



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Assembly and Executive Review Committee (AERC)

Minutes of Proceedings

Tuesday 16 September 2025 at 9.30 a.m.

Meeting Location: Room 21, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Pat Sheehan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Sinead Ennis MLA

Michelle Guy MLA

Michelle McIlveen MLA

Gary Middleton MLA

Matthew O'Toole MLA

John Stewart MLA

Apologies:

Jonathan Buckley MLA (Chairperson)

Carál Ní Chuilín MLA



Northern Ireland Assembly

In Attendance:

Shane McAteer, Committee Clerk
Ashleigh Mitford, Senior Assistant Clerk
Elaine Farrell, Assistant Clerk
Alison Ferguson, Clerical Supervisor
Laura Gourley, Clerical Officer
Christopher Dickison, Senior Assistant Clerk (Agenda item 3)
Jessica Jacques, Senior Assistant Clerk (Agenda item 3)

The meeting commenced at 9.31 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 Assembly proceedings, including Committee proceedings, relating to that matter.

No interests were declared at this point in the meeting.



Northern Ireland Assembly

3. Review into Assembly and Executive Reform – initial consideration of written evidence

The Clerk briefed the Committee and provided an update on the written submissions received in response to the Committee's Call for Evidence for the Review.

The Committee considered the written submissions and discussed next steps in the review process.

John Stewart joined the meeting at 9.34 a.m.

Noted: The Committee noted the written evidence submissions received from the Call for Evidence.

Noted: The Committee noted the progress made in drafting an analysis document on 'Consideration of the Evidence' and noted the approach taken in that regard.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to incorporate applicable written evidence gathered by the previous Committee into the Consideration of the Evidence document.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule oral evidence sessions with a range of respondents who had provided written evidence to the Committee and to have the option to invite other witnesses where necessary.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that, where possible, the witnesses will be grouped onto panels for the oral evidence sessions and that they will be asked to outline their preferred options for Assembly and Executive reform, along with the benefits and drawbacks which they perceive for each option.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to further consider the scheduling of the oral evidence sessions at the next meeting.

The meeting moved into open session at 9.45 a.m.

4. Draft minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2025, subject to a minor amendment.



5. Matters arising

None.

6. Review of Assembly Committee engagement on cross-cutting Executive strategies – update on call for evidence

The Senior Assistant Clerk introduced this agenda item and provided an update on the Committee's Call for Evidence for the review.

Noted: The Committee noted the progress to date on the Call for Evidence for the review.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Committee on Procedures to establish if it intends to conduct a review of the Assembly's legislative processes in the current mandate as per the recommendation of the Speaker last year.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to share the list of cross-cutting Executive strategies provided by the Executive Office with all statutory committees for information and comment as applicable.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request confirmation from the Executive Office that the cross-cutting Executive strategies listed in its correspondence are live strategies.

Noted: The Committee noted the paper on evidence gathered from Assembly Committee clerking staff on the effectiveness of existing mechanisms for cross-cutting committee scrutiny and opportunities for reform of existing procedures and practices.

Noted: The Committee noted that a summary of all responses to the Committee's Call for Evidence will be provided at a future meeting.



Northern Ireland Assembly

7. Review into the development of a formal process and guidance on the handling of Westminster Statutory Instruments which include a role for the Assembly – update on the call for evidence

The Senior Assistant Clerk introduced this agenda item and provided an update on the Committee's Call for Evidence for the review.

Noted: The Committee noted the progress to date on the Call for Evidence for the review.

Noted: The Committee noted that a summary of all the responses to the Committee's call for evidence will be provided at a future meeting.

8. Correspondence

None.

9. AOB

None.

10. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting of the AERC will take place on Tuesday 7 October 2025 at 9.30 a.m. in Room 21.

The meeting was adjourned at 10.00 a.m.



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Jonathan Buckley MLA
Chairperson, Assembly and Executive Review Committee

7 October 2025