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cc Mr Semple
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Mrs Brown

**DESIGN OF A CORPORATE IDENTITY FOR THE NORTHERN IRELAND
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND ITS DEPARTMENTS**

Attached is a paper which has been approved by the First Minister and
Deputy First Minister for consideration at the next meeting of the Executive
Committee.

(Signed)

F S WOODS

DESIGN OF A CORPORATE IDENTITY FOR THE NORTHERN IRELAND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Proposal

This paper offers proposals for the development of a corporate identity for the Executive and its Departments. It is proposed that the paper form the basis of a brief for a competition for a designer to take the project forward.

Timetable for action

If the paper is approved today, the timescale from issue of an invitation to tender to completion of the project will be approximately 2.5 months, made up as follows:

Invitation to tender	28 January
Appointment of design company	11 February
Stage 1: Range of ideas	2 weeks
Stage 2: Development of chosen idea	3 weeks
Stage 3: Creation of identity guidelines and manual	3 weeks
Issue of identity manual to Departments and associated design companies.	Start of April

1. INTRODUCTION

Good, well-planned communications will play a vital part in securing public understanding and support for the new administration. As an important part of this process the Executive needs to develop a corporate identity to establish itself firmly in the minds of the public. This identity will extend to more than just a logo, it will shape the public face of everything the Executive does, both at home and overseas.

A working group composed of special advisors to the First Minister and Deputy First Minister and officials from the OFMDFM and the Executive Information Service has taken professional advice on the different types of corporate branding which could be developed. The group agreed to recommend the 'strongly endorsed' approach as the most suitable. This is explained in the paper.

2. OBJECTIVES

The principle objectives in developing a corporate identity will be to:

- establish easy public recognition of all aspects of the work of the Executive
- develop public confidence in the new administration. It will be important for the public to perceive the Executive working as a coherent whole, delivering services efficiently and effectively for the benefit of all.
- represent a new forward-looking, confident administration capable of operating on the world stage
- achieve cost effectiveness.

3. CONTEXT

The new administration has been formed against the background of three decades of violence, deep community division, political uncertainty and direct rule from Westminster. Now decision making is in the hands of local people and the new administration needs to convince the public it can make a new start – to make a difference and to do it in partnership with the people.

The organisation

The Executive Committee is a completely new and unprecedented structure. There are 14 Ministers and 11 new departments of government. It is to be expected that the public will so far have a limited understanding of functions and responsibilities. A corporate communications strategy is under development.

Although Ministers derive their authority from the Northern Ireland Assembly, the working of the Executive Committee and its Departments needs its own identity separate from the Assembly. Without this, there is considerable potential for public confusion over roles and responsibilities.

In addition, the Northern Ireland public is familiar with many of the new Ministers in their recent roles of party negotiators and spokesmen during the political talks process. There has been limited time for them to be perceived as members of a credible government administration. It will be important for public confidence to establish the Executive as a whole entity, rather than as a collection of disparate Departments with different political direction. There is now an excellent opportunity to create a new, clear, strong brand that delineates 'government' within Northern Ireland and which has the ability to represent the region strongly on the world stage.

For these reasons a 'strongly endorsed' branding structure is recommended. This would be based on one logo and colour scheme representing the Executive as a whole which would be used by all Departments. The Departments would be identified individually within the overall branding. One notable example of a country which has used this approach successfully is Canada. It is recommended as the most coherent and the most cost effective

solution to achieve the objectives above. Designing and implementing new identities for 11 new Departments could well be considered wasteful.

The strongly endorsed structure, although using a uniform approach to key presentational issues, is not overly prescriptive. There would still be considerable scope for designers to interpret the brand in creative ways – for example for publications and internet material - provided the overarching identity guidelines are followed.

4. FUNCTION

The Northern Ireland Executive Committee requires a corporate identity that is distinctive, memorable and provides a unique framework for the successful projection of corporate strategy, structure and style.

It will underpin all aspects of the Executive's communication – written, visual, promotional, verbal. This will include direct communication with its range of customers for example in correspondence and in face to face contact at the point of delivery of services; visual communication via its buildings, vehicles and equipment; and through the provision of information using printed and electronic publications, advertising and through the news media.

All of these communications elements should work together to endorse the cohesion and effectiveness of the Executive.

5. AUDIENCE

A government administration is unique in having the widest possible range of audiences both at home and abroad.

At home It has to be accessible to and have the confidence of, voters; taxpayers; young, old; the successful and the disadvantaged; the public and the private sectors; and the news media as a conduit to all of these.

Overseas the administration must win friends and influence on behalf of Northern Ireland among governments and decision makers to develop trade, investment and tourism. It must re-define the troubled image of recent years. The EU and the United States will be key targets in this sphere.

No one group will always be pre-eminent as a target audience and therefore the corporate identity must be robust enough to work in a range of very different circumstances.

6. THEMES/TONES

The identity should build a positive profile and be credible. It must be true to the organisation, service and region. It must avoid being bland by seeking the highest common factor rather than the lowest common denominator.

Key themes and tones underpinning the corporate identity will be:

Vision

- the Executive has as its vision a peaceful and prosperous Northern Ireland founded on reconciliation, tolerance and mutual trust and in which human rights and identities are respected and protected
- it has a vision of good government working to improve the economy, infrastructure and opportunity for all
- it has the vision to work for this constructively

Future

- The administration is looking forward
- It understands the potential of the people and the place

Togetherness

- this is an administration for all of the people of Northern Ireland

Energy

- This an energetic new administration with the drive, determination and vigour to improve life for all citizens

Leadership

- The Executive has the ability and confidence to lead
- it will not shirk its responsibilities

Authority

- this is the elected regional administration for Northern Ireland. It will use its power to legislate and control for the benefit of the people
- it will speak with authority on behalf of the people at home and internationally

Accessibility

- this is government by local people for local people
- it is government with a human face
- contact with government should be simple and straightforward

Restrictions

Political sensitivity will be necessary in the development of the identity. Given the complex political history of the region, It will be necessary to avoid colours and symbols that could be interpreted as having party political associations or giving offence to any section of the community.

Languages

The corporate identity will have to be capable of incorporating the Irish language, and potentially other languages, if required by Ministers.

7. COSTS

It is expected that quotations for the design of a corporate identity and provision of a detailed design manual will be in the region of £15,000 - £20,000. Each Department will be responsible for its own implementation costs in relation to stationery, vehicles, buildings etc.

8. INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS

In the interim, Departments should continue with the current temporary arrangements for letter heads and other items and avoid expenditure which could be nugatory.