



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Devolution (Further Powers) Committee

c/o Clerk to the Committee
Room T3.40
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
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20 May 2015

Dear Secretary of State,

Re. Follow-up from our meeting

Thank you again for your accommodation of our visit to the Scotland Office on Tuesday. We are grateful that you were able to take the time to meet with us and the flexibility shown on the day.

I am encouraged by the comments you made to us regarding the imminent introduction of a new Scotland Bill and the careful consideration you said you would give to our recent Interim Report. I welcome the indication that you made that, at least in a couple of areas regarding the welfare provisions, you will be making the necessary amendments to the Bill prior to introduction.

As we discussed, our unanimous report, agreed as it is by representatives of all five political parties in the Scottish Parliament, represents, in our view, an objective and constructive critique of the current draft clauses relative to the agreement reached in the Smith Commission. As such, we see our report as the minimum that needs to be taken forward to reach a baseline of a Bill that fully reflects the spirit and substance of the Smith Commission and, as such, delivers on the commitment made by the Prime Minister during his recent visit to Scotland that the Bill will deliver on Smith "in full".

As outlined to you during our meeting in your office, I would be grateful if you could provide a detailed, point-by-point, response to our report and the individual conclusions and recommendations. I believe that it is important that we have clarity on what changes you have made to the Bill at introduction, or will be prepared to make in the process that follows the passage of the Bill through the UK Parliament. On this occasion, in the same way that we will be asking the Scottish Government, it would be helpful if you could address each of our recommendations in turn.

Furthermore, I am grateful that you will give consideration to appearing at the Committee shortly after the introduction of the Bill. I will leave our officials to arrange a suitable date. I am also pleased that you will use your good offices in the coming months to smooth our anticipated invitations to other UK Government ministers, notably in HM Treasury and the DWP, as we consider in detail those parts of the Bill such as the financial provisions, welfare powers and The Crown Estate. I know that you will agree that such appearances will go a long way in maintaining dialogue on this Bill.

I look forward to working closely with you and your officials in the months ahead and thank you again for the time set aside for our constructive discussions.

Yours sincerely,

Bruce Crawford MSP
Convener