



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

WEDNESDAY 10 FEBRUARY 2021

Virtually via Video Conferencing

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: Mr Christopher Stalford MLA

In Attendance: Mr Michael Potter (Assembly Clerk)
Ms Carla Campbell (Assistant Clerk)
Ms Sarah-Anne McKinley (Assistant Clerk)
Mr Craig Mealey (Clerical Supervisor)
Ms Andrienne Magee (Clerical Officer)

All Members, Staff and Officials attended the meeting via video conferencing.

The meeting commenced at 2:02pm.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson welcomed the court ruling that the Executive Office now must move and make payments for the Victims' Pensions Scheme.

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 3 February 2021.

4. Matters Arising

None.

5. Brexit – Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement

The following Members of the Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement joined the meeting at 2:06pm, to discuss the impact of Brexit on institutions and North/South relationships:

Orfhlaith Begley MP, Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement

Senator Frances Black, Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement

Senator Niall Blaney, Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement

Mickey Brady MP, Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement

Jennifer Carroll MacNeill TD, Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement

Rose Conway Walsh TD, Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement

Patrick Costello TD, Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement

Senator Emer Currie, Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement

Stephen Farry MP, Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement

John Finucane MP, Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement

Michelle Gildernew MP, Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement

Claire Hanna MP, Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement

Chris Hazzard MP, Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement

Paul Maskey MP, Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement

Padraig MacLochlainn TD, Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement

Senator Niall Ó Donnghaile, Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement

Brendan Smith TD , Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement

The session was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked the Members of the Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement for their attendance and the informative discussion.

6. Brexit – Article 2 of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland: Funding arrangements, dedicated mechanism – Oral evidence session with departmental officials

The Officials joined the meeting at 3:41pm

Ms Siobhan Broderick, Head of Equality, Rights and Identity Division, The Executive Office.

Janet Johnston, Head of the Equality, Human Rights and Delivering Social Change Unit, The Executive Office.

The officials briefed Members on Article 2 of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland: Funding arrangements, dedicated mechanism.

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.

7. Research and Information Service Briefing Paper – The Executive’s International Relations and comparisons with Scotland and Wales – NIAR 261-20 – Research and Information Service Briefing

The Northern Ireland Assembly Research and Information Service Research Officer, Mr Stephen Orme, joined the meeting at 4:04pm.

The Research Officer briefed Members on the Research and Information Service briefing paper “The Executive’s International Relations and comparisons with Scotland and Wales”.

The Chairperson thanked Mr Orme for his attendance.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Executive Office to seek an update on the International Relations Strategy question what outcomes are used to measure performance levels within these international bureaux and also within Invest NI.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Committee for the Economy to ascertain if they are engaged in monitoring of the Invest NI offices.

8. Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered the Forward Work Programme for February to April 2021.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request that the briefing with the Junior Ministers be brought forward to an earlier date in March as a result of Easter Recess.

9. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted a response from the Executive Office regarding Outcomes Delivery Plan and the issue of regional equality and challenges in keeping outcomes grounded and realistic.
- ii. The Committee noted a response from the Executive Office to the Committee for Health regarding the provision of abortion services.
- iii. The Committee noted the Attorney General’s Annual Reports for 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2019/20.
- iv. The Committee noted correspondence from The Speaker for the Northern Ireland Assembly to the President of the European Commission informing them of a motion debated by the Assembly on 12 October 2020 in relation to the European Union-United Kingdom Withdrawal Agreement.
- v. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Justice to all Executive Ministers regarding the Damages (Return on Investment) Bill and its proposed accelerated passage.
- vi. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Communities to the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding imminent expiration of contracts for services and anticipated delay in tenders.
- vii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for the Economy to the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding issues that have arisen with the movement of goods between Britain and Northern Ireland, and vice versa, since the end of the EU Exit Transition Period.
- viii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Scottish Parliament Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee to the Executive Office, seeking the view of the Northern Ireland Executive on the operation of the Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol.
- ix. The Committee noted correspondence from Rt Hon Michael Gove MP to the European Commission outlining the next steps on the Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol.
- x. The Committee noted a joint statement from Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Gove and Vice-President Sefcovic following a meeting with the First Minister and deputy First Minister on 3 February 2021.
- xi. The Committee noted the Brussels NI, Northern Ireland Executive Brussels Office “Brussels Report – October to December 2020”.

- xii. The Committee noted Investment Strategy Northern Ireland “Investing Activity Report –January 2021”.
- xiii. The Committee noted correspondence from an individual regarding internet and technology poverty.
- xiv. The Committee noted correspondence from an individual regarding a complaint made to the First Minister regarding mutual respect, civil rights and religious liberties.

10. Any Other Business

None.

11. Date, Time and Place of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 17 February 2021 at 2:00pm, virtually via Starleaf.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:35pm.

Mr Colin McGrath MLA
Chairperson, Committee for the Executive Office