



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for The Executive Office

Minutes of Proceedings

Friday 17th December 2021

Meeting Location: Fully Virtual, Starleaf

Present:

Ms Sinéad McLaughlin (Chairperson)

Present via Video Conferencing:

Mr John Stewart MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Mr Christopher Stalford

Mr Pat Sheehan MLA

Ms Emma Sheerin MLA

Ms Diane Dodds MLA

Mr Alex Easton MLA

Mr Trevor Lunn MLA

Apologies:

Mr Pádraig Delargy 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 11.09am in open session.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson informed the Committee of her disappointment with regard to having to suspend the Committee for the Executive Office meeting on Wednesday 15 December 2021 due to loss of quorum during the presentation by the Commisisoner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse (COSICA).

The Chairperson expressed her apologies on behalf of the Committee to COSICA and victims and survivors.

3. Historical Institutional Abuse - Oral Briefing

The Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse (COSICA) joined the meeting at 11.12am.

- Ms Fiona Ryan, Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse.

Christopher Stalford joined the meeting at 11.13am.

The Commissioner briefed the Committee in relation to matters concerning victims and survivors of historical institutional abuse.

Alex Easton left the meeting at 12.00pm.



Christopher Stalford left the meeting at 13.05pm

The Chairperson thanked the Commissioner for her attendance.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the First and deputy First Minister to ask that they consider the symbolic date of 20th January 2022 for the timing of an official apology.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the First and deputy First Minister to raise the importance that the review of the redress process is worked upon without delay and is carried out in parallel to an official apology.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the First and deputy First Minister to seek more information surrounding the memorial process.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the First and deputy First Minister for an update on engagement with the institutions involved in historical abuse and to advise on the level of co-operation on the part of those institutions.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the First and deputy First Minister to ask if there are adequate resources within The Executive Office to deal with the issues surrounding historical institutional abuse.

The Chairperson also updated the Committee in relation to a number of actions that were outstanding following the Committee for the Executive meeting on Wednesday 15 December 2021.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Secretary of State in relation to the UK Government's Nationality and Borders Bill and the potential impact this will have on people's rights, significantly those in border areas.



Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Secretary of State and the Irish Government to consider legislating for the protection of rights concerning the Common Travel Area and the free movement of people.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Secretary of State regarding the accreditation status of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and the possibility of further funding for their work in relation to the Dedicated Mechanism and Article 2 of the Protocol on Ireland/ Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the report from the Centre for Children's Rights, Queen's University Belfast, entitled 'It Didn't End in 1998: Examining the Impacts of Conflict Legacy across Generations' to the junior Ministers due to the areas of overlap with FICT.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to include conflict legacy issues in the Committee Legacy Report as a potential point of interest for the new Committee of the Executive Office to take forward in the next mandate.

4. Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme for 2022.

5. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted a Hansard report from the House of Commons regarding the Parliamentary Partnership Assembly (PPA) debate on the 6 December 2021.
- ii. The Committee noted a report from The Seanad Special Select Committee on the Withdrawal of the UK from the EU titled 'Final report on the impacts of Brexit – December 2021'.



- iii. The Committee noted correspondence from The Executive Office in relation to queries following an oral evidence session with the Head of Northern Ireland Civil Service on the 3 November 2021.
- iv. The Committee noted correspondence from The Executive Office regarding a meeting of the Joint Consultative Working Group Meeting on the 15 November 2021.
- v. The Committee noted an Executive Office News Release in relation to tackling the Covid-19 Omicron Variant.
- vi. The Committee noted the Annual Report and Accounts for 2020-2021 from the Commission for Victims and Survivors for Northern Ireland.
- vii. The Committee noted the 2021 Annual Statement from the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission.
- viii. The Committee noted a report from the Independent Reporting Commission titled Fourth Report - December 2021.
- ix. The Committee noted correspondence from the NIA EU Affairs Manager regarding the thirteenth European Union (Withdrawal) Act and Common Frameworks Report.
- x. The Committee noted a research paper from the NIA Research and Information Service Briefing Paper titled 'The Role of the European Court of Justice in the Protocol on Ireland/ Northern Ireland.'
- xi. The Committee noted a report from Pivotal titled – 'Should I Stay or Should I Go? Reasons for Leaving Northern Ireland for Study or Work December 2021.'
- xii. The Committee noted correspondence from Friendship Travel to Sir Jeffrey Donaldson MP in relation to support for Travel Agents.



6. Any Other Business

The Chairperson updated the Committee in relation to setting up a WhatsApp group for the Members as a means of communication for the Committee.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to set up a WhatsApp group between the Members and Committee Clerk.

7. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday 12 January 2022 at 2:00pm, in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 13.14pm

Sinéad McLaughlin Chairperson, Committee for the Executive Office