



Rt Hon Lord Frost CMG
Minister of State
Cabinet Office 70 Whitehall London
SW1A 2AS

Mr. Colin McGrath MLA
Chair, Northern Ireland Assembly Committee
for the Executive Office
Room 375a, Parliament Buildings,
Ballymiscaw, Stormont
Belfast
BT4 3XX

Our reference: MC2021/03996

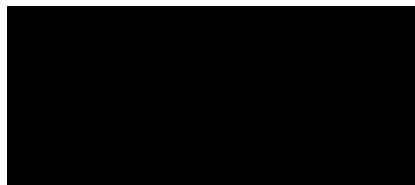
30 March 2021

Dear Mr McGrath,

Thank you for your letter of 19 February regarding the first meeting of the Joint Consultative Working Group (JCWG). Article 15(2) of the Northern Ireland Protocol establishes that the Joint Consultative Working Group shall be composed of representations of the United Kingdom and the European Union. The UK Government has committed to including representatives of the Northern Ireland Executive as part of the UK delegation to meetings. The JCWG briefly convened for a very short period on 29 January purely to adopt the Rules of Procedure. This was not a full meeting so was attended by limited delegations of only three officials from each side.

My officials are continuing to work with the EU and colleagues in the Northern Ireland Executive to agree the modalities of operation for the Working Group going forwards, now that the Rules of Procedure have been formally adopted.

With best wishes,

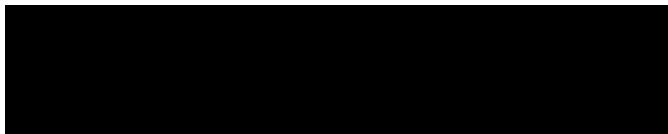


Rt Hon Lord Frost CMG



Committee for the Executive Office

The Rt Hon. Michael Gove MP Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and
Minister for the Cabinet Office
Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2AS
United Kingdom



19 February 2021

Dear Michael

Joint Consultative Working Group (JCWG)

At the Northern Ireland Assembly Committee for the Executive Office meeting on 17 February 2021, the Committee discussed the meeting of the Joint Consultative Working Group (JCWG) on 29 January 2021.

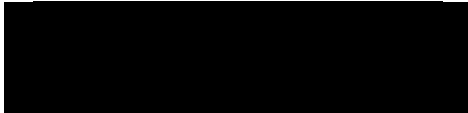
This information was conveyed by Paymaster General Penny Mordaunt on 1 February 2021 during questions for the Cabinet Office on the subject of UK Relations with EU: Northern Ireland, however no further detail on the attendees or agenda was provided.

As you are aware the function of the JCWG as outlined in the Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol is to 'serve as a forum for the exchange of information and mutual consultation' on the implementation of the Protocol. The Committee agreed that I write to you express our disappointment in finding out that the meeting of the JCWG had place, with no announcement or communication from the UK Government that the group had met.

While the meeting of the group is confidential, co-chairs can decide to release agendas and summaries of the minutes of meetings if they wish. The Committee has requested that this information is shared going forward to ensure all administrations are kept informed of the latest developments in regard to the JCWG.

I look forward to a response at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely



Colin McGrath MLA Chairperson,
Committee for the Executive Office

Committee for the Executive Office
Room 375a, Parliament Buildings, Ballymiscaw, Stormont, Belfast, BT4 3XX
Telephone: (028) 9052 1019