

COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURES

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**TUESDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 2013
ROOM 144, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr Gerry Kelly MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Trevor Clarke MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Jim Allister MLA
Ms Paula Bradley MLA
Mr Samuel Gardiner MLA
Mr Chris Lyttle MLA
Mr Barry McElduff MLA
Mr Alban Maginness MLA
Lord Morrow MLA
Mr George Robinson MLA

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

1.00pm The meeting opened in public session.

1. Apologies

Mr Oliver McMullan MLA

The Chairperson welcomed Ms Bradley to the Committee. Ms Bradley confirmed that she had no financial or other interests, relevant to the work of the Committee, to declare. The Chairperson reminded Members of the on-going need to declare any interests which are relevant to the work of the Committee.

2. Draft Minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2013

Agreed: Members agreed the draft minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2013.

3. Draft End of Session Report

The Committee considered the draft End of Session report summarising the work of the Committee from 1 September 2012 to 31 August 2013.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the End of Session report and was content for it to be published.

1.05pm Mr Allister joined the meeting.

4. Inquiry into the extent to which Standing Orders should permit the Attorney General to participate in proceedings of the Assembly

Agreed: It was agreed to defer consideration of this item to the next meeting, so that Members can obtain the views of their parties on each of the issues.

5. Emergence of new political parties/groupings during a mandate

The Chairperson advised Members that, as agreed at the meeting on 25 June 2013, he had written back to the Speaker in relation to the interim speaking arrangements, however, a response from the Speaker had not yet been received.

Agreed: As the awaited response from the Speaker may have some bearing on the Committee's deliberations, it was agreed to defer consideration of this item to the next meeting.

Agreed: The Clerk was asked to prepare a briefing paper to inform discussion at the next meeting.

6. Scheduling of parliamentary business

The Committee considered a letter from the Director of Clerking and Reporting regarding the scheduling of parliamentary business within the Assembly. The letter requested that the Committee on Procedures considers this matter with a view to examining options and making recommendations to improve the effectiveness and focus of the scheduling of parliamentary business within the Assembly.

The Committee also considered some research into the scheduling of parliamentary business in other legislatures.

Agreed: It was agreed to conduct an inquiry into this matter, and the Clerk was asked to prepare an inquiry plan (including draft Terms of Reference) for consideration at the next meeting.

7. Committee Stage of Bills

The Committee considered figures for this mandate so far on the number of

requests to extend the Committee Stage of Bills.

The Clerk was asked to obtain some additional information for consideration at the next meeting.

Agreed: It was agreed that Members should obtain the views of their parties on this issue for the next meeting.

8. Amending Bills after Further Consideration Stage

1.15pm Patricia Casey and Éilis Haughey from the Bill Office joined the meeting and briefed Members on the draft Standing Order to provide for an Exceptional Further Consideration Stage, and accompanying briefing paper. This was followed by a question and answer session.

1.36pm Mr Allister left the meeting.

1.50pm Mr Lyttle left the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee was content with the draft Standing Order and agreed to consult on the draft with the Speaker's Office, the Business Office and OFMDFM. It was also agreed to seek legal advice following the consultation and to consider consulting with the Secretary of State.

1.52pm The Chairperson thanked Ms Casey and Ms Haughey for the briefing, and they left the meeting.

9. Forward Work Programme

The Committee was content with the Forward Work Programme.

10. Correspondence

There was no other correspondence.

11. Any other Business

The Chairperson informed Members that some feedback had been received from Members on the Topical Questions process.

Agreed: It was agreed that an interim evaluation of the Topical Questions process should be undertaken, and the Clerk was asked to gather information for consideration at the next meeting.

12. Date, time and place of next meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Committee would take place on 22 October 2013 at 1.00pm in Room 144, Parliament Buildings.

1.55pm The Chairperson adjourned the meeting.

Gerry Kelly
Chairperson, Committee on Procedures

22 October 2013