



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for The Executive Office

Minutes of Proceedings

Wednesday 28 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

Mr Timothy Gaston MLA

Ms Sinéad McLauglin MLA

Ms Áine Murphy MLA

Online:

None

Apologies:

Ms Carál Ní Chuilín MLA

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)
online
Mr Neil Porter (Clerical Supervisor)
Ms Andrienne Magee (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced at 2.01pm 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.

Pam Cameron declared an interest in relation to item 3.2 and having a family member who is a member of the Arts Council Northern Ireland Board.

3. Chairperson's Business

3.1 Rosetta Trust – HIA Memorial

Sinéad McLaughlin joined the meeting at 2.03pm.

The Chairperson advised Members that they received correspondence from Rosetta Trust in relation to email exchanges between Rosetta Trust and TEO regarding the final wording of the HIA Memorial.

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

3.2 Survivors Together – HIA Memorial

The Chairperson advised Members that Survivors Together released a statement outlining that they will not be attending the unveiling of the HIA Memorial next month.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note this item of correspondence and agreed to forward the statement to the Department, and to request that the Department reconsider the circumstances and format of the event to ensure the fullest possible inclusion of victims' and survivors' groups.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to Belfast City Council to seek an update on its plans in relation to Belfast Stories and the inclusion of HIA and victims & survivors within the initiative.

3.3 Clerical Child Abuse

The Chairperson advised Members that during yesterday's debate on Clerical Child Abuse, the Junior Ministers offered to provide the Committee with an oral briefing from Department officials, in closed session, on the contents of the reports commissioned by TEO.

Agreed: The Committee agreed for the Committee team to liaise with the DALO to arrange this oral briefing as part of the Committee's forward work programme.

3.4 Sectarian attack in Londonderry

The Chairperson condemned the recent sectarian attack on a young family in Londonderry.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to seek an update on how the Communities in Transition and TBUC programmes are addressing the grass roots delivery of these initiatives in light of the recent incident.

4. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 21 January 2026.

5. Matters Arising

The Chairperson advised Members that she met with Joe McVey, the newly appointed Commissioner for Victims and Survivors for Northern Ireland last Wednesday for an informal introduction prior to his evidence session with the Committee on Wednesday 11 February 2026. A note of the informal meeting was provided.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note this item.

6. Final Agreement of Committee Report: Inquiry (Mother & Baby Institutions, Magdalane Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill.

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

Title page, Committee Membership and Powers, Table of Contents and List of Abbreviations

Agreed : The Committee agreed it was content with this section of the report.

Introduction Section

Agreed : The Committee agreed it was content with this section of the report.

Recommendations Section

Agreed : The Committee agreed it was content with this section of the report.

Preparation Work

Agreed : The Committee agreed it was content with this section of the report.

Call for Evidence

Agreed : The Committee agreed it was content with this section of the report.

Written Submissions

Agreed : The Committee agreed it was content with this section of the report.

Oral Evidence

Agreed : The Committee agreed it was content with this section of the report.

Summary of Roundtable Events

Agreed : The Committee agreed it was content with this section of the report.

Engagement with Statutory Committees

Agreed : The Committee agreed it was content with this section of the report.

Other issues considered by the Committee

Agreed : The Committee agreed it was content with this section of the report.

Clause by Clause deliberations and decisions by the Committee

Agreed : The Committee agreed it was content with this section of the report.

Appendices

Agreed : The Committee agreed it was content with this section of the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that a copy of the minutes from today's meeting are included in appendices of the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the report on the Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill (NIA 135/22-27) is printed on 29 January 2026.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that an electronic copy of the report be published on the Committee's webpage on 29 January 2026 and sent to all organisations that provided evidence to the Committee on the Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to publish the press release as drafted to be published on 29 January 2026.

The Chairperson informed Members that the Committee had now completed the Committee Stage of the Bill and that the date for the Consideration Stage debate will be confirmed by the Department in the coming weeks.

The Chairperson thanked all those who contributed to the Bill, in particular victims and survivors, who have waited decades for recognition, truth and redress.

7. Update from the three overseas bureaux: Oral Briefing

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

The witnesses joined the meeting online at 2.22pm.

Members received an oral briefing from:

- Kerry Curran, Director Northern Ireland Bureau China
- Aodhán Connolly, Director of the Northern Ireland Executive Brussels
- Richard Cushnie, Director / Counsellor, Northern Ireland Bureau North America

The witnesses provided an update on the work of the three bureaus.

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

Phillip Brett left the meeting at 3.13pm and returned at 3.18pm.

Áine Murphy declared an interest as a Member of the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs.

Sinéad McLaughlin left the meeting at 4.08pm.

Phillip Brett left the meeting at 4.08pm and returned at 4.12pm.

Áine Murphy left the meeting at 4.09pm and came back at 4.17pm.

The Chairperson thanked the witnesses for their attendance.

The witnesses left the meeting at 4.12pm.

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

The meeting was suspended at 4.12pm.

The meeting resumed in open session at 4.17pm.

8. Equality Commission for Northern Ireland - Supreme Court Judgment in 'For Women Scotland Ltd v The Scottish Ministers': Oral Briefing

Agreed: The Committee agreed to postpone the oral briefing with the Equality Commission until the conclusion of the current legal proceedings have completed.

Timothy Gaston asked for it to be recorded that he was of the view that the oral briefing should have proceeded as scheduled.

9. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted the summary of Committee correspondence.
- ii. The Committee considered correspondence from the Committee for Finance in relation to the scrutiny of the Draft Multi-Year Budget for 2026-29/30.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note this item of correspondence and agreed to raise the issue of 5 year departmental business plan with officials at the oral evidence session on the Draft Budget at next week's meeting.

- iii. The Committee considered correspondence from an individual regarding the promotion of public transport.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note this item of correspondence and agreed to write to the individual informing them that issues in relation to Translink would be a matter for the Committee for Infrastructure to consider.

- iv. The Committee considered correspondence from TEO regarding the Executive's response to the Covid-19 Inquiry Module 2 report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note this item of correspondence and agreed for the Committee team to schedule an oral briefing with the Department's Covid Team as part of the Committee's April - July Forward Work Programme.

- v. The Committee noted correspondence from First Minister and deputy First Minister - Statement to the Assembly 13 January: British-Irish Council Summit December 2025.
- vi. The Committee noted correspondence from NIA Legal Services – 52nd report from the Examiner of Statutory Rules.
- vii. The Committee noted correspondence from First Minister and deputy First Minister - Statement to the Assembly 16 January 2026: Publication of the

NI Executive's Third Response to the Covid-19 Inquiry Module 1 Report recommendations.

- viii. The Committee noted a response from TEO regarding the Committee's correspondence on 9 October 2025 in relation to the cost of the Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry.
- ix. The Committee noted correspondence from the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding the unveiling of the HIA Memorial.
- x. The Committee noted correspondence from the Northern Ireland Youth Assembly – Big Youth Survey 2025 Final Report.
- xi. The Committee noted a TEO news release – Individual Well-Being in Northern Ireland 2024/25.
- xii. The Committee noted an Official Report (Hansard) on the Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill: Formal Clause-by-clause Consideration from the meeting on Wednesday 19 January 2026.

10. Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered the draft forward work programme.

The Committee noted an update from the Clerk in relation to the oral briefings for the forthcoming meetings on Wednesday 4 and Wednesday 11 February 2026, which are scheduled as drafted.

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

11. Any Other Business

Phillip Brett asked the Chairperson whether she would be attending events in Washington DC as part of the St Patrick's Day celebrations. The Chairperson indicated that she would not be attending.

12. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 4 February 2026 at 2.00pm in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 4.29pm.

Paula Bradshaw MLA

Chairperson, Committee for the Executive Office

Wednesday 28 January 2026