

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY
BUSINESS COMMITTEE

TUESDAY 05 NOVEMBER 2013
IN ROOM 106, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

MINUTES

The meeting began at 12.35pm.

Present:

The Speaker
Mr S Dickson
Mr G Kelly
Mrs K McKevitt
Lord Morrow
Mrs S Overend
Ms C Ruane
Mr R Swann
Mr P Weir

In attendance:

Ms L Gordon
Dr G McGrath

Clerk of Business
Director of Clerking and
Reporting

Ms N Dunwoody
Mr R Ramsey
Mr H Widdis
Mr C McNickle

Clerk Assistant
Adviser to the Speaker
Director of Legal Services
Assistant Assembly Clerk

Observers:

Deputy Speaker Beggs

Mr A Rogers
Dr A McGarel

OFMDFM
Clerk of Business

1. Apologies

1.1 Apologies were noted from Mr Pat Ramsey.

2. Minutes of previous meeting

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 22 October were **agreed** and signed by the Speaker.

3. Matters arising

3.1 There were no matters arising

4. **Finalisation of the Order Papers for the plenary meetings in week commencing 11 November**

Executive Business

- 4.1 Members **noted** that there was no change to Executive Business scheduled for Monday 11 November, but that statements were possible on either day.
- 4.2 Members **noted** that a Legislative Consent Motion on the Intellectual Property Bill (Freedom of Information Pre-Publication Exemption) was scheduled for Tuesday 12 November.

Committee Business

- 4.3 Members **noted** that there was no additional Committee Business scheduled for Monday 11 November and Tuesday 12 November.

Private Members' Business

- 4.4 Members **noted** that there was no change to Private Members' Business scheduled for Monday 11 November and Tuesday 12 November.
- 4.5 Mr Rogers advised that no further business was expected at this stage.
- 4.6 The draft Order Papers were **agreed**.

5. **Provisional arrangements for the plenary meetings in week commencing 18 November 2013**

Executive Business

- 5.1 Members **noted** that the following Executive business was scheduled for Monday 18 November:
- Motion on the Occupational and Personal Pension Schemes (Automatic Enrolment) (Amendment) regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013.
 - Question Time to the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister and to the Minister for Regional Development

- 5.2 Members **noted** that Question Time to the Minister of Justice and the Minister for Social Development, along with Assembly Commission Questions, was scheduled for Tuesday 19 November.

Committee Business

- 5.3 Members **noted** that there was no Committee Business scheduled for Monday 18 November and Tuesday 19 November.

Private Members' Business

- 5.4 Members **agreed** to schedule two Private Members' Motions on Monday 18 November and three on Tuesday 19 November, two of which were cross-party motions.
- 5.5 Under the system of allocation, the selections lay with the SDLP, DUP and UUP. The following motion was selected for Monday 18 November:
- 'Recall of the Civic Forum' (Mr A Attwood, Mrs D Kelly and Mr C Eastwood).
- 5.6 Mr Weir undertook to inform the Business Office of his party's selection for Monday 18 November as soon as possible.
- 5.7 The following cross-party motions were selected for Tuesday 19 November:
- 'Effective Delivery of Major Infrastructure Work' (Mr P McGlone, Mr P Frew, Mr B McElduff and Mr D Kinahan); and
 - 'Support and Investment for the Higher Education Sector' (Mr P Ramsey, Mr A Ross, Mr S Agnew, Mr B McCrea, Ms B McGahan and Mr R Swann).
- 5.8 Mr Swann undertook to inform the Business Office of his party's selection for Tuesday 19 November as soon as possible.
- 5.9 Members **agreed** that up to 1 hour should be allocated for each cross-party motion, with the usual speaking times, and that up to 1 hour 30 minutes should be allocated for the three other Private Members' Motions, with the usual speaking times.
- 5.10 Ms Ruane suggested that consideration should be given to establishing arrangements for bringing forward and tabling cross-party motions, and to agreeing protocols for moving and winding such motions. Following discussion, it was **agreed** that party whips would discuss these matters.

5.11 Members **agreed** to schedule an Adjournment Debate on Tuesday 19 November. Under the system of allocation, the selection lay with the DUP and the following topic was selected:

- '50th Anniversary of the death of C.S. Lewis' (Mr S Douglas).

5.12 Mr Rogers advised that all Ministers were available.

5.13 The provisional Order Papers were **agreed**.

6. **Letter from the Committee on Procedures**

6.1 The Speaker referred members to a letter from the Chairperson of the Committee on Procedures regarding its review of the business week in the Assembly. Members **noted** that parties had also been asked to submit written evidence and **agreed** that it was not necessary for the Business Committee to do so separately. When the Committee on Procedures had come to its conclusions, and if alternative models were to be identified, the Business Committee would consider commenting at that stage.

7. **Any other business**

7.1 The Speaker referred Members to a letter from the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister requesting a change of Question Time slot from 02 December to 26 November. Members **noted** that the Minister of Education was content with the proposed change.

7.2 Members **agreed** to the request.

7.3 The Speaker referred Members to a letter from the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety requesting a change of Question Time slot from 09 December to 03 December. Members **noted** that the Minister of the Environment was content with the proposed change.

7.4 Members **agreed** to the request.

7.5 The Speaker expressed concern that the Committee had received seven requests to change Question Time since the session began in September. He indicated that this would not be allowed to happen elsewhere and asked Mr Rogers to report back to the Executive his very strong view that, while the Business Committee had accommodated these requests to date, Ministers have a clear duty to make themselves available for Question Time.

8. **Date and Time of next meeting**

- 8.1 Members **agreed** to meet at approximately 12.30pm on Tuesday 12 November 2013 in Room 106.

The Speaker brought the meeting to a close at 12.47pm

The Speaker
Chairperson