

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY
BUSINESS COMMITTEE

MONDAY 10 FEBRUARY 2020
IN ROOM 106, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

MINUTES

The meeting began at 7.49pm.

Present:

The Speaker (Chairperson)
Ms K Armstrong
Ms C Bailey
Mr R Butler
Ms D Kelly
Mr G Middleton
Mr A Muir
Mr J O'Dowd

In attendance:	Dr A McGarel	Clerk of Business
	Mr P Gill	Clerk Assistant
	Ms L Hogg	Clerk/Chief Executive
	Mr S Kelly	Legal Advisor
	Mr P Stitt	PS to the Speaker
	Ms P Devlin	Assistant Assembly Clerk
	Mr M O'Hare	Clerical Supervisor

Observers:	Mr G Lyons	Junior Minister
	Ms K Morrison	Executive Office

1 Apologies

1.1 Apologies were received from Declan Kearney, Sinead Ennis, Colin McGrath, Keith Buchanan and John Stewart.

2 Minutes of previous meetings

2.1 The minutes of the meeting on 3 February 2020 were agreed.

3 **Matters Arising**

- 3.1 There were no matters arising.

4 **Finalisation of the Order Paper for plenary meeting on 17 February 2020**

Executive Committee Business

- 4.1 Members **noted** that, as previously agreed, four Ministers would respond to Oral Questions on 17 February at 2pm.
- 4.2 Members **agreed** the request from the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to switch his assigned timeslot for oral questions with that of the Minister for Communities.
- 4.3 Members **agreed** to schedule the two Prayers of Annulment, one against the Sea Fish Licensing Order (NI) 2019 and the other against the Sea Fishing (Licenses and Notices) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2019.
- 4.4 Members **agreed** that a single debate would be adequate as the two rules as the same issues would be likely to arise for both.
- 4.5 Members **agreed** that there would be a three-hour limit on the debate, with 15 minutes for the Committee Chair to open the debate, 20 minutes for the Minister to respond and 10 minutes for all other contributions.
- 4.6 Members **noted** that the decision to allocate a time limit to the debate on the prayers of annulment was based on there being only one sitting that week and should not establish precedent for future debates on subordinate legislation.

Private Members' Business

- 4.7 Members **agreed** to postpone the Private Members Business which had been on the Provisional Order Paper for 17 February and reschedule it at the next opportunity.
- 4.8 Members **agreed** the draft Order Paper for 17 February.

5 **Provisional arrangements for plenary meetings in the week commencing 24 February.**

- 5.1 Members **noted** that they had been provided with two order papers, for 24 and 25 February.

Executive Committee Business

- 5.2 Members **noted** that the notice of forthcoming business from the Executive included motions on the 2019-2020 Spring Supplementary Estimates and 2020-2021 Vote on Account.
- 5.3 Members **agreed** a single debate on both motions with a total time allocation of 4 and a half hours; one hour for the Minister to divide between moving and winding at his discretion and 10 minutes for all other speakers.
- 5.4 Members **noted** that the Executive had also requested to introduce the Budget Bill, and **agreed** to schedule this on 24 February with no debate.
- 5.5 Members **agreed** that Question Time will return to two ministerial slots between 2 and 3.30pm and on 24 February, questions will be for the Minister for the Economy and the Minister of Education.
- 5.6 Members **agreed** to schedule the Second Stage of the Budget Bill on 25 February with an untimed debate.
- 5.7 Members **agreed** that Question Time would be scheduled for the Ministers of Finance and Health on 25 February.

Committee Business

- 5.8 Members **noted** that there have been no formal requests for Committee business to date.

Private Members' Business

- 5.9 Members **agreed** that no Private Members' motions or adjournment debate would be scheduled for 25 February.
- 5.10 Members **agreed** the Provisional Order Papers for 24 and 25 February 2020.

6 **Any other business**

- 6.1 Members **noted** that in accordance with Standing order 55(4), Keith Buchanan and John O'Dowd had been nominated to act as Chairpersons of the Business Committee in the Speaker's absence.
- 6.2 Members **noted** that that the New Decade, New Approach document contains a proposal to create an Ad Hoc Committee on a Bill of Rights and that the Business Committee would be required to table a motion to create the Committee. Members noted that a paper was being prepared by the Clerk Assistant, with whom the party whips should liaise directly. The issue would be brought back to the Committee for scheduling when whips are content to proceed.
- 6.3 Members **agreed** to consider for accuracy the list of former Members who had died while the Assembly had not been sitting, with a view to the Speaker making arrangements for tributes to be paid to them in the Chamber.

7 **Date and time of next meeting**

- 7.1 Members **agreed** that the next meeting would take place after the adjournment of the sitting on Monday 17 February in Room 106.

The Chairperson brought the meeting to a close at 5.32 pm

The Speaker
Chairperson