



**Northern Ireland  
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE**

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

WEDNESDAY 16 SEPTEMBER 2020

The Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings, Belfast

**Present:** Mr Colin McGrath MLA (Chairperson)  
Mr Doug Beattie MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Ms Martina Anderson MLA  
Mr Trevor Clarke MLA  
Mr Trevor Lunn MLA  
Mr George Robinson MLA  
Mr Pat Sheehan MLA  
Ms Emma Sheerin MLA

**Apologies:** Mr Christopher Stalford MLA

**In Attendance:** Ms Marie Austin (Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Craig Mealey (Assistant Clerk)  
Ms Andrienne Magee (Clerical Officer)

*The meeting commenced at 3:18pm in open session.*

**1. Apologies**

As above.

**2. Draft Minutes**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 9 September 2020.

**3. Matters Arising**

Common Frameworks

The Committee noted that, during the Brexit evidence session with Junior Ministers on 24 June 2020, Junior Minister Lyons referred to a letter which was to be sent to the Assembly providing information on Common Frameworks. To date, neither the

Speaker's Office nor the Committee for the Executive Office had received any such letter.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to request the information as a matter of urgency.

#### **4. Implementation of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland (Article 2(1)) – Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission**

The following representatives from the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission joined the meeting at 3.21pm:

Ms Geraldine McGahey, Chief Commissioner, Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

Dr Evelyn Collins, Chief Executive, Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

Dr David Russell, Chief Executive, Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission.

The representatives briefed Members on Article 2(1) of the Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol and their new powers under the “dedicated mechanism”.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

*Martina Anderson left the meeting at 4:26pm.*

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to schedule a follow-up evidence session with the Equality Commission and the Human Rights Commission in the first quarter of the new year.

*Emma Sheerin left the meeting at 4:35pm.*

*The meeting was suspended at 4:35pm.*

*The meeting resumed at 4:36pm.*

#### **5. Report on Informal Strategic Planning Meeting**

The Committee considered a report on the informal Strategic Planning meeting which was held on Wednesday 9 September 2020.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that it was content with the report and its immediate Strategic Priorities.

The Committee considered a revised Brexit scrutiny schedule.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that it was content with the revised Brexit scrutiny schedule.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to schedule a range of oral and written briefings on Brexit issues.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to request legal advice on how the UK Internal Market Bill, as is currently drafted, will change/impact the devolved legislative competence of the Northern Ireland Assembly.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to commission research on the workings of the North South Ministerial Council and the British Irish Council and updates following meetings.

*Emma Sheerin rejoined the meeting at 4:37pm.*

The Committee considered a request from Fermanagh and Omagh District Council to brief the Committee on Brexit issues that directly impact that council area.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to hold a Brexit stakeholder event, to which one senior official and one political representative from each council area would be invited to attend.

The Committee considered correspondence from the Historical Institutional Abuse Interim Advocate's Office advising that the Interim Advocate would like an opportunity to brief the Committee on aspects of his work before he leaves office.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to request a written briefing from the Interim Advocate for Historical Institutional Abuse.

## **6. Forward Work Programme**

The Committee considered the Forward Work Programme for September to October 2020.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to move the departmental oral briefing on engaging with the Institutions regarding Historical Institutional Abuse to later in the autumn.

## **7. Correspondence**

- i. The Committee noted a response from the First Minister and deputy First Minister to the Committee for Finance regarding the provision of timely financial responses and adherence to Department of Finance guidelines.

- ii. The Committee noted the 2019-2020 Annual Report on the Northern Ireland Executive's Child Poverty Strategy.
- iii. The Committee considered a copy of correspondence from the Committee for Justice to the First Minister and deputy First Minister requesting information on funding for the Victims' Payment Scheme.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to request a copy of the First Minister and deputy First Minister's response to the Committee for Justice.

- iv. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for the Economy to the Chancellor of the Exchequer encouraging the extension of the Job Retention Scheme and Self-Employment Income Support Scheme.
- v. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance providing information on Covid-19 Funding Allocations.
- vi. The Committee noted correspondence from Carnegie UK Trust regarding Community Planning Partnerships.
- vii. The Committee noted the Pivotal Public Policy Forum NI report: *Priorities for Recovery – A briefing paper for the Northern Ireland Executive's return from recess.*

## **8. Chairperson's Business**

None.

## **9. Any Other Business**

None.

## **10. Date, Time and Place of next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 23 September 2020 at 3:15pm in The Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

*The meeting was adjourned at 4:44pm.*

**Mr Colin McGrath MLA**  
**Chairperson, Committee for the Executive Office**