



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR THE OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER AND DEPUTY
FIRST MINISTER
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
WEDNESDAY 22 OCTOBER 2014
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

- Present: Mr Mike Nesbitt (Chairperson)
Mr Chris Lyttle (Deputy Chairperson)
Mrs Brenda Hale
Ms Bronwyn McGahan
Mr David McIlveen
Mr Stephen Moutray
Mr Jimmy Spratt
- Apologies: Mr Michael Copeland
Mr Alex Attwood
- In Attendance: Mrs Kathy O'Hanlon (Assembly Clerk)
Miss Karen Jardine (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Ms Marion Johnson (Clerical Supervisor)
Mr Stephen Magee (Clerical Supervisor)
Miss Zuzana Polackova (Clerical Officer)
Ms Roisin Kelly (Bill Clerk) Item 1 only
Mr Alyn Hicks (Assistant Assembly Clerk) Item 1 only

The meeting began in closed session at 2.01 pm.

1. Northern Ireland Public Service Ombudsperson Bill

Ms Kelly and Mr Hicks joined the meeting at 2.01pm.

Mr Lyttle joined the meeting at 2.02 pm

The Committee was briefed by the NI Public Service Ombudsperson Bill Project Team on a number of changes the drafter had made to the Bill and emerging issues that required clarification.

Mrs Hale joined the meeting at 2.07 pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the NI Ombudsman to provide an indicative timetable for progress of the Bill.

Ms Kelly and Mr Hicks left the meeting at 2.20 pm.

The meeting moved into public session at 2.21 pm.

2. Apologies

Apologies were noted as above. The Chairperson advised Members that bi-lateral talks with political parties would be taking place on Wednesdays and Thursdays until the Christmas recess, and this may have an impact on Members' attendance at Committee meetings.

3. Chairperson's Business

Italian Ambassador

The Chairperson advised Members that he met with the Italian Ambassador to the UK His Excellency Pasquale Terracciano on Monday 20 October, along with Robin Swann MLA, Chairperson of the Committee for Employment and Learning.

Legislative Consent Motion: Childcare Payments Bill

The Chairperson advised Members that the Legislative Consent Motion on the Childcare Payments Bill is scheduled for debate in plenary on Tuesday 4 November.

Assembly and Executive Review Committee: Women into Politics

The Chairperson advised Members that he had agreed to chair a roundtable discussion at the Assembly and Executive Review Committee event on Women into Politics on Thursday 23 October.

Centre for Effective Services

The Committee noted correspondence from the Centre for Effective Services inviting Members to the launch of a report on the learning from ten years of prevention and early interventions in children and young people's services on Wednesday 5 November 2014.

Child Poverty Alliance: Beneath the Surface, Child Poverty in Northern Ireland

The Committee noted an invitation from the Child Poverty Alliance to the launch of a report entitled "Beneath the Surface, Child Poverty in Northern Ireland" in the Long Gallery, on Monday 3 November.

Committee Invitations

The Committee noted the list of current invitations.

Indicative Timings

Members noted that, following a recommendation from the Committee Review Group, indicative timings for agenda items have been added to the Committee pack and the Business Diary on the NI Assembly website.

4. Draft Minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2014

Agreed: The draft minutes of the proceedings of 15 October 2014 were agreed by the Committee.

5. Matters Arising

List of Outstanding Correspondence

The Committee noted the list of outstanding correspondence.

6. Correspondence

Individual Needs Programme

The Committee noted a response from the Department concerning means testing for applicants to the Victims and Survivors Service (VSS) Individual Needs Programme.

Departmental Savings Delivery Plans

The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance and Personnel which included a briefing paper from the Department of Finance and Personnel on the implementation of Departmental Savings Delivery Plans up to 31 March 2014.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to seek a written update on the progress of the 2014/2015 savings delivery plan.

Community Relations in Schools

The Committee noted correspondence from the Director of Community Relations in Schools providing an update on the Buddy Scheme.

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

Victims and Survivors Service

The Committee noted correspondence from VSS following a query raised by Members regarding the number of new groups that have been established in the past 12 months. VSS note that the number of victim/survivor groups funded by the Service has decreased by 1 over the last 12 months.

Sickness Absence in the NICS

The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance and Personnel relating to sickness absence in the Northern Ireland Civil Service and information which indicated that OFMDFM missed the target for sickness absence in 2013-14.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Department for comment on the latest figures and to ask if the Department contributed to the NI Audit Office report with regard to sickness absence.

7. Social Investment Fund

Departmental officials joined the meeting at 2.29 pm.

Departmental officials Mr Ricky Irwin and Ms Orla McStravick appeared before the Committee for questions and discussion on the progress of the Social Investment Fund. The briefing was recorded by Hansard.

The officials agreed to provide further information as requested on a number of issues.

Departmental officials left the meeting at 3.00 pm.

Mrs Hale left the meeting at 3.00 pm.

8. Committee Inquiry into Building a United Community

Departmental officials joined the meeting at 3.05 pm.

Departmental officials Ms Linsey Farrell, Mr Michael McGinley and Ms Donna Blaney appeared before the Committee for questions and discussion on the Together: Building a United Community Strategy. The briefing was recorded by Hansard.

Mrs Hale re-joined the meeting at 3.15 pm.

The officials agreed to provide further information as requested on a number of issues

Departmental officials left the meeting at 3.40 pm.

9. Committee Inquiry into Building a United Community

The Committee noted that over 60 written submissions had been received with regard to its Inquiry into Building a United Community, and noted late submissions from Belfast City Council, the Department of Justice and the Department for Social Development.

Mrs Hale left the meeting at 3.42 pm.

The Committee noted a draft plan with regard to taking oral evidence in relation to the Inquiry and areas for potential visits.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider the draft plan and return to the issue at the next Committee meeting.

10. Draft Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme up to the end of November.

11. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

12. Date, Time and Location of next meeting

The next meeting will be held at 2.00pm on Wednesday 5 November 2014, in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 4.03 pm.