



Julia Lopez MP
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Baroness Andrews
Chair, Lords Common Frameworks
Scrutiny Committee
House of Lords
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5 May 2021

Dear Baroness Andrews,

Thank you for your letter of 20 April requesting greater clarity on the reviews of the Public Procurement Provisional Common Framework and on ongoing transparency for the framework. I am happy to address your questions below.

The Provisional Framework states that if a change is required to the framework as a result of a dispute, it will be referred to the twice-yearly liaison meeting or an extraordinary liaison meeting if necessary. Will the scheduled periodic reviews of the framework be part of these liaison meetings or in addition to them?

The role of the Liaison Group is to undertake reviews and amendments of the Framework as well as monitoring the extent of cooperation between the parties. The Liaison Group will meet twice yearly to discuss the progress of the Framework. At the end of the first year the Liaison Group will undertake a comprehensive review of the Framework. It will then be reviewed every three years by the Liaison Group as part of its normal meetings. If any amendments are required to the Framework as a result of these reviews then the changed version will be submitted to the relevant Ministers and then forwarded for scrutiny.

What will these less frequent scheduled reviews include that is not on the agenda of these liaison meetings? What difference is there, if any, between an extraordinary liaison meeting called as a result of a dispute and an exceptional review of the framework triggered by a significant issue?

As well as the Liaison Group, the Common Framework has also set up a monthly working level meeting called the Concordat Working Group. The role of the Concordat Working Group is to provide a vehicle for the parties to the framework to discuss matters affecting public procurement. If in the course of its meetings the Concordat Working Group identifies something in the Framework that needs to be amended or updated, or that one of the Parties is not complying with the Framework, then that will be referred to the Liaison Group. Since we would not want to wait potentially for several months for the scheduled Liaison Group to resolve the issue, or make the amendment, an extra-ordinary Liaison Meeting could be convened specifically to discuss the issues reported to it by the Concordat Working Group.

Will the results of any of these reviews be published in order to ensure that the UK Parliament and devolved legislatures are able to conduct effective scrutiny of this framework after its implementation?

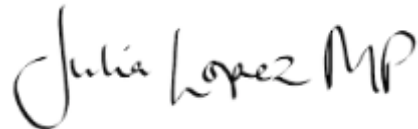
Any amendments made to the Framework as a result of a review will be published to allow for effective scrutiny by the legislatures.

Can you provide any more details on how this framework will facilitate ongoing parliamentary scrutiny? If not, when do you plan to provide these details?

The Provisional Framework published on 23rd March is the version agreed by the ministers in UKG and the devolved administrations with responsibility for intergovernmental relations at the beginning of March 2021. Further work to finalise the Framework will continue at official level, including the addition of the reporting process that will facilitate ongoing scrutiny. Due to elections in both Wales and Scotland, it is expected that the next iteration of the Framework will be submitted to the respective Ministers later in the year, and will be subsequently presented for scrutiny.

I hope the above information is useful.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julia Lopez MP". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Julia Lopez MP