



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR EMPLOYMENT AND LEARNING
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

WEDNESDAY, 15 JANUARY 2014

ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Mr Robin Swann MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Thomas Buchanan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Mr Sammy Douglas MLA
Mr Phil Flanagan MLA
Mr David Hilditch MLA
Mr Chris Lyttle MLA
Mr Fra McCann MLA
Ms Bronwyn McGahan MLA
Mr Pat Ramsey MLA
Mr Alastair Ross MLA

In Attendance: Mrs Cathie White (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Vincent Gribbin (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Johnny Lawless (Clerical Supervisor)
Ms Noreen Hayward (Clerical Officer)

Apologies: Mr David McClarty MLA

The meeting opened in public session at 10:04 am.

1. Apologies

Apologies are detailed above.

2. Chairpersons Business

- The Chairperson advised Members that letters of congratulations have been sent to individuals named in the New Year Honours list who have links to the remit of the Committee.
- The Committee considered its proposed Inquiry into post Special Educational Need Provision in education, employment and training for those with Learning Disabilities.

Mr Thomas Buchanan joined the meeting at 10:08 am.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Terms of Reference for the Inquiry.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to issue the Terms of Reference to the organisations listed.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to issue the public notice to publicise the Inquiry.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider at a future meeting how it intends to take evidence for the Inquiry.

3. Minutes of the meetings held on 11 December 2013

Agreed: The minutes of the meeting on 11 December 2013 were agreed.

4. Matters arising

- The Committee noted a list of matters arising from the meeting on 11 December 2013.
- The Committee considered actions from the meeting on 11 December 2013 regarding today's briefing on the procurement for the Steps 2 Success Programme.

Mr David Hilditch joined the meeting at 10:12 am.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to hold the briefing on the procurement for the Steps 2 Success Programme in public session and recorded by Hansard.

Mr Sammy Douglas joined the meeting at 10:16 am.

5. Correspondence

The Committee considered the following items of correspondence:

Mr Phil Flanagan left the meeting at 10:16 am.

- Correspondence from the Department for Finance and Personnel regarding the current position in relation to Post Project Evaluations (PPE's).

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence and forward it to the Department for comment.

- Correspondence from Save the Children providing a paper titled 'Too Young to Fail: Closing the Education Achievement Gap in Northern Ireland'.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Ministerial response to Committee request for information regarding the appointment to the Board of Governors at North West Regional College.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Response from the North West Regional College regarding issues raised by a member of staff at the College.

Agreed: The Committee agree to note the correspondence.

- Departmental response to Committee request for sight of the minutes of the North West Regional College Board of Governors meeting on 13 March 2013.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from the Committee for Finance and Personnel regarding a briefing from the Department for Finance and Personnel on the proposals for the local budget process for 2015 - 2016.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing in its forward work programme after the Budget Process is approved by the Northern Ireland Executive.

- Correspondence from the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding the recent Delivering Social Change Signature Programmes Event.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Departmental response to Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister's correspondence regarding the Delivering Social Change Signature Programmes.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Correspondence from the Committee for the Environment requesting a response to its inquiry into Wind Energy.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to provide the Committee with correspondence it received from the Universities and Colleges regarding Public Sector Renewable Generation Uptake and requesting that the Committee is kept updated on the Inquiry.

- Correspondence from the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding the compilation of the 2014 report on Assembly Committee European Priorities.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency providing the latest Labour Market Statistics.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from the GL Education Group requesting to meet the Chairperson regarding STEM/teacher training and wider vocational education issues.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Chairperson and/or Deputy Chairperson would meet the GL Education Group informally.

- Correspondence from the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment regarding the Exploris Aquarium and Seal Sanctuary.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from Investing Strategy for Northern Ireland including the Department's Investing Activity Report for December 2013.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the report.

- Response from Stranmillis University College regarding efficiencies made in the last two academic years.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Correspondence from Derry City Council providing an update on the Collaboration and Innovation Fund.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Response from Copius Resources to issues raised by the Department regarding its briefing to the Committee.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the response to the Department for information and requests that the Department meets Copius to resolve any outstanding issues and that the Department keep the Committee updated on any on-going discussions.

- Response from the Department for Finance and Personnel regarding action taken against companies who are found to have operated blacklists.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Departmental correspondence regarding its Literature Review of Zero Hours Contracts.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Departmental correspondence to the Committee for Education regarding the planned Stakeholder Forums on the Review of Youth Training

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Departmental correspondence to the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment regarding the planned Stakeholder Forums on the Review of Youth Training

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Departmental correspondence detailing its financial position at January 2014.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Departmental response providing statistical information on the Steps to Work Programme,

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Queen's University Belfast response to Committee request for comment following the CLIC Sargent Briefing.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence and forward it to CLIC Sargent for information.

- Stranmillis University College response to Committee request for comment following the CLIC Sargent Briefing.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence and forward it to CLIC Sargent for information.

- Departmental response to Committee request for information on the impact of employment schemes on the mind-set and employability of scheme participants.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Departmental response to Committee request for information on the availability of funding for the continuance of the Kestrel Project.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence and forward it to the Kestrel Project for information.

- Departmental invitation to Stakeholder Forums on the Review of Youth Training.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

- Invitation from the Committee for Education to attend the 'STEM is Cool' Event on 29 January in the Long Gallery, Parliament Buildings.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Committee for Education confirming its participation in the event.

6. Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted the draft Forward Work Programme up to 23 April 2014.

7. Departmental Briefing on the Review of Apprenticeships

The Departmental officials joined the meeting at 10:27 am.

The Committee was briefed by Mrs Catherine Bell CBE, Deputy Secretary and Ms Yvonne Croskery, Head of Apprenticeship Review Team.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Mr Chris Lyttle joined the meeting at 10:45 am.

The Departmental official left the meeting at 11:08 am.

8. Departmental Briefing on the Summary of Responses on the TUPE Consultation.

The Departmental officials joined the meeting at 11:09 am.

Mr Chris Lyttle left the meeting at 11:09 am.

The Committee was briefed by Mr Tom Evans, Deputy Director, Strategy, European and Employment Relations Division, Mr Conor Brady, Head of Employment Relations Policy and Legislation Branch and Mr Andrew Dawson, Employment Relations Policy and Legislation Branch.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The Departmental officials left the meeting at 11:32 am.

9. Any other business

None.

10. Date, time and place of next meeting

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the next meeting should be held on Wednesday 22 January at 10.00 am in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The Committee moved into closed session at 11:33 am.

11. Briefing from the Northern Ireland Assembly Legal Service on Procurement for Steps 2 Success

The official joined the meeting at 11:34 am.

The Committee was briefed by a member of the Northern Ireland Assembly Legal Service.

Mr Phil Flanagan re-joined the meeting at 11:40 am.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Mr Alastair Ross left the meeting at 12:12 pm.

Mr David Hilditch left the meeting at 12:15 pm.

The official left the meeting at 12:17 pm.

The Committee moved into open session at 12:18 pm.

12. Joint Departmental and Department for Finance and Personnel Central Procurement Division Briefing on Procurement.

The Departmental officials joined the meeting at 12:20 pm.

The Committee was briefed by Mr Derek Baker, Permanent Secretary, Department for Employment and Learning, Mr Colum Boyle, Director of Employment Services, Department for Employment and Learning and Mr David Carson, Deputy Director Central Procurement Division, Department of Finance and Personnel.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Ms Bronwyn McGahan left the meeting at 1:01 pm.

Mr Fra McCann left the meeting at 1:11 pm.

Agreed: Departmental officials agreed to provide the Committee with a comparative analysis of the outputs for the Steps to Work Programme, Steps 2 Success Programme and the Work Programme

Agreed: Departmental officials also agreed to seek advice on whether the Department is allowed to provide the Committee with the scores of the applicants at stage 1 of the Steps 2 Success procurement exercise.

Agreed: Departmental officials agreed provide an update on the timeframe for the remainder of the procurement process.

Mr Sammy Douglas left the meeting at 1:29 pm.

The Departmental officials left the meeting at 1:33 pm.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 1:33 pm.

Mr Robin Swann MLA
Chairperson, Committee for Employment & Learning

22 January 2014