



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

WEDNESDAY, 9 OCTOBER 2013

ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Mr Thomas Buchanan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Mr Sammy Douglas MLA
Mr David Hilditch MLA
Mr Phil Flanagan MLA
Mr Chris Lyttle MLA
Mr Fra McCann MLA
Ms Bronwyn McGahan MLA
Mr Pat Ramsey 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 David McClarty MLA
Mr Alastair Ross MLA

The meeting opened in public session at 10:05 am.

1. Apologies

Apologies are detailed above.

2. Chairperson's Business

- The Deputy Chairperson advised the Committee that the briefings from Stranmillis College and St Mary's College regarding the Review of Teacher Training Infrastructure which were scheduled for today have been rescheduled for later in the year to allow the Department to progress Stage 2 of the Review.

- The Deputy Chairperson advised Members that the Belfast Metropolitan College's Annual Fashion Show is scheduled for Friday 13 June 2014 in the Great Hall.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to sponsor the event.

- The Deputy Chairperson advised Members that Queen's University Belfast has chosen Professor Patrick Johnston to be its next President and Vice-Chancellor.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to Professor Johnston to congratulate him on his appointment.

- The Committee considered a draft Press Release for the launch of the BDO 2013 Graduate Recruitment Programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Press Release.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 25 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.

5. Correspondence

The Committee considered the following items of correspondence:

- Assembly Research and Information Service briefing paper on Good Practice Gender Equality in EU 27 Nations.

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 forwarding the research paper to the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister for information and comment.

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

- Correspondence from Include Youth regarding the Department for Health, Social Service and Public Safety consultation on Minimum Standards for Children's Homes.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Response from Queen's University Belfast regarding the increase in Post Graduate student fees.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Departmental response regarding Post Project Evaluations (PPE's).

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Departmental response to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills explanatory memorandum on the EU Commission communication: European Higher Education in the World.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Departmental response regarding student support arrangements with Further Education for those with disabilities or learning difficulties.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider further at next week's meeting.

- Departmental response regarding the recent jobs fair in Derry/Londonderry.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Departmental response regarding the panel appointed to conduct the Review of the Teacher Training Infrastructure.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Department for Employment and Learning's Investment Activity Report - September 2013.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the report.

- Correspondence from the Committee for the Office of First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding the launch of Bright Start.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Department for further information and comment on the policy area of Workforce Development.

- Departmental response to Committee request on a report on cross border issues.

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

- Departmental response regarding the closure of crèche facilities at the University of Ulster.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Departmental response regarding projects no longer receiving funding as a result of Savings Delivery Plan B/6.

Mr David Hilditch joined the meeting at 10:13 am.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Correspondence from Include Youth inviting the Chairperson to officially launch its Transitional Support Pilot Project.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to Include Youth confirming that the Chairperson will launch the project.

- Correspondence from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency providing further information following the briefing on 18 September 2013.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Note of key issues discussed and decisions taken at the Chairpersons Liaison Group meeting on 1 October 2013.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Departmental response regarding the Student Loan Policy for 5th Year Dental students studying outside Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note and forward to Mrs Maureen Mawhinney for information.

- Departmental response to Committee request for further information on the European Social Fund NEET Conference in November 2013.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Invitation from The Open University to the Committee to the launch of the “University of the Air” arts commission on 31 October 2013 in Belfast City Hall.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

- Correspondence from the Committee for Environment regarding the Exploris Aquarium and Seal Sanctuary.

Mr Phil Flanagan joined the meeting at 10:17 am.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Deputy Chairperson would attend the meeting scheduled with the representatives of NIPSA.

6. Forward Work Programme

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

7. SR 2013 - 223 The Education (Student Support) (No. 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009 (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013

Agreed: The Committee for Employment and Learning has considered SR 2013 - 223 The Education (Student Support) (No. 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009 (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013, and has no objection to the rule.

8. Briefing from the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) Northern Ireland

The representatives joined the meeting at 10:20 am.

The Committee was briefed by Mr Martin O'Kane, Employment & Welfare Rights Manager, Mr Chris Yung, Employment Officer and Ms Lisa French, Service User.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Mr Phil Flanagan left the meeting at 10:45am

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a research paper from the Research and Information Service on the numbers of people in Northern Ireland registered as blind or partially sighted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department requesting information on how it advertises its programmes such as Access to Work, Workable (NI) and Work Connect for people who are disabled.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department requesting information on its engagement with employers regarding the employment of people with disabilities.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward a copy of the Hansard to the Department for information and comment.

The representatives left the meeting at 11:04 am.

9. Briefing from Copius Resources

The representatives joined the meeting at 11:05 am.

The Committee was briefed by Mr Brendan Carlin, Managing Director, Copius Resources NI Ltd, Mr Andrew Watson, Business Development Offshore, Copius Resources NI Ltd, Mr Tommy Walker, Chairman of the Northern Ireland Branch of the Institute of Welders UK and Mr Nigel Hamilton, Head of Marketing & Training, Copius Resources NI Ltd

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Mr Phil Flanagan re-joined the meeting at 11:39 am.

Mr Phil Flanagan left the meeting at 11:58 am.

Mr Fra McCann left the meeting at 12:03 pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward a copy of the Hansard to the Department for information and comment.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward a copy of the Hansard to Colleges NI for information and comment.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to Copius for information on the cost of training courses to make its clients job ready.

Mr Phil Flanagan re-joined the meeting at 12:08 pm.

Mr Fra McCann re-joined the meeting at 12:09 pm.

The representatives left the meeting at 12:09 pm.

10. Departmental briefing on the Youth Employment Scheme.

The officials joined the meeting at 12:10 pm.

The Committee was briefed by Mr Colum Boyle, Director of Employment Services, Mrs Siobhan Logue, Assistant Director Employment Service and Mr Jim Russell, Deputy Director Employment Service on the Youth Employment Scheme.

Mr Chris Lyttle joined the meeting at 12:16 pm

Mr Phil Flanagan left the meeting at 12:20 pm.

Ms Bronwyn McGahan left the meeting at 12:25 pm.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a research paper on unemployment statistics in the North West region of Northern Ireland.

Mr Chris Lyttle left the meeting at 12:52 pm.

The officials left the meeting at 12:59 pm.

11. Any other Business

None.

12. Date, time and place of next meeting

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the next meeting should be held on Wednesday 16 October 2013 at 10.00 am in in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12:59 pm.

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

16 October 2013