

**From the Minister of Finance**

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Dear Diane

**EXEC-0020-2020 - Coronavirus Recovery: Charting a Course for the Economy - Our first steps**

Thank you for the second version of this paper which was issued this morning.

I completely accept the analysis of the very severe impact of the pandemic on the economy and how this has not been evenly spread with disproportionate impacts on groups such as the young and lower paid. As well as and linked to the different sectors of the economy. I also accept the need to and challenges of beginning to move out of the lockdown and get the economy moving again. And to do this in a clearly communicated, planned and structured way, based on principles and evidence.

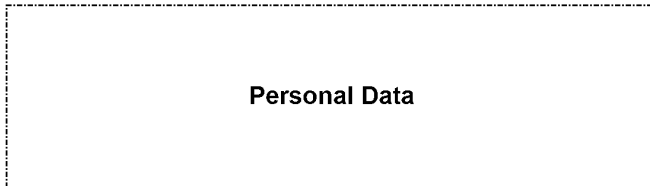
In charting a course for recovery there is a need to provide *practical* sector-specific guidance for reopening in a safe manner. That will include arrangements for PPE and social distancing. It will take employers time to prepare for reopening.

There is also a need to set out *strategically* how government policies will be re-orientated to deliver a recovery that is in line with our objectives. That work should be underpinned by consultation with businesses and trade unions so that the needs of specific sectors in the new local and global context are identified, and government interventions can be tailored accordingly. The financial support that will be available to businesses, including via Invest NI, is a key question and I'm conscious that furloughing support is likely to be reduced. I believe we should have further analysis of what an economic packages would look like before we publish this and raise expectations.

More specifically I am concerned that the statement that “the #stayhome message has led to many construction projects and manufacturing operations being suspended in ways that were not intended by the Coronavirus Regulations” will be perceived as criticism of workers who acted responsibly in staying at home and is likely to provoke an adverse reaction.

The paper provides more of a general discussion rather than a clear practical or strategic direction. Given this I welcome that there are now no recommendations and that the paper is for discussion only.

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