RURAL ECONOMY AND CONNECTIVITY COMMITTEE

PROPOSED NATIONAL ISLANDS PLAN

SUBMISSION FROM CROWN ESTATE SCOTLAND

Crown Estate Scotland submitted a response to Scottish Government’s consultation in July 2019 (LINK) on the draft National Islands Plan and welcome the further opportunity to contribute to the preparation of the Plan through this call for evidence.

We are pleased to see that many of the points that we raised in our consultation response, particularly in relation to the status of Crown Estate Scotland and the Scottish Crown Estate Act 2019, have been incorporated into the proposed National Islands Plan.

We also welcomed the opportunity to contribute an update on our Local Management Pilots Scheme (https://www.crownestatescotland.com/what-we-do/local-pilot-scheme) to the proposed Plan. All three of the Island Councils (Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Orkney Islands Council and Shetland Islands Council) are involved in this initiative which is relevant to Strategic Objective 10 of the Plan (“to empower diverse communities and different places”).

Strategic Objective 10 includes a commitment to “ensure that the Scottish Crown Estate is managed sustainably, responsibly and fairly, and in a transparent and inclusive manner, to deliver financial benefits and wider and long-term social, economic and environmental benefits for Scotland and its communities.” This objective is aligned with the direction set for Crown Estate Scotland in the Scottish Crown Estate Act 2019 and we welcome this consistency.

Given Crown Estate Scotland’s central role in contributing to the delivery of Strategic Objective 10, we are very keen to work with the Islands team and our sponsor department (Marine Scotland) to identify appropriate indicators which will effectively monitor the implementation of this objective and which are consistent with other monitoring and evaluation processes.

Our July response also included comments on the topic of “Islands Communities Impact Assessments”. This is an important area for Crown Estate Scotland given that Strategic Objective 10 of the proposed Plan states that it will “ensure that policies and plans relating to the Scottish Crown Estate are appropriately island proofed and that any manager of a Scottish Crown Estate asset supports implementation of the National Islands Plan as appropriate.” As stated in our July consultation response, we would welcome clear guidance on how to carry out such assessments, particularly in terms of the level of detail required; consultation requirements; the screening process; and the availability of support and guidance on how to identify significantly different effects and opportunities for mitigation.

We are not aware of any indications to date as to when this guidance will be made available. However, we note that Strategic Objective 13 of the proposed Plan states the commitment to “establish a robust process to ensure the timely publication of a detailed Implementation Strategy setting out clear actions with defined
responsibilities for action and timescales to support the delivery of the National Islands Plan.” Assuming that this strategy will include guidance on the Islands Communities Impact Assessment process, we would welcome a draft being published as soon as possible to enable robust and consistent assessments to be completed as needed. Confirmation as to whether this strategy will include guidance on these assessments and the timescale for its publication would be welcomed. If the guidance will be delivered via a different route, information about what guidance will be made available and when would be very helpful. In the meantime and until guidance is available, we intend to discuss our approach to undertaking Island Communities Impact Assessments for our draft 2020-23 Corporate Plan with the Scottish Government Islands team to ensure we are working in the spirit of the assessments and can effectively islands proof our policies and plans.