



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

**ASSEMBLY AND EXECUTIVE
REVIEW COMMITTEE**

**OFFICIAL REPORT
(Hansard)**

**Contact with the NIO re Memoranda of
Understanding, Concordats and Protocols**

1 December 2009

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

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Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Mr Jimmy Spratt (Chairperson)

Mr Raymond McCartney (Deputy Chairperson)

Mr Alex Attwood

Mr Simon Hamilton

Mr Alan McFarland

Mr Ian Paisley Jnr

The Chairperson (Mr Spratt):

The Committee Clerk will bring members up to date on our contact with Mr John Larkin QC.

The Committee Clerk:

After the Committee's meeting last week, at which I was asked to get in touch with Mr John Larkin QC, I left messages for him at the Bar library. I did not hear from him directly, but I understand that Mr Larkin is due to send a letter to the Committee. However, I had not received that letter by this morning.

Mr Paisley Jnr:

It could be an invoice.

Mr Hamilton:

For his time.

The Chairperson:

If members have no queries, we shall move on and discuss our contact with the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) concerning the memoranda of understanding, protocols and concordats. The Committee Clerk's office received a letter from the Secretary of State at 5.10 pm yesterday, although it is dated 26 November. That letter is now being distributed. It is short, and I will give members a moment or two to read it. The Secretary of State indicates that some of the protocols are still being worked on, and he aims to share the protocols and concordats with the Committee by 9 December. We note that letter.

We will now discuss future Committee meetings. There is a meeting on 8 December and —

Mr Attwood:

Would it not be useful for the Committee to have the protocols, which may be with us by 9 December, by 8 December?

The Chairperson:

I agree.

Mr Attwood:

Could we leave that issue with the Committee Clerk to raise?

The Committee Clerk:

I explained in my conversations with NIO officials that the next scheduled meetings of the Committee were today and 8 December and that the Assembly would be in recess from the following week. Therefore, the NIO officials were well aware of the Committee's schedule. Moreover, as I said, I received that letter only at 5.10 pm yesterday.

Mr Attwood:

I am tempted to suggest that the officials are being a bit obtuse, but I will resist that temptation.

Mr Paisley Jnr:

Table a motion.

The Chairperson (Mr Spratt):

I ask that members note the outgoing correspondence to John Larkin QC. Incoming correspondence includes an acknowledgement from the First Minister and the deputy First Minister about the Committee's letter about memoranda of understanding, protocols and concordats. Are members happy to note those letters?

Members indicated assent.