



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for The Executive Office

Minutes of Proceedings

Wednesday 3rd November 2021

Meeting Location: Room 30, Parliament Buildings

Present: Ms Sinead McLaughlin (Chairperson)

Present via Video Conferencing:

Mr John Stewart MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Mr Pat Sheehan MLA

Ms Emma Sheerin MLA

Ms Diane Dodds MLA

Mr Alex Easton MLA

Apologies: Mr Trevor Lunn MLA

In Attendance:

Mr Michael Potter (Assembly Clerk)

Ms Sarah-Anne McKinley (Assistant Clerk)

Ms Alison Belshaw (Clerical Supervisor)

Ms Andrienne Magee (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced at 2:02pm in open session.



1. Apologies As Above.

2. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson updated the Committee in relation to the meeting with Lord Kinnoull and the Chairs of the relevant Committees of the three devolved legislatures on Monday 1 November in relation to participation in the Parliamentary Partnership Assembly (PPA). A joint letter is being drafted outlining the proposals from the devolved Committees and Committee approval for this letter will be sought in due course.

The Committee discussed correspondence from SAVIA in relation to a public apology for victim's groups as part of the Hart inquiry.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the First and deputy First Minister for an update on an official apology.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Abuse (COSICA) for an overview on the apology process and her opinion on the matter.

The Committee discussed the oral briefing by the Truth Recovery Panel scheduled for 17 November 2021 in relation to Mother and Baby Homes.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite survivors of Mother and Baby Homes to give evidence to the Committee.

The Committee discussed the recent bus attack in Newtownards and Members condemned the incident.



3. Draft Minutes

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

4. Matters Arising

The Chairperson reminded Members of the upcoming invitation to attend the House of Lords Constitution Committee on Thursday 4 November 2021 at 10am for the Committee to give its views in relation to future governance of the UK.

5. Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service – Introductory Briefing

Jayne Brady and officials joined the meeting at 2:15pm.

- Dr Jayne Brady, Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service.
- Ms Karen Pearson, Deputy Secretary, COVID Strategy and COVID Contingencies, The Executive Office.
- Mr. Gareth Johnston, Deputy Secretary, Strategic Policy, Equality and Good Relations, The Executive Office.
- Mr. Tom Reid, Deputy Secretary, International Relations and EU Exit, The Executive Office.

The Head of the Civil Service briefed the Committee on her new role and the future work planned for the Department.

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

Pat Sheehan left the meeting at 3:00pm.



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Agreed: The Committee agreed to send the relevant Hansard reports of the High Street Taskforce sessions the Committee for the Executive Office received on the 3 February 2021 and 3 March 2021 to the Call for Evidence.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to invite officials to brief the Committee in January 2022 following the call for evidence in relation to the High Street Taskforce.

During their evidence session the Head of the Civil Service and officials agreed to provide the Committee with information in relation to Covid recovery and civil service working.

The Chairperson thanked the Head of the Civil Service and officials for their attendance.

6. Scrutiny of Arms-Length Bodies – Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission – Written Briefing

The Committee noted that consideration of the written briefing from the Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission would be postponed until next week.

7. Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme for November – December 2021.

The Committee noted an invitation from the Seanad Special Select Committee on the Withdrawal of the UK from the EU with proposed dates for meeting in November.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the proposed dates were unsuitable. The Clerk was directed to liaise with the Clerk from the Seanad Special Select Committee on alternative meeting dates for the Committee.



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Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite groups supporting refugees and people seeking asylum to give evidence to the Committee.

8. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted correspondence from the House of Lords European Affairs Sub Committee on the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland to Secretary of State on Article 2 of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, the Irish Humans Rights Commission and the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission to provide an update on the Dedicated Mechanism to the Committee in December.

- ii. The Committee noted a press release from the European Commission on the EU Digital Covid Certificate.
- iii. The Committee noted a report from the Office of the Northern Ireland Executive in Brussels titled Brussels Report July – September 2021.
- iv. The Committee noted correspondence from Assembly Speaker to Chairpersons' Liaison Group regarding legislative pressures.
- v. The Committee noted a memo from the Committee for Justice in relation to the Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme.
- vi. The Committee noted a response from the Maze Long Kesh Development Corporation providing clarity on the budget for health and safety work on the site.
- vii. The Committee considered correspondence from the Historical Institutional Abuse Victims' Groups in relation to the HIA apology process.



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- viii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Assembly's Research and Information Service on their digital strategy.
- ix. The Committee noted a survey from the Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce and Industry - Quarterly Economic Survey October 2021.
- x. The Committee noted an invitation from Queens University Belfast to attend an event "In Conversation with Professor Andrew Heyn" on 11 November 2021.
- xi. The Committee noted correspondence from Royal Irish Academy in relation to their Education Futures Taskforce launching a series of discussion papers on higher education.

9. Any Other Business

None.

10. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday 10 November 2021 at 2:00pm, in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:40pm.

Sinead McLaughlin

Chairperson, Committee for the Executive Office