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Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
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12 February 2022

Thank you for your letter of 10 February.

I very much welcome the resumption of joint working between the Scottish and UK Governments, on a partnership basis, to tailor the UK's freeports programme to the Scottish policy context. I have been grateful for the work done at pace by our officials to establish the elements of a joint approach that would meet the core requirements of both governments.

I believe the agreement that we have reached, as reflected in your letter, is a fair and balanced one. I am pleased that you are now proposing to provide funding for two Green Freeports in Scotland, to be selected jointly by the two governments, at a level equivalent to that available in England. I welcome your agreement to make contributing to our ambitions for a just transition to net zero a key requirement of the programme, and to reflect that strong green thread in the branding of the initiative in Scotland. And finally, I am pleased that, by making regeneration and the creation of high-quality jobs the lead objective of the programme in Scotland, the promotion of the fair work agenda will be at the heart of our approach to Green Freeports. The Scottish and UK Governments will have equal roles in selecting the winning bids, and the Scottish Government will consider a bidder's commitment to fair work practices, including payment of the Real Living Wage.

I hope that our officials will now be able rapidly to finalise a joint bidding prospectus embodying the agreement outlined in your letter, so that we can soon launch a competition in pursuit of the best possible outcomes for Scotland.



KATE FORBES

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