

Mr. LOUGHRAN

CONFIDENTIAL - POLICY

FROM: D J WATKINS
D/CENT SEC

DATE: 28 MARCH 1997

cc PS/PUS (B&L)
PS/Sir David Fell - B
Mr Stephens
Mr Lavery - B

NI Permanent Secretaries
Mr Daniell
Mr Beeton
Mrs Brown
Mr Canavan
Mr Hill, CPL

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28 MARCH 1997
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ELECTION: CONTINGENCY PLANNING

1. I attach a letter which Sir David Fell has received from Dr Mo Mowlam. (Its attachments will be distributed as appropriate when they arrive.) In essence Dr Mowlam would like us to put in hand some preparatory analysis for the event of a Labour Government being returned on 1 May. This note, which has been discussed with Sir David, commissions such preparatory work.
2. Dr Mowlam has set out a number of headings under which she would want preparatory work undertaken, as follows:-

The Budget: We take this to mean PE. I understand that a meeting has been arranged between Dr Mowlam and Mr Semple for 7 April, and that will doubtless provide further pointers to the sort of material which a Labour Secretary of State would appreciate on appointment.

Local Governance: Work here falls to CPL on the NIGC and constitutional and political implications of power-sharing local councils, to DFF and Central Secretariat on the openness and accountability of quangos and to DOE on both the functions of power-sharing local councils and the scope for further development of other forms of local participation. Perhaps it

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might be best if this work was co-ordinated by Central Secretariat on the basis of inputs from those departments;

* Fair Employment and PAFT: Mr Canavan and DED will wish to set out the facts relating to the SACHR Review, its timetable and handling options; and then go on to a brief analysis of the points made in the Labour submission;

TSN: Again Mr Canavan, perhaps in conjunction with the Chair of SSG/NISRA will wish to look at both a progress report and the McGill paper, together with, in conjunction with DFP, the possible impact of proposed cuts in PE;

* Youth Training and Employment Programme: This seems to fall primarily to DED, though involving DENI on at least some aspects;

* Training Review: This seems primarily to fall to DENI, though in conjunction with DED as appropriate. On the Springvale aspect I suggest that DENI should lead (since it is placed clearly within an HE context), although in collaboration with DOE and Central Secretariat as appropriate. DENI will presumably wish to lead on the notion of refining the remit of the group in question together with an action plan and composition;

Legislation on Abortion: My understanding is that DHSS have the policy lead, though with support from Mr Daniell and REL;

Ministerial Responsibilities: This is an area which Sir David would wish to discuss with PUS after the Easter break. They will doubtless be in touch with colleagues as appropriate in due course.

3. I suggest that the overall product of this exercise should be co-ordinated by Central Secretariat. I should be grateful therefore if colleagues could have with me the requisite

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material by close of play on Friday 18 April, please. We will then need to consider the link between this material and first-day briefing, not least in terms of timing.

4. It would be pointless to try and stipulate a rigid format for the papers commissioned. I suggest nonetheless that Departments should be guided by the following:
 - papers on each topic not to exceed 4 pages if at all possible. (We have potentially 7 topics, and so already the prospect of a 30-page document.) Departments may of course wish to prepare more extensive papers for their own background use;
 - depending on the appropriateness for the subject matter, I suggest that each paper should start with a factual analysis and then proceed to a brief discussion of policy options or commentary on salient points where the Opposition have already set forth their policy proposals.
5. This note is intended merely as a helpful guide. If I have misallocated material or made suggestions which may not suit your particular field, then I am sure you would wish to adjust accordingly. In my absence next week, perhaps queries might be directed to either Mrs Doreen Brown (x28153) or Mr Ian Maye (x28146).

DJW

D J WATKINS
SC X28151

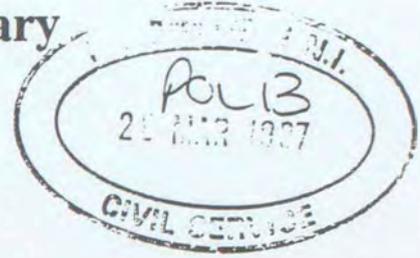
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Dr Marjorie Mowlam MP
Shadow Northern Ireland Secretary

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA
Tel. 0171 219 5066
Fax. 0171 219 2466



Sir David Fell
Permanent Under Secretary of State and
Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service
The Northern Ireland Office
Stormont Castle
Belfast BT4 3ST
Northern Ireland

cc: Sir John Chilcott

21 March 1997

Dear David 28/3

Following our recent meeting, I am writing to highlight those areas in Labour policy where it would be very useful to have some preparation work completed by the date of the election. I would be grateful if you would pass on these points, where appropriate, to the Permanent Secretary in the relevant Northern Ireland department. Then, in the event of Labour Government we could act swiftly in these key areas as we intend.

With the exception of some background on the budget, I would not expect you or the Permanent Secretaries to answer any of these points specifically before the result of the general election is known. However, I thought it would be useful for you and your colleagues to know some of the questions we have in our minds and the priority areas on which we would most like briefing prepared.

THE BUDGET

As a first step we will need to take good look at the budget. We will need a detailed presentation on this at the very beginning. JFr

It would also be useful to have background briefing available before May 1st in preparation.

LOCAL GOVERNANCE

We have said we want to look afresh at the operation of the Northern Ireland Grand Committee as well the functions of power-sharing local councils, the openness and accountability of the quangos, and the scope for further development of other forms of local participation such as the District Partnership Boards.

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group to report within six months with the following remit:

- what administrative and legislative action to take on further education given the present Government's failure to progress its legislation to incorporate FE colleges.
- to produce a strategy document on the role of FE in Northern Ireland
- preparatory work for establishment of FE and HE funding councils with shared chief executive and secretariat
- relationship between DENI and T&EA
- early action in Northern Ireland on implementation of Labour's training and employment programme for young people
- action for Springvale or other initiatives to increase the number of higher education places in Northern Ireland.

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In preparation for the launch of the review early after the election it would be very helpful for some work to be done on refining the remit of this group with a suggested action plan and top quality membership. This should involve both civil servants and outside expertise.

LEGISLATION ON ABORTION

Labour is committed to examining the legislation regarding abortion in Northern Ireland with a view to clarifying the position for both doctors and patients.

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It would be very helpful if this could be looked at in terms of how the review might be conducted and who might be involved.

MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

I would like to make an early announcement to designate a Minister in the team with special responsibility for both Cross-border and European Union initiatives.

I would be grateful if some thought could be given to which Ministerial post (I am presuming that one could do it) it would be most appropriate to give these special responsibilities to.

Thank you very much for your help. I look forward to seeing again you soon.