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Mr Calum Steele
Staff Side Secretary
PNB Scotland Standing Committee
5 Woodside Place
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In 2014 Scotland Welcomes the World



Your ref: CS/KB

11th June 2014

Dear Calum,

Thank you for your letters of 10 April 2014 to myself and the Cabinet Secretary for Justice regarding the Westminster Government's consultation "Freedom and Choice in Pensions" and your concern over potential delay in implementing the 2015 scheme regulations.

On "Freedom and Choice in Pensions", I sympathise with your position and would like to reassure you that the Scottish Government will be submitting a response that is supportive of the concerns you have raised and I will be happy to share this with you once it has been issued.

The Treasury proposal as set out could introduce an unacceptable impact on a significant number of key Scottish public servants. Members of Scottish schemes, including police officers, will have seen the Westminster Government's 25 year guarantee of no further pension change as a real commitment, but understandably may consider this as an initial attack on that guarantee. As you will be aware, the Cabinet Secretary for Justice confirmed in a letter to the Scottish Police Federation last Autumn, that in the event of independence, Ministers would enter into early discussions about the terms of police officer pensions and that the Independent Commission on the State Pension Age will be asked to review the impact State Pension Age policy has on the working and retirement patterns of Scotland's public servants. If implemented, these latest Treasury proposals will further strengthen the Scottish Government's view of the need for such consideration.

With regards to your concern over the potential delays in implementing the 2015 scheme regulations, you will know that we have previously made the UK Government aware that the timetable they have set for implementing pension reform has not taken into account the need for the Scottish Government to work through these reforms in partnership with stakeholders in order to take account of Scotland's circumstances.

SPPA officials continue to work closely with the Home Office in order to manage impacts on the regulatory timetable for Scotland and as part of that process will keep both sides of the PNB in Scotland aware of the progress made in drafting and consulting on 2015 scheme regulations.

Y. Smith
John Swinney

JOHN SWINNEY

Copy to: Cabinet Secretary for Justice.