NI Open Government Network 25th May 2017

89 Loopland Drive

Belfast

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Dear Party Leader

**Re: Your party’s commitment to open government at the General Election.**

The Northern Ireland Open Government Network (NIOGN) is a coalition of active citizens and civil society organisations committed to making government work better for people. We work to promote the principles of open government – increased transparency, participation and accountability – alongside sister networks in Scotland, Wales and Republic of Ireland.

The NIOGN are committed to collaborating with, and challenging the government in the UK to develop and implement ambitious open government reforms. In Northern Ireland we are committed to continue to work with the Executive to meet its [Open Government commitments](http://www.opengovernment.org.uk/resource/2016-18-uk-open-government-action-plan-commitments-from-the-northern-ireland-executive/).

Following the up-coming election, your party will re-enter talks to re-establish a Northern Ireland Executive. During this election and in the subsequent talks, we call on all political parties to:

* Commit to implementing all existing commitments in the Northern Ireland 2016-18 Open Government Action Plan, and to a continued partnership between government and civil society to create the next National Action Plan due in 2018
* Commit to open government principles of transparency, participation and accountability in your party manifesto; and outline the open government reforms that you will introduce.
* Commit to publish political donations in-line with the Electoral Commission guidance.
* Commit to honouring the principles of open government throughout the process of the UK leaving the EU, and during future negotiations. Specifically, through:
* Providing the maximum level of transparency possible during the Brexit negotiations.
* Publishing the register of ministerial meetings on a weekly basis with adequate information to ensure that who is meeting with ministers is transparent.
* Establishing a new Northern Ireland Assembly Committee to scrutinise the impacts of Brexit on Northern Ireland.

The General Election has been called at a time of great political and constitutional uncertainty. Many institutions have lost the public’s trust, and citizens are feeling increasingly disempowered and disengaged from political life. Therefore, it is vital that the principles of open government are adopted and promoted by all political parties to help restore public trust and confidence.

Yours Sincerely



Colm Burns

Chair of the Northern Ireland Open Government Network