

# National Islands Plan Implementation Route Map 2023

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THE  
**ISLANDS**  
SCOTLAND ACT 2018  
ACHD  
**NAN EILEAN**  
ALBA 2018



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# Ministerial Foreword



As Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs Land Reform and Islands, I am pleased to present the 2023 revision of the National Islands Plan Implementation Route Map.

The Implementation Route Map (IRM) details how Scottish Government are delivering our priorities over the lifetime of the National Islands Plan. It is designed to be a living document that will be continually updated and adapted, in recognition of the fact that priorities for island communities can change, enabling it to respond to fresh challenges as they arise.

Each year we publish a [National Islands Plan Annual Report](#), looking back at the previous year and detailing the wide breadth of actions being taken across Scottish Government, to support our island communities. The Annual Report is then followed by an updated IRM, looking forward to the year ahead and setting out the actions for how the National Islands Plan commitments will be delivered in the coming year.

Many of the commitments in the National Islands Plan are of an ongoing nature, and whilst in 2022 we have been delighted to see the fulfilment of a number of commitments that had very specific remits, for others, they are of a nature where we must continue to take action on them and as such, they are categorised as 'ongoing'. Examples of this can be found under Strategic Objective 8, where we commit to 'Protect island biodiversity' or under Strategic Objective 2, where we commit to ensuring that 'crofting continues to provide jobs and opportunities to island communities'. Actions outlined in this IRM around these commitments and many others of this nature, demonstrate our ongoing ambitions to improve outcomes for island communities both this year and going forward.

I was recently delighted to announce the latest round of [Islands Programme funding](#) which sees capital investment of £4.1 million shared between 13 initiatives across our islands. This funding displays our commitment to enact our [National Islands Plan](#) across all six island authorities in Scotland in order to tackle island depopulation, boost local economies and bolster tourism.

We know that rural and island communities already face higher costs of living than other areas of the UK and this has only been exacerbated by the current Cost Crisis and the ongoing impact Brexit continues to have on island communities and businesses. With this in mind, and looking forward to the remainder of 2023, it will be more important than ever that we continue to support our island communities to enable them to flourish and achieve their full potential.

2023 will also see us begin the review process for the National Islands Plan, as required by the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018. The aim of the review is twofold. First, it will provide a detailed overview of the impact of the National Islands Plan since its publication. Second, it will inform (if the review tells us we need one) a new National Islands Plan which will subsequently be published in 2025.

An online consultation in respect of this will be launched shortly and I would like to encourage all islanders and people with an interest in islands to complete it. This will help us to understand how Scotland's first National Islands Plan has been received and the impact it has had. It will also help us to understand how we might improve upon the work already undertaken to ensure the best possible outcomes for island communities.

We will continue to work closely with both the [Islands Strategic Group](#) and the [National Islands Plan Delivery Group](#) in 2023, both of whom support the implementation of the National Islands Plan. The Islands Strategic Group allows for greater involvement of the relevant local authorities in helping design solutions to the challenges islanders face, whilst the Delivery Group ensures that work continues to be driven forward in a collaborative way that involves island communities.



**Mairi Gougeon MSP**

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands

# Introduction

Within the National Islands Plan (NIP), Scottish Government committed to publishing an Implementation Route Map (IRM) that addresses each of the 13 Strategic Objectives and accompanying commitments listed in the Plan.

NIP Annual Reports are published each year which look back at the actions that have been taken across Scottish Government in the preceding year, to deliver on the NIP commitments. The IRM is published after this and takes a forward looking, action-focussed approach, detailing the specific actions Scottish Government will then take over the coming year, to continue to deliver on the Plan.

The IRM has been developed in collaboration across Scottish Government to ensure all policy areas with responsibility for commitments within the Plan, outline how they are delivering for island communities.

Commitments in the Plan that were already fulfilled during 2020-2022 do not feature in this document, but you can read more about the actions that have been taken to fulfil them in the respective years' Annual Reports.

[Annual Report 2020](#)

[Annual Report 2021](#)

[Annual Report 2022](#)

In the IRM you will find the as yet unfulfilled commitments from the National Islands Plan with the specific actions assigned to each of them. Each action has been given an indicative timescale for delivery as follows:

**Short:** One-two years

**Medium:** Two-five years

**Long:** Over five years

As the Cabinet Secretary has highlighted in her foreword, many of the commitments within the National Islands Plan have an ongoing nature to them, and therefore assigning a timescale for fulfilment is not always appropriate. For these commitments, they are marked as '**ongoing**'. Each year in the Annual Report, we will update on what work has taken place during the year for these commitments.

In addition to this, some actions have been '**implemented**' since the publication of the 2022 Annual Report and are now marked as such in the IRM. These commitments will be fully reported upon in the 2023 NIP Annual Report when it is published in early 2024.

# Our Strategic Objectives and Values

The National Islands Plan sets a direction for the Scottish Government and provides a framework for action in order to meaningfully improve outcomes for island communities. The Plan has 13 Strategic Objectives which we will use to direct our work over the coming months and years.

- **Strategic Objective 1**  
To address population decline and ensure a healthy, balanced population profile
- **Strategic Objective 2**  
To improve and promote sustainable economic development
- **Strategic Objective 3**  
To improve transport services
- **Strategic Objective 4**  
To improve housing
- **Strategic Objective 5**  
To reduce levels of fuel poverty
- **Strategic Objective 6**  
To improve digital connectivity
- **Strategic Objective 7**  
To improve and promote health, social care and wellbeing



### Strategic Objective 8

To improve and promote environmental wellbeing and deal with biosecurity



### Strategic Objective 9

To contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation and promote clean, affordable and secure energy



### Strategic Objective 10

To empower diverse communities and different places



### Strategic Objective 11

To support arts, culture and language



### Strategic Objective 12

To promote and improve education for all throughout life



### Strategic Objective 13

To support effective implementation of the National Islands Plan

# A Fair, Integrated, Green and Inclusive Plan

The four principles of fairness, integration, environmental protection (green) and inclusiveness underpin the National Islands Plan by guiding us and our partners in meeting its ultimate objective – which is to improve outcomes for island communities.

A **fair** Plan with wellbeing at its heart will strive towards fairer, healthier, happier communities across Scotland. Its human rights approach will support greater accountability and help ensure that island communities' rights are respected, protected and fulfilled.

An **integrated** Plan will promote joined-up services based on a cohesive, place-based and holistic approach to policy and will build economic, social and environmental considerations in an integrated approach to island policy.

A **green** Plan will harness the opportunities of a greener, fairer economy while we work toward ending Scotland's contribution to climate change.

An **inclusive** Plan will promote genuine community empowerment at the local level enabling decisions to be taken as close as possible to where their impact will be felt.



# National Islands Plan Implementation Route Map 2023

## Strategic Objective: 1 – Population

Address population decline and ensure a healthy, balance population profile

**Partners:** Local Authorities, Island Communities, Scottish Islands Federation, Skills Development Scotland, Crofting Commission, Scottish Crofting Federation, Youth Scotland, Rural Youth Parliament, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, South of Scotland Enterprise, Convention of the Highlands and Islands (CoHI), University of the Highlands and Islands, James Hutton Institute, Robert Gordon University, Herriot Watt University, Young Islanders Network.

Commitment	Action	Timescale
<p><b>Identify islands where population decline is becoming a critical issue in order to ensure that these islands have their needs addressed.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will continue to utilise and promote the Scottish Island Regions (2023) geography, a grouping of Scotland's islands into nine different island regions. This new geography is based on the Scottish Island Regions Framework (2020) initially developed by the James Hutton Institute ( JHI ) and used as the basis for the National Islands Plan Survey (2020). Grouping islands together into regions is one feasible way to provide aggregate statistics on the Scottish island population, overcoming the challenge that many of the islands are very sparsely populated. Using this new grouping will mean that National Records of Scotland will be able to produce Scottish Island population data every year. By continuing to promote this new data-zone based geography, it is hoped that other types of data such as house prices will also be available at the Island level.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing</li> </ul>

Commitment	Action	Timescale
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retaining and attracting young people is one of the key objectives of the Islands Growth Deal. Both the Scottish and UK Governments are each investing up to £50m in the Deal. Full Deal Agreement for the Islands was signed on 20th January 2023, and the Deal will be delivered over the next 10 years.</li> <li>• The Scottish Government is also contributing £25 million to the Argyll and Bute Growth Deal, £135 to the Inverness and Highland City Region Deal and £103 million to the Ayrshire Growth Deal, which all include projects helping to drive sustainable and inclusive growth across Scotland's islands. The Argyll and Bute Deal consists of projects and programmes spanning sustainable tourism, digital, business innovation, housing, skills, aquaculture, low carbon and regeneration.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long Term</li> <li>• Long Term</li> </ul>
<p><b>Develop an action plan to support repopulation of our rural and island communities and work with partners to test approaches using small-scale pilots</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are currently developing a strategic plan aimed at providing the policy framework to enable population retention and repopulation across rural and island communities. This work will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mapping levers currently used by Scottish Government (strategies, funding, planning regulations) and the limitations of our approach at present;</li> <li>• Commissioning research and evidence building to mainstream population, depopulation, and repopulation across government policy in future;</li> <li>• Setting out current engagement with key partnerships (Convention of the Highlands and Islands, Convention of the South of Scotland, COSLA);</li> </ul> </li> <li>• We aim to publish the Addressing Depopulation Action Plan in Autumn 2023.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short Term</li> </ul>

Commitment	Action	Timescale
<p><b>Work with young islanders to identify actions to encourage them to stay on or return to islands.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Young Islanders Network (YIN) was officially launched by the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands on Orkney in August 2022, providing children and young people with a platform to support meaningful contributions to National Islands Plan (NIP) delivery and to their current and future life on islands. YIN members are empowered to set their own agenda based on how they want to address the local and national priorities that matter to them the most. At the launch event, Ms Gougeon formally invited YIN representation onto the National Islands Plan Delivery Group. This will ensure that through the Network, the voices of young people are heard and they genuinely shape the delivery of the commitments within the Plan, which will include input that helps to influence a broad range of actions that support and encourage young islanders to stay on or return to islands.</li> <li>• Work on the Student Retention project is continuing. Student Retention aims to encourage students to remain in Scotland (and rural locations/move to islands) after completing study - this applies to any students from Scotland or the rest of the UK. Working with young islanders will help us develop our understanding of what would make them want to stay or return after study.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ensure that policies aim to retain and attract Gaelic speakers to live and work in Gaelic speaking island communities.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing completion of Island Communities Impact Assessments by relevant authorities, will support this process following the 2022 update to the <a href="#">ICIA Guidance and Toolkit</a>.</li> <li>• Established quarterly meetings between the Gaelic and Scots Team, the Islands Team and Bòrd na Gàidhlig will continue.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>

Commitment	Action	Timescale
<p><b>Work with the Crofting Commission to encourage a healthy turnover of croft tenancies on our islands to create opportunities for new people into crofting.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Commission will further expand its Residency and Land Use team, enabling it to increase its work in addressing absenteeism and bringing crofts back into active use, which will create opportunities for new entrants.</li> <li>• The Crofting Commission has also created a Crofting Development Team and has employed officers based in the Western Isles who will continue to engage with crofting communities and grazings committees to encourage active croft use and identify opportunities for new entrants.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>

## Strategic Objective: 2 – Sustainable Economic Development

Improve and promote sustainable economic development

**Partners:** Local Authorities, Island Communities, Scottish Islands Federation, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, South of Scotland Enterprise, Skills Development Scotland, Creative Scotland, Creative Scotland’s RFOs (Regularly Funded Organisations), Youth Scotland, Marine Scotland, Scottish Forestry, Forestry and Land Scotland, Crofting Commission, Scottish Enterprise, Scottish Fisherman’s Federation, Visit Scotland, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Tourism Industry, University of the Highlands and Islands, Third Sector Interfaces, Crown Estate Scotland.

Commitment	Action	Timescale
<p><b>Identify key actions to drive inclusive and sustainable economic growth on islands such as community-run businesses, e-commerce and digitally enabled island-based businesses.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will consider this as part of work being taken forward under the <a href="#">National Strategy for Economic Transformation</a> (NSET) to transform the way in which the public sector in Scotland provides support for workers and businesses. NSET recognises the need to build a model that reaches every community, rural or urban, and connects people and businesses with the support they need. Building on the work of the Business Support Partnership, which is responsible for the Find Business Support website, this will include a review of the products and services available. It will provide businesses with greater clarity on the support they can expect at a local, regional, national and international level through clear and consistent communication.</li> <li>• We will establish a Digital Productivity Fund focused on supporting business to improve firm-level productivity through the adoption and successful integration of new and advanced technologies.</li> <li>• We will continue to work with teams and our agencies delivering the priorities of the National Strategy for Economic Transformation in ways that maximise benefits for island communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medium Term</li> <li>• Medium Term</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>

Commitment	Action	Timescale
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will develop joint programmes of action to increase digital understanding and adoption in sectors where business models have been transformed rapidly due to new technology.</li> <li>• To ensure that the National Islands Plan leads to meaningful, positive and sustainable change, there needs to be ongoing collaboration with our island communities for the duration of the Plan. We will continue to consult and collaborate with our island communities on a regular basis.</li> <li>• Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) has been allocated a net budget of just under £62.7m in 2023-24 to support its work to optimise regional strengths and opportunities whilst addressing barriers to growth, in order to unlock the region's full economic potential. HIE will continue to flex its delivery for rural communities and businesses through its area team approach, adjusting intervention rates and criteria for programme support to increase entrepreneurship, innovation and productivity. HIE will continue to enable place-based opportunities, recognising and enhancing the role of distinctive natural, built and cultural assets and human resources as they exist in local areas across the Highlands and Islands.</li> <li>• HIE will also continue to support growth, innovation and productivity in sectors which are fundamental to the rural economy and will drive transformational change, both those which are well-established such as food and drink, tourism and creative industries and those which are developing including renewable energy, the blue economy and space.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>

Commitment	Action	Timescale
<p><b>Explore how best to ensure the needs of islands are met within emerging regional economic partnerships including the Convention of the Highlands and Islands (COHI).</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All island local authorities are active members of, and their needs well represented at CoHI and are represented on the Regional Economic Partnership.</li> <li>• HIE will continue as a key partner in the Business Support Partnership which has a leading role in the delivery commitments of NSET. It is also a key partner and driving force in the Highlands and Islands Regional Economic Partnership (REP)</li> <li>• With regards to Talent Attraction, there will be ongoing work with HIE to develop understanding of the issues faced and how the Talent Attraction and Retention Programme, Skills Recognition Scotland, and Student Retention project can positively impact repopulation efforts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>

Commitment	Action	Timescale
<p><b>Tailor business and community support for island communities to ensure products and services are fit for purpose, accessible and effective. This will include exploring new and innovative models and working with national providers to consider how programmes can better address needs of island communities and businesses.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scottish Government has committed to growing Community Wealth Building (CWB) as a practical approach to delivering on our Wellbeing Economy aims. We have supported five pilot areas, including the Western Isles, to develop bespoke CWB action plans. Alongside this pilot work, the Scottish Government committed £3m to advance CWB across the Ayrshire region, through Ayrshire Growth Deal. The 2021 Programme for Government and the National Strategy for Economic Transformation confirmed our plans to introduce legislation on Community Wealth Building during this Parliamentary session. The legislation we plan to introduce will attempt to address blockages identified within the areas leading the implementation of CWB and support further embedding of this approach across Scotland. A Bill Steering Group, chaired by the Minister for Public Finance, Planning and Community Wealth, has been established and contains representation from a range of public, private and third sector stakeholders, including Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and North Ayrshire Council. The Scottish Government recently held a consultation on CWB legislation which closed on 9 May 2023 which provided all interested stakeholders with the opportunity to participate in shaping the legislation and the changes required to grow local wealth and give communities a greater stake in the economy. The consultation responses will help inform the development of the legislation going forward.</li> <li>• Figures from the latest Social Enterprise Census show there is a greater density and a continuing over-representation of social enterprise activity in Scotland's Island communities. We will continue to provide specific targeted funding and support for rural and island locations through organisations like Inspiralba and Social Enterprise Academy to ensure that these social enterprises, which often form the life blood of island communities, continue to have the opportunities to thrive and grow.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medium Term</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>



Commitment	Action	Timescale
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HIE will continue to flex its delivery for rural communities and businesses through its area team approach, adjusting intervention rates and criteria for programme support to increase entrepreneurship, innovation and productivity. Examples include its Graduate Placement Programme which received higher quotas for recruitment of graduates in more rural and island locations, which were priorities for repopulation interventions.</li> <li>• HIE will continue to provide business and industrial premises in rural locations where market failure exists and develop innovation assets to support transformational opportunities. HIE will also continue to support community wealth building through building community capacity, capability and developing community assets.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>
<p><b>Work in partnership to support strategic projects which deliver sustainable economic growth in the islands, e.g. Orkney Research and Innovation Campus and Stornoway port developments.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through the Islands Growth Deal, in which both the Scottish and UK Governments are each investing up to £50m, we will be investing in local people, projects and priorities in partnership with the three island authorities, the UK Government and a wide range of public, private and third sector partners. This will spread the benefits of inclusive economic growth across Orkney, Shetland and the Outer Hebrides, increasing opportunities for all.</li> <li>• The Scottish and UK Governments have each committed £1.5m funding to complement the work being undertaken to support the development of a local energy plan for Islay and lead to the implementation of a local energy network across the island. We will continue to work with stakeholders to support the development the local energy plan, which is being developed for consideration as part of the Argyll and Bute Rural Growth Deal.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long Term</li> <li>• Long Term</li> </ul>

Commitment	Action	Timescale
<p><b>Drive the many socio-economic opportunities arising from the 2019 Science and Innovation Audit report “Maximising Opportunities for the Marine Economy in the Highlands and Islands” as well as enhance those arising from growth deals.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Several projects are being taken forward as part of both the Islands Growth Deal and the Argyll and Bute Growth Deal that have a strong focus on the Marine Economy. Both the Scottish and UK Governments will continue to work closely with partners in both Deals to develop these projects to the benefit of coastal communities.</li> <li>• Following on from the 2019 Science and Innovation Audit “Maximising Opportunities for the Marine Economy in the Highlands and Islands”, HIE published a report on “The Blue Economy in the Highlands and Islands” in February 2023. The research studied eleven marine sectors and acknowledged the significant socio-economic contribution that the blue economy makes in island communities. The report identified opportunities for growth that have the potential to be transformative, and the role that HIE might play in catalysing and supporting this growth. These strategic priorities have informed HIE’s 2023-2028 Strategy (not yet published), which highlights opportunities for development in marine renewable energy, aquaculture, marine biotechnology and processing.</li> <li>• HIE are proactively supporting private sector and academic partners to develop the business cases for transformative Region Deal projects in the marine economy – Shell-volution (Shetland), Marine Aquaculture Programme and Machrihanish Innovation Campus (both Argyll). When the final business cases are approved, the delivery of these multifaceted projects will be led by the University of the Highlands and Islands, Scottish Association for Marine Science and University of Stirling, respectively. HIE will seek to embed impacts and outcomes by working strategically and tactically with local enterprises and communities over the next decade.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long Term</li> <li>• Medium Term</li> <li>• Long Term</li> </ul>

Commitment	Action	Timescale
<p><b>Display leadership in the public sector by demonstrating that jobs and careers can be successful on islands.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workforce Dispersal aims to demonstrate that work can be carried out from most locations. Scottish Government will continue to engage and reflect on this emerging work which has been supported through engagement with the CoHI Population Working Group.</li> <li>• The Scottish Government has committed through the National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET) to implement a focused Talent Attraction programme to attract key skills and talent from the rest of the UK (rUK). The Talent Attraction programme includes a number of workstreams with the aim of attracting and retaining working age people with the skills to support Scotland's economic recovery and help to address the population challenges.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>

Commitment	Action	Timescale
<p><b>Promote a thriving business environment that allows individuals to pursue a wide range of economic opportunities on islands.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As is the case across Scottish Government, much of our work to support island economy sectors is mainstreamed and lies across many policy areas and as such we will continue to collaborate to ensure that the needs and interests of islands are served.</li> <li>• We will continue to ensure that new and revised policies, strategies and services are island-proofed by supporting colleagues with their duty to conduct Island Communities Impact Assessments, which play a critical role in supporting and developing sustainable economic development on islands.</li> <li>• Our <a href="#">Programme for Government</a> makes a number of commitments to support Scotland’s rural economy, to be taken forward this year. These commitments reach across a wide range of sectors from agriculture to tourism, fishing and connectivity.</li> <li>• In addition to mainstreamed business support, our Islands Programme will continue to support capital investment over the lifetime of the National Islands Plan (NIP), by supporting a range of areas, including tourism, infrastructure, innovation, energy transition and skills. In order to ensure that this investment provides best value for our island communities, whilst supporting them in their economic recovery, the framework for the Islands Programme is underpinned by the principles of place-based community wealth building, whilst also reflecting the four key pillars of the NIP to ensure it promotes a fair, integrated, green and inclusive approach to island policy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Short Term</li> <li>• Medium Term</li> </ul>

Commitment	Action	Timescale
<p><b>Create and promote apprenticeships and job opportunities for young islanders.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education Scotland’s comprehensive review of Foundation Apprenticeships was published in March 2023. We have established a stakeholder group, chaired by Scottish Government, which has developed an Improvement Plan to strengthen the programme and address issues highlighted in the report.</li> <li>• We are also establishing a Graduate Apprenticeship Enhancement Group to develop longer term policy objectives for Graduate Apprenticeships including how they can support rural and island employers and young people.</li> <li>• Similarly Modern Apprenticeship policy will also be reviewed to ensure that apprenticeships help to drive economic growth, address skills gaps in the labour market and support the delivery of Scottish Government commitments, including net zero and sustainable rural and island communities.</li> <li>• SDS provide an all-age career service in every local authority highlighting the options available to people across Scotland, including Modern Apprenticeships. SDS undertakes further activity, together with employers, to highlight the importance of Modern Apprenticeships, particularly through Scottish Apprenticeship Week. We continue to work closely with SDS to support Modern Apprenticeships throughout Scotland.</li> <li>• Work on the Student Retention project is continuing. Student Retention aims to encourage students to remain in Scotland (and rural locations/move to islands or highlands) after completing study; this applies to any students from Scotland or the rest of the UK. Working with young islanders will help to develop our understanding of what would make them want to stay or return after study.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short Term</li> <li>• Long Term</li> <li>• Long Term</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>

Commitment	Action	Timescale
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A review of the Agriculture frameworks is currently underway. The most recent meeting of the Technical Expert Group (TEG) took place on June 8th. The TEG is where the Occupation Profiles are agreed, which lead to the Apprenticeship Framework and Standard being developed and approved. The Occupation Profile then forms the basis of what the qualification(s) required to be developed. The TEG will also decide the number of apprenticeships, the pathways and what level is required. The wider Land-use includes Horticulture, Game &amp; Wildlife, Agriculture, Environmental Conservation and Rural Skills.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ensure that skills provision is agile and responsive to future demand and enables individuals to take up opportunities.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The National Strategy for Economic Transformation's Skilled Workforce Programme aims to ensure that people have the skills they need at every stage of life to have rewarding careers and meet the demands of an ever-changing economy and society and that employers invest in the skilled employees they need to grow their businesses. The Scottish Government is committed to ensuring the education and skills system is agile and responsive to the economic needs of our regions and sectors. As part of this, in June 2023, the Scottish Government published the final report on the Independent Review of the Skills Delivery Landscape which was submitted by James Withers, Independent Advisor. The Review highlights challenges within the current system and makes recommendations on how it should change to ensure that it is fit for the future.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing</li> </ul>

Commitment	Action	Timescale
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="616 225 1494 852">• The Skills Action Plan for Rural Scotland (2019-21) sets out our strategic, partnership approach to support current and future skills needs of the rural economy. Considerable progress has been made across all five priority areas in the Plan. The Scottish Government and SDS continue to be committed to a strategic, partnership approach to support current and future skills needs of the rural economy and continue to resource oversight of delivery of this work. The are ensuring completion of the few remaining actions in the Plan. The broader policy landscape is likely to be changing given the work on the Rural Delivery Plan (and the education and skills component of that), the independent review of the skills delivery landscape and review of the Climate Emergency Skills Action Plan and others. To ensure that the co-ordination and delivery of skills in rural Scotland is relevant and takes account of the findings from this work we will continue an interim position whilst we develop our sustainable, long-term approach.</li> <li data-bbox="616 879 1494 1335">• The Scottish Government independent Commission to review land-based learning submitted their report to Scottish Ministers in January 2023. This has 22 recommendations on how to attract and improve learning pathways to equip more people with the skills and knowledge needed to work in Scotland's land-based and aquaculture sectors. The Scottish Government has committed to consider the report and to produce a response in 2023. The review considered how to provide opportunities and qualifications through early years, school, college, university and work-based learning for more people, and specifically more women and young people, to work in land-based and aquaculture sectors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="1512 225 1727 252">• Medium Term</li> <li data-bbox="1512 879 1693 906">• Short Term</li> </ul>

Commitment	Action	Timescale
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Argyll and Bute Deal includes Rural Skills Accelerator programme which will comprise mobile STEM Academy which, will serve island and remote communities in the region.</li> <li>The Islands Growth Deal's Talented Islands programme will improve the education and skills across all sectors in the Islands Deal programme, particularly in the net zero and renewables sectors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Long Term</li> <li>Long Term</li> </ul>
<p><b>Build on Scotland's National Marine Plan to ensure that fishing and other economic activities stemming from the sea provide increased opportunities for island communities, but at the same time that they are pursued in a sustainable manner.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A <a href="#">statutory review of Scotland's Marine Plan</a> was published in March 2021 which found that whilst the plan remains effective, national and global developments point to a need to update and replace. Scottish Ministers have considered the findings of the Review, and announced the intention to develop new National Marine Plan in September 2022 in the PfG. The Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero and Just Transition in the <a href="#">First Minister's Policy Prospectus April 2023</a> reaffirmed this intension and committed to publish and begin implementation of a new national marine plan, in line with Blue Economy Vision, by 2026.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Short Term Announcement on outcome of the Review</li> <li>Long Term Update of National Marine Plan</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ensure that sustainable land use including agriculture and forestry continues to provide jobs and opportunities to island communities.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Scottish Government will continue to work with the forestry sector to support training new entrants and existing members of the sector and thereby support new entrants into forestry on the islands.</li> <li>The Crofting Commission will further expand its Residency and Land Use team, enabling it to increase its work in addressing absenteeism and bringing crofts back into active use, which will create opportunities for new entrants.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing</li> <li>Ongoing</li> </ul>



Commitment	Action	Timescale
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="616 225 1494 464">• The Crofting Commission received an increase to its budget in 2022/23, enabling it to expand its staff resource, including its Crofting Development Team based in the Western Isles. There are now 6 Commission staff based on our Islands. The Commission will continue to review this in the future consider further positions in other island crofting areas.</li> <li data-bbox="616 491 1494 667">• The Scottish Government continues to provide support to help sustain croft businesses. Officials continue to consider potential changes to the Crofting Agricultural Grant Scheme, which include widening the scope of activity which can be grant supported.</li> <li data-bbox="616 694 1494 1141">• The Agriculture Reform Implementation Oversight Board (ARIOB) was established in August 2021 to contribute to Scottish Government’s work to implement policy reform, incorporating the relevant recommendations of the farmer-led groups to cut emissions across agriculture, support the production of sustainable, high quality food, and design a new support system and approach. The Board are helping to develop the National Test Programme, which will support and encourage farmers and crofters to learn about how their work impacts on climate and nature, including offering financial support to carry out carbon audits and nutrient management plans, establishing a clear baseline and options for action for all who participate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="1512 225 1659 252">• Ongoing</li> <li data-bbox="1512 491 1659 518">• Ongoing</li> <li data-bbox="1512 694 1695 721">• Short Term</li> </ul>

Commitment	Action	Timescale
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our Vision for Agriculture was published on 02 March 2022 and outlines our aim to transform how we support farming and food production in Scotland to become a global leader in sustainable and regenerative agriculture. This commitment will sit at the heart of a robust and coherent framework to underpin Scotland's future agriculture support regime from 2025 onwards. A new Scottish Agriculture Bill will be brought forward in 2023 to replace the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and deliver on the vision.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long Term Framework</li> <li>• Short Term Agriculture Bill</li> </ul>
<p><b>Work with relevant partners and stakeholders to make tourism more sustainable and less seasonal, and encourage development of a year-round offer across a wider range of islands that delivers economic, environmental and social benefits.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To support the long term recovery of Scotland's tourism and hospitality industry, the Tourism Recovery Programme (10 projects that had a positive impact across Scotland) was completed in March 2022. The ten projects were designed to support the four outcomes (Diverse Businesses, Passionate People, Memorable Experiences and Thriving Places) identified in Scotland Outlook 2030. As we move beyond the immediate short term challenge of the pandemic, the industry and the government must continue to work together to align Scotland Outlook 2030's priorities with the National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET). Partners are now working together through the Tourism and Hospitality Industry Leadership Group (ILG) which will provide strategic direction to drive Scotland's ambition to be the world leader in 21st century tourism. The ILG will provide strategic leadership to help grow the economic value and enhance the benefits of tourism, while delivering the very best for visitors, businesses, and communities across Scotland.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medium Term</li> </ul>

Commitment	Action	Timescale
<p><b>Ensure that crofting continues to provide jobs and opportunities to island communities.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Scottish Government will continue to provide support to help sustain croft businesses. Officials continue to consider potential changes to the Crofting Agricultural Grant Scheme, which include widening the scope of activity which can be grant supported.</li> <li>• The Crofting Commission received an increase to its budget in 2022/23, enabling it to expand its staff resource, including its Crofting Development Team based in the Western Isles. There are now 6 Commission staff based on our Islands. The Commission will continue to review this in the future consider further positions in other island crofting areas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>
<p><b>Work with the food and drink industry to leverage its economic potential and explore options for sharing some of its benefits with island communities.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are providing £5m support in 2023/34 towards the work of the new Food &amp; Drink Industry Strategy. The strategy was launched in June 2023 and sets out aims and actions for the sector over the coming years to help food and drink businesses throughout Scotland leverage their economic potential.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>
<p><b>Seek to expand the range of economic, social and environmental benefits that island communities derive from forestry.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scottish Forestry will continue to work with a range of partners to increase the benefits delivered from forests and woodlands on the islands including: carbon sequestration and climate change mitigation; enhancing and protecting Scotland's rich biodiversity; growing an inclusive and sustainable rural economy; and helping Scotland's people adapt to the changing climate and improve their health and well-being.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ensure that legislation and policy relating to early learning and childcare is appropriately island-proofed.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Scottish Government will continue to engage with island stakeholders in the development of Early Learning and Childcare policy and legislation, including conducting an Island Communities Impact Assessment where appropriate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>

Commitment	Action	Timescale
<p><b>Ensure that opportunities to develop the wellbeing of the Gaelic language and increase the number of speakers and users are considered as part of sustainable economic development.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will continue to explore and develop a broad range of opportunities that promote and support the Gaelic language across Scotland and operating across a number of sectors. These functions all have a significant economic impact, through direct employment and attracting visitors while simultaneously supporting grassroots, community language use and the wellbeing of the Gaelic language.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>
<p><b>Support women in agriculture on Scottish islands to succeed, including encouraging their participation in the Women in Agriculture Development Programme</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will encourage the delivery of Islands-specific Women in Agriculture Development Programme courses during 2023.</li> <li>• We will provide targeted support for Practical Training Funding to enable training courses to be hosted on islands.</li> <li>• We will provide additional travel and subsistence for island women to attend courses on the mainland.</li> <li>• We will continue to promote online and in-person training provision to women in Scottish islands.</li> <li>• We will Encourage Women in Agriculture groups to increase networking on islands.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medium term</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>
<p><b>Work with relevant local authorities to develop regional food and drink action plans to support growth of the sector on islands, including a focus on the vital Whisky sector.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will continue to engage with sector leads across Scottish Government and their industry stakeholders on the Working with Business Action Plan to identify actions that could be taken to help mitigate the effects of labour market shortages on businesses and to help stimulate economic recovery. We will continue to feed this information into the ongoing development of the Talent Attraction and Retention programme.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>

Commitment	Action	Timescale
<p><b>To work with relevant local authorities to encourage take up of Food For Life accreditation to help stimulate local sourcing in public sector settings.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We continue to support the delivery of the Food for Life Programme with a focus on school meals and the Soil Association are targeting all Scottish local authorities to encourage them to apply for accreditation through the scheme. This is being done through a process of education, and relationship building, and there are currently 17 councils who now hold FFL accreditation, this includes Orkney and Shetland who achieved bronze level accreditation in 2020/21 and 2021/22 respectively. Our support this year includes funding for a Public Sector Expansion Pilot in Glasgow to bring fresh, local and sustainable meals to new public sector settings across the city, with the aim of taking learnings from that and scaling up the programme in other areas of Scotland.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>

## Strategic Objective: 3 – Transport

Improve transport services

**Partners:** Local Authorities, Island Communities, Highlands and Islands Airport Ltd, Hitrans, Visit Scotland, Calmac Community Board, ZetTrans, Strathclyde Partnership for Transport.

Commitment	Action	Timescale
<p><b>Ensure that existing and future transport-related policies, strategies and services are fully island-proofed so that they truly meet the needs of island communities.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In 2022, Transport Scotland undertook an <a href="#">Islands Communities Impact Assessment</a> for the actions in the first National Transport Strategy Delivery Plan (2020-2022), alongside other impact assessments. We will continue to undertake Island Communities Impact Assessments for any relevant actions which we are considering, including in future strategies and policies and will undertake further consultation with islands stakeholders on specific topics where required.</li> <li>Transport Scotland will continue to engage with island and rural communities on key projects including STPR2, Fair Fares Review and concessionary travel.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing</li> <li>Ongoing</li> </ul>
<p><b>Engage with local authorities, island communities and transport operators in developing regulations and guidance for the bus services provisions of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019, which aim to enable local authorities to better respond to local needs.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following the completion of the consultation in late 2021, Transport Scotland have continued working with partners on the implementation of the bus provisions in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019. The <a href="#">consultation analysis</a> was published 11 March 2022. Since June 2022, local transport authorities have had the powers to run their own local services, which sits alongside their existing ability to subsidise local bus services. Regulations improving the information sharing process when operators vary or cancel a service came into force on 1 April 2023. Later this year, we will begin to introduce secondary legislation to enable the remaining bus provisions of the Act (partnerships and franchising). Transport Scotland will continue to work with partners as these regulations are developed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing</li> </ul>

Commitment	Action	Timescale
<p><b>Produce a long-term plan and investment programme for new ferries and development at ports to improve resilience, reliability, capacity and reduce emissions to give confidence to island communities on our ongoing commitment.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The second <a href="#">Strategic Transport Projects Review</a> (STPR2) will inform the Scottish Government's transport investment programme in Scotland over the next 20 years. STPR2 sets out 45 recommendations for future investment in Scotland's strategic transport network. We intend to develop a Delivery Plan to provide further insight on the prioritisation of the STPR2 recommendations.</li> <li>• Transport Scotland's draft Long-Term Plan for Vessels and Ports was shared with key stakeholders and published on the TS website on 30 December 2022. We will further revise this draft in 2023.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short Term</li> <li>• Short Term</li> </ul>
<p><b>Develop a new Ferries Plan<sup>1</sup>* that will meaningfully contribute to delivering the outcomes of wider Scottish Government strategies as set out in the National Transport Strategy and this National Islands Plan.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will continue with developing the Islands Connectivity Plan (ICP) as the successor to the Ferries Plan 2013-22. The ICP will include objectives based on supporting delivery of NTS2 and the National Islands Plan, and develop proposals to meet those objectives which represent value for money. This work is currently programmed for 2023.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short Term</li> </ul>
<p><b>As part of the next Ferries Plan, review the impacts of Road Equivalent Tariff (RET) and consider future ferry fares policy options that will meet the needs of islanders and support island economies.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The RET Evaluation Report published in March 2021 will inform the fares review workstream being conducted as part of the Islands Connectivity Plan (ICP) and the wider Fair Fares Review.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medium Term</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Ferries Plan is now known as the Islands Connectivity Plan.

Commitment	Action	Timescale
<p><b>Also as part of the Ferries Plan*, review and promote integration between ferries and other modes of transport on the mainland and islands, with a view to better facilitating the use of active, public or shared transport for all or part of journeys to and from islands in an affordable and accessible manner.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This work is being taken forward as an element of the Islands Connectivity Plan (ICP). An Onward and Connecting Travel (OCT) Action Plan will be produced during 2023, in parallel with the other subsidiary elements of the ICP.</li> <li>• The priorities identified in that for improving connectivity will be taken forward as an ongoing programme from 2024 in collaboration with our ferry network operators, other modal transport providers, and relevant wider stakeholders including local authorities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medium Term OCT paper to be published by end 2023</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>
<p><b>For the Clyde and Hebrides ferry services, develop and introduce a new booking, reservation and ticketing system, with Smart Ticketing capability, to replace the existing system</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The delivery of this action is in three phases, the first phase will go live on 16 May 2023. Timing for the other phases are still being developed, and updates will be provided in due course.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medium Term</li> </ul>
<p><b>Determine strategic transport investments from our island communities through STPR2 – which will also inform Transport Scotland’s Ferries Plan 2.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• STPR2 was published on 8 December 2022 and in it, we have set out 45 recommendations for future investment in Scotland’s strategic transport network. The consultation closed on 15 April 2022. The number of responses received was 424, comprising of 159 individuals, 165 organisation and 100 non-disclosed responses. The consultation response, particularly relating to the level of support for the individual recommendations, has also fed into the prioritisation process. A Delivery Plan to provide further insight on the prioritisation of the STPR2 recommendations will follow.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short Term</li> </ul>



Commitment	Action	Timescale
<p><b>Work in partnership with local authorities and communities to improve walking and cycling infrastructure, the design of place and access to bikes, facilities, promotion and education to make walking and cycling the most popular choice for shorter everyday journeys including as part of multi-modal journeys.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TS has grant funded Cycling UK to continue the Rural Connections programme in 2023 which will support people in Shetland, Orkney, and other island communities to cycle, walk and wheel for everyday journeys, leisure and adventure. The programme is being funded as part of our UCI Cycling World Championships response, and offers a wide range of cycling and walking activities for all abilities.</li> <li>• The online portal for applications to Places for Everyone re-opened on 25 July 2022. This was fully publicised to all local authorities who were able to apply for funding for new walking wheeling and cycling infrastructure through the fund. Projects will be progressed in 2023.</li> <li>• Sustrans officers are now in place in Orkney and Dumfries &amp; Galloway, and will continue to support those local authorities with their active travel strategies and projects.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short Term</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>
<p><b>Explore the potential to reduce the need to travel by using the planning system to promote places which bring people and services together.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) was approved in February 2023 and is now in force. NPF4 includes a new policy on local living including the principle of 20 minute neighbourhoods which connect people to a range of amenities and services close to home and recognises that it is a flexible approach that can vary across the country and settlements to suit the context. A consultative draft of guidance on Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods was published in Spring 2023, to support the implementation of NPF4. As a priority, we will now take forward the implementation and monitoring of NPF4 through the <a href="#">Delivery Programme   Transforming Planning</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>

Commitment	Action	Timescale
<b>Subject to requirements as set out in the Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Service and the Northern Isles Ferry Service contracts, we will always strive to improve, where necessary and possible, issues relating to freight and will engage proactively with operators, communities and stakeholders as appropriate.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Transport Scotland continue to work closely with Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd (CMAL) and our ferry operators to help address the challenges facing our ferry network, and will continue to explore any appropriate second hand tonnage if available subject to terms and affordability of any such arrangement.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Medium Term</li></ul>

## Strategic Objective: 4 - Housing

Improve housing

**Partners:** Local Authorities, Island Communities, Scottish Islands Federation, Rural Housing Scotland, Scottish Land Commission, Shelter Scotland, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Communities Housing Trust, Rural and Islands Housing Association Forum, Tighean Innse Gall, local Housing Associations.

Commitment	Action	Timescale
<p><b>Ensure that the regulation of short-term lets takes account of the unique circumstances of island communities and make special provision for them where required.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have introduced regulation of Short-term lets through a licensing scheme that is now operational and requires short-term let hosts to obtain a licence before they accept bookings and receive guests. To obtain a licence, hosts must comply with mandatory conditions (that apply to all short-term lets in Scotland) and any additional conditions imposed by local authorities in response to local needs and concerns. This provides assurance to guests that all short-term lets meet consistent safety standards.</li> </ul> <p>Powers for local authorities to introduce short-term let control areas in order to manage the number of short-term lets in their area. Edinburgh Council designated the whole of the council as a control area on 5 September 2022. From the point of designation it means a change of use to a short-term let is a material change and will always require planning permission.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implemented</li> </ul> <p>Existing hosts operating prior to 1 October 2022 have until 1 October 2023 to apply for a licence. These hosts can continue to operate while their application is being determined</p> <p>New hosts after 1 October 2022 must obtain a licence before they accept bookings and receive guests</p> <p>All short-term lets will be licensed by 1 January 2025</p>

Commitment	Action	Timescale
<p><b>Make best use of all housing stock including derelict properties and options for compulsory purchase.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through <a href="#">Housing to 2040</a> we have committed to take a range of actions to help bring empty homes back into use. The first is to undertake an audit to inform how we deliver the other actions. We have therefore commissioned independent research about the scale, characteristics and location of empty homes, and the effectiveness of interventions to bring them back into use. We intend to publish the report findings later this year and set out our response, including actions. We also continue to support and fund the Scottish Empty Homes Partnership which has helped bring over 8,000 empty homes back into use since 2010.</li> <li>• In April 2023 we launched a consultation on proposals to increase council tax on second and long-term empty homes. The consultation runs until 11 July 2023 and proposes that new powers are introduced to allow councils to charge up to a 100% council tax premium on second homes from April 2024.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short-term Publication of Empty Homes Audit Report Autumn 2023</li> <li>• Medium/Long Term Various actions to be determined in response to audit findings</li> <li>• Short-term Public consultation on proposal to increase council tax on second and long-term empty homes</li> <li>• Medium Term Subject to outcome of consultation, introduce new powers for councils to charge up to 100% council tax premium on second homes from April 2024</li> </ul>

Commitment	Action	Timescale
<p><b>Improve access to homes for people looking to settle in, or return to, island communities. In collaboration with local authorities and relevant stakeholders, we will examine the full range of options to do this, making best use of our existing homes and new supply.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have committed to delivering 110,000 affordable homes by 2032, of which 70% will be for social rent, and 10% in remote, rural and island communities.</li> <li>• In recognition of the challenges with recruiting and retaining staff in remote, rural and island communities we will make up to £25 million available from our affordable housing supply programme budget over the period 2023-2028. The funding will support local authorities and registered social landlords to purchase existing suitable properties which can be rented directly or leased to employers to provide affordable homes for key workers.</li> <li>• In June 2023, we will publish a Remote, Rural &amp; Islands Housing Action Plan to meet the housing needs of, and retain and attract people to, those communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Long Term</li> <li>• Short Term Publication of plan</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ensure that the impact on Gaelic speaking communities is considered as housing policies are developed.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is expected that Local Housing Strategies prepared by local authorities will evidence how the development of outcomes have been influenced by community engagement and consultation to deliver national priorities, plans and targets, and how the Place Principle<sup>2</sup> is being used to deliver change within communities and achieve desired outcomes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> The Place Principle aims to promote a shared understanding of place, and the need to take a more joined-up, collaborative approach to services and assets within a place to achieve better outcomes for people and communities in which they live. The Place Principle is not prescriptive - rather, it encourages and enables local flexibility in responding to issues and circumstances in different places.

## Strategic Objective: 5 – Fuel Poverty

Reduce levels of fuel poverty

**Partners:** Local Authorities, Island Communities, Scottish Islands Federation, Shelter Scotland, Local Energy Scotland, Community Energy Scotland, Home Energy Scotland, Housing Associations.

Commitment	Action	Timescale
<p><b>Review how delivery schemes can work better locally and review funding for island communities.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The successor to the Warmer Homes Scotland scheme is currently undergoing procurement, to go live 2023. As part of the design for the successor to the Warmer Homes Scotland scheme, an eligibility working group was formed which reviewed ways in which eligibility levels and processes could be changed to better target support at fuel poor households. Eligibility criteria has now been set and the successor scheme launches in October 23</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Short Term</li> </ul>

## Strategic Objective: 6 – Digital Connectivity

Improve digital connectivity

**Partners:** Scottish Government, Local Authorities, Scotland 5G Centre, Ofcom, UK DSIT, Internet Service Providers, Openreach, Mobile providers, HIE, SDS, Island Communities

Commitment	Action	Timescale
<p><b>Deliver a step change in the quality of digital connectivity across the islands</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Scottish Government is investing £384m in the Reaching 100% (R100) North lot contract which covers the majority of Scotland’s inhabited islands. In August 2022, the Scottish Government announced that it is investing a further £20.2m, alongside £9.4m of UKG funding, to extend full fibre broadband coverage in the R100 North contract to a further 1,488 premises across Argyll &amp; Bute, Na h-Eileanan Siar, Orkney and Shetland Islands.</li> <li>• The Scottish Government will continue to urge the UK Government to ensure that plans are in place to offer ultrafast connectivity to premises considered by UK Government ‘Very Hard to Reach’ for the purposes of Project Gigabit.</li> <li>• We will continue to progress the Scottish Government’s 4G Infill (S4GI) programme, with all of the 55 sites to be delivered through the programme being located on islands or in rural Scotland.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medium Term</li> <li>• Medium Term</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>

<p><b>Mandate the delivery of gigabit-capable connectivity to selected island locations, through the R100 programme, with many other island communities to benefit once contracts are finalised.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The R100 contracts, alongside our Scottish Broadband Voucher Scheme, ensured that anyone who required a superfast broadband connections, could access one by end December 2021. The R100 programme has delivered 16 new fibre optic subsea cables providing resilient, future-proofed connectivity to 15 Scottish islands for decades to come. This is in addition to 20 subsea cables delivered through our legacy programme, DSSB. The vast majority of R100 contract build will be fibre to the premises (FTTP), capable of delivering gigabit speeds – putting island communities in Scotland ahead of the curve, even compared to many urban areas.</li> <li>• Through the R100 North contract, we will continue to progress delivery with over 12,000 premises located in island communities expected to receive a gigabit-capable connection.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>
<p><b>Call on the UK Government to prioritise early investment in Scotland’s islands as part of their plans for full fibre roll-out by 2025.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will continue to engage with UK Ministers to ensure Scotland receives its fair share of Project Gigabit funding, urging the UK Government to commit a level of funding that allows early investment in Scotland’s islands.</li> <li>• The Scottish Government is investing a further £20.2m, alongside £9.4m of UKG funding, to extend full fibre broadband coverage in the R100 North contract to a further 1,488 premises across Argyll &amp; Bute, Na h-Eileanan Siar, Orkney and Shetland Islands. This is expected to complete build on four islands – namely Westray, Rousay, Hoy and Eday.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medium Term</li> <li>• Short Term</li> </ul>



<p><b>Call on Ofcom to address the issues faced by island communities when designing telecoms regulation and policy. We also committed to convene a meeting with Ofcom and island representatives to explore how regulatory levers (such as spectrum auctions) could improve both mobile and broadband coverage on the islands and ensure that the needs of islands are represented to the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in UK national policy development.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will continue to work with island partners including local authorities, communities and business to gather evidence of demonstrate needs of islands in regards to mobile and broadband coverage.</li> <li>• The Scottish Government continues to work closely with representatives of OFCOM to ensure that Scotland's interests are represented and any issues raised. This also includes co-ordinating regular liaison between OFCOM and DCMS representatives with our recognised local authority single points of contact for digital connectivity, including representatives of island communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>
<p><b>Through the Scotland 5G Centre, building on the 5G RuralFirst trials currently taking place on Orkney, and working with partners including Ofcom, we committed to develop rural 5G use cases to address the rural digital divide using 5G technology.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with the Scotland 5G Centre, and in partnership with the 5G New Thinking project, we continue to monitor the progress of the pan-island testbed 5G network trials (including fixed wireless access and spectrum sharing) and key 5G and Internet of Things (IoT) use case applications (including energy and food &amp; drink), and explore how the trial's outputs and lessons learned can be mainstreamed and help inform policy in addressing the rural digital divide.</li> <li>• Private 5G networks have been built on Westray and Papa Westray, and on Flotta and Hoy, working with local on-island partners Cloudnet IT Services and Orkney Islands Council. A total of seven 5G rural private network base-stations have been installed and providing connectivity to 68 trialists across the these island communities. A 5G network core was set up and a network monitoring system developed for the network operations. Physical deployment activity concluded in March 2022, however, since then, the project team has maintained and operated the network, and also carried out additional engineering to allow scope for further innovative projects.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>

<p><b>Work with local resilience partnerships and telecoms providers to encourage them to focus on resilience of data links to and from the islands.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scottish Government will continue engaging with relevant resilience partnerships and, through this engagement, will identify any challenges to resilience of data links to and from the islands.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>
<p><b>Develop a digital skills programme designed by island communities to meet their needs.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will continue to engage with island communities to understand digital skills needs.</li> <li>• We will learn from existing programmes being delivered in island communities and support their implementation across the islands.</li> <li>• We will engage with education providers, agencies, and local authorities to understand more of what skills programmes are being implemented across the islands.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short Term</li> <li>• Medium Term</li> <li>• Medium Term</li> </ul>
<p><b>Extend the availability of coding clubs and community-based digital inclusion programmes across the islands.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will learn from existing programmes being delivered in the island communities and support their implementation across the islands.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medium Term</li> </ul>

## Strategic Objective: 7 – Health, Social Care and Wellbeing

Improve and promote health and wellbeing

**Partners:** Scottish Government, Local Authorities, TSIs, Community Planning Partnerships, Young Islanders Network, NHS Scotland, Local Health Boards, Royal College of Midwives, Sport Scotland, Active Schools, Scottish Sports Council, Samaritans Scotland, Scottish Women’s Aid, Age Concern Scotland, Public Health Scotland, Scottish Drugs Forum, Alcohol Focus Scotland, Alcohol Information Scotland, Island Communities

Commitment	Action	Timescale
<p><b>Work with NHS Boards, Local Authorities and Health and Social Care Partnerships to ensure that there is fair accessible health and social care for those on islands</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All of Scotland’s islands are attached to Integration Authorities which serve the specific needs of those island communities. Integration Joint Boards will continue to work closely with Health and Social Care Partnerships to ensure each island is recognised within their unique circumstances. Scottish Government has also drafted a Transport to Health delivery plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing</li> </ul>
<p><b>Identify and promote good practice, especially as regards the improvement of services in islands and other remote areas.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will continue to implement the recommendations from the <a href="#">‘Shaping the Future Together: Remote and Rural General Practice Working Group’ report</a>.</li> <li>Work is continuing to finalise the business case for the National Centre for Remote and Rural Health and Social Care, which was one of the recommendations from the Shaping the Future together report.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Long term</li> <li>Ongoing</li> </ul>
<p><b>Support the extension of NHS Near Me/Attend Anywhere, and other digital health initiatives, to reduce unnecessary travel and enable more care to be delivered on Islands.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NHS Near Me will continue to be utilised across every Health Board in Scotland to provide greater flexibility, whilst supporting remote working, reducing the need to travel and promoting greater access to specialist services.</li> <li>Procurement of a ‘once for Scotland’ digital solution for the education and management of type 2 diabetes is ongoing and is forming part of wider digital transformation work being led by ANIA which will explore a potential value case for Digital Solution to support T2 Diabetes and prevention agenda.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing</li> <li>Ongoing</li> </ul>

Commitment	Action	Timescale
<p><b>Work with stakeholders to develop propositions for a national centre for excellence in remote, rural and island health and social care.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In the 2022 Programme for Government we have committed to ensuring that our islands and rural areas are not left behind as we work to improve health services by creating a centre of excellence for rural and remote medicine and social care, with scoping work starting this year. A final business case has been progressed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Long Term</li> </ul>
<p><b>Work with stakeholders to ensure that we develop a plan to adequately support the ageing population of island communities so that they remain active, connected, engaged and have access to suitable, quality opportunities.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integration Authorities will continue to work closely with their communities to develop strategic plans for delivery of health and social care services most suitable to the specific needs of their communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing</li> </ul>
<p><b>Support relevant local authorities to plan and develop sports facilities on the islands that respond to the needs of communities.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>sport</b>scotland will continue to engage strategically with local authorities (through their capital planning processes) and Islands communities with regards to opportunities to deliver improved local facility provision for sport and physical activity.</li> <li><b>sport</b>scotland and the Scottish Government Islands team are continuing to have discussions with Orkney Islands Council regarding strategic facilities investment that would deliver improved local facility provision in preparation for the 2025 Orkney Island Games and beyond.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing</li> <li>Medium Term</li> </ul>
<p><b>Work with Orkney Islands Council and other partners to use the hosting of the 2023 Islands Games by Orkney to strengthen sports development on the island.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>sport</b>scotland will continue to support Orkney Islands Council, Orkney Islands Organising Committee and local sports associations to add value to Orkney hosting the (rescheduled) 2025 International Island Games through the development of the local infrastructure of people, places and pathway opportunities.</li> <li><b>sport</b>scotland will continue work with the Community Sport Hub Officer and with the Orkney Islands Games Organising Committee to deliver a needs based programme of education and development for coaches and volunteers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Medium Term</li> <li>Medium Term</li> </ul>

Commitment	Action	Timescale
<p><b>Work with our partners to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and take steps to assist with promoting equality and meeting people’s different needs.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bairns’ Hoose – based on an Icelandic model “Barnahus” – will bring together services in a ‘four rooms’ approach with child protection, health, justice and recovery services all made available via a coordinated approach designed to reduce the number of times children have to recount their experiences to different professionals. Bairns’ Hoose provides Scotland with an opportunity to provide a genuinely child-centred approach to delivering justice, care and recovery for children who have experienced trauma, including, but not only, child sexual abuse. Children below the age of criminal responsibility, whose behaviour has caused harm, will also have access to the services it will provide. Implementation of the Bairns’ Hoose is a key action identified in our Keeping The Promise Implementation Plan. National Bairns’ Hoose Standards were published on 31 May 2023. Standard 3.4 states that “Children in rural and island communities can access Bairns’ Hoose in a way that is right for them.” From September 2023, these National Standards will be implemented across Scotland by several Pathfinder partnerships. As described in our <a href="#">Bairns’ Hoose Project Plan Progress Report and Pathfinder Delivery Plan (2023 – 25)</a>, the Pathfinders will act as proof of concept and form part of a quality improvement and service design process. The Pathfinders will identify how the Standards may be applied to different contexts, including remote or islands areas. The Pathfinder phase will be followed by pilot phase, then national rollout.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medium Term</li> </ul>

Commitment	Action	Timescale
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The new Scottish Child Interview Model for Joint Investigative Interviews, is being introduced nationally from 2021 to 2024 and will be seen as the 'justice room' of the Bairns' Hoose. A Remote and Islands Subgroup sat throughout 2021 and it was useful in bringing together those with island communities to consider what some of the key challenges were in implementing the Scottish Child Interview Model. The national JII Team recognised that the solutions to implementation challenges were bespoke to each local authority so, since early 2022, have worked on an individual basis with each of the areas represented on the Remote and Islands Subgroup (which were Highland, Argyll and Bute, Western Isles, Orkney and Shetland) and have not re-convened the subgroup. The national JII team continue to engage with each of these areas, plus Orkney and Shetland, on an individual basis, supporting them to consider how to ensure children living in remote and island communities have access to the Scottish Child Interview Model.</li> <li>• The Caledonian System is an internationally recognised behavioural change programme for perpetrators of domestic abuse which involves working with woman and children to reduce the risk of harm that domestic abuse can have. Consideration is being given to the lessons learned during COVID and the needs of island communities. We remain committed to investing in interventions which provide evidence of being able to change the attitudes of offenders. We will continue to explore with Community Justice Scotland the safest, most effective way in which we can increase the availability of the Caledonian System across Scotland.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medium Term National rollout in all areas by 2024</li> <li>• Medium Term</li> </ul>

Commitment	Action	Timescale
<p><b>Address any equality, health and wellbeing related data gaps that exist in respect of, for example, women and girls, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment and sexual orientation.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scottish Women's Aid published the findings from their <a href="#">Participating-in-Equally-Safe-in-the-Highlands-and-Islands</a> consultation. This report will be considered as part of next iteration of Equally S We will be working with partners to consider the recommendations in the report.</li> <li>• A priority of the Delivering Equally Safe Fund is working with those in remote or island communities. The fund will run from October 2021 to March 2025.</li> <li>• Additionally, the Scottish Government committed to an independent strategic funding review to look at how national and local specialist services for women and children experiencing gender based violence are commissioned and funded across Scotland. The findings of this review were published on 6 June 2023 and we will now consider, along with COSLA, local authority partners and wider stakeholders, to ensure a stable footing for funding in the future is developed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medium Term</li> <li>• Short Term</li> <li>• Short Term</li> </ul>
<p><b>Consider our consultation on out of school care through which we have gathered views from parents on the challenges of accessing childcare and range of activities for school age children in island communities. Responses to our consultation will, together with continued engagement, inform development of a future strategic framework which will be published before the end of this parliamentary term.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are currently developing potential rural childcare projects in island communities which aim to explore models of delivery that can provide the flexibility required by the local workforce, including women in agriculture.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short term</li> </ul>

Commitment	Action	Timescale
<p><b>Ensure that health, social care and wellbeing services are available through the medium of Gaelic to support Gaelic speaking island communities.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NHS Highland commitments to Gaelic will be outlined in its revised Gaelic Language Plan, 2023-2028.</li> <li>NHS Western Isles is currently revising its Gaelic Language Plan and will submit it to Bòrd na Gàidhlig soon. NHS Western Isles commitments to Gaelic will also be set out in its Gaelic Plan when approved. BnG has also commissioned a study looking at Gaelic and wellbeing. This will be available later this year with recommendations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing</li> <li>Short Term</li> </ul>
<p><b>Align our ambition to eradicate child poverty with the Plan by continuing to work with island local authorities and health boards to build on their understanding of child poverty in their areas – helping to focus efforts on lifting families out of poverty and mitigating against its damaging impact.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We published the second <a href="#">Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan</a> in March 2022. The Plan outlines the transformational actions we will take alongside our delivery partners – including island local authorities and health boards – to deliver on our national mission to tackle child poverty.</li> <li>Island local authorities and health boards will continue to be required to produce Local Child Poverty Action Reports under the terms of the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017, and the work with national partners set out below will continue to help to inform local action.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Long Term Delivery of the Plan</li> <li>Short Term</li> </ul>
<p><b>Work alongside national partners, continuing to share good practice identified across Scotland which could be applicable to child poverty in our island communities.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will continue to work with national partners to ensure knowledge and good practice is shared and to support and improve local responses to tackling child poverty, including in our island communities.</li> <li>The Scottish Government Islands Team committed to working closely with Child Poverty colleagues to adapt the wider measuring framework for island policy delivery – ensuring that evidence is robust and aligns with and forms part of the work and reporting being led by the Tackling Child Poverty Unit and led by the new <a href="#">Tackling Child Poverty Development Plan</a>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing</li> <li>Ongoing</li> </ul>



Commitment	Action	Timescale
<p><b>Work with islanders to contribute, where we can, to the creation of a fairer, healthier, happier nation for all of Scotland by supporting the work of the group of Wellbeing Economy Governments (WEGo).</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We continue to learn from and collaborate with other countries and organisations through WEGo, and more broadly, to transition to a fair, green, wellbeing economy that puts people first, serving current and future generations. That means empowering our island communities to take a greater stake in the economy, tackling inequalities, and aiming to ensure that they can seize the opportunities from the just transition to net zero to deliver greater prosperity and increased wellbeing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>
<p><b>Work with our partners to consider a range of options to ensure that adequate mental health care is available, whilst taking into consideration the uniqueness of our island communities.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have committed to reviewing the Mental Health Strategy 2012-2027. Reviewing the Strategy provides us with an opportunity to systematically review all of our other existing commitments and make sure that our policies around rural mental health are current and appropriate for those living throughout rural and island areas in Scotland.</li> <li>• We will continue to work with the National Rural Mental Health Forum to ensure to understand the emerging needs of island and rural communities around Covid-19 recovery and in particular to share community based solutions to support good wellbeing. This will look at the role of place and future Community Led Development opportunities to support resilience in our Communities in partnership with others.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short Term Review of Mental Health Strategy</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>

## Strategic Objective: 8 – Environment Wellbeing and Biosecurity

Improve and promote environmental wellbeing and deal with environmental security

**Partners:** Scottish Government, Local Authorities, Island Communities, HIE, SEPA, Nature Scot, National Trust for Scotland, RSPB, Scottish Wildlife Trust, Scottish Land and Estates, Scottish Land Commission, Forestry and Land Scotland, Scottish Forestry, Marine Scotland, Calmac Coastal Community Network, VisitScotland, NFUS.

Commitment	Action	Timescale
<b>Protect island biodiversity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <a href="#">National Islands Plan 2022</a> sets out a series of projects that are currently supporting this commitment and will continue to support island biodiversity going forward.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing</li> </ul>
<b>Address biosecurity in a holistic and integrated manner as a means not only to contribute to environmental wellbeing, but also to contribute to sustainable economic development on Scottish islands.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will continue to undertake island specific projects where required to put in place measures to address biosecurity in an integrated manner, including on the most important islands for breeding seabirds.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing</li> </ul>
<b>Work with island communities to explore how they can contribute to the circular economy through small-scale pilots for example supporting local food production.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Zero Waste Scotland (ZWS) continues to work actively in this field including by chairing Highland Adapts, Highlands regional adaptation partnership. It is also working on the role circular economy has in adaptation, including trade off synergies.</li> <li>ZWS is working in collaboration with HIE to deliver a regionally focused Fuel Change Challenge. A focused development programme getting young people engaged with climate action.</li> <li>ZWS is also supporting partners in a Highland cup re-use scheme and it is delivering workshops and follow-up support on circular economy with Highland Council and Shetland Islands Council.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Short Term</li> <li>Short Term</li> <li>Short Term</li> </ul>

Commitment	Action	Timescale
<p><b>Develop work with the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy’s Non-Native Species Action Group to increase public information around minimising particularly high-risk invasive species movements on islands.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will consult with the Non-Native Species Action Group and NatureScot on:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• which species should be included; and</li> <li>• how raising public awareness may be best achieved.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short Term 2023-24</li> </ul>
<p><b>Work with island partners to design solutions that address climate change through nature based solutions with multiple benefits including, for example the protection and restoration of peatlands and salt marshes.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scottish Government will continue to support collaboration with island partners to ensure nature based solutions are used to tackle to continued threat of climate change.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>

## Strategic Objective: 9 – Climate Change and Energy

Contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation and promote clean, affordable and secure energy

**Partners:** Scottish Government, Local Authorities, Island Communities, SEPA, Scottish Land Commission, Forestry and Land Scotland, Scottish Forestry, Marine Scotland, Zero Waste Scotland, Local Energy Scotland, Community Energy Scotland, European Marine Energy Centre, Strathclyde Centre for Environmental Law and Governance, DTAS, VisitScotland, HIE, NFUS, Sustrans and ZetTrans, Climate Action Hubs, NatureScot, National Trust for Scotland, Crofting Commission.

Commitment	Action	Timescale
<p><b>Work with island communities to support their climate change aspirations.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community climate action hubs across the islands will empower communities to identify the actions that are most appropriate to their needs and provide support in their local areas. They will help groups to take advantage of funding opportunities, and promote collaboration between projects. We will continue to support the development of a further one to two community climate action hubs to ensure full island coverage.</li> <li>• The Carbon Neutral Islands project will embrace the opportunity for island communities to lead the way in realising Scotland's climate change ambitions. Directly supporting 6 islands in their journey towards carbon neutrality by 2040, this will not only benefit the environment, but support local economies, facilities and general wellbeing through investment in communities.</li> <li>• A carbon audit has been completed on each island looking at emissions from energy, transport, waste, land and agriculture. Marine was also looked at and where appropriate, further validation of this data will be carried out this year.</li> <li>• A Community Climate Change Action Plan for each island has been published in June 2023 and includes a consideration of adaptation. Each Plan puts forward priorities and lists of actions and projects from an island perspective.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short Term</li> <li>• Long Term</li> <li>• Short Term</li> <li>• Short Term</li> </ul>

Commitment	Action	Timescale
<p><b>Work with island communities to look at alternative solutions to managing waste, particularly in respect of Scotland’s Circular Economy Strategy.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Programme for Government committed us to the development of a route map to achieving our recycling and waste targets for 2025 and beyond. We consulted on this last year, including an <a href="#">Islands Communities Screening Assessment</a>. The final route map will be published this year. We are also committed to bringing forward a Circular Economy Bill in 2023 and will undertake an Island Communities Impact Assessment as part of this.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Long Term</li> </ul>
<p><b>Work with local authorities to help them work towards their statutory targets.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whilst local authorities do not currently have individual statutory targets for climate change, there are national climate change targets that they have an important role in contributing towards. There are a number of programmes and funding streams targeted at local authorities in this area, which we are continuing to support including EV charging infrastructure fund, support and funding through the Heat Network Support Unit, Local Heat Strategies, support for building retrofits/Heat in Buildings and funding through the Learning Estates programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing</li> </ul>
<p><b>Work towards creating net zero emission islands and providing global climate change leadership.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following the publication of the CNI project community climate change action plans in June 2023, we will focus on implementation of the Climate Change Action Plans and the development of investment strategies aimed at leveraging finance streams to support the project.</li> <li>We have worked with the government of Malta and influenced the development of offshore policy in the country. We have also developed a strong relationship with other islands partners around the world and have co-organised a Nordic Energy Research Island Net Zero Conference in Shetland in May 2023.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Short Term</li> <li>Short Term</li> </ul>

Commitment	Action	Timescale
<p><b>Put in place resilient adaptation plans on islands that are at greater risk from climate change linking these strongly with development plans for those islands.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Dynamic Coast 2</a>, which identifies lengths of coastline at risk of erosion from the sea, was published in August 2021. This work considers how future sea level rise could further exacerbate coastal erosion and erosion enhanced coastal flooding. We are encouraging councils to prepare coastal change adaptation plans using evidence from Dynamic Coast. A budget to help councils plan for and take action to adapt to coastal change was distributed to councils in their general capital grant settlement from 2022-23.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Coastal Change Adaptation Guidance</a> was published in 2023. Continued engagement through the Adaptation Scotland Programme with the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership and Climate Hebrides to support development of locally led adaptation across the islands. Ongoing engagement with other island stakeholders through national capacity building projects and events.</li> <li>• An adaptation component runs through the Carbon Neutral Islands project community climate change action plans published in June 2033.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short Term</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Short Term</li> </ul>
<p><b>Work closely with island partners, the network owner and all other key stakeholders to deliver existing proposals for electricity transmission links to mainland Scotland.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will continue to engage closely with island local authorities and industry to assess the risks and opportunities as Scottish island wind projects approach this year's Contract for Difference (CfD) allocation round.</li> <li>• Scottish Ministers will continue to make clear to Ofgem that its decisions on island links must take the net zero imperative more fully into account, and incorporate a more flexible approach to what are vital strategic investments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>
<p><b>Work with Resilience Partnerships and energy providers to encourage them to focus on the resilience of islands' energy supply networks.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Scottish Government Energy Networks Strategic Leadership Group will continue to be an influential forum for discussing the development of Scotland's energy networks.</li> <li>• We await the outcomes of draft business plans submitted to Ofgem in December which will influence our approach to the coming year.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Short Term</li> </ul>

Commitment	Action	Timescale
<p><b>Work with transport-related stakeholders to have the most energy-efficient and climate-friendly transport services possible across the islands.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport Scotland has consulted on developing an aviation strategy (closed 21 January 2022). The responses will help us to determine how the Highlands and Islands commitments noted can be progressed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have committed to decarbonising scheduled flights within Scotland by 2040.</li> <li>• Aim to create the world's first zero emission aviation region in partnership with Highlands and Islands Airports.</li> <li>• Exploring the potential for the purchase of zero/low emission aircraft.</li> <li>• Continue to examine the scope for utilising hybrid and low carbon energy sources in the public sector marine fleet as part of our vessel replacement programme.</li> <li>• Additionally, as part of the Islands Connectivity Plan, we will explore and consult on pathways to zero/low emission ferry transport.</li> <li>• We will support all island authorities to develop public EV charging strategy and expansion plans.</li> <li>• Through schemes such as the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund, we will support local authorities covering rural and island areas to move towards zero emission road transport.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short Term Report from Aviation Strategy consultation  Develop public electric vehicle charging strategy and expansion plans for island authorities</li> <li>• Long Term The aviation strategy consultation will help us to determine the actions needed to deliver the Highlands and Islands commitments, which are to be realised by 2040 at the latest  Support the public and private sectors to work together to invest in electric vehicle charging networks</li> </ul>
<p><b>Continue working to unleash the potential of renewable energy as both a way to mitigate climate change and as a driver of sustainable and inclusive economic growth.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan (ESJTP) was published for consultation in January 2023. The draft ESJTP lays out over 150 actions, as well as consulting on further actions, to help maximise a just transition to net zero. It seeks to deliver a just energy transition that benefits communities across Scotland, including island communities, and provide high-quality jobs and economic benefit, affordability, and protect our environment and energy security. An Island Impact Assessment will be carried out for the final ESJTP.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short Term Publication of Plan</li> </ul>

Commitment	Action	Timescale
<b>Work with communities, crofters, farmers and landowners to expand forests and woodlands on the islands, recognising wider land-use objectives.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scottish Forestry will continue to support sustainable woodland creation on the islands through the Forestry Grant Scheme.</li> <li>• Scottish Forestry will also continue to work with a range of partners including the Woodland Trust and Point and Sandwick Trust to deliver the Croft Woodlands Project, which covers all islands, including Argyll and Arran, providing advice and support for crofters.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Medium Term</li> </ul>
<b>Support the adaptation of Scotland's aquaculture and fishing industry.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will continue to ensure Island fishing representatives contribute to the development of annual fisheries negotiations strategy and priorities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>
<b>Work with a range of stakeholders to develop an action plan to improve resilience to properties at flood risk.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will continue to work with a stakeholders to deliver the Living with Flood: action plan, which was reviewed in 2021.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>
<b>Work with local authorities to strengthen recycling and food waste services in island communities.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued development of route map for Scotland's waste and recycling targets to 2025 and beyond which will include an Island Communities Impact Assessment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short Term</li> </ul>
<b>Work closely with key stakeholders to ensure that the voices of islanders are fully heard, achieving a just transition to net-zero, and that islands benefit from the many opportunities associated with a green and sustainable economy.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will engage on a draft Islands Energy Strategy setting out approach to decarbonisation for Scotland's Island communities.</li> <li>• We are committed to publishing a Just Transition Plan as part of the refreshed Energy Strategy – it will involve extensive engagement with those likely to be impacted by the energy transition, including in the islands.</li> <li>• We will also publish a sectoral Land Use and Agriculture Just Transition plan, which will be co-produced with relevant stakeholders. Impacts on islands will be a key consideration.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short Term 2023</li> <li>• Short Term 2022</li> <li>• Short Term 2023</li> </ul>



## Strategic Objective: 10 – Empowered Communities and Strong Local Partnerships

Empower diverse communities and different places

**Partners:** Scottish Government, Local Authorities, Island Communities, Scottish Islands Federation, Scottish Community Development Centre, Community Land Scotland, Development Trust Association Scotland, Scottish Land Commission, Marine Scotland, Youth Parliament, Youth Scotland, COSLA, Crown Estate Scotland.

Commitment	Action	Timescale
<p><b>Take forward the Local Governance Review with COSLA in order to create a system of local democracy that will be inclusive and improve people's lives.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The commitment remains to conclude the joint Local Governance Review (LGR) with COSLA and implement the findings through a Bill within this parliament. The LGR is a key part of our overall approach to Public Service Reform and future relationship with local government. We are making progress on delivering the overarching policy ambitions of the LGR through a variety of routes. The New Deal for Local Government and commitments on a Local Visitor Levy and council tax on second homes/ long-term empty properties all represent material changes which empower local government. Some of these reforms are being taken forward, as necessary, through their own distinct legislative vehicles.</li> <li>• Scottish Government are also continuing to work with local partners on the Orkney Islands and Western Isles to explore the potential benefits of Single Authority type models. This highly complex work with potentially far reaching implications is in the early stages and we are aware of potential interest from other councils.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short Term</li> <li>• Short Term</li> </ul>

Commitment	Action	Timescale
<p><b>Support participatory processes aimed at providing island communities with a strong voice in the implementation of the Plan.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We continue to provide support to the National Participatory Budgeting Strategic Group, which is an independent group responsible for gathering intelligence on PB and building capacity across Scotland to ensure best possible practice. The group meets on a quarterly basis.</li> <li>• We continue to work with the strategic group to explore how PB can be used as innovative engagement tool to tackle issues around health and wellbeing, education, housing and climate justice.</li> <li>• We continue to work in partnership with COSLA to support local authorities reach the target of having at least 1% of their budget subject to participatory budgeting, giving local people a direct say in how almost £100m will be spent.</li> <li>• The Scottish Government continues to support COSLA's PB team, who have had a particular focus on the development and delivery of CONSUL, a free citizen participation software. CONSUL has been translated into Gaelic, making it possible for online community engagement processes to take place in Gaelic.</li> <li>• Scottish Government acknowledge that in order to ensure that the National Islands Plan leads to meaningful, positive and sustainable change, there needs to be ongoing collaboration with our island communities for the duration of the Plan. We will continue to consult and collaborate with our island communities on a regular basis.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>

Commitment	Action	Timescale
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The implementation of the National Islands Plan is supported by both the <a href="#">Islands Strategic Group</a> and the <a href="#">National Islands Plan Delivery Group</a>. The Islands Strategic Group was established to ensure greater involvement of the relevant councils in helping design solutions to the challenges islanders face, whilst the Delivery Group ensures that work is driven forward in a collaborative way that truly involves island communities. We will continue to work closely with both of these groups on delivery of the National Islands Plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing</li> </ul>
<p><b>Explore ways to strengthen the voice of island communities whilst capturing the differences between islands in local and national decision-making.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work has started to review the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 – a 2021 Programme for Government commitment – where we will consider how we can give local communities more of a say over how local public assets are used – whether that is taking on the ownership or management of land or buildings, delivery of services to members of their community, or greater engagement with the public sector to have more say in how services are delivered, assets are used and resources are allocated. The review was launched by Tom Arthur, then Minister for Public Finance, Planning, and Community Wealth at the Loch Ness Community Hub on 21 July 2022. The Scottish Government will ensure it remains fit for purpose and will consider how we can give local people even more of a say in the things that matter to them in their community. The review of the Community Empowerment Act builds on success achieved since the Scottish Government brought this landmark legislation in, with more and more local people having their voices heard about public service outcomes, and ever greater amounts of our public owned land and buildings moving over to community control. We are taking the review forward in collaboration with the public sector, third sector and communities with a particular focus on the implications of the legislation for disadvantaged communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Short Term</li> </ul>

Commitment	Action	Timescale
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scottish Government acknowledge that in order to ensure that the National Islands Plan leads to meaningful, positive and sustainable change, there needs to be ongoing collaboration with our island communities for the duration of the Plan. We will continue to consult and collaborate with our island communities on a regular basis.</li> <li>• The implementation of the National Islands Plan is supported by both the <a href="#">Islands Strategic Group</a> and the <a href="#">National Islands Plan Delivery Group</a>. The Islands Strategic Group was established to ensure greater involvement of the relevant councils in helping design solutions to the challenges islanders face, whilst the Delivery Group ensures that work is driven forward in a collaborative way that truly involves island communities. We will continue to work closely with both of these groups on delivery of the National Islands Plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>
<p><b>Working with island communities and local authority partners in the development and introduction of a Transient Visitor Levy Bill.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Visitor Levy (Scotland) Bill was introduced to Parliament 24 May 2023 building on the considerable policy development completed prior to the pandemic. In doing so, we have engaged a range of stakeholders, including industry representative bodies and worked closely with Local Government through a working group convened by COSLA which included officers from a range of local authorities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implemented</li> </ul>
<p><b>Explore ways in which to empower and support island communities to enhance their resilience by developing local initiatives and plans in partnership with Scotland's Emergency Responder organisations.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Resilient Communities team is currently scoping a project to establish a baseline of community resilience activity and is working with island stakeholders to ensure that the perspective of island communities is built into the project design.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short Term</li> </ul>

Commitment	Action	Timescale
<p><b>Ensure that policies and plans relating to the Scottish Crown Estate are appropriately island proofed and that any manager of a Scottish Crown Estate asset supports implementation of the National Islands Plan as appropriate.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Crown Estate Scotland Unit team will work with Crown Estate Scotland and potential new managers, on a case-by-case basis, to ensure that wider policies relating to the Scottish Crown Estate and that transfer and/or delegation proposals have completed an Islands Impact Assessment and take into account the National Islands Plan as appropriate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing (applications for a transfer and/or delegation may be received at any point throughout these indicative delivery timescales)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ensure that Gaelic speakers in island communities are encouraged and supported to represent themselves through the medium of Gaelic.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scottish Government published the new Gaelic Language Plan 2022-2027 in October 2022. The Plan has an open offer to engage through the medium of Gaelic. In addition, Scottish Government are happy to take written requests in Gaelic. The Scottish Government has committed to providing more services through Gaelic and extending opportunities to use Gaelic in everyday situations and formal settings. As part of the process for developing the next iteration of the SG Gaelic Language Plan, the Gaelic &amp; Scots team liased with various island based Scottish Government offices to discuss what further provision they can make for Gaelic. The three local authorities of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Highland Council and Argyll &amp; Bute all have Gaelic language plans in place, have Gaelic medium education and have Gaelic development officers to promote and support the use and learning of Gaelic.</li> <li>Education Scotland has published a revised Gaelic Language Plan, 2022-2027. This is part of HM Inspectors' five-year strategy for Gaelic Education, which also impacts on islands. As part of this, HM Inspectors will continue to provide specialist evaluations of how well establishments and settings are performing in a range of key areas. We provide this specialist evaluation for Gaelic Medium Education and for islands contexts. We will also take forward new high-level aims to support Gaelic.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing</li> <li>Short Term Publication of Plan</li> <li>Ongoing Continued provision of specialist evaluations</li> </ul>

## Strategic Objective: 11 – Arts, Culture and Language

Support arts, culture and language

**Partners:** Scottish Government, Local Authorities, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Creative Scotland, Fèisean nan Gàidheal, Comunn na Gàidhlig, An Comunn Gàidhealach, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Historic Environment Scotland, National Youth Orchestra, HIE, VisitScotland, Event Scotland, Creative Scotland, RFOs, National Lottery, Island Communities.

Commitment	Action	Timescale
<p><b>Invest in our cultural and historic resources, to ensure that islanders are encouraged to engage with, and participate in, arts and culture.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many continuing projects such as Ceolas, Feisean nan Gaidheal, An Comann Gaidhealach, the Heritage Forum and centres such as Lanntair, Kildonan Museum, Taigh Chearsabhagh, Sabhal Mor Ostaig Urras Oighreachd Gabhsainn contribute to this objective.</li> <li>• Working with partners, EventScotland will continue to raise Scotland’s reputation as the perfect stage by supporting and securing a portfolio of events and developing the events industry. EventScotland will continue to maintain constant awareness/alignment with wider Scottish Government and VisitScotland initiatives that focus on the islands.</li> <li>• ‘Themed Years’ present a unique collaborative platform for a number of partners to work in closer collaboration to achieve shared goals and generate stronger partnership working to deliver sustainable economic development in the linked sectors of culture tourism and events. Creating a rich and varied events programme is a central aspect of the Themed Year approach.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing Decisions on future Themed Years will be taken during 2023</li> </ul>

Commitment	Action	Timescale
<p><b>Has Support, develop and promote the creative talents of islanders, and ensure that the culture of Scotland's islands has a wide audience both nationally and abroad.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many continuing projects such as Ceolas, Feisean nan Gaidheal, An Comann Gaidhealach, the Heritage Forum and centres such as Lanntair, Kildonan Museum, Taigh Chearsabhaigh, Sabhal Mor Ostaig Urras Oighreachd Gabhsainn contribute to this objective.</li> <li>• Working with partners, EventScotland will continue to raise Scotland's reputation as the perfect stage by supporting and securing a portfolio of events and developing the events industry. EventScotland will continue to maintain constant awareness/alignment with wider Scottish Government and VisitScotland initiatives that focus on the islands.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>
<p><b>Support all of Scotland's indigenous languages and dialects in ways that are relevant to the communities where these are spoken.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Island Communities Impact Assessments will support this process following the 2022 update to the Guidance and Toolkit.</li> <li>• Quarterly meetings are established between the Gaelic and Scots Team, the Islands Team and Bòrd na Gàidhlig to support this process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ensure that the commitments in this plan are informed by and aligned with the commitments in the National Gaelic Language Plan, working closely with Bòrd na Gàidhlig.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Scottish Government's Gaelic Language Plan outlines its alignment with the <a href="#">National Gaelic Language Plan</a>. The SG Islands Team is represented on the Scottish Government's Gaelic Implementation Group. This meets twice yearly and is a forum for ensuring our policy area fulfils the commitments of both the National and Scottish Government Gaelic Language Plans.</li> <li>• We will continue to work closely with Bòrd na Gàidhlig as members of the National Islands Plan Delivery Group which was established to oversee implementation of the National Islands Plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>

Commitment	Action	Timescale
<p><b>Ensure that the effect on Gaelic language development is considered from the outset in island-specific policies and initiatives and that these link to statutory Gaelic language plans.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Island Communities Impact Assessments will support this process following the 2022 update to the Guidance and Toolkit which now includes consideration of impact on Gaelic speaking communities.</li> <li>• The latest SG Gaelic Language plan has corporate service aims to ensure the equal prominence of Gaelic and encouragement to use Gaelic in communications.</li> <li>• Representatives on the Scottish Government’s Gaelic Implementation Group ensure their policy areas are mindful of the language and that, where possible, policies serve to advance Gaelic.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>
<p><b>Work with public authorities and community groups in increasing the use and visibility of Gaelic in Gaelic speaking island communities.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Gaelic &amp; Scots team has prepared the new Scottish Government Gaelic Language Plan. This contains corporate service aims to ensure the equal prominence of Gaelic in SG logo and branding, the prominence of Gaelic signage in SG offices, and commitments to use Gaelic in our public communications and corporate publications. Other SG agencies, such as Social Security Scotland, provide bilingual material relating to their services and discussions are ongoing with island based SG offices to increase their Gaelic provision.</li> <li>• The Gaelic Implementation Group established under the plan is an ongoing opportunity for colleagues across the Scottish Government to support Gaelic through their work and the Islands Team, along with other parts of the Agriculture and Rural Economy Directorate, are represented on it.</li> <li>• A number of Gaelic development officers from different organisations are based in island communities with the aim of increasing the use and learning of Gaelic. To help organise their efforts a Gaelic Development Officers Network has recently been formed with support from Bòrd na Gàidhlig.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>



Commitment	Action	Timescale
<p><b>Work with relevant authorities to improve Gaelic provision for Gaelic speaking island communities in delivering their functions and services.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Gaelic &amp; Scots team has prepared the new Scottish Government Gaelic Language Plan. This contains corporate service aims to ensure the equal prominence of Gaelic in SG logo and branding, the prominence of Gaelic signage in SG offices, and commitments to use Gaelic in our public communications and corporate publications. Other SG agencies, such as Social Security Scotland, provide bilingual material relating to their services and discussions are ongoing with island based SG offices to increase their Gaelic provision.</li> <li>The Gaelic Implementation Group established under the plan is an ongoing opportunity for colleagues across the Scottish Government to support Gaelic through their work and the Islands Team, along with other parts of the Agriculture and Rural Economy Directorate, are represented on it. The Faster Rate of Progress Initiative and COHI also have a role here and Gaelic is emphasised in these gatherings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing</li> <li>Ongoing</li> </ul>
<p><b>Support approaches that promote the sustainable management of the historic environment.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Our Past, Our Future: The Strategy for Scotland's Historic Environment</a> is our refreshed five-year strategy for Scotland's historic environment which speaks to our shared heritage, and reflects the positive impacts the historic environment has for people and communities across the country and the beneficial role it will play in our future lives.</li> <li>Its three key priorities are: Delivering the transition to net zero, Empowering resilient and inclusive communities and places, and Building a wellbeing economy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Short Term</li> <li>Short Term</li> </ul>

## Strategic Objective: 12 – Education

Promote and improve education for all throughout life

**Partners:** Scottish Government, Local Authorities, Island Communities, UHI, Heriot Watt University, Robert Gordon University, Scotland's Rural College, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, e-Sgoil, SDS, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Comann nam Pàrant, Local colleges, Young Scot, Creative Scotland, Youth Theatre Arts Scotland, Youth Scotland.

Commitment	Action	Timescale
<p><b>Work with UHI, the University of Aberdeen, Heriot-Watt University, Robert Gordon University and other education providers to ensure a broad range of options are available to young people</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scottish Government is aware that a range of positive work has been taken forward in recent academic years within UHI, University of Aberdeen, Heriot-Watt University and Robert Gordon University to ensure young people in Islands communities have access to a wide range of opportunities throughout the lifelong learning and skills system. We will continue to engage with those institutions to monitor ongoing work over the coming academic year.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing</li> </ul>
<p><b>Support UHI as it deepens collaboration with island partners to promote learner pathways, innovation and industry/employer engagement.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The UHI Islands Strategy Director role will continue to be important and support close partnership work with the SG Islands Team through a collaborative, solution-focussed approach that seeks to maximise the opportunities that arise through overlapping work streams and synergies, such as UHI projects associated the Islands Growth Deal and Islands Programme investment. Critically this work interconnects as a result of shared priorities, identified through both the <a href="#">Islands Strategy</a> and the SG's <a href="#">National Islands Plan</a>.</li> <li>Ongoing work on Student Retention and Talent Attraction and Retention programmes to support students to stay, including linking with employers, especially those with skills shortages.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing</li> <li>Ongoing</li> </ul>

Commitment	Action	Timescale
<p><b>Ensure that young people are given the same opportunities to access education as young people on mainland Scotland.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education Scotland will include island practitioners in groups and professional learning reviewing curriculum pathways and curriculum planning to continue to increase access to the curriculum for all children and young people.</li> <li>• The Rural Skills Accelerator programme will include a mobile STEM Academy which will serve island and rural communities in Argyll and Bute.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>
<p><b>Continue to support and promote Gaelic medium education at all levels.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A wide range of projects and initiatives are in place to promote and support Gaelic medium education at all levels. This involves SG, a number of local authorities, public bodies and Gaelic organisations. We will continue to support Northern Alliance working group for Gaelic to support collaborative improvement.</li> <li>• The Scottish Government is committed towards exploring the establishment of a new strategic approach to Gaelic Medium Education. This was consulted on in 2022 and relevant provisions will be made in the forthcoming Scottish Languages Bill.</li> <li>• We will continue to use evidence and independent evaluation to celebrate success, support improvement and raise standards in Gaelic Medium and Learner Education; taking forward the scrutiny objectives of HM Inspectors' Corporate and Gaelic Language Plans bespoke to island contexts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>

Commitment	Action	Timescale
<p><b>Work with all island authorities to scope potential projects that could benefit from successive phases of the new £1 billion Learning Estate Investment Programme which runs until 2026.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The £2 billion Learning Estate Investment Programme prioritises schools identified by local authorities as in need of updating, to ensure rapid progress where most required, and will benefit tens of thousands of pupils across Scotland.</li> <li>• Phase three of the Learning Estate Investment programme opened to local authorities in 2022, and successful projects will be announced by July 2023. Any bids for funding from island authorities, through Phase three of the Learning Estate Investment Programme, will be given careful consideration.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medium Term</li> <li>• Short Term</li> </ul>

Commitment	Action	Timescale
<p><b>Increase our collective efforts to improve the educational outcomes of children living in poverty by continuing to support island authorities/schools plans to raise attainment through Scottish Attainment Challenge programmes such as Pupil Equity Funding.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education Scotland will continue to collaborate with island authorities to improve educational outcomes of children living in poverty. Five Attainment Advisors work with local authority central staff and individual schools to continue to improve the use of data, identify need and develop appropriate interventions to close the poverty related attainment gap. Joint cross-island professional learning is taking place to develop skills in data use and how to make best use of the Pupil Equity Funding.</li> <li>• HM Inspectors will continue to share practice using social media campaigns, dedicated sections within Scotland Learns newsletters, webinars and inclusion within thematic reports and other publications. By means of an example, HMI have ensured islands were part of the evidence gathering of the following thematic reports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Local approaches to recovery: a thematic review</a></li> <li><a href="#">Evaluation of Foundation Apprenticeships - March 2022</a></li> <li><a href="#">Responsive, supportive and resilient communities - September 2022</a></li> <li><a href="#">Approaches to recording and monitoring incidents of bullying in schools</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Effective practice from islands was also shared in professional learning resources. The practitioner resources have self-evaluation and improvement frameworks and exemplars of effective practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Sharing scrutiny evidence on Gaelic Medium Education - early learning and childcare total immersion</a></li> <li><a href="#">Sharing inspection evidence: leadership and primary Gaelic Medium and Learner Education</a></li> <li><a href="#">Sharing scrutiny evidence on Gaelic Medium Education - secondary curriculum</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>

Commitment	Action	Timescale
<b>Consider the needs of adult learners in our island communities as we develop our adult learning strategy for Scotland.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An Island Communities Impact Assessment was undertaken and published in May 2022. We will continue to engage with adult learners in our island communities to identify how we can remove barriers to learning as we deliver the Adult Learning Strategy for Scotland.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Short Term</li></ul>

## Strategic Objective: 13 – Implementation and Measurement of the National Islands Plan

Support effective implementation of the National Islands Plan

**Partners:** Scottish Government, Local Authorities, Island Communities, National Islands Plan Delivery Group, Islands Strategic Group.

Commitment	Action	Timescale
<p><b>Develop indicators applicable to each Strategic Objective in collaboration with Scottish Government agencies, local authorities, island communities and relevant island socio-economic actors based on the SMART criteria and building on the National Performance Framework and Sustainable Development Goals.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further research is being undertaken to gather the necessary data in order to set the baselines for our measurable outcomes.</li> <li>• We will undertake a further iteration of the National Islands Plan Survey.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medium Term</li> <li>• Short Term</li> </ul>
<p><b>Work with island communities to ensure that the Plan is widely promoted and understood by all sectors of society.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will continue to consult and collaborate with our island communities on a regular basis.</li> <li>• We will continue to support the Islands Strategic Group to allow us to work closely with our local authority partners on delivery.</li> <li>• We will continue to support the National Islands Plan Delivery Group to ensure that work is driven forward in a collaborative way that truly involves island communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>



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**W W W . G O V . S C O T**