

BRIEFING FOR THE FIRST MINISTER

MEETING WITH ORKNEY ISLANDS COUNCIL, SHETLAND ISLANDS COUNCIL AND COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR – 15 AUGUST 2025

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Key message | The Scottish Government recognises the unique contribution and challenges of all our island communities. This meeting is a critical opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to meaningful partnership with Orkney, Shetland, and the Western Isles - exploring shared ambition on investment, local powers, and long-term resilience. While this meeting will focus on a proposal brought forward by the three councils, we remain committed to supporting all six island authorities and ensuring a fair and coherent approach to future policy and funding. |
| What | Meeting with Leaders and Chief Executives of Shetland Islands Council, Orkney Islands Council and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar. You are also having dinner with them on 14 August 2025. |
| Why | [Redacted] |
| Who | Emma Macdonald, Leader, Shetland Islands Council Maggie Sandison, Chief Executive, Shetland Islands Council Heather Woodbridge, Leader, Orkney Islands Council Oliver Reid, Chief Executive, Orkney Islands Council Paul Steele, Leader, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Malcolm Burr, Chief Executive, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar |
| Where | Diary Team will advise in covering email |
| When | Diary Team will advise in covering email |
| Likely themes | The meeting will focus largely on the following three areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Financial Sustainability and Investment• Addressing Immediate Island Needs• Future expansion of powers to realise potential |
| Media | This is a private meeting arranged at the request of the three council leadership teams [Redacted] |
| Supporting official | [Redacted] |
| Attached documents | Annex A (p3) – Summary of proposition from island councils Annex B (p4) – Financial sustainability and investment Annex C (p9) – Addressing immediate island need Annex D (p11) – Future expansion of powers |

Agenda and summary

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

SG policy position

The proposals from the councils align with several Scottish Government policies and strategic frameworks, including the National Islands Plan. Their emphasis on long-term sustainability, infrastructure investment, and stronger local control reflects shared ambitions and echoes the principles of the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018.

The two areas beyond current SG policy are the retention of ScotWind revenues and (subject to confirming specific proposals) greater devolution of revenue from Crown Estate assets. [Redacted]

Sensitivities

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

ANNEX A – SUMMARY OF PROPOSITION FROM ISLAND COUNCILS

Strategic Partnership

The Leaders and Chief Executives of Orkney, Shetland and the Western Isles councils have formed an informal **strategic alliance** to engage jointly with the Scottish Government on shared challenges and opportunities. They have proposed the **creation of a joint team** to explore a reimagined relationship between the Scottish Government and the three island authorities.

Key Requests ("Our Ask")

1. New Financial Arrangements:

- Proposal for tailored funding models that better reflect the distinct needs and circumstances of island communities.

2. Retention of ScotWind Revenues:

- Request for a share of revenues from offshore wind developments to be retained locally to support long-term investment and infrastructure and services.

3. Devolution of Crown Estate Scotland Assets:

- Call for greater local control over marine and coastal assets to enable more place-based economic development and community benefit.

4. Use of Additional Powers under the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018:

- Exploration of how existing legislative provisions could be used to devolve local additional powers to island councils to strengthen local governance.

Strategic Offer ("Our Offer")

[Redacted]:

- [Redacted],
- [Redacted]; and
- [Redacted]

Challenges Highlighted

The three councils point to long-standing structural challenges, including:

- Underinvestment in critical infrastructure such as housing, transport and workforce development.
- Demographic pressures, particularly population decline and ageing communities.
- Structural inequalities, including higher costs of living, fuel poverty, and fragile public services.

Purpose and Vision

[Redacted]

ANNEX B – FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY AND INVESTMENT (AGENDA ITEM ONE)

Financial Sustainability and Investment

1. [Redacted]
2. [Redacted].
3. [Redacted].

A. The Local Government Settlement – reflection of Island Costs

Approach to take in meeting

4. With regard to the Local Government settlement, officials recommend that you note that the funding formula is designed to distribute funding fairly among all councils and already accounts for factors affecting island communities, and that the Special Islands Needs Allowance already exists to reflect the additional costs of delivering services.
5. You may wish to emphasise that any examination of the local government settlement should consider the whole of it and be based on agreement across COSLA Leaders. Should a request to undertake such a review come from COSLA, the Scottish Government would do so.

Background and context

6. The Scottish local government funding formula is a complex, needs-based system designed to distribute revenue funding fairly among Scotland's 32 local authorities.
7. Within the General Revenue Grant (GRG) and General Capital Grant (GCG) funding is distributed based on indicators of need for specific services (e.g. education, social care, roads). Each service area (called a "line") has its own formula, using data such as: Population size and age profile; School pupil numbers; Road length; Deprivation indices; Sparsity and remoteness.
8. The funding formula is overseen by the Settlement and Distribution Group (SDG), a joint body of: Scottish Government officials, COSLA and Directors of Finance from local authorities.
9. Western Isles, Orkney and Shetland routinely have the highest expenditure per head. On average, General Fund Net Revenue Expenditure per capita in the three islands authorities (c. £4715) is more than double that in Aberdeen and Edinburgh (c. £2205)
10. The island councils are among those which have made the case in recent years to adjust the local government funding formula to better reflect their needs. All councils recognise that any adjustment is a zero-sum game leading to "losers" elsewhere in the settlement.
11. Issues affecting island communities are already taken into account within the evidence and methodology used to agree distribution. Minimum amounts are already reflected in a number of these methodologies and the three councils are the three most significant winners from these minimum amounts – all receiving around £1.5 million each in 2025-26 (the next most significant gain was c. £0.6m to Clackmannanshire).
12. The Special Islands Needs Allowance (SINA) is a further specific top-up within the settlement for island councils to reflect costs of delivering services. In 2023 COSLA agreed that the Improvement Service should lead work to review whether the SINA should be adjusted, that work has been ongoing but has largely concluded to date that the Allowance already reflects the issues.
13. Other models could include new revenue raising or retention models, including options with regards to ScotWind and marine assets. While the three councils have considered the Visitor

Levy, they have not progressed it at pace. At least two of the three councils have argued a preference for a levy on either cruise ships or a port of entry charge.

B. Retention of ScotWind Revenues and Crown Estate Net Revenues

Approach to take in meeting

14. [Redacted]:

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

15. With regard to **Crown Estate revenue**, officials recommend that you signal two areas where further work would be possible and where you are open to officials developing more detailed propositions for discussion:

- a. **Signal willingness to further explore a model for local control over future revenues** generated by actual development of sites based on the current approach to Crown Estate net revenue, whilst being clear that these are not anticipated to come onstream for potentially 8-10 years and, as such, this is a much longer-term proposal.

AND

- b. **Signal a desire to enhance the approach to the current model of Crown Estate net revenue funding for non-ScotWind revenue**, e.g. by providing multi-year certainty over a minimum level of funding alongside Spending Review, whilst noting that this would be subject to further discussion and due diligence.

16. With regard to **Crown Estate revenue**, officials also recommend that you also note that you are aware that **a paper is being developed in advance of COHI which will help inform specific asks on this issue** and that you look forward to seeing the outcome of this discussion.

Background and context

17. Currently, ScotWind revenues (£755 million from the first leasing round) are managed centrally by the Scottish Government to support largely capital spending.
18. To date the only revenue has been from the sale of leasing options and that revenue is one-off. In around 8-10 years, there is an expectation of annual revenue generation commencing from those areas where options have resulted in development of sites.
19. While the direction of revenue to local authorities is not explicitly ruled out, local retention is not part of current policy, and any change would likely require applying nationally – not only to the three councils.
20. The 2025-26 Budget allocated £20 million for Shetland Islands Council and Orkney Islands Council from the ScotWind funding to support inter-island connectivity. All councils benefited from a share of a £40 million capital fund for the climate emergency supported by ScotWind.
21. Local retention of revenues by island councils could offer a range of economic, social, and governance benefits. The three council Chief Executives hypothetically mooted a scenario whereby each of the three authorities was assured £10 million a year in either capital or revenue over the next 10 years (representing £300m or just under half of the revenue from the first leasing round) which they could invest in local infrastructure.
22. With long term certainty over revenue of this nature, councils could reinvest revenues in local priorities. Communities hosting major infrastructure (like offshore wind farms) would directly see the benefit from the value they help generate and those additional funds could help maintain essential services in remote areas where costs are higher. Multi-year certainty could allow councils to make borrowing decisions to further enhance the scale of investment.
23. There is some precedent for a share of revenue generated through development of inshore waters (within 12 nautical miles) being distributed to coastal councils. Currently this encompasses income from marine assets (e.g. aquaculture, moorings, cables) managed by Crown Estate Scotland within 12 nautical miles of the coast.
24. Revenues are allocated to local authorities based on a formula considering sea area and income generated in each council's waters. Payments are made in arrears and must be used for community benefit projects, although reporting and monitoring is fairly light and the definitions are broad giving significant flexibility to councils. In 2024–25, £12.4 million was distributed to coastal councils based on this mechanism.
25. [Redacted].
26. [Redacted].
27. [Redacted].

C. Community Benefit Funding

Approach to take in meeting

28. [Redacted].
29. [Redacted]
30. [Redacted].
31. [Redacted]:
 - [Redacted].
 - [Redacted]; and,
 - [Redacted].

Background and context

32. The Scottish Government encourages developers to offer community benefits as standard on all renewable energy projects. This ensures that communities directly share in the wealth of Scotland's natural resources.
33. These arrangements are voluntary and operate independently of the planning and consenting system. They are not compensation for project impacts.
34. While the power to mandate community benefits is reserved to the UK Government, Scotland has made good progress through a voluntary approach, underpinned by our Good Practice Principles (GPP).
35. Community benefits, guided by our GPPs, are an integral part of renewable energy developments in Scotland. They can help build positive relationships between renewable energy businesses and local communities and deliver lasting social and economic value.
36. The onshore GPPs set out a national community benefit benchmark equivalent to £5,000 per MW per year, index-linked for the operational lifetime of the development.
37. The offshore GPPs do not include a recommended national benchmark, recognising the sector is at an earlier stage of maturity and allowing flexibility to reflect local priorities.
38. The Scottish Government is reviewing the GPPs to ensure the guidance is fit for purpose and continues to deliver meaningful, community-led outcomes. A public consultation closed in April, and responses are being analysed.
39. The review will inform updated guidance that supports Scotland's just and fair transition to net zero, ensuring communities remain at the heart of the energy transition.
40. Island councils have raised that the current GPPs voluntary approach does not set out specific guidance for local authorities to administer community benefit funds from onshore and offshore developments.
41. The current GPPs encourage the renewables industry and communities to work together and ensure community benefits packages are set up in a way which will support and promote local decision making, accountability and generate a lasting legacy.
42. [Redacted].
43. The UK Government is also reviewing its approach, including seeking views on a potential mandatory community benefits scheme and mechanisms to mandate shared ownership offers. In response, the Scottish Government has called for:
 - A mandatory scheme for mature onshore technologies.
 - A GB-wide voluntary framework for emerging technologies.
 - Further consideration of the approach for offshore wind to ensure a level playing field across GB.

Sensitivities – GPP Consultation Insights - Not for Wider Sharing

44. [Redacted].
45. [Redacted]:
 - [Redacted]
 - [Redacted]
 - [Redacted]
46. Some individual respondents expressed concerns about involvement from developers, local authorities, the Scottish Government, development trusts, and community councils, emphasising that no single organisation should make decisions on behalf of communities.

47. Some respondents raised the risk of funds being used for statutory services, limiting support for community-driven initiatives.

Shared Ownership

48. [Redacted]

49. [Redacted].

50. [Redacted].

51. [Redacted].

ANNEX C – ADDRESSING IMMEDIATE ISLAND NEED (AGENDA ITEM TWO)

Cost of Living, Cost Crisis, Business Resilience and National Islands Plan

Approach to take in meeting

1. [Redacted]:
 [Redacted];
 [Redacted]
 [Redacted]
2. [Redacted].
3. [Redacted].
4. [Redacted].

Island Cost of Living

Background and context

5. [Redacted].
6. Evidence indicates that island households face significantly higher costs across multiple domains – ranging from energy and transport to delivery charges and construction. Research suggests that basic living expenses in Shetland can be 15 to 30% higher than urban Scotland averages, with some specific cost lines (e.g. fuel) reaching up to 60% higher.
7. The Scottish Government has already acknowledged the validity of these pressures through short-term measures like the ICCEF and the Islands Business Resilience Fund (IBRF).
8. The ICCEF builds on the foundation established by the Scottish Government to reflect the cost of service delivery and true cost of living challenges faced in island communities that are driving the budget deficit position of councils (up to £20m deficit).
9. [Redacted].
10. A pragmatic next step could be to invite SG officials and the three councils to jointly develop a clearer evidence base around cost drivers which could inform future policy and funding decisions. Shetland Islands Council have consistently called for a refresh of the Minimum Income Standard research last undertaken in 2013. Offering SG backing – potentially announced at the meeting and signalled in the National Islands Plan – would be well received locally. The proposal was previously discussed at COHI (late 2024), with an action assigned to HIE. However, there has been no visible progress, causing mounting frustration within SIC. Orkney Islands Council are also supportive, while other island councils are warm to the idea,

albeit less actively engaged. The research is relatively costly (approx. £175k), but SIC and OIC have indicated willingness to co-fund. Hjaltland Housing Association also expressed interest in contributing, and CnES could likely be brought on board.

The Islands Cost Crisis Emergency Fund

Background and context

11. The Islands Cost Crisis Emergency Fund was introduced in December 2022 as a short-term measure to address acute cost-of-living pressures in island communities. The fund was designed to support immediate local responses such as high fuel costs, fragile service delivery and affordability challenges unique to islands. It has since distributed £4.4 million, including a further £1 million allocation in 2025-26.
12. [Redacted].

The Islands Business Resilience Fund

Background and context

13. The Islands Cost Crisis Emergency Fund was introduced in December 2022 as a short-term measure to address acute cost-of-living pressures in island communities. The fund was designed to support immediate local responses such as high fuel costs, fragile service delivery and affordability challenges unique to islands. It has since distributed £4.4 million, including a further £1 million allocation in 2025-26.
14. [Redacted].

The National Islands Plan, the Islands Programme and Carbon Neutral Islands

Background and context

15. Although the Islands Cost Crisis Emergency Fund and the Islands Business Resilience Fund are time-limited interventions, they reflect the Scottish Government's broader commitment to supporting island communities through targeted, place-based approaches.
16. The National Islands Plan provides the long-term strategic framework for improving outcomes and the Islands Programme supports the delivery of the plan by investing in infrastructure and local resilience. The refreshed National Islands Plan will be published later this year.
17. The Carbon Neutral Islands project continues to showcase the role island communities can play in advancing Scotland's net zero ambitions through locally-led innovation.

ANNEX D – FUTURE EXPANSION OF POWERS (AGENDA ITEM THREE)

Ask from three island councils

1. Although financial sustainability and addressing immediate island need are the main priorities of the three councils, their letter also noted a desire to consider greater devolution of Crown Estate assets and use of the Additional Powers Provisions in the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018.

Approach to take in meeting

2. With regard to **greater devolution of Crown Estate Scotland assets**, officials recommend that you **recognise potential economic and community benefits and welcome further discussion** in this space, whilst highlighting need for legislative change and negotiation around funding mechanisms mean that this would be on a longer timeframe beyond the election.
3. With regard to **use of additional powers under the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018**, officials recommend that you **signal openness to specific and meaningful proposals and invite further dialogue**, including in relation to whether the new National Island Plan could include a commitment to support interested councils make use of this mechanism to support their vision of a reimagined partnership.

Greater devolution of Crown Estate Scotland assets

Background and context

4. The councils seek greater control over marine and coastal assets which may have several strategic, economic and community benefits.
5. Scottish Crown Estate assets, such as seabed, foreshore and rural estates, can be devolved to local authorities or communities through two main mechanisms: transfer and delegation. These options are supported by the Scottish Crown Estate Act 2019 and align with the broader goals of the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018. Transfer requires parliamentary scrutiny and approval.
6. All three councils have been involved in Local Asset Management Pilots, but none submitted any expression of interest when applications for transfer and delegation were open from 1 November 2021 to 2 May 2022.
7. Further devolution would not necessarily result in councils retaining all income generated from the asset(s) they propose managing – this revenue would continue to be returned to the Scottish Consolidated Fund. Legislative change or negotiation of a separate mechanism whereby monies due to go to the SCF were diverted to the islands would be required.

Use of additional powers under the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018

Background and context

8. The Islands Act provides a route for island councils to request greater control over specific functions currently held by Scottish Ministers. To date, no such requests have been received although the Scottish Government remains open to receiving formal requests.
9. Examples of potential additional powers might be: management of marine licensing or planning functions, control over transport services or infrastructure investment, administration of environmental or energy-related regulations and localised economic development activity.

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VISIT TO ACTION FOR CHILDREN – HILLCREST

15 August 2025

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Key message | The SG's continued commitment to supporting Children's Residential Care and delivering The Promise. |
| What | Visit |
| Why | The visit will reflect SG's commitment to deliver The Promise and to offer FM an opportunity to talk to staff and young people about the care they receive. |
| Who | Fiona Steel, Action for Children, National Director for Scotland |
| Where | Hillcrest House (a parking space will be reserved) |
| When | Friday, 15 August 10:30 –11:30 |
| Likely themes | Children's Residential Care The Promise Housing Continuing Care |
| Media | No media. |
| Supporting official | [Redacted] |
| Attached documents | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agenda and Summary• Annex A - Background on Hillcrest House and Residential Care• Annex B - Lines to Take• Annex C - Attendees |

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Briefing for Lewis – Friday, 15 August 2025

Agenda and summary

The visit offers the First Minister an opportunity to meet staff, and if appropriate, some young people who are looked after in a children’s home. It will reflect the First Minister’s commitment to delivering The Promise.

Officials met with staff from the service on Thursday, 7 August 2025 to discuss the upcoming visit.

Action for Children provided the following agenda:

| TIME | EVENT |
|-------------|---|
| 10.30-11.10 | <p>Upon arrival Fiona Steel will meet the First Minister and his team outside Hillcrest house.</p> <p>Fiona will escort FM and party into the Kitchen/dining area for refreshments.</p> <p>Fiona will provide an overview of Action for Children’s work. Key topics to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AfC work to keep and deliver the Promise. (Note in June SG published the Children (Care, Care Experience and Services Planning) (Scotland) Bill, and made the positive decision to include limiting the profits that can be made from children’s residential care). • Partnership working, early intervention and the need for wrap round support and choice of support provision for young people. • The issue of multiyear funding/ security of service provision. • Vital role the social care workforce provide to Scotland’s children and families. <p>Local staff will then have an opportunity to offer the FM an insight into providing residential care support noting their trauma informed approach and highlight the unique challenges and benefits faced by living in Na h-Eileanan Siar.</p> <p>The FM may have the opportunity to speak directly to a young person whom the service has supported or a family. This is dependent on the young person’s availability/view on the day.</p> |

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| 11.10 am | Fiona Steel happy to take part in Scottish Gov internal filming opportunity to camera. |
| 11.20 am | TBC FM wanted to meet [Redacted]. If not going ahead this time slot can be added to the wider staff discussion. |
| 11.30 am | FM departs |

For awareness - Wider Engagement with Action for Children later in the year

Parliament reception: Action for Children are hosting a Scottish Parliamentary reception on the 11th November 2025. The Minister for Children, Young People and the Promise will be in attendance.

First Minister future visit: The FM, as part of Action for Children’s 70th anniversary celebrations, will be visiting the GENR8 housing service in Easterhouse on 19 November 2025. The FM will meet staff and families supported by various services we deliver in the local area which includes Housing support, Employability, Youth justice work and Family support.

Background Briefing

Stakeholder Profile

Hillcrest is a 5-bedroom home run by Action for Children which supports a mix of care experienced young people and children and young people benefitting from short breaks. The aim of Eilean Siar Residential is to provide high quality residential care and support to vulnerable young people across the Outer Hebrides.

A range of services are available which include emergency admission, outreach care, residential assessment and long-term care. This ensures the individual needs of young people can be met in a flexible and responsive manner.

In 2023, the Care Inspectorate found that although staff treated young people with dignity and respect, there were issues with overstretched staff and child protection measures being inconsistently followed. In 2024, a further inspection took place and it was found that additional staff had been recruited which “improved young people's consistency of care, their relationships with staff and the atmosphere in the house”.

Since 1955 Action for Children have supported children and young people in Scotland, providing practical and emotional care, ensuring their voices are heard and campaigning to bring lasting improvements to their lives. Over 90 services were delivered last year across Scotland, with 850 staff supporting, caring for and loving more than 36,000 children, young people, and their families, across 30 of the country's 32 local authorities.

Children's Residential Care - Policy Background

As of 31 May 2025¹, there are 361 residential care services in Scotland. This is made up of 116 local authority providers, 173 private providers, 71 voluntary/not for profit providers, and 1 health board. There are approximately 1830 registered residential care setting places. The breakdown of number of registered places by type of provider is local authority 731, private 667, voluntary/not for profit 426, and health board 6.

¹ The information outlined in this paragraph is from The Care Inspectorate's quarterly statistics which include the number of registered care services in Scotland. The link to the most recent statistics, published on 22 January 2025, can be found here: [Quarterly Statistical Summary Report - Qtr 3 \(2024/25\)](#)

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The Scottish Government also publish Children's Social Work Statistics for Looked After Children each year. The latest report was published in April 2025 and can be found [here](#).

It shows that, as of 31st July 2024, there were 973 children living in residential care in Scotland (this number excludes residential schools and secure accommodation). This is around 8% of the total number of looked after children in Scotland.

The Children (Care, Care Experience and Services Planning) (Scotland) Bill

The Children (Care, Care Experience and Services Planning) (Scotland) Bill was introduced on 17 June 2025. The Bill has been introduced by the Scottish Government as part of the Government's commitment to implement the recommendations of the Independent Care Review (also referred to as "The Promise") by 2030. The Bill's provisions include introducing financial transparency and the ability to introduce a limit to excessive profit, subject to Parliament's agreement. These provisions will apply both to private and not-for-profit providers such as Action for Children.

Lines to Take

General Lines to Take in relation to Residential Childcare:

- The Scottish Government is committed to Keeping the Promise and to working with the children's residential childcare sector to ensure that together we implement its aspirations.
- We are grateful for the amazing work done by the residential childcare workforce in providing invaluable care and support to the children and young people they look after.
- We remain committed to supporting the residential care workforce to care for children in a way that is relational rather than procedural and process driven. It is essential that we prioritise the quality of relationships that children experience in residential settings. This includes supporting the workforce to ensure caring, relational and trauma-informed responses that meet children's individual needs.
- We want to support the residential care workforce.

YOUNG PEOPLE LEAVING CARE AND HOMELESSNESS

We remain committed to supporting care experienced young people to flourish as they move on from care into more independent adult living.

- Scotland has the strongest rights across the UK nations for people experiencing homelessness and the duties of local authorities and corporate parents to support young people leaving care are set out in legislation.
- Scotland abolished the priority need test in 2012. Anyone threatened with or experiencing homelessness is entitled to support from their local authority and temporary accommodation if they need it.

Whole Family Support

We want to ensure families can get the help they need, where and when they need it. That is why we are transforming holistic family support through the Whole Family Wellbeing Funding Programme.

- Since 2022, we have invested over £148m in a programme of activity to transform family support.
- This includes a multi-year commitment to funding Children's Services Planning Partnerships (CSPPs) to drive this work at the local level.
- Funding for CSPPs will increase from £32m to £38.1m in 2025-26 and 2026-27.

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- WFWF is a critical part of how we will #KeepthePromise – by shifting investment towards early intervention and prevention activities to prevent Scotland’s families reaching crisis.
- It is also an essential part of our mission to eradicate child poverty. By ensuring we provide holistic support that meets the needs of the whole family.
- This is the smarter, more compassionate way to help Scotland’s families, by putting their needs at the centre of our approach.

PROFIT

The Promise is clear that there is no place for profiting in how Scotland cares for its children and the Scottish Government supports this principle.

- This is why the ‘Promise’ Bill [The Children (Care, Care Experience and Services Planning) (Scotland) Bill] will through regulations require private and not-for-profit providers of residential childcare services to publish and provide financial and other relevant information pertaining to the operation of their services.
- In light of that information, the Bill will also enable Scottish Ministers to introduce regulations to limit the profits of the providers of those services, in accordance with a framework to be set out in those regulations, where such profits are considered by Ministers to be excessive.

Ensuring that provisions for children’s placements are maintained and protected is key to meeting the aims of The Promise.

- We are working to better understand the current landscape of residential childcare, including capacity and workforce challenges, with a view to informing a new strategic approach. Staff wellbeing and training are of vital importance in this area.
- Changes will focus on excessive profit rather than penalising services that provide high quality and invaluable care and support to children and young people.

We intend that these changes will be made collaboratively alongside engagement with those involved with and receiving residential care.

- A public consultation which will address both the increase in financial transparency and the profit limiting provisions will be run over Autumn 2025. The results of this consultation will be used to inform any future development of regulations and will be published before they are introduced.

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- There is currently ongoing work in both England and Wales that we will learn from, and it is important to ensure changes are made in consultation with services and the children and families that need them. It is for this reason that the profit limit will not be set until there has been a period of information gathering and consultation across the Children's Residential Care system.

MULTI-YEAR SPENDING


- **We are taking action to ensure fiscal sustainability.** Scotland faces a challenging fiscal environment. Without action, the gap between funding and spending will grow significantly. Our response is clear: we will take tough but necessary decisions to ensure every pound delivers maximum value. In this context, multi-year spending is not always possible.
- **We are focusing government spend on delivering our national priorities.** In December, we will publish a multi-year Scottish Spending Review and a new infrastructure investment pipeline. These will set out how we will prioritise spending and investment to deliver on our strategic goals.
 - **If you have concerns about the funding of any of your services, I would encourage you to raise any issues with the Local Authority to explore all options available.**

RESTRAINT

The Scottish Government is committed to The Promise and our shared objective of reducing the need to practice restraint and seclusion, which we are actively addressing through the Scottish Physical Restraint Action Group ('SPRAG').

- The use of restraint should always be a last resort in exceptional circumstances when it is the only practicable means of securing the welfare or safety of the child or another person.
- We are seeking to build up a national picture of learning to understand developing and innovative local approaches and identify the key values, principles and enabling environments that have been required to successfully embed trauma informed care approaches which have reduced the need for the use of restraint.

List of Attendees

| | | |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| <p>Fiona Steel</p> | <p>Fiona is a qualified social worker and has been the National Director Scotland for Action for Children since 2023. Fiona leads the subgroup on "community confidence subgroup" for the Age of Criminal Responsibility Advisory Group, which was established to assist Scottish ministers to review and evaluate the Age of Criminal Responsibility. Fiona also sits on many other working groups both advising Government and within the sector and is currently a board member with CCPS.</p> |  |
| <p>[Redacted]</p> | <p>[Redacted]</p> | |
| <p>[Redacted]</p> | <p>[Redacted]</p> | |
| <p>[Redacted]</p> | <p>[Redacted]</p> | |
| <p>[Redacted]</p> | <p>[Redacted]</p> | |
| <p>[Redacted]</p> | <p>[Redacted]</p> | |
| <p>[Redacted]</p> | <p>[Redacted]</p> | |

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BRIEFING FOR THE FIRST MINISTER

OUTER HEBRIDES CLIMATE ACTION HUB

15 August 2025

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Key message | The network of Community Climate Action Hubs, funded by the Scottish Government, supports communities to address local priorities through impactful and positive climate action. |
| What | Visit to Outer Hebrides Climate Hub to meet the hub’s staff and its members and understand the breadth of work the hub is delivering for the Outer Hebrides. Closing remarks at the event giving the First Minister’s impressions about the work of the hub and its community members that he will be briefed about at the meeting would be appreciated. |
| Why | The Outer Hebrides Climate Hub, run by Climate Hebrides CIC, is funded by the Scottish Government. The hub supports its membership by providing resources, seed funding, training, collaboration on projects, and networking opportunities to help mitigation and adaptation efforts in the Hebridean islands alongside broader awareness raising activities to improve understanding of and the need to tackle climate change. It is an opportunity to showcase the work of the hub and what it has achieved since it launched in June 2023. |
| Who | [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted] |
| Where | An Lanntair Restaurant, An Lanntair, Kenneth Street, Stornoway, HS1 2DS |
| When | Friday, 15 August 11:45-13:00 |
| Likely themes | Climate Change (Mitigation and Adaptation) |

FIRST MINISTER
Briefing for Lewis – Friday, 15 August 2025

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Media | To be confirmed by FM Communications Team. |
| Supporting official | [Redacted] |
| Attached documents | Agenda and Summary Annex B: Briefing (including potential closing remarks) Annex C: List of attendees Annex D: Biographies |

FIRST MINISTER
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Agenda and summary

Agenda

- 11:45 FM meets [Redacted], [Redacted] and [Redacted] outside An Lanntair (alongside electric vehicle which the hub is using for its EV roadshow to communities) and is escorted to An Lanntair restaurant.
- 11:50 Presentation on work of the Outer Hebrides Hub by [Redacted] .
- 12:05 FM meets hub member organisations. [Redacted] will lead the FM around the tables introducing members.
- 12:50 FM closing comments and photo opportunity.
- 13:00 FM departs.

Background

The visit to the Outer Hebrides Climate Action Hub is an excellent opportunity to demonstrate the Scottish Government's commitment to supporting community climate action and the (national) Climate Action Hubs Programme.

The visit will allow the First Minister to hear first-hand about the important work of the hub and learn how they are supporting collective action on climate change on the islands. It will also reinforce the important role of Scottish communities in our transition to low carbon, climate resilient living.

The visit will meet hub members, who are based from Vatersay to Ness, and whilst different in their remit and activities, share the common concern of climate change and its effects on the islands.

The Former Minister for Climate Action, Dr Allan, nominated the Climate Hebrides CIC for the 2025 Scottish Charity Awards, for which they were a finalist under the Climate Impact category. The FM met a number of the other Hub Managers in Glasgow on 19 February 2025 when he gave his speech on Climate Action.

Sensitivities:

Funding is provided on an annual basis. Funding for 2025/26 (up to £6m for our network of 24 hubs and a support package for its delivery) is in place but spending controls delayed approval. Funding over the long term is important to ensure hubs can support the development and delivery of long-term strategies for supporting a just transition to a net zero and to building climate resilience in their local communities, retain staff, and remain operational. A national evaluation of the programme is underway and this will help inform any future funding decisions.

Briefing

Outer Hebrides Climate Hub and Climate Hebrides CIC

The hub, run by Climate Hebrides CIC, is funded by the Scottish Government. It was formed to provide a platform for community organisations, businesses and individuals to collaborate on climate change action in the islands. The hub develops activities that enable action in the islands by its members – supporting each other.

Climate Hebrides CIC is accountable to the Community Planning Partnership's Climate Change Group and thus has strong links with the Council, NHS Western Isles and Community Land Outer Hebrides.

For 2025/26, the hub has a grant from the Scottish Government of up to £191,700 to support the work of the hub. This includes £50,000 to support the development of a regional adaptation partnership for the islands.

Key objectives for 2025/26 include: delivering a summer outreach programme to improve communities understanding of climate threats to the islands and raise the levels of public discourse on climate change; supporting community organisations and small businesses to reduce their emissions and energy use through building resilience via imaginative and verifiable actions; supporting development of funding applications to support decarbonisation efforts in the islands; delivering OH-COP2 to help identify programmes, policies and practical solutions and to support collaboration which will help deliver our net zero and climate ready goals.

In addition, the hub acts as a 'point of truth' on climate issues for residents. There is a need to raise the level of public discourse on climate change and its effects in our islands, overcoming the increasing threat to disinformation and misinformation campaigns on climate change and the energy transition necessary to tackle it.

Key achievements include:

- 230 members with representatives from all aspects of society, demographics, and types of groups.
- Delivered 41 events in 2024/25 reaching over 938 people (4% of population).
- Promoted a citizen science project helping build understanding and awareness of the current impact of climate change in the Outer Hebrides.
- Delivered free climate training sessions for communities including around nature based solutions, waste reduction, food and diet, travel and transport and home and energy

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- During 2024/25, funded 9 innovative, climate-friendly projects across the Western Isles through their Ideas Into Action fund including a Greenhouse gas audit for the main Arts/Cultural centre in the island chain, An Lanntair.
- Commissioned Social Enterprise Academy to deliver a series of sustainability training sessions for small businesses and social enterprises which supported 16 enterprises to develop their own sustainability plans
- Delivered 4 Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Audits for community land trusts and supported the training of the auditing team to establish verifiable carbon emission reduction projects in response. The hub is now supporting the land trusts as they develop strategic plans to reduce emissions.
- Held the first Outer Hebrides Climate Conference (OH-COP1), which marked a milestone in local climate efforts. 120 people participated in person and online and it featured inspiring presentations from young leaders and local/national experts. The outputs of this work informed the hub's 2025/26 strategy

Closing Remarks

- I'm delighted to hear first-hand how the Climate Hub is helping communities across the Outer Hebrides support climate action and empower communities to actively participate in our transition to a net zero and climate ready nation.
- I'm impressed by how much the hub has delivered since launching in June 2023 and hearing how your collective efforts are having an impact including (to name but a few):
 - Developing and hosting the Gaidhlig Convention on Climate Change, the world's first major Gaelic language community climate event, held in November 2023.
 - Holding the first Outer Hebrides Climate Conference (OH-COP1) last September, which brought together over 115 participants, and concluded with a call for urgent collective action and shaped the future focus for the hub; I look forward to hearing the conclusions from OH-COP2 taking place during Scotland's Climate Week 2025.
 - Supporting greenhouse gas audits of a number of land trusts helping them start a process of determining emission reduction priorities and helping to put these into practice.
 - Supporting Boshan CIC, who upcycle second hand toys, to purchase a plastic testing kit and assisting them to gain further funding to purchase a shredding machine to process plastic waste ultimately diverting waste from landfill.
- Hearing about all of your good work today has been inspiring.
- Climate change is on our doorsteps and driving more extreme weather in Scotland and it is essential that, as a nation, we are adapting to these already present effects of climate change.
- This is particularly the case in the Outer Hebrides and I am grateful for all the efforts the hub and its members are making to tackle climate change and build resilience for the future.

Biographies of attendees

| | |
|------------|------------|
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] |
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] |
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] |
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] |

FIRST MINISTER
Briefing for Lewis – Friday, 15 August 2025

BRIEFING FOR THE FIRST MINISTER

VISIT TO STORNOWAY PORT AUTHORITY

15 August 2025

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Key message | The Scottish Government recognises that Scotland benefits from a diverse and successful maritime sector that contributes significantly to the national, regional and local economies in which it operates. |
| What | Visit Stornoway Port Authority, including a tour of the Deep Water Terminal. |
| Why | Maintain a positive connection with the ports industry; and demonstrate the Scottish Government's commitment to the rural economy. |
| Who | Alex Macleod, CEO Stornoway Port |
| Where | Stornoway Port Authority |
| When | Friday, 15 August 13.30 - 14.45 |
| Likely themes | Phase 2 of Deep Water development Lifeline Ferry provision Cruise Tourism |
| Media | To be confirmed by FM Communications Team. |
| Supporting official | [Redacted] |
| Attached documents | Annex A: Agenda and summary Annex B: Lines Annex C: Background on Stornoway Port Annex D: Ferries Annex E: Biographies |

Agenda and summary

Agenda

13.30 - Arrive at Amity House office, Stornoway Port

25 minutes presentation and update from Alex Macleod.

13.55 - Drive to Deep Water Terminal – Alex Macleod can drive FM to the Deep Water Terminal.

On route to the Deep Water Terminal, Alex will stop at the Cromwell St Quay cruise visitor hub for a short photo opportunity with FM at the new gate and roundhouse ship art installation. Alex will also show the Arnish road project on the way into the Deep Water Terminal.

At Deep Water Terminal, they will ask the cruise ship Captain comes down for an introduction, and they can get some photos on the pier side. The cruise ship in on Friday is the Seabourn Sojourn. Seabourn Sojourn is a luxury cruise ship operated by Seabourn Cruise Line. The ship was launched in 2010 and accommodates 450 guests in 225 spacious suites.

At the Terminal, it will be easier to explain to the FM where the Linkspan will go and where Phase 2 will be located.

14.45 - Meeting ends.

Summary

- Stornoway Port is the major port facility in the Outer Hebrides supporting a broad range of industries from ferries and cruise to aquaculture. As a Trust Port, Stornoway Port Authority has primarily grown the facilities through re-investment of its own earnings and with support from public grant funding, this has included the most recent major development of Stornoway Deep Water Terminal.

- The Scottish Government, along with Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar – Western Isles Council (CnES), is a key partner supporting the Stornoway Deep Water Terminal project, with SG providing £33.7m [Redacted]

- [Redacted]

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Briefing for Lewis – Friday, 15 August 2025

- [Redacted]

- [Redacted]

- [Redacted]

- [Redacted]

Sensitivities

- [Redacted].

Lines to take

Phase 2 development

- The completion of Stornoway Deep Water Terminal is a significant development project for the Port, and I understand you are progressing plans for Phase 2. What are the key next steps, including any challenges you are dealing with?
- How are conversations progressing with industry regarding funding for Phase 2?
- Investment in offshore wind has significant potential to support economic growth and employment opportunities. How does Stornoway Port Authority intend to maximise job creation and GVA potential through the plans for expansion?

Ports

- We recognise that a diverse and successful ports and shipping sector contributes significantly to the national, regional and local economies in which it operates.
- Ports and harbours are crucial gateways to Scotland and Scottish Ministers continue to support a market-driven approach to ports policy and recognise the contributions of port and shipping operators to the economy of Scotland.
- Ports in Scotland are mostly independent statutory bodies – each governed by their own local legislation – and are deemed commercial entities. Therefore, the Scottish Government has no say in the day-to-day running of their business, nor can it dictate business decisions made by a company on how to best utilise its resources. These are matters for the port authority.

Ferries procurement

- Shipbuilding is a competitive global market and any direct award of a public contract must comply with procurement rules and be capable of withstanding legal challenge.
- Ministers will consider future vessel contracts, including those mentioned, from public agencies at an appropriate time and on a case-by-case basis to determine whether any might legally be open to direct award. Under public procurement and subsidy control rules, direct award of public contracts is only possible in strictly limited circumstances.

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- We are currently considering the business case and next steps in relation to the Lord of the Isles replacement and will confirm these in due course.

SSEN and Renewables Development Freight Requirements

- Scottish Ministers are fully supportive of the interconnector and future renewables projects in the Western Isles and the economic and environmental benefits these will bring – but it is important that developers play their part in seeking and funding solutions.
- We note the work undertaken by consultants working for Stornoway Port Authority in relation to possible significant uplift in freight requirements on the Ullapool to Stornoway route but are awaiting more granular detail from SSEN on its logistics plans.
- Transport Scotland continue to press for this and are also looking at the national picture in supporting renewables and mitigating impacts during construction.

Stornoway Passenger Access System

- I note that the Passenger Access System is out of service and has been for some time. I welcome an update from Stornoway Port Authority on next steps to deliver a replacement.

Long term Port Contract with Calmac

- Scottish Ministers highly value the contribution that Stornoway Port Authority has made to supporting lifeline services – and in parallel the benefit this has brought to the port business with Calmac as a key customer. There are certainly no plans to reduce or divert the service from the current route.

Cruise Ship Levy Consultation

- SG consulted on a potential cruise ship levy earlier this year, which closed end May. This included a question on a potential point of entry levy.
- The consultation included detailed operational questions such the basis of the levy (size of ship, passenger numbers etc) and how it could be administered.
- SG appointed external consultants to undertake the analysis of responses received. The report will be provided shortly, and SG will need to consider analysis and provide advice to Ministers on key findings.

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- In parallel, SG officials are holding sessions with ports and cruise sector representatives to explore alternatives to a cruise ship levy which could help mitigate local impacts of cruise ship visits.
- The aim is to provide further advice to Ministers towards the end of the calendar year on possible next steps on Cruise Ship Levy, including timings for any legislation, subject to their decisions.

Ports and infrastructure for offshore wind development activity

- Ports have a critical role to play in supporting the growth of Scotland's offshore wind sector and accelerating investment in essential infrastructure, manufacturing and fabrication.
- We recognise that investment is key, and private investment will be central for the development of our ports and infrastructure.
- We are taking a commercial first approach to deliver up to £500m investment over 5 years to anchor the offshore wind supply chain in Scotland, which is expected to leverage additional private investment of £1.5bn in ports, manufacturing and fabrication facilities.
- We will continue to work collaboratively with the UK Government to ensure alignment on investment priorities to support the offshore wind supply chain in Scotland and bring forward targeted capital investment in our world-leading ports facilities.

Background on Stornoway Port

Stornoway Port Authority

- Stornoway Port is the main port of the Outer Hebrides and supports a range of commercial sectors and lifeline ferry services.
- The Port is capable of supporting offshore wind manufacturing and O&M activities and has the potential for marshalling and assembly work with further development.
- The completion of the Stornoway Deep-Water Terminal in 2024 provides multi-purpose facilities, including two berths suitable for the offshore wind sector (below 10m Chart Datum), and Stornoway Port Authority intends to proceed with Phase 2 of the development.
- Stornoway Port Authority is engaged with public sector delivery partners on funding for Phase 2 of the project.

Offshore Wind Project Connections

- [Redacted].

Stornoway Port Phase 2 – [Redacted]

- [Redacted].
- [Redacted].
- [Redacted].
- [Redacted].
- [Redacted]:
 - [Redacted].

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- [Redacted].
- [Redacted].
- [Redacted].

[Redacted]

- [Redacted].
- [Redacted].
- [Redacted].
- [Redacted].
- [Redacted].

[Redacted]

- [Redacted].
- [Redacted].
- [Redacted].
- [Redacted].
- [Redacted].
- [Redacted].
- [Redacted].

Arnish Yard

- Arnish Yard, across the bay from Stornoway, is a 38-hectare development site. It is owned and operated by Navantia who acquired the site from Harland and Wolff in December 2024.
- The Arnish Yard offers covered and open assembly areas, a fabrication area, and storage areas.
- Stornoway Port Authority and Harland and Wolff have invested jointly in the site.

Ferries

SSEN and Renewables Development Freight Requirements

- We note the work undertaken by consultants working for Stornoway Port Authority in relation to possible significant uplift in freight requirements on the Ullapool to Stornoway route but are awaiting more granular detail from SSEN on its logistics plans.
- Transport Scotland continue to press for this and are also looking at the national picture in supporting renewables and mitigating impacts during construction.
- Where possible we would expect developers and others in the logistics chain - including SPA – to maximise opportunities to ship materials directly to the port itself.
- There are challenges beyond ferry capacity in relation to any uplift in ferry demand, including the impact on local and trunk road network and marshalling restrictions in Ullapool.
- It is important that developers who are going to benefit significantly from these projects contribute fairly to the cost -of any additional provision or take the lead in providing their own solutions.
- CMAL and Calmac are actively engaged in work to consider possible ferry based solutions - and CNES are also supporting this work as the planning authority.
- A key challenge is the availability of a suitable vessel that would be able to provide these services (regardless of who is delivering this).
- There may be some provision from 2029 as new freight tonnage is delivered to serve the Northern Isles services, potentially freeing up one of the existing freight vessels to support services to Stornoway.
- Ministers are aware there have been local calls to utilise the MV Isle of Lewis for this work but CMAL have flagged concerns over the condition and reliability of the vessel - and it has limited capacity. There have also been calls from the community on Barra for the vessel to be retained on a longer basis on their route.

Stornoway Passenger Access System

- We welcome the work undertaken by Stornoway Port Authority and Calmac in putting in place an interim solution to provide access to the vessel over the car deck and arrangements to transfer luggage.
- [Redacted].
- It would be helpful to understand in the ports view why the existing system (which is the same as that used in Brodick and Ullapool) has failed and is

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irreparable in this instance. Is there any redress to the manufacturer and was an adequate maintenance regime in place?

- Stornoway Port Authority should continue to work with Calmac and customers on interim arrangements and confirm the longer term plans as soon as possible.



Long term Port Contract with Calmac

- I note this was raised in a recent discussion with the Deputy First Minister - potentially to help underpin investment. It would be helpful for Stornoway Port Authority to outline any concerns or proposals that it has to Transport Scotland in this regard.
- As part of any consideration, it would be important to consider the substantial level of dues currently charged to Calmac to make sure these remain proportionate and reasonable under the terms of the Harbours Act and the ports local legislation.

Transport Needs Assessments for Outer Hebrides communities

- As part of the Islands Connectivity Plan, community needs assessments covering the Outer Hebrides will be undertaken, with work at an early stage. As a first step, users surveys of the Sound of Harris and Sound of Barra ferry services began on Monday 11 August and will run for 4 weeks. These 2 routes have been prioritised to inform the business cases for vessel replacements as part of Phase 2 of the Small Vessel Replacement Programme.

Annex E – Biographies

| | |
|---|--|
|  | <p>Alex Macleod – Chief Executive of the Board of Stornoway Port</p> <p>Brought up in the village of Knock, Mr MacLeod’s family has had a long connection with the Port. His great-grandfather owned and skippered the sailing vessel Muirneag, one of the most famous fishing vessels of its time. Following a period of time working in Glasgow with the civil engineering company Lilley Construction, Mr MacLeod worked with Fletcher Construction in Auckland, New Zealand, which included working on the America’s Cup viaduct basin facilities. Following his return from New Zealand, he has worked for a long-established civil engineering company during which time he worked on a number of projects around Stornoway harbour. He commenced employment with Stornoway Port as Chief Executive in July 2015.</p> |
|  | <p>Margaret Ann Macleod - Chair of the Board of Stornoway Port</p> <p>Margaret Ann joined the Stornoway Port in November 2016 and has a business background in textile manufacturing, international sales and rural economic development. Currently employed as the Sales Director for Harris Tweed Hebrides, Margaret Ann has previously worked at a senior level for a number of companies, including; Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Johnstons of Elgin, RGU and Arcadia plc.</p> <p>Born and brought up in Carloway on the Isle of Lewis, Margaret Ann is a native Gaelic speaker, a working mother, and an active board member for a number of community organisations on the island, including her current role as Chair of HI-Scot Credit Union. Margaret Ann was co-opted to the Board in November 2016.</p> |

BRIEFING FOR THE FIRST MINISTER

AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT SITE VISIT – HEBRIDEAN HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

15 August 2025

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Key message | We remain focused on our target of delivering 110,000 affordable homes by 2032, with at least 70% for social rent, and a minimum 10% of which will be delivered in rural and island communities. |
| What | Visit affordable housing development delivered by Hebridean Housing Partnership (HHP). |
| Why | Opportunity to visit new housing development that is contributing homes towards 110,000 affordable housing target |
| Who | [Redacted] |
| Where | Blackwater Housing Development, Newmarket, Isle of Lewis, HS2 0EE |
| When | Friday, 15 August 15:00 – 15:45 |
| Likely themes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges with Affordable Housing Supply Delivery • Concerns of potential Singla Authority Model • SSEN Worker Housing / Accommodation |
| Media | To be confirmed by FM Communications Team. |
| Supporting official | [Redacted] |
| Attached documents | <p>Overview of what is included in wider briefing annexes.</p> <p>Annex A: Agenda and summary</p> <p>Annex B: Lines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single Island Authority • SSEN Worker Housing / Accommodation • Isle of Harris, Leverburgh Affordable Housing Development • Western Isles Affordable Housing Supply Programme <p>Annex C: Background and attendees</p> |

Agenda and summary

- The visit offers FM an opportunity to meet HHP staff, contractors, and speak with current tenants / residents of these new affordable homes.

- [Redacted]

Lines

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Lines to take

- The relationship between local government and local health services has been the focal point of discussions. However, we know there is interest in the relationship with other key services.
- Models will be developed in close consultation with all stakeholders

Single Island Authority Model

PfG 2025-26 - Reforming services for the future (PSR)
Preferred models for Single Authority Models in Argyll and Bute, Orkney and Western Isles that have been developed jointly by local government and health and enable a shift towards prevention.
PSR Strategy Published June 2025
Preferred models for Single Authority Models in Argyll and Bute, Orkney and Western Isles that have been developed jointly by local government and health and enable a shift towards prevention. This will include a plan and timeline for implementation, with at least one area transitioning to shadow arrangements

- Ministers believe Single Authority type models demonstrate strong potential to improve outcomes for people and make best use of available resources in some settings.
- We welcome the proposals from Orkney Islands, Western Isles and Argyll and Bute Councils for a move towards SA type models in each of their individual geographies.
- The outline proposals reflect the specific challenges and opportunities associated with these different rural and islands settings
- The next step will be to explore with all relevant partners how streamlined and strengthened local governance arrangements can support deeper service integration, a decisive shift towards prevention & increased community empowerment.
- SA models involve enhanced local governance arrangements and align with the principles of the Verity House Agreement.
- SA models align with shared accountability arrangements for the National Care Service and would also maintain appropriate Ministerial powers of direction.

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- At present, the relationship between local government and local health services is the focal point of discussions. However, we know there is interest in the relationship with other key services.
- Models will be developed in close consultation with all stakeholders
- The type of alternative governance arrangements set out in SA models will not require changes to staff terms and conditions or career pathways.
- The views of local communities will be vital and we will adopt a human rights based approach to policy development.
- At present, we are considering the potential of SA models in three authority areas, but this work will generate valuable learning for other geographies

SSE/Renewables Key Worker Housing

There are a number of new renewable energy projects planned for the Outer Hebrides and the Isle of Lewis in particular. These include three terrestrial windfarm projects and potentially three offshore wind projects. These projects will be connected to the national grid through a major electricity transmission network enhancement.

HHP have been working with the Comhairle and other partners to deliver accommodation for the increased workforce which will be on Lewis to deliver the new infrastructure.

HHP have yet to sign formal agreements, but the position is that SSEN will provide funding to build a minimum of 50 new homes which they will use for a period of up to 5 years. The homes will be built to the same standards as current HHP new homes. At the end of their lease the houses will revert back to HHP and will have the opportunity to Market them to first time buyers (HHP can apply rural housing burden or golden share to keep them as affordable in perpetuity), or use them for key worker accommodation for mid-market rent or use them for social housing

HHP have meetings with the Comhairle and Tighean Innse Gall (TIG – a housing and energy efficiency organisation providing services in the outer Hebrides) regularly to ensure they are all working together and not duplicating effort. It is particularly important how the return of the houses are managed so the market is not flooded and values of properties impacted

Isle of Harris / Leverburgh Affordable Housing Development

HHP are currently on site with a 12-house development in Leverburgh. The first phase of 6 houses has been completed, and the remaining houses are due to be handed over on 28 October 2025.

This development was initially planned for 6 houses in line with CNES SHIP with a potential second phase of 6 houses. However, following representations from the community on the need for housing to assist businesses and to sustain the community it was agreed to develop all 12 as one project.

The agreement was subject to the Comhairle underwriting any long-term voids that might arise if we were unable to fill the new homes or any other homes in Leverburgh were left vacant through transfer to the new homes. Development is always a balance between providing for the future without jeopardising the long-term security of the current tenants.

Tarbert, Scott Road

HHP are currently carrying out a Pre Application Consultation process (PAC) with a view to submitting a full planning application this year for 48 houses.

The CNES SHIP contains a development of 24 houses. The site has capacity for 48 houses but the nature of the site would need rock blasting to develop it fully which could not be done after the first 24 were built. Consequently, HHP have determined to seek to platform the site for a second phase at this stage and to seek planning for the whole development.

The development site is owned by the North Harris Trust and is in crofting tenure. HHP have concluded missives with the Trust and understand they are preparing a resumption application.

While the majority of crofting shareholders are supportive, the decrofting process remains a risk. Feedback from the community so far has been largely positive and they support the need for new housing. Concerns have been mainly from the neighbouring properties and there have also been issues raised regarding the number of properties being proposed and the additional traffic being generated.

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Harris Development Ltd

Harris Development Ltd are seeking to progress plans for accommodation for workers to meet the needs of local businesses. These would primarily be seasonal. However, plans for two sites they had identified were opposed by crofting shareholders following some local opposition and the North Harris Trust subsequently withdrew their support for the project.

Other Sites

HHP continue to work with CNES and the Community Landowners to identify and assess other sites.

Western Isles Affordable Housing Supply Programme

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Blackwater Ph 2 & 3 | Ph 2 - 25 houses due for handover end of August |
| Leverburgh | Ph 2 - due to complete October 2025 |
| Barra Cleit Road - Phase 2 | Due to complete March 2026 |
| Scott Road | Planning application submission aimed for September for decision by Planning Board in December 2025. ALH land purchased. Looking at procurement options for the site due to its complexity. |
| Melbost West | Planning application submitted for full site – decision by Planning Board 5 th October 2025 |
| Grimsay, North Uist | Land agreements being put in place & planning application now submitted |
| Low Flyer Ph 2 - Uist | To tender with Grimsay, North Uist |
| Rural Lewis - Gravir | Awaiting landowner progression |

Funding for Net Zero

HHP have an application in which is being considered and if successful this will take the number of heat pumps installed in HHP Properties to over 90% of our Off-gas stock. The remaining properties would be those tenants who have previously refused the change of heating.

Background and attendees

Hebridean Housing Partnership (HHP)

In 2006 Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (CnES) became one of the five Scottish Local Authorities to transfer its housing stock to a Registered Social Landlord (RSL). Hebridean Housing Partnership (HHP) was created following the merger of 5 locally based Housing Associations and took control of over 2,000 homes.

Attendees

The following will be present at the Blackwater site

| Organisation | Name | Role |
|--------------|------------|------------|
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] | [Redacted] |
| | [Redacted] | [Redacted] |
| | [Redacted] | [Redacted] |
| | [Redacted] | [Redacted] |
| [Redacted] | [Redacted] | [Redacted] |

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[Redacted]
[Redacted]

[Redacted]
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[Redacted]

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BRIEFING FOR THE FIRST MINISTER

BABY BOX VISIT

15 August 2025

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Key message | <p>Delighted to celebrate the 8th Anniversary of Scotland’s Baby Box being delivered to families across Scotland – the only universal Baby Box scheme in the UK.</p> <p>Over 350,000 Baby Boxes have been delivered to parents since the programme started in 2017, giving our children the best start in life. Scotland’s Baby Box provides essential items needed in the first six months of a child’s life, worth around £400.</p> <p>Our aim is to help all parents in these momentous first six months of a baby’s life.</p> |
| What | <p>First Minister to deliver a Baby Box to first time expectant mother, [Redacted] and [Redacted], in the Maternity Unit at Western Isles Hospital and chat with her about the benefits of the Baby Box. [Redacted] and [Redacted], [Redacted] will also be in attendance to chat about her views of the Baby Box programme.</p> |
| Why | <p>Part of the First Ministers’ tour of Lewis 14-15th August. 15th August will be the 8th anniversary of the commencement of the delivery of Scotland’s first Baby Boxes. We will also have distributed over 350,000 Baby Boxes since the programme began in 2017.</p> |
| Who | <p>[Redacted] and [Redacted] who will receive the Baby Box from FM. [Redacted] [Redacted]</p> |
| Where | <p>Maternity unit Western Isles Hospital Macaulay Rd, Stornoway, HS1 2AF</p> |
| When | <p>Friday 15 August 1615-1700</p> |
| Likely themes | <p>Parental Support and giving children the best start in life</p> |
| Media | <p>To be confirmed by FM Communications Team.</p> |

FIRST MINISTER
Briefing for Lewis – Friday, 15 August 2025

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Supporting official | [Redacted] |
| Attached documents | Annex A – Summary, Agenda & Background Annex B – Baby Box Top Lines Annex C - Biographies |

Summary

The First Minister will arrive at Western Isles Hospital and will be met by Gordon Jamieson, Chief Executive, Western Isles Hospital and escorted to the Maternity Unit's Parent's Craft Room where you will meet [Redacted] and [Redacted] and hand deliver their baby box to them. [Redacted].

The First Minister will then have an opportunity to speak to [Redacted] about their impending arrival, to open and unpack the Baby Box. The First Minister will also have an opportunity to discuss with [Redacted] and [Redacted] the impact of the Baby Box on other parents.

Comms and Special Advisors feel this presents a good media opportunity to celebrate the 8th anniversary of Scotland's first Baby Boxed being delivered to families across Scotland, the only universal scheme of its kind in the UK and that over 350,000 baby boxes have been delivered since the programme commenced.

Agenda

Spaces will be coned off across from the main entrance of the Main Hospital (Macaulay Rd, Stornoway HS1 2AF). Maternity is upstairs on level 2 and is accessible via a lift or nearby stairs. FM will be directed to the parent craft room for baby box unpacking with the parents. No problem for filming / photo's, WI Hospital will gather consent of participants

4.15pm – Arrive at Maternity Unit, Western Isles Hospital – FM will meet [Redacted] and [Redacted], [Redacted] and [Redacted] and deliver the Box to the expectant parent. Photo opportunity.

4.20pm – FM will have the opportunity to unpack the Baby Box and chat with [Redacted] and [Redacted] and [Redacted] and [Redacted] about the benefits of the Baby Box.

5pm – FM Departs

Background

The Scottish Government's universal Baby Box programme, the only one in the UK, opened for registration on 15 June 2017. Since the start of the programme, 350,000 Baby Boxes have been delivered across Scotland with 1,281 Baby Boxes being delivered to families in NHS Western Isles.

The Scottish Government is providing £7.940 million for the delivery of Scotland's universal Baby Box programme in 2025/26, offering all parents of a newborn baby in Scotland essential items for the first 6 months of a baby's life worth around £400.

The Baby Box also provides key health and financial advice and support to parents and carers through key information leaflets and directs parents to use the Scottish Government's

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ParentClub website for further advice, support and guidance on a range of issues throughout their parenting journey.

Current uptake of the Baby Box is 89% of all parents with newborn babies registering for a box, around 41,000 parents annually.

We keep the contents of the Baby Box under review to ensure they are meeting the needs of parents in Scotland by engaging with health and third sector partners. Our most recent review in January 2024 highlighted that on the whole, most families are delighted with the box and its contents and that they found the items very useful.

Those families who have not signed up for a baby box most commonly gave a reason that they felt they should not apply for it if their income enabled them to buy all the items they need for their baby themselves or because they still have the Baby Box from their first child and still have all the necessary items.

2025/26 Programme for Government includes a commitment to enhance the contents of the Baby Box by March 2026, building on feedback from parents and frontline practitioners working with families, which will strengthen support for early child development and to mitigate the impact of poverty on babies. We will shortly be engaging with health practitioners to seek their views on the current Baby Box and whether any improvements to it are recommended.

The Baby Box includes items which support breastfeeding, such as breast pads and a leaflet with top tips on breastfeeding and how to access support. Among other items the Baby Box contains 2 baby books, a carrier sling, underarm thermometer, bath & room thermometer, play mat, around 15 items of clothes for age 0 – 6 months, a changing mat, a redeemable voucher for a reusable nappy and liners and many other useful items for mother and baby.

Baby Box – Top lines

Scotland’s Baby Box strongly signals our determination that every child, regardless of their circumstances, should get the best start in life.

- Scotland’s Baby Box is offered to all parents of new-born babies and ensures that every family with a new-born has access to essential items needed in the first six months of a child’s life as well as a safe space to sleep worth around £400, giving a substantial saving for families during a Cost of Living Crisis.
- The Baby Box provides health professionals with material to introduce expectant parents to a wide range of information and advice aimed at improving health and wellbeing outcomes and promoting positive parenting.
- The Baby Box signposts to the Scottish Government ParentClub website which provides advice to parents for their child from 0 – 18 years.
- Information contained in each Baby Box helps to tackle deprivation, improve health and support parents during the first few months of their child’s life.
- The Baby Box balances practical items with items designed to have a positive impact on parent-child interaction. Various items of the Baby Box are designed to help new parents bond with their baby, create a love for reading which helps in early childhood development.
- We will continue to evaluate how Scotland’s Baby Box is helping families and continue to monitor how it can be improved.

Biographies

GORDON JAMIESON

Gordon Jamieson has been **Chief Executive of NHS Western Isles** since December 2008. Gordon first came to the Western Isles in September 2006 as part of a Ministerial Support Team. He then joined NHS Western Isles in February 2008 as Nurse Director / Chief Operating Officer. His previous post was a Nurse Director / Director of Patient Safety at NHS Dumfries and Galloway.

Gordon was born and brought up in Castle Douglas in Dumfries and Galloway. He has significant experience of working in the NHS, including almost 20 years at Executive Board level.

[Redacted]

[Redacted].

[Redacted]

[Redacted].

[Redacted].

[Redacted].

[Redacted].

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Briefing for North and South Uist – Saturday, 16 August 2025

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| Programme for the day | Page Number |
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| Visit to North Uist Historical Society (Comann Eachdraidh Uibhist a Tuath) | 2-11 |
| Visit to Cnoc Soilleir, Daliburgh, South Uist, | 12-25 |

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Briefing for North and South Uist – Saturday, 16 August 2025

BRIEFING FOR THE FIRST MINISTER

NORTH UIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY (Comann Eachdraidh Uibhist a Tuath)

16 August 2025

| | |
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| Key message | <p>The Scottish Government supports Gaelic and Gaelic-speaking communities</p> <p>Capital Projects like North Uist Historical Society's renovation of Carinish Old School are key to the language's revitalisation and the growth of rural island economies.</p> |
| What | <p>Visiting North Uist Historical Society's ongoing renovation of Carinish Old School to serve as a local heritage hub.</p> |
| Why | <p>To announce £360k for the renovation of Carinish Old School.</p> |
| Who | <p>Councillor Ùisdean Robertson, Chair of North Uist Historical Society (other attendees listed in Annex A).</p> |
| Where | <p>Carinish Old School, Carinish North Uist HS6 5EJ</p> |
| When | <p>Saturday, 16 August 10:00-11:00</p> |
| Likely themes | <p>Gaelic community development Gaelic Capital investment Rural island economies</p> |
| Media | <p>FM Comms will share handling separately.</p> |
| Supporting official | <p>The Islands Team have advised that FM PO will be the primary support in North and South Uist.</p> |
| Attached documents | <p>Annex A - Attendees Annex B – North Uist Historical Society Annex C – Details of funding Annex D – Scottish Languages Act</p> |

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Briefing for North and South Uist – Saturday, 16 August 2025

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| | Annex E – Short Life Working Group on Economic and Social Opportunities for Gaelic Annex F – Short speaking note |
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Briefing for North and South Uist – Saturday, 16 August 2025

Agenda and Summary

The First Minister will meet with Trustees of North Uist Historical Society (Comann Eachdraidh Uibhist a Tuath) and the architect responsible for the renovation of Carinish Old School. There are no specific agenda items but he will be given a tour of the building along with an outline of the Historical Society's plans for developing it as a local heritage hub.

This visit was suggested by the Gaelic & Scots Division as our funding of the Carinish Old School renovation represents significant capital investment in a fragile island economy. Furthermore, it boosts Gaelic in one of the language's traditional strongholds. This works towards the strategic aims of two major measures the Scottish Government is currently implementing: the Scottish Languages Act and the Short Life Working Group on Economic and Social Opportunities for Gaelic.

The visit will signal the Scottish Government's commitment to Gaelic in its traditional island communities. It will also acknowledge the economic benefits of capital projects such as the Carinish Old School renovation. This is one of several examples of investment in construction-based projects serving to revitalise island communities and follows examples such as Cnoc Soilleir in South Uist as well as Sabhal Mòr Ostaig in Sleat and Islay Gaelic Centre.

[Redacted]

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Briefing for North and South Uist – Saturday, 16 August 2025

Annex A

Attendees

North Uist Historical Society (Comann Eachdraidh Uibhist a Tuath)

Cllr Uisdean Robertson - Chair Comann Eachdraidh Uibhist a Tuath

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Other

Mairi V MacInnes – Chair - Bòrd na Gàidhlig

Alasdair MacEachen – Chair - Sealladh Hiort (St Kilda Centre)

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

North Uist Historical Society (Comann Eachdraidh Uibhist a Tuath)

North Uist Historical Society (Comann Eachdraidh Uibhist a Tuath) was founded in 1987. It collects and curates artefacts, photographs and oral histories that reflect social and cultural history of North Uist. The group has over 300 members and has a small but dedicated group of volunteers who organise events and exhibitions for the community.

The Society took ownership of the Carinish Old School buildings and grounds in May 2019. This project received £165k from the Gaelic Capital Fund in 2024-25. It has also secured support for a development officer from Bòrd na Gàidhlig and is applying for other grants.

North Uist Historical Society is renovating the premises to create a vibrant heritage hub as an open access resource for its artefact and document collections; research, digital and genealogical facilities, and as an active hub for Gaelic and heritage learning, activities and events.

The Society is actively involved with many partners working to deliver community benefit projects and has a relationship with the Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Education Department because the building acts as a base for the e-Sgoil project. It has a history of working in partnership with local schools (Primary and Secondary) and a junior branch, Òigridh CEUT. In the past the Society's activities have been limited to working in other settings such as local schools or the Taigh Chearsabhaigh Museum.

Having a new base gives it more opportunities to develop activities around the collections, helping pupils to understand how artefacts link with their community's past. It is hoped that investing in the younger generation will encourage them to remain involved in the future.

Once the new heritage centre is fully operational the Society will continue to work alongside other local organisations to provide opportunities for elderly/disabled people and reach out to those with an interest in seeing the artefacts and those that would enjoy the ambience of the centre. It also aims to collaborate with the local Trianaid Care Home which is within walking distance of the Carinish Old School site.

Details of Funding

North Uist Historical Society (Comann Eachdraidh Uibhist a Tuath) is receiving £360k from the 2025/26 Gaelic Capital Fund. This is in addition to £165k it received from the same fund in 2024/25.

The main objectives for the £360k are to help with Phase 3 and Phase 4 work on the Carinish Old School building. For Phase 3, this entails renovating two higher level classrooms for use as exhibition spaces. One of these rooms will be for a St Kilda exhibition which is being prepared ahead of the centenary of St Kilda's evacuation in 2030. North Uist is the site of the Sealladh Hiort St Kilda Centre which offers visitors a viewpoint for St Kilda.

Phase 4 work will involve the extension of the building's Collections Resource Centre as well as costs for the architects' work. Both the Phase 3 and Phase 4 objectives are to be completed by March 2026.

Scottish Languages Act

Top Lines:

- The Scottish Government are **absolutely committed to maintaining and promoting** Scotland's languages, recognising their importance to Scotland's **historical, cultural and economic wellbeing**.
- The **SNP manifesto commitments** of 2021 were **positive and ambitious** and became the starting point for the **Scottish Languages Bill**.
- The **Scottish Languages Bill** was **passed unanimously** by Parliament in **June 2025**, following extensive engagement with stakeholders and members of Parliament.
- The Bill was **granted Royal Assent on 31 July 2025** and became an Act of the Scottish Parliament.
- The **Scottish Languages Act 2025** is an important vehicle to address the needs of speakers in **home, school, communities and the workplace** and gives **both Gaelic and Scots official status** for the very first time.

SCOTTISH LANGUAGES ACT 2025

Despite the challenging financial climate, we have increased the investment in Scotland's minority languages.

- **Since 2020**, the Scottish Government has spent more than **£120 million** on initiatives to support the use of Gaelic and Scots, and we have **increased the funding we will provide in 2025-26 to over £35.5 million, an uplift of £5.7 million from last year.**

While the 2022 census data showed a rise in Gaelic speakers for the first time in over 50 years, there is still much progress to be made. The Act will build on progress and boost and encourage the use of Gaelic through a number of practical measures:

- Providing **parents with a mechanism to ask for a Gaelic school** to be established in their area – requiring local authorities to assess if the request was practical and affordable.
- Providing the powers to bring forward secondary legislation to set **standards** for Gaelic education
- Supporting the **creation of areas of linguistic significance** in **Gaelic communities** so that Scottish Ministers can better target policies to support the language's growth.

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- Enabling parents in every part of Scotland to apply for **Gaelic nursery and early years education** for their children.
- Ensuring that where **qualifications are available in Gaelic** they are accompanied by appropriate teacher and pupils support and resources.
- Introduce a **National Gaelic language strategy** including **targets on Scottish Ministers** in relation to promoting facilitating and supporting the use of the Gaelic language.

Scots, for the very first time in this Parliament's history is recognised in legislation, this is a significant step forward and will help to remove stigma and improve confidence of speaker communities. Positive measures in the Act for Scots include:

- Placing a requirement on Scottish Ministers to **prepare a strategy for Scots** and **report on progress** made.
- Providing a new power which will allow **statutory guidance for public bodies** to be prepared in relation to **promoting Scots**.
- Placing a duty on Scottish Ministers to **promote and support Scots language education in schools**.
- Providing powers for Scottish Ministers to **set standards and requirements for local authorities** in relation to promotion of **Scots language education in Schools**.

^[1] The Scottish Government **define areas of linguistic significance as:**

- Had **20% Gaelic speakers at the 2011 census**
- Or, are **historically connected** with the use of Gaelic
- Or, **offer Gaelic education**
- Or, have **significant Gaelic networks and activity**.

Short Life Working Group on Economic and Social Opportunities for Gaelic

At the end of the month the Deputy First Minister will chair a meeting of the Faster Rate of Progress (FROP) initiative. This will outline how FROP will implement the Scottish Government's response to the Short Life Working Group on Economic and Social Opportunities for Gaelic. Both Wellbeing Economy and Education Reform directorates are providing official support in implementing the response.

The Short Life Working Group on Economic and Social Opportunities for Gaelic (the SLWG) forms part of the National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET). It contributes towards that strategy's aim of "ensuring strong regional economic strategies and local economic development plans" would contribute to overall national economic success. Specifically, the SLWG works towards NSET's ambition of preparing "a unique socio-economic plan based on supporting and growing the number of Gaelic speakers". The group was chaired by Arthur Cormack of Fèisean nan Gàidheal.

The report provides 45 recommendations. It applies these specifically to regions of the Highlands and Islands which it describes as "Key Gaelic Communities" – areas which the 2011 census recorded at least 20% of the population as having Gaelic abilities. These are "Na h-Eileanan Siar, Skye & some districts of Lochalsh, Tìre, Islay and Jura". Each recommendation is assigned a lead body along with several supporting bodies, active within these communities, and who are expected to contribute - in delivering upon the recommendation.

All the recommendations have substantial policy responses against them. These outline how current and future SG work will contribute towards the fulfilment of the SLWG's aims and their articulation of the key role which Gaelic development will play in the fulfilment of NSET.

Short Speaking Note

- Madainn mhath [*Mah-deen vah*]
- It is a pleasure to be in North Uist announcing this new funding for Comann Eachdraidh Uibhist a Tuath [*Kaw-mun Ech-tree Ooh-eesht ih Too-uh*].
- The work the society has done in preserving Carinish Old School on behalf of the community is to be commended. I am proud that the Scottish Government has been able to support you in this.
- The contribution which the islands' historical societies make in sustaining the social fabric of the Outer Hebrides is something which cannot be overstated. Time and again we see in our islands the work which community organisations such as yours do in order to preserve historical assets and with them the public services which they provide. Your ambition on behalf of Carinish Old School is in itself a demonstration of this and will be an act which makes North Uist a more resilient place.
- By renovating the old school as a heritage hub you also demonstrate the role which Gaelic culture plays in encouraging the wider economic regeneration of Gaelic-speaking communities: a principal which is central to Scottish Government policy on behalf of the language.
- I can only look forward to seeing how this project continues to progress and wish you the best of luck.
- Gur math a thèid leibh. [Pr: *Goor mah ih haitch luheev*. Trans: "All the best."]

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Briefing for North and South Uist – Saturday, 16 August 2025

BRIEFING FOR THE FIRST MINISTER

Cnoc Soilleir

16 August 2025

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Key message | The Scottish Government supports Gaelic and Gaelic-speaking communities Capital Projects like Cnoc Soilleir are key to the language's revitalisation and the growth of rural island economies |
| What | Visiting Cnoc Soilleir to see the centre's ongoing Phase 2 construction work |
| Why | To announce £200k funding for the Phase 2 construction work |
| Who | [Redacted] [Redacted] Other names listed in Annex A |
| Where | Cnoc Soilleir, Daliburgh, South Uist, HS8 5SS |
| When | Saturday 16 August 2025 12:15-13:15, |
| Likely themes | Gaelic community development Gaelic Capital investment Rural island economies |
| Media | FM Comms will share handling separately. |
| Supporting official | The Islands Team have advised that FM PO will be the primary support in North and South Uist. |
| Attached documents | Annex A – Attendees Annex B – Detailed Agenda Annex C – Short speaking note Annex D – Cnoc Soilleir Annex E – Details of funding Annex F – UHI North, West & Hebrides and Cnoc Soilleir Annex G – Scottish Languages Act Annex H – Short Life Working Group on Economic and Social Opportunities for Gaelic |

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FIRST MINISTER

Briefing for North and South Uist – Saturday, 16 August 2025

Agenda

The First Minister and a small group from Cnoc Soilleir will be given a tour of the Phase 2 construction site by the contractors, MacInnes Brothers. PPE will be provided. The local primary school Mòd choir will then perform at the temporary link to the current Cnoc Soilleir facility. The First Minister will then be taken through the link to an Lasag – Cnoc Soilleir’s main social and gathering space which the First Minister opened during his time as Deputy First Minister. A finger buffet will be provided and the First Minister will be able to informally chat to the attendees. The First Minister and party will then leave through Cnoc Soilleir’s front door and through the centre’s temporary carpark.

Summary

Policy suggested Cnoc Soilleir as the centre’s funding represents significant capital investment in a fragile island economy. The First Minister has a long association with Cnoc Soilleir having formally opened its completed Phase 1 construction. He also chaired CoHI at Cnoc Soilleir in his last formal role as Deputy First Minister (March 2023).

Cnoc Soilleir is a Gaelic policy success. Since its establishment it has provided a major centre for traditional culture and arts in the Western Isles. It hosts the Ceòlas summer school which provides an immersive experience in Gaelic music and performance arts for speakers and learners of the language. The venue works with the University of Glasgow by helping to facilitate the immersion year of the university’s Gaelic learner degrees. It has also been cited by European minority language communities as an example of government support for endangered languages.

This impact has been recognised by the Scottish Government in its response to the Short Life Working Group on Economic and Social Opportunities for Gaelic. That response points to Cnoc Soilleir, along with other institutions such as Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and Islay Gaelic Centre, as an example of the economic benefits which accrue from Gaelic capital and cultural investment. This is something which will be built on by the Scottish Languages Act. Cnoc Soilleir will be vital to implementing the Act’s strategic aims for Gaelic education and community development.

Attendees

Cnoc Soilleir Ltd Board Members

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

UHI NWH

[Redacted]

Cnoc Soilleir Ltd Staff

[Redacted]

Ceòlas Staff

[Redacted]

UHI NWH staff

[Redacted].

Detailed Agenda

12.15 – 12.40 Tour of the building site

Meet FM and team accompanying him on site visit at construction site entrance opposite the Borrodale Hotel. Other members of FM team to go round and park in our temporary carpark opposite the post office and enter the existing building through the front door and wait with other guests while the construction site tour takes place.

1. [Redacted]
2. Board of Cnoc Soilleir Ltd
 - [Redacted]
 - [Redacted]
 - [Redacted]
 - [Redacted]
 - [Redacted]
1. [Redacted]
2. [Redacted]
3. [Redacted]
4. [Redacted]

Small group of local primary school Mod children to sing a song to the FM from by the new link through to the existing building.

Tour team to follow them up the stairs and into the new building

Take off PPE

12.40-12.50: Formal welcome and announcement by First Minister of funding

Welcome by [Redacted]

12.50-12. 55: Short Dance presentation by local children's dance group.

12.55 – 1.15 Informal mingling- finger food and buffet and tea and coffee.

People to be introduced to the First Minister.

- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

Short Speaking Note

- Feasgar math [*Fess-kur mah*]
- It is wonderful to be back at Cnoc Soilleir [*Crawk Sull-yeir*] to announce funding for the next phase of the venue's development. When I was last here I was promised that, at my next visit, I would be able to walk through from Phase 1 to Phase 2 of the building. It is therefore a point of great personal satisfaction to have done just that.
- Cnoc Soilleir [*Crawk Sull-yeir*] can be considered one of the Gaelic policy successes of the last decade. As the name implies, it has provided in South Uist a guiding light for Gaelic culture and arts.
- With UHI North, West and Hebrides you open up opportunities for Gaelic education in one of the language's main strongholds.
- Your work with Ceòlas [*Kyaw-luss*] demonstrates the enduring appeal of Gaelic music and the language's role in drawing visitors to the islands.
- This also illustrates the reciprocal role which exists between Gaelic revival and economic growth: the language is enhanced by attracting new learners and this, in turn, drives local prosperity.

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Briefing for North and South Uist – Saturday, 16 August 2025

- As a wider principle this is something which is seen across the islands and, increasingly, in the emerging Gaelic communities of urban Scotland. Recognising and supporting this economic dimension of Gaelic development is a key aspect of Scottish Government policy towards the language.
- Cnoc Soilleir's [*Crawk Sull-yers*] ongoing growth is a cause for pride. The range of other programmes with which you work – such as the University of Glasgow's Gaelic immersion year or Climate Hebrides' Gaelic Climate Convention – serves as an example of the diversity of activities which an individual Gaelic initiative can undertake. They also demonstrate the various aspects of modern life with which the language can engage and ultimately inform. I am excited to see the further achievements which are made possible with the completion of Phase 2 of Cnoc Soilleir [*Crawk Sull-ye*].
- A h-uile beannachd leibh. [Pr: *Ih hoolah byahn-achk luheev*. Trans: "Best of luck to you."]

Cnoc Soilleir

The ideas and vision for Cnoc Soilleir grew following the publication of a report published by the then Scottish Arts Council at the end of the 20th Century that clearly identified a need for a centre for music, dance and Gaelic culture in Uist.

Since then the partnership between UHI and Ceòlas was formed, to take the project forward and to develop a brief that met their needs, with a vision to to establish a place that promotes and celebrates the islands' rich natural, cultural and heritage assets for the benefit of students, residents and visitors alike.

In 2016 the site was chosen as part of a wider community vote, and in 2017, they were successful in being awarded funding by Scottish Government that led to the full development of the project including both phases.

While Phase 1 has been essential in allowing them to start to establish and provide facilities for both their partners to flourish and grow, Phase 2 has always been key for the overall transformational vision for the project.

The vision for phase 2

- A world class facility to enable delivery of high-quality professional performances
- A world class facility to showcase Gaelic arts including traditional and contemporary music, dance and performance
- A world class facility to capitalise on and strengthen the natural resources within a vibrant natural Gaelic community
- A world class facility to inspire and build confidence within the local community
- A world class facility to act as a beacon of excellence to engage with a wider audience, and to attract people to Uist

Details of Funding

Cnoc Soilleir project is receiving £200k from the 2025/26 Gaelic Capital Fund. This will be used alongside Regeneration funding, HIE funding and support from other Scottish Government budgets to help fulfil the centre's vision for Phase 2.

Scottish Government support for this project is provided via CNES. £2.750m was contributed to phase 2 on 17 March 2023. the £200,000 being issued now in 25/26 is in addition to this.

UHI North, West & Hebrides and Cnoc Soilleir

[Redacted].

Scottish Languages Act

Top Lines:

- The Scottish Government are **absolutely committed to maintaining and promoting** Scotland's languages, recognising their importance to Scotland's **historical, cultural and economic wellbeing**.
- The **SNP manifesto commitments** of 2021 were **positive and ambitious** and became the starting point for the **Scottish Languages Bill**.
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SCOTTISH LANGUAGES ACT 2025

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- **Since 2020**, the Scottish Government has spent more than **£120 million** on initiatives to support the use of Gaelic and Scots, and we have **increased the funding we will provide in 2025-26 to over £35.5 million, an uplift of £5.7 million from last year.**

While the 2022 census data showed a rise in Gaelic speakers for the first time in over 50 years, there is still much progress to be made. The Act will build on progress and boost and encourage the use of Gaelic through a number of practical measures:

- Providing **parents with a mechanism to ask for a Gaelic school** to be established in their area – requiring local authorities to assess if the request was practical and affordable.
- Providing the powers to bring forward secondary legislation to set **standards** for Gaelic education
- Supporting the **creation of areas of linguistic significance^[1] in Gaelic communities** so that Scottish Ministers can better target policies to support the language's growth.

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- Enabling parents in every part of Scotland to apply for **Gaelic nursery and early years education** for their children.
- Ensuring that where **qualifications are available in Gaelic** they are accompanied by appropriate teacher and pupils support and resources.
- Introduce a **National Gaelic language strategy** including **targets on Scottish Ministers** in relation to promoting facilitating and supporting the use of the Gaelic language.

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- Or, have **significant Gaelic networks and activity**.

Short Life Working Group on Economic and Social Opportunities for Gaelic

At the end of the month the Deputy First Minister will chair a meeting of the Faster Rate of Progress (FROP) initiative. This will outline how FROP will implement the Scottish Government's response to the Short Life Working Group on Economic and Social Opportunities for Gaelic. Both Wellbeing Economy and Education Reform directorates are providing official support in implementing the response.

The Short Life Working Group on Economic and Social Opportunities for Gaelic (the SLWG) forms part of the National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET). It contributes towards that strategy's aim of "ensuring strong regional economic strategies and local economic development plans" would contribute to overall national economic success. Specifically, the SLWG works towards NSET's ambition of preparing "a unique socio-economic plan based on supporting and growing the number of Gaelic speakers". The group was chaired by Arthur Cormack of Fèisean nan Gàidheal.

The report provides 45 recommendations. It applies these specifically to regions of the Highlands and Islands which it describes as "Key Gaelic Communities" – areas which the 2011 census recorded at least 20% of the population as having Gaelic abilities. These are "Na h-Eileanan Siar, Skye & some districts of Lochalsh, Tìre, Islay and Jura". Each recommendation is assigned a lead body along with several supporting bodies, active within these communities, and who are expected to contribute - in delivering upon the recommendation.

All the recommendations have substantial policy responses against them. These outline how current and future SG work will contribute towards the fulfilment of the SLWG's aims and their articulation of the key role which Gaelic development will play in the fulfilment of NSET.

HIE briefings for First Minister Visit to Lewis, 15th August 2025

Stornoway Port

- Stornoway Port is a Trust Port and is the main seaport in the Hebridean Island chain.
- In 2017 SPA released a Port Masterplan which set out the framework for development over a 20 year period. They have progressed delivery of significant elements, the most recent of which was the construction of the Deep water Terminal which welcomed its first vessel in April 2024. The port have reported that the new terminal has worked well operationally and demand has been in line with projections. The linkspan element of the project is due to be awarded in October 2025.
- The port is currently updating the masterplan to capitalise and deliver for new opportunities that have materialised over the past decade, in particular the opportunity presented by offshore wind.
- Stornoway Port is leading on the upgrade of the Arnish Moor Road, the road which connects the main Tarbert to Stornoway road with Arnish Industrial Estate. HIE and OWIP approved funding of £3.4M to the project, subject to conclusion of legal agreements.
- Stornoway Port is progressing plans for the expansion of the Deep Water Terminal to be known as Deep Water South. This new berth is designed specifically to meet the requirements of the offshore wind market.
- Other developments completed in recent years include:
 - construction of a new food standard building (completed in 2020) which until recently was occupied by Macduff Shellfish Group. The business's Stornoway operation has recently been acquired by Seafood Ecosse Ltd.
 - 70 berth marina with pontoons (opened Sept 2021)
 - Construction of a marine engineering workshop, currently occupied on a 10 year lease to Coastal Workboats Scotland Ltd. (completed May 2022)
 - Development of Cromwell Street Quay cruise shuttle bus drop off area in the centre of Stornoway. (completed July 2024)

Hebridean Housing Partnership

- HHP is the only registered social landlord in the Outer Hebrides and manages nearly 2,400 homes across the islands.
- Recently completed projects include new homes at Blackwater and Goathill in Stornoway as well as a new care home and housing with extra care.
- New build projects are currently on site in Barra and Harris
- Plans are underway to build a mix of social rent and shared equity homes in Tarbert, Harris, including adapted housing for people with disabilities.
- HHP is considering reactivating its dormant subsidiary, HI-IP Community Ltd, to potentially provide accommodation for workers in the renewable energy sector, a growing need in Lewis.

Comann Eachdraidh Uibhist a Tuath / North Uist Historical Society

- Founded in 1987, CEUT collects and curates artefacts, photographs and oral histories that reflect social and cultural history of North Uist.
- The group has over 300 members and has a small but dedicated group of volunteers who organise events and exhibitions for the community.
- CEUT purchased the old Carinish School from Comhairle nan Eilean Siar in 2019 with the vision of transforming it into a heritage hub offering access to their collections and research facilities.
- HIE's engagement with CEUT has focused on the need to develop a viable operational business model and to consider how their plans fit with wider community plans for North Uist.

Cnoc Soilleir – MB

- Cnoc Soilleir is nearly a year into their construction Programme for the development of Phase 2 of Cnoc Soilleir, due to complete in Spring 2026. The external fabric is watertight and windows and external doors have been fitted with the exception of one external door being used for plant and material access. HIE is contributing £2.1million to the £7.96million Phase 2 development.
- HIE is engaged significantly with Cnoc Soilleir and with both joint venture partners as key clients in the area.
- HIE has led the development of a benefits realisation strategy to ensure maximisation of the benefits of Phase 1 and Phase 2 investments. This complements a funding stakeholder group that meets with the client monthly to track progress.
- A Project Advisory Group is to be convened to support benefits realisation, and we anticipate a range of public sector engagement from Government and appropriate agencies as well as the key organisations involved in Cnoc Soilleir.
- A Governance Review to explore the optimal future governance structure is currently underway.
- Storm Floris caused some damage to the roof of phase 2, however, contractors, MacInnes Bros of Uist, were on site once the winds had abated and made the site safe. A full assessment of the damage has been carried out and will be reported in due course.



COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR



ORKNEY
ISLANDS COUNCIL



SHETLAND
ISLANDS COUNCIL

John Swinney MSP, First Minister of Scotland
Bute House, 5 Charlotte Square
Edinburgh, EH2 4DR

Friday 27th June 2025

Dear First Minister,

RE: An Islands partnership

We are writing to advise you that Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Orkney Islands Council and Shetland Islands Council have agreed a strategic partnership to hold discussions with the Scottish Government on shared opportunities and concerns.

We have come together because we believe our interests have never been more closely aligned, and because we believe that the opportunities our islands can offer the rest of Scotland have never been greater.

We know that you understand the enormous contribution and potential of our islands, particularly in renewable energy, aquaculture, fisheries and tourism, but our ability to contribute fully to Scotland's future is constrained by underinvestment in infrastructure, continued demographic challenges, and structural inequalities.

Our ask

We seek to augment and deepen our collaboration with you, the Deputy First Minister, key Cabinet colleagues and officials.

Specifically, we request the swift establishment of a joint team to explore how the relationship between the Scottish Government and the island authorities can be reimagined to ensure both greater sustainability for us and greater returns for Scotland.

We value our relationship with you, and we would like to begin our discussions with nothing either firmly on, or firmly off the table - including new financial arrangements which reflect our needs and circumstances, retention of ScotWind revenues, greater devolution of Crown Estate Scotland assets and use of additional powers under the Islands (Scotland) Act.

Our offer

We are committed to mutually beneficial outcomes. Our islands offer a colossal contribution to the rest of the country, both economically and environmentally. We host a large proportion of Scotland's current and future wind generation and, at well over 10GW of initial potential, the capacity to power every home in Scotland five times over, in addition to contributing significantly to Scotland's action on the climate emergency.



COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR



ORKNEY ISLANDS COUNCIL



SHETLAND ISLANDS COUNCIL

Our ability to deliver for Scotland is dependent on targeted investment in housing, transport, and workforce development, and in ensuring the financial sustainability of our public services. Without it, our potential will remain unfulfilled.

Our purpose

We know that the long-term sustainability of Scotland’s island communities is of the utmost importance to you. However, we remain heavily reliant on central government support to allow us to deliver sustainable public services. This support is currently insufficient to close the cost of living gap between the islands and the mainland. Fuel poverty, outward migration, and declining public service viability are everyday realities, and island residents are increasingly concerned that they are not benefiting sufficiently from the contribution they are making to support national growth.

Our geography and demography demand tailored, long-term solutions, and as a partnership we wish to work with you to reimagine our relationship in a way that enhances our strategic value and secures a sustainable future for our islands and for Scotland.

Summary

We value our relationship with you. We understand that you have an affinity with our islands, and we welcome and celebrate the efforts in developing the Convention of the Highlands and Islands and the Islands Growth Deal, as well as the National Islands Plan and of course the Islands (Scotland) Act.

However the structural problems which persist are as much yours as they are ours; without solving them, our shared potential cannot be realised.

The pressures, challenges and opportunities of our three islands’ communities are more similar now than they have ever been, and in our desire to solve them we speak with one voice.

We look forward to your reply and hope to see you soon at an initial meeting.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr. Paul Steele (Ind)
Leader, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

Cllr. Heather Woodbridge (Ind)
Leader, Orkney Islands Council

Cllr. Emma Macdonald (Ind)
Leader, Shetland Islands Council

Malcolm Burr
Chief Executive, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

Oliver Reid
Chief Executive, Orkney Islands Council

Maggie Sandison
Chief Executive, Shetland Islands Council

Lewis and North Uist 2025 – First Minister

| Day | Proposed engagement/visit (name of organisation) | Reason for engagement/visit (with policy recommendation around why these would be good opportunities) e.g. visiting X to see progress on how they're using X funding to deliver on X priority and if any announcements can be made | Location | Rough time required (minutes/hours) | Priority (H/M/L) | Lead Official, Directorate, Policy Area |
|---|--|--|------------|-------------------------------------|------------------|--|
| <p>Thursday, 14 August Travel from Constituency to Ferry Terminal (pm) Ferry from Ullapool (departs at 1730 and arrives in Stornoway at 2010) Ferry Timetable</p> <p>ENGAGEMENTS/VISITS IN LEWIS</p> | | | | | | |
| <p>Thursday, 14 August 20:30-22:00</p> | <p>Orkney, SIC and CnES Dinner</p> | <p>Dinner with leaders from Orkney, Shetland and Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar ahead of meeting on Friday morning.</p> | <p>TBC</p> | <p>1 hour 30 minutes</p> | <p>H</p> | <p>[Redacted] (Briefing has been commissioned separately)</p> |
| <p>Overnight stay (Thursday) in Lewis</p> | | | | | | |

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ENGAGEMENTS/VISITS IN LEWIS - Friday 15 August

| | | | | | | |
|-------------|------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|-----------------------|---|---|
| 08:00-10:00 | Orkney, SIC and CnES meeting | <p>Orkney, Shetland and Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar leaders have asked to hold discussions to raise awareness of their approach with you.</p> <p>Further discussions around the pressures, challenges and opportunities on the three islands; communities.</p> <p>Also apart of the wider agenda the Comhairle will be pivotal to the implementation of the Scottish Languages Bill. Of particular interest will be the Bill's measures for local authorities to designate Areas of Linguistic Significance. The Comhairle has been proactive in outlining how this might work for the Western Isles.</p> | Sandwick Road, Stornoway HS1 2BW | 1 hour and 30 minutes | H | <p>[Redacted]</p> <p>[Redacted]</p> <p>(DG Communities)</p> <p>[Redacted]</p> <p>(Briefing has been commissioned separately)</p> |
|-------------|------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|-----------------------|---|---|

| Day | Proposed engagement/visit (name of organisation) | Reason for engagement/visit (with policy recommendation around why these would be good opportunities) e.g. visiting X to see progress on how they're using X funding to deliver on X priority and if any announcements can be made | Location | Rough time required (minute s/hours) | Priority (H/M/L) | Lead Official, Directorate, Policy Area |
|----------------------------|---|--|--|--------------------------------------|------------------|--|
| 10:30 – 11:30 | Hillcrest House, Children's Residential Care Home | Reflection of FM commitment to deliver The Promise, visit could promote consultation which is currently planned to launch around 11th August (subject to Ministerial agreement), on financial transparency and profit limitation in residential care as provided for in the Promise Bill (Children's Care, Care Experience and Planning)(Scotland)(Bill) | Hillcrest Residential Unit, 41 Goathill Road, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis HS1 2NX | 1 hour | H/M | [Redacted] (DG Education and Justice) |
| 11:45 – 13:00 | Climate Hebrides CIC | Climate Hebrides CIC run the Outer Hebrides Climate Hub, funded by the Scottish Government. The Hub focusses on supporting communities to take action to tackle and adapt to the changing climate through training, providing resources and small amounts of funding through their Ideas into Action Fund. They work closely with land trusts, SMEs as well as community groups. They gather climate impact stories that will help shape and inform adaptation work. The Hub is supporting the development of a regional adaptation strategy for the islands. They also do a lot around just transition and supporting the Gaelic language. They are currently planning their second climate conference that will help identify key priorities for the hub to take forward. Home - Climate Hebrides | An Lanntair restaurant, Kenneth Street, Stornoway, HS1 2DS | 1-2 hours | H/M | [Redacted] (DG Net Zero) |
| 13:00 - LUNCH/BREAK | | | | | | |

| Day | Proposed engagement/visit (name of organisation) | Reason for engagement/visit (with policy recommendation around why these would be good opportunities) e.g. visiting X to see progress on how they're using X funding to deliver on X priority and if any announcements can be made | Location | Rough time required (minutes/hours) | Priority (H/M/L) | Lead Official, Directorate, Policy Area |
|---------------|---|---|---|-------------------------------------|------------------|--|
| 13:30-14:45 | Stornoway Port Authority | <p>Stornoway Port Authority's Deep Water Terminal provides multi-purpose facilities to support renewables sectors including offshore wind.</p> <p>Opportunity to hear more about the plans for its Phase 2 development to expand the Port's capabilities and support the construction and operation phases of floating offshore wind projects. It is also an opportunity to visit the Arnish Yard, which has been acquired by Navantia and hear more about the plans for the site.</p> | Stornoway, HS1 2XS | 1 hour 30 minutes | M | [Redacted] (DG Net Zero) |
| 15:00 – 15:45 | Hebridean Housing Partnership | <p>Opportunity to visit affordable housing development that is contributing 74 homes towards 110,000 housing target by 2032, supported by £9.5M from the Affordable Housing Supply Programme.</p> <p>Homes are handing over in phases with 33 homes already complete and tenanted with a further 25 homes due to handover late in August.</p> | Blackwater Housing Development, Newmarket, Isle of Lewis, HS2 0EE | 45 minutes | M | [Redacted] (DG Communities) |
| 16:15 – 17:00 | Baby Box delivered to family to celebrate 8 th Anniversary (15 August) | <p>We have a parent who is due to have her Baby Box delivered on 15 August (the 8th Anniversary of the launch of the Baby Box Programme).</p> <p>The Baby Box team has spoken with the parent, Carrin Campbell, who is to receive her Baby Box from the First Minister. She unfortunately won't be at home on</p> | Western Isles Hospital Macaulay Rd, Stornoway, HS1 2AF | 30 minutes – 45 minutes | M/H | [Redacted] (DG Education and Justice) |

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|---|--|--|----------|--------------------------------------|------------------|---|
| | | <p>Friday 15th August but will be at work at the Western Isles Hospital (where her husband also works). She has confirmed she is happy to still receive the Baby Box from FM in the maternity unit of the hospital, where her husband can also be present.</p> <p>Registration for Baby Boxes began on 15th June 2017 with the first boxes delivered on 15th August 2017.</p> <p>Prior to the Baby Box launch we piloted the Baby Box in Orkney and Clackmannanshire and the very first box was delivered to parents in Orkney on 1st January 2017</p> <p>We expect to have delivered the 350,000th Baby Box by end of July, another milestone for FM to celebrate.</p> <p>Officials would arrange for the Baby Box to be delivered to a suitable venue in Lewis in advance of FM's visit to ensure no weather issues impact on the delivery of the box. Officials can explore the potential for the parent's midwife to be in attendance too.</p> | | | | |
| Overnight stay (Friday) in Lewis | | | | | | |

| Day | Proposed engagement/visit (name of organisation) | Reason for engagement/visit (with policy recommendation around why these would be good opportunities) e.g. visiting X to see progress on how they're using X funding to deliver on X priority and if any announcements can be made | Location | Rough time required (minute s/hours) | Priority (H/M/L) | Lead Official, Directorate, Policy Area |
|--|--|--|--|--------------------------------------|------------------|--|
| Saturday, 16 August Travel from Hotel to Leverburgh Ferry Terminal (1 hour 30 mins from Stornoway) Leverburgh Ferry Terminal to Berneray (North Uist) (1 hour) Ferry timings 0815 (tbc) | | | | | | |
| ENGAGEMENTS/VISITS IN NORTH UIST | | | | | | |
| Saturday, 16 August 10:00-1100 | North Uist History Society | FM, announcement of £340k for the North Uist History Society. Community Centre and history society, North Uist. This project received £165k from the Gaelic capital fund in 2024-25. The plans for this centre include community, education, heritage, exhibition and Gaelic functions with a strong focus on North Uist. The centre has secured support for a development officer from Bòrd na Gàidhlig and is applying for other grants. This capital funding of £360,000 will assist with the ongoing renovation of the former Carinish school. The Chair of the society is Cllr Uisdean Robertson. | HS6 | 1 hour | M | [Redacted] (DG Education and Justice) |
| 1215-13:15 | Cnoc Soillier, Daliburgh, South Uist, | FM, announcement of £200k for Cnoc Soillier, South Uist The Cnoc Soillier Centre has received funding from SG, Regeneration, HIE and Gaelic capital. Phase 1 of the | Cnoc Soilleir's address is Cnoc Soilleir, Daliburgh, | 1 hour | M | [Redacted] (DG Education and Justice) |

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|--|--|---|--------------------------------|--|--|--|
| | | <p>building is complete and was formally opened by Mr Swinney. The funding is in place for phase 2 and it is under construction. Cnoc Soillier is a centre for performance, learning and community and with UHI involvement. The £200k funding offer from SG is for internal fittings and fabric and for specialist auditorium equipment.</p> | <p>South Uist, HS8 5SS</p> | | | |
|--|--|---|--------------------------------|--|--|--|

**Travel from Cnoc Soillier, Daliburgh, South Uist to Lochboisdale South Uist Ferry Terminal
Lochboisdale South Uist Ferry Terminal to Mallaig Ferry Terminal (3 hours 30 mins)
Ferry timings - 14:00 (tbc)**