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Parliament Buildings
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Mr Phillip Brett MLA
Chairperson of the Ad Hoc Committee
Assembly Members (Remuneration Board) Bill
Parliament Buildings

7 March 2025

Dear Chairperson

Assembly Members (Remuneration Board) Bill – Delegated Powers

We wish to respond to two technical points the Ad Hoc Committee on the Assembly Members (Remuneration Board) Bill has raised with the Assembly Commission in relation to the delegated powers within the Bill.

We would firstly return to the point which we made at the Committee's meeting of 20 February 2025, when we indicated that the Assembly Commission was exploring bringing forward an amendment in relation to the delegated powers as currently drafted in the Bill. I can confirm that work is currently being undertaken on this and we would hope to update the Committee at its meeting on 25 March 2025.

At its meeting of 20 February 2025, the Committee raised the issue of Assembly Standing Order 43(1) which requires that every statutory rule or draft statutory rule which is laid before the Assembly and is subject to Assembly proceedings shall stand referred to the appropriate committee for scrutiny. The Committee asked which Assembly committee will have responsibility for the scrutiny of any order made by the Commission as set out in clause 4 of the Bill.

The Assembly Commission proposes that the Audit Committee would undertake this function, as the Audit Committee has an existing role regarding the Assembly Commission's responsibilities, specifically to undertake the scrutiny of the Assembly Commission's budget. We will be engaging with the Audit Committee on this.

On a different issue, at its meeting of 4 March 2025, the Committee considered correspondence from the Committee on Standards and Privileges (CSP). In its correspondence, the CSP noted the delegated power in the Bill relating to the appointment of temporary members to the Remuneration Board and provided information on the provision for the appointment of an Acting Commissioner for Standards under section 23(1) of the Assembly Members (Independent Financial Review and Standards) Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

The CSP highlighted this provision as an alternative appointment mechanism that the Ad Hoc Committee may wish to note. The Committee asked for the Assembly Commission's view.

The Assembly Commission notes that this provision has been used to appoint an Acting Commissioner for Standards. However, the Assembly Commission does not believe that this would be an appropriate model in relation to the Assembly Members (Remuneration Bill). The core purpose the Bill is to ensure that salaries and pensions are determined independently from Members of the Assembly.

At your meeting of 20 February 2025, we pointed out that Members of the Assembly Commission itself are standing aside from the recruitment process for the Remuneration Board in recognition of its independence and that the Clerk/ Chief Executive would oversee it. It would therefore run completely contrary to that independence, and the procedure for regular appointments to the Remuneration Board, if the name of a temporary member of the Remuneration Board had to go to the floor to be voted upon by all Members in order for that person to serve with the agreement of Members.

We hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely



Mrs S. Ennis MLA



Mr T. Clarke MLA



Miss N. McAllister MLA



Mr A. Allen MBE MLA



Mr C. McGrath MLA