

## MEETING ACTIONS

<b>TITLE/ORGANISATION</b>	FM meeting with EO Committee Chair
<b>PRIVATE OFFICE REFERENCE (INV/COR/SUB)</b>	
<b>VENUE/DATE</b>	<b>FM Office, PB 23/10/2024</b>
<b>LIST OF ATTENDEES</b>	Michelle O'Neill FM Ronan McGinley, FM SpAd Carol Morrow FM PPS David Malcolm, TEO Permanent Secretary Paula Bradshaw, Committee Chair Michael Potter, Clerk
<b>TEO POLICY OFFICIAL(s) PRESENT:</b>	
<b>GIFTS/HOSPITALITY TO REGISTER</b>	

## AREAS DISCUSSED

The First Minister referenced the correspondence to the Committee Chair (Email from DALO to Clerk, 22/10/24) which outlined the intended purpose of the meeting, that is to:

- ensure that the Committee meeting is constructive and contributes to the positive working relationship between Ministers and the Committee,
- that the First Minister's attendance at the meeting is productive and conducted consistent with the statutory remit of the Committee, which should be confined to the statutory functions which the First Minister exercises jointly,
- and that matters outside the functions and responsibilities of The Executive Office are beyond the legal remit of the Committee.

The First Minister acknowledged that previously, in answering questions on these matters, the lines had been blurred to some extent and expressed concern at the potential negative impact the situation could have on the integrity of the Joint Office and the wider Institutions which she wished to protect.

The Chair confirmed that the Committee had received legal advice and that she would ask Committee members if they were willing to share it with TEO Ministers.

The Chair explained that the First Minister was scheduled to appear for 45 minutes, the Committee would meet ten minutes early, and there would be a time limit on each member's questions of five minutes.

The Chair confirmed that in respect of questions that may fall outside of the vires, the Chair cannot stop the questions being asked, it is for FM to decide if she wishes to answer or not. The Chair may ask a member to revise a question to fit within the remit and if questioning becomes repetitious or aggressive the Chair will intervene.

Discussion was held on the questions which had been submitted. It was noted that some were tenuously linked to the work of TEO e.g. safeguarding where the policy responsibility belongs to DoH.

There was some discussion on the media reports from the morning, which suggested some members intended to ask questions outside of the Committee's remit.

Discussion was held on the concerns the Assembly staff had expressed regarding the First Minister appearing specifically relating to the jointery of the office, which had been mitigated with confirmation that the deputy First Minister had agreed to First Minister's attendance.

The Permanent Secretary raised the potential of delaying or postponing the session, seeking Committee agreement to hold the meeting in closed session or with the Committee's legal support present. Both the First Minister and Chair agreed the meeting should proceed in open session as planned. The Chair reiterated that she would remind members of the Committee's legal advice before the session commenced.

#### **ISSUES AGREED**

NA

#### **ACTION POINTS/OFFICIAL RESPONSIBLE**

**NOTE WRITTEN BY:** Carol  
Morrow

**DATE:** 28/10/24

**Agreed by:** Permanent  
Secretary

**DATE:** 30/10/24