



Department for

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Dear Ms McGoldrick,

REGENERATION POWERS

Thank you for your letter of 28th of March 2024 to the Minister for Communities on whose behalf I am providing this response. You advised that Belfast City Council's City Growth and Regeneration Committee met in February and consequently agreed to write to the Minister requesting that he works with all the relevant stakeholders to achieve the conferring of regeneration powers to councils, with the appropriate budgets, within this Assembly mandate.

As Council will be aware, several attempts have been made to put the necessary legislation in place, but on each occasion have not progressed due to a lack of consensus, on the broader issue of local government reform, or on the content of the legislation itself. The last attempt saw the Regeneration Bill introduced in the Northern Ireland Assembly on the 8th of December 2014 (Bill 43/11-16). This was withdrawn in November 2015.

Due to the significant period, which has passed since the introduction of the last Regeneration Bill (2014), and the experience of recent initiatives in response to Covid-19

e.g. the Covid-19 Recovery Revitalisation and Small Settlements Programmes in partnership with the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), the cross-departmental nature of regeneration activities has been clearly demonstrated. The Minister has indicated that he has no plans currently to devolve any additional powers to local councils as this would require a fundamental review of the current position across several Departments and would potentially require Executive referral.

The issue of further work being required to revisit the potential transfer of regeneration powers to Councils was most recently raised at the Partnership Panel meeting in August 2022 at which it was agreed that Local Government and Central Government officials would engage to discuss what a future transformation of regeneration powers could look like.

In October 2022, the PSG/SOLACE Engagement Forum co-chairs agreed that SOLACE would undertake scoping work to understand what is meant by regeneration powers. The Department awaits the outcome of that work.

Yours sincerely



PATRICK ANDERSON
DIRECTOR