Consultation
Did you take part in either of the Scottish Government consultation exercises which preceded the Bill and, if so, did you comment on the financial implications made?
1. Yes, West Lothian Council took part in the consultation and included comment on the financial implications.

2. This response has been prepared by the Head of Finance and Estates as it relates to the financial memorandum.

Do you believe your comments on the financial assumptions have been accurately reflected in the FM?
3. Yes with regards to Early Learning and Childcare.

4. No with regards to Looked After Children and GIRFEC

5. Looked After Children - Kinship Care
Kinship care is integral to West Lothian Council’s looked after children service. The council currently pays full allowances to all kinship carers and any move to change this would seriously impact on the council’s ability to provide suitable placements for children who need this service. The additional costs which are anticipated reflect the requirement to provide financial support to carers seeking legal guardianship of the children they look after. It is anticipated there would be an ongoing requirement in the region of £20,000 per annum, and as such additional funding should be provided on a recurring basis.

6. Looked After Children - Through care and Aftercare
Currently West Lothian Council has a number of high cost packages in place to support former looked after children up to age 21. It is estimated that an expansion of this up to age 25 could cost West Lothian Council in the region of £192,000 per annum. Based on new recurring costs additional funding should be provided on a recurring basis.

7. GIRFEC – duties relating to the named person and child’s plan
In order to implement the transformational change required in effective practice to meet the legislative duty regarding Named Person and Single Plan, the council would need ongoing funding to maintain, review and reinforce service delivery. The projected recurring costs of £324,000 reflect the additional administration and ongoing training required.
Did you have sufficient time to contribute to the consultation exercise?
8. Yes, on the basis that this is an officer response relating to financial issues.

Costs
If the Bill has any financial implications for your organisation, do you believe that these have been accurately reflected in the FM? If not, please provide details.
9. The financial implications for West Lothian Council have not been accurately reflected in the FM in relation to Looked After Children and GIRFEC as outlined above in the response provided to question 2.

Do you consider that the estimated costs and savings set out in the FM and projected over 15 years for each service are reasonable and accurate?
10. Funding proposals are provided for a six year period rather than a 15 year period. Based on the information provided, the costs appear reasonable with regards to Early Learning and Childcare but not with regards to Looked After Children and GIRFEC, as per the response provided to question 2.

If relevant, are you content that your organisation can meet the financial costs associated with the Bill which your organisation will incur? If not, how do you think these costs should be met?
11. As specified in the response to question 2 the recurring financial costs in relation to Kinship care, through care and aftercare and named person/child’s plan are not reflected in the FM. In line with previous practice the cost of legislative changes should be fully funded.

Does the FM accurately reflect the margins of uncertainty associated with the estimates and the timescales over which such costs would be expected to arise?
12. Yes with regards to Early Learning and Childcare. However, not for Looked After Children (Kinship Care Orders and Through care and Aftercare) and GIRFEC as no recurring funding has been provided, as outlined in response to question 2 above.

Wider Issues
Do you believe that the FM reasonably captures costs associated with the Bill? If not, how do you think these costs should be met?
13. This question is answered in the response to question 6 provided above.

Do you believe that there may be future costs associated with the Bill, for example through subordinate legislation? If so, is it possible to quantify these costs?
14. Future costs that might arise from subordinate legislation associated with the current Bill will need to be assessed when the draft regulations and guidance are available for comment. It is not possible to quantify these costs at this time. As previously noted, the expectation in line with previous practice would be that the Scottish Government would fund any further costs associated with legislation.