

## COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURES

### MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**TUESDAY 22 JANUARY 2013  
ROOM 144, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr Gerry Kelly MLA (Chairperson)  
Mr Trevor Clarke MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Jim Allister MLA  
Mr Samuel Gardiner MLA  
Mr Chris Lyttle MLA  
Mr Barry McElduff MLA  
Mr Oliver McMullan MLA  
Mr Alban Maginness MLA  
Lord Morrow MLA  
Mr George Robinson MLA  
Mr Mervyn Storey MLA

In attendance: Alison Ross (Clerk)  
Neil Currie (Assistant Clerk)  
Jonathan Watson (Clerical Supervisor)

**1.00pm** The meeting opened in public session.

#### **1. Apologies**

None.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr McElduff to the Committee. Mr McElduff confirmed that he had no financial or other interests, relevant to the work of the Committee, to declare.

#### **2. Draft Minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2012**

*Agreed :* Members agreed the draft minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2012.

### **3. Matters Arising**

The Chairperson informed Members that legal advice had been sought in relation to the query surrounding the procedures set out in Standing Order 60 (regarding the establishment of an ad hoc committee on conformity with equality requirements), however, the advice would not be available until the next meeting scheduled for 26 February 2013.

### **4. Standing Order 32(2) – Reasoned Amendments to Bills**

The Committee considered a Research and Information Service briefing paper outlining the timeframe specified in other legislatures before a Bill that has been rejected at Second Stage can be reintroduced.

*Agreed:* It was agreed to write to the Party Whips seeking their views, and to also seek the views of other stakeholders such as the Bill Office, Business Office and OFMDFM.

### **5. Attorney General participation in the proceedings of the Assembly**

The Committee considered correspondence from the Chairperson of the Committee for Justice, outlining some issues his Committee had encountered in recent dealings with the Attorney General for Northern Ireland, in relation to his interaction with Assembly committees and participation in the proceedings of the Assembly.

**1.06pm** Mr Lyttle joined the meeting.

The Committee also considered a briefing paper which advised Members that the previous Committee on Procedures had initiated an inquiry into how the Attorney General will participate in proceedings of the Assembly, however, this was subsequently put on hold pending the outcome of a consultation initiated by the Department of Justice into, inter alia, the powers of the Attorney General. The Chairperson advised Members that the Committee for Justice expected to receive a briefing on the results of the consultation by the end of March 2013.

*Agreed:* In light of the pressing nature of the issues highlighted in the correspondence from the Chairperson of the Committee for Justice, it was agreed to include these items in and proceed with the inquiry into the participation of the Attorney General for Northern Ireland in the proceedings of the Assembly.

*Agreed:* The Committee was content with the suggested way forward for the inquiry, as outlined in the briefing paper, and the Clerk was asked to prepare an inquiry plan (including draft Terms of Reference), and to take forward the other actions in the paper, for consideration at the meeting scheduled for 26 February 2013.

**6. Amending Bills after Further Consideration Stage – briefing from the Bill Office**

**1.08pm** Patricia Casey and Éilis Haughey from the Bill Office joined the meeting and briefed Members on the further paper it had provided on amending Bills after Further Consideration Stage. This was followed by a question and answer session.

**1.17pm** Mr Storey joined the meeting.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed with the recommendations and proposed next steps contained in the briefing paper.

**1.46pm** The Chairperson thanked Ms Casey and Ms Haughey for the briefing, and they left the meeting.

**7. Inquiry into Topical Questions**

The Committee discussed some outstanding issues on its inquiry into Topical Questions.

**2.01pm** Mr Allister left the meeting.

**2.02pm** Mr Storey left the meeting.

The Committee also discussed the situation where an Urgent Oral Question is selected to a Minister who is scheduled for Topical Question Time on the same day.

*Agreed:* It was agreed that the Clerk should explore the feasibility of an Urgent Oral Question in this scenario being taken before Topical Question Time.

*Agreed:* It was agreed to consider this matter and any other outstanding issues at the next meeting scheduled for 26 February 2013.

**8. Review of Forward Work Programme**

The Chairperson advised Members that the briefing by the European Project Manager on Subsidiarity Monitoring had been deferred until the meeting scheduled for 19 March 2013.

The Committee was content with the Forward Work Programme.

**9. Correspondence**

There was no other correspondence.

**10. Any other Business**

None.

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

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Committee would take place on 26 February 2013 at 1.00pm in Room 144, Parliament Buildings.

**2.06pm** The Chairperson adjourned the meeting.

Gerry Kelly  
Chairperson, Committee on Procedures

26 February 2013