

**MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE MEETING: 1 OCTOBER 2020**

**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

**In attendance:** Junior Minister, TEO (Mr. Lyons)  
Junior Minister, TEO (Mr. Kearney)  
Head of Executive and Central Advisory Division, TEO  
  
Dr Michael McBride, Chief Medical Officer  
Prof Ian Young, Chief Scientific Adviser

**INTRODUCTION**

The First Minister chaired agenda items 1 - 4.

**AGENDA ITEM 1**

**E (M) (20) 55          Minutes of Executive meeting held on 24 September 2020**

1. The minutes of the Executive meeting of 24 September 2020 were agreed.

**Matters Arising**

**Circulation of Executive Papers**

2. The First Minister requested that Ministers who had not done so should provide returns to the Executive Office on Executive papers expected to be circulated in the following three months.

## **AGENDA ITEM 2**

### **COVID-19 Report by the Minister of Health**

3. The First Minister advised that an appropriate point had been reached to consider and implement a reset of the Executive's approach to the management of the Covid-19 pandemic. She outlined actions the Executive may wish to consider in the context of continuing challenges, including reference to the Framework for Decision Making; inclusion of family impacts in the decision making process; engagement with sectors impacted by Executive decisions; announcements to be made in the Assembly where possible; press conferences to be driven by key events, updates and relevant data; clear on-line messaging; and a more even distribution across departments of lead roles in taking regulations through the Assembly.
4. The Minister of Health provided an update on, and the Executive discussed, developments in the COVID-19 pandemic, including the 'R' number; increasing hospitalisation figures; increased incidence of positive diagnoses in the Derry City and Strabane local district council area; age profile of positive cases; and Trust concerns regarding capacity.

## **AGENDA ITEM 3**

### **Actions from Previous meetings**

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

## **AGENDA ITEM 4**

### **COVID-19 Management**

**E (20) 234 (C)      Additional Non-Pharmaceutical Intervention for the North West Region**

6. The Minister of Health introduced this paper.
7. Following detailed discussion, the Executive agreed a number of amendments to Executive Memorandum E (20) 234 (C), and that the following additional restrictions be introduced for Derry City and Strabane Local Government District area by regulation:
  - a. No indoor gatherings should take place where people from different households were mixed, with exemptions to this for:
    - weddings and funerals, as in the existing regulations
    - services of worship in places of worship
    - Indoor sport for individual training only (e.g. no exercise classes)
    - workplace where working from home was not possible
    - educational settings
  - b. Hospitality venues including wet pubs could remain open for take-away, delivery and outdoor dining only, with existing outdoor restrictions as were. Hotels could only provide services to residents as per previous restrictions. A support package for affected venues would be brought forward.
  - c. All museums, galleries and cultural attractions must remain closed. Libraries could operate a call and collect service.
  - d. Outdoor gatherings were permitted, up to a maximum of 15 people – there would be no allowance for gatherings above 15 with a risk assessment. There would be an exemption for sports training and sporting events although they would be required to take place without spectators.
8. These restrictions would be in place for a time limited period of a minimum of two weeks, and would be reviewed weekly.

9. In addition the Executive agreed that the following would be recommended in guidance:

- a. People living in Derry and Strabane LGD area should avoid all unnecessary travel. Similarly, people should only travel to the LGD area where it was absolutely necessary.
- b. People working in Derry and Strabane LGD area should continue to work from home where possible.
- c. Schools, Early Learning and Childcare services and Managed Youth Settings in the LGD area should remain open. Adult and Higher Education Institutions should remain open, but were asked to review protective measures and take steps to limit congregation as much as possible.
- d. People were asked to walk, cycle or use private transport, shared only with members of their household where possible. Where public transport was taken, social distancing should be observed and masks worn. Public transport would be available to key/essential workers.

10. The Executive discussed issues relating to the range of penalties and sanctions which may be made applicable for breaching these restrictions and noted that these would be considered further by the Working Group on Enforcement.

11. The Minister of Finance advised that he would circulate a paper in the following week in relation to supports available for the hospitality sector.

12. The Minister for the Economy recorded her concern in relation to the impact of any further restrictions on the economy generally, and in particular on the hospitality and tourism sectors.

**Irrelevant & Sensitive**

**14. The Executive meeting was adjourned.**

**15. The Executive meeting was reconvened on Monday 5 October 2020.**

**Irrelevant & Sensitive**

### **COVID-19 Developments**

18. The Minister of Health and the Chief Medical Officer briefed the Executive on COVID-19 developments over the weekend, including the continuing increase in numbers of cases, hospitalisations and ICU patients across Northern Ireland, and the emerging possibility of a move to level five restrictions being introduced by the Irish Government.

19. The Executive discussed the implications of a circuit-breaker period of restrictions to slow the advance of the pandemic. The Minister of Health advised that he would bring forward a paper for consideration by the Executive ahead of its meeting of 8 October. which would model the impacts of further and wider restrictions. It was recognised that the economic, societal and family impacts as well as health impacts, would be have to be factored in to the process for decision making.

20. The Minister of Finance advised that he intended to speak to the Chancellor of the Exchequer in relation to funding available for support measures during continued restrictions. The First Minister and deputy First Minister advised that they would be engaging with the Prime Minister on the issue.

21. The Minister of Finance outlined his approach to a proposed support programme for businesses impacted by restrictions; invited Ministers to provide their comments and views of the level of support which may be appropriate as soon as possible; and advised that he would bring a paper for agreement by urgent decision procedure or to the Executive for consideration at the Executive meeting of 8 October.

**The deputy First Minister chaired the remaining items on the agenda**

## **AGENDA ITEM 5**

### **Other papers requiring Executive agreement**

**Irrelevant & Sensitive**

**Irrelevant & Sensitive**

**Irrelevant & Sensitive**

**AGENDA ITEM 6**

**Any other business**

**Irrelevant & Sensitive**

**Date of next meeting**

33. The date of the next meeting of the Executive would take place on Thursday 8 October at 1.00 p.m.