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**Hannah Mary Goodlad
Minister for Public Finance
Scottish Government**

8 September 2026

Dear Minister,

Programme for Government and Nature Recovery 2026-31

Thank you for meeting with representatives of the Scottish Environment LINK Planning Group on 21 August. We appreciated the opportunity to discuss our shared priorities and look forward to continuing that dialogue.

We note that the recently published Programme for Government includes a number of proposals to reform the planning system, with a focus on speeding up decision-making and development. We recognise the need for an effective and well-resourced planning system that supports good quality development in the right places. However, any changes to planning and regulation must ensure that nature does not lose out.

Scotland's natural environment is fundamental to our economy and our health and wellbeing, as well as our efforts to tackle climate change. We therefore welcome the First Minister's recognition of the importance of tackling the climate and nature crises while protecting Scotland's landscapes and environment. We also welcome the commitment to increasing planning system capacity and recognise the need for adequate resources to support effective delivery.

A strong planning system must also provide meaningful opportunities for local people to participate in decisions that affect their communities. This helps ensure that the value of our natural heritage to local communities is recognised and protected.

We would be extremely concerned if efforts to speed up development and consenting processes were to weaken environmental safeguards or reduce opportunities for meaningful community participation. Planning reform should improve the effectiveness of the system while continuing to protect nature, support its recovery and give communities a meaningful voice in decisions about development.

We would be keen to discuss these issues with you and, as mentioned at our last meeting, to put in place quarterly catch-ups to discuss shared priorities.

Yours sincerely,

Co-Conveners of ScotLINK Planning Group
Esme Clelland (RSPB Scotland) and Arthur Keller (CIEEM)



Scottish Environment LINK the voice for Scotland's environment

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