

Written Ministerial Statement

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The Executive Office

ANNOUNCEMENT OF LAUNCH OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT INVESTMENT STRATEGY FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Published at 10.30 pm on 26 January 2022.

Mr Givan (The First Minister) and Mrs O'Neill (The deputy First Minister): We are pleased to announce the launch of a public consultation on a draft Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland on 26 January 2022. The consultation will last 12 weeks.

The draft Strategy articulates The Executive's vision that we will have the infrastructure that enables everyone to lead a healthy, productive and fulfilling life; supports sustainable economic development; and protects our environment.

Infrastructure, such as roads, hospitals, schools and colleges, energy, water, digital and transport networks, requires careful planning, takes time to deliver and is used for many years. We need to consider our current needs as well as the needs of our children. We also need to make best use of our existing infrastructure and maintain it for the future.

This strategy sets out how the Executive will achieve this vision. It provides a clear framework for planning and prioritising infrastructure investment, defining the outcomes required of that investment and setting out the mechanisms, including greater collaboration that will ensure its efficient and effective delivery.

Over the last ten years, government has invested £14.9 billion in maintaining, upgrading and extending our regional infrastructure – an average of £1.48 billion per year, or £8,000 per person. Nearly three-quarters of this has been directed to the major infrastructure areas of roads, housing, water and wastewater, schools, public transport and hospitals. Over 400 projects have been completed, thirty with a value of more than £100 million. Although this is a record to be proud of, some projects have been delivered late or over budget, and this strategy includes actions to accelerate and improve infrastructure delivery.

Despite this investment, there are significant deficiencies in our existing infrastructure, particularly in health, social and intermediate housing, water and wastewater, roads maintenance and the rail network. Addressing these existing problems is a key element of the strategy. Coupled with this is a recognised need to invest in the increased capacity and skills required to deliver such an ambitious investment strategy.

The strategy is aligned with the principles of the Executive's other key strategies, some of which are currently in development such as 10x Economic Strategy, Green Growth Strategy, the Energy Strategy, the Environment Strategy and the Housing Supply Strategy. It embodies an approach to coordination that will ensure government policies and plans are consistent and complementary at every level.

The strategy describes the outcomes we intend to achieve. It will be implemented through a rolling 10-year investment plan that will define and prioritise the individual programmes and projects we need to deliver and will be matched to a financial plan that will show how these will be funded.

The strategy is ambitious. Pressing challenges such as decarbonisation mean that we need to do more, in new ways and quickly. That is why the Executive is focused on delivery – getting things done.

Engagement has been central to the development of this strategy. Many people inside and outside government have already helped in its formation. We want this dialogue to continue, so please review the strategy carefully and contribute your views and ideas.

Following this consultation period, we are committed to bringing the final Strategy to the Executive table for discussion and consideration. We will publish the final Strategy once agreed by the Executive.