



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

# Committee for The Executive Office

## Minutes of Proceedings

Wednesday 17 February 2021

**Meeting Location:** Virtually via Video Conferencing

**Present by Video or Teleconference:**

Mr Colin McGrath MLA (Chairperson)  
Mr Doug Beattie MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Ms Martina Anderson MLA  
Mr Trevor Lunn MLA  
Mr George Robinson MLA  
Mr Pat Sheehan MLA  
Ms Emma Sheerin MLA  
Mr Christopher Stalford MLA

**Apologies:** Mr Trevor Clarke MLA

**In Attendance by Video or Teleconference:**

Mr Michael Potter (Assembly Clerk)  
Ms Carla Campbell (Assistant Clerk)  
Ms Sarah-Anne McKinley (Assistant Clerk)  
Mr Craig Mealey (Clerical Supervisor)  
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 Chairperson acknowledged that Dr Mark Browne had been appointed as Permanent Secretary for the Department of Education.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to Dr Browne congratulating him on his appointment.

The Chairperson advised Members that the Committee for Finance have agreed to commission experts to advise on particular financial matters arising from the Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol and have asked the Committee for the Executive Office to co-commission this selection of experts.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to co-commission a selection of experts with the Finance Committee to advise on particular financial matters arising from the Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol.

### **3. Draft Minutes**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> February 2021.



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**4. Matters Arising**

None

**5. Northern Ireland Youth Forum – Our Voices: Speaking Truth to Power - Presentation**

The following Members of the Northern Ireland Youth Forum joined the meeting at 2:09pm to discuss the views of young people on the response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Mr Chris Quinn, Director, Northern Ireland Youth Forum

Natalie Corbett, Participation Development Worker, Northern Ireland Youth Forum

Oisin-Tomas O'Raghallaigh, Member, Northern Ireland Youth Forum

Adam Crothers, Member, Northern Ireland Youth Forum

Jack Dalzell, Member, Northern Ireland Youth Forum

Blair Anderson, Member, Northern Ireland Youth Forum

Lauren McAreavey, Member, Northern Ireland Youth Forum

The session was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked the Members of the Northern Ireland Youth Forum for their attendance and the informative discussion.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to consider the issues raised by the Northern Ireland Youth Forum at the Committee meeting on 24 February 2021.



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*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly to ask for an update on the current status of the Youth Assembly.

## **6. Forward Work Programme**

The Committee considered the Forward Work Programme for February to April 2021.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that an outline of the Effective Questioning Training should be circulated to Members to consider.

## **7. Correspondence**

- i. The Committee noted a response from the Executive Office regarding support for survivors of Mother and Baby Homes and Magdalene Laundries.
- ii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for the Economy to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland seeking an urgent response on what is being done to address issues faced by local businesses.
- iii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for the Economy to the First Minister and deputy First Minister urging the Executive to support the Department for the Economy's financial request to fund long-term Skills projects.
- iv. The Committee noted correspondence from the Ad Hoc Committee on a Bill of Rights to the Executive Office requesting an update on the recruitment of a panel of experts provided for in New Decade, New Approach to assist the Committee in its work.
- v. The Committee noted a joint statement by the UK Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Gove and European Commission Vice-President Sefcovic following their meeting in London to prepare the upcoming Joint Committee on the



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implementation of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland and the outstanding issues.

- vi. The Committee noted a response from the Cabinet Office to points raised in Road Haulage Association Letter to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.
- vii. The Committee considered correspondence from an individual regarding the impact of internet and technology poverty.

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

- viii. The Committee noted correspondence from an individual regarding police powers in dealing with people travelling outside their local area to the North Coast.
- ix. The Committee noted a response from the Executive Office regarding the inclusion of local stakeholders in the membership of the High Streets Task Force.
- x. The Committee noted a joint statement by the Executive Office, the Archbishops of Armagh, the Association of Leaders of Missionaries and religious of Ireland (AMR), and Barnardo's regarding their meeting to discuss the remaining Hart recommendations for victims and survivors of historical institutional abuse.
- xi. The Committee noted correspondence from the Public Accounts Committee regarding primacy over the reports of the Northern Ireland Audit Office.
- xii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Audit Committee to the Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly regarding the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman's resource plans to enable her office to exercise a complaints standards authority role should Part 3 of the Public Services Ombudsman Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 be commenced.
- xiii. The Committee considered correspondence from the Northern Ireland Assembly Chairpersons' Liaison Group regarding the Programme for Government draft Outcomes Framework Consultation and plans for considering the responses to the consultation.



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*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the Committee for the Executive Office should take the lead in considering the responses to the Programme for Government draft Outcomes Framework Consultation.

- xiv. The Committee noted correspondence from the Seanad Special Select Committee on the Withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union accepting the Committee's invitation to attend as witnesses on Wednesday 10 March 2021.
- xv. The Committee noted correspondence from the Secretary of State for Wales to the Welsh Assembly Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee regarding the Sewel Convention.
- xvi. The Committee noted correspondence from NAHT(NI) to the Interim Head of the Civil Services regarding the vaccinations for special school staff.

## **8. Any Other Business**

The Chairperson referred to the meeting with the Joint Committee for the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement and proposals made during the meeting for ongoing co-operation.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the Clerk should liaise with the Clerk of the Joint Committee for the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement regarding the proposals made and potential ongoing co-operation between the two Committees.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that, subject to agreement by the Joint Committee for the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement, a joint letter should



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be drafted to send to the European Commission to highlight issues associated with the UK withdrawal from the EU.

Members raised the lack of communication regarding the meetings of the Joint Consultative Working Group, which met on 29 January 2021.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to Minister Gove to ask for an update from the meeting of the Joint Consultative Working Group on 29 January 2021 and to request that regular briefings are provided to the Committee following any future meetings.

Members raised a meeting scheduled between the EU Commission Vice-President and Northern Ireland business leaders on 18 February 2021.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Executive Office to request information on these meetings including details of the business organisations that the European Commission Vice-President is meeting and an indication of how these were selected.

### **9. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 24 February 2021 at 2:00pm, virtually via Starleaf.

The meeting moved into closed session at 4:10pm.



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### **10. Brexit – NIA EU Affairs Manager Briefing**

The Northern Ireland Assembly European Affairs Manager, Ms Shauna Mageean, joined the meeting at 4:10pm.

The European Affairs Manager briefed Members on structures of intergovernmental relations and EU exit.

During the briefing there were a number of proposals which will be considered and agreed at the Committee meeting on 24 February 2021.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that future briefing sessions with the Northern Ireland Assembly European Affairs Manager should be held in public session.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00pm.

**Colin McGrath MLA**  
**Chairperson, Committee for the Executive Office**