

*MEETING OF THE CHAIRPERSONS' LIAISON GROUP*

**Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2015**

Present: Ms Anna Lo, MLA (Chairperson)  
Mr Trevor Clarke, MLA  
Mrs Jo-Anne Dobson, MLA  
Mr Alex Maskey, MLA  
Mr Nelson McCausland, MLA  
Mr Stephen Moutray, MLA  
Mr Robin Swann, MLA

In attendance: Mrs Nuala Dunwoody, Clerk Assistant  
Mr Damien Martin, Clerk Assistant  
Mr Paul Gill, Clerk Assistant  
Mr Gareth McGrath, Director of Clerking and Reporting  
Mr Trevor Allen, Senior Assistant Clerk  
Mrs Tara McClafferty, Assistant Assembly Clerk  
Mr George McClelland, Clerical Supervisor

Apologies: Ms Michaela Boyle, MLA  
Mr Patsy McGlone, MLA  
Mr Daithí McKay, MLA

*1.12pm The meeting commenced in closed session.*

**1. Apologies**

Apologies are listed above.

## **2. Minutes of the meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2015**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2015 were agreed.

## **3. Matters Arising**

### Resource Planning

Chairpersons received a briefing from Mr Damien Martin on resource planning. At the previous meeting of the Group Mr Ross had expressed the view that despite reductions in staff levels within Research post the Voluntary Exit Scheme, the Committee needed ready access to research due to the high volume of work coming through the Committee. The other chairpersons shared this concern and emphasised the importance of maintaining services to committees in the coming months. Mr Martin made the Group aware that the Clerk Assistants had met with the Head of Research and Information Services and that they were trying to address the issues through managing the demand and by using other researchers or external contracting if needed.

Mr Martin advised that due to the reduction in staff numbers and the increase in the legislative programme that there are also likely to be restrictions in how much work Hansard could cover and that the turnaround times may be longer. Mr Martin also advised that there may be an issue in broadcasting committee meetings if committees agreed to have extra meetings on Plenary days or if there was an extra Plenary on a Wednesday.

Mr McCausland raised the impact of Hansard not being available which in turn could make it difficult for a committee to scrutinise effectively. Mr Martin advised that the most important items of business will be covered and that Hansard will prioritise legislation and inquiries.

*1.24 pm Mr Swann and Mr Moutray joined the meeting.*

*1.25 pm Ms Dobson left the meeting.*

## **4. Chairperson's Business**

The Chairperson welcomed Mr Paul Gill to the meeting as the new Clerk Assistant who will be taking over from Mrs Nuala Dunwoody at the end of November.

The Chairperson thanked Mrs Dunwoody for all of her work over recent years and wished her well in her retirement.

## **5. Impact of External Meetings and Visits**

Chairpersons noted a paper and received a briefing from Mr Trevor Allen on the impact of external meetings and visits.

Mr Maskey advised the group that having a meeting and external visit on the same day was too time consuming for all committee members to attend and that as an alternative the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and Clerk to the Committee attending low key engagements on behalf of the committee and reporting back at the next meeting, can be effective.

Mr Swann commented that he felt undertaking visits without an official meeting was sometimes more effective as not all members are expected to attend.

*1.35 pm Mr Moutray left the meeting.*

## **6. Analysis of Committee Strategic Plans**

Chairpersons noted a paper and received a briefing from Mr Trevor Allen on the analysis of committee strategic plans.

*1.38 pm Mr McCausland left the meeting.*

*1.39 pm The Chairperson adjourned as the meeting became inquorate.*

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Ms Anna Lo, Chairperson

26<sup>th</sup> January 2016