



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**TUESDAY 23 OCTOBER 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 Raymond McCartney
Mr Conall McDevitt
Ms Cairtriona Ruane

Apologies: None

In Attendance: Mr John Simmons (Assembly Clerk)
Ms Ursula McCanny (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Andrienne Magee (Clerical Officer)
Mr Christopher McNickle (Clerical Officer)

Mr Raymond McCaffrey (Research Officer)

The meeting opened at 11.04 am in public session.

1. Apologies

None.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 9th October 2012.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. 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 the Committee's Review, that is, the number of NI Departments.

Members noted the fact that, as requested by the Committee, Professor Birrell from the University of Ulster had provided the Committee with a written submission on his work relating to the governance structures in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: To note the submission

The Chairperson referred Members to an Assembly Research Briefing Paper entitled '*Estimating the Cost of Machinery of Government Changes*'. Members noted the fact that the paper had been commissioned by the Committee as a result of discussions on costings and the impact on employment from scenario draft reorganisations of NI Departments.

The Chairperson welcomed a representative from Assembly Research and Information Service and invited him to join the meeting.

Assembly Research representative joined the meeting at 11.06am.

The Assembly Research representative briefed the Committee on the Research Paper entitled '*Estimating the Cost of Machinery of Government Changes*'.

Mr Stewart Dickson joined the meeting at 11.08 am.

This was followed by a short discussion on the paper.

The Chairperson thanked the member of Assembly Research Staff.

The Chairperson proposed that the Committee write to the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister to request information on any work undertaken to date or planned for the future in relation to initial cost estimates, anticipated savings and the effect on employment that would result from a restructuring of NI Government Departments. He further proposed that the letter should be issued following the day's meeting, with a request for a response for the next Committee meeting.

Agreed: To issue a letter to OFMDFM requesting information on anticipated costs and the impact on staffing in relation to a restructuring of government departments, including specific figures from previous instances of NI departmental restructuring and/or other examples of restructuring, such as RPA.

The Chairperson reminded the Members that the aim of the session was to continue the Committee's discussions on some of the key issues of the Review in order that they might move to an agreed position in preparation for an initial first draft of the Report.

The Chairperson reminded Members that the Committee had the option of moving into closed session to discuss aspects of the Committee's Review on the number of Departments.

Agreed: To move into closed session.

The Committee moved into closed session at 11.10 am

The Clerk briefed the Committee on the papers before Members.

Mr McCartney left the meeting at 11.12 am.

The Committee discussed a number of matters relating to the Committee's Review on the number of Government Departments.

Mr Paul Givan joined the meeting at 11.28 am.

Mr Stewart Dickson left the meeting at 11.36 am.

Mr Paul Givan left the meeting at 11.36 am.

Mr Paul Givan rejoined the meeting at 11.46 am

Agreed: To continue the discussion at the next Committee meeting.

5. Forward Work Programme

The Chairperson advised the Members that the purpose of this agenda item was to give consideration to the timeline for Part 2 of the Review and to

consider options for the Committee's next review work, beginning late November, when the Committee planned to report on Part 2 of the Review.

The Clerk briefed the Committee on the papers before Members.

The Committee briefly discussed the possible options for their next review.

Agreed: To continue their discussions on options for the Committee's next review work at the next meeting.

The Committee moved into open session at 11.55 am

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 13th November, at 11.00am in Room 21, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 11.55 am.

Mr Stephen Moutray
Chairperson
Assembly and Executive Review Committee