

# Island communities across the UK to come together in Orkney for first Islands Forum

Press release

Island communities across the UK have been invited to the first Islands Forum meeting in September.



- New Islands Forum created to level up island communities and work together on shared opportunities and challenges
- Representatives from island communities in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and the devolved governments have been invited to join the Islands Forum
- First meeting will take place in Orkney in September

Island communities across the UK have today (28 June 2022) been invited to the first Islands Forum meeting in September.

The Islands Forum will help to level up island communities by encouraging collaboration to tackle common challenges such as connectivity, infrastructure, demographic trends and explore opportunities including the transition to net zero. It will also allow the UK government to hear and learn from island communities to inform future policy.

Orkney has been chosen as the location for the first Islands Forum, which will be chaired by Secretary of State Michael Gove.

The UK government has invited council leaders and chief executives of island communities in all parts of the UK to take part in the first Forum. The devolved administrations will also have a key role, with ministers from the Scottish and Welsh governments and the Northern Ireland Executive invited.

Secretary of State for Levelling Up Michael Gove MP said:

Island communities contribute a huge amount to the UK and often face common challenges. Our new Islands Forum will bring communities together and give our islands a stronger voice.

Whether it is the requirement for better transport connectivity or opportunities for economic development, I want to hear directly from island communities across the UK what they need to unlock their full potential.

The UK government's goal is to unite and level up our whole United Kingdom, from Shetland to the Scillies. This new forum will make sure that our islands are placed right at the heart of our levelling up mission.

Several projects in island communities are set to benefit from cash injections through levelling up funds. This includes:

- £48.4 million for the Isles of Scilly to upgrade sea links between the islands and the mainland, including replacing the ferries and delivering harbour improvements, and £440,000 through the UK Community Renewal Fund for their new museum and cultural centre.
- £5.8 million for East Cowes Marine Hub project in the Isle of Wight, which sits within the proposed Solent Freeport zone. The funding will futureproof the marine engineering hub, creating jobs and boosting productivity.
- Anglesey has seen a boost of £2.7 million through the UK Community Renewal Fund for 6 projects including schemes to develop youth enterprise and provide high quality Health and Social Care education.
- £173,400 to Argyll and Bute Council for investment into the West Coast UAV Innovation Logistics and training hub, which helps explore using drones to transport medical supplies to islands.
- The Western Isles was awarded more than £166,000 to fund projects for the Port of Ness Harbour and Horshader Community Asset Development.

Invitations have been sent to representatives from the following islands:

<b>Nation</b>	<b>Member</b>	<b>Island(s)</b>
England	Isle of Wight Council	Isle of Wight
England	Council of the Isles of Scilly	Isles of Scilly
Scotland	Highland Council	Skye, Rum, Raasay, Eigg, Muck, Canna, Sanday
Scotland	North Ayrshire Council	Arran, Great Cumbrae
Scotland	Argyll & Bute Council	Bute, Islay, Mull, Coll; Colonsay; Danna; Easdale; Eilean da Mheinn; Erraid; Gigha; Gometra; Inchtavannach; Innischonon; Iona; Jura; Kerrera; Lismore; Luing; Oronsay; Seil; Shuna (Luing); Tiree; Ulva

<b>Nation</b>	<b>Member</b>	<b>Island(s)</b>
Scotland	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	Western Isles
Scotland	Orkney Islands Council	Orkney Islands
Scotland	Shetland Islands Council	Shetland Islands
Wales	Isle of Anglesey County Council	Anglesey
Northern Ireland	Rathlin Development & Community Association, NI Department for Infrastructure	Rathlin Island

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