



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR THE OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER AND DEPUTY
FIRST MINISTER
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
WEDNESDAY 6 JANUARY 2016
SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr Mike Nesbitt (Chairperson)
Mr Chris Lyttle (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Andy Allen
Mr Alex Attwood
Ms Megan Fearon
Mr Gordon Lyons
Mr Alex Maskey

Apologies: Mr Chris Hazzard

In Attendance: Mrs Kathy O'Hanlon (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Christopher McNickle (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Stephen Magee (Clerical Supervisor)
Mr Bill Kinnear (Clerical Officer)
Mr Jonathan McMillen (Bill Team – Item 1 only)
Mr Michael Potter (Research Officer – Item 9 only)

The meeting began in closed session at 2.02 pm.

1. NIPSO Bill

Mr Jonathan McMillen joined the meeting at 2.03 pm.

Attorney General for Northern Ireland

The Committee received an update on discussions with officials from the Northern Ireland Office and the Attorney General's office on the way forward in respect of concerns raised by the Attorney General with regard to a matter of competence.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to bring forward an amendment to Clause 50.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the Drafter to provide the necessary amendment.

Agreed: Members agreed that the Clerk Assistant should engage with the Speaker and the Business Office to explore how an additional Bill stage might be accommodated. Staff will provide a schedule setting out the procedures and a timeline for the remaining stages of the Bill for consideration at the meeting on 13 January.

The meeting moved into public session at 2.14 pm.

2. Apologies

Apologies were as recorded above.

3. Chair's Business

Social exclusion and sport in Northern Ireland

The Committee noted a request from Ulster University to brief the Committee on research on social exclusion and sport in Northern Ireland and explore how the recommendations made may be taken forward.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that this would be a matter for the Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure.

Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People

The Committee noted a request from the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People to brief the Committee on ongoing developments in relevant areas of the Commissioner's work.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing from the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People.

4. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The draft minutes of the proceedings of 9 December 2015 were agreed by the Committee.

5. Matters Arising

Historical Institutional Abuse

The Committee noted a response from the First Minister and deputy First Minister with regard to the Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry and the issue of redress.

UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

The Committee noted a response from OFMDFM with regard to the Executive's submission to the UK Government's response to the 'List of Issues' as published by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request an oral briefing on the Executive's submission to the UK Government.

Departments Bill and Transfer of Functions Order

The Committee noted a response from OFMDFM with regard to the Departments Bill and the Transfer of Functions Order.

Outstanding Correspondence

The Committee noted the list of outstanding correspondence.

6. Correspondence

Sign Language Legislation

The Committee noted copy correspondence to the First Minister and deputy First Minister from the Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure regarding support for sign language legislation.

Delivering Social Change

The Committee noted copy correspondence to the Committee for Education from OFMDFM regarding the Delivering Social Change Literacy and Numeracy Signature Programme.

Investigating Links in Achievement and Deprivation

The Committee noted a copy letter to OFMDFM from the Committee for Education regarding Investigating Links in Achievement and Deprivation research. The Committee Clerk confirmed that the response from OFMDFM to the Committee for Education will be copied to the Committee for information.

Child Poverty Strategy

The Committee noted copy letters to OFMDFM from the NI Commissioner for Children and Young People regarding the revised Child Poverty Strategy.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request an update on the revised Child Poverty Strategy from OFMDFM.

Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee regarding its major constitution inquiry.

Investment Strategy

The Committee noted the Investment Strategy Implementation Report April-October 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward a copy of the report to relevant statutory committees.

Gender Equality Strategy

The Committee noted a response from OFMDFM regarding the draft Gender Equality Strategy which included a copy of the draft Strategy.

Include Youth

The Committee noted correspondence from Include Youth providing an Executive Summary of the research which was launched at its Aiming Higher Project 100 event held on 3 December 2015.

Inquiry into Special Education Needs

The Committee noted a response to the Committee for Employment and Learning from OFMDFM regarding the Inquiry into Special Education needs.

Investment Activity Report

The Committee noted the Strategic Investment Board Investment Activity Report for OFMDFM for December 2015.

7. Draft Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted that the briefing from OFMDFM, scheduled for 13 January, will include January monitoring, November monitoring and the 2016-17 Budget position.

The Committee noted the draft forward work programme.

8. Open Government

Witnesses from the Northern Ireland Open Government Network joined the meeting at 2.20 pm.

Dr Jonathan Bell, Northern Ireland Open Government Network Co-ordinator; Mr Colm Burns, Chairperson, Northern Ireland Open Government Network; and Mr David McBurney, Steering Committee Member, Northern Ireland Open Government Network briefed the Committee on the open government initiative and the open government commitments specific to Northern Ireland. A question and answer session followed.

The witnesses left the meeting at 3.42 pm.

Agreed: The witnesses agreed to provide further information as discussed during the briefing.

9. European Issues

A Research Officer from the Northern Ireland Assembly Research and Information Service joined the meeting at 3.42 pm

Mr Michael Potter, Northern Ireland Assembly Research and Information Service, briefed the Committee on the European Commission Work Programme 2016 and initiatives of potential interest to OFMDFM.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to include the identified items as European priorities for 2016; and to recommend in its Legacy Report that the issues are followed up by the appropriate committee(s) in the new Assembly mandate.

Agreed: Staff will prepare a draft of the Committee's 2016 EU priorities for consideration by the Committee.

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 Room 30 on Wednesday 13 January 2016.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 3.51 pm.

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