

From: Derek Wheeler
4 February 2002.

To: PPS/Ministers

cc

PS/Ministers
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Mary Bunting
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Advisers

REPORT 4 FEBRUARY 2002.

1. CRUA held a public meeting on Friday night. Although I was invited I could not attend. I have not yet heard much about the outcome of that meeting, except that Mark Coulter has reported that the committee got through it okay, but that they are now in "the Last Chance Saloon." Before that meeting I had given the CRUA committee a copy of the latest version of the landscape architect's drawing of the interface, incorporating the changes they had requested on Thursday evening. I had also emphasised to Coulter, Potts and Megarry before the public meeting that we were consulting both communities with the reasonable assumption that the project will proceed.
2. On Saturday morning I met a group representing Ardoyne. Led by Gerard McGuigan, the group included Father Troy, Michael Liggett, Rab McCallum and a couple of the Holy Cross parents. I had hoped to discuss the realignment project and consider the landscape architect's options. However there was extreme reluctance to talk about the project. The first three options that I had previously shown to McGuigan were declared unacceptable. A variety of concerns were raised, especially the feeling that the work would cut off access to the school. In the absence of any interest in talking with me about the road project, I did not give them a copy of the latest design option. I did however emphasise that in all the options proposed by CRUA, they have accepted that parents and children going to Holy Cross must continue to be seen from the Lower Ardoyne Road.
3. Basically Ardoyne has boiled down their position to a single requirement; that all efforts should be put into establishing the planned Ardoyne/Upper Ardoyne Joint Forum, which should then be asked to agree the way ahead on the Ardoyne Road. (Father Troy wants the Dunlop project to take resolution of the Holy Cross dispute as their top priority. He also mentioned he was unhappy with the makeup of the team on the Community Action Project.) I pointed out the difficulties of putting the currently most contentious issue on the agenda of a group that has yet to establish regular contact, let alone tackle the basic relationship and trust issues. In any event there has not been any contact between the two sides for over two weeks, which does not augur well for progress. Both McGuigan and McCallum again said they would try to make contact by telephone with some of the individuals on CRUA. I reiterated the offer by FM and DFM to support any agreed mechanism for facilitation or mediation.
4. We continue to be in a very dangerous impasse. I recommend early contact with the local

MLAs to discuss the situation. However I do not think the two sides will form a satisfactory relationship in the absence of support on a wider front. It is asking a lot for these two communities – one of which has no full time support workers – to pioneer an ambitious development when emotions on both sides remain so raw.

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