

**DRAFT**  
**NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY**  
**BUSINESS COMMITTEE**

**TUESDAY 08 MARCH 2016**  
**IN ROOM 106, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

**MINUTES**

*The meeting began at 1.07pm.*

<b>Present:</b>	<b>The Speaker (Chairperson)</b> Mr T Clarke Mr S Dickson Mr G Kelly Mr A Maginness Mrs K McKevitt Mrs S Overend Ms C Ruane Mr R Swann Mr P Weir	
<b>In attendance:</b>	<b>Dr A McGarel</b> <b>Mr T Reaney</b> <b>Dr G McGrath</b>  <b>Mr D Martin</b> <b>Mr P Gill</b> <b>Ms R Kelly</b> <b>Ms T Caul</b>  <b>Mr R Ramsey</b> <b>Ms F Leneghan</b> <b>Mr G Ervine</b>	<b>Clerk of Business</b> <b>Clerk/Chief Executive</b> <b>Director of Parliamentary Services</b> <b>Clerk Assistant</b> <b>Clerk Assistant</b> <b>Clerk of Business</b> <b>Legal Services and Governance</b> <b>Adviser to the Speaker</b> <b>PS/Speaker</b> <b>Assistant Assembly Clerk</b>
<b>Observers:</b>	<b>Mr A Rogers</b>	<b>OFMDFM</b>

1. **Apologies**

1.1 No apologies were received.

2. **Minutes of previous meetings**

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 01 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 14 March 2016**

Speaker's Business

4.1 Members noted that there was no change to Speaker's Business scheduled for Tuesday 15 March.

Assembly Business

4.2 Members **noted** that there was no change to Assembly Business scheduled for Tuesday 15 March. The wording of the motion from the Assembly Commission was now available.

Executive Business

4.3 Members **noted** that there was no change to Executive Committee Business previously scheduled for Monday 14 March.

4.4 Members **noted** a request from the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to make two Ministerial Statements on Tuesday 15 March.

4.5 Members **noted** a request to schedule a motion on the draft Renewables Obligation Closure Order (Northern Ireland) 2016 for Tuesday 15 March.

4.6 Members **noted** that there was no further change to Executive Committee Business previously scheduled for Tuesday 15 March.

Committee Business

4.7 Members **agreed** to schedule three further motions from the Committee on Procedures to amend Standing Orders for Monday 14 March.

4.8 Members **noted** that there was no further change to Committee Business scheduled for Monday 14 March.

4.9 Members **noted** that there was still no Committee Business scheduled for Tuesday 15 March.

Private Members' Business

- 4.10 Members **noted** that there was still no Private Members' Business scheduled for Monday 14 March.
- 4.11 Members **noted** that there was no change to Private Member's Business scheduled for Tuesday 15 March.
- 4.12 Mr Rogers advised that no further business was expected at this stage.
- 4.13 The draft Order Papers were **agreed**.

5. **Any other business**

- 5.1 Members were referred to the advice paper regarding the implementation of the Fresh Start Agreement proposed entitlement for an official opposition.
- 5.2 Members **noted** the Speaker's proposals for delivering the changes to deliver the required speaking order.
- 5.3 Members were referred to the three options in the advice paper regarding the allocation of plenary debating time to an official opposition.
- 5.4 Mr Swann stated that the UUP favoured Option 1 for the new mandate.
- 5.5 Mr Weir informed Members that the DUP favoured Option 3 as a holding position going into the new mandate.
- 5.6 Ms Ruane informed Members that Sinn Féin also favoured Option 3 as a holding position.
- 5.7 The Speaker returned to the first proposal from Mr Swann – that Option 1 in the advice paper is adopted by an incoming Speaker and Business Committee in the next mandate.
- 5.8 Members **voted** on the proposal as follows:  
  
For - 35 votes  
Against - 66 votes
- 5.9 The proposal was, therefore, **negatived**.
- 5.10 The Speaker returned to the second proposal from Mr Weir – that Option 3 in the advice paper is adopted by an incoming Speaker and Business Committee in the next mandate.
- 5.11 Members **voted** on the proposal as follows:

For – 66 votes  
Against – 35 votes

- 5.12 The proposal was, therefore, **carried**.
- 5.13 Members were referred to the advice paper regarding tabling Assembly Questions.
- 5.14 All Members **agreed** to the Speaker taking forward Recommendation 4 in the advice paper through amendments to the Business Office Guidance on Questions issued under the authority of the Speaker authority. Members also highlighted the importance of monitoring this issue going forward.
- 5.15 The Speaker thanked members for their co-operation and help during the mandate and wished them well in the forthcoming elections.
- 5.16 The Speaker also thanked the junior Ministers.
- 5.17 All Members put on record their thanks to the Speaker for his stewardship and management of the Business Committee over the last year.

## **6. Date and Time of next meeting**

- 6.1 Unless the Business Committee was required to meet to schedule unexpected business, members **noted** that the newly appointed Business Committee would meet as soon as possible after the first sitting of the new Assembly, in week commencing 9 May.
- 6.2 Members **noted** that there would also be a meeting with Whips to agree arrangements for the first sitting, including seating arrangements in the Chamber, which was likely to be on Tuesday 10 May. Members noted that this would be confirmed in writing closer to the time.

*The Chairperson brought the meeting to a close at 1.25pm*

**The Speaker**  
**Chairperson**