



Ministry of
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Dear Lady,

I am writing to expand on a statement made in response to the points you raised during the Second Reading of the Constitutional Reform and Governance Bill on 24 March 2010. You welcomed The National Archives' proposed role in the transitional arrangements for the proposed reduction of the 30-Year Rule, and noted that it "will be vital [...] that departments recognise the scale of the task facing them and that each prepares an implementation plan in consultation with the National Archives." You also asked whether I shared your view that each Permanent Secretary should agree to the above so that "Ministers have a full appreciation of the risks and costs involved".

I am conscious that my response in the House may not have fully covered the points you raised, and would like to take this opportunity to provide you with further details.

Prior to publication of the Government's Response to the 30 Year Rule Review, Ministry of Justice officials worked with a number of central government departments to assess the nature and likely cost of the work involved in transition to a new rule. I agree that in order for this process to be effective, departments will need to develop and implement robust plans and to fund those plans appropriately. To that end, officials in the Ministry of Justice will continue to work closely with their colleagues in The National Archives to develop implementation arrangements providing for the most efficient and effective transition to the new rule, in conjunction with all public records bodies.

Looking further ahead, as you highlighted in your statement, The National Archives will assume responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the new rule on behalf of the Lord Chancellor and will report annually to Ministers on progress towards implementation. This will allow for scrutiny at Ministerial level of the progress made by departments and other bodies in implementing the transition to the new rule.

I am placing a copy of this letter in the Library of the House.

Yours GW,

WILLY BACH

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