

~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ Rt Hon Viscount Thurso
Chairman



21 May 2016

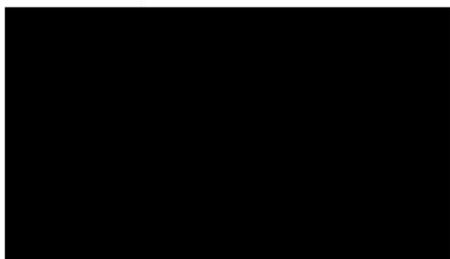
Fiona Hyslop MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs
St. Andrews House
Regent Road
Edinburgh EH1 3DG

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

Please accept my congratulations on your new portfolio covering culture, tourism and external affairs. At VisitScotland we are, of course, delighted that tourism has been recognised at a Cabinet Secretary level and I look forward to working with you to develop the already fantastic tourism offering which we have in Scotland.

I very much hope I may have an early opportunity to discuss your priorities with you and to brief you on our new plans and I have asked my office to liaise with your officials to look for a date convenient to you.

Kind Regards,



John Thurso
Chairman, VisitScotland

VisitScotland
Ocean Point One
94 Ocean Drive
Edinburgh EH6 6JH
Telephone +44(0)131 [REDACTED]
Fax +44(0)131 [REDACTED]

www.visitscotland.com
www.visitscotland.org

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 05 October 2017 13:29:11
To: Public Engagement Unit
Subject: FW: For attention of Keith Brown, MSP, Cabinet Secretary Economy, Job and Fair Work

Attachments: Keith Brown letter.pdf

For MACCS ? MR.

[REDACTED] | Private Secretary to Keith Brown MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work
The Scottish Government | Web: www.gov.scot<<http://www.gov.scot/>>
Tel: 0131 [REDACTED] | Mob: [REDACTED] | Email: CabSecEJFW@gov.scot<<mailto:CabSecEJFW@gov.scot>>

From: Chairman [<mailto:chairman@visitscotland.com>]
Sent: 05 October 2017 13:24
To: Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work
Subject: For attention of Keith Brown, MSP, Cabinet Secretary Economy, Job and Fair Work

Good afternoon,

Please find attached a letter for Keith Brown, MSP, Cabinet Secretary Economy, Job and Fair Work.

Kind regards,
Lord Thurso
VisitScotland Chairman
For Visitor Information<<http://www.visitscotland.com>>
For information on VisitScotland<<http://www.visitscotland.org>>
For information on Business Events<<http://www.conventionscotland.com>>
For information on EventScotland<<http://www.EventScotland.org>>
For information on Travel trade<<http://www.visitscotlandtraveltrade.com>>

From World Heritage Sites to ancient monuments, cultural traditions to our myths, stories and legends, the 2017 Year of History, Heritage and Archaeology, running from 1 January to 31 December shines a spotlight on Scotland's greatest assets, icons and hidden gems. 2017 is the year to delve into the past ? come and make history with us! #HHA2017 <<https://www.twitter.com/hashtag/HHA2017>>
#facethepast<<https://www.twitter.com/hashtag/FaceThePast>>

Show your #ScotSpirit<<https://twitter.com/hashtag/scotspirit>>....Join the conversation

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Tha am post-d seo (agus faidhle sam bith na chois) d'omhair agus sochairichte. Mas ann le mearachd a tha thu air am post-d fhaighinn, cuir fios gun d'ìl chun neach a chur thugaibh e agus dubh 's an teachdaireachd-sa sa bhad. Na d'an lethbhreac den fhiosrachadh, na foillsich e ann an d'ìgh sam bith, na d'an gn'omh ri a linn.

Dh'fhaodadh beachdan pearsanta a bhith gan cur an c'ill sam post-d seo nach eil a' riochdachadh beachdan VisitScotland. Tha siostam post-dealain VisitScotland (an teachdaireachd sam post-dealain seo agus ceangalachain sam bith) ga mheasadh agus ga chl'radh gu tuairamach airson adhbharan t'arainteachd agus tr'anadh.

Tha VisitScotland a' comhairleachadh gu bheil sibh a' fosgladh puist-d agus cheangalachain aig ur cunnart fh'in.

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5 October 2017

Keith Brown MSP
Cabinet Secretary Economy, Jobs and Fair Work
Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
1 Regent Road
EDINBURGH
EH1 3DG

Dear Keith

Over the last two months I have enjoyed contributing to the Implementation Board whose work, I hope, will prove a valuable foundation for the new Strategy Board. Now that the Implementation Board's work is complete I thought it might be helpful to share my views relating to VisitScotland's future participation.

The visitor economy is both one of Scotland's largest employers and a major contributor to national GDP. Since 2008 tourism GVA has grown by 42%, outstripping the GVA of any other growth sector in the Scottish economy. The sector also has potential for significant growth across a wide geographic spread throughout the country. In addition to leading that growth VisitScotland also has skills and assets which can be deployed in cooperation with other agencies to promote Scotland overall as exemplified by "Project Unlimited". VisitScotland is therefore clearly an agency whose work can and should have an important impact on future economic growth.

The Strategy Board is currently envisaged to have 16 members with each of the economic agencies being represented ex-officio within that number. I write to urge that, if that is the chosen model, VisitScotland be one of those agencies.

There are of course dangers in having a "representative" board membership. If the primary tasks of the Strategy Board are part "think tank" and part "Audit Committee" with a remit to speak truth and to hold delivery bodies to account, then there is an alternative which could envisage a slightly smaller board with a more focused approach. In this model none of the board Chairs would be represented on the Strategy Board itself which would then be freed to think more strategically.

+44 (0)131 472 2222

VisitScotland, Ocean Point One, 94 Ocean Drive, Edinburgh, EH6 6JH

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The agencies would deliver through a sub-committee of the Board, probably chaired by the Strategic Board chair. If this latter model, which has clear merits, were to be chosen then I would urge that VisitScotland be represented on the sub-committee.

With kind personal regards



LORD THURSO
Chairman

Ivan McKee MSP
Minister for Business, Trade, Tourism, and Enterprise.
Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Edinburgh.
EH1 3DG

By E mail.

26th July 2021

Dear Minister,

As Chair of VisitScotland I sit ex-officio on the board of the British Tourist Authority (BTA) which trades as VisitBritain.

The Scotland Act 1998 specified tourism as wholly devolved to Scottish Ministers, however the Act also retained the BTA as a cross border authority with domestic English promotion undertaken by VisitEngland. This asymmetric devolution has left the BTA obligations in relation to promoting Scotland as part of the UK.

Therefore, VisitBritain and VisitScotland entered into a Memorandum of Understanding which sets out the principles of our collaboration. This is underpinned by a service level agreement and by cooperation between our respective organisations. A core principle of the MOU is that it is a partnership of equals. Until recently these arrangements have worked reasonably well and any issues were dealt with at an operational level.

Dealing with the consequences of Covid for the tourism and hospitality industry has been challenging for both organisations and their respective governments and it is understood that normal service cannot be delivered in these circumstances. However, at the last BTA board meeting we were informed that virtually no funds would be available for any communications or marketing this year – a sum of £100k was mentioned for the autumn campaign- and that no normal marketing communication could take place without Cabinet Office approval which it was estimated had an 8 to 10 week turnaround time.

I believe this means that BTA can no longer deliver on either the MOU or the SLA which means it is no longer an operational matter, and I felt it my duty to advise you of these developments for your consideration.

The BTA is, I believe, aware that it is not able to help businesses in the way it wishes to or to market to meet future demands but has been unable to persuade DCMS of its case. Whilst DCMS is entitled to take such decisions in respect of England it is my view that it must take into account the devolution settlement when considering these matters in a UK perspective, and that at present it is

not doing so, a point I made with clarity at the last BTA board meeting.

Given the necessity to ensure that economic recovery happens speedily it is essential that all our combined resources are focused and maximised to greatest effect and to that end you may wish to raise this issue with your counterpart in the UK Government at your next meeting.

I remain at your disposal to discuss any of the above at your convenience if you would like to.

With kind personal regards,

Yours sincerely



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

The Rt Hon Steve Barclay MP
Chief Secretary to the Treasury
Email: Action.CST@hmtreasury.gov.uk

22 June 2021

Dear Steve,

Next steps for delivering green ports in Scotland

Further to my letter to you of 11 May, I remain disappointed at the lack of engagement by the UK Government on delivering green ports in Scotland. I have yet to receive formal agreement from you about designating two green ports in Scotland, and that each will be able to access the same amount of seed capital funding as each freeport in England. I am therefore writing to you to set out the Scottish Government's proposed next steps for delivering this policy.

Industry stakeholders have been clear that the applicant prospectus for green ports in Scotland ought to be launched as soon as possible. It is my belief, and that of industry stakeholders in Scotland, that delaying implementation of this policy further will be detrimental for Scottish businesses, placing them at an increased competitive disadvantage to the successful freeport bidders in England, directly as a result of UK Government delays.

The Scottish Government has been ready for some time to press ahead with the process to establish green ports. Despite our commitment to moving forward in partnership, the UK Government has failed to engage with us to publish a final joint applicant prospectus as a result, the Scottish Government's intention is to now invite notes of interest from potential green port bidders in Scotland. This exercise will allow us to gauge interest for the development of green port policy in Scotland and will provide an indication of the geography and sectors likely to benefit. The notes of interest invited will be based on the content of the abridged draft applicant prospectus, published on the Scottish Government website in March, which also signposted the reserved offer available to all freeports in England.

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

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The Scottish Government wants to ensure that businesses in Scotland receive the same level of incentives and assistance as those offered to freeports in England, and for the difference in time between the processes north and south of the border to be as short as possible to minimise further competitive disadvantage to businesses in Scotland.

I intend to hold a stakeholder engagement session on the 30th of June and would like to extend an invitation to you or a Scotland Office minister to attend this event. The agenda will address the call for notes of interest and prompt discussion of the next steps towards designating green ports in Scotland.

I would welcome a conversation with you on this matter at your earliest convenience so that we can move forward with delivering green ports in Scotland as quickly as possible for the benefit of businesses and communities in Scotland.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ivan McKee', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

IVAN MCKEE

Cc

The Rt Hon Alistair Jack MP
Secretary of State for Scotland
Scotland Office

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