



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

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

WEDNESDAY, 16 OCTOBER 2013

ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Mr Thomas Buchanan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Mr Sammy Douglas 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 Robin Swann MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Phil Flanagan MLA
Mr David McClarty MLA

The meeting opened in public session at 10:00 am.

1. Apologies

Apologies are detailed above.

2. Chairperson's Business

- The Committee considered a briefing paper on Vacancies and Skills Shortages in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider the briefing paper at next week's meeting.

- The Committee considered a draft Press Release for the Committee visit to the Living and Learning Together project at Magherafelt on 2 October 2013.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Press Release.

Mr Fra McCann joined the meeting 10:04 am.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2013

Agreed: The minutes of the meeting were agreed as amended.

4. Matters arising

- The Committee noted a list of matters arising from the previous meeting.
- The Committee considered Departmental correspondence regarding the Post 19 SEN College Audit.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department requesting information on:

- a detailed breakdown of courses for those with learning difficulties by subject;
- the percentage of those individuals with learning difficulties who are attending colleges and who are completing courses to level 2; and
- an assessment of the overall colleges use of the Additional Support Fund.

5. Correspondence

The Committee considered the following items of correspondence:

- Departmental correspondence providing an update on Graduating to Success and Access to Success.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Departmental response regarding the Report of the Advisory Group on Alleviating Hardship.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Correspondence from the Employment Lawyers Group regarding the Review of Employment Law.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from Mr Joseph Leech regarding The Careers Detective – The Big Green Fox.

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

- Correspondence from the Committee for the Office of First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding the Barroso Task Force Officer Progress Reports – April – June 2013.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Departmental response regarding Pathways to Success and improved educational attainment and the recruitment of graduate teachers under delivering social change.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Correspondence from the Committee for Finance and Personnel providing a Departmental response to written submissions relating to the Public Service Pensions Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from the Committee for Justice regarding a complaint made by a member of the public to NIACRO.

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

- Invitation from the European Commission to attend an event *UK/EU 40 Years: What has it meant to Northern Ireland* in the Great Hall, Queen's University Belfast on 18 October 2013.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

6. Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted the draft Forward Work Programme up to 11 December 2013.

7. Briefing from Assembly Research and Information Service on the European Commission Legislative Work Programme.

The researcher joined the meeting at 10:07 am.

The Committee was briefed by Mr Eoin Murphy, Assembly Research and Information Service on the European Commission's Legislative Work Programme.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The researcher left the meeting at 10:20 am.

8. Departmental briefing on DEL European Policy Developments Including European Social Fund 2014 - 2020.

The officials joined the meeting at 10:20 am.

The Committee was briefed by Mr Colin Jack, Director of Strategy, European Employment and Relations Division, Mrs Patricia McVeigh, Head of European Policy Branch and Mrs Briege Rainey, ESF, Future Funding on DEL European Policy Developments Including European Social Fund 2014 - 2020.

Mr David Hilditch joined the meeting at 10:24 am.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The officials agreed to provide the Committee with information on how it has engaged with young people during the ESF 2014 – 2020 consultation process including the numbers of events and individuals it has engaged with and what advertising it has carried out?

The officials left the meeting at 11:00 am.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Clerk would liaise with the Clerk of the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister before writing to the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding briefings from the European Thematic Desk Officer.

9. Departmental briefing on the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competences Report.

The officials joined the meeting at 11:00 am.

The Committee was briefed by Mr Victor Dukelow, Deputy Director Analytical Services, Mr Daryl Young, Deputy Director Further Education, Mrs Harriet Ferguson, Head of Curriculum and Essential Skills Policy Branch and Mr Stephen McGonagle, Statistician on the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competences Report.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Mr Pat Ramsey left the meeting at 11:19 am.

Mr Chris Lyttle joined the meeting 11:23 am.

The officials agreed to provide the Committee with information on a range of issues:

- Why the figures in the skills survey show that the Agri-food sector has not improved?
- A geographical breakdown of the skills survey analysis.

Mr Pat Ramsey re-joined the meeting at 11:30 am.

Mr Alastair Ross left the meeting at 11:31 am.

The officials left the meeting at 11:34 am.

10. Any other Business

None.

11. Date, time and place of next meeting

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the next meeting should be held on Wednesday 23 October 2013 at 10.00 am in the Boardroom, Belfast Metropolitan College, Millfield Campus.

12. Committee Inquiry into Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) in Northern Ireland.

The Committee moved into closed sessions at 11:35 am.

The Committee considered a response from the Committee for Education endorsing the recommendations of the Inquiry report relating to the Department of Education in full and requesting further information.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Committee for Education regarding the issues raised.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to provide the Committee for Education and the Minister for Employment and Learning with a copy of the Inquiry Report one week before it is debated in plenary.

The Committee considered the Executive Summary of the Report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to include the Executive Summary as part of the Report.

The Committee considered an amended version of Recommendation 1 in the Report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to include Recommendation 1, as amended, as part of the Report.

The Committee considered a list of the content of the appendices to the Report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that Appendix 1, Minutes of Proceedings, stands part of the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that Appendix 2, Minutes of Evidence, stands part of the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that Appendix 3, Written Submissions, stands part of the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that Appendix 4, List of Witnesses, stands part of the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that Appendix 5, Other Papers, stands part of the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that Appendix 6, Correspondence, stands part of the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that Appendix 7, Inquiry Survey Findings, stands part of the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to order the report to be printed.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request the Business Committee to schedule the debate in Plenary on 25 November 2013.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 11:50 am.

Mr Robin Swann MLA
Chairperson, Committee for Employment & Learning

23 October 2013