

Correspondents on behalf of the secretariat of the Scottish Rural & Islands Parliament

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For the attention of:

Shona Robison MSP, Deputy First Minister

Mairi Gougeon MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands

11 September 2023

Dear Ms Robison and Ms Gougeon

Strengthening the role of culture within the Rural Delivery Plan

On behalf of the curators of the Scottish Rural and Islands Parliament (SRIP), we welcome the launch of the Ministerial Working Group to oversee the development of a Rural Delivery Plan.

The Working Group minutes of [26/06/2023](#) capture an emerging cross-cutting policy narrative which will be transformative for our rural and island places. An aligned cross-cutting policy narrative is emerging from the SRIP process which will be fed into the Working Group.

This policy narrative will be strengthened through recognition of the role that our diverse culture, heritage and languages play as driving forces for the economy and wellbeing of our rural and island communities. Culture shapes community cohesion and our connection to our environment. It underpins people's attraction and commitment to place, and creates economic integrity and resilience in the face of global challenges.

The centrality of culture and heritage to any discussion on rural development has been consolidated through the SRIP process. With respect to the Rural Delivery Plan Working Group, we are pleased to see that Director-General Strategy and External Affairs can speak to the culture and heritage portfolio, but we also note, given the membership of this group, that it is Ministerial colleagues who will set the agenda and direction.

We therefore invite you as co-Chairs, to consider including Christina McKelvie MSP, Minister for Culture, Europe and International Development in the Working Group membership, thereby giving culture an equal seat at the table. Such a move would ensure that the emerging cross-cutting policy narrative reflects, and builds opportunity from, the reality on the ground across all our rural and island places.

Thank you for your work to support communities,



Theona Morrison

Chair – Scottish Rural Action