



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR THE OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER AND DEPUTY
FIRST MINISTER
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
WEDNESDAY 16 MARCH 2016
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr Chris Lyttle (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Andy Allen
Mr Paul Frew
Mr Gordon Lyons
Mr Alex Maskey
Mr David McIlveen

Apologies: Mr Mike Nesbitt (Chairperson)
Mr Alex Attwood
Ms Megan Fearon
Mr Stephen Moutray

In Attendance: Mrs Kathy O'Hanlon (Assembly Clerk)
Miss Karen Jardine (Senior Assistant Clerk)
Mr Stephen Magee (Clerical Supervisor)

The meeting began in public session at 2.12 pm.

1. Apologies

Apologies are noted above.

2. Chair's Business

Public Services Ombudsman Act (NI) 2016

The Committee noted a letter from the Northern Ireland Ombudsman, Dr Tom Frawley CBE, regarding the work of the Committee and of Assembly staff on the Public Services Ombudsman Act (NI) 2016.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to circulate his correspondence to other relevant Assembly Staff; and to thank Dr Frawley for his contribution to the development of the legislation.

Proposed Establishment of European Committee

The Committee considered correspondence from the Chairpersons' Liaison Group seeking the Committee's views on the establishment of a European Committee or a sub-committee of the Committee for the Executive Office in the new mandate.

Mr Alex Maskey joined the meeting at 2.14pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to advise the Chairpersons' Liaison Group of its view that the establishment of a European Committee in the next mandate merits consideration.

Collaboration NI

The Committee noted an invitation from Collaboration NI to a conference which is to be held at the Lough Neagh Discovery Centre on Thursday 19 May 2016.

Current Committee Invitations

The Committee noted the list of current invitations.

Mr McIlveen left the meeting at 2.15pm.

End of mandate arrangements

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the draft minutes of proceedings of 16 March 2016 will be agreed by the Deputy Chairperson on behalf of the Committee.

The Chairperson that correspondence received between the final meeting of the Committee and the end of the mandate will be forwarded to Members for information.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that a standard response will be issued to correspondents advising that the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister has no further meetings scheduled before the Assembly dissolves on 29 March 2016, but that the correspondence has been forwarded to members of the Committee for information.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to delegate authority to the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson to submit views on releasing or withholding information in any non-routine/contentious Freedom of Information requests received before the end of the mandate.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the incoming Committee for the Executive Office should be permitted access to the Committee papers from this mandate should it request so in the new mandate.

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The draft minutes of the proceedings of 9 March 2016 were agreed by the Committee.

4. Matters Arising

Outstanding Correspondence

The Committee noted the list of outstanding correspondence.

5. Correspondence

House of Commons Joint Committee on Human Rights

The Committee noted correspondence from The Speaker to the Chair of the Joint Committee on Human Rights on the UK Government's consultation on its proposal to repeal the Human Rights Act, and introduce a UK Bill of Rights.

Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland

The Committee noted correspondence from OFMDFM on the appointment of a new Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the new Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland, Mr Eddie Lynch to congratulate him on his appointment.

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

The Committee noted correspondence from a member of the public regarding an issue of philosophical belief and the role of the Equality Commission.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to OFMDFM and ask that officials respond directly to the member of the public.

Together: Building a United Community Summer Camps

The Committee noted correspondence from OFMDFM regarding the opening of the T:BUC summer camps programme for 2016/17.

6. Statutory Rule 2016 No 143: The Salaries (Public Services Ombudsman) Order (NI) 2016

The Committee considered The Salaries (Public Services Ombudsman) Order (NI) 2016. The Committee noted that, while the Examiner of Statutory Rules had still to report formally on the Rule, he had indicated that he has no comments to make by way of technical scrutiny.

Agreed: That the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister has considered The Salaries (Public Services Ombudsman) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016 and has no objection to the Rule.

7. SL1 – Draft Sex Discrimination Order 1976 (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2016

Departmental officials joined the meeting at 2.30pm.

Martina Hanna and David McGowan, OFMDFM, briefed the Committee on the proposals for a statutory rule to amend the Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976 to address concerns raised by the EU Commission.

The briefing was recorded by Hansard.

Agreed: The Committee was content with the proposal for the Rule.

8. Good Relations: Regenerate

Representatives from Regenerate joined the meeting at 2.30pm.

Mr John Stevenson, Committee Member, and Mr Keith McCann, Strategic Development Worker, Regenerate, briefed the Committee on work on a flags protocol in the Portadown area.

A question and answer session followed.

Representatives from Regenerate left the meeting at 3.32pm

Mr Allen left the meeting at 3.32pm. The Committee lost its decision-making quorum. In the absence of a decision-making quorum proceedings continued in line with Standing Order 49(5).

9. Good Relations: Queens University Belfast

Researchers from Queens University Belfast joined the meeting at 3.33pm

Dr Paul Nolan, Research Director, and Dr Dominic Bryan, Research Director, Institute of Irish Studies, Queens University Belfast, briefed the Committee on a research paper 'Flags: Towards a New Understanding'.

A question and answer session followed.

Mr Allen returned to the meeting at 3.42pm.

The Chairperson left the meeting at 3.43pm. Mr Paul Frew took the Chair. The Committee lost its decision-making quorum. In the absence of a decision-making quorum proceedings continued in line with Standing Order 49(5).

The Chairperson returned to the meeting at 3.45pm and resumed the Chair.

Mr Allen left the meeting at 3.56pm. The Committee lost its decision-making quorum. In the absence of a decision-making quorum proceedings continued in line with Standing Order 49(5).

The witnesses left the meeting at 4.52pm.

10. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 4.53pm.

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