



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee

Cllr Shona Morrison,
President,
COSLA

28 January 2025

Dear Shona,

The Committee has agreed to undertake a short, focussed inquiry on potential changes to the current council tax system. This is expected to involve taking evidence from relevant stakeholders after February recess and will consider the following key themes—

- Progress made by the Joint Working Group on Sources of Local Government Funding and Council Tax Reform since its first meeting in 2022;
- Barriers to change in this area;
- Ways in which barriers to change can be addressed;
- Arguments for and against a revaluation of domestic properties being undertaken in Scotland;
- What Scotland can learn from other countries – for example Wales – in terms of their approaches to revaluation and reform;
- Likely costs of any revaluation exercise in Scotland and how they should be funded;
- Assuming that council tax remains one of the main local taxes in Scotland, what other reforms to the tax could be explored?

The key aims of the inquiry would be to—

- Understand the various arguments for and against local tax reform;
- Explore why change has not happened despite broad agreement that the current system could be improved;
- Discuss how barriers to change could be addressed or mitigated; and

Contact: Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee, The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP. Email: localgov.committee@parliament.scot. We welcome calls through Relay UK and in BSL through Contact Scotland BSL.

- Help inform debate and policy proposals .

As part of this work, the Committee agreed to invite a progress update from the Joint Working Group on Sources of Local Government Funding and Council Tax Reform. It would be helpful if this could include progress updates in respect of each of the specific actions noted under [the Group's Remit](#), along with timescales for each of them to be completed. I would be grateful if this update could be received by Tuesday 18 February.

I also understand from the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government's [evidence to the Finance and Public Administration Committee on 14 January](#) that COSLA's Resources Spokesperson is leading on work to "create some level of cross-party agreement on principles ... that will help to scope out where there may be a landing space for agreement" on potential reforms. It would be helpful if your response could also provide an update on this work, again focussing on specific actions, timescales and expected outputs.

The Committee also agreed to invite you to give oral evidence as part of its inquiry and our clerks will liaise with your officials to confirm timings in due course.

I have written in similar terms to the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government as co-chair of the Joint Working Group.

The Committee has also agreed to consider potential alternative forms of local taxation to council tax at a later date.

Ariane Burgess
Convener, Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee

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