

MEETING OF THE CHAIRPERSONS' LIAISON GROUP
TUESDAY 13 MAY 2014

- Present: Mr Robin Swann MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Michaela Boyle MLA
Mr Paul Givan MLA
Mr Gerry Kelly MLA
Miss Michelle McIlveen MLA
Mr Alex Maskey MLA
- In attendance: Mrs Nuala Dunwoody, Clerk Assistant
Mr Damien Martin, Clerk Assistant
Mrs Kathy O'Hanlon, Clerk to the Liaison Group
Mr Oliver Bellew, Assistant Assembly Clerk
Mr George McClelland, Clerical Supervisor
Mr Michael Greer, Clerical Supervisor
- Apologies: Mrs Anna Lo MLA
Mr Stephen Moutray MLA
Mr Mike Nesbitt MLA
Mr Jimmy Spratt MLA

12.46pm The meeting opened in closed session

1. Apologies

Apologies are listed above.

2. Minutes of the meeting on 25th March 2014

The minutes of the meeting held on 25th March 2014 were agreed.

3. Matters Arising

Correspondence from the Head of the Civil Service regarding cancelled briefings and late papers

Chairpersons noted correspondence from the Head of the Civil Service (HOCS) in response to a Clerk's paper on cancelled briefings and late papers by departments. The response by HOCS indicated that he had met with the OFMDFM Committee to outline the measures that had been put in place to address the ongoing issues and that the Permanent Secretaries Group had been reminded of the continuing need for timely and effective engagement with committees.

4. Core tasks for Statutory Committees

The Clerk briefed the Group on the recommendation by the Committee Review Group which tasked CLG with defining a set of core tasks which would assist the strategic and systematic planning of statutory committees.

Agreed: Chairpersons noted, and agreed, a set of core tasks which would assist the development of strategic plans by committees. Chairpersons also agreed to encourage committees to take account of the seven key principles to enhance and improve the effectiveness of committees.

5. Good practice in conduct and operation of committee meetings

12.51pm Miss McIlveen joined the meeting

Chairpersons were briefed by the Clerk on the recommendation by CRG regarding the agreement of protocols relating to conduct during committee meetings by individual members. Chairpersons noted that the aim of the agreements would be to set out good practice in the conduct and operation of committee meetings, not to regulate behaviour. Members will continue to be bound by the Code of Practice. Chairpersons noted the example protocol provided in the Clerk's paper.

Agreed: Chairpersons agreed to encourage committees to develop protocols for conduct and operation of their committee meetings, and that the example set out in the Clerk's paper could be used as a guide.

6. Business Efficiency – update on committee position

Nuala Dunwoody, Clerk Assistant, updated chairpersons on the latest committee position in respect of the Business Efficiency Programme. Chairpersons were apprised of the outcome of two pilots which included the new post of Senior Assistant Clerk. Chairpersons noted that, whilst the pilot involving the Business Office and Procedures Committee was successful, the committee office pilot had not delivered against some of the main objectives.

Chairpersons were briefed on an alternative committee pilot which would commence shortly.

Chairpersons expressed their appreciation of the bursary students who worked in support of a number of committees during this session.

7. Draft Forward Work Program

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

8. Any other business

There was no other business

9. Date, time and venue of next meeting

The next meeting of the Liaison Group is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 17 June 2014 at 12.45pm in Room 21, Parliament Buildings.

1.01pm The Chairperson adjourned the meeting.

Mr Robin Swann, Chairperson

17 June 2014