



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

WEDNESDAY 1 JULY 2020

Room 30, Parliament Buildings, Belfast

Present: Mr Colin McGrath MLA (Chairperson)
Ms Martina Anderson MLA
Mr Trevor Clarke MLA*
Mr Trevor Lunn MLA
Mr George Robinson MLA*
Mr Pat Sheehan MLA
Ms Emma Sheerin MLA
Mr Christopher Stalford MLA

Apologies: Mr Doug Beattie MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

In Attendance: Ms Marie Austin (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Craig Mealey (Assistant Clerk)

** Members who attended the meeting via video conferencing.*

The meeting commenced at 2.03pm.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 24 June 2020.

3. Matters Arising

June Monitoring Round

The Committee noted a written briefing from the Executive Office on its June Monitoring Round position.

Brexit

- i. The Committee noted a response from the Executive Office to issues raised during the oral evidence session on Brexit issues which took place on 26 February 2020.
- ii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Executive Office providing a copy of the Terms of Reference for the Executive Committee considering EU Matters.

4. Executive Committee (Functions) Bill: Accelerated Passage - Oral Briefing from the First Minister and deputy First Minister

The First Minister and deputy First Minister joined the meeting at 2.07pm:

Arlene Foster MLA, First Minister, The Executive Office
Michelle O'Neill MLA, deputy First Minister, The Executive Office.

The First Minister and deputy First Minister briefed the Committee on the Executive Committee (Functions) Bill and explained, as required under Standing Order 42(3), why accelerated passage for the Bill was being sought and the consequences of it not being granted.

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

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

5. COVID-19 Response - Oral Briefing from the First Minister and deputy First Minister on the Executive Office and Executive's response to the COVID-19 pandemic

The First Minister and deputy First Minister remained at the table.

The First Minister and deputy First Minister briefed the Committee on the Executive Office and Executive's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The First Minister and deputy First Minister agreed to give consideration to a number of issues raised by the Committee.

The Chairperson thanked the Ministers for their attendance.

4. Executive Committee (Functions) Bill – Accelerated Passage (continued)

The Committee considered whether it was content that the Executive Committee (Functions) Bill proceed under the accelerated passage procedure.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content to support the Ministers' motion that the Executive Committee (Functions) Bill proceed under the accelerated passage procedure.

The Chairperson advised Members that the Second Stage of the Executive Committee (Functions) Bill was scheduled for 6 July 2020.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to support the general principles of the Executive Committee (Functions) Bill during the Second Stage debate.

6. Functioning of Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill – Consideration of Committee response

The Committee considered a draft response to the Committee for Finance on its consideration of the Functioning of Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed a response to the Committee for Finance on its consideration of the Functioning of Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill.

7. SL1 - The Salaries (Public Services Ombudsman) Order (Northern Ireland) 2020

The Committee considered a proposal by the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission to make a Statutory Rule, under powers conferred by paragraph 6 of Schedule 1 to the Public Services Ombudsman Act (Northern Ireland) 2016, to increase the salary payable to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman, from £97,337.00. to £100,257.00 per annum.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the proposal for the Statutory Rule.

8. Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme for July to September 2020.

9. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted a response from the Executive Office to scrutiny points contained within the Northern Ireland Assembly Research and Information Service Briefing paper – *Assembly Committee: Coordinated Budget Scrutiny (NIAR 116-20)*.
- ii. The Committee noted a written briefing paper from the Executive Office on the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Amendment No. 5) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 and the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Amendment No. 6) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020.
- iii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Clerk to the Committee for Justice regarding the proposed transfer of a statutory function to make changes to the procedural regulations that govern the practice of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST), from the Department of Education to the Department of Justice.
- iv. The Committee considered a copy of correspondence from the Chairperson of the Committee for Justice to the First Minister and deputy First Minister, requesting further information on the interim arrangements to be put in place and the proposals and timescale for the appointment of a permanent successor to the Attorney General for Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the First Minister and deputy First Minister requesting that it is copied into the response to the Committee for Justice.

- v. The Committee considered a copy of correspondence from the North West Migrants Forum to the Executive Office on racial equality and fairness in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Executive Office requesting that it is copied into the response to the North West Migrants Forum.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Executive Office requesting an update on progress for each of the work strands within the New Decade, New Approach document that fall within the remit of the Executive Office.

- vi. The Committee considered correspondence from Development Trusts Northern Ireland requesting to brief the Committee on Community Wealth Building.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider requests from stakeholders to brief the Committee at its strategic planning meeting on 9 September 2020.

10. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson reminded Members that the Committee strategic planning meeting is scheduled for 9 September 2020, and asked them to forward their suggested strategic priorities to the Committee Clerk in advance of the meeting.

11. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

12. Date, Time and Place of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 8 July 2020 at 2.00 pm in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 3.47pm.

Mr Colin McGrath MLA
Chairperson, Committee for the Executive Office