

## South of Scotland Enterprise

Professor Russel Griggs OBE  
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14 December 2020

Fergus Ewing MSP  
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

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Joe.Brown@gov.scot

Dear Fergus

### Wedding Sector Funding

It was good to see the package of funding that Kate Forbes announced this week and think it will go a long way to helping those sectors that perhaps felt that they had not been properly recognised previously.

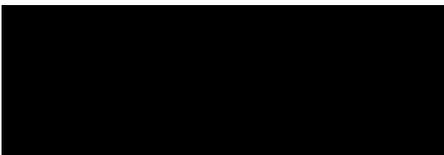
In the south of Scotland we were especially pleased to see the funding awarded to the wedding sector which, as you are aware, is a key part of the hospitality industry in the south. In volume 15% of all weddings take place in the south of Scotland with Gretna accounting for almost two thirds of those.

As you know we were involved with Joe Brown in the initial conversation between the wedding sector and Scottish Government, and as well as the funding package now available to them from Scottish Government the sector has also now formed themselves into a cohesive voice with over 800 members in a few weeks. Duncan McConchie, who as you know sits on our Board, has and will continue to be one of the leaders of the new Association.

Given all the above we believe that it would be useful and beneficial if we led for the whole of Scotland in the design and implementation of this funding package. That it is not to say that we would not involve our colleagues in SE and HIE in both the design and direct delivery of the funds. However, we are well-placed to take on the responsibility for the coordination and consistency of the fund design, working with the Wedding Association itself who already have had some good thoughts on how we would ensure that the funds go to those who need it most.

Therefore if you and colleagues confirm that you are content that we move ahead on that basis then I will get Bryan McGrath our Operations Director at SOSE to move ahead to work with other parties to put in place an implementation process that will get the funding out as quickly and as fairly as possible.

Best wishes



Professor Russel Griggs OBE  
Chair  
South of Scotland Enterprise

## South of Scotland Enterprise

Professor Russel Griggs OBE

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Paul Wheelhouse MSP

Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands

By email [MinisterECl@gov.scot](mailto:MinisterECl@gov.scot)

17 August 2020

Dear Paul

### SCOTWIND LEASING

I understand that you are currently reflecting on the outcome of the consultation on the options for the Sectoral Marine Plan and the sites which should be included in that plan. This is key in setting out the sites that will form part of the current Crown Estates seabed leasing round.

We recognise the significant and exciting opportunities that offshore wind-could bring to the South of Scotland, creating more green jobs across the region and making a vital contribution to our green recovery. Developing the sector successfully would bring vital economic activity to the region, with direct long-term employment in operation and maintenance as well as shorter term construction jobs. We would also be well-placed to ensure we attracted additional investment to the region, making use of the clean energy available.

There are four sites in the draft plan that are of particular relevance to South of Scotland, those in the East (sites E1, E2 and E3) and in the South West (site SW1). We believe that there is considerable value in continuing to include these options in the leasing round, to enable projects to be worked up that could bring vital opportunities to the region while contributing to Scotland's green energy. We think it important not to narrow the field of sites too early but we keep the field broad to ensure we maximise the likelihood of success for the sector and enabling developers to bring forward projects proposals for more detailed assessment allowing us to benefit from commercial expertise.

I know that some responses to the recent consultation expressed opposition to the Luce Bay site (SW1) highlighting concerns about landscape and tourism impacts. I do not underestimate these important considerations and they would clearly need to be explored in detail if any project in that area was brought forward. However, we think there is merit in not closing down the option at this stage but to include it as part of the leasing round. That would enable interested developers to explore innovative approaches that maximise commercial renewable energy production whilst minimising any negative environmental and community concerns.. Even if a project does not eventually go ahead, the development and exploration stage would bring economic benefit to the region.

I should be happy to discuss further.



Professor Russel Griggs OBE  
Chair, South of Scotland Enterprise

## South of Scotland Enterprise

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19 November 2020

Dear Jamie

Recognising the significant energy opportunity in the South of Scotland, South of Scotland Enterprise established an Energy Transition Group drawing together a wide range of key stakeholders across the South of Scotland, including the public, education and private sectors. Rural Scotland needs a different set of solutions to the central belt. One size does not fit all.

Through a series of themed meetings, the group has reflected on the potential that a strategic plan for the decarbonising heat, transport and the need for upgrades to our distribution and transmission infrastructure, can bring to employment, now and the coming decade. We have explored what we need to do to address the skills needs and to raise awareness of the opportunity to our supply chain to ensure that the benefits stay in Scotland, and for us in the South of Scotland.

As part of the area's growth deal, the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal, work is about to start on a masterplan supplemented by more detailed local area plans focused on investment opportunities. This will provide a comprehensive picture and create a framework for future investment from both the public and private sectors as we move forward.

We can expect 130,000 annual conversions to heat pumps in Scotland alone, worth about £1 billion. Accompanied by opportunities to install insulation, build the charging network and take forward grid upgrades; there is a huge and immediate opportunity. It is vital that we work together to unlock this at a time of such economic challenge. Retraining the existing workforce and enabling the future workforce will lead to long term sustainable employment if we react now to plan the transition.

We want to look at how we can respond and create new jobs in this sector. These opportunities can contribute significantly to the delivery of the Youth Guarantee, offering young people an opportunity in training or employment in a sector with a secure future. Coupled with the potential created through the grants available for heat pumps through the green homes grants scheme, it should be possible to attract contractors to become involved as part of the Youth Guarantee work.

This is an important opportunity for rural Scotland. We in the South of Scotland are uniquely placed to respond, with a central location between the Central Belt of Scotland and the North of England allowing us to export expertise and capitalise on that market. This work contributes to our commitment to community wealth building, helping to develop a supply chain and generate income that will stay in the region.

We look forward to working closely with you as you take forward the Youth Guarantee to explore how that funding can support opportunities within this sector and would be happy to meet to discuss how we can develop the approach.

I am copying this letter to Paul Wheelhouse MSP, given his portfolio responsibility for energy.

Yours sincerely,



**Professor Russel Griggs OBE**  
**Chair**  
**South of Scotland Enterprise**

Cc: Paul Wheelhouse MSP

Fiona Hyslop MSP  
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30 April 2021

Dear Fiona,

**Re: FAIR WORK**

As you are aware, we are committed to promoting Fair Work across the South of Scotland in all that we do with businesses and communities. As part of that we have been developing the detail of our approach and I wanted to share the recent agreement my Board reached about what we will do moving forward to encourage organisations in their Fair Work Journey.

We agreed that:

- Any organisation we work with needs to commit to becoming a Fair Work employer - whether a business or community organisation;
- If we offer a grant to a business or community organisation, becoming a Fair Work employer and a commitment to Fair Work First will be a condition of our funding regardless of amount of grant involved;
- That condition can, of course, only be for our region so for businesses with plants or offices outwith the South we can only apply that provision within our region;
- Each case will be dealt with on an individual basis with our staff working with the business/organisation to agree what their specific Fair Work First Journey would look like - recognising that each business will be at a different point or stage on that journey; and,
- We shall ensure we support organisations on that journey and intend to build a team of specialists to provide the guidance and support that is required.

We recognise that for some organisations various aspects of Fair Work remain challenging but we are determined to ensure we do all that we can to help them progress on their journey. We will act as an exemplar demonstrating what can be done by promoting all the elements of Fair Work. It is vital, however, that we do not inadvertently develop a post-code lottery of delivering support to businesses and communities that could mean in some parts of Scotland organisations do not need to embrace Fair Work First criteria to get public sector support. We want to work with you, the other enterprise agencies, and other public bodies to minimise the risk of that happening and ensure a level playing field, and we look forward to continuing the discussion about how this is best achieved.

I have copied this to the Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Tourism and the Cabinet Secretary for Finance.

Yours sincerely,



**Professor Russel Griggs OBE  
Chair  
South of Scotland Enterprise**

## South of Scotland Enterprise

Professor Russel Griggs OBE  
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28 May 2021

Dear Mr Dey

On behalf of South of Scotland Enterprise, I am delighted to congratulate you on your recent election and appointment as Minister for Transport.

As you know, we went live as the economic and community development agency for the South of Scotland last April and, in our first year, we have been very much focused on helping businesses and communities survive through the pandemic. As we look to the future, we are committed to building a fairer, greener and stronger region.

With our wide ranging and varied remit, to further the sustainable economic and social development of the South of Scotland and improve its environment, we look forward to working with colleagues across government and actively contributing to your ambitious and forward looking agenda for Scotland.

Operating in a rural community, we recognise the importance of an effective public transport system. Previous research we have commissioned, showed that for many businesses access to good public transport was key to what they were looking for. Clearly that presents a challenge in a rural area, but we are keen to work with partners to facilitate. The strategic projects transport review is also of key interest to us.

Yours sincerely



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28 May 2021

Dear Ms Gilruth

On behalf of South of Scotland Enterprise, I am delighted to congratulate you on your recent election and appointment as Minister for Culture, Europe and International Development.

As you know, we went live as the economic and community development agency for the South of Scotland last April and, in our first year, we have been very much focused on helping businesses and communities survive through the pandemic. As we look to the future, we are committed to building a fairer, greener and stronger region.

With our wide ranging and varied remit, to further the sustainable economic and social development of the South of Scotland and improve its environment, we look forward to working with colleagues across government and actively contributing to your ambitious and forward looking agenda for Scotland.

Like many rural areas in Scotland, we are suffering a population challenge. Attracting people to our region and retaining our talent are important themes in our work. We are beginning to see some key skills shortages caused in part by the impact of EU Exit, for our hospitality, tourism and agriculture sectors and are keen to work with others to help address these.

Our cultural heritage is important to the region and shapes our economy, including our festivals and events. We recognise how important creative industries are to our economy. We look forward to working with you to maximise their potential.

Yours sincerely



Professor Russel Griggs OBE  
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28 May 2021

Dear Mr Robertson

On behalf of South of Scotland Enterprise, I am delighted to congratulate you on your recent election and appointment as Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, External Affairs and Culture.

As you know, we went live as the economic and community development agency for the South of Scotland last April and, in our first year, we have been very much focused on helping businesses and communities survive through the pandemic. As we look to the future, we are committed to building a fairer, greener and stronger region.

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28 May 2021

Dear Mairi

On behalf of South of Scotland Enterprise, I am delighted to congratulate you on your recent election and appointment as Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Islands.

As you know, we went live as the economic and community development agency for the South of Scotland last April and, in our first year, we have been very much focused on helping businesses and communities survive through the pandemic. As we look to the future, we are committed to building a fairer, greener and stronger region.

With our wide ranging and varied remit, to further the sustainable economic and social development of the South of Scotland and improve its environment, we look forward to working with colleagues across government and actively contributing to your ambitious and forward looking agenda for Scotland.

Operating in a rural economy, we recognise the value of agriculture, forestry and fishing and adding value to the primary products produced and those sectors remain central for us. Our natural capital has strongly influenced the sectors that are important for the region and we are looking at ways to maximise its benefits. Next year is vital for the future of the Galloway and South Ayrshire Biosphere as it looks to renew its UNESCO accreditation and engage with communities to explore extending its boundaries. You will, of course, recall visiting them as we looked to explore how SOSE could best support them to deliver their ambitions and unlock the potential contribution they can make.

I look forward to continuing our work with you.

Yours sincerely



Professor Russel Griggs OBE  
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28 May 2021

Dear Richard

On behalf of South of Scotland Enterprise, I am delighted to congratulate you on your recent election and appointment as Minister for Just Transition, Employment and Fair Work.

As you know, we went live as the economic and community development agency for the South of Scotland last April and, in our first year, we have been very much focused on helping businesses and communities survive through the pandemic. As we look to the future, we are committed to building a fairer, greener and stronger region.

With our wide ranging and varied remit, to further the sustainable economic and social development of the South of Scotland and improve its environment, we look forward to working with colleagues across government and actively contributing to your ambitious and forward looking agenda for Scotland.

We are, of course, the only public body to have inclusive growth and fair work in its founding legislation and that is central to how we operate. My board recently agreed our approach to ensuring that all those we work with look to commit to their fair work journey. We have established our shadow workers' interest committee as a standing committee of our Board that is external facing and designed to help us understand the issues facing workers in the South of Scotland and steer us on fair work. The just transition to net zero offers significant opportunities to create good green jobs in the South of Scotland and we want to do all we can to maximise those opportunities.

I look forward to working with you.

Yours sincerely



Professor Russel Griggs OBE  
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28 May 2021

Dear Ivan

On behalf of South of Scotland Enterprise, I am delighted to congratulate you on your recent election and appointment as Minister for Business, Trade, Tourism and Enterprise.

As you know, we went live as the economic and community development agency for the South of Scotland last April and, in our first year, we have been very much focused on helping businesses and communities survive through the pandemic. As we look to the future, we are committed to building a fairer, greener and stronger region.

With our wide ranging and varied remit, to further the sustainable economic and social development of the South of Scotland and improve its environment, we look forward to working with colleagues across government and actively contributing to your ambitious and forward looking agenda for Scotland.

We are sure that we can make a valuable contribution to the activities you want to take forward across your portfolio. We have considerable interest in sectors for which you are responsible including tourism. We would like to build on our previous conversations about innovation in the South, demonstrating the range of strengths we have that can contribute to international trade and inward investment. You may also be interested in hearing more about our work as part of the South of Scotland Regional Economic Partnership which is driving forward the production of the first ever regional economic strategy. [REDACTED]

I look forward to working with you.

Yours sincerely



Professor Russel Griggs OBE  
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## South of Scotland Enterprise

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28 May 2021

Dear John

On behalf of South of Scotland Enterprise, I am delighted to congratulate you on your recent election and appointment as Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Covid Recovery.

As you know, we went live as the economic and community development agency for the South of Scotland last April and, in our first year, we have been very much focused on helping businesses and communities survive through the pandemic. As we look to the future, we are committed to building a fairer, greener and stronger region.

With our wide ranging and varied remit, to further the sustainable economic and social development of the South of Scotland and improve its environment, we look forward to working with colleagues across government and actively contributing to your ambitious and forward looking agenda for Scotland.

Your role in co-ordinating our recovery from COVID-19 is a vital one and we look forward to contributing as we make the South of Scotland a centre of opportunity innovation and growth.

and hope that you continue in your role as chair of the Convention of the South of Scotland. We are working, as part of our Regional Economic Partnership, to drive forward the first ever Regional Economic Strategy for the South of Scotland and are making good progress. That will set the strategic direction for the region over the next 10 years and will be central to the COSS agenda. We hope that our approach to the strategy can be a helpful pathfinder for other regions.

We look forward to continuing the discussion with you.

Yours sincerely



Professor Russel Griggs OBE  
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## South of Scotland Enterprise

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28 May 2021

Dear Mr Arthur

On behalf of South of Scotland Enterprise, I am delighted to congratulate you on your recent election and appointment as Minister for Public Finance, Planning and Community Wealth.

As you know, we went live as the economic and community development agency for the South of Scotland last April and, in our first year, we have been very much focused on helping businesses and communities survive through the pandemic. As we look to the future, we are committed to building a fairer, greener and stronger region.

With our wide ranging and varied remit, to further the sustainable economic and social development of the South of Scotland and improve its environment, we look forward to working with colleagues across government and actively contributing to your ambitious and forward looking agenda for Scotland.

As one of the pilot areas developing our approach to Community Wealth Building, we look forward to sharing our experiences as you develop your approach to the legislation. We will be happy to contribute to the work on town centre regeneration building on the Town Centre Action Plan work. We have strong examples in the South of Scotland demonstrating effective approaches to regeneration, from the Midsteeple Quarter in Dumfries to the work that Re-energise Gala are taking forward in Galashiels. Supporting and developing resilient and enterprising communities is a key part of what we are about.

We would also be interested in sharing with you work we have been doing on energy and the importance of grid infrastructure in rural Scotland and how that links to the National Planning Framework 4.

I look forward to working with you.

Yours sincerely



Professor Russel Griggs OBE  
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## South of Scotland Enterprise

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28 May 2021

Dear Kate

On behalf of South of Scotland Enterprise, I am delighted to congratulate you on your recent election and appointment as Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Economy.

As you know, we went live as the economic and community development agency for the South of Scotland last April and, in our first year, we have been very much focused on helping businesses and communities survive through the pandemic. As we look to the future, we are committed to building a fairer, greener and stronger region.

With our wide ranging and varied remit, to further the sustainable economic and social development of the South of Scotland and improve its environment, we look forward to working with colleagues across government and actively contributing to your ambitious and forward looking agenda for Scotland.

I know that your office is sorting out an early conversation so we can share more about our work. You will, of course, have seen our operating plan which sets out our immediate focus for this financial year. We are working, as part of our Regional Economic Partnership, to drive forward the first ever Regional Economic Strategy for the South of Scotland and are making good progress. That will set the strategic direction for the region over the next 10 years.

We were delighted to see the digital economy coming together under you and the opportunities that brings. In creating SOSE, the Scottish Government ensured that there was a proper economic voice for all the rural part of Scotland and together with HIE we are able to deliver that perspective. Each of the three enterprise agencies now act to deliver the regional needs of their areas, while coming together where appropriate to work jointly on issues of national importance.

I look forward to a more detailed discussion shortly.

Yours sincerely



Professor Russel Griggs OBE  
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## South of Scotland Enterprise

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28 May 2021

Dear Jamie

On behalf of South of Scotland Enterprise, I am delighted to congratulate you on your recent election and appointment as Minister for Higher Education and Further Education, Youth Employment and Training.

As you know, we went live as the economic and community development agency for the South of Scotland last April and, in our first year, we have been very much focused on helping businesses and communities survive through the pandemic. As we look to the future, we are committed to building a fairer, greener and stronger region.

With our wide ranging and varied remit, to further the sustainable economic and social development of the South of Scotland and improve its environment, we look forward to working with colleagues across government and actively contributing to your ambitious and forward looking agenda for Scotland.

We have been working closely with partners across the South of Scotland, including Skills Development Scotland and the Scottish Funding Council, to understand and respond to the current and future skills needs of the South of Scotland. There are significant opportunities across the green economy where we need to ensure we are building the skills required to ensure we do not lose the benefit. We also look forward to exploring different approaches to work based learning and apprenticeships, ensuring the models respond to the needs of rural geographies and economies.

In establishing our regional economic partnership, we have set up a group that focuses on education and skills, drawing together the key players to help align and co-ordinate activity.

We are seeing some key skills shortages for our hospitality, tourism and agriculture sectors and are keen to work with others to help address these. We have had valuable discussions with our textile businesses who are keen to ensure there is locally available training.

We look forward to working with you.

Yours sincerely



Professor Russel Griggs OBE  
Chair  
South of Scotland Enterprise

## South of Scotland Enterprise

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28 May 2021

Dear Mairi

On behalf of South of Scotland Enterprise, I am delighted to congratulate you on your recent election and appointment as Minister for Environment, Biodiversity and Land Reform.

As you know, we went live as the economic and community development agency for the South of Scotland last April and, in our first year, we have been very much focused on helping businesses and communities survive through the pandemic. As we look to the future, we are committed to building a fairer, greener and stronger region.

With our wide ranging and varied remit, to further the sustainable economic and social development of the South of Scotland and improve its environment, we look forward to working with colleagues across government and actively contributing to your ambitious and forward looking agenda for Scotland.

Operating in a rural economy, we recognise the value of agriculture, forestry and fishing and natural capital continues to shape our economy. Forests in the South of Scotland offers significant economic opportunity and the region will be key in helping meet planting targets. Our natural resources will make a significant contribution to finding nature based solutions as we strive to meet our net zero targets. Making best use of our forest land is important, including looking at the potential for mountain biking, which includes one of our key projects in the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal, the Mountain Bike Innovation Centre.

Supporting asset transfer is also an important part of our remit and I should be happy to share our experiences as I did with your predecessor. [REDACTED]

██████████ We look to make good use of forest land with various mountain bike projects and the opportunity that this brings.

I look forward to working with you.

Yours sincerely



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28 May 2021

Dear Shona

On behalf of South of Scotland Enterprise, I am delighted to congratulate you on your recent election and appointment as Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing and Local Government.

As you know, we went live as the economic and community development agency for the South of Scotland last April and, in our first year, we have been very much focused on helping businesses and communities survive through the pandemic. As we look to the future, we are committed to building a fairer, greener and stronger region.

With our wide ranging and varied remit, to further the sustainable economic and social development of the South of Scotland and improve its environment, we look forward to working with colleagues across government and actively contributing to your ambitious and forward looking agenda for Scotland.

Operating in a rural area, we are aware of the importance that small scale housing developments have in unlocking economic opportunity across our region as well as ensuring that people across the region have access to good quality and affordable housing. We are working closely with RSLs across the South of Scotland who are working collaboratively to tackle some key challenges and offer opportunities to the region.

We also work closely with the third sector across the South of Scotland and have particularly strong relationships with The Third Sector Interface in Dumfries and Galloway and are keen to see the structures in the Borders strengthened.

I look forward to working with you.

Yours sincerely



Professor Russel Griggs OBE  
Chair  
South of Scotland Enterprise

## South of Scotland Enterprise

Professor Russel Griggs OBE

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Jamie Hepburn MSP  
Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills

By E-mail: [MinisterBFWS@gov.scot](mailto:MinisterBFWS@gov.scot)

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Our ref: 20210126/RG/GL/JM

Your ref: 202000117769

26 January 2021

Dear Jamie,

Thank you for your letter dated 4 December 2020 following up on the work of the South of Scotland Energy Transition Group and the region's ambitious heat decarbonisation plans.

We welcome the need for a carefully planned and managed transition which recognises differences across Scotland. This is particularly true for rural communities who risk being left behind without timely, co-ordinated and proactive action – the specifics of which our Energy Transition Group is acting to define.

Equally as important is that our rural communities must be recognised as presenting significant and real opportunities to be a catalyst for generating the momentum needed to respond to the national challenge. This is particularly true for example with regards to the accelerated deployment of heat pumps as part of the drive to decarbonise heating, where it is obvious that to meet emerging targets, in the short term at least, there will be a need for a real focus on those areas remote from the gas grid.

Thank you for highlighting the formation and reporting timescales of the national expert advisory group on heat pumps. The establishment of this group is welcomed. We have made contact with those leading this work with and there is a willingness from both sides to share learning recognising there will likely be many synergies.

As you highlight, we also continue to engage with Scottish Enterprise to help build a low carbon heat supply chain database, acting to ensure that the expertise and potential of firms across the South of Scotland is recognised. Acting to replicate this in the near future to cover for example the roll out of electric vehicle charging infrastructure will be equally as important and we will play our part in exploring how we can achieve this.

Our Energy Transition Group met on 21 January to consider the scope of its report and recommendations. We are confident that the output of the group will, in addition to being a catalyst for local action, be of considerable national interest. An early highlight for example is how imperative it will be, in undertaking the significant upgrades of the grid networks that we know will be needed, to only touch the grid once as opposed to revisiting and upgrading incrementally for different roll outs i.e. the need to act now to design and implement infrastructure that is fit for a new cleaner lifestyle, which requires holistic planning and thinking.

Moving forward we believe that co-ordinated national and local efforts will be critical to enabling the complementary actions needed to succeed in our objectives. Strong communication to communities and businesses about the journey and the opportunities will be vital to the success of our collective agenda.

We look forward to sharing our key findings with you in due course.

Yours sincerely,



**Professor Russel Griggs OBE  
Chair  
South of Scotland Enterprise**

**NOTE OF MEETING BETWEEN SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT, THE COMPETITION AND MARKETS AUTHORITY AND SCOTTISH WEDDING INDUSTRY ALLIANCE.**

**THURSDAY, 25 FEBRUARY 2021**

**Present**

Fergus Ewing MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism.

Professor Russel Griggs OBE, Chairman, South of Scotland Enterprise. Chairman, Scottish Government Independent Regulatory Review Group

Competition and Markets Authority (CMA)

██████████, Stakeholder Manager

██████████ – Senior Director, Consumer

██████████ - Director Devolved Nations

██████████ – Director Consumer

██████████ – Assistant Legal Director

██████████ – Legal Adviser

Scottish Wedding Industry Alliance (SWIA)

██████████, Laggan Outdoor, SWIA

██████████, Byre at Inchyra House, SWIA

Scottish Government (SG)

██████████, Branch Head, Family Law

██████████ Senior Policy Officer, Family Law

██████████, Tourism Lead – Business Support and Recovery, Tourism Policy

██████████, Senior Policy Officer, Tourism Policy

██████████, Policy Officer, Tourism and Major Events

**Welcome, introductions and opening remarks from the Cabinet Secretary.**

**1.** The **Cabinet Secretary** gave an introduction in which he:

- Acknowledged that tourism had been hit hard by the impact of COVID – 19, with the wedding sector being the hardest hit of all.
- Explained that the SWIA was formed from wedding industry members concerned about the impact of the pandemic on their sector, this includes application of CMA guidance to their sector.
- Stated that the meeting was intended as an opportunity for the CMA to hear from the SWIA.
- Expressed his appreciation for the CMA engaging with the SWIA at this meeting.

## **Professor Russell Griggs OBE.**

### **2. Professor Griggs introduced himself and**

- Explained that the Scottish Government Independent Regulatory Review Group which he chairs, was set up to try to resolve issues with regulations (NB not Covid regulations).  
[Regulatory Review Group - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot).
- Introduced [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], both representing the SWIA.

### **SWIA Presentation to provide an overview of the impact and main issues from their perspective.**

#### **3. [REDACTED] expressed his sincere thanks to the Cabinet Secretary, Professor Griggs and the Scottish Government officials for their support.**

#### **4. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] outlined the issues affecting the weddings industry from their perspective:**

- At the start of the pandemic, lawyers did not know what to do, but wedding businesses tried to be fair.
- The CMA guidance, a 27 page legal letter, was difficult for anxious, worried and frightened businesses to comprehend.
- Customers claimed that their contracts had been frustrated and most businesses provided refunds.
- There is a continuing problem of customers claiming frustrated contracts in 2021 and 2022.
- Guidance for the year ahead is needed, to reflect that everybody now knows there are public health restrictions in place which was not the case when we first went into lockdown.
- Wedding venues are the foundation of the industry, without them the rest of the wedding industry collapses.
- Venues remain at a wedding ready state for when restrictions are lifted.
- As an industry reliant on good public relations, the industry has no reason to fight refunds.
- Insurance companies are avoiding carrying out their duties.
- With no indication of reopening of the sector, couples are cancelling bookings.
- The SWIA understands that the law of frustrated contract is complex, with couples interpreting frustration of their contract in a wide variety of ways.
- Only 2.7% of couples have issues with how they were treated by the industry.
- The venue contract typically gives a couple the exclusive right to use a large asset, expectation of support and back up for event planning for up to 2 years.
- Couples expect that the venue and grounds must, on the day, be as seen prior to the booking having been made.
- The vast majority of costs are incurred before the day of the event.

- Wedding venues consider the issue of refunds the biggest threat.
  - There has been an extraordinary and growing number of cancellations, which have escalated significantly, with 1000 weddings being cancelled after the First Minister's announcement on 23 February.
  - Businesses are having to apply normal consumer rights in an abnormal situation.
  - The SWIA is seeking a review of the refund guidelines.
5. ██████████ thanked ██████████ and ██████████ for their presentation.

**CMA explanation of their work in this area, why it was necessary and the rationale behind it.**

6. ██████████ informed the meeting that the role of the CMA is to:
- Enforce consumer law, such as the Consumer Rights Act and
  - Not to change the law, which is the role of Parliament.
7. ██████████ added that where the law entitles consumer refunds, this right has to be respected. The CMA does not underestimate the financial pressures on firms, but it is for governments to decide if the law needs to change and/or provide economic support. The CMA will not change statements that are based on current law. Refunds are the biggest set of complaints about the wedding sector to the CMA. In building consumer trust, the best start is businesses complying with consumer law.
8. ██████████ explained that the CMA's approach to weddings is part of their overall guidance on refunds across a range of sectors, e.g. package holidays, travel and child care. ██████████. The development of the statement during 2020 was done at pace, but the CMA was able to speak to wedding sector representatives.
9. ██████████ thanked ██████████ and ██████████ for their presentation and added that he would be happy to talk through the CMA's statement or particular parts.

**Discussion.**

██████████ felt that the CMA's statement was lengthy and asked whether a summary page would be useful

10. **Professor Griggs** wondered if the approach taken by the CMA in its guidance might raise wider questions on how the wedding industry had been operating for a number of years.
11. ██████████ suggested consideration was needed on the issues of fixed costs and frustrated contracts.
12. ██████████ explained that where a law changes in a way that fundamentally affects the ability to perform the contract as expected, after a contract is formed, it is frustrated. Customers are entitled to money back, but suppliers can make a deduction in some cases, where costs have had to be incurred in or for the frustrated contract. ██████████ offered to set out this information in writing.

13. ██████████ added that key aspects are more complex. For example, if changing lockdown laws reduced the number allowed at a wedding reception to 20, but the contract was for 50 guests, the issue would need to be considered individually. The CMA cannot lay down the consequences of a particular change in lockdown restrictions, but can describe the principles.
14. ██████████ felt that the current law and complying with it could destroy the industry. She accepted that the law was beyond the remit of the CMA. She noted the situation was getting worse and there was a need for clarification of claims for refunds.
15. **Professor Griggs** suggested an off – line discussion to see if the law can be changed. He pointed out that laws have been changed significantly during the COVID – 19 pandemic, therefore they could be changed with respect to other things.
16. ██████████ responded that that it is not within the CMA’s gift to change the law, which is for Parliament.
17. **Professor Griggs** suggested that the statement on refunds could be improved.
18. ██████████ commented that the production of guidance was not an enviable task and expressed thanks to the CMA for producing a document which SG had referred to in correspondence from concerned consumers.
19. **Cabinet Secretary** pointed out that although he had a legal background, he was not an expert on this area of law and consumer law is a reserved function. He:
  - Recognised that the CMA cannot change the law and their statement was intended to provide guidance on the law.
  - Noted that the law on consumer protection was a reserved matter for Westminster.
  - Felt that the CMA has to use discretion and judgement in providing guidance.
  - Noted that the difference between regulation and guidance is understood, the latter being used to interpret law in individual circumstances.
20. The **Cabinet Secretary**:
  - Asked if the CMA had any discretion to change the guidance.
  - Suggested that a working group be formed, including industry representatives, to consider the current guidance and ascertain if there is any scope to make amendments whilst continuing to correctly reflect the law.
  - Asked if the CMA could do something to help the wedding industry.
21. The **Cabinet Secretary** added his gratitude to everyone for joining the meeting.
22. ██████████ added that the meeting had not provided the CMA with any evidence suggesting that they were wrong on law and the CMA has to be careful that consumer rights are not eroded. He offered to:
  - Take the points raised back to the CMA Chief Executive and Board
  - Consider any examples of the guidance being used in a way which might not give the full picture

23. The **Cabinet Secretary** felt, there is a need to think out of the box in these unprecedented times.
24. The **Cabinet Secretary** thanked the CMA representatives for their time and felt there was a need to continue the dialogue.

#### **Conclusion and agreed next steps.**

25. [REDACTED] stated that, from the Scottish Government point of view:
- The guidance is not wrong.
  - A restructuring of the guidance may be helpful to counter presentational issues.
  - Officials can take issues away for discussion.
26. **Professor Griggs** stated that we need something to take us forward into a changing future.
27. [REDACTED] felt that, for some firms, it is currently impossible to provide refunds and suggested a pause in paying refunds, so that businesses pay refunds when they are able to reopen.
28. [REDACTED] responded that, in the travel and hospitality sector the CMA has been open to businesses paying refunds over extended periods. However, he did not want to raise expectations of a revised statement.
29. [REDACTED] appreciated this opportunity to talk to the CMA.

#### **Actions.**

- a) [REDACTED] to set out information on frustration of contracts in writing.
- b) [REDACTED] to take the points raised in the meeting back to the CMA Chief Executive and Board.
- c) [REDACTED] to consider any examples of the guidance being used in a way which might not give the full picture
- d) Discuss cases of the misuse of the statement with the SWIA.
- e) **Officials** to discuss with the CMA whether the guidance can be restructured to address presentational issues, which may be driving consumer action demanding full refunds.

#### **Next meeting.**

The next meeting will be between the CMA and Scottish Government is to be arranged.

#### **Tourism and Major Events Team**

#### **Scottish Government**

**9 March 2021**

## South of Scotland Enterprise

Professor Russel Griggs OBE

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Fergus Ewing MSP  
Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and  
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The Scottish Parliament  
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By email: [CabSecRE@gov.scot](mailto:CabSecRE@gov.scot)  
CC: [Jon.Pickstone@gov.scot](mailto:Jon.Pickstone@gov.scot)

7 August 2020

Dear Fergus

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Firstly, we were only created last year and started on April 1<sup>st</sup> this year. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] SOSE was set up to reverse decades of underinvestment in the South of Scotland, evident by persistently low levels of productivity, R&D investment, and new business start-up. We have started to turn this around as evidenced by an early investment of £2.7m in the South of Scotland Destination Alliance, and attracting People's Energy to create 100 groups in Selkirk. We supported almost 300 businesses with £12m through PERF and HF, providing hope to those businesses that they and their thousands of employees had a future beyond the pandemic.

We have only just started but we have already generated excitement for a brighter future, with many creative ideas for investment in new low-carbon business, community asset purchases, improved transport and affordable housing stock starting to come forward. These will not only add more jobs to the economy but also enhance the wellbeing and sustainability of the communities as well as moving us quicker and closer to our net zero target for the south. Significant new capital projects to drive growth and reverse under investment in the South are emerging.

Secondly, last year we agreed with Scottish Government and your good self that, as we are a start-up business, we would work towards our full budget over our first three years. This would mean that at the end of the third year, our budget would be set on a per capita equivalent with HIE and that equivalence would continue thereafter. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

The agreement was that in our initial year our budget would be set at around 60% of what a full budget for us would look like. Ministers agreed it would then grow towards its final size over the coming three years. While all the numbers in the financial memorandum were always indicative, the principles behind them were not. Ministers and officials stated this approach publicly many times, as is clear from the following extracts from the Financial Memorandum to the South of Scotland Enterprise Act 2019:

Clause 9 “It will be for the Scottish Ministers to decide the overall budgetary allocation for the new body in future, as part of the relevant future Scottish Government budget cycle, and for the chair and members to make operational decisions about the detail of how the body best uses its budget to deliver its aims. In approaching those budgetary discussions, the Scottish Ministers’ intention is to ensure the new body receives a per capita equivalent to the allocation made to Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) as a body with a similar remit delivering services in a predominantly rural area.”

Clause 53 “is intended that the allocation given to the new body will be equivalent on a per-capita basis to the allocation for HIE, as a body with a similar economic and social remit delivering services in a predominantly rural area. This will be calculated on HIE’s budget, net of any income HIE generates outwith its core budgetary allocation.”

In the Chamber during the Stage 1 debate on 26/3/19 Edward Mountain said: “ On funding, the committee considers that the Scottish Government’s intention to ensure that, initially, there is an equivalence between the budget that is provided for the new agency and that which is provided to HIE is an appropriate and proportionate approach.” Similar was said in the RECC stage 1 report.

And in summing up the Stage 1 debate you stated:

“The budget has rightly exercised the minds of members, and we have had a wide range of views on it. Mr Mason indicated that there are arguments with regard to budgetary priorities that we have not heard much about. However, the overwhelming view is that the approach that we are taking is correct, as it recognises that there should in principle be parity of esteem between all citizens in rural Scotland. That should have an influence, and it has had one in determining the approach that we are taking in our policy.”

These elements were a key part of the message that all the southern MSPs, and our other stakeholders bought into and again have all publicly stated many times.

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

I hope that you find this helpful.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

Professor Russel Griggs OBE  
Chair  
South of Scotland Enterprise

## South of Scotland Enterprise

Professor Russel Griggs OBE  
E: Chair@sose.scot



24 March 2021

Paul Wheelhouse MSP  
Minister for Energy, Connectivity and Islands

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By cc e-mail: [enterprisesponsorship@gov.scot](mailto:enterprisesponsorship@gov.scot)

Dear Paul

### POWERING CHANGE – CALLING THE SOUTH OF SCOTLAND TO ACTION

I am delighted to enclose a copy of the Group's call to action "Powering Change – Calling the South of Scotland to Action" which is being published today. The document identifies our vision and sets out our initial findings and actions across six core and interlinked themes:

- leadership and an aligned vision;
- decarbonising heat and travel;
- transmission and distribution infrastructure;
- education and skills;
- green jobs and supply chains; and
- community and a just transition.

Our call to action provides an overview of activity and sets out a framework for more detailed work that will be taken forward. We recognise the potential of off-shore and identify that as an area we want to explore further as next steps which will be important as we look to future discussions around Scotwind leasing. To maintain the momentum around this agenda, we are recruiting a Energy Transition and Green Enterprise Director.

We look forward to continuing to work with the Scottish Government, supporting the ambitions set out in your Energy Strategy Position Strategy and the ambition to ensure local economies benefit from opportunities.

Yours sincerely



Professor Russel Griggs OBE  
Chair  
South of Scotland Enterprise

## South of Scotland Enterprise

Professor Russel Griggs OBE  
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Michael Matheson MSP  
Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport  
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By cc: [enterprisesponsorship@gov.scot](mailto:enterprisesponsorship@gov.scot)

28 May 2021

Dear Michael

On behalf of South of Scotland Enterprise, I am delighted to congratulate you on your recent election and appointment as Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport.

As you know, we went live as the economic and community development agency for the South of Scotland last April and, in our first year, we have been very much focused on helping businesses and communities survive through the pandemic. As we look to the future, we are committed to building a fairer, greener and stronger region.

With our wide ranging and varied remit, to further the sustainable economic and social development of the South of Scotland and improve its environment, we look forward to working with colleagues across government and actively contributing to your ambitious and forward looking agenda for Scotland.

You will be interested in the work we are doing through our Energy Transition Group which we established to respond to the Scottish Government's Energy Strategy Position Statement. The Group brought together diverse partners from across the public, private, education and third sectors to explore the opportunities and challenges of a Just Transition to Net Zero in a rural area. I have enclosed a copy of our call to action, *Powering Change: Calling the South of Scotland to Action*. This report sets out our vision, our initial findings and what we, collectively across the South of Scotland, intend to drive forward.

Decarbonising heat and transport together is key and I know that the South of Scotland has an important contribution to Scottish Government's work. Our call to action points to the opportunity to take forward geographic pilots projects modelling future demand (reflecting heat and electric vehicles) and grid capacity enhancement. Working on a community basis is important and we are looking at pilots in Dumfries, Peebles and Wigtownshire to align with planned network upgrades.

We have a unique natural capital offering in the South of Scotland which continues to shape our economy – from the tourists who visit, through the farming and forestry sectors, to the renewable

energy we generate. We are taking forward work to establish our natural capital baseline which will help to shape nature based solutions as we look to meeting Net Zero targets.

We are keen to work with you around future opportunities for off-shore wind. The decision was taken in the last round of Scotwind leasing, not to pursue in that round the option for the site in the South West (SW1). Picking up those discussions for any future rounds would be of interest to us and contribute substantially to the economic development of the region. In our exchanges with the previous energy Minister, Mr Wheelhouse recognised the challenges that had been presented to the proposal but recognised that those challenges could be addressed.

Many of these themes will be familiar to you from the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal and I look forward to continuing our discussions.

Yours sincerely



Professor Russel Griggs OBE  
Chair  
South of Scotland Enterprise

Enc

12 July 2021

Kate Forbes MSP  
Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Economy  
The Scottish Parliament  
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By e-mail: [CabSecFE@gov.scot](mailto:CabSecFE@gov.scot)

Dear Kate

### **THREE QUESTIONS**

When we met on 22 June, you shared your focus and overarching priority to deliver the 10 year strategy for economic transformation. You posed three questions and challenged us to reflect and respond. Those questions have been thought provoking and have stimulated much discussion.

- 1) Vision - where does the Scottish Government need to be clearer, more robust and demonstrate greater prioritisation?

Developing a clear and compelling vision is vital for anything let alone an economic strategy where it will be viewed from many directions. People need to own it; to believe in it to deliver it, to feel like they want to do it and to feel that they can do it. That requires a different sort of vision and strategy, one that builds emotional attachment and ownership and belonging to the specific area it is about. We have taken that approach in the South of Scotland so that our first ever draft regional economic strategy (attached) is not typical at all as it is by the South and for the South. It deliberately draws on the commitment and views that people have of and to our region, tugging perhaps on their heart strings in terms of why we live here in the first place and what and how we want to enhance that. Through significant engagement and consultation, as well as research and analysis, we have written a document in language that resonates with the population we serve, while setting out a clear strategic framework to create a “green, fair and flourishing” region.

With six themes, rooted in the region and speaking to it, our draft strategy provides all of us in the south of Scotland the focus we need as we move forward. It will be our “south star” providing the direction for organisations, communities, and individuals working in the South, providing alignment and prioritisation. Developing the strategy in partnership through our Regional Economic Partnership, has provided widespread endorsement of where we need to go and we can now focus on the actions required to deliver it which we, with our partners and population, will be developing over the summer and early autumn. The clarity of focus, long term view and ownership it brings to those working in the South of Scotland is central to our and their success. We know that there are difficult challenges ahead as we look to come out of Covid-19 and also transition to net zero, and we need to find different ways of having that discussion with people to help them understand the behaviour changes required as well as the many opportunities ahead.

- 2) How - what are the three biggest job creating opportunities over the next five years?

As we emerge from the global pandemic, things feel very different. We are not coming out of Covid-19 in the South in the way that anyone expected, which was with a failing economy and large unemployment, but indeed the opposite in many sectors with good demand but severe shortages of skills and labour in key parts of our region. It has though, changed the way that we look at employment and how we value people's jobs and contribution. We need to keep hold of that perspective. For economies to be successful, they need a balance of employment opportunities in all tiers of the economy, all of which are important. Valuing all jobs creates resilience and contributes to the success of places, and a region of relatively small places is what we are in the South of Scotland. We also see the importance of different business models and the strong role for social enterprise and the third sector.

For rural Scotland, that means we need to look at every opportunity. Our overriding focus needs to be on the just transition to net zero and the jobs that come with that – not just the jobs developing innovative solutions and new technologies – vital though that is – but the jobs that ready our communities for the transition and build the infrastructure of the future. Decarbonising transport and heating will require us to replace electrical cabling no longer fit for purpose – creating jobs in digging up streets and laying cables. New heating systems and electrical vehicles will create immediate opportunities for installation and in the longer term for servicing and maintenance. In doing that we need to create a more sustainable local supply chain, not just in this sector, but across all parts of the economy of the South. We will do this by configuring the opportunities in different ways to make it clear that the demand does, and will continue to, provide opportunities for the many entrepreneurs there are in the predominantly micro and small businesses we have in the South. The aim is to help those entrepreneurial businesses to grow bigger faster and root themselves even more in our communities and reduce the amount of goods and services we have to bring in from elsewhere.

We need to recognise the value of our traditional sectors, their constancy and their contribution – our farms, forests and marine environment will remain important to our economic wellbeing. That is not to set them in aspic or avoid change; driving innovation within those traditional industries – including the land-based sector – is as important as is innovation in new industries. The entrepreneurs in the land-based industries have led and continue to lead on a lot of the innovation required, so there is already a good base to build on for the future. Embracing new approaches is vital in sustaining and creating new employment as well as ensuring those sectors respond to the climate change crisis, as indeed they already are doing. Digital and new technologies are enablers across all sectors. Changing the image of those sectors will attract new people to them and secure a future.

Tourism is also woven through everything we do in the South of Scotland in our communities, providing direct employment and as well as anchoring communities, it is integral to developing and sustaining local supply chains. We have seen the challenges currently being faced by hospitality businesses and other sectors in attracting people with the right skills and the impact that is having on businesses' ability to trade and respond to demand. We need to work with the industry and the entrepreneurs who lead the businesses to help them create career paths and engage with the fair work agenda, improving pay and conditions to encourage people to take up those jobs. We have a strong tourism offering, responding directly to the desire for responsible tourism with outdoor experiences.

In creating opportunities for new employment across all our sectors, we realise that in many of our communities we do not have the housing or public transport infrastructure to support that new employment. In response, we will be developing with our partners in local and national government plans for smaller and more flexible house building projects where lack of housing is a barrier to attracting employment. Also, we need a better connected and operationally effective public transport system to ensure that not only can our population get to work, but that our young people can access the educational and other opportunities that will be created. While digital development in more flexible and distance learning will help in that process as well, we need a better connected public transport system so that communities feel part of the South rather than, as in some cases, currently isolated from it.

3) Delivery - where do opportunities exist for greater collaboration to deliver a Team Scotland approach?

As a new agency, coming into being a week after the first lock-down, collaboration has been built into the way we work – nationally but just as importantly, regionally. We need to allow space for both, working nationally where appropriate, but recognising the regional differences that make up the richness of Scotland’s economy which is why we were set up to fill the gap that existed in that provision.

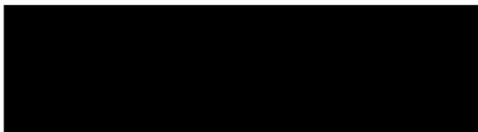
As the enterprise agency for the South of Scotland we were created to be different, with our focus being on wider wellbeing, fair work, the environment, all within the focus on net zero. We need to respond to the needs and opportunities of our area and our people which will require us to do things operationally differently from other areas in some of what we do. While we need a clear national direction, regional priorities are unlikely to be uniform requiring a flexibility of approach. The recently published Scottish Funding Council review of Coherent Provision and Sustainability provides an example. The overarching aim is an integrated approach to tertiary provision, but how that could be delivered will be different in different areas and the review proposes two pathfinders to test and model how that might work in practice. While the geographies covered are to be finalised, we are working with the SFC to scope a South of Scotland pathfinder.

We have worked closely with Scottish Government and the enterprise, tourism, skills, and other agencies to ensure we respond as effectively as possible to crisis and to recovery. That has involved us looking at who has the most relevant experience and expertise and, as a result, having different agencies leading on different things. The importance of the wedding industry in the South of Scotland saw us lead on the Scottish Wedding Industry Fund and that model of working, playing to our respective strengths is one we want to see continue.

Regional collaboration is also important, recognising the role and responsibilities of local partners. We have established “Team South of Scotland”, that brings together the two local authorities, VisitScotland and Skills Development Scotland. This has built a strong core of collaboration. Our Regional Economic Partnership builds on that and brings together key stakeholders – across the public, private, third, education and housing sectors. Those differing perspectives coming together add strength and will ensure that we focus on what is required to create a wellbeing economy in the South of Scotland, not driven by traditional economic theory. We are, and will continue to be, a region of communities – and small ones at that in many cases – who each have their own view on what their future should be. Therefore partnership and collaboration has to be in everything we do to ensure that each community and person has a voice in that future and does not feel left behind, as many have felt historically since national agencies have perhaps not served them as well as they would have wanted. Part of our role is to ensure that that never happens again.

I hope these reflections are helpful as you look to shape your transformation proposals. We welcome the opportunity to discuss these with you and to participate in the detail of their development and in taking an active part in delivering what is required to create the thriving Scotland, in all its different parts, that we all want to see.

Yours sincerely



**Professor Russel Griggs OBE**  
**Chair, South of Scotland Enterprise**

OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE

**South of Scotland Enterprise Chair Call with Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism 19 May 2020**

An overview of the discussion between the SoSE Chair and the Cabinet Secretary.

Attendees			
Fergus Ewing – Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism; Russell Griggs, Chair of South of Scotland Enterprise, Nick Halfhide, Interim Chief Executive; Anthony Daye, Director of Finance; John Evans, Director of Enabling Services; Karen Jackson, Director of Strategy, Partnership and Engagement; Bryan McGrath, Director of Operations; ██████████ – SG – Head of Enterprise Sponsorship; Jon Pickstone – SG – Deputy Director of Regional Economic Development; ██████████ – SG – Enterprise Sponsorship; Catriona Maclean – SG - Head of Rural Economy and Communities Division		Time	12:15
Chair	Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism		

**Actions Arising**

No.	Description	Owner	By
1.	Mr Ewing would like to understand the process for approval/rejection for each of the funds in more depth. He is looking for an in depth note to assist him with this.	Russell Griggs/ Nick Halfhide	COP 20 May
2.	Establish if further work is needed on the system to ensure that adequate information can be provided to the applicant when rejected	Russell Griggs/ Nick Halfhide	TBC



**Meeting Note**

**Welcome / Introductions**

Mr Ewing welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no apologies

**(Item 2) Update on Priorities & Progress**

- SoSE are contacting all those rejected for the Pivotal Fund to discuss their application and point to other more suitable support where possible.
- Some applications are not clear and this requires assessors to contact applicants to clarify details and in some cases, await for further information to be received from applicants and this delays the processing of cases.
- A detailed analysis is required on the reasons behind rejections (for both funds
- Mr Ewing requested a note detailing the assessment process for the Hardship Fund and Pivotal fund
- Establish if further work is needed on the system to ensure that adequate information can be provided to the applicant when rejected

**(Item 3) Current Environment & Financial repurposing**

- Early prediction suggests that SoSE will be able to cover the costs of applications (through allocated funds and SoSE budget)

**(Item 4) Restart**

- Concerns over negativity around tourism. It will be important to encourage people (when the time is right) to holiday in the UK.
- SoSE are reaching out to tourist groups to build and maintain good relationships.

**(Item 5) – A.O.B**

None

Date of Next Meeting 18<sup>th</sup> June 2020 10:45 by conference call



**NOTE OF QUARTERLY MEETING BETWEEN CABINET SECRETARY FOR FINANCE  
AND THE ECONOMY, MINISTER FOR BUSINESS, TRADE, TOURISM AND  
ENTERPRISE AND SOUTH OF SCOTLAND ENTERPRISE (SOSE)  
14 SEPTEMBER 2021**

**Present**

Kate Forbes, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Economy  
Ivan McKee, Minister for Business, Trade, Tourism and Enterprise  
Russel Griggs, Chair, SOSE  
Jane Morrison-Ross, CEO, SOSE  
Colin Cook, Director for Economic Development  
[REDACTED], Enterprise Sponsorship, SG

The Cabinet Secretary, noting that SOSE is still in start-up mode and aiming to have between 130 and 140 staff at full capacity, commented on the ability of start-ups and smaller organisations to take significant market share because of their ability to think differently. She invited SOSE to share observations on what works well and areas that could be improved.

RG and JMR referenced the collaborative input from across the South of Scotland to the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) and ongoing work to identify the short, medium and long term actions for inclusion in the 10 year delivery plan that will sit beneath it. SOSE intends to hold town hall sessions across the region to seek views on how delivery of the RES should be adapted for local circumstances.

The Cabinet Secretary underlined the importance of alignment between the National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET) and regional strategies. The NSET needs to provide national direction, but allow for variation in regional delivery. This will require SG to be transparent about the direction of travel as the Strategy is developed, and also to take account of SOSE's experience.

The Minister for Business, Trade, Tourism and Enterprise noted that consideration is being given to the inclusion of annexes in the NSET to set out, in a standardised way, what will be delivered in particular regions. Fair Work and Net Zero will both be fundamental threads of the NSET. He invited SOSE to share information on the shape and size of the economy sought for the South of Scotland over the next 10 years.

RG and JMR said that frequent conversations with SG officials were proving very constructive. These suggested that the themes in the NSET and RES would be closely aligned.

The Cabinet Secretary said that effective and efficient delivery by every part of the public sector working together in a complementary way will be essential to ensure value for money, clarity of vision, and regional and local nuance.

RG and JMR described the process recently undertaken by SOSE to review its customer journey. The aim is for it to be 'lean, mean and green' - as simple, efficient and effective as possible for clients. Work to restructure the organisation is being taken forward in parallel, to make obvious to clients what SOSE does and who they should talk to. Toolkits are being developed to ensure that all frontline staff have access to key information on Fair Work and Net Zero. As a smaller organisation, SOSE is able to take a distinct approach and to be innovative in its thinking.

RG and JMR provided an update on work to bring Business Gateway (BG) in the South of Scotland in-house, under SOSE's Head of Innovation and Entrepreneurship. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] SOSE is also focusing on growing the number of women in enterprise and supporting under-represented founders.

RG and JMR described work being taken forward to develop large/regional customers in order to grow supply chains and provide opportunities for smaller businesses across the region. Examples included: a consortium of 7 registered social landlords; the provision of new EV charging points to the region's hospitality businesses; and an aggregated digital model for the tourism sector.

The Cabinet Secretary said that grant funding is not always of most use to the SME base - more can be achieved through delivery of a comprehensive package of support. RG agreed, noting that he had introduced a section at SOSE's Board meetings for discussion of interventions by SOSE which involved help for businesses aside from funding. Building the capacity of businesses was paramount. JMR said that SOSE is focused on developing leadership skills and entrepreneurial spark within new and existing businesses and introducing them to opportunities for exporting and internationalising. SOSE looks at the support a business needs in the round, relying on expert input from SOSE staff but also bringing in expertise where necessary.

RG said that SOSE is learning from the different types of business already located in the South of Scotland. For example, the HALO Trust, which clears land mines and other debris left behind by war, is located in Thornhill. The Trust had accepted an invitation to speak to SOSE staff and share its experience. Social enterprises are of significant importance in the South of Scotland.

JMR described SOSE's efforts to showcase innovation in the South of Scotland, for example through video clips. She noted that collaboration across the entire ecosystem is fundamental to strengthening the overall offer. Measuring performance - being able to point to the progress made - is also key.

RG and JMR explained that, in everything it does, SOSE considers the impact on the local community, the environment and the economy. It also applies conditionality around Fair Work and Net Zero. By promoting the South of Scotland as a vibrant, innovative and exciting place to be, SOSE is instrumental in building confidence and growth across the region.

The Minister for Business, Trade, Tourism and Enterprise asked SOSE to share notes on how conditionality is applied to financial support in practice and [REDACTED].

The meeting briefly discussed the role of the Enterprise and Skills Strategic Board. RG said that it had encouraged the development of good working relationships amongst the Chairs of the enterprise agencies and helped them to understand each other's organisations better.

Enterprise Sponsorship  
September 2021

Hi [REDACTED]

Please find below a note of the meeting between Mr Lochhead and South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE) on 8 Sept.

**Attendees:**

Mr Lochhead, Minister for Just Transition, Employment and Fair Work  
Russel Griggs – Chair, SOSE  
Jane Morrison Ross – CEO, SOSE  
Karen Jackson – Director of Strategy, SOSE  
[REDACTED] – SOSE Sponsorship, SG  
[REDACTED] – Fair Work Policy & Delivery, SG

**Purpose:**

An introductory meeting between SOSE and Mr Lochhead. SOSE updated the Minister on their progress, priorities and actions in relation to his portfolio.

**Discussion topics:**

Just Transition / Green Jobs:

SOSE highlighted the work they have been progressing in relation to Just Transition and green jobs. They explained that their Board recently had a strategy session on Just Transition and they (Board and Senior Leadership Team in SOSE) had all completed a series of modules to aid their understanding. SOSE discussed the challenge of ensuring that all businesses and communities in the South of Scotland understand the impact and the change that is needed and outlined some of the work they are doing to assist including;

- making conditions on net zero as part of the grant application process,
- be the place that businesses can contact to find out about how to make changes,
- working with key partners to make best use of existing toolkits and ensuring they are tailored to the South of Scotland,
- social media campaigns,
- collating case studies to show others what is possible,
- ensuring that all customer facing staff have up to date information and
- using their Board as ambassadors to businesses and communities in the area.

Mr Lochhead reiterated the need and importance for more good green jobs which SOSE agreed with.

Fair Work:

The discussion then moved onto Fair Work and SOSE explained how they are making fair work at the heart of everything they do internally and supporting businesses. They have recently put together a small team to focus on this. SOSE described how recruiting for this team was challenging as there wasn't too much expertise in the market however they have developed the expertise in house and are

sharing this with others including Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

SOSE discussed that not one size fits all so they are providing tailored advice to all sizes of businesses. SOSE explained that businesses are keen to implement fair work principles however it isn't always possible to do it all from the outset, so they are working with the businesses to make incremental changes.

SOSE commented that they are working with Scottish Enterprise on the fair work employer support toolkit however they feel it is too urban based. They are working with SE to tweak some of the base data to make it more reflective of the differences between urban and rural. The Minister agreed that the tool should be fully reflective and offered assistance if SOSE faced any difficulties. Officials will also pick this up with SE.

The Minister offered his support to SOSE commenting that he was happy to help raise awareness through visits, speeches etc.

Kind regards

██████████

██████████ | Enterprise Sponsorship Team | Regional Economic Development Division | 0300 ██████████  
██████████ | ██████████ | e: ██████████ [@gov.scot](mailto:██████████@gov.scot)

OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE

**South of Scotland Enterprise Leadership Team Call with Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism 09 June 2020**

An overview of the discussion between the Leadership Team and the Cabinet Secretary.

Attendees			
Fergus Ewing – Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism; Kate Forbes – Cabinet Secretary for Finance; Nick Halfhide, Interim Chief Executive; Anthony Daye, Director of Finance; John Evans, Director of Enabling Services; Karen Jackson, Director of Strategy, Partnership and Engagement; Bryan McGrath, Director of Operations; [REDACTED] – SG – Head of Enterprise Sponsorship; Jon Pickstone – SG – Deputy Director of Regional Economic Development; [REDACTED] – SG – Enterprise Sponsorship; [REDACTED] – SG - Team Leader, Highlands, Islands and South of Scotland Economy; Reuben Aitken – SG - Deputy Director, Trade Policy		Time	12:00
Chair	Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism		

**Actions Arising**

No.	Description	Owner	By
1.	A paper to be provided with more granular detail on what businesses in the tourism industry are thinking regarding recovery.	Nick Halfhide	23/06
2.	SoSE to provide information on individual companies and groups of companies who are in the hotel and hospitality areas within the SoS that Mr Ewing could have calls with. In particular Mr Ewing would like a further call with them in coming weeks too.	Karen Jackson + [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]	23/6
3.	A conference call with SoSE, Mr Ewing and Mr Wheelhouse to discuss maximising the Scottish spend in Energy projects in the SoS.	[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]	23/06



- [REDACTED]

**(Item 5) – A.O.B**

- Ms Forbes and Mr Ewing thanked SoSE for their continued efforts.
- Agreed Topic for next call will be – ‘What contribution SoSE can make to create the right environment for ensuring a provision of job opportunities in the south in the run up to economic recovery including how the colleges and universities can play a key part.

Date of Next Meeting 25 June 2020 13:00 by conference call

**South of Scotland Enterprise Leadership Team Call with Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism 27 May 2020**

An overview of the discussion between the Leadership Team and the Cabinet Secretary.

Attendees			
Fergus Ewing – Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism; Nick Halfhide, Interim Chief Executive; Anthony Daye, Director of Finance; John Evans, Director of Enabling Services; Karen Jackson, Director of Strategy, Partnership and Engagement; Bryan McGrath, Director of Operations; ██████████ – SG – Head of Enterprise Sponsorship; Jon Pickstone – SG – Deputy Director of Regional Economic Development; ██████████ – SG – Enterprise Sponsorship; ██████████ – SG - Rural Economy Team Leader		Time	10:45
Chair	Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism		

**Actions Arising**

No.	Description	Owner	By
1.	Mr Ewing would like to know main reasons for rejections in the SOSE area and for SOSE to share experience and approach to personalising replies with Charlotte at HIE.	Nick Halfhide	COP 15 June
2.	Follow up with Reuben and ██████████ on more data and analysis of funds for ministers	██████████ ██████████ ██████████	COP 15 June
3.	SOSE to consider how they can engage with Mr Wheelhouse on the Windfarm project and maximising local supply chains opportunities	██████████ ██████████ ██████████ / Karen Jackson	TBC
4.	SOSE to link in with LAs in relation to preparations for businesses re opening to explore how areas such as licencing are being approached	Karen Jackson	
5.	Explore ambition for SOS including areas such as agriculture and hydroponics that ██████████ may have linking in with ██████████	Nick Halfhide	

**Meeting Note**

**Welcome / Introductions**

Mr Ewing welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no apologies

**(Item 2) Update on Priorities & Progress**

- Majority of Pivotal Funding applications in SOS allocation are being approved.
- Those rejected are being contacted by SoSE to discuss whether other support may be appropriate..
- Hardship funds that are rejected relate toto grounds of not being eligible for the fund.
- More detail on why applications are being rejected would be helpful to understand why they did not meet criteria – action to follow-up

**(Item 3) Current Environment & Financial repurposing**

SOSE have reprioritised their budget for 2020-21 to pivot an element to Covid-19 wraparound support for businesses.

**(Item 4)**

**Restart**

- Windfarm planned in Dumfries and Galloway – discussions are needed around supply chains and opportunities for SOS businesses.

**Recovery**

Bennie Higgins attending SOSE Board tomorrow to discuss AGER work.

**(Item 5) – A.O.B**

Agreed focus for next meeting will include significant priority Projects SOSE are looking to do in coming 12 to 18 months; update on [REDACTED] ambitions and other opportunities

Date of Next Meeting 09 June 2020 12:00 by conference call



OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE

**South of Scotland Enterprise Leadership Team Call with Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism 11 May 2020**

An overview of the discussion between the Leadership Team and the Cabinet Secretary.

Attendees			
Fergus Ewing – Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism; Nick Halfhide, Interim Chief Executive; Anthony Daye, Director of Finance; John Evans, Director of Enabling Services; Karen Jackson, Director of Strategy, Partnership and Engagement; Bryan McGrath, Director of Operations; ██████████ – SG – Enterprise Sponsorship; ██████████ – SG – Head of Enterprise Sponsorship; Jon Pickstone – SG – Deputy Director of Regional Economic Development; ██████████ ██████████ – SG – Enterprise Sponsorship; ██████████ – SG – Enterprise Sponsorship; Catriona Maclean – SG - Head of Rural Economy and Communities Division		Time	12:00
Chair	Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism		

**Actions Arising**

No.	Description	Owner	By
1.	<p>Mr Ewing would like to understand the criteria for each of the funds in more depth. He is looking for an in depth note to assist him with this.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Pivotal Enterprise Resilience Fund</a></li> <li>• This grant is for businesses that can play a critical role in supporting Scotland’s recovery but need some immediate support. It might be to get back up and running or to maintain or diversify your current operations.</li> <li>• If you have the potential to continue trading and supporting employment but have an immediate cash flow challenge, then this grant is for you.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Creative or Tourism and Hospitality Enterprises Hardship Fund</a></li> <li>• This fund is designed for companies that are ineligible for other COVID-19 grant support or are not yet in receipt of the funds they need to survive.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Newly Self-Employed Hardship Fund</a></li> <li>• Administered by LAs</li> </ul>	██████████	COP 12 May
2.	<p><b>Finance</b> – Given that Councils are already administering funds for other support to business what arrangements and guidance are SG finance able to provide in relation to this relative to the prevention of fraud and double claiming/funding?</p>	██████████ Reuben/ ██████████	Cop 11 May 2020
3.	<p>Local authority colleagues are advising SoSE on applicants who have received grant funding. Ensure two people sign off on any list that details who has received this funding.</p>	Nick Halfhide	22 May 2020

████████████████████

**Meeting Note**

**Welcome / Introductions**

Mr Ewing welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no apologies

**(Item 2) Update on Priorities & Progress**

**Covid-19 Response**

- SoSE are working with colleagues in Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise to ensure a coordinated and consistent approach in supporting businesses.
- Similar to HIE, applications for the Pivotal Fund began arriving week commencing 04/05 and staff are continuing to work through these. Committee are meeting on the afternoon of 11/05 to discuss appraisal and SoSE will look to issue letters asap.
- Funds of [REDACTED] have been identified for reprioritisation within SoSE and discussions on what this could be used for will be conducted in due course.

**Finance Checks/Fraud Prevention**

- It is important to have a system where every step of the process is checked, from application to payment.
- Audit Scotland are present on all programme calls along with HIE, SoSE and Scottish Enterprise (SE).
- Banking fraud checks are carried out prior to any payment.
- SoSE are working with their local authority partners to close off the potential of a business receiving double funding. They are doing this by sharing list of applicants and having the local authority confirm whether the applicant has received grant support.
- The Head of Audit is involved in SoSE committee meetings in order to scrutinise process and challenge high-value awards.

**(Item 3) Current Environment & Financial repurposing**

- The SoSE board agreed a [REDACTED] about a month ago. The board are to meet on Thursday 14/05 and reconsider all money to assess where would be best placed to spend. Flexibility will be needed to allow for any extra government support that may be offered.
- When considering budget, there is a need to assess how best to support the businesses that need support now but also consider the regeneration, recovery and reskilling work that will be needed in the recovery phase. SOSE also looking at community resilience and how to build this in as they develop their plans.
- Tourism facing ongoing pressures over how they will survive until the 2021 season. The pressures are not temporary and will continue for several months.
- SoSE are starting to look at where capital underspend should be mobilised to move quickly to make commitments and capitalise on any resource available. Conversations are taking place with regeneration colleagues.
- There are certain issues that may arise that are less obvious and if planned for then strengthens position to combat them. Example given of a call with the Holiday Home and Caravan Association where certain parks have an 8 month trade license so if they wanted to extend their season to November then planning for this would allow the necessary paperwork to be completed in time.

**(Item 5) – A.O.B**

None

Date of Next Meeting 27 May 2020 12:00 by conference call

[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** FW: Note of Cabinet Secretary's meeting with SOSE's Chair and Chief Executive - 19 November 2020  
**Date:** 02 November 2021 12:05:59

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 20 November 2020 08:49  
**To:** Nick Halfhide <Nick.Halfhide@sose.scot>; [REDACTED]@gmail.com;  
corporate.relations@sose.scot  
**Cc:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** Note of Cabinet Secretary's meeting with SOSE's Chair and Chief Executive - 19 November 2020

Russel, Nick

Please find below a note of yesterday's meeting with Mr Ewing.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

## **NOTE OF MEETING BETWEEN CABINET SECRETARY FOR RURAL ECONOMY AND TOURISM AND SOSE'S CHAIR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE - 19 NOVEMBER 2020**

### **Present**

Fergus Ewing, Cabinet Secretary RET  
Professor Russel Griggs, Chair, SOSE  
Nick Halfhide, Chief Executive, SOSE  
[REDACTED] SG

### Update on COVID-19 measures and support for business

- 
- SOSE is engaging with Joe Brown, SG Head of Strategic Business Engagement, on support for the wedding industry, including the supply chain. It will be important to focus support on businesses whose premises are used solely or mainly for weddings.
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- The Cabinet Secretary noted that it will be important avoid duplication in support funding from SG and SOSE. There is a need to get support to businesses before Christmas to aid their survival.

**Action: Sponsor Team to ensure SOSE receive full information on SG support, to aid co-ordination.**

Budget position

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]

SOSE's priorities

- 
- SOSE is pleased with the outcome of its recent recruitment exercise for a permanent CEO and is looking forward to working with the new CEO on clarifying SOSE's ambitions for future years.
- For the remainder of the year, its focus will be on delivering the projects to which it has allocated funding.
- It is looking at its pipeline of projects for next year and at building capacity to meet business demand.
- It is also working with partners on development of the South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy.
- The Cabinet Secretary noted the outcome of the recruitment exercise and thanked Nick Halfhide for his contribution to SOSE during its first year in operation.

Update on key projects

- 
- SOSE has a number of staff members who are famers or from farming families and is engaging fully with the farming sector with a view to increasing the number of farming projects it supports.
- An article will appear in the NFUS magazine explaining how SOSE can help farmers in the South of Scotland.
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- The Cabinet Secretary noted that new generation farmers are looking to be business people first, farmers second and that the sector has a lot of potential. He recommended also speaking to Scottish Farmer magazine.
- SOSE is looking ahead at projects that will add value to the tourism offer post-Covid, [REDACTED].

Head of Enterprise Sponsorship | Regional Economic Development Division | Scottish Government  
5 Atlantic Quay | 150 Broomielaw | Glasgow G2 8LU

Email: [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Mob: [REDACTED]

## South of Scotland Enterprise

Professor Russel Griggs OBE

E: [Chair@sose.scot](mailto:Chair@sose.scot)



24 March 2021

Jamie Hepburn MSP

Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills

By e-mail: [MinisterBFWS@gov.scot](mailto:MinisterBFWS@gov.scot)

By cc e-mail: [enterprisesponsorship@gov.scot](mailto:enterprisesponsorship@gov.scot)

Dear Jamie

### **POWERING CHANGE – CALLING THE SOUTH OF SCOTLAND TO ACTION**

Thank you for your letter of 1 March about the work of our Energy Transition Group.

I am delighted to enclose a copy of the Group's call to action "Powering Change – Calling the South of Scotland to Action" which is being published today. The document identifies our vision and sets out its initial findings and actions across six core and interlinked themes:

- leadership and an aligned vision;
- decarbonising heat and travel;
- transmission and distribution infrastructure;
- education and skills;
- green jobs and supply chains; and
- community and a just transition.

Our call to action provides an overview of activity and sets out a framework for more detailed work that will be taken forward. It highlights the importance of engaging across the South of Scotland to ensure we benefit from the opportunity ahead. It is a key part of the wider activity that sets the future ambitions for our region as we respond to the climate emergency, capitalising on our energy resources and creating the good jobs we want to see.

We look forward to continuing to work with the Scottish Government, supporting the ambitions set out in your Energy Strategy Position Strategy and focusing on the opportunities and circumstances of a rural economy.

Yours sincerely



Professor Russel Griggs OBE

Chair

South of Scotland Enterprise

John Swinney MSP  
Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Covid Recovery  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP



By email: [DFMCSCR@gov.scot](mailto:DFMCSCR@gov.scot)

By cc: [CabSecFE@gov.scot](mailto:CabSecFE@gov.scot)

2 August 2021

Dear Mr Swinney

## **DRAFT SOUTH OF SCOTLAND REGIONAL ECONOMIC STRATEGY**

We were delighted to launch the consultation on the draft of the first ever South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy at the beginning of last month.

The Strategy has been developed collaboratively by the South of Scotland Regional Economic Partnership, which aside from the region's two Councils and SOSE, brings together key representatives from communities, the private, education, third and housing sectors, and a small number of national agencies. There has been a relentless focus by the full breadth of the Partnership on preparing a strategy that is distinctive to and which speaks of the South.

Our draft strategy has been created following extensive and far-reaching engagement earlier this year, which saw close to 1,000 individuals, businesses, communities and organisations – covering a diverse range of interests – put forward their views of the opportunities and challenges facing the South of Scotland.

The input from that engagement has helped the Regional Economic Partnership shape the strategy. It provides a clear and compelling vision and will be a vital document for the future prosperity of our region and our communities. It has helped us set out a 10-year vision, built around six essential themes that we believe will help create a greener, fairer and flourishing South of Scotland. It will provide a direction for all of us in the South, providing alignment and helping with prioritisation.

The six themes and key priorities are:

- **Skilled and ambitious people** – which will look at access to skills and training, attracting and retaining people to the region, preparing for the work of the future and building lifelong learning and opportunity;
- **Innovative and enterprising** – focusing research and innovation, business support, supporting business networks and creating new workspaces;

- **Rewarding and Fair Work** – diversifying the economy, attracting new investment, improving productivity and delivering fair work;
- **Cultural and creative excellence** – enabling creativity, championing our identity, supporting our visitor economy and boosting our cultural assets;
- **Green and sustainable economy** – looking at our natural capital, net zero transition, improving our homes and supporting community wealth building;
- **Thriving and distinct communities** – revitalising towns and communities, quality and affordable homes, connectivity and supporting communities and social enterprise.

We want to ensure that the strategy speaks to the people of our region, building on the commitment they have to its success. As such we have been undertaking a six week public consultation on the draft strategy, which closes on 16 August 2021.

We have kept the strategy short and accessible but are accompanying it with more detailed technical documents that provide the supporting evidence – which will be an invaluable source of information about the South. We hope the draft SOS strategy will be useful to you in developing the national 10-year transformational economic strategy. It is vital that this national strategy is relevant to the regions of Scotland including the South of Scotland.

We look forward to discussing the Regional Economic Strategy and how Scottish Government and its agencies can support its delivery when we meet at the Convention of the South of Scotland in October.

Yours sincerely

  
**Chair of the Regional  
Economic Partnership**

**Scottish Borders Council**

  
**Vice Chair of the Regional  
Economic Partnership**

**Dumfries & Galloway Council**

**Professor Russel Griggs  
Chair - South of Scotland  
Enterprise**

**From:** [REDACTED] on behalf of [Minister for HE, FE, Youth Employment and Training](#)  
**To:** [Public Engagement Unit](#)  
**Cc:** [Minister for HE, FE, Youth Employment and Training](#)  
**Subject:** FW: South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE) Operating Plan 2021/22  
**Date:** 01 June 2021 09:06:05  
**Attachments:** [image002.jpg](#)

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**From:** Corporate Relations <[corporate.relations@sose.scot](mailto:corporate.relations@sose.scot)>  
**Sent:** 27 May 2021 16:18  
**To:** Corporate Relations <[corporate.relations@sose.scot](mailto:corporate.relations@sose.scot)>  
**Subject:** South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE) Operating Plan 2021/22

***Sent on behalf of Professor Russel Griggs OBE (SOSE Chair) and Jane Morrison-Ross (SOSE CEO)***

Dear Minister/Cabinet Secretary,

We are delighted to share with you our Operating Plan (attached) for South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE) for 2021/22.

This plan sets out our pledge to listen, be innovative, different and deliver for the South of Scotland. [You can view the press release here.](#)

We have produced our Operating Plan in order to set the context for our journey ahead and to detail where our efforts and resources will be focussed across the next year.

We remain focused on listening to our partners both locally and nationally – as well as listening to the residents, communities, and businesses across the South in order to develop ourselves as the Agency that everyone wants to see.

This plan paves the way for our more focused Action Plan which will follow a period of extensive consultation which we will be undertaking over the Autumn, in order to define our longer-term priorities and guide our future focus across all we have been established to do.

We hope you find it helpful to see our plan, and we look forward to working with you.

Kind regards,

**Russel Griggs**  
**Chair**

**Jane Morrison-Ross**  
**Chief Executive**



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## BORDERS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE CONFERENCE CALL – 8 APRIL 2020

### Participants

1. Fergus Ewing, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy & Tourism
2. Professor Russel Griggs, OBE, Chair, South of Scotland Enterprise
3. ██████████, Director, Scottish Borders Chamber of Commerce
4. ██████████, Sales Executive, ERIBÉ Knitwear
5. Karen Jackson, South of Scotland Enterprise
6. ██████████, Scottish Government, Tourism
7. ██████████, Scottish Government, Highlands, Island & South of Scotland Economy

### Purpose of meeting

The teleconference was arranged, as part of a series, to provide the Cabinet Secretary with the opportunity to hear about the impact on businesses in rural areas to better understand their immediate needs and the support they require for recovery.

### Introductions:

- Mr Ewing began by thanking everyone for their participation, noting that the fishing, tourism & leisure, manufacturing and agricultural sectors were particularly affected by the crisis.
- Actions arising would be fed back to appropriate SG Ministers, policy areas and to UKG on further possible business support requirements.
- The purpose of the current and potential future support was to tide businesses over and bridge the gap to areas hardest hit, allowing them to survive the crisis but not to compensate for losses incurred during it.
- Mr Ewing advised the group of his constructive conversations with the UKG and DEFRA.

### Key Points raised

#### 1 Impact on different areas of the rural economy

The convergence money paid to the livestock producers at the beginning of April was most welcome.

Presently shooting businesses are excluded from current grants and it would be beneficial if this were not the case. Shooting is a big contributor to the Scottish borders and sadly 40% of shoots have been cancelled for the autumn and this has already resulted in redundancies. The value of shooting to the rural economy cannot be underestimated because if shooting does not occur on hill farms, this will result in a fall in shepherds.

There are no abattoirs in the borders region and Scottish and north English abattoirs are working at full capacity.

It was noted that a number of pickers will be required to pick Scotland's fruit and vegetables.

Mr Ewing acknowledged the points raised. He noted that the convergence money was not a subsidy payment and it played a valuable role in supporting the rural economy by allowing livestock producers to produce a product that the population can afford to buy.

The lack of abattoir facilities for the borders is something that will be considered at a later date.

## **2 Timing of government assistance**

The package of measures introduced by the government are welcome however there is concern around the length of time it will take for money to get through to the businesses and individuals who need it most. Given the retrospective nature of the payments, many businesses do not possess the financial reserves to pay salaries and other overheads.

It was noted that if employers know when to expect payments, the clarity would allow businesses to plan and remove the uncertainty.

[REDACTED]

## **3 SMEs**

Currently only those firms who are classified as essential are allowed to operate. In the borders, some SMEs have as little as three employees and are forced to shut. Could consideration be given to opening these tiny companies if they adhere to social distancing policies?

## **4 Post covid 19 future sustainability**

Professor Griggs noted that local businesses such as butchers are enjoying a boost in sales. Mr Ewing advised that discussions are already taking place with governments and supermarkets about sourcing more food locally after covid 19 to reduce the reliance on food sources out with the UK and allow us to become more sustainable. This approach could apply to other sectors such as textile manufacturing.

## **5 Rebuilding the economy**

Discussions are already taking place within the Scottish Government about how to 'restart' the economy, acknowledging that this process will have to be carefully managed, at the correct time.

## **6 Mental health**

The importance of the nation's mental health, after covid 19 cannot be underestimated.

Mr Ewing thanked everyone on the call for their contributions. He assured the chamber that the Scottish Government will do everything it can to rebuild Scotland's rural economy.

## Dumfries & Galloway Chamber of Commerce

### Draft Note of Teleconference Meeting – 9 April 2020

#### Participating:

Fergus Ewing MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism

██████████, President, Dumfries & Galloway Chambers

██████████, owner, The Selkirk Arms

██████████, Armstrong Watson.

██████████, Membership Services Manager, D & G Chambers

██████████, Programme Director, Developing the Young Workforce

Russell Griggs, Chair, South of Scotland Enterprise

Karen Jackson, South of Scotland Enterprise

██████████, Regional Economic Development

██████████ Tourism, Scottish Government

#### Purpose of meeting:

- The teleconference was arranged as part of a series to provide the Cabinet Secretary with the opportunity to hear about the impact on businesses in rural areas and to better understand their immediate needs and the support they require for recovery.

#### Introductions:

- Mr Ewing began by thanking everyone for their participation, noting that the tourism sector was particularly affected by the crisis.
- Actions arising would be fed back to appropriate SG Ministers, policy areas and to UKG on further possible business support requirements and this process has led to additional support becoming available, e.g for self-catering businesses.
- The purpose of the current and potential future support was to tide businesses over and bridge the gap to areas hardest hit, allowing them to survive the crisis but not to compensate for losses incurred during it.
- While SG would not be able to do everything that business was asking, Ms Forbes would be looking at how the ██████████.

#### Discussion points:

##### General

- Dumfries & Galloway's business suffering broadly the same problems as those in the rest of Scotland and had conducted a survey amongst its members, showing that of the 140 businesses that have responded, of those who have taken the decision to furlough members of staff:
  - 30% have placed all staff on furlough
  - 28% have placed some on furlough
  - 15% have yet to furlough staff but are considering
  - 27% have no plans to furlough staff (mainly large employers)
- The Chamber would share the survey with SG.
- There was some frustration among businesses that had yet been unable to access support but also appreciation of what had been done to date.
- Support on non-domestic rates was now moving with businesses able to access £10,000 grants for businesses eligible for small business bonus scheme.

### Access to Finance

- HMRC portal for Job Retention Scheme due to be up and running by 20 April, which would make a difference.
- Still gaps in support with micro businesses and self-employed businesses that have started recently and are unable to access support.
- Business reluctant to apply for Business Interruption Loan Scheme, which was seen as a last resort, as they don't want to be saddled with debt and are waiting to see how long the crisis will last. Grants would be preferable.
- Raising the non-domestic rateable value to £95,000 would be welcome as it would make a huge impact, covering many more businesses, not least covering hotel/hospitality sector.
- The Cabinet Secretary had spoken to Nigel Huddleston, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Arts, Heritage and Tourism, to discuss the possibility of reconfiguring the financial package of grants and loans non-domestic rates threshold for support to support business, mainly in the tourism sector.
- Two main gaps identified in support:
  - The threshold by which the self-employed can claim support is currently capped at £50,000 and Chambers wondered what discussions with UKG were taking place to address this.
  - Some self-employed choose to work as a limited company, with most of their salary taken through dividends.
- The Cabinet Secretary said he would feed back the first point of the £50,000 cap to Ms Forbes and Ms Hyslop and confirmed that the second point had been raised with UKG.

### South of Scotland Enterprise Agency (SoSA)

- SoSA Board met this morning to discuss actions to support business and aid recovery. Large portion of the discussion centred on the tourism sector.
- Focus is on how best funds can be used to fill gaps and which businesses are in need of targeted support. Working closely with the Council.
- Information from SoSA on what is/will be available would be welcomed.
- Issues such as procurement to work through before information on the kind of support available will become available in the next 7 to 10 days.

### Tourism

- The issue of businesses with multiple outlets – mainly in the hospitality sector – was raised as an issue of concern due to support being restricted to one premises.
- The Cabinet Secretary explained that the decision on multiple outlets was taken to ensure that chains were not overcompensated and pointed out that the support was designed to tide businesses over and not to compensate for lost earnings.
- While acknowledging that there was a gap, the Cabinet Secretary explained that practicalities meant that support on this level could not be provided.
- SG working closely with N Irish and Welsh governments in lobbying UKG to widen schemes to support tourism, especially on the February cut-off date for furloughing staff.

#### **Actions:**

- Issue of self-employed being unable to access support if earnings exceed £50,000 to be fed back to Ms Forbes and Ms Hyslop.
- Chambers to share its survey of members with SG.

**Scottish Government**  
**9 April 2020**

# MINISTER FOR PUBLIC FINANCE, PLANNING AND COMMUNITY WEALTH MEETING WITH PROFESSOR RUSSEL GRIGGS OBE 22 July 2021

## Attendees

### Scottish Government

Tom Arthur MSP, Minister for Public Finance, Planning & Community Wealth

██████████, Community Wealth Building Advisor

██████████, Spatial Planning, Policy and Environment

██████████, Low Carbon Support Unit

██████████, Regeneration Unit

██████████, Private Secretary

██████████, Regional Economic Development

### South of Scotland Enterprise

Professor Russel Griggs OBE, Chair

Karen Jackson, Director of Strategy and Planning

Meeting conducted on MS Teams

## 1. Welcome and Introductions

The Minister welcomed Professor Griggs and Karen Jackson to the meeting

## 2. Introduction to SOSE

- Professor Griggs highlighted that being the newest Enterprise Agency, the act takes account of newer policy areas such as Fair Work.
- SOSE have also ensured that policy such as CWB, Regeneration and Planning Framework are at the heart of what they do.
- Being a small Enterprise Agency, we can be flexible and the Board can have a very 'hands on' network role in the running of the Agency.

## 3. Community Wealth Building Approach in South of Scotland

- Important part of SOSE's work. The South of Scotland is one of the five SG supported areas for CWB pilot.
- The focus has been on Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) in South of Scotland as key anchor organisations and one of the five pillars of CWB-spending. SOSE have been working closely with them so that they can be deal collectively as one customer e.g. when sourcing maintenance work. Especially important, given the forthcoming changes to rental properties with regard to adapting them for net zero
- This collaborative approach has worked well in this sector and SOSE now looking to extend that to other anchors in SoS and sectors such as working with SSDA and the wedding services industry. SOSE are also working with the Textile industry, particularly around skills.

- Officials from Low Carbon Support Unit keen to speak with SOSE on their work with RSL's.
- SOSE also considering how we embed CWB in wider SoS economic strategy. Including how CWB relates to wider investment resource, including Borderlands growth Deal.

#### **4. Energy and NPF4**

- SOSE have fed into the NPF4 process and had the opportunity to discuss with officials. There will be a consultation later this year and SOSE encouraged to engage further at that time.
- Housing remains a priority for the SoS where developments tend to be too small for the majority of developers. Employers regularly complain that they have difficulty finding accommodation for employees.
- Grid network is also a priority. [REDACTED]
- The Minister acknowledged that he recognised the points that SOSE made.
- SOSE recognise the importance of net zero and the impact it will have on everyone, but feel that in their interaction that a lot of the population do not fully understand what it means.

#### **5. Town Centre Regeneration in South of Scotland**

- Professor Griggs represented the SoS on the Town Centre action plan group. Concern that regeneration of cities and large town is very different to rural towns. Example given of Gala and Dumfries. Galashiels is being developed around the need to support tourists is visiting the Great Tapestry of Scotland, whereas in Dumfries, in Midsteeple Quarter, it is about getting people back living in town centres.
- 20 minute neighbourhoods is a good initiative, but it doesn't work in every area.
- It was important to have community buy in for the plans to work. The Minister acknowledged that a broad brush approach would not fit every area.

#### **Going Forward**

The Minister and SOSE agreed to meet quarterly to discuss CWB and NPF4

## Introductory meeting with the enterprise agencies - 22 June 2021

### Participants

Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Economy  
Minister for Business, Trade, Tourism and Enterprise  
Alistair Dodds, Chair, HIE  
Charlotte Wright, CEO, HIE  
Russel Griggs, Chair, SOSE  
Jane Morrison-Ross, CEO, SOSE  
Lord Smith, Chair, SE  
Linda Hanna, Interim CEO, SE  
Colin Cook, Interim Director of Economic Development  
Richard Rollison, Interim Director, DIT  
Kat Feldinger, Investment Finance Division  
Jon Pickstone, Deputy Director, Regional Economic Development  
██████████, Enterprise Sponsorship Team  
Callum McCaig, Special Adviser

\* The Cabinet Secretary set out the areas now included in the much broader Finance and Economy portfolio. Their inclusion in the same portfolio presents a real opportunity to look at the interaction

between areas feeding into the economy and economic development.

\* Her one, overarching priority is to deliver the new 10-year strategy for economic transformation. For development over the next few months, this will clarify the Government's vision and ruthlessly prioritise areas of focus (with an acceptance that there will be less focus on other areas).

\* Its development will be guided by three questions:

\* where does Scotland want to be in 10 years?

\* what do we have to do to get there?

\* who is going to deliver the step change needed?

\* Mr McKee is leading work on the data that will underpin the strategy and inform the prioritisation

exercise. It needs to recognise Scotland's strengths and areas of greatest potential and to have a

regional filter. Financial constraints mean that it will be critical to use all levers at our disposal.

\* The new Council for Economic Transformation will be brought together in July to help develop the strategy.

\* Given their on-the-ground experience, the enterprise agencies' involvement in this work will be critical, alongside other public and private sector partners.

In discussion, it was noted that:

\* there is an urgency to the work to develop and start delivery of the strategy - we are at a crossroads and need to take advantage of opportunities;

- \* the worsening of inequalities and child poverty due to the pandemic has been well documented - what's required is fair work and a growing economy, and an absolute focus on promoting prosperity;
- \* the regional dimension is particularly important - any strategy should be for the whole of Scotland and, for example, sensitive to the differing impact that the number and types of jobs created has in different areas of the country;
- \* delivery of the strategy, through partnership working, will be key - learning from the pandemic should inform how delivery agencies can work together as a system going forward;
- \* it will be important to consider to what extent the strategy should focus on resilience or future growth;
- \* also important will be linkages across policies, for example transport infrastructure, housing and population;
- \* alignment with the new strategy will require consideration of existing year-to-year commitments to make sure that interventions contribute to delivery of the vision;
- \* it will be important for the ESSB's strategic plan refresh and development of the enterprise agencies' new 3-year strategies to align with the 10-year strategy;
- \* effort is being put into building data capability to inform decision making, but this is still work in progress;
- \* maintaining the status quo is not an option in any sector, for example retaining people and skills in the tourism sector requires a step change on fair work, productivity and digitalisation;
- \* the strategy needs to focus on actions and to be presented in a way that engages its audience.

Each of the agencies presented information on their immediate priorities, as set out in their annual business plans.

Mr McKee agreed that it was important for the different strategies to align and for the 10-year strategy to articulate, in detail, what will be delivered. Conditionality on fair work will be key, as well as addressing practical issues such as material shortages.

The Cabinet Secretary reiterated that progress on delivering all of the Government's aims is dependent on a thriving economy and that the enterprise agencies are fundamental to delivering this.

She invited the agencies to provide their thoughts in response to three questions:

\* on the vision, where does the Scottish Government need to be clearer, more robust and demonstrate greater prioritisation?

\* on the 'how', what are the three biggest job creating opportunities over the next 5 years?

\* on delivery, where do opportunities exist for greater collaboration to deliver a Team Scotland approach?

Action: HIE, SOSE and SE to prepare short submissions responding to these questions.

The Cabinet Secretary said that she looked forward to working in partnership with the agencies on unpacking these three questions in regular meetings.