



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Beatrice Wishart MSP  
Member of the Scottish Parliament for Shetland

Neil Grant  
Director of Development Services  
Development Service Department  
Shetland Islands Council  
Solarhus  
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23 June 2022  
Our ref: BW2982

Dear Mr Grant,

**Support for Fair Isle Ferry Application to UK Government Levelling Up Fund – Round 2**

I understand Shetland Islands Council is preparing to submit a bid to the UK Government Levelling Up Fund to support the Fair Isle Ferry Replacement Project.

The current ferry and associated infrastructure are aging and without action the residents of Fair Isle could see a reduction in ferry services. This unreliable ferry service has negative consequences for supply chain, service provision, personal travel and tourism. The Fair Isle community has been regularly engaged in the project development and the option arising from the Shetland Islands Council's detailed Outline Business Case, developed as part of the Strategic Outline Programme for Inter Island Links in Shetland, has the full support of the island community.

This project consists of replacing the MV Good Shepherd IV with a bespoke Roll on – Roll off vessel with supporting harbour works at Grutness and North Haven. The ferry link is a lifeline transport service and upgrading the ferry and infrastructure will have a transformational impact for the Fair Isle community, enabling greater flexibility for transporting vehicles and cargo to the islands, and providing improved access to the ferry for passengers with mobility difficulties. A reliable ferry service for Fair Isle will support inclusive economic growth, improve access to opportunities and services on mainland Shetland while promoting population retention, and support enhanced productivity within the Shetland Islands.

When I visited Fair Isle last summer, it was clear that people living there are very much looking forward to completion of the replacement building of the Fair Isle Bird Observatory, sadly lost to fire in 2019. This will bring further opportunities for visitors to come to the world-renowned island, particularly during bird migratory seasons. A new ferry, built to today's requirements and future-proofed to allow for growth, will enhance opportunities in the island as well as increase Fair Isle's contribution to the

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Shetland economy.

I very much share the concerns raised about the current Fair Isle ferry and I fully support the Shetland Islands Council's application to the UK Government Levelling Up fund for a replacement ferry and associated infrastructure.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Beatrice Wishart". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underlining the name.

Beatrice Wishart MSP