

STATEMENT FROM:



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## **Armstrong reacts to DUP demands for UUP cover on re Policing & Justice**

Mid-Ulster MLA Billy Armstrong has reacted to the DUP's claims that it will not proceed with the devolution of Policing & Justice without the support of the Ulster Unionist Party, describing it as confusing.

The Ulster Unionist representative said;

“It was the DUP who excluded other parties – including the Ulster Unionists - from the negotiations at Hillsborough. As a result, the DUP and Sinn Fein came to an arrangement between themselves and the British and Irish Governments. They have been out selling this “new deal” and in saying they will not proceed without Ulster Unionist support, have shown their complete lack of confidence in what they have negotiated. This is very worrying.

The reality is they do not need our backing in the Assembly. The DUP and Sinn Fein have regularly used their numbers in both the Assembly and Executive to push measures through which the Ulster Unionists objected to.

The Ulster Unionists have been consistent in our approach. We believe in the devolution of Policing & Justice powers but only in the right circumstances. We are placing a priority on fixing the dysfunctional Executive first, with a particular focus on sorting out the dreadful mess in which the Education of our young people has been left. We want to put stability first.

If the DUP really want Ulster Unionist support in devolving Policing & Justice powers, then they need to demonstrate that they are serious about helping us to create the right circumstances for further devolution to take place. At the moment Education is a mess and RPA – particularly local government reform – is not far behind it. With that scenario in mind, I have little confidence that the Executive could make a success of devolved policing powers at this point in time, when it is clear they cannot cope with the devolved powers which they already have.”

ENDS