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Our ref: CORR/2204/2022
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Mrs S Steele
Democratic Services Officer
Belfast City Council
Legal and Civic Services Department
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS

Via email: steelesara@belfastcity.gov.uk

Dear Mrs Steele,

Motion - Continuance of Hybrid Meetings

Thank you for your letter of 18 July 2022 to the Minister, regarding the above motion passed by Belfast City Council on 4 July 2022. The Minister has asked that I reply on her behalf.

The Local Government (Meetings and Performance) Act (NI) 2021 contains an enabling power to allow the Department to bring forward further Regulations to provide for remote/hybrid meetings, which would include making permanent provision for such meetings. The Department is developing proposals, for the Minister's consideration, on further regulations for remote/hybrid meetings to be made under the 2021 Act, taking account of the responses to the recent call for evidence. A working group, (with membership comprising Departmental officials and council officers) has recently been set up to assist in developing these proposals.

The Local Government (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of District Council Meetings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020, made under section 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020, are due to remain in force until 24 September 2022 as the Department extended the expiration date of section 78 of that Act until that date.

The Department, subject to the Minister's agreement, would intend to further extend the expiry date of section 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020, allowing the current regulations to remain in force beyond 24 September. This will give time for the proposals for Regulations under the 2021 Act, to be fully developed.



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I trust that this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

Anthony Carleton
Director
Local Government & Housing Regulation Division