



Northern Ireland
Assembly

COMMITTEE
FOR THE OFFICE OF THE
FIRST MINISTER AND DEPUTY
FIRST MINISTER

OFFICIAL REPORT
(Hansard)

Departmental Spending Plans

27 July 2010

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

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FOR THE OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER AND
DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER**

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Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Dr Stephen Farry (Deputy Chairperson)
Ms Martina Anderson
Mrs Dolores Kelly
Mr Barry McElduff
Mr Francie Molloy
Mr George Robinson
Mr Jimmy Spratt

The Deputy Chairperson (Dr Farry):

We now move on to the 2010-11 spending plans of the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister (OFMDFM), on which the Committee was due to receive a briefing today. We received an e-mail from the Department, which advises that:

“Ministers are continuing to actively consider and discuss various options in relation to the Department’s Budget/Spending plans and until the implications and feasibility of these options are explored further we are not in a position, at this stage, to provide any briefing to the Committee, either in writing or orally, on this matter.”

Does anyone wish to comment? We ought to be concerned about clarity on spending plans. However, the situation is not unique to OFMDFM but applies across the board. We will return to the issue in early September.

Mrs D Kelly:

Was a reason given? Had officials not finished their work on the departmental spending plans? I understand that they must be submitted by August.

The Deputy Chairperson:

The spending plans are a work in progress. The options are still being considered and discussed.

Mrs D Kelly:

Will the spending plans come back to the Committee?

The Deputy Chairperson:

I imagine that they will come back to the Committee in early September.

Mrs D Kelly:

By then, it will be a fait accompli, and it will be too late to scrutinise the spending plans.

The Deputy Chairperson:

Nothing is a fait accompli until it is formally adopted by the Assembly as part of the Budget resolution and legislation. A departmental briefing will be a first indication of what is likely to happen.