



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR HEALTH

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**Thursday, 13 February 2020
Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings**

Present: Mr Colm Gildernew MLA (Chairperson)
Ms Pam Cameron MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Ms Sinéad Bradley MLA
Ms Paula Bradshaw MLA
Mr Gerry Carroll MLA
Mr Alan Chambers MLA
Ms Jemma Dolan MLA
Mr Alex Easton MLA
Ms Órlaithí Flynn MLA

Apologies: None.

In Attendance: Ms Éilis Haughey (Clerk)
Ms Deirdre Farry (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Ms Roisin Donnelly (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Jonathan Lamont (Clerical Supervisor)
Mr Brendan Miskelly (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced at 10.33 am in closed session.

1. Briefing from Assembly Research and Information Services – Department of Health Budget

An Assembly Research Officer briefed the Committee on the Executive In-Year Monitoring process and Assembly budget scrutiny.

The meeting moved into public session at 10.58 am.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr Alan Chambers to his first meeting of the Committee for Health and wished Mr John Stewart well in his role as Assembly Private Secretary to the Minister for Health.

2. Apologies

None.

3. Chairperson's Business

- i. The Chairperson advised Members that he had accepted the Minister for Health's invitation to participate in the reconstituted Strategic Health Partnership Forum.
- ii. The Chairperson advised Members that he had held an introductory meeting with the British Medical Association.

4. Draft Minutes

The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2020.

5. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

6. Update from the Chief Medical Officer on Coronavirus

The following officials joined the meeting at 11.01 am:

Dr Michael McBride, Chief Medical Officer, Department of Health

Dr Gerry Waldron, Head of Health Protection, Public Health Agency

Dr Miriam McCarthy, Director of Commissioning, Health and Social Care Board

The Chief Medical Officer briefed the Committee on the Department of Health's response to the Coronavirus (Covid 19).

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

The meeting was suspended at 12.05 pm.

The meeting resumed at 12.20 pm.

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7. Departmental Briefing – Departmental Budget

The following officials joined the meeting at 12.22 pm:

Ms Neelia Lloyd, Director of Finance, Department of Health

Mr David Keenan, Financial Planning Unit, Department of Health

Ms Brigitte Worth, Director of Investment Directorate, Department of Health

Ms Linda Carter, Head of Capital Resources, Department of Health

The officials briefed the Committee on the Department of Health's 2019/20 Resource Budget position, Spring Supplementary Estimates, 2020/21 Resource Budget requirements and the Department's Capital Budget position.

Mr Carroll rejoined the meeting at 12.32 pm.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The officials agreed to provide the Committee with further information on a number of issues raised by Members during the question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

The briefing session was reported by Hansard.

8. SR 2019/42 The Provision of Health Services to Persons Not Ordinarily Resident (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019

The Committee considered SR 2019/42 The Provision of Health Services to Persons Not Ordinarily Resident (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019 which were created to provide for continuing healthcare provision in respect of certain categories of person, should the UK exit the EU without an agreement.

Agreed: That the Committee for Health has considered SR 2019/42 The Provision of Healthcare Services to Persons Not Ordinarily Resident (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019 and recommends that it be annulled by the Assembly.

The Agenda Item was reported by Hansard.

9. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted a response from the Minister for Health to the Committee's request for further information on the consultation carried out in relation to substances controlled by SR 2018/3 The Misuse of Drugs (Designation) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2018 and SR 2018/4 The Misuse of Drugs (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2018.
- ii. The Committee noted a response from the Minister for Health to a request from Mr Gerry Carroll MLA that senior departmental officials meet with the patients affected by the Neurology Recall and confirming that arrangements for a proposed meeting would

be taken forward in consultation with the NI Neurological Charities Alliance and the Patient Client Council.

- iii. The Committee considered correspondence from Mr Declan McAleer MLA seeking the Committee's support for the introduction of the Cystic Fibrosis drug Trikafta.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Department of Health for a response to the issues raised.

- iv. The Committee considered an invitation from Dementia NI to its fifth anniversary celebration event and the launch of its new strategy for 2020-2023 on 28 February 2020.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that Members should respond to the invitation directly.

- v. The Committee considered correspondence from Pivotal Public Policy Forum providing information on its work and its first report 'Moving Forward – putting Northern Ireland on track for the future' and requesting to meet the Committee.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider this as part of its Forward Work Programme.

- vi. The Committee considered an invitation from Mid Ulster District Council to hold a Committee meeting at one of its council locations.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider this as part of its Forward Work Programme.

- vii. The Committee noted correspondence from an individual to the Minister for Health regarding health service waiting lists.

- viii. The Committee considered a request from the Chief Commissioner of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission to meet the Chairperson to discuss the role and remit of the Commission.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Chairperson should meet with the Chief Commissioner.

- ix. The Committee considered an invitation from the Northern Ireland Hospice for the Committee to visit the Hospice Patient Units.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider this invitation as part of its Forward Work Programme.

- x. The Committee considered correspondence from the Committee for Finance in relation to the Budget Bill 2020 and resource requirements for the forthcoming financial year.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to provide any relevant budget information it receives from the Department of Health to the Committee for Finance.

- xi. The Committee considered a meeting request from the family of Dáithí MacGabhann to discuss potential legislation for soft opt-out organ donation.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider the meeting request as part of its Forward Work Programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Minister for Health for a response to the issues raised.

- xii. The Committee considered an invitation from the British Association for Music Therapy to attend its 2020 Conference, ‘Open Ground: Music Therapy in Collaboration and Exchange’ on 3 April 2020.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that Members should respond to the invitation directly.

- xiii. The Committee considered a response from the Minister for Health to the Committee’s request for information on the ongoing and planned inquiries relating to the work of the consultant neurologist, Dr Michael Watt.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite the Chair of the Independent Neurology Inquiry to brief the Committee.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite the RQIA to brief the Committee.

- xiv. The Committee considered a request from Dunmurry Manor Support Group to brief the Committee.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to proceed with its planned briefing from the Commissioner for Older People and to give further consideration to the planning and scheduling of additional work and briefings in relation to this matter.

10. Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered its Forward Work Programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite the Department of Health’s Chief AHP Officer to brief the Committee.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that Members should advise the Clerk of issues they wish to consider as part of its longer term Forward Work Programme to discuss at the strategic planning meeting.

11. Any Other Business

The Committee discussed potential future subordinate legislation relating to the UK’s exit from the European Union.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek assurances from the Department of Health that it would engage the Committee at the earliest opportunity in relation to any subordinate legislation relating to the UK’s exit from the European Union.

12. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next Committee meeting will be on Thursday, 20 February 2020, at 10.30 am in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 1.16 pm.

Signed: _____
Chairperson

Date: _____