



Ulster Unionist Party proposals for the 2011-2015 Programme for Government

Ulster Unionist Party

Programme for Government 2011 - 2015

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Introduction

The Ulster Unionist Party is pleased to present our thoughts on the forthcoming 2011-1015 Programme for Government for Northern Ireland. We entered the 2011 Assembly election with a pledge that we would get all the political parties around the table in the days after the final result being declared. We were pleased that two days of cross party talks took place and that many of the biggest issues were discussed, but unfortunately as was all too common with the previous Executive, these issues lay dormant within the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister ever since. This is particularly frustrating given that it is now over 6 months since the budget for the next four years was forced through. It passed almost without mention that the Coalition Government published it's headline Programme for Government 6 days after the polls closed and their full Programme by the end of the same month. Indeed even the Scottish Executive published an interim PfG in September last year in light of perceived budgetary pressures.

Therefore we have taken the responsible step of drawing up a number of proposals which we believe could have a beneficial impact in Northern Ireland over the next 4 to 5 years.

The biggest consideration when drawing up targets for the next Assembly term has been an acknowledgement that the Executive is entering a period of sustained fiscal constraint of which it is truly going to be tested to find workable solutions for extremely difficult financial circumstances. It has always been our Party's nature to be honest with the electorate and consequently we aren't promising things which we ourselves do not absolutely consider to be deliverable.

Lessons should be learnt from the 2008-2011 Programme for Government both in terms of setting realistic targets and as well as performance measuring techniques. In June 2010 the Minister for Finance and Personnel admitted that many commitments set out in the original Programme for Government were no longer deliverable, but yet OFMdFM refused to amend the document. We have long argued that a four year budget should always be associated with a costed Programme for Government as well as an effective Investment Strategy.

Looking forward, the economy remains the number one priority for the Ulster Unionist Party. It is vital that we begin to once again provide the wealth and resources required to build the peaceful, fair and prosperous society that all in Northern Ireland want to see. However this will require new thinking and brave decision making.

The Ulster Unionist Party's top priorities for this term of the Assembly are:

1. Northern Ireland's economy
2. Protecting Northern Ireland's health system
3. Providing our young people with the education they deserve
4. A shared future
5. A better form of governance of Northern Ireland

Therefore, the Ulster Unionist Party wants to see this Executive deliver:

1. A Rebalanced economy which encourages enterprise, trade and investment
2. A Healthier Northern Ireland
3. Quality education and learning opportunities for all
4. Safeguarding the most vulnerable in society
5. Safer communities and an effective criminal justice system
6. Effective services for victims, equality and good relations
7. Culture, Arts and Leisure
8. Standing up for rural communities
9. A clean environment with a sustainable supply of energy
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11. Improved operation of Government and joined up Government

This Executive will face many challenges and will have no choice but to make some difficult decisions; however we genuinely believe there are opportunities to deliver a more stream lined public service.

The reform of public administration is only partially complete, with only the Health Department having seen it through to the end under the former UUP Minister. An Educational Skills Authority has the potential to deliver a much more streamlined education service, yet unfortunately it has been dragged down by out-dated political ideology. These are two areas where the Ulster Unionist Party want to see immediate action and there is no reason why this cannot be the case.

In short, the Ulster Unionist Party want to see a PfG which is centred around our own strategic goals:

- To promote good governance
- To build a better, healthier more tolerant Northern Ireland
- To make best use of our economic potential

Economy

Stating that the economy is at the heart of a PfG is a fine sentiment, but relatively meaningless in isolation.

We consider one of Stormont's most important roles to create the environment in which business people can grow the private sector, creating the jobs that generate the wealth than provides the tax income to fund our public services. What we are not able to do however is create jobs in the sense of setting up private sector companies and offering direct employment.

The Ulster Unionist Party acknowledges that the imbalance between our public and private sectors has built up over a period of decades and therefore requires a long-term fix.

We also perceive the debate on the relative strengths of the public and private sectors to be a two-dimensional view requiring the addition of the third element of the social economy.

It must also be remembered that the Northern Ireland economy is unique in that it saw decades of systematic targeting of the private sector by terrorists who bombed businesses and subjected individual business people to intimidation and much worse.

Creating the environment where the economy flourishes entails a complex cocktail of measures, well beyond purely economic or fiscal initiatives; a holistic view must recognise the importance of housing conditions, access to transportation, health and, above all, the existence of an educated workforce with the skill sets most likely to appeal to private sector investors. Politicians talk of jobs; economists increasingly speak of skills.

One of the central tenets in rebalancing the Northern Ireland economy is the devolution of Corporation Tax (CT). We want the power devolved and then deployed, with the primary aim of building our manufacturing / production base. At present, Invest NI's chief tool is Selective Financial Assistance (SFA). This is well suited to attract elements of a business which are cost centres, e.g. a call centre. Organisations will base these cost centres where the operational costs are lowest. A lower rate of CT does not apply to cost centres, as, by definition, they do not generate a profit. CT will help attract those elements of a business that do generate profit, i.e. the "manufacturing" element.

As regards the practical implementation of CT:

- We believe a lower rate of CT should be pre-announced, to give Invest NI two years in which to attract new businesses and get them established on the ground in NI.
- We further propose CT is lowered incrementally over a period of 3-5 years, allowing scope to react the changing international economic conditions. We must also bear in mind that these conditions include the UK rate of CT decreasing from 26% to 23% by 2014.

However, the Ulster Unionist Party is aware of the need for a basket of measures to address the issues within the Northern Ireland economy and we want to see an NI wide Economic

Enterprise Zone. Secretary of State, Owen Paterson MP, has promised such an Enterprise Zone and we await movement on this important issue. We call for an urgent discussion and agreement on what elements should be included in such an initiative. The Ulster Unionist Party would propose, in addition to CT and SFA, elements including an expansion of the Small Business Rates Relief Scheme; a National Insurance Contribution holiday for employers' creating new jobs; A 100% capital allowances on new commercial and industrial buildings a 5% VAT rate on the Repair Maintenance and Improvement of the domestic housing stock; a reduced rate of Air Passenger Duty (APD); the creation of a truly business-friendly regime of tax and administrative regulations, cognisant of the capacity issues associated with the large number of SMEs in our private sector and generally less red tape and bureaucracy.

It is also important that we begin to explore the potential for developing a green energy sector with the aim of becoming a leader among UK regions. As an indicator, this would see us move from assembling wind turbines to manufacturing them. The Ulster Unionist Party are committed to the Green New Deal and we want to see Northern Ireland becoming less dependent on imported fossil fuels and make better use of our diverse natural environment through the promotion of wind, solar, waste, biomass and tidal energy.

Northern Ireland has a vibrant rural economy with agriculture and fisheries having a vital role to play in the recovery of the economy as a whole. We want to see the development of a reformed Common Agricultural Policy which adequately protects and supports Northern Ireland's producers. This is a high priority for the Ulster Unionist Party as well as ensuring the agri-food industry is receiving effective support.

Health

The Ulster Unionist Party's policy on the National Health Service in Northern Ireland will always remain the same; that healthcare should be free at the point of delivery and available to everyone based on need, not the ability to pay.

This was a policy which we kept at our core from 2007-2011 when we held the Health Ministry in the Northern Ireland Executive. We delivered free prescriptions, a minor ailment scheme and redirected hundreds of millions of pounds from administration costs back to frontline services.

However we would still like to see further changes. Too many people are being admitted to hospitals when they could be afforded equally good care from their own GP. We also want to see more people with disabilities receive the help they require to lead more independent lives.

Northern Ireland has the highest non-attendance rates for clinical appointments in the United Kingdom, with a did not attend (DNA) rate of 10.3. These missed appointments bear a huge financial cost on the health service and we believe that by utilizing SMS technology this could be drastically reduced.

Meeting the healthcare needs of everyone in society can be complicated, which is why we will continue to spearhead the use of Local Commissioning Groups. We want to see people use the already formed relationships they have with their GP so that they have an effective guide throughout our health system.

Given that £10million per day is spent on the Health System in Northern Ireland; equating to nearly £6 per person every 24 hours, it is unsurprising that some look upon Northern Ireland's health service unsympathetically. Not since the introduction of the welfare state in 1948 has the NHS in Northern Ireland faced a more difficult fiscal situation.

Even before the Budget for 2011-2015 was passed, the Department of Health, Social Services and Public safety had to find hundreds of millions of pounds in efficiency savings. Even though we no longer hold the Ministry, we still believe that it is not an understatement to say that sections of the health service in Northern Ireland are at breaking point. Our concern is now that elements of healthcare delivery, if not remedied, have the potential to become unsafe and unsustainable.

This is what we are most concerned about and we therefore call upon the Executive, and in particular the Health Minister, to ensure that regardless of any circumstances Northern Ireland is still able to provide adequate health care.

The determinants of a population's health are many and varied and currently Northern Ireland faces several critical health and social care pressures. Lifestyle-linked health problems such as obesity, smoking and alcohol and solvent abuse are putting

unprecedented demands on the health service. People living in Northern Ireland have much higher levels of fat intake and excessive drinking is more prevalent than much of Great Britain, whilst the levels of physical activity are much lower compared to the United Kingdom average.

We have an ageing population which will inevitably lead to a greater demand for domiciliary care and further pressure on hospitals.

One in four people in Northern Ireland will experience a form of mental ill-health in their lives and additional effort must be taken to tackle the issue. Many lives are being lost to suicide in Northern Ireland, particularly amongst young people in relatively small areas. Whilst Government cannot always intervene in the personal circumstances of people suffering, it can at least seek to improve social and environmental standards. Given that suicide is the third biggest killer in Northern Ireland, after cancer and heart disease, it's clear that previous strategies have yet to break through the mould. Our educational and public wellbeing bodies must all recognise that they will have a key role to play in the development of a long-term project to improve Northern Ireland's mental health.

There also needs to be greater recognition that health inequalities are growing wider – the difference between the life expectancy of the richest and poorest in our country is now greater than at any time since the 19th century.

The establishment of the Public Health Agency for Northern Ireland was an accomplishment which all in Government should be proud of, however in April this year the DUP have stated that want to disband it. We will strongly challenge any attempts to weaken the good work of the Public Health Agency.

Education

The last four years witnessed a deliberate challenge on Northern Ireland's educational system. It was unfortunate that 2007 began with no solution to the post primary transfer process, but it is unacceptable that in 2011 the situation is, if anything, worse. The Ulster Unionist Party believes that an early objective for this Executive should be to end the numerous unregulated tests and replace them with a single transfer paper, even if it is only for a temporary period until a permanent resolution is found.

We are clear about our firm belief in the merits of academic selection; and also in the fact that, despite what some would claim, the removal of academic selection in Northern Ireland would not promote opportunity for all or eliminate underachievement.

Tackling educational underachievement is such a complex issue it will require well-resourced and well-targeted support for children and schools. We also believe that promoting excellence, diversity and choice across Northern Ireland's education system is an effective tool at tackling underachievement as well as promoting social mobility.

The Ulster Unionist Party believes that education must begin in the early stages of life; early intervention is proven to have educational and lifestyle benefits. The 2006 'Effective Pre-school Provision in Northern Ireland' report provided evidence that preschool education makes a difference to the cognitive and social behavioural development of children and has lasting benefits. Indeed the subsequent reports have confirmed that there is clear evidence that preschool effects persist to the end of Key Stage 2 for children who attended a nursery school class or playgroup. Therefore there is clear and reliable research that demonstrates that a preschool education not only improves children's ability at the start of school, but can also improve their capacity for learning in subsequent years.

Whilst we welcomed the publication of a draft Early Years Strategy in 2010, we were disappointed to see that the Department of Education had paid little more than lip service to the issue. We fundamentally believe that a Northern Ireland Early Years Strategy can only be delivered on a cross departmental approach and only if it is followed by a cross departmental Early Years Fund.

We are also confident that with the appropriate consideration, Northern Ireland has the capability to provide a statutory free preschool place for every young person in Northern Ireland who would seek to avail of it.

The current economic climate brings a focus to the need to cut waste, and there is no doubt that the multiple layers of administration in our varied education system should be a target for such rationalisation.

It is a matter of regret that debate over the introduction of an Education and Skills Authority have been stalled because some see its introduction as an engine of social engineering and ideological control, whereas its purpose should be to facilitate efficiencies, redirecting funding from administration to frontline teaching services. The Ulster Unionist Party remains committed to a single Education and Skills Authority which can deliver these

efficiencies. The Ulster Unionist Party is also committed to ensuring that the positions of Transferor's representatives are protected in any new authority.

The Ulster Unionist Party has long believed in the merits of a single education system, however unlike some political parties in Northern Ireland we will not wait until a few months before an election and come out with sound bites. The principle at the centre of our thinking on shared education is one centred on informed parental choice. The problems created by division in Northern Ireland are vast. Therefore it is imperative that political and societal consensus is reached before any new system is implemented otherwise it simply will not work.

The Ulster Unionist Party believes the challenge for Northern Ireland's education system is to keep pace with the modern world of the 21st Century, to provide our young people and our society with the skills and resources to compete in a world which is constantly changing.

Our education system must adapt, it must become more responsive to the individual needs of the child, to the needs of society and our economy and too the financial constraints of our economy.

We reject the monolithic command and control systems favoured by a number of other parties as too slow, too bureaucratic, too cumbersome, and too expensive.

If one thing has become clear over the last number of years is that a one size fits all solution will not work. We believe that head teachers and boards of governors are best placed to manage schools and to promote and protect their particular school's ethos. We also believe that head teachers are best placed to raise standards of behaviour in schools; therefore we would like to see this Executive devolving greater power to individual schools, as well as encouraging schools to generate active participation by parents in the education of their children.

Every child is different; each will aspire to different goals, each will learn in different ways and each will come to school from a unique environment, but their educational experience will have a profound effect on their life chances at almost every stage of life from health to wealth, from cradle to grave.

The education of each and every child is of absolute importance to all of us. The mantra of "Every school a good school" should be replaced by "Every child a cherished child".

It is vital that the tools are in place that will allow Northern Ireland's education system to produce a well educated and highly skilled workforce to help assist Northern Ireland in an increasingly competitive global marketplace.

Shared Future

The Ulster Unionist Party believe that creating a shared future for Northern Ireland should be at the forefront of the Executives thoughts over the coming Assembly mandate. Much time has been spent on this issue – it is over 5 years since the Executive decided to revisit the issue of a shared future, over a year since the CSI Consultation Document was published and 10 months since the consultation closed.

The Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Consultation Document was an opportunity missed but we believe that this new Assembly term presents an opportunity to drive this important Strategy forward. There seems to be a change in attitude in Northern Ireland with the reaction to the tragic murder of Constable Ronan Kerr as well as the widespread condemnation of the recent violence in East Belfast indicating that the majority want to move towards developing a truly shared society through the fostering of closer working relationships with one another.

David Cameron, during his recent visit to Northern Ireland, spoke about the need for a shared future as opposed to a shared out future and it was encouraging to hear the Prime Minister using the language of the Ulster Unionist Party on this issue.

The cost of division in Northern Ireland has been estimated at around £1.5 billion a year and this figure can be drastically reduced through an effective CSI Programme which provides a framework for Departments to put practical measures in place to encourage Cohesion, Sharing and Integration throughout society.

The Ulster Unionist Party believe that this strategy needs to be long term – at least 10 years – and it needs to set out robust actions which need to be taken forward by each relevant Department, Agency or Body as well as short, medium and long term actions, targets and indicators so performance can be measured.

We have set out below a number of specific areas which we believe are essential and must be included within a CSI document. However, the Ulster Unionist Party recognise the need to develop shared communities in every aspect and only through a combinations of the issues outlined below can we achieve that ultimate goal.

Key to building a shared future for Northern Ireland is the creation and support of shared spaces within our communities where people from all backgrounds can socialise regardless of cultural differences. An excellent urban example is the live site big screen currently located in the grounds of Belfast City Hall and segregation in many rural areas also needs to be tackled.

Housing is a priority issue for the Ulster Unionist Party. The continued decline in production of social housing places more and more strain on low income households as they are forced into a growing and largely unregulated private rental market. However, there are deeper rooted problems within housing in Northern Ireland due to the fact that in many areas it is

strictly segregated. Whilst some areas are clearly not ready for shared housing and this cannot be forced under any circumstances, Northern Ireland cannot move forward on the basis of a shared future without beginning to address this issue and practical solutions to problems with social housing need to be found.

The Ulster Unionist Party believes that a debate is needed in the Assembly on the issue of creating a single education system in Northern Ireland. Such a system has the potential to alleviate divisions within our society. Part of our education policy 'Every Child a Cherished Child' promotes shared education as a contributing factor to a shared future. Too often children in our society progress through the education system with little understanding or knowledge of other cultures and this adds to the division which is apparent within our society. Controlled and Maintained schools operate in their own silos often with no interaction with each other.

Various cultural issues need to be addressed within a programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration if we are to move forward in the context of a shared future. An Irish Language Act would bring with it extreme costs and would also be highly divisive and the Ulster Unionist Party want to see this language depoliticised. The most inclusive way forward is through the implementation of a Culture Act which contains the issue of language but broadens the argument out beyond language. The unacceptable Parades Commission must also be replaced with a clear and unambiguous body which is acceptable to all sides.

The Ulster Unionist Party is acutely aware of the need to deal effectively with the past and indeed it represents the single greatest challenge for all political parties as we move forward and we believe that ideally a CSI Strategy would deal with this issue. Public Enquiries, the Historical Enquiries Team and the historical section of the Police Ombudsman Office are all means to an end, which is the truth. None works in a balanced manner and it is time to go forward with a balanced, inclusive mechanism, or to park these endless investigations that serve only to take the focus off the perpetrators and onto those who put themselves in harm's way in the service of all.

Governance

The Ulster Unionist Party is rightly proud of the role it played in delivering the Belfast Agreement in 1998 and through that we contributed much to the political structures which are in place in Northern Ireland today. However, we were always aware that the mandatory coalition system of government which was set up was temporary, albeit necessary, at such a transitional time in Northern Ireland's history.

Now is the time to look to reform the governmental structures of the Assembly and we brought this issue to the floor of the Assembly at the earliest opportunity through a Private Members Motion in June.

We believe there should be an official opposition in place by 2015. The Ulster Unionist Party set out in our manifesto that we acknowledge the best form of government is one which is held to account by a formal and recognised Opposition. This gives voters the choice between a sitting government and a credible alternative to that government. It is apparent that when this element of choice is not available the public tends to disconnect from the political process. Consideration should obviously be given to opposition days, agenda setting and speaking rights.

An official opposition would lead to positive changes in 3 specific areas:

- Greater delivery - The decision making and legislative processes are slow within the present system and failure to find consensus on a number of important issues was evident over the last mandate. This would be less of an issue if an opposition were in place.
- Increased flexibility - There would be more flexibility for political parties outside of the current coalition restrictions and also increased flexibility for the public to vote for an alternative with an opposition present.
- Improved scrutiny - An official opposition would hold the government to account in a much more robust manner than is currently achieved.

The Ulster Unionist Party also believe that Northern Ireland is vastly over governed with 3 MEPS, 108 MLA's and 582 councillors as well as commissioners, Quangos and scores of consultants. The Efficiency Review Panel was set up to examine the efficiency and value for money of all aspects of the Strand One institutions under the St Andrews Agreement, however, no consensus was reached on a way forward. The Assembly Executive and Review Committee have been equally as unsuccessful.

Due to the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011 the number of MP's will decrease from 650 to 600. The Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland announced in March 2011 that this drive for more equal constituencies across the UK will lead to the loss of two constituencies in Northern Ireland (from 18 to 16). Indeed the Boundary

Commission's proposals are now out for consultation. The knock on effect to this would be a reduction in the number of MLA's from 108 to 96. Alongside that, given the population of Northern Ireland and the potentially increased role of councils in light of RPA recommendations, it is apparent that we should be considering carefully the reduction of the number of MLA's.

The Ulster Unionist Party believes that the number of arm's length bodies is an issue which needs to be addressed promptly. We have far too many of these bodies in Northern Ireland and this creates a number of problems related to inefficiency and lack of accountability. The same problems existed in England and Wales with the Coalition Government moving to cut back the number of Quangos. The Ulster Unionist Party wants to see a restructuring of these bodies and we are committed to reducing them by a third by 2014/15.

Good governance also goes beyond structure and should also relates to process. That is why, under the current system, the Ulster Unionist Party was committed to settling agreement amongst the relevant Parties on a Programme for Government (PfG) before D'hondt was run. It is also our belief that a PfG should be brought alongside the Budget and an Investment Strategy. These are elements of good practice which are fundamental in the creation of an overarching and cross departmental approach to legislative and policy formation.

Rebalancing the Economy and Encouraging Enterprise, Trade and Investment

Ulster Unionist Party Key Goals;

- Secure the devolution of Corporation Tax to Northern Ireland which would be pre-announced and lowered incrementally over 3-5 years
- Work to retain Selective Financial Assistance for the Northern Ireland economy
- Rebrand Northern Ireland as an Economic Enterprise Zone, in which we would propose:
 - an expansion of the Small Business Rates Relief Scheme
 - a National Insurance Contribution holiday for employers creating new jobs
 - a 100% capital allowance on new commercial and industrial buildings
 - a 5% VAT rate on the Repair and Maintenance and improvement of the domestic housing stock
 - a reduced rate of Air Passenger Duty (APD)
 - the creation of business friendly regime of tax and administrative regulations
 - cognisance of the capacity issues associated with the large number of SME's in our private sector
- Review of public procurement processes in order to make this £2bn a year market more accessible to Northern Ireland's SME's
- Develop the green energy sector to become a leader among UK regions
- Capitalise on the successes of our professional golfers through effective marketing of Northern Ireland as the new home of golf with additional visitors and visitors spend as a result
- Rebalance the business rates system through changes to the rating of commercial properties
- Identification of businesses who employ up to five people and are capable of breaking through to the next level and facilitation of that transition
- Consultation as to how the Harbour Commissioners can enhance their role as drivers of private sector expansion
- Review the area of Research and Development tax credits with a view to incentivising investment by SME's in this area
- Work to address the recent downturn in tourists visiting Northern Ireland through projects such as Titanic Belfast
- Financial incentives of reducing energy consumption needs to be greater emphasised
- Greater focus placed on town centre renewal as it creates stability and generates job. We would use Newcastle as a model
- A planning system that adequately meets the needs of a growing economy

Building a healthier Northern Ireland

Ulster Unionist Party Key Goals;

- Ensure that those trusted with caring for those in community develop co-ordinated, effective, accessible and timely response mechanisms for those seeking help
- Reduce Northern Ireland's rate of non-attendance at hospital appointments to 5% by 2015 by introducing a patient reminder system, using the potential offered by SMS technology
- Issue guidance with annual targets to all GP's encouraging the prescribing of generic drugs
- Develop the relationship between GP's and Local Commissioning Groups
- Further expand that provision of supported and independent living for those suffering from mental health
- Implement the Bamford recommendations in full within the 10-15 year timescale it suggested for reforming and modernising the relevant services. This will require a cross-departmental approach
- Reduce the levels of suicide in Northern Ireland by directing the necessary resources to wherever they are most needed
- Achieve results in tackling teen pregnancy through greater education and awareness raising programmes in Northern Ireland's schools
- Carry out an annual review of free prescriptions in order to identify any potential areas of abuse
- By 31 December 2021 reduce the number of deaths from cardiovascular disease in the under 75's by at least half
- Demonstrable appreciation of the importance of investment in early years programmes
- Reduce hospital costs by offering services which enable patients to remain at home
- Introduce legislation to ban smoking in cars with children by 2012
- Ensure that by 2012 all Health and Social Care trusts are meeting a target of having 90% of their payments made within 30 days
- Continue to resource the vital work of family support interventions assisting vulnerable families
- Review of the role which the independent healthcare sector plays in caring for older and vulnerable people in Northern Ireland.
- Investigate the opportunities which equity release and annuity loans offer in meeting the growing demographic needs of an increasing elderly population
- A renewed investigation into how people can continue to live in rural areas but still get access to healthcare services in their local community, with specific attention being given to telemedicine
- A comprehensive study to obtain a better understanding of the health needs of people living in rural areas of Northern Ireland followed up by the introduction of a Rural Health Promotion Strategy targeted which would tackle a range of issues from obesity to isolation
- An steadfast commitment to the existence of the Public Health Agency and the role it plays in addressing ill health

Providing quality education and learning opportunities for all

Ulster Unionist Party Key Goals;

- Ensure the removal of unregulated transfer tests with a lasting outcome to the post-primary transfer process by early 2014 which identifies a child's individual strengths
- Officially introduce a fully functional Education and Skills Authority which takes into consideration the views of Transferor's representatives by Spring 2012
- Introduce a Community use of Schools Strategy by 2013
- The establishment of a cross-Departmental Early Years Fund to finance the Early Years Strategy
- Guarantee pre-school education as a universal entitlement for all those living in Northern Ireland
- Ensure that Northern Ireland's indigenous students are not priced out of the market
- An acknowledgement that now is not the time to be cutting back on adult training programme
- Introducing adults to schools as hubs of continuing education offering parenting classes and FE courses in care-related subjects, as well as courses in literacy, numeracy and personal and social development for adults and young people
- A re-evaluation of the high-tech opportunities provided by the agri-food industry
- Reduce to below 10% the proportion of school leavers with Free School Meal Entitlement not achieving 5+ GCSE's A*-C by 2014
- A re-examination of the primary school curriculum and greater individual school determination of targets at stipulated ages.
- A wide-ranging review into the merits and shortcomings of the foundation stage
- Replace the eligibility of Free Schools Meals as a social index with a more robust and fairer way of establishing need
- Examine current arrangements for reporting pupils' progress to their parents to determine if it is explicit and properly guides parents in school choice and subject achievement.
- The merits of the Entitlement Framework should be re-examined in the light of its introduction and the definition of subjects as general and vocational.
- Ensure that by 2014 all pupils study at least one modern language up to year 12
- Literacy and numeracy levels of applicants for initial teacher training whether pre or post degree should be assessed in addition to oral skills and should form part of annual assessment of suitability.
- Financial incentives should be provided to undergraduates to pursue ICT and postgraduate trainees in STEM subjects.
- Probation arrangements should include at least one formal visit by the inspectorate.
- Teacher trainers should complete one term in a school every 8 years
- Dedicate sufficient time and resources to the NEET's Strategy so that it can effectively meet its targets
- Continue to nurture the links between Northern Ireland's universities and businesses and further develop the resourcefulness of apprenticeships

Safeguarding the most vulnerable in society

Ulster Unionist Party Key Goals;

- Reduce fuel poverty considerably among households which include the elderly, the disabled or children by 2015 and entirely by 2018.
- Maintain the Warm Homes Scheme whilst rolling out a full Boiler Replacements Scheme by Spring 2013
- Carry out a total review of the effectiveness of the Northern Ireland Funding Database by Spring 2012
- Move towards the automatic payment of pension credits
- Significantly reduce the level of homelessness due to unavailability of suitable accommodation, as well as produce and implement a cross-departmental Homelessness Strategy by Spring 2012
- Continue to fund Neighbourhood Renewal schemes beyond 2011, as well as enhancing the provisions for small pockets of deprivation within the scheme
- Issue guidance to paying agencies to enable them to identify cost-effective ways of generating relevant information in order for statutory bodies to obtain reliable benefit uptake estimates
- Ensure that data-sharing protocols between all benefit-paying agencies are finalised by June 2012
- Extend outreach activities to educate people, most particularly pensioners, about benefits eligibility
- Introduce a new system of assessing future demand for social housing
- Place greater weighting on the development of integrated or mixed social housing whilst also promoting, through planning and land use policy, mixed tenure and income development.
- Ensure that future policies for allocation of social housing include a reference to expressing preference for shared living
- Develop new flexible tenures by introducing new products, particularly rent to buy and home buy leaseholds
- Build effective working relationships with lending institutions to promote lending policies which support first time buyers
- Raise and implement higher standards in existing social housing, particularly with regard to environmental, health and safety, and waste management issues
- Extend the development roles of the Housing Associations to include private provision with a view to increasing investment through cross-subsidy
- Introduce a dependably funded Mortgage Rescue Scheme by mid-2012
- Promote greater community and resident involvement in the management and regulation of social and private rented housing
- Ensure that the health and social care sector works with other statutory agencies to meet the needs of the most vulnerable people in society; particularly the destitute and homeless
- Find a permanent resolution to the public benefit dispute within the Northern Ireland Charities Act by January 2012 leading to the full publication of the register of charities by the end of 2011

Safer Communities and an Effective Criminal Justice System

Ulster Unionist Party Key Goals;

- Reduce the levels of offending and reoffending
- Support the PSNI in advancing and improving confidence in community policing throughout Northern Ireland as measured by the Northern Ireland Crime Survey
- Establish a new police, fire and rescue service and police service training centre
- Decrease the prevalence of human trafficking in Northern Ireland by the end of this Assembly mandate
- Build on the recent roll out of the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) by implementing Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA's) and Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPO's)
- Bring forward a Victims Strategy which ensures that there are consistent standards of service for victims with more attention is afforded to those most in need
- DoJ to work collegiately with DFP to facilitate an outcome to the civil service equal pay dispute
- Tackle the cost and inefficiency associated with avoidable delay within the Criminal Justice System
- Facilitate a closer working relationship between the Criminal Justice Agencies such as seen in the Criminal Justice Delivery Board
- Changes in the relationship between the Public Prosecution Service and the Police Service of Northern Ireland to ensure incidents of low level crime do not proceed to court at great expense to the public purse
- Progress a more transparent and consistent approach to sentencing
- Bring forward proposals to lift the ban on filming in law courts by 2013 to improve transparency around judicial decision making
- Improve public confidence in the criminal justice system as measured in the Northern Ireland Crime Survey
- Improve access to justice through improvements to criminal and civil legal aid as well as those with limited or no recourse to public funds
- Improve and simplify the legislative framework on Bail
- Drive forward the Prison Reform Programme recommendations
- Implement the recommendations of the Youth Justice Review Team
- Effectively deal with the issues of the past through the removal of powers of historical inquiry from the Police Ombudsman's Office to other processes agreed by meaningful political engagement
- Set up a process whereby storytelling about the past can be facilitated and recorded for those who feel they want to partake in this
- Ensure compliance to European Court of Human Rights rulings on the issues of retention of DNA and fingerprints as well as sexual offender notification requirements in a balanced manner whilst maintaining effective and adequate police powers
- Address the inequality around the appointment of a Justice Minister by 01/05/12 when the current provisions are due to run out
- Identify European funding to maximise opportunities in this area

Victims, Equality and Good Relations

Ulster Unionist Party Key Goals;

- Work to set up the new Victims Service as soon as practically possible which will fully address the needs of victims and survivors
- Ensure that victims and survivors are adequately catered for as regards funding in the interim between now and the setting up of the new Victims Service through various victims groups as well as the Northern Ireland Memorial Fund
- Alter the current definition of a victim in order to render it acceptable to all as opposed to placing innocent victims on the same footing as perpetrators of violence
- Set up an inquiry into institutional abuse in Northern Ireland
- Continue to work to secure PEACE IV funding by 2013 when the current PEACE III money is due to run out
- Progress the Maze/Long Kesh site in a way which is inoffensive to victims and survivors through the relocation of the Royal Ulster Agricultural Society by 31/12/11
- Ensure final decisions are made on the future use of several Government lands such as Ebrington and Crumlin which could be sold to generate much needed funds for frontline services or utilised for the good of local communities
- Agree and implement a 10 year CSI Strategy which sets out robust actions which need to be taken forward by each relevant Department, Agency or Body as well as short, medium and long term actions, targets and indicators so performance can be measured
- Bring forward an overarching Early Intervention Strategy for consultation
- Implement a Childcare Strategy
- Bring forward an Age Strategy for consultation
- Appoint a Commissioner for Older People
- Address the issues which relate to child, adult and pensioner poverty
- Revisit the issue of a Single Equality Bill which will incorporate existing equality measures into one piece of legislation
- Bring forward a sexual orientation strategy
- Adopt a Northern Ireland Executive International Development Strategy contained within an International Relations Strategy which endorses the recent report published by the All Party Group on International Development.
- Resolve as far as possible the outstanding issues in respect of parading and agree a mechanism, other than the Parades Commission, to oversee this area
- Foster closer working relationships with the USA as well as emerging economies such as Brazil, Russia and India to promote Northern Ireland on the world stage

Culture, Arts and Leisure

Ulster Unionist Party Key Goals;

- Introduce 2 hours of physical activity in all schools to all pupils to promote physical well-being
- Promote creative industries in Northern Ireland through adequate funding of NI Screen and other creative enterprises as well as through the Creative Industries Fund
- Take forward a review Libraries NI long term strategy in light of current socio-economic factors as well as changes in educational needs and demands at all levels
- Support the development of museums throughout Northern Ireland as attractions for local people as well as visitors
- Invest £138 million in the football, rugby and GAA stadia by the end of the planning period
- Increase the number of people who participate in culture, arts and leisure activities over the next assembly mandate
- Exploit the natural and built environment of Northern Ireland as a stimulus for the development of tourism
- Oppose an Irish Language Act in favour of a more inclusive approach to languages through a Regional and Minorities Language Strategy
- Review the numbers and funding of North/South Bodies
- Improve the financial accounting of the North/South language body (Irish Language and Ulster Scots Agencies)
- Simplify existing law with regard to fishing licences
- Attract Olympic Teams to locate their training base to Northern Ireland in advance of the 2012 Olympic Games
- Build upon the legacy of the World Police and Fire Games and use the Games to promote Northern Ireland internationally
- Make a bid for the Commonwealth Games to be hosted in Northern Ireland
- Organise a campaign of events to commemorate the Queens Diamond Jubilee in 2012
- Utilise the potential of the Titanic centenary to promote Northern Ireland in as attractive and positive light as possible
- Commemoration of the Centenary of the Balmoral Review in April 2012
- Commemoration of Centenary of Ulster Day in September 2012

Standing up for Rural Communities

Ulster Unionist Party Key Goals;

- Support the development of a reformed Common Agricultural Policy which adequately protects and supports Northern Ireland's producers
- Reduce the financial burden caused by regulation on the agri-food industry by £10million by 2014
- A detailed evaluation process carried out on the DARD Direct project, before any decisions on a new Headquarters are taken
- A appraisal of the decision to review animal disease compensation levels
- Work with DETI to promote the increase in availability of Broadband connections to rural and farming Communities
- Pay at least 95% of the Single Farm Payment by 30 June following the end of each scheme year
- Urgently resolve the dispute of land eligibility for European Union Support Schemes
- Increase by 1200 hectares the area of forest and woodland by 2015
- Drive forward innovation in rural technology
- To review staffing and duties within DARD with a view ensuring departmental efforts are focused on directly impacting upon the local agri-food sector.
- Ensure effective implementation of village renewal as identified through the Regional Development Strategy and Rural White Paper
- Ensure the future sustainability of the Less Favoured Areas support scheme
- Support the introduction of a Groceries Code Adjudicator, including a clause which enables third parties to make complaints on behalf of their members
- Work towards a long term goal of eradicating brucellosis in the Northern Ireland cattle population as well as decisive measures to be taken to investigate the incidence of tuberculosis in wildlife, including a feasibility report on a pilot badger cull scheme
- Introduce a mental health awareness programme for those working in rural areas, particularly within the agricultural sector, so that they become aware of the services available to tackle depression and other rural related stresses which are magnified by a feeling of isolation
- Ensure that the Land Parcel Identification Scheme, including positional improvement, is completed by early 2013
- The abolition of the Agricultural Wages Board at the earliest possible opportunity
- Introduce a Public Procurement Strategy to enable Government departments to specifically source an increased proportion of food from Northern Ireland producers
- Funding levels to be retained for the New Entrants Scheme to enable young people to choose a career within agriculture

Maintaining a Clean Environment and a Sustainable Supply of Energy

Ulster Unionist Party Key Goals;

- An all-inclusive review by 2014 of the River Basin Local Management Areas in Northern Ireland to ensure that they comply with the requirements of the European Water Framework Directive
- Promote more sustainable lifestyles in local communities through the use of ecological foot printing techniques
- Raise awareness and understanding of the benefits of and opportunities of bioenergy and anaerobic energy including the publication of a Northern Ireland bio-energy strategy in mid-2013
- A cross-departmental plan to ensure that appropriate provisions are in place to oversee the gritting of public footpaths and private roads by winter 2011
- A purposeful National Parks Bill which takes into account the concerns of those which it may most affect
- Introduce legislation by 2014 which puts right the current inadequacies in the regulations governing aspects of the ownership of private properties which comprise part of multi-unit developments
- Review the application process with the goal to speed it up, to maximise the funding opportunity offered by research innovation FP7
- Through a Northern Ireland Marine Bill, enhance marine nature conservation provisions including an efficient system of Marine Spatial Planning that is based on sustainable development principles with the environment at its heart
- Further promote environmental education
- A review of the Northern Ireland Environmental Agency in order to make it more representative of the ambitions and concerns of those which it most frequently encounters
- Introduce a statutory requirement on Local Councils to provide a sufficient number of allotments in areas where private land owners are not in the position to do so
- Enhance the transparency and robustness of the processes currently in place which oversee the storage and disposal of used tyres in Northern Ireland
- Pursue the opportunities which Green New Deal
- Review the support mechanisms currently in place for private owners of listed buildings
- Review PPS6 so that developers, as well as members of the public, achieve full benefit from all archaeological excavations
- Further develop the interaction between the Department of Environment and the European Commission to investigate the possibility of the drawdown of EU support for the development of local freshwater projects
- Introduce a levy on carrier bags from April 2013
- An evaluation of all the publically owned land currently under the tenure of statutory bodies
- Promote and support social housing development which meets renewable energy targets, as well as predetermined thresholds of energy efficiency.

An infrastructure which is adequately resourced and fit for purpose

Ulster Unionist Party Key Goals;

- Maintain, manage, and improve the road network so that 65% of the motorway and trunk road network is in satisfactory structural condition, and that by March 2015 journey times on key transport corridors reduce by 2.5% compared with 2003
- Maintain a high quality of drinking water and improve compliance with waste water standards by investing £600m in water and sewerage infrastructure
- Invest in a programme of measures to bring about modal shift to more sustainable modes of travel and to achieve an annual average of 77 million passenger journeys by public transport
- Bring forward a Regional Aviation Strategy which protects both local residents and the regional economy
- By 2015, 36% of primary school pupils and 22% of secondary school pupils should be walking or cycling to school
- Fully utilising Project Kelvin in order to give us an advantage in attracting businesses to Northern Ireland
- Tackle disadvantage through concessionary fares on public transport, disability transport programme and investment in public transport priority measures such as the Belfast on the Move project
- Development of an Active Travel Strategy to promote walking and cycling
- Broaden out the focus of sustainable development away from urban areas
- Use publicly provided transport (community buses, health service vehicles) to transport young children to provision within two miles of their homes.
- Ensure free on street car parking to help local traders in towns across Northern Ireland.
- Upgrade Belfast to Londonderry Railway line with aim of providing hourly intercity railway services in each direction
- Continue to invest in major road infrastructure projects including A2 Greenisland to Carrickfergus road, Sydenham By-Pass, Westlink and A26 Frosses Road
- Lobby European authorities on review of TEN T network in Northern Ireland
- Review roll of railways in provision of freight transport with aim of achieving higher number of freight journeys by rail

Improved operation of Government and Joined up Government

Ulster Unionist Party Key Goals;

- Reform Government structures by 2015 to include an official opposition to improve delivery, flexibility and scrutiny
- Reduce the number of Executive Departments through a transfer of powers
- Reduce the number of MLA's to 96 by 2015
- Reduce the number of Arm's Length Bodies by a third by 2015
- Implement Local Government Reform, shifting powers from central control to local councils by 2014
- Immediate publication of the St Andrew's Agreement Review into North South Implementation Bodies
- A commitment to link together the Budget, Investment strategy and Programme for Government documents in future mandates
- Take forward a review of the budget process in order to simplify the current structure which is complex and cumbersome
- We believe there should be a much stronger link between Assembly Committees and Ministers. We also believe that Ministers should take greater appreciation of their scrutiny committee findings.
- A commitment to engage in more meaningful dialogue by the major political parties before a Programme for Government is agreed upon
- Agriculture, fishery, freshwater issues and environment are fragmented across a number of different Executive Department's, we would call for fishing, particularly – commercial to be brought under one Department.
- Departments should all accept that they need to meet climate change targets
- A memorandum of understanding between Government and NGO's in relation to funding – specifically detailing who can do what and who is ultimately responsible.
- Ensure sustainable development principles are embedded at that heart of government processes

