

FROM THE MINISTER OF HEALTH



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PLANNING FOR RECOVERY

Introduction

1. As you are aware, on Monday coming we are due to discuss my Strategic Framework for Rebuilding Health and Social Services. Without seeking to pre-empt that discussion, I feel it marks a turning point in our response to the pandemic.
2. Thus far, we have – rightly in my view – largely focussed our energy and discussion on managing the health and social care dimension of this issue. Moving forward, I believe it is now time to place much more energy and focus on other aspects of this crisis. In particular, I feel we need to prioritise our discussions around the issues and challenges facing the Departments for the Economy and Communities. Supporting people as we seek to rebuild the economy is the critical challenge for the Executive in the time ahead, and I believe our focus at Executive meetings should reflect that.
3. As a start to such a change, I would suggest that our planned special meeting for next Thursday should focus on some of the short and medium term challenges in those sectors, and how we as an Executive can work to support Diane and Deidre in their work. I know that I have found the focus of Executive discussion, and the support offered by colleagues, to be incredibly helpful as I sought to navigate through the challenges we have faced in the

Health and Social Care Sector, and I feel a similar focus and level of support for DfE and DfC could be invaluable.

4. As a parallel step in shifting our focus, I would also propose to ask my Permanent Secretary to convene a meeting of his counterparts in other departments to try and bring a greater strategic focus to our ongoing process of reviewing the Coronavirus Regulations. At present, any proposed changes to these arise from the submission to DoH of a template, which is then considered from the scientific/medical perspective. While the impact on the spread of the virus will continue to be an important factor in considering whether to make changes, I believe the current approach is departmentally focussed and quite reactive, and I feel strongly that there is an opportunity to be much more strategic and forward looking in this endeavour – starting by establishing a strategic framework within which we can more proactively press Ministerial colleagues to come up with proposals for change. I would be grateful for confirmation that you are content with such an approach, or advise me of any alternative approach you prefer.
5. I look forward to the discussions next week.

Personal Data

**ROBIN SWANN MLA
MINISTER OF HEALTH**