



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

**AD-HOC COMMITTEE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND PUBLIC SERVICES
OMBUDSPERSON BILL**

**TUESDAY 12 MAY 2015, 10.30 AM ROOM 21, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS,
BALLYMISCAW, STORMONT**

Present: Lord Morrow (Chairperson)
Mr Pat Sheehan (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Cathal Boylan
Mr Leslie Cree
Mr David Hilditch
Mr Trevor Lunn
Ms Maeve McLaughlin
Mr Alban Maginness
Mr Gary Middleton
Mr Jim Wells

In Attendance: Mr Paul Gill (Clerk)
Ms Claire McCanny (Senior Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Ms Kate McCullough (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Jim Nulty (Clerical Supervisor)

1. Apologies: Mr Colum Eastwood

The Committee commenced in closed session at 10.35am for the election of the Chairperson.

Ms Maeve McLaughlin joined the meeting at 10.35am

2. Election of Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson

Mr Gary Middleton joined the meeting at 10.37am

The Clerk called for nominations for the position of Committee Chairperson.

Mr Boylan proposed that Mr Sheehan be elected as Chairperson of the Committee. Ms McLaughlin seconded this and the nomination was accepted.

Mr Hilditch proposed that Lord Morrow be elected as Chairperson of the Committee. Mr Wells seconded this and the nomination was accepted.

There being no further nominations, the Clerk put the question that Mr Sheehan, being the first candidate proposed, be elected as Chairperson of the Committee:

The Committee divided:

AYES:

Mr Cathal Boylan
Ms Maeve McLaughlin
Mr Pat Sheehan

NOES:

Mr David Hilditch
Mr Gary Middleton
Lord Morrow
Mr Jim Wells

ABSTENTIONS:

Mr Leslie Cree
Mr Trevor Lunn

The proposal fell.

The Clerk put the question that Lord Morrow, being the second candidate proposed, be elected as Chairperson of the Committee:

The Committee divided:

AYES:

Mr Leslie Cree
Mr David Hilditch
Mr Trevor Lunn
Mr Gary Middleton
Lord Morrow
Mr Jim Wells

NOES:

Mr Cathal Boylan
Ms Maeve McLaughlin
Mr Pat Sheehan

ABSTENTIONS:

None

The proposal was carried and Lord Morrow was duly elected as Chairperson of the Committee.

The Chairperson assumed the Chair at 10.38am.

The meeting was suspended at 10.39am to allow the Clerk to brief the Chairperson.

The meeting resumed at 10.42am with Lord Morrow in the Chair

The Chairperson called for nominations for the position of deputy Chairperson.

Ms Maeve McLaughlin proposed Mr. Pat Sheehan be elected as Deputy Chairperson of the Committee. Mr Cathal Boylan seconded this and the nomination was accepted.

Agreed: There being no further nominations, the Committee agreed that Mr Pat Sheehan, being the only candidate proposed, be elected as Deputy Chairperson of the Committee.

The Committee moved into open session.

3. Declaration of Interests

The Chairperson reminded Members of their obligation of declare any relevant or other interests before and during each Committee meeting. The Committee noted registered interests of each Member of the Committee. Members noted that as a new MLA Mr Gary Mildddleton has up to three months to register his interests.

4. Committee Procedures

Mr Alban Maginness joined the meeting at 10.50am

The Chairperson referred Members to a memorandum from the Clerk on the procedures of the Committee contained in their briefing papers and the guide to the *Powers and Operation of Standing and Ad Hoc Committees for the Chairpersons and Members*. The Chairperson reminded Members of the rules relating to privilege and sub-judice.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that decisions shall be made by a simple majority vote by showing of hands unless a Member requests otherwise.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to permit the nomination of one deputy per Member to attend in the event that the appointed Member is unable to attend the Committee meeting. Members agreed to inform the secretariat office of their nominated deputy by Tuesday 19 May 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to meet every Tuesday at 10.30am in Room 21 until the end of June 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider the schedule for any additional meetings that may be required as the need arises.

The Committee noted the contact details of the Secretariat support.

5. Committee Remit

Members noted a background paper setting out the remit of the Committee in respect of the Bill.

Mr Pat Sheehan left the meeting at 11.17am

6. Committee Call for Evidence

The Committee considered a list of proposed stakeholders, draft letters to stakeholders and Assembly Committees inviting them to respond to the 'Call for Evidence'.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to issue the letters to stakeholders and the relevant Assembly Committees inviting them to respond to the 'Call for Evidence'.

The Committee considered the draft webpage information on the 'Call for Evidence'.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to publish a 'Call for Evidence' in local newspapers.

7. Briefing from Mr Nesbitt MLA, Chairperson of the Committee for Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister and Mr Alyn Hicks, Bills Team

The Committee was briefed on the key principles of the Bill. The key areas discussed included the response by Ministers to the proposals in the Bill, the merger of the Assembly Ombudsman for NI and the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Complaints, the recruitment and selection of the NIPSO by the Northern Ireland Assembly and the bodies which would fall under its remit.

8. Briefing from Assembly Research Services

Members considered the briefing paper from the Assembly Research and Information Services on the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsperson Bill.

9. Draft Forward Work Programme

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Forward Work Programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite the current Assembly Ombudsman for Northern Ireland and The Northern Ireland Commissioner for Complaints and the Deputy Ombudsman to brief the Committee at the meeting of 19 May 2015.

10. Correspondence

There were no items of correspondence.

Mr Jim Wells left the meeting at 11.45am

11. Any Other Business

No other business was discussed.

12. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be 19 May 2015, 10.30am Room 21.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 11.47am