

From the Permanent Secretary
Katrina Godfrey

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07 November 2023

Dear Kim,

DAERA WITHDRAWAL OF ALL FUNDING TO COUNCILS FOR NON-FARMED ANIMAL WELFARE

Thank you for your letter which I received on 23 October 2023 regarding the delivery of non-farmed animal welfare enforcement services by councils in Northern Ireland.

You will be aware all Departments, including DAERA, have had to find significant savings in this financial year due to a constrained budgetary position. As Accounting Officer, I carry responsibility for ensuring that the Department lives within the budget allocated to it, a responsibility that continues to be stressed to me by both the Northern Ireland Office and the Department of Finance and one that I am committed to discharging, even though it requires difficult decisions to be made.

A substantial majority of the Department's budget is earmarked and cannot be used other than for the purposes for which it has been allocated. Determining how to allocate the reduced non-earmarked resource budget provided to the Department has been a very difficult task, especially in a context where inflation and other factors mean that it is costing significantly more to deliver our statutory and contractual obligations than in previous years.

In such a challenging scenario, difficult decisions have had to be made. One of those difficult decisions was to reallocate funding for the council animal welfare service to ensure the Department can deliver its own core services and statutory functions. However, I have given council colleagues a commitment that we will keep the position under review and will look again at the possibility of financial assistance for councils if the budgetary position changes in the months ahead.

Yours sincerely,



KATRINA GODFREY

Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.

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