

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY
BUSINESS COMMITTEE

TUESDAY 18 MAY 2021
SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

MINUTES

The meeting began at 1.03pm.

Present:

The Speaker (Chairperson)
Ms K Armstrong
Ms C Bailey
Mr R Butler
Mr K Buchanan
Mrs 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
Ms L Hogg	Clerk/Chief Executive
Dr G McGrath	Director of Parliamentary Services
Mr S Kelly	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 Kearney	Junior Minister
Mr D McCreedy	The Executive Office

1 Apologies

1.1 Apologies were received from John Stewart, Gary Middleton and Sinéad Ennis.

2 Minutes of previous meeting

2.1 The minutes of the meeting on 11 May 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 24 May 2021**

Monday 24 May

Executive Committee Business

- 4.1 Members **noted** that the Executive had scheduled four items of business.
- 4.2 Members **noted** that a statement from the Minister for the Economy on the NSMC Trade and Business Development meeting would be scheduled once confirmed with the Speaker.
- 4.3 Members **agreed** to schedule an untimed debate to consider the Renewables Obligation (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2021.
- 4.4 Members **noted** that the Minister of Finance was seeking to suspend Standing Orders 10(2) to 10(4) to remove the time limits on the sitting to facilitate the Budget debate.
- 4.5 Members **agreed** to schedule the motion as a business motion with no opportunity for debate or amendment.
- 4.6 Members **agreed** to schedule the Budget 2021 – 2022 motion, and allocated 4 and a half hours for the debate, with 30 minutes for the Minister to use at his discretion for moving and winding, 10 minutes for the Finance Committee Chair and seven minutes for all other speakers.

Committee Business

- 4.7 Because of the additional Executive Business, Members **agreed** to reschedule the Committee for Education's motion for the following day.

Private Members' Business

- 4.8 Members **agreed** that insufficient time was available for Private Members' motions.
- 4.9 Members **agreed** the Order Paper for Monday 24 May.

Tuesday 25 May

Executive Committee Business

- 4.10 Members **noted** that, in addition to the business agreed at last week's meeting, the Executive had notified a statement from the Minister for Infrastructure on the NSMC Transport Sector meeting, which had been confirmed with Speaker's Office.

Committee Business

- 4.11 Members **noted** that the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs was seeking to schedule a motion to extend committee stage of the Climate Change Bill.
- 4.12 Members **agreed** to schedule an untimed debate for the Committee's motion.
- 4.13 As referred to at 4.7, Members **agreed** to reschedule the Education Committee's motion on restraint and seclusion with the usual timings.

Private Members' Business

- 4.14 Members **noted** that sufficient time was available to schedule Private Members' business.
- 4.15 Members **agreed** to schedule the following Private Members' motions with the same timings:
- Green New Deal (Alliance)
- 4.16 Members **agreed** to schedule the following adjournment debate:
- School Estate in East Antrim (DUP)
- 4.17 The junior Minister indicated that all Ministers were currently available.
- 4.18 Members **agreed** the Order Paper for Tuesday 25 May.

5 **Provisional Arrangements for the Plenary Meetings in Week Commencing 31 May 2021**

Monday 31 May

- 5.1 Members **noted** that the Assembly would not sit on 31 May as it was a public holiday.

Tuesday 1 June

Public Petition

- 5.2 Members **noted** that Claire Sugden was seeking to present a Public Petition to the Speaker and that in accordance with Standing Order 22 this item would last no more than three minutes.
- 5.3 Members **agreed** to schedule the petition for Ms. Sugden.

Executive Committee Business

- 5.4 Members **noted** that Question Time was scheduled for the Executive Office and Minister for Communities.
- 5.5 Members **noted** that the Minister of Education was seeking to make a statement regarding Fair Start – the final report and action plan of the expert panel on educational underachievement.
- 5.6 Members **noted** that the Minister of Finance had scheduled First Stage of the Financial Reporting (Departments and Public Bodies) Bill, and that this would be included on Indicative Timings when the Speaker was satisfied it was within the legislative competence of the Assembly.
- 5.7 The junior Minister indicated that no other business was expected at that time.

Committee Business

- 5.8 Members **agreed** to schedule a motion for the Committee for Infrastructure with the usual timings.

Private Members' Business

- 5.9 Members **agreed** to defer consideration of Private Members' business until the next meeting.
- 5.10 Some Members raised concerns about the impact that the shorter timeframe for selection of Private Members business was having on Ministers and staff. The Speaker acknowledged that this was not ideal, but that it was a temporary adjustment to facilitate the Executive in its response to coronavirus, and there was an expectation that it would resolve soon.
- 5.11 Members **agreed** the Provisional Order Paper for Tuesday 1 June.

6 Any Other Business

- 6.1 There was no other business.

7 Date and time of next meeting

- 7.1 Members **agreed** that the next meeting would take place on Tuesday 25 May in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

The Speaker brought the meeting to a close at 1.14pm

**The Speaker
Chairperson**