
Written Ministerial Statement

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Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Executive's Priority Measures to Deal with the Economic Downturn

Published at 9.30 am on Thursday 20 May 2010

The First Minister and the deputy First Minister (Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness):

In December 2008 we presented to the Assembly the Executive's consolidated package of measures to deal with the economic downturn. As part of that December package, we established the Cross Sector Advisory Forum (CSAF) to continue our dialogue with business, trade unions, financial institutions, consumer organisations and voluntary and community stakeholders.

The Forum held four meetings on 6 April 2009, 30 June 2009, 7 October 2009, and finally on 4 March 2010. It formed sub-groups to take forward particular strands of work and their recommendations were submitted to us for consideration in November 2009.

In parallel with this work, the Economic Development Forum also submitted recommendations specifically aimed at helping the local economy recover from the recession. We were also able to draw upon recommendations made by NICS Departments to contribute to economic recovery.

All of these measures are included in the paper: "The Executive's Priority Measures to Deal with the Economic Downturn". This package of measures was approved by the Executive on 25 March and forms the next steps in our work to address the economic downturn.

The actions cover wide ranging issues such as planning, availability of bank finance, export

promotion, R&D support, implementation of MATRIX, skills and employment measures, benefit uptake, promoting renewables, the social economy, illegal money lending, benefit uptake, small business access to procurement projects, money guidance rollout, development of the gas industry and energy efficiency.

Many of the proposals can be implemented readily and others are for further consideration with the priority being to have a strong impact on jobs, business growth and alleviating hardship and effectively respond to the issues raised by the crisis.

Full details of the recovery package can be found in the booklet posted in the Assembly Library and on the Cross Sector Advisory Forum section on the OFMDFM website:

http://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/index/economic-policy/cross_sector_advisory_forum.htm.