



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for The Executive Office

Minutes of Proceedings

Wednesday 2 October 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 Carál Ní Chuilín MLA

Ms Emma Sheerin MLA

Ms Claire Sugden MLA

Apologies:

Ms Sinéad McLaughlin 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

As above.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Chairperson's Business

The Committee discussed correspondence received from the Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland and from Age NI.

The Chairperson reminded Members of The Members Code of Conduct.

Agree: Members agreed to send letters of apology to the Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland and Age NI setting out steps to prevent a similar incident occurring in the future.

Carál Ní Chuilín MLA joined the meeting at 2:02pm

Emma Sheerin MLA joined the meeting at 2:02pm

4. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 25 September 2024.

5. Matters Arising

The Committee discussed invoking Section 44 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 to compel institutions to appear before the Committee to give evidence of Historical Institutional Abuse.

Agreed: The Members agreed to invite the six Institutions to the Committee meeting of 4th December.

6. Oral Briefing – First Minister and deputy First Minister

The witnesses joined the meeting at 2.07pm

Members received a briefing from:

- Michelle O'Neill MLA, First Minister
- Emma Little-Pengelly MLA, deputy First Minister
- Pam Cameron MLA, junior Minister
- Aisling Reilly MLA, junior Minister

The witnesses provided the Committee with an overview the work of The Executive Office.

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

The Chairperson thanked the witnesses for their attendance.

Agreed: Members agreed to write to The Executive Office to request that updates on the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Framework 2024-2031 are copied to the Committee.

The witnesses left the meeting at 3:13pm.

Timothy Gaston MLA left the meeting at 3:14pm

7. Recent Racist Incidents – Departmental Oral Briefing

The witnesses joined the meeting at 3.14pm

Members received a briefing from:

- Ricky Irwin, Director of Communities in Transition and Racial Equality, The Executive Office
- Orla McStravick, Director of Refugee and Asylum Support and Integration Division, The Executive Office.

The witnesses provided the Committee with an overview of The Executive Office's response to recent racist incidents.

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 3:58pm.

The meeting was suspended at 3:58pm.

The meeting resumed at 4:05pm.

8. Recent Racist Incidents – PSNI Oral Briefing

The witnesses joined the meeting at 4:05pm

Members received a briefing from:

- Bobby Singleton, Assistant Chief Constable, PSNI
- Paddy Mullan, Chief Inspector, PSNI

The witnesses provided the Committee an overview of the PSNI response to recent racist incidents.

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

The Chairperson thanked the witnesses for their attendance.

Brian Kingston MLA left the meeting at 4:30pm

The witnesses left the meeting at 4:51pm.

9. Inquiry into Gaps in Equality Legislation – Update

Members discussed the responses to the Committee consultation.

Agreed: Members agreed to publish responses that the Committee has received in its consultation subject to confidentiality requirements.

Members discussed which groups they wish to invite to the Committee to give evidence.

Agreed: Members agreed to organise a round table event in Parliament Buildings to enable Inquiry stakeholders to discuss gaps in equality legislation with members.

10. Draft Forward Work Programme

Members considered the draft forward work programme

Agreed: Members agreed to invite the Committee for the Administration of Justice and Amnesty UK to discuss conflict legacy.

Agreed: Members agreed to invite MEARS to give evidence to the Committee.

Agreed: Members agreed to invite Migrant Help to give evidence to the Committee.

Agreed: Members agreed to invite the Housing Executive to brief the Committee on their response to recent racist incidents.

Agreed: Members agreed to invite the Human Rights Commission to give evidence to the Committee in relation to the Committee inquiry on gaps in equality legislation.

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

Members discussed the Committee's visit to Ebrington on 16 October.

Agreed: Members agreed that they would notify Committee staff if they are or are not planning to attend the visit to Ebrington and whether they require transportation from Parliament Buildings.

11. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted the summary of Committee correspondence.
- ii. The Committee noted Centre for Public Policy and Administration launch event invite from Queens University Belfast.
- iii. The Committee noted correspondence from NICCY declining to appear before the Committee on 25 September and enclosing written evidence.
- iv. The Committee noted 1st Report of Session 2024-25 from Select Committee on the Constitution.
- v. The Committee noted invitation to attend a webinar, hosted by the ICRIR.
- vi. The Committee noted the Memo from the Committee for Communities regarding Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme.
- vii. The Committee noted Investing Activity Report from ISNI.
- viii. The Committee noted correspondence from Truth Recovery Independent Panel setting out upcoming dates for testimonial gathering.

12. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

13. Date, Time and Place of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 9 October 2024 at 2:00pm in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:56pm.

Paula Bradshaw MLA

Chairperson, Committee for the Executive Office