



F/T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Ariane Burgess MSP
Convener, Local Government, Housing and
Planning Committee
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

By email: localgov.committee@parliament.scot

20 March 2023

Dear Convener,

Thank you for your letter of 1 March 2023 enquiring when our audit work on empty homes will conclude.

We expect the research we have commissioned to be completed before the summer recess and for the audit report to be published by the end of 2023 following our review of the research.

The Scottish Government is also reviewing local government funding, including Council Tax, as part of a Joint Working Group with COSLA. The Minister for Public Finance, Planning and Communities wrote to you on 17 November 2022 to advise this includes exploring proposals that would introduce new powers allowing councils to increase the rate of Council Tax on second and empty homes.

I hope this will enable the Committee to plan its work accordingly.

Yours sincerely,

SHONA ROBISON

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St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot

