

## **Transparency, Governance and Accountability**

**The SDLP is firmly committed to the highest standards of transparency and accountability in public life.**

Politics and Government has been degraded here over the last ten years but the last number of months has seen a marked acceleration in that deterioration.

The SDLP believe that governmental transparency should not be a goal, it should be a pre-requisite.

Recently, scandals have degraded confidence in Government. This has been coupled with the degradation of budget transparency.

### **We believe that:**

- Meetings between Ministers and external organisations and individual should be published.
- Meetings between Special Advisors and external organisations and individual should be published.
- A uniform minute template of meetings should be used across government departments.
- There must be greater sharing of information on the processes and principles by which the Executive works and for providing greater detail on what decisions have been taken
- PAC should have the power to flag a particular budget line to remind the departmental committee in question or the Assembly at large to keep it under focus and scrutiny going forward.
- Budget Transparency must improve - this includes Ministers making statements in the Assembly in respect of their own departmental budgets and clarity surrounding the announcement of new money (or the reallocation of money).
- Improve the measures in place to protect whistle-blowers.