



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR THE OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER AND DEPUTY
FIRST MINISTER
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
WEDNESDAY 30 SEPTEMBER 2015
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr Mike Nesbitt (Chairperson)
Mr Chris Lyttle (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Andy Allen
Mr Alex Attwood
Ms Megan Fearon
Mrs Brenda Hale
Mr Chris Hazzard
Mr Alex Maskey
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)
Mr Innis Mennie (Clerical Officer)
Mr Alyn Hicks (Bill Team - item 1 only)

The meeting began in closed session at 2.01 pm.

1. NIPSO Bill

Mr Hicks joined the meeting at 2.01 pm.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee on Standards and Privileges proposing that the office of the NI Assembly Commissioner for Standards be brought within the remit of the NIPSO legislation. Members also noted correspondence from the NI Ombudsman advising that he is content with the proposal, subject to the consideration of COFMDFM.

Ms Megan Fearon and Mr Chris Hazzard joined the meeting at 2.02pm.

Agreed: Members agreed to ask the Committee on Standards and Privileges whether it had consulted the Commissioner for Standards on its proposal.

The Committee noted correspondence from the NI Ombudsman in which he suggests the potential addition of amendments to the NIPSO Bill regarding Part 9 of the Local Government Act 2014 which requires him, in his role as Commissioner for Complaints, to investigate and adjudicate on Code of Conduct complaints against councillors. Members noted that the Ombudsman has been in discussion with the Minister of the Environment on these matters.

Mr David McIlveen joined the meeting at 2.06pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite the NI Ombudsman to provide a briefing on these matters at the earliest opportunity.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Education following a request for his views on the request by the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI) to be added to the list of authorities to come under the remit of the Public Services Ombudsperson in Schedule 3 to the Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content for the GTCNI to be added to Schedule 3.

Mr Hicks left the meeting at 2.08 pm.

2. Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry

The Committee discussed procedural matters relating to the provision of information by the Department regarding the Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask staff to prepare a timeline of interaction with the Department, on the matter of those victims who fall outside the remit of the Inquiry into Historical Institutional Abuse, for consideration at the next meeting on 7 October.

Mr Alex Attwood left the meeting at 2.15pm.

The meeting moved into public session at 2.16pm.

3. Apologies

There were no apologies.

Mrs Brenda Hale joined the meeting at 2.17pm.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr Andy Allen to his first meeting of the Committee; and thanked Mrs Brenda Hale for her contribution to the work of the Committee, in advance of her move to the Committee for Regional Development.

4. Chairperson's Business

Northern Ireland Renewables Industry Group

The Committee noted an invitation from the NI Renewables Industry Group to an energy policy summit which is to be held on Tuesday 13 October 2015.

The Committee noted the list of current invitations.

5. Draft Minutes of the meetings held on 23 September 2015

Agreed: The draft minutes of the proceedings of 23 September 2015 were agreed by the Committee.

6. Matters Arising

Non-attendance of officials

The Committee noted an acknowledgement from the OFMDFM Private Office following the Committee's letter on non-attendance of officials at the meeting of 23 September.

List of Outstanding Correspondence

The Committee noted the list of outstanding correspondence.

7. Correspondence

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

The Committee noted information from the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety regarding a series of focus groups being held across Northern Ireland to gather views of people with mental health problems and/or a learning disability, and their carers on the Bamford Action Plan 2012-15.

Committee for Finance and Personnel

The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from the Committee for Finance and Personnel to the Rt. Honourable Peter Robinson MLA inviting Mr Robinson to provide evidence regarding the NAMA Review.

The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from the Committee for Finance and Personnel to Mr Martin McGuinness following his appearance before that Committee on matters relating to the NAMA Review.

Parenting NI

The Committee noted correspondence from Parenting NI regarding its meeting with the Chairperson in July on the Odyssey Parenting Your Teen programme; and subsequent correspondence from the Chairperson to Ministers regarding the programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to Ministers to request an urgent response to its letter of 21 July regarding the Odyssey Parenting your Teen programme.

October Monitoring Round

The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance and Personnel which advised that the October Monitoring Round will not proceed as the Executive has not yet resolved the June Monitoring position.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to seek an update on its current budgetary position for 2015-16.

Community Relations Council

The Committee noted a request from the Community Relations Council for a member of staff to present the recommendations of the Report on the Inquiry into Building a United Community to an Interface Community Partners group meeting on 14 October 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content for staff to present the report at this event and that any Committee Member could attend the event if they wished.

8. Draft Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted that representatives from NILGA are provisionally scheduled to brief the Committee on the Refugee and Asylum Seeker Crisis on Wednesday 21 October.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite a panel of community and voluntary sector organisations to brief the Committee on the Refugee and Asylum Seeker Crisis including NICRAS, the Law Centre, the Refugee Forum and Tearfund.

The Committee approved the draft work programme, subject to any amendments agreed today.

9. UN Human Rights Committee: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights - briefing by Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission

Representatives from the NI Human Rights Commission joined the meeting at 2.26pm.

Representatives from the NI Human Rights Commission, Mr Les Allamby, Chief Commissioner; Mrs Virginia McVea, Director; and Dr David Russell, Deputy Director briefed the Committee on the concluding observations of the UN Human Rights Committee relating to the seventh report of the UK on compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; and on the NIHRC submission to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on the UK's 5th Periodic Report on compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to circulate the NIHRC submission to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child to statutory committees for information.

Questions and discussion followed.

Mr Alex Maskey joined the meeting at 3.07pm.

Mrs Brenda Hale left the meeting at 3.27pm.

Mr Stephen Moutray left the meeting at 3.32pm.

Representatives from the NI Human Rights Commission left the meeting at 3.38pm.

10. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

11. Date, Time and Location of next meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Committee is at 2.00 pm in Room 30 on Wednesday 7 October 2015.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 3.38pm.

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