



**Northern Ireland  
Assembly**

**ASSEMBLY AND EXECUTIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE (AERC)**

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

**WEDNESDAY 16 DECEMBER 2020, ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mervyn Storey MLA, Chairperson  
Maolíosa McHugh MLA, Deputy Chairperson  
Jim Allister MLA  
Kellie Armstrong MLA (via StarLeaf)  
Robbie Butler MLA  
Alex Easton MLA  
Colin McGrath MLA

Apologies: Gerry Kelly MLA

In Attendance: Mr Shane McAteer (Assembly Clerk)  
Ms Aoibheann Baker (Assistant Clerk)

*The meeting commenced at 12:42pm in open session.*

**1. Apologies**

As above

**2. Declaration of Interests**

Members were advised of the ongoing requirement to declare relevant financial or other interests as and when they arise on the Committee.

**3. Draft Minutes**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 11 November 2020.

*Robbie Butler joined the meeting at 12:44pm*

#### **4. Matters Arising**

Members noted the Committee Secretariat paper setting out the decision made by the Committee under temporary Standing Order 115(9) since the last formal meeting on 11 November; namely the approval of the draft Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Review of the Statement of Entitlements for an Official Opposition.

*The meeting moved into closed session at 12:45pm*

#### **5. Review of the Statement of Entitlements for an Official Opposition: procurement process**

Members received a briefing from the Committee Secretariat on this agenda item.

The Chairperson welcomed John Gibson, Head of the Assembly's Procurement Office, to the meeting to answer any queries the Committee had in regards to the procurement process.

The Committee discussed various aspects of the procurement exercise, including the budgetary considerations and how best to publicise the tender opportunity.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed:

- (a) the draft Specification of requirements, subject to: the inclusion of an additional provision permitting the supplier to make such other relevant observations on Opposition arrangements as considered appropriate; making explicit the budget for the project; and any further amendments as considered necessary by the Evaluation Panel;
- (b) the draft Procurement Strategy, subject to the amendments as discussed and any further amendments as considered necessary by the Evaluation Panel;
- (c) that a number of potential suppliers, as identified by the Assembly's Research and Information Service (RaISe), are issued 'without prejudice' letters making them aware of the opportunity;

- (d) that Maolíosa McHugh, Kellie Armstrong and Jim Allister form the Evaluation Panel;
- (e) that Maolíosa McHugh also fulfils the role of ‘Senior Responsible Owner’;
- (f) that delegated responsibility be given to the Evaluation Panel for all applicable actions leading up to and including the award of the contract;
- (g) that the Evaluation Panel will have a quorum of three; and
- (h) that the tender opportunity shall be published on the Assembly’s website and publicised on the Assembly’s social media accounts as well as through existing academic and parliamentary networks.

*Robbie Butler declared an interest as a member of the Assembly Commission.*

## **6. Potential topics for AERC forward work programme**

Members received a briefing from the Committee Secretariat on this agenda item and were informed that correspondence has been received from the First Minister and Deputy First Minister that morning in regards to the AERC forward work programme;

Agreed: The Committee agreed that:

- (a) the correspondence from the First Minister and Deputy First Minister will be circulated to members for their information; and
- (b) the Committee secretariat will update the list of potential topics to reflect the suggestions from the Executive Ministers and will complete a feasibility assessment of all the proposed topics for consideration at the next meeting of the Committee.

## **7. Correspondence**

7.1 Members noted correspondence from the Finance Committee on its Report on the Functioning of Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill.

7.2 Members noted correspondence from Pivotal on its latest report on education, training and skills for young people aged 14-19 years old.

## **8. Any Other Business**

There was no other business

**9. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting**

The details of the next meeting of the Committee will be communicated to members in due course.

*The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 13:50pm*

**Mervyn Storey MLA  
Chairperson  
Assembly and Executive Review Committee**