



MANIFESTO 2007

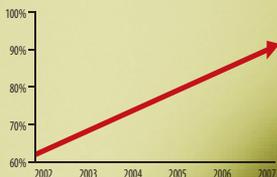


DUP

www.dup2win.com

In the 2003 Assembly elections the DUP was elected as the largest political party in Northern Ireland. Since then the level of confidence in the unionist community has been transformed. It is at its highest level in a generation.

In 2002 with the UUP as the largest party 34.5% of unionists believed there would be a united Ireland by 2020, now with the DUP in the lead position, over 82% believe there will not.



TRANSFORMING UNIONISM

UNIONIST CONFIDENCE AT HIGHEST LEVEL IN A GENERATION.





DEAR FRIEND

In the last four years the DUP has transformed the political process in Northern Ireland. We have achieved what many of our opponents said was impossible. We have successfully renegotiated the Belfast Agreement, and required republicans to give up their weapons and all paramilitary and criminal activity before they could enter Government.

In 2003 we campaigned for a fair deal for the people of Northern Ireland.
Today, we are delivering on that pledge.

We have a veto on all major decisions in Northern Ireland, and on all North South matters. We have ensured that we will determine when policing and justice functions are devolved and can block a Sinn Fein Minister from holding the post. We have also ensured it is a legal requirement of holding Ministerial office to take a pledge to support the police. Today it is unionists who are setting the political agenda.

Unionist confidence is at its highest level in a generation. Republicans are under pressure like never before, having being forced to abandon fundamental principles and long held beliefs.

In the past unionists jumped first only to find that republicans failed to deliver. By contrast, we continue to insist that there must be upfront delivery from republicans before they would be entitled to a place in any Executive. This strategy is working.

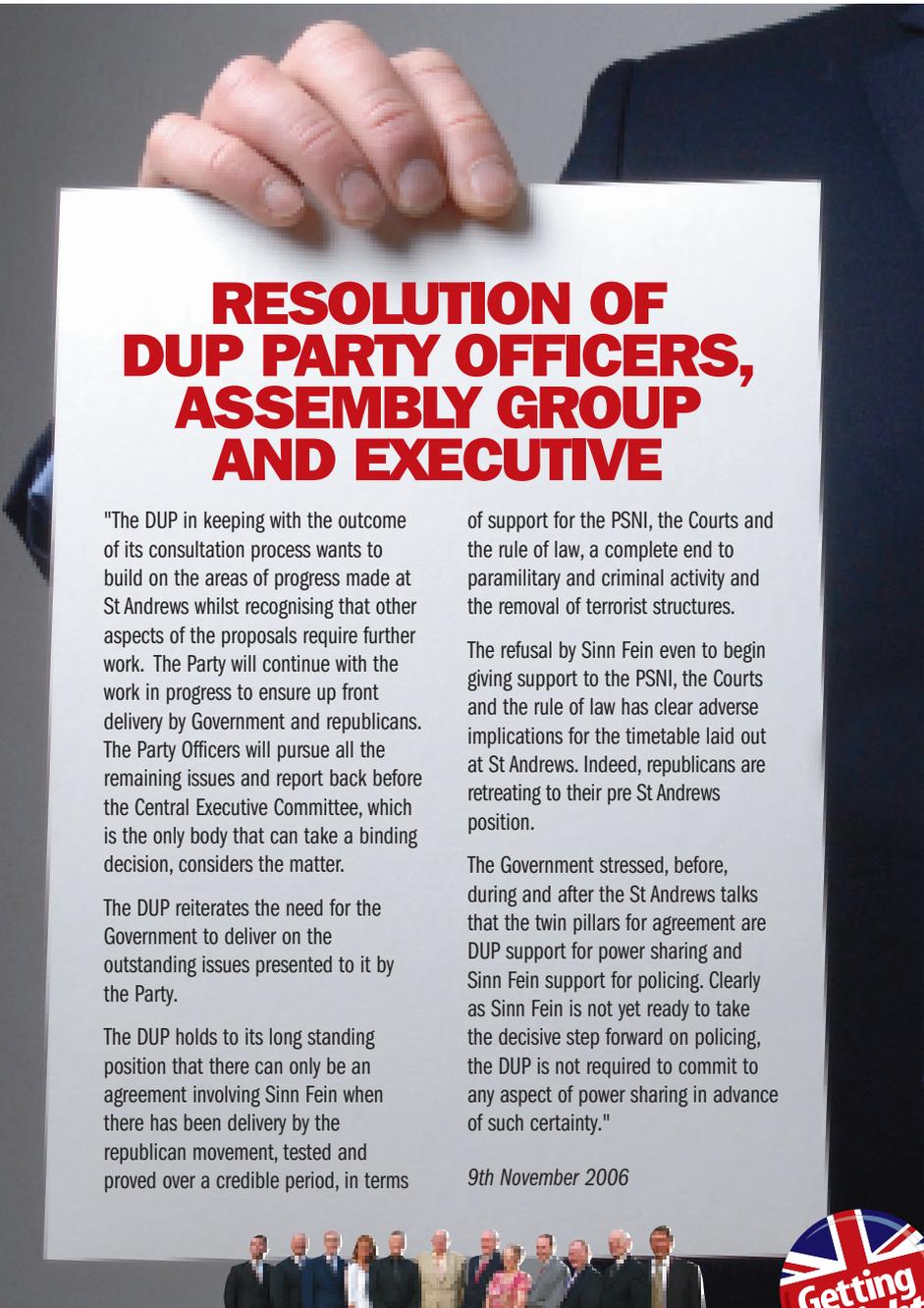
By requiring the conditions to be right for devolution we are ensuring the best opportunity for democratic institutions to be stable and lasting.

While much has been achieved, unionists cannot afford to be complacent. We cannot afford to go back to the bad old days when UUP weakness was exploited by republicans, and Sinn Fein dominated the political agenda.

Unionism needs a strong DUP. The safeguards we have negotiated depend on a strong DUP in the Assembly and the Executive. Votes for independents or fringe unionist candidates endanger a unionist majority on the Executive, regardless of the size of the unionist majority within the Assembly. With the UUP achieving little more than half our level of support in recent elections, only one unionist party is realistically capable of winning more seats than Sinn Fein to stop them being nominated for the post of First Minister.

Every vote will count on election day. This manifesto sets out our record of achievement and our plans for the future. With your support we can build a better future for Northern Ireland.

Ian R. K. Paisley



RESOLUTION OF DUP PARTY OFFICERS, ASSEMBLY GROUP AND EXECUTIVE

"The DUP in keeping with the outcome of its consultation process wants to build on the areas of progress made at St Andrews whilst recognising that other aspects of the proposals require further work. The Party will continue with the work in progress to ensure up front delivery by Government and republicans. The Party Officers will pursue all the remaining issues and report back before the Central Executive Committee, which is the only body that can take a binding decision, considers the matter.

The DUP reiterates the need for the Government to deliver on the outstanding issues presented to it by the Party.

The DUP holds to its long standing position that there can only be an agreement involving Sinn Fein when there has been delivery by the republican movement, tested and proved over a credible period, in terms

of support for the PSNI, the Courts and the rule of law, a complete end to paramilitary and criminal activity and the removal of terrorist structures.

The refusal by Sinn Fein even to begin giving support to the PSNI, the Courts and the rule of law has clear adverse implications for the timetable laid out at St Andrews. Indeed, republicans are retreating to their pre St Andrews position.

The Government stressed, before, during and after the St Andrews talks that the twin pillars for agreement are DUP support for power sharing and Sinn Fein support for policing. Clearly as Sinn Fein is not yet ready to take the decisive step forward on policing, the DUP is not required to commit to any aspect of power sharing in advance of such certainty."

9th November 2006



DELIVERING LASTING DEVOLUTION

There can be no doubt that the political process has been transformed since the election of the DUP as the largest party in 2003.

The most fundamental changes have been made, at DUP insistence, to the way the Assembly and North South institutions work. The Government has legislated for those changes to the political institutions and crucially republicans are being forced by the DUP down the road of transformation towards being a democratic party.

We still have more to achieve. However, if the conditions for devolution fail to be met by the 26th March, it will not be the DUP that is to blame. It will be because republicans or the Government have failed to meet all their obligations.

Our position has been set out clearly in our Executive Resolution. Progress can only be made following delivery. Republicans know what they need to do. Sinn Fein making support for policing and the rule of law conditional on them being in government may satisfy Peter Hain, but it is not sufficient for the DUP or the people of Northern Ireland, who have borne the brunt of decades of republican attack on the rule of law. There must be upfront and proven delivery. There can be no cherry-picking of policing functions to support.

The DUP is placing no new conditions on Sinn Fein. The conditions Sinn Fein must meet have been accepted and set out by both Her Majesty's Government and the government of the Irish Republic.

Just as the governments set a condition, following negotiations with the DUP, that there must be decommissioning and an end to all paramilitary and criminal activity before Sinn Fein could enter government, so too did the governments accept the DUP stipulation that there must be public support for the police, courts and rule of law and it must be demonstrated in a tangible and practical way.

It was the DUP that pressed for these conditions to be made a pre-requisite to Executive membership but importantly through tough negotiating we convinced both governments and they have endorsed our position and those conditions. They were right to do so. We welcome the extent to which our strategy has succeeded.

While we have made huge progress in many areas it is essential that we do not take the pressure off republicans. As a party we will continue to be condition-led and not calendar-led.

For us it is about delivery and not deadlines. This strategy has already delivered results and will do so again. The restoration of devolution will not be delayed because of the DUP. It will only be delayed if republicans or the government do not deliver on their commitments and obligations.

SEVEN PRINCIPLES

- 1 The DUP is a devolutionist party. We believe in democratic, fair and accountable government.
- 2 No negotiating with the representatives of terrorism but we will talk to other democratic parties.
- 3 Those who are not committed to exclusively peaceful and democratic means should not be able to exercise unaccountable executive power.
- 4 Terrorist structures and weaponry must be removed before the bar to the Stormont Executive can be opened.
- 5 Any relationship with the Republic of Ireland should be fully accountable to the Assembly.
- 6 The DUP will work to restore the morale and effectiveness of the police force.
- 7 We will strive to ensure genuine equality for all including equality in funding.



These are the principles the electorate first endorsed in 2001 and which have formed a part of every DUP campaign since then. We still stand by those same principles today and we will not be departing from them.

"There is going to be no renegotiation of the Good Friday Agreement.
That is the agreement, that is the only agreement."
Tony Blair May 2003

CONFOUNDING OUR CRITICS

"The Irish people may feel a sense of affront, and dare I say,
humiliation that the agreement they approved has
been renegotiated behind closed doors."
Mark Durkan 2004



BACK A WINNING STRATEGY

The DUP has set out a clear and consistent strategy to achieve devolution that is stable and durable, and to ensure the end of IRA activity. This approach is clearly working, and winning for unionism.

Whereas the Ulster Unionist Party was prepared to take republicans on trust the DUP has insisted republicans must deliver first. Our strategy stated that only when there is credible evidence that republicans have done what we required of them can they be considered fit for Government.

This approach has transformed the political process in Northern Ireland and provides the opportunity for lasting devolution.

The history of the last decade is that republicans have only delivered when forced to do so.

The election of the DUP as the largest unionist party brought clarity. It was recognised that only total delivery from republicans would do. The days of stunts, gestures, half measures and fudges were over.

Before the DUP became the largest unionist party neither the other parties nor the Government were prepared to insist that republicans totally end their illegal activity before they could enter Government.

This weakness was repeatedly exploited by Sinn Fein and republicans were able to dictate the terms of political debate.

Today all that has changed.

Our approach has brought republicans this far, and will succeed. Ultimately it will ensure that when devolution returns it can be on a permanent basis.

FORCING REPUBLICANS TO DELIVER

The last few years have seen a transformation in the political process.
Who can forget what things were like just a few years ago?

WHEN THE UUP LED UNIONISM

Ulster Unionists jumped first
UUP took republicans on trust
Sinn Fein in Government without any requirement to decommission
Sinn Fein in Government despite paramilitary activity continuing
Sinn Fein in Government while criminal activity ongoing
Sinn Fein in Government despite opposing police and rule of law

NOW THAT THE DUP LEADS UNIONISM

Republicans were forced to jump and then be tested
DUP requires delivery
IRA forced to decommission
Total end to IRA paramilitary activity a condition of holding office
Total end to IRA criminality a condition of holding office
Support for police, courts and rule of law now a legal requirement for holding office

UNIONISTS SETTING THE POLITICAL AGENDA

How things have changed. Just a few years ago it was Sinn Fein who could sit back and watch as the Ulster Unionist Party bent over backwards to pander to republicans.

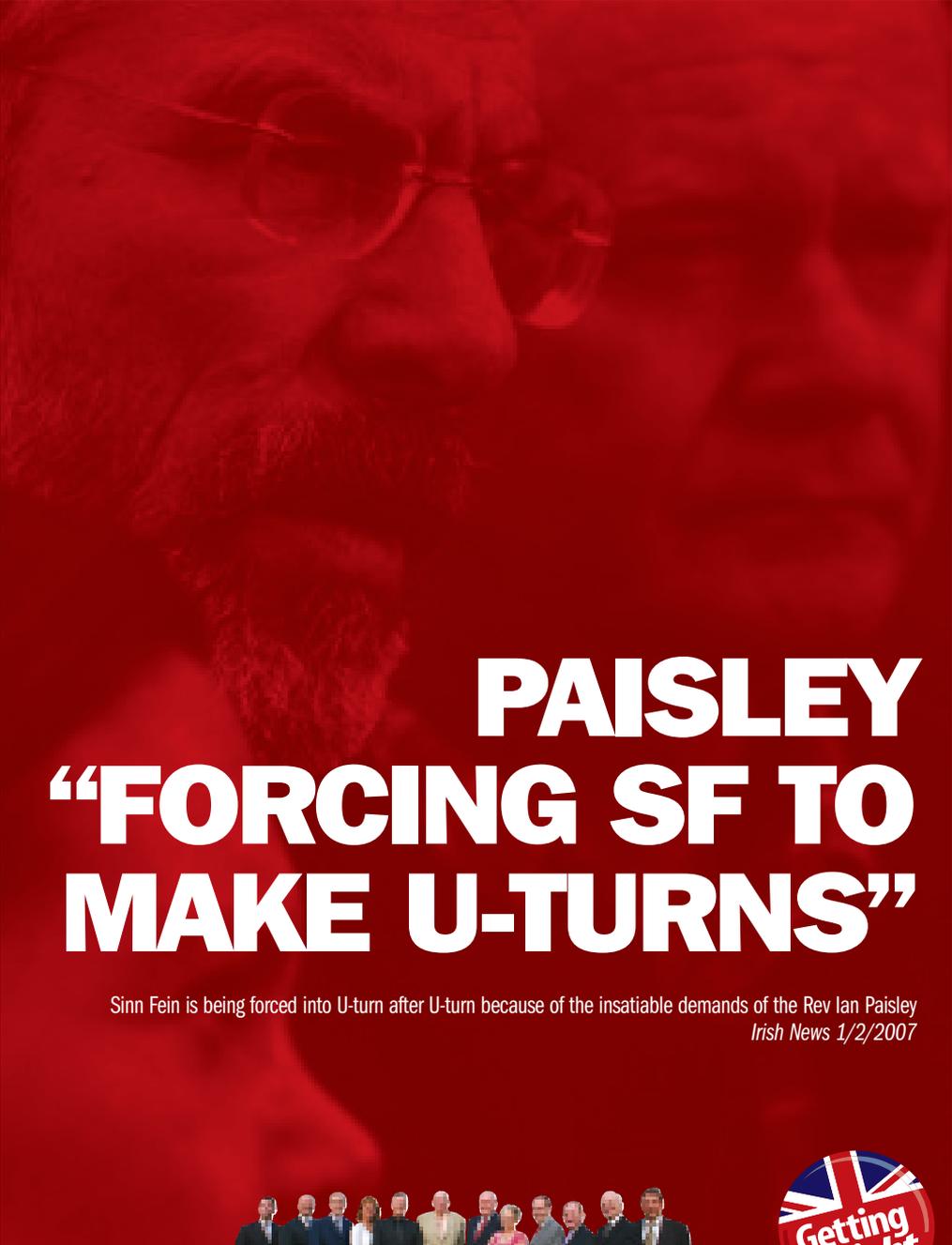
While republicans happily continued with their paramilitary and criminal activity David Trimble and Reg Empey did all they could to provide a place in Government for Sinn Fein.

Now in 2007, it is republicans who have jumped first and unionists who can wait and judge if they are genuine. For the first time in a generation it is unionists who are dictating the pace and direction of the political process.

The Government has had to rewrite the legislation which deals with the political institutions in Northern Ireland in order to meet DUP requirements including the incorporation of the most fundamental democratic principle of accountability. Meanwhile, republicans are required to end all their illegal activity and support the police and rule of law.

In 2003 the electorate mandated the DUP to work to achieve a Fair Deal. Delivery of all the issues we have negotiated with government will represent a Fair Deal. Yet for the DUP a Fair Deal is not a Final Destination.

The achievement of a stable devolved government is but a staging post in our strategy to strengthen Northern Ireland's place within the United Kingdom and build robust democratic structures which can prevail for future generations.



PAISLEY “FORCING SF TO MAKE U-TURNS”

Sinn Fein is being forced into U-turn after U-turn because of the insatiable demands of the Rev Ian Paisley
Irish News 1/2/2007



Direct Rule has allowed Peter Hain to impose his own left-wing agenda on Northern Ireland.

The return of devolution with a strong DUP team will allow us to block any decisions we do not support.

As a result of the changes we have secured on decision-making within the institutions, under devolution legislation such as an Irish Language Act can also be prevented.

I'm Voting DUP -
**TO END
HAIN
RULE IN
NORTHERN
IRELAND**



THE STRONGEST UNIONIST VOICE IN GOVERNMENT

It has never been more important to vote DUP than at this election.

We have secured a veto on decision making in Northern Ireland and secured the unionist position. But this will only happen if we are able to win enough seats in the Executive. Votes for independents or parties which are not likely to win seats in the Executive are votes wasted for the unionist cause if devolution returns. They merely undermine unionist representation at the heart of Government and reduce the unionist voice in an Executive.

To maximise the number of unionist Ministers in the Executive and guarantee the strongest unionist voice vote DUP.

The new arrangements also mean that the largest political party in the Assembly will be entitled to nominate a First Minister. The DUP is the only political party which can keep Sinn Fein from holding this position. At the last Assembly election the DUP was only 15,000 votes ahead of Sinn Fein so it is vital for unionists to unite behind the DUP. With almost twice as many votes as the UUP in recent elections the DUP is the only unionist party capable of beating Sinn Fein.

PUTTING MANNERS ON REPUBLICANS

The DUP insisted that to be in Government republicans must not only end all paramilitary and criminal activity but must also support the PSNI, the Courts and the rule of law in Northern Ireland.

This represents the clearest possible acceptance of the legitimacy of the state and will mark an historic shift for republicans. It fundamentally redefines the nature of republicanism in Northern Ireland.

While the UUP did not even raise the issue in 1998, we made sure that support for the police was enshrined in legislation as a precondition for holding Ministerial Office.

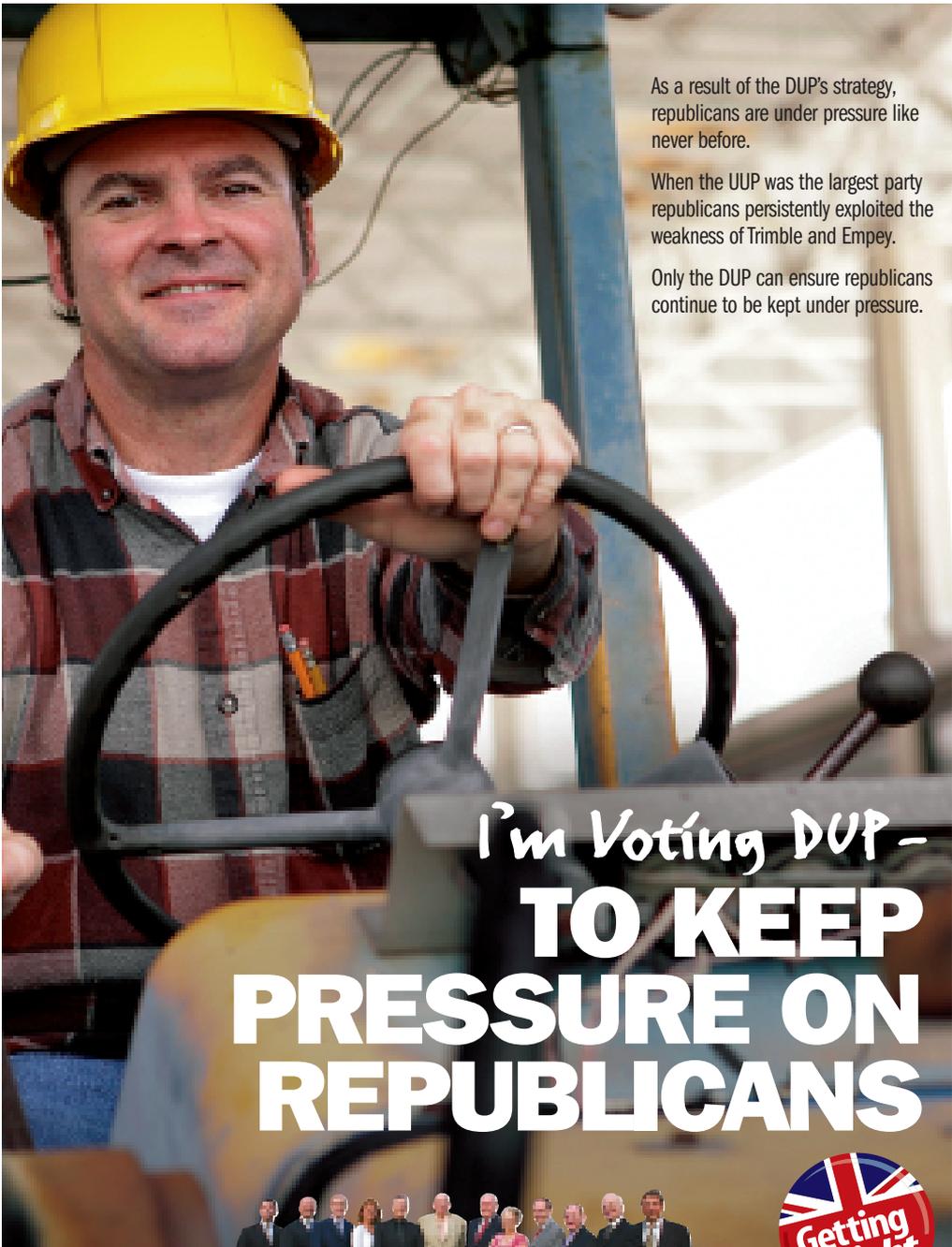
The new pledge of office requires Ministers,

“to uphold the rule of law based as it is on the fundamental principles of fairness, impartiality and democratic accountability, including support for policing and the courts as set out in paragraph 6 of the St Andrews Agreement”.

The legislation also sets out what support for the rule of law means,

“The essential elements of support for law and order include endorsing fully the Police Service of Northern Ireland and the criminal justice system, actively encouraging everyone in the community to co-operate fully with the PSNI in tackling crime in all areas and actively supporting all the policing and criminal justice institutions including the Policing Board.”

Taking this Pledge of Office is a pre-condition for anyone wishing to become a Minister in Northern Ireland. This legal requirement does more than make Ministers take the pledge. It requires them to deliver on their obligations.



As a result of the DUP's strategy, republicans are under pressure like never before.

When the UUP was the largest party republicans persistently exploited the weakness of Trimble and Empey.

Only the DUP can ensure republicans continue to be kept under pressure.

I'm Voting DUP -
**TO KEEP
PRESSURE ON
REPUBLICANS**



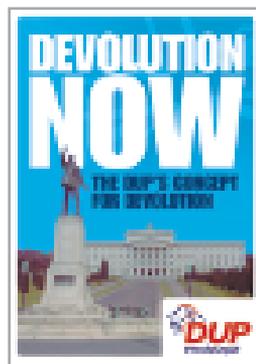
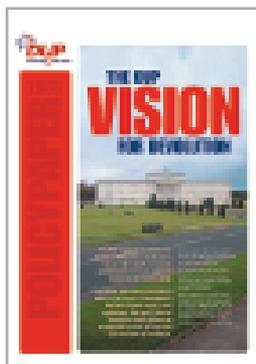
REWRITING THE AGREEMENT

The DUP has succeeded in rewriting the 1998 Belfast Agreement and making fundamental changes in the way in which we would be governed in Northern Ireland.

In our manifesto for the previous Assembly election in 2003, we set out what we believed were the fundamental flaws in the Belfast Agreement:

- 1. Terrorists in Government**
- 2. Unaccountable Executive**
- 3. Inability to deliver coherent Government**
- 4. Unaccountable all-Ireland implementation bodies**
- 5. NSMC – stand alone all-Ireland Government**
- 6. Freelance unaccountable North South co-operation**
- 7. Imbalance between north/south and east/west relationships**

All of these issues have been addressed in the changes to the legislation that the DUP has secured, regarding the governance of Northern Ireland.



RECTIFYING FUNDAMENTAL FLAWS IN THE BELFAST AGREEMENT

Terrorists in Government	We have made it clear no party linked to those involved in paramilitary or criminal activity will be in an Executive. Indeed, to be a Minister it will be necessary to take a pledge of office to support the police.
Unaccountable Executive	Under the changes we demanded, all significant Ministerial decisions will have to be agreed by the Executive, the Assembly can refer matters back to the Executive for decision, and there is a new statutory duty in the Ministerial Code to act in accordance with decisions of the Assembly.
Inability to deliver coherent Government	All Ministers will be bound by decisions of the Executive allowing a more coherent administration. Ministers will no longer be able to act alone, in narrow party interests.
Unaccountable all-Ireland implementation bodies	There will be a review of all-Ireland implementation bodies. All decisions concerning these bodies will be for the Executive to take.
NSMC – stand alone all-Ireland Government	Under the new law all NSMC decisions will be for the Executive and subject to unionist control.
Freelance unaccountable North South co-operation	Under the new law all North South co-operation will be accountable to the Executive where the DUP have a veto.
Imbalance between north/south and east/west relationships	Because of the new accountability arrangements, the DUP can ensure in office that there is balance in these arrangements.

I'm Voting DUP -

FOR A UNIONIST DOMINATED EXECUTIVE

Votes for fringe parties or independent unionist candidates will fragment the unionist vote and could prevent a unionist majority in the Executive.

A vote for the DUP is the best way for unionism to maximise its strength in the Executive and control nationalist and republican Ministers.



In the 2003 Assembly election we fought on a platform of renegotiating the Belfast Agreement and delivering a fair deal for the people of Northern Ireland. Our political opponents said there could be no change to the Belfast Agreement but the electorate backed us to deliver. In negotiations over the last three years we have fought for and succeeded in securing fundamental changes to the Belfast Agreement which have changed the nature of the political institutions.

In a series of policy documents we set out the changes that we wished to see to the political institutions in Northern Ireland.

A DUP VETO ON MINISTERIAL DECISIONS

One of the most fundamental flaws in the Belfast Agreement was that it permitted nationalist and republican Ministers to take decisions free from the control of the Assembly or Executive. As a result we saw Sinn Fein Ministers taking contentious decisions without democratic control, for narrow party political interests.

This individual Ministerial power was a fundamental tenet of the Belfast Agreement and gave nationalist and republican Ministers unfettered power. This situation proved a great threat to unionism and democracy in Northern Ireland.

We insisted there must be new legislation to change fundamentally the nature of decision making in Northern Ireland. Instead of being free to do as they wished, Ministers would be required to bring all major decisions to the Executive for approval.

In effect the Executive could determine these matters and the Minister would implement them.

The SDLP has complained that this guarantees the DUP a veto on any government decision in Northern Ireland. We say that never again can significant matters be decided against the wishes of the DUP. We now have the ability to stop any major decision of which we disapprove. This is a massive step forward and a most significant safeguard for unionism.

It changes utterly the nature of devolution from the arrangements under the 1998 Belfast Agreement.

A DUP VETO ON NORTH SOUTH DECISIONS

Because of the new arrangements the DUP has negotiated we will have a veto on all North South decisions. This is a huge advance and removes any danger to the constitutional position of Northern Ireland through nationalist Ministers reaching agreement with their Dublin counterparts.

ASSEMBLY REFERRALS FOR EXECUTIVE REVIEW

Under the new arrangements the Assembly would have a considerably greater role in decision making than was the case under the Belfast Agreement. Now the Assembly can send any Ministerial decision back to the Executive for reconsideration.

This properly gives the Assembly, which had previously been ignored, a meaningful role in challenging the Executive.

A REQUIREMENT FOR MINISTERS TO ACT IN ACCORDANCE WITH ANY RELEVANT DECISIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE AND/OR THE ASSEMBLY

The new arrangements ensure Ministers cannot act in defiance of the Executive or the Assembly, and that the Executive can ensure the province is governed in a much more cohesive manner.

APPOINTMENT OF FIRST AND DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER

One of the key features of the Belfast Agreement, prized by nationalists, was the joint election of the First and deputy First Minister. The new legislation separates this process.

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

This committee will examine the operation of the devolved institutions in Northern Ireland such as the d'Hondt procedure and community designation. The setting up of this committee is consistent with the temporary nature of the present arrangements and will provide for consideration of alternative models of Government for Northern Ireland for the longer-term. This is a key component of the next phase of the DUP's strategy.

A NEW AGREEMENT A BETTER AGREEMENT

The DUP... asserted from the outset of the Good Friday Agreement that it could secure a better arrangement for Unionists than David Trimble and the Ulster Unionist Party, and the DUP's stance has been largely vindicated.

Editorial Comment, The Times 29th January 2007



GETTING IT RIGHT ON THE DEVOLUTION OF POLICING AND JUSTICE

The DUP has reversed the failures of the UUP on the devolution of policing and justice and created the ideal position for unionism. While in principle we support the devolution of policing and justice functions we believe this can only happen when there is the necessary support within the community. We have indicated that we do not believe there would be support for the devolution of such powers to a Sinn Fein Minister in the foreseeable future.

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In this area we have made huge advances for unionism. We:

- **have secured a veto on the devolution of policing and justice, and**
- **can ensure there will be no Sinn Fein Policing and Justice Minister**

Just remember what it was like only a few years ago. The UUP had committed to the devolution of policing and justice by 2005 and accepted there would be a Sinn Fein Policing and Justice Minister. Indeed, last year they even wanted us to set a date for the devolution of these functions.

Through negotiations the DUP has transformed this situation. We argued for and won a triple lock on the devolution of policing and justice functions. This has now been enshrined in legislation. Before Parliament would vote to devolve the powers, the First Minister would have to agree that the functions should be devolved and a majority of unionists in the Assembly would have to vote for it.

“(The Northern Ireland (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006) was the act that provided for the so-called triple lock being given to the DUP. It allowed ultimate control to rest on a DUP veto, and unfortunately the British government conceded that to them”

SDLP leader Mark Durkan, 20th November 2006

The triple-lock was included because the DUP made it a deal breaker. Now that a system has been put in place, at DUP insistence, whereby Sinn Fein can be blocked from holding the policing and justice post the prospect of gaining community confidence for such devolution is much greater. The Government is now legislating for arrangements which would allow us to block any unacceptable candidate as Policing and Justice Minister.

Whether it is negotiating the conditions for achieving devolution or priorities in a new Executive it is vital that unionism has the strongest possible negotiators.

Whereas for years the UUP failed, the DUP has proved it can be trusted to deliver for the unionist community.

I'm Voting DUP -
**FOR STRONG
NEGOTIATORS**



After the election, in the context of restoration of devolution the largest political party in Northern Ireland will nominate a First Minister.

It is vital that a unionist holds this position.

At the last Assembly election, partly due to splitting of the unionist vote, the DUP was just 15,000 votes ahead of Sinn Fein. The UUP was far behind.

Only the DUP can beat Sinn Fein.

I'm Voting DUP -
**TO ENSURE A
UNIONIST FIRST
MINISTER**



SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

On a number of issues our political opponents have attempted to distort the reality and mislead the public. The facts though are indisputable, and consequently many of the initial criticisms of the Governments' St Andrews Agreement are no longer made.

OPPOSITION LIE

The Irish Language Act

An Irish Language Act will place Irish on a par with English

EU Nationals in Civil Service

Republic of Ireland nationals will have access to all civil service posts in NI

Academic Selection

The retention of academic selection depends upon a cross-community vote in the Assembly

Cap on Rates

A rates cap was dependent on a cross-community vote in the Assembly

Creation of Seven Super Councils

It would take a cross-community vote to block the creation of seven super councils

More All-Ireland Bodies

The DUP conceded to the creation of additional all-Ireland bodies

THE TRUTH

Parliament confirmed this would be an issue for the Assembly which will have a unionist majority. The DUP will not support an Irish Language Act.

HM Revenue and Customs have been driving these reforms on a UK-wide basis. It is not NI specific. ROI and other EU Nationals will not have access to all civil service posts in NI.

Due to our negotiations at St Andrews, if there is no agreement on specific arrangements for post primary transfer, schools will be free to select on the basis of academic ability. This will ensure genuine efforts to secure agreement on realistic common arrangements for placing pupils.

The Government will set a cap before the restoration of devolution. However, we continue to press Government on the details.

In order to proceed with a Seven Council model there would need to be a majority vote. If necessary this could be cross-community.

The Belfast Agreement initially proposed these bodies. This would need to be decided in the Assembly, and would require our approval.

SAFEGUARDING DEMOCRACY

One of the fundamental problems for the last Assembly was its inability to deal successfully with republicans failing to adhere to democratic requirements. This resulted in instability and repeated suspensions.

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All paramilitary and criminal activity and terrorist structures must be abandoned before Sinn Fein is admitted to Government. This should reduce the chances of a continuation of such activity, but it is essential that arrangements which are effective and enforceable are in place to deal with such an eventuality.

It is wrong that all parties should be punished for the misbehaviour of one. The Government has previously indicated that default by any one of the parties following restoration of the Executive should not be allowed to delay or hinder political progress in Northern Ireland. However, it is necessary that the Government should set out what this means in practice.

The Government, at the DUP's insistence, has already amended legislation before Christmas to allow an Executive to continue to function in the event that Sinn Fein defaulted, but more needs to be done.

The Independent Monitoring Commission has played an important role in reporting on the activities of paramilitary organisations. It is vital that this body continues with its work and the

unionist community has confidence in the reliability of its reports.

There is also legislation in place which allows the Government to exclude a political party in the event that the Assembly cannot secure the cross-community support for such a proposal. It is vital that people have confidence that the Government would implement any recommendation from the IMC.

While it is possible for the Government to exclude Sinn Fein in the event of default by republicans, this will not ensure the continuation of devolution if the SDLP refuses to participate. It is therefore necessary to create the circumstances where there is a disincentive for republicans to misbehave and an incentive for nationalists to continue in Government in the event of Sinn Fein being excluded.

In dealing with the Government we have made progress on all these issues but it is essential that they are finally resolved in the period after the election. Proper safeguards will increase the long-term stability and durability of devolution in Northern Ireland.

I'm Voting DUP - **FOR A STRONG UNIONIST VOICE IN GOVERNMENT**

Unionism needs the strongest possible representation in an Executive.

During the last Assembly the SDLP were able to manipulate the UUP in the Executive and dictate the direction of policy.

This time unionism needs the DUP to continue setting the agenda.





REWRITING THE AGREEMENT

“... the Good Friday Agreement, if you look at it in strictly nationalist terms, is a better deal for nationalists than the St Andrews Agreement or Comprehensive Agreement, because what Sinn Fein conceded in both of those agreements, so-called, was giving the DUP or unionism, vetoes over what nationalist Ministers could do, and over the development and the existence of North/South institutions.

In our view we have the Good Friday Agreement as the high water mark, and the DUP negotiated down from that, and Sinn Fein conceded ground from that, and the St Andrews Agreement creates all those problems, and I know I hear on the grapevine that for all the bluster of Sinn Fein, they are beginning to realise that they have actually given to the DUP more power to stop nationalist Ministers, or any Minister, doing what is necessary to do and have created veto powers on matters on what any Minister can do on creating North South initiatives.”

Alex Attwood (SDLP) 7th February 2007

THIS AGREEMENT IS A
PLEASE READ IT CAREFULLY.

It's Your Decision



OUR LONG-TERM STRATEGY

The changes to the political institutions in Northern Ireland represent only the first phase in our goal of creating normal long-term democratic institutions in the province.

While the changes which we have made to the Belfast Agreement have transformed the political institutions in Northern Ireland our long-term goal remains to have a voluntary coalition Executive.

The new arrangements represent a fair deal. They do not represent a final settlement.

It is widely accepted that while the new arrangements are a massive advance on the Belfast Agreement they still do not offer the best way for Northern Ireland to govern itself.

We continue to believe that a voluntary coalition is the best permanent solution for Northern Ireland to provide good government for our people. We also believe that it is important that the designation system is replaced by weighted majority voting.

Under the new arrangements the Assembly has established a committee which is required to consider these matters and can make recommendations. It is our goal to work to end the present arrangements as quickly as is possible and we do not envisage the present arrangements as anything other than short-term.

SECURING A FINANCIAL PACKAGE FOR DEVOLUTION

Devolution is not an end in itself. It must be capable of succeeding. When devolution returns, it is essential that an incoming Executive has the necessary resources to make a difference to people's lives. This will require a financial package for Northern Ireland.

We have made it clear that resolution of this issue is a precondition for establishing devolution. Northern Ireland will never have a better opportunity to make up for the decades of underinvestment during the Troubles or to help us compete economically with the Republic of Ireland.

Without such a package, Northern Ireland will face the prospect of massive local taxes, being economically uncompetitive and lacking the funding for essential infrastructure. This is not a welcome prospect for any incoming Executive.

While other parties have talked about a financial package, we were the first party to put it on the agenda and the only one to make it a precondition for devolution.

Establishing an Executive without this issue being resolved would undoubtedly threaten the long-term viability of devolution in Northern Ireland. An Executive would be impotent to deal with the challenges which lie ahead and would be left at the mercy of events.

This matter was overlooked at the time of the Belfast Agreement in 1998 and as a result Northern Ireland is suffering today. The massive UK wide spending increases over the first two terms of the Labour Government obscured the problems that were being stored up for the future.

Negotiations have already taken place on this issue but it is vital that the matter is resolved in advance of devolution. If a satisfactory financial package is not secured now, it is unlikely to be obtained after devolution returns when the pressure is off the Government.

TRANSFORMING OUR ECONOMY

Transforming our economy is of paramount importance if Northern Ireland is to have the prosperous future which we all hope for.

Despite the fact that certain key indicators would point to an economy that is healthy, the DUP believes that there are several structural weaknesses in the Northern Ireland economy that must be overcome. These include:

- over dependence on the public sector
- a higher proportion of economically inactive people
- low levels of investment in research and development
- a shortage of many appropriate skills

The DUP was the first party to press for a financial package to underpin any possible political settlement and, as part of our work at Stormont, DUP Assembly Members have been working hard to develop the details of a package that can alter our economic fortunes.

We have prioritised:

- a cut in our corporation tax rate to entice foreign direct investors to set up in NI and existing companies to expand
- other fiscal incentives to encourage, for example, enhanced research and development
- assurances on public spending levels going forward
- a massive investment in our roads, rail, water, sewerage, energy and telecommunications infrastructure
- a radical reform of the planning process so strategically important developments can be fast tracked
- investment in our skills base so our schools and colleges are producing people with skills to suit our economy
- exploiting fully our excellent tourism potential

The DUP insists that a suitable financial package is a necessary condition before political progress can be made.

CUTTING THE COST OF DOING BUSINESS

Many businesses in Northern Ireland are being crippled by rising rates and other costs. They are also being entangled in red tape. In many instances such costs and bureaucracy are either unique to Northern Ireland or have a disproportionate impact on the province.

The DUP believes that business is the job of the business community and that Government's role is, where possible, to remove the impediments to growth in our economy.

In order to overcome these obstacles, the DUP supports:

- a simplified tax and benefits system
- an electricity market within British Isles context delivering competitive energy prices
- a cap on industrial rates
- reduced business banking charges
- special emergency fund for businesses having difficulty obtaining insurance cover
- lower fuel duty
- concerted action to reduce business crime

**OUR PRIORITIES
FOR GOVERNMENT**

**COMMITTED TO
CREATING A
COMPETITIVE
ECONOMY**

Northern Ireland needs an economy which can compete in the 21st Century.
The DUP will work to ensure that the conditions are in place to deliver prosperity for the future.



OUR PRIORITIES FOR GOVERNMENT

COMMITTED TO CREATING AN EFFECTIVE PLANNING PROCESS

In Northern Ireland it takes too long to get planning decisions made. This is bad for those building a house but is disastrous economically. We must ensure that Northern Ireland is a good place to do business, not one bogged down in bureaucracy.



BUILDING A COMPETITIVE NORTHERN IRELAND

After decades of underinvestment in infrastructure Northern Ireland needs to build for the future. During the Troubles money was diverted away from infrastructure and into security and as a result Northern Ireland faces a massive infrastructure deficit.

During the 1960s, under the Stormont Parliament Northern Ireland was at the forefront in building new roads. It is essential that the next decade sees the upgrading of our road network.

Recent years have seen unprecedented investment in infrastructure in the Republic of Ireland. It is essential that Northern Ireland matches the scale of investment on our side of the border.

It will cost billions of pounds over the next decade to ensure that Northern Ireland is economically competitive.

The Strategic Investment Board has made an important contribution to addressing Northern Ireland's investment plans. This will have to continue.

The resources required to finance an ambitious infrastructure package is only one aspect of what is required to allow Northern Ireland to maximise its competitiveness.

A critical factor in our capability to deliver large projects will be the flexibility of the planning process. Delays in planning approval mean delays in delivery and lost opportunities. It discourages private sector involvement and sends out a signal that Northern Ireland is not geared up for business at the highest level.

We must create a planning system which encourages investment and ensures we can benefit from job opportunities that too often go elsewhere.

The Planning Service must be capable of responding expeditiously to applications which have a significant wealth generating potential.

TACKLING THE TAX PROBLEM

Householders in Northern Ireland are facing unprecedented increases in the level of local taxes. The introduction of water charges, the new rating system and an increase in the amount raised from rates taken together mean many people face local tax bills two or three times the levels they were paying just a few years ago.

Indeed, under present plans this trend is set to increase as the full impact of the recent changes is felt over the next few years.

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Many of the changes have been implemented by Direct Rule Ministers but the reforms were initiated by the pro-agreement parties in the last Executive. Those parties that contributed to the problem can hardly be depended upon to solve it.

The DUP is the only party that can solve the local tax problem. We have demonstrated at every level of Government that we are a low tax party committed to obtaining for Northern Ireland taxpayers the best value for money.

It is wrong to pretend there is a straightforward solution to our problems. While a local Executive and Assembly will take decisions on a range of issues facing Northern Ireland, it still does so, constrained within a financial framework set by the Treasury.

Devolution will allow the problems of local tax levels to be addressed but, for this to occur, a satisfactory financial package must be secured in advance.

That is why we not only have plans for the restoration of devolution, but insist the underlying conditions must be right.

**OUR PRIORITIES
FOR GOVERNMENT**



**COMMITTED TO
THE LOWEST
POSSIBLE TAXES**

The DUP has an unrivalled reputation for delivering the best possible services at the lowest possible cost. In any Executive we will fight for the lowest possible local taxes.



A SOLUTION FOR WATER CHARGES

The Government's plans for water charging ignore the fact that people in Northern Ireland already pay for their water. The debate should not be about whether people should pay for water, but whether they should be expected to pay twice.

We believe that they should not.

The DUP has consistently opposed the Government's plans for water charging. We are opposed to the privatisation of the Water Service. We believe the arrangements must be fundamentally changed to ensure the best deal possible for Northern Ireland householders.

In reality, water charges have been used as cover to increase massively the level of taxation in Northern Ireland. While there may be justifications for a separate charging mechanism for water services, there does not need to be a significant increase in the overall tax burden.

We have previously argued that if there is to be separate charging for water, it should take account of the money already raised for water services through the regional rate and that efficiencies within Water Service should free up resources.

Indeed, if the other parties supported our proposals for cutting the cost of Government in Northern Ireland we could ensure there was no additional burden on Northern Ireland householders.

We continue to believe that the option of voluntary metering, with appropriate consideration being given to infrastructure costs, should be available for all Northern Ireland consumers. The capital value of a person's home is too inaccurate an indicator for ability to pay to be the only reliable method for assessing water charges. Ultimately, the wider the availability of water metering, the greater the potential that exists for encouraging water conservation.

We also believe the average water charge should be no higher than the average in England and Wales with a maximum charge fixed at this level.

Any system of water charging must:

- **Fully reflect the existing contribution made through the regional rate**
- **Extend the option of metering for householders**
- **Keep bills at a level no higher than in England and Wales**

REVIEW OF RATING

The DUP opposes the new rating arrangements for Northern Ireland. We argued that their introduction should be delayed until devolution was restored and a new Executive could consider the matter.

Despite Government proceeding with the introduction of the new system, we believe a new Executive should make rating arrangements an urgent priority upon restoration. It will also be essential to put in place short-term arrangements to deal with the most serious problems.

Fundamental to rating reform is whether rates should be a charge or a tax. We believe it should have elements of each. Most people are willing to pay their fair share of local taxes.

We do not believe the capital value of a person's home on 1st January 2005 is a sufficiently reliable indicator of ability to pay to be used as the sole basis for determining rates.

There are many people outside the safety net of the benefits system whose house values do not reflect their income. For these people rates increases will severely curtail their quality of life.

At St Andrews we insisted that a cap on rates should be introduced. The Government has agreed to do this, but we believe the level at which the cap has been set at is too high. In particular more generous reliefs should apply to older people and other vulnerable groups.

It will not be easy for a new Executive to reach an agreed way forward on rating arrangements on account of the position taken by some other parties but we will continue to work for the fairest system possible.

OUR PRIORITIES FOR GOVERNMENT



COMMITTED TO CUTTING BUREAUCRACY

The DUP is committed to ensuring that public spending goes to front-line services and is not wasted on political bureaucracy.



CUTTING THE COST OF GOVERNMENT

Reducing the burden on householders will only be possible if the levels of expenditure on bureaucracy are kept under control. Indeed if agreed by the other parties, along with our other proposals we could eliminate the additional burden on householders from the introduction of water charges.

In 2003 we published proposals to cut the cost of Government, advocating:

- **Reducing the number of Government Departments**
- **Cutting the number of Assembly Members**
- **Abolition of the Civic Forum**
- **Cutting North-Southery**
- **Redefining the Equality and Human Rights Agenda**
- **Cutting the costs of OFMDFM**

We have already started to deliver on these proposals. At St Andrews we secured an Efficiency Review Panel to examine efficiency and value for money.

The potential for making savings is not limited solely to Northern Ireland institutions. The efficiency and value for money of existing all-Ireland implementation bodies must be examined.

Cutting bureaucracy will be a key priority for the DUP in Government. We believe money should be spent on front line services not big Government and bureaucracy.



DELIVERING FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

The DUP has a strong record of placing the needs of older people at the top of our agenda, and has been at the forefront in protecting senior citizens.

The DUP pioneered the Warm Homes Scheme and introduced free travel on all public transport for those aged 65 and above. We are committed to extending the Free Fares Scheme to include all people over 60.

The DUP supports legislation to prevent discrimination against older people. We support the introduction of a Commissioner for Older People and implementation of the 'Ageing in an Inclusive Society' strategy would help combat ageism.

Older people should be allowed to continue to enjoy an active and full life in comfort and security. In Northern Ireland approximately 1 in every 10 pensioners does not claim all the state benefits they are entitled to. They must be assisted to do so. We support the reduction of means testing.

We want to eradicate pensioner poverty. Too many pensioners cannot afford everyday necessities like heating, clothing and food.

There are too many avoidable cold weather related deaths in the province. We want to eliminate fuel poverty and ensure everyone has a warm and comfortable home.

Health and social care for older people must improve. Patients must be afforded the best care in

the appropriate environment, with independence encouraged. More domiciliary, residential and nursing home places are required, as well as better respite provision. Government does not value sufficiently the important contribution of carers.

The DUP-backed introduction of free nursing care benefited thousands of elderly people in Northern Ireland, but it was only a half-step in the right direction. We want to see free personal care provided as soon as circumstances permit.

The 6.5% of over 65s who have dementia will rise to 11% by 2015. We will continue to promote the needs of those with Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia.

The DUP will continue to press for immediate provision of digital hearing aids for all who would benefit from them.

The DUP has proposed a reduction in rates bills for pensioners living alone. We have campaigned for free television licences for all senior citizens. We appreciate the important role of post offices particularly in rural areas.

The DUP is concerned at the increasing number of robberies and attacks against vulnerable older people. We support stiffer sentences to serve as a deterrent. Older people should feel secure within their own homes, free from the fear of crime.

OUR PRIORITIES FOR GOVERNMENT

The DUP has always made the interests of senior citizens a top priority. We have already delivered free public transport for those over 65 and are dedicated to ensuring their interests are protected in Government.

COMMITTED TO PROVIDING FOR SENIOR CITIZENS



**OUR PRIORITIES
FOR GOVERNMENT**

COMMITTED TO

RETAINING ACADEMIC SELECTION

The DUP forced the Government to back down on its plans to scrap Academic Selection. We will ensure that pupils still can be placed at schools on the basis of aptitude and ability.



ENSURING THE BEST EDUCATION FOR ALL

Under the terms of the Belfast Agreement, an unaccountable Sinn Fein Minister was able to abolish the transfer test. Direct Rule Ministers proposed legislation for the removal of academic selection altogether, contrary to the wishes of the consistent 60–65% of the Northern Ireland population who have confirmed their desire to maintain a different form of selection.

The DUP made the retention of the transfer test a pre-condition for the return of devolution. We will ensure that schools are free to select on the basis of ability. We believe pupils should be placed in schools which best enable them to develop to their full potential.

We recognise the benefits grammar schools and academic excellence bring to our local economy and oppose the introduction of selection by social connection or ability to pay.

Since each child has differing needs, a range of schools offering different educational options is essential for children to develop according to their individual skills.

Any new method of testing should be less stressful than the 11+, and assessment must be externally based. Computer Adaptive Testing has been suggested as an option.

This would seem to address many of the objections against the 11+, in that it would not be high stakes, nor open to tutoring, and would tie in with the normal curriculum. Proposed pupil profiles would prove time-consuming for teachers and immensely subjective.

Despite excellent local exam results, there are undoubtedly areas where we must improve.

We need to improve the qualifications of those not so academically gifted. Children from areas of social deprivation perform less well. It is important to have more young people from disadvantaged backgrounds doing well. Better training at an earlier age is essential

for those who wish to pursue a vocational path.

The DUP has been prominent in opposing cuts in services resulting from insufficient education and library board funding. We support extra resources being directed towards those with special educational needs.

We recognise the excellent education small schools can provide and their crucial role particularly within isolated rural communities.

We appreciate that the existing over capacity in schools is unsustainable, and we oppose the Department's current policy on setting up Irish language and integrated schools with as few as twelve pupils. The DUP will seek to reverse the preferential funding for Irish language and integrated schools.

Local universities have worked hard to be open to all but variable top-up fees could deter potential students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The cap on student numbers in Northern Ireland means there are already higher entry barriers, and we oppose further disincentives for students wishing to remain in the province.

Urgent action is required to deal with the problem of underachievement. Too many children especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds leave school without essential skills. It is important to allow children a wide choice of study at Key Stage 3 and opportunities to pursue vocational pathways should be accommodated.

A HEALTH SERVICE YOU CAN DEPEND UPON

The DUP wants to improve the 'patient experience'. We demand enhanced facilities that can help improve the overall health of the population.

We are determined to ensure Government delivers in full the resources required to complete proposed capital development plans. Sufficient staff are needed to prevent trolley-waits and unacceptable waiting times for treatment.

The Appleby Report reiterated that the health service in Northern Ireland has suffered from long-term under-funding relative to the rest of the UK.

The resources we do have must be used to maximum effect. Proposed reforms of health structures arising from the RPA provide opportunities, but they must be accompanied by new ways of operating.

We have argued consistently for reduced bureaucracy and streamlined decision making. Staff morale must be improved. We need to train, recruit and retain more staff including professions allied to medicine.

Health is one sector in particular that would benefit massively from local decision making and greater accountability. The focus must be on investing in health promotion, early intervention and prevention of illness at community level.

Addressing mental health, learning disability and providing for the needs of an ageing population must be key priorities for the DUP. More people are living longer and consequently require extra treatment and long-term care. A more efficient hospital system is required, which removes the delays

that patients face. Enhanced intermediate and community care would allow patients to be discharged much earlier from hospital, and address the needs of those with chronic conditions who are otherwise likely to require multiple short re-admissions.

Greater community ownership of health services is needed. Increased health awareness will lead to individuals taking greater personal responsibility for their own wellbeing and that of their families.

Poor diet, a lack of exercise, binge drinking, smoking and illicit drug use all contribute significantly to ill-health in the province. We cannot afford our focus to be directed too much towards acute services. The needs of those with chronic conditions and disability must not be overlooked.

We support the extension of National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidance and recommendations to Northern Ireland, so that patients here can be assured of the same standard of care as in the rest of the UK.

The DUP is concerned at the increased level of suicide in recent years. After heart disease and cancer, suicide is the third largest cause of life years lost in the province. A range of efforts directed at individual, community and provide-wide levels must be pursued to attempt to reduce suicide.

TACKLING DEPRIVATION

The DUP has been at the forefront of highlighting the needs of many disadvantaged unionist communities throughout Northern Ireland. Whilst we were successful in lobbying for the £33 million package which was announced by the Government to tackle deprivation in Protestant/unionist areas, we believe that this should represent a start to a long-term strategy aimed at regenerating areas which have suffered from years of neglect.

There is a lack of educational achievement in many of these areas which requires early intervention to ensure that a generational cycle does not continue and that young people in these areas can leave school not just with qualifications but with aspirations to improve themselves.

While we would wish to see further examples of those task forces which have been set up to look at particular areas it is vital that action follows the recommendations which come forward. Previously when recommendations have been made, too often they have been ignored by Government or announcements have not been followed through by actions.

We believe that the use of Targeting Social Need (TSN) criteria does not always target those with most need communities. There are many areas, particularly within greater Belfast which do not fit within the TSN categorisation. There are sometimes pockets of great deprivation within these areas masked by the relative affluence of their neighbours.

A joined up approach between Government Departments is needed to tackle housing problems. There are high levels of dereliction as well as land available which could be used to develop new, low-cost homes for local people. Providing the opportunity for them to buy their own home can give people a stake in their community and a vested interest in the upkeep of their locality.

PROMOTING THE INTERESTS OF VICTIMS

The DUP has placed the needs of innocent victims at the forefront of the political process. For many years under the Belfast Agreement victims were sidelined and their needs ignored.

In 2003 the DUP published a policy document calling for the introduction of a Victims Commissioner. In December 2005 that call was met through the appointment of the Interim Commissioner, Mrs Bertha McDougall. We want to see the work she embarked upon continued and developed through the appointment of a permanent Victims Commissioner.

The report produced by the Interim Victims Commissioner highlights issues which have been raised by victims for many years and for which we as a party have been pressing with Government.

There should be a comprehensive needs analysis carried out which can quantify the number of people who require support and what the main needs are of victims in the community.

The issue of funding still remains a key priority for victims and the groups which represent them. There must be long-term sustainable funding which allows victims groups to plan for the future. Currently many groups are surviving on short-term funding and often on applications which were made several years ago.

It is vital that Government makes sufficient funds available to deliver professional services provided by victims groups for both physical and psychological needs.

The issue of a fund for UDR soldiers equivalent to that for those who served in the RUC is a key priority and we believe that everyone who served the province so bravely during the period of the Troubles should have their service and sacrifice recognised.

The needs of innocent victims can never be forgotten and providing for the needs of victims is vital as Northern Ireland seeks to move beyond decades of terrorism and violence.

**OUR PRIORITIES
FOR GOVERNMENT**

FOR
REMEMBRANCE

**COMMITTED TO
PROPER FUNDING
FOR VICTIMS**

The DUP secured the creation of a Victims Commissioner for Northern Ireland and is committed to ensuring victims receive the support they deserve.



PROTECTING OUR RURAL ECONOMY

Northern Ireland farmers are currently using their Single Farm Payment to support their farming enterprises. This is not sustainable in the long-term. The DUP is working to improve the fortunes of all agricultural sectors in Northern Ireland.

In the milk sector the DUP has lobbied the Government for additional funds to help the sector reduce its reliance on milk powders. The party opposed recent cuts in European support for the sector and led a delegation to meet European Commissioners lobbying on behalf of the sector.

The DUP welcomed the lifting of the beef export ban but is continuing to lobby for the normalisation of live animal exports. The DUP believes that the number of suckler cows within Northern Ireland will continue to decline unless beef prices increase.

ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION

The implementation of the Nitrates Directive will have a significant impact on farming practices in Northern Ireland. The DUP continues to lobby for additional funds to be allocated towards the Farm Nutrient Management Scheme and for practical rules controlling how the Nitrates Directive is implemented at farm level.

REDUCTION IN RED TAPE

The DUP is critical of the amount of red tape and bureaucracy forced on the agricultural industry. The DUP believes that the amount of paper work and number of inspections from both DARD and the DOE must be reduced.

HARVESTING OF ENERGY

Currently Northern Ireland farmers are focused on the production of food. With climate change, increasing energy costs and changes to Government policies, renewable energy is likely to play a greater role in years to come. The DUP supports Northern Ireland becoming a centre of excellence for renewable energy and believes that this can provide an alternative land use for farmers.

A STRONG AND VIBRANT RURAL COMMUNITY

The DUP supports rural communities flourishing and becoming more stable. We believe that both European and National monies should be used to fund a future rural development programme and this should be delivered in a manner which is of greatest benefit to rural communities. The DUP is however opposed to the removal of CAP money via voluntary modulation to fund wider rural development programmes. The DUP has supported a change in the delivery structures for rural development funds to ensure that funding is more effectively targeted to where it is needed.

FISHING INDUSTRY

Current Government policy has led to the decline of the Northern Ireland fishing industry, and in particular the white fish fleet. The DUP pledge to support the Northern Ireland fishing industry through mechanisms such as tie-up aid.

DELIVERING AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Northern Ireland house prices have escalated in a very short space of time from being well below the United Kingdom average to a position where the average price in many areas of Northern Ireland is now around £200,000.

First-time buyers are increasingly being priced out of the housing market in Northern Ireland and the huge increases in private sector housing are coupled with growing waiting lists for social housing in many areas of the province.

The policy of Housing Executive sales has been a positive one which has given many people an opportunity to buy their own home. However, this is not being matched with provision of new social housing to meet the needs of those currently on the waiting list.

More land must be zoned for development in Northern Ireland, with the guarantee this will not be land-banked by developers, but used for the provision of new homes. Similarly there should be a provision to de-zone development if work is not commenced within a specified time.

The current system of Area Plans in Northern Ireland has also been shown to be slow and unresponsive to the needs of communities. The system for devising Area Plans in Northern Ireland must be radically overhauled.

Housing Associations too often find themselves unable to compete with developers in order to obtain land for social housing schemes. This should be rectified with provision made so that these Associations can obtain land at a reasonable price in order to provide social housing for those who need it most.

We also would support a further increase in the threshold for the introduction of stamp-duty. Recent increases in house prices have meant that many of the houses being considered by first-time buyers are now covered by stamp duty which create a disincentive for purchasers.

There should be an effective licensing system for the private rented sector.

Steps should be taken to sustain local communities and limit investors buying in housing developments. In addition the Co-ownership scheme should be extended and the threshold raised.

OUR PRIORITIES FOR GOVERNMENT

COMMITTED TO **STREAMLINED LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO MEET LOCAL NEEDS**

We oppose the seven council model for Local Government and are committed to delivering services in an efficient and effective way, sensitive to the needs of local communities.



GETTING THE RPA RIGHT

The DUP welcomes improvements to streamline decision-making and reduce bureaucracy, but believes Government plans to reduce the number of local councils from twenty-six to just seven will weaken local government and make it more remote and unrepresentative of the needs of the local community.

We have ensured that, in the event of devolution, this would be a matter for the Assembly to resolve and a cross-community vote would be required to proceed with a seven-council model.

The Review of Public Administration was commenced by the Executive during devolution and has been carried forward by the Direct Rule administration. It will have a legacy well beyond the next few years in terms of its impact on the province. Given the time and money invested in the process, it is important that we get it right.

We argued from the start of the RPA process that its terms should have been wider to encompass the devolved institutions as well. We have ensured an Efficiency Panel will examine Assembly structures and associated bodies.

We support replacing unaccountable quangos and ensuring elected representatives are responsible for taking decisions.

The proposed seven council model is opposed by a vast majority of political representatives and parties.

A seven council model does not represent local government, rather it is sub-regional government. In a province the size of Northern Ireland, sub-regional government is not what is required. It fails to reflect any sense of local identity and it could exacerbate divisions.

PROTECTING CHILDREN

Almost twice as many children in Northern Ireland (38%) live without basic necessities as in GB (20%). We must reduce child and infant mortality which varies markedly across the province.

Investment in preventative measures and early intervention is essential. Directing resources towards early years provision will pay the maximum dividends.

We see value in considering a devolved Minister or Junior Minister having cross-cutting responsibility for children's issues. There are far fewer outcome targets here than in GB.

Legislative and procedural safeguards introduced across the water have not been extended to Northern Ireland. Every child is entitled to the same support and protection, no matter where they live in the UK.

We have a very high number of children on the Child Protection Register in the province. Our emphasis must shift from child protection to prevention. Greater inter-agency co-operation and information exchange is required.

It is imperative that the Irish Republic has a framework as equally robust as Northern Ireland to ensure the border does not permit sex offenders to escape easily from one jurisdiction to another. Similarly we must safeguard against sexual exploitation and trafficking.

Sufficient resources must be provided for young people in care. More accommodation options should be available such as supported lodgings and being able to remain in foster placement if they prefer.

We recognize inequalities in educational achievement and want fewer young people leaving school without qualifications. It is important to raise aspirations, particularly in families where multiple generations have not had a job.

SureStart has proved effective and could be extended to include other areas and children older than five years. Children would benefit from greater access to Extended Schools programmes.

Children's centres across the water have been successful, and more co-ordinated family support services including respite are needed.

Waiting times for Child and Adolescent Mental Health services are unacceptable. High risk behaviours such as alcohol misuse, early teen sex and drug and solvent abuse are strongly inter-related. We support initiatives to combat bullying.

We demand sufficient quality accessible and affordable registered childcare places across the province.

**OUR PRIORITIES
FOR GOVERNMENT**

**COMMITTED TO
IMPROVING
NORTHERN
IRELAND'S ROAD
SAFETY RECORD**

Northern Ireland has suffered from a terrible road safety record. While resources have been allocated, it is essential that further tough measures are taken to cut the carnage.



DEVELOPING TOURISM

There is enormous potential for the tourist industry to play a major part in the success of the Northern Ireland economy. As well as the province's natural beauty, we have a rich cultural heritage which ought to be capitalised on.

Loyal Order parades and the Ulster-Scots link to the United States are areas which have not been exploited fully in terms of tourism and there should be targeted marketing of these to make the most of that potential. We have seen some moves towards the marketing of the 12th July parade in Belfast and we want to see this and other examples such as the Maiden City Festival.

Obviously transport links are key for Northern Ireland and in particular our air links should be expanded. The growth of Belfast as a destination for short-breaks as well as a conference venue can be extended across Northern Ireland so that other areas can benefit from these kinds of visitors.

Tourism Ireland has failed to promote routes to, and the distinctiveness of, the Northern Ireland tourism product.

Of some 40 events it lists only 11 are from Northern Ireland. While the West Belfast festival is highlighted by Tourism Ireland, the Twelfth of July and the Maiden City Festival are not.

Northern Ireland needs to be sure that its tourism product is locally resourced and that it is being promoted in a manner which will maximise benefits to the province. We will ensure that this is the case.

Allowing Tourism Ireland to market our tourism industry has failed. This arrangement must be reviewed and a marketing strategy which more fully recognises Northern Ireland pursued. This is particularly important in the North America and Great Britain markets.

We must invest in creating a long-term sustainable industry. This will require investment in signature projects such as the Titanic and the Giants Causeway.

Tourism is also very important for jobs in Northern Ireland. There must be a much greater emphasis on training and visitor servicing.

There must also be greater emphasis on community tourism which will spread the benefit to local people.

PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

There is a growing recognition of the need to protect our environment from both local and global threats. It is important that we in Northern Ireland not only look after our own environment but also play our part in global issues such as tackling climate change.

The DUP has supported the introduction of a Climate Change Bill at Westminster and called for year on year targets in order to achieve reduced Carbon emissions. Northern Ireland must play its part in that overall effort, and a new Executive should be proactive in this area. Energy efficiency measures can play a role in meeting these targets. Extending and enhancing the Warm Homes Scheme will mean that more houses can access heating systems and insulation which will help many households not only cut their energy bills and live free from fuel poverty, but cut their household Carbon emissions. Similarly all new social housing should be required to meet the Ecohomes assessment.

Northern Ireland needs effective implementation of environmental laws, and we are open to considering how this can best be delivered.

The changes in agriculture over recent years allows the opportunity for farmers to look towards the production of bio-fuels as an alternative crop. It is vital that there is a sustainable long-term market for these fuels in order to assure producers of a long-term future and an Executive could help develop this through wider use in both the public and private sectors.

The planning system in Northern Ireland has been the subject of much criticism, and the recent introduction of Draft PPS 14 has meant that rural planning policy cannot deliver the goals to which it aspires. We recognise the fact that there have been significant problems with rural planning in the past and that unrestricted development in the countryside cannot be allowed. There is a need for controls on the building of houses in the countryside but the system must be compatible with sustainable rural development.

**OUR PRIORITIES
FOR GOVERNMENT**

**COMMITTED TO
TACKLING
RACISM**

Racism is a scourge on the reputation of Northern Ireland.
We support a zero tolerance approach against racism.



REDUCING CRIME

It is essential that tough measures are taken in order to tackle the scourge of crime. Older people in particular have been affected by the fear of crime as we have seen patterns of attacks on elderly people particularly in isolated rural areas.

A tough message must be sent out to those who have been involved in attacks on the most vulnerable in society as well as those motivated by sectarianism or racism. We therefore favour stiff minimum sentences for those convicted of such crimes.

There are organised criminal gangs operating throughout Northern Ireland and it is vital that these groups are stopped. The Assets Recovery Agency had been making good progress in dealing with many of those involved in such activities. It is important that the Serious and Organised Crime Agency is given adequate resources to ensure this work is not just continued, but enhanced.

It is essential that the assets of those who have profited from crime are not beyond the reach of law. We will continue to press the Government on this issue and seek to ensure that SOCA is able to carry out this much needed function.

Whether it is through death on our roads or through car crimes, Northern Ireland has some of the worst statistics in the United Kingdom. Due to the high numbers of deaths on our roads it is important that those found guilty of offences such as causing death by dangerous driving or driving while under the influence of drugs or alcohol receive sentences which reflect the very serious consequences of these crimes.

Anti-social behaviour plagues many communities across Northern Ireland but the current use of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders has not dealt with this issue. We believe they should be strengthened and enforced more rigorously.

PRIDE IN WHO WE ARE

The DUP is committed to the promotion and development of unionist culture and cultural identity. Much good work has already been started in this area and this will continue.

Over the last number of years we have witnessed the recognition and growth of the distinct and culturally rich tradition of Ulster-Scots. This area continues to require enhanced funding and support. Irish and Gaelic culture should not be allowed to dominate funding.

The DUP has fought hard to deliver a rate exemption for all Orange Halls throughout Northern Ireland. The DUP recognised the importance of these halls in playing a pivotal community and cultural role. This has ensured the continued existence for small rural halls.

The DUP recognises the importance many across the province attach to the freedom to parade. This is a right that has come under considerable and sustained attack from republicans.

The Parades Commission has failed. It has become part of the problem instead of providing a solution. After extensive pressure from the DUP, together with the Loyal Orders, the Government has undertaken to review the parades issue.

The DUP will ensure these matters remain firmly on the political agenda. The right to parade and the freedom to express our culture is absolutely fundamental.

The DUP was instrumental in setting up the recent Maximising Community Space programme that resulted in Orange Halls throughout Northern Ireland obtaining funding to improve hall facilities. We are campaigning for the extension of this scheme.

There has been clear discrimination in the allocation of funding for community festivals that has penalised the unionist community. The DUP will continue to challenge the relevant funding bodies.

OUR PRIORITIES FOR GOVERNMENT

The DUP has secured derating for Orange Halls and is making progress in relation to parading. We will ensure that unionist culture receives its fair share of Government funding.



COMMITTED TO
**PROMOTING
UNIONIST CULTURE**



DEFENDING RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

The DUP believes that elected representatives of the people of Northern Ireland should have the right to influence laws that will have a significant impact on the lives of constituents. The decision by the Government to introduce new regulations aimed at tackling discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation has meant that laws have been introduced which restrict the religious freedoms of people living in Northern Ireland.

These proposals were rushed through after a period of consultation which was less than that given in the rest of the United Kingdom and with insufficient time to consider the responses to that consultation.

We believe that all discrimination is wrong. There is already anti-discrimination legislation in place which should be sufficient to deal with this matter and does not require the introduction of new, subjectively assessed legislation which will not solve any problems but simply create more.

These are regulations which the Secretary of State has confirmed that any new Assembly would be legally entitled to revoke. Yet despite the tacit acceptance by Peter Hain that they are not supported by the people of Northern Ireland he has imposed them over the heads of our elected representatives.

The DUP believes that the rights of people to exercise their religious beliefs should be protected and that people should not be penalised for holding those views.

In many regards the law in Northern Ireland recognises the Christian ethos of the province.

The DUP has opposed plans to allow homosexual couples to adopt children in Northern Ireland. The vast majority of people in the province are totally opposed to this measure.

For such an emotive issue, changes should only be made where it is clear that there is overwhelming public support or through a local Assembly.

A mountain of social science, the world's major religions, common sense and observation tell us that children have the best chance to thrive in married mother and father-based families.

This issue should be about the interests of children. They should have the best opportunity for a normal healthy family life instead of being used to seek to make a cultural statement.

DELIVERING AN UNRIVALLED CONSTITUENCY SERVICE

DUP Assembly Members don't represent only the needs of their constituents and the people of Northern Ireland in the Assembly Chamber at Stormont. The work of all DUP MLAs is backed up by a network of more than forty constituency offices and numerous satellite surgeries right across Northern Ireland.

DUP offices in cities, towns and villages across the province provide an unrivalled level of constituency service and are the first point of contact with their Assembly Member for many people.

The work of these offices means that not only can the DUP be trusted with the constitutional future of Northern Ireland, but also that our representatives can be relied upon to deliver on bread and butter issues affecting everyone across the province.

Areas which have seen recent victories by DUP MPs and MLAs have witnessed the impact DUP representation has made locally in delivering a first-rate constituency service. Other areas with long-standing DUP representation know how vital it is to maintain and maximize Democratic Unionist representation in their constituency.

DUP MLAs can be trusted to give the right balance to their constituents by ensuring they play a full role in the work of an Assembly at Stormont whilst still being available to serve constituents on the ground and actively work alongside them.

DUP representatives deliver a full-time service, all of the time, not just at election time.



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