

Module 2C Corporate Statement
Department for Infrastructure Corporate Statement

Julie Harrison, Permanent Secretary

1. I am Julie Harrison the Permanent Secretary for the Department for Infrastructure (DfI). Having joined the Civil Service in 2020 I have been in this post since April 2022. Prior to my appointment, my predecessor was Katrina Godfrey who was the Permanent Secretary in the Department from September 2018 until my arrival. Katrina is now the Permanent Secretary of DAERA. My background is in research and analysis, social inclusion programmes, grant making and urban regeneration.
2. In 2015, I was retained as Strategic Advisor by the Strategic Investment Board, which supports delivery of large scale or complex projects and programmes and advises the Northern Ireland (NI) Executive. In 2020 I joined the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) as a Deputy Secretary in the Department of Justice (DOJ). In DOJ I was responsible for a broad range of policy areas including Policing, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Crime, Hate Crime, Paramilitarism and Organised Crime, including Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery.

Main responsibilities of the Department for Infrastructure

3. The Department for Infrastructure (DfI) was created in 2016. It has just under three thousand staff working across sixty-seven locations with our headquarters in Clarence Court, Adelaide Street, Belfast.
4. DfI delivers essential services every day to those living in, working in, and visiting Northern Ireland. It also provides and maintains the connections for safe travel and the transport of people and goods; it supports economic growth and sustainable development; and ensures that the creation of living places is planned properly and supported by the necessary infrastructure.
5. DfI maintains the road and rail networks to enable daily travel and transport of goods. It sponsors the NI Transport Holding Company, an Arm's Length Body (ALB) of the Department, and the parent company of the publicly owned bus and rail companies

in the region, collectively known as Translink, which delivers over eighty million passenger journeys each year.

6. DfI also sponsors and is the sole shareholder in Northern Ireland Water, which is the statutory water and sewerage undertaker. NI Water provides sewerage management and 560 million litres of drinking water every day to 840,000 households and businesses. The Drainage Council decides which designated watercourses and sea defences should be maintained to address the risk of flooding.
7. DfI, along with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (Republic of Ireland) also co-sponsors Waterways Ireland, a cross-border body responsible for the management of navigable waterways throughout the island of Ireland.

Pre-Existing Contingency Plans

8. In January 2020, DfI had in place a well-rehearsed emergency planning plan that enabled the Department to provide a coordinated response to a major incident for the purposes of preventing an emergency, and or reducing, controlling, or mitigating its effects in relation to both its functions and in the wider community. While this plan was mostly used to help DfI respond to emergencies including severe weather events, it also provided a framework for it to respond to the emerging threat from the COVID-19 pandemic.
9. DfI also worked with The Executive Office (TEO) in the planning for the UK leaving the European Union. This UK wide emergency planning exercise, known as Operation Yellowhammer, was co-ordinated in Northern Ireland by TEO. It used the C3 model (Command, Control and Co-ordinate) which was based around the existing emergency planning arrangements in Northern Ireland. This established the Departmental Operations Centre (DOC) within DfI which communicated information to the central 'Hub' housed in TEO. DfI had undertaken work to ensure that there was staff resource for the DOC, undertook training for these staff and conducted a range of test exercises to stress test the arrangements.

Formal Activation of Emergency Structures

10. On 16 March 2020, the Executive agreed to formally stand-up emergency structures similar to those rehearsed for Operation Yellowhammer to address the developing threat from the COVID-19 pandemic – **JH/1 – INQ000114480**.
11. The Executive wrote to Permanent Secretaries on the same day and informed them of the intention to formally stand up and utilise the response structures of the NI Hub and the suite of DOCs developed for EU Exit. This was to be scaled and tailored to the needs of this emergency. In response to this request my predecessor, Katrina Godfrey, requested that the Major Emergency Response Plan (MERP) be activated via email – **JH/2 – INQ000114494**. On 19 March 2020, C3 structures (NI Hub-DOC) were stood up – **JH/3 – INQ000114528**.

Departmental Emergency Management Group (DEMG) meetings

12. The activation of the MERP then established DfI's Emergency Management Group (DEMG). The first meeting of this Group, which established the support mechanisms for the group, was held on 18 March 2020. This Group was made up of senior officials within DfI and met on a daily basis for six weeks until 29 April 2020. Following the stand down of the DfI's MERP, the last meeting of the DEMG was held on 28 May 2020. During that period DEMG was the main mechanism for managing the DfI's (including its Arm's Length Bodies) response to emerging issues and agreeing the daily Departmental Situation Report (Sitrep), produced by the DOC, shared with NI Hub, and communications with TEO.
13. Once the DEMG meetings were stood down on 28 May 2020, the DfI's Senior Leadership Team met regularly to consider issues relating to its pandemic Response, Recovery and Resilience. Its first meeting in this mode was held on 4 June 2020. This Group consisted of senior DfI officials and met on a weekly basis until the end of August 2020. The Group's last meeting was held on 16 June 2021.
Annex Two details DfI's key decision makers, their roles and responsibilities and functions of working groups.

Impact of COVID-19 2020-21

14. The 2020-21 financial year began in the midst of a national lockdown due to the global pandemic, as the COVID-19 virus impacted on every aspect of the running of the DfI and its staff.
15. DfI's top priorities were to keep our staff, customers and the public safe and to do everything possible to help the wider efforts to contain the spread of the virus. DfI moved quickly to ensure that all staff who could work from home were provided with the technology and support to enable them to do so. Risk Assessments were also quickly undertaken where functions could only be delivered in the workplace or on-site to ensure that crucial public services were delivered and that we maintained our capacity to deal at all times with weather-related and other emergencies.
16. The Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA) suspended services, such as MOT tests and driving tests, until measures could be put in place to deliver those services in full compliance with public health advice and as the public followed the 'Stay-at-Home' message travel levels reduced significantly. During the height of the pandemic in mid-April 2020, public transport use fell to just 5% of 2019-20 levels. The first lockdown had a significant impact on DfI's core services. General road traffic during this period dropped by 70% of normal levels while public transport use dropped by 95% in the initial days, before recovering to around 70% of 2018-19 levels.
17. The implementation of COVID-19 restrictions also had a significant impact on the income and finances of DfI and its ALBs. The lockdowns resulted in a dramatic reduction in Translink's fare income while NI Water's non-domestic income also dropped significantly creating an unavoidable deficit for the financial year.

Department Response 2020-21

18. As part of the response to the pandemic DfI had to find new ways of conducting its business. An early priority was to ensure that crucial supply routes remained open and that the delivery of food and medical supplies were maintained. DfI worked with partners to deliver easements of the regulatory framework to support hauliers, including, relaxation of drivers' hours for the delivery of essential items. It also worked closely with other Executive Departments and with the UK Government to roll out financial assistance for airports and ferry operators.

19. In spring 2020, DfI facilitated the delivery of emergency support from the Executive and the UK Government. A support package was established for NI-GB ferry routes. The scheme, which ended on 12 July 2020, was funded by the Department for Transport (DfT) with the NI Executive contributing 40% of the total funding. Financial support was provided to the City of Derry Airport (CODA) and George Best Belfast City Airport for the period from April 2020 to June 2020, with further funding provided for CODA for the period July 2020 – March 2021. In autumn 2020, DfI introduced new support for taxi drivers and for private coach and bus operators. These schemes were designed and implemented to help those individuals and businesses who had faced exceptional circumstances from the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and to assist with unavoidable overheads and loss of income during this time.
20. The Executive's recognition of the importance of public transport and the additional financial support provided in response to the sharp drops in income and to build resilience for the future ensured that crucial public transport services continued throughout the year.
21. NI Water also continued to provide the essential water and sewerage services during the pandemic. This involved prioritising essential work and changing work practices to ensure that social distancing rules are adhered to. Keeping staff and customers safe has been a key focus of NI Water. It also approved NI Water delaying the planned increase in tariffs from April 2020 until October 2020 at the earliest. DfI ensured that the company was financially supported during this critical time, by securing an additional £32.8m of funding, mainly to address the impact of lost income due to the mandatory closure of many businesses throughout the lockdown periods. NI Water also received £15m capital funding which was COVID-19 related.
22. The DVA was also able to introduce extensions to driving licences and provide Temporary Exemptions Certificates (TECs) for vehicles. DfI also delivered further progress in many other areas, including its Infrastructure flagship projects. The A6, Randalstown to Toome was opened for single lane traffic, Toome to Castledawson is completed, and Dungiven to Drumahoe is on track for opening in 2023. Enabling work has also commenced on the Belfast Transport Hub, while the interim report from the public inquiry on the A5 road scheme was received.

23. DfI worked with Translink to respond to the pandemic ensuring that the public transport network continued to facilitate essential travel, including for many in the Health and Social Care sector. This included introducing new working and operational practices to ensure all staff and passengers could follow social distancing guidelines. During this time, the Minister also announced free public transport for health workers during the COVID-19 outbreak. This facility was also later extended to those fleeing domestic violence.
24. Community transport operators funded by DfI also contributed to wider efforts to support the vulnerable as they transitioned their services to assist with the delivery of prepaid groceries, prescriptions, food parcels or fulfilling essential journeys.
25. DfI took other steps to help the wider healthcare sector during the year which included the use of DVA Vehicle Test Centres in Belfast, Craigavon and Newtownards as COVID-19 test centres, free parking at Crumlin Road Gaol for health care workers based at the Mater Hospital, and use of the Gaol for Belfast Health and Social Care Trust to facilitate decontamination of ambulances and disposal of contaminated PPE material.
26. During the year DfI received COVID-19 funding to support the core services that it provided. The total COVID-19 funding received by DfI was £226.6m.
27. DfI also brought forward legislation and guidance to deal with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the planning system. This included the temporary suspension of the requirement to hold a public event as part of a pre-application community consultation process for major developments. It provided advice to councils and business on a range of temporary measures to address the impact of the pandemic.
28. As the rollout of the vaccine began in early 2021 DfI played its part in helping to support the work of the Health Service to combat the virus. Following the announcement of the use of the SSE Arena in Belfast as a mass vaccination centre, a Traffic Management Plan was activated to ensure the smooth flow of traffic in the vicinity of the area. At the same time Community Transport providers have also been working to provide transport for the most vulnerable in rural areas to COVID-19 vaccination centres.

29. Many of these issues have been mitigated against in the short-term following additional COVID-19 funding received from the Executive.

Impact of COVID-19 2021-22

30. At the start of the 2021-22 financial year, DfI continued to operate against the backdrop of COVID-19. While some restrictions had been lifted by the Executive, the 'Stay-at-Home' message remained in place. In particular, the pandemic continued to have a substantial impact on the operation and performance of Translink and the number of passengers well below normal levels.
31. The DVA continued to be affected throughout the year by the pandemic. Following the resumption of vehicle tests on 20 July 2020 and driving tests on 23 April 2021, the DVA worked to increase its capacity to help meet the high demand for these services.
32. In December 2021, the number of COVID-19 positive cases rose dramatically due to the increased transmissibility of the Omicron variant.
33. In early February 2022, the majority of COVID-19 restrictions were removed and DfI gradually returned to a more normal way of operating. It implemented its annual contingency planning for winter preparedness whilst being acutely aware that the pandemic was not over, and it continued to monitor the situation carefully.

Departmental Response 2021-22

34. As the rollout of the vaccine progressed, the Executive agreed a pathway out of restrictions which saw the return to a more normal way of life, including the full return of students to school, the reopening of shops and the removal of the 'Stay-at Home' message.
35. During 2021-22 DfI continued to recover its services as much as possible to pre-pandemic levels. In May 2022 it announced the resumption of full parking enforcement to pre-lockdown levels while the temporary suspension for the

requirement to hold public consultations as part of pre-application community consultation for major planning applications also ended in 2022.

36. Throughout this time DfI continued to work alongside the Department of Health to undertake a range of measures to reduce the transmission of the virus while also promoting the public health messages. This included the use of overhead road signs on key strategic routes to display public health messages to support the ongoing fight against COVID-19.
37. Staff within DfI continued to follow the Executive's advice to 'work from home where possible.' Laptops continued to be rolled-out to all staff who required them while detailed risk assessments were undertaken for those staff who were not able to work from home. During this time DfI and Translink rolled out COVID-19 workplace testing with Lateral Flow Tests being made available at various locations for staff to access. Similar actions were implemented by NI Water.
38. A number of initiatives were introduced by DfI during 2021-22 to support a range of individuals and sectors who had been particularly impacted by COVID-19. In July DfI announced the extension of the free public transport for healthcare workers scheme to cover the period up to the 31 August 2021. In February 2022 DfI opened a third financial support scheme for the bus and coach sector. This scheme followed on from the two previous schemes implemented in 2020-21 and covered the 10-month period from April 2021 to January 2022. It also secured funding of £4m to provide assistance to those businesses who experienced difficult trading conditions during the latest period of COVID-19 uncertainty.
39. Throughout this time NI Water also continued to provide water and sewerage services and implemented a range of initiatives to ensure that the spread of COVID-19 did not impact these services. This included prioritising essential work and changing work practices to ensure that social distancing rules are adhered to.
40. During the year DfI undertook significant planning to support the continuation of public services. COVID-19 Green Recovery was one of the five objectives contained within the Departmental Business Plan and it worked alongside the NI Executive to deliver against the Executive's COVID-19 Recovery Plan. In 2021-22 DfI received COVID-19 funding to support the core services that it provides. The total COVID-19 funding received by DfI was £73.5m.

41. In conjunction with colleagues within the Civil Contingences Policy Division within TEO a substantial amount of scenario planning was undertaken due to a likely increase in staff absences early in 2022 and any impact this would have on essential services. Due to this detailed planning DfI and its ALBs were able to run a largely unaffected range of services even with substantially increased staff absences due to illness or self-isolation with only some very minor and localised disruption.

Role of the Department in the Provision of Advice and Key Decision Making

42. The Department's intervention in creating, implementing, and enforcing non-pharmaceutical interventions related mainly to contact and social distancing. This included liaising with the Executive in relation to closing of ports, suspending driving and MOT tests, encouraging staff to work from home, where this was possible, implementing a mandatory requirement for face coverings on public transport and encouraging social distancing.
43. Regulations mandating the use of face coverings on public transport were made using enabling powers derived from the Public Health Act (Northern Ireland) 1967, which empowered the Department of Health to make this legislation. In addition, legislative interventions were made in relation to the closure of ports, relaxation of enforcement of drivers' hours rules for all sectors, mandatory requirement for face coverings on public transport and the issue of 1-year licenses to certain bus and lorry drivers.
44. Although the Department did not have direct contact with the UK Government and other devolved administrations, it did however, through Urgent Procedure ask the Executive to agree a joint protocol with the Department for Transport and the Home Office regarding the triggering of a power to close ports in the Coronavirus (Emergency) Bill. All other interaction was via the Executive Office.

Review and Lessons Learned

45. An important element of the stand down of the DfI COVID-19 response was to undertake a review of how the emergency procedures were implemented. The DfI MERP proposed that this should be undertaken via a debrief of those who were involved, the creation of a Lessons Learnt Log and a debrief report produced for the

Departmental Board. DOC and HUB staff were encouraged to populate a Lessons Learned Log during their last week within the DOC and HUB when they had some time to think through the issues. Staff were encouraged to write down any issues that they had encountered during their time in the DOC and HUB, any solutions that were found and suggest any changes going forward if the DOC and HUB were to be established again. All DOC staff were also invited to attend a debrief session. This was an opportunity for staff to discuss how they felt the DOC and HUB operated and to discuss any issues they had included within the Lessons Learnt Log – **JH/41 - INQ000114563 & JH/53 – INQ000114581**. In addition, TEO Covid Recovery and Strategy Team commenced the process of gathering Departments' views on what worked well and what did not during the pandemic response. TEO was specifically focused on the Covid-19 Cross Departmental Working Group (CDWG), that helped support the Executive's COVID response.

46. In conclusion, I would like to place on record my appreciation to all Dfl and ALB staff for their work during the pandemic. I commend them for the dedication and professionalism that was displayed in providing a vital public service, in what was a difficult time for us all.

Declaration of Truth

47. I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true. I understand that proceedings for contempt of court may be brought against anyone who makes, or causes to be made, a false statement in a document verified by a statement of truth without an honest belief in its truth.

Personal Data

Signed:

Date : 18/07/2023

Key Decisions Taken

- **13 March 2020** - Agreed by Urgent procedure by FM & dFM - **DfI Executive paper - E (UP) (20) 06 CORONAVIRUS (EMERGENCY) BILL – JH/4a - INQ000114558, JH/4b – INQ000114559, JH/4c – INQ000114560, JH/5a - INQ000114576, JH/5b – INQ000114577, JH/6a – INQ000114599 & JH/6b – INQ000114600.** During the COBRA meeting on 11 March 2020 reference was made to powers being taken in the Coronavirus (Emergency) Bill to facilitate the suspension of operations at ports where the Secretary of State considers that there is a real and significant risk to security as a result of insufficient immigration officers. This urgent procedure was to ask the Executive to agree a joint protocol with the Department for Transport and the Home Office regarding the triggering of a power to close ports in the Coronavirus (Emergency) Bill.
The Home Office requested agreement of Northern Ireland Executive by 12 March, and an Executive paper was brought forward to seek this approval.
- **14 March 2020** – the Minister for Infrastructure issues emergency letter on planning restrictions for food and essential deliveries to support the response to COVID-19 - **JH/7 – INQ000114612.**
- **16 March 2020** – DfI Permanent Secretary requests MERP is activated – **JH/2 - INQ000114494.**
- **18 March 2020** - Memo issued from David Sterling (the then Head of the Civil Service) to outline measures to be taken relating to social distancing to help to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 within the NICS applying to all staff and all workplaces – **JH/8 – INQ000114613.**
- **18 March 2020** – DEMG established – **JH/9 – INQ000114614.**

- **19 March 2020** – Press release – Driving tests suspended for 3 months – **JH/10 – INQ000114481.**
- **19 March 2020** – E-mail to TEO to confirm DOC stood up – **JH/3 – INQ000114528.**
- **19 March 2020** – Encourage staff to work from home – message from DfI Perm Sec – **JH/11- INQ000114482.**
- **20 March 2020** - Minister announces reduction in public transport services as response to COVID-19 outbreak – **JH/12 – INQ000114483.**
- **21 March 2020** - Temporary relaxation of the enforcement of drivers' hours rules for all sectors – **JH/13 – INQ000114484.**
- **23 March 2020 UK - lockdown announced.** Boris Johnson announces a nationwide 'Stay-at-Home' order. This becomes known as the UK lockdown.
- **23 March 2020** - Email from David Sterling re COVID-19– work from home if you can do so – **JH/14 – INQ000114485.**
- **24 March 2020** – All MOT Testing suspended immediately – **JH/15 – INQ000114486.**
- **25 March 2020** – Minister Mallon puts measures in place to protect the most vulnerable and those using community transport – **JH/16 – INQ000114487.**
- **26 March 2020** – Free Public Transport for Health Care workers – **JH/17 – INQ000114488.**
- **27 March 2020** – Minister Mallon provided an update to the assembly and staff of the ongoing efforts by the department in tackling the response to the pandemic, in these first few weeks. It outlines actions taken across public transport, water infrastructure, freight and haulage, ports and ferries, community transport, MOTs and planning – **JH/18a – INQ000114489, JH/18b – INQ000114490 & JH/18c – INQ000114491.**

- **3 April 2020** - Agreed at Executive meeting - **DfI Executive Paper - E (20) 45 (C)**
SUPPLY CHAIN RESILIENCE Recommendations were that the Executive: -
 - i. note the emerging threat to the resilience of the supply chain due to commercial decisions triggered by COVID-19;
 - ii. agree to make the case to UKG for national intervention to protect the supply chain;
 - iii. note that a UKG intervention may not be sufficient or come in time to meet the Northern Ireland need and that short term solutions may be required – **JH/19a - INQ000114492, JH/19b – INQ000114493, JH/20a - INQ000114495, JH/20b – INQ000114496 & JH/21a – INQ000114497 & JH/21b – INQ000114498.**
- **6 April 2020** – Minister Mallon delivers MOT test centres to help fight COVID-19 – **JH/22 – INQ000114499.**
- **10 April 2020** – Minister Mallon confirms automatic renewal of licenses for Taxi Industry in COVID-19 Response – **JH/23 – INQ000114500.**
- **10 April 2020** - Written Ministerial Statement – taxi licensing mitigations introduced – **JH/24a – INQ000114501, JH/24b – INQ000114502, JH/24c – INQ000114503, JH/24d – INQ000114504, JH/24e – INQ000114505, JH/24f – INQ000114506, JH/24g – INQ000114507, JH/24h – INQ000114508, JH/24i – INQ000114509, JH/24j – INQ000114510, JH/24k – INQ000114511, JH/24l – INQ000114512 & JH/24m – INQ000114513.**
- **16 April 2020** - Minister Mallon confirms Newtownards MOT centre opens as COVID-19 testing facility – **JH/25 – INQ000114514.**
- **16 April 2020** - Minister Mallon updates Assembly COVID-19 Ad Hoc Committee on how DfI has been playing its part in the fight back – **JH/26a – INQ000114515, JH/26b – INQ000114516, JH/26c – INQ000114517, JH/26d – INQ000114518, JH/26e – INQ000114519, JH/26f – INQ000114520, JH/26g – INQ000114522 & JH/26h – INQ000114523.**
- **24 April 2020** – Minister Mallon secures £17m support package for ferries to keep supply chains open – **JH/27 - INQ000114525.**

- **27 April 2020** – Minister Mallon announces temporary changes to major planning application process to keep NI moving forward – **JH/28 – INQ000114526**.
- **28 April 2020** – Coronavirus National Testing Programme for Key Workers – **JH/29 – INQ000114527**.
- **29 April 2020** – Minister Mallon announces DVA contact point to assist customers during COVID-19 – **JH/30 – INQ000114529**.
- **1 May 2020** – Following Executive agreement on 17 April 2020, Minister Mallon announces temporary financial support package of £5.7m for the George Best Belfast City Airport and the City of Derry Airport (£3.3m came from DfI, the remainder came from DfT in relation to transport support) **JH/31 – INQ000114530**.
- **1 May 2020** - Guidance on temporary changes to major planning application process due to COVID-19 – **JH/32 – INQ000114531**.
- **5 May 2020** – SUB-1305-2020 – Minister Mallon updates Assembly on Department's COVID-19 response – **JH/33a – INQ000114532, JH/33b – INQ000114533, JH/33c – INQ000114534, JH/33d – INQ000114535, JH/33e – INQ000114536, JH/33f – INQ000114537, JH/33g – INQ000114539 & JH/33h – INQ000114540**.
- **5 May 2020** – Minister Mallon announces automatic one year MOT exemption – **JH/34 – INQ000114542**.
- **8 May 2020** – Minister Mallon approves changes to public transport provision and measures to ensure continued safety of staff and passengers during the COVID-19 outbreak – **JH/35 – INQ000114543**.
- **12 May 2020** - A phased five-stage Executive Approach to Decision Making plan for slowly moving out of lockdown was published by the Executive. This put in place a process for developing and seeking Executive approval of Departments' proposals for relaxations by which the associated costs, benefits and risks could be considered as a package rather than individually. DfI was represented at regular cross-

departmental meetings, chaired by TEO, at which implementation of this process was discussed – **JH/36 – INQ000114544.**

- **14 May 2020** – Northern Ireland First Minister Arlene Foster announces the **first steps for easing the lockdown in Northern Ireland** (Further steps are announced throughout May and June)
- **14 May 2020** - NI Water advice - Turning the taps on safely after lockdown – **JH/37 – INQ000114545.**
- **19 May 2020** – Message to all staff – COVID-19 from Permanent Secretary – **JH/38a – INQ000114546 & JH/38b – INQ000114547.**
- **26 May 2020** – Minister Mallon’s statement to Assembly on the Department’s response to COVID-19 – **JH/39a – INQ000114548, JH/39b – INQ000114549, JH/39c – INQ000114550, JH/39d – INQ000114551, JH/39e – INQ000114552, JH/39f – INQ000114553, JH/39g – INQ000114555 & JH/39h – INQ000114556.**
- **28 May 2020** - TEO decision to transition from Emergency phase to recovery. DfI COVID-19 Major Emergency Response – Stand Down – **JH/40a – INQ000114561 & JH/40b – INQ000114562.**
- **12 June 2020** - NI Hub Stood Down [SOPS]
- **15 June 2020** – Scale down of DfI DOC and Hub – memo from Permanent Secretary – **JH/42a – INQ000114564 & JH/42b – INQ000114565.**
- **18 June 2020** – Agreed at Executive meeting - DfI Executive Paper - E (20) 143 (C) BUSINESS AND PLANNING BILL: LEGISLATIVE CONSENT MOTION **JH/43a – INQ000114566 & JH/43b – INQ000114567.**
Recommendations were that the Executive agree to: -
 - I. the laying of a Legislative Consent Memorandum in relation to Clause 10 of the Business and Planning Bill, which provides for the issue of 1-year licenses to certain bus and lorry drivers in Northern Ireland; and
 - II. the tabling of a Legislative Consent Motion

- **22 June 2020** – Minister Mallon plans for phased return of MOT and Driver Testing Services – **JH/44 – INQ000114568**.
- **25 June 2020** – The Northern Ireland Executive **agrees to reduce social distancing from two metres to one metre from 29 June**, as well as a number of other lockdown easing measures for Northern Ireland. During this period, the economy opened up in line with the Executive's recovery plan, numbers on specific public transport services started to significantly increase. Difficulty in maintaining social distancing brought about a renewed focus on face coverings.
- **25 June 2020** - Memo from Katrina Godfrey to All DfI Staff – COVID-19 Major Emergency Response Stand Down – **JH/45a – INQ000114569 & JH/45b – INQ000114570**.
- **29 June 2020** - DfI Comms – Email Message from David Sterling – update – **JH/46 – INQ000114571**.
- **2 July 2020** – Agreed at Executive meeting DfI Executive Paper - E (20) 161 (C) COVID-19: REQUIREMENTS FOR MANDATORY FACE COVERINGS ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT – **JH/47a – INQ000114572 & JH/47b – INQ000114573**.
- Recommendations were: -
 - (i) to implement a mandatory requirement for face coverings on public transport from 10 July 2020, to be taken forward by means of an amendment to the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020;
 - (ii) that the definition of public transport would include all services delivered under a Public Service Agreement (Translink), commercial bus service permit and Strangford and Rathlin ferries; and
 - (iii) that the cross departmental group on face coverings would engage with private operators to explore any extension of this requirement.
- **2 July 2020** – Minister Mallon announces face coverings to be mandatory on public transport from 10 July 2020 – **JH/48 – INQ000114574**.
- **2 July 2020** - NI Direct page published: Safer travel during (COVID-19): guidance for public transport users, walkers, cyclists, and drivers – **JH/49 – INQ000114575**.

- **3 July 2020** - Safer travel guidance for public transport operators published – **JH/50 – INQ000114578**.
- **28 July 2020** – COVID-19 MERP Departmental Board Meeting held. Minutes of meeting – **JH/51 – INQ000114579**.
- **28 July 2020** – Minister Mallon plans to resume further MOT services and car and lorry driving tests – **JH/52 – INQ000114580**.
- **6 August 2020** - Agreed at Executive meeting - DfI Executive Paper - E (20) 193 (C) COVID-19: RAISING THE SEA PORT LOAN AND GRANT LIMIT BY ACCELERATED PASSAGE – **JH/54a – INQ000114582 & JH/54b – INQ000114583**.
- Recommendations were that the Executive agree to: -
 - I. the final policy content of a proposed Harbours Bill needed to increase the total loan and grant limit for sea ports;
 - II. an in-year bid for inclusion of the required Bill in the legislative programme by accelerated passage; and
 - III. that my officials engage with the Office of Legislative Counsel.
- **10 September 2020** - Agreed at Executive meeting - DfI Executive Paper - E (20) 207(C) COVID-19: INFRASTRUCTURE RECOVERY – **JH/55a - INQ000114584, JH/55b – INQ000114585**.
- Recommendations were that the Executive: -
 - I. note the progress that has been made by my Department on COVID-19 recovery;
 - II. agree that the Executive's recovery plans, Investment Strategy and Programme for Government must fully recognise the importance of investment in infrastructure to help improve the economy and the wellbeing of our citizens.
- **29 October 2020** - Agreed at Executive meeting - DfI Executive Paper - E (20) 258 (C) FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE DUE TO CORONAVIRUS FOR THE TAXI, PRIVATE BUS AND COACH INDUSTRY – **JH/56a – INQ000114586 & JH/56b – INQ000114587**.
- Recommendations were that the Executive: -

- I. note the First and Deputy First Ministers' designation that DfI should provide financial assistance to the taxi, private bus and coach sectors;
 - II. endorse proposals to provide financial assistance to mitigate the effect of this hardship by means of two schemes provided for in accordance with the Financial Assistance Act (NI) 2009; and
 - III. approve the funding bid to cover the cost of these schemes (£25m).
- **5 November 2020** - Agreed at Executive meeting - DfI Executive Paper- E (20) 260
INTRODUCTION OF THE HARBOURS (GRANTS AND LOANS LIMIT) BILL TO
THE ASSEMBLY – JH/57a - INQ000114588, JH/57b - INQ000114589, JH/57c -
INQ000114590, JH/57d - INQ000114591 & JH/58a – INQ000114592, JH/58b –
INQ000114593, JH/58c – INQ000114594, JH/58d – INQ000114596 & JH/58e –
INQ000114597.
 - Recommendations were that the Executive agree to: -
 - I. the Harbours (Grants and Loans Limit) Bill, attached to paper; and
 - II. the Bill's introduction in the Assembly.
 - **19 November 2020** – Following agreement with Executive colleagues to provide further short-term funding until March 2021 to City of Derry Airport, Minister Mallon announces up to £1.23m in additional support for the Airport – JH/59 – INQ000114598.
 - **14 January 2021** - Agreed at Executive meeting - DfI Executive Paper - E (21) 009
(C) FURTHER FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO TAXI DRIVERS DUE TO
CORONAVIRUS – JH/60a – INQ000114601 & JH/60b – INQ000114602.
 - Recommendations were that the Executive: -
 - I. approve proposals to provide financial assistance to mitigate in part the effect of the financial pressures on taxi drivers by means of a further scheme provided for in accordance with the Financial Assistance Act (NI) 2009;
 - II. support request to the First and Deputy First Ministers seeking a further designation that DfI should provide financial assistance to taxi drivers under the Financial Assistance Act (Northern Ireland) 2009; and

- III. note the funding arrangements to cover the cost of the second scheme (£10m) to be funded from the £25m provided to the Department for Infrastructure in October, of which some £6m is still being held at the centre.

- **18 February 2021** - Agreed at Executive meeting - DfI Executive Paper - E (21) 045 (C) FURTHER FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE DUE TO CORONAVIRUS FOR PRIVATE BUS AND COACH INDUSTRY – **JH/61a – INQ000114603 & JH/61b – INQ000114604.**

- Recommendations were that the Executive: -
 - I. approve proposals to provide financial assistance to mitigate in part the effect of the financial pressures on bus and coach operators, covering the period 1 October 2020 to 31 March 2021, by means of a further scheme provided for in accordance with the Financial Assistance Act (NI) 2009;
 - II. agree that the First Minister and deputy First Minister should make a further Determination and Designation that under the Financial Assistance Act (Northern Ireland) 2009 in respect of financial assistance to bus and coach operators; and
 - III. note the funding arrangements to cover the cost of the second scheme to be funded from the £25m already provided to the Department for Infrastructure.

- **8 July 2021** – Written Ministerial Statement from the First and Deputy First Minister – Decisions of the Executive on COVID-19 – relaxations outlined including guidance for social distancing on public transport – **JH/62a – INQ000114605, JH/62b – INQ000114606 & JH/62c – INQ000114607.**

- **12 August 2021** - Written Ministerial Statement from the First and Deputy First Minister – Decisions of the Executive on COVID-19 – requirement for social distancing on public transport lifted – **JH/63a – INQ000114608 & JH/63b – INQ000114609.**

- **20 January 2022** - Agreed at Executive meeting - DfI Executive Paper - E (22) 018 (C) FURTHER FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR PRIVATE BUS AND COACH INDUSTRY DUE TO CORONAVIRUS – **JH/64a – INQ000114610 & JH/64b – INQ000114611.**

- Recommendations were that the Executive: -

- I. approve proposals to provide financial assistance to mitigate in part the effect of the financial pressures on bus and coach operators, covering the period 1 April 2021 to 31 January 2022, by means of a further scheme provided for in accordance with the Financial Assistance Act (NI) 2009;
- II. agree that the First Minister and deputy First Minister should make a determination under the Financial Assistance Act (Northern Ireland) 2009 and designate DfI as the relevant department to make a scheme of financial assistance.; and
- III. note this is subject to a successful bid to cover the cost of the third scheme.

ANNEX TWO

Name of Key Decision Maker	Role and Responsibilities	Name of any working groups participated in	Brief Description of named working groups and their function
Katrina Godfrey	Permanent Secretary. Responsible for clearance of submissions and draft replies in relation to COVID Executive Papers.	Departmental Emergency Management Group (DEMG) Response, Recovery and Resilience group (RRR)	Departmental Emergency Management Group (DEMG) was activated on 18th March 2020 and initially met on a daily basis for six weeks until 29th April 2020 and then met weekly until 28 May 2020. This group was established as part of the implementation of the Major Emergency Response Plan (MERP). Response, Recovery and Resilience Group (RRR) was established on 4 June 2020 after the DEMG was stood down and considered issues relating to the pandemic response. This consisted of senior DfI officials and met on a weekly basis until the end of August 2020, with its last meeting on 16 June 2021.
John McGrath	Deputy Secretary. In the absence of the Permanent Secretary, he was responsible for clearance of submissions and draft replies in relation to COVID Executive Papers. Up until 5 September 2020 when he retired.	DEMG RRR	
Julie Thompson	Deputy Secretary. In the absence of the Permanent Secretary, she was responsible for clearance of submissions and draft replies in relation to	DEMG RRR	

Name of Key Decision Maker	Role and Responsibilities	Name of any working groups participated in	Brief Description of named working groups and their function
	COVID Executive Papers.		
Andrew Murray	Deputy Secretary. In the absence of the Permanent Secretary, he was responsible for clearance of submissions and draft replies in relation to COVID Executive Papers.	DEMG RRR	
Linda MacHugh	Acting Deputy Secretary. In the absence of the Permanent Secretary, she was responsible for clearance of submissions and draft replies in relation to COVID Executive Papers. From 5 September 2020 until 17 May 2021.	RRR	
Declan McGeown	Deputy Secretary. In the absence of the Permanent Secretary, he was responsible for clearance of submissions and draft replies in relation to COVID Executive Papers. From 17 May 2021.	DEMG RRR	

Name of Key Decision Maker	Role and Responsibilities	Name of any working groups participated in	Brief Description of named working groups and their function
Michaela Glass	Director of Corporate Policy & Planning (until 25-09-20) Responsible for clearing Executive papers in absence of Permanent Secretary and Deputy Secretary.	DEMG	
Sian Kerr	Director of Corporate Policy & Planning (from 25-09-20) Responsible for clearing Executive papers in absence of Permanent Secretary and Deputy Secretary.	DEMG RRR	
Damian Curran	G5 Director	Brexit-Group	As COVID developed during Brexit – this group morphed into a combined Brexit-COVID group. This group was not a ‘decision making’ group but was used for general information sharing and awareness.
Julie Thompson	Deputy Secretary Leadership-approval role for the two financial support schemes.		
Chris Hughes	Director of SATD Leadership-approval role for the two financial support schemes.		

Name of Key Decision Maker	Role and Responsibilities	Name of any working groups participated in	Brief Description of named working groups and their function
Jeremy Logan	Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA) Chief Executive Leadership-approval role for the delivery of DVA services.		
Angus Kerr	Chief Planner and Director of Regional Planning Responsible for policy and legislative response in relation to planning issues.		
Tom Reid	Director of Public Transport (up to 31 August 2020) Responsible for decision making in relation to public transport.		
Jackie Robinson	Director of Gateways & EU relations (up to 31 Oct 2020) Responsible for decision making in relation to Gateways – Ports and Airports.		
Jackie Robinson	Director of Public Transport (started 1 November 2020) Responsible for decision making in		

Name of Key Decision Maker	Role and Responsibilities	Name of any working groups participated in	Brief Description of named working groups and their function
	relation to public transport.		