



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Assembly and Executive Review Committee

Minutes of Proceedings

20 October 2021

Meeting Location: Room 29, Parliament Buildings

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Peter Weir MLA (Chairperson)

Jim Allister QC MLA

Kellie Armstrong MLA

Robbie Butler MLA

Gerry Kelly MLA

Colin McGrath MLA

Present:

Maolíosa McHugh MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Paul Frew MLA

Apologies:

George Robinson MBE MLA

In Attendance:

Mr Shane McAteer (Assembly Clerk)

Ms Marie Austin (Senior Assistant Clerk)



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Ms Karen Barry (Assistant Clerk)
Mr Jim Nulty (Clerical Supervisor)
Ms Alison Ferguson (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced at 12.44pm in open session.

1. Apologies

As noted above.

2. Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared by Members.

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2021.

4. Matters Arising

Members noted the written response from the SDLP to the Committee's request to Assembly parties for progress reports in respect of the recommendations on addressing gender imbalance within political parties, contained in the 2015 Assembly and Executive Review Committee (AERC) report on 'Women in Politics and the Northern Ireland Assembly'. Members were advised that the correspondence would be added to the responses on that strategic topic.



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The Committee agreed to move the meeting into closed session, in line with normal practice for formally agreeing draft committee reports to the Assembly.

5. Report on the Review of Opposition Entitlements: Consideration of Draft Committee Report

Members noted that the draft Committee report had been updated to take account of the Committee's informal discussion, on 6 October 2021, of the recommendations in the independent report from Mr Trevor Reaney.

Members undertook formal consideration of the draft report as follows:

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Title Page, Committee Powers and Membership page and Table of Contents page, as drafted, stand part of the report, subject to any necessary amendments to the page numbers on the Table of Contents page.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that paragraphs 1 to 3, which include the 'Background' section, stand part of the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that paragraphs 4 to 11, which include the 'Review Process' section, stand part of the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that paragraph 12, which includes the 'AERC consideration and recommendations' section, stands part of the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that paragraphs 13 and 14, regarding Review Recommendation 1, stand part of the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that paragraphs 15 and 16, regarding Review Recommendation 2, stand part of the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that paragraphs 17 to 19, regarding Review Recommendation 3, stand part of the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that paragraphs 20 to 22, regarding Review Recommendation 4, stand part of the report.



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Agreed: The Committee agreed that paragraphs 23 and 24, regarding Review Recommendation 5, stand part of the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that paragraphs 25 to 27, regarding Review Recommendation 6, stand part of the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that paragraph 28 regarding Review Recommendation 6, subject to minor amendment, stands part of the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that paragraph 29, regarding Review Recommendation 6, stands part of the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that paragraphs 30 and 31, regarding Review Recommendation 7, stand part of the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that paragraphs 32 to 34, regarding Review Recommendation 8, stand part of the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that paragraphs 35 and 36, regarding Review Recommendation 9, stand part of the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that paragraphs 37 to 39, regarding Review Recommendation 10, stand part of the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that paragraphs 40 to 42, regarding Review Recommendation 11, stand part of the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that paragraphs 43 to 47, regarding Review Recommendation 12, stand part of the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that paragraphs 48 and 49, regarding Review Recommendation 13, stand part of the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that paragraphs 50 and 51, regarding Review Recommendation 14, stand part of the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that paragraphs 52 to 57, regarding Review Recommendations 15, 16 and 17, stand part of the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that paragraphs 56 to 58, regarding Review Recommendation 18, stand part of the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that paragraph 59, which includes the 'AERC Conclusion' section, stands part of the report.



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Agreed: The Committee agreed that the annex containing ‘Trevor’s Reaney’s Report and Addendum’, stands part of the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that appendices 1, 2 and 3, which include the written responses from the Procedures Committee, the Assembly Commission and Sinn Féin respectively, stand part of the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the ‘Link to appendix 4’ which includes the Minutes of Proceedings relating to the Report, stands part of the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the ‘Link to appendix 5’ which includes the Official (Hansard) Report of the oral briefing from Mr Reaney on 29 June 2021, stands part of the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that this report be the first report of the AERC in the 2017-22 Mandate.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that Appendices 1, 2 and 3 to the report be published on-line on the Assembly’s webpages.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that, in line with normal practice, the Committee report to the Assembly be embargoed until commencement of the debate in plenary.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the report be published on-line on the Assembly’s webpages on the expiration of the embargo.

The Committee noted that, to take account of agreed protocols, a copy of the embargoed report will be laid in the Business Office within 24 hours and all MLAs will be circulated with a copy in advance of the debate.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Chairperson will agree an extract of today’s minutes regarding the agreement of this report so it may be included in the Minutes of Proceedings section of the report.

The Committee considered the following draft plenary motion seeking Assembly approval of the Committee’s recommendations, as contained in the report:

‘Report on the outcome of the independent Review of the adequacy and effectiveness of the Statement of Entitlements for an Official Opposition at the Northern Ireland Assembly (NIA 137/17-22)



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That this Assembly notes the Report of the Assembly and Executive Review Committee on the outcome of the independent review of the adequacy and effectiveness of the Statement of Entitlements for an Official Opposition (NIA 137/17-22); further notes that this addresses the applicable recommendation in paragraph 3.7 of Annex C of New Decade, New Approach; and calls on the Assembly to approve the Committee's recommendations contained in the Report.'

Agreed: The Committee agreed the plenary motion for tabling in the Business Office today.

Members noted that, subject to scheduling, the debate is likely to be held during week commencing 8 November 2021.

The Committee agreed to move the meeting into public session.

5. Correspondence

There was no correspondence to consider.

6. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

7. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on Wednesday 1 December 2021, at 12.40pm in Room 29.

The meeting was adjourned at 1.21pm.



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Peter Weir MLA
Chairperson
Assembly and Executive Review Committee