

Northern Ireland Secretary Brandon Lewis – Statement following Queen’s Speech 2022

The Northern Ireland Office has today (Tuesday 10 May) outlined two Bills as part of its legislative programme for the next parliamentary session.

In the 2022 State Opening of Parliament, the UK Government confirmed it will introduce a Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Bill and an Identity and Language (Northern Ireland) Bill.

The Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Bill will address the legacy of Northern Ireland’s past by focusing on information recovery and reconciliation and will provide better outcomes for victims, survivors and their families.

It will also deliver on our commitment to veterans who served in Northern Ireland, and help society to look forward. The Bill will further develop proposals set out in a Command Paper last year to ensure they better meet the needs of people most impacted by the Troubles.

A new approach will be taken to immunity for those involved in Troubles-related incidents. An independent body will now only grant immunity from prosecution on a case-by-case basis, based on an individual’s cooperation with the body’s inquiries.

The Identity and Language (Northern Ireland) Bill will deliver a carefully balanced package of identity and language measures as negotiated by the Northern Ireland parties under the New Decade, New Approach agreement. This includes the creation of a new Office of Identity and Cultural Expression that will provide guidance for public authorities on a series of national and cultural identity principles.

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Rt Hon Brandon Lewis MP, said:

“The legislative agenda set out by the Government today is focused on strengthening the economy, easing the cost of living, and levelling up the whole of the UK.

“My immediate post-election priority in Northern Ireland remains working with party leaders to ensure they come together to form an Executive as soon as possible. This is crucial to delivering in the best interests of all the people of Northern Ireland.

“Today’s State Opening of Parliament offers an opportunity to drive forward crucial pieces of legislation that will aid reconciliation and support a fairer, more tolerant society.

“We will deliver an improved approach to addressing the legacy of the

Troubles in Northern Ireland, focused on information recovery and reconciliation. The Government is confident that forthcoming legislation will better support those most impacted by the Troubles.

“The Identity and Language (Northern Ireland) Bill will also recognise and celebrate Northern Ireland’s rich heritage with a balanced package of identity and culture measures previously agreed by the Northern Ireland parties.”