

Mark Drakeford AM
First Minister of Wales

20 May 2019

Dear Mark,

Attendance of Ministers at committees on a Monday

Thank you for your letter dated 12 April 2019, which the Committee considered on 29 April 2019.

Firstly, I would like to thank you personally for the flexibility you have shown in attending meetings of the Committee to date. This is both in terms of your appearances as First Minister and during your time as the Cabinet Secretary for Finance. Such attendances have allowed the Committee to undertake its duties and deliver informed and timely outputs for consideration by the whole Assembly.

We are content to reciprocate that flexibility within the constraints of our allocated meeting slot and particularly in circumstances where we seek your attendance, or that of Welsh Ministers, at short notice. We have done so in the past and see no reason as to why this would not continue. Adjusting the start time for our meetings to 1.30pm on occasions where you, or other Welsh Ministers, are attending should be possible on most occasions, though I am sure you appreciate that there could be rare circumstances where it is not. I have asked the Committee's clerks to continue liaising with your officials on a meeting by meeting basis.

In responding, it is important to note that the issue of Ministerial availability on Mondays has arisen due to the recent decision to move Cabinet meetings from Tuesday mornings to Monday afternoons. I am sure that the decision was taken in full knowledge of the fact that this was at a time allocated by the Business Committee for Assembly business, specifically for the Public Accounts Committee, Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee and the External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee to meet. This



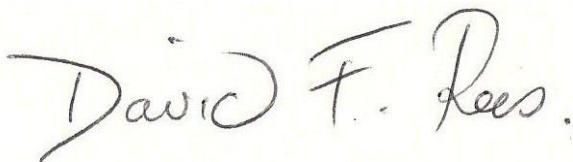
conflict of timing has not arisen as a consequence of any change in this committee's approach, or a change to the pattern of Assembly business.

In your letter you refer to paragraph 6.8 of the Ministerial Code. You will know that one example provided under that paragraph, to illustrate the exceptional circumstances that might prevent a Minister attending a Cabinet meeting, is "Assembly business". Further, we are of the view that whilst it might be appropriate for the Ministerial Code to manage Ministers' time in terms of the business of government, it would be concerning if the Code were to be used as a basis for constraining the availability of Ministers to appear before us as an Assembly committee.

I thank you again for the flexibility you and your Ministers have shown in the past and look forward to your continued engagement with the Committee in the future on that very flexible basis.

I have copied this letter to the Llywydd as Chair of the Business Committee, given the link to the organisation of Assembly business. I have also copied this letter to the Chair of the Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee and the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee due to our shared meeting slots.

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

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

