

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY
BUSINESS COMMITTEE

TUESDAY 5 OCTOBER 2021
SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

MINUTES

The meeting began at 1.05pm.

Present:

The Speaker (Chairperson)
Ms C Bailey
Mrs R Barton
Ms J Bunting
Mr R Butler
Mr T Clarke
Ms S Ennis
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 A Hicks	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 D Kearney	Junior Minister
Mr D McCreedy	The Executive Office

1 Apologies

1.1 Apologies were received from Ms Paula Bradshaw.

2 Minutes of previous meeting

2.1 The minutes of the meeting on 28 September were **agreed**.

3 **Matters Arising**

- 3.1 The Speaker advised that, further to discussions last week on Private Members' Bills, a paper from officials had been circulated to Members which he considered helpful in addressing some of the issues that had been raised.
- 3.2 The Speaker noted that he had informed Members over the summer of his intention to conduct a further review of progress on Private Members' Bills after 30 September, and added that at least 29 bills would require Assembly time before the end of the mandate. The Speaker advised Members that he was meeting with officials later that week as part of his review and would update the Committee in due course.
- 3.3 The Speaker informed Members that he had also written to the Executive for an update on whether there will be any additional Executive legislation coming forward beyond the 14 bills that are already making their way through the Assembly.
- 3.4 The Speaker noted that Clare Bailey's Abortion Services (Safe Access Zones) Bill was the only Private Members' Bill awaiting second stage at that time, and that Ms. Bailey had formally requested that it be scheduled. The Speaker advised that the four-week interval since the Bill was introduced would be reached by 11 October and that in his view, the Committee should consent to scheduling the Bill that week to comply with the priority given to legislation under Standing Orders.
- 3.5 The Alliance party representative advised that his party's view was that the four-week period between Private Members' Bills being introduced and their second stage should be kept, to ensure proper scrutiny.
- 3.6 There were no other matters arising.

4 **Finalisation of the Order Papers for the Plenary Meetings in Week Commencing 11 October**

Monday 11 October

Members' Statements

- 4.1 Members **noted** that Members' Statements remained scheduled.

Public Petition

- 4.2 Members **noted** Mr Muir's request for his public petition to be scheduled on Tuesday 12 October, and **agreed** to remove it from the draft Order Paper for 11 October.

Executive Committee Business

- 4.3 Members **noted** that the notice of Forthcoming Assembly Business from the Executive Office indicated that one item of business had been listed sine last week; a statement from the First Minister and deputy First Minister on the NSMC plenary meeting.
- 4.4 Members **agreed** that the statement would be added to Indicative Timings when it had been confirmed with Speaker's Office.

Committee Business

- 4.5 Members **noted** that there was still no Committee Business.

Private Members' Business

- 4.6 Members **noted** that two Private Members' motions remained scheduled, The Arts and Creative Industries for the UUP, and a Sinn Féin motion on Labour Shortages.
- 4.7 Members **noted** that the Minister for the Economy would not be available to respond to the motion on Labour Shortages. Sinn Féin representatives confirmed that they nonetheless wished to proceed with the motion on that date.
- 4.8 Members **agreed** the Order Paper for Monday 11 October.

Tuesday 12 October

Public Petition

- 4.9 Members **agreed** to reschedule a public petition for Mr Muir.

Executive Committee Business

- 4.10 Members **noted** that there was still no Executive Business.

Committee Business

4.11 Members **noted** that there was still no Committee Business.

Private Members' Business

4.12 Members **noted** that Ms Bailey had now formally requested that second stage of her Abortion Services (Safe Access Zones) Bill be scheduled for debate.

4.13 Members **agreed** to schedule second stage of the Abortion Services (Safe Access Zones) Bill.

4.14 Members **noted** that two Private Members' motions and an adjournment debate were also scheduled on that date.

4.15 Members **agreed** to postpone the DUP's adjournment debate on Social Housing in East Belfast until the following week.

4.16 Members **agreed** the Order Paper for Tuesday 12 October.

5 **Provisional Arrangements for the Plenary Meetings in Week Commencing 18 October**

Monday 18 October

Members' Statements

5.1 Members **noted** that Members Statements were scheduled as agreed previously but could be removed when finalising the Order Paper if it became apparent that there would not be enough time.

Executive Committee Business

5.2 Members **noted** that Question Time was scheduled for the Minister of Education and Minister of Finance.

5.3 Members **noted** that the Executive had listed the following three items of business:

- The Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020 (Coronavirus) (Amendment of Schedule 11) Regulations (NI) 2021;

- The Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020 (Coronavirus) (Amendment of Relevant Period in Schedule 8) (No.2) Regulations (NI) 2021; and
- Introduction of the Support for Mortgage Interest etc. (Security for Loans) Bill.

5.4 Members **agreed** to schedule a single untimed debate for both Corporate Insolvency Regulations.

5.5 Members **agreed** that the First Stage of the Support for Mortgage Interest etc. (Security for Loans) Bill would be added to Indicative Timings once the Speaker was satisfied that it was within the legislative competence of the Assembly.

5.6 The junior Minister indicated that no other business was expected at that time.

Committee Business

5.7 Members **noted** that the Committee on Standards and Privileges was seeking to schedule a motion to appoint an Acting Commissioner, and had requested 30 minutes for the debate.

5.8 Members **agreed** to schedule a 30-minute debate for the Committee motion, with 5 minutes for move and wind and 5 minutes for all other speakers.

Private Members' Business

5.9 Members **noted** that sufficient time was available for up to two Private Members motions.

5.10 Members **agreed** to schedule two Private Members motions, as follows:

- Interparliamentary Dialogue (SF)
- Independent Evaluation of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland (DUP)

5.11 Members **agreed** the Provisional Order Paper for Monday 18 October.

Tuesday 19 October

Executive Committee Business

5.12 Members **noted** that Question Time was scheduled for the Minister of Health.

- 5.13 Members **noted** that no other Executive business had been scheduled.
- 5.14 The junior Minister indicated that no other business was expected at that time, and advised that the Minister for the Economy would not be available on that date.

Committee Business

- 5.15 Members **agreed** to schedule an untimed debate for the Committee for Finance to extend the Committee Stage of the Defamation Bill.
- 5.16 Members **agreed** to schedule an untimed debate for the Committee on Communities to extend the Committee Stage of the Private Tenancies Bill.
- 5.17 Members **agreed** to schedule an untimed debate for the Committee for Communities to extend the Committee Stage of the Betting, Gaming, Lotteries and Amusements Bill.
- 5.18 Members **agreed** to provisionally schedule time for an additional Committee motion seeking to extend a bill stage.

Private Members' Business

- 5.19 Members **agreed** to schedule a Private Members' motion for Alliance, the details of which could be confirmed after the meeting.
- 5.20 Members **agreed** to schedule the following Private Members' motion:
- Impact of Department for Infrastructure Planning Guidance on Rural Communities (SF)
- 5.21 Members **agreed** to reschedule the adjournment debate on Social Housing Need in East Belfast for the DUP.
- 5.22 Members **agreed** the Provisional Order Paper for Tuesday 19 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 12 October in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

The Speaker brought the meeting to a close at 1.25pm

**The Speaker
Chairperson**