Rt Hon John Swinney MSP
An Fhìor Urr John Swinney BPA
First Minister of Scotland
Am Prìomh Mhinistear

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
Taigh Naomh Anndrais, Rathad Regent, Dùn Èideann
EH1 3DG

Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

Patrick Harvie MSP
Convenor of Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee
Eeac.committee@parliament.scot

Duncan Massey MSP
Convenor of Economy, Tourism and Energy Committee
economy.committee@parliament.scot

16 November 2026

Dear Patrick, Duncan,

Further to my letter of 29 October, I am writing to update you on the Scottish Government's contribution at a number of meetings held in Glasgow on Friday 30 October, including the Prime Minister and Heads of Devolved Governments Council; the National Economic Council; and a bilateral meeting with the Prime Minister.

As you may have seen, the First Minister and deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland did not attend these engagements Instead, senior officials from the Northern Ireland Executive attended in an observer capacity.

In addition to the Prime Minister, a number of other senior UK Ministers were in attendance, including Rt. Hon. John Healey MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer; Rt. Hon. Louise Haigh MP, First Secretary of State; Rt. Hon. Angela Rayner MP, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government; and Rt. Hon. Douglas Alexander MP, Secretary of State for Scotland.

At the **Prime Minister and Heads of the Devolved Governments Council** meeting, the Prime Minister provided an update on international matters, including developments in Ukraine, the Middle East, the UK-EU relationship and the forthcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. I emphasised the importance of prioritising stability overseas in order to help alleviate economic challenges and cost of living pressures. I also made clear that the recently announced UK budget and its associated measures fell far short of the scale of the action required.

Regarding the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, I shared my reflections on visits to the Scottish Government's partner countries, including Malawi and Zambia,

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

Tha Ministearan na h-Alba, an luchd-comhairleachaidh sònraichte agus an Rùnaire Maireannach fo chumhachan Achd Coiteachaidh (Alba) 2016. Faicibh www.lobbying.scot

emphasising that international development assistance and debt relief are central elements of the Scottish Government's support for partner countries.

On UK-EU negotiations, I emphasised the Scottish Government's long-standing commitment to strengthening our relationship with the EU and the need for transparency from the UK Government regarding any agreements emerging from the forthcoming UK-EU Summit.

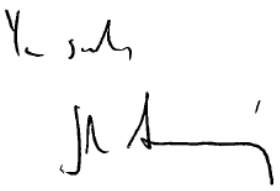
The attendees also reaffirmed the shared ambition to end rough sleeping. In discussion, I highlighted that a number of decisions by the UK Government that have impacted negatively on homelessness in Scotland such as the freeze of local housing allowance rates.

We also discussed joint efforts to respond to wildfires and extreme weather events, as well as continue to strengthen national resilience.

During the **National Economic Council**, we discussed opportunities for promoting economic growth, productivity and investment across the UK. I highlighted Scotland's key strengths in energy, advanced manufacturing, life sciences and digital and data technologies, including AI. The discussions were constructive and resulted in agreement to take forward a programme of engagement between the Scottish and UK Governments on a number of areas of shared interest, including employability services, enterprise and innovation, and public procurement. Progress is expected to be considered at a further meeting of the National Economic Council in March and the Scottish Government will update the relevant parliamentary committees on developments.

During the **bilateral meeting with the Prime Minister**, which was also attended by the Deputy First Minister and the Secretary of State for Scotland, I welcomed agreement that ministers and officials from both governments will take forward work on the Scottish Government's proposals for the future development of devolution. I raised the cost of living and energy costs, including reflecting on the recent UK Government announcement for support on energy bills for households. I also raised issues related to the forthcoming UK Strategic Spatial Energy plan and further measures related to the UK Government's budget, in particular carbon capture and duty on spirits, which is impacting Scottish whisky.

I hope you find this update helpful.



JOHN SWINNEY MSP

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

Tha Ministearan na h-Alba, an luchd-comhairleachaidh sònraichte agus an Rùnaire Maireannach fo chumhachan Achd Coiteachaidh (Alba) 2016. Faicibh www.lobbying.scot