



President
General Sir James Everard KCB CBE

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Lieutenant General Philip Jones CB CBE DL

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ABF The Soldiers' Charity (Northern Ireland)
Building 115, Thiepval Barracks, Lisburn BT28 3NP
02892 678112 ni@soldierscharity.org www.soldierscharity.org

NI Councils List A.

12th January 2023

MUSICAL TRIBUTE TO HM QUEEN ELIZABETH II – WATERFRONT HALL, 15 APR 2023

Dear Adrian / Adrian à chera,

On behalf of our Hon Regional President, The Viscount Brookeborough KG, I would like to inform you of our Tribute Concert at the Waterfront Hall, Belfast, featuring the Band, Bugles, Pipes and Drums of the Royal Irish Regiment. It will take place on the evening of Saturday 15th April 2023, as a commemoration of Her Majesty's long reign, through the medium of music and to raise funds for soldiers, ex-soldiers and their families in times of need.

ABF The Soldiers' Charity, (formerly the Army Benevolent Fund), has been in existence since 1944 and supports soldiers, veterans and army families who have fallen upon hard times, raising around £8 million annually to meet this need. Should you wish to know more about the work of the charity, you can visit our website at www.soldierscharity.org.

We would like to invite a group of your Councillors and staff to attend and I would be grateful if you could enter the date of the concert into your forecast of events for 2023 and support the charity by planning to attend what I know will be a tremendously entertaining evening. VIP tickets cost £65 and allow the holders to relax in a VIP lounge with drinks and nibbles as part of the ticket price, both before the show and during the interval. VIP seating is also included for the performance.

If you have any enquiries, don't hesitate to contact me on ni@soldierscharity.org or by calling 02892 678112. Please note that we work from home on Mondays and Fridays.

Best wishes, *a mis*

David

David Forsey
Director (NI)

Received

24 JAN 2023

Chief Executive



BBC Northern Ireland

Broadcasting House,
Ormeau Avenue,
Belfast BT2 8HQ

028 9033 8000
bbc.co.uk/northernireland

08 February, 2023

Dear Cllr Corry

Foyle Update – BBC Northern Ireland Savings and Renewal Plan 2023/24

I'm replying to your recent letter, which was also sent to senior BBC colleagues, about the Foyle-related aspects of BBCNI's savings and renewal plan 2023/24.

We said from the outset (29 November) that **we were committed to Foyle's continuing role as a production base for the BBC's local and region-wide content.**

We also said that we wanted to:

- **enhance digital news provision from/about the Foyle area and how this would complement (and inform) other BBC output;**
- **bring Foyle's news team into BBC News NI's region-wide operation, with all of the editorial and audience benefits that this will provide, including career progression for staff;**
- **retain a 30mins weekday news programme on Foyle and with a broadcast slot that would maximise its reach and impact;**
- **achieve 35-40 post closures across BBCNI departments through voluntary redundancy;**
- **take careful account of feedback from BBC staff, the trade unions and audiences about our savings and reinvestment plan and how best its objectives could be delivered.**

We can't avoid the savings that we need to make, or the difficult choices that these involve. And we need to respond to changes in how BBC audiences want to access news and information and everything else that's happening in the media marketplace. None of this is easy and we have been mindful throughout of the impact which our plans will have on BBC teams across the region – and in many different roles.

We have now done what we said we would and have gone beyond those core commitments by further strengthening news and region-wide programming in Foyle. This has involved making some additional (and not insignificant) savings and changes elsewhere. **Not everything in Foyle will stay the same and the financial context for all of this remains difficult.** We are convinced that **these updated (and now final) plans** will provide audience and operational benefits and deliver value for money. They **make tangible the ambitions that we have for Foyle and its creative potential**, whilst also acknowledging the limits of what is financially possible for BBC Northern Ireland and its services more generally.

We have now confirmed our intention (subject to the BBC's ability to confirm planned post closures) to:

- create an additional two roles in addition to the three already announced for Foyle, providing local and region-wide output on digital and audio;
- **retain hourly radio news bulletins on Foyle** each weekday until 3.00pm – something that will require additional savings being made elsewhere within BBCNI;
- make Foyle **the production base for an additional peak-time programme on BBC Radio Ulster**, in addition to several other off-peak programmes (details to be announced as part of wider schedule changes within the next month or so);
- **broadcast Foyle's 30mins radio news programme at 08.30am** each weekday with an **exclusively local focus**;
- launch a **12mth pilot initiative** that will mean that journalist vacancies in BBC News NI's online and news app teams will be advertised as having their primary base either in Foyle or Broadcasting House;
- **maintain existing BBC staffing levels within Foyle** with the ambition to grow and diversify the skills of its staff team and their work over time.

We appreciate what you and Council colleagues have said about the value of the BBC's news and other services for people in the North West and hope this short note provides clarity about what's been happening and anticipated next steps.

Yours sincerely



Adam Smyth
Interim Director – BBC Northern Ireland

Press Announcement – 29 November, 2022

BBC Northern Ireland has set out plans to facilitate the enhancement of its digital video and online services and the savings that it will need to make over the coming period.

These plans reflect a BBC-wide strategy to prioritise digital content, [announced earlier this year](#), and the need to manage inflationary and other cost pressures.

Local investment in BBC iPlayer will be increased as a result of these proposals, but there will also be output and staffing reductions in news, audio and related areas.

BBC Northern Ireland is proposing to close approximately 35-40 posts to contribute to its £2.3 million savings and reinvestment plans.

It is hoped the majority of post closures will be achieved through voluntary redundancy, with some opportunities for redeployment within BBC Northern Ireland. The proposals are now subject to consultation with staff and trade unions.

Some of BBC Northern Ireland's output will be impacted by these plans, including the breakfast-time news programme on BBC Radio Foyle and Inside Business on BBC Radio Ulster.

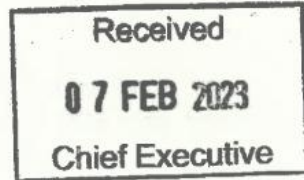
Efforts have been made to limit the effect of proposed changes on the scope and benefits of BBC services in Northern Ireland and local staff teams.

Adam Smyth, Interim Director, BBC Northern Ireland, said: "These are challenging times and we face some difficult choices, none of which are easy. We have to find monies to maintain and develop our local presence on BBC iPlayer and to absorb cost pressures across different aspects of our work. Our concern in all of this will be to safeguard audience value and benefit and to remain mindful of the impact that this announcement will have on BBC staff in Northern Ireland."

Several UK-wide operational and staffing reviews are also ongoing and these may impact other locally-based teams and roles next year.

ends

POA2023/00419



HM Treasury, 1 Horse Guards Road, London, SW1A 2HQ

Councillor Córa Corry
Burn Road
Cookstown
BT80 8DT

Your ref: C234/22
31 January 2023

Dear Councillor Corry,

Thank you for your letters of 2 December to both the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer outlining Mid Ulster District Council's call for immediate support to help people to manage the cost of living. I am replying as the Minister responsible for Public Spending. I am sorry to hear of the difficulties your constituents find themselves in.

The Government understands that people are worried about the cost of living challenges ahead. High inflation is the hidden tax – eating into wages; increasing the cost of the weekly shop and the cost of people's mortgages. That is why we are determined to get inflation down – and the Government have set out a plan that will halve inflation this year.

Decisive action has been taken to support households across the UK through cost of living challenges ahead, whilst remaining fiscally responsible. At the Autumn Statement, the Government announced further support for next year designed to target the most vulnerable households. This cost of living support is worth £26 billion in 2023/24. This action taken by the Government means that over 8 million of the most vulnerable households across the UK will continue to be supported through next winter via additional Cost of Living Payments. The Government will provide all UK households on means-tested benefits with an additional Cost of Living Payment of £900 in 2023/24 – in the same year, pensioner households will receive an additional £300 Cost of Living Payment, and individuals on disability benefits will receive an additional £150.

The Government is continuing to provide support to all UK households for their energy bills through the Energy Price Guarantee (EPG). The EPG Scheme in Northern Ireland provides households with equivalent financial support with their electricity and gas bills, saving the average consumers around £900 this winter. The Government understands people in Northern Ireland have faced severe impacts from the rising costs of energy, including the households who are reliant on alternative fuels. That is why all Northern Ireland households will also receive £600 from the Government to help with energy costs. This payment is made up of the Energy Bills Support Scheme £400 and the Alternative Fuel Payment £200.

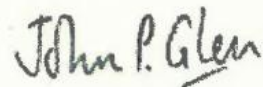
The Government remains committed to tackling low pay. From 1 April 2023, the National Living Wage (NLW) will increase by 9.7 percent to £10.42 an hour for workers aged 23 and over. This represents an increase of over £1,600 to the annual earnings of a full-time

worker on the NLW and is expected to benefit 130,000 low paid workers in Northern Ireland. This is in addition to the previously announced reversal of the Health and Social Care Levy which will have saved the average worker £310 in 2023/24.

The Government will continue to keep the situation under review and focus support on the most vulnerable whilst acting in a fiscally responsible way.

Thank you for taking the trouble to make me aware of these concerns and for the actions you are taking to support the most vulnerable in your council.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John P. Glen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line under the name.

THE RT HON JOHN GLEN MP



Derry City & Strabane
District Council
Comhairle
Chathair Dhoire &
Cheantar an tSratha Báin
Derry Cíttie & Stràbane
Deistrick Council

Our Ref: CM/C45/23

10 February 2023

Adrian Mc Creesh
Chief Executive
Mid Ulster Council

Email: adrian.mccreesh@midulstercouncil.org

Dear Mr Mc Creesh

At a Meeting of Derry City and Strabane District Council held on 25 January 2023, the following Motion was passed:

That Council further recognises the rail infrastructure neglect across the North West of this island since the then Stormont Government closed the cross-border rail network here in 1965.

That Council reaffirms its position to support investment of rail in the city and its expansion to other parts of our Council District which will allow for greater regional connectivity.

That Council recognises the need, as consequence of the All Island Strategic Rail Review, for a feasibility business case into re-opening the Great Northern Railway, connecting Derry City to Strabane, Omagh, Dungannon and ultimately Portadown allowing for connectivity with Dublin, along with facilitating new connections in County Donegal.

That Council actively seeks to engage with the Department of Infrastructure, Translink, Donegal County Council, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, Mid Ulster District Council, Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council and the Dublin Government on jointly funding a feasibility study into re-opening the former Great Northern Railway line.

That Council Officers report back to the Environment and Regeneration Committee with relevant options papers and costings in relation to the feasibility study.

Derry
C/o Council Offices
98 Strand Road
Derry
BT48 7KN

Strabane
C/o Council Offices
47 Derry Road
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John Kelpie MEng., CEng., MIStructE., MIEI
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t @dcsdcouncil

Council will write to DFI to ask for immediate clarification on what plans they have to secure the track bed off Victoria Road in order to extend rail south from Waterside Station, given the latest information received from Clanmil.

Council notes the 'Restoring your Railway' fund in England, Government funding to support local communities to explore the options for restoring old lines and stations, and so will write to the NI Secretary of State and the Permanent Secretary of DFI to call for a similar scheme to be introduced here.

I would appreciate your consideration in this important matter and would be grateful for a response at your earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Kelpie', with a large, stylized initial 'J'.

**John Kelpie
Chief Executive**

Northern Ireland Water

PO Box 1026
Belfast
BT1 9DJ
www.niwater.com

Tel: 0345 7440088



Eileen.forde@midulstercouncil.org

10 February 2023

Dear Cora

Re: NI Water Telecommunications Mast & Reservoir – Castlehill, Dungannon

Thank you for your letter dated 31 January 2023, further to our previous correspondence regarding NI Water's Telecommunications Mast at Castlehill, Dungannon, and the Council's ongoing concern about its visual impact.

As you will be aware, NI Water is a regulated utility and as such it is required to ensure that expenditure is aligned with the outputs that are set for it by UREGNI. As a government owned body, NI Water must also ensure that it complies with guidance in respect to Managing Public Money. There are currently over 100 economically constrained areas in Northern Ireland, operating near or above their design capacity, either at the Wastewater Treatment Works or within the sewer network. Sustained, and secure levels of investment over multiple Price Controls will be required, if NI Water is to recover from the historic underinvestment in water and sewerage services that has created the current situation of capacity constraint in so many locations. This funding is not guaranteed.

Future budgets and current costs increases aside, in this context I regret therefore to advise you that NI Water is not funded to establish an alternative telecoms solution in this location, as the cost would be significant.

In the event that alternative sources of funding to replace the mast were to be obtained, via the Council or another body, NI Water would need to be assured that not only would the solution enable NI Water's essential services to be maintained but that such a solution would also meet the needs of the 3rd party telecom and blue light service providers who are currently hosted on the mast, and from whom an income is obtained. In this context it would not be appropriate for Council representatives to meet with NI Water.



NI Water does however understand the Council's concerns and wishes to assist in so far as it is able. If it is helpful, NI Water would welcome the opportunity to meet with Council representatives to discuss how it may be able to part-fund an appropriately procured feasibility study to help the Council and other stakeholders to understand what alternatives to the mast may be possible and the associated cost estimates for such a solution. The current estimated cost for a feasibility study is approximately £60k. Such an offer of assistance would have to be based on a shared understanding with Mid Ulster District Council that NI Water cannot fund any subsequent work identified by the feasibility study to relocate the mast.

Our Chief Information Officer Peter Semple and our Head of Telemetry and Telecoms Pearse Bradley would be happy to meet with Council representatives in this regard, if it would be useful. If the Council would like to suggest some dates and times via e-mail to waterline@niwater.com, marked for Peter and Pearse's attention, our team will confirm their availability and get back to you.

Lastly, I would note in your most recent letter you have mentioned NI Water's Service Reservoir at Castlehill as well, in the context of its environmental impact. This reservoir is an integral part of our potable water infrastructure in the area storing drinking water for local distribution. We could not therefore consider relocating it.

I hope you find this response helpful.

Yours sincerely



Sara Venning
Chief Executive



FROM THE PERMANENT SECRETARY



Councillor Cora Corry
Chair
Mid Ulster District Council

Eileen.Forde@midulstercouncil.org

Adelaide House
39-49 Adelaide Street
Belfast, BT2 8FD
Tel: 028 90529441
Email: permanent.secretarysupport@economy-ni.gov.uk

Our Ref: SCOR-0055-2023

13 February 2023

Dear Councillor Corry,

Thank you for your correspondence of 30th January 2023, regarding Mid Ulster District Council's support of a motion recently carried by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council that laws being proposed at Westminster that would give workers a legal right to their tips, be extended to Northern Ireland.

As employment law is devolved to Northern Ireland, the legislation currently progressing through Westminster does not apply here. However, my Department continues to liaise with its counterpart in GB on the topic more generally. Any policy proposals for similar legislation in Northern Ireland would be subject to appropriate public consultation and the necessary approvals from the Executive and the Assembly.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'David Malcolm', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

DAVID MALCOLM
Interim Permanent Secretary
Department for the Economy



Department for

Infrastructure

An Roinn

Bonneagair

Department for

Infrastructure

www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Councillor Cora Corry

Eileen.Forde@midulstercouncil.org

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BT79 7AF

Tel: 0300 200 7894
Text Phone: 028 9054 0022
Fax: 028 8225 4009

Your reference:
Our reference: 149293-23

14th February 2023

Dear Cllr Corry,

GRITTING ON RURAL ROADS IN MID ULSTER

Thank you for your letter of 30th January requesting information regarding the gritting of the rural road network in Mid Ulster.

As you may be aware, the current winter service policy operated by the Department utilises the widely accepted practice of targeting limited resources for this service on the higher trafficked main through routes. The application of this policy means that 28% of the total road network, which carries around 80% of traffic, is salted. It must however, be emphasised that the service provided cannot eliminate the risks – even on roads that are gritted, ice free conditions cannot be guaranteed.

In rural areas, small settlements containing 100 dwellings or more have salted links to roads on the main salted network. In addition, on roads not included on the salted network, salt boxes (bins) or grit piles may be provided for use by the public on a self-help basis. DfI Roads commits significant resources to maintain 542 salt bins and approximately 11,308 salt/grit piles provided on public roads within Mid Ulster.

I fully understand and appreciate the concerns of local residents, but it is simply not feasible to expand the criteria to include more lightly trafficked roads on the primary salted network given the severe budget constraints facing the Department.

The current policy also allows for unscheduled secondary and emergency requests where additional salting may be undertaken where resources allow. For example, to

assist access for the emergency services or some other unforeseen occurrence of that nature such as a funeral. Arrangements are also in place to provide priority secondary salting to schools which have had to close due to inaccessibility, associated solely with the presence of snow or ice on the adjacent network.

Secondary salting occurs when the integrity of the main salting schedule has been assured and problems with ice and or snow are being reported on untreated roads. It does not occur in response to normal frost conditions.

DfI Roads Policy and Procedure document E022 lists the following criteria for Inclusion of Roads on the Salting Schedule:

The following routes shall be included in precautionary salting schedules:

- Motorways and Trunk Roads;
- Main Routes – (i.e.) through routes carrying more than 1,500 vehicles per day; and
- Other Busy Routes with special difficulties – (i.e.) through routes carrying between 1,000 and 1,500 vehicles per day where the following factors give rise to special difficulty: -
 - a) severity, frequency and extent of gradient
 - b) frequency of bends
 - c) height above sea level
 - d) railway level crossing
 - e) abnormally high junction frequency

While I fully understand the concerns of those who use the more lightly trafficked roads which are not on the salted network, I hope you will appreciate it is simply not practical to salt all roads. There is a balance to be struck between putting more funds into salting or funding the numerous other worthwhile demands on Departmental funds, many of which are safety related. If local council staff or elected representatives require specific information on certain roads the local Section Engineer is always willing to discuss specific locations. Neil Bratton can be contacted regarding roads in the Mid Ulster North area while Lesley Maxwell can be contacted regarding roads in the Mid Ulster South area.

I hope this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely,



Daniel Healy
Divisional Roads Manager
Western Division



Councillor Cora Corry

Eileen.Forde@midulstercouncil.org

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Drumragh Avenue
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BT79 7AF

Tel: 0300 200 7894
Text Phone: 028 9054 0022
Fax: 028 8225 4009

Your reference:
Our reference: 149297-23

15th February 2023

Dear Cllr Corry,

IMPROVEMENTS IN THE DUNGANNON AREA

Thank you for your letter dated 30th January 2023 regarding traffic congestion and accident investigation in the Dungannon area.

The programming of resurfacing works in the Dungannon area has been complicated this year due to the lack of a surfacing contract until the 28th of June, and the lateness of our budget allocation.

With the reduced timeframe for delivering projects in the 2022-23 financial year, the task of programming and delivering vital resurfacing schemes becomes more difficult.

I understand the members concern that Dungannon was almost gridlocked due to the roadworks. However, the careful planning and programming of the works by my maintenance staff meant that traffic continued to move through the town. I accept that there was increased traffic congestion due to the roadworks but I hope it is recognised that our primary aim was to balance the short term disruption to traffic with the long term benefits of improving the road network for the local community.

Resurfacing works have been completed on A45 Granville Road and A29 Cookstown Road and are now continuing on the A45 Coalisland Road. All of these works necessitated road closures for a substantial part of the works and traffic management arrangements were in place. Other works under a lane closure have been carried out by our Street Lighting section on the A29 Moy Road. At all times access to businesses

and residents was accommodated. Health and safety for both the road user and the contractor for all these works is paramount and therefore it is necessary for traffic management to be in place.

I appreciate the feedback from members and I can assure them that the concerns they have raised will be respected when planning future roadworks in Dungannon.

The accidents on the M1 between junctions 14 and 15 are currently being investigated by the PSNI. DfI are assisting the PSNI with their investigation. I trust you understand that until this investigation is complete, I am unable provide further details.

I hope this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Healy', with a stylized flourish underneath.

Daniel Healy
Divisional Roads Manager
Western Division