

DRAFT MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE MEETING: 23 JULY 2020

MEMBERS' DINING ROOM, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS, STORMONT

Present: First Minister (Chair)
deputy First Minister (Chair)
Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
Minister for Communities
Minister for the Economy
Minister of Education
Minister of Finance
Minister of Health
Minister for Infrastructure
Minister of Justice (via video link)

In attendance: Junior Minister, TEO (Mr. Lyons)
Junior Minister, TEO (Mr. Kearney)
Secretary to the Executive
Head of Executive & Central Advisory Division TEO

Dr Michael McBride, Chief Medical Officer
Prof Ian Young, Chief Scientific Adviser
Dan West, Chief Digital Information Officer, DOH

INTRODUCTION

The deputy First Minister chaired agenda item 1 – 4

1. The Executive agreed to a photograph of its current membership.

AGENDA ITEM 1

E (M) (20) 43 Minutes of Executive meeting of 9 July 2020

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2. The minutes of the Executive meeting of 9 July 2020 were agreed.

AGENDA ITEM 2

COVID-19 Report by the Health Minister

3. Dan West, Chief Digital Information Officer, Department of Health, briefed the Executive on the Northern Ireland COVID-19 Contact Tracing App.
4. The Minister of Health provided an update on developments in the COVID-19 pandemic, including the R number; engagement with the new Minister of Health in Dublin; the COVID outbreak in Limavady; the number of COVID patients in ICU; and the wording of advice to be provided in relation to guidance on travel. He advised that he would bring a paper on travel regulations to the Executive meeting of 30 July, as well as providing information on the risk assessments and methodology involved.
5. The deputy First Minister advised that she and the First Minister had agreed to request an urgent dedicated BIC meeting to resolve the issues relating to the Common Travel Area.

AGENDA ITEM 3

Actions from previous meetings

6. The deputy First Minister advised that the Action Log had been circulated.

AGENDA ITEM 4

COVID-19 Management

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E (20) 171 (C) Go-Live of the Northern Ireland COVID-19 App

7. The Minister of Health introduced this paper.
8. The Executive:
 - (i) noted the current plan for go-live of the Northern Ireland COVID-19 App;
 - (ii) agreed to support the use of the App in Executive Communications.

E (20) 173 (C) Introduction of Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020

9. The Minister of Health introduced this paper.
10. The Executive agreed that:
 - (i) the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No. 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 should be made;
 - (ii) these Regulations should be made on 23 July and come into operation on 24 July, in line with commencement dates for specific changes to restrictions and requirements;
 - (iii) the restriction on gatherings in private dwellings should be relaxed to increase the number of people allowed to meet indoors to 10, from up to 4 different households, and any restriction on people staying overnight in a dwelling other than their own should be discontinued;
 - (iv) the No. 2 Regulations would retain the general restriction limiting gatherings to 30 participants, with a number of general categories of exception to this limit in place rather than the current list of more specific purposes for which an exception applies;
 - (v) it should not legislate for localised enforceable actions to respond to clusters of cases; and

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- (vi) the primary focus of its should now be on promoting and maintaining public awareness and understanding of the continuing danger of COVID-19 transmission and promoting voluntary compliance with public health advice, particularly in light of the ending of the lockdown provision and the approaching flu season.

E (20) 174 (C) COVID 19 – Indicative Timeline, Executive Ratifications

11. The Minister of Health introduced this paper.

12. Following discussion, the Executive:

- (i) noted the risk assessment at Annex A to Executive Memorandum E (20) 174 (C);
- (ii) ratified dates for the easements outlined in Executive Memorandum E (20) 174 (C);
- (iii) noted the plan for bringing some further easements to the Executive in coming weeks; and
- (iv) set an indicative date for pubs, hotels and private clubs to serve drinks only on a seated table service basis.

13. The Minister of Justice and the Minister for Infrastructure agreed to engage further in relation to re-starting of additional driving courses for people with driving convictions.

E (20) 175 (C) Wearing of Face Coverings

14. The Minister of Health introduced this paper.

15. Following discussion, the Executive agreed:

- (i) to support a policy of achieving a sufficient proportion of the population, as assessed by the Chief Scientific Adviser and Chief Medical Officer, using

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face coverings in indoor settings with individuals from other households, subject to the exemptions allowed for public transport and additional exemptions outlined in Executive Memorandum E (20) 175 (C);

- (ii) to amend legislation to include the provision to provide for the mandatory use of face covering when in enclosed public settings where social distancing could not be maintained for limited periods of time, such as retail environments, from 1 August; and to engage with the public until the 20th August to raise awareness of the benefit and to build public support; and
- (iii) to a clear public information campaign to reinforce current messaging on hand and respiratory hygiene and to encourage use of face coverings to: protect others; prevent transmission; protect our economy and prevent a second wave.

The First Minister chaired the remaining items on the agenda.

AGENDA ITEM 5

Schedule of Events/Media/Ad Hoc Committee

- 16. The First Minister asked to be advised of any Ministers planning to update the Assembly Ad Hoc in the following week. The Minister of Health advised that he would be attending on Tuesday 28 July.

AGENDA ITEM 6

Other Matters requiring Executive Agreement

Irrelevant & Sensitive

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Irrelevant & Sensitive

Note of Urgent Decision

19. The Executive noted the following urgent decision taken in accordance with Paragraph 2.14 of the Ministerial Code:

Irrelevant & Sensitive

AGENDA ITEM 7

Any other business

Business Support Schemes

20. The Minister of Finance raised, and the Executive discussed, the need for clarity on allocation of funds which had not been fully utilised for the business support schemes for which they had been designated. The Minister of Finance agreed to prepare a paper for consideration at the Executive meeting of 30 July.

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Date of next meeting

21. The next Executive meeting would take place on Thursday 30 July 2020 at 2.00pm in Parliament Buildings.

22. Executive meetings would also take place via Zoom on 6 and 20 August, with details being notified to Ministers in due course.

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