

Note for the Record

Thursday 7th May at 13.00hrs via Zoom
Ministerial Stocktake meeting

In attendance:

Secretary of State for NI (SofS)
First Minister and deputy First Minister

NR

NI C3 Hub Chief of Staff, Anthony Harbinson

PS FM and PS dFM

1. The Secretary of State asked about the Executive meeting and FM and dFM said that overall it was a positive meeting.
2. The Secretary of State advised that the Prime Minister would be making contact today at 3.30pm to discuss the announcement he plans to make on Sunday.
3. The Secretary of State noted that there were a couple of things to touch base on. There had been UK wide press interest on the potential contents of the PM's announcement. The SoS stated that he had spent the morning damping the media's expectations and that at this point we were not likely to see significant reduction or relaxation in measures, rather the PM most likely set out timelines and dates. He continued that the approach would be much the same as the Irish Government and that the PM will likely make clear that UKG will step back from such dates if necessary eg if the R number increases. Overall, there would be no big change over the next week or so, rather it will be about setting out a pathway.
4. The Secretary of State advised that businesses are just holding on and what they want to know is does the government have a plan and have the got a clear direction of travel. He mentioned the CDL meeting earlier in the week with FM and dFM and that fact that he had touched on issues around travellers and potential border controls. The SoS said that it was likely that the PM will want to make comments about border controls and advise that individuals coming into the UK will have to self-isolate for 14 days and provide an address.
5. Hauliers and CTA travel will be exempt from these controls but the SoS noted that the main focus will be on the need to pass legislation in all UK jurisdictions. The UKG will work with the DAs and will want to get principles agreed with DAs. They highlighted that there could be a QUAD discussion on this next week.

6. The First Minister noted that the MIG meeting which is currently ongoing is looking at this issue and enquired if UKG had checked with Dublin and the SoS noted that this wasn't for the NIO but for another UKG Department. Again he highlighted the need for UKG / DAs agree first. He later confirmed that the CDL of FCO will speak with Simon Coveney before Sunday's announcement.
7. The First Minister advised that at the Executive meeting there had been a review of the R number which seems to currently be around 0.08 and 0.09 which is in same territory as Scotland / Wales. It was agreed that London was a bit lower, probably because it was a bit ahead in terms of the curve. It was noted that compliance is a bit of an issue in all jurisdictions.
8. It was agreed that a QUAD meeting next week would be helpful.