

MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE MEETING: 17 JUNE 2021

MEETING CONDUCTED VIA ZOOM

Present: First Minister (Chair)
deputy First Minister (Chair)
Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
Minister for Communities
Minister for the Economy
Minister of Finance
Minister of Health
Minister for Infrastructure
Minister of Justice

In attendance: Junior Minister, TEO (Mr. Middleton)
Junior Minister, TEO (Mr. Kearney)

Interim Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service
Head of Executive and Central Advisory Division
Sir Michael McBride, Chief Medical Officer
Professor Ian Young, Chief Scientific Adviser

LPP/LAP

Apologies: Minister of Education

The deputy First Minister advised of an apology received from the Minister of Education.

INTRODUCTION

The deputy First Minister chaired agenda items 1 - 2.

1. The deputy First Minister welcomed the First Minister and Minister for the Economy to their first Executive meeting in their current roles. She noted that, given the circumstances, the meeting would focus on the approach to easing COVID restrictions, and that consideration of normal departmental business would be resumed at the next Executive meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 1

Covid-19 Report by the Minister of Health

2. The Minister of Health provided an update on the vaccination programme, and advised that given the comparatively high uptake here, there were no plans to require care home staff to receive vaccinations. He noted that community testing would take place this weekend in two post-code areas showing high levels of the Delta variant.
3. The Chief Scientific Adviser gave a presentation on, and the Executive discussed, statistical data relating to the pandemic, including: the recent rise in positive cases and test positivity; the age profile of positive cases, which demonstrated a significant rise in cases amongst those in the 18-30 age range but lower rates of infection in largely vaccinated age groups; the increase in incidence rates in a number of local government areas; and comparisons with infection levels in England, Scotland and Wales. The CSA noted that hospitalisation rates remained low, but advised it may take two to three weeks to assess the impact of the increase in infection rates. He provided an overview of revised modelling that takes account of the Delta variant and planned relaxations, noting three scenarios (optimistic, central, pessimistic).

AGENDA ITEM 2

COVID Management

E (21) 138 (C) Ratification of Decision for Further Easements from 21 June 2021

4. The Minister of Health introduced this paper.
5. Following discussion, the Executive agreed an indicative date of 5 July for the proposed relaxations as detailed in Annex A of Executive Memorandum E (21) 138 (C), with a prior review date of 1 July.