



Northern Ireland
Assembly

COMMITTEE FOR EMPLOYMENT AND LEARNING MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

WEDNESDAY, 19 NOVEMBER 2014

ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Mr Robin Swann MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Thomas Buchanan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr David Hilditch MLA
Mr William Irwin MLA
Ms Anna Lo MLA
Mr Fra McCann MLA
Mr Pat Ramsey MLA
Mr Alastair Ross MLA

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

Apologies: Mr Phil Flanagan MLA
Ms Claire Sugden MLA
Ms Bronwyn McGahan MLA

The meeting opened in public session at 10:03 am.

1. Apologies

Apologies are detailed above.

2. Chairperson's Business

- The Chairperson advised Members that an informal meeting with the Ulster University, Queen's University Belfast and The Open University to discuss the implications of budget cuts for the HE Sector took place on 4 November 2014.

- The Chairperson advised Members that an informal meeting with the University and College Union to discuss the implications of budget cuts for the HE Sector took place on 5 November 2014.

The Committee noted that the Chairperson had written on behalf of the Committee to Queen's University Belfast and the Ulster University requesting that they engage meaningfully with the University and College Union regarding the budget cuts.

- The Chairperson advised Members that Financial Scrutiny Training provided by the Assembly Research and Information Service would take place today in closed session following the meeting in preparation for the Ministerial briefing on the Budget 2015-2016 next week.
- The Chairperson raised the issue of the recent Employment Appeals Tribunal decision that overtime is included in holiday pay.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request details of any action it has taken following the ruling with regard to the Working Time Directive and the related Working Time Regulations.

- The Committee discussed the recent Committee visit report on its visit to Springvale Employment and Learning Solutions as part of its Inquiry into Post Special Educational Need in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to include the visit report in the Inquiry report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a research paper detailing the different organisations providing training for individuals with learning disabilities on leaving full-time education in Northern Ireland.

- The Committee discussed the recent Committee visit to North West Regional College.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to host a joint Supported Employment Showcase event for the North West Regional College and the Belfast Met in the Long Gallery on 3 November 2015.

- The Chairperson advised Members that he attended the NOW graduation event on 13 November 2014 where the entertainment was provided by the Glenveagh School rock band.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to host the Glenveagh School rock band in the Great Hall on Tuesday 9 December 2014 from 12:30 - 1:00 pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Speaker of the Assembly requesting permission for the band to play in the Great Hall.

- The Committee discussed the Rotary Club Technology Tournament that it hosted in the Long Gallery on 18 November 2014.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to issue a press release calling on the Further Education and Higher Education sectors to respond to the Budget consultation process.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Ulster University, Queen's University Belfast and The Open University offering to propose a Committee Motion on the budget cuts to the Higher Education Sector.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2014

Agreed: The minutes of the meeting on 22 October 2014 were agreed.

4. Matters arising

- The Committee noted a list of matters arising from the meeting on 22 October 2014.

5. Correspondence

The Committee considered the following items of correspondence:

- Correspondence from the Chairpersons' Liaison Group detailing the key issues raised and decisions taken at its meeting on 21 October 2014,

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from the Northern Ireland Assembly EU Affairs Manager providing the EU Matters Newsletter for October 2014.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from the Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure to the Minister for Employment and Learning regarding the Creative Arts Visual School.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from the Department for Employment and Learning to the Committee for Education regarding the Shared and Integrated Education Inquiry.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence and to write to the Committee for Education advising that it will keep a watching brief on the Inquiry in case an issue of relevant to the Department of Employment and Learning is raised.

- Departmental response regarding the briefing on the Labour Mobility Research.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Correspondence from Stranmillis University College providing an update on the Teacher Training Infrastructure staff consultations.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland providing the Department for Employment and Learning Investing Activity Report for October 2014.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from the Irish Congress of Trade Unions requesting the opportunity to brief the Committee on the Review of Employment Law.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing when the Review of Employment Law comes before the Committee.

- Correspondence from Unite the Union requesting to meet the Committee regarding the budget cuts to Higher Education.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to arrange an informal meeting.

- Correspondence from the British Council regarding the FlameLab.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Assembly Research and Information Service research paper on Sweden's support for people with learning disabilities.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the research paper.

- Assembly Research and Information Service research paper on Kinship Care in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing from Kinship Care in the forward work programme.

- Correspondence from the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment regarding the Deregulation Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Departmental correspondence regarding The Deregulation Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note that this correspondence has already been forwarded to the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment for information.

- Correspondence from the Historical Royal Palaces offering to brief the Committee on the new Clore Learning Centre.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to decline the offer of a briefing.

- Ministerial correspondence regarding amendments that have been tabled for the Work and Families Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Assembly Research and Information Service research paper on Public Procurement Competitions and Not-for-Profit Organisations: Current Cabinet Office Proposals

Agreed: The Committee agreed to discuss this research paper at next week's meeting.

- Correspondence from the Chair's Forum on enhancing the effectiveness of corporate governance of public bodies in the Northern Ireland Public Sector.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland regarding the promoting of teacher professionalism.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from the Committee for Finance and Personnel regarding the draft budget for 2015 - 2016.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Departmental response to correspondence regarding SDC Trailers.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to ascertain the reasons why the Department has agreed a Bridge to Employment Programme for only 10-12 posts for training for welding staff when SDC Trailers stated they could take 20 new staff.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment for information and advising that it has written to the Department for further information.

- Correspondence from the Confucius Institute at the Ulster University requesting the opportunity to brief the Committee on its work.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing in the forward work programme.

- Assembly Research and Information Service research paper on the Productivity Gap.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence

- Correspondence from the Committee for Finance and Personnel regarding concerns expressed by the Minister for Finance and Personnel over the current underspend in the Financial Transactions Capital Budget.

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

- Departmental response to correspondence regarding the number of part-time workers receiving benefits.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Departmental response to correspondence requesting sight of study visit reports.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Departmental response to correspondence requesting additional information following the Reed in Partnership briefing on the Steps 2 Success programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Correspondence from the Minister for Employment and Learning giving notice of his intention to make an oral statement on the Review of Youth Training.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from Colleges NI requesting that the Committee sponsor a showcase event in 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to sponsor the showcase event.

- Departmental correspondence regarding the publication of the Review of Youth Training - Interim Report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Departmental response to correspondence regarding the number of young people with disabilities on apprenticeship programmes.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department requesting that the statistics be broken down by constituency.

- Invitation from the Northern Ireland Assembly Business Trust briefing on Sales and Marketing.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

- Invitation to the Inclusion Quality Mark awards presentation ceremony.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

- Invitation from The Open University to its Perspectives in Lifelong Learning Showcase.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

- Invitation from NISCA and the Northern Ireland Careers Service Autumn conference.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

- Invitation from the Welsh Government to a forum on Europe Working for Wales.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

- Invitation from Collaboration NI to a conference on future proofing the third sector for the challenges ahead.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

- Invitation from the Centre for Economic Empowerment to the launch of research into universal childcare in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

- Invitation from Dignity and Rights conference on a framework for the future.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

- Invitation from the Open University to a farewell dinner for the Vice-Chancellor.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

- Invitation from Momentum to its digital conference.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

6. Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted the draft Forward Work Programme to 10 December 2014.

7. Departmental Briefing - United Youth Programme

10:18 am The Departmental officials joined the meeting.

The Committee was briefed by Ms Yvonne Croskery, Director of Youth Policy and Strategy Division and Mr Jim Russell, Deputy Director Youth Policy and Strategy Division.

10:22 am Mr Thomas Buchanan joined the meeting.

10:22 am Mr William Irwin joined the meeting.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Agreed: The officials agreed to provide further information on how they intend to track young people after they take part on the programme.

10:41 am Mr David Hilditch joined the meeting.

11:06 am The Departmental officials left the meeting.

8. Briefing from Steps 2 Success Contractor - EOS Works

11:07 am The representatives joined the meeting.

The Committee was briefed by Ms Tina McKenzie, Managing Director, EOS NI, Mr Steven Bell, Director of Policy and Communications, EOS NI and Ms Katrina Hinfey, NI Contract Manager, EOS NI.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Agreed: The representatives invited the Committee to visit one of its training centres.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward a copy of the Assembly Research and Information Service paper on the Contracted Companies and request that they provide updated statistics on the work programmes they provide in Great Britain.

11:55 am The representatives left the meeting.

9. Departmental Briefing - Zero Hours Contracts

11:55 am The Departmental officials joined the meeting.

The Committee was briefed by Mr Tom Evans, Deputy Director, Strategy, European and Employment Relations Division, Mr John McKeown, Head of Employment Relations Policy and Legislation Branch and Ms Deirdre Walsh, Employment Relations Policy and Legislation.

12:11 pm Mr William Irwin left the meeting.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

12:34 pm The Departmental officials left the meeting.

10. Departmental Briefing - Legislative Consent Motion Pension Schemes Bill

12:35 pm The Departmental officials joined the meeting.

The Committee was briefed by Ms Jo Wilson, Civil Justice Policy & Legislation Division, Department of Justice, Mr Tom Evans, Deputy Director, Strategy, European and Employment Relations Division, Department for Employment and Learning and Mrs Geraldine Lavery, Employment Relations Policy and Legislation, Department for Employment and Learning.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note correspondence from the Department of Justice

relating to the Judicial Pensions: Proposals for Subordinate Legislation under the
Public Service Pensions Act (Northern Ireland) 2014

12:42 pm The Departmental officials left the meeting.

11. Any other business

None.

12. Date, time and place of next meeting

The Committee noted that the next meeting should be held on Wednesday 19 November 2014 at 10.00 am in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

12:43 pm The Committee moved into closed session

12:45 pm Mr Alastair Ross left the meeting.

12:45 pm Mr Thomas Buchanan left the meeting.

12:45 pm Ms Anna Lo left the meeting.

13. Assembly Research and Information Service on Budget Scrutiny.

12:47pm The researcher joined the meeting.

The Committee was briefed by Mr Michael Scholes, Researcher, Northern Ireland Assembly Research and Information Service.

1:00 pm Mr Pat Ramsey left the meeting.

The meeting was inquorate at 1:00 pm

1:00 pm The Chairperson adjourned the meeting.

Mr Robin Swann MLA
Chairperson, Committee for Employment & Learning

26 November 2014