



## **Northern Ireland Assembly**

### **COMMITTEE FOR THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE**

#### **MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS WEDNESDAY 7 DECEMBER 2016 ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

- Present: Mr Mike Nesbitt (Chairperson)  
Mr Danny Kennedy (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Cathal Boylan  
Mrs Pam Cameron  
Mr William Irwin  
Mr Seán Lynch  
Mr Philip McGuigan  
Mr Richie McPhillips  
Mr Christopher Stalford
- Apologies: Mr Stewart Dickson  
Mr Phillip Logan
- In Attendance: Mrs Kathy O'Hanlon (Committee Clerk)  
Mr Neal Flanagan (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Stephen Magee (Clerical Supervisor)  
Mrs Andrienne Magee (Clerical Officer)  
Mr Michael Potter (Research Officer, Item 5)  
Mr Ray McCaffrey (Research Officer, Item 6)

*The meeting began in public session at 2.02 pm.*

#### **1. Apologies**

Apologies were noted as above.

## **2. Chairperson's Business**

### EC-UK

The Chairperson gave an account of his engagement with the Chairs of Committees from Westminster, the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly with responsibility for European affairs. The Chairperson advised that the main focus of the discussions were matters related to the UK's exit from the EU; and that it is likely the next EC-UK forum will be held in February after the Supreme Court judgement and before Article 50 is triggered.

The Chairperson also advised that the Chairs of the Committees from the devolved administrations held separate discussions, and agreed it would be useful to have a separate meeting to discuss matters of mutual interest to the devolved administrations.

### Budget Scrutiny by Committees

The Committee noted that responses from departments to the Committee for Finance to questions contained in a Budget research paper were overdue and that this matter had been raised at the Chairpersons' Liaison Group. The Chairperson informed members that officials from the Executive Office (TEO) advised on 24 November that additional time would be required due to the detail of the questions; however, a response had not yet been received.

*Agreed:* To ask TEO to confirm when the requested information will be provided.

*Mr Boylan joined the meeting at 2.05 pm.*

*Mrs Cameron joined the meeting at 2.05 pm.*

*Mr Lynch joined the meeting at 2.05 pm.*

### Committee Visit to Brussels

The Committee noted the travel proposal and costings for the Committee's visit to Brussels in January, and that the Director of Parliamentary Services and Clerk Assistant had confirmed they were content with the proposal.

*Agreed:* To seek to engage with ONIEB, NI MEPs, the NI Taskforce, the UK Permanent Representative and the Irish permanent representative during the visit.

*Agreed:* To confirm a delegate from each political party for the visit.

### Christmas greetings list

The Committee considered a draft list of recipients for Christmas greetings.

*Agreed:* To send a Christmas greetings e-card to those on the list.

#### T:BUC Engagement Forum

The Committee noted an invitation from the Together: Building a United Community Engagement Forum to an event on reconciliation, respect and shared space to be held on Thursday 23 February 2017 at Girdwood Community Hub, Belfast.

#### Commission on Flags, Identity, Culture and Tradition

The Committee noted an invitation to an engagement meeting on the Section 75 sector from the Commission on Flags, Identity, Culture and Tradition to be held at NICVA's premises on 19 December 2016.

#### Committee Invitations

The Committee noted the current list of Committee invitations.

#### Programme for Government Consultation Document – Children's Version

The Chairperson advised that the NI Commissioner for Children and Young (NICCY) people had voiced concerns that the child-friendly version of the Programme for Government (PfG) consultation document had been published three weeks into the consultation period; and was unaware of any sector-specific PfG engagement events.

*Agreed:* That NICCY's concerns be reflected in the Committee's report on the PfG.

### **3. Draft Minutes**

*Agreed:* The draft minutes of the proceedings for the meetings of 30 November 2016 were agreed by the Committee.

### **4. Matters Arising**

#### Mr Dee Stitt – remarks made during previous meeting

The Committee noted it had previously agreed to ask to the Chairpersons' Liaison Group to encourage Chairpersons to remain mindful of affording an opportunity for people to respond to comments made about them during Committee meetings at which they are not

present. Members discussed the criteria for writing to an individual who is named during Committee proceedings.

*Agreed:* That the Chairperson will write to Mr Stitt with a copy of the relevant Hansard report offering an opportunity to respond.

#### Outstanding Committee Correspondence

The Committee noted the current list of outstanding correspondence.

### **5. UK Exit from EU – RaISe: International Relations outside the EU: Norway and Switzerland**

*An Officer from the Assembly's Research and Information Service (RaISe) joined the meeting at 2.17 pm*

Mr Michael Potter, Research Officer, briefed the Committee on International Relations outside the European Union, focusing on Norway and Switzerland.

A question and answer session followed.

The Research Officer agreed to provide follow-up research on any arrangements for Ukraine with respect to freedom of movement or visa liberalisation as part of its free-trade agreement with the European Union.

*The Research Officer left the meeting at 2.38 pm*

*Agreed:* To ask ONIEB for guidance on which of the Norwegian offices in Brussels it would be most appropriate to engage with during the Committee's visit.

### **6. Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman – RaISe: Issues relating to public services Ombudsmen and the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland**

*An Officer from the RaISe joined the meeting at 2.39 pm.*

Mr Ray McCaffrey, Research Officer, briefed the Committee on issues relating to public services Ombudsmen and the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland.

A question and answer session followed.

*The Research officer left the meeting at 2.58 pm.*

*Agreed:* To request follow-up research from RaISe on: examples whereby a complaint to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman has led to a review of a decision of the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner; and on the original rationale as to why the Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland was set up in the way it is with respect to review/oversight of its decisions.

*Agreed:* To ask the Minister of Justice for information on the number of complaints received by the Department of Justice regarding the Police Ombudsman's Office; an indication of the outcome of those complaints; and details of what powers the Department has or sanctions that are available when complaints are upheld.

## **7. Together: Building a United Community**

The Committee noted responses from other Statutory Committees regarding the scrutiny of departmental activity, including the monitoring of T:BUC headline actions where Departments have responsibility for delivery.

*Agreed:* To advise the Committee for the Economy that the Good Relations indicators are published annually and that the Executive, in line with the Committee's recommendation, have agreed to publish an annual report on T:BUC.

## **8. Correspondence**

### Delivering Social Change Stakeholder Update

The Committee noted the Delivering Social Change (DSC) Stakeholder Update for November 2016.

*Agreed:* To forward the DSC update to the relevant statutory committees.

### ISNI DTS Investing Activity Report

The Committee noted the ISNI Delivery Tracking System Investment Activity Report for November 2016.

## **9. Forward Work Programme**

The Committee noted the draft Forward Work Programme until January 2017.

## **10. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

## **11. Date, time and place of next meeting**

The next Committee meeting will be held at 2.00 pm in Room 30 on Wednesday 11 January 2017.

*The meeting moved into closed session at 3.08 pm*

## **12. Programme for Government 2016-21 – Consideration of Draft Report**

### Equality Commission for Northern Ireland – PfG Response

The Committee noted correspondence from the ECNI on the draft Programme for Government.

*Agreed:* To consider the correspondence and bring back any issues to a future Committee meeting.

### Departmental Position

The Committee considered its draft position on TEO's Programme for Government commitments.

*Agreed:* That the Committee was content with the introductory text.

*Agreed:* That the Committee was content with the 'Views on outcomes and indicators' section.

*Agreed:* That the Committee was content with the section on 'Whether the outcome of the first consultation has been taken into consideration as appropriate'.

*Agreed:* That the Committee was content with the 'Views on departmental action plans' section.

*Agreed:* That the Committee was content with the 'Opportunities and challenges presented by cross-departmental working' section.

*Agreed:* That the Committee was content with the 'Proposed departmental reporting' section.

*Agreed:* That the Committee's position on the Department's PfG commitments be included in the Appendices to the Committee's report.

### Report on the Executive's Programme for Government 2016-21

The Committee considered its draft report on the Programme for Government 2016-21.

*Agreed:* That the Committee was content with the 'Introduction' section.

*Agreed:* That the Committee was content that the 'Summary of Findings and Recommendations' section be completed upon agreement of the report.

*Agreed:* That the Committee was content with paragraphs 1 to 5, 'The Committee's Approach'.

*Agreed:* That the Committee was content with paragraphs 6 and 7, 'Outcomes based accountability'.

*Agreed:* That the Committee was content with paragraph 8, comprising the introductory text under 'Committee Consideration'.

*Agreed:* That the Committee was content with paragraphs 9 to 12, 'Consultation', subject to an amendment to paragraph 11 to reflect the concerns of the Commissioner for Children and Young People.

*Agreed:* That the Committee was content with paragraphs 13 to 21, 'Outcomes'.

*Agreed:* That the Committee was content with paragraphs 22 to 26, 'Indicators and Data'.

*Agreed:* That the Committee was content with paragraphs 27 to 31, 'Delivery and governance'.

*Agreed:* That the Committee was content with paragraphs 32 to 35, 'Transparency'.

*Agreed:* That the Committee was content with paragraphs 36 to 41, 'Scrutiny', subject to an amendment to paragraph 39 to reflect the Committee's commitment to taking the lead in bringing forward recommendations on how best to achieve joined-up scrutiny of the PfG.

*Agreed:* That the Committee was content with paragraphs 42 and 43, 'Funding & Resources'.

*Agreed:* That Committee website links be created to include: a printable version of the report; relevant extracts of the Minutes of Proceedings; relevant Minutes of Evidence; Statutory Committee responses; stakeholder responses; research papers; and other relevant documents related to the report.

*Agreed:* That the Committee Secretariat may make amendments and additions to the report as agreed by members.

*Agreed:* That the Committee Secretariat may make editorial changes to typographical errors and the format of the Report as necessary where these have no effect on the substance of the Report.

*Agreed:* That the 'Report on the Executive's Draft Programme for Government 2016-21' [NIA 14/16-21] be the first Report of the Committee for the Executive Office to the Assembly.

*Agreed:* That the Report be published.

#### Press Release

The Committee considered a draft press release on the Report.

*Agreed:* That the press release be issued when the Report is published on the Committee's website.

*The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 3.34 pm.*

**Mr Mike Nesbitt**  
**Chairperson**  
**Committee for the Executive Office**