



Leader: Steven Coutts

Town Hall

Lerwick, Shetland
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Mr Humza Yousaf MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care
The Scottish Government
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Our Ref: SC/IS
Your Ref:

Date: 21 June 2021

Dear Mr Yousaf MSP

I would like to firstly congratulate you on your appointment to the role of Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care. It is such an important remit and we are also very committed to support Health and Care improvement in our island community.

I write to you following a motion, copy overleaf, which the Deputy Leader and I brought to our full Council meeting. This motion was unanimously supported by our Council.

In your previous role as Islands Minister I was very pleased with your Leadership in bringing the Islands Act to fruition and the recognition of island uniqueness. With the rationale behind the Islands Act foremost in my mind I wish to seek to engage in advance of legislation being drafted on the National Care Service.

I believe there are significant differences in how care is provided in our community when compared to other mainland local authorities, and indeed other island councils. Hence the request for early engagement on the impact assessment and the desire to work collaboratively to improve health and care outcomes in Shetland.

I would be obliged if we could arrange a meeting at your earliest convenience to discuss the next steps in more detail.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Steven Coutts
Political Leader

Full Text of the Motion

“Notes the Scottish Government plans to begin legislating for a National Care Service by Autumn 2021.

Notes the significant investment the Shetland Islands Council and our partners have made in provision of care services in our community over decades, and the dedicated and committed staff delivering these crucial front line services.

To improve outcomes, reform is often necessary. However, a move towards a National Care Service should not be merely accepted as the only means of reform without proper consideration of its scope, resourcing and implications for local decision making.

Shetland’s model of care and strong partnership working has been developed and modified as local needs have changed, and is significantly different to many areas of Scotland.

The Council has previously voted to explore options for a greater degree of self-determination and are concerned that National Care Service proposal will diminish, rather than enhance, the community, fiscal and functional empowerment we seek in Shetland.

As a matter of priority, and in keeping with the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018, the Council writes to the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care seeking confirmation that a full Island Communities Impact Assessment will be undertaken before any legislation is drafted.”

Proposed by:

Councillor Steven Coutts, Leader

Councillor Emma Macdonald, Depute Leader