

THE RT HON BORIS JOHNSON MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

28 August 2019

Dear Colleague,

I hope that you had an enjoyable and productive summer recess, with the opportunity for some rest ahead of the return of the House.

I wanted to take this opportunity to update you on the Government's plans for its business in Parliament.

As you know, for some time parliamentary business has been sparse. The current session has lasted more than 340 days and needs to be brought to a close – in almost 400 years only the 2010-12 session comes close, at 250 days. Bills have been introduced, which, while worthy in their own right, have at times seemed more about filling time in both the Commons and the Lords, while key Brexit legislation has been held back to ensure it could still be considered for carry-over into a second session. This cannot continue.

I therefore intend to bring forward a new bold and ambitious domestic legislative agenda for the renewal of our country after Brexit. There will be a significant Brexit legislative programme to get through but that should be no excuse for a lack of ambition!

We will help the NHS, fight violent crime, invest in infrastructure and science and cut the cost of living.

This morning I spoke to Her Majesty The Queen to request an end to the current parliamentary session in the second sitting week in September, before commencing the second session of this Parliament with a Queen's speech on Monday 14 October. A central feature of the legislative programme will be the Government's number one legislative priority, if a new deal is forthcoming at EU Council, to introduce a Withdrawal Agreement Bill and move at pace to secure its passage before 31 October.

I fully recognise that the debate on the Queen's Speech will be an opportunity for Members of Parliament to express their view on this Government's legislative agenda and its approach to, and the result of, the European Council on 17-18 October. It is right that you should have the chance to do so, in a clear and unambiguous manner.

I also believe it is vitally important that the key votes associated with the Queen's Speech and any deal with the EU fall at a time when parliamentarians are best placed to judge the Government's programme. Parliament will have the opportunity to debate the Government's overall programme, and approach to Brexit, in the run up to EU Council, and then vote on this on 21 and 22 October, once we know the outcome of the Council. Should I succeed in agreeing a deal with the EU, Parliament will then have the opportunity to pass the Bill required for ratification of the deal ahead of 31 October.

Finally, I want to reiterate to colleagues that these weeks leading up to the European Council on 17/18 October are vitally important for the sake of my negotiations with the EU. Member States are watching what Parliament does with great interest and it is only by showing unity and resolve that we stand a chance of securing a new deal that can be passed by Parliament. In the meantime, the Government will take the responsible approach of continuing its preparations for leaving the EU, with or without a deal.

The Leader of the Commons will update the House in the normal fashion with regard to business for the final week. For now, I can confirm that on Monday 9 September both Houses will debate the motions on the first reports relating to the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation etc) Act 2019 (NIEFA). Following these debates we will begin preparation to end the Parliamentary session ahead of a Queen's Speech.

The Business Managers in both Houses will shortly engage with their opposite numbers, and MPs more widely, on plans for passing a deal should one be forthcoming. Decisions will also need to be taken about carrying over some of the bills currently before the House, and we will look to work constructively with the Opposition on this front. If agreement cannot be reached we will look to reintroduce the bills in the next session, and details on this will be set out in the Queen's Speech.

As always my door is open to all colleagues should you wish to discuss this or any other matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Boris Johnson', written in a cursive style.

The Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP