

**OUTCOMES FROM THE CONVENTION OF THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS – 30 OCTOBER 2017 – OBAN-
UPDATED MARCH 2018**

Scotland's Place in Europe- Protecting the interest of H & I	SG Lead	Update
<p>COHI asks Scottish Government to continue to recognise the specific nature of the impact of Brexit on the Highlands and Islands (particularly in relation to loss of EU funding and impact, regulation and trade tariffs, and the importance of migration, including to support the future labour market and skills) and that these continue to be reflected in Scottish Government policy and negotiations, keeping COHI members involved in, and informed about, developments, including regional arrangements. COHI members agreed to do more - in a co-ordinated, structured way, with support from the Scottish Government - to raise local awareness and understanding and in parallel to lobby the UK Government.</p>	<p>Sandra Reid</p>	<p><i>Scotland's Place in Europe: People, Jobs and Investment</i> presents the latest analysis by the Scottish Government of the implications of Brexit. It recognises some of the particular issues which affect rural areas, and that the interests of all of Scotland, including rural communities, are served best by Scotland remaining with the EU.</p> <p>It recognises the role of migration in supporting rural Scotland, and the recently published discussion paper 'Scotland's population needs and migration policy' encourages an open discussion around migration and how a tailored migration system might work.</p> <p>The Minister for UK Negotiation's on Scotland's Place in Europe has met with business in rural areas to discuss the impact of brexit. We will continue to reach out and engage with businesses, civic organisations, government administrations, and with people across Scotland to limit the damage of Brexit.</p>

What Makes a Thriving Rural Economy	SG Lead	Update
<p>COHI asks Scottish Government with partners to ensure the alignment of investment and strategic priorities across the public sector with the objective of creating a cohesive, shared, agenda that guarantees the development of a vibrant, diverse and thriving rural economy for all. Key elements of this include housing, digital and mobile infrastructure, and transport.</p>	<p>Amanda Fox</p>	<p>Update to follow</p>

Highlands and Islands Post 2020	SG Lead	Update
<p>COHI members approved further work by the COHI Senior Officer Group as broadly outlined in the tabled Future of CoHI post-2020 paper. All COHI partners to be involved in all priorities, particularly the emerging marine proposition, given shared objectives.</p> <p>COHI agreed an annual summary report on implementation progress to more proactively shape the agenda of future meetings on growing vibrant communities across the Highlands and Islands through population growth, inclusive growth, and investment in communities and (particularly digital and transport) infrastructure.</p>	<p>Emma Lopinska</p>	<p>The Senior Officer Group (SOG) agreed that 7 key areas (Digital; Transport; Skills; Talent Attraction; Marine; Energy; and, Housing) remain crucial to delivering a strong and vibrant economy in the Highlands and Islands. Separate project groups are being established for each of these, with individual project plans being produced.</p> <p>All 7 projects will have aligned aims, and there will be oversight of them all by the SOG as a whole. It remains the case that all 7 must be viewed with the continued impact of Brexit, and the post-EU environment we will be operating in, in mind.</p> <p>As each project develops and approaches key milestones, CoHI agendas will reflect the development of this work and will be tailored to allow specific updates to be provided to Convention Members at opportune Spring and Autumn meetings. Work by the SOG continues to determine appropriate annual reporting procedures.</p>

Digital/Rural Connectivity	SG Lead	Update
<p>COHI members agreed that a detailed update on the points raised by members around digital connectivity will be provided by Scottish Government and Highlands and Islands Enterprise by the end of 2017.</p> <p>On the issue of fixed wireless broadband provision, members agreed that HIE and Scottish Government officials should meet with local authorities by the end of 2017 to explore the possibility of interim solutions, providing better connectivity now while R100 is deployed, can be progressed.</p>	<p>Gareth Wells</p>	<p>We are engaging with local authorities through a series of round table discussions on connectivity, hosted by Mr Ewing. The Cabinet Secretary has already written to LA CEOs and Leaders to highlight these events.</p> <p>One means of delivering an interim solution is through the Better Broadband voucher scheme, now extended until 31 December 2018 at least. SG and HIE understand that wireless broadband providers are increasingly supporting these. This has formed part of discussions about the Inverness and Highland City Region Deal. HIE are engaged with several wireless providers through their account management process. As some providers are clients of Business Gateway, there are opportunities for LAs to engage directly.</p>

Health and Social Care Integration	Lead	Update
<p>CoHI asks Scottish Government and partners to work together to consolidate the stories of success and to articulate the impact of service change; to ensure that we are effectively communicating programmes of change to build confidence across our communities about the value of that change; and to coproduce with communities to build new models of delivery.</p> <p>CoHI asks Scottish Government to continue to support on-going change and innovation in the governance of health and social care; and to hear back from partnerships about how those models are developing</p> <p>CoHI asks Scottish Government to consider remote and rural issues in respect of workforce strategies and planning</p>	Charlie Hogg	Update to follow

Education Reform	Lead	Update
<p>Scottish Government will work with COHI partners to bring further focus to the impact of rural deprivation on educational attainment and consider what further support can be put in place.</p>	<p>William Scott-Watson</p>	<p>After looking at national evidence and engaging with local authorities, the Rural Poverty Working Group, established to consider the degree to which the current approach to the Scottish Attainment Challenge addresses the impact of rural poverty on attainment, produced a report for the Scottish Attainment Challenge Advisory Group in November. This report included a number of recommendations which may support the priority of closing the attainment gap in rural areas. The Advisory Group welcomed the report and agreed that the recommendations should be further explored. The working group, which includes rural based representatives from ADES, COSLA, SOLACE, the Improvement Service and a number of school leader representatives, has now been reconvened with a view to provide fuller proposals and will continue to ensure the consultation with the authorities that fall within the COHI.</p>

UPDATED OUTCOMES FROM CONVENTION OF THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS SHETLAND – UPDATED MARCH 2018

Enterprise and Skills Review	Lead	Update
<p>On 31 August, the First Minister announced that Nora Senior has now been appointed as Chair of the Strategic Board. Membership of the Strategic Board is currently being considered with the first meeting scheduled to take place in November.</p>	<p>Gillian Dolan/ Simon Coote/ Craig McQueen</p>	<p>Full membership of the Board was announced in November, featuring a range of members with a wealth of business experience encompassing a broad range of sectors, sizes and locations, with further representation covering education, research, trade unions, local authorities and the new South of Scotland enterprise agency.</p> <p>The Board met for the first time in December and held a Strategy Day in January to discuss to discuss early priorities. A series of broad areas of focus were identified, with the Strategic Board now developing a remit around each of these areas with the help of policy colleagues in order to provide a deeper understanding of current activity.</p>
Energy	Lead	Update
<p>The draft Energy Strategy was open for public consultation for 16 weeks, closing 30 May 2017. We received 254 responses from a broad range of stakeholders, stimulating ideas and debate about these critical issues. The results are now being analysed and, with input from the Scottish Energy Advisory Board, and will be considered in the development of the final strategy. We will publish the final Energy Strategy at the end of 2017. The final Climate Change Plan will be published in early 2018.</p>	<p>Kathleen White</p>	<p>The Energy Strategy was published on 20th December. http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Business-Industry/Energy/energystrategy</p> <p>Climate Change Plan was published 28th Feb 2018 (weblink to follow).</p> <p>COHI Members are invited to note these publications and raise any comments/observations at the meeting – If desired, Scottish Government will include a discussion of these documents at the next COHI.</p>

<p>The June 2017 Conservative manifesto stated that the UK Government (UKG) would support wind project in the remote islands of Scotland, where they will directly benefit local communities.</p> <p>On 30 August, Richard Harrington; Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Industry and Energy met with Mr Wheelhouse, industry and local politicians, where he confirmed the UKG intention to fulfil the May 2017 manifesto commitments. It is intended this will be completed through the Contracts for Difference (CfD) process, but will be subject to State Aid clearance.</p> <p>A consultation is anticipated for October or November and will continue to seek reassurance over the Secretary of State's commitment to co-chair, with Scottish Ministers, future meetings of the Scottish Islands Renewables Delivery Forum.</p>	<p>Heather Stewart</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The State Aid case for Remote Island Wind was approved by the Commission in early February. This is a significant development. • BEIS are currently consulting on the legislative changes that will allow Island Wind projects to compete in future Pot 2 CfD auctions. The remaining budget is £557 million, with the next auction in Spring 2019. • The Scottish Government will respond to this consultation (closes 9 March). We are working closely with all key delivery partners and Island stakeholders to inform this response. It will focus on what is required to deliver the transmission cables. • The key risk is the ability of the main anchor projects to compete against offshore wind – the projects and SHE-T are all working hard to improve their competitiveness ahead of the auction. • The Scottish Energy Minister, Paul Wheelhouse, wrote to Richard Harrington in Nov 2017 to discuss the need for additional support to deliver the islands. The case will be made again to the new UK Energy Minister, Claire Perry, in the SG response to the current consultation. • SHE-T expect to submit the Needs Case for the transmission cables to Ofgem in Autumn 2018.
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