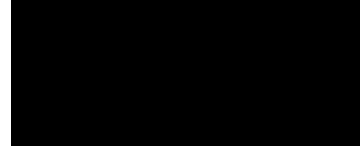


Stormont Castle
BELFAST
BT4 3TT



Marie Austin
Committee for TEO
Room 412
Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
Stormont
BELFAST
BT4 3SR

24 June 2020

Dear Marie

BREXIT ISSUES

The Committee for the Executive Office has requested follow-up information to the evidence provided by officials on Brexit Issues at its meeting on 29 April 2020. .

Please see the response to each issue as set out in your request dated 4 May 2020.

- *The reasons why the replacement of the Brexit Sub-Committee, as detailed in New Decade New Approach document, was not communicated to the Assembly.*

The Executive approved proposals to replace the Brexit Sub-Committee with the Executive Committee on EU Exit related matters at its meeting on Monday 2 March. The first meeting of the Executive Committee in that format took place on 4 March.

The change was communicated to the Committee in a briefing paper cleared by Ministers and issued to Committee members on 25 March (Dr Andrew McCormick, Secretary to the Executive Committee had been due to provide

the TEO committee with an oral update on EU Exit that day, but that meeting did not take place).

- *Further information on: the projects currently funded by the European Union; the amount of funding the Shared Prosperity Fund will need to provide to replace what is currently provided by the European Union; and, the associated number of jobs created that will need to be sustained.*

With respect to the projects currently funded by the European Union, the following link <https://successes.eugrantfundingni.org/> provides up to date details of projects currently funded under the following programmes:

- NI ERDF Investment for Growth and Jobs Programme,
- NI ESF Investment for Growth and Jobs Programme 2014-2020, and
- Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2014-2020.

The Shared Prosperity Fund has been proposed as a vehicle to replace EU Structural Funds. However, progress in Westminster has been slow with limited information available and we do not know the full scope or quantum of this replacement fund.

The following table shows the current level of EU Structural Funds for NI across the current Multi Financial Framework.

Fund Name	Commonly known as	Current Value (MFF 2014-2020)
European Regional Development Fund Investment for Jobs and Growth	ERDF	€313.2 m
Common Agricultural Policy Pillar 2	CAP 2 or the "Rural Development Programme" (RDP)	€228.4m
European Social Fund (Investment for Jobs and Growth)	ESF	€210m

DoF are pursuing the full replacement spending power. We are seeking no less than the greater of what we previously received through these funds or what we would have been entitled to had we remained within the EU.

The Current Peace IV and Interreg VA programmes will be replaced by PEACE Plus.

Current programmes have not yet completed and therefore we cannot report on the total number of jobs created from these programmes. We are however able to provide the target number of jobs to be created across the current 2014-2020 MFF.

The ERDF Programme as a whole aims to contribute to a macro-economic increase in Northern Ireland employment levels however in terms of a job creation target specifically for supported enterprises there is only one:

2,803 jobs to be created under Priority Axis 2 'Enhancing the Competitiveness of SMEs'.

The target for RDP is 700 jobs created under LEADER in the 2014-2020 Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme.

The aim of ESF is to combat poverty and enhance social inclusion by reducing economic inactivity and increase the skills base of those currently in work and future potential participants in the workforce. Therefore ESF does not have any job creation targets.

ESF does have the following job related targets to be achieved by 2023:-

Into employment upon leaving:

Unemployed	3850
Inactive	2200
Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETS)	1800
Disability	1300
Community Family Support Programme (CFSP)	505

In employment six months after leaving:

Unemployed	5250
Inactive	3000
Disability	650

- *Further information on the Common Frameworks that are currently under consideration; when the Executive needs to come to a view on those Frameworks it will opt in to or out of; and, those areas where a Memorandum of Understanding might be appropriate.*

The Common Frameworks Analysis published by the UK Government in April 2019,

(https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/792738/20190404-FrameworksAnalysis.pdf), highlights 160 policy areas where a Common Framework arrangement may be required post Exit, 157 of which are within the legislative competence of the NI Assembly. The 157 areas of relevance to the Executive were divided into the following categories.

Classification	Number
Policy areas where no further action is required.	59
Policy areas where in UKG's view a non-legislative common framework may be required.	77
Policy areas where in UKG's view a legislative common framework may be required.	21

An exercise is currently underway in conjunction with the UK Government, Scottish Government and Welsh Government to identify policy areas where current working arrangements are sufficient and no framework is required and those which could be amalgamated where it is sensible and appropriate to do so. This exercise, alongside Executive consideration of the principles for the development of Common Frameworks may reduce the overall number of potential frameworks and inform the decision making process on whether a Memorandum of Understanding would be appropriate.

- *Confirmation of whether the Executive intends to pursue the issue of the 'democratic consent' mechanism with the Northern Ireland Office.*

Under Article 18 of the Protocol, the UK Government is obliged to provide the opportunity for democratic consent in Northern Ireland to the continued operation of the Protocol. The Protocol does not stipulate how the institutions in Northern Ireland will provide their democratic consent.

In relation to this obligation the UK Government has committed to legislate for a democratic consent process in the Northern Ireland Assembly, and to support the NI Executive in a public consultation on this decision.

The UK Government must inform the EU as to the outcome of the democratic consent process within two months of the end of the initial four year period for which the Protocol is in force. Accordingly this obligation will be engaged two months in advance of 1 January 2025.

TEO officials will continue to engage with UKG colleagues on the implementation of their obligations as to democratic consent in advance of this deadline.

In addition, the Committee also sought confirmation in respect of Executive business and all aspects of the Executive decision making process being confidential, whether this principle applies to the work on Brexit that the Executive is now taking forward in place of the Brexit Sub-Committee.

It was always the case that the Brexit Sub-Committee was subject to the same obligations of confidentiality that apply to meetings of the Executive as a whole or any of the other past or current sub-committees. I should clarify that Brexit issues will be considered at Monday meetings of the Executive along with, currently, the response to the Covid-19 pandemic, and other matters which may require Executive agreement. In order to ensure appropriate scrutiny, the Committee will continue to be briefed by TEO officials on Brexit matters. Ministers consider that these briefings and supporting papers can be provided in parallel with the Executive's considerations and therefore should not require the provision of actual Executive papers and minutes.

Yours sincerely



Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for the Executive Office



Stormont Castle
Ballymiscaw
Belfast
BT4 3TT

4 May 2020

Dear 

BREXIT ISSUES

At its meeting on 29 April 2020, the Committee for the Executive Office received oral evidence from officials on Brexit Issues.

During the evidence session officials agreed to provide:

- The reasons why the replacement of the Brexit Sub-Committee, as detailed in New Decade New Approach document, was not communicated to the Assembly.
- Further information on: the projects currently funded by the European Union; the amount of funding the Shared Prosperity Fund will need to provide to replace what is currently provided by the European Union; and, the associated number of jobs created that will need to be sustained.
- Further information on the Common Frameworks that are currently under consideration; when the Executive needs to come to a view on those Frameworks it will opt in to or out of; and, those areas where a Memorandum of Understanding might be appropriate.
- Confirmation of whether the Executive intends to pursue the issue of the 'democratic consent' mechanism with the Northern Ireland Office.

The Committee also understands that Executive business and all aspects of the Executive decision making process are confidential. The Committee agreed to seek confirmation of whether that principle applies to the work on Brexit that the Executive is now taking forward in place of the Brexit Sub-Committee.

I should be grateful for a response by **18 May 2020**.

Yours sincerely

Marie Austin, Clerk to the Committee for the Executive Office