



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Assembly and Executive Review Committee (AERC)

Minutes of Proceedings

Tuesday 29 September 2026 at 9.30 a.m.

Meeting Location: Room 21, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Deborah Erskine MLA (Chairperson)
Pat Sheehan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Michelle Guy MLA
Michelle McIlveen MLA
Carál Ní Chuilín MLA
John Stewart MLA

In attendance by video conference :

Matthew O'Toole MLA

Apologies:

Sinéad Ennis MLA

In Attendance:

Shane McAteer, Committee Clerk
Ashleigh Mitford, Senior Assistant Clerk



Northern Ireland Assembly

Laura Gourley, Clerical Supervisor

Alison Ferguson, Clerical Officer

Feargal McGuinness, Clerk of EU and Interparliamentary
Affairs (agenda item 6)

In attendance by video conference :

Elaine Farrell, Assistant Clerk

The meeting commenced at 9.31 a.m. in open session

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Declaration of Interests

The Deputy 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 15 September 2026.



4. Matters arising

Agreed: The Committee noted the updated research paper on cross-cutting scrutiny in other legislatures and agreed that it is incorporated into the evidence base for the Review into Assembly committee engagement on cross-cutting Executive strategies.

Noted: The Committee noted that an updated Consideration of Evidence paper in relation to the Review is scheduled for consideration at the meeting on 17 November 2026.

5. Review into Assembly and Executive Reform – oral evidence session with Gavin Robinson MP

Noted: The Committee noted that the Committee secretariat received correspondence from the DUP on 28 September 2026 advising that Gavin Robinson MP was no longer available to attend the oral evidence session today due to circumstances beyond his control.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to reschedule the oral evidence session with Mr Robinson to 20 October 2026 and to advise that a written submission can also be submitted in lieu of attendance if that date is not suitable.

John Stewart joined the meeting at 9.35 a.m.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to move into closed session to consider the remaining agenda items.

The meeting moved into closed session at 9.36 a.m.

Michelle McIlveen joined the meeting at 9.39 a.m.



Northern Ireland
Assembly

6. Review of the arrangements for Assembly members' participation in interparliamentary and international bodies – consideration of initial draft Committee report

The Committee Clerk and the Clerk of EU and Interparliamentary Affairs briefed the Committee on this agenda item.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the draft report and agreed that it should issue to the Speaker, Chairpersons' Liaison Group, the Assembly Commission and all Assembly parties and Independent Members, in the first instance, to provide them with the opportunity, should they wish, to comment on the emerging conclusions and recommendations before the Committee considers a final draft report.

Carál Ní Chuilín left the meeting at 9.50 a.m.

Carál Ní Chuilín rejoined the meeting at 9.52 a.m.

Noted: The Committee noted the comparative information contained in the Legacy Reports from the committees in the Senedd and Scottish Parliament which are referenced in the draft Committee report.

Noted: The Committee noted the memo from the Clerk of EU and Interparliamentary Affairs which is reflected in the draft Committee report.

7. Review into the development of a formal process and guidance on the handling of Westminster Statutory Instruments (SIs) which include a role for the Assembly – consideration of evidence

The Senior Assistant Clerk introduced this agenda item.

Noted: The Committee noted the review of evidence paper.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Northern Ireland Civil Service Guidance for EU Exit Transition Period SIs is included in the evidence base for the review.



Northern Ireland Assembly

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek an update from the Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee in the Scottish Parliament on the status of the implementation of its protocol for the handling of SIs.

Noted: The Committee noted the table of potential recommendations that have emerged from the evidence gathered to date.

8. Correspondence

Agreed: The Committee noted the correspondence from Dr Sean Haughey, dated 14 September 2026, on an article on “Why Northern Ireland’s Institutions Need Reform” and agreed to add it to the evidence base for the Review into Assembly and Executive Reform.

Agreed: The Committee noted the correspondence from Kellie Armstrong MLA, dated 21 September 2026, in which she suggests that the Committee considers undertaking a review on the attendance of Ministers in the Chamber. The Committee agreed to add the suggestion to the list of potential recommendations to be considered for inclusion in the Committee’s Legacy Report to its successor Committee.

9. Forward Work Programme

Noted: The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme.

10. AOB

None.



Northern Ireland
Assembly

11. Date, time and place of the next meeting

The next meeting of the AERC will take place on Tuesday 20 October 2026 at 9.30 a.m. in Room 21.

The meeting was adjourned at 9.54 a.m.

Deborah Erskine MLA
Chairperson, Assembly and Executive Review Committee

20 October 2026