A REPORT ON DECISIONS TAKEN DURING DECEMBER 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 Northern Ireland Ministers.

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

Decisions Taken by Northern Ireland Departments: December 2019

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>The Executive Office</td>
<td>A decision was taken to extend the Urban Villages Programme for an additional 2 years until 31 March 2023.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs</td>
<td>A decision was taken to permit the Livestock and Meat Commission to engage external consultants to provide specialist support and progress the Pre Application Discussion process with Planning Service with regard to a land asset.</td>
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<td>A decision was taken to agree to the making of the Genetically Modified Organisms (Deliberate Release) (Amendment)</td>
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A decision was taken to suspend payments from the Horse Racing Fund until State Aid approval is obtained.

A decision was taken to replace existing Northern Ireland legislation to ensure that there is no gap in the powers of enforcement of official controls. The Plant Health (Official Controls and Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019 consolidates all relevant plant health legislation into this SR and contains two new offences.

A decision was taken that DAERA should issue a discussion document on Environmental Plans, Principles and Governance for Northern Ireland for public consultation.

A decision was taken by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to make regulations to support the implementation of the EU Official Controls Regulation which applies from 14 December 2019.

A decision was taken to make The Plant Health (Official Controls and Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019 (by 14 December 2019) to enable the Department to continue to carry out the official controls and activities which are needed to protect biosecurity in Northern Ireland and maintain businesses’ ability to trade within the UK and EU.

A decision was taken to seek approval from the Commissioner for Public Appointments Northern Ireland to extend the second terms of the appointments for the Chairperson and three Board Members of the Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority.
A decision was taken to publish a summary of responses to the stakeholder engagement exercise on options for Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) entitlement unit values. It was further agreed that any adjustments for the 2020 Scheme year would require a Ministerial decision and that a press release should be issued to inform the industry of the position.

A decision was taken to extend the Direct Payments to Farmers (Legislative Continuity) Bill to Northern Ireland. Its principal purpose is to enable the UK Government and devolved Administrations to continue making direct payments to farmers for the 2020 Scheme year.

A decision was taken to include NI provisions, and some UK-wide provisions, in the draft UKG Agriculture Bill. This ensures primarily that the status quo for agricultural support in Northern Ireland will be maintained until such time as local Ministers are in place to take decisions on future agricultural policy.

A decision was taken not to transfer monies from CAP Pillar 1 (Direct Payments) 2020 scheme year to Pillar 2 (Rural Development).

A decision was taken to introduce a tuition fee for International Students studying Higher Education courses at the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise.

A decision was taken to determine stakeholders’ views on proposals for a DAERA Innovation Strategy through a public consultation.
A decision was taken to request Defra not to include Northern Ireland in ‘Separation of Waste’ provisions in any proposed Parliamentary legislation.

A decision was taken to approve the publication for public consultation of the Significant Water Management Issues (SWMI) report before 22 December 2019.

**Department for Communities**

Decisions were taken to make the following public appointments to ensure the maintenance of sustainable and efficient public services as follows:

- To extend the terms of appointment of the chair and nine Trustees to the Board of National Museums NI from 1 January 2020 to 30 June 2020, or until a decision is made on their reappointments by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.
- To extend the appointments of five members of the Sports Council Northern Ireland (Sport NI) for a period of 6 months from 1 January 2020 to 30 June 2020.
- To extend the appointment of a member of the Board of Ulster Supported Employment Ltd (USEL) for a period of five months from 1 January 2020 to 31 May 2020.

A decision was taken to agree the inclusion of provisions for Northern Ireland in a forthcoming DWP Pension Schemes Bill to maintain parity between GB and NI pension law. The Bill seeks to strengthen regulation of pension schemes and provide greater protection for pension savings.

A decision was taken to remake and lay the Child Support (Miscellaneous Amendments No. 3) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019 and the Child Support (Miscellaneous Amendments No.4) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019 to ensure maintenance of single systems of social security across
GB and NI as provided for in section 87 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

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.

**Department of Education**

A decision was taken to make three new appointments (a Vice Chairperson and two Directors) and two re-appointments (two Directors) to the Board of the Middletown Centre for Autism Ltd.

A decision was taken to approve statutory nursery provision comprising 26 part-time nursery school places at Currie Primary School, North Belfast.

A decision was taken to publish the cross-departmental Children and Young People’s Strategy 2019-2029. The strategy was developed in the context of the Children’s Services Co-operation Act (NI) 2015.

**Department of Finance**

A decision was taken to appoint a new Chair and two new members of the Statistics Advisory Committee and reappoint seven of the existing Committee Members for a second term. All appointments are for a period of 5 years commencing in March 2020.

**Department of Health**

A decision was taken to lay 3 statutory rules implementing the official controls Regulation EU 2017/625, in order to maintain alignment with EU Regulations for food and feed safety and hygiene:

- The Meat (Official Controls Charges) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019
Summary of Decisions Taken in December 2019

- The Official Feed and Food Controls (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019
- The Fishery Products (Official Controls Charges) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019

Department for Infrastructure

A decision was taken to make five Statutory Rules that are Abandonment Orders:

- Ferrard Meadow, Antrim (Abandonment) Order (NI) 2019
- Ballysillan Park, Belfast (Abandonment) Order (NI) 2019
- Ballygowan Rd, Dromore (Abandonment) Order (NI) 2019
- Tarry Lane, Lurgan (Abandonment) Order (NI) 2019
- The Galway Drive, Belfast (Abandonment) Order (NI) 2019

The Ferrard Meadow Abandonment will facilitate a private housing development and the other abandonments will facilitate the disposal of land owned by the Department that is no longer required for roads purposes.

A decision was taken to make a Road Traffic Regulation Order to create, and in some cases, remove “limited waiting” or unlimited waiting disabled parking bays.

A decision was taken to make a Traffic Regulation Order – The One Way (Coalisland) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019 which will introduce a one – way traffic system on a length of Main Street and a length of The Square, Coalisland.

A decision was taken to launch a recruitment competition to appoint a Chair of the Board of Northern Ireland Water (NIW).

A decision was taken to appoint five non–executive members to the Board of Northern Ireland Water (NIW).
A decision was taken to “call in” two planning applications in relation to development proposals for electricity power lines associated with the Dalradian gold mine planning application.

A decision was taken to publish the final Timetable and Work Programme for the preparation of the Northern Ireland Flood Risk Management Plan 2021 – 2027.

**Department of Justice**

A decision was taken to erect a temporary fence on Derry/Londonderry’s Walls.

A decision was taken to increase the fees paid to Tribunal Judiciary and Lay magistrates by 2% for 2019/20.

A decision was taken to approve 5 sets of Court Rules relating to EU Exit.

A decision was taken to extend the appointment of a Disability Qualified member of the Appeals Tribunal for the period of one year.

A decision was taken to amend section 37 of the Criminal Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 1945, to apply to the Defence of Marital Coercion to males and females whether married or in a civil partnership.

A decision was taken to launch a recruitment exercise to establish a pool of Independent Chairs for Domestic Homicide reviews in Northern Ireland.

A decision was taken to increase the complement of members of the Appeal Tribunals from 120 to 140.
A decision was taken to appoint a Board Member to the Northern Ireland Police Fund.

A decision was taken to launch a recruitment competition for chairperson and Board Members for the Northern Ireland Police Fund.

A decision was taken to amend the PSNI 2005 and PSNI Reserve (Injury Benefit) 2006 Regulations and consult policing stakeholders on the draft amendment. This will enable appropriate rota and shift payments as a result of moving the May bank holiday from Monday 4th May to Friday 8th May 2020.

THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE
JANUARY 2020