# General Election Call Delays Programme for Government in Stormont and Scotland



Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's decision to call a General Election on July 4 has created complications for the Stormont Executive, impacting their plans to publish a programme for government before the summer recess. First Minister Michelle O'Neill explained that purdah regulations, which restrict governmental actions during an election period, pose significant challenges in releasing the policy plan as initially intended.

The Executive Office is still seeking legal advice to determine if it is feasible to publish the programme amidst the election campaign. Initially, O’Neill and Deputy First Minister Emma Little-Pengelly had aimed to present the plan before the summer break.

In Scotland, similar frustrations were expressed by officials who pointed out that critical regional legislation and fiscal plans need to be delayed, including those related to energy and financial strategies. The Scottish government has postponed these initiatives due to the pre-election restrictions.

Stormont, which recommenced its activities in February after a two-year hiatus, is tentatively set to resume deliberations in September post-recess. However, the Executive will remain in session over the summer.

Matthew O’Toole, leader of the opposition at Stormont and a member of the SDLP, criticized what he termed an "alibi" for delayed governmental actions, while Ulster Unionist MLA Steve Aiken also voiced concerns over the prolonged wait for the programme’s publication. These developments underscore the broader impact of the unexpected election timing on regional governance.