

COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS AND PRIVILEGES

WEDNESDAY, 7TH OCTOBER 2015

ROOM 21, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Mr Paul Givan (Chairman)
Ms Anna Lo (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Steven Agnew
Mr Gordon Dunne
Mr Declan McAleer

In Attendance: Mr Paul Gill (Assembly Clerk)
Mrs Hilary Cleland Bogle (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Miss Alison Ferguson (Clerical Officer)

Apologies: Mr Cathal Boylan
Mr Colum Eastwood
Mr David Hilditch
Mr Fra McCann
Mr Robin Newton
Mrs Sandra Overend

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the meeting should commence in closed session and move into open session from agenda item 6.

The meeting commenced at 1.40pm in closed session.

The Chairman welcomed Committee members to the meeting and in particular Mr Gordon Dunne who has replaced Mr Tom Buchanan.

The Committee noted that Mr Paul Givan had replaced Mr Jimmy Spratt as Chairman of the Committee.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Declaration of Interests

The Chairman reminded Members of their obligation to declare any relevant financial or other interest before or during each Committee meeting.

Members noted the tabled registered interests of Mr Paul Givan, Chairperson and Mr Gordon Dunne.

3. Draft minutes

Agreed: The draft minutes of the meeting held on 23rd September 2015 were agreed by the Committee.

4. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Review of the General Procedures Direction

Members noted the Clerk's paper and accompanying papers.

The Clerk briefed the Committee on the background to this issue.

Agreed: Following discussion the Committee agreed to ask Legal Services to consider redrafting the provision on preliminary investigations in light of the Commissioner's clarification.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the Commissioner's comments to Legal Services so that they can be addressed in an updated draft of the direction.

Agreed: The Committee agreed it was content with the Commissioner's new practice in relation to the making and retaining of audio recordings and that it should expressly be reflected in the draft new direction.

1.56pm The Committee moved into open session

6. Public Service Ombudsperson Bill

Members noted the Clerk's Paper and correspondence with the OFMdfM Committee.

The Clerk briefed the Committee on the background to this issue.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consult the Commissioner on the proposal.

7. Any other business

2.00pm The Committee moved into closed session.

Forthcoming Report from the Assembly Commissioner for Standards

Agreed: Following discussion the Committee agreed that the Clerk should seek legal advice on a forthcoming report from the Commissioner in advance of its consideration by the Committee.

Agreed: The Committee agreed steps to be taken in relation to the treatment of the report as confidential.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that members should not make any public comment in relation to the forthcoming report but should respond to any press enquiries with the agreed line taken by the Committee in respect of previous complaints.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Clerk should re-circulate the agreed line to members.

8. Time, date and place of next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on Wednesday, 4th November 2015 at 1.30pm in Room 21.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting at 2.10pm.

Mr Paul Givan MLA
Chairman, Committee on Standards and Privileges

4th November 2015