

**JOINT POLITICAL STRATEGY/
CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES'
WEEK-END SEMINAR
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ELECTION STRATEGY

by

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ELECTION STRATEGY

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS - MAY 1989

INTRODUCTION

The Party must at this point in time assume that the Local Government Elections next year are going to take place and propose accordingly. These elections are vitally important to the Party as they will be taken as a truer barometer of our support than any other recent election. It must also be an opportunity for us to take advantage of our positive and determined approach to Local Government over the past 4 years.

Training sessions for prospective candidates and election organizers have been held in January 1988 and will be held again in September. Other organizational propositions are in hand.

WHAT IS ACHIEVEABLE - REALISTIC TARGETS

In the Local Government Elections of 1985 Alliance polled 6.9% of the vote. In the Westminster Elections of 1987 the Party polled 10.0% of the vote. In 1989 we ought to increase our vote from 6.9% but are unlikely to achieve 10.0%, not least because we will not be standing in every area.

Given the possibility of a small but significant increase in our vote added to more effective organization in some areas we should be able to increase our total of 34 councillors in 1989 (we presently hold 32 seats).

On the next page are the areas where we are most likely to gain seats. Two main observations can be made;

1. It may be possible to regain seats on councils where we have not had representation for at least 4 years, eg. Ballymena, Omagh, Downpatrick etc. This would undoubtedly be very beneficial to the party's morale and image.
2. Other councils where gains are most likely eg. Newtownabbey, Castlereagh, Carrickfergus and Larne could have their Alliance representation doubled if things go well.

STRATEGY

To maximise our chances of gaining seats we should;

1. Identify candidates now and have them working in their areas - particularly those areas where we have a chance of winning.
2. Identify potential problems at an early stage and give the appropriate organizational help and advice.
3. Consider the possibility of a central publicity/leafleting effort well before the campaign.
4. Consider the most effective way of assisting and encouraging those outlying areas where there may be a chance of a seat eg. possibly targeting manpower and publicity before and during the campaign.

AREAS WITH THE BEST CHANCE OF GAINING A SEAT

<u>COUNCIL</u>	<u>AREA</u>	<u>No. of Q. in 1985</u>	<u>No. of seats held</u>
CARRICKFERGUS	CASTLE	1.9	0
NEWTOWNABBEY	MANSE	0.7	0
BALLYMENA	TOWN	-	0
OMAGH	TOWN	0.7	0
DOWNPATRICK	TOWN	0.6	0
CASTLEREAGH	SOUTH	1.4	1
LARNE	LOUGH	0.6	0
CASTLEREAGH	CENTRAL	1.7	1
LARNE	TOWN	1.6	1
LISBURN	KILLULTAGH	0.6	0
NEWTOWNABBEY	DOAGH ROAD	0.4	0
CASTLEREAGH	EAST	1.5	1
ANTRIM	SOUTH EAST	0.7	0
NORTH DOWN	BANGOR WEST	2.3	2
CRAIGAVON	PORTADOWN	0.5	0

EUROPEAN ELECTIONS - JUNE 1989

INTRODUCTION

The July meeting of central executive agreed on fielding one candidate for the European Elections. Nominations are being sought and the draft ELDR Manifesto is being discussed. The Alliance candidate will be chosen at the September meeting of Party Council.

With the Quota at 25% and our vote in 1984 at 5% it is clear that winning a seat is unlikely. Our strategy, as it was in 1984, must be to increase our percentage of the vote as much as possible.

STRATEGY

To that end, we must investigate the following areas urgently:-

1. How do we attack the voting constituencies of possible 'vulnerable' candidates eg. Jim Nicholson and Jim Kilfedder.
2. How do we deal with the threat Bob McCartney poses to us.
3. What help do we require from ELDR and what level of involvement should we seek from other parties in the ELDR.
4. How should we project our candidate before the campaign proper, i.e. media exposure, campaigns, issues etc.
5. What should be the style of our campaign.
To get our message across the province, do we need a campaign bus or an alternative. Are a series of publicity stunts of any value?

ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

THE PROSPECTS

While elections to a devolved Assembly are relatively unlikely at least in the short term, it is imperative that the Party is in a constant state of readiness.

The following sheet gives details of the Alliance vote in each constituency where an Assembly seat is possible for the 1983 and 1987 Westminster Elections as well as for the 1985 Local Government Elections.

In the 1982 Assembly Elections Alliance won 10 seats out of 78. We had only 6 'safe' seats and were fortunate to pick up seats in West and North Belfast and second seats in East Belfast and South Antrim.

If the Party were to fight Assembly Elections in the near future we could be almost certain of only 7 out of 85 and would be doing very well to pick up 10 or 11 seats.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NOW

1. Ensure that an effective organization is in place and ready to respond.
2. Make ourselves fully aware of the possibilities in each new constituency.
3. Identify able, prospective candidates of Assembly standard.
4. Start to think out a possible campaign strategy.
i.e. how do we project a positive image of devolved government to a largely sceptical general public.

ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS PAST PERFORMANCE

CONSTITUENCY	1982	No. of Seats	WESTMINSTER 1983		COUNCILS 1985		WESTMINSTER 1987		Probable No. of Alliance Candidates
			%	No. of Quotas	Approx. %	No. of Quotas	%	No. of Quotas	
EAST BELFAST	**	5	24.0	1.44	18.8	1.13	32.1	1.92	2
SOUTH BELFAST	*	5	23.9	1.43	16.3	0.98	21.3	1.28	2
EAST ANTRIM	*	5	19.6	1.17	17.2	1.03	25.5	1.53	1-2
NORTH DOWN	*	5	22.1	1.32	24.4	1.46	19.4	1.16	1-2
STRANGFORD	*	5	15.7	0.94	14.2	0.85	20.3	1.22	1
SOUTH ANTRIM	*	5	12.0	0.72	9.6	0.57	16.0	0.96	1
LACAN VALLEY	*	5	11.3	0.68	11.4	0.68	13.8	0.83	1
NORTH BELFAST	*	5	9.1	0.55	6.3	0.38	7.8	0.47	1
NORTH ANTRIM	*	5	-	-	2.3	0.14	12.4	0.47	1
WEST BELFAST	*	5	-	-	7.5	0.45	-	-	1
EAST L'DERRY	*	5	4.6	0.28	2.2	0.13	6.6	0.40	1
UPPER BANN	*	5	-	-	3.4	0.20	5.9	0.35	1

