



Ein cyf/Our ref: MA/RE/2315/21

Huw Irranca-Davies MS
Chair of the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee

SeneddLJC@senedd.wales

20 November 2021

Dear Huw,

The Valuation for Rating (Wales) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2021

I am writing in response to your letter dated 16 November. Although non-domestic rates policy is devolved, there are elements of the rating system that, in practice, operate across Wales and England. Valuation and, in turn, the initial processing of appeals fall under this categorisation, and the Valuation Office Agency is the body responsible for those matters across Wales and England.

The Welsh Government's intention in addressing this matter was to achieve a collaborative approach with that of the UK Government, and we have made frequent calls for communication and cooperation in reaching a consensus on a suitable approach. Unfortunately, this cohesive approach has not proven possible, and the Welsh Government was not sighted on UK Government's intentions until announcements had been made. In addition, the sharing of relevant data from the Valuation Office Agency has been limited, adversely impacting appropriate and timely policy development for Wales.

Welsh Policy on devolved matters is set in Wales, although it is also recognised that the interconnected nature of certain policy and operational matters across Wales and England means that for the sake of certainty, it is sometimes better to adopt an aligned approach. In this instance, given the impact on businesses and other ratepayers in both Wales and England, and the fact that subsequent business support is linked to the passing of the Rating (Coronavirus) and Dissolved Companies (Directors Disqualification) Bill (the Bill), an aligned approach better enables use of financial levers, that are to a lesser extent, within the Welsh Government's devolved arsenal.

I have also noted the Committee's comments about the timing of laying, and commencement of these Regulations.

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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.

On 23 November, there will be a Plenary debate on the Legislative Consent Motion for the Bill. I will ensure that as part of the debate reference is made to the Regulations, providing Members with context on the matter at hand.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca Evans." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rebecca Evans AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Cyllid a Llywodraeth Leol
Minister for Finance and Local Government