



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

# Committee for The Executive Office

## Minutes of Proceedings

Wednesday 14 April 2021

**Meeting Location:** Virtually via Video Conferencing

**Present by Video or Teleconference:**

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

**Apologies:** None

**In Attendance by Video or Teleconference:**

Mr Michael Potter (Assembly Clerk)  
Ms Carla Campbell (Assistant Clerk)  
Ms Sarah-Anne McKinley (Assistant Clerk)  
Ms Alice O'Hare (Clerical Supervisor)  
Ms Andrienne Magee (Clerical Officer)



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The meeting commenced at 2:03pm in open session

### **1. Apologies**

As Above.

### **2. Chairperson's Business**

The Chairperson acknowledged the passing of the Duke of Edinburgh and the Committee extended condolences to his family.

The Chairperson acknowledged the unrest in recent weeks and encouraged those with influence within communities to use that influence to instil peace and also encouraged all politicians to do the same.

### **3. Draft Minutes**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 24 March 2021.



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#### **4. Matters Arising**

The Committee considered a response from the Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse, correspondence from the Rosetta Trust and a paper outlining issues raised by Historical Institutional Abuse groups in relation to the redress process.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the Chairperson and deputy Chairperson would meet with the Rosetta Trust to discuss the issues raised and the work undertaken by the Commissioner to date.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to schedule an oral briefing with the Victims and Survivors Service to ascertain how the service is engaging with survivors of abuse.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Executive Office to establish what support is available for the welfare and support of survivors of abuse.

#### **5. First Minister and deputy First Minister – Oral Briefing.**

The First Minister and deputy First Minister joined the meeting at 2:11pm

- Ms Arlene Foster MLA, First Minister, The Executive Office.
- Ms Michelle O'Neill MLA, deputy First Minister, The Executive Office.

The First Minister and deputy First Minister briefed Members on the response to Covid-19 and other departmental issues.

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

The oral evidence was reported by Hansard.



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The Chairperson thanked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for their attendance.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to request a list of outstanding commitments within the New Decade New Approach agreement and indicative costs for each.

***The meeting was suspended at 3:26pm.***

***The meeting resumed at 3:31pm.***

**6. Implementation of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland (Article 2(1)) – NI Human Rights Commission, Equality Commission NI, Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission.**

The Officials joined the meeting at 3:31pm

- Ms Geraldine McGahey OBE, Chief Commissioner, Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.
- Mr Les Allamby, Chief Commissioner, Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission.
- Mr Michael Finucane, Commissioner, Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission.

The representatives briefed Members on the implementation of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland (Article 2(1)) in relation to equality and human rights.

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



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The oral evidence was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance.

### **7. SR 2021/68 Travel Agents (Coronavirus, Financial Assistance) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021.**

The Committee considered SR 2021/68 Travel Agents (Coronavirus, Financial Assistance) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021.

*Question put and agreed:*

That the Committee for the Executive office has considered the SR 2021/68 Travel Agents (Coronavirus, Financial Assistance) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 and, subject to the report from Examiner for Statutory Rules, has no objection to the Rule.

### **8. Forward Work Programme**

The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme for April to May 2021 and a paper outlining the scrutiny and legislation responsibilities of the Committee.

### **9. Correspondence**

- i. The Committee considered a response from the Executive Office providing information in relation to the Joint Consultative Working Group, measurement of progress and the Shared Prosperity Fund.



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*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to share this response with the Committee for Finance.

- ii. The Committee considered a response from the Executive Office providing further information on the Flags, Identity, Culture and Tradition Working Group.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to schedule an oral briefing with Junior Ministers to update the Committee on the progress of this group.

- iii. The Committee noted a response to the Finance Committee from the Executive Office in relation to a request for clarity on a number of issues relating to funding and budget for the Victims' Payments Scheme for Permanent Disablement.
- iv. The Committee noted a response from the Executive Office providing details of the seventh meeting of the Ireland/Northern Ireland Specialised Committee.
- v. The Committee noted a response to the Committee for the Economy from the First Minister and deputy First Minister in relation to click and collect services provided by local businesses.
- vi. The Committee considered a response from the Health Minister in relation to the allocation of Covid funding to support the voluntary sector in delivering vital mental health services.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to forward this response to the Northern Ireland Youth Forum for information.

- vii. The Committee considered a response from The Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly regarding commencement of Part 3 of the Public Services Ombudsman (Northern Ireland) Act 2016 which asked that the Committee for the Executive Office engage with the Ombudsman on the statement of principles and take responsibility for bringing the necessary motion to the Assembly.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to engage with the Ombudsman on the statement of principles and take responsibility for bringing the necessary motion to the Assembly.



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- viii. The Committee considered correspondence from the Committee for Finance asking the Committee for the Executive Office to seek evidence from the Executive Office in respect of its expenditure proposals for 2021-22.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Executive Office asking that a written briefing outlining their expenditure proposals for 2021-22 be provided to the Committee by 23 April 2021.

- ix. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance to the Executive Office seeking an update on their ongoing assessment of the nature and quantity of European Union legislation which is to be adopted in order to maintain Northern Ireland's position in the European Union's Single Market.

- x. The Committee noted a response from the Committee for the Economy agreeing to a joint meeting with the Committee for the Executive Office regarding the Executive's Covid Recovery Plan.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the Clerk should liaise with the Clerk to the Committee for the Economy to schedule a joint meeting.

- xi. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for the Economy to the First Minister and deputy First Minister urging that they show support for independent wedding venues by including them in the existing schemes developed by the Department for the Economy and to provide clarity for the sector moving forward.

- xii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for the Economy to the First Minister and deputy First Minister seeking support for the delivery of the content of the motion agreed by the Assembly on 16 March 2021 to widen out the group of payment recipients for the Covid-19 disruption payment for students studying full-time higher education courses.

- xiii. The Committee considered correspondence from the Committee for Justice requesting a copy of any relevant information that the Committee for the Executive Office has received, or is due to receive, in relation to the Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme.



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*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to share any Departmental briefings or responses in respect of the Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme with the Committee for Justice.

- xiv. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Justice inviting views/comments on any aspects of the Damages (Return on Investment) Bill which commenced Committee Stage on 10 March 2021.
- xv. The Committee noted correspondence from the Ad Hoc Committee on a Bill of Rights to the Executive Office requesting a further update on the recruitment of the three-person panel of experts, provided for in the New Decade, New Approach, to assist the Committee in its work.
- xvi. The Committee noted a response from Rt Hon Lord Frost CMG regarding the first meeting of the Joint Consultative Working Group.
- xvii. The Committee noted a statement from the UK Government following the seventh meeting of the Ireland/Northern Ireland Specialised Committee on 26 March 2021.
- xviii. The Committee noted a statement by the European Commission following the seventh meeting of the Specialised Committee on the implementation of the Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland.
- xix. The Committee noted correspondence from the Northern Ireland Assembly European Affairs Manager regarding documents published by the UK Government in relation to Intergovernmental Relations (IGR) and Dunlop Review.
- xx. The Committee noted correspondence from an individual regarding the effect of the Covid-19 restrictions on elderly members of the community.
- xxi. The Committee noted a statement from the First Minister and deputy First Minister, Justice Minister and Finance Minister on the Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme.
- xxii. The Committee noted a response from the Executive Office regarding the GAD Report on anticipated costs of Victims' Payments Scheme for Permanent Disablement.





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- xxiii. The Committee noted the House of Lords Common Frameworks Scrutiny Committee report “Common frameworks: building a cooperative Union”.
- xxiv. The Committee noted the Annual Report and Accounts 2019-20 for the Commission for Victims and Survivors for Northern Ireland.

**10. Any Other Business**

None.

**11. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 21 April 2021 at 2:00pm, virtually via Starleaf.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:42pm.

**Colin McGrath MLA**

**Chairperson, Committee for the Executive Office**