

From the Minister of Finance

*Arlene Foster MLA
First Minister*

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Your reference: *MEMORANDUM E
(20) 276 (C)*

Our reference: *EXEC-0471-2020*

Date: *7 December 2020*

Dear Arlene and Michelle

FINAL EXECUTIVE PAPER: THE EXECUTIVE COVID TASKFORCE (ECT)

Thank you for your final Executive paper on 2 December to Executive colleagues with regards the proposal to establish a DoH/TEO Covid-19 Taskforce.

Clearly there is much work to be done in the months ahead in relation to the effective rollout of mass testing capability and vaccination programmes; strategic compliance; and clear public communications. As such, I agree it is critical that we have appropriate structures in place to manage and co-ordinate this. The membership here does not include DoF, which is fine as these policy areas are for the Departments involved.

I have no objection from my perspective as Finance Minister to the establishment of the joint taskforce as you have proposed. However, there is a need to keep the LPS team within DoF involved and informed within sufficient time with regard to the classification of businesses to be restricted. The current approach in which restrictions are proposed at short notice, with little consideration as to the implications for providing financial support, is making it very difficult to implement business support measures in a prompt manner.

However, I would note that the Spending Review announcement of 25 November set the COVID-19 Resource DEL Barnett funding for 2021-22 at £538 million. This is significantly less than the £2.8 billion provided to date in the current financial year. The Taskforce will have to be mindful of the wider financial position and liaise as

necessary with DoF to ensure that any recommendations are affordable, deliverable and take into account the wider financial context.

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**CONOR MURPHY MLA
MINISTER OF FINANCE**