

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY
BUSINESS COMMITTEE

TUESDAY 13 APRIL 2021
SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

MINUTES

The meeting began at 2.45pm.

Present:

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

In attendance:

Dr A McGarel	Clerk of Business
Mr P Gill	Clerk Assistant
Ms L Hogg	Clerk/Chief Executive
Dr G McGrath	Director of Parliamentary Services
Ms K McDonald	Legal Advisor
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

Observers:

Mr D McCreedy The Executive Office

1 Apologies

- 1.1 Apologies were received from junior Ministers Kearney and Lyons, John Stewart and Dolores Kelly.

2 **Minutes of previous meetings**

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting on 23 March were **agreed**.
- 2.2 The minutes of the meeting on 31 March were **agreed**.
- 2.3 The minutes of the meeting on 7 April were **agreed**.
- 2.4 The minutes of the meeting on 9 April were **agreed**.

3 **Matters Arising**

- 3.1 There were no matters arising.

4 **Finalisation of the Order Papers for the Plenary Meetings in Week Commencing 19 April 2021**

Monday 19 April

Ministerial Statement

- 4.1 Members **noted** that the Executive had scheduled a statement on Neurology Patients Recall, which would be shown on the published indicative timings when the Minister of Health had formally notified the Speaker.

Executive Committee Business

- 4.2 Members **noted** that no other Executive business had been scheduled.

Committee Business

- 4.3 Members **noted** that the Committee for Justice was seeking to schedule a motion to extend the Committee Stage of the Damages (Return on Investment) Bill.
- 4.4 Members **noted** that the Committee for Health was seeking to schedule motions to extend the Committee Stage of two bills, as follows:
 - Severe Fetal Impairment Abortion (Amendment) Bill; and
 - Health and Social Care Bill.
- 4.5 Members **agreed** to schedule untimed debates for all three Committee extension motions.

Private Members' Business

- 4.6 Members **noted** that sufficient time was available to schedule Private Members' business.
- 4.7 Members **noted** that this week's Private Members' business had been deferred as a mark of respect and to allow tributes to be paid to HRH Prince of Edinburgh and that Sinn Féin could either select their original motion or an alternative.
- 4.8 Members **agreed** to reschedule the following Private Members' motion with the usual timings:
- Brexit and Card Fees (Sinn Féin)
- 4.9 The TEO official indicated that all Ministers were currently available.
- 4.10 Members **agreed** the Order Paper for Monday 19 April.

Tuesday 20 April

Executive Committee Business

- 4.11 Members **noted** that no Executive business had been scheduled.

Private Members' Business

- 4.12 Members **noted** that sufficient time was available to schedule Private Members' business.
- 4.13 Members **noted** that UUP and DUP motions had also been deferred and those parties could select either their originally scheduled motion or an alternative.
- 4.14 Members **agreed** to reschedule the following Private Members' motions with the usual timings:
- Conversion Therapy (UUP)
 - Putting Cancer Services at Centre of the Covid-19 recovery (DUP)
- 4.15 Members **agreed** to reschedule the following adjournment debate:
- Progress of the A5 Dual Carriageway (Sinn Féin)

4.16 The TEO official indicated that all Ministers were currently available.

4.17 Members **agreed** the Order Paper for Tuesday 20 April.

5 **Provisional Arrangements for the Plenary Meetings in Week Commencing 26 April 2021**

Monday 26 April

Executive Committee Business

5.1 Members **noted** that Question Time was scheduled for the Minister of Health and Minister for Infrastructure.

5.2 Members **noted** that no other Executive business had been scheduled to date.

5.3 The TEO official indicated that no other business was expected at that time.

Committee Business

5.4 Members **noted** that no Committee business had been requested to date.

Private Members' Business

5.5 Members **agreed** to defer consideration of Private Members' business until the next meeting.

5.6 Members **agreed** the Provisional Order Paper for Monday 26 April.

Tuesday 27 April

Executive Committee Business

5.7 Members **noted** that Question Time was scheduled for the Minister of Justice.

5.8 Members **noted** that no Executive business had been scheduled to date.

5.9 The TEO official indicated that no other business was expected at that time.

Committee Business

- 5.10 Members **noted** that there were no requests for Committee Business to date.

Private Members' Business

- 5.11 Members **agreed** to defer consideration of Private Members' business until the next meeting.
- 5.12 Members **agreed** the Provisional Order Paper for Tuesday 27 April.

6 Duration and Timings for Debates on Primary Legislation

- 6.1 Members **noted** that they had again received a discussion paper exploring options to address the issue of long debates on legislation.
- 6.2 A Member queried whether any feedback had been provided on the proposal to reschedule plenary sittings and the resultant rescheduling of Committee meetings.
- 6.3 Members **noted** that feedback had been received from the Chairpersons Liaison Group which included mixed views on that issue.
- 6.4 Members **agreed** to return to the matter at a future meeting.

7 Any Other Business

- 7.1 A Member commended the Speaker on the approach he had taken in rescheduling plenary business to facilitate tributes following the death of the Duke of Edinburgh.
- 7.2 The Speaker advised that he too wished to record his thanks to both the Assembly Commission and the Business Committee for their assistance in enabling decisions on how tributes should be handled to be taken at very short notice.
- 7.3 There was no other business.

8 **Date and time of next meeting**

- 8.1 Members **agreed** that the next meeting would take place on Tuesday 20 April in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

The Speaker brought the meeting to a close at 2.56pm

**The Speaker
Chairperson**