

## **FUNCTIONS OF THE OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER AND DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER**

The functions of OFMDFM are those designated in the Statement agreed by the First Minister and Deputy First Minister on 18 December 1998 and subsequently approved by the Assembly on 16 February 1999. OFMDFM as a Department was created by the Departments Order 1999, which came into effect on 1 December 1999. The current organisational structure of the Department is shown in the attached Annex A. The functions of each Directorate are shown below.

### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT AND LEGISLATION DIRECTORATE**

#### Executive Committee Secretariat

- Ministerial Code
- Agreeing agendas for Executive Committee meetings, in consultation with the Ministerial Representatives Committee
- Arranging Executive Committee meetings
- Commissioning and circulating papers for Executive Committee meetings

- Briefing First Minister and Deputy First Minister for Executive Committee meetings
- Supporting the First Minister and Deputy First Minister during meetings of the Executive Committee
- Recording and circulating decisions taken at Executive Committee meetings
- Liaison with the Assembly on Executive Committee business in the Assembly
- Co-ordination of OFMDFM papers for consideration by the Executive Committee
- Identifying and brokering with Departments cross-cutting issues for consideration by the Executive Committee
- Advising the First Minister and Deputy First Minister and the Executive Committee on all North/South matters and British Irish matters
- Fulfilling statutory requirements for First Minister and Deputy First Minister to nominate Ministers to attend NSMC, BIC and BIIGC; to notify Executive Committee and Assembly of such meetings; and to

- report to the Executive Committee and Assembly on attendance at NSMC and BIC meetings
- Co-ordinating the input of the Northern Ireland Executive to the work of the NSMC, BIC and BIIGC
  - Supporting the First Minister and Deputy First Minister in discharging their roles and responsibilities within the NSMC, BIC and BIIGC
  - Developing inter-parliamentary links with members of the BIC, if agreed
  - Establishment of Civic Forum, administrative support for the Civic Forum, once established
  - Liaison with Secretary of State/NIO on reserved and accepted matters as specified in Schedules 2 and 3 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998
  - Liaison between the Northern Ireland administration and Parliamentary Bodies such as Select Committees and the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee

## Machinery of Government

- Establishment of procedures for dealing with the interface between the Northern Ireland Executive Committee, the Assembly, the public, MPs, the Secretary of State, etc
- Advice and guidance to Departments on the business and machinery of government, contacts with political parties, handling of Ministerial correspondence, meetings, etc, distribution of papers to Northern Ireland MPs, Assembly members and others, dealing with Assembly Committees, advice on Access to Government, advice to Department on handling Assembly questions
- Co-ordination of OFMDFM Assembly questions
- Co-ordination of OFMDFM dealings with Committee of the Centre
- Liaison on Memorandum of Understanding and Concordats between UK, Scottish, Welsh and NI administrations
- Supporting the First Minister and Deputy First Minister as members of the Joint Ministerial Committee, agreeing and monitoring the operation of concordat between NIO and Northern Ireland Executive Committee

- Liaison with Northern Ireland Departments on bilateral concordats with Whitehall Departments
- Co-ordination of cross-departmental matters for which there is no clear lead Department, eg advice to First Minister and Deputy First Minister/Head of Northern Ireland Civil Service, responses to Assembly questions, etc
- Co-ordinating, monitoring and advising on the Northern Ireland Legislative Programme
- Advising and guiding Departments on the preparation of primary legislation (Bills of the Assembly) and subordinate legislation (Statutory Rules of Northern Ireland) including legislation required to implement EC Directives
- Advice to Departments on Assembly procedures for approval of legislation
- Liaison with OLC, Assembly and NIO on matters falling outside the legislative competence of the Assembly
- Co-ordination of freedom of information within Northern Ireland

#### Infrastructure and Services

- Personnel and finance services to OFMDFM

- Promotion of civil protection arrangements to respond to a civil emergency
- Advice and guidance to Departments about public appointments policy
- Maintenance of central register for public appointments
- Monitoring public appointments made by Departments
- Preparation of Annual Report by FM/DFM on public appointments to bodies in the transferred field
- Appointment of Northern Ireland Assembly Ombudsman and Commissioner for Complaints
- Liaison with the Office of the Assembly Ombudsman and Northern Ireland Commissioner for Complaints
- Administration of the Honours system for Northern Ireland
- Oversight of the Northern Ireland Bureau in Washington (and any other International Bureau or liaison arrangements that may be established by the Executive Committee)

## Washington Bureau

- Representation of NI interests in the US.

## **HUMAN RIGHTS DIRECTORATE**

- Helping the Northern Ireland Departments ensure that they and the public authorities for which they are responsible are ready for the implementation of the Human Rights Act 1998 on 2 October 2000, and the immediate Human Rights issues arising under the Northern Ireland Act 1998 on devolution.
- Ensuring that all areas of legislation, policy and administrative practice in Northern Ireland Departments are compliant with the Convention rights;
- Helping to promote a culture of rights and responsibilities within the NICS and other public authorities;
- Promoting awareness of wider human rights considerations, for example under other international instruments to which the U.K. is a signatory;

- Facilitating the development of good working relationships between the Northern Ireland devolved administration and the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission;
- Developing a protocol supporting the working relationship between the devolved administration and the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission;
- Together with the NIO, to advising the Secretary of State ( and the NI Executive Committee) on the recommendations of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission in relation to:
  - NI legislation
  - Policies in the transferred field
  - The scope for a NI Bill of Rights

## **EQUALITY DIRECTORATE**

### Community Relations

- Policy on community relations, including cultural diversity
- Relations with Community Relations Council
- Expenditure on CR grants, capital programme, District Council programme
- EU measures on community reconciliation

## Research

- Research on community relations, equality and New TSN
- Evaluation of CR programmes and projects
- Monitoring of PEACE programme

## Statutory Duty

- Provision, training and central guidance on S75NIA statutory equality obligation within NI Departments
- Liaison with NIO and other public bodies on implementation of S75
- Liaison with Equality Commission on S75

## New TSN

### **FUNCTIONS OF THE NEW TSN UNIT**

- Driving forward the initiative and set overall objectives
- Promoting New TSN both within Departments and externally
- Advising Departments on the implementation of New TSN and challenging current arrangements where necessary
- Producing written guidance on specific aspects of the work and collaborating with Departments on New TSN training events or materials
- Identifying and disseminating good practice in relation to resource skewing and other aspects of the work
- Advising on monitoring and other statistical aspects of the work and on research needs arising from New TSN

- Report on progress - this includes reports to Ministers and the cross Departmental steering body as well as the production of the New TSN Annual report
- Co-ordinating and administering PSI, this includes working with others to determine what interdepartmental action falls within PSI's scope, identifying and recommending priorities, advising on Working Group terms of reference, and membership
- Chairing and servicing PSI Working Groups which are tackling issues for which there is no identified lead Department
- Providing a central point for liaison with the Social Exclusion Unit and with those engaged in similar initiatives in the Scottish and Welsh Offices and elsewhere

#### Anti-Discrimination

- Legislation on fair employment and treatment
- Equal pay legislation
- Race relations legislation
- Disability discrimination legislation
- Sex discrimination legislation
- Input to UK consultation of EU draft directives on discrimination (Art 13 of Treaty of Amsterdam)
- Departmental responsibility for Equality Commission

Gender Policy (New Branch)

- Policy on gender issues
- Raising awareness of gender issues in NI Departments, encouraging joint working
- Liaison with gender-related non-government organisations
- Monitoring NI compliance with EU and international obligations on gender equality
- Liaison with Equality Commission on gender issues (excluding Sex Discrimination legislation)

Victims (New Branch)

- Policy on victims within the devolved system
- Raising awareness of victims issues in NI Departments, encouraging joint working
- Liaison with voluntary victims organisations
- Liaison with NIO Victims Liaison Unit

## NORTH-SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL JOINT SECRETARIAT

The Secretariat will arrange meetings of NSMC as follows:

- in consultation with the two Administrations, the plenary meetings of the NSMC;
- NSMC meetings in specific sectoral formats on a regular and frequent basis;
- NSMC meetings in appropriate format to consider institutional or cross-sectoral matters (including in relation to the EU);
- NSMC meetings, as required, to resolve disagreements, either in plenary format or other appropriate format, including advising on, and seeking agreement between the two Administrations on the appointment of experts to consider particular matters and report.

Arrangements for all meetings will include:

- Seeking agreement between the two sides on the agendas for all meetings, including dealing with proposals from either side of any matters raised for consideration or action;
- Commissioning and circulating in advance of all meetings the appropriate papers for consideration at those meetings;

- Making practical arrangements;
- Providing Secretariat services, including the production of minutes of meetings in an agreed format;
- Commissioning and taking forward any action required following meetings.

The Secretariat will also prepare papers for consideration by the Council in appropriate format on:

- Matters of mutual interest within the competence of both Administrations, North and South, containing information, ideas and proposals on possible co-operation on those matters;
- Matters where there is a mutual cross-border and all-Ireland benefit and which are within the competence of both Administrations, North and South, setting out proposals on the possible adoption of common policies and addressing any disagreements;
- Relevant meaningful areas within the competence of both Administrations, North and South, setting out proposals for policies which might be implemented separately in each jurisdiction;

- Policies and action at an all-Ireland and cross-border level to be implemented by the North-South Implementation Bodies or proposals for further development of North-South Implementation Bodies.

The Secretariat will ensure that papers on other issues in relation to the Implementation Bodies, are brought forward for consideration by NSMC meeting in the appropriate format.

### **EXECUTIVE INFORMATION SERVICE**

- Development and delivery of a comprehensive communications strategy to the satisfaction of Ministers
- Central co-ordination and planning of communications issues
- Media relations – including advice to Ministers and officials; media monitoring and response, central press office; 24 hour service to Ministers and media
- Public relations – including advice to Ministers and officials; media monitoring and response, central press office; 24 hour service to Ministers and media
- Public relations – including corporate identity, publications, advertising, internet, intranet, internal communications, evaluation, overseas information, media visits

- Departmental Information offices – providing full media and PR service to each Minister and Department
- Events management, training and administration

### **OFFICE OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

- Drafting Northern Ireland Primary Legislation;
- Adaptation where necessary of GB Bills extending to NI;
- Advice on constitutional matters; and
- The Statutory Publications Office.

### **ECONOMIC POLICY UNIT/PUBLIC SERVICE OFFICE**

#### Economic Policy Unit

The main functions of the Unit include assisting the First Minister and Deputy First Minister in:

- Undertaking, together with the responsible Northern Ireland Minister and the Secretary of State, negotiations with HM Treasury on the size of the Northern Ireland Block grant and on EU and IFI funding;

- Determining, within the Executive Committee, the Administration's detailed strategic goals and inputting them to the Programme for Government and the allocation of financial resources working in conjunction with the Minister for Finance and Personnel;
- Arbitrating on competing funding demands and making final determination thereon; and evaluating the effectiveness of Government policies;
- Co-ordinating EU policy including the establishment of a representative office in Brussels and reviewing the progress and effectiveness of EU and IFI funds;
- The efficient co-ordination and development of cross cutting policies;
- Establishing a Performance and Innovation Unit, the overall goal of which is to ensure that the new Administration operates in an holistic manner in its approach to problem solving and adopts a preventative approach
- Responsibility for overall policy research including the work of the Northern Ireland Economic Council (NIEC)

## **Public Service Office**

The Public Service Office has had the lead responsibility in promoting, monitoring and reporting on delivery of Government objectives for improving quality and efficiency in public services in Northern Ireland and driving forward the modernising government.

## **Central Information Technology Unit (CITU)**

This unit has overall policy responsibility for development of e-Government within the NI public service.

## **INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR IRELAND**

- Liaison with the IFI.