



Manifesto 2010

Let's Keep
Northern Ireland
***Moving
Forward***



DUP

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INTRODUCTION BY PARTY LEADER **Rt Hon Peter Robinson MLA**

INTRODUCTION



Northern Ireland has made significant progress under the stewardship of the Democratic Unionist Party. Today the DUP is the largest party in the Northern Ireland Executive and could have a key role to play in the establishment of a United Kingdom Government after the General Election.

The platform we outline, as well as demonstrating our policies on a broad range of issues, will clearly form the basis for our priorities in the context of a hung Parliament.

There are two key themes to our campaign:

Building stability and prosperity in Northern Ireland through improved and more efficient local political institutions,

Directing resources in public services towards preventative and early intervention measures, and frontloading funding for the first few years of life.

We want tax-payers' money to deliver the greatest long-term benefits for individuals and society. Across a range of sectors we are outlining comprehensive proposals for improving the economy, public services and quality of life in the United Kingdom, and Northern Ireland in particular.

Within the overall UK context we are committed to securing the best deal for the people of Northern Ireland. We ask you to give us the strongest mandate to negotiate the best deal for Northern Ireland over the Parliamentary term and in the event of a hung Parliament. Such a scenario offers a once in a lifetime opportunity to obtain key strategic gains for unionism.

A vote for the DUP is a vote for:

- **unionist unity**
- **strong positive Unionist leadership**
- **the best deal for Northern Ireland at Westminster**
- **a long-term strategy for Northern Ireland.**

Northern Ireland has made massive strides. There is still much to be done. Together we can make things better. We ask for your support. **Let's Keep Northern Ireland Moving Forward.**

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Peter Robinson".

***Let's Keep Northern Ireland
Moving Forward***



Key Goals

Let's Keep
Northern Ireland
**Moving
Forward**

- For Unionist Unity >*
- Strong Positive Unionist Leadership >*
- A long-term strategy for Northern Ireland >*
- Best deal for Northern Ireland at Westminster >*

Building stability and prosperity in Northern Ireland through improved and more efficient local political institutions

Directing resources in public services towards preventative and early intervention measures, and frontloading funding for the first few years of life.

- Innovative High-Skilled Economy >*
- Reduced Taxes >*
- Smaller Government >*
- Better Childcare, Primary Schools and Youth Services >*
- Increased Health Spending on Prevention and Early Intervention >*
- Visible Neighbourhood Policing >*



Key Goals *at a glance*

ECONOMY: Innovative wealth generating export oriented economy - Reduced corporation tax - 5% VAT rate for construction - Special Economic Zone status for NI - Establish Invention and Innovation Institute

BUSINESS: Reduced regulatory burden on business - Improved basic skills - Overhaul public sector procurement - Single Government Department for Economy - Creating jobs - More small business start-ups - Tackle late payments

EDUCATION: Pilot Child-Parent Centres based on Chicago model - Extra funding in primary schools and more classroom assistants - Enhanced extended schools programmes - Increase youth services budget - Pupils matched to post-primary school on basis of ability - End special privileges for integrated and Irish medium sectors - Single body to own and promote controlled schools

FURTHER EDUCATION: Establish vocational sector-specific training centres of excellence - Assist businesses to offer high quality apprenticeships - Produce more skilled craftsmen

HIGHER EDUCATION: UK-wide review of number of universities, student places and subjects offered - Remove cap on NI student numbers - Re-establish independence of universities

HEALTH: Increase spending on prevention and early intervention - NICE to focus more on identifying non-cost effective practice - Screening programme for prostate cancer - Broaden opportunities for charities and other proven providers to deliver care - Create unit to co-ordinate multiple hospital attendances of older people - Address failure to meet cancer waiting times - Access psychological therapies within two weeks

ARMED FORCES: Most up-to-date equipment for our armed forces - Upgrade living quarters - Dedicated hospital facility for British soldiers and veterans - Remembrance Day and Pride in Britain Day as public holidays

AGRI-FOOD: Maximize funding for NI from CAP - Continue single farm payments - Country of origin labelling - Continue ban on Brazilian beef - Eradication policy against TB and Brucellosis - Facility to deal with NI poultry litter - Effective local fisheries strategy

COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR: Third sector to deliver more services - Increased collaboration between Government and faith sector - Audit of contribution of NI faith community - Non-lottery funding – service projects to mark Year of Volunteering



OLDER PEOPLE: Increased basic state pension, linked to earnings - Full or substantial proportion of personal care from public purse - Individual care plans - One week respite guaranteed every three months - Winter Fuel Payment increased and extended to cancer sufferers

HOUSING: Examine breaking up NI Housing Executive - More flexible Warm Homes Scheme - Single telephone point of contact for energy efficiency and fuel poverty advice - Reform Common Housing Selection Scheme

ENVIRONMENT: More renewable energy - Develop renewable heat sector - Achieve greenhouse gas emission reduction obligations - Prevent species decline and habitat destruction - More allotment provision

CULTURE: Assist Loyal Orders, bands and Ulster-Scots – new start for parades – bands strategy – developing Britishness – feasibility study into NI National Library

CRIME & POLICING: More neighbourhood police officers visible – New NI sentencing framework - Reduce legal aid bill – More fixed penalties for ASB – Fewer prisoners on remand – Support extended pre-charge detention

STORMONT: Fewer NI Government Departments and MLAs – Voluntary Coalition – Abolish community designations introducing weighted majority voting – No NI Bill of Rights – Annual Performance Reports from public bodies

WESTMINSTER REFORM: Halve Whitehall spending on advertising, external consultants and PR - Cut Whitehall Departments by one third - Create a National Institute of Policy Evaluation - Cut quangos

OTHER PRIORITIES: Legislate to change definition of victim - NI as global centre for renewables technology - Cut TV licence fee from £142.50 to £50 - Prohibit high cost 0845 or 0870 numbers for Government agencies - Gift Aid to be assumed on donations unless opt out - Assistance for PMS savers





Economy

Summary: Innovative wealth generating export oriented economy - Reduced corporation tax - 5% VAT rate for construction - Special Economic Zone status for NI - Establish Invention and Innovation Institute

Growing the private sector is the key to economic success. It will be the private sector that will lead the UK into economic recovery. We need low interest rates and must reign back public spending and invest more wisely. Spending reductions must be pursued rather than seeking to increase taxes, though restricted spending cannot jeopardise recovery.

A key priority of the next Government must be reducing debt. Public spending in recent decades, and particularly over the last two years in response to the recession, has caused the United Kingdom to be laden with exceptionally high levels of debt. Greater independent scrutiny of Government financial management would assist in preventing similar levels of debt arising again.

We must also become much more competitive internationally. The UK suffers from high levels of corporation tax and regulation. Corporation tax should be substantially reduced to kick-start economic growth. We have a particularly strong case in Northern Ireland for a reduction in corporation tax. Northern Ireland suffers from having a land border with another EU state and a step change is needed in the province's economy. Any reduction in corporation tax for Northern Ireland should not be on the basis of a compensating reduction from elsewhere or the Northern Ireland block grant.

Over time the DUP advocates progressing towards a simpler, fairer tax system, offering the prospect of releasing tens of billions from administrative savings and abolishing minor reliefs. Abolition of a myriad of deductions, allowances and incentives would reduce tax avoidance and illegal evasion.

High tax rates and exemptions cause disincentives to invest and expand businesses. Economic distortions would be eliminated with economic activity and job creation increasing.

We support a reduction in stamp duty for first time buyers and oppose raising National Insurance. A savings culture must be re-established in the UK, both at macro and domestic level. More must be done to ensure banks make credit available for small and medium size businesses. The DUP proposes cutting VAT to 5% for construction work to encourage more building, employment and revenue for the Treasury.

Consideration could be given to streamlining the sums currently allocated through numerous forms of child-related and family support to contribute instead towards the provision of childcare vouchers and potentially also early years and further development.

In order to be competitive we need more of our working age population to be in employment. Elsewhere in this manifesto we outline plans for making secondary and tertiary education more attractive and ultimately more rewarding, and how our education system generally can better match the requirements of our economy.

Northern Ireland's specific innovation and industrial heritage should be promoted. The DUP advocates the formation of a UK Invention and Innovation Institute with a Northern Ireland base, and offering incentives to companies and international experts developing new products and ideas to encourage them to base their work here.

We want to see a successful UK economy, and within that national framework we are committed to securing the best deal for Northern Ireland's economy.

Northern Ireland should be designated a Special Economic Zone within the UK with the potential for investors to benefit from reduced regulation, lower taxes and other financial incentives to reduce the cost of business. We could adopt some of the more attractive elements of the successful regeneration of areas such as Aqaba, Jordan and Subic Bay in the Philippines. The redevelopment of the London Docklands similarly was aided by exemptions from property taxes and capital allowances.

Although taxation matters reside ultimately at Westminster, Northern Ireland was still well placed to react to the economic downturn, limit its impact and prepare for economic recovery. The Northern Ireland Executive has set the economy as its top priority.

We were also able to reduce the pressure on domestic budgets by reducing household bills and a hardship payment to 150,000 people. The regional rates were frozen and water charges deferred. Additional rate relief was provided for pensioners as well as a lone pensioner allowance. The DUP will continue to strive at local level to keep district rates as low as possible.

The DUP had succeeded in having the link severed between access to borrowing under The Reform and Reinvestment Initiative and closing the gap with GB Council tax rates. That link had led to double digit rate rises earlier in the last decade.

Under Stormont control, business rates were also frozen, manufacturing rates capped and a small business rates relief scheme introduced. Assistance was also given to small companies to help them during the economic downturn.

We want Northern Ireland to become an innovative entrepreneurial wealth-generating export-oriented economy. Tens of millions have been provided to assist in improving research capacity, foster greater international collaboration, promote new and emerging technologies and stimulate research activity. This must continue.

We support investment in new technologies including opportunities arising from the development of the green economy. We want Northern Ireland's potential for providing marine and tidal power to be fully explored. The DUP believes Belfast port is well-placed to tap into the offshore renewable sector. We would expand incentives for energy efficiency measures in homes.

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 faced a massive infrastructure deficit. During the 1960s, under the Stormont Parliament Northern Ireland was at the forefront in building new roads.

Already this Assembly and Executive have made significant progress. £4.8 billion has so far been invested in capital projects such as new schools, roads and hospitals since devolution was established in 2007. The annual investment is more than double that of the last year of direct rule.

The resources required to finance an ambitious infrastructure package is only one aspect of what is required to allow Northern Ireland to maximize its competitiveness. We have also introduced fast-tracking of planning applications which have wealth-generating potential.

Within the Northern Ireland Government, the DUP pioneered the Performance and Efficiency Delivery Unit, and continues tackling overstaffing, absenteeism, poor working practices and resistance to change. We are committed to rooting out waste and cutting bureaucracy.



Business

Summary:

Reduced regulatory burden on business - Improved basic skills
 - Overhaul public sector procurement - Single Government
 Department for Economy - Creating jobs - More small business
 start-ups - Tackle late payments

Our economic prospects will only improve significantly following a major expansion in the private sector. A dynamic and innovative economy is essential. Prior to the terror campaign in the early part of the last century Northern Ireland had a rich heritage of industry and invention. Today to be successful that innovative outlook must be restored.

The DUP wants to make Northern Ireland the best place to do business, utilising and enhancing existing advantages:

- **World class infrastructure**
- **Low costs, e.g. rates**
- **State-of-the-art telecommunications**
- **Supply of highly educated and skilled individuals**
- **Better regulation regime**
- **Geographical location close to both USA and Europe**

We must lessen existing regulatory burdens and ensure new policies do not place disproportionate pressure on entrepreneurs. The Impact on the private sector must be considered before introducing new legislation.

We believe there is a role for an advisory group of retailers and those in business having the opportunity to provide greater guidance on the impact of legislation, regulations, rates and employment law.

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.



We want to create a business environment which encourages more small business start-ups, creates more jobs, expands the tax base, increases local economic vibrancy and improves and retains local services and confidence. Post start-up businesses must be assisted to establish and grow.

Indigenous businesses struggling to compete with multi-nationals and global chains need to know that they are valued for their contribution to the economy. We appreciate that Rates represent a larger proportion of turnover, profit and outgoings for small businesses than larger ones.

While efforts must be intensified to attract foreign direct investment, we also need to ensure indigenous small businesses and retailers are assisted to grow. The DUP wants to protect suppliers and sub-contractors by placing an onus on large businesses to make payments to them within a maximum of thirty days.

Rises in electricity prices and fuel costs, often far in excess in Northern Ireland of the rest of the UK, make it more difficult to run businesses and provide competitive prices. Treasury should give consideration to introducing flexibility around fuel duty at times of particularly high costs.

Objectives should be set for growing our retail sector and addressing the barriers it currently faces. We support initiatives to encourage people to buy and produce local goods.

The DUP will examine how businesses can be incentivised, through rates assistance or other means, to improve energy efficiency and reduce fuel costs.

There are too many Government Departments involved in economic policy both at Westminster and Stormont slowing decision-making leaving it more difficult to deal with problems. A single Department should have sole responsibility for the economy. Another could be responsible for all aspects of strategic development including planning.

A key challenge is to build on the skills base in the workforce and working-age population, addressing deficits in some sectors. Improvements are urgently needed on literacy and numeracy levels. The DUP supports working towards the target in the Leitch Review for 95% of adults to reach functional literacy and numeracy by 2020. We see merit in extra incentives being provided to those who invest in their staff through enhanced training and continuous professional development.

More must be done to match our education offering with what the economy demands. In Northern Ireland the 22% of the working age population with no qualifications is a much higher figure than for other parts of the UK. An effective 14-19 strategy is urgently required.

We will seek to establish better co-ordination with British representatives in the EU Parliament to ensuring funding and programmes are maximally enterprise-focused.

The economic crisis presents opportunities for businesses to up-skill staff, pursue innovation and modernise their business practices. Businesses have suffered in recent times as the result of reduced sales, cash flow and access to finance. The issue of trade credit insurance for small businesses must be addressed. The DUP has introduced a Small Business Rate Relief scheme.

There continue to be barriers to SMEs gaining access to public procurement and this must be addressed. The procurement process should be simplified and less time-consuming. Most small companies are tendering to public bodies on contracts below the EU thresholds so public buyers are not bound by the usual EU requirements.

The Northern Ireland Government spends upwards of £3 billion each year on supplies, services and construction work. Public procurement should be considered in the context of offering opportunities to smaller enterprises locally. We want to encourage Northern Ireland firms to expand their capacity to bid for and win public sector contracts.

The DUP is determined to see increasing numbers of indigenous smaller enterprises competing in the public sector supply chain, providing better value for money, higher levels of service and more innovative business solutions.

The DUP will continue to support companies to diversify into new markets. We must continue to develop relationships with India, China and other emerging economies.

Tourism remains a key area of potential growth for the Northern Ireland economy. The local film industry in Northern Ireland has flourished recently, with the securing of a Universal Studios film and an HBO series worth £20 million to the local economy the latest successes. Efforts should be made to promote the province as a premium venue for this industry. Supporting and expanding creative industries should be a key focus of the new Government.



Education

Summary: Pilot Child-Parent Centres based on Chicago model - Extra funding in primary schools and more classroom assistants - Enhanced extended schools programmes - Increase youth services budget - Pupils matched to post-primary school on basis of ability - End special privileges for integrated and Irish medium sectors - Single body to own and promote controlled schools

The best possible education provision is an essential component of any society. Every young person should be encouraged to fulfil their potential in all aspects of their lives. Both at Westminster and in the Northern Ireland Assembly, DUP representatives will be working to ensure the best education outcomes.

Strong foundations are essential to a good education. The DUP advocates targeting resources in the early stages of education. We are determined that there should be a stronger focus on intervening at an early stage.

Childcare provision should be standardised across the UK with an expanded range of providers. In order to improve the quality of childcare, consideration should be given to extending elements of the mainland transformation fund for those working in the sector across to Northern Ireland.

The DUP advocates piloting in major cities on the mainland some Child-Parent Centres based on successful ones in Chicago, with a view to comparing their outcomes alongside existing SureStart programmes. Child-Parent Centres provide comprehensive educational and family support to economically disadvantaged children and their parents, and evaluations have been very positive.

The guiding principle of the Chicago programme is that by providing a stable pre-school learning environment, in which parents are active and consistent participants in their child's education, success at school will follow.

We support the investment of extra funding in primary schools and the provision of more classroom assistants. Every effort should be made to

ensure class sizes in primary schools are as small as possible.

The DUP wants to see investment in extended schools programmes which has dropped by more than 30% from £14.2 million in 2007-8 to less than £10 million in 2009-10. However we want more focused outcomes for these programmes and believe they should particularly seek to improve literacy and numeracy. The DUP would also explore the potential to develop new schemes in Northern Ireland, run by volunteers, to help disadvantaged children improve key literacy and numeracy skills.

Youth work plays a vital role in the development of many young people. The DUP would advocate extra resources being made available for youth services, while making greater demands on achieving measurable outcomes.

The DUP wants to enhance discipline in schools, and we support principals being able to take prompt disciplinary measures against pupils for inappropriate behaviour. Means of incentivising and improving the performance of staff should be explored. We support schools being granted freedoms to attract, retain and provide extra training and professional development for high-performing staff. A review should be conducted locally of teacher training and Continuing Professional Development in numeracy and literacy.

The DUP has sought to preserve and promote grammar schools in Northern Ireland. We believe Boards of Governors both in Northern Ireland and the mainland should be permitted to determine admissions criteria. We recognize that the ending of academic selection in Great Britain has coincided with a marked fall in intergenerational mobility.

The academically gifted should be stretched throughout their learning and this ought to include an academically-oriented education which includes grammar schools. We need high achievers and a well-educated highly-skilled workforce.

Not everyone's gifts and talents will be academic so a tailored system of schools is necessary to offer an education appropriate for each young person. Each pupil has different abilities and skills, and they should be matched to the most appropriate schools for their individual needs. For those who do not wish to pursue an academic path, more attractive vocational opportunities must be available.

The DUP will continue working to deliver a single robust form of assessment under the auspices of the Department of Education in Northern Ireland for matching pupils to the most appropriate post-primary school.

The excessively rigid national curriculum prevents schools from adapting teaching methods to the needs and skills of students. Schools should have the right to choose how they should design the balance of vocational/occupational and academic subjects, as long as they achieve specific academic standards. Increased freedoms could be offered in line with growing success.

The DUP supports streamlining and reducing bureaucracy within the administrative structures in education, which has the potential to deliver savings extending to tens of millions of pounds. Uniform standards and consistency can be ensured from the centre but there must be influence at local level to encourage innovation and initiative.

It is essential that in any reorganisation of arrangements in Northern Ireland all sectors are treated equitably. The DUP opposes existing privileges for integrated and Irish medium schools which have a detrimental impact on other schools. Teachers should have equal opportunities to work in all sectors, particularly if a single employing authority is to be created. The DUP advocates a single body both to own and promote controlled schools as the most effective model and one which offers equality with other sectors.

Those working in education have endured an unprecedented amount of change in recent years. Such change must be phased and appropriately planned.

We oppose the Stormont Education Minister's ideologically-driven campaign against preparatory departments of grammar schools, which would actually cost the public purse more and restrict parental choice.

Proper recognition should be given to the contribution of our special schools. The DUP supports a radical overhaul of the Minister's proposals for reforming SEN provision which have been rejected by parents of children with special needs.

The DUP rejects the Minister's desire to broaden the definition of SEN to include social factors, and firmly believes that it is those with the most severe special needs where our resources should be prioritised. We believe that an annual review of provision for individuals should be retained, and are committed to ensuring an improved and modernised service which provides better outcomes for those with special needs.

FURTHER EDUCATION

Summary: Establish vocational sector-specific training centres of excellence - Assist businesses to offer high quality apprenticeships - Produce more skilled craftsmen

The DUP wants to see significant investment in new apprenticeships and supports the creation of sector specific training 'centres of excellence'. Apprenticeships must be of higher quality and we must make it easier for businesses to offer them, through providing incentives, reducing bureaucracy and making inspections simpler. Groups of smaller businesses should be encouraged to join together to offer apprenticeships.

Currently too many apprenticeships are not completed, often through no fault of the trainee. We want to see every apprentice who commences training guaranteed that training. In the event that a company can no longer deliver what was intended, an alternative must be found elsewhere to allow that young person to receive the experience required.

We produce only a fraction of the skilled craftsmen and technicians that mainland European nations do, yet our companies are competing against those countries in a global marketplace.

Individuals must have the skills to secure and hold down employment. One fifth of young people in Northern Ireland leave school unable to read and write while twice as many have poor numeracy skills. The DUP supports the target in the Leitch Review for 95% of adults to reach functional literacy and numeracy by 2020.

Barriers to obtaining a job or training must be removed as we seek to reduce the numbers economically inactive. The cycle of unemployment over multiple generations within some families must be broken.

We must increase skills and career choices in STEM subjects and increase links with local industry to promote technology and science. Consideration should be given to the feasibility of establishing a technology institute in Northern Ireland.

A key group to address is those recently left school, not in education, employment or training. One in five people aged between 16 and 24 years in Northern Ireland currently fall into this category, adding up to 47,000 young people. The number of benefit claimants under the age of 25 has risen by more than 90% in just one year. Those under 25 are four times more likely to be unemployed than those aged 25+.

Youth unemployment costs the Northern Ireland economy £1.6 million per week. A major hurdle is encouraging these young people to engage and participate. What is offered must be tailored to be attractive and rewarding.

Intervention is needed at an early stage before they disengage. Family support for vulnerable individuals and households can assist as well as intensive nurturing and support at transition stages.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Summary: UK-wide review of number of universities, student places and subjects offered - Remove cap on NI student numbers - Re-establish independence of universities

The DUP proposes a high level review involving academics, leaders of industry and public sector specialists to determine how our UK-wide higher education profile can best complement the future development of our country. This review would make proposals around the range of subjects offered and the optimal number of university places and institutions to augment our economy and society.

Institutions would be encouraged to specialize with a focus on particular sectors which could result in a reduction in the number of courses some universities offer. Too many universities are currently offering merely more of the same.

The DUP advocates the removal of the cap on student numbers in Northern Ireland which results in artificially elevated entrance requirements. Consequently many students are forced away from Northern Ireland to study and many obtain employment and settle elsewhere. Those who wish to pursue a university education particularly from disadvantaged backgrounds should not be deterred by fees.

The DUP supports increasing the commercialisation of intellectual property from Northern Ireland's university and company research base.

A medium term goal of the DUP is to see our universities having their independence restored, much like the situation which pertained prior to the First World War. The best universities in the world are the independent universities in the United States, which far outperform the state-funded institutions of mainland Europe.

Academic institutions need independence to flourish and would then be better placed to attract private donations. The DUP would require, alongside greater autonomy, universities to raise funds to assist students needing financial support.



Health

Summary:

Increase spending on prevention and early intervention -
 NICE to focus more on identifying non-cost effective practice -
 Screening programme for prostate cancer - Broaden opportunities for charities and other proven providers to deliver care - Create unit to co-ordinate multiple hospital attendances of older people - Address failure to meet cancer waiting times - Access psychological therapies within two weeks

In line with international research the DUP advocates frontloading funding for the first few years of life in order to give young people the best prospects in life. Earlier in this manifesto we have outlined our support for piloting Child-Parent Centres like those which have proved successful in Chicago.

The DUP supports increased investment in health promotion and disease prevention, and raising spending on preventative and early intervention measures.

The real way to prioritise public health is through strategic and funding prioritization driven by Ministers. The DUP considers the commitment to public health of the Minister for DHSSPS in Northern Ireland to be little more than cosmetic. The establishment of yet another health body, the Public Health Agency with 220 staff and annual management costs of £15.2 million, has resulted in vast numbers of staff doing exactly the same jobs within a re-titled organization.

As well as benefiting the individual, investment early also makes sense in terms of avoiding greater costs further down the line. We want investment in interventions that will at least pay for themselves. In order to ensure that funding is not wasted on ineffective interventions, we support consideration being given to the formation of a National Institute of Policy Evaluation based on the experience of Washington



State Institute of Public Policy. The Social Research Unit at Dartington has already carried out some valuable work in this country on evidence-based policy around health and development of children.

We support a shift in emphasis of the work of the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence to focus more on identifying existing practice which is not cost-effective as well as that which offers good value.

In order to improve public health the DUP supports:

- introduction of a national screening programme for males at risk of developing prostate cancer
- research into the potential benefits from establishing a routine screening programme for abdominal aortic aneurysm in those aged fifty and above
- minimum pricing for alcohol. England's Chief Medical Officer has suggested 50 pence per unit. Consumption of alcohol has doubled in the last forty years and is directly linked to affordability. Alcohol is now 69% more affordable than in 1980. So-called 'happy hours' and two for one discounts should be discouraged
- effective smoking prevention strategy with prompt access to cessation services
- initiatives to reduce levels of smoking especially amongst young females and those from disadvantaged backgrounds
- smoking in cars with children should be outlawed. Evidence shows that passive smoke is significantly more toxic in a car than at home, and this is an offence in other parts of the world
- multi-agency response to obesity focussing on natural opportunities to influence behaviour during key stages in people's lives such as early life, leaving home, pregnancy, becoming a parent and through peer group influences
- 20mph speed limits in specific built up areas
- establish more cycle lanes
- no junk food adverts on television before the watershed
- expand school sports facilities and playing fields, with floodlights for evening use
- specific school nurse dedicated to each school
- consideration of merits of providing a nutritious school meal for all young pupils

- cost-effective early detection and intervention for diabetes
- instill particularly in young males at school the development of emotional skills, empathy, coping skills, resilience and help-seeking strategies
- daily tooth brushing programme for pre-school children
- discourage the use of trans fats
- presumed consent for organ donation.

Opportunities should be freed up for charities and other providers with a proven track record to deliver services. The third sector has much to offer in social care provision in areas such as mental health, dementia, learning disability and acquired brain injury.

A Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform commissioned report stated in 2008 that "different firms and organizations have different strengths in delivering different types of services. This points to a mixed economy model".

The Cabinet Office in its paper Partnership in Public Services, an Action Plan for Third Sector Involvement, states "We in Government positively encourage the involvement of third sector organisations in the design and delivery of public services."

DBERR research found there are clear benefits to both users and taxpayers with academic literature typically indicating cost savings from tendering to be between 10 and 30% including when the in-house trust won the bid with no adverse effect and sometimes an improvement in service quality.

In an increasingly stringent financial climate this approach can bring huge savings, protect services and ensure any surplus is re-invested in service provision. Every opportunity to do this should be investigated.

In order to release savings through more efficient practice the DUP advocates:

- stronger incentives and penalties to maximise generic drug prescribing
- a refocused, improved and expanded programme of computerized cognitive behaviour therapy which if enacted properly offers potential savings of close to £10 million in Northern Ireland
- screening for and treatment of malnourishment
- alternatives to oral contraceptives

- prescribing new drug treatments for hypertension, advanced breast cancer and dementia.

The NHS continues to serve us incredibly well after more than six decades. It comprises some of the most dedicated and highly-skilled staff. It can be empowered to do even better though. There are still inefficiencies. Our health service is more expensive than countries in Europe, yet on many measures not as effective. Staff are persistently working at maximum capacity often with staff shortages and at risk of burnout. Access to new technologies can be restricted and care is not uniform.

It is increasingly difficult to meet consumer expectations as costs of providing services rise. Efforts at reform have followed a managerial, bureaucratic approach rather than bottom up innovation. The NHS must be freed to fulfil its true potential.

Not everyone reports having a good experience. Individuals who fall into this category should be provided genuine choice and permitted to opt out. Currently those from poorer backgrounds have no choice. Only those who can pay have the opportunity to look elsewhere.

The DUP wants to address that inequity and will explore means, such as a personal rebate, which would permit those on low incomes to have the same opportunity as the better off to seek alternative treatment from another Trust or provider if dissatisfied.

The NHS currently uses independent contractors extensively to reduce surgical waiting lists for example. However, any DUP proposals would guarantee full preservation of the founding principles of the NHS including universal access to publicly funded health care and redistribution of resources to assist the less well-off.

The DUP wants to release the NHS from the top down approach to funding and management. We support power being shifted away from the Secretary of State, Ministers and officials into the hands of patients.

The DUP also advocates:

- an action plan to improve maternity provision across Northern Ireland
- investigation into impact challenging central targets for initial outpatient assessment are having on waiting times for a second appointment
- establishing a unit to co-ordinate multiple hospital attendances particularly for older people to be minimally disruptive and tailored to the realities of daily life

- swift action to address failure to meet target waiting times for cancer treatment
- benchmark trusts' performance in Northern Ireland on cancer survival rates with Great Britain
- intensive visiting programmes by health professionals to at risk families with young children
- capacity in psychology developed to allow patients to access therapy within two weeks
- one week's respite guaranteed every three months for carers
- new processes for the transition to adult services of older children with learning difficulty
- consistency across the province in response to emergency calls to ambulance service
- encourage greater opportunities for general practitioners with special interests
- renewed focus on serious long-term high cost illness
- greater use of technology including telemedicine and access to medical records
- consideration of investment in telecare to seek to reduce risks, respond rapidly, assist in management of conditions, reduce unnecessary costs and delay people from having to enter a nursing or residential home
- promote self management programmes for those with chronic conditions empowering patients to deal with the long-term nature of their illness
- pilot self-referral for physiotherapy to improve costs, outcomes and workload
- greater use of the knowledge of pharmacists to free up general practitioner time. Currently family doctors can spend five hours per week on repeat prescriptions. Pharmacists could play a greater role with repeat prescriptions and initiating some prescriptions such as basic creams for example
- a more responsive accessible medicines management service to help cut wastage- £1.5 billion is lost each year on account of patients failing to inform practitioners of difficulties taking particular medications

- reduced number of Caesarean births
- expansion of intermediate care to avoid individuals being in hospital unnecessarily and frequent re-admissions
- better access to wheelchairs
- shorter stays in hospital - A recent review found 30-40% of inpatients did not need to be in hospital and had been admitted unnecessarily or were forced to stay too long. Similar results were obtained from a Californian study which suggested that looking after patients at home cost only half as much as in an acute setting.
- more day care and day hospitals
- ensure emphasis on clinical considerations is uppermost with children in care in aftermath of Baby P case rather than targets
- more timely access to anti-TNF therapies for rheumatoid arthritis
- oppose extension of 1967 Abortion Act to Northern Ireland
- more exacting targets for treatment times in Accident and Emergency Departments with associated extra resourcing to meet patient expectations
- faster assessment and provision of care needs
- improve compliance with hygiene standards following critical RQIA report
- study into differential productivity in comparable hospitals
- protections for those with autism and their families contained within the Westminster Autism Act should be translated across to Northern Ireland as a minimum baseline, and built upon in the Northern Ireland Assembly utilising the key local knowledge available
- promote simple language to enhance communication with patients and relatives
- greater delivery of end of life care in primary and community settings rather than secondary care



Armed Forces

Summary:

Most up-to-date equipment for our armed forces -
 Upgrade living quarters - Dedicated hospital facility for British soldiers and veterans - Remembrance Day and Pride in Britain Day as public holidays

Our armed services deserve our immense gratitude. They are renowned, and indeed sought-after, throughout the world. Our defence budget should be protected. The very least that we should be doing is ensuring that they are fully equipped for battle. They deserve to have their professionalism properly remunerated and should expect a decent quality of life when they return from duty.

Significant investment is required to upgrade living quarters for our forces and their families. Tens of thousands of soldiers' homes have fallen into disrepair after they were sold by the MoD to the private sector in a £1.6 billion deal. A National Audit Office report found that one third of families moving into service properties complained that their new homes were filthy and two in five were unhappy with the general condition of the property.

Breaches of deployment rate guidelines must be avoided in order to reduce family separation and potential family breakdown.

Families who lose loved ones deserve the fullest support from the Government. Unfortunately we hear of situations where communication with the next of kin of soldiers lost in Afghanistan has been unsatisfactory. This must improve.

Specialist bereavement counselling should be available to first degree relatives, and independent legal advice offered to bereaved families to support them through the inquest process.

An independent Advisory Committee on Military Deaths should be established, and extra training provided to coroners on Armed Forces procedures to assist in investigating operational or training deaths.

It is important to ensure the NHS priority treatment system is functioning appropriately for veterans injured in service. Consideration should be given to establishing a dedicated hospital facility for British soldiers and veterans where they would be surrounded by fellow veterans with a better understanding of their condition and path to recovery.

All ex-service personnel should be given comprehensive advice about mental health conditions and information on where assistance can be accessed promptly. More effective prevention and early intervention measures must be introduced to tackle mental health conditions and drug and alcohol abuse.

Funding should be identified for research into the impact of duty of care breaches on veterans suffering long-term health consequences from the Gulf War and nuclear testing.

The DUP supports a specific Government Minister being designated as Minister for Veterans.

The Armed Forces Compensation Scheme should be kept under continual independent review. We must seek to prevent poverty amongst veterans and their widows. War Pension payments should not be taken into account when means testing for benefits.

Pressure should be exerted on mobile phone companies who continue to charge members of our armed forces away in conflict, despite them being prohibited from bringing their phones with them into a war zone.

The DUP has wholeheartedly supported Armed Forces Day and senior members have been prominent in efforts to assist the Help the Heroes campaign. We understand that discussions have taken place within Government about increasing the number of annual public holidays in the UK. The DUP would propose Remembrance Day as a prime date for consideration. We also support the idea of a Pride in Britain public holiday.

We must make it easier for members of our armed forces to have the opportunity to vote. If candidates are nominated only eleven days before polling day, it does not permit sufficient time for postal ballot papers to be printed, sent to personnel deployed overseas and returned in time for counts. Amendments should be made to the timetables so nominations occur earlier and members of our armed forces have the opportunity to participate fully in the democratic process.



Agri-Food

Summary:

Maximize funding for NI from CAP - Continue single farm payments - Country of origin labelling - Continue ban on Brazilian beef - Eradication policy against TB and Brucellosis - Facility to deal with NI poultry litter - Effective local fisheries strategy

Northern Ireland is still a largely rural community. The agri-food sector is one of our key industries and we believe that its future will be vital to the development of our economy as we seek to move forward out of the current global recession.

The food and drink sector in Northern Ireland is worth almost £3 billion per annum to the economy. In the current economic climate it is one of the few sectors to exhibit significant growth. Last year output from the agri-food sector grew by more than 10% employing thousands of people in both primary production and food processing.

The Democratic Unionist Party believes that rural communities face particular issues and through devolution we have brought forward a vastly improved rural planning policy which has been hugely significant for rural communities right across Northern Ireland. Our Members on the Stormont Agriculture Committee have been effective on issues such as TB, forestry and dioxins.

At Westminster our Members of Parliament have been pressing the Government to assist the local industry. We successfully secured a reassurance from Government that they had no plans to change Agricultural Property Relief on conacre land. At a European level we have been lobbying the European Commission to ensure that the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy does not adversely affect local farmers.

The DUP is fully committed to ensuring that rural communities are vibrant and sustainable and that our agricultural industry continues to be the backbone of our countryside.

The Common Agricultural Policy underpins primary production within Northern Ireland. Without a continuation of funding coming into Northern Ireland through the CAP, farmers could not afford to produce the raw material for the food processing sector or maintain and protect our rural landscape. The DUP will lobby and make sure decisions at all levels of government - Stormont, Westminster and Europe - are in the best interests of Northern Ireland. The DUP has concerns over the stance that both the Conservatives and Labour Party have taken over reforming the Common Agricultural Policy. The incoming Government at Westminster will be responsible for making key decisions regarding the shape of the CAP post 2013.

The DUP supports:

- Maximising the level of funding coming to Northern Ireland from Europe via the CAP
- Continuing to support farmers directly through single farm payments
- Regional flexibility within the UK on deciding how payments will be made to farmers
- Minimise top-slicing of farmers' payments to fund wider rural development programmes or budget shortfalls
- Introduction of measures to prevent extreme price volatility for the agri-food sector as it is more exposed to world markets.
- Sufficient time to allow both farmers and processors to adapt to market liberalisation
- Level playing field for all farmers across Europe
- Amount of bureaucracy connected to the CAP being kept to a minimum.

FOOD SECURITY

With an increasing world population, more land being used to grow energy crops and more extreme weather patterns globally, we cannot rely on other regions of the world to supply the food required for the UK. The DUP believes that the UK Government should place greater emphasis on food security and less reliance on the importation of food from other regions of the world. Food security needs to be further up the political agenda in Europe when discussions are taking place regarding the future of agricultural policy.

CLEAR LABELLING

The DUP believes that consumers should be allowed to make the most informed choice possible when deciding what food they eat. This should include food sold not only in the retail sector but also within the restaurant and catering industry which increasingly accounts for more of the overall food sold.

Over the last two years, the Stormont Government has been encouraging local processors to export food products outside Northern Ireland to GB, Europe and onto the global stage. This drive for increased exports was significantly enhanced by the weakening of the value of the sterling currency compared to the Euro. The DUP supports clear labelling of country of origin for food. Local farmers should also have a level playing field and not have to compete with imports produced at much lower welfare and production standards. The DUP will continue to lobby for the ban on Brazilian beef being retained until it meets standards expected of producers farming within Northern Ireland.

TACKLING ANIMAL DISEASE

The problems of bovine TB and Brucellosis are not simply measured in terms of the impact they have on agricultural production but in the very real costs placed upon the public purse in tackling these diseases.

The Northern Ireland Audit Office report on the control of Bovine TB in Northern Ireland has found that a total of £199 million was spent on disease control over the ten years to March 2006. This spending has coincided with a change of policy within DARD from one which existed from 1964 of aiming to eradicate the disease to that from the mid-1990s of simply controlling TB infection in the province.

We believe a new approach must be taken, not just to tackle, but eradicate both Bovine TB and Brucellosis. There are clear lessons to be learned from the strategy adopted by the Welsh Assembly Government through a policy of: 'Find It, Deal with the source of infection, Stamp it out, and Stop it from coming back'.

We cannot continue spending tens of millions of pounds of public money tackling only part of the problem. A holistic approach is necessary which can deal with the problem quickly and tackle all sources of infection.

RURAL ENVIRONMENT

The farming community, together with assistance from the Northern Ireland Executive, has spent millions of pounds to ensure that the local industry meets more stringent regulations coming from Europe. The

DUP supports in principle the development of a single site to deal with poultry litter in Northern Ireland.

The DUP believes that efforts to cut carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions in Northern Ireland will present both threats and opportunities for agriculture. We support experimental research being carried out to benchmark emissions from farming systems in Northern Ireland and develop new methods in agriculture to minimise emissions and promote the Northern Ireland food industry.

The DUP believes that much of the waste produced both in agriculture and the food processing sector can be used to support the production of renewable energy. The DUP supports a 40% target for the amount of energy produced from renewable sources. The DUP believes that farmers should be assisted in helping Government meet its ambitious renewable energy target, mindful that it must not significantly increase the cost of electricity to business or domestic users.

FISHERIES

Northern Ireland's fishing industry employs nearly 1,500 people and annually contributes £100 million to the local economy from a renewable resource. Fisheries policy is dictated from Europe. The command and control approach pursued by the European Commission has by their own admission failed Northern Ireland's fishing industry both at sea and on shore. While our fishermen and other industry workers often feel abandoned, the DUP will not desert them.

DUP representatives at Stormont, Westminster and the European Parliament will continue to support and lobby for:

- The decentralisation of EU Fisheries Policy.
- Direct involvement in local and regional fisheries management by our fishermen.
- A fundamental review of fish stock assessments in the Irish Sea.
- The delivery of a meaningful restructuring package for the entire industry, including a fishing vessel decommissioning scheme.
- The promotion of an economically and environmentally sustainable fishing industry and aquaculture sector.
- Inclusion of the industry at the heart of discussions on any future Northern Ireland Marine Bill.



Victims

The DUP was determined to address the disgraceful legacy of the last number of decades when the needs of victims were overlooked or ignored. From the establishment of devolved government the DUP set about implementing fundamental reform of the sector introducing a new ten year strategy, establishing the Victims Commission and the Forum and working towards a new delivery service tailored to meet individual, family and group needs.

The DUP through the Department of Finance and Personnel more than doubled the funding available to victims in this three year budget period meaning far more money than ever to address the needs of victims with £15 million being made available next year. This allocation has led to an increase in funding in every area of victim support. All core funded groups have had budget increases and we have doubled funding to schemes for individual victims and their families through the Northern Ireland Memorial Fund supporting carers, short breaks and hardship grants. Since devolution hardship grants have been delivered to those victims registered with the Memorial Fund every Christmas.

Over the course of this year alone 500 projects were funded through the Development Grant Scheme. Amongst the hundreds of projects were opportunities for training, support for older people and youth, counselling and befriending. The new Equipment Scheme has provided almost £500,000 for computers, tables, chairs, kitchens and other basic needs to 72 groups supporting victims.

Our Private Member's Bill on changing the direct rule definition of a victim is ongoing and moving steadily through the legislative process. The consultation overwhelmingly supported the need for change.

The new Victims Service will place a greater emphasis on individual assessment and tailored packages. Groups will be supported to meet the identified needs of victims and their families. Following significant change this is a new era for victims - they are finally being given the recognition they deserve.

Tackling Disadvantage

Unfortunately there are still significant parts of our province blighted by poverty and deprivation. In some of these areas, those from both sides of the community divide feel they have experienced little benefit from the peace process. The DUP is particularly concerned about the often overlooked deprivation within Ulster's Protestant Unionist and Loyalist communities. The long held myth that poverty was most prevalent within nationalist and republican areas whilst unionist parts of the province were all affluent has been dispelled.

As loyalist communities come out of conflict and through transformation, it is critical that positive steps forward are underpinned by the development of these communities. Strong, vibrant PUL communities will give their people a real sense of hope and present opportunities for these areas which are disadvantaged today to thrive tomorrow.

The DUP reaffirms our commitment to tackle child poverty and wants to see the development of comprehensive strategies aimed at lifting our deprived communities out of poverty and creating genuine opportunities for people of all ages. We know this will not be easy but we support the creation of interventions to concentrate on:

- addressing head-on inequalities in health, education, housing, financial awareness and skills
- engender a greater sense of community
- encourage social economy enterprises
- establish suitable and sustainable funding streams
- overcome funding imbalances
- value the work of faith based organisations
- obtain non-public sector assistance and expertise
- understand the importance of community leadership
- utilise existing infrastructure and develop new infrastructure
- grow community capacity
- repair the unravelled fabric of our society
- improve the appearance of local environments.

The DUP wants to work in partnership with local people to improve areas of disadvantage.



Community and Voluntary Sector

Summary:

Third sector to deliver more services - Increased collaboration between Government and faith sector - Audit of contribution of NI faith community - Non-lottery funding – service projects to mark Year of Volunteering

Northern Ireland has the largest community and voluntary sector relative to all other regions of the UK. This sector provides support right in the heart of communities working hand in hand with statutory agencies and Government to deliver vital services and facilities to those who need them most.

Many of these critical services could not be delivered without the community groups, workers and volunteers who give their experience and hard graft to produce valuable impacts not only directly to the individuals and families they help, but also to the wider community.

The sector has experienced significant growth over the last decade and it is critical that in an inevitable period of restricted public spending we do not lose the experience, standards and good practice that has been developed and the services to the community. Moving forward it will be essential to work closely and collaborate on a community-wide basis to ensure continuation and sustainability. This will inevitably mean changes in working practices and existing provision to prevent inter-community competitiveness developing to the detriment of the community we serve. Working together is the best way to ensure the existence of these critical services over the next number of years.

The DUP wants to continue to work closely with the sector. The invaluable role groups play must be protected and, where possible,

enhanced. As funding opportunities become more restricted we want to provide help and guidance where and when needed.

The DUP supports the development of a meaningful and constructive concordat between the Government and the third sector in Northern Ireland that not only recognises the value of the sector but also identifies how this important relationship can be enhanced. The DUP is concerned that uncertainty about funding streams for voluntary and community groups can undermine the good work going on across Northern Ireland. Our experience tells us that certainty of funding can be as important as the quantity, and we want to see funding decisions taken at the earliest opportunity and for funding to be committed for longer periods.

With 2011 being European Year for Volunteering, this should be used to recognise the vital contribution volunteering makes to community life. The DUP advocates public sector employees being granted a day or days from work next year to participate in a service project.

FAITH GROUPS

Faith groups play a key role in hard to reach communities often where statutory services prove ineffective. A small local individualised service is often preferable to that of a large organisation considered distant and impersonal.

The DUP is keen to see increased collaboration between Government and the faith sector. We have brought a motion to the floor of the Assembly and continue to press for an audit of the contribution of the faith community to be carried out in Northern Ireland. The DUP is keen to find means of providing funding to organisations which are opposed to applying for lottery funding.



Valuing Older People

Summary:

Increased basic state pension, linked to earnings - Full or substantial proportion of personal care from public purse - Individual care plans - One week respite guaranteed every three months - Winter Fuel Payment increased and extended to cancer sufferers

The Democratic Unionist Party has consistently sought to assist older people. Concessions to pensioners from a DUP Finance Minister under the domestic rating review are assisting many of those on low and fixed incomes. The lone pensioner allowance is having a dramatic impact on a significant number of pensioners' rate bills, keeping nearly £7 million in the pockets of 25,000 people aged 70 and above.

Today's state pension is too low to bring pensioners above the poverty line without significant supplementation through private means. We believe an increased basic state pension, ideally linked with earnings, should be introduced with immediate effect.

Pensioner poverty is 5% higher in Northern Ireland than the rest of the United Kingdom. Increases in the prices of food, gas, oil and electricity have also impacted on older people. We support a substantial increase in the Winter Fuel Payment to reflect high energy prices.

Pension payments fail to take into account the extra costs incurred as a result of having a disability. It is unacceptable that those with a disability are disadvantaged when they become pensioners.

Applications for benefits such as pension credit for example should be much less stressful. The DUP supports a single telephone number being available to dealing with all benefit enquiries and applications.

70% of those aged 65 plus identified keeping warm in winter as the biggest problem they face. 34% of Northern Ireland households are considered to be in fuel poverty compared with 11.5% in England. The DUP is rightly proud of having introduced the Warm Homes Scheme in 2001 and welcomes the fact that it has helped over 70,000 households in Northern Ireland to obtain insulation and heating assistance. We advocate a more flexible approach to the Scheme so those with oil or gas boilers can receive repairs or upgrades.

The current funding of care is extremely complex and poorly understood by the public. It must be simplified and made more equitable. The DUP is committed to the provision of universal free personal care.

However if Ministers from other parties continue to resist this, we believe doing nothing is unsustainable and that consideration should be given to measures including examining the system which operates in Japan where a substantial fixed proportion of domiciliary or care home costs is supplied through the public purse with the remaining small set percentage being made up by the individual.

We believe homeowners should be protected from having to sell their houses and move into residential care to afford high care costs. It is essential that no individual requiring care has to wait longer than absolutely necessary for a care package to be put in place. Each individual should have an individual care plan.

One in eight people over the age of sixty years is a carer, of which one in three carry out more than fifty hours caring per week. We believe that the restriction preventing those receiving a pension from obtaining Carer's Allowance should be re-examined. The Allowance currently offers considerably less than the minimum wage. Carers make a massive contribution to Northern Ireland society. It is estimated that they save the Northern Ireland Government over £3.2 billion annually, equivalent almost to the total NHS spend in the province. Much of their efforts are taken for granted with a lack of financial, emotional and physical support.

Many carers are unaware of their entitlement to an assessment of their needs. Authorities are supposed to notify all carers of their right to such an assessment. The lack of respite care is a major problem for many families. We believe carers should be guaranteed at least one week's respite every quarter.

The Democratic Unionist Party tabled and secured support last year for an Assembly motion calling for the Minister to: "reconfigure and

enhance services for older people to ensure that these services are integrated, person-centred and well-staffed; that the dignity of the individual is promoted; that information is communicated effectively to patients and relatives by health professionals" and "that inpatients receive a nutritional diet." That is what people should expect from their services.

Two thirds of hospital beds are occupied by those over the age of 65. More intermediate care should be offered to allow patients to return to their own homes and minimise rebound hospital admissions.

The recommendations of the Bamford Review of Mental Health should be implemented. Approximately 24,000 people currently suffer dementia in Northern Ireland, and this figure is expected to climb to 50,000 by 2051. Health and social care costs for dementia of £200 million will double within twenty years. We need to be well-equipped to treat and support these individuals. A comprehensive dementia strategy for Northern Ireland is required.

Information is crucial for older people about their medical condition and prognosis. Details should be reinforced regularly using different means including leaflets. Care must be taken to ensure family members are also fully informed where appropriate.

The World Health Organisation recognizes that palliative care incorporates physical, psychological and spiritual needs and it is important that all elements are properly resourced. Three quarters of people indicate that they would prefer to die at home, and this must be respected as services are commissioned. Those in receipt of such care should be informed about benefits available to them and given sound advice around finance and other personal matters as they plan for the end of their life.

66% of people have identified fear of crime as being the main problem facing older people today. It is essential that older people feel safe and secure in their homes. Crimes against older people and the fear of crime they experience must be reduced. Fear of crime also has implications for the psychological and emotional wellbeing of our older population. A strong integrated community safety strategy is necessary for older people.

Free transport has been provided by the Northern Ireland Government to those aged sixty and above, those registered blind and war disabled pensioners. Also those in receipt of the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance or who have had a driving licence refused or revoked on medical grounds have only to pay half fares.

The Rural Community Network's Ageing and Rural Poverty report found that 71% of older people regarded access to public transport as a key disadvantage facing older people living in rural communities. The Rural Development Council discovered that only one in five rural households is within 13 minutes of a bus stop.

A SmartPass is not relevant for community transport and more needs to be done to improve the access of older people in isolated rural areas to public transportation. The DUP supports greater investment and more innovative, flexible approaches to the delivery of services to meet the travel and social needs of those older people who are most isolated. Adequate, affordable and appropriate transport should be available to all older people to help prevent isolation and ensure they can participate fully in society. We support the promotion of programmes to maintain the skills and confidence of older drivers.

It is important that we properly recognize the significant contribution older people make to society. They have acquired considerable and varied knowledge, experience and skills through their life experience. Initiatives such as PRIME (Prince's Initiative for Mature Enterprise) which help people over the age of fifty set up in business for themselves should be encouraged.

The Northern Ireland Government has carried forward plans to appoint an Older Person's Commissioner. Public consultation ended in January and in the interim period an Older Person's Advocate has been in place.

3% of older people have been found to suffer elder abuse in Northern Ireland but this is undoubtedly an underestimate since those with dementia or living in a care home were not included in the study. More robust evidence on abuse is needed and the case for legislation to protect vulnerable older people from abuse should be examined.

Post offices remain a lifeline for older people particularly in rural areas. It is important that our network of post offices is retained. Situating other services in post offices can contribute to them surviving as sustainable community hubs.

Older people can be refused insurance, access to financial services and even medical treatment. Denial of access to medical screening or treatment will lead to their condition deteriorating and ultimately higher health costs. In Scotland the 'See the Person not the Age' campaign has promoted the positive aspects of ageing. We want to see older people receive the protection they deserve and having the opportunity to play a full and active role in the community in Northern Ireland.



Energy

With the availability of fossil fuels in decline and prices volatile, addressing our energy needs for the future is increasingly important.

With Northern Ireland at the end of the pipeline and almost totally dependent on imported fuels, the urgency of improving our energy situation not just for consumers but also to improve business competitiveness is more acute here. Yet, Northern Ireland has tremendous, virtually untapped energy potential especially in renewables.

Over recent months the DUP has encouraged the development of the renewable sector by changing planning laws and increasing support for renewable technologies and the value of Renewable Obligation Certificates.

Under the Ministerial leadership of the DUP in the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, Northern Ireland is developing a long term energy strategy.

The DUP supports:

- Developing a low carbon, secure energy mix
- Greater interconnection between Northern Ireland, Great Britain, Republic of Ireland and Europe to underpin the security of supply
- Capitalising on our inherent renewables potential through harnessing wind, tidal, energy from waste and geothermal energy sources
- Enhancing our grid infrastructure to allow for the development of renewables
- Establishing Northern Ireland as a global centre for the development of renewables and smart grid technology
- Extending the natural gas network



Housing

Summary:

Examine breaking up NI Housing Executive - More flexible Warm Homes Scheme - Single telephone point of contact for energy efficiency and fuel poverty advice - Reform Common Housing Selection Scheme

In recent times, housing issues have rarely been out of the headlines. Stories about record house prices were quickly followed by others on the impact of the bursting of the property bubble.

Owning or renting a safe, secure and high standard home is such a fundamental matter for most people that it requires ever-improving Government policies to ensure, in so far as is possible, stability in all housing sectors.

Attaining the dream of having a home of your own has become increasingly difficult for many on account of factors such as the lack of available mortgage finance or the low supply of social housing with a waiting list of nearly 40,000.

The construction sector is also a key element of the Northern Ireland economy and while no one wants to see the return of an artificial property bubble, the sector needs an urgent boost.

The DUP supports:

- Seeking more sustainable sources for financing and delivering social housing including private equity finance, stock transfer and block leasing
- Examining the scope for breaking up the Northern Ireland Housing Executive into a strategic housing authority, and a body with responsibility for the landlord and possibly a development function - this could allow the estimated £3 billion of assets held by NIHE to be used to finance new build, repairs, maintenance and other important programmes like Supporting People.



- Enhancing the powers of housing associations to allow them to play a greater role in developing, for example, mixed tenure housing developments
- Increased focus on the housing needs of the vulnerable including the elderly and disabled, ensuring processes are more sympathetic to their particular needs
- Looking at the scope for reforming the current Common Housing Selection Scheme
- Continue to encourage financial institutions to keep lending especially to first time buyers
- The introduction of a light touch, mandatory registration scheme for private landlords
- Keeping a balance between investment in social housing new build and the maintenance of existing stock
- Well-resourced private sector grants scheme
- Reduction in level of VAT payable on repairs and maintenance of properties
- Greater assistance for first time buyers including increased support for Co-Ownership scheme



Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty

Northern Ireland's fuel poverty problems are well documented. With about half of households suffering from the effects of fuel poverty, Northern Ireland has the worst levels in the whole of the United Kingdom.

The effects of fuel poverty are far reaching, impacting on all aspects of a household's well-being including health and educational achievement. Last winter saw the number of older people in Northern Ireland dying from the cold climb again, the highest increase in almost a decade.

Erratic energy costs and low incomes are major contributing factors to fuel poverty which tends to afflict vulnerable groups such as pensioners and single parents most. Around half of people in fuel poverty are aged over 60 and over 40% of households in fuel poverty have children.

The recognised poor level of energy efficiency in homes is a key area of concern. Despite the success of many policy interventions such as the Warm Homes Scheme, there is still significant scope for improving the energy efficiency of homes in all tenure types in Northern Ireland.

The DUP supports:

- Establishing one single telephone point of contact for all energy efficiency and fuel poverty advice
- The adoption and development of an Energy Assistance Package approach to maximise the number of people in Northern Ireland who would receive good energy efficiency advice and assistance
- More flexibility in the Warm Homes Scheme to allow for repairs and upgrades of existing broken or inefficient oil and gas heating systems
- The introduction of a Boiler Scrappage Scheme for Northern Ireland
- Extension of the gas network throughout Northern Ireland

Environment

Summary:

More renewable energy - Develop renewable heat sector - Achieve greenhouse gas emission reduction obligations - Prevent species decline and habitat destruction - More allotment provision

We aim to secure 40% of electricity consumption from renewable sources by 2020. This has been assisted by increasing the number of Renewable Obligation Certificates for small scale renewable energy generation and making changes to the planning laws associated with renewable energy. Over the next decade significant investment is required in the electricity grid to meet this very ambitious target. The DUP believes that renewable heat is underdeveloped and we are examining means to support the development of this sector.

We must make our contribution to upholding international agreements to cut carbon emissions. We will work to improve air quality, reduce our carbon footprint and decrease greenhouse gas emissions by 25% below 1990 levels by 2025. Northern Ireland's public sector organisations account for over 5% of the province's total energy use. We support efforts to reduce the carbon footprint of the Government estate.

Over the last 5 years considerable investment has taken place on farms to ensure that Northern Ireland meets the nitrates and ground water directive coming from Europe. The DUP supports further research to develop farming techniques that reduce the carbon footprint and methane output from the Northern Ireland livestock sector. The DUP are exploring ways to support anaerobic digestion on farms in Northern Ireland.

The DUP supports biodiversity protection and wishes to prevent species decline and habitat destruction. We are keen to see recent loss of wildlife arrested by 2020 and support the retention and restoration of native forests and peatlands. The DUP is keen to facilitate the expansion of allotment provision.



Culture

Summary:

Assist Loyal Orders, bands and Ulster-Scots – new start for parades – bands strategy – developing Britishness – feasibility study into NI National Library

Culture is an essential part of the mix that affirms who we are. The preservation, development and promotion of our rich culture both within Northern Ireland as a region within the United Kingdom and nationally across the United Kingdom is the determined goal of the Democratic Unionist Party.

The DUP has worked to promote and develop the roles of the Loyal Orders, marching bands and Ulster-Scots heritage. The DUP has ensured:

- there will be no Irish Language Act,
- a new start and new structure for resolving parades, a timetable for completion of new parades legislation, and that the Parades Commission will be gone by the end of the year,
- de-Rating of Orange Halls,
- new compensation arrangements for attacked halls,
- Stormont providing greater funding for the Twelfth and other Orange activities,
- reform of the Community Festivals Fund with money being taken from republican festivals and redirected to Orange events,
- secured £1million benefiting 40 Orange Halls,
- funding to purchase instruments for marching bands,
- funding for musical tuition,
- recognition of marching bands as Northern Ireland's largest provider of community arts



- Stormont working with Bands Forum to develop strategy for future development including areas such as support, raising standards, linking with schools and accessing media,
- reform of Ulster-Scots Agency to aid delivery to grassroots community projects,
- additional £1million to Ulster-Scots Agency,
- working for equality between Irish and Ulster-Scots culture.

This work will continue in the months ahead. Past problems around parading must be overcome if Northern Ireland is truly to move forward. Opposition to parades was used as a political tool and those responsible cannot now abdicate themselves. We believe the Parades Commission actually increased the problems surrounding parades rather than helping to provide a solution, and therefore we set it as a negotiating target to have the Commission abolished.

We want to see a new start on parades with a new framework. Parades are a vital part of the cultural life of Northern Ireland and we believe they should be one of our greatest tourist assets.

The DUP proposes the establishment of a body to encourage discussion and debate around the diversity and development of the British identity past, present and future. This work could be supplemented by a grassroots interaction programme to forge practical, cultural, social and economic linkages at community level by fostering and entrenching linkages across the United Kingdom between educational bodies, youth and community groups, local authorities, media and public bodies.

This would address the imbalance in Northern Ireland in wide-ranging and dedicated support being available for cross-border activities but a lack of support for cross-channel linkages.

Furthermore the DUP wishes to see all parts of the United Kingdom have proper access to the cultural wealth of the nation. Too much of our cultural wealth is held permanently in museums in London, and often in its storerooms rather than on display. Likewise the collections held in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland too rarely leave. The DUP advocates a programme of touring exhibitions and exchanges across the UK.

The DUP believes that Northern Ireland should be properly recognised in the National Libraries network. We advocate the Department of Culture, Media and Sport in co-operation with our local Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure and the existing network of five national libraries to undertake a feasibility study into establishing a sixth National Library, in Northern Ireland.

The future development of new media will play a key role in the development of culture in its various manifestations. The DUP wishes to see Northern Ireland at the forefront of these new developments building on the IT base that has developed as well as harnessing the talent of our young people.

The DUP will seek to end Northern Ireland's exclusion from the Creative Media Funds made available by the Department of Culture Media and Sport to England, Scotland and Wales.

The DUP is unconvinced of the merits of devolving broadcasting policy to any part of the United Kingdom, so will oppose measures to devolve broadcasting policy to Stormont.



Social Security

Northern Ireland receives in excess of £3 billion annually in social security benefits. This assistance helps thousands of people to deal with difficulties in their lives whether as a result of unemployment, disability or illness.

The DUP wants to see our social security system reformed further so that people who are able to work can get back into employment, and our society's most vulnerable are assisted. The DUP is particularly supportive of enhancing the entitlements received by older people and those suffering from long term illnesses.

The DUP wants to see:

- An increase in the basic state pension
- A rise in the Winter Fuel Payment
- The extension of the Winter Fuel Payment to cancer patients
- The mainstreaming of hospital based benefit advice services for those with long term illness
- Greater recognition of the contribution of carers
- Recognition of the needs of those with autism when applying for benefits
- Continued improvements to the efficiency of benefit processing
- Increased investment in benefit awareness and uptake campaigns
- Simplification of benefit application forms





Crime and Policing

Summary:

More neighbourhood police officers visible – New NI sentencing framework - Reduce legal aid bill – More fixed penalties for ASB – Fewer prisoners on remand – Support extended pre-charge detention

Policing and justice are areas where prevention and early intervention are crucially important. The devolution of policing and justice on 12th April restored powers, the removal of which caused unionists to collapse Stormont back in 1972. They have always been considered essential by Unionists for any Northern Ireland legislature.

Aside from the important symbolism, local control provides opportunities to improve services for the community. The financial settlement secured means hundreds of millions of pounds extra to ensure frontline policing is properly resourced and that any emergency costs will be met from the mainland. Specifically it has meant the preservation of an extra 1,200 officers.

A local Minister will now be responsible to local voters for decisions, and scrutiny will be enhanced through a new Assembly committee. We have the opportunity to develop a new sentencing framework for the province, and can create offences tailored to Northern Ireland's particular circumstances. Local powers will allow us to adapt our criminal law more quickly rather than lagging behind England and Wales. We will be able to set our funding priorities for the criminal justice system.

The DUP is committed to ensuring that members of the public receive a first class policing service from the PSNI. The independence of the police and judiciary is essential. The DUP is determined to see both crime and



the fear of crime reduced. We support extra crime prevention and community safety initiatives.

We want the management of risk posed by sex offenders to improve. Other important priorities are domestic abuse, knife crime and alcohol and drug-related offences. We must remove delays and inefficiency in criminal justice processes and ensure more police officers are visible within communities.

Currently 403 police officers are involved in criminal justice units, some of which deal with servicing large files where the decision making ultimately rests with the PPS, rather than with policing. If we were to streamline this process and make it more effective large numbers of police officers would be back onto the streets.

The low level crime and antisocial behaviour that people experience impacts on their overall quality of life. We support early intervention and prioritising resources to deal with particular problem areas. A broad range of options must be available to officers in dealing with low level crime and anti-social behaviour.

There must be determined efforts to tackle under age drinking in public places. Greater overall co-operation is required between the PSNI, local government and other agencies to prevent crime.

The DUP supports and calls for a greater increase in the number of neighbourhood officers, who have proved popular and effective in local areas. In order to tackle anti-social behaviour, we need the maximum number of police officers on the streets meeting and listening to the public.

Fixed penalty notices, prosecutorial fines and police cautions could be used to reduce the burden on the courts system for offences such as anti-social behaviour. Existing laws dealing with ASB are not being implemented consistently across the province.

The DUP will consider pilots based on practice in other parts of the world to combat persistent antisocial behaviour offenders including overnight and weekend detention.

It must be a priority to reduce the crippling multi-million pound legal aid bill, which is significantly higher than elsewhere in the UK. Senior

counsels appear more frequently in Northern Ireland than England and Wales.

The delays in the criminal justice system and the high number of prisoners on remand must be addressed. Northern Ireland currently has 1,775 prison places for inmates across three jails, but 33% of prisoners in the province are on remand compared with 17% in England and Scotland. The prison estate must improve and the high incidence of mental health and personality disorder issues within the prisoner and offender population be addressed.

The DUP has supported the establishment of a policing museum to recognise the enormous contribution of the police in Northern Ireland's history.

The DUP has consistently been supportive of legal measures to protect society against those who pose the greatest threat to our hard won peace and stability. Our experience in facing down terrorism in Northern Ireland has allowed us to frame the debate nationally as to how the United Kingdom responds to the unprecedented threat we all now face.

We used our votes in the House of Commons to support the extension of pre-charge detention of terror suspects to forty two days. On that issue the DUP balanced the need to protect the overwhelming law abiding majority against the rights of individuals who are, of course, innocent before proven guilty. On the merits of the government case we supported the measure. It is a matter of regret that the Government could not persuade the House of Lords to back their proposal.

As it is, we continue to support the use of 28 day pre-charge detention, with proper judicial scrutiny, and if the matter is revisited in the future we would consider increasing the period dependant on the circumstances faced by the nation. It is our belief that this power would only be used in the most extreme cases where the additional time allowed to the police could improve the evidential base required for a successful prosecution.

This approach has been vindicated by experience in the immediate aftermath of the Massereene Barracks murders where the PSNI



International Affairs

required additional time to hold suspect Colin Duffy pending analysis of forensic evidence. The issues which were raised in his challenge to the decision to extend his detention may require further legislation which we would support at Westminster. Given the increased sophistication of the terrorist threat, in certain circumstances the police may require a greater period of pre-charge detention than society would normally be comfortable with. The DUP Westminster team will ensure that the United Kingdom as a whole is properly protected.

The devolution of policing and justice leaves national security issues, including MI5 intelligence operations, with Westminster. The DUP has ensured that there is no question of Sinn Fein politicians having any direct or indirect access to sensitive intelligence as MI5 lead the fight against dissident terrorists.

As part of our commitment to the people of Northern Ireland we placed the operational independence of the Chief Constable at the heart of the devolution scheme. Paragraph 2.2 of the National Security Protocol makes it clear just why this was so important:

“The police operational response, including any request for military assistance, is a matter for the Chief Constable who has the operational responsibility and is independent consistent with the arrangements in place between the Home Secretary and other Chief Constables.”

Should the Chief Constable at any time in the future for operational reasons require military support the DUP has ensured that this decision is free from political interference or control.

We believe that too many powers have been ceded by our national Government to the European Union. Despite promises by both the Conservative and Labour Party leaders to allow United Kingdom citizens a vote on the Lisbon Treaty both parties have reneged on their pledge.

We believe that people living across the United Kingdom should be allowed to have their say in a referendum on major constitutional issues such as this, and whilst our attempt to pass a Bill in the House of Commons for a referendum on the Lisbon Treaty secured cross-party support it was ultimately defeated by the two major parties in Westminster.

The DUP opposes the UK entering the Euro zone. Giving up our national currency would mean surrendering a vital tool for running the British economy and an unacceptable loss of independence.

We also believe that the United Kingdom Government must do much more to oppose the continual power-grab exercised by the European Commission. We support the localisation of the Common Fisheries Policy which would see fishing policy controlled at a national or local level within the UK.

The United Kingdom must maximise its position as a bridge between Europe and the United States. However, we believe that it is important to look beyond these areas for greater co-operation. Northern Ireland already has many industrial and trading links with India, and it will be vital for maximising the UK's influence in the world to deepen relations with China and India.



We want to see the United Kingdom leading a concentrated international effort to make the United Nations more efficient and accountable with the amalgamation of many of its component organisations.

We believe that the UN target of spending 0.7% of Gross National Income on international aid by 2013 is a target which should be met. It is important however that this money is seen to be delivering the maximum possible benefits for those who are in most need. We believe there must be measurable targets put in place to ensure that aid is being put to the best and most efficient use.

It is important that UK interests are protected within the world and the DUP fully supports the rights of the Falkland Islands to self-determination.

The DUP supports measures to limit the number of people from overseas permitted to settle in the United Kingdom each year. We support a points-based system similar to that in Australia which gives priority to those with skills we need in the UK.

We demand the discontinuation of the practice of submitting multiple new asylum applications in order to avoid deportation, and believe that the UK should only receive a fixed number of refugees from the UNHCR. Plans to introduce ID cards should be scrapped. They are too expensive and will not tackle terrorism or illegal immigration.

Next steps at Stormont

Summary:

Fewer NI Government Departments and MLAs – Voluntary Coalition – Abolish community designations introducing weighted majority voting – No NI Bill of Rights – Annual Performance Reports from public bodies

The DUP is committed to delivering a voluntary coalition model of government in Northern Ireland. We believe this is best done through a step-by-step approach, building consensus rather than threatening to tear down our institutions and precipitate constitutional uncertainty again. It is important that change can command broader support and does not threaten devolution altogether.

Following decades of terrorism and division the uncommon mandatory coalition form of Government has been used as a temporary measure to maximise cross-community support, but as politics normalises we must build on what has been achieved and refine our governance arrangements. We must provide the best possible government for the people of the province.

Until a voluntary coalition system is achieved, there are interim measures which we believe can enhance the quality of decision making even within the existing apparatus. We propose that community designations should be abolished with decisions taken on the basis of weighted majority voting. 65% support would guarantee cross-community support and that any single party was unable to hold Government to ransom. The 65% figure could be used for votes in the Assembly and Executive, and indeed to form an agreed Government after an election rather than the unsatisfactory d'Hondt system.

The DUP has prevented the return of the Civic Forum and blocked any new North-South bodies. We will continue carrying forward our reform agenda to deliver:



- Reduced number of Government Departments
- Fewer Assembly Members
- Streamlined and refocused OFMDFM
- Fewer quangos, revisiting direct rule RPA decisions
- Amalgamation of Human Rights Commission, Equality Commission and potentially Office of Children's Commissioner
- Further civil service reform
- Efficiency in North-South structures- no new bodies or expanded workplans for areas of existing co-operation

We propose that all public bodies in the province should produce a brief annual performance report, overseen by the Northern Ireland Audit Office. We would consult with the public on what information they would wish to have included.

The DUP opposes a Northern Ireland Bill of Rights. We are unconvinced of the necessity for a UK Bill of Rights, and see a number of potential pitfalls, but consider a UK Bill with a Northern Ireland chapter to be infinitely more appropriate than the Northern Ireland version envisaged by rights zealots.

We will continue to take forward our work on establishing a Unionist Academy.

The DUP will continue to work to deliver an effective outcome for Presbyterian Mutual Society savers.

Westminster Reforms

Summary:

Halve Whitehall spending on advertising, external consultants and PR - Cut Whitehall Departments by one third - Create a National Institute of Policy Evaluation - Cut quangos

Government can give a lead in delivering efficiencies. The DUP advocates a reduction in the number of Whitehall Departments and Ministers by at least one third.

We are keen to see the number of quangos reduced and propose cutting by 50% spending in all Whitehall Departments on consultants, advertising and public relations. Expertise should be utilised within Government with external consultants only employed very rarely.

The DUP supports the proposal in the recent Institute of Directors report to establish an integrated public sector procurement and outsourcing structure. Regional procurement hubs could provide support where there are specific needs for different areas.

The DUP encourages investment in interventions that at least pay for themselves. In order to ensure that public money is not wasted, we advocate consideration being given to establishing a National Institute of Policy Evaluation based on the experience of the Washington State Institute of Public Policy.

The reputation of Parliament has been damaged recently. To those of us who value the Union, our Parliament is of immense significance, and the DUP is determined to rebuild confidence in Parliament and politics.

Expenses claims of Democratic Unionist Party MPs were of an entirely different nature to some of the indefensible behaviour by Members of mainland parties, clearly in contravention of the rules. However we fully realised that change was required to engender public confidence. Whatever inconvenience may ensue for Members of Parliament and

their parties, it is essential that the reputation of Parliament and politics in general is restored.

We made a comprehensive submission to the Committee on Standards in Public Life's Review, and proposed abolishing the MPs' expense system entirely. Many of our other proposals have now been adopted. We accept and are implementing in full the recommendations of the Kelly Report, and indeed, as a Party are actually going much further.

We advocate that salaries of MPs should be set independently with no role for elected Members or Parliament. MPs must declare annually any income acquired from other employment. An internal Code of Conduct in relation to staffing and offices has been in operation for all elected DUP Members since September 2008. The DUP will ensure that expenses incurred by our Members will be made publicly available on a regular basis.

The DUP committed to ending the practice of holding multiple mandates in a manner which would not jeopardise the new political institutions at Stormont. We have carried out a phased process including the stepping down of Ministers and Committee Chairs. The emergence of NIO legislation eventually on Council vacancies is permitting MPs and others to step down from local government without the threat of numerous costly by-elections.

Following the Westminster election, successful DUP candidates will step down within weeks from the Northern Ireland Assembly, as early as practically possible. The Party Leader will be the only DUP MP representing the Party at both the House of Commons and Stormont for a further Parliamentary term.

We also believe double-jobbing on quangos should end. The conducting of public affairs would be enhanced by a broader range of people serving on public bodies, and we will aim to phase out the non-elected holding multiple public appointments.

We propose consideration of Gift Aid being assumed on charitable donations unless an individual chooses otherwise.

The DUP would oppose high cost 0845 or 0870 numbers for calls to government agencies.

We propose slashing the TV licence fee from £142.50 to £50 annually with the BBC receiving further funding through other means including direct grants from the Government and the profits of commercial operations.

Let's Keep
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Forward*



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