



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Douglas Ross MSP  
Convener  
Education, Children and Young People  
Committee

Liz Smith CBE MSP  
Scottish Parliament

28 November 2024

Dear Douglas

**Schools (Residential Outdoor Education) (Scotland) Bill – alternative funding models**

Thank you for inviting me to give evidence to the Education, Children and Young People Committee on Wednesday 18 December as part of your Stage 1 scrutiny of the Schools (Residential Outdoor Education) (Scotland) Bill. I am looking forward to discussing my Bill with the Committee and responding to the evidence that has been received during Stage 1.

Having given evidence to the Finance and Public Administration Committee on Tuesday 19 November, and having watched your committee's Stage 1 scrutiny with interest, I am aware that funding the provision of residential outdoor education for school pupils has been a key issue highlighted in evidence. I note that there has been a particular focus on different funding models that could potentially be used to provide such education. This was a matter I discussed with the Finance and Public Administration Committee when giving evidence to that committee. At that meeting, I highlighted to the Committee my interest in exploring the possibility of using a public trust model of finance for the provision of residential outdoor education for young people. It was apparent that members of that committee were interested in such a model. Furthermore, I noted that, in her evidence to your committee on Wednesday 27 November 2024, the Minister for Children, Young People and Keeping the Promise indicated that she too was open to further discussion on additional means of funding. I welcome her willingness to engage in this respect.

As such, ahead of the evidence session on 18 December, I thought that your committee might find it helpful if I shared some examples of possible alternative funding models that I think could be used to fund residential outdoor education for school pupils.

### *Rethink Ireland*

Firstly, I would encourage the Committee, in considering alternative funding models, to look at the excellent work being done by Rethink Ireland ([About Us - Rethink Ireland](#)). Rethink Ireland is an organisation which provides cash grants and business support to local charities and social enterprises to help them to develop their initiatives and give them access to networks across Ireland. It is funded by philanthropic giving from companies, trusts and foundations, as well as individuals, and receives match funding for donations from the Irish Government.

Individuals and bodies can apply for support through different funding streams. A full list of current funding streams is available on the Rethink Ireland website ([Our Funds - Rethink Ireland](#)). The Committee may be interested to note that it has relatively recently provided funding to enable young people with disabilities to engage in outdoor recreation.

### *Inspiring Scotland*

A similar model to Rethink Ireland that is already in existence in Scotland is the funding model provided by Inspiring Scotland ([Home - Inspiring Scotland](#)). Inspiring Scotland was established in 2008 to tackle long-term, entrenched social problems, and to do so by using a venture philanthropy model of financial support matched with tailored development support to the charity sector. It raises money from private individuals, trusts and foundations, and the Scottish Government, and invests it in funds that seek to address specific themes. It is essentially a partnership model between government, business, the voluntary sector and others that seeks to tackle deep seated social problems and deliver change. I consider that Inspiring Scotland, or a similar body, could work to provide funding for every school pupil to undertake residential outdoor education.

### *Ernest Cook Trust*

There are other trusts already in existence across the UK which the Committee may consider to be models that could be adopted to enable school pupils to receive residential outdoor education. Of particular note is the Ernest Cook Trust ([The Ernest Cook Trust](#)). This is an organisation based in Gloucestershire, which exists to give grants, fund Outdoor Learning and find innovative ways to work with funding partners, and to provide and fund Outdoor Learning programmes for children and young people. Each year the Trust donates around £2 million of funds generated through income from its estates and investments ([Grants – The Ernest Cook Trust](#)).

I hope that the Committee finds these examples of alternative funding models to be helpful to consider as it scrutinises the financial aspects in relation to my Bill. It is my view that the Scottish Government could use a model along the lines of those referred to above in providing funding to give effect to the provisions of my Bill. Alternatively, it could develop a bespoke Public Trust, chaired by a Minister, civil servant or public appointee, to enable public, private and philanthropic funding to be invested and used to provide residential outdoor education for school pupils. Such

a trust might also be used for other initiatives, such as the provision of music tuition in schools or school trips.

I look forward to discussing these matters further on 18 December. As these issues were also raised at his committee, I am copying this letter to Kenneth Gibson MSP, Convener of the Finance and Public Administration Committee. I am also copying this letter to Natalie Don-Innes MSP, Minister for Children, Young People and Keeping the Promise, for information.

Yours sincerely

**Liz Smith CBE MSP**

## ANNEX – UPDATED FINANCIAL MEMORANDUM TABLES

### ANNEXE – REVISED OVERALL COSTS ON SCOTTISH ADMINISTRATION (TABLES 5, 6 AND 7 IN FINANCIAL MEMORANDUM)

#### Year 1 costs (Revised Table 5)

	<b>Low estimate</b>	<b>Median estimate</b>	<b>High estimate</b>
Cost of pupils attending residential outdoor education	£19,710,075	£26,493,413	£33,276,750
Transport costs	£1,195,620	£1,304,449	£1,413,277
Costs of producing guidance	£2,578	£4,581	£6,584
<b>Total year 1 costs</b>	<b>£20,908,273</b>	<b>£27,802,443</b>	<b>£34,696,611</b>

#### Year 2 costs (Revised Table 6)

	<b>Low estimate</b>	<b>Median estimate</b>	<b>High estimate</b>
Cost of pupils attending residential outdoor education	£20,672,602	£27,981,098	£35,289,594
Transport costs	£1,254,138	£1,368,150	£1,482,163
Costs of producing guidance	£0	£0	£0
<b>Total year 1 costs</b>	<b>£21,926,740</b>	<b>£29,349,248</b>	<b>£36,771,757</b>

#### Year 3 costs (Revised Table 7)

	<b>Low estimate</b>	<b>Median estimate</b>	<b>High estimate</b>
Cost of pupils attending residential outdoor education	£20,492,291	£27,544,833	£34,597,375
Transport costs	£1,243,070	£1,356,217	£1,469,364
Costs of producing guidance	£0	£0	£6,845
<b>Total year 1 costs</b>	<b>£21,735,361</b>	<b>£28,901,050</b>	<b>£36,073,584</b>