

An Leas-phrìomh Mhinistear agus Ath -shlànachadh
Cobhid
Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Covid
Recovery
John Swinney MSP

a b c d

T: 0300 244 4000

Ms Clare Adamson MSP
Convener
Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture
Committee
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

03 August 2022

Dear Clare,

I wrote to you on 14 June to inform you that the second meeting of the Interministerial Standing Committee (IMSC) would be taking place on 16 June. This meeting was postponed to secure attendance from the Chief Secretary to the Treasury and instead took place on 29 June.

I chaired this meeting, in line with new rotating chair arrangements. Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Veterans, Keith Brown, joined me at this meeting. The other Ministers in attendance were:

- **From the UK Government:** The former Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities – Rt Hon Michael Gove MP; Chief Secretary to the Treasury – Rt Hon Simon Clarke MP; Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Northern Ireland Office) – Lord Caine, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Scotland Office) – Iain Stewart MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Wales Office) – David Davies MP.
- **From the Welsh Government:** The First Minister – Rt Hon Mark Drakeford MS; Counsel General and Minister for the Constitution – Mick Antoniw MS; Minister for Finance and Local Government – Rebecca Evans MS; Minister for Social Justice – Jane Hutt MS.
- **From the Northern Ireland Executive:** Minister of Finance – Conor Murphy MLA, Minister for the Economy – Gordon Lyons MLA.

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot

a b c d e f g a

The agenda covered legislation and the Sewel Convention as a follow up item from the first IMSC held on 23 March, and actions needed to address cost of living pressures.

I made clear my view that the level of engagement from the UK Government on legislation was not satisfactory and that many UK Bills were eroding the responsibilities of devolved governments and Parliaments. In particular I raised concern about the Northern Ireland Protocol Bill, the Review of EU Law, the Levelling Up Bill, and the Bill of Rights. On the latter, Mr Brown put on the record the Scottish Government's strong opposition to the Bill of Rights Bill that undermines vital human rights safeguards and intrudes into areas that are firmly within devolved competence. He also made clear the lack of meaningful engagement on this issue.

Unfortunately the Chief Secretary to the Treasury did not present any new information. I reiterated our view that as well as the war in Ukraine and Covid, the UK Government's reckless approach to Brexit was clearly a key contributory factor driving the cost of living crisis, and that the need to reach realistic public sector pay settlements was placing an enormous pressure on devolved budgets.

The communique can be found here:

[Interministerial Standing Committee Communiqué: 29 June 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/interministerial-standing-committee-communicue-29-june-2022)

I trust this is a helpful update.

Yours sincerely,



JOHN SWINNEY