



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for The Executive Office

Minutes of Proceedings

Wednesday 28 May 2025

Meeting Location: Room 30, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Ms Paula Bradshaw MLA (Chairperson)

Mr Stewart Dickson MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Mr Timothy Gaston MLA

Mr Harry Harvey MLA

Mr Brian Kingston MLA

Sinéad McLaughlin MLA

Ms Carál Ní Chuilín MLA

Online:

Ms Áine Murphy MLA

Apologies:

Ms Claire Sugden MLA

In Attendance: Mr Nick Mitford (Assembly Clerk)
Ms Sarah-Anne McKinley (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Neil Porter (Clerical Supervisor)
Ms Andrienne Magee (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced at 2.02pm in public session.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Declarations of Interest

Brian Kingston declared an interest under item 9.4 under correspondence as a Member of the Committee for Communities.

3. Chairperson's Business

There were no items of Chairperson's business.

4. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 21 May 2025.

5. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

6. Preparation for Truth Recovery and Redress Bill: Policy Briefing from Departmental Officials – Oral Briefing

Agreed: The Committee agreed to move into closed session for the next item of business.

The meeting went into closed session at 2.03pm.

The witnesses joined the meeting at 2.03pm.

Stewart Dickson left the meeting at 2.09pm and returned at 2.15pm.

Carál Ní Chuilín left the meeting at 2.12pm and returned at 2.17pm.

The witnesses left the meeting at 3.20pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to take a short comfort break and suspend the meeting.

The meeting was suspended at 3.20pm.

The meeting resumed at 3.28pm in open session.

7. EU Matters: Departmental Officials – Oral Briefing

The witnesses joined the meeting in person and online at 3.28pm.

Members received a briefing from:

- Tom Reid, Deputy Secretary Intergovernmental & International Relations
- Aodhán Connolly - Director, Office of the Northern Ireland Executive Brussels
- Stephen Hamilton - Shields, Assistant Director, Post EU Exit Coordination Group

The witnesses provided an update on EU Matters.

The oral briefing session was followed by a question and answer session.

Carál Ní Chuilín left the meeting at 3.49pm and returned at 3.53pm.

The Chairperson thanked the witnesses for their attendance.

The witnesses left the meeting at 4.18pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request further information on the Professional Qualifications Common Framework, specifically the reasons for the delay in its finalisation and an updated timeline for its completion.

Agreed: The Committee also agreed to write to the Department to request an update on the thirty-two Common Frameworks that apply to Northern Ireland, specifically when they will be approved and fully finalised.

8. The Strategic Investment Board – Retention and Disposal Schedule

The Committee considered the most recent Retention and Disposal Schedule for the Strategic Investment Board, which is required to be laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly under section 8(2) of the Public Records Act (Northern Ireland) 1923, and in accordance with the Rules of the Disposal of Documents Order 1925, by the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Strategic Investment Board to ask whether commercially sensitive information is included in the schedule, and if so whether it is retained or disposed.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider the schedule at next week's meeting, following an update on the Committee's query regarding the Retention and Disposal Schedule for the Strategic Investment Board.

9. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted the summary of Committee correspondence.
- ii. The Committee noted a response from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive to the Committee's correspondence of 14 April requesting information in relation to trauma informed practice and HIA.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department for Communities to seek clarification on the Common Selection Scheme (CSS), specifically regarding the eligibility of HIA victims and survivors for Complex Needs points.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Minister for Communities to ask as part of the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls strategy, whether victims and survivors of domestic violence are eligible for Complex Needs points.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to Survivors Together to provide further information in relation to the difficulties faced by victims and survivors of HIA when applying for social housing.

- iii. The Committee noted a response from Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council to the Committee's correspondence from the 8 May requesting details of the allocation of Local Change Fund in relation to Ending Violence Against Women and Girls.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider further action when responses have been received from all local council areas.

- iv. The Committee noted a response from the Committee for the Economy to the Committee's correspondence from the 26 March to ascertain whether their Department has a role delivering the Ending Violence against Women and Girls Strategy; and if so, how much funding was bid for and/or earmarked by their Department and for what activities for the Ending Violence against Women and Girls Strategy, given it has been identified as a priority in the Programme for Government.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider further action when responses have been received from all Statutory Committees.

- v. The Committee noted a response from the Scottish Deputy First Minister, regarding the Committee's request for information on the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry and Redress Scheme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to include the response as part of the Committee's prep work for the Truth Recovery and Redress Bill.

- vi. The Committee noted a response from Victims and Survivors Services (VSS) to the Committee's correspondence of the 16 May requesting information

on a Communication Strategy regarding the Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note and consider further when other replies have been received from other support service groups.

- vii. The Committee noted a response from the Department to the Committee's correspondence of the 31 March requesting information on the TEO Budget Allocation 2025/ 2026 and the Local Change Fund.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request that they keep the Committee updated after the Shared Learning Event for 2025 and if the Committee can be sent a copy of the report upon completion.

- viii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance regarding the 2025-2026 June Monitoring Commissioning.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to ask that they send a copy of the completed return for TEO once it has been sent to Department of Finance.

- ix. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Communities regarding an evidence session on the Sign Language Bill and a copy Hansard has been sent to help inform the Committee's Inquiry relating to Gaps in Equality Legislation.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to add the relevant section from the Hansard which encourages understanding between disabled and non-disabled people, to the Inquiry report under the section on disability, and to include the Hansard extract in the Appendices of the report.

- x. The Committee noted a response from the Department to the Committee's correspondence requesting information on TEO Budget 2025-2026.
- xi. The Committee noted correspondence from Department on 2026 Main Estimates and Budget Bill.
- xii. The Committee noted a response from the Department to the Committee's correspondence of the 14 April requesting information on the Civil Contingences Group NI.

- xiii. The Committee noted a response from the Department to the Committee's correspondence of the 11 April requesting information on the handling of complaints received by TEO in relation to the Truth Recovery process.
- xiv. The Committee noted correspondence from Department regarding the Maze Long Kesh Development Corporation Annual Report and Accounts 2023/24
- xv. The Committee noted an invitation from the Financial Conduct Authority lunchtime networking reception in Belfast to celebrate the FCA's new 5-year strategy on Thursday 12 June 2025. Any Member wishing to attend can register in the link provided in the invitation.

10. Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered the draft forward work programme.

The Committee noted an update from the Assistant Clerk in relation to next week's meeting which will start at the later time of 3.45pm due to the Committee's second training session with the Safeguarding Board as part of the Committee's preparation for the Truth Recovery and Redress Bill.

The Committee noted an update from the Assistant Clerk regarding a confirmed RalSe paper and oral briefing on a trauma informed approach in the context of victims and survivors in jurisdictions of best practice. This will take place at the meeting on the 11 June.

The Committee also noted an update from the Assistant Clerk in relation a the introductory briefing with the new Commissioner for Older People which will take place at the meeting on the 18 June. Lastly the Committee noted an update regarding a confirmed oral briefing from the Department on PfG and the PfG Delivery Unit at the meeting on the 2 July.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to proceed with the remaining briefings as set out in the forward work programme.

11. Any Other Business

None

12. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 4 June at 3.45pm in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 4.38pm.

Paula Bradshaw MLA

Chairperson, Committee for the Executive Office

Wednesday 28 May 2025