

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY
BUSINESS COMMITTEE

TUESDAY 28 SEPTEMBER 2021
SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

MINUTES

The meeting began at 1.08pm.

Present:

The Speaker (Chairperson)
Ms C Bailey
Mrs R Barton
Ms P Bradshaw
Ms J Bunting
Mr R Butler
Mr T Clarke
Ms S Ennis
Mrs D Kelly
Mr C McGrath
Mr J O'Dowd

In attendance:

Dr A McGarel	Clerk of Business
Mr P Gill	Clerk Assistant
Ms L Hogg	Clerk/Chief Executive
Ms A McKelvey	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

Observers:

Mr G Middleton	Junior Minister
Mr D McCreedy	The Executive Office

1 Apologies

1.1 Apologies were received from Mr Andrew Muir.

2 Minutes of previous meeting

2.1 The minutes of the meeting on 21 September 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 4 October**

Monday 4 October

Public Petition

4.1 Members **noted** that a public petition for Mr Easton remained scheduled.

Assembly Business

4.2 Members **noted** that no Assembly business had been scheduled.

Executive Committee Business

4.3 Members **noted** that no Executive business had been scheduled.

Committee Business

4.4 Members **noted** that no Committee Business had been scheduled.

Private Members' Business

4.5 Members **noted** that two Private Members' motions remained scheduled, Universal Credit Uplift for the SDLP, and a Sinn Féin motion on a Bespoke Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standards Agreement.

Members' Statements

4.6 Having assessed scheduled business, Members **agreed** to schedule Members' statements.

4.7 Members **agreed** the Order Paper for Monday 4 October.

Tuesday 5 October

Public Petition

4.8 Members **noted** that a public petition for Mr Blair remained scheduled.

- 4.9 The Alliance party representative asked the Committee to consider rescheduling Mr Blair's petition for 4 October to coincide with another on the same subject.
- 4.10 Following discussion, the Committee **agreed** not to reschedule Mr Blair's petition.
- 4.11 Members **agreed** to seek an update from the Committee on Procedures on its review of petitions and to highlight the issue of multiple petitions on the same issue to the Committee.

Executive Committee Business

- 4.12 Members **noted** that in addition to the Executive business scheduled at the last meeting, the notice of Forthcoming Assembly Business from the Executive Office indicated that two further items of business had been scheduled, as follows:
- The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations (NI) 2021 (Amendment No. 15) Regulations (NI) 2021
 - The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Wearing of Face Coverings) (Amendment No. 5) Regulations (NI) 2021
- 4.13 Members **agreed** to schedule a single untimed debate for both motions.
- 4.14 A member asked why junior Ministers were not bringing the Health Protection Regulations to the Assembly as they had in recent months. The Speaker advised that this was a matter for the Executive and that the member's concerns could be conveyed to the Executive through the junior Minister.

Committee Business

- 4.15 Members **noted** that no Committee Business had been scheduled.

Private Members' Business

- 4.16 Members **noted** that Private Members' Business remained as scheduled the previous week.
- 4.17 Members **agreed** to allow Sinn Féin to change the adjournment topic they had chosen the week before, on the basis that a motion on the same issue had been added to that day's business after the previous meeting.

Members' Statements

- 4.18 Having assessed estimated timings for scheduled business, Members **agreed** not to schedule Members' statements.
- 4.19 Members **agreed** the Order Paper for Tuesday 5 October.

5 Provisional Arrangements for the Plenary Meetings in Week Commencing 11 October

Monday 11 October

Public Petition

- 5.1 Members **noted** that Mr Muir had been unable to present his petition on 27 September due to illness, and **agreed** to reschedule it.

Executive Committee Business

- 5.2 Members **noted** that Question Time was scheduled for the Executive Office and Minister for Communities.
- 5.3 Members **noted** that no other Executive business had been scheduled.
- 5.4 The junior Minister indicated that no other business was expected at that time.
- 5.5 The Committee **noted** its disappointment at the lack of business coming forward from the Executive.
- 5.6 The Committee **noted** that there were a number of Members hoping to progress Private Members Bills and it was suggested that this could be prioritised in the absence of any legislation flowing from the Executive.
- 5.7 Ms Bailey advised that she would like to schedule second stage of her Private Member's Bill on Abortion Services (Safe Access Zones) during week commencing 11 October.
- 5.8 Members **agreed** to keep the four-week period between the introduction of a Private Member's Bill and its second stage under review.
- 5.9 Members **agreed** that a list of Private Members' Bills and their current stage should be brought back to the Committee.

Committee Business

- 5.10 Members **noted** that no Committee Business had been scheduled.

Private Members' Business

- 5.11 Members **noted** that sufficient time was available for up to two Private Members motions.
- 5.12 Members **agreed** to schedule two Private Members motions, as follows:
- The Arts and Creative Industries (UUP)
 - Labour Shortages (SF)

Members' Statements

- 5.13 Members **agreed** to schedule Members' Statements each Monday as a regular item of business, and **noted** that they could be removed when finalising the Order Paper if it became apparent that there would not be enough time.
- 5.14 Members **agreed** the Provisional Order Paper for Monday 11 October.

Tuesday 12 October

Executive Committee Business

- 5.15 Members **noted** that Question Time was scheduled for the Minister for the Economy.
- 5.16 Members **noted** that the notice of Forthcoming Assembly Business from TEO indicated that the Executive has scheduled one item of business; Second Stage of the Adoption and Children Bill for the Minister of Health.
- 5.17 Members **noted** that no other Executive business had been scheduled.
- 5.18 The junior Minister indicated that no other business was expected at that time.

Committee Business

- 5.19 Members **noted** that no Committee Business had been requested.

Private Members' Business

- 5.20 Members **agreed** to schedule the following Private Members' motion:
- Cancer Screening for Firefighters (DUP)

- 5.21 Members **agreed** to schedule a second Private Members' motion for the SDLP, the subject of which could be confirmed at a later stage.
- 5.22 Members **agreed** to schedule the following adjournment debate topic for the DUP:
- Social Housing Need in East Belfast
- 5.23 Members **agreed** the Provisional Order Paper for Tuesday 12 October.

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 5 October in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

The Speaker brought the meeting to a close at 1.34pm

The Speaker
Chairperson