



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

## Committee on Procedures

### Minutes of Proceedings

**18 June 2025**

**Meeting Location:** Room 21, Parliament Buildings

**Present:** Órlaithí Flynn MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

**Present by Video or Teleconference:**

Robbie Butler MLA

Trevor Clarke MLA

William Irwin MLA

Maolíosa McHugh MLA

**Apologies:** Kellie Armstrong MLA (Chairperson)

Danny Donnelly MLA

Aoife Finnegan MLA

**In Attendance:** Stella McArdle, Assembly Clerk  
Christine Darrah, Assembly Clerk  
Michael Best, Assistant Assembly Clerk  
Veronica Lo Pinto, Clerical Officer

The meeting started at 10.37 a.m. in public session.

### **1. Apologies**

As above.

### **2. Draft Minutes**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2025.

### **3. Matters Arising**

None.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that the meeting should move into closed session.

The meeting moved into closed session at 10.39 a.m.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that the agenda item on the Extension of Standing Order 27A Voting by Proxy – Absence on Official Assembly Business should be deferred until the meeting on 2 July 2025.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to consider the agenda item on an Annual Debate on the Executive's Legislative Timetable before the agenda item on the Northern Ireland Act 1998 Section 42.

### **4. Annual Debate on the Executive's Legislative Timetable – Further Consideration of draft Standing Order**

The Committee considered draft Standing Order 18C to provide for an annual debate on the Executive's Legislation Programme.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed paragraph 1.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed paragraph 2.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed paragraph 3.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed paragraph 4.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed paragraph 5.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed paragraphs 6 and 7.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that the Standing Order be tabled as a motion for debate in Plenary.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the First Minister and deputy First Minister to advise that it had agreed the Standing Order and tabled it as a motion for debate in Plenary.

## **5. Northern Ireland Act 1998 Section 42 – Petitions of Concern – Legal Advice**

The Deputy Chairperson welcomed Helen Smyth, Assembly Legal Adviser, to the meeting.

Ms Smyth outlined her legal advice on Section 42(6)(b) and Section 42(6)(d) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The Deputy Chairperson thanked Ms Smyth and she left the meeting.

The Committee considered a range of issues relating to provision in Standing Orders for the Northern Ireland Act 1998 Section 42 Petitions of Concern.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that the existing mechanisms for the operation of the Ad Hoc Committee in Standing Order 60 should remain in place pending a full review of Standing Orders 35 and 60.

The Deputy Chairperson informed the Committee that a review of Standing Orders 35 and 60 would be added to the list of potential work areas for consideration at the next Strategic Priorities review session in September 2025.

The meeting moved into public session at 11.56 a.m.

## **6. Forward Work Programme**

The Committee considered an updated Forward Work Programme.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the updated Forward Work Programme.

The Deputy Chairperson informed the Committee that, as previously agreed, the legal advice on the extension of Standing Order 27A Voting by Proxy to include absence on official Assembly business would be taken at the next meeting on 2 July 2025.

## **7. Correspondence**

The Deputy Chairperson informed the Committee that correspondence had been received from the Clerk to the Assembly and Executive Review Committee regarding a review being undertaken by that Committee covering Assembly Committee engagement on cross-cutting Executive strategies and inviting this Committee to provide evidence to the review.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to respond to the Assembly and Executive Review Committee advising that while not directly impacted by the issues covered by the review this Committee will consider any proposed amendments to Standing Orders arising from the findings and recommendations of the review.

## **8. Chairperson's Business**

The Deputy Chairperson advised the Committee that, at the start of Plenary on Monday 9 June 2025, the Speaker outlined his concerns about the Assembly not routinely being given an appropriate opportunity to give or withhold legislative consent for the Westminster Parliament to legislate on devolved issues.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Speaker asking him if the proposed changes to Standing Order 42A recommended by the previous Committee on Procedures following its Inquiry into Legislative Consent Motions in

2022 would assist in addressing the issues he raised on or whether consideration should be given to additional or alternative changes.

**9. Any Other Business**

None.

**10. Date, Time and Place of next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 2 July 2025 at 10.00 a.m. in Room 21, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 12.01 p.m.

Kellie Armstrong MLA  
Chairperson, Committee on Procedures  
2 July 2025