

**ISG – 30/03/17/01 Agenda**

**Islands Strategic Group  
Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh (Room Q1:03)  
Thursday, 30 March 2017 (13:00-15:00)**

<b>Paper</b>	<b>Agenda item</b>	<b>Introduced by</b>
	Welcome & Introductions	Minister for Transport and the Islands
Paper 30/03/17/02	Draft Minutes of Meeting on 19 December 2016	Minister for Transport and the Islands
Oral Update	Brexit	Minister for UK Negotiations on Scotland's Place in Europe
Paper 30/03/17/03	Social Security Reforms	Minister for Social Security
Oral Update	Islands Bill	Minister for Transport and the Islands
Paper 30/03/17/04	Consideration of Group Work Programme	Minister for Transport and the Islands
	Any Other Business	Minister for Transport and the Islands

**ISG Secretariat, March 2017**

## **SOCIAL SECURITY DEVOLUTION: SUMMARY PAPER**

### **Purpose**

1. To provide background information on the devolution of social security in Scotland in advance of the Islands Strategic Group.

### **Content**

2. This paper provides information in the following areas:
  - Benefits Being Devolved
  - Principles and Policy Direction
  - Progress to Date and Timeline
  - Agency and Delivery
  - Consultation
  - Experience Panels
  - Benefits Take Up

### **Benefits Being Devolved**

3. Scotland will gain powers over 15% (£2.8billion) of social security spending with 85% remaining with the UK Government. In total, 11 benefits will be devolved. They are: Attendance Allowance; Carer's Allowance; Disability Living Allowance; Personal Independence Payment (N.B. DLA is closed to new working-age claimants and being replaced by the Personal Independence Payment); Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit; Severe Disablement Allowance; Cold Weather Payment; Funeral Payment; Sure Start Maternity Grant; Winter Fuel Payment; Discretionary Housing Payments; Universal Credit (certain flexibilities over payment dates).

### **Principles and Policy Direction**

4. The Scottish Government has made clear its ambition to build a fairer social security system founded on the principles of dignity and respect.
5. Early policy commitments include raising Carer's Allowance to the same level as Jobseeker's Allowance; integrating the Sure Start Maternity Grant and Healthy Start food vouchers into a new Best Start Grant, introducing a new Job Grant for young people, and using flexibilities on Universal Credit to allow people in Scotland more choice over how their Universal Credit is paid.

### **Progress to Date and Timeline**

6. **November 2014** - Smith Commission publishes 'Heads of Agreement' on the devolution of further powers to the Scotland.
7. **January 2015** - UK Government Command Paper published with draft legislative clauses.
8. **May 2015** - Scotland Bill published. Negotiations to agree the Bill and a supporting Fiscal Framework begin.
9. **March 2016** - Scotland Bill and Fiscal Framework agreed by the Scottish Parliament. Scottish Government published its 'Vision' for the future of social security in Scotland, including five principles that will govern our decisions on policy and delivery.

10. **March 2016** - Scottish Government announces its intention to establish a social security agency.
11. **July to October 2016** - Consultation on the first Social Security Bill.
12. **February 2017** – Publication of response to the consultation and Ministerial announcement that right to social security will be a human right in the new Bill and that founding principles of dignity, fairness and respect will be embedded within the Bill
13. **March 2017** – Experience panel recruitment and Benefits Take up campaigns launched
14. **June 2017** – Planned introduction of Social Security Bill (The Scottish Government as part of its preparatory work has made a commitment to “island proof” the bill).

### **Agency and Delivery**

15. In March 2016 the Scottish Government announced that an agency will be established to oversee the delivery of social security in Scotland.
16. Currently work on an options appraisals process for Stage 2 of the delivery process is under way and will be completed soon. A preferred model for the Agency is expected to be announced in Spring 2017.
17. The Scottish Government intends that by the end of the parliamentary term there will be a Scottish social security agency delivering all devolved benefits.

### **Consultation**

18. The Scottish Government’s consultation on Social Security in Scotland ran from 29 July 2016 to 28 October 2016. Over 13 weeks, there were more than 120 stakeholder engagements, reaching people across Scotland with engagement with every one of Scotland’s 32 local authority areas.
19. A total of 521 responses were received - 280 from individuals and 241 from organisations. Respondents represented a wide range of individuals and organisations with knowledge and experience of, or an interest in social security matters. The consultation responses can be found online at: <https://consult.scotland.gov.uk/social-security/social-security-in-scotland/>
20. The independent analysis of the responses, by Research Scotland, along with the Scottish Government response was published on 22 February 2017.
21. In its response to the independent analysis , the Scottish Government announced it would enshrine the right to social security as a human right in the forthcoming Social Security Bill.
22. This will be done through the establishment of a Charter which will communicate clearly what the public is entitled to expect from the Scottish system and will frame the culture and positive ethos of the new social security agency.
23. The Scottish Government also announced that Dr Jim McCormick, associate director for Scotland with Joseph Rowntree Foundation, will chair an Expert Advisory Group on Disability and Carers Benefits.

### **Experience Panels**

24. The Scottish Government recently announced plans to recruit at least 2,000 people from across Scotland, who have recent experience of receiving benefits, to be involved in social security Experience Panels.
25. Recruitment for the Experience Panels launched on 3 March and is aimed at putting the social security principles into practice.

26. The proposed social security Experience Panels will ensure that those in receipt of benefits are involved in designing the social security system in a meaningful way. Research can be carried out with the Panel as a whole, or be more focused on specific sub-panels (for example, on a specific benefit).
27. The Experience Panels are designed to build on the Social Security consultation, continuing and deepening the engagement, and learning from what people have said about how they want to be involved in building a new and better system.
28. By randomly sampling from DWP lists of current recipients, and by having separate Panels for each benefit (or group of benefits) each panel will be representative of people in Scotland currently receiving the devolved benefits. The sample has been drawn using the National Record of Statistics postcode list for Scotland so will cover all areas of Scotland. In the DWP sample some benefits are received by certain age groups or genders by their criteria or nature e.g. winter fuel is linked to pensions, 84% of IIDB recipients are men, and 69% of Carer's Allowance recipients are women.
29. The open recruitment is designed to supplement the DWP sample and will enable panels to be topped up with groups which either are less represented in the DWP benefits or are harder to reach. Equality and geographical monitoring of the panels will take place and will check that they have a good balance of genders, ages and geographical coverage etc. If this is not the case, specific groups/areas will be targeted leaving the recruitment open for longer.
30. The Panels are expected to start in Summer 2017 and run for 4 years using the principles of working, designing and developing together to create a Social Security system that better meets the needs of those who receive the benefits.

### **Benefits Take Up**

31. The Scottish Government has made a commitment to see incomes maximised, by ensuring that people receive all the benefits to which they are entitled. The Scottish Government has recently launched the first stage of a campaign, working with Citizens Advice Scotland, to encourage people to check their eligibility for benefits.
32. From 6-12 March the Scottish Government carried out an initial phase of activity to encourage people to find out if they were entitled to benefits, and to claim them. The activity was through local press and local radio channels. Listeners and readers were encouraged to contact Citizens Advice Scotland, via its benefits webpage or its Free Benefits Helpline.
33. Further stages of the campaign will proceed later in the year and work to support people to take up their entitlements will continue over the course of the parliamentary term.

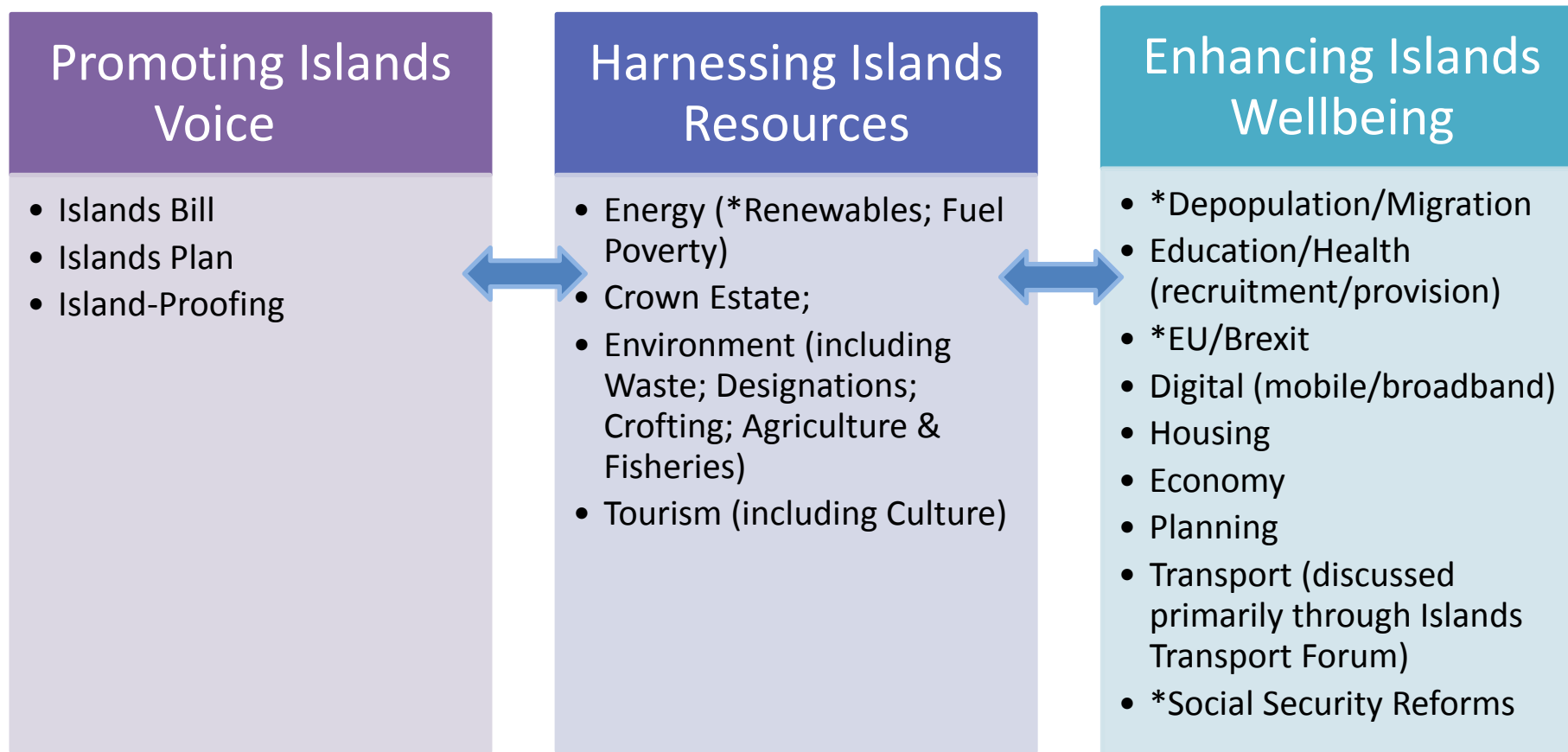
### **Points for discussion**

How can we ensure the social security system works across all communities?  
How can the Group help support the recruitment of Experience Panels and promote the Benefit Take Up campaign?

March 2017

**ISLANDS STRATEGIC GROUP – FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME**

Based around the three key themes of the Empowering Scotland's Island Communities Prospectus, the following areas have been identified as priority areas for discussion by the Group.



\* Discussed at 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Meetings of the Islands Strategic Group

2nd Meeting  
19 Dec 16

- Islands Bill
- Renewables
- Depopulation

3rd Meeting  
30 Mar 17

- Islands Bill
- Brexit
- Social Security Reforms

4th Meeting  
Jun 17

- Islands Bill
- Digital Connectivity
- Economy (including Planning)
- Energy

5th Meeting  
Sep 17

- Islands Bill (including initial discussion re. Island Plan)
- Housing
- Tourism
- Environment
- Crown Estate

6th Meeting  
Dec 17

- Islands Bill
- Other Items TBC