



**COMMITTEE FOR THE OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER AND DEPUTY  
FIRST MINISTER  
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS  
WEDNESDAY 7 OCTOBER 2015  
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr Mike Nesbitt (Chairperson)  
Mr Chris Lyttle (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Andy Allen  
Mr Alex Attwood  
Ms Megan Fearon  
Mr Paul Frew  
Mr Chris Hazzard  
Mr Alex Maskey  
Mr David McIlveen  
Mr Stephen Moutray

Apologies: Mr Gordon Lyons

In Attendance: Mrs Kathy O'Hanlon (Assembly Clerk)  
Miss Karen Jardine (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Innis Mennie (Clerical Officer)  
Ms Dagmar Walgraeve (Clerical Officer)  
Mr Alyn Hicks (Bill Team - item 1 only)

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

**1. NIPSO Bill**

*Mr Alyn Hicks joined the meeting at 2.12pm.*

*Agreed:* Members agreed to meet on Monday 19 October 2015 to consider amendments which may be tabled by other MLAs for the Consideration Stage of the Public Services Ombudsperson Bill.

**Ad Hoc Committee Report**

The Committee noted the Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Public Services Ombudsperson Bill including the proposed amendments and recommendations.

Members noted that the Ad Hoc Committee had submitted amendments to change ‘Ombudsperson’ to ‘Ombudsman’.

*Mr Paul Frew joined the meeting at 2.16pm.*

*Ms Megan Fearon joined the meeting at 2.17pm.*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to support the amendments tabled by the Ad Hoc Committee in respect of changing ‘Ombudsperson’ to ‘Ombudsman’.

The Committee noted the Ad Hoc Committee recommendation relating to the power of the NIPSO to make a special report to the Assembly under Clause 37 of the Bill.

The Committee noted the Ad Hoc Committee recommendation regarding a Memorandum of Understanding with DFP which acknowledges and safeguards the NIPSO’s financial independence.

#### Local Government Ethical Standards Complaints

*Representatives from the Northern Ireland Ombudsman’s Office joined the meeting at 2.24 pm*

Dr Tom Frawley, Northern Ireland Ombudsman and Ms Marie Anderson, Deputy Northern Ireland Ombudsman briefed the Committee on the possible addition of amendments to the NIPSO Bill regarding Part 9 of the Local Government Act 2014 which requires him, in his role as Commissioner for Complaints, to investigate and adjudicate on Code of Conduct complaints against councillors. Dr Frawley provided Members with a copy of draft amendments in relation to this matter.

*Mr Attwood joined the meeting at 2.27pm.*

*Mr Lyttle left the meeting at 2.28pm.*

A question and answer session followed.

Dr Frawley and Ms Anderson also briefed the Committee on the recommendation relating to the power of the NIPSO to make a special report to the Assembly under Clause 37 of the Bill.

*Dr Frawley and Ms Anderson left the meeting at 2.43pm*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to seek advice from the Bill Office regarding the tabling of amendments to Further Consideration Stage; determine whether the Minister of the Environment is content with the amendments as drafted; and forward the draft amendments to the Drafter for comment and revision.

The Committee noted that an additional meeting may be required early in week commencing 12 October in respect of these proposed amendments.

*Mr McIlveen left the meeting at 2.44pm.*

#### Consolidated list of draft amendments

The Committee noted the consolidated list of draft amendments to the Public Services Ombudsperson Bill; and also noted that Consideration Stage of the Bill was provisionally scheduled for Tuesday 20 October.

*Agreed:* Members agreed to table the amendments to the Bill Office in advance of Consideration Stage as the amendments of the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister to Consideration Stage of the Public Services Ombudsperson Bill.

#### General Teaching Council for NI

The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Education with regard to adding the General Teaching Council for NI to the list of authorities to come under the remit of the NIPSO in Schedule 3 to the Bill.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to table an amendment in this regard, and noted that it had been included in the consolidated list agreed above.

*Mr Hicks left the meeting at 2.49pm.*

*The meeting moved into public session at 2.49pm.*

## **2. Apologies**

Apologies were as recorded above.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr Paul Frew to his first meeting of the Committee

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

#### My Journey, My Voice Exhibition

The Committee noted an invitation from the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists and Disability Action to the launch of 'My Journey, My Voice' Portraits and Stories Exhibition which is to be held in the Long Gallery from Monday 2 November 2015.

The Committee noted the list of current invitations.

## **4. Draft Minutes of the meetings held on 30 September 2015**

*Agreed:* The draft minutes of the proceedings of 30 September 2015 were agreed by the Committee.

*Mr Lyttle returned to the meeting at 2.50pm.*

*Mr Maskey joined the meeting at 2.50pm.*

## **5. Matters Arising**

### Historical Institutional Abuse

The Committee noted a timeline of interactions between the Committee and the Department regarding those victims and survivors who fall outside the remit of the current Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to seek legal advice in relation to the powers to compel witnesses and release of papers before deciding how it wishes to proceed on this issue.

### List of Outstanding Correspondence

The Committee noted the list of outstanding correspondence.

## **6. Correspondence**

### Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency - 2021 Census

The Committee noted information from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency regarding the 2021 Census development process, including the consultation on Topic Content.

### ISNI Procurement Activity Report September 2015

The Committee noted the OFMDFM Procurement Activity Report for September 2015.

### Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

The Committee noted the availability of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland Annual Report and Accounts for 2014-15.

### Delivering Social Change

The Committee noted the Delivering Social Change update for September 2015

### Committee for Finance and Personnel

The Committee noted a copy letter from Rt Hon Peter Robinson MLA to the Committee for Finance and Personnel confirming availability to provide oral evidence in respect of the NAMA Review.

The Committee noted a copy letter from the Committee for Finance and Personnel to the Head of the Civil Service requesting copies of all correspondence concerning NAMA operations, including the Project Eagle sale.

## SOLACE NI

The Committee noted correspondence from SOLACE NI regarding protocols for NI Assembly Committees requesting representation from Local Government.

### **7. Draft Forward Work Programme**

The Committee agreed the draft Forward Work Programme for October 2015.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to postpone the briefing from NILGA and SOLACE on the Refugee/Asylum Crisis, which had been provisionally scheduled for 21 October.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to invite the Red Cross, along with NICRAS, the Law Centre and the Refugee Forum to brief the Committee on the Refugee/Asylum Crisis on 4 November.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request the attendance of officials to brief Members on matters relating to the Refugee/Asylum Crisis, as had been requested in its correspondence of 10 September.

*Mr Lyttle left the meeting at 3pm.*

### **8. Victims and Survivors**

*Representatives from the Victims and Survivors Service joined the meeting at 3.01pm.*

Oliver Wilkinson, Chairperson, and Margaret Bateson, Interim Chief Executive, briefed the Committee on the work of the Victims and Survivors Service.

Questions and discussion followed and the briefing was recorded by Hansard.

*Mr Lyttle returned to the meeting at 3.24pm.*

*Mr Moutray left the meeting at 3.28pm.*

*Representatives from the Victims and Survivors Service left the meeting at 3.40 pm.*

*Mr Maskey left the meeting at 3.40pm.*

### **9. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

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

The next scheduled meeting of the Committee is at 2.00 pm in Room 30 on Wednesday 14 October 2015. Members noted that an additional meeting may be

required on Tuesday 13 October to consider amendments to the NIPSO Bill in advance of the deadline for tabling amendments for Consideration Stage of the Bill.

*The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 3.41pm.*

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