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David Rees MS  
Chair of the External Affairs and Additional  
Legislation Committee

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*Des Davis*

Many thanks for your letter of 9 June on the engagement between the UK Government and the Welsh Government with regard to the UK-EU future relationship negotiations. I would like to begin by extending my best wishes to you during these challenging times.

While international relations are a reserved matter, the UK Government remains committed to regular engagement with the devolved administrations regarding the negotiations with the EU, to ensure an agreement that works for the whole of the UK. The Paymaster General has regular discussions with devolved administration Ministers, including the Welsh Government's Counsel General and Minister for European Transition, both before and after each negotiation round to ensure the Welsh Government has the opportunity to contribute. You may also be aware that I chaired a meeting of the Joint Ministerial Committee (EU Negotiations) on 21 May, where the Prime Minister's Europe advisor and Chief Negotiator to the EU, David Frost, led a discussion on the strategic overview of the negotiations. Further, UK Government officials continue to hold regular discussions with their Welsh Government counterparts on the negotiations.

The legal texts you mention are the legal articulation of the document the UK Government published on 27 February setting out the Approach to negotiations, and have been used in discussions with the EU to underpin the proposals set out in that document. The UK Government engaged the Welsh Government and other devolved administrations during the development of its Approach to the negotiations, including through regular official-level meetings and bilateral discussions between the Paymaster General and the Counsel General and Minister for European Transition. I was also pleased to discuss the devolved administrations Ministers' priorities with them ahead of the publication of the Approach to negotiations, ensuring their views and priorities were considered.

Further to this, engagement between the UK Government and Welsh Government, and indeed other devolved administrations, also continues as we prepare for the end of the transition period. Work on the end of transition readiness is primarily led by individual departments, who work closely with the devolved administrations on relevant policy areas. This departmental-led engagement is the primary way for Welsh Government and other devolved administration officials to feed into transition planning and help us develop plans which take into account the differing needs across our four nations. To complement this, however, we are also sharing

content from our central transition delivery reporting, and devolved administration officials have been invited to attend regular meetings of our central Portfolio Board, which oversees the delivery of transition projects.

With regards to a structured approach to engagement, I agree that we must have robust and structured intergovernmental relations, and that is why it was agreed at the last JMC (EN) meeting that work to consider changes to intergovernmental engagement structures would resume as part of the joint review of intergovernmental relations. I am pleased that conversations are already taking place between the UK Government and the devolved administrations at official-level.

I would like to thank you for your invitation to join your meeting of the External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee on 30 June. Unfortunately, on this occasion I will not be able to attend due to prior commitments. However, I would like to assure you of the UK Government's willingness to engage with devolved legislature committees where possible. The Secretary of State for Wales has kindly agreed to attend on my behalf and will write to you shortly to confirm this.

I am copying this letter to:

Rt. Hon Simon Hart MP, Secretary of State for Wales;  
Rt. Hon Penny Mordaunt MP, Paymaster General;  
Jeremy Miles MS, Counsel General and Minister for European Transition;  
Rt. Hon. Hilary Benn MP, Chair of the Committee on the Future Relationship with the EU;  
The Earl of Kinnoull, Chair of the European Union Committee;  
Joan McAlpine MSP, Convener of the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee;  
Bruce Crawford MSP, Convener of the Finance and Constitution Committee;  
Colin McGrath MLA, Chair of the Committee for the Executive Office.

**With every good wish,**

*V  
Mrs.  
Michael*

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