



HCS/508/98

RESTRICTED



Dr Murphy
Shadow Assembly 25582008
116

RS
316

cc Mr Gibsm
Mr Wamack
116

FROM: JOHN SEMPLE
29 MAY 1998

cc see list below

PS/MR MURPHY (DFP,B&L)
PS/SECRETARY OF STATE (B&L)

PREPARING FOR A NEW ASSEMBLY: SEMINAR PROGRAMME FOR
ASSEMBLY MEMBERS AND SENIOR CIVIL SERVANTS

Summary

Issue: The urgent need to engage the political parties in the process of agreeing and directing the proposed seminar programme for assembly members and senior civil servants.

Timescales: To coincide with the round of bilateral meeting scheduled with the parties next week.

Recommendation: Initial contact with the parties on this issue should be face-to-face. The topic should be raised by Mr Murphy during his bilateral meetings with the Parties. Thereafter, officials would carry forward the initiative, involving Ministers and others as appropriate. Subject to Ministers being satisfied with the outline proposals for the programme, along the lines attached, these could be given to the parties following Mr Murphy's meetings.

Introduction

1. Officials have drawn together preliminary proposals for the running of the seminar programme - possibly to be known as the "Transition Programme". Subject to the agreement of Mr Murphy and the Secretary of State these could be put to the political parties encouraging them to participate in the initiative. The proposals are, necessarily, tentative at this stage and will develop as the requirements of participants emerge. They draw heavily on

RESTRICTED



the advice and suggestions of Tony Colman, whose input and assistance has been invaluable. Tony is content with the broad proposals.

Engaging the Political Parties

2. It is exceptionally important that the political parties have ownership of this initiative and are actively involved in directing its progress. The parties at present are naturally preoccupied with the forthcoming elections and I have so far been unable to obtain nominations to serve on the proposed steering committee.
3. Mr Murphy is scheduled to hold a round of bilateral meetings with the main political parties next week. I have asked that he include the Transition Programme on the agenda, thereby enabling us to take early soundings from the key players. Thereafter officials could carry forward the arrangements in a way that best suits the participants.

Outline Proposals

4. It is important once the parties have been made aware of the proposed initiative that they are given an indication of how it might operate. This will begin to involve them in the process of shaping its structure and content. I attach a short paper which has been prepared to give to the parties at Mr Murphy's meetings. In summary it proposes:
 - A programme format which is informal and interactive.
 - Seminars which are aimed primarily at small to medium sized groups of participants (say 25-50). Numbers on this scale will allow Members and civil servants to get to know one another.
 - A mix of residential and non-residential events, mostly but not exclusively in Northern Ireland.

RESTRICTED



- A launch event for the programme to happen possibly in the last 2 weeks of July. (Given that the politicians will be preoccupied until then with the election and the marching season).
 - Occasional major events involving the attendance of large numbers.
 - European and American elements which are likely to run September through to November.
5. I do not believe we should put more by way of detail in the paper until such time as the parties have had the opportunity to consider and comment on the programme proposals.
6. We have been fortunate in securing the service of, among others, Sir Kenneth Stowe, former PUS at the NIO, to advise on programme structure and content. Sir Kenneth is currently on the Board of Directors of the Commonwealth Association of Public Administration and Management (CAPAM) and has considerable experience in working with foreign governments in transitional mode. As work progresses on the programme I would propose that we retain the services of Sir Kenneth on a part-time consultancy basis.

Conclusion

7. Tony Colman is in Belfast on Monday next when he will meet with Gerry Cosgrave to take forward the planning process. He is anxious to meet with the Secretary of State to discuss the programme. I am therefore attempting to arrange through the Secretary of State's Private Office a meeting for Monday, or as soon as possible thereafter, to consider the outline proposals. It would be important to have the Secretary of State's agreement before Mr Murphy's meetings with the parties.

RESTRICTED



Recommendations

8. Mr Murphy and the Secretary of State are invited:
- to agree the process for engaging the political parties;
 - to agree the attached proposals paper; which would be given to the parties at Mr Murphy's meetings.
 - to agree to the retention of Sir Kenneth Stowe on a part-time consultancy basis; and
 - to note the possibility of a meeting with the Secretary of State on Monday 1 June.

David Crabbe

JOHN SEMPLE

(Agreed by Mr Semple and
signed in his absence)

Copy Distribution

PS/Mr Worthington (DHSS, DENI&L)
 PS/Mr Ingram (DED, L&B)
 PS/Lord Dubs (DOE, DANI & L)
 PS/PUS (L&B)
 Mr Colman (PPS/Mr Ingram)
 NI Permanent Secretaries
 Mr McCusker
 Mr Hunter
 Mrs Angus
 Mr Cosgrave

RESTRICTED

DRAFT

THE NEW GOVERNANCE OF NORTHERN IRELAND: A PROPOSED PROGRAMME TO HELP ELECTED MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY (INCLUDING PROSPECTIVE MINISTERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS) AND SENIOR OFFICIALS FULFIL THEIR NEW RESPONSIBILITIES**Introduction**

1. The outcome of the referendum on the Good Friday Agreement has paved the way for the establishment of a local Assembly and a North/South Ministerial Council. Elections to the Assembly will take place on 25 June 1998. This submission outlines proposals for the design and delivery of a seminar programme - possibly known as the "Transition Programme" - to help prepare Assembly members and senior officials for the advent of devolved rule.

Programme Outline

2. The programme is intended to assist newly-elected members of the Assembly, and senior officials, to understand fully and be able to carry out effectively their new roles and responsibilities. This would include roles and responsibilities as Ministers and Chairmen or Deputy Chairmen of Assembly Committees.
3. Subject to availability of participants it will begin as soon as possible after the elections and continue for the following 3-4 months and perhaps thereafter, depending on the requirements of participants. The intention would be to do as much as possible from mid July and in August but Assembly members holiday arrangements will inevitably reduce the scope for this.
4. It is proposed that the programme should be designed under the supervision of a small Steering Committee, with members drawn from the Northern Ireland political parties represented in the Assembly, and the Northern Ireland Civil Service, chaired initially by the Minister of State, Mr Paul Murphy. It is crucial that the Programme reflects the requirements of those who will serve in the Assembly.
5. It is proposed that the Steering Committee should be supported by an Advisory Group of local and international experts in public service reform and development who would draw on the experience of the United Kingdom, Ireland, Canada, South Africa and the European Union. [An informal dinner meeting of interested individuals, some of whom may form part of the Advisory Group, will be held on 4 June 1998 to "brain storm" issues relating to the programme.]

RESTRICTED

6. The programme will be managed by a small Executive Office of seconded officials led by Gerry Cosgrave (DFP), perhaps under a programme director (yet to be designated).

Programme Format

7. It is proposed that the programme format should be informal and interactive, enabling those participating to benefit from the expertise and experience of a wide-ranging group of experts in government, from home and abroad. It could comprise seminars and workshops lasting one, two or at most three days, together with possible study tours to Boston and Louvain.
8. It follows that seminars should be aimed primarily at small to medium size groups of participants (ranging from say 25-50). This is generally considered the best approach for creating the desired conditions and for promoting social interaction. However, it would be appropriate on occasions to run major events that would draw in all assembly members and relevant senior officials. Examples might include an event to launch the programme, perhaps in the second half of July or presentations/workshops from eminent speakers.
9. It is envisaged that the major part of the programme would take place in Northern Ireland. Elected members and officials could meet either:
 - (a) residentially - in small groups of say 20 elected members and up to 10 speakers and officials in a residential setting. The Rural College in Draperstown might provide a suitable venue as it offers good facilities, in a quiet and peaceful environment. The College could be reserved, on selected dates, for the exclusive use of the programme, but an early decision would be required to book the accommodation. Local hotels would be able to accommodate increased numbers but given their normal operating arrangements it would prove difficult to gain the exclusive use of the premises.
 - (b) non-residentially - Participants could attend seminars on a "working-day" basis. These could be held in a range of locations across Northern Ireland, but would suffer from a loss of social interaction which is such an integral part of residential events.

Europe

10. In addition to those elements which would be delivered in Northern Ireland, the programme would benefit from European and American dimensions. The Irish College in Leuven, Belgium is a possible venue for bringing together parties of between 40-50 people to explore interface issues relating to the European Union. Initial contact with the College and with the local European office indicate that they would favour one large conference event, to run either in Northern Ireland or Brussels, followed by a series of Brussels-based

RESTRICTED

seminars for groups of up to 30 participants. They advise that September is the earliest practicable date for organising the Brussels element. The European institutions more or less close down in August.

Boston College

11. Boston College has earmarked funds for programmes which would bring together newly elected members of the NI Assembly and senior officials. The college is keen to support seminars that could run in Northern Ireland or elsewhere, but a condition for funding is that a number of events would be held on American soil. Early indications are that they would favour running 2/3 seminars, each for around 60 participants. It has been suggested that the seminars should take place away from the spotlight: Cape Elizabeth in North Boston has been proposed, and the College view is that they should ideally be timetabled for October and November.

Programme Content

12. It is proposed that the programme should be "modular" and multi-track ie exploring concurrently different aspects of the new governance of Northern Ireland. Each component would be repeated so that participants would avail of those modules which they see as particularly relevant to their prospective interests and responsibilities, although some modules are likely to be of general interest. A list of possible Topic Areas is annexed to this paper.
13. It is intended that the programme content should be flexible and develop as the requirements of participants emerge.

Conclusion

14. The political parties are invited to consider the concept of the "*Transition Programme*" and the outline arrangements for its design and delivery. If parties are broadly content then each party is invited to nominate a representative to serve on the Steering Committee to oversee the development of the programme.

RESTRICTED**ANNEX****TRANSITION PROGRAMME****POSSIBLE TOPICS****Machinery of Government**

- structures and organisation of Departments, Agencies and NDPBs
- comparative analysis of national, regional and local government
- administrative law and judicial review
- relations with Europe
- probity, ethics and conduct
- legislative process
- Ombudsman
- The media and relations with Government.

Public Finance

- the Public Expenditure process
- Public Private Partnerships
- Comprehensive Spending Review

Economic Trends and Policies

- overview of NI economy in Irish, British and European contexts
- economic development policy for NI - target sectors
- job creation - training and employment
- community economic development programmes
- development of tourism

Social Trends and Policies

- demographic trends
- socio economic status of population of NI

Agriculture

- future of agriculture industry - reform of CAP
- jobs and incomes - diversification
- developments in fisheries and forestry

Education

- education policies - pre-school to post-graduate
- organisation of education services
- arts, libraries, museums and national lottery

RESTRICTED**Health & Social Services**

- health and social services policies
- organisation of HSS services

Social Security Services

- social security services policies

Environment Services

- housing, transport, planning, water, environment, urban regeneration policies

Leadership & Management

- roles and responsibilities of Ministers, Committee Chairs, Assembly Members and civil servants
- organisation of NICS and departmental running cost controls
- "Better Government" agenda and "Continuous Improvement Programme"
- procurement policies

Equality

- "Employment Equality Review": Way Forward
- comparative analysis of policies in other divided societies
- human rights
- treatment of minorities
- community development: peace and reconciliation

Europe

- finance and structural funds
- peace & reconciliation programme
- organisation of European Commission
- study tour

USA

- USA investment in NI
- International Fund for Ireland
- study tour

NB: Particular topics could be divided; into two or more seminars - depending on views of Steering Committee.