Dear John

During preliminary discussions on the Committee’s teacher workforce planning report yesterday members of the Committee discussed the Government’s intention to tender the new route into teaching, and the relevance of this new announcement to the inquiry.

As the Committee did not have the opportunity to discuss this with you, and a potential new route into teaching is of interest to it, I am writing to seek information on this policy to supplement the Committee’s evidence base for the inquiry. I note your comments during portfolio questions yesterday, specifically that any bid to the tender from an organisation not currently involved in initial teacher education would need to have an academic partner and any new route would need to be certified by the GTCS.

Given the Committee’s focus on ITE and also of increasing the supply of teachers to address shortages the Committee would appreciate details from you on the timescales of this tendering process and what the new route intends to achieve. For example any initial details you have on the following would be of interest to the Committee:

- potential length and formats of courses;
- any targeted specialisms;
- estimated number of teachers to be trained through this route;
- the extent to which certain local areas will be targeted; and
- the extent to which specific groups of potential trainees will be targeted (including whether it would aim at those considering teaching as a first or a second career).
I appreciate not all of these details will be available at this stage but the Committee would be interested in as much detail as possible available on the terms of the tender.

The Committee will consider its report next week so a response at your earliest opportunity to inform these deliberations would be very much appreciated. I understand that more detail may of course feature in your announcement today which the Committee will be listening to with interest.

Yours sincerely

JAMES DORNAN MSP
CONVENER