



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Finance and Public Administration Committee

Rt. Hon. Michael Gove MP
Secretary of State for Levelling Up,
Housing and Communities

By email

All correspondence c/o
Finance and Public
Administration Committee Clerks
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The Scottish Parliament
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18 October 2023

Dear Secretary of State

Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill and attendance at Committee.

On 11 July 2023, the UK Government proposed amendments to Part 1 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill which were agreed by the House of Lords. Those amendments provided for UK Ministers to “have regard to” any role of the devolved legislatures and devolved authorities (and carry out consultation, as the Minister considers appropriate, with the devolved authorities) in relation to:

- Preparation of the levelling-up missions in the statement, and any reviews of those statements; and
- Changes to mission progress methodology and metrics or target dates.

We note that these amendments also provide for Scottish Ministers to be consulted by UK Ministers in preparing annual reports on the delivery of the levelling-up missions.

We have written to the Scottish Government seeking their commitment to agree a process by which the Scottish Parliament can inform any consultation response they provide under Part 1 of the Bill, subject to the Bill being passed by the UK Parliament.

Those amendments provide that in relation to the statement of levelling-up missions, UK Ministers also require to prepare a document setting out how they have complied with the duty to have regard to any role of the Scottish Parliament (and the Scottish Government). That document is then also laid before the UK Parliament.

Given this new duty in the Bill, we seek clarification from you of how the UK Government proposes to discharge those duties. This is particularly in relation to “any role” of the Scottish Parliament and in light of the Scottish Government’s view that Part 1 triggers the Legislative Consent Motion process and that consent should be withheld. We also seek more information from you on what consultation you had with the Scottish Government and the Scottish Parliament about these amendments both before and after the House of Lords agreed them.

On 21 November 2022 you confirmed that you would be open to appearing before the Committee in 2023. Since then the Committee has sought both formally and informally to identify a suitable time in your diary for you to attend. As 2023 draws to a close, and in view of these amendments, we remain keen to secure your attendance as soon as possible at a Committee meeting to discuss how you see Part 1 of the Bill working in practice with Scottish Parliament and Scottish Government; as well as the effectiveness of Levelling Up Funding more generally.

We would welcome a response to this letter, and the queries posed, by the end of November 2023. The Clerks to the Committee are happy to liaise with your officials over suitable dates for your attendance.

Yours sincerely

Kenneth Gibson MSP
Convener
Finance and Public Administration Committee