

COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURES

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**TUESDAY 1 MARCH 2016
ROOM 21, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr Gerry Kelly MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Trevor Clarke MLA
Mr Jim Allister MLA
Mr Samuel Gardiner MLA
Mr Barry McElduff MLA
Mr Oliver McMullan MLA
Mr Alban Maginness MLA
Mr George Robinson MLA

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

1.28pm The meeting began in closed session.

1. Apologies

Mr Kieran McCarthy MLA
Mr Adrian McQuillan MLA

2. Draft minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2016

Agreed: Members agreed the draft minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2016.

3. Fresh Start Agreement – provision in Standing Orders

The Committee considered a letter from the Speaker requesting that amendments to Standing Orders to give effect to the provisions for an Official Opposition, as set out in “*A Fresh Start (the Stormont Agreement and Implementation Plan)*”, be brought forward for consideration by the Assembly before the end of the mandate.

1.30pm Mr McElduff joined the meeting.

1.29pm Paul Gill, Clerk Assistant and Jonathan McMillen from the Legal Services Office joined the meeting and briefed the Committee and answered Members' questions on the draft amendments to Standing Orders.

Agreed: As the Assembly had passed the final stage of "*The Assembly and Executive Reform (Assembly Opposition) Bill*" on 29 February 2016, it was agreed that a revised draft of the proposed new Standing Order 45A should be prepared to reflect the provisions in the Bill at Clause 2 (2) and 2 (3) that:
"*(2) The Opposition may be formed by one or more qualifying parties.*
(3) "In this Act "qualifying party" means a political party which does not have a member who is a Minister, but which was entitled to nominate a person to Ministerial office under section 18(2) to (6) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, at the time when those nominations were made; or whose members comprise 8% or more of the total number of members of the Assembly, and which does not contain a member who is a Minister."

The Committee queried the proposed positioning of "Opposition Business" in the order in which categories of Assembly business are listed in the draft amendment to Standing Order 10(1)

Agreed: It was agreed to seek clarity on whether any reason existed for the proposed positioning of "Opposition Business".

1.55pm Mr Clarke left the meeting.

Agreed: It was agreed that the Committee should meet on 7 March 2016 to give further consideration to the draft amendments to Standing Orders.

1.59pm The Chairperson thanked Mr Gill and Mr McMillen for their attendance and they left the meeting.

4. Forward Work Programme

Agreed: It was agreed to defer this item until the next meeting.

5. Correspondence

The Committee noted the letter the Chairperson had sent to the Speaker in relation to Hybrid Bills.

6. Any other Business

None.

7. Date, time and place of next meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Committee would take place on 7 March 2016 at 1.15pm in Parliament Buildings.

2.02pm The Chairperson adjourned the meeting.

Gerry Kelly
Chairperson, Committee on Procedures

7 March 2016