

## COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURES

### MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**TUESDAY 23 FEBRUARY 2016  
ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr Gerry Kelly MLA (Chairperson)  
Mr Trevor Clarke MLA  
Mr Jim Allister MLA  
Mr Samuel Gardiner MLA  
Mr Paul Givan MLA  
Mr Kieran McCarthy MLA  
Mr Oliver McMullan MLA  
Mr Adrian McQuillan MLA  
Mr Alban Maginness MLA  
Mr George Robinson MLA

In attendance: Alison Ross (Clerk)  
Neil Currie (Assistant Clerk)  
Christopher Jeffrey (Clerical Officer)

**5.02pm** The meeting began in closed session.

**1. Apologies**

None.

**2. Draft minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2016**

*Agreed:* Members agreed the draft minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2016.

**3. Matters arising**

*Agreed:* It was agreed that, should the Assembly approve the Committee's report on the Review of Public Petitions Procedures, that the draft amendments to Standing Orders to introduce the e-petitions facility should be brought to the next

Committee after the summer recess, and included to in the Legacy Report.

#### **4. Fresh Start Agreement – provision in Standing Orders**

**5.02pm** Jonathan McMillen from the Legal Services Office joined the meeting and answered Members' questions on the Northern Ireland (Stormont Agreement and Implementation Plan) Bill and associated draft amendments to Standing Orders.

**5.07pm** Mr McCarthy joined the meeting.

*Agreed:* The amendment to Standing Order 44(2) and the motion were agreed.  
The amendment to Standing Order 44A(1) and the motion were agreed.

**5.31pm** The Chairperson thanked Mr McMillen for his attendance and he left the meeting.

*Agreed:* It was agreed that other issues arising from the Bill outlined in the briefing paper, which may require amendments to Standing Orders, should be referred to the next Committee in the new mandate and included in the Legacy Report.

**5.39pm** The meeting moved into public session.

#### **5. Standing Orders for Hybrid Bills**

The Chairperson advised Members that the draft amendments to Standing Orders in relation to hybrid bills would not be available prior to the Committee's last meeting on 8 March 2016.

*Agreed:* It was agreed that the Legal Services Office should proceed with drafting so that the draft Standing Orders can be finalised during dissolution. It was also agreed to refer the matter to the next Committee in the new mandate, highlighting it as a priority in our Legacy Report.

*Agreed:* It was agreed that the Chairperson should write back to the Speaker advising him of the position.

#### **6. Standing Orders – Code of Conduct**

The Committee considered the response from the Chairperson of the Committee on Standards and Privileges confirming that, subject to one minor correction, the Committee was content with the proposed amendments to Standing Order 69, which will give effect to the provisions of the new Code of Conduct and Guide to the Rules Relating to the Conduct of Members.

*Agreed:* The amendment to Standing Order 69 and the motion were agreed.

The Committee considered a consequential amendment to Standing Order 81.

*Agreed:* The amendment to Standing Order 81 and the motion were agreed.

## **7. Public Services Ombudsman Bill**

The Committee considered the response from the Chairperson of the Audit Committee confirming that the Committee was content with the proposed amendments to Standing Order 58(1), which will reflect the provisions of the Public Services Ombudsman Act (Northern Ireland) 2016.

*Agreed:* The amendment to Standing Order 58(1) and the motion were agreed.

*Agreed:* With regard to the scheduling of the motion in plenary, it was agreed that this motion and the other motions agreed earlier in the meeting should be grouped, rather than bringing them to plenary separately.

## **8. Time allowed for answers to supplementary Oral Questions**

Members gave party views on reducing the time allowed for answers to supplementary Oral Questions from two minutes to one minute.

As there was no consensus, the Committee divided on the proposal to retain the two minutes. Ayes 7; Noes 3.

### **Ayes**

Trevor Clarke  
Samuel Gardiner  
Paul Givan  
Gerry Kelly  
Oliver McMullan  
Adrian McQuillan  
George Robinson

### **Noes**

Jim Allister  
Alban Maginness  
Kieran McCarthy

The proposal accordingly was agreed to.

## **9. Forward Work Programme**

The Committee was content with the Forward Work Programme.

## **10. Correspondence**

The Committee considered correspondence from Roisin Kelly, Clerk of Business, asking it to consider an amendment to Standing Order 19(4)(d) which currently states that an Assembly question must be submitted by hand, by post, by email or by fax.

The proposed amendment would substitute the words “by email or by fax” with “or electronically”, which would cover the submission of questions by email, fax and the new online system, which it is anticipated will be extended to all Members at the start of the new mandate.

*Agreed:* The Committee was content with the proposed amendment, and agreed that as it was a minor technical amendment, that an editorial amendment should be made to Standing Order 19(4)(d) when Standing Orders are next updated.

## **11. Any other Business**

None.

## **12. Date, time and place of next meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Committee would take place on 1 March 2016 at 1.15pm in Room 21, Parliament Buildings.

**5.48pm** The Chairperson adjourned the meeting.

Gerry Kelly  
Chairperson, Committee on Procedures

1 March 2016