

Deputy First Minister
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John Swinney

Thank you for your letter of 5 November regarding the timing of the publication of the draft Scottish budget and fiscal framework negotiations.

I wrote to you on 10 November to seek the Committee's agreement to publish the Draft Budget on 16 December. I also sought your views on scope for delaying the introduction of the Budget Bill to 28 January to allow additional time to scrutinise the Draft Budget. I look forward to receiving your response to these proposals.

However, and as I outlined in my letter to you of 2 November, the Joint Exchequer Committee fiscal framework negotiations are on-going. I am not yet in the position to confirm when these will be completed but both I and the Chief Secretary to the Treasury aim to agree a framework as soon as possible.

I have made it clear that Parliament will have the opportunity to scrutinise the fiscal framework alongside the Scotland Bill. I also recognise the relationship between the fiscal framework and the Draft Budget and the need for clarity on specific issues such as block grant adjustment in relation to the devolved taxes and the Scottish Rate of Income Tax and would intend to provide as much clarity on this as soon as it is possible to do so. I have written to the Chief Secretary to the Treasury on these issues and raised with him the need for joint agreement in advance of the publication of the draft Budget.

I have copied this letter to the Presiding Officer and the Convener of the Devolution (Further Powers) Committee.

John Swinney

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