proposed draft policy objective paper to be sent to the board which consolidates these discussions. The paper would provide the Board with full context and is presented as a series of propositions that Board members are asked to make judgement on. In due course this paper would also be sent to the chairs of the other Farmer Led Groups to inform their thinking on the cross cutting issues raised in the paper.

Also attached is paper from RESAS titled “Analysis of cattle numbers: An analysis of cattle numbers to support the development of a suckler beef scheme” that provides further context to the proposed draft board paper.

The aim is to discuss this draft paper with [redact] tomorrow in the scheduled call (10:30 to 11:30) and to note that that both [redact] and [redact] have been invited to contribute to the discussion.

Regards
[redact]

[redact]

Andrew

Response below which Mr Ewing provided late Saturday afternoon but was received to my personal email rather than the ministerial mailbox, so wasn't picked up on BB.

Dear Andrew,

I note your response and start by acknowledging that work has been done on this by various officials. But this work is hindered by the absence of policy development reflecting my clear instructions. (I am afraid I do have to point out again as well, that it was also severely hindered last year by the lack of support to [redact] and [redact], again contrary to my instructions).

So, for example, Tracy and Eddie cannot deliver a scheme until policy is settled. That policy work has not been carried out despite my instructions over a prolonged period, and I have had no proposals of the type I have asked for.

Sadly, it is a simple matter of incontrovertible fact that my instructions have not been followed through despite having been made clear on innumerable occasions to you personally, to the ARE group meetings and generally to all officials. I very much regret this but I have to say that as a Cabinet Secretary I do suggest that this is just not acceptable. At the same time, however, I sense that you personally do wish to make progress, but you must accept that this is the case that so far my instructions have not been implemented, though I was promised that they would be, and that that is neither correct nor fair to me, and moreover, that it also is not in line with the clear instructions from the DFM.

The purpose of this letter to you now, is to express my instructions that this must all now be put right, and put right in the limited time available.

There must be delivered the announcement of a suckler beef climate scheme in order to prove that this Scottish Government are taking action - and not just talk - and this has been made clear as I say from last year. The Farmer Led group work is of course a PfG commitment. It is backed by the FM and DFM .

I know from discussions with him, that [redact] has already provided answers to all the points you mention, and has done so with the support of his two principal advisors from the SRUC has presented a plan for the payment scheme.

My understanding is that this aims to focus on payment only for breeding cows, and that the aim is therefore to remove over time the 90,000 cows that do not rear calves. So the scheme will help reduce non-productive animals.

I must point out, with respect, that it does appear to me that there is a gulf between the knowledge of farmers of farming and officials of farming and the problems you raise seem to reflect that. To some extent this is inevitable and to be expected. But fortunately, one of the benefits of the farmer-led groups approach, is that we can and do gain from their real world experience. That has been provided and your questions have been answered already by [redact] and others on numerous occasions.

It is essential in the farmer led group work that the solutions to tackle climate change are seen as practical. The alternative is stasis - in other words nothing will happen - quite possibly, for years whilst a Government plan say for straight decommissioning is resisted by the farming community. I

don't want that. The FM has made it perfectly clear she wants action, prompt action, and bold initiatives to tackle climate change.

I understand from [redact] that [redact] (who have put a power of work into all this alongside [redact]) have covered all the points that you have put and I am disappointed that all this work they have done does not appear to have been recorded acknowledged or accepted.

Regards the point you made about the financial take up of the scheme, I understand that the Programme Board accept that there needs to be a scheme which encourages the smaller farmer with smaller herd to join. We have discussed the principle of this before. So, the payments will be front loaded for, I believe a proposed £150 per calf up to the first 20, and thereafter at the standard rates of £60. You should check with [redact] the figures, which I believe have been cross checked already.

I am advised that the modelling of this has been checked by [redact]. It assumes a take up of 200,000 which is significantly greater than that of the Beef Efficiency scheme so is a pretty cautious estimate. So I don't believe that is a real problem.

I must also point out that you have not at any point ever put forward any alternative payment scheme. I have asked for such policy proposals repeatedly but instead of getting what I have asked for, I receive submissions which are designed to say why we cannot proceed or why it is all too difficult. I have discussed and rejected these arguments and also agreed that, after the end of the first and second year a control mechanism could be considered, if the whole, industry is proven wrong and numbers do not decrease. I thought that would help you and indeed you said that it would.

I have not so far as I am aware seen any such control mechanism - despite your promising me to bring it forward. I remain willing for that to be inserted, and subject to discussion of the detail with [redact] and SRUC etc, and the recognition that a straight decommissioning scheme of cattle is not a sensible approach .

I would point out by way of comparison, that the advice I had on the Ag Transformation programme was the budget was ten million - but then the outturn was actually £18m (though take up may reduce that to about £16.8m). So I would gently point out that perhaps we should have listened to farming voices a little more when we were planning the ATP - as if we had we may have shaped it to avoid it exceeding target by 80%. I do not recall any accountable officer giving advice about that - and it has exceeded budget something that might have been avoided had the proposals been for example more conditional. It is also relevant that that grant money is being paid out with zero conditionality - again something which the accountable officer was silent on.

It is unfortunate that the clear views of industry regards the continued fall in numbers of cattle was not mentioned in the submissions to me, (despite me raising these arguments in discussion on various occasions) nor the impact that the scheme will have- in discouraging some beef farmers from carrying on - which in itself will cause numbers to fall as beasts go to slaughter. So, at no point have you or Liz Ditchburn appeared to accept or actually recognise the clear view of industry on these matters which is grounded in lifetimes experience and knowledge and understanding of farming, the markets and the commercial reality. All of this has been spelt out in detail by [redact] and others. I would respectfully suggest that all the facts in the real world of cattle farming point to a continuing reduction in numbers, and my scheme will accelerate that. Conversely, not proceeding with my scheme would retard that process - which I gather Liz thinks is important. So announcing this scheme will by itself lead to reduction in numbers over time because a not insignificant number of farmers will say that it is not for them.

The instructions I have issued, and reiterate now, will therefore directly contribute to the reduction of cattle numbers, because many will just decide that this "new world" of sustainable beef farming is just not for them. It will take a period of a few years for this to pan out in practice , but anyone who understands farming will appreciate that farmers take their time - usually years - to make the big decisions - and who can say they are wrong.

My instructions are therefore, that we announce the two schemes as planned, and the suckler beef scheme will show we mean business. I have already explained to you how we handle the narrative with other groups and sectors, and I have a clear idea about that. We should aim to enable payment of the scheme under the existing VCS. Enrolment to take place asap, and payment in say June. None of this is that difficult and this can fairly easily be done. By making this announcement we also counter the main opposition parties claim against the SG that we have done no policy work - a claim which were we not to proceed with the climate beef scheme, otherwise have some foundation- and so again the DFM instruction should I presume be borne in mind and acted upon.

My ask is that there is now over the next few days, good and detailed team working with [redact], the SRUC advisers who are steeped in this, the Board and the other groups to bring this to a conclusion in a very short time scale. They have already done the leg work. They already have the information and statistics. They have the knowledge and understanding. All I have ever asked for is the "Team Scotland" approach which characterises our successes.

I will also ensure in discussions with the other group leaders, that there is buy in to this approach, on the basis that we will be proceeding with their sector plans promptly as well, but in the meantime are catering for and providing for them in other ways e.g. generally through Stability and Simplicity, specifically through LFASS at 100%, with in addition more funding for agri forestry, and peatland restoration and a further round of ATP expected in due course.

In addition, the other groups will understand that, above all, going ahead with the beef scheme means that this farmer led approach is serious and there is no going back. If this scheme does not go ahead, there are real fears that the whole process may simply be abandoned.

I conclude by reminding you that I do have the support of the FM and DFM on this scheme and have made clear - crystal clear my instructions .

I look forward to working with you and to get this done, and in the meantime would appreciate it if you would kindly acknowledge my instructions and confirm that they will be acted upon.

Yours sincerely

Fergus Ewing MSP

Cabinet Secretary Rural Economy,
Scottish Government

[redact]

Private Secretary

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

2N.08

St Andrews House

☎ [redact]

☎ [redact]

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From: Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>

Sent: 05 March 2021 21:03

To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: IMMEDIATE: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance

[Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy & Tourism](#)

Copies as above.

Thanks for your note. We have invested a lot of time working with [redact] to turn his ideas into scheme with clear and realistic goals that have the prospect of fitting with the other requirements of wider agriculture. The Suckler Beef Implementation Board has not yet developed much of the detail that is needed to deliver a programme. There is, for example, no agreed approach on the Board as to the size of conditional payments nor for measuring the outcomes for which Government will pay. The paper that we have drafted for Tuesday's Suckler Beef Implementation Board gives you an approach that sets out the big picture – based on [redact]'s ideas – and it sets out all the other issues that are relevant to creating agreement and the detail of a beef scheme. It also sets out a process for dealing with them.

Where decisions affecting beef production have implications for other parts of agriculture the draft paper also identifies where we need to make practical connections. This is essential to deliver a reliable service to farmers. At present, although [redact] says that he recognises these issues, the more we develop the process to address them, the less faith he has in our commitment to it. A successful scheme cannot be addressed without these questions being addressed. The team are working hard on your behalf. Your support in addressing these issues with [redact] would enable us to make more rapid progress.

In our conversations with [redact] he has emphasised the priority he attaches to the Government making a detailed commitment to provide public funds. He wants £16m for the suckler beef industry in the near future and his approach is to divide this sum of money between as many farmers as apply to the new scheme. Coupled with the issues above, you will quickly see the difficulties this causes for a detailed announcement: the more farmers that apply the less each farmer will get and so the incentive attached to the suckler beef scheme and its sustainability will diminish.

[redact] believes that unless we make a detailed financial commitment now his work will be wasted. You and I can assure him that this is not so – and show him that your broader policy is consistent with his thinking. We can now talk about what the scheme is designed to achieve. You can point to the development of the common enrolment gateway on which his scheme (and others depend) and the data exchanges with SRUC that are necessary for the beef scheme to function. We are trying very hard to go further – though time is short.

These things apart, we are making reasonably positive progress with the legal foundation of a suckler scheme: we will send you advice on Monday.

I am happy to discuss over the weekend if it would help.

Andrew

Andrew Scott,
Director of Sustainable Land Use & Rural Policy,
The Scottish Government,
P1, Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh, EH11 3XD,
Telephone [redact],
Mobile [redact]
Email: DirectorRPSLU@gov.scot

From: Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy

Sent: 05 March 2021 16:49

To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: IMMEDIATE: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance
[redact],

Thanks for your note. I tried to call. I will set out the state of play for Mr Ewing this evening but I cannot do that by 5pm.

Andrew

Andrew Scott,
Director of Sustainable Land Use & Rural Policy,
The Scottish Government,
P1, Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh, EH11 3XD,

Telephone [redact],
Mobile [redact]
Email: DirectorRPSLU@gov.scot

From: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

Sent: 05 March 2021 15:54

To: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>

Cc: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>; Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>

Subject: IMMEDIATE: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance

Importance: High

Removing [redact] – please see comments from Mr Ewing in response to the earlier submission; “The submission that was sent to me by [redact] does not contain what Andrew Scott promised. I warned Andrew and Liz Ditchburn that [redact] was fed up with the failure to deliver my wishes. I have to say I am hugely frustrated and now I have been advised that [redact] will resign shortly because he has been mucked about.

I warned officials - senior officials - that this was a risk. I was thereafter promised by Andrew that a scheme would be brought forward and I discussed with him that this scheme must involve payment for non-breeding beef cows.

That is the proposal we need to deliver and that was the proposal I discussed with Andrew and that was what I was promised. Moreover, there has been in the clearest terms instruction from the DFM and FM to deliver.

Unless I can get by 17:00 confirmations that this will be done, I will need to make a full a report to the DFM and FM of the situation.

FE”

[redact]

Private Secretary

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

2N.08

St Andrews House

☎ [redact]

☎ [redact]

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From: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>

Sent: 05 March 2021 14:11

To: [redact] <[redact]>; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance

Co-chairs of the Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board (SBCGPB),

[redact]/Cabinet Secretary RET,

Following on from the email below please find attached the proposed board paper that has been redrafted as a result of the discussion held with [redact] and SRUC colleagues on 04/03/2021. This paper now also contains an Annex on how to take forward Suckler Beef Specific Service Design. With

your agreement we can issue later this afternoon to board members for wider discussion at the board on 09/03/2021.

Regards
[redact]

[redact]

From: [redact]

Sent: 03 March 2021 15:32

To: '[redact]' <[redact]>; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>

Subject: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper (draft) - for discussion 04/03/2021

Co-chairs of the Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board (SBCGPB),

[redact]/Cabinet Secretary RET – following on from the series of conversations between [redact] and SG officials over the last several weeks please find attached a proposed draft policy objective paper to be sent to the board which consolidates these discussions. The paper would provide the Board with full context and is presented as a series of propositions that Board members are asked to make judgement on. In due course this paper would also be sent to the chairs of the other Farmer Led Groups to inform their thinking on the cross cutting issues raised in the paper.

Also attached is paper from RESAS titled “Analysis of cattle numbers: An analysis of cattle numbers to support the development of a suckler beef scheme” that provides further context to the proposed draft board paper. The aim is to discuss this draft paper with [redact] tomorrow in the scheduled call (10:30 to 11:30) and to note that that both [redact] and [redact] have been invited to contribute to the discussion.

Regards
[redact]

[redact]

Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Tourism

Copies as above.

[redact] sent me a lengthy text message on Friday evening. Essentially it repeated the criticism below.

I am not at work tomorrow (Monday) so I replied to him this evening. I said that I thought it important to issue the policy paper because it is the only document that sets out succinctly our policy intentions for agriculture in general and beef in particular. We need to take the group(s) with us in what we do. Similarly, although the annex (setting out the implementation process) needs more work – it is practical and inclusive. Doubtless it can be improved further in the next few days (and probably with the help of the Chairs of the other groups).

I also said to [redact] that I thought that the papers should issue promptly tomorrow so that members of the Suckler Board can read and think about them properly. This decision is, of course, for you and [redact] to take tomorrow morning.

I will try to keep abreast of developments tomorrow albeit from a distance – but in my absence John Kerr and [redact] will do what is required.

Andrew

Andrew Scott,
Director of Sustainable Land Use & Rural Policy,
The Scottish Government,
P1, Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh, EH11 3XD,
Telephone [redact],
Mobile [redact]
Email: DirectorRPSLU@gov.scot

From: [redact] <[redact]>

Sent: 05 March 2021 15:54

To: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>

Cc: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>; Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>

Subject: Re: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance

[redact] for the avoidance of doubt following our discussion on the woefully inadequate proposals for an early beef scheme launch which the paper you sent me sets out, I just want to clarify my position.

I need confirmation that you will deliver on the instructions of the Cabinet Secretary to have a beef scheme in place by mid March to deliver funds to participants in the spring /early summer of 2021 in return for various data submission and conditionality as discussed for weeks.

I have never in my life been involved in ANY business where the explicit instructions of the “boss” have been so wilfully ignored. However that’s exactly what this paper proposes.

It will be for others to decide what happens next but I am very clear what I will do.

Regards

[redact]

[redact] [REDACT]

Sent from my iPhone

On 5 Mar 2021, at 14:10, [redact]@gov.scot wrote:

Co-chairs of the Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board (SBCGPB),

[redact]/Cabinet Secretary RET,

Following on from the email below please find attached the proposed board paper that has been redrafted as a result of the discussion held with [redact] and SRUC colleagues on 04/03/2021. This paper now also contains an Annex on how to take forward Suckler Beef Specific Service Design. With your agreement we can issue later this afternoon to board members for wider discussion at the board on 09/03/2021.

Regards
[redact]

[redact]

From: [redact]

Sent: 03 March 2021 15:32

To: '[redact]' <[redact]>; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>

Subject: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper (draft) - for discussion 04/03/2021

Co-chairs of the Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board (SBCGPB),

[redact]/Cabinet Secretary RET – following on from the series of conversations between [redact] and SG officials over the last several weeks please find attached a proposed draft policy objective paper to be sent to the board which consolidates these discussions. The paper would provide the Board with full context and is presented as a series of propositions that Board members are asked to make judgement on. In due course this paper would also be sent to the chairs of the other Farmer Led Groups to inform their thinking on the cross cutting issues raised in the paper.

Also attached is paper from RESAS titled “Analysis of cattle numbers: An analysis of cattle numbers to support the development of a suckler beef scheme” that provides further context to the proposed draft board paper.

The aim is to discuss this draft paper with [redact] tomorrow in the scheduled call (10:30 to 11:30) and to note that that both [redact] and [redact] have been invited to contribute to the discussion.

Regards
[redact]

[redact]

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<SBCG - draft Board Paper- Policy Objectives 05 March 2021.docx>

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DG Economy

Mr Ewing has noted and would request that work is taken forward during dissolution to address all the issues raised below, so that advice can be made available to an incoming government in May on the detailed proposition for this scheme.

Noting that one of the recommendations of the dairy sector group is similar to that of the suckler beef scheme proposals, to establish the baseline in terms of data and carbon footprint etc, Mr Ewing requests proposals be worked up to allow that work to be supported and taken forward in this financial year, including providing mechanisms and suitable financial support for farmers and crofters.

Kind regards

[redact]

Private Secretary

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

2N.08

St Andrews House

☎ [redact]

☎ [redact]

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From: DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>

Sent: 22 March 2021 22:22

To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Burgess WG (George) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; Lloyd E (Elizabeth) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Chief Financial Officer <cfo@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board - Policy Objective paper - for Co-Chair clearance

Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy & Tourism

[redact]

Liz

Liz Ditchburn

DG Economy

From: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

Sent: 22 March 2021 09:48

To: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>

Cc: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon)

<[redact]@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Burgess WG (George) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board - Policy Objective paper - for Co-Chair clearance

[redact]

Removing external email addresses but adding Kate and comms.

Further to the response below, Mr Ewing does not think this paper contains any material to which would cause any concerns for the Accountable Officer. That is because more work is required to convert it into a programme, and it places no figures on the scheme. So the detail will require to be worked out. This paper though sets the clear direction of travel and as such, whilst not in accordance with his instructions, is a start.

He would welcome confirmation from Andrew and the Accountable Officer during the course of today please.

Kind regards

[redact]

Private Secretary

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

2N.08

St Andrews House

☎ [redact]

☎ [redact]

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From: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

Sent: 22 March 2021 09:41

To: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact]; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Burgess WG (George) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact]; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]>; [redact]; [redact] <[redact]>; [redact]; [redact]; [redact]; [redact]; [redact]; [redact]; [redact] <[redact]>

Subject: RE: Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board - Policy Objective paper - for Co-Chair clearance

[redact]

Mr Ewing has considered the paper and wishes to proceed to announcing as SG policy prior to dissolution.

Can confirm I have sought the views of [redact] as co-chair and he is also agreed.

I will be in touch separately on a few other points for consideration.

Kind regards

[redact]

Private Secretary

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

2N.08

St Andrews House

☎ [redact]

☎ [redact]

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From: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>

Sent: 17 March 2021 17:47

To: [redact]; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Burgess WG (George) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact]; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]>; [redact]; [redact] <[redact]>; [redact]; [redact]; [redact]; [redact]; [redact]; [redact]; [redact]; [redact]; [redact] <[redact]>

Subject: Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board - Policy Objective paper - for Co-Chair clearance

To: Co-Chairs of the Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board – [redact] and Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Tourism,

I was grateful to receive final comments from Board members on the SBCGPB Policy Objective paper over the last few days. In general terms, board members are content with the paper with this attached version reflecting their overall consensus and takes on board the additional comments which focused mainly on wording and presentational aspects rather than content.

I would be therefore grateful if the co-chairs would now review this version of the document and confirm if you are content to sign this off on behalf of the SBCGPB,

If signed off, a copy will be sent to the chairs of the other Farmer Led Groups

Regards

[redact]

[redact]

From: "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>
Date: Monday, 15 March 2021 at 13:37
To: "[redact]" <[redact]>, "CabSecRET@gov.scot" <CabSecRET@gov.scot>, [redact] <[redact]>, "[redact]" <[redact]>, "[redact]" <[redact]>, "[redact]" <[redact]>, [redact] <[redact]>
Cc: "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "DDRPID@gov.scot" <DDRPID@gov.scot>, "DDISD@gov.scot" <DDISD@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "DirectorARE@gov.scot" <DirectorARE@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board - redrafted policy paper -

Dear SBCGPB Members,

Many thanks to all Board Members for their additional comments and suggestions on the draft policy board paper to those made at the Board meeting of 9th March. The attached redrafted version looks to address the issues raised and I would be grateful if members could review this version and signal if they are content with paper. Once the Suckler Beef Board is content with the paper a copy will be shared with chairs of the other Farmer Led Groups.

I would be grateful if you could get back to me at your earliest opportunity and ideally by noon tomorrow if possible.

Regards
[redact]
Secretariat

[redact]

From: [redact] <[redact]>
Sent: 10 March 2021 10:25
To: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>
Cc: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact]; [redact]; [redact]; [redact]; [redact]; [redact]; [redact]; [redact]; [redact]; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Burgess WG (George) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; [redact]; [redact]; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>
Subject: Re: Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board 5th meeting - 09 March 2021 - Agenda and paper

[redact]

Mr Ewing

Thank you for recognising the hard work and commitment of officials as they seek to produce a scheme for suckler beef support that will deliver the benefits required and capture the energy and enthusiasm for climate change action you describe.

You have asked for unqualified and unequivocal assurance from Andrew and I that two schemes, baseline data gathering and suckler beef support, are ready to be launched within the next ten days with firm financial commitments. Given all the work still ongoing, I am not

yet in a position to give you that assurance and I am concerned that it may not be possible to complete all the detailed work required to produce such an assurance in the time you have stipulated. I realise this will be unwelcome news but felt I should share it as soon as possible so that you can consider a range of options. As you know from my previous notes, there are a number of AO considerations at play here, across the full set of regularity, propriety and value for money tests; the speed with which we are seeking to develop this proposal also means that our normal processes for the necessary impact and equalities assessments, public consultation, or Parliamentary engagement have not been possible. The direct engagement of farmers in this work provides some protection against challenge but leaves other risks unaddressed. There are also some questions of feasibility of delivery that you will want to consider given the learning from the CAP payments challenges that both of us worked on.

In terms of a path forwards, the team are fully engaged in continuing to work through the detailed design with the Suckler Beef Implementation Board. They also continue to work with all the other farmer led groups and the Farming and Food Production Future Policy group to advance your broader agricultural policy objectives. Based on their work, I will be in a position to give you more detailed advice next week. At that point, I would expect to be able to offer a detailed assessment against the AO tests. Should the tests be met, I understand your strong expressed preference is to proceed to launch. Should the tests not be met, I would intend to offer alternative approaches that could mitigate the risks sufficiently. Should you not wish to proceed with any of the alternatives, you will of course have the option to issue a written Ministerial Direction to proceed with the schemes as you have indicated below. I have asked my team, with support from finance colleagues, to work through the detailed procedures involved in ministerial direction as laid out in the Scottish Public Finance Manual to ensure this option is available to you if required. My office can provide more detailed information if helpful, including the roles set out for the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, the Deputy First Minister and the First Minister, together, if direction is issued, with subsequent letters to the Auditor General and the Clerk to the Public Audit and Post-legislative Scrutiny Committee. Given her Principle Accountable Officer role, I have made the Permanent Secretary aware of this and this email is copied to her and the Chief Financial Officer.

Given the uncertainty around the level of assurance that can be provided in the time available, you may wish to consider stopping short of the launch of a detailed scheme at present, maintaining momentum through technical work in the farmer led groups. As ever, Andrew and I would be very happy to discuss.

Liz

From: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

Sent: 08 March 2021 21:27

To: Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: IMMEDIATE: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance

Andrew

Please see reply below from Mr Ewing;

"I appreciate your exchanges with [redact] today.

I also appreciate that many officials are working very hard. What I do need though, is unqualified and unequivocal assurances from both you and Liz Ditchburn that we will deliver both schemes pre-dissolution - not just the initial data baseline gathering exercise but also the suckler beef scheme. That is essential and that is what I have made clear and asked for most of the last year and in the

PfG, with the support of the DFM and FM, as I said in my letter to you over the weekend which letter I gather you got this morning.

That remains what, as Cabinet Secretary, I instruct happens. Whilst I appreciate that there is more work to be done, I believe that we are now essentially ready and able to announce a scheme next week. That is substantially because of the quite unprecedented amount of pro bono work that has been done mainly by [redact] - but also by the farmer led groups.

Not only has [redact] done more for the SG for Agriculture than any person I can recall in my fourteen years as Minister. I actually doubt that any single person in Scotland has done more to help us - at no cost to us - since our time in Government. I think we should bear that in mind.

We now have a bank of good will which, if thwarted, will set us back, in my view, for years because all involved in the farming world will believe they were led up the garden path by me and the Scottish Government. Trust is hard won and quickly lost. Look at the farm payments fiasco in 2015/16. It has taken 5 years to win back that trust and on my part thousands of hours, along with enormous and successful work by RPID officials.

Incidentally, I gather also that the Banks are now starting to say they won't lend in future unless farmers farm sustainably - and [redact] has told me he has presented his ideas to one major bank very recently and they are very enthusiastic about it. So, again, that carries with it the possibility that if we fail, farmers won't be able to borrow money from banks! So, Andrew, there are very high stakes here.

Key is this: if you or Liz have any problems with that, I MUST know immediately. If there remain any issues, I will then have no choice but to formally approach the DFM and or FM - although they have other things on their plate right now. I am copying this to my special adviser to share with her colleagues.

It does genuinely pain me to be so blunt, but given that I have for so long, issued crystal clear instructions to you as minister, and with the DFM FM support, I think that I am entitled to this clarity now, since they have not as yet been obeyed.

The action to be taken re unproductive cows, which [redact] envisages, answers the points that Liz has - in spades. By contrast, if we don't do this, then nothing will happen for years as farmers dig into the trenches.

So, in conclusion, I do appreciate the assurance that you and your senior team will deliver the outcomes that we have agreed in our innumerable earlier discussions. Tomorrow is clearly another step on that journey. We will need the details of the scheme and announcement substantially agreed by the end of this week.

By doing that, my belief is that we will be placing Scottish Agriculture in exactly the right place at the right time - ready to tackle climate change - and ready to support food production at the high quality end. That is where we are at in Scotland and therefore if my plan does not work we will falter and fail and this will be identified as the moment where we collectively dropped the ball.

We have a unique opportunity to take farmers with us. If this is squandered then the battle against climate change in agriculture will be lost.

I have for the last year set this out clearly and I am determined we will not fall at the last hurdle. On that basis I am happy that the amended paper be issued to the suckler beef group and I, [redact] and Tracy will say that there shall be delivered the beef scheme this year.

FE

Monday 8 March"

Kind regards

[redact]

Private Secretary

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

2N.08

St Andrews House

☎ [redact]

☎ [redact]

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From: Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>

Sent: 08 March 2021 20:14

To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: IMMEDIATE: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance

Cabinet Secretary

The whole senior team in ARE is working very hard to deliver the detail and assurance that you require for a successful announcement before the pre-election period begins. Discussion of the paper at tomorrow's Board meeting provides the foundation for this work. I have asked Tracy McIntyre to say something at tomorrow's meeting about a possible payment mechanism.

In his note to you of earlier this evening [redact] said that the legal foundation and the AO issues had been resolved. I am keen to avoid creating impediments to progress (and the perception of them) but the assurance that I gave [redact] was that we would work very hard to resolve the relevant issues and that there was progress. There is more to do. The only route to their resolution is to establish the detail in the short time that is left prior to Recess. We will work with you and [redact] to achieve this goal.

Andrew

Andrew Scott,

Director of Sustainable Land Use & Rural Policy,

The Scottish Government,

P1, Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh, EH11 3XD,

Telephone [redact],

Mobile [redact]

Email: DirectorRPSLU@gov.scot

From: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

Sent: 08 March 2021 18:58

To: Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: IMMEDIATE: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance

Andrew

Before agreeing to issue the paper Mr Ewing would welcome your clear commitment that you work together to develop the payment details so that they are announced pre-dissolution.

He is entirely confident that we can do this, and moreover if we do not we are moving into very difficult territory, which he does not want to do.

Further he would point out that removing 90,000 non-productive cattle (over the next few years) is something that we can deliver through the configuration of the scheme and is a kind of control mechanism. You can discuss with [redact] if you need any further detail.
Mr Ewing will await your commitment before clearing the paper for circulation.
Finally, he is confident that the co-chairs can take the other group leaders along with them.
Kind regards

[redact]

Private Secretary
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism
2N.08
St Andrews House
☎ [redact]
☎ [redact]

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From: Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>

Sent: 08 March 2021 18:32

To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: IMMEDIATE: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance
Cabinet Secretary

I spoke to [redact] this afternoon. He said that he would contact you in the course of this evening indicating his agreement to the paper being issued to the Board on the basis that:

- i) work takes place on an intensive basis over the next week to iron out the necessary details of ahead of an announcement;
- ii) we include discussion on a possible payment mechanism at the Board tomorrow.

I said that I had no difficulty with these points – although I explained that the payment mechanism was at an early stage. [redact] said that he recognised this. We have made some small changes to annex to reflect the work on payment mechanisms.

If you are content then [redact] will issue the paper to the Group this evening.

Andrew

Andrew Scott,
Director of Sustainable Land Use & Rural Policy,
The Scottish Government,
P1, Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh, EH11 3XD,
Telephone [redact],
Mobile [redact]

Email: DirectorRPSLU@gov.scot

From: Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy

Sent: 05 March 2021 21:03

To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; [redact]

<[redact]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: IMMEDIATE: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance
Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy & Tourism

Copies as above.

Thanks for your note. We have invested a lot of time working with [redact] to turn his ideas into scheme with clear and realistic goals that have the prospect of fitting with the other requirements of wider agriculture. The Suckler Beef Implementation Board has not yet developed much of the detail that is needed to deliver a programme. There is, for example, no agreed approach on the Board as to the size of conditional payments nor for measuring the outcomes for which Government will pay. The paper that we have drafted for Tuesday's Suckler Beef Implementation Board gives you an approach that sets out the big picture – based on [redact]'s ideas – and it sets out all the other issues that are relevant to creating agreement and the detail of a beef scheme. It also sets out a process for dealing with them.

Where decisions affecting beef production have implications for other parts of agriculture the draft paper also identifies where we need to make practical connections. This is essential to deliver a reliable service to farmers. At present, although [redact] says that he recognises these issues, the more we develop the process to address them, the less faith he has in our commitment to it. A successful scheme cannot be addressed without these questions being addressed. The team are working hard on your behalf. Your support in addressing these issues with [redact] would enable us to make more rapid progress.

In our conversations with [redact] he has emphasised the priority he attaches to the Government making a detailed commitment to provide public funds. He wants £16m for the suckler beef industry in the near future and his approach is to divide this sum of money between as many farmers as apply to the new scheme. Coupled with the issues above, you will quickly see the difficulties this causes for a detailed announcement: the more farmers that apply the less each farmer will get and so the incentive attached to the suckler beef scheme and its sustainability will diminish.

[redact] believes that unless we make a detailed financial commitment now his work will be wasted. You and I can assure him that this is not so – and show him that your broader policy is consistent with his thinking. We can now talk about what the scheme is designed to achieve. You can point to the development of the common enrolment gateway on which his scheme (and others depend) and the data exchanges with SRUC that are necessary for the beef scheme to function. We are trying very hard to go further – though time is short.

These things apart, we are making reasonably positive progress with the legal foundation of a suckler scheme: we will send you advice on Monday.

I am happy to discuss over the weekend if it would help.

Andrew

Andrew Scott,
Director of Sustainable Land Use & Rural Policy,
The Scottish Government,
P1, Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh, EH11 3XD,
Telephone [redact],
Mobile [redact]
Email: DirectorRPSLU@gov.scot

From: Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy

Sent: 05 March 2021 16:49

To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: IMMEDIATE: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance
[redact],

Thanks for your note. I tried to call. I will set out the state of play for Mr Ewing this evening but I cannot do that by 5pm.

Andrew

Andrew Scott,

Director of Sustainable Land Use & Rural Policy,
The Scottish Government,
P1, Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh, EH11 3XD,
Telephone [redact],
Mobile [redact]
Email: DirectorRPSLU@gov.scot

From: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

Sent: 05 March 2021 15:54

To: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>

Cc: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>; Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>

Subject: IMMEDIATE: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance

Importance: High

Removing [redact] – please see comments from Mr Ewing in response to the earlier submission; “The submission that was sent to me by [redact] does not contain what Andrew Scott promised. I warned Andrew and Liz Ditchburn that [redact] was fed up with the failure to deliver my wishes. I have to say I am hugely frustrated and now I have been advised that [redact] will resign shortly because he has been mucked about.

I warned officials - senior officials - that this was a risk. I was thereafter promised by Andrew that a scheme would be brought forward and I discussed with him that this scheme must involve payment for non-breeding beef cows.

That is the proposal we need to deliver and that was the proposal I discussed with Andrew and that was what I was promised. Moreover, there has been in the clearest terms instruction from the DFM and FM to deliver.

Unless I can get by 17:00 confirmations that this will be done, I will need to make a full a report to the DFM and FM of the situation.

FE”

[redact]

Private Secretary

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

2N.08

St Andrews House

☎ [redact]

☎ [redact]

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From: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>

Sent: 05 March 2021 14:11

To: [redact] <[redact]>; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance

Co-chairs of the Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board (SBCGPB),
[redact]/Cabinet Secretary RET,

Following on from the email below please find attached the proposed board paper that has been redrafted as a result of the discussion held with [redact] and SRUC colleagues on 04/03/2021. This paper now also contains an Annex on how to take forward Suckler Beef Specific Service Design. With your agreement we can issue later this afternoon to board members for wider discussion at the board on 09/03/2021.

Regards
[redact]

[redact]

From: [redact]

Sent: 03 March 2021 15:32

To: '[redact]' <[redact]>; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>

Subject: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper (draft) - for discussion 04/03/2021

Co-chairs of the Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board (SBCGPB),

[redact]/Cabinet Secretary RET – following on from the series of conversations between [redact] and SG officials over the last several weeks please find attached a proposed draft policy objective paper to be sent to the board which consolidates these discussions. The paper would provide the Board with full context and is presented as a series of propositions that Board members are asked to make judgement on. In due course this paper would also be sent to the chairs of the other Farmer Led Groups to inform their thinking on the cross cutting issues raised in the paper.

Also attached is paper from RESAS titled “Analysis of cattle numbers: An analysis of cattle numbers to support the development of a suckler beef scheme” that provides further context to the proposed draft board paper. The aim is to discuss this draft paper with [redact] tomorrow in the scheduled call (10:30 to 11:30) and to note that that both [redact] and [redact] have been invited to contribute to the discussion.

Regards
[redact]

[redact]

Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy & Tourism

Copies as above.

Official: Sensitive: Accountable Officer Assessment: Scottish Suckler Beef Climate Scheme: Stakeholder Communications

I know that you and others will be considering the formal assessment that Liz Ditchburn sent to you last night. I also understand that you have a series of meetings with all of the livestock stakeholder organisations during the course of this week and next. In the absence of a confirmed Accountable Officer Direction I have asked the teams to provide you with an approach that is consistent with the SPFM in the terms that Liz outlined last night.

Andrew

Andrew Scott,
Director of Sustainable Land Use & Rural Policy,
The Scottish Government,
P1, Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh, EH11 3XD,
Telephone [redact],
Mobile [redact]
Email: DirectorRPSLU@gov.scot

Cabinet Secretary

The whole senior team in ARE is working very hard to deliver the detail and assurance that you require for a successful announcement before the pre-election period begins. Discussion of the paper at tomorrow's Board meeting provides the foundation for this work. I have asked Tracy McIntyre to say something at tomorrow's meeting about a possible payment mechanism.

In his note to you of earlier this evening [redact] said that the legal foundation and the AO issues had been resolved. I am keen to avoid creating impediments to progress (and the perception of them) but the assurance that I gave [redact] was that we would work very hard to resolve the relevant issues and that there was progress. There is more to do. The only route to their resolution is to establish the detail in the short time that is left prior to Recess. We will work with you and [redact] to achieve this goal.

Andrew

Andrew Scott,
Director of Sustainable Land Use & Rural Policy,
The Scottish Government,
P1, Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh, EH11 3XD,
Telephone [redact],
Mobile [redact]
Email: DirectorRPSLU@gov.scot

From: [redact] **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

Sent: 08 March 2021 18:58

To: Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy ; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

Cc: DG Economy ; Deputy Director of RPID ; Deputy Director of ISD ; Fuller S (Simon) ; [redact] ; Kerr J (John) ; Higgins K (Kate) ; DG Economy ; [redact]

Subject: RE: IMMEDIATE: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance

Andrew

Before agreeing to issue the paper Mr Ewing would welcome your clear commitment that you work together to develop the payment details so that they are announced pre-dissolution.

He is entirely confident that we can do this, and moreover if we do not we are moving into very difficult territory, which he does not want to do.

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Mr Ewing will await your commitment before clearing the paper for circulation.

Finally, he is confident that the co-chairs can take the other group leaders along with them.

Kind regards

[redact]

Private Secretary

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

2N.08

St Andrews House

[redact]

[redact]

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Sent: 08 March 2021 18:32

To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: IMMEDIATE: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance

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Andrew Scott,
Director of Sustainable Land Use & Rural Policy,
The Scottish Government,
P1, Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh, EH11 3XD,
Telephone [redact],
Mobile [redact]
Email: DirectorRPSLU@gov.scot

From: Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy

Sent: 05 March 2021 21:03

To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>

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Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy & Tourism

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These things apart, we are making reasonably positive progress with the legal foundation of a suckler scheme: we will send you advice on Monday.

I am happy to discuss over the weekend if it would help.

Andrew

Andrew Scott,
Director of Sustainable Land Use & Rural Policy,
The Scottish Government,
P1, Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh, EH11 3XD,
Telephone [redact],
Mobile [redact]
Email: DirectorRPSLU@gov.scot

From: Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy

Sent: 05 March 2021 16:49

To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: IMMEDIATE: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance

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Thanks for your note. I tried to call. I will set out the state of play for Mr Ewing this evening but I cannot do that by 5pm.

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Director of Sustainable Land Use & Rural Policy,
The Scottish Government,
P1, Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh, EH11 3XD,
Telephone [redact],
Mobile [redact]
Email: DirectorRPSLU@gov.scot

From: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

Sent: 05 March 2021 15:54

To: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>

Cc: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>; Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>

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Importance: High

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That is the proposal we need to deliver and that was the proposal I discussed with Andrew and that was what I was promised. Moreover, there has been in the clearest terms instruction from the DFM and FM to deliver.

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FE”

[redact]

Private Secretary
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism
2N.08

St Andrews House

[redact]

[redact]

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Regards

[redact]

[redact]

From: [redact]

Sent: 03 March 2021 15:32

To: '[redact]' <[redact]>; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>

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Regards
[redact]

[redact]

Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy & Tourism

Copies as above.

Thanks for your note. We have invested a lot of time working with [redact] to turn his ideas into scheme with clear and realistic goals that have the prospect of fitting with the other requirements of wider agriculture.

The Suckler Beef Implementation Board has not yet developed much of the detail that is needed to deliver a programme. There is, for example, no agreed approach on the Board as to the size of conditional payments nor for measuring the outcomes for which Government will pay. The paper that we have drafted for Tuesday's Suckler Beef Implementation Board gives you an approach that sets out the big picture – based on [redact]'s ideas – and it sets out all the other issues that are relevant to creating agreement and the detail of a beef scheme. It also sets out a process for dealing with them.

Where decisions affecting beef production have implications for other parts of agriculture the draft paper also identifies where we need to make practical connections. This is essential to deliver a reliable service to farmers. At present, although [redact] says that he recognises these issues, the more we develop the process to address them, the less faith he has in our commitment to it. A successful scheme cannot be addressed without these questions being addressed. The team are working hard on your behalf. Your support in addressing these issues with [redact] would enable us to make more rapid progress.

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Sent: 05 March 2021 15:54

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Cc: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>; Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>

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Regards

[redacted]

[redacted]

From: [redacted]

Sent: 03 March 2021 15:32

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[redact]

[redact]



[redact],

The 1.4 million figure comes from our June Agricultural Census and is calculated as total cattle minus those associated with the dairy industry. The data and different breakdowns can be found here under 'supporting files': Scottish Agricultural Census: final results - June 2020 - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

The numbers are similar to those in [redact] paper: SRUC+Report+-+Structure+and+Efficiency+of+the+Scottish+Beef+Herd+-+CTS+-+FINAL.pdf (www.gov.scot). I've copied one of their tables below so you can see the breakdown by cows, heifers, calves and finished cattle. Summing these categories gets to around 1.2 million animals. There is a small discrepancy between the June Agricultural Census figures (1.4 million) and those that SRUC have calculated below (1.2 million, making the difference around 200,000 head). I've talked to Steven and Andrew about this – factors such as different times of year for the two analyses (June vs end of year), different classification systems and whether or not you include only animals born in Scotland or not likely account for the difference.

Table 2: Businesses with breeding cows, number of breeding cows and average breeding cows, 2013-2017

	Total Cows						Heifers					
	BRNs	Total Cows	Mean	Lower Quartile	Median	Upper Quartile	BRNs	Total Heifers	Mean	Lower Quartile	Median	Upper Quartile
2013	8,362	405,778	49	7	27	66	6,368	67,153	11	2	6	13
2014	7,966	398,777	50	9	29	67	6,274	67,662	11	2	6	13
2015	7,909	396,376	50	8	29	67	6,275	71,418	11	2	6	13
2016	7,738	397,961	51	9	29	69	6,219	70,511	11	2	6	13
2017	7,589	395,530	52	9	30	70	6,097	72,303	12	2	6	14
2018	7,387	388,805	53	9	30	70	5,953	70,604	12	2	6	14
2019	7,273	381,097	52	9	30	70	5,841	70,878	12	2	6	14

	Registered Calves						Finished Cattle					
	BRNs	Calves Registered	Mean	Lower Quartile	Median	Upper Quartile	BRNs	Finished Cattle	Mean	Lower Quartile	Median	Upper Quartile
2013	8,362	393,404	47	7	26	63	4,985	331,387	66	2	13	60
2014	8,214	393,044	48	7	26	65	4,695	341,678	73	2	14	67
2015	8,149	398,133	49	7	26	65	4,463	329,764	74	2	15	66
2016	7,982	396,946	50	7	27	67	4,450	336,433	76	2	14	67
2017	7,801	395,648	51	8	28	67	4,323	327,001	76	2	12	65
2018	7,625	382,998	50	8	27	67	4,236	322,913	76	2	11	63
2019	7,481	382,175	51	8	28	68	4,116	324,979	79	2	13	64

[redact] | Senior Economist | Rural and Environmental Science and Analytical Services | Scottish Government
| I am currently working from home. Please contact me by email, Skype or Teams.

From: [redact]@gov.scot

Date: 3 March 2021 at 15:32:32 GMT

To: [redact], CabSecRET@gov.scot

Cc: DirectorARE@gov.scot, DDRPID@gov.scot, DDISD@gov.scot, [redact]@gov.scot, [redact]@gov.scot, [redact]@gov.scot

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[redact]

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[redact]

[redact]

From: [redact]

Sent: 03 March 2021 15:32

To: '[redact]'; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

Cc: Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy ; Deputy Director of RPID ; Deputy Director of ISD ; Fuller S (Simon) ; [redact] ; Kerr J (John)

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[redact]

[redact]

Agriculture Transformation in Productivity – Head of Unit

Agriculture Policy Division | The Scottish Government | D Spur, Saughton House | Edinburgh EH11 3XD

Tel: [redact] | Mob: [redact] | e: [redact]@gov.scot

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Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Tourism

Copies as above.

[redact] sent me a lengthy text message on Friday evening. Essentially it repeated the criticism below.

I am not at work tomorrow (Monday) so I replied to him this evening. I said that I thought it important to issue the policy paper because it is the only document that sets out succinctly our policy intentions for agriculture in general and beef in particular. We need to take the group(s) with us in what we do. Similarly, although the annex (setting out the implementation process) needs more work – it is practical and inclusive. Doubtless it can be improved further in the next few days (and probably with the help of the Chairs of the other groups).

I also said to [redact] that I thought that the papers should issue promptly tomorrow so that members of the Suckler Board can read and think about them properly. This decision is, of course, for you and [redact] to take tomorrow morning.

I will try to keep abreast of developments tomorrow albeit from a distance – but in my absence John Kerr and [redact] will do what is required.

Andrew

Andrew Scott,
Director of Sustainable Land Use & Rural Policy,
The Scottish Government,
P1, Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh, EH11 3XD,
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[redact],

For this afternoon I've asked John Kerr to introduce the policy paper. He will spend five minutes or so setting out the overall shape and then to take people through the questions in each section sequentially. Questions on the annex they will fall to Eddie and Tracy.

Tracey will introduce the second item (payment mechanism) – supported by [redact] [redact].

Hope that's ok.

Andrew

Andrew Scott,
Director of Sustainable Land Use & Rural Policy,
The Scottish Government,
P1, Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh, EH11 3XD,
Telephone [redact],
Mobile [redact]
Email: DirectorRPSLU@gov.scot

Andrew

Mr Ewing would welcome a call today to discuss the outcomes of the meeting yesterday and delivery of his instructions on announcement pre-dissolution of the two phases - enrolment and payment.

[redact] will be in touch to offer a time.

Kind regards

[redact]

Private Secretary
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism
2N.08
St Andrews House
☎ [redact]
☎ [redact]

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From: Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy
Sent: 08 March 2021 20:14
To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism
Cc: DG Economy ; Deputy Director of RPID ; Deputy Director of ISD ; Fuller S (Simon) ; [redact] ; Kerr J (John) ; Higgins K (Kate) ; DG Economy ; [redact]
Subject: RE: IMMEDIATE: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance

Cabinet Secretary

The whole senior team in ARE is working very hard to deliver the detail and assurance that you require for a successful announcement before the pre-election period begins. Discussion of the paper at tomorrow's Board meeting provides the foundation for this work. I have asked Tracy McIntyre to say something at tomorrow's meeting about a possible payment mechanism.

In his note to you of earlier this evening [redact] said that the legal foundation and the AO issues had been resolved. I am keen to avoid creating impediments to progress (and the perception of them) but the assurance that I gave [redact] was that we would work very hard to resolve the relevant issues and that there was progress. There is more to do. The only route to their resolution is to establish the detail in the short time that is left prior to Recess. We will work with you and [redact] to achieve this goal.

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The Scottish Government,
P1, Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh, EH11 3XD,
Telephone [redact],
Mobile [redact]
Email: DirectorRPSLU@gov.scot

From: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism
Sent: 08 March 2021 18:58
To: Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>
Cc: DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: IMMEDIATE: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance

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Before agreeing to issue the paper Mr Ewing would welcome your clear commitment that you work together to develop the payment details so that they are announced pre-dissolution.

He is entirely confident that we can do this, and moreover if we do not we are moving into very difficult territory, which he does not want to do.

Further he would point out that removing 90,000 non-productive cattle (over the next few years) is something that we can deliver through the configuration of the scheme and is a kind of control mechanism. You can discuss with [redact] if you need any further detail.

Mr Ewing will await your commitment before clearing the paper for circulation.

Finally, he is confident that the co-chairs can take the other group leaders along with them.

Kind regards

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Cc: DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>
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I spoke to [redact] this afternoon. He said that he would contact you in the course of this evening indicating his agreement to the paper being issued to the Board on the basis that:

- i) work takes place on an intensive basis over the next week to iron out the necessary details of ahead of an announcement;
- ii) we include discussion on a possible payment mechanism at the Board tomorrow.

I said that I had no difficulty with these points – although I explained that the payment mechanism was at an early stage. [redact] said that he recognised this. We have made some small changes to annex to reflect the work on payment mechanisms.

If you are content then [redact] will issue the paper to the Group this evening.

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Director of Sustainable Land Use & Rural Policy,
The Scottish Government,
P1, Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh, EH11 3XD,
Telephone [redact],
Mobile [redact]
Email: DirectorRPSLU@gov.scot

From: Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy

Sent: 05 March 2021 21:03

To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: IMMEDIATE: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance

Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy & Tourism

Copies as above.

Thanks for your note. We have invested a lot of time working with [redact] to turn his ideas into scheme with clear and realistic goals that have the prospect of fitting with the other requirements of wider agriculture.

The Suckler Beef Implementation Board has not yet developed much of the detail that is needed to deliver a programme. There is, for example, no agreed approach on the Board as to the size of conditional payments nor for measuring the outcomes for which Government will pay. The paper that we have drafted for Tuesday's Suckler Beef Implementation Board gives you an approach that sets out the big picture – based on [redact]'s ideas – and it sets out all the other issues that are relevant to creating agreement and the detail of a beef scheme. It also sets out a process for dealing with them.

Where decisions affecting beef production have implications for other parts of agriculture the draft paper also identifies where we need to make practical connections. This is essential to deliver a reliable service to farmers. At present, although [redact] says that he recognises these issues, the more we develop the process to address them, the less faith he has in our commitment to it. A successful scheme cannot be addressed without these questions being addressed. The team are working hard on your behalf. Your support in addressing these issues with [redact] would enable us to make more rapid progress.

In our conversations with [redact] he has emphasised the priority he attaches to the Government making a detailed commitment to provide public funds. He wants £16m for the suckler beef industry in the near future and his approach is to divide this sum of money between as many farmers as apply to the new scheme. Coupled with the issues above, you will quickly see the difficulties this causes for a detailed announcement: the more farmers that apply the less each farmer will get and so the incentive attached to the suckler beef scheme and its sustainability will diminish.

[redact] believes that unless we make a detailed financial commitment now his work will be wasted. You and I can assure him that this is not so – and show him that your broader policy is consistent with his thinking. We can now talk about what the scheme is designed to achieve. You can point to the development of the common enrolment gateway on which his scheme (and others depend) and the data exchanges with SRUC that are necessary for the beef scheme to function. We are trying very hard to go further – though time is short.

These things apart, we are making reasonably positive progress with the legal foundation of a suckler scheme: we will send you advice on Monday.

I am happy to discuss over the weekend if it would help.

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P1, Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh, EH11 3XD,
Telephone [redact],
Mobile [redact]
Email: DirectorRPSLU@gov.scot

From: Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy

Sent: 05 March 2021 16:49

To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: IMMEDIATE: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance

[redact],

Thanks for your note. I tried to call. I will set out the state of play for Mr Ewing this evening but I cannot do that by 5pm.

Andrew

Andrew Scott,
Director of Sustainable Land Use & Rural Policy,
The Scottish Government,
P1, Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh, EH11 3XD,
Telephone [redact],
Mobile [redact]
Email: DirectorRPSLU@gov.scot

From: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

Sent: 05 March 2021 15:54

To: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>

Cc: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>; Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>
Subject: IMMEDIATE: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance
Importance: High

Removing [redact] – please see comments from Mr Ewing in response to the earlier submission;

“The submission that was sent to me by [redact] does not contain what Andrew Scott promised.

I warned Andrew and Liz Ditchburn that [redact] was fed up with the failure to deliver my wishes. I have to say I am hugely frustrated and now I have been advised that [redact] will resign shortly because he has been mucked about.

I warned officials - senior officials - that this was a risk. I was thereafter promised by Andrew that a scheme would be brought forward and I discussed with him that this scheme must involve payment for non-breeding beef cows.

That is the proposal we need to deliver and that was the proposal I discussed with Andrew and that was what I was promised. Moreover, there has been in the clearest terms instruction from the DFM and FM to deliver.

Unless I can get by 17:00 confirmations that this will be done, I will need to make a full a report to the DFM and FM of the situation.

FE”

[redact]

Private Secretary
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism
2N.08
St Andrews House
☎ [redact]
☎ [redact]

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From: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>

Sent: 05 March 2021 14:11

To: [redact] <[redact]>; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance

Co-chairs of the Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board (SBCGPB),

[redact]/Cabinet Secretary RET,

Following on from the email below please find attached the proposed board paper that has been redrafted as a result of the discussion held with [redact] and SRUC colleagues on 04/03/2021. This paper now also contains an Annex on how to take forward Suckler Beef Specific Service Design. With your agreement we can issue later this afternoon to board members for wider discussion at the board on 09/03/2021.

Regards
[redact]

[redact]

From: [redact]
Sent: 03 March 2021 15:32
To: '[redact]' <[redact]>; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>
Cc: Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>
Subject: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper (draft) - for discussion 04/03/2021

Co-chairs of the Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board (SBCGPB),

[redact]/Cabinet Secretary RET – following on from the series of conversations between [redact] and SG officials over the last several weeks please find attached a proposed draft policy objective paper to be sent to the board which consolidates these discussions. The paper would provide the Board with full context and is presented as a series of propositions that Board members are asked to make judgement on. In due course this paper would also be sent to the chairs of the other Farmer Led Groups to inform their thinking on the cross cutting issues raised in the paper.

Also attached is paper from RESAS titled “Analysis of cattle numbers: An analysis of cattle numbers to support the development of a suckler beef scheme” that provides further context to the proposed draft board paper.

The aim is to discuss this draft paper with [redact] tomorrow in the scheduled call (10:30 to 11:30) and to note that that both [redact] and [redact] have been invited to contribute to the discussion.

Regards
[redact]

[redact]

Andrew

In addition Mr Ewing has commented the programme board discussion yesterday indicated that the farming community will fight to the end any scheme that sets out to cull or remove hundreds of thousands of cattle - but also agreed with the approach that he and [redact] set out - of a payment scheme, which can contain a cap mechanism, focuses on payment for productive animals and which excludes those who choose not to join up.

From his engagement last night the NFUS support this approach entirely as they also want to see progress.

He would like to advise Cabinet in a written SCANCE note and make the announcement in the course of next week.

Kind regards

[redact]

Private Secretary
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism
2N.08
St Andrews House
☎ [redact]
☎ [redact]

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From: [redact] R ([redact]) **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism
Sent: 10 March 2021 17:36
To: Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy
Cc: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism ; DG Economy ; Deputy Director of RPID ; Deputy Director of ISD ; Fuller S (Simon) ; [redact] ; Kerr J (John) ; Higgins K (Kate) ; DG Economy ; [redact]
Subject: RE: IMMEDIATE: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance

Hi Andrew,

I will issue a diary invite for 11:45 tomorrow (Thurs 11th) and will get Mr Ewing to call you directly.

Many thanks,

[redact] [redact] | Deputy Private Secretary
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism
☎: 07867 375 282

Room 2N.08 | St. Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG

From: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism
Sent: 10 March 2021 13:45
To: Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>

Cc: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: IMMEDIATE: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance

Andrew

Mr Ewing would welcome a call today to discuss the outcomes of the meeting yesterday and delivery of his instructions on announcement pre-dissolution of the two phases - enrolment and payment.

[redact] will be in touch to offer a time.

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Cc: DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>

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Sent: 05 March 2021 21:03

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Email: DirectorRPSLU@gov.scot

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Sent: 05 March 2021 16:49

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Subject: RE: IMMEDIATE: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance

[redact],

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P1, Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh, EH11 3XD,

Telephone [redact],
Mobile [redact]
Email: DirectorRPSLU@gov.scot

From: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

Sent: 05 March 2021 15:54

To: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>

Cc: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>; Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>

Subject: IMMEDIATE: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance

Importance: High

Removing [redact] – please see comments from Mr Ewing in response to the earlier submission;

“The submission that was sent to me by [redact] does not contain what Andrew Scott promised.

I warned Andrew and Liz Ditchburn that [redact] was fed up with the failure to deliver my wishes. I have to say I am hugely frustrated and now I have been advised that [redact] will resign shortly because he has been mucked about.

I warned officials - senior officials - that this was a risk. I was thereafter promised by Andrew that a scheme would be brought forward and I discussed with him that this scheme must involve payment for non-breeding beef cows.

That is the proposal we need to deliver and that was the proposal I discussed with Andrew and that was what I was promised. Moreover, there has been in the clearest terms instruction from the DFM and FM to deliver.

Unless I can get by 17:00 confirmations that this will be done, I will need to make a full a report to the DFM and FM of the situation.

FE”

[redact]

Private Secretary
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism
2N.08
St Andrews House
☎ [redact]
☎ [redact]

All e-mails and attachments sent by a Ministerial Private Office to any other official on behalf of a Minister relating to a decision, request or comment made by a Minister, or a note of a Ministerial meeting, must be filed appropriately by the recipient. Private Offices do not keep official records of such e-mails or attachments.

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From: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>
Sent: 05 March 2021 14:11
To: [redact] <[redact]>; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>
Cc: Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper - for clearance

Co-chairs of the Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board (SBCGPB),

[redact]/Cabinet Secretary RET,

Following on from the email below please find attached the proposed board paper that has been redrafted as a result of the discussion held with [redact] and SRUC colleagues on 04/03/2021. This paper now also contains an Annex on how to take forward Suckler Beef Specific Service Design. With your agreement we can issue later this afternoon to board members for wider discussion at the board on 09/03/2021.

Regards
[redact]

[redact]

From: [redact]
Sent: 03 March 2021 15:32
To: '[redact]' <[redact]>; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>
Cc: Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>
Subject: Suckler Beef - proposed board paper (draft) - for discussion 04/03/2021

Co-chairs of the Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board (SBCGPB),

[redact]/Cabinet Secretary RET – following on from the series of conversations between [redact] and SG officials over the last several weeks please find attached a proposed draft policy objective paper to be sent to the board which consolidates these discussions. The paper would provide the Board with full context and is presented as a series of propositions that Board members are asked to make judgement on. In due course this paper would also be sent to the chairs of the other Farmer Led Groups to inform their thinking on the cross cutting issues raised in the paper.

Also attached is paper from RESAS titled “Analysis of cattle numbers: An analysis of cattle numbers to support the development of a suckler beef scheme” that provides further context to the proposed draft board paper.

The aim is to discuss this draft paper with [redact] tomorrow in the scheduled call (10:30 to 11:30) and to note that that both [redact] and [redact] have been invited to contribute to the discussion.

Regards
[redact]

[redact]

Andrew

Letter attached for your awareness and consideration.

Kind regards

[redact]

Private Secretary

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

2N.08

St Andrews House

 [redact]

 [redact]

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Dear SBCGPB Members,

Following on from [redact]'s email below, and if any Board member still wishes to, please provide any comments/suggestions on the policy objective paper by close of play tonight to myself,

Regards
[redact]
Secretariat

[redact]

On 9 Mar 2021, at 09:29, [redact]@gov.scot wrote:

Dear Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board Member,

Please see agenda and papers for the board meeting later today at 2:30pm (dial in details are below)

1. SG officials to present "Policy Objectives" paper (attached). Discussion and Board position.
2. SG officials to take group through potential initial scheme mechanics, and potential payments etc. Discussion and Board position.
3. Biodiversity paper (attached)
4. Templates for other scheme requirements.
5. Communication Strategy
6. Next Steps
7. AOB

SBCGPB Secretariat

[redact]

-----Original Appointment-----

From: [redact] [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>

Sent: 04 March 2021 12:48

To: [redact] [redact]; [redact]; [redact]; Fuller S (Simon); [redact]; Deputy Director of RPID; Deputy Director of ISD; Kerr J (John); Burgess WG (George); [redact]; [redact]; Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy; [redact]; [redact]; [redact]; [redact]; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism; [redact]

Subject: Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board 5th meeting

When: 09 March 2021 14:30-16:30 (UTC+00:00) Dublin, Edinburgh, Lisbon, London.

Where: Microsoft Teams Meeting

Dear All

Grateful if you can accept this invite to the next meeting of the Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board.

Many Thanks

[redact]

Microsoft Teams meeting

Join on your computer or mobile app

Click here to join the meeting

Or call in (audio only)

+44 131 376 2847,,586217128# United Kingdom, Edinburgh

Phone Conference ID: 586 217 128#

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Dear SBCGPB Members,

Many thanks to all Board Members for their additional comments and suggestions on the draft policy board paper to those made at the Board meeting of 9th March. The attached redrafted version looks to address the issues raised and I would be grateful if members could review this version and signal if they are content with paper. Once the Suckler Beef Board is content with the paper a copy will be shared with chairs of the other Farmer Led Groups.

I would be grateful if you could get back to me at your earliest opportunity and ideally by noon tomorrow if possible.

Regards
[redact]
Secretariat

[redact]



To: Co-Chairs of the Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board – [redact] and Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Tourism,

I was grateful to receive final comments from Board members on the SBCGPB Policy Objective paper over the last few days. In general terms, board members are content with the paper with this attached version reflecting their overall consensus and takes on board the additional comments which focused mainly on wording and presentational aspects rather than content.

I would be therefore grateful if the co-chairs would now review this version of the document and confirm if you are content to sign this off on behalf of the SBCGPB,

If signed off, a copy will be sent to the chairs of the other Farmer Led Groups

Regards
[redact]

[redact]

From: "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>
Date: Monday, 15 March 2021 at 13:37
To: "[redact]" <[redact]>, "CabSecRET@gov.scot" <CabSecRET@gov.scot>, [redact] <[redact]>, "[redact]" <[redact]>, "[redact]" <[redact]>, "[redact]" <[redact]>, [redact] <[redact]>
Cc: "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "DDRPID@gov.scot" <DDRPID@gov.scot>, "DDISD@gov.scot" <DDISD@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "DirectorARE@gov.scot" <DirectorARE@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board - redrafted policy paper -

Dear SBCGPB Members,

Many thanks to all Board Members for their additional comments and suggestions on the draft policy board paper to those made at the Board meeting of 9th March. The attached redrafted version looks to address the issues raised and I would be grateful if members could review this version and signal if they are content with paper. Once the Suckler Beef Board is content with the paper a copy will be shared with chairs of the other Farmer Led Groups.

I would be grateful if you could get back to me at your earliest opportunity and ideally by noon tomorrow if possible.

Regards
[redact]
Secretariat

[redact]

From: "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>

Date: Monday, 15 March 2021 at 13:37

To: "[redact]" <[redact]>, "CabSecRET@gov.scot" <CabSecRET@gov.scot>, [redact] <[redact]>, "[redact]" <[redact]>, "[redact]" <[redact]>, "[redact]" <[redact]>, [redact] <[redact]>

Cc: "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "DDRPID@gov.scot" <DDRPID@gov.scot>, "DDISD@gov.scot" <DDISD@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "DirectorARE@gov.scot" <DirectorARE@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board - redrafted policy paper -

Dear SBCGPB Members,

Many thanks to all Board Members for their additional comments and suggestions on the draft policy board paper to those made at the Board meeting of 9th March. The attached redrafted version looks to address the issues raised and I would be grateful if members could review this version and signal if they are content with paper. Once the Suckler Beef Board is content with the paper a copy will be shared with chairs of the other Farmer Led Groups.

I would be grateful if you could get back to me at your earliest opportunity and ideally by noon tomorrow if possible.

Regards

[redact]

Secretariat

[redact]

Copies as above.

Official: Sensitive: Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board - Policy Objective paper - for Co-Chair clearance

Thank you for your note. I recall the paper that you refer to was produced as a discussion paper for the Suckler Beef Climate Scheme Programme Board and not as policy advice to you as Cabinet Secretary. It is important that it is seen in this context. You have asked me if the material in the paper causes me any concern as Accountable Officer. The paper is helpful insofar as it shows the extent of change that is necessary in agriculture in order to meet emissions reduction targets and how measures from all the farmer led groups will need to be integrated into a coherent approach. However, it pre-supposes (as does the Annex) a general approach to agriculture policy and associated support schemes that is substantially incomplete at present. For this reason it does not provide a sufficiently robust basis to meet the requirements placed upon me as Accountable Officer in the use of public resources to support policy objectives.

My Accountable Officer Assessment (provided to you on 15th March) identified various difficulties in the proposed suckler beef scheme. These difficulties also present in the Board paper as follows.

- From the perspective of regularity (see paragraphs 10 to 20 of my assessment) the approach proposed in the paper cannot be made legal and its conditions effective in a practical way without the requirement for legislation in a future Parliament (see paragraph 11 & 17 of my assessment). By the same token it is unclear that the budget resources available to support the change will be sufficient (see paragraph 13, 17 and 19 of my assessment). In addition, the document does not consider the impact of the proposed measures on other types of agriculture or rural and island communities who are not covered by the proposed approach. It is, however a current legal requirement that the Government considers these impacts in the preparation of all public policy (see for example paragraphs 14 to 16 of my assessment). More generally the Government has not engaged in any systematic consultation on any aspects of the broader change yet this is a matter so substantial that is bound to bring many as yet unidentified risks (see paragraphs 14, 15, 16 & 19 of my earlier assessment).
- From the perspective of propriety (see paragraphs 21 to 37 of my assessment) the paper contains little of the detail necessary to launch measures in the suckler beef industry. By the same token it offers little insight into the practical requirements of other agricultural sectors (see in particular paragraph 28 of my assessment). We have not yet received the thinking from other Farmer Led Groups which would help us form a view or to put in place the necessary pilots and full range of necessary technical advice. In particular, paragraphs 25 to 33 of my earlier assessment seem relevant in this regard. For these reasons we are substantially short of detail in the outline business case that would be needed to create a transformative programme for Scottish Agriculture and the terms of a Just Transition.
- From the perspective of value for money (see paragraphs 38 to 53 of my assessment), the suckler beef scheme proposal has not yet been able to show how incentives will operate to turn the sound technical measures into changed farming practice. Beyond this, the paper says little about the how the objectives of agriculture policy as a whole might be achieved in the most economical, efficient and effective way. All of the considerations present with regard to the proposed suckler beef scheme appear relevant to the wider application of this approach. Whilst we have yet to receive proposals from other Farmer Led Groups it is not possible to make judgements about the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of any one particular aspect of policy in advance of others.

In addition to these issues, I am aware that the policy framework has not been agreed in any detail with the Cabinet Secretary for Environment & Climate Change although it will have a significant impact on the ECCLR

portfolio. For these reasons, taken together, I do not think that the paper is a sufficiently strong foundation for the Accountable Officer to support the use of public resources until such time as we are able to make more informed judgements and further work has been undertaken.

Notwithstanding these points I know that you are keen to recognise the work that has been done to date and the progress that has been made. Placing the Board Paper in the relevant section of the SG web-site alongside the reports from other farmer led groups would help to do this. A version of the paper, made available in this way, must, in the interests of transparency and in the absence of an approved ministerial direction, be presented as a work in progress which shows the broad approach, is intended to stimulate discussion about the many issues yet to be resolved, and confirms the need for integration of the work of the various groups, yet to take place. In particular, the material in the annex, (drafted for the eventuality of the AO tests being met) must be marked as being for illustrative purposes only or alternatively removed altogether, in order to avoid misleading stakeholders.

Please let me know how you would like to proceed

Liz

Liz Ditchburn
DG Economy

From: [redact] **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

Sent: 22 March 2021 09:48

To: [redact]

Cc: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism ; Fuller S (Simon) ; Deputy Director of RPID ; Deputy Director of ISD ; Kerr J (John) ; Burgess WG (George) ; [redact] ; Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy ; [redact] ; [redact] ; [redact] ; [redact] [redact] ; [redact] ; Higgins K (Kate) ; [redact] ; [redact] ; DG Economy ; Permanent Secretary

Subject: RE: Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board - Policy Objective paper - for Co-Chair clearance

[redact]

Removing external email addresses but adding Kate and comms.

Further to the response below, Mr Ewing does not think this paper contains any material to which would cause any concerns for the Accountable Officer. That is because more work is required to convert it into a programme, and it places no figures on the scheme. So the detail will require to be worked out. This paper though sets the clear direction of travel and as such, whilst not in accordance with his instructions, is a start.

He would welcome confirmation from Andrew and the Accountable Officer during the course of today please.

Kind regards

[redact]

Private Secretary

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

2N.08

St Andrews House

☎ [redact]

☎ [redact]

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From: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

Sent: 22 March 2021 09:41

To: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact]; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Burgess WG (George) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact]; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]>; [redact]; [redact] <[redact]>; [redact]; [redact]; [redact]; [redact]; [redact]; [redact]; [redact] <[redact]>

Subject: RE: Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board - Policy Objective paper - for Co-Chair clearance

[redact]

Mr Ewing has considered the paper and wishes to proceed to announcing as SG policy prior to dissolution.

Can confirm I have sought the views of [redact] as co-chair and he is also agreed.

I will be in touch separately on a few other points for consideration.

Kind regards

[redact]

Private Secretary

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

2N.08

St Andrews House

☎ [redact]

☎ [redact]

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From: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>

Sent: 17 March 2021 17:47

To: [redact]; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Burgess WG (George) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact]; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]>; [redact]; [redact] <[redact]>

[redact]; [redact]; [redact]; [redact]; [redact]; [redact]; [redact]; [redact]; [redact] <[redact]>

Subject: Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board - Policy Objective paper - for Co-Chair clearance

To: Co-Chairs of the Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board – [redact] and Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Tourism,

I was grateful to receive final comments from Board members on the SBCGPB Policy Objective paper over the last few days. In general terms, board members are content with the paper with this attached version reflecting their overall consensus and takes on board the additional comments which focused mainly on wording and presentational aspects rather than content.

I would be therefore grateful if the co-chairs would now review this version of the document and confirm if you are content to sign this off on behalf of the SBCGPB,

If signed off, a copy will be sent to the chairs of the other Farmer Led Groups

Regards

[redact]

[redact]

From: "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>

Date: Monday, 15 March 2021 at 13:37

To: "[redact]" <[redact]>, "CabSecRET@gov.scot" <CabSecRET@gov.scot>, [redact] <[redact]>, "[redact]" <[redact]>, "[redact]" <[redact]>, "[redact]" <[redact]>, [redact] <[redact]>, [redact] <[redact]>, [redact] <[redact]>, "[redact]" <[redact]>, [redact] <[redact]>, [redact] <[redact]>, [redact] <[redact]>, "[redact]" <[redact]>, [redact] <[redact]>

Cc: "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "DDRPID@gov.scot" <DDRPID@gov.scot>, "DDISD@gov.scot" <DDISD@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "DirectorARE@gov.scot" <DirectorARE@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>

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Dear SBCGPB Members,

Many thanks to all Board Members for their additional comments and suggestions on the draft policy board paper to those made at the Board meeting of 9th March. The attached redrafted version looks to address the issues raised and I would be grateful if members could review this version and signal if they are content with paper. Once the Suckler Beef Board is content with the paper a copy will be shared with chairs of the other Farmer Led Groups.

I would be grateful if you could get back to me at your earliest opportunity and ideally by noon tomorrow if possible.

Regards

[redact]

Secretariat

[redact]

[redact]

[redact] | Future Rural Policy Frameworks, Land Use and Land Reform Division | [redact]



Copies as above.

Official: Sensitive: Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board - Policy Objective paper - for Co-Chair clearance

Thank you for your note. I recall the paper that you refer to was produced as a discussion paper for the Suckler Beef Climate Scheme Programme Board and not as policy advice to you as Cabinet Secretary. It is important that it is seen in this context. You have asked me if the material in the paper causes me any concern as Accountable Officer. The paper is helpful insofar as it shows the extent of change that is necessary in agriculture in order to meet emissions reduction targets and how measures from all the farmer led groups will need to be integrated into a coherent approach. However, it pre-supposes (as does the Annex) a general approach to agriculture policy and associated support schemes that is substantially incomplete at present. For this reason it does not provide a sufficiently robust basis to meet the requirements placed upon me as Accountable Officer in the use of public resources to support policy objectives.

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Notwithstanding these points I know that you are keen to recognise the work that has been done to date and the progress that has been made. Placing the Board Paper in the relevant section of the SG web-site alongside the reports from other farmer led groups would help to do this. A version of the paper, made available in this way, must, in the interests of transparency and in the absence of an approved ministerial direction, be presented as a work in progress which shows the broad approach, is intended to stimulate discussion about the many issues yet to be resolved, and confirms the need for integration of the work of the various groups, yet to take place. In particular, the material in the annex, (drafted for the eventuality of the AO tests being met) must be marked as being for illustrative purposes only or alternatively removed altogether, in order to avoid misleading stakeholders.

Please let me know how you would like to proceed

Liz

Liz Ditchburn
DG Economy

From: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

Sent: 22 March 2021 09:48

To: [redact] RAD <[redact]@gov.scot>

Cc: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Burgess WG (George) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board - Policy Objective paper - for Co-Chair clearance

[redact]

Removing external email addresses but adding Kate and comms.

Further to the response below, Mr Ewing does not think this paper contains any material to which would cause any concerns for the Accountable Officer. That is because more work is required to convert it into a programme, and it places no figures on the scheme. So the detail will require to be worked out. This paper though sets the clear direction of travel and as such, whilst not in accordance with his instructions, is a start.

He would welcome confirmation from Andrew and the Accountable Officer during the course of today please.

Kind regards

[redact]

Private Secretary

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

2N.08

St Andrews House

[redact]

[redact]

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From: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

Sent: 22 March 2021 09:41

To: "[redact]" <[redact]@gov.scot>; "[redact]" <[redact]>, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Burgess WG (George) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact]; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]>; [redact]; [redact] <[redact]>; [redact]; [redact]; [redact]; [redact]; [redact]; [redact]; [redact]; [redact] <[redact]>

Subject: Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme

Subject: RE: Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board - Policy Objective paper - for Co-Chair clearance

[redact]

Mr Ewing has considered the paper and wishes to proceed to announcing as SG policy prior to dissolution.

Can confirm I have sought the views of Mr [redact] as co-chair and he is also agreed.

I will be in touch separately on a few other points for consideration.

Kind regards

[redact]

Private Secretary

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

2N.08

St Andrews House

[redact]

[redact]

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From: [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>

Sent: 17 March 2021 17:47

To: [redact]; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Burgess WG (George) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact]; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] <[redact]>; [redact]; [redact] <[redact]>; [redact]; [redact]; [redact]; [redact]; [redact]; [redact] <[redact]>

Subject: Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board - Policy Objective paper - for Co-Chair clearance

To: Co-Chairs of the Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board – [redact] and Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Tourism,

I was grateful to receive final comments from Board members on the SBCGPB Policy Objective paper over the last few days. In general terms, board members are content with the paper with this attached version reflecting their overall consensus and takes on board the additional comments which focused mainly on wording and presentational aspects rather than content.

I would be therefore grateful if the co-chairs would now review this version of the document and confirm if you are content to sign this off on behalf of the SBCGPB,

If signed off, a copy will be sent to the chairs of the other Farmer Led Groups

Regards

[redact]

[redact] [redact]

From: "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>

Date: Monday, 15 March 2021 at 13:37

To: "[redact]" <[redact]>, "CabSecRET@gov.scot" <CabSecRET@gov.scot>, [redact] <[redact]>, "[redact]" <[redact]>, "[redact]" <[redact]>, "[redact]" <[redact]>, [redact] <[redact]>, [redact] <[redact]>, [redact] <[redact]>, "[redact]" <[redact]>, [redact] <[redact]>, [redact] <[redact]>, [redact] <[redact]>, "[redact]" <[redact]>, [redact] <[redact]>

Cc: "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "DDRPID@gov.scot" <DDRPID@gov.scot>, "DDISD@gov.scot" <DDISD@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "DirectorARE@gov.scot" <DirectorARE@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board - redrafted policy paper -

Dear SBCGPB Members,

Many thanks to all Board Members for their additional comments and suggestions on the draft policy board paper to those made at the Board meeting of 9th March. The attached redrafted version looks to address the issues raised and I would be grateful if members could review this version and signal if they are content with paper. Once the Suckler Beef Board is content with the paper a copy will be shared with chairs of the other Farmer Led Groups.

I would be grateful if you could get back to me at your earliest opportunity and ideally by noon tomorrow if possible.

Regards
[redact]
Secretariat

[redact] [redact]



Hi [redact],

Mr Ewing has made the following comments:

The note should add that “Mr Ewing was concerned to the reputational damage to the SG should Mr [redact] conclude that his massive efforts have not received sufficient support, to turn his October Report to delivery in action.”

Regarding the paragraph regarding the numbers, Mr Ewing pointed out that the note did not reflect that:

- cattle numbers had reduced for the last three decades
- that process was expected to continue
- that the proceeding with a scheme in itself would see some livestock farmers not join the new scheme and withdraw from the sector
- that the efficiencies of the scheme would see a reduction in numbers

Regarding the control mechanism, Mr Ewing does not favour a decommissioning scheme. He does favour using the levers of finance - i.e. to reward those who take part and join the scheme to submit to its disciplines and to remove, gradually, support from the VCS payments of those who do not. Any control mechanism should apply only if the predictions for the whole of the industry that overall numbers decrease anyway turn out to be wrong.

Many thanks,

[redact] [redact] | Deputy Private Secretary
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism
☎: 07867 375 282

Room 2N.08 | St. Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG

From: [redact] ([redact]) RAD <[redact].[redact]>

Sent: 01 March 2021 09:34

To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; <[redact]>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>

Subject: Note of Meeting - 18th Feb - Suckler Beef policy proposals - Cabinet Secretary RET and SG officials

PO/Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism,

Please find attached a note of the meeting between Mr Ewing and officials regarding Suckler Beef policy proposals on 18th February 2021,

Regards
[redact]

[redact] [redact]
Agriculture Transformation in Productivity – Head of Unit

Agriculture Policy Division | The Scottish Government | D Spur, Saughton House | Edinburgh EH11 3XD
Tel: +44 (0)1312445946 | Mob: +44 (0)7779 426545 | e: [redact].[redact]

[redact]

My note crossed with this further note from Mr Ewing

Liz

From: [redact] On Behalf Of Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

Sent: 22 March 2021 21:32

To: DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>

Cc: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Burgess WG (George) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact][redact]v.scot>; [redact]; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] ([redact]) RAD <[redact].[redact]>

Subject: RE: Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board - Policy Objective paper - for Co-Chair clearance

Liz

Please see note below from Mr Ewing;

“This morning I asked the AO for a proposal to be agreed which would in my view, prevent potential substantial damage to the SG and embarrassment on a major scale, by supporting a compromise proposal on the climate change farmer led group initiative.

It is not the proposal which I instructed (and I must stress that). It is far less than that, so it is not what I believe what should have happened had my instructions been followed as I believe they should but were not.

But nonetheless, the modified and compromised proposals are ones which would allow us to proceed now without potential implosion of the whole initiative which implosion now, in my judgement a serious risk. Were that implosion to occur, then, again in my view (and a view that my officials well know because I have expressed it on innumerable occasions) the risk is that the ability of any government to work with farmers to achieve climate change over the next five years, having spurned their voluntary work now and over the past year - is zero. In short trust would be destroyed and any proposals for change would likely be embroiled in dissent and political controversy.

Today, I have not heard anything from the AO despite requesting that I get a reply.

I will of course raise these issue with my colleagues including the FM and DFM. But I do hope that the compromise can be agreed as surely is the only sensible course of action.

All these issues are already well considered so disappointed that I have not heard a reply from Liz Ditchburn or Andrew Scott.

FE”

Kind regards

[redact]

Private Secretary

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

2N.08

St Andrews House

☒ [redact]

☒ [redact]

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From: DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>

Sent: 22 March 2021 10:00

To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>; [redact] ([redact]) RAD <[redact].[redact]>

Cc: Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Burgess WG (George) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; [redact]v.scot>; [redact]; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board - Policy Objective paper - for Co-Chair clearance

Thanks [redact]

As Accountable Officer, I will consider the paper and proposal from Mr Ewing as suggested and come back to you.

Liz

From: [redact] On Behalf Of Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

Sent: 22 March 2021 09:48

To: [redact] ([redact]) RAD <[redact].[redact]>

Cc: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Burgess WG (George) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; [redact]v.scot>; [redact]; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board - Policy Objective paper - for Co-Chair clearance

[redact]

Removing external email addresses but adding Kate and comms.

Further to the response below, Mr Ewing does not think this paper contains any material to which would cause any concerns for the Accountable Officer. That is because more work is required to convert it into a programme, and it places no figures on the scheme. So the detail will require to be worked out. This paper though sets the clear direction of travel and as such, whilst not in accordance with his instructions, is a start.

He would welcome confirmation from Andrew and the Accountable Officer during the course of today please.

Kind regards

[redact]

Private Secretary

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

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St Andrews House

📧 [redact]

📧 [redact]

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From: [redact] On Behalf Of Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

Sent: 22 March 2021 09:41

To: [redact] ([redact]) RAD <[redact].[redact]>; [redact]; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Burgess WG (George) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; [redact] | [redact] [redact]

Subject: RE: Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board - Policy Objective paper - for Co-Chair clearance

[redact]

Mr Ewing has considered the paper and wishes to proceed to announcing as SG policy prior to dissolution.

Can confirm I have sought the views of Mr [redact] as co-chair and he is also agreed.

I will be in touch separately on a few other points for consideration.

Kind regards

[redact]

Private Secretary

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

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☒ [redact]

☒ [redact]

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From: [redact] ([redact]) RAD <[redact].[redact]>

Sent: 17 March 2021 17:47

To: [redact]; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Burgess WG (George) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; [redact] | [redact]

Subject: Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board - Policy Objective paper - for Co-Chair clearance

To: Co-Chairs of the Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board – [redact] and Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Tourism,

I was grateful to receive final comments from Board members on the SBCGPB Policy Objective paper over the last few days. In general terms, board members are content with the paper with this attached version

reflecting their overall consensus and takes on board the additional comments which focused mainly on wording and presentational aspects rather than content.

I would be therefore grateful if the co-chairs would now review this version of the document and confirm if you are content to sign this off on behalf of the SBCGPB,

If signed off, a copy will be sent to the chairs of the other Farmer Led Groups

Regards

[redact]

[redact] [redact]

Agriculture Transformation in Productivity – Head of Unit

Agriculture Policy Division | The Scottish Government | D Spur, Saughton House | Edinburgh EH11 3XD

Tel: +44 (0)1312445946 | Mob: +44 (0)7779 426545 | e: [redact].[redact]

From: "[redact].[redact]" <[redact].[redact]>

Date: Monday, 15 March 2021 at 13:37

To: "[redact]" <[redact]>, "CabSecRET@gov.scot" <CabSecRET@gov.scot>, [redact] <[redact]>, "[redact]" <[redact]>, "[redact]" <[redact]>, "[redact]" <[redact]>, <[redact]>, <[redact]>, [redact] <[redact]>, "[redact]" <[redact]>, Neil [redact] <[redact]>, Scott [redact] <[redact]>, <[redact]>, "[redact]" <[redact]>, [redact] <[redact]>

Cc: "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "DDRPID@gov.scot" <DDRPID@gov.scot>, "DDISD@gov.scot" <DDISD@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, [redact] "DirectorARE@gov.scot" DirectorARE@gov.scot [redact]

Subject: RE: Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board - redrafted policy paper -

Dear SBCGPB Members,

Many thanks to all Board Members for their additional comments and suggestions on the draft policy board paper to those made at the Board meeting of 9th March. The attached redrafted version looks to address the issues raised and I would be grateful if members could review this version and signal if they are content with paper. Once the Suckler Beef Board is content with the paper a copy will be shared with chairs of the other Farmer Led Groups.

I would be grateful if you could get back to me at your earliest opportunity and ideally by noon tomorrow if possible.

Regards

[redact]

Secretariat

[redact] [redact]

DG Economy

Mr Ewing has noted and would request that work is taken forward during dissolution to address all the issues raised below, so that advice can be made available to an incoming government in May on the detailed proposition for this scheme.

Noting that one of the recommendations of the dairy sector group is similar to that of the suckler beef scheme proposals, to establish the baseline in terms of data and carbon footprint etc, Mr Ewing requests proposals be worked up to allow that work to be supported and taken forward in this financial year, including providing mechanisms and suitable financial support for farmers and crofters.

Kind regards

[redact]

Private Secretary

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

2N.08

St Andrews House

☎ [redact]

☎ [redact]

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From: DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>

Sent: 22 March 2021 22:22

To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Burgess WG (George) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; [redact]>; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact]; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; Lloyd E (Elizabeth) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] ([redact]) RAD <[redact].[redact]>; Chief Financial Officer <cfo@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board - Policy Objective paper - for Co-Chair clearance

Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy & Tourism

Copies as above.

Official: Sensitive: Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board - Policy Objective paper - for Co-Chair clearance

Thank you for your note. I recall the paper that you refer to was produced as a discussion paper for the Suckler Beef Climate Scheme Programme Board and not as policy advice to you as Cabinet Secretary. It is important that it is seen in this context. You have asked me if the material in the paper causes me any concern as Accountable Officer. The paper is helpful insofar as it shows the extent of change that is necessary in agriculture in order to meet emissions reduction targets and how measures from all the farmer led groups will need to be integrated into a coherent approach. However, it pre-supposes (as does the Annex) a general approach to agriculture policy and associated support schemes that is substantially incomplete at present. For

this reason it does not provide a sufficiently robust basis to meet the requirements placed upon me as Accountable Officer in the use of public resources to support policy objectives.

My Accountable Officer Assessment (provided to you on 15th March) identified various difficulties in the proposed suckler beef scheme. These difficulties also present in the Board paper as follows.

- From the perspective of regularity (see paragraphs 10 to 20 of my assessment) the approach proposed in the paper cannot be made legal and its conditions effective in a practical way without the requirement for legislation in a future Parliament (see paragraph 11 & 17 of my assessment). By the same token it is unclear that the budget resources available to support the change will be sufficient (see paragraph 13, 17 and 19 of my assessment). In addition, the document does not consider the impact of the proposed measures on other types of agriculture or rural and island communities who are not covered by the proposed approach. It is, however a current legal requirement that the Government considers these impacts in the preparation of all public policy (see for example paragraphs 14 to 16 of my assessment). More generally the Government has not engaged in any systematic consultation on any aspects of the broader change yet this is a matter so substantial that is bound to bring many as yet unidentified risks (see paragraphs 14, 15, 16 & 19 of my earlier assessment).
- From the perspective of propriety (see paragraphs 21 to 37 of my assessment) the paper contains little of the detail necessary to launch measures in the suckler beef industry. By the same token it offers little insight into the practical requirements of other agricultural sectors (see in particular paragraph 28 of my assessment). We have not yet received the thinking from other Farmer Led Groups which would help us form a view or to put in place the necessary pilots and full range of necessary technical advice. In particular, paragraphs 25 to 33 of my earlier assessment seem relevant in this regard. For these reasons we are substantially short of detail in the outline business case that would be needed to create a transformative programme for Scottish Agriculture and the terms of a Just Transition.
- From the perspective of value for money (see paragraphs 38 to 53 of my assessment), the suckler beef scheme proposal has not yet been able to show how incentives will operate to turn the sound technical measures into changed farming practice. Beyond this, the paper says little about the how the objectives of agriculture policy as a whole might be achieved in the most economical, efficient and effective way. All of the considerations present with regard to the proposed suckler beef scheme appear relevant to the wider application of this approach. Whilst we have yet to receive proposals from other Farmer Led Groups it is not possible to make judgements about the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of any one particular aspect of policy in advance of others.

In addition to these issues, I am aware that the policy framework has not been agreed in any detail with the Cabinet Secretary for Environment & Climate Change although it will have a significant impact on the ECCLR portfolio. For these reasons, taken together, I do not think that the paper is a sufficiently strong foundation for the Accountable Officer to support the use of public resources until such time as we are able to make more informed judgements and further work has been undertaken.

Notwithstanding these points I know that you are keen to recognise the work that has been done to date and the progress that has been made. Placing the Board Paper in the relevant section of the SG web-site alongside the reports from other farmer led groups would help to do this. A version of the paper, made available in this way, must, in the interests of transparency and in the absence of an approved ministerial direction, be presented as a work in progress which shows the broad approach, is intended to stimulate discussion about the many issues yet to be resolved, and confirms the need for integration of the work of the various groups, yet to take place. In particular, the material in the annex, (drafted for the eventuality of the AO tests being met) must be marked as being for illustrative purposes only or alternatively removed altogether, in order to avoid misleading stakeholders.

Please let me know how you would like to proceed

Liz

Liz Ditchburn
DG Economy

From: [redact]**On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

Sent: 22 March 2021 09:48

To: [redact] ([redact]) RAD <[redact].[redact]>

Cc: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Burgess WG (George) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact]Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; [redact]v.scot>; [redact]; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board - Policy Objective paper - for Co-Chair clearance

[redact]

Removing external email addresses but adding Kate and comms.

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He would welcome confirmation from Andrew and the Accountable Officer during the course of today please.

Kind regards

[redact]

Private Secretary

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

2N.08

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☎ [redact]

☎ [redact]

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From: [redact]**On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

Sent: 22 March 2021 09:41

To: [redact] ([redact]) RAD <[redact].[redact]>; [redact]; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of

ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Burgess WG (George) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; [redact]>

Subject: RE: Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board - Policy Objective paper - for Co-Chair clearance

[redact]

Mr Ewing has considered the paper and wishes to proceed to announcing as SG policy prior to dissolution.

Can confirm I have sought the views of Mr [redact] as co-chair and he is also agreed.

I will be in touch separately on a few other points for consideration.

Kind regards

[redact]

Private Secretary

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

2N.08

St Andrews House

☎ [redact]

☎ [redact]

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From: [redact] ([redact]) RAD <[redact].[redact]>

Sent: 17 March 2021 17:47

To: [redact]; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: Fuller S (Simon) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]@gov.scot>; Burgess WG (George) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; [redact] [redact] [redact]; <[redact]>

Subject: Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board - Policy Objective paper - for Co-Chair clearance

To: Co-Chairs of the Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board – [redact] and Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Tourism,

I was grateful to receive final comments from Board members on the SBCGPB Policy Objective paper over the last few days. In general terms, board members are content with the paper with this attached version reflecting their overall consensus and takes on board the additional comments which focused mainly on wording and presentational aspects rather than content.

I would be therefore grateful if the co-chairs would now review this version of the document and confirm if you are content to sign this off on behalf of the SBCGPB,

If signed off, a copy will be sent to the chairs of the other Farmer Led Groups

Regards

[redact]

[redact] [redact]

From: "[redact].[redact]" <[redact].[redact]>

Date: Monday, 15 March 2021 at 13:37

To: "[redact]" <[redact]>, "CabSecRET@gov.scot" <CabSecRET@gov.scot>, <[redact]>, "[redact]" <[redact]>, "[redact]" <[redact]>, "[redact]" <[redact]>, redact]>, <[redact]>, <[redact]>, "[redact]" <[redact]>, Neil [redact] <[redact]>, <[redact]>, <[redact]>, "[redact]" <[redact]>, <[redact]>

Cc: "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "DDRPID@gov.scot" <DDRPID@gov.scot>, "DDISD@gov.scot" <DDISD@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "[redact]@gov.scot" <[redact]@gov.scot>, "DirectorARE@gov.scot" <DirectorARE@gov.scot>, "[redact]" <[redact]>, "[redact]" <[redact]>

Subject: RE: Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board - redrafted policy paper -

Dear SBCGPB Members,

Many thanks to all Board Members for their additional comments and suggestions on the draft policy board paper to those made at the Board meeting of 9th March. The attached redrafted version looks to address the issues raised and I would be grateful if members could review this version and signal if they are content with paper. Once the Suckler Beef Board is content with the paper a copy will be shared with chairs of the other Farmer Led Groups.

I would be grateful if you could get back to me at your earliest opportunity and ideally by noon tomorrow if possible.

Regards

[redact]

Secretariat

[redact]

Hello [redact],

Grateful if Mr Ewing could approve the attached draft minute of the fourth Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board meeting (held on 22nd February). Mr Ewing's co-chair, [redact] has approved the attached draft. I will issue to the wider group upon approval by Mr Ewing.

Thanks

[redact]

[redact]

Livestock Production Policy

Tel: [redact]

I generally work between 9am and 4pm.

Twitter: [redact]

PO/Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism,

Please find attached a note of the meeting between Mr Ewing and officials regarding Suckler Beef policy proposals on 18th February 2021,

Regards
[redact]

Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Tourism

Copies as above.

[redact] sent me a lengthy text message on Friday evening. Essentially it repeated the criticism below.

I am not at work tomorrow (Monday) so I replied to him this evening. I said that I thought it important to issue the policy paper because it is the only document that sets out succinctly our policy intentions for agriculture in general and beef in particular. We need to take the group(s) with us in what we do. Similarly, although the annex (setting out the implementation process) needs more work – it is practical and inclusive. Doubtless it can be improved further in the next few days (and probably with the help of the Chairs of the other groups).

I also said to [redact] that I thought that the papers should issue promptly tomorrow so that members of the Suckler Board can read and think about them properly. This decision is, of course, for you and Mr [redact] to take tomorrow morning.

I will try to keep abreast of developments tomorrow albeit from a distance – but in my absence John Kerr and [redact] [redact] will do what is required.

Andrew

Andrew Scott,
Director of Sustainable Land Use & Rural Policy,
The Scottish Government,
P1, Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh, EH11 3XD,
Telephone [redact],
Mobile [redact]
Email: DirectorRPSLU@gov.scot

(copy to PS/First Minister for the attention of John Somers)

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

In my note of 10th March, I said I would give you more detailed advice this week on the extent to which the Accountable Officer tests of regularity, propriety and value for money are currently met in a way that would allow the launch before 25th March of baseline data gathering and suckler beef support schemes.

A detailed assessment of the current state of the proposals and associated appraisal and delivery readiness work against these tests is attached.

In summary, there remain significant regularity, propriety and value for money risks and issues outstanding that cannot be resolved in the time before 25th March to meet your preferred timing and announcements. If having reviewed the information I am providing, you wish to proceed to commit public funds and launch the scheme in this timeframe, then, in accordance with the Scottish Public Finance Manual, as Accountable Officer, I will be required to request written direction from you to proceed. This would need to be separately reviewed by the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, and then cleared by the DFM and FM.

As you know, much work has been done by stakeholders in the Suckler Beef Climate Group and the subsequent Programme Board and by officials in ARE. There has been much progress and there are many strengths in both the engagement and the quality of the vision and ideas for agricultural transformation and the detailed improvements that can support farmers to reduce emissions, increase efficiency and improve biodiversity. As you have observed, the level of engagement with some elements of the industry with climate change is higher than ever before. But the detailed work to turn these ideas into fully worked up, costed, appraised and deliverable schemes is just not complete, and in my view, launching schemes now would not be consistent with the proper performance of my accountable officer duties. That does not mean however, that schemes, consistent with the standards of propriety, regularity and value for money, could not be developed and launched later in the year. However, it is not possible to give assurance on these matters now with the information available to us.

If the beef industry were unable to access any support currently, or all existing support schemes were about to cease this year, there might be a stronger case for taking a higher risk approach to emergency funding. However, the industry is currently receiving both Basic Payments and Voluntary Coupled Support, and participating farmers are making improvements to reduce herd emissions through the Beef Efficiency Scheme.

Since completing this assessment, I note that the First Minister has expressed her view that there could be an announcement before the pre-electoral period in principle and of intent, setting out a clear direction of travel and with a recognition that further work is required.

I have given a first outline below of how such an announcement might be framed in a way that is consistent with the requirements of the Scottish Public Finance Manual. It could:

- celebrate the progress made in the Suckler Beef Climate Group in particular and give an update on the other Farmer Led Groups
- commit to a whole agriculture approach;
- describe the general principles of future agricultural and rural support together with an indication of the overall financial envelope available and the intention to commit both capital and resource;
- describe a coherent vision of how all farming sectors will benefit and how we will implement a Just Transition approach;
- lay out the path through all the Farmer Led Groups to the launch of a “Green Gateway” enrolment and baselining scheme later in the year;
- show how this can be combined with pilot testing of schemes and the early recruitment of a cohort of farmers and crofters to work with us on service design; and
- confirm how broader stakeholders and Parliament will be able to engage.

It would need to stop short of specific financial commitments for individual schemes or detail such as payment rates to particular sectors. However, the feedback from the Chairs Group on Friday 12th March indicates that an announcement that demonstrates strong momentum, creates clear signposts and commits to a whole agriculture approach, thus avoiding industry division, could be welcomed by the majority.

Please let me know how you would like to proceed

Liz



AO assessment
suckler beef 14.3.docx

(For publishing purposes the document above is available to view as Annex B)



Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy & Tourism

Copies as above.

Official: Sensitive: Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board - Policy Objective paper - for Co-Chair clearance

Thank you for your note. I recall the paper that you refer to was produced as a discussion paper for the Suckler Beef Climate Scheme Programme Board and not as policy advice to you as Cabinet Secretary. It is important that it is seen in this context. You have asked me if the material in the paper causes me any concern as Accountable Officer. The paper is helpful insofar as it shows the extent of change that is necessary in agriculture in order to meet emissions reduction targets and how measures from all the farmer led groups will need to be integrated into a coherent approach. However, it pre-supposes (as does the Annex) a general approach to agriculture policy and associated support schemes that is substantially incomplete at present. For this reason it does not provide a sufficiently robust basis to meet the requirements placed upon me as Accountable Officer in the use of public resources to support policy objectives.

My Accountable Officer Assessment (provided to you on 15th March) identified various difficulties in the proposed suckler beef scheme. These difficulties also present in the Board paper as follows.

- From the perspective of regularity (see paragraphs 10 to 20 of my assessment) the approach proposed in the paper cannot be made legal and its conditions effective in a practical way without the requirement for legislation in a future Parliament (see paragraph 11 & 17 of my assessment). By the same token it is unclear that the budget resources available to support the change will be sufficient (see paragraph 13, 17 and 19 of my assessment). In addition, the document does not consider the impact of the proposed measures on other types of agriculture or rural and island communities who are not covered by the proposed approach. It is, however a current legal requirement that the Government considers these impacts in the preparation of all public policy (see for example paragraphs 14 to 16 of my assessment). More generally the Government has not engaged in any systematic consultation on any aspects of the broader change yet this is a matter so substantial that is bound to bring many as yet unidentified risks (see paragraphs 14, 15, 16 & 19 of my earlier assessment).
- From the perspective of propriety (see paragraphs 21 to 37 of my assessment) the paper contains little of the detail necessary to launch measures in the suckler beef industry. By the same token it offers little insight into the practical requirements of other agricultural sectors (see in particular paragraph 28 of my assessment). We have not yet received the thinking from other Farmer Led Groups which would help us form a view or to put in place the necessary pilots and full range of necessary technical advice. In particular, paragraphs 25 to 33 of my earlier assessment seem relevant in this regard. For these reasons we are substantially short of detail in the outline business case that would be needed to create a transformative programme for Scottish Agriculture and the terms of a Just Transition.
- From the perspective of value for money (see paragraphs 38 to 53 of my assessment), the suckler beef scheme proposal has not yet been able to show how incentives will operate to turn the sound technical measures into changed farming practice. Beyond this, the paper says little about the how the objectives of agriculture policy as a whole might be achieved in the most economical, efficient and effective way. All of the considerations present with regard to the proposed suckler beef scheme appear relevant to the wider application of this approach. Whilst we have yet to receive proposals from other Farmer Led Groups it is not possible to make judgements about the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of any one particular aspect of policy in advance of others.

In addition to these issues, I am aware that the policy framework has not been agreed in any detail with the Cabinet Secretary for Environment & Climate Change although it will have a significant impact on the ECCLR portfolio. For these reasons, taken together, I do not think that the paper is a sufficiently strong foundation for the Accountable Officer to support the use of public resources until such time as we are able to make more informed judgements and further work has been undertaken.

Notwithstanding these points I know that you are keen to recognise the work that has been done to date and the progress that has been made. Placing the Board Paper in the relevant section of the SG web-site alongside the reports from other farmer led groups would help to do this. A version of the paper, made available in this way, must, in the interests of transparency and in the absence of an approved ministerial direction, be presented as a work in progress which shows the broad approach, is intended to stimulate discussion about the many issues yet to be resolved, and confirms the need for integration of the work of the various groups, yet to take place. In particular, the material in the annex, (drafted for the eventuality of the AO tests being met) must be marked as being for illustrative purposes only or alternatively removed altogether, in order to avoid misleading stakeholders.

Please let me know how you would like to proceed

Liz

Liz Ditchburn
DG Economy

From: [redact] **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

Sent: 22 March 2021 09:48

To: [redact]

Cc: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) [redact] Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]>; Burgess WG (George) <[redact]>; [redact] Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; [redact]; Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact]; DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board - Policy Objective paper - for Co-Chair clearance

[redact]

Removing external email addresses but adding Kate and comms.

Further to the response below, Mr Ewing does not think this paper contains any material to which would cause any concerns for the Accountable Officer. That is because more work is required to convert it into a programme, and it places no figures on the scheme. So the detail will require to be worked out. This paper though sets the clear direction of travel and as such, whilst not in accordance with his instructions, is a start.

He would welcome confirmation from Andrew and the Accountable Officer during the course of today please.

Kind regards

[redact]

Private Secretary

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

2N.08

St Andrews House

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[redact]

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Regards
[redact]

[redact]

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Date: Monday, 15 March 2021 at 13:37

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Cc: "[redact]; "DDRPID@gov.scot" <DDRPID@gov.scot>, "DDISD@gov.scot" <DDISD@gov.scot>, [redact] [redact]"[redact], "[redact] "DirectorARE@gov.scot" <DirectorARE@gov.scot>, [redact]

Subject: RE: Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board - redrafted policy paper -

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I would be grateful if you could get back to me at your earliest opportunity and ideally by noon tomorrow if possible.

Regards
[redact]
Secretariat

[redact]

[redact]

My note crossed with this further note from Mr Ewing

Liz

From: [redact] **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

Sent: 22 March 2021 21:32

To: DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>

Cc: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>; Fuller S (Simon) [redact] Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) [redact] Burgess WG (George) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact] Higgins K (Kate) <[redact]>; [redact]; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) <[redact]@gov.scot>; [redact]

Subject: RE: Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board - Policy Objective paper - for Co-Chair clearance

Liz

Please see note below from Mr Ewing;

"This morning I asked the AO for a proposal to be agreed which would in my view, prevent potential substantial damage to the SG and embarrassment on a major scale, by supporting a compromise proposal on the climate change farmer led group initiative.

It is not the proposal which I instructed (and I must stress that). It is far less than that, so it is not what I believe what should have happened had my instructions been followed as I believe they should but were not.

But nonetheless, the modified and compromised proposals are ones which would allow us to proceed now without potential implosion of the whole initiative which implosion now, in my judgement a serious risk. Were that implosion to occur, then, again in my view (and a view that my officials well know because I have expressed it on innumerable occasions) the risk is that the ability of any government to work with farmers to achieve climate change over the next five years, having spurned their voluntary work now and over the past year - is zero. In short trust would be destroyed and any proposals for change would likely be embroiled in dissent and political controversy.

Today, I have not heard anything from the AO despite requesting that I get a reply.

I will of course raise these issue with my colleagues including the FM and DFM. But I do hope that the compromise can be agreed as surely is the only sensible course of action.

All these issues are already well considered so disappointed that I have not heard a reply from Liz Ditchburn or Andrew Scott.

FE"

Kind regards

[redact]

Private Secretary

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

2N.08

St Andrews House

[redact]

[redact]

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From: DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>

Sent: 22 March 2021 10:00

To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>; [redact]

Cc: Fuller S (Simon) <[redact] Deputy Director of RPID <DDRPID@gov.scot>; Deputy Director of ISD <DDISD@gov.scot>; Kerr J (John) <[redact]>; Burgess WG (George) <[redact]>; [redact]; Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; [redact] DG Economy <DGEconomy@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board - Policy Objective paper - for Co-Chair clearance

Thanks[redact]

As Accountable Officer, I will consider the paper and proposal from Mr Ewing as suggested and come back to you.

Liz

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To: [redact]

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I would be grateful if you could get back to me at your earliest opportunity and ideally by noon tomorrow if possible.

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Secretariat

[redact]

From: DG Economy <DGEEconomy@gov.scot>

Sent: 23 March 2021 09:35

To: Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; First Minister <firstminister@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism <CabSecRET@gov.scot>

Cc: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <DFMCSE@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Finance <CabSecFinance@gov.scot>; Williams K (Katrina) [redact[]]; Thomson KAL (Ken) (Director-General) <[redact] DG Economy <DGEEconomy@gov.scot>; Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy <DirectorARE@gov.scot>; Lloyd E (Elizabeth) <[redact] McAllister C (Colin) <[redact]

Subject: RE: OFFICIAL SENSITIVE - Agriculture: Ministerial Code & Reputational Concerns

Mr Ewing

I have replied separately to you on your email of yesterday (attached here for reference) with respect to the presentation of a Suckler Beef Climate Programme Board paper as government policy and whether this would create AO concerns. As you know, my view is that the paper does create AO concerns, however, I have put forward a means of making the paper available publicly with appropriate risk mitigations in place.

I want to record my extreme disquiet that your office, on your behalf, made it known to external stakeholders including [redact], that you wished to proceed to announcing the material in the paper as government policy before the pre-electoral period begins. Only after making your position public to these stakeholders did you seek my advice as to whether AO issues were invoked by this material.

The material in the paper is largely the same material that was appraised from an AO perspective and that was therefore reflected in my assessment to you of 15th March, an assessment to which I have received no reply. It can be no surprise to you, that in my view, making a statement of government policy in these terms is not consistent with the duties placed on me. In making your position public, I can only infer that you wish to proceed with the process of securing approval for written ministerial authority. Alternatively, if you do not wish to do this, the material will need to be made available publicly in a way that makes its status as a discussion paper clear.

The sequencing of these processes – making your policy position known publicly and only then seeking AO assurance – is very problematic and exposes my teams to unfair criticism from stakeholders that they are “blocking” government policy. You have shared your concerns with Andrew about the likely adverse reaction of [redact] and the criticism of you, the government and civil servants that will flow from that. This is clearly a difficult dynamic with diverse stakeholders and it is important that we work together to manage these risks. Expressing your intentions externally while internal processes continue is likely to make that stakeholder management harder and increase the risk of criticism.

Liz