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Ms Linda Dillon
Chairperson
Committee on Procedures
Northern Ireland Assembly
By email: committee.procedures@niassembly.gov.uk
Cc: Nick.Mitford@niassembly.gov.uk

23rd October 2020

Dear Linda

Thank you for your letter of 22 September, notifying the Secretary of State of the Committee's intention to review the current procedure for Legislative Consent Motions (LCMs) along with the associated Standing Orders. The Secretary of State has asked me to respond on his behalf.

I note the issues the Committee are keen to consider as part of this review, and, whilst I welcome the opportunity to provide input, I do not think it would be appropriate for me to comment specifically on internal matters or processes within the NI Assembly. As such I will focus my comments on the legislative consent process.

On our part, the UK Government remains committed to engaging with the NI Executive and seeking legislative consent where appropriate. Following the restoration of the NI Executive, the NIO immediately issued guidance to all UKG Departments to make them aware that NI Executive Ministers were now in place and reminding them of the need to respect the devolution settlement in Northern Ireland.

This guidance highlighted that UKG Departments should work closely with counterparts in the NI Civil Service with the aim of seeking legislative consent from the Northern Ireland Assembly where appropriate. It also noted that the NI Civil Service and NIO should always be consulted at an early stage when developing any such legislative proposals, which is already outlined within Devolution Guidance Note 8.

The NIO has played an important role to date in facilitating this engagement, ensuring that the NI Civil Service and NI Executive are consulted and appropriately engaged at an official and Ministerial level.

We will continue to facilitate this engagement to ensure NI Executive Ministers have the opportunity to consider any such legislative proposals when appropriate. To help with the Committee's forward plans, I have attached an indicative list of forthcoming

legislation scheduled for parliamentary introduction over the next few months. I would of course stress that this list is subject to change depending on the final content and scope of each bill.

I wish the Committee well as they undertake this review and I look forward to seeing the final report upon its completion.

Yours sincerely,

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

ROBIN WALKER MP
MINISTER OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

INDICATIVE LIST OF FORTHCOMING UK PARLIAMENT LEGISLATION

October 2020	Reserved/Devolved Status
National Security & Investment Bill	All provisions of the Bill only deal with reserved or excepted matters.
Telecoms Security Bill	All provisions of the Bill only deal with reserved or excepted matters.
November/December 2020	Reserved/Devolved Status
Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) Bill	All provisions of the Bill only deal with reserved or excepted matters.
EU Future Relationship Bill	Some provisions of the Bill are likely to engage transferred matters
January 2021	Reserved/Devolved Status
Crime & Justice Bill	Provisions of the Bill only apply to England & Wales.
Building Safety Bill	TBC - Pending Ministerial agreement from the NI Executive on proposals for UK-wide provisions on a New Homes Ombudsman .