

MEETING OF THE CHAIRPERSONS' LIAISON GROUP

TUESDAY 14 APRIL 2015

- Present: Mr Patsy McGlone MLA (Chairperson)
Mrs Anna Lo MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Ms Michaela Boyle MLA
Mr Nelson McCausland MLA
Miss Michelle McIlveen MLA
Mr Robin Swann MLA
- In attendance: Dr Gareth McGrath, Programme Director for SP15+
Mrs Nuala Dunwoody, Clerk Assistant
Mr Damien Martin, Clerk Assistant
Mr Trevor Allen, Senior Assistant Clerk
Mr Oliver Bellew, Assistant Assembly Clerk
Mr George McClelland, Clerical Supervisor
Mr Michael Greer, Clerical Supervisor
- Apologies: Mr Daithí McKay MLA
Mr Alex Maskey MLA
Mr Alastair Ross MLA
Mr Jimmy Spratt MLA

12.58pm The meeting opened in closed session.

1. Apologies

Apologies are listed above.

2. Matters Arising

Correspondence from OFMDFM

Chairpersons were advised of correspondence from the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister indicating that it was content with the draft guidance on timescales

for interaction between Assembly committees and departments. The guidance had previously been agreed by CLG at its meeting of 27 January 2015.

Mobile Phone Connectivity

Chairpersons were advised that the issue of interference on Assembly landline telephones had been resolved. Members were also advised that further updates will be provided in due course on discussions with the mobile network provider in relation to lack of coverage.

Chairpersons were advised that some members were using apps for texting within Parliament Buildings but were advised not to use apps for making voice calls over the wireless network as this may have a negative effect on other wireless network users. The Group was advised that committee clerks would be asked to speak to their Chairpersons in relation to using an app for texting within the building.

In response to a query by Mrs Lo, members discussed limitations on making calls to outside of Northern Ireland from Assembly landlines and the availability of switchboard operators. The Chairperson asked that a response be provided to Mrs Lo by the end of the day.

1.00pm Ms Boyle joined the meeting

3. Minutes of the meeting on 3rd March 2015

The minutes of the meeting held on 3rd March 2015 were agreed.

4. Update on budgets for 2015-2016/SP15+

1.05pm Mr McCausland joined the meeting

Chairpersons received an update on the Assembly Commission's strategic planning and budgeting for 2015/16 from Dr Gareth McGrath.

Members noted that since the last update, and following decisions taken by the Assembly Commission, staffing posts in the Clerking and Reporting Directorate would be reduced by 4.2.

A number of Chairpersons indicated their disappointment at the Independent Financial Review Panel's decision not to accept the Commission's proposal to apply the same childcare scheme measures to members as applied to staff.

5. Use of Social Media in Committees

Chairpersons noted a paper by the Clerk Assistants' Office in relation to the use of social media by committees. Members were advised that a number of committees were already using social media to promote their work.

6. Forward Work Programme

Agreed: Chairpersons noted, and agreed, the draft forward work programme.

7. Any other business

Heating

Members noted that there was a problem with the energy management system and that heating would be fully restored to the building as soon as possible.

Election week

Chairpersons noted that during the week of the elections, in the absence of a full programme of committee meetings, committee clerks would be availing of training on effective questioning.

8. Date, time and venue of next meeting

The next meeting of the Liaison Group is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 19 May 2015 at 12.45pm in Room 21, Parliament Buildings.

1.26pm The Chairperson adjourned the meeting.

Mr Patsy McGlone, Chairperson

16 June 2015