



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

# Ad Hoc Committee on the Assembly Members (Remuneration Board) Bill

## Minutes of Proceedings

**18 February 2025**

**Meeting Location:** Room 29, Parliament Buildings

**Present:**

Phillip Brett MLA, Chairperson

Cathy Mason MLA, Deputy Chairperson

Paula Bradshaw MLA

Pádraig Delargy MLA

Daniel McCrossan MLA

Gary Middleton MLA

John Stewart MLA

**In Attendance:**

Jim McManus, Committee Clerk

Roisin Donnelly, Assistant Committee Clerk

Carla Campbell, Clerical Supervisor

The meeting commenced at 1:01 pm in public session with the Clerk in the Chair.

## **1. Election of Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson**

The Clerk invited nominations for the position of chairperson.

Gary Middleton proposed that Phillip Brett be chairperson of the committee.

The proposal was seconded by Cathy Mason.

Phillip Brett accepted the nomination.

There were no other nominations.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that Phillip Brett, being the only candidate proposed, be chairperson of this committee.

Phillip Brett thanked Members for supporting his nomination and took the chair.

The Chairperson invited nominations for the position of deputy chairperson.

Pádraig Delargy proposed that Cathy Mason be deputy chairperson of the committee.

The proposal was seconded by Paula Bradshaw.

Cathy Mason accepted the nomination.

There were no other nominations.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that Cathy Mason, being the only candidate proposed, be deputy chairperson of this committee.

## **2. Apologies**

There were no apologies.

### **3. Chairperson's Business**

The Chairperson advised members of his intention that the Committee would undertake impartial and robust scrutiny of the Assembly Members (Remuneration Board) Bill.

### **4. Committee Membership**

The Committee noted the membership of the Ad Hoc Committee.

### **5. Declaration of Interests**

The Chairperson advised members of their requirement to register their interests under Standing Order 69(5).

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that as the Ad Hoc Committee has been established to scrutinise a Bill that relates to MLA salaries, allowances and pensions, the minutes should reflect that all members of the Committee have a financial interest in the work of the Committee.

### **6. Arrangements for Committee Meetings**

The Chairperson advised members about the weekly meeting arrangements, provision of committee papers, staff contact details and the use of social media.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that meetings should, as a rule, be held in public session unless there is an overriding reason for proceedings to be closed.

### **7. Committee Procedures**

The Chairperson advised members that it is a matter for the Committee to determine its own procedures.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that all questions shall be decided by a simple majority.

*John Stewart joined the meeting at 1.08 pm.*

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it would not allow the nomination of deputies to attend committee meetings in the place of committee members if they are unable to attend.

Members noted guidance papers on:

- Powers and Operations of Standing and Ad Hoc Committees;
- Role of Committee Chairpersons; and
- Role and functions of the Committee Office.

The Committee agreed to move to closed session at 1.09 pm.

## **8. Assembly Members (Remuneration Board) Bill – oral briefing from the Bill Office**

The following NI Assembly Bill Office officials joined the meeting at 1.10 pm:

Aoibheann Baker, Senior Assistant Bill Clerk; and

Liz Marsh, Bill Clerk.

The Senior Assistant Bill Clerk briefed the Committee on the role of the Bill Office and outlined the Bill process.

*Daniel McCrossan joined the meeting at 1.24 pm.*

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked the Bill Clerks for their attendance.

## **9. Assembly Members (Remuneration Board) Bill**

The Clerk outlined options for the management of the Committee Stage of the Assembly Member (Remuneration Board) Bill.

The Committee agreed to move to public session at 1.37 pm.

The Committee noted the Delegated Powers Memorandum relating to the Bill provided by the Assembly Commission.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to refer the Delegated Powers Memorandum to the Examiner of Statutory Rules for advice on the delegated powers within the Bill.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to request a research paper from RaISe on the Bill to include the practice for determining salaries in other legislatures.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to issue a call for evidence on the Bill for a 4-week period and to place a sign-post advertisement in the newspapers.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the content of its call for evidence and to use Citizen Space for its call for evidence.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to schedule oral evidence from the NI Assembly Commission on Thursday, 20 February.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to publish the papers relating to its consideration of the Bill on the Committee's webpage including: meeting minutes; links to Hansard; research papers; and written submissions.

## **10. Forward Work Programme**

The Committee considered a draft Forward Work Programme and discussed potential stakeholders it may wish to seek oral evidence from on the Bill.

- Agreed:** The Committee agreed to invite oral evidence from the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority and the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission.
- Agreed:** The Committee agreed to invite written evidence from: Northern Ireland Assembly Members and staff of Assembly Members; Assembly Committee on Standards and Privileges; Senedd Remuneration Board; and the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body.
- Agreed:** The Committee agreed its Forward Work Programme.
- Agreed:** The Committee agreed to issue a press release regarding its call for evidence on the Bill.

## **11. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

## **12. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting**

The next meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee was scheduled to take place at 2:00 pm on Thursday, 29 February 2025 in Room 21.

The meeting was adjourned at 1.43 pm.

**Phillip Brett MLA**

**Chairperson, Ad Hoc Committee on the Assembly Members (Remuneration Board) Bill**

**20 February 2025**