



The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

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20 April 2020

Dear Michael,

I write following the helpful meeting on Wednesday last week between yourself and the Devolved Administrations, plus Sadiq speaking for London, and the subsequent COBR (M).

There has been very considerable alignment of policy across the four nations through this period and, while respecting specific needs in each of our administrations, this coherence continues to prove very helpful. As we move towards the next set of decisions we may, depending on scientific and medical advice, be in position to consider easing some of the current restrictions. Inevitably this will require more detailed and nuanced judgements, with greater potential for contention and difference, than last week's clear consensus to extend the present restrictions for another three weeks. For this reason I believe we should endeavour to work even more closely together to agree a common approach where that is possible and to assist appreciation of difference where that is necessary.

I believe it would be enormously helpful to establish a regular rhythm to that period in which, as a minimum each week:

- officials meet at the early part of each week to share data and analysis;
- the Devolved Administrations and the Mayor of London meet with you in mid-week to discuss emerging policy options,
- and a COBR at the end of the week consolidates progress and shared understanding.

The purpose of these meetings would not be to deal with the here-and-now decisions which are being pursued through the COBR subgroups each day, but to share thinking and ideas about the best ways in which lockdown can be eased, when it is safe to do so.

Such a pattern would maximise the chances of us being able to work closely together, and reach an agreed set of measures at the end of the period, whatever those measures might be. It would also provide confidence to the nations of the United Kingdom that we are working purposefully together to plan for the future. Coming together immediately before

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

decisions have to be made will not be sufficient to craft the sort of shared understanding and common approaches which we have succeeded in establishing to date, and which, I believe, we are all keen to see continue.

I am copying this letter to Nicola in Scotland, Arlene and Michelle in Northern Ireland and Sadiq in London.

Best Wishes

Personal Data

MARK DRAKEFORD