



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for The Executive Office

Minutes of Proceedings

Wednesday 10 June 2026

Meeting Location: Room 30, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Ms Paula Bradshaw MLA (Chairperson)

Mr Stewart Dickson MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Mr Phillip Brett MLA

Ms Deborah Erskine MLA

Mr Timothy Gaston MLA

Ms Áine Murphy MLA

Ms Carál Ní Chuilín MLA

Online:

Ms Sinéad McLaughlin MLA

Ms Claire Sugden MLA

Apologies:

None

In Attendance: Mr Trevor Allen (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Feargal McGuinness (Assembly Clerk)
Ms Aoife Keating-Fitzpatrick (Senior Assistant 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

There were no apologies

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Chairperson's Business

Members expressed their condemnation of the recent disorder seen across Northern Ireland and placed on record their sincere thanks to those in emergency services who have been responding to these incidents.

Phillip Brett read into the record a statement on behalf of the victim's family.

The Chairperson conveyed her thanks to Phillip for reading the statement and asked that he pass on the Committee's well wishes to the victim and his family.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the First and deputy First Minister to ask for the following information:

- How departments are working together to ensure a coordinated response, particularly in relation to community safety and support for individuals and families displaced by recent disorder.

- How TEO can utilise Good Relations Funding to support areas where disorder has occurred to help reduce tensions.
- An urgent update on the Race Relations legislation, including a date for introduction to the Assembly.
- An update on the Refugee Integration Strategy, in particular how progress is being monitored at an outcome level, including through the collection and reporting of relevant data.
- Details of any engagement with the Home Office, given that immigration policy is a reserved matter.
- What actions were agreed at yesterday afternoon's Executive meeting to help address the recent disorder.
- Following the disorder witnessed last year in Ballymena, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council and other council areas were given funding to address issues such as social cohesion, including the establishment of community hubs. How much funding has been spent in each council area to date?

Agreed: Members agreed that the Committee team should explore the feasibility of hosting roundtable events for those most affected, in relation to TEO initiatives.

Carál Ní Chuilín put on record her concerns around Ending Violence against Women and Girls.

3.1 Interfaith Clerical Abuse Survivors – Safeguarding Priorities

The Chairperson advised Members that she was copied into correspondence from the Interfaith Clerical Abuse Survivors (ICAS) to the Department in relation to a meeting which took place between ICAS and TEO officials on 28 May 2026.

The Chairperson expressed concern regarding the alleged safeguarding failings within the Church of Ireland at St Brendan's, as reported in the media in recent days.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note this item and to write to the Department to ask for an update on the meeting, including any agreed outcomes and actions for TEO.

3.2 Interfaith Clerical Abuse Survivors – Spiritual Abuse

The Chairperson advised Members that she was copied into correspondence from the Interfaith Clerical Abuse Survivors (ICAS) to Timothy Gaston in relation to queries regarding spiritual abuse. ICAS advised that spiritual abuse would have been excluded from TEO research into Historical Clerical Childhood Abuse unless specifically childhood sexual abuse.

The Committee noted this item.

3.3 The Executive Office – Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) Invitation

The Chairperson advised Members that she has been invited to the launch of the Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes Coercive Control Campaign, which has been created in partnership with Ulster University and the EVAWG Programme. The event will take place at Ulster University Belfast Campus on Tuesday 16 June 2026 at 10.00am.

The Committee noted this item.

3.4 Ulster University – Invitation to Migration Policy Clinic

The Chairperson advised Members that she has been invited to Ulster University's first Migration Policy Clinic event, which will take place on Thursday 25 June 2026 at 10.00am at Ulster University School of Law.

The Committee noted this item.

4. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meetings held on Wednesday 3 June 2026.

5. Matters Arising

Further Consideration Stage of The Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill

The Chairperson advised Members that Further Consideration Stage of The Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill will now take place on Monday 22 June 2026.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to hold an additional meeting on Tuesday 16 June 2026 to discuss proposed amendments ahead of the Further Consideration Stage debate.

5.1 - 5.3 Draft Framework for Race Relations and Delivery Plan 2026-2028

The Committee considered a draft response on behalf of the Committee to TEO's Draft Framework for Race Relations and Delivery Plan 2026–2028. The Committee also noted Law Centre NI's submission to TEO's consultation on the draft framework and delivery plan.

Agreed: The Committee agreed for Members to respond with any final comments by Friday 12 June 2026 and that the draft response would be revisited at next week's meeting.

5.4 Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) – Summary of Responses

The Chairperson reminded Members that at its meeting on 25 March 2026, the Committee agreed to request written updates from all departments on EVAWG, including details of the evidence that departments continue to collect and the funding allocated for this work.

The Committee considered a summary of these responses.

Agreed: The Committee agreed for the Committee team to update the summary document to highlight the rural nature of the issue, particularly the engagement work undertaken by DAERA and the absence of specific funding, and to revisit the summary of responses at next week's meeting.

5.5 Publication of the Third Report of the Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ)

Agreed: The Committee noted that the third report of the CAJ will be published on 23 June and agree to schedule a briefing from the authors of this and the previous two reports in due course.

Deborah Erskine agreed to share a copy of the report from Soroptimist discussed during this item of business with the Committee.

6. Oral Briefing: Truth Recovery Independent Panel - Update on Final Report

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

The witnesses joined the meeting at 2.48pm.

Phillip Brett left the meeting at 2.48pm and returned at 2.59pm.

Members received an oral briefing from:

- Prof. Leanne McCormick, Co-chair and Social and Oral Historian (attending remotely)
- Prof. Sean O'Connell, Co-chair and Social and Oral Historian
- Dr. Mark Farrell, Expert member for Archiving
- Ms. Roisin McGlone, Victim-Survivor Representative

The officials provided the Committee with an update on the publication of the Truth Recovery Independent Panel's final report.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Sinéad McLaughlin left the meeting at 2.48pm.

Carál Ní Chuilín left the meeting at 2.53pm and returned at 2.58pm.

Áine Murphy left the meeting at 3.11pm and returned at 3.17pm.

Carál Ní Chuilín left the meeting at 3.21pm and returned at 3.30pm.

Phillip Brett left the meeting at 3.43pm and returned at 3.52pm.

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

Timothy Gaston left the meeting at 3.49pm and returned at 4.46pm.

The Chairperson thanked the witnesses for their attendance.

The officials left the meeting at 4.01pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Truth Recovery Independent Panel to ask if they can share its recommendations with the Committee, particularly in relation to access and archival matters, and any recommendations to TEO, to ensure the Bill reflects these. The Committee also agreed to explore the possibility of an informational briefing to discuss the recommendations, if required.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to review previous actions it has taken with the Department of Health in relation to access to records, to ensure these reflect the Panel's recommendations in this area.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to look at its Committee Stage report on the Bill in relation to the removal of institutions and recommendations made in the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to explore ways in which it could help publicise the Public Inquiry when it is due to begin.

7. Oral Briefing: Programme for Government First Annual Report – Departmental Officials

Agreed: The Committee agreed to defer this oral briefing to a later meeting.

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

The meeting was suspended at 4:03pm.

Deborah Erskine and Áine Murphy left the meeting at 4.13pm.

Proceedings continued in public session at 4.13pm with the following Members present: Paula Bradshaw, Stewart Dickson, Phillip Brett, Timothy Gaston, Carál Ní Chuilín and Claire Sugden online.

8. SL1: The Salaries (Public Services Ombudsman) Order (Northern Ireland) 2026

The Committee noted that the Assembly Commission is proposing to make a statutory rule that determines the salary payable to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to publish the SL1 papers on the Assembly website and to issue a call for views on the proposal.

Timothy Gaston put on record his views on the proposed increase in the Ombudsman's salary compared to the MLA pay rise implemented in April 2026.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule consideration of the proposed SR at its meeting on 1 July 2026.

9. Oral Briefing: Assembly Legal Services: FOI (Closed session)

Agreed: The Committee agreed to defer this oral briefing until next week's meeting.

10. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted the summary of Committee correspondence.
- ii. The Committee considered a response from the Minister for Communities to correspondence of 20 March 2026 requesting further information on the court action taken by DfC in relation to signage at Grand Central Station.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note this item and agreed to write to the Minister for Communities requesting that the associated legal costs are forwarded to the Committee when they become available.

- iii. The Committee considered a response from the Minister of Health to correspondence of 15 May 2026 requesting further information on the funding allocation for the Regional Trauma Network and the need for its expansion.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Minister of Health requesting that he keeps the Committee updated on the completion of Phase 1 of the evaluation of the Regional Trauma Network.

- iv. The Committee considered a response from the Department to correspondence of 24 April 2026 requesting details of spend to date on legal fees by the Irish Language Commissioner and the Office's budgetary concerns, including a breakdown of all associated costs.

Agreed: The Committee noted this item and agreed to write to TEO to request a detailed breakdown of the legal fees to date.

- v. The Committee considered a response from the Department to correspondence of 11 May 2026 on the funding for the Office of Identity and Cultural Expression, and the two Language Commissioners, including legal fees to date.

The Committee noted this item.

- vi. The Committee considered a response from the Secretary of State to correspondence of 18 May 2026 in relation to the May Review of the Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery.

The Committee noted this item.

- vii. The Committee considered a response from the Department for Communities to correspondence of 27 March 2026 regarding male aggression in women's sports and team sports.

The Committee noted this item.

- viii. The Committee considered a response from the Department to correspondence of 28 May 2026 requesting an update on the Refugee Integration Strategy.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to arrange an oral briefing on the strategy following publication of the first annual report.

- ix. The Committee noted the 67th Report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules and that there are no rules for the attention of this Committee.
- x. The Committee noted a news release from The Executive Office – ‘Ministers welcome £42million ePharmacy as part of wider £102.6million Transformation Fund’.
- xi. The Committee noted correspondence from The Executive Office – ‘ISNI - Investing Activity Report’.
- xii. The Committee noted a response from the Minister of Health to correspondence of 21 May 2026 regarding the development of a Redress Scheme.
- xiii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance of the HM Treasury Open Book Review of Executive Budget.
- xiv. The Committee noted correspondence from the Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission on the appointment and reappointment of members.

11. Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered the draft forward work programme.

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

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request confirmation of the oral briefing with the First Minister and deputy First Minister, which was requested to take place at the meeting on Wednesday 1 July 2026.

12. Any Other Business

Carál Ní Chuilín asked whether there had been any response from the Department regarding an update to Race Relations legislation. The Chairperson advised that nothing had been received to date.

13. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Tuesday 16 June at 10.00am in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 4.31pm.

Paula Bradshaw MLA

Chairperson, Committee for the Executive Office

Wednesday 17 June 2026