



Our Ref: MP625938

Graham Allen MP
Chair
Political and Constitutional Reform Committee
House of Commons
First Floor, Committee Office
7 Millbank
London
SW1P 3JA

10 February 2015

Dear Graham,

Thank you for your letter of 13 January about the Government response to the Committee's report "Fixed-term Parliaments: the final year of a Parliament."

In relation to pre-legislative scrutiny, formal pre-legislative scrutiny may not always be possible, but this does not mean that there has not been a formal public consultation on the proposed legislation, or informal discussions with the relevant stakeholders. Both are just as valuable as pre-legislative scrutiny and are part of the normal process for formulating policy. The current system allows for the flexibility and dynamic nature of the legislative process.

In some instances, consultation documents have included draft illustrative clauses. The explanatory notes that accompany Bills set out the background to a policy and detail where there have been public consultations. The new format of explanatory notes, which are being piloted on two Bills in this session, will allow for easier access to online policy documents on consultations. When a Bill is passing through each House, the Minister will also set out at Second Reading the policy background and the rationale for the approach to consultation adopted.

You asked about the process for pre-elections contacts in the light of the Fixed-term Parliaments Act 2011. The operation of pre-election contacts is a matter for the Prime Minister. The timing and nature of the contacts for the 2015 General Election reflects both the introduction of the Fixed-term Parliaments Act 2011, and previous practice. The start date and process for pre-election contacts for future General Elections will be a matter for the Prime Minister.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sam Gyimah', is centered on the page. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

SAM GYIMAH