



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for The Executive Office

Minutes of Proceedings

Wednesday 19 June 2024

Meeting Location: Room 30, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Ms Paula Bradshaw MLA (Chairperson)

Ms Connie Egan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Mr Pádraig Delargy MLA

Mr Harry Harvey MLA

Mr Brian Kingston MLA

Ms Sinéad McLaughlin MLA

Ms Claire Sugden MLA

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Ms Carál Ní Chuilín MLA

Ms Emma Sheerin MLA

In Attendance:

Mr Michael Potter (Assembly Clerk)

Mr Tom Armstrong (Assistant Assembly Clerk)

Ms Andrienne Magee (Clerical Supervisor)

Mr Stephen McGlennon (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced at 2.00pm in open session

1. Apologies

There were no apologies.

2. Declarations of Interest

Emma Sheerin MLA joined the meeting at 2.01pm

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson discussed the absence of the First Minister and deputy First Minister at next week's meeting. The Chairperson also remarked that the junior Ministers have not appeared before the Committee since the restoration of the Assembly. The Chairperson confirmed that she and the Deputy Chair will meet informally with the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

4. Arrangements for Summer Recess

- i. The Chairperson advised that the Committee continues to receive correspondence from stakeholders over the summer period. It is standard practice that the committee team include such items for consideration at the committee's first meeting of the new session in September 2024 unless there are any urgent matters.

- ii. The Chairperson advised that it is standard practice to delegate authority to the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson, during periods of recess, to submit views on the releasing or withholding of information in any non-routine or contentious Freedom of Information requests received by the Committee; and that any such views expressed would be brought to the attention of the committee at the first meeting after summer recess.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to delegate authority to the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson to submit views on the releasing or withholding information in any non-routine or contentious Freedom of Information requests received by the Committee.

5. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 12 June 2024.

6. Matters Arising

There were no Matters Arising.

7. Oral Evidence Session – Mother and Baby Institutions – Donation of Bodies for Anatomical Research – Oral Briefing

The witness joined the meeting at 2.04pm

Sinéad McLaughlin MLA joined the meeting at 2.05pm

Members received a briefing from:

- Eunan Duffy, Campaigner and Activist

The witness provided the Committee an overview of the witness's ongoing work on the donation of bodies for anatomical research from mother and baby institutions.

Claire Sugden MLA joined the meeting at 2.27pm

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

The Chairperson thanked the witness for his attendance.

Carál Ní Chuilín MLA left the meeting at 3.03pm

The witness left the meeting at 3.07pm

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite the Human Rights Commission to a future meeting to discuss access to historical records.

8. Oral Evidence Session – Mother and Baby Institutions – Disposal of Bodies – Stakeholder Oral Briefing

The witnesses joined the meeting at 3.08pm

Members received a briefing from:

- Toni Maguire, Consultant Archaeologist
- Siubhainín Ní Chutnneagan, Individual

The witnesses provided the Committee with an overview of their work on the disposal of bodies from mother and baby institutions.

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

The Chairperson thanked the witnesses for their attendance.

Emma Sheerin MLA left the meeting at 3.42pm

The witnesses left the meeting at 3.54pm

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write a letter to the Department to ask that the terms of reference of the future inquiry will include preservation of records and of burial grounds.

9. Draft Forward Work Programme

Members considered the draft forward work programme.

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 considered a memo from the Clerk to the Committee for Finance regarding the Public Sector Transformation Fund.

Agreed: Members agreed to write to the Department to seek a copy of the Department's transformation proposals and the Departmental Business Plan.

- iii. The Committee considered a memo from the Clerk to the Committee for Finance regarding scrutiny of the draft Executive Budget for 2024-25.

Agreed: Members agreed to write to the Committee for Finance to give an update on this Committee's scrutiny.

- iv. The Committee noted the Eighteenth Report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules.
- v. The Committee noted a memo from the Clerk to the Committee for the Economy and a letter to the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding the High Street Taskforce.
- vi. The Committee considered a letter from Community Relations in Schools regarding the delay in Good Relations funding decisions.

Agreed: Members agreed to write to the Department to seek clarification on these issues.

11. Any Other Business

The Committee discussed the recent cancellation of events at Ebrington and the management of the site.

Agreed: Members agreed to write to the Department to ask that the Executive Office intervenes to ensure that a more comprehensive programme of events takes place at the site.

12. Date, Time and Place of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 26 June 2024 at 2:00pm in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 4.04pm

Paula Bradshaw MLA

Chairperson, Committee for the Executive Office