

## **A REPORT ON DECISIONS TAKEN DURING JANUARY 2019 BY NORTHERN IRELAND DEPARTMENTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GUIDANCE ISSUED BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND (EXECUTIVE FORMATION AND EXERCISE OF FUNCTIONS) ACT 2018**

On 5 November 2018 the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, in accordance with section 3(2) of the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation and Exercise of Functions) Act 2018, published guidance about the exercise of the functions of Northern Ireland departments during the period for Executive Formation. This guidance requires Northern Ireland departments to prepare a monthly summary report of decisions taken by senior officials using the guidance and to share this with the Secretary of State, who will in turn promptly make it available to Parliament and to the Northern Ireland political parties.

This Summary Report has been prepared by the Executive Office and provides information on the decisions taken by Northern Ireland departments in January 2019.

### **Decisions Taken by Northern Ireland Departments: January 2019**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Description</b>
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<b>Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs</b>	A decision was taken to agree that DEFRA should issue a short UK-wide consultation on an interim UK National Air Pollution Control Programme. This will address the requirements of the National Emissions Ceiling Directive, in respect of consulting on air pollution measures set out in the National Plan to achieve compliance with emissions targets.
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A decision was taken to formally adopt and publish the DAERA Knowledge Framework as a Departmental strategic policy. The framework provides a formal context for stakeholder engagement and the development and delivery of educational policy.

**Department  
For  
Communities**

Decisions were taken to fill two vacancies and extend two appointments on the Board of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland; and to initiate a public appointment competition to appoint a Chair, Member and Expert Advisors to the Ministerial Advisory Group for Architecture and the Built Environment NI, to ensure the maintenance of sustainable and efficient public services.

A decision was taken to allow the recovery of Social Fund debt to maintain parity with DWP in respect of debt recovery policies and processes, to ensure the maintenance of sustainable and efficient public services and in accordance with Section 87 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Decisions were taken to make the Pension Scheme Act 2015 (Judicial Pensions) (Consequential Provision) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019 and the Pensions Schemes Act 2015 (Transitional Provisions and Appropriate Independent Advice) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019, to safeguard members' interests and ensure that the pension schemes can continue to function on a UK-wide basis.

**Department  
for the  
Economy**

A decision was taken to publish for public consultation, a five-year Equality Scheme and Action Plan, Disability Action Plan and Audit of Inequalities, covering the period 2016- 2021. The consultation, which commenced on 18 February 2019, will assist DfE in fulfilling its duties under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

A decision was taken to introduce an InterTradeIreland Brexit Start to Plan Voucher Scheme 2019-2021. This Scheme is

designed to assist SMEs (and in particular – microenterprises) to plan for the UK's exit from the EU.

A decision was taken to proceed with making and laying The Gas (Designation of Pipelines) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019, which will designate a section of new high pressure gas pipeline in the west of Northern Ireland for the purposes of the common tariff under Article 59 of the Energy (Northern Ireland) Order 2003. The Order came into operation on 4 February 2019.

A decision was taken to extend the contract for delivery of the ApprenticeshipsNI programme beyond the current contract end date of July 2019. The contract will be extended to 31 July 2020 to allow the continuation of a significant public service: the funding of training and skills development associated with apprenticeships in a wide range of professional and technical occupations.

A decision was taken to extend the contract for delivery of the Training for Success programme (and associated Disability Support contracts) beyond the current contract end date of July 2019. The contract will be extended to 31 July 2020 to allow the continuation of a significant public service: the provision of training that will allow participants to pursue to technical skills/qualifications that will enable progress to higher level training or employment.

**Department of  
Education**

Five decisions were taken on published Development Proposals seeking changes to the design of education provision. Decisions were taken to reduce the approved admissions and enrolment numbers at Holy Family Primary School, Magherafelt, and Holy Child Primary School, Belfast, in order to meet current and anticipated need for Catholic Maintained places at these two

schools, and to address issues of excess capacity in each area. Decisions were also taken to increase the approved admissions and enrolment numbers at Taughmonagh Primary School, Belfast, and Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche, Castlewellan; and the approved enrolment number at Priory Integrated College, Holywood, in order to meet evidenced demand for additional places at these schools.

**Department for  
Infrastructure**

Decisions were taken to issue Decision Notices granting planning consent for: a turbot fish farm in Kilkeel; closure of works and reprofiling of a former landfill site in Newbuildings, Co. Londonderry; and Grade A office space as part of the wider City Quays project in Belfast. A decision was taken to issue a Notice of Opinion refusing planning consent for a wind farm near Swatragh, Co. Londonderry. A decision was taken to issue a Stop Notice under the provisions of section 151 of the Planning Act (NI) 2011 in relation to an unauthorised quarry operated by Kelly's Sand and Gravel Limited, Old Bridge Road, Strabane, Co. Tyrone.

A decision was taken to request that the Planning Appeals Commission convenes a Public Local Inquiry into a proposed 33 turbine wind farm in Doraville, near Draperstown, Co. Tyrone.

A decision was taken to make a new Statutory Rule (The Road Vehicles Lighting (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019) to update legislation in respect of the Roads Vehicles Lighting Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000.

A decision was taken to make a new Statutory Rule (The Drivers' Hours and Tachographs (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019) to include transposition provisions for drivers' hours and tachographs following EU exit. This will enable full

implementation of EU obligations, promote road safety and provide standardisation within the road haulage industry.

**Department of Justice** A decision was taken to reappoint the chair of the Northern Ireland Law Commission.

A decision was taken to propose an amendment to the Coroners Act for inclusion in the draft Pandemic Influenza Bill.

**THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE**  
**FEBRUARY 2019**