

A REPORT ON DECISIONS TAKEN DURING JULY 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 July 2019.

Decisions Taken by Northern Ireland Departments: July 2019

Department	Description
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs	<p>A decision was taken to endorse the recommendations of the Indecon Report and the Analysis of the Northern Ireland Equine Industry, and appoint a Northern Ireland representative to the Board of the all-island governing body for equestrian sport and breeding, Horse Sport Ireland.</p> <p>A decision was taken to undertake a stakeholder engagement exercise seeking views on two potential options for Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) entitlement unit values post 2019. The BPS is an agricultural land-based scheme which provides direct</p>

funding of approximately €300 million per annum to NI farmers as part of the Common Agricultural Policy.

A decision was taken to launch a consultation on the draft Northern Ireland Animal Health and Welfare Strategic Framework.

A decision was taken to amend subordinate legislation to remove an existing clause (Schedule 4 (c) Part C in item 29 of the Plant Health Order (Northern Ireland)), to strengthen import controls for oak trees, to minimise the risk of further incursions of *Thaumetopoea Processionea* (oak processionary moth).

A decision was taken to make the Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order (NI) 2019 and to seek the Department of Justice's agreement to the new penalties and sanctions contained within it. The Order will ensure parity with the legislation being introduced by the other UK administrations.

Department for Communities The following decisions were taken in relation to public appointments:

- To extend the appointments of seven members of the Historic Buildings Council for a period of up to six months from 1 July 2019;
- To extend the appointments of two members of the Board of the Northern Ireland Museums Council from 1 July 2019 until 31 December 2019; and
- To appoint a Chief Commissioner to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland for a five year term from 1 August 2019 until 31 July 2024.

A decision was taken to activate a Scheme of Emergency Financial Assistance to support households which had suffered from flooding. This is consistent with the previous decisions of Ministers with responsibility for Local Government.

A decision was taken to make The Social Security (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019 to ensure that, after the UK exits the EU, the rights of certain third country nationals lawfully living and working in the UK are protected for the purposes of determining entitlement to certain benefits and tax credits. This will maintain a single system of social security and pensions in line with section 87 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

**Department
for the
Economy**

A decision was made to launch a procurement for Project Stratum, a £165 million broadband rollout scheme. The project, funded from the Confidence and Supply Agreement, seeks to improve connectivity for those unable to access broadband services of at least 30 Mbps. It is anticipated that circa 100,000 premises, primarily in rural areas, will be eligible for potential intervention as Project Stratum is rolled out.

A decision was made to appoint a new Chair of Invest NI for a three year term starting on 1 August 2019.

**Department of
Education**

Four decisions were taken on published Development Proposals seeking changes to the design of education provision. Three of the proposals were not approved and one approved. The approved proposal was for an increase to the admissions and enrolment numbers at Academy Primary School (in Saintfield) to meet current and anticipated demand for places. The proposals which were not approved related to:

proposals to establish statutory nursery units at Bridge Integrated Primary School (in the Banbridge area) and Spires Integrated Primary School (in the Magherafelt area); and a proposal to introduce selection by academic ability or aptitude at Strangford Integrated College (in the Carrowdore area).

Department of Finance Decision taken to agree in-year public expenditure allocations to departments amounting to £39.9 million Resource DEL and £27.1 million Capital DEL; and the allocation to departments of £4 million Resource DEL set aside in the Budget for initiatives under the Programme for Government Transformation Fund.

Department of Health A decision was taken to increase the employer contribution rate for the HSC Pension Scheme from 16.3% to 22.5% from 1 April 2019, by means of an amendment to the HSC Scheme regulations and as recommended by the Government Actuary's Department following the 4 yearly actuarial valuation of the HSC Pension Scheme.

A decision was taken to agree that NHS England leads on seven proposed UK-wide consultations relating to the prescribing and administration of drugs by allied health professionals and healthcare scientists in the course of their professional practice. The proposed changes would bring many benefits to patients, commissioners and providers by facilitating the redesign of services which are focussed on enhancing the quality of patient care whilst also increasing capacity through effective use of the workforce.

Department for Infrastructure A decision was taken to enter into a modified planning agreement with George Best Belfast City Airport, which was signed on 22 July. This establishes a more effective noise

management system at the Airport and removes the Seats for Sale restriction.

Decisions were taken to make eight Statutory Rules for Proposed Traffic Regulation Orders: The Parking and Waiting Restrictions (Ballynahinch) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019; The Parking and Waiting Restrictions (Belfast) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019; The Parking and Waiting Restrictions (Strabane) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019; The Parking and Waiting Restrictions (Larne) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019; The Waiting Restrictions (Toome) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019; The Parking Places (Disabled Persons' Vehicles) (Amendment No. 2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019; The Taxi Buses (Belfast) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019; and The One-way Traffic (Downpatrick) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019.

Decisions were taken to make five Statutory Rules relating to races on specified public roads: The Roads Races (Armoy Motorcycle Road Race) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019; The Road Races (Garron Point Hill Climb) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019; The Road Races (Ulster Grand Prix Bike Week) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019; The Road Races (Ulster Rally) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019; and The Road Races (Eagles Rock Hill Climb) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019.

A decision was taken to initiate a public appointment competition to appoint two members to the Board of Warrenpoint Harbour Authority.

A decision was taken to proceed with the making of a Direction to permit, for a period of 6 months from 1 August 2019, the

enforcement of waiting restrictions on lengths of Bedford Street in Belfast to facilitate the 'Better Bedford Street' pilot scheme.

A decision was taken to grant a Renewal Lease to the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust for land at Crumlin Road Goal for use as a car park for a 3 year period from 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2022.

Decisions were taken to issue Notices of Opinion to approve planning consent for a Grade A Office Development at Ebrington Square; a Section 54 application to vary planning conditions of a major mixed-use development at Carnbane Way, Newry; and the granting of planning approval for two planning applications and a listed building application at Upperlands, Maghera.

**Department of
Justice**

Decisions were taken to approve the Magistrates' Courts and County Courts Appeals (Criminal Legal Aid) (Costs) (Amendment) Rules (Northern Ireland) 2019; the Legal Aid for Crown Court Proceedings (Costs) (Amendments) Rules (Northern Ireland) 2019, to address gaps in the legal aid provision for the Fine Collection and Enforcement Service; and the Criminal Justice Act 1988 (Reviews of Sentencing) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019, bringing terrorist, para-military and organised crime linked offences within the Unduly Lenient Sentence provisions.

The following decisions were taken in relation to public appointments:

- To extend by one year the appointment of the fee paid Disability Qualified member of the Appeals Tribunal; and
- The appointment of an 'Appointed Person' under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002, effective from 1 August

2019. This is a joint appointment by the Home Office Ministers, the Department of Justice and Scottish Ministers.

Following on from the 2019/20 budget outcome and taking account of the recent ruling and other relevant considerations, a decision was taken to allocate additional funding for legacy inquests (it should be noted that this decision was taken in February 2019).

THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE
AUGUST 2019