



**Northern Ireland  
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR THE OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER AND DEPUTY  
FIRST MINISTER  
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS  
WEDNESDAY 13 MAY 2015  
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present:	Mr Mike Nesbitt (Chairperson) Mr Chris Lyttle (Deputy Chairperson) Ms Megan Fearon Mr Alex Maskey Mr David McIlveen
Apologies:	Mr Alex Attwood Mr Michael Copeland Mrs Brenda Hale Ms Bronwyn McGahan Mr Stephen Moutray Mr Jimmy Spratt
In Attendance:	Mrs Kathy O'Hanlon (Assembly Clerk) Miss Karen Jardine (Assistant Assembly Clerk) Mr Stephen Magee (Clerical Supervisor) Mr Alyn Hicks (Assistant Assembly Clerk) Item 1 only Ms Éilis Haughey (Bill Clerk) Item 2 only

*The meeting began in closed session at 2.11pm.*

**1. Northern Ireland Public Service Ombudsperson Bill**

The Committee noted that the Public Services Ombudsperson Bill was now in Committee Stage, and that the Chair had provided a briefing to the Ad Hoc Committee on the Bill on Tuesday 12 May 2015.

The Committee noted that the Ombudsman and Commissioner for Complaints (Amendment) Bill had passed Second Stage in the Assembly on Monday 11 May 2015, and that the Assembly had also agreed that the Bill proceed by way of accelerated passage.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to request that the Business Committee schedule the remaining stages of the Ombudsman and Commissioner for Complaints (Amendment) Bill on the following dates:

Consideration Stage - Monday 1 June

Further Consideration Stage - Monday 8 June

Final Stage - Tuesday 9 June.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety regarding progress in addressing concerns that he raised previously regarding the Public Services Ombudsperson Bill.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Education indicating that he is content with the Public Services Ombudsperson Bill as drafted.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence from the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, and the Minister of Education to the Ad Hoc Committee for information.

The Committee noted correspondence from the First Minister and deputy First Minister advising that, following the introduction of the Amendment Bill, they no longer intend to proceed with the appointment competition for a new Ombudsman, but would continue to keep the matter under review.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that necessary technical amendments to the Public Services Ombudsperson Bill be drafted.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to keep the Ad Hoc Committee informed of any amendments which it planned to bring forward in relation to the Public Services Ombudsperson Bill.

*Mr Hicks left the meeting at 2.18pm.*

## **2. Children's Services Co-operation Bill**

*Ms Haughey joined the meeting at 2.19pm.*

*The meeting moved into open session at 2.24 pm*

The Committee considered the Children's Services Co-operation Bill in light of the oral and written evidence received from stakeholders, OFMDFM and the Bill sponsor. The Committee's deliberations were recorded by Hansard.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department to indicate that it is broadly supportive in principle of the direction of the Department in relation to the Bill, but to request early sight of any proposed amendments before taking a formal view. The

Committee also agreed to seek clarification on a number of issues relating to the Bill.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to seek clarification from the Bill Sponsor on an issue relating to the Bill; and to request sight of any amendments that he may plan to bring forward separately from OFMDFM.

*Ms Haughey left the meeting at 3.10pm.*

### **3. Apologies**

Apologies were noted as above.

### **4. Chairperson's Business**

#### Ministerial Reshuffle

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to Minister Jonathan Bell to wish him well in his new role as Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment; and to write to junior Minister McIlveen to welcome her to her new role.

#### Westminster eForum keynote Seminar

The Committee noted an invitation to a Westminster eForum Keynote Seminar on "Delivering Digital Government: technology, procurement and policy priorities", which is to be held in London on 25 June 2015.

#### Policy Forum for Northern Ireland keynote Seminar

The Committee noted an invitation to a Policy Forum for Northern Ireland Keynote Seminar on the future of health and social care delivery in Northern Ireland following the Donaldson Report, which is to be held in Belfast on 16 September 2015.

#### Committee for Employment and Learning

The Committee noted an invitation from the Committee for Employment and Learning to a Further Education showcase event in the Long Gallery on Tuesday 19 May.

#### Committee Invitations

The Committee noted the list of current invitations.

### **5. Draft Minutes of the meetings held on 27 April 2015**

*Agreed:* The draft minutes of the proceedings of 27 April 2015 were agreed by the Committee.

## **6. Matters Arising**

### List of Outstanding Correspondence

The Committee noted the list of outstanding correspondence.

## **7. Correspondence**

### Minority Ethnic Development Fund

The Committee noted a copy letter to the First Minister and deputy First Minister from the All Party Group on Ethnic Minority Communities regarding the administration of the Minority Ethnic Development Fund.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department to ask if a response has been issued to the All Party Group on Ethnic Minority Communities regarding this matter.

### Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland

The Committee noted the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland Procurement Activity Report for April 2015.

### OFMDFM - Disability Living Allowance Advisory Board for NI and Enterprise Ulster

The Committee noted copy letters from the First Minister and deputy First Minister to the Minister for Social Development and the Minister for Employment and Learning relating to the abolition of the Disability Living Allowance Advisory Board for Northern Ireland and dissolution of Enterprise Ulster.

### OFMDFM - Disability Strategy

The Committee also noted correspondence from OFMDFM advising that the Executive's Disability Strategy will be extended to the end of March 2017.

### Inquiry into Building a United Community

The Committee noted a response from the Department of the Environment regarding its Inquiry into Building a United Community and 'Living Places' - An Urban Stewardship and design guide for Northern Ireland.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to include the response in the papers for the Inquiry into Building a United Community.

### Programme for Government

The Committee noted a response from OFMDFM in relation to a number of Programme for Government Commitments following the Committee briefing on 25 March 2015.

### Strategic Investment Board

The Committee noted a letter from OFMDFM regarding the recruitment of two new Non-Executive Directors to the Strategic Investment Board.

### Committee for Finance and Personnel

The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance and Personnel regarding the Monitoring of Savings Delivery Plans 2014-15.

### Sickness Absence in the NICS

The Committee noted a response from OFMDFM regarding sickness absence in the Department for 2014/15.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to seek a briefing from the Department on the Annual Report and Accounts for 2014/15 once this information is available, with specific commentary on OFMDFM's savings delivery plan and sickness absence.

### Request for briefing from First Minister and deputy First Minister

The Committee noted a positive response from the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding a request to brief the Committee on the work of the Department and an overview of plans for the final year of the mandate.

### Delivering Social Change

The Committee noted the Delivering Social Change Stakeholder Update for April 2015.

### The NI European Regional Forum

The Committee noted correspondence regarding a survey seeking information on experiences of the Northern Ireland European Regional Forum.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request that the Committee is kept up to date with the progress of this work and to be informed of any decisions at the earliest opportunity.

## **8. Draft Forward Work Programme**

The Committee noted the draft Forward Work Programme to July 2015

## **9. Inquiry into Building a United Community.**

*Departmental officials joined the meeting at 3.17 pm.*

Ms Linsey Farrell, Ms Donna Blaney, Mr Michael McGinley and Mr Peter Robinson appeared before the Committee for discussion and questions on the Inquiry into Building a United Community, and specifically in relation to the themes which have emerged from written and oral evidence received from stakeholders. The evidence session was recorded by Hansard.

Officials agreed to provide further information on a number of issues including comparative figures regarding funding for good relations activity in 2013/14 and 2014/15 and the identification of additional spend due to the Together: Building a United Community strategy; an update on the progress of finalising the Good Relations indicators; and an update on the Buddy Scheme, administered by the Department of Education.

*The officials left the meeting at 4.00 pm.*

## **10. Any Other Business**

There was no other Committee business.

## **11. Date, Time and Location of next meeting**

The next meeting will be held at 2.00 pm in Room 30 on Wednesday 20 May 2015.

*The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 4.01 pm.*

**Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister**