



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee on Procedures

Minutes of Proceedings

10 December 2025

Meeting Location: Room 21, Parliament Buildings

Present: Kellie Armstrong MLA (Chairperson)
Cheryl Brownlee MLA
Trevor Clarke MLA

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Órlaithí Flynn MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Robbie Butler MLA
Danny Donnelly MLA
Aoife Finnegan MLA
Cara Hunter MLA
Philip McGuigan MLA

Apologies: None

In Attendance: Stella McArdle, Assembly Clerk
Claire Milliken, Senior Assistant Assembly Clerk

Michael Best, Assistant Assembly Clerk
Veronica Lo Pinto, Clerical Officer

The meeting started at 10.07 a.m. in public session.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2025.

3. Matters Arising

The Committee noted an updated Committee membership list.

The Chairperson updated the Committee on the clarification received from Assembly Legal Services that the Assembly's sub judice rule applies only to active proceedings within the UK under the Contempt of Court Act 1981.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the meeting should move into closed session.

The meeting moved into closed session at 10.10 a.m.

4. Scrutiny of Delegated Powers in Bills - Consideration of revised Standing Order and legal advice

The Chairperson welcomed Maeve Corrigan, Assembly Legal Adviser to the meeting.

Ms Corrigan outlined a revised Standing Order for the scrutiny of delegated powers in Bills and the associated legal advice.

Cara Hunter joined the meeting at 10.19 a.m.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked Ms Corrigan and she left the meeting.

Trevor Clarke joined the meeting 10.38 a.m.

The Committee noted that the provisions to scrutinise delegated powers in Bills would apply to all public and private Bills including Private Members' Bills. Cara Hunter MLA and Danny Donnely MLA declared an interest regarding Private Members' Bills.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the First Minister and deputy First Minister for their views on the Committee's proposed approach to formalising the delegated scrutiny of Bills in Standing Orders.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Assembly Bill Office for its view on the Committee's proposed approach to formalising the delegated scrutiny of Bills in Standing Orders.

5. Northern Ireland Act 1998 Section 42 – Petitions of Concern - Further consideration of potential provision in Standing Orders

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the parties who had not yet provided their views on the draft illustrative Standing Orders on petitions of concern asking for responses to allow the Committee to progress this work.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to defer this agenda item to its meeting on 28 January 2026.

6. Inquiry into an Extension of Standing Order 27A Voting by Proxy - Further consideration of preferred position on serious long-term illness and injury

The Committee considered a preferred position on the provision of supporting documentation to accompany the notification of proxy voting for serious long-term illness and injury.

Agreed: The Committee agreed a preferred position on the provision of supporting documentation to accompany the notification of proxy voting for serious long-term illness and injury.

The Committee considered the practical arrangements for the provision of a fit note and supporting documentation for proxy voting for serious long-term illness or injury.

Agreed: The Committee agreed a preferred position on the practical arrangements for the provision of a fit note and supporting documentation for proxy voting for serious long-term illness or injury.

The Committee considered the period of a proxy vote for serious long-term illness and injury.

Agreed: The Committee agreed a preferred position on the period of a proxy vote for serious long-term illness and injury.

The Committee considered arrangements for a review of proxy voting for serious long-term illness and injury.

Agreed: The Committee agreed a preferred position on the arrangements for a review of proxy voting for serious long-term illness and injury.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the next steps and revised timetable for the Inquiry into an Extension of Standing Order 27A Voting by Proxy for long-term illness, bereavement and absence on official Assembly business.

7. Review of the Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny Committee Standing Order 59A and substitute members

The Committee considered a written briefing paper on a proposed approach to reviewing Standing Order 59A and the use of substitute members in the Windsor Framework Scrutiny Committee.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny Committee (DSC) on the proposed approach to the Review of Standing Order 59A and the use of substitute members in the DSC.

8. Assembly Sitting Days – Consideration of approach

The Committee considered a written briefing paper on a proposal considered in the previous mandate, to switch Plenary sitting days from Mondays and Tuesdays to Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Speaker for his view on the Committee conducting an inquiry into switching Plenary Sitting days from Mondays and Tuesdays to Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the parties and independent MLA for their views on the Committee conducting an inquiry into switching Plenary Sitting days from Mondays and Tuesdays to Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Business Committee for its view on the Committee conducting an inquiry into switching Plenary Sitting days from Mondays and Tuesdays to Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the First Minister and deputy First Minister for the Executive's view on the Committee conducting an inquiry into switching Plenary Sitting days from Mondays and Tuesdays to Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

The meeting moved into public session at 11.47 a.m.

9. Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered an updated Forward Work Programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the updated Forward Work Programme.

10. Correspondence

The Committee noted correspondence from the Chairperson's Liaison Group on a request from Timothy Gaston MLA to codify in Standing Orders a process for Committee Chairs meeting with witnesses prior to the witnesses appearance before their committee.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee on Standards and Privileges on the repeal of Standing Order 70 and consequential amendments, in particular the proposed amendment to Standing Order 22(2) and noted that this issue is scheduled on the Committee's Forward Work Programme for consideration on 14 January 2026.

11. Chairperson's Business

None.

12. Any Other Business

None.

13. Date, Time and Place of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 14 January 2026 at 10.00 a.m. in Room 21, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 11.55 a.m.

Kellie Armstrong MLA
Chairperson, Committee on Procedures
14 January 2026