



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Chairpersons' Liaison Group

Minutes of Proceedings

Thursday 27 May 2021

Meeting Location: Virtual Meeting via StarLeaf

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Dr Caoimhe Archibald MLA

Ms Paula Bradley MLA

Ms Sinéad Ennis MLA (Chairperson)

Mr Chris Lyttle MLA

Mr Declan McAleer MLA

Ms Emma Sheerin MLA

Apologies:

Mr Colm Gildernew MLA

Mr Paul Givan MLA

Mr William Humphrey MLA

Miss Michelle McIlveen MLA

In Attendance by Video or Teleconference:

Mrs Lesley Hogg, Clerk to the Assembly/Chief Executive

Dr Gareth McGrath, Director of Parliamentary Services

Dr Kevin Pelan, Clerk Assistant



Northern Ireland Assembly

Ms Stella McArdle, Clerk

Mr Trevor Allen, Senior Assistant Clerk

Mrs Bronagh Irwin, Assistant Clerk

Mrs Diane Bergeron, Clerical Supervisor

Ms Aisha O'Reilly, Senior Programme Officer

The meeting commenced at 4:03 pm in closed session.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Chairperson's Business

Chairpersons recorded their thanks to Mr Humphrey for his time as Chairperson to the Group.

Agreed: Members agreed to defer Agenda Item 6 until the next meeting.

Chairpersons noted that, as part of the Member Development programme, the Northern Ireland Assembly will be facilitating three online training sessions in June 2021 on 'Protecting Your Social Media Reputation'.

3. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting of 2 March 2021, as circulated and agreed by correspondence, were noted.



Northern Ireland Assembly

4. Matters Arising

Chairpersons noted that at the March meeting, they were provided with a briefing on options to increase capacity for additional Committee meetings until the summer recess. Chairpersons subsequently agreed, via correspondence, that they were content with Option 2, which allows for additional committee meetings being hosted on an entirely virtual basis via StarLeaf. This has now been set up and is being utilised by committees. Chairpersons also agreed that they were content with proposals on the proposed layout of Room 21 following its planned refurbishment later this year.

Chairpersons noted the Research Paper provided by the Assembly's Research and Information Service on the Establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee to Monitor Programme for Government.

Chairpersons noted correspondence from the Speaker on Committee Stage of Legislation.

Chairpersons considered correspondence from the Committee on Procedures on the temporary provisions in Standing Orders 110-116.

Agreed: Chairpersons agreed to write to the Committee on Procedures advising that the group has considered its correspondence of 19 May 2021 and is content that the temporary provisions in Standing Orders 110-116 be extended. Chairpersons agreed that the sensible and precautionary approach would be to extend the temporary provisions until at least the end of the year, if not, the end of the mandate.

Dr Archibald joined the meeting at 4:17 pm.

5. Update on Women's Caucus

Chairpersons noted the paper providing an update on the work of the Women's Caucus. Chairpersons discussed the work of the Caucus and noted that responsibility for it will shortly be transferring from Politics Plus to the Clerking and Member Support Office.



Northern Ireland Assembly

Agreed: Chairpersons agreed to circulate a research paper provided to the Committee for Education on gender budgeting to all other committees.

6. Strengthening Committee Scrutiny

This agenda item was deferred until the next meeting.

7. Correspondence

Chairpersons considered correspondence received from the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs outlining issues experienced with the Department not providing briefing papers within expected timescales.

Agreed: Assembly officials would raise the matter with officials from the Executive Office.

Chairpersons considered correspondence received from Mr Jim Allister MLA in response to the distribution of its questionnaire on proposals for strengthening Committee scrutiny.

Agreed: Chairpersons agreed to write to Mr Allister to highlight Standing Order 48(2).

Chairpersons considered correspondence received from the Chairperson of the Assembly and Executive Review Committee (AERC) outlining their strategic priorities for the remainder of the mandate.

Agreed: Chairpersons agreed to write to the AERC advising of their work on strengthening scrutiny and that additional StarLeaf capacity has been made available for fully virtual meetings and plans are underway to refurbish room 21.



Northern Ireland Assembly

Chairpersons noted correspondence received from the Chairperson of the Committee for Justice in relation to meetings to discuss scrutiny of the Northern Ireland Protocol.

8. Any Other Business

Chairpersons shared their approaches to holding committee meetings in light of the current restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and discussed the merits of hybrid meetings and witnesses attending in person.

9. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next Chairpersons' Liaison Group meeting is scheduled to take place on Thursday, 1 July 2021 at 4 pm via StarLeaf.

The meeting was adjourned at 4.39 pm.

Ms Sinéad Ennis MLA
Chairperson, Chairpersons' Liaison Group