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The Speaker

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To: All Assembly Members

9 February 2022

Dear Member,

I wrote to you on Thursday 3 February to inform you that I had received a letter from Paul Givan MLA tendering his resignation as First Minister with effect from 12:01am on Friday 4 February.

I notified Members that, in accordance with section 16B of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the offices of the First Minister and the deputy First Minister were vacant and must be filled before 12.01am on Friday 11 February. The Business Committee therefore agreed arrangements to schedule an Assembly sitting on Thursday 10 February 2022 to provide the opportunity for both offices to be filled before that deadline passes.

However, I also outlined that I may have to take account of changes arising from the passage of legislation at Westminster. Royal assent was granted yesterday for the Northern Ireland (Ministers, Elections and Petitions of Concern) Act 2022. The deadline to fill both offices before 12.01am on Friday 11 February no longer exists and therefore there is no longer any duty on me to ensure that there is an Assembly sitting by then to allow an opportunity for the offices to be filled.

Therefore, in accordance with the decision of the Business Committee yesterday, there will be no plenary sitting on Thursday 10 February 2022.

Yours sincerely,

ALEX MASKEY MLA