



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee on Standards and Privileges

Minutes of Proceedings

4 June 2025

Meeting Location: Room 106, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Cathy Mason MLA (Chairperson)

Stewart Dickson MLA

Jemma Dolan MLA

Harry Harvey MLA

Brian Kingston MLA

Declan McAleer MLA

Present by video or teleconference:

Connie Egan (Deputy Chairperson)

Colin McGrath MLA

Apologies:

Paul Frew MLA

In Attendance:

Shane McAteer, Committee Clerk

Elaine Farrell, Assistant Clerk

Alison Ferguson, Clerical Supervisor

Laura Gourley, Clerical Officer

Rebecca Ellis, Legal Advisor (agenda item 5)

The meeting commenced at 10.01 a.m. in closed session

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Declaration of interests

The 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.

3. Minutes

Noted: The Committee noted that the minutes of the meeting held on 7 May 2025 had previously been agreed by the Chairperson following the delegation of authority by the Committee to do so in order that the minutes could be included in a Committee report published on 9 May 2025.

4. Matters Arising

The Clerk briefed the Committee on an item of correspondence from the Commissioner for Standards dated 29 May 2025 in response to a letter from the Committee on proposed changes to the General Procedures Direction (GPD).

Jemma Dolan joined the meeting at 10.04 a.m.

Connie Egan joined the meeting at 10.06 a.m.

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence and that the Clerk will liaise with Assembly Legal Services to finalise the necessary amendments to the GPD, which will be implemented as part of a wider revision.

5. Draft Unacceptable Behaviours Policy – briefing by Legal Services

The Assembly Legal Advisor, Rebecca Ellis, joined the meeting at 10.12 a.m.

The Legal Advisor briefed the Committee and this was followed by a question and answer session.

Agreed: The Committee agreed a number of amendments to the draft Unacceptable Behaviours Policy based on the legal advice received.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek the views of the Commissioner for Standards on the draft Confidentiality Agreement and on various draft amendments to the GPD.

Connie Egan left the meeting at 10.42 a.m.

Agreed: The Committee agreed other necessary amendments to the GPD and to seek necessary amendments to Standing Order 69C, as outlined in the legal advice.

Noted: The Committee noted the steps that will need to be taken towards implementation of the Unacceptable Behaviours Policy.

6. Update on process for appointment of next Commissioner for Standards

The Clerk briefed the Committee on the progress to date and indicative timetable for the appointment of the next Commissioner for Standards.

Noted: The Committee noted the progress to date and timetable for the appointment of the next Commissioner for Standards and that an update will be provided in due course.

7. Adjudication of complaints against Ministers of alleged breaches of the Ministerial Code of Conduct

The Clerk briefed the Committee on the issues in deciding whether the Committee will seek procedural changes to provide it with the role of adjudicating on complaints against Ministers of alleged breaches of the Ministerial Code of Conduct.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to refer this matter to the Assembly and Executive Review Committee (AERC) for its consideration, given the role of the AERC to review matters relating to the functioning of the Assembly, including Assembly committees.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Assembly parties who had not responded to the consultation on the issue to advise that the matter has now been referred to the AERC.

8. Correspondence

None.

9. Any other business

None.

10. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 18 June 2025 at 10.00 a.m. in room 106.

The meeting was adjourned at 11.04 a.m.

Connie Egan MLA

Deputy Chairperson, Committee on Standards and Privileges

18 June 2025