



Foreign, Commonwealth
& Development Office

Rt Hon James Cleverly MP

Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth
and Development Affairs

King Charles Street
London
SW1A 2AH
Tel: 0207 008 5000

Email: fcdo.correspondence@fcdo.gov.uk

Lord Jay of Ewelme
Chair, Protocol on Ireland/ Northern Ireland
Sub-Committee
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW

19 December 2022

Dear Lord Jay,

Findings of the House of Lords Sub-Committee on the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland's inquiry into the Northern Ireland Protocol Bill

Thank you for your letter of 22 November, which set out the findings of the recent inquiry of the House of Lords Sub-Committee on the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland into the Northern Ireland Protocol Bill. I am grateful for the Sub-Committee's careful and detailed scrutiny of the Bill. I have asked the Minister for Europe, as the minister with responsibility for this area, to provide a detailed response to the questions in your letter.

The government has been clear that its preference is to resolve the current problems with the operation of the Protocol through negotiation with the EU. I have now spoken to Vice President Šefčovič five times since taking up my position, and both sides are optimistic that we can find shared solutions on the key issues. However, it is essential that the Northern Ireland Protocol Bill remains before Parliament to fix these problems if we cannot reach a negotiated settlement.

I agree wholeheartedly with the sentiment expressed at the conclusion of your letter, noting that the 25th anniversary of the Belfast Good Friday Agreement will soon be upon us, and that this will represent an important moment of reflection. I am hopeful that we will soon be able to provide a durable solution that protects both EU and UK internal markets, respects Northern Ireland's constitutional position and works for the businesses and the people of Northern Ireland.

My ministerial team and I remain at your disposal for any further questions. I look forward to further engagement with the Sub-Committee in the New Year.

Yours Sincerely,

Rt Hon James Cleverly MP
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Secretary