



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Ad Hoc Committee on a Bill of Rights

Minutes of Proceedings

Thursday 20 January 2022

Meeting Location: Hybrid Meeting – Room 29, Parliament Buildings, and via StarLeaf

Present: Emma Sheerin MLA (Chairperson)

Present by video or teleconference:

Paula Bradshaw MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Alan Chambers MLA

Mark Durkan MLA

Carál Ní Chuilín MLA

Apologies: None

In Attendance: Caroline Perry (Assembly Clerk)

Jonathan Lamont (Assistant Assembly Clerk)

Shirleen Cornelissen (Clerical Officer)

Jim Nulty (Clerical Supervisor)

The meeting commenced at 2.33pm in open session

1. Apologies

No apologies were received.

2. Chairperson's Business

There were no items of Chairperson's Business.

3. Draft Minutes

Mr Chambers indicated that the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2021 were not a true reflection of that meeting, and asked that his dissent would be recorded.

The Minutes of the meeting were agreed.

4. Matters Arising

There were no Matters Arising.

5. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted the correspondence from the Commission for Victims and Survivors regarding an event to launch its *Better Together* research.
- ii. The Committee considered correspondence from Dermot Nesbitt regarding the meeting on 25 November 2021.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to reply to Mr Nesbitt informing him that party position papers will be included in the Committee's report.

- iii. The Committee considered correspondence from the Law Society of Northern Ireland regarding the Committee meeting on 25 November 2021.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to reply to the Law Society of Northern Ireland informing it that the Committee had not concluded its formal committee meetings and had agreed it would reconvene.

- iv. The Committee noted correspondence from the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission regarding its 2021 Annual Report.
- v. The Committee noted correspondence from the CAMS Office regarding Deaf Awareness courses.

6. Any Other Business

The Committee agreed to write to Professor Colin Harvey to acknowledge his contribution to the Committee's work.

7. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

Members agreed to confirm the date and time of the next meeting during its informal session following the meeting.

The Committee moved to closed session at 3.02pm

8. Consideration of draft report

The Committee considered the draft report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to submit a paragraph summarising the position of the respective parties on a bill of rights.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to submit a revised party position paper for the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the Human Rights Consortium to provide a copy of correspondence it had received from the Northern Ireland Office.

Agreed: The Committee agreed its report subject to minor drafting changes and the addition of party position papers and paragraphs summarising party positions.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that Committee decisions within the report should be qualified, noting that they were made without the assistance of the panel of experts and prior to the submission of party position papers. The Committee agreed to note that it could not make a decision on the outstanding areas in the absence of the panel of experts.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider the wording of the draft motion for debate by correspondence, and once agreed, the Clerk would submit this to the Business Office.

The meeting was adjourned at 3.48pm.

Emma Sheerin MLA
Chairperson, Ad Hoc Committee on a Bill of Rights