



**Northern Ireland  
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR THE OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER AND DEPUTY  
FIRST MINISTER  
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS  
WEDNESDAY 4 JUNE 2014  
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

- Present: Mr Mike Nesbitt (Chairperson)  
Mr Chris Lyttle (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Alex Attwood  
Mr Leslie Cree  
Mrs Brenda Hale  
Mr Alex Maskey  
Ms Bronwyn McGahan  
Mr George Robinson  
Mr Jimmy Spratt
- Apologies: Mr Stephen Moutray
- In Attendance: Ms Karen Jardine (Senior Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Keith McBride (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Stephen Magee (Clerical Supervisor)  
Miss Sabra Wray (Clerical Officer)  
Ms Roisin Kelly (Bill Clerk) Item 9 only  
Mr Alyn Hicks (Assistant Bill Clerk) Item 9 only

*The meeting began in public session at 2.10 p.m.*

**1. Apologies**

As above.

## **2. Chairperson's Business**

### Briefing from First Minister and deputy First Minister

The Committee considered a response from the First Minister and deputy First Minister in relation to the Committee's request for a briefing on progress of the Programme for Government, in which they proposed a briefing session before the end of this Assembly session.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the First Minister and deputy First Minister to request their attendance at the meeting on 11 June or 18 June.

### EC-UK Meeting

The Chairperson advised Members that neither he, nor the Deputy Chairperson, are available to attend the next meeting of the EC-UK Forum on 9 June 2014.

### Committee Invitations

The Committee noted the list of current invitations.

## **3. Draft Minutes of the meeting held on 28 May 2014**

*Agreed:* The draft minutes of the proceedings of the 28 May 2014 were agreed by the Committee.

## **4. Matters Arising**

### 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 the Department to request that issues raised be considered at the forthcoming Departmental briefing on victims and survivors issues.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Victims and Survivors Service to request monthly updates on progress on the risk register, implementation plan and communications plan for Scheme 6 (Financial Assistance) 2014/15; including

clarification on whether relevant information regarding Scheme 6 had issued to MLAs.

### Racial Equality Strategy

The Committee considered a response from the Department in relation to queries raised on refugee and asylum issues.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to forward the response to the Law Centre, the Red Cross and NIACRO for information, as they initially raised concerns.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing from Assembly Research regarding refugee issues on 11 June, to inform the plenary debate on Community Relations Week and Refugee Week scheduled for plenary in week commencing 16 June.

### Delivering Social Change for Children and Young People

The Committee noted a response from the Department to queries raised following a briefing on 14 May regarding Delivering Social Change for Children and Young People, advising that legal advice is being sought regarding its statutory obligations in relation to the Child Poverty Act, and consultation with the Commissioner for Children and Young People.

### List of Outstanding Correspondence

The Committee noted the list of outstanding correspondence.

## **5. Correspondence**

### Investing Activity Report - May

The Committee noted a copy of the Department's Investment Strategy Investing Activity Report for May.

### Commissioner for Children and Young People

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department advising that the current Commissioner for Children and Young People will fulfil her second term of office on 7 January 2015, and that a recruitment process to appoint a new Commissioner for Children and Young People is to commence.

## Gender Equality Strategy

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department providing an update on the development of the Gender Equality Strategy.

### **6. Departmental Budget 2014/15 and June Monitoring Round**

The Chairperson advised Members that, owing to the late receipt of relevant briefing papers from the Department on the opening budget position for 2014/15 and the bids in respect of June Monitoring, he did not consider enough time had been given to allow for adequate preparation for the briefing session and scrutiny of the information provided. The Chairperson further advised Members that consequently he was not content to Chair the briefing from Departmental officials, and that the Deputy Chairperson was also not content to Chair the briefing.

*Mr Nesbitt left the meeting at 2.27 p.m.*

*Mr Lyttle left the meeting at 2.27 p.m.*

*As the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson were both absent the Senior Assistant Clerk assumed the Chair for the nomination of a Temporary Chairperson.*

Mr Maskey proposed that Mr Spratt be nominated as Temporary Chairperson. The proposal was seconded by Mr Robinson. There were no further nominations.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to appoint Mr Spratt as Temporary Chairperson for the briefing on Departmental Budget 2014/15 and June Monitoring Round.

*The Temporary Chairperson assumed the Chair at 2.28 p.m.*

*Departmental officials joined the meeting at 2.28 p.m.*

Departmental officials Mr Mark Browne, Mr Stephen Boyd and Ms Carol Gilchrist briefed the Committee on the Department's 2014/15 Budget, performance against 2013/14 Savings Delivery Plans and on its June Monitoring Round proposals. Questions and discussion followed. The Department agreed to provide further information on a number of issues.

*Departmental officials left the meeting at 3.13 p.m.*

*Mr Nesbitt re-joined the meeting at 3.13 p.m. and resumed the Chair.*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to take the Forward Work Programme as the next agenda item.

### **7. Forward Work Programme**

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

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to schedule a session on 25 June 2014 to review the Committee's strategic priorities for the year 2013/14.

## **8. Any Other Business**

None.

*The meeting moved into closed session at 3.15 p.m.*

## **9. Ombudsman Proposals**

The Committee was briefed by the Ombudsman Bill Project Team on Part II of the draft Bill. The Committee also considered a number of issues that required clarification for the draftsman of the Bill.

*Mr Spratt left the meeting at 3.58 p.m.*

*Mr Maskey left the meeting at 4.52 p.m.*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed a number of issues that required further clarification in order for the draftsman to continue, and agreed to seek legal advice from the Assembly's Legal Services on a number of issues.

## **10. Date, Time and Location of next meeting**

The next meeting will be held at 2.00 p.m. on Wednesday 11 June 2014, in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

*The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 4.54 p.m.*

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