

## **A REPORT ON DECISIONS TAKEN DURING APRIL 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 April 2019.

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

<b>Department</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>The Executive Office</b>	A decision was taken to extend the term of appointment of one board member of the Strategic Investment Board for a 12 month period from 1 May 2019.
<b>Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs</b>	<p>A decision was taken to provide the option for a future Executive and Assembly to enable Northern Ireland's participation in the UK Government's Environment (Principles and Governance) Bill to include resource efficiency enabling powers.</p> <p>A decision was taken to provide the option for a future Executive and Assembly to enable Northern Ireland's participation in the UK</p>

Government's Environment (Principles and Governance) Bill to include measures on waste tracking and waste crimes.

A decision was taken to progress the Household Waste Recycling Collaborative Change Programme by providing an Outline Business Case to the Department of Finance. The programme will contribute to Outcome 2 of the draft Programme for Government and to meeting the 2020 household waste recycling target under Article 11 of the Directive 2008/98/EC.

A decision was taken to conduct a public consultation on a range of proposed management measures for the brown crab fishery. These measures seek to ensure the long term sustainability of the fishery.

A decision was taken to amend, by negative resolution, the Common Agricultural Policy (Review of Decisions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 No. 318, to alter the fees for applications to the Review of Decisions Independent Panel.

A decision was taken to provide input to the UK Voluntary National Review on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The VNR will highlight the contribution across the UK on delivery of all 17 UN goals and will demonstrate NI progress on SDG delivery.

A decision was taken to support the launch of a UK-wide consultation on Marine Strategy - Part One: UK Updated Assessment and Good Environmental Status. This facilitates compliance with The EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) (2008/56/EC) and the UK Marine Strategy Regulations (2010). The consultation is due to be launched in early May.

A decision was taken to extend the first term of appointment of a Livestock and Meat Commission (LMC) board member from 21 April 2019 until 31 May 2019.

**Department  
For  
Communities**

A decision was taken to make The Employment Equality (Age) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019 to ensure the status quo is maintained for pension schemes paying bridging pensions when State pension age increases beyond 65. This maintains a single system of pensions across GB and NI in line with Section 87 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

A decision was taken to allow DWP to include Northern Ireland in The Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018 (Funeral Expense Assistance and Best Start Grants) (Consequential Modifications and Savings) Order 2019. The Order amends social security legislation as a consequence of the introduction of Scotland's Funeral Expense Assistance, maintains parity and protects public funds.

The following decisions were taken in relation to public appointments:

- To appoint a Chair and two members to the Charities Advisory Committee for the Northern Ireland Central Investment Fund for Charities for a term of five years;
- To re-appoint two members for a further term of five years to the Charities Advisory Committee for the Northern Ireland Central Investment Fund for Charities;
- To extend the appointment of the Discretionary Support Commissioner for a second three year term;
- To extend the appointments of two members of the Arts Council for a further six months;
- To re-appoint the Chair of the Board of Libraries NI for a second four year term, to ensure the maintenance of sustainable and efficient public services; and

- To appoint a Chair and four members to the Board of Ulster Supported Employment Ltd for a term of four years.

**Department  
for the  
Economy**

Decisions were taken to make a Statutory Rule, and an amendment to an existing Statutory Rule, in respect of the tuition fees charged by Higher Education Institutions in Northern Ireland; and to make a Statutory Rule to amend the Carriage of Dangerous Goods and Transportable Pressure Equipment Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010. These regulations are needed to maintain regulatory parity with Great Britain in relation to radiological emergencies.

A decision was taken to support a major investment project by data storage company Seagate Technology in Londonderry. It is investing £47 million in a research and development project at its Londonderry factory, creating 25 highly skilled jobs. The project will be supported by a grant of almost £10 million from Invest NI.

A decision was taken to provide £1 million for an extension (until December 2020) of the Department for the Economy's Higher Education-EU Framework Support Fund which provides funding for University-based Horizon 2020 Northern Ireland Contact Points.

Decisions were taken to award Mineral Prospecting Licences to Conroy Gold, Dalradian Gold, Flintridge Resources, and Karelian Diamonds.

A decision was taken to appoint a new Chair of the Governing Body of the Northern Regional College.

**Department of Education** Nine decisions were taken on published Development Proposals seeking changes to the design of education provision. Two of the decisions approved the closure of unsustainable, rural primary schools (Erganagh Primary School and Culnady Primary School) in the Castlederg and Maghera areas respectively. Decisions to decrease admission and enrolment numbers at Holy Trinity Primary School in Enniskillen, and to increase the approved enrolment at Ashfield Boys' High School in Belfast, were taken to meet current and anticipated demand for places in both schools. Decisions were taken to approve two proposals to establish a nursery unit; and an Autistic Spectrum Disorder Centre at Key Stage 1 and a Learning Support Centre at Key Stage 2, at Forge Integrated Primary School in Belfast. Decisions were taken not to approve published Development Proposals seeking the establishment of statutory nursery units at three schools: Rowandale Integrated Primary School (Moirá); Drumlins Integrated Primary School (Ballynahinch); and Enniskillen Integrated Primary School.

A decision was taken to hold a public appointments competition to enable Department of Education appointments to be made later in 2019 to the Board of the Middletown Centre for Autism (MCA), an all-Ireland facility offering services to children and young people with autism. A further decision was taken to extend the terms of appointments of current DE designated members on the MCA Board, until 30 September 2019 (or until such time as appointments can be made from the public appointment competition).

**Department of Finance** A decision was taken to make two annual Statutory Rules: the Pensions Increase (Review) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019, and the Public Service Pensions Revaluation Order (Northern Ireland) 2019. The making of these orders ensures that members

of public service pension schemes have their pension income uprated from April 2019 in line with the annual change in the cost of living, as measured by published government indices for prices or earnings, and reflects corresponding legislation to uprate pensions for members of public service schemes in Great Britain. A decision was taken to make a formal pay offer to Trade Union Side (TUS) in relation to industrial and non-industrial civil servants. The offer was made on 25 April 2019 in respect of the 2018 pay award i.e. retrospectively effective from 1 August 2018.

**Department of Health**

A decision was taken to approve the recommendations in the Consultation Report on the Criteria for Reconfiguring HSC services. This will result in the adoption of the reconfiguration criteria as policy within the department, and in the amendment of the extant guidance on Change or Withdrawal of Services, to enhance the decision making process in relation to significant service changes.

A decision was taken to approve the engagement of specialist external consultancy support to provide analysis and advice in relation to GP indemnity in Northern Ireland.

A decision was taken to extend from September 2019 the HPV vaccination programme to include boys aged 12/13 years of age.

A decision was taken to change the primary bowel cancer screening test in the NI Bowel Cancer Screening Programme from the Faecal Occult Blood (FOB) test to the Faecal Immunochemical Test (FIT). The new FIT bowel screening test will be introduced from early 2020.

A decision was taken to freeze the value of Health Service sight testing fees, domiciliary visiting fees and optical voucher values

for 2018/19. A decision was also taken to increase by 1% in Continuing Education and Training allowances payable to optometrists and Ophthalmic Medical Professionals.

The following decisions were taken in relation to public appointments:

- To appoint a member to the Northern Ireland Food Advisory Committee (NIFAC) of the Food Standards Agency (FSA);
- To agree to a proposal by the Department of Health and Social Care regarding the appointment of an Interim Deputy Chair of the Food Standards Agency. In the end the FSA Chair decided not to appoint an Interim Deputy Chair; and
- To commence a Public Appointment competition to fill five vacancies in the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service Board.

**Department for Infrastructure** Decisions were taken to make five Statutory Rules for the Road Races Order with operative dates in April 2019: the Road Races (Easter Stages Rally) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019; the Road Races (Drumhorc Hill Climb) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019; the Road Races (Craigantlet Hill Climb) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019; the Road Races (Cookstown 100) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019 and the Road Races (Tandragee 100) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019. These Orders authorise the closure of specified public roads to facilitate five road races to be held in April and early May 2019.

Decisions were taken to make three Statutory Rules in relation to the Roads Races Order 14 – 25 May 2019: The Road Races

(North West 200) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019; the Road Races (Knockagh Hill Climb) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019 and the Roads Races (Spamount Hill Climb) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019. These Orders authorise the closing of the public roads specified and permit their use for road racing on the days and during the times specified, in mid to late May 2019. The Orders were made on 19 April, 26 April and 3 May 2019 respectively, and also specify conditions which apply in respect of these road closures.

Decisions were taken to make five Road Abandonment Orders in May 2019: The Kilkinamurry Road and Katesbridge Road, Banbridge (Abandonment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019; The Ballybeen Park, Dundonald (Abandonment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019; The Bramble Road, Newtownabbey (Abandonment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019; The Footpaths (Centre Walk, Cherry Path and Lakeside Walk) Craigavon (Abandonment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019 and The Finvoy Street, Belfast (Abandonment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019. The effect of these Abandonment Orders is to remove areas and the lengths of road from the public road network. The Banbridge Order will allow the Department to dispose of land it owns.

Decisions were taken to make four Traffic Regulation Orders with operative dates in June 2019: The Parking and Waiting Restrictions (Carrickfergus) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019; the Parking and Waiting Restrictions (Newtownards) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019; the Prohibition of Waiting (Schools) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland), introducing 'School Keep Clear' restrictions at a number of schools in Ballynahinch, Bangor, Carrickfergus and Newtownabbey; and the One-Way Traffic (Belfast) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019.



Decisions were taken to issue a Notice of Opinion to grant Planning Approval for the demolition of a section of an existing concrete coastal retaining wall for application LA01/2018/0014/DCA in Cushendall, Co Antrim; Notices of Opinion to grant Planning Approval for applications LA03/2018/0601/O and LA03/2018/1011/RM for major housing development and provision of part of the Ballyclare Relief Road; and a Notice of Opinion to grant Planning Approval for application LA03/2019/0149/O for a major housing development and provision of part of the Ballyclare Relief Road.

A decision was taken to enable the Department to execute its functions, including the allocation of budgets across the Department and to its Arm's Length Bodies (including Northern Ireland Water, Translink and Waterways Ireland) and the application of savings measures required to reduce the funding gap to maintain existing services.

A decision was taken to extend the appointments of four members of the Londonderry Port and Harbour Commissioners (LPHC) Board for 6 months (until 30 September 2019) and two members of the Warrenpoint Harbour Authority (WHA) Board for 8 months (until 30 November 2019).

**Department of  
Justice**

A decision was taken to introduce The Damages for Bereavement (Variation of Sum) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019, increasing the amount of statutory bereavement damages in Northern Ireland from £14,200 to £15,100 for fatal accidents caused by negligence.

Decisions were taken to: delegate decision-making in relation to refusal or revocation of licences or registrations to manufacture

or store explosives to a senior officer of the department; and to delegate decision-making in relation to firearms appeals to a senior officer of the department; in both cases to enable due process to continue in the absence of a Minister.

**THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE**

**MAY 2019**