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Dear Huw,

## **WALES BILL**

Thank you for your letter of 18 August regarding the Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee's consideration of the Wales Bill. Your office has subsequently been in touch with mine to arrange for me to brief the Committee on the Wales Bill in private, via video conference.

I want work on the Bill to continue in the spirit of close co-operation that has been evident thus far and welcome the Committee's scrutiny of the Bill. However, the Wales Bill will conclude its Commons stages early next week, by when the UK Government will have confirmed policy on all its key provisions and MPs will have had a number of opportunities to modify the legislation. I intend to meet with Assembly Party Leaders individually and am happy to meet you on a similar basis.

More widely, I simply do not agree with your comments that stakeholders outside Parliament have not had sufficient opportunity to contribute to debate on the Bill. We published the Bill in draft almost twelve months ago to enable wide-ranging public debate on the future shape of Welsh devolution. We listened to, and acted on points raised during that debate and have continued to seek the views of stakeholders about further improvements.

The draft Bill also benefitted from pre-legislative scrutiny by the House of Commons Welsh Affairs Committee, and from scrutiny by your Committee in the last Assembly. All in all, this Wales Bill has been much more thoroughly scrutinised than its predecessors.

I suggest your diary secretary contacts mine to agree a mutually convenient date for me to brief you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Alun Cairns', with a horizontal line underneath.

**Rt Hon Alun Cairns MP**  
**Secretary of State for Wales**