



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE

Minutes of Proceedings

Wednesday 25 March 2020

Room 30, Parliament Buildings, Belfast

Present: Mr Colin McGrath MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Mike Nesbitt MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Ms Martina Anderson MLA
Ms Emma Sheerin MLA
Mr Christopher Stalford MLA

Apologies: Mr Trevor Clarke
Mr Trevor Lunn MLA
Mr George Robinson MLA
Mr Pat Sheehan MLA

In Attendance: Ms Marie Austin (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Craig Mealey (Clerical Supervisor)

The meeting commenced at 2.06pm.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 18 March 2020.

3. Matters Arising

The Committee considered a draft response to the Committee on Procedures Review of Legislative Consent Motions and the relating Standing Order (42A).

Agreed: The Committee agreed a response to the Committee on Procedures Review of Legislative Consent Motions and the relating Standing Order (42A).

4. SL1 – Historical Institutional Abuse Rules

The following officials joined the meeting at 2.08pm:

Mark Browne, Director of Strategic Policy, Equality and Good Relations, The Executive Office

Gareth Johnston, Director, Victims and Survivors Division, The Executive Office.

The officials briefed the Committee on The Executive Office's proposal to make a Statutory Rule to deal with matters of procedure on applications to the Historical Institutional Abuse (Northern Ireland) Act 2019, and matters of procedure on appeals under the Act.

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

The Committee noted that the current Coronavirus pandemic will present huge challenges for compensating victims and survivors of historical institutional abuse. Members stressed the importance of ensuring that the compensation process is 'Coronavirus proofed' to avoid any delay in payments being made.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

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

5. Brexit – Issues including work of the Brexit Sub-Committee

The Committee considered a departmental written briefing paper on Brexit issues which included responses to the questions forwarded by the Committee following its meeting on 4 March 2020.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule an oral briefing to provide Members with an opportunity to question officials on the content of the paper.

6. SL1- Census Order (Northern Ireland) 2020

The Committee considered a proposal by The Executive Office to make a Statutory Rule under powers conferred by the Census Act (Northern Ireland) 1969, to direct that a census should be taken in 2021, and noted that the Committee for Finance was content with the policy implications of the proposed subordinate legislation.

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

7. Functioning of Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill

The Committee considered the list of individuals and groups from which the Committee for Finance intends seeking written evidence in relation to the Functioning of Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it did not wish to add other individuals or groups to the list, and will consider the written evidence when received to identify those individuals or groups who should be invited to give oral evidence.

8. Chairpersons Visit to Washington D.C

The Committee noted a report on the Chairperson's visit to Washington D.C.

9. Forward Work Programme

The Chairperson informed Members that the strategic planning meeting due to take place on 1 April 2020, would be rearranged for a later date.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that meetings should only be scheduled to deal with budgetary, legislative or other urgent matters.

The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme for March to April 2020.

10. Correspondence

The Committee considered correspondence from the Clerk to the Committee for Finance outlining the Executive Budget 2020-2021 indicative timetable and asking that all committees adopt a standardised approach to budget scrutiny.

Members also considered the RaISe paper: *Standardised Scrutiny Approach: Assembly Statutory Committees engaging on forthcoming Executive Budget 2020-21* and the associated departmental template.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to adopt a standardised approach to budget scrutiny.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to issue the template to The Executive Office for completion and return by 15 April 2020.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward a copy of the completed template to the Committee for Finance and RaISe.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that departmental officials should attend the Committee meeting on 22 April 2020 to give oral evidence. If officials cannot attend the meeting, any issues arising from the Committee's consideration of The Executive Office's return will be forwarded to officials on 22 April, or shortly thereafter, for a response within 24 hours.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to reach a position on the Budget 2020-2021 at its meeting on 29 April 2020, and advise the Committee for Finance, RaISe and The Executive Office of same.

11. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson updated Members on discussions that took place at the Chairpersons' Liaison Group meeting on Tuesday 24 March 2020.

12. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

13. Date, Time and Place of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 22 April 2020 at 2.00 pm in Room 30 Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 3.26pm.

Mr Colin McGrath MLA
Chairperson, Committee for the Executive Office