

Dear David,

Thank you for your request dated 16 March 2026 under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA).

### Your request

You asked for “Correspondence sent and received, analysis and briefings and the full costs of Kate Forbes trip to Stornoway on November 5”.

### Response to your request

I enclose a copy of the information you requested.

The answer to your question on the total cost of Kate Forbes’ visit to Stornoway on 4 and 5 November 2025, including travel and accommodation for supporting officials, was £2,447.98.

Some of the information you have requested is available from [Ministerial engagements, travel and gifts: November 2025 - gov.scot](#). Under section 25(1) of FOISA, we do not have to give you information which is already reasonably accessible to you. If, however, you do not have internet access to obtain this information from the website(s) listed, then please contact me again and I will send you a paper copy.

While our aim is to provide information whenever possible, in this instance we are unable to provide some of the information you have requested because exemptions under sections s.30(b)(i) (free and frank provision of advice), s.33(1)(b) (commercial interests) and s.38(1)(b) (personal data relating to a third party) of FOISA applies to that information. The reasons why that exemption(s) applies are explained in the Annex to this letter.

### Your right to request a review

If you are unhappy with this response to your FOI request, you may ask us to carry out an internal review of the response, by writing to Colin Cook C/O FOI.gov.scot and C/O this postal address: FOI Unit 1E.10, St Andrew’s House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG.

Your review request should explain why you are dissatisfied with this response and should be made within 40 working days from the date when you received this letter. We will complete the review in accordance with FOISA as soon as possible, and not later than 20 working days from the day following the date we receive your review request.

If you are not satisfied with the result of the review, you then have the right to appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner. More detailed information on your appeal rights is available on the Commissioner’s website at: [Appeal to the Commissioner | Scottish Information Commissioner \(itspublicknowledge.info\)](#).

Kind Regards,

Lewis Wiles  
Policy Officer, Regional Economic Development

## ANNEX

### An exemption applies

An exemption under section s.38(1)(b) of FOISA applies to some of the information you have requested. Section s.38(1)(b) regarding the release of personal data relating to a third party where disclosure would contravene UK GDPR data protection principles.

This exemption is not subject to the 'public interest test', so we are not required to consider if the public interest in disclosing the information outweighs the public interest in applying the exemption.

### An exemption applies, subject to the public interest test

An exemption under section s.33(1)(b) of FOISA applies to some of the information you have requested. Section s.33(1)(b) around Commercial interests means that information which may substantially prejudice the commercial interests of any person may be exempt from disclosure and can relate to a person or organisation's trading activity.

This exemption is subject to the 'public interest test'. Therefore, taking account of all the circumstances of this case, we have considered if the public interest in disclosing the information outweighs the public interest in applying the exemption. We have found that, on balance, the public interest lies in favour of upholding the exemption. We recognise that there is a public interest in disclosing information as part of open and transparent government, and to help account for the expenditure of public money. However, there is a greater public interest in protecting the commercial interests of companies we engage with, to avoid releasing information which could inadvertently undermine their competitiveness or which could impact our ability to obtain information from them for the purposes of growing Scotland's economy.

An exemption under section s.30(b)(i) of FOISA also applies to some of the information you have requested. Section 30(b)(i) on the free and frank provision of advice exempts disclosure of information which inhibits the provision of advice to ministers.

This exemption is subject to the 'public interest test'. Therefore, taking account of all the circumstances of this case, we have considered if the public interest in disclosing the information outweighs the public interest in applying the exemption. We have found that, on balance, the public interest lies in favour of upholding the exemption. We recognise that there is a public interest in disclosing information as part of open, transparent and accountable government, and to inform public debate. However, there is a greater public interest in allowing a private space within which officials can provide full and frank advice to Ministers, as part of the process of exploring and refining the Government's position on several key issues affecting the Outer Hebrides in November 2025, until the Government as a whole can adopt a decision that is sound and likely to be effective. This private thinking space is essential to enable all options to be properly considered, based on the best available advice, so that good decisions can be taken. Premature disclosure is likely to undermine the full and frank discussion of issues between Ministers and officials, which in turn will undermine the quality of decision-making, which would not be in the public interest.

## **Deputy First Minister**

- Air Travel - £431.79

<b>Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Gaelic Kate Forbes MSP</b>					
Date	Class	Origin	Destination	Ticket Type	Cost
04/11/2025	Economy	Glasgow	Stornoway	Return to Inverness	£431.79
06/11/2025	Economy	Stornoway	Inverness	Return (2nd half of above journey)	As above

- Accommodation - £334 Total (£167 per night)

<b>Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Gaelic Kate Forbes MSP</b>			
Date	Location	Stay duration (night)	Cost
04/11/2025	Stornoway	2	£334.00

- Sustenance - £52

<b>Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Gaelic Kate Forbes MSP</b>		
Date	Type	Cost
04/11/2025	Meals Allowance Elsewhere	£23.50
05/11/2025	Meals Allowance Elsewhere	£23.50

**DFM Total = £817.79**

## **Lead Official**

- Air Travel - £443.79

Outbound Flight			
<b>From:</b>	Glasgow International Airport (GLA)	<b>Terminal:</b>	M
<b>To:</b>	Stornoway Airport (SYY)	<b>Terminal:</b>	-
<b>Departs:</b>	Tue 4th Nov 2025 06:55	<b>Arrives:</b>	Tue 4th Nov 2025 08:00
<b>Airline:</b>	Loganair	<b>Class:</b>	Economy Flexi
<b>Duration:</b>	1:5 Hrs	<b>Baggage Allowance:</b>	1 bag
<b>Flight Number:</b>	470		
Inbound Flight			
<b>From:</b>	Stornoway Airport (SYY)	<b>Terminal:</b>	-
<b>To:</b>	Glasgow International Airport (GLA)	<b>Terminal:</b>	M
<b>Departs:</b>	Wed 5th Nov 2025 19:20	<b>Arrives:</b>	Wed 5th Nov 2025 20:10
<b>Airline:</b>	Loganair	<b>Class:</b>	Economy Flexi
<b>Duration:</b>	0:50 Hrs	<b>Baggage Allowance:</b>	1 bag
<b>Flight Number:</b>	479		
<b>Total CO2:</b>	145.18kg		
<b>TOTAL:</b>	443.79 GBP	<b>STATUS:</b>	BOOKED

- Accommodation - £169

Arrival	Nights	Room Type	Rooms	Hotel Ref	Per Night
Tuesday, 4 November 2025	1	Twin Room	1	NVOYKG/31279SF002578	1 night(s) at 169.00 GBP
es exclusive of VAT or other local taxes):					169.00 GBP

**Lead Official Total = £612.79**

## Second Official

- Air Travel - £321.56

### Outbound Flight

<b>From:</b>	Inverness Airport (INV)	<b>Terminal:</b>	-
<b>To:</b>	Stornoway Airport (SYY)	<b>Terminal:</b>	-
<b>Departs:</b>	Tue 4th Nov 2025 10:10	<b>Arrives:</b>	Tue 4th Nov 2025 10:55
<b>Airline:</b>	Loganair	<b>Class:</b>	Economy Flexi
<b>Duration:</b>	0:45 Hrs	<b>Baggage Allowance:</b>	1 bag
<b>Flight Number:</b>	151		

### Inbound Flight

<b>From:</b>	Stornoway Airport (SYY)	<b>Terminal:</b>	-
<b>To:</b>	Inverness Airport (INV)	<b>Terminal:</b>	-
<b>Departs:</b>	Wed 5th Nov 2025 16:45	<b>Arrives:</b>	Wed 5th Nov 2025 17:25
<b>Airline:</b>	Loganair	<b>Class:</b>	Economy Flexi
<b>Duration:</b>	0:40 Hrs	<b>Baggage Allowance:</b>	1 bag
<b>Flight Number:</b>	597		
<b>Total CO2:</b>	78.70kg		
<b>TOTAL:</b>	321.56 GBP	<b>STATUS:</b>	BOOKED

- Accommodation - £167

<b>Check In:</b>	Tue 4th Nov 2025	<b>Check Out:</b>	Wed 5th Nov 2025
<b>Room Type:</b>	Twin Room	<b>Nights:</b>	1
<b>Number Of People:</b>	1		
<b>Price:</b>	167.00 GBP		

**Second Official Total = £488.56**

## Gaelic Policy Official

### • Air Travel - £443.79

Outbound Flight			
From:	Glasgow International Airport (GLA)	Terminal:	M
To:	Stornoway Airport (SYV)	Terminal:	-
Departs:	Tue 4th Nov 2025 06:55	Arrives:	Tue 4th Nov 2025 08:00
Airline:	Loganair	Class:	Economy Flexi
Duration:	1:5 Hrs	Baggage Allowance:	1 bag
Flight Number:	470		
Inbound Flight			
From:	Stornoway Airport (SYV)	Terminal:	-
To:	Glasgow International Airport (GLA)	Terminal:	M
Departs:	Thu 6th Nov 2025 19:20	Arrives:	Thu 6th Nov 2025 20:10
Airline:	Loganair	Class:	Economy Flexi
Duration:	0:50 Hrs	Baggage Allowance:	1 bag
Flight Number:	479		
Total CO2:	145.18kg		
TOTAL:	443.79 GBP	STATUS:	BOOKED

**Gaelic Policy Official = £443.79**

**DFM TOTAL COST = £817.79**

Publication on ministerial engagements, travel and gifts for November 2025 can be found here: [Ministerial engagements, travel and gifts: November 2025 - gov.scot](#)

**OFFICIALS TOTAL COST = £1545.14**

**TOTAL COST OF 5 NOVEMBER VISIT TO STORNOWAY = £2362.92**



# TAX INVOICE

1 [REDACTED] gov.scot

**Invoice Date** 11 Nov 2025  
**Invoice Number** INV-0845  
**Reference** INV-0845  
**VAT Number** 424982377

Stornoway Vehicle Hire  
14 Inaclate road  
Stornoway  
Isle of Lewis  
HS12RB

Description	Quantity	Unit Price	VAT	Amount GBP
6/11-7/11 Car rental	1.00	54.1667	20%	54.17
Fuel Bill	1.00	16.7083	20%	16.71
			Subtotal	70.88
			TOTAL VAT 20%	14.17
			<b>TOTAL GBP</b>	<b>85.05</b>

**Due Date: 25 Nov 2025**  
Account Name Stornoway vehicle hire Ltd  
Sort Code 87-34-52Account No 00028468



[View and pay online now](#)

## PAYMENT ADVICE

To: Stornoway Vehicle Hire  
14 Inaclate road  
Stornoway  
Isle of Lewis  
HS12RB

**Customer** 1 [REDACTED] gov.scot  
**Invoice Number** INV-0845  
**Amount Due** 85.05  
**Due Date** 25 Nov 2025  
**Amount Enclosed** \_\_\_\_\_

Enter the amount you are paying above

Company Registration No: SC736793.

Redaction Key:  
1 = Redacted - S.38(1)(b)  
2 = Redacted - out of scope

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
KATE FORBES, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR  
ECONOMY AND GAELIC  
Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

<b>Engagement Title</b>	DFM Visit to Stornoway
<b>Engagement Type</b>	<p>Programme of engagements including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Meeting with SSEN on Freight Capacity and Logistics</li> <li>- Visit to An Taigh Cèilidh</li> <li>- SSEN Accommodation Announcement</li> <li>- Ground Breaking ceremony at Arnish Road</li> <li>- Meeting with Navantia</li> <li>- Stornoway Deep Water Terminal Advisory Board</li> <li>- Meeting on Areas of Linguistic Significance with Comhairle Gaelic leaders</li> <li>- Visit to MG Alba Studios</li> <li>- Meeting with Cllr Murray</li> </ul>
<b>Date/Time</b>	<p>Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2025 – arrive into Stornoway at 08:00 and depart on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> November at 08:55 on the flight to Inverness.</p> <p>Full programme of engagements and timings can be found at the Visit Engagement Programme (pages 5-8).</p>
<b>Venue</b>	Various – see Visit Engagement Programme (pages 5-8).
<b>Background/Purpose</b>	<p>For meeting on freight capacity with SSEN:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To discuss the importance of the SSEN-T development to Lewis and the possible challenges associated with its logistical planning (including freight capacity issues)</li> </ul> <p>For visit to An Taigh Cèilidh:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To recognise An Taigh Cèilidh as a Stornoway-based social enterprise using commercial activity to revitalise Gaelic locally.</li> <li>- To recognise its contribution to the aims of the National Gaelic Language Plan and National Islands Plan.</li> <li>- To recognise its receipt of Gaelic Capital Fund support in May 2025 for property renovation.</li> </ul> <p>For Arnish Road Ground-Breaking Ceremony:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To mark the beginning of the construction phase for the new Arnish Road development, alongside partners at HIE, Stornoway Port Authority, Breedon Hebrides, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and SSEN.</li> </ul> <p>For Navantia Meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Opportunity for Navantia to discuss their growth plans at Arnish Fabrication Yard.</li> </ul> <p>For chairing the Advisory Board:</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Structured check-in on key enablers of growth including freight capacity, accommodation strategy, port infrastructure, wider transport strategy and skills.</li> <li>- Check in on progress regarding establishment of the Lewis Renewables – Programme Delivery Board</li> <li>- Note that partners may disappointed Ministerial Chairing of the successor board will not be possible. Need to reinforce message that SG will continue to engage and support, just how we do that needs to shift, with Ms Martin engaging periodically (up to twice per year)</li> </ul> <p>For meeting on Areas of Linguistic Significance (ALS):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Comhairle nan Eilean Siar is the local authority which contains the most communities that would meet the ALS criteria</li> <li>- They will be key partners in defining the policy measure</li> <li>- Their Gaelic team is undertaking key work in defining the Gaelic economy and exploring the feasibility of a stand-alone Gaelic school</li> </ul> <p>For visit to MG Alba:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MG ALBA is a major employer in the Western Isles and Skye with EY finding that they had an ROI of £1.34 for each £1 of SG funding provided.</li> <li>- The DFM will be shown the range of their work across TV, radio and digital media.</li> <li>- They are currently supporting community content creators whose work the DFM will see.</li> </ul> <p>For meeting with Cllr Murray:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- For Cllr Murray to raise issues relating to aviation and food prices</li> </ul>
<b>Attendees</b>	See relevant Annex for engagement.
<b>Official Support</b>	<p>[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)], Inclusive Growth Investment Manager, Regional Economic Development – [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)]</p> <p>[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)], Policy Officer, Highlands, Islands, Edinburgh and South Regional Growth Deals – [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)]</p> <p>[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)], Gaelic Plan Officer, [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)]</p>
<b>Media Handling</b>	DFM Comms Lead – [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] Comms will advise separately on a Comms handling plan.

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
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<b>Constituency details</b>	<b>Alasdair Allan MSP</b> – Na h-Eileanan an Iar Constituency, Highlands and Island Electoral Region.
<b>Greeting party and specific meeting point on arrival</b>	<p><b>04/11/25</b> <b>For SSEN Meeting:</b> Sandy Mactaggart, Director of Offshore Delivery, SSEN Transmission</p> <p>HIE offices (co-located at Comhairle nan Eilean Siar offices, Sandwick Road, Stornoway, HS1 2AN)</p> <p><b>05/11/25</b> <b>For visit to An Taigh Cèilidh:</b> [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)], Co-founder and Manager of An Taigh Cèilidh</p> <p>An Taigh Cèilidh (16 Church St, Stornoway, HS1 2DH)</p> <p><b>For SSEN Accommodation Announcement:</b> Sandy Mactaggart, Director of Offshore Delivery, SSEN Transmission</p> <p>Stornoway Airport Housing Development, HS2 0BB - adjacent to Airport Road at Branahuie and A866</p> <p><b>For Arnish Road Ground-Breaking Ceremony:</b> Alex Macleod, Chief Executive, Stornoway Port Authority</p> <p>Arnish Rd, Isle of Lewis, HS2 9JY</p> <p><b>For Navantia Meeting:</b> Colin Morrison, Head of Operations (Arnish), Navantia UK</p> <p>Arnish Fabrication Yard, Arnish Rd, Ilse of Lewis, HS2 9JY</p> <p><b>For Stornoway Deep Water Terminal Advisory Board and pre-meet:</b> Alex Macleod, Chief Executive, Stornoway port Authority</p> <p>SPA Offices (Amity House, Esplanade Quay, Stornoway, HS1 2XS)</p> <p><b>For meeting on Areas of Linguistic Significance:</b> [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)], Director of Education, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar</p> <p>MG Alba (56 Seaforth Road, Stornoway, HS1 2SD)</p> <p><b>For visit to MG Alba:</b> Donald Campbell, CEO of MG ALBA</p> <p>MG Alba (56 Seaforth Road, Stornoway, HS1 2SD)</p>

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
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Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

**VISIT TO STORNOWAY CONTENTS PAGE**

<b>Section</b>	<b>Page number</b>
<b>Visit Programme</b>	<b>p. 5-8</b>
<b>ANNEX A – FREIGHT CAPACITY MEETING WITH SSEN</b>	<b>p. 9-10</b>
<b>ANNEX B – AN TAIGH CÈILIDH</b>	<b>p. 11-12</b>
<b>ANNEX C - SSEN ACCOMMODATION ANNOUNCEMENT</b>	<b>p. 13-15</b>
<b>ANNEX D - ARNISH ROAD GROUND BREAKING CEREMONY</b>	<b>p. 16 - 21</b>
<b>ANNEX E – NAVANTIA MEETING</b>	<b>p. 21 - 22</b>
<b>ANNEX F - Stornoway Deep Water Terminal Advisory Board Chair’s Brief (contact [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)], GAMs Lead, [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)]/ contact [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)], Regional Economic Development, [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)])</b>	<b>p. 23 - 43</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>(1):</b> Chair’s Brief</li> <li>• <b>(2):</b> Minutes of Advisory Board Meeting of 13<sup>th</sup> May 2025</li> <li>• <b>(3):</b> Stornoway Port Authority Developments Briefing</li> <li>• <b>(4):</b> Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Briefing</li> <li>• <b>(5):</b> HIE Briefing</li> <li>• <b>(6):</b> Lewis Renewables Programme Delivery Board – Draft Terms of Reference</li> <li>• <b>(7):</b> Transport Scotland Freight Brief</li> </ul>	<p>p. 23-28</p> <p>p. 28-33</p> <p>p. 33-35</p> <p>p. 35-37</p> <p>p. 37-38</p> <p>p. 39-41</p> <p>p. 41-43</p>
<b>ANNEX G – MEETING WITH COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR GAELIC TEAM</b>	<b>p. 44-46</b>
<b>ANNEX H – VISIT TO MG ALBA</b>	<b>p.47-51</b>
<b>ANNEX I – MEETING WITH CLLR MURRAY</b>	<b>p. 52</b>

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
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Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

**VISIT PROGRAMME**

**TUESDAY 4<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER**

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
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<b>TIME</b>	<b>ITEM</b>	<b>POLICY LEAD</b>
<b>06:55 – 08:00</b>	Inbound flight from <b>G'gow International</b> to <b>Stornoway</b> .	N/A
<b>08:00 – 08:30</b>	Disembark, collect luggage and leave airport. Car pool with [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] of Rural Payments and Inspection Division to HIE Stornoway office- [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)].	N/A
<b>08:30 – 09:00</b>	Travel from <b>Stornoway Airport</b> to <b>HIE Stornoway Office</b> . <i>Comhairle nan Eilean Siar offices</i> <i>Sandwick Road,</i> <i>Stornoway</i> <i>HS1 2AN</i>	N/A
<b>09:00 – 13:30</b>	Morning Cabinet and committee session meetings conducted virtually from HIE Office meeting room.	[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)]
<b>13:30 - 13:50</b>	Break for lunch before afternoon engagement.	
<b>13:50 – 14:00</b>	Short officials pre-meet with [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)], Head of Ferries Unit, Transport Scotland, ahead of meeting with SSEN colleagues.	[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)]
<b>14:00 – 15:00</b>	<b>Discussion on Freight Capacity with partners at SSEN</b> – Opportunity to discuss freight capacity workstream progress ahead of Stornoway DWT board meeting with partners at SSEN. In attendance from SSEN; Sandy Mactaggart, Director of Offshore Delivery, [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] and [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)]. SSEN, first movers in renewables development space, will not be in attendance at the DWT advisory board. Meeting held at HIE Stornoway meeting room.	[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)]
<b>15:00 – 15:15</b>	Travel from <b>HIE Stornoway Office</b> to <b>Caberfeidh Hotel</b> <i>Manor Park</i> <i>Perceval Road South</i>	N/A

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	<i>Stornoway HS1 2EU</i>	
<b>15:50 – 22:00</b>	Check in to accommodation and time for parliamentary business. <b>Parliament Decision Time</b> – Stage 3 Land Reform (Scotland) bill, may run on till 10pm. Online voting from secure room with Wifi at the <b>Caberfeidh Hotel</b> .	<b>[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)]</b>

**WEDNESDAY 5<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER**

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
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Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

<b>TIME</b>	<b>ITEM</b>	<b>POLICY LEAD</b>
<b>08:45 – 09:00</b>	Travel from <b>Caberfeidh Hotel to An Taigh Cèilidh</b> <i>16 Church St, Stornoway HS1 2DH</i>	N/A
<b>09:00 – 09:45</b>	<b>An Taigh Cèilidh</b> – Visit to a social enterprise in Stornoway town centre which launched several years ago and uses commercial initiatives to revitalise Gaelic within Stornoway. It works towards various goals in the National Gaelic Language Plan and the National Islands Plan and was cited in the Scottish Government’s response to the Short Life Working Group on Economic and Social Opportunities for Gaelic. In May 2025, An Taigh Cèilidh received funding from the Gaelic Capital Fund to help with property renovations. The owners have recently expanded the business into a new space and this funding will help them make the necessary improvements to their café and events room.	<b>[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)]</b>
<b>09:45 – 10:00</b>	Travel from <b>An Taigh Cèilidh</b> to <b>SSEN Accommodation site at Stornoway Airport</b> <i>Stornoway Airport Housing Development, HS2 0BB - adjacent to Airport Road at Branahuie and A866 What 3 words – <b>invoices.seasick.views</b></i>	N/A
<b>10:00 – 10:30</b>	<b>SSEN Housing Announcement</b> – Media opportunity to announce nearly 100 new homes as part of its proposed Lewis Hub project, after funding the unlocking of a site near Stornoway Airport. DFM will meet with key stakeholders at SSEN, CalMax and Tighean Innse Gall and have the opportunity to speak with local apprentices before media engagement.	<b>[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] (Comms)</b>

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<b>10:30 – 11:00</b>	Travel from <b>SSEN Accommodation site at Stornoway Airport to Arnish Road</b> <i>[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)]</i>	N/A
<b>11:00– 11:45</b>	<b>Arnish Road Ground-Breaking Ceremony</b> – Ceremony to mark beginning of construction phase for Arnish Road development, key enabling infrastructure for the renewables sector on the isle of Lewis, alongside partners at HIE, Stornoway Port Authority and SSEN. The project will receive OSW funding, delivered through local partners at HIE. Time including media engagement.	<b>[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] (Comms)</b> <b>[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)]</b> <b>[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)]</b>
<b>11:45 - 12:15</b>	<b>Navantia engagement</b> – Meet with Colin Morrison, Head of Operations (Arnish) to discuss expansion plans for Arnish Fabrication Yard. Photo opp for Navantia’s internal comms on upcoming funding announcement. Take place at Navantia’s Arnish site.	
<b>12:15 – 12:30</b>	Travel from <b>Arnish Road to Amity House</b> <i>Esplanade Quay, Stornoway, HS1 2XS</i>	N/A
<b>12:30 – 12:40</b>	Short meeting with Alex Macleod, CEO of Stornoway Port Authority, at Amity House [Redacted S.33 (1)(b)]	<b>[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)]</b> <b>[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)]</b>
<b>12:40 – 13:00</b>	Light Buffet Lunch at <b>Amity House</b> . Comfort break ahead of afternoon programme.	N/A
<b>13:00 – 14:30</b>	<b>Stornoway Deep Water Terminal Advisory Board</b> – Final meeting of the Advisory Board for the Stornoway Deep Water Terminal project, which DFM will chair, before governance arrangements transition to the new Lewis Renewables – Programme Delivery Board.	<b>[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)]</b> <b>[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)]</b>
<b>14:30 – 14:45</b>	Travel from <b>Amity House to MG Alba</b> <i>56 Seaforth Road, Stornoway, HS1 2SD</i>	N/A

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
KATE FORBES, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR ECONOMY AND GAELIC  
Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

<b>14:45 – 15:45</b>	<b>Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Gaelic team</b> – An opportunity to meet with local Gaelic policy leaders from Comhairle nan Eilean Siar on Areas or Linguistic Significance, a key provision of the Scottish Languages Act. This meeting is taking place in a private room at MG ALBA prior to the tour of their facilities.	<b>[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)]</b>
<b>15:45-16:45</b>	<b>MG ALBA tour</b> – An opportunity to see upgrades to, and productions based at, MG ALBA’s Stornoway studios. The visit provides an opportunity to hear how MG Alba are making progress on a number of Gaelic and Economic initiatives. Visit rescheduled from cancelled itinerary on 13 <sup>th</sup> May. <b>UPDATE – 16:40 – 16:55 Meet with Cllr Murray at MG ALBA</b>	<b>[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)]</b>
<b>16:45 – 17:00</b>	Travel from <b>MG Alba</b> to <b>Cabarfeidh Hotel</b> <i>Manor Park</i> <i>Perceval Road South</i> <i>Stornoway</i> <i>HS1 2EU</i>	N/A
<b>17:10 – 19:15</b>	<b>Parliament Decision Time</b> – Online voting from secure room with Wifi at <b>Cabarfeidh Hotel</b> . Stage 3 Land Reform (Scotland) Bill likely to go until 19:15. MG Alba colleagues happy for DFM to have room to vote and will instruct on how to exit the building at end of voting time.	<b>[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)]</b>

**THURSDAY 6<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER**

<b>07:30 – 08:00</b>	Travel from <b>Cabarfeidh Hotel</b> to <b>Stornoway Airport</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>08:00 – 08:30</b>	Check-in for flight to Inverness.	N/A
<b>08:55 – 09:35</b>	Outbound flight from <b>Stornoway</b> to <b>Inverness</b> .	N/A

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
KATE FORBES, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR  
ECONOMY AND GAELIC  
Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

**ANNEX A**

**FREIGHT CAPACITY MEETING WITH SSEN**

**Background**

1. TS officials, along with CalMac and CMAL, have continued to meet with partners to seek to support SSEN-T efforts to develop its ferry logistics solution(s) to successfully deliver its development. TS CEO has also been meeting quarterly with SSEN-T Director Sandy MacTaggart (who is also attending this meeting) to discuss these matters.
2. For example, CalMac have been meeting with SSEN-T to provide information on the available and projected capacity on the existing subsidised MV Loch Seaforth service between Ullapool and Stornoway. This sailing currently operates 3 times a day, including one dedicated overnight freight sailing.
3. As a developer, SSEN-T are responsible for preparing an application for consent, including an environmental assessment and a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) demonstrating how they will mitigate the impacts of their development.
4. However, SSEN-T has been unable to share full details of its requirements and plans to date with TS officials or partners, as these are still under development.
5. Most recently Transport Scotland met with SSEN-T on 1 October to receive an update on its Construction Traffic Management Plan. SSEN-T is exploring a number of logistics options as part of that plan.
6. This includes confirmation that the most likely avenue to support the development is a proportion of their traffic carried on the existing subsidised CalMac service between Ullapool and Stornoway, with SSEN-T chartering a vessel to carry freight traffic direct to Stornoway from another port, which is itself still to be determined.
7. SSEN-T is also in discussion with Transport Scotland roads colleagues regarding potential trunk road impacts and with Ullapool Harbour Authority regarding space for vehicle queueing. This is likely to be a key challenge should there be the anticipated significant uplift in freight traffic moving on this route in the years ahead.

**Lines to Take**

**We recognise the importance of the SSEN-T development to Lewis and the possible challenges associated with its logistical planning.**

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
KATE FORBES, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR  
ECONOMY AND GAELIC**

**Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

- It is right that developers are responsible for considering and mitigating their impacts on infrastructure, including transport.

**As Ministers have previously confirmed, given the commercial nature of the developments we would expect developers, including SSEN-T to ensure that the impacts are clearly understood and mitigations are developed.**

- However, the public sector will help input into these solutions and are exploring possible models that may assist.
- The current lack of available suitable vessels and the practicalities of freight movements, including marshalling at Ullapool, are a challenge.

**We understand that SSEN-T are working hard to finalise their draft of their Construction Traffic Management Plan and exploring plans for commercially chartering a vessel to support their development.**

- When you do you (SSEN-T) expect to finalise your plans?
- It's vital that SSEN-T plans minimise the impact on local communities and don't take CalMac ferry space away from existing travellers.

**Key Attendee Biographies**

**Sandy Mactaggart, Director of Offshore Delivery, SSEN Transmission**

Sandy has been with SSE since 2013, currently serving as Director of Offshore Delivery at SSEN Transmission. He leads major offshore grid infrastructure projects, including HVDC links critical to Scotland's renewable energy transition. His previous roles include Director of Large Capital Project Services and Head of Project Assurance. Sandy holds an Executive MBA in Finance, Operations and Renewable Energy from Strathclyde Business School and a Bachelor of Engineering in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Glasgow.

**[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)], Programme Director, SSEN Transmission**

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] is a seasoned civil engineer with over two decades of experience in the UK construction and energy sectors. He currently oversees major infrastructure projects at SSEN Transmission, including the Shetland HVDC link, the Western Isles HVDC, Spittal to Peterhead HVDC and Shetland 2 HVDC delivery. His background includes roles at SSE plc, Morrison Construction, and Morgan Sindall. [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] earned a BEng (Hons) in Civil Engineering from the University of Abertay Dundee.

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
KATE FORBES, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR  
ECONOMY AND GAELIC  
Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

**[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)], Head of Corporate Affairs, SSEN Transmission**

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] has worked with SSE for over 20 years, currently leading corporate affairs for SSEN Transmission. He plays a key role in stakeholder engagement and public communications around major transmission upgrades, including the Pathway to Net Zero programme. Based in Perth, [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] has been instrumental in shaping the public dialogue around energy infrastructure in Scotland.

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
KATE FORBES, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR  
ECONOMY AND GAELIC  
Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

**ANNEX B**

**VISIT TO AN TAIGH CÈILIDH**

**OUTLINE OF EVENT**

A tour of both An Taigh Cèilidh's café and shop as well as their new performance space. The performance space was supported by the Scottish Government's Gaelic Capital Fund in May.

**ATTENDEES**

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] (co-manager of An Taigh Cèilidh)

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)], Manager and Co-founder of An Taigh Cèilidh

**ITINERARY**

**9.00** DFM welcomed by An Taigh Cèilidh managers [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] and [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)]

**9.05** DFM meets An Taigh Cèilidh staff [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)], [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] and [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)]

**9.10** DFM receives a tour of An Taigh Cèilidh

**9.20** DFM shown An Taigh Coinneimh (the company's new venue space) and introduced to service users [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)], [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)], [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] and [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)]

**9.30** DFM shown a short film about An Taigh Cèilidh

**9.35** Tea, coffee and biscuits in An Taigh Cèilidh with staff

**9.45** DFM leaves

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
KATE FORBES, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR  
ECONOMY AND GAELIC  
Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

**AN TAIGH CÈILIDH BACKGROUND**

This is a social enterprise in Stornoway town centre which launched several years ago and uses commercial initiatives to revitalise Gaelic within Stornoway. It works towards various goals in the National Gaelic Language Plan and the National Islands Plan and was cited in the Scottish Government's response to the Short Life Working Group on Economic and Social Opportunities for Gaelic.

In May, An Taigh Cèilidh received funding from the Gaelic Capital Fund to help with property renovations. The owners have recently expanded the business into a new space and this funding will help them make the necessary improvements to their café and events room.

An Taigh Cèilidh is a strong example of business entrepreneurialism working hand in hand with language and culture, boosting the local economy while engaging with the growing tourism sector, and also assuming ownership of and revitalising historical assets within Stornoway. In fulfilling these aims it also provides early career employment to young Gaelic speakers and learners. The funding they have received from the Scottish Government will help them expand their activities and build on the success they have achieved so far. The venture has also received much positive coverage for itself and Gaelic by developing the Gaelic edition of Scrabble.

Note from HIE

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] of HIE has provided the following note on An Taigh Cèilidh:

HIE has supported An Taigh Cèilidh since its establishment. Whilst not able to support them to establish the café due to the potential for displacement of activity from the many other cafés in the area, we were pleased to provide a capital grant to support them to take on and redevelop the facility across the road to provide Gaelic cultural events specifically targeting the visitor market.

We are keen to see An Taigh Cèilidh focus on developing their business model with a view to generating more of their income through trade. We see that there are significant opportunities to do so and have been encouraging the development of an enterprising mindset given the real interest in language and culture both from the local community and visitors to Stornoway.

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
KATE FORBES, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR  
ECONOMY AND GAELIC  
Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

**ANNEX C**

**SSEN ACCOMMODATION ANNOUNCEMENT**

**EVENT ITINERARY**

**10:00 – 10.10**

On arrival DFM will meet representatives of the key partner organisations involved in the Stornoway Airport Housing Development, including SSEN Transmission, CalMax Construction, and Tighean Innse Gall (TIG). Details of those representing the respective organisations are listed below (Comhairle nan Eilean Siar may send representative, to be confirmed).

**10:10 – 10.15**

DFM to meet two apprentices who are employed on the site, highlighting the economic and training opportunities the development is creating for young people.

**10:15 – 10:20**

Photo op with representatives from partner organisations/apprentices and DFM.

Background to feature co-branded SSEN Transmission/CalMax Construction/TIG signage, and plant equipment.

**10:20 – 10.30**

Media interviews (attendees to be confirmed).

**ATTENDEES**

**SSEN Transmission**

Sandy Mactaggart, Director of Offshore Delivery

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)], Head of Corporate Affairs

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)], Programme Director

**CalMax Construction**

Donald Mackay, Director CalMax Construction

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
KATE FORBES, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR  
ECONOMY AND GAELIC  
Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] – Designer/ Project Manager

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] – Site Manger

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] 2<sup>nd</sup> year Apprentice Plant Operator

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] 1<sup>st</sup> Year Apprentice Plumber

**Tighean Innse Gall (TIG)**

Donna Smith, CEO

**Comhairle nan Eilean Siar**

Attendees TBC

**SSEN BACKGROUND AND SENSITIVITIES**

- [Redacted - S.30(b)(i)]
- [Redacted - S.30(b)(i)]
- [Redacted - S.30(b)(i)]

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUPPLY PROGRAMME**

**We remain focused on our target of delivering 110,000 affordable homes by 2032, with at least 70% for social rent and 10% in rural and island areas.**

- We continue to work with our partners to increase the delivery of more affordable homes - the majority of which will be for social rent, including supporting acquisitions of existing properties.
- In 2025-26 we will be investing £808m, which includes the targeted use of £80 million for acquisitions.
- As of 30 Jun 2025, 29,680 affordable homes were completed, including 77% of homes for social rent.
- The Scottish Government has a strong track record in delivering affordable homes, with latest quarterly housing statistics showing more than 140,000 affordable homes have been delivered since 2007, with more than 100,000 of those being for social rent.
- The latest data to March 2024 showed we had delivered significantly more affordable homes than in England and Wales – since 2007, we have delivered 47% more affordable homes per head of population than in England, and 73% more than in Wales.
- An estimated 2,261 households with children have been helped into affordable housing in the year to June 2025.
- And keeping social rents lower than market rents benefits approximately 140,000 children in poverty each year.

**Our Rural and Islands Housing Action Plan is building on the delivery of over 12,000 affordable homes in rural communities between April 2016 and March 2024.**

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
KATE FORBES, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR  
ECONOMY AND GAELIC**

**Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

- In our 2025 Programme for Government, we announced we are extending new applications to the Rural and Island Housing Fund to March 2028.
- Demand led funds, such as the £30m Rural and Island Housing Fund and the £25m Rural Affordable Homes for Key Workers Fund, are key elements in addressing specific rural housing issues where they arise.

**AHSP - NA EILEAN SIAR**

- Na Eilean Siar's resource planning assumption for 2025-26 is £8.453 million
- Between 2007 and June 2025, a total of 774 affordable homes were delivered in Eilean Siar, of which 616 were for social rent.

**HOUSING EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN**

**Housing continues to be a clear priority for the Scottish Government, with a range of actions being taken to ensure people can access good quality, affordable homes backed by the increased investment in affordable housing of £808 million for 2025 to 2026.**

- We developed a Housing Emergency Action Plan setting out a short, sharp package of new, enhanced, and accelerated actions to tackle the housing emergency.
- The Plan commits to multi-year funding for affordable homes of up to £4.9 billion, through a mix of public and privately leveraged investment, over the next four years to deliver up to 36,000 homes, providing up to 24,000 children with a warm, safe home.

**ALL-TENURE DELIVERY AMBITION**

**Our response to the housing emergency takes a whole-system approach, recognising that maximising growth and investment is essential to alleviate the pressures on households and to build the capacity and momentum needed to deliver our ambitions.**

- This is not solely about the public sector doing more. It's about ensuring that the entire housing sector, public and private, plays its part in delivering the homes we need across all tenures and all communities, urban, island and rural.
- We will continue to invest extensively in affordable homes whilst working to create the optimum conditions for wider investment to be made in our housing sector with confidence and certainty.
- We have set out our new all-tenure delivery ambition, working with the housebuilding sector to increase delivery across all sectors by at least 10% each year over the next three years.

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
KATE FORBES, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR  
ECONOMY AND GAELIC  
Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

**ANNEX D**

**ARNISH ROAD GROUND BREAKING CEREMONY**

**OUTLINE OF EVENT**

You will lead a ceremony to mark the beginning of the construction phase for the new Arnish Road development, alongside partners at HIE, Stornoway Port Authority, Breedon Hebrides, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and SSEN.

DFM and Alex will each have a spade, with the remaining stakeholders standing behind them for photo opp. Stornoway Port will provide PPE to the DFM and attendees

The ground breaking will be held along the Arnish road, at the blue cross location on the below map – <https://maps.app.goo.gl/dqzW62Dz8Qd9jW4z8>

What 3 words – slouched.track.revealing

**ATTENDEES**

**Stornoway Port Authority** – Alex Macleod, Chief Executive

**SSEN** – Sandy Mactaggart, Head of Offshore Delivery

**HIE** – Jo Peteranna, Director of Area Operations

**Stornoway Trust** – [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] / [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)]

**Comhairle nan Eilean Siar** – Malcolm Burr, Chief Executive

**Breedon Hebrides** – [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)]

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)]

**PROJECT BACKGROUND**

The Arnish Moor Road is a 3,3km single lane road connecting the A859 to the Arnish Industrial Estate and Stornoway Deep Water Terminal, which are key strategic locations for offshore wind market opportunities on the Lewis coastline over the coming decade.

The upgrade of the road from one to two lanes is a critical enabling infrastructure project that will significantly improve access to the Arnish Peninsula. Improved access is key to unlocking

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
KATE FORBES, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR  
ECONOMY AND GAELIC  
Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

the local value chain, including proposed expansion plans by Navantia UK and Stornoway Port aimed at capturing the offshore wind market opportunity. Additionally, SSEN's Western Isles Connection Project will place further demands on the road, as its HVDC landfall site is located in the Arnish Industrial Estate. The cable route aligns the full length of the road to the HVDC converter station and associated infrastructure, reinforcing the need for this upgrade.

The SG is providing £3.4m grant for the project, as part of the SG's commitment to invest up to £500m over 5 years in offshore wind supply chain and infrastructure. The grant funding is being delivered by HIE, with match-funding of £3.4m from SSEN and £409k from Stornoway Port.

The development of the expanded new Arnish Moor Road will bring enhancements and serviceability benefits. These include enabling free flowing two-way traffic movements for vehicles of varying size; improved safety through enhanced sight lines, increased load capacity, and improved access from A859 to support oversized haulage to the industrial estate. The road will be built to a fully adoptable standard, allowing it to be formally adopted by the local authority as part of the national highway.

## **TOP LINES**

**Stornoway's location, skills and existing port infrastructure make it critical to realising the enormous economic opportunities presented by Scotland's growing offshore wind industry.**

- The strategic public investment in the Arnish Moor Road project will transform access to strategic industrial and port sites on the Isle of Lewis.
- Matched by investment from the private sector, the project will ensure the deep-water terminal, and increasingly important industrial cluster at Arnish Point, is equipped to meet demand and attract further investment and business.
- Funding for the project includes a £3.4 million grant award from Highlands and Islands Enterprise as part of the Scottish Government's commitment to invest up to £500 million over five years in the offshore wind supply chain and port infrastructure.

**The Scottish Government is doing everything within its power to ensure that the offshore wind opportunity for Scotland is realised so that projects and the associated economic benefits we all want to see are delivered.**

- Scotland is at the forefront of offshore wind development globally with a current reported potential pipeline of over 40 GW of offshore wind projects.
- We are investing up to £500m over 5 years to support market certainty, create a highly productive, competitive offshore wind economy and support thousands of jobs, while embedding innovation and boosting skills.

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
KATE FORBES, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR  
ECONOMY AND GAELIC**

**Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

- We welcome the commitment of developers to invest an average projection of £1.5 bn in Scotland per project on the 20 ScotWind projects.
- Including Ardersier, over the last 18 months we have invested almost £150 million in a range of projects, leveraging up to £670 million in private investment into projects with the potential to support around 5,000 jobs.
- Our investments have benefited a range of ports and supply chain projects including up to £24 million grant funding for Kishorn Port and up to £10 million for the Port of Nigg. Across Lerwick, Scapa and Montrose ports, we have provided over £9 million in support. And our £24.5 million funding for Sumitomo's subsea cable manufacturing plant at the Port of Nigg will help support around 330 jobs over 10 years.
- These projects demonstrate how the public and private sectors in Scotland are working together at pace to deliver high-quality green jobs and drive growth.

**PFG - OFFSHORE WIND SKILLS & JOBS**

**Scotland continues to lead the way in the creation of green jobs, with data from PwC's Green Jobs Barometer showing the number of green roles advertised has tripled since 2021.**

- Renewable energy is already boosting Scotland's economy and will provide many more jobs for communities across the country as well as wider infrastructure benefits.
- The expansion of offshore wind alone represents a significant opportunity to create thousands of high-quality jobs, offering opportunities to those entering the job market for the first time as well as those who want or need to change careers including as part of a just transition.
- Working with industry and public sector partners we will publish an evidence-based offshore wind skills action plan shortly.
- We are also providing targeted funding to the college sector in 2025-26 to establish an Offshore Wind Skills Programme, helping to create region-specific training hubs for offshore wind skills.
- The Scottish Government remains committed to Fair Work practices and has taken great strides towards embedding Fair Work despite having limited devolved powers and employment law being reserved.

**SENSITIVITIES**

1. [Redacted - S.30(b)(i)]
2. [Redacted - S.30(b)(i)]

**[Redacted - S.30(b)(i)]**

- [Redacted - S.30(b)(i)]
- [Redacted - S.30(b)(i)]
- [Redacted - S.30(b)(i)]
- [Redacted - S.30(b)(i)]
- [Redacted - S.30(b)(i)]

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
KATE FORBES, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR  
ECONOMY AND GAELIC  
Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

- [Redacted - S.30(b)(i)]

**MEDIA Q&A**

**[Redacted - S.30(b)(i)]**

- [Redacted - S.30(b)(i)]
- ScotWind reflects very significant market ambition for offshore wind in Scottish waters, delivering over £750m in revenues to the public purse.
- Developers have also committed to invest an average projection of £1.5 billion in Scotland across the 20 ScotWind projects. We expect developers to honour those commitments, and failure to do so can trigger remedies ranging from financial penalties to an inability to progress to a seabed lease.
- Over time, ScotWind could raise several billion pounds more in rental revenues when projects become operational.

**[Redacted - S.30(b)(i)]**

- Renewable energy is already boosting Scotland's economy and will provide many more jobs for communities across the country as well as wider infrastructure benefits.
- The expansion of offshore wind alone represents a significant opportunity to create thousands of high-quality jobs, offering opportunities to those entering the job market for the first time as well as those who want or need to change careers including as part of a just transition.
- We are reviewing our Good Practice Principles for community benefits from offshore renewables.
- The review will inform a refresh of our guidance so that community benefit arrangements deliver sustainable, meaningful impacts and help support our just and fair transition to net zero.

**[Redacted - S.30(b)(i)]**

- Increasing Scotland's renewable energy generation is critical to meeting our net zero targets – which in turn supports the long term future of our marine ecosystems, on which fishing depends.
- It is vital that offshore wind projects need to balance the impact on the marine environment and other marine users, which is why the Scottish Government is updating its offshore wind policies in partnership with marine sectors, including fisheries and local communities.
- We look forward to analysing all responses to the consultations on the updated Offshore Wind Policy Statement and the draft updated Sectoral Marine Plan for Offshore Wind Energy, and will publish an analysis of these in due course.

**[Redacted - S.30(b)(i)]**

- [Redacted - S.30(b)(i)]
- [Redacted - S.30(b)(i)]
- [Redacted - S.30(b)(i)]

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
KATE FORBES, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR  
ECONOMY AND GAELIC  
Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

[Redacted - S.30(b)(i)]

- The expansion of offshore wind offers a once-in-a-generation opportunity to create thousands of high-quality jobs that drive growth, foster innovation and support a just transition.
- We want to ensure these are good-quality, diverse and meaningful roles, open to new entrants as well as those looking to retrain. That means taking our existing skilled workforce and supply chain with us as the sector grows.
  
- To support this, the Scottish Government convened a short-life working group with industry and public sector partners to develop an Offshore Wind Skills Action Plan, to be published shortly.
- We are also providing targeted funding to the college sector in 2025-26 to deliver an Offshore Wind Skills Programme, creating region-specific training hubs that will equip people with the skills needed to seize the opportunities this sector presents.

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
KATE FORBES, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR  
ECONOMY AND GAELIC  
Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

**ANNEX E**

**NAVANTIA MEETING**

**OUTLINE OF EVENT**

Discussion with Arnish Navantia's head of operation's on the company's expansion plans for the yard and opportunity to meet members of the Navantia Arnish workforce.

**ATTENDEES**

Colin Morrison – Head of Operations (Arnish)

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] – Machine Operator

**BACKGROUND**

[Redacted – S.30 (b)(i)] the future of Arnish Fabrication Yard was secured through a takeover by Navantia UK Ltd. The workforce of 148 was retained. Since then, Navantia has continued to recruit to further roles based at Arnish, from apprentices through to senior managers.

[Redacted - S.33 (1)(b)]. [Redacted – S.30 (b)(i)].

The fabrication yard is ideally situated near the deep-water terminal which will allow for the assembly and movement of components as well as use of laydown space.

**[Redacted - S.33 (1)(b)]**

- [Redacted - S.33 (1)(b)]
- [Redacted - S.33 (1)(b)]
- [Redacted - S.33 (1)(b)]
- [Redacted - S.33 (1)(b)]

**Navantia UK - Plant and Facilities Development**

Set within the current footprint of the Arnish yard leased area, the proposed project will deliver the following:

- [Redacted - S.33 (1)(b)]
- [Redacted - S.33 (1)(b)]
- [Redacted - S.33 (1)(b)]
- [Redacted - S.33 (1)(b)]
- This investment is essential to meet the volume, quality, and delivery expectations of offshore wind clients, [Redacted - S.33 (1)(b)]

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
KATE FORBES, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR  
ECONOMY AND GAELIC  
Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

[Redacted - S.30 (b)(i)]

**Arnish Industrial Estate – preconstruction phase (design and development)**

HIE is also progressing a £1.1M own-hand project to allow the delivery of design and consenting of developments proposed on and around Plot 1.1 at Arnish Industrial Estate, currently leased to Navantia (UK) Ltd. The developments are proposed to support Navantia UK Ltd’s ambitious growth plans within the Offshore Wind Market.

[Redacted S.33(1)(b)]

- **[Redacted - S.33 (1)(b)]**
- **[Redacted - S.33 (1)(b)]**

[Redacted - S.33(1)(b)] [Redacted -S.33(1)(b)]

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KATE FORBES, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR  
ECONOMY AND GAELIC  
Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

**ANNEX F**

**STORNOWAY DEEP WATER TERMINAL ADVISORY BOARD – 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

**Attendees**

Kate Forbes MSP – Deputy First Minister & Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Gaelic  
(CHAIR)

Joanna Peteranna – Director of Area Operations, HIE

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] , HIE

Cllr Paul Steele – Leader, Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar

Malcolm Burr – Chief Executive, Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar

Anne Murray – Chief Officer for Economy and Community Regeneration, Comhairle Nan  
Eilean Siar

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] , Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] , Stornoway Trust

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] , Stornoway Port

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] , Stornoway Port

Alex Macleod – Chief Executive, Stornoway Port

Kevin Hobbs – Chief Executive Officer, CMAL

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] – Outer Hebrides Development Officer, Visit Scotland

Anne-Marie Martin – Deputy Director, Regional Economic Development, SG **(TBC)**

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)], Scottish Govt

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] - Regional Economic Development, Scottish Govt

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] – Regional Economic Development, Scottish Govt

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] , Scottish Govt **(TBC)**

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)], Scottish Govt

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] , Transport Scotland

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] , Transport Scotland **(TBC)**

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] – Associate Director, Scottish Futures Trust **(TBC)**

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
KATE FORBES, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR  
ECONOMY AND GAELIC  
Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

**Apologies**

Stuart Black - Chief Executive, HIE

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] – Director of Industry & Destination Development, Visit Scotland

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] – Destination Development Director, Visit Scotland

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] , Scottish Govt

**(1) CHAIR'S BRIEF**

**i.WELCOME (DFM) 2 mins**

The majority of attendees will have already met so there is no need for all to do formal introductions. Please welcome [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)], SG Offshore Wind Policy Official, [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] will be the SG Energy representative to take help take this work forward to its next phase for SG (given the energy developments focus).

**ii. REVIEW OF MINUTES AND ACTIONS OUTSTANDING FROM MEETING OF 13<sup>TH</sup> MAY (DFM) 1 min PAPER 2**

Ask if attendees are happy with the minutes of the previous Advisory Board. Actions will all be picked up in today's agenda so won't go through them separately.

**iii. STORNOWAY DWT AND SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE –UPDATE (Alex Macleod) 10 mins PAPER 3**

**Linkspan and Deep Water Terminal South**

[Redacted S.33 (1)(b)]. At the previous Advisory Board meeting Alex was scoping [Redacted - S.33 (1)(b)]. [Redacted S.33(1)(b). Alex should be asked about expected timelines for progressing this work.

Alex will also briefly update on plans for the second stage of Deep Water Terminal. This will be needed if the port is to service larger renewables components. [Redacted S.33 (1)(b)] .

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
KATE FORBES, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR  
ECONOMY AND GAELIC  
Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

[Redacted S.33(1)(b)]. [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.33 (1)(b)]. [Redacted - S.33 (1)(b)]–  
[Redacted S.33 (1)(b)].

**Deepwater Terminal Business Case Update**

[Redacted s.30(b)(i)]. [Redacted S.33 (1)(b)]. [Redacted S.33 (1)(b)]. [Redacted S.33 (1)(b)].

**iv. ARNISH DEVELOPMENTS (Alex Macleod/Jo Peteranna) 10 mins PAPER 3**

**Arnish Road Project Progress (Alex) PAPER 3**

Invite Alex (SPA) to give a brief update on the Arnish Road project. As you will have been seen at the groundbreaking ceremony today the Arnish Road contract will have been awarded and work is now commencing. [Redacted – S.33(1)(b)]

**Wider Arnish site developments (Jo)**

Invite Jo (HIE) to provide an update on the wider development activity on the Arnish Industrial Park (which HIE own). The intention of this agenda item is to give a high -level overview of the planned and proposed future investment at the industrial estate which is primarily to support Navantia UK's growth plans to capitalise on and meet the needs of the offshore wind sector which is great news for the island's economy. Note we are trying to get a short meet for you with Navantia to enable you to hear their plans and to capture visuals for [Redacted - S.33 (1)(b)].

Once Alex and Jo have updated please open it up to attendees for questions.

**v.FREIGHT CAPACITY ([Redacted - S.38(1)(b)]/Anne Murray) 20 mins PAPERS 4 and 7**

Kevin Hobbs, CEO CMAL, will be in attendance online for this item so please welcome him.

[Redacted - S.30 (b)(i)] ;[Redacted - S.33 (1)(b)]. [Redacted - S.30 (b)(i)]. [Redacted - S.30 (b)(i)]. [Redacted - S.30 (b)(i)]. [Redacted - S.30 (b)(i)].

Please invite [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] (TS) and Anne (CnES) to provide their updates. Then open the floor to wider questions. And seek to define clear next steps to move things forward.

**Transport Scotland Update ([Redacted - S.38(1)(b)]) PAPER 7**

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
KATE FORBES, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR  
ECONOMY AND GAELIC  
Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

[Redacted - S.30 (b)(i)]. [Redacted - S.30 (b)(i)].

**Freight Stakeholder Group (Anne) PAPER 4**

Invite Anne (CnES) to give a short update. Anne has convened regular stakeholder meetings related to issues arising from freight capacity. Partners have found these meetings useful to gather information. These meetings have been attended by attendees of the Advisory Board but have also included representatives from CalMac and CMAL. [Redacted - S.30 (b)(i)]. [Redacted - S.30 (b)(i)]. Anne Murray has been tasked by the Chair Malcolm Burr with putting that in place and involving others – including TS and CMAL in that discussion. [Redacted - S.30 (b)(i)].

**Next Steps (All)**

Once [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] and Anne have provided updates we would ask you to open discussion up to the wider group. [Redacted - S.30 (b)(i)]. [Redacted - S.30 (b)(i)]. [Redacted - S.30 (b)(i)]

**vi.ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY UPDATE ([Redacted - S.38(1)(b)]) 10 mins PAPER 4**

Invite [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] (CnES) to provide an update on the accommodation strategy. The accommodation strategy has developed significantly since the last Advisory Board with a clear pipeline of work underway. Paper 4 contains details of a number of accommodation developments, with a particular focus on SSEN's work as a first mover in Developer Accommodation which has embedded a commitment to legacy housing once their project is complete. Please invite comments from attendees.

**vii.MAJOR DEVELOPERS FORUM (Jo Peteranna/[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)]) 10 mins PAPER 5**

**Overview of 2<sup>nd</sup> October Meeting (Joanna)**

**Skills and Supply Chain Workstream Updates ([Redacted - S.38(1)(b)])**

**Next steps (All)**

Joanna (HIE) will give a short update of the 2<sup>nd</sup> October meeting before [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] (HIE) will provide a wider update focusing on the Skills and Supply Chain Workstream updates. Further details are contained in Paper 5. UHI are taking the lead in the skills workstream. The first in a series of supply chain development events took place in October which was well attended by developers, contractors and local businesses. Ask for comments or queries from attendees when [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] concludes.

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
KATE FORBES, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR  
ECONOMY AND GAELIC  
Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

**viii. FUTURE GOVERNANCE LEWIS RENEWABLES PROGRAMME DELIVERY BOARD (Jo Peteranna/Anne Murray) 20 mins PAPERS 5 and 6**

Before asking for updates please re-confirm to attendees that as this will be your last engagement with the Advisory Board, Ms Martin will attend the newly constituted Programme Delivery Board on a bi-annual basis to maintain Ministerial engagement. Future official support will be provided by SG Energy Colleagues. [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] will undertake this support in the first instance. Officials from Regional Economic Development will also attend the new Board on a regular basis (Anne-Marie Martin RED DD and/or [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] RED).

Several elements regarding future governance will be discussed under this agenda item. We ask that you invite those listed below to give their updates to the Board and then open to wider discussion after all the updates have been provided given the interconnected nature of the updates.

**Future Governance Arrangements (Jo/Anne) PAPERS 5 and 6**

Invite Jo (HIE) and Anne (CnES) to provide an update on future governance arrangements. One of the recommendations from the previous Gateway Review was to transfer leadership and ownership of the next stage of the project - realising the benefits through a co-ordinated approach to broader economic strategy - to local partners. After this final DWT Advisory Board is held the new Lewis Renewables Programme Delivery Board will take its place. Strategic oversight and secretariat for the new Board will be undertaken at a local level. Jo and Anne will outline the remit and scope of this new Board. Jo has shared the draft Terms of Reference, including proposed membership, for the new board (Paper 6).

**Local Chair appointment (Jo/Anne) PAPER 5**

Invite Jo (HIE) and Anne (CnES) to provide an update on the appointment of a local chair. Again, the appointment of a local chair is in response to the previous gateway review recommendation which outlined that a local champion of the project would be key to progress future work streams. HIE have informally confirmed that [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] has agreed to take on the role as Local Chair. [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] is a previous leader of Comhairle and is a current board member of the Stornoway Port Authority. He is also a long serving member of the Stornoway Deepwater Terminal Advisory Board.

**Development Executive recruitment update (Jo) PAPER 5**

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
KATE FORBES, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR  
ECONOMY AND GAELIC  
Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

Invite Jo (HIE) to provide an update on the Development Executive post. As discussed at the previous Advisory Board it was agreed that a shared post is needed to work between partners to drive the work of the board forward. [Redacted - S.33 (1) (b)]. [Redacted - S.33 (1) (b)]. [Redacted - S.33 (1) (b)]. [Redacted - S.33 (1) (b)]. **[Redacted - S.30 (b)(i)]**

**ix.FINANCE AND CLAIMS (DFM) 1 min PAPER 3**

Please ask Alex (SPA) to confirm that SPA is on track to achieve the targets for the annual grant allocation for FY 25/26. As per Paper 3 Alex expects to meet the required targets for this financial year in order to receive the full annual GAM grant allocation for FY 25/26 (£1.346m revenue).

**x.ACTIONS AGREED (DFM) 5 mins**

Please summarise any actions agreed as a result of the Advisory Board. [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] is taking the Minutes and can assist you with those if needed.

**xi.A.O.C.B (All) 2 mins**

Invite the Board to raise any remaining competent issues for discussion.

**CLOSING REMARKS**

As this is the last Advisory Board please thank all attendees for their contributions and wish the new board (and its Chair [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)]) every success. It has been a pleasure to work with them all and their inputs have been appreciated in getting the port up and running (SPA), preparing for the influx of cruise visitors (all) and in driving forward the work needed to successfully land renewable developments.

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
KATE FORBES, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR  
ECONOMY AND GAELIC  
Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

**(2) MINUTES OF ADVISORY BOARD MEETING OF 13<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2025**

Meeting Held at Amity House, Stornoway and Virtually via MS Teams on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2025  
at 15:00

**1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

**Attendees**

Kate Forbes MSP – Deputy First Minister & Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Gaelic  
(CHAIR)

Joanna Peteranna – Director of Area Operations, HIE

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] , HIE

Cllr Paul Steele – Leader, Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar

Malcolm Burr – Chief Executive, Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar

Anne Murray – Chief Officer for Economy and Community Regeneration, Comhairle Nan  
Eilean Siar

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] , Stornoway Trust

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] , Stornoway Port

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] , Stornoway Port

Alex Macleod – Chief Executive, Stornoway Port

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] – Destination Development Director, Visit Scotland

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] , Capital Investment Policy, Scottish Govt

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] , Scottish Govt

Anne-Marie Martin – Deputy Director, Regional Economic Development, SG

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] - Regional Economic Development, Scottish Govt

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] – Regional Economic Development, Scottish Govt

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] , Transport Scotland

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] – Associate Director, Scottish Futures Trust

**Apologies**

Stuart Black- Chief Executive, HIE

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] – Director of Industry & Destination Development, Visit Scotland

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
KATE FORBES, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR  
ECONOMY AND GAELIC**

**Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] , Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] , Transport Scotland

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)], Transport Scotland

**2. REVIEW OF MINUTES AND ACTIONS OUTSTANDING FROM MEETING OF 30<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER**

No amendments were tabled to the minutes of the previous meeting held on the 30<sup>th</sup> October 2024.

**3. STORNOWAY DWT AND SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE**

Alex gave a presentation on the multiple workstreams and pipeline of opportunity at the port. Cruise numbers continuing to steadily increase to manageable levels for 2025 season. Alex noted the SPA'S objections to the proposed cruise levy and that those objections were being fed into the ongoing consultation process. The loss of Bakkafröst has had a sizeable impact on the local economy and this is felt at the port, in regards to forward finance. Navantia locating at Arnish yard has been a big positive for the port authority with a positive pipeline of economic opportunities to work around.

Value engineering is ongoing for the Arnish Road project, process has been positive so far with work still ongoing on funding for the upgrade. [Redacted – S.33(1)(b)]. [Redacted – S.33(1)(b)]. DFM was keen to understand if there are any barriers to project progress and what collaboration would be required if so to resolve such barriers and progress towards project delivery. DFM offered her support to bring parties together to resolve issues if that were needed.

[Redacted - S.33 (1) (b)]. [Redacted - S.30 (b)(i)]. [Redacted - S.30 (b)(i)].

[Redacted - S.33 (1) (b)]. [Redacted - S.33 (1) (b)]. [Redacted - S.33 (1) (b)]. [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted - S.33 (1) (b)].

Work continues towards shovel-readiness for the Deep Water Terminal South project with aim of having the project shovel ready by Spring 2026. Alongside this, strategic work regarding a new Port Masterplan is underway with consultants. That work will define which projects will be picked up in the new Port Masterplan.

**4. FREIGHT CAPACITY**

Issue is on DFM's radar following yesterday's discussions at CoHI. It was noted that SSEN is the first-moving project with the Interconnector and need to lead on their development but that a partnership approach should be taken. The need to tackle the challenge of freight capacity for subsequent multiple renewables projects on Lewis presents risks and issues. Alex presented a rough estimate of potential ferry revenue on his slides. Alex and [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] to work to refine these figures in coming weeks to give a full picture of the revenue opportunity with regards to freight. [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] recognised the

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
KATE FORBES, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR  
ECONOMY AND GAELIC**

**Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

significant challenge facing projects on freight and noted the constructive engagement with SSEN, CMAL and CalMac to this juncture. SSEN are currently drafting a logistics plan that will fully outline their freight requirements for the Interconnector project with a significant draft of this plan expected to be presented in early June. [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted - S.33 (1) (b)]. [Redacted - S.33 (1) (b)]. [Redacted - S.33 (1) (b)]. DFM noted a partnership approach would be required and encouraged all partners to continue to develop existing workshopping groups and set an action for [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] to seek to revise and refine the revenue figures set out in Alex's update, working with [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)]. With an active workshopping group, DFM is keen to be kept in the loop on solutions arising from SSEN's logistics plan and the freight demand of all renewables projects coming on stream over the coming years. All partners must take ownership of relevant parts of the freight capacity solution if we are to find an acceptable way forward.

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] raised the urgent need for a dedicated freight service [Redacted - S.33 (1)(b)]. [Redacted - S.33 (1) (b)]. [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] noted priority should be to secure vessels in a timely manner and that the work assessing the scale of the challenge may be immaterial given the obvious need for additional freight. A couple of members noted that SSEN won't be the only developers involved for too long, with other developers projects coming on stream and the full impact of their freight capacity demands must be measured and considered. Ambition for freight capacity needs should be higher than the SSEN demand to accommodate all freight and workforce transport requirements for renewables projects expected to come on stream in later years. Joanna noted that it is not just the movement of components but of people too that need to be addressed.

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] recommended that SSEN should be invited to a subsequent meeting to provide an update on their plans.

**5. ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY**

Anne gave an update on behalf of [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)], who sent his apologies for the meeting given the last minute shift in start time. Current focus remains around developer's accommodation requirements between 2026 and 2031. It is estimated during this period there will be 1.5k transient workers on the islands in total with a peak of 624 in 2028/29. With SSEN being the first movers, focus has been on meeting their immediate needs from 2026 and working towards solutions with legacy impact beyond construction period. [Redacted - S.33(1)(b)] [Redacted - S.33(1)(b)] [Redacted - S.33 (1) (b)]. [Redacted - S.33 (1) (b)]. [Redacted - S.33 (1) (b)]. Cllr Paul Steele additionally noted the freight challenge in transporting materials for new build sites.

**6. MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS FORUM**

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] gave an update on progress with the Major Developer's Forum following their meeting today. The forum was established in July 2023 to attempt to ensure community benefits are baked into this programme of renewables investments. Collective

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
KATE FORBES, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR  
ECONOMY AND GAELIC**

**Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

narrative between developers on demand for freight, accommodation and labour is under constant review by the group. Developers have recently agreed to a set of 'Developers Principles' through the forum, which will provide a framework for all developers to work to. These include principles around; Local economic and supply chain development, community benefit, sectoral co-existence and environmental protection. All of these principles have been well received by the developers involved. Priority workstreams around skills, housing, labour, peat management, supply chain development and communications have been identified and are being taken forward within the forum. Skills partners have been progressing an energy prospectus, which was launched today, setting out local skills offerings to students and developers. A new brand and accompanying website, Outer Hebrides- Powering Our Future, will be launched at the All Energy Conference in Glasgow this week. This new brand will attempt to highlight the collective opportunity within the renewables sector, signpost available support and rally to attract talented diaspora back to the area.

**7. FUTURE GOVERNANCE OF THE LEWIS MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS PROGRAMME DELIVERY BOARD**

DFM informed the board that, given ministerial code issues and potential for conflicts in the consenting of renewables development, she would not be able to chair the new Lewis Major Developments Programme Delivery Board. However, ministers will still be able to engage with the new board to pick up on specific issues and DFM has offered to co-chair the first meeting of the new board alongside a local co-chair to aide this transition. DFM also offered to engage directly with the new chairperson when they come into post to help ensure a smooth handover. Joanna noted the letter sent last week from DFM advising partners of this and that, while the opportunity to work with Ms Martin and energy officials was greatly received, a continued relationship with colleagues in SG Regional Economic Development would also be useful.

Alex suggested that DFM reschedule her cancelled visit today to come to Stornoway for the SPA's annual stakeholder event and for a final in-person advisory board on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October. DFM is happy to join on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October, subject to diary arrangements. Alex also noted that the task of agreeing a local chair had been a difficult one between local partners and finding the right person for the role had been a challenge. It was however acknowledged that Ministers could not Chair the successor board and local partners will work to find a Chair.

Joanna gave an update on the project manager role, which came from the last gateway review's recommendation for a local strategic leader. Stuart Black of HIE had, at the last advisory board, offered to create the post within HIE with the help of partnership funding for the role. [Redacted - S.33 (1) (b)]. This new project manager will strategically drive the Benefits Realisation Plan, developed by local partners, for the programme of renewables developments in the Outer Hebrides. Partners were encouraged to share the advert for the post widely within their networks once it goes live.

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
KATE FORBES, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR  
ECONOMY AND GAELIC  
Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

**8. FINANCE AND CLAIMS**

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] confirmed that the grant payment of £1.347m has been made for FY 2025/26 following the achievement of GAM contractual milestones. Partners are optimistic that targets for this coming financial year will also be met.

**9. ACTIONS AGREED**

- Transport Scotland and SPA to investigate the PAS issue and the ferry agreement and provide briefing to the DFM, copying RED colleagues.
- Anne-Marie Martin and [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] to follow up with SNIB to update them on how the GAM operates and on our wider work on the island.
- Alex Macleod to provide regular briefing to DFM and SG colleagues over next critical two month phase of Arnish Rd project. DFM also happy to facilitate any conversations to break through stumbling blocks on this.
- [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] and [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] to work with SPA colleagues on reviewing freight revenue figures across the programme.
- Transport Scotland to ask SSEN to expand ) their work on transport and freight, and discussion of their logistics plan and revenue figures, to include HIE, CnES and SPA to establish ownership of each part of the solution. Working towards identifying a clear way forward by end of the summer.
- All colleagues to widely share Project Manager post advert with their networks once it goes live. Joanna to share the advert when available.
- DFM and SG colleagues to explore possibility of DFM visiting Stornoway for SPA stakeholder event on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October for the last meeting of the Stornoway Port Advisory Board.
- Local partners to continue to work to appoint a chair for the new Lewis Major Developments Programme Delivery Board. If possible to have them in place by 2 October to ensure a smooth transition once the current board concludes this will be helpful.

**10. A.O.C.B.**

None raised under A.O.C.B.

**(3) STORNOWAY PORT AUTHORITY DEVELOPMENTS BRIEFING**

**Arnish Road**

[Redacted - S.33 (1) (b)]. [Redacted - S.33 (1) (b)].

1. [Redacted - S.33 (1) (b)].
2. [Redacted - S.33 (1) (b)].
3. [Redacted - S.33 (1) (b)].
4. [Redacted - S.33 (1) (b)].
5. [Redacted - S.33 (1) (b)].
6. [Redacted - S.33 (1) (b)].

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
KATE FORBES, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR  
ECONOMY AND GAELIC  
Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

7. [Redacted - S.33 (1) (b)].
8. [Redacted - S.33 (1) (b)].

[Redacted - S.33 (1) (b)]. A turf cutting ceremony is proposed for the 5<sup>th</sup> of November.

Stornoway Port and its consultants have managed this entire project, and all the construction/funding contracts are contracted with Stornoway Port.

1. HIE/SG - £3.4million
2. [Redacted - S.33 (1) (b)].
3. [Redacted - S.33 (1) (b)].
4. [Redacted - S.33 (1) (b)].

[Redacted - S.33 (1) (b)].

### **Linkspan Project**

Strategically critical investment to ensure the resilience of the existing at-capacity ferry service, but also to accommodate the significant increase in freight traffic resulting from the interconnector and major renewables projects.

[Redacted S.33 (1)(b)]. [Redacted S.33 (1)(b)]. [Redacted S.33 (1)(b)].

[Redacted - S.33 (1) (b)]. [Redacted - S.33 (1) (b)].

[Redacted - S.33 (1) (b)]. Engagement has taken place over a number of months and has involved detailed financial modelling, sensitivity analysis and assessment of the Port's economic impact and resilience.

[Redacted S.33 (1)(b)]. [Redacted S.33 (1)(b)].

[Redacted S.33 (1)(b)].

[Redacted S.33 (1)(b)].

### **DWT Business Case Update**

The Port economists have been working on the FBC for Deep Water Terminal project. Completion is expected before the end of October.

### **Deep Water South**

The Deep Water South (DWS) development is a strategic extension of the Deep Water Terminal (DWT), required to meet the forecast operational and spatial demands associated with large-scale offshore and onshore wind deployment. The project will:

- Provide additional laydown capacity, pier depth and operational flexibility required for offshore wind construction and assembly.

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
KATE FORBES, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR  
ECONOMY AND GAELIC  
Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

- Enable year-round utilisation of the Port by separating cruise and energy-related operations.
- Position Stornoway as a key strategic hub for national net-zero infrastructure delivery.

[Redacted - S.33 (1) (b)]. [Redacted - S.33 (1) (b)]. [Redacted - S.33 (1) (b)]. [Redacted - S.33 (1) (b)]. [Redacted - S.33 (1) (b)].

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**DWT – Growth Accelerator Targets**

[Redacted - S.33 (1) (b)].

[Redacted - S.33 (1) (b)].

1. Opening Date – Achieved April 2024
2. [Redacted - S.33 (1) (b)].
3. [Redacted - S.33 (1) (b)].
4. [Redacted - S.33 (1) (b)].

**(4) COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR BRIEFING**

**MDF Forum Update**

- Major Development Forum had a productive and well-attended meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2025, in Stornoway.
- There was in-person attendance from all Major Developers, HIE, SDS, CNES, UHINWH, Crown Estate Scotland, Scottish Government, and Prosper.
- There were a significant number of actions arising which reflect the evolution of the MDF, and stage of the proposed developments. These include:
  - Terms of Reference and Sub-Group structures / membership to be reviewed
  - A dedicated sub-group focused on operational delivery, bringing in Tier 1 and Tier 2 contractors, will be explored.
- Developers remain committed to the MDF and recognise the value and benefits of coming together through the Forum.
- The MDF were updated on proposals to create the Lewis Major Developments Programme Delivery Board as a successor to the DWT-AB, and were welcoming of this development.
- Skills was a particular focus of the discussion and it has been agreed to convene a meeting of the Industry Skills Sub-Group in November, to ensure alignment with the development of the Workforce North agenda in the Outer Hebrides, and to take forward actions around:
  - Collaborative approaches to targeting the diaspora with employment opportunities.

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
KATE FORBES, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR  
ECONOMY AND GAELIC**

**Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

- Developing joint public / private sector employment and relocation offers for incoming workforce and their families.
- Collaboration around school engagement and development of resources.
- The meeting took place the day after a successful joint Supply Chain Event, arranged by HIE. Arising from this it was agreed there is a need to consider how local contractors can be supported to engage in forthcoming procurement processes. The approach to this is two-fold – ensuring local firms have the capacity to engage but also looking at procurement strategies and frameworks that developers have in place and scope to modify these.
- The Comhairle raised a number of items with attendees where further collaboration would be welcomed. These included: delivery mechanisms for affordable energy; investment in energy efficiency research and interventions; contribution towards a Planning Officer (Discharge of Conditions) post within the Comhairle’s Planning Service.
- Community Planning Seminar will be convened to consider impact of projects across a range of community planning partners.
- Communications Sub-Group will be convened to build on the Outer Hebrides: Powering Our Future Website, and to give consideration to development of a shared communications plan.
- Given the pace of activity, additional time and resource will be needed from the public sector in coming months in order to meaningfully drive forward the actions arising from the MDF.

**Freight Capacity Stakeholder Group**

- Following the last meeting of the DWT-AB, the public sector has met three times to discuss freight capacity issues in the islands from 2026 onwards (next meeting scheduled for 27<sup>th</sup> October).
- While it is appreciated that there is ongoing discussion between individual developers and Transport Scotland, CalMac, Loganair, etc and that developers will have their own freight plans to support project delivery, it is felt the public sector needed to have these meetings to ensure ongoing visibility of cumulative impacts that will not be addressed via individual freight and logistics plans.
- The two meetings held to date have seen broad consensus that there is a freight capacity issue and that there is a need for a public / private sector response.
- [Redacted - S.33 (1)(b)]
- Given an operational solution appears to exist, the discussion has now reached the stage where there needs to be clarity on whether the public sector is willing to move forward with and put the initial funding into this, on the basis that the capacity would be utilised by the private sector. The position on this will be discussed at the meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup> October in terms of seeking initial views from Scottish Government on this proposition.

Anne Murray, Chief Officer, Economic & Community Regeneration, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

**Developer Accommodation Update**

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
KATE FORBES, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR  
ECONOMY AND GAELIC**

**Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

- SSEN Transmission (SSEN-T) first to move on Developer Housing; other developers encouraged to follow the SSEN-T ‘Legacy Housing’ model as they move closer to mobilisation
- SSEN-T model is to majority fund new house construction and to support financing costs for local partner (Hebridean Housing Partnership, Tighean Innse Gall or private contractor) contribution
- Houses return to local market in 2030, effectively gifted by SSEN-T

**[Redacted - S.33 (1)(b)]**

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**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
KATE FORBES, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR  
ECONOMY AND GAELIC**

**Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

- [Redacted - S.33 (1)(b)]
- [Redacted - S.33 (1)(b)]
- [Redacted - S.33 (1)(b)]

**KEY POINTS**

- Provision of Legacy Housing will be additional to local Affordable Housing Supply Programme
- [Redacted - S.33 (1)(b)]
- Local agencies actively exploring spousal opportunities in Care, Education and other sectors to encourage whole-family relocation to the islands
- Early Years Care not a statutory function of the Local Authority and private / Government support required to complete an attractive relocation offer for incoming worker families

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)], Chief Planning Officer, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

**(5) HIE BRIEFING**

**Local Chair appointment**

A preferred candidate has been identified and there are plans for HIE and CnES to arrange a joint meeting with the individual ideally week beginning 27<sup>th</sup> October. The role will be discussed with a view to agreeing an initial appointment and timetable for establishment of the new delivery board.

**Future Governance arrangements and secretariat handover**

SFT has been providing welcome support to HIE and CnES to develop terms of reference for the new governance arrangements. Draft ToRs are shared along with this briefing but remain subject to finalisation and agreement by CnES and HIE. CnES has agreed to provide secretariat. We anticipate convening the first meeting of the new board in Q1 of 2026.

**Major Developer's Forum Skills and Supply Chain Workstreams**

Skills

This workstream is now being led by [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] at UHI North, West & Hebrides. We have engaged with Workforce North and [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] of SDS has been over to Stornoway twice in the last 6 weeks and has presented at the Prosper Economic Forum, the UHI

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
KATE FORBES, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR  
ECONOMY AND GAELIC  
Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

Islands Forum and the Major Development Forum. This has provided the opportunity for sharing of information and consideration of the action required.

The first of programme of school engagement events was held at Nicolson Institute in October.

This was well attended by businesses offering a range of career opportunities.

This year's UHI Islands Forum was hosted in Stornoway and had a focus on a just transition to net zero. The presentations and discussions at that event will help shape the UHI skills offering and research for the future.

A key action to be taken forward is to explore options for establishing a database of people who could be key targets for employment opportunities, especially those who have left the islands and could be drawn to return through increased, well paid, island-based roles.

Supply Chain

The first in a series of supply chain development events was held at the beginning of October and was very well attended by developers, main contractors and local businesses interested in finding out more about how they could get involved. This was the first in what will be a regular series of events.

HIE is beginning to see enquiries coming through from businesses seeking to invest in getting ready for the energy opportunity.

**Dev Exec recruitment**

Partners have agreed the need to adequately resource the benefits realisation phase following the investment in the Stornoway Deep Water Terminal and in the context of the live energy sector opportunity. HIE is continuing to collaborate with SFT and SG RED and Islands Team to agree a suitable way forward. HIE's revenue budget position does not currently allow for recruitment however we have committed budget towards some consultancy work during the current financial year. This consultancy will take forward several workstreams which will advance the overall programme of work in anticipation of finalising a plan for an appointment to the post in due course.

Joanna Peteranna  
24<sup>th</sup> October 2025

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
KATE FORBES, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR  
ECONOMY AND GAELIC  
Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

**(6): LEWIS RENEWABLES PROGRAMME DELIVERY BOARD – DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE**

## **LEWIS RENEWABLES – PROGRAMME DELIVERY BOARD**

### **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

#### **Background**

- 1.1 Over the next decade there will be an estimated £6.8bn level of investment happening on the Isle of Lewis where a series of significant renewable energy and supporting deployments are anticipated. These deployments include:
- [Redacted - S.33(1)(b)]
  - [Redacted - S.33(1)(b)]
  - [Redacted - S.33(1)(b)]
  - [Redacted - S.33(1)(b)]
- 1.2 This will represent the largest ever private sector investment into the Outer Hebrides and will coincide with a further series of investments, such as the activity being delivered through the Islands Growth Deal, by the UK and Scottish Governments.
- 1.3 This activity offers a transformational economic opportunity for the Outer Hebrides. It will offer significant construction and operational phase benefits for local supply chains, will stimulate new local jobs and will create significant environmental benefits. It will also create logistical challenges and risks as projects seek to go into construction to broadly similar timescales.
- 1.4 The programme of energy developments is of national significance in Scotland's journey to meeting net zero targets.

#### **Purpose and role**

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
KATE FORBES, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR  
ECONOMY AND GAELIC**

**Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

2.1 The Delivery Board will provide strategic leadership to the successful deployment of the Lewis Renewables Programme. It will take a place-based approach to the pipeline of investment by bringing together national and local stakeholder representatives at a senior level, ensuring the Programme's potential impact of national significance to Scotland's economy and journey to meeting net zero targets can be fully realised.

3.1 The Programme Delivery Board will function during the Consenting, Co-ordination and Legacy Phases of the Lewis Renewables Programme in order to:

- Promote a co-ordinated approach to the successful delivery of the Renewables Programme, in line with achievement of net zero and economic benefit outcomes
- Seek to resolve risks and issues that may impact on the successful delivery of the Renewables Programme
- Improve alignment of resources and identify innovative solutions where blockages to progress are foreseen
- Consider the impact on critical infrastructure, ensuring the Programme's impact on the community is minimised
- Maximise the benefits accruing to public and private sector investment in enabling infrastructure, including the Stornoway Deep Water Terminal.
- Ensure learning is applied to other parts of the Highlands and Islands

3.2 The Advisory board is not for the following purposes;

- Lobbying by/of stakeholders
- Review of financial, funding or contractual arrangements
- Review of consenting processes

**Membership**

4.1 The initial membership of the Lewis Major Developments Advisory Board will comprise of:

- Scottish Government – Regional Economic Development and Energy Team
- Transport Scotland
- Scottish Futures Trust
- Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
- Highlands and Islands Enterprise

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
KATE FORBES, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR  
ECONOMY AND GAELIC**

**Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

- Stornoway Port Authority

4.2 Other bodies may be asked to join the Advisory Board as determined by the needs of the Programme.

**Working Principles**

5.1 It is proposed that the meetings are set with reference to the meetings of the Major Development Forum and will be held at least six-monthly. Frequency of meetings to reviewed as requested by member stakeholders depending on requirements.

5.2 Comhairle nan Eilean Siar will provide a Secretariat, or similar arrangement to support administration, compile meeting minutes, collate action and help implement Advisory Board decisions.

**(7): TRANSPORT SCOTLAND FREIGHT BRIEFING**

**SSEN-T Background**

1. TS officials, along with CalMac and CMAL, have continued to meet with partners to seek to support SSEN-T efforts to develop its ferry logistics solution(s) to successfully deliver its development. TS CEO has also been meeting quarterly with SSEN-T Director Sandy MacTaggart to discuss these matters.
2. [Redacted - S.33 (1) (b)]. This sailing currently operates 3 times a day, including one dedicated overnight freight sailing.
3. As a developer, SSEN-T are responsible for preparing an application for consent, including an environmental assessment and a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) demonstrating how they will mitigate the impacts of their development.
4. [Redacted – S.30(b)(i)]
5. Most recently Transport Scotland met with SSEN-T on 1 October to receive an update on its Construction Traffic Management Plan. [Redacted - S.33 (1) (b)].
6. [Redacted - S.33(1)(b)]

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
KATE FORBES, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR  
ECONOMY AND GAELIC  
Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

7. [Redacted - S.33(1)(b)]

**Wider Developments Background**

8. [Redacted – S.30(b)(i)]
9. However, the soon to be established Lewis Renewables Programme Delivery Board (managed by CnES and HIE), provides an opportunity to establish clearer governance and provide coordination of the range of development impacts, including logistics matters. This would help mitigate risk and liabilities for the Scottish Government.
10. TS officials have asked for more information on the planned Terms of Reference for the Delivery Board and the separate refreshed Major Developer Forum. In particular of any specific asks of Transport Scotland, to allow these to be appropriately considered via the correct channels for all parties involved.
11. The Comhairle nan Eilean Siar have convened a series of meetings of public sector partners regarding freight, most recently 27 October 2025. The group concluded that there is an urgent need to meet with SSEN-T and the other developers and impress on them the urgency of coming forward with detailed plans.

**Lines to Take**

**We recognise the importance of the SSEN-T development to Lewis and the possible challenges associated with its logistical planning.**

- It is right that developers are responsible for considering and mitigating their impacts on infrastructure, including transport.
- However Transport Scotland officials, along with CalMac and CMAL, continue to engage with SSEN-T to support their planning. Transport Scotland notes it requires further information from SSEN-T and other developers on likely movements to better understand ferry demand.

**As Ministers have previously confirmed, given the commercial nature of the developments we would expect developers, including SSEN-T to ensure that the impacts are clearly understood and mitigations are developed.**

- However, the public sector will help input into these solutions and are exploring possible models that may assist.
- The current lack of available suitable vessels and the practicalities of freight movements, including marshalling at Ullapool, are a challenge.

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
KATE FORBES, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR  
ECONOMY AND GAELIC  
Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

**We understand that SSEN-T are working hard to finalise their draft of their Construction Traffic Management Plan and exploring plans for commercially chartering a vessel to support their development.**

- It's vital that SSEN-T plans minimise the impact on local communities and don't take CalMac ferry space away from existing travellers.

**Regarding the subsequent windfarm developments and wider impacts, the new Lewis Renewables Programme Delivery Board, along with the Comhairle as planning authority, have a key role to play in considering and coordinating these developments.**

- We look forward to seeing the planned Terms of Reference and any specific asks of Scottish Government and Transport Scotland.

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
KATE FORBES, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR  
ECONOMY AND GAELIC  
Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

**ANNEX G**

**MEETING WITH COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR GAELIC TEAM**

**ATTENDEES**

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)], Director of Education

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)], Team Leader of Heritage and Culture

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)], Gaelic Policy Officer

**AGENDA AND SUGGESTED QUESTIONS**

**14:45-15:00 Areas of Linguistic Significance**

What benefits does Comhairle nan Eilean Siar seek from Areas of Linguistic Significance?

**15:00-15:15 Stand-alone Gaelic school**

Can you update me on the work in assessing the viability of a stand-alone Gaelic school for Lewis?

**15:15-15:30 Curriculum Improvement Cycle**

I gather that Gaelic bodies are feeling empowered through the work of the Curriculum Improvement Cycle. What are your priorities for developing the Gaelic curriculum?

**15:30-15:45 Gaelic extracurricular bodies**

My officials tell me that you feel there are efficiencies which could be realised in the work of bodies providing out-of-school activities in Gaelic. Could you say a bit more about this?

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KATE FORBES, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR  
ECONOMY AND GAELIC  
Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

**SCOTTISH LANGUAGES ACT SUMMARY**

The Scottish Languages Bill was granted Royal Assent on 31 July 2025 and became an Act of the Scottish Parliament. It 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 first time.

The 2022 census data showed a rise in Gaelic speakers for the first time in over 50 years and the Act will build on this progress 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 is 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.
- Enabling parents across Scotland to apply for Gaelic early learning and childcare for their children.
- Ensuring that where qualifications are available in Gaelic they are accompanied by appropriate support and resources
- Introduce a National Gaelic language strategy including targets for Scottish Ministers in relations to promoting, facilitating and supporting the use of the Gaelic language.

Scots is recognised in legislation which is a significant step forward and will help to remove stigma and improve confidence of speaker communities. Further practical measures in the Act for Scots include:

- Placing a requirement on Scottish Ministers to prepare a strategy for Scots and report on progress
- 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 in schools.

Officials are working on detailed implementation plans to support the legislation and many of the provisions will require further consultation and engagement as guidance and secondary legislation is developed.

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
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ECONOMY AND GAELIC**

**Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

**SUMMARY OF LOCAL AUTHORITY MEETING ON ALS**

- Officials from the Gaelic and Scots Division met with representatives from Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Highland Council, Argyll and Bute Council, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, and Highlands and Islands Enterprise on 9 September 2025 to discuss implementation of the *Scottish Languages Act* provisions on Areas of Linguistic Significance (ALS).
- The Scottish Government outlined the current legislative position and proposed timeline. Draft guidance on ALS is expected for consultation between December 2025 and February 2026, to align with parallel consultation on Gaelic language standards and requirements. Commencement of the designation power will depend on legal and parliamentary timetables and may fall into the next parliamentary term if not completed before the 2026 election. The guidance will define the process and criteria for designation, while the standards will set expectations for activity within designated areas.
- Local authority representatives welcomed engagement but raised concerns about capacity, timing, and clarity of purpose. They emphasised that designation must deliver practical benefits and not impose additional bureaucratic burdens. Discussion highlighted the need for flexibility, community consultation, and proportionality in guidance. Participants agreed that ALS policy should focus on increasing everyday Gaelic use, supported by economic and community development.
- Authorities described varying approaches to identifying potential ALSs. Highland Council is using census data and mapping Gaelic activity, noting challenges in defining meaningful clusters and measuring use beyond speaker numbers. Argyll and Bute questioned how designation would influence resourcing and political priorities where Gaelic-speaking populations are small. Comhairle nan Eilean Siar favoured whole-island designations to ensure consistency and avoid exclusion of peripheral communities.
- Participants cautioned against relying solely on census thresholds and stressed the importance of including evidence of education, heritage, and community activity. There was broad agreement that ALS designation must strengthen Gaelic use in functional settings, demonstrate economic and social value, and avoid symbolic or short-term measures. Further engagement will follow as guidance and standards develop.

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
KATE FORBES, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR  
ECONOMY AND GAELIC  
Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

**ANNEX H**

**VISIT TO MG ALBA**

**OUTLINE OF EVENTS**

**1545-1600** – meet with Donald Campbell (CEO) and [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] (Director of Partnership & Development)

**1600-1625** – meet with [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] (Commissioner) and [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] (Assistant Commissioner)

**1625-1645** – meet with [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] (Creative Scheduler) and [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] (Digital Producer)

**ATTENDEES**

Donald Campbell, CEO of MG ALBA

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)], Director of Partnerships and Development

[Redacted - S.38(1)(b)], Gaelic & Corporate Affairs Manager

**MG ALBA BACKGROUND**

MG ALBA is a public body, set up by UK legislation. Its principal functions relate to the provision of Gaelic programmes. MG ALBA is funded predominantly by the Scottish Government, who are under an obligation to provide such funding as they determine to be appropriate. In 2025-26, SG funding of MG ALBA was £14.8m.

The BBC also contributes to the channel BBC ALBA and the BBC contribution is in the region of £6m to £8m this goes towards programme content produced in-house and to distribution, infrastructure and general support. MG ALBA works in partnership with the BBC to operate the channel, BBC ALBA. The channel has been available on the Freeview Digital Terrestrial Television platform since 2011.

MG ALBA's remit under the Communications Act 2003 is to ensure that high quality television programmes in Gaelic are made available to persons in Scotland. In September 2008 and in collaboration with the BBC, MG ALBA established BBC ALBA, the Gaelic channel, the first partnership television channel to operate under a BBC licence.

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
KATE FORBES, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR  
ECONOMY AND GAELIC**

**Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

MG ALBA has 40 staff and 9 board members, with chair, [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)], having started in January 2023. The staff, under the direction of [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] and his senior management team, operates out of Stornoway, Inverness and Glasgow.

**Funding**

In relation to future funding, DCMS has commenced discussions on the BBC Charter renewal process. Among others, DCMS has approached [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] (former MSP) and [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] (Former HC, Director of Education) for views on this.

The MG ALBA position on this remains ‘parity of esteem’ and that the licence fee settlement should include specific amounts for Gaelic broadcasting as it does for Welsh broadcasting.

MG ALBA creates £1.34 of value for every £1 of funding. It is responsible for 160 jobs in the islands of Scotland and a further 180 elsewhere in Scotland. Rising costs at a time of increasing challenge mean that MG ALBA is experiencing significant financial strain and the depletion of reserves.

Nevertheless, the organisation is optimistic and willing. MG ALBA Investment Report prepared by Ernst and Young in November 2023 identified that MG ALBA requires additional £13.8 million per annum to unlock its vision for a world class Gaelic media service.

**Under investment**

MG ALBA recognises that it can demonstrate valuable economic impact. MG ALBA is also active in strengthening messages that the contribution of Gaelic broadcasting is wide and positive and contributes to many areas cultural, social, economic and more.

**An t-Eilean**

BBC ALBA’s Gaelic crime drama “An t-Eilean” launched in January 2025. This series has received a hugely impressive amount of positive press coverage with headlines such as “Island drama to give Gaelic a global stage” (The Scotsman) and “Crime drama a “game changer” for BBC ALBA” (Sunday Express). MG ALBA report the series has been a huge boost to co-production. Also to skills development, employment, local economy. It was filmed on location in Harris. It has received several awards. These include the Grand Prix at the CIRCOM 2025

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
KATE FORBES, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR  
ECONOMY AND GAELIC**

**Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

awards – the highest honour in the prestigious European television awards. It has also recently been nominated for the BAFTA Scotland Award, Indielab Innovation Awards and the Broadcast Tech Award. Discussions are ongoing to start filming a second series.

**BBC ALBA**

BBC ALBA is delivered across a range of platforms through a unique partnership between MG ALBA and the BBC. The partnership delivers Gaelic television, radio and online services, fulfilling the remit of MG ALBA under the Communication's Act 2003, to ensure that a wide and diverse range of high-quality Gaelic programmes is made available to persons in Scotland. It is regulated by Ofcom.

**FilmG**

Launched in 2008, the competition has accepted over 1000 film entries since then, generating a significant volume of new and engaging Gaelic content, with a greater focus on creating a digital community in Gaelic. With a focus on schools and young filmmakers, the competition has helped to uncover and develop new talent for the Gaelic media sector, encouraging young people, to create, enjoy and become active within the media through Gaelic. In the last few years it has expanded to include Nova Scotian entries.

**Learn Gaelic**

Since its launch in 2011, LearnGaelic has proven popular with Gaelic learners and with its comprehensive learning and language resources it aims to be a constant companion for all levels of Gaelic language speakers.

**Speak Gaelic**

SpeakGaelic is a new, wide-ranging, multi-faceted learning brand, offering the most comprehensive approach to learning Scottish Gaelic in a generation. The concept for SpeakGaelic was developed by the LearnGaelic partners and is a partnership between MG ALBA, the BBC and Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, with additional funding from the Scottish Government and Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

**MG ALBA'S PROPOSED GAELIC GROWTH DEAL**

MG ALBA in summer wrote to the DFM outlining an argument for a Gaelic Growth Deal based on the existing regional growth deals. The central idea is to use Gaelic media as the backbone of a wider programme of investment that would bring together the UK and Scottish Governments, public bodies and the private sector to support long-term economic development.

A meeting was scheduled in September between MG, the DFM and the then Secretary of State for Scotland, Ian Murray to discuss this. However, that was cancelled due to the UK Government

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
KATE FORBES, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR  
ECONOMY AND GAELIC  
Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

reshuffle. DFM PO is currently working with Douglas Alexander's PO to identify a new date for the meeting.

The Scottish Government's topline in response to this proposal is that the existing Growth Deals are **place-based** rather than focussing on specific sectors. Our focus for now is on ensuring that the considerable investment we have already committed to the region through the growth deal programme delivers well and achieves its stated objectives and benefits for local communities.

## **UK MEDIA ACT 2024 AND BBC CHARTER REVIEW**

### Gaelic Specific Briefing

The Media Act 2024, which brings long-sought after changes to the broadcasting regulatory regime, was introduced on 24 May 2024. The UK Government said that they will continue to work up implementation plans and the regulator Ofcom is continuing to implement changes. The Scottish Government engaged with the consultation and welcomed the majority of the changes, however we are disappointed that Gaelic as a minority language was not more adequately reflected in the Media Act, in line with the Welsh language. The Scottish Government believes that Gaelic, being an indigenous minority language for Scotland, requires safeguarding, and this should have been reflected in the Media Act.

The Scottish Government, at Ministerial and official levels, has continued to set out the points that there is an MG ALBA deficit in legislation, co-ordination and funding. The arrangements are not equitable, coordination and discussion is poor and often SG, despite being the main funder, is not included.

At the time of discussions about the Media Bill, DCMS mentioned the possible benefits for MG ALBA in the BBC Charter renewal process.

### **BBC Charter Review**

The current Charter began on 1 January 2017 and ends on 31 December 2027. The Scottish Ministers have a role in the review of the next Charter and SG officials are currently engaging with UKG officials regarding the review.

**MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING:  
KATE FORBES, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR  
ECONOMY AND GAELIC  
Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

On 31 March 2025, the Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture agreed the Plan for Engagement between the DCMS and the Scottish Government.

**Focus on UK Gov**

Over recent years MG ALBA has mostly directed the request for increased funding to UK Gov as part of the licence fee settlement, recognising broadcasting is reserved, BBC Scotland resources are limited and SG has provided some increases. The lack of equity between Welsh and Gaelic broadcasting strengthens this focus. Scottish ministers have also adopted this approach yet, on occasions the MG ALBA Chair has deviated from this, looking to SG for increased funding.

**DCMS and BBC Charter Review**

DCMS is clear that minority languages will be included in the BBC Charter renewal process. The important stages of this will be Green Paper, White Paper, draft Charter and MG ALBA is keen that Gaelic broadcasting is specifically and consistently mentioned in this developing process. Before this S4C and Welsh broadcasting has received much clearer and stronger references in key documents and legislation and consequently a much higher level of funding. MG ALBA is keen to see a more even handed and equitable approach in this Charter review process and allocation of licence fee funding.

**[Redacted - S.30(b)(i)]**

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On 24 October, the Minister for Creative Industries, Media and Art, [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)], responded, confirming that several of the Scottish Government's proposed changes will be incorporated into the final ToR. [Redacted - S.38(1)(b)] noted that some of the comments would not be included, including specific reference to MG Alba and BBC Alba, however he has provided assurances that these will be considered throughout the Review process. Officials will continue to press for these to be reflected in the forthcoming Green Paper.

**[Redacted - S.30(b)(i)]**

Broadcasting Policy

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**Top Lines**

- We support public service broadcasting which can deliver high quality outcomes for people in Scotland and the UK, and we are committed to ensuring its sustainability.
- However, we believe broadcasting policy should be devolved to Scotland to ensure that proportionate decisions can be taken which recognise the requirements of audiences in Scotland.
- Public service broadcasters give an outlet and platform to a wide range of output on TV, radio and online that would not otherwise have found a home and an audience.
- The nature of the public service broadcasting system helps broadcasters reflect the UK's diversity, but more should be done to improve representation and authenticity of programming to ensure Scottish audiences feel broadcasters are genuinely reflecting their lives to them and to others.
- Public service broadcasting plays a vital role in supporting press freedom by encouraging media plurality, and countering misinformation and disinformation by providing impartial, editorially independent news.
- We support a thriving Gaelic broadcasting industry, and are clear on the importance of minority language broadcasting, including Gaelic and Scots, and the need to protect and enhance the important role it plays in driving community and economic growth, particularly in rural areas.
- **Media Act 2024:** The Scottish Government engaged with the consultation and welcomed the majority of the changes, however we are disappointed that Gaelic as a minority language was not more adequately reflected in the Media Act, in line with the Welsh language.

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**ANNEX I – MEETING WITH CLLR MURRAY**

**Aviation lines to take**

**Cost of Travel on Commercial Air Services**

Lines to Take

- Air services between Stornoway and the Scottish mainland operate on a commercial basis.
- The scheduling of flights and the fares applied are operational matters for the individual airline.
- The Scottish Government has no power to directly intervene in the operation of these services.
- We do, however, understand the importance of aviation to the Highlands and Islands, which is why the Scottish Government provides funding to support the operations of Highlands and Islands Airport Limited (HIAL).

**Air Discount Scheme (ADS)**

Lines to Take

- The Scottish Government continues to operate the Highlands and Islands Air Discount Scheme which provides residents of the eligible area, which includes the Western Isles, with a 50% discount on the core ticket price on eligible routes.
- We announced the intention to review the Air Discount Scheme, to consider how it could be made fairer and more effective and that is ongoing. There is no suggestion whatsoever that the scheme could be scrapped by the Scottish Government.
- We expect the scheme to cost around £15 million this year which we believe is a worthwhile investment in our island communities.
- We have no plans to extend the Air Discount Scheme to include business travel which would be unaffordable at this time.

**Benbecula to Stornoway air service**

Lines to Take

- The provision of supported air services within the Western Isles is a matter for Comhairle nan Eilean Siar.
- The Scottish Government provides funding through the Local Government Settlement to assist local authorities in providing supported air services.
- There are no plans for the Scottish Government to directly subsidise air services that operate wholly within a single local authority area.

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- Through the Local Government Settlement the Scottish Government is providing an additional £100,000 in 2025-26 to enable the introduction of a larger aircraft on the Benbecula to Stornoway air service.

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**Aviation background information**

**Cost of Travel on Commercial Air Services – background**

1. The fare charged by airlines relate to the cost of providing the service and the number of passengers that are carried. Air services have high fixed costs but whether this results in high fares depends on the number of passengers on the aircraft. With more passengers each person pays less as the costs are split between them. With fewer passengers, however, the cost per person is higher. In the Highlands and Islands, even the busier routes have relatively low passenger numbers over which to spread costs. This leads to fares that are higher than what passengers would likely pay on longer, busier routes such as from a major Scottish airport to Europe. The total distance travelled has a limited impact on fare price.
2. In general, booking ahead will provide less expensive fares and booking closer to the time of travel will be more expensive. In addition, the cheapest fares tend to have a limited number available per flight, regardless of time of booking. If a flight, even though it's a long way off, is very busy then the remaining tickets will likely be more expensive than on a flight on a different date that is less busy.
3. HIAL operates airports across the Highlands and Islands, including Stornoway. In order to ensure that HIAL can continue to operate safe and regulatory compliant airports, supporting connectivity in the Highlands and Islands, we're making a budget available to HIAL of up to £60.5 million in 2025-26. This funding means that HIAL's airport charges are kept lower than they would otherwise be enabling the operation of commercial air services.

**Air Discount Scheme (ADS) – background**

4. The Highlands and Islands Air Discount Scheme (ADS) provides residents of the eligible area, which includes the Western Isles, with a 50% discount on the core ticket price on eligible routes. The discount applies regardless of the price of the ticket and there is no limit on the number of discounts members can receive. In 2024-25 the scheme cost over £13.5 million.
5. The ADS is a demand-led scheme where the cost to the Scottish Government is determined by the number of people travelling and the cost of the ticket – neither of which we have any control over. The scheme cost £13.6 million in 2024-25 and this is projected to increase to £14.6 million in 2025-26.
6. Officials have been developing the scope and structure of the proposed review of the ADS. A submission will be provided to Ministers following comment/review by SpAds.
7. The Scottish Government introduced the ADS in 2006 to mitigate the impact of high air fares and to improve social inclusion in the most peripheral parts of the Highlands and Islands. Air services have high fixed costs driven by equipment and staff. A route with higher passenger numbers has more people over which to spread those fixed costs, resulting in lower fares. Thin routes, such as those in the Highlands and Islands, have fewer people to spread the costs, resulting in higher fares.

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8. Transport Scotland regularly receive requests to broaden its eligibility, for example, to include business travel, or to increase the level of discount. However, due to EU State Aid conditions, the scheme does not include travel for business or travel funded by a third party, such as the NHS, nor does it include any optional extras a passenger may add to their booking.
9. There are no eligibility requirements other than being a permanent resident within the eligible area. This also includes students that are normally resident in the eligible area but who are studying away from home. There is also no limit on the number of flights a scheme member can purchase. The scheme is popular and well used, and rarely attracts negative comment. There are around 80,000 registered users out of a population of approximately 115,000 for the eligible area.

**Benbecula to Stornoway air service – background**

10. The Benbecula to Stornoway service is subsidised by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (CnES) under a Public Service Obligation (PSO). CnES announced on 11 March 2024 that they had awarded a four year contract for provision of the service to Hebridean Air Services (Airtask) who took over from Loganair. The service commenced on 12 April 2024. The service moved from two return flights per day on a Tuesday and Thursday using 48 seat aircraft to two return flights per day on a Monday, Tuesday and Friday using an 8 seat aircraft. However in practice the flight is generally restricted to carrying 5 passengers.
11. The provision of supported air services within the Western Isles is a matter for CnES. It is longstanding Scottish Government policy that the provision of an air service wholly within a local authority boundary is a matter for that local authority. We provide indirect support to the Benbecula to Stornoway service through our subsidy of HIAL which operates both Benbecula and Stornoway airports. Our subsidy enables HIAL to set their airport charges lower than they would otherwise be. The Benbecula to Stornoway service benefits from this in the same way that all other services from HIAL's airports do.
12. The Comhairle also receives funding from the Scottish Government through the Local Government Settlement. The Scottish Government's policy towards local authorities' spending is to allow local authorities the financial freedom to operate independently. As such, the vast majority of funding is provided by means of a block grant. It is then the responsibility of individual local authorities to manage their own budgets and to allocate the total financial resources available to them, including on support for air transport, on the basis of local needs and priorities, including fulfilling their statutory obligations and the agreed national and local priorities. The funding formula does take account of the Comhairle's need in relation to air transport and includes £377,000 in 2025-26.
13. Following issues raised by NHS Western Isles about the impact on the revised service on patients, in August 2024 the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care convened a meeting in Uist with relevant local delivery bodies, the community and elected members to consider the issues in relation to transport access to healthcare in the Western Isles. The outcome of this meeting was the establishment of a working group to scope out possible actions to address the issues highlighted in relation to transport for health purposes. The Group was led by Hitrans and in early 2025 produced the 'Western Isles Transport & Health Working Group Findings and Recommendations Report'.

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Briefing for Visit to Stornoway 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

14. The report set out short and longer actions that could be undertaken to improve the situation for patients travelling between Uist and Barra and the Regional General Hospital in Stornoway. Following the report, CnES submitted a request for funding to implement an upgrade to the air services, as recommended in the report. £100,000 was provided via the Local Government Settlement 2025-2026 to support provision of different aircraft (a Tecnam p2012), which aims to improve accessibility but will not fully address the issues for all travellers with reduced mobility. The aircraft has yet to begin operating.

### **Food prices**

#### **Cost of Living**

- Scotland continues to face a cost of living crisis. Inflation has disproportionately hurt the most vulnerable in society and heaped more pressure onto our public services.
- We recognise the pressure on household budgets which is why in 2025-26 we continue to allocate over £3bn a year to policies which tackle poverty and the cost of living.
- No one should have to compromise on food or other essentials.
- Through the “Cash-First: Towards ending the need for Food Banks in Scotland” Plan, we are taking forward nine actions over 2023-2026, to improve the response to crisis, using a cash-first approach so fewer people need to turn to food parcels.
- In 2025/26 we will allocate up to £1.3 million to continue to tackling food insecurity
- This includes investment of around £600,000 to conclude work on the Cash-First Programme. The learning from this will help to identify measures that move us closer towards our longer term ambition of a Scotland without the need for food banks.
- As well as continued funding for inclusive community-led responses that maximise dignity and integrate help to reduce future need, through:
  - £315,000 to FareShare to redistribute high quality surplus food to community organisations with an emphasis on shared meals and cash-first;
  - £100,000 to the Community Food Reference Group to develop a Food Security Learning and Resource Centre; and
  - £50,000 to Nourish to enhance dignity in food provision.

#### Current cost of red meat to the consumer

- The Scottish Government recognises that food price inflation, including the rising cost of everyday items remains a concern for many households.
- We understand that this is closely linked to developments within the agricultural sector, particularly a gradual decline in cattle numbers across Scotland. This trend has been influenced by several factors, including changes in land use, rising labour and input costs, generational lifestyle choices, and market volatility. Many of these factors are shaped by

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global market dynamics and lie beyond the direct control of government, but they nonetheless contribute to tighter supply in the beef market and upward pressure on retail prices. Nevertheless, the Scottish Government remains committed to supporting our beef sector.

- According to the latest Quality Meat Scotland (QMS) analysis, a slight rebound in calf registrations suggests that beef production could begin to stabilise in 2026 and 2027, helping to meet long-term demand as Scotland's population grows.
- While the Scottish Government cannot directly control food prices, we continue to monitor the situation closely and work with industry partners to help secure a stable and resilient food supply chain for Scotland.