

## **BRIEFING | call with Simon Coveney**

**Time: Friday 17 April, 2.45pm**

### **Steer**

A meeting with the Tanaiste to update him on yesterday's announcements on social distancing - which we understand he is grateful to have had a heads up on last night from you by text. He will appreciate a fuller update on announcement. This is a good opportunity to reiterate the message that it is important that we and the NIE stay joined up on messages.

This is also a good opportunity to secure a further meeting of the Quad group - we would suggest that the end of next week or early the week after would be a sensible time to schedule a further meeting.

**Irrelevant & Sensitive**

### **Social Distancing Announcement**

- Yesterday COBR and Cabinet met to consider the advice from SAGE on the impact of social distancing measures. There are indications that the measures we have put in place have started to slow down the spread of the virus.
- The advice from SAGE is that relaxing any of the measures currently in place would risk damage to public health and our economy. So the UK Government and Devolved Administrations have collectively decided that the current measures must remain in place for at least the next 3 weeks.
- We've also set out 5 things we must be satisfied with before we will consider it safe to adjust any of the current measures.
  - First, we must be confident that we are able to provide sufficient critical care and specialist treatment right across the UK.
  - Second, we need to see a sustained fall in the daily death rates from coronavirus so we are confident that we have moved beyond the peak.
  - Third, we need to have reliable data from SAGE showing that the rate of infection is decreasing to manageable levels across the board.
  - Fourth, we need to be confident that the range of operational challenges,

including testing capacity and PPE, are in hand, with supply able to meet future demand.

- Fifth, we need to be confident that any adjustments to the current measures will not risk a second peak of infections.
- The NI Executive have also announced that the current restrictions will be extended for another three weeks with a review to be taken before 9 May.

#### **Coordination with Irish Government & Exec Stability**

- Glad to hear that our officials met for a trilateral meeting with Northern Ireland Executive Officials this week and that that was a positive meeting;
- Keen that we look to get another meeting of the Quad group in soon, I would suggest either the end of next week, or the week after ahead of both of our Governments reviewing the position on social distancing;
- We should also discuss the latest on supply chains, as well as checking in on the parties and ensuring that they are continuing to be joined up.

**Irrelevant & Sensitive**