

Legislation from The Department of Finance

Question 1

Point 1 – The timeframe for the Fiscal Council Bill

The Executive approved the Fiscal Council policy for the Bill and the continued engagement with OLC to continue drafting on 13th June.

The Bill has been included in the Executive's legislative programme for this year.

The Minister is aiming to introduce the Bill prior to the end of this year, however there is still some further work required in the drafting process for DoF and OLC officials; and the Minister is mindful of OLC's significant workload following the Executive return.

Point 2: The detail, scope and timescale for the Financial Provisions Bill

Periodically DoF prepares a Financial Provisions Bill. This Bill usually contains a range of miscellaneous financial provisions which are required to resolve routine, non-controversial financial matters which Departments encounter. In January 2024, DoF wrote to Departments advising of the intention to compile a draft Financial Provisions Bill and to commission items for inclusion in the Bill.

Departments have subsequently been providing instructions to DoF. DoF have been in discussion with Departments regarding the contents of the Bill and a list of proposed provisions has been developed.

Proposed provisions to date relate to:

- DAERA: Marine Licensing Fees
- DFC: Tenancy Fraud
- DfE: Financial Assistance
- DfE: Apprenticeships
- DfE: Company Formation
- DfE: Tourism NI Powers
- DfE: Mineral & Petroleum Accounts
- DOF: Financial Transactions Capital
- DOF: Appointment of the NIAO External Auditor
- DoF: Increase limit on advance from Consolidated Fund for contingencies
- TEO: Refugee & Asylum Seekers
- TEO: Victim & Survivor Support Services
- TEO Boardroom Apprentice

A paper is currently with the Executive seeking their agreement to the development of the Bill. Once achieved, the department intends to bring its engagement with the Finance Committee but is happy to provide a briefing on the contents of the proposed Bill at any stage.