

RESTRICTED - EXECUTIVE

E (M) (01) 20

MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE MEETING: 13 SEPTEMBER 2001

Those Present: Mr Mallon, Joint Chairman
Sir Reg Empey, Joint Chairman and
Minister of Enterprise, Trade & Investment
Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development
Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure
Minister of Education
Minister of the Environment
Minister of Finance and Personnel
Minister of Education and Learning
Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

In Attendance: Secretary to the Executive
Deputy Secretary to the Executive
Director of EPU, OFMDFM*
Director of Central Finance Group, DFP*
* for E (01) 157 and E (01) 158

INTRODUCTION

Response to Attacks in USA

1. The Executive held a minute's silence as a mark of respect to the victims of the terrorist atrocities carried out in the United States of America on Tuesday 11 September. It noted that Sir Reg Empey and Séamus Mallon had written on behalf of the Executive to President Bush expressing sympathy.

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Circulation of Papers

2. The Chairman advised the Executive that the following papers had been circulated to the Minister for Regional Development and the Minister for Social Development:

- E (01) 164 - Update on Holy Cross Dispute
- E (01) 157 – Draft Programme for Government
- E (01) 158 – Draft Budget 2001: Key Issues
- E (01) 159 – Procurement Review Implementation Team Report
- E (01) 160 – Executive/Ministerial Business in the Assembly
- E (01) 161 – Update on Legislative Programme

E (01) 164:

UPDATE ON HOLY CROSS DISPUTE

3. The Secretary to the Executive presented the paper to the Executive.
4. Following discussion, the Executive:
- (i) noted the latest position;
 - (ii) agreed to the establishment of a local office to liaise between the Executive and local community representatives as set out in paragraph 7 of the paper; and
 - (iii) agreed the establishment of an inter-Departmental group of senior officials to take forward work on establishing a formal mechanism for dialogue with local communities to address the full range of social, economic and community issues both now and in the longer term.

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- (iv) agreed to have an early further discussion about community relations issues generally at a subsequent meeting.

E (01) 157: DRAFT PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT

- 5. The Chairman presented the paper to the Executive.
- 6. Following discussion, the Executive
 - (i) agreed to the style of the document, subject to any further reductions in text agreed at the drafting group; the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety noted that as presently drafted aspects of the document were not realistic when taken alongside the Budget provisions;
 - (ii) agreed the proposed monitoring and reporting arrangements set out in paragraph 5(ii) of the paper;
 - (iii) agreed to consider draft text creating a sub-priority for issues affecting older people;
 - (iv) agreed the inclusion of the following additional text on ex-prisoners in paragraph 2.7 of the Growing as a Community priority:

"We acknowledge that ex-prisoners may face particular difficulties re-integrating fully into society. Some of these issues are within the scope of the devolved administration. We will consider what more might be done to help ex-prisoners overcome barriers to re-integration."

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- (v) agreed that further work should proceed urgently with Departments, EPU and DFP to improve the PSAs, particularly on benchmark positions and targets; and
- (vi) agreed that the draft assessment of equality impact covers the issues which need to be addressed.

E (01) 158:

DRAFT BUDGET 2001: KEY ISSUES

- 7. The Minister of Finance and Personnel presented the paper to the Executive.
- 8. Following discussion the Executive:
 - a. agreed that the focus of further consideration in the preparation of the Draft Budget should be on the bids in Appendix C, subject to the addition of items highlighted by individual Ministers;
 - b. agreed not to confirm the indicative allocations, but withhold some spending power so as to provide wider scope for choice by the Executive;
 - c. agreed to give further consideration to the matter of rates increases in light of further information which would be provided by DFP;
 - d. agreed that the provision held back from the indicative allocations should be through a combination of a 1% reduction in running costs and the other methods set out in paragraph 44; including in particular that there is a need for constraint on running costs in all Departments, though this would have to have regard for the effect on services;

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- e. agreed that, while the spending plans should be steered by the need to pursue all the priorities in the Programme for Government, the immediate pressures facing some services required particular attention in settling detailed allocations for 2002-03. Without prejudice to the consideration of wider priorities for the longer term, there was a need to find additional provision for Health, Social Services, Education and Roads, though the needs of services in other Departments would also be considered;
- f. recognising that there would be serious difficulties for Departments with the possible adjustments to the Indicative Allocations set out in the DFP paper, agreed that, to inform final decisions by the Executive, each Minister should provide by 14 September details of the effects of an outcome such as that set out at Appendix G on their services including effects on actions and targets in the PfG and the Public Service Agreements, and on New TSN and equality;
- g. noted that some £52m was to be allocated for 2002-03 from the Executive Programme Funds to ensure that the Executive could secure some key objectives in the PfG and that the agreed timetable would allow allocations to be reflected in the Revised Budget;
- h. noted that there could be some additional provision available through end year carry forward from 2001-02, and remitted the Minister of Finance and Personnel to examine how this could be used to develop proposals for the Draft Budget, taking account of the points made by Ministers in discussion and the material to be provided under (f) above, and that these proposals should be discussed bilaterally with Departments so as to prepare for final consideration by the Executive next week; and

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- i. asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to give consideration to the request to provide funding for the dualling of the road between Newry and the Border and to report back to the next Executive meeting.

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PROCUREMENT REVIEW IMPLEMENTATION TEAM REPORT

9. The Minister of Finance and Personnel presented the paper to the Executive.
10. Following discussion, the Executive:
 - (i) noted the Review Team Report and its recommendations;
 - (ii) agreed that it should be released for public consultation and subjected to an equality impact assessment; the Minister of the Environment noted that he did not support this decision;
 - (iii) noted that following public consultation and impact assessment a further submission will be put to Ministers seeking formal approval to the policy and other recommendations; and
 - (iv) agreed that in the meantime work should start on the interim organisational arrangements proposed by the Team, ie, setting up a small implementation group in DFP to take forward the establishment of the Procurement Board and proceeding with recruitment of the Director for the Central Procurement Body, with a view to the Body becoming operational from April 2002.

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E (01) 160

EXECUTIVE/MINISTERIAL BUSINESS IN THE ASSEMBLY

11. The Executive noted the business to be taken in the Assembly in week commencing 17 September 2001

E (01) 161

UPDATE ON LEGISLATIVE PROGRAMME

12. The Executive noted the current position on the Legislative Programme.

E (01) 162

SCHEDULE OF NSMC MEETINGS

13. The Executive noted the current schedule of NSMC meetings.

E (01) 163

BIC SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

14. The Executive noted the latest position on BIC.

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MINUTES OF MEETING ON 26 JULY

15. The Executive approved the minutes of the meeting on 26 July 2001.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

BSE

16. The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development briefed the Executive on the current position in relation to BSE.

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Executive Papers dealt with by Written Procedure

17. The Executive noted the decisions taken in relation to Written Procedure papers as set out in Annex A.

DRAFT PRESS RELEASE

18. The Executive agreed the Press Release for issue after the meeting.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

19. The Executive noted that the next meeting would be held on Thursday 20 September at 1.30 pm.

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