31 January 2017

James Dornan MSP
Convenor, Education and Skills Committee
Scottish Parliament

Dear James,

Feedback to the Education and Skills Committee on Curriculum for Excellence Management Board

I am writing to you in response to the Committee’s recent session on the Curriculum for Excellence Management Board on 18 January 2017.

You will be aware that COSLA are members of the Board. We were not asked to join the delegation but there were a couple of requests for a "local government" position which suggest that our views might be helpful for the committee. I have therefore noted these below.

I would also note that the evidence given by Larry Flanagan, that COSLA do not attend the CfE Management Board, is factually incorrect and that this can be confirmed by a cursory glance at the minutes of the Board meetings.

At 10:45am Ms Gillian Martin MSP asked for the Local Government view about the implementation of CfE and specifically about whether there was regional variation in performance. Terry Lanagan of ADES was asked to respond on behalf of Local Government and was correct to state that he did not represent Local Government. The COSLA view is that there are some regional variations in the curriculum - in fact CfE actively allows for local variation to ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of children and reflects their context. We can see performance variation right down to school level and, of course, there are myriad reasons for this variation. Local Authorities are committed to working to improve the performance level achieved by all schools and we rely on the expertise and experience of Education Scotland to support us in this endeavour.

At 11.11am Mr Fulton McGregor MSP noted that “COSLA is not here” and asked Education Scotland and the Scottish Qualifications Agency about the effectiveness of their work with local authorities. Local Authorities would note the importance of constructive working relationships with both these bodies and we would also note the importance of the interaction of these bodies with our employees directly - teachers, headteachers and senior management.

I hope these clarifications are helpful. COSLA officers are available to your committee clerks if you require any further information in this area.
Yours sincerely

Councillor Stephanie Primrose
COSLA Spokesperson, Education, Children and Young People