

## **EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO**

### **The Coronavirus Act 2020 (Extension of Provisions Relating to Local Authority Meetings) Order (Northern Ireland) 2023**

**SR 2023 No. 48**

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. This Explanatory Memorandum has been prepared by the Department for Communities to accompany the Statutory Rule (details above) which is laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly.
- 1.2. The Statutory Rule is made under section 90(2) of the Coronavirus Act 2020 (“the 2020 Act”) and is subject to the confirmatory resolution procedure.

#### **2. Purpose**

- 2.1. The purpose of the Order is to provide for the continued extension of the expiry date of section 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 to 24 March 2023.

#### **3. Background**

- 3.1. Section 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 made provision to provide local authorities with the flexibility to hold meetings by remote or hybrid means during the Coronavirus emergency. Section 78 included an enabling power for the Department to make regulations regarding remote/hybrid meetings and the Local Government (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of District Council Meetings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 were subsequently made and came into operation on 1 May 2020.
- 3.2. The Coronavirus Act 2020 (Extension of Provisions Relating to Local Authority Meetings) (No 2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2022 extended the expiry date of section 78 of the Act to 24 March 2023, but that Order has not yet been approved by the Assembly. The Department, however, wishes to ensure that section 78 is extended to 24 March 2023 and so makes this Order. The making of this Order renders the continued operation of S.R. 2022 No. 226 unnecessary and so that Order is revoked by this Order.

#### **4. Consultation**

- 4.1. This Order has been drafted using provisions provided for under the Coronavirus Act 2020. There is no statutory requirement for subordinate legislation made under section 90 of the Coronavirus Act to be consulted on.

#### **5. Equality Impact**

- 5.1. The provisions of the Order are technical in their nature and do not give rise to any equality concerns. No new policy is being implemented.

#### **6. Regulatory Impact**

- 6.1. A Regulatory Impact Assessment is not considered necessary. There will be no impact on businesses, charities or voluntary bodies.

#### **7. Financial Implications**

- 7.1. None.

**8. Section 24 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998**

8.1. The Department is satisfied that these regulations comply with section 24 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

**9. EU Implications**

9.1. Not applicable

**10. Parity or Replicatory Measure**

10.1. Not applicable

**11. Additional Information**

Not applicable