



Department for
International Trade



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

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By email: jeremy.purvis@parliament.uk

12 January 2021

Dear Jeremy,

Thank you for your contribution to our debate on Amendment 46 and the wider discussion on the WTO Agreement on Government Procurement (GPA) at Report on 6 January. As discussed, I am writing to respond to your question about when you can expect to see a timeframe on Government procurement policies.

With regards to the GPA, I am pleased to confirm that the UK became an independent party to the GPA on 1 January 2021. We have acceded to the GPA on substantially the same terms that the UK had previously via the EU.

The powers in clause 1 of the Trade Bill will enable the making of regulations to implement the UK's obligations as an independent party to the GPA in full in domestic law. Clause 1 of the Trade Bill cannot be used to implement more general, broader changes to procurement law and can only be used in limited circumstances directly related to the UK's participation in the GPA. For example, as part the UK's accession, we committed to carry out a routine update to the list of central Government entities in the UK's market access schedule. We will notify the WTO GPA Committee of this update in the coming months and we expect that regulations to reflect the update in domestic law will be made in late May 2021. Parliament will be updated on regular work of the GPA Committee via the Department for International Trade Annual Report.

With regard to broader changes in domestic procurement law, the Cabinet Office published a Green Paper Transforming Public Procurement in December and a consultation is open for until 10 March 2021. Any reform of the procurement regime will require primary legislation so, subject to the outcome of the consultation process, Cabinet Office anticipates a Bill will be introduced to Parliament in summer 2021 to give effect to these reforms. This Bill will progress through the legislative process in the usual way.

All proposals outlined in the Green Paper, and any future changes to our domestic procurement framework, will be consistent with the UK's international obligations including our GPA obligations. Whilst changes to the domestic procurement regime are not 'authorised' by the UK's independent participation in the GPA, it does provide a more flexible framework of procurement regulation. The UK has a greater degree of flexibility to introduce reforms, now it is no longer bound by the EU Public Procurement Directives.

I hope this provides some clarity and I am happy to follow up again if you have any further questions. I am placing a copy of this letter in the Library of the House.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Grimstone". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel, Kt
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