



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR THE OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER AND DEPUTY
FIRST MINISTER
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
MONDAY 19 OCTOBER 2015
ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr Mike Nesbitt (Chairperson)
Mr Chris Lyttle (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Andy Allen
Mr Alex Attwood
Mr Paul Frew
Mr Gordon Lyons
Mr Alex Maskey
Mr David McIlveen
Mr Stephen Moutray

Apologies: Ms Megan Fearon
Mr Chris Hazzard

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 2 only)
Mr Damien Martin (Clerk Assistant - item 2 only)

The meeting began in closed session at 11.32am.

1. Apologies

Apologies were as recorded above.

2. NIPSO Bill

Mr Damien Martin & Mr Alyn Hicks joined the meeting at 11.32am.

Clause 18: Matters which may be investigated universities

The Committee considered Amendments 22 and 23 which had been tabled to Clause 18 of the Public Services Ombudsperson Bill by Mr Jim Allister MLA, for debate at Consideration Stage.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was not content to support Amendment 22 or Amendment 23.

Mr Paul Frew MLA joined the meeting at 11.34am.

Clause 35: Matters which may be investigated universities

The Committee considered Amendment 54 which had been tabled to Clause 35 of the Public Services Ombudsperson Bill by Mr Jim Allister MLA, for debate at Consideration Stage.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was not content to support Amendment 54.

Mr Alex Attwood MLA joined the meeting at 11.39am.

Clause 41: Disclosure contrary to public interest

The Committee considered Amendments 58 and 59 which had been tabled to Clause 41 of the Public Services Ombudsperson Bill by Mr Jim Allister MLA, for debate at Consideration Stage.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was not content to support Amendment 58, or Amendment 59.

Amendments relating to the Assembly Commission

Agreed: The Committee agreed not to move Amendments 7, 25, 26, 113 and 114 at Consideration Stage to allow time for further consideration of the allocation of additional functions to the Assembly Commission.

Attorney General

The Committee noted correspondence from the Attorney General on the Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek legal advice on a matter of legislative competence raised by the Attorney General.

Ad Hoc Committee Recommendations

The Chairperson referred Members to a recommendation from the Ad Hoc Committee regarding an assurance that the OFMDFM Committee had satisfied itself that there are adequate safeguards in place in relation to the exercise of the NIPSO's power to make a special report to the Assembly.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content for the Chair to relay its position during the Consideration Stage debate that it is up to the NIPSO as a public authority to exercise the power to make a special report in a manner which is compliant with the Convention rights of the listed authority.

The Chairperson referred Members to another recommendation from the Ad Hoc Committee regarding the drafting of a Memorandum of Understanding between the NIPSO and the Department of Finance and Personnel for the purposes of approving the NIPSO's estimate.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content for the Chair to relay its position during the Consideration Stage debate that it is minded to explore this option with the Audit Committee and the Committee for Finance and Personnel as a first step.

3. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

4. Date, Time and Location of next meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Committee is at 2.00 pm in Room 30 on Wednesday 21 October 2015.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 11.49am.

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