

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

**TUESDAY 8 DECEMBER 2020**  
**IN THE SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

**MINUTES**

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

**Present:**

**The Speaker (Chairperson)**

**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 J O'Dowd**

**In attendance:**

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

**Observers:**

<b>Mr D Kearney</b>	<b>Junior Minister</b>
<b>Ms C Kerr</b>	<b>Executive Office</b>

**1     Apologies**

1.1     Apologies were received from John Stewart and Andrew Muir.

**2     Minutes of previous meetings**

2.1     The minutes of the meeting on 1 December were **agreed**.

### 3 **Matters Arising**

- 3.1 A Member sought an update on the Committee's request for the Executive's legislative timetable. Members **noted** that this had not yet been received.
- 3.2 There were no other matters arising.

### 4 **Finalisation of the Order Papers for the Plenary Meetings in Week Commencing 14 December 2020**

#### **Monday 14 December**

- 4.1 Members **agreed** to schedule a Public Petition for Ms Woods, calling on the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to introduce equivalent legislation to Lucy's Law.
- 4.2 Members **agreed** to schedule a Committee Membership motion for the SDLP, and agreed that it would be treated as a Business motion with no opportunity for amendment or debate.
- 4.3 Members **noted** the addition of a statement from the Minister of Health on the NSMC Health and Food Safety meeting.
- 4.4 Members **noted** that this statement, and the statement scheduled last week for the Minister of Finance on the Dormant Accounts Fund, had yet to be formally notified to the Speaker but would be added to indicative timings once confirmed.
- 4.5 Members **noted** that otherwise business remained as agreed at last week's meeting.

#### **Executive Committee Business**

- 4.6 Members **agreed** to schedule a motion for the Committee for Justice to extend Committee Stage of the Criminal Justice (Committal Reform) Bill.

#### **Private Members' Business**

- 4.7 Members **noted** that they had previously agreed not to schedule Private Members business.
- 4.8 Members **agreed** the Order Paper for Monday 14 December.

### **Tuesday 15 December**

- 4.9 Members **agreed** to schedule a Public Petition for Mr Lyttle, calling for the provision of free period products in schools.
- 4.10 Members **noted** the addition of a statement from the Minister for the Economy on the NSMC Tourism Sector meeting.
- 4.11 Members **noted** that the statement scheduled for the Economy Minister last week on the NSMC Trade and Business Development remained scheduled, and the Budget statement for the Minister of Finance, which was originally scheduled for Monday 14 December, has now been rescheduled for this date.
- 4.12 Members **noted** that all of these statements had yet to be formally notified to the Speaker but would be added to indicative timings once confirmed.

### **Executive Committee Business**

- 4.13 Members **noted** the Minister of Justice did not move Further Consideration Stage of her Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill on 7 December, and that the Executive Office had issued a revised notice of forthcoming business rescheduling Further Consideration stage for Tuesday 15 in place of Final Stage but had not yet confirmed this.
- 4.14 Members **agreed** to schedule an untimed debate for the Bill stage when confirmed.
- 4.15 Following this change of Executive Business, Members **agreed** to adhere to their previous decision to schedule the Committee for the Executive Office motion on 15 December.
- 4.16 Members **noted** that the TEO Committee had indicated that it was content with this change.
- 4.17 Members **noted** that there had otherwise been no changes to the Executive and Committee Business agreed at the last meeting.

### **Private Members' Business**

- 4.18 Members **noted** that Mr. Allister had indicated that, as Final Stage of the Domestic Abuse Bill was not proceeding, he would like the Committee to consider adding Further Consideration stage of his Functioning of Government Bill to the Order Paper for this sitting.

- 4.19 Members **agreed** that as Further Consideration Stage of Domestic Abuse Bill had been rescheduled for this date, insufficient time was available for his Bill stage.
- 4.20 A Member asked if, there was some means by which Mr Allister's Bill could be held in reserve and, in the event that Further Consideration Stage of the Domestic Abuse Bill was not moved again, added in its place.
- 4.21 Members **noted** that there was a longstanding commitment to observing family-friendly hours for staff of the Assembly and Members' staff and that even without Further Consideration Stage of the Domestic Abuse Bill, adjournment was anticipated to be 5.30pm.
- 4.22 Following discussions, Members **agreed** that Mr Allister's request could not be facilitated on that day.
- 4.23 The Speaker advised Members that he had received correspondence from the Minister of Finance, that he would share with Members later, advising that the Department needs sufficient time to engage with legislative counsel on any remedial amendments to the Bill that may be needed.
- 4.24 Members **agreed** that as there would be no meeting of the Business Committee on Tuesday 15 December, the usual lunchtime suspension would be removed to enable business to continue uninterrupted.
- 4.25 Members **agreed** to reschedule an adjournment debate for Ms Paula Bradshaw on Post Primary Education Provision in South Belfast.
- 4.26 Members **agreed** the Order Paper for Tuesday 15 December.

5 **Provisional Arrangements for the Plenary Meetings in Week Commencing 18 January 2020**

- 5.1 Members **noted** that Business Committee does not usually issue Provisional Order Papers before Christmas recess but these had been provided to give Members an indication of what business is currently in place for the first sittings, and the changes to Question Time that have been reflected.
- 5.2 Members **agreed** that the Provisional Order Papers would be noted but not yet published.

## **Monday 18 January**

### **Executive Committee Business**

- 5.3 Members **noted** that Question Time was scheduled for the Minister of Justice and Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs.
- 5.4 Members **noted** that the Executive had not yet scheduled any business post-recess.

### **Committee Business**

- 5.5 Members **noted** that no Committee business had been requested to date.

## **Tuesday 19 January**

### **Executive Committee Business**

- 5.6 Members **noted** that in line with their agreement to reduce the number of Ministers responding to Question Time on a trial basis, Question Time would be scheduled for the Communities Minister only.
- 5.7 Members **noted** that no other Executive Business had yet been scheduled.

### **Private Members' Business**

- 5.8 Members **noted** that they had previously agreed to schedule Further Consideration Stage of Mr Allister's Bill for the first Tuesday sitting in January, subject to Executive Business.
- 5.9 Members **noted** that provisionally scheduling the Bill on that date would enable Members' awareness of the deadline for amendments, which would be Wednesday 13 January, but that in the event that a high volume of Executive Business is subsequently scheduled, the Bill stage could be removed before the Order Paper is finalised.

## **6 Any Other Business**

- 6.1 There was no other business.

7     **Date and time of next meeting**

- 7.1   Members **agreed** that the next meeting would take place at 1pm on Tuesday 12 January 2021 via MS Teams.

*The Speaker brought the meeting to a close at 1.18pm*

**The Speaker**  
**Chairperson**