



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Chairpersons' Liaison Group

Minutes of Proceedings

13 May 2025

Room 29, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Deborah Erskine (Chairperson)
Paula Bradshaw MLA
Phillip Brett MLA
Joanne Bunting MLA
Robbie Butler MLA
Nick Mathison MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Matthew O'Toole MLA

Apologies:

Kellie Armstrong MLA
Jonathan Buckley MLA
Alan Chambers MLA
Colm Gildernew MLA
Ciara Ferguson MLA
Cathy Mason MLA
Daniel McCrossan MLA
Philip McGuigan MLA
Matthew O'Toole MLA

In Attendance: Roisin Kelly (Clerk)
 Mary Kerr (Senior Assistant Clerk)
 Charmaine McBride (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
 Sarah Wright (Clerical Supervisor)

 Lesley Hogg (Chief Executive/Clerk to the Assembly)
 Frank Geddis (Clerk Assistant)
 Paul Gill (Clerk Assistant)
 Stephanie Mallon (Clerk Assistant)

The meeting commenced at 1:11pm in closed session.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Chairpersons' Business

Members noted that due to the Business Committee meeting at the same time on a Tuesday, the timing of a 1pm start for Chairpersons' Liaison Group (CLG) was a challenge for quorum.

Agreed: Members were content that CLG meet at the new time of 1:15pm, with the meeting room being available from 1pm.

Matthew O'Toole joined the meeting at 1:13pm

Frank Geddis joined the meeting at 1:14pm

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Agreed: Chairpersons agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 8 April 2025.

4. Matters Arising

Update on Draft Terms of Reference on Assembly and Executive Review on Cross-Departmental Strategies

Members noted an update to include:

- i) The draft terms of reference for the Assembly and Executive review on Cross-Departmental Strategies; and
- ii) That in conducting its review, the Committee will take written and/or oral evidence from a range of stakeholders, including Chairpersons' Liaison Group (CLG), to inform its consideration of improvements.

Letter to Committee for Communities from Chairpersons' Liaison Group

Members noted a letter that was issued from CLG to the Committee for Communities on 1 May 2025, advising that the optimal process for gaining information on whether Chairpersons and their respective committees have had sight of terms of reference for co-design programmes, is by corresponding directly with each committee.

Phillip Brett left the meeting at 1:20pm

5. Strengthening Committee Scrutiny

Members noted an update from Paul Gill (Clerk Assistant) regarding progress on the implementation of the predecessor CLG's recommendations contained within the Strengthening Committee Scrutiny Report; particularly the detail relating to the scrutiny of delegated legislation which is the first component in the package of measures that the Assembly is taking forward. He advised that it would be timely to write to Ministers to set out the next steps regarding this.

Agreed: Members were content to note the update on the progress of recommendations contained within the Strengthening Committee Scrutiny Report; including changes to the process of scrutinising delegated legislation.

Agreed: Members were content to issue the letter from CLG to the First Minister and deputy First Minister (copied to all Ministers) as drafted; however, with a minor amendment to reflect the intended timescale of strengthened scrutiny arrangements.

Joanne Bunting left the meeting at 1:35pm

6. Correspondence

Letter to Chairpersons' Liaison Group from the Speaker

Members noted the correspondence from the Speaker which advised that the Assembly Commission had had a discussion regarding standards of dress of Members attending committee meetings; and that because neither the Assembly Commission nor the Speaker have a role in relation to dress code in committees, the Speaker has written to refer the matter to CLG for consideration.

Members had a discussion on standards of dress while participating in committee meetings (in person or hybrid) and discussed the importance of Members who are joining via videoconference, ensuring their camera is turned on during a committee meeting.

Agreed: The Clerking and Member Support Office (CAMS office) will collate and review existing guidance for Committees relating to dress code for Members and hybrid camera use, including guidance from other legislatures. The guidance will be considered by CLG at a future meeting.

Agreed: CLG will write to the Speaker to thank him for his letter, note that CLG discussed standards of dress in committee meetings; and that they will return to the matter at a future meeting of CLG.

7. Draft Forward Work Programme

Members noted that at the meeting of the CLG in April 2025, they agreed to include areas of shared concern as an activity under the strategic priority of Improving the Effectiveness of Committees. At the April meeting, Members also proposed a number of areas of shared concern that would merit further discussion. Members noted these areas as listed in the Forward Work Programme memorandum.

Agreed: Members are content with the proposed next steps in the Forward Work Programme as provided; and content to share issues at each meeting of the CLG that may require an immediate, brief discussion and allow for sharing of Members' experience and potential resolution.

Agreed: Members proposed that they consider the matter of staffing for committee meetings in a Recess period as listed in the Forward Work Programme.

Agreed: CAMS Office will prepare draft guidance on staffing for committee meetings in a Recess period and Members will consider the draft guidance at a future meeting of CLG.

8. Any Other Business

None.

9. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on Tuesday 17 June 2025, at 1pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:58pm.

Deborah Erskine (Chairperson)

13 May 2025