



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

Committee for Finance

Carál Ní Chuilín MLA
Chairperson
Committee on Procedures
Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
Stormont
Belfast
BT4 3XX

Our Ref: 2021:066

29 January 2021

Dear Carál

Committee Consideration of Private Member's Bills

At its meeting on 27 January 2021, the Committee reflected on recent experiences arising from its scrutiny of a Private Members' Bill (PMB) – namely, the Functioning of Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill. Members also discussed related experiences shared by the sponsor of the proposed Zero Hours Contract Bill.

The Committee agreed, that in the course of its scrutiny of the Functioning of Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill, there was considerable benefit in having the Bill sponsor as an ex-officio member of the Committee for Finance during the Committee Stage and subsequent stages of the Bill.

The Committee therefore agreed that I should write to you in order to suggest that the Committee on Procedures gives consideration to setting out clear procedures (and amending Standing Orders as appropriate) in order to allow committees, if they so choose, to include the sponsor of a PMB as an ex-officio member of that committee during the appropriate stages of the passage of the PMB. Members felt particularly that the revision to procedures was required in order to allow the sponsor to ask questions of witnesses and thus provide necessary clarity to the committee.

Members felt that the revised procedures should be in line with the amendment (shown below) proposed by Mr Paul Frew MLA during the passage of the Functioning of Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill.

If you require further explanation or clarification, please do not hesitate to have the Clerk of the Committee on Procedures contact the Clerk to the Committee for Finance.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Steve Aiken OBE MLA
Chairperson
Committee for Finance
Enc.

New Clause

After clause 12 insert -'Enhanced engagement and scrutiny of private members' legislation
12A.—(1) Standing Orders shall provide that when a Private Member's Bill passes its Second Stage the Bill sponsor shall be afforded all rights, save voting rights, in the relevant committee during and for the purpose only of the Committee Stage of the Bill.

(2) In circumstances where more than one Member is sponsoring the Bill, then the sponsors shall nominate the Member who will exercise the rights arising under subsection (1)

(3) If the Bill sponsor, or any one of the sponsors, is already a member of the relevant committee, then subsection (1) shall not apply.'

*Mr Paul Frew
Mr Christopher Stalford
Mr Gary Middleton
Mr Keith Buchanan*