



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for the Executive Office

Minutes of Proceedings

Wednesday 16 March 2022

Meeting Location: Room 30 Parliament Buildings

Present: Ms Sinéad McLaughlin MLA (Chairperson)

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Mr Pádraig Delargy MLA

Mr Pat Sheehan MLA

Ms Emma Sheerin MLA

Mr Alex Easton MLA

Ms Diane Dodds MLA

Apologies: Mr John Stewart MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Mr Trevor Lunn MLA

In Attendance: Mr Michael Potter (Assembly Clerk)

Ms Sarah-Anne McKinley (Assistant Assembly Clerk)

Ms Alison Belshaw (Clerical Supervisor)

Mr Christopher McAfee (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced at 2.02pm in open session.

1. Apologies

Trevor Lunn MLA delegated his vote to the Chairperson, Sinéad McLaughlin MLA.

John Stewart MLA delegated his vote to the Chairperson, Sinéad McLaughlin MLA.

2. Chairperson Business

The Chairperson updated the Committee in relation to the official apology for victims and survivors of historical institutional abuse which took place on Friday 11 March 2022 in Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson updated the Committee in relation to the Committee report on the Fair Employment (School Teachers) Bill which was published on 11 March 2022.

Diane Dodds joined the meeting at 2.06pm

The Chairperson updated the Committee that the Bill had its Consideration Stage on 15 March 2022. The Committee amendment, extending commencement from twelve months to twenty-four months, was also made.

The Chairperson updated the Committee that Further Consideration Stage of the Bill is scheduled to take place on the 21 March 2022 and that the Final Stage is scheduled to take place on the 24 March 2022.

The Chairperson reminded the Committee about previous correspondence sent by the Committee to Queen's University School of Medicine asking particular questions in relation to the acquisition of bodies from institutions identified in research on mother and baby homes.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to Queens University to urge them for a response in relation to initial correspondence sent by the Committee regarding the acquisition of bodies from institutions identified in research on mother and baby homes.

Agreed: The Committee agreed for a press release to be drafted on this issue to be agreed at next week's meeting, highlighting the importance for victims and survivors for a thorough examination of this sensitive issue to be undertaken.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that this issue should be detailed in the Legacy Report for the successor Committee.

The Chairperson raised concerns with the Committee in relation to the situation in Ukraine and the refugees fleeing from the conflict.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite the Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service to attend the Committee to outline what preparations have been made by the Department for Ukrainian refugees arriving in Northern Ireland.

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 10 March 2022.

4. Matters Arising

The Chairperson updated the Committee that a summary report of the stakeholder session on 24 March 2022 on the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy was sent to all Members.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the summary paper to the Executive Office.

The Chairperson updated the Committee that the House of Commons Northern Ireland Affairs Committee has produced a report on the experiences of minority ethnic and migrant people in Northern Ireland.

5. Northern Ireland Assembly EU Affairs Manager: EU Matters - Oral Briefing

The Northern Ireland Assembly EU Affairs Manager joined the meeting at 2.12pm.

- Ms Shauna Mageean, Northern Ireland Assembly EU Affairs Manager

The Northern Ireland Assembly EU Affairs Manager briefed the Committee in relation to recent EU Exit matters.

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

The Chairperson thanked the Northern Ireland Assembly EU Affairs Manager for her attendance.

The Northern Ireland Assembly EU Affairs Manager agreed to send information on the analysis of EU legislation that applies to Northern Ireland and information regarding UK businesses that are no longer supplying goods to Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Health to ask for an analysis of the issues in relation to EU proposals regarding new medicines coming into Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the summary paper on Common Frameworks to the Department and the House of Lords Common Frameworks Scrutiny Committee copying relevant Committees in the devolved legislatures.

6. Committee on the Administration of Justice: Legal Research Report - Oral Briefing

The Committee on the Administration of Justice joined the meeting at 3.14pm.

- Mr Daniel Holder Deputy Director, Committee on the Administration of Justice
- Ms Úna Boyd Immigration Project co-ordinator, Committee on the Administration of Justice

The Committee on the Administration of Justice briefed the Committee in relation to their legal research report.

Pádraig Delargy left the meeting at 3.51pm

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

The Chairperson thanked the Committee on the Administration for their attendance.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to detail the Committee on the Administration of Justice asks surrounding an upgraded Racial Equality Strategy, an action plan on how mitigate the hostile environment within the Executive Office and to make representations to both the UK and Irish governments to ensure that all residents can move freely within the Common Travel area.

7. Bill Sponsor: The Emergency Exceptional Circumstances (Energy Prices and Other Contingencies) Bill – Oral Briefing

The Bill Sponsor Mark Durkan MLA joined the meeting at 4.07pm.

- Mr Mark Durkan MLA

The Bill Sponsor briefed the Committee in relation to the Emergency Exceptional Circumstances (Energy Prices and Other Contingencies) Bill.

Emma Sheerin left the meeting at 4.26pm

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

The Chairperson thanked the Bill Sponsor for their attendance.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Emergency Exceptional Circumstances (Energy Prices and Other Contingencies) Bill should forgo Committee stage and move to accelerated passage.

8. Committee Legacy - Consideration of draft Report

The Committee considered the draft Committee Legacy Report for the 2017-2022 mandate.

The Chairperson updated the Committee that outstanding areas of correspondence and additional comment on the Programme for Government and New Decade New Approach will be included in the final report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that they were content with the draft report subject to outstanding areas of correspondence, additional comment on the Programme for Government, New Decade New Approach and additional items for the successor legacy Committee be included.

9. Forward Work Plan

The Chairperson updated the Committee that the final meeting for the Committee will take place on 23 March 2022.

The Chairperson informed the Committee that there are outstanding invitations from the Committee to the junior Ministers and to the Minister for Europe with the Committee.

The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme for the remainder of March 2022.

10. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted correspondence from the Independent Review of Invest NI in relation to a call for evidence on the review of Invest NI.
- ii. The Committee noted a press release from the Department for Communities regarding progress on the strategies for Irish and Ulster-Scots languages.
- iii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Justice in relation to the Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme.

- iv. The Committee noted correspondence from the Executive Office regarding an invitation to the Chair of the Committee for the Executive Office to attend the Official Apology to Victims and Survivors of Historical Institutional Abuse.
- v. The Committee noted correspondence from the Executive Office in relation to an invitation to the Deputy Chair of the Committee for the Executive Office to attend the Official Apology to Victims and Survivors of Historical Institutional Abuse.
- vi. The Committee noted correspondence from the Executive Office regarding the Draft Budget 2022-2025.
- vii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Infrastructure in relation to Rebated Fuel Entitlement and Fuel Duty.
- viii. The Committee noted a press release from the Executive Office in relation to Permanent Secretary appointments.
- ix. The Committee noted correspondence from the Executive Office regarding the Ad Hoc Committee on the Bill of Rights.
- x. The Committee noted a press release from the Executive Office in relation to Ministerial Statements given during the Official Apology to Victims and Survivors of Historical Institutional Abuse.

11. Any Other Business

None.

12. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday 23 March 2022 at 2:00pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 4.32pm.

Sinéad McLaughlin MLA
Chairperson, Committee for the Executive Office