

**DERRY AND STRABANE LOCALISED RESTRICTIONS,  
MINISTERIAL MEETINGS, 1 OCTOBER**

In advance and subsequent to the Executives decisions on localized restrictions for Derry and Strabane, Junior Ministers held the following meetings which were supported by Karen Pearson, TEO. Other meetings took place during the day.

**1. Minister Long**

Junior Minister Lyons met with Minister Long at 10.30. Julie Harrison, DOJ and Karen Pearson, TEO were in attendance. Minister Lyons explained the proposals the Executive would consider that afternoon. Minister Long had received the paper but had not had time to consider in detail. She made the following points:

- Enforcement would work best if delivered in a partnership approach with the Council. This had proven effective in Belfast Holylands in recent weeks
- She would like to review the level of fines available for COVID offences
- She was in favour of a higher level of penalty for venue and event organisers who broke the regulations

Minister Long thanked Junior Minister Lyons for the briefing.

**2. Derry and Strabane Council Chief Executive**

Junior Ministers Kearney and Lyons, with Minister Swann, CMO and CSA provided a briefing on a confidential basis at 11.30. In attendance were **NR**, **NR**, **NR** and **NR**. Julie Harrison attended from DOJ, and TEO officials attended.

CMO and CSA provided an overview of the latest positive test cases in the area and outlined their concerns about the doubling rate, and where the situation may reach if no further action was taken. John Kelpie thanked Minister Swann, CMO and CSA for the engagement over the past week and he outlined the steps the Council had taken in advance of and in anticipation of restrictions. He noted that most people were expecting an intervention and it would be welcome by some. Minister Swann thanked the Council for taking proactive steps.

ACC Todd was concerned about the narrative around enforcement issues. He noted the significant number of interventions PSNI had made on face coverings, and that only 8 fines had been issued across the UK on this issue. He was strongly in favour of a SCG approach to manage co-ordination of operational activity.

The meeting discussed a range of issues which would be relevant to the regulations:

- Designation of Councils
- Council powers to issue improvement notices

- Levels of fines to be more reflective of fines for anti social behaviour
- The need for clarity on wet bars

John Kelpie confirmed that he would remain in close contact with his counterpart in Donegal, and it was agreed that he and Minister Kearney would discuss separately the format for a briefing to the Councilors after the Executive decision.

The meeting noted the confidential nature of the briefing, which could not prejudice Executive decision making.

### **3. Briefing for MLAs**

After the Executive decision, dFM and Junior Ministers Lyons and Kearney, with CSA, provide a pre-press conference briefing for local politicians. In attendance were Sinead McLaughlin, Mark Durkan, Martina Anderson, Gary Middleton, Karen Mullan, Declan McAleer, Colum Eastwood, Daniel McCrossan, and Órfhlaith Begley.

dFM outlined the Executive's decision and asked for local political support for the measures, and consistency of communications. dFM undertook to provide information on the decision to assist.

JM Kearney emphasized the importance of working together, forming a group and having consistent messaging. He opened the meeting for questions and the following issues were discussed:

- Why close contact economy had not been included. CSA explained that any combination of measures could have been chosen. JM Lyons noted that this tended to be one to one service, whereas hospitality would involve larger numbers
- Examples of where working from home was not possible, including driving instructors
- The impact on the hospitality sector and the need for support packages, which took care of workers as well as the industry
- The likely reaction from citizens and the need for clear messaging
- The need for clarity on weddings and funerals

Junior Minister Kearney suggested that a further meeting be arranged for next week, to hear the experience on the ground. He noted that there would be engagement with the Council later today and he stressed the need for joined up communications and close working.

ENDS