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I regret that an unplanned medical procedure has prevented my intended attendance at the Finance Committee. However I wish to provide the Committee with my observations on Revenue Scotland which may prove helpful in their deliberations.

Since January 2015 I have acted as Chair of Revenue Scotland, working closely with the Chief Executive through key delivery milestones to the formal launch of the service on April 1st 2015. I am also a long-standing non-executive board member of a key partner of Revenue Scotland – the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA).

Through both these roles I have gained insights into the successful development of Revenue Scotland as an organisation, the IT transactional systems and relationships with stakeholders and partners. Despite challenging timescales, Revenue Scotland successfully won stakeholder buy-in and partner co-operation; I am convinced that it was this relationship management – which I view as exemplary - that was the key element in the programme's achievements.

Revenue Scotland's engagement with stakeholders was undertaken through professional body advocacy, stakeholder roadshows and demonstrations, 1:1 meetings with key personnel and a supportive service desk call centre. This programme of engagement led to co-operation and buy-in towards:

- Design of the transactional system portal and browser interface
- Operational testing of the system to aid development refinements
- Promotion of the new service to the legal and tax communities
- Familiarity and ease-of-use of the new systems
- Trust and Confidence in Revenue Scotland

If the Welsh Government seeks to establish a similar Revenue Authority, I would commend early and effective engagement with stakeholders, in effect making them partners in the organisational development and system adoption.