



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Chairpersons' Liaison Group

Minutes of Proceedings

Tuesday 28 September 2021

Meeting Location: Virtual Meeting via StarLeaf

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Dr Steve Aiken OBE MLA
Dr Caoimhe Archibald MLA
Ms Paula Bradley MLA
Mr Jonathan Buckley MLA
Mr Colm Gildernew MLA
Mr William Humphrey MLA
Mr Chris Lyttle MLA
Mr Declan McAleer MLA
Ms Carál Ní Chuilín MLA (Chairperson)
Ms Emma Sheerin MLA
Mr Mervyn Storey MLA
Mr Peter Weir MLA

Apologies: Ms Linda Dillon MLA

In Attendance by Video or Teleconference:



Northern Ireland Assembly

Mrs Lesley Hogg, Chief Executive/Clerk to the Assembly
Dr Kevin Pelan, Clerk Assistant
Ms Stella McArdle, Committee Clerk
Mr Trevor Allen, Senior Assistant Clerk
Mrs Bronagh Irwin, Assistant Clerk
Dr Frank Geddis, Clerk Assistant (agenda item 4)
Mr Ray McCaffrey, Research Officer (agenda item 5)
Miss Angela Kelly, Examiner of Statutory Rules (agenda item 5)
Mr Paul Gill, Clerk Assistant (agenda item 7)

The meeting commenced at 1:22 pm in closed session.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Chairperson's Business

Members noted that that Sinéad Ennis resigned as Chairperson of the Committee on Standards and Privileges and therefore is no longer a member of the Chairpersons' Liaison Group (CLG); and that Carál Ní Chuilín has been nominated as the new Chairperson until the end of the mandate. Members thanked Sinéad for her contribution to the work of CLG. Members also welcomed Peter Weir, Jonathan Buckley and Linda Dillon to the Group and thanked Paul Givan and Michelle McIlveen for their contribution to the work of CLG.

Members also noted that, as agreed, Tuesdays at 1:15pm will be the regular day and time for meetings of the Group so as to best suit members' availability.



Northern Ireland Assembly

Agreed: Members agreed the draft Forward Work Programme up to 14 December 2021.

3. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting of 27 May 2021, as circulated and agreed by correspondence, were noted.

4. Legislation and Committee Work Programmes

Mr Buckley, Mr Weir and Mr Gildernew joined the meeting at 1:31 pm

Chairpersons received a briefing from Dr Kevin Pelan, Clerk Assistant, and Dr Frank Geddis, Clerk Assistant, on the current pressures that committees, Members and committee staff are facing in the period up to the end of the mandate in March 2022. The presentation made specific reference to committees that have, or are likely to have, multiple bills at Committee Stage and asked Chairpersons to take this into consideration when prioritising committee work programmes.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked Dr Pelan and Dr Geddis for their presentation.

Agreed: Chairpersons agreed to write to the First Minister and deputy First Minister to request that CLG is provided with a copy of the Executive's Legislative Programme until the end of the current mandate. Chairpersons also agreed that Assembly officials should raise this matter with their counterparts in The Executive Office.

Agreed: Chairpersons agreed to write to the IS Office to request that connectivity issues are investigated, in order to make best use of video conferencing software to accommodate current and additional committee meetings.



Northern Ireland Assembly

Agreed: Chairpersons agreed that the Clerking and Member Support Office will explore options regarding the further expansion of streaming fully virtual meetings.

5. Strengthening Committee Scrutiny

Chairpersons received a briefing from Mr Ray McCaffrey, Research Officer, on pre- and post-legislative scrutiny, specifically the consideration of approaches in other legislatures.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked Mr McCaffrey for the presentation.

Dr Archibald left the meeting at 1:55 pm

Mr Gildernew left the meeting at 1:59 pm

Chairpersons received a briefing from Miss Angela Kelly, Examiner of Statutory Rules (ESR), on the role and remit of the ESR.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked Miss Kelly for the presentation.

Agreed: Chairpersons agreed that, based on the work undertaken to date, that a proposal paper be brought forward in the autumn, for consideration by CLG, outlining potential practical solutions that could be adopted within Assembly Committees to strengthen pre-and-post legislative scrutiny.

6. Correspondence

Chairpersons considered correspondence from the Committee for Finance on the need for scrutiny processes for EU Regulations and received a briefing from Mr Paul Gill, Clerk Assistant.



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Agreed: Chairpersons agreed that, in the context of the statutory duty of Assembly committees to advise and assist Ministers in the formulation of policy, to write to the First Minister and deputy First Minister to request that where the views of NI Executive Departments are sought by the UK Government on amendments to EU law listed in the Annexes to the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland; or on new EU legislation within the scope of the Protocol but which does not amend or replace EU acts listed in the Annexes, that each Department engages with the relevant Assembly committee prior to finalising its input to the final Government Explanatory Memorandum and provides a final copy of the Explanatory Memoranda to the committee.

7. Any Other Business

None.

8. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next Chairpersons' Liaison Group meeting is scheduled to take place on Tuesday, 19 October 2021 at 1.15 pm via StarLeaf.

The meeting was adjourned at 2.19 pm.

Ms Carál Ní Chuilín MLA
Chairperson, Chairpersons' Liaison Group