

**NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY**  
**BUSINESS COMMITTEE**

**TUESDAY 12 OCTOBER 2021**  
**SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

**MINUTES**

*The meeting began at 1.09pm.*

**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 A Muir**  
**Mr J O'Dowd**

**In attendance:**

<b>Dr A McGarel</b>	<b>Clerk of Business</b>
<b>Mr P Gill</b>	<b>Clerk Assistant</b>
<b>Ms L Hogg</b>	<b>Clerk/Chief Executive</b>
<b>Dr G McGrath</b>	<b>Director of Parliamentary Services</b>
<b>Ms K McDonald</b>	<b>Legal Services</b>
<b>Mr R Ramsey</b>	<b>Adviser to the Speaker</b>
<b>Ms F Leneghan</b>	<b>PS to the Speaker</b>
<b>Ms P Devlin</b>	<b>Assistant Assembly Clerk</b>
<b>Mr M O'Hare</b>	<b>Clerical Supervisor</b>

**Observers:**

<b>Mr G Middleton</b>	<b>Junior Minister</b>
<b>Mr D McCreedy</b>	<b>The Executive Office</b>

**1 Apologies**

1.1 Apologies were received from Mr Colin McGrath.

**2 Minutes of previous meeting**

2.1 The minutes of the meeting on 5 October were **agreed**.

### 3 **Matters Arising**

- 3.1 The Speaker advised that he had arranged for a paper to be circulated earlier in the week giving Members an update on legislative pressures following his discussions with officials.
- 3.2 The Speaker advised that he was proposing to hold a standalone meeting of the Business Committee after Hallowe'en to focus on managing legislative pressures to the end of the mandate.
- 3.3 Members **agreed** to the Speaker's proposed approach.
- 3.4 There were no other matters arising.

### 4 **Finalisation of the Order Papers for the Plenary Meetings in Week Commencing 18 October**

#### **Monday 18 October**

##### Members' Statements

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

##### Assembly Business

- 4.2 Members **noted** that the DUP and SDLP were seeking to schedule Committee membership motions, the details of which would be confirmed after the meeting.
- 4.3 Members **agreed** to schedule Committee Membership motions for the DUP and SDLP as business motions with no debate or amendment.

##### Executive Committee Business

- 4.4 Members **noted** that the Support for Mortgage Interest etc. Bill would not be introduced on this date as previously indicated, but all other Executive business remained as scheduled.

##### Committee Business

- 4.5 Members **noted** that the Committee on Standards and Privileges motion to appoint an Acting Commissioner remained scheduled.

### Private Members' Business

- 4.6 Members **noted** that two Private Members' motions remained scheduled; Interparliamentary Dialogue (Sinn Féin) Independent Evaluation of the Police Ombudsman (DUP).
- 4.7 Members **agreed** the Order Paper for Monday 18 October.

### Tuesday 19 October

#### Executive Committee Business

- 4.8 Members **noted** that the Minister for Communities had been unable to respond to oral questions on 12 October and **agreed** to reschedule these on 19 October after questions to the Minister of Health.
- 4.9 Members **noted** that this would provide sufficient notice for another Minister to respond on behalf of the Minister for Communities if she remained unavailable.
- 4.10 Members **noted** that no other Executive business had been scheduled.

#### Committee Business

- 4.11 Members **noted** that three motions to extend Committee stages of Bills remained scheduled.
- 4.12 Members **agreed** to schedule an untimed debate for the Committee for Justice to extend Committee stage of the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Bill.

### Private Members' Business

- 4.13 Members **noted** that two Private Members' motions remained scheduled; Stability of Institutions and Referral to the Assembly and Executive Review Committee (Alliance) and Impact of Department for Infrastructure Planning Guidance on Rural Communities (Sinn Féin).
- 4.14 Members **agreed** to reschedule the DUP's adjournment debate on Social Housing in East Belfast, which was postponed last week.
- 4.15 Members **agreed** the Order Paper for Tuesday 19 October.

5 **Provisional Arrangements for the Plenary Meetings in Week Commencing 1 November**

**Monday 1 November**

Members' Statements

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

Public Petition

- 5.2 Members **agreed** to schedule a Public Petition for Mr. McNulty entitled 'Reassessing Contact Tracing in Schools'.

Executive Committee Business

- 5.3 Members **noted** that Question Time was scheduled for the Executive Office and the Minister for Infrastructure, but that the Executive Office had requested to switch with the Minister for Communities on 8 November.
- 5.4 Members **agreed** to facilitate the requested change.
- 5.5 Members **noted** that parties had already been invited to submit names to the Business Office for the ballot for questions to the Executive Office on 1 November, and that they would now be invited to submit names for the Minister for Communities on that date.
- 5.6 Members **noted** that the Executive had listed the following two items of business:
- A statement from the Minister of Finance on the Budget; and
  - A Legislative Consent Motion on the Public Service Pensions and Judicial Offices Bill.
- 5.7 Members **noted** that the statement would be added to Indicative Timings once it had been confirmed in writing with the Speaker's Office.
- 5.8 Members **agreed** to schedule an untimed debate for the LCM.
- 5.9 The junior Minister indicated that no other business was expected at that time.

### Committee Business

- 5.10 Members **agreed** to schedule a motion for the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to extend the Committee Stage of the Climate Change (No. 2) Bill.
- 5.11 Members **agreed** to schedule two motions for the Committee for Health to extend the Committee Stage of the Organ and Tissue Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill and the Autism (Amendment) Bill.
- 5.12 Members **agreed** to schedule a motion for the Committee for the Economy to extend the Committee Stage of the Small-Scale Green Energy Bill.
- 5.13 Members **agreed** that there would be no time limits applied to these debates.

### Private Members' Business

- 5.14 Members **noted** that sufficient time was available for one Private Members' motion.
- 5.15 Members **agreed** to schedule a Private Members' motion, as follows:
- A Ring-fenced Skills Fund for Northern Ireland (DUP)
- 5.16 Members **noted** that the amendment deadline for motions on Monday 1 November would be 9.30am on 21 October as the Assembly would be in recess the following week during which amendments may not be tabled.
- 5.17 The Speaker advised that Mr. Fra McCann had announced his intention to step down as an MLA for West Belfast but had approached him with a request to introduce his Private Members' Bill before doing so.
- 5.18 Members **noted** that Mr. McCann's Hospital Parking Charges Bill would be introduced during Private Members' Business.
- 5.19 Members **agreed** the Provisional Order Paper for Monday 1 November.

### Tuesday 2 November

#### Executive Committee Business

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

- 5.21 Members **noted** that the Executive had listed the following two items of business for the Minister of Health:
- Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations (NI) 2021 (Amendment No. 16) Regulations (NI) 2021; and
  - The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Wearing of Face Coverings) (Amendment No. 6) Regulations (NI) 2021.
- 5.22 Members **agreed** to schedule a single untimed debate to consider both motions.
- 5.23 The junior Minister indicated that no other business was expected at that time.

#### Committee Business

- 5.24 Members **noted** that there were no requests for Committee business.

#### Private Members' Business

- 5.25 Members **agreed** to schedule the following Private Members' motion:
- Rising Energy Costs (UUP)
- 5.26 Members **agreed** to schedule a Private Members' motion for SDLP, the details of which would be confirmed after the meeting.
- 5.27 Members **noted** that the amendment deadline for motions on Tuesday 2 November would be 9.30am on 22 October because of recess the following week during which amendments may not be tabled.
- 5.28 Members **agreed** to schedule the following adjournment debate:
- Future Regeneration Opportunities at Kinnegar Logistics Base, Holywood (Alliance)
- 5.29 Members **agreed** the Provisional Order Paper for Tuesday 2 November.

## 6 Correspondence

- 6.1 Members **noted** receipt of a memo from the Clerk to the Committee on Procedures inviting the Business Committee to comment on the terms of

reference for their inquiry into the procedures and support for Private Members' Bills currently provided by the Assembly.

- 6.2 Members **agreed** to consider the correspondence and return to the issue at the next meeting.
- 6.3 Members **agreed** that the Clerk of Business would draft an initial response focusing on the aspects of the terms of reference that relate directly to the remit of the Business Committee to inform the Committee's discussions.

## 7 **Any Other Business**

- 7.1 The Speaker reminded Members that at the first meeting in September, he had asked Members to consider appointing a substitute member to the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (CLRAE).
- 7.2 Members **agreed** that parties would confer and would advise the Speaker of their position.
- 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 19 October in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

*The Speaker brought the meeting to a close at 1.22pm*

**The Speaker**  
**Chairperson**