

DRAFT
NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY
BUSINESS COMMITTEE

TUESDAY 15 NOVEMBER 2016
IN ROOM 106, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

MINUTES

The meeting began at 1.02pm.

Present:

The Speaker (Chairperson)

Mr A Attwood

Mr C Boylan

Mr T Clarke

Mr S Dickson

Dr S Farry

Mr G Lyons

Mr C McGrath

Ms C Ní Chuilín

Mrs S Overend

Mr R Swann

In attendance:

Dr A McGarel

Mrs L Hogg

Dr G McGrath

Mr P Gill

Mr D Martin

Ms T Caul

Mr R Ramsey

Ms F Leneghan

Mr G Ervine

Clerk of Business

Clerk/Chief Executive

**Director of Parliamentary
Services**

Clerk Assistant

Clerk Assistant

**Director of Legal Services
and Governance**

Adviser to the Speaker

PS/Speaker

Assistant Assembly Clerk

Observers:

Junior Minister Fearon

Junior Minister Ross

Mr A Rogers

The Executive Office

1. Apologies

1.1 There was an apology from Mr D McAleer.

2. Minutes of previous meetings

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 08 November were **agreed**.

3. **Matters arising**
4. **Finalisation of the Order Paper for plenary meetings in week commencing 21 November 2016**

Executive Committee Business

- 4.1 Members **noted** that there was no change to Executive Committee Business previously scheduled for Monday 21 November.
- 4.2 Members **noted** notification of an oral statement from the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs on the North South Ministerial Council in Agriculture Sectoral Format for Tuesday 22 November.
- 4.3 Members **noted** that there was no further change to Executive Committee Business previously scheduled for Tuesday 22 November.

Opposition Business

- 4.4 Members **noted** revised wording for the motion on 'Poverty and Deprivation', scheduled for Monday 21 November.
- 4.5 Members were provided with revised wording for the motion on 'EU Funding for the Agriculture Sector', scheduled for Monday 21 November, noting that this revised wording was tabled outside the agreed timeframe. Mr Swann requested that the Draft Order Paper be amended accordingly and Members **agreed** to this revised wording.
- 4.6 Members **noted** that there was no further change to Opposition Business previously scheduled for Monday 21 November.

Public Petition

- 4.7 Members **agreed** to schedule the presentation of a Public Petition by Ms Clare Bailey, on 'Campaign for Abortion Law Reform in Northern Ireland', for Tuesday 22 November.

Private Members' Business

- 4.8 Members **noted** revised wording for the motion on 'Review of Arm's-length Bodies', scheduled for Tuesday 22 November.
- 4.9 Members **noted** that there was no further change to Private Members' Business scheduled for Tuesday 22 November.

4.10 Junior Minister Fearon advised that no further Executive Business was expected at this stage.

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

5. **Provisional arrangements for the plenary meetings in week commencing 28 November 2016**

Executive Business

5.1 Members **noted** that the following Executive Business was scheduled for Monday 28 November:

- Legislative Consent Motion on the Higher Education and Research Bill.
- Motion on Further Education (Governing Body of Institution of Further Education) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016.
- Legislative Consent Motion on the Policing and Crime Bill.
- Motion on draft Civil Legal Services (Scope) (No.2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016
- Question Time to the Minister of Health and the Minister for Infrastructure.

5.2 Members **noted** that the following Executive Business was scheduled for Tuesday 29 November:

- Motion on draft Insolvency (Monetary Limits) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016.
- Motion on Insolvency (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016.
- Question Time to the Executive Office, the Minister of Justice and the Assembly Commission.

Private Members' Business

5.3 Members **agreed** to schedule one Private Members' Motion on Monday 28 November and two Private Members' Motions on Tuesday 29 November.

5.4 Under the system of allocation, the selection for Monday 28 November lay with Sinn Féin and the selections for Tuesday 29 November lay with SDLP and DUP. The following motions were selected:

- 'House Sales Scheme' (Mr A Maskey and Mr F McCann).
- 'Medical School in the North West' (Mr M Durkan, Mr C Eastwood and Mr G Mullan).

- 'People Diagnosed with HIV' (Ms P Bradley, Mr G Middleton and Mr T Clarke)

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

5.6 Members **agreed** to schedule an Adjournment Debate on Tuesday 29 November. Under the system of allocation, the selection lay with SDLP and the following adjournment debate was selected:

- 'Proposed Closure of Outdoor Education Centres in South Down' (Mr C McGrath).

5.7 Junior Minister Fearon advised that all Ministers were available.

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

6. **Speaking Rights**

6.1 Members were referred to an advice paper in relation to alternative approaches to provide speaking opportunities for smaller parties.

6.2 Following discussion, Members **agreed** to share this advice paper with the Green Party, People Before Profit Alliance and TUV.

6.3 Members **agreed** to consider any comments received from these smaller parties before returning to this issue at a future meeting.

6.4 In connection with the response to the Committee on Procedures, specifically in relation to speaking rights, Members **agreed** that existing Standing Orders 17(4) and 17(5) give effect to the requirement of the Assembly and Executive Reform (Assembly Opposition) Act to ensure that speaking rights are allocated according to party strength.

6.5 In connection with the response to the Committee on Procedures, Members **agreed by majority** that current practices give effect to the requirements of the Assembly and Executive Reform (Assembly Opposition) Act for enhanced speaking rights for the Opposition and should not be codified in Standing Orders.

7. **Business Committee Membership**

7.1 In relation to a request from the Green Party, People Before Profit Alliance and the TUV, Members considered options for providing smaller parties with representation on the Business Committee.

- 7.2 Following discussion, Members **agreed** to return to this issue at a future meeting.
- 7.3 In connection with the response to the Committee on Procedures, specifically in relation to Business Committee Membership, Members **agreed** that existing Standing Orders are sufficient to provide for membership of the Opposition on the Business Committee in accordance with the Assembly and Executive Reform (Assembly Opposition) Act.
8. **Draft Response on the Assembly and Executive Reform (Assembly Opposition) Act**
- 8.1 Members were referred to the draft response to the Committee on Procedures in relation to the consultation on the Assembly and Executive Reform (Assembly Opposition) Act.
- 8.2 Members **agreed** that the issues discussed at points 6.4, 6.5 and 7.3 be incorporated into the response and for this response to be circulated by email for agreement by Wednesday 16 November.
9. **Selection of Private Members' Motions**
- 9.1 Members were referred to an advice paper in relation to the selection of Private Members' Motions. This paper included correspondence from Mr Steven Agnew and a draft response.
- 9.2 Members **agreed** for the draft response to be issued to Mr Agnew.
- 9.3 Members **agreed** to inform the People Before Profit Alliance and the TUV of the positions at which they will be invited to select a Private Members' Motion.
10. **Question Time Rota: January – March 2017**
- 10.1 Members **agreed** the Question Time Rota for January 2017 to April 2017.
11. **Indicative Opposition Days: January – April 2017**
- 11.1 Members **agreed** the indicative schedule of Opposition Days for January 2017 to April 2017.
- 11.2 Members **agreed** that the Speaker writes to the Executive Office to inform it of the indicative schedule of Opposition Days for January 2017 – April 2017.
12. **Correspondence**

12.1 Members were referred to the correspondence from The Detail requesting a copy of two advice papers, on Speaking Rights and Impact of extending Business Committee Membership to parties with two MLAs, which were previously provided to the Business Committee.

12.2 Members **agreed** to provide these two advice papers to The Detail.

13. **Any Other Business**

14. **Date and time of next meeting**

10.1 Members **agreed** to meet at 1:00pm on Tuesday 22 November 2016 in Room 106.

The Chairperson brought the meeting to a close at 1.54pm

The Speaker
Chairperson