



Northern
Ireland
Office

Departmental Business Plan 2010-11

January 2011

INTRODUCTION

The Northern Ireland Office is responsible for overseeing the Northern Ireland devolution settlement. We represent Northern Ireland interests at UK Government level and UK Government interests in Northern Ireland.

We have relatively few direct policy responsibilities. Our role is often one of co-ordination and facilitation, particularly between the UK Government and the Northern Ireland Executive. We work closely with other UK Government departments, the devolved administration in Northern Ireland and all other relevant bodies, to achieve our objectives.

Our vision is a stable, peaceful, prosperous, forward-looking, mainstream, 'normalised' Northern Ireland. We will achieve this by working through partnerships within Whitehall and with the Northern Ireland Executive, the Irish Government, and all those who share this ambition.

We will act as an advocate for Northern Ireland within Whitehall and for Whitehall within Northern Ireland. We will support the implementation of Coalition Government policies on political reform, and particularly the promise to promote peace, stability and economic prosperity in Northern Ireland. We will stand firmly behind the agreements negotiated and institutions they establish as set out in the Coalition Programme for Government. In addition, through membership of the National Security Council, we will develop and manage a comprehensive strategy to combat the Northern Ireland related terrorist threat.

OVERALL AIMS

OBJECTIVE 1

Renewed politics:

- **Devolved government capable of resolving differences, delivering its core business**
- **Rebalancing the economy by promoting private sector growth**
- **Society moving on, not held back by the legacy of the past**

Outcomes

- A fully implemented and stable devolution settlement in Northern Ireland based on the framework of the Agreements, moving towards the mainstream
- A positive contribution to help address legacy issues in a way that supports a shared future and takes proper account of the unique circumstances in Northern Ireland
- A new joint approach with the Executive to key economic challenges in Northern Ireland
- Delivery of the Coalition Government programme for democratic and political renewal in Northern Ireland

- A. Take forward **implementation of the Agreements**, cement the **stability and success of the political institutions** in Northern Ireland and advance **the Government's economic goals**, working through **relationships** with:
- the Northern Ireland Executive, parties and partners in Northern Ireland
 - the Irish Government
 - overseas opinion, especially in the US

Fulfil the Government's role in the implementation of the Agreements and building future political stability

Ongoing

Continue to build trusting relationships through meaningful engagement with:

- The Northern Ireland Executive
- Northern Ireland political parties
- Community leaders and wider civic society
- The Irish Government
- The US

Ongoing

Through the British-Irish Intergovernmental Secretariat, foster effective and co-operative day to day working relations with the Irish Government

Ongoing

Decide on the future of 50/50 recruitment to PSNI

March 2011

Ensure HMG is fully advised on Northern Ireland related constitutional issues and support Respect agenda in relation to NI

Ongoing

Ensure continuation of the Parades Commission until such time as locally-agreed replacement arrangements can be secured.

Ongoing

B. Working with HM Treasury and the Northern Ireland Executive, ensure proposals are brought forward, and as appropriate implemented, to **rebalance the Northern Ireland economy**

Ensure publication of paper on rebalancing of the Northern Ireland economy, including potential mechanisms for a separate Corporation Tax rate	Early 2011
Facilitate a just and fair resolution of Presbyterian Mutual Society issues	Complete

C. Ensure the **UK Government works effectively with the Northern Ireland Executive**

Support effective operation of the Joint Ministerial Committee, British Irish Council and Finance Ministers' Quadrilateral to advance NI interests: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint Ministerial Committee Plenary • British-Irish Council summits 	Ongoing
Represent the Northern Ireland position effectively at Cabinet and in Parliament	Ongoing
Participate in cross-departmental initiatives to raise awareness of devolution issues and settlements across Whitehall.	Ongoing

D. Deliver Coalition Government's **programme for democratic and political renewal in Northern Ireland – including the development of civil liberties and electoral reform**

Work with Ministry of Justice in developing proposals for a United Kingdom-wide Bill of Rights that take full account of the Belfast Agreement commitments and are capable of achieving cross-community support in Northern Ireland. Publish responses to previous Government's consultation paper	Ongoing Publication of response complete.
Publish proposals for a reduction in the number of MPs in Northern Ireland	Complete
Work with Northern Ireland parties to bring an end to dual mandates	Ongoing
Introduce revised arrangements on confidentiality of political donations in Northern Ireland following consultation	March 2011
Work with the Chief Electoral Officer to successfully deliver a referendum on electoral reform in Northern Ireland	May 2011
Work with the Chief Electoral Officer to successfully deliver Assembly and local government elections in Northern Ireland	May 2011

E. Ensure that HMG makes a positive contribution to the development and delivery of a strategy in Northern Ireland that deals with the **legacy of the Troubles**

Publish Bloody Sunday Inquiry report	Complete
Publish summary of responses to Consultative Group on the Past	Complete
Engage with party leaders, leaders in civic society, Irish Government and others to develop HMG strategy on dealing with the Past	Ongoing
Publish of the Billy Wright Inquiry report	Complete
Publish of the Rosemary Nelson Inquiry report	Ongoing
Publish of the Robert Hamill Inquiry report	Ongoing
Support witnesses and manage evidential issues in preparation for the oral hearings of the Smithwick Tribunal	Ongoing

F. Support **Royal and other VVIP visits** to Northern Ireland including Irish Presidential and senior Ministerial visits

Work with the Royal Household, FCO and Irish government to plan and support key visits to Northern Ireland	Ongoing
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OBJECTIVE 2

A decreased threat from terrorism in Northern Ireland, as result of co-ordinated response

Outcomes

- The remaining violent threat from those against peace and political progress addressed through a co-ordinated response of partners
- The wider national security interests of the United Kingdom remain protected in Northern Ireland

A. Have the necessary **protections in place for national security arrangements** in Northern Ireland

Maintain effective cooperation with key players in accordance with protocols, Memorandums of Understanding and Service Level Agreements surrounding delivery of National Security in Northern Ireland	Ongoing
Provide the HMG response to terrorist incidents in Northern Ireland	As required
Administer the Limited Home Protection Scheme consistently	Ongoing
Deal with National Security Firearms appeals and prohibition applications	Ongoing

B. Ensure **effective counter terrorism policy and legislation** are in place to combat effectively the terrorist threat in Northern Ireland

Participate in Home Office Review of Counter Terrorism legislation	Ongoing
Through membership of the National Security Council, develop and manage a comprehensive strategy to combat the Northern Ireland related terrorist (NIRT) threat	Ongoing
Commence comprehensive review of non-jury trial system including through consultation	July 2011
Conduct a public consultation on non-jury system	March 2011

OBJECTIVE 3

Manage Hillsborough Castle

Outcomes

- Hillsborough Castle is fully utilised meeting the needs of the Royal Household, Department and the wider community in Northern Ireland

Maximise the use of Hillsborough Castle to meet the needs of the Royal Household, public sector and wider community in Northern Ireland

Support the Royal Household during visits to Northern Ireland

Ongoing

Increase use of Hillsborough Castle by public sector and community organisations including Citizenship Ceremonies and charitable events

Ongoing

OBJECTIVE 4

A slimmer Northern Ireland Office, which lives within its means and maximises the value of its people and resources

Outcomes

- Implementing efficiencies through SR10 ensuring value for money
- Provide the necessary accommodation, IT and telecoms, security, legal services and other infrastructure to enable the department to meet its objectives
- Communicate effectively with, and support openness and transparency information to, the public
- Manage resources effectively across the Department and Arm's Length Bodies to meet ongoing business priorities and future requirements

A. Deliver efficiency savings and live within annually funded baselines

Prepare initial return for HM Treasury setting out approach to SR10	Complete
Agree final outcome of SR10 with HM Treasury	Complete
Implement agreed programme of efficiency savings	Ongoing
Keep under review performance and value for money of Arm's Length bodies	Ongoing
Establish new baselines for Departmental Expenditure in 2011/12, maximising use of agreed budget	January 2011
Manage Service Level Agreements for corporate services and processes for all financial transactional services	Ongoing
Prepare end year accounting returns as set out by HM Treasury and parent department.	March 2011
Identify ways of working with the Scotland Office and the Wales Office to make best use of resources.	August 2012

B. Provide accurate and timely responses to public correspondence, parliamentary questions and Freedom of Information requests

Ensure deadlines for FOI requests, parliamentary questions and Ministerial correspondence are met across Department	Ongoing
Manage annual release of records with the National Archives and Public Record Office (Northern Ireland)	December 2010

C. Manage efficiently and effectively all corporate services across Department and Arm's Length Bodies

Develop staff resource and recruitment to meet future requirements and business needs	March 2011
Ensure all corporate governance returns are made on time promoting a culture of transparency across the Department	Ongoing
Manage delivery of HR, payroll, IT, security, legal, corporate governance and business continuity across the Department	Ongoing
Lead NIO response to Diversity and Corporate Social Responsibility	Ongoing

D. Communicate Government information and policy to the general public, media and external organisations

Positive engagement with and feedback from journalists and news organisations	Ongoing
Key messages of Government understood and carried accurately by media	Ongoing

E. Provide direct support to the Secretary of State, Minister and Head of Office

Ministers and Head of Office provided with effective logistical and administrative support	Ongoing
Accurate and timely performance management information; secretariat support for meetings; advice on Whitehall wide initiatives; and general administrative support	Ongoing

TABLE OF SPENDING FOR 2011/12 TO 2014/15

This section sets out the department's resource and capital Departmental Expenditure Limits (DEL) over the Spending Review period, as agreed with the Treasury.

£'000 (nominal)	Baseline 2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Core Administration	14,525	13,274	12,595	11,629	10,664
Other Resource	11,351	11,755	11,647	11,714	10,626
Resource DEL	25,876	25,029	24,242	22,343	21,290
<i>o/w non-ringfenced resource DEL</i>	<i>23,718</i>	<i>22,967</i>	<i>22,276</i>	<i>21,474</i>	<i>19,517</i>
<i>o/w depreciation ring-fenced</i>	<i>2,158</i>	<i>2,062</i>	<i>1,966</i>	<i>1,869</i>	<i>1,773</i>
Capital DEL	440	390	341	291	241