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MEMORANDUM E (20) 148 (C)

FROM: FIRST MINISTER
DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER
DATE: 18 JUNE 2020
TO: EXECUTIVE COLLEAGUES

FINAL EXECUTIVE PAPER: CONSIDERATION OF EASEMENTS TO THE REGULATIONS (FAITHS)

1. Executive colleagues will want to be aware that a number of proposed easements to the regulations have been submitted and are under review including risk assessment. These are:
 - Changes to the dates for the tourism and hospitality sector, and visitor attractions. The Executive agreed revised dates on Monday on the basis that these are indicative and will be assessed nearer the time. The indicative dates are in the public domain, with appropriate caveats. This will enable the industry to prepare, and citizens to make plans;
 - An easement for those engaged in providing nail, hair etc services, which is discussed further below;
 - Indoor facilities for high performance sport;
 - Easements for outdoor museums, and to enable a pilot opening of a small number of libraries.
2. The Executive will also want to be aware that FM and dFM and Junior Ministers met with Faiths Leaders yesterday. Proposals are set out below.

STRATEGIC RESPONSE TO THE REGULATIONS

3. An indicative timetable plan is in preparation and is well advanced. There are some dates still to be allocated to some easements, and some further work is

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needed at official level. We anticipate being able to bring the document to the Executive soon.

4. It would also be timely to review the process for considering requests for easements and DoH and TEO will meet next week and bring forward recommendations as appropriate.

FAITHS

5. With support from NICVA, FM and dFM held a very positive meeting yesterday. The invite was sent to all the main faiths practicing here and the meeting was inclusive and diverse. Further reach out will be sent to the Muslim and Sikh faiths as they were unable to attend. On the call were representatives of the Jewish and Bah'i communities.
6. There is a strong desire to have the ability to open places of worship, on a permissive basis, from Monday 29 June. Urgent work will now be taken forward to:
 - Develop a proposal on this, with the aim of 29 June, with appropriate guidance. CMO has offered to meet with the Faiths Leaders next week to discuss;
 - Consider issues for funerals, weddings, christenings and other celebrations;
 - Link this work with the step in the plan to move from 10 to 30 people meeting outside.
7. TEO will co-ordinate with inputs from other Departments.
8. Given the lead in time for good preparations, we propose to announce an indicative date of Monday 29 June, but subject to the proper DoH process and risk assessment and confirmation by the Executive nearer the time.

THE REQUESTS FOR EASEMENTS

9. Of the requests for easements submitted to DoH this week, we propose to give an indicative date for the nail, hair, beauty, barbers etc sector. That is on the basis that we see a link with the announcements made on Monday for tourism, hospitality and visitors. This would be the first set of service providers who operate at close contact. The sector would need a good lead in time for their own risk assessments, protective measures and place of work lay outs.

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10. We consider that this sector supports wellbeing as well as making a contribution to the economy. The request for the easement will be properly risk assessed by DoH and on that basis, 6 July to link with tourism and hospitality is proposed on an indicative basis.

11. The other requests for easements remain under consideration and risk assessment and will be submitted to the Executive in due course.

COMMUNICATIONS

12. We propose that today's communications cover the following key points:

- Today's agenda has been focused on key issues for citizens, on children, childcare and vulnerable people
- The Executive has also noted that it will return to the issue of family meetings and visits and this remains a key issue for us
- We have reviewed whether restrictions can be lifted at this time in other areas and we note the importance of Faiths to our community. We will work towards places of worship being open in a safe way from Monday 29 June. We will continue to work with the Faiths Leaders towards this date and a final decision will be made nearer the time depending on the nature of Covid 19
- We have looked at other economic sectors and we give an indicative date of 6 July for the nail, hair, beauty, barbers, tanning salons, acupuncture and electrolysis. These sectors are covered by one restriction so have been considered as a group. Given the wellbeing benefits, economic contribution and link to tourism and hospitality already announced on an indicative basis, the Executive has approved the indicative date of 6 July subject to confirmation nearer the time depending on the nature of Covid 19.

SUMMARY

13. The Executive is asked to:

- Note the requests for easements submitted by Departments, which will be reviewed and submitted formally to the Executive
- Agree that the Executive will communicate an indicative date of 29 June for the safe re-opening of places of worship subject to a final decision nearer the time

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- Agree that the Executive will communicate an indicative date of 6 July for the safe re-opening of the nail, hair etc sector subject to a final decision nearer the time

**THE RT. HON. ARLENE FOSTER MLA
FIRST MINISTER**

**MICHELLE O'NEILL MLA
DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER**

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