**NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY**

**BUSINESS COMMITTEE**

# TUESDAY 16 JUNE 2015

**IN ROOM 106, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

**MINUTES**

##### The meeting began at 12.39pm.

**Present: The Speaker (Chairperson)**

**Mr S Dickson**

**Mr G Kelly**

**Mrs K McKevitt**

**Lord Morrow**

**Mrs S Overend**

**Mr P Ramsey**

**Ms C Ruane**

**Mr R Swann**

**Mr P Weir**

In attendance: Dr A McGarel Clerk of Business

**Ms N Dunwoody Clerk Assistant**

**Mr R Ramsey Adviser to the Speaker**

**Ms F Leneghan PS/Speaker**

**Mr C McNickle Assistant Assembly Clerk**

**Observers: Junior Minister McIlveen**

**Mr A Rogers OFMDFM**

1. **Apologies**

* 1. There were no apologies.

2. **Minutes of previous meeting**

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 09 June were **agreed**.

3. **Matters arising**

3.1 Members **noted** correspondence, dated Friday 12 June, from the Speaker to all MLAs outlining a number of options regarding the management of late plenary sittings and the Chairperson invited Members to express their parties’ views on this issue.

3.2 Mr Weir expressed the view that a reduced lunch break would alleviate time pressures on those days where the Assembly is expected to sit late and that, on certain occasions, a short tea break may be required to provide relief to Ministers who may be required to attend debates for long periods of time. Mr Weir also requested more time to consider fixed time for suspending late sittings of the Assembly.

3.3 Ms Ruane expressed the view that, if necessary, the Assembly should sit on Wednesdays, for the remainder of the 2014/2015, session to alleviate time pressures and that Monday sittings of the Assembly should commence before 12 noon. Ms Ruane also expressed concern of the impact which late sittings had on MLAs travelling long distances and suggested that an 8pm finish time would be preferable for these. Ms Ruane also asked the Speaker to consider introducing a specific time of day for voting and clarification of arrangements for booking accommodation for MLAs when the Assembly sits late.

3.4 Mr Ramsey expressed the view that late sittings had a negative impact on MLAs and staff with caring responsibilities. Mr Ramsey also expressed the view that 9pm would be a suitable time to suspend late sittings of the Assembly and agreed with the view that the Assembly should sit on Wednesdays to alleviate time pressures. On occasions where the Assembly does sit late Mr Ramsey expressed his support for a short tea break.

3.5 Mr Swann expressed the view that 10pm would be a suitable time to suspend late sittings of the Assembly with the possibility of suspending no later than 11pm where it is clear that all business on the Order Paper can be concluded. Mr Swann also expressed the view that a 30 minute lunch on Tuesday’s would alleviate time pressures and that a short tea break may be required to provide relief to Ministers who may be required to attend debates for long periods of time.

3.6 Mr Dickson also expressed the view that late sittings had a negative impact on MLAs and staff with caring responsibilities and also expressed the view that 10pm would be a suitable time to suspend late sittings of the Assembly with the possibility of suspending no later than 11pm where it is clear that all business on the Order Paper can be concluded. Mr Dickson expressed concern regarding the proposal to reduce the Tuesday lunch break to 30 minutes and highlighted the fact that MLAs scheduled meetings with stakeholders during this time.

3.7 Following discussion Members **agreed** that for the remaining sittings of this session, where necessary, the Assembly should sit on Wednesdays to debate essential business and that the Tuesday lunchtime suspension should be scheduled between 1pm and 2pm.

3.8 Members also **agreed** that the Speaker should review the remaining options for the management of late plenary sittings after recess.

4. **Finalisation of the Order Papers for the plenary meetings in week commencing 22 June 2015**

Assembly Business

4.1 Members **agreed** to schedule a Committee Membership motion from the UUP for Tuesday 23 June.

Public Petition

4.2 Members **agreed** to schedule the presentation of a public petition by Mr Jonathan Craig on ‘Dromore High School New Build’ for Monday 22 June.

4.3 Members **agreed** to schedule the presentation of a public petition by Mr Maírtin Ó Muilleoir on ‘Pedestrian Crossing on the Ormeau Road’ for Monday 22 June.

Executive Business

4.4 Members **noted** that the following additional Executive Business was scheduled for Monday 22 June:

* First Stage of the Pension Schemes Bill, subject to the Speaker’s clearance;
* First Stage of the Environmental Better Regulation Bill, subject to the Speaker’s clearance.

4.5 Members **noted** that the following additional Executive Business was scheduled for Tuesday 23 June:

* Ministerial Statement from the Minister for Employment and Learning on the ‘Outcome of the Review of Youth Training’;
* First Stage of the Credit Unions & Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Bill, subject to Speaker’s clearance.

4.6 Members **noted** that the following Executive Business was no longer scheduled for Tuesday 23 June:

* Motion from the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment on the Draft Renewables Obligation (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015;
* Motion from the Minister of the Environment on the Draft Local Government (Exclusion of Non-Commercial Considerations) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015.

Committee Business

4.7 Members **noted** that there was no change to Committee Business, previously scheduled for Monday 22 June.

4.8 Members **agreed** to a request from the Committee for Finance and Personnel to schedule a motion on its ‘Report on the Review of the Operation of the Barnett Formula’ for Tuesday 23 June.

4.9 Members **agreed** that up to 2 hours should be allocated for the motion, with 15 minutes to move, 15 minutes to wind and 5 minutes for all other speakers.

Private Members’ Business

4.10 Members **noted** that there was no Private Members’ Business scheduled for Monday 22 June.

4.11 Following the scheduling of additional business on Tuesday 23 June Members **agreed** to defer the DUP selection of an Adjournment Debate to Tuesday 30 June and Members **noted** that there was no Private Members’ Business scheduled for Tuesday 23 June.

4.12 Members **agreed** that the lunchtime suspension, for Tuesday 23 June, should be scheduled between 1pm and 2pm.

4.13 The draft Order Papers were **agreed**.

5. **Provisional arrangements for the plenary meetings in week commencing 29 June 2015**

Assembly Business

5.1 Members **agreed** to schedule a business motion to suspend Standing Orders 10(2) to 10(4) for Monday 29 June.

5.2 Members **agreed** to schedule a Committee Membership motion from the UUP for Tuesday 30 June.

Public Petition

5.3 Members **agreed** to schedule the presentation of a public petition by Ms Claire Sugden on ‘Early Years Fund’ for Tuesday 30 June.

Executive Business

5.4 Members **noted** that the following Executive Business was scheduled for Monday 29 June:

* Question Time to the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment and to the Minister of the Environment;
* Second Stage of the Health and Social Care (Control of Data Processing) Bill, subject to the Speaker’s clearance;
* Second Stage of the Water and Sewerage Services Bill, subject to the Speaker’s clearance;
* Consideration Stage of the Food Hygiene Rating Bill;
* Consideration Stage of the Road Traffic (Amendment Bill);
* Further Consideration Stage of the Budget (No.2) Bill 2015;
* Final Stage of the Justice Bill;
* Motion from the Minister for Regional Development to approve the Londonderry Harbour (Variation of Limits) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015;
* Motion from the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to approve the Draft Renewables Obligation (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015;
* Motion from the Minister of the Environment to approve the Draft Local Government (Exclusion of Non-commercial Considerations) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015.

5.5 Members **noted** that the following Executive Business was scheduled for Tuesday 30 June:

* Question Time to the Minister of Finance and Personnel and to the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety;
* Ministerial statement from the Minister of Justice on the Inter-Governmental Agreement on Cooperation on Criminal Justice Matters;
* Motion from the Minister for Social Development to provide for the Pension Schemes Bill to proceed under the Accelerated Passage Procedure;
* Second Stage of the Pension Schemes Bill;
* Second Stage of the Environmental Better Regulation Bill;
* Final Stage of the Budget (No.2) Bill 2015;
* Motion from the Minister of the Environment to approve the Draft Local Government (Community Planning Partners) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015.

Committee Business

5.6 Members **noted** that there were no requests for Committee Business for Monday 29 June.

5.7 Members **agreed** to a request from the Committee on Standards and Privileges to schedule a Motion under Standing Order 69B for Tuesday 30 June.

5.8 Members **agreed** to allow one hour and 30 minutes for the debate, with 10 minutes to move and 10 minutes to wind, and 5 minutes for all other speakers. Members further **agreed** to allow the relevant Member 10 minutes to make a contribution, and to offer the relevant Member the choice of speaking either second or immediately before the wind.

Private Members’ Business

5.9 Members **agreed** to schedule no Private Members’ Motions on either day.

5.10 Members **agreed** to schedule an Adjournment Debate on Tuesday 30 June and as per paragraph 4.11 the selection lay with the DUP and the following topic was selected:

* ‘The Comber Greenway’ (Mr R Newton).

5.11 The Chairperson reminded Members that the Committee was not scheduled to meet on Tuesday 30 June and it was **agreed** to continue with Business at 12.30pm and not schedule a lunch break.

5.12 Junior Minister McIlveen advised that all Ministers were available to respond.

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

6. **Any other business**

6.1 There was no other business.

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

7.1 Members **agreed** to meet at approximately 1.00pm on Tuesday 23 June 2015 in Room 106.

*The Chairperson brought the meeting to a close at 1.13pm*

**The Speaker**

**Chairperson**