



Cabinet Office

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Bruce Crawford MSP
Convener of the Finance and Constitution Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

11 June 2019

Dear Bruce,

Thank you for your letter of 26 April on Parliamentary scrutiny of intergovernmental relations (IGR) and common frameworks. Parliamentary scrutiny is indeed essential to achieving accountability and I am grateful for your recommendations on the subject.

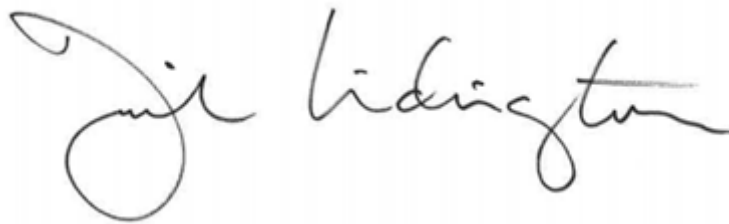
In your letter, you identify transparency, accountability and respect for the confidentiality of discussions as the three main principles governing the relationships between governments and their respective legislatures. The UK Government deeply values these core principles and remains fully committed to them.

You also highlight that both the Scottish and Welsh governments have reached agreements with their legislatures to commit to these principles and to report on IGR meetings, decision-making and the content of agreements. The UK Government acknowledges the importance of information-sharing between the executive and legislative and is currently investigating how to improve Parliamentary scrutiny. As you know, I regularly provide UK Parliamentary committees with updates on IGR. I most recently wrote on 3 May and, on this occasion, extended my updates to relevant committees of the devolved legislatures. Officials from all four administrations are working to develop a set of principles to underpin relations in the future, including transparency and effective communication. We will continue to promote collaboration and build close working relationships between the UK Government and the devolved administrations.

I welcome your recommendations on the role of Parliaments in the scrutiny of common frameworks. The UK Government acknowledges the key scrutiny role played by the devolved legislatures and has made clear we welcome increased Parliamentary scrutiny as this programme of work moves forward. Under the terms of the EU(Withdrawal) Act, we publish quarterly updates on progress in developing common frameworks, which are

laid before the UK Parliament. The most recent of these was published on 16 May. We also recently responded to the report of the Scottish Parliament Finance and Constitution Committee, and we recognise the contribution they are making to our work on common frameworks. As you note, different frameworks will be implemented according to the specific needs of the policy area and through different types of vehicle including primary and secondary legislation, Memoranda of Understanding, concordats or other mechanisms depending on the particular context. Officials from all administrations are currently developing more detailed proposals relating to the agreement and scrutiny of frameworks.

I welcome your continued interest in IGR and common frameworks and remain open to your suggestions on shaping the final IGR agreement as well as ensuring an appropriate level of parliamentary scrutiny of common frameworks.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "David Lidington". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D' and a long, sweeping tail.

Rt Hon David Lidington CBE MP