



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for The Executive Office

Minutes of Proceedings

Wednesday 22nd September 2021

Meeting Location: Room 30, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Mr Trevor Lunn MLA

Ms Emma Sheerin MLA

Present via Video Conferencing:

Mr Colin McGrath MLA (Chairperson)

Mr John Stewart MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Ms Diane Dodds MLA

Mr George Robinson

Mr Pat Sheehan MLA

Apologies:

None.

In Attendance:

Mr Michael Potter (Assembly Clerk)

Ms Carla Campbell (Assistant Clerk)

Ms Sarah-Anne McKinley (Assistant Clerk)

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 Chair updated the Committee on an informal meeting with the Head of the Civil Service on Monday 20 September.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department for clarification on the roles of the Head of the Civil Service and the Permanent Secretary.

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 15th September 2021.

4. Matters Arising

The Committee considered a summary of key points raised during the oral evidence session on the Climate Change Bill on 15 September 2021.



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Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the summary of key points to the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs.

The Committee noted correspondence from Clare Bailey MLA clarifying a figure that had been misquoted during her oral briefing on Climate Change Bill on 15 September 2021.

George Robinson joined the meeting at 2:05pm.

5. Covid Recovery Plan – Departmental Officials

The witnesses joined the meeting at 2:08pm.

- Ms Karen Pearson, Director of Covid Strategy and Civil Contingencies, The Executive Office.
- Mr Peter Luney, Deputy Director, Covid Strategy and Recovery, The Executive Office.
- Ms Jane Holmes, Head of the Covid Recovery Team, The Executive Office.

The Member briefed Committee Members on the Executive Office Covid Recovery Plan.

Diane Dodds joined the meeting at 2:16pm.

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

During the evidence officials agreed to provide the Committee with further information on a number of areas.

The Chairperson thanked the witnesses for their attendance.



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Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Executive Office to ask what liaison had been carried out with other legislatures to share learning in relation to the Covid-19 response.

6. UK Exit from EU – Written briefing: UK Approach to the Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol – Assembly Research

The Committee noted the Northern Ireland Assembly Research and Information Service Briefing Paper: NIAR194-2021 - The Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol – UK Government Command Paper – 16 September 2021.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Clerk would liaise with Northern Ireland Assembly Research and Information Service in relation to research on the impact in Northern Ireland of upcoming legislation in Westminster.

Colin McGrath left the meeting at 3:08pm.

The Deputy Chairperson took the Chair.

7. Written Briefing Scrutiny of Arms-Length Bodies – Strategic Investment Board

The Committee noted a written briefing from the Strategic Investment Board.



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8. Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme for September to October 2021.

Agreed: The Committee agreed a number of amendments to the forward work programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request an oral Departmental briefing on the October monitoring round.

9. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted a response from the Executive Office to the Committee for Finance in relation to the unique circumstances funding provided under the NDNA agreement.
- ii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Executive Office announcing that a recruitment competition to appoint a new Commissioner for Victims and Survivors has commenced.
- iii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance to the Executive Office seeking an update on the Executive process relating to EU legislation and asking that statutory committees be kept advised in respect of these kinds of regulations.
- iv. The Committee noted an invitation from the Committee for Finance to Jayne Brady, Head of Civil Service, asking her to attend their Committee on 3 November 2021.
- v. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance to the Head of Civil Service in relation to legislation for Fire Safety Act and Building Safety Bill.



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- vi. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Infrastructure to the First Minister and deputy First Minister asking for information and their views on the implementation of regulations referred to in correspondence with Lord Jay, Chairman of the European Affairs Sub-Committee on the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland.
- vii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Justice to the Executive Office requesting a further update on the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy and whether the draft Strategy would be issued for public consultation during this Assembly mandate.
- viii. The Committee noted correspondence from Diane Dodds MLA asking for Thompson Travel to be considered as a witness when the Committee takes further evidence on the issue of support for travel agents.
- ix. The Committee noted correspondence from the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman updating the Committee on the progress made on the introduction of the complaint standards function following the commencement of Part 3 of the Public Services Ombudsman Act (Northern Ireland) 2016.
- x. The Committee noted correspondence from the Northern Ireland Assembly EU Affairs Manager providing an update on Common Frameworks.
- xi. The Committee noted a statement from Lord Frost to the House Lords on 16 September 2021 on the opportunities the UK has now that it has left the European Union.
- xii. The Committee noted a press release from the UK Government “Government launches plans to capitalise on new Brexit freedoms”, 16 September 2021.
- xiii. The Committee noted a press release from the UK Government “Government sets out pragmatic new timetable for introducing border controls”, 14 September 2021.
- xiv. The Committee noted a statement made by Penny Mordaunt, Paymaster General, on Border Controls, 14 September 2021.



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- xv. The Committee noted correspondence from the House of Lords European Affairs Sum-Committee on the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland to the Financial Secretary to the Treasury in relation to Unnumbered EM: Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/414 of 8 March 2021 on Technical Arrangements for Developing, Maintaining and Employing Electronic Systems for the Exchange and Storage of Information under Regulation (EU) No 952/2013 of the European Parliament and of The Council.
- xvi. The Committee noted correspondence from the House of Lords Constitution Committee inviting the Committee for the Executive Office to provide evidence for its inquiry into the future governance of the UK.
- xvii. The Committee noted NIA Bill 34/17-22 Political Appointments Bill.
- xviii. The Committee noted a response from the House of Lords European Union Committee to a joint letter from the Committee for the Executive Office, Northern Ireland Assembly; Justice and Constitution Committee, Welsh Senedd; and the Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee, Scottish Parliament confirming that they will seek to involve the Scottish Parliament, the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Welsh Senedd in the work of the PPA.
- xix. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Justice to the Executive Office in relation to the Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme.
- xx. The Committee noted a call for evidence from the Committee for Finance in relation to the Defamation Bill.
- xxi. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Communities to the Head of Civil Service asking what plans there are to introduce a more standardised cross-departmental business planning method and framework across the NI Civil Service.



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10. Any Other Business

George Robinson informed the Committee that today would be his last meeting with the Executive Office Committee.

The Deputy Chairperson thanked Mr Robinson for his contribution to the Committee and wished him well.

11. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday 29 September 2021 at 2:00pm, in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:13pm.

Colin McGrath MLA

Chairperson, Committee for the Executive Office