

ALAN MCARTHUR

18/9
11 SEP 2000

RECEIVED

cc Mr Sweeney
Mrs Brown

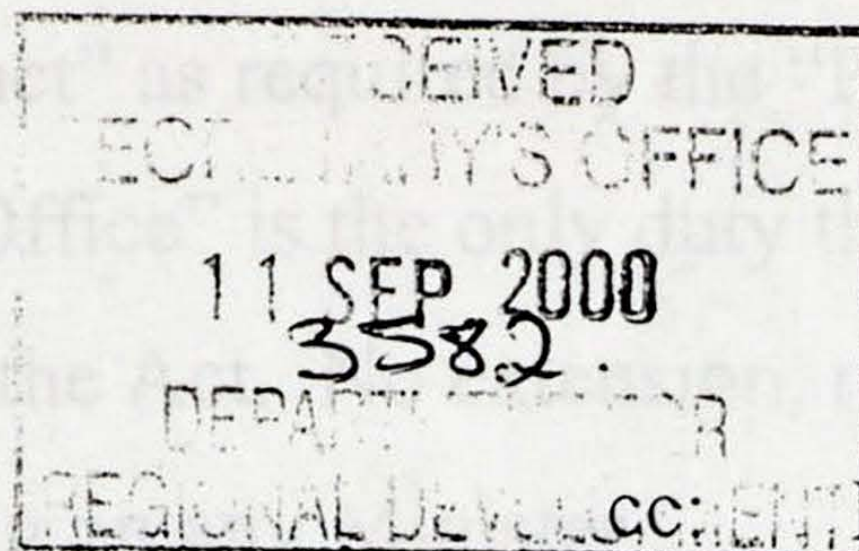
Mr McArthur

DSD

Department for
Social Development

From The Minister for Social Development

Churchill House
Victoria Square
Belfast BT1 4SD



From: Maurice Morrow MLA

Minister for Social Development

PS/Mr Campbell

Mr Hunter

Mr Spence

Date: 7 - September 2000

First Minister and Deputy First Minister

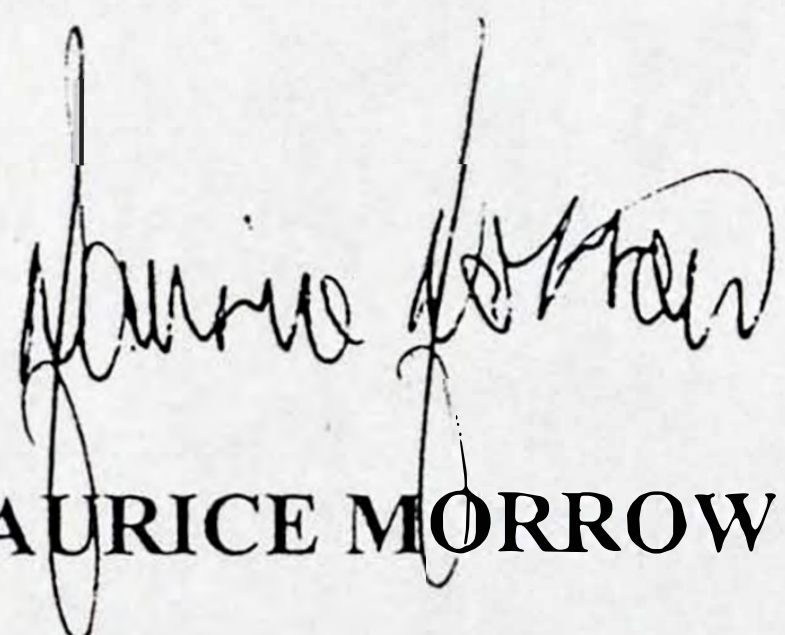
Karen 1/142
I think we have a
file on this - please
P.A.



MINISTERIAL CODE

1. The Executive Committee Secretariat has asked for Ministers' comments and views on the Ministerial Code. This is a joint response on behalf of Gregory Campbell and myself.
2. Consistent with our manifesto pledges, we are determined to deliver the best possible service to the people of Northern Ireland. Our commitment to this approach has been proven throughout our stewardship of both the Department for Social Development and the Department for Regional Development. We have run both of our departments in the most effective and efficient manner possible and will continue to do so. We trust that others will not seek to disadvantage them and prejudice the services that they provide on the basis of our principled stand in relation to the continued presence of Sinn Fein in the Executive Committee.

3. The Northern Ireland Act 1998 clearly defines the boundaries of executive responsibility. It makes no mention of a "Ministerial Code", referring only to the "Ministerial Code of Conduct" as required by the "Pledge of Office". Compliance with the "Pledge of Office" is the only duty that exists for Northern Ireland Ministers under the Act. No extension, reduction or qualification of this duty is binding on any Minister.
4. The "Ministerial Code", in seeking to extend the obligations under the "Pledge of Office" and to limit the legal authority vested in Ministers under the Act, is unenforceable and this was reflected in the legal advice furnished to the Executive Committee meeting on 24th January 2000. As before, DUP Ministers will, at all times and in all circumstances, operate to the highest standards of probity (including of course, respect for the confidentiality of official papers) and will continue to safeguard the best interests of the people of Northern Ireland.



MAURICE MORROW MLA

Minister for Social Development