



F/T: 0300 244 4000  
E: dfmcse@gov.scot

Councillor Stephen McCabe  
Spokesperson for Children and Young People  
COS LA  
By email to: [redacted]

14 December 2017

Thank you for your letter of 7 December 2017 concerning the Scottish Government's consultation on the content of the forthcoming Education Bill.

The purpose of our reforms is to ensure that key educational decisions which affect learner outcomes are taken as close to the learner as possible. The proposals set out in *Empowering Schools: a consultation on the provisions of the Education (Scotland) Bill* are entirely consistent with that aim and with the agreement which we have reached on regional collaboration.

The proposals in the consultation paper make it clear that local authorities will remain the employer of education professionals, including headteachers. They will, therefore, continue to play an essential role in developing their employees and in ensuring that their decisions are both supported and constructively challenged leading to better outcomes for learners.

In addition, local democratic accountability will be maintained under the reform proposals through local authorities continuing overarching statutory duty to ensure adequate and efficient provision of education - discharging these duties in part through their participation in the work of the Regional Improvement Collaboratives does not diminish this accountability.

The agreement reached by the joint Scottish Government, Education Scotland and Local Government Steering Group remains central to way in which the Regional Improvement Collaboratives are being established. There was a clear agreement that all partners would be required to work differently and that includes working collaboratively to plan improvement across each region discharging all of the agreed functions set out in the Steering Group report.

I would be happy to meet with you to discuss these issues further and have asked my office to find a suitable date.

**JOHN SWINNEY**

