



## COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURES

### MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

WEDNESDAY 29 JANUARY 2020  
ROOM 21, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Ms Carál Ní Chulín MLA (Chairperson)  
Mr Thomas Buchanan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mrs Rosemary Barton MLA  
Mr Maurice Bradley MLA  
Ms Sinéad Bradley MLA  
Mr Gerry Carroll MLA  
Ms Linda Dillon MLA  
Mr Harry Harvey MLA  
Ms Catherine Kelly MLA

In attendance: Nick Mitford (Assembly Clerk)  
Stewart Kennedy (Assistant Assembly Clerk)

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to commence the meeting in closed session to discuss a number of Committee protocols.

The meeting commenced at 2.03pm in closed session.

The Chairperson welcomed Members to the first meeting of the Committee.

#### 1. Apologies

There were no apologies.

**2. Arrangements for Committee meetings**

The Chairperson informed Members that the Committee will normally meet fortnightly on Wednesday at 2pm in Room 21.

The Committee considered a paper on the 'Background of the Committee on Procedures'.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to adopt the protocols as set out in the 'Background of the Committee on Procedures' paper.

The Committee noted the paper on the 'Arrangements for Committee Meetings'.

**3. Staff Contact Details**

The Chairperson introduced the Committee Clerk to Members.

The Committee Clerk introduced the Committee staff to Members.

The Committee noted the contact details of the Committee staff.

**4. Committee Induction Plan and Arrangements for Strategic Planning Meeting.**

The Chairperson advised Members that a proposed Committee Induction Plan had been prepared and a number of guidance papers, relevant to the Induction Plan, would be addressed in agenda items throughout the meeting.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the Induction Plan.

**5. Outcomes of an Effective Committee**

The Committee noted a paper on 'Outcomes of an Effective Committee'.

**6. Committee Approach to Dealing with Correspondence**

The Committee noted a paper on 'Committee Approach to Dealing with Correspondence'.

**7. Committee Approach to Meeting Preparation and Witness Questioning**

The Committee noted a paper on 'Committee Approach to Meeting Preparation and Witness Questioning'.

**8. Protocol on Conduct and Courtesy at Committee Meetings**

The Committee considered a draft protocol on conduct and courtesy at committee meetings.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to adopt the protocol on conduct and courtesy at committee meetings

The Committee moved to public session at 2.10pm.

**9. Committee Membership**

The Committee noted the Committee membership.

**10. Declaration of Members' Interests**

The Committee considered a memo from the Clerk on 'Declarations of Members' Interests'.

The Chairperson advised Members that all Assembly Members are required to register relevant financial and other interests in the Register of Members' Interests.

The Chairperson reminded Members that, in line with Standing Order 69(5), the Chairperson reminded Members that a Member who has a financial interest in any matter; or a relevant interest in any matter, must declare that interest before taking part in any proceedings of the Assembly relating to that matter.

The Chairperson asked if Members had any interests to declare which are relevant to the work of the Committee.

*The Chairperson declared an interest as the former Minister for the Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure.*

## **11. Committee Procedures**

The Committee noted the following guidance papers:

- Guide to the Powers and Operation of Standing and Ad Hoc Committees for Chairpersons and Members;
- Guide to the Role of the Chairperson;
- Guide for Members on the Role and Functions of the Committee Office; and

## **12. Committee on Procedures Legacy Report 2016-17**

The Chairperson informed Members that a Legacy Report for 2016-17 mandate was not produced by the previous Committee.

The Committee noted a briefing paper, prepared by the Clerk, on a range of outstanding issues from the 2016-17 mandate which the Committee may wish to take forward.

The Chairperson asked the Clerk to brief the Committee.

The Clerk briefed the Committee on the outstanding issues from the 2016-17 mandate.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the Clerk should seek legal advice relating to official opposition arising from the Assembly Executive and Reform (Assembly Opposition) Act (NI) 2016.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Executive Office to ask for details of which area of Government is responsible for introducing legislation in relation to implementing areas of the New Decade, New Approach agreement that may result in changes to the Assembly's Standing Orders. The Committee also agreed to ask for the proposed timescales for the introduction of such legislation.

## **13. Forward Work Programme**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to schedule an introductory briefing from Research and Information Service (RaiSe) at its next meeting.

Mr Carrol suggested that the Committee should consider a review of the Assembly speaking rounds when considering its work plan.

Mr Carrol also suggested the Committee should consider the provisions in Standing Orders for those parties, who are not on the Executive, to receive more speaking time in Plenary.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to commission research on the following issues and to incorporate them in its forward work programme:

- Official Opposition;
- Executive Legislative Timetable;
- Review of Private Members' Bills;
- E-Petitions; and
- Order Paper – issues around topicality

## **14. Correspondence**

**14.1** The Committee considered an email from a stakeholder regarding e-petitions.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed for the Clerk to respond to the stakeholder with an update, informing them that the Committee plan to include a review of e-petitions in its strategic planning session.

**14.2** The Committee considered a letter from the Chairperson of the Business Committee regarding Standing Orders 49(2)(a) and 52(2)(a).

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to commission research on the reduction of members on Committees, and that the issue is added as a substantive agenda item for the next meeting.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to forward the letter from the Business Committee to RaISe as a supporting document to the request.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to also consider the number of Members required for quorum and to include this in its request for research.

## **15. Chairperson's Business**

There was no Chairperson's business.

**16. Any other Business**

There was no other business.

**17. Date, time and place of next meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Committee would take place on Wednesday 12 February 2020 at 2pm in Room 21, Parliament Buildings.

2.39pm The Chairperson adjourned the meeting.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Buchanan', written in a cursive style.

**Tom Buchanan**  
Deputy Chairperson, Committee on Procedures  
12 February 2020