

Ken Skates AS/MS
Gweinidog yr Economi, Trafnidiaeth a Gogledd Cymru
Minister for Economy, Transport and North Wales



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref MA-KS-1481-21

Russell George MS
Chair
Committee for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills

24 March 2021

Dear Russell,

I would like to update the EIS Committee on the development of Regional Economic Frameworks (REFs) across Wales. You may recall that this was a topic that was discussed during my attendance at the committee meeting held on the 25th of November 2020.

The Welsh Government's Economic Action Plan (EAP) outlines the basis for a regional approach to economic development across Wales. The development of new REFs is an essential part of this - developing the distinctive strengths of our regions, supporting inclusive and sustainable economic growth and maximising opportunities to address regional and local inequalities, contributing to the Well-being Goals for Wales.

REFs are intended as a vehicle to help promote collaborative regional planning and delivery amongst public, private and third sector partners, working to a shared vision and a set of common economic development objectives. In taking forward the development of the REFs we have been acutely aware of the immediate reset and recovery required in the wake of the Coronavirus pandemic, but also the need to set out the longer term aspirations for the regions, aligned to the Welsh Government's Economic Recovery and Resilience Mission.

In taking forward the development of the REFs, officials have undertaken a period of targeted engagement with a range of key stakeholders at national and regional levels in each of the regions of Wales, with closer working relationships fostered with Local Authorities to co-design a placed based approach to economic development.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Gohebiaeth.Ken.Skates@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Ken.Skates@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

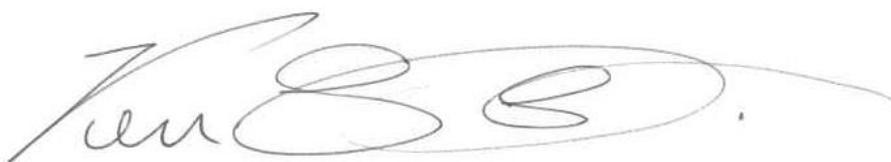
Underpinning this will be the principle that regions are not subordinate to the national level in respect of their own priorities agreed under shared principles, and we must make paramount the importance to respect subsidiarity and democratic accountability at different national, regional and local levels.

REFs can enable greater alignment and integration across government, bringing benefits including joined up economic development and strategic planning on a range of issues from land use to skills as well as supporting cross border collaboration - working with the new and existing governance structures across local authority boundaries on issues such as regeneration, strategic transport and infrastructure for example. REFs will not duplicate the plethora of plans that already exist, but draw together the key elements to address regional inequalities and will aim to directly influence how Welsh Government delivers in regions and places. These frameworks will be agile to ensure they remain relevant and responsive to changing economic circumstances.

The development of REFs across the 4 regions of Wales can have an important role in facilitating collaborative regional economic development and be key in informing and influencing the delivery of Welsh Government and UK Government funding priorities, set in the context of emerging Corporate Joint Committees as well as taking into account the recommendations of the OECD work. Continued stakeholder engagement and co-production with key regional partners will continue towards the development of the REFs to underpin a place based approach to regional economic development aligned to EAP and the Welsh Government's aspirations for a well-being economy which drives prosperity, is environmentally sound, and helps everyone realise their potential.

Officials will be continuing the detailed development work with partners through the spring and summer for consideration by the next administration ahead of the establishment of the CJs.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken Skates', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ken Skates AS/MS

Gweinidog yr Economi, Trafnidiaeth a Gogledd Cymru
Minister for Economy, Transport and North Wales