



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

# Committee for The Executive Office

## Minutes of Proceedings

**Wednesday 24 April 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 Carál Ní Chuilín MLA

Ms Emma Sheerin MLA

**Present by Video or Teleconference:**

Ms Claire Sugden MLA

**In Attendance:**

Mr Michael Potter (Assembly Clerk)

Mr Tom Armstrong (Assistant Assembly Clerk)

Ms Andrienne Magee (Clerical Supervisor)

Mr Adam Byrne (Clerical Officer)

*The meeting commenced at 1.59pm in open session*

### **1. Apologies**

There were no apologies.

### **2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **3. Chairperson's Business**

There was no Chairperson's Business.

### **4. Draft Minutes**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 17 April 2024.

### **5. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

### **6. Oral Evidence Session – Executive Office Financial Scrutiny**

*The witnesses joined the meeting at 2.01pm*

Members received a briefing from:

- Gareth Johnston, Deputy Secretary, Strategic Policy, Equality & Good Relations, The Executive Office
- Ronan Murtagh, Accountant, The Executive Office
- Paula Shearer, Accountant, The Executive Office

The witnesses provided the Committee an overview of the financial situation of The Executive Office.

*Emma Sheerin MLA joined the meeting at 2.15pm*

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

The Chairperson thanked the witness for their attendance.

*The witnesses left the meeting at 3.02pm*

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Executive Office seeking further information on: a prevalence study on the violence against women and girls; detail on business case costs on the Urban Villages programme; and update on costs of the Communities in Transition, Together: Building a United Community and Urban Villages programmes.

## **7. House of Lords Constitution Committee Inquiry on the Governance of the Union**

Members considered the House of Lords Constitution Committee Inquiry on the Governance of the Union.

**Agreed:** Members agreed to provide a response to the Inquiry. The Clerk will compile a submission for consideration at next week's meeting.

## **8. 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.

Members considered a draft list of proposed organisations to invite to the oral evidence session on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy on 15 May.

**Agreed:** Members agreed to the draft list.

## 9. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted the summary of Committee Correspondence.
- ii. The Committee noted a memo and a letter from the Clerk to the Committee for the Economy to the Executive Office regarding the post of Chief Science and Technology Advisor.
- iii. The Committee noted a letter from the Chair to the Committee for the Communities to the First Minister and deputy First Minister to ask if consideration is being given to making housing a stand-alone outcome in the Programme for Government.
- iv. The Committee noted the Ninth Report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules.
- v. The Committee considered a request from the Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement to meet with the Committee.

**Agreed:** Members agreed to meet with the Joint Committee at a future date.

- vi. The Committee noted a memo and letter from the Clerk to the Committee for Education to the Executive Office regarding policy recommendations submitted by Diverse Youth NI.
- vii. The Committee considered a response from Queen's University Belfast on the historical use of bodies for anatomical study.

**Agreed:** Members agreed to discuss the matter further during the strategic planning session.

- viii. The Committee noted a memo from the Clerk to the Finance Committee on Embargoes on Written Ministerial Statements.
- ix. The Committee noted a letter from the Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Abuse with an update after her evidence to the Committee.

- x. The Committee noted a letter from an individual regarding the Truth Recovery Consultative Forum.
- xi. The Committee considered a memo from the Clerks to the Committee on Procedures regarding the Interparliamentary Forum.

**Agreed:** Members agreed to write to the Committee on Procedures on the Committee's actions on Common Frameworks and any response to the Lords Constitution Committee.

- xii. The Committee noted a letter from an individual on the Truth Recovery Forum.
- xiii. The Committee noted a letter from an individual on disability challenges in the absence of a Bill of Rights.

**Agreed:** Members agreed to add the individual to a list of potential witnesses in the event of this subject being prioritised in the planning session.

## **10. Any Other Business**

The Committee was informed the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee is coming to Northern Ireland in June and they wish to engage with the Committee.

**Agreed:** Members agreed to meet with the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee.

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

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 1 May 2024 at 2:00pm in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

*The meeting was adjourned at 3.20pm*

## **12. Committee Strategic Planning Session**

The Committee completed the strategic planning session.

**Paula Bradshaw MLA**

**Chairperson, Committee for the Executive Office**