



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Finance and Public Administration Committee

Shona Robison MSP
Deputy First Minister and Cabinet
Secretary for Finance

By email

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Dear Shona

Congratulations on your appointment as Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Finance.

You may be aware that the former Deputy First Minister wrote to the Committee on 20 March 2023 setting out information that we had requested on the Scottish Government's plans for public service reform and fiscal transparency, while also noting the Committee's agreed approach to scrutiny arising from the Session 5 harassment reviews. The Committee considered this letter at our meeting on 18 April.

Public service reform

The former Deputy First Minister confirmed in his letter that he "would anticipate Government updating you regularly on progress on the various elements that constitute this drive to reform", while noting that "this will, of course, be for my successor". However, the Committee had asked for updates to be provided every six months. We therefore seek clarification of your intentions in relation to the frequency of these updates.

Mr Swinney had also suggested that the Committee reflects on the nature of the updates to be provided. The Committee has considered this matter and asks that

they should include details of all public bodies reform activity, rather than just narrowly focusing on the five areas of reform identified in the Resource Spending Review.

Fiscal transparency

We also note the progress made by the Scottish Government in responding to the findings of its Fiscal Transparency Discovery Report, including development of an online fiscal portal “to bring together current fiscal information in a more comprehensive and integrated way”. Clerks and SPICe researchers who lead in supporting the Committee would be pleased to take up the offer of a demonstration of this prototype by Scottish Government officials.

Aggregates Levy Bill

The Committee notes the Scottish Government’s intention to delay the introduction of a Scottish Aggregates Levy Bill beyond the current parliamentary year, as announced on 28 March 2023. Given commitments made in the Programme for Government 2022-23 to introduce the bill within this parliamentary year, the Committee seeks details of the reasons behind the Government’s recent decision.

It would be helpful to the Committee if further information was provided in relation to the delay, the establishment of an advisory group and the revised timescales for the bill’s introduction.

The Committee looks forward to working with you in your new role.

Yours sincerely

Kenneth Gibson MSP
Convener
Finance and Public Administration Committee