

**From the Minister of Finance**

*Paul Frew, MLA  
Minister for Economy*

Private Office  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Clare House  
303 Airport Road West  
BELFAST  
BT3 9ED

Tel: **Irrelevant & Sensitive**  
Email: [private.office@finance-ni.gov.uk](mailto:private.office@finance-ni.gov.uk)

Your reference: EXEC-0040-2021

Our reference: EXEC-0210-2021

Date: 24 June 2021

Dear Paul

**NI DOMESTIC AVIATION KICKSTART SCHEME (NIDAKS).**

Thank you for your paper of 23 June 2021 regarding the NI Domestic Aviation Kickstart Scheme (NIDAKS) and to advise that you wish to take this scheme forward under Ministerial Direction.

As I explained in my earlier letter on this case the Department for the Economy was allocated £286.8m for Economic Recovery Action Plan (ERAP) at the time of the Final Budget. Although £145m of this was ring fenced for the High Street Stimulus Scheme, the remaining £141.8m is to be used by your Department for economic recovery measures, and as such the use of ERAP funding for NIDAKS can be taken forward as you see fit and there is no requirement for Executive approval for this.

I note your view that time does not allow for a full value for money assessment of the NIDAKS and on that basis you are seeking the Executive's agreement for your use of a Ministerial Direction. I believe that it is important for the Executive to consider its approach to air connectivity and airports together, particularly the related responsibilities of the Departments of Economy and Infrastructure.

While I am content to support your proposal on that basis, it is important that the Executive has the opportunity to consider its approach to air connectivity and airports together. The discussions and practical experience during the COVID period have shown that the two are inseparable and that our overall approach has been confused by having three departments involved and where DoF only provided assistance under emergency powers because the Departments of Economy and Infrastructure could not

agree where responsibility lay. The proposal for this scheme to assist airlines (all very large companies with considerable resources) and how it is being driven by the airports shows this again, as does the current request for further assistance from City of Derry Airport that is currently with all three departments for consideration

Is mise le meas,

**Personal Data**

**CONOR MURPHY MLA  
MINISTER OF FINANCE**