



**Northern Ireland  
Assembly**

**Committee for Finance**

Room 373  
Parliament Buildings  
Tel: 028 9052 1482

---

**From: Peter McCallion, Clerk to the Committee for Finance**  
**Date: 19 November 2021**  
**To: Emer Boyle, Clerk to the Committee on Procedures**

---

**Committee on Procedures Ongoing Inquiry  
Private Members' Bills (PMBs)**

At its meeting of 17 November 2021, this Committee considered your correspondence, dated 11 November 2021 seeking the Committee's views on PMB sponsors joining scrutiny committees during the passage of their Bills.

The Committee agreed that I should respond to you indicating that the Committee endorses a change to Standing Orders which would allow statutory committees the option of inviting PMB Sponsors to attend some or all of the committee proceedings which relate to the PMB. The Committee felt that the change in Standing Orders should provide such an option to statutory committees in order to allow Bill Sponsors to: question witnesses; provide prompt answers; and inform committee scrutiny of a PMB.

Members agreed that this should be an option and that statutory committees should not be compelled in this regard. It would also be for statutory committees to decide which proceedings the Bill Sponsor would attend and the extent to which they would participate in questioning and deliberations. Members were clear that the Bill Sponsor would not, under these arrangements, be a Member of the statutory committee and would not enjoy any voting rights. Conversely, the Committee also felt that if a Bill Sponsor was a Member of the relevant statutory committee during the passage of their PMB, they should continue to enjoy all of the privileges and responsibilities of a committee Member during the scrutiny of their own PMB.

The Committee also suggested that the Committee on Procedures may also wish to give consideration to comparison with Westminster Standing Orders in this regard and to determine whether there are situations where there may be issues of conflict of interest particularly where expert witnesses may find themselves questioned by PMB Sponsors.

If you require further information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards

**Peter McCallion**

**Tel. 21821**