



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Local Government and Regeneration Committee

**Kevin Stewart MSP
Convener**

Mr Gavin Stevenson
Chief Executive
Dumfries and Galloway Council

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6 November 2014

Dear Mr Stevenson,

Local Government and Regeneration Committee Meeting – 27 October 2014

I have been instructed by the Committee to write to you regarding its request for further information surrounding the delays in negotiations with Inspired Community Enterprise Trust in relation to the lease for the former Townhead Church in Dumfries.

You may be aware that during the Committee's visit to Dumfries we received a presentation from the Trust during which the Committee became interested in the reasons why the lease was taking so long to conclude.

During the Committee's public meeting Louise Matheson stated Dumfries and Galloway "had a reasonable track record on empowering communities to take over assets" and later, Dumfries and Galloway Council "has a process that allows a maximum period of 18 months" from proposals being brought forward to transfer – when asked specifically about the Trust who had a draft lease in April 2013 an undertaking was given to write to the clerks on the reasons for the apparent delay. I attach a link to the Official Report:
<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28862.aspx?r=9587&mode=pdf>

The Clerk to the Committee spoke to Louise Matheson immediately after the meeting and then e-mailed requesting the update by 31 October. Unfortunately, this timescale was not met. Ms Matheson was subsequently asked for this information to be made available by

Please contact the Committee clerking team in the first instance.

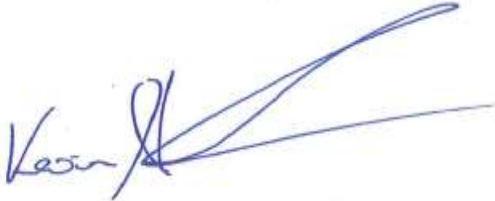
David Cullum (0131 348 5217): Claire Menzies-Smith (0131 348 5219): Seán Wixted (0131 348 5223)

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4 November to enable the Committee to consider it at its meeting on 5 November. Ms Matheson advised on 5 November the matter was with Legal Services who were putting together a timeline. As the information was not available to the Committee for its meeting, the Committee considered the delay warranted that I bring the matter to your attention.

It was also agreed by the Committee that if the information was not forthcoming for its meeting on 12 November, that you should be invited to attend the following meeting on 19 November to give in person a full account of the delay in dealing with the Committee's request and provide an update on the finalisation of the lease.

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