

Huw Irranca-Davies AS/MS
Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog ac Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros
Newid Hinsawdd a Materion Gwledig
Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate
Change and Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: PO/HIDCC/0058/25

Mike Hedges MS
Chair
Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

13 February 2025

Dear Mike,

Further to my letter of 2 December 2024, I represented the Welsh Government at the seventh meeting of the Inter-Ministerial Standing Committee on 3 December 2024. A communique regarding this meeting is expected to be published on the [UK Government website](#) in the normal way.

The meeting was chaired by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for Intergovernmental Relations, the Rt Hon Pat McFadden MP.

The other attending ministers were:

From the UK Government: Minister of State for Trade Policy and Economic Security, the Rt Hon Douglas Alexander MP; Secretary of State for Wales, the Rt Hon Jo Stevens MP; and Secretary of State for Scotland, the Rt Hon Ian Murray MP.

From the Scottish Government: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Gaelic, Kate Forbes MSP.

From the Northern Ireland Executive: First Minister Michelle O'Neill MLA; and deputy First Minister Emma Little-Pengelly MLA.

The agenda enabled discussion of a range of issues including: resilience and the responses from each government to the Module 1 report of the UK Covid-19 Inquiry which focused on pre-pandemic planning; and the Common Frameworks Programme and the UK Internal Market Act (2020).

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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.

In relation to the discussion on resilience and each government's response to the first report of the UK Covid-19, I highlighted that it is important for this report and also future reports that we work together as governments across the UK. Whilst the Welsh Government broadly supports the recommendations in principle, I raised the importance of responses to the recommendations taking into account differences in the devolution settlements across our nations. In addition, the absence of Barnett consequential funding for civil contingency matters is a constraint on investment in this important agenda. I also outlined that the Welsh Government would like there to be strengthened cross-UK engagement on resilience at Ministerial level.

As part of the discussion relating to the Common Frameworks Programme, I highlighted that, where currently embedded, Common Frameworks are a positive example of effective intergovernmental working and have created space for innovation within devolved competencies. Regrettably, however, over recent years the Welsh Government's experience of the UK Internal Market Act (2020) is that it has undermined the purpose of Common Frameworks. Therefore, the interplay between the two must be placed at the centre of discussions on these issues.

In this context, the Committee also discussed the UK Internal Market Act (2020) and the plans for the statutory review in 2025. I emphasised our hope that this work will provide a platform for reform to address the serious constitutional issues with the Act. I highlighted the Welsh Government's focus on growth and the important role a well-functioning internal market can play, but made clear that the Act as it stands is not the right approach. I offered to work with the UK Government and other devolved governments on an approach to reforming governance of the UK internal market in a way which embraced devolution. I looked forward to working together on these issues as the Act undergoes statutory review in 2025.

An agenda item on the Sewel Convention and UK legislation was not discussed due to time constraints, and I therefore expect these issues to feature in future meetings.

The next Inter-Ministerial Standing Committee is expected to take place in early spring 2025, with chairing arrangements to be determined.

I have copied this letter to the First Minister, the Rt Hon Eluned Morgan MS, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language, the Rt Hon Mark Drakeford MS, Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning, Rebecca Evans MS, the Counsel General and Minister of Delivery, Julie James MS, and to the Chairs of the Finance Committee, the Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee and the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Huw Irranca-Davies', with a stylized, flowing script.

Huw Irranca-Davies AS/MS

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