



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

**Local Government and Regeneration Committee**

**Kevin Stewart MSP**  
**Convener**

Derek Mackay MSP  
Minister for Local Government and  
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6 February 2014

Dear Derek

**Re: Inquiry into the Flexibility and Autonomy of Local Government**

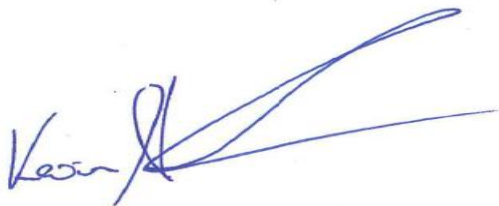
At its meeting yesterday the Local Government and Regeneration Committee agreed to undertake an inquiry into the flexibility and autonomy of local government in Scotland. The Committee plans to launch a public call for written evidence on this inquiry this coming Monday 10 February. For your information, I attach the remit for the inquiry in Annexe A to the letter, and an embargoed copy of the call for evidence in Annexe B.

I wanted to take this opportunity to write to you in advance of this launch, to inform you of this inquiry. It is the Committee's intention to take oral evidence on this inquiry over April and May and report our findings and recommendation to the Parliament by the end of June 2014. We would welcome written and oral evidence from you as part of the inquiry. The Clerk to the Committee will confirm the details of this request to your office in due course.

I have also written today to Cllr David O'Neill, President of COSLA and Chair of the Commission on Strengthening Local Democracy to bring the inquiry to his attention. It is the view of the Committee that this inquiry will be complimentary to the work the Commission is currently undertaking. I note the Commission's intention to report the main messages emerging from its work at the COSLA/IS Annual Conference in mid-March. The Committee will consider these findings carefully in the context of the inquiry and has invited the Commission to provide oral evidence in early May as part of the inquiry.

In the meantime, if your office requires any further information, please feel free to contact the Clerk to the Committee.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kevin', followed by a large, stylized flourish that extends upwards and to the right.

Kevin Stewart MSP  
Convener  
Local Government and Regeneration Committee

## **Annexe A: Inquiry Remit**

### **Inquiry into the Flexibility and Autonomy of Local Government**

The Local Government and Regeneration Committee has launched an inquiry to examine the levels of flexibility and autonomy available to local government. The aim of the inquiry is to learn lessons, and inform the ongoing debate on whether there is a need to strengthen and enhance local democratic structures in Scotland. The inquiry will—

- Contrast the position of local government with the constitutional and legal framework in neighbouring EU jurisdictions;
- Examine the level of public engagement and interaction with local government, including turnout at local elections;
- Consider the legal and constitutional funding mechanisms available to local government;
- Consider how remote, peripheral or island communities are accommodated within the local government structures; and
- Consider the level of legal flexibility, and autonomy from central government, which local government enjoys.

## Annexe B: Draft Call for Public Evidence



### Local Government and Regeneration Committee

#### Public call for Written Evidence

#### Inquiry into the Flexibility and Autonomy of Local Government

The Scottish Parliament's Local Government and Regeneration Committee has today, Monday 10 February 2014, launched a call for written evidence as part of its inquiry into the flexibility available to Local Government in Scotland

Organisations and individuals are invited to submit written evidence to the Committee setting out their views.

#### Committee's Call for evidence

The Committee invites all interested parties to submit written evidence on the inquiry. It would be helpful if written submissions could address the following questions—

1. Does any action require to be taken to improve the level of public engagement and interaction with local government, if so please suggest what action might be beneficial?
2. Views on the current legal and funding positions of local government.
3. Views on the way that remote, peripheral and island communities are accommodated within the local government structure.
4. Views on the level of legal flexibility and autonomy from central government that local government enjoys.

#### How to submit your evidence

The closing date for receipt of submissions is **6pm on Friday 28 March 2014**. Submissions should be limited to no more than eight pages of A4. Responses should be sent, **wherever possible, electronically** and in MS Word format to the following email address: [lgr.committee@scottish.parliament.uk](mailto:lgr.committee@scottish.parliament.uk)

Before submitting your evidence please read the Parliament's policy on treatment of written evidence by subject and mandatory committees (see below).

Responses can also be sent by post to:

Clerk to the Local Government and Regeneration Committee  
Committee Office  
Room T3.40  
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Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP

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