



**Northern Ireland  
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR THE OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER AND DEPUTY  
FIRST MINISTER  
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS  
WEDNESDAY 2 JULY 2014  
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr Chris Lyttle (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Alex Attwood  
Mr Leslie Cree  
Miss Megan Fearon  
Mr Alex Maskey  
Ms Bronwyn McGahan  
Mr Stephen Moutray  
Mr George Robinson  
Mr Jimmy Spratt

Apologies: Mrs Brenda Hale  
Mr Mike Nesbitt

In Attendance: Ms Karen Jardine (Senior Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Keith McBride (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Stephen Magee (Clerical Supervisor)  
Mr Joe Westland (Clerical Supervisor)  
Miss Sabra Wray (Clerical Officer)  
Ms Shauna Mageean (European Project Manager) Item  
2 only  
Ms Roisin Kelly (Bill Clerk) Item 3 only  
Mr Alyn Hicks (Assistant Assembly Clerk) Item 3 only  
Mr Jonathan McMillen (Legal Advisor) Item 3 only

*The meeting began in closed session at 2.12pm.*

**1. Apologies**

As above.

## **2. Draft Report – Inquiry into the Barroso Task Force**

The Committee considered its draft Report on its Inquiry into the Barroso Taskforce.

*Mr Cree joined the meeting at 14.19 pm.*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the Membership and Powers.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the list of Appendices to be included in the Report.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the Executive Summary.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the Summary of Recommendations.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the Introduction and Background.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed “Barroso Task Force - Work and Structures since 2007”.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed “Outcomes against Objectives”.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed “Lessons Learned”.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed “Recommendations”.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that an extract from the Minutes of Proceedings of this meeting should be included in Appendix 1 of the report and that the Deputy Chairperson approve that extract for inclusion.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the Report be printed as the Twelfth Report of the Committee.

*Agreed:* The Committee order the Report to be printed.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to table a motion for a ‘Take Note’ debate on the Report at the start of the next session. The Committee agreed to table the following motion:

*“That this Assembly notes the Report of the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister (NIA 179/11-15) on its Inquiry into the Barroso Taskforce; and calls on the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister to implement the recommendations contained in the Report”.*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to embargo the Report until the debate in Plenary, but to publish the written submissions to the Inquiry on the Committee’s webpage in the meantime.

### **3. Ombudsman Proposals**

The Committee was briefed by the Ombudsman Bill Project Team on a number of issues that required clarification for the draftsman of the Bill, and on legal advice provided by the Assembly’s Legal Services.

*Mr Moutray joined the meeting at 2.30pm.*

*Mr Attwood left the meeting at 2.31pm.*

*Mr Spratt joined the meeting at 2.48pm.*

*Mr Maskey joined the meeting at 2.56pm.*

*Miss Fearon left the meeting at 3.20pm.*

*Mr Spratt left the meeting at 3.36pm.*

*Mr Lyttle declared an interest as a Member of the Northern Ireland Policing Board.*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to make an informal approach to the Secretary of State in relation to relevant clauses of the Committee’s draft Bill.

*The meeting moved into public session at 3.42pm.*

### **4. Chairperson’s Business**

#### **OFMDFM Annual Accounts**

Members noted that the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson were scheduled to meet officials regarding the Department’s Annual Report and Accounts on Friday 4 July.

### Freedom of Information requests

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to delegate authority to the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson to submit views on releasing or withholding information on any non-routine/contentious Freedom of Information requests received during recess; with the Committee to be advised of any such requests and the response issued by the Freedom of Information unit at the first meeting following recess.

### Correspondence Received During Recess

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that correspondence would be held for the first meeting in the new session, but that any urgent or pressing items of correspondence would be emailed to Members during recess.

*Mr Spratt re-joined the meeting at 3.44pm.*

### Belfast Islamic Centre

The Committee considered a request from the Belfast Islamic Centre to meet with Members to discuss issues relating to the Belfast Islamic Community.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and any other Members available would initially meet informally with the Belfast Islamic Centre, early in the next session.

### Committee Invitations

The Committee noted the list of current invitations.

## **5. Draft Minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2014**

*Agreed:* The draft minutes of the proceedings of 25 June 2014 were agreed by the Committee.

## **6. Matters Arising**

### List of Outstanding Correspondence

The Committee noted the list of outstanding correspondence.

## **7. Correspondence**

### Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment

The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment to the Department in relation to a response that it received from DETI concerning the European Liaison Officers, and how information received by DETI from the Barroso Desk Officers can best be passed to Committees.

### Delivering Social Change: Stakeholder Monthly Update

The Committee noted a copy of the Department's Delivering Social Change: Stakeholder Monthly Update.

### Investment Strategy: Investing Activity Report

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

### Strategic Investment Board Annual Report and Accounts

The Committee noted that the Strategic Investment Board's Annual Report and Accounts for 2013/14 had been laid in the Assembly.

### Northern Ireland Ombudsman Annual Report and Accounts

The Committee noted that the Northern Ireland Ombudsman's Annual Report and Accounts for 2013/14 had been laid in the Assembly.

## **8. Legislative Consent Motion – Childcare Payments Bill**

The Committee considered a Research Paper provided by the Assembly's Research and Information Service on the Childcare Payments Bill.

*Employers for Childcare joined the meeting at 3.49pm.*

Ms Mairaid McMahon, Ms Rachel Dennison and Mr Chris Briggs from Employers for Childcare briefed the Committee on issues relating to the Childcare Payments Bill. Questions and discussion followed and the briefing was recorded by Hansard.

*Employers for Childcare left the meeting at 4.12pm.*

*Departmental officials joined the meeting at 4.12 pm.*

Departmental officials, Mr David McGowan and Dr Martin Tyrell, briefed the Committee on the Legislative Consent Memoranda in relation to the Childcare Payments Bill. Questions and discussion followed and the briefing was recorded by Hansard.

*Miss Fearon re-joined the meeting at 4.46 p.m.*

Officials agreed to provide further information on a number of issues including the Department's response to the 2013 Treasury consultation on Tax-free Childcare; a list of stakeholders who were consulted on the 2013 Treasury consultation on Tax-free childcare, the number of responses received including copies of those responses; an assessment of the impact the proposed legislation may have on parents who are on zero hours contracts; and comment on Clause 30 of the Bill which refers to Universal Credit and, as drafted, appears to expect that the Universal Credit system will be in operation in NI by the time these proposals are implemented.

*Departmental officials left the meeting at 4.49 pm.*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to forward Employers for Childcare's written briefing to the Department for comment.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to forward a link of today's Minutes of Evidence and briefing papers from Employers for Childcare and the Department to the Committee for Employment and Learning for information.

## **9. Executive's European Priorities 2014/15 – Written Briefing**

The Committee noted a written briefing from the Department in relation to the Executive's European Priorities for 2014/15.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing on this issue early in the next session.

## **10. Forward Work Programme**

### **Inquiry into Building a United Community**

The Committee considered the draft Terms of Reference for an Inquiry into Building a United Community.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the draft Terms of Reference for its Inquiry into Building a United Community.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to make a call for evidence on the Terms of Reference to a list of stakeholders.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed a draft notice be published in local papers in line with Assembly protocol and that the notice inviting submissions be placed on the Committee's webpage.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the Committee Office would scope options for a study visit with regard to the Inquiry.

## **11. Any Other Business**

### **Good Relations Fund**

A Member raised the issue of perceived delays in groups receiving funding in relation to the 2014/15 Central Good Relations Fund.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department to seek an update on progress of the fund.

### **Sexual Orientation Strategy**

A Member raised the issue of the Sexual Orientation Strategy and its link to Together: Building a United Community.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that this issue would be raised with the Department in a briefing on the Sexual Orientation Strategy early in the next session.

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

The next meeting will be the Committee's Strategic Planning Day and would be held at 1pm. on Wednesday 3 September 2014, in Ranfurly House, Dungannon.

*The Deputy Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 5.02pm.*

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