



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

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

WEDNESDAY, 18 SEPTEMBER 2013

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
Ms Bronwyn McGahan MLA
Mr Pat Ramsey MLA
Mr Alistair 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 Fra McCann MLA
Mr David McClarty MLA

The meeting opened in public session at 10:01 am.

1. Apologies

Apologies are detailed above.

2. Chairperson's Business

- The Chairperson advised Members of the arrangements made for the Committee to use electronic meeting packs.

- The Chairperson advised Members that he has been invited, as Chairperson, to a Northern Ireland Assembly Business Trust dinner on 8 October 2013 in the Long Gallery, Parliament Buildings.
- The Chairperson advised Members that the Labour Relations Agency Annual Report and Accounts 2012-2013 has been laid in the Assembly Business Office.
- The Chairperson advised Members that the European Thematic Desk Officer, Gordon Browne, will meet the Committee to brief it on his work on 11 November 2013 during the Committee visit to Brussels and join the Committee for dinner.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2013

Agreed: The minutes of the meeting were agreed.

4. Matters arising

- The Committee noted a list of matters arising from the previous meeting.
- The Chairperson advised Members that the Department for Employment and Learning has offered a date of 29 January 2014 for the “walk through” for the Committee on the Steps to Work Programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department and request an earlier date for the “walk-through”.

- The Committee considered a draft press release regarding the Apprenticeship Showcase event on 24 September 2013.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the press release.

- The Committee considered the planned updates on the North West Regional College Action Plan.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request that the Change Manager attend the next planned update meeting.

- Mr Sammy Douglas MLA indicated that he would represent the Committee at the Construction Employers Federation Awards Gala Evening on 26 September 2013.

5. Correspondence

The Committee considered the following items of correspondence:

- Correspondence from the Committee for Education providing a letter from the Letterkenny Institute of Technology regarding the transferability of students to higher education and further education in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

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

- Departmental correspondence regarding the changes to data collection and reporting arrangements for training programmes statistical bulletins.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from Queen's University Belfast detailing areas for consideration by the Committee.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request an Assembly Research and Information Service Paper on issues contained in the correspondence.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to Queen's University Belfast seeking information on its decision to increase fees for postgraduate students.

- Correspondence from the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding the report of the Advisory Group on Alleviating Hardship.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Department for information and comment on the areas of the report relating to the Department.

- Correspondence from the Open University regarding the University of the Air - Public Art Launch Event.

Agreed: The Committee agreed note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from the Department for Finance and Personnel providing an update on outstanding Post Project Evaluations (PPE's).

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

- Response from the Committee for Education regarding the Apprenticeship Showcase.

Agreed: The Committee agreed note the response.

- Invitation from the Department for Employment and Learning to celebrate the achievements of Northern Ireland team members who competed at Worldskills Leipzig 2013.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

- Invitation to the Celebration of European Day of Languages and launch of Opportunity Europe and Beyond 2013.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

- Invitation to the Modern Builder C.P.D. Construction Trade Event.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

- Invitation to the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors Chairman's Reception and 2014 Awards Launch.

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 the Department of Finance and Personnel and the Department for Employment and Learning Officials on NISRA Quarterly Labour Market Statistics.

The officials joined the meeting at 10:12 am.

The Committee was briefed by Dr James Gillan, Head of Economic Statistics Branch, Department of Finance and Personnel and Dr Tracy Power, Deputy Director Analytical Services, Department for Employment and Learning on the NISRA Quarterly Labour Market Statistics.

Mr Thomas Buchanan MLA joined the meeting 10:18 am.

Mr David Hilditch MLA joined the meeting 10:18 am.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The officials agreed to provide the Committee with information on:

- the unemployment rate in Derry/Londonderry and an explanation as to why it is so high despite the City hosting the City of Culture.
- the inward/outward migration figures for Northern Ireland.
- the unemployment figures in Northern Ireland in comparison with the Republic of Ireland.
- any feedback from employers and jobseekers and types of work offered and sought at the recent jobs fair that took place in Derry/Londonderry.

The officials left the meeting at 10:55 am.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider the matter at next week's meeting during the Departmental Briefing on Pathways to Success.

8. Departmental briefing on Graduating to Success and Access to Success

The officials joined the meeting at 10:56 am.

The Committee was briefed by Mrs Nula Kerr, Director of Higher Education and Mr Kieran Mannion, Head of Higher Education Widening Participation Branch on Graduating to Success and Access to Success.

Mr Chris Lyttle joined the meeting at 11:14 am.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Agreed: The officials agreed to keep the Committee updated on the Universities' proposals for rebalancing the profile of their courses so that the qualifications offered more accurately reflect the needs of the economy.

Agreed: The officials agreed to keep the Committee updated on the external evaluation of "Connected 2".

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department requesting the correspondence between the Department and the University of Ulster in relation to the closure of crèche facilities at the Magee and Jordanstown campuses.

Mr Pat Ramsey left the meeting at 11:29 am.

Mr Phil Flanagan joined the meeting at 11:31 am.

Mr Sammy Douglas left the meeting at 11:32 am.

The officials left the meeting at 11:34 am.

9. Consideration of the Committee for Employment and Learning End of Session Report 2012 -2013

Agreed: The Committee agreed to publish the Committee End of Session Report.

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 25 September 2013 at 10.00 am in in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

11:35 am. The Committee moved into Closed Session.

12. Consideration of the draft report on the Committee Inquiry into Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) in Northern Ireland

The Committee considered the recommendations of its Inquiry into Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider the recommendations again at its meeting on 25 September 2013.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12:19 pm.

**Mr Thomas Buchanan MLA
Deputy Chairperson, Committee for Employment & Learning**

25 September 2013