

ULSTER SCOTS ACADEMY - UPDATE AT 19 AUGUST



Department of  
**Culture, Arts  
and Leisure**  
www.dcalni.gov.uk

**FROM: CAROL MOORE**  
**Deputy Secretary**

**DATE: 19 August 2004**

To: Stewart Johnston, OFMDFM

**LANGUAGE ISSUES - NIO MEETING WITH DUP**

Further to my minute and enclosure of 17 August to Gail McKibbin I attach an update which reflects Minister Smith's submission of 13 August to Secretary of State and the letter of 16 August from Nelson McCausland to Adam Higgitt.

*CP. Moore.*

**C P MOORE (MRS)**

**Ext 58848**

cc Secretary  
B Davis o/r  
V Douglas o/r  
C Quinn  
A Forsythe  
Gail McKibbin, OFMDFM

## ULSTER SCOTS ACADEMY – UPDATE AT 19 AUGUST

- The Joint Declaration committed the Government to take steps to encourage support to be made available to an Ulster Scots Academy.
- A business case, undertaken to determine the best way to give effect to this, has now been approved subject to some conditions, eg, Memorandum of Understanding with Ulster Scots Agency.
- The preferred option in the business case was an independent academy affiliated to a university based in Belfast city centre with outreach activities to areas where Ulster Scots speakers live. Extensive consultation during the process indicated that interested parties were largely content with the preferred option.
- Two companies had expressed interest in delivering an Ulster Scots Academy. These were the Ullans Academy led by Ian Adamson and the Ulster Scots Academy linked to the Ulster Scots Language Society. It was not possible to differentiate between the proposals of the two companies in relation to the preferred option of an independent academy affiliated to a local university.
- Consideration is currently being given to how best to implement the academy. Officials have put forward options which include the possibility of Government appointing an implementation group under an independent chair and supported by an executive of seconded civil servants. This could include representatives from each of the academy companies as well as representatives from the local universities and business nominees. (Note these proposals have been discussed broadly with Secretary of State, Minister Smith has now indicated that she is broadly content and wrote to the Secretary of State recommending this approach on 13 August. Secretary of State has not yet responded.)

### Line to Take

- Preservation of the Ulster Scots language is critical.
- Following approval of business case the Government wants to see early progress on implementation of the Academy to assist the preservation of the Ulster Scots language.
- Government would wish to see all those who want to preserve the language co-operating in the way forward.

[May wish to further test party views on possible involvement of representatives from each of the two academy companies in the way forward – see last dot point regarding involvement of DUP overleaf.]

DUP involvement in the issue to date:-

- ❖ Nigel Dodds MP had in the past indicated support for the Ulster Scots Academy Company which is associated with the Ulster Scots Language Society.
- ❖ Ian Paisley MP relatively recently indicated to Secretary of State support for Ian Adamson who leads the other academy company.
- ❖ Martin Smyth met Minister Smith on 21 July and was accompanied by Nelson McCausland. At that meeting the Minister and Adam Higgitt confirmed that the business case for the academy had been approved but there was a need to look at the detail and get all the parties involved. At that meeting Martin Smyth suggested Church House as a venue.
- ❖ Nelson McCausland wrote to Adam Higgitt on 16 August – presumably as a follow up to the meeting on 21 July. In this he outlines the consideration which he has given to move the Ulster Scots Academy away from being seen as “a contest between two factions”. The proposals are more elaborate than the alternative suggestion of an implementation group, comprising as they do both a Management Board and an Academic Advisory Council. While they involve both academy companies they appear to favour the Ulster Scots Academy Company and therefore the Ulster Scots Language Society. Nonetheless the concept of involving representatives has won some acceptance.

**Line to Take (if required)**

Thank Mr McCausland for his constructive suggestion and for taking the time to work them through. Advise that further consideration is being given to ensure early implementation of the Academy in an inclusive way.