



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Ivan Mckee
Minister for Public Finance

Local Government,
Housing and Planning Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
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By email only

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Dear Ivan,

As you know, during this session of the Scottish Parliament the Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee has scrutinised and monitored a number of issues relating to community engagement and empowerment, in addition to following the progress of the long-standing commitment by the Scottish Government to work with COSLA to conduct a Local Governance Review.

I would be grateful if you could provide an update on a number of related issues, to help inform the Committee's ongoing tracking of what progress is being made with them.

Local Governance Review

I understand that Phase 2 of the Democracy Matters consultation was to have concluded in February this year, and the Scottish Government's intention was to publish the key findings this Spring once its analysis of the responses and engagement was concluded. Given that Democracy Matters is a key part of the Local Governance Review, it would be helpful to understand what the revised timescales are for the conclusion of this work, and what the intended outcomes now are.

- **Are you able to confirm when the conclusions reached by the Democracy Matters consultation will be published?**
- **Are you able to set out what the next steps will be in the Local Governance Review. For example does the Scottish Government still intend to bring forward a Local Democracy Bill to give effect to the outcomes of the Local Governance Review?**

Last year the Committee undertook a review of Community Councils and concluded by writing to the Scottish Government with a number of proposed actions which could strengthen the role of community councils. In its response to those, the Scottish Government stressed that the views of Community Councils would be critical to the Democracy Matters conversations, given their role in local democracy.

- **To what extent did Community Councils engage with the Democracy Matters conversations?**

Community Empowerment

Both the current Committee and our predecessor in Session 5 undertook significant post-legislative scrutiny of aspects of the Community Empowerment Act, namely asset transfers, participation requests, allotment provision, and community planning. I understand that the Scottish Government has been undertaking a review of what the legislation has achieved and how it could be strengthened or improved. In the Committee's report on Community Planning we highlighted a number of opportunities the review could take to look at aspects of improvement.

- **Can you confirm whether the Scottish Government remains on track to publish its conclusions this summer?**
- To what extent has the review drawn on the work of the inquiries undertaken by the current Committee and its predecessor committee.

Yours sincerely,

Ariane Burgess
Convener, Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee