

## ISG – 28/09/16/01 Agenda

**1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of Islands Strategic Group**  
**Conference Rooms C & D, St Andrews House, Edinburgh**  
**Wednesday, 28<sup>th</sup> September 2016**

### AGENDA

<b>Paper</b>	<b>Agenda item</b>	<b>Introduced by</b>
	Welcome & Introduction	Chair
Paper 28/09/16/02	Draft Terms of Reference	Chair
Paper 28/09/16/03	Consideration of Group Work Programme	Chair
Paper 28/09/16/04	Islands Bill Update	Chair
	'Any Other Business'	Chair

**ISG Secretariat**  
**September 2016**

## **THE ISLANDS STRATEGIC GROUP DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **PURPOSE AND REMIT**

1. The Islands Strategic Group is being facilitated by the Scottish Government and chaired by the Minister for Transport and the Islands.
2. The group will seek to build on the work of the previous Island Areas Ministerial Working Group, including the Empowering Scotland's Island Communities prospectus, which was published in June 2014.
3. The remit of the group will be to consider strategic issues affecting the inhabited island communities of Scotland and to ensure greater involvement of the relevant Councils in helping identify and designing solutions to the unique needs and challenges these communities face. The Group will agree a formal programme of work, which will in broad terms focus on the following areas:
  - Assist with the development of provisions for the forthcoming Islands Bill and supporting statutory guidance that will underpin it;
  - Assist with the development and implementation of a National Islands Plan;
  - Consider how the Islands Councils and Councils with responsibilities for Island Communities are and can be supported to exploit existing and future powers available to them to engage and empower their communities to better deliver efficient, improved and more responsive public services, and better outcomes; and
  - Consider strategic policy issues/challenges to ensure proper solutions, fit for purpose are being considered to allow greater sustainable economic growth, community development and equality within island communities.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

4. Membership of the group is by invitation only. Members will be as follows:

Minister for Transport and the Islands  
Minister for Local Government and Housing  
Minister for Business, Innovation and Energy  
Leader and Chief Executive of Argyll & Bute Council  
Leader and Chief Executive of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar  
Leader and Chief Executive of The Highland Council  
Leader and Chief Executive of North Ayrshire Council  
Leader and Chief Executive of Orkney Islands Council  
Leader and Chief Executive of Shetland Islands Council

5. The Scottish Government's Location Directors for each of the Councils can attend meetings as observers if they wish. Officers from each of the Councils can also attend meetings as observers.

6. The group will be supported by an officers group consisting of lead officials from the Scottish Government and the 6 Councils. This group will meet on a regular basis to take forward the different strands of the Strategic Group's agreed work programme.

## **FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS AND REPORTING**

7. It is envisaged that the Group should meet on a quarterly basis, with the flexibility to meet more often as circumstances require. Dates for future meetings will be fixed as far in advance as possible and members are asked to protect these slots in their diaries, where possible. Members should inform the ISG Secretariat if a substitute is to represent a member.

8. Every effort will be made to circulate papers for meetings as far in advance as possible, however time constraints may occasionally prevent early circulation. A draft record of discussions will be circulated for comment/clearance, where possible within two weeks of each meeting taking place.

9. It is envisaged that agendas and minutes of meetings will be made publically available through the Scottish Government's website.

## **REVIEW**

10. The group will review the relevance and value of its work, including its work programme and terms of reference on an annual basis, or earlier should it decide to do so.

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**Consideration of Proposed Group Work Programme**

1. The following items have been put forward by Councils as possible items for discussion as part of the group's proposed work programme going forward.

- Brexit Implications for Island Communities
- Devolution of the Crown Estate
- Economy
- Education (Recruitment/Provision)
- Energy (Renewables/ Fuel Poverty etc)
- Environment (including Geo Park Status)
- Housing (Affordable)
- Islands Bill
- Island-Proofing
- Islands Plan
- Empowering Scotland's Island Communities – Prospectus Monitoring
- Councillor Representation in Island Communities (Ward Sizes)
- Waste (including Community Biomass)

2. A key focus of early meetings will be the development of the provisions for inclusion in the forthcoming Islands Bill. Discussions therefore on issues such as Island-Proofing; Islands Plan; and Councillor representation in island communities will be taken forward as part of that work, and led by Government officials.

3. The group is therefore asked to identify from the remaining items listed above, those they wish to prioritise for discussion at future meetings to allow a work programme to be finalised for the first 12 months. Given the focus at initial meetings will be on the development of the Bill, it is recommended that no more than two items are identified for consideration at each meeting to allow sufficient time for discussion. It is further recommended that a lead Council is identified to co-ordinate the preparation of each of the draft subject papers, with input being provided on the drafts from relevant Scottish Government policy officials as appropriate.

4. Should circumstances dictate, the draft work programme can be re-prioritised, subject to the agreement of all group members.

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**Islands Bill Update**

1. As part of the Programme for Government announced on 6 September, the Government confirmed it will bring forward legislation in the first year of the new parliamentary session for an Islands Bill.
2. The Bill will build on the work of the Island Areas Ministerial Working Group and last year's consultation. It will aim to reflect the unique needs of Scotland's islands and include measures such as:
  - Provision for island-proofing future legislation and policies;
  - Creation of a National Islands Plan;
  - Statutory Protection for the Na h-Eileanan an Iar Scottish Parliamentary constituency boundary
  - Greater flexibility around Councillor representation within island communities; and
  - Extension of Powers to Island Communities
3. It is anticipated that the Bill will be introduced to Parliament in Spring 2016 (date to be confirmed), and the Parliament will begin scrutinising and taking evidence on it from Summer 2017. All going well, the Bill should complete its parliamentary journey in the first part of 2018, and receive Royal Assent by Summer 2018. It is likely that statutory guidance will need to be developed to support the different strands of the Act's provisions. It is envisaged that the Islands Strategic Group will help support not only the development of the Bill's provisions but also any statutory guidance that will ultimately underpin them.
4. The provisions outlined above are the starting point for the Bill and will form the basis of the Bill to be introduced to Parliament. New proposals may well emerge through discussion and engagement over the next few months in the lead up to introduction. The Government will engage positively in discussions for new proposals but members should be aware that the timescales for introduction may prevent new proposals being ready for the introduction of the Bill. .

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