



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Assembly and Executive Review Committee (AERC)

Minutes of Proceedings

Tuesday 2 June 2026 at 9.30 a.m.

Meeting Location: Room 21, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Jonathan Buckley MLA (Chairperson)
Pat Sheehan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Sinéad Ennis MLA
Deborah Erskine MLA
Michelle Guy MLA
Michelle McIlveen MLA
Carál Ní Chuilín MLA

Apologies:

John Stewart MLA

In Attendance:

Shane McAteer, Committee Clerk
Ashleigh Mitford, Senior Assistant Clerk
Elaine Farrell, Assistant Clerk



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Laura Gourley, Clerical Supervisor

Alison Ferguson, Clerical Officer

Marie Austin, Committee Clerk (agenda item 5)

The meeting commenced at 9.27 a.m. in open session.

The Chairperson welcomed Deborah Erskine to her first meeting of the Committee.

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 declarations were declared at this point in the meeting.

3. Draft minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 12 May 2026 subject to a minor amendment.



4. Matters arising

None.

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

Agreed: The Committee agreed for the oral evidence session to be recorded by Hansard.

The following witnesses joined the meeting at 9.29 a.m.:

Professor Ciarán Burke, Friedrich-Schiller- Universität, Germany (joined by Zoom)

Dr David Torrance, House of Commons

Dr Patrick Graham, University of New England (joined by Zoom)

Dr Maria Xiouri, University of Lincoln

Dr Katie Johnston, Liverpool University

The witnesses briefed the Committee on their respective submissions to special issue edition of the Northern Ireland Legal Quarterly, entitled: Reform of the 1998 Belfast/Good Friday Agreement.

Michelle McIlveen joined the meeting at 9.35 a.m.

Michelle Guy joined the meeting at 9.49 a.m.

Carál Ní Chuilín left the meeting at 10.02 a.m.

Carál Ní Chuilín rejoined the meeting at 10.08 a.m.

The Chairperson thanked the witnesses for their attendance.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to add the additional written submission from Dr Katie Johnston to the evidence base for the review.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request follow-up information from Dr Katie Johnston, as discussed during the session.



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Agreed: The Committee noted the further submission from Community Dialogue and Peace Summit Partnership and agreed to add it to the evidence base for the review.

The Committee Clerk briefed the Committee on future evidence sessions, proposed Committee meeting dates from September to December 2026 and suggested steps towards concluding the review.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the proposed meeting dates from September-December 2026, as outlined by the Clerk.

Noted: The Committee noted that additional meetings may be required in the autumn in order to ensure that the three other ongoing reviews are completed before the end of the mandate.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to implement the steps towards conclusion of the reform review, as outlined by the Clerk.

6. Correspondence

Noted: The Committee noted the responses from Permanent Secretaries and the Head of the Civil Service confirming acceptance of invitations to provide oral evidence on the Committee's Review into Assembly Committee engagement on cross-cutting Executive strategies.

7. Forward Work Programme

Noted: The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme.

8. AOB

None.



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9. Date, time and place of the next meeting

The next meeting of the AERC will take place on Tuesday 23 June 2026 at 9.30 a.m. in Room 21.

The meeting was adjourned at 10.39 a.m.

Deborah Erskine MLA
Chairperson, Assembly and Executive Review Committee

8 September 2026