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Mrs Carál Ni Chuilin
Chairperson, Committee on Procedures
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29 May 2020

Carál a chara

Proxy Voting

At its meeting on 19 May, the Business Committee discussed options for the management of Assembly business as we begin to emerge from the 'lockdown' restrictions. During these discussions the Business Committee recognised that proxy voting was one of the range of temporary measures introduced in an effort to minimise risk to Members and staff during the COVID-19 pandemic, and that Standing Order 112 making provision for it only remains in place until 30 September.

The Committee considers that there is merit in retaining proxy voting in circumstances where Members cannot be physically present in the Chamber but are not otherwise prevented from casting their vote, and agreed to write to the Committee on Procedures to suggest that it considers the instances in which proxy voting could be retained on a more permanent basis, and how this might be reflected in Standing Orders.

I would add in my own capacity as Speaker, that when I met with my counterparts in England, Scotland and Wales earlier this year they were all either conducting, or considering, pilot schemes, and their experience might be instructive. The most obvious instances where proxy voting would seem useful are in relation to maternity and paternity leave and cases of serious illness but clearly some regulation may be required to prevent abuse.

Therefore, the Committee's consideration of the details of this matter would be very important and I would be happy to assist if the Committee found it helpful.

Is mise le meas

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alex Maskey". The signature is written in black ink and includes a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

ALEX MASKEY MLA