



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Assembly and Executive Review Committee

Minutes of Proceedings

Tuesday 3 December 2024 at 9.30 a.m.

Meeting Location: Room 21, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Jonathan Buckley MLA (Chairperson)

Declan McAleer MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Michelle Guy MLA

Gary Middleton MLA

Michelle McIlveen MLA

Matthew O'Toole MLA

John Stewart MLA

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Aíne Murphy MLA

Apologies:

Pat Sheehan MLA

In Attendance:

Shane McAteer, Committee Clerk

Elaine Farrell, Assistant Clerk
Laura Gourley, Clerical Supervisor
Alison Ferguson, Clerical Officer
Jonathan McMillen, Head of Legal Services (agenda item 3)

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Nick Mitford, Senior Assistant Clerk

Agreed: The Committee agreed to hold agenda items 1 – 3 in closed session.

The meeting commenced at 9.30 a.m. in closed session

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Declaration of Interests

The Chairperson advised Members of the ongoing requirement to declare relevant financial or other interests as and when they arise and before taking part in any proceedings of the Assembly relating to that matter. Members were further advised that any financial or other interests which relate to the remit of the Committee, or which are likely to be relevant to a substantial part of its work, should be drawn to the attention of the Committee at this stage.

No interests were declared at this point in the meeting.

3. Proposal to provide Assembly Committees with powers to amend delegation legislation

Jonathan McMillen, Head of Legal Services, joined the meeting at 9.38 a.m.

Mr McMillen briefed the Committee on the legal advice on the proposal to provide Assembly Committees with powers to amend delegated legislation, which had arisen from the previous Chairpersons' Liaison Group's Report on Strengthening Committee Scrutiny.

Matthew O'Toole joined the meeting at 9.39 a.m.

The Chairperson thanked Mr McMillen for his briefing.

Mr McMillen left the meeting at 9.48 a.m.

The meeting moved into open session at 9.49 a.m.

4. Draft minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2024.

5. Matters arising

None.

6. Arrangements for Assembly Members' participation in international and inter-parliamentary bodies – briefing by RalSe

The Assembly Research Officer, Ray McCaffrey, joined the meeting at 9.50 a.m. and briefed the Committee on his research paper.

John Stewart joined the meeting at 9.54 a.m.

Aíne Murphy left the meeting at 9.55 a.m.

Jonathan Buckley declared an interest that he is the Chairperson and executive member of the Northern Ireland Assembly Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

Michelle McIlveen declared an interest that she is an executive member of the Northern Ireland Assembly Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

Aíne Murphy rejoined the meeting at 10.05 a.m.

The Chairperson thanked the Research Officer for his briefing.

7. Selection and prioritisation of topics for the AERC work programme

The Clerk briefed the Committee on the updated list of topics for the Assembly and Executive Review Committee (AERC) work programme and advised that the expected response from The Executive Office (TEO) had not yet been received.

Matthew O'Toole indicated that he had forwarded a topic suggestion in June 2024 on Assembly reform, which had not been included in the topic list. The Clerk advised that this would be followed up and included in the topic list for the next meeting.

The Committee discussed the selection and prioritisation of topics for the AERC work programme.

Michelle Guy proposed that the AERC selects and prioritises topic 2 – “Designations and the Appointment of the First Minister and deputy First Minister” and topic 7 – “To build on the existing AERC work carried out in relation to Member Designations and Cross-Community Voting”.

The Chairperson put the question on Michelle Guy's proposal.

The Committee divided: Ayes:2; Noes 6; Abstain 0.

AYES

Michelle Guy

Matthew O'Toole

NOES

Jonathan Buckley

Declan McAleer

Michelle McIlveen

Gary Middleton

Aíne Murphy

John Stewart

The proposal fell.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it is content to not proceed with the suggested topic on Assembly Committees having the power to amend delegated legislation (topics 3 & 6) given the legal advice received under agenda item 3.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the secretariat will undertake further scoping work to consider what role the AERC might play in the arrangements for Assembly engagement with inter-parliamentary and international bodies, which would respect and complement the role of the Assembly Commission (topic 13).

Michelle McIlveen proposed that the Committee awaits the receipt of any suggested topics from TEO, which should then be assessed for feasibility and considered at the next AERC meeting.

The Chairperson put the question on Michelle McIlveen's proposal.

The Committee divided: Ayes 6; Noes 2; Abstain 0.

AYES

Jonathan Buckley

Declan McAleer

Michelle McIlveen

Gary Middleton

Aíne Murphy

John Stewart

NOES

Michelle Guy

Matthew O'Toole

The proposal was carried.

8. Correspondence

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 18 October 2024 from the Chairpersons' Liaison Group which provides an update to all committees on the work considered by the Group at its meeting on 18 June 2024.

Noted: The Committee noted the circular correspondence from a member of the public on a sensory pod.

9. AOB

None.

10. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting of the AERC will take place on Tuesday 4 February 2025 at 9.30 a.m. in Room 21, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 10.45 a.m.

Jonathan Buckley MLA
Chairperson, Assembly and Executive Review Committee
4 February 2025