



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for The Executive Office

Minutes of Proceedings

Wednesday 26 February 2025

Meeting Location: Room 30, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Ms Paula Bradshaw MLA (Chairperson)

Mr Timothy Gaston MLA

Mr Harry Harvey MLA

Mr Brian Kingston MLA

Ms Áine Murphy MLA

Ms Carál Ní Chuilín MLA

Online:

Mr Stewart Dickson MLA (Deputy Chairperson) (and later in person)

Ms Sinéad McLaughlin MLA

Ms Claire Sugden MLA

Apologies:

None

In Attendance: Ms Roisin Kelly (Assembly Clerk)
Ms Sarah-Anne McKinley (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Neil Porter (Clerical Supervisor)
Ms Andrienne Magee (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced at 2.03pm in public session.

1. Apologies

There were no apologies.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Chairperson's Business

3.1 Data Breach

The Chairperson discussed further correspondence from the Clerk Assistant regarding a data breach that occurred in the course of collecting information for the Inquiry into Gaps in Equality Legislation.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence pending further updates.

3.2 Truth Recovery Independent Panel – Communication Material

The Chairperson discussed correspondence from Brown O'Connor Communications on behalf of the Truth Recovery Independent Panel. Included in this correspondence was a letter from the co-chairs of the Panel and associated communication materials.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence and for Members to share the messaging where they feel appropriate.

3.3 Truth Recovery Independent Panel – Invitation

The Chairperson referred to an invitation from the Truth Recovery Independent Panel in relation to consultation events on the permanent archive taking place on the 27 February 2025.

Agreed: The Committee agreed for Members to note this invitation.

4. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 19 February 2025.

5. Matters Arising

5.1 Memo to Members – Special Lighting Policy

The Chairperson discussed a Memo to Members on the Special Lighting Policy in relation to the lighting up of Parliament Buildings.

5.2 Special Lighting Policy (2020)

The Chairperson also referred Members to the Assembly Commission's policy on the lighting-up of Parliament Buildings.

Timothy Gaston proposed, formally, that the Committee submits a request for the lighting-up of Parliament Buildings to mark the European Remembrance Day for Victims of Terrorism on 11 March 2025.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to suspend the meeting to discuss the wording of the proposed motion.

The meeting was suspended at 2.14pm

The meeting resumed at 2.27pm in open session.

The Chair provided a summary of the discussions on this matter and Timothy Gaston withdrew his proposal and will speak to Members individually on this matter.

6. Legacy Issues – Stakeholder Oral Evidence

The witnesses joined the meeting at 2.28pm.

Members received a briefing from:

- Mr Mark Thompson, Chief Executive Officer, Relatives for Justice
- Mr Raymond McCord, a campaigner for victims' rights

The witnesses provided evidence on legacy issues.

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

The Chairperson thanked the witnesses for their attendance.

Stewart Dickson left the meeting at 3.15pm.

Áine Murphy left the meeting at 2.55pm and returned at 2.59pm.

Carál Ní Chuilín left the meeting at 3.05pm and returned at 3.07pm.

The witnesses left the meeting at 3.29pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to follow up with Relatives for Justice to provide documentation relating to inquests.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to take a short comfort break and suspend the meeting.

The meeting was suspended at 3.30pm.

The meeting resumed at 3.36pm in open session.

7. Independent Commission on Reconciliation and Information Recovery (ICRIR) – Oral Evidence

The witnesses joined the meeting at 3.37pm.

- Sir Declan Morgan, Chief Commissioner, ICRIR
- Ms Louise Warde Hunter, Chief Executive Officer and Commissioner, ICRIR
- Mr Peter Sheridan, Commissioner for Investigations, ICRIR

The witnesses provided a briefing on the work of the ICRIR.

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

Carál Ní Chuilín left the meeting at 4.28pm and returned at 4.42pm.

The Chairperson thanked the witnesses for their attendance.

The witnesses left the meeting at 4.49pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the NIO to request that they provide an update on their engagement with victims groups regarding remedial orders and any amendments they are proposing going forward.

8. Legacy in Republic of Ireland – Assembly Research and Information Service (RaISe) – Oral Briefing

The official joined the meeting at 4.50pm.

- Mr Thomas Lough, Research Officer, RaISe

Agreed: The Committee agreed to reschedule today's briefing session at a future meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request that RaISe add additional information to the briefing paper to include additional sections on the following:

- Commitments that were given by the Republic of Ireland as part of different Intergovernmental Agreements.
- Commitments that the Irish Government have given around legacy and information sharing;
- The role that the Irish Government played in the Troubles; and
- Commitments from the Irish Government regarding compliance with European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) agreements to ongoing inquiries.

Agreed: The Committee also agreed to request that RaISe compile an additional paper on reconciliation, to include the definition of, and examples of good practice in, reconciliation from other jurisdictions.

The official left the meeting at 4.54pm.

9. Draft Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered the draft forward work programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed for the Clerk to begin to draft a paper in order to respond to the Finance Committee's views on the Department's Budget for 2025-26 and any comments the Committee has on the Department's 2024-25 budget position for consideration by the Committee at a future meeting.

The Chairperson updated Members that the Committee team has requested a priority oral briefing from the Department as soon as an announcement on an agreed Programme for Government is made.

The Chairperson reminded Members that the next meeting on the 5 March will be for Members to consider recommendations for the Inquiry which will be in closed session; and for Members to forward any comments they have to the Clerk for inclusion in next week's meeting pack.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to hold a Strategic Planning review session at its meeting on the 12 of March but is flexible if that needs to change based on Committee priorities.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule consideration of the Draft Refugee Strategy and Delivery Framework; the paper for which were received in the Committee Office today.

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

10. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted the summary of Committee correspondence.
- ii. The Committee noted correspondence from Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse (COSICA) regarding raising victim awareness of HIA Redress Scheme.

Stewart Dickson joined the meeting (in person) at 5.03pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to issue a press release encouraging HIA victims to apply to the Redress scheme before the 2 April cut off date. A draft press release will be included in next week's pack for Members to consider.

- iii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Truth Recovery Independent Panel in relation to how the Panel intend to deal with instances of misogyny while attending the Victims and Survivors Consultation Forum.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response from the Panel and to consider a draft response to the Panel at its meeting next week.

- iv. The Committee noted correspondence from the Christian Institute following their oral evidence session as part of the Inquiry on 12 February 2025.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence and agree for the Committee team to include the correspondence as part of the Committee's Inquiry evidence.

11. Any Other Business

The Chair recapped to Members about the update in relation to the Draft Refugee Strategy and Delivery Framework and how the Clerk will send out these documents to seek early views from Members.

12. Date, Time and Place of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 5 March 2025 at 2.00pm in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 5.11pm.

Paula Bradshaw MLA

Chairperson, Committee for the Executive Office

Wednesday 26 March 2025