



# PACAC (Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee)

House of Commons · London SW1A 0AA

Tel 020 7219 3268 Email [pacac@parliament.uk](mailto:pacac@parliament.uk) Website [www.parliament.uk/pacac](http://www.parliament.uk/pacac)

The Rt Hon Michael Gove  
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and Minister for the Cabinet Office  
70 Whitehall  
London  
SW1A 2AS

19<sup>th</sup> March 2021

*Dear Michael,*

## **PACAC's Eighth report, Government transparency and accountability during Covid 19: The data underpinning decisions.**

In light yesterday's business statement announcing that the House will be considering renewal of the Coronavirus Act on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2021, I am writing to request an early response on some of the recommendations my Committee made in its recent Report. Two of the *Covid 19: The data underpinning decisions* recommendations request a response prior to the renewal of the Act. I have paraphrased these below but (of course) expect the response to cover the recommendations in full as stated in the report.

The first is that you clearly outline responsibilities for decision-making (paragraph 97). I would be grateful if you could write to me outlining accountabilities, including stating what you are accountable for, before 25<sup>th</sup> March.

The second is that Government must share data which is key to decision-making on the roadmap with local leaders and publish a comprehensive list of data available (paragraph 132). I would be grateful if you could write to me outlining progress on this and directing me to the published list before 25<sup>th</sup> March.

Additionally, the report makes a number of recommendations about data underpinning decisions on the roadmap. First and foremost is the recommendation that you publish the thresholds for progressing to each step of the roadmap (paragraph 178). Publishing thresholds will make decisions more transparent, and the earlier they are published, the easier it will be for local leaders, businesses and those on the front-line to plan ahead with a view on whether lifting restrictions is likely. As we state in the report "*data transparency is not just a moral issue, it is integral to the success of the response to this pandemic*".



Finally, two recommendations from the Committee's Fourth Report *Parliamentary Scrutiny of the Government's handling of Covid-19* are also relevant for the upcoming debate.

The Government should take care to timetable the six-monthly review debate so that the two-monthly status report is published in good time before that debate takes place, ensuring Parliamentarians have the most up-to-date report to inform the debate. (para 100)

And

To aid effective scrutiny and transparency, it is essential that the Government articulates: the original rationale for the temporary provisions in the Coronavirus Act, why those provisions are still justified and the evidence base for demonstrating those provisions are still effective. This should include provisions that are in force and those that are not. This will improve the transparency of these measures and help determine whether they are still necessary and proportionate. We recommend the Government publish this information in good time for the six-month review. This should be done at least two weeks before that debate takes place. (para 103)

The information that the Committee highlighted as important for the first renewal is equally important before the House considers the Act this time and I would be grateful for an update on these recommendations as well.

I will be placing this letter, and your response, in the public domain.

*Yours ever,*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. Wragg'.

**William Wragg MP**  
**Chair, Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee**