



## **Minutes of Proceedings**

**27 April 2026**

**Meeting Location:** Room 106, Parliament Buildings

**Present:**

Alan Lowry, Chairperson

Craig Griffiths, Member

Robert Herron, Member

**In Attendance:**

James Gilsenan, Assembly Clerk

Roisin Donnelly, Senior Assistant Assembly Clerk

Krystal Clarke, Executive Assistant

Robin Ramsey, Adviser to the Speaker, NI Assembly (agenda item 6)

Ray McCaffrey, Research Officer, RaISe, NI Assembly (agenda item 7)

Michael Scholes, Research Officer, RaISe, NI Assembly (agenda item 8)

Suzanne Murphy, Deputy Head of Finance (Members), Finance, NI Assembly (agenda item 9)

Memet Pekacar, Actuary, GAD (remote attendance, agenda item 9)

Laura Brunton, Actuary, GAD (remote attendance, agenda item 9)

John Hart, Head of Communications, NI Assembly (agenda item 10)

The meeting commenced at 9.30 am.

### **1. Apologies**

There were no apologies.

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

No interests were declared in relation to the agenda items listed for the meeting.

### **3. Chairperson's Business**

The Chairperson updated the Board on his attendance at the UK Remuneration Chairs' Network meeting on 24 March 2026.

### **4. Draft Minutes**

**Agreed:** The Board agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2026.

### **5. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

### **6. Office of the Speaker and Assembly Commission**

Robin Ramsey, Adviser to the Speaker, NI Assembly, joined the meeting at 9.33 am.

Mr Ramsey outlined the roles and responsibilities of the Speaker, Principal Deputy Speaker, Deputy Speakers and Assembly Commission Members.

The briefing was followed by a question-and-answer session.

The Chairperson thanked Mr Ramsey for his attendance and he left the meeting.

## 7. Office Holder Allowances

Ray McCaffrey, Research Officer, RaISe, NI Assembly, joined the meeting at 10.01 am.

Mr McCaffrey briefed the Board on Assembly office holder allowances.

The briefing was followed by a question-and-answer session.

The Chairperson thanked Mr McCaffrey for his attendance and he left the meeting.

**Agreed:** The Board agreed to request further information on the role of Ministers and Junior Ministers.

**Agreed:** The Board agreed to request further information on the role of Chairpersons and Deputy Chairpersons of statutory and standing committees.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to request further information on the Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny Committee.

## 8. Assembly Members' Salaries – Adjustment Mechanisms

Michael Scholes, Research Officer, RaISe, NI Assembly, joined the meeting at 10.30 am.

Mr Scholes briefed the Board on key mechanisms used to implement annual salary adjustments.

The briefing was followed by a question-and-answer session.

The Chairperson thanked Mr Scholes for his attendance and he left the meeting.

**Agreed:** The Board agreed to request further information on the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings.

## 9. Assembly Members' Pensions

The following attendees joined the meeting at 10.53 am:

Suzanne Murphy, Deputy Head of Finance (Members), NI Assembly;

Laura Brunton, Actuary, GAD (via video-conference); and

Memet Pekacar, Actuary, GAD (via video-conference).

Ms Murphy outlined the roles of: the NI Assembly Finance Office, the Assembly Members' Pension Scheme Trustees, the Government Actuary's Department, and Eversheds Sutherland in relation to the Assembly Members' Pension Scheme.

Ms Brunton and Mr Pekacar outlined a number of matters where clarification or amendment is considered necessary to ensure the Assembly Members' Pension Scheme remains legally compliant and aligned with current best practice.

The briefing was followed by a question-and-answer session.

The Chairperson thanked Ms Murphy, Mr Pekacar and Ms Brunton for their attendance and they left the meeting.

**Agreed:** The Board agreed to give further consideration to the matters highlighted in relation to the Assembly Members' Pension Scheme.

**Agreed:** The Board agreed to request the views of the political parties and the independent Member of the Assembly on the work of the Board when considering its Determination on pensions.

## 10. Board Communications

John Hart, Head of Communications, NI Assembly joined the meeting at 11.51 am.

Mr Hart provided a review to Board members on the communication of the Draft Assembly Members (Salaries) Determination (Northern Ireland) 2026.

The briefing was followed by a question-and-answer session.

The Chairperson thanked Mr Hart for his attendance and he left the meeting.

## 11. Publications

The Board considered a request for an internal review of a Freedom of Information response.

The Board noted that the draft Retention and Disposal Schedule is being considered by the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI).

The Board reviewed the original request and the response that was provided.

**Agreed:** The Board agreed that it was content with the original response provided and to advise the requester of its decision.

**Agreed:** The Board agreed to publish Freedom of Information requests and responses on its webpage.

## 12. Draft Annual Report

The Board considered the format and content of its first Annual Report.

**Agreed:** The Board agreed the draft format and to consider updated draft text by correspondence.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to provide its final report, when approved, to the Assembly Commission in accordance with section 9 of the Assembly Members (Independent Financial Review and Standards) Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

## 13. Correspondence

The Board noted correspondence received from members of the public since its last meeting in relation to the Draft Assembly Members (Salaries) Determination (Northern Ireland) 2026.

## 14. Forward Work Programme

The Board discussed its forward work programme and the deadlines for determinations to be made in respect of the next Assembly mandate.

**15. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

**16. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting**

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled to take place on 27 May 2026 via Teams.

*The meeting was adjourned at 12.57 pm.*

**Chairperson, Independent Remuneration Board**

**27 May 2026**