

The Northern Ireland Assembly Commission

Meeting Venue: Parliament Buildings, Room 106

Meeting date: Monday, 8 June 2026

Meeting Time: 11.30 am



Assembly Commission Members:

Edwin Poots MLA, Speaker (Chairperson)
Trevor Clarke MLA
Nuala McAllister MLA
Andy Allen MBE MLA
Colin McGrath MLA

Officials present:

Lesley Hogg, Clerk/Chief Executive
Steven Baxter, Director of Corporate Services
Tara Caul, Director of Legal, Governance and Research Services
Gareth McGrath, Director of Parliamentary Services
Robin Ramsey, Adviser to the Speaker/Head of Corporate Support
John Hart, Head of Communications
Paul Stitt, Private Secretary to the Speaker
Scarlett Healey, Executive Assistant to the Clerk/Chief Executive

The meeting commenced at 11.32 am.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Sinéad Ennis MLA.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Trevor Clarke and Steven Baxter declared that they had used the upper car park Electric Vehicle (EV) charging facilities behind Parliament Buildings.

3. USE OF ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGERS

The Speaker thanked members of the Assembly Commission for attending the meeting to discuss and agree a paper brought by Assembly officials on EV charging points within the responsibility of the Assembly Commission. The Speaker acknowledged the recent public interest in regard to the provision of

EV charging facilities at Parliament Buildings and advised that he thought it better for the Assembly Commission to deal with this matter urgently rather than wait until the scheduled meeting on 17 June 2026.

Lesley Hogg provided an overview of the paper setting out the current provision of EV charging on site and the potential options to be considered to ensure that this provision was consistent across the areas within the Assembly Commission's responsibility. Mrs Hogg confirmed that, as an interim measure, she had suspended the use of the six EV charging points in the upper car park behind Parliament Buildings, which operate on a free-to-use basis.

Mrs Hogg stated that EV charging infrastructure has been in place at Parliament Buildings since 2015 and has been expanded incrementally over time, reflecting the growth in EV usage. Initial provision was supported through grant funding, with subsequent expansion in 2018, achieved through reuse of existing government assets, and most recently through additional installations in 2024 in response to increased demand.

Mrs Hogg explained that the original purpose of the scheme was to encourage the uptake of electric vehicles and support more sustainable travel at a time when EV charging infrastructure was not widely available. She noted that the current infrastructure comprises six charging points in the upper car park that are available free of charge, while two charging points operate on a paid basis in the lower east car park.

Mrs Hogg advised that in terms of the tax treatment, MLAs are treated as staff and HMRC treats the availability of free to use chargers for all staff as a tax-exempt benefit separately from any travel or mileage claims, provided they are made available to all staff generally.

Mrs Hogg confirmed that the EV charging scheme presented no HRMC implications in relation to taxable benefits etc. and that those who had been using the EV charging facilities behind Parliament Buildings were operating within the rules. She advised, however, a number of MLAs had been in contact in relation to reimbursement and officials would work to agree a fair arrangement.

Members considered the matter and agreed unanimously that the Assembly Commission should move to a paid-for, cost-recovery model, applied on a consistent basis. It was also agreed that officials would undertake the further implementation work required on tariff setting, technology, procurement, communications and tax/accounting treatment. Mrs Hogg confirmed that Sinéad Ennis had also advised that she was content to approve this recommendation.

Members agreed that this option best addresses the issues of fairness, consistency, and good use of public funds, while retaining infrastructure already in place and recognising that many MLAs, staff and building users travel considerable distances to Parliament Buildings and that the current scheme would remain suspended until the new scheme was put in place.

The Speaker confirmed that he would make short remarks at the start of the plenary session to convey the decision reached by the Assembly Commission on this matter.

4. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

5. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Assembly Commission is scheduled for 17 June 2026.

The meeting ended at 11.46 am.