



Public Record Office
of Northern Ireland

2007 ANNUAL RELEASES

1977 files – Highlights List

A full list of the files will be available

Introduction

The annual release of selected official files continues against a background of greater public access through the Freedom of Information Act balanced against the need to protect personal information. The FOI Act (2000) created a new access to information regime and all records were reviewed in accordance with both that Act and the Data Protection Act.

Records continue to be brought forward for release as they approach 30 years of age. This involves the referral of the files to the Responsible Authority for sensitivity review. This entails a page by page examination to ensure that a record contains nothing sensitive as defined by the FOI Act and DP Act.

This year's annual release covers official files with a terminal date of 1977. Of the 466 departmental files examined, 49 were subject to full closure, with an additional 31 subject to partial closure or redaction (blanking out). Partial closure involves the removal of a limited number of papers from the file that have been deemed as exempt from the right to know under FOI. To facilitate the release of as much information as possible, redaction can be used to blank out sensitive data within individual documents that would otherwise prevent release. All information withheld under this procedure must conform to the exemptions contained in the FOI Act. In the majority of cases, the reason for extended closure was the application of section 40 – the personal information exemption – of the FOI Act. This means that personal information is exempt from the right to know if it would breach the Data Protection principles.

Central Secretariat

CENT/1/6/14 1977 Economic and Industrial Strategy for NI – highlights the problems facing the local economy against the backdrop of the ‘troubles’ and the importance which Roy Mason regarded the economic situation. Also includes analysis of local political party reaction to the policy from the DUP, NILP and UPNI, and minutes of the Economic Review Committee.

CENT/1/6/3 1976-1977 Economic and Industrial Strategy for NI – Economic Review Committee – comprises minutes of the committee tracing the development of the strategy, consultation with employers, and submissions from local political parties and other interested groups.

CENT/1/6/1 1977 Meetings between NICS Permanent Secretaries and the Permanent Under Secretary – comprises minutes of monthly meetings between the NIO Permanent Under Secretary, Brian Cubbon, and the Permanent Secretaries of the NI departments. The subjects discussed or reported on include: security situation; political developments; North/South relations; and UUAC strike. The papers contributed includes: one on community reconciliation referring to integrated housing and stating that integrated education was not achievable within a reasonable timescale.

CENT/1/4/34 1975-1977 EEC Cross-Border Study – Londonderry-Donegal – comprises minutes of meetings between representatives of NI departments and Irish government counterparts.

CENT/1/6/25 1977 EEC Cross-Border Study – Londonderry-Donegal – contains notes of a meeting between Ray Carter, NIO Minister and local councillors at the Guildhall at which they highlight the major issues confronting the city, and reports on the publication of the cross-border study.

CENT/1/5/38 1976-1977 Economic and Industrial Strategy for NI – Economic Review Committee – comprises minutes of the committee revealing the development of the strategy, meetings with Trade Unions, consultation with major employers, etc.

CENT/1/6/12 1977 Anglo-Irish Economic Cooperation – North South Sub-group – comprises briefings for ministers including a paper expressing concern that if meetings become too regular, loyalists would be alienated by introduction of a Council of Ireland by the backdoor, papers on potential areas of cooperation, and minutes of the 1st meeting of the group in Dublin in December 1977.

CENT/1/6/6 1977 Working Party on Local Democracy – minutes and report of a committee headed up by Ken Bloomfield looking at local government in Northern Ireland, particularly the role of councillors and their representation across various boards, etc.

CENT/1/6/21 1977 Bars in Civil Service Canteens – comprises correspondence from the Council on Alcohol Related Problems (CARP) to the Head of the Civil Service, condemning bars in government canteens and recording that the practice was stopped before the end of the year.

CENT/1/6/2 1977 Direct Rule – Note by Secretary of State on the image – comprises a minute from Roy Mason reminding civil servants of the benefits of direct rule and need to highlight any issues or policies that might undermine the positive image.

CENT/1/6/7 1977 United Unionist Action Council Strike – includes contingency plans, minutes of meetings of the NI Permanent Secretaries about the impact of the strike, briefings, note of thanks to the Civil Service from the Prime Minister, and papers on the cost of the strike.

CENT/1/4/15 1975-1977 Reports by Principal Civil Representatives – comprises reports from the Civil Reps commenting on the security situation, The Queen's silver jubilee visit, impact of UUAC strike, reference to the murder of Captain Nairac, the Peace People, etc.

CENT/1/3/38 1973-1977 Meetings 'Miscellaneous' – includes note of a meeting between the Prime Minister and Northern Ireland Church leaders, February 1976, discussing topics such as security, unemployment, investment, housing, etc.; note of a meeting between Lord Donaldson, NIO minister, and the Peace Women of Londonderry, August 1974; note of a meeting between Secretary of State, Merlyn Rees and John Laird, discussing power-sharing with SDLP, and the proposed Convention, August 1974; note of a meeting between the Secretary of State and the Northern Ireland Executive discussing the UWC strike, May 1974; note of a meeting between the Chief Minister, Brian Faulkner and the Prime Minister, April 1974, discussing security and the progress of the power-sharing executive.

CENT/1/4/11 1975-1977 Civil Emergency Committee – includes minutes of meetings detailing the preparations being put in place for the threatened UUAC strike; and a note recording that the Army was to supply 100 safari type beds and ration packs to Stormont Castle, 28 April 1977.

Department of Commerce

COM/63/1/741 1977 Strathearn Audio Ltd – concern expressed about impact of potential closure of factory and includes memos from NIO officials drawing attention to the political dangers of the closure. The factory was located in west Belfast.

COM/69/85 1976-1977 Northern Ireland Economic Council – comprises papers relating to the re-establishment of the council, appointments to the council, etc.

COM/62/1/1416 1977 Secretary of State's visit to Dublin 1977. Follow-up [re trade with the Republic] – includes record of meeting between Secretary of State, Roy Mason and Dr Garret Fitzgerald, Minister for Foreign Affairs, at which the NI economy, cross border cooperation, and long term cooperation were discussed.

COM/69/89 1976-1977 Correspondence between District Councils and Government – includes a letter from the Secretary of State responding to Derry City Council's concerns at a perceived deliberate policy to downgrade the city; minutes of a meeting between the Secretary of State and Down District councillors, mainly about lack of investment and infrastructure in Downpatrick..

1977 Highlighted Files

COM/69/75 **1977** **Department of Commerce Departmental and Ministerial Briefs – July–Sept 1977** – includes a letter from Roy Mason, Secretary of State to Sir Peter Jay, British Ambassador, Washington, about how the government were tackling violence from loyalist paramilitaries as well as republicans; and papers concerning a meeting between the Secretary of State and Jimmy Saville, who was keen to promote Viking Bicycles, Londonderry.

COM/69/87 **1974-1977** **Correspondence/meetings with Northern Ireland Labour Party:** includes note of a meeting with the Secretary of State at which the economic and security situation were discussed.

COM/63/1/19-20 **1977** **Non-payment of Gas and Electricity Accounts –** addresses the problem of public debt in Northern Ireland and how it can be tackled by government.

Department of Education

ED/13/2/450 **1977** **Procedure for transfer from Primary to Secondary education** – highlights policy and transfer arrangements in lieu of 11+ test. The file sets out how parents will select schools, the use transfer reports on pupils, etc. [Lord Melchett, NIO Minister, had announced the proposed abolition of selection and the introduction of a comprehensive system during 1977]

ED/13/2/377, 392, 410, 431, 433, 434 **1977** A run of Education files relating to the proposed re-organisation of Secondary education. Includes comment from the Roman Catholic, Presbyterian and, Methodist churches, Democratic Unionist Party, Republican clubs, and Official Unionist Party

ED/13/2/383 **1976-1977** **Re-organisation of Secondary Schools: Working Party:** includes minutes of meetings and papers for proposed new procedures in place of the 11+, etc.

ED/13/2/409 **1976-1977** **Re-organisation of Secondary Schools: comment from Roman Catholic Church:** includes note of a meeting between Lord Melchett, NIO Minister and Bishop Edward Daly, discussing the proposed school re-organisation and integrated education.

Department of Community Relations

DCR/1/178 **1974-1977** **Contingency plans to meet emergencies** – comprising various reports including: 'History of a Crisis' about the UWC strike by the Coordinating Committee of Community Groups in Alliance, Ardoyne and Oldpark; report entitled Official Action during the Ulster Workers Council Strike based on notes on the situation in Belfast prepared by the Principal Community Relations representatives. Also a report on the UWC strike by the South Belfast Community Association.

DCR/1/181 **1974-1977** **Civil Representative Reports and Miscellaneous Correspondence – Divisions B + C Mr Cadden** – papers include a report by Edward Cadden titled 'Paramilitary Community Development: Observations from North and West Belfast, 1971-1976; and a note of a meeting with Paddy Devlin and Army and RUC representatives, discussing illegal drinking clubs, internment and policing, 21 December 1974

Northern Ireland Office

NIO/25/1/5 **1976-1977** **RUC Recruiting: Statistics** – includes papers on how to improve recruitment to the RUC.

NIO/12/63 **1977** **Prisons: Special Category – Ending of special category status** – includes situation reports from the Northern Ireland prisons containing details of the numbers refusing to wear prison uniforms and participating in the 'blanket protest'.

NIO/10/11/1 **1973-1977** **Remand Prisoners and awaiting trial** – includes complaints from solicitors about the conditions in the Maze and Belfast prisons, protests at the ending of segregation within the prisons and concerns about the effects of non-segregation on remand prisoners.

NIO/10/2/5 **1977** **Prisons Management Committee: minutes** – comprising minutes of meetings reporting on the Maze, Belfast, Armagh, Magilligan, and Millisle. The topics discussed include: development of the H blocks, security levels, paramilitary factions, protests against the ending of special category status, concerns about potential protests by prisoners during the Queen's visit, development of Maghaberry Prison, etc.

NIO/25/2/12 **1976-1977** **Police Authority and the local Community: working party papers** – contains papers about the Local Security Committees, including a paper from Army HQ giving their perspective on the Local Security Committees and papers on the representation of local councillors on the Police Authority.

Department of Finance

FIN/18/57/2 **1977** **Committee on Areas of Need** – includes reports on the socio-economic situation in Londonderry and Belfast with detailed analysis of conditions, and what needs to be done. Includes ward reports on paramilitary influence, control, etc.

FIN/19/56/1 **1977** **Northern Ireland Construction Industry Advisory Council – Effect of UUAC stoppage** – comprises Emergency Committee conclusions, 11 May 1977, report of shortages to the Secretary of State, 6 May 1977 and details of daily reports on construction sites affected by the stoppage, areas affected by intimidation, impact on building merchants and suppliers, etc.

FIN/18/56/3 **1976-1977** **Industries Development: Harland & Wolff's financial assistance to** – papers reveal how were government were trying to support the company and includes a paper on the numbers of employees that would be made redundant if no new orders were placed with Harland & Wolff.

Department of Manpower Services

DMS/3/72 **1977** **Areas of Special Need:** includes minutes of the Committee on Areas of Need, looking at proposals for the redevelopment of Londonderry.

Department of Health and Social Services

HSS/13/33/35 **1976-1977** **Inter-departmental Liaison Group:** includes minutes of meetings between DHSS and DE, chaired by Lord Melchett on the provision of services for the under five age group, at which the issue of integration of facilities was discussed as a means to make better use of available resources.

HSS/13/31/51 **1976-1977** **Strike – Ulster Worker Council** [File actually relates to UUAC strike] – includes papers on arrangements to ensure payments of benefits to those affected by the strike and a note of a meeting between Lord Melchett, NIO and Terry Carlin, Trade Union representative, on the same subject.

Department of the Environment

ENV/10/1/3 **1977** **Local Democracy: Working Party (1977)** – contains details of how to increase local government participation in central government decision making, etc .

ENV/20/2 **1977** **Committee on Review of Rural Planning Policy:** includes papers by Ken Bloomfield on the problems with rural planning, referring to various options and the attitudes of political parties at the time.

ENV/21/1/24 **1977** **Belfast Areas of Need – Committee on Areas of Need** – includes profiles of electoral wards in Belfast and Londonderry, commenting on paramilitary activity, control, etc.

POLICY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE: MINUTES

PCC/1/6/	DATE	DESCRIPTION	FILE NO.
1	12 Jan. 1977	Minutes of Policy Co-ordinating Committee held at Parliament Buildings, Stormont. Topics discussed: 1. Northern Ireland Prices Data 2. Draft Guidelines on the Extension of Westminster Bills to Northern Ireland	PCC1/77
2	19 Jan. 1977	Minutes of Policy Co-ordinating Committee held at Parliament Buildings, Stormont. Topics discussed: 1. Official Secrets 2. Losses on Government Contracts due to Civil Unrest 3. Proposal for a Draft Departments (Northern Ireland) Order 4. Public Expenditure Reallocation of Shortfall	PCC2/77
3	26 Jan. 1977	Minutes of Policy Co-ordinating Committee held at Parliament Buildings, Stormont. Topics discussed: 1. Parliamentary Questions 2. Report of the Working Party on the Future of the Economic Council 3. Public Expenditure	PCC3/77
4	2 Feb. 1977	Minutes of Policy Co-ordinating Committee held at Parliament Buildings, Stormont. Topics discussed: 1. Proposed Draft Dogs Order in Council 2. Proposal for a Health and Safety at Work Order	PCC4/77

POLICY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE: MINUTES

PCC/1/6/	DATE	DESCRIPTION	FILE NO.
5	16 Feb. 1977	Minutes of Policy Co-ordinating Committee held at Parliament Buildings, Stormont. Topics discussed: 1. Option Mortgage 2. Prohibition of the Sale of Cigarettes and Tobacco to Children and Young Persons under the age of 16 3. Belfast Transportation Strategy Review	PCC5/77
6	2 Mar. 1977	Minutes of Policy Co-ordinating Committee held at Parliament Buildings, Stormont. Topics discussed: 1. Review of Economics, Statistics and Social Research Services 2. Extension of the Proposed Order in Council Amending the Planning (NI) Order 1972	PCC6/77
7	23 Mar. 1977	Minutes of Policy Co-ordinating Committee held at Parliament Buildings, Stormont. Topics discussed: 1. Retirement Policy in the NICS 2. Proposal for a Draft Development of Tourist Traffic (NI) Order 1977 Rehabilitation of Offenders Order in Council	PCC7/77
8	6 Apr. 1977	Minutes of Policy Co-ordinating Committee held at Parliament Buildings, Stormont. Topics discussed: 1. Incentive Schemes for Manual Workers in the NICS 2. Whiterock District Centre 3. Proposed Draft Property (NI) Order 1977	PCC8/77

POLICY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE: MINUTES

PCC/1/6/	DATE	DESCRIPTION	FILE NO.
		4. Proposed Civil Liability (Contributions) Bill Vocational Training for General Medical Practice Proposed Occupiers' Liability Bill Vocational Training for General Medical Practice Proposed Draft Agricultural Wages (Regulations) (NI)	
9	18 Apr. 1977	Minutes of Policy Co-ordinating Committee held at Parliament Buildings, Stormont. Topics discussed: 1. Financial management 2. The Unfair Contract Terms Bill	PCC9/77
10	25 Apr. 1977	Minutes of Policy Co-ordinating Committee held at Parliament Buildings, Stormont. Topics discussed: 1. Public Expenditure 1977 Survey	PCC10/77
11	27 Apr. 1977	Minutes of Policy Co-ordinating Committee held at Parliament Buildings, Stormont. Topics discussed: 1. Proposed Draft Departments (Northern Ireland) Order – Extension of Sections 19 and 21 of the Northern Ireland Constitution Act 1973 2. Public Debt	PCC11/77
12	11 May 1977	Minutes of Policy Co-ordinating Committee held at Parliament Buildings, Stormont. Topics discussed: 1. Arrangements for Audit of Accounts of Education and Library Boards and Certain Other Bodies	PCC12/77

POLICY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE: MINUTES

PCC/1/6/	DATE	DESCRIPTION	FILE NO.
13	18 May 1977	Minutes of Policy Co-ordinating Committee held at Parliament Buildings, Stormont. Topics discussed: 1. Reorganisation of Secondary Education 2. Proposed Draft Supplementary Benefits (NI) Order 1977 Proposed Occupiers' Liability Bill	PCC13/77
14	1 June 1977	Minutes of Policy Co-ordinating Committee held at Parliament Buildings, Stormont. Topics discussed: 1. Shops Act (NI) 1946 – Request for Six-Day Trading Rights 2. Government Contracts – Religious or Political Discrimination 3. Programme Analysis and Review	PCC14/77
15	20 July 1977	Minutes of Policy Co-ordinating Committee held at Parliament Buildings, Stormont. Topics discussed: 1. Youth Opportunities Programme 2. Rathlin Island	PCC15/77
16	27 July 1977	Minutes of Policy Co-ordinating Committee held at Parliament Buildings, Stormont. Topics discussed: 1. Shortfall in Public Expenditure: Stockpiling of Projects Shortfall	PCC16/77
17	2 Sep. 1977	Minutes of Policy Co-ordinating Committee held at Parliament Buildings, Stormont. Topics discussed: 1. Multi-purpose Benefits Claim Form 2. Savings and Loans Scheme	PCC17/77

POLICY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE: MINUTES

PCC/1/6/	DATE	DESCRIPTION	FILE NO.
		3. The Draft Judgements Enforcement and Debt Recovery Order-in-Council Enforcement of Judgements Office	
18	7 Sep. 1977	Minutes of Policy Co-ordinating Committee held at Parliament Buildings, Stormont. Topics discussed: 1. Public Expenditure	PCC18/77
19	14 Sep. 1977	Minutes of Policy Co-ordinating Committee held at Parliament Buildings, Stormont. Topics discussed: 1. Report by Public Debt Policy Committee dated 7 September 1977	PCC19/77
20	21 Sep. 1977	Minutes of Policy Co-ordinating Committee held at Parliament Buildings, Stormont. Topics discussed: 1. Draft Matrimonial Causes (Northern Ireland) Order	PCC20/77
21	5 Oct. 1977	Minutes of Policy Co-ordinating Committee held at Parliament Buildings, Stormont. Topics discussed: 1. Winter electricity discount Scheme 2. Draft Electricity Service (Finance) NI Order 1977	PCC21/77
22	22 Oct. 1977	Minutes of Policy Co-ordinating Committee held at Parliament Buildings, Stormont. Topics discussed: 1. Trade Union Representatives on Public Bodies	PCC22/77

POLICY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE: MINUTES

PCC/1/6/	DATE	DESCRIPTION	FILE NO.
		2. First and Second Report of the Committee of Officials on Social/Family Law	
23	19 Oct. 1977	Minutes of Policy Co-ordinating Committee held at Parliament Buildings, Stormont. Topics discussed: 1. Winter Electricity Discount Scheme 2. Royal Commission on Civil Liability and Compensation	PCC23/77
24	26 Oct. 1977	Minutes of Policy Co-ordinating Committee held at Parliament Buildings, Stormont. Topics discussed: 1. Possible Construction Industry Package 2. Government Contracts – Religious or Political Discrimination	PCC24/77
25	9 Nov. 1977	Minutes of Policy Co-ordinating Committee held at Parliament Buildings, Stormont. Topics discussed: 1. Shortfall in Public Expenditure 2. Construction Industry Package 3. Guidelines for Departments making Presentations to NI Economic Council	PCC25/77
26	16 Nov. 1977	Minutes of Policy Co-ordinating Committee held at Parliament Buildings, Stormont. Topics discussed: 1. Suggested Procedure for the Preparation of an Economic Plan 2. Belfast River Lagan Report 3. Payment for Debt (Amendment) Order	PCC26/77

POLICY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE: MINUTES

PCC/1/6/	DATE	DESCRIPTION	FILE NO.
27	23 Nov. 1977	Minutes of Policy Co-ordinating Committee held at Parliament Buildings, Stormont. Topics discussed: 1. Office of Law Reform 2. The Lawrence Committee Report (NI) on Rate Relief for Recreational Activities and the Layfield Report (GB) on Local Government Finance 6. Draft Homosexual Offences (NI) Order 1977 7. Eastern Area Water Supply	PCC27/77
28	7 Dec. 1977	Minutes of Policy Co-ordinating Committee held at Parliament Buildings, Stormont. Topics discussed: 1. Protection of the Environment Order (NI)	PCC28/77
29	14 Dec. 1977	Minutes of Policy Co-ordinating Committee held at Parliament Buildings, Stormont. Topics discussed: 1. Public Expenditure 2. Ban 3. Government Insurance	PCC29/77
30	21 Dec. 1977	Minutes of Policy Co-ordinating Committee held at Parliament Buildings, Stormont. Topics discussed: 1. Government Insurance 2. Striking of Regional Rate for 1978-1979 3. Re-allocation of 1978-1979 Resources Including Staffing	PCC30/77