

## RESTRICTED - EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

EC(M)(00)9

## MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING: 29 JUNE 2000

Those Present:     First Minister  
                         Deputy First Minister  
                         Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development  
                         Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure  
                         Minister of Education  
                         Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment  
                         Minister of Environment  
                         Minister of Finance and Personnel  
                         Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety  
                         Minister of Higher and Further Education, Training and Employment

In Attendance:    Secretary to Executive Committee  
                         Mr Loughran  
                         Director, OFMDFM

Introduction

1.     The Executive Committee discussed the remit of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister in relation to issues which are the responsibility of other Ministers and the process by which Ministers should obtain information from each other's Departments. It was agreed that
  - it was appropriate for the First Minister and Deputy First Minister to speak on the complete range of Executive functions, given their chairmanship of the Executive Committee and their role in relation to cross-cutting issues, but that this did not extend to going beyond policy which had already been approved by the Minister or the Executive;
  - all contact should be at Private Office level;

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- any Minister intending to speak on an issue which was the responsibility of another Minister should inform that Minister in advance about what was to be said;
- where difficulties arose, Ministers would normally try to resolve them bilaterally in the first instance.

### Financial Allocations 2000-01: EC(00)83

### Agenda for Government: EC(00)84

2. The Executive Committee discussed the Agenda for Government and the brochure Moving Forward Together. The Committee noted that Moving Forward Together included only one addition to the proposed allocations to the Agenda for Government in EC(00)84, ie, £1.2 million to DHFETE for support for projects for disabled persons. A number of Ministers expressed concern about bids for their Departments which had not been met in the financial allocations exercise. It was noted that the financial allocations, including the Agenda for Government allocations, had been made on the basis of the decision by the Executive Committee at its meeting on 8 June that all available resources including resources from the Chancellor's budget and resources from end-year flexibility would be treated as a single pool of resources for these exercises, rather than automatic assumptions about their allocation being made. It was also noted that there would be further opportunities at later monitoring rounds for Departments' bids to be considered again. The Executive Committee approved the Moving Forward Together paper for issue to the Press and the other financial allocations for 2000/01 in Annex 3 of EC(00)83.

### Report on EU Structural Funds Meeting with Commissioner Barnier

3. The First Minister, Deputy First Minister and the Minister of Finance and Personnel reported on their meeting the previous week with Commissioner Barnier. The Committee noted that Commissioner Barnier had expressed his personal commitment to contributing

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to the peace process as well as emphasising the importance of sound financial management of European money in Northern Ireland.

### New TSN: EC(00)85

4. The Executive Committee discussed the recommendations in the New TSN paper. The Committee agreed:
- the New TSN approach including the principle of targetting on the basis of objectively defined socio-economic need, and the action plans approach;
  - that the New TSN policy should be integrated into the development of the Programme for Government;
  - that the Committee of the Centre should be given the opportunity to consider the Departmental action plans and respond before July 7;
  - that Ministers would consider Departmental action plans with a view to giving Ministerial approval by end July;
  - that Departmental action plans should be published as a single document by the end of September;
  - that Departments should work together at Ministerial and official levels, in consultation with Departmental Committees on the development and implementation of New TSN;
  - that co-ordination should be through an inter-Departmental group;
  - that progress should be monitored on a cross-Departmental basis with quarterly reports at official and Executive Committee levels.

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The Executive Committee noted that the New TSN agenda would create additional work in Departments which would have implications for DRC.

### Report on the Work of the Joint Ministerial Committee (Health) – Implications for the HPSS: EC(00)86

5. The Executive Committee considered the Report from the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety on the work of the JMC (Health). The Committee noted that it was the Minister's intention to make an announcement to coincide with the announcement of the English National Plan for the NHS which would:
  - confirm spending plans for 2000-01 to bring improvements across a range of services;
  - confirm plans for dealing effectively with the pressures of next winter;
  - announce action on a review of acute services and the development of a public health strategy; and
  - confirm the intention to take measures to improve standards in clinical and social care settings and to tighten professional regulations.
6. The Executive Committee noted that the Minister would keep the Committee informed of any further developments and would forward a copy of the statement at the end of July to the Committee for information. In discussion, the Committee noted that any implications of the proposals for the structures of the Health and Social Services Boards would be considered in the context of the Review of Public Administration. The First Minister indicated that he would meet the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to discuss the proposals. The Minister of Finance and Personnel advised that there could be no automatic assumption that additional resources which might accrue to Northern Ireland on foot of the English National Plan would be allocated to DHSS&PS.

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### Legislative Programme: EC(00)87

7. The Executive Committee noted the current position.

### Schedule of NSMC Meetings: EC(00)88

8. The Executive Committee noted the schedule.

### Executive Committee Business in the Assembly: EC(00)89

9. The Executive Committee noted that, in addition to business listed in the Memorandum, the First Minister and Deputy First Minister would make a statement on Agenda for Government and the Minister of Finance and Personnel would make a statement on the Financial Allocations for 2000-01 in the Assembly the following week.

### Minutes of the Last Meeting: EC(M)(00)8

10. The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 15 June.

### Press Release

11. The Committee noted that a Press Release on Moving Forward Together would be issued after the meeting. It was agreed that all Ministers would attend the Press Conference to announce the Agenda for Government, but that only the First Minister and Deputy First Minister would speak. A co-ordinated approach to the announcement of the details of individual Departmental Agenda items and spending plans would be taken over the course of the following week.



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### Any Other Business

12. The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development advised the Committee that she would be reporting to the Assembly on the NSMC sectoral meeting on agriculture, but that she had not yet agreed the statement with Mr Dermot Nesbitt who had accompanied her to that meeting.
13. In response to a question from the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, the Secretariat agreed to provide clarification on the process for appointing members to the Advisory Committee to the Food Safety Promotion Board.
14. The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development advised the Committee that to meet the statutory deadline her Department would submit its Equality Scheme to the Equality Commission without Ministerial approval.
15. The Committee agreed that a report from the sub-committee on Flags should be brought forward for consideration at the next meeting.

### Date of Next Meeting

16. The Committee noted that the next meeting would be held at 2 pm on Thursday 6 July 2000.