



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for The Executive Office

Minutes of Proceedings

Wednesday 12th January 2022

Meeting Location: Room 30, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Ms Sinéad McLaughlin (Chairperson)

Mr John Stewart MLA

Mr Trevor Lunn MLA

Present via Video Conferencing:

Mr Christopher Stalford

Mr Pat Sheehan MLA

Ms Emma Sheerin MLA

Mr Pádraig Delargy MLA

Mr Alex Easton MLA

Apologies: None

In Attendance:

Mr Michael Potter (Assembly Clerk)

Ms Sarah-Anne McKinley (Assistant Clerk)

Ms Alison Belshaw (Clerical Supervisor)

Ms Andrienne Magee (Clerical Officer)



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

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson condemned the online abuse experienced by Diane Dodds over the recess period.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to Diane Dodds to offer support of the Committee in relation to the online abuse received.

The Chairperson updated the Committee that at its meeting of 1 December 2021, the Committee agreed to table a motion for the approval by the Assembly of the Statement of Principles for the handling of complaints for debate in January 2022 and that the date scheduled for the motion is Tuesday 18 January at 4.30pm.

3. Draft Minutes

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

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Friday 17th December 2021.



4. Matters Arising

The Chairperson updated the Committee in relation to concerns raised by victims and survivors regarding the review of the HIA Redress Board and how it may not be complete before the Assembly dissolves ahead of the election.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request that the Department provides an update of the review of the HIA Redress Board.

5. Junior Ministers – EU Matters – Oral Briefing

The junior Ministers joined the meeting at 2.09pm.

- Mr Declan Kearney MLA, Junior Minister
- Mr Gary Middleton MLA, Junior Minister

The junior Ministers briefed the Committee in relation to the most recent developments regarding EU Exit.

Christopher Stalford joined the meeting at 2.20pm.

John Stewart left the meeting at 2.51pm and returned at 2.57pm.

Junior Minister Declan Kearney left the meeting at 3.10pm

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

The Chairperson thanked the junior Ministers for their attendance.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to contact the Assembly library to request information around the cost of labelling for medicines coming into Northern Ireland.



6. Departmental Officials – January Monitoring Round - Oral Briefing

Departmental officials joined the meeting at 3:41pm

- Dr Denis McMahon Permanent Secretary and Accounting Officer, The Executive Office.
- Mr Gareth Johnston Director of Strategic Policy, Equality and Good Relations The Executive Office.
- Ms Tara Kennedy Head of Finance Branch, The Executive Office.

Departmental officials briefed the Committee in relation to the January Monitoring Round.

Sinéad McLaughlin left the meeting at 4.04pm and returned at 4.07pm

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

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

7. Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme for January and February 2022.

The Chairperson updated the Committee that UK Foreign Secretary Liz Truss replaced Lord Frost as the UK's lead negotiator with the EU on the 19 December 2021.



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Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite Minister Heaton-Harris to brief the Committee in relation to the EU matters for the scheduled meeting on the 19 January 2021.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite Liz Truss to brief the Committee in relation to the EU matters before the end of the current mandate.

8. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted an SL-1 in relation to the Departments (Transfer of Functions) (Appeals Service) Order which will transfer statutory responsibility for the Appeals Service and Rent Assessment Panel from the Department for Communities to the Department of Justice.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Committee for Justice and the Committee for Communities for their views on the proposed legislation.

- ii. The Committee noted correspondence from the House of Lords European Affairs Sub-Committee in relation to the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland to Conor Burns, Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office on Article 2 on the Protocol on Ireland/ Northern Ireland (Rights of Individuals).
- iii. The Committee noted correspondence from House of Lords European Affairs Sub-Committee regarding the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland to Lord Frost on the democratic deficit under the Protocol and ways to enhance Northern Ireland's voice and influence.
- iv. The Committee noted correspondence from the House of Lords Common Frameworks Scrutiny Committee to the Welsh Parliament in relation to the Common Frameworks Programme.
- v. The Committee noted correspondence from the First Minister and deputy First Minister to the Assembly Speaker regarding an update on the issue of exemption for wearing a face covering.



- vi. The Committee noted a statement from the Executive Office regarding a Covid-19 Omicron update dated 30 December 2021.
 - vii. The Committee noted a statement from the First Minister and deputy First Minister in relation to decisions of the Executive on Covid-19 dated 22 December 2021.
 - viii. The Committee noted a statement from the Executive Office regarding an update on the Covid-19 situation dated 16 December 2021.
 - ix. The Committee noted a press release from the Executive Office in relation to the welcome launch of CIT supported Community Safety Engagement Forum.
 - x. The Committee noted a press release from the Executive Office regarding the announcement of £40million support for the Hospitality Sector.
 - xi. The Committee noted a press release from the Executive Office in relation to physical proof of status being offered to EU citizens.
 - xii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Executive Office regarding the NDNA Commitment on sub-regional equality.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the First and deputy First Minister for clarification on sub-regional equality commitments.
- xiii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Executive Office in relation to the Terms of Reference for the appointment of new members to the Victims and Survivors board.
 - xiv. The Committee noted correspondence from the Executive Office regarding the Minority Ethnic Development Fund 2022-2025 - Call for Applications.
 - xv. The Committee noted a ministerial statement from the Finance Minister in relation to the draft budget 2022-2025.



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- xvi. The Committee noted a press release from the Department for Finance regarding public consultation on the 2022-2025 draft budget.
- xvii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Finance Committee in relation to the draft budget 2022-2025.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule an evidence session with Department officials to scrutinise plans for the departmental budget 2022-2025.

- xviii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Finance Committee regarding the super parity issue - Parental Leave (Leave and Pay) Bill.
- xix. The Committee noted a report from ISNI titled Investing Activity Report - December 2021.
- xx. The Committee noted correspondence from Rosetta Trust in relation to the reconvened Committee for the Executive Office meeting on 17 December 2021.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Commissioner for Survivors of Childhood Institutional Abuse (COSICA) to seek views on a memorial.

- xxi. The Committee noted a report from the Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce titled "Brexit One Year On".
- xxii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Women's Resource and Development Agency (WRDA) in relation to the Executive Office's Engagement with the women's sector.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the First and deputy First Minister to highlight the importance of listening to the views of women in relation to Covid recovery.

- xxiii. The Committee noted correspondence from Phoenix Law to the Minister for Justice regarding the Greenvale hotel tragedy.



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xxiv. The Committee noted correspondence from an individual regarding Covid-19 restrictions and subsidies.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward this correspondence to the Economy Committee.

xxv. The Committee noted correspondence from the Executive Office in relation to the Covid Recovery Taskforce and request for regular updates on the Taskforce.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward this correspondence to the Economy Committee.

9. Any Other Business

None.

10. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday 19 January 2022 at 2:00pm, in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:38pm.

Sinéad McLaughlin Chairperson, Committee for the Executive Office