



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE

Minutes of Proceedings

WEDNESDAY 5 FEBRUARY 2020

Room 30, Parliament Buildings, Belfast

Present: Mr Colin McGrath MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Mike Nesbitt MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Trevor Clarke MLA
Mr Fra McCann MLA
Mr George Robinson MLA
Mr Pat Sheehan MLA
Ms Emma Sheerin MLA
Mr Christopher Stalford MLA

Apologies: Mr Trevor Lunn MLA

In Attendance: Ms Marie Austin (Assembly Clerk)
Mrs Janet Robinson (Assistant Clerk)
Mr Craig Mealey (Clerical Supervisor)
Mrs Andrienne Magee (Clerical Officer)

The Committee agreed to start the meeting in closed session to receive a briefing from the Clerk on handling subordinate legislation.

The meeting commenced at 3:00 pm. in closed session.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Subordinate Legislation:

The Clerk briefed the Committee on handling subordinate legislation.

The meeting moved into public session at 3:11 pm.

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 29 January 2020.

4. Matters arising

None.

5. First Minister and deputy First Minister – Overview of key challenges and priorities and proposed programme of work – Evidence Session

The First Minister and deputy First Minister and one of the Junior Ministers joined the meeting at 3.15pm.

Mrs Arlene Foster MLA, First Minister

Mrs Michelle O'Neill MLA, deputy First Minister

Mr Gordon Lyons MLA, Junior Minister.

The Committee noted an apology from Junior Minister Kearney who was unable to accommodate the later start time for the meeting.

The First Minister and deputy First Minister provided the Committee with an overview of the key challenges for The Executive Office, their priorities and proposed programme of work.

The oral evidence was followed by a question and answer session.

The Ministers agreed to provide further information on a range of issues.

The oral evidence was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked the Ministers for their attendance.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request monthly oral and written briefings on the work of the Brexit Sub-Committee.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to commission research on the position in relation to International Relations in UK jurisdictions and the Republic of Ireland, covering issues such as: their approach; indicators to measure effectiveness and associated costs.

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6. SR 2018/194 – The Sex Discrimination Order 1976 (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2018

The Committee considered SR 2018/194: The Sex Discrimination Order 1976 (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2018, which amends Regulation 4 of the Sex Discrimination Order 1976 (Amendment) Regulations 2012 to substitute Department for Communities for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

Agreed: The Committee considered SR 2018/194: The Sex Discrimination Order 1976 (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2018 and had no objection to the Rule.

7. SR 2019/132 – The Salaries (Public Services Ombudsman) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019

The Committee considered SR 2019/132: The Salaries (Public Services Ombudsman) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019 which sets the salary for the office of the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman.

Agreed: The Committee considered SR 2019/132 The Salaries (Public Services Ombudsman) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019 and had no objection to the Rule.

8. Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme for February – March 2020 and a number of briefings to be scheduled or rescheduled.

9. Correspondence

The Committee noted the following:

- i. The Investment Strategy Northern Ireland - Investing Activity Report.
- ii. Correspondence from Queen's University Belfast providing a briefing note on UK Withdrawal, Statutory Instruments, and devolved competence.
- iii. Correspondence from the Carnegie UK Trust requesting to brief the Committee on its work.
- iv. Correspondence from Mr Jim Allister, MLA, in relation to his Private Members' Bill: The Functioning of Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill.

10. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson informed Members that he had been invited to represent the Committee for the Executive Office at the St Patrick's Day events in Washington DC from Tuesday 10 March to Friday 13 March 2020.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Chairperson should attend the St Patrick's Day events in Washington DC.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Committee meeting scheduled for 11 March should be cancelled and the briefings rearranged for the following week.

11. Any Other Business

Mr Sheehan asked whether there was scope to change the meeting day for the Committee for the Executive Office.

12. Date, Time and Place of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 12 February 2020 at 2.00 p.m. in Room 30 Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 4.38 p.m.

Mr Colin McGrath MLA

Chairperson, Committee for the Executive Office