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Richard Leonard MSP
Convener
Public Audit Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Our Ref - Shared Outcomes Framework
10 March 2022

Dear Convener,

Following our appearance before the Committee this morning we are writing to reiterate the unreserved apology issued in person, for not having given the Committee further advanced sight of the Shared Outcomes Framework that was published yesterday.

As was said during the evidence, given the context of the Audit Scotland report, the Committee has the absolute right to scrutinise this document and to hold the Government to account. Once members have had the opportunity to consider the Framework in depth, we will be happy to provide any further evidence that the Committee may require on this.

We are clear that we must ensure that both Audit Scotland and the Committee are able to remain up to date with progress on the projects included in the Shared Outcomes Framework as well as the work of the Shared Outcomes Assurance Group; to be assured that the revised oversight and governance arrangements are robust; and that sufficient progress is being made towards stated outcomes. To this end I can confirm that the agenda, minutes and papers for the Shared Outcomes Assurance Group meetings will be published proactively on the Scottish Government's website. We would be happy to send your Clerk a link to those once the next meeting's minutes are published.

A letter has also been sent to the Auditor General with an offer to meet with Scottish Government officials on the development and implementation of the Framework and we recognise that this may be an area that the Auditor General may wish to revisit in future. Of course, it is for the Auditor General to direct his own staff and activity, and this is suggested as merely one possible element of ongoing scrutiny and improvement.

We will also follow up on the two actions agreed to during this morning's session including the commitment to share the finalised 2022/23 Letters of Guidance for the Scottish Funding Council and Skills Development Scotland with the Committee; and to follow up directly with Willie Coffey MSP with further detail on skills planning in Ayrshire, while copying in the Committee as a whole.

We hope that this helps to restate our ongoing commitment to working with the Committee on this important set of issues.

JOE GRIFFIN
DG Education and Justice

HELENA GRAY
Interim Director, Fair Work,
Employability and Skills

