

Mr Mark Drakeford AM
Cabinet Secretary for Finance
Welsh Government

21 November 2017

Dear Mark

Common UK policy frameworks: “deep dive” exercises

Thank you for attending the External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee’s meeting yesterday.

At the meeting, committee members asked you questions about the development of common UK policy frameworks.

You explained that the Welsh, Scottish and UK Governments are jointly undertaking three “deep dives” to explore the feasibility of agreeing common UK policy frameworks in relation to agriculture; justice and public health. You stated that each of these would involve two–days of meetings and that such meetings in relation to the ‘deep dive’ on agriculture had already taken place.

The Committee believes that this significant process must also be subject to appropriate scrutiny.

For the agriculture “deep dive”, will you provide further details to the committee, including:

- terms of reference for this exercise;
- names and titles of those present at the two–days of meetings;
- dates of the meetings;



- outputs from the meetings and the “deep dive” (e.g. reports, draft text, minutes or similar); and
- a summary of any decisions taken, including the next steps agreed.

In terms of the public health “deep dive”, can you please provide: details of when meetings are planned; the terms of reference that have been agreed; and who you expect to be in attendance.

You explained that the justice “deep dive” is more a bilateral exercise between the Scottish and UK Governments. I would like to request details of when this exercise is to be undertaken and how the Welsh Government is to be involved.

I am sure you would agree that the pace with which this process is moving poses some challenges for the scrutiny process – particularly as we are only weeks away from the next JMC (EN) meeting. The support of the Welsh Government and its willingness to ensure such scrutiny is achieved is welcome.

In terms of the agenda for the next JMC (EN) meeting, I would hope that you are able to share this with the Committee as soon as it is confirmed. In particular, I would like to know whether you foresee any decisions being taken on common UK policy frameworks or the EU (Withdrawal) Bill at this meeting.

The transparency of these inter-governmental arrangements is important – a point that has been made in clear terms to the Committee by its stakeholders. I intend to write to you separately with a broader request regarding the level of information the Committee will need in future to effectively scrutinise these Brexit-related inter-governmental processes.

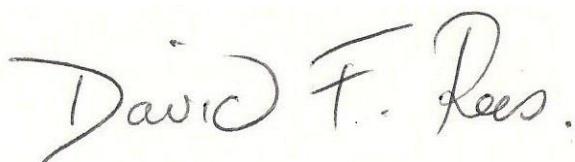
As most of the above information is likely to be in your possession already, I would be grateful for a swift response. If at all possible, I would like to include it in the Committee’s meeting papers for 4 December 2017. To that end, I would need a response by 29 November 2017.



I am copying this letter to Mike Hedges AM, Chair of the Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee, Dr Dai Lloyd AM, Chair of the Health and Social Services Committee and Mick Antoniw AM, Chair of the Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee.

Thank you for considering this request. I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David F. Rees." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D' and 'R'.

David Rees AM

Chair of the External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee

