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To: All Assembly Members

3 March 2022

Dear Member

Update on Legislative Pressures

Next Monday (7 March 2022) we will enter the last three weeks of Assembly sittings before the end of this Assembly mandate. I therefore want to update Members on progress in managing our legislative pressures.

The Business Committee has agreed to have an additional sitting on Wednesday 9 March 2022. This will ensure that all of the Consideration Stages have been scheduled for the bills which have completed their committee scrutiny. This will enable the Further Consideration Stages and Final Stages of all those remaining bills to be taken in the last two weeks before the dissolution of the Assembly at 00:01 on 28 March 2022.

This creates the potential for all of the bills which emerged from their Committee Stage to complete their passage, subject to the decisions of the Assembly. Given all of the challenges faced in the shortened life of this Assembly term, it will be a remarkable achievement if the Assembly manages to process all of the legislation which it realistically could have done. I am also pleased that we will have done so without abandoning all of our normal procedures and therefore maintaining scrutiny.

However, getting to this position has required significant coordination and planning and we cannot be complacent. Time is still incredibly tight to deal with the remaining business and it is still very possible that an additional sitting may be required in the final week. I want to recognise that the progress so far has been made possible by the cooperation amongst parties and whips, the discipline of Members to ensure that most debates in recent weeks have been of a reasonable length, and the significant efforts and additional hours of staff.

That cooperation, discipline and work needs to continue for the next three weeks but I think the focus that there has been on completing legislation over the last weeks and months speaks very well of the purpose of this Assembly to deal with issues of interest to our community.

Yours sincerely,

ALEX MASKEY MLA