Supplementary written submission from COSLA

I am writing in response to the letter received by Cllr David O’Neill from Rob Gibson MSP dated 16th October regarding the scrutiny of the Land Reform (Scotland) Bill by the Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee (RACCE).

As requested, COSLA has reviewed the transcript of the evidence session undertaken by the Committee on 30th September 2015, in particular the evidence provided in relation to sporting rates and the valuation roll.

With regard to sporting rates and the valuation roll, COSLA’s position remains unchanged from that which we submitted in our written evidence to the Finance Committee and copied to the RACCE Committee. COSLA agrees with Scottish Government that there will be administrative costs for local authorities relating to the entry in the valuation roll of shootings and deer forests. COSLA officials are currently working with Scottish Government officials and Local Authority Directors of Finance to better understand and quantify these costs.

We also note the comments made at the evidence session relating to Local Authorities and deer management responsibilities. COSLA does not have a political position on the issue of deer management, but the geographic and population disbursement variances experienced by our members indicate that it is clear there is a requirement for an element of local flexibility to address the different issues that exist within different local authority areas. Given the concerns expressed at the evidence session, we would suggest that the Committee may wish to contact a central belt conurbation directly for their views and experiences of deer management.