

## Tony Romain

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**From:** Tony Romain on behalf of Local Government Policy and Relationships  
**Sent:** 20 April 2023 14:24  
**To:** Local Government Policy and Relationships  
**Subject:** FW: FM / COSLA Meeting

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**From:** Sean Neill  
**Sent:** 03 April 2023 10:19  
**To:** DG Communities; DG Health & Social Care; [Redacted]; Ellen Leaver; Mary McAllan; Jane O'Donnell  
**Cc:** Permanent Secretary  
**Subject:** FM / COSLA Meeting

Folks

Here is a quick read out from the FM / DFM /Minister for Local Government Empowerment and Planning/ COSLA meeting on Friday afternoon.

Quite far reaching 30 mins that was characterised by a really positive and engaging discussions. Key points:

- FM confirmed his commitment to Bute House style agreement with LG, as per his campaign. This will be underpinned by cooperation and co-design. FM wants to be ambitious and look at what further powers can be given to LG, committed to financial flexibility and removal of ringfencing. Reiterated commitment to European charter, but noted some of the issues relating to UKG and competence.
- DFM keen to move at pace and resolve any outstanding issues relating to the fiscal framework. Keen to deliver on the single island authority.
- JFP – reflected on the fact that empowerment was in his title – keen for regular engagement. NB thinking here about how the mechanics of the BH style arrangement would work, how often / how meets etc. How does FM and DFM play a role?
- Agree that would like to see a draft agreement end of Easter, draft language etc so that people can get comfortable with what is in it. COSLA noted they had a meeting in middle of April that was key to getting buy-in.
- High trust and high collaboration will underpin the framework – digital will play a key role in – secondments and sharing of staff can help strengthen working, reflecting positively on recent secondments.
- FM was keen to hear any new ideas from LG about further powers and committed to taking a positive approach
- DFM keen to look at what more could be done to release economic potential – keen to push boundaries and what more can be done to support reform and collaboration
- Agreed need to contain pay – teachers pay discussions highlighted how we can work collaboratively together

Discussions went onto NCS. Key points:

- FM keen to use the pause to work with LG on the NCS. Clear that there were plenty of areas that they agree on (national standards etc). Was very clear that he thought there were areas that agreement and compromise could be reached (employment of staff). Keen also to engage with the Unions on this.
- FM wanted early and intense discussions to find a compromise – President was clear that co-production was key to this and that transfer of staff was a red line for LG. Agreed there were lots of areas we agree on (sharing of DATA / T&Cs etc)

- All recognised that delayed discharge was an area that they needed to continue to work on.
- FM or Cab Sec to write to COSLA about engagement on NCS – keen to do something this week

Finally FM said would try and attend Conference in September and Leaders gathering in June – diary permitting

Sean Neill

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