



**Northern Ireland  
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR THE OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER AND DEPUTY  
FIRST MINISTER  
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS  
WEDNESDAY 22 APRIL 2015  
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr Mike Nesbitt (Chairperson)  
Mr Chris Lyttle (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Alex Maskey  
Ms Bronwyn McGahan  
Mr David McIlveen  
Mr Jimmy Spratt

Apologies: Mr Alex Attwood  
Mrs Brenda Hale  
Mr Michael Copeland  
Ms Megan Fearon  
Mr Stephen Moutray

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

*The meeting began in public session at 2.09pm.*

**1. Apologies**

Apologies were noted as above.

**2. Chairperson's Business**

Ballynafeigh Community Development Association

The Committee noted a request from Ballynafeigh Community Development Association (BCDA) to meet with the Committee regarding funding cuts.

*Agreed:* The Committee noted that the Chair and other Members had met previously with BCDA regarding funding in February 2015, and agreed to forward the letter to the Department for comment.

### NIACRO

The Committee noted an invitation from Alban Maginness MLA on behalf of NIACRO to 1<sup>st</sup> Justice Series Seminar to be held in Parliament Buildings on Wednesday 13 May 2015.

### Committee for Finance and Personnel Report on Sickness Absence in the Public Sector

Members noted the debate on the Committee for Finance and Personnel Report on Sickness Absence in the Public Sector held on Tuesday 21 April.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to ask the Department for a written briefing on its performance regarding sickness absence for 2014/15 as soon as the figures are available.

### Committee Invitations

The Committee noted the list of current invitations.

### **3. Draft Minutes of the meetings held on 15 April 2015**

*Agreed:* The draft minutes of the proceedings of 15 April 2015 were agreed by the Committee.

### **4. Matters Arising**

#### NIPSO

Members noted that the Committee's Public Services Ombudsperson Bill was introduced to the Assembly on Monday 20 April, and that Second Stage has been scheduled provisionally for Monday 11 May.

Members noted that the Ombudsman and Commissioner for Complaints (Amendment) Bill is scheduled for introduction on Monday 27 April; and that the motion for Accelerated Passage and the Second Stage of the Bill are also provisionally scheduled for plenary business on Monday 11 May.

#### Children in Northern Ireland

Members noted that a meeting with Children in Northern Ireland to discuss the policy implications in respect of children and young people with regard to the re-organisations of departments was scheduled for Tuesday 12 May at 11am.

## List of Outstanding Correspondence

The Committee noted the list of outstanding correspondence.

## **5. Correspondence**

### OFMDFM Urban Villages

The Committee noted a response from OFMDFM regarding the Urban Villages Programme which is part of Together: Building a United Community.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to include the correspondence in the papers for the Inquiry Report into Building a United Community.

### OFMDFM Maze Long Kesh Development Corporation

The Committee noted a response from OFMDFM regarding the Maze Long Kesh Development Corporation

### Written Ministerial Statement

The Committee noted a Written Ministerial Statement from the First Minister and deputy First Minister on an Update on Progress with the Investment Strategy 2011-21 and Information on the Private Finance Initiative (PFI).

### Committee for Finance and Personnel

The Committee noted copy correspondence from the Committee for Finance and Personnel inviting the Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service to brief that Committee on the work of the Public Sector Workforce Restructuring Steering Group.

### OFMDFM Summer Camp Programme 2015 Pilot

The Committee noted correspondence from OFMDFM regarding the launch of the Summer Camp Programme 2015.

### OFMDFM Race and Ethnicity in Northern Ireland

The Committee noted the response from OFMDFM to the request for the evidence base paper commissioned to inform the development of the Racial Equality Strategy which advised that the paper will be disclosed when finalised.

## **6. Draft Forward Work Programme**

The Committee considered the Forward Work Programme up to July 2015, and the Chairperson reminded Members that the next meeting was scheduled for Monday 27 April at 12.15pm.

## **7. Children's Services Co-operation Bill - Evidence from representatives from the disability and health sector**

The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety with regard to his views on the Bill, and indicating his intention to seek 'substantial amendments' to clause 4.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to OFMDFM and Steven Agnew in advance of the evidence sessions scheduled for the next meeting. The Committee also agreed to forward the correspondence to the Committee for Health, Social Services and Public Safety for information.

*Witnesses from the disability and health sector joined the meeting at 2.16 pm.*

Ms Maria Treacy, carer of a child with Acquired Brain Injury; Ms Rosaleen Dempsey Royal National Institute for Blind People; and Ms Sandra Allen, College of Occupational Therapists NI appeared before the Committee for discussion and questions on the Children's Services Co-operation Bill.

The evidence session was recorded by Hansard.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to forward the Official Report of the evidence session to the Committee for Employment and Learning to inform their ongoing Inquiry which focuses on post special educational need provision in education, employment and training for those with learning disabilities.

*The witnesses left the meeting at 3pm.*

*Ms McGahan left the meeting at 3pm.*

## **8. Children's Services Co-operation Bill - Evidence from representatives from the children's and voluntary sector**

*Witnesses representing the children's and voluntary sector joined the meeting at 3.01pm.*

Ms Ellen Finlay, Children in Northern Ireland; Mr Colin Reid, NSPCC; Ms Lisa McElherron, NICVA; and Mr Alan Herron, Playboard NI appeared before the Committee for discussion and questions on the Children's Services Co-operation Bill. The evidence session was recorded by Hansard.

*Ms McGahan returned to the meeting at 3.04pm.*

*The witnesses left the meeting at 3.31pm.*

#### **9. Children's Services Co-operation Bill - Evidence from Children's Law Centre**

*Witnesses from the Children's Law Centre joined the meeting at 3.32pm.*

Ms Natalie Whelehan and Ms Rachel Hogan from the Children's Law Centre appeared before the Committee for discussion and questions on the Children's Services Co-operation Bill. The evidence session was recorded by Hansard.

*The witnesses left the meeting at 3.53pm.*

#### **10. Children's Services Co-operation Bill - Evidence from Northern Ireland Local Government Association**

*Witnesses from NILGA joined the meeting at 3.54pm.*

Ms Karen Smyth, Head of Policy, NILGA; Councillor Sean McPeake, Vice-President, NILGA; and Elaine Black, Children and Young People's Officer, Belfast City Council, appeared before the Committee for discussion and questions on the Children's Services Co-operation Bill. The evidence session was recorded by Hansard.

*The witnesses left the meeting at 4.24pm.*

#### **11. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

#### **12. Date, Time and Location of next meeting**

The next meeting will be held at 12.15 pm in Room 30 on Monday 27 April 2015.

*The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 4.25 pm.*

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