



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

AGREED MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**TUESDAY 11 SEPTEMBER 2012, ROOM 21, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS,
BALLYMISCAW, STORMONT**

Present:	Mr Stephen Moutray (Chairperson)	
	Mr Pat Sheehan (Deputy Chairperson)	
	Mr Roy Beggs	
	Mr Gregory Campbell	
	Mr Stewart Dickson	
	Mr Paul Givan	
	Mr Simon Hamilton	
	Mr John McCallister	
	Mr Raymond McCartney	
	Mr Conall McDevitt	
	Ms Caitríona Ruane	
In Attendance:	Mr John Simmons	(Assembly Clerk)
	Ms Sohui Yim	(Assistant Assembly Clerk)
	Mr Andrienne Magee	(Clerical Officer)
	Mr Christopher McNickle	(Clerical Officer)
	Mr Tim Moore	(Senior Research Officer)
	Mr Ray McCaffrey	(Research Officer)

The meeting opened at 11.00 am. in public session.

1. Apologies

There were no apologies.

The Chairperson welcomed Caitríona Ruane who replaces Pat Doherty as a Committee Member and noted that he would be writing to Mr Doherty to thank him for his contribution to the Committee.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 26th June 2012.

3. Matters Arising

Members noted a Freedom of Information request which was received over the summer recess and were informed that a full copy of the information released in the response was available should Members wish to view it.

Agreed: Members were content.

4. Correspondence

Members noted a letter from the Speaker regarding the NIO Consultation on *'Measures to improve the operation of the NI Assembly'*, the full NIO Consultation Paper, a press release relating to the Consultation and a draft response letter to the Speaker.

Agreed: Content with the draft response letter and to issue it to the Speaker.

Members noted a letter from the NI Public Service Alliance (NIPSA) regarding the NIO Consultation and a draft response letter to NIPSA.

Agreed: Content with the draft response letter and to issue it to NIPSA.

5. Review of Parts III and IV of the Northern Ireland Act in the Context of Reviewing the Size of the NI Assembly and the Number of NI Departments

The Chairperson advised the Members that the purpose of this agenda item was to consider items under Part 2 of Committee's Review, that is, the number of NI Departments.

The Clerk briefed the Committee on the papers before Members

The Chairperson referred Members to an Assembly Research Briefing Paper entitled *'Machinery of Government: Departmental Arrangements'* and invited two representatives from Assembly Research and Information Service to join the meeting.

Assembly Research representatives joined the meeting at 11.08am.

The Assembly Research representatives briefed the Committee on the Research Paper entitled *'Machinery of Government: Departmental Arrangements'*.

Mr Paul Givan joined the meeting at 11.10am.

This was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked the Assembly Research representatives for their briefing and attending the meeting.

The Assembly Research Representatives left the meeting at 11.20am.

The Committee noted that the Assembly Research Paper references that the Cabinet Secretary is responsible for advising the Prime Minister on [Westminster] machinery of government changes.

Agreed: To issue a letter to OFMDFM inviting a senior official (or officials) to provide a presentation to the Committee regarding its Review on the number of Government Departments.

Members discussed several documents relating to the Review including: 'Summary analysis of the Political Parties of the Assembly proposals on reduction in the number of NI Government Departments'; 'Summary analysis of written submissions to the Stakeholder Call for Evidence paper'; and a statement from OFMDFM from 18th July 2012.

Mr Gregory Campbell left the meeting at 11.19am

The Chairperson invited a Party Representative from each of the Political Parties represented on the Committee to speak on their Party's position regarding number of Government Departments.

Mr Roy Beggs left the meeting at 11.20am.

A Party Representative from the Alliance, DUP, SDLP, Sinn Féin and UUP spoke on their respective Party's position in relation to the number of Government Departments.

Agreed: To continue the discussion at the next Committee meeting which will be held in both open and closed session in order to provide the Members with time to consult further with their Party colleagues further on this matter.

6. Draft Forward Work Programme

The Chairperson advised the Members that the purpose of this agenda item was to give some consideration to the timeline for Part 2 of the current Review and to consider options for the Committee's next review work after October 2012.

Members discussed the draft Forward Work Programme.

Agreed: Content with the draft Forward Work Programme subject to one minor amendment.

Agreed: To return to the subject of the Committee's next review work at the next Committee meeting.

7. Any Other Business

There were no other items of business.

8. Date, Time and Place of next Meeting

The next meeting of the Assembly and Executive Review Committee will be held on Tuesday 25th September, at 11.00am in Room 21, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 11.37am

**Mr Stephen Moutray
Chairperson
Assembly and Executive Review Committee**