



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

# Committee for The Executive Office

## Minutes of Proceedings

**Wednesday 4 March 2026**

**Meeting Location:** Room 30, Parliament Buildings

**Present:** Ms Paula Bradshaw MLA (Chairperson)  
Mrs Pam Cameron MLA  
Mr Timothy Gaston MLA  
Ms Áine Murphy MLA  
Ms Carál Ní Chuilín MLA

**Online:** None

**Apologies:** Mr Stewart Dickson MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Phillip Brett MLA  
Ms Sinéad McLaughlin MLA  
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 2.00pm in public session.*

### **1. Apologies**

As above.

### **2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **3. Chairperson's Business**

#### **3.1 Commission for Victims and Survivors (CVS) – Follow up from evidence session**

The Chairperson advised Members that the Commissioner for Victims and Survivors, Joe McVey wrote to her thanking the Committee for their time during the oral evidence session on 11 February 2026. The Commissioner outlined that he would welcome the opportunity to return to the Committee in the future to provide further updates in relation to his work.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to schedule an oral briefing with the Commissioner for Victims and Survivors as part of the Committee's FWP during the September – December 2026 session.

### **3.2 Interfaith Clerical Abuse Survivors – TEO research and recommendations**

The Chairperson advised Members that she has been forwarded correspondence from representatives of Interfaith Clerical Abuse Survivors to the Department regarding the public dissemination of the TEO research and recommendations of clerical sexual abuse.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to note this item and agreed to write to junior Ministers to request that a meeting is arranged between Ministers and Interfaith Clerical Abuse Survivors at their earliest opportunity.

## **4. Draft Minutes**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 25 February 2026.

## **5. Matters Arising**

### **5.1 Northern Ireland Assembly Legal Services – Data Protection Policy**

The Chairperson reminded Members that at the meeting on Wednesday 12 February 2026, the Head of Legal Services explained to Members the actions taken by Assembly Commission staff in relation to a PSNI enquiry, and the role of the Legal Services in those actions. During that meeting the Head of Legal Services agreed to provide a copy of the Assembly's Data Protection Policy.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to note this item and for the Clerk to confirm the date the Form 81 was authorised.

### **5.2 Equality Commission for Northern Ireland – Future Oral Briefing**

The Chairperson reminded Members that prior to last week's meeting, the Clerk emailed Members correspondence from the Equality Commission in relation to Supreme Court judgment in 'For Women Scotland Ltd v the Scottish Ministers' in

response to the Committee's recent enquiry about when the Commission will next be able to provide an update to Members.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to note this item and agreed for the Clerk to liaise with the Equality Commission to seek permission to share the correspondence received by the Committee with the Assembly Commission.

## **6. Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Abuse (COSICA): Oral Briefing**

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

*The witnesses joined the meeting at 2.13pm.*

Members received an oral briefing from:

- Fiona Ryan, Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Abuse, COSICA
- Denise Morgan, Head of Policy, Research and Engagement, COSICA

The witnesses provided an update on the work of the office of COSICA.

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

The Chairperson thanked the witnesses for their attendance.

*The witnesses left the meeting at 4.02pm.*

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Health Minister to ask for the following information:

- Details of the trauma-informed care and specialist support services currently available to victims and survivors of childhood institutional sexual abuse.
- Whether pathways to support can be made available for those childhood victims who do not fall within the remit of the Office of COSICA.
- Whether a prevalence study has been considered and if not, whether one could be commissioned to assess the gap between identified need and

current provision for victims and survivors of non-recent/historical institutional child abuse.

- Whether a central depository system could be established or developed through the existing Encompass system to support comprehensive data capture relating to lifelong trauma experiences of victims and survivors.

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

- What plans are in place for support services for victims and survivors of institutional abuse beyond 2027 should the Office of COSICA cease to exist.
- Whether an oral briefing in relation to COSICA could be scheduled and that additional time be set aside for this topic during the next oral briefing with Ministers and the Committee.
- What work if any, is currently underway in relation to the wider Memorial Programme, including broader engagement and consultation with victims and survivors.
- Whether a prevalence study has been considered and if not, whether one could be commissioned to assess the gap between identified need and current provision for victims and survivors of non-recent/historical institutional child abuse and how this matter should be brought to the Executive for consideration.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Justice to ask whether a prevalence study has been considered and if not, whether one could be commissioned to assess the gap between identified need and current provision for victims and survivors of non-recent/historical institutional child abuse.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department for Communities to ask about the New Foundations pilot scheme and whether this model could be used for data capture for victims and survivors in order to avoid re-traumatisation across statutory agencies.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to request that RaISe examine prevalence studies relating to victims and survivors of non-recent/historical institutional child abuse in the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to COSICA to request further information on any prevalence studies relating to victims and survivors of non-recent/historical institutional child abuse carried out elsewhere that have been put into statute.

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

*The meeting was suspended at 3.13pm.*

*The meeting resumed in open session at 3.19pm.*

## **7. Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Framework and first Delivery Plan – Departmental Officials Oral Briefing**

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

*The witnesses joined the meeting at 3.19pm.*

Members received an oral briefing from:

- Geraldine Fee, Director of Ending Violence Against Women & Girls Division, TEO
- Ryan Somerville, Head of Policy and Research, TEO
- Fionnuala French, Head of Community Investment, TEO

The witnesses provided an update on the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Framework and first Delivery Plan.

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

The Chairperson thanked the witnesses for their attendance.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department to ask for the following information:

- An update on the Power to Change campaign, including the wording of questions used during the campaign's youth panel sessions.

- How much TEO funding for EVAWG has been provided to the Education Authority for Youth Panels.
- When the first study on attitudes among young men and boys will be published.
- A breakdown of funding provided to all providers from the EVAWG budget.
- That the report on the shared learning event with councils is shared with the Committee.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to NISRA to request statistics relating to EVAWG, including the number of recorded incidents involving violence or threats made against women and a breakdown of offenders.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to discuss the possibility of holding a stakeholder panel session on the EVAWG Strategy at its Strategic Planning meeting next month.

*The witnesses left the meeting at 4.20pm.*

## **8. Immigration Raids in Northern Ireland – Migrants’ Rights Network: Written Briefing**

The Committee discussed a written briefing on Immigration Raids in Northern Ireland from the Migrants’ Rights Network.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to note the written briefing and agreed to invite Migrants’ Rights Network and the PSNI to provide an oral briefing on immigration raids in Northern Ireland.

*Áine Murphy left the meeting at 4.27pm and returned at 4.30pm.*

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to suspend the meeting until the Committee resumed quorum.

*The meeting was suspended at 4.27pm.*

*The meeting resumed in open session at 4.33pm.*

## 9. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted the summary of Committee correspondence.
- ii. The Committee considered correspondence from the Committee for Finance – Outturn and Forecast Outturn January position.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to note this item and agreed to write to the Department to ask for further information around the £1.2 million Capital DEL reduction regarding the timing of Urban Villages including a breakdown by project.

- iii. The Committee noted a news release from TEO – First Minister and deputy First Minister unveil memorial plaque for victims and survivors of Historical Childhood Abuse.
- iv. The Committee noted correspondence from TEO – Investment Strategy NI Investing Activity Report for February 2026.
- v. The Committee noted an Official Report (Hansard) – Strategy for Victims and Survivors of the Troubles / Conflict 2024-2024: Bridge of Hope, Ely Centre, Relatives for Justice, SEFF and WAVE Trauma Centre – 18 February 2026.
- vi. The Committee noted an Official Report (Hansard) – Strategy for Victims and Survivors of the Troubles / Conflict 2024-2024: The Executive Office – 18 February 2026.
- vii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Northern Ireland Assembly Business Office – Partnership agreement between TEO and Maze Long Kesh Development Corporation.
- viii. The Committee noted correspondence from the NI Fiscal Council – The Finance Minister’s proposed 2026-2027 to 2028-2029-30 Budget: An assessment.
- ix. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Communities regarding the Social Housing Development Programme.

## **10. Forward Work Programme**

The Committee considered the draft forward work programme.

The Committee noted an update from the Assistant Clerk in relation to next week's meeting where the Committee will receive an oral briefing from Interfaith Clerical Abuse Survivors and the Department on Historical Clerical Sexual Abuse. The Committee will also receive an oral briefing from Departmental officials on the Programme for Government (PfG) and the PfG Delivery Unit.

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

## **11. Any Other Business**

Timothy Gaston raised an issue in relation to comments made by the Irish Language Commissioner coinciding with an event in Parliament Buildings to mark Irish Language week.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed for the Clerk to contact the Speaker's Office to determine whether a transcript or recording of the event is available.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed for the Clerk to contact the Communications Office to determine whether a transcript of the media interview given by Mr Deeds on the day of the event is available.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the DALO regarding the responsibilities of the posts and reporting structures for the Director of the Office of Identity and Cultural Expression, Irish Language Commissioner, and Commissioner for the Ulster Scots and the Ulster British tradition.

## **12. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 11 March 2026 at 2.00pm in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

*The meeting was adjourned at 4.42pm.*

**Paula Bradshaw MLA**

**Chairperson, Committee for the Executive Office**

**Wednesday 4 March 2026**