

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY
BUSINESS COMMITTEE

TUESDAY 24 MARCH 2015
IN ROOM 106, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

MINUTES

The meeting began at 12.35pm.

Present:

The Speaker (Chairperson)
Mr K McCarthy
Lord Morrow
Mrs S Overend
Mr P Ramsey
Ms C Ruane
Mr P Weir

In attendance:	Dr A McGarel Ms N Dunwoody Mr R Ramsey Ms F Leneghan Mr C McNickle	Clerk of Business Clerk Assistant Adviser to the Speaker PS/Speaker Assistant Assembly Clerk
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Observers:	Deputy Speaker Beggs Mr A Rogers	OFMDFM
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1. Apologies

1.1 Apologies were received from Mr Stewart Dickson, Mr Gerry Kelly, Mrs Karen McKevitt and Mr Robin Swann.

2. Minutes of previous meeting

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 16 March were **agreed**.

3. Matters arising

3.1 There were no matters arising.

4. **Finalisation of the Order Papers for the plenary meetings in week commencing 13 April 2015**

Assembly Business

- 4.1 Members **agreed** to schedule a motion from the Assembly Commission on Financial Assistance for Political Parties Scheme 2015 for Monday 13 April.

Executive Business

- 4.2 Members **noted** that there was no change to Executive Business previously scheduled for either day.

Committee Business

- 4.3 Members **noted** that there was no change to Committee Business previously scheduled for Monday 13 April.
- 4.4 Members **noted** that there was no Committee Business scheduled for Tuesday 14 April.

Private Members' Business

- 4.5 Members **noted** that there was no change to Private Members' Business previously scheduled for either day.
- 4.6 Mr Alan Rogers advised that no further business was expected at this stage.
- 4.7 The draft Order Papers were **agreed**.

5. **Provisional arrangements for the plenary meetings in week commencing 20 April 2015**

Executive Business

- 5.1 Members **noted** that Question Time to the Minister of Finance and Personnel and to the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety was scheduled for Monday 20 April.
- 5.2 Members **noted** that the following Executive Business was scheduled for Tuesday 21 April:
- Question Time to the Minister of Justice and to the Minister for Regional Development;
 - Further Consideration Stage of the Pensions Bill (NIA Bill 42/11-16).

Committee Business

- 5.3 Members **noted** that there were no requests for Committee Business for Monday 20 April.
- 5.4 Members **agreed** to schedule a motion from the Committee for Finance and Personnel on its 'Report on Sickness Absence in the Northern Ireland Public Sector' for Tuesday 21 April.
- 5.5 Members **agreed** that up to 1 hour 30 minutes should be allocated for the motion, with 10 minutes allocated to move, 10 minutes to wind and 5 minutes for all other speakers.

Private Members' Business

- 5.6 Members **agreed** to schedule two Private Members' Motion on Monday 20 April, and one on Tuesday 21 April.
- 5.7 Under the system of allocation, the selections lay with the DUP, the SDLP and the DUP.
- 5.8 The following motions were selected for Monday 20 April:
- 'Fuel Laundering' (Mr J Bell, Mr A Ross, Mr J Craig and Lord Morrow);
 - 'Westminster Elections' (Dr A McDonnell, Mr A Attwood and Mr A Maginness).
- 5.9 The following motion was selected for Tuesday 21 April:
- 'Water Rates' (Mr J Bell and Mr T Clarke);
- 5.10 Members **agreed** that up to 1 hour 30 minutes should be allocated for each motion, with the usual speaking times.
- 5.11 Members **agreed** to schedule an Adjournment Debate on Tuesday 21 April. Under the system of allocation, the selection lay with the DUP and the following topic was selected:
- 'Traffic problems in the vicinity of schools in Upper Bann' (Mr S Moutray).
- 5.12 Mr Alan Rogers advised that all Ministers were available to respond to the motions.

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

6. **Update on statistics on late answers to written questions**

6.1 Members **noted** statistics on late answers to written questions. Mrs Overend expressed her frustration at the number of late answers to written questions and in addition highlighted the issue of questions not being accepted by Executive Departments. The Chairperson also expressed his disappointment at the number of late answers to written questions and it was **agreed** that the Committee would consider the matter again at a later date and decide on what action to take, including whether the statistics should be published. It was also agreed that the figures should be updated on an ongoing basis.

7. **Any other business**

7.1 The Chairperson reminded Members of the Assembly Commission's ongoing efforts to prioritise expenditure against the Assembly's reduced budget and Members **agreed** that lunch would no longer be provided for Committee meetings.

7.2 Mrs Overend enquired about procedural options to consider the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee report on 'The administrative scheme for "on-the-runs" Second Report of Session 2014-15' and the Clerk outlined the procedural options.

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

8.1 Members **agreed** to meet at approximately 12.30pm on Tuesday 14 April 2015 in Room 106.

The Chairperson brought the meeting to a close at 12.50pm

The Speaker
Chairperson