

Annex A

Item 1

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 07 May 2025 16:58

To: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>

Cc: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Finance & Local Government <CabSecFLG@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; Anna Kynaston <Anna.Kynaston@gov.scot>; DG Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; DG Scottish Exchequer Mailbox <DGScottishExchequer@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Donald McGillivray <Donald.McGillivray@gov.scot>; Penelope Curtis <Penelope.Curtis@gov.scot>; [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted]; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Emily Mackintosh <Emily.Mackintosh@gov.scot>; John Webster <John.Webster@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE - Council of the Nations and Regions and associated meetings

Hi [Redacted],

As discussed, please find attached a draft letter from the First Minister to the Prime Minister reflecting the feedback below.

Many thank indeed
[Redacted]

From: [Redacted] **On Behalf Of** First Minister

Sent: 06 May 2025 13:00

To: Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Anna Kynaston <Anna.Kynaston@gov.scot>

Cc: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Finance & Local Government <CabSecFLG@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; DG Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; DG Scottish Exchequer Mailbox <DGScottishExchequer@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Donald McGillivray <Donald.McGillivray@gov.scot>; Penelope Curtis <Penelope.Curtis@gov.scot>; Laura Merenciano-Sanchis [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted]; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Emily Mackintosh <Emily.Mackintosh@gov.scot>; John Webster <John.Webster@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE - Council of the Nations and Regions and associated meetings

Hi Chris,

Thanks for this submission.

FM welcomes the opportunity of a National Security Briefing but, as noted, cannot attend on Thursday afternoon due to his obligation to answer FMQs. The earliest that he would be able to attend a meeting in Whitehall would be 18:30.

FM would welcome a FM-PM bilateral and a PM-FMs quadrilateral.

[Redacted - s.28(1) Relations within the UK]

Thanks,
[Redacted]

[Redacted] (She/Her)
Deputy Private Secretary | Office of the First Minister | [Redacted]

Item 1 attachment 1

[Redacted - s.28(1) Relations within the UK]

Item 2

From: [Redacted]**Sent:** 21 May 2025 17:10

To: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>

Cc: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Finance & Local Government <CabSecFLG@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; DG Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; DG Scottish Exchequer Mailbox <DGScottishExchequer@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Donald McGillivray <Donald.McGillivray@gov.scot>; Penelope Curtis <Penelope.Curtis@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted][Redacted][Redacted]; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Emily Mackintosh <Emily.Mackintosh@gov.scot>; John Webster <John.Webster@gov.scot>; [Redacted]

Subject: RE: OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE - Council of the Nations and Regions and associated meetings

PO/[Redacted],

Please find attached a briefing pack for the First Minister's attendance at the Council of the Nations and Regions and associated meetings taking place on Friday. As discussed, we are seeking supplementary briefing on CCUS and will send that up as soon as we can tomorrow. Annexes C-F are attached separately due to formatting.

Please also find attached a letter for the First Minister's approval and issue to notify the conveners of the *Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture* and *Economy and Fair Work* committees of this Friday's Council of the Nations and Regions and other related engagements, in line with the Written Agreement on IGR between the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Government. **I would be grateful if the letter could be issued tomorrow**

afternoon to the committee conveners Clare Adamson MSP (Clare.Adamson.msp@parliament.scot) and Claire Baker MSP (Claire.Baker.msp@parliament.scot), copying in the relevant committee email addresses: CEEAC.committee@parliament.scot and economyandfairwork.committee@parliament.scot.

Please let me know if you require anything further.

Many thanks
[Redacted]

[Redacted] (she/her) | Constitution and UK Relations Division | Constitution Directorate

From: [Redacted] **On Behalf Of** First Minister

Sent: 19 May 2025 11:20

To: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; [Redacted]

Cc: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Finance & Local Government <CabSecFLG@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; DG Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; DG Scottish Exchequer Mailbox <DGScottishExchequer@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Donald McGillivray <Donald.McGillivray@gov.scot>; Penelope Curtis <Penelope.Curtis@gov.scot>; [Redacted][Redacted][Redacted][Redacted] Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Emily Mackintosh <Emily.Mackintosh@gov.scot>; John Webster <John.Webster@gov.scot>; [Redacted]

Subject: RE: OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE - Council of the Nations and Regions and associated meetings

Hi all,

I had thought I'd come back to confirm formally last week that FM has agreed to attend the full CNR programme, however I now can't find that, so apologies if I didn't! As discussed on teams, FM will be attending.

We are looking at travel options just now – it looks most likely that FM will choose to fly both directions and do the trip in one day.

We have received a further email from No 10, attached, asking for the bilat to be 9:55 – 10:25, and confirming that the multilateral should be a full hour.

Thanks,

[Redacted]

[Redacted] (She/Her)

Deputy Private Secretary | Office of the First Minister | [Redacted]

From: [Redacted] **Behalf Of** First Minister

Sent: 15 May 2025 14:43

To: [Redacted]>; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>

Cc: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Finance & Local Government <CabSecFLG@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture

2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; DG Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; DG Scottish Exchequer Mailbox <DGScottishExchequer@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Donald McGillivray <Donald.McGillivray@gov.scot>; Penelope Curtis <Penelope.Curtis@gov.scot>; [Redacted]>[Redacted] Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Emily Mackintosh <Emily.Mackintosh@gov.scot>; John Webster <John.Webster@gov.scot>; [Redacted]

Subject: RE: OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE - Council of the Nations and Regions and associated meetings

Thanks [Redacted], that;s helpful

Just adding Taylor to the copylist

Thanks,

[Redacted]

[Redacted] (She/Her)

Deputy Private Secretary | Office of the First Minister | [Redacted]

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 15 May 2025 14:03

To: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>

Cc: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Finance & Local Government <CabSecFLG@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; DG Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; DG Scottish Exchequer Mailbox <DGScottishExchequer@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Donald McGillivray <Donald.McGillivray@gov.scot>; Penelope Curtis <Penelope.Curtis@gov.scot>; [Redacted]>; [Redacted]>; [Redacted][Redacted]>; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Emily Mackintosh <Emily.Mackintosh@gov.scot>; John Webster <John.Webster@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE - Council of the Nations and Regions and associated meetings

Hi [Redacted],

[Redacted - Section 28(1) – relations within the UK]

Many thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted] (she/her) | Constitution and UK Relations Division | Constitution Directorate |

From: [Redacted] **On Behalf Of** First Minister

Sent: 15 May 2025 13:58

To: Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>

Cc: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Finance & Local Government <CabSecFLG@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; DG Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; DG Scottish Exchequer Mailbox <DGScottishExchequer@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Donald McGillivray <Donald.McGillivray@gov.scot>; Penelope Curtis <Penelope.Curtis@gov.scot>; [Redacted];

[Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Emily Mackintosh <Emily.Mackintosh@gov.scot>; John Webster <John.Webster@gov.scot>

Subject: Re: OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE - Council of the Nations and Regions and associated meetings

[Redacted - Section 28(1) – relations within the UK]

Thanks,
[Redacted]

From: Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>

Sent: Thursday, May 15, 2025 12:59:51 PM

To: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>

Cc: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Finance & Local Government <CabSecFLG@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; DG Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; DG Scottish Exchequer Mailbox <DGScottishExchequer@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Donald McGillivray <Donald.McGillivray@gov.scot>; Penelope Curtis <Penelope.Curtis@gov.scot>; [Redacted] [Redacted][Redacted][Redacted]<[Redacted] Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Emily Mackintosh <Emily.Mackintosh@gov.scot>; John Webster <John.Webster@gov.scot>

Subject: OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE - Council of the Nations and Regions and associated meetings

PS FM,

Please find attached a submission providing an update on arrangements for the forthcoming Council of the Nations and Regions in London, including an update on the proposed agenda and various logistical updates.

I would be grateful for the First Minister's consideration of the recommendations. If the First Minister would find a discussion helpful, we stand ready to contribute.

Please let me know if you need any further information.

Thanks,

Chris

Chris Mackie

Deputy Director, Constitution & UK Relations

Item 2 attachment 1

Attached separately

Item 2 attachment 2

[Redacted - s.28(1) Relations within the UK]

Item 2 attachment 3

[Redacted - s.28(1) Relations within the UK]

Item 2 attachment 4

[Redacted - s.28(1) Relations within the UK]

Item 2 attachment 5

Ms Clare Adamson MSP
Convener of Constitution, Europe and External
Affairs and Culture Committee
The Scottish Parliament
CEEAC.committee@parliament.scot

Ms Claire Baker MSP
Convener of Economy and Fair Work
Committee
The Scottish Parliament
economyandfairwork.committee@parliament.scot

May 2025

I am writing to inform you that the next meeting of the Council of the Nations and Regions which has been scheduled to take place on Friday 23 May. The meeting of the Council, which was arranged by the United Kingdom Government, will focus on two agenda items: an update on trade and tariffs; and the role of artificial intelligence in supporting economic growth.

On the same day, I will also meet the Prime Minister on a bilateral basis, and there will be a joint meeting between the Prime Minister and the Heads of the Devolved Governments.

Throughout the day, I intend to emphasise that I welcome the trade deal which has been reached with the United States while also highlighting that there are important details yet to be agreed and that time will be needed to consider the full implications for Scottish business. I intend to press for a more detailed account of the impact with the UKG anticipates for key industries for Scotland, such as pharmaceuticals and the agrifood sector.

I aim to welcome the positive momentum in rebuilding UK's relationship with the EU, which includes progress in some areas Scottish Ministers have been calling for, such as removing obstacles to food and agricultural exports and rejoining the Erasmus exchange scheme. I also intend to express my disappointment at the lack of devolved government involvement in the negotiations and to call on the UKG to involve devolved governments properly in the next stages of negotiations so that the interests of all parts of the UK can be protected.

On the topic of artificial intelligence, I intend to set out the huge opportunities for innovation in Scotland and emphasise that we hope to engage closely on the UK Government's proposed AI Bill to ensure this technology is used ethically and inclusively to support business and the public sector in Scotland.

During proceedings, I will also highlight to the Prime Minister the need for tailored migration solutions for Scotland, to support our economy, communities, and public services.

I will write to you following these meetings to update you on the Scottish Government's contribution.

Yours sincerely,

JOHN SWINNEY

Item 2 attachment 6

COUNCIL OF THE NATIONS AND REGIONS AND ASSOCIATED MEETINGS

What	Bilateral meeting with the Prime Minister; (top tier) PM and Heads of Devolved Governments meeting; second meeting of the Council of the Nations and Regions (CNR); and national security briefing.
Who	<u>Prime Minister</u> – Rt Hon Sir Keir Starmer KCB KC MP <u>Deputy Prime Minister</u> – Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP <u>Chancellor of Duchy of Lancaster</u> (in role as Minister for Intergovernmental Relations) – Rt Hon Pat McFadden MP <u>First Minister (Wales)</u> – Rt Hon Baroness Morgan of Ely PC MS <u>First Minister (Northern Ireland)</u> – Michelle O'Neill MLA <u>deputy First Minister (Northern Ireland)</u> – Emma Little-Pengelly MLA <u>The Mayor of London, mayors of combined authorities and county combined authorities</u> – see Annex E for full membership of CNR

Where	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The series of meetings will take place in London: • PM bilateral; the PM and Heads of Devolved Governments meeting; and CNR plenary to be held at Lancaster House, an FCDO building on The Mall. • [Redacted - S30C - Otherwise prejudice effective conduct of public affairs]
When	Friday, 23 May 2025
Agendas	<p>FM/PM bilateral (09:55 – 10:25) (1) Migration (2) Welfare reform (3) Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage (4) Progress on Intergovernmental Relations</p> <p>PM/Heads of Devolved Governments (11:25 – 12:25) (1) International update (2) Trade (including EU-UK and US) (3) Growth/economy (4) UK Spending Review</p> <p>Council of the Nations and Regions (12:45 – 13:45) (1) Trade and tariffs (2) Artificial Intelligence in support of economic growth</p> <p>National Security Briefing (14:30 – 15:30 (estimated)) No agenda confirmed in advance.</p>
Supporting Officials	Chris Mackie, Deputy Director, Constitution and UK Relations [Redacted], Private Secretary Colin McAllister, Special Adviser
Attached Documents	<p>Overview and key objectives</p> <p>PM Bilateral – annotated agenda, logistics and background briefing</p> <p>PM and Heads of Devolved Government meeting – annotated agenda, logistics and background briefing</p> <p>Council of the Nations and Regions – annotated agenda, logistics and background briefing</p> <p>National Security Briefing – logistics and background briefing</p> <p>Annex A: English Mayors: biographies</p> <p>Annex B: Operational note</p> <p><i>[Annexes C-F attached separately]</i></p>

	Annex C: CNR slide-pack on AI opportunities [Redacted - Section 28(1) – relations within the UK]
Comms	UKG advise there will be no media presence, however there will be a UKG photographer taking official pictures.

Programme

from 09:45	Arrival at Lancaster House - Refreshments will be served
09:55-11:25	Bilateral Meetings with the Prime Minister: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 09:55-10:25: First Minister of Scotland ● 10:25-10:55: First Minister of Wales ● 10:55-11:25: First and deputy First Minister of NIE
11:25-12:25	Prime Minister and Heads of Devolved Governments
12:15-12:45	Lunch
12:45-13:45	Full Council of the Nations and Regions Meeting
14:30-15:30 (estimated)	National Security Briefing

OVERVIEW AND KEY OBJECTIVES

[Redacted - S30(b)(i) – Free and frank advice]

The day will start with a 30-minute meeting with the Prime Minister at 09:55. The Prime Minister will also hold meetings with the FM Wales and with the FM and dFM Northern Ireland.

This will be followed by the second (top tier) PM and Heads of Devolved Governments meeting since the Westminster general election. The meeting will cover: International update; Trade (including EU-UK and US); Growth/economy; and, UK Spending Review. The last top tier meeting covered Economy and Growth; Green Energy; and Intergovernmental Relations. The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster will join this meeting.

For the CNR plenary, the UKG has chosen the overarching theme of *‘driving growth by making the most of trade and AI opportunities’*. The meeting will therefore have two main elements, an update on trade agreements and tariffs followed by a roundtable discussion chaired by the PM on growth and AI opportunities.

The last engagement will be a national security briefing. This will be on Privy Council terms and therefore only attended by the heads of devolved governments. [Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

Objectives and Priority Issues

[Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

Briefing structure

Briefing has been provided for each individual meeting, including logistical information, top lines and background briefing for each of the agenda items. Some topics occur in multiple meetings. Where this occurs, briefing has been duplicated to allow each meeting section to stand alone.

BILATERAL WITH THE PRIME MINISTER

09:55 – 10:25, Lancaster House

Official support: Colin McAllister; Chris Mackie

Agenda:

- 1) Migration
- 2) Welfare reform
- 3) Carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS)
- 4) Progress on Intergovernmental Relations

1. Migration: Approach for Devolved Nations

Top Lines

- The Scottish Government issued a comprehensive, evidence-based, and mutually beneficial proposal document to the Home Office during development of the UK Government's Immigration White Paper.
- However, the **White Paper fails to reflect Scotland's distinct requirements** for an immigration system. Policy changes outlined in the White Paper pose a significant risk to Scotland's economy, communities, and public services.
- The White Paper offers no evidence that the needs of Scotland's economy, public services or communities have been considered in the development of these proposals. **A one-size fits all approach to immigration fails to meet the needs of Scotland** and much of the UK.
- I met representatives from across our public services and economy on 20 May to discuss the impact of the White Paper. People are really concerned about the language in the publication which does not reflect Scotland's values.
- They were also concerned about the impact of the proposed changes on their work - [Redacted - S30C - Otherwise prejudice effective conduct of public affairs]
 - Planned **changes to the Graduate Visa and the Health and Care Worker Visa** route are short-sighted and will damage sectors that rely on international talent.
 - **Plans to end international recruitment of care workers will be devastating for the care sector in Scotland** and across the UK.
 - The decision to stop care workers bringing dependants to the UK, introduced in March 2024 and maintained by the current UK Government, has already damaged the Scottish sector.
 - We expressed concern the policy was shortsighted and would only further exacerbate shortages in the care sector.
 - Home Office Statistics show there were 81% fewer applications from main applicants for Health and Care visas between April 2024 and January 2025

when compared to the same 10-month period between April 2023 and January 2024, prior to the ban on dependants.

- **Migration supports sustainable communities, economies and public services in Scotland.** Scotland's population is growing only because of migration. Our working-age population is only growing because of inward migration.
 - Our **Population Strategy and Addressing Depopulation Action Plan** is prioritising activity through our devolved powers that respond to these challenges. But we need the immigration system to work for Scotland so we can address demographic challenges now and into the future.
- The UK Government must work urgently with us to deliver tailored migration solutions for Scotland and prevent the harm to our economy, communities, and public services which the policy decisions in the White Paper will lead to.

Background

[Redacted - s.28(1) Relations within the UK]

2. Welfare Reform

Top Lines

Our approach to social security stands in contrast to the reforms being proposed and which have begun to be implemented, by the UK Government.

- I am deeply concerned about the UK Government's plans to cut £4.8bn from benefits by 2029/30, particularly the effects of the reforms on people across Scotland, especially disabled people and those with long-term conditions.
- This will lead to cuts in the funding the SG receives of £408 million by 2029-30.
- These cuts are being imposed on some of the most vulnerable people in our society and the UK Government appears to be trying to balance its books on the backs of disabled people.
- Around half of all children in poverty in Scotland live in a household with a disabled person - these changes threaten to undermine the progress we are making to reduce child poverty.
- The decision to freeze the **Universal Credit** health element for existing recipients and halving it for new applicants sees the UK Government again looking to make savings on the back of those found unable to work due to ill-health.
- Despite **widespread condemnation from disabled peoples' organisations** and mental health charities, it is incredibly disappointing that the UK Government has made even more cuts to social security in response to the OBR findings.
- The decision to not pay Universal Credit health top-up to people under 22 is unjustifiable.
- Young people already receive less financial support through Universal Credit, and this decision will further impact those reliant on financial support to manage their health condition.
- The UK Government should take a more compassionate approach to reforming the Universal Credit Health Element, rather than making cuts which will negatively impact sick and disabled people who are reliant on this support.

Background

- The UK Government's changes to benefits that are devolved in Scotland.
- The Scottish Government will invest £210 million to mitigate the worst aspects of UK Government welfare reform.
- That includes mitigating against the Winter Fuel Payment cut and helping over 94,000 households affected by the bedroom tax and benefit cap.

- The Department for Work and Pension's own impact assessment highlights that by 2029/30, 3.2 million families will lose out as a result of the UKG's planned cut to benefits, with an average loss of £1,720 per year. 96% of those families losing out include a disabled person. These changes will drive an additional 250,000 people across the UK, including 50,000 children, into poverty by 2029/30 and will reduce the funding Scotland receives for devolved disability benefits.
- Universal Credit provides low levels of support, with over a decade of benefit freezes, caps and limits having all eroded the value of social security and the effectiveness of the safety net it should provide.
- The Scottish Government welcomes the UK Government's plans to carry out a complete review Universal Credit – for too long it has been failing those who need it the most.
- We hope this review will address the issues the Scottish Government have raised in the past and we would welcome the opportunity to work with the UK Government to achieve that goal.

[Redacted - Section 28(1) – relations within the UK]

3. Carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS)

4. Progress on intergovernmental relations re-set

Top Lines

The Scottish Government continues to seek a principled and pragmatic approach to engagement with the UK Government.

- We believe there is a substantial opportunity to achieve better outcomes when we work together in a way that reflects our respective responsibilities, and those of our respective legislatures.
 - We will continue to work constructively with the UK Government on areas of common ground.
 - This includes work to eradicate child poverty; improving public services through fair funding; growing the economy; and accelerating the transition to net zero.

I recognise that the current relationship with the UK Government is more productive and constructive than with its predecessor.

- However, areas of significant concern remain, most notably in relation to information sharing and substantive discussion around significant developments such as US trade deal and the EU re-set deal, which were both announced without sufficient engagement with the devolved governments.
- There are also number of areas in which the UK Government is falling short in its commitment to re-setting intergovernmental relations by failing to take into account the needs of Scotland on work such as to eradicating child poverty, migration and the IMA Review.
- It is imperative that information sharing and engagement with the Scottish Government is both sustained and meaningful to maximise the potential for positive outcomes for the people of Scotland.

IMA REVIEW

The IMA remains one of the greatest barriers to a lasting and meaningful reset in relations between the Scottish and UK Governments

- We are concerned that the preferred outcome of both the Scottish and Welsh Governments – repeal and replace with a system built around Common Frameworks – wasn't even considered in the Statutory Review.
- The Scottish Government remains concerned that the UK Government is just not listening on the Internal Market Act.
- There is still time to work through the review to agree lasting solutions to the problems created by the Act.

- But that will require a willingness to properly engage with the arguments being put forward not just by the Scottish Government, but by a wide range of stakeholders, including business organisations.
- We have been clear we are willing to work together to deliver sustainable solutions - but that must be based on collaboration and meaningful engagement.
- The UK Government will find a willing partner in the Scottish Government if it is willing to work together to deliver agreed and sustainable solutions.

No one wants to see new, unnecessary barriers to trade.

- The Scottish Government recognises that businesses want transparency and predictability, but this is the opposite of what the IMA provides.
- It has shown itself to be a source of unnecessary confusion and disputes.
- Other countries manage to have market systems that deliver market efficiencies while presenting the ability to make sensible decisions locally to reflect different priorities. All we are asking for is that we can do the same here.

THE SEWEL CONVENTION

We welcomed the Labour manifesto commitment to “strengthen the Sewel Convention by setting out a new memorandum of understanding outlining how the nations will work together for the common good”.

- However, there has been no progress by UKG on an MOU and almost a year on, the time has come for UKG to set out its plans.
- Restoring confidence in the Sewel Convention is key to resetting the relationship between the UK and devolved governments. It is a fundamental part of the devolution settlement.
- There should be a shared ambition to repair the damage done to intergovernmental relations by the previous UK Government.
- While SG welcomes the proposal for an MOU to strengthen Sewel, the lack of progress or any indication of UKG’s thinking or plans is disappointing.
- The key to a successful outcome will be working together and SG stands ready to assist with this work constructively and positively.

Proof of meaningful respect for the Convention will be in experience on individual Bills.

- We welcome the constructive engagement on UK legislation so far, and agreement on the content of Bills that allows SG to recommend legislative consent to the Scottish Parliament.
- [Redacted - Section 28(1) – relations within the UK]
- [Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

PM AND HEADS OF DEVOLVED GOVERNMENTS MEETING

11:25 – 12:25, Lancaster House

Official support: Colin McAllister; Chris Mackie will be in the adjacent listening room.

Agenda:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------|
| 1) Welcome/intros | 5 mins |
| 2) International update | 15 mins |
| 3) Trade (including EU-UK and US) | 15 mins |
| 4) Growth/economy | 10 mins |
| 5) Spending Review | 10 mins |
| 6) AOB | 5 mins |

2. International Update

The Prime Minister will provide a short update on current affairs and the impact on domestic policy making, then will likely invite views.

ISRAEL / GAZA

The situation in Gaza is intolerable.

- I welcome statements from the international community that called for an end to Israel's military operation in Gaza, the release of hostages and urgent access for humanitarian aid.
- Israel's actions and rhetoric are deeply troubling and it is high time the international community takes decisive action to bring an end to this tragedy.
- The trilateral statement raised the possibility sanctions and talked of a two-state solution.
- Scottish Government ministers have called for an end to all licensed arms exports to Israel and for recognition of the State of Palestine.
- We have consistently called for an immediate and sustained ceasefire, the release of hostages and unimpeded access for humanitarian aid into Gaza.
- We also want to see compliance with international court rulings, and accountability for Israeli leaders or military commanders responsible for breaches of international law.

RUSSIA / UKRAINE

The Scottish Government resolutely condemns Russia's illegal war against Ukraine – as we have done since its invasion.

- We are shocked and appalled at the violence and humanitarian crisis this has caused.

- Scotland stands for democracy, human rights and the rule of law at home and abroad.
- We condemn Russia's most recent attacks targeting civilian infrastructure.

We support all international efforts to secure a strong and durable peace, which respect Ukraine's sovereignty.

- We need a strong, durable peace that ensures Ukraine has a secure future and deters any future Russian aggression.
- There can be no talks about Ukraine without Ukraine.
- We would back a properly constituted international peace plan if one emerges that respects Ukrainian sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, is agreed by Ukraine and restores peace in Europe.

UK involvement should be debated and voted on in the UK Parliament.

- Any peace will require robust security guarantees and a clear mandate.
- Any peacekeeping initiative must be fully capable and empowered to keep the peace.
- Any UK involvement, including deployment of British troops, should be debated and voted on in the UK Parliament.
- We welcome the opportunity to work closely with the UK Government on implementation of the UK-Ukraine 100 Year Partnership.

We are signing an MoU with Ukraine this week focusing on the bilateral trade opportunities across a wide cross section of industry.

- The MoU covers enhanced co-operation across six workstreams:
 1. Exchanging information to enhance bilateral trade and business.
 2. Providing practical support to facilitate trade, investment and business events, including fairs, missions and conferences.
 3. Providing information and advice to help SME's find new customers based on professional matchmaking, including appropriate e-platforms.
 4. Promoting technology transfer and protection of industrial property
 5. Promoting exchange of training programs between business representatives in the two countries.
 6. Promoting strategic business alliances between the business circles, encouraging visits and meetings between businesses.

INDIA / PAKISTAN

I welcome UK diplomacy to support a ceasefire between India and Pakistan

- [Redacted - s.32(1)(a)(i) – Relations between UK and any other state]

- We also remained in contact with Police Scotland to stay abreast of any community tensions.
- With that in mind, I wrote to the Cross-Party Groups for India and Pakistan to assure them communities were the focus for Scottish Government and advise on the avenues available to them should there be any tensions or concerns.
- On India, my government remains seized of the case of Jagtar Singh Johal, who has been arbitrarily detained in India since 2017

[Redacted - S30C - Otherwise prejudice effective conduct of public affairs]

3. Trade

Top Lines for US and EU Trade

[Note background briefing for both trade deals can be found following both sets of top lines]

UNITED STATES

I welcome the fact a deal has been reached between the UK and United States but will need time to consider the full details and implications for Scottish businesses.

- An agreement that removes or reduces tariffs or other trade barriers is welcome in principle.
 - We understand the UK and United States to have agreed only to general terms of an Economic Prosperity Deal, much of the detail requires further negotiation.
 - Several trade-related concerns still need to be addressed. We have concerns about the potential impact on specific sectors.
 - [Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]
 - I note that the statement on 8 May on the trade deal did not refer to the NHS. As with all trade negotiations, ensuring that there are no impacts on the NHS is a priority. As further details are made available we will engage closely with the UKG to seek assurances that the NHS is not impacted.
 - Now that a deal has been reached, I urge you to share as much information as possible and look forward to exploring the details of the final agreement to fully understand the implications for Scottish businesses.
 - It is extremely concerning that the Scottish Government had no advance notice that this deal was imminent.
 - The lack of meaningful engagement is a source of enormous disappointment and frustration, particularly when we consider the impact this deal will have on Scottish businesses.
 - Scotland must not be an afterthought in this or indeed any deals arranged by the UK Government.

EUROPEAN UNION

The EU-UK Summit represents positive momentum in rebuilding our relationship with the European Union. But no agreement can deliver the economic, social and security benefits we lost with Brexit in 2020.

- I am pleased to see significant progress in several areas the Scottish Government urged should be prioritised.
- This includes removing obstacles to food and agricultural exports, supporting energy trading and rejoining the Erasmus exchange scheme for students.
- If it is serious about economic growth, the UK Government needs to drop its red lines around the single market, customs union and freedom of movement.

- We believe the best answer is for Scotland to be an independent member of the European Union

We are deeply disappointed the UK Government has reached an agreement on fisheries – a vital area for Scotland – without proper dialogue with the Scottish Government.

- We recognise the need for an overall agreement that delivers benefits for both sides.
- We also welcome the market access benefits of an agreement on agriculture, food and drink for fishing communities.
- However, the failure to engage in a meaningful way on this prior to reaching an agreement is totally unacceptable and disrespectful.
- This in stark contrast to the transparent and consultative approach the EU has taken with its Members States.
- [Redacted - s.32(1)(a)(i) – Relations between UK and any other state]
- The UKG must do better going forward. The Scottish Government must be engaged constructively and positively in the next phase of the EU dialogue.

We are committed to engaging constructively with our EU partners. The relationship with the EU matters more than ever in today's uncertain world.

- This week's summit represents positive momentum in rebuilding our relationship with the European Union.
- The Scottish Government argued for an ambitious package in the interests of people and businesses across Scotland.
- I am pleased to see progress in some areas, such as removing obstacles to food and agricultural exports, supporting energy trading, and rejoining the Erasmus exchange scheme.
- But no agreement can deliver the economic, social and security benefits we lost with Brexit in 2020.
- The UK Government's stated red lines – on not rejoining the single market, or customs union, and against free movement – mean that the scope of agreement this week and the benefits available from this process are necessarily limited.
- This underlines again the fact that the best future for Scotland is as an independent country and a member of the European Union.

Going forward the Scottish Government stands ready to engage constructively as more detail is added to today's agreement.

- We also hope to be more closely involved as the UK Government develops its future priorities for working with the EU.

US Background

1 May: Reports suggested President Trump is likely to visit Scotland at the end of July to mark the opening of his new golf course in Aberdeenshire.

5 May: Trump formally announced regulatory changes to benefit domestic pharmaceutical production in preparation for increased tariffs on imports. He also suggested “instituting a 100% tariff” (more likely to be tax or regulation) on all movies not produced in the USA.

8 May: General terms for a US-UK economic prosperity deal announced. US ethanol and beef would be able to be imported at lower UK tariffs. In return, UK cars (incl. parts), beef, steel and aluminium would be subject to lower US tariff rates. Further agreement is still to be reached on other tariff (incl. pharmaceuticals) and non-tariff trade barriers. The 10% US “reciprocal” tariff seems to be remaining in place for UK goods.

12 May: US and China agreed a 90-day pause in their trade war. US to reduce tariffs from 145% to 30% and China to lower tariffs from 125% to 10%.

[Redacted - s.28(1) Relations within the UK]

[Redacted - s.28(1) Relations within the UK]

[Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

UK Government – Scottish Government engagement

[Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

- Scotland and the United States will remain close trading partners and will continue to enjoy the strong social, economic and cultural links that have been in place for many years.

US-Scotland Trade

- The **US is Scotland’s second biggest international trading partner** after the EU and is our largest inward investor. There are 735 US owned enterprises in Scotland, employing more than 115,000 people, and with a turnover of in excess of £38bn.
- In 2024, exports of Scottish goods (excluding oil and gas) to the US were worth £4bn, equivalent to 17% of the value of all Scottish goods exports. A quarter (25%) of those exports were beverages. Other **key Scottish exports** to the US included machinery, pharmaceuticals and chemicals.
- Scotland had a modest positive balance of trade for goods exports to the US in 2024, exporting £280m more than it imported. **Scotland’s top exporting sector to the US** is service based – Financial and Business Services – followed by Food and Drink, Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing.

- We **need to see bold and decisive action** from the UK Government that reflects the uncertainty being felt by business and families at this turbulent time.

Trade Support

- There are a range of well-established sources of support available to exporters in Scotland.
- These include updated advice on US tariffs and the movement of goods to the US through the Department for Business & Trade's website, to existing channels of support for exporters through the Scottish Enterprise website.
- In addition, we have announced a significant increase in the export support we provide to Scottish companies through the **6 Point Export Plan in our Programme for Government**, enhancing their export growth potential in both new, and existing, markets.
- This includes targeted support for export growth in Scotland's companies and sectors and an increase in both inward and outward promotion of Scotland's economic opportunities on the global stage.
- [Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

Scotch Whisky and Scottish Salmon

- The **United States is the largest and most valuable market for Scotch Whisky**, worth £971 million in exports in 2024.
- The Scotch Whisky industry has previously experienced the serious impact of US tariffs and it's hugely disappointing this vital sector will face tariffs again.
- They estimate that the 10% tariff increase could result in between £200-400 million export losses on an annual basis to the US alone.
- The increased tariffs that President Trump imposed during his first presidency, under the long-running dispute about aircraft manufacturing subsidies, reportedly cost the Scotch whisky industry more than £600 million in lost exports.
- Those tariff increases have been suspended but could be reinstated and **we want a permanent resolution to this long-running dispute**.
- **Exports of Scottish salmon to the US** in 2024 were worth £225 million and accounted for 72% of total UK seafood exports to the US (£312 million) in 2024.
- The US is the second largest market for Scottish salmon, accounting for 27% of total export value.

EU Background

The Summit package was captured across three texts:

- A **Common Understanding** detailing policy measures both sides committed to as we take the new Strategic Partnership forward;
- A **Joint Statement** setting out UK-EU cooperation across global issues and committing to annual leader-level summits; and
- A **Security and Defence Partnership**, which will formalise UK-EU foreign policy cooperation and allow for greater collaboration on defence industry work.

The Summit package also delivered across the three pillars the UKG had flagged would comprise their reset – Economy, Safety and Security – to deliver a “new Strategic Partnership”. The package is being briefed by UKG as:

- **Security and Defence Partnership:** The Partnership establishes a framework for cooperation across a range of areas, including potential UK participation in the EU’s proposed €150bn Security Action for Europe instrument. It will complement core bilateral security partnerships and support the UK’s NATO First policy, as the cornerstone of Euro-Atlantic security.
- **SPS Agreement:** The UK and EU agreed to deliver an agri-food deal which will establish a UK-EU Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Zone, cutting costs and red-tape.
- **Energy:** Closer co-operation on energy, strengthening our economies. Agreement on parameters for a new agreement to link Emissions Trading Systems.
- **Fisheries:** Twelve-year access arrangements with the EU that provide certainty.
- **Youth and educational mobility:** Agreement to work towards the establishment of a balanced youth experience scheme. The UK and EU will also work towards association to the Erasmus+ programme. These are first steps, with substantive negotiations on the detail and financial terms to follow.
- **Operational cooperation:** Agreement to enhance operational relationships to tackle criminal threats, including organised immigration crime, with key agencies like Europol, the European Drugs Agency, the European Migration Network, the EU Asylum Agency and Frontex.

SG published or shared policy notes on many of these points setting out our preferred SG approach. We are now confirming how SG will configure next steps

[Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice] and Nick Thomas-Symonds MP the lead negotiators for EU and UKG.

Cab Sec CEAC gave a statement with SG response to the agreement to the Parliament the following day on 20 May 25; later that day **Cab Sec CEAC spoke to Nick Thomas-Symonds on the agreement** and Scottish considerations (read-out being provided separately).



The Prime Minister is likely to hand to CDL to lead items 4 and 5.

4. Growth/ economy

Points you may wish to raise:

[Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

[Redacted - Section 28(1) – relations within the UK]

Background

Our economy is one of the best performing parts of the UK.

- Scotland's GDP per capita has grown faster than the UK's since 2007. Accounting for population growth, since 2007 GDP per person has grown by 10.7% in Scotland, compared to 5.6% at a UK level.
- Inward investment projects in Scotland grew by 12.7% in 2023, compared to 6% growth across the UK and a 4.5% fall across Europe.
- A record number of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) projects were secured in Scotland in 2023, maintaining Scotland's position as the top performing area of the UK outside of London for the ninth year running.
- Through our enterprise agencies, we have supported exporters to secure £2.15bn in planned international sales over the next three years, among the highest results achieved.

Our economy is resilient with strong earnings growth and record income tax receipts.

- The Scottish economy has grown 0.9% over the past year (Q2 2024 v Q2 2023).
- Scotland's labour market has been particularly resilient:
 - There were 2,456,000 payrolled employees in Scotland in August 2024, 0.1% more than in August 2023.
 - Median nominal monthly pay for payrolled employees in Scotland was £2,443 in August, the highest since the series began in 2014 and up 6% over the year.
 - The Claimant Count unemployment rate for Scotland was 4% in August 2024, below the rate for the UK as a whole (4.7%).
 - Scotland's median Gender Pay Gap for full-time employees was lower than the UK as a whole (1.7% vs 7.7%) in 2023 and has been since 2003.
 - In April 2023, Scotland had a higher proportion of employees (aged 18+) paid the Real Living Wage or more (89.9%) than in Wales (87.1%), England (87.0%) and Northern Ireland (84.4%)

- This is helping contribute to record income tax receipts, with Scottish Income Tax alone now forecast to raise around £18.8bn in 2024-25 to help fund public services.

We are committed to supporting export growth in both current and emerging markets as they find a way through this challenging time.

- We have announced an increase in the export support we provide to Scottish companies through the Six-Point Export Plan in our Programme for Government, which builds on the significant support we already provide to Scottish exporters.
- We highlighted the development of a US Export Plan to identify those US states which offer the best fit for Scottish export strengths.
- The development of a US Export Plan is in line with our on-going analysis and delivery of export growth opportunities for Scotland across the world.

We are committed to supporting people into employment.

- [Redacted - S30(b)(i) – Free and frank advice]
- In Apr 2023 to Mar 2024, Scotland's economic inactivity rate was estimated at 22.9% (791,000 people).
- This was 0.7 percentage points higher than pre-pandemic (22.2% in Apr 2018 to Mar 2019).
- In Apr 2023 to Mar 2024, 259,000 people aged 16-64 were estimated to be inactive due to long-term sickness or disability, 32.7% of Scotland's economically inactive people aged 16-64.
- This was 46,000 more than pre-pandemic (Apr 2018 to Mar 2019).
- The UK as a whole has a long-term sickness problem. The number of people inactive because of long-term sickness or disability in the UK was estimated at 2.8 million in May-Jul 2024, up 73,000 from the same period the year before.

5. UK Spending Review

[Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

COUNCIL OF THE NATIONS AND REGIONS

13:30-15:00, Lancaster House

Official support: no official support allowed for devolved government or mayoral attendees.

Agenda:

- 1) Welcome and introductions
- 2) Update on trade and tariffs
- 3) Artificial intelligence in support of economic growth

[Redacted - S30(b)(i) – Free and frank advice]

A **slide-pack**, primarily focussed on artificial intelligence, has been produced by the UK Government with input from the devolved governments [annex C]. The slides are intended to support discussion but will not be presented or discussed in detail on the day.

Following the **English local elections** on 1 May, the meeting is expected to be attended by two Reform Mayors – namely, the Mayor of Greater Lincolnshire, Dame Andrew Jenkyns and the Mayor of Hull and East Yorkshire, Luke Campbell.

Following the CNR, UKG intend to publish a **communique** on the UKG IGR webpage providing a short note on the meeting. This will be cleared through Special Advisers on the day.

You are aware that no **Scottish local authorities/COSLA/Scottish Cities Alliance (SCA)** or other devolved government local authorities have been invited to join the CNR. [Redacted - s.28(1) Relations within the UK]

3. Artificial Intelligence in support of economic growth

Proposed discussion topics:

- 1) AI and economic growth
- 2) AI opportunities for public sector reform
- 3) Examples of best practice for AI deployment
- 4) AI growth zones – and in particular the current focus on data centres versus more distributed AI infrastructure models.
- 5) The impact of AI on creative industries.

[We understand the Prime Minister will hand to you for a short overview – proposed contribution below]

[Redacted - S30(b)(i) – Free and frank advice]

[Following overviews from key attendees the discussion will open wider and may cover the below topics – proposed points you may wish to make on each topic below]

AI and economic growth

- We are determined to capture as much economic benefit in this emerging sector as possible for Scotland.
- The latest round of the Scottish Government's CivTech programme has awarded up to £9 million to 14 companies developing AI products to tackle challenges faced by charities and public sector organisations, aiming to position Scotland as a leader in the development of AI for public purpose.
- Products being developed include:
 - a software to help identify toxic contaminants to address the risk of cancer for firefighters.
 - using drones and an automated mapping system to monitor puffin populations in a less invasive way.
 - an AI support system to enable entrepreneurs to grow their businesses.
- CivTech companies from previous rounds have created more than 400 jobs and attracted more than £126 million of private sector investment.

[Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

AI Growth Zones

- Scotland is well placed to be designated an AI Growth Zone, and we are working closely with UKG to seek **early confirmation that Scotland will be recognised and designated at least one AI growth zone.**
- Enhancing Scotland’s supercomputing capability is key to drive economic growth and to creating high-skilled jobs of the future.
- Redacted - Section 28(1) – relations within the UK]

Impact of AI on Creative Industries

- In February, Scottish Government responded to the UK Copyright consultation which affects creative industries.
- We encourage UK Government to reconsider its proposed solution and to put the continuing success of both the creative sector and businesses at the forefront of their thoughts.
- Allowing AI developers to take content which they do not own, and which they have no legal right to take, and making the creative sector responsible for this, does not seem equitable.
- Both industries are incredibly important to the future success of the UK economy and a solution should be found which does not damage one to benefit the other.

Background

13 Jan: UKG published their Artificial Intelligence Action Plan, including plans on the creation of AI “Growth Zones”, where investment in AI data centres will be prioritised and facilitated. The commitment will be to prioritise access to the grid (reserved) and planning approvals (devolved) to accelerate delivery and to build an ecosystem of research and innovation around the zone. The first of these AI Growth Zones will be based in Culham, Oxfordshire – home of the UK's Atomic Energy Authority.

[Redacted - Section 28(1) – relations within the UK]


NATIONAL SECURITY BRIEFING

16:00-16:45, [Redacted - S30C - Otherwise prejudice effective conduct of public affairs]


Official support: The meeting will be held on Privy Council terms, so no official support will be allowed.






[Redacted - S30C - Otherwise prejudice effective conduct of public affairs]

ANNEX A – ENGLISH MAYOR BIOGRAPHIES

Greater London Authority	
Mayor of London, Rt Hon Sadiq Khan AM (Lab)	 <p>Sadiq Khan was born in London. In 2005 he was elected MP for Tooting. He was appointed Minister of State for Communities in 2008 and later became Minister of State for Transport. Khan sought and won his party's nomination as Mayor of London in the capital's 2016 election which he won and was re-elected as Mayor in both 2021 and 2024, being the first London mayor to win a third term.</p>

Combined County Authorities	
Mayor of East Midlands, Claire Ward (Lab)	 <p>Claire Ward was elected MP for Watford in the 1997 general election, a seat she held until 2010. After losing her parliamentary seat in 2010, Ward held various leadership positions, including Executive Director of the Independent Pharmacy Federation and Chair of Pharmacy Voice. She ventured into healthcare governance and served as a non-exec director on the board of Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, becoming its Chair in 2021.</p>

Combined Authorities	
Mayor of Greater Manchester, Rt Hon Andy Burnham (Lab)	 <p>Andy Burnham was elected Mayor of Greater Manchester in May 2017, and was re-elected for a second term in May 2021. Prior to being Mayor, Andy was MP for Leigh from 2001. In Government, Andy has held Ministerial positions at the Home Office, Department of Health and the Treasury. In 2008 he became Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, before returning to Health as Secretary of State in 2009. In opposition, he has served as Shadow Education Secretary, Shadow Health Secretary and Shadow Home Secretary. You met with Andy Burnham in August 2024.</p>
Mayor of Liverpool City Region, Steve Rotheram (Lab)	 <p>Steve Rotheram served as a Liverpool City Councillor in 2002 to represent the Fazakerley ward and as Lord Mayor of Liverpool during the city's European Capital of Culture year of 2008-2009.</p>

	<p>In 2010, he was elected as the Member of Parliament for the Liverpool Walton constituency. A bricklayer by trade, he'd set up his own company by the age of 22 and later went on to work in various capacities in the construction industry. In May 2017, Steve was elected to become the first ever Metro Mayor of the Liverpool City Region – securing 59% of the vote. You met with Steve Rotheram in August 2024.</p>
<p>Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, Paul Bristow (Con)</p>	 <p>Paul Bristow was elected Mayor of Cambridgeshire & Peterborough in May 2025. Paul was first elected as a councillor in 2006 and represented Peterborough in Parliament from 2019 to 2024. As Mayor, he is dedicated to championing the people of Cambridgeshire & Peterborough, working to ensure that every part of the region thrives.</p>
<p>Mayor of the North East, Kim McGuinness (Lab)</p>	 <p>Prior to entering politics Kim McGuinness worked professionally in a number of sectors including finance, universities and charities. Before becoming mayor, she was Police and Crime Commissioner for the Northumbria force area.</p>
<p>Mayor of South Yorkshire, Oliver Coppard (Lab)</p>	 <p>Oliver Coppard was elected as South Yorkshire's first regional mayor in 2022. During his career he has worked in Parliament, for Barnsley Council, for Sheffield City Region Local Enterprise Partnership and for the charity BookTrust.</p> <p>In 2015 he ran to represent the Sheffield Hallam constituency but lost out to Nick Clegg.</p>
<p>Mayor of Tees Valley, Rt Hon Lord, Ben Houchen (Con)</p>	 <p>Ben Houchen was elected as the Mayor of the Tees Valley in May 2017. He is the Conservative politician with the largest electoral mandate in the North of England.</p> <p>A qualified solicitor, in 2016 he founded BLK UK – an international sportswear business, which supplies clothing to amateur and professional clubs.</p>
<p>Mayor of the West Midlands, Richard Parker (Lab)</p>	 <p>Richard Parker was elected as Mayor of the West Midlands in 2024. He is a qualified public finance accountant, who joined PricewaterhouseCoopers in 1989, becoming a partner and the company's lead on housing and communities. From 2010 to 2015 he led the firm's relationship with the Labour Party, working closely with the Shadow Front Bench.</p>

<p>Mayor of York and North Yorkshire, David Skaith (Lab)</p>		<p>David Skaith is a businessman who admitted he had "no political experience" when he became the first directly elected mayor for York and North Yorkshire. He joined the Labour party in 2015.</p>
<p>Mayor of West Yorkshire, Tracy Brabin (Lab)</p>		<p>Tracy Brabin is a British politician who has been the Mayor of West Yorkshire since the office was established on 10 May 2021, and was re-elected in May 2025. She was previously the Member of Parliament (MP) for Batley and Spen from 2016 to 2021 under the Labour and Co-operative banner.</p>
<p>Mayor of Greater Lincolnshire, Dame Andrea Jenkyns DBE (Ref)</p>		<p>Dame Andrea Jenkyns was elected the first Mayor of Greater Lincolnshire in May 2025. She was previously Conservative MP for Morley and Outwood from 2015 to June 2024. Jenkyns served as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Skills from July to October 2022, as part of the governments of Boris Johnson and Liz Truss. She was dismissed by Rishi Sunak. She left the Conservative Party for Reform UK in November 2024.</p>
<p>Mayor of Hull and East Yorkshire, Luke Campbell MBE (Ref)</p>		<p>Luke Campbell was elected as the first Mayor of Hull and East Yorkshire combined authority in May 2025. He is a former professional boxer who competed from 2013 to 2021.</p>
<p>Mayor of the West of England, Helen Godwin (Lab)</p>		<p>Helen Godwin was elected mayor of the West of England Combined Authority in May 2025. Godwin was elected councillor on Bristol City Council in 2016, and was re-elected in 2021. She ran to be Labour candidate for the 2021 West of England mayoral election, but was defeated in a local party membership ballot by former Labour MP for Wansdyke, Dan Norris.</p>

ANNEX B – OPERATIONAL NOTE

Programme

Time	Location	Event
From 09:45	Lancaster House, Stable Yard, SW1A 1BB	Arrivals and refreshments
09:55-10:25		Bilateral with the Prime Minister
10:25-11:25		Briefing space in private room
11:25-12:25		PM and Heads of Devolved Governments multilateral meeting
12:25-12:45		Lunch for Principals
12:45-13:45		Council of the Nations and Regions meeting
From 13:45		[Redacted - S30C - Otherwise prejudice effective conduct of public affairs]
14:30 (45-60 mins)	[Redacted - S30C - Otherwise prejudice effective conduct of public affairs]	National Security Briefing

Logistics

Attendees can be accompanied into Lancaster House by a maximum of two officials, including private office, special advisors, and policy advisors. Upon arrival, attendees will register at reception. A cloakroom will be available. Formal proceedings at Lancaster House will end at 13:45. Timings may be subject to change.

[Redacted] - S30C - Otherwise prejudice effective conduct of public affairs]

Item 3

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 20 May 2025 15:53

To: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>

Cc: Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie

<Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; [Redacted]Visits and Events <VisitsandEvents@gov.scot>;

Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; John Webster <John.Webster@gov.scot>;

Communications First Minister <CommunicationsFirstMinister@gov.scot>; [Redacted]

[Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]Anna Kynaston <Anna.Kynaston@gov.scot>;

[Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted];

Subject: RE: FM visit to CSLG - 22nd May - Briefing and Speech

Dear FMPO,

Please see attached Speech and Briefing for the FM's visit to the Civil Service Leadership Group on Thursday 22nd May.

Please do let me know if you have any questions or if further material is required.

Kind regards,

[Redacted]

[Redacted] (she/her) | UK Governance - Senior Policy Officer, Constitution & UK Relations Division | Constitution Directorate

From: [Redacted] On Behalf Of First Minister

Sent: 07 May 2025 16:46

To: [Redacted]

Cc: Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; Visits and Events <VisitsandEvents@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; John Webster <John.Webster@gov.scot>; Communications First Minister <CommunicationsFirstMinister@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]

Subject: RE: FM visit to CSLG - 22nd May

Hi [Redacted],

The First Minister will attend the CSLG breakfast from 08:30-09:15 on 22nd May at Dynamic Earth. As per our Teams chat you have confirmed you will be leading on the briefing for this event.

- Grateful if a briefing note, in line with preferences, could be prepared for **COP Tuesday 20 May** please.
- Our Visits & Events (V&E) team will carry out a venue recce in advance. [Redacted] is the main contact from the former SG Permanent Secretary office.
- Normally policy support would be required but given this is a Civil Service event I think just PS support will do. [@John Webster](#) let me know if you disagree and want someone additional to support.
- In addition to the briefing we will also provide the FM with an Operational note (Ops note). I've created a link to a shared ops note which allows policy, V&E and Comms to complete the rest of the fields / review this document before we submit to the FM [Ops Note - CSLG - 22 May.docx](#) – V&E will then submit final version to PO. I have given you access but do let me know if anyone else from policy requires this.

FM Comms – grateful if you can confirm comms approach for this. If required, could a comms plan also be submitted by same deadline please?

Many thanks,

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Private Secretary to the First Minister

5th Floor | St Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG

From: [Redacted] **On Behalf Of** First Minister

Sent: 07 May 2025 09:02

To: Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>

Cc: Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie

<Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; Visits and Events <VisitsandEvents@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: FM visit to CSLG - 22nd May

Thanks Anna, I've copied in [Redacted] from V&E who will also need to link in with organisers to prepare an ops note for FM. Grateful if you can put him in touch with the relevant person.

Many thanks,

[Redacted]

From: Anna Kynaston <Anna.Kynaston@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Permanent Secretary

Sent: 06 May 2025 20:38

To: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>

Cc: Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie

<Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: FM visit to CSLG - 22nd May

Thanks [Redacted].

Dominic/Chirs – Myself and [Redacted] have been supporting Cabinet office with this so worth a chat. Joe will also have a view on an approach to the speaking note. I will look for time for a quick catch up.

A

From: [Redacted] **On Behalf Of** First Minister

Sent: 06 May 2025 18:14

To: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>

Cc: Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie

<Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: FM visit to CSLG - 22nd May

Hi all,

Dominic has been in touch to say his team can lead so he will confirm with me tomorrow who is picking this up.

We will keep you in copy as I am assuming the Permanent Secretary will be attending?

Best,

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Private Secretary to the First Minister

5th Floor | St Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG

From: [Redacted] **On Behalf Of** First Minister
Sent: 06 May 2025 16:09
To: Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>
Cc: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>
Subject: FM visit to CSLG - 22nd May

Hi Perm Sec team,

Hoping you can help with this. I'm looking for someone to lead on briefing and speaking remarks for the First Minister's role in the Civil Service Leadership Group session on 22nd May 8:15-9:00 at Dynamic Earth. The invite has come through from the former Permanent Secretary but went into the micase system and no policy lead was found. We have removed from the system and picked up directly with FM. I've attached the letter which contains more information and Maria has confirmed timing as above.

John will PS the event but I need a lead to liaise with the organisers and prepare materials for the First Minister. I'd be grateful if you could pick this up and let me know who will take forward.

Many thanks,

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Private Secretary to the First Minister
5th Floor | St Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG

Item 3 attachment 1

[Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

Item 3 attachment 2

BRIEFING FOR THE FIRST MINISTER

CIVIL SERVICE LEADERSHIP GROUP EVENT BREAKFAST

22 MAY 2025

Key message	Civil Service leaders must learn from and challenge each other, to seek inspiration and drive innovation, to deliver on shared priorities across governments, such as on tackling child poverty.
What	You have been asked to speak at the Breakfast session at the Civil Service Leadership Group (CSLG) event in Edinburgh. Speaking to an audience of c.90 CSLG members from across the Civil Service.

	This is the first time the CSLG event has been in Scotland.
Why	[Redacted - S30(b)(i) – Free and frank advice]
Who	<p>Sir Chris Wormald KCB, Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Civil Service, Cabinet Office</p> <p>Permanent secretaries, DGs, chief executives, and other senior civil servants from across the UK Government, Scottish Government and Welsh Government.</p> <p>Non-civil servants also in attendance are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sally Ann Kelly, Chief Executive Officer, Aberlour Child Care Trust • Kirsten Urquhart, Chief Executive Officer, YoungScot • Paul Kissack, Chief Executive Officer, Joseph Rowntree Foundation • Neil Bentley-Gockmann, Chief Executive, Whitehall & Industry Group • Tom Sapsted, Director of External Engagement, Whitehall & Industry Group
Where	Diary team will advise in covering email
When	Diary team will advise in covering email
Likely themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [Redacted - S30(b)(i) – Free and frank advice]
Media	No proactive comms are advised for this engagement.
Supporting official	<p>John Webster will be supporting.</p> <p>Anna Kynaston, PPS to the Permanent Secretary, will be attending.</p> <p>Joe Griffin will meet you on arrival.</p>
Attached documents	<p>Annex A: Agenda and summary page</p> <p>Annex B: Speaking note</p> <p>Annex C: Briefing / lines to take</p> <p>Annex D: Examples of constructive engagement between SG and UKG</p> <p>Annex E: Key biographies and delegates list</p>

CIVIL SERVICE LEADERSHIP GROUP (CSLG): SCOTLAND EVENT AGENDA AND SUMMARY

Summary

1. You have agreed to join an informal networking breakfast with CSLG members from 8:30am - 9:15am to discuss your priority effort to tackle child poverty.
2. Joe Griffin will introduce you. You will then speak for 10 minutes to the group (via a lectern) before engaging in a networking session.
3. You will speak to an audience of c. 90 (at the time of writing) CSLG members from across the Civil Service at the 'Breakfast with the First Minister of Scotland' part of the event.
4. You have been invited by former Permanent Secretary JP Marks (now Chief Executive and First Permanent Secretary at HMRC).

Background on CSLG

5. Existing since 2006, CSLG is the leadership team of all individuals in SCS3/4 level posts based at home and abroad (primarily permanent secretaries, directors general and HM Ambassadors).
6. CSLG facilitates senior leaders to strengthen relationships for mutual support, to aid delivery, and to develop a common understanding about the most important issues of the day. It enables the most senior leadership of the Civil Service to develop a common approach on how to support the government's priorities, for example by considering new ways of working needed to deliver the UK's and Scottish Government's missions.

CSLG Event Objectives and Context

7. Each CSLG intervention aims to strengthen relationships and build knowledge and curiosity about complex systems to enable collective leadership. This event will achieve this by:
 - a. Creating connections and strengthening relationships.
 - b. Sparking partnerships and sharing best practice to deliver for citizens.
 - c. Facilitating broader systems and strategic insights on shared challenges.
8. The CSLG event will take place at Dynamic Earth, between 8:00am and 1:00pm. The focus for this event is child poverty.
9. On Wednesday afternoon, CSLG members will go on a service visit to explore different parts of the child poverty system.

10. On Wednesday evening, CSLG members will be joined by public and private sector leaders to discuss the roles of economic growth, skills and jobs in driving opportunities for all of the UK.

ANNEX B

SPEAKING NOTE

To see attached Speaking Note

BRIEFING / LINES TO TAKE

2025-26 PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT / FOUR KEY PRIORITIES: LINES TO TAKE

When I became First Minister I set out my vision to enable the people of Scotland to live happier, healthier lives.

- I have been clear on the four priorities for my government: eradicating child poverty, growing our economy, tackling the climate emergency and ensuring high quality and sustainable public services.

I am proud of the progress delivered during this parliament:

- We're treating more patients with cancer on time, within both standards, compared to the same quarter 10 years ago - 12% more within the 31 day standard & 6% more within the 62 day standard.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected level in literacy and numeracy across primary and secondary schools reached a new high in 2023-24.
- We have delivered a Scottish benefits system investing £6.9 billion for the people who need it – including £644 million in benefits and payments only available in Scotland.
- PwC's Green Jobs Barometer 2024 shows Scotland has the highest proportion of green job adverts of any of the UK's nations and regions, at 5.6% (UK average 3.3%, NI 3.9%, London 3.7%). The size of the green jobs market in Scotland has tripled since 2021.
- In my first year as First Minister, I have been struck by the cumulation of real challenges that people are living their lives in the face of – the effects of austerity, Brexit, Covid, inflation and the illegal invasion of Ukraine.
- My choices about priorities are influenced by that tough context within which people and families are living.

I brought forward the Programme for Government, enabling me to set out how we will improve the lives of the people of Scotland.

- It is a Programme for Government focused on delivery and hope.
- Building on the work of the past year, this Programme for Government is clear on what actions we will deliver, with our partners across Scotland, in the next 12 months to make progress on each of our four priorities.
- Following the successful passing of the 2025-26 budget, publishing the Programme for Government today helps align the policy and budget processes.
- The decisions made in it are all designed to try to help people living in the difficult circumstances our economy faces today.

The Programme for Government sets out what we will deliver in response to the challenges we know people are facing in their everyday lives

- It sets out how we will make the most of Scotland's vast resources to deliver higher standards of living and improved quality of life for Scotland's people.

- It is not a list of everything that government is doing but a focused programme of action to tackle the issues we face and improve people’s lives in the next 12 months.

TACKLING CHILD POVERTY

Eradicating child poverty in Scotland is a national mission and my top priority.

- Statistics published in March show too many children continue to live in poverty in Scotland, and that is why it is so important that we work together to deliver the change needed.
- Although we have not met the interim child poverty targets, the proportion of children living in relative poverty has reduced.
- The 2023-24 rate is now lower than it has been since 2014-15, while the proportion in absolute poverty has also fallen with the annual figure the lowest in 30 years.
- Rates of both relative and absolute child poverty were 9 percentage points lower than the UK average in 2023-24 (22% and 17% Scotland, 31% and 26% UK).
- While JRF predict child poverty will rise in other parts of the UK by 2029, they highlight that policies such as our Scottish Child Payment, and our commitment to mitigate the two-child limit, “are behind Scotland bucking the trend”.

Our action is making a real difference to families.

- On average, households with children in the poorest 10% of households are estimated to be £2,600 a year better off in 2025-26 as a result of Scottish Government policies.
- This value is projected to grow to an average of £3,700 a year by 2029-30.
- The 2025-26 Budget prioritises action to eradicate child poverty, including investment in breakfast clubs, employability and to develop the systems to mitigate the two-child limit.

Our Programme for Government sets out how we will continue to drive forward progress on child poverty and tackle the cost of living crisis facing households in the final year of this Parliament. We will:

- **Deliver our cost-of-living guarantee**, which includes free prescriptions, eye exams, bus travel for 2.3 million people, free tuition for students and more than £6,000 in early learning and childcare support for each eligible child.
- Develop the systems needed to effectively **scrap the impact of the two-child cap**.
- **Scrap peak rail fares on ScotRail** – making everyday commutes cheaper, particularly for workers.
- Support all pensioners to heat their homes over winter by introducing a **universal Pension Age Winter Heating Payment from Winter 2025**.
- **Invest around £6.9bn in our social security system**, almost £1.3bn more than the UK Government gives to the Scottish Government for Social Security.
 - This includes investment of £644m in our package of benefits and payments only available in Scotland.
 - One of those is the Scottish Child Payment which is forecast to be supporting the families of over 330,000 children in 2025-26.

- Provide £3 million in 2025-26 to progress work to commence a **pilot scheme for a £2 bus fare cap** in one of Scotland’s transport regions.
- **Expand our ‘Extra Time’ programme**, providing funded breakfast and after school and holiday clubs across Scotland, supporting 5,000 children and families most at risk of poverty.
- From August, **deliver a £3 million ‘Bright Start Breakfasts’ Fund** to create more free club places for families who need it most across Scotland.
- Provide an additional **£1 million to all local authorities to deliver holiday playschemes** and activity provision for disabled children.
- **£37m to deliver the expansion of free school meals programme** to those in receipt of Scottish Child Payment in Primaries 6 and 7 - helping provide healthy and nutritious meals to around 25,000 children.
- Increase investment to over **£15 million for free income maximisation and debt advice**, including investing an extra £2.2 million to support the expansion of tailored advice on council tax debt – building on a pilot that has helped over 1,600 people with arrears.
- **Support delivery of over 8,000 affordable homes** for social rent, mid-market rent and low-cost home ownership, with a focus on acquisitions and family sized homes, with a focus on acquisitions and family sized homes.
- Subject to approval of the Housing (Scotland) Bill, begin work to implement the Bill’s measures – including **improving outcomes for those at risk of homelessness and strengthening tenants’ rights**.
- Introduce a **new Care Leavers payment** from 1st April 2026 – a one-off £2,000 payment to help improve the financial security of young people leaving care.
- Invest over **£40 million in Parental Employability Support**, reaching every local authority area, and strengthening support for disabled people through Specialist Employability Support from summer 2025.

UKG CHILD POVERTY TASKFORCE: LINES TO TAKE

We welcome the establishment of the UK Government’s Child Poverty Taskforce and the commitment to develop a Child Poverty Strategy.

- [Redacted - Section 28(1) – relations within the UK]
- However, the UK Government’s ambition must be matched with action, including immediately abolishing the two-child limit and matching the Scottish Child Payment.
- As John Dickie said on behalf of the End Child Poverty Coalition: **[QUOTE]:** *“the bottom line is that no strategy can be credible if the two-child limit continues to pull over 100 more children into poverty each and every day.”* [28 Oct 2024, media]
- [Redacted - Section 28(1) – relations within the UK]

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS: LINES TO TAKE

We have always sought a principled and pragmatic approach to engagement with UKG.

- There is a substantial opportunity to achieve better outcomes when we work together in a way that reflects our respective responsibilities, and those of our respective legislatures.
- The Scottish Government is committed to forging a constructive and collaborative relationship with the UK Government.
- This should be done with joint working and cooperation on a voluntary basis, and in a way that respects the Scottish Parliament and the Devolution Settlement.
- It is important to remember that there is no hierarchy of governments.
- Both governments have their areas of responsibility, accountable to their Parliaments, which can be brought together to work on areas of mutual interest.
- We are working constructively with the UK Government on areas of common ground such as eradicating child poverty; improving public services through fair funding; taking steps to help the economy grow; and working together to accelerate the transition to net zero.

IMPORTANCE OF PROTECTING DEVOLUTION: LINES TO TAKE

Respect for devolution and the powers of the Scottish Parliament is essential to forging a constructive and collaborative relationship between the Scottish and UK Government.

- Restoring confidence in the Sewel Convention is key to resetting the relationship between the UK and devolved governments. It is a fundamental part of the devolution settlement.
- There should be a shared ambition to repair the damage done to intergovernmental relations by the previous UK Government.
- The Internal Market Act (IMA) continues to represent the most the most significant threat to devolution since the establishment of the Scottish Parliament a quarter of a century ago.
- The full restoration of the powers of the Parliament is the only acceptable outcome of the UK Government's statutory review of the Act.
- This can only be achieved through the repeal and replacement of the Act with a workable system that has the confidence of all governments.

DEVOLUTION CAPABILITY: LINES TO TAKE

[Redacted - S30(b)(i) – Free and frank advice]

CSLG SERVICE VISITS: BACKGROUND

On Wednesday 21 May, CSLG attendees will have taken part in several service visits as part of their programme. This includes:

[Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

LINES TO TAKE:

- The 'Extra Time' Programme is supporting Scotland's most deprived communities, targeted at primary school children and their families who are most at risk of living in poverty.
- It is also contributing towards our national mission to end child poverty; and will help to reduce inequalities in accessing activities for families living in poverty
- It is a joint initiative between the Scottish Government and the Scottish Football Association, which is funding local football clubs and trusts to provide free breakfast, after school and holiday clubs to targeted primary school children from families on low incomes.
- In 2025-26 we are investing £5.5m to deliver 5,000 free places for children, working with 53 football clubs and trusts across the whole of Scotland.

[Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

LINES TO TAKE:

- In 2024, we announced up to £16m investment over 2 years in our childcare early adopter communities, which operate in 23 communities across 6 local authority areas – Clackmannanshire, Dundee, Fife, Glasgow, Inverclyde and Shetland.
- The projects are testing what it takes to build local systems of childcare which meet the needs of families most at risk of living in poverty.
- Services are being co-designed in local communities to meet a range of needs, working with families to test and adapt services.
- Funding initially focused on delivering school age childcare services but in 2024 scope increased to consider childcare for all ages of children.
- Childcare services have a critical role in improving outcomes for children and parents relating to reducing inequalities and supporting employment.
- When designing policies to support people and communities with multiple and complex needs, it is important to consider people-centred and place-based approaches.
- These approaches require partnership working. In each EAC location, it has been important that the work of the childcare Early Adopter Community aligns with existing local priorities.
- The way in which the childcare EAC is embedded in Clackmannanshire Council's Family Wellbeing Partnership is an example of this.

BACKGROUND: EXAMPLES OF CONSTRUCTIVE ENGAGEMENT BETWEEN THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT AND UK GOVERNMENT

Collaboration on Green Issues

- Scottish Ministers have identified five opportunity areas in our Green Industrial Strategy: the wind economy (both onshore and offshore); Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage; Hydrogen; Green financial and professional services; and clean energy intensive industries
- [Redacted - Section 28(1) – relations within the UK]

GB Energy

- [Redacted - Section 28(1) – relations within the UK]
- The Scottish Government was keen to ensure a robust process in the Bill to ensure GB Energy's strategic priorities and the Scottish Government's own objectives did not diverge and conflict with one another.

City and Regional Growth Deals

- We recognise the shared priority of delivering sustainable growth including through joint city and regional growth deals.
- The Falkirk & Grangemouth (F&G) Growth Deal, which was signed in by the Deputy First Minister, the Secretary of State for Scotland, and the, Leader of Falkirk Council in November, will deliver sustainable, green and inclusive growth.
- The SG is a full partner of the Deal, committing £50 million over 10 years.
- The projects being invested in will help to unlock the potential of the region, creating sustainable economic growth, enabling the regions industry to pivot towards net-zero and attracting further public and private investment.

Resetting the Relationship with the EU

- We welcomed the joint statement from the President of the European Commission and the Prime Minister in October and subsequent statements by UKG confirming it will listen to Devolved Governments in relation to setting priorities for the UK-EU reset.
- We welcome the effective reset of relations on assimilated law (retained EU law) matters.
- UK and Scottish Ministers have committed to working together constructively on Retained EU Law Act secondary legislation, and UK Ministers have committed to only using their powers in devolved areas with the consent of the Scottish Ministers.

ANNEX E

KEY BIOGRAPHIES

Sir Chris Wormald KCB, Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Civil Service, Cabinet Office



Sir Chris Wormald was appointed Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Civil Service in December 2024.

Before this he served as Permanent Secretary at the Department of Health (now Department of Health and Social Care). He has also served as Permanent Secretary at the Department for Education.

Sir Chris joined the Civil Service in 1991 as a fast streamer at the (then) Department of Education and Science. He has worked in a range of posts on education policy, including spells as Principal Private Secretary to the Secretary of State, as well as at the Department for Communities and Local Government (now Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government) as Director General for Local Government and Regeneration. He has also previously held roles in the Cabinet Office including as Director General of Public Service Reform, Head of the Economic and Domestic Secretariat and Director General in the Deputy Prime Minister's Office.

SallyAnn Kelly OBE, Chief Executive Officer, Aberlour Child Care Trust



To note, in March 2025, SallyAnn Kelly announced that she would be retiring from the charity at the end of the year.

SallyAnn has over 30 years of experience working in Children's Services, having qualified as a social worker in 1990. She was promoted to her first management post in 1996 and has worked in several Scottish local authorities in middle and senior management positions until 2008.

Prior to joining Aberlour as CEO in 2014, SallyAnn worked for Barnardo's Scotland, first as Head of Operations, then as Acting Director of Barnardo's Scotland.

SallyAnn has a keen interest in strengthening and improving practice with an emphasis on

taking rights based approaches. She has a particular interest in improving the experiences of children and young people who have experience of the wider care system in Scotland.

SallyAnn has a commitment to challenging and reducing poverty and inequality and she has worked with colleagues within Aberlour and across Scotland over a number of years to ensure that reducing child poverty is at the heart of the political agenda.

SallyAnn is currently the Chair of STAF (Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum) and was awarded an OBE in 2022.

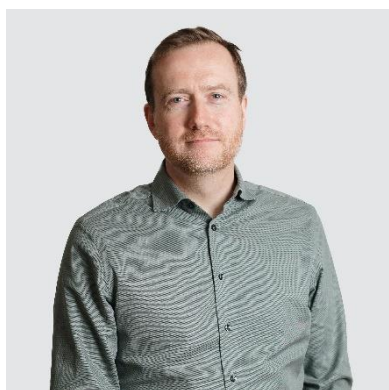
Kirsten Urquhart BEM, Chief Executive Officer, YoungScot



Kirsten Urquhart BEM is the Chief Executive at Scotland's national youth information and citizenship charity, Young Scot. As an ambassador for Young Scot, Kirsten is a passionate advocate for young people in Scotland. She drives the strategic vision of the organisation, leading the team to ensure they deliver efficient and effective services that support young people to thrive and make the most of their lives as they grow up in Scotland.

As a qualified librarian, Kirsten's career started in the library sector and is passionate about information literacy for young people. Kirsten then moved into third sector and private sector roles with a focus on digital/tech innovation – ensuring that universal and targeted services remain relevant and responsive for future generations of young people in Scotland. In 2021 Kirsten was awarded a British Empire Medal for services to young people during COVID 19.

Paul Kissack, Chief Executive Officer, Joseph Rowntree Foundation



Paul is the Group Chief Executive of Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) and Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust (JRHT). Paul started with JRF on the 1 September 2020 and was previously a Director General in the UK Government working on the national response to the COVID-19 crisis.

He has held Director General roles at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Department for Education. He was Deputy Chief Executive for Policy and Organisational Strategy at the Ministry for Children in New Zealand. Paul has also held senior roles at HM Treasury, the Cabinet Office, and a local authority. He has worked throughout his career on economic and social policy issues and public service reform.

Dr Neil Bentley-Gockmann OBE, Chief Executive, Whitehall & Industry Group



Neil joined WIG as CEO in May 2023 at a time when the charity's purpose of encouraging better leadership, dialogue and collaboration across sectors for social, economic and environmental benefit is more vital than ever.

Neil spent over seven years as CEO at the charity WorldSkills UK, a network for raising training standards in apprenticeships, technical and professional education to world-class levels. Neil was previously Deputy Director-General and Chief Operating Officer at the business organisation the CBI, working for 12 years at the highest level of the business and government interface nationally and internationally.

Neil was also the former CEO of OUTstanding, a business network for LGBT leaders and their allies, and former deputy chair of Stonewall, the LGBT equality charity. He holds a PhD in race equality in the workplace and was awarded an OBE for services to diversity and inclusion in the 2019 New Year's Honours List. In 2019, Neil was also awarded an honorary doctorate by Middlesex University for services to STEM education.

Tom Sapsted, Director of External Engagement, Whitehall & Industry Group



As Director of Strategy and Programmes, Tom is responsible for overseeing the WIG Events & Content team and the Membership team. The main focus is to ensure WIG continues to be the leading platform for constructive collaboration between government, industry and the not-for-profit sector. Tom originally joined as Head of Content and Events in 2017.

Before joining WIG, Tom worked across both government and industry. He ran the energy division for a commercial conference company, worked within the Department for International Trade, and developed new business for an independent TV production company that worked exclusively with not-for-profits.

Permanent Secretaries in attendance

Cat Little	Permanent Secretary and Chief Operating Officer of the Civil Service	Cabinet Office
Gareth Davies	Permanent Secretary	Department for Business and Trade
Susan Acland-Hood	Permanent Secretary	Department for Education

Tamara Finkelstein	Permanent Secretary	Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs
Bernadette Kelly	Permanent Secretary	Department for Transport
Peter Schofield	Permanent Secretary	Department for Work & Pensions
John-Paul Marks	Permanent Secretary	HMRC
Chris Whitty KCB	Interim Permanent Secretary & Chief Medical Officer	Department of Health & Social Care
Richard Cornish	Chief Operating Officer	Government Legal Department
Susanna McGibbon	Treasury Solicitor, HM Procurator General and Permanent Secretary	Government Legal Department
Joe Griffin	Permanent Secretary	The Scottish Government
Andrew Goodall	Permanent Secretary	Welsh Government

Other attendees

Name	Job Title	Organisation
Andrew Key	Director, Government Skills	Cabinet Office
Clara Swinson	Second Permanent Secretary, Domestic and Economic and Head of Mission Delivery Unit	Cabinet Office
Fiona Ryland	Government Chief People Officer	Cabinet Office
Jessica De Mouteney	First Parliamentary Counsel	Cabinet Office
Jonathan Black	DNSA International Economic and Global Issues	Cabinet Office
Philip Chessum	Parliamentary Counsel (DG)	Cabinet Office
Sarah Harrison	Chief Operating Officer	Cabinet Office
Julie Lennard	Chief Operating Officer	Crown Prosecution Service
Mike Green	Chief Executive	Defence Infrastructure Organisation
Amanda Brooks	DG, Trade Negotiations	Department for Business and Trade
Caleb Deeks	Director General, Competition, Markets and Regulatory Reform (Job Share)	Department for Business and Trade
Isobel Stephen	Director General, Domestic and International Markets and Exports (Job Share)	Department for Business and Trade
Jae Samant	Director General, Business Group	Department for Business and Trade

Name	Job Title	Organisation
Jennifer Ashby	Director Goods, Regulatory Environment, Gulf and India	Department for Business and Trade
Tara Smith	Chief Operating Officer	Department for Business and Trade
Ruth Hannant	Director General for Policy (Job Share)	Department for Culture, Media & Sport
Tony Foot	Director General Strategy Group	Department for Education
Clive Maxwell	Second Permanent Secretary	Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
Jonathan Mills	Director-General Energy Supply	Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
Sarah Homer	Chief Operating Officer	Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs
Emily Middleton	DG, Digital Centre Design	Department for Science, Innovation and Technology
Emran Mian	Director General for Digital, Technology and Telecoms	Department for Science, Innovation and Technology
Freya Guinness	Director General Corporate Services	Department for Science, Innovation and Technology
Alex Hynes	DG Rail Services Group	Department for Transport
Conrad Bailey	Director General, Public Transport and Local Group	Department for Transport
Emma Ward	Director General, Roads Transport Group	Department for Transport
Rannia Leontaridi	Director General, Aviation, Maritime and Security	Department for Transport
Richard Goodman	Director General Rail Reform and Strategy	Department for Transport
Debbie Alder	Director General, Corporate Transformation	Department for Work & Pensions
Neil Couling	Director General, Change & Resilience	Department for Work & Pensions
Sophie Dean	Director General, Labour Market and Poverty (Job share)	Department for Work & Pensions
Andy Brittain	Director General, Finance	Department of Health & Social Care
Catherine Frances	DG Global and Public Health	Department of Health & Social Care
Jonathan Marron	Director General, Primary Care and Prevention	Department of Health & Social Care
Liz Ketch	Director, Early Years, Children & Families Directorate	Department of Health & Social Care

Name	Job Title	Organisation
Lucy Chappell	Chief Scientific Adviser	Department of Health & Social Care
Matthew Style	Director General, Secondary Care and Integration	Department of Health & Social Care
Sally Warren	Director General, 10 Year Health Plan	Department of Health & Social Care
Tom Riordan	Second Permanent Secretary	Department of Health & Social Care
Catriona Laing	Senior Responsible Owner, Soft Power	Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
Corin Robertson	DG Finance and Corporate	Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
Jenny Bates	DG Economics, Climate and Global Issues	Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
Owen Jenkins	Director General Indo Pacific & MENA	Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
Mel Nebhrajani	Director General Litigation with Justice and Security	Government Legal Department
Richard Cornish	Chief Operating Officer	Government Legal Department
Susanna McGibbon	Treasury Solicitor, HM Procurator General and Permanent Secretary	Government Legal Department
Dan R	Director General	HM Government
Alan Evans	General Counsel and Director General, Legal Group	HM Revenue & Customs
Angela MacDonald	Second Permanent Secretary and Deputy Chief Executive	HM Revenue & Customs
Carol Bristow	Director General, Borders and Trade	HM Revenue & Customs
Daljit Rehal	Chief Digital Information Officer	HM Revenue & Customs
Helen Pickles	Chief People Officer	HM Revenue & Customs
James Mitton	DG of Enterprise Design	HM Revenue & Customs
Jonathan Athow	Director General, Customer Strategy and Tax Design	HM Revenue & Customs
Justin Holliday	Chief Finance Officer	HM Revenue & Customs
Myrtle Lloyd	Director General, Customer Services Group	HM Revenue & Customs
Suzanne Newton	DG, Change Delivery Group	HM Revenue & Customs
Beth Russell	Second Permanent Secretary	HM Treasury
Jean-Christophe Gray	Acting Chief Executive. NISTA	HM Treasury

Name	Job Title	Organisation
Daniel Hobbs	Director General for Migration and Borders	Home Office
Jennifer Rubin	Chief Scientific Adviser and Director General, STARS	Home Office
Joanna Rowland	Director General for Customer Services Group	Home Office
Paul Kissack	Chief Executive	Joseph Rowntree Foundation
Lawrence Tallon	Chief Executive	Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency
Dominic Wilson	Director General	Ministry of Defence
Matt Thurstan	Chief Finance Officer	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
Amy Holmes	Interim Director General, Service Transformation	Ministry of Justice
Jerome Glass	Director General, Policy and Strategy Group	Ministry of Justice
Phil Copple	Acting CEO, HM Prisons and Probation Service	Ministry of Justice
James Babbage	Director General National Economic Crime Centre & Threat Leadership	National Crime Agency
Becky Wood	Chief Executive Officer	National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority
Emma Rourke	Director General, Health, Population and Methods	Office for National Statistics
Peter Benton	Director General, Data Capability	Office for National Statistics
Jonathan Freeman	Chief Executive	The Charity for Civil Servants
Alyson Stafford	Director General, Finance	The Scottish Government
Gregor Irwin	Director General Economy	The Scottish Government
Lesley Fraser	Director General Corporate	The Scottish Government
Louise MacDonald	DG Communities	The Scottish Government
Neil S Rennick	DG Education and Justice	The Scottish Government
Roy Brannen	Director General, Net Zero	The Scottish Government
Shona Riach	Director General, Strategy and External Affairs	The Scottish Government
Dyfed Alsop	Chief Operating Officer and Deputy Chief Executive	UK Health Security Agency
Sioned Evans	DG, Public Services and Welsh Language	Welsh Government

Name	Job Title	Organisation
Tracey Burke	Director General - Climate Change & Rural Affairs	Welsh Government

Item 4

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 11 June 2025 18:55

To: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>

Cc: Minister for Parliamentary Business 2024 <MinisterPB@gov.scot>; DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Luke Mcbratney <Luke.Mcbratney@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]

Subject: Draft note of meeting on 27 May between the First Minister and Minister for Parliamentary Business on electoral integrity

PS/First Minister

Please find attached a draft note of the meeting between the First Minister and Minister for Parliamentary Business and officials on elections integrity on 27 May.

Click on the link to open 'RESTRICTED - Note of meeting with FM - Elections Integrity - 27 May 2025_' - <https://erdm.scotland.gov.uk/documents/A53149466/details>

Regards

[Redacted]

Item 4 attachment 1

Meeting with FM – Integrity of Elections

27 May 2025

FM's Office Scottish Parliament

Attending

First Minister, John Swinney MSP

Minister for Parliamentary Business, Jamie Hepburn MSP

[Redacted], Private Office

Luke McBratney, Deputy Director, Elections and Constitutional Projects

[Redacted], Head of Elections Team (Policy and Review)

FM had requested a note from the Minister for Parliamentary Business on what steps the Scottish Government could take to secure greater protection for our elections, especially from external influence. This had been submitted on 25 February and subsequently FM requested a meeting to discuss the substance of the note.

[Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice] he was keen to have an update on the actions which were being taken to address the risks to elections.

[Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

FM thanked Mr Hepburn and all those present for the work that was being done and asked to be kept informed of progress and developments.

Item 5

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 12 June 2025 18:33

To: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>

Cc: Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Martin Johnson <Martin.Johnson@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Donna MacKinnon <Donna.MacKinnon@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Briefing pack for British-Irish Council - 12 and 13 June 2025

Hi [Redacted],

For completeness, please find attached a final briefing pack taking account of the recent clarification of Acorn funding this afternoon. To note, I will print out a new section for you, but just sending on here for your records.

Many thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted] (she/her) | Constitution and UK Relations Division | Constitution Directorate |

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 12 June 2025 11:39

To: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>

Cc: Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted] [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Martin Johnson <Martin.Johnson@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; [Redacted] [Redacted]; Donna MacKinnon <Donna.MacKinnon@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Briefing pack for British-Irish Council - 12 and 13 June 2025

Hi [Redacted],

As discussed on Teams, we have received further information and the pack has been updated again. The changes are:

- i. FM will be greeted on arrival at the hotel by Junior Minister Pam Cameron MLA and Junior Minister Aisling Reilly MLA, and there will be welcome photos taken.
- ii. The press conference line-up has been amended, as UK Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has replaced CDL.

Attached the annexes again for ease, but to note, no changes have been made to these.

Many thanks
[Redacted]

[Redacted] (she/her) | Constitution and UK Relations Division | Constitution Directorate |

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 10 June 2025 16:52

To: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>

Cc: Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted] Martin Johnson <Martin.Johnson@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Donna MacKinnon <Donna.MacKinnon@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Briefing pack for British-Irish Council - 12 and 13 June 2025

PS/FM

[Redacted - Section 28(1) – relations within the UK]

All other attachments are the same.

Many thanks
[Redacted]

[Redacted] (she/her) | Constitution and UK Relations Division | Constitution Directorate |

Item 5 attachment 1

British-Irish Council Summit and associated meetings

ITINERARY/OPS NOTE

Thursday, 12 June 2025		
17:40	FM flight arrives <i>Met by NI official and transported to the hotel</i>	Belfast City Airport

19:00 approx.	<p>FM and officials (Joe Griffin, Chris Mackie, [Redacted], [Redacted]) arrive at Slieve Donard.</p> <p>Greeted by Junior Minister Pam Cameron MLA and Junior Minister Aisling Reilly MLA.</p> <p>Welcome photo taken by NIE Comms.</p> <p><i>Met by SG BIC team/DLO and provided with room keys, accreditation etc.</i></p>	Slieve Donard Hotel
19:00 – 19:50	Welcome reception including photograph on arrival with FM and dFM NI	Brunel Lounge
19:50	Guests to move to dining room and be seated	Chandelier Room
20:00	Welcome remarks from FM and dFM NI	Chandelier Room
20:00 – 22:00	Dinner	Chandelier Room
22:00 approx.	Dinner concludes	Chandelier Room
22:00 onwards	<p>Post-dinner entertainment in the Brunel Lounge</p> <p><i>The bar and the Chandelier Room (connected to the Brunel Lounge) will remain open for informal engagement.</i></p>	Brunel Lounge

Wi-Fi - Free Wi-Fi is available throughout the venue for all delegates. A dedicated BIC Summit connection is available at:

[Redacted - S30C - Otherwise prejudice effective conduct of public affairs]

Friday, 21 June		
06:30 – 10:00	Breakfast available	JJ Farrall's Restaurant
08:00 – 08:25	Bilateral meeting with CDL	Centenary Room 3
08:30 – 08:50	Bilateral meeting with Tánaiste	Centenary Room 4
09:00 – 09:20	Bilateral meeting with An Taoiseach	Centenary Room 1
09:30 – 09:50	Bilateral meeting with CM Isle of Man	John Toner Lounge

By 10:00	All delegates to have checked out of rooms	Reception; luggage stored securely in Drawing Room
10:05	Principals (and press officers only) assemble in Drawing Room for family photographs.	Drawing Room - <i>Escorted by</i> [Redacted]
10:05-10:15	Family photos are taken I. Heads of Administration/ Delegation II. All Principals	Weather dependent – outside or in the Grand Ballroom
Principals make way to Grand Ballroom. Tea/coffee available; bathrooms in Ballroom Annex.		
10:25	Principals to take seats for Summit Plenary <i>There will be an establishment photo and camera pan of the meeting room</i>	Grand Ballroom
10:30 – 12:10	Summit Plenary	Grand Ballroom
12:20	Heads of Administration to gather for media briefing by Head of NIE Information Service	Drawing Room
12:25	Heads of Administration escorted to Press Conference room	Annesley Room
12:30 – 13:00	Press Conference	Annesley Room
12:15 – 14:30	Buffet lunch available	JJ Farrall's Restaurant
13:15 – 13:45	Bilateral with FM Wales	JJ Farrall's Restaurant
14:00 – 14:30	Bilateral with FM/dFM NIE	Centenary Room 2
14:30 – 16:00	Private room booked for FM and FMPO	Centenary Room 3
16:00	Departure hotel to Belfast City Airport	Hotel reception
18:50	Flight to Edinburgh	Edinburgh Airport

What	The 43 rd meeting of the British-Irish Council and associated bilaterals with other heads of administrations.
Who	<p>Northern Ireland: <u>First Minister</u> – Michelle O’Neill MLA (co-chair), <u>deputy First Minister</u> – Emma Little-Pengelly MLA (co-chair)</p> <p>Ireland: <u>Taoiseach</u> – Micheál Martin TD, <u>Tánaiste</u> – Simon Harris TD</p> <p>UK: <u>Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster</u> – Pat McFadden MP and <u>Secretary of State for Northern Ireland</u> – Hilary Benn MP</p> <p>Wales: <u>First Minister</u> – Eluned Morgan MS</p> <p>Guernsey: <u>Chief Minister</u> – Deputy Lyndon Trott</p> <p>Isle of Man: <u>Chief Minister</u> – Hon Alfred Cannan MHK</p> <p>Jersey: <u>Chief Minister</u> – Deputy Lyndon Farnham and <u>Minister for External Relations</u> – Deputy Ian Gorst</p>
Where	Slieve Donard Hotel, Newcastle, County Down, Northern Ireland
When	Thursday, 12 and Friday, 13 June
Agendas	<p>FM/ CDL Bilateral (Friday 08:00 – 08:25) [Redacted - Section 28(1) – relations within the UK]</p> <p>FM/Tánaiste Bilateral (Friday 08:30 – 08:50) [Redacted - s.32(1)(a)(i) – Relations between UK and any other state]</p> <p>FM/Taoiseach Bilateral (Friday 09:00 – 09:20) [as Tánaiste agenda]</p> <p>Chief Minister Isle of Man (Friday 09:30 – 09:50)</p> <p>BIC summit plenary</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The role of AI in reform and transformation 2) Latest political developments <p>FM/FM Wales Bilateral (Friday 13:15 – 13:45)</p> <p>FM/FM & dFM NI Bilateral (Friday 14:00 – 14:30)</p>
Supporting officials	<p>Joe Griffin, Permanent Secretary</p> <p>Shona Riach, Director General, Strategy and External Affairs</p> <p>Chris Mackie, Deputy Director, Constitution and UK Relations</p> <p>[Redacted], Constitution and UK Relations Division</p> <p>[Redacted], Constitution and UK Relations Division</p> <p>[Redacted], AI Policy</p> <p>[Redacted], FM Comms</p> <p>[Redacted], Private Secretary</p>

Attached documents	<p>Itinerary/ops note – p1 Overview and key objectives – p4 Briefing for welcome reception/dinner – p5 Briefing for bilateral with Chancellor of Duchy of Lancaster – p7 Briefing for bilaterals with An Taoiseach and Tánaiste – p25 Briefing for bilateral with Chief Minister of the Isle of Man – p32 Briefing for summit plenary – p33 Briefing for bilateral with FM Wales – p46 Briefing for bilateral with FM/dFM Northern Ireland – p47</p> <p>ANNEX A: Contacts – p48 ANNEX B: Additional NIE Minister biographies – p49</p> <p><i>Annexes C-G attached separately</i> ANNEX C: Thematic paper ANNEX D: Thematic case studies ANNEX E: Forward work plans for endorsement ANNEX F: Letter from Cabinet Secretary Social Justice to Co-chairs of UK Child Poverty Taskforce ANNEX G: Letter from SoS Business to DFM on regional investment summit</p>
Media/ Comms	<p>Establishment photographs will be taken at start of summit with a press conference to follow summit (12:30 – 13:00) Contact: [Redacted]</p>

OVERVIEW AND KEY OBJECTIVES

[Redacted - S30(b)(i) – Free and frank advice]

Briefing structure

Briefing has been provided for each individual meeting, including logistical information, top lines and background briefing for each of the agenda items. Some topics occur in multiple meetings. Where this occurs, briefing has been duplicated to allow each meeting section to stand alone.

WELCOME RECEPTION/DINNER

19:00 – 19:50, Reception – Brunel Lounge









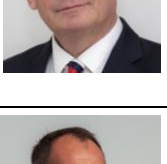
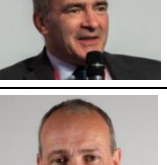
20:00 – 22:00, Dinner – Grand Ballroom

[Redacted - S30(b)(i) – Free and frank advice]

Musical entertainment will be provided during the reception by Niamh Noade. Niamh is a talented singer-songwriter and harpist from Co. Armagh, captivating audiences with her blend of traditional Celtic harp and contemporary influences.

Further entertainment will be provided following dinner in the Brunel Lounge by Duke Special, aka Belfast's Peter Wilson. Duke has released 17 albums and EPs and toured extensively throughout the world, writing for theatre, and teaching songwriting and performance at BIMM University, Dublin.

Heads of Delegation Biographies

	Michelle O'Neill (First Minister of Northern Ireland)	Appointed as First Minister in 2024. Previously held a number of Ministerial posts in the Executive, including deputy First Minister between January 2020 and February 2022. Vice-President of the Sinn Féin party.
	Emma Little-Pengelly (deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland)	Appointed as deputy First Minister in 2024. Ms Little-Pengelly served as Junior Minister in the Executive Office, and Chairperson of the Finance Committee. Member of the Democratic Unionist Party.
	Pat McFadden (UKG Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster)	Appointed as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for Intergovernmental Relations in July 2024. Labour MP since 2005. Mr McFadden is leading the UKG delegation at the Summit.
	Hilary Benn (UKG Secretary of State for Northern Ireland)	Appointed SoS NI in July 2024. During the last Labour Government served as a Minister in the Home Office, as SoS for International Development and SoS for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.
	Micheál Martin (Ireland Taoiseach)	Leader of Fianna Fáil since 2011. Previously served as Taoiseach and Tánaiste during Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael, and Green Party coalition. Mr Martin will serve as Taoiseach until Nov 2027, when Simon Harris is expected to be appointed as per coalition agreement.
	Simon Harris (Ireland Tánaiste)	Taoiseach before the 2024 general election. He took up the role of Fine Gael party leader in April 2024. Mr Harris will serve as Tánaiste until Nov 2027, after which he is expected to be appointed Taoiseach as per the coalition agreement.
	Eluned Morgan (First Minister of Wales)	Appointed First Minister in August 2024. Previously Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning, Minister for International Relations and the Welsh Language, and Minister for Health and Social Services followed by Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care.
	Deputy Lyndon Trott (Chief Minister of Guernsey)	Was Deputy Chief Minister between 2016-2020, in December 2023 he was elected Chief Minister for an unprecedented second time. Guernsey will hold its next election on 18 June 2025. Deputy Trott has chosen not to seek re-election, stepping down after 25 years in Government.
	Hon Alfred Cannan (Chief Minister of Isle of Man)	Chief Minister since 2021, previously Minister for Treasury. Has served as Chairman of the Civil Service Commission and Vice Chairman of the Public Sector Pensions Authority.
	Deputy Lyndon Farnham (Chief Minister of Jersey)	Elected Chief Minister in January 2024, after serving as Deputy Chief Minister (2018-2022) and Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (2014–2022).



Deputy Ian Gorst
(Minister for
External Relations
for **Jersey**)

Appointed Minister for External Relations in 2024, which includes responsibility for Financial Services.

BILATERAL WITH CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY OF LANCASTER

08:00-08:25, Centenary Room 3

Official Support: Shona Riach, [Redacted], Chris Mackie

Agenda:

[Redacted - Section 28(1) – relations within the UK]

[Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

[Redacted - Section 28(1) – relations within the UK]

BILATERALS WITH AN TAOISEACH and TÁNAISTE

Briefing covers both meetings

Tánaiste – 08:30 – 08:50, Centenary Room 4

Taoiseach – 09:00 – 09:20, Centenary Room 1

Official Support Tánaiste: Shona Riach, Maddie Fleming, Chris Mackie

Official Support Taoiseach: Joe Griffin, Maddie Fleming, Chris Mackie

Agenda:

[Redacted - s.32(1)(a)(i) – Relations between UK and any other state]

BILATERAL WITH CHIEF MINISTER OF THE ISLE OF MAN

09:30 – 09:50, John Toner Lounge

Official support: [Redacted], Chris Mackie

Agenda: Informal

Background

[Redacted - Section 28(1) – relations within the UK]

BIC SUMMIT PLENARY MEETING

10:05-10:15: Family photo, outside (weather permitting) or Grand Ballroom

Official support: [Redacted]

Family Photo – Heads of Delegations

WG	GoG	IG	IG	NIE FM	NIE dFM	UKG	SG	GoJ	IoMG
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Family Photo – All Ministers

NIE Junior Min Cameron			NIE Min O’Dowd		NIE Min Givan		NIE Junior Min Reilly		GJ Min Gorst	
GG	WG	GOI Tánaiste	GOI Taoiseach	NIE FM	NIE dFM	UKG	SG	GoJ	IoMG	

10:30-12:10: Plenary, Grand Ballroom

Official support: Joe Griffin, Shona Riach, Chris Mackie, [Redacted], [Redacted], [Redacted]

Plenary Table Plan

	NIE Junior Minister Reilly	NIE deputy First Minister	NIE First Minister	NIE Junior Minister Cameron	
WG	LARGE SCREEN FOR VIRTUAL DIAL-IN				SG
GoG					IoMG
UKG CDL					GoI Taoiseach
UKG SoSNI					GoI Tánaiste
GoJ Chief Minister					NIE Minister Nesbitt
GoJ Minister Gorst					NIE Minister O’Dowd
NIE Minister Givan					

Plenary Agenda

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| 1) Welcome remarks | [3 mins] |
| 2) Discussion topic: The role of AI in reform and transformation | [45 mins] |
| 3) Latest political developments | [45 mins] |
| 4) Closing remarks | [5 mins] |
| a. Draft communiqué | |
| b. Next BIC summit | |
| 5) Any other business | [2 mins] |
| <i>Endorsement of new BIC Forward Work Plans</i> | |
| a) Transport Work Sector 2025-27 | |
| b) Invasive Species Work Sector 2025-27 | |

[Redacted - S30(b)(i) – Free and frank advice]

2. The role of AI in reform and transformation [45 mins]

Paper 1 [Annex C] ‘*The role of AI in reform and transformation*’ is a background paper for this item.

Paper 2 [Annex D] provides some case studies from across the member administrations.

[Redacted - S30(b)(i) – Free and frank advice]

[Redacted - S30(b)(i) – Free and frank advice]

Background

11 June: UK Government spending review announces that £750 million will be invested in Edinburgh's supercomputer.

14 May: SoS Peter Kyle said in parliament investment for the University of Edinburgh's supercomputer 'never existed' and that the previous government/ treasury had not committed it, which is at odds with our understanding.

[Redacted - Section 28(1) – relations within the UK]

13 Jan: UKG published their Artificial Intelligence Action Plan, including plans on the creation of AI "Growth Zones", where investment in AI data centres will be prioritised and facilitated. The commitment will be to prioritise access to the grid (reserved) and planning approvals (devolved) to accelerate delivery and to build an ecosystem of research and innovation around the zone. The first of these AI Growth Zones will be based in Culham, Oxfordshire – home of the UK's Atomic Energy Authority.

SG commitments

- PfG 2025 commitment on AI: *Launching AI Scotland, a new national transformation programme founded on a partnership of business, academia, agencies and government, including a national AI adoption programme for SMEs.* Policy teams are developing this commitment so that we are able to capture as much economic benefit in this emerging sector as possible for Scotland with more information be available soon.

[Redacted - S30(b)(i) – Free and frank advice]

[Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

Vision for public sector data in Scotland

- Public sector data is a vital component in making sure that services for the people of Scotland are delivered efficiently and effectively.
- The vision has been developed in response to stakeholders across the public sector who indicated that a Scotland-wide vision for public sector data would be useful in helping them drive change in their organisations.
- The vision for public sector data was co-created by 30 volunteers from public, private and third sector, bringing a range of experience from organisations large and small.
- The vision the group have developed is 'Scotland's data advances innovation and wellbeing for people and planet'. It is underpinned by five ambitions (the 'to be' state), objectives (arising from the ambitions) and enabling conditions (to enable the objectives).

[Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

3. Latest Political Developments [45 Mins]

There is no paper for this item. Each Member Administration will have approximately **5 minutes** to speak about their government's latest position on a range of topical issues. As with the previous item, we expect that the Chairs will turn to you last to provide your comments.

[Redacted - S30(b)(i) – Free and frank advice]

Background

UK-EU summit

The UK-EU Summit package was captured across three texts:

- A **Common Understanding** detailing policy measures both sides committed to as we take the new Strategic Partnership forward;
- A **Joint Statement** setting out UK-EU cooperation across global issues and committing to annual leader-level summits; and
- A **Security and Defence Partnership**, which will formalise UK-EU foreign policy cooperation and allow for greater collaboration on defence industry work.

The Summit package also delivered across the three pillars the UKG had flagged would comprise their reset – Economy, Safety and Security – to deliver a “new Strategic Partnership”. Main elements from the package have been briefed as:

- **Security and Defence Partnership:** The Partnership establishes a framework for cooperation across a range of areas, including potential UK participation in the EU’s proposed €150bn Security Action for Europe instrument. It will complement core bilateral security partnerships and support the UK’s NATO First policy, as the cornerstone of Euro-Atlantic security.
- **SPS Agreement:** The UK and EU agreed to deliver an agri-food deal to establish a UK-EU Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Zone, cutting costs and red-tape.
- **Energy:** Closer co-operation on energy, strengthening our economies. Agreement on parameters for a new agreement to link Emissions Trading Systems.
- **Fisheries:** Twelve-year access arrangements with the EU.
- **Youth and educational mobility:** Agreement to work towards the establishment of a balanced youth experience scheme. UK and EU to work towards association to the Erasmus+ programme. These are first steps, with substantive negotiations on the detail and financial terms to follow.
- **Operational cooperation:** Agreement to enhance operational relationships to tackle criminal threats, including organised immigration crime, with key agencies like Europol, the European Drugs Agency, the European Migration Network, the EU Asylum Agency and Frontex.

International

UK arms sales to Israel

13 May 2025: A four-day hearing took place from 13 May in the High Court of England & Wales to decide a legal challenge brought forward by NGOs on the UKG’s export licencing decisions related to Israel, including the indirect supply of F-35 parts. Outcome of the hearing is expected in late-June.

2 Sep 2024: UK suspends around 30 arms export licences to Israel for use in Gaza over International Humanitarian Law concerns.

[Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

4. Closing remarks

[Redacted - S30(b)(i) – Free and frank advice]

5. AOB

As per paper 3, *Forward Work Plans for Endorsement*, the Council is invited to:

- *Endorse* the Work Plan 2025-27 for the Transport Work Sector, approved at a Council Transport Ministerial meeting on 3 April 2025 in Belfast.
- *Endorse* the Work Plan 2025-27 for the Invasive Species Work Sector, approved at a Council Environment Ministerial meeting on 8 May 2025 in London.

[Redacted - S30(b)(i) – Free and frank advice]

Following conclusion of the plenary, there is a 10-minute comfort break. [Redacted] will then meet you and escort you to the media briefing.

Media briefing and press conference

12:20-12:30: Media briefing from NIE Head of Information Services, Drawing Room

12:30-13:00: Press conference, Annesley Room

Official support: [Redacted]

PRESS CONFERENCE SEATING PLAN

GoG CM	WG FM	GOI Taoiseach	NIE dFM	NIE FM	UKG SoS NI	SG FM	GoJ CM	IoMG CM
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BILATERAL WITH FIRST MINISTER OF WALES

13:15 – 13:45, JJ Farrall's Restaurant

Official Support: Joe Griffin, [Redacted] [Redacted]

[Redacted - Section 28(1) – relations within the UK]

Latest position on the intergovernmental relations reset

Background

- [Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]
- [Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]
- [Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

- [Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]
- [Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]
- [Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]
- [Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]
- [Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

BILATERAL WITH FM/dFM Northern Ireland

14:00 – 14:30, Centenary Room 2

Official Support: [Redacted] [Redacted]

[Redacted - Section 28(1) – relations within the UK]

Latest position on the intergovernmental relations reset

Background

[Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

ANNEX A – CONTACT LIST

Rt Hon John Swinney MSP	First Minister	Phone number
[Redacted]	Private Secretary	[Redacted]
[Redacted]	Security Liaison Officer	[Redacted]
[Redacted]	Security Liaison Officer	[Redacted]
OFFICIALS		
Joe Griffin	Permanent Secretary	[Redacted]
Shona Riach	Director General, Strategy and External Affairs	[Redacted]
Chris Mackie	Deputy Director, Constitution and UK Relations	[Redacted]
[Redacted]	AI Policy	[Redacted]
[Redacted]	UK Relations Team	[Redacted]
[Redacted]	UK Relations Team	[Redacted]
COMMS		
[Redacted]	FM Comms	[Redacted]
Northern Ireland Executive Delegation Liaison Officer (DLO)		
[Redacted]	DLO	[Redacted]

ANNEX B – ADDITIONAL NIE MINISTER BIOGRAPHIES

Dr Caoimhe Archibald MLA – Minister for the Economy	
	Appointed Economy Minister in February 2025. Previously served as Finance Minister from February 2024. Elected as an MLA for East Derry in May 2016 and re-elected March 2017 and May 2022. Formerly Chair of the Assembly’s Economy and Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs committees.
John O’Dowd MLA – Minister of Finance	
	Appointed Minister for Finance in February 2025. Previously served as Minister in the Department for Infrastructure 2022 and 2024; Minister for Education 2011 and 2016 and as deputy First Minister for a short time.
Paul Givan MLA – Minister for the Department of Education	
	Appointed Minister for the Department of Education in February 2024. Appointed as First Minister for Northern Ireland June 2021; resigned February 2022 in line with DUP’s opposition to the Northern Ireland protocol.
Mike Nesbitt MLA – Minister of Health	
	Appointed Minister of Health in May 2024. Previously served as the Assembly Private Secretary to the Health Minister. Before appointment as Minister, represented the Ulster Unionist Party on the NI Policing Board and Economy Committee.
Aisling Reilly MLA – Junior Minister in the Executive	
	Appointed Junior Minister in the Executive in February 2024. Activist for the Sinn Féin party for many years. Served on the Assembly’s Committee for Communities; previously Party Spokesperson for Justice and Sports, Culture, Arts and Irish Language.
Pam Cameron MLA – Junior Minister in the Executive	
	Appointed Junior Minister in the Executive Office in February 2024. Elected as DUP MLA in May 2011. Has served as Deputy Chair of the Committee for Health and as Chair of the Assembly and Executive Review Committee.

Item 6

From: [Redacted]> **On Behalf Of** First Minister

Sent: 14 June 2025 07:58

To: Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; [Redacted]>

Cc: Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Oral SCANCE item Monday 16 June

Good morning,

The First Minister is content.

Thanks,

[Redacted]

From: Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>
Sent: 13 June 2025 22:29
To: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; [Redacted]>
Cc: Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Oral SCANCE item Monday 16 June

PS FM,

Further to [Redacted] note below, please find attached a draft speaking note that the First Minister may find useful for the proposed oral SCANCE item concerning the British Irish Council.

Please let us know if you require anything further.

Chris

Chris Mackie
Deputy Director, Constitution & UK Relations

From:[Redacted]> **On Behalf Of** First Minister
Sent: 13 June 2025 20:13
To: [Redacted]
Cc: Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Oral SCANCE item Monday 16 June

Good evening,

The First Minister is content.

Thanks,

[Redacted]

[Redacted]
Deputy Private Secretary to the First Minister
Office of the First Minister
5th Floor | St Andrew's House | Regent Road Edinburgh | EH1 3DG | [Redacted]

From: [Redacted]>
Sent: 13 June 2025 18:25
To: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>
Cc: Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie

<Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>

Subject: Oral SCANCE item Monday 16 June

PSFM

Grateful if FM could agree in principle to raise his attendance at the British-Irish Council summit as an oral SCANCE item on Monday 16 June. Should he agree, I will send up a speaking note this evening.

Many thanks
[Redacted]

[Redacted] (she/her) | Constitution and UK Relations Division | Constitution Directorate |

Item 7

[Redacted - S30(b)(i) – Free and frank advice]

Item 8

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 14 July 2025 18:27

To: Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Finance & Local Government <CabSecFLG@gov.scot>; Lord Advocate <LordAdvocate@gov.scot>; Solicitor General <SolicitorGeneral@gov.scot>

Cc: DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted][Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted][Redacted] [Redacted] Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Graham Fisher <Graham.Fisher@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Communications Constitution, External Affairs and Culture <CommunicationsConstitutionExternalAffairsAndCulture@gov.scot>; [Redacted] Communications Deputy First Minister, Economy and Gaelic <DFMEG@gov.scot>; Jack Middleton <Jack.Middleton@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Legal Secretariat to the Lord Advocate <LegalSecretariattotheLordAdvocate@gov.scot>; Solicitor to the Scottish Government <solicitor@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Submission - Routine - UKIMA Review - UKG Response

Thanks [Redacted], recirculating with attachments to include the Law Officers in copy.

Best,
[Redacted]

From: [Redacted] > **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024

Sent: 14 July 2025 18:17

To: [Redacted][Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for

Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Finance & Local Government <CabSecFLG@gov.scot>
Cc: DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Graham Fisher <Graham.Fisher@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Communications Constitution, External Affairs and Culture <CommunicationsConstitutionExternalAffairsandCulture@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; Communications Deputy First Minister, Economy and Gaelic <DFMEG@gov.scot>; Jack Middleton <Jack.Middleton@gov.scot>; [Redacted];>
Subject: RE: Submission - Routine - UKIMA Review - UKG Response

Hi [Redacted],

Many thanks for your submission and associated documents – Mr Robertson has noted. He has also cleared the statement (see attached for any wider copy list).

Thanks,

[Redacted]

Private Secretary

Office of Angus Robertson MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture
CabSecCEAC@gov.scot

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 14 July 2025 17:45

To: [Redacted]; [Redacted]; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Finance & Local Government <CabSecFLG@gov.scot>

Cc: DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted] [Redacted]; [Redacted] [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Graham Fisher <Graham.Fisher@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Communications Constitution, External Affairs and Culture <CommunicationsConstitutionExternalAffairsandCulture@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; Communications Deputy First Minister, Economy and Gaelic <DFMEG@gov.scot>; Jack Middleton <Jack.Middleton@gov.scot>

Subject: Re: Submission - Routine - UKIMA Review - UKG Response

Adding [Redacted] who's on duty tonight for awareness.

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]

Sent: Monday, July 14, 2025 4:59:25 PM

To: [Redacted]; [Redacted]; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Finance & Local Government <CabSecFLG@gov.scot>

Cc: DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; [Redacted][Redacted]; [Redacted [Redacted]]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Graham Fisher <Graham.Fisher@gov.scot>; [Redacted] [Redacted]; [Redacted] Communications Constitution, External Affairs and Culture <CommunicationsConstitutionExternalAffairsandCulture@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; Communications Deputy First Minister, Economy and Gaelic <DFMEG@gov.scot>; Jack Middleton <Jack.Middleton@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Submission - Routine - UKIMA Review - UKG Response

Also adding comms spads.

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 14 July 2025 16:59

To: [Redacted] [Redacted]; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Finance & Local Government <CabSecFLG@gov.scot>

Cc: DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Graham Fisher <Graham.Fisher@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted] Communications Constitution, External Affairs and Culture <CommunicationsConstitutionExternalAffairsandCulture@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; Communications Deputy First Minister, Economy and Gaelic <DFMEG@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Submission - Routine - UKIMA Review - UKG Response

Thanks. I think these should issue either embargoed to 8am, or at 8am tomorrow from Mr Robertson. I've tweaked slightly below as well.

Thanks,
[Redacted]

[Redacted - S30C - Otherwise prejudice effective conduct of public affairs]

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 14 July 2025 16:52

To: [Redacted]; [Redacted]; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Finance & Local Government <CabSecFLG@gov.scot>

Cc: DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; [Redacted] [Redacted]; [Redacted] [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Graham Fisher <Graham.Fisher@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Communications Constitution, External Affairs and Culture <CommunicationsConstitutionExternalAffairsandCulture@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; Communications Deputy First Minister, Economy and Gaelic <DFMEG@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Submission - Routine - UKIMA Review - UKG Response

Adding [Redacted] from our team who looks after comms on IMA and DFM comms for awareness.

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 14 July 2025 16:50

To: [Redacted]; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Finance & Local Government <CabSecFLG@gov.scot>

Cc: DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; Graham Fisher <Graham.Fisher@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]

Subject: RE: Submission - Routine - UKIMA Review - UKG Response

Hi [Redacted]

Reactive lines drafted by policy below, comms also in copy for view.

[Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 14 July 2025 16:49

To: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Finance & Local Government <CabSecFLG@gov.scot>

Cc: DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; [Redacted][Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted] [Redacted][Redacted]; [Redacted]Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; Graham Fisher <Graham.Fisher@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]

Subject: RE: Submission - Routine - UKIMA Review - UKG Response

Can I see the comms lines please? Suggest they should issue in Cab Sec Robertson's name.

Thanks,

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted] > **On Behalf Of** First Minister

Sent: 14 July 2025 16:44

To: [Redacted]; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Finance & Local Government <CabSecFLG@gov.scot>

Cc: DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; Euan Page [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Graham Fisher <Graham.Fisher@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]
Subject: RE: Submission - Routine - UKIMA Review - UKG Response

Hi [Redacted],

Copying in CabSec FLG who is covering for both FM and DFM who are on leave.

[Redacted - S30C - Otherwise prejudice effective conduct of public affairs]

Thanks,
[Redacted]

[Redacted] (She/Her)

Deputy Private Secretary | Office of the First Minister | [Redacted]

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 14 July 2025 16:18

To: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>

Cc: DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Graham Fisher <Graham.Fisher@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]

Subject: Submission - Routine - UKIMA Review - UKG Response

Deputy First Minister
First Minister
Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, External Affairs and Culture

The UK Government intend to publish their findings from the statutory review of the Internal Market Act 2020 tomorrow (Tuesday 15 July) at 08:00.

Please find attached a submission summarising the content and suggesting proposed handling, as well as an embargoed copied of the report.

[Redacted - S30(b)(i) – Free and frank advice]

Best wishes,

[Redacted]

Item 8 attachment 1

Attached separately

Item 8 attachment 2

From: [Redacted] **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024

Sent: 14 July 2025 18:11

To: [Redacted][Redacted] Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024
<CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>

Cc: DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; [Redacted]>; [Redacted]>; [Redacted]>; [Redacted]>; [Redacted]>; [Redacted][Redacted]; [Redacted]>; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Graham Fisher <Graham.Fisher@gov.scot>; [Redacted]>; [Redacted]>; Communications Constitution, External Affairs and Culture <CommunicationsConstitutionExternalAffairsAndCulture@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; Communications Deputy First Minister, Economy and Gaelic <DFMEG@gov.scot>; Jack Middleton <Jack.Middleton@gov.scot>; [Redacted]>; [Redacted]; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Finance & Local Government <CabSecFLG@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; [Redacted]>; [Redacted]

Subject: RE: FOR CLEARANCE - UKIMA Review - UKG Response

Hi [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted],

Many thanks – Mr Robertson is content with this statement and for it to issue at 8am tomorrow morning.

Best,
[Redacted]

Private Secretary

Office of Angus Robertson MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture
CabSecCEAC@gov.scot

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 14 July 2025 17:33

To: [Redacted]; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024

Cc: DG Strategy and External Affairs ; Dominic Munro ; Sean McGivern ; Christopher Mackie ; [Redacted] ; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted] ; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Ewan Crawford ; Graham Fisher ; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Communications Constitution, External Affairs and Culture ; [Redacted]; Communications Deputy First Minister, Economy and Gaelic ; Jack Middleton ; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; First Minister ; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic ; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 ; Cabinet Secretary for Finance & Local Government ; [Redacted]; Julie Grant ; [Redacted]

Subject: Re: FOR CLEARANCE - UKIMA Review - UKG Response

Adding Head/Deputy Head of News for awareness.

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]

Sent: Monday, July 14, 2025 5:23:27 PM

To: Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>

Cc: DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>;

[Redacted][Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted];

[Redacted][Redacted]; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Graham Fisher

<Graham.Fisher@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]Communications Constitution, External Affairs and

Culture <CommunicationsConstitutionExternalAffairsandCulture@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; Communications

Deputy First Minister, Economy and Gaelic <DFMEG@gov.scot>; Jack Middleton <Jack.Middleton@gov.scot>;

[Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and

Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External

Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Finance & Local Government

<CabSecFLG@gov.scot>; [Redacted]

Subject: FOR CLEARANCE - UKIMA Review - UKG Response

Good evening Cabinet Secretary CEAC/PO

The UK Government will publish its findings from the statutory review of the Internal Market Act 2020 at 08:00 on Tuesday 15 July. (full submission sent at 16:18)

I have liaised with SpAds and policy colleagues and we suggest issuing the statement below at 08:00 tomorrow.

Grateful for your view.

Kind regards

[Redacted]

Constitution Secretary Angus Robertson said:

“The Internal Market Act was introduced by the previous UK Government and passed at Westminster without the consent of any Devolved Government or Parliament. It undermines the ability of the Scottish Parliament to use its powers to pursue devolved social and economic objectives in Scotland for the people to which it is accountable.

“It introduces radical new uncertainty as to the effect of laws passed by the Scottish Parliament and effectively provides a veto to UK Ministers. Nothing set out in the UK Government’s response to the review changes this position, which is completely unacceptable.

“The conclusion of the review falls well short of our stated position of repeal and replace the Internal Market Act, and indeed short of the legislative change required to mitigate the most damaging aspects of the operation of the IMA. It is important also to note that the Scottish Parliament has twice voted to repeal the Act – since it is fundamentally misconceived and incompatible with devolution.

“We do welcome the UK Government’s intention to address some of the most egregious issues with the function of the IMA exclusions process. However, we remain concerned that there is no clear vehicle to give meaningful effect to these changes, which work against our shared interests to promote growth, protect jobs and ensure seamless trade across the UK nations.”

[Redacted]

News | Senior Media Manager

Constitution, External Affairs and Culture Communications

The Scottish Government, St Andrew's House, Edinburgh

Mobile: [Redacted] | Portfolio Media inquiries: [Redacted]

Item 8 attachment 3

Constitution and UK Relations Division

14 July 2025

Deputy First Minister

First Minister

Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, External Affairs and Culture

STATUTORY REVIEW OF THE UNITED KINGDOM INTERNAL MARKET ACT 2020 (IMA)

Priority and Purpose

1. To provide an initial analysis of the UK Government’s response to the statutory review of the Internal Market Act (IMA) and propose immediate handling. Officials received a copy of the UK Government paper on 14 July.
2. To note that UK Government officials have also advised of their intention to publish the internal evaluation of Common Frameworks on Thursday 17 July at 16:00. Separate advice on this evaluation will follow.
3. This submission is **routine**, although early consideration would allow a letter to be issued to the UK Government ahead of Westminster recess.

Recommendation

[Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

Context and Issues

[Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

The main proposals in the review response are as follows:

[Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

Options Considered and Advice

[Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

Risks and Sensitivities

[Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

Implications for Business, Investment and the Economy

[Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

Quality Assurance

4. This submission has been approved by Chris Mackie, Deputy Director, Constitution and UK Relations.

Conclusion and next Steps

[Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

[Redacted - S30(b)(i) – Free and frank advice]

[Redacted]

Constitution and UK Relations

14 July 2025

Cabinet Secretaries and Ministers Copy List	For Action	For Information Portfolio interest	For Information Constituency interest	For Information General awareness
Deputy First Minister	X			
First Minister				X
Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture		X		

Officials Copy List
DG Strategy and External Affairs Dominic Munro, Director, Constitution Chris Mackie, DD, Constitution and UK Relations (CUKR) [Redacted], Head of UK Frameworks [Redacted], CUKR [Redacted], CUKR

Officials Copy List

[Redacted], CUKR
[Redacted], CUKR
[Redacted], CUKR
[Redacted], CUKR
[Redacted], CUKR
Ewan Crawford, Special Advisor
Emily MacKintosh, Special Advisor
[Redacted], News
Graham Fisher, SGLD
[Redacted], EUS
[Redacted], EUS

Annex A

[Redacted - s.28(1) Relations within the UK]

Annex B

[Redacted - S30(b)(i) – Free and frank advice]

Item 9

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 15 July 2025 08:12

To: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Finance & Local Government <CabSecFLG@gov.scot>; Lord Advocate <LordAdvocate@gov.scot>; Solicitor General <SolicitorGeneral@gov.scot>

Cc: DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]
[Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Graham Fisher <Graham.Fisher@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]Communications Constitution, External Affairs and Culture <CommunicationsConstitutionExternalAffairsAndCulture@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; Communications Deputy First Minister, Economy and Gaelic <DFMEG@gov.scot>; Jack Middleton <Jack.Middleton@gov.scot>; [Redacted][Redacted]; Emily Mackintosh <Emily.Mackintosh@gov.scot>; Legal Secretariat to the Lord Advocate <LegalSecretariattotheLordAdvocate@gov.scot>; Solicitor to the Scottish Government <solicitor@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Submission - Routine - UKIMA Review - UKG Response

Thanks [Redacted], yes agree a decision on the letter can wait till post publication, with some slight tweaking.

Publication was due at 8 and is not yet live.

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted] **On Behalf Of** First Minister

Sent: 15 July 2025 08:09

To: [Redacted]; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Finance & Local Government <CabSecFLG@gov.scot>; Lord Advocate <LordAdvocate@gov.scot>; Solicitor General <SolicitorGeneral@gov.scot>

Cc: DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted] [Redacted] Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Graham Fisher <Graham.Fisher@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Communications Constitution, External Affairs and Culture <CommunicationsConstitutionExternalAffairsandCulture@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; Communications Deputy First Minister, Economy and Gaelic <DFMEG@gov.scot>; Jack Middleton <Jack.Middleton@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Emily Mackintosh <Emily.Mackintosh@gov.scot>; Legal Secretariat to the Lord Advocate <LegalSecretariattotheLordAdvocate@gov.scot>; Solicitor to the Scottish Government <solicitor@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Submission - Routine - UKIMA Review - UKG Response

Morning [Redacted]

I haven't heard back from the FM on this so if lines from Cab Sec need to issue, then please go ahead – assuming a decision on whom the letter issues from can come later on today?

Thanks

[Redacted]

Item 10

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 17 July 2025 10:57

To: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; Solicitor General <SolicitorGeneral@gov.scot>; Lord Advocate <LordAdvocate@gov.scot>

Cc: DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Emily Mackintosh <Emily.Mackintosh@gov.scot>; Graham

Fisher <Graham.Fisher@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Solicitor to the Scottish Government <solicitor@gov.scot>; Legal Secretariat to the Lord Advocate <LegalSecretariattotheLordAdvocate@gov.scot>; Luke Mcbratney <Luke.Mcbratney@gov.scot>; [Redacted]

Subject: RE: Submission - Routine - UKIMA Review - UKG Response

Deputy First Minister
First Minister
Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture
Lord Advocate
Solicitor General

The Welsh Government has published a Cabinet Statement on the outcome of the UK Government review of the Internal Market Act today (17 July) at 10:30.

The statement can be found on gov.wales [here](#).

Please find attached a submission summarising the content and position of the Welsh Government in addition to our advice on Monday 14 July.

The submission is marked **routine**.

Best wishes,

[Redacted]

Item 10 attachment 1

Constitution and UK Relations Division
17 July 2025

Deputy First Minister
First Minister
Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture
Lord Advocate
Solicitor General

WELSH GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE INTERNAL MARKET ACT REVIEW

Priority and Purpose

1. To provide you with a summary of the Welsh Government position following advice provided on 14 July on the UK government's Internal Market Act (IMA) review response.
2. This submission is for **routine** consideration.

Recommendation

3. Recommends that Ministers note the content of the submission.

Context and issues

[Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

Options Considered and Advice

[Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

Quality Assurance

4. This submission has been approved by Chris Mackie, Deputy Director, Constitution and UK Relations.

Conclusion and next Steps

[Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

[Redacted]

Constitution and UK Relations
16 July 2025

Cabinet Secretaries and Ministers Copy List	For Action	For Information Portfolio interest	For Information Constituency interest	For Information General awareness
First Minister				X
Deputy First Minister	X			
Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture		X		
Lord Advocate				X
Solicitor General				X

Officials Copy List

DG Strategy and External Affairs
Dominic Munro, Director, Constitution
Chris Mackie, DD, Constitution and UK Relations (CUKR)
Luke McBratney, DD, Elections and Constitutional Projects
[Redacted], Head of UK Frameworks
[Redacted], CUKR

[Redacted], CUKR
[Redacted], CUKR
[Redacted], CUKR
[Redacted], CUKR
[Redacted], CUKR
[Redacted], CUKR
Ewan Crawford, Special Advisor
Emily MacKintosh, Special Advisor
[Redacted], News
Graham Fisher, SGLD
[Redacted], SGLD
[Redacted], SGLD
[Redacted], EUS
[Redacted], EUS

Welsh Government Written Statement: Outcome of the UK Government review of the Internal Market Act 2020

The UK Government has announced the [outcome of its review of the Internal Market Act 2020](#) (“the Act”) and has laid a report in the Senedd, which is available [here](#).

The review builds on [previous commitments made by the UK Government](#) in December 2024, which included a recommitment to the principles of the Common Frameworks. The UK Government will make the following additional changes to the operation of the Act.

“The UK Government will:

- *implement UK Internal Market Act exclusions that have been agreed by all governments within a Common Framework;*
- *alongside economic impacts, consider in particular environmental protection and public health in UK Internal Market Act exclusions, thereby ensuring a balance of factors is considered;*
- *establish a Minimum Economic Impact process for considering smaller exclusions, and implement them where all governments agree the exclusion has an economic impact of less than £10 million a year;*
- *implement a “reserve” exclusions process where it has not been possible for all four governments to reach agreement on an exclusion;*
- *work with the devolved governments to agree processes for how all four governments engage with businesses and other stakeholders on matters being discussed in Common Frameworks; and*
- *work with the devolved governments to agree a process for all four governments to jointly refer UK internal market matters for advice to the Office for the Internal Market.”*

The Welsh Government is committed to our economic mission of sustainable growth and jobs. Wales’ economy is reliant on smooth functioning of the UK internal market and we are committed to playing our part in supporting and strengthening it. We need an approach to governing the UK internal market which works with the grain of devolution and respects our democratic mandate.

The commitments made by the UK Government following the review are a good start towards this goal. We particularly welcome the commitment to implement any exclusions agreed via Common Frameworks, which should improve the functioning of the UK internal market. The Common Frameworks operate on a clear [set of principles](#) which fully respect devolution and include dispute resolution mechanisms.

However, it is our long-standing and consistent view that the Act should be repealed and replaced with a system, underpinned by legislation, designed around the Common Frameworks and which maintains the safeguards necessary to support the Windsor Framework.

Despite this, we have engaged constructively with the UK Government throughout the review to put forward proposals to reduce the impact of the Act on the effectiveness of devolved policy and legislation. The Act must operate in the interests of all four nations.

We will now work with the UK Government on some of the detail associated with these commitments, in particular to help ensure the 'reserve' exclusions process is objective and transparent in the same way as the Common Frameworks processes.

We will continue to make the case for statutory changes to the Act to prevent its misuse and improve its functioning alongside the devolution settlements. The non-statutory commitments made by the UK Government are welcome, but they do not prevent the misuse of the Act by future UK Governments to enforce English policy preferences in affected devolved policy. Legislative reform is advocated for by academia, the Senedd's Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee, and the Welsh Government.

We will also continue to pursue the issue of the use of Financial Assistance Powers which were not included within the scope of this review. These powers are unrelated to the functioning of the UK internal market and undermine a fundamental aspect of devolution. There are established mechanisms for the UK Government to invest in Wales without recourse to these powers.

Notwithstanding these concerns, I welcome the changes being made by the UK Government as a positive step in the right direction. We will work together with the UK Government and other devolved governments to support the further clarification and implementation of the proposed changes.

Item 11

From: [Redacted] > On Behalf Of First Minister

Sent: 23 July 2025 14:13

To: [Redacted]; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; Solicitor General <SolicitorGeneral@gov.scot>; Lord Advocate <LordAdvocate@gov.scot>

Cc: DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Emily Mackintosh <Emily.Mackintosh@gov.scot>; Graham Fisher <Graham.Fisher@gov.scot>; [Redacted][Redacted]; Solicitor to the Scottish Government <solicitor@gov.scot>; Legal Secretariat to the Lord Advocate <LegalSecretariattotheLordAdvocate@gov.scot>; Luke Mcbratney <Luke.Mcbratney@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]

Subject: RE: Submission - Routine - UKIMA Review - UKG Response

Hi [Redacted],

FM has noted.

Thanks,
[Redacted]

[Redacted] (She/Her)

Deputy Private Secretary | Office of the First Minister | [Redacted]

Item 12

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 31 July 2025 13:11

To: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; [Redacted]>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>

Cc: DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: SEN - BIC bilateral notes

Many thanks [Redacted]

[Redacted] (she/her) | Constitution and UK Relations Division | Constitution Directorate |

From: [Redacted]> **On Behalf Of** First Minister

Sent: 31 July 2025 13:06

To: [Redacted] First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>

Cc: DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; [Redacted]

Subject: RE: SEN - BIC bilateral notes

Hi [Redacted],

These letters have now issued – attached for your records.

Thanks,
[Redacted]

[Redacted] (She/Her)

Deputy Private Secretary | Office of the First Minister | [Redacted]

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 08 July 2025 12:46

To: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>

Cc: DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; [Redacted]

Subject: RE: SEN - BIC bilateral notes

[Redacted],

As discussed, please find attached letters to FM and dFM NI thanking them for hosting the BIC summit in June. These have now been cleared by Chris.

Kind regards,

[Redacted]

[Redacted]
UK Relations Policy Officer

From: [Redacted]
Sent: 03 July 2025 13:50
To: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>
Cc: DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; [Redacted]
Subject: RE: SEN - BIC bilateral notes

Thanks [Redacted],

Please see below eRDM links to bilateral notes.

We are already drafting a letter to FM and dFM NI and will get this to you next week once cleared by Chris, who is on leave this week.

Kind regards,

[Redacted].

<https://erdm.scotland.gov.uk/documents/A53346386/details> - CDL
<https://erdm.scotland.gov.uk/documents/A53346416/details> - Taoiseach
<https://erdm.scotland.gov.uk/documents/A53346402/details> - Tánaiste
<https://erdm.scotland.gov.uk/documents/A53346444/details> - FM & dFM NI
<https://erdm.scotland.gov.uk/documents/A53346434/details> - CM IoM

[Redacted]
UK Relations Policy Officer

From: [Redacted] **On Behalf Of** First Minister
Sent: 03 July 2025 12:54
To: Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>
Cc: [Redacted] Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; [Redacted]
Subject: RE: SEN - BIC bilateral notes

Hi Chris,

FM is content with the notes – grateful if you could share eRDM links when stored.

Could I also say a (belated, sorry!) thank you to you for your support at BIC, and to [Redacted] and [Redacted] for all your work during and in advance of the trip. It was smooth sailing as always – thanks to your excellent coordination and thorough briefing.

Please also pass on my thanks to the NI BIC team for their hospitality.

Could a letter be drafted from FM to FM and dFM NI to thank them for hosting, please?
Grateful if I could get this by the 21st July for FM's consideration.

Thanks,
[Redacted]

[Redacted] (She/Her)
Deputy Private Secretary | Office of the First Minister | [Redacted]

From: Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>
Sent: 20 June 2025 14:43
To: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>
Cc: [Redacted] DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; [Redacted]
Subject: OFF: SEN - BIC bilateral notes

[Redacted],

Please now find attached notes of all the bilaterals held at BIC. As [Redacted] sets out below, when the FM has confirmed he is content, we will store on ERDM.

Thanks, and please let me know if you require anything further.

Chris

Chris Mackie
Deputy Director, Constitution & UK Relations
T: [Redacted]

From: Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>
Sent: 20 June 2025 10:43
To: [Redacted]; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>
Cc: [Redacted]
Subject: RE: BIC bilaterals

[Redacted] – I will recirculate these shortly with the notes from the IOM, Ireland and UKG bilaterals.

Thanks,

Chris

Chris Mackie
Deputy Director, Constitution & UK Relations
[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]
Sent: 18 June 2025 15:41
To: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>

Cc: Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; [Redacted]>

Subject: BIC bilaterals

Hi [Redacted],

As discussed at the summit, please find attached a note of attendees from the other delegations at the FM's bilaterals. I also attach my draft note of the NIE bilateral. Once FM is content I will save to ERDM and share the link with you.

Many thanks

[Redacted]

Item 12 attachment 1

First Minister – First and deputy First Ministers of Northern Ireland bilateral
Slieve Donard Hotel, County Down
14:00-14:30, 13 June 2025

SG

First Minister

[Redacted], UK Relations Team Lead

[Redacted], PS

NIE

First Minister

deputy First Minister

Ronan McGinley, FM Special Adviser

[Redacted], FM Principal Private Secretary

Alastair Ross, dFM Special Adviser

Ashleigh Perry, dFM Special Adviser

[Redacted], dFM Principal Private Secretary

[Redacted - Section 28(1) – relations within the UK]

Item 12 attachment 2

First Minister – Tánaiste bilateral
Slieve Donard Hotel, County Down
0830 - 0900, 13 June 2025

Scottish Government

First Minister

Shona Riach, DG Strategy and External Affairs

Chris Mackie, Deputy Director, Constitution and UK Relations

[Redacted], PS

Government of Ireland

Simon Harris, Tánaiste

Joe Hackett, Secretary General
Sonja Hyland, Deputy Secretary General
Martin Fraser, Irish Ambassador to Great Britain
Conor Glynn, Special advisor
Emer O'Connell, Director British Irish Relations

[Redacted - s.32(1)(a)(i) – Relations between UK and any other state]

Item 12 attachment 3

First Minister – Taoiseach bilateral
Slieve Donard Hotel, County Down
0830-0900, 13 June 2025

Scottish Government

First Minister
Permanent Secretary
Chris Mackie, Deputy Director, Constitution and UK Relations
[Redacted], PS

Government of Ireland

Micheal Martin, Taoiseach
Martin Fraser, Ambassador to Great Britain
Pat McParland, Adviser to the Taoiseach
[Redacted], Government Press Secretary
John Callinan, Secretary General Department of the Taoiseach
Émer Deane, Assistant Secretary General British and Northern Ireland Affairs, Department of the Taoiseach
[Redacted], Assistant Principal Officer British and Northern Ireland Affairs, Department of the Taoiseach

[Redacted - s.32(1)(a)(i) – Relations between UK and any other state]

Item 12 attachment 4

First Minister – Chancellor of Duchy of Lancaster bilateral
Slieve Donard Hotel, County Down
0800-0830, 13 June 2025

Scottish Government

First Minister
Shona Riach, DG Strategy and External Affairs
Chris Mackie, Deputy Director, Constitution and UK Relations
[Redacted], PS

UK Government

Pat McFadden, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
[Redacted], CDL PS
Alaina Macdonald, Special Adviser
Chris Flatt, Director, Union and Devolution Directorate

[Redacted - Section 28(1) – relations within the UK]

Item 12 attachment 5

First Minister – Isle of Man Government bilateral
Slieve Donard Hotel, County Down
0930 - 1000, 13 June 2025

Scottish Government

First Minister
Chris Mackie, Deputy Director, Constitution and UK Relations
[Redacted], PS

Isle of Man Government

Alfred Cannan, Chief Minister of the Isle of Man
[Redacted], External Relations Manager
Chris Brannigan, Executive Director of Crown and External Relations
[Redacted], Comms & Media

[Redacted - Section 28(1) – relations within the UK]

Item 12 attachment 6

Emma Little-Pengelly MLA
deputy First Minister
Executive Office
Stormont Castle
Belfast
BT4 3TT

July 2025

Dear

I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the warm welcome my delegation and I received as we attended the forty-third Summit meeting of the British-Irish Council on 12 and 13 June.

I would also like to thank you for your generous hospitality at the beautiful Slieve Donard Hotel. I thoroughly enjoyed the conversations over a wonderful dinner and I am also grateful for your time following the summit to discuss matters of mutual interest.

Can I also commend your team for the smooth running of the main summit meeting, which helped facilitate a useful, thought-provoking discussion on the challenges we all face in relation to artificial intelligence. It is clear we have much to share and learn from each other

on this topic and events such as the British Irish Council provide the ideal platform for this collaboration.

Finally, I know from our own experience last year just how much hard work goes in to planning and hosting the event. I would therefore also like to extend my thanks to your officials who ensured a successful summit.

Yours sincerely

John Swinney

Item 12 attachment 7

Michelle O'Neill MLA
First Minister
Executive Office
Stormont Castle
Belfast
BT4 3TT

[Redacted]

July 2025

Dear

I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the warm welcome my delegation and I received as we attended the forty-third Summit meeting of the British-Irish Council on 12 and 13 June.

I would also like to thank you for your generous hospitality at the beautiful Slieve Donard Hotel. I thoroughly enjoyed the conversations over a wonderful dinner and I am also grateful for your time following the summit to discuss matters of mutual interest.

Can I also commend your team for the smooth running of the main summit meeting, which helped facilitate a useful, thought-provoking discussion on the challenges we all face in relation to artificial intelligence. It is clear we have much to share and learn from each other on this topic and events such as the British Irish Council provide the ideal platform for this collaboration.

Finally, I know from our own experience last year just how much hard work goes in to planning and hosting the event. I would therefore also like to extend my thanks to your officials who ensured a successful summit.

Yours sincerely

John Swinney

Item 13

From: [Redacted] **On Behalf Of** First Minister

Sent: 01 August 2025 12:26

To: [Redacted] First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>

Cc: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; Minister for Parliamentary Business 2024 <MinisterPB@gov.scot>; DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; Kathy Johnston <Kathy.Johnston@gov.scot>; [Redacted][Redacted]>; [Redacted]>; [Redacted]>; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; Pauline Aylesbury <Pauline.Aylesbury@gov.scot>; [Redacted]>; [Redacted] [Redacted]>; [Redacted][Redacted]>; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; [Redacted]>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <Ross.Ingebrigtsen@gov.scot>; Emily Mackintosh <Emily.Mackintosh@gov.scot>; Olaf Stando <Olaf.Stando@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; Luke Mcbratney <Luke.Mcbratney@gov.scot>; [Redacted]

Subject: RE: Official Sensitive : Submission and draft paper- Building a new Scotland Prospectus

This email is for the official record and confirms a Ministerial Decision. This email must be placed in the official record (eRDM) by your team [in line with SG records management policy](#).

Hi [Redacted],

Thank you for the submission on the final BaNS paper, A new Scotland: A Prospectus for an independent nation state.

The First Minister wishes to ensure the option of publishing this paper as early as the [Redacted - S30C - Otherwise prejudice effective conduct of public affairs] is maintained and would therefore be grateful if officials can take all necessary steps to ensure that the necessary preparations are undertaken to facilitate that schedule. A final decision on publication will be made nearer the time.

Thanks,
[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Deputy Private Secretary to the First Minister
Office of the First Minister

5th Floor | St Andrew's House | Regent Road Edinburgh | EH1 3DG | [Redacted]

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 14 May 2025 15:04

To: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>

Cc: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>;
Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>;
Minister for Parliamentary Business 2024 <MinisterPB@gov.scot>; DG Strategy and External Affairs
<DGSEA@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie
<Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; Kathy Johnston <Kathy.Johnston@gov.scot>; [Redacted];
[Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted] Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; Pauline Aylesbury
<Pauline.Aylesbury@gov.scot> [Redacted]; [Redacted] [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted];
Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; Ross Ingebrigtsen
<Ross.Ingebrigtsen@gov.scot>; Emily Mackintosh <Emily.Mackintosh@gov.scot>; Olaf Stando
<Olaf.Stando@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary
<PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; Luke Mcbratney <Luke.Mcbratney@gov.scot>; [Redacted]

Subject: Official Sensitive : Submission and draft paper- Building a new Scotland Prospectus

First Minister,

Copy: Deputy First Minister, Cab Sec Constitution External Affairs and Culture, Minister for
Parliamentary Business

SUBMISSION ON BUILDING A NEW SCOTLAND PROSPECTUS PAPER

Please find a submission sent on behalf of Luke McBratney

This is a routine submission on the final BaNS paper **A new Scotland: A Prospectus for an independent nation state.**

This submission invites you to consider and approve the content and structure of the paper, and the timing and arrangements for its publication.

A **draft** version of the paper is also attached. Drafting material that is in development is marked in the paper. This will be finalised in the next version of the paper.

*We would be grateful for any comments and feedback by **Thursday 29 May** if possible.*

Please do come back if there are any questions.

Luke McBratney

Deputy Director, Elections and Constitutional Projects

Item 13 attachment 1

[Redacted - S30C - Otherwise prejudice effective conduct of public affairs]

Item 13 attachment 2

[Redacted - S30C - Otherwise prejudice effective conduct of public affairs]

Item 14

From: [Redacted]> **On Behalf Of** Luke Mcbratney

Sent: 18 August 2025 14:33

To: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>

Cc: Luke Mcbratney <Luke.Mcbratney@gov.scot>; Constitution Coordination and Briefing <ConstitutionCoordinationandBriefing@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: FM - Enlighten Scotland - Meet the Leaders - 19 Aug

[Redacted],

Apologies for the delay – the lines below were sent up to our DG office last week so apologies if this is a duplication. Copying the constitution briefing team in case anything else is required.

Many thanks,

[Redacted]

[Redacted - S30C - Otherwise prejudice effective conduct of public affairs]

[Redacted]

Elections Team

Directorate for Constitution

The Scottish Government | St Andrew's House, Regent Road, EDINBURGH EH1 3DG

Item 15

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 19 August 2025 14:26

To: Luke Mcbratney <Luke.Mcbratney@gov.scot>

Cc: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Emily Mackintosh <Emily.Mackintosh@gov.scot>; [Redacted] Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>

Subject: Official Sensitive : Submission and draft paper- Building a new Scotland Prospectus

Luke,

As discussed.

The First Minister has considered, and has asked for:

[Redacted - S30C - Otherwise prejudice effective conduct of public affairs]

Also copying to Helen Webster for awareness ref Cabinet agenda.

[Redacted]Principal Private Secretary to the First Minister
5th Floor | St Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG
T[Redacted]

From: Luke Mcbratney <Luke.Mcbratney@gov.scot>

Sent: 19 August 2025 13:57

To: [Redacted]

Cc: Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Emily Mackintosh <Emily.Mackintosh@gov.scot>;
[Redacted] Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>

Subject: FW: Official Sensitive : Submission and draft paper- Building a new Scotland Prospectus

[Redacted],

I have discussed with Ewan the plans for publication of the two independence papers.

The current steer we are working to, below, involves making sure both papers are able to be published [Redacted - S30C - Otherwise prejudice effective conduct of public affairs]

[Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

[Redacted - S30C - Otherwise prejudice effective conduct of public affairs]

Luke

Luke McBratney | Deputy Director, Elections and Constitutional Projects
Constitution Directorate | DG Strategy and External Affairs
mob: [Redacted] | **email:** luke.mcbratney@gov.scot
My normal working week is Tuesday to Friday.

Item 16

From: [Redacted]> **On Behalf Of** First Minister

Sent: 20 August 2025 11:11

To: [Redacted]>; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>

Cc: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>;
Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>;
Minister for Parliamentary Business 2024 <MinisterPB@gov.scot>; DG Strategy and External Affairs
<DGSEA@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie
<Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; Kathy Johnston <Kathy.Johnston@gov.scot>; [Redacted];
[Redacted]; [Redacted]; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; Pauline Aylesbury
<Pauline.Aylesbury@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Ewan
Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; Ross Ingebrigtsen
<Ross.Ingebrigtsen@gov.scot>; Emily Mackintosh <Emily.Mackintosh@gov.scot>; Olaf Stando
<Olaf.Stando@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary
<PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; Luke Mcbratney <Luke.Mcbratney@gov.scot>; Graham Fisher
<Graham.Fisher@gov.scot>; [Redacted]Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>;

Katherine White <Katherine.White@gov.scot>; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Off Sen: 'Your Right to Choose' - for clearance to proceed to Cabinet

This email is for the official record and confirms a Ministerial Decision. This email must be placed in the official record (eRDM) by your team in line with SG records management policy.

[Redacted],

The First Minister is content for these documents to proceed to Cabinet with the following change to the intro.

Please change this paragraph:

[Redacted - S30C - Otherwise prejudice effective conduct of public affairs]

Kind regards,
[Redacted]

[Redacted] Deputy Private Secretary to the First Minister
Office of the First Minister
5th Floor | St Andrew's House | Regent Road Edinburgh | EH1 3DG | [Redacted]

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 19 August 2025 17:42

To: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>

Cc: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; Minister for Parliamentary Business 2024 <MinisterPB@gov.scot>; DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; Kathy Johnston <Kathy.Johnston@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; Pauline Aylesbury <Pauline.Aylesbury@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <Ross.Ingebrigtsen@gov.scot>; Emily Mackintosh <Emily.Mackintosh@gov.scot>; Olaf Stando <Olaf.Stando@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; Luke Mcbratney <Luke.Mcbratney@gov.scot>; Graham Fisher <Graham.Fisher@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; Katherine White <Katherine.White@gov.scot>; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>

Subject: Off Sen: 'Your Right to Choose' - for clearance to proceed to Cabinet

PS/First Minister

Copy as above

OFFICIAL SENSITIVE – YOUR RIGHT TO CHOOSE

Please find attached a draft copy of the paper 'Your Right to Choose' plus a draft Cabinet paper for the **First Minister's consideration and clearance to proceed to Cabinet**. If agreed, the First Minister would introduce the paper to Cabinet on [Redacted - S30C - Otherwise prejudice effective conduct of public affairs], seek

Cabinet approval to proceed to publication in week commencing [Redacted - S30C - Otherwise prejudice effective conduct of public affairs]

The 'Right to Choose' paper calls on the UK Government to make a clear commitment (i) to respect the people of Scotland's right to choose their constitutional future, and (ii) if and when the people of Scotland so choose, it will enter into negotiations with the Scottish Government about the transfer of power required for a lawful and constitutional referendum, legislated for by the Scottish Parliament.

[Redacted - S30C - Otherwise prejudice effective conduct of public affairs]

Kind regards

[Redacted]

[Redacted] **Constitution Directorate**
Scottish Government

Tel: [Redacted]

Item 17

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 22 August 2025 15:44

To: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; [Redacted]>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]>

Cc: Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; [Redacted][Redacted]>; <[Redacted]>; [Redacted]>; [Redacted][Redacted]>; [Redacted][Redacted]

Subject: RE: DFM to SoS Wales re S. 150 order - Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Act 2022 - MA_HIDCC_1976_25

[Redacted] – thanks

[Redacted] has redirected these to PLU and SGLD colleagues in copy, who will revert as necessary.

Have a good weekend

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]> **On Behalf Of** First Minister

Sent: 22 August 2025 14:36

To: [Redacted]>; [Redacted][Redacted]>; [Redacted]>; [Redacted]

Cc: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>

Subject: FW: DFM to SoS Wales re S. 150 order - Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Act 2022 - MA_HIDCC_1976_25

Hi Euan,

Please see attached which has been copied to FM.

Grateful if you can confirm no action required from us?

Thanks,
[Redacted]

[Redacted]
Deputy Private Secretary to the First Minister
Office of the First Minister
5th Floor | St Andrew's House | Regent Road Edinburgh | EH1 3DG | [Redacted]

Item 18

From: Luke Mcbratney <Luke.Mcbratney@gov.scot>
Sent: 29 August 2025 10:33
To: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>;
[Redacted]
Cc: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>;
Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>;
Minister for Parliamentary Business 2024 <MinisterPB@gov.scot>; DG Strategy and External Affairs
<DGSEA@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie
<Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; Kathy Johnston <Kathy.Johnston@gov.scot>; [Redacted];
[Redacted]; [Redacted]; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; Pauline Aylesbury
<Pauline.Aylesbury@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted][Redacted] Colin McAllister
<Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <Ross.Ingebrigtsen@gov.scot>; Emily Mackintosh
<Emily.Mackintosh@gov.scot>; Olaf Stando <Olaf.Stando@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern
<Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; Graham Fisher
<Graham.Fisher@gov.scot>; [Redacted] Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>;
Katherine White <Katherine.White@gov.scot>; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Off Sen: 'Your Right to Choose' - for clearance to proceed to Cabinet

Hi Ellie,

Just to confirm that we are on track to get a copy to the FM this afternoon.

Luke

Luke McBratney | Deputy Director, Elections and Constitutional Projects
Constitution Directorate | **DG Strategy and External Affairs**
mob: [Redacted] | **email:** luke.mcbratney@gov.scot
My normal working week is Tuesday to Friday.

From: [Redacted] **On Behalf Of** First Minister
Sent: 29 August 2025 10:32
To: Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>;
[Redacted] **Cc:** Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic
<DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024

<CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; Minister for Parliamentary Business 2024 <MinisterPB@gov.scot>; DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; Kathy Johnston <Kathy.Johnston@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; Pauline Aylesbury <Pauline.Aylesbury@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted] [Redacted]; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <Ross.Ingebrigtsen@gov.scot>; Emily Mackintosh <Emily.Mackintosh@gov.scot>; Olaf Stando <Olaf.Stando@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; Luke Mcbratney <Luke.Mcbratney@gov.scot>; Graham Fisher <Graham.Fisher@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; Katherine White <Katherine.White@gov.scot>; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Off Sen: 'Your Right to Choose' - for clearance to proceed to Cabinet

Hi Ewan,

Thanks for flagging.

A reminder that the FM would also like to see a copy of the final paper before it goes to publication. PO are hoping to see that today.

Thanks,
[Redacted]

[Redacted]
Deputy Private Secretary to the First Minister
Office of the First Minister
5th Floor | St Andrew's House | Regent Road Edinburgh | EH1 3DG | [Redacted]

From: Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>

Sent: 28 August 2025 18:12

To: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; [Redacted]

Cc: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; Minister for Parliamentary Business 2024 <MinisterPB@gov.scot>; DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; Kathy Johnston <Kathy.Johnston@gov.scot>; [Redacted] [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; Pauline Aylesbury <Pauline.Aylesbury@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <Ross.Ingebrigtsen@gov.scot>; Emily Mackintosh <Emily.Mackintosh@gov.scot>; Olaf Stando <Olaf.Stando@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; Luke Mcbratney <Luke.Mcbratney@gov.scot>; Graham Fisher <Graham.Fisher@gov.scot>; [Redacted] Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; Katherine White <Katherine.White@gov.scot>; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Off Sen: 'Your Right to Choose' - for clearance to proceed to Cabinet

Hi,

The FM would like a change to the document title – in place of Your Right to Choose, he would like the title to be Your Right to Decide.

Grateful if this change can be made.

Thanks,

Ewan

Ewan Crawford
Senior Special Adviser to the First Minister,
EU affairs and the constitution.
Tel: [Redacted]
Mobile [Redacted]

Please note Scottish Ministers, Special advisers and the Permanent Secretary to the Scottish Government are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot for information.

From: [Redacted] On Behalf Of First Minister

Sent: 20 August 2025 13:57

To: Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; [Redacted] First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>

Cc: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; Minister for Parliamentary Business 2024 <MinisterPB@gov.scot>; DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; Kathy Johnston <Kathy.Johnston@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; Pauline Aylesbury <Pauline.Aylesbury@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted] Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <Ross.Ingebrigtsen@gov.scot>; Emily Mackintosh <Emily.Mackintosh@gov.scot>; Olaf Stando <Olaf.Stando@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; Luke Mcbratney <Luke.Mcbratney@gov.scot>; Graham Fisher <Graham.Fisher@gov.scot> [Redacted]; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; Katherine White <Katherine.White@gov.scot>; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Off Sen: 'Your Right to Choose' - for clearance to proceed to Cabinet

Thanks to Ewan and officials for ensuring FM's feedback has been covered here.

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Deputy Private Secretary to the First Minister
Office of the First Minister
5th Floor | St Andrew's House | Regent Road Edinburgh | EH1 3DG | [Redacted]

From: Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>

Sent: 20 August 2025 13:52

To: [Redacted] First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>

Cc: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; Minister for Parliamentary Business 2024 <MinisterPB@gov.scot>; DG Strategy and External Affairs

<DGSEA@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; Kathy Johnston <Kathy.Johnston@gov.scot>; [Redacted] [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; Pauline Aylesbury <Pauline.Aylesbury@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted][Redacted]; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <Ross.Ingebrigtsen@gov.scot>; Emily Mackintosh <Emily.Mackintosh@gov.scot>; Olaf Stando <Olaf.Stando@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; Luke Mcbratney <Luke.Mcbratney@gov.scot>; Graham Fisher <Graham.Fisher@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; Katherine White <Katherine.White@gov.scot>; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Off Sen: 'Your Right to Choose' - for clearance to proceed to Cabinet

Thanks [Redacted]

Ewan Crawford
Senior Special Adviser to the First Minister,
EU affairs and the constitution.
Tel: [Redacted]
Mobile [Redacted]

Please note Scottish Ministers, Special advisers and the Permanent Secretary to the Scottish Government are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot for information.

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 20 August 2025 13:25

To: Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>

Cc: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; Minister for Parliamentary Business 2024 <MinisterPB@gov.scot>; DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; Kathy Johnston <Kathy.Johnston@gov.scot>; [Redacted] [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; Pauline Aylesbury <Pauline.Aylesbury@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <Ross.Ingebrigtsen@gov.scot>; Emily Mackintosh <Emily.Mackintosh@gov.scot>; Olaf Stando <Olaf.Stando@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; Luke Mcbratney <Luke.Mcbratney@gov.scot>; Graham Fisher <Graham.Fisher@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; Katherine White <Katherine.White@gov.scot>; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Off Sen: 'Your Right to Choose' - for clearance to proceed to Cabinet

Ewan

You have discussed with Luke how best to reflect the First Minister's feedback in the text, and the following change has been made:

[Redacted - S30C - Otherwise prejudice effective conduct of public affairs]

Once this is confirmed as good to go, I will send the papers to Cabinet Secretariat.

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 20 August 2025 11:57

To: Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>

Cc: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>;

Minister for Parliamentary Business 2024 <MinisterPB@gov.scot>; DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie

<Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; Kathy Johnston <Kathy.Johnston@gov.scot>; [Redacted];

[Redacted]; [Redacted]; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; Pauline Aylesbury <Pauline.Aylesbury@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted] [Redacted]; [Redacted] Colin McAllister

<Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <Ross.Ingebrigtsen@gov.scot>; Emily Mackintosh

<Emily.Mackintosh@gov.scot>; Olaf Stando <Olaf.Stando@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern

<Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; Luke

Mcbratney <Luke.Mcbratney@gov.scot>; Graham Fisher <Graham.Fisher@gov.scot>; [Redacted];

Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; Katherine White

<Katherine.White@gov.scot>; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Off Sen: 'Your Right to Choose' - for clearance to proceed to Cabinet

Ewan

Yes, Luke and I have checked the document, and made the following change [Redacted - S30C - Otherwise prejudice effective conduct of public affairs]

From: Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>

Sent: Wednesday, August 20, 2025 11:47 AM

To: [Redacted] First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>

Cc: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; Minister for Parliamentary Business 2024 <MinisterPB@gov.scot>; DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>;

Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; Kathy Johnston <Kathy.Johnston@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted] Julie Grant

<Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; Pauline Aylesbury <Pauline.Aylesbury@gov.scot> [Redacted]; [Redacted];

[Redacted] [Redacted]; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen

<Ross.Ingebrigtsen@gov.scot>; Emily Mackintosh <Emily.Mackintosh@gov.scot>; Olaf Stando

<Olaf.Stando@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary

<PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; Luke Mcbratney <Luke.Mcbratney@gov.scot>; Graham Fisher

<Graham.Fisher@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>;

Katherine White <Katherine.White@gov.scot>; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Off Sen: 'Your Right to Choose' - for clearance to proceed to Cabinet

Hi [Redacted]

Can I check that as per the FM wishes the whole document has been checked against this:

[Redacted - S30C - Otherwise prejudice effective conduct of public affairs]

Ewan

Ewan Crawford
Senior Special Adviser to the First Minister,
EU affairs and the constitution.
Tel: [Redacted]
Mobile [Redacted]

Please note Scottish Ministers, Special advisers and the Permanent Secretary to the Scottish Government are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot for information.

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 20 August 2025 11:21

To: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>

Cc: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; Minister for Parliamentary Business 2024 <MinisterPB@gov.scot>; DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; Kathy Johnston <Kathy.Johnston@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; Pauline Aylesbury <Pauline.Aylesbury@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <Ross.Ingebrigtsen@gov.scot>; Emily Mackintosh <Emily.Mackintosh@gov.scot>; Olaf Stando <Olaf.Stando@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; Luke Mcbratney <Luke.Mcbratney@gov.scot>; Graham Fisher <Graham.Fisher@gov.scot> [Redacted]; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; Katherine White <Katherine.White@gov.scot>; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Off Sen: 'Your Right to Choose' - for clearance to proceed to Cabinet

[Redacted]

Thank you. I can confirm we have made the change to the Foreword and will send through the revised paper to Cabinet Secretariat.

Kind regards

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted] > **On Behalf Of** First Minister

Sent: Wednesday, August 20, 2025 11:11 AM

To: Leila Brosnan <Leila.Brosnan@gov.scot>; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>

Cc: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; Minister for Parliamentary Business 2024 <MinisterPB@gov.scot>; DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; Kathy Johnston <Kathy.Johnston@gov.scot>; [Redacted][Redacted]; [Redacted]; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; Pauline Aylesbury <Pauline.Aylesbury@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted][Redacted]; [Redacted]; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <Ross.Ingebrigtsen@gov.scot>; Emily Mackintosh <Emily.Mackintosh@gov.scot>; Olaf Stando <Olaf.Stando@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; Luke Mcbratney <Luke.Mcbratney@gov.scot>; Graham Fisher <Graham.Fisher@gov.scot>; [Redacted] Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; Katherine White <Katherine.White@gov.scot>; Helen Webster

<Helen.Webster@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Off Sen: 'Your Right to Choose' - for clearance to proceed to Cabinet

This email is for the official record and confirms a Ministerial Decision. This email must be placed in the official record (eRDM) by your team in line with SG records management policy.

Leila,

The First Minister is content for these documents to proceed to Cabinet with the following change to the intro.

[Redacted - S30C - Otherwise prejudice effective conduct of public affairs]

Kind regards,

[Redacted]

[Redacted] Deputy Private Secretary to the First Minister

Office of the First Minister

5th Floor | St Andrew's House | Regent Road Edinburgh | EH1 3DG | [Redacted]

From: [Redacted] **Sent:** 19 August 2025 17:42

To: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>

Cc: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; Minister for Parliamentary Business 2024 <MinisterPB@gov.scot>; DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; Kathy Johnston <Kathy.Johnston@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; Pauline Aylesbury <Pauline.Aylesbury@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <Ross.Ingebrigtsen@gov.scot>; Emily Mackintosh <Emily.Mackintosh@gov.scot>; Olaf Stando <Olaf.Stando@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; Luke Mcbratney <Luke.Mcbratney@gov.scot>; Graham Fisher <Graham.Fisher@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; Katherine White <Katherine.White@gov.scot>; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>

Subject: Off Sen: 'Your Right to Choose' - for clearance to proceed to Cabinet

PS/First Minister

Copy as above

OFFICIAL SENSITIVE – YOUR RIGHT TO CHOOSE

Please find attached a draft copy of the paper 'Your Right to Choose' plus a draft Cabinet paper for the **First Minister's consideration and clearance to proceed to Cabinet**. If agreed, the First Minister would introduce the paper to Cabinet on [Redacted - S30C - Otherwise prejudice effective conduct of public affairs], seek Cabinet approval to proceed to publication in [Redacted - S30C - Otherwise prejudice effective conduct of public affairs]

The 'Right to Choose' paper calls on the UK Government to make a clear commitment (i) to respect the people of Scotland's right to choose their constitutional future, and (ii) if and when the people of Scotland so choose, it will enter into negotiations with the Scottish Government about the transfer of power required for a lawful and constitutional referendum, legislated for by the Scottish Parliament.

In order for the paper to [Redacted - S30C - Otherwise prejudice effective conduct of public affairs] we would be grateful for a response by noon on [Redacted - S30C - Otherwise prejudice effective conduct of public affairs]

Kind regards

[Redacted]
[Redacted] **Constitution Directorate**
Scottish Government

Item 19

From: Luke Mcbratney <Luke.Mcbratney@gov.scot>

Sent: 29 August 2025 15:27

To: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; Minister for Parliamentary Business 2024 <MinisterPB@gov.scot>; Lord Advocate <LordAdvocate@gov.scot>; Solicitor General <SolicitorGeneral@gov.scot>

Cc: Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; DG Corporate <dgcorporate@gov.scot>; Solicitor to the Scottish Government <solicitor@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; Graham Fisher <Graham.Fisher@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; Director Propriety and Ethics <DirectorProprietyandEthics@gov.scot>; Kathy Johnston <Kathy.Johnston@gov.scot>; Andrew Bruce <Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot>; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot> [Redacted] [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted] [Redacted][Redacted][Redacted]; Pauline Aylesbury <Pauline.Aylesbury@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <Ross.Ingebrigtsen@gov.scot>; Olaf Stando <Olaf.Stando@gov.scot>; Emily Mackintosh <Emily.Mackintosh@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; [Redacted][Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]

Subject: URGENT submission re 'Your Right to Decide' publication

First Minister,

Please find attached (1) a submission inviting you to approve the text of 'Your Right to Decide', considered by Cabinet earlier this week, and (2) a draft of 'Your Right to Decide', updated following feedback from Cabinet.

Luke

Item 19 attachment 1

[Redacted - S30C - Otherwise prejudice effective conduct of public affairs]

Item 19 attachment 2

[Redacted - S30C - Otherwise prejudice effective conduct of public affairs]

Item 20

From: [Redacted] **On Behalf Of** First Minister

Sent: 31 August 2025 20:32

To: Luke Mcbratney <Luke.Mcbratney@gov.scot>; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; Minister for Parliamentary Business 2024 <MinisterPB@gov.scot>; Lord Advocate <LordAdvocate@gov.scot>; Solicitor General <SolicitorGeneral@gov.scot>; John Webster <John.Webster@gov.scot>

Cc: Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; DG Corporate <dgcorporate@gov.scot>; Solicitor to the Scottish Government <solicitor@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; Graham Fisher <Graham.Fisher@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; Director Propriety and Ethics <DirectorProprietyandEthics@gov.scot>; Kathy Johnston <Kathy.Johnston@gov.scot>; Andrew Bruce <Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot>; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; [Redacted][Redacted[Redacted]]; [Redacted]; [Redacted] [Redacted]; [Redacted]Pauline Aylesbury <Pauline.Aylesbury@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <Ross.Ingebrigtsen@gov.scot>; Olaf Stando <Olaf.Stando@gov.scot>; Emily Mackintosh <Emily.Mackintosh@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot[Redacted]>; [Redacted]; [Redacted] [Redacted]>

Subject: RE: URGENT submission re 'Your Right to Decide' publication

This email is for the official record and confirms a Ministerial Decision. This email must be placed in the official record (eRDM) by your team [in line with SG records management policy](#).

Hi Luke,

The First Minister has noted and has provided comments reflected in the attached revised final copy of the document.

Grateful if these changes can be reflected and used in the final version.

Kind regards,
[Redacted]

[Redacted]
Deputy Private Secretary to the First Minister
Office of the First Minister
5th Floor | St Andrew's House | Regent Road Edinburgh | EH1 3DG | [Redacted]

Item 20 attachment 1

[Redacted - S30C - Otherwise prejudice effective conduct of public affairs]

Item 21

From: [Redacted]> **On Behalf Of** First Minister

Sent: 02 September 2025 16:11

To: [Redacted]>; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Minister for Parliamentary Business 2024 <MinisterPB@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; Luke Mcbratney <Luke.Mcbratney@gov.scot>; [Redacted]>; ParlyClerk Scotland <ParlyClerkScotland@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Spads Admin <Spads_Admin@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; [Redacted]>; Andrew Bruce <Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot>; [Redacted]>; [Redacted]>; Graham Fisher <Graham.Fisher@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]>; Legal Secretariat to the Lord Advocate <LegalSecretariattotheLordAdvocate@gov.scot>; Solicitor to the Scottish Government <solicitor@gov.scot>; Solicitor General <SolicitorGeneral@gov.scot>; Lord Advocate <LordAdvocate@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Your Right To Decide - GIQ submission for clearance - 2pm today

Can I check if the letter to the Convener is issuing from FM or Cab Sec, and is it coming tonight for clearance?

[Redacted]

Private Secretary

Office of the First Minister

Mobile: [Redacted]

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 02 September 2025 15:43

To: First Minister ; Minister for Parliamentary Business 2024 ; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 ; Luke Mcbratney ; [Redacted]; ParlyClerk Scotland ; Permanent Secretary ; DG Strategy and External Affairs ; Ewan Crawford ; Spads Admin ; Dominic Munro ; Julie Grant ; [Redacted]; Andrew Bruce ; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Graham Fisher ; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Legal Secretariat to the Lord Advocate ; Solicitor to the Scottish Government ; Solicitor General ; Lord Advocate

Subject: RE: Your Right To Decide - GIQ submission for clearance - 2pm today

Dear all,

Thank you for the swift turnaround on this. I can confirm the question has now been lodged by Keith Brown MSP, and will appear in tonight's business Bulletin at approximately 6pm.

The question will be answered at 4pm tomorrow, 3rd September.

Best regards

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 02 September 2025 14:14

To: Lord Advocate ; Solicitor General

Cc: First Minister ; Minister for Parliamentary Business 2024 ; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 ; Luke Mcbratney ; [Redacted]; ParlyClerk Scotland ; Permanent Secretary ; DG Strategy and External Affairs ; Ewan Crawford ; Spads Admin ; Dominic Munro ; Julie Grant ; [Redacted]; Andrew Bruce ; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Graham Fisher ; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Legal Secretariat to the Lord Advocate ; Solicitor to the Scottish Government

Subject: RE: Your Right To Decide - GIQ submission for clearance - 2pm today

Apologies, clearance not required, for Information only.

Best regards

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 02 September 2025 14:08

To: Lord Advocate <LordAdvocate@gov.scot>; Solicitor General <SolicitorGeneral@gov.scot>

Cc: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Minister for Parliamentary Business 2024 <MinisterPB@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; Luke Mcbratney <Luke.Mcbratney@gov.scot>; [Redacted]< ParlyClerk Scotland <ParlyClerkScotland@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Spads Admin <Spads_Admin@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; [Redacted]>; Andrew Bruce <Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot>; [Redacted]>; [Redacted]>; Graham Fisher <Graham.Fisher@gov.scot>; [Redacted]>; [Redacted]>; Legal Secretariat to the Lord Advocate <LegalSecretariattotheLordAdvocate@gov.scot>; Solicitor to the Scottish Government <solicitor@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Your Right To Decide - GIQ submission for clearance - 2pm today

Importance: High

Adding Lord Advocate and Solicitor General for clearance.

Best regards

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]> **On Behalf Of** First Minister

Sent: 02 September 2025 14:05

To: Minister for Parliamentary Business 2024 <MinisterPB@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; Luke Mcbratney <Luke.Mcbratney@gov.scot>; [Redacted]>; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>

Cc: ParlyClerk Scotland <ParlyClerkScotland@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Spads Admin <Spads_Admin@gov.scot>; [Redacted];

Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; [Redacted];
Andrew Bruce <Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot>; [Redacted] [Redacted]; Graham Fisher
<Graham.Fisher@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]
Subject: RE: Your Right To Decide - GIQ submission for clearance - 2pm today

Thanks all – the FM did not have time to consider the GIQ so was content for this to go on Mr Robertson's clearance given time.

[Redacted]
Private Secretary
Office of the First Minister
Mobile: [Redacted]

From: [Redacted] > **On Behalf Of** Minister for Parliamentary Business 2024
Sent: 02 September 2025 13:56
To: Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>;
Luke Mcbratney <Luke.Mcbratney@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; First Minister
<FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Minister for Parliamentary Business 2024 <MinisterPB@gov.scot>
Cc: ParlyClerk Scotland <ParlyClerkScotland@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary
<PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Ewan
Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Spads Admin <Spads_Admin@gov.scot>; [Redacted];
Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; [Redacted];
Andrew Bruce <Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Graham Fisher
<Graham.Fisher@gov.scot> [Redacted] [Redacted]
Subject: RE: Your Right To Decide - GIQ submission for clearance - 2pm today

This email is for the official record and confirms a Ministerial Decision. This email must be placed in the official record (eRDM) by your team [in line with SG records management policy](#).

Hi [Redacted],

Subject to FM's views, Mr Hepburn is content for his interests.

Thanks,
[Redacted]

[Redacted] Private Secretary to the [Minister for Parliamentary Business](#) – Jamie Hepburn MSP
T: [Redacted] | **E:** MinisterPB@gov.scot

From: [Redacted] > **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024
Sent: 02 September 2025 13:45
To: Luke Mcbratney <Luke.Mcbratney@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; First Minister
<FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Minister for Parliamentary Business 2024 <MinisterPB@gov.scot>;
Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>
Cc: ParlyClerk Scotland <ParlyClerkScotland@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary
<PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Ewan
Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Spads Admin <Spads_Admin@gov.scot>; [Redacted];
Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; [Redacted];
Andrew Bruce <Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Graham Fisher

<Graham.Fisher@gov.scot>; [Redacted] [Redacted]>

Subject: RE: Your Right To Decide - GIQ submission for clearance - 2pm today

This email is for the official record and confirms a Ministerial Decision. This email must be placed in the official record (eRDM) by your team in line with SG records management policy.

Hi [Redacted],

Many thanks for the submission and GIQ (reattached for reference). Mr Robertson is content for his part (including with the GIQ which is going in his name).

In future, it would be helpful to have GIQs up with slightly more notice please – a 1 hour turnaround on clearance is far from ideal.

Thanks,
[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Private Secretary to the Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture – Angus Robertson MSP

The Scottish Government

St Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG

Email: CabSecCEAC@gov.scot

Phone: [Redacted]

From: Luke Mcbratney <Luke.Mcbratney@gov.scot>

Sent: 02 September 2025 13:29

To: [Redacted]>; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Minister for Parliamentary Business 2024 <MinisterPB@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>

Cc: ParlyClerk Scotland <ParlyClerkScotland@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Spads Admin <Spads_Admin@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; Andrew Bruce <Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Graham Fisher <Graham.Fisher@gov.scot> [Redacted]; [Redacted]

Subject: RE: Your Right To Decide - GIQ submission for clearance - 2pm today

Copying in [Redacted]

Luke McBratney | Deputy Director, Elections and Constitutional Projects

Constitution Directorate | DG Strategy and External Affairs

mob: [Redacted] | **email:** luke.mcbratney@gov.scot

My normal working week is Tuesday to Friday.

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 02 September 2025 13:07

To: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Minister for Parliamentary Business 2024 <MinisterPB@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>

Cc: ParlyClerk Scotland <ParlyClerkScotland@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary

<PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Spads Admin <Spads_Admin@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; Luke Mcbratney <Luke.Mcbratney@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; Andrew Bruce <Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot>; [Redacted][Redacted]; Graham Fisher <Graham.Fisher@gov.scot>; [Redacted]>

Subject: Your Right To Decide - GIQ submission for clearance - 2pm today

First Minister
Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture
Minister for Parliamentary Business

Please see attached submission and GIQ relating to the upcoming Your Right To Decide paper.

Grateful if clearance can be provided no later than **2pm today** to allow time for the Parliamentary Clerk to lodge the question today, in order for it to be answered at 4pm tomorrow.

[@ParlyClerk Scotland](#), [Redacted] is Lead Action Officer, so grateful for the case to be assigned to [Redacted] once cleared.

Kind regards,

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Item 21 attachment 1

[Redacted]
Constitution Directorate
2 September 2025

First Minister
cc Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, Cabinet Affairs and Strategy
Minister for Parliamentary Business

GIQ – PUBLICATION OF YOUR RIGHT TO CHOOSE PAPER

Priority and Purpose

URGENT:

5. To seek clearance from the First Minister and the Minister for Parliamentary Business for the attached Government Initiated Question (GIQ) and answer at Annex A to be lodged as late as possible today, Tuesday 2nd September, and answered at 16:00 on Wednesday 3rd September.

6. To give the Parliamentary Clerk the necessary time for the question to be tabled, we would be grateful for clearance of the GIQ by **14:00 on Tuesday 2 September.**

Context and Issues

7. After discussion at Cabinet 26 August, it was agreed that the Scottish Government publish a paper 'Your Right to Decide' and that its publication should be announced to Parliament via GIC. Publication of the paper on the gov.scot website is scheduled for 00:01 Thursday 4 September. An embargoed pdf copy will be sent to the press on Wednesday 3 September.,

8. At the point that the GIQ is answered at 16:00 on Wednesday 3rd September, the fact of the publication of Your Right to Decide will be in the public domain. However, the link to the text of the publication in the GIQ answer, will not go live until 0:01 on Thursday morning. At that point on 4 September the paper will be publicly available on the Scottish Government website.

9. We propose that in order to ensure that all MSPs are promptly made aware of the publication, a GIQ should be used to announce the publication to Parliament. We will also write to the Convener of the Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee at the time of publication.

[Redacted - s.29(1)(c) Advice by the Law Officers]

Quality Assurance

8. This submission has been approved by Luke McBratney, DD within the Constitution Directorate.

Conclusion and next Steps

9. That the First Minister and the Minister for Parliamentary Business confirm that they are content for the GIQ to be lodged late in the day on Tuesday 2nd September and answered at 16:00 Wednesday 3rd September as per the text at Annex A; and agree to nominate Keith Brown MSP to ask the GIQ, with the Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture, Angus Robertson MSP, answering.

[Redacted]
Constitution Directorate

Cabinet Secretaries and Ministers Copy List	For Action	For Information Portfolio interest	For Information Constituency interest	For Information General awareness
Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, Cabinet Affairs and Strategy		X		
Minister for Parliamentary Business		X		
Lord Advocate		X		
Solicitor General		X		

Officials Copy List

Permanent Secretary
DG Strategy and External Affairs
DG Corporate
Andy Bruce
Dominic Munro
Graham Fisher
Chris Mackie
[Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted]
[Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted]
[Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted]
[Redacted]
Ewan Campbell
Olaf Stando
Colin McAllister

Draft Government Initiated Question – Publication of Your Right To Decide paper**Question - Keith Brown MSP:**

To ask the Scottish Government what further publications it has planned in connection with its policy on giving people in Scotland the right to decide their constitutional future?

Answer – Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, Cabinet Affairs and Strategy, Angus Robertson MSP:

On 4th September, the Scottish Government will publish a new paper which evidences and updates the right of people in Scotland to decide their future.

Your Right to Decide demonstrates that the right to decide has been accepted across the political spectrum, including by former UK Prime Ministers and calls on the current UK Government to respect this key democratic principle.

Your Right To Decide will be available to view on the Scottish Government website from Thursday 4th September at <https://www.gov.scot/isbn/9781806430321>

Item 22

From: [Redacted] > **On Behalf Of** First Minister

Sent: 04 September 2025 17:58

To: [Redacted]>; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>

Cc: Luke Mcbratney <Luke.Mcbratney@gov.scot>; [Redacted]>; [Redacted]; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; [Redacted] [Redacted]>; [Redacted]

Subject: RE: OFF SEN Letters for clearance - FM to FM/dFM Northern Ireland - Your Right to Decide

[Redacted]

Letters issued – attached for your records.

Many thanks,
[Redacted]

[Redacted]**Private Secretary**
Office of the First Minister
Mobile: [Redacted]

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 04 September 2025 16:03

To: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>

Cc: Luke Mcbratney <Luke.Mcbratney@gov.scot>; [Redacted]>; [Redacted]>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; [Redacted]>; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; [Redacted];

[Redacted]>; [Redacted]

Subject: OFF SEN Letters for clearance - FM to FM/dFM Northern Ireland - Your Right to Decide

PS/FM,

Please see attached two letters for the First Minister's clearance, addressed to the First Minister and the deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland, regarding the publication of the Your Right to Decide paper.

If the First Minister is content I would be grateful if these letters could please issue today.

Kind regards
[Redacted]

Item 22 attachment 1

Attached separately

Item 22 attachment 2

Attached separately

Item 22 attachment 3

[Supporting documents - Your Right to Decide - gov.scot](#)

Item 23

From: Luke Mcbratney <Luke.Mcbratney@gov.scot>

Sent: 12 September 2025 15:28

To: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; Minister for Parliamentary Business 2024 <MinisterPB@gov.scot>

Cc: Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Stephen Noon <Stephen.Noon@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Brian Dornan <Brian.Dornan@gov.scot>; [Redacted]>; [Redacted]>; [Redacted]>; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; [Redacted]>; [Redacted]>; [Redacted]>; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: URGENT Sub and Draft - Final BANS Paper - A Fresh Start with Independence

... copying in Colin McA

Luke McBratney | Deputy Director, Elections and Constitutional Projects
Constitution Directorate | DG Strategy and External Affairs
mob: [Redacted] | **email:** luke.mcbratney@gov.scot
My normal working week is Tuesday to Friday.

From: Luke Mcbratney
Sent: 12 September 2025 15:25
To: First Minister ; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic ; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 ; Minister for Parliamentary Business 2024
Cc: [Redacted]; Ewan Crawford ; Stephen Noon ; Permanent Secretary ; DG Strategy and External Affairs ; Dominic Munro ; Brian Dornan ; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Julie Grant ; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox
Subject: URGENT Sub and Draft - Final BANS Paper - A Fresh Start with Independence

FMPO,

Please find attached (1) a short submission, and (2) a draft version of the final Building a New Scotland Series Paper: A Fresh Start with Independence.

This is being sent following a steer from the FM earlier this week, which Stephen Noon discussed with me.

[Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

Feedback by Monday morning would keep us on track.

Thanks,

Luke

Item 23 attachment 1

[Redacted - S30C - Otherwise prejudice effective conduct of public affairs]

Item 23 attachment 2

[Redacted - S30C - Otherwise prejudice effective conduct of public affairs]

Item 24

From: Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>
Sent: 17 September 2025 16:43
To: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>
Cc: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>;

Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>

Subject: I hope this is helpful. RE: Introductory meeting - CSPM/FM Scotland

[Redacted],

Thanks for the below.

[Redacted - S30(b)(i) – Free and frank advice]

I hope this is helpful.

Thanks,

Chris

Chris Mackie

Deputy Director, Constitution & UK Relations

T: [Redacted]

From: [Redacted]> **On Behalf Of** First Minister

Sent: 17 September 2025 16:35

To: Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]>; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>

Cc: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>

Subject: FW: Introductory meeting - CSPM/FM Scotland

Hi all,

Please see below meeting request from the new CDL and Minister for Intergovernmental Relations.

[Redacted - S30(b)(i) – Free and frank advice]

Thanks,

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Deputy Private Secretary | Office of the First Minister | [Redacted]

Item 25

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 19 September 2025 11:06

To: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <Ross.Ingebrigtsen@gov.scot>; Jack Middleton <Jack.Middleton@gov.scot>

Cc: Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; [Redacted]

Subject: RE: Introductory meeting - CSPM/FM Scotland

Thanks [Redacted], much appreciated. Spads – we'd be grateful for a steer here if possible, [Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

Many thanks indeed
[Redacted]

[Redacted] (she/her) | Constitution and UK Relations Division | Constitution Directorate

From: [Redacted]> **On Behalf Of** First Minister

Sent: 19 September 2025 10:42

To: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>

Cc: Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Introductory meeting - CSPM/FM Scotland

Hi [Redacted],

As discussed - see attached.

Thanks,
[Redacted]

[Redacted]
Deputy Private Secretary to the First Minister
Office of the First Minister
5th Floor | St Andrew's House | Regent Road Edinburgh | EH1 3DG | [Redacted]

From: [Redacted]**On Behalf Of** First Minister

Sent: 18 September 2025 10:13

To: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>

Cc: Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Introductory meeting - CSPM/FM Scotland

Thanks [Redacted] – I can respond to the initial message, copying you in, and then will leave for you to pick up.

Thanks,
[Redacted]
[Redacted](She/Her)
Deputy Private Secretary | Office of the First Minister | [Redacted]

From: [Redacted]**On Behalf Of** Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic

Sent: 18 September 2025 09:54

To: Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>;

[Redacted]; [Redacted] Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>
Cc: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Introductory meeting - CSPM/FM Scotland

Chris/[Redacted],

DFM is content to schedule a call with the new CDL and Minister for Intergovernmental Relations.

[Redacted] – would you like DFMPO to respond to the meeting request below, or will you respond and copy us in to take this forward?

Many thanks,

[Redacted]

Deputy Private Secretary to the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Gaelic – Kate Forbes MSP

Lauren Jeffries, Leas-rùnaire Priobhaideach dhan Leas-Phrìomh Mhinistear is do Rùnaire a' Chaibineit airson na h-Eaconamaidh is Gàidhlig – Ceit Fhoirbeis BPA
The Scottish Government | St Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG
E: DFMCSEG@gov.scot

Item 26

From: Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>

Sent: 20 September 2025 13:19

To: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <Ross.Ingebrigtsen@gov.scot>; Jack Middleton <Jack.Middleton@gov.scot>

Cc: Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted][Redacted]; Mark Boyce <Mark.Boyce@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Possible Monday Meeting -RE: Introductory meeting - CSPM/FM Scotland

PS/FM,

Please find attached a briefing for the First Minister's proposed meeting with the Chief Secretary to the Prime Minister on Monday.

[Redacted - S30(b)(i) – Free and frank advice]

I hope this is helpful – please let me know if you need anything further.

Best wishes,

Chris

Chris Mackie

Deputy Director, Constitution & UK Relations

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted] > **On Behalf Of** First Minister

Sent: 19 September 2025 22:01

To: Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <Ross.Ingebrigtsen@gov.scot>; Jack Middleton <Jack.Middleton@gov.scot>

Cc: Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted][Redacted] Mark Boyce <Mark.Boyce@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Possible Monday Meeting -RE: Introductory meeting - CSPM/FM Scotland

Thanks Chris.

[Redacted]

From: Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>

Sent: 19 September 2025 22:00

To: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <Ross.Ingebrigtsen@gov.scot>; Jack Middleton <Jack.Middleton@gov.scot>

Cc: Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Mark Boyce <Mark.Boyce@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Possible Monday Meeting -RE: Introductory meeting - CSPM/FM Scotland

[Redacted] – thanks.

We spoke and just acknowledging receipt to confirm I will submit by the deadline. Grateful for further details when you have them.

Besty wishes,

Chris

Chris Mackie

Deputy Director, Constitution & UK Relations

T: [Redacted]

From: [Redacted] > **On Behalf Of** First Minister

Sent: 19 September 2025 19:48

To: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <Ross.Ingebrigtsen@gov.scot>; Jack Middleton <Jack.Middleton@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>

Cc: Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Mark Boyce

<Mark.Boyce@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Possible Monday Meeting -RE: Introductory meeting - CSPM/FM Scotland

Evening,

Attaching briefing template.

As soon as I have further details, I will update you.

Thanks,

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted] **On Behalf Of** First Minister

Sent: 19 September 2025 19:39

To: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Lotti Lancaster <Lotti.Lancaster@gov.scot>; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <Ross.Ingebrigtsen@gov.scot>; Jack Middleton <Jack.Middleton@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>

Cc: Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted][Redacted]; Mark Boyce <Mark.Boyce@gov.scot>

Subject: Possible Monday Meeting -RE: Introductory meeting - CSPM/FM Scotland

Importance: High

[Redacted], Chris

[Redacted - S30(b)(i) – Free and frank advice]

The Scotland House London team can support during the meeting and circulate a minute.

Many thanks,

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Private Secretary

Office of the First Minister

Mobile: [Redacted]

From: [Redacted] **On Behalf Of** First Minister

Sent: 19 September 2025 11:25

To: [Redacted] First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <Ross.Ingebrigtsen@gov.scot>; Jack Middleton <Jack.Middleton@gov.scot>

Cc: Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; [Redacted]

Subject: RE: Introductory meeting - CSPM/FM Scotland

Hi [Redacted],

I have spoken to Jack. I will ask FM for views.

Thanks,
[Redacted]

[Redacted]
Deputy Private Secretary to the First Minister
Office of the First Minister
5th Floor | St Andrew's House | Regent Road Edinburgh | EH1 3DG | [Redacted]

From: [Redacted]
Sent: 19 September 2025 11:06
To: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <Ross.Ingebrigtsen@gov.scot>; Jack Middleton <Jack.Middleton@gov.scot>
Cc: Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; [Redacted]
Subject: RE: Introductory meeting - CSPM/FM Scotland

Thanks [Redacted], much appreciated. Spads – we'd be grateful for a steer here if possible, [Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

Many thanks indeed
[Redacted]

[Redacted](she/her) | Constitution and UK Relations Division | Constitution Directorate | Scottish Government | E: [Redacted] | W: www.gov.scot | Address: 2 West, St. Andrew's House, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG |

I work Tuesday to Friday, Monday is my non-working day.

From: [Redacted] **On Behalf Of** First Minister
Sent: 19 September 2025 10:42
To: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>
Cc: Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Introductory meeting - CSPM/FM Scotland

Hi [Redacted],

As discussed - see attached.

Thanks,
[Redacted]

[Redacted]
Deputy Private Secretary to the First Minister
Office of the First Minister
5th Floor | St Andrew's House | Regent Road Edinburgh | EH1 3DG | [Redacted]

Item 26 attachment 1

BRIEFING FOR THE FIRST MINISTER

MEETING WITH CHIEF SECRETARY TO THE PRIME MINISTER, CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY OF LANCASTER AND MINISTER FOR INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELAITONS

22 September 2025

Key message	The Scottish Government is committed to forging a constructive relationship with the UK Government. However, despite some progress we have concerns as to the extent of the reset in relations.
What	Introductory meeting with Rt Hon Darren Jones, Chief Secretary to the Prime Minister, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for Intergovernmental Relations
Why	[Redacted - S30(b)(i) – Free and frank advice]
Who	First Minister Chief Secretary to the Prime Minister
Where	Diary Team will advise in covering email
When	Diary Team will advise in covering email
Likely themes	[Redacted - S30(b)(i) – Free and frank advice]
Media	Non-media event
Supporting official	Scotland House London team to confirm
Attached documents	Annex A – biography of Rt Hon Darren Jones MP Annex B - Copy of letter from Deputy First Minister to Minister Jones, dated 16 September.

AGENDA AND SUMMARY

You have agreed to meet Rt Hon Darren Jones MP, following his appointment as the UK Government minister responsible for intergovernmental relations. Mr Jones was appointed Chief Secretary to the Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in the recent UK reshuffle. He has chosen to be known primarily by his Chief Secretary to the Prime Minister title. A biography of Mr Jones is attached at **Annex A**.

[Redacted - S30(b)(i) – Free and frank advice]

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster administers the estates and rents of the Duchy of Lancaster and is a member of the Cabinet. After the Prime Minister, they are the most senior minister in the Cabinet Office.

As well as intergovernmental relations, Mr Jones has responsibility for:

- Missions - supporting delivery of Government's priorities
- Oversight of all Cabinet Office policy
- National security, resilience, and civil contingencies, including:
 - COBR
 - Resilience policy
 - Cyber security
 - State threats
 - National Security and Investment Act
- Propriety and ethics
- Public appointments
- Major events policy

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS BRIEFING

The UK Labour manifesto for the 2024 General Election made the following commitment:

"As part of Labour's plans to clean up politics and return it to the service of working people, we will reset the UK Government's relationship with devolved governments in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Labour will ensure the structures and institutions of intergovernmental working improve relationships and collaboration on policy. Labour will strengthen the Sewel Convention by setting out a new memorandum of understanding outlining how the nations will work together for the common good."

This change in approach was publicly welcomed by Scottish Ministers and has been followed by substantial interministerial engagement. [Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

Individual points of background and top lines on intergovernmental issues are included below.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS TOP LINES

The Scottish Government is committed to forging a constructive and collaborative relationship with the UK Government

- There is a substantial opportunity to achieve better outcomes when we work together in a way that reflects our respective responsibilities, and those of our respective legislatures.
- This should be done with joint working and cooperation on a voluntary basis, and in a way that respects the Scottish Parliament and the Devolution Settlement.
- We welcomed the UK Government's commitment to reset its relationship with the devolved governments of the United Kingdom.
- We recognise that some progress has been made, with improvements in the tone and frequency of the engagement across a range of policy areas.
- We also welcome good collaborative working on areas of shared concern – notably on issues such as securing the future of Grangemouth and our shared ambitions on clean energy.
- And we recognise the UK Government's commitment to making the formal intergovernmental machinery work better, with improvements in the operation of interministerial groups.

[Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

[Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

[Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

ANNEX A – DARREN JONES BIOGRAPHY



The Rt Hon Darren Jones MP was named Chief Secretary to the Prime Minister, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for Intergovernmental Relations in the recent UK Government reshuffle. He will attend UK Cabinet and is tasked with driving delivery of the Prime Minister's priorities across government as well as holding responsibility for intergovernmental relations.

Born in Bristol in 1986, Jones grew up on a council estate and went to a local state school in the Shirehampton area of the city. He studied human bioscience at the University of Plymouth and subsequently studied law at the University of West England and then at the University of Law in Bristol before practising as a solicitor, specialising in technology law.

Previously on the national youth committees of both the Co-operative Party and Unite the Union, he entered Westminster at the 2017 election, winning the seat of Bristol North West with a majority of 4,761. He was re-elected in 2019 and won the seat again in 2024 with a majority of 15,669. Between 2017 and 2020, he served on the Commons' Science and Technology Committee and European Scrutiny Committee. He was chair of the Commons' Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee between 2019 and 2024.

Item 26 attachment 2

[Redacted - s.28(1) Relations within the UK]

Item 27

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 23 September 2025 17:13

To: Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; Minister for Parliamentary Business 2024 <MinisterPB@gov.scot>; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>

Cc: Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Kenneth Hogg <Kenneth.Hogg@gov.scot>; Martin Johnson <Martin.Johnson@gov.scot>; Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; Luke Mcbratney <Luke.Mcbratney@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted][Redacted]>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]>; [Redacted]>; [Redacted]>; [Redacted] [Redacted]; [Redacted]>; Russell Bain <Russell.Bain@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; Donna MacKinnon

<Donna.MacKinnon@gov.scot>; [Redacted]>; [Redacted]>; [Redacted]>; Helen Webster
<Helen.Webster@gov.scot>; [Redacted][Redacted] [Redacted]; Ewan Crawford
<Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; [Redacted][Redacted]

Subject: Routine (response before Friday 26 September) - Submission and draft response to CEEAC inquiry into Transparency of IGR and its implications for parliamentary scrutiny

**Deputy First Minister (for action),
Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Europe (for action),
Minister for Parliamentary Business (for action),
First Minister (for information),**

Please see attached a routine submission to seek ministerial approval of the Scottish Government's response to the Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee (CEEAC) inquiry into the '*Transparency of Intergovernmental activity and its Implications for parliamentary scrutiny*'.

We have agreed to issue to CEEAC before **Friday 26 September**, so very grateful for clearance before then.

Once Ministers are content, we would be grateful if Mr Robertson's PO could please send the Response (submission from 'the Scottish Government') to the CEEAC Committee Convener (Clare.Adamson.msp@parliament.scot), copying in the Committee's general mailbox (CEEAC.committee@parliament.scot). If you would like us to draft a covering email to this effect, please do let me know.

The Cabinet Secretary has also been invited to provide evidence in relation to this inquiry, as well as the independence referendum inquiry, on 18 December.

Kind regards,

[Redacted]

Item 27 attachment 1

Chris Mackie
Constitution and UK Relations
23 September 2025

**Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Gaelic
Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, Culture and External Affairs
Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans**

**SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO CEEAC COMMITTEE'S INQUIRY INTO
TRANSPARENCY OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL ACTIVITY**

Priority and Purpose

- **ROUTINE:** To seek ministerial approval of the Scottish Government's response to the Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture

Committee (CEEAC) inquiry into the ‘Transparency of Intergovernmental activity and its Implications for parliamentary scrutiny’, to issue before Friday 26 September.

Recommendation

[Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

Context and Issues

[Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

Next Steps

[Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

Risks to Delivery

N/A

Verity House Agreement Implications

N/A

Implications for Business, Investment and the Economy

N/A

Legal Considerations

N/A

Financial Considerations

N/A

Quality Assurance

- This submission and the attached draft response to the Committee have been cleared by Dominic Munro, Director for Constitution.

Conclusion and next Steps

- Once Ministers have confirmed they are content with the response, private office will submit the response to the Committee and officials will continue to liaise with parliamentary clerks about timescales regarding the outcomes of the inquiry.

Chris Mackie
CUKR
23 September 2025

Cabinet Secretaries and Ministers Copy List	For Action	For Information Portfolio interest	For Information Constituency interest	For Information General awareness
First Minister				X
Deputy First Minister	X			
Cabinet Secretary for Constitution and External Affairs	X			
Minister for Parliamentary Business	X			

Officials Copy List
Permanent Secretary DG Strategy and External Affairs Dominic Munro Kenneth Hogg Martin Johnson Chris Mackie Luke McBratney Gerald Byrne [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted] Russell Bain [Redacted] Donna Mackinnon [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted] Helen Webster [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted] Ewan Crawford (SpAd) Emily Mackintosh (SpAd)

[Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

Draft SG's response to the CEEAC Inquiry

[Attached separately]

Item 27 attachment 2

Scottish Government's response to the Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee Inquiry into 'Transparency of Intergovernmental activity and its implications for parliamentary scrutiny'

Introduction

The Scottish Government recognises the increased complexity of the devolution settlement and intergovernmental activity since EU Exit, and the need for appropriate transparency to ensure the Scottish Parliament can fulfil its function of scrutinising the Scottish Government's intergovernmental activity.

There is also a need for a shared, private space for intergovernmental discussion between the governments within the United Kingdom.

The Scottish Government welcomes the Scottish Parliament's inquiry into 'Transparency of intergovernmental activity and its implications for parliamentary scrutiny' and submits written evidence setting out an assessment on the following three themes:

1. progress on the UK Government's commitment to a 'reset' of relations with the devolved governments and what it means for parliamentary scrutiny;
2. transparency of formal intergovernmental structures and impact on scrutiny;
3. transparency of intergovernmental activity outside of formal intergovernmental structures, particularly considering arrangements such as the UK Internal Market Act 2020, common frameworks, the Sewel Convention and the potential for dynamic alignment with EU law as a result of new UK/EU agreements.

The relevant questions of the Inquiry, as tailored by the Committee's Clerk for Scottish Government's response, are included under each theme for ease of reference:

1. Progress on the 'reset' committed to by the UK Government and implications for parliamentary scrutiny

Question:

- *The progress to date on the intergovernmental relations reset committed to by the UK Government, and what the reset means for parliamentary scrutiny.*

1.1. Scottish Government's assessment of the 'reset' in the relationship with the UK Government

The new UK Government was formed by the Labour Party following its victory in the General Election on 4 July 2024. The Labour manifesto stated:

“As part of Labour’s plans to clean up politics and return it to the service of working people, we will reset the UK Government’s relationship with devolved governments in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland [ensuring] the structures and institutions of intergovernmental working improve relationships and collaboration on policy.”¹

The first anniversary of the new UK Government provided the opportunity for the Scottish Government to review how the reset has worked in practice. Evidence gathered from across the Scottish Government has allowed Scottish Ministers to conclude that there has been a partial reset in the relationship, with particular progress regarding the tone and frequency of engagement.

Significant progress was noted on issues where policy objectives between the governments were aligned, such as: engagement on pandemic preparedness; and joint work on clean energy ambitions, such as the UK Government’s Clean Power 2030 mission.

In relation to the formal intergovernmental structures, the Scottish Government concluded that the UK Government has generally maintained a good level of participation. Over the past year, the Prime Minister has held four bilateral meetings with the First Minister, and a consistent level of dialogue has existed at the middle tier, through the Interministerial Standing Committee and Finance Interministerial Standing Committee. There have also been two (top tier) PM and Heads of Devolved Governments meetings in this period (for comparison, there was only one held in 2022 with no top tier meeting taking place in 2023). Overall, despite some problems in individual groups, the Scottish Government consider there has been improvement in the general functioning of portfolio-level Interministerial Groups (IMGs), with all groups having met at least once over the first year.

Notwithstanding these improvements, the Scottish Government considers that several high-profile problems in intergovernmental working have occurred since the Labour government came to office. These include a lack of involvement and information sharing on UK trade deals (even when they significantly impact devolved interests) and an unwillingness to share information ahead of significant policy announcements with clear devolution read across.

An important example of this is the UK-EU summit negotiations, where in the later stages the devolved governments were not kept informed or consulted on progress, even in clearly devolved areas such as fisheries. Similarly, the Scottish Government was not informed of the proposed US-UK Trade Deal ahead of announcement, despite its impact on devolved responsibilities.

There has been acknowledgement from the UK Government of the deficiencies in its trade deal development and official-level engagement has improved since this acknowledgement.

¹ [Change Labour Party Manifesto 2024](#), p.109

However, for the reset to have been truly successful, devolved governments must be involved more closely in the conduct of trade negotiations as well as the formulation of UK policy and engagement in international matters more generally.

The Scottish Government was also concerned about a lack of engagement ahead of announcements on other major policy initiatives, such as the changes to Winter Fuel Payments and the UK Spending Review. Collaboration was also lacking in the development of the UK Trade Strategy and the UK Child Poverty Strategy.

Regarding both the statutory review of the Internal Market Act (IMA) and the UK Government's manifesto commitment to a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to "*strengthen the Sewel Convention*", as set out in detail below, progress has so far been insufficient to address the issues created by the previous UK Government.

While the new UK Government did not breach the Sewel Convention in relation to Scotland in its first year, there were numerous examples of bills being introduced without devolution issues being resolved, and with provisions which the Scottish Government has not been able to support in its memorandums to the Scottish Parliament. If UK Government departments continue to take this approach to legislation, there remains the risk of breaches in the future. The Scottish Government will work with the UK Government on its proposed MOU on the Sewel Convention, which needs to demonstrate to the Scottish Parliament how the Convention is being strengthened to respect the Parliament's decisions on questions of legislative consent.

In relation to the statutory review of the Internal Market Act, not only did it explicitly rule out, in advance, the Scottish Government's preferred option of repeal and replace, but it was also conducted without permitting the close collaboration of the devolved governments. There was no opportunity to discuss, far less jointly agree, the scope of the review and there was no acknowledgement that the Act was imposed by the previous UK Government without the consent of any devolved legislature. Moreover, the devolved governments were treated throughout the process as stakeholders, not partners; the review recommendations made little or no reference to the positions and priorities of the devolved governments and legislatures; and there was no acknowledgement of the IMA's constitutional effect, far less proposals on how this might be addressed.

As part of the stated 'reset', the UK Government has created the Council of the Nations and Regions (CNR), which brings together the Prime Minister, the Heads of Devolved Governments, the Mayor of London and the mayors of combined authorities and combined county authorities. The Council has met twice since the UK general election.

The CNR sits outwith formal IGR Review structures. It is a distinct forum with separate governance structures, agendas and membership owned wholly by the UK Government. While the CNR is still a relatively new entity, at this point Scottish Ministers have concerns about the value it adds to effective intergovernmental working, particularly given the asymmetric devolution arrangements between the heads of the devolved governments and the mayors of English regions, as well as the lack of a clear set of objectives meaning that, in our opinion, little benefit has been derived from the CNR plenary.

Furthermore, there are barriers to effective scrutiny of the CNR. There is no independent secretariat (the existing IGR secretariat is not currently used for this purpose), the dates of the meetings are confirmed at short notice, agendas are set by the UK Government without

opportunity for co-design by governments in attendance, and minutes are taken and agreed by the UK Government only, with no opportunity for devolved ministers to assure the minutes before they are finalised.

The UK Government has also tied the Top Tier PM and Heads of Devolved Governments meeting to the CNR, with both meetings taking place on the same day due to reasons of diary scheduling. While the increased frequency of the Top Tier PM and Heads of Devolved Governments meeting has been welcomed, making this meeting part of the programme of engagements under the CNR has served to limit the duration of the Top Tier meeting as well as impacting on the co-design of the Top Tier agendas, which is a principle set out in the IGR review.

Overall, Scottish Government Ministers have concluded that significant work is still required from the UK Government to fully reset the relationship; ensure its approach respects devolved responsibilities; fully involve Scottish Government at the appropriate point in policy development; and maintain a consistent approach to collaboration across all priorities areas.

The partial nature of the reset also has an impact on the Scottish Parliament, particularly in terms of how its devolved responsibilities and legislative processes are respected and engaged with. There remains wide inconsistency in the meaningful consideration from UK Government departments of Scottish Parliament procedures in the development and passage of legislation, which risks undermining the Parliament's role and authority. The assessment of the reset by the Scottish Government as 'partial' also reflects this impact on the powers of the Scottish Parliament.

1. 2 Implications of the 'reset' for parliamentary scrutiny

Continuing inconsistency in information sharing across UK Government departments or lack of meaningful engagement throughout the policy development process can also hinder the Scottish Parliament's ability to scrutinise effectively the relevant inter-governmental activity as the information available is more limited in scope or the activity is taking place later in the process.

It is therefore the Scottish Government's view that improvements need to be made by the UK Government to address these issues across departments and reaffirm the position that devolution ushered in new, legitimate centres of political authority across the UK, with important expectations and norms regarding democratic accountability.

In particular, the Scottish Government would welcome improvements in the consistency of experience across policy areas; improvements to information sharing generally and further work across the UK civil service to increase capability when it comes to dealing with devolved governments and legislatures, to raise standards in the UK Government towards the best practice already demonstrated in some parts of the UK Government.

2. Transparency of formal intergovernmental structures and impact on scrutiny

Questions

- *The extent of transparency of formal structures of intergovernmental relations and whether transparency could be improved.*

- *Whether procedures and mechanisms for joint working between governments could be developed and/or improved to ensure practical cooperation and resource sharing whilst safeguarding the powers of each government and the Scottish Parliament.*
- *If parliamentary scrutiny of intergovernmental activity can be improved and, if so, how.*
- *How inter-parliamentary work can aid the scrutiny of intergovernmental activity and lead to an increase in transparency and accountability. What level of information should be provided by governments in order to facilitate transparency.*

2.1 Formal IGR structures set out by the Intergovernmental Relations Review

The UK Government and the devolved governments concluded a Review of Intergovernmental Relations (IGR) ² in 2022. The new processes and structures established through the Review have become the main framework through which formal intergovernmental relations are conducted.

The Review's report set out five principles for engagement and collaborative working. It also introduced some practical improvements such as a fairer and more transparent escalation and dispute resolution mechanism; an impartial, standing IGR Secretariat; and improved reporting on intergovernmental activity, providing further transparency to, and accountability from, each government's respective legislatures.

Since the conclusion of the Review, the Scottish Government has worked collaboratively with the UK and other devolved governments to implement its recommendations. The Scottish Government has also engaged constructively through each of the different tiers of the new structure – the Top Tier PM and Heads of Devolved Governments meeting; Interministerial Standing Committee (IMSC), Finance Interministerial Standing Committee (FISC), and individual Interministerial Groups (IMGs).

The arrangements are supported by an impartial secretariat. A key function of the IGR Secretariat is not only to promote impartial and efficient intergovernmental relations between all governments but also to support individual governments to report to their respective legislatures regarding their IGR activity, as required.

As part of their work to support transparency and parliamentary accountability, the IGR Secretariat publishes communiques and terms of reference from the structures it supports, namely: the Prime Minister and Heads of Devolved Governments meeting; the Interministerial Standing Committee (IMSC); as well as any time-limited Interministerial Committees that may be formed by the IMSC. Secretariats supporting the Finance: Interministerial Standing Committee (F:ISC) and individual portfolio Interministerial Groups (IMGs) also publish communiques from their meetings. These can be found in one central hub on the UK Government website - [Intergovernmental relations - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/intergovernmental-relations).

The IGR Review also established that the IGR Secretariat will publish annual reports on intergovernmental activity. It is expected that annual reports for the periods 2022-23 and 2023-24 will be published in autumn 2025. Future annual reports will settle into a regular

² [Review of intergovernmental relations - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/intergovernmental-relations)

publication schedule as the IGR Secretariat becomes more established. Scottish Government officials will inform the Scottish Parliament once the reports have been published.

2.2 The Scottish Parliament – Scottish Government Written Agreement on Intergovernmental Relations

The [Scottish Parliament – Scottish Government Written Agreement on Intergovernmental Relations](#) - signed in 2016 - currently provides the basis for parliamentary scrutiny of formal intergovernmental activity, although it is worth noting that intergovernmental working will also be scrutinised by individual committees through routine examination of policy development for which intergovernmental working is a consideration.

In 2024, the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Government commissioned a [report](#) by Professor Nicola McEwen and Dr. Coree Brown-Swan to assess the extent to which the Agreement remained fit for purpose in light of the complexities and challenges to devolution posed by EU Exit and the COVID-19 pandemic. The report reflected on the changing nature of intergovernmental relations and devolved policymaking in the UK since the Agreement was introduced.

The report also recommended that there was more the Scottish Government could do to recapture the spirit of the Agreement. It argued that, in order to ensure the Agreement was fit for purpose, the transparency arrangements with respect to the Scottish Government's intergovernmental activity should keep pace with constitutional and intergovernmental developments and recognise and adapt to a new more complex landscape.

The Scottish Government has welcomed the report and its recommendations and is committed to working with the Scottish Parliament to update the Written Agreement, ensuring it captures the current (and adapts to the future) state of intergovernmental structures and ensures appropriate levels of scrutiny on intergovernmental activity. The Scottish Government agrees with the report's message that it is necessary *'to strike the balance between the need for confidentiality with the need for sufficient transparency to enable the Scottish Parliament to scrutinise the Scottish Government's approach to, and engagement, in intergovernmental relations.'*³

The Scottish Government remain committed to working with the Scottish Parliament to refresh the written agreement, although it is worth noting that this work has been paused pending the outcome of this Inquiry to ensure that its conclusions can be reflected in any refreshed agreement.

3. Transparency of intergovernmental activity outside of formal intergovernmental structures (Internal Market Act, Common Frameworks, UK-EU negotiations)

Questions:

- *How open intergovernmental activity falling outside of the formal structures (for example common frameworks) are and what this means for Parliamentary and stakeholder scrutiny.*

³ [Commissioned report: The Scottish Government-Scottish Parliament Written Agreement on Intergovernmental Relations: Still Fit for Purpose?](#) P.5

- *The potential consequences of insufficient scrutiny of intergovernmental activity, particularly considering arrangements such as common frameworks, the UK Internal Market Act 2020 and the potential for dynamic alignment with EU law as a result of new UK/EU agreements.*
- *What the evolving shared intergovernmental space means for parliamentary scrutiny and accountability, particularly in relation to legislative consent facilitated by the Sewel Convention, and the taking and exercise of delegated powers by UK Ministers in devolved areas.*

3.1 The UK Internal Market Act

The UK Internal Market Act (IMA) was introduced by the previous UK Government and passed at Westminster without the consent of any devolved legislature. It introduces radical new uncertainty as to the effect of laws passed by the Scottish Parliament and effectively provides a veto to UK Ministers on laws passed by a democratically accountable legislature. The Scottish Parliament has twice voted in favour of its repeal.

The Scottish Government's [position paper](#), published in April 2025, set out the impact of the Act on the powers and responsibilities of the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Government, calling on the UK Government to acknowledge the Act's constitutional effect and to work with the devolved governments to jointly design a workable, agreed alternative. No one wishes to see new, unnecessary barriers to trade for Scottish businesses and consumers. It is entirely possible to guard against these whilst also respecting devolution and the democratic accountability of the Scottish Parliament, in a manner which the IMA does not and cannot allow for.

In the Scottish Government's view, the [UK Government response to the Review of the United Kingdom Internal Market Act 2020 and Public Consultation](#), published in July 2025, represents a missed opportunity to remove an unnecessary source of friction between the governments of the UK and restore confidence in the devolution settlement.

Through the review, the UK Government has, unfortunately, chosen not to acknowledge the Act's far-reaching constitutional effect, despite the strength of evidence set out by not just the Scottish Government but the overwhelming majority of academic and legal commentators and a wide variety of civil society groups.

The proposals set out in the UK Government's response focus on non-binding administrative and procedural changes. These include consideration of environmental and public health policy drivers, a new *de minimis* threshold for economic impact and a renewed commitment to give effect to IMA exclusions where there is agreement to do so through a Common Framework.

There is also a proposed mechanism for referring matters to the Office for the Internal Market and a new reserve process which reverts decision making to UK Ministers, where agreement cannot be reached through a Common Framework. How this will operate alongside the existing dispute and escalation mechanisms for Common Frameworks remains unclear, as does how the Scottish Parliament's position is protected in this process.

This package of measures falls significantly short of what is needed to address the damage the IMA has caused to the powers of the Scottish Parliament, to effective intergovernmental

relations, and to the establishment of a workable, proportionate and transparent post-EU Exit market regime which delivers for businesses, consumers and citizens.

Unfortunately, the UK Government has followed its predecessor in asserting that the IMA is necessary, arguing only that improvements to its operation can be made, without any legislative change. The Scottish Government is equally clear that the Act is fundamentally misconceived and incompatible with devolution, and that it should be repealed and replaced with a balanced and agreed system of co-operation that both ensures market efficiencies and respects devolution.

The Welsh Government's position is also that the Act should be repealed and replaced with a workable, agreed alternative.^[10]

The UK Government has stressed that it went beyond the statutory minimum requirements for the review, undertaking it at an accelerated pace and with a slightly expanded scope. However, the review was undertaken solely by the UK Government, and a more collaborative approach to its design and delivery might have allowed for acknowledgement of the absence of co-production and consent, both governmental and legislative, that marked the introduction of the IMA.

The conclusion of the review leaves significant questions as to how the fundamental issues with the Act can be addressed. The commitment to foregrounding Common Frameworks as the primary mechanism for managing divergence between the nations of the UK is welcome, but there remains a lack of clarity on how the UK Government propose Common Frameworks fulfil their intended role. The market access principles of the IMA continue to apply automatically in almost all cases and subsequently condition the operation of Common Frameworks. The Scottish Government also welcomes the acknowledgment that the exclusion process has not operated as intended but remains unclear on how the situations we have previously seen can be avoided without acknowledging the more fundamental issues with the Act.

As matters stand, it is hard to see how the Scottish Parliament's well-founded and long-standing concerns about the Act's potential to undermine effective scrutiny of draft laws will be allayed by the UK Government's response.⁴

The UK Government's decision not to address the constitutional impact of the IMA also continues to hamper effective parliamentary scrutiny. The Scottish Parliament has previously been put in the position of scrutinising and passing laws whose legal effect was wholly undermined by the IMA;⁵ the Scottish Government cannot say with any confidence that a similar situation could not occur in future.

The UK response to the review does not set out how the proposals will enable effective parliamentary scrutiny. Most significantly it does not address concerns that decisions on devolved matters, which are the responsibility of the Scottish Parliament, can revert to UK Ministers where consensus cannot be reached through a Common Framework.

The financial assistance power in Part 6 of the IMA provides a means for the UK Government to spend directly in devolved areas, including economic development,

⁴ For academic commentary on the UKG review see, for example, Prof Horsley's article:

<https://ukconstitutionallaw.org/2025/07/21/thomas-horsley-reforming-the-uk-internal-market-the-uk-governments-response-to-the-review-of-the-united-kingdom-internal-market-act-2020/>

⁵ For example, regulation relating to Scotland's deposit return scheme, and provision to ban the sale of rodent glue traps in the Wildlife Management and Muirburn (Scotland) Act 2024.

infrastructure, sport and culture. This enables the UK Government to extend its powers in Scotland beyond those reserved in the Scotland Act 1998 and bypass the role of the Scottish Government and Scottish Parliament in these areas.

The previous UK Government used the IMA power to deliver, among other funds, the Shared Prosperity Fund, which replaced EU Structural Funds, and the Levelling Up Fund, which had originally been announced as England-only and was expected to generate Barnett consequential. This resulted in no role for the Scottish Government in the decision-making or delivery of these funds and no role for the Scottish Parliament in scrutinising their effectiveness.

The Scottish Government has consistently opposed the use of the Part 6 financial assistance power and called for funding to instead be provided to the devolved governments in the usual way. As set out in the Scottish Government's position paper on the Internal Market Act 2020, the Scottish Government remains of the view that the Part 6 financial assistance power should be repealed. However, as the UK Government excluded Part 6 from the review and intends retaining it in legislation, then it should at least put in place conditions on its use. The UK Government should work with the devolved governments to codify the circumstances in which it may consider using the Part 6 power and agree that this power should only be used with the consent of the devolved government in question.

3.2 Common Frameworks Evaluation

The Scottish Government recognise that the lack of formal mechanisms for oversight, and the intergovernmental nature of the process, have led to concerns as to the role of the Scottish Parliament in the operation of Common Frameworks. Parliamentary scrutiny and the experiences of stakeholders have highlighted several persistent issues: the lack of visibility, transparency and clarity, where Frameworks are non-statutory and often operate at the official level, which limits public and parliamentary oversight; and inconsistent implementation and stakeholder engagement, with some Frameworks demonstrating strong stakeholder engagement and others adopting a more limited approach.

Since their introduction, there has been a commitment by all four governments to the introduction of post-implementation reporting on the effectiveness of Common Frameworks to legislatures and stakeholders to secure their future accountability. However, as the current provisional frameworks have not reached final agreement and moved into post-implementation the intended joint annual reporting on the effectiveness of Frameworks operations has not yet commenced. From a Scottish perspective, the challenges of finalising Frameworks continue to be compounded by the undermining of devolution through the impact of the UKIMA.

The nature of post-implementation monitoring of Frameworks is part of our ongoing discussions with the other governments as we seek to conclude the Frameworks programme. The views of the Parliament and Scottish stakeholders are an important element of the post-implementation monitoring and review of Common Frameworks.

The Scottish Government's starting point remains that of the 2017 Common Frameworks statement of principles: that frameworks will respect the democratic accountability of the Scottish Parliament.

We are engaging with the UK and devolved governments on how we give effect to this principle, and welcome further engagement with the Scottish Parliament on this matter.

3.3 Sewel Convention

The 2024 Labour general election manifesto committed to “strengthen the Sewel Convention by setting out a new memorandum of understanding outlining how the nations will work together for the common good”.

The previous UK Government set aside the decisions of the Scottish Parliament on legislative consent on a dozen occasions, undermining the Sewel Convention, which is a crucial safeguard for the Scottish Parliament in our constitutional system. A Convention that can be ignored by the UK Government when it chooses to do so is no effective safeguard for Scotland’s democracy.

Restoring confidence in the Sewel Convention is therefore key to resetting the relationship between the UK and devolved governments and ensuring that the position of the Scottish Parliament is protected, with sufficient opportunity for scrutiny. The convention is a fundamental part of the devolution settlement and there should be a shared ambition to repair the damage done to devolution by the previous UK Government. The Scottish Government therefore welcomed the proposal for a memorandum of understanding to strengthen Sewel. Although there has not been significant work on this commitment yet, the Scottish Government stands ready to assist and looks forward to progress in the near future.

It will be important that the MOU demonstrably addresses the issues that have arisen in recent years to give the Scottish Parliament confidence that the Sewel Convention has been strengthened for the future.

Notwithstanding any progress on the proposed MoU, proof of meaningful respect for the Convention will be in the experience on individual bills: in timely sharing of drafts of bills and amendments; in allowing sufficient time for proper scrutiny by the Scottish Parliament and its committees; and in respect from the UK Government for the legislative consent decisions of the Parliament.

It should be noted that the UK Government has not breached the Sewel Convention in relation to Scotland during its first year in office. All individual negotiations between governments on legislative consent were concluded successfully, allowing the Scottish Government to recommend consent to the Scottish Parliament, which has been agreed.

However, there remain numerous examples of Bills being shared too late in the process for the Scottish Government to lodge its legislative consent memorandum in time to meet Scottish Parliament standing orders. There have also been instances of late sharing of amendments and timetabling pressures leading to inadequate time for proper consideration by the Scottish Parliament. As an example, seven legislative consent motions were passed in the final week of the Scottish parliamentary year. The Scottish Government will continue to press the UK Government on timely sharing of information and proper recognition of Scottish parliamentary procedures in its Bill timetabling processes.

3.4 UK / EU negotiations

The UK Government’s tone and approach to EU relations has shifted significantly since the 2024 General Election and the new government’s attempt to reset relations. This approach extended to an offer to integrate the Scottish Government’s concerns more closely into the process of negotiating closer relations with the EU.

This initial ambition culminated in the UK-EU Summit in London on 19 May and the announcement of a new strategic partnership, building on previous agreements including the Withdrawal Agreement, Windsor Framework, and Trade and Cooperation Agreement, and a Common Understanding between the two parties on a range of policy priorities. The parties agreed to establish nine ‘negotiating tables’ covering:

- SAFE defence fund;
- Youth experience;
- Erasmus+;
- Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary measures;
- Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) linking;
- Electricity trading;
- Wider security (including health, development, maritime);
- Law enforcement and judicial cooperation;
- Irregular migration.

Throughout the UK Government-EU engagement to date, Scottish Government Ministers and officials have sought a strong presence for the Scottish Government in order that specific Scottish considerations are given due regard. In the run up to the summit, SG produced seven policy papers in areas of priorities for Scotland. We consider that these papers had a positive influence on the summit outcomes.

Nevertheless, for the summit agreements, there were significant strains on relations at times when the UK-EU Relations IMG process was not used to share information with the Scottish Government. A clear example of this was the fisheries agreement, where no information was shared in advance. Scottish Government Ministers have made clear this was unacceptable.

Over the summer, the UK Government and the EU have been preparing for a negotiating process in which they will agree the details of these policy priorities. The degree of legislative activity the summit agreements will create is considerable and the UK Government, in parallel to negotiating with the EU, is currently assessing what legislation will be required to implement the expected substantial re-adoption of EU law in areas where full alignment has not been maintained.

Primary legislation will be required, with the expectation of a bill being introduced in the second session (before summer 2026). A UK bill team for this purpose will operate from the Cabinet Office. A transposition model is expected, with powers taken to implement the necessary EU law via secondary legislation. A key objective for the Bill team will be to enable the UK to meet the EU’s demands for dynamic alignment with EU law.

Primary legislation will involve devolved competence. The split between powers for devolved governments, UKG or concurrent powers will need to be agreed, taking account of devolved interests as well as practical repercussions of complying with EU law.

It is anticipated that the volumes of secondary legislation needed to implement the negotiated outcomes will be very significant with consequent capacity impact for the Scottish Parliament and SG internal resources. The principal policy areas impacted by the talks have initiated work to assess the re-brigading and/or additional resources that are likely to be required.

We expect that the Scottish Parliament’s Standing Order requirements on legislative consent will be engaged. The Cabinet Sub-Committee on Legislation (CSCL) will require to agree the

Scottish Government's proposed Legislative Consent Memorandum and position on legislative consent.

Considerations around timing and timelines for legislation and implementation are significant. With the commitment given in May that there would be a series of annual UK-EU summits, we expect at a political level, both parties to seek tangible progress in delivery before a second summit in spring 2026.

For legislation, dates are harder to set and the timing of the Scottish Parliament election, and the time taken post-election to form a government, could be relevant, e.g. for practical impact on the timing of consent to the UK Bill, depending on when it is introduced and the speed of its progress through Westminster. Welsh Government Ministers share similar concerns regarding the timing of their own elections to the Senedd, likely to be similar in date to the Holyrood elections.

Given this degree of uncertainty, SG officials expect to work with the CEEAC Committee before the elections and its successor to agree on the most effective means for the Scottish Parliament to scrutinise the anticipated legislation.

To manage the SG response, officials will engage in the legislative process including the interface with and impact on the existing legislative programme:

- For primary legislation, SG officials are engaging with their UKG counterparts to influence the Bill content, its design, powers, and Legislative Consent Memorandum arrangements with ministerial preference for legislation to include concurrent powers with statutory consent mechanisms.
- Associated secondary legislation is expected to be significant in volume. SG will centrally track these independent policy areas and anticipate secondary legislation in the following policy areas: Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures, Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS), and electricity trading.

There will be a high degree of responsibility on the UK Government to include devolved governments in the negotiation process and to share information as promptly as possible. The Concordat on International Relations, agreed by the UK and devolved governments, states that the governments will co-operate on the formulation of UK policy and conduct of international negotiations. The extent to which future legislation and the implementation of policies under negotiation will sit within devolved responsibilities strengthens the need for close cooperation. Given the very significant degree of activity across policy areas, there will be an ongoing need for the SG to monitor activity to ensure that devolved interests are incorporated into the UK Government's negotiating position and the practical planning for legislation.

At a ministerial level, we maintain a four-nations dialogue with UK, Wales, and Northern Ireland lead ministers through the Intergovernmental Ministerial Group in UK-EU relations. The Group last met in Edinburgh shortly before the summit and had a first post-summit meeting on 23 September to discuss the negotiations process. Bilateral engagement also takes place with Mr Nick Thomas-Symonds as Minister for the Constitution and European Union Relations. Both group and bilateral engagements have been an opportunity to raise concerns about the UK Government's approach to Intergovernmental relations given the high degree of devolved input required to the negotiations.

At official level the SG EU Secretariat are coordinating cross-SG activity and an internal governance process is being implemented to ensure there is sharing of information and coordination of response.

Despite our own governance processes there will remain a clear risk that, either through insufficient regard for devolved considerations, or through an unintentional failure of their IGR processes to meet the high workload and complexity of undertakings, UKG does not include Scottish Government sufficiently or reflect Scottish policy interests. SG Ministers are aware of this risk and, while tasking their officials to take full mitigating measures possible, have indicated that the degree of success the UKG achieves in incorporating the SG into the EU reset will reflect the extent to which the UKG has delivered a full reset and improvement of relations with the SG overall.

SG officials have thus far updated the CEEAC Committee, maintaining a commitment to provide written reporting at key points in the calendar (for example each time there is a round of TCA Specialist Committee meetings) as well as at officials' informal sessions with the Committee. As negotiation and legislative activity increases, we will incorporate these processes into the new overall governance process being implemented within the Scottish Government, taking direction from the Committee on the routines for reporting and updating that will assist their scrutiny. As ever, officials will be led by the requirements of the Parliament for this work.

4. Conclusion

The Scottish Government is clear that the ability of the Scottish Parliament to scrutinise Scottish Government's intergovernmental activity, especially where there is an impact on devolved areas, is vitally important.

The Scottish Government will continue to abide by the spirit of the current Scottish Parliament–Scottish Government Written Agreement on Intergovernmental Relations and will work with the Scottish Parliament to refresh this Agreement to reflect the increasingly complex backdrop and the outcome of this inquiry.

If the UK Government is committed to resetting relations with the Scottish Government, it must demonstrate a willingness to ensure that the powers of the Scottish Parliament are protected. This should include helping facilitate the proper transparency and scrutiny of intergovernmental structures. The Scottish Government believes that while there has been some progress in resetting relations with the UK Government, it remains incomplete. Further steps are needed to achieve meaningful policy outcomes, including clear commitments from the UK Government to respecting and upholding the powers of the Scottish Parliament.

This should include ensuring the timely communication of agendas and communiques, for intergovernmental forums, to ensure the Scottish Government is able to fulfil its own commitments to the Scottish Parliament by providing advance notice.

Item 28

From: [Redacted]> **On Behalf Of** First Minister

Sent: 23 September 2025 19:57

To: [Redacted] Luke Mcbratney <Luke.Mcbratney@gov.scot>; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 <CabSecCEAC@gov.scot>; Minister for Parliamentary Business 2024 <MinisterPB@gov.scot>
Cc: [Redacted]>; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; Stephen Noon <Stephen.Noon@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; Brian Dornan <Brian.Dornan@gov.scot>; [Redacted]>; [Redacted] Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; [Redacted]>; [Redacted]>; [Redacted] Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: URGENT Sub and Draft - Final BANS Paper - A Fresh Start with Independence- Revised version of the paper

Importance: High

Luke, [Redacted]

With apologies for the delay please find attached the First Minister's comments on the BANS paper – [Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

I understand an update will follow tomorrow on sequencing of the publication – I would be grateful if a updated version of the paper could be sent alongside this **with the new changes in tracked so it is simple for the First Minister to review and sign off please.**

Many thanks,
[Redacted]

[Redacted]
Private Secretary
Office of the First Minister
Mobile: [Redacted]

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 16 September 2025 11:55

To: Luke Mcbratney ; First Minister ; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic ; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture 2024 ; Minister for Parliamentary Business 2024

Cc: Colin McNeill ; Ewan Crawford ; Stephen Noon ; Permanent Secretary ; DG Strategy and External Affairs ; Dominic Munro ; Brian Dornan ; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Julie Grant ; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox ; Colin McAllister

Subject: RE: URGENT Sub and Draft - Final BANS Paper - A Fresh Start with Independence- Revised version of the paper

[Redacted]/ FMPO

Please find a slightly revised version of the paper.

Could you use this version please for printing out for FM.

Thank you.

Please do come back if you have any queries.

Item 28 attachment 1

[Redacted - S30C - Otherwise prejudice effective conduct of public affairs]

Item 29

From: Luke Mcbratney <Luke.Mcbratney@gov.scot>

Sent: 25 September 2025 11:18

To: [Redacted]; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>

Cc: John Webster <John.Webster@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Lord Advocate <LordAdvocate@gov.scot>; LSLA team <DLPCEALSLA@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; Andrew Bruce <Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot>; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; DL SPADS Admin <DLSPADSAdmin@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted][Redacted]; [Redacted]; DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; [Redacted]

Subject: RE: Cabinet - Tuesday, 30 September 2025 - Draft Agenda for Approval - clearance requested by 4pm on Thursday, 25 September 2025

Folks,

[Redacted] and I have discussed now, including with FMPO and Spads, and we have a plan.

Thanks

Luke

Luke McBratney | Deputy Director, Elections and Constitutional Projects

Constitution Directorate | DG Strategy and External Affairs

mob: [Redacted] | **email:** luke.mcbratney@gov.scot

My normal working week is Tuesday to Friday.

From: Luke Mcbratney

Sent: 25 September 2025 10:31

To: Sophie Corbett ; First Minister ; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox

Cc: John Webster ; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Lord Advocate ; LSLA team ; Permanent Secretary ; Andrew Bruce ; Helen Webster ; Colin McAllister ; DL SPADS Admin ; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted][Redacted]; DG Strategy and External Affairs ; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic ; Ewan Crawford ; [Redacted]

Subject: RE: Cabinet - Tuesday, 30 September 2025 - Draft Agenda for Approval - clearance requested by 4pm on Thursday, 25 September 2025

[Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

Luke McBratney | Deputy Director, Elections and Constitutional Projects

Constitution Directorate | DG Strategy and External Affairs

mob: [Redacted] | **email:** luke.mcbratney@gov.scot

My normal working week is Tuesday to Friday.

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 25 September 2025 10:18

To: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; Luke Mcbratney <Luke.Mcbratney@gov.scot>

Cc: John Webster <John.Webster@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Lord Advocate <LordAdvocate@gov.scot>; LSLA team <DLPCEALSLA@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; Andrew Bruce <Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot>; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; DL SPADS Admin <DLSPADSAdmin@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted][Redacted] DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot> [Redacted]

Subject: RE: Cabinet - Tuesday, 30 September 2025 - Draft Agenda for Approval - clearance requested by 4pm on Thursday, 25 September 2025

Thanks [Redacted]. We have issued the agenda.

We will send a note to all Cabinet Secretaries, Law Officers and MfPB to make them aware that the [Redacted - S30C - Otherwise prejudice effective conduct of public affairs]. As per convention, we would recommend that the lead Director issues the paper for PCC. Once that process has concluded we will issue the final paper on [Redacted - S30C - Otherwise prejudice effective conduct of public affairs].

Thanks, [Redacted]

[Redacted]

Head of Cabinet Performance and Outreach

Cabinet Secretariat

Communications and Ministerial Support Directorate

Email: [Redacted]

Please copy e-mails which concern Cabinet business to the [Cabinet Secretariat Inbox](#)

Please note I'm working flexibly and do not usually work on Friday afternoons. If you receive this outwith normal working hours please do not feel you need to pick this up outside of your own working pattern.

From: [Redacted] > **On Behalf Of** First Minister

Sent: 24 September 2025 18:07

To: Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; First Minister

<FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Luke Mcbratney <Luke.Mcbratney@gov.scot>
Cc: John Webster <John.Webster@gov.scot>; [Redacted] [Redacted]; Lord Advocate <LordAdvocate@gov.scot>; LSLA team <DLPCEALSLA@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; Andrew Bruce <Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot>; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; DL SPADS Admin <DLSPADSAdmin@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>; Ewan Crawford <Ewan.Crawford@gov.scot>; [Redacted]
Subject: RE: Cabinet - Tuesday, 30 September 2025 - Draft Agenda for Approval - clearance requested by 4pm on Thursday, 25 September 2025

[Redacted]
The FM has sent the below:

Approved. [Redacted - S30C - Otherwise prejudice effective conduct of public affairs]

Please note – there is a further iteration of the paper due to come to the FM at [Redacted - S30C - Otherwise prejudice effective conduct of public affairs]. Once he has approved, **FMPO will share that version with Cabinet Secretariat to circulate to Cabinet by** [Redacted - S30C - Otherwise prejudice effective conduct of public affairs]. [@Luke Mcbratney](#) is the policy lead on BANS so probably helpful to cc him in when circulating to Cabinet, in order to monitor and take forward responses.

Thanks
[Redacted]

From: [Redacted] > **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretariat Inbox
Sent: 24 September 2025 11:27
To: Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>
Cc: John Webster <John.Webster@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Lord Advocate <LordAdvocate@gov.scot>; LSLA team <DLPCEALSLA@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; Andrew Bruce <Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot>; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; DL SPADS Admin <DLSPADSAdmin@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; DG Strategy and External Affairs <DGSEA@gov.scot>; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy & Gaelic <DFMCSEG@gov.scot>
Subject: Cabinet - Tuesday, 30 September 2025 - Draft Agenda for Approval - clearance requested by 4pm on Thursday, 25 September 2025
Importance: High

PS/FM

Please find attached a draft agenda for the next Cabinet meeting on Tuesday, 30 September which will be held in Bute House.

The proposed agenda is:

[Redacted - S30C - Otherwise prejudice effective conduct of public affairs]

Annex (for question 4)

Item 1

Prospectus paper twice weekly call – note of meeting 25 Sept 2025

Update: Main paper and annex going to Cabinet on Tuesday 30th, ahead of publishing on Wednesday 8 October. Cabinet Secretaries providing comments on the paper ahead of Tuesday's meeting, at FM's request

Actions

Drafting/assurance

- Officials to incorporate Cab Sec comments
- [Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

Comms

- [Redacted] to send list of potential venues with capacities
- Comms colleagues and spads to discuss launch options after FMQs

Item 2

Prospectus paper twice weekly call – note of meeting 30 Sept 2025

Update: Main paper, macroeconomic annex and Q&A currently being considered by Cabinet, ahead of publishing on Wednesday 8 October. Cabinet feedback to be incorporated into draft before proceeding through final assurance. Papers to go to FM for final sign off on Thursday, for publication on Wed 8 October.

Actions

Drafting/assurances

- Officials to incorporate Cabinet comment
- All papers put to Cabinet to be prepared for publication
- [Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

Launch & Comms

- Launch scheduled for morning of Wed 8 October; FM time window is 09:00 – 10:30
- Plan is for short FM speech, followed by broadcaster questions and a print huddleMedia arrive
- Comms colleagues and spads to discuss video options
- Draft launch plan to be circulated

Briefing

- Draft pack to be circulated to officials today
- Final brief to be with FM on Monday 6 Oct

GIQ

- Plan to lodge on Tue and answer on Wednesday 1 hour prior to launch – policy and comms officials to confirm timings.

Next meeting – Thursday 10.30

Item 3

Prospectus paper twice weekly call – note of meeting 2 Oct 2025

Update: Main paper, macroeconomic annex, Q&A and Easy Read being published next week - colleagues are currently finishing absorbing comments from the DG and Chiefs assurance process, in order for material to go to FM today for clearance to go to APS tomorrow

Actions

Launch

- In the process of reviewing venue options - two have been visited but are not suitable, another option will be visited shortly. [Redacted] to send a list of further potential options

Comms

- Social content plan progressing. Draft trail and news release being sent to SpAds for feedback today
- Script for social media video needing clearance asap - recording slot on Monday. Olaf to feed back by COP today

Parliament

- GIQ sent for clearance yesterday. SpAds to provide name of MSP to ask GIQ

Briefing

- FM requested that the briefing document be cut down to ten pages - briefing team in the process of actioning, in order to send to FM by 2pm on Monday

Engagement

- [Redacted] to share draft engagement plan with Ministers
- Need to organise some sort of briefing session for Ministers - one option could be the weekly Ministers meeting. SpAds to discuss and confirm

Item 4

All hands call – note of meeting 6 Oct 2025

Update: All products were signed off over the weekend - the main paper and macroeconomic annex will have hard copies and the HTML version ready for launch, while the Easy Read and Summary products will have HTML only.

Actions

Drafting/assurances

[Redacted - s.30(b)(i) Free and frank advice]

Launch & Comms

- FM has cleared the comms handling plan, draft news release and trail are currently with SpAds for clearance asap.
- Social media plans in progress.
- SpAds drafting FM speech, and will send round officials for a factual accuracy check.
- Launch venue likely to be the National Galleries of Scotland Portrait Gallery in Edinburgh but still to be confirmed. Questions around venue access and licensing for photographs in hand.
- Work ongoing for the 'What You Need to Know' section of the website, including embedding graphics and videos. Work also ongoing to incorporate the paper into the BANS landing page upon publication

Briefing

- In the process of being cleared to be sent to FM by 2pm

Stakeholder engagement

- Engagement plan still to be signed off. Letters to be sent up for clearance today

Item 5

Prospectus paper twice weekly call – note of meeting 7 Oct 2025

Update: Physical copies being delivered to SAH today, to be taken to launch. On the Q&A, FMPO confirmed the position that the longer Q&A should be used.

Actions

Launch

- Colleagues are setting up the launch venue this evening
- Media will be briefed after Cabinet on a launch taking place, prior to the media invite issuing

Comms

- The draft trail and news release are being progressed through assurance process
- Social media video was recorded yesterday so ready to go on launch. Colleagues to work on video being embedded on website

Parliament

- GIQ cleared by Mr Dey, all in hand to be lodged and answered

Briefing

- Briefing pack was issued yesterday, Ministerial briefing session to be confirmed

- Longer briefing pack to be prepared for later engagement/bids etc - colleagues expect to be finished Wednesday PM

Engagement

- [Redacted] in the process of implementing engagement plans, including with letters going to Cab Secs today

Annex C

Section 28(1) Relations within the UK

An exemption under section 28(1) of FOISA (relations within the UK) applies to some of the information requested. This exemption applies because disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice substantially relations between the Scottish Government and the UK Government, Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Executive. It is essential for the effective administration of the UK as a whole that there should be regular, and often private, communications between the Scottish Government, the UK Government and the other devolved administrations.

This exemption is subject to the 'public interest test'. Therefore, taking account of all the circumstances of this case, we have considered if the public interest in disclosing the information outweighs the public interest in applying the exemption. We have found that, on balance, the public interest lies in favour of upholding the exemption. We recognise that there is a public interest in disclosing information as part of open, transparent and accountable government, and to inform public debate. However, there is a greater public interest in maintaining good relations between the Scottish Government and the UK Government, Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Executive, and in protecting the free exchange of information between them.

Section 29(1)(a) - Formulation or development of Scottish Government Policy

An exemption under section 29(1)(a) of FOISA (Formulation or development of Scottish Government Policy) applies to some of the information requested. This exemption applies because some of the information relates to the formulation or development of government policy.

This exemption is subject to the 'public interest test'. Therefore, taking account of all the circumstances of this case, we have considered if the public interest in disclosing the information outweighs the public interest in applying the exemption. We have found that, on balance, the public interest lies in favour of upholding the exemption. We recognise that there is a public interest in disclosing information as part of open, transparent and accountable government, and to inform public debate. However, on this occasion, there is a greater public interest in allowing the Scottish Government space to reach a settled view and officials a private space within which policy positions can be explored and refined, until the Government as a whole can adopt policies that are sound and likely to be effective.

Section 30(b)(i) – free and frank provision of advice

An exemption under section s.30(b)(i) (free and frank provision of advice) of FOISA applies to all of the information you have requested. This exemption applies because disclosure would, or would be likely to, inhibit substantially the free and frank provision of advice. This exemption recognises the need for officials to have a private space within which to provide free and frank advice to other officials. Disclosing the content of free and frank advice on matters involving UK relations and independence related materials will substantially inhibit the provision of such

advice in the future, particularly because discussions on this matter are still ongoing, and it continues to be a matter of public, political and media interest.

This exemption is subject to the 'public interest test'. Therefore, taking account of all the circumstances of this case, we have considered if the public interest in disclosing the information outweighs the public interest in applying the exemption. We have found that, on balance, the public interest lies in favour of upholding the exemption. We recognise that there is a public interest in disclosing information as part of open, transparent and accountable government, and to inform public debate. However, there is a greater public interest in allowing a private space within which officials can provide full and frank advice to other officials, as part of the process of briefing the First Minister on a variety of constitution related matters.

Section 30 C - Otherwise prejudice effective conduct of public affairs

The reason why this exemption applies is because releasing details of provisional documents would undermine the Scottish Government's ability to effectively and accurately engage and communicate with the public.

This would constitute substantial prejudice to the effective conduct of public affairs in terms of the exemption. This exemption is subject to the 'public interest test'. Therefore, taking account of all the circumstances of this case, we have considered if the public interest in disclosing the information outweighs the public interest in applying the exemption. We have found that, on balance, the public interest lies in favour of upholding the exemption. We recognise that there is a public interest in disclosing information as part of open, transparent and accountable government, and to inform public debate. However, there is a greater public interest in enabling the Scottish Government to effectively and accurately engage and communicate with the public without the risk of being prejudiced by inaccurate information regarding draft materials, which do not reflect final decisions taken.

Section 33(2)(a) – UK economic interests

An exemption under section 33(2)(a) of FOISA applies to some of the information you have requested. Information is exempt under section 33(2)(a) if disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice substantially the economic interests of the whole or part of the UK.

This exemption is subject to the 'public interest test'. Therefore, taking account of all the circumstances of this case, we have considered if the public interest in disclosing the information outweighs the public interest in applying the exemption. We have found that, on balance, the public interest lies in favour of upholding the exemption. We recognise that there is some public interest in release because disclosure would enhance public scrutiny of Government decision making. However, this is outweighed by the public interest in avoiding substantial prejudice, potentially damaging the UK's economic interests.