



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR THE OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER AND DEPUTY
FIRST MINISTER
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
WEDNESDAY 28 MAY 2014
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

- Present: Mr Mike Nesbitt (Chairperson)
Mr Alex Attwood
Mr Leslie Cree
Mr Alex Maskey
Ms Bronwyn McGahan
Mr George Robinson
- Apologies: Miss Megan Fearon
Mrs Brenda Hale
Mr Jimmy Spratt
- In Attendance: Mrs Shauna Mageean (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Keith McBride (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Stephen Magee (Clerical Supervisor)
Miss Sabra Wray (Clerical Officer)

The meeting began in public session at 2.06 p.m.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Chairperson's Business

Budget 2014/15 and Savings Delivery Plans

The Chairperson advised Members that the Department had written to the Committee to advise that it is unable to brief the Committee at today's meeting

on the 2014/15 Budget and Savings Delivery Plans as the Budget lines are still under review.

European Economic and Social Committee

The Committee noted a letter from the President of the European Economic and Social Committee thanking the Committee for hosting a lunch at Parliament Buildings during their visit to Northern Ireland.

Health and Social Care Regulation

The Committee noted an invitation from the General Medical Council to attend an event on Health and Social Care Regulation on Wednesday 11 June, at 12 noon in the Long Gallery.

Community Relation Week

The Committee noted an invitation from to attend the launch of Community Relations Week on Tuesday 10 June, at 11 a.m. at the Mac Theatre.

Committee Invitations

The Committee noted the list of current invitations.

Members Survey

The Chairperson reminded Members that the Members Survey of Services is now underway and the closing date for the survey is 6 June 2014.

3. Draft Minutes of the meeting held on 14 May 2014

Agreed: The draft minutes of the proceedings of the 14 May 2014 were agreed by the Committee.

4. Matters Arising

Financial Transactions Capital

The Committee considered a response from the Assembly's Research and Information Service to comments provided by the Department on a Research paper on Financial Transactions Capital.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to seek further information on the Strategic Investment Board's conduit role when the sponsor body does not have the requisite legislative authority to enter into a Financial Transactions Capital scheme.

Victims and Survivors Service

The Committee considered a response from the Victims and Survivors Service providing a copy of its Corporate Risk Register, a copy of the implementation plan for the independent assessment report recommendations and a copy of the communications plan for Financial Scheme 6.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to consider this response at next week's meeting to allow Members further opportunity to consider.

Historical Institutional Abuse

The Committee considered responses from SAVIA, Contact NI and WAVE to the Committee's request for their assessment of how the support services are operating for victims who have attended the Acknowledgement Forum.

The Chairperson advised Members that he had received a request from a victims group to brief the Committee on this issue.

Agreed: The Committee agreed as a first step to request a briefing from Departmental officials on the support services available to victims of Historical Institutional Abuse. Following the briefing the Committee will consider how to take this issue forward.

List of Outstanding Correspondence

The Committee noted the list of outstanding correspondence.

5. Correspondence

Post Project Evaluations

The Committee considered correspondence from the Committee for Finance and Personnel providing a copy of outstanding Post Project Evaluations by Department.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to seek comment on its outstanding Post Project Evaluations.

Equality Coalition

The Committee noted a copy of a paper commissioned by the Equality Coalition on “Sectarianism in Northern Ireland: Time for a definition in law”.

Northern Ireland Ombudsman

The Committee noted correspondence from the Northern Ireland Ombudsman advising of a bid the Office is making to the department in the June Monitoring Round.

Re-appointment of the Attorney General

The Committee considered correspondence from the Department advising that the First Minister and deputy First Minister had re-appointed Mr John Larkin QC as Attorney General.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request further information on the terms of re-appointment and if they are the same terms as the previous appointment.

Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure

The Committee noted a copy of a response from the Department to the Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure’s Inquiry into Inclusion in the Arts of Working Class Communities.

Committee for the Environment

The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from the Committee for the Environment to the Department regarding the NI Rural Development Programme 2014-2020.

Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment

The Committee noted a copy of a response from the Department to the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment advising that an official from the Department would be attending its event on Energy Efficiency.

Victims and Survivors Service Annual Accounts 2012/13

The Committee noted correspondence from the Business Office advising that the Victims and Survivors Service Annual reports and Accounts for 2012/13 had been laid in the Assembly.

6. Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission

Representatives from the NI Human Rights Commission joined the meeting at 2.17 p.m.

Mr Attwood left the meeting at 2.45 p.m.

Representatives from the NI Human Rights Commission, Mr John Corey, Interim Chair, Mrs Virginia McVea, Director and Dr David Russell, Deputy Director briefed the Committee of the Northern Ireland Office's proposal to reduce funding to the Commission by 11.15%. Questions and discussion followed.

Representatives from the NI Human Rights Commission left the meeting at 3.00 p.m.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to all Assembly committees to advise them of the Northern Ireland Office's proposal.

Agreed: The Committee also agreed to write to the Department to express its concern about the proposed cuts and the ability of the Commission to carry out its statutory functions. The Committee also agreed to seek the Department's assessment of the proposed cut and information on what actions it is taking in relation to this issue.

7. Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme to the end of the session.

8. Any Other Business

None.

9. Date, Time and Location of next meeting

The next meeting will be held at 2.00 p.m. on Wednesday 4 June 2014, in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 3.08 p.m.

Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister