



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for the Executive Office

Minutes of Proceedings

Wednesday 9th February 2022

Meeting Location: Room 30 Parliament Buildings

Present:

Ms Sinéad McLaughlin MLA (Chairperson)
Mr John Stewart MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Trevor Lunn MLA

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Mr Pat Sheehan MLA
Ms Diane Dodds MLA
Mr Christopher Stalford MLA
Mr Alex Easton MLA

Apologies: Mr Pádraig Delargy MLA

In Attendance: Mr Michael Potter (Assembly Clerk)
Ms Sarah-Anne McKinley (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Ms Alison Belshaw (Clerical Supervisor)

The meeting commenced at 2.03pm in open session.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Chairperson Business

The Chairperson updated the Committee in relation to the resignation of the First Minister Paul Givan and the implications for the Committee.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to ask what implications there are in the absence of a First Minister for decisions on:

- Covid Recovery
- Development of the High Streets Task Force
- Strategy for ending violence against women
- Refugee strategy
- Review of the HIA redress process
- The truth recovery process for victims and survivors of mother and baby homes
- Directives or Orders signed off by the First Minister and deputy First Minister prior to the First Minister's resignation

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to seek clarity on Departmental engagement with the Committee following the resignation of the First Minister.

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 2nd February 2022.

4. Matters Arising

The Chairperson updated the Committee in relation to the launch of a public consultation on a draft Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the relevant statutory committees for their views so that a consolidated response can be compiled for submission to the consultation.

5. Strategic Investment Board: Maze Long Kesh Development Corporation – Oral Briefing

The Chief Executive of the Strategic Investment Board and the Interim Chief Executive of the Maze Long Kesh Development Corporation joined the meeting at 2.17pm.

- Mr Brett Hannam, Chief Executive, Strategic Investment Board (SIB).
- Dr Bryan Gregory, Interim Chief Executive, Maze Long Kesh Development Corporation.

The Chief Executive of the SIB and the Interim Chief Executive of the Maze Long Kesh Development Corporation briefed the Committee in relation to the Maze Long Kesh development.

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

The Chairperson thanked the Chief Executive of the SIB and the Interim Chief Executive of the Maze Long Kesh Development Corporation for their attendance.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to include in its legacy report for the successor Committee to consider progress steps needed for the site in terms of infrastructure including roads and waste water treatment works.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Northern Ireland Audit Office to ask if they have investigated or reported on the policy of secondments from SIB to the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

6. COSICA: Update on Official Apology – Oral Briefing

The Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse joined the meeting at 2.55pm

- Ms Fiona Ryan Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse (COSICA)

The Commissioner briefed the Committee in relation to views on an official apology scheduled for 11 March 2022 for victims and survivors of Historical Institutional Abuse following the resignation of the First Minister.

Emma Sheerin joined the meeting at 3.31pm.

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

The Chairperson thanked the Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse for her attendance.

The Committee went into closed session at 4.01pm.

The Committee resumed in open session at 4.25pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to ask who can legally represent the state in terms of an official apology in the absence of a First and deputy First Minister.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to ask what planning with the relevant institutions has taken place on the logistics surrounding the official apology.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask for an informal meeting with the Executive Office with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Committee on the approach for the official apology in the absence of a First and deputy First Minister.

7. Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme for February and March 2022.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to invite the Transferor Representatives' Council to brief the Committee on the Fair Employment (School Teachers) Bill.

8. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted a press release from the EU Commission - Statement by Vice President Šefčovič on the Implementation of the Protocol on Ireland/ Northern Ireland.
- ii. The Committee noted a press release from the UK Government regarding the Brexit Freedoms Bill.
- iii. The Committee noted a policy paper from the UK Government titled 'The Benefits of Brexit - How the UK is Taking Advantage of Leaving the EU.'

- iv. The Committee noted a press release and white paper from UK Government in relation to Levelling Up.
- v. The Committee noted a Statement by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland regarding the resignation of the First Minister.
- vi. The Committee noted correspondence from the Executive Office in relation to the Attorney General for Northern Ireland - Annual Report 2020-2021.
- vii. The Committee noted a briefing paper from the Executive Office regarding the Draft Budget 2022-2025.
- viii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Executive Office in relation to the Appointment of the Commissioner for Victims and Survivors (CVS).
- ix. The Committee noted a press release from the Executive Office regarding the Appointment of an Attorney General.
- x. The Committee noted correspondence from the Executive Office in relation to the Common Frameworks Programme.
- xi. The Committee noted a Research and Information Service Briefing Paper from the Committee for Finance regarding Covid Spending.
- xii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for the Economy to the Minister for the Economy in relation to support for travel agents.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Executive Office to ask if the requested information has been provided to the Department for the Economy.

- xiii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Justice regarding the Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme.
- xiv. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Education in relation to the Period Products (Free Provision) Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write the Executive Office to ensure the Department responds to the Committee for Education on the Period Products (Free Provision) Bill.

- xv. The Committee noted correspondence from Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse regarding views on a memorial for victims and survivors of Historical Institutional Abuse.

9. Any Other Business

Discussed under Chairperson's Business.

10. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday 16 February 2022 at 2:00pm, in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 4.42pm.

Sinéad McLaughlin MLA
Chairperson, Committee for the Executive Office