



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR THE OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER AND DEPUTY
FIRST MINISTER
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
WEDNESDAY 9 DECEMBER 2015
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr Chris Lyttle (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Andy Allen
Mr Alex Attwood
Ms Megan Fearon
Mr Paul Frew
Mr Gordon Lyons
Mr David McIlveen

Apologies: Mr Mike Nesbitt (Chairperson)
Mr Chris Hazzard
Mr Alex Maskey

In Attendance: Mrs Kathy O'Hanlon (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Christopher McNickle (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Stephen Magee (Clerical Supervisor)
Mr Bill Kinnear (Clerical Officer)

The meeting began in closed session at 2.09 pm.

1. NIPSO Bill

The Committee considered a paper from the Clerk on a potential evidence session in relation to the Bill.

Agreed: The Committee will consider this matter further when an indication of the outcome of discussions with the Northern Ireland Office is known.

Mr Alex Attwood MLA joined the meeting at 2.11pm.

Mr Paul Frew MLA joined the meeting at 2.12pm.

The meeting moved into public session at 2.15 pm.

2. Apologies

Apologies were as recorded above.

3. Chair's Business

Christmas Cards

Agreed: The Committee agreed to issue Christmas cards in e-card format as had been the case in previous years.

The Committee noted the list of current invitations.

4. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The draft minutes of the proceedings of 2 December 2015 were agreed by the Committee.

5. Matters Arising

Transfer of Functions Order

The Deputy Chairperson reminded Members that the Committee had written to statutory Assembly committees for their views on the proposed functions of the new nine department structure.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a briefing from the Department on the proposed changes for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

Historical Institutional Abuse

The Committee noted correspondence from the First Minister and deputy First Minister with regard to the Options Papers relating to the mother and baby homes/Magdalene asylums (laundries) and clerical abuse scoping exercises.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek further legal advice in view of the recent correspondence from the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the First Minister and deputy First Minister to confirm if they will indicate a preferred option in the Options Papers on mother and baby homes/Magdalene asylums (laundries) and clerical abuse; and whether a decision on this matter will be made in this Assembly mandate.

Mr Andy Allen left the meeting at 2.33pm.

Outstanding Correspondence

The Committee noted the list of outstanding correspondence.

6. Correspondence

Good Relations Indicators

The Committee noted a response from the OFMDFM to issues raised during a previous briefing on the Good Relations Indicators; and noted that the report on Social Exclusion and Sport in Northern Ireland had been published.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward a copy of the Executive Summary of the report to the Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure for information.

Delivering Social Change

The Committee noted the Delivering Social Change Stakeholder update for November 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a briefing on the Executive's submission to the UK Government response to the 'List of Issues' as published by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976

The Committee noted a Consultation document from OFMDFM setting out proposals to amend the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976.

Parenting NI

The Committee noted a letter of thanks to the Committee from Parenting NI regarding funding for the Odyssey Parenting Your Teen Programme.

7. Draft Forward Work Programme

Departmental Briefings

The Committee noted that a number of briefings had been provisionally scheduled with Departmental officials on a range of issues.

Public Finance Scrutiny Unit

The Committee noted that a Budget Briefing from the Assembly's Public Finance and Scrutiny Unit will be provisionally scheduled to take place on 13 January to address the key budgetary and economic concerns of the Committee in advance of the anticipated Budget following the Spending Review 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to notify the Clerk of any specific budgetary issues they believe Assembly Research should cover by Friday 11 December.

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

8. European Issues

Officials from the Office of the Northern Ireland Executive in Brussels joined the meeting via video link at 2.40 pm.

Mr Andy Allen returned to the meeting at 2.40pm.

Mr Andrew Elliott, Head of the Northern Ireland Executive Office in Brussels, OFMDFM and Ms Heidi-Beth Hudson, Senior EU Liaison Officer, OFMDFM briefed the Committee on the work of the Office of the Northern Ireland Executive in Brussels. A question and answer session followed.

Mr Andy Allen left the meeting at 3.12pm.

Agreed: The officials agreed to provide further information as requested during the briefing.

Officials from the Office of the Northern Ireland Executive in Brussels left the meeting at 3.43 pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to publish Departmental correspondence on the drawdown of EU Competitive Funds.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward correspondence from the Northern Ireland Assembly Business Trust to the Department for information.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to Belfast City Council and to OFMDFM with regard to the future of Northern Ireland European Regional Forum.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Finance and Personnel to request further information on £9.1 million match funding which was surrendered at the November monitoring round; and further information on the European Fund for Strategic Investment.

Mr Andy Allen returned to the meeting at 3.45pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite the Northern Ireland Assembly's European Affairs Manager to brief the Committee on EU issues.

Mr David McIlveen left the meeting at 3.46pm.

9. November Monitoring

The Committee noted a written briefing from OFMDFM officials on the November Monitoring position.

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 2pm in the Senate Chamber on Wednesday 6 January 2016.

The Deputy Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 3.51 pm.

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