



Subject:	Notice of Motion : Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry
Date:	22nd September, 2017
Reporting Officer:	Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager
Contact Officer:	Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To consider responses which has been received in relation to the Council's Motion on the Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is asked to; <ul style="list-style-type: none">Note the responses and take any such action as may be determined.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	Key Issues The Council, at its meeting on 3rd July, passed the following motion on the Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry, which had been proposed by Councillor Heading and seconded by Councillor McReynolds:

“This Council notes that the Inquiry into Historical Institutional Child Abuse found that children's homes run by some churches, charities and state institutions in Belfast and elsewhere in Northern Ireland were the scene of widespread abuse and mistreatment of young residents.

The Council notes that Sir Anthony Hart, Chair of the Inquiry, recommended compensation, a memorial and a public apology to abuse survivors.

The Council expresses deep concern that, due to the failure to form a power-sharing government, there has been no progress into implementing the Hart HIA Redress Findings.

The Council agrees to write to political party leaders in Northern Ireland to ensure that, if an Executive is formed, the Inquiry's recommendations are implemented in full as a matter of urgency.”

3.2 A response has now been received, on behalf of the Secretary of State, from Minister Chloe Smith MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. A copy of the response is attached.

3.3 Minister Smith points out that the Secretary of State met recently with historical institutional child abuse victims from a number of organisations in Northern Ireland, during which he reiterated the Government's condemnation of any form of abuse of children and its abhorrence of any tolerance by people in positions of responsibility of such activity by others.

3.4 She states that the Government has always believed that the Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry, which was announced in 2012 by the then First Minister and Deputy First Minister, was the most effective way of establishing the truth and that both the Government and agencies had provided the fullest possible level of co-operation. She highlights the fact that Sir Anthony Hart, who had led the Inquiry, stated clearly within his closing statement that the report, its findings and recommendations were now a matter for the new Assembly and Executive to consider and urged them to implement his recommendations as a matter of priority. Minister Smith concludes by recognising fully the frustration felt by victims and survivors at the current lack of progress due to the suspension of the devolved administration and adds that the Secretary of State continues to urge the Political Parties to restore the Executive to allow a response to Sir Anthony Hart's report to be provided at the earliest opportunity, including on his recommendations for redress and support for victims and survivors of child abuse.

In addition to the response from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern

3.5	Ireland, the Council has, to date, received responses from two leaders of Political Parties, namely, Mr. Steven Agnew MLA and Mr. Robin Swann MLA of the Green Party and the Ulster Unionist Party respectively.
3.6	Mr. Agnew, within his response, recognises the urgency of the issue and maintains that the implementation of the report arising from the Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry should not be delayed as a result of a failure to form an Executive and Assembly. He adds that he has written to the Secretary of State to urge him to implement the report immediately and requests those Political Parties on the Council to urge their leadership to do the same.
3.7	Mr. Swann confirms that he has written also to the Secretary of State on this issue and that he is committed to maintaining his Party's longstanding position of supporting the victims of historical institutional abuse. He too regrets the fact that the absence of an Executive and Assembly has delayed the process and supports the Council's call for the Inquiry's recommendations to be implemented as soon as the political institutions are restored. However, he points out that the Panel of Experts on Redress believes that the recommendations relating to compensation fall short of survivors' needs and has identified flaws and suggested improvements. Mr. Swann confirms that, in the absence of the Executive and Assembly, he has called upon the Government to examine both the recommendations of Sir Anthony Hart and the Panel of Experts on Redress and options for bridging the gap between them. He concludes by stating that he is working currently with other Political Parties to identify common ground and help deliver justice for the victims of Historical institutional abuse.
3.8	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None</p>
3.9	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>None</p>
4.0	Appendices - Document Attached
	<p>Responses from:</p> <p>Appendix 1 - Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland</p> <p>Appendix 2 - Mr. Steven Agnew MLA , Green Party</p> <p>Appendix 3 - Mr. Robin Swann MLA, Ulster Unionist Party</p>