

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

**TUESDAY 19 MAY 2020**  
**IN THE SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

**MINUTES**

*The meeting began via MS Teams at 1.12pm. The Speaker was in the Chair and commenced by taking apologies and agreeing the Minutes of the last meeting. Throughout this period Members experienced difficulty with video and audio reception and the Speaker called the meeting to an end at 1.28pm.*

*The meeting reconvened in the Senate Chamber 1.32pm. (C) denotes attendance via conference call*

**Present:**

**Mr K Buchanan (Acting Chairperson)**  
**The Speaker (C)**  
**Ms K Armstrong**  
**Ms C Bailey**  
**Mr R Butler**  
**Ms S Ennis**  
**Mrs D Kelly**  
**Mr C McGrath**  
**Mr G Middleton**  
**Mr A Muir**  
**Mr J O'Dowd**

**In attendance:**

<b>Dr A McGarel</b>	<b>Clerk of Business</b>
<b>Mr P Gill</b>	<b>Clerk Assistant</b>
<b>Ms L Hogg</b>	<b>Clerk/Chief Executive</b>
<b>Dr G McGrath</b>	<b>Director of Parliamentary Services</b>
<b>Ms A McKelvey</b>	<b>Legal Advisor</b>
<b>Mr R Ramsey</b>	<b>Adviser to the Speaker</b>
<b>Ms P Devlin</b>	<b>Assistant Assembly Clerk</b>
<b>Mr M O'Hare</b>	<b>Clerical Supervisor</b>

**Observers:**

<b>Mr G Lyons</b>	<b>Junior Minister</b>
<b>Mrs K Morrison</b>	<b>Executive Office</b>

**1 Apologies**

1.1 Apologies were confirmed from John Stewart.

## 2 **Minutes of previous meetings**

- 2.1 It was confirmed that the minutes of the meeting on 12 May 2020 had been **agreed**.

## 3 **Matters Arising**

- 3.1 There were no matters arising.

## 4 **Consideration of Options for Resuming Assembly Business Following 'Lockdown'**

- 4.1 Members **noted** that at recent meetings they discussed giving consideration to how the Assembly should function coming out of 'lockdown'
- 4.2 Members **noted** that a paper had been prepared by the Speaker.
- 4.3 Members **agreed** that, because of the technical problems with the Speaker's remote participation, they would defer consideration of the paper until the issue could be resolved.
- 4.4 Members **agreed** to schedule a second meeting after plenary adjourned for the day.

## 5 **Finalisation of the Order Papers for plenary meeting on 26 May 2020**

- 5.1 Members **noted** that that because of the public holiday on 25 May, they agreed to schedule one sitting on Tuesday 26 May despite the high volume of business requested by the Executive for that week.
- 5.2 Members **noted** that they had agreed not to extend business into Wednesday as it would disrupt Committees, and had instead agreed that Assembly officials should liaise with the Executive to spread the business over two weeks.

### Assembly Business

- 5.3 Members **noted** that the SDLP wished to schedule a Committee membership motion.
- 5.4 Members **agreed** to schedule the motion.

### Executive Committee Business

- 5.5 Members **noted** that they had previously agreed to allow a total of four hours for the Supply Resolution – Further Vote on Account debate from the Minister of Finance, with a half hour for the Minister to divide between moving and winding
- 5.6 Members **agreed** to allow 10 minutes for the Finance Committee Chair to speak on the debate, and 7 minutes for all other speakers.
- 5.7 Members **noted** that First stage of the Budget No.2 Bill from the Minister of Finance had been scheduled.
- 5.8 Members **noted** that First stage of the Housing (Amendment) Bill had been scheduled by the Minister for Communities.
- 5.9 Members **noted** that the Finance Minister had scheduled a motion to suspend Standing Order 42(5) for the Budget No. 2 Bill which, if agreed, would allow the Budget No.2 Bill to be passed in fewer than ten days.
- 5.10 Members **agreed** that in line with convention, untimed debates for the above three items would be scheduled.
- 5.11 Members **noted** that Second Stage of the Budget No. 2 Bill had been scheduled, subject to its successful introduction earlier in the sitting.
- 5.12 Members **agreed** that the item would be untimed in line with convention.
- 5.13 Junior Minister Lyons confirmed that the Minister for Infrastructure would make a statement to the Assembly on 26 May.

### Private Members Business

- 5.14 Members **agreed** to defer consideration of Private Members Business until after the Speaker's paper had been discussed at the next meeting.
- 5.15 Members **agreed** the Order Paper for Tuesday 26 May.

## **6 Provisional Arrangements for the Plenary Meetings During Week Commencing 1 June 2020**

- 6.1 Members **noted** that the rescheduling of business from the previous week necessitated two plenary sittings on Monday 1 and Tuesday 2 June.

6.2 Members **agreed** to schedule two sittings on week commencing 1 June.

### **Monday 1 June**

#### Assembly Business

6.3 Members **noted** that no requests for Assembly Business had been received to date.

#### Executive Committee Business

6.4 Members **noted** that Consideration Stage of the Budget No. 2 Bill has been scheduled by the Minister of Finance, subject to the successful passage of earlier stages of the Bill.

6.5 Members **noted** that this item would take approximately two hours if amendments were tabled to the Bill, and 15 minutes if not.

6.6 Members **agreed** that the item would have no time limit, in line with convention.

6.7 Members **noted** the Minister for Communities had scheduled a motion for the Housing (Amendment) Bill to proceed by accelerated passage.

6.8 Members **noted** that the Minister for Communities had scheduled second stage of the Housing (Amendment) Bill.

6.9 Members **noted** that the Minister for Communities had rescheduled the following two statutory rules:

- The Child Support (Miscellaneous Amendments No. 3) Regulations (NI) 2019; and
- The Child Support (Miscellaneous Amendments No. 4) Regulations (NI) 2019.

6.10 Members **noted** that they had previously agreed to schedule one untimed debate for both motions as they are interrelated, and remained content with that arrangement.

6.11 Members **noted** that the Minister for Communities had scheduled a Legislative Consent Motion on the Pensions Schemes Bill.

6.12 Members **agreed** to schedule an untimed debate for the LCM, in line with convention.

- 6.13 Junior Ministers/TEO Officials advised that no other business was currently expected.

Private Members Business

- 6.14 Members **agreed** to defer consideration of Private Members Business until after the Speaker's paper had been discussed at the next meeting.

**Tuesday 2 June**

Assembly Business

- 6.15 Members **noted** that no requests for Assembly Business had been received to date.

Executive Committee Business

- 6.16 Members **noted** that Further Consideration Stage of the Budget No. 2 Bill had been scheduled by the Minister of Finance, subject to the successful passage of earlier stages of the Bill.
- 6.17 Members **noted** that the Minister of Justice had scheduled a Legislative Consent Motion on the Sentencing (Pre-Consolidation Amendments) Bill.
- 6.18 Members **noted** that the Minister for the Economy had scheduled a Legislative Consent Motion on the Corporate Insolvency and Governance Bill.
- 6.19 Members **noted** that Legislative Consent Motions are by convention untimed.
- 6.20 Members **agreed** to schedule two untimed debates for the Legislative Consent Motions.
- 6.21 Members **noted** that the Minister of Finance had scheduled Final Stage of the Budget No. 2 Bill, subject to the successful passage of earlier stages of the Bill.
- 6.22 Junior Ministers/TEO Officials advised that no other business was currently expected.

Private Members Business

- 6.23 Members **agreed** to defer consideration of Private Members Business until after the Speaker's paper had been discussed at the next meeting.

6.24 Members **agreed** the Provisional Order Papers for the sittings on Monday 1 and Tuesday 2 June 2020 and **agreed** that they should be issued.

## 7 **Review of Written Questions**

7.1 Members **noted** that information on written questions, which had been requested by the Committee on a weekly basis, had been provided in their packs. Dr McGarel gave a brief summary of the findings.

7.2 Members **agreed** that, particularly given the significant reduction in questions being asked of Ministers, the number which remained unanswered was not acceptable.

7.3 Members **noted** that they were scheduled to review their position on Assembly questions at next week's meeting.

7.4 Members **agreed** to give further consideration to the review of questions and of the suspension of question time at the next meeting.

## 8 **Any Other Business**

8.1 There was no other business.

## 9 **Date and time of next meeting**

9.1 Members **agreed** that the next meeting would take place on Tuesday 19 May in the Senate Chamber, following the Assembly's adjournment.

*The Acting Chairperson brought the meeting to a close at 1.58pm*

**Acting Chairperson**