



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

# Assembly and Executive Review Committee (AERC)

## Minutes of Proceedings

Tuesday 25 November 2025 at 9.30 a.m.

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

**Present:**

Pat Sheehan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Michelle Guy MLA

Michelle McIlveen MLA

Gary Middleton MLA

Carál Ní Chuilín MLA

Matthew O'Toole MLA

John Stewart MLA

**In attendance by video :**

Sinéad Ennis MLA

**Apologies:**

Jonathan Buckley MLA (Chairperson)



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### **In Attendance:**

Shane McAteer, Committee Clerk

Elaine Farrell, Assistant Clerk

Alison Ferguson, Clerical Supervisor

Laura Gourley, Clerical Officer

### **In attendance by video:**

Ashleigh Mitford, Senior Assistant Clerk

The meeting commenced at 9.32 a.m. in open session

### **1. Apologies**

As above.

### **2. Declaration of Interests**

The Deputy Chairperson advised Members of the ongoing requirement to declare relevant financial or other interests, as and when they arise, and before taking part in any Assembly proceedings, including Committee proceedings, relating to that matter.

No interests were declared at this stage in the meeting.

John Stewart joined the meeting at 9.33 a.m.



### **3. Draft minutes**

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

### **4. Matters arising**

The Committee Clerk briefed the Committee on an updated response from the Committee for Education to the Review of Assembly Committee engagement on cross-cutting Executive Strategies, and responses from four statutory committees to the Review into the development of a formal process and guidance on the handling of Westminster Statutory Instrument, which include a role for the Assembly.

**Noted:** The Committee noted that draft documents providing a consideration of the evidence for each of the ongoing reviews will be presented at a future Committee meeting.

### **5. Review into Assembly and Executive Reform – oral evidence session**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that the oral evidence session be recorded by Hansard.

The following witnesses joined the meeting at 9.37 a.m.:

Dympna McGlade, Peace Summit Partnership (joined remotely)

Daniel Holder, Equality Coalition

Due to technical difficulties, Dympna McGlade was unable to participate in the oral evidence session.

Daniel Holder briefed the Committee, and this was followed by a question and answer session.

Matthew O'Toole joined the meeting at 9.39 a.m.



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Matthew O'Toole left the meeting at 9.45 a.m.

Matthew O'Toole rejoined the meeting at 9.49 a.m.

Michelle McIlveen joined the meeting at 9.49 a.m.

Carál Ní Chuilín left the meeting at 10.05 a.m.

Carál Ní Chuilín rejoined the meeting at 10.10 a.m.

Gary Middleton left the meeting at 10.25 a.m.

Gary Middleton rejoined the meeting at 10.27 a.m.

The Deputy Chairperson thanked the witnesses for their attendance.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to reschedule the oral evidence from Dympna McGlade, Peace Summit Partnership, to an alternative date, given that she was unable to participate in today's session due to technical difficulties.

**Noted:** The Committee noted the additional information provided by Professor Kerr and Professor McCulloch following their attendance at the oral evidence session at the meeting on 4 November 2025.

The Committee Clerk briefed the Committee on future meeting dates for the Committee and other issues relating to the evidence gathering process.

**Noted:** The Committee noted the scheduling of agreed evidence sessions and research briefings between January to March 2026.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the provisional meeting dates from April to summer recess 2026 and that, where necessary, any additional agreed evidence sessions are scheduled for the agreed meeting dates.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Chairperson of the Covid Inquiry, Baroness Hallett, to ask for any observations she may have, arising from the applicable findings from the Covid Inquiry, which would be relevant to the Committee's Terms of Reference for the Review into Assembly and Executive Reform.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed, subject to receiving procedural advice, to consider inviting the current Assembly Speaker and former holders of the office of Assembly



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Speaker to provide oral evidence on the Committee's Review into Assembly and Executive Reform.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to request that the Assembly Engagement Office provides follow-up information on the extent to which it could support the Committee in undertaking an engagement exercise. In particular this would relate to a 'Citizens' Assembly' approach, and on whether/what external support might be required if the Committee was to undertake such an exercise.

### 6. Correspondence

None.

### 7. Forward Work Programme

**Noted:** The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme.

### 8. AOB

None.

### 9. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting of the AERC will take place on Tuesday 13 January 2026 at 9.30 a.m. in Room 21.

*The meeting was adjourned at 10.38 a.m.*



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**Jonathan Buckley MLA**  
**Chairperson, Assembly and Executive Review Committee**

**13 January 2026**