



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for The Executive Office

Minutes of Proceedings

Wednesday 09 June 2021

Meeting Location: Virtually via Video Conferencing

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Mr Colin McGrath MLA (Chairperson)
Mr John Stewart 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
Mr Christopher Stalford MLA

Apologies:

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 2:03pm in open session

1. Apologies

As Above.

2. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson welcomed the DUP nominations of Paul Givan MLA for First Minister and Gary Middleton MLA for junior Minister.

Trevor Lunn joined the meeting at 2:05pm.

The Chairperson acknowledged the findings of the investigation into the Black Lives Matter protest and highlighted the need for the Department to ensure that guidelines are clear.

The Chairperson acknowledged the removal of Portugal from the UK Green List for travel. He expressed concern for the travel industry, which has not received any assistance packages to date and urged the Executive to address the issues within the travel industry to try to help the sector.



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3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 02 June 2021.

4. Matters Arising

None.

5. Departmental Spending Plans – June Monitoring – Departmental Officials

The officials joined the meeting at 2:08pm

- Mr Chris Stewart, Deputy Secretary of Strategic Policy, Equality and Good Relations, The Executive Office.
- Ms Neelia Lloyd, Assistant Secretary of Strategic Policy, Equality and Good Relations, The Executive Office.
- Ms Tara Kennedy, Accountant, Strategic Policy, Equality and Good Relations, The Executive Office.

The officials briefed Members on the Executive Office June Monitoring Round.

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

The oral evidence was reported by Hansard.



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George Robinson left the meeting at 2:30pm.

Christopher Stalford left the meeting at 2:33pm.

During the evidence, officials agreed to provide the Committee with a breakdown of the budget for the Delivering Social Change programme, a copy of any evaluation carried out on the Delivering Social Change programme, and an assessment of benefits foregone in relation to the reduction in funding to the Communities in Transition programme.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

6. Covid Recovery – Oral evidence: Community Foundation for Northern Ireland

The witnesses joined the meeting at 2:48pm.

- Mr Paul Braithwaite, Head of Innovation and Vice, Community Foundation for Northern Ireland.
- Ms Rebekah McCabe, Senior Project Officer, Involve.
- Ms Louise O’Kane, Planner, Community Places

The witnesses briefed Members on post-Covid recovery.

Christopher Stalford joined the meeting at 2:48pm.



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

Emma Sheerin left the meeting at 3:30pm.

George Robinson joined the meeting at 3:47pm.

The oral evidence was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked the witnesses for their attendance.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Executive Office to request an update on the commitment to introduce reformed measures to put civic engagement and public consultation at the heart of policy-making, outlined in New Decade New Approach including detail of any work that has been completed surrounding this commitment to date.

7. High Streets Task Force – Assembly Research Service

The researcher joined the meeting at 3:58pm.

- Mr Michael Scholes, Research Officer, NIA Research Office.

The researcher briefed Members on High Streets Task Force.

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



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Martina Anderson left the meeting at 4:04pm.

The Chairperson thanked the researcher for their attendance.

8. Forward Work Programme

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

The Committee noted a paper outlining the Executive Office responsibilities and implications of the Climate Change Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite the bill sponsor, Clare Bailey MLA, to provide Members with a briefing on the Climate Change Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a departmental oral briefing on the areas within the Climate Change Bill that are the responsibility of the Executive Office.

The Committee noted that the Concurrent Committee meeting scheduled for 16 June 2021 would be held in the Assembly Chamber.



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9. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted a statement from the European Commission “EU and UK reach agreement in principle on fishing opportunities for the remainder of 2021”.
- ii. The Committee noted a response the Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Defence, Simon Coveney TD, in relation to contingency work undertaken by the Irish Government to plan and prepare for the potential for change to the constitutional status of Northern Ireland.
- iii. The Committee noted an announcement from the UK Government in relation to funding is available for Northern Ireland.
- iv. The Committee noted the Official Report (Hansard) of the Committee for the Economy, EU Exit: Department for the Economy – 19 May 2021.
- v. The Committee noted a press release from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs “Minister Poots confirms delay to pet travel checks”.
- vi. The Committee noted the Investment Strategy Northern Ireland Investing Activity Report – 30 May 2021.
- vii. The Committee noted a response from the First Minister and deputy First Minister to the Committee for Finance in relation to draft budget provision for the Victims’ Payments Scheme for Permanent Disablement.
- viii. The Committee noted “Government Response to the House of Lords Common Frameworks Scrutiny Committee report: - Common Frameworks: building a cooperative Union”.
- ix. The Committee noted a press release from the UK Government “Partnership Council and Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee: 9 June 2021”.
- x. The Committee noted a response from the Executive Office informing the Committee of the first meeting of the EU-UK Partnership Council and of a meeting of the EU-UK Joint Committee.



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- xi. The Committee noted draft agendas for meetings of the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee and the inaugural meeting of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement Partnership Council.
- xii. The Committee noted a response from the Executive Office to the Committee for Education providing a written briefing on the teachers' exception to Fair Employment and Treatment Orders legislation under Article 71 of FETO, as amended by Regulation 30 of the Fair Employment and Treatment (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003.
- xiii. The Committee noted correspondence from the NI Assembly EU Affairs Manager providing correspondence from the House of Commons European Scrutiny Committee to the Northern Ireland Office in respect of a European Commission proposal for a Directive on pay transparency.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Executive Office to ask what consideration under Article 2 of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland the Department will undertake in relation to the pay transparency proposal.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Dedicated Mechanism to ask what consideration would be undertaken with regard to the pay transparency proposal.

- xiv. The Committee considered a summary of Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol issues for businesses in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the Committee for the Economy to share any correspondence they issue or receive in relation to the Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol issues for businesses in Northern Ireland with the Committee for the Executive Office.

- xv. The Committee noted correspondence from the NI Assembly Women's Caucus sharing researched commissioned by the Committee for Education from the Northern Ireland Assembly Research and Information Service "Gender Budgeting and Gender Inequalities in Northern Irish Education Policy – 18 March 2021".



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10. Any Other Business

None.

11. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting is a Concurrent Committee Meeting with the Committee for Economy and the Committee for Finance and will be held on Wednesday 16 June 2021 at 2:00pm, in the Assembly Chamber.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:33pm.

Colin McGrath MLA

Chairperson, Committee for the Executive Office