

F/T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Ariane Burgess MSP
Convener
Local Government, Housing
and Planning Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

By email

9 July 2024

Dear Convener,

Thank you for your letter of 28 June seeking an update on delivery of the Verity House Agreement and on the Scottish Government's response to the recommendations from the Scottish Local Authority Remuneration Committee (SLARC).

On the latter, the Government's response to the SLARC recommendations was published on 5 July 2025 and I wrote to you on that date providing a link to the document. I am happy to attend Committee after recess to discuss the response further and I understand my officials and the Clerk are liaising to agree a mutually convenient date.

With regard to the Verity House Agreement (VHA), my officials are working with COSLA colleagues on a stocktake of the VHA which will consider the first year of implementation. This is due to be completed by the end of August and we intend to publish a report in September.

The original timescales in the VHA for completion of the fiscal framework and accountability and assurance arrangements have been recognised by both Scottish and local government as being ambitious. However, the Scottish Government remains committed to making progress on both as swiftly as possible.

Fiscal Framework

Scottish Government officials have been working closely with COSLA and local government officers to understand and explore the kind of fiscal framework which Council Leaders wish to see. This work is recognised by all as complex, and it is essential for both the Scottish Government and local government that we get this right.

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It is anticipated that further intensive engagement will take place between officers and officials over the summer with the intention of progressing the Fiscal Framework in advance of the 25-26 Budget.

Assurance and Accountability

Scottish Government officials and COSLA officers have been working together to understand how we can best demonstrate visible progress against the three shared priorities with transparency for the public and Parliament, making use of existing mechanisms, and minimising the need to establish additional reporting. There has been good progress to date and we will use the summer months to further examine and test proposals with a view to reaching agreement in the Autumn.

I hope you find the above helpful and I am happy to keep you updated as we continue to make progress on these issues.

I have also copied this response to Councillor Shona Morrison, President of COSLA.

Yours Sincerely,

SHONA ROBISON

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