

Written evidence – Robin Walker MP (GLT0011)

I offer my thanks to the Committee for their inquiries into the implications of Brexit for Gibraltar and the Crown Dependencies and for inviting me to give evidence in person. I look forward to appearing in front of the committee.

The UK Government is committed to fully involve Gibraltar and the Crown Dependencies as we prepare for negotiations to leave the EU in accordance with their constitutional relationships with the UK, to ensure that their priorities are taken into account.

I have been closely involved from the start of the EU exit process. Indeed on 20 July, my first debate in my role as a minister at the Department for Exiting the European Union was a Westminster Hall debate on the EU Referendum and Gibraltar.

The Secretary of State for Exiting the EU and I met the Chief Minister of Gibraltar on 12 September, and Gibraltar participated in the Joint Ministerial Council for Overseas Territories on 1 and 2 November.

The first meeting of the UK-Gibraltar Ministerial Forum on EU Exit took place on 7 December, where I was joined by Sir Alan Duncan to meet with the Chief Minister of Gibraltar. The next meeting is scheduled for early March. Officials have held technical meetings in the priority areas identified by the Chief Minister of Gibraltar.

I have also had informal contact with the Chief Minister, including following the Prime Minister's Lancaster House speech and the Supreme Court verdict.

I welcome the Chief Minister's comments on the forum to the BBC's Marr Show on 13 December: "We are participating in a joint ministerial committee on Gibraltar specifically and I think it's going very well indeed."

Likewise I have committed to formal quarterly meetings with the Chief Ministers of Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man. This forum most recently met on 25 January, when I was joined by Mark Garnier from the Department for International Trade. Officials from HM Treasury, Home Office, HM Revenue and Customs and the Department for the Environment and Rural Affairs attended. It was an important and productive meeting, allowing us to understand the challenges and opportunities that will arise for Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man. The first formal Chief Ministers' meeting took place on 02 November. I also met with the Crown Dependencies Chief Ministers at the British Irish Council on 24 November.

Officials from the UK and Crown Dependency Governments have held technical meetings in the priority areas identified by the Chief Ministers

As with Gibraltar, I have also maintained informal contact with the Chief Ministers, including following the Prime Minister's Lancaster House speech and the Supreme Court verdict.

I welcome the Chief Ministers' positive comments on the engagement process to this committee and to the Commons Justice Select Committee in December.

The UK Government maintains a constant dialogue with the Government of Gibraltar and the governments of the Crown Dependencies in order to ensure that their perspective is understood as we prepare to leave the EU.

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