



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR THE OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER AND DEPUTY
FIRST MINISTER
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
WEDNESDAY 2 DECEMBER 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 Gordon Lyons
Mr Alex Maskey
Mr David McIlveen

Apologies: Mr Stephen Moutray

In Attendance: Mrs Kathy O'Hanlon (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Christopher McNickle (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Stephen Magee (Clerical Supervisor)
Mr Bill Kinnear (Clerical Officer)
Mr Alyn Hicks (Bill Team - Item 1 only)
Mr Jonathan McMillen (Bill Team – Item 1 only)
Mr Damien Martin (Bill Team – Item 1 only)

The meeting began in closed session at 2.03 pm.

1. NIPSO Bill

Mr Alyn Hicks, Mr Jonathan McMillen and Mr Damien Martin, Bill Team, joined the meeting at 2.03 pm.

Mr Gordon Lyons MLA joined the meeting at 2.05pm.

Attorney General for Northern Ireland

The Committee considered concerns raised by the Attorney General with regard to a matter of competence and discussed the options for the way forward.

Mr Paul Frew MLA joined the meeting at 2.15pm.

Mr Maskey reiterated Sinn Féin's objections to the specific provisions that the concerns relate to but noted that the Bill would bring benefits for citizens; and that steps to resolve the matter should be considered in order that the Bill can be progressed.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Bill Team should liaise with the Northern Ireland Office and update the Committee no later than 13 January 2016. The Committee will decide how to proceed on that date.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Final Stage of the Bill will not be moved on 8 December as scheduled.

Mr Hicks, Mr McMillen and Mr Martin left the meeting at 2.37pm.

Mr Alex Maskey MLA left the meeting at 2.48pm.

Agreed: The Committee will consider a briefing paper from the Clerk at the meeting of 9 December regarding an evidence session with the Attorney General for Northern Ireland.

The meeting moved into public session at 2.50 pm.

Mr David McIlveen left the meeting at 2.52pm.

2. Apologies

Apologies were recorded as above.

3. Chair's Business

Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission

The Committee noted an invitation from the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission to the launch of their Annual Statement 2015 which is to be held in the Long Gallery on Monday 14 December 2015.

The Committee noted the list of current invitations.

4. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The draft minutes of the proceedings of 26 November 2015, as amended, were agreed by the Committee with an editorial amendment.

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

5. Matters Arising

Transfer of Functions Order

The Chairperson reminded Members that, during the briefing on the Departments Bill on 30 November, junior Ministers had committed to working with the Committee with regard to the consideration of the Transfer of Functions Order. Nonetheless, the time allowed for the Committee's consideration of the order may be tight.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask statutory Committees for their views on the proposed functions of the nine new departments as set out in "A Fresh Start – the Stormont Agreement and Implementation Plan", which will assist its future consideration of the Transfer of Functions Order.

Historical Institutional Abuse

The Committee considered the response from the First Minister and deputy First Minister to recent requests for information pertaining to the scoping exercises and the options being considered in respect of those victims of abuse who fall outside the remit of the current Historical institutional Abuse Inquiry.

Agreed: The Committee agreed ask Ministers to confirm the date that the Options Paper will be received by Executive Colleagues; and that officials provide an oral briefing at the next scheduled Committee meeting immediately following that date. The Committee requested a response to these questions in time for consideration at its meeting on 9 December.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the First Minister and deputy First Minister for their view on comments made by the Chairperson of the Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry, Sir Anthony Hart, regarding a scheme to award financial compensation to those children who suffered abuse in children's homes and other institutions in Northern Ireland between 1922 and 1995.

Outstanding Correspondence

The Committee noted the list of outstanding correspondence.

6. Correspondence

Procurement Activity Report

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

Ilex Annual Report and Accounts

The Committee noted that the Ilex Annual Report and Accounts for year ended 31 March 2015

7. Draft Forward Work Programme

The Chairperson informed the Committee that, at a recent meeting of the Committee for Finance and Personnel, Departmental officials advised it was expected that the Executive would consider a one year budget for 2016-17; and that there would be limited opportunity to consult on the draft budget.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask OFMDFM for an urgent briefing on the Department's budget proposals for 2016-17.

The Committee approved the draft work programme, subject to any amendments agreed today.

8. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

9. Date, Time and Location of next meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Committee is at 2pm in Room 30 on Wednesday 9 December 2015.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 3.07 pm.

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