



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Communities

Minutes of Proceedings

Thursday 23 October 2025

Meeting Location: Room 29, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Mr Colm Gildernew (Chairperson) MLA
Ms Nicola Brogan (Deputy Chairperson) MLA
Mr Andy Allen MBE MLA
Mrs Pam Cameron MLA
Mr Maolíosa McHugh MLA
Mr Mark Durkan MLA (via Zoom)
Mrs Sian Mulholland MLA

In Attendance:

Mrs Emer Boyle (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Sean McCann (Assistant Clerk)
Mrs Victoria Bourqoin (Assistant Clerk)
Mr Chris McAfee (Clerical Supervisor)
Ms Katie Egan (Clerical Officer)
Ms Patrice Morris (Senior Assistant Clerk)

The meeting commenced in public session at 10.01a.m.



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1. Declarations of Interest

The following interests were declared:

Pam Cameron – former Junior Minister with sight of Executive and Cross Departmental policy, strategy and legislation.

Maolfosa McHugh – Chairman of pre-school Naíscoil na Deirge, Treasurer Conrad na Gaeilge na Deirge

Sian Mulholland – family member is on board of governors of a gaescoil and family members attend gaescoils

2. Apologies

Mrs Kellie Armstrong MLA

Mr Maurice Bradley MLA

3. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson informed Members that

4. Draft Minutes

The Chairperson informed Members that they had been provided with a copy of draft minutes from the meeting on 16 October 2025.

Agreed: That the minutes are agreed as drafted.

5. Matters Arising

The Committee noted the following items:

Source	Subject Matter
Department for Infrastructure	Disability and Work Strategy



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6. Correspondence

The Committee noted the following items:

The Committee further noted the following items of tabled correspondence:

7. Briefing by Association of British Insurers on the Pensions Bill LCM

The Chairperson welcomed the following representative to the meeting:

Justin Wray, Interim Assistant Director, Long Term Savings, Association of British Insurers

A question-and-answer session followed the briefing and the main areas of discussion were:

8. Consideration of Committee End of Session Report 2024/25

The Chairperson informed Members that they had been provided with, for consideration.

Agreed: That the report is published.

9. Briefing by Irish Language Strategy Co-Design Group on the Irish Language Strategy

The Chairperson informed Member that Departmental officials were asked to attend today's meeting to brief on this issue and advised that they were unavailable.

Agreed: That a letter is sent to the Department to ask when officials will be able to brief on this issue.

The Chairperson welcomed the following representatives to the meeting:

Liam Ó Flannagáin, Coiste Forbartha Charn Tóchair



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Maria Thomasson, CEO, Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta

Ciarán Mac Giolla Bhéin, Language Planning Coordinator, Glór na Móna

Dr Pádraig Ó Tiarnaigh (Co-Chair, CDG), Conradh na Gaeilge

A question-and-answer session followed the briefing and the main areas of discussion were:

- Blockages in preventing the strategy's adoption
- The co-design process and Conrad na Gaeilge's understanding of its role in the process
- The need to take on board the work of the co-design group and its recommendations
- The benefits of an Irish Language Strategy for Irish medium education
- The importance of the strategy to the overall development of the Irish language
- The impact on the community of not adopting the Irish Language Strategy
- The group's relationship with the Department
- Costings for the funding of the strategy

Agreed: That a letter is sent to the Department to ask for the following:

- A timeline for publication of the Irish Language Strategy
- The membership of the Cross Departmental Working Group and the outcomes of its work to date
- The date of the establishment of the Cross Departmental Working Group as there were different dates being quoted
- A list of strategies that will have overarching targets and those that will not
- Information on the Department's policy on dealing with co-design groups

Agreed: That a visit to and the feasibility of holding a Committee meeting in Charn Tóchair is explored for a future meeting.



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The Chairperson informed Members that, as the next agenda item was a briefing from Assembly Legal Services, he proposed, and members agreed, that the meeting go into closed session.

The meeting went into closed session at 12.05p.m.

10. Briefing by Assembly Legal Services on the potential use of Section 44 powers and freedom of information issues

The Chairperson welcomed the following Assembly official to the meeting:

Simon Kelly, Legal Adviser, Assembly Legal Services

The meeting resumed in open session at 12.22p.m.

Agreed: That a letter is sent to the Department to ask for a reply in relation to the NI Football Fund which has now passed the agreed deadline of 10 working days for a response. The Committee would like to know what the delay has been in responding, when a response can be expected and to remind the Department of its obligations under Section 11 of the Functioning of Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 2021.

11. Forward Work Programme

The Chairperson informed Members that there would be a Ministerial briefing at the meeting on 23 October and asked if Members had any comments or topics that they wished to discuss with the Minister in order to notify his office of these issues in advance.

The Committee noted a copy of the forward work programme.

12. Any other business

There was no other business.

13. Date, time and location of the next meeting

The next meeting is at 10.00 a.m. on Thursday 23 October 2025, in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.



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The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12.23p.m.

Colm Gildernew MLA

Chairperson, Committee for Communities