



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for The Executive Office

Minutes of Proceedings

Wednesday 6 November 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

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Ms Carál Ní Chuilín MLA

Ms Claire Sugden MLA

Apologies:

Ms Emma Sheerin MLA

In Attendance:

Mr Jim McManus (Assembly Clerk)

Mr Tom Armstrong (Assistant Assembly Clerk)

Mr Neil Porter (Clerical Supervisor)

Ms Andrienne Magee (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced at 2.04pm in public session.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson discussed the need for all members to have regard to the protocol on conduct and courtesy in committee meetings and the need to treat all witnesses, staff and other committee members with respect.

The Chairperson advised that, regarding the meeting with First Minister on 23rd October, the Committee staff have asked the TEO Private Office to provide a copy of the minutes of the meeting with First Minister which took place prior to the last Committee meeting and that they are yet to arrive.

4. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the amended minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 23 October 2024.

5. Matters Arising

The Committee discussed the Chair's informal meeting with the First Minister on Wednesday 23 October.

Agreed: To ask the Clerk to provide the original email thread including timestamps relating to the invitation from the First Minister.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider the matter further under Any Other Business.

Sinéad McLaughlin MLA joined the meeting at 2.12pm.

6. Programme for Government – Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland Oral Briefing

The witnesses joined the meeting at 2.13pm

Members received a briefing from:

- Eddie Lynch, Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland
- Ángel Leira Pernas, Policy and Research Officer, Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland

The witnesses provided the Committee with the views and proposals of the Office of the Commissioner for Older People as outlined in its response to the consultation on the draft Programme for Government.

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

The Chairperson left the meeting at 2.56pm and the Deputy Chairperson took the Chair.

The Chairperson returned to the meeting at 3.00pm and resumed the Chair.

The Chairperson thanked the witnesses for their attendance.

The witnesses left the meeting at 3.41pm.

7. Programme for Government – Departmental Oral Briefing

The witnesses joined the meeting at 3.42pm.

Members received a briefing from:

- Michael Kennedy, Director, Programme for Government, The Executive Office
- Karen Pearson, Deputy Secretary, Programme for Government, The Executive Office
- Gavin King, Consultation Manager, Programme for Government, The Executive Office

The witnesses provided the Committee with an update on the draft Programme for Government.

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

Departmental officials undertook to share their briefing notes with the Committee.

The Chairperson thanked the witnesses for their attendance.

The witnesses left the meeting at 4.30pm.

Agreed: to seek time from the Executive for statutory committees to consider and advise their ministers on the PfG between the publishing of the Report (which will include a summary of consultation responses) and the completion of the final draft to the Executive.

The meeting was suspended at 4.31pm.

The meeting resumed at 4.38pm.

8. October Monitoring – Departmental Written Briefing

The Committee considered the October Monitoring Round.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to receive oral evidence from departmental officials at next week's meeting to consider the October Monitoring Round in detail.

Agreed: The Committee agreed for the Committee staff to collate information on the timeliness of the submission of papers to the Committee since the Committee was

formed, in relation to oral and written evidence and responses to Committee requests for information from The Executive Office.

9. Inquiry into Gaps in Equality Legislation – Update

The Committee discussed the stakeholder event scheduled for Wednesday 4th December 2024.

Agreed: Members agreed to confirm the attendance list via correspondence with additional groups to be invited including groups representing older people, regional women's groups, Hindus and Jehovah's Witnesses.

10. Draft Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered the responses to the invitations sent to the institutions requesting that they appear before the Committee on Wednesday 4th December

Agreed: Members agreed to consider this matter again following the evidence session with the Independent Facilitator regarding contributions to the HIA Redress Board on 20th November.

The Committee discussed which Victims Groups they would like to invite to the Committee meeting of Wednesday 27th November.

Agreed: Members agreed to invite WAVE, Pat Finucane Centre, South East Fermanagh Foundation, Relatives for Justice and Ulster Human Rights Watch to the Committee.

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.

11. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted the summary of Committee correspondence.

- ii. The Committee discussed correspondence from the Executive Office on a review of COSICA.

Agreed: Members agreed that the Chairperson will meet with the Independent Assessor on behalf of the Committee.

- iii. The Committee noted an invitation to the Climate Action Programme from Business Action on Climate.
- iv. The Committee noted correspondence from an individual regarding a complaint from the Truth Recovery Independent Panel.
- v. The Committee noted a response from the Centre for Effective Services to the draft Programme for Government consultation.
- vi. The Committee noted a response from the Committee for Education to the draft Programme for Government.
- vii. The Committee noted a response from the Committee for Infrastructure to the draft Programme for Government.
- viii. The Committee noted a response from the First Minister and deputy First Minister accepting an invitation to appear at the Inter-Parliamentary Forum on 15 November 2024.
- ix. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance on the 2024-25 Public Expenditure Outturn and Forecast Outturn information – September position.
- x. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance on the Budget 2025-26 and Future Years Information Gathering Exercise.
- xi. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Infrastructure to the Executive Office requesting an update on the Infrastructure Commission.
- xii. The Committee noted a news release from the Department of Justice on the Domestic Homicide Review “Pamela”.
- xiii. The Committee noted a news release from the Department of Justice on the Domestic Homicide Review “Ruth”.

- xiv. The Committee discussed correspondence from the Rosetta Trust on proposed actions outlined during the Committee meeting of 10 April 2024.

Agreed: Members agreed to write to the Department to seek an update on these actions and specifically on what resources are being allocated.

- xv. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Infrastructure on zero emissions vehicles and fleet management.
- xvi. The Committee noted correspondence from an individual regarding Covid-19 regulations October 2020 – May 2021.
- xvii. The Committee noted the Twenty-Fifth Report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules.
- xviii. The Committee noted the Investment Strategy Northern Ireland – Investing Activity Report.
- xix. The Committee noted an invitation to the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission Annual Statement Launch on 9 December 2024.
- xx. The Committee noted correspondence from the Congregation of the Sisters of Nazareth regarding the invitation to appear before the Committee.
- xxi. The Committee noted correspondence from Napier Solicitors on behalf of De La Salle regarding the invitation to appear before the Committee.
- xxii. The Committee noted correspondence from Napier Solicitors on behalf of Good Shepherd regarding the invitation to appear before the Committee.
- xxiii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Victims and Survivors Service on their Annual Report and Accounts 2023-24.
- xxiv. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Communities regarding Committee Scrutiny of Social Inclusion Strategies.
- xxv. The Committee noted the Oral Urgent Statement from the Minister for Finance on the Autumn Budget 2024.

- xxvi. The Committee noted correspondence from Carson McDowell Solicitors on behalf of The Sisters of St Louis regarding the invitation to appear before the Committee.

Connie Egan MLA left the meeting at 4.55pm.

12. Any Other Business

The Committee returned to its consideration of the Chairperson's informal meeting with the First Minister on Wednesday 23 October.

Harry Harvey MLA left the meeting at 5.04pm.

The Committee considered a proposal from Timothy Gaston MLA that, before the Chairperson agrees to meet a witness on a matter of a political nature who is scheduled to provide evidence to the Committee, the Chairperson will seek prior agreement from the Committee.

Agreed: Members agreed that, before the Chairperson agrees to meet a witness on a matter of a political nature who is scheduled to provide evidence to the Committee, the Chairperson will seek prior agreement from the Committee.

13. Date, Time and Place of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 13 November 2024 at 2:00pm in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 5.16pm.

Paula Bradshaw MLA

Chairperson, Committee for the Executive Office