



# HOUSE OF LORDS

Common Frameworks Scrutiny Committee

House of Lords

London

SW1A 0PW

Tel: 020 7219 8664

[hlcommonframeworks@parliament.uk](mailto:hlcommonframeworks@parliament.uk)

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Clare Adamson MSP  
Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP

Dear Clare,

Thank you for your letter of 22 February.

We would like to congratulate your committee on publishing your latest report and very much appreciate you sharing your findings with us. We as a Committee have dedicated much of our focus to scrutinising the UK Internal Market Act's interaction with common frameworks and therefore take great interest in your findings. We share your deep concerns about how it causes tension for the devolution settlements, but also in terms of how it risks further destabilising intergovernmental relations and the Union more generally.

As you point out, common frameworks provide the potential to resolve such tensions. We found in our first report "Common Frameworks: building a cooperative Union", that they provide positive foundations for intergovernmental working.<sup>1</sup> We as a Committee also strongly advocate the new Process published last December for considering UK Internal Market Act exclusions for areas covered by common frameworks.<sup>2</sup> This Process was the result of a vital amendment secured by one of our committee members, Lord Hope. However, we support your point that the Common Frameworks Programme is hampered by a lack of transparency. We have also identified this in terms of public stakeholder engagement, and also from a lack of commitment to regular ongoing reporting on frameworks to the legislatures, past their full implementation. This would of course facilitate future parliamentary scrutiny of the Common Frameworks Programme.

We are aware that the Welsh Government have committed to at least an annual report to the Senedd covering the Programme in general, and each of the frameworks. We are also aware that the Welsh Government are planning to present guidance to the other governments on how ongoing reporting might look past the full implementation of common frameworks, although we have not yet received any updates on this work.<sup>3</sup> When we also received evidence from the Scottish Government last December, an official acknowledged that they could always do more stakeholder engagement, and that they are committed to

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<sup>1</sup> [Common frameworks: building a cooperative Union \(parliament.uk\)](https://www.parliament.uk/publications/2017/11/common-frameworks-building-a-cooperative-union/)

<sup>2</sup> [Process for considering UK Internal Market Act exclusions in Common Framework areas - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/534242/Process_for_considering_UK_Internal_Market_Act_exclusions_in_Common_Framework_areas_-_GOV.UK.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Q246, <https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/3260/pdf/>

ongoing stakeholder engagement for the future.<sup>4</sup> We note you are seeking the views of the Welsh and Scottish governments on these issues and would be interested in what additional information they provide.

We are also encouraged that you intend to raise these issues at the newly refreshed interparliamentary forum. We as a Committee are due to report and conclude our work in July, and therefore will no longer be in existence at the estimated time of the next forum meeting. However, in the meantime, we hope to continue engaging with you on these matters alongside other committees across the legislatures.

Yours sincerely,

Baroness Andrews  
Chair of the Common Frameworks Scrutiny Committee

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<sup>4</sup> Q237, <https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/3225/pdf/>