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Mary Bunting

08/12/02 10:34 AM

To: Evelyn Cummins/OFMDFM/DFP@DFP

cc: Derek Wheeler/OFMDFM/DFP@DFP, Eugene
Rooney/OFMDFM/DFP@DFP, Will Haire/OFMDFM/DFP@DFP,
Edgar Jardine/OFMDFM/DFP@DFP, Sheila
Bradfield/OFMDFM/DFP@DFP

Subject: Correspondence -- Ref. Number: COR/475/2002

Evelyn,

For information - you will be interested in this. I have been keeping EPU up-to-date on our relationship with DSD on the work of the North Belfast Unit.

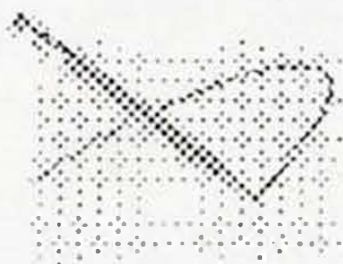
While, Minister Dodds has advanced very strong arguments, I cannot see how a close relationship with this Department can be avoided.

I would welcome an opportunity for a discussion with you on the work of the Unit in the near future - maybe we could discuss this in that context.

I'll ask **Sheila to arrange a meeting.**

Mary

----- Forwarded by Mary Bunting/OFMDFM/DFP on 08/12/02 10:31 AM -----



ps.ministers

Sent by: Scott Mitchell

08/12/02 10:04 AM

Please respond to
ps.ministers

To: eugene.rooney@ofmdfmni.gov.uk

cc: ps.ministers@ofmdfmni.gov.uk, gerry.loughran@ofmdfmni.gov.uk,
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Subject: Correspondence -- Ref. Number: COR/475/2002

OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER AND DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER

URGENT - CORRESPONDENCE

Reference: COR/475/2002

Raised By: Nigel Dodds

Subject: COR 475/02 - LETTER TO FM & DFM RE: SECURITY BASES DEVELOPMENT
MODELS (CRUMLIN GAOL AND EBRINGTON BARRACKS)

Referred To: EUGENE ROONEY

Date Referred: 12/08/2002

ACTION REQUIRED

Please provide advice and a draft reply for signature by the First Minister and Deputy First Minister.

To be with Private Office not later than 19/08/2002 before Close of Play

For further information etc. contact :

Scott Mitchell (Private Office)
Parliament Buildings Tel : 028 90 521028

Copied To For Information:

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Damien McAteer
Mark Larmour
Alison Coey
Aidan Cassidy
Paddy Cullen
Dara Cosgrove
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Michael Henderson
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dodds.pdf

From The Minister for Social Development

Churchill House
Victoria Square
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The Rt Hon David Trimble LLB BL MP MLA
and Mark Durkan Esq MLA

OFMDFM

Parliament Buildings

BELFAST

BT4 3XX

Our ref: SUB/609/2002

August 2002

Dear Mr Trimble & Mr Durkan,

SECURITY BASES: DEVELOPMENT MODELS

At our meeting on 11 July on the future development of security bases, you invited me to write to you with options for the mechanisms to be used to ensure the regeneration of these sites in a cross cutting way. In the letter I have concentrated on the Crumlin Road Gaol and the Ebrington Barracks sites, but the same broad approach could be utilised for the other security bases – tailored to local requirements.

At the outset, I have to say that I think it is essential to take account of the new approach to regeneration policy throughout the UK and indeed Europe, over the last number of years. There has been a move away from demand led, reactive and fragmented renewal measures towards a more focused method of tackling disadvantage and multiple deprivation based on the direct involvement of the community.

The National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal in Great Britain and my own Department's Neighbourhood Renewal initiative are excellent examples of this. There is now a widely-held acceptance that effective regeneration requires the development of

cross-cutting policies and joined up delivery across Departments and Public Service Agencies and that the development of partnerships, involving relevant stakeholders and statutory providers, is key to successful renewal initiatives.

The management of these important security base sites should be no exception to this. It seems to me that it would be a step backwards to develop them using a regeneration model such as Development Corporations which were organisations set up to deal with specific situations of decline and market failure, and involved a hands off approach by Government. The approach is illustrated by the Laganside Corporation which relied on public sector investment in infrastructure, ie the weir and cross harbour bridges, to lever substantial private investment in what became prime waterfront sites.

Laganside is, of course, the only remaining Urban Development Corporation in the UK. Its designated area contains around 120 acres of developable land making it one of the smallest. In Londonderry, I understand that Ebrington Barracks, Fort George and Queen's Quay together have around 50 acres of land for potential use, so there is also a significant issue of economy of scale.

Laganside, of course, has had some outstanding successes to its credit. Its ability to lever an impressive amount of private sector investment reflected its location and the incipient interest of the private sector. It is now, as you know, looking towards an exit strategy over the next 5 years and when it goes, the era of Development Corporations will be at an end. I see no justification for seeking to resurrect a model which was right for its time but which had limitations. There is little evidence beyond the recent Halifax Call Centre to suggest that there were substantial 'trickle down' benefits from Laganside to communities living adjacent to the Development Corporations designated area, despite the efforts of the Corporation, private investors and several government agencies.

On the other hand, the informal partnership alliance initiated to consider the future of the Crumlin Road Gaol which involves OFMDFM, DHSSPS, PRONI, DCAL, the Mater Hospital, and St Malachy's College has received strong support from the surrounding

community. As you will know, the Phoenix Trust is interested in contributing to the Gaol's regeneration by drawing on their experience and their considerable expertise elsewhere. I would like to consider inviting the Trust to join a partnership based Steering Group to take forward the restoration and preservation of the Gaol. This would enable their expertise in the regeneration of historical and architecturally sensitive sites to be exploited – alongside their ability to lever lottery and other funding sources. To my mind, that illustrates clearly the flexibility which a partnership approach gives in providing opportunities for private, statutory and community sector interests to be involved and bring their expertise to the table. Moreover, there has been little or no interest shown by the private sector in the Gaol – confirming that the regeneration of the site will almost certainly be public sector led.

In Londonderry, you are aware that, my Department is leading a representative steering group of local interests (public, private and voluntary sector) to oversee the "Heart of the City" study which aims to adopt an integrated planning process taking account of the wider regeneration context and the views of local people. The study will make recommendations on how key sites such as Fort George, Ebrington and Queen's Quay should be developed. This steering group, with the experience it is gaining, could easily evolve into a Development Partnership for Londonderry, and include the chairs of the Partnership and Regeneration Panel.

It seems to me that the partnership processes I have described in Belfast and Londonderry are the future of effective regeneration in Europe and offer many benefits; for example, their inclusive nature, the expertise and experience of representatives and in the case of my Department, its comprehensive development powers, and the involvement of key players from the areas, in particular the local council.

This approach sends out a strong positive signal to the community in Northern Ireland that the Government is serious in its efforts to be more transparent in its dealings, particularly in relation to major issues of public interest, and that it genuinely wants to promote inclusive partnership working as described in the Programme for Government.

At our meeting you talked about wanting to avoid the bureaucratic delays associated with public sector led regeneration schemes. I should point out that it has taken the Lagan-side Corporation some 13 years to achieve its present stage of development. I must also sound a word of caution in relation to any development models as regards delays, and this is borne out by the long experience of my Department's officials in regeneration matters. All development schemes are subject to a lengthy statutory process, and this usually, of necessity, involves responding to a hefty number of objections to the planning application. I share your perception of the need for urgency but there are no quick fixes – particularly if the communities alongside are to be fully involved and their commitment secured.

I remain confident that my Department is in the best position to work with Government Departments and Agencies and other key stakeholders in finding the right way to develop these sites innovatively and effectively, and within budget and on time. The expertise of my officials and the unique regeneration powers of my Department cannot be over emphasised. Using all of our experience, we are in a position to take a strategic approach to regeneration across the Province and integrate the development of the sites with other renewal policies and programmes and in so doing effect some real improvements in the quality of life for the people of Northern Ireland.

Seamus Boyd
P.P.

NIGEL DODDS MP MLA
Minister for Social Development

*Agreed by Minister
& signed in his absence.*
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