



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

## COMMITTEE FOR EMPLOYMENT AND LEARNING MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

WEDNESDAY, 10 DECEMBER 2014

ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Mr Robin Swann MLA (Chairperson)  
Mr Thomas Buchanan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Phil Flanagan MLA  
Mr David Hilditch MLA  
Mr William Irwin MLA  
Ms Anna Lo MLA  
Mr Fra McCann MLA  
Ms Bronwyn McGahan MLA  
Mr Pat Ramsey 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 Sydney Anderson MLA

*The meeting opened in public session at 10:12 am.*

### 1. Apologies

Apologies are detailed above.

### 2. Chairperson's Business

- The Committee considered the visit report for the Committee visit to Ardnashee School and College as part of its inquiry into Special Education Need Provision in Northern Ireland.

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

- The Chairperson advised Members that the Minister has requested a change in the order of today's briefings.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to change the order of today's briefings.

### **3. Minutes of the meetings held on 26 November 2014 and 3 December 2014**

*Agreed:* The minutes of the meetings on 26 November 2014 and 3 December 2014 were agreed.

### **4. Matters arising**

- The Committee noted a list of matters arising from the meetings on 26 November 2014 and 3 December 2014.

### **5. Correspondence**

The Committee considered the following items of correspondence:

- Correspondence from The Open University regarding the budget cuts to Higher Education.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to consider a draft motion on budget cuts to Further Education and Higher Education at its next meeting.

- Correspondence from the Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure regarding the Sign Language Partnership Group.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding the Joseph Rowntree Foundation report on Economic Mobility.

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

- Departmental response to Committee correspondence regarding the Steps 2 Success providers performance statistics.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from the Consumer Council for Northern Ireland providing a copy of the Business Plan Consultation 2015-2016.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission regarding carer's in Northern Ireland.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing in the Forward Work Programme.

- Correspondence from Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland providing a copy of the Departmental Investing Activity Report for November 2014.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Departmental response to Committee request for further breakdown of apprenticeships statistics.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Departmental response to Committee query regarding the tracking of United Youth participants.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Departmental response to Committee correspondence regarding SDC Trailers.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the correspondence and forward it to the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment for information.

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

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Departmental response to Committee query regarding the Employment Appeals Tribunal decision on overtime.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from the Department of Justice providing the draft Judicial Pensions Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and related matters.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Departmental correspondence regarding the future delivery of the Youth Employment Scheme.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from the Committee for Education regarding the proposed changes to the Northern Ireland Teachers' Pensions Scheme.

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

- Departmental response to Committee correspondence regarding the National Fraud Initiative.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Departmental response to Committee correspondence regarding funding arrangements for students attending university outside Northern Ireland.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Copy correspondence from the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment to the Department for Employment and Learning regarding a US Trade Mission.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from St. Mary's University College declining the invitation to hold a joint showcase event with Stranmillis University College.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to St. Mary's University College asking them to reconsider their decision.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to Stranmillis regarding the St Mary's correspondence.

- Assembly Research and Information Service briefing paper on examples of Support for People with Learning Difficulties in North West England.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to schedule a visit to the Seashell Trust and other Centres for March 2015.

- Departmental response to Committee request for information on transitions for young people with severe learning disabilities.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the correspondence and include in the Inquiry Report.

- Ministerial response to Committee request for information on transitions for young people with severe learning disabilities.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Departmental response to Committee correspondence regarding financial and enrolment information on the Entitlement Framework and Apprenticeships.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Correspondence from Public Accounts Committee regarding Report on The Future Impact of Borrowing and Private Finance Commitments and Belfast Metropolitan College's Titanic Quarter PPP Project.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Invitation from the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission to its Annual Statement Event.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

- Invitation from Queen's University Belfast to the 14th Annual Sir Bernard Crossland Lecture.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

## **6. Forward Work Programme**

The Committee noted the draft Forward Work Programme to 1 April 2015.

The Committee considered the proposal to arrange an event for parents of young people with learning disabilities as part of its on-going inquiry into post special educational need provision in Northern Ireland.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to hold an event on 28 January 2015 in Parliament Buildings.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to reschedule two briefings in the Forward Work Programme.

## **7. SL1 - The Education (Student Support) (No.2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009 (Amendment) (No.2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014**

The Committee considered the SL1 - The Education (Student Support) (No.2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009 (Amendment) (No.2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014.

*Agreed:* The Committee were content with the proposals.

*10:23 am Mr William Irwin joined the meeting.*

*The Committee agreed to move to Agenda Item 10*

## **8. Departmental Briefing - Review of Careers Guidance**

*10:25 am The Departmental officials joined the meeting.*

The Committee was briefed by Ms June Ingram, Director of Skills Industry and Ms Frances O'Hara, Head of Careers Service Delivery.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

*11:01 am Mr David Hilditch joined the meeting.*

*Agreed:* The Departmental officials agreed to provide the Committee with a written briefing paper on the problems surrounding the UCAS and CAO systems for students thinking of applying for courses in the Republic of Ireland.

*Agreed:* The Departmental officials agreed to provide the Committee with progress updates.

*11:05 am The Departmental officials left the meeting.*

*The Committee agreed to move to Agenda Item 9*

## **9. Departmental Briefing - January Monitoring Round**

*11:06 am The Departmental officials joined the meeting.*

The Committee was briefed by Mr Stephen McMurray, Director of Finance and Mr Billy Lyttle, Head of Higher Education Finance.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

*Agreed:* The Departmental officials agreed to provide the Committee with a list of all capital projects.

*11:20 am The Departmental officials left the meeting.*

*The Committee agreed to move to Agenda Item 8*

## **10. Ministerial Briefing - 2015 -2016 Budget**

*11:21 am The Minister and his officials joined the meeting.*

The Committee was briefed by Dr S Farry, Minister for Employment and Learning, Mr Derek Baker, Permanent Secretary, Mrs Heather Cousins, Deputy Secretary and Mr Stephen McMurray, Director of Finance.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

*Agreed:* The Departmental officials agreed to provide the Committee with a briefing note on the background and context of students from the Republic of Ireland attending Further Education Colleges in Northern Ireland.

*12:08 pm Mr Phil Flanagan left the meeting.*

*Agreed:* The Minister agreed to write to NICVA regarding ESF Funding guidance and to copy the correspondence to the Committee.

*Agreed:* The Departmental officials agreed to consider the reduction in funding from £8,000 to £2,000 for training.

*12:53 pm Mr Pat Ramsey left the meeting.*

*12:59 pm The Minister and his officials left the meeting.*

## **11. Departmental Briefing - Review of Regulations/Better Regulations Project**

*1:00 pm The Departmental officials joined the meeting.*

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

*1:04 pm Mr Fra McCann left the meeting.*

*Agreed:* The Departmental officials agreed to provide a copy of the “at-a-glance” guides produced as part of the Work and Families legislation.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

*1:09 pm The Departmental officials left the meeting.*

## **12. Any other business**

None.

## **13. Date, time and place of next meeting**

The Committee noted that the next meeting should be held on Wednesday, 14 January 2015 at 10:00 pm in the Open University Building, Belfast.

*1:09 pm The Chairperson adjourned the meeting.*

**Mr Robin Swann MLA**  
**Chairperson, Committee for Employment & Learning**

**14 January 2015**