



**Northern Ireland  
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE**

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS  
WEDNESDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2016  
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

- Present: Mr Mike Nesbitt (Chairperson)  
Mr Danny Kennedy (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Cathal Boylan  
Mrs Pam Cameron  
Mr Stewart Dickson  
Mr William Irwin  
Mr Phillip Logan  
Mr Seán Lynch  
Mr Philip McGuigan  
Mr Richie McPhillips  
Mr Christopher Stalford
- In Attendance: Mrs Kathy O’Hanlon (Assembly Clerk)  
Miss Karen Jardine (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Stephen Magee (Clerical Supervisor)  
Mrs Andrienne Magee (Clerical Officer)

*The meeting began in public session at 2.02pm.*

**1. Apologies**

There were no apologies.

**2. UK Exit from EU**

*Professor David Phinnemore joined the meeting at 2.03pm.*

Professor David Phinnemore, Professor of European Politics, Queen's University Belfast, briefed the Committee on the paper 'After the EU Referendum: Establishing the Best Outcome for Northern Ireland' which was prepared with Dr Lee McGowan, QUB and other academics, and published in September 2016.

*Mr Stalford joined the meeting at 2.05pm.*

A question and answer session followed. The briefing was recorded by Hansard.

*Professor Phinnemore left the meeting at 3.00pm.*

*Mr Boylan left the meeting at 3.00pm.*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to circulate the research paper to the other statutory committees for information.

*Mr Boylan returned to the meeting at 3.02pm.*

Members discussed the possibility of inviting other potential witnesses to brief the Committee on matters relating to the decision of the UK to leave the European Union.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to ask the NI Assembly EU Affairs Manager to suggest other witnesses in relation to this matter.

### **3. Chair's Business**

#### Appointment process for Executive Press Secretary

The Committee discussed the recent appointment of an Executive Press Secretary by the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to consider a draft letter to the First Minister and deputy First Minister at its next meeting which would request a description of the role of Executive Press Secretary and how the role fits within the Executive Office; and how responsibilities previously undertaken by the outgoing Director of Communications and Executive Support within the Executive Office will be reallocated.

#### EC-UK

The Committee noted that the next meeting of EC-UK has been provisionally scheduled to take place in Cardiff on 31 October 2016.

*Mr Dickson left the meeting at 3.24pm.*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that it was content for the Chair to attend the next meeting of EC-UK, along with a member of Committee staff.

#### Committee invitations

The Committee noted the current list of Committee invitations, including updated information relating to the Law Centre NI Brexit and Immigration event.

#### **4. Draft Minutes**

*Agreed:* The draft minutes of the proceedings of 14 September 2016 were agreed by the Committee.

#### **5. Matters Arising**

##### Draft Programme for Government 2016-21

The Committee considered a briefing note from the Clerk regarding scrutiny of the forthcoming draft Programme for Government 2016-21 and the preparation of its co-ordinated report.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that it was content for the Clerk to write to other statutory committees to outline the suggested themes for scrutiny and the anticipated timescale for response. A formal commissioning note will issue once the draft Programme for Government 2016-21 has been published for consultation by the Executive.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to commission responses from the Executive Office Arms-Length Bodies on the draft PfG once it is published.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to consider hosting a stakeholder event, possibly in conjunction with an external organisation, to aid its scrutiny of the draft PfG.

##### Global Outcomes-based Accountability Summit

The Committee noted a number of additional suggested invitees to the reception it is hosting to close the Global Outcomes-based Accountability Summit on Tuesday 11 October.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to issue the additional invitations.

### Budget 2017-20

The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance providing communication from the Department of Finance on the proposal for a one-stage one-year Resource DEL Budget process for 2017-18, alongside a multi-year capital DEL budget. Members noted that DoF has indicated that input from Committees to Budget 2017-18 should be provided by the end of October 2016.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to request a briefing from TEO officials in early October on Budget 2017-18.

### Briefing on matters relating to UN treaties and conventions

The Committee noted that, as agreed at the previous meeting, representatives from the NI Human Rights Commission (NIHRC), Equality Commission NI (ECNI) and the NI Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM) had been invited to provide a briefing on the NI Executive's engagement with the reporting cycles of relevant UN treaties and conventions.

Members noted subsequent correspondence from NIHRC requesting that the Chief Commissioner and colleagues be given an opportunity to brief the Committee on these matters separately.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that it was content to hear separately from the NIHRC.

The Committee also noted correspondence from the NI Human Rights Consortium, including supporting documentation, requesting an opportunity to contribute to the briefing on participation of the NI Executive in reporting cycles of relevant UN treaties and conventions.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to invite the Human Rights Consortium to contribute to the briefing with ECNI and NICEM.

### Outstanding Correspondence

The Committee noted the current list of outstanding correspondence from the Executive Office.

## **6. Governance – Executive Office Departmental Plan 2016-17**

The Committee discussed the Executive Office Departmental Plan for 2016-17.

*Mr Dickson returned to the meeting at 3.32pm.*

*Mr Stalford left the meeting at 3.33pm.*

- Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Executive Office to seek clarification on why a number of issues which had previously been included as key issues in June had not been included in the Departmental Plan for 2016-17 including:
- Appointment of board members to North South bodies;
  - Matters relating to victims and survivors including the collaborative design process, welfare reform implications and PEACE IV proposals;
  - Development of a refugee integration strategy;
  - Response to recommendations from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Report of the Review Panel on the Employers' Guidance on Recruiting People with Conflict Related Convictions; and
  - Public appointments, and re-appointments to the Strategic Investment Board.

- Agreed:* The Committee also agreed to seek clarification on the lack of reference within the Plan with regard to:
- draft PfG indicator 30 (improve our attractiveness as a destination) and indicator 40 (improve our international reputation);
  - bringing forward Age GFS legislation, despite OFMDFM undertaking a consultation on proposals last year; and
  - engagement with the Committee.

- Agreed:* The Committee agreed to invite the TEO officials to brief the Committee on the Departmental Plan on receipt of the written information.

## **7. Correspondence**

### Committee for the Economy - UK Exit from the EU

The Committee noted copy correspondence from the Committee for the Economy to the First Minister and deputy First Minister on the management of the Northern Ireland response to the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union.

*Mr Stalford returned to the meeting at 3.39pm.*

- Agreed:* The Committee agreed to include the correspondence in the papers for the briefing with the Head of the Civil Service, Sir Malcolm McKibbin, on the implications for NI Executive departments of the UK decision to exit the EU, scheduled for 5 October.

### Public Accounts Committee - Financial Assistance to United Airlines

The Committee noted copy correspondence from the Public Accounts Committee to the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding the provision of financial assistance to United Airlines in respect of the Belfast-Newark route.

### TEO – consultation on withdrawal of Statistical Compendia Publications

The Committee noted correspondence from the Executive Office advising of a consultation on a proposal to withdraw the publication of the annual Official Statistics publication ‘A profile of older people in NI’ and ‘Gender Equality Statistics’.

## **8. Forward Work Programme**

The Committee noted the draft Forward Work programme for September – October 2016.

## **9. Any Other Business**

None.

## **10. Date, time and place of next meeting**

The next Committee meeting will be held at 2 pm in Room 30 on Wednesday 28 September 2016.

*The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 3.42pm.*

**Mr Mike Nesbitt MLA**  
**Chairperson**  
**Committee for the Executive Office**