



Ein cyf/Our ref: RE-652-22

Huw Irranca-Davies MS
Chair, Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

21 January 2022

Dear Huw,

I am writing to inform you of an urgent Finance Ministers' Quadrilateral meeting that took place on the 12 January to discuss the cost-of-living crisis and Covid funding requirements in response to the Omicron variant.

In attendance were myself, Chief Secretary to the Treasury - Simon Clarke MP, Minister for Finance Northern Ireland - Conor Murphy MLA, and Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Economy Scottish Government - Kate Forbes MSP.

During the meeting I highlighted some of the support measures the Welsh Government has put in place to address the cost of living crisis, but outlined that most of the powers and fiscal resources were in the UK Government's hands. I pressed that the UK Government needed to go further in providing immediate support to people with rising bills and living costs, and shared ideas to tackle fuel poverty.

In relation to the item on Covid funding, we discussed the importance of certainty to support effective planning. I requested the CST guarantee that money allocated to support the Covid response would be provided in full and sought assurance that the usual practice would be maintained, whereby late allocations of funding could be carried forward. I also raised the need for the use of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and the Self Employment Income Support Scheme to be kept under consideration should circumstances in any of the four nations require it.

The updates from the Devolved Governments on our respective 2022-23 budget rounds was an opportunity to share priorities for the coming year, and I particularly outlined our plans to tackle the climate and nature emergencies. I highlighted the challenges the UK Spending Review settlement had on our ability to invest in infrastructure to drive towards net zero, noting that the Welsh Government capital budget would be 11% lower in 2023-24 than this year.

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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.

I also took the opportunity to secure Ministerial agreement for officials to work together to establish effective arrangements for the new Finance Inter Ministerial Standing Committee (FISC) so that this could be agreed ahead of our next meeting which will be the first meeting of the FISC under the newly published Intergovernmental Relations Review.

Finally, the CST confirmed that the Chancellor would present his Spring Statement on 23 March alongside the latest Office for Budget Responsibility economic and fiscal forecast.

Following the meeting a joint Press Notice was issued by Devolved Finance Ministers.
[Finance ministers call for Covid funding flexibility | GOV.WALES](#)

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