

Weekly catch up with TEO Special Advisers wef 23 October 2020

**Friday 23 October 2020**

Via Zoom

**Attending: Philip Weir, Stephen McGlade, Neill Jackson, Chris Stewart, Derek Baker, Andrew McCormick** NR

COVID

- Need for 'exit strategy' and measures and evidence to provide options. Work is in hand.
- Need for finance mitigations.
- CCG group has convened in 'light-touch' format. SMcG noted that the sit-rep and CCG forum are useful
- Hub ready to go (Chris).
- Priorities: Derek raised the need for prioritisation

Friday 30 October 2020

Attending: Philip Weir, Stephen McGlade, Neill Jackson, Chris Stewart, Derek Baker, NR

**Issues raised/discussed**

- **'Bandwidth' paper** to FMdFM from Andrew and Derek – Ministers considering (Derek)
- Draft to FMdFM on **restrictions framework for decision making**. Derek urged consideration – plan would be for a paper to be circulated for Tuesday's Executive meeting (which was later cancelled).
- **High Street Taskforce** – Chris advised that there is now more clarity on the role and remit of this forum but bandwidth/capacity issue impacts on progress which hinges on the availability of others.
- **Work on Ministerial Standards etc.** – Neill noted slow progress for the same reasons as Chris on HSTF, above.
- **Jim Allister Bill** – Neill asked – SF will oppose. No comment from PW.
- DOF Minister's intervention on **DE/DfE/HOCS comps** – Derek raised concern about this making it into the public domain and manifesting publically as a SF/DUP spat – Derek urged a graceful exit on this. SMcG indicated that dFM view is that this should be included as part of the wider NICS reform piece as per NDNA commitment.
- **NSMC** – SMcG keen to see Strands 2&3 restored; noted issue around amends by official on a business plan and difficulties with **language** used which ultimately led to delays on institutional matters – need guidance to officials on process.
- **Interim HOCS** – conversations with purpose will take place soon (SMcG)
- **Recovery/Karen Pearson's team** – SMcG expressed concern re level of responsibility and limited staffing – Derek noted that while some staff had been secured more were required. Discussion as to why it sits within TEO (due to central Co-ordination)
- **CCG** – Derek advised that CCG has begun weekly meetings with agreed format of Sitrep to go forward to Executive meetings.
- **NICS Code of Ethics** – PW raised this, in particular the aspect which sets out that NICS staff work for the Executive rather than individual departments. Consultation has been carried out, more work required and this should then be returned to the Executive for final sign-off. [ACTION: check position]
- **Ministerial Code amends to deal with planning issues** (SMcG). Neill advised that DfI Minister currently operating on basis of separate legal advice.

Neill has submitted proposals to FMdFM not noted that there will be further op later to amend the code – PW will chase on FM side.

- **AGNI** – need for a review of office and substantive competition. Will check on current position. [ACTION: **NR** /Andrew McC]
- **Rationale for a central policy unit in TEO, for cross-cutting issues? (PW)**  
**Derek** – is Ministers decided this is something they wanted it would need to be properly resourced and staffed and note tacked on to an existing day job.

**Friday 6 November 2020**

Via Zoom

**Attending: Philip Weir, Stephen McGlade, Neill Jackson, Chris Stewart, Andrew McCormick, NR**

**Actions from previous meetings**

- **AGNI review** – Andrew advised that a sub to Ministers is in train. Will need someone to conduct the review with visible independence.
- **Code of Ethics** - Colleagues in DOF advise that they have written to Trade Unions and Commissioners and have dealt with a number of queries that the Commissioners raised. Unions have not raised further concerns so the current working assumption is that they are content.

A submission to the Minster on the final version of the Code of Ethics is in train. It will provide a draft Executive paper for him to send jointly with FMdFM covering the new Code of Ethics and the revisions to the Guidance for Ministers and the SpAd Code of Ethics agreed by the Executive Subcommittee on reform following RHI. [RC by email in advance of this meeting]

**Executive**

Neill advised that he will bring forward proposals on the Legislative programme for the remainder of the mandate shortly. Noting that the Assembly had been silent on this issue, Neill suggested that it would be helpful to be on the front foot with plans and pre-empt this. There should be a Ministerial statement on the position towards the end of this year.

Andrew noted that the legislative programme should feed into the wider exercise on prioritisation – sub of 6 October refers. A draft letter from FMdFM to the TEO Committee now cleared.

Chris and Neill advised of the required PFG and legislative parallels and the alignment of related, supporting strategies and budget. Need for a robust approach on legislation following PFG agreement.

Philp asked for a rough list of Bills to consider alongside PFG.



**Executive**

Stephen advised of plans for a meeting on Monday to consider restrictions with possible statement to the Assembly that afternoon.

**Recovery/Executive**

Andrew urged caution around pressures on KP and team (on Exec demands) given excess pressures and limited resourcing.

**CCG**

Chris advised that this is going well and noted that the EU transition period will have to be weaved into plans towards the end of the year. Prof Ian Young will now join calls as regularly as possible.

**NDNA**

Chris is seeking part input on the position re the Fiscal Council following an approach from the Secretary of State and invited initial thoughts.

Stephen/dFM's view was that we should 'get on with it'.

Chris advised that the approach would be a political call but said that he would speak with DOF. Also asked if there had been any discussion of NDNA with the Irish Government. Stephen said no formal comms but there has been some commitment on funding.

**Brexit**

Andrew advised that letters to both CDL and the Commission had issued yesterday. He will also provide a brief readout from negotiations later today.

**Friday 13 November 2020**

Via Zoom

**Attending: Philip Weir, Stephen McGlade, Neill Jackson, Chris Stewart, and**

**NR**

**Apologies: Andrew McCormick**

**Friday 20<sup>th</sup> November – cancelled due to Stephen's unavailability.**

Friday 27 November 2020

Via Zoom

Attending: Philip Weir, Stephen McGlade, Neill Jackson, Chris Stewart, Andrew McCormick, and **NR**

- **Review of the role of the AGNI – sub with Ministers currently.**

This sub from **NR** was discussed. PW indicated that FM & SPAD had some concerns around the prescriptive nature envisaged by the recruitment proposed but were largely content. Will return on this soon. dFM is content.

- **Executive meetings – Ministers considering.**

Sub 1841-20 from Chris S in the system which sets out proposals for a more stringent approach on attendees at Executive Zoom meetings. dFM commented on the excessive number of 'attendees' at the meeting of 26.11.20. dFM side may seek to secure additional flex for TEO advisers. Both SPADS agree to respond definitely on this ASAP.

- **PFG and budget in light of spending review**

Chris spoke to this and advised that work would be required to weave the out workings of the recent spending review into the PFG strand. PFG paper with Ministers currently but will require political consideration to move to slimed down outcomes process. The timing around the consultation process envisaged by the Executive will now prove challenging. There were no other comments.

- **Legislative programme**

Neill advised that departments indicate that around 30 pieces of legislation will be required for introduction by March 2022. A submission is in train and Ministers will need to provide direction on what is likely. Policy development on each of these pieces of legislation is at varying stages. It would be preferable to update the Assembly before Christmas or very early in the New Year.

- **Prioritisation and NDNA etc.**

Andrew reiterated that the NICS is at full stretch, citing yesterday's announcement of a further TEO led taskforce to drive the COVID-vaccine programme etc. Andrew underscored the serious under resourcing currently on key issues across the service including, but not limited to, DOH, Brexit, COVID recovery work, Exit readiness etc. Serious consideration of NDNA political commitments required. While FMdFM had signalled approval for Andrew's submission on prioritisation, an indication of likely priorities is required.

SPADS indicated that FMdFM would be keen to meet with incoming HOCS immediately to discuss priorities for the next six months.

- **Biden administration**

Stephen ask about engagement with the incoming administration and plans going forward; special envoy and ST Pats in March etc. Both Advisers keen that we are 'towards the front of the queue'. Andrew confirmed that conversations with the NI Bureau in DC are ongoing.

- **Termination of pregnancy**

Recent letter from DOH Minister to FM dFM on next steps promoted discussion as to whether the AGNI should be engaged to help determine the way forward. dFM takes the view that now legislation is in place to provide for abortion services, the onus is firmly on DOH to take this forward. FM (and dFM) content for the AGNI to be engaged, and for Chris to frame draft the basis on which advice should be sought. **[Action: Chris]**

- **Judicial Reviews/legacy issue**

Neill Advised that TEO have not yet replied to the Pre action letter on the legacy issue and urged that we move to an agreed position as this moves towards court hearing.

**Friday 4 December 2020**

**Attending: Jenny Pyper, Philip Weir, Stephen McGlade, Neill Jackson, Chris Stewart, Andrew McCormick** **NR**

#### **Executive Business**

Jenny offered her observations on her first executive meeting and the level of discussion on EU Exit issues. She suggested Tuesday meetings could be EU Exit focused whilst Thursdays were Covid focused. Normal business could still be conducted on both days but only if papers were received by a prescribed cut off time. She also asked whether there was a procedure whereby non-controversial papers could be cleared by correspondence. Neill advised that there is a process which hadn't been used in years but he would look into it. **[Action: Neill]**

The issue of attendance at Exec meetings was raised and it was agreed that only those who would have been in the room if it was held in person should be allowed to join the zoom meeting. This should be restricted to Executive Ministers, FM & dFM private secretaries, AG, HOCS, Executive secretariat and 1 SpAd from each party. **[Action: Neill]**

Chris advised that this recommendation was contained in his paper to Ministers dated the 18 November 2020 and that he would need a formal response agreeing to this from private offices. **[Action: Philip & Stephen]**

#### **Budget**

Jenny advised that an agenda item on the Budget needed to be included on the Executive agenda for the 7<sup>th</sup> December. DoF will bring a short budget paper to the Executive on the 7<sup>th</sup> to include headline information, and seek endorsement that Perm Secs would undertake a more detailed discussion on the budget to bring a collective overview with advice and recommendations to a subsequent meeting of the Executive **[Action: Neill]**

#### **EU Exit**

It was agreed that involving Executive Ministers in a hands on scenario planning exercise would be beneficial to assisting their understanding of some of the possible implications of the outcome of an EU Exit deal. **[Action: Chris]**

#### **HSC Strike Pay**

Neill advised that a request for an urgent decision had been received earlier today from Robin Swann to allow him to direct the DoH Accounting Office to pay HSC staff the pay that they lost on the HSC strike days. Minister Swann has asked for a response from Ministers today. Jenny advised of the very significant implications of agreeing to this for both the budget but also for other public sector workers.

#### **Recommencement Order**

Jenny reflected Perm Secs feedback that agreed Executive positions regarding legislation is then not being followed by Assembly members when legislation is passing through the necessary stages. Neill advised that party members are not obliged to support their Ministers position.

#### **NICS Reform / Jim Allister FoG bill**

Jenny expressed her own and Perm Secs collective concern about the progress of this bill. Jenny suggested that the bill was drafted in response to RHI at a point in time, but there is now a need to look at reform in a more holistic manner which would appear more beneficial than altering the current processes at a time when the NICS and Ministers are under exceptional pressure around Covid and EU Exit.

Stephen outlined his party's position on the bill and Philip advised that he would speak to the First Minister to highlight concerns about the bill. **[Action: Philip]**

#### **Covid Taskforce**

Jenny advised that following Executive agreement to proceed with the Executive Covid Taskforce (ECT) she met with Perm Secs who offered support for more joined up working. Work is ongoing to refine the terms of reference and operationalise these and she will provide an update at next week's meeting. **[Action :Jenny]**

**There were no meetings on:**

**11 December**

**18 December**

**1 January**

**8 January (scheduled but meeting of the Executive meeting took place)**



**Friday 15 January 2021 (note approved by JP 19.1.21)**

**Attending: Jenny Pyper, Philip Weir, Stephen McGlade, NR**

#### **Functioning of Government Bill**

Jenny recorded concerns expressed about the implications of the Bill which had been discussed by Permanent Secretaries that morning.

#### **RHI Court case**

Jenny advised that an Executive paper on RHI would be provided shortly by DfE and that its clearance would be fundamental to the ongoing court proceedings. She urged expediency on this.

#### **Death of Norman Houston**

Jenny outlined plans by the NIB for the co-ordination of condolences and memorial service.

#### **St Patrick's Day engagement with the United States**

The Northern Ireland Bureau will engage with advisers on events this year.

#### **Executive effectiveness**

A paper is being finalised following reflections on better discipline around and at recent meetings including engagement with the Private Offices.

#### **Executive Covid Taskforce**

An update for FM and dFM in current position, next steps, timeframe and forward look is being prepared and will be provided shortly.



SUB-0033-2021

**Minister Swann's letter of** Memo from Minister **11 January 2021**

This letter was discussed. It was agreed that the ECT is not a repository for all COVID related issues. Jenny advised that work is ongoing in relation to strategic communications and behaviour/adherence. It was agreed that the ongoing engagement work led by the Junior Ministers (business/community etc.) should continue under their stewardship but presentationally this will be part of the ECT work.

**HOCS – role and recruitment**

Jenny outlined current thinking around developing proposals. SMcG and PW concurred with the direction of travel. A formal paper informed by NICSHR on emerging thinking will be provided for FMdFM consideration. (now attached).



HOCS role and  
recruitment 1 (003) (i)

**NICS Reform & HOCS recruitment**

Jenny outlined the need for collective buy-in for any proposals on NICS reform in light of its cross-cutting nature and pressed the need for NICS Board to feed into this in order to lead change. SpAds advised that draft proposals are under development in DOF but more work to do, including political conversations to ensure that reform has the endorsement of FMdFM to ensure this is led from 'the centre'. While FM and FM need to drive this, elements within in may be delegated. SMcG advised that the recruitment of a substantive HOCS remained the key priority in the first instance as the appointee would be charged with driving reform.

**Attorney General – review etc.**

SMcG was anxious to ensure that the review of the AG role was progressed quickly and that a substantive appointment is made. PW undertook speak with ELP with a view to progressing.

### **High Street Taskforce (HST)**

Concerns were expressed with messaging around the HST appearing to indicate that work had been scaled back or deprioritised. Content that this was subsumed into the recovery stream of the ECT if this gave it impetus. Jenny sought to manage expectations given scarce resources. Consideration would be given to the secondment of a suitably skilled person at SCS level from DfC to drive this work. NICS Board have a role in placing SCS staff and any departure from this would be out with agreed practice. PW commented that this work will require a Ministerial focus and should not be on the 'back burner'. Jenny will engage with Chris Stewart and Tracy Meharg at DfC.

**Friday 22 January 2021 [JP approved 25.1.21]**

**Attending: Jenny Pyper, Philip Weir, Stephen McGlade:** NR

**Larne Port**

- Jenny advised of a threat (via graffiti) to border control staff in Larne. Jenny would be visiting staff at both Belfast and Larne ports later today.

**HOCS recruitment competition**

- Jenny advised that work is ongoing to provide further advice to Ministers on next steps. A further submission will be made available in the coming days. Stephen indicated that it would be dFM's preference that HOCS was appointed in the first instance before any appointment was made for TEO perm sec.

**AGNI – review and substantive appointment**

- Stephen advised that an independent view was required in relation to advising the Executive, T&Cs around salary, leave etc. but there was no requirement for a 'guru' of international standing. Philip was of the view that a senior judicial figure would be best placed to conduct any review and that the recruitment element should be decoupled from the general review. There was a shared view that the current interim appointment should not overrun. Philip and Stephen will convene separately to determine an agreed way forward.  
[Action: SPADs]

**Executive conduct/Zoom protocol**

- Jenny noted progress in terms of the agreed Executive paper on etiquette for meetings going forward. Suggestions for additional refinements included capturing zoom commentary submitted within the chat facility and timed agendas. Piloting timed agendas was welcomed but this would require (1) timely starts to meetings to prove effective; and (2) early distribution of papers for consideration in advance. A 'rolling' agenda was also mooted which could have regular updates as papers were agreed for each agenda.

Philip pressed the need of time to consider DOH/Covid related papers and their direct out workings given the potential for decisions to impact on other areas such as Education, for example.

#### **Staff well-being/delivery vs Ministerial expectations**

- Jenny relayed the collective (and well-rehearsed ) concerns of all Permanent Secretaries in relation to staff welfare and the increasing and unrealistic expectations of Ministers in relation to many key staff at all grades across the NICS; the long hours culture becoming standard practice and the bar raising ever higher in terms of expectation versus delivery. Jenny sounded a stark warning about serious capacity issues and was clear that while good will has seen us through the last twelve months that is now close to running on empty. She urged discipline with turnaround on work, especially out of hours and confirmed that there are increasing numbers of exceptional staff for whom the cumulative impact of all of this has taken a dreadful toll on their health and well-being. Advisers accepted the points made, noted that it's quite often the same hands that do the lifting and it was suggested that HOCS might write to Ministers on this. Jenny undertook to take soundings from NICS Board in the first instance with a view to (possibly) setting out planned asks of Ministers thereafter. Advisers confirmed that they will reflect concerns back to their Ministers.

Philip advised that they will talk to FM and dFM about understanding and recognition.

NR



JP approval of  
note.msg

**Friday 29 January 2021 [JP approved 1.2.21]**

**Attending: Jenny Pyper, Philip Weir, Stephen McGlade, NR**

### **HOCS recruitment competition**

Jenny provided an update on progress and discussed options for panel members, invited suggestions and reiterated the importance of widening the field of potential candidates.

### **Executive away-day**

The merits of the Executive convening for two half days to focus on priorities/budget/PFG/ recover (including health recovery) was discussed. There was broad agreement to convene in mid-February. SPADs will discuss with Ministers and come back to allow planning to begin.

### **Legislative Programme**



SUB - Update on  
Legislative Programr

Jenny raised the submission on the legislative programme and the importance of securing agreement on a plan to move forward given the finite capacity of both OLC resources and Assembly time. Swift, realistic prioritisation is urgently required.

### **Functioning of Government Bill (FOG)**

Jenny flagged the FOG Bill, its latter stages in the Assembly in the coming week and reiterated the consequences for the NICS, Ministers and SPADs. Minister Murphy will set out the out-workings of any enactment of the Bill shortly. (now issued,



SUB-0041-2021 -  
FoG Bill - Implement  
attached).

### **NIO engagement**

Stephen advised that Sinn Fein would not be supporting the proposed Legislative Consent Motion on the Armed Forces Covenant.

#### **Mother and Baby Homes & TEO remit**

Jenny raised her concern around statements by the DOH Minister that TEO would be taking forward next steps following the publication of the report on Mother and Baby Homes. SPADs concurred but undertook to consider further. Terms of reference going forward may have to be agreed by the Executive for example.

#### **ECT**

Jenny advised that the task and finish group met earlier that day in relation to travel and that more work can be done on this issue.

On the recovery piece, Philip's view was that the public are weary with restrictions and felt that the earlier we can point the way the better, particularly in relation to adherence.

Jenny provided an update on the strategic communications workstreams and added that a paper will be provided shortly.

**Friday 5 February 2021**

**Attending: Jenny Pyper, Philip Weir, Stephen McGlade, NR**

**Travel Agents**

JP considered that this was within the DfE remit and advised that there was no vires within TEO to take this forward. It would be important to avoid duplication of existing provision. FM is looking at the proposals and use of existing schemes.

**Mother and Baby Homes**

JP advised that corporate knowledge and work to date has been vested in DOH. Advisers emphasized that terms of reference for any statutory enquiry would be important.

**Legislative programme sub**

PW advised that the submission has now cleared on FM's side.

**Pathway to Recovery**

Jenny provided an update to advise that DOH modelling to include vaccination etc. would be mapped into lifting of restrictions. Paper will be developed which will aim to set the likely trajectory.

**Functioning of Government Bill (FOG)**

Permanent Secretary led group is considering the implication of the legislation and will report back.

**HOCS recruitment competition**

dFM is content with the five names proposed and keen to move the process on. FM will report back.

**ECT Strategic Comms lead**

PW and SMcG to discuss names. NR was mentioned.



### **Executive workshop**

JP considered there would be value in two workshops to make most progress. Initial thinking would include restrictions of the Permanent Secretary group within the context of the current budget constraints with consideration for Ministerial priorities. Prioritisation, together with PFG outcomes would be mapped out. Advisers agreed that the date of the first workshop should be pushed back to take account of the Chancellor's statement.

JP undertook to give a sense of what the pathway to recovery would look like ahead of the review of current restrictions by the Executive on 18 February.

### **Dept. of Education Permanent Secretary Competition**

JP provided details of the outcome of the recent recruitment exercise.

### **DfC budget/benefits issue**

JP outlined the DfC budget deficit (£70m for benefit service delivery), impact on the recruitment of key staff, concerns around the delivery of benefit provision/staff welfare and impact on front line staff. A sharp increase in claimants is expected as support schemes expire/business fails. JP advised that this is a cross-cutting issue and urged engagement at political level at the earliest opportunity in a bid to determine a way forward. While flex around COVID money is being examined this may not be a solution and in any event, would not present a long-term option.

### **NICS staff welfare/late working**

JP again reiterated the need for discipline on the circulation of Executive papers and the importance of imposing finite deadlines for appropriate consideration of papers and the welfare of both staff and Ministers, citing the continuing late papers regime which is impacting on Private Office staff in particular.

JP will put forward proposals for consideration.

**Friday 12 February 2021**

**Attending: Jenny Pyper, Philip Weir, Stephen McGlade, NR**

Jenny raised intervention from an adviser in relation to factual briefing provided for a forthcoming meeting she would be having with NIPSA. As such an intervention was unusual, Jenny confirmed that should this occur in future, it would be necessary, and appropriate, to seek approval from the opposite side of the joint TEO office. Advisers noted the position.

#### **High Street Task Force**

Jenny provided an update on the current position, reporting that much work is ongoing within DfC with TEO providing support and resource. This work will be grounded within the Urban Regeneration team at DfC to allow for an agile, quick-start structure. This would not rule out the project moving to TEO at some future stage. Stephen undertook to engage with Dara in relation to this work.

#### **Functioning of Government Bill**

Following the passing of the FoG Bill, Jenny flagged the need for a coherent, NICS board approach to the out-workings of this new legislation. Work has commenced on central guidance for both civil servants and advisers. The developing guidance will be shared with advisers in due course.

#### **DfI/Special Adviser intervention on Ports**

Jenny alerted advisers to an intervention from a fellow adviser in relation to offering advice on accounting/finances to officials at local ports. This was highly irregular, particularly in view of the fact that this person was not associated with the Minister with remit for ports. Jenny asked that this individual be spoken to and advised against such future interventions. Advisers will follow up on this.

#### **Travel Agents – Covid support**

Philip asked about the possibility of a generic support mechanism for people who has thus far been unable to avail of existing provision. Jenny advised that there appeared to be no justification for a further scheme for Travel Agents, that value for money could not be demonstrated and that it was her understanding that many business had already benefitted from existing schemes. Jenny also advised that should Ministers wish to pursue such a scheme a Ministerial direction would be required in the absence of a demonstration of value for money.

#### **NICS – staffing and sustainability & Pathway to recovery**

Jenny discussed the current NICS pressures and warned of the urgent need to prioritise actions in the months ahead. As staff resources had been skewed to deal with the pandemic response, actions would need to be prioritised to develop a pathway to recovery. Jenny referred to her paper to Ministers and urged early conversations to develop collective thinking on citizen-focussed recover options. An early Executive 'workshop' was encouraged to begin the process of discussing options. Philip agreed and was keen to see options for delivery within the current mandate and underlined the importance of a joined-up Executive response on collective decision making. Stephen also agreed and advised that a holistic approach should be taken to recovery, pointing to the central role of the Executive Taskforce. He also suggested that Junior Ministers could usefully play a role. Jenny suggested a presentation to the Executive as a first step and agreed on the holistic approach which would include, but not be led by, DOH.

#### **Belfast Harbour Commissioners – appointment**

Jenny flagged her offer of appointment to the board of the Belfast Harbour Commissioners.

#### **RHI Disciplinary process**

Jenny provided an update on current disciplinary cases; two have concluded with four remaining cases ongoing. NICS Board will have oversight of the four cases remaining. Jenny will provide an update to FM and dFM today.

#### **DOF Permanent Secretary**

Jenny advised that this secondment would end on 13 May and that this will trigger a reshuffle of the Permanent Secretary cadre, linking to the TEO appointment.

19 February 2021 – this meeting was cancelled.



FW: meetings with  
TEO Advisers 26 2 21

Friday 26 February 2021 [JP approved]

Attending: Jenny Pyper, Philip Weir, Stephen McGlade, NR

### **Pathway/Recovery**

Jenny provided an update on then work ongoing following discussion at yesterday's Executive meeting. Timing of a revised document and further Executive meeting to obtain final agreement were discussed. Philip and Stephen advised that the Pathway document was a top priority for Ministers currently and that they would wish to ensure this is a holistic document and stressed the importance of taking time to ensure it is developed correctly.

### **Executive Workshop**

Jenny advised that she has engaged Neill Gibson to provide support in developing the format for the workshop. The possibility of an in-person meeting, socially distanced, was discussed along with the timing. The current date of 10 March pencilled into FM and dFM diaries but not yet notified to other Ministers might be better pushed back slightly to allow for necessary planning to ensure a productive event. The out-workings of the Chancellor's budget will have to be considered in tandem with statements to the Assembly. Philip and Stephen will reflect on this and confirm shortly to allow early notice for all Ministers.

### **HOCS Recruitment competition**

Jenny is finalising a submission to Ministers which will set out process and associated documentation with a view to launching the recruitment competition on 18 March. Jenny will engage with the DOF Minister to brief him on the detail.

Stephen indicated a preference for 1) Submission to FMdFM first and, 2) engagement with DOF Minister thereafter.

There was a short discussion in relation to further thinking around the development of a central policy unit/think- tank which would form part of the restructuring of HOCS hierarchy in due course. Advisers were supportive of the concept and further developed proposals on this would follow in due course.

#### **Harbour Commissioners.**

Jenny sought an update on FMdFM's consideration of this appointment. This would be raised with FM and dFM later today.

#### **Communities in Transition**

Jenny outlined the correct procedure for allocating funding to projects under the stewardship of the Tackling Paramilitarism Programme Board following concerns around negotiation on NDNA funding connected with the TEO Communities in Transition programme. As Chair of the Tackling Paramilitarism Programme Board Jenny reiterated the need for open and transparent process at all times and stressed the strategic advantages of "housing" CIT within the overall TPP and its governance structures. Advisers undertook to engage with NR (who lead in this area) and return if necessary ahead of the Board meeting on 1 March.



RE Advisers 5  
March note of meet

**Friday 5 March 2021** [JP approved 10.3.21]

**Attending: Jenny Pyper, Philip Weir, Stephen McGlade, NR**

### **Executive workshop**

Jenny explored thinking around the planned Executive workshop, not least in the context of the staffing, budget and time pressures which would set the context for decision making on recovery going forward. Jenny advised that this initial workshop would aimed at consensus as a first step towards firm decisions. A submission will follow shortly which will set out full details.

Jenny acknowledged that there were difficult choices ahead and that discussion will be required at political level to refine priorities for the short and medium term.

Philip suggested that there is common ground to be found and pointed to the DfC/DfE co-operation on economic and social strategies by way of an example.

Advisers undertook to review Jenny's submission on the workshop upon receipt.

### **HOCS recruitment**

Jenny updated advisers on the progress with the HOCS competition, advising that a further submission will follow once any comments from Ministers are received. Jenny also advised that she will be updating Minister Murphy (in his role as Minister for personnel) on the competition and wider recruitment for Permanent Secretary positions in the coming days.

### **Pathway**

Stephen emphasised that the Pathway will remain a high priority for Ministers between now and the end of June; this work must remain focussed and continue at pace. Philip asked about the process which will inform the review of current restrictions on 16 March. There must be a cross-departmental look with Minister's and advisers being kept appraised along the way. Jenny outlined the process and what 'success' might look like. It will be important to set the scene for the review on 16<sup>th</sup> March by way of a short update at the Executive meeting of 11<sup>th</sup> March.

[ACTION: Jenny/ECT team]



**16 March 2021**

**Attending: FMdFM, Philip Weir, Stephen McGlade, NR, Deirdre**



RE FMdFM

**Griffith, Jenny Pyper [JP approved ]** meeting 16 March -

#### **Executive business**

[This meeting took place following an adjournment of the Executive meeting at which a review of the Coronavirus Regulations and related restrictions were under consideration]

The various options under consideration for a number of relaxations were discussed together with the timing of each. Variations in comparison to other regions was also discussed in relation to adjustments to current restrictions both before and after the Easter holidays.

#### **Taskforce/Pathway**

Jenny advised that at the next review stage in mid-April, the new process for consideration of options/data will be in place and will be co-ordinated through the Taskforce, which will work through the details. FM asked about representation on the group to bring expertise in the economy sphere. Jenny provided reassurance that Mike Brennan and Shane Murphy (DfE) and Ernst & Young were both embedded within the Taskforce which would provide both the required expertise and reach required. FM also expressed concerns in relation to the perceived 'rigidity' of the four-weekly cycle for reviewing regulations and how this might be dispelled. There would be means to step outside this process if there was enough "social contact headroom" to do so. No such example has yet been presented but this remains an option albeit one requiring careful use. FM also sought a readout from the faith groups meeting later.

#### **HOCS competition**

Jenny advised that the post will be advertised on Thursday 18 March in line with the planned schedule.

#### **Functioning of Government Bill (FoG)**

Jenny advised that a meeting of all Special Advisers has been convened for later this week to provide an overview briefing on the out-workings and obligations of the FoG Bill which is expected to received Royal Assent shortly. Guidance for Ministers, Special Advisers and Private Office staff will follow in due course. Jenny also noted that the DoF Minister is leading on professional training for Ministers and SpAds.



RE Spads - 16  
APril.msg

**Friday 16 April 2021 [JP approved with amends in blue]**

**Attending: Jenny Pyper, Philip Weir, Stephen McGlade, NR**

### **NSMC**

Jenny raised concerns around the failure to secure an accompanying Minister for Nichola Mallon at today's NSMC meeting in Transport and Sectoral format. A further meeting on Trade is also due shortly. Jenny urged a swift resolution to this matter but did not intend to intervene at this stage as this is a matter for Ministers to resolve. She did remind both SpAds of the requirements under Section 3 of the Ministerial Code

### **FoG Act – briefing and Revised codes**

Jenny offered a briefing for Ministers on the out-workings of the Functioning of Government Act. Will follow up with Private Secretaries.

Jenny asked again for urgent clearance of the various codes which were revised in light of the FoG Act. dFM has cleared, FM will have a comment in relation to the Civil Service being responsible to the Executive as opposed to individual Ministers/ departments.

### **Executive confidentiality**

Jenny reflected on the previous day's Executive meeting from which a considerable amount of confidential information had been leaked to the media in both in advice and during the Executive discussions. It was agreed that Jenny would draft a note to Ministers reminding them of their obligations as set out in statute, including the Ministerial Code and the FoG Act.

There was a discussion around the operation of the Executive and the lack of structure around transacting business. It was suggested that a return to in-person meetings may have a positive impact on the streamlining the meetings. The current health and legal position was also discussed and the viability of returning to face to face meetings will be explored (HOCS)

## **NICS**

### **Greensill**

In the wake of the Greensill investigation in Whitehall and subsequent correspondence from the Cabinet Secretary, Simon Case, on proposed action, Jenny advised that she will be writing to Permanent Secretaries to remind them of already established checks and balances in relation to second jobs etc. This will be copied to FMdFM. There is no action for Ministers or advisers at this time.

### **HOCS competition**

17 applications have been received and early indications suggest interest from a wide field of candidates from both the public and private sector. FM and dFM will be briefed on Tuesday.

### **DOF Permanent Secretary**

Jenny provided an update on plans for the temporary promotion opportunity to fill this position and on forward planning for the wider NICS.

### **Duke of Edinburgh**

Jenny has written to HM The Queen to offer condolences on behalf of the NICS.

### **RHI/Executive response**

Jenny has submitted advice on the paper from the DOF Minister on the proposed response to the RHI inquiry and urged an early decision on the way forward.

### **Executive**

### **Further Education**

Philip raised a query around further education students returning to practical lessons. Jenny undertook to look into this [with DE and DFE](#).



RE SPADs - Friday  
23 April.msg

Friday 23 April 2021 [JP approved 26.4.21]

Attending: Jenny Pyper, Philip Weir, Stephen McGlade, NR

The recent **FMdFM outreach visit** and how it was positively received was discussed. It was agreed that there was value in such visits and that opportunities will be sought in coming weeks as restrictions continue to ease.

**NICS Board** – Jenny suggested that Ministers may wish to join NICS Board at some stage to acknowledge efforts and express gratitude for the pandemic response to date.

Jenny provided an update on that morning's presentation to PSS from the **community and voluntary sector** and discussed the merits of harnessing local community outreach following the experience of recent pandemic efforts. Recognition for this sector was also discussed.

**Staff recognition** – the possibility of some recognition events at Stormont Castle should be discussed further when COVID restrictions allow.

**NICS Codes** – Jenny raised the outstanding clearance of the various Codes following the enactment of the Functioning of Government Bill. FMdFM Comments have now been returned to the DOF Minister for further consideration.

**Victims' Commissioner Advertisement** – Jenny raised the stalemate which had ensued following proposed dFM amends to the wording of the advertisement. Stephen undertook to review in a bid to move this forward.

**Functioning of Government Act – training.** Jenny discussed the possibility of training for Ministers, advisers and PPS staff following the enactment of the FoG Bill. HOCS office will follow up with Private Offices.

**DOH Minister/COVID work** – Jenny discussed recent correspondence from the Health Minister around pressures on his department and the lack of resources to cope with this, together with his proposed thinking on how best to take this critical work forward. While some of the issues may have a cross-cutting element such as vaccine passports etc., this cross-cutting nature does not mean that this work should be led by TEO. As with other issues, the work should be taken forward by the department with a locus in the policy area, albeit with appropriate resourcing.

**International travel** – Jenny briefed advisers on quarantine facilities and challenges around the first international flight resuming into Northern Ireland this week.

**HOCS competition** – Jenny will provide a status report to FM and dFM at their meeting on Tuesday.

**Executive meetings/rhythm** – the continuation (or not) of the two meetings per week cycle was discussed. It was agreed that the current pattern should continue for now and that this could be reviewed in June together with a possible return to in-person meetings.

Friday 21 May 2021

Attending: Jenny Pyper, Philip Weir, Stephen McGlade, NR

- **Executive meeting today** – the Common Travel Area issue remained challenging and clarity is still required on holidaying within the British Isles. A paper on this issue will be required as soon as possible and could perhaps be cleared by correspondence to aid expediency.
- **Recovery Strategy** – colleagues in the Covid Recovery Team have sought an early briefing with SPADs next week in order to maintain momentum and brief FMdFM quickly thereafter. Both Philip and Stephen were agreeable.
- **HOCS recruitment** – Jenny advised that conversations with FMdFM had taken place the day before and that the second interviews will take place on 9 June.
- **TEO Permanent Secretary** – A note to invite expressions of interest from the existing Permanent Secretary cohort has issued with a deadline of today. A discussion took place in relation to the possible resulting scenarios and timing of appointments in order to ensure continuity of support for FMdFM and a smooth transition for new personnel to the new arrangements.
- **DAERA Centenary branding** – Jenny sought an update on any further discussion on this with other DUP Ministers. Jenny rehearsed the current arrangements agreed by the Executive in relation to logos and branding and the possible repercussive nature of straying beyond those already agreed parameters. Both Philip and Stephen accepted the position presented and the need to preserve the politically neutral status of civil servants. Philip will continue to engage with SPAD colleagues on this issue.
- **Recent SCS interview** – Jenny raised the interview given to the BBC and outlined the relevant sections of the NICS Code of Conduct by which all NICS staff are bound in this regards. This current situation is a clear breach of the rules governing media engagement and Jenny expressed her wider concern that the nature of some of the comments had the potential to undermine the commitment of the NICS to fair employment practices, equality and trust in civil servants. Jenny also drew attention to the current arrangements for the recruitment of a substantive Permanent Secretary for DoF and that these arrangements would remain under review.
- **Building Safety Group** – Jenny reported that she will chair the first meeting of the Building Safety Group next week in accordance with the Executive's agreed position on the issue.
- **Violence Against Women and Girls** – further staffing resource will be made available shortly to continue this work and free up other work which had been paused to facilitate it.
- **RHI paper** – Jenny raised the suggested amends to the recommendations.
- **NICS Code of Ethics** – Ministers have agreed revised proposals which have been remitted to the DoF Minister for consideration today.
- **TBUC allocation** – a reminder to move on this paper [since agreed]
- **NSMC** – Jenny asked for latest thinking on an agreed date for an NSMC meeting and the preferred format and location. Both Advisers indicated that 18 or 25 June would be possible and that they were content for arrangements to be firmed up.

**Friday 28 May 2021** – there was no meeting due to extended PPS session at the Mount, Belfast.





RE SpAds last  
Friday.msg

Friday 4 June 2021

Attending: Jenny Pyper, Philip Weir, Stephen McGlade,

NR

- **Bonfires:** Jenny raised the issue of managing bonfires in the coming weeks given potential for civil unrest amid tensions around the NI Protocol and looming June deadlines. The matter has been discussed at a meeting of Permanent Secretaries earlier that day with a strong emphasis on advance planning and management over reactive actions. Jenny also understood that there was currently no unionist representation on a DOJ steering group and considered it important to rectify this. Both Philip and Stephen supported advance planning and management and Philip undertook to look into the steering group representation.
- **June Monitoring:** Jenny raised today's deadline for agreement on this monitoring round. Advisers confirmed that this had since been agreed.
- **BIC Summit:** Advisers said that there was no reason to assume that the summit would not proceed as planned on 11 June. Jenny highlighted the cost implications of any failure to proceed which would likely amount to around £50k. This was noted.
- **NSMC:** Jenny sought clarity around arrangements for the NSMC Plenary meeting on 18 June in the wake of comments by Edwin Poots when he referred to the next meeting 'in Dublin'. Arrangements for a Plenary in Armagh are settled and Stephen has also spoken with the Irish Government who are content with arrangements for a meeting in Armagh.
- **HOCS recruitment:** final stage interviews will take place on Wednesday 9 June. Various possible outcomes, the political backdrop and a timeline for any announcement were discussed. Given the media focus on BIC at the end of next week it was considered that a swift announcement ahead of BIC or delaying until the following week were the most likely options, depending on the outcome of the competition.
- **Executive meeting 10 June** – Jenny suggested a meeting of the Executive in person for 10 June (PB Long Gallery). Advisers were content but noted that some Ministers may not attend. A hybrid zoom/in-person meeting would be explored with possible family photo.
- **Language Bills v TEO workload:** Jenny discussed the need to reach an early decision on the direction of travel with language bills noting that both Assembly time and staff resources to facilitate were increasingly compromise. Staff from the language bills team have been repurposed to work on the Travel Agents' scheme which will continue into the summer. We would need to determine a credible way forward in line with Ministers' wishes. Stephen noted that there is no political agreement on the preferred way forward but indicated that they were likely to know the direction of travel before 24 June. Jenny reiterated that in the event that agreement was reached on language bills tough decisions would be required in order to direct staff resources which would likely have a detrimental impact on the delivery of other Ministerial priorities.

- **Covid Inquiry:** Jenny raised the UK wide inquiry announced by the Prime Minister. The response to this will require considerable resource that is beyond the capacity of the current Covid team. Jenny plans to write to Permanent Secretaries shortly in relation to securing information ahead of the anticipated launch of the inquiry in March 2022.
- **Violence Against Women and Girls** – Jenny also flagged the lack of resources to support work on this policy area.



JP approved SpAds  
meeting 2 July.msg

**Friday 2 July 2021**

**Attending: Jenny Pyper, Philip Weir, Stephen McGlade, NR**

### **Executive meetings**

Plans for the rhythm of Executive meetings going forward and the likely pattern during summer recess was discussed to take account of key dates for review of the current restrictions. Jenny will provide a schedule of workable dates for meetings within a submission on Executive process.

### **George Cross**

Jenny advised that that the NHS in each of the four UK nations is to be awarded the George Cross with an announcement on Monday 5 July. Media handling etc. will be provided in a submission shortly. This was positively received by both advisers.

### **EU Exit legislation – Westminster**

Jenny raised the current legislation in progress at Westminster and questioned whether Ministers are sufficiently sighted on the potential long-term implications when enacted. Examples include an impact on State Aid and the 2.2 powers. Jenny felt that with some work there could be pragmatic solutions found to mitigate any adverse consequences and suggested that a first step may be to present thinking to advisers after the July holidays to test proposals ahead of submission to Ministers. Both were agreeable. **[ACTION : HOCS office]**

### **Bonfires**

Jenny raised the increasing concern around a number of potentially contentious bonfires including those at Adam Street and Cluan Place. While engagement is ongoing in a bid to find a solution to contain community tensions, the latest indications are that a universally acceptable solution is unlikely. Jenny also raised again the lack of unionist representation within the bonfire MOU and asked Philip to consider. Jenny also reference a letter from the CE of Belfast City Council in relation to bonfires which raised serious concerns (attached).

NR

2.7.21



RE Note of  
meetings with advis

**Friday 10 September 2021 HOCS noted -**

**Attending: Jayne Brady, Philip Weir, Stephen McGlade,**

**NR**

**Via Zoom**

Jayne opened discussion by providing a brief overview of her background, experience and skills. Advisers were invited to outline key issues from their perspectives.

**Philip** – noted the difficulties operating a five-party coalition government and the need for a collective and strategic focus. This is a key element.

**Stephen** – hopeful that Ministers will have more bandwidth for key areas like health – there would be little divergence between Ministers on health and similar issues. Expressed concern that NICS delivery is slow; need for our own data gathering on economic issues, for example, rather than relying on UU etc.; noted forthcoming election; suggested more use of SIB and external expertise to provide more agile support; Shared Island Fund from ROI Government of half a billion pounds which will be require projects.

**Jayne** – important to strengthen 'at the core'; NICS Board and NEDs under review; discussed sub-committees to focus on 'big ticket' issues like green growth and skills. Discussed 'rapid response' team within TEO for agility.

### **Transformation**

**What are the big issues?**

**Philip** – PFG outcomes approach and NICS culture change – important that while staff work for a specific area, it's important to have bought into being

**Commented [CR1]:** We have had a number of exec committees in the past to hot house various issues. This stretches the smaller parties as they each have only one rep so can't share the load like DUP/SF. Might operate better at official or adviser level.

part of the wider organisation; vacancies need plugged with the right people; key expertise to be brought in.

**Stephen** – Pointed to the Executive Covid Taskforce as a model which would be used in other areas such as transformation on health.

#### **Delivery – long term and within the mandate**

Discussed the need for considered prioritisation and clarity around what can be done within time and resource constraints. Advisers voiced support for a dedicated session with key officials from PFG/recovery.

[ACTION: HOCS office]

Commented [CR2]: Jayne, can you liaise with on which officials and when pl?

NR

#### **UK-wide COVID Inquiry**

Jayne briefed on the latest position with the UK Inquiry:

- UK Terms of reference are under development and we will be consulted.
- Scotland will hold own inquiry in addition.
- Readiness – much work can be undertaken now, regardless of the final shape of the UK Inquiry or any final decision on NI specific Inquiry - to ensure we are on the front foot. This includes securing records etc, scoping legal support.

Jayne sought agreement to provide a high-level brief to Permanent Secretaries in advance of any final terms of reference to ensure that they are sighted on the likely demands and resource requirements any inquiry will bring. Executive will be consulted later when clear proposals are available. Advisers agreed this was the best approach.

Commented [CR3]: Issued to Permanent Secretaries.

#### **COVID Pressures & communications**

Jayne highlighted concerns that pressure on the health service is likely to increase in the coming weeks. She suggested that a 'state of the nation' comms piece might be one option to further understanding of these pressures and to close gaps on vaccine uptakes, particularly within younger cohorts. Advisers were open to considering this. While an EIS comms strategy has been developed, it would be important to maximise this and it was suggested that use of external PR experts (such as Genesis) might help support this.

### **IRC Transition brief**

At the request of advisers a draft brief has been developed which may help inform any future advice to Ministers in the event it was formally commissioned. Arrangements will be made to provide a hard copy to both



HOCS Briefing  
Group Transition.doc

Philip and Stephen as soon as possible.

**In person meetings** – we will seek opportunities for such meetings going forward.

**Commented [CR4]:** Copies provided.

**Friday 17 September 2021**

**Attending: Jayne Brady, Philip Weir, Stephen McGlade, NR**

**Via Zoom**



RE draft Note of  
meeting with SPADs

**Prioritisation**

General feedback on this with PW and SMcG indicating that the session with Grade 3s was positively received. Further engagement with senior TEO officials and Ministers on a regular basis would be a welcome feature. A further session is planned next week.

**Executive meeting this week**

Keen to return to in-person meetings; liaison with the Speaker's Office will now enable use of the Members' Dining room going forward. Executive business must take priority. Discussed the importance of getting an early sense of likely position on the assessment of remaining restrictions and societal issues. JB raised the importance of a 'Plan B' as we enter into autumn e.g. ventilation and any available support etc. Stressed the need to be on the front foot. Importance of strong communication was also discussed: what are the trigger points which would tip us into the red? Is the public info/data clear? Consider 4/5 criteria against which to benchmark. Current comms accused of being too reactionary; possible role for oversight of strategic comms; more interaction with the media would help to build productive relationship. JB confirmed that strategic comms is one of her key priorities.

**PFG**

JB advised that there is a growing need to move on the publication of PFG/Outcomes given the lack of movement since the close of consultation in March. Risk of legal challenge was flagged. Conversations will continue offline/at Wednesday prioritisation follow up meeting.

**Infrastructure Commissioner**

PW indicated that FM is supportive in principle but more scoping would be required; should be TEO driven but have a remit wider than DfI – this is a cross-departmental issue; caution around creating another ALB without due

process; interaction with SIB and Fiscal Commission should be considered (JB). It would be useful to analyse within TEO and propose options.

#### **NICS Board Terms of Reference**

JB advised that revised TOR and next steps in relation to Non-Exec Directors will be considered at the next Board meeting. Important to factor in cross-cutting perspective. Aspirational thematic issues include delivery, transformation, responsiveness and accountability. Proposed new Board model and sub-committees to focus on health, skills, economy, comms etc. in the mix. Capability and capacity of NICS in general was also discussed.



**Friday 24 September 2021**

**Attending: Jayne Brady, Philip Weir, Stephen McGlade, NR**

**Via Zoom**

**Feedback following Executive Meeting 23/9/21**

Need clear CMO advice on proposals around restrictions. Difficult for dFM to support changes to restrictions if CMO advice not clear. FM to discuss proposals with party colleagues in advance of next Executive meeting on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> Sept - difficulty agreeing to discriminating between people in terms of gaining access to services/venues. More input/feedback/engagement needed from the various sectors that are being impacted by the restrictions. Some challenges with the proposals presented – opt in/opt out option confused the discussions at Exec meeting. Feedback from Culture and Arts sectors is that they are voluntarily prepared to put in place whatever measures are needed to open safely. Sector expected to submit proposals on how to do this. Risk assessments a vital part of this process. Background work being done on vaccine passports – although value of this not clear given Rol removing use of these in next few weeks. Analysis of restriction changes across the others DAs to be provided to Executive.

**Budget**

Exec discussion on budget scheduled for the 6 October. NICS board pulling together piece on strategic priorities to feed into this discussion focusing on outcomes rather than departmental priorities. Other external sources of funding to be investigated.

**Fortnightly Prioritisation meetings**

These remain helpful. Period between meetings could be extended down the line – current schedule of meetings feels right. Suggested and agreed that every 6-8 weeks these meetings are broadened out to include G3s, so FM and dFM can get more understanding of the work taking place across the department.

**ACTION** – HOCS office to arrange first one of these with G3s in a few weeks time.

**Covid Taskforce Model**

HOCS given role as chair to give the taskforce weight and to get departmental buy in. Model could be tweaked. Needs to look at messaging and address weakness – ie encourage uptake of vaccine in various age groups. Update from taskforce at Exec meetings should come before MoH update – PW and SMcG to discuss. Concern that vaccination statistics omitted from health paper to the Exec. Input from Economy and Communities on the proposals presented/ impacts to their sectors very helpful. Going forward would be ideal if this input was provided on all easement proposals.

**Friday 1 October 2021**

**Attending: Jayne Brady, Philip Weir, Stephen McGlade,** **NR**

**Via Zoom**

**Executive – forward look**

Jayne set out the plans for the Executive meetings on covid related issues for the following week. On the latter, draft papers on autumn planning, remaining restrictions etc are under development and will be shaped by key stakeholder engagement early in the week. Stephen noted that Junior Ministers had been involved in stakeholder engagement previously and suggested that their being involved again may be beneficial. Jayne indicated that it would be helpful to have a clear steer from Ministers in terms of which areas to test. Jaye also suggested that early engagement/briefing with other Executive Ministers in advance of meetings may be helpful in reaching consent. Advisers were content with the proposed planning for this Executive meeting.

**Executive budget session**

**Friday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2021**

**Attending: Jayne Brady, Philip Weir, Stephen McGlade, NR**

**Via Zoom**

  
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SpAds Meeting.msg

  
RE: Weekly Official  
SpAds Meeting.msg


Issues discussed:

- NICS Board papers (attached)– role and purpose and work plan. Both advisers undertook to consider further but initial reaction was positive in terms of the potential for meeting Ministers’ needs. Jayne outlined thinking on strategy and delivery of Executive priorities under Delivery, Transformation, Innovation and Communications. Jayne will shortly provide analysis of her first few months in post and will include details on strategic funding sources.
- NSMC court proceedings and DUP engagement.
- Budget session – follow up planned with Perm Secs to discuss issues and with a view to considering levelling up, Peace Plus/Shared Island/International investment proposition. SMcG suggested engagement with DC to consider opportunities for Ministers to engage and agree ahead of St Patrick’s Day with possible pre-Christmas visit. Jayne suggested East/West coast engagement (John Hartland and Shaun Kelly). Both content with outlined thinking on this.
- Mother and Baby Homes – paper to be shared for feedback on moving forward and ownership (attached above).
- Executive – discussed future Covid handling/engagement with sectors/remaining restrictions.
- City Deals – Heads of Terms signed, Jayne urged consideration at Exec meeting on 21.10.21.
- Minister Mallon letter to HOCS on previous Executive meeting.
- Mark Durkan letter and proposed reply. Jayne recorded her preference for

  
FW: Mark Durkan-  
SCORR-0058-2021 -

FMdFM to reply given political nature of the enquiry.



## MEETING NOTE

<b>TITLE/ORGANISATION:</b>	HOS weekly meeting with SPADs 29 October (Zoom); and Briefing on London Bridge/operation Shamrock
<b>LIST OF ATTENDEES:</b>	Jayne Brady, Stephen McGlade, Philip, Weir, <b>NR</b> <b>NR</b>
<b>London Bridge attendees:</b> Neill Jackson, Carol Morrow, Chris McNabb, Chris Stewart.	
<b>Issues discussed:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jayne's appearance at TEO Committee on 3.11.21, opening remarks etc.</li> <li><b>Permanent Secretary Competition</b> launched – candidate information booklet and advertisement were shared with advisers the previous    FW Perm Sec comp.msg day.</li> <li><b>Executive meeting next week</b> – format</li> <li><b>Violence against Women and Girls</b> – submission and draft Executive paper for next week's meeting to follow.</li> <li><b>Ministerial Code amendments</b> – next steps</li> <li><b>International engagement and possible US programme</b>; the need to determine a clear proposition and Ministerial visit programme. Jayne will lead this work. <b>It was agreed that Tom Reid will join the meeting next week to discuss.</b></li> <li><b>Jayne's visit to the North West</b> and engagement with stakeholders and TEO Committee Chair.</li> </ul>	
<b>London Bridge</b> – colleagues noted above joined the meeting to talk through the ceremonial events, required decisions and comms which would be required following the death of the queen and succession of the king. It was agreed that further engagement would take place to ensure that early decision are taken and agreed statements and communications are in place. It was agreed that it be useful to refresh the knowledge of permanent secretaries give the many decisions regarding public services which will be required across the NICS.	

<p><b>ACTION POINTS : Tom Reid to brief advisers on US engagement – next steps – at the meeting on 5.11.21</b></p> <p><b>PSS briefing on London Bridge for PSS on 5.11.21</b></p>	
NOTE WRITTEN BY:	<div>NR</div> <div>DATE: 2.11.21</div>



#### MEETING NOTE

TITLE/ORGANISATION:		HOCS weekly meeting with TEO advisers	
VENUE:	<input type="checkbox"/> Zoom 	<input type="checkbox"/> Stormont Castle	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER:
LIST OF ATTENDEES:		Jayne Brady, HOCS, Philip Weir, <div>NR</div> Tom Reid joined for final item.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6 October Executive meeting follow up and today's Permanent Secretary budget session follow up.</li> <li>Mother &amp; Baby Homes – revised paper and follow up for next week.</li> <li>MOU between TEO/DOF – HOCS submission and request for early agreement ahead of HOCS DOF and PAC committee attendance.</li> </ul> <div>  <p>Submission Received SUB-0742-2021 MEM</p> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>London Bridge – follow up on agreed public statement and recent briefing of Permanent Secretaries.</li> <li>Amendments to the Ministerial Code – reminder on related submission.</li> </ul>			



Ministerial Code  
amendments - October

- M. Durkan letter now issued from FMdFM

#### **Tom Reid joined the meeting**

Tom updated on possible US engagement and dates for travel; outlined milestones, need for strong investment proposal and engagement with DfE. Purpose of US visit/engagement is to generate broad interest on key 10 x strategy areas; and to seek specific opportunities for meetings with key stakeholders. NI Bureau in DC in developing initial thinking. DFC and DFE to link in.

**ACTION:** Tom to provide briefing paper to capture current thinking with a view to a further update at the next meeting.

NOTE WRITTEN BY: NR

DATE: 19.10.21



#### **MEETING NOTE**

<b>TITLE/ORGANISATION:</b>	HOS weekly meeting with SPADs 29 November (Zoom);
<b>LIST OF ATTENDEES:</b>	Jayne Brady, Stephen McGlade, Philip Weir, <span style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 0 5px;">NR</span>
<b>Issues discussed:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Executive meeting, Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> December– format / CMO &amp; CSA attendance to provide update.</li><li>• Executive pre-brief with CMO/CSA potentially Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> December.</li><li>• ECT Meetings rescheduled weekly, next meeting Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> November.</li></ul>	

- Draft Covid Cert regulations laid 29/11 – 2 week grace period on enforcement.
- Update on the UK Covid Inquiry.
- HOCS Finance Committee appearance.
- US Investment Proposal.

**ACTION POINTS :**

- **Jayne to confirm with ECT on programme and timeline of the tabled Covid Certification Scheme.**
- **Jayne to liaise with ECT to include an update on the UK Covid Inquiry in the Executive ECT Update.**

NOTE WRITTEN BY

NR

DATE: 30.11.21



**Weekly meeting with SPADs/HOCS – Friday 7 January 2021**

**Via zoom**

**Attending: Jayne Brady, Stephen McGlade, Philip Weir, NR**

**1. Executive business**

**a. COVID response**

Both PW and SMcG advised that respective parties were comfortable with current restrictions and stakeholder engagement but would consider the data over the next ten days.

Jayne updated on engagement which led to face coverings proposals and advance engagement with SDLP/Alliance Ministers. Jayne also sought views on financial support for sectors, adding that view of DFE/DfC officials that there was no strong evidence to support such a move.

Both advisers agreed that there would be need to be clear evidence to justify any financial support.

**b. NI LRA engagement** – Jayne provided and update on her recent meeting.

**c. Regional/Solace engagement** – Jayne provided an update.

**d. Ministerial Code amends** – this remains in a political space but PW undertook to engage further with colleagues.

**2. Forward planning**

**a. Executive priorities until end of mandate** – returns from departments under scrutiny, further update at the next meeting.

**b. NICS Renewal** – Jayne updated on the position and will share a draft paper with advisers for initial reaction shortly. Noted also the ongoing Perm Sec recruitment competition & NICS Board plans for 2022.

**c. Surge planning/Civil Contingencies** – update.

**3. Investment**

**a. ISNI** – will issue shortly and sit under the office of innovation as part of the joined up, strategic approach.

**b. NI Innovation Zone/ Freeport** – Jayne provided an update and advised that she will undertake further scoping work to establish sources of funding/regeneration outside Barnett. This was agreed.

**c. Levelling Up** – Jayne noted the planned White Paper and need for NI to be fully engaged in its development. Discussions on the Shared Island Fund will take place next week.

- d. **US Trip** – no trip in January but Ministers content for virtual engagement in advance of St Patrick's Day. Both Ministers content to travel to the US in March, subject to Covid restrictions.

4. Operations

- a. Intergovernmental relations – await clearance
- b. VAWG launch – will take place on Monday
- c. Covid Public Inquiry – await ToF

**AOB**

NIO had briefed parties on progress with **Westminster language Bills** – SMcG advised that dFM would expect to have all staffing and structures on place to commence work once the legislation is enacted.

**Michael Gove** visit – Jayne advised of a possible visit in February – she will seek a timeline and plans for this. Both advisers were content.



28.1.22 Agenda and  
papers Weekly Office

Meeting of 28.1.22 – via zoom

Attending: Jayne Brady, Philip Weir, Richard Bullick, Stephen McGlade, Neill  
Jackson ( for 2,4,7 only) NR

1. Ministerial Code amends, attached
  - Options paper to follow
  - Presentational issues around any selective approach taken
  - Planning aspects
  - Political challenges
2. Legislative programme table – attached
  - Neill spoke on Private Members Bills awaiting scheduling and likelihood of their completing all stages in the Assembly within the current mandate (unlikely)
  - Inquiry ongoing on PMBs which will consider introductions
  - Admission of PMBs should be informed in advance by likely sponsoring department before they are allowed to proceed to avoid retrospective work to make them workable
  - Executive Bills will take priority; PMBs secondary.
3. Prioritisation framework within mandate – feedback on session
  - Currently in the right space but will keep under regular review. PW noted that there may need to be inclusion of details around ongoing developments with the NI Protocol.
4. Executive- period products
  - PMB on this issue which replicates Scottish legislation which puts onus on local government. As drafted, NI Bill indicated DoH as lead department;
  - DoH vs Social issue
  - Solution may be for Executive to commit to this matter in new mandate
  - Neill will summarise and share with advisers – review next week.  
**{ACTION}**
5. Review of Covid restrictions, Labour Market Engagement, pre-meet with DoH
  - Discussed LRA engagement and working from home messaging.
6. Budget update
  - Discussed role of HOCS in facilitating/adding value/engagement with DoH

7. IGR review
  - Neill – review to be conducted across NICS departments
  - Frameworks also in play – need to look at this in totality – work to being shortly.
  - Useful for FMdFM to have handle on these meetings to help shape the agenda and play a more strategic role
8. NICS Renewal, job specs attached
  - NICS Board agreed some principles
  - Separation of roles in HR
  - CSO/CDO – further discussions required to develop role and remit
  - Comms needed to explain CSA role given Prof Young's profile
  - Comms role – expect strong media interest (PW)
  - Anticipate 3 x new board members
  - dFM supportive of renewal agenda (SMcG)
9. US Trip – E/W coast engagement update
  - Jayne updated on e/w coast engagement.
  - FMdFM engagement towards end February ahead of March US visit
  - Investment conference in Autumn – March as launch pad
  - Canada – dFM not keen; FM has agreed the submission on the visit
10. Dubai Expo
  - Invest NI view is that there is no little activity to warrant Ministerial visits
  - Event very much pared back due to pandemic/restrictions
  - Omicron wave at height in Dubai
  - Mostly virtual
  - DA counterparts will not attend
  - SOS interest possible
  - PW – should do what we can to engage virtually.
11. Forward planning- legislative functioning for new mandate – covered at (2)
12. AGNI – sub
  - Has Justice Gillian been consulted on recommendation in the FMdFM sub? [RB] **[ACTION]**

