



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for The Executive Office

Minutes of Proceedings

Wednesday 15 May 2024

Meeting Location: Room 30, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Ms Paula Bradshaw MLA (Chairperson)

Ms Connie Egan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

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:

Mr Pádraig Delargy MLA

Ms Claire Sugden MLA

In Attendance:

Mr Michael Potter (Assembly Clerk)

Mr Tom Armstrong (Assistant Assembly Clerk)

Ms Andrienne Magee (Clerical Supervisor)

Mr Damien Brown (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced at 2.02pm in open session

1. Apologies

As noted above.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Chairperson's Business

The Chair commented on the High Court's ruling that provisions of the Illegal Migration Act 2023 were to be disapplied in Northern Ireland virtue of Article 2 of the Windsor Framework.

4. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 8 May 2024.

5. Matters Arising

Sinéad McLaughlin MLA joined the meeting at 2.03pm

The Committee discussed the late arrival of Departmental papers. The Chairperson confirmed that she had written to the First Minister and deputy First Minister outlining the Committee's frustrations.

6. Oral Evidence Session – Departmental Briefing on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls

The witnesses joined the meeting at 2.04pm

Members received a briefing from:

- Claire Archbold, Director, Ending Violence Against Women and Girls, The Executive Office
- Geraldine Fee, Deputy Director, Ending Violence Against Women and Girls, The Executive Office
- Ryan Somerville, Ending Violence Against Women and Girls, The Executive Office

The witnesses provided the Committee an overview of the Department's work on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls.

Pádraig Delargy MLA joined the meeting at 2.24pm

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 3.10pm

7. Oral Evidence Session – Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Stakeholder Groups

The witnesses joined the meeting at 3.11pm

Members received a briefing from:

- Louise Coyle, Director, Northern Ireland Rural Women's Network
- Sarah Mason, CEO, Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland
- Joanne Barnes, CEO, Nexus NI

- Elaine Crory, Women's Sector Lobbyist, Women's Resource and Development Agency
- Karen Sweeney, Representative, Rape Crisis

The witnesses provided the Committee an overview of their work on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls.

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 4.02pm

The meeting was suspended at 4.02pm

The meeting resumed at 4.06pm

8. Oral Evidence Session – Women's Centres - Ending Violence Against Women and Girls

The witnesses joined the meeting at 4.06pm

Members received a briefing from:

- Catherine Barr, Director, Women's Centre Derry
- Eleanor Jordan, CEO, Windsor Women's Centre
- Lisa Maclean, CEO, Footprints Women's Centre

The witnesses provided the Committee an overview of Women's Centres work on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls.

Carál Ní Chuilín MLA left the meeting at 4.11pm

Pádraig Delargy MLA left the meeting at 4.24pm

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 4.56pm

9. Draft Forward Work Programme

- i. Members considered the draft forward work programme.

Agreed: Members agreed for the meeting on 19 June to be held in the North-West.

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

- ii. Members discussed a potential inquiry into equality and human rights gaps in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: Members agreed for the Clerk to write a Terms of Reference for the inquiry to be discussed at a future meeting.

10. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted the summary of Committee correspondence.
- ii. The Committee noted a response from the Committee for Infrastructure on the Committee's request for an update on Common Frameworks scrutiny.
- iii. The Committee noted a response from the President of the Historical Institutional Redress Board on the Committee's invite to attend a meeting.
- iv. The Committee discussed a memo from the Clerk to the Committee for Finance on scrutiny of the Draft Executive Budget and the draft Committee response.

Agreed: Members agreed a Committee response to the Committee for Finance.

- v. The Committee noted a response from an individual relating to the historical use of bodies for anatomical research by Queen's University.
- vi. The Committee noted a response from Good Shepherd Sisters regarding the Committee's invite to attend a meeting along with an update on the work of the Good Shepherd Sisters in relation to co-operating with HIA issues.
- vii. The Committee noted a response from the Department in relation to the Committee's request for details of available signposting to support refugees and asylum seekers.

- viii. The Committee noted a response from the Department on Apologies to Victims and Survivors of Historical Institutional Abuse.
- ix. The Committee noted a response from the Department following it's meeting on Victims and Survivors.
- x. The Committee noted an invitation from the Committee for Finance to the Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service to discuss Civil Service Reform.
- xi. The Committee noted details of Budget bids by the Executive Office.
- xii. The Committee noted correspondence from the EU Affairs Manager regarding the Intergovernmental Relations Annual Report 2023.
- xiii. The Committee noted correspondence from the EU Affairs Manager regarding the Illegal Migration Act 2023.
- xiv. The Committee noted an assessment from the NI Fiscal Council on the 2024-25 Budget.
- xv. The Committee noted a letter from the NI Youth Forum on their Four Key Asks on Peace and Reconciliation.
- xvi. The Committee noted the Thirteenth Report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules.

11. Any Other Business

None.

12. Date, Time and Place of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 22 May 2024 at 2:00pm in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 5.00pm

Paula Bradshaw MLA

Chairperson, Committee for the Executive Office