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FROM: ROSALIE FLANAGAN
CENTRAL SECRETARIAT
29 SEPTEMBER 1998

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PS/MR MURPHY (DFP, B&L) - O

MINISTERIAL AND LIAISON MEETINGS

Issue: New arrangements for Ministerial meetings.

Timing: Immediate.

Recommendation: That the new arrangements commence on 5 October subject to Secretary of State's views on the need for Ministerial meetings that day.

DETAIL

Purpose

1. The purpose of this note is to confirm the new arrangements for the weekly Ministerial & Liaison meetings, and specifically to seek views about whether to hold the Ministerial meetings on 5 October.

New Arrangements

2. I should be grateful if you could confirm that the normal pattern for meetings under the new arrangements will be

Mondays 1PM

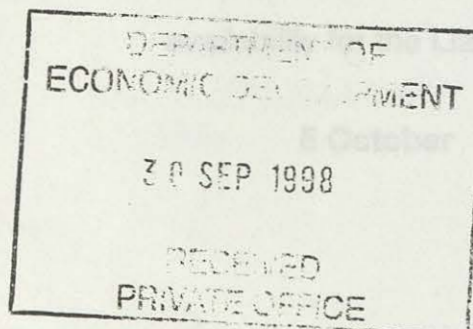
Ministers & Advisers (VCR)

2PM

Minister & officials (VCR)

3PM

Liaison meeting between Ministers & First and Deputy First Ministers (Conference Room)



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Arrangements for 5 October

3. It had been expected that these new arrangements would come into play on 5 October (with no Ministerial meeting in w/c 28 September because of the Party Conference). However on that date only the Secretary of State and Mr Murphy will be available, since Mr Ingram is in the States, Mr McFall on leave and Lord Dubs in the House of Lords on the NI Bill. I should be grateful to know the Secretary of State's view on whether a meeting should be held that day.

Liaison Meeting with First and Deputy First Ministers

4. The First and Deputy First Ministers have indicated at recent Liaison meetings that
- (i) a Liaison meeting should be held each week (Mondays 3pm); in their absence, they can be represented by special advisers or party spokespersons,
 - (ii) they wish to structure the meetings, so that the most significant items of business across NI Departments are considered in the immediate future, with less vital matters being set aside at present.
 - (iii) papers should be provided to them as far in advance of a discussion as possible (minimum 4 days) to enable them to be adequately considered.
 - (iv) papers should set out clearly the timescales including when and what decisions/actions are required both by Ministers/Departments and the First and Deputy First Ministers.
5. In discussions with Private Offices over the last few days I had confirmed Ministerial availability for the Liaison meetings as follows:-

5 October

Mr Murphy

Political Developments

DFP: Structural Funds (continuation)

Future Programmes for Liaison meetings



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12 October	Lord Dubs	DOE, items - Harbour plus other priority issues
19 October	Mr McFall	DHSS items
26 October	Lord Dubs	DANI items
2 November	Mr Ingram	DED items
9 November	Mr McFall	DENI items.

A composite papers on the policy reviews currently going on in Departments has been issued to the First and Deputy First Ministers, and it is anticipated that they will indicate their views at next week's meeting about which items they would wish to consider from Departments.

(X) In preparation for next week's meeting, Departments are asked, by copy of this minute, to submit to me immediately details of the item which they would see as having greatest priority for this first round of meetings, to enable us to issue a brief paper to the First and Deputy First Ministers on 2 October.

Items which might be considered by Assembly

5. We would like to bring forward for consideration by Lord Alderdice some proposals about items which might be debated by the Assembly at meetings from mid October onwards. By copy of this minute I am therefore asking Departments to let me have suggestions of suitable items for discussion.

(Y) *Rosalie Flanagan*

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