

**Oifig Mary Lou McDonald TD**

Office of Mary Lou McDonald TD

Peter Weir MLA
Chairperson
Assembly and Executive Review Committee
Room 276
Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
BT4 3XX

Wednesday, 24 November 2021

Re: Designations and the Appointment of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Peter, a chara,

Further to your correspondence of October 7th on issues involving designations and the appointment of the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

As acknowledged in your correspondence there is limited time remaining in the current mandate to consider these matters which are highly sensitive.

Any attempt to alter the designations and appointments would prove extremely controversial and could only be achieved by discussion and agreement.

It is my firm view that there is currently no basis at present for or prospect of agreement to alterations in the arrangements for designations or the appointment of the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

Current arrangements were arrived at from negotiations involving the political parties and the two governments leading to the historic Good Friday and St. Andrews Agreements.

These arrangements involved essential safeguards and mechanisms to protect minority rights and to prevent the sort of systemic inequality that occurred in the past.

There is no argument or rationale for changing the current arrangements other than the reluctance of the main unionist parties' leaders to nominate a deputy First Minister alongside a republican First Minister should that be the democratic decision of the electorate.



For this reason, Sinn Féin is opposed at this time to changes in the current designations requirement, to any alteration in the method of appointing the First and deputy First Ministers or to any change to the titles of First Minister and deputy First Minister.

If the Assembly in the new mandate wishes to revisit these issues, then we will of course make our views known at that time.

I hope this clarifies Sinn Féin's position on these matters.

Is mise, le meas,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary Lou McDonald'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Mary' and last name 'McDonald' clearly distinguishable.

Mary Lou McDonald TD

Uachtarán Shinn Féin