

RESTRICTED

780/2

*John  
to file  
27/4*

From: William Keown  
PS/PUS  
27 February 1998

*27/4  
Evelyn o/k.  
This has been about for  
some time. For the  
Bilateral Talks file?  
11/3  
C.C.R.U.  
Ed.  
6/4.*

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

- cc. Mr Bell
- Mr Daniell
- Mr Leach
- Mr Shannon
- Mr Stephens
- Mr McCusker
- Mr Watkins
- Mr Woods
- Mr Beeton
- Mr Brooker
- Mrs Collins
- Mr Ferguson
- Mr Hill
- Mr Maccabe
- Mr Perry
- Mr Whysall
- Miss Bharucha
- Mr Fergusson RID
- Mr Sanderson, Cabinet Office
- Ms Wheldon, HOLAB

*Mr Solomons 6/4*

*1.4 Mr Equam 2.3  
will need to discuss  
+  
2.22 Mr Brown  
Mr Snythe  
for info*

*3. Back to me, pl.*

PREPARING FOR THE AGREEMENT AND REFERENDUM:  
STRUCTURAL ARRANGEMENTS

*8/10  
27.2*

Following this morning's first meeting of the Co-ordinating Group, I am circulating for information a paper setting out the various project teams which have been set up to ensure that the Department can deliver its objectives in the run-up to an agreement and referendum.

*William Keown*

*Date in 06 23/3.*

PRIVATE SECRETARY  
EXT 6456

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**RESTRICTED****DELIVERING THE AGREEMENT, REFERENDUM AND LEGISLATION:  
AN OVERVIEW****Objectives**

The first objective is to secure approval in referendums, North and South, on 7 May for an agreed comprehensive settlement.

2. The second objective, subject to the agreement of the parties, is to ensure smooth implementation of the arrangements, with Elections to the new Assembly before the Summer, legislative provision (Northern Ireland Constitution Bill) for the settlement as a whole in the Autumn, if not before, with the new institutions going live early in the New Year.

**Method**

3. The operation will be managed and co-ordinated, under the Secretary of State's direction, by a Co-ordinating Group chaired by Joe Pilling and bringing together the key players in the NIO with the head of NICS, Central Secretariat, FCO and Cabinet Office.

4. A key early task for the Co-ordinating Group will be to draw up a Planning Schedule establishing key points on the critical path to securing these objectives. Each project manager should offer Mr Pilling a scheme, with targets and dates, for the part of the plan for which they have responsibility. The notes below offer some pointers.

**A More Detailed Plan**

5. This operation has several component parts, which need to be co-ordinated to ensure that there is an integrated end result. The main components of the project are identified below, with some suggested intermediate objectives and key dates, the names of the various project managers, who have overall responsibility for the component in question, and the project drivers responsible for pushing the work ahead.

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(i) **Drawing up the Settlement, and Securing Agreement to it** - or at least a sufficient measure of support as to ensure a successful referendum outcome.

Project Manager: Mr Thomas

Project Drivers: The negotiating team

Key Targets: Text agreed with Irish side by 14 March;  
Agreed by parties by 28 March.

(ii) **Managing the Talks Process** on as inclusive terms as possible as providing the best context for the final multi-lateral negotiations, probably involving a secluded residential session. In any event the process needs to be preserved to sustain the credibility of the project as a whole.

Project Manager: Mr David Hill

Project Drivers: CPL, enhanced by Peter May.

Key Targets: secure agreement to playing in of an Anglo-Irish text by 14 March;  
Arrange away day session perhaps 23 - 25 March;  
Prepare, by 6 June, programme for consultation and other purposive activity by the Assembly before it assumes its real responsibilities

(iii) **Planning for the Referendum**

- Ensuring that all the arrangements for holding the referendum on 7 May are in place
- Preparing the campaign to encourage people to vote to run from 14 April
- Campaign to encourage positive attitude to referendum and the settlement to run up to 14 April
- Possibly campaigning for a yes vote

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Project Manager: Mr McCusker, as Chairman of the Referendum Planning Group

Project Drivers: members of Referendum Planning Group

Key Targets: Referendum Orders prepared by 14 April;  
Campaign for people to vote ready by 14 April;  
Voting on 7 May

**(iv) Planning for the legislation to implement the agreement.**

This will require either a Bill on the full agreement, or an urgent limited Bill to allow elections to shadow institutions, followed later by the remaining provisions. It will need to be prepared in conjunction with the new British/Irish agreement.

Project Manager: Mr Jeffrey

Project Driver: Mr Whysall

Key Targets: drafting instructions by 20 June;  
Bill ready for introduction at outset of 1998/99 session

**(v) Planning for the Election either to shadow or substantive institutions.**

Project Manager: Mr Beeton

Project Drivers: REL, enhanced temporarily by the addition of Stephen Webb for the referendum. Chief Electoral Officer.

Key Targets: Initial instructions to Counsel by 10 March;  
Bill prepared by 12 April;  
Bill passed by 10 May;  
Elections on 6 June

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(vi) Monitoring the Northern Ireland Departments.

Many areas of Departmental activity, though not strictly speaking on the critical path to a political agreement, could have the potential to influence the wider political environment for or against a deal. Arrangements are therefore needed for a regular "Forward Look" at the main items of NI Departmental business.

Project Manager: Mr McCusker

Project Drivers: Central Secretariat and Northern Ireland Departments.

Key Targets: produce weekly reports, to be fed into the Co-ordinating Group as necessary.

(vii) Managing an Effective Information Campaign

There will be an increasing need, up to the point where the agreement is reached, to foster support for the talks process, a positive outcome in the referendum, and a good turnout. Once the referendum campaign begins there will need to be a sustained public information campaign.

Project Manager: Mr Kelly

Project Driver: Information Services

Key Targets: Up to start of referendum campaign - intensive programme of articles, speeches, briefings, etc. Once campaign begins, intensive public information campaign.

(viii) Preparing the Northern Ireland Departments for Devolution and for the accommodation and support of the Assembly. This heading embraces a wide range of preparatory work.

Project Manager: Mr Semple

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Project Drivers: Central Secretariat and Northern Ireland  
Departments

Key Targets: Assembly building ready by 10 June, with other  
logistical support for Assembly;  
Departments ready for ending of direct rule by New  
Year

**(ix) Preparing the NIO for the end of Direct Rule**

As well as policy and operational implications, there are significant  
staffing and accommodation issues.

Project Manager: Mr Pilling

Project Driver: Mr Blackwell

Key Targets: Preparing NIO, NICS and relevant parts of Whitehall,  
as well as key interlocutors including Chief Constable, Security  
Service, Ministry of Defence for end of direct rule early in New Year.

**(x) Resolving the Prison Issue.**

Depending on how inclusive the process is by the time of the  
settlement, we may need some resolution of the possibility of early  
release of prisoners.

Project Manager: Mr Shannon

Project Driver: Mr White

Key Targets: Ministerial agreement to new scheme by 10 March  
Agreement/acquiescence from parties by 28 March  
Legislation passed before Summer recess

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(xi) Resolving the Policing Issue

It is unlikely that radical reform of policing, even if agreed, could be achieved before the 7 May referendum. A possible outcome which has been identified is agreement on a set of policing principles and criteria coupled with the establishment, on agreed terms, of a Commission to bring forward proposals for reform.

Project Manager: Mr Steele

Project Driver: Mrs Collins

Key Targets: approach agreed by Minister and by the Irish side by 14 March;  
Agreement by parties by 28 March;  
Establish commission after successful 7 May referendum

(xii) Settling the Handling of Decommissioning.

Depending on how inclusive the process is it may be necessary to reach an agreed outcome on the decommissioning issue as part of the overall settlement.

Project Manager: Mr Perry

Project Driver: Mr Margetts

Key Targets: secure commitment by all relevant parties to agreed approach by 28 March;  
Implementation as part of settlement

(xiii) Resolving Employment Equality, and the Equality Agenda

This may involve establishing an Equality Commission. One important decision is where, after devolution, responsibility for these issues, and any possible institutions, should lie as between the devolved institutions and HMG. One approach might be for HMG to carry forward the establishment of any new institutions so that any

X

*Notes - Opinion but opening under  
Assembly law: Good not allow on meeting  
all cases of Commission.*

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*Note to finish discussion  
- UP progress for commission - paper.  
- progress by 12/7. - Open Bill  
Need to move quickly. Clear in an equality Bill  
new Commission & powers.*

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Project Driver: Mr McIlroy

Key Targets: Approach agreed with the Irish side by 14 March  
Approach agreed by parties by 28 March

(xvi) **Preparing the Secretariat for the new IGC and the Council of these Islands.**

It is not yet clear whether there will be one, two or more Secretariats for the complex set of cross-border institutions. Consultation will be needed with the Scots, the Welsh and the Cabinet Office as well as with the Irish side and with the parties. The arrangements need to be ready by the time the new institutions go live.

Project Manager: Mr Bell

Project Driver: Project Team (which might include Maryfield, IPL, RID, Cabinet Office, Central Secretariat)

(xvii) **Preparing for the North/South Council**

There may be a significant body of work providing both for the Secretariat infrastructure in support of North/South arrangements, and the programme of work which may be needed under the agreement. There may be some overlap with the Secretariat for the IGC and the Council of these Islands.

Project Manager: Mr Semple

Project Driver: Mr Ferguson

Key Targets: Infrastructure planned by June operational with new institutions

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