

FIRST MINISTER & DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER MEETING

9th September 2020

STEER

A useful opportunity for a catch up with the FM and dFM after the summer. Their minds will likely be focused on the UK Internal Market Bill and the ongoing Covid response (particularly looking ahead to plans for the Autumn/Winter). This is a useful opportunity to remind them of the planned Joint Board in early Autumn, which will focus on Executive commitments around transformation and the Fiscal Council. FM and dFM also committed to convene the first quarterly Implementation Review Meeting in early Autumn, so you may want to press them on plans for that meeting. Their instincts will be to delay, given all that is going on at present - but we want to avoid the meeting slipping. You may also wish to ensure that the Party Leaders' Forum is up and running again after Summer: it proved a useful forum to manage tensions in the wake of the Bobby Storey funeral and you should encourage the parties to make use of it on an ongoing basis.

ISSUES TO RAISE

UKIM Bill

I&S

Covid

High case numbers and measures to combat Covid-19

- I note with concern the recent increase in cases of Covid-19 in Northern Ireland and would welcome your thoughts on this difficult situation, including the growing trend of younger people accounting for most positive cases.
- I am also interested to hear your views on the implementation of restrictions at a local level.
- I am saddened to hear of the deaths of four patients in Craigavon Hospital. I understand a serious incident investigation is now underway to find out how this happened and give bereaved families the answers they are entitled to.

Testing Capacity

- Testing: I understand that the return of schools has contributed to pressure on testing capacity in Northern Ireland and across the UK. I am keen to continue working together to monitor this important resource.

IF RAISED: Furlough extension request and Winter Summit / BIC

- Finances for at risk sectors, including hospitality. I appreciate this is a major challenge for NI's economy, especially the hospitality sector. We have guaranteed £2.2 billion to help Northern Ireland fight coronavirus. This is in addition to the UK-wide measures that the people and businesses in Northern Ireland will benefit from, such as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme and the Bounce Back Loan Scheme.
- Winter Summit / BIC I am excited by the opportunities to join-up across the four nations presented by the Winter Summit; allowing UKG and DA's to discuss potential shared challenges and concurrent risks. This is an excellent opportunity to share information and encourage a joined up approach to winter challenges.

NDNA Implementation

Irrelevant & Sensitive

IF RAISED:

Victims Payments

Irrelevant & Sensitive

Legacy

Irrelevant & Sensitive

Counter Terrorism Sentencing Bill (incorporating the Terrorist Offenders Restriction of Early Release (TORER) Act)

Irrelevant & Sensitive