

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

**TUESDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 2020**  
**IN THE SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

**MINUTES**

*The meeting began at 1.02pm. (C) denotes attendance via conference call*

<b>Present:</b>	<b>The Speaker (Chairperson)</b> Ms K Armstrong Ms C Bailey Mr K Buchanan Mr R Butler Mrs D Kelly Mr C McGrath Mr G Middleton Mr A Muir Mr J O'Dowd	
<b>In attendance:</b>	Dr A McGarel Mr P Gill Ms L Hogg Dr G McGrath  Mr J McMillen Mr R Ramsey Ms F Leneghan Ms P Devlin Mr M O'Hare	<b>Clerk of Business</b> <b>Clerk Assistant</b> <b>Clerk/Chief Executive</b> <b>Director of Parliamentary Services</b> <b>Head of Legal Services</b> <b>Adviser to the Speaker</b> <b>PS to the Speaker</b> <b>Assistant Assembly Clerk</b> <b>Clerical Supervisor</b>
<b>Observers:</b>	Mr D Kearney Ms K Loveland-Morrison	<b>Junior Minister</b> <b>Executive Office</b>

1 **Apologies**

1.1 Apologies were received from John Stewart and Sinéad Ennis.

2 **Minutes of previous meetings**

2.1 The minutes of the meeting on 15 September were **agreed**.

### 3 **Matters Arising**

3.1 There were no matters arising.

### 4 **Finalisation of the Order Papers for the Plenary Meetings on Week Commencing 28 September 2020**

#### **Monday 28 September**

##### **Executive Committee Business**

- 4.1 Members **noted** that Question Time was scheduled for the Executive Office and Minister for Communities.
- 4.2 Members **noted** that the possible statement from the Health Minister on a Surge Planning Strategic Framework remains unconfirmed.
- 4.3 Members **noted** that Minister for Communities has scheduled a Legislative Consent Motion for The Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal) Bill.
- 4.4 Members **noted** that LCMs are by convention untimed but that an indicative timing of 30 minutes had been allocated.
- 4.5 Members **agreed** to schedule an untimed debate for the LCM.

##### **Private Members' Business**

- 4.6 Members **noted** that they had previously agreed to schedule the following motions:
- Children with Hearing Difficulties and Deafness (SF)
  - Introduction of Legislation Equivalent to Helen's Law (DUP)
- 4.7 Members **agreed** the Order Paper for Monday 28 September.

## Tuesday 29 September

### Executive Committee Business

- 4.8 Members **noted** that Question Time was scheduled for the Economy and Education Ministers.
- 4.9 Members **noted** that the following two items of Executive Business had been scheduled since last week:
- A motion on the Screen Commission (Funding) Order
  - A Legislative Consent Motion on the Fisheries Bill
- 4.10 Members **noted** that the oral statement from the Minister for Communities on Social Recovery from COVID-19, which was originally scheduled for 22 September, had been rescheduled for this date.
- 4.11 Members **noted** that they had agreed to schedule two items of business from the Committee on Procedures last week but only one would now be required, a motion to extend the provisions of Standing Order 110.
- 4.12 Members **noted** that the Committee on Procedures had indicated that 30 minutes should be sufficient.
- 4.13 Members **agreed** to schedule a 30-minute debate with up to 10 minutes for the move and 10 minutes for the wind.

### Private Members' Business

- 4.14 Members **noted** that based on Executive Business notified last week, the Committee agreed not to schedule Private Members' motions.
- 4.15 Members **noted** that they had previously scheduled an Adjournment debate on the School Estate in Upper Bann.
- 4.16 Members **agreed** the Order Paper for Tuesday 29 September.

5 **Provisional Arrangements for the Plenary Meetings on Week Commencing 5 October 2020**

**Monday 5 October**

Executive Committee Business

- 5.1 Members **noted** that Question Time was scheduled for the Minister of Finance and Minister of Health.
- 5.2 Members **noted** that a motion from the Minister for Communities on the Pension Protection Fund (Moratorium and Arrangements for Companies in Financial Difficulty) Regulations had been scheduled, and that by convention this would be untimed.
- 5.3 Members **agreed** to schedule an untimed debate for the motion.
- 5.4 Members **noted** that no other Executive Business had been scheduled to date.
- 5.5 The junior Minister advised that no other business was expected.

Private Members' Business

- 5.6 Members **agreed** to schedule two Private Members' motions.
- 5.7 Members **noted** that the selections were for UUP and SF.
- 5.8 The following Private Members' motions were selected with the usual timings:
- Appointment of a Victims of Crime Commissioner (UUP)
  - Consequences of the British Government Breaking International Law (SF)
- 5.9 The junior Minister confirmed that Ministers would be available to respond to the selected business.
- 5.10 Members **agreed** the Provisional Order Paper for Monday 5 October.

## **Tuesday 6 October**

### **Executive Committee Business**

- 5.11 Members **noted** that the Infrastructure and Justice Ministers would respond to oral questions.
- 5.12 Members **noted** that the Executive Office had not scheduled any further business for this date.
- 5.13 The junior Minister advised that no other business was expected.

### **Private Members' Business**

- 5.14 Members **agreed** to schedule two Private Members' motions.
- 5.15 Members **noted** that the selections were for SDLP and Alliance.
- 5.16 The following Private Members' motions were selected with the usual timings:
- Impact of COVID-19 Restrictions on Workers and on the Economy (SDLP)
  - Terminal Illness (ALL)
- 5.17 Members **agreed** to schedule an Adjournment debate, and **noted** that the topic selection was for UUP.
- 5.18 The following Adjournment debate topic was selected with the usual timings:
- Protecting the Knock Iveagh Historical and Archaeological Site (UUP)
- 5.19 The junior Minister confirmed that Ministers would be available to respond to the selected business.
- 5.20 Members **agreed** the Provisional Order Paper for Tuesday 6 October.

## **6 Any Other Business**

- 6.1 Members noted that they had agreed recess dates back in February and that those dates remain on the Assembly website.
- 6.2 Members noted that the summer recess had been revised and that the Committee would need to look at forthcoming recess periods in the coming

weeks. However, because it was approaching, the Speaker sought the Committee's approval for Halloween recess to proceed as planned.

- 6.3 Members **agreed** that the Halloween recess would be from Saturday 24 October until Sunday 1 November, as originally agreed.
- 6.4 A Member noted that on occasion they had arrived in the Chamber to find members of other parties in the position allocated to them, and requested that party whips remind their Members that seating allocations per party have been agreed.
- 6.5 Members discussed difficulties during Question Time as a result of social distancing in the Chamber, in particular that there was pressure in getting Members in and out of the Chamber whilst also cleansing the seat between Members. It was suggested that cleaning materials are placed at each allocated position or at least at more frequent intervals between seats.
- 6.6 The Clerk Assistant responded to a Member's query regarding the provision of support to Committees in relation to the significant volume of Statutory Instruments arising from the EU withdrawal.
- 6.7 There was no other business.

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

- 7.1 Members **agreed** that the next meeting would take place at 1pm on Tuesday 29 September in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

*The Speaker brought the meeting to a close at 1.17pm*

**The Speaker  
Chairperson**