



T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Rural Affairs and Islands Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

23 October 2024

Dear Finlay,

Thank you for your letter of 3 October 2024 on the Committee's consideration of the review of the proposed National Outcomes. I also welcomed the opportunity to discuss the proposals before the Committee on the 11th September.

Your letter raised a question around how the review of the National Outcomes has been conducted and how it engaged with the challenges and opportunities facing rural communities.

It may be helpful to note that before laying the proposed changes before Parliament, the Scottish Government collected and analysed evidence from four evidence strands: desk-based research (covering 34 sources), a public written consultation (87 responses), a stakeholder call for evidence (125 responses) and expert stakeholder meetings (110 stakeholders attending 11 meetings). Three advisory groups also helped inform the Review process.

As a result of this evidence gathering work island and rural communities are specifically referenced in the extended definition of the Communities, Health, Wellbeing Economy and Fair Work Outcomes. Rural communities are also referenced in the Housing Outcome.

Our island impact assessment found that the revised Outcomes are worded in a way which recognises the distinct needs of island communities within certain policy areas.

While I believe this represents a robust process, I note the Committee's recommendation "that greater consideration should be given to 'rural-proofing' the national outcomes." The recommendations made by the Committee will be fully considered as work to implement the revised National Performance Framework (NPF) progresses, including the recommendation that the National Indicators contain a suite of markers relating specifically to rural communities.

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot



I look forward to the forthcoming report on the inquiry from the Finance and Public Administration Committee, with whom I note these findings have also been shared. The parliamentary debate which will follow offers a further opportunity to discuss the specifics of the Rural Affairs and Islands Committee's recommendations.

Following the conclusion of the inquiry, the timetable for publishing the agreed National Outcomes, the associated Implementation Plan and the National Indicators will be confirmed.

Thank you again for the Committee's thoughtful consideration of the proposed National Outcomes.



MAIRI GOUGEON

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE[™]
We invest in people Silver

