



Committee for Enterprise, Trade & Investment,
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**To: Claire McCanny
Senior Asst. Clerk, Assembly & Executive Review Committee**

**From: Jim McManus
Clerk to the Committee for Enterprise, Trade & Investment**

Date: 2nd November 2015

**Subject: Committee Consideration of the Assembly & Executive Reform
(Assembly Opposition) Bill**

At its meeting on 20th October 2015, the Committee for Enterprise, Trade & Investment considered provisions in the Assembly & Executive Reform (Assembly Opposition) Bill which may impact on the work of Assembly committees.

The Committee has one point of concern in relation to provisions at Paragraph 14 of the Bill Schedule. The current wording provides for a motion requesting that the function of statutory committees ceases to be to advise and assist Ministers and instead becomes to scrutinise Ministers. The Committee believes that the removal of the role of committees to advise and assist Ministers has the potential to significantly limit the impact of committees as the work of a statutory committee would become limited to reacting to the work of the department. The Committee agrees that there should be a formal role for committees in scrutinising Ministers but that retention of the role of advising and assisting Ministers would provide committees with a broader remit.

The Committee therefore suggests that the words 'advise' and 'assist' be retained but that word 'scrutinise' be added to the relevant sentence so that Paragraph 14 may read:

"The motion may request that the function of statutory committees becomes to scrutinise Ministers and to advise and assist Ministers in the formulation of policy."

The Committee believes that this wording will retain the broader remit of committees and will formalise committee role in scrutinising Ministers.