



**Northern Ireland  
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR THE OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER AND DEPUTY  
FIRST MINISTER  
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS  
WEDNESDAY 1 OCTOBER 2014  
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr Mike Nesbitt (Chairperson)  
Mr Chris Lyttle (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Alex Attwood  
Miss Megan Fearon  
Mrs Brenda Hale  
Ms Bronwyn McGahan  
Mr Stephen Moutray  
Mr George Robinson  
Mr Jimmy Spratt

Apologies Mr Leslie Cree  
Mr Alex Maskey

In Attendance: Mrs Kathy O'Hanlon (Assembly Clerk)  
Miss Karen Jardine (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Stephen Magee (Clerical Supervisor)  
Miss Zuzana Polackova (Clerical Officer)

*The meeting began in public session at 2.04 pm.*

**1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Mr Leslie Cree and Mr Alex Maskey.

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

### Business in the Community

The Committee noted an invitation to the Chairperson from Business in the Community to a conference entitled 'Looking to the Future, Not the Next Annual Report' to be held on 16 October 2014.

*Mr Robinson MLA joined the meeting at 2.07pm.*

### Informal meetings

The Chairperson advised Members that he and the Deputy Chair had met informally with representatives of the Belfast Islamic Centre (BIC) regarding proposals for a new Islamic Centre. The Chairperson advised that BIC are not seeking financial assistance but have asked that the Executive indicates its support for a new Islamic Centre in Belfast. In addition, support and expertise which could be provided from organisations such as the Strategic Investment Board would be welcomed by BIC.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the First and deputy First Ministers regarding the request by BIC.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to invite representatives from BIC to brief the Committee at a later date.

### Committee Invitations

The Committee noted the list of current invitations.

## **3. Draft Minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2014**

*Agreed:* The draft minutes of the proceedings of 24 September 2014 were agreed by the Committee.

*Mr Attwood MLA joined the meeting at 2.08pm.*

## **4. Matters Arising**

### Department of Education - Community Relations in Schools

The Chairperson advised that he and the Deputy Chairperson had met with representatives from Community Relations in Schools with regard to the Buddy Scheme. The Committee also noted a response from the Department of Education which provided an update on how the Department of Education is taking forward

its commitment within Together: Building a United Community to roll out a Buddy scheme in all publicly funded nurseries and primary schools.

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

#### EU Matters

The Committee noted the “EU Matters” newsletter which highlights items of European business of interest to Assembly Committees; and the Chairperson commended the EU Affairs Manager on the quality and presentation of the information provided.

#### Inquiry into Building a United Community

The Committee noted the current list of submissions received in response to its call for evidence to its Inquiry into Building a United Community.

*Agreed:* The Committee noted its earlier decision to copy any issues or submissions relating to shared/integrated education to the Committee for Education for consideration, and agreed to forward the submission from the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education to that Committee.

#### List of Outstanding Correspondence

The Committee noted the list of outstanding correspondence.

### **5. Correspondence**

#### Delivering Social Change for Children and Young People

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department which provided information on the provisions in the Welfare Reform Act 2012 which amended the Department’s statutory obligations with regard to the Child Poverty Commission as detailed in the child Poverty Act 2010.

#### Historical Institutional Abuse

The Committee noted a response from the Department regarding the scoping exercises with regard to the Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry.

### **6. Legislative Consent Motion – Childcare payments Bill**

The Committee recorded thanks to Departmental officials who had made themselves available at the meeting to answer any further questions Members may

have had with regard to the Legislative Consent Memorandum on the Childcare Payments Bill.

The Chairperson recorded thanks to junior Minister Bell, junior Minister McCann and officials for the informal briefing on Monday 29 September with regard to the Childcare Payments Bill; and noted that the meeting was both useful and informative.

The Committee discussed the information received to date with regard to the LCM and noted correspondence from the Federation of Small Businesses, CBI together with further information provided by Employers for Childcare.

The Committee discussed the draft report on the LCM.

*Ms Fearon left the meeting at 2.18pm.*

*Mrs Hale joined the meeting at 2.25pm.*

The motion was proposed: *“That the last sentence of paragraph 24 be amended to add at end ‘, or otherwise, and to bring forward proposals by February 2015.’”*

The Committee divided on the motion:

Ayes 2;

Noes 5;

Abstentions 1.

AYES

Mr Attwood MLA

Mr Lyttle MLA (Deputy Chair)

NOES

Mrs Hale MLA

Ms McGahan MLA

Mr Moutray MLA

Mr Robinson MLA

Mr Spratt MLA

ABSTENTION

Mr Nesbitt MLA (Chair)

Members agreed to add the words “*It was highlighted by junior Ministers*” and “*with regard to tax relief*” to paragraph 22 of the draft report.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to support the Legislative Consent Motion to extend the provisions of the Childcare Payments Bill to Northern Ireland; but strongly recommended that the Department undertakes a scoping exercise to identify the categories of people who will be disadvantaged under the new scheme, and where appropriate, ensures that their needs are addressed within the wider childcare strategy.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the draft report on the Legislative Consent Motion, subject to amending paragraph 22 as agreed.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the list of appendices to accompany the report.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed for the report to be published.

## **7. October Monitoring**

*Departmental officials joined the meeting at 2.43pm.*

Departmental officials Mr Mark Browne, Mr Stephen Boyd and Ms Sinead McCartan appeared before the Committee for questions and discussion on the Department’s bid for the October Monitoring Round. The briefing was recorded by Hansard.

*Mr Moutray left the meeting at 2.44pm.*

*Ms Fearon returned to the meeting at 3.10pm.*

Officials agreed to provide further information as requested on a number of issues including on the Department’s contractual commitments with regard to the Social Investment Fund and Delivering Social Change; a breakdown of the bid of £302k as part of the overall October Monitoring bid for the Victims and Survivors Service; and further information with regard to funding for the Shackleton site.

*Mr Spratt left the meeting at 3.43pm.*

*Mr Moutray returned to the meeting at 3.43pm.*

*Ms Fearon left the meeting at 3.43pm.*

*Departmental officials left the meeting at 3.43pm.*

## **8. Draft Forward Work Programme**

The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme.

## **9. Northern Ireland Public Service Ombudsperson Bill**

The Committee noted papers that had been provided by the Bill team with regard to its consideration of the draft legislation for a Northern Ireland Public Service Ombudsperson Bill, including a copy of the updated Bill and further information on the proposed complaints procedure and on proposed consequential amendments.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the most recent changes to the draft Northern Ireland Public Service Ombudsperson Bill.

*Agreed:* Members agreed to contact the Bill team with comments and amendments in regard to the proposed complaints procedure and the proposed consequential amendments before the meeting on Wednesday 15 October.

Members noted that, due to time pressures, it was not possible to consider the RaISe paper which provided an update on the estimated cost implications of the proposed legislation. The paper will be considered at the Committee's meeting on 15 October.

#### **10. Any Other Business**

Mr Robinson noted that this was his last meeting with the OFMDFM Committee and recorded his thanks to the Chairperson and Committee staff.

Mr Attwood offered condolences on behalf of the Committee to the Chairperson on the death of his former party colleague and former MLA Mr George Savage.

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

The next meeting will be held at 2.00pm on Wednesday 8 October 2014, in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

*The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 3.46 pm.*

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