



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for The Executive Office

Minutes of Proceedings

Wednesday 25 June 2025

Meeting Location: Room 30, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Ms Paula Bradshaw MLA (Chairperson)

Mr Stewart Dickson MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Mr Timothy Gaston MLA

Mr Harry Harvey MLA

Mr Brian Kingston MLA

Ms Áine Murphy MLA

Ms Carál Ní Chuilín MLA

Online:

Ms Sinéad McLaughlin MLA

Apologies:

Ms Claire Sugden MLA

In Attendance:

Mr Nick Mitford (Assembly Clerk)

Ms Sarah-Anne McKinley (Assistant Assembly Clerk)

Mr Neil Porter (Clerical Supervisor)

Ms Andrienne Magee (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced at 2.02pm in public session.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson reminded Members about the Assembly Executive Review Committee Call to Evidence. Any Member who wishes to comment are reminded to email the Clerk by Friday 27 June as the consultation closes on Monday 30 June.

4. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 25 June 2025.

5. Matters Arising

5.1 Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill

The Chair reminded Members that at last week's meeting some Members discussed the possibility of the Committee requesting legal advice in terms of the potential to compel religious orders and other relevant institutions to contribute financially to the Redress Scheme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request legal advice from Assembly Legal Services on this matter and to include in the request the possibility of consulting external experts if necessary.

The Chair advised Members that the Committee had now been sent the Delegated Powers Memorandum from the Department.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the Delegated Powers Memorandum pending the oral evidence session with the Examiner of Statutory Rules at its meeting on Wednesday 10 September.

The Chair informed Members that the bill passed its Second Stage in the Chamber on Tuesday 24 June and that the Committee Stage formally commenced today.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to all Assembly Statutory Committees and seek their views on issues of the Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill.

Áine Murphy left the meeting at 2.08pm and returned at 2.13pm

5.2 Commissioner for Older People Northern Ireland (COPNI)

The Chair reminded Members that at last week's meeting the Committee received an introductory briefing from COPNI. During the oral evidence session COPNI mentioned a current survey on the Commissioner's priorities for a new Corporate Plan 2025-2029.

The Chair advised Members that this survey was included in this week's meeting pack.

5.3 PSNI Race and Ethnicity Action Plan Update

The Chair advised Members that the Committee has received a written update from the PSNI on their Race and Ethnicity Action Plan. The Plan outlines their commitments alongside actionable steps to address racial and ethnic disparities.

The Chair reminded Members that they also received an invitation from the PSNI to the launch of the Plan which was included in last week's meeting pack. The PSNI also sent a copy of the Race and Ethnicity Action Plan Consultation report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule an oral briefing with the PSNI following the launch of the Plan as part of its September to December forward work programme.

The Chair advised Members that the Committee has received a response from the Chief Constable regarding the recent incidents of disorder across Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note this item of correspondence.

5.4 Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme

The Chair advised Members that the Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme (the Victim's Payment Scheme) which opened for applications on 31 August 2021, is currently scheduled to close to applications on 30 August 2025 and in order to highlight the closure of the scheme in August 2026 the Committee will wish to consider a draft press release (to be published in August 2025) highlighting the Scheme's closure in one year and urging those eligible to apply.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to issue the draft press release as drafted which will be published by the Assembly Communications team in August.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that any Member wishing for the press release to be published in any outlets outside Northern Ireland should notify the Clerk.

6. Departmental Officials: June Monitoring – Oral Briefing

Agreed: The Committee agreed for Hansard to record the oral briefing session.

The officials joined the meeting at 2.16pm.

Members received an oral briefing from:

- Ronan Murtagh, Finance Director, TEO
- Paula Shearer, Head of Budgeting Branch, TEO

The Officials provided an update on the June Monitoring Round.

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

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

The officials left the meeting at 3.16pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request further information on the following matters:

- Options for accommodation in terms of leases for language bodies and the Truth Recovery Programme
- To seek clarification on whether it is standard practice for departmental business cases and evaluation reports to be shared with the Committee
- The link to the publishing of Departmental Annual Report and Accounts on the TEO Website
- Strategic Investment Board and EVAWG – Information on the staffing costs for 2025/26 as it moves into the implementation phase
- Communication Relations Council - Funding breakdown for 2025/2026
- NDPB's – Funding breakdown for 2025/2026
- Good Relations Funding - breakdown of the geographical allocations for this funding and further information on what actions the Department is taking to support the need for greater community cohesion
- National Insurance costs - Further detail these costs and the funding received through Westminster allocations, including a breakdown of hypothecated and unhypothecated funds
- Communities in Transition - Analysis of the priority areas from previous phases as well as details on Phase 3 of the project which are subject to business case approval
- Homes for Ukraine - Detailed breakdown of the associated funding
- North West Development Fund - Details on the revised approach to the North West Development Fund, including the shift towards co-ordinated strategic interventions and confirmation if the Department has received the €122,000 funding from the Irish Government
- Independent facilitator – to provide an update in relation to this work
- Departmental officials to have a conversation with Committee Clerk regarding the presentation of financial information to the Committee in terms of how this can be best presented

Agreed: The Committee agreed for the Committee team to schedule a briefing from the Department on the EVAWG Strategy as part of its September to December forward work programme.

7. First and deputy First Minister – Oral Briefing

The Chairperson advised Members that due to sickness this oral briefing has been rescheduled to the first meeting after summer recess on Wednesday 10 September.

Aine left at 3.21pm and returned at 3.35pm

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request legal advice from Assembly Legal Services in relation to public interest immunity and the Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to seek an update on the development of a 'How to Guide' as part of the Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed for the Committee team to confirm with the DALO that the rescheduled briefing with Ministers in September would be in addition to the ministerial oral briefing as part of the September to December forward work Programme.

8. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted the summary of Committee correspondence.
- ii. The Committee noted correspondence from an academic at Queen's University Belfast regarding human rights and constitutional change.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the academic outlining that the Committee does not share an agreed position on this issue and any current updates should be shared with individual Members or in the form of a written update.

- iii. The Committee considered responses from Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council and Ards and North Down Borough Council to the Committee's correspondence of the 7 May requesting details on allocation of the Local Change Fund in relation to Ending Violence Against Women and Girls.

Agreed: Members agreed to note and to consider further action when responses have been received from all local council areas.

- iv. The Committee noted a response from the Executive Office to the Committee's correspondence of 16 May requesting information on final Budget Allocations 2025-2026, Disaggregation of Programme for Government Priorities (PfG) and how will the £2 million allocated for EVAWG within PfG be spent.

9. Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered the draft forward work programme.

The Committee noted an update from the Assistant Clerk in relation to the meeting of 10 September which will now include the reschedule oral briefing with the First, deputy and junior Ministers.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to proceed with the remaining briefings as set out in the forward work programme.

10. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

11. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 2 July at 2.00pm in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 3.37pm.

Paula Bradshaw MLA

Chairperson, Committee for the Executive Office

Wednesday 25 June 2025