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Convener,  
Local Government and Regeneration Committee,  
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The Scottish Parliament,  
Edinburgh EH99 1SP.

In 2014 Scotland Welcomes the World



18 August 2014

Dear Kevin,

## INQUIRY INTO THE FLEXIBILITY AND AUTONOMY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

I am writing to respond, on behalf of the Scottish Government, to your Committee's 8th report of 2014 regarding the Inquiry into the Flexibility and Autonomy of Local Government.

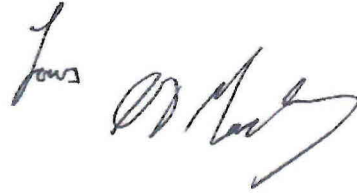
In giving the report careful consideration, I note it raises issues that are either dependant on the result of the referendum or the Committee envisages being acted upon, as you acknowledge in your introduction to the report, after the referendum.

It is also the case that a positive vote in the referendum would create a unique opportunity for democratic renewal and as I set out in the Scottish Government's submission would enhance the debate on the right level for decisions to be made in all parts of Scotland.

For example the Scottish government has already set out in Empowering Scotland's Islands a range of responsibilities which could be transferred to island communities in the event of independence.

With these points in mind, and if you are agreeable, I therefore propose the Scottish Government provides a full response to the Committee's report shortly after September 18th. This will enable the response to take account of the referendum result. Any response now could quickly be out of date.

I hope that you and your committee concur that the unique circumstances of the referendum and the relationship between the result and the range of actions the Scottish Government could pursue in this area make it preferable for the Government to respond after the event. The very fact that I propose this action underlines how timely this work by the Committee is. Indeed, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Committee on bringing together the often divergent views presented in evidence so well and in a very coherent and accessible report.



**DEREK MACKAY**