



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

WEDNESDAY 9 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 George Robinson MLA*
Mr Pat Sheehan MLA*
Ms Emma Sheerin MLA*
Mr Christopher Stalford MLA

Apologies: Mr Trevor Lunn MLA

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 2:08pm.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. **Draft Minutes**

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 2 December 2020.

3. **Matters Arising**

The Committee considered a Joint Statement from the co-chairs of the EU-UK Joint Committee announcing that agreement in principle had been reached on the outstanding issues related to the implementation of the Withdrawal Agreement, and confirming an agreement in principle on the decisions the Joint Committee has to take before 1 January 2021.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a departmental oral evidence session on the latest Brexit developments for the Committee meeting on 16 December 2020.

The Committee noted a written departmental briefing paper on the Executive Office work strands under New Decade, New Approach. An oral evidence session on the matter was removed from the agenda for the meeting on 2 December 2020, as the Executive Office did not provide the paper in advance of the meeting to allow Members to prepare. The Committee noted that the oral evidence session had been rescheduled for the meeting on 20 January 2021.

The Committee considered correspondence from the House of Lords European Union Committee to the Minister of State at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office regarding the European Commission Work Programme 2021. The Committee noted that the correspondence raised issues around the implications of the Work Programme for Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the European Union Committee to forward a copy of the response from the Minister of State when received.

4. **Brexit – House of Lords Common Frameworks Scrutiny Committee**

The following Members of the House of Lords Common Frameworks Scrutiny Committee joined the meeting at 2:15pm, to take evidence as part of its inquiry on Common Frameworks.

The Baroness Andrews OBE, Chairperson
The Rt Hon. The Lord Bruce of Bennachie
The Lord Caine
The Baroness Crawley
The Lord McInnes of Kilwinning CBE

The Rt Hon. The Lord Murphy of Torfaen
The Baroness Randerson
The Baroness Redfern
The Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick.

A question and answer session ensued.

The session was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked the Members of the House of Lords Common Frameworks Scrutiny Committee for their attendance and the opportunity to provide evidence to the inquiry.

Meeting suspended at 3:03pm.

Meeting resumed at 3:09pm.

5. EU Funding programmes/participation in EU programmes in the future – Oral evidence session with departmental officials

The following officials joined the meeting at 3:09pm

Dominic McCullough, Head of EU Division, Department of Finance
Laura McDonald, Head of Future Funding and EU Exit Co-ordination, Department of Finance
Lorraine Lynas, EU Future Relations Division, The Executive Office.

The officials briefed Members on EU Funding programmes and participation in EU programmes in the future.

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

The oral evidence was reported by Hansard.

During the briefing, officials agreed to provide further information on a range of issues.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

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

The Committee noted the Research and Information Service Briefing Paper: “*The Executive’s International Relations and comparisons with Scotland and Wales*”.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite the Northern Ireland Assembly Researcher to attend a Committee meeting in the new year to discuss the content of the paper.

7. Forward Work Programme

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

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Forward Work Programme subject to a number of amendments.

8. Correspondence

i. The Committee noted a Written Statement made by the First Minister and deputy First Minister on decisions of the Executive on COVID-19.

ii. The Committee noted a response from the Executive Office regarding support services for victims and survivors of historical institutional abuse.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that an informal meeting between the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson and victim and survivor groups should be scheduled to discuss resources in relation to the Office of the Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse.

iii. The Committee noted a copy of a response from the Executive Office to Campaign by Survivors of Abuse, regarding the historical institutional abuse apology process.

iv. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance outlining the work being undertaken by the Public Finance Scrutiny Unit within the Assembly’s Research and Information Service.

v. The Committee noted a call for evidence from the Committee for Justice on the Criminal Justice (Committal Reform) Bill.

- vi. The Committee noted a copy of correspondence to the First Minister and deputy First Minister from the Committee for Health regarding an agreement by the UK Government and the EU Commission allowing pharmaceutical industry twelve months to comply with the new regulatory requirements which apply to Northern Ireland as a result of the Northern Ireland Protocol.
- vii. The Committee noted an invitation from the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission to the virtual launch of its 2020 Annual Statement.
- viii. The Committee noted: *Information Strategy Northern Ireland – Investing Activity Report – November 2020*.
- ix. The Committee noted a response from the Executive Office regarding discussions with Treasury around ensuring that Historical Institutional Abuse payments made through the Redress Board, to those residing in Britain, will not be liable to taxation or national insurance deductions, and will also not affect social security payments.
- x. The Committee noted the Northern Ireland Assembly Brexit Brief – 7 December 2020.

9. Chairperson’s Business

None.

10. Any Other Business

None.

11. Date, Time and Place of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 16 December 2020, at 2:00pm in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:58pm.

Mr Colin McGrath MLA
Chairperson, Committee for the Executive Office