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**MEMORANDUM E (21) 142 (C)**

**FROM:       FIRST MINISTER**  
**DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER**

**DATE:        24 June 2021**

**TO:           EXECUTIVE COLLEAGUES**

**FINAL EXECUTIVE PAPER: Building Forward – Consolidated NI Covid Recovery Plan**

**Introduction**

1. The purpose of this paper is to seek Executive views on the draft Building Forward – Consolidated Covid Recovery Plan and to secure your agreement to officials proceeding with focused stakeholder engagement on the Plan. An updated draft of the Plan will be brought back for Executive consideration and approval following that stakeholder engagement next month. This will include proposals for implementation of the Plan.

**Background**

2. Covid-19 has significantly impacted all aspects of our society through, for example loss of life, disruption to people's livelihoods and the impact on our physical and mental health. The purpose of the Recovery Plan is to accelerate economic, health and societal recovery in the short term so we can emerge stronger and also to transform and innovate to seed now for longer term ambitions.
3. Departments have been focusing on recovery as part of the transition from crisis response mode to short term recovery considerations with some significant work already delivered. TEO officials have worked with all Departments to develop an integrated Recovery Plan, to deliver societal, economic and health recovery, in order

**OFFICIAL - EXECUTIVE**

## OFFICIAL - EXECUTIVE

to inform the Executive of the priorities for the Government with regards to accelerating recovery.

4. The draft Plan focuses on the delivery of interventions over a 24 month period. It is not about getting back to where we were before, rather it provides the foundation for economic, health and societal renewal. It has been developed using a collaborative approach across departments through close partnership working with Senior Policy leads including one-to-one bilateral meetings with Permanent Secretaries.
5. The development of an integrated Recovery Plan and the approach taken has emphasised a numbers of benefits:
  - Prompted wider thinking across the piece to drive co-partnership development of interventions that are right for this strategy;
  - Driven a coherent approach to develop a cross-Executive birds-eye view of what recovery looks like;
  - Highlighted where additional work is required to further develop some of the high impacted areas, such as women and young people to create shared interventions;
  - Highlighted the need to ensure alignment with PfG;
  - Provided a greater momentum to work across departments, particularly on this shorter more focused piece that has the potential to drive longer term collaborative working under PfG; and
  - Will help facilitate information sharing and engagement between jurisdictions.
6. An advance draft of the integrated Recovery Plan was shared with Departments and final comments were received and are reflected in the attached draft at **Annex A**.

## OFFICIAL - EXECUTIVE

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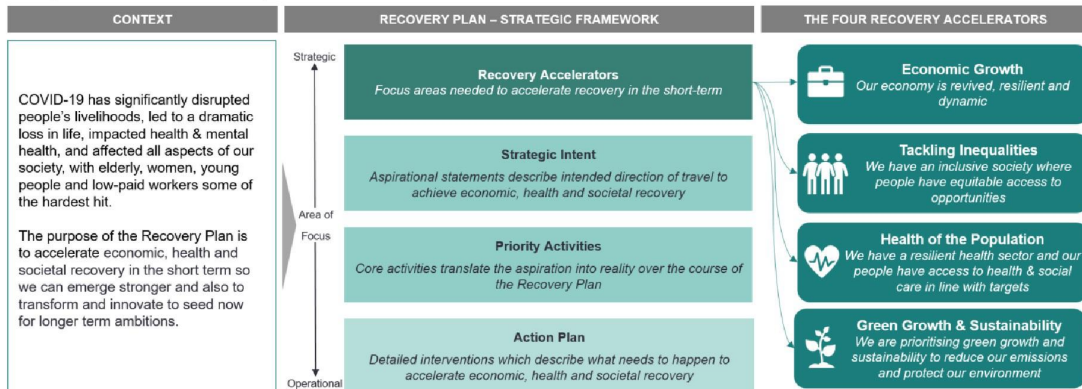
### Detail

7. Development of the Recovery Plan followed an iterative and collaborative approach and methodology over a number of weeks:
  - Interventions gathering – interventions were identified and submitted by departments and analysed for inclusion in the plan based on whether they met any or all of the following criteria:
    - i. Does it accelerate recovery over the next 24 months?
    - ii. Does it ensure the citizen is better off in the short term? and
    - iii. Does it address critical challenges our citizens are facing today and in the near-term?
  - Prioritisation – interventions were then prioritised based on scoring of impact and ease of implementation, and how this, at a high level, translates into shorter and longer term implementation. Through the prioritisation exercise, interventions were plotted under three categories, namely: Early Successes; Contributory Actions; and Seeding Long Term Ambitions.
  - Validation – the interventions were validated with departments in respect of categorisations, themes, aggregation and prioritisation to ensure the detail of each intervention was maintained.
  - Collaboration – those interventions that are cross-cutting and would benefit from collaborative working across departments were identified.
8. To accelerate economic, health and societal recovery in the short term, four Recovery Accelerators work together to ensure that we can emerge stronger from the pandemic. The four Recovery Accelerators are:
  - Economic Growth,
  - Tackling Inequalities,
  - Health of the Population, and
  - Green Growth and Sustainability.

## OFFICIAL - EXECUTIVE

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9. Each Recovery Accelerator is set out in a strategic framework which translates aspiration into action.



10. The four Recovery Accelerators each have a number of key areas of strategic intent, each of which have a set of priority activities and interventions. The table below summaries the key strategic intent for the accelerators.

Recovery Accelerator	Strategic Intent
<b>Economic Growth Recovery</b>	Accelerating Job Creation & Growth
	Enhancing Skills
	Stimulating the economy through green growth and circular economy
<b>Tackling Inequalities</b>	Addressing Vulnerability
	Enabling learning recovery, enhancement & skills development
	Providing equitable access to our health services
<b>Health of the Population</b>	Addressing Vulnerability
	Protecting and improving the health of the population
	Promoting Health and Wellbeing
<b>Green Growth &amp; Sustainability</b>	Accelerating Job Creation and Growth
	Sustainable Development

11. Each Recovery Accelerator comprises of a number of interventions, which have been put forward by departments. In total there are 85 distinct interventions, however due to the cross cutting nature of this Plan some interventions will feature in

## OFFICIAL - EXECUTIVE

## **OFFICIAL - EXECUTIVE**

more than one Recovery Accelerator. Nearly half (42 of the 85) interventions in the Plan are cross-cutting in nature.

12. Each intervention has also been given a category that best describes the focus of the intervention (Strengthening, Transforming or Innovating) along with whether they are interventions that can be actioned in the short term and as a result can be seen as an early success. 86% of the interventions listed can be actioned in the short term with the remaining 14% seeding long term ambition.

### **Alignment with Programme for Government**

13. The draft Recovery Plan has been designed in the context of the development of the strategic outcomes-based Programme for Government (PfG), whereby it is anticipated that the workstreams are likely to form the basis of a number of key strategic areas that will ultimately contribute to the achievement of the new draft PfG Outcomes Framework. This Recovery Plan details those collaborative and highly impactful interventions that can be delivered now and accelerate recovery for our citizens as well as a small number of interventions to be delivered to seed long term ambitions.

### **Financial Implications**

14. This Recovery Plan is a chance to emerge stronger from the pandemic and focus around the key areas that matter most to citizens to help transform the economy, create jobs and shape the region as an attractive place to live, work and visit. The impact of this plan will depend upon funding and investment in order to make change happen.
15. The Executive's Budget 2021-22 allocated £1,148 million for Covid support and recovery. The allocation of a further £316 million was agreed on 20 May 2021. The funding for these allocations is for a 1-year period only with no guarantee of additional COVID money from UK Treasury for 2021-22. The funding for 2022-23 and beyond will not be known until the UK Spending Review announcement later this year. This Recovery Plan has been designed to implement action over a two-year period in order to focus attention on both immediate priorities but also longer term

## **OFFICIAL - EXECUTIVE**

## OFFICIAL - EXECUTIVE

interventions that require planning now. For those actions that have financial implications beyond 2021/22, further bids may be required in due course. Each Department remains responsible for the funding and due diligence requirements relating to its actions.

### Stakeholder Engagement

16. It is proposed that engagement takes place with a number of cross-sectoral bodies to harness views on the Plan from a wide range of sectors. This feedback will be considered before the final draft Plan is shared with the Executive for consideration and approval. Details of the proposed stakeholders can be found at **Annex B**.

### Recommendation

17. It is recommended that the Executive:
  - consider the draft Building Forward Consolidated NI Covid Recovery Plan at **Annex A** and provide written feedback after the Executive meeting on Thursday;
  - agree that the draft Plan is brought to the stakeholders proposed at **Annex B**;
  - note that the final report will be presented to the Executive for approval next month.

**PAUL GIVAN MLA**

**First Minister**

**MICHELLE O'NEILL MLA**

**deputy First Minister**

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**Annex A**

**Draft Building Forward – Consolidated NI Covid Recovery Plan**

**See attachment**

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**Annex B**

**Proposed Stakeholders**

**Organisation**

- CBI
- Chamber of Commerce
- Federation of Small Businesses
- Manufacturing NI
- NI Retail Consortium
- The Irish Congress of Trade Unions
- Unison
- NIPSA
- INTO
- Unite
- USDAW
- Institute of Directors
- Public Health Agency
- Health and Safety Executive NI
- SOLACE
- Food Standards Agency NI
- NICCY
- ECNI
- Human Rights Commissioner
- Interim Mental Health Champion for NI
- Women's Policy Group
- The Migrant Centre
- NUS-USI (Students Union)
- InterTrade Ireland
- NI Women's Budget Group
- NI Environment Link
- UFU
- Rural Community Network
- Patient Client Council
- Commissioner for Older People (COPNI)