



Northern
Ireland
Office

The Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP

**Secretary of State for
Northern Ireland**

1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ

Erskine House
20-32 Chichester St
Belfast
BT1 4GF

E: correspondence@nio.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/nio
Follow us on X @NIOgov

Edwin Poots
Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly
Parliament Buildings, Stormont
Belfast, BT4 3XX

By Email: speaker@niassembly.gov.uk
Cc: PS.Ministers@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk

31 October 2024

Dear Edwin,

NOTIFICATION UNDER SCHEDULE 6A NORTHERN IRELAND ACT 1998

Under Schedule 6A of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, it is my duty as Secretary of State to give notification of the start of the democratic consent process, as referred to in paragraphs 3 and 4 of the declaration by His Majesty's Government concerning the operation of the 'Democratic consent in Northern Ireland' provision of the Windsor Framework made on 17 October 2019.

This notification marks the day immediately before the start of the final two months of the current continuation period. The first day of the new continuation period will be 1 January 2025. Before that date, this Government must notify the European Commission of the outcome of the democratic consent process established by Schedule 6A in relation to the continued application of Articles 5 to 10 of the Framework during the new continuation period.


I can confirm that for this upcoming democratic consent process, the default democratic consent process will apply, as set out in Part 3 of Schedule 6A.

Schedule 6A prescribes the text of the motion to be tabled, and has remained unamended since December 2020 such that it refers to the former Northern Ireland Protocol. As you will know, the arrangements laying down the Windsor Framework

at the UK/EU Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee included agreement that references to the 'the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland' (such as that prescribed in the motion) will be read by the Government to mean the Windsor Framework. I would be grateful if this could be put to Assembly Members should there be doubt as to the validity of a motion.

I am copying this letter to the First Minister and deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland, Michelle O'Neill & Emma Little-Pengelly.

Yours Sincerely,

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

**THE RT HON HILARY BENN MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND**