



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee on Procedures

Minutes of Proceedings

13 October 2021

Meeting Location: Room 29 and Starleaf

Present by Video-Conference:

Mr Thomas Buchanan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Mrs Rosemary Barton MLA

Ms Sinéad Bradley MLA

Ms Nicola Brogan MLA

Ms Joanne Bunting MLA

Mr Gerry Carroll MLA

Ms Ciara Ferguson MLA

Mr William Humphrey MLA

Apologies: Ms Carál Ní Chuilín MLA (Chairperson)

In Attendance:

Emer Boyle (Committee Clerk)

Paul Gill (Clerk Assistant)

Sohui Yim (Assistant Clerk)

Joanne Keenan (Clerical Officer)



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The meeting commenced at 2.34pm in open session.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 29 September 2021.

3. Matters Arising

The Committee considered correspondence from the Business Committee regarding public petitions highlighting the specific issue of scheduling multiple petitions on the same matter in Plenary.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Business Committee to inform them that the previous Committee on Procedures recommended that the existing public petitions process remains fit for purpose and that it be retained, but that it should be enhanced by the inclusion of an E-petitions facility to permit submission of petitions without requiring sponsorship of a political party. Furthermore, given the time constraints and other priorities for this Committee, it has agreed that E-Petitions should be listed as a priority in its legacy report for immediate attention by the next Committee.

Sinead Bradley joined the meeting at 2.37pm.



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4. Review of Private Members' Bill – Update

The Committee noted a paper from the Clerk which detailed the progress to date on the Committee's Inquiry into Private Members' Bill (PMBs), and the proposed next steps.

Members noted that the Assembly Bill Office had provided a list of MLAs that engaged with the PMB process throughout this mandate.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to those MLAs to invite them to give written and / or oral evidence on their experience of the PMB process at the Assembly.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the forward work programme for the Inquiry.

5. Legislative Consent Motion – Update

The Committee noted a briefing note from the Clerk that outlined that LCMs and the experience of the NI Assembly had been discussed during a meeting between Assembly officials and the Lord Speaker of the House of Lords as part of his recent visit to the NI Assembly. Members also considered a written submission previously agreed on the topic of the NI Assembly experience of the Legislative Consent Motion (LCM) process and whether Committee was content to correspond with the Lords Constitution Committee in the context of its ongoing Inquiry into the Future Governance of the UK.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the House of Lords Constitution Committee and reflect the details of an edited version of a written submission previously agreed on the topic of the NI Assembly experience of the LCM process.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek clarification on the timescales in place in the Standing Orders of other devolved legislatures for the handling of LCMs.



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6. The Northern Ireland (Ministers, Elections and Petitions of Concern) Bill 2021-22 – Update There were no items of correspondence

The Committee noted a briefing note from the Clerk regarding the Northern Ireland (Ministers, Elections and Petitions of Concern) Bill 2021-22 (NI MEPoC Bill) currently at the report stage in the Commons.

Members discussed Clauses in the Bill that may have impact on the Assembly's Standing Orders.

Agreed: The Committee agreed for the Committee Secretariat to provide an issues paper on the Bill for consideration at the next Committee meeting.

7. Proxy Voting – Update

The Committee noted a briefing note from the Clerk regarding the Committee's review of proxy voting and discussed the possibility of including "unforeseen circumstances" in the review of permanent proxy voting.

Sinead Bradley re-joined the meeting at 3.28pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to further consider the possibility of adding "unforeseen circumstances" into the review. The Committee Secretariat will provide an updated paper to determine the scope of "unforeseen circumstances" for consideration at the next Committee meeting.



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8. Correspondence

Agreed: The Committee noted a Human Rights Commission newsletter.

9. Forward Work Programme

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft forward work programme.

10. Chairperson's Business

The Committee noted a briefing note from the Assembly Secretariat regarding the current pressures that committees are facing in the period up to the end of the mandate in March 2022.

11. Any Other Business

12. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Agreed: It was agreed that the next meeting of the Committee would take place on Wednesday, 3 November 2021 at 2.30pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 3.32pm.

Carál Ní Chuilín MLA
Chairperson, Committee on Procedures
3 November 2021