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Local Government and Transport
Committee
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20 February 2007

Dear George,

Public Petitions PE875, PE896 and PE961

Thank you for attending on 23 January 2007 to give oral evidence to the Local Government and Transport Committee on the common good petitions

The Committee, at its meeting of 13 February 2007, considered a summary of the written submissions which had been made to the Local Government and Transport Committee and to the Public Petitions Committee on the petitions and of the oral evidence which had been heard. I enclose for your information a copy of the summary of evidence.

The Committee agreed that the supporters of the three petitions should be commended for bringing the issues raised in the petitions to the attention of the Scottish Parliament.

The Committee shares the concerns of the petitioners that the standard of record keeping in relation to common good assets and funds by local authorities does not appear to be consistent across Scotland. The Committee believes that the common good assets and funds of local councils should be clearly and correctly recorded in the councils' common good accounts; that the accounts should provide a full record and description of assets, both heritable and moveable; that assets should be properly valued and that the information recorded in the common good accounts should be transparent and easily accessible to local communities.

The Committee would ask you to consider whether guidance, or further guidance, can be put into place to bring about an improvement in the overall quality of common good accounts over a measurable period of time.

Members of the Committee are of the view that common good assets and the common good fund should be promoted better to allow communities to have more influence over their use. Community planning processes should take full account of

common good assets so that communities can participate in ensuring that common good land is recognised and used to the best effect. You may wish to consider whether there could be statutory provision, to ensure that there should be a formal consultation with a community council relative to the disposal of any common good asset arising in the area that the community council covers.

The Committee has not yet taken a decision on the suitability or otherwise of legislation. It would be grateful if you could provide a response to the points made above, which it will take into account in coming to a view on whether legislation is required. You may also wish to comment on other points arising from the attached summary of evidence.

In order to enable the Committee to consider your response before dissolution, I would be grateful if it could be received as soon as possible, and not later than **Wednesday, 21 March**.

Yours sincerely,

Bristow Muldoon
Convener
Local Government and Transport Committee