



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

CHAIRPERSONS' LIAISON GROUP

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

TUESDAY 15 SEPTEMBER 2020

The Senate, Parliament Buildings

- Present: Dr Steve Aiken OBE MLA
Dr Caoimhe Archibald MLA
Ms Paula Bradley MLA (present by videoconference)
Ms Linda Dillon MLA
Ms Sinéad Ennis MLA, Deputy Chairperson
Mr Paul Givan MLA
Mr William Humphrey MLA, Chairperson
Mr Chris Lyttle MLA
Mr Declan McAleer MLA
Mr Colin McGrath MLA
Ms Michelle McIlveen MLA
Ms Emma Sheerin MLA
- Apologies: Mr Colm Gildernew MLA
Mr Mervyn Storey MLA
- In Attendance: Mrs Lesley Hogg (Clerk to the Assembly/Chief Executive)
Dr Kevin Pelan (Clerk Assistant)
Mr Keith McBride (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Trevor Allen (Senior Assistant Clerk)
Mrs Bronagh Irwin (Assistant Clerk)
Mr Peter Hall (Assembly Clerk) (Agenda Item 7)
Miss Angela Kelly (Examiner of Statutory Rules) (Agenda Item 8)

The meeting commenced at 1.33 pm in closed session.

1. Apologies

As above.

1.34 pm Mr McGrath joined the meeting

2. Chairperson's Business

No items of Chairperson's business were raised.

3. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting of 23 June 2020, as circulated and agreed by correspondence on 1 July 2020, were noted.

4. Matters Arising

Mr Lyttle queried the status of an Ad Hoc Committee on the Programme for Government and it was clarified that this will be discussed during agenda item 5 as well as at a future meeting of the group.

5. Changes to Organisational Structure

Chairpersons received a briefing from Dr Kevin Pelan, Clerk Assistant, who provided an overview of the recent restructuring of the Clerking business area.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked Dr Pelan for the briefing.

6. Guidance for Committees – update

The group considered operational changes to Assembly Committee proceedings arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Agreed: Chairpersons agreed to revert back to the committee meeting schedule agreed in January 2020, subject to any necessary ad hoc changes that may arise in relation to the scheduling and broadcasting of committee meetings. Chairpersons also agreed to a number of measures as outlined in the Clerk's memo.

Agreed: Chairpersons agreed to write to the Committee on Procedures advising that the group has considered its correspondence of 2 September 2020 and is content that the temporary provisions in Standing Orders 110-116 be extended, and that they be kept under review by the committee.

7. Youth Assembly for Northern Ireland

Chairpersons received a briefing from Mr Peter Hall, Committee Clerk, on the Assembly Commission's decision to establish a Youth Assembly.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked Mr Hall for the briefing.

1.55 pm *Mr Aiken left the meeting*
1.58 pm *Mr Lyttle left the meeting*
1.59 pm *Mr McGrath and Dr Archibald left the meeting*
2.05 pm *Mr McAleer left the meeting*

Agreed: Chairpersons agreed to write to the Speaker welcoming the establishment of the Youth Assembly for Northern Ireland and to request that the Assembly Commission ensures that membership of the Youth Assembly is representative and reflective of wider Northern Ireland society.

8. RHI Inquiry Report recommendation on strengthening the scrutiny role of Assembly Committees – Subordinate Legislation

Chairpersons noted a research paper on parliamentary scrutiny of delegated legislation and received a briefing from Miss Angela Kelly, Examiner of Statutory Rules, on the scrutiny of secondary legislation, including areas of best practice in other jurisdictions and how her team can input in terms of strengthening the scrutiny role of committees.

Mr P Givan left the meeting at 14:14

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked Miss Kelly for the briefing.

Agreed: Chairpersons agreed that the committee office should take forward further scoping work on the examples of best practice in secondary legislation scrutiny and this will inform the ongoing work of the group on strengthening the scrutiny role of Assembly Committees.

Chairpersons noted that the Assembly Commission's Corporate Plan 2019-23 has a key action to develop proposals to strengthen the Assembly's legislative, scrutiny, financial and budgetary oversight and representative roles and that there would need to be liaison between the Commission and Chairperson's Liaison Group to take this action forward.

9. Correspondence

Chairpersons considered correspondence from the Committee for Communities on funding for disability employment services.

Agreed: The group agreed to write to the Committee for Communities advising that the group has noted the correspondence but feels it more appropriate that they write directly to the other statutory Committees on this matter.

10. Any Other Business

No other items of business were raised.

11. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The Clerk will advise Chairpersons of the date of the next meeting of the Chairpersons' Liaison Group.

The meeting was adjourned at 2.22 pm.

William Humphrey MLA
Chairperson, Chairpersons' Liaison Group