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Ms Michelle McIlveen MLA
Infrastructure Committee Chair
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1 April 2021

GM-0463-2021

Dear Michelle

COMMITTEE INQUIRY INTO DECARBONISING ROAD TRANSPORT

Thank you for your letter of 25 March on the above matter.

The Department recognises the profound challenges that climate change creates for all of us, and the specific responsibilities that fall to the Department in this regard. Minister Hargey is a member of the Ministerial Green Growth Group and, through this, contributes to Executive efforts to address climate change and the significant issues arising.

The Minister has established a Climate Change Working Group of officials from the Department and key ALBs in order to develop and progress a Climate Change Action Plan, and has allocated money to a Climate Change Fund to support positive steps to reduce emissions, and to implement appropriate mitigation and adaptation measures. The Minister has also written to all ALBs that the Department sponsors to ensure that they are taking appropriate action in relation to climate change. Officials are engaging with DAERA officials in their cross-departmental climate change work.

In terms specifically of road transport, the core Department operates small numbers of vehicles; some of our ALBs, particularly NIHE and Libraries NI, operate more substantial numbers. The Department and our ALBs can also have a significant impact on road transport choices made by other organisations through our procurement policies, for instance for services such as couriers, and through our grant conditions. We can ensure that staff are suitably informed to enable them to make relevant choices in their official duties and in their personal lives; and National Museums and Libraries NI can provide opportunities for wider education.

Options for Departmental and ALB vehicles, along with procurement and grant issues, form part of our draft Climate Change Action Plan, and the Climate Change Fund for 2021-22 will allow us to begin to quantify the challenges and opportunities in a number of areas.

It will be vital in all of this work to be led by the advice and evidence gathered by the UK Committee on Climate Change, ensuring that we focus on areas which will make the most difference to overall emissions and climate change impacts. Continued joined-up working across Executive Departments will therefore be very important.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Diane Mulligan', is positioned above the typed name.

Diane Mulligan

Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer

Private Office