

Rt Hon Steve Barclay MP, Chief Secretary to the Treasury
Rt Hon Simon Hart MP, Secretary of State for Wales

16 February 2021

Dear Chief Secretary and Secretary of State

Inquiry into the implementation of the Wales Act 2014 and operation of the Fiscal Framework

I wrote to you both recently informing you that the Finance Committee had published its report into the inquiry into the implementation of the Wales Act 2014 and operation of the Fiscal Framework.

As you will be aware, the Committee had hoped to take evidence from you both during our inquiry but we appreciate the time pressures on you given the UK fiscal events that were happening at that time. I subsequently wrote to invite you to attend a meeting following publication of our report but prior to our scheduled Plenary debate on 24 March 2021.

The Committee was very disappointed that the Chief Secretary had declined this further invitation. Whilst we are grateful to the Secretary of State for agreeing to attend, I understand you are only willing to discuss matters relating to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and not on any fiscal matters given that these are the responsibility of the Chief Secretary.

As I have highlighted to you both in previous correspondence, the Wales Act 2014 was a fundamental piece of legislation in the devolution settlement and the role of the Welsh Government in delivering successfully is intrinsically linked with the UK Government. Our report identifies a number of issues where further information is required from the UK Government and it is vital that we hear from you. We would be willing to arrange a joint session with you both to cover matters falling within your responsibilities or for one of you to attend to cover all aspects on behalf of the UK Government. Your evidence is fundamental to the inquiry, and for this reason the Committee is willing to accommodate an evidence session outside of our normal meeting slot to suit your availability.



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The Committee feels strongly that the lack of engagement from the UK Government so far has undermined the value of the scrutiny process. For this reason I am copying this letter to the Llywydd of the Senedd given the constitutional implications and the precedent it sets if you are unwilling to participate in scrutiny of powers which fall within the remit of the UK Government and the Welsh Government.

In order to ensure this matter is able to progress with urgency, please could you formally respond by 23 February 2021 to enable us to arrange this session as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Llyr', is centered on a light yellow rectangular background.

Llyr Gruffydd MS / AS

Cadeirydd / Chair

Cc: Rebecca Evans MS, Minister for Finance and Trefnydd

Elin Jones MS, Llywydd of the Senedd

