



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for The Executive Office

Minutes of Proceedings

Wednesday 11 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 Sinéad McLaughlin MLA

Ms Emma Sheerin MLA

Ms Claire Sugden MLA

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Ms Carál Ní Chuilín 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

None.

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 consultation of the draft Programme for Government.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the other Committees to co-ordinate a response to the consultation.

4. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 3 July 2024.

5. Matters Arising

There were no Matters Arising.

6. Oral Evidence Session – Inquiry into Gaps in Equality Legislation – Equality Commission Evidence

The witnesses joined the meeting at 2.02pm

Members received a briefing from:

- Geraldine McGahey, Chief Commissioner, Equality Commission
- Roisin Mallon, Director of the Dedicated Mechanism Unit, Equality Commission
- Kathryn Barr, Senior Policy Officer, Policy & Strategic Engagement, Equality Commission

The witnesses provided the Committee an overview of where the Equality Commission believes that Equality Legislation could be improved.

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

The Chairperson thanked the witnesses for their attendance.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing from RalSe to discuss their research papers in further detail.

Connie Egan MLA the meeting at 2.49pm

Claire Sugden MLA the meeting at 2.49pm

The witnesses left the meeting at 3.00pm

7. Oral Evidence Session – Inquiry into Gaps in Equality Legislation – Equality Coalition Evidence

The witnesses joined the meeting at 3.01pm

Members received a briefing from:

- Daniel Holder, Director, Committee for Administration & Justice & Co-Convenor, Equality Coalition
- Patricia McKeown, Regional Secretary, UNISON & Co-Convenor, Equality Coalition
- Eliza Browning, Senior Policy Officer, Committee for Administration & Justice

The witnesses provided the Committee an overview of where the Equality Coalition believes that Equality Legislation could be improved.

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

The Chairperson thanked the witnesses for their attendance.

Timothy Gaston MLA the meeting at 3.48pm

The witnesses left the meeting at 3.48pm

8. SL1 – Fair Employment (Monitoring) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024

The Committee considered a proposal by the Executive Office to make a statutory rule to amend the Fair Employment (Monitoring) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999 to provide monitoring information in respect of school teachers from 12th May 2024 only.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the proposal for the statutory rule but will ask the Department to clarify whether the Equality Commission will receive any extra funding.

9. SL1 – Period Products (Executive Office Specified Public Service Bodies) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024

The Committee considered a proposal by the Executive Office to make a statutory rule to specify by regulations those public service bodies to which the duty to make free period products available for users while on their premises applies.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the proposal for the statutory rule.

10. Mother & Baby Institutions – Review of Committee Response

The Committee discussed the draft Committee Response to the public consultation on a statutory public inquiry and financial redress in relation to Mother and Baby institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask to the Department if the Committee response could be delayed in order that further consideration can be given.

11. 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.

12. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted the summary of Committee correspondence.
- ii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance on the Financial Provisions Bill.
- iii. The Committee noted a response from the Department on the funding and key performance indicators of the overseas bureaux.
- iv. The Committee noted a report from the Department of Finance on the Executive Office Annual Report and Accounts 2023-24.
- v. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Education to the Executive Office on Newcomer Children Provision.
- vi. The Committee noted the Annual Report of the Historical Institutional Abuse Redress Board for the year ended 31 March 2024.
- vii. The Committee noted a response from the Department in respect of 2024-25 Good Relations funding.

- viii. The Committee noted the Strategic Investment Board Annual Review and Financial Statements 2023-24.
- ix. The Committee noted a response from the Department in relation to departmental transformation proposals and business plan.
- x. The Committee noted the Executive Office Brussels Report Spring 2024.
- xi. The Committee noted the Investment Strategy (NI) Investing Activity Report July 2024.
- xii. The Committee noted the Equality Commission NI's Annual Report and Accounts Year Ending 31 March 2024.
- xiii. The Committee noted the Centre for Effective Services report into Realising the Promise of National Equality Policy.
- xiv. The Committee discussed a request from the Independent Monitoring Authority for Citizens' Rights Agreements to meet with the Committee

Agreed: Members agreed that the Chair should have an informal meeting with IMACRA.

- xv. The Committee noted the written ministerial statement from the First Minister and deputy First Minister on Module 1 of the Covid Inquiry Report.
- xvi. The Committee noted a response from the Department in relation to Ebrington site management.
- xvii. The Committee noted an invitation from the NI Human Rights Commission and Equality Commission to the launch of the Annual Report on the Implementation of Article 2 of the Windsor Framework.
- xviii. The Committee noted Equality Commission's Race Equality Recommendations.
- xix. The Committee noted an assessment from the NI Fiscal Council on the NI Executive Budget 2024-25
- xx. The Committee noted an invitation from the NI Human Rights Commission and Equality Commission on the Research Launch of 'The Interaction

between the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the general principles of EU Law with the Windsor Framework’.

- xxi. The Committee noted a briefing paper from the Equality Commission on Eradicating Racism from Northern Ireland’s society.
- xxii. The Committee noted a letter from the Department on the appointment of a new Commissioner for Victims and Survivors.
- xxiii. The Committee noted a request from the Commissioner Designate for Victims of Crime for a review into recent racially motivated race crimes. The Chairperson advised the Committee that she will be having an informal meeting with the Commissioner Designate on 25th September.
- xxiv. The Committee noted the Investing Activity NI Activity Report August 2024.
- xxv. The Committee noted a request from the Chancellor of the Diocese of Down and Connor to brief the Committee on issues relating to Milltown Cemetery.
- xxvi. The Committee noted the Executive Office’s Annual Report and Accounts Year Ending 31 March 2024.
- xxvii. The Committee noted a response from the Good Shepherd Sisters to the Committee’s invitation to brief.
- xxviii. The Committee noted a request from the NI Judicial Commission for a joint meeting with the Executive Office Committee and Committee for Justice in February 2025.
- xxix. The Committee noted a response from the Department in respect of identity and language structures.
- xxx. The Committee noted a response from the Department in respect of Good Relations and Urban Villages Projects.
- xxxi. The Committee noted the Attorney General Northern Ireland Annual Reports for 2021-22 and 2022-23.
- xxxii. The Committee noted a response from the Department in relation to the protections of burial grounds and preservations of records being included in

the Terms of Reference for the Mother and Baby Institutions and Magdalene Laundries Inquiry.

- xxxiii. The Committee noted a report from Pivotal on the First Seven Months of the Restored Executive.
- xxxiv. The Committee noted a Pre-Action Protocol Letter from Phoenix Law.
- xxxv. The Committee noted a Letter from First Minister and deputy First Minister on the draft Programme for Government, Oral Statement to the Assembly and the draft programme for Government.
- xxxvi. The Committee noted a response from the Department on a review of Departmental Objectives.

13. Any Other Business

None.

14. Date, Time and Place of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 18 September 2024 at 2:00pm in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 3.56pm

Paula Bradshaw MLA

Chairperson, Committee for the Executive Office