

MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE MEETING: 6 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 First Minister chaired agenda items 1 – 4.

AGENDA ITEM 1

E (M) (20) 47 Minutes of Executive meeting held on 30 July 2020

1. The minutes of the Executive meeting of 30 July 2020 were agreed.

AGENDA ITEM 2

COVID-19 Report by the Minister of Health

2. The Minister of Health provided an update on developments in the COVID-19 pandemic, including the increase in the R number, an increase in the number of positive tests, the younger age profile evident in new cases; and the uptake of the Stop COVID NI App. He advised that the PHA would be producing a weekly report on outbreak clusters by district council area.

AGENDA ITEM 3

Actions from Previous Meetings

3. The First Minister advised that the Action Log had been circulated.

AGENDA ITEM 4

COVID-19 Management

E (20) 188 (C) Advice of the Chief Medical Officer and Chief Scientific Adviser on the reopening pubs

4. The Executive noted the advice from the Chief Medical Officer and the Chief Scientific Adviser which had been circulated previously.
5. Following discussion, the Executive agreed that the ending of the current restriction on the opening of wet pubs should be deferred from the indicative date of 10 August, to be reviewed in three weeks; and that further engagement should take place with the sector on the pressures facing it.

E (20) 191 (C) COVID 19 – Indicative Timeline, Executive Ratifications

6. The First Minister introduced this paper.
7. The Executive:
 - i. noted the risk assessment at Annex A of Executive Memorandum E (20) 191 (C);

- ii. agreed that theatres and concert halls should be allowed to reopen for the purposes of rehearsals and live recordings without audiences with effect from 8 August; and to admit audiences to live performances on a seated basis and with other mitigations in place with effect from 1 September. Agreed that spectators should be admitted to indoor sports events where social distancing can be managed;
- iii. noted the update on soft play areas and agreed that these should not reopen on 7 August, and that an update should be provided for its next meeting;
- iv. commissioned an update on Entertainment issues including Nightclubs for its next meeting;
- v. commissioned urgent consideration of options on a maximum number for outdoor gatherings; and
- vi. noted that further work would be undertaken on conferences.

E (20) 190 (C) Wearing of Face Coverings

- 8. The Minister of Health introduced this paper.
- 9. Following discussion, the Executive agreed that the use of face coverings in certain indoor settings, including shops, would be made mandatory with effect from August 10th.

E (20) 186 (C) Cross-Departmental Covid-19 Vulnerable Children and Young People's Plan

- 10. The Minister of Health introduced this paper.
- 11. The Executive:
 - i. agreed the revised draft of the Cross-Departmental Covid-19 Vulnerable Children and Young People's Plan (Annex A of Executive Memorandum E (20) 186 (C); and
 - ii. agreed to a targeted consultation on the plan.

E (20) 187 (C) Executive COVID-19 Action Plan: Quantitative Information on the Actions Taken within Care Homes to reduce Infection and their Effect

12. The Minister of Health introduced this paper.

13. The Executive noted Executive Memorandum E (20) 187 (C).

E (20) 189 (C) Education Restart Update and Revised Assumptions

14. The Minister of Education introduced this paper.

15. The Executive:

- a) noted the paper and the update on Education Restart planning and delivery; and
- b) agreed to a more ambitious approach to Education Restart planning (subject to the revision of guidance in line with public health requirements and the engagements outlined in this paper), namely:
 - i. the resumption of more normal patterns of operation and attendance in line with standard legislative requirements for all education settings for all pupils during week commencing 31 August;
 - ii. the relaxing of strict social distancing restrictions amongst all pupils, in school and on dedicated home to school transport; and
 - iii. the use of appropriate public health mitigations including protective bubbles or consistent class groups possible, enhanced cleaning and hygiene and effective track and trace processes.
- c) agreed to the outlined approach and noted the required actions.

E (20) 193 (C) Raising the Sea Port Loan and Grant Limit by Accelerated Passage

16. The Minister for Infrastructure introduced this paper.

17. The Executive agreed:

- (i) to the final policy content of a proposed Harbours Bill needed to increase the total loan and grant limit for sea ports;
- (ii) to an in year bid for inclusion of the required Bill in the Legislative Programme by accelerated passage;
- (iii) that Department for Infrastructure officials should engage with the Office of Legislative Counsel; and
- (iv) that the Minister for Infrastructure would bring any proposed EU-Exit related expenditure to the Executive for consideration.

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

AGENDA ITEM 5

Schedule of Events / Media / Ad Hoc Committee

18. The Executive noted that no statements to the Ad Hoc Committee were scheduled.

AGENDA ITEM 6

Other Matters requiring Executive Agreement

Irrelevant & Sensitive

Irrelevant & Sensitive

AGENDA ITEM 7

Any Other Business

Support for haulage, taxis and coaches

23. The Secretary to the Executive was asked to provide advice on the availability and extent of departmental powers to provide financial support to the haulage, taxi and coach sectors of business.

Retail Industry

24. The First Minister and deputy First Minister advised the Executive that they intended to establish a cross-departmental High Street Task Force to be led by TEO. The Executive discussed issues relating to the return of civil servants to work in government offices as a lever to support the retail sector.

COVID reallocation funding

25. The Minister of Finance outlined his proposed two stage approach to the re-allocation of funding. It was agreed that he would circulate a paper with

proposals in respect of emergency allocations and that the Executive would hold a dedicated meeting to consider this on 13 August.

Irrelevant & Sensitive

Door to door charity collections

27. The Minister of Justice invited the Department for Communities to participate in discussions with her department and the Department of Health about the Covid-19 health issues relating to door -to-door charity collections.

Irrelevant & Sensitive

Date of next meeting

29. A dedicated meeting of the Executive to consider a paper from the Minister of Finance on proposed allocations would take place on Thursday 13 August.