

The Northern Ireland Constitutional Convention

NEWS

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Convention file

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RECONVENING CONSULTATIONS

Following receipt of a letter from the Secretary of State, formally announcing his decision to reconvene the Convention from February 3, the Chairman, Sir Robert Lowry, has taken immediate steps to consult with the Leaders of the Parties represented in the Convention on the procedural arrangements required.

Starting on Monday, he will have separate meetings with each group over the next few days to discuss how the Convention should set about the task of considering the three specific matters referred to it by the Secretary of State.

These matters, as set out in the letter to the Chairman, which has been published today as a White Paper, are:

- (a) How best agreement can be reached on a system of government built on the principles on which there is already widespread agreement, and providing for a form of partnership and participation, and which will command the most widespread acceptance throughout the whole of the community in Northern Ireland and in both parts of that community.
- (b) Whether a committee system might be of value as part of a wider and acceptable constitutional framework.
- (c) Whether progress could best be made on the basis of setting up a system of government which, though not temporary, is capable of evolving over a period of time into permanent and agreed constitutional arrangements.

After his consultations have been completed the Chairman will advise the Secretary of State of the proposed arrangements for the first meeting of the reconvened Convention and of any other procedural matters or other points which might require his assistance, so that the necessary formal Order may be made under the Northern Ireland Act 1974.

The Secretary of State has informed the Chairman that he hopes a period of four weeks from February 3 will be sufficient for the Convention to make progress on the matters referred to it.