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Susanne Millar
Linda.Chalmers@glasgow.gov.uk

Item 8(a)

12th December 2024

Our Reference: 202400434113

10 October 2024

Dear Ms Millar,

Thank you for your correspondence of 25 September 2024 which includes a motion about greater fireworks control.

I note the motion urges Scottish Government to accelerate progress on implementing the fireworks licensing requirement, as set out in the Fireworks and Pyrotechnic Articles (Scotland) Act 2022. I will continue to keep Parliament and stakeholders informed of updates about implementing this requirement in due course.

In the meantime, officials will continue to maximise the value, and monitor the impact, of firework measures already introduced through the above mentioned Act to help make our communities safer from fireworks.

I also note that the motion refers to firework control zones and a subsequent action for the council to develop proposals to consult whether there is evidence to support a whole council area approach being taken. While I recognise that the designation of firework control zones in communities is an entirely local decision, I would like to highlight that this measure intends to offer targeted localised approaches. This should be based on the specific circumstances of communities, where the resultant boundaries are proportionate, as well as being enforceable and grounded in evidence. Statutory guidance which details the process local authorities should follow for designating, amending, or revoking a firework control zone within their boundaries is available at: Firework control zones: guidance for local authorities - gov.scot (www.gov.scot).

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

Tha Ministearanna h-Alba, an luchd-comhairleachaidh sònraichte agus Rùnaire Maireannach fo chumhachan Achd Coiteachaidh (Alba) 2016. Faicibh www.lobbying.scot

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I also understand a firework control zone is no longer progressing in Pollokshields for over the bonfire night period this year due to insufficient legal notice being provided. This is the first year that zones have been considered and we would welcome any learning from local authorities' experiences, to be considered and shared with key partners to inform any future zones.

Yours sincerely,

SIOBHIAN BROWN

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Tha Ministearanna h-Alba, an luchd-comhairleachaidh sònraichte agus Rùnaire Maireannach fo chumhachan Achd Coiteachaidh (Alba) 2016. Faicibh www.lobbying.scot

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Item 8(b)

12th December 2024

Our ref: MCB2024/08974

Susanne Millar
Chief Executive
Glasgow City Council

By email: Linda.Chalmers@glasgow.gov.uk

23 October 2024

Dear Susanne,

Thank you for your correspondence of 27 September, regarding Glasgow City Council's Fireworks motion.

Most people use fireworks in a responsible, safe, and appropriate manner and there are laws in place to address situations where fireworks are misused. The current regulatory framework is designed to support people to enjoy fireworks whilst lowering the risk of dangers and disruption to people, pets, and property.

At this stage in the new Government, I am examining the detail of existing positions to decide if and where policy changes may be needed. I can assure you that the safety of the public and the impact on people, animals and property will be central in decisions on how we proceed in relation to the regulation of fireworks. To inform any future decisions I intend to engage with businesses, consumer groups and charities to gather evidence on the issues and impacts with fireworks.

While we consider the potential of future regulatory changes, there are steps we can take now to ensure people are able to enjoy fireworks responsibly. To ensure people use fireworks in a safe and considerate manner, I have launched a fireworks campaign for this fireworks season to provide guidance on minimising the impacts of fireworks on animal welfare and encouraging responsible use. This will supplement existing guidance from government and other organisations that is available to help people to use fireworks safely and appropriately.

I am aware of the introduction, by the Scottish Government, of Firework Controls Zones to restrict the use of fireworks in Scotland and note your comments with interest regarding Glasgow City Council consideration of a whole area approach. Officials in my Department will continue to work closely with their counterparts in Scotland to ensure the safety of the public across the UK.

I hope this response is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

JUSTIN MADDERS MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment Rights, Competition and Markets

Item 8(c)

12th December 2024

Susanne Millar
Chief Executive
Glasgow City Council
City Chambers
George Square
Glasgow
G2 1DU

By Email: susanne.millar@glasgow.gov.uk

Our Ref: 24/321
15 November 2024

Dear Susanne,

GLASGOW CITY COUNCIL MOTION ON THE REMOVAL OF WINTER FUEL PAYMENTS

Thank you for your letter dated 25 September 2024 seeking a response from me on the Glasgow City Council's motion passed on 12 September 2024. In particular, you asked me to respond regarding the means-testing of Winter Fuel Payments.

As you and Glasgow City Council members will be aware, this government discovered a £22 billion in year spending gap after the general election, with the Treasury reserves spent 3 times over by July.

Responsibility for winter heating assistance is devolved. The Scottish Government intends to replace Winter Fuel Payments with Pension Age Winter Heating Payment from this winter on the same basis as in England and Wales, subject to approval in the Scottish Parliament. It has been a Scottish Government decision to follow the UK Government and means-test this benefit in Scotland. We have worked closely with the Scottish Government to support the delivery of their payment this year and have committed to administering payments to people in Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Government so that eligible pensioners in Scotland continue to receive winter heating support this winter.

I would like to stress that this Government is absolutely committed to pensioners. That is why through our commitment to protect the Triple Lock, from April 2025, the basic and new State Pension and Pension Credit's standard minimum guarantee will be uprated by 4.1%, with over 12 million pensioners, including those in Scotland, gaining up to £475 next year. Protecting the Triple Lock even in the current economic climate shows our steadfast commitment to pensioners. We have also focused on increasing Pension Credit take-up and extending the Household Support fund in England, which will have Barnett consequentials for the Scottish Government.

As part of the UK budget, the Scottish Government will receive Barnett consequentials of £1.5 billion for 2024/25 and a further £3.4 billion for 2025/26. This amounts to a record £47.7 billion settlement in 2025/26 - the largest in real terms in the history of devolution.

It is my firm view that money must reach frontline services and I hope this is reflected in the Scottish Government's plans in December. In addition, the budget confirmed £229,617,246 for the Glasgow City Region, by confirming previously committed funding for Levelling Up Fund Round 3 projects, Investment Zone and Long Term Plan for Towns. The total figure for UK Government growth investment over 10 years (including funding already spent) totals £1.12 billion.

THE RT HON IAN MURRAY MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND

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Susanne Millar

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Item 8(d)

12th December 2024

DECS Reference: TRO/1226311/24
HO Reference: 192283

05 December 2024

Dear Susanne Millar,

Thank you for your correspondence of 07 November to the Prime Minister, about the motion passed at the Glasgow City Council meeting on 28 March. Your correspondence has been passed to the Asylum Policy Secretariat for a response.

Thank you for your offer of a meeting. Unfortunately, due to pre-existing commitments the Prime Minister is unable to meet at this time.

Working relationship between the UK and the Scottish Government
Intergovernmental relations are high on this government's priority list. Stronger cooperation means we can work together to deliver better outcomes for people in Scotland. We are committed to resetting the relationship with Scottish Government and Scottish partners, to reduce the asylum backlog and subsequent pressures to deliver for the whole of the UK.

Reform of the asylum system
The UK has a proud history of providing protection to those who need it, in accordance with our international obligations under the Refugee Convention and European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

Every asylum claim admitted to the UK asylum system is carefully considered on its individual merits by assessing all the evidence provided by the claimant against a background of published country information and a wide range of recognised and publicly disclosable sources, including the media and non-governmental sources, such as the UNHCR, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.

The Home Office takes safeguarding issues extremely seriously and protecting vulnerable people is a key cross-cutting departmental priority. We recognise that all asylum seekers are potentially vulnerable, and during the asylum decision making process, we aim to ensure that particularly vulnerable claimants are identified, the particular difficulties they may face in disclosing their experiences are given due consideration when assessing their credibility, and that they are given help in accessing appropriate services.

It is right that we help individuals from around the world who are fleeing conflict and oppression, but the asylum system must be a fair and effective one so that we can better protect and support those in genuine need of protection.

Asylum backlog

We are determined to restore order to the asylum system so that it operates swiftly, firmly, and fairly; and ensures the rules are properly enforced. It is a financial necessity to start clearing the asylum backlog so that those costs do not continue to mount up at the expense of the taxpayer.

We anticipate that clearing the backlog will help us to deliver savings on asylum hotels and accommodation, delivering better value for money for the taxpayer. However, we recognise the pressure, and the impacts placed on a range of external stakeholders, including local authorities and Non-Government Organisations. We are carefully considering how to best prioritise the backlog of asylum claims. We will work in conjunction with stakeholders to prioritise cases most effectively and mitigate any wider impacts, for example with local authorities and reducing the risks of homelessness.

We are ensuring our cross-government partners, such as the Department for Work and Pensions and the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) are sighted on data to enable them to consider the impacts of increased decision making and effectively plan. We are also working with MHCLG to ensure the right asylum decision data is being shared with local authorities to enable effective planning and to lessen the impact on existing homelessness and rough sleeping pressures. Our accommodation providers are directly working with local authorities to notify them when an individual is due to have their asylum support ended.

We have worked, and continue to work, with colleagues at MHCLG to understand rough sleeping and homelessness pressures within local authorities.

Permission to work

Asylum seekers are eligible to apply for permission to work in the UK if their claim has been outstanding for 12 months or more, through no fault of their own.

Those permitted to work are restricted by the Home Office to apply for jobs on the Immigration Salary List. The list itself is based on expert advice from the independent Migration Advisory Committee, who will continue to review the occupations.

Our permission to work policy for asylum seekers stands out as among the toughest in Europe because we believe that allowing asylum seekers the right to work sooner would undermine our wider migration policy. We have repeatedly resisted calls to relax our policy position.

Whilst we keep all policies under review, there are no plans to change the current arrangements for asylum seekers' permission to work.

It is important to distinguish between those who need protection and those seeking to work here who can apply for a work visa under the Immigration Rules. Our wider policy could be undermined if migrants bypassed work visa Rules by lodging unfounded asylum claims here.

We encourage asylum seekers to undertake volunteering activities, so long as it does not

amount to unpaid work. Volunteering provides a valuable contribution to their local community and may help them to integrate into society if they ultimately qualify for protection.

Internal Market Act
The UK internal market underpins the economy and showcases the economic benefits of a UK wide market for goods and services. The Government is committed to improving the operation of the Act and will engage with devolved governments on next steps.

Scottish Government funding and Scottish public servicesThe Scottish Government's Phase 1 Spending Review settlement for 2025-26 delivers a real-terms increase and is the largest in real terms of any settlement since devolution.

The Scottish Government is receiving £47.7 billion in 2025-26, including an additional: £3.4 billion through the operation of the Barnett formula, with £2.8 billion resource and £610 million capital; and 130 million targeted funding, with £10 million resource and £120 million capital, including for City and Growth Deals.

The Scottish Government are also receiving over 20% more per person than equivalent UK Government spending in the rest of the UK. That translates into over £8.5 billion more in 2025-26.

We are delivering on our first step to establish Great British Energy by providing £125 million next year to set up the institution at its new home in Aberdeen helping us to develop new, clean energy projects in the UK.

The UK Government will maintain the arrangements of the updated Scottish Government Fiscal Framework. The Scottish Government Fiscal Framework ensures that the Scottish Government can continue to invest further in schools, hospitals, roads, and other key infrastructure to help drive opportunity in Scotland, while protecting the Barnett formula.

Thank you once again for taking the time to write to the Home Office.

Yours sincerely,

Jason Buultjens
Head of Asylum & Protection Unit