



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee on Standards and Privileges

Minutes of Proceedings

Wednesday 28 February 2024 at 09.59 a.m.

Meeting Location: Room 106, Parliament Buildings

Present: Carál Ní Chuilín MLA (Chairperson)
Stewart Dickson MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Connie Egan MLA
Paul Frew MLA
Harry Harvey MLA
Cathy Mason MLA

Present by video or teleconference:
Colin McGrath MLA

Apologies: Jemma Dolan MLA
Stephen Dunne MLA

In Attendance: Shane McAteer, Committee Clerk
Nick Mitford, Senior Assistant Clerk
Elaine Farrell, Assistant Clerk



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Alison Ferguson, Clerical Supervisor

Ciara Dorrian, Clerical Officer

Agreed: The Committee agreed to hold the meeting in closed session.

The meeting commenced at 09.59 a.m. in closed session.

1. Apologies

The Committee noted that apologies had been received from Jemma Dolan MLA and Stephen Dunne MLA.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Speaker, as Chairperson of the Assembly Commission, and to the Committee on Procedures to highlight the issue and impact around the lack of formal maternity and paternity leave provision for MLAs.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Committee Clerk would issue a schedule of committee meetings from Easter to summer recess in due course.

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.

Mr Dickson declared an interest in relation to two of the complaints cases to be considered under agenda item 6 and advised that he would recuse himself from consideration of the two cases.



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3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2024.

4. Matters arising

None.

5. Complaints against Ministers of alleged breaches of the Ministerial Code of Conduct

The Committee received a briefing from the Committee Clerk on procedural issues in relation to the handling of complaints against Ministers of alleged breaches of the Ministerial Code of Conduct.

Mr Frew joined the meeting at 10.07 a.m.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to commission legal advice on the consequential procedural changes and related issues arising from the decision by the previous Committee not to have a role in relation to considering or publishing the investigation reports by the Commissioner for Standards on complaints against Ministers.

6. Further consideration of decisions on inadmissible complaints against Members

The Committee received a briefing from the Committee Clerk on procedural issues in relation to this agenda item.

The Commissioner for Standards, Dr Melissa McCullough, joined the meeting at 10.16 a.m.



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The Commissioner briefed the Committee on 15 complaints cases against Members which she had deemed inadmissible but which were for further consideration by the Committee.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it concurs with the Commissioner's decision that Case ID 202100046 is inadmissible.

Mr Dickson recused himself from the meeting at 10.20 a.m.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it concurs with the Commissioner's decision that Case ID 202200003 is inadmissible.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it concurs with the Commissioner's decision that Case ID 202200008 is inadmissible.

Mr Dickson rejoined the meeting at 10.23 a.m.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it concurs with the Commissioner's decision that Case ID 202200004 is inadmissible.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it concurs with the Commissioner's decision that Case ID 202200007 is inadmissible.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it concurs with the Commissioner's decision that Case ID 202200045 is inadmissible.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it concurs with the Commissioner's decision that Case ID 202200056 is inadmissible.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it concurs with the Commissioner's decision that Case ID 202200058 is inadmissible.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it concurs with the Commissioner's decision that Case ID 202200060 is inadmissible.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it concurs with the Commissioner's decision that Case ID 202200005 is inadmissible.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it concurs with the Commissioner's decision that Case ID 202300011 is inadmissible.



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Agreed: The Committee agreed that it concurs with the Commissioner's decision that Case ID 202300017 is inadmissible.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it concurs with the Commissioner's decision that Case ID 202300021 is inadmissible.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it concurs with the Commissioner's decision that Case ID 202300028 is inadmissible.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it concurs with the Commissioner's decision that Case ID 202300030 is inadmissible.

7. Discontinuation of a complaint: Case ID 202300002

The Committee received a briefing from the Committee Clerk on procedural issues in relation to agenda items 7 and 8.

The Commissioner briefed the Committee on her request for approval to discontinue consideration of Case ID 202300002.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it is content with the Commissioner's reasons for discontinuing consideration of Case ID 202300002 and confirmed its approval in that regard.

8. Discontinuation of a complaint: Case ID 202300031

The Commissioner briefed the Committee on her request for approval to discontinue consideration of Case ID 202300031.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it is content with the Commissioner's reasons for discontinuing consideration of Case ID 202300031 and confirmed its approval in that regard.



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9. Proposals for All-Party Groups (APGs)

Mr Harry Harvey declared an interest as a member of the proposed All-Party Group (APG) on Stroke.

Mr Colin McGrath declared an interest as the Chairperson of the proposed APG on Stroke.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to approve the establishment of an APG on Stroke.

10. Correspondence

The Committee considered correspondence from a member of the public who has an interest in collecting political memorabilia.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward a signed copy of the minutes of the meeting from 21 February 2024 to the member of the public who emailed the Committee Chairperson outlining their interest in collecting political memorabilia.

11. AOB

None.

12. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee on Standards and Privileges will take place on Wednesday 13 March 2024 at 10.00 a.m. in Room 106.

The meeting was adjourned at 11.26 a.m.



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Carál Ní Chuílin MLA
Chairperson, Committee on Standards and Privileges

13 March 2024