



18 November 2008 - Statement from the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, Stormont Castle, 18 November 2008

First Minister Rt Hon Peter Robinson MP, MLA said: “We want to take this opportunity to brief the media to outline the present position on the issue of the devolution of policing and justice and meetings of the Northern Ireland Executive.

As I have consistently indicated the Democratic Unionist Party is committed to the transfer of Policing and Justice powers. Our election manifesto and policy position papers set out our support for devolving these powers as soon as confidence exists in the community for such a move.

In relation to the modalities we identified the issues of concern that needed to be addressed. This agreed process takes account of all of these requirements.

The agreement we have reached represents a very satisfactory resolution of the most difficult issues relating to the modalities of transferring power and meets all of the publicly expressed concerns.

We believe these agreements are capable of gaining the confidence of the community and we look to the Prime Minister to make good his commitment of helping to resolve the financial arrangements relating to the devolution of these powers.

We both want devolution to happen without undue delay. As I said repeatedly but most recently in my contribution to the Westminster Northern Ireland Affairs Select Committee devolution would take place when the modalities are agreed, legislation passed and the community confidence is in place. But importantly I would add it is the responsibility of political leaders to build public confidence in this process, not simply monitor it. This we are committed to do.

Consequently we have agreed the process by which such devolution will take place and we are determined to faithfully work through the essential steps we have identified. We intend to consult widely throughout the process and earnestly seek to secure the confidence of the community necessary for the devolution of policing and justice functions.”

deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness MP, MLA said: “Following discussions we have agreed a number of arrangements for the discharge of policing and justice functions by the Assembly. We have set out the details of these interim measures in a joint letter to the AERC. You will receive a copy of this along with a process paper.

We are both agreed that Policing and Justice functions should be devolved.

Every leading politician in our community is committed to this outcome. In the past the differences have been about the structures, who would exercise authority and when the powers would be transferred.

We have agreed a tranche of measures which, along with our agreement in July, will assist the AERC in completing its modalities report and, we contend, resolves all the publicly expressed concerns about the structures and who would be the Justice Minister.

Significant progress has been made in resolving these matters. We both want devolution to happen without undue delay.

We have also agreed that the Executive will meet this Thursday 20 November and each week until business is up to

date. We will then revert to our fortnightly meeting. There are a significant number of Ministerial papers on Thursday's agenda.

Ministers will also discuss the first draft of a paper detailing measures to deal with the financial hardship being faced by many people and related matters, issues which we have been in discussions with the British government on resolving.

Sinn Féin has been consistent in all of this, the Executive and other political institutions must operate on the basis of equality and partnership. We believe the outworking of the agreements we have reached will allow the uninterrupted functioning of the Executive.”

Please see documents relating to the announcement below;

- [Assembly and Executive Review Committee correspondence \(PDF 79 KB\) \[assembly-and-executive-review-committee-correspondance.pdf\]](#)
- [Policing and Justice process paper \(PDF 74 KB\) \[policing-and-justice-process-paper.pdf\]](#)

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