



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR THE OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER AND DEPUTY
FIRST MINISTER
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
WEDNESDAY 11 JUNE 2014
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr Mike Nesbitt (Chairperson)
Mr Chris Lyttle (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Alex Attwood
Mr Leslie Cree
Miss Megan Fearon
Mrs Brenda Hale
Mr Alex Maskey
Ms Bronwyn McGahan
Mr Stephen Moutray
Mr George Robinson

Apologies: Mr Jimmy Spratt

In Attendance: Ms Karen Jardine (Senior Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Keith McBride (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Stephen Magee (Clerical Supervisor)
Miss Sabra Wray (Clerical Officer)
Mr Michael Potter (Researcher) Item 8 only
Ms Roisin Kelly (Bill Clerk) Item 11 only

The meeting began in public session at 2.03 p.m.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Chairperson's Business

Committee Invitations

The Committee noted the list of current invitations.

Briefing from First Minister and deputy First Minister

The Chairperson advised Members that a response from the First Minister and deputy First Minister in relation to the Committee's request for a briefing on the progress of the Programme for Government had been received prior to the meeting, advising of their availability to attend the meeting of 25 June 2014.

3. Draft Minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2014

Agreed: The draft minutes of the proceedings of the 4 June 2014 were agreed by the Committee.

Mr Maskey joined the meeting at 2.08 p.m.

4. Matters Arising

Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission

The Committee considered responses from the Committee for Employment and Learning and the Committee for Finance and Personnel in relation to proposed cuts the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission's annual budget in 2015/16.

Mr Maskey left the meeting at 2.11 p.m.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Northern Ireland Office to seek its assessment of the impact on the NI Human Rights Commission of meeting its statutory duties if the proposed cut in its budget proceeds.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee to highlight concerns in relation to the proposed budget cut.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Clerk would draft a letter to the NI Human Rights Commission, for consideration at next week's meeting, requesting clarification on the potential impact

of the proposed budget cut on its proposed work programme including its capacity fulfil its statutory duty with regard to support for the Assembly and Committees, and conducting investigations.

List of Outstanding Correspondence

The Committee noted the list of outstanding correspondence.

5. Correspondence

Legislative Consent Motion – Childcare Payments Bill

The Committee considered correspondence from the Department providing advance notice of its intention to lay a Legislative Consent Memorandum in relation to the Childcare Payments Bill, recently introduced by the Coalition Government in Westminster.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing from Departmental officials on the Legislative Consent Memorandum.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a research paper from the Assembly's Research and Information Service on the Childcare Payments Bill.

Mr Maskey re-joined the meeting at 2.16 p.m.

Mr Robinson joined the meeting at 2.16 p.m.

6. Programme for Government- Update Report

Departmental officials joined the meeting at 2.18 p.m.

Departmental officials Dr Denis McMahon, Mr Henry Johnston and Ms Grainne Killen briefed the Committee on progress of Programme for Government commitments 31, 32, 33, 34, 37, 38 and 67. Questions and discussion followed and the briefing was recorded by Hansard.

Miss Fearon joined the meeting at 2.41 p.m.

Mr Moutray left the meeting at 3.08 p.m.

Mr Cree left the meeting at 3.22 p.m.

The Department agreed to provide further information on a number of issues.

Departmental officials left the meeting at 3.49 p.m.

7. Good Relations Indicators – Summary of Responses to Consultation

Departmental officials joined the meeting at 3.50 p.m.

Departmental officials Mr Fergus Devitt and Mrs Pauline Donnan briefed the Committee on the responses to the Department's consultation on the draft Good Relations Indicators. Questions and discussion followed.

Mrs Hale joined the meeting at 4.06 p.m.

Officials agreed to provide further information on recent research highlighting negative perceptions of young people towards good relations.

Ms McGahan left the meeting at 4.17 p.m.

Departmental officials left the meeting at 4.18 p.m.

8. Refugee Issues

A Researcher from the Assembly's Research and Information Service briefed the Committee on a research paper highlighting issues facing refugees in Northern Ireland. Questions and discussion followed.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to add the Research Paper to its webpage in advance of the Committee Motion on Community Relations Week and Refugee Week to be debated in plenary on Monday 16 June.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the Research paper to the Committee for Education, the Committee for Employment and Learning, the Committee for Health, Social services and Public Safety and the Committee for Justice for information.

9. Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme to the end of the session.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to start next week's meeting at 2.15 pm to allow Members to participate in the World United Football

Match organised next Wednesday as part of Community Relations Week.

10. Any Other Business

None.

The meeting moved into closed session at 4.26 p.m.

11. Ombudsman Proposals

The Committee was briefed by the Ombudsman Bill Project Team on Part III of the draft Bill. The Committee also considered a number of issues that required clarification for the draftsman of the Bill.

The Committee noted the opposition of Sinn Féin in relation to provisions in the draft Bill regarding the disclosure of information.

Agreed: The Committee agreed a number of issues that required further clarification in order for the draftsman to continue.

12. Date, Time and Location of next meeting

The next meeting will be held at 2.15 p.m. on Wednesday 18 June 2014, in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 5.14 p.m.

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