



GOVERNMENT WHIPS' OFFICE
HOUSE OF LORDS
LONDON SW1A 0PW

Telephone 020-7219 3131

www.lordswhips.org.uk

holgovernmentwhips@parliament.uk

BARONESS BLOOMFIELD OF HINTON WALDRIST
020-7219 6802

28 February 2023

Dear Kay,

I am writing to address questions which I did not have sufficient time to answer in the Common Frameworks Scrutiny Committee Report debate on Thursday 2 February. Most of these relate to questions raised by Baroness Taylor towards the end of the debate. The debate was very useful and I welcome the opportunity to demonstrate the value of the Commons Frameworks programme.

You raised in your closing speech that greater clarity was needed on the interaction of Common Frameworks and the REUL Bill and expressed concern around whether or not Common Frameworks could manage a large volume of REUL reform related divergence. I understand that since the debate you have had a private briefing with senior officials on Frameworks and REUL reform, which I hope has reassured you that Common Frameworks are designed to manage divergence and accommodate changes to regulations in their scope - including that which results from the sunset and governments' use of the powers in the Bill.

I would like to offer the following responses to the questions we did not have time to consider fully in the debate.

'I also ask the Minister to consider how the Government can continually reflect on the operation of the communiqué within government, and to remain open to the prospect of further revisions in the future'.

In January last year, the Government published the Intergovernmental Relations Review following extensive consultation with the devolved governments. Alongside this, the focus is on embedding Common Frameworks to ensure their effective operation as a key part of the fabric of intergovernmental working. The principles in the Communiqué remain at the centre of the operation of the Programme, and the oversight provided by the Inter-Ministerial Standing Committee as the successor to the historic Joint Ministerial Committee operating arrangements. The Government previously agreed to review the JMC(EN) Communiqué post-implementation should all four governments agree and this remains our position.

'Unfortunately, three recommendations have been rejected outright by the Government, including the suggestion that the Frameworks analysis report should be updated. On this specific issue, can the Minister confirm whether the Government are refusing to update the report in any form, or whether they are just rejecting the specific recommendation to include the Joint Ministerial Committee's principles?'

The latest Frameworks analysis published in 2021 set out clear rationales for the no Framework

required areas which remains the position. However, this is something the Government is considering and will publish a revised version should further developments warrant it and this is something I am aware that the Second Permanent Secretary touched on in her evidence to the Committee and has committed to keeping the Committee updated on

'I also ask the Minister to commit at least to ongoing engagement with the committee to consider whether it would be appropriate to implement the three other recommendations at a later date'.

The Government will continue to keep previous recommendations under review and greatly values the support of the committee in implementing the programme, and our officials meet regularly and will continue to do so. The government welcomes this constructive working.

I would like to take the opportunity again to thank all the members and officials of the Common Frameworks Scrutiny Committee, past and present, for their detailed and diligent scrutiny. I look forward to your comments on the Emissions Trading Scheme Framework once this is published, and on remaining Frameworks.

I hope you find this letter helpful. I will also send a copy to all those Peers who spoke in the debate and I will also place a copy in the House library.

*Kind regards
Olivia*

BARONESS BLOOMFIELD OF HINTON WALDRIST

Baroness Andrews
House of Lords