



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of Proceedings

27 November 2025

Meeting Location: Room 30

Present:

Ciara Ferguson MLA (Chairperson)

David Brooks MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Cathal Boylan MLA

Declan Kearney MLA

Peter Martin MLA

Eóin Tennyson MLA

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Kate Nicholl MLA

Apologies:

Steve Aiken MLA

In Attendance:

Chris Dickison, Senior Assistant Clerk

Sean McCann, Assistant Clerk

Carla Campbell, Clerical Supervisor

Shelley Garner, Clerical Officer

In Attendance by Video or Teleconference:

Oliver Bellew, Assistant Clerk

Damien Brown, Clerical Officer

The meeting commenced at 10:06a.m. in public session.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Declaration of Interests

None.

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2025.

4. Matters Arising

None.

5. Note of Informal Meeting

The Committee considered a note of its informal meeting held on 20 November 2025.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the First and deputy First Minister to ask for more information about the product being developed by the Executive Office (TEO) - following the Committee's review of its operations - and to ask for an indication of when details of the final product will be shared with the Committee.

Agreed: Having considered a response from the Cabinet Office – as part of the same review into the Committee's operations – regarding the provision of Explanatory Memoranda, and reserved/excepted and devolved policy areas, the Committee agreed to share it with the First and deputy First Minister for comment and to ask for confirmation that any new product developed by TEO will be in line with the response from the Cabinet Office.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to revise its operational procedures so that if a Department suggests it has not been engaged on an Explanatory Memorandum or cannot engage with a UK Government department on an EU act, the Secretariat will notify Cabinet Office and ask that the matter be investigated.

Agreed: In relation to Standing Order 59A on the Committee and the provisions for substitute members, the Committee agreed that it is content with the current arrangements and that the Committee's agreed internal guidance on the process for nominating a substitute member is fit for purpose.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it intends to visit Westminster before the end of this financial year and that the Secretariat should explore Members' availability in February/March 2026 and prepare a suggested itinerary for Committee approval.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it intends to visit Brussels before the end of this financial year and that the Secretariat should explore Members' availability in February/March 2026 and prepare a suggested itinerary for Committee approval.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Secretariat should explore options for engaging with the Irish Government around its Presidency of the Council of the EU.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek further information on the Scottish Parliament's use of a standing panel of experts to advise committees.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the Office of the Northern Ireland Executive (ONIEB) in Brussels to present biannually to the Committee on relevant proposed EU acts progressing through the legislative system, and the ONIEB's engagement in Brussels on these.

6. Response to the Independent Review of the Windsor Framework and Lords Northern Ireland Scrutiny Committee recommendations

Agreed: The Committee agreed its responses to relevant recommendations in both the Independent Review of the Windsor Framework and the House of Lords Northern Ireland Scrutiny Committee's report entitled "Northern Ireland after Brexit: Strengthening Northern Ireland's voice in the context of the Windsor Framework".

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and the Chairperson of the House of Lords Northern Ireland Scrutiny Committee to share the Committee's responses. The Committee further agreed that the correspondence would note that there were a range of views expressed by Members during discussions on the recommendations.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to share a copy of the correspondence with:

- Rt Hon Lord Murphy of Torfaen, Independent Reviewer of the Windsor Framework;
- The First and deputy First Minister;
- The Office of the Northern Ireland Executive in Brussels;
- The Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly;
- The Chairperson of the Committee for the Economy;
- The Chairperson of the House of Commons Northern Ireland Affairs Committee; and
- All MLAs.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to publish the correspondence on the Committee's webpage.

Kate Nicholl joined the meeting by video at 10.11a.m.

7. Committee Notifications – December 2025

The Committee considered possible options for pausing notifications from the Cabinet Office over the Christmas recess period.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that notifications be paused on 18 December 2025 and 25 December 2025.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to delay notifications due on 1 January 2026 to 2 January 2026 and, if the Committee is required to meet on 8 January 2026, for the Secretariat to issue the relevant meeting papers to Members on 6 January 2026.

Members noted that Cabinet Office would be advised accordingly.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to inform the Business Office, Legal Services, the Executive Office of its decision.

8. Correspondence

- 8.1 The Committee noted a response from the UK Government regarding its consideration of recommendations in the Murphy Report.
- 8.2 The Committee noted a UK Government Explanatory Memorandum on the European Commission Work Programme 2026.
- 8.3 The Committee noted correspondence from the Executive Office in relation to current proposed EU legislation relevant to Northern Ireland.
- 8.4 The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for the Economy regarding GB and EU type approval schemes for new cars.
- 8.5 The Committee noted a status update from RaiSe on COM/2023/217 Proposal for a Regulation on detergents and surfactants.

- 8.6 The Committee noted a status update from RalSe on COM/2025/652 as regards certain obligations of operators and traders.
- 8.7 The Committee noted a status update from RalSe on COM/2023/411 Proposal for a Regulation on plants obtained by certain new genomic techniques and their food and feed.
- 8.8 The Committee noted a status update from RalSe on COM/2023/770 Proposal for a on the protection of animals during transport and related operations.
- 8.9 The Committee noted a status update from RalSe on COM/2024/577 Proposal for a Regulation as regards the strengthening of the position of farmers in the food supply chain.
- 8.10 The Committee noted a status update from RalSe on COM/2023/192 Proposal for a Directive on the Union code relating to medicinal products for human use and COM/2023/193 Proposal for a Regulation laying down Union procedures for the authorisation and supervision of medicinal products for human use and establishing rules governing the European Medicines Agency.
- 8.11 The Committee noted an updated briefing paper from RalSe on the European Commission Work Programme for 2026.
- 8.12 The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from the House of Lords Northern Ireland Scrutiny Committee (NISC) to the UK Government regarding the Independent Monitoring Panel's Report on the first reporting period for the UK Internal Market Guarantee (1 January - 30 June 2025).
- 8.13 The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from the UK Government to the NISC regarding Regulation (EU) 2024/1860 as regards a gradual roll-out of Eudamed, the obligation to inform in case of interruption or discontinuation of supply, and transitional provisions for certain in vitro diagnostic medical devices.
- 8.14 The Committee noted a response from the UK Government to the NISC regarding COM/2025/531 Proposal for a Regulation as regards simplification of certain requirements and procedures for chemical products.

- 8.15 The Committee noted a response from the UK Government to the NISC regarding COM/2025/526 Proposal for a Regulation as regards dates of application and transitional provisions.
- 8.16 The Committee noted a response from the UK Government to the NISC regarding a Delegated Regulation on household tumble dryers.
- 8.17 The Committee noted a response from the UK Government to the NISC regarding a Delegated Regulation as regards the requirements for entry into the Union of certain dairy products, certain food additives derived from animals, collagen casings, minced meat, meat preparations, mechanically separated meat and composite products containing gelatine capsules.
- 8.18 The Committee noted an invitation from the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission to its Annual Human Rights Statement 2025 launch.

9. Chairperson's Business

None.

10. Any Other Business

A Member referred to issues relating to the supply of veterinary medicines from Great Britain to Northern Ireland, and the assurances that had been given by the UK Government in relation to arrangements to mitigate impact once the grace period comes to an end on 31 December 2025.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider the matter at its next meeting when further correspondence in relation to the issue would also be considered. In the meantime, the Committee agreed that the further correspondence should be circulated now for Members' information.

11. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 11 December 2025 at 10.00am in Room 30.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:36a.m.

Ciara Ferguson MLA

Chairperson, Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny Committee