



## **COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS AND PRIVILEGES**

**WEDNESDAY, 9<sup>TH</sup> APRIL  
ROOM 21, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr Alastair Ross (Chairperson)  
Ms Anna Lo (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Steven Agnew  
Mr Cathal Boylan  
Ms Paula Bradley  
Mr Fra McCann  
Mr Ian McCrea  
Mrs Sandra Overend  
Mr Mervyn Storey

In Attendance: Mr Paul Gill (Assembly Clerk)  
Mrs Ashleigh Mitford (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Jonathan Watson (Clerical Supervisor)

Apologies: Mr Colum Eastwood

*The meeting commenced at 1.31pm in closed session.*

### **Chairperson's Introduction**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the meeting should be held in closed session.  
The Chairperson welcomed Committee members to the meeting.

### **1. Apologies**

As above.

## **2. Declaration of Interests**

The Chairperson reminded Members of their obligation to declare any relevant financial or other interests before and during each Committee meeting.

No interests were declared.

## **3. Draft minutes of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2014**

*Agreed:* The draft minutes of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2014 were agreed by the Committee.

*1.36pm Mr Agnew and Mr Storey joined the meeting*

*1.37pm Ms Bradley joined the meeting*

## **4. Matters arising**

There were no matters arising.

## **5. Correspondence from the Assembly Commissioner for Standards on complaints against members**

Members noted the Clerk's Paper and three items of correspondence, two dated 18<sup>th</sup> March 2014 and one dated 20<sup>th</sup> March 2014, from the Assembly Commissioner for Standards on complaints against two Members.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr Douglas Bain, Northern Ireland Assembly Commissioner for Standards, and invited him to brief the Committee on these items of correspondence. Following this briefing the Commissioner answered Members' questions.

*1.42pm Mr McCann left the meeting*

The Chairperson thanked Mr Bain who left the meeting.

Following discussion, the Chairperson put the question that the Committee agrees with the decision of the Commissioner for Standards, set out in his correspondence of 18 March 2014, that the complaint against the first Member was inadmissible.

### **Ayes**

Ms Paula Bradley

Mr Cathal Boylan

Mr Ian McCrea

Mr Mervyn Storey

Mr Alastair Ross

### **Noes**

Ms Anna Lo

### **Abstentions**

Mr Steven Agnew

Mrs Sandra Overend

The motion was carried

The Chairperson then put the question that the Committee agrees with the decision of the Commissioner for Standards, set out in his correspondence of 18 March 2014 and 20 March 2014, that each of the two complaints about a second Member were inadmissible.

<b>Ayes</b>	<b>Noes</b>	<b>Abstentions</b>
Ms Paula Bradley	Ms Anna Lo	Mr Steven Agnew
Mr Cathal Boylan		Mrs Sandra Overend
Mr Ian McCrea		
Mr Alastair Ross		
Mr Mervyn Storey		

The motion was carried.

*2.17pm Mr Storey left the meeting*

Ms Lo stated that she would have preferred to ask the Commissioner further questions about his decisions. The Chairperson pointed out that all Members had been given an opportunity to ask the Commissioner questions. Ms Lo claimed that she wasn't accorded the opportunity to ask for the Commissioner to return to the Committee for further questions prior to the Committee decision being made and put the question that this be reflected in the minutes of the meeting.

<b>Ayes</b>	<b>Noes</b>	<b>Abstention</b>
Ms Anna Lo	Mr Cathal Boylan	Mr Steven Agnew
	Ms Paula Bradley	
	Mr Ian McCrea	
	Mr Alastair Ross	
	Mrs Sandra Overend	

The proposal fell.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the Clerk should write to the complainants on behalf of the Committee, enclosing the Commissioner's correspondence and setting out the Committee's position. The Committee also agreed that the Clerk should write to the Members complained of and the Commissioner.

*2.34 Ms Lo left the meeting*

## **6. Review of the Code of Conduct**

The Chairperson referred Members to the Clerk's Paper which summarised the Committee's recent visit to Washington in relation to the review. The Clerk briefed the Committee and this was followed by a Committee discussion in relation to the visit.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the Clerk publish relevant aspects of the paper on the Committee's visit to Washington on the Committee page of the Northern Ireland Assembly website.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that Members would contact the Committee Office to confirm attendance at the Committee's forthcoming visit to the Scottish Parliament.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that it should seek to have published in the main newspapers a platform piece on the review of the Code, and that this should be written in the first person in the name of the Chairperson.

## **7. Any other business**

Members were reminded of an IT housekeeping matter in relation to Easter Recess.

## **8. Time, date and place of next meeting**

The Chairperson advised Members that the next meeting will take place on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2014 at 1.30pm. Later on that afternoon the Committee shall depart for its visit to the Scottish Parliament.

*The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 2.45pm.*

**Mr Alastair Ross MLA**

**Chairperson, Committee on Standards and Privileges**