



Ein cyf/Our ref MA-P/KS/4174/17

David Rees AM
Chair of the External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee

19 December 2017

Dear David,

Thank you for your letter of 6 December regarding actions the Welsh Government has been taking and intends to take in relation to recommendations 1-4 of the Committee's report on the implications of Brexit for Welsh ports. I have had a number of meetings on Brexit with UK Government Ministers, focusing discussions on the related issues of customs and trade, including the unique risk that must be addressed in relation to connectivity with Ireland via our ports.

These meetings have included discussions with the Secretary of State for Wales, the Secretary of State for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy and with the Secretary of State for Transport, with whom I have also corresponded on the issue of customs.

I am keeping under review the need for further meetings with the UK Government on these key issues as further details emerge from the 'second phase' of negotiations with the EU.

I have also met with Shane Ross, Irish Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport to discuss Brexit, particularly the potential mutual threat to our 'landbridge' ports, and am planning to meet with my Scottish counterpart Keith Brown, the Minister for Economy, in the New Year.

More broadly as part of our work to understand the implications of Brexit, I recently visited the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in Geneva where I met the UK Ambassador to the WTO and representatives from WTO member countries. I have also invited the UK Ambassador to visit Wales to strengthen these connections.

At an official level, there is ongoing dialogue with counterparts and co-ordinating teams in the UK Government, including HMRC, to raise specific issues in relation to Welsh ports, as well as other transport-related matters such as the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T), in order to ensure that devolved matters continue to be fully considered in the development of the UK's position.

Officials continue to be members of the DFT led UK Ports Administrations Group (comprising HMRC, sector representation, DFT and the devolved administrations) whose focus is now on Brexit.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Gohebiaeth.Ken.Skates@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Ken.Skates@gov.wales

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.

They have more recently met and established an ongoing relationship on Brexit related issues with the DfT's International and Regulatory Reform Directorate.

Officials have also built strong links with counterparts in Transport Scotland to allow for a more co-ordinated approach across Celtic nations.

I would like to emphasise that I continue to treat all of the recommendations from the Committee's report seriously; I hope this update provides members with the specific reassurance they seek on meaningful engagement with the UK Government.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken', written in a cursive style.

Ken Skates AC/AM

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth
Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Transport