



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for The Executive Office

Minutes of Proceedings

Wednesday 14 January 2026

Meeting Location: Room 30, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Ms Paula Bradshaw MLA (Chairperson)

Mr Stewart Dickson MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Mr Phillip Brett MLA

Mrs Pam Cameron MLA

Ms Carál Ní Chuilín MLA

Ms Áine Murphy MLA

Online:

Ms Sinéad McLaughlin MLA

Mr Timothy Gaston MLA

Apologies:

Ms Claire Sugden MLA

In Attendance: Mr Nick Mitford (Assembly Clerk)
Ms Aoife Keating-Fitzpatrick (Snr Assist Assembly Clerk)
Ms Sarah-Anne McKinley (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Neil Porter (Clerical Supervisor)
Ms Andrienne Magee (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced at 2.00pm in public session.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Declarations of Interest

Áine Murphy declared a standing interest as having a family member who was born in a Mother and Baby institution in relation to the Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill.

Pam Cameron declared a standing interest as having worked previously in TEO as a junior Minister from February 2024 until September 2025.

Pam Cameron declared a standing interest on the Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill as it stands, she has a family member who may be entitled to a redress payment as part of the second part of this legislation.

Carál Ní Chuilín declared a standing interest on the Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill serving as Communities Minister in 2020.

Carál Ní Chuilín declared an interest having served as Communities Minister in 2020.

3. Chairperson's Business

There were no items of Chairperson's Business.

4. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meetings held on Wednesday 10 December 2025.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meetings held on Wednesday Tuesday 6 January 2026.

5. Matters Arising

5.1 The Tobacco and Vapes Bill

The Chairperson advised members that at the meeting on Wednesday 10 December 2025 the Committee considered correspondence from JTI Northern Ireland regarding the Tobacco and Vapes Bill. The Committee then agreed to forward the correspondence to the Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny Committee for consideration of the issues raised, as it is within that Committee's remit to examine and consider new EU acts and replacement EU acts.

The Chairperson advised that upon further consideration The Tobacco and Vapes Bill falls under the remit of the Health Committee.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note this item and agreed for the Clerk to liaise with the Clerk of the Health Committee to ensure they have received the original correspondence from JTI Northern Ireland.

6. Informal Clause by Clause: The Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalane Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill

Agreed: The Committee agreed to move into closed session.

Agreed: The Committee agreed for the Bill Clerk to join the meeting for this agenda item.

The meeting moved into closed session at 2:04pm.

Áine Murphy joined the meeting at 2.42pm.

Carál Ní Chuilín left the meeting at 2.53pm and returned at 2.53pm.

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

The meeting was suspended at 3.03pm.

The meeting resumed in closed session at 3.12pm.

Carál Ní Chuilín left the meeting at 3.37pm and returned at 3.42pm

Phillip Brett left the meeting at 4.04pm and returned at 4.10pm

The meeting moved into open session at 4.42pm.

The Chairperson advised Members that the Committee had completed its informal clause by clause scrutiny of the Bill, subject to further consideration of one remaining clause at the meeting scheduled for Monday 19 January 2026.

7. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted the summary of Committee correspondence.
- ii. The Committee considered a response from the Department to the Committee's correspondence on 21 November 2025 regarding the proposed HIA memorial plaque wording.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note this item of correspondence and agreed to forward the correspondence to Rosetta Trust.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to ask for a definitive date for the plaque's unveiling in Parliament Buildings.

- iii. The Committee considered a response from TEO to the Committee's correspondence on 3 December 2025 in relation to the RHI (Closure of Non-Domestic Scheme) Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note this item of correspondence and agreed to write to the Committee for the Economy indicating a nil response from the Committee.

Phillip Brett left the meeting at 4.52pm and returned at 4.56pm.

- iv. The Committee considered correspondence from the Northern Ireland Assembly Public Engagement Team inviting the Committee to take part in the Balmoral Show which will take place from Wednesday 13 May to Saturday 16 May 2026.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note this item of correspondence and agreed that should the proposed Race Relations Order Bill have been received by that time the Committee could attend to gather views as part of its Call for Evidence.

- v. The Committee considered correspondence from the Committee for Communities regarding proposed legislation.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note this item of correspondence and agreed to write to the Committee for Communities outlining how the Committee received a Written Ministerial Statement on the Executive Legislation Programme for the 2025-26 session on the 3 October 2025 and receives updates on relevant legislation including timelines via the DALO.

- vi. The Committee considered a response from the Department for Communities to the Committee's correspondence on 31 October 2025 in relation to the Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalane Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill and access to records.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note this item of correspondence and agreed to forward the response to the Committee for Communities for information.

Agreed: The Committee agreed for the Committee team to arrange a Committee visit to PRONI after the Easter Recess period.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to Barnardo's to ask for further information regarding the reasons why they have not permitted PRONI to digitise its records.

- vii. The Committee considered correspondence from an individual regarding Education Authority funding and a potential conflict of interest.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note this item of correspondence and agreed to write to the individual informing them that any potential Ministerial conflicts of interest are a matter for the Assembly's Commissioner for Standards, who would investigate complaints of this nature under the Ministerial Code of Conduct.

- viii. The Committee considered a response from Newry, Mourne & Down District Council to the Committee's correspondence on 31 October 2025 in relation to the potential redevelopment of the Marionvale site.

Agreed: The Committee agreed for the Clerk to liaise with the Planning Department at Newry, Mourne & Down District Council to ascertain further information on the Proposal of Application Notice and to ask if they can keep the Committee updated should a formal planning application be received.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to share the correspondence with the two individuals who previously wrote to the Committee about the proposed redevelopment of the Marionvale Site.

- ix. The Committee considered a response from the Department to the Committee's correspondence on 21 November 2025 regarding Reserve Schemes for those affected by Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note this item of correspondence and agreed to forward this response to the Committee for Finance.

- x. The Committee noted correspondence from the Information Commissioner's Office regarding their Better Records Together launch.
- xi. The Committee noted a report from Pivotal on Northern Ireland's multi-year Budget: challenges and opportunities.
- xii. The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from the Committee for Justice to TEO in relation to the Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme.
- xiii. The Committee noted an Executive Office News Release - Junior Ministers use London events to reaffirm Executive's commitment to economic growth.
- xiv. The Committee noted correspondence from the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission – Annual Statement 2025.
- xv. The Committee noted a response from the Department to the Committee's correspondence on 14 November 2025 regarding the International Relations Strategy.
- xvi. The Committee noted copy of correspondence from the Committee for Communities to the First Minister and deputy First Minister in relation to the Cross-Departmental Strategy for the Supporting People Programme.
- xvii. The Committee noted correspondence from The Independent Monitoring Authority – Fourth Annual Report to the Specialised Committee on Citizen's Rights.
- xviii. The Committee noted a TEO briefing paper on the Budget 2026 - 2029/2030.
- xix. The Committee noted a copy of correspondence sent from the Committee for Communities to the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding The Fraud, Error and Recovery Bill timeline.
- xx. The Committee noted a news release from TEO regarding Young People's Attitudes to Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Northern Ireland 2025.

- xxi. The Committee noted correspondence from TEO – A copy of the Central Good Relations Fund guidance Notes 2026/27.
- xxii. The Committee noted a response from Commissioner for Public Appointments to the Committee's correspondence on 23 September 2025 inviting the Commissioner to brief the Committee.
- xxiii. The Committee noted correspondence from The Open University in Ireland announcing the appointment of its new Director, Michael Bower.
- xxiv. The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Finance in relation to the proposed draft Budget for 2026 – 2029/30.
- xxv. The Committee noted correspondence from an individual outlining views on the Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery and the Legacy Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Irish Government to seek an update on the status of its commitments in relation to the Legacy Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the NIO to ask for details of any engagement that has taken place with victims and survivors regarding any implications of the remedial order, including the introduction of new clauses in the Legacy Bill.

8. Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered the draft forward work programme.

The Committee noted an update from the Assistant Clerk regarding the rescheduled briefing with the First and deputy First Minister which will now take place at the meeting on Wednesday 4 February 2026.

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

9. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

10. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Monday 19 January at 10:00am in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 4.58pm.

Paula Bradshaw MLA

Chairperson, Committee for the Executive Office

Wednesday 14 January 2026