



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

WEDNESDAY 27 JANUARY 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
Ms Emma Sheerin MLA

Apologies: Mr Pat Sheehan MLA
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 2:04pm.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson acknowledged the statement made by the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding the research report into the operation of Mother and Baby Homes and Magdalene Laundries in Northern Ireland, and the work of Judith Gillespie and the working group.

The Chairperson expressed the Committee's hope for a quick establishment of the sub group of survivors who will form part of the co-design process in order to get their determinations which will shape the process for survivors going forward.

The Chairperson referred Members to a statement made in the Assembly Chamber by the Minister for Finance with regard to funding for the Victims' Pension Scheme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland urging him to meet urgently with the First Minister, deputy First Minister, the Finance Minister and the Justice Minister in relation to funding for the Victims' Pension Scheme.

The Chairperson acknowledged that it was Holocaust Memorial Day reiterating the importance of remembering and ensuring that the stories of those that were impacted continue to be heard and are not forgotten.

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 20 January 2021.

4. Matters Arising

The Committee noted the Terms of Reference for the Committee overseeing EU Exit Matters.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward a copy of the Terms of Reference for the Committee overseeing EU Exit Matters to all Northern Ireland Assembly Statutory Committees for information.

The Committee noted a response from the Executive Office to a question from a Member regarding the Ministerial Code.

5. **Brexit – Oral Evidence Session with Junior Ministers on Brexit Issues**

The Junior Ministers joined the meeting at 2:12pm

Gordon Lyons MLA, Junior Minister.

Declan Kearney MLA, Junior Minister.

The Junior Ministers briefed Members on Brexit Issues.

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

The oral evidence was reported by Hansard.

During the session, the Junior Ministers agreed to provide the Committee with

- Details of the monthly Joint Consultative Working Group meetings and any Executive actions arising from them.
- Details on how officials measure progress in the post-transition period of Brexit, in particular, what commitments have been made and what progress has been made towards fulfilling these commitments.
- Further information on the Shared Prosperity Fund, in particular the extent to which the Fund will replace EU funds.

The Chairperson thanked the Junior Ministers for their attendance.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite CBI-Ibec to give an oral briefing on their experience of the transition period following Brexit.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the Northern Ireland Assembly European Affairs Manager to prepare an organisational chart indicating the main bodies associated with Brexit.

6. **Historical Institutional Abuse including Memorial for Victims – Oral briefing by the Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse (COSICA)**

The Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse joined the meeting at 3:33pm

Fiona Ryan, Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse
(COSICA)

The COSICA briefed Members on Historical Institutional Abuse including a memorial for victims.

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

The oral evidence was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked the Commissioner for her attendance.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Executive Office asking for clarification of what mechanisms were in place to provide support to survivors of Mother and Baby Homes and Magdalene Laundries.

7. Forward Work Programme

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

The Committee noted that the meeting scheduled with the Seanad Special Select Committee on the Withdrawal of the UK from the EU for 3 February 2021 would now be taking place on Tuesday 2 February 2021.

The Committee considered a request from the Executive Office to provide a written briefing on funding arrangements for the dedicated mechanism for Article 2 of the Ireland/ Northern Ireland protocol instead of the oral briefing which is scheduled for 10 February 2021.

Agreed: The Committee agreed where oral briefings have been scheduled, written briefings would only be accepted in mitigating circumstances.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a briefing from Northern Ireland Assembly Research and Information Service on the consultation on the Programme for Government.

8. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted a response from the Equality Commission providing Members with an update on the status of Disability Action Plans in place in public authorities.
- ii. The Committee considered correspondence from the Committee for Finance asking the Committee to engage with the Executive Office to ascertain how the

draft Budget is expected to affect their budget and to report findings back to the Committee for Finance by 12 February 2021.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule an oral briefing with departmental officials on spending plans for 2021-22.

- iii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance to the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the failure to provide a briefing on the January monitoring round in a timely manner.
- iv. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance to the Executive Office seeking clarity as to the level of funding required, why related resources were not included in the 2021-22 Budget and why the bid was made by the Executive Office and not Department for Justice which has been allotted the related responsibility.
- v. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for the Economy to the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding Covid support funding for students and other excluded groups.
- vi. The Committee noted a response from the Department of Finance providing a current assessment of the funding which will be required in financial year 2021-2022 in order to replace funding that was previously derived from EU sources.
- vii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs to Minister Gove, Minister Naughton, HMRC and Trader Support Services regarding EU Exit Matters.
- viii. The Committee noted correspondence from the House of Lords European Union Committee to Minister Gove regarding parliamentary scrutiny of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland.
- ix. The Committee noted correspondence from the Welsh Parliament External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee to the Minister for Mental Health, Wellbeing and the Welsh Language regarding nutrition related labelling, composition and standards provisional common framework.
- x. The Committee noted correspondence from the Welsh Parliament Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee to the Secretary of State for Wales regarding Sewel Convention.
- xi. The Committee noted correspondence from the Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly to the Assembly and Executive Review Committee in respect of the

design of an appropriate model for scrutiny of issues related to the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland.

- xii. The Committee noted the Northern Ireland Assembly Brexit and Beyond Newsletter of 25 January 2021.

9. Any Other Business

None.

10. Date, Time and Place of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 3 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