

# Rural Affairs and Islands Committee

16<sup>th</sup> Meeting, 2023 (Session 6), Wednesday, 24 May

## National Islands Plan: annual report 2022

### Introduction

1. At its meeting on 24 May 2023, the Committee will take evidence from the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands on the [national islands plan annual report 2022](#), published on 31 March 2023.
2. The purpose of the session will be to scrutinise the Scottish Government's progress in delivering on the objectives set out in the national islands plan, building on the evidence taken on the annual report 2021 on [4 May 2022](#). The session will also draw on the Committee's pre-budget scrutiny 2023-24 which focussed on the projects funded through the islands programme.

### Background

3. Part 2 of the [Islands \(Scotland\) Act 2018](#), places a duty on Scottish Ministers to prepare and lay before Parliament a national islands plan. The purpose of the plan, as defined in the 2018 Act, is "to set out the main objectives and strategy of the Scottish Ministers in relation to improving outcomes for island communities that result from, or are contributed to by, the carrying out of functions of a public nature."
4. The Plan sets out 13 strategic objectives and over 100 commitments, which must be delivered over the five-year lifetime of the plan. The 2018 Act requires that a report is presented to parliament each year setting out the progress made towards delivery. [The national islands plan annual report 2021](#) was published on 23 March 2022.
5. Section 28 of the 2018 Act, requires the Scottish Ministers to publish a report on the operation of the Act before four years have passed since the day after the Act received Royal Assent. [Published on 5 July 2022](#), the report on the operation of the Act covers all the provisions of the Islands Act, whereas the annual report relates solely to the islands plan.
6. Within the national islands plan, Scottish Government committed to publishing an implementation route map that addresses each of the 13 strategic objectives and accompanying commitments listed in the plan. [The 2022 implementation route map was published 26 September 2022](#).

## Previous consideration of the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018

7. The Committee's previous consideration of the 2018 Act included—

- taking evidence on the islands plan, including a roundtable discussion covering the key issues facing island communities at its [meeting on 6 October 2021](#);
- taking evidence from the Cabinet Secretary and Scottish Government officials on the 2021 annual report at its [meeting on 4 May 2022](#);
- budget scrutiny around the Scottish Government's spending commitments to support the implementation of the Islands Act and the islands plan. [In the 2022-23 financial year, this included detailed scrutiny of the islands programme funding designed to mitigate population decline.](#)

**Rural Affairs and Islands Committee clerks**  
**May 2023**