



**Northern Ireland  
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE**

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

WEDNESDAY 16 DECEMBER 2020

Room 30, Parliament Buildings, Belfast

**Present:** Mr Colin McGrath MLA (Chairperson)  
Mr Doug Beattie MLA (Deputy 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\*

**Apologies:** None.

**In Attendance:** Ms Marie Austin (Assembly Clerk)  
Ms Carla Campbell (Assistant Clerk)  
Ms Sarah-Anne McKinley (Assistant Clerk)  
Mr Craig Mealey (Clerical Supervisor)

\* Members who attended the meeting via video conferencing.

*The meeting commenced at 2:04pm.*

**1. Apologies**

As above.

## 2. **Draft Minutes**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 9 December 2020.

## 3. **Matters Arising**

The Committee considered a draft letter to the First Minister and deputy First Minister, setting out the difficulties some committees have encountered in scrutinising common frameworks; and, seeking clarification on how they think the common frameworks scrutiny process should be working, why the issues have arisen and the steps they will take to ensure Executive departments follow the Cabinet Office guidance on the scrutiny of common frameworks.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the draft letter subject to one amendment.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to copy the letter to: the House of Commons Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee; the House of Lords Common Frameworks Scrutiny Committee; the Scottish Parliament Finance and Constitution Committee; the Senedd European Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee; and, Northern Ireland Assembly Statutory Committees.

## 4. **Brexit – Oral evidence session with departmental officials on Brexit developments**

The following officials joined the meeting at 2:10pm

Andrew McCormick, Director General, International Relations, The Executive Office

Tom Reid, Director, EU Relations, The Executive Office

Lynsey Moore, Director of European Division and Head of the Office of the Northern Ireland Executive in Brussels, The Executive Office.

The officials briefed Members on recent Brexit developments.

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

The oral evidence was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Finance seeking a detailed breakdown of all the EU funding Northern Ireland currently receives and an

indication of the losses that are likely to be incurred as a result of the UK's exit from the European Union.

*Meeting suspended at 3:21pm.*

*Meeting resumed at 3:29pm.*

**5. Brexit – Article 2 of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland – Joint Committee of Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland**

The following representatives joined the meeting at 3:29pm

Les Allamby, Chief Commissioner, Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission  
Geraldine McGahey OBE, Chief Commissioner, Equality Commission for Northern Ireland  
Sinéad Gibney, Chief Commissioner, Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission.

The representatives briefed Members on Article 2(1) of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland.

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

The oral evidence was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance.

**6. January 2021 Monitoring Round – Departmental Written Briefing**

The Committee noted the Executive Office proposed January 2021 Monitoring Round return.

**7. Forward Work Programme**

The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme for December 2020 to February 2021.

The Committee considered correspondence from the Oireachtas Joint Committee on European Affairs expressing thanks for the invitation to attend the Committee for the Executive Office meeting on 6 December 2020, and indicating a desire to continue to enhance inter-parliamentary relations post-Brexit.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to schedule further engagement with the Oireachtas Joint Committee on European Affairs.

## 8. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted a response from the Executive Office to questions raised during the October 2020 Monitoring Round evidence session which took place on 30 September 2020.
- ii. The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from the Committee for Justice to the First Minister and deputy First Minister requesting that they ask all Ministers to engage with their respective statutory committees on relevant aspects of the Health Protection Regulations.
- iii. The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from the Committee for Health to the Executive Office regarding abortion care in Northern Ireland.
- iv. The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from the Committee for Health to the First Minister and deputy First Minister asking that concerns raised by the Equality Coalition are taken into consideration when future decisions on coronavirus regulations are being made.
- v. The Committee considered correspondence from the Committee for Health to the First Minister and deputy First Minister requesting an update on progress in relation to the anti-poverty strategy.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the First Minister and deputy First Minister asking to be copied into the response to the Committee for Health.

- vi. The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from the Committee for Communities to the Executive Office seeking comment on queries raised in correspondence received from St Vincent de Paul.
- vii. The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from the Committee for Communities to the Executive Office regarding youth sport and current COVID-19 restrictions.
- viii. The Committee noted: *“The 2020 Annual Statement Human Rights in Northern Ireland – December 2020”*.
- ix. The Committee noted the Northern Ireland Assembly Brexit Brief Newsletter dated 14 December 2020.

## **9. Chairperson's Business**

None.

## **10. Any Other Business**

The Chairperson thanked the Committee office team for their work throughout 2020, and offered best wishes to the Clerk to the Committee who will be moving to a new post within the Assembly.

## **11. Date, Time and Place of next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 13 January 2021 at 2:00pm in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

*The meeting was adjourned at 4:37pm.*

**Mr Colin McGrath MLA**  
**Chairperson, Committee for the Executive Office**