

The Rt Hon Neil O'Brien MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for
Levelling Up, the Union and Constitution

11 May 2022

Dear Mr O'Brien

Finance Committee's inquiry into Post-EU Funding Arrangements

Thank you for your letter of 6 May 2022, on behalf of the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP. The Finance Committee considered your response during our meeting on the 11 May 2022. On behalf of the Finance Committee, I express our deep regret that you have declined our invitation to provide evidence on our inquiry into Post-EU Funding Arrangements. It is also disappointing that your letter does not formally acknowledge our invitation, the response to which had to be confirmed subsequently by your officials, or state whether or not you are willing to engage with the Committee's work in this area.

By your own admission, this is a flagship UK Government policy, and following the UK's exit from the EU, the preparations for replacing EU funding and the impact this will have for Wales has remained of significant importance to this Committee.

We urge you to re-consider our invitation to attend a Committee meeting to allow Members of the Senedd the opportunity to engage with the UK Government on this important matter. We note that on 24 February, the Secretary of State, Mr Gove, appeared before the Scottish Parliament's Finance and Public Administration Committee in relation to replacing EU Structural Funds and stated:

"The more that UK Government ministers can appear in the Scottish Parliament to answer your questions, the more that demonstrates how devolution can and should work.... It is both a duty and a pleasure to come here."

I would be grateful if you could let me know if you are willing to attend a similar session with the Finance Committee. We have a number of scheduled evidence sessions before the summer recess,

or, given the importance of this inquiry, we would be willing to schedule a meeting at your convenience, which can be facilitated via Zoom so as to take up as little of your time as possible.

As the Minister responsible for Levelling Up, the Union and Constitution, I trust you appreciate the Committee's interest in this areas and hope that you will extend the same courtesy to devolution and the democratic process in Wales as was expressed to our counterparts in the Scottish Parliament.

We would appreciate receiving your response by 25 May.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peredur Owen Griffiths', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Peredur Owen Griffiths MS

Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg | We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.



Senedd Cymru
Welsh Parliament