

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY
BUSINESS COMMITTEE

TUESDAY 31 MAY 2016
IN ROOM 106, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

MINUTES

The meeting began at 1.05pm.

Present:

The Speaker (Chairperson)
Mr A Attwood
Mr T Clarke
Mr S Dickson
Mr G Lyons
Mr D McAleer
Mr C McGrath
Ms C Ní Chuilín
Mrs S Overend
Mr R Swann

In attendance:

Dr A McGarel	Clerk of Business
Dr G McGrath	Director of Parliamentary Services
Mr D Martin	Clerk Assistant
Mr P Gill	Clerk Assistant
Ms T Caul	Director of Legal Services and Governance
Mr J McMillen	Legal Services and Governance
Mr R Ramsey	Adviser to the Speaker
Ms F Leneghan	PS/Speaker
Mr G Ervine	Assistant Assembly Clerk

Observers:

Junior Minister Fearon
Mrs C Kerr **The Executive Office**

1. **Apologies**

1.1 The Speaker welcomed Mr G Lyons as a new member to the Business Committee.

2. **Minutes of previous meetings**

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 26 May were **agreed**.

3. **Matters arising**

4. **Speaking lists**

- 4.1 Members were referred to the advice paper regarding speaking lists.
- 4.2 Members **agreed** to continue to call parties with five or more members in the first speaking round.
- 4.3 In relation to speaking rights for two member parties, Ms Ní Chuilín stated that she supported option 1, which would call parties in order of strength using the d'Hondt formula.
- 4.4 Mr Clarke stated that he also supported option 1.
- 4.5 Mr Swann, Mr Attwood and Mr Dickson stated that they supported option 2, which would allow two-member parties an opportunity to be called after the fourth speaking round.
- 4.6 Ms Ní Chuilín **proposed** that option 1 be adopted in relation to speaking rights for two member parties.
- 4.7 Members **voted** on the proposal as follows:
- For - 65 votes
Against - 36 votes
- 4.8 The proposal was, therefore, **agreed**.
- 4.9 Members **agreed** that the Speaker would change the way the speaking list is used in order to call members from the Opposition in accordance with the Fresh Start Agreement.

5. **Seating Arrangements in the Chamber**

- 5.1 Members were referred to the advice paper regarding seating arrangements in the Chamber.
- 5.2 Members **agreed** a revised seating arrangement to allow a front seat for Minister of Justice.
- 5.3 In relation to Opposition, Mr Clarke **proposed** that there was no change to current seating arrangements.

5.4 Mr Swann and Mr Attwood stated that they preferred the option which allowed the Opposition to sit in the benches opposite the Government, similar to the House of Commons in Westminster.

5.5 Members **voted** on the proposal as follows:

For - 65 votes

Against - 36 votes

5.6 The proposal was, therefore, **agreed**.

6. **Rota for Private Members' Business**

6.1 Members were referred to the advice paper regarding the rota for Private Members' Business.

6.2 Members **agreed** to defer a decision on this issue until next week's meeting.

7. **Finalisation of the Order Paper for plenary meetings in week commencing 06 June 2016**

Assembly Business

7.1 Members **noted** that there was no change to Assembly Business previously scheduled for Monday 06 June.

7.2 Members **noted** that there was no change to Assembly Business previously scheduled for Tuesday 07 June.

Executive Business

7.3 Members **noted** that, since last week, the Executive had tabled a motion on the Programme for Government Framework 2016-2021. Members **agreed** to allocate this motion 4 hours, giving the Minister additional time in accordance with, and 7 minutes for all other speakers.

7.4 Members **noted** that there was still no Executive Committee Business scheduled for Tuesday 07 June.

Opposition Business

7.5 Members **noted** that there was no change to Opposition Business previously scheduled for Monday 06 June.

7.6 Members **noted** a change to the title and wording of the Childcare motion for Tuesday 07 June.

Private Members' Business

7.7 Members **noted** that following last week's meeting, DUP selected the following motion for Monday 06 June:

- 'Illegal Drugs' (Mr P Frew, Mrs P Cameron and Mr S Douglas)

7.8 Members **noted** that following last week's meeting, DUP selected the following motion for Tuesday 07 June:

- 'Economic Strategy' (Mr M Storey, Mr T Buchanan, Mr G Lyons and Mr G Dunne)

7.9 Members **agreed** that the UUP motion on 'Review of the Schools Estate' scheduled for Tuesday 07 June, was replaced with the following motion:

- 'Continued Crisis in Hospital Waiting Times' (Mrs J Dobson and Mr R Butler)

7.10 Members **noted** that following last week's meeting, DUP selected the following adjournment debate for Tuesday 07 June:

- 'Tourism in East Antrim' (Mr G Lyons)

7.11 Junior Minister Fearon advised that no further business was expected at this stage and all Ministers were available.

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

8. **Provisional arrangements for the plenary meetings in week commencing 13 June 2016**

Executive Business

8.1 Members **noted** that the following Executive Business was scheduled for Monday 13 June:

- Suspension of Standing Orders 10(2) to 10(4).
- Motion on Supply Resolution for the 2014/15 Excess Votes and Northern Ireland Main Estimates 2016/17. Members **agreed** to allow one debate on both motions, with a total allocation of 4 hours 30 minutes. The Minister will have one hour to divide between

moving and winding at his discretion, with 7 minutes for all other speakers.

- First Stage of the Budget Bill.
- Question Time to the Executive Office and the Minister of Education.

8.2 Members **noted** that the following Executive Business was scheduled for Tuesday 14 June:

- Second Stage of the Budget Bill.
- Question Time to the Minister for Communities and the Minister for the Economy.

Opposition Business and Private Members' Business

8.3 Members **noted** that there was no time to schedule any Private Members' Motions on either day.

8.4 Members **agreed** to schedule an Adjournment Debate on Tuesday 14 June. Under the system of allocation, the selection lay with the Sinn Féin and the following adjournment debate was selected:

- 'The Condition of Rural Roads in West Tyrone' (Mr B McElduff)

8.5 Junior Minister Fearon advised that the relevant Minister was available.

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

9. Any Other Business

9.1 Mr Swann asked for confirmation that the Budget Bill would be available in good time to allow Members and the relevant Committee to scrutinise it.

9.2 Members were referred to correspondence from the Director of Parliamentary Services regarding an appointment to the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe.

9.3 Mr Clarke proposed that Mr Dickson be appointed to the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe; Mr Attwood seconded this proposal.

9.4 Members **agreed** that a Business Motion to this effect be brought to the next meeting.

- 9.5 Mr Dickson proposed that a second member of the Alliance Party be allocated a seat on the Business Committee.
- 9.6 Members **agreed** to this proposal and **agreed** that a Business Motion to this effect be brought to the next meeting.
- 9.7 Mr Attwood asked for clarification regarding any primary legislation being brought to the House before Summer recess, ensuring that the relevant Committees were given appropriate time to scrutinise it.
- 9.8 Junior Minister Fearon stated that she was not aware of any primary legislation at this time.
10. **Date and time of next meeting**
- 10.1 Members **agreed** to meet at 1:00pm on Tuesday 07 June 2016 in Room 106.

The Chairperson brought the meeting to a close at 1.45pm

The Speaker
Chairperson