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Dear Michelle

Despite the unprecedented steps taken by both the UK and Scottish governments to protect businesses and workers, it is clear that the changes precipitated by COVID-19 will continue to present considerable challenges for Scotland's economy over the coming months and years. As I set out in my statement to Parliament on 22 April, in recognition of this fact the Scottish Government has adopted a four-step plan (Respond, Reset, Restart and Recover) for rebuilding Scotland's economy. This approach is intended to not only protect Scotland's economy during the immediate crisis but also to harness the changes arising from the pandemic to support the transition towards a wellbeing economy.

During this statement I outlined specific actions that would be taken by the Scottish Government across these four phases to protect and support Scotland's economy which included establishing an independent Advisory Group to be led by Benny Higgins with the specific remit of advising on Scotland's economic recovery from Covid-19, including;

- measures to support different sectoral and regional challenges the economy will face in recovery; and
- how business practice will change as a result of Covid, including opportunities to operate differently and how Government policy can help the transition towards a greener, net zero and wellbeing economy.

The Advisory Group has progressed in parallel with work taking place within the Scottish Government to facilitate rapid implementation of the interventions that will be required to support Scotland's economic recovery.

I am pleased to inform you that the Advisory Group on Economic Recovery's report *Scotland Needs a Robust, Resilient Economy: The Report of the Advisory Group on Economic Recovery* will be published on the Scottish Government's website at 11:30 on Monday 22 June (a link to the report will be sent to all MSPs once the report has been published). Thanks to the commitment of its Membership, this is ahead of the end of June deadline which I gave the Group to report its recommendations.

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In establishing the Advisory Group I was clear that its recommendations must be informed by meaningful and widespread engagement both with those affected by the pandemic as well as those who will be vital to rebuilding Scotland's economy. Despite the short timeframe, it is clear that the Advisory Group's engagement has been both widespread and robust. In the interests of ensuring that its recommendations are shaped by voices from across the business community trade unions and civil society the Advisory Group has, with the support of the enterprise agencies, engaged directly with over 400 organisations and individuals throughout May and June. This gives me confidence that the Group's recommendations reflect a diversity of views and will provide a solid foundation upon which to build the economic recovery.

I will consider the Advisory Group's recommendations in discussion with my Cabinet colleagues once they are received on Monday to determine those which we intend to take forward although we anticipate that a number of these will involve collaboration with economic development partners and the business community.

I look forward to hearing the views of all parties on the Advisory Group's recommendations during Tuesday's debate.

Yours sincerely

*Kind regards
Fiona Hyslop*

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