

**Jenny Pyper**  
**Interim Head of the Civil Service**  
Room FD.34, Stormont Castle  
Stormont Estate, Belfast  
BT4 3TT, Northern Ireland  
Tel: Irrelevant & Sensitive

**From: Jenny Pyper**  
**Secretary to the Executive**

**6 July 2021**

**To: PS/First Minister and PS/deputy First Minister**

## **EXECUTIVE PROCESS – COVERING SUBMISSION**

1. FM and dFM will be aware of the criticism being made about the management of the processes leading up to Executive meetings. These criticisms centre on:
  - the lateness of the issue of the agenda and papers for meetings;
  - the sense by some Ministers that their papers are being excluded Executive consideration for protracted periods; and
  - the lack of clarity as to the reasons for this delay.
2. These are not new concerns, and over the years various agreements and protocols have been put in place to seek to improve the operation of the Executive, including the timeliness of papers and access to the agenda. It is the case that in a multi-party coalition, there can be no guarantee that all proposals put forward by a Minister will be guaranteed immediate acceptance: effective processes themselves cannot alone resolve political disagreements but they can facilitate agreement, if adhered to. The circulation of successive versions of papers across a horizon of 5-6 weeks for example was originally designed to provide adequate space for comment, discussion and the refinement of

**INVESTORS IN PEOPLE™**  
**We invest in people Silver**

The personal information (e.g., name, personal email/home postal address) included in your correspondence, which the Executive Office now holds, will be handled in accordance with data protection legislation. It will be kept secure and only shared with relevant officials for the purpose of providing a response. This information will be retained for no longer than is necessary, and in line with the Department's retention and disposal schedule.

proposals. Ministers have now indicated their intention to resume a pattern of fortnightly meetings from September.

3. I attach a short paper which rehearses the development of the processes in place for Executive meetings which, in my view, remain largely valid and useful if applied consistently. It also suggests the resumption of or establishment of new approaches, particularly to support communication between Ministers in the development of policy proposals requiring Executive agreement.
4. I also attach the agreed schedule of Executive meetings up to 3 September.
5. Ministers are invited to consider the contents of the paper and convey any views or alternative or additional suggestions they may have before the paper is circulated to the Executive for consideration and agreement. I would of course be happy to discuss.

**Personal Data**

**JENNY PYPER**

**INVESTORS IN PEOPLE™**  
**We invest in people** Silver

The personal information (e.g., name, personal email/home postal address) included in your correspondence, which the Executive Office now holds, will be handled in accordance with data protection legislation. It will be kept secure and only shared with relevant officials for the purpose of providing a response. This information will be retained for no longer than is necessary, and in line with the Department's retention and disposal schedule.