



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR THE OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER AND DEPUTY
FIRST MINISTER
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
WEDNESDAY 13 JANUARY 2016
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr Mike Nesbitt (Chairperson)
Mr Chris Lyttle (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Andy Allen
Mr Alex Attwood
Ms Megan Fearon
Mr Paul Frew
Mr Chris Hazzard
Mr Gordon Lyons
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)
Mr Damien Martin (Bill Team – Item 1 only)
Mr Alyn Hicks (Bill Team – Item 1 only)
Mr Simon Kelly (Legal Advisor – Item 2 only)
Mr Michael Scholes (Research Officer – Item 3 only)

The meeting began in closed session at 2.03 pm.

1. NIPSO Bill

Mr Damian Martin and Mr Alyn Hicks joined the meeting at 2.04 pm.

The Committee considered the wording of a draft amendment to clause 50 of the Public Services Ombudsman Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the wording of the proposed amendment.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Speaker to: provide a statement in general accordance with the requirements of Standing Order 37A providing background to the proposed amendment; seek advice on the scheduling of an Exceptional Further Consideration Stage; and propose, subject to the Speaker's views on the most appropriate procedural approach, to table an appropriate motion to suspend all or part of Standing Order 37(A) in relation to the Ombudsman Bill.

Mr Alex Maskey MLA joined the meeting at 2.12pm.

Mr Damian Martin and Mr Alyn Hicks left the meeting at 2.15 pm.

2. Legal Advice

Mr Simon Kelly joined the meeting at 2.15pm.

The Committee considered further legal advice relating to the Committees powers to compel witnesses and the release of papers.

Ms Megan Fearon MLA joined the meeting at 2.22pm.

Mr Simon Kelly left the meeting at 2.30pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to reconsider this matter if the papers on the scoping exercises regarding those individuals that fall outside the remit of the Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry are not provided by the end of January 2016.

3. Budget – Assembly Research and Information Service briefing

Mr Michael Scholes joined the meeting at 2.30 pm.

Mr Michael Scholes, Research Officer, Public Finance Scrutiny Unit, briefed the Committee on the key budgetary and economic concerns relevant to the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister. A question and answer session followed.

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

Mr Scholes left the meeting at 2.48 pm.

The meeting moved into public session at 2.48pm.

4. Apologies

There were no apologies.

5. Chair's Business

NSPCC NI

The Committee noted an invitation from the Internet Watch Foundation, in partnership with Childline and the NSPCC, to a presentation and roundtable discussion "Keeping children safe in the online world" which is to be held in Parliament Buildings on Thursday 21 January 2016.

Current Committee Invitations

The Committee noted the list of current invitations.

6. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The draft minutes of the proceedings of 6 January 2016 were agreed by the Committee.

7. Matters Arising

Outstanding Correspondence

The Committee noted the list of outstanding correspondence.

8. Correspondence

Racial Equality Strategy

The Committee noted correspondence from OFMDFM regarding the Racial Equality Strategy 2015-2025.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request an oral briefing from OFMDFM officials on the Racial Equality Strategy.

Shared Education Bill

The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Education regarding its Report on the Shared Education Bill.

Strategic Investment Board

The Committee noted copy correspondence from the Committee for Finance and Personnel to the Strategic Investment Board regarding a proposed evidence session with that Committee.

9. Draft Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted the draft forward work programme.

Mr Alex Maskey MLA left the meeting at 2.52pm.

10. Restructuring of OFMDFM – Departmental Briefing

Departmental officials joined the meeting at 2.52 pm.

Dr Mark Browne, Director of Finance, Strategic Planning & Social Change; Mr Henry Johnston, Acting Deputy Secretary, Equality & Reform Directorate; and Mr Tony Canavan, Head of Institutional Review Division, OFMDFM, briefed the Committee on the restructuring of OFMDFM. A question and answer session followed.

Mr Chris Lyttle MLA declared an interest as a Member of the Social Investment Fund East Belfast Area Steering Group.

Mr Chris Hazzard MLA joined the meeting at 3.11pm.

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

The witnesses left the meeting at 3.44 pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that Mr Lyttle should bring forward a proposal regarding the Committee's consideration of the forthcoming Transfer of Functions Order for consideration at the next Committee meeting.

11. November 2015 Monitoring; January 2016 Monitoring; and Budget 2016-17 – Departmental Briefing

Departmental officials joined the meeting at 3.46 pm.

Dr Mark Browne, Director of Finance, Strategic Planning & Social Change; Mr Stephen Boyd, Director of Finance; and Ms Sinead McCartan, OFMDFM, briefed the Committee on the November monitoring position, the January Monitoring position and the 2016-17 Budget position. A question and answer session followed.

Mr Paul Frew MLA left the meeting at 4.22 pm.

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

The witnesses left the meeting at 4.43 pm.

12. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

13. Date, Time and Location of next meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Committee is at 2pm in Room 30 on Wednesday 20 January 2016.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 4.43 pm.

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