

Mr Peter Hall
Clerk to the Committee for Finance
Room 382, Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
Stormont
Belfast
BT4 3XX

3 June 2025

Dear Peter,

Thank you for your recent correspondence on behalf of the Committee for Finance.

Bank of Ireland UK is part of the Bank of Ireland Group, which was established in 1783 and has been supporting customers and communities across the island of Ireland for 241 years, with a clear purpose to enable our customers, colleagues, shareholders and society to thrive.

Locally, this is an important year as we celebrate 200 years since we opened our first branch in Newry, supporting customers in Northern Ireland.

As we mark this important milestone, we are looking to our future with ambition. Earlier this year we announced investment of £100m over the next three years across our Everyday Banking products and services as we expand our lending, deposit, current account, mortgage and broker offerings to help us meet the changing needs of our customers while growing a strong and sustainable business.

Following the recent session with the Committee, please see below some further information as requested:

- **Any ethical focus that the banks apply to their investment activity and payment of dividends, and any wider policy involving an ethical stance;**

Sustainability is central to our strategy at Bank of Ireland and is one of our core strategic pillars. Our 'Investing in Tomorrow' sustainability strategy centres on supporting the green transition, enhancing financial wellbeing and enabling our colleagues to thrive.

As a responsible investor, we are deeply committed to upholding the highest ethical standards in all aspects of our operations.

- **The resolution of issues surrounding cross-border banking that were raised by Members;**

Bank of Ireland operates across the island of Ireland and provides cross-border banking services for customers. In addition to a physical branch presence across the island we also offer products and services in both jurisdictions. If a customer, business or personal, needs cross-border banking services, such as a current account or support managing foreign exchange risk, we encourage them to speak to us to see how we can help.

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- **Efforts made by the banks to support charities in their banking activity, including authentication, etc. of officers/trustees and ways that this process might be made easier, etc;**

At Bank of Ireland, we recognise the important societal and economic role of the third sector and are working with UK Finance and representative bodies such as CO3 to see how we can better support and improve banking services for charities and community organisations. We know that there can be challenges with more complex cases, where there can be multiple signatories, volunteers and different structures. We are working to address this, respectful of the regulatory frameworks in which we operate.

- **The banks' appetite for risk with regard to investing in/lending to SMEs and micro businesses in NI:**

Bank of Ireland has been supporting businesses across Northern Ireland for 200 years and our commitment to enabling entrepreneurs and businesses to grow, expand and thrive is as important now as ever. We have dedicated business management teams based throughout Northern Ireland who get to know our customers and their businesses ensuring we provide the right products and services at the right time to help them to achieve their ambitions. Our appetite to support SMEs and micro- businesses in Northern Ireland is strong and we would encourage any business seeking support to speak to us to see how we can help.

At Bank of Ireland we realise the important role we play in enabling our customers, colleagues, shareholders and society to thrive. If I can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

George Higginson

Managing Director Everyday Banking, Bank of Ireland UK