



Patricia Ferguson MP
Chair
Scottish Affairs Committee

26 November 2026

Dear Patricia,

It was a pleasure to appear before your committee earlier this month. I was grateful for the opportunity to outline my priorities as Secretary of State and to discuss how best to deliver for Scotland and its people. I hope the session was useful for you and your members.

Following the appearance, the department committed to providing you with follow up information on a number of matters. I apologise for the delay in getting you these responses - as I'm sure you understand, some aspects relate to highly-sensitive matters of policy led by other government departments and I was keen to ensure we were providing the most up to date and accurate information. I am pleased to be able to share those details with you now.

The number of hotels housing asylum seekers in Scotland.

The Home Office have confirmed they currently utilise 14 hotels in Scotland to house asylum seekers, accommodating approximately 1700 people currently. This figure is subject to change as this Government is committed to closing all hotels accommodating asylum seekers by the end of this parliament if not sooner.

The attendees at Minister McNeill's recent High Street Summit

Minister McNeill's summit was joined by a wide cross section of representatives, covering an array of interests and concerns, with over 20 organisations involved. For ease these are provided in an Annex to the letter.

Clarification of the information available on comparability figures

My officials have assured me that the statement of funding policy provided by HMT does include details of how the comparability percentage of each department has been calculated, including a programme-by-programme breakdown. This can be found in Annex B of the Statement of Funding Policy document published in June 2025, which is linked here for ease: [Statement of Funding Policy: - GOV.UK](#)

I hope this is of help to the committee and I look forward to appearing before you again in the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Douglas Alexander'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Douglas' and the last name 'Alexander' clearly distinguishable.

**THE RT HON DOUGLAS ALEXANDER MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND**

Annex - Attendees at Minister Kirsty McNeill's High Street Summit held on 23/10/2025

- Kirsty McNeill MP - Scotland Office, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Scotland
- Iseabail McTaggart - DBT, Deputy Director Scotland
- John Thompson - DBT
- Barry Fisher - Keep Scotland Beautiful, Chief Executive
- Russell Fraser - SCOTO - Scottish Community Tourism, Chair
- Duncan Thorpe - Social Enterprise Scotland, Policy & Public Affairs Manager
- Christina Tweeddale - Music Venues Trust, Scotland Coordinator
- Cllr Gail Macgregor - COSLA, Spokesperson
- Colin Wilkinson - The Scottish Licensed Trade Association, MD
- David Lonsdale - Scottish Retail Consortium, CEO
- Elizabeth Docherty - Scottish Community Alliance, Director
- Euan Leitch - SURF - Scotland's Regeneration Forum, Chief Executive
- Robert Richmond - Midsteeple Quarter, Dumfries, Chair
- Peter Kormylo - Midsteeple Quarter, Dumfries, Former Chair
- James Fowlie - COSLA, Director for Place Policy
- Jonathan Guthrie - Scottish Property Federation, Chair
- Leon Thompson - UK Hospitality Scotland, Exec Director
- Linda Gillespie - Development Trusts Association Scotland, Head of Community Ownership
- Marc Crothall - Scottish Tourism Alliance, CEO
- Mark Shields - Walk Wheel Cycle Trust, Director
- Stephen Montgomery - Scottish Hospitality Group, Director
- Lisa Willis - USDAW, Usdaw Area Organiser