



Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

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The Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP
Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government
Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government

21 May 2018

Thank you for your letter of 8 May 2018 in response to my letter following the Committee's evidence session in March on its ongoing Brexit and local government inquiry. It is likely the Committee will hold further one-off sessions before the summer and in the autumn on this inquiry. However, I wanted to follow up on a number of specific points at this juncture.

Firstly, on EU funding, you note that the Government has guaranteed that all projects signed before the UK leaves the EU in March 2019 "will receive the level of funding agreed as long as they are good value for money and in line with domestic strategic priorities". I would be grateful if you could indicate:

- (a) how the Government will assess whether something is (i) value for money and (ii) in line with domestic strategic priorities; and
- (b) what the process will be for (i) that assessment and (ii) individual projects ensuring the continuance of their funding in such circumstances.

Given March 2019 is now less than a year away, it is important that there is clarity and transparency now in how these assessments will be made and the process thereto.

Secondly, you may be aware of a letter that was received by the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee on 30 April from the Permanent Secretary in the Department for Exiting the European Union on departmental workstreams to implement EU Exit. This included a department-by-department summary of the areas of work being undertaken. For the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government it noted ten active workstreams relating to policies affected by leaving the EU, and provides some examples. The summary notes that these include the implications of exit on local government, but it is unclear whether there is a specific workstream on the devolution of powers to local government. I note that paragraph 3.8 of the Government's February 2017 White Paper made clear that it was "committed to devolving greater powers to local government where there is economic rationale to do so". I would therefore be grateful if you could indicate what each of the ten active workstreams are.

In this context, it is also somewhat surprising that your most recent letter seems to indicate that there has been very little progress from the Department on ensuring the representation of local government in the Brexit negotiation since the letter from your predecessor on the same subject in January. As you point out, March was a milestone in the negotiations and therefore to only be considering now, with less than a year to go, the best mechanism for engaging local government

in the negotiations is somewhat concerning. I therefore reiterate the Committee's previous call to formalise the structure by which Government engages with local government on Brexit, mirroring that for the devolved administrations. Again, it is also important that local authorities and all levels and in all regions are represented.

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

Clive Betts MP
Chair, Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee