

From: <redacted>
Islands Team
D: ARE – Rural Economy and
Communities
25 February 2022

Cabinet Secretary For Rural Affairs and Islands

ISLANDS BOND ENGAGEMENT WORKSHOPS

Purpose

1. To provide a further update on the development of the Islands Bond, and notify you of our ongoing engagement with island communities.

Priority

2. Routine.

Background

3. At the Islands Strategic Group (ISG) on 15 December 2021, we committed to undertaking further engagement through a short series of on-island workshops with local authorities and island communities on the development of the eligibility and criteria for the Islands Bond in spring 2022.

4. At this ISG meeting, Councillor Gallagher from North Ayrshire Council, requested that local authority officials be involved in the planning of these workshops.

5. We had initially proposed virtual workshops only as we could not be sure whether travel would be suitable or permitted under Covid guidance. However, it has consistently been suggested through our engagement with community partners thus far that some face-to-face meetings would be a positive and preferred step.

6. As officials are now able to travel for work purposes, we feel it would strengthen the message that the development of the Islands Bond is a collaborative effort with our island stakeholders if we were to undertake a small number of in-person workshops

Purpose of Workshops

7. Following the conclusion of the Islands Bond consultation, we commissioned an analysis of the responses, and expect a final report on 9 March. This report will provide crucial feedback on priorities of the Bond should be; outlining island communities' views on where and on what it should be targeted. We will provide a separate submission regarding the Islands Bond Consultation analysis following submission of this report by contractors on 9 March.

8. Ahead of the workshops, we will consider the consultation analysis along with the feedback we have received both internally and from the external engagement we

undertook between August and November 2021, to draft potential criteria and aims for the Islands Bond.

9. The workshops will then be an opportunity to “sense-check” these suggestions, refine them and work with communities and stakeholders to develop place-based criteria relevant to each local authority. This will ensure that the workshops are not just further information gathering exercises, and will allow us to demonstrate how we are working towards a localised approach to the Bond as agreed with the ISG.

10. The below table provides a list of islands that we will visit, and the dates we intend to be undertaking workshops. We have yet to agree the specific islands in Shetland and Orkney. However, we firmly believe that we should engage with non-mainland communities as the islands most at risk of depopulation and are working with the Scottish Islands Federation to identify suitable locations.

Date	Location
14 or 15 March	Eigg
22 March	Shetland (Island TBC)
23 March	Shetland (Island TBC)
24 March	Orkney (Island TBC)
25 March	Orkney (Island TBC)
4 April	Arran
5 April	Cumbræ
6 April	Bute
7 April	Islay
11 April	Raasay
12 April	Uist
13 April	Lewis or Harris

Planning the workshops

11. We have reached out to each of the six local authorities to inform them of our intention to undertake these workshops. We also sought their views on islands that we should visit, whether the local authority are undertaking any engagement that we should be aware of or could link with, and whether they would like to meet with us whilst we are in their area.

12. Local authorities are generally in support of our intended approach, and have suggested islands that we should visit or agreed with those that have been suggested. Where possible, we have taken these suggestions on board and made changes. For example, we will be visiting Islay at the request of Argyll and Bute Council.

13. However, local authorities did express that, ideally, they would have liked us to have visited many more islands in their local authority area, and there was some minor disappointment around some workshops falling within the Easter holiday.

14. Local authorities were understanding of our tight timeframe in aiming to deliver the bond in summer 2022. We also acknowledged that the workshops falling within the Easter holiday may potentially prevent some island residents from attending.

15. As a mitigation to both the number of islands we are able to visit, and the timing of the workshops, we will be holding an online workshop for each of the local authority areas after this round of in-person workshops has concluded.

16. We feel it necessary to make the Cabinet Secretary aware that Orkney Islands Council have responded to say reaffirm that OIC is not a supporter of the Islands Bond as currently conceived and that it would, therefore, be inconsistent for the council to participate in any joint or associated events intended to promote the scheme locally.

17. OIC also wanted to flag the added complication of the upcoming local government election which will curtail activity which might be perceived as lending support to any political interest.

18. To support with the logistics of this engagement, we are working with the Scottish Islands Federation to secure suitable venues, promote the events through their own network and, where possible, physically in those communities we will be visiting e.g. in any local press or through posters in the local shop.

Outcomes

19. Following the workshops, we expect to have developed locally-identified priorities for the Islands Bond in each of the six local authority areas beyond the overarching aim of the policy.

20. This will support our Island Communities Impact Assessment and allow us to demonstrate that we have been flexible in developing a policy that reflects placed-based priorities and that we have fully considered island feedback in the Bond development.

21. Once we have developed these proposed criteria, we will provide an update and recommendations. Should you then be content with those draft criteria, we will continue with preparing the Islands Bond Guidance and Application. This will allow us to maintain our progress towards the intended aim of launching the Islands Bond in summer 2022.

Comms

22. It is felt that these events will provide an opportunity to further raise the profile of islands policy work more broadly, and we will explore this with Comms colleagues.

Conclusion

23. You are invited to:

- **Note the content of this submission and provide any comments as appropriate.**

<redacted>

Islands Team

D:ARE Rural Economy and Communities

<redacted> 25 February 2022

Copy List:	For Action	For Comments	For Information		
			Portfolio Interest	Constit Interest	General Awareness
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Economy Minister for Environment, Biodiversity and Land Reform Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing and Local Government,	«text»	«text»	«text»	«text»	«text»

<redacted>

OPQ - ISLANDS POPULATION

Liam McArthur is a Liberal Democrat MSP for Orkney, and has been since 2007.

<redacted>

26 April: BBC Radio Orkney enquired about the Islands Bond workshops being held in Shapinsay and Eday asking: were these the only two islands visited; how else can people contribute to the bond development; and when will the bond launch. A response was issued highlighting that a formal 12 week consultation was undertaken, and that we continue to engage with island communities.

25 April: Western Isles News Agency requested an update on how many applications, and from how far away, Scottish Government had received for the Islands Bond. As the Islands Bond is still in development, the response was to highlight that the intention was to launch the bond in summer 2022.

22 April: Former MSP Rob Gibson has called on SG to do more on land reform including how it can address population challenges. A response issued highlighted the commitment to publishing a draft Action Plan to address depopulation by winter 2023.

ISSUE: 24 March – Liam McArthur criticises Scottish Government’s Islands Connectivity Plan for not including interisland ferry services in Orkney and Shetland. *“It seems that this government believes there are some islands that deserve to be connected and others than do not”*.

ISSUE: 28 October 2021 – During portfolio questions, Liam McArthur MSP asked the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands to *“commit to ring fencing the funding for that gimmick [Islands Bond] to support broadband and transport links instead, as they allow people to live, work and study in our islands”*

TOP LINES

- Population decline is a real threat to the sustainability of many, although not all, of Scotland’s island communities. During the consultation for the National Islands Plan, depopulation was the top priority issue identified by respondents.
- That is why, through the National Islands Plan, we have committed to address population decline and ensure a healthy, balanced population profile across our islands.
- To address population decline and ensure a healthy, balanced population profile, we know that we have to work closely with regional, local and community partners.
- The issues that contribute to depopulation are complex and therefore there is no one silver bullet which can solve them.

OPQ - ISLANDS POPULATION

- We are committed to developing an action plan to support population growth in our rural and island communities experiencing depopulation, and will be progressing with this work in 2022.

Population change is not the same across all Scottish Islands, and we must be alert to this when developing any policies designed to support our communities.

- When we look at the experience of depopulation over the past twenty years, Scotland's islands should not be treated as one homogeneous group as some communities have seen growth, whilst others have seen significant decline.
- Most of the growth in Scotland's island population since 2001 took place in the Orkney, Highland and Shetland Islands council areas. (NRS)
- Orkney has seen the largest population growth while the Argyll and Bute isles have seen the largest decrease. (NRS)
- Islands have seen the biggest decrease in the younger population than Scotland overall.

Addressing population challenges across our island communities requires collaboration across all sectors

- There is no quick fix for the challenges leading to depopulation and we must work with regional, local and community partners to ensure that we collectively deliver a sustainable solution to the challenges facing our island populations.
- A key route towards addressing population decline has been our work with the Convention of the Highlands and Islands exploring actions to tackle depopulation in the region.
- At the most recent CoHI in March 2022, it was announced that Scottish Government would be progressing with our commitment to developing an Action Plan to address the challenge of depopulation, with a view to a draft publication in winter 2023

The Islands Bond is just one tool we are developing to support island populations and is not seen as a "silver bullet".

- We recognise that the population challenges in our island communities are wide ranging and complex and cannot be solved by a singular approach.
- The Islands Bond consultation along with our ongoing engagement, will help us to understand these challenges in greater detail and work to develop potential solutions to them.
- We will continue to work with local authorities, our island communities and other island stakeholders to address some of the more immediate, acute population challenges facing our island communities.
- Between 14 March and 26 April 2022, Scottish Government held in-person engagement events, meeting with over 100 island residents across 12 island communities on the development of the Islands Bond criteria and eligibility.
- These events allowed island residents from across all six relevant authority areas to discuss the bond, and how it could address the specific needs of their communities.

OPQ - ISLANDS POPULATION

- The feedback from these events, along with the responses to the 12 week formal consultation, and the engagement we have had with stakeholders is being considered in order to ensure that this policy is developed with island communities, not delivered to them.
- Of course, this is not the only opportunity that communities have to engage with Scottish Government, and officials in the Islands Team are always open to discussing challenges and opportunities with our islands.

List of Island Workshops:

- Rum, 14 March 2022
- Yell, 22 March 2022
- North Mavine (Shetland Mainland), 23 March 2022
- Arran, 4 April 2022
- Cumbrae, 5 April 2022
- Bute, 5 April 2022
- Islay, 7 April 2022
- Raasay, 11 April 2022
- Eriskay, 12 April 2022
- Lewis, 13 April 2022
- Shapinsay, 25 April 2022
- Eday, 26 April 2022

<redacted>

OPQ - ISLANDS POPULATION

Oral PQ – Potential Supplementary questions and background note

Q. Given the scale of the depopulation issue in Scottish Islands, does the Scottish Government really believe this tokenistic gesture is sufficient to address the challenges facing communities?

A. The Islands Bond has never been presented as some sort of silver bullet to address our island population challenges. It is just one element of our wider work, across all of Scottish Government, to support island communities.

The Islands Bond consultation, along with our ongoing engagement, will help us to understand the challenges in greater detail and we will continue to work with local authorities, our island communities and other island stakeholders to address these.

Q. There are major infrastructural challenges facing our island communities. Does the Scottish Government think it is delivering enough to support island populations?

A. We are working hard to ensure that infrastructure is in place to deliver on the needs of our island communities.

For 2022/23, the Scottish Government has announced a £4 million funding package to help improve infrastructure on Scotland's islands. The funding is part of the £30 million Islands Programme, established to support the implementation of the National Islands Plan.

We are also making substantial investments in Scotland's digital infrastructure, despite responsibility for broadband being reserved to the UK Government.

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MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING: Ms. Mairi Gougeon

Copied to: as per copy list

<i>Engagement Title</i>	Meeting with Kate Forbes MSP – Broadford Community Hub
<i>Venue</i>	<redacted>
<i>Date and Time of Engagement</i>	Date(s): 07 June 2022 Time(s): 16:15 – 16:45
<i>Background/Purpose</i>	Cabinet Secretary Gougeon has accepted a meeting with Cabinet Secretary Forbes, for exploratory discussions regarding the Broadford Community Hub, Isle of Skye. Community representatives and a local Councillor who has been very active in supporting the Hub project are also attending.
<i>Annexes</i>	ANNEX A: AGENDA ANNEX B: BROADFORD COMMUNITY HUB ANNEX C: NATIONAL ISLANDS PLAN ANNEX D: ANNUAL REPORT ANNEX E: ISLANDS BOND ANNEX F: CARBON NEUTRAL ISLANDS ANNEX G: ISLANDS PROGRAMME ANNEX H: ICIA'S ANNEX I: ISLANDS SURVEY
<i>Attendees</i>	<redacted>
<i>Official Support</i>	<redacted>

ANNEX A: AGENDA

<redacted>

ANNEX B: BROADFORD COMMUNITY HUB

<redacted>

ANNEX C: THE NATIONAL ISLANDS PLAN

<redacted>

ANNEX D: THE 2021 NATIONAL ISLANDS PLAN ANNUAL REPORT

<redacted>

ANNEX E: ISLANDS BOND

- Within the 2021/22 Programme for Government, a commitment was made that by Summer 2022 the Scottish Government will introduce a new £5 million Islands Bond fund, providing up to £50,000 each for up to 100 households by 2026, by providing financial support for island residents to remain in their community, or to encourage people to move there.

TOP LINES:

- **We have now completed our formal consultation which we hope allowed people on our islands to inform the shape of the Islands Bond at an early stage.**
- **We expect to publish the analysis from this consultation very soon before launching the first ever Islands Bond this summer. In the meantime, our ongoing engagement with islanders is ensuring that we better understand acute population challenges facing our island communities.**
- **We recognise that the population challenges across our island communities are wide ranging and complex and cannot be solved by a singular approach. The Islands Bond consultation along with our ongoing engagement, will help us to understand these challenges in greater detail and will inform our work to develop potential solutions to them.**

BACKGROUND:

- The Scottish Government committed to launching an Islands Bond which will offer financial support to those wishing to move to, or remain in, one of Scotland's island communities. A consultation seeking views on the design and implementation of the proposed Bond was carried out between 2 August 2021 and 25 October 2021.
- The consultation paper, set out background information on island depopulation, and the role of the proposed Islands Bond in addressing this. It outlined a number of matters for consideration in developing the detail of the Bond. These included understanding population challenges and the implications for different islands, determining how the Bond scheme might be implemented, and establishing processes for measuring its impact. The paper contained a mix of 12 open and closed questions.
- Alongside this public consultation, we have been and continue to undertake a detailed and targeted engagement exercise with local authorities and other key island stakeholders.
- We undertook a series of island community workshops to develop locally identified priorities and criteria for the bond during March and April 2022. This involved in-person events in two island locations across each of the six relevant

local authorities, inviting island residents to work with SG on developing the criteria of the bond in order that it can better respond to locally identified need.

- Reflecting on the feedback we have received during the extensive engagement we have carried out thus far, and understanding how complex an issue this is, we are currently considering how best to progress with the policy.

Q. What are the key population challenges for island communities?

A. We received 1,654 responses to the consultation for the Islands Bond. Respondents repeatedly identified three key population challenges in their areas: (i) an ageing (largely retired) population, (ii) young people and young families moving away, and (iii) a shortage of working-aged people in key sectors of the economy.

ANNEX F: CARBON NEUTRAL ISLANDS

<redacted>

ANNEX G: THE ISLANDS PROGRAMME

<redacted>

ANNEX H: ISLAND COMMUNITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

<redacted>

ANNEX I: NIP SURVEY

<redacted>

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From: <redacted>
Islands Team, REC Division

8 June 2022

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands

ISLANDS BOND CONSULTATION ANALYSIS AND PROPOSALS FOR NEXT STEPS

Purpose

1. To provide you with a copy of the Islands Bond Consultation Analysis along with a proposal on how the Islands Bond policy can be redeveloped to ensure delivery against the National Islands Plan commitment to address depopulation and to support the Rural Depopulation Action Plan - whilst managing the impact of the Capital Spending Review.

Priority

2. Routine.

Background

3. Within the Programme for Government 2021/22, the Scottish Government committed to *“developing a £5 million Islands Bond fund, providing up to £50,000 each for up to 100 households by 2026, by providing financial support for island residents to remain in their community, or to encourage people to move there”*.

4. The online Islands Bond consultation ran from 2 August 2021 to 25 October 2021, and received 1,661 responses. There has been significant interest in this proposed policy and a substantial number of enquiries continue to be received in relation to it.

5. Following a procurement exercise, Griesbach & Associates were appointed to undertake the analysis of this consultation and to produce a report outlining the key findings. The finalised report was provided to Scottish Government on 9 March, and we have previously committed to publishing this report online following local council elections.

6. Between 14 March and 26 April 2022, we held in-person events on 12 islands to help us develop the Islands Bond criteria and eligibility. Over 100 island residents contributed, and a full list of the stakeholders we engaged with can be found at **Annex A**. These events also informed our Island Communities Impact Assessment which is being undertaken in tandem with our policy development work.

7. These events allowed island residents from across all six local authority areas to discuss the Bond, and to consider how it might address the specific needs of their communities.

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8. The feedback from these events, along with the responses to the formal consultation, and the engagement we have had with stakeholders has been carefully considered in order to ensure that the Islands Bond was being developed in collaboration with island communities..

Consultation Analysis and the Views of Respondents

9. The analysis of the consultation highlights that the views of island respondents were fairly evenly split between those in favour and those opposed. In particular, respondents raised a number of questions and concerns about the scheme and many were not convinced that the approach set out in the Manifesto commitment, which was the basis for the consultation, would achieve the objective of reversing population decline.

10. Non-island respondents, however, were often strongly in favour of the Islands Bond proposal because it supported their wish to move to a Scottish Island.

11. The main benefit identified by both island and non-island respondents was that the Islands Bond could help address the issue of island depopulation both by attracting newcomers (and returners) and by retaining existing inhabitants.

12. Respondents who were generally in favour of the proposal did, however, sometimes raise caveats. In particular, it was suggested that island residents should be given a higher priority for awards than those relocating (or returning). It was also suggested that newcomers would need assurances about jobs and the availability of housing and services, as well as about practicalities such as transport links and IT connectivity in order to be confident about the viability of making a move.

13. A wide range of disadvantages or potential disadvantages following the introduction of the Islands Bond were identified. These were raised most frequently by island respondents but also, less often, by non-island respondents.

14. Those who were strongly against the proposal thought that the concept of an Islands Bond was wrong in principle. The reasons offered for this view included that; (i) it was a short-term fix to a long-term problem and would not address the underlying causes of depopulation; (ii) £5m was far too small an investment to have any impact on the depopulation of the Scottish islands; (iii) it was a waste of taxpayers' money; (iv) a cash incentive to individuals was a bad idea and would attract the 'wrong people'; and (v) the scheme would be open to abuse.

15. These views were held mainly, but not exclusively, by island respondents. More generally, both island and non-island respondents questioned whether the proposals represented a strategic response to the question of island depopulation.

16. The potential for divisive impacts on communities and community cohesion was also raised as a key concern – mainly by island respondents.

17. Further detail on key areas of information is at **Annex B**.

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18. During the in-person engagement events, many of the same strong criticisms and concerns highlighted above were raised again.

19. Overall, islanders felt that the Bond would not address the challenges of high property prices, and that support should be directed to those already living on the islands.

20. However, it is important to recognise that some island communities felt that immigration was essential to address their particular population challenges. For example, islanders on Shapinsay in Orkney felt one of the key issues impacting on their population sustainability was a perceived complete lack of the 18-35 demographic. This perceived dearth is somewhat justified with the Data Zone covering Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre, and Shapinsay seeing an estimated 26.5% decline in the 25-44 age range between 2010 and 2020 (NRS Small Area Population Estimates, 2020)

21. Through our events, it became apparent that whilst communities were fully in support of funding to address depopulation, they did not agree that the Islands Bond commitment was the correct approach.

22. As such, communities often suggested options for the criteria and eligibility that would extend far wider than individual households, as committed to in both the Manifesto and PfG.

The Islands Bond Budget and Spending Review

23. The Islands Bond was announced in Programme for Government as a £5 million package across the lifetime of the current parliament.

24. As you will be aware, there have been challenging decisions required by Cabinet in regards to future spending.

25. Following a difficult prioritisation process, the Islands Bond will no longer be funded beyond the 2022-23 Financial Year. We have however kept a capital budget allocation of £300,000 and a resource allocation of £200,000 against the Islands Bond for the current financial year.

26. This submission will now set out recommendations for how this money could be best utilised to deliver against our commitments to address depopulation, whilst reflecting the feedback received during the consultation process.

Responding to the Consultation

27. Following publication, and the further development of the Bond policy, Ministers would be expected to produce a final report setting out what has been done, or is going to be done, and why.

28. This report is distinct from an analysis report in that it will draw on all sources of information used in the policy development process, and is likely to focus on the information and views which have been taken on board.

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29. We believe that this report could present an opportunity to communicate a redesign of the Bond, and how resource allocated to the policy for this financial year will be used to address depopulation challenges. This would demonstrate a strong commitment to genuine collaboration on policy development, and responding to the strong feedback received from island communities.

30. This information would be presented in the We Asked, You Said, We Did (WAYSWD) format, highlighting how the new approach is a direct response to the information gathered through the Islands Bond consultation process.

31. The WAYSWD approach would also allow us to link the engagement on the Islands Bond to the development of the Depopulation Action Plan that was presented to the Ministerial Population Taskforce in May 2022. Furthermore, this would evidence that the contributions of islanders and stakeholders have directly influenced policy.

32. This would also present an opportunity to highlight that the decisions taken were a result of the ICIA process.

Next Steps and Options for Consideration

33. Islanders have told us that the key barriers to retention and a driver of depopulation are housing, infrastructure, low-wage economy and child care. This is an echo of what we were told by respondents to the National Islands Plan consultation and are major cross-cutting themes running throughout our Implementation Route Map for the Plan.

34. Respondents to our consultation have been unequivocal - that the Bond as originally intended in the Programme for Government is not what communities need. Therefore, we have proposed here some options below for your consideration:

Option One – Alignment with the National Islands Plan and Wider SG Population Work

As Cabinet Secretary will be aware, through the commitment within the National Islands Plan to “*develop an action plan to support the repopulation of rural and island communities*”, the Islands and Population Teams are taking forward work on the Depopulation Action Plan [working title] presented at the Population Ministerial Taskforce in May 2022.

Whilst still to be finalised, it is understood that the Depopulation Action Plan will include a Rural and Islands Depopulation component, to be led by your Islands officials. As part of this component, there will be a Practical Policy Testing workstream to inform the Action Plan.

Utilising the information gathered through the Islands Bond consultation to shape these policy tests would deliver a clear link between the two pieces of work, and reassure communities that their input to the Bond has not been disregarded.

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Officials have already begun exploring suggestions from respondents to the consultation in order to identify whether they would have been within the scope of the Islands Bond. Should this option agreed, we would expect these conversations to easily pivot to focus on developing and delivering projects through the lens of Practical Policy Tests as outlined in the Depopulation Action Plan.

However, given the likelihood of future spending pressures, there is a risk that successful and replicable projects could not be rolled out (or further supported), once the Policy Tests have been analysed.

An update on Practical Policy Tests would be provided to Cabinet Secretary ahead of the Taskforce in August and we will ensure that Cabinet Secretary is kept informed as work progresses in the interim.

Option Two – Support Population through the Islands Programme

The second option would be to simply absorb this year's money into the National Islands Plan Islands Programme (IP) to support of all 13 Strategic Objectives but with a specific focus on Strategic Objective One - Population.

Messaging could be framed around how we will use the IP and Carbon Neutral Islands to support population because the consultation has reinforced our understanding that population is a complex and multi-faceted challenge that requires an integrated and holistic approach.

By absorbing the Bond funding back into the IP, we could fully take into account depopulation as a driver of the future projects that will receive our investment, and would show communities that islands funding would be used more generally to address larger policy issues relating to depopulation such as transport, infrastructure, housing and so on.

This option would also help to offset some of the financial pressures on the IP and CNIs. Island residents were clear that small levels of flexible funding was to be welcomed, but that the Bond was not the right mechanism for this. This option would also allow Ministers to announce an additional amount of capital money as part of the IP and the £200,000 resource could be used to monitor the life of the awarded projects through a population lens.

However, island communities could see this a broken promise and feel that their contributions to the consultation have not been considered. Equally, this option would not address the locally identified, nuanced challenges affecting population retention that island communities raised through the consultation process.

Furthermore, there could be concern raised by lesser populated islands that this would result in funding going towards the larger islands or more populous centres. Flexibility to support smaller communities, and ensuring that funding was not absorbed by larger towns/islands was the key positive that island communities identified in the Bond.

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Sensitivities

35. The engagement on the Islands Bond has highlighted that it was an emotive and, at times, divisive policy. However, whilst the policy itself may not have been widely supported, there was a recognition that funding delivered to the islands to support population sustainability is positive and much needed.

36. Whilst the proposed redevelopment of the Bond is responding to the feedback from islands, and will deliver some financial assistance to address population challenges in this financial year, there is likely to be a negative response from stakeholders to the cuts in support as a result of that support not being packaged as the Islands Bond. As such, we suggest a number of key messages below that could be developed into a positive narrative.

Publication and Comms

37. The Consultation Analysis is currently with APS and ready to be published as and when next steps are agreed.

38. Cabinet Secretary is aware that the Islands Bond is now no longer deliverable in light of SR cuts. This will be sensitive and as islands budgets have been hit hard in the round, we will work with our comms colleagues to ensure our messaging is thoughtful and positive as we move away from the PfG commitment to deliver a £5 million Islands Bond.

39. The National Islands Plan now needs to be integral to how we approach our population work. However, there are also opportunities for us to align our population work with our Carbon Neutral Islands project, with the Rural and Islands Housing Action Plan and importantly with the Population Action Plan. This could form part of our handling plan.

40. Ahead of publication, we will engage with Comms colleagues and SpAds to develop a strategy communicating the following key messages in order to build a more positive narrative. For example:

- Scottish Ministers are responding to the criticism of the Islands Bond and listening to feedback from island communities;
- The decision to revisit the Islands Bond was taken prior to the Spending Review;
- This allows us to deliver action sooner; and
- This new approach to tackling population issues will allow us to test new and exciting interventions that will be replicable across all island areas, delivering a wider impact than the original Islands Bond proposal (therefore acknowledging and addressing one of the key criticisms raised).

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Recommendation

41. On the basis of the feedback received from island communities, and the impact of the Spending Review, we recommend:

- Pursuing Option One – Alignment with the National Islands Plan and Wider SG Population Work. We believe that this will be the most effective and agreeable, from an island community perspective and that it will allow us to repackage the Islands Bond policy whilst also delivering on the National Islands Plan commitments around population;
- Publishing a short response to the Consultation Analysis, outlining that the intention of the Islands Bond will now be delivered through the Policy Testing component of the Depopulation Action Plan, thus delivering on the National Islands Plan;
- Officials, through the development of the Depopulation Action Plan, to progress development of the Practical Policy Tests as a priority; and
- Engage with local authorities, communities and key partners to collaboratively develop and implement these projects.

Conclusion

42. We would be happy to meet to discuss this further, but in the meantime the Cabinet Secretary is invited to:

- **Note the contents of this submission; and**
- **to comment on the recommendations contained within.**

<redacted>

Islands Team

Rural Economy and Communities Division

8 June 2022

Copy List:	For Action	For Comments	For Information		
			Portfolio Interest	Constit Interest	General Awareness
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands		X	X		X
Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Economy			X	X	X
Minister for Environment, Biodiversity and Land Reform			X		X
Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture			X		X

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Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing and Local Government,			X		X
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SUMMARY OF ISLANDS BOND ENGAGEMENT

Islands Stakeholder Engagement Sessions

Stakeholder	Date of initial engagement session
Aspire Orkney	23 November 2021
Bòrd na Gàidhlig	22 November 2021
Communities Housing Trust	17 November 2021
Community Land Scotland	16 November 2021
Crofting Commission	26 August 2021
Highlands and Islands Enterprise	22 November 2021
Mobility Access Committee for Scotland	25 November 2021
NFUS	16 November 2021
Promote Shetland	25 November 2021
Rural Housing Scotland	22 November 2021
Scottish Crofting Federation	19 November 2021
Scottish Enterprise	16 November 2021
Scottish Islands Federation	19 November 2021
Scottish Land Commission	23 November 2021
Scottish Rural Action	19 November 2021
Skills Development Scotland	23 November 2021
SLAED	23 November 2021
UHI	22 November 2021

Islands Based Community Workshops

Island	Date
Rum	14 March 2022
Yell	22 March 2022
North Mavine (Shetland Mainland)	23 March 2022
Arran	4 April 2022
Cumbrae	5 April 2022
Bute	5 April 2022
Islay	7 April 2022
Raasay	11 April 2022
Eriskay	12 April 2022
Lewis	13 April 2022
Shapinsay	25 April 2022
Eday	26 April 2022

SUMMARY OF KEY INFORMATION FROM CONSULTATION ANALYSIS

Population Challenges

1. Regarding the population challenges that face island communities, three key challenges were repeatedly highlighted:

- an ageing (largely retired) population;
- young people and young families moving away; and
- a shortage of working-aged people in key sectors of the economy.

These views were consistent among individuals and organisations across all island groups.

2. These challenges were attributed to four main issues:

- a lack of (suitable) (affordable) housing;
- poor infrastructure in terms of public transport, roads, digital connectivity, water supply, etc.;
- a low-wage economy and lack of (quality) employment opportunities; and
- a lack of childcare and education services.

Population Retention versus Population Growth

3. In regards to whether the bond should target population retention or population growth, there was a clear difference between island residents and non-island residents, with island residents giving more emphasis to population retention, and non-island residents giving more emphasis to population growth.

Alternative Suggestions for Addressing Depopulation

4. Through the consultation, alternative suggestions for how depopulation might be addressed were provided by respondents. The most common suggestions were to:

- invest in island infrastructure;
- invest in communities (rather than individuals and households);
- strategically target (a small number of) communities;
- provide loans rather than bonds; and
- introduce new policies and / or legislation to address issues such as housing shortages and complexities in the planning process for croft acquisition.

Target Demographics

5. Island residents were asked their views regarding under-represented demographics that should be targeted by the Islands Bond. The majority that responded to this question said that the Islands Bond should be targeted at working aged adults

(71%) and / or young people (67%). Just over a quarter (27%) thought the scheme should be targeted at professions.

Bond value, allowable expenditure, and conditions

6. Regarding financial issues, respondents were unclear if individual bonds were intended to be of a fixed value of £50k, or whether there would be a process for determining individual bond values up to that limit. Some argued that the bond award process should involve a financial assessment of some type, to ensure that the money went to those in most need.

7. Regarding allowable expenditure, respondents felt that the Bond should be able to be used to help recipients access affordable housing, to support existing businesses and to start-up new businesses. There were suggestions that other allowable expenditure should include (i) removal and relocation costs, and (ii) travel to and from the islands.

8. Regarding conditions of bond awards, there was a widespread view that appropriate financial and other conditions were required. Respondents repeatedly expressed concerns that the bonds would be open to potential abuse, exploitation, or misuse (e.g. with recipients using the money to fund projects intended for resale), and said that ongoing monitoring and scrutiny would be required to prevent or detect this. Respondents wished to see payback and / or clawback arrangements put in place.

Decision-making Processes

9. Respondents, particularly island respondents, often asked for clarity about the process for decision-making in relation to the allocation of bond awards. It was felt that, as there were many more 'worthy recipients' than the Islands Bond scheme could support, it would be vital to ensure that the process of assessment and decision-making was 'fair', 'transparent', and 'evidence-based'.

10. Who would make decisions, and how the available funds would be distributed were also key concerns for respondents. There was a view that the selection of bond recipients should involve identifying the 'right sort of people' who could make a positive contribution to island life. Community involvement in the process of assessing applications was also seen as crucial.

Advisory Service

11. Respondents were asked for their views about the need for an advisory service to support people relocating to island communities. More than two-thirds of respondents (70%) agreed that an advisory service would be needed – including almost half who 'strongly agreed' (46%).

12. However, there were substantial differences between the views of island and non-island respondents. Almost nine-tenths (88%) of non-islanders agreed that an advisory service would be needed, compared to around half of islanders (45%).

13. Respondents put forward a wide range of functions for the service, including (i) helping incomers settle into island life and integrate into communities, (ii) providing

information and advice on local services and amenities, (iii) advising on housing options, (iv) and providing business support and advice.

14. In terms of who should be involved in the delivery of such a service, the most common view was that island residents should be involved.

15. Respondents who did not agree with the need for an advisory service often expressed opposition to (or reservations about) the Islands Bond policy. More specific points made by this group included that (i) island communities are welcoming and would be able to provide any advice needed; (ii) those locating to the islands should be proactive in doing their own research and seeking assistance; (iii) moving to an island is not significantly different to moving to any other location; and (iv) other sources of information are already available.

Measuring the impact of the Bond

16. In terms of monitoring the application process, the main issue raised by respondents was the need to have a full account of the awards made in terms of island location, whether the award was for retention or relocation, and the specific purpose of the award.

Liam McArthur: To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide an update on the proposed Islands Bond scheme, including when it expects to publish the outcome of its consultation. (S6O-01307)

A: The delivery of the Islands Bond is still being carefully considered in light of the strong feedback we have received from island residents, and within the context of the current energy crisis and rising living costs which are being experienced by many islanders.

Further details will be announced later this summer as part of the response to the 12 week online consultation analysis report. We expect to publish the analysis of the consultation in the coming weeks.

POSSIBLE SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS

Q. Given the scale of the depopulation issue in Scottish Islands, does the Scottish Government really believe the tokenistic gesture of an Islands Bond is sufficient to address the challenges facing communities?

MAIRI GOUGEON: The Islands Bond has never been presented as some sort of silver bullet to address our island population challenges. It is just one element of our wider work, across all of Scottish Government, to support island communities.

The Islands Bond consultation, along with our ongoing engagement, will help us to understand the challenges in greater detail and we will continue to work with local authorities, our island communities and other island stakeholders to address these.

Q: Recent media reports suggest that the first Islands Bonds are to be issued “within weeks” (*The Times*, 23/05/22). Will the Scottish Government confirm that this is the case?

MAIRI GOUGEON: The Islands Bond has not been launched and, contrary to recent media coverage, no bonds will be issued imminently. The specifics of the Islands Bond are still being carefully considered in light of the feedback we have received from island residents and in response to this, details setting out the direction of travel for the policy will be announced later this summer.

Q: There are major infrastructural challenges facing our island communities. Does the Scottish Government think it is delivering enough to support island populations?

MAIRI GOUGEON: We are working hard to ensure that infrastructure is in place to deliver on the needs of our island communities.

For 2022/23, the Scottish Government has announced a £4 million funding package to help improve infrastructure on Scotland’s islands. The funding is part of the Islands Programme, established to support the implementation of the National Islands Plan.

We are also making substantial investments in Scotland's digital infrastructure, despite responsibility for broadband being reserved to the UK Government.

When considering the Islands Bond consultation, there has also been a clear and understandable desire from islanders that those already resident in our island communities should receive support first before immigration is encouraged. We will take this into account as our population policy work develops.

<redacted>

BACKGROUND NOTE FOR S60-01307

This question has been tabled by Liam Macarthur MSP, Liberal Democrats for the Orkney Islands constituency.

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT COMMITMENTS TO RURAL AND ISLAND POPULATION

Top Lines

Scotland is facing long-term demographic challenges - an ageing population, a declining birth rate, an uncertain future of migration, and spatial population imbalances (with depopulation in many remote and rural areas in the West, and sustained population growth in other areas in the East).

- These issues led to the established of a Ministerial Population Task Force and Director-led Population Programme Board in 2019 to take a cross-portfolio approach to identifying and addressing Scotland's demographic challenges.
- It is within this structure that there will be a focus on Rural and Island Depopulation through the Action Plan on Depopulation, thus aligning with the Population Strategy's 'More Balanced Population' pillar.
- Addressing population challenges across our rural and island communities requires collaboration across all sectors.
- There is no quick fix for the challenges leading to depopulation and we must work with regional, local and community partners to ensure that

we collectively deliver a sustainable solution to the challenges facing our island populations.

<redacted>

ISLANDS POPULATION

Top Lines

Population decline is a real threat to the sustainability of many, although not all, of Scotland's island communities. During the consultation for the National Islands Plan, depopulation was the top priority issue identified by respondents.

- That is why, through the National Islands Plan, we have committed to address population decline and ensure a healthy, balanced population profile across our islands.
- To address population decline and ensure a healthy, balanced population profile, we know that we have to work closely with regional, local and community partners.
- The issues that contribute to depopulation are complex and therefore there is no one silver bullet which can solve them.
- We are committed to developing an action plan to support population growth in our rural and island communities experiencing depopulation, and will be progressing with this work in 2022.

Population change is not the same across all Scottish Islands, and we must be alert to this when developing any policies designed to support our communities.

- When we look at the experience of depopulation over the past twenty years, Scotland's islands should not be treated as one homogeneous group as some communities have seen growth, whilst others have seen significant decline.
- Most of the growth in Scotland's island population since 2001 took place in the Orkney, Highland and Shetland Islands council areas. (NRS)
- Orkney has seen the largest population growth while the Argyll and Bute isles have seen the largest decrease. (NRS)
- Islands have seen the biggest decrease in the younger population than Scotland overall.

Addressing population challenges across our island communities requires collaboration across all sectors

- There is no quick fix for the challenges leading to depopulation and we must work with regional, local and community partners to ensure that we collectively deliver a sustainable solution to the challenges facing our island populations.
- A key route towards addressing population decline has been our work with the Convention of the Highlands and Islands exploring actions to tackle depopulation in the region.
- At the most recent CoHI in March 2022, it was announced that Scottish Government would be progressing with our commitment to developing an Action Plan to address the challenge of depopulation, with a view to a draft publication in winter 2023

The Islands Bond is just one tool we are exploring to support island populations and is not seen as a “silver bullet”.

- We recognise that the population challenges in our island communities are wide ranging and complex and cannot be solved by a singular approach.
- The Islands Bond consultation along with our ongoing engagement, will help us to understand these challenges in greater detail and work to develop potential solutions to them.
- We will continue to work with local authorities, our island communities and other island stakeholders to address some of the more immediate, acute population challenges facing our island communities.
- Between 14 March and 26 April 2022, Scottish Government held in-person engagement events, meeting with over 100 island residents across 12 island communities on the development of the Islands Bond criteria and eligibility.
- These events allowed island residents from across all six relevant authority areas to discuss the bond, and how it could address the specific needs of their communities.
- The feedback from these events, along with the responses to the 12 week formal consultation, and the engagement we have had with stakeholders is being considered in order to ensure that this policy is developed with island communities, not delivered to them.
- Of course, this is not the only opportunity that communities have to engage with Scottish Government, and officials in the Islands Team are always open to discussing challenges and opportunities with our islands.

List of Island Workshops:

- Rum, 14 March 2022
- Yell, 22 March 2022
- North Mavine (Shetland Mainland), 23 March 2022
- Arran, 4 April 2022
- Cumbrae, 5 April 2022
- Bute, 5 April 2022
- Islay, 7 April 2022
- Raasay, 11 April 2022
- Eriskay, 12 April 2022
- Lewis, 13 April 2022
- Shapinsay, 25 April 2022
- Eday, 26 April 2022

<redacted>

From: <redacted>

Sent: 23 June 2022 12:11

To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands <CabSecRAI@gov.scot>; <redacted>

Subject: RE: Letter from Annabelle Ewing MSP(Case Ref: AE3644)

Good afternoon,

<redacted>

is on annual leave for a couple of days so I have added the responses to the Micase system for the two cases below and have assigned them both to Private Office. No further amendments were made.

Thanks,

<redacted>

<redacted>

| Rural and Islands Communities Team | D:ARE | Scottish Government

<redacted>



From: <redacted> **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands

Sent: 23 June 2022 09:47

To:<redacted>

Cc: <redacted>

Subject: RE: Letter from Annabelle Ewing MSP(Case Ref: AE3644)

Good Morning,

Grateful if you could let me know if at least cases below could be added in MiCase and send to us please, Ms Gougeon is content with answers in the attachment as I already mentioned in previous email. If there was any amendment made in the response please **highlight** it the attachment.

- [MiCase - View Case 302083](#) – Alasdair Allan MSP – PO deadline (10/6) will be missed, final reply deadline (24/6) could be missed
- [MiCase - View Case 302664](#) – Kate Forbes MSP – PO deadline (14/6) possibly missed, final reply deadline (28/6) should be met

Kind Regards,

<redacted>

| Assistant Private Secretary

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands

<redacted>

| St. Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG

From: <redacted>

Sent: 20 June 2022 15:30

To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands <CabSecRAI@gov.scot>

Cc: <redacted>

>

Subject: RE: Letter from Annabelle Ewing MSP(Case Ref: AE3644)

Afternoon <redacted>

,

The attached are the responses that will be submitted through the MiCase system. I thought it would be helpful for the Cabinet Secretary to be sighted on these before our meeting on Wednesday to discuss the submission regarding the next steps for the Islands Bond (sent 8/6/22), as those discussions may have some impact on our messaging.

We wanted to highlight that we are aware of further enquiries from MSPs just to provide reassurance that these have been picked up amongst the high volume of correspondence relating to the Islands Bond. We are currently working on those responses, and will submit them through the MiCase system when they have been drafted.

I hope that helps.

<redacted>

|| Directorate for Agriculture and Rural Economy (D:ARE)

Mobile: <redacted>

Email <redacted>

From: <redacted> **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands

Sent: 20 June 2022 15:21

To: <redacted>

Cc: <redacted>

Subject: RE: Letter from Annabelle Ewing MSP(Case Ref: AE3644)

Hi <redacted>

Just to double check my understanding, you will still add what you will receive further enquiries from MSPs regarding the Islands Bond. Or the drafts provided will be exactly what will be in MiCase please?

Could you clarify please?

Kind Regards,

<redacted> | Assistant Private Secretary
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands

<redacted> | St. Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG

From: <redacted>

Sent: 20 June 2022 14:15

To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands <CabSecRAI@gov.scot>

Cc: <redacted>

Good afternoon **<redacted>**

,

Please find, attached, draft responses to five MiCases in question.

We also wished to highlight that we have received further enquiries from MSPs regarding the Islands Bond, and will ensure that these are responded to within deadlines.

Let me know if Ms Gougeon requires anything further at this stage.

Kind regards,

<redacted>
Directorate for Agriculture and Rural Economy (**D:ARE**)

Mobile: **<redacted>**

Email: **<redacted>**

From: **<redacted>** **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands

Sent: 20 June 2022 11:38

To: **<redacted>**

Cc: <redacted>

>

Subject: RE: Letter from Annabelle Ewing MSP(Case Ref: AE3644)

Good Morning **<redacted>**

,

Do you think we could have the drafts provided to us before the final reply deadline - earliest is 24/06 please.

Kind Regards,

<redacted>

| Assistant Private Secretary

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands

<redacted>

| St. Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG

From: <redacted>

On Behalf Of Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands
Sent: 07 June 2022 14:29

To: <redacted>

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands <CabSecRAI@gov.scot>

Cc: <redacted>

Subject: RE: Letter from Annabelle Ewing MSP(Case Ref: AE3644)

Hi <redacted>

,

Thank you for the dates provided which were helpful.

We need to meet the final reply deadline - earliest is 24/06 it should be doable.

Kind Regards,

<redacted>

| Assistant Private Secretary

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands

<redacted>

| St. Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG

From: <redacted>

▶

Sent: 07 June 2022 13:31

To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands <CabSecRAI@gov.scot>

Cc: <redacted>

Subject: RE: Letter from Annabelle Ewing MSP(Case Ref: AE3644)

Hi <redacted>,

If we were to hold off until after Ms Gougeon has had time to reflect on the submission (using Routine timeframe), then I would expect the impact to be as set out below:

- [MiCase - View Case 302083](#) – Alasdair Allan MSP – PO deadline (10/6) will be missed, final reply deadline (24/6) could be missed

- [MiCase - View Case 302664](#) – Kate Forbes MSP – PO deadline (14/6) possibly missed, final reply deadline (28/6) should be met
- [MiCase - View Case 302746](#) – Annabelle Ewing MSP - PO deadline (14/6) possibly missed, final reply deadline (28/6) should be met
- [MiCase - View Case 303856](#) – Gillian Martin MSP - PO deadline (17/6) possibly missed, final reply deadline (1/7) should be met
- [MiCase - View Case 304085](#) – James Dornan MSP - PO deadline (20/6) should be met, final reply deadline (4/7) should be met

Hope that helps,

<redacted>

Directorate for Agriculture and Rural Economy (**D:ARE**)

Mobile: <redacted>

Email: <redacted>

From: <redacted> **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands
Sent: 07 June 2022 13:10
To: <redacted>
Cc: <redacted>
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands <CabSecRAI@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Letter from Annabelle Ewing MSP(Case Ref: AE3644)

Good Afternoon <redacted>,

I agree with your point in the last paragraph. However could you please clarify which deadline will pass?

- The Final Reply Deadline
- The Private Office Deadline
- Or both?

Also, do you have a roughly idea of when we will have the final response please.

Kind Regards,

<redacted> | Assistant Private Secretary
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands

<redacted> | St. Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG

From: <redacted>
Sent: 07 June 2022 12:57
To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands <CabSecRAI@gov.scot>
Cc: <redacted>

Subject: RE: Letter from Annabelle Ewing MSP(Case Ref: AE3644)

Good afternoon <redacted>,

Thanks for flagging this. I have updated the case to show that it will be Ms Gougeon responding.

We have a number of MRs with a similar line of enquiry – how and when can constituents apply for the Islands Bond. Draft responses have been prepared. However, before we finalise them and send them through on the system, I would appreciate your thoughts on the below.

We will shortly be sending up a submission outlining the next steps for the Islands Bond following the conclusion of our engagement, and in light of the Spending Review. The Cabinet Secretary's response to the submission may substantively change the messaging around the Islands Bond. As such, we had considered holding off until Ms Gougeon has had time to respond to the Submission before issuing responses. This would ensure that the messaging is consistent with how the policy is being developed but it would mean that some responses may have to be issued after the MiCase deadline.

Many thanks,

<redacted> | Directorate for Agriculture and Rural Economy (D:ARE)

Mobile: <redacted>

Email<redacted>

From: <redacted>> **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands
Sent: 07 June 2022 11:21
To: <redacted>
Cc: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands <CabSecRAI@gov.scot>
Subject: FW: Letter from Annabelle Ewing MSP(Case Ref: AE3644)

Good Morning <redacted>,

It is not showing which Minister is to respond in MiCase, but grateful if an update could be provided regarding case 202200302746.

Kind Regards,

<redacted> | Assistant Private Secretary
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands

<redacted> | St. Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG

From: <redacted>

Sent: 07 June 2022 10:23

To: Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands <CabSecRAI@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Letter from Annabelle Ewing MSP(Case Ref: AE3644)

Good Morning,

Case Ref: AE3644

Just chasing up a response to the letter sent on 26 May 2022.

Kind regards,

<redacted>

<redacted>

Parliamentary Assistant

Office of Annabelle Ewing MSP

Scottish Parliament | Edinburgh | EH99 1SP

A: <redacted>Offices of the Deputy Presiding Officer

E: <redacted>

T: <redacted>

Please note I only work Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday Afternoons.

You can view Annabelle's privacy statement [here](#).

From: <redacted>

Sent: 26 May 2022 14:49

To: CabSecRAI@gov.scot

Subject: Letter from Annabelle Ewing MSP(Case Ref: AE3644)

Good Afternoon,

Case Ref: AE3644

Please find attached a letter from Annabelle Ewing MSP.

Kind regards,

<redacted>

Parliamentary Assistant

Office of Annabelle Ewing MSP

Scottish Parliament | Edinburgh | EH99 1SP

A: <redacted>Offices of the Deputy Presiding Officer

E: <redacted>

T: <redacted>

MINISTERIAL CABINET BRIEFING - 28 JUNE 2022

CABINET SECRETARY FOR RURAL AFFAIRS AND ISLANDS

DRAFT CONSULTATION PAPER ON SG COMMITMENTS TO GAELIC AND SCOTS AND SCOTTISH LANGUAGES BILL

Purpose

To provide the Cabinet Secretary with an overview of the background to the draft consultation paper, the rationale for this, and how the Scottish Government commitments to Gaelic and Scots will impact upon rural and island communities.

Attached:

- Annex A** Background to the Consultation
- Annex B** Top Lines and Lines to Take
- Annex C** National Islands Plan
- Annex D** Gaelic Medium Education (GME)
- Annex E** Creation of a Gàidhealtachd
- Annex F** Bòrd na Gàidhlig
- Annex G** Scots language
- Annex H** Ferries

ANNEX A

BACKGROUND TO THE CONSULTATION

<redacted>

ANNEX B

RURAL AND ISLANDS TOP LINES AND LINES TO TAKE

<redacted>

ANNEX C

ISLANDS ACT AND NATIONAL ISLANDS PLAN

<redacted>

Islands Bond

- The delivery of the Islands Bond is still being carefully considered in light of the strong feedback we have received from island residents, and within the new context of the current energy crisis and rising living costs which are being experienced by many islanders.
- There has been a clear and understandable desire from islanders who contributed to the Islands Bond consultation that those already resident in our island communities should receive support first before encouraging in-migration.
- Many of those who contributed also highlighted the importance of understanding the impact of in-migration on Gaelic speaking island communities.
- We will take this into account as our population policy work develops and further details will be announced later this summer as part of the response to the 12 week online consultation analysis report.

ANNEX D

GAELIC MEDIUM EDUCATION (GME)

<redacted>

ANNEX E

CREATION OF A GÀIDHEALTACHD

<redacted>

ANNEX F

BÒRD NA GÀIDHLIG

<redacted>

ANNEX G

SCOTS LANGUAGE

<redacted>

ANNEX H

FERRIES

<redacted>

CABINET SECRETARY FOR RURAL AFFAIRS AND ISLANDS
Island Briefing for Arran Visits

What	High Level Island Brief for COP26 Engagement Events on Arran
Where	Isle of Arran
When	Monday 01 November (all day tour)
Briefing contents	Annex A: Top Brief Annex B: Island Policy Annex C: Ferries Annex D: Tourism Annex E: Housing Annex F: Health and Social Care

TOP BRIEF

ANNEX A

<redacted>

ISLAND POLICY

ANNEX B

<redacted>

Population

- Population decline is a real threat to the sustainability of many, although not all, of Scotland's island communities. During the consultation for the National Islands Plan, depopulation was the top priority issue identified by respondents.
- That is why, through the National Islands Plan, we have committed to address population decline and ensure a healthy, balanced population profile across our islands.
- We remain committed to developing an action plan to support population growth in our rural and island communities experiencing depopulation.
- The Islands Team are working closely with colleagues leading on the Scottish Government's recently published Population Strategy, the COHI Officers Population Working Group, and key stakeholders to ensure that there is a coordinated approach to addressing our population challenges

Islands Bond

- The Scottish Government has committed to developing a £5 million Islands Bond fund, providing up to £50,000 each for up to 100 households by 2026, by providing

CABINET SECRETARY FOR RURAL AFFAIRS AND ISLANDS
Island Briefing for Arran Visits

financial support for island residents to remain in their community, or to encourage people to move there.

- Engagement with communities and island stakeholders will be crucial to developing a Bond that will deliver a meaningful, sustainable intervention reflecting island communities' aspirations and needs.
- We launched the Islands Bond consultation on 2 August and this closed on 24 October This public consultation ran alongside a detailed and targeted engagement exercise with local authorities and other key island stakeholders through a series of meetings and online focus groups.
- Engagement with local authorities and key stakeholders will continue throughout the winter 21/22 with a view to launching the Islands Bond in summer 2022.

<redacted>

FERRIES
<redacted>

ANNEX C

ECONOMIC RECOVERY
<redacted>

ANNEX D

TOURISM
<redacted>

ANNEX E

HOUSING
<redacted>

ANNEX F

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE
<redacted>

ANNEX G