

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY
BUSINESS COMMITTEE

TUESDAY 14 JANUARY 2020
IN ROOM 106, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

MINUTES

The meeting began at 1:51pm.

Present:

The Speaker (Chairperson)
Ms K Armstrong
Ms C Bailey
Mr R Butler
Mrs D Kelly
Mr G Lyons
Mr C McGrath
Mr A Muir

In attendance:

Dr A McGarel	Clerk of Business
Mr P Gill	Clerk Assistant
Mrs L Hogg	Clerk/Chief Executive
Dr G McGrath	Director of Parliamentary Services
Ms T Caul	Director of Legal, Governance and Research Services
Mr J McMillen	Head of Legal Services
Mr R Ramsey	Adviser to the Speaker
Mrs K O'Hanlon	Assistant Assembly Clerk
Mr M O'Hare	Clerical Supervisor
Mr P Stitt	Clerical Supervisor

Observers:

Deputy Speaker Beggs
Junior Minister Kearney
Ms K Morrison The Executive Office

1. Apologies

- 1.1 There was an apology from Mr John Stewart. Mr Keith Buchanan attended as DUP substitute and Ms Sinead Ennis and Mr John O'Dowd attended as Sinn Féin substitutes.

2. **Minutes of previous meetings**

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2020 were **agreed**.

3. **Matters arising**

4. **Party Seating Allocation in the Chamber**

4.1 Members were referred to the advice paper regarding seating arrangements in the Chamber.

4.2 Members **agreed** that a further paper should be prepared for consideration at the next meeting.

5. **Speaking Lists**

5.1 Members were referred to an advice paper on the speaking lists.

5.2 Members **agreed** to continue to call parties with five or more members in the first speaking round, after which parties will be called in order of strength using the d'Hondt formula.

5.3 Members **agreed** that the Speaker should continue to exercise discretion to allow any Member to speak earlier than his/her party strength would allow, taking into account the topic and any special interests.

6. **Draft Question Time rota**

6.1 Members **agreed** the Question Time Rota until 31 March 2020.

7. **Rota for Private Members' Business**

7.1 Members were referred to an advice paper regarding the rota for Private Members' Business.

7.2 Members **agreed** to continue to select motions according to party size.

8. **Finalisation of the Order Paper for the Plenary Meeting on 20 January 2020**

Assembly Business

8.1 Members **agreed** to schedule a motion to schedule a motion to suspend Standing Order 20(1).

- 8.2 Members **agreed** to schedule a motion to appoint Mr Keith Buchanan as a member of the Business Committee.
- 8.3 Members **agreed** to schedule a motion to appoint Ms Sinéad Ennis and Mr John O'Dowd as members of the Business Committee.

Membership of Statutory and Standing Committees

- 8.4 Members discussed the proposal to reduce the number of committee members from 11 to nine.
- 8.5 Ms Bailey stated that the group she represents are not be in favour of the reduction in the number of committee members. The Clerk Assistant confirmed that all members of smaller parties and the independent member would still be offered a place on a statutory committee under the proposal.
- 8.6 Members **agreed** to table a motion to suspend Standing Order 49(2)(a) and Standing Order 52(2)(a). Members **agreed** that the motion will not be moved if final agreement to reduce the number of members from 11 to nine is not reached during the Whips' discussions on committee membership on 15 January.
- 8.7 Members **agreed** to schedule two motions to appoint members to Statutory Committees and Standing Committees.

9. **Provisional arrangements for the Plenary meetings in week commencing 27 January 2020**

- 9.1 Members **agreed** to schedule a plenary sitting on Monday only in week commencing 27 January.
- 9.2 Members **agreed** to schedule a motion to suspend Standing Order 20(1).

10. **Recess Dates**

- 10.1 Members **agreed** to consider recess dates at a later date.

11. **Any Other Business**

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

- 12.1 Members **agreed** to meet at 9.30am on Monday 20 January 2020 in Room 106, followed by a meeting when the House adjourns on Monday 20 January 2020 in Room 106.

The Chairperson brought the meeting to a close at 2.14pm

**The Speaker
Chairperson**