



BRITISH-IRISH PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY
TIONÓL PARLAIMINTEACH NA BREATAINE AGUS NA HÉIREANN

TWENTY-SECOND ANNUAL REPORT
THE ASSEMBLY'S ACTIVITIES IN 2017

February 2018

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TWENTY-SECOND ANNUAL REPORT

THE WORK OF THE BRITISH-IRISH PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY IN 2017

Introduction

1. This is the twenty-second annual report of the Assembly since it was decided at the Plenary Session in May 1996 that such a Report should be made. This Report summarises the work of the Assembly during the calendar year 2017.

Membership of the Assembly

2. The unexpected UK general election in June 2017 resulted in the need to appoint a new British delegation at short notice. Under Rule 1(d) members and associate members remain part of BIPA after a dissolution of their institution until either a new delegation is appointed or until the end of the following plenary session, whichever is the sooner. This meant that existing Westminster members of BIPA could attend the July 2017 plenary session in Kilkenny but that their membership would thereafter lapse. As a precautionary measure, the Assembly at Kilkenny agreed to a temporary change to the rules to enable delegations to continue in being until the end of the next-but-one plenary session. In the event, this precaution proved unnecessary as the UK delegation was re-established in September, thus enabling members of the delegation to attend the plenary session held at Liverpool in October.
3. A list of Members and Associate Members at the start and close of 2017 is set out at Appendix 1.

Political developments

General Overview of British-Irish political developments

4. 2017 saw a continued strengthening of relations between Ireland and the UK, with several visits and events showcasing the ongoing close relations between the two countries.
5. In May, the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall visited Ireland. This visit was the third year in a row that the royal couple visited Ireland, continuing to build on the success of the Queen's visit to Ireland in 2011 and President Higgins's State Visit to the UK in 2014. The royal visit took in Dublin, Kildare and Kilkenny.
6. In May 2017, Enda Kenny announced that he would step down as Taoiseach and leader of Fine Gael and. Following a leadership election within Fine Gael, Leo Varadkar T.D. was elected Taoiseach by the Dáil on 14 June 2017. The coalition government between Fine Gael and Independents was maintained.
7. In his first cabinet, Taoiseach Varadkar made a number of changes to previous roles. Simon Coveney T.D. was appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade with special responsibility for Brexit.

Government of Ireland, July 2017	Minister
Taoiseach and Minister for Defence	Leo Varadkar TD
Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade	Simon Coveney TD
Minister for Finance	Paschal Donohoe TD
Minister for Justice and Equality	Charles Flanagan TD
Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation	Frances Fitzgerald TD (replaced by Heather Humphreys TD, December 2017)
Minister for Education and Skills	Richard Bruton TD
Minister for Health	Simon Harris TD
Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection	Regina Doherty TD
Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine	Michael Creed TD
Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment	Denis Naughten TD
Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government	Eoghan Murphy TD
Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht	Heather Humphreys TD (replaced by Josepha Madigan TD, December 2017)
Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport	Shane Ross TD
Minister for Children and Youth Affairs	Katherine Zappone TD

8. A UK General Election took place on 8 June 2017. The Conservative Party won 317 seats, Labour 262, Scottish National Party 35, Liberal Democrats 12, Democratic Unionist Party 10, Sinn Féin 7, Plaid Cymru 4 and the Green Party 1. The Conservative Party returned to government supported by a deal with the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) signed on 26 June 2017. Theresa May remained as Prime Minister.

Government of the United Kingdom June 2017	Minister
Prime Minister	Theresa May MP
Minister for the Cabinet Office	Damian Green MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer	Philip Hammond MP
Secretary of State for the Home Department	Amber Rudd MP
Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs	Boris Johnson MP
Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union	David Davis MP
Secretary of State for Defence	Sir Michael Fallon MP/ Gavin Williamson CBE MP

	Dec 2017
Secretary of State for Justice Lord Chancellor	David Lidington CBE MP
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care	Jeremy Hunt MP
Secretary of State for Education	Justine Greening MP
Secretary of State for International Trade	Liam Fox MP
Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy	Greg Clark MP
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	Michael Gove MP
Secretary of State for Transport	Chris Grayling MP
Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government	Sajid Javid MP
Leader of the House of Lords Lord Privy Seal	The Baroness Evans of Bowes Park PC
Secretary of State for Scotland	David Mundell MP
Secretary of State for Wales	Alun Cairns MP
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland	James Brokenshire MP
Secretary of State for International Development	Priti Patel MP / Penny Mordaunt MP Dec 2017
Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport	Karen Bradley MP
Secretary of State for Work and Pensions	David Gauke MP
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Chairman of the Conservative Party	Sir Patrick McLoughlin MP

9. UK and Irish Ministers met frequently throughout 2017, with a series of high-level visits taking place. The Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, T.D., met Prime Minister May in London in June and September. The Tánaiste Simon Coveney spoke at the British Irish Association, and visited London in December for a series of high-level meetings. Minister Donohoe, Minister Creed and Minister of State Helen McEntee all visited London to meet with counterparts. From the UK, Foreign Minister Boris Johnson, Chancellor Philip Hammond, Michael Gove and James Brokenshire MP all visited Ireland and met with counterparts.
10. 2017 was a busy year for the British-Irish Council, with a November Summit meeting in Jersey, which also incorporated a Ministerial meeting of the Creative Industries work sector. Three of the Council's work streams also convened separate Ministerial meetings to consider developments and innovative policy in relation to indigenous and minority languages, the digital inclusion agenda and addressing the misuse of substances. Additionally, there were 52 BIC meetings at official level in 2017 to coordinate policy in the 11 work sectors of the Council.
11. There was also significant engagement between the Irish government and the devolved administrations in 2017. President Higgins visited Dumfries House in Ayrshire at the invitation of the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall on 6 and 7 September 2017. First Minister Nicola Sturgeon visited Dublin on 5 and 6 October 2017, meeting the Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar. Welsh Finance Minister Mark

Drakeford met with Minister Simon Coveney at the British-Irish Association in September. Several other ministers also engaged bilaterally throughout the year.

Commemorations

12. 2017 marked the beginning of the second half of the Decade of Centenaries and one hundred years since the penultimate year of the First World War. Ceremonies remembering the seminal events of one hundred years ago and the lives that were affected or lost during that period continued to take place and recalled the interlinked and often shared histories of the peoples of Britain and Ireland.
13. During their visit to Ireland in May 2017, the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall attended a service in Glasnevin Cemetery, Dublin, at which four Victoria Cross paving stones laid in memory of Irish VC awardees were unveiled. The Prince and Duchess then laid a wreath at the Cross of Sacrifice, which commemorates the First World War casualties buried at Glasnevin, and also visited the Necrology Wall, which remembers all combatants and civilians who died during the 1916 Easter Rising.
14. The centenary of the Battle of Messines Ridge was marked on 7th June 2017 by a joint Ireland-UK commemoration held at the Island of Ireland Peace Park in Messines, Belgium. This ceremony recalled the first occasion during the World War One at which the 16th (Irish) and 36th (Ulster) Divisions fought side-by-side. The ceremony was attended by Taoiseach Enda Kenny, the Duke of Cambridge, and Princess Astrid of Belgium. They also attended a further ceremony at the nearby Wytschaete Military Cemetery to remember the Irish casualties of the engagement and those buried there.
15. On 31st July 2017, during a programme of events marking the centenary of the Battle of Passchendaele, the Prince of Wales attended a memorial service organized by the Welsh Government at Artillery Wood Cemetery near Ypres remembering Welsh poet Hedd Wyn and Irish poet Francis Ledwidge, both of whom died during the battle and are buried there.
16. On Remembrance Sunday in November, Taoiseach Leo Varadkar travelled to Northern Ireland where he laid a wreath at the cenotaph in Enniskillen. The Irish Government was represented at the Belfast Cenotaph by Minister Heather Humphreys.

North South Co-operation

17. While the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) was unable to meet during 2017 in the absence of a Northern Ireland Executive, the North South Implementation Bodies continued to carry out their mandated functions for the mutual benefit of citizens in both jurisdictions. In the areas of cooperation, officials from Departments

in both jurisdictions continued to work together in line with the previously agreed work programme of cooperation.

18. It is expected that there will be full drawdown from both EU PEACE IV and INTERREG VA Programmes. The 8 December 2017 joint report from UK and EU negotiators stated that *“Both Parties will honour their commitments to the PEACE and INTERREG funding programmes under the current multi-annual financial framework. Possibilities for future support will be examined favourably.”*
19. The Senior Officials Group which was established to oversee and report to the NSMC on the North South Infrastructure commitments in the Fresh Start Agreement continued to meet during 2017.

Political Developments in Northern Ireland

20. After building political disagreements between the two parties in the Executive in the latter part of 2016, 2017 began with the resignation of then deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness on 9 January. First Minister Arlene Foster therefore also ceased exercise the functions of her office on that date.
21. Following the passage of the 7-day period for the two largest parties to nominate a First and deputy First Minister, as provided for under the Northern Ireland Act, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, James Brokenshire, called an Assembly election. The Assembly was formally dissolved on 25 January.
22. The Assembly election was held on 2 March. In accordance with the provision made in the 2015 Fresh Start Agreement, this Assembly election held with 5 seats in each constituency, reduced from 6, meaning that the total number of seats in the Assembly reduced from 108 to 90. The elections returned the DUP with 28 seats and Sinn Féin with 27 seats. The SDLP won 12 seats, the UUP 10 seats and Alliance 8 seats. The 5 remaining seats were taken by smaller parties and independents.
23. Following the Assembly elections, talks facilitated by the British and Irish Governments as co-guarantors of the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement, on outstanding commitments from previous agreements and formation of a new Executive commenced on 6 March at Stormont Castle. Under the Northern Ireland Act, the parties were to nominate a First and deputy First Minister within 14 days of the first sitting of the Assembly. 27 March was therefore the initial timeframe for an effective agreement on a new Executive; however an agreement was not reached.
24. Talks continued at Stormont Castle in April until the announcement on 18 April of a UK general election. On 25 April, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland introduced legislation at Westminster which extended the timeframe for formation of an Executive to 29 June.
25. In the general election held on 8 June, the DUP were returned with 10 seats, Sinn Féin with 7 seats and 1 seat was held by independent Lady Sylvia Hermon.
26. Following the general election, the British and Irish Governments again facilitated the resumption of talks at Stormont Castle. While further progress was made, including on outstanding commitments, this round of talks continued up until on 4 July without

reaching the necessary agreement between the parties on the formation of a new Executive. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, James Brokenshire, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Simon Coveney, urged the parties to reflect on how progress could be made.

27. There were consultations over the summer period. On 22 August, Secretary of State Brokenshire and Minister Coveney met to discuss a way forward in supporting the formation of a new Executive. There were further consultations between the two Governments and the parties in September, and a further phase of engagement, facilitated by the two Governments as co-guarantors of the Agreement, commenced on 5 October. The focus was on discussions between the DUP and Sinn Féin as the two parties mandated to lead the formation of a new Executive. At the beginning of this phase of engagement, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland advised that if no Assembly was sitting by 6 November, then an indicative Northern Ireland budget for 2017-18 would have to be set at Westminster to ensure continuity of public services.
28. Talks continued throughout October but although significant progress was made, no agreement was reached between the two main parties to lead the formation of an Executive by the 6 November deadline. On 13 November, Secretary of State James Brokenshire brought forward legislation in Westminster to confirm a budget for Northern Ireland for the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018. The Secretary of State confirmed that the budget was based on advice from the Northern Ireland civil service and was not subject to political decision-making outside of Northern Ireland.
29. The British and Irish Governments continued to engage with the parties in November and December with a view to the remaining outstanding issues being resolved and an agreement on a new Executive being reached as soon as possible in 2018.

Legacy issues

30. The discussions at Stormont Castle on outstanding commitments from previous agreements included a particular focus on finding a way forward for the implementation of the comprehensive legacy framework provided for under the 2014 Stormont House Agreement. Encouraging progress on legacy issues was made in the discussions at Stormont Castle, facilitated by both Governments with the participation of all of the political parties. In November, taking account of the progress in these discussions, the British Government confirmed that while agreement had not been reached on every detail of the proposals that sufficient consensus had been reached to seek the views of the public, and it therefore intended to publish a draft Northern Ireland (Stormont House Agreement) Bill proceed shortly with a consultation document, seeking views on the proposed approach. Pending the ongoing discussions between the parties on forming a new Executive, the consultation phase was not launched in 2017.
31. Implementing legislation for on Stormont House Agreement legacy bodies is also required in Ireland. In November, the Irish Government approved a general scheme for a bill to provide for a mechanism for Coroners in Northern Ireland who are conducting inquests into troubles-related deaths, to hear testimony from Garda Síochána witnesses using existing Irish law. The Bill will also allow the Garda

Commissioner to enter into co-operation agreements with bodies such as the Historical Investigations Unit and the Independent Commission on Information Retrieval, two of the institutions to be established under the Stormont House Agreement legacy framework.

32. There were developments with a number of individual legacy cases. In February the family of Anthony Hughes, a civilian killed at Loughgall in 1987, were granted leave to seek a judicial review against the Northern Ireland Executive and the British Government for failure to release funding for legacy inquests and the inquest hearings continued during 2017. A fresh inquest into the deaths of 10 civilians in Ballymurphy in 1971 was confirmed on 13 May and is due to commence in September 2018. The inquest into the 10 men killed in the Kingsmill attack in 1976 resumed on 15 May 2017, having been on hold since June 2016 while criminal investigations into new evidence were conducted. The hearings in the Kingsmill inquest continued through 2017. A High Court judgment on 28 July in a case brought by the family of one of the victims of the Hillcrest bombing in 1976, found that the Historical Enquiry Team's failure to produce a report examining the murderous activities of the Glenanne Gang, a breach of Article 2 rights had occurred.
33. On 20 September, the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers reviewed progress with implementation by the UK of European Court of Human Rights judgments in the McKerr group of cases, including the Finucane case, and statements were made by the UK and Ireland. The Committee's decision called for the establishment of the Historical Investigations Unit without delay, and measures to deal with the backlog of legacy inquests as proposed by the Lord Chief Justice of Northern Ireland.

Security Situation

34. During 2017 there were a number of security incidents including the shooting of two PSNI officers on the Crumlin Road and an attempted attack on a PSNI officer's home and car in Derry. A small number of murders were also committed by loyalist paramilitaries in Bangor and Carrickfergus.
35. The Independent Reporting Commission agreed in Fresh Start to monitor progress towards ending continued paramilitary activity was legally constituted in 2017 following the passing on legislation by the Irish Government in 2017. Throughout 2017 it carried out a series of engagements with a wide range of stakeholders and will produce its first report in 2018.
36. The IRC consists of four persons, one each to be nominated by the British and Irish Governments and two nominated by the Executive. The membership is Mitchell Reiss (British Government), Tim O'Connor (Irish Government) and Professor Monica McWilliams and John McBurney (NI Executive).

Work of the Assembly

37. In 2015 it was agreed by the Steering Committee that the Annual Report should no longer contain a précis of the speeches made and questions asked on the grounds that the verbatim record is now available on the website (www.britishirish.org). This, the

22nd Report, therefore merely reports details of speakers and any specific or unusual arrangements.

54th Plenary Conference (Kilkenny)

38. The 54th Plenary Conference of the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly took place between Sunday 16 July and Tuesday 18 July 2017 at the Newpark Hotel in Kilkenny. The conference was held much later than usual because the British general election in June had required a postponement from the original dates. The conference was held only a few weeks after the British Parliament had reconvened; consequently, it had proved impossible to appoint a new delegation. However, the rules of the Assembly allowed members of the previous delegation to attend on this occasion. The balance of parties in the new House of Commons meant that whipping was extremely rigorous which, in turn, meant that very few Members of Parliament were able to attend. Laurence Robertson MP had resigned as British Co-Chair in the period since the 53rd Plenary Conference and Andrew Rosindell MP had been appointed in his place.
39. At the beginning of business, the Assembly observed a minute's silence in memory of those killed and injured in recent terrorist attacks in England.
40. The first item of business was an address by John Paul Phelan TD, Minister of State for Housing, Planning and Local Government and formerly a member of the Assembly. Minister Phelan spoke about the implications of Brexit for Ireland, the Good Friday Agreement for which the European Community was a guarantor and the border with the North. At the end of his address, he answered questions from Members.
41. The next speaker was His Excellency Robin Barnett, the recently appointed British Ambassador to Ireland. He paid tribute to the important role the Assembly had played in improving British-Irish relations and he spoke of the influence the Assembly could have in the next 18 months in respect of the Brexit negotiations and the impact of Brexit on Ireland.
42. His address was followed by the first of two occasions at this plenary conference when young people spoke to the Assembly on matters of concern to them. Three speakers from the Young Voices of the National Youth Council of Ireland – Vanessa Mulhall, Paul Dockery and Cárthach Ó Faoláin – addressed the Assembly in turn and then answered questions.
43. The Assembly listened with interest to an address by Emily O'Reilly, the European Ombudsman. She explained her role, which had been created by the Maastricht Treaty, and her wish for transparency in the Brexit negotiations. She expressed her own sadness at the United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union, listing the many achievements which, she argued, would not have been possible if left to individual countries. At the end of her address, she replied to questions from the floor.
44. As at the 53rd Plenary Conference in Cardiff, young Representatives from five jurisdictions had an opportunity to speak to the Assembly and express the political concerns they have. Danielle Gayson from Youth Work Ireland, Mark McLaughlin from Youth Action Northern Ireland, Kate Seary from Youth Cymru, Reece Harding

from Youth Scotland and Brendan Quirke from UK Youth spoke and then answered questions.

45. This was followed by an open debate on the implications of Brexit for all the jurisdictions of the Assembly. There was no motion before the Assembly but 24 Members expressed their different views openly.
46. On Tuesday, the Assembly agreed a change in the Rules to enable the Westminster delegation appointed before the 2017 General Election to attend the next plenary in the event that a new delegation had not been appointed in the relatively short interval between the two conferences.
47. The Annual Report for 2016 was approved. Progress reports on the work of the four committees were given.
48. Emeritus Professor Michael Marsh of the Department of Political Science at Trinity College, Dublin, gave a presentation about the “perils of political polling” and then answered questions.
49. Finally, the Assembly agreed a report from Committee D on Childhood Obesity and received an interim report from Committee C on Brexit and the AgriFood Sector.
50. On the Monday night of the conference, Members of the Assembly and staff were taken by coach to Kilkenny Town Hall for a reception hosted by the Mayor, Councillor Michael Doyle. There was an opportunity to visit the recently opened Mediaeval Mile Museum which traced 800 years of the town’s history. Following the reception, delegates travelled the short distance to Kilkenny Castle where a talk on the history of the castle was given in the Picture Gallery, followed by a tour of the building finishing in the Parade Tower for dinner. One of the benefits of a plenary conference being held in mid-summer was that the grounds of Kilkenny Castle looked wonderful in the evening light and added to the pleasure of the conference dinner.
51. After dinner, Ms. Sinead McCooile gave a talk on Countess de Markievicz, the first woman elected an MP (although she did not take her seat). She was also a TD and the first Irish Cabinet member to be a woman.
52. On Sunday night, members enjoyed an informal dinner at Harper’s Restaurant in Kilkenny.

55th Plenary Conference (Liverpool)

53. The 55th Plenary Conference of the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly took place between Sunday 15 and Tuesday 17 October 2017 at the Hilton City Centre Hotel, Liverpool. The hotel was conveniently located opposite the Liverpool waterfront, a UNESCO world heritage site.
54. The Lord Mayor of Liverpool, Councillor Malcolm Kennedy, welcomed the presence of the Assembly in Liverpool for the very first time. He said that Liverpool was the pre-eminent Irish city of the United Kingdom.

55. The first item of business was an address on the Irish Community in Liverpool by Greg Quiery, an expert on the history of Liverpool and in particular its Irish heritage. He responded to questions from Members after giving his address.
56. Robin Walker MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary in the Department for Exiting the European Union, addressed the Assembly on the progress of negotiations between the United Kingdom and the European Union and answered many questions from Members on the impact Brexit might have on Ireland and on the Irish border.
57. Chloe Smith MP, Parliamentary Secretary in the Northern Ireland Office, apologised that the Secretary of State, James Brokenshire MP, was unable to be present; she explained that he was engaged in talks on the future of the Northern Ireland Executive. She gave an address in which she spoke about the present political impasse and also about the border.
58. Daniel Mahoney, Deputy Director and Head of Economic Research at the Centre for Policy Studies, Seamus Nevin, Head of Policy Research (and policy lead on Northern Ireland) at the Institute of Directors and Dr John Whittaker of the Lancaster Business School and a member of Economists for Free Trade formed a panel to discuss the implications of Brexit for the economies of the United Kingdom and Ireland. After they had each made an initial statement, they answered questions from the floor of the Assembly.
59. This was followed by a debate on the following motion proposed by the Steering Committee, which was agreed to:-

This Assembly believes that the absence of a hard border in Ireland is necessary, recognises that there are different opinions on how to safeguard this achievement and calls for every effort to be made in the Brexit negotiations to achieve a positive, solution-focused outcome on this issue.
60. The final agenda item of the day consisted of presentations, as had happened in Cardiff and Kilkenny, by representatives from youth organisations of the different jurisdictions. The Representatives were from UK Youth (Tamanna Miah), Youth Cymru (Kate Seary), Youth Scotland (Reece Harding), Youth Action Northern Ireland (Dale Simpson) and Youth Work Ireland (Fintan O'Dwyer). After making their initial statements, the youth Representatives responded to questions from the floor.
61. Tuesday's business began with an address by Eoin O'Neill, President of the British-Irish Chamber of Commerce, on the implications of Brexit for trade between the Irish Republic and the United Kingdom. He then answered questions from Members.
62. This was followed by an address by Professor Peter Shirlow, Director and Chair of the Institute of Irish Studies at Liverpool University. Professor Shirlow used a PowerPoint presentation to illustrate his talk about political engagement among young people in Northern Ireland. He provided some new and surprising insights into the 2015 General Election in Northern Ireland. At the end of his presentation he answered a number of questions.

63. The Chairs of Committees A, C and D reported on the work which their committees were undertaking while the Chair of Committee B, Andrew Rosindell MP, presented a summary of conclusions and recommendations from Committee B's report on Brexit and British-Irish relations. This was agreed, and it was noted that a compilation of the evidence associated with the report would be published in due course.
64. The final item of business was an address by Dr Kirsten Pullen, Chief Executive of the British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums (BIAZA). Dr Pullen spoke about the work of BIAZA and explained that the best zoos and aquariums in Britain and Ireland were members of the Association. She used a PowerPoint presentation to illustrate her talk and then responded to questions.
65. The Monday night conference dinner was held at Liverpool Town Hall. The Assembly was honoured with the presence of Mr. Mark Blundell, Lord Lieutenant of Merseyside, and Mr. Henry Burrows, High Sheriff of Merseyside and his wife. The Lord Mayor was unable to be present but Councillor Christine Banks, Deputy Lord Mayor, and Councillor Peter Brennan attended. Dinner was served in the magnificent main ballroom and was of a very high standard. Music at the pre-dinner reception was provided by three Irish musicians from the Liverpool Comhaltas. At the end of dinner, Councillor Banks invited members of the Assembly to view the council chamber.
66. On Sunday night after the arrival of members, an informal reception and dinner was held in the Merseyside Maritime Museum in the Albert Dock. The venue afforded members the opportunity of visiting the Titanic exhibition, Liverpool being the home port of the White Star Line, under whose flag the Titanic had sailed.

The Steering Committee

67. The Steering Committee met four times during 2017: on the occasion of the two plenary sessions (on 16 July in Kilkenny, and 15 October in Liverpool); and twice in the States Building, St Helier, Jersey, on 28 and 29 September. At the latter two meetings the Committee discussed the future strategy of the Assembly (including the timing, content and location of future plenary sessions, the role of the Assembly's four subject committees, outreach, public engagement and media coverage, follow-up to plenaries and committee inquiries, and relations with the British-Irish Council and other external bodies), as well as receiving briefings on the governance and politics of the Bailiwick of Jersey.

Committees

68. The work of the Committees during the year is set out in Appendix 3.

Staffing of the Assembly

69. Details of the staffing of the Assembly can be found at Appendix 4.

Prospects for 2018

70. It is hoped that following the reconstitution of the Irish and Westminster delegations after the general elections in, respectively, 2016 and 2017, the Assembly will enjoy a period without major turnover of membership, which in turn will enable its committees to make good progress with their inquiries. The Steering Committee is continuing with its review of the future strategy of the Assembly, on which it made further progress at its meeting held in Belfast on 29 January 2018.

APPENDIX 1

Members of the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly

The UK Parliament—January 2017

Mr. Andrew Rosindell MP	Ms. Caroline Ansell MP
Ms. Karin Smyth MP	Ms. Victoria Atkins MP
Lord Bew	Mr. Tom Blenkinsop MP
Baroness Blood MBE	Viscount Bridgeman
Mr. Andrew Bridgen MP	Lord Donoughue
Ms. Deidre Brock MP	Lord Empey
Mr. Oliver Colvile MP	Mrs. Margaret Ferrier MP
Miss Rosie Cooper MP	Lord Gordon of Strathblane
Rt. Hon Baroness Corston	Rt. Hon David Hanson MP
Rt. Hon Sir Jeffrey Donaldson MP	Mr. Stephen Hepburn MP
Lord Dubs	Lord Kilclooney
Mr. Mark Durkan MP	Ms. Siobhain McDonagh MP
Mr. Nigel Evans MP	Sir Alan Meale MP
Mr. Paul Farrelly MP	Mr. Mark Pritchard MP
Lord Glentoran CBE DL	Mr. Bob Stewart MP
Baroness Harris of Richmond	Lord Tugendhat
Ms. Helen Jones MP	
Mr. Danny Kinahan MP	
Mr. Jack Lopresti MP	
Rt. Hon Lord Mawhinney	
Mr. Conor McGinn MP	
Mr. Nigel Mills MP	
Lord Skelmersdale	

The UK Parliament—December 2017

Mr. Andrew Rosindell MP	Sir Peter Bottomley MP
Ms. Karin Smyth MP	Mr. Jack Brereton MP
Mr. Nigel Evans MP	Viscount Bridgeman
Lord Bew	Mr. Vernon Coaker MP
Baroness Blood MBE	Lord Donoughue
Mr. Andrew Bridgen MP	Mr. Stephen Doughty MP
Ms. Deidre Brock MP	Lord Gordon of Strathblane
Ms. Maria Caulfield MP	Mr. John Grogan MP
Miss Rosie Cooper MP	Mr. Graham Jones MP
Rt. Hon Sir Jeffrey Donaldson MP	Rt. Hon Lord Kilclooney
Lord Dubs	Mr. Andrew Lewer MBE MP
Lord Empey OBE	Ms. Siobhain McDonagh MP
Mr. Paul Farrelly MP	Mr. Huw Merriman MP
Mr. Stephen Hepburn MP	Ms. Carol Monaghan MP
Ms. Helen Jones MP	Ms. Bridget Phillipson MP
Lord Lexden OBE	Mr. Mark Pritchard MP
Mr. Jack Lopresti MP	Mr. Paul Scully MP
Mr. Conor McGinn MP	Lord Skelmersdale
Mr. Nigel Mills MP	Mr. Bob Stewart MP
Mr. David Morris MP	

Rt. Hon Lord Murphy of Torfaen
Baroness O’Cathain OBE
Mr. Chris Ruane MP
Baroness Suttie
Mr. Martin Vickers MP

Ireland —January 2017

Ms. Kathleen Funchion TD
Senator Frank Feighan
Mr. Declan Breathnach TD
Senator Victor Boyhan
Ms. Joan Burton TD
Mr. Joe Carey TD
Senator Paul Coghlan
Mr. Seán Crowe TD
Mr. Peter Fitzpatrick TD
Mr. Pat the Cope Gallagher TD
Mr. Tony McLoughlin TD
Mr. Mattie McGrath TD
Mr. Kevin Boxer Moran TD
Ms. Margaret Murphy O’Mahony TD
Senator Catherine Noone
Mr. Fergus Ó Donnghaile TD
Mr. Eamon Scanlon TD
Mr. Brendan Smith TD
Senator Denis Landy
Senator Terry Leyden
Senator Diarmuid Wilson

Mr. Colm Brophy TD
Mr. Martin Ferris TD
Mr. Brendan Griffin TD
Mr. Danny Healy Rae TD
Senator Gerry Horkan
Ms. Josepha Madigan TD
Ms. Kate O’Connell TD
Mr. Aengus Ó Snodaigh
Mr. John Paul Phelan TD
Mr. Brendan Ryan TD

Ireland —December 2017

Ms. Kathleen Funchion TD
Senator Frank Feighan
Mr. Declan Breathnach TD
Senator Victor Boyhan
Ms. Joan Burton TD
Mr. Joe Carey TD
Mr. Sean Canney TD
Senator Paul Coghlan
Mr. Séan Crowe TD
Mr. Peter Fitzpatrick TD
Mr. Pat the Cope Gallagher TD
Mr. Tony McLoughlin TD
Mr. Mattie McGrath TD
Ms. Margaret Murphy O’Mahony TD
Senator Catherine Noone
Mr. Fergus Ó Donnghaile TD
Mr. Eamon Scanlon TD
Mr. Brendan Smith TD
Senator Denis Landy
Senator Diarmuid Wilson

Mr. Colm Brophy TD
Mr. Martin Ferris TD
Mr. Brendan Griffin TD
Mr. Danny Healy Rae TD
Senator Gerry Horkan
Ms. Josepha Madigan TD
Ms. Kate O’Connell TD
Mr. Aengus Ó Snodaigh
Mr. Brendan Ryan TD
Mr. Eamon Ryan TD

The Scottish Parliament – January 2017

Mr. Willie Coffey MSP

Mr. James Dornan MSP

Ms. Linda Fabiani MSP
Mr. Ross Greer MSP
Mr. Mark Griffin MSP
Mr. John Scott MSP

Mr. Maurice Golden MSP
Mr. Gordon MacDonald MSP
Ms. Pauline McNeill MSP

The Scottish Parliament – December 2017

Mr. Willie Coffey MSP
Ms. Linda Fabiani MSP
Mr. Ross Greer MSP
Mr. Mark Griffin MSP
Mr. John Scott MSP

Mr. James Dornan MSP
Mr. Maurice Golden MSP
Mr. Gordon MacDonald MSP
Ms. Pauline McNeill MSP

National Assembly for Wales – January 2017

Ms. Jayne Bryant AM
Ms. Ann Jones AM
Mr. Steffan Lewis AM
Mr. Darren Millar AM
Vacancy

Mr. Hefin David AM
Mr. Neil Hamilton AM
Mr. Mark Isherwood AM
Dr. Dai Lloyd AM

National Assembly for Wales – December 2017

Ms. Jayne Bryant AM
Ms. Ann Jones AM
Mr. Steffan Lewis AM
Mr. Darren Millar AM
Vacancy

Mr. Hefin David AM
Mr. Neil Hamilton AM
Mr. Mark Isherwood AM
Mr. Dai Lloyd AM

Northern Ireland Assembly – January 2017

Mr. Steve Aiken MLA
Mr. David Ford MLA
Mr. Paul Givan MLA
Mr. Ian Milne MLA
Mr. Colin McGrath MLA

Mr. Cathal Boylan MLA
Mr. Alan Chambers MLA
Ms. Claire Hanna MLA
Mr. Jim Wells MLA

Northern Ireland Assembly – December 2017

Mr. Steve Aiken MLA
Mr. David Ford MLA
Mr. Paul Givan MLA
Mr. Ian Milne MLA
Mr. Colin McGrath MLA

Mr. Cathal Boylan MLA
Mr. Alan Chambers MLA
Ms. Claire Hanna MLA
Mr. Jim Wells MLA

States of Jersey – January 2017

Deputy John Le Fondré

Deputy Kevin Lewis

States of Jersey – December 2017

Deputy John Le Fondré

Deputy Kevin Lewis

States of Guernsey – January 2017

Deputy Al Brouard

Deputy Jane Stephens

States of Guernsey – December 2017

Deputy Al Brouard

Deputy Jane Stephens

Tynwald – January 2017

Hon. Juan Watterson SHK

Mr. Tim Crookall MLC

Tynwald – December 2017

Hon. Juan Watterson SHK

Mr. Tim Crookall MLC

APPENDIX 2

Reports and other Documents approved by the Assembly

Fifty-fourth plenary, Kilkenny, 16 to 18 July 2017

The Assembly agreed to the following Resolutions:

MOTION TO AMEND THE MEMBERSHIP RULES (ON A TEMPORARY BASIS)

That, with effect until 17 October 2017, as a temporary measure, the following amendment be made to the rules of the Assembly: in the proviso to rule 1(d), line 3, leave out “until the end of the next session” and insert “until the end of the next but one session”.

TWENTY-FIRST ANNUAL REPORT

That the Assembly takes note of the Twentieth-first Annual Report of the Assembly.

CHILDHOOD OBESITY

That the Assembly takes note of the Report from Committee D (Environmental and Social Affairs) on Childhood Obesity, and the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee, which should be forwarded to both governments and the devolved administrations for their observations.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF BREXIT FOR THE AGRI-FOOD SECTOR (INTERIM REPORT)

That the Assembly takes note of the interim Report from Committee C (Economic Affairs) on the implications of Brexit for the agri-food sector.

Fifty-fifth plenary, Liverpool, 15 to 17 October 2017

The Assembly agreed to the following Resolutions:

IRISH BORDER

This Assembly believes that the absence of a hard border in Ireland is necessary, recognises that there are different opinions on how to safeguard this, and calls for every effort to be made in the Brexit negotiations to achieve a positive, solution-focused outcome on this issue.

BREXIT AND THE FUTURE OF BRITISH-IRISH RELATIONS

That the Assembly takes note of the summary of conclusions and recommendations relating to Brexit and the future of British-Irish relations presented by Committee B (European Affairs), which should be forwarded to both governments and the devolved administrations for their observations in conjunction with the compendium of associated evidence when the latter has been finalized.

APPENDIX 3

Work of Committees

Annual Report of Committee A (Sovereign Matters)

1. The Committee met formally on five occasions during 2017: in Belfast in January, in Dublin in September, in London in November and during the plenary meetings in Kilkenny and Liverpool in July and October respectively.
2. The Committee's work in 2017 was exclusively concerned with an on-going inquiry into trade and the border, which was launched following the EU referendum. In January the Committee met a range of stakeholders, including the PSNI, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, the Centre for Cross Border Studies, the Committee on the Administration of Justice and the Ulster Farmers Union. In September the Committee met with Norway's Ambassador to Ireland, as well as Dr Katy Hayward and former Irish official Ray Bassett. In November the Committee met with Chairs of relevant UK parliamentary committees and the Swiss Ambassador to the UK.
3. The Committee saw several changes to its membership in 2017. New Chair Peter Fitzpatrick TD praised the hard work of outgoing Chair Joe Carey TD, and those members who were no longer on the Committee, and welcomed new and returning members.

Attendance at meetings of Committee A in 2017:

Belfast 23 January 2017: Joe Carey TD (Chair), Lord Bew, Declan Breathnach TD, Viscount Bridgeman [Associate], Senator Paul Coghlan, Seán Crowe TD, Senator Frank Feighan, Margaret Ferrier MP [Associate], Senator Gerry Horkan, Danny Kinahan MP

Kilkenny 16 July 2017: Joe Carey TD (Chair), Lord Bew, Baroness Blood, Declan Breathnach TD, Senator Paul Coghlan, Sean Crowe TD, Senator Frank Feighan, Lord Kilclooney, Brendan Smith TD

Dublin 25 September 2017: Joe Carey TD (Chair), Lord Bew, Declan Breathnach TD, Senator Paul Coghlan, Sean Crowe TD, Senator Frank Feighan, Lord Kilclooney, Brendan Smith TD

Liverpool 15 October 2017: Joe Carey TD (Chair), Lord Bew, Declan Breathnach TD, Senator Paul Coghlan, Rosie Cooper MP, Sean Crowe TD, Rt Hon Sir Jeffrey Donaldson MP, Senator Frank Feighan, Brendan Smith TD

London 28 November 2017: Peter Fitzpatrick TD (Chair), Lord Bew, Baroness Blood, Declan Breathnach TD, Senator Paul Coghlan, Rt Hon Sir Jeffrey Donaldson MP, Senator Frank Feighan, Lord Lexden, Nigel Mills MP, Brendan Smith TD

Annual Report of Committee B (European Affairs)

1. During 2017, Committee B met formally at the plenary meetings in Kilkenny and Liverpool. In addition, the Committee conducted three visits to collect evidence for its inquiry into Brexit: in London (28-28 February), Dublin (9-10 March) and Brussels (24-26 September). During these visits, the Committee held meetings with Ministers and officials of the UK and Irish governments, members from relevant Westminster and Oireachtas committees, representatives of the Crown Dependencies, Members of the European Parliament, academics and other key stakeholders.
2. At the Kilkenny plenary in July 2017, the Committee considered the written evidence received for its inquiry into Brexit, and agreed a plan for the completion of the inquiry, including its September visit to Brussels.
3. At the Liverpool plenary in October 2017, the Committee welcomed two new members – David Morris MP and Steve Aiken MLA – and agreed a summary of recommendations and conclusions for its report on Brexit. This summary was presented to the plenary for adoption. It was agreed that the remainder of the report would be published as a compendium of evidence before the next plenary. The Committee also agreed to launch two new inquiries, into EU policing and security cooperation and EU external borders. The Chair informed the Committee that he would be handing over to his successor at the next plenary, and the Committee agreed to elect an Irish Vice-Chair.

Attendance at formal meetings of Committee B in 2017

Kilkenny, 16 July 2017: Andrew Rosindell MP (Chair), Ross Greer MSP, Darren Millar AM, Senator Terry Leyden, Eamon Scanlon TD, Margaret Murphy O'Mahony TD, Baroness Suttie.

Liverpool, 15 and 16 October 2017: Andrew Rosindell MP (Chair), Steve Aiken MLA, Ross Greer MSP, Paul Farrelly MP, Senator Terry Leyden, Conor McGinn MP, Darren Millar AM, David Morris MP, Lord Murphy of Torfaen, Fergus O'Dowd TD, Margaret Murphy O'Mahoney TD, Eamon Scanlon TD, John Scott MSP

Annual Report of Committee C (Economic Affairs)

1. In July 2016, Committee C continued work as part of its inquiry into the *Implications of Brexit for the agri-food sector*. It had hoped to visit London, Edinburgh and Brussels in 2017 to complete this work but for a number of reasons this did not prove possible. However, in 2017 the Committee planned our visits to London and Edinburgh for early in 2018.
2. In July 2017, the Committee published its interim Report on the *Implications of Brexit for the agri-food sector*. In that Report it drew on the evidence it had taken in Belfast, Cardiff and Dublin to highlight the key issues and to make some interim conclusions and recommendations.
3. In October 2017, the Committee discussed its future programme and agreed that its next inquiry would be into *The impact of online sales on high street retailers*. The Committee expects to launch this inquiry in 2018 after it has concluded its current inquiry.

Attendance at meetings/Fact Finding Mission of Committee C in 2017

Kilkenny plenary, 16–18 July 2017: Lord Empey (in the Chair); David Ford MLA; Deputy John Le Fondré; Steffan Lewis AM; and Colin McGrath MLA.

Liverpool plenary, 15–17 October 2017: Helen Jones MP (in the Chair); Deputy John Le Fondré; Dr Dai Lloyd; Colin McGrath MLA; Deputy Mattie McGrath; and Martin Vickers MP.

Annual Report of Committee D (Environmental and Social Issues)

1. Committee D met four times during 2017: two meetings during plenary sessions; and a further two meetings taking evidence. There was a large turnover of membership of the Committee following the Northern Ireland Assembly election and UK General Election, and the Chairman would like to thank all the members of Committee D for their work during the year.
2. During the first part of 2017, the Committee continued its inquiry into Childhood Obesity, following on from meetings held in London and Cardiff in late 2016. After reflecting on the evidence heard at these meetings, the Committee decided that, in view of the similar challenges and statistics in Ireland and Britain, it would be helpful to visit another jurisdiction where efforts to combat obesity had been more successful. As a result, the Committee undertook a highly informative visit to Amsterdam in February 2017 to hear about approaches in the Netherlands. There, the Committee heard about the innovative approaches undertaken by Amsterdam City Council and the JOGG project (which translates as Young People at a Healthy Weight).
3. The Committee's final report on childhood obesity was published at the Kilkenny plenary in July 2017. The report concluded that childhood obesity is a multifactorial problem with no single cause or solution. Nevertheless, necessary components of a successful childhood obesity strategy are:
 - Strong local and national political leadership and commitment
 - A coordinated whole of government national approach, combined with a coordinated localised approach which promotes a healthy local environment
 - A particular focus on deprived communities
 - Involving and consulting young people
 - Acknowledgement of the role the food and drink industry has to play, including in relation to sugar content, advertising and product reformulation. In the event that voluntary measures do not achieve sufficient results, consideration should be given to tighter regulation or a levy on sugary foods
 - Rigorous advertising regulation
 - A strong focus on joined-up healthcare provision
 - An enhanced focus on pre-conception and early years strategies
 - A positive, non-judgmental approach, and providing better information to consumers
 - Enhanced local planning powers, for instance on the location of fast food outlets
 - A strong focus on schools
 - Funding

The Committee will conduct a short follow-up piece of work in 2018.

4. At the Kilkenny plenary, the Committee decided to launch an inquiry into the cross-jurisdictional implications of abortion policy across the BIPA jurisdictions, with the intention of hearing from Government representatives, academic, medical and legal

experts, and campaigners representing all points of view on this important and contentious issue. At the Liverpool plenary meeting in October, the Committee met locally-based clinicians and academic experts. In December, the Committee held a meeting in London with healthcare professionals, academics and service providers, as well as campaigners reflecting both sides of the debate. The Committee will continue this inquiry in 2018.

Attendance at meetings of Committee D in 2017

Amsterdam, 5-6 February 2017

Lord Dubs (Chairman), Senator Catherine Noone, Lord Skelmersdale, Senator Diarmuid Wilson

Kilkenny, 16 July 2017

Lord Dubs (Chairman), Senator Victor Boyhan, Deidre Brock MP, Ian Milne MLA, Karin Smyth MP, Jim Wells MLA

Liverpool, 15 October 2017

Lord Dubs (Chairman), Senator Victor Boyhan, Cathal Boylan MLA, Deidre Brock MP, Jayne Bryant AM, Stephen Hepburn MP, Tony McLoughlin TD, Senator Catherine Noone, Chris Ruane MP, Karin Smyth MP, Jim Wells MLA, Senator Diarmuid Wilson

London, 3-4 December 2017

Lord Dubs (Chairman), Senator Victor Boyhan, Cathal Boylan MLA, Deidre Brock MP, Maria Caulfield MP, Senator Catherine Noone, Chris Ruane MP, Karin Smyth MP, Jim Wells MLA

APPENDIX 4

Staff of the Assembly in 2017

Ireland:

Clerk: Ms. Dervila Flynn

Policy Adviser:

Ms. Marylee Wall

Clerk, Committee A:

Mr. Paul Shannon

Shadow Clerk, Committee B:

Ms. Marie-Claire Hughes

Clerk, Committee C:

Mrs. Veronica Carr (temporary)

Shadow Clerk, Committee D:

Ms. Veronica Carr (temporary)

Irish Secretariat:

Mrs. Veronica Carr

United Kingdom:

Clerk: Dr. Robin James

British Consultant:

Sir Michael Davies KCB

Shadow Clerk, Committee A:

Mr. Edward Faulkner

Clerk, Committee B:

Ms. Harriet Deane

Shadow Clerk, Committee C:

Ms. Danielle Nash

Clerk, Committee D:

Mr. Stuart Stoner

UK Secretariat:

Mrs. Amanda Healy

Media Consultant:

Ms. Nuala Walsh, Press Liaison Officer, Houses of the Oireachtas
Mr. George Perry Committee Press Consultant, House of Commons