

**A REPORT ON DECISIONS TAKEN DURING MARCH 2023 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 ETC) ACT 2022**

On 19 December 2022 the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, in accordance with section 3(4) of the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation etc) Act 2022, published guidance about the exercise of departmental functions by senior officers of Northern Ireland departments during the absence of Ministers. 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 make it available to Parliament and to MLAs.

Decisions taken by Northern Ireland Departments: March 2023

This summary report has been prepared by the Executive Office and provides information on the decisions taken by Northern Ireland departments during March 2023.

Department	Decision
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs	<p>A decision was taken to confirm to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) the Department's agreement that Northern Ireland should be included in a proposed UK-wide consultation on Animal Welfare Labelling. The decision allows Defra to include NI in the scope of a UK wide consultation on standardising animal welfare labelling on selected food products.</p> <p>A decision was taken to approve the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) levy rates for the coming year (2023/24). AHDB levy rates will remain unchanged in the coming year and there will be no increase in the charge for late payment.</p> <p>A decision was taken to launch a consultation on new regulations to facilitate Climate Change reporting by</p>

Summary of decisions taken March 2023

**Department of
Agriculture,
Environment and
Rural Affairs
[continued]**

specified Public Bodies, as required by the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022.

A decision was taken to confirm DAERA's agreement to allow Defra to publish its Summary of Responses to the UK-wide consultation on 'Contractual practice- in the UK pig sector'.

A decision was taken to approve the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) Business Plan 2022/23.

A decision was taken to launch a targeted consultation with the Agricultural Policy Stakeholder Group and other key agri-food sector stakeholders on proposed amendments to retained EU regulations providing the frameworks for Public Intervention and Private Storage Aid, as they apply to Northern Ireland.

A decision was taken to provide agreement to Defra to allow it to commence the European Union and World Trade Organisation Notification of the UK-Wide Statutory Instrument that implements Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging. The decision provides consent for DEFRA to start the necessary notification processes.

A decision was taken to launch an updated 2023 Quarry Safety Campaign.

A decision was taken to seek European Commission approval to make a modification to the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme (NIRDP) 2014-2020. The decision was needed to ensure that all EU funds are deployed by the end of the Programme in December 2023.

A decision was taken to provide agreement to Defra to progress the public appointments process for the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) to its next stages, including in relation to appointments, reappointments and changes to the terms and conditions of some board members.

A decision was taken to approve the opening of the Northern Ireland Regional Food Programme 2023-2024.

A decision was taken to sign a Sustainability Guarantee Letter in support of the joint UK & Ireland Euro 2028 bid. The decision was necessary to allow the Department for the Economy (DfE) to progress the documentation needed to support the Joint UK & Ireland Euro 2028 bid.

Summary of decisions taken March 2023

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs [continued]

A decision was taken to agree Defra's Determination of Fishing Quotas for 2023 which includes an updated position on sand eel quota.

A decision was taken to seek agreement from the UK Chief Veterinary Officer to apply to the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) for recognition of Northern Ireland as a zone free from High Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI).

A decision was taken to extend the existing Northern Ireland Environment Agency Regulatory Charging Policy (2021-23). The decision puts in place the NIEA's Regulatory Charging policy for the 2023/24 financial year and its publication on the DAERA website.

A decision was taken not to offer additional financial assistance to the Fishing Industry, in response to a request from NI Fishermen's Federation (NIFF) for a scheme of financial support for fishing vessel owners.

Department for Communities

A decision was taken to allocate additional short-term funding to support the charitable food sector. This is in line with previous Minister's commitments to providing a practical response to the cost-of-living crisis and tackling disadvantage.

A decision was taken to undertake a consultation on a proposal to move the revaluation date in the Local Government Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) and, subject to the outcome of the consultation, introduce this change. This is to maintain sustainable and efficient public services.

A decision was taken to process complex SAR requests under the Data Protection Act in relation to historical NIO internment files and progress such requests on a case-by-case basis. This decision complies with relevant statutory and non-statutory guidance and legislative requirements.

A decision was taken to sign Tournament Guarantee letters to form part of the NI dossier in relation to the Euro 2028 bid. This is to realise public advantage for the NI economy and create sporting and well-being legacy.

Decisions were taken to ensure maintenance of a single system of benefits across GB and NI in line with Section 87 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, by:

Summary of decisions taken March 2023

Department for Communities [continued]

- Carrying out a correction exercise of EU Settlement Scheme statuses
- Assessing and where appropriate, awarding Universal Credit to vulnerable EU claimants in compliance with current case law
- Extending the temporary de minimis period in Universal Credit to 31 March 2024.

A decision was taken to make the following Statutory Rules to ensure parity is maintained between GB and NI in line with section 87 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998:

- The Occupational Pension Schemes (Administration, Investment, Charges and Governance) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2023
- The Pension Protection Fund (Compensation) and Occupational Pension Schemes (Fraud Compensation Payments) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2023
- The Occupational Pension Schemes (Master Trusts) (Northern Ireland) 2023

The Occupational Pension Schemes (Governance And Registration) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2023

A decision was taken to make the following Statutory Rules to ensure delivery of sustainable, effective, and efficient services:

- The Coronavirus Act 2020 (Extension of Provisions Relating to Local Authority (Meetings) Order (Northern Ireland) 2023
- The Coronavirus Act 2020 (Extension of Provisions Relating to Local Authority Meetings) (No 2) Order (NI) 2023
- The Licensing (Form of Licence) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2023
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A decision was taken to extend the time taken for Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council to respond to the recommendations made by the Local Government Auditor. This is to ensure that the recommendations are considered and addressed, thereby ensuring the maintenance of sustainable and efficient public services.

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 commitments of previous Executives and Ministers and ensures the maintenance of sustainable and efficient public services.

**Department for
Communities
[continued]**

A decision was taken to approve the publication of the following:

- The Department's Intermediate Rent policy and design standard documents
- The Duncairn Gardens Development Study report

A decision was taken to approve the NIHE's use of external consultants to complete an options appraisal on its site at Cloughfern, Newtownabbey. This is to maintain sustainable and efficient public services.

A decision was taken to approve Economic Appraisals for five Social Housing Development Programme Schemes. This is to comply with statutory obligations, ensure provision of public service, and realise significant public advantage for job creation in the construction sector, and tackling disadvantage.

A decision was taken to approve pay remits to comply with relevant statutory and non-statutory guidance and legislative requirements, for:

- Staff of the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee (NILGOSC)
- NI Housing Executive Chief Executive

A decision was taken to approve the NI Housing Executive Corporate Plan 2022/23 – 2024/25 and Business Plan for 2022-23 in support of DfC's strategic aims and objectives, and in line with the previous Minister's priorities. This is to enable the NIHE to commit to and deliver its statutory obligations and maintain sustainable and efficient public services.

A decision was taken to extend the term of office of an independent member of the Northern Ireland Joint Standards Committee and approve documentation for a public appointment competition. This is to comply with statutory requirements and to ensure proper governance and accountability.

A decision was taken to reappoint two Ulster Supported Employment (USEL) Board Members to ensure that the Board is fully and properly constituted and has the required skills and experience. This is to comply with statutory requirements and to ensure proper governance and accountability.

**Department for
Economy**

A decision was taken to extend the appointments of four Members of the Industrial Court and to appoint a Chair and four further members (two as employer representatives and two as employee representatives). Appointments and extensions are made in accordance with Article 91 of the Industrial Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1992. Failure to make these appointments and extensions would have left the Industrial Court with no Chair and few members and therefore with a substantial risk of not functioning. This would be a breach of statutory obligations set out in Article 91 of the Industrial Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1992 and could have resulted in a significant risk to Northern Ireland industrial relations.

A decision was taken in relation to the Period Products (Free Provision) Act (NI) 2022 to agree the bodies that will be either specified in the regulations or excluded as Public Service Bodies, and to write to the bodies to advise of the decision and outline the next steps in the process. This is a new policy and the final decision on specification would normally be taken by a Minister. However, given the terms of the Act, it is considered that the required preparatory work must be completed. The previous Minister agreed to consultation on a list of public service bodies upon whom regulations will place a statutory duty to provide period products free of charge. The consultation was targeted only at those organisations within the Department's remit. It was also agreed that, should any other bodies emerge during the consultation process, officials could amend the list.

A decision was taken in relation to the joint UK and Ireland Bid to host the Euro 2028 Tournament to agree and sign a Sustainability Guarantee letter and a Ticketing Guarantee letter, in conjunction with the Permanent Secretaries from DAERA and DfC. This work feeds into the Final Bid Dossier to satisfy UEFA that NI will have the legislative and policy cover to host the event. Signing the Guarantee letters will enable the Irish Football Association, as the lead partner for NI, to complete its bid for this event which could potentially have significant economic, sporting and other legacy benefits for NI.

A decision was taken to issue amended Grant Letters to NI Higher Education Institutions, advising that additional funding has now been secured for Quality Research and some additional teaching grant for specified places. Not allocating this funding could potentially result in a missed opportunity to realise a significant public advantage for public finances, to the NI economy and job creation.

**Department for
Economy
[continued]**

A decision was taken to seek to utilise NIO funding to support those under-represented within further and higher education to access and participate in a range of opportunities. In December 2022 the NIO agreed, in principle, to provide a funding package to DfE, under the New Deal for Northern Ireland commitment, to support those under-represented within further and higher education. Utilising this funding will provide an opportunity for Further and Higher Education Institutions to model provision on what has been proven to add value to the lives of the individuals who need it most. Missing this opportunity would be likely to result in the loss of a range of societal benefits.

A decision was taken to extend the tenure of a member of the NI Screen Board by six months to allow a new appointment process to conclude. The extension also serves to retain valuable expertise until that can be replaced. NI Screen's Articles of Association give the Department the power to appoint Board Members in consultation with DfC. It should be noted that an incoming Minister may review, confirm, or terminate this extension and this will be clearly stated in the letter to extend the appointment.

A decision was taken to publish a draft departmental Equality Scheme (2022-2027), Audit of Inequalities and Equality Action Plan (2022-2027) and a Disability Action Plan (2022-2027) for public consultation, with the later submission of the final documents to the Equality Commission for NI (ECNI) in 2023. Proceeding with this consultation will enable the Department to meet its statutory obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as well ensuring an appropriate level of engagement with those individuals and organisations that are likely to be most affected.

A decision was taken in relation to pre-1998 student loans, to approve amendment of relevant Erudio Loans documentation, changing references from the London Inter-Bank Offered Rate (LIBOR) to Sterling Overnight Index Average (SONIA). Changes are to be made by Thesis/Finance for Higher Education (FFHE), owners of Mortgage style loans sold by the UK government to private investors in 1998. This change is required as the LIBOR rate will no longer be available. The Bank of England Base Rate will be used as an alternative rate to LIBOR. The previous Minister agreed to amendments to the Honours Trustees Ltd (owners of the 1999 sold loans)

**Department for
Economy
[continued]**

documentation to change references from LIBOR to SONIA. This decision relates to the same changes being made to the THESIS loans.

A decision was taken in relation to funding the Public Service Obligation (PSO) route connecting the City of Derry Airport (CoDA) and London Stansted from April 2023 to March 2024 at a cost of £1.1m. The PSO has been in operation since 2017. The Executive approved funding for the PSO for the two year period to March 2023. The PSO is vital to the viability of CoDA, accounting for approximately one quarter of the airport's passenger volume. Without this route the airport might be forced to close. The Secretary of State for NI will allocate a specific, ringfenced £1.1m to DfE for one year, 2023-24. The agreement to fund will include a break clause which allows an incoming Minister to decide on future funding. If the performance of the route is stronger than forecast, the subsidy will be reduced and no further subsidy will be due if the route underperforms.

A decision was taken to appoint 20 new Governing Body Members from Ministerially approved reserve lists to fill vacancies in five Further Education (FE) colleges which will arise in June and July 2023. The previous Minister agreed that the current reserve lists should be extended for the purposes of making appointment decisions in 2023. The appointments are important to ensure the ongoing effective management of the five FE Colleges.

A decision was taken to accept, in principle, all recommendations arising from the Independent Review of Invest NI, with the caveat that there may be very limited occasions where the levers to create the necessary change are not within the Department's control, or do not currently exist. This decision does not have any direct budgetary implications. The out-workings of the recommendations will fall to be considered in due course and will be subject to the customary financial control and management arrangements.

**Department of
Education**

A decision was taken on 29 March 2023 to discontinue the School Holiday Food Grant scheme from the end of March 2023. This scheme had been delivered on behalf of the Executive in seeking to tackle holiday hunger and provided a payment during school holiday periods to families entitled to free school meals.

Summary of decisions taken March 2023

A decision was taken, bearing in mind the significant financial pressures facing the department in 2023/24, to end the Engage programme on 31 March 2023 on the basis that it was unaffordable. The Engage programme had been in place since 2020 to support one-to-one and small group tuition to offset the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on children's learning.

A decision was taken to cease the Healthy Happy Minds pilot counselling and therapy provision for primary age children. This pilot had been instigated using DoF Covid funding and was extended in 2022-23 by Ministerial Direction. The decision reduces support to the cohort of pupils but allows DE to adhere to the principle in the Secretary of State's guidance issued under the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation etc) Act 2022 that it must control and manage expenditure within the limits of the appropriations set out in Budget Acts. The pilot was ceased on 31 March 2023.

A decision was taken to prioritise capital requirements on the basis of the likely Departmental capital budget for 2023/24 to enable initial allocations to be provided across the education sector.

Department of Finance

A decision was taken to approve the 2022 pay remit for the Northern Ireland Prison Service.

A decision was taken to offer industrial unions a beneficial change to the Department of Infrastructure's Productivity Unit (PU) Scheme for road workers.

A decision was taken to approve the making of the Pensions Increase (Review) Order (Northern Ireland) 2023.

A decision was taken to approve the making of the Public Service Pension Revaluation Order (Northern Ireland) 2023.

A decision was taken to approve the recruitment of a CEO for Tourism Ireland for a 5-year fixed term contract at a starting salary of €186,782 per annum. This allowed the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media to proceed with the recruitment process for this post.

A decision was taken to offer industrial unions a further adjustment to the Department of Infrastructure's

Summary of decisions taken March 2023

Department of Finance [continued]	<p>Productivity Unit (PU) Scheme for road workers for 2022 pay.</p> <p>A decision was taken to approve the PSNI's Chief Police Officers pay remits (Chief Constable, Deputy Chief Constable, and Assistant Chief Constable). The remits follow the recommendations of the Police Remuneration Review Body's 8th Report on Northern Ireland 2022, published 29 June 2022; the Permanent Secretary of the Department of Justice has confirmed these are affordable but will impact future years with uncertainty around the 2023-24 budget allocations.</p> <p>A decision was taken to approve the changes to two allowances in payment to serving PSNI officers. This will allow for the Department of Justice to proceed with implementing the required changes. The previous Justice Minister had approved these changes on 19 October 2022 before leaving office.</p> <p>A decision was taken to approve the Northern Ireland Water Alpha Pay Remit for 2022-23. This allowed NI Water to proceed with implementing the 2022-23 pay award for staff. The Department for Infrastructure (DfI) Accounting Officer advised that the award is affordable from within DfI's budget as set out by the Secretary of State in his Written Statement on 24 November 2022.</p> <p>A decision was taken by member organisations to appoint new members of the Programme Monitoring Committee to oversee the implementation of the Investment for Growth and Jobs Programme within the 2014-2020 European Structural and Investment Funds. The Monitoring Committee is established under the General Commission Regulation 1303/2013. There are no financial implications and, in the absence of Ministers, previous Permanent Secretaries have endorsed the nominated members' appointments. This is not a Public Appointment.</p> <p>A decision was taken to launch a public consultation concerning a draft Statutory Rule covering the 2015 Remedy ('McCloud'): retrospective phase, as failure to implement or any delay in the Statutory Rule coming into operation on 1 October 2023 would mean failing to comply with a statutory obligation.</p>
Department of Health	<p>A decision was taken to approve the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) advice to introduce a COVID-19 vaccine for clinically at risk infants aged 6</p>

**Department of
Health [continued]**

months to 4 years into the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme.

A decision was taken to agree to the JCVI recommendation that a Spring COVID-19 booster should be offered to everyone aged 75 years and over, all care home residents and those classed as immunocompromised aged 5+.

A decision was taken to approve a proposal to the Department of Finance to uplift Band 1 and the lower point of Band 2 pay rates in line with the National Living Wage.

A decision was taken to update the Health and Social Care (HSC) compensation recovery rates to maintain parity with those in GB.

A decision was taken to make regulations to increase the value of Optical Vouchers by 2% in line with the previous Minister's decisions in relation to the General Ophthalmic Services pay uplift for 2022/23. This modest increase can be met within the baseline budget.

A decision was taken to progress the proposals to retain pay parity policy set by the previous Minister for the Speciality Associate Specialist (SAS) Doctors Contract Reform Year 2 2022/23.

A decision was taken to review the annual amendments to Regulations governing service user contributions to the cost of residential and nursing home care.

A decision was taken to proceed with a public appointment competition to appoint a Non-Executive Chair to the Board of the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service.

A decision was taken to approve the General Dental Services Rebuilding Support Scheme and the Enhanced Child Exam Fee for Q1 2023/24 for a three month period. Q1 costs can be met from the General Dental Services (GDS) baseline and this is in line with the policy direction of the previous Minister.

A decision was taken to extend the Public Health powers in the Coronavirus Act for six months.

A decision was taken to end the provisions of free PPE to the Independent Sector from 31 March 2023.

Summary of decisions taken March 2023

Department of Health [continued]

A decision was taken to continue the high and medium impact Waiting List Initiative for a period of 2 months into the 23/24 financial year pending confirmation of a budget settlement.

A decision was made to award core grant funding to the voluntary and community sector for a period of three months pending budget clarity.

A decision was taken to approve the 2023/4 contract for GPs including suspending the Quality Outcomes Framework (QOF) for General Practice for payment purposes in 2023/24 on the basis of GP activity being monitored via the (General Practice Intelligence Platform) GPIP data platform.

A decision was taken to extend the testing under the Waste Water Surveillance Programme by three months to end of June 2023, with a review in early June when there should be budget certainty.

A decision was taken to appoint Non-Executive Chairs to five HSC Trusts i.e. South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust; Northern Health and Social Care Trust; Western Health and Social Care Trust; Belfast Health and Social Care Trust; and the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service.

A decision was taken to approve the annual uplift to the minimum regional Self-Directed Support and Direct Payment (DP) hourly rate for 2023/24 to meet the National Living Wage increase from April 2023.

A decision was taken to approve an uplift for 2023/24 to Community & Voluntary contracts in respect of the increase in the National Living Wage from April 2023 and for non-pay inflation.

A decision was taken to approve an uplift in respect of the increase to the National Living Wage from April 2023 and for non-pay inflation to the Independent Sector Care Home tariffs; and Supported Living/bespoke services contracted on a weekly/monthly/annual tariff basis.

A decision was taken to approve the amendment of Standard 17 of the Department's Minimum Standards for Children's Homes to reflect the need for all registered managers and care staff to be registered with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC) in line with regulatory requirements; and to remove the minimum age

Summary of decisions taken March 2023

requirement of 21 for care staff working in children's homes.

A decision was taken to implement low and medium impact savings measures across the HSC in order to minimise the overall impact of a difficult budget settlement on public services.

Department for Infrastructure

A decision was taken to defer changes to maximum taxi fares following a consultation on the 2022 Taxi Fare Review. The issue will be reviewed again in late spring 2023.

A decision was taken to pause the development of the Buncrana Road Improvement Scheme, until Transport Plans have been developed and the project has been considered against the Department's responsibilities under the Climate Change (NI) Act.

A decision was taken to issue a direction (variation) to Belfast City Council directing them to adopt their Plan Strategy (as first stage of the Local Development Plan) with modifications as specified, to vary in part the previous direction issued.

A decision was taken to appoint an Executive Commissioner to the board of Londonderry Port and Harbour Commission. The decision will help the Port meet the requirements of the Port Marine Safety Code, ensure properly qualified personnel are employed, and resources are provided to manage marine operations safely.

A decision was taken to appoint a Councillor Board Member to Warrenpoint Harbour Authority. It is in the public interest to make this appointment now to give effect to the previous Minister's policy which he commenced with his decision to launch the competition.

A decision was taken to make a Statutory Rule, The Road Races (Circuit of Ireland Rally) Order (Northern Ireland) 2023. This rule permitted the suspension of the right of way of traffic on Saturday 8th April 2023 on certain roads in County Tyrone to permit the Ulster Automobile Club Ltd as promoter of the Circuit of Ireland Rally 2023, to hold the event.

A decision was taken to make a statutory rule, The Road Races (Croft Hill Climb) Order (Northern Ireland) 2023. This rule permitted the suspension of the right of way of

**Department for
Infrastructure
[continued]**

traffic on Saturday 15th April 2023 on lengths of Ballymenoch Road and Creightons Green Road, Holywood, County Down to allow the Thoroughbred Sports Car Club N.I., as promoter of the Croft Hill Climb 2023, to hold the event.

A decision was taken to make a statutory rule, The Road Races (Craigantlet Hill Climb) Order (Northern Ireland) 2023. This rule permitted the suspension of the right of way of traffic on Saturday 29th April 2023 from 7.30 a.m. to 7.30 p.m. on lengths of Belmont Road and Ballymiscaw Road, Craigantlet, County Down to allow the Ulster Automobile Club Ltd, as promoter of the Craigantlet Hill Climb 2023, to hold the event.

A decision was taken to make a statutory rule, The Road Races (Cookstown 100 Motor Cycle Road Race) Order (Northern Ireland) 2023. The Rule permitted the suspension of the right of way of traffic on Friday 21st April 2023 between 7.00 a.m. and 9.30 p.m. and Saturday 22nd April 2023 between 7.00 a.m. and 7.30 p.m. on lengths of Orritor Road, Gortnagross Road, Tullagh Road, Mackenny Road, Killycurragh Road and Drumearn Road in County Tyrone to allow the Cookstown & District Motor Cycle Club (Road Racing) Ltd as promoter of the Cookstown 100 Motor Cycle Road Race 2023, to hold the event.

A decision was taken to make a Statutory Rule entitled The Parking Places (Disabled Persons' Vehicles) (Amendment) Order 2023. The Rule authorises parking places (9 in total) with unlimited waiting for disabled persons' vehicles in Belfast, Cookstown, Dundonald and Omagh. Vehicles are excepted from the prohibitions in certain circumstances. The Rule also removes parking places (4 in total) with unlimited waiting for disabled persons' vehicles that are no longer required in Bangor, Belfast, Downpatrick and Whitehead.

A decision was taken to commit capital funding for future years and to approve additional funding for the Lagan Gateway Greenway project. There are significant opportunities along the Lagan to develop underused land and act as a catalyst for investment and regeneration for the whole city.

A decision was taken to commit capital funding for future years to four greenway projects: Ballyclare Town Greenway; Comber to Newtownards Greenway; Newtownards to Somme to Green Road Bangor; and Carlingford Greenway; and also to commit additional

Summary of decisions taken March 2023

funding for the Carlingford Greenway. The funding of these Greenways will enable greater numbers of the population to adopt healthier, more active lifestyles and encourages a focus on sustainable transport whilst also offering significant opportunities to develop and connect Active Travel links.

A decision was taken not to provide the funding required to cover the payments to teachers to deliver the cycling proficiency scheme in 2023/24, in light of the 2023/24 resource budget pressures facing the Department.

Department of Justice

A decision was taken to approve the publication of a report prepared by Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland on Probation Approved Premises in Northern Ireland.

A decision was taken to approve the appointment of two lay advisers to provide an objective lay perspective on the operation and continuous review of the Public Protection Arrangements for Northern Ireland (PPANI).

A decision was taken to approve the publication of a summary of responses following a consultation on legislative options to enable the Official Solicitor to be appointed in Emergency Family proceedings in a Magistrates' court.

A decision was taken to carry out a targeted consultation on a legislative amendment that will extend the public holiday to mark the coronation of His Majesty the King to PSNI officers to facilitate proper duty rostering and payment.

A decision was taken to approve changes to the terms and conditions of the Chief Executive of the Probation Board for Northern Ireland.

A decision was taken to make a further statutory rule (The Coronavirus Act 2020 (Extension of Provisions Relating to live links for Courts and Tribunals)) Order (Northern Ireland 2023) to allow the courts and tribunals to use live links for further six month period where the judge is satisfied it is 'in the interests of justice'.

A decision was taken to launch a targeted consultation on Police Pensions (Remediable Service) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2023. Secondary legislation is required to amend the rules of each affected public service pension scheme to remedy the impact of unlawful age discrimination identified in litigation cases ('McCloud

Summary of decisions taken March 2023

Department of Justice [continued]

judgement'). The intention of the proposed Regulations is to remedy discrimination that had taken place between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022.

A decision was taken to agree to publication of the Prison Service Pay Review Body Thirteenth Report on Northern Ireland 2022 and action the Northern Ireland Prison Service pay award for operational prison grades in salaries.

A decision was taken to submit written evidence to the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) in relation to its review of the remuneration for officers in the Police Service of Northern Ireland for the 2023-24 pay round.

A decision was taken in relation to the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) report for 2022/23 to bring mutual aid arrangements for PSNI officers into line with those officers in England and Wales. The previous Minister of Justice accepted the PRRB recommendations on 26 October 2022.

Decisions were taken on the advice of a Parole Commissioner to recall two prisoners to prison.

The Executive Office

A decision was taken to publish a public consultation document on the Race Relations (NI) Order 1997.

A decision was taken to publish the Draft TEO Equality Scheme 2023-2028 for consultation.

A decision was taken to approve publication of the Investment Strategy Consultation Report.