



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

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

WEDNESDAY, 25 JUNE 2014

ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

- Present:** Mr Robin Swann MLA (Chairperson)
- 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 Thomas Buchanan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Sammy Douglas MLA
Mr Phil Flanagan MLA
Mr David Hilditch MLA
Ms Claire Sugden MLA

10:16 am The meeting opened in public session.

1. Apologies

Apologies are detailed above.

2. Chairpersons Business

- The Chairperson advised the Committee that the University and College Union has requested an informal meeting with the Committee regarding issues in Further and Higher Education.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule an informal meeting.

- The Chairperson advised the Committee that the Belfast Metropolitan College has requested that the Committee sponsors its end of year fashion show in the Great Hall in 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to sponsor the event.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2014

Agreed: The minutes of the meeting on 18 June were agreed.

4. Matters arising

- The Committee noted a list of matters arising from the meeting on 18 June 2014.

5. Correspondence

The Committee considered the following items of correspondence:

- Correspondence from the Prison Arts Foundation regarding the provision of arts in prison.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Department for comment and to the Committee for Justice and the Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure for information.

- Departmental response to correspondence from the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment regarding the shortage of trained analytical chemists.

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

- Departmental response to Committee correspondence requesting clarification on the University of Ulster's bid for additional funds for the Magee campus.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Joint Departmental response from the Department for Employment and Learning and the Department of Education on the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland Consultation.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Correspondence from Assembly Research and Information Service regarding a European Union Explanatory Memorandum on Country Specific Recommendations.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Departmental correspondence requesting that the Labour Mobility Research briefing on 2 July 2014 be rescheduled.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to reschedule the briefing in its forward work programme.

- Correspondence from Assembly Research and Information Service regarding an European Union Explanatory Memorandum on the International Labour Organisation.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from the Labour Relations Agency offering to brief the Committee on issues which may arise from the Departmental Employment Law Consultation.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Labour Relations Agency requesting a written briefing.

- Departmental correspondence regarding the implementation of the Higher and Further Education Collaboration Fund - “Connected 3”.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing in the autumn on the Department’s Higher Education Strategy, Graduating to Success.

6. Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted the draft Forward Work Programme to 2 July 2014.

7. Departmental Briefing - Programme for Government Update

10:21 am Mr John Smith, Director of Finance, Ms June Ingram, Director of Skills Industry and Mr Billy Lyttle, Head of Higher Education Finance joined the meeting.

The officials provided a brief introduction to the Programme for Government briefing.

10:23 am Mr Smith left the meeting

The officials briefed the Committee on Commitment 20 in the Programme for Government.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

10:33 am Mr Billy Lyttle left the meeting.

10:33 am Mr Jim Russell, Deputy Director Employment Service, Mr Victor Dukelow, Deputy Director Analytical Services and Mr Daryl Young, Deputy Director of Further Education joined the meeting.

The officials briefed the Committee on Commitment 25 in the Programme for Government.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Agreed: The officials agreed to provide the Committee with details on the Agrifood Working Group including the Strategy and the Action Plan.

10:48 am Ms June Ingram, Mr Victor Dukelow and Mr Daryl Young left the meeting.

10:48 am Ms Sheila McNeill, Assistant Director Employment Service joined the meeting.

The officials briefed the Committee on Commitment 27 in the Programme for Government.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The officials briefed the Committee on Commitment 36 in the Programme for Government.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

11:00 am The Departmental officials left the meeting.

8. Departmental Briefing - Departmental Business Plan

11:01 am The Departmental official joined the meeting.

The Committee was briefed by Mr John Smith, Director of Finance.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Agreed: The official agreed to provide a geographic breakdown of the deprived areas in which people were helped to attain qualifications under A1 of the Business Plan.

Agreed: The official agreed to provide information on the actions that it has taken to engage with deprived areas under A1 of the Business Plan.

Agreed: The official agreed to provide further information on whether 2,000 people in the local workforce had been up-skilled in priority economic sectors under A2 of the Business Plan.

Agreed: The official agreed to provide a breakdown of the staff sickness absence figures to show the impact of staff on long-term sickness absence on the figures.

11:17 am Mr Pat Ramsey joined the meeting.

Agreed: The official agreed to provide information on what engagement had taken place with the Agri-food sector under A1 of the Business Plan.

11:20 am The Departmental official left the meeting.

9. Departmental Briefing - Contracting of Steps 2 Success

11:21 am The Departmental officials joined the meeting.

The Committee was briefed by Mr Colum Boyle, Director of Employment Services, Mr Brendan McCann, Head of the New Employment Team and Mr Tony Montgomery, Employment Service.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a further briefing by Departmental officials on Wednesday 9 July 2014 at 11:30 am.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

11:33 am The Departmental officials left the meeting.

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 2 July 2014 at 10.00 am in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

11:34 am The Chairperson adjourned the meeting.

Mr Robin Swann MLA
Chairperson, Committee for Employment & Learning

2 July 2014