



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for The Executive Office

Minutes of Proceedings

Wednesday 28 April 2021

Meeting Location: Virtually via Video Conferencing

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Mr Colin McGrath MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Doug Beattie MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Ms Martina Anderson MLA
Mr Trevor Clarke MLA
Mr Trevor Lunn MLA
Ms Emma Sheerin MLA

Apologies:

Mr Pat Sheehan MLA
Mr George Robinson MLA

In Attendance by Video or Teleconference:

Mr Michael Potter (Assembly Clerk)
Ms Carla Campbell (Assistant Clerk)
Ms Sarah-Anne McKinley (Assistant Clerk)
Ms Alice O'Hare (Clerical Supervisor)
Ms Andrienne Magee (Clerical Officer)



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The meeting commenced at 2:04pm in open session

1. Apologies

As Above.

2. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson informed Members that recruitment for the Youth Assembly is underway and urged Members to encourage young people in their constituencies to apply, as it is very important to have young people's voices heard when making decisions that impact them.

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 21 April 2021.

4. Matters Arising

None.



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5. UK Exit from European Union – Oral Evidence Session with Junior Ministers on Brexit Issues.

The Junior Ministers joined the meeting at 2:07pm

- Mr Declan Kearney, Junior Minister, The Executive Office.
- Mr Gordon Lyons, Junior Minister, The Executive Office.

The Junior Ministers briefed Members on EU Exit matters.

The oral evidence was followed by a question and answer session.

The oral evidence was reported by Hansard.

During the evidence the Junior Ministers agreed to provide the Committee with further information on the checks and controls at border control posts.

The Chairperson thanked the Junior Ministers for their attendance.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Executive Office to ask for information on the current status of the Common Frameworks.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Executive Office to ask for the reason for non-attendance by Ministers for North-South meetings.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Executive Office to ask for information on EU funding streams, value of the EU funds that have been, or will be, discontinued as a consequence of EU Exit, and details of the shortfall of funds intended to replace them following EU Exit.



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6. The EU and Irish Unity – Oral Briefing by Mark Bassett and Professor Colin Harvey.

The Representatives joined the meeting at 3:01pm

- Mr Mark Bassett, Barrister-at-Law, The Bar Library.
- Professor Colin Harvey, School of Law, Queens University Belfast.

Trevor Clarke left the meeting at 3:07pm.

The representatives briefed Members on the EU and Irish Unity – Planning and Preparing for Constitutional Change.

The oral evidence was followed by a question and answer session.

The oral evidence was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked the representative for their attendance.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Irish Government to ask for details of planning for constitutional change.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Executive Office to ask for details of planning for constitutional change.



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7. Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme for April to June 2021.

The Committee were informed that the Oireachtas Joint Committee on EU Affairs are intending to invite the Committee to a meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that a proposed date would be considered at next week's meeting, 5 May 2021.

The Committee were informed that the Climate Change Bill will move to Second Stage on 11 May and the Bill contains significant provisions relating to the Executive Office, on which the Committee's views will be sought.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite Clare Bailey MLA to provide an oral briefing on the Climate Change Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite Departmental officials to provide an oral briefing on the Climate Change Bill.

8. Correspondence

- i. The Committee considered a response from the First Minister and deputy First Minister assuring the Committee of their commitment to engage with young people.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward this response to the Northern Ireland Youth Forum for information.



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- ii. The Committee noted a response from the Executive Office providing clarifications on the legal commitment to the principle of non-regression of nature and conservation laws following the UK's exit from the EU.
- iii. The Committee noted the Northern Ireland Civil Service Internal Audit and Fraud Investigation Service report "Data Breach Investigation – Office of the HIA Interim Advocate".
- iv. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance to the Department of Finance, the Executive Office and the Department for the Economy requesting answers to a series of questions raised within the Northern Ireland Assembly Research and Information Service research paper on the UK Internal Market Act 2020 and the Protocol on Northern Ireland/Ireland.
- v. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for the Economy to the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding the Community Renewal Fund.
- vi. The Committee considered correspondence from the Committee for the Economy suggesting that the Committee for Finance be included in the concurrent meeting of the Committee for the Executive Office and the Committee for the Economy scheduled for 16 June 2021.
Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Committee for the Economy supporting their invite to the Committee for Finance to join the concurrent meeting scheduled for 16 June 2021.
- vii. The Committee noted a response from the Committee for the Economy providing information regarding Invest NI offices outside of Northern Ireland.
- viii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Communities to the Executive Office requesting information on the amount of funding that has been provided by the Executive through each Department to Community and Voluntary Sector organisations over the past financial year.
- ix. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Health to the Executive Office regarding concerns around the reclassification of Lemonade Wigs Ltd from a close contact service to non-essential retail.



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- x. The Committee noted the report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules to the Assembly and the Appropriate Committees Thirty-fourth Report of Session 2020-2021 21 April 2021.
- xi. The Committee noted correspondence from the Department for Communities regarding the Commission for Victims and Survivors Retention and Disposal Schedule.
- xii. The Committee noted a response from the First Minister and deputy First Ministers regarding the publication of the Executive's Pathway out of Restrictions and engagement with the Committee.
- xiii. The Committee considered a response from the Executive Office providing the Committee with information in relation to the Department's expenditure proposals for 2021/22.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule an oral briefing with Departmental officials on the Expenditure Proposals for 2021/22.
- xiv. The Committee noted the Terms of Reference of the Working Group to Consider the Flags, Identity, Culture and Tradition (FICT) Report.
- xv. The Committee noted a statement from the First Minister and deputy First Minister, dated 27 April 2021, welcoming the opening date for Victims' Payments Scheme.
- xvi. The Committee noted correspondence from the Northern Ireland Assembly Communications and Media Service informing Members that the recruitment stage for the Northern Ireland Youth Assembly was now live.
- xvii. The Committee noted the Investment Strategy Northern Ireland Investing Activity Report – April 2021.



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9. Any Other Business

The Committee noted that during the Committee meeting the First Minister, Arlene Foster MLA, has offered her resignation as DUP party leader by the end of May 2021 and has announced she will step down as First Minister at the end of June 2021.

10. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 5 May 2021 at 2:00pm, virtually via Starleaf.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:14pm.

Colin McGrath MLA

Chairperson, Committee for the Executive Office