

Rt Hon Carwyn Jones AM
First Minister
Welsh Government
Ty Hywel, Cardiff Bay
Cardiff CF99 1NA

11 September 2017

Dear First Minister

Meeting on 14 July 2017

Thank you for attending the meeting of the Committee for the Scrutiny of the First Minister held in Bangor on 14 July.

Following the meeting, Members agreed that I should write to you with some additional questions and to seek further clarity on several of the issues discussed.

European Union (Withdrawal) Bill

Members were grateful to you for agreeing at short notice to spend some time at the start of the meeting answering questions on the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill, following your Written Statement published the previous day.

We would be grateful for further detail on your views in relation to the following:

1. Your analysis of the Bill, including where you consider it might be possible to amend it to alleviate concerns held by the Welsh Government, and, conversely, details of any areas you feel are flawed to the point where they cannot be changed.
2. Whether there are any circumstances under which you would be prepared to accept the temporary retention of some powers by the UK Parliament,



providing that a clear commitment is given to devolving those powers within specified conditions.

Transport

Members would like further clarity on the work undertaken by the Welsh Government to assess the capacity of Welsh ports to deal effectively with any changes to customs arrangements post Brexit, particularly given the interdependence of Welsh and Irish ports. Members are aware that you have met with the Irish Government to discuss Brexit, particularly through the British–Irish Council, however we would be grateful for further information about how the Welsh Government has, and will be, engaging with the Irish and UK Governments specifically on the issue of ports.

Economic Development

Members welcomed your undertaking to consider publishing the Welsh Government's 'Prosperous and Secure Strategy' before the end of the summer term, to allow time for committees to consider its content over recess.

In relation to the strategy, Members would appreciate further detail about how the Welsh Government will ensure, in taking a regional approach, that cross–border working will be a factor in the way that policy is developed and taken forward.

Energy

Members welcomed your commitment to consider the impact of the increase in business rates on community hydropower schemes. As part of our discussion, Simon Thomas AM agreed to provide you with further information about a specific example. Given the potentially commercially sensitive nature of this information, it has been provided as an unpublished attachment to this letter.

Finally, you undertook to provide further information as to how arrangements for awarding the Wales and Borders rail franchise would be taken forward should the



procurement process run into difficulty, including who would be responsible for this.

In response to questions from Members, you also agreed to give further consideration to:

- Providing advice and support to hyper local journalists and those who want to create new sources of news, given the lack of bespoke support available;
- Ways in which the Welsh Government could encourage and support skilled NHS staff nearing the end of their career, to inspire young people to consider a career in the Welsh NHS and to pass on their experience, knowledge and skills before they retire.

I apologise for the delay in sending this letter following the meeting and would be grateful for your response on the points above in due course, including in relation to why the Prosperous and Secure Strategy was not, in the event, published prior to the end of the summer term.

Yours sincerely



Ann Jones AM
Deputy Presiding Officer
Chair, Committee for the Scrutiny of the First Minister

