

STATEMENT FROM:



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Ulster Unionists put the people of Northern Ireland first

People should be very clear about why the Ulster Unionist Party is opposed to the Devolution of Policing & Justice powers at this particular time.

In spite of coming under an unprecedented amount of pressure from various sources, the Ulster Unionist party has stood firm and stuck to its principles and its promises.

We are concerned at the Executive's failure to deliver on the issues which matter for local people, and are particularly concerned at the disastrous mess in which our Education system has been left.

The Executive has proved itself to be dysfunctional and incapable of reaching decisions in the field of Education and the Review of Public Administration to name but two.

Absolutely the last thing which the people of Northern Ireland need is for Policing & Justice to be left in a similar state to Education.

This so-called crisis is a manufactured one. If the DUP believes in the deal it negotiated with Sinn Fein at Hillsborough then it is up to the DUP to sell that deal, and the simple fact is that both the DUP and Sinn Fein have the numbers in the Assembly to push it through.

First Nigel Dodds said there would be no devolution of Policing & Justice powers for a political lifetime. Then Lord Morrow said it would not happen in the lifetime of this Assembly. Next the DUP said they would not proceed without Community confidence. Finally they said they would not proceed without Ulster Unionist support. Now they are set to proceed with their Sinn Fein allies.

The Ulster Unionist Party has a track record of putting the future of the people of Northern Ireland first - rather than for personal or party political gain, unlike others. We were not afraid to take electorally unpopular decisions in the past in the best interests of all the people of Northern Ireland.

The Northern Ireland economy needs a stable, working Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive. The Ulster Unionist Party believes that additional powers should not be given to the current dysfunctional system at Stormont until they can demonstrate that they can cope with the powers they have.

We believe that Policing and Justice powers are too important to take unnecessary risks with by devolving to this Executive at this stage.

ENDS