



Ein cyf/Our ref: MA-P/FM/4067/17

Mick Antoniw AM  
Chair, Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee  
National Assembly for Wales

20<sup>th</sup> November 2017

Dear Mick

I am writing in response to a letter from your predecessor dated 23 October, relating to your Committee's inquiry 'A Stronger Voice for Wales'.

We set out our views on the operation of the Joint Ministerial Committee structures in 'Brexit and Devolution' which we published in June this year. It remains our view that the JMC's role and working arrangements are inadequate for the new challenges we face, and that the UK's inter-governmental machinery must be reformed with a new UK Council of Ministers, served by an independent secretariat, and supported by a dispute resolution mechanism.

In the meantime, we want to see a step change in the way in which JMC operates. It is right to acknowledge that October's JMC (EN) was more positive in tone than has hitherto been the case. The four administrations were able to agree a set of principles for the development of the UK frameworks, which we have always recognised will be essential if we are to ensure that no new barriers to the effective free movement of goods and services within the UK are created as a result of EU withdrawal. We now expect to see this progress maintained with regular JMC (EN) meetings which are genuinely collaborative in nature, and we also need a further meeting of JMC(P), as we approach the anniversary of the last meeting which we hosted in Cardiff. As matters go forward, I anticipate that there will be regular reporting to the Assembly and/or its Committees on the outcomes of JMC(EN) and JMC(P) meetings.

Looking ahead to the longer term challenges of how the Devolved Administrations and the UK Government will relate to each other and work constructively outside the EU, it is clear to me that the cumulative effect of the Frameworks we intend to agree will inevitably lead to more substantive inter-governmental relations within the UK. We will need to significantly rethink how we conduct business on matters where there are common areas of interest, both in respect of devolved matters where there is a collective UK interest, and matters which are non-devolved but in respect of which the Devolved Administrations have

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

legitimate interests. We set out our thoughts on these issues in 'Brexit and Devolution', but we emphasised that neither we nor anyone else has a monopoly on good ideas, and it is now vital that we have an open discussion about how the future relations within the UK should look. I look forward to receiving the views of the Committee on these matters.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carwyn Jones', written in a cursive style.

**CARWYN JONES**