

Our ref: AQW 38208/22-27

From: The Minister

28 January 2026

Kellie Armstrong MLA
Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw, Stormont
Belfast
BT4 3XX

Via email: kellie.armstrong@mla.niassembly.gov.uk

Dear Kellie,

AQW 38208/22-27 - to ask the Minister for Communities, pursuant to AQW 36330/22-27, whether he will provide copies of the minutes of meetings (i) he; or (ii) his officials, have had with Hospitality Ulster, where the University of Stirling's recommendations following the Report of the Independent Review of the Liquor Licensing system in Northern Ireland including the Surrender Principle were discussed, including the (a) dates; and (b) locations, of the meetings; and (c) attendees and their positions within his Department.

Due to the volume of detail required to answer AQW 38208/22-27, I have arranged for the information attached at Annexes A and B to be placed in the Assembly Library.

Some of the information at Annex A – Ministerial Meeting Note – Meeting with Colin Neil CEO of Hospitality Ulster - cannot be disclosed under the following exemptions contained in the Freedom of Information Act 2000:

- **Section 40(2)** - information is exempt from disclosure if it is the personal data of, or could lead to the identification of an individual. The information requested contains the personal details of junior members of staff. In the Department's opinion, release of this information

would breach the first principle of Data Protection legislation which requires personal data to be processed lawfully, fairly and transparently.

- **Section 43(2)** - information is exempt if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the public authority holding it).

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gordon Lyons".

Gordon Lyons MLA
Minister for Communities

MINISTERIAL MEETING NOTE

Meeting Date:		30 July 2025 at 4.15pm		
Meeting Title:		INV-0252-2025 Meeting with Colin Neill, CEO, Hospitality Ulster.		
VENUE:	<input type="checkbox"/> Parliament Buildings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Causeway Exchange <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minister Gordon Lyons MLA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SpAd Peter Johnston	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PS Louise Anderson		
OFFICIALS:	Victoria Trimble – DfC Social Policy Unit. [REDACTED] – DFC Social Policy Unit, note taker.			
OTHERS:	Micheal Cadden, incoming Chair, Hospitality Ulster, and Managing Director, Cadden group. Brian Murphy, Managing Partner, BDO NI.			
KEY POINTS DISCUSSED:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hospitality Ulster's views on the recommendations in the University of Stirling's report on the Independent Review of the Liquor Licensing System in NI, including the Surrender Principle; <div style="background-color: black; height: 10px; width: 100%; margin-top: 10px;"></div> - Current challenges facing the hospitality industry in Northern Ireland. 				
ACTIONS: None				
NOTE WRITTEN BY: [REDACTED]		DATE: 30 July 2025		
NOTE AGREED ON:				

ATTENDEES AND THEIR POSITION WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT.

Victoria Trimble – Grade 7 Head of Social Policy Unit.

Louise Anderson – Principal Private Secretary.