



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

# Committee on Procedures

## Minutes of Proceedings

16 June 2021

**Meeting Location:** Virtual Meeting (Room 30)

**Present by Video-Conference:**

Ms Carál Ní Chuilín MLA (Chairperson)

Mr Thomas Buchanan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Ms Nicola Brogan MLA

Mr Gerry Carroll MLA

Ms Linda Dillon MLA

Mr Gary Middleton MLA

**Apologies:**

Mrs Rosemary Barton MLA

Mr Maurice Bradley MLA

Ms Sinéad Bradley MLA

**In Attendance by Video-Conference:**

Emer Boyle (Committee Clerk)

Paul Gill (Clerk Assistant) (Item 11)

Stewart Kennedy (Assistant Clerk)

Joanne Keenan (Clerical Officer)



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The meeting commenced at 2.32pm in open session.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for the work undertaken in respect of the two committee motions which were debated in the Assembly on 15 June 2021.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to move to closed session at the end of the meeting to consider a draft Standing Order and corresponding legal advice in relation to Members' Statements.

### **1. Apologies**

As above.

### **2. Draft Minutes**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 2 June 2021.

### **3. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

### **4. Private Members' Bills – Briefing by RalSe**

*Mr Raymond McCaffrey (Assembly Researcher) joined the meeting at 2.34pm.*

The Committee noted a covering memo from the Clerk and a research paper on Private Members' Bills.



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The Chairperson welcomed Mr McCaffrey to the meeting.

Mr McCaffrey briefed the Committee on the research paper which was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked Mr McCaffrey for his briefing.

*Mr McCaffrey left the meeting at 2.52pm.*

The Chairperson advised the Committee that officials will continue with the programme of work as previously agreed and revert to the Committee with progress update in the Autumn.

### **5. Legislative Consent Motions – Associated Actions**

The Chairperson reminded Members that the Committee agreed for the Clerk to bring back a draft committee response to the House of Commons Procedures Committee Inquiry for consideration.

The Committee noted a cover note from the Clerk and considered a draft response to the House of Commons Procedures Committee Inquiry.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the draft response and for it to be forwarded to the House of Commons Procedures Committee.

The Chairperson advised the Committee that in respect of its LCM Inquiry, further correspondence had been issued to officials in the Executive Office seeking an update on its response.

### **6. Correspondence**

The Committee noted an email from the Women's Caucus which included research paper on a RalSe paper on Gender Budgeting in Northern Irish Education Policy.



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## 7. Forward Work Programme

The Committee agreed the draft Forward Work Programme.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed for a further letter to be issued to the Executive seeking its response to the Committee's LCM Inquiry.

## 8. Chairperson's Business

There was no Chairperson's business.

## 9. Any Other Business

The Chairperson informed the Committee that Mr Gary Middleton MLA and Mr Maurice Bradley MLA would be replaced on the Committee. On behalf of the Committee, the Chairperson thanked them and wished them well.

## 10. Date and Time of Next Meeting

**Agreed:** The Committee provisionally noted that the next meeting of the Committee would take place on Wednesday 30 June 2021 at 2.30pm. However, depending on the outcome of discussions at the next agenda item, the Committee noted that it may be necessary to have an additional meeting.

The Committee moved to closed session at 2.57pm.



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## **11. Members' Statements – Consideration of Draft Standing Order and legal advice**

The Chairperson advised Members that the Committee would consider legal advice on a draft Standing Order before going on to consider a number of outstanding issues relating to Members' Statements.

*Mr Simon Kelly (Legal Advisor) and Mr Paul Gill (Clerk Assistant) joined the meeting at 2.57pm.*

The Committee noted a covering memo from the Clerk and legal advice.

Mr Simon Kelly briefed the Committee on the draft Standing Order and legal advice.

The Committee considered a number of outstanding issues.

The Committee discussed whether Members should be restricted from making statements on matters that have previously been debated. It was the Committee's views that the draft Standing Order was too restrictive in this respect.

The Committee also discussed whether it is worth clarifying in the new Standing Order that any statement should be about a topical matter of public interest. The Committee was of the view that a statement must relate to a topical matter of public interest.

The Committee considered whether the Speaker should have an express power to impose further new restrictions on what a Member might say in a statement. It was the Committee's view that the power to introduce further restrictions should be included in guidance.

The Committee also considered whether provision to ensure that a statement should not be used to attack another member should also extend to political parties. The Committee were of the view that the provision should not extend to political parties.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed for a new draft Standing Order to prepared based on the Committee's decisions.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it would prefer to bring forward a motion before summer recess and therefore agreed to hold an additional meeting in closed session.



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**Agreed:** The Committee therefore agreed that the date and time of the next meeting would be on Wednesday 23 June 2021 at 2.30pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 3.32pm.

**Carál Ní Chuilín MLA**

**Chairperson, Committee on Procedures  
23 June 2021**