

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE MINISTER
Diane Dodds MLA



From: Diane Dodds MLA
Minister for the Economy

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To: Robin Swann MLA
Minister of Health

Need for urgent restrictions in additional areas

Thank you for your Executive paper of 21 September 2020 regarding the above.

I have noted the contents of the paper and the recommendations therein.

I would be grateful for a further assessment of the continued and expanded use of postcodes as a delineation which has caused already anomalies in some instances with restrictions applying in one part of a town (e.g. Armagh & Ballymena) and introducing arbitrary divisions within communities.

I am also concerned about the nature of the guidance relating to travel which may leave those attempting to enforce it in a highly subjective position as the definition of necessary and unnecessary travel will ultimately be open to all sorts of subjective interpretations. It is absolutely essential that in the messaging, the Executive is clear that Restrictions are not being imposed on the hospitality and retail sectors or wider economy.

I am mindful of the delicate balancing required in continuing to develop and implement restrictions including the need to minimise the impact on the economy. It would be very helpful to have a provisional assessment of the current localised restrictions and the effectiveness of the related communications, including in relation to travel and those in the most vulnerable groups.

In addition, it is vital that we have clarity of how long we will allow the current restrictions to be in place to measure their impact, before determining whether additional restrictions are necessary.

I am copying this to the Attorney General, Departmental Solicitor's Office, First Legislative Counsel and to Executive Secretariat.

Yours sincerely

Personal Data

DIANE DODDS MLA
Minister for the Economy