



Department for the

Economy

An Roinn

Geilleagair

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Dear Michael

Flood Scheme

Further to your letter dated 05 May 2026, regarding discussions you have had with DfI officials on the Water, Sustainable Drainage and Flood Management Bill. I apologise for the delay in responding to the Committee's questions, which was due to an administrative error. Please see response below which has been cleared by Minister Archibald. This information is fully disclosable under Freedom of Information.

I can confirm that this department is taking forward a pilot scheme to provide grants for flood protection measures to non-domestic properties in Newry city centre. This is being delivered through a collaborative approach with the Department for Infrastructure, using its existing powers under the Drainage (NI) Order 1973 to implement experimental measures, reflecting the pilot nature of the scheme. The relationship with DfI is governed by a joint memorandum of understanding, which reflects the roles of the two departments: DfE is providing funding for the pilot, achieving the relevant approvals and will complete the evaluation, while DfI is using its existing contract for the domestic scheme and its expertise to deliver the pilot on the ground.

The non-domestic pilot is closely modelled on the homeowner flood protection grant scheme: eligible properties are those that have been flooded in recent years, and applicants can receive grants covering 90% of the cost of the materials and installation up to a maximum of £13,700, with the property owner having to meet any additional costs above that threshold. The process involves a survey of each

property and the ordering, installation and testing of the protective measures through DfI's existing contract for the domestic scheme.

The innovative approach with the current pilot is that we have worked closely with the Newry Business Improvement District to coordinate installations in a specified area to achieve 'street level' protection by ensuring all facades where possible on a given street are protected, to help to channel any flood water to an outflow rather than through internal walls.

32 properties have been identified for the current pilot, which is supported by £309k funding from DfE, with installations expected to commence within the next month or two. We will be formally assessing the pilot following a period of consultation later in the summer, with recommendations likely in the autumn.

The outcomes of this pilot will form a key part of a cross-departmental flood protection and recovery framework which DfE is coordinating with colleagues from DfI, DfC, DAERA, DoF, TEO and the council network. The aim of the framework is to ensure that government as a whole is better placed to respond appropriately to future flooding events, and to ensure that protective measures are installed where appropriate to help all property owners and dwellers be better prepared for the increased risk of flooding driven by global heating.

Officials in DfE would also like to take this opportunity to place on record their appreciation of the collaborative and professional approach taken by their counterparts in DfI, which has enabled this valuable pilot project to take place against a challenging timeframe.

Yours sincerely

Brendan Heaney

Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer