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Scottish Parliament  
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7<sup>th</sup> April 2022

Dear Clare,

I am writing to update you following the first meeting of the Interministerial Standing Committee (IMSC) which took place on 23 March. You will recall that the Deputy First Minister wrote to you on 7 February following the publication of the Review of Intergovernmental Relations (IGR Review).

The IMSC forms part of the middle tier of the new machinery under the IGR Review, replacing the Joint Ministerial Committee (JMC) sub-committees. It is attended by Ministers with responsibility for intergovernmental relations and is intended to meet every two months, with chairing arrangements to rotate between the four governments. The IMSC discusses cross-cutting issues with implications for the relationship between governments.

As this was the first meeting of the IMSC invitations were extended to the First Ministers of devolved governments as well as lead IGR Ministers. The meeting was therefore attended by FM and DFM for Scottish Government. The other Ministers attending were:

- From the UK Government: The Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Rt Hon Michael Gove MP; The Secretary of State for Scotland, Rt Hon Alister Jack MP; The Secretary of State for Wales, Rt Hon Simon Hart MP, and the Minister of State for Northern Ireland, Rt Hon Conor Burns MP.
- From the Welsh Government: The First Minister of Wales, Rt Hon Mark Drakeford MS, and the Counsel General and Minister for the Constitution, Mick Antoniw MS.
- Officials from the Northern Ireland Civil Service attended as observers.

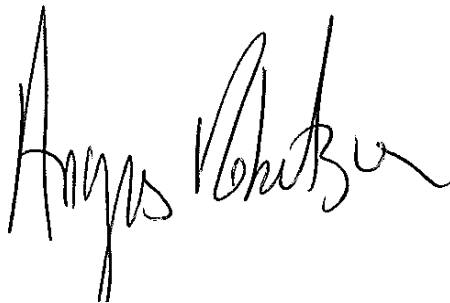
The meeting was chaired by Michael Gove and discussed the ongoing situation in Ukraine and the domestic implications for the UK; implementation of the new IGR arrangements; approach to UK legislation and future ways of working; and the implications of the Levelling Up White Paper.

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The First Minister placed on record her thanks to the teams in both Scottish and UK governments for their work in establishing the Scottish Government's role as a super sponsor as part of the response to the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. In doing so, she highlighted the importance of ensuring more effective data flows and faster processing of visas. The meeting discussed concern from the Scottish and Welsh Governments about the operation of the Sewel convention – a concern, of course that the Committee shares, and tasked officials with work to consider what can be done to improve the current, unacceptable situation. Finally, on the UK Government's Levelling Up programme and EU replacement funds, Ministers from the Scottish and Welsh Governments highlighted the importance of there being no shortfall in the quantum of funding available through successor funding schemes; and of recognising the legitimate decision making role of devolved institutions.

I hope that this update is helpful. Arrangements are being made for a next meeting of the Interministerial Standing Committee to take place after the Northern Ireland election. Officials will be in touch with Committee clerks to discuss how we can best ensure that the Committee is kept updated in future.

Yours sincerely ,



**ANGUS ROBERTSON**

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