



Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities

Jacob Young MP
Minister for Levelling Up
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Our reference: MC2024/01461

Councillor Robert Francis
Chairman, Council of the Isles of Scilly
Town Hall, St Mary's
Isles of Scilly
TR21 0LW

16 Feb 24

Dear Cllr Francis,

Thank you for your email of 8 January to the Secretary of State, the Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, about the Isles of Scilly Transport Links project. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this policy area.

This has been a challenging project and I know you and your team at the council have worked incredibly hard in trying to find a solution that is in the best interests of the islanders.

Following the announcement by the Isles of Scilly Steamship Group (ISSG), I understand that the group has now signed a construction contract with Piriou for the new ferry vessels.

I have spoken with my counterparts in the Department for Transport and we agree that public funds cannot be used to deliver new vessels which would compete directly with a private operator on the route. Whilst I understand your reasoning in maintaining the Levelling Up Fund (LUF) allocation until construction begins, we have always been clear that the funding would no longer be available upon the signing of private contracts by ISSG.

I share your disappointment that it has not been possible to use the LUF funding for the new vessels. However, I am pleased that up to £6 million in Levelling Up Capital Projects funding, announced at the Autumn Statement, can be used to support the construction of the cultural museum on St Mary's. The centre will provide an important community asset in St Mary's for both locals and visitors to benefit from and we will continue to work closely with you to progress this project.

My officials will now consider how my department can best support the council and community moving forward. They will be in touch with you and your team in the coming weeks.

Once again, I would like to thank you, your members, and your team for your commitment to this project. Please be assured that we remain committed to supporting the Isles of Scilly and tackling the challenges facing the island community.

I look forward to seeing you at the next Islands Forum meeting and I hope to visit the Isles of Scilly soon to continue my engagement with you. Thank you for writing on this important matter.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jacob Young', with a stylized flourish at the end.

JACOB YOUNG MP
Minister for Levelling Up