Dear Tim,

Thank you for your letter of 18 April to the former Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union asking that the Government respond to the principal questions raised by the Pitcairn Islands Council, and the governments of the Falkland Islands and Anguilla in correspondence received by you on 26 March.

I apologise for the lateness of this response, which was delayed in order to engage with the governments of the Overseas Territories and to take into account the conversations held at the Joint Ministerial Council Overseas Territories EU Negotiations (JMC OT EN) on the issues that they raised in their correspondence. In the meantime, an update was sent to you on progress of the JMC OT EN, which was held on the 14 June.

**Falkland Islands**

The Falkland Islands indicated in their letter to you that they would appreciate greater clarity on whether or not the Overseas Territories would be included in any future free trade agreements negotiated by the UK Government, and how the UK Government would propose to help the Falkland Islands adjust in the event of a 'no deal'.

The former Secretary of State responded to the specific concerns raised by the Falkland Islands in a letter to the members of their Legislative Assembly in April. Senior officials have since held a series of detailed discussions with the Falkland Islands’ Government about their priorities and concerns in exit, including ‘no deal’, and will continue to engage with them.

Through this regular engagement, we understand the importance of access to the European market for their fish and meat to the economic wellbeing of the Falklands Islands. As set out in the Government’s White Paper *The Future Relationship between the United Kingdom and the European Union*, the UK will be seeking specific arrangements for the Crown Dependencies, Gibraltar and the other Overseas Territories. These arrangements should take account of the significant and mutually beneficial economic ties between these economies and EU Member States, including their overseas countries and territories.
Separately to the issue of market access, the UK will be leaving the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), and is committed to working closely with EU Member States and other coastal states to ensure sustainable management of shared stocks and the wider marine environment. The UK therefore proposes to agree a mechanism for annual negotiations on access to waters and fishing opportunities; and to promote sustainable fisheries. In pursuing this agreement, the Government will continue working closely with the devolved administrations, Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories, including the Falkland Islands.

The White Paper also contains the UK’s proposals for its new economic partnership with the EU, which will allow the UK to negotiate new international trade agreements in line with its priorities and interests, and as the then Minister of State for Trade Policy set out for the Overseas Territories leaders at the recent JMC OT EN, the extent to which future Free Trade Agreements will apply to the Overseas Territories will be explored on a country by country basis, taking into account the market interests of the Overseas Territories. Separately, we are examining the options for what will replace the effects of the Overseas Association Decision, and welcome the substantive input we have received from the Falkland Islands’ Government.

**Pitcairn Islands**

We have noted the Pitcairn Islands’ concerns about replacing the EU funding that the Overseas Territories receive from the EU, and the UK Government is committed to seeking to ensure the Overseas Territories’ development needs continue to be met appropriately post-exit. Lord Bates, Minister of State for Development Policy, reassured the Overseas Territories at the JMC OT EN that those who currently benefit from the European Development Fund 11, including the Falklands, Pitcairn Island and Anguilla, will continue to do so until the fund’s closure in 2020. He was also able to reiterate that the Overseas Territories’ Overseas Development Assistance eligibility will not be affected by EU exit.

The UK Government also recognises the importance of Pitcairn’s relationship with French Polynesia, especially the use of the domestic port of Mangareva in the Gambier Islands for loading and unloading of passengers. The Home Office have conducted a detailed review of the visa arrangements that are in place with the French and French Polynesian Governments and have concluded that there is no indication that the visa exemption for British Nationals is at risk on account of the UK leaving the EU, as French Polynesia is not part of the Schengen Zone. However, the Government will continue to review this situation and support the Pitcairn Islands as appropriate to retain this arrangement post Brexit, as it will for hospital access in Tahiti for Pitkerners.

**Anguila**

We note the West India Committee’s report: ‘Anguilla & Brexit: The Solution’. Officials have met and discussed exit issues as they relate to Anguilla with the Anguilla Representative to the UK, Mrs. Blondel Cluff CBE, on a number of occasions. These matters were also discussed at length during the recent JMC OT EN, which included a Home Office technical
briefing on the likely implications of the UK leaving the EU for Citizens’ Rights and ease of movement. The Home Office’s analysis indicates that most movement arrangements between UK OTs and the Overseas Countries and Territories of Member States— including those for Anguilla and St. Martin and Sint Maarten— should not be directly affected by EU exit.

Questions raised about EU development funding and trade raised in The West India Committee Report, which echoed those raised by other OTs, were also comprehensively addressed at the JMC OT EN as outlined in our report to you on that meeting.

I very much appreciate the work of your Committee in highlighting issues of concern to the Overseas Territories, and look forward to working with you further as the Government ensures that the UK-EU deal delivers for the Overseas Territories.

ROBIN WALKER MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR
EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION