



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR THE OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER AND DEPUTY
FIRST MINISTER
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
WEDNESDAY 15 OCTOBER 2014
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr Mike Nesbitt (Chairperson)
Mr Chris Lyttle (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Alex Attwood
Ms Megan Fearon
Mrs Brenda Hale
Mr Alex Maskey
Ms Bronwyn McGahan
Mr Jimmy Spratt

Apologies: Mr Michael Copeland
Mr David McIlveen
Mr Stephen Moutray

In Attendance: Mrs Kathy O'Hanlon (Assembly Clerk)
Miss Karen Jardine (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Stephen Magee (Clerical Supervisor)
Miss Zuzana Polackova (Clerical Officer)
Ms Roisin Kelly (Bill Clerk) Item 2 only
Mr Alyn Hicks (Assistant Assembly Clerk) Item 2 only

The meeting began in closed session at 2.05 pm.

**1. Northern Ireland Public Service Ombudsperson Bill - Briefing on Estimated
Cost Implications**

*An officer from the Assembly's Research and Information Service joined the meeting
at 2.08 pm.*

Ms Pamela Dugdale, Researcher from NIA Research and Library Services spoke to
her research paper on the Northern Ireland Public Service Ombudsperson Bill -

Estimated Cost Implications. The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Mr Maskey joined the meeting at 2.10pm.

Ms Fearon joined the meeting at 2.13pm.

The Research Officer left the meeting at 2.23 pm.

2. Northern Ireland Public Service Ombudsperson Bill

Ms Kelly and Mr Hicks joined the meeting at 2.23pm.

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 for the draftsperson of the Bill.

Agreed: the Committee agreed to forward the research paper on estimated cost implications to the Ombudsman for comment.

Ms Kelly and Mr Hicks left the meeting at 2.49pm.

The meeting moved into public session at 2.49 pm.

3. Apologies

Apologies were noted as above.

The Chairperson advised Members that Mr Michael Copeland had joined the Committee in place of Mr Roy Beggs.

4. Chairperson's Business

Common Platform request regarding the draft Racial Equality Strategy

The Committee noted correspondence from Mr Peter Osborne, Community Relations Council on behalf of the Common Platform requesting that a representative group are invited to brief the Committee on the draft Racial Equality Strategy. Members also noted that the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities was a contributor to the Common Platform submission, and that the Committee had previously agreed to take a briefing from NICEM on the draft Racial Equality Strategy

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite a panel from the Common Platform, including the Community Relations Council and a representative from NICEM to brief the Committee on the draft Racial Equality Strategy, when a briefing is received from officials on the outcome of the consultation.

Italian Ambassador

The Committee noted that an informal meeting with HE Pasquale Terracciano, Italian Ambassador to the UK, had been arranged for Monday 20 October at 11.30am in Room 21.

Agreed: Members agreed to notify staff regarding their availability to attend.

Agreed: Members agreed to invite other Statutory Committee Chairs to the meeting given that each committee has its own responsibilities in terms of EU matters.

Committee Invitations

The Committee noted the list of current invitations.

5. Draft Minutes of the meeting held on 8 October 2014

Agreed: The draft minutes of the proceedings of 8 October 2014 were agreed by the Committee.

6. Matters Arising

Inquiry into Building a United Community

The Committee noted the current list of submissions received in response to its call for evidence to the 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 a number of submissions to that Committee.

List of Outstanding Correspondence

The Committee noted the list of outstanding correspondence.

7. Correspondence

Committee for Finance and Personnel

The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance and Personnel providing the terms of reference for a review of the operation of the Barnett Formula.

8. Children and Young People - Assembly Research Paper on Child Poverty Strategies in the UK

The Committee noted a research paper on Child Poverty Strategies in the UK, and thanked Jane Campbell, Research Officer for preparing the information.

The Chairman also referred Members to the “End Poverty Now” report which had been mentioned in media reports and which maps levels of child poverty across the UK.

9. Children and Young People - Departmental briefing on draft Child Poverty Strategy

Members noted correspondence from the Department advising that the draft Child Poverty Strategy is still under consideration by Ministers, and that officials would therefore not be in a position to brief the Committee.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the research paper and the End Poverty Now report to the Department for comment; and also agreed to ask about the nature and depth of engagement with the Commissioner for Children and Young People with regard to developing the draft Child Poverty Strategy 2014 - 2017.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to Ministers to request an explanation for the delay in agreeing the draft Child Poverty Strategy.

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.

Ms Fearon left the meeting at 3pm.

12. Date, Time and Location of next meeting

The next meeting will be held at 2.00pm on Wednesday 22 October 2014, in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 3.01 pm.

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