



**Northern Ireland  
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR THE OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER AND DEPUTY  
FIRST MINISTER  
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS  
WEDNESDAY 21 OCTOBER 2015  
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

- Present: Mr Mike Nesbitt (Chairperson)  
Mr Chris Lyttle (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Andy Allen  
Ms Megan Fearon  
Mr Paul Frew  
Mr Chris Hazzard  
Mr Gordon Lyons
- Apologies: Mr Alex Maskey  
Mr David McIlveen  
Mr Stephen Moutray
- In Attendance: Mrs Kathy O’Hanlon (Assembly Clerk)  
Miss Karen Jardine (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Stephen Magee (Clerical Supervisor)  
Mr Innis Mennie (Clerical Officer)  
Mr Simon Kelly (Legal Adviser - Item 1 only)  
Mr Alyn Hicks (Bill Team - Item 2 only)  
Mr Michael Potter (Research Officer – Item 10 only)

*The meeting began in closed session at 2.03 pm.*

**1. Legal Advice**

*Mr Simon Kelly, Legal Adviser, joined the meeting at 2.03pm.*

The Committee considered legal advice with regard to the Committee’s powers to compel witnesses and release of papers.

*Mr Paul Frew MLA joined the meeting at 2.08pm.*

*Agreed:* Members agreed to write to the Department to: request that the relevant documents on the scoping exercises regarding those individuals that fall outside the remit of the Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry are provided; ask that officials

attend Committee to provide an oral briefing on this matter; and outline the Committee's powers under Section 44 of the NI Act 1998.

*Mr Kelly left the meeting at 2.14pm.*

*Ms Megan Fearon MLA joined the meeting at 2.14pm.*

## **2. NIPSO Bill**

*Mr Alyn Hicks joined the meeting at 2.15pm.*

The Committee considered copy correspondence from the Commissioner for Standards to the Committee on Standards and Privileges regarding a proposal to include the Commissioner as a listed authority under the remit of the NIPSO.

*Agreed:* Members agreed that the Clerk should seek clarity from the Clerk of Standards on the relationship between the Commissioner on Standards and the Committee on Standards and Privileges, including the process for considering reports from the Commissioner.

*Mr Hicks left the meeting at 2.28pm.*

*The meeting moved into public session at 2.28pm.*

## **3. Apologies**

Apologies were as recorded above.

## **4. Chair's Business**

Mr Jim Nicholson MEP

The Committee noted an invitation to a 'Meet your MEP' event with Mr Jim Nicholson MEP, which is to be held in the MAC, Belfast at 12 noon on Friday 30 October 2015.

NIABT: EU Referendum/Brexit

The Committee noted an invitation to the NIA Business Trust event on the theme of the EU Referendum and the impact of a 'Brexit' on the local business community scheduled for Monday 16 November, at which the Chair is scheduled to participate on behalf of the Committee.

The Committee noted the list of current invitations.

## **5. Draft Minutes**

*Agreed:* The draft minutes of the proceedings of 14 October 2015 were agreed by the Committee.

*Agreed:* The draft minutes of the proceedings of 19 October 2015 were agreed by the Committee.

## **6. Matters Arising**

### Inquiry into Building a United Community

The Committee noted a report on the Interface Community Partners Group meeting, held on Wednesday 14 October, at which a member of Committee staff had presented on the recommendations and conclusions arising from the Committee's Inquiry into Building a United Community.

### List of Outstanding Correspondence

The Committee noted the list of outstanding correspondence.

## **7. Correspondence**

### Solace NI

The Committee noted further correspondence from Solace NI regarding local government representation at Assembly Committees.

### Assembly and Executive Review Committee

The Committee noted correspondence from the Assembly and Executive Review Committee regarding Committee Stage of the Assembly and Executive Reform (Assembly Opposition) Bill.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that Members would respond to Committee Stage on a party basis.

### Committee for Education

The Committee noted a copy letter from the Committee for Education to the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People regarding proposed amendments to the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Bill.

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

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the First Minister and deputy First Minister to request their attendance at a meeting of the Committee at the earliest opportunity.

Members noted correspondence from Lord Boswell, Chairman of the House of Lords European Committee, regarding that Committee's inquiry exploring the UK Government's vision for reform of the EU ahead of the referendum on UK

membership of the EU. Members noted that Lord Boswell had requested an opportunity to meet with the Committee to discuss the issues in more detail.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to consider rescheduling the meeting of Wednesday 25 November to Thursday 26 November to accommodate the visit from Lord Boswell.

The Committee agreed the draft Forward Work Programme.

## **9. Commissioner for Victims and Survivors**

*Representatives from the Commission for Victims and Survivors joined the meeting at 2.35 pm.*

Mrs Judith Thompson, Commissioner for Victims and Survivors; Mr John Beggs, Secretary to the Commission; and Mr Adrian McNamee, Head of Policy briefed the Committee on the work of the Commission. Questions and discussion followed and the evidence session was recorded by Hansard.

The Commissioner agreed to provide further information on the outcome of engagement on the issue of legacy inquests being subsumed into the Historical Investigations Unit.

*Representatives from the Commission for Victims and Survivors left the meeting at 3.30 pm.*

*Mr Chris Hazzard MLA left the meeting at 3.31pm.*

## **10. European Issues – Committee’s EU Priorities 2015**

*An officer from the Assembly Research and Information Service joined the meeting at 3.31pm.*

Mr Michael Potter, Assembly Research Officer, briefed the Committee on issues identified as the Committee’s EU priorities for 2015. Questions and discussion followed.

*The Research Officer left the meeting at 3.38pm.*

## **11. Good Relations - Briefing by Departmental Officials on the Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme**

*Departmental officials joined the meeting at 3.39 pm*

Departmental officials Dr Mark Browne, Ms Grainne Killen and Mr Ken Frazer briefed the Committee on the NI Executive response to the refugee and asylum crisis, including the Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme. Questions and discussion followed and the evidence session was recorded by Hansard.

*Mr Paul Frew MLA left the meeting at 4.08pm.*

The Department agreed to provide further information on the membership of the Strategic Planning Group led by OFMDFM and the Operational Group led by the Department for Social Development.

*Departmental officials left the meeting at 4.15 pm.*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to forward the departmental briefing papers and a link to the Official Report of the evidence session to relevant statutory committees for information.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to consider issuing a press release outlining the information provided by officials during the briefing; and asked the Clerk to prepare a draft for agreement by Members via email correspondence.

## **12. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

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

The next scheduled meeting of the Committee is at 2 pm in Room 30 on Wednesday 4 November 2015

*The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 4.16 pm.*

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