

COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURES

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**TUESDAY 29 APRIL 2014
ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr Gerry Kelly MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Trevor Clarke MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Ms Paula Bradley MLA
Mr Samuel Gardiner MLA
Mr Oliver McMullan MLA
Mr Alban Maginness MLA
Lord Morrow MLA
Mr George Robinson MLA

In attendance: Nick Mitford (Senior Assistant Clerk)
Neil Currie (Assistant Clerk)
Jennifer Breslin (Clerical Officer)

1.01pm The meeting began in closed session.

1. Apologies

Mr Kieran McCarthy MLA
Mr Barry McElduff MLA

2. Review of the current organisation of the business week

The Committee read the draft report on the Review of the Current Organisation of the Business Week paragraph by paragraph.

Report:

Paragraphs 1 – 11, agreed

Paragraph 12, agreed, as amended

1.05pm Mr Maginness joined the meeting.

Paragraphs 13 – 49, agreed

Paragraph 50, agreed, as amended

Paragraph 51, agreed

Summary of Recommendations – agreed

Executive Summary – read and agreed, as amended

Agreed: The inclusion of the following appendices was agreed:
Appendix 1 – Minutes of Proceedings relating to the report
Appendix 2 – Written Submissions
Appendix 3 – Business week models in the Northern Ireland Assembly and other legislatures

Agreed: Members ordered the report to be printed.

Agreed: It was agreed that the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson could approve the minutes for the part of today's meeting dealing with consideration of the draft report, in order for an extract to be included in the report.

Agreed: It was agreed that the report should be embargoed until commencement of the debate of the report in plenary.

Agreed: The motion to accompany the report's introduction to Assembly was agreed, as follows: 'That this Assembly approves the Committee on Procedures' report on its Review of the Current Organisation of the Business Week of the Northern Ireland Assembly'.

3. Review of Standing Order 56 – Public Accounts Committee

Having consulted with their parties on Mr Allister's proposal that a further amendment be made to Standing Order 56 to provide that the Chairperson of the Public Accounts Committee cannot be a member of any party included in the Executive Committee, Members gave party views on the proposal.

Agreed: The Committee was not in favour of the amendment proposed by Mr Allister.

The Committee considered a draft amendment to Standing Order 56(1) and a draft motion for the plenary debate.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the amendment and the motion to amend Standing Order 56(1).

1.17pm The meeting moved into public session.

4. Draft Minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2014

Agreed: Members agreed the draft minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2014.

5. Matters arising

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

The Chairperson advised Members that, as agreed, he had written to the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister, the Attorney General for Northern Ireland and the Committee for Justice, to seek their views on mechanisms for managing guidance (Statutory Rules) laid by the Attorney General which is subject to the negative resolution or draft affirmative resolution procedures.

As no responses had been received, the Committee was content to consider this item at the next meeting.

b) Review of Topical Questions

The Chairperson advised Members that, as agreed, he had written to the junior Ministers to remind them of their outstanding response, and to ask for their comments on some specific issues that had emerged during the review.

As no response had been received, the Committee was content to consider this item at the next meeting.

6. Amending Bills after Further Consideration Stage

The Committee considered a revised draft Standing Order to provide for an Exceptional Further Consideration Stage, along with some consequential amendments.

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

7. Electronic voting in the Chamber

The Committee considered a briefing paper summarising the consideration given to electronic voting in the Chamber by the previous Committee on Procedures in the last mandate.

Agreed: It was agreed that the Clerk should obtain information on the estimated costs to introduce electronic voting, and provide a briefing paper for consideration at the next meeting.

8. Forward Work Programme

The Committee was content with the Forward Work Programme.

9. Correspondence

The Committee considered a memo from the Clerk to the Assembly and Executive Review Committee (AERC) in relation to its report on the Review of Petitions of Concern.

Ms Bradley declared an interest as a member of the AERC.

Agreed: As the AERC did not reach consensus on the issues relating to Petitions of Concern and the establishment of ad-hoc committees on conformity with equality requirements, it was agreed that this item could be removed from 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 27 May 2014 at 1.00pm in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

1.33pm The Chairperson adjourned the meeting.

Gerry Kelly
Chairperson, Committee on Procedures

27 May 2014