

**To: Chris Stewart**  
**Deputy Secretary, TEO**

cc: 

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**Date: 23 January 2020**

**From: Bernie Rooney**  
**Director, TEO**

## **RESOURCES - CIVIL CONTINGENCIES POLICY BRANCH (CCPB (NI))**

1. I am writing to you to advise that there is currently a critical lack of resources in CCPB (NI) and to request approval to put 'on hold' the CCPB (NI) wider work programme, including the TEO actions contained in the Civil Contingencies (NI) Resilience Programme and prioritise work to key issues and top priority matters.

### **Background**

2. CCPB (NI) has a limited resource (1 X G7, 1 X SO and 2 part-time EO2s) and as a result of the UK government enhancing existing civil contingency arrangements to prepare for a reasonable worst case scenario should the UK leave the EU without a deal, additional pressures were placed upon the staff within the Branch.
3. Staff responded to the additional and unanticipated pressures and NICS fully participated in the joint project with NIO to put in place all necessary requirements. This is a credit to the small team within CCPB (NI).
4. However, as a consequence of the additional effort of the staff and the routine work programme being put on hold and the project additional pressures have emerged:
  - Expectations from Departments of CCPB (NI) has increased;
  - Requests for representation, advice, guidance and input into preparing and participating in operational exercises (Testing) has increased;
  - Staff moves and changes have taken place with the result of loss of knowledge and experience;
  - Vacancies have arisen and recruitment process, whilst expedited, are taking time to reach conclusion, with the added complication of the need for Security Clearance before appointments can be finalised. A business case and a paper to the TEO Departmental Board are being drafted to address staffing resources long term.

5. In addition, the quick returning Executive, Ministers and NI Assembly has increased business need elsewhere and CCPB (NI) has lost resources as a result of this business need.
6. In addition, the staff have built up surplus flexi time and leave during the C3 Project and have to use it up by year end.
7. Whilst I am not the direct Line Manager, from being on site it is obvious that staff are becoming very stretched and have voiced concern about the current position. In my view, under duty of care, management has no alternative but to take this course of action. All alternative options to secure additional resources have been exhausted with staff on loan recalled to the NI Assembly.

#### **In conclusion**

8. I have reviewed the work programme and many of the issues have already been outstanding for a period of time and there is little risk in a further delay. I am therefore proposing that, until the Branch has secured additional resource, which requires significant work to secure, you consider and agree to put on hold the business as usual work programme and prioritise only the key issues and priority tasks.

#### **Recommendation**

9. I therefore recommend that you:

Note that due to lack of resources the work programme cannot be progressed as planned;

Agree that CCPB (NI) put on hold the 2019/20 work programme and prioritise key and urgent matters; and

Write to NI permanent Secretaries and departmental officials to inform them of this unfortunate but necessary position. A draft letter is attached for your consideration.

10. I am of course happy to discuss.

**Personal Data**

**BERNIE ROONEY**

EXT **I&S**

Draft memo

**To: NI permanent Secretaries  
CCG (NI) Co-ordinators**

**cc As below**

**Date: 23 January 2020**

**From: Chris Stewart  
Deputy Secretary, TEO**

**Re: Civil Contingencies Policy Branch (NI)**

I am writing to inform you that due to business needs arising from the restoration of the Executive, that Civil Contingencies Policy Branch (CCPB(NI)) currently has a resources due to business need to support the returning Executive and Ministerial Private Offices. CCPB (NI) currently has a skeleton team remaining.

It has therefore been necessary to review and prioritise the CCPB (NI) work programme and with the exception of immediate and priority issues the wider CCPB (NI) work programme has had to be temporarily put 'on hold'.

Whilst extremely disappointing and as a consequence, it will not be possible for CCPB (NI) to be in attendance at all departmental meetings and events due to lack of available resource.

Recruitment processes are currently underway to fill posts however, as you will appreciate, this may take some weeks to reach conclusion.

In the interim, the colleagues in CCPB(NI) Branch will aim to respond to any urgent issues or queries that may arise and the point of contacts are:

**General Office:**

Tele: I&S

Email: CCPB@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk

Head of CCPB: NR

Tele: I&S

E-mail: NR@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk

I trust that you will understand this is a temporary measure and that we are doing all that we can to prioritise the work programme.

I will keep you informed of progress.  
Thank you for your understanding and co-operation.

**Chris Stewart**