



Liaison Committee

House of Commons London SW1A 0AA

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Website: <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/103/liaison-committee-commons>

From Sir Bernard Jenkin MP, Chair

Chloe Smith MP
Minister of State for the Constitution and Devolution
Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2AS

9 February 2021

Dear Chloe,

I am writing on behalf of those Committees involved in scrutiny of Common Frameworks and shared competencies to raise a number of concerns about the timeliness of the process.

Since the end of the transition period on 31 December, Common Frameworks have now come into force in a wide range of policy areas. In many cases, these frameworks have yet to be published, even in summary form. The Covid-19 pandemic has understandably impacted the Government's intended timetable for publication, but as we move further into the post-implementation period it is important that every effort is made to bring forward the publication of frameworks and summary frameworks as quickly as possible.

Committees have made clear their willingness to engage with Departments on frameworks, and in many cases have begun scrutiny work in anticipation of frameworks which have then been delayed. I would be grateful for your assurance that the Cabinet Office will do everything it can to support Departments in engaging with Committees at the earliest possible stage, even on a confidential basis, to ensure that frameworks can receive proper scrutiny even as they continue to apply in preliminary form.

I would also like to draw your attention to concerns raised by a number of Chairs about the long-term arrangements for scrutinising the operation of Common Frameworks and how matters of common interest between the UK Government and Parliament, and the devolved Governments and Parliaments should continue to be discussed and scrutinised. The Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs; Northern Ireland Affairs; Scottish Affairs and Welsh Affairs Committees have written to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster about the delay in publishing the results of the Dunlop review, which the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee had been promised by the end of 2020, and the progress of the wider review of intergovernmental relations. I would be grateful if you could provide those Committees with a clear timeline for publication as soon as possible.

Preparations for the COP 26 summit later this year present an immediate issue of shared interest between the UK Government and Parliament and the Devolved Governments and Parliaments. I would welcome your views on the establishment of a forum for inter-parliamentary discussion in the



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run up to the summit to consider matters of shared interest flowing from agreements reached at the summit.

I would be grateful for a response by Friday 5 March. I am copying this letter to Baroness Andrews, Chair of the House of Lords Common Frameworks Scrutiny Committee.

Yours ever

Sir Bernard Jenkin MP

Chair of the Committee