



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for The Executive Office

Minutes of Proceedings

Wednesday 18 September 2024

Meeting Location: Room 30, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Ms Paula Bradshaw MLA (Chairperson)

Ms Connie Egan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Mr Timothy Gaston MLA

Mr Harry Harvey MLA

Mr Brian Kingston MLA

Ms Emma Sheerin MLA

Ms Claire Sugden MLA

Ms Carál Ní Chuilín MLA

Apologies:

Ms Sinéad McLaughlin MLA

In Attendance:

Mr Michael Potter (Assembly Clerk)

Mr Tom Armstrong (Assistant Assembly Clerk)

Mr Michael McClelland (Clerical Supervisor)

Ms Andrienne Magee (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced at 2.00pm in open session

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson informed the Committee of her meeting with the First Minister and deputy First Minister to discuss the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Framework and First Delivery Plan.

The Chairperson informed the Committee of her meeting with the Independent Chair to the inter-departmental Working Group looking at mother and baby institutions and clerical abuse.

The Chairperson informed the Committee of her meeting with the Commissioner of Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse on victims who do not meet the current criteria for redress.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to seek an extension of the deadline for applications to the Redress Board, set out plans for a communications plan to improve uptake and consider commissioning research into sexual abuse prevalence in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to commission the Assembly Research Service to summarise research and processes in the Republic of Ireland.

4. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 11 September 2024.

5. Matters Arising

Members discussed the draft Committee response to the Executive Office's consultation on mother and baby institutions.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to the response to the consultation.

6. Oral Evidence Session – Independent Commission on Reconciliation and Information Recovery (ICRIR)

The witnesses joined the meeting at 2.04pm

Members received a briefing from:

- Louise Warde Hunter, Chief Executive Officer and Commissioner, ICRIR
- Sir Declan Morgan, Chief Commissioner, ICRIR
- Peter Sheridan, Commissioner for Investigations, ICRIR
- Dr Lesley Carroll, Assistant Commissioner – Support, Engagement – Victims and Survivors, ICRIR

The witnesses provided the Committee an overview of the work of the Independent Commission on Reconciliation and Information Recovery.

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

The Chairperson thanked the witnesses for their attendance.

The witnesses left the meeting at 3.00pm

Claire Sugden MLA left the meeting at 3.00pm

7. Recent Racist Incidents – Stakeholder Oral Briefing

The witnesses joined the meeting at 3.01pm

Members received a briefing from:

- Takura Donald Makoni, African and Caribbean Support Organisation Northern Ireland
- Lori-Gatsi-Barnett, African and Caribbean Support Organisation Northern Ireland
- Dr Naomi Green, Belfast Islamic Centre
- Muhammed Atif, Belfast Multicultural Association
- Beverly Simpson, North West Migrant's Forum

The witnesses provided the Committee an overview of their experiences with the recent racist incidents.

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

The Chairperson thanked the witnesses for their attendance.

Brian Kingston MLA left the meeting at 4:34pm

Harry Harvey MLA left the meeting at 4:43pm

The witnesses left the meeting at 4:50pm

Agreed: Members agreed a draft press release on the recent racist incidents.

8. Inquiry into Gaps in Equality Legislation – Consultation Summary

Members discussed the outcome of the consultation for the Committee's inquiry into gaps in equality legislation.

9. Draft Forward Work Programme

Members considered the draft forward work programme.

Agreed: Members agreed to postpone the session on 25 September for institutions involved in historical institutional abuse and to replace it with one for advocacy organisations from the age sector.

Agreed: Members agreed that they were content to proceed with the briefings as set out in the work programme.

10. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted the summary of Committee correspondence.
- ii. The Committee noted Draft Programme for Government – Peace as key pillar from Peace Summit Partnership.
- iii. The Committee noted Report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules to the Assembly.
- iv. The Committee noted Proposed Claim for Judicial Review from Committee on the Administration of Justice.
- v. The Committee noted NIAO Departmental Guide from Northern Ireland Audit Office.
- vi. The Committee noted Letter dated 5 July 2024 - Statutory Committee Scrutiny of the 2024-25 Budget, forwarded from Committee of Finance on 13 September.
- vii. The Committee noted documents from the Committee for Finance, 2024-2025 Budget - Timeline and Scrutiny.
- viii. The Committee noted oral statement from First Minister and deputy First Minister on launch of the Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls and first Delivery Plan.
- ix. The Committee noted correspondence from an individual on the charity Sex Matters.

- x. The Committee noted correspondence from Carson McDowell Solicitors on behalf of the Sisters of St Louis, stating they will not attend the Committee on 25 September.

11. Any Other Business

None.

12. Date, Time and Place of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 25 September 2024 at 2:00pm in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:57pm

Paula Bradshaw MLA

Chairperson, Committee for the Executive Office