

From the Permanent Secretary
Dr Denis McMahon

Our Reference: SSUB-0260-2023

Council Chief Executives

Via email: name@emailaddress.co.uk

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Clarence Court
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4 October 2023

Dear Chief Executives

HANDLING CORRESPONDENCE RELATED TO ROADS MAINTENANCE DEFECTS

The purpose of this letter is to advise you and Councilors of the Department for Infrastructure's preferred approach to handling correspondence relating to the reporting of defects on the roads network. Our aim in doing this is to ensure that we provide the best possible service while focusing our resources on delivery on the ground.

The Department, and in particular the Transport and Roads Asset Management Teams, receive a significant volume of correspondence from the public and elected representatives throughout the year. To give you a sense of scale, one Division was sent over 19,000 items of correspondence last year. Indeed, the level of correspondence has been increasing in recent years at a time when resources have been reducing which is adversely impacting on our ability to deliver key services and public safety responsibilities.

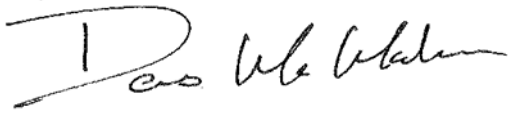
In an effort to maximise the Department's effectiveness in delivering key road maintenance functions, I would ask that members of the public and elected representatives who have access to the internet report road defects via the DfI online reporting facility provided by NI Direct (<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/travel-transport-and-roads/problems-roads-and-streets>) rather than by direct correspondence with the Department.

Alternatively, faults that are considered to be an emergency can be reported by telephone to 02890 540540 and reports of Flooding can be directed to the Flooding Incident Line 0300 2000 1000 (24 hours a day).

I hope you find this helpful and know that you will appreciate the reasons for this

approach which is seeking to make best use of the people we have.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Denis McMahon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "M".

DR DENIS McMAHON
Dfi Permanent Secretary

From the Director of Major Projects & Active Travel
Colin Hutchinson



Paul McCreedy
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Paul.McCreedy@midulstercouncil.org

Date: 2 October 2023

Our reference:
WS/2023/3067395

Dear Paul McCreedy,

A5 Western Transport Corridor (A5WTC) scheme update

As one of our key partners in the delivery of the A5WTC flagship scheme, you will know that earlier this year (May–June 2023), the Department progressed the scheme through a Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) led public inquiry process.

We are expecting the PAC Report on its findings from the public inquiry to be issued to the Department by the end of December 2023, at the latest. I am optimistic that the significant work invested by the Department, all our advisors and stakeholders, will lead to a positive outcome from the public inquiry and allow us to move towards the commencement of construction next year.

Subject to a positive report from the public inquiry and a formal Decision to Proceed by a Minister (or Permanent Secretary), the Departmental Statement and Direction and Vesting Orders could be made and published in Spring 2024.

Subject to all requirements being met including the availability of funding and no further delays due to legal challenges, all three Section Contractors would gain possession of their respective sites from Spring 2024, with construction works currently being programmed to commence as follows:

- Section 1 (New Buildings to Sion Mills) mid-2024
- Section 2 (Sion Mills to South of Omagh) Autumn 2024
- Section 3 (South of Omagh to Aughnacloy) Spring 2025.

We have fully committed our consultants – WSP, the Contractors and their design teams to ensure we are ready to meet these dates.

If agreement with current landowners can be reached, we anticipate that advance works in the form of archaeological and ground investigations could commence across all three sections in autumn of this year.

The Department appreciates your continued support and commitment to achieving this planned delivery programme and commencing construction. As we wait for the publication of the PAC Report and findings of the public inquiry, I would encourage you to review your resourcing position to ensure that you will be able to meet the demands of the anticipated scheme progression and planned delivery programme.

If you have any queries, please contact the Project Sponsor for the scheme, Seamus Keenan at Seamus.Keenan@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely,



Colin Hutchinson
Director of Major Projects & Active Travel



Steve Baker MP
Minister of State for Northern
Ireland

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Councillor Dominic Molloy
Chair, Mid-Ulster Council

By email: Eileen.Forde@midulstercouncil.org

10 October 2023
Our reference: MC/23/465
Your reference: C172/23

Dear Dominic,

Thank you for your letter dated 2 October regarding Lough Neagh. I am responding on behalf of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Rt Hon Chris Heaton-Harris MP.

The Secretary of State and I understand the appalling state and the seriousness of concerns that people in Northern Ireland, and indeed people in the rest of the UK and Ireland, have about Lough Neagh and the damage being caused to its environment, wildlife and local businesses.

As you are aware, the management of Lough Neagh is a devolved matter and responsibility for this rests with the Northern Ireland Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, the Department of Infrastructure and the NI Environment Agency. We would therefore ask that you please contact the relevant departments and agencies, who will be able to respond to you directly about their specific plans on this issue.

The absence of a functioning Executive in Northern Ireland is exacerbating the severe challenges associated with managing serious environmental issues such as this. The restoration of the Executive and a fully functioning Assembly is a key priority for the UK Government. The Secretary of State is continuing to engage with party leaders to support a return to stable government so that matters such as the protection of Lough Neagh can be addressed by those elected to do so.

In the meantime, my officials, and their counterparts in DEFRA, will continue to engage regularly with the Northern Ireland Departments to monitor the situation at Lough Neagh.

Thank you once again for writing to the Secretary of State on this important issue.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Baker', with a horizontal line underneath.

STEVE BAKER MP
MINISTER OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Andrew Scott
Director of Corporate Services & Governance



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Andrew.Scott@education-ni.gov.uk
19 October 2023

Every CHILD: Department of Education Corporate Plan 2023-2028

Dear stakeholder

I am writing to advise you that the Department of Education has today published its new Corporate Plan, *Every CHILD*, which is available to view on the Department's website at [Corporate and business planning | Department of Education \(education-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/corporate-and-business-planning)

On the website you will also find an Easy Read version of *Every CHILD*, a report on the public consultation which took place towards the end of 2022 and the DE 2023-24 annual Business Plan and mid-year progress report.

At the heart of the Plan is the Department's Vision that "*Every child and young person is happy, learning and succeeding*," *Every CHILD* puts children and young people at the heart of its priorities for the next five years and sets out an ambitious Plan for achieving this.

Every CHILD was developed following extensive engagement with stakeholders and we hope that it will provide clarity to the Department and all our stakeholders on our focus over the coming years to deliver on our Vision that "*Every child and young person is happy, learning and succeeding*".

Although I recognise the challenges we are all facing across the education sector and beyond, it is important that we remain ambitious. *Every CHILD* provides a renewed focus for everyone working to improve outcomes for children and young people.

If you would like further information on *Every CHILD*, please contact DEcorporateplan@education-ni.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew Scott".

ANDREW SCOTT