

Written Ministerial Statement

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Department of Finance

2021-22 PUBLIC EXPENDITURE

FUNDING FOR ENERGY PAYMENT SUPPORT SCHEME AND NIW AND DFI ROADS ENERGY COSTS

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Mr Murphy (The Minister of Finance): I wish to update the Members on the Executive's agreement to allocations ahead of January Monitoring for 2021-22.

Members will be aware of the difficulties caused by escalating energy costs and the Executive has agreed to three urgent allocations to help mitigate the impact of these on the most vulnerable and to ensure vital services can be maintained.

Due to the urgency of this issue, I am informing the Assembly of these by written statement. It remains my intention to make an oral statement to the House for January Monitoring and this will provide the opportunity for Members to ask questions and raise specific issues.

At the conclusion of October Monitoring round all Resource DEL funding was allocated.

Since then the Treasury has confirmed that the Executive will receive a Barnett consequential of £13.8 million Resource DEL as a result of the British Government announcement of £500 million of support for households over the winter.

While this is welcomed it was clear that it would not be sufficient to provide the level of support needed for vulnerable households.

Therefore, I sought early notification from departments of any reduced requirements they would be surrendering in January Monitoring to allow allocations to be considered in advance of that round.

I am pleased to say that the Executive has agreed to immediate allocations of £1.8 million to the Department for Infrastructure for NIW and £2.0 million for Roads to help address the immediate impact of rising energy costs on the ability to maintain vital services. Further allocations for this purpose will be considered as part of the January Monitoring round.

The Executive has also agreed an allocation of £55.0 million to the Department for Communities to establish an Energy Payments Support Scheme.

This will provide a one-off payment of £200 to approximately 280,000 individuals on low incomes who are in receipt of certain specified benefits.

This intervention ahead of the January Monitoring Round will ensure that vital support is provided to vulnerable households as soon as possible.

The Executive will shortly consider the January Monitoring round and following this I will provide a further statement to the Assembly which will include details of all reduced requirements surrendered, including those identified early to facilitate these urgent allocations.