



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

WEDNESDAY 21 OCTOBER 2020

Room 30, Parliament Buildings, Belfast

Present: Mr Colin McGrath MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Doug Beattie MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Ms Martina Anderson MLA
Mr Trevor Lunn MLA*
Mr George Robinson MLA*
Mr Pat Sheehan MLA*
Ms Emma Sheerin MLA
Mr Christopher Stalford MLA

Apologies: Mr Trevor Clarke MLA

In Attendance: Ms Marie Austin (Assembly Clerk)
Ms Carla Campbell (Assistant Clerk)
Ms Sarah-Anne McKinley (Assistant Clerk)
Ms Andrienne Magee (Clerical Officer)

* Members who attended the meeting via video conferencing.

The meeting commenced at 2:03pm in closed session.

1. Legal Advice on the impact of the United Kingdom Internal Market Bill on the legislative competence of the Northern Ireland Assembly

The Committee considered legal advice it had commissioned on the impact of the United Kingdom Internal Market Bill on the legislative competence of the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the Legal Adviser to attend the Committee meeting on 11 November 2020, to brief Members on the legal advice.

The meeting moved into public session at 2:07pm

2. Apologies

As above.

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 14 October 2020.

4. Matters Arising

Members noted information provided by the Assembly EU Affairs Manager on Westminster Bills for which legislative consent was or will be sought from the Northern Ireland Assembly, and the purpose and timing of the Health and Social Care (Cross Border) Healthcare 2020 Bill.

The Committee agreed to move forward Agenda Item 10.

5. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted correspondence from the Executive Office on a number of Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations.
- ii. The Committee noted a response from the Minister of Finance to the Committee for Finance providing information on EU funding that has not yet been received.
- iii. The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from the Committee for Finance to the First Minister and deputy First Minister on the provision of financial support for travel agents.
- iv. The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from the Committee for the Economy to the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding the impact of the new COVID-19 restrictions on a range of sectors.
- v. The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from the Committee for the Economy to the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding financial support for those who have to self-isolate because of COVID-19.

- vi. The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from the Committee for the Economy to the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding issues raised by the Northern Ireland Hotels Federation and the Northern Ireland Tourism Alliance in relation to COVID-19 and the impact on the tourism and hospitality sectors.

The Committee agreed to move forward Agenda Item 11.

6. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson informed Members that he had been contacted by Carnegie Trust UK in relation to the development of a Programme for Government.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a written briefing from Carnegie Trust UK on interaction and engagement with the public in relation to the development of a Programme for Government.

The Committee agreed to move forward Agenda Item 7.

7. SL1 – The Departments (Transfer of Functions) Order (Northern Ireland) 2020

The Committee considered a proposal by the First Minister and deputy First Minister to make a Statutory Rule to transfer the following functions:

- those under section 19 of the Employment Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 (relating to gender pay disparity information) from the Executive Office to the Department for Communities;
- those under the Reservoirs Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 (relating to the regulation of certain reservoirs) from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to the Department for Infrastructure; and
- those under Article 23 of the Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 (relating to the proceedings of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal on a claim of unlawful discrimination under Chapter 1 of Part 3 of the Order and to the making of a claim) from the Department of Education to the Department of Justice (Article 5).

The Committee noted that the Statutory Rule would be subject to the affirmative procedure.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the proposal to make the Statutory Rule.

8. Brexit – Oral Evidence Session with Departmental Officials on Brexit Issues

The following officials joined the meeting remotely via StarLeaf at 2:20pm:

Andrew McCormick, Director General, International Relations, The Executive Office.

Mr Tom Reid, Director, EU Relations, The Executive Office.

The representatives briefed Members on Brexit issues.

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

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request details of the confirmation received by the Executive Office that the Northern Ireland Executive will be represented on the Joint Consultative Working Group.

The meeting was suspended at 3:04pm.

The meeting resumed at 3:09pm.

9. Allocation of Funding – Community Relations Council

The following representatives from the Community Relations Council joined the meeting remotely via StarLeaf at 3:10pm:

Jacqueline Irwin, Chief Executive, Community Relations Council

Paul Jordan, Director of Funding, Community Relations Council.

The representatives briefed the Committee on the allocation of funding under the Community Relations Council's funding programmes.

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

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

Officials agreed to provide contact details for circulation to Members.

The Chairperson thanked representatives for their attendance.

10. Report from the Interim Advocate for Victims/Survivors of Historical Institutional Abuse – Written Briefing

The Committee considered a report from the Interim Advocate for Victims/Survivors of Historical Institutional Abuse on progress made during his time in office.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the Executive Office: to provide detailed reasons why the Historical Institutional Abuse Support Service had not yet launched and when it is expected to launch.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to encourage the Junior Ministers to engage with all the Historical Institutional Abuse groups, as had been the case in previous times.

11. Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered the Forward Work Programme for October to December 2020.

The Chairperson informed Members that additional responses had been received from councils accepting the invitation to brief the Committee on Brexit issues.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to hear evidence from the councils at the Committee meeting on 11 November 2020, and to re-schedule two of the oral briefings that had already been planned for that date.

12. Any Other Business

None.

13. Date, Time and Place of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 4 November 2020, at 2:00pm in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:52pm.

Mr Colin McGrath MLA
Chairperson, Committee for the Executive Office