

MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE MEETING: 18 JUNE 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 & Central Advisory Division TEO

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

INTRODUCTION

The First Minister chaired agenda item 1 - 4

AGENDA ITEM 1

E (M) (20) 36 Minutes of Executive meeting of 15 June 2020

1. The minutes of the Executive meeting of 15 June 2020 were agreed.

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Matters Arising

Irrelevant & Sensitive

AGENDA ITEM 2

COVID-19 Report by the Health Minister

3. The Minister of Health provided an update on developments in the COVID-19 pandemic, including patient numbers in ICU; hospital admissions; testing of staff and residents in care homes; and references in ONS reports of COVID deaths of health professionals in Northern Ireland.

AGENDA ITEM 3

Actions from previous meetings and SitRep

4. The First Minister advised that the Action Log from the previous Executive meeting had been circulated.

AGENDA ITEM 4

COVID-19 Management

E (20) 144 (C) Planning for Recovery: Fourth Review of Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020

5. The Minister of Health introduced this paper.

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6. The Executive agreed that:

- (i) the requirement in regulation 2(2) for a fourth review of the need for the restrictions and requirements in the Regulations had been duly met;
- (ii) the Regulations as amended to date continued to be an appropriate and necessary response to the serious and imminent threat to public health which was posed by the incidence and spread of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) in Northern Ireland; and
- (iii) overall the restrictions and requirements imposed by these Regulations continued to be proportionate to what the Regulations sought to achieve, which was a public health response to that infectious disease threat.

E (20) 148 (C) Consideration of Easement to the Regulations (Faith)

7. The First Minister introduced this paper.

8. Following discussion, the Executive:

- (i) noted the requests for easements submitted by Departments, which would be reviewed and submitted formally to the Executive;
- (ii) agreed that the Executive would communicate an indicative date of 29 June for the safe re-opening of places of worship subject to a final decision nearer the time; and
- (iii) agreed that the Executive would communicate an indicative date of 6 July for the safe re-opening of businesses specified in Part 2, Regulation 14 of the Regulations (nail, beauty, hair salons and barbers and tanning services, electrolysis or acupuncture), subject to a final decision nearer the time.

9. The Minister for Infrastructure and the Minister of Justice advised of their concerns in relation to the timing of the circulation of the paper, and the lack of priority being accorded to easements in respect of families and friends.

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It was agreed that an Indicative Roadmap of Easements Timelines would be circulated by the Executive Office to Ministers for their information.

E (20) 141 (C) Pausing the Shielding Advice for Northern Ireland

10. The Minister of Health introduced this paper.

11. The Executive agreed to the pausing of shielding advice from 31 July.

E (20) 147 (C) COVID-19 Childcare Sector Recovery Plan

12. The Minister of Health and the Minister of Education introduced this paper.

13. Following discussion, the Executive:

- (i) agreed the draft Childcare Recovery Plan attached at Appendix A to Executive Memorandum E (20) 147 (C);
- (ii) noted the challenges in successfully delivering the plan's aim and objective, in particular capacity challenges;
- (iii) agreed to consider a further childcare recovery funding scheme in the context of the re-prioritisation discussion planned for the Executive meeting on 22 June 2020; and
- (iv) subject to the outcome of (iii) above, agreed to publish the Childcare Sector Recovery Plan.

E (20) 146 (C) Education Restart Progress and Assumptions

14. The Minister of Education introduced this paper.

15. The Executive:

- (i) noted the update on Education Restart planning;
- (ii) endorsed the key elements of the Department of Education draft guidelines on planning for the "New School Day"; and

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- (iii) noted the challenges faced in returning to normal education delivery in the context of current physical distancing restrictions, and accepted the position that the Department of Education plan on the preferred option for social distancing within schools, as outlined in Executive Memorandum E (20) 146 (C), for the new school term, subject to wider public conditions at the time permitting.

E (20) 142 (C) Summer Activity to Support Children and Young People

16. The Minister of Education introduced this paper.

17. The Executive:

- (i) noted that the emergency educational supervision scheme for vulnerable children and the children of key workers would not continue in its current format beyond 30 June 2020;
- (ii) agreed the proposed programme of activity over the summer to support vulnerable children and young people's well-being;
- (iii) agreed to permit limited resumption of youth service summer programmes prioritising key worker children, delivered by voluntary youth organisations and uniformed organisations, and to include youth workers in the list of key workers;
- (iv) agreed to support the bid for additional funding to cover payments in lieu of free school meals (approximately £12.5m) ; and to support a bid of up to £800,000 to extend and expand the Eat Well Live Well Scheme (reducing to £400,000 if the bid to cover free school meals was met); and
- (v) agreed to support the bid for funding to support learning for children over the summer and beyond, approximately £12m.

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E (20) 143 (C) Business and Planning Bill: Legislative Consent Motion

18. The Minister for Infrastructure introduced this paper.

19. The Executive agreed:

- (i) to the laying of a Legislative Consent Memorandum in relation to Clause 10 of the Business and Planning Bill, which provided for the issue of 1 year licences to certain bus and lorry drivers in Northern Ireland; and
- (ii) to the tabling of a Legislative Consent Motion

E (20) 149 (C) Covid-19 Supplier Relief Transition and Recovery Post 30 June 2020

20. The Minister of Finance introduced this paper.

21. The Executive agreed to:

- (i) the extension of the period for supplier relief to 31 October, in line with the Covid-19 Job Retention Scheme; and
- (ii) the Department of Finance publishing a PGN (draft attached at Executive Memorandum E (20) 149 (C)), applicable to all Departments/CoPEs advising of the new measures to be implemented post 30 June 2020.

Other COVID issues

Youth Press Conference on Covid-19

22. The Minister of Justice raised the issue of a Youth Press Conference on COVID-19 issues. The First Minister advised that the Executive Information Service was developing proposals for such an event following consultation with a range of youth organisations.

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

AGENDA ITEM 5

Schedule of Events/Media/Ad Hoc Committee

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AGENDA ITEM 6

Other Matters requiring Executive Agreement

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AGENDA ITEM 7

Any other business

Disclosure of minutes and documents from the Executive Office in relation to COVID-19

27. At the request of the Minister of Health, the Secretary to the Executive agreed to provide guidance on public release of Executive papers and minutes in relation to medical advice on COVID-19 matters.

Airports

28. The Minister of Finance advised that he wished to have his paper on Financial Support for Connectivity and Airports placed on the agenda of the meeting of 22 June in accordance with the three meeting rule. .

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Date of next meeting

30. The next meeting of the Executive would take place on Monday 22 June 2020 at 12.00.
31. A Special Executive meeting to consider Recovery matters would take place in the Members Dining Room, Parliament Buildings on Thursday 25 June from 10.00am to 12.00noon.

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