



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Assembly and Executive Review Committee

Minutes of Proceedings

1 December 2021

Meeting Location: Room 29, Parliament Buildings

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Robbie Butler MLA
Paul Frew MLA
Colin McGrath MLA
George Robinson MBE MLA

Present:

Peter Weir MLA (Chairperson)
Maolíosa McHugh MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Jim Allister QC MLA
Kellie Armstrong MLA
Gerry Kelly MLA

Apologies:

No Apologies

In Attendance:

Mr Shane McAteer (Assembly Clerk)
Ms Marie Austin (Senior Assistant Clerk)
Ms Karen Barry (Assistant Clerk)
Mr Simon Gallaher (Clerical Supervisor)



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Mr Jim Nulty (Clerical Supervisor)

Ms Alison Ferguson (Clerical Officer)

In Attendance by Video or Teleconference:

Ms Alison Ferguson (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced at 12.43pm in open session.

1. Apologies

As noted above.

2. Declaration of Interests

Mr Butler declared an interest in relation to Agenda Item 5, as a member of the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission which will have responsibility for taking forward the financial recommendations arising from the Review of Opposition Entitlements.

Mr Allister joined the meeting at 12.44pm

Mr Kelly joined the meeting at 12.44pm

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2021.



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4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Review of Opposition Entitlements: Follow up from Assembly approval of Committee Report

The Committee considered follow-up actions arising from the Assembly's approval of the Committee report on the independent *Review of the adequacy and effectiveness of the Statement of Entitlements for an Official Opposition at the Northern Ireland Assembly*.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to commission research papers from the Assembly Research and Information Service (RaISe) arising from review recommendations 3, 11 and 18, which will inform the related proposals in the Committee's Legacy Report to the successor Assembly and Executive Review Committee (AERC) in the next mandate.

The Committee noted that briefings on the various research papers will be scheduled for the Committee's meetings in the remainder of the current mandate.

6. Update on other Strategic Priorities

Members considered a report on its other strategic priorities (additional to the Review of Opposition Entitlements) and noted the progress made to date.

In relation to its priority work topic: Designations and the Appointment of the First Minister and deputy First Minister, the Committee considered three further possible expert witnesses identified by RaISe.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite written evidence from all three expert witnesses identified.

Agreed: Committee Members agreed to forward details of other possible expert witnesses to the Clerk.



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Agreed: The Committee agreed that it would report to the Assembly on its considerations under this strategic priority by way of its Legacy Report.

The Committee noted a response from Sinn Féin to its request for views on the areas under consideration as part of this strategic priority.

In relation to its priority work topic: Committee Effectiveness and Collaboration, the Committee noted the terms of reference and methodology for the Chairpersons' Liaison Group review on Strengthening Committee Scrutiny, which is due to conclude at the end of January 2022.

In relation to its priority work topic: Gender and Diversity Imbalances in the Assembly and the Executive, the Committee noted that two political parties had responded to its request for an update on progress made under relevant recommendations contained in the 2015 AERC 'Report on Women in Politics and the Northern Ireland Assembly'.

Agreed: Committee Members agreed to encourage their respective parties to respond to the Committee's request.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request an update on work being undertaken in this area by the Northern Ireland Assembly Women's Caucus, and for its assessment of the progress made by the political parties to implement the recommendations contained in the 2015 AERC 'Report on Women in Politics and the Northern Ireland Assembly'.

7. Correspondence

Members noted correspondence from the Clerking and Member Support Office regarding Member Development on 'Personal Security'.

8. Any Other Business

There was no other business.



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9. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on Wednesday 19 January 2022, at 12.40pm in Room 29.

The meeting was adjourned at 1.13pm.

Peter Weir MLA
Chairperson
Assembly and Executive Review Committee