

Manifesto Ulster Unionist Party

The Ulster Unionist Party will DELIVER.

We are delivering on all the important issues for you and will continue to do so on:

- the maintenance of the Union
- peace and democracy
- greater prosperity
- improved quality of life
- better services
- good education
- better health services.
- We will protect your rights and the rights of children now and in the future.



Rt Hon David Trimble with David Burnside



Jeffrey Donaldson with Rt Hon John D Taylor



Election 2001

We are advocates for the Union.

Unionism is not based on any sense of elitism or particular religious belief. It is based on a sense of Britishness - a shared bond and a shared history with the rest of the United Kingdom. It is inclusive: all the peoples of the British Isles and all sections of the community in Northern Ireland have contributed to, and participated in, that history.

The Union offers all the people of Northern Ireland the best prospect of peace and fair play because it unites us all into a genuinely plural, liberal, democratic state, capable of accomodating social, cultural and religious diversity, and offering opportunity to all.

Key priorities for the next Parliament must be:

- to enhance the role of Ulster Unionism at the heart of British political life
- to deliver strengthened local democratic accountability through a more effective Northern Ireland Assembly
- to deliver a culture of lawfulness throughout Northern Ireland
- to deliver a stronger Northern Ireland economy and greater prosperity
- to deliver a better quality of social, cultural and environmental life
- to deliver better technical and vocational education while maintaining high academic standards
- to deliver a better, more effective health service
- to deliver a reformed and enhanced local government and a leaner, more efficient public administration



We intend to enhance further the standing of Unionism in the eyes of our fellow citizens and to make our party a more significant element of British public life. We do not intend to ever let Ulster Unionism be marginalised.

Westminster matters

Economic policy, all tax matters and the levels and type of public expenditure are determined at Westminster. Defence, Criminal Justice, Policing, European and Foreign Affairs are also reserved to Westminster. While the Assembly has a degree of autonomy over the allocation of resources, the major contours of policy in relation to devolved issues such as health and education will still be decided nationally. Stormont's budget and agenda continues to be set in London. Those who say Westminster is irrelevant, therefore, are wrong.

The Ulster Unionist Party seeks to make a contribution to national life, not only in relation to Northern Ireland matters, but over the whole gamut of national issues. Nothing better symbolises our determination to be British than our desire to participate in the affairs of the British nation.

The UUP is the only Northern Ireland political party which plays a full part in Westminster debates, both in the Commons and in the Lords. In this we build on Ulster Unionist achievements, such as: fair representation at Westminster; the Northern Ireland Select Committee; the Northern Ireland Grand Committee; and the inclusion of Northern Ireland into UK legislation. Liaison with the Assembly, Westminster and European Parliamentary teams ensures continuity of policy and cross-fertilisation of ideas and information. Thus we deliver modern dynamic representation and maintain parity of services for Northern Ireland.

The Ulster Unionist Parliamentary Party has earned respect right across the House. Ulster Unionists have regularly participated in UK delegations to the Council of Europe, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. We intend to enhance further the standing of Unionism in the eyes of our fellow citizens and to make our party a more significant element of British public life. We do not intend to ever let Ulster Unionism be marginalised.

“I wish to say a sincere thank you on behalf of the House and the people of Northern Ireland to Mr Taylor and Mr Maginnis who will leave us... They have made a major contribution to the business of the House and to the benefit of the people they represent, as well as all of the people of Northern Ireland.”

Rt Hon Dr John Reid
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, 9th May 2001

“John Taylor has made an enormous contribution, and I thank him for that.”

Rt Hon Tony Blair, Prime Minister, 9th May 2001



The Assembly has made a good start, addressing the areas neglected under Direct Rule. But collective decision-making needs to be strengthened and the Committees need to enhance their policy-making role.

Delivering democratic accountability

As Unionists, we have a duty to make Northern Ireland work, to prove it is not the “failed political entity” of republican propaganda. It is also in the interests of unionists to show to Northern nationalists that working with us in Northern Ireland provides a better future than any United Ireland. Our approach will continue to be positive. We will continue to engage with our government and others to ensure unionist concerns are not sidelined.

The Assembly has made a good start, addressing the areas neglected under Direct Rule, notably our economic infrastructure. Crises such as Foot and Mouth show the value of locally accountable decision making. At the same time we work loyally with the national framework of the United Kingdom.

The Joint Ministerial Committees with colleagues in London, Cardiff and Edinburgh have made a good start. We want to build on them. We also want to enhance the “Council of the Isles” - the British Irish Council which we believe has real potential for the future.

The UUP is as committed to making the Assembly a success. Under Direct Rule, decisions were made by London ministers and the bureaucracy. Furthermore, the Assembly provides unionists with a veto over policy decisions in Northern Ireland and over cross-Border co-operation. The Party is committed to good relations with the Republic of Ireland but they must be based in mutual advantage, not ideological nationalist schemes. But collective decision-making within the administration needs to be strengthened. The Committees have worked well in developing accountability, but we need to enhance their role in policy making.

The Assembly is jeopardised by the failure of terrorist organisations to disarm, to indicate demonstrably to society that their campaigns are at an end. Inclusive government cannot be sustained indefinitely in such circumstances. The offer of partnership between equals based on respect for each other’s identities and for the law that we made in 1997 stands. But the UUP will not be party to any attempt to bury the decommissioning issue or ignore it as other political parties do. To do so would threaten democracy and public safety.

We regret that others play down the threat to peace and democracy from paramilitaries and have so far failed to deliver their pledges.

“...if ...these provisions have been shown to be ineffective, we will support changes to these provisions to enable them to be properly effective in preventing such people from holding office.”

Rt Hon Tony Blair, Prime Minister, 10 April, 1998

“For many unionists there is the fear that Sinn Fein seeks to pocket the maximum sectoral advantage from the Agreement... and then will fail to honour their decommissioning obligations... the SDLP would rigorously enforce the terms of the Agreement and remove from office those who had so blatantly dishonoured their obligations.”

Seamus Mallon, Deputy Leader, SDLP 13 November, 1998



Cecil Walker listening to a Police Constable in North Belfast

All sections of society have a responsibility to develop a culture of lawfulness. Casual violence, gangsterism and racketeering must be tackled.

Delivering a culture of lawfulness

Government must remain vigilant and ready to deal with all residual terrorism while organised crime and racketeering are an increasing threat as the paramilitary organisations are turning into armed gangsters. It is also important to retain the integrity of the Royal Ulster Constabulary - it is essential that we have an effective and efficient police force.

At the same time, all sections of society have a responsibility to develop a culture of lawfulness. We cannot continue with some sections of society behaving as if they owe no duty to any law or any administration. The casual violence on our streets, gangsterism and racketeering must be tackled.

Developing a culture of lawfulness goes further than all parties supporting the police and participating in the new Police Board. Churches, schools, business, community groups must all row in behind the police and work to develop a culture where keeping the law, restraining the wrongdoer and helping to maintain a free, peaceful and orderly atmosphere in all walks of life comes naturally.

Ulster Unionists will play their role in developing a culture of lawfulness. We will support policing despite bad political decisions of government or any mistakes in policing. We will also resolutely oppose any attempt to accommodate terrorism within the field of law and order by, for example, a two-tier police force - or so-called "community policing" involving paramilitaries.

We have new challenges to face in the fight against crime - cross-border smuggling of fuel and animals which has undoubtedly led to the foot-and-mouth outbreak, the appalling drugs trade, and racketeering generally. These criminals think they are beyond the law, but the RUC and society must ensure that they are brought to justice.

The UUP supports the creation of an Anti-Intimidation Unit to vindicate the right of those who suffer at the hands of paramilitaries - as in the Northern Ireland Select Committee Report. We will also continue to press for the use here of the measures that broke the Mafia in the USA - the admissibility of "wiretap" evidence, confiscation of criminally acquired assets and legal measures directed against groups of racketeers.

Roy Beggs opening a new factory in East Antrim



James Cooper and Jim Nicholson MEP inspecting foot and mouth protective measures on the Fermanagh border

Northern Ireland's economy is stronger than ever before. Constitutional stability is underpinning our new-found prosperity.

Delivering Economic Prosperity

In a relatively short time, Northern Ireland has chalked up impressive results in jobs, overseas investment, exports and economic performance. As soon as new records are set, they are surpassed. Last year, the Industrial Development Board reported its best year ever with the promotion of almost 7,000 jobs since last May. In addition to this, LEDU and the district councils have created more than 3,000 jobs in investments worth £20.6 million. Exports stand at a record £3.4 billion.

We have the fastest growing regional economy in the UK. We head the UK league table in e-commerce. Eight out of every ten new jobs are in high-tech manufacturing and knowledge-based sectors. Northern Ireland is recognised as having the youngest and most highly talented workforce in the country. Unemployment is now below 6%. We want the new developments to be high-tech high value-added to offset low-value added businesses vulnerable to competition from low cost economies.

Within the Assembly, the UUP can help build a stronger economy by ensuring that the right help is directed to the right people and companies at the right time. The tourism sector was deeply affected by the outbreak of foot-and-mouth. We will ensure that increased financial aid and other support will go to that sector, and other businesses affected by foot-and-mouth, to help them re-establish themselves and realise their full potential.

We have a strong economy and we can continue to see economic improvement through our role in the Assembly and at Westminster. The UUP will endeavour, as always, to protect Northern Ireland's union with the rest of the UK therefore ensuring our economic strength.

Ulster Unionism's heart is with the farmers. We know the hard times that farmers have gone through in the past decade. We will continue to work for the new "Farmers Loan and Early Retirement Scheme", which will enable older farmers to retire with dignity, a lump sum and a pension. It will also enable "young blood" to enter farming. This should enable the agricultural sector to restructure.

An imaginative and well-researched "Ten-Year Business Plan" needs to be drawn up for Northern Ireland Agriculture to restructure and reposition it in the global market place. This should include a major scaling up of marketing Northern Ireland beef, greater diversification in farm incomes, easement of planning regulations, and a bigger slice of the DARD budget going directly to farmers in a wide range of support schemes. We will also seek to guarantee a future for our Fishing Industry by renegotiating greater flexibility into their right to fish, based on regional status within the European Union and taking active steps to restock depleted fishing stocks.



Councillor David McNarry candidate for Strangford

Respect for our natural and built environment is a cherished Ulster Unionist value.

Delivering a better quality of life

The preservation and enhancement of the environment is one of the biggest challenges facing us today. We need improved stewardship of our natural resources and a more responsible attitude to environmental protection. Despite our 'green' image, we have some of the highest levels of atmospheric pollution in the United Kingdom.

We will seek to deliver a co-ordinated environmental strategy for Northern Ireland focused on sustainable development. The establishment of an Independent Environmental Protection Agency for Northern Ireland is also necessary. Generally we need greater protection for the countryside from over-development and more quality open space in our towns and cities.

We also need to do far more to protect our built environment and to conserve Ulster's architectural heritage. The new Northern Ireland must cherish what is best from our past.

The promotion of Culture, Arts and Leisure is vital to the progress of any self-respecting society. In Northern Ireland, we have a fine tradition in this area. We have produced great writers and artists, top class sportsmen and women, and we have a wonderful diversity of culture, diversifying further with the contribution to our society of our ethnic minority communities.

These sectors are concerned with fostering creativity, with giving individuals a sense of identity and providing everyone with the opportunity to engage in activities to promote their health, educational enjoyment and personal development. There are also wider benefits for society through job creation and tourism.

We have been instrumental in delivering increased funding for the Arts, the capital programme for libraries, increases in the Sports Council budget, the establishment of the Football Task Force, developing the Ulster Scots heritage and culture and promoting the British identity of Northern Ireland.

We fully support the promotion of Belfast as European City of Culture 2008. The development of new projects such as the Odyssey complex, Cathedral Quarter, Titanic Quarter and the Ulster Canal - all Ulster Unionist-supported initiatives - are transforming our Province.

The Ulster Unionist Party is committed to the development of the maximum range of social, economic and cultural lifestyle opportunities. Northern Ireland has always been a good place to live. With Ulster Unionist direction it is becoming a great place to live.



Dermot Nesbitt following a school safety announcement in South Down

We aim to introduce more parental choice while protecting academic standards and securing improvements across the spectrum.

Education

Our future lies with our children. For this reason the Ulster Unionist Party continues to place Education at the top of our list of priorities. The excellent standards of education achieved in Northern Ireland are widely acknowledged to be the best of any region within the United Kingdom by far, and these standards must be maintained.

We insist that all schools must be provided with the means necessary to meet the demands of the National Curriculum. There should be a “single funding formula” for schools. We welcome the current review of the funding formula for grant-aided schools as the present system, using seven formulae to distribute funds has become unwieldy and inequitable. Schools with similar characteristics should receive comparable levels of grant-aid regardless of their sector.

We recognise the excellent standards produced by most of our grammar schools and the best of our non-grammar schools. We believe that the Transfer Procedure should be retained to some degree, but accept that the perception of some children as “failures” at age 11 can undermine their achievements in secondary education. Our aim is to devise a system that leads to major improvements in the lower ranges of the ability spectrum while protecting the achievements of those schools that already produce excellent results.

It is praiseworthy that more secondary schools are achieving success in GCSE courses, but we recognise that such courses are not suitable for all pupils, and so - we support the introduction of alternative vocationally related courses for less academic pupils. We welcome the improved co-operation between Further and Higher Education, Industry and Commerce, and we are keenly aware that the attraction of inward investment and the sharpening of Northern Ireland’s international competitiveness are dependant on the adequate funding of the research and development programmes of our universities.

The UUP would like to see adequate grants to remove the burdens of student debt and we believe that students should not be expected to pay their own tuition fees. We also believe that there should be equality in funding and oppose preferential treatment for Irish medium schools.



Lady Sylvia Hermon listening to concerns about the National Health Service in North Down

The Ulster Unionist Party is committed to the development of a first class Health Service in Northern Ireland

Health

The National Health Service in Northern Ireland has gone through a number of changes and there is clearly a sense of growing crisis. Patients, professionals and others are all deeply concerned about the Health Service. Whilst recognising that consultations are taking place on Acute Hospital care services, primary care and other areas, the UUP will seek to redress the growing lack of confidence in the management of the National Health Service.

For too long the Health Service has been without a strategy. Important decisions have been avoided. The Department has hidden behind the Boards. The Boards have used the Department as an excuse. One review follows another and hospital services are subject to unplanned change and, in some cases, collapse.

We believe that there must be much greater emphasis on primary care. Co-operatives of all health professionals should be formed to deliver primary care locally, with local polyclinics or community hospitals as their focus. Such co-operatives must have financial responsibility with control of their own budgets. Acute care should be managed through a single Hospitals Authority for Northern Ireland.

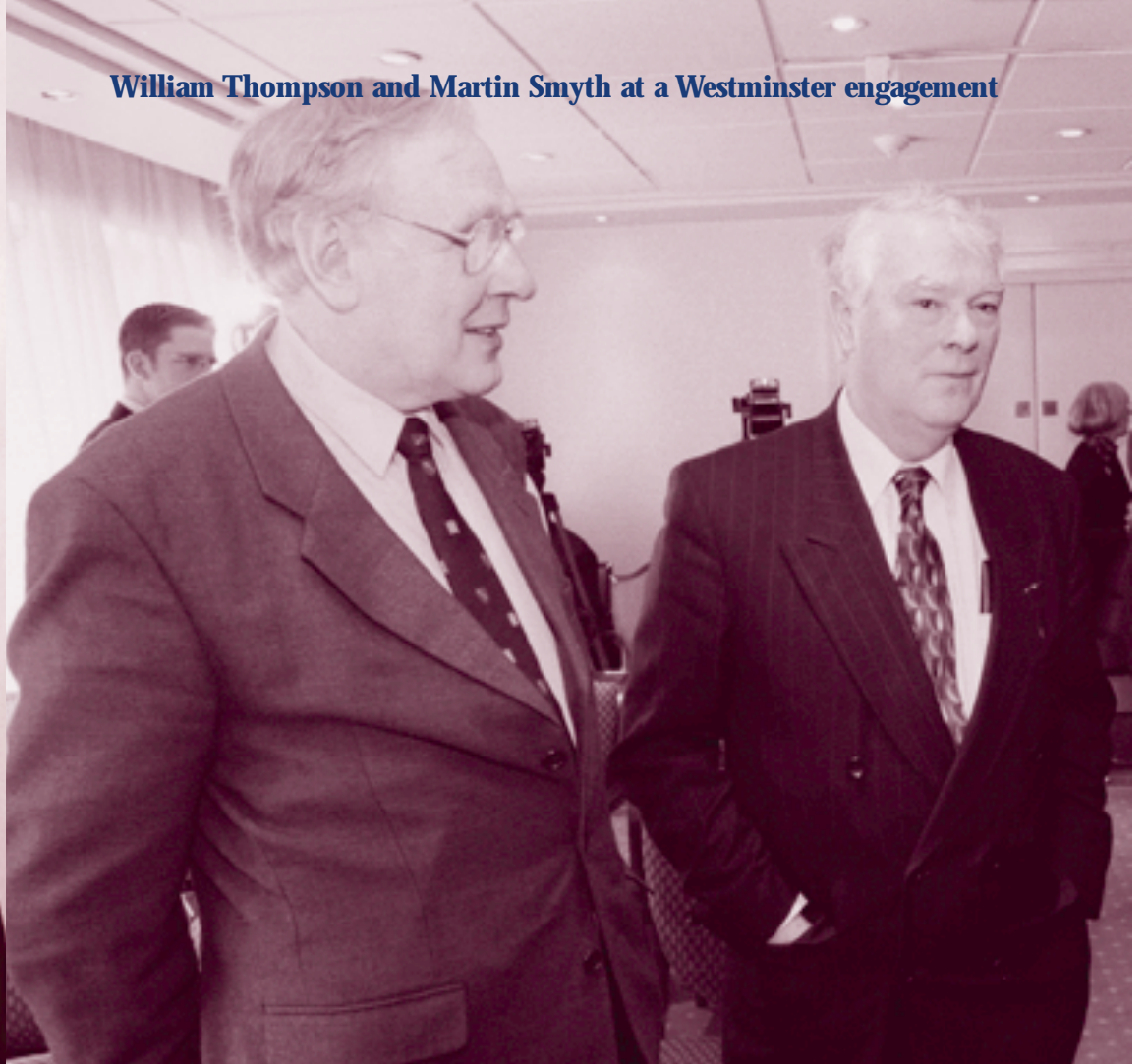
There needs to be greater efficiency. Northern Ireland has higher health spending per head of the population than in Great Britain, yet the output is poorer. Our waiting lists are much longer than across the water. Huge sums of public money have been made available - an extra £150 million this year, yet there is little sign of better services for the patient. The review of Public Administration should be used as an opportunity to streamline administration and release resources for frontline services. Better use should also be made of the Health Service's human resources through more flexible working. For example, more use should be made of nurses in prescribing.

The Ulster Unionist Party is committed to the development of a first-class Health Service in Northern Ireland, implementing health promotion strategies and prioritising areas where action is needed to redress unsatisfactory public health.

Councillor Sylvia McRoberts candidate in Newry and Armagh



William Thompson and Martin Smyth at a Westminster engagement



William Ross with a group of school-children on a trip to Westminster

We are determined to reduce costs and the number of administrative bodies.

The local council area should be the unit for the delivery of local services.

Delivering reformed Public Administration

Despite the inadequacy of the local government system over the past thirty years, we have worked to ensure that this essential layer of government has survived. More powers should be devolved to councils with a review of the whole structure of public administration.

We are determined to reduce the cost of administration and to reduce the amount of unnecessary administrative bodies. The review should also ensure improvement in performance and responsiveness. There should be a critical examination of the many expensive, unelected quangos, with a view to making their functions accountable, either through the Assembly or local councils.

In areas of health and education, we will seek to reduce the amount of duplication in administration.

We would like to see more streamlined and efficient governmental structures. As a broad principle, we think that the local council area should be the geographic unit for the delivery of all local services. We should also consider what should be better administered regionally with a presumption in favour of administration through the Departments.

Local councillors have a greater knowledge of the needs of their areas and a capacity to ensure effective co-ordination and leadership. However, we still believe that streamlining is still necessary. In general, we would like to see wider powers given to councillors, reduction in cost of over-administration, review of health and education boards, representation for councils in Brussels, the right to fly the Union flag and a review of rating.

The Union secured, building *your* future

At the last UK general election in 1997, the UUP Manifesto
“Secure the Union, Build your future” sought several specific reforms:-

“Our objectives are to repair the damage done to the Union by Direct Rule
and the Anglo-Irish Agreement and to build a stronger, broader-based Union”;

“We wish to see the failed Anglo-Irish Agreement replaced. Any new Agreement
must be based on the wishes of the people of Northern Ireland - the principle of consent”;

“The Agreement must also enable everybody in Northern Ireland
to participate in local administration on an equal basis”;

“Ulster Unionist proposals for a Northern Ireland Assembly are based on the principle
of proportionality; elected representatives will be able to participate at all levels
and at all stages in proportion to their electoral strength”;

“We wish to see the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms
incorporated into UK law”;

“We would welcome genuinely beneficial co-operation with our southern neighbour
but that must be based on mutual respect and recognition”;

“The broader Agreement must look to the totality of relations within the British Isles”;

“A genuinely British-Irish Agreement should replace the flawed Anglo-Irish Agreement.”

All of these commitments have been delivered!