

# Minister for Transport submission of 13 March 2022

## PE1862/C - Introduce community representation on boards of public organisations delivering lifeline services to island communities

Thank you for your letter of 16 February 2022 which was addressed to Ms Gougeon MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands. Your letter has been passed to me as the Minister with portfolio responsibility for delivering lifeline life-line ferry and air services to the Scottish islands.

It is for the appointing Minister to agree who should sit on the selection panel for each PublicBody recruitment exercise. The current process involves that selection panel making recommendations to the Minister on all aspects of the recruitment exercise, including what the key criteria, for each vacant position, should be. Given therefore that our current arrangements already allow for such decisions to be taken, legislative change is not required.

In considering what the key criteria should be, the selection panel will consider what skills, knowledge and experience is required – based upon the skills matrix agreed for each board. The key criteria may vary depending on the requirements of each position, and any particular requirements of the Board itself.

It is worth noting that all board members appointed on the basis of any particular skill, experience or background must be able to represent the interests of Scottish Ministers. In addition, and in the case of DML, HIAL and CMAL, Board members must also have regard to any fiduciary duties and responsibilities it has to the organisation or company itself under the Companies Act 2006.

However, I fully understand the concern expressed on this matter and would be keen to strengthen our approach in this area, ensuring the views of communities can be fed more directly into our boards. I have asked my officials for further advice on this issue, and will be happy to provide the Committee with a further update in due course.

I hope my reply is helpful.