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FORUM SECRETARY  
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135  
24 MAR 1998

Mr McCusker

TOWARDS A LOCAL ADMINISTRATION

1. I was commissioned by the Interdepartmental Group you chaired on 5 March to produce a paper which considers how departmental functions might be restructured to equate to the probable number of "Ministerial" posts in any new Assembly.
2. I have looked at the work which was carried out in 1991/92 and it has been partially helpful. However the work is now a little dated because:
  - departments have changed as new agencies have been created;
  - food safety, now in the shape of a Food Standards Agency, is accepted as a Health rather than an Agriculture matter and bringing the T&EA under the same Ministerial remit as DENI is a departure from earlier assumptions; and
  - the changes proposed then were largely based on the logical redistribution of functions which "would be consistent with good government". While good government is clearly important it is not, in the current situation, necessarily the only consideration.
3. The principles which I think should underlie any changes to the current structure should be:-

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- (i) to be acceptable in political terms functions either need to be large in scale or important in policy/PR terms (ideally, of course, they would be both);
  - (ii) changes to existing departmental structures should, if possible, be kept to a minimum;
  - (iii) changes should, if possible, improve the business of Government and the coherence of functions; and
  - (iv) any changes should be such as to allow ease of return to a "direct rule" model if the Assembly should fail.
4. While it is possible to make assumptions about the size, shape and role of a new Assembly there are nevertheless important issues which are not clear at this stage. These could have considerable bearing on the number, nature and range of functions which might fall to an individual Minister's responsibility. For example:
- Are all of the "Ministers" to be of equal status and therefore, so far as practicable, should the jobs have similar standing?
  - Are the "Ministerial" jobs likely to be allocated according to votes cast or seats held leading to senior and junior positions?
  - A straightforward executive cabinet would lend itself to senior positions and junior positions but in a committee system this is slightly more difficult. Nevertheless is there scope to have one, two or even three vice-chairs of committees holding executive posts?
  - How extensive will be the powers of a new Assembly? Will Ministers simply be implementing UK Government policy or will they be able to

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implement different policies (ie, will they have real power over transferred matters)?

5. Before considering options for different structures I thought it might be helpful to set out the main issues which I think have been exercising the Forum both in debate and through committee deliberations. In other words these are likely to be the areas where locally elected members with executive authority will want to exercise power and make changes. I will rank them below in what I think is a reasonable order of importance but it is very subjective. Had the SDLP been present in the Forum some of the issues and rankings might be different.

- (i) Security
- (ii) Health
- (iii) Education
- (iv) Agriculture
- (v) Unemployment
- (vi) Equality
- (vii) Roads/Transport
- (viii) Europe

6. For ease of reference I have attached at Annex I the current structure of departments as shown in the 1997/98 to 1999/00 edition of Expenditure Plans and Priorities. At Annex II I have attached (from the 1991/92 papers) a synopsis of how departments have changed since the Northern Ireland Parliament.

7. Annexes III, IV, V and VI show some options for restructuring. These options only deal with existing departments and functions; to these should be added the Ministerial posts for Home Office type functions and European issues. Where possible I have tried not to split the responsibilities falling to Deputy

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Secretary commands. This simple expedient meets most of the principles in para 3.

8. Annex III shows the simplest method of allocating posts using the existing structure of 6 departments. There is no change in the functions under the command of Deputy Secretaries.
9. Annex IV proposes an increase to 8 departments by leaving 4 intact and splitting DOE and DHSS each into 2 parts.
10. Annex V proposes an increase to 9 departments by splitting DED as well.
11. Annex VI proposes 12 departments with some functions shifting between departments and Deputy Secretary commands in order to produce apparently greater coherence and to allow the emergence of some departmental responsibilities which might be particularly attractive to some members of a new executive.
12. These options are offered as a starting point for discussion and some of the thoughts involved can be switched between options. As the matters mentioned in para 4 above are settled as the detail of an Assembly becomes clearer some more refinement can be brought to this kind of analysis.

*Signed NC*

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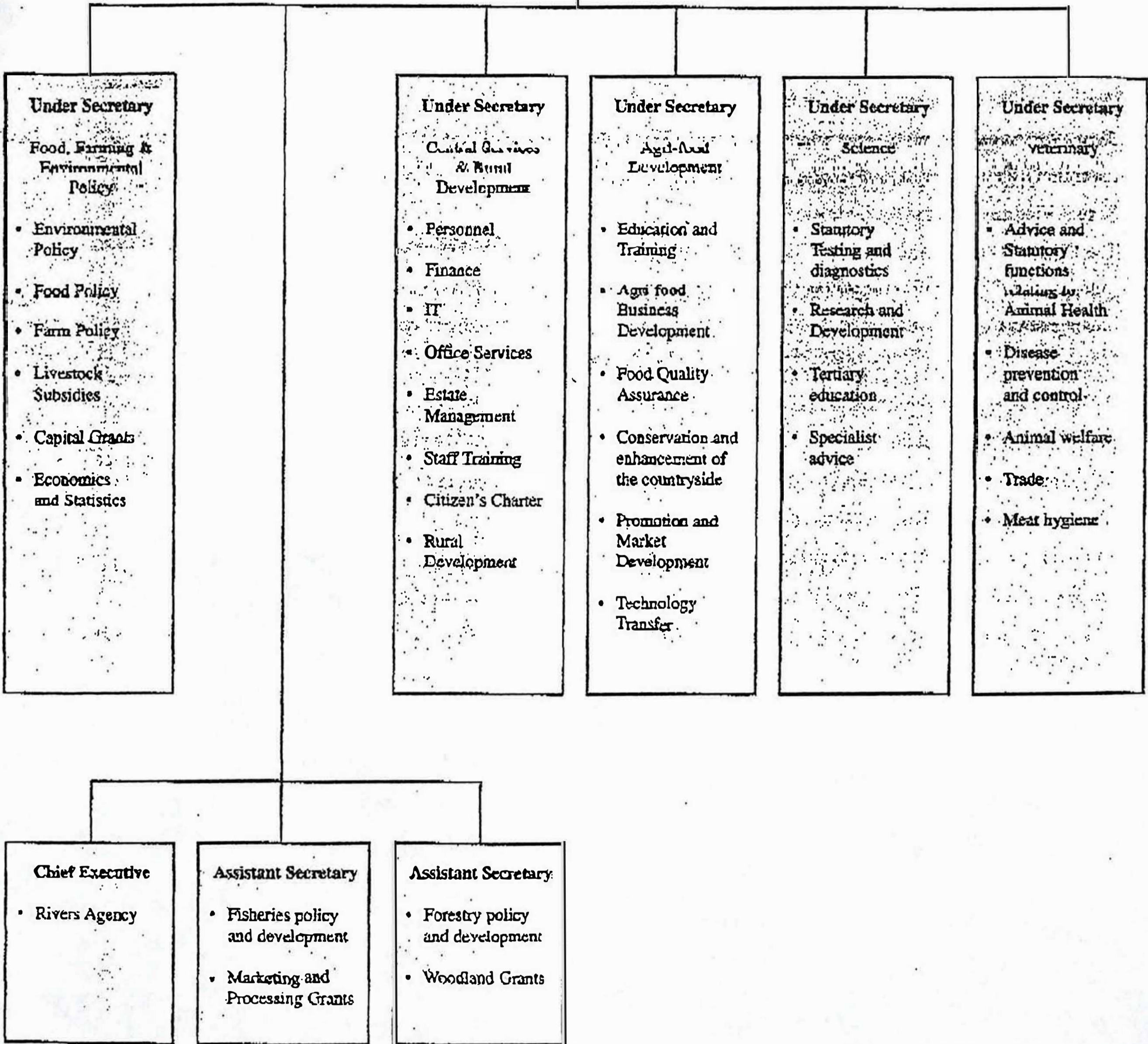
ANNEX I

# Department of Agriculture - Structure

97-98

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State  
The Baroness Denton of Wakefield CBE DL

Permanent Secretary



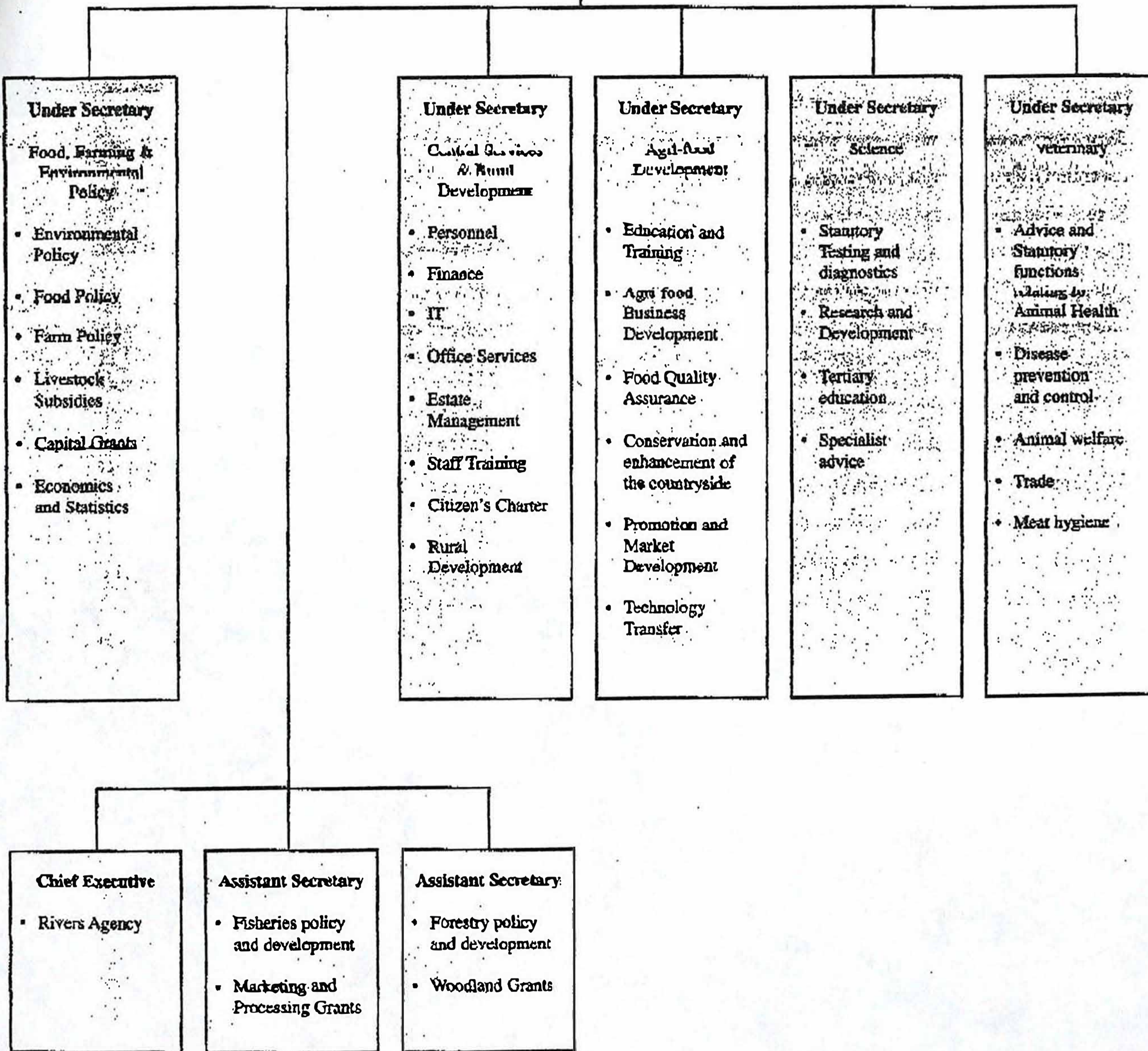
ANNEX I

# Department of Agriculture - Structure

97-98

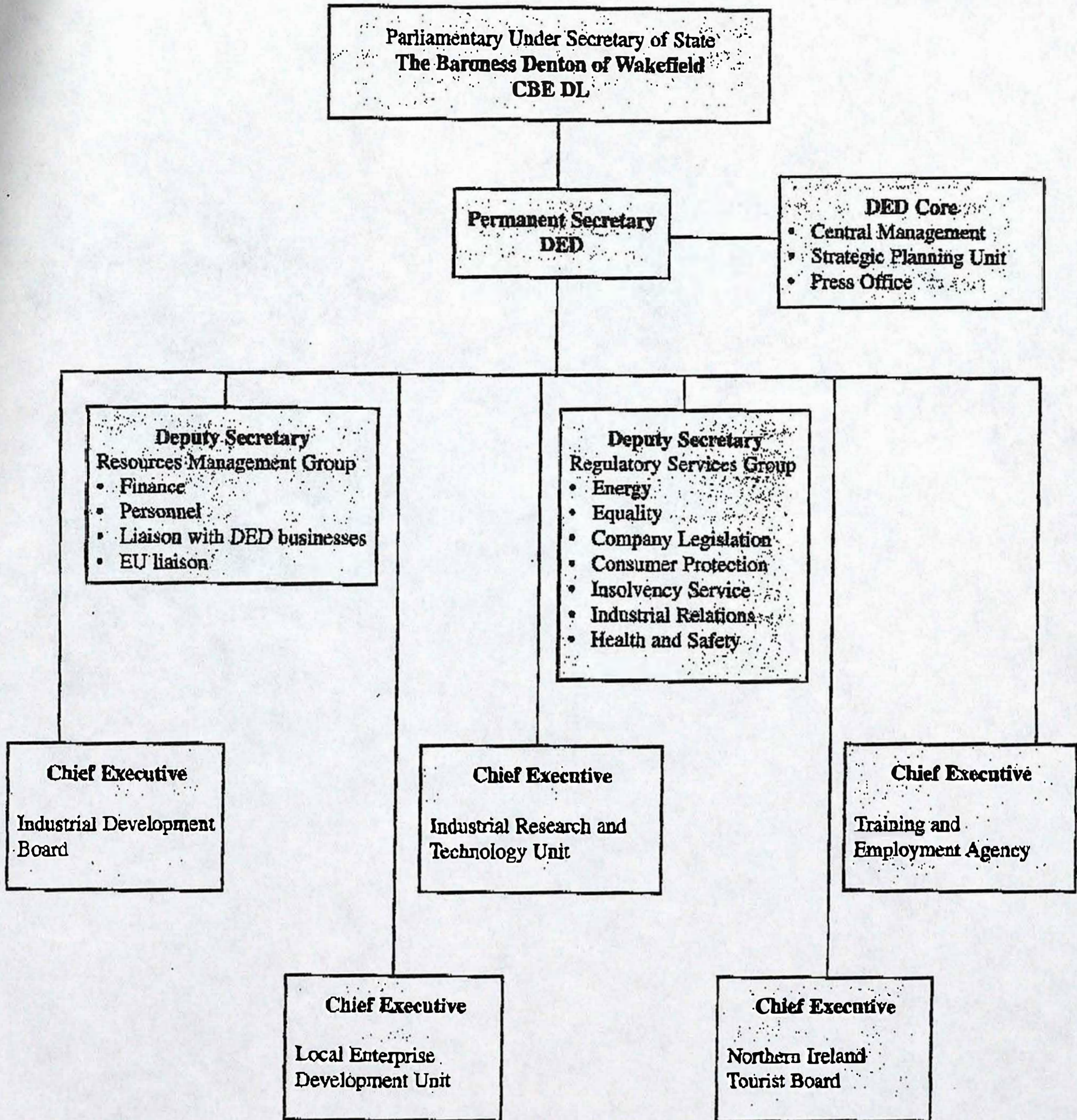
**Parliamentary Under Secretary of State  
The Baroness Denton of Wakefield CBE DL**

**Permanent Secretary**



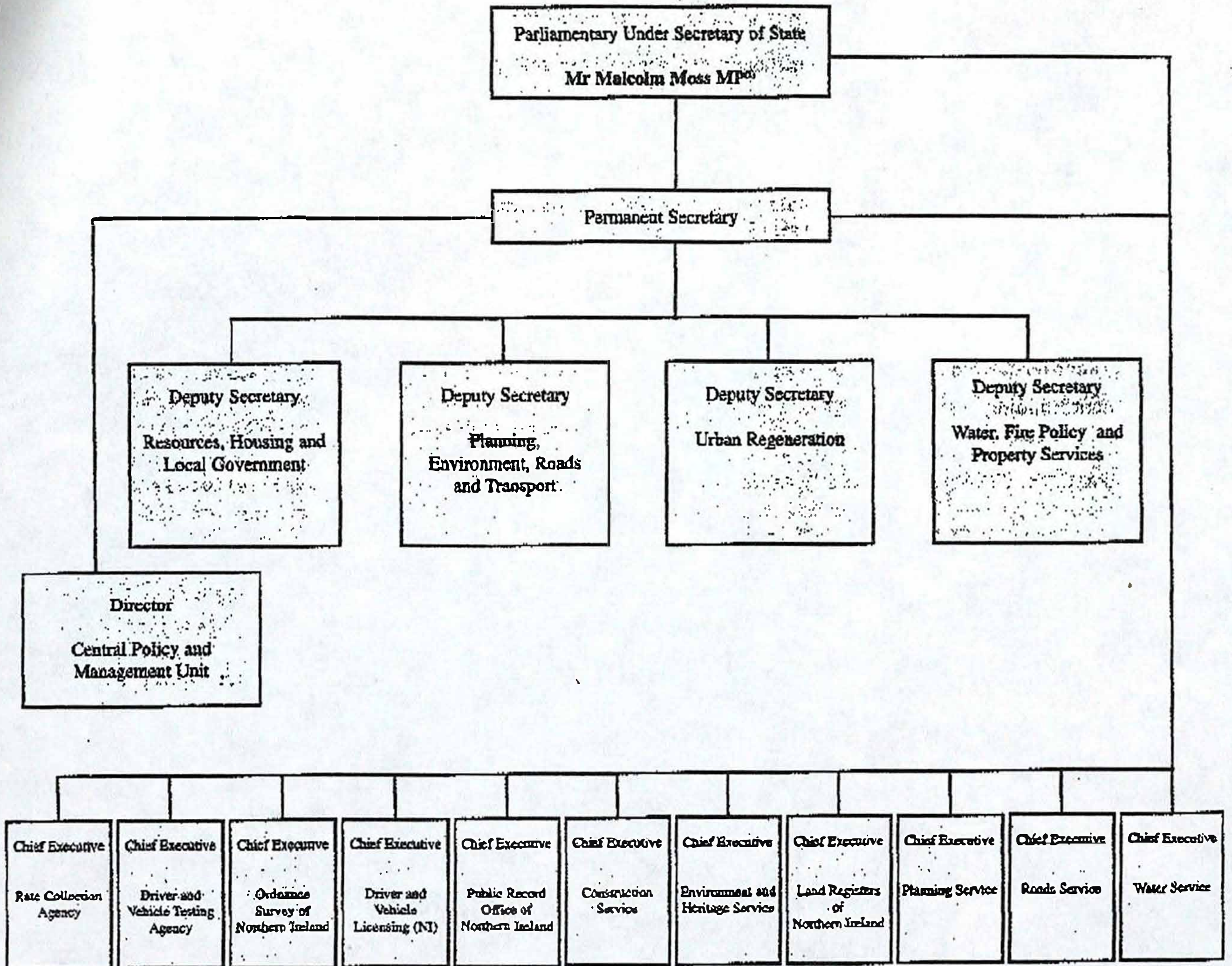
# Department of Economic Development - Structure

97-98



# Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland - Structure

97-98

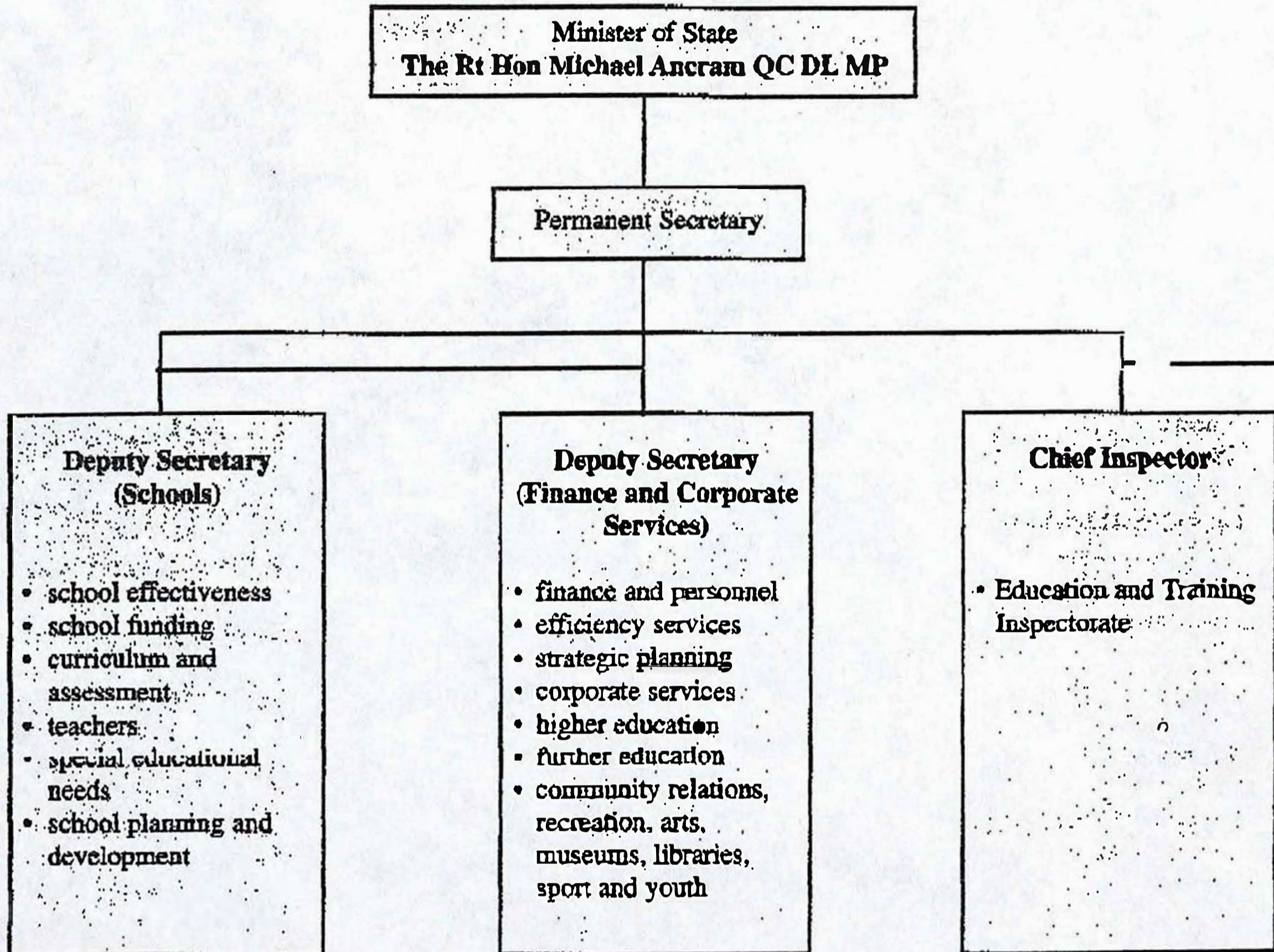


(1) Mr Moss is the "Green Minister" with responsibility for all environmental issues in Northern Ireland.



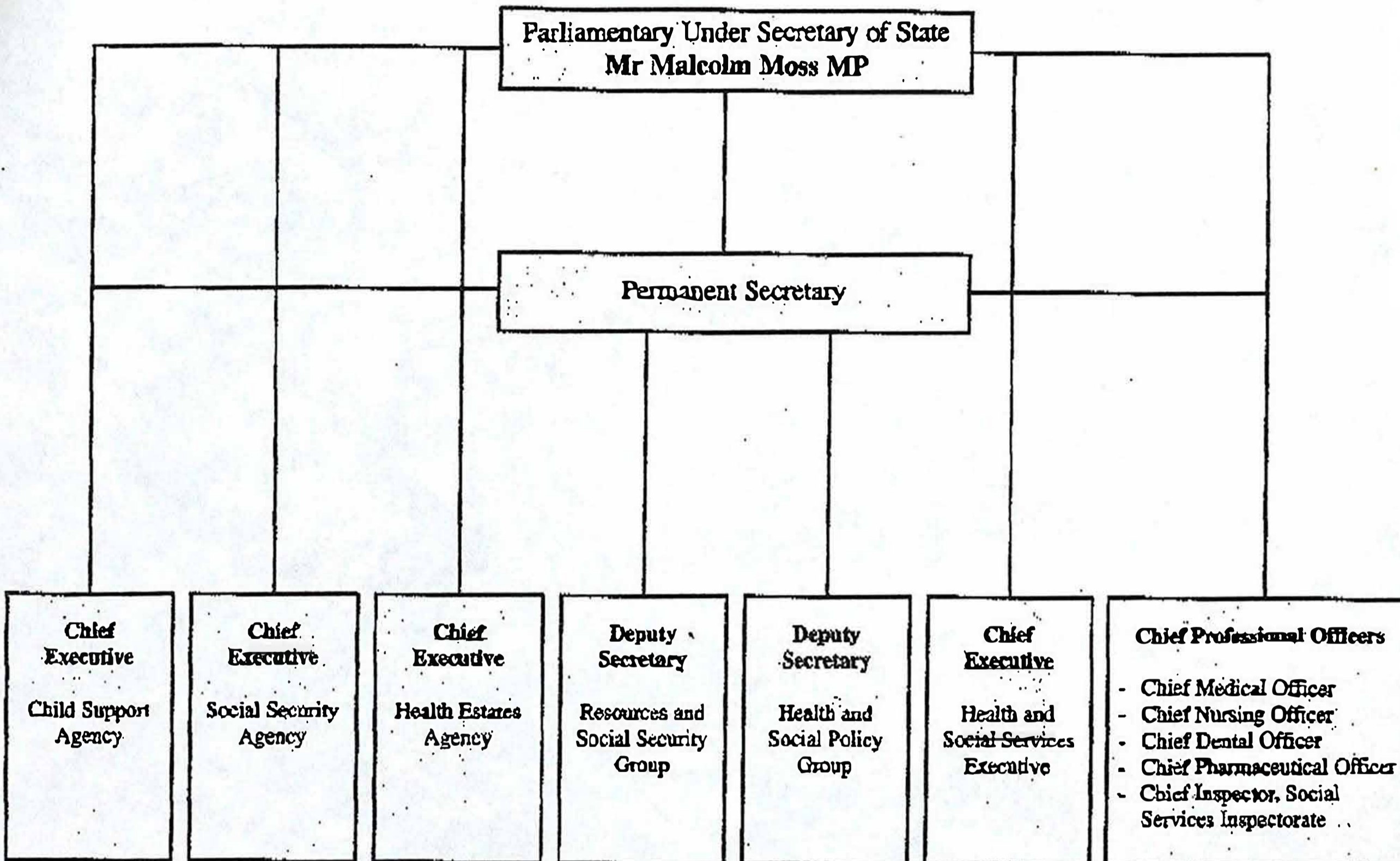
# Department of Education - Structure

97-98



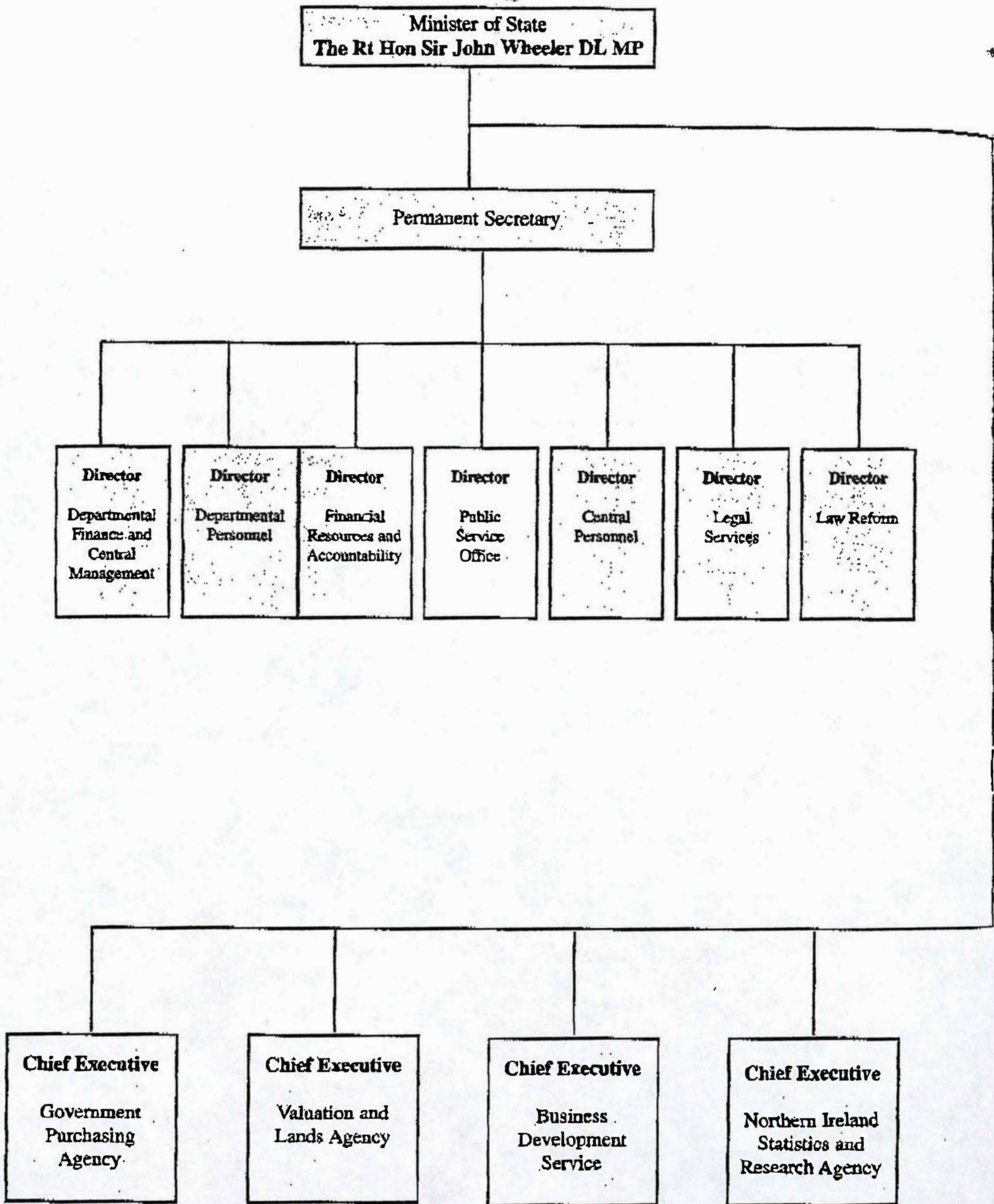
# Department of Health and Social Services - Structure

97-98



# Department of Finance and Personnel Structure

97-98



NOTE: Central Secretariat, the International Fund for Ireland and the Office of the Legislative Counsel are also attached to DFP

CHANGES IN THE NORTHERN IRELAND DEPARTMENTS

Stormont

1. In 1921 there were 7 Northern Ireland departments. By the time Direct Rule was imposed in 1972, these had grown to 9:

Prime Minister's Office

Finance

Commerce

Agriculture

Home Affairs

Education

Health and Social Services

Development (eg, local government, housing, planning)

Community Relations (created in 1969)

2. To accommodate the needs of the power sharing Executive in 1974, these 9 departments increased to 13:

Chief Executive's Office

Finance

Commerce

Agriculture

Health and Social Services

Manpower Services

Environment

Housing, Local Government and Planning

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Education

Community Relations

Law Reform

Information

Planning and Co-Ordination

3. Not all these departments were represented in the Executive itself. Manpower Services, Community Relations and Planning and Co-Ordination were headed by non-voting members of the Executive. The Chief Whip was also a non-voting member. With the addition of the Deputy Chief Executive, the Executive itself therefore consisted of 11 members.
4. A number of departments were amalgamated with the end of the Executive, or soon after. The only extra Department to be created since 1974 was the Department of the Civil Service, which lasted from 1976 to 1982.
5. In 1982 the current structure of departments was established. It was in place throughout the Assembly of 1982-1986 and was reflected in the Assembly's Committee structure.

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Departments remain unchanged. All become the responsibility of a Minister.  
Some Ministers are assisted by Junior Ministers.

DEPARTMENT	RESPONSIBILITY	
	MINISTER	JUNIOR MINISTER(S)
AGRICULTURE	All functions	-
EDUCATION	All functions	-
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	Resource Management Group IDB LEDU IRTU	1. Regulatory Services Group 2. NITB T&EA
ENVIRONMENT	Planning Service Environment and Heritage Service Roads Service DVTA DVL(NI) Transport Policy	1. Housing, Local Government and Urban Regeneration 2. Water Service Rate Collection Agency Land Registers of NI Construction Service Fire Policy PRONI
HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES	Health and Social Services Executive Health Estates Agency Health and Social Policy Group	1. SSA CSA Resources & Social Security Group
FINANCE & PERSONNEL	Financial Resources and Accountability	1. Remainder of Department
TOTALS	6	6

Six Departments increased to 8.

DEPARTMENT	FUNCTION
AGRICULTURE	As is
EDUCATION	As is
FINANCE & PERSONNEL	As is
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	As is
ENVIRONMENT	Planning Service, Environment & Heritage Service, Roads Service, Water Service, Transport Policy, DVTA, DVL(NI), RCA, Land Registers (NI), Construction Service, Fire Policy, PRONI
HOUSING, LOCAL GOVERNMENT & URBAN REGENERATION	NIHE, Housing Associations, etc, Local Government, MBW, Laganside, CERS, Comprehensive Development Schemes, CRISP, Belfast and Londonderry Partnership Boards
HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES	HSE, Health Estates Agency, Health & Social Policy Group
SOCIAL SECURITY & CHILD SUPPORT	SSA, CSA, Social Security Group

Six Departments increased to 9 with broadly equal standing.

DEPARTMENT	FUNCTION
AGRICULTURE	As is
EDUCATION	As is
FINANCE & PERSONNEL	As is
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	IDB/LEDU/NITB/IRTU/Energy
EQUALITY & EMPLOYMENT	Including Equality, Company Legislation, Consumer Protection, Insolvency, Industrial Relations, Health and Safety, T&EA
ENVIRONMENT	Planning Service, Environment & Heritage Service, Roads Service, Water Service, Transport Policy, DVTA, DVL(NI), RCA, Land Registers (NI), Construction Service, Fire Policy, PRONI
HOUSING, LOCAL GOVERNMENT & URBAN REGENERATION	NIHE, Housing Associations, etc, Local Government, MBW, Laganside, CERS, Comprehensive Development Schemes, CRISP, Belfast and Londonderry Partnership Boards
HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES	HSE, Health Estates Agency, Health & Social Policy Group
SOCIAL SECURITY & CHILD SUPPORT	SSA, CSA, Social Security Group



Six Departments increased to 12 with some issues shifting Departments.

DEPARTMENT	FUNCTION
AGRICULTURE	As is (- Forestry and Rivers Agency)
EDUCATION	As is (- Arts, Museums, Sport, Community Services)
FINANCE & PERSONNEL	As is
CULTURE & COMMUNITY RELATIONS	Arts, Museums, Sport, Community Services, CCRU, Language
EQUALITY & EMPLOYMENT	Equality, T&EA
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT	IDB, LEDU, IRTU
COMMERCE	NITB, Energy, Regulatory Services
TRANSPORT	Roads Service, Transport Policy, DVTA, DVL(NI)
ENVIRONMENT	Environment & Heritage Service, Planning Service, Water Service, RCA, Land Registers, Construction Service, Fire Policy, Forestry, Rivers Agency
HOUSING, LOCAL GOVERNMENT & URBAN REGENERATION	NIHE, etc, Local Government, MBW, Laganside, Belfast and Londonderry Initiatives
HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES	HSE, Health Estates Agency, Health & Social Policy Group
SOCIAL SECURITY & CHILD SUPPORT	SSA, CSA, Social Security Group