Dear Mr Gauke,

The Finance and Constitution Committee recently published its Report on the Scottish Government’s Draft Budget 2017-18. The report can be accessed on the Committee’s website via the following link—

- [http://www.parliament.scot/S5_Finance/Reports/FCCS052017R01.pdf](http://www.parliament.scot/S5_Finance/Reports/FCCS052017R01.pdf)

I am writing to bring to your attention a number of recommendations in the report which relate to HM Treasury—

“15. The Committee also recognises that the operation of the Fiscal Framework is a shared responsibility between the Scottish Government and the UK Government. The Committee is, therefore, disappointed that the Chief Secretary to the Treasury declined to give evidence in relation to the operation of the Fiscal Framework. The Committee believes it is vital that we have the opportunity to hear from an HM Treasury Minister on the operation of the Fiscal Framework as part of the annual budget process. The Committee will continue to pursue this matter with HM Treasury.

34. The Committee agrees with our predecessor that full transparency is an essential element in securing public confidence in the operation of the BGA. The Committee recommends that the Scottish Government explores with HM Treasury how best to provide the respective BGA calculations for the 2017-18 budget and that in future years the BGA calculations are published alongside the draft budget.

35. The Committee also notes that it is HM Treasury which has responsibility for the operation of the Barnett formula and the BGA and it is, therefore, vital, as noted above that a HM Treasury Minister is available to appear before the Committee.
114. The Committee intends to write to HM Treasury highlighting the potential challenges to the budget scrutiny timetable by changes to the timing of the UK budget announcement and asking what consultation took place with the devolved governments. The Committee will also ask HM Treasury to clarify when in the Autumn the UK budget is likely to be published.”

As the Report makes clear, the recent changes to the timing of the UK budget announcement have the potential to impact significantly on parliamentary scrutiny of the Scottish Government’s draft budget. I would therefore be grateful if you could provide a written response to these recommendations. In particular, it would be helpful if you could address the specific questions raised in paragraph 114, namely—

- What consultation took place between the UK Government and the devolved governments in relation to the change in timing of the UK budget announcement from Spring to Autumn?

- Can you confirm exactly when in the Autumn the next UK budget is expected to be published and whether the timing will be the same in future years?

It would also be helpful if your officials could liaise with the committee clerks to arrange a mutually convenient date for you or another Treasury minister to give evidence to the Finance and Constitution Committee on the operation of the Fiscal Framework.

Yours sincerely,

Bruce Crawford MSP
Convener