

**FROM: CHRIS STEWART**  
**30 JANUARY 2002**

**PS/FIRST MINISTER**  
**PS/DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER**  
**below**

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**COR 699: REQUET FOR PART INPUT FROM DFP: NORTH BELFAST**

**Summary**

**Issue:** DFP request for input to a response on North Belfast.

**Timescale:** Reply due.

**Recommendation:** Draft attached.

**Background**

1. The Department of Finance and Personnel received an e-mail enquiry on 27 November about North Belfast.
2. I attach a draft part input to the reply addressing the suggestion that recent measures announced for the area amount to a reward for violence and intimidation.

**Chris Stewart**

**CHRIS STEWART**  
**Community Relations, Human Rights and Victims Unit**  
**☎ 28351**

Enc

(1) *Handwritten:* Donegan / Carrough CB  
To see please

(2) *Handwritten:* File on 46/2001.

*Handwritten:* J 30/1



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## DRAFT INPUT

In your letter you suggested that the Holy Cross protest proves that violence and intimidation pay. Dr Farren welcomes the suspension of the protest at Holy Cross Primary School. He has consistently called for the protest to end and stated that there can be no justification for sectarian violence or intimidation.

On 3 December 2001, the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, along with the Minister for Social Development, launched the North Belfast Community Action Project, with the aim of putting in place a plan of short, medium and long-term actions to address social and community issues in North Belfast. To date, funding of £250,000 has been committed to this project, to be provided jointly by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister and the Department for Social Development.

The Community Action Project is one of a number of measures being taken by the Executive to deal with a range of social, economic and community issues in North Belfast. Other elements of the package include:

- a four-phased programme of road works designed to promote community safety in the Upper Ardoyne area. This will be facilitated by the Department for Regional Development, with the estimated costs of approximately £236,000 plus the cost of any land acquisition to be met by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister;
- increased support for trauma and counselling services. This will be provided by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety through the North and West Belfast HSS Trust, with the additional costs of £104,000 being met by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister.

The Minister for Education announced on 17 December 2001 a package of

CS-30-1 COR699 Part input from DFP



education measures to address the immediate needs of schools in the area and rebuild community relationships. A total of £1.5m will be available over the financial years 2001/02 to 2004/05 to support the following:

Support for 15 primary schools	£450k
Enhancement of Belfast Board Behavioural Support Unit	£250k
Additional Youth Workers	£500k
Additional after-school provision	£50k
Funding for art and music therapies	£30k
Refurbishment of Wheatfield Primary School	£100k
Development of St Gabriel's Secondary School playing field as an astro-turf facility for use by both communities.	£120k

The Department for Social Development is taking a number of steps to protect housing in the area.

There is already in existence a scheme to protect the homes of social tenants, ie, tenants of the Housing Executive and Housing Associations, living in interface areas, who require security measures to be installed to protect their homes from attacks.

In addition, officials in the Department for Social Development are developing a scheme to enable the Housing Executive to cover homeowners who are at the greatest security risk.

The suspension of the protest has paved the way for dialogue between the local communities, and for action to address the difficulties that they face. Far from being a reward for violence, this demonstrates that it is only when violence ceases and dialogue begins that progress can be made on the range of social and economic issues that affect both communities.