

**From: The Minister**

**Mr Edwin Poots MLA  
Speaker to the Northern Ireland Assembly  
The Speaker's Office  
Parliament Buildings  
Stormont  
Belfast  
BT4 3XX**

**LETTER TO SPEAKERS OFFICE - DFE: LETTER FROM MINISTER ARCHIBALD  
RE TOPICAL 5 OF DFC QUESTION TIME ON 8 SEPT 2026**

I am writing in response to the letter received by your office on 17 September 2026 from Dr Caoimhe Archibald MLA, Minister for the Economy.

In that correspondence, the Economy Minister asserts that I placed inaccurate information on the Assembly record by stating that I had not received a response regarding the draft Irish Language Strategy. The Minister advises that a response was provided by the end of June 2026 and has requested that I correct the record and issue an apology.

I wish to make clear that I did not state that a response from the Economy Minister remained outstanding. My remarks referred directly to the findings of the judgment issued in the Conradh na Gaeilge Judicial Review and reflected the circumstances that existed during the relevant period of those proceedings – in fact I was directly quoting the words of the judge in the comments to which Dr Archibald is referring.

Officials in my department sought ministerial clearance from all departments for the associated narratives and action plans relating to both the draft Irish Language

Strategy and the draft Ulster-Scots Language, Heritage and Culture Strategy by 11 March 2026.

The substantive hearings in the Judicial Review took place during May and June 2026, with the final hearing concluding on 3 June 2026. By that stage, evidence had already been submitted to the court. During the proceedings, officials advised the court that delays in securing the necessary departmental responses were a contributing factor in impeding progress on the strategies and meant that it would no longer be possible to bring them before the Executive for consideration during the current mandate.

The Department for the Economy did not provide a response until 26 June 2026, more than three months after the requested deadline and after the Judicial Review proceedings had concluded. Consequently, at the time the evidence was presented to the court and the matters considered by the judge, a response from the Economy Minister had not been received.

It is therefore important to distinguish between the position that existed during the Judicial Review proceedings and the subsequent response received from the Department for the Economy. My remarks reflected the former and included direct quotes from the judgement in the Conradh na Gaeilge Judicial Review.

The delays arising from the absence of a timely response from the Department for the Economy, including the delay in signalling agreement to the draft narratives and action plans or providing alternative comments, were a significant factor in hindering progress on these important strategies.

In these circumstances, I do not accept that the Assembly record requires correction, nor do I consider that there is any basis for an apology. In the interests of clarity, I have therefore arranged for the associated correspondence to be deposited in the Assembly Library for Members' information and reference.

I have copied this correspondence to Executive colleagues for information.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gordon Lyons', written on a light blue background.

**Gordon Lyons MLA**  
**Minister for Communities**

Cc: Executive members

**From the Office of the Minister  
DR CAOIMHE ARCHIBALD MLA**



Department for the

**Economy**

An Roinn

**Geilleagair**

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**Our Ref: SUB-0828-2026**

**17 September 2026**

Edwin, a chara

**Topical 5 of DfC Question Time – 8 September 2026**

I am writing in relation to remarks made by the Minister for Communities during Tuesday 8 September Topical 5 DfC Question Time.

The Minister for Communities stated that he had not received a response from me in relation to 'Irish Language Strategy'. That statement was inaccurate. I had, in fact, responded to the Minister for Communities before the end of June.

Given the importance of the accuracy of information placed on the Assembly record, I would be grateful if you would ask the Minister for Communities to correct the record and apologise at the earliest opportunity.

I have copied this correspondence to Executive colleagues for information.

Is mise le meas

**DR CAOIMHE ARCHIBALD MLA  
Minister for the Economy**

cc     Executive Colleagues



**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 26 June 2026 12:28  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** Ball, John; [REDACTED] Lynch, Ciara;  
McPolin, Laura; [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Draft Narrative and Action plans for approval by all  
departments. - updates  
**Attachments:** Annex B - Ulster-Scots - Actions - DRAFT FOR ALL  
DEPARTMENTS APPROVAL AS AT 16.02.26.DOCX; Annex A - Irish - Actions - DRAFT FOR ALL  
DEPARTMENTS APPROVAL AS AT 16.02.26.DOCX

Hi Guys

Please find attached DfE input approved by our Minister.

Please note our minister is endorsing DfE actions only, as highlighted in yellow, and not the strategy wholistically as that is best reserved for the Executive.

Our Minister will reserve comment on other aspects until discussed at Executive level.

Happy to chat

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Mobile – [REDACTED]