

DRAFT MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE MEETING: 2 MARCH 2021

MEETING CONDUCTED VIA ZOOM

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. Middleton)
Junior Minister, TEO (Mr. Kearney)

Interim Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service
Head of Executive and Central Advisory Division
Interim Attorney General of Northern Ireland
Dr Michael McBride, Chief Medical Officer
Karen Pearson, Director of EU Relations
Chris McNabb, Director of Communications
Peter Toogood, Deputy Director, COVID Strategy, TEO
Carol Morrow, COVID Legislation, TEO

INTRODUCTION

The deputy First Minister chaired agenda item 1.

AGENDA ITEM 1

E (21) 054 (C) Moving Forward: The Executive's Pathway out of Restrictions

1. The deputy First Minister advised, in the context of the planned publication of 'Moving Forward: Executive's Pathway out of Restrictions', of the need for a joined up Executive response to increasing social activity, including in the Belfast Holylands, over forthcoming holiday periods, and asked for all Departments with a

role or interest to get involved in this issue, in cooperation with the Universities, Belfast City Council and PSNI.

2. The Secretary to the Executive introduced, and Ministers discussed, 'Moving Forward: The Executive's Pathway out of Restrictions' and the Executive Summary of the document.
3. The deputy First Minister advised that following agreement, engagement on the document would be scheduled with all relevant sectors and that a Communications Strategy for publication was being developed by Executive Information Service.
4. Following discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 10.30 a.m. to enable officials to circulate a final version of the documents, taking account of agreed amendments.

5. The meeting reconvened at 12.40 p.m.

6. The deputy First Minister advised that an amended version of 'Moving Forward: The Executive's Pathway out of Restrictions' had been circulated for further consideration, which took into account the issues raised during the first part of the meeting.
7. The Minister of Justice advised that she had been contacted by members of the media, who had received copies of the document ahead of the reconvening of the meeting.
8. The Secretary to the Executive outlined, and the Executive agreed, the amendments which had been made to the document.
9. The Director of Communications outlined the Communications Strategy which had been developed to coincide with the First Minister's and deputy First Minister's statement to the Assembly that afternoon and publication of the document, and asked that all Ministers be available to take part in media activity as required.
10. The deputy First Minister advised that, following the meeting, the final version of 'Moving Forward: The Executive's Pathway out of Restrictions', as agreed by the

Executive, would be circulated to all Ministers, as well as a Question & Answer document which had been developed. The Secretary to the Executive confirmed that issues relating to international travel would be included in the Q&A document.

11. The Executive agreed to the publication of 'Moving Forward: The Executive's Pathway out of Restrictions', and to a statement being made to the Assembly.

The First Minister chaired the remaining item on the agenda

AGENDA ITEM 2

Any Other Business

Border Control Issues

12. The First Minister advised that, as agreed at the Executive meeting of 1 March, this matter was being revisited following engagement between the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs and the interim Attorney General on the issues at hand.

Irrelevant & Sensitive

Irrelevant & Sensitive

13. The Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs advised that, following his meeting with the interim Attorney General, he wished to seek more information on matters considered by the Executive at its meetings of 21 May and 17 September 2020, and in that context, he would bring a paper to the Executive for consideration.

14. In response to a query from the Minister for Infrastructure,

I&S

Irrelevant & Sensitive

15. The Minister for Infrastructure sought clarification on whether the matter should have been brought to the Executive in the first instance, and if the Minister had breached the Ministerial Code by not seeking Executive agreement. The interim

Irrelevant & Sensitive

16. The deputy First Minister and the Minister of Justice both sought clarification on whether the instruction which had been given by the DAERA Minister to his staff was being acted upon:

LPP/LAP

LPP/LAP

Date of next meeting

17. The next meeting of the Executive would take place on Thursday 4 March.