



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR THE OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER AND DEPUTY
FIRST MINISTER
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
WEDNESDAY 5 NOVEMBER 2014
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr Mike Nesbitt (Chairperson)
Mr Chris Lyttle (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Alex Attwood
Ms Megan Fearon
Ms Bronwyn McGahan
Mr David McIlveen
Mr Stephen Moutray
Mr Jimmy Spratt

Apologies: Mr Michael Copeland
Mrs Brenda Hale

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 closed session at 2.01pm.

1. Inquiry into Building a United Community

The Committee noted the themes emerging from the written evidence to its Inquiry into Building a United Community and considered proposals for the next phase of evidence gathering. The Committee noted the Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education currently being undertaken by the Committee for Education, and noted its previous agreement to pass any issues arising in the course of its own Inquiry relating to education to that Committee for information.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to host a roundtable event with Departments and statutory agencies responsible for headline actions within the Together: Building a United Community strategy.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to approach NILGA with regard to receiving oral evidence from local councils during a formal Committee meeting.

Ms Fearon joined the meeting at 2.17pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite the Community Relations Council to give oral evidence during a formal Committee meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to explore the possibility of hosting a roundtable event with organisations involved in community relations work across Northern Ireland.

The Committee considered a paper from Assembly Research which suggested a number of academics from whom the Committee might consider inviting to give oral evidence.

Mr Attwood left the meeting at 2.20pm.

Mr Lyttle proposed the motion: *“That Dr Duncan Morrow be invited to provide evidence to the Committee with regard to its Inquiry into Building a United Community.”*

The Committee divided on the motion:

Ayes 1;

Noes 4;

AYES

Mr Lyttle (Deputy Chair)

NOES

Mr McIlveen

Mr Moutray

Mr Nesbitt (Chair)

Mr Spratt

Ms McGahan and Ms Fearon did not vote.

Members noted that, prior to leaving the meeting, Mr Attwood had indicated his support for inviting Dr Morrow to provide evidence.

The motion fell.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite Professor Brandon Hamber, Dr Neil Jarman, Professor Colin Knox and Professor Peter Shirlow to give evidence to the Committee, subject to their availability.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to explore the possibility of inviting evidence from Northern Ireland Environment Link and the Landscape Institute Northern Ireland, including the possibility of a site visit to a project.

The Committee noted that a number of organisations had responded specifically to the Inquiry on the matter of a definition for the term ‘good relations’.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider issues relating to a definition of good relations at a later stage.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to engage with the Rural Community Network regarding the challenges faced at rural interface areas; and agreed to consider the possibility of a visit to a rural area.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite oral evidence from InterAction Belfast, Forthspring InterCommunity Project and the Peace Walls Programme with regard to the challenges at urban interface areas and the role of communities in decision making.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to explore the possibility of a roundtable event with young people in conjunction with the Assembly Education Service.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite oral evidence with regard to the role of women in good relations and their involvement in policy and decision making.

The Committee noted that other emerging themes in the written evidence included the role for civic society within Building a United Community; and issues relating to mental health and inter-generational trauma.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that, while these areas are both important and merit further consideration, it is unlikely that the Committee will be able to consider them in depth during the course of the Inquiry.

The meeting moved into public session at 2.41 pm.

2. Apologies

Apologies were noted as above.

3. Chairperson's Business

Draft Budget 2015/16

The Committee noted the statement in plenary on Monday 3 November from the Minister of Finance and Personnel on the draft budget 2015/16, and the overall reduction for OFMDFM of 0.6% Resource DEL.

Members also noted that the draft budget document advises that Ministers will seek to publish detailed breakdowns of proposed expenditure on departmental websites, including details on the measures required to enable the department to live within its budget allocation and details of implications for frontline services.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a briefing from Ministers at the earliest opportunity on the draft budget proposals for OFMDFM for 2015/16.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to ask when the detailed information on the OFMDFM draft budget allocation for 2015/16 will be available on the departmental website; and to ask what plans are in place to extend the Programme for Government for 2015/16.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek views from the Department's Arm's Length Bodies on the spending plans once they are available on the website.

Members' Attendance 2013/14

Members noted that the attendance figures for 2013/14 would be published on the Committee's website on Friday 7 November.

Inclusion Quality Mark

The Committee noted correspondence from Inclusion Quality Mark inviting Members to a presentation of awards to 9 schools in Northern Ireland which achieved this national award during the year 2013/2014, in the Long Gallery on 17 November 2014.

Collaboration NI

The Committee noted the agenda for the Collaboration NI conference 'How do we future proof the third sector for the challenges ahead?' which will be held at the Lough Neagh Discovery centre on 27 November 2014.

Committee of the Regions

The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee of the Regions on the 'CoR platforms and networks facing the future' event in Brussels on 9 December 2014.

Committee Invitations

The Committee noted the list of current invitations.

4. Draft Minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2014

Agreed: The draft minutes of the proceedings of 22 October 2014 were agreed by the Committee.

5. Matters Arising

List of Outstanding Correspondence

The Committee noted the list of outstanding correspondence.

Members noted that a response to the letter to Ministers regarding support for the Belfast Islamic Centre remained outstanding, and that representatives from the Belfast Islamic Centre were due to brief the Committee at its meeting on 12 November 2014.

Agreed: Members agreed to request a response from Ministers in advance of the meeting of 12 November .

6. Correspondence

OFMDFM: ISNI Portal

The Committee correspondence from the Department regarding the Investment Strategy Project Delivery Portal, in response to a query from Patsy McGlone MLA, Chair of the All Party Group on Construction.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to Patsy McGlone MLA, Chair of the All Party Group on Construction, for information.

Northern Ireland Economic Strategy

The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment which included the Northern Ireland Economic Strategy, Year 2 Annual Monitoring Report.

EU Matters newsletter

The Committee noted the October edition of the EU Matters Newsletter, produced by the NIA EU Affairs Manager.

Delivering Social Change

The Committee noted the October 2014 edition of the Delivering Social Change Stakeholder Newsletter provided by OFMDFM.

Delivering Social Change

The Committee noted a response from the Department regarding the 3 new Delivering Social Change signature programmes.

Investing Activity Report

The Committee noted the October edition of the ISNI Investing Activity Report provided by OFMDFM.

Committee of the Regions

The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee of the Regions on the European Entrepreneurial Region Award.

Committee for Employment and Learning

The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Employment and Learning to OFMDFM regarding its Inquiry into Post Special Educational Need Provision in Education, Employment and Training for those with Learning Disabilities.

Commission for Victims and Survivors

The Committee noted that the Commission for Victims and Survivors Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2014 had been laid in the Business Office.

Central Good Relations Funding

The Committee noted a response from the Department regarding the criteria for the Central Good Relations Fund.

Department of Finance and Personnel

The Committee noted a response from the Department of Finance and Personnel regarding a European Commission proposal to promote the free movement of citizens and businesses by simplifying the acceptance of certain public documents.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the House of Lords European Committee for information.

7. Children and Young People – Bright Start Childcare Strategy

Departmental officials joined the meeting at 2.47 pm.

Departmental officials Mr Henry Johnston and Mr Martin Tyrrell appeared before the Committee for questions and discussion on the final Brightstart Childcare Strategy consultation. The briefing was recorded by Hansard.

Mr Moutray left the meeting at 2.55pm.

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

Departmental officials left the meeting at 3.41pm.

8. Draft Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme up to Christmas recess.

9. Any Other Business

The Chairperson advised that he was not available to Chair the meeting on Wednesday 12 November and asked the Deputy Chair to deputise in his absence.

10. Date, Time and Location of next meeting

The next meeting will be held at 2.00pm on Wednesday 12 November 2014, in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 3.42 pm.

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