

STORMONT HOUSE AGREEMENT

PROGRESS REPORT

JUNE 2015

The Stormont House Agreement reached last December contained a commitment to publish a progress report on implementation after 6 months.

This first report reflects the significant progress made in implementing the Agreement over the past six months. It also highlights those areas where work remains to be done to ensure that the Stormont House Agreement is implemented in full as agreed by all parties and both Governments.

Work will continue to resolve the outstanding issues around implementation.

Paragraph number	Commitment	Progress Report / Milestones Achieved
	<p>FINANCE AND WELFARE</p> <p><i>2015-16 Budget and welfare</i></p>	
4	A final balanced budget for 2015-16 needs to be agreed in January.	<p>COMPLETED: Budget Bill 1 received Royal Assent in March 2015</p> <p>Budget Bill 2 was introduced to the Assembly on 16 June and Final Stage is scheduled for 30 June.</p>
5	The Executive will adopt in January 2015 a comprehensive programme of Public Sector Reform and Restructuring... including measures to address structural differences in relation to the cost of managing a divided society, reduce pay bill costs, such as a reduction in the size of the NICS and the wider public sector, and the extension of shared services.	<p>The NICS Voluntary Exit Scheme was launched and conditional offers have been made to the first 1,200 staff due to exit in September subject to the availability of funding.</p> <p>A Transformation Fund Oversight Group chaired by the Head of the Civil Service has been established and meets regularly to oversee a four year programme of reform and restructuring.</p> <p>Paper on public sector pay restraint has been prepared for consideration by the Executive. A letter from the First Minister and deputy First Minister relating to initiatives aimed at addressing the issue of division has been issued to Executive Ministers.</p>
5	An independent strategic review of public sector reform conducted by OECD will report by the end of 2015.	OECD Report is on track for completion by end of November 2015.
6	Legislation will be brought before the Assembly in January 2015 to give effect to welfare changes.	At Final Stage on 26 May a Petition of Concern was lodged. The Assembly voted by a majority to support the Bill, but it fell on a cross community basis. Political discussions relating to Welfare Reform continue.
6	...alongside further work to develop and implement flexibilities and top-ups from the block grant as part of a package of measures to address local need.	The Executive has agreed the Universal Credit Payment Flexibilities Scheme and the Executive parties are considering papers on the draft Supplementary Payment Scheme, Social Sector Size Criteria and public consultation papers on Disability Protection and Discretionary Support Schemes.
7	Implementation of these welfare changes will begin to take place in the financial year 2015-16 and implementation will be complete by 2016-17.	Project teams are in place and links with the Department for Work and Pensions are being maintained. However political agreement on Welfare Reform implementation is not in place.
8	Legislation will be introduced as soon as Parliament returns to enable the devolution of corporation tax in April 2017.	UK Government introduced legislation at Westminster in January; at the end of March the Corporation Tax (Northern Ireland) Bill received Royal Assent. COMPLETED
8	Progress of legislation will proceed in parallel with the implementation of key measures to deliver sustainable Executive finances.	COMPLETED: Budget Bill 1 received Royal Assent in March 2015 and Final Stage of Budget Bill 2 is scheduled for 30 June.

	Medium and Longer Term Reform	
10	Executive departments should be commissioned to undertake work looking at medium and long term reform measures with the support of DFP and report back by March 2015. These plans will include delivery plans and implementation timetables that allow at least some measures to be delivered in 2015-16 and others as soon as possible thereafter.	A paper on cross-cutting reform, including high level implementation plans and timescales has been prepared for initial consideration by the Finance Minister.
11	Executive departments should consider how best to realise the value of their capital assets through reform or restructuring to realise income and longer term savings.	Capital asset revenue generation is being accelerated through the Executive's Asset Management Strategy.
12	There should be an independent audit of departmental spending to identify how divisions in society impact on the delivery of goods, facilities and services, and to then consider how best to reconfigure service delivery in a manner consistent with a shared future.	A study is being progressed by the NI Centre for Economic Policy.
13	Revenue raising measures may be considered if cost reductions cannot be achieved quickly enough or if there is a decision to run an enhanced provision of public services.	This is being progressed in line with the work on capital revenue generation and departmental reviews during monitoring rounds.
	Additional Fiscal Devolution	
14	The Executive is examining a range of taxes...to consider whether devolution could result in any clear economic or social benefit for NI. In the light of this work the Government will consider additional fiscal devolution for NI, including Aggregates Levy, Stamp Duty Land Tax and Landfill Tax.	Options have been prepared to enable the Finance Minister to bring a paper to the Executive.
	FLAGS, IDENTITY, CULTURE AND TRADITION	
15	A Commission on Flags, Identity, Culture and Tradition will be established by June 2015 as the basis for further addressing these issues, to report within 18 months of its being established.	Stormont House Implementation Group has endorsed in principle the draft advertisement and candidate information pack for non-political nominees.
	PARADES	
17 & 20	Powers to take responsibility for parades and related protests should, in principle, be devolved to the NI Assembly. There will be a full public consultation on any agreed legislation.	Progress on this commitment will follow the work relating to the commitment at paragraph 18 of the Agreement.
18	The Office of Legislative Counsel, working in conjunction with OFMDFM, shall	The Office of the Legislative Counsel is preparing proposals for consideration by the Stormont House

	provide a range of options on how the remaining key issues which include the Code of Conduct, criteria and accountability could be addressed in legislation. OFMDFM shall bring forward proposals to the Executive by June 2015.	Implementation Group on 29 June.
	THE PAST	
22	The Executive will, by 2016, establish an Oral History Archive to provide a central place for people from all backgrounds (and from throughout the UK and Ireland) to share experiences and narratives related to the Troubles.	Provisions will be included in the UK Government's Northern Ireland (Stormont House Agreement) Bill. Proposals considered by the Stormont House Implementation Group have been submitted as the basis for instructions to Parliamentary Counsel.
25	A research project will be established as part of the Archive, led by academics to produce a factual historical timeline and statistical analysis of the Troubles, to report within 12 months.	A subgroup of Executive party representatives which was established to oversee the research project has met and further meetings are scheduled.
26	The Executive will take steps to ensure that Victims and Survivors have access to high quality services, respecting the principles of choice and need. The needs of victims who do not live in Northern Ireland should also be recognised.	Two workshops have been held with key stakeholders to identify key priorities and opportunities for partnership and collaboration within the victims sector. Pilot projects led by the Victims and Survivors Service are being developed and are expected to commence shortly.
27	The Commission for Victims and Survivors' recommendation for a comprehensive Mental Trauma Service will be implemented. This will operate within the NHS but will work closely with the Victims and Survivors Service (VSS), and other organisations and groups who work directly with victims and survivors.	The Stormont House Implementation Group has had initial discussions on the key elements of a Mental Health Trauma Model and a PEACE IV funding proposal is being prepared.
28	Further work will be undertaken to seek an acceptable way forward on the proposal for a pension for severely physically injured victims in NI.	Initial proposals have been prepared for consideration by the Stormont House Implementation Group on 6 July.
29	Victims and survivors will be given access to advocate-counsellor assistance if they wish.	An initial scoping exercise on advocacy assistance has commenced.
	Historical Investigations Unit	
30	Legislation will establish a new independent body to take forward investigations into outstanding Troubles-related deaths; the Historical Investigations Unit (HIU).	The necessary legislation to establish the HIU is being prepared and will be introduced in the autumn as part of the Northern Ireland (Stormont House Agreement) Bill, announced in the Queen's speech. Proposals considered by the Stormont House Implementation Group were submitted as the basis for instructions to Parliamentary Counsel. Arrangements for the recruitment and appointment of the Director Designate have been endorsed by the Stormont House Implementation Group.

30	The body will take forward outstanding cases from the HET process and the legacy work of the Police Ombudsman for NI. A report will be produced in each case.	The new body will be established following the introduction of the legislation. An action plan is being prepared.
31	Legacy inquests will continue as a separate process to the HIU...the Executive will take appropriate steps to improve the way the legacy inquest function is conducted to comply with ECHR Article 2 requirements.	Proposals to improve the legacy inquest function have been discussed by the Stormont House Implementation Group and preparatory work is underway prior to the Lord Chief Justice assuming Presidency of Coroners Courts. The County Court Judge complement has been increased to enable experienced Judges at a higher judicial tier to take on some legacy inquests. The UK Government wishes further reform proposals to be considered.
32	Appropriate governance arrangements will be put in place to ensure the operational independence of the two different elements of the work of the HIU.	Proposals on the HIU complaints process have been considered by the Stormont House Implementation Group. Work continues on other required governance arrangements.
37	The UK Government makes clear that it will make full disclosure to the HIU... Westminster legislation will provide for equivalent measures to those that currently apply to existing bodies so as to prevent any damaging onward disclosure of information by the HIU.	The Northern Ireland (Stormont House Agreement) Bill will make provision for full disclosure to the HIU, and the prevention of damaging onward disclosure by the HIU, in line with the conditions outlined in paragraph 37.
38	The necessary arrangements will be put in place to ensure the HIU has the full co-operation of all relevant Irish authorities, including disclosure of information and documentation. This will include arrangements for co-operation between criminal investigation agencies in both jurisdictions and arrangements for obtaining evidence for use in court proceedings. Where additional legislation is required, it will be brought forward by the Irish Government.	Good progress continues to be made at official level on putting in place the arrangements necessary, including legislation if required, to ensure the HIU has the full cooperation of all relevant Irish authorities.
<i>Independent Commission on Information Retrieval</i>		
41, 44, 46 & 48	A new body....will be established by the UK and Irish Governments, called the Independent Commission on Information Retrieval (ICIR), building on the precedent provided by the Independent Commission on the Location of Victims' Remains [para 41]. The ICIR will be led by five members: an independent chairperson who...will be appointed by the UK and Irish Governments, in consultation with OFMDFM, together with two nominees appointed by the FM and dFM, one each	A treaty is being drafted between UK and Irish Governments to establish the ICIR as an international body. UK Government will enable the operation of the ICIR in the UK through its inclusion in the Northern Ireland (Stormont House Agreement) Bill. Irish legislation will also be required and work is ongoing on the preparation of proposals for a Bill in this regard.

	<p>appointed by the UK Government and the Irish Government.</p> <p>The ICIR will not disclose information provided to it to law enforcement or intelligence agencies and this information will be inadmissible in criminal and civil proceedings</p> <p>Legislation will be taken forward by the UK Government, the Irish Government and the Assembly to implement the above decision on inadmissibility.</p>	<p>UK Government will cover inadmissibility in the Northern Ireland (Stormont House Agreement) Bill.</p>
Implementation and Reconciliation		
51, 53, 54 & 55	<p>An Implementation and Reconciliation Group (IRG) will be established to oversee themes, archives and information recovery. After 5 years a report on themes will be commissioned by the IRG from independent academic experts.</p> <p>In the context of the work of the IRG, the UK and Irish Governments will consider statements of acknowledgement.</p> <p>The chair shall be a person of independent and international standing and will be nominated by FM and dFM. The other appointments will be nominated as follows: DUP (3), Sinn Fein (2), SDLP (1), UUP (1), Alliance (1) and one nominee each from the UK and Irish Governments. The UK and Irish Governments recognise that there are outstanding investigations and allegations into Troubles-related incidents..... They commit to co-operation with all bodies involved... and to bring forward legislation where necessary.</p>	<p>Initial Terms of Reference for the IRG have been considered by the Stormont House Implementation Group.</p>
INSTITUTIONAL REFORM		
56	<p>The number of Assembly members should be reduced to five members per constituency, or such other reduction as may be agreed, in time for the 2021 Assembly election, and the Assembly will legislate accordingly.</p>	<p>A draft Bill has been prepared by the Office of the Legislative Counsel.</p>
58	<p>The threshold for Petitions of Concern should remain at 30 members. Changes will be made to the operation of the Petition of Concern mechanism through a protocol agreed between the parties.</p>	<p>A draft protocol has been discussed by the Stormont House Implementation Group.</p>
59	<p>Arrangements will be put in place by the Assembly by March 2015 to enable those parties which would be entitled to ministerial positions in the Executive, but choose not to take them up, to be</p>	<p>A Schedule of Opposition Entitlements has been prepared.</p>

	recognised as an official opposition and to facilitate their work.	
60	A reduction in the number of departments from 12 to 9 should be made in time for the 2016 Assembly election, with the new allocation of departmental functions to be agreed by the parties.	The Executive has agreed the reconfiguration and names of the new Departments and the drafting and introduction of the Departments Bill to the Assembly. Programme management and governance arrangements are in place to oversee the change programme.
61	After the Assembly meets following an election and before the FM/dFM are selected and the d'Hondt process runs, representatives of the parties who are entitled to take up places in the Executive and who confirm their intention to do so will meet to resolve the draft Programme for Government. Changes to Westminster legislation (as soon as time permits) could extend the time available from 7 days to 14 days. The draft Programme for Government would, once the Executive was formed be passed to the Assembly for approval.	UK Government will make necessary legislative provision as part of the Northern Ireland (Stormont House Agreement) Bill. Initial work has begun within the Delivering Social Change Framework. Instructions on changes to Westminster legislation have been submitted to Parliamentary Counsel.
62	A protocol shall be developed to..... promote greater efficiency in the conduct and discharge of Executive business...in line with the NI Act 1998.	COMPLETED.
64	A new process will be brought forward for a more transparent and robust system for Members' salaries and expenses.	Options for future models for setting Members' pay, pensions and allowances are being considered at meetings of the Assembly Commission.
65	The maximum consultation requirement on policy will be reduced from 12 weeks to 8.	The Stormont House Implementation Group is considering an approach that will involve engagement with Stakeholders.
66	The UK Government stands ready to consider potential further areas of devolution/changes to intergovernmental machinery...under discussion elsewhere in the UK and likely to command broad support among parties in NI.	For future consideration.
OUTSTANDING COMMITMENTS		
67	A new engagement model could be achieved, by June 2015, through the establishment of a compact civic advisory panel which would meet regularly to consider key social, cultural and economic issues and to advise the Executive. The Chair would be appointed by OFMDFM.	Options on the size and composition of the panel have been discussed by the Stormont House Implementation Group.
70	On the St Andrews Agreement Review, the NSMC (meeting in Institutional format) will agree before the end of February 2015 a report on new sectoral priorities for North /South cooperation, identified	COMPLETED.

	during Ministerial discussions since November 2013. A report on new sectoral priorities will be a standing item for future meetings of the NSMC meeting in Institutional format.	
71	In early 2015, a meeting of relevant Ministers from North and South will take place in the North West to consider strategic approaches to the development of the region as envisaged in the North West Gateway Initiative. Further meetings may also take place.	NSMC Institutional meeting of 25 February agreed that a meeting should be held. Discussions continue regarding a date for the meeting.
72	The Executive will ensure full implementation of the T:BUC strategy, and beyond that will commit to a continuing effort to eradicate sectarianism in all its forms.	Existing delivery mechanisms are in place and work continues under the auspices of the Ministerial Panel and Programme Board. £10m has been allocated for T:BUC initiatives and a further £3m for the United Youth programme.
REVIEW AND MONITORING		
74 & 75	...progress in implementing the provisions of this Agreement must be actively reviewed and monitored. Review meetings will include Executive party leaders as well as the UK Government and Irish Government... supported by the NICS and, as appropriate, officials of the UK and Irish Governments. There will be quarterly meetings, convened by the UK Government and Irish Government, with the first meeting before the end of January 2015 at which an implementation timetable will be agreed.	Quarterly meetings took place on 30 January, 27 March, and 25 June. An extraordinary meeting was held on 2 June to discuss the implications of the failure of the Welfare Reform bill on the implementation of the Stormont House Agreement.
75	Six-monthly updates on progress on the implementation of the Agreement will be published.	The first six-monthly update to be published on 25 June.
A statement by the DUP regarding the implementation process and the Stormont House Agreement is set out in the Annex to this document.		

Irish Government commitments

Paragraph No.	Agreement	Progress Report / Milestones Achieved
B1	The Irish Government is fully committed to North South Cooperation...will continue to commit to substantial resources [estimated at €450m in the period 2015 to 2020] to support agreed work	Ongoing and on target

	programmes.	
B2	The Irish Government will continue to support measures to promote reconciliation, including through continued annual provision of €2.7m in the Reconciliation Fund.	Irish Government Reconciliation Fund grants totalling over €1.5 million approved and disbursed since beginning of 2015. Second round of grants to be completed before end of year.
B3	The <i>[Irish]</i> Government will allocate €5.0m to the International Fund for Ireland to support its work of reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the border counties in 2015	COMPLETED. Irish Government decision approving allocation of €5 million made on 20 January 2015. Transfer of funds completed.
B4	The Irish Government commits to bring forward legislation and to provide financial support to an Independent Commission for Information Retrieval as set out in the Agreement.	Treaty between Irish and UK Governments as well as draft legislation under preparation. Legislation scheduled for introduction to the Houses of the Oireachtas in autumn 2015
B5	The Irish Government reaffirms its support for the EU PEACE and INTERREG funding programmes, which will see almost €500m invested in the region for the period from 2014 to 2020, and will continue to work closely with the Northern Ireland Executive to ensure that the opportunities under these programmes are maximized.	INTERREG programme adopted by the European Commission on 13 February 2015 Discussions are continuing between the European Commission, Irish Government and Northern Ireland Executive in relation to finalisation of Peace IV programme
B6	The <i>[Irish]</i> Government remains fully committed to the concept of the Narrow Water Bridge Project and to developing the Ulster Canal.	Irish Government approved funding for part of the Ulster Canal project from Upper Lough Erne to Castle Saunderson on 24 February 2015. Irish Government remains committed to concept of a Narrow Water Bridge Project.
B7	The <i>[Irish]</i> Government fully supports the A5 Project and reaffirms its commitment to provide £25m in each of the years 2015 and 2016 as a contribution to the project.	The Irish Government affirms its commitment to provide £25m in each of the years 2015 and 2016 as a contribution to the A5 project. North South Ministerial Council Plenary meeting of 5 June 2015 noted ongoing work on the A5 project
B8	In addition the Government commits to examining scope for further contributions to the project in the context of the forthcoming Capital Expenditure Programme.	Capital Expenditure Programme to be reviewed autumn 2015.

Annex

Statement by the DUP regarding the Stormont House Agreement

“The DUP is firmly committed to the full implementation of every aspect of the Stormont House Agreement. The Stormont House Agreement is a comprehensive interdependent deal which requires full implementation of all its parts. Failure to implement one part disturbs the carefully constructed balance of the Agreement. If the Agreement is not implemented as a whole then each element stands to be re-negotiated separately.”