



**Northern Ireland  
Assembly**

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

**WEDNESDAY, 1 JULY 2015**

**ROOM 29 PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

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

Mr Sydney Anderson MLA  
Mr William Irwin MLA  
Ms Anna Lo MLA  
Mr Fra McCann MLA  
Ms Bronwyn McGahan MLA  
Mr Pat Ramsey MLA  
Ms Claire Sugden MLA

**In Attendance:** Mrs Cathie White (Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Johnny Lawless (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Ms Marion Johnson (Clerical Officer)

**Apologies:** Mr Phil Flanagan MLA  
Mr David Hilditch MLA

*10:02 am The meeting opened in public session.*

**1. Apologies**

Apologies are detailed above.

## **2. Chairperson's Business**

- The Committee considered the visit report for its visit to Hawthorns Adult Day Centre as part of its on-going Inquiry into Post School Special Educational Need Provision in Northern Ireland

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to include the report in the Committee Inquiry report into Post School Special Educational Need Provision in Northern Ireland.

- The Committee considered the public notice for the Committee stage of the Employment Bill.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to issue the public notice following the introduction of the Bill.

- The Chairperson advised Members that the provision of hard copy packs would cease from the beginning of the next session and refresher training on the Electronic Committee Pack System would be available if required.
- The Chairperson advised Members that the Deputy Chairperson met with the Minister yesterday prior to the oral statement on the Outcomes of the Review of Youth Training.

## **3. Minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2015**

*Agreed:* The minutes of the meeting on 24 June were agreed.

## **4. Matters arising**

- The Committee noted a list of matters arising from the meeting on 24 June 2015.

## **5. Correspondence**

The Committee considered the following items of correspondence:

- Correspondence from the Northern Ireland Assembly Education Service confirming a visit by South West College students.

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

- Correspondence from Ashton Community Trust regarding LEMIS+ European Social Fund and Departmental match funding.

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

- Correspondence from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) providing an update on the latest Labour Market Statistics.

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

- Correspondence from the Clanrye Group inviting the Committee to visit one of their projects at Slieve Gullion.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to defer the correspondence to the Committee Planning Day.

- Correspondence from the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment regarding its inquiry into growing the economy and creating jobs with lower corporation tax.

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

- Correspondence from South Eastern Regional College inviting the Committee to visit 'The Space' Project in its Bangor Campus.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to defer the correspondence to the Committee Planning Day.

- Correspondence from Include Youth regarding the Employability Mentoring Initiative for Care Leavers Week 2015.

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

- Correspondence from Mrs Gerri Fiala regarding the Workforce Services for Youth with Disabilities.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the correspondence and include it in the Committee Inquiry report into Post School Special Educational Need Provision in Northern Ireland.

- Correspondence from Investing Strategy for Northern Ireland providing the Department for Employment and Learning Investing Activity Report for June 2015.

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

- Invitation from NICVA to attend a seminar on 'How an ageing population will impact on the public finances.'

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

## **6. Forward Work Programme**

*10:08 am Ms Claire Sugden joined the meeting.*

- The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme to 9 December 2015.

## **7. Ministerial Briefing - Update on the European Social Fund 2014 - 2020**

*10:09 am The Minister and Departmental officials joined the meeting.*

The Committee was briefed by Dr Stephen Farry, Minister for Employment and Learning, Ms Heather Cousins, Deputy Secretary, Mr Colin Jack, Director of Strategy, European and Employment Relations Division and Ms Sheila McNeill, Deputy Director of Strategy, European and Employment Relations Division.

- The Committee considered a Departmental response to Committee correspondence regarding the European Social Fund Appeals process.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the correspondence and forward it to the Training for Women Network for information.

- The Committee considered a Departmental response to providing additional information on the European Social Fund.

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

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

*Agreed:* The Departmental officials agreed to provide a copy of the communication being issued to the organisations today regarding the issuing of payments.

*11:36 am Mr William Irwin left the meeting.*

*11:39 am Mr Fra McCann left the meeting.*

*11:46 am Mr Pat Ramsey left the meeting.*

*Agreed:* The Departmental officials agreed to provide details on the headroom available for facilitating dance and drama students at South Eastern Regional College (SERC) and the unused MaSN allocation from last year at SERC.

*11:53 am The Minister and Departmental officials left the meeting.*

## **8. Departmental Briefing - Departmental Business Plan**

*11:54 am The Departmental officials joined the meeting.*

The Committee was briefed by Ms Heather Cousins, Deputy Secretary, Mr Michael Gould, Assistant Director Skills and Industry Division, Ms Carol Keane, Head of Corporate Support Branch and Mrs Beverley Harrison, Director of HR and Corporate Services.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

*Agreed:* The Departmental officials agreed to provide the baseline figures for Level 2 qualifications in action B1 in the Departmental Business Plan.

*12:01 pm Mr Sydney Anderson left the meeting.*

*Agreed:* The Departmental officials agreed to provide a geographical breakdown of the 900 employers by industry in action A4 in the Departmental Business Plan.

*Agreed:* The Departmental officials agreed to provide the Committee with more detail on action point A12 in the Departmental Business Plan, the Integrated Regional Strategy for Widening Participation in Higher Education and its impact in deprived areas.

*12:12 pm The Departmental officials left the meeting.*

## **9. Briefing from Belfast Metropolitan College - Performing Arts Provision**

*12:13 pm The representatives joined the meeting.*

The Committee was briefed by Ms Marie-Therese McGivern, Chief Executive, Belfast Metropolitan College and Ms Gillian Magee, Head of Corporate Development, Belfast Metropolitan College.

*12:15 pm Mr Sydney Anderson re-joined the meeting.*

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department requesting clarification on what the additional £300,000 funding awarded to South Eastern Regional College was for in relation to its performing arts provision.

*Agreed:* The representatives agreed to provide the Committee with a copy of the impact assessment that was carried out.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to South Eastern Regional College to ascertain the numbers of student places available for performing arts following the cessation of provision at Belfast Metropolitan College.

*Agreed:* The representatives agreed to provide the Committee with a geographical breakdown of where this past years performing arts students reside.

*Agreed:* The representatives agreed to provide the Committee with details of conversations that have been held with the industry to ascertain the impact that the decision to close Belfast Metropolitan Colleges Performing Arts Department may have on the performing arts sector.

*Agreed:* The representatives agreed to provide the Committee with a copy of the funding letter issued by the Department to Belfast Metropolitan College.

*12:45 pm Ms Bronwyn McGahan left the meeting.*

*12:53 pm The representatives left the meeting.*

#### **10. Any other business**

None

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

The Committee noted that the next meeting should be held on Wednesday 16 September 2015 at 10.00 am in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

*12:53 pm The Chairperson adjourned the meeting.*

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

**16 September 2015`**