



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for The Executive Office

Minutes of Proceedings

Wednesday 23 October 2024

Meeting Location: Room 29, 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 Carál Ní Chuilín MLA

Ms Emma Sheerin MLA

Ms Claire Sugden MLA

In Attendance:

Dr Kevin Pelan (Clerk Assistant)

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 2.09pm in open session

1. Apologies

There were no apologies.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson informed the Committee that she had met with the Chair of the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee.

The Chairperson informed the Committee that she had met with the First Minister and Permanent Secretary this morning.

4. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 16 October 2024.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 22 October 2024.

5. Matters Arising

Agreed: Members agreed that the invitation to the Chairperson from the First Minister to discuss today's Committee meeting will be in the information pack for the next Committee meeting.

6. First Minister, deputy First Minister and junior Ministers - Oral Briefing

The witness joined the meeting at 2.20pm

Members received a briefing from:

- Michelle O'Neill MLA, First Minister

The Chairperson stated that the First Minister was appearing alone with agreement from the deputy First Minister.

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

The Chairperson thanked the witness for their attendance.

The witness left the meeting at 3:01pm.

The meeting was suspended at 3:01pm.

The meeting resumed at 3:07pm.

7. Identity and Language – Foras na Gaelige and Ulster Scots Agency - Oral Briefing

The Chairperson advised that this item has been postponed and will be rearranged for a later date.

8. Identity and Language – Departmental Oral Briefing

The Chairperson advised that this item has been postponed and will be rearranged for a later date.

9. SR 2024-xxx Fair Employment (Monitoring) (Amendment) Regulations 2024

The Committee considered SR 2024-xxx Fair Employment (Monitoring) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 which would require existing registered concerns (including public authorities) to provide monitoring information in respect of school teachers from 12th May 2024 only.

Agreed: Members agreed that The Committee for the Executive Office has considered SR 2024/xxx The Fair Employment (Monitoring) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024 and recommended that it be approved by the Assembly.

10. SL1- The Northern Ireland Climate Commissioner Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024

The Committee considered a SL1 for the Executive Office to establish an independent office to be known as the 'Northern Ireland Climate Commissioner'

Agreed: Members agreed to forward the SL1 Letter and draft Statutory Rule to the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to seek their views before this Committee considers the SL1.

11. Inquiry into Gaps in Equality Legislation – Update

Agreed: Members agreed to share with the Clerk groups they wish to invite to the event to be held on 4 December 2024.

12. Draft Forward Work Programme

Members considered the draft forward work programme

Agreed: Members agreed to share with The Executive Office briefing papers received from Foras na Gaelige and the Ulster Scots Agency.

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

13. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted the summary of Committee correspondence.
- ii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Home Office on the Electronic Travel Authorisation Scheme and the Common Travel Area/tourism in Northern Ireland.
- iii. Committee noted a response from the Committee for the Economy in respect of the draft Programme for Government
- iv. The Committee noted correspondence from Ofcom progress update on Online Safety implementation.
- v. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Justice on Draft Programme for Government Consultation.
- vi. The Committee noted a response from The Executive Office on Fair Employment Monitoring Regulation.
- vii. The Committee considered correspondence regarding the escalation of a complaint to the Truth Recovery Programme Independent Panel.

The Chairperson advised that she will be meeting with the individual involved and will report back to the Committee.

- viii. The Committee noted the correspondence from the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs response to the Draft Programme for Government.
- ix. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Infrastructure on Draft Programme for Government.
- x. The Committee noted correspondence from Sinéad McLaughlin MLA on questions for the First Minister and deputy First Minister.
- xi. The Committee noted CLG Update to Committees: June 2024.
- xii. The Committee noted correspondence from Timothy Gaston MLA on questions for the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

- xiii. The Committee noted a response from The Executive Office on updates on the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Framework 2024-2031.

14. Any Other Business

The Committee discussed the role of Commissioners in assisting the Department with their statutory functions.

Claire Sugden MLA agreed to share with the Committee the response to her written question on the Department engaging with the Equality Commission when drafting Department Bills when an answer has been received.

15. Date, Time and Place of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 6 November 2024 at 2:00pm in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:15pm.

Paula Bradshaw MLA

Chairperson, Committee for the Executive Office