

CONSULTATION WITH THE PARTIES ON DEPARTMENTAL STRUCTURES -
29 OCTOBER 1998

Aide-Memoire by Executive Support Team

1. Key points:

(a) Department of the Centre

- ◆ need in principle for a Department of the Centre under the auspices of the First Minister/Deputy First Minister
- ◆ functions described in paragraph 3.4 of Structures paper to be included, subject to precise definitions in some areas (eg cross-Departmental co-ordination)
- ◆ other functions to be considered (see below)

(b) Junior Ministers

- ◆ Junior Minister(s) in support of First Minister/Deputy First Minister, depending on functions/ responsibilities allocated to the Department of the Centre

(c) Departments

- ◆ Agriculture
- ◆ Economic Development
- ◆ Environment (1) – Environmental Protection/Public Services
- ◆ Environment (2) – Infrastructure/Development
- ◆ Health
- ◆ Education + Training
(TEEA)
- ◆ [Finance and Personnel]/[Arts, Culture, Heritage, Sport]

(d) Wider review of public administration

- ◆ broad based support, but divergence of views on approach (see below)
- ◆ need to bring non-elected public bodies under direct democratic control.

2. Issues for further consideration:

(a) Department of the Centre

- ◆ whether to include issues summarised in paragraph 3.5 of the Structures paper (plus others?)
- ◆ clarification of the role and functions of Information Services?
- ◆ provision of legal services/legal adviser?

(b) Non-Departmental Ministers

- ◆ noted that the Bill allows for Ministers to be appointed without Departmental portfolio
 - proposals (eg Leader of the House)?
- ◆ cross-Departmental Minister? *(with no statutory functions)*

(c) Appointment of Junior Ministers

- ◆ method of appointment?
- ◆ Junior Minister(s) in individual Departments?
- ◆ Junior Minister(s) on cross-Departmental/thematic issues?

(d) Departmental issues:

- ◆ Finance
 - should finance be in a separate Department or in the Department of the Centre?
 - if in a separate Department, should overall responsibility for the budget be located in the Department of the Centre?

◆ Personnel

- where should personnel (currently in Department of Finance and Personnel) go:

(i) to a separate Department of Finance; or

(ii) to the Department of the Centre; or

(iii) to another Department?

◆ Local government

- should local government be moved from the DOE and brigaded with the main finance function?

◆ Equality ^{+ Social Inclusion} (possibly with victims, community relations and human rights)

- separate Department or located in the Department of the Centre?

◆ Rural Development

- rural development to remain in Agriculture or moved to Environment (2) – Infrastructure/Development?

◆ Training

- should training remain with economic development?
- should training be brought in to a newly-created Department of employment?
- should some of the training function be transferred to education?

◆ Education

- should further and higher education be brigaded with training in a new Department of Employment and Allied Training?

◆ Environment (1) – Environmental Protection/Public Services

- determination of public services to be included?

◆ Environment (2) – Infrastructure/Development

- should housing be removed from DOE and placed in a newly-created Department of Social Support and Development or remain brigaded with planning and roads in infrastructure/development?

[- transfer the Voluntary Activity Unit from DHSS to Environment
(2) -Infrastructure/Development?]

◆ Social security

- should social security remain with DHSS?
- alternatives (for example, newly-created Department of Social Support and Development or Department of Training, Employment and Social Security)?

◆ Arts, culture, sport, heritage, tourism

- should tourism remain located in economic development?

◆ thematic Departments, for example

- for children?
- social inclusion?

(e) Wider review of public administration

◆ timing, commissioning, methodology?

- minimal change to Departmental structures now, with indication of comprehensive review, or
- significant change to structures now, with Executive Committee to determine nature and scope of any further review?

(f) Costs/savings

- ◆ technical assessments on costings of establishing new Departments, discounted by savings to be made through rationalisation?