

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY
BUSINESS COMMITTEE

TUESDAY 23 JUNE 2020
IN THE SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

MINUTES

The meeting began at 1.02pm. (C) denotes attendance via conference call

Present:

Mr J O'Dowd (Acting Chairperson)
The Speaker (C)
Ms K Armstrong
Ms C Bailey
Mr K Buchanan
Mr R Butler
Ms S Ennis
Mrs D Kelly
Mr C McGrath
Mr G Middleton
Mr A Muir
Mr J Stewart

In attendance:

Dr A McGarel	Clerk of Business
Mr P Gill	Clerk Assistant
Ms L Hogg	Clerk/Chief Executive
Dr G McGrath	Director of Parliamentary Services
Mr J McMillen	Head of Legal Services
Mr R Ramsey	Adviser to the Speaker
Ms P Devlin	Assistant Assembly Clerk
Mr M O'Hare	Clerical Supervisor

Observers:

Mrs K Loveland-Morrison	Executive Office
Mr G Lyons	Junior Minister

1 Apologies

1.1 There were no apologies.

2 **Minutes of previous meetings**

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting on 16 June 2020 were **agreed**.

3 **Matters Arising**

- 3.1 Members **noted** that at the meeting of 9 June, they had discussed the decision-making process for selecting Private Members' motions and had agreed that a discussion paper would be brought to a future meeting.
- 3.2 Members **noted** that the requested paper had been provided in their packs.
- 3.3 Dr McGarel gave Members a summary of the paper.
- 3.4 Following discussion, Members **agreed** to retain current practices for selecting Private Members' motions.
- 3.5 Members **noted** the current practice for scheduling All-Party and Cross-Party motions and **agreed** to review it in the future.

4 **Finalisation of the Order Paper for Plenary Meeting on 30 June 2020**

Tuesday 30 June

- 4.1 Members **noted** that they had scheduled one sitting for Tuesday 30 June.

Assembly Business

- 4.2 Members **noted** that the Assembly Commission had scheduled a motion on the conferral of functions on the NIA Commission.
- 4.3 Members **agreed** to schedule one and a half hours for the debate, with ten minutes to move, ten minutes to wind and five minutes for all other speakers.
- 4.4 Members **noted** that no other requests for Assembly Business had been received.

Executive Committee Business

- 4.5 Members **noted** that, in addition to the items scheduled at last week's meeting, the Executive Office had scheduled two additional item of business, as follows:

- The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Amendment No.5) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020; and

- The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Amendment No.6) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020

4.6 Members **agreed** to schedule a single untimed debate to consider both items.

4.7 Members **noted** that following items of business had previously been scheduled:

- Final Stage of the Housing (Amendment) Bill.
- A Statutory Rule subject to affirmative resolution on The Motor Vehicles (Wearing of Seat Belts) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2020.
- A Legislative Consent Motion for the Environment Bill.
- Question Time for the Minister of Education and the Minister of Finance.

Private Members Business

4.8 Members **noted** that Sinn Féin's Private Members' motion on Concern and Anxiety over the Reopening of Schools, which had been deferred from 23 June until 30 June, had been scheduled.

4.9 Members **noted** that the adjournment time was indicated to be 7.15pm, with the majority of items being untimed.

4.10 Members **agreed** the Order Paper for Tuesday 30 June.

5 Provisional Arrangements for the Plenary Meetings During Week Commencing 6 July 2020

5.1 Members **noted** that a Revised Notice of Forthcoming Business from the Executive Office had been tabled, and the listed items of Executive Business necessitated scheduling only one sitting for week commencing 6 July.

5.2 Members **agreed** to schedule one sitting on Tuesday 7 July.

Tuesday 7 July

Assembly Business

5.3 Members **noted** that no requests for Assembly Business had been received to date.

Executive Committee Business

- 5.4 Members **noted** that the Minister of Finance had scheduled a motion to consider a Statutory Rule, the Rates (Exemption for Automatic Telling Machines in Rural Areas) Regulations.
- 5.5 Members **agreed** to schedule an untimed debate for the SR.
- 5.6 Members **noted** that the tabled revised Notice of Forthcoming Business from the Executive contained two further items: First and Second Stage of the Executive Committee (Functions) Bill.
- 5.7 Members **noted** that if the two items were to proceed on the date requested, further motions to suspend Standing Orders would be necessary.
- 5.8 Members **noted** that Question Time would be for the Executive Office and the Minister of Health.
- 5.9 Members **noted** that Topical Questions are currently suspended until 4 July.
- 5.10 Members **agreed** that Question Time on 7 July would proceed in line with current arrangements and the suspension of Topical Questions would be reviewed as part of the Committee's wider review of questions on 30 June.
- 5.11 TEO Officials advised that no other business was currently expected.

Private Members Business

- 5.12 Members **agreed** to defer a decision on the inclusion of Private Members' motions until the next meeting when there would be a firmer indication of Executive business and its timings.
- 5.13 Members **agreed** the Provisional Order Paper for Tuesday 7 July.

6 Review of Written Questions

- 6.1 Members **noted** that information on questions tabled, and responses from Ministers, had been provided in their packs.
- 6.2 Dr McGarel provided a summary of the information.
- 6.3 Members **noted** that there had been some movement from the Department for Communities on responses to written questions.
- 6.4 Members **noted** that it would be beneficial to Members for the Training and Induction Programme to be revisited when the current situation allows for it.

6.5 Members **agreed** to write to the Commission to bring the issue to its attention.

7 **Any Other Business**

7.1 The Acting Chairperson, on behalf of the Committee, offered sympathies to Dr. McGarel following her recent bereavement.

8 **Date and time of next meeting**

8.1 Members **agreed** that the next meeting would take place on Tuesday 30 June in the Senate Chamber.

The Acting Chairperson brought the meeting to a close at 1.28pm

Mr Keith Buchanan
Acting Chairperson