

Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for
Finance and Local Government
Leas-Phrìomh Mhinistear agus Rùnaire a' Chaibineit
airson Ionmhas agus Riaghaltas Ionadail
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Convener
Finance and Public Administration Committee
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28 September 2026

Dear Convener,

Thank you for your letter of 7 September 2026 regarding the predecessor Committee's report on the cost-effectiveness of Scottish public inquiries, specifically aspects relating to reporting on expenditure and recording progress in implementing recommendations.

I welcome the Finance and Public Administration Committee's continuing interest in public inquiries. As you are aware, public inquiries remain a vital mechanism for accountability, establishing facts and identifying lessons to be learned in respect of matters of public concern. The Scottish Government is committed to improving transparency and supporting effective parliamentary scrutiny of public inquiries.

The Scottish Government accepted the thrust of the Committee's recommendation that arrangements should be developed to enhance scrutiny of inquiry expenditure and the implementation of recommendations. Any consideration of future reporting arrangements will need to respect the existing statutory and operational independence of Inquiry Chairs under the Inquiries Act 2005, including their responsibility for determining how inquiries are conducted. It is also important to bear in mind that it is not appropriate for the Scottish Government to report on inquiry performance.

Current work includes consideration of how information on the costs of holding inquiries and their outcomes could be presented more consistently and transparently, as well as how progress in implementing inquiry recommendations could be monitored and reported more effectively.

In developing any future proposals, the Scottish Government will ensure that it engages appropriately with live inquiry teams, respecting the statutory and operational independence of inquiry Chairs under the 2005 Act and avoiding disruption to the work of live inquiries as far as possible. It will also be important to acknowledge and build upon examples where inquiries themselves have sought to innovate within their own approaches to areas such as costs data publication.

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I recognise the importance the Committee places on this issue and would be pleased to provide a further update as this work progresses.

Yours sincerely,



JENNY GILRUTH

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