



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Chief executive

Rural Affairs and Islands Committee

c/o Clerk to the Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
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By email only

11 July 2023

Dear Sir/Madam,

2024-25 pre-budget scrutiny

At its meeting on 28 June 2023, the Committee agreed to continue to focus its budget scrutiny on the islands programme budget and the funding associated with the national islands plan. This follows a similar focus during its scrutiny of the 2023-24 budget.

To inform this scrutiny, the Committee agreed to write to ask for further information about how the Committee's 2023-24 pre-budget recommendations have been implemented. It would be helpful, therefore, if you could provide information in response to the following questions—

- With many of the projects from 2021-22 (year 1) now completed, what analysis has your authority done to measure the impact they are having on island communities?
- How are the projects in your local authority area which were awarded funding in 2022-23 (year 2) progressing?
- How do the projects in your local authority area which were awarded funding in 2023-24 (year 3) support the national islands plan's strategic objectives?
- What are your authority's experiences of the competitive bidding process and the support received from the Scottish Futures Trust for 2023-24 (year 3) allocations?
- To what extent have island communities been involved in the design, development and delivery of 2023-24 (year 3) projects?
- What is the impact for your local authority of the Scottish Government's decision not to provide any capital funding for the islands programme in 2024-25 (year 4)?

- What are the challenges of delivering capital projects on the islands in your authority area?
- How important is it to have a pipeline of capital projects?
- How is your local authority demonstrating that capital projects funded through the islands programme are additional, critical and transformative?
- Whether funding to support the national islands plan is adequate given we are halfway through the five-year lifetime of the plan and only a fraction of its commitments have been fulfilled?
- How the resource element of islands plan budget has supported the delivery of the national islands plan objectives in your authority area over the past three years?
- Island local authorities raised concerns with the Committee last year about the “cluttered landscape” for funds and budgets available to island local authorities and the Committee recommended the Scottish Government consider how these could be “amalgamated or streamlined”. Do you feel the Scottish Government has made any progress to address these concerns?
- Have you received any funding from the £1.4m Island Cost Crisis Emergency Fund set up by the Cabinet Secretary last year and, if so, please provide further information?

A response by Friday 1 September would be appreciated.

Yours sincerely,



Finlay Carson MSP
Convener
Rural Affairs and Islands Committee