



Northern Ireland Assembly

COMMITTEE FOR THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS WEDNESDAY 16 NOVEMBER 2016 ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

- Present: Mr Danny Kennedy (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Cathal Boylan
Mrs Pam Cameron
Mr Stewart Dickson
Mr William Irwin
Mr Phillip Logan
Mr Seán Lynch
Mr Philip McGuigan
Mr Richie McPhillips
Mr Christopher Stalford
- Apologies: Mr Mike Nesbitt (Chairperson)
- In Attendance: Mrs Kathy O'Hanlon (Committee Clerk)
Miss Karen Jardine (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Neal Flanagan (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Stephen Magee (Clerical Supervisor)
Mrs Andrienne Magee (Clerical Officer)
Mr Michael Potter (Research Officer – Item 5)

Mr Stalford declared an interest as the Chair of the All Party Group on Ethnic Minority Communities.

Mr Boylan declared an interest as the Deputy Chair of the All Party Group on Ethnic Minority Communities.

The Committee noted matters outside the remit of the briefing session which they wished to raise with the Equality Commission during agenda item 7; and also noted that a date had been set for an application to appeal to the Supreme Court in respect of one matter.

Agreed: To request advice from Assembly Legal Services on the application of sub judice to Assembly statutory committees.

The meeting began in public session at 2.12 pm.

1. Apologies

Apologies were noted as above.

2. Chairperson's Business

NICRAS – Housing Report

The Committee noted a request from the NI Community of Refugees and Asylum Seekers (NICRAS) brief the Committee on its recent “Home Sweet Home” report.

Agreed: To invite NICRAS to brief the Committee on the housing report.

Members also noted that responsibility for the Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme to settle refugees falls within the remit of TEO.

Agreed: To request an update on the Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme from TEO officials.

Committee Invitations

The Committee noted the current list of Committee invitations.

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The draft minutes of the proceedings of 9 November 2016 were agreed by the Committee.

4. Matters Arising

European Commission Work Programme

The Committee considered draft letters to stakeholders requesting input to its report on priorities for EU Scrutiny for Assembly committees.

Agreed: To issue letters to the relevant stakeholders including statutory committees, local MEPs, the Committee of the Regions, and the European Economic and Social Committee.

Programme for Government Consultation Document

The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for the Economy advising that it may be difficult to meet the deadline for response on the draft Programme for Government for inclusion in the Committee's report.

Agreed: To request that the Committee for the Economy respond at its earliest convenience.

The Committee also noted that a date had not yet been confirmed for a previously agreed briefing by the First Minister and deputy First Minister on the Programme for Government.

Agreed: To ask the Clerk to engage with departmental officials regarding confirmation of a date for the Ministerial briefing.

Outstanding Committee Correspondence

The Committee noted the current list of outstanding correspondence.

5. Equality and Human Rights - RaISe Briefing on International Human Rights Standards

The Research Officer joined the meeting at 2.17 pm

Mr Michael Potter briefed the Committee on his paper 'International Human Rights Standards: Recommendations Relating to Northern Ireland'. A question and answer session followed.

The Research Officer left the meeting at 2.25 pm

Agreed: To forward the RaISe paper to the Committee for Education; the Committee for Communities; the Committee for Health; and the Committee for Justice.

6. Equality and Good Relations – NI Human Rights Commission on the NI Executive's Engagement with UN Reporting Cycles

Representatives from the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission joined the meeting at 2.26 pm.

The Committee heard evidence from Mr Les Allamby, Chief Commissioner, and Dr David Russell, Deputy Director, on the engagement of the NI Executive with International Human Rights treaties.

A question and answer session followed. The session was recorded by Hansard.

Mr Stalford pointed out that it had been established that a former Health Minister did not make comments attributed to him in paragraph 37 of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance's fifth monitoring cycle report.

The Chief Commissioner agreed to forward a copy of the NIHRC submission on the Programme for Government consultation to the Committee.

The representatives left the meeting at 3.28 pm.

7. Equality and Good Relations – Equality Commission NI, Human Rights Consortium, and Mr Patrick Yu

Representatives from the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI), the Human Rights Consortium and Patrick Yu, former Director of NI Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM) joined the meeting at 3.29 pm

The Committee heard evidence from Dr Michael Wardlow, Chief Commissioner, ECNI; Mr Paul Noonan, Senior Policy Officer, ECNI; Ms Helen Flynn, Campaign and Membership Officer, Human Rights Consortium; and Mr Patrick Yu, former Executive Director, NICEM on the engagement of the NI Executive with International Human Rights treaties.

A question and answer session followed. The session was recorded by Hansard.

The Chief Commissioner agreed to forward a copy of a paper highlighting gaps in equality legislation between GB and NI; and a copy of the ECNI submission on the Programme for Government consultation.

The witnesses left the meeting at 4.35 pm.

Mr Boylan left the meeting at 4.36pm.

Agreed: To write to the First Minister and deputy First Minister to encourage full participation on behalf of the Executive in forthcoming UN treaty reporting cycles, and in particular next year's Universal Periodic Review.

Mr Boylan returned to the meeting at 4.38pm.

Agreed: To request information on the possible implications of the UK's exit from the EU on equality legislation.

8. Subordinate Legislation - Departments (Transfer of Functions) Order (NI) 2016

The Committee noted responses from Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, the Committee for Infrastructure and the Committee for Communities advising that they are content with the Executive Office's proposal to bring forward a draft Transfer of Functions Order.

Agreed: To advise the Executive Office, on behalf of the relevant Committees, that this Committee is content with the draft Order.

9. Correspondence

Archbishop Martin - Historical Institutional Abuse

The Committee noted a response from Archbishop Eamon Martin to comments made by some representatives of the Panel of Experts on Redress during the meeting of 28 September. The Archbishop provided the Committee with a copy of a statement made on the evening of 28 September; a copy of a statement issued on 5 July following a meeting between the Archbishop and the Panel of Experts on Redress; and an extract from his Opening Address given to the Annual conference of the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church on 14 October.

Agreed: To write to the Chairpersons' Liaison Group to encourage Chairpersons to remain mindful of affording the opportunity for people to respond to comments made about them during Committee meetings at which they are not present.

Committee for Finance - Monthly Forecast Outturn Data

The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance regarding the Departmental Monthly Forecast Outturn Data.

10. Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted the draft Forward Work Programme until January 2017.

11. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

12. Date, time and place of next meeting

The next Committee meeting will be held at 2.00 pm in Room 30 on Wednesday 23 November 2016.

The Deputy Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 4.43 pm.

Mr Danny Kennedy
Deputy Chairperson
Committee for the Executive Office