

From the Minister of Finance

*First Minister and deputy First Minister
The Executive Office*

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Dear Michelle and Arlene

**DoH EXECUTIVE PAPER – MODELLING THE COURSE OF THE COVID
EPIDEMIC AND THE IMPACT OF DIFFERENT INTERVENTIONS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is extremely disappointing that after numerous discussions at the Executive we have been unable to reach agreement around how we move to the next stage of tackling the coronavirus pandemic.

There is a public and indeed a sectoral expectation that we, as an Executive, will reach decisions no matter how difficult they are. That is our job as political leaders. People want and deserve certainty and decisive action from us.

In all our meetings and discussions what has continuously struck me is that we are dealing literally with life and death situations and with people's livelihoods.

This is not about the economy pitched against health. It is about ensuring that we do not put insurmountable pressure on our health service as we head into the winter months. It is fundamentally about protecting people's health.

The scientific and medical advice has remained consistent and clear throughout all of our discussions. If we relax restrictions at this time we will be dealing with an excess of deaths.

The Health Minister will also be returning to the Executive before Christmas asking for agreement on more restrictions. This, in my view, will be even more damaging to our economy.

I am formally proposing, therefore, that we go back to the Health Minister's original proposal and implement a two week extension to the current restrictions.

As I have continuously stated any extension must be in tandem with a financial support package to help those businesses affected. I am ready and willing to work with Executive colleagues to put such support in place.

I am copying this letter to Executive colleagues.

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CONOR MURPHY MLA
MINISTER OF FINANCE