



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for The Executive Office

Minutes of Proceedings

Wednesday 24 March 2021

Meeting Location: Virtually via Video Conferencing

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Mr Colin McGrath MLA (Chairperson)

Ms Martina Anderson MLA

Mr Trevor Clarke MLA

Mr Trevor Lunn MLA

Mr George Robinson MLA

Mr Pat Sheehan MLA

Ms Emma Sheerin MLA

Mr Christopher Stalford MLA

Apologies: Mr Doug Beattie MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

In Attendance by Video or Teleconference:

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 2:04pm in open session

1. Apologies

As Above.

2. Chairperson's Business

The Chair referred to a memo from the Chairpersons' Liaison Group to all Members seeking their views on how best to improve scrutiny. Members were encouraged to respond to this request.

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 10 March 2021.

4. Matters Arising

The Committee considered a response from the Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse (COSICA) regarding issues raised by Committee members.

Members were informed that the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson had received correspondence from a representative of a historical institutional abuse group



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highlighting concerns and requesting a meeting to discuss issues they were experiencing with the redress process.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Clerk should prepare a paper comparing the information given by the Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse and issues raised in the correspondence.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that an informal meeting should be arranged between the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson and survivors of institutional abuse who had requested to meet.

The Committee considered a paper outlining the common themes raised during the briefing session with business organisations on the High Streets Task Force at the meeting on 10 March 2021.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the NI Assembly Research and Information Service is to be tasked to prepare a paper of examples of good practice in high streets regeneration referred to by stakeholder groups.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule an oral briefing session with departmental officials on the High Streets Task Force.

5. Programme for Government – Outcomes Framework – NI Assembly Research and Information Service.

The Researcher joined the meeting at 2:07pm

- Mr Steven Orme, Researcher, Northern Ireland Assembly Research and Information Service.



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The Researcher briefed Members on the Programme for Government Outcomes Framework.

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

The Chairperson thanked the Researcher for his attendance.

6. Programme for Government – Consultation – Oral Evidence Session with Departmental Officials.

The Officials joined the meeting at 2:38pm

- Mr Chris Stewart, Deputy Secretary of Strategic Policy, Equality and Good Relations, The Executive Office.
- Mr Geoffrey Simpson, Director of Programme for Government and NICS of the Future, The Executive Office.
- Ms Joanne Cartland, Principal Statistician, The Executive Office.

The officials briefed Members on the Programme for Government Consultation.

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

The oral evidence was reported by Hansard.



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During the session officials agreed to provide the Committee with results of the Equality Impact Assessment and Rural Needs Assessment when they are available.

The Chairperson thanked the Officials for their attendance.

The meeting suspended at 3:35pm.

The meeting resumed at 3:41pm

7. UK Exit from EU – Post-Brexit Transition – Oral Evidence Session with Business Organisations.

The Representatives joined the meeting at 3:42pm

- Ms Angela McGowan, Director, CBI Northern Ireland.
- Mr Fergal O'Brien, Director of Policy and Public Affairs, IBEC.
- Mr Michael D'Arcy, Programme Lead, IBEC-CBI NI Joint Business Council.

The Representatives briefed Members on Post-Brexit transition.

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

The oral evidence was reported by Hansard.



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The Chairperson thanked the Representatives for their attendance.

8. Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme for March to April 2021.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule an oral briefing with departmental officials on the June Monitoring Round in May 2021.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Clerk should prepare a paper highlighting what work the Committee needs to complete by March 2022, and options for Committee work up to that date, to be considered at the scheduled planning session on 5 May 2021.

9. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted a response from the Executive Office regarding the forecast Resource and Capital expenditure for 2020/21 and the Draft Budget 2021/22.
- ii. The Committee noted an urgent oral Ministerial statement to the Assembly by the First Minister and deputy First Minister providing an update of decisions taken by the Executive in relation to COVID-19 Restrictions.
- iii. The Committee noted a response from the First Minister and deputy First Minister to the Committee for the Economy regarding business preparedness for EU Exit.



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- iv. The Committee considered correspondence from the Executive Office regarding the proposal to make a Statutory Rule – Travel Agents (Coronavirus, Financial Assistance) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule consideration of SR 2021/68 Travel Agents (Coronavirus, Financial Assistance) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 after Easter Recess.

- v. The Committee noted a response from the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland regarding the Victims' Payments Scheme.

- vi. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for the Economy to the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding the Department for the Economy Economic Recovery Action Plan, highlighting the cross cutting nature of the plan and advocating for Executive support for funding of the plan.

- vii. The Committee considered correspondence from the Committee for Infrastructure to the First Minister and deputy First Minister asking for information on when the Transfer of Functions Order will be enacted and requesting that this be expedited urgently.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Executive Office to support the Committee for Infrastructure's request that this be expedited urgently.

- viii. The Committee noted a memo from the Assembly EU Affairs Manager to all Statutory Committees regarding correspondence between Lord Kinnoull to Lord Frost in relation to the operation of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland.

- ix. The Committee noted a memo from the Assembly EU Affairs Manager to the Committee regarding correspondence from Chloe Smith MP to Sir Bernard Jenkin MP detailing the status of Common Frameworks and the scrutiny process.

- x. The Committee noted a memo from the Assembly EU Affairs Manager to Statutory Committees regarding the latest Government update on Common Frameworks and forwarding a copy of the Cabinet Office document "The



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European Union (Withdrawal) Act and Common Frameworks – 26 September to 25 December 2020”

- xi. The Committee noted a press release from the European Commission “Withdrawal Agreement: Commission sends letter of formal notice to the United Kingdom for breach of its obligations under the Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland”.
- xii. The Committee noted a response from the House of Lords European Union Committee regarding the UK-EU Parliamentary Partnership Assembly.
- xiii. The Committee noted the Executive Office notice “Ministers launch competition for Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service”.
- xiv. The Committee noted the Executive Office March 2021 Update on EU Exit Matters.
- xv. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Communities to the Executive Office regarding the safe reopening of leisure centres.
- xvi. The Committee considered correspondence from the Welsh Minister for Health and Social Services regarding food and feed safety and hygiene provisional framework.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward this correspondence to the Committee for Health as this issue falls within its remit.

10. Any Other Business

None.



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11. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 14 April 2021 at 2:00pm, virtually via Starleaf.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:38pm.

Colin McGrath MLA

Chairperson, Committee for the Executive Office