



Northern  
Ireland  
Office

Parliamentary Under  
Secretary of State for  
Northern Ireland  
1 Horse Guards Road  
London  
SW1 2HQ  
T 020 7210 6460  
T 0207 210 6464

Stormont House  
Belfast  
BT4 3SH  
T 028 9052 7021  
E [sos@nio.gov.uk](mailto:sos@nio.gov.uk)

[www.gov.uk/nio](http://www.gov.uk/nio)  
[@niopressoffice](https://twitter.com/nio_pressoffice)

Your Ref: HD/MOH

Henry Downey  
Democratic Services Officer  
Belfast City Council  
Chief Executive's Department  
City Hall  
Belfast  
BT1 5GS

18 July 2017

Dear Mr. Downey,

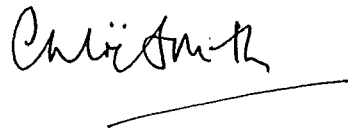
Thank-you for your letter of 13 June 2017 to the Prime Minister requesting a meeting to discuss a recently agreed motion from Belfast City Council regarding special designated status for Northern Ireland. I am replying on the Prime Minister's behalf.

The Government recognises Northern Ireland's unique circumstances - its economy, geography and history. Securing the best outcome for Northern Ireland remains a key focus to ensure these interests are represented and addressed.

The approach that we take is based on getting the best possible deal for all parts of the United Kingdom: we are clear about the strengths of the Union. Therefore, we believe the concept of special status is the wrong approach. It is rather about looking at special factors (such as the border) and special circumstances (like the highly integrated agri-food industry) and dealing with them effectively.

I recognise that Councillors will have a range of interests in relation to EU Exit and would be keen to meet a delegation to consider these. I will ask my Private Office to liaise with you to secure a suitable date to meet elected representatives.

Yours -

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Chloe Smith", with a horizontal line underneath it.

**CHLOE SMITH MP  
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE**