

Mr McAndrew 25/9
Mr Deakin
I did not hear any comments.
358/9
709/95
25/9
15 SEP 1997

FROM: ANITA BHARUCHA
IPL Division
11 September 1997

cc NI Permanent Secretaries- by fax

- 1. cc *Mr Deakin*
- Mr Carson*
- Mr Long*
- Mr Loughton*

- Mr Watkins
- Mr Stephens
- Mr Brooker
- Mr Warner
- Ms Healy



PS/Sir David Fell

I'm to see the review team on 23 Sept.
I'd value any views before then. H.

REVIEW OF INFORMATION SERVICES IN NORTHERN IRELAND

L. D/F 22 Sept. *to H.*

As you may know, the Secretary of State has agreed that there should be a review of Information Services in Northern Ireland. The Review will be led by Jonathan Stephens, supported by Allan Percival, No. 10 Press Office (who has previously worked in the NIO) and Veronica Crichton, an external consultant. I will act as secretary to the review.

2. I attach a copy of a recent Office Notice about the review, which includes its terms of reference, and has been sent to all staff in the NIO and its agencies. I should be very grateful if Permanent Secretaries would arrange for this information also to be passed to relevant staff within their Departments.

3. The Review team would like to hear views from individuals in the NI Departments as well as the NIO, and we will be arranging discussions with staff; we will also try to meet anyone who wishes to see us. In addition, we would welcome any written comments which people may wish to make. The time-scale for the Review is relatively short: our aim is to complete the Report by mid-October. For this reason, it would be helpful to receive any comments by 3 October.

signed

ANITA BHARUCHA
11 Millbank
210 - 6503

DATE OF ISSUE: 10 SEPTEMBER 1997

TO ALL STAFF IN THE NIO AND AGENCIES

REVIEW OF INFORMATION SERVICES

Following Andy Wood's departure as Director of Information, the Secretary of State has agreed that a Review of Information Services in Northern Ireland should be carried out.

The Review team will be led by Jonathan Stephens, Associate Political Director (L), supported by Allan Percival, previously Head of Information, NIO(L) and now No 10 Press Office, and Veronica Crichton, an external consultant. Anita Bharucha will act as secretary to the Review.

The terms of reference for the review, agreed by the Secretary of State, are attached. The review team's aim is to propose a framework for the future of Information Services which provides:

- a clear statement of what service Information Services should be expected to provide to Ministers, the Office and the media world;
- a clear outline of the relationship between Information Services, policy divisions and Ministers;
- the management structure and support to deliver this level of service, equipped to deliver
 - an overall communications strategy
 - effective management of Information Services staff throughout the system
 - proactive day to day media handling and advice.
- a management agenda to meet the long-term needs of the Office and Information Services' staff.

In carrying out their task, the Review team would like to listen and talk to as many staff concerned with these issues throughout the NIO and NI Departments as possible. They will be in touch with a number of staff to arrange discussions. But members of the team will also try to meet anyone who would like to see them. They would also welcome any comments in writing.

The discussions will of course be on a confidential basis. The team aims to complete the review by mid-October.

If you would like more information about the Review, or wish to contribute, please contact Jonathan Stephens (210 6469) or Anita Bharucha (210 6503).

REVIEW OF INFORMATION SERVICES IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Terms of reference

The terms of reference for the Review shall be:

- to review the service levels required by the Information Service in all aspects of its activities in Northern Ireland to deliver the necessary media strategy and handling, including efficient media monitoring, the need for rapid response and effectiveness in making the Government's view known all the time;
- to review the structures in the service and the departmental structures required to support them to ensure integration with policy and ministerial oversight, including relationships between the Information Service and the Private Offices;
- to address the question of whether the post of a senior administrator should be created in the Information Service in addition to that of the Chief Press Officer (as recommended in the Strategic Review);
- to examine how to deal with any special problems that arise from having offices in both London and Belfast;
- to address ways to deal with the additional pressure created by the need to coordinate HMG's message across the different audiences in Northern Ireland, Great Britain, the Republic of Ireland and the USA;
- to examine the possible relationship between the head of Information Services and any changes in the upper ranks of the NICS which might arise from David Fell's departure.

In addition the Review may wish to make recommendations about how we begin to look at the way the Information Service would operate under devolution.