

MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE MEETING: 13 AUGUST 2020

MEETING WAS CONDUCTED VIA VIDEO LINK

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)
Secretary to the Executive
Head of Executive and Central Advisory Division, TEO

Dr Michael McBride, Chief Medical Officer
Prof Ian Young, Chief Scientific Adviser
Karen Pearson, Director of EU Relations, TEO

INTRODUCTION

The deputy First Minister chaired agenda items 1 – 4.

AGENDA ITEM 1

E (M) (20) 48 Minutes of Executive meeting held on 6 August 2020

1. The minutes of the Executive meeting of 6 August 2020 were agreed.

AGENDA ITEM 2

COVID-19 Report by the Minister of Health

2. The Chief Medical Officer on behalf of the Minister of Health, who was delayed, provided an update including on the number of new positive tests, admission to hospital and numbers in intensive care. There had been a substantial increase in transmission particularly among the young, and with a stronger trajectory upwards in comparison to GB and ROI, with smaller clusters occurring over a wider area. He advised that careful attention was being paid to developments in France.
3. The Executive noted the further review of the regulations which would be tabled at its next meeting and discussed the need for robust messaging in advance to combat resistance to and non-compliance with protective measures, and to target complacency among young people. It was also agreed that a more consistent approach to the provision of live entertainment at weddings should be examined.

AGENDA ITEM 3

Actions from Previous Meetings

4. The Executive noted that, in the light of the high level of risk identified, departmental engagement was taking place with the organisers of the Stendhal Festival, and that a further report, including on any necessary intervention, would be provided at the next meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 4

COVID-19 Management

E (20) 194 (C) Public Expenditure: 2020-21 COVID-19 Approach to Economic Recovery and Urgent Allocations

5. The Minister of Finance introduced this paper.

6. The Minister for the Economy drew attention to the economic options for recovery which she had circulated in June, and urged Executive intervention with the UK Government in relation to a strategy for the aerospace industry and support for the recently self-employed and others who had fallen through the gaps in support.
7. The Minister of Justice also urged support for the self-employed in line with action already taken in Scotland and Wales.
8. The Executive:
 - a) noted the overall level of funding available;
 - b) agreed that the £600 million is held pending estimation of health costs;
 - c) agreed that the consideration of further substantive allocations is deferred until early September to allow the Executive to formulate an economic recovery strategy;
 - d) agreed the allocations in Annex A to Executive Memorandum E (20) 194 (C); and
 - e) agreed the next steps set out above.
9. The Minister of Finance agreed to send a letter to Treasury about a support scheme for the self-employed, and to provide a copy of a Press Release on the allocations to MLAs

The First Minister chaired the remaining items on the agenda.

AGENDA ITEM 5

Schedule of Events/Media/Ad Hoc Committee

10. The Executive noted that no Minister would be addressing the Ad Hoc Committee in the following week.

AGENDA ITEM 6

Any Other Business

Support for persons in debt

11. The Minister of Justice recommended an examination, potentially by the Department for Communities, of the situation facing those who had fallen into debt because of Covid-19 or who were likely to do so when existing support mechanisms ended. The deputy First Minister agreed to convey this to the Minister for Communities, who had left the meeting.

Irrelevant & Sensitive

2020 A Level results

13. The First Minister declared an interest in this matter and, following introduction of the topic, did not take part in the discussion.

14. The Executive discussed the impact of educational grading and algorithmic award on the 2020 A level cohort.

Date of next meeting

15. The next Executive meeting would take place on Thursday 20 August 2020 at 2.00pm.