



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

John Swinney MSP,  
Deputy First Minister and  
Cabinet Secretary for  
Covid Recovery

Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP

By email only

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Copied to Kate Forbes  
MSP, Cabinet Secretary  
for Finance and the  
Economy; and Shona  
Robison MSP, Cabinet  
Secretary for Social  
Justice, Housing and Local  
Government

24 June 2022

Dear John,

### **Local Governance Review**

Now that the local government elections have concluded and membership of the new COSLA political team has been confirmed, I am writing to seek an update on progress and expected timescales for conclusion of the Local Governance Review. Whilst the Committee recognises that delays were inevitable as a result of Covid-19 and other factors, we are keen that this work now progresses as a matter of urgency.

We note that the Scottish Government has committed to bringing forward primary legislation to give effect to the recommendations of the Review during the current parliamentary session but would welcome an update on expected next steps in advance of the introduction of any draft bill.

When you gave evidence to the Committee on this topic in November 2021, you explained that you had engaged substantively with COSLA on the Review's development and with wider stakeholders to gather their input. You further confirmed that the Scottish Government was considering proposals that had emerged from local authorities and community planning partners about how the aspirations of the Review could be put into practice. I would be grateful if you could update the Committee on progress with this work and when it is expected to conclude, along

with your plans for publication of the Scottish Government's conclusions on this important matter.

The Committee also took evidence from the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Economy and the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing and Local Government in January 2022. The proposed fiscal framework for local government was discussed at this meeting and Ms Forbes described this as "hugely important...one of my top priorities." The Committee notes that negotiations were taking place between the Scottish and UK governments and that preparatory work on a citizen's assembly on sources of local government funding, including taxation, had begun. Again, whilst the Committee recognises that some of this work was understandably delayed as a result of Covid-19, we would welcome an update on progress in this area along with expected timescales for its conclusion.

I am copying this letter to both Cabinet Secretaries and have written in similar terms to the recently elected President of COSLA inviting her to provide initial views on both topics.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Ariane Burgess  
Convener, Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee