



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for The Executive Office

Minutes of Proceedings

Wednesday 8th December 2021

Meeting Location: Room 30, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Ms Sinéad McLaughlin (Chairperson)

Mr Trevor Lunn MLA

Present via Video Conferencing:

Mr Pat Sheehan MLA

Ms Emma Sheerin MLA

Mr Alex Easton MLA

Ms Diane Dodds MLA

Apologies:

Mr John Stewart (Deputy Chairperson)

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)



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

1. Apologies

As Above.

2. Stakeholder Session Refugee Integration Strategy – Oral Briefing

Stakeholder groups joined the meeting at 2:03pm.

- Ms. Bernadette McAliskey, CEO of the South Tyrone Empowerment Programme, representing Stronger Together
- Ms. Lilian Seenoi-Barr, Director of Programmes North West Migrants' Forum
- Ms. Catherine Barr Director, The Women's Centre Derry
- Ms. Breidge McPherson BAME Advocacy Project Worker, The Women's Centre Derry
- Ms. Ann Marie White, Refugee Support Operations Manager British Red Cross
- Ms. Coumilah Manjoo, Community Liaison Officer Belfast Multi-Cultural Association

Diane Dodds joined the meeting at 2.33pm

Stakeholders briefed the Committee in relation to the draft Refugee Integration Strategy.



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

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Clerk would compile a summary of the issues raised during the session for the Committee's consideration prior to submission to the consultation.

The Chairperson thanked the stakeholder groups for their attendance.

3. Centre for Cross Border Studies: Civic Engagement and the EU - Oral Briefing

Representatives from The Centre for Cross Border Studies joined the meeting at 4:01pm.

- Dr Anthony Soares, Director, The Centre for Cross Border Studies
- Ms. Megan McDermott, Project Support Officer, The Centre for Cross Border Studies

The Centre for Cross Border Studies briefed the Committee in relation to civic engagement and the EU.

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

The Chairperson thanked Anthony and Megan for their attendance.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the First and deputy First Minister for an update on engagement and the establishment of civic society mechanisms with the UK, EU and Irish Governments around the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland and the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA).



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4. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson updated the Committee in relation to attending the first meeting of the re-convened Inter-Parliamentary Forum in the House of Lords on Friday 10th December 2021.

The Chairperson also updated the Committee that a meeting with Lord Jay, the Chair of the Lords Sub-Committee on the Protocol on Ireland/ Northern Ireland, has been arranged for Thursday 9th December 2021.

The Chairperson raised concerns to the Committee in relation to the appointment of the former Interim Head of Civil Service to the board of Firmus Energy.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the First Minister and deputy First Minister to raise a number of questions regarding the appointment of the former Interim Head of Civil Service in relation to policy and comparable rules.

5. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 1st December 2021.

6. Matters Arising

The Chairperson updated the Committee in regard to follow up actions following a visit to the Maze Long Kesh Development Corporation on Thursday 25 November 2021 where Members were taken on a tour of the site.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the First and deputy First Minister to ask for information on the conditions contained within the lease agreement with the Ulster Aviation Society.



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Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the First and deputy First Minister to ask can there be any modifications to the current lease agreement with the Ulster Aviation Society.

The Chairperson referred the Committee to a proposed list of invitees for stakeholder groups to give their views on the Violence against Women and Girls Strategy.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that a revised list of stakeholder groups would be compiled for the Committee to consider inviting in relation to the Strategy.

7. Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme for the remainder of 2021 and early 2022.

8. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted a statement from Lord Frost following a meeting with Maroš Šefčovič on the 3 December 2021.
- ii. The Committee noted correspondence from the House of Lords European Union Committee to devolved administrations in relation to the Parliamentary Partnership Assembly (PPA).
- iii. The Committee noted a statement from the UK Government - Joint Communique of the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference on the 2 December 2021.
- iv. The Committee noted correspondence from the First Minister and deputy First Minister in relation to queries regarding the former Interim Head of the Civil Service.



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- v. The Committee noted correspondence from the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding a request for minutes of Executive meetings.
- vi. The Committee noted correspondence from The Executive Office in relation to queries following an oral briefing session with the Permanent Secretary on 10 November 2021.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to ask how the statutory requirement for retention of records in relation to mother and baby homes will be put in place.

- vii. The Committee noted correspondence from The Executive Office regarding the review of HIA Redress Board and issues regarding timeline and an official apology.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the First and deputy First Minister to ask for a copy of the terms of reference for the review.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the First and deputy First Minister to insist that a review of the redress process is separate to considerations for an apology and that the two should in no way impact on each other.

- viii. The Committee noted correspondence from the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding the publication of the final report of the FICT Commission.
- ix. The Committee noted an Executive Office news release on FICT report.
- x. The Committee noted an Executive Office press release on the current Covid-19 situation.
- xi. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for the Economy in relation to future support for Travel Agents.
- xii. The Committee noted a report from the Committee for Education titled "A fair Start."



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- xiii. The Committee noted the annual report (2020-2021) from the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman.
- xiv. The Committee noted a report from ISNI titled Investing Activity Report - November 2021.
- xv. The Committee noted correspondence from the Welsh Parliament Counsel General and Minister for the Constitution to the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee in relation to a Common Frameworks update.
- xvi. The Committee noted correspondence from the Welsh Parliament Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee to the House of Lords Common Frameworks Scrutiny Committee regarding to Common Frameworks.
- xvii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Rosetta Trust regarding follow up points subsequent to a meeting with the Chair of the Executive Office Committee.
- xviii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Association of Northern Ireland Travel Agents (ANITA) in relation to a follow up from the Stakeholder session with the Committee for the Executive Office on the 10 November 2021.
- xix. The Committee noted correspondence from the Clerking and Member Support Office (CAMS) in relation to a Member Development Deaf Awareness Course.

Alex Easton left the meeting at 4.50pm.

9. Any Other Business

The Chairperson updated the Committee that a Committee motion for the Assembly to adopt the Statement of Principles laid by the Public Services Ombudsman has been scheduled for 18 January 2022.



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10. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday 15 December 2021 at 2:00pm, in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:58pm.

Sinéad McLaughlin

Chairperson, Committee for the Executive Office