

COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURES

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**TUESDAY 28 JANUARY 2014
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 Barry McElduff MLA
Mr Oliver McMullan MLA
Mr Kieran McCarthy MLA
Mr Alban Maginness MLA
Lord Morrow MLA
Mr George Robinson MLA

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

1.02pm The meeting opened in closed session.

1. Apologies

None.

2. Draft Minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2013

Agreed: Members agreed the draft minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2013.

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

The Committee considered a first draft report on its inquiry.

Agreed: The Committee was content with the broad outline of the draft

report and with the areas identified for consideration.

1.08pm Ms Bradley joined the meeting.

1.10pm Mr Allister joined the meeting.

The Committee considered each section of the draft report and discussed a number of issues relating to the Terms of Reference for the inquiry.

Agreed: It was agreed to consider the outstanding issues at the meeting scheduled for 25 February 2014, along with a revised draft report.

1.32pm The meeting moved into public session.

4. Review of Topical Questions

The Committee noted the updated statistical data on the Topical Questions process since its introduction.

Agreed: The Committee agreed:

- a) The programme of work, and that a notice publicising the review would appear on the Assembly website only.
- b) The list of stakeholders who should be invited to submit written evidence.
- c) The draft letter to stakeholders.

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

The Committee considered the written responses from the Alliance Party, the DUP and the SDLP in relation to the establishment of Technical Groups. The views of Sinn Féin and the UUP were also expressed at the meeting.

1.39pm Lord Morrow left the meeting.

Mr Maginness proposed that the Committee gives further consideration to the various issues surrounding the impact of the establishment of Technical Groups.

The Committee divided on the proposal. Ayes 4; Noes 5; Abstentions 1.

Ayes	Noes	Abstentions
Gerry Kelly	Paula Bradley	Jim Allister
Barry McElduff	Trevor Clarke	
Oliver McMullan	Samuel Gardiner	
Alban Maginness	Kieran McCarthy	
	George Robinson	

The proposal accordingly fell.

Mr Clarke proposed that there should be no change to the current arrangements and that Technical Groups should not be established at this time.

The Committee divided on the proposal. Ayes 5; Noes 5.

Ayes

Paula Bradley
Trevor Clarke
Samuel Gardiner
Kieran McCarthy
George Robinson

Noes

Jim Allister
Gerry Kelly
Barry McElduff
Oliver McMullan
Alban Maginness

The proposal accordingly fell.

Agreed: It was agreed to consider this issue further at the next meeting.

6. Amending Bills after Further Consideration Stage

The Committee considered the response from the Bill Office to the amendment suggested by OFMDFM to the draft Standing Order to provide for an Exceptional Further Consideration Stage.

Agreed: The Committee agreed with the Bill Office recommendation to accept the amendment suggested by OFMDFM.

Agreed: It was agreed to seek legal advice on the proposed Standing Order and to consider the matter further on receipt of the advice.

7. Review of the current organisation of the business week

The Committee considered the written submissions that had been received for the review, plus pictograms of the current business week models outlining the systems operating in the Assembly and other legislatures.

The Chairperson informed Members that a response from the Executive Committee was expected, but had not yet been received.

Agreed: It was, therefore, agreed to defer consideration of this matter until the next meeting. It was also agreed that the Clerk could begin drafting an emerging issues paper using the evidence that had been received to date.

8. Correspondence

The Committee considered correspondence from the Chairperson of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) requesting amendments to Standing Order 56 so that it more accurately reflects the functions and work of the PAC.

Mr Clarke declared an interest as a member of the PAC.

Agreed: It was agreed to seek legal advice on the content of the letter from the PAC and to consider the matter further on receipt of the advice.

9. Forward Work Programme

The Chairperson drew Members' attention to the Northern Ireland Public Service Ombudsman Bill which had been added to the list of forthcoming business. He informed Members that, if passed by the Assembly, the new legislation would require amendments to Standing Orders, and that a briefing paper on this issue was expected from the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister in April or May 2014.

The Committee was content with the Forward Work Programme.

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 25 February 2014 at 1.00pm in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

1.52pm The Chairperson adjourned the meeting.

Gerry Kelly
Chairperson, Committee on Procedures

25 February 2014