

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY
BUSINESS COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 7 APRIL 2021
MS TEAMS

MINUTES

The meeting began at 11.08am.

Present:

The Speaker (Chairperson)
Ms K Armstrong
Ms C Bailey
Mr K Buchanan
Mr R Butler
Ms D Kelly
Mr C McGrath
Mr A Muir
Mr J O'Dowd

In attendance:

Dr A McGarel	Clerk of Business
Mr P Gill	Clerk Assistant
Dr G McGrath	Director of Parliamentary Services
Mr J McMillen	Head of Legal Services
Mr R Ramsey	Adviser to the Speaker
Ms F Leneghan	PS to the Speaker
Ms P Devlin	Assistant Assembly Clerk
Mr M O'Hare	Clerical Supervisor

1 Apologies

1.1 Apologies were received from Gary Middleton.

2 Finalisation of the Order Paper for the Plenary Meeting on 8 April 2021

Private Members' Business

2.1 The Speaker advised the Committee that he had received a valid request from more than 30 Members under Standing Order 11 to recall the Assembly and that a plenary session would take place on Thursday 8 April.

- 2.2 The Speaker proposed that the sitting should commence at 11am as this would allow time for the broadcasting technicians to resume essential maintenance afterwards and to enable staff to resume their leave.
- 2.3 Members **noted** that the sitting would commence at 11am.
- 2.4 Members **noted** that the usual time allocation for a private members' motion was 1 hour and 30 minutes, and that the debate the previous week had been given 2 hours which was not fully used.
- 2.5 Members **noted** that amendments to the motion could be submitted up until 9.30am on Thursday 8 April.
- 2.6 Following discussion, Members **agreed** to allocate 1 hour 30 minutes for the debate, but to allow the Speaker discretion to increase the timeframe to 2 hours if amendments to the motion were accepted.
- 2.7 Members **agreed** the Order Paper for Thursday 8 April.
- 2.8 The Speaker recognised the efforts of staff in facilitating the additional sittings over Easter recess, acknowledged that they had returned from leave in order to do so, and offered his thanks to those staff.
- 2.9 The Speaker noted that the additional sitting was in response to a sensitive and volatile situation and emphasised the importance of showing leadership. He asked whips to encourage party colleagues to make constructive contributions to the debate and not to aggravate ongoing tensions.

3 **Date and time of next meeting**

- 3.1 Members **agreed** that the next meeting would take place on Tuesday 13 April in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

The Speaker brought the meeting to a close at 11.14am

**The Speaker
Chairperson**