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Councillor Alison Evison  
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COSLA  
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2 July 2019

Dear Allison

Thank you for your letter of 18 June about support for local authorities to help them prepare for a potential UK exit from the EU.

I appreciate your welcome for the additional funding, totalling £1.6 million, that my colleagues and I have agreed to give local authorities for this purpose. This is additional to the fact that local government has along with other Scottish Government portfolios benefited from the £54.7 million of EU Exit funding consequentials, including the consequentials from the additional funding for councils announced by the UK Government mentioned in your letter, that were allocated through the 2019-20 Scottish Budget.

I acknowledge the concerns that exist in local government and indeed all parts of the devolved public sector, including the Scottish Government, about the possible implications of EU exit and the absorption of additional costs in preparation. The outlook of course remains uncertain. As the position becomes clearer I and my officials will continue to maintain the fruitful and regular dialogue that we have been having with you, your officials and other local government stakeholders about EU exit preparation.

Kind regards

AILEEN CAMPBELL

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25 June 2019

Dear Alison

I am writing to follow up your discussion with the Cabinet Secretary for Government Business and Constitutional Relations in February about consultative arrangements for local government to replace those that currently exist through the Committee of the Regions after The UK leaves the EU. Mr Russell and I have since seen your letter of 14 May to the Convener of the Parliament's Local Government and Communities Committee explaining COSLA's position, following your evidence to the Committee on 30 April. My apologies for the delay in replying to you, but as you know the position on EU exit has been and remains very uncertain.

My understanding from your meeting with Mr Russell is that the UK Government has reached an agreement in principle with the 4 UK local government associations (including COSLA) about consultative arrangements for powers to be held at UK level. However, I note from your letter of 14 May that you have not yet been able to have any further discussion about this with the UK Government. In the meantime, I also understand that you said at your meeting with Mr Russell that while the proposed UK arrangements would be a suitable starting point for discussions about Scottish arrangements, they should not necessarily dictate their final form. I agree with that, and am therefore happy to confirm now our agreement in principle to putting in place consultative arrangements for Scotland of the kind you describe, and that we would be happy to work with COSLA to develop proposals for those arrangements.

In your letter of 14 May you said that COSLA was keen to discuss this with Scottish Ministers and their officials. Mr Russell and I would be very willing to meet you to discuss how to take this forward, and if you think this would be helpful I suggest that in the first instance your office contacts mine to arrange such a meeting.

In the meantime, I confirm that the proposed consultative arrangements would only apply to matters that are currently held at the EU level and are transferred to Scotland following the UK's departure from the EU. This reflects our understanding of the approach being taken to the arrangements that are proposed to apply at the UK level. Also, as Mr Russell said at your meeting in February, they would not remove the need for engagement between the Scottish Government and COSLA on specific portfolio issues to continue as at present.

I am copying this letter to Mike Russell.

AILEEN CAMPBELL

**From the President, Councillor Alison Evison**



5 July 2019

Aileen Campbell MSP  
Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government  
The Scottish Government  
St. Andrew's House  
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Edinburgh  
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By email: [CabSecCLG@gov.scot](mailto:CabSecCLG@gov.scot)

— Dear Aileen

### **UK Exit from EU – Consultative Arrangements**

Thank you for your letter of 25 June 2019 concerning the arrangements for Local Government that will replace those that currently exist through the Committee of the Regions (CoR) after the UK leaves the EU. COSLA is keen to make what progress we can in areas where we share competencies with other spheres of Government so that we see no detriment or loss of influence. Indeed, I would like to increase the areas where the broad principles of engagement, proportionality and subsidiarity are applied in Scotland's policy formulation processes. I welcome your support for this and consider it absolutely vital.

As you point out, the UK Government's agreement in principle with the four UK Local Government Associations (including COSLA) is yet to be worked up further. I share with Mr Russell the need for us not to simply wait for the UK developments to occur and then to replicate them here in Scotland.

I feel a good starting point for us would be to consider both the structure of our current relationship and the principles for inter-governmental working we would want to see underpinning the Scottish and UK Government's relationship with us. Ultimately what we agree could be codified.

I look forward to discussing the above with you both and hope that you can share at an official level any emerging proposals you may have.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Alison Evison  
**President**

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Councillor Alison Evison  
President of COSLA

By email: [cllr.a.evison@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.a.evison@aberdeenshire.gov.uk)

14 May 2020

Dear Councillor Evison

## UK EXIT FROM THE EU

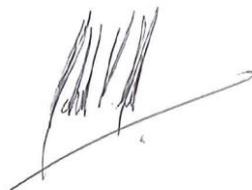
Thank you for copying me into your letter to the Prime Minister dated 6 May.

Many of the points you raise echo the concerns of the Scottish Government on the ongoing EU-UK negotiations, in particular with regards to the current challenges posed by the Coronavirus pandemic and establishing meaningful engagement with the UK Government ahead of negotiating rounds. We also support the points you make on citizens' rights, environmental and state aid matters, and EU programmes.

I have previously written in similar terms to Michael Gove last month and on 13 May, outlining the Scottish Government's concerns and strongly calling for an extension to the transition period beyond January 2021. The Scottish Government may soon publish analysis in support of our position, in which case I will ensure it is copied to you.

I welcome your call for a more co-operative intergovernmental way forward as negotiations progress. It is in all of our interests to maximise further discussion and coordination on these issues.

We have a call arranged for Monday to discuss this further, so I look forward to speaking to you then.



**MICHAEL RUSSELL**

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

**From the President, Councillor Alison Evison**

15 June 2020

Your Ref:

Our Ref:

Michael Russell MSP  
Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, Europe and  
External Affairs  
The Scottish Government  
St. Andrew's House  
Regent Road  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3DG

Dear Michael

**COSLA Leaders call for an extension to UK-EU negotiations**

I hope this finds you well.

I am writing to you as a follow up to our meeting on 12 May to communicate that at the Council Leaders meeting earlier today it was agreed that that COSLA immediately and publicly calls for an extension to the present negotiations.

Leaders noted the lack of developments around UK-EU negotiations and acknowledged the significant risks to the Scottish economy and Local Government services of the failure to reach a deal.

They also considered the evidence from the Scottish Government's own study as released on 3 June on the impacts of failing to extend the Brexit transition period if a deal is not reached.

As I had already mentioned to you, COSLA's position has always been about securing a good deal with our closest neighbours and partners over any timescale. This is a principled position that has the interest of our local communities in mind.

As you know, if the UK and the EU stop negotiations in June, or are unable to conclude a deal by October, we would be back to a "no deal" scenario. Local Government preparations would have to resume over the Summer to prepare for that, at the very time our attention should be focused on recovering from the crisis we currently face with Covid.

This also means that if there is no such extension, and the UK has formally confirmed today to the UK-EU Joint Committee that it does not intend to do so, the preparedness work that we have previously carried out with the Scottish Government needs to restart by way of precaution.

You will also be aware that the UK has confirmed today that it will set up new border controls in three stages up until 1 July 2021. This will have an impact on transport, trade and logistics in Scotland and I'm sure you share my concerns around this.

Therefore, as discussed last time, we should meet again and take stock of the situation and explore what we can do together to seek to secure the best deal possible for our local communities.

As we focus on this more immediate challenge I think that we should work together on a range of other Brexit related matters of common interest, namely the UK Common Frameworks; the level playing field in UK-EU negotiations and the Scottish Continuity Bill; future relations with the EU, such as opt into EU programmes and political dialogue. Also, more widely, Scotland's international engagement as COSLA and Scottish Government are active on the international field, both in international bodies and events such as next year's COP26 summit but also to influence the UK Government post Brexit Integrated Review of foreign policy.

No doubt there are many issues to cover in a meeting, but I trust you could instruct your officials to work with my staff in progressing these agendas.

I trust your private office will be in touch with COSLA officers to set up a suitable date for a further discussion.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alison Evison', written in a cursive style.

Councillor Alison Evison  
**President of COSLA**

**From the President, Councillor Alison Evison**

26 June 2020

Your Ref:

Our Ref:

Michael Russell MSP  
Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, Europe and  
External Affairs  
The Scottish Government  
St. Andrew's House  
Regent Road  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3DG

Dear Michael

### **UK Withdrawal from the European Union (Continuity) (Scotland) Bill [2020]**

I am writing again to you following the tabling of the Scottish Continuity Bill on 19th June. Though I can understand the need to have this legislation in place before the end of the Transition Period, I was under the impression from previous meetings with yourself and the First Minister earlier in the year, that we would be consulted beforehand.

I am taking this opportunity now therefore to highlight the changes that we are keen to seek, and ideally, the Government to introduce, during the Bill's parliamentary passage.

The Policy Memorandum accompanying the Bill states that there is no differential impact of this very important piece of legislation for Local Government. However, it goes on to say that there is a very significant impact to Local Government across a variety of policy areas, from public services to environmental standards. The services delivered by Scottish Local Government have been greatly impacted by EU legislation over the years.

We acknowledge that the Bill only aims to introduce a legal tool whereby Ministers, through Scottish Statutory Instruments, can ensure that the Scottish Statute Book keeps pace with future EU legislation, subject to the Scottish Parliament approving or rejecting it. At the same time, the supporting material of the Bill does highlight that "in developing any proposals for regulations under the keeping pace power, the Scottish Government will consult Local Government in line with normal practice for policy development and consider in particular any resource implications for Local Government."

While I welcome this general statement, I would be keen that the Bill explicitly addresses the offer made by the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government on 25 June 2019 on replicating in Scotland the consultative arrangements for Local Government post Brexit that the UK Government has formally offered to the four national associations of local authorities of the UK.

In that letter the Cabinet Secretary, after prior consultation with yourself, was "therefore happy to confirm now our agreement in principle to putting in place consultative arrangements for Scotland of the kind you describe, and that we would be happy to work with COSLA to develop proposals for those arrangements."

I think that it is important to do this as part of the Bill. We do not start from scratch however, as back in 2016 COSLA helped draft the Local Government consultation provisions of the 2016 Scottish Government Influencing EU Policy Guidance for Policy Officials.

The Bill does not only cover the cross-cutting EU continuity elements but also covers in Part 2 the EU-derived Environmental principles and governance, and in Schedule 1 the functioning of the new domestic environmental regulator, replacing the European Commission, Environmental Standards Scotland (EES).

Therefore we welcome the specific provisions on consultation with Local Government on these environmental principles derived from EU Law in Section 9 (2) (g) of the Bill as it establishes an obligation by Scottish Ministers that they “must consult” “such persons appearing to them to be representative of the interests of local government”. The same applies, but also and more explicitly for individual local authorities, before the laying down in Parliament new Guidance on how to apply these principles (Section 14).

Furthermore, Subsection 16 (1)(c) allows for EES to take appropriate action to secure a public authority’s compliance with environmental law, and to secure improvement in the effectiveness of environmental law or in how it is implemented or applied. This no doubt will affect councils hence the need for robust engagement with Local Government in the workings of this new Scottish environmental regulator.

I believe that, given that this Bill covers all policy areas that derive from EU legislation, from trading standards to procurement, employment, health and safety etc, it seems pertinent that the above mentioned statutory Local Government consultation mechanism that the Bill is already proposing for EU derived environmental policy should be amended accordingly to cover all other relevant issues as well.

I do hope that at our next meeting we could touch upon this alongside the other issues raised in my earlier correspondence.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alison Evison', written in a cursive style.

Councillor Alison Evison  
**President**



From COSLA President, Councillor Alison Evison

30 June 2020

Your Ref:

Our Ref:

Roseanna Cunningham MSP  
Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land  
Reform  
The Scottish Government  
St. Andrew's House  
Regent Road  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3DG

Dear Roseanna,

### **Scottish Participation in COP26 Glasgow Summit 2021**

Together with Cllr Steven Heddle, COSLA Environment and Economy Spokesperson, I am writing to you as COSLA President to discuss possible joint political activities at the Conference of Parties (COP) 26 climate negotiations taking place in Glasgow, November 2021 and in preparatory meetings taking place on the road to Glasgow.

COSLA and Scottish Government have worked closely over recent years to deliver one of the most ambitious climate policies in the world. COSLA has given firm political backing to the UN Paris Agreement and to Scotland's recent national target of 2045 net-zero emissions, with several Councils declaring climate emergencies and aiming for carbon neutrality by 2030.

Scottish Councils are not only leaders in adopting climate policies and clean energy solutions but are also keen to increase their civic leadership role to coordinate wider societal responses in support of national and international targets.

Economic recovery from the current crisis will be crucial in achieving our shared long-term climate objectives with greater need for joint action between spheres of government in achieving just transition to a zero carbon, inclusive economy.

Neither Scottish Government nor COSLA are new to these summits. COSLA has been working closely with our counterparts from other countries and our international networks. We have helped move towards a Local Government focussed day as part of the COP26 main programme, making Glasgow COP26 truly multilevel. This builds upon our previous experience at the COP summits in Paris, Marrakesh, Bonn and Madrid.

Next year's COP26 is an opportunity to promote Scotland's example and demonstrate that devolved administrations, in partnership with Local Government, are key climate actors at a time when UN parties need to make good on the earlier Paris commitments. This should ideally include a sub-state chapter in the final COP26 agreement and a reference to, where applicable, Devolved/Federal Nationally Determined Contributions, as well as options to link domestic public sector reporting to international frameworks.

There are also grounds to promote Scotland as a welcoming nation and demonstrate shared commitment to continued EU and international collaboration on climate change matters.

Although the United Kingdom will formally be the host of the summit, in partnership with the Italian Government, Local Government through COSLA is keen that this is also Scotland's summit, as indeed is the expectation from our counterparts across the world. Glasgow City Council is, for example, keen that hosting COP provides a legacy to deliver on existing local climate ambitions.

Indeed, our European umbrella organisation the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR)- where Cllr Heddle is the spokesperson for Territorial Development- and the worldwide municipal body United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) – where I sit on its World Council - are members of the subnational constituency of the UN Climate Convention.

Though my officials have had useful discussions with the UK Government and your officers over the last few months, we thought it prudent to wait until the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic were clearer before having a political discussion on COP26 with Scottish Ministers.

We understand, and welcome, that the UK and Scottish Governments have reached understanding on COP26 arrangements. With the postponement until next year, there is now time to more carefully develop workstreams and possible joint actions in Scotland.

We are keen to discuss plans and expectations within the Scottish Government's COP26 programme for the subnational community, specifically Scottish Local Government and COSLA, including activities in the blue and green zones, as well as in other potential offsite events ahead of and during COP26.

Similarly, you may be interested in activities that we are planning with our counterparts internationally in the run-up to and at COP26. For instance, Cllr Heddle recently took part in the UCLG Ministerial-Mayoral Dialogue on the Paris Agreement, together with Environment Ministers from South Africa and Ivory Coast and Mayors of Accra (Ghana), Konya (Turkey), Soria (Spain), among others. You will remember that he also represented Scottish Local Government at COP25 Madrid last year in several blue zone events, one of them alongside yourself. Indeed, we have similar events in preparation where we would be keen to collaborate and share platforms with Scottish Government.

COSLA is keen to consider feasible and practical arrangements that confirms to the international and COP26 community Scotland's commitment to fight climate change both nationally and locally. It would be far more constructive for the international reputation of Scotland if our respective engagement is co-ordinated. Our respective international partners expect that the national government and the national association of local authorities in the host county will work hand in hand to make COP26 a success.

Though our officers will no doubt be working together on this we would be keen to have a discussion with yourself on how we can best take this forward.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Alison Evison  
**President**



Councillor Steven Heddle  
**Environment and Economy Spokesperson**

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**CC: Michael Russell MSP, Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, Europe and External Affairs; Aileen Campbell MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government.**



**From the President, Councillor Alison Evison**

15 July 2020

Your Ref:

Aileen Campbell MSP  
Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local  
Government  
Scottish Government

Our Ref:

Dear Aileen

### **Scottish Engagement in EU and International fora**

As you are aware COSLA has been very active over the last three years, working with the Committee of the Regions (CoR) administration in developing the UK-CoR Contact Group.

We copied both you and your colleague Michael Russell into correspondence with the Welsh Senedd Presiding Officer in the latest of a series of exchanges with interested parties from across the UK and with the EU.

COSLA believes that it would be beneficial to take a more strategic approach to the way the Scottish Government and COSLA engage with various EU and international fora, post-Brexit. This, of course, relates to both your own and Mr Russell's portfolios (copied), with whom I had already had a useful discussion on 6 July.

Firstly, the UK-CoR Contact Group, established by agreement at the CoR Bureau on 30 March. Although it is clearly an informal body - as it is not mentioned in the Withdrawal Agreement, the Political Declaration or the UK and EU negotiation mandates - it will be a helpful platform to maintain and develop relations with our counterparts at devolved and local government levels in the EU27, particularly as the local or regional impacts of ending the transition period are still difficult to predict.

The CoR has invited the Scottish Parliament, the Scottish Government and COSLA to send representatives to this new body. It is up to each organisation to decide what their participation might be. In the case of COSLA, our full Convention had agreed that COSLA send representatives from a pool made up of the Presidential Team, Spokespersons and our former CoR members. Attendance will be decided on a case by case basis depending on the nature of the topic to be discussed. No doubt arrangements will become more formalised if this Contact Group proves to be useful, but the CoR offer is a judicious one in order to allow maximum flexibility.

As the format offered by the CoR is flexible Cabinet Secretaries and Ministers can decide on a case by case basis who could attend. On some occasions it will, no doubt, be MSPs on behalf of the Government, just as on others representation may be from the broader Scottish Parliament. It is anticipated that meetings take place between two and five times a year.

We are keen that there is a coordinated approach from Scotland in this body so that we can support our respective participation, both ahead, during and after the meetings. I hope that our respective officers can begin to discuss this over the coming weeks.

Secondly, I would like to take the opportunity to respond on the wider issue of consultation with Local Government when the Scottish Government wishes to implement international frameworks *concerning* Local Government. This is something that was raised specifically in your letter of 25 June 2019 regarding the replication, in Scotland, of the consultative arrangements for Local Government post-Brexit that existed for the UK through the CoR, and which the UK Government has formally offered to the four UK local authority associations. As expressed in my letter on 26 June, I believe that this can be addressed through targeted amendments to the Continuity Bill. I hope that we can work on those together.

Thirdly, there are broader aspects of forward looking engagement with the EU and wider international institutions, that concern both Local and Scottish Government where I think that we should adopt a more strategic approach. This would seek to ensure that we share a more cooperative and mutually self-reinforcing approach which is able to exploit engagement opportunities where at present Scotland is underrepresented.

There are a number of fora dealing with local and devolved matters in bodies such as the Council of Europe, the OECD and the United Nations.

In addition, there is the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe. Local and devolved engagement should include not just its political Chambers and Committees, where COSLA and the Scottish Parliament already send representatives, but also its specialised bodies namely the Centre of Expertise for Good Governance or European Committee on Democracy and Governance.

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) includes a few specialised bodies such as the Territorial Development Policy Committee, Regional Development Policy Committee, as well as the OECD Roundtable of Mayors and Ministers, Local Economic and Employment Development LEED and the successive Rural Development Conferences.

Finally, the United Nations provides us with access to some of its specialised bodies through our international membership bodies the Council of European Municipalities and Regions and United Cities and Local Government such as the United Nations Advisory Committee of Local Authorities, High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, the UN Climate Change Conference of Parties, the UN HABITAT Assembly, and the UN Economic Commission for Europe Committee of Urban Development.

There is no doubt that the Scottish Government and COSLA will continue engaging in some of these fora. In others, there is no Scottish participation currently but there is a case to be made for them being more representative of the different parts of the UK.

I hope you agree we need to harness the opportunities which we do have for engaging internationally that I have highlighted here.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Alison Evison  
**President**

**Copied: Michael Russell MSP, Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, Europe and External Affairs.**

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(By email: [REDACTED]@cosla.gov.uk)

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25th August 2020

Dear Councillor Evison,

Thank you for your letter of 15 July concerning Scottish Engagement in EU and International fora.

The Scottish Government welcomes the establishment of the UK-CoR Contact Group and we will continue to work closely with COSLA to represent Scotland's interests in the EU, including through this forum, in line with the priorities set out in our EU Strategy. We agree with you that it would be desirable to have a coordinated approach between Scotland's participants and I will seek views from my Ministerial colleagues on the most effective way for us to engage and revert in due course.

We share your keenness to maximise opportunities for Scottish representation in international fora. As you have identified, there are a number of institutions which recognise that decision-making is often devolved and a wide range of decisions are taken in international fora which impact on the responsibilities of the Scottish Government and Local Authorities. In addition to engaging directly with international bodies to ensure devolved interests are represented, we are in regular contact with the UK Government to agree how we participate in international fora. As you might imagine, this can be difficult at times and progress is not as we would wish.

I welcome your suggestion that a more strategic, cooperative approach is required and would ask, in the first instance, for your officials to liaise with [redacted], Head of European Engagement, Directorate for External Affairs at [REDACTED].[REDACTED]@gov.scot or [REDACTED], to explore this further.

As the Continuity Bill progresses through Parliament the Scottish Government welcomes closer engagement with COSLA and local government, and as we put in place the new arrangements for environmental principles and governance we look forward to further dialogue. The Scottish Government is committed to ensuring that local government is appropriately consulted about the use of the regulatory power in part 1 of the Bill, and we are

grateful for COSLA's suggestions which we will work through with you. Again, please contact [REDACTED] in the first instance who can connect your team to the relevant SG leads.

I have copied my Cabinet colleague, Michael Russell, with whom you have also been in recent contact, into this reply.

Thank you again for your correspondence.

AILEEN CAMPBELL

From the President, Councillor Alison Evison



29 September 2020

Aileen Campbell MSP  
Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government  
The Scottish Government  
St. Andrew's House  
Regent Road  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3DG

By email: [CabSecCLG@gov.scot](mailto:CabSecCLG@gov.scot)

Dear Aileen,

### **Brexit Co-ordination Funding**

I am conscious that there have been various requests for support to local authorities submitted to the Scottish Government in respect of additional responsibilities arising from EU Exit.

You will recall that one of these requests resulted in £1.6m being made available to local authorities in 2019; an allocation of £50,000 to each Scottish council to progress on-going local co-ordination work on Brexit preparedness arrangements.

This funding was welcomed. You will be aware of the exceptional pressures councils have faced since March as a result of the Coronavirus which has impacted on so many council services across Scotland.

Local authorities have had to refocus their existing resources to undertake various roles essential to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic. This has been at the expense of other duties.

As I am sure you will be aware, most recent reports indicate we are likely to be heading for a No Deal EU Exit in just over 3 months' time. The ramifications of this, together with the continuing Coronavirus issues will undoubtedly increase the burden on council resources even more.

More recently, I am aware that funding for the equivalent of 64 compliance/technical officer posts, has been made available and again this offer to create capacity in this area is welcome.

Nevertheless, funding to assist councils generally, to co-ordinate on Brexit is still needed and continuing to fund a Brexit Co-ordinator for EU Exit related work into 2021 would go some way towards mitigating risks by allowing council resources to focus on statutory duties without the additional burden of the various EU Exit related actions. These actions include but are not limited to:

- Overall administration of the Brexit process within councils
- National, regional and local information gathering and analysis
- Facilitating council resilience planning
- Co-ordinating and attending any Brexit seminars/workshops
- Providing advice and updates on Brexit across the Council and to Elected Members
- Chairing a Brexit Working Group,
- Attending and reporting to Corporate Management Teams as appropriate,
- Liaising with Community Planning Partners and other public sector partners,
- Producing Brexit Committee reports
- Engaging with the business community
- Acting as a conduit within councils for communications, information and support for EEA citizens applying to the EU Settlement Scheme.
- Collating the impact of the post-Brexit immigration system on local areas.

As I have mentioned in previous letters, the initial funding, whilst welcome and necessary, did not meet the overall cost of Brexit work. COSLA Leaders have now agreed that we should seek specific further funding, to assist councils' coordination through the EU Exit transition period and beyond. I hope that you will be prepared to support this, and I am happy to discuss this further with you.

Yours sincerely,



Cllr Alison Evison  
**COSLA President**

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Councillor Alison Evison  
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10th October 2020  
Dear Alison

Thank you for your letter of 29 September requesting additional funding to support the local authority Brexit Co-ordinator roles and local Brexit preparedness arrangements.

I am very supportive and grateful of the work councils are doing and your letter helpfully lists some of the actions the Brexit Co-ordinator's have carried out during the last year. As you'll be aware the funding covered the period ending on 31 December 2020.

However, as I advised when you raised this matter previously with me, in order for me to seek support from colleagues for further funding it would be useful to have real tangible evidence of what the co-ordinator funding has achieved to date and what more any additional funding would deliver going forward. Given the significant pressures currently on budgets it would be impossible for me to progress this request successfully without having the appropriate supporting information.

I would also add that the Scottish Government have also been funding two seconded officials to COSLA as a dedicated resource to support operational readiness across councils. Whilst I understand that one of the officials has now returned to Scottish Government, we are still providing resources to COSLA to use appropriately for that purpose. I understand officials have been discussing this further and we are keen for these resources to be released to COSLA. Our commitment to continuing to provide this support demonstrates the importance we attach to ensuring local government has the resources it requires to prepare for the impacts of Brexit.

I look forward to receiving evidence of the outcomes achieved and, of course, I'm happy to discuss this further with you.

AILEEN CAMPBELL  
Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government

**From the President, Councillor Alison Evison**



29 October 2020

Aileen Campbell MSP  
Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government  
The Scottish Government  
St. Andrew's House  
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Edinburgh  
EH1 3DG

By email: [CabSecCLG@gov.scot](mailto:CabSecCLG@gov.scot)

Dear Aileen,

### **Brexit Co-ordination Funding**

Thank you for your letter of 10 October to a request for extending Brexit Co-ordination Funding. I appreciate that you did acknowledge the work that councils have done this year in these exceptional circumstances. However, those circumstances and the pressures have not lessened and are unlikely to do so for the foreseeable future. I still believe that funding for Council Brexit Coordinators is cost effective and mutually beneficial as we collectively progress towards and beyond 1 January 2021.

As I pointed out in my original letter, throughout this year, local authorities have had to constantly refocus their existing resources to undertake roles essential to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic.

With the increasing likelihood of a No Deal EU Exit, or, at best, some form of limited Deal, councils will have to react to a wide variety of changes to rules and regulations, many of which will not be known until 2021. These are uncharted waters and, despite all of our best efforts, the broader impacts of leaving the EU on our economy and communities will not be known for sure until that actually happens. This is concurrent with continuing to deal with Covid as well as other essential council duties, not least winter weather and 'normal' winter health issues.

The ramifications of this will undoubtedly increase the burden on council resources, especially those smaller councils who have limited staff resources to call on. Even larger councils will struggle to cope when their staff are already over-stretched. As an example, Environmental Health Officers, who are currently assisting with business support and compliance and Covid-19 Test and Trace, will also be expected to continue operating in their usual environmental role and, in some councils, be expected to cope with a potentially massive increase in demand for export health certificates. Again, while the additional funding provided by Scottish Government for the next year is welcome, it still does not fully resolve the resourcing problems in Environmental Health.

I think you will agree that co-ordination and support to the local resilience structures will be vital. Individual councils will want to establish arrangements most appropriate to their local circumstances. I highlighted in my last letter some of the actions this funding might support at the local level. However, I think there is a real difference in context now compared with when you previously provided such funding, in that both councils and Scottish Government know that the Transition Period will definitely end on 31 December.

This relatively small sum of money will make a tangible difference at this crucial time to the coordination required to mitigate the worst impacts of Brexit, not to mention provide a focus for collecting the intelligence and data that both Local and Scottish Government will need to respond and ensure that we protect the most vulnerable over the next few months.

I intend to update Leaders on 30 October on your response, and I am sure they will be as hopeful as I am that further support for councils can be found.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alison Evison', written in a cursive style.

Cllr Alison Evison  
**COSLA President**