



Heads of British-Irish Council Summit Delegations

11 November 2021

Dear all,

I very much look forward to welcoming you to Wales for the 36th British-Irish Council Summit on 18-19 November. The BIC Summits play a vital role in supporting dialogue and collective action between our governments, and this is more important than ever given the current challenges we all face.

On current trends, the Coronavirus case rates within Wales are falling, but not falling as fast as I would like, and by the time of the Summit next week it looks likely that the rates in Wales will still be relatively high in absolute terms and in comparison to other parts of the UK and neighbouring islands. We will be putting in place robust measures to ensure the Summit is delivered safely, but in this context, I have been reviewing the preparations for the Summit and the latest estimate of expected numbers attending, which for the governmental delegations is currently projected at close to 100.

In relation to the Welsh Government, I have decided that at Ministerial level only myself and the Minister for Education and Welsh Language will attend, and that only the smallest number of our officials should support in person, on an absolutely 'minimum critical' basis. Any other Welsh Government Ministers and officials will join using the virtual facilities provided. This forms part of the Covid safe summit risk mitigation plans which we are putting in place.

In this vein, I would be extremely grateful if you could consider further who from your delegation needs to be at the Summit in-person actively to contribute to the discussions, and who can take part virtually, via the video conferencing systems being made available. By focusing on those expected to have a direct speaking role, and an absolute minimum number of supporting officials / advisers, I hope that we can keep the Summit size to a level that reflects the context of the continuing pandemic.

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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.

I am confident that with smaller delegations and greater virtual attendance we will all enjoy a more successful and safer Summit.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Drakeford". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

MARK DRAKEFORD