

COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURES

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**TUESDAY 27 MAY 2014
ROOM 29, 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 Kieran McCarthy MLA
Mr Barry McElduff MLA
Mr Oliver McMullan MLA
Mr Alban Maginness MLA
Mr George Robinson MLA

In attendance: Ciara McKay (Clerk)
Neil Currie (Assistant Clerk)
Jennifer Breslin (Clerical Officer)

1.01pm The meeting began in closed session.

1. Apologies

Lord Morrow MLA

2. Amending Bills after Further Consideration Stage

1.02pm Mr Kieran McCarthy joined the meeting.

1.02pm Mr Alban Maginness joined the meeting.

The Committee considered proposed amendments to Standing Orders to provide for an Exceptional Further Consideration Stage, along with legal advice from the Legal Services Office in relation to the proposed amendments.

Agreed: The amendments and the motion on the proposed new Standing Order 37A were agreed.
The amendment to Standing Order 31 and the motion were agreed.
The amendment to Standing Order 35 and the motion were agreed.

1.05pm The meeting moved into public session.

1.05pm Ms Bradley left the meeting.

1.05pm The Chairperson left the meeting and the Deputy Chairperson took the Chair.

3. Draft Minutes of the meeting held on 29th April 2014

Agreed: Members agreed the draft minutes of the meeting held on 29th April 2014.

4. Matters arising

In relation to the Review of Topical Questions, the Deputy Chairperson advised Members that responses from the junior Ministers to the Committee's letters dated 28th January 2014 and 1st April 2014 were still outstanding.

Agreed: It was agreed that the Chairperson should write to the junior Ministers to chase up the outstanding responses.

The Committee was content to consider this item at the next meeting.

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

The Committee considered the views expressed in the responses from the Attorney General for Northern Ireland, the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister, and the Committee for Justice, in relation to the mechanisms for managing guidance (Statutory Rules) laid by the Attorney General which is subject to the negative resolution or draft affirmative resolution procedures.

The Committee also considered a briefing paper including some options for handling these Statutory Rules.

Agreed: It was agreed to write to the Speaker and the Business Committee to seek their views on mechanisms for managing these Statutory Rules. It was also agreed that Members should discuss the matter with their parties and notify the Clerk of party views.

The Deputy Chairperson advised Members that, in view of the Statutory Rule (subject to the draft affirmative resolution procedure) which may come to the

Assembly before the summer recess, it may be necessary for the Committee to meet before the next scheduled meeting on 24th June 2014.

6. Electronic voting in the Chamber

The Committee considered information on the estimated costs to introduce electronic voting in the Chamber, based on two potential options.

Agreed: It was agreed that Members should obtain party views, so that further consideration can be given to this matter at the meeting scheduled for 24th June 2014.

7. Forward Work Programme

The Deputy Chairperson updated Members on the timescale of the introduction of the Northern Ireland Public Service Ombudsman Bill to the Assembly.

The Deputy Chairperson also updated Members on the development of a draft Memorandum of Understanding, to be underpinned by Standing Orders, which has been developed as an option for improving the Assembly's input to the budget process. Members were content for this item to be added to the list of other forthcoming business.

The Committee was content with the Forward Work Programme.

8. Correspondence

(a) The Committee considered a letter from Mairaid McMahon requesting to meet the Committee regarding a pilot project she is developing to enhance public participation in politics.

Agreed: It was agreed that Committee staff should meet with Mairaid McMahon in the first instance, and to consider the correspondence further after that meeting.

(b) The Committee considered correspondence from the Chief Executive of PlayBoard NI requesting to brief the Committee on its 'Let us Play' campaign.

Agreed: As the issues raised in the correspondence falls outside the remit of the Committee, it was agreed to write back to explain the position.

9. Any other Business

The Deputy Chairperson reminded Members that the Committee report on the Review of the Current Organisation of the Business Week of the Northern Ireland Assembly was scheduled for debate in plenary later that day.

There was no other business.

1.25pm Mr Allister left the meeting.

10. Date, time and place of next meeting

It was agreed that the next scheduled meeting of the Committee would take place on 24th June 2014 at 1.00pm in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

1.26pm The Deputy Chairperson adjourned the meeting.

Gerry Kelly
Chairperson, Committee on Procedures

24th June 2014