

**EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO THE
ELECTIONS (POLICY DEVELOPMENT GRANTS SCHEME) ORDER 2006**

2006 No. 602

1. This explanatory memorandum has been prepared by the Department for Constitutional Affairs and is laid before Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.

2. Description

2.1 This Order relates to the grants made to political parties ('policy development grants') to assist the parties with the development of policies for inclusion in their manifestos for parliamentary elections, elections to the European Parliament, the Scottish Parliament, the National Assembly for Wales, and Northern Ireland Assembly, local government elections and local elections in Northern Ireland. It makes variations to the Scheme, to remove the Ulster Unionist party from the Scheme on the ground that it is no longer eligible. The Order gives effect to recommendations of the Electoral Commission, who make the grants.

3. Matters of special interest to the Select Committee on Statutory Instruments

3.1 None

4. Legislative Background

4.1 This Order is made by the Secretary of State under section 12 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000.

4.2 Under section 12, it is the responsibility of the Electoral Commission to devise the terms of the scheme for the making of policy development grants. The Commission then has to submit that scheme to the Secretary of State who must make an Order setting out the scheme (with such modifications as he thinks fit). The scheme has in particular to specify or provide for the determination of the parties who are eligible and how the money is to be allocated amongst them.

4.3 The Commission must keep the Scheme under review, and may make recommendations to the Secretary of State for any variations to the Scheme that they consider appropriate.

5. Extent

5.1 The instrument applies to the United Kingdom.

6. European Convention on Human Rights

6.1 In Harriet Harman's view, as the instrument is subject to the negative resolution procedure and does not amend primary legislation, no statement is required.

7. Policy Background

7.1 Following the May 2005 UK parliamentary general election, the Ulster Unionist Party no longer satisfies the eligibility requirements provided in section 12

(in broad terms, two or more Members of Parliament who have made the oath of allegiance (or the corresponding affirmation) and who are not disqualified from sitting or voting). Accordingly, the Electoral Commission has recommended that the Ulster Unionist Party be removed from the scheme. The share of the moneys available for policy development grants that previously could be granted to the Ulster Unionist Party can be redistributed amongst the parties that continue to be eligible.

8. Impact

8.1 A regulatory impact assessment has not been prepared for this instrument as it has no impact on business, charities or voluntary bodies.

9. Contact

9.1 Nnenna Orji at the Department for Constitutional Affairs, 6th Floor (6.21) Selborne House, 54-60 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6QW

020 7210 8239

E-mail: Nnenna.Orji @dca.gsi.gov.uk

Department for Constitutional Affairs
February 2006