

FROM: ROBBIE SAULTERS

DATE: 22 DECEMBER 2003-12-22

*Paul
Please see under
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a file please create one.
Paul K*

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TO: NIGEL HAMILTON
HEAD OF THE CIVIL SERVICE

PARTY MANIFESTOES

1. I attach as requested in your 11 December minute a summary of the position of each of the four main parties ie SF, UUP, DUP, SDLP summarising their position about reform of public administration, including reform of and proposed actions in respect of the NICS.
2. As you would suspect the coverage and volume of information carried in the party manifestoes varied greatly and is therefore reflected in the amount of detail contained in the summaries.
3. I trust the attached summary meets your need, do let me know if you require any additional work carried out.
4. Finally, I would like to wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New year.

Robbie Saulters
Economic Policy Unit
Extn: 22516

Political Parties' manifestos 2003– response to the Review of Public Administration and Reform

UUP

A modern Society

We will vigorously pursue the Review of Public Administration with a view to reducing the layers of administration, and putting added substantial functions into a revitalised local government – putting power as close to the people as possible.

Our key commitments are:

- Using RRI funds to improve Northern Ireland's infrastructure in a planned and responsible way.
- Pushing forward the Review of Public Administration to reduce bureaucracy and improve efficiency
- We are committed to concluding the Review of Public Administration as soon as possible and we will move rapidly to implement the radical changes needed to improve the way local services are administered.
- To maximise the efficiency of the Water Service and to minimise any potential costs.

The All Ireland Civic Forum

- The Good Friday Agreement committed the two Governments to establishing an All Ireland Civic Forum. Again five years on it has not yet been established.

Education

- Call for the ending of academic selection

Sinn Fein

Equality

- Gender-proofing in appointments, policies and resource allocation must be obligatory for all public bodies. Specifically, we will work to ensure that the introduction of gender proofing measures are a core aspect of the Review of Public Administration.

Equality and Human Rights

- Establishment of a Department of Equality
- Establishment of an all-Ireland Constitutional Court to protect rights enshrined in a Bill of Rights.

Restructuring of the Human Rights Commission

- Need to restructure the Commission including the composition, the appointments process and the powers and resources of the Commission
- The British Government needs to put in place measures to guarantee the integrity, independence and effectiveness of the Commission
- Human Rights Commission needs to be governed by the United Nations Paris Principles – to guarantee sufficient and appropriate powers, resources, independence and balanced representation of its membership
- The limiting remit and powers of the Human Rights Commission must be expanded to instil public confidence in its ability to champion and protect the human rights of all citizens.

The All Ireland Civic Forum

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Education

- Call for the ending of academic selection

Health

- The reform of healthcare structures is essential and long overdue. Sinn Féin proposed an end to the confusing layers of health bureaucracy and an immediate scrapping of the four Health Boards with the creation of a single strategic body to co-ordinate services and workforce planning.
- Future healthcare structures should not be confined by the border but should be configured to reflect the needs of communities.
- The modernisation of services will cost £1.2 billion over a ten-year period. This sum needs to be made available in full and from the public purse rather than relying on public-private partnerships, which will result in future service cutbacks to meet loan repayments and limit future service development
- Amalgamation of Belfast City Hospital with the Royal Group of Hospitals.
- Setting up of the proposed Regional Authority under the control of Health Departments, North and South

Agriculture

- Decentralisation of DARD central offices in tandem with a wider programme of decentralisation of offices

Local government

- Full reform of local government designed to devolve maximum authority to the appropriate local level;
- Local authorities to retain revenue-raising powers;
- Local authorities to be free to act in the public interest and not overly constrained by the need to seek central government permission for innovative local solutions that do not run counter to regional policy;
- Return of powers currently held by quangos to local authorities with power to administer these in innovative ways suitable to local conditions;

SDLP

Reshaping government

- Strengthen partnerships, working with unions, business and the voluntary sector on a new basis of real social partnership to agree a 5 year Programme for Government.
- Widen partnership by broadening membership of the SIB, to include unions and voluntary sector groups.
- Deepen partnership by creating opportunities for local ownership and delivery of public services. This could be done for example, by enabling LSPs to bid for delivery of centrally funded government programmes. In this way we can bring government services closer to the public, a key aim of the Review of Public Administration.
- Use the Review of Public Administration to restructure government to make government more responsive, more accountable, decentralized, efficient and transparent and to better release the talent and potential of those in public sector employment.
- Impose a 1% per year curb on government departments' administrative running costs.
- Establish a "Cost of Government Committee" for a 5 year period - a new cross-party group of Assembly Members and external partners, modelled on the successful Public Accounts Committee, to establish deadlines and targets to cut administrative costs further.
- Establish a cross-party Assembly "Performance Committee" including the social partners, also modelled on the Public Accounts Committee.
- Decentralise government functions and agencies including at least 2000 jobs to towns across the North within 5 years, targeting areas of highest unemployment in the systematic promotion of balanced regional development.

Rebuilding public services

- Use the reconfigured Strategic Investment Board (see above) to increase professional expertise to ensure that all public-led investment projects are funded as efficiently as possible and that competitive dividends are generated from public spending.
- Release under-utilised public land and assets for community and economic use and secure further release of military bases.
- Deploy the new borrowing power, negotiated under RRI, to achieve a stepchange in the quality of infrastructure and public services necessary to regenerate our economy; and establish new 'not-for-profit' models for investing in public services.
- Commission the economic research bodies North and South to work together to produce proposals for further all-Ireland cooperation and development in social and economic policy.
- Recognise the Community and Voluntary Sector as valued service providers.

Economy & Skills

- Establish a North-South Further & Higher Education body to encourage collaboration in policy, teaching, research, evaluation, recognition of qualifications and models of excellence.

Health, Social Policy and Environment

- Advance all-Ireland co-operation in health to maximise opportunities for investment in specialist services and equipment which would be otherwise unaffordable in either jurisdiction.
- Create an all-Ireland Public Safety Body to build on the successful collaboration on road safety advertising and education initiatives.

Food and Agriculture

- Establish a new All-Ireland Food Marketing Body to improve branding of local produce and conduct a vigorous international marketing campaign capitalising on the green, clean image of Ireland

DUP

Controlling the cost of government

- At regional level, the pro-agreement parties have devised a form of government with too many layers of administration and too many checks to effective governance. As a result we have an ever-growing bureaucracy that devouring resources which are needed for front line services and investment. This situation must change.
- In the last four years the staffing levels at the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister have expanded to a level where it is larger than the Prime Ministers' offices in London and Dublin combined. It is clear that the pro-agreement parties are unable or unwilling to halt the growth of bureaucracy. The pro-agreement parties promised a review of public administration would result in cost savings. After five years, this process has hardly got off the ground.
- The Abolition of the Civic Forum and reductions in the number of assembly members and government departments would make substantial savings without any damage being done to the administration in Northern Ireland.
- Nothing has been done to limit or control QUANGOs in Northern Ireland.