

**The NI Assembly - Relationships
with other UK Assemblies**

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Ian Walford
The Scottish Office

Notable Milestones

- ◇ 1st May 1997 New Government
- ◇ 14th May 1997 Publication of Referendums Bill
- ◇ 24th July 1997 Publication of "Scotland's Parliament"
- ◇ 31st July Referendums Bill Royal Assent
- ◇ 11th Sept 1997 Referendum on Scottish Parliament
- ◇ 17th Dec 1997 Publication of Scotland Bill
- ◇ 9th Jan 1998 Holyrood announced as site
- ◇ 13th Jan 1998 Second Reading of Scotland Bill
- ◇ March 1998 Interim Accommodation for Parliament announced

Next Steps - public milestones

- ◇ Oct/Nov 1998 Final Stages of Scotland Bill
- ◇ Nov 1998 Royal Assent for Scotland Bill
- ◇ End 1998 “McLeish Group” reports
- ◇ Feb/Mar 1999 Numerous Orders made in Westminster Parliament
- ◇ First Standing Orders issued

Next Steps - public milestones

- ◆ 1 April 1999 Money Orders made to set up SCF
- ◆ 6 May 1999 Elections to Scottish Parliament
- ◆ July/Sept 1999 D-Day: Scottish Parliament and Executive take up their full powers
- ◆ Autumn 2001 Holyrood building ready

The scheme in brief

- ◇ 129 MSPs (73 constituency; 56 regional)
- ◇ Parliament four year fixed terms
- ◇ legislative competence over most matters currently within SoFS's responsibility
- ◇ executive devolution of others
- ◇ Scottish Executive: First Minister, Scottish Ministers, Law Officers and juniors
- ◇ Finance - block and formula arrangements to continue

The scheme in brief

- ◇ Power to vary basic rate income tax by 3p in the pound
 - worth up to about £420m
- ◇ Europe - Executive to play a full part in developing and negotiating UK position and implementing decisions
- ◇ Parliament to be able to scrutinise EU documents
- ◇ Single civil service maintained
- ◇ Relations with Whitehall - administrative agreements (concordats)

Scotland and the UK

- ◆ Scotland remains within the UK/Queen remains Head of State
- ◆ UK Parliament remains sovereign
- ◆ Legal Procedures for disputes about powers
- ◆ Open and constructive relationship between both Parliaments at official and Ministerial level

Scotland and the UK

- Secretary of State for Scotland continues to represent Scottish interests within UK Government
- Scotland's MPs continue to play full part within UK Parliament on reserved matters

Scotland's Parliament - what? Planning assumptions

- ✗ MSPs full time job - ongoing debate for parties to decide
- ✗ Probably sitting 4 days a week for about 30-33 weeks in the year - still being considered
- ✗ Probably more committee sessions than plenaries
- ✗ Committees probably shadowing Exec Depts plus others
- ✗ Prelegislative scrutiny monitored by committees
- ✗ Westminster MPs

Parliament at work

- ◆ modern Parliament for a new millennium: new building on historic Holyrood site in central Edinburgh
- ◆ running costs estimated at £20-30m per year around £5 per head
- ◆ aim to promote modern and efficient ways of working
- ◆ procedures for Parliament itself to decide but all party group undertaking preparatory work

McLeish Group

- ◆ Four main parties, Cosla, STUC, business, consumers, academics
- ◆ Remit
 - Consider operational needs and working methods
 - develop proposals for procedures and standing orders
 - report to S of S by end 1998

McLeish Group

- ◆ Supported by expert panels/groups
 - Financial Issues Advisory Group
 - Information and Communications Technology Panel
 - Procedures and Standing Orders Panel
 - Media panel to be set up in October
 - Working Group on Code of Conduct for MSPs
 - Small Working Group on Opening Ceremony

Getting ready

- ◆ How far can we anticipate Parliament's and Executive's priorities for legislative and executive action?
 - ◆ eg
 - unfinished business
 - new manifesto commitments
 - worthy but necessary reforms
 - European obligations
 - matching England (and Wales)

Getting ready

- ◆ New responsibilities
 - understanding devolution - Dev Com strategy
 - for policy development (less “piggy backing”)
 - in relation to Europe (inc with other regional Governments)
 - managing the new relationship with Whitehall
 - making the Executive work