



Department for
Communities
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Release of 2004 and 2005 files at the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland



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Using the documents

When using the documents held at the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI), please ensure that you acknowledge PRONI's custody of the original files and give the full PRONI document reference number.

Please note that in the 2004/05 file list, any file reference bearing 'A' at the end denotes the open part of a file which has been partially closed.

For example, the file *CENT/1/24/14A* refers to the open part of a file, whereas *CENT/1/24/14* refers to the part of that file withheld under certain exemptions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.



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PRONI on CAIN

PRONI on CAIN (Conflict Archive on the Internet) is a joint project between the Ulster University and PRONI which has resulted in digitised images of key documents from previous PRONI file releases being made freely available to view online for researchers and students. PRONI on CAIN includes over 4,000 public records comprising 17,000 pages of content on the troubles and political developments from 1968-1998. For further details of the documents available, please visit

<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/proni/index.html>



Introduction

The files are being released under the 30/20 Year Rule.

The annual release of selected official files continues against a background of greater public access through the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000 balanced against the need to protect personal information. The FOI Act created a new access to information regime and all records were reviewed in accordance with the Act, and the Data Protection legislation.

Annually since 1976, official records held by PRONI which were 30 years old have been reviewed with a view to making them publicly available ("the 30 Year Rule"). In September 2011, the Assembly accepted a Legislative Consent Motion to reduce the time limit for release from 30 years to 20 years ("the 20 Year Rule"). This is underpinned by the FOI Act 2000 and the amendments made to it by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

"The 20 Year Rule" is being phased in over 10 years, with two years' worth of records being reviewed and released each year. This year, the records of Northern Ireland (NI) Departments with terminal dates of 2004 and 2005 are being brought forward for release during December 2025.

This process involves the referral of the files to the Responsible Authority for sensitivity review. This entails a page-by-page examination to ensure that a record contains nothing sensitive as defined by the FOI Act, and Data Protection legislation.

Records Released

There are **1160** files being deemed as suitable for release as "fully open". A further **284** files are open but subject to blanking out and/or partial closure of some content. **39** files remain closed in full.

Some of the significant issues covered by the 2004 and 2005 release include:

- Programme for Government (PfG), New Targeting Social Need (TSN), Promoting Social Inclusion (PSI), Government Administration (e.g. Ministerial Briefings, Executive Committee Meetings), Suspension of Devolved Government, Review of Belfast Agreement
- North/South and East/West Cooperation: British Irish Parliamentary Body, North South Ministerial Council and Implementation Bodies, Northern Ireland Affairs Committee
- Europe: Strategy and Policy, International Fund for Ireland, State Aids, European Monetary Union
- NICS: Departmental Board and Senior Management Meetings, Review of Public Administration, Equal Opportunities
- Civil Contingencies and Emergency Planning
- Emergency Services and Social Welfare: Health Issues, Human Organs Inquiry, Waiting Lists, Child Support Agency, Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO)
- Education: Further and Higher Education, Integrated Education, Special Education, Teachers Industrial Action
- Economy & Society: Regional Economic Policy, Economic Research (Industry), Migrants
- Energy and Utilities: Power Supply, Renewables, Reducing Costs, Rathlin Island Electricity Project, Water Service Reform
- Transport and Infrastructure: Harbours and Ports, Derry to Dublin Air Service, Railways Review Group, Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan, Road Safety
- Regeneration and Development: Laganside Corporation, Development of the North West, Rural Development
- Tourism: Giant's Causeway, Ballycastle - Campbeltown Ferry
- Agriculture and Environment: Animal Health (TB, Brucellosis, Foot and Mouth Disease 20-day Standstill, Swine Fever), Genetic Modification, Climate Change Impacts, Countryside Management Scheme
- Language, Culture and Identity: Language Rights, Charter on Regional or Minority Languages, Flags and Emblems
- Legacy Issues: Victims, Sectarian Violence, Community Relations, Loyalist Outreach

Records may be closed either fully or in part only. Blanking out involves the removal of a limited number of papers from the file that have been deemed as exempt from the right to know under FOI. To facilitate the release of as much information as possible, redaction can be used to blank out sensitive data within individual documents that would otherwise prevent release. All information which is withheld in the manner outlined above, however, must be retained in accordance with the exemptions contained within the FOI Act. In the majority of cases, the reason for extended closure was the application of section 40 – the *personal information* exemption – of the FOI Act. This means that personal information is exempt from the right to know if it would breach Data Protection legislation.

The catalogue of files for 2004 and 2005 will be publicly available online on the PRONI website www.nidirect.gov.uk/proni from Tuesday 30 December 2025 and the files will also be available to view at PRONI from Tuesday 30 December 2025.



2004 & 2005 Highlighted Files

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

AG/64/48	1987-1988	<p>Chernobyl - The Government's Reaction [House of Commons Agriculture Committee Inquiry].</p> <p>File includes letter from E A J Attridge, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, to D M Carson, Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland, dated 23 May 1988.</p>
<p>Writing on the subject of "House of Commons Agriculture: Chernobyl," Attridge acknowledges a DANI Draft Memorandum, which he had discussed with Grant Meekings and states:</p> <p>"We both feel the best way to present the action taken by DANI is to emphasise the protection of the food chain through the monitoring undertaken at creameries and at slaughterhouses. Although we have explained to the Committee in some detail the rationale for individual farm samples in England, I see no reason why your memorandum should not emphasise... that sampling at creameries and slaughterhouses was the quickest and most effective way of covering the Province."</p>		

AG/73/5	1999-2004	<p>North / South Implementation Bodies - Personnel Implications.</p> <p>File includes letter from the Director of Personnel, Department of Finance and Personnel, Belfast to the Secretary General, Department of Finance, Dublin, dated 30 March 1999.</p>
<p>The letter discusses staffing of North/South Implementation bodies. It notes that Irish Government Departments "might consider "Maryfield allowance" - type payments to their staff working, or transferring to the Trade and EU Bodies (...in the North) and the Belfast office of the Irish Language Agency." However, the NI Departments' position differed: "We believe that there is no objective case in the current circumstances for an allowance for staff in implementation bodies similar to that paid to staff who had to work at Maryfield."</p>		

DARD/6/1/61	1995-2005	Tuberculosis in Badgers. File includes briefing for Ministers meeting with Mr McGrady, MP, MLA to discuss the issue of TB in Badgers, dated 28 November 2001.
<p>The briefing noted that Mr McGrady had raised the issue of TB in badgers a number of times and was “particularly interested in the development of a badger trial in Northern Ireland similar to the trials being undertaken in Great Britain and ROI.”</p> <p>The “Background” states “The Department has been aware for some years that the badger is susceptible to bovine TB and may contribute to the persistence of the disease. Although it is widely accepted that badgers are implicated in the spread of bovine TB there is no clear agreement on the most effective control strategy. There is evidence to suggest that removal of badgers from a particular area disturbs the population balance leading to the subsequent influx of animals from outside the area. This may lead to a worsening of the situation. ...</p> <p>Officials are of the view that the current Great Britain trials provide the best scientific method for understanding better the epidemiology of TB in cattle and badgers and for determining future policy options for the control of cattle TB. A sample badger cull in Northern Ireland on its own is unlikely to provide any statistically significant results. The best way forward is to continue with the road traffic survey and await the results of the Great Britain trials.</p> <p>There seems little merit in devoting scarce resources to doing anything additional on our own account although of course the whole question of what we might do on Tuberculosis (and Brucellosis) is being considered in the ongoing policy reviews and the issue will be on the agenda for the Animal Health Working Group being established under the North South Ministerial Council arrangements to consider Tuberculosis and Brucellosis in the context of an All-Island animal health strategy.”</p>		

DARD/6/1/74	2002-2005	TB/BR [Tuberculosis / Bovine Brucellosis] Policy Reviews - Devolved Administration Meetings. File includes email from Ben Bradshaw, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, dated 4 August 2005 on the subject of "TB visit to Ireland." The email states: "my visit to Ireland yesterday to discuss bovine TB was interesting and useful. It exploded a number of myths. The situation in Ireland is not "worse" than here. Their disease is more widely spread." The email further notes that the "Irish fall in TB coincides (approximately) with a more intensive reactive badger culling programme". Follow up "Action points" included the needs "to find out why there is enormous discrepancy between Ireland and the UK in reported lesions", also "to roll out the gamma interferon test", "to feed in (if we haven't already) the Irish style stop restraint into our cost benefit analysis for badger culling", and "to get tests on gases underway".
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DARD/6/4/3	2001-2005	NSMC (North / South Ministerial Council) Sub-group on cross border fraud (12.4). File includes letter from Mr Gleeson, Finance Division, to Ms Sperber, European Anti Fraud Office (OLAF), dated March 2005. The letter notes investigations into possible irregularities involving bovine ear tag switching. It states: "In early 2004, arising from an investigation of a consignment of cattle stolen from a livestock mart in the south west of Ireland, the Irish authorities uncovered information leading them to believe that these cattle had been transported illegally to a holding in Northern Ireland. This intelligence was shared with the authorities in Northern Ireland and a follow-up investigation of a number of premises in Northern Ireland... The stolen cattle were not recovered. However the Northern authorities uncovered a quantity of used ear tags from both jurisdictions. A small number of Irish cattle passports were also found. Details of the Irish tags and cattle passports (63 in all) were provided to the Southern authorities and a detailed field investigation was conducted..." The letter concludes: "The authorities on both sides of the border are very satisfied with the outcome of the joint investigation. It has demonstrated in practical terms the value of co-operation and co-ordination of activities. ..."
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DARD/6/9/3	2005	First Day Brief papers. File includes notes on "Draft Diseases of Animals Order in Council", dated June 2005. The notes state: "The disruption caused across Northern Ireland by the 2001 Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreak (occurring during devolution) should ensure that those aspects of the legislation concentrating on the Government's response to such a future emergency, will be of interest to locally elected political representatives."
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DARD/7/4/6	2004	Agri-Environment Strategic Management Board. File includes minute dated 20 February 2004, entitled "Agri-Environment Schemes: Strategic Management Board". The minute refers to a meeting in November 2003 which agreed: "a need for an agri-environment scheme Strategic Management Board ... to consider agri-environment scheme progress, establish priorities and objectives for the period ahead, etc." In the meantime, it stated: "the ongoing work in the agri-environment area is proceeding satisfactorily, albeit in an unchallenged way." A subsequent minute dated 8 April 2004 details the first meeting of the Strategic Management Board, where it was "agreed that a robust monitoring programme was needed to ensure value for money and to protect against future PAC [Public Accounts Committee] interest. ..."
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DARD/7/5/2	2004-2005	Rural Development Regulation 2007-2013. File includes note on "A Meeting With RSPB," dated 11 November 2004. Topics discussed included biodiversity monitoring and an awareness of inadequacies was noted by the Department. Other issues discussed included the RSPB and the suggested possibility of a small "pilot bird-monitoring project", such as "the effect of CMS [Countryside Management Scheme] arable options on yellowhammers on the Ards Peninsula." In relation to Rathlin Island, because of its, "uniqueness a Memorandum of Understanding should be drawn up between RSPB, DARD, EHS and the National Trust. This would not be a legally binding document but would clarify each party's proposals." An official expressed "unease in relation to equality issues, but suggested that if RSPB were to clarify their intentions he would circulate for comment within DARD."
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Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

DCAL/13/12	2004	Briefing Minister Part 6B YR 2003/2004. File includes note to Baroness Amos, dated 21 January 2004, on the subject "Meeting with the Lord Laird re Parliamentary Questions."
The note highlighted two areas of concern which Lord Laird might raise:		
(i) the timing and content of the answers that have been provided to him over the past year since suspension of the devolved institutions; and		
(ii) most recently the refusal by the Table Office to accept three "pursuant" questions tabled by him on the grounds that the Minister had already confirmed that she had nothing further to add to her previous answers."		
It further stated: "Lord Laird's questions on North/South matters are repetitive, predominantly cross-department, often include accusations about the role of the Irish government and have in a number of cases been critical of civil servants to the extent of naming them.		
These questions require a considerable amount of officials' and Ministers' time in the preparation and approval of answers. This has, unfortunately, resulted in a higher than usual percentage of late answers. In response to the pressures arising from responding to these questions we have allocated additional staff resources specifically to the answering of PQs on North/South matters, the vast bulk of which are from Lord Laird.		
Attached background notes stated that Lord Laird had asked 701 written questions during the 2002-2003 Parliamentary Session, mostly focused on "North South Bodies and Ulster Scots issues". In comparison, the "next most frequent tabler of Questions was Lord Lester of Herne Hill who had tabled 259 written questions".		

DCAL/13/13	2004	North / South Bodies Part 6B. File includes background material in relation to a meeting on Language Issues between the NIO and the DUP.
<p>An update on the "Ulster Scots Academy", prepared on 19 August [2004], noted that the Government had committed "to take steps to encourage support to be made available to an Ulster Scots Academy" in the Joint Declaration. The DUP's involvement in the issue was summarised, and it was noted that:</p> <p>"Nelson McCausland wrote to Adam Higgitt on 16 August... In this he outlines the consideration which he has given to move the Ulster Scots Academy away from being seen as "a contest between two factions". The proposals are more elaborate than the alternative suggestion of an implementation group, comprising as they do both a Management Board and an Academic Advisory Council. While they involve both academy companies they appear to favour the Ulster Scots Agency Company and therefore the Ulster Scots Language Society. Nonetheless the concept of involving representatives has won some acceptance."</p>		



Department of Economic Development

DED/3/811	2005	Departmental Board Meetings Number 75. File includes minutes of a departmental board meeting, dated 6 September 2005.
<p>Items discussed included "Current Issues – Political situation." The minutes state: "Mr Robinson briefed Board members on current thinking regarding the possibility of an early return of devolution. In addition, Mr Robinson alerted members to the forthcoming Strategic Investment Board meeting on the topic of 'Infrastructure'; the Minister's meeting with her Roi counterpart, Noel Dempsey, on the issue of telecommunications; and a recent proposal to run a major investment conference in Northern Ireland either later this year or in Spring 2006.</p> <p>Mr Robinson updated Board members on the current budget position. He re-emphasised the very tight budget position facing all Departments and outlined briefly the thrust of his recent meeting with Phil Taylor, the Secretary of State's political advisor, which had allowed him to express clearly the Department's priorities going forward.</p> <p>Mr Hamilton made reference to the DFP led work on a Regional Economic Strategy for Northern Ireland and Treasury's views. It was agreed that Mr Morrison and Mr Clarke would be kept informed."</p>		



Department of Education

DE/4/1/10	2002-2004	<p>Machinery of Government - NSMC (North / South Ministerial Council) - Papers for Sectoral Meetings Vol. 2.</p> <p>File includes background note and update on "Teacher Qualifications Joint Working Group," dated June 2003.</p>
<p>It notes that the working group had been "established to examine... a range of issues related to teacher mobility." Before suspension [of the NI Executive], the group had identified a number of areas for examination as "potential barriers to teacher mobility." With regard to "Irish Language Proficiency", it observed that there had been "significant relaxation of the previous requirements for proficiency in the Irish language in respect of teaching posts." Nevertheless, it noted: "Many primary schools in the RoI [sic] not only teach Irish but also have Irish as the principle language of instruction and communication generally. The number of such schools has grown significantly in recent years. ... Even when teaching Irish to pupils whose mother tongue is English or another language, it is widely accepted by language teachers in the South that, in order to be effective, a teacher needs to have a very good command of the language."</p>		

DE/4/1/12	2003-2004	Post Primary Support Team - Costello Report (The). File includes "Briefing for Announcement on Costello" from David Woods, Head of Curriculum and Post-Primary Review dated, 14 January 2004. The briefing includes a draft speech for Steve Costello entitled "Launch of the New Post Primary Arrangements." It states: "I felt very privileged to be asked to Chair the Group and I know that all of the members also felt privileged to be involved. ... The members brought to the table a tremendous breadth of knowledge and experience and different perspectives on many issues, but we all had one thing in common and that was to ensure that whatever recommendations we brought forward would create better opportunities for all of the children of Northern Ireland. Putting the interests of the pupil first was central to our thinking. We reached a view first on what educational opportunities should be accessible to each pupil. Only then did we turn our minds to structures and systems. We have managed to produce a report for the Minister in a very short space of time. Despite the different backgrounds of members the report has the unanimous support and agreement of all of the members of the group. There is much that is good about education in Northern Ireland. We want to build on that to ensure that all young people, regardless of background or circumstance, are able to reach their potential and to make a full and positive contribution to society and the economy in the future. I believe that the advice given to the Minister will achieve that objective. There are still some issues that require further work, but in the main, I think we have created a vision for the future. The changes proposed will present challenges to all parts of the education service. But if it is properly managed it is achievable. All sectors in the education service will need to work together in a culture of real partnership as never before. It is for the Minister to decide what to do with the advice we have given her, but the members are very clear that now is the time for decisions; the time to provide a clear view of the way ahead. We owe our young people no less."
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Department of Employment and Learning

DEL/1/35	1998-2004	Correspondence with the Prince's Trust Re: Team. File includes minute from John Hunter to Will Hare, dated 5 February 2004, headed "Prince's Trust - Northern Ireland".
<p>Hunter states that he had attended a Prince's Trust event on 4 December 2003, "on behalf of Nigel Hamilton to receive an award to the NICS for our outstanding contribution to the Trust." He goes on to note:</p> <p>"In the margins of the event the Trust's Director and his team Programme Manager approached me about the deficit situation facing the Trust this financial year. They wondered whether they could secure financial backing from the NICS. Without knowing the background to the particular programme in question, I indicated that they should write to me and undertook to refer the proposal to the appropriate Department. I do not recall mention of DEL's potential role in funding the programme as set out in the attached papers.</p> <p>You will see from the papers that the basis for the request for funding lies in DEL "not being able to support 0-6 months unemployed young people". It seems to me that DEL is the most likely source of funding for this project, although DSD might also be willing to chip in. It is clear to me however that DFP could not apply its resources in support of the programme. ..."</p>		



Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

DETI/1/140	2004	Planning for Possible Fuel Crisis in Northern Ireland – Volume 2. File includes "Cabinet Office Ministerial Meeting – Fuel Protests" dated, 14 June 2004.
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The meeting notes state: "There is considerable unrest, both in GB and in the Republic of Ireland regarding increased oil prices, and there have been a number of threats of protest in GB. Issues of Government insensitivity to steep price rises may occur and may be directed locally rather than at HMT. Manufacturing, farming and transport and domestic supplies will all be affected." The rising prices were due to two main reasons:

"Firstly, the prices of refined oil products rose after the initial action in Iraq and have remained flat but at a relatively high level since that date. Since January 2004, increase in demand on a global basis, coupled with a short-fall in production created by the OPEC countries and revisions of reserves in the African nations, have driven the price of crude oil to a 30-year high. Secondly, the threat of terrorist action against major oil infrastructure targets is creating instability in the oil markets. ..."

It was further noted that the treasury planned a "rise in fuel duty". This would impact "Those industries that use oil as part of their processes" as well as "the agriculture and transport sectors". Also, "The general public will notice immediately the increases in road fuel prices and will also notice the continued increase in the price of home heating oil."

There was concern about protest action, and the notes stated: "The Government, industry and police remain alert to any possible resumption of the fuel protests which started in 2000 and any attempts to disrupt fuel supplies. Contingency plans have been updated and are in place to deal with any threat of disruption.

Within Northern Ireland we are observing the national position through DTI and Omand Group.

Locally, key terminals have been alerted to the possibility of protest and officials are in regular contact with them. Oil supply to NI is reported as normal and storage levels are high."

DETI/1/141	2004-2005	Contingencies Bill – Volume 2. File includes submission to Bruce Robinson, dated December 2004, entitled “Managing the Consequences of Power Outages”. The submission states: “Civil Contingencies Secretariat (CCS) are managing a UK wide exercise to assess the implications of major power outages for key stakeholders.” It notes that DETI had collected NI responses to a questionnaire provided by the CCS. The responses “were mostly favourable”, nevertheless, “several weaknesses” were identified, notably “the capacity of local Councils to deal with a major outage.” Regarding “Private Infrastructure”, it notes one area identified for improvement “relates to the BP oil terminal at Belfast Harbour... BP’s response to the survey highlighted that the company would be unable to supply fuel in the event of major power failure to their site. ...”
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DETI/2/182	2004	State Aids – Regional Aid – Contact with Politicians. File includes note on “Meeting with MEPs” dated, 6 September 2004. The note summarises a meeting between Ian Pearson and Jim Nicholson on European issues. It states: “Jim Nicholson anticipated that the two new MEPs, de Brun and Allister, would spend more time in Brussels than their predecessors. He and de Brun were both on the Regional Affairs Committee... He warned that Northern Ireland was well down the agenda at the moment: all eyes were looking East. A political breakthrough would help immensely. The Minister said state aids would be a big issue for Northern Ireland over the next while.” Nicholson also noted that he would be meeting Peter Mandelson, and the Minister suggested he “might seek Mandelson’s assistance” with “the proposal to reduce non-domestic electric bills by 10%, which had fallen foul of the Commission.”
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DETI/2/189	2004-2005	DETI – All-Island Energy Market – Joint Steering Group Vol. 7. File includes details of the “Northern Ireland Energy Forum 2004” meeting on 23 November 2004.
<p>There is a draft speech for Barry Gardiner, MP, Minister for Enterprise, Trade & Investment related to the theme of “Energy Market and Infrastructure Development”. It states: “... My job is to ensure that energy policy in Northern Ireland continues to meet the needs of its citizens while the NI Assembly is in suspension. ...” The speech also noted that, “Northern Ireland is making real progress on a number of fronts to create a more sustainable and competitive energy industry,” and that a Strategic Energy Framework for Northern Ireland had been published in the summer. It noted that:</p> <p>“The high cost of energy in Northern Ireland compared to GB and the Republic is not a new issue. ...</p> <p>Fuel poverty is a serious problem that my colleague John Spellar and the Department of Social Development have been working to address, alongside my own Department. I am pleased that he today announced the new Fuel Poverty Strategy for Northern Ireland and I will play my part to ensure that energy policy continues to address the needs of those consumers who are least able to meet the costs of electricity and gas.”</p> <p>Discussing the “All-island energy market” the draft speech states:</p> <p>“... the work of integrating the two Irish energy markets has been remarkably rapid and remarkably successful. Only ten years ago the two markets were completely separate. There was no physical connection between the electricity networks and Northern Ireland did not even have a gas industry. Ten years on the situation is rather different.”</p> <p>In relation to the “North South Electricity Interconnector,” the draft speech notes:</p> <p>“There is now general acceptance that one of the next steps that should be taken to create an island-wide electricity market is to improve the network links by the construction of more north south transmission. This needs to go hand-in-hand with joined-up transmission planning so that over the next few years a single transmission network comes into being. What we need to move the all-island market forward is more investment in the infrastructure ...</p> <p>... At yesterday's meeting with Noel Dempsey, along with publication of the All-island Energy Market Framework, we also endorsed the Regulatory Authorities' decision to proceed with the detailed planning of a second cross border electricity interconnector - providing it is based on sound investment principles. ...”</p>		

DETI/2/192	2004-2005	Northern Ireland Affairs Committee – Inquiry into Air Transport. File includes a memo entitled "Report on Air Transport Services in Northern Ireland" from the Director, Ports & Public Transport Division to John Spellar, dated 8 April 2005.
The memo notes there are three main issues arising from the report for DRD: City of Derry Airport, Leakage to Dublin and Access to Heathrow.		
In relation to City of Derry Airport it noted that: "The Committee "wholeheartedly welcomes" the decision in principle to provide financial support for City of Derry Airport. It recommends that DRD should undertake a review of the governance of CoDA "as a matter of urgency". Comment: This recommendation is slightly awkward in that the governance of CoDA is strictly a matter for Derry City Council. However, you will recall that change in the governance of CoDA is one of the conditions attaching to the Governments' offer of support and that DRD had offered to assist in taking this forward.		
The Committee has also suggested that DRD should consider action to reduce the financial burden of the airport on the ratepayers of Derry through refinancing loans or rescheduling payments. Comment: When giving evidence, you had already outlined the impracticality of this suggestion."		
Discussing "Leakage to Dublin" it states: "The Committee has recommended an "urgent study" to determine the extent of leakage of air passengers to the Republic of Ireland and a "detailed analysis" of the factors involved. It is also suggested that DRD should pursue with Treasury measures to reduce the impact of tax differentials. Comment: You have already expressed scepticism about such a study of leakage."		
Discussing "Access to Heathrow" it notes "While recognising that there seems to be no immediate threat to the Heathrow service, it is suggested that DRD should "explore and develop" contingency plans to protect the service. Comment: I suspect that this is a recommendation much easier to articulate than to carry out in practice."		



Department of Environment

ENV/34/12/8	2004	Minister's Queries 2004/05. File includes a memo entitled "Road Safety Bill" dated, 26 May 2004.
The memo states the issue as the "inclusion of three additional measures in the Road Safety Bill." The proposals related to "Graduated Fixed Penalty/Deposit Scheme, International Exchange of DVLA Vehicle Data and Definition of Private Hire Vehicles in London."		
It noted that the deposit scheme "aims to create a level playing field for UK and non-UK drivers. Currently UK drivers can be forced to pay a penalty where they commit an offence whereas non-UK drivers can, in practice, escape without penalty by leaving the country. ... This scheme mirrors those in operation in all other EU Member States, except Finland and the Republic of Ireland."		
In relation to the definition of private hire vehicles the document notes "uniquely in the UK, PSVs in Northern Ireland include taxis a generic term defined as "a [Public Service] vehicle seating not more than eight passengers in addition to the driver." ... If the legislation is implemented across the UK as currently proposed, Northern Ireland will be the only part of the UK in which the scheme will apply in the first instance to taxis as well as to HGVs, buses and coaches.		
At present there is no requirement for PHV operators in Northern Ireland to be licensed. The Taxi Review will recommend that a system of operator licensing, based largely on the London system, be introduced."		



Department of Finance and Personnel

DFP/28/1/1/76	2002-2005	EO – EOU – Flags and Emblems (Equal Opportunity) (Equal Opportunity Unit). File includes a note entitled "World Cup - Message From AMB [Agency Management Board]" dated [? May] 2002.
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The message, addressed to all staff states:

"AMB is aware that there is a high level of interest in the Football World Cup which runs from 31 May to 30 June 2002 and recognises that many staff will hope to take time off to watch televised matches, especially those involving the English and Irish teams. This comes as a very busy time for the Agency and at a time when staff numbers will be depleted because of summer holidays. In consultation with Trade Union Side, AMB has considered different options to balance the pressure of enthusiasts to want time off to watch matches and the business needs that contain approval of leave.

... However, AMB has decided that core-time and fixed hours working rules will be suspended for all staff only on the days that the English and Irish teams are playing. Consideration will be given to other dates should either of the teams progress further in the competition."

DFP/28/1/1/79	2003-2004	Corporate Services - Briefing - Minister. File includes "Briefing for NIO sponsored Order to extend Direct Rule - Modification Order Debate - 21 July 2004."
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The file outlined "Background to Civil Service Pay Dispute" and noted that discussions were on-going following "one day strikes on 11 December 2003, and 6 February 2004, as well as other industrial action."

The briefing also provided "Lines to take" on the "Civil Service Smoking Policy", stating: "The decision to introduce a complete ban on smoking from 1 January 2005 has taken into account mounting medical evidence on the risks associated with environmental tobacco smoke in the workplace and the dangers of passive smoking.

All Government Departments and the NIO place considerable importance on creating and maintaining a healthy and safe working environment for all staff."

DFP/28/12/39	2002-2004	ECPD – Emergency and Contingency Planning. File includes notes entitled “SARS – Implications for Northern Ireland” dated 9 July 2003. The notes state: “I understand that you are interested at headline level in the impact on our essential services of large numbers of staff being absent. the initial analysis is that provided key staff do not have the disease and could work through remote access it would be hugely disruptive rather than catastrophic.”
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DFP/31/3	2005	Appleby Review - General - Vol. 2. File includes a paper on the subject “Review of the HPSS in Northern Ireland” from D C Gowdy, Permanent Secretary, DHSSPS, to Professor John Appleby dated, 5 April 2005. The paper provides “an overview of the issues facing the HPSS” and “background context.” It states: “There is strong political and public attachment to the NHS model in NI. The HPSS is virtually the only provider of health and social care services here. The private sector is small... Figures relating to the uptake of private medical insurance show that in 2002 19% of the population in England were covered by such insurance compared to 10% of NI households. The value of the HPSS is also demonstrated by the fact that throughout the 30 years of civil disturbance, the HPSS was viewed as an impartial community resource, providing essential services fairly and equitably across the community and political divide. The HPSS dealt with, and indeed continues to deal with, both the injuries and illness directly associated with the conflict and also with the illnesses arising from the economic stagnation, long term unemployment and poverty to which the Troubles contributed.” The paper concludes: “In general terms, therefore, the picture of the HPSS is one of heavy pressure and a number of difficult problems which need to be addressed. Progress has been made in a number of these areas and the perception amongst the politicians and the public of a Service in crisis is not always accurate. ... Lessons can undoubtedly be learned from other parts of the UK and it is hoped that the Review will provide some new insights and recommendations for action to address the problems.”
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Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

DHSSPS/2/5/43	2003-2004	<p>Health Promotion Branch - Private Office Enquiries.</p> <p>File includes submission to Angela Smith, Junior Minister, and [Paul Murphy] Secretary of State on "Reform of the Welfare Foods Scheme" dated November 2003.</p>
<p>The submission recommended that the Secretary of State agreed to "the making of an Order in Council to replicate the replacement of the Welfare Foods Schemes provisions of the Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Bill." This would follow a similar planned amendment to the Welfare Foods Scheme in England and Wales. The submission noted that:</p> <p>"The approach may be unpopular with the Northern Ireland political parties. However, given that the Welfare Foods Scheme is a benefit and has always been in parity with the rest of the UK it is justifiable. ...note that the amendment to the GB Bill did not provoke a reaction from any of the Northern Ireland MPs, MEPs or leaders of the Northern Ireland parties."</p>		

DHSSPS/2/6/76	2004-2005	<p>Modernisation and Reorganisation - Operations - Private Office Submissions 2004-2005.</p> <p>File includes memo to Angela Smith [Junior Minister, NIO], entitled, "Review of Public Administration" dated, 21 February 2005.</p>
<p>The memo states: "I suggest that you might say, if asked on 23 Feb, that you understand the text of our chapter has been shared with the RPA team, and you are happy to await the latest draft of the whole document..."</p> <p>A worrying issue raised its head last week, when it emerged that the RPA team had commissioned Deloitte to undertake a high level assessment of the scale of savings which RPA might achieve. The content of this report was not shared with Departments until Friday 18 Feb, and we are now being pressed by the RPA team and by DFP to respond to the estimates in the report. I have just sent a reply ... making it clear that the level of savings estimated for the HPSS are totally unrealistic."</p>		



Department for Regional Development

DRD/1/4/56	2000-2004	<p>Senior Management Meetings. File includes minutes of a senior management meeting, dated 7 January 2004.</p> <p>Topics discussed included: concessionary fares, transport programme for people with disabilities, rural transport fund, railway safety, bus grants, railway capital, city of Derry airport, publication of Air Transport White Paper, Rathlin ferry and Warrenpoint harbour-deep water quay proposal. Regarding a proposal for lorry road user charging (LRUC), the minutes noted that: "... the LRUC Scheme is a Treasury/HM CE led initiative to modernise the taxation of the haulage industry." It was envisaged that the new charge would be introduced by 2007, however there were "some concerns about the practicalities of introducing this charging mechanism to NI." For example, "Ports are concerned that the introduction of the charge could distort competition between NI and ROI ports..."</p>
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DRD/3/3/2	2005	<p>Water Service Reform Vol. 3. File includes a submission addressed to Shaun Woodward MP, entitled "Domestic Metering Policy Proposals", dated November 2005.</p> <p>The submission noted proposals to introduce "a comprehensive water and sewerage charging regime on 1 April 2007." Regarding "Drivers for domestic metering" it states: "The metering debate is characterised by strong views both in support of and against domestic metering. ... The views of the NI political parties vary from strong opposition to any form of metering (SDLP and Sinn Fein) to support for some form of metering (Alliance), optional metering (DUP) or universal metering (UUP). ..."</p> <p>The submission stated that domestic metering raised issues in four broad areas: environmental, economic, social and political. Among the recommendations, it stated that: "Ministers should confirm that a managed long-term transition to widespread domestic metering will be undertaken." It also recommended that "The policy will be subject to a review within two years with a view to extending the domestic metering option to further groups from year 3."</p>
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DRD/8/11	2003	Water Service Reform Steering Group. File includes "Note of Minister's [Angela Smith] meeting with Minister Pearson to discuss the Future Financing and Structure of Water Service," dated 18 November 2002. At the meeting, Minister Smith stated that decisions needed to be taken on two issues: (i) whether to make a commitment to Water Service becoming self-financing...and (ii) the need for structural reform. ..." The Ministers "recommended that a qualified commitment (to self-financing) should be given stating that substantial progress will be made by April 2006 but that no guarantee could be given that Water Service would be completely self-financing by this date." The Ministers also discussed the need to "attract talented people with significant management expertise to take forward the structural reform." It was also noted that the possibility of water charges should not be discussed without reference to plans for water service reform. Furthermore, it was noted that "any statements should not overshadow the good news to be announced in the Budget."
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Records of the Laganside Corporation

LAG/1/1/28	1998-2005	<p>Laganside Corporation Minutes of Meetings of the Board Vol.3, from Meeting No.101 (18 May 1998) to Meeting No.169 (23 May 2005).</p> <p>File includes minutes of meeting dated 15 November 2004.</p>
<p>The Chairman reported "that since the last meeting, the Corporation had received the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Belfast and Nigel Hamilton, the Head of the Civil Service." There had also been a visit from the Public Accounts Committee. Regarding this visit, the minutes referred to a press statement by Mr Edward Leigh MP, Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, which stated:</p> <p>"...our programme on this visit includes a guided tour of Laganside, which has been a success story for both the public and the private sector in Belfast. I believe it is important to recognise that Northern Ireland has made a quantum leap from the dark days of the 1970's and 1980's and that Laganside, in many ways, symbolises the wider regeneration of Northern Ireland."</p>		



Northern Ireland Assembly Commission

NIASC/2/1/5	2003	Senior Staff Meetings / Board of Management. File includes note entitled "Education Programme" dated, 14 February 2003. It notes: "the Assembly appointed two Education Officers to develop an education and information programme aimed primarily at visitors to Parliament Buildings." Regarding the purpose of the programme it states it is to: "educate people about the reasons for the existence of the Assembly, its role and achievements. The focus of the programme will be to bring people to Parliament Buildings and to engage them on the work of the Assembly and how it benefits Northern Ireland." The focus of the programme over the next few months "will continue to be on visitors to Parliament Buildings and, in particular, visiting schools. The Education Officers already have a programme to offer pupils aged 11 -15. This is suitable for those doing Citizenship and as a general introduction to the Assembly for all in this age group. Very soon, a more in-depth programme will be available for A-level students which could also include specific seminars on various aspects of Assembly business, e.g., Committees or the legislative process. A programme suitable for primary level children is also being prepared."
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Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister

OFMDFM/6/18	2000	<p>Executive Committee - Meeting Papers - 6 July 2000.</p> <p>File includes minutes of meeting dated 29 June 2000.</p>
<p>The meeting began with a discussion on “the remit of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister in relation to issues which are the responsibility of other Ministers...” It was agreed that: “it was appropriate for the First Minister and Deputy First Minister to speak on the complete range of Executive functions ... but that this did not extend to going beyond policy which had already been approved by the Minister or the Executive”. Other topics discussed included New Targeting Social Need (TSN), and the Committee agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “the New TSN approach including the principle of targeting 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 ...” 		

OFMDFM/3/2/153	2004	<p>Use of Irish in Courts and Tribunals.</p> <p>File includes response from the Council of County Court Judges in Northern Ireland to consultation letter re. Use of Irish language in courts in Northern Ireland, [1 April 2004].</p>
<p>The document noted that there was already “an obligation to ensure that all parties and those persons involved in any proceedings ... are able to understand the legal proceedings”. It stated: “In terms of the use of a particular minority language, Irish, this may give rise to the question why other languages should not be accorded the same facilities. That is particularly so when, for example there is a growing Chinese community, and in one area a sizeable Portuguese community... there is an argument that funds should be channelled towards their needs in priority to the needs of others for whom the use of a particular language would be one of choice rather than necessity.”</p>		

OFMDFM/3/2/184	2003-2004	<p>Review of Belfast Agreement.</p> <p>File includes copy letter from David Trimble, on behalf of the Ulster Unionist Party, to Rt Hon Paul Murphy MP, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, dated 23 December 2003.</p> <p>The letter outlines Ulster Unionist misgivings about the proposed review of the Belfast Agreement under paragraph 8 of the Validation, Implementation and Review section. Trimble outlines three issues arising from paragraph 8, which raised "the question of whether there should be a review at all." Firstly, he noted, "the "conference" is to be convened by the two Governments and the parties in the Assembly." Therefore, it would be "wrong for the Government to merely consult and present proposals to the parties on a "take it or leave it basis". Secondly, "having a review without an assembly was clearly outside the contemplation of the parties at the time of the Agreement". Thirdly, the Assembly had not been in operation for four full years: "There has been less than three years experience, punctuated by crisis and suspension..."</p> <p>Trimble further outlined concerns that in considering a review, issues raised by Alliance, SDLP and Sinn Fein were being given priority. He wrote:</p> <p>"...the Government is quick to cater to the needs of these parties, even to the extent of stretching the terms of the Agreement, while ignoring the more important concerns of the Unionist community.</p> <p>If we were to consider the agenda for a review, we would focus on the failure to vest power in the Assembly, the low level of collectivity [sic] in the Executive, the emasculation of the Assembly committees and also refer to a number of issues concerning the public administration more generally...</p> <p>There is, however, one overriding issue... I refer, of course, to the problem of continuing paramilitary activity and the failure, three and a half years after the due date, to achieve the decommissioning of all paramilitary arms. ...</p> <p>It is our view therefore that rather than a paragraph 8 review, there should be a review, analogous to the so-called "Mitchell review" of 199[9]-2000... That review should be [a] short review and focused on the real issue. If that is sorted out, then the Assembly can be resumed and a paragraph 8 review held in the manner and context envisaged by the Agreement."</p>
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OFMDFM/3/2/188	2002-2003	<p>Community Relations: Post Suspension.</p> <p>File includes minute entitled "Tackling Interface Violence: Third Roundtable" from PS/Des Browne, dated 18 November 2002.</p> <p>The minute gives details of a meeting on 14 November, attended by representatives from the NI political parties and the NIO. The Summary paragraph stated: "The meeting was not quite what the Minister hoped."</p> <p>Opening the meeting, Des Browne noted that funding for the NICICTU [Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions] mobile phone network had been approved in principle for a year. However, the parties had some concerns and queries. Browne "undertook to ask NICICTU to ensure that they spoke to all the parties" and "reminded the meeting that the parties had advised him that it would have been the kiss of death to have NIO fingerprints on the detail of the project."</p> <p>Browne also noted that he wished to "move forward quickly" to establish the Community Action Group and stated that "The intent with the policy would be to emphasise that government would reward and support good behaviour in communities, not just turn up with cash when they were burning down."</p>
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OFMDFM/3/2/195	2004	<p>Anti-Social Behaviour in Northern Ireland 'ASBO' [Anti-Social Behaviour Order].</p> <p>File includes submission from Sinn Fein to Paul Murphy, Secretary of State, on "Measures to Tackle Anti-Social Behaviour in NI (Draft Anti-Social Behaviour (NI) Order 2004)" dated 3 June 2004.</p> <p>Sinn Fein outlined concerns about the speed with which ASBO legislation was being developed, that it would not be effective, and that it ran contrary to Section 75 of the NI Act 1998. The Sinn Fein submission stated: "The proposal to give the PSNI, District Councils and the Housing Executive power to enforce ASBOs is unacceptable. Given the sectarian make-up of the PSNI and given the past and current abuse of power by a significant number of District Councils Sinn Fein has no confidence that ASBOs will be implemented in a fair and impartial manner. Combined with the judiciary ... it is our concern that these bodies will oversee and implement a process which will result in one section of the community in the north of Ireland policing the other."</p>
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OFMDFM/3/2/205	2003-2004	Addressing the needs of Protestant working class communities. File includes confidential minute to Stewart Eldon [British Ambassador to Ireland] entitled "Loyalism and the Irish: Lunch with Martin McAleese", dated 24 September 2003. The minute states: "Martin explained how he and President McAleese have been engaged in a social outreach to Unionists for some years." On 3 February [2003], Martin McAleese "had taken a call from the UDA's South Belfast Brigadier Jackie McDonald" who "explained that he and his associates in the UDA/UPRG would be keen to develop relationships with influential people south of the border. When Martin had checked that there would be no political objection to such a personal initiative, the first meeting was set up." Following this, there had been several other contacts, including, "a meeting in Aras an Uachtaráin involving 50 Unionists/Loyalists", "meetings with the UDA Brigadiers", "lunches/dinners/meetings in Dublin, Belfast and Armagh". There had also been "social events, including golf outings", as well as visits to Belfast "by Martin and Tim Dalton on 19 July to see examples of deprivation in Loyalist areas", and "by Martin and the President which included a tour of the Farnhill House Museum". The minute concluded by noting McAleese was also planning to meet with PUP members and hoped it might "lead to direct contact with someone on the military side". It also noted that Sinn Féin "would not complain", so long as "any benefits that derived for Loyalism were mirrored in the Nationalist community".
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OFMDFM/3/2/209	2001-2003	Victims' Strategy. File includes "Victims' Strategy - Position Report to June 2002" by Fergus Devitt, Head of Victims Unit. The report noted the launch of the Victim's Strategy, "Reshape, Rebuild, Achieve", on 11 April 2002. The Strategy comprised of "49 actions, spread across Departments and Agencies, aimed at making a practical difference to the lives of victims." It noted that 11 of 14 actions with a target date June 2002 or earlier had already been achieved.
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OFMDFM/3/2/231	2004	<p>Strategic Economic Vision for Northern Ireland.</p> <p>File includes minute dated 25 June 2004, from Dr Andrew McCormick, Permanent Secretary, Department of Finance and Personnel, to Bruce Robinson, with comments on draft version of "An Economic Vision for Northern Ireland".</p> <p>McCormick welcomes the economic vision and suggests some changes, including better integration of "current strategies that address key priority areas", prioritisation of action points, and development of "quantifiable targets and milestones". He also refers to the situation in Scotland and Wales, and notes: "the strategic importance of moving away from our significant economic dependence on public expenditure". He suggests: "One way of using our existing public expenditure capacity to enhance and promote the private sector here would be to increase significantly the proportion of public goods and services we acquire following external competitive tendering. ... This is one of the key themes emerging from the procurement stream of the Efficiency Review..."</p>
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OFMDFM/3/2/239	2005	<p>Corporate Manslaughter Application to the Crown (2005).</p> <p>File includes draft submission dated November 2005, from David Mercer, Criminal Justice Policy Division to the Rt Hon David Hanson, Minister of State and the Secretary of State entitled "Corporate Manslaughter: Response to Consultation and Way Forward".</p> <p>The draft submission notes that the Home Office would be publishing summary consultation responses and bringing forward a Bill on Corporate Manslaughter. It recommends that a summary of Northern Ireland consultation responses should also be published and that preparations should be made for similar legislation in Northern Ireland. It notes that 18 substantive consultation responses had been received in Northern Ireland, and that: "Respondents welcomed the proposal in principle... The only political party to respond, the DUP, called for the extension to Northern Ireland of any England and Wales legislation enacted on this subject."</p>
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OFMDFM/5/26	2000-2004	Flags and Emblems. File includes [draft] minutes of "Second Meeting on Flags", dated 2 March 2004.
<p>At the meeting, Gary White, PSNI reported on a discussion with the DPP [Department of the Director of Public Prosecutions] about the use of Section 13 of the Terrorism Act 2002. He believed: "that the DPP are in favour of using the provision generally and this is easiest when a flag or mural illustrates an explicit level of support for a paramilitary organisation." The minutes noted that a test case "relating to the display of paramilitary flags in Holywood" was ongoing.</p> <p>It was also noted that CRU/CRC [Community Relations Unit/Community Relations Council] had commissioned research on flags and emblems from the Institute of Irish Studies at QUB, and that a policy document would be prepared. The preferred approach to resolution of issues, was by "a sophisticated policy response" with various agencies working together, based on action beginning in "the more moderate areas", where the chances of success were greater, and these could then "act as an example to other less moderate areas." The vital importance of educating communities was also noted.</p> <p>The meeting notes concluded by stating that: "The group was clearly impressed with the approaches of the CRU/CRC and await the outcome of the policy document in June. ... It is clear, however, that there will be times when the community simply cannot prevent paramilitaries from indulging in this activity. In such circumstances the PSNI are content that they have the necessary powers under the Terrorism Act to deal with the situation. In short, there is no one size fits all policy that can resolve the flags issue. The issue itself is too complex and differs significantly in individual areas. The challenge will be to have a range of solutions available so that they can be applied to individual problems. ..."</p>		

OFMDFM/5/27	2000	<p>Establishing OFMDFM as a Department - Volume III.</p> <p>File includes agenda and papers for a planned "Awayday" meeting of the Project Board with oversight of "Establishing OFM/DFM as a Department" dated [15 May 2000].</p>
<p>The notes state that the planned event had been "shortened" due to "The prospect of renewed devolution on 22 May". A paper entitled "Environmental Scan (Pestel Analysis)" examined the "external environment" within in which OFMDFM operated. In regard to the "External Environment", it stated:</p> <p>"Northern Ireland is on the cusp of a new beginning. ...that offers the real prospect of enduring political stability and self-government. It is a new start that provides society with the opportunity to undergo the dynamic changes that derive from global forces and from specific domestic factors."</p> <p>Under the heading of "Political Environment", it stated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Devolution will bring many challenges and threats. Threats from those opposed to the process and major challenges to heal society, tackle polarisation and deal with the deep distrust built up over 30 years of conflict. • The nature of the involuntary coalition of 4 very disparate parties will present difficulties. There will be high pressure on returning Ministers (and officials) and high expectation from the public. • The level of constitutional change within NI is significant with the Executive, Assembly, NSMC, BIC, BIIGC and Civic Forum all seeking to establish their roles and identities. • At a UK level constitutional change, most notably devolution, is still outworking. It offers Northern Ireland a basis for establishing its own relationships with other parts of the UK and with the EU. • The nature of devolution in Northern Ireland puts a premium on the need to provide "joined-up" and more open government." 		

OFMDFM/6/7	1999-2000	Executive Committee Business. File includes letter from Alan Shannon, Permanent Secretary, Department of Higher and Further Education, Training and Employment, to Pat Carvill, Permanent Secretary, Department of Finance and Personnel, dated [?29] February 2000, on the "Impact of Devolution". The letter states: "Like other Departments we found that the task of servicing the new democratic machinery during the period of devolution stretched our existing resources and structures to the limit. This Department, like three others, is not simply adjusting to cope with the need to support the democratic structures, it is also establishing itself as a new Department with the necessary infrastructure. ..."
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OFMDFM/6/9	1999-2000	Executive Committee - Meeting Papers - 18th January 2000. File includes minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee on Tuesday 11 January 2000. In matters arising, the minutes noted: "The Minister of the Environment referred to the lack of consistency in flying the Union Flag on Government offices on Christmas Day. It was agreed to seek legal advice and to bring forward a paper to allow a discussion of the issue, in the wider context of symbols and emblems in the Agreement, before the next flag flying day on 6 February." Items for discussion included: "Devolution: Memorandum of understanding and supplementary agreements," which would "underpin relations between the UK Government and the devolved administrations." The minutes noted that the Committee "endorsed the Memorandum of Understanding and the supplementary agreements on the establishment of a Joint Ministerial Committee, on Financial Assistance to Industry, on International Relations and on Statistics." It was also noted that "agreed further consideration would be given to the Concordat on European Policy Issues."
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OFMDFM/6/11	2000	<p>Executive Committee - Meeting Papers - 1st February 2000.</p> <p>File includes paper EC(00)21 from Executive Secretariat entitled "Flying of Flags", attaching legal advice and background papers.</p>
<p>The paper asked the Executive Committee to "consider the legal advice ... in relation to the flying of the Union flag on government buildings; and seek to agree an executive policy on this issue."</p> <p>An attached note dated 14 January 2000 from Mr McCartney, Departmental Solicitor's Office stated: "... I have not been able to find any statutory provision relating to the flying of the flag." McCartney noted that a letter held in the Public Record Office, dated October 1927, referred to "correspondence between the Home Office and the private secretary to the Governor of Northern Ireland on approved days for flying the Union flag from Government House, Hillsborough". McCartney stated that: "the Home Office regarded the matter as one for the Northern Ireland Government, rather than the Governor himself. ..." He further noted that: "There is nothing in the Government of Ireland Act 1920, the Northern Ireland Constitution Act 1973 or the Northern Ireland Act 1998, to suggest that the flying of flags from the buildings of the Northern Ireland administration is other than a transferred matter. ..."</p> <p>In conclusion, McCartney wrote: "I have to say I have doubts on whether the flying of the Union flag is truly a matter the authority for which relies on the prerogative or other executive powers of Her Majesty, exercisable by Northern Ireland departments. Any person may fly any flag ... and a department's decision to do so may simply be a matter of lawful administration, rather than an exercise of prerogative or executive power delegated to Ministers and departments under section 23.</p> <p>Whatever the source of authority, be it section 23(2) or the common law, it is clear that this, as a transferred matter, is for decision of Ministers... Accordingly, subject to any agreement which may be made in the Executive Committee, the issue of the flying of the Union flag from government buildings is for individual Ministerial discretion."</p>		

OFMDFM/6/13	2000	Executive Committee - Meeting Papers - 9th February 2000. File includes minutes of Executive Committee meeting on 1 February 2000.
<p>Items discussed included the Ministerial Code, with reference to which the Committee “noted the legal advice on Conflict of Interest in relation to Ministers continuing to hold District Council membership. It was agreed in principle that Council membership should not be retained...”</p> <p>The Committee also discussed the issue of “Drugs”, in response to “media coverage of the absence of a co-ordinating Minister for the NI Drugs Strategy.” The minutes noted that: “The Minister of Health proposed that separate arrangements should be established to co-ordinate action in the transferred field as distinct from action in the reserved field. ...”</p> <p>The Committee decided that it could not “determine the most appropriate future arrangements without having considered a paper setting out the options.” In the meantime, a press release would “explain that the delay in a decision was not impeding progress in considering applications for funding for drugs measures...”</p> <p>The Committee deferred discussion of the paper “Flying of Flags – EC(00)21.”</p>		

OFMDFM/6/14	2000	Executive Committee - Meeting Papers - 1 June 2000. File includes “Chairman's Brief” for First Minister, in preparation for a planned Executive Committee Meeting on 1 June 2000.
<p>The brief suggests that the chairman: “Welcome Ministers back ... following restoration,” and “Express regret at the absence of the Minister for Regional Development and the Minister for Social Development.” The brief also provided detail on “Issues which may arise” and “Lines to take” on various topics. Regarding “Financial Issues,” the chairman was advised to ask Mr Durkan to introduce the paper and seek agreement from the Executive Committee. The brief noted: “It is possible that DHSSPS will argue that the Chancellor's Budget offered them guarantee of additional funds in future years. ... It suggested a Line to Take: “Agree with Minister of Finance that the issue will be dealt with, with all other pressures, in the agreement of next year's budget in December.”</p>		



Annual Release of 2004 & 2005 Official Files
