

Oral Statement to the Northern Ireland Assembly

**PUBLIC SECTOR TRANSFORMATION
SUCCESSFUL STAGE 2 TRANSFORMATION PROPOSALS**

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Introduction

This Executive's Programme for Government, Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most, has made 'Reform and Transformation of our Public Services' one of our nine key priorities.

As our society changes, we must ensure our public services adapt and evolve to meet the new and changing needs of communities.

As an Executive we have been clear that we want to transform the delivery of public services and make life better for the people we serve.

I am pleased today to announce £129m of Transformation Programme funding for innovative projects which will support and drive the transformation of our public services.

This funding will make a real difference improving health outcomes for citizens, supporting children with special educational needs and funding initiatives in our justice system to make our communities safer.

It will also support infrastructure projects to address pressure on our constrained drainage and wastewater infrastructure and improvements in the planning system which is central to economic growth. All of which are key priorities within our Programme for Government.

Agreement on recommendations

The financial package for a restored Executive included £235m in ring-fenced transformation funding over a 5-year period, commencing in 2024-25.

On 9 May 2024, the Executive agreed to establish an interim Board, Chaired by the Head of the Civil Service, Jayne Brady, and agreed the assessment criteria to consider transformation proposals from departments.

The criteria upon which proposals were sought, included proposals which could:

- Increase the financial sustainability of public services;
- Transform the model of delivery of public services, to improve effectiveness and efficiency; and
- Prevention, Cost Savings, and Early Intervention.

The interim Board assessed 47 proposals from Departments. Those proposals deemed to be transformative progressed to a Stage 2 assessment. It is those proposals successful in that assessment which I will allocate funding for today.

The interim Board presented its recommendations to the previous Finance Minister, who put forward her recommendations to Executive colleagues. Those recommendations were approved on 28 January.

Successful proposals / funding allocations

As a result of that work and following my efforts to agree the Terms of Reference for the interim Board, with the Secretary of State and, separately, to secure release of this funding from the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, I am now in a position to announce those proposals which have been successful in the first tranche of Transformation funding.

Six successful proposals will benefit from funding across a five-year period.

The successful proposals and funding amounts are:

- **£61m**, for the Department of Health's Primary Care Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) proposal.

MDT's are a partnership between GP Federations and Health and Social Care Trusts, that has introduced new early intervention physiotherapy, social work and

mental health roles into general practice to work alongside existing teams.

This transformation funding will enable completion of the model in the seven existing MDT areas, and expansion into an additional five GP Federation areas with a combined population coverage of around 670,000 people.

This will improve health outcomes for citizens as well as helping to address health inequalities across the North.

- **£27.5m**, for the Department of Education's Special Educational Needs (SEN) proposal.

This proposal aims to reform services to ensure better outcomes for children. This proposal will support a suite of pilot programmes focused on early intervention and building an appropriately skilled education workforce.

It aims to help address the unsustainable financial trajectory of SEN and improve the support provided to

children and young people with Special Educational Needs, ensuring they have equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of life with greater emotional well-being, societal inclusion and life-skills.

- **£20.45m**, for the joint Department of Justice and Public Prosecution Services proposal on Speeding Up and Transforming the Criminal Justice System.

This proposal aims to support the transformation of criminal justice, to reduce delay and maximise efficiencies. This will happen through the promotion of more timely engagement between PSNI, prosecution and defence services.

This proposal will also target alternative approaches for out of court disposals for lower-level crime, freeing up capacity in our courts for more serious cases.

- **£2.19m**, for the Department of Justice's Modernisation of Electronic Monitoring proposal.

This proposal will allow DoJ to transform the way in which they monitor individuals released into the community.

The funding will also enable the creation of a multi-disciplinary team to examine the technical and policy implications of implementing GPS location monitoring for those on bail or on licence fitted with an electronic tag.

- **£15m**, for the Department for Infrastructure's Urban Drainage proposal.

This proposal will fund a pilot project to make a robust case on how we can transform the way in which rainwater is managed in our towns and cities.

The pilot will use nature-based drainage solutions to demonstrate the benefits of managing rainwater naturally on the surface, to slow its flow into our rivers and piped drainage systems; and

- **£3m**, for the Department for Infrastructure's Transforming Planning proposal.

This proposal will lead to the appointment of independent persons to deliver reports on planning and environmental considerations relating to major 'hear and report' work.

This will help the Planning Appeals Commission address its resource issues and help drive economic delivery through our Planning system.

In addition, a further £300k will be allocated to The Executive Office to undertake a Digital Maturity Assessment. 18 of the original 47 proposals, which are digital in nature, will be assessed collectively as part of a Digital Maturity Assessment. To ensure a more strategic, system-wide approach to digital transformation.

Funding will also be allocated to the administration and operation of the Public Sector Transformation Board,

including the provision of expert advice to support the delivery of proposals in departments.

The Board Secretariat will monitor and report on the progress of funded projects as they are implemented to ensure projects deliver on their outcomes.

I will formally notify departments of their funding allocations, including conditions of approval, to enable spend to commence in 2024-25.

Next steps

Following allocation of these funds, approximately £102.5 million will remain for further distribution.

This funding will be utilised through a combination of those digital proposals which are deemed transformational and agreed by the Executive. And any subsequent call for transformation proposals.

My expectation is that a second call for proposals will take place, in late Spring / Summer.

I would like to put on record my thanks to the Public Sector Transformation Board for all its work during this process and to all departments for their engagement and active participation in the Transformation Programme.

Having come from the Department for Infrastructure I can say that the process undertaken so far has been a positive one.

Officials have reflected to me that this novel and innovative process has challenged them, led to the development of stronger proposals, and allowed departments to demonstrate how they could accelerate the transformation of public services when given the opportunity.

While the £235m in funding will in no way tackle the magnitude of issues at hand, it will be significant in helping to develop and implement a model of delivery, to stimulate the wider transformation of public services. Transformation will take time and this is a step on that journey.

It also demonstrates this Executive's commitment to the Reform and Transformation of our Public Services, as published in the Programme for Government this week.