

**NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY**  
**BUSINESS COMMITTEE**

**TUESDAY 17 SEPTEMBER 2013**  
**IN ROOM 106, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

**MINUTES**

*The meeting began at 12.34pm.*

**Present:**

**The Speaker (Chairperson)**  
**Mr G Kelly**  
**Mr K McCarthy**  
**Mrs K McKeivitt**  
**Lord Morrow**  
**Mrs S Overend**  
**Mr P Ramsey**  
**Ms C Ruane**  
**Mr R Swann**  
**Mr P Weir**

**In attendance:**

<b>Ms L Gordon</b> <b>Dr G McGrath</b>	<b>Mr H Widdis</b> <b>Ms N Dunwoody</b> <b>Mr R Ramsey</b> <b>Ms F Leneghan</b> <b>Mr C McNickle</b>	<b>Clerk of Business</b> <b>Director of Clerking and Reporting</b> <b>Director of Legal Services</b> <b>Clerk Assistant</b> <b>Adviser to the Speaker</b> <b>PS/Speaker</b> <b>Assistant Assembly Clerk</b>
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**Observers:**

**Deputy Speaker Dallat**  
**Junior Minister Bell**  
**Junior Minister McCann**  
**Mr A Rogers**                      **OFMDFM**

**1. Apologies**

1.1 Apologies were noted from Mr Stewart Dickson

**2. Minutes of previous meeting**

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 10 September were **agreed** and signed by the Speaker:

3. **Matters arising**

3.1 There were no matters arising.

4. **Finalisation of the Order Papers for the plenary meetings in week commencing 23 September**

Executive Business

4.1 Members **agreed** to schedule the First Stage of the Local Government Bill, subject to clearance by the Speaker, on Monday 23 September.

4.2 Members **agreed** to schedule a Legislative Consent Motion relating to the Northern Ireland (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill on Monday 23 September.

4.3 Members **noted** that the Health and Social Care (Amendment) Bill had been introduced and scheduled its Second Stage on Tuesday 24 September.

Committee Business

4.4 Members **agreed** to schedule a motion from the Committee for Social Development to extend the Committee Stage of the Licensing of Pavement Cafes Bill (NIA 24/11-15) on Monday 23 September.

4.5 Members **agreed** to schedule a motion from the Committee for Finance and Personnel to extend the Committee Stage of the Public Service Pensions Bill (NIA 23/11-15) on Tuesday 24 September.

4.6 Members **agreed** to schedule a motion from the Committee on Standards and Privileges on the Appointment of an Acting Commissioner on Tuesday 24 September. Members **agreed** to limit the debate to up to 30 minutes, with the usual timings. The Speaker indicated that he would not allow contributions to the debate to stray into areas other than the appointment.

Private Members' Business

4.7 Members **noted** that there was no change to Private Members' Business previously agreed for Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> September.

4.8 Members **agreed** to schedule an All Party motion on 'Support for DVANI Office Staff' on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> September in addition to the motions agreed at the previous meeting.

4.9 Junior Minister Bell advised that all relevant ministers were available to respond to the selected plenary business.

4.10 The draft Order Papers were **agreed**.

5. **Provisional arrangements for the plenary meetings in week commencing 30 September 2013**

Executive Business

5.1 Members **noted** that Question Time to the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister, and the Minister for Regional Development was scheduled for Monday 30 September.

5.2 Members **agreed** to schedule a motion from the Minister of Justice to approve the draft Lands Tribunal (Salaries) Order (Northern Ireland) 2013

5.3 Members **noted** that Question Time to the Minister for Social Development, and the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development was scheduled for Tuesday 1 October.

5.4 Members **agreed** to schedule the Second Stage of the Local Government Bill on Tuesday 1 October, subject to the necessary consents. Members **noted** that if other Executive business comes forward, the Committee might need to consider timing issues relating to the Second Stage of the Local Government Bill, including whether a two day Order Paper might be required.

Committee Business

5.5 Members noted that there were no requests for Committee business.

Private Members' Business

5.6 Members **agreed** to select two Private Members' Motions on Monday 30 September, but none on Tuesday 1 October, due to the Bill Stage.

5.7 Under the system of allocation, the selections lay with Sinn Féin and the DUP. The following motions were selected for Monday 30 September:

- 'Exploitation of Children and Young People' (Ms M McLaughlin, Mr M Brady, Ms C Ruane)
- 'Farm Safety Investment Scheme' (Mr P Frew, Mr T Buchanan, Miss M McIlveen, Mr W Irwin)

5.8 Members **agreed** that up to 1 hour 30 minutes should be allocated for each motion, with the usual speaking times.

5.9 Members **agreed** to schedule an Adjournment Debate on Monday 30 September. Under the system of allocation, the selection lay with Sinn Féin. The following topic was selected:

- 'Provision of Health Services at the South West Acute Hospital, Enniskillen' (Mr P Flanagan).

5.10 Junior Minister Bell advised that all relevant Ministers were available to respond to the selected plenary business.

5.11 The provisional Order Papers were **agreed**.

6. **Response from the Committee on Procedures on issues relating to the emergence of new political parties or groupings during a mandate.**

6.1 The Speaker referred Members to correspondence from the Committee on Procedures dated 2 August 2013 which requested that the speaking arrangements which were in place prior to the Business Committee meeting of 11 June 2013 be restored until such times as the Committee on Procedures comes to a view on this matter.

6.2 Mr Kelly declared an interest as the Chairperson of the Committee on Procedures and took no part in the discussion.

6.3 Mr Weir considered that the current speaking arrangements had worked well and had been a reasonably practical compromise. He indicated that he was happy to leave the operation of the arrangements to the Speaker's discretion, and saw no need to reverse the committee's decision.

6.4 Ms Ruane expressed the view that the Business Committee's decision of 11 June had been wrong and that the previous arrangements should not have been departed from. She considered that the decision lacked generosity and that the treatment of minorities was also an issue.

6.5 Mr Ramsey referred to the impact of the different voting arrangements that applied on the Business Committee. While he continued to consider that it would have been preferable to have retained the previous speaking arrangements, he had been surprised that the Committee on Procedures had asked the Business Committee to change its decision. He indicated that his party's position was that the integrity of the Speaker's role under Standing Order 17 should not be undermined.

6.6 Mr R Swann indicated his support for the decision taken at the Business Committee on 11 June 2013.

- 6.7 Mr K McCarthy indicated his support for the decision taken at the Business Committee on 11 June 2013.
- 6.8 Following discussion, Mr Weir formally **proposed** 'that the Business Committee reaffirms the speaking arrangements applying as at 17 September 2013'.
- 6.9 Members **voted** on the proposal as follows:
- For - 58 votes  
Against - 43 votes.
- 6.10 The proposal was, therefore, **carried**.
- 6.11 There was further discussion on what clarity could be provided to the Committee on Procedures in the context of any consideration it might give to the general principles of speaking arrangements, given the authority of the Speaker and the role of the Business Committee under Standing Orders 17(4) and (5). It was **agreed** to revisit this issue at the next meeting and to consider how the Business Committee might respond to the Committee on Procedures.
7. **Any other business**
- 7.1 There was no other business
8. **Date and Time of next meeting**
- 8.1 Members **agreed** to meet at approximately 12.30pm on Tuesday 24 September 2013 in Room 106.

*The Speaker brought the meeting to a close at 1.05pm.*

**The Speaker  
Chairperson**