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Hannah Mary Goodlad MSP

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FAO Community Council Chairperson

15 October 2026

Dear Chairperson,

As you may be aware, the Programme for Government 2026-31 set out our commitment to a three month period of intensive dialogue with partners on the future of local governance as part of our approach to public service reform.

On the 21 September 2026, the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government published our initial proposal, which can be found here. It set out our view is that Scotland currently has some councils that are too large to be truly local and others that are too small to operate strategically at the scale now required. We have therefore proposed a model built around a smaller number of Strategic Regional Authorities, alongside a much larger number of Community Authorities, with bespoke arrangements for island communities. The principle is that strategic decisions should be taken at regional level, while decisions that affect everyday community life should be taken much closer to local people.

The proposal builds on and goes beyond the vision set out in the Democracy Matters Route Map for Reform, which Community Councillors made an important contribution to. The proposed changes are about improving public services and strengthening democracy and community empowerment, giving communities a stronger voice and creating new opportunities for participation in local decision-making.

I am writing to you today to encourage you to participate in the national conversation and to invite you to join an online meeting with my officials to discuss your views and feedback on these initial ideas. The event will create a space for community councillors to share views on the proposals and will help us to establish a measure of shared agreement across Scotland about the scale and shape reform could take. Wider events are also taking place with local authorities; the wider public sector; community and third sector organisations.

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The Scottish Government values the role of Community Councils across Scotland, and the work that you do to support our local democracy, bridging the gap between the communities and local authorities, to ensure public authorities are aware of the needs and opinions of the communities you represent. Your views and input in this conversation will be incredibly valuable and we hope that representatives from your council will be able to attend.

The meeting will be held online in early November and more details will be provided shortly. I encourage you to actively participate and help shape the future of local government in Scotland.

Sincerely

HANNAH MARY GOODLAD

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