Assembly and Executive Review Committee (AERC)

Minutes of Proceedings

Tuesday 10 November 2026 at 9.30 a.m.

Meeting Location: Room 106, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Deborah Erskine MLA (Chairperson)
Pat Sheehan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Jonathan Buckley MLA
Sinéad Ennis MLA
Michelle Guy MLA
Michelle McIlveen MLA
Carál Ní Chuilín MLA
Matthew O'Toole MLA
John Stewart MLA

Apologies:

None

Northern Ireland Assembly

In Attendance:

Shane McAteer, Committee Clerk

Ashleigh Mitford, Senior Assistant Clerk

Laura Gourley, Clerical Supervisor

Alison Ferguson, Clerical Officer

Marie Austin, Committee Clerk (agenda item 5)

Christopher Dickison, Senior Assistant Clerk (agenda item 5)

Agreed: The Committee agreed to hold the meeting in closed session.

The meeting commenced at 9.39 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 declarations were declared at this point in the meeting.

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3. Draft minutes

Michelle McIlveen joined the meeting at 9.40 a.m.

Jonathan Buckley joined the meeting at 9.40 a.m.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2026.

4. Matters arising

None.

5. Review into Assembly and Executive Reform – workshop follow-up

The Committee noted a Committee Secretariat briefing paper in relation to the agenda item.

The Chairperson introduced the agenda item.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it is content with the selection of options, identified by the Committee Secretariat, as falling within the scope of the Review into Assembly and Executive Reform.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it is content with the analysis of the options, as provided by the Committee Secretariat, which fall within the scope of the Review, including the perceived benefits and drawbacks as cited in the evidence.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it is content to confirm the options assessed by the Committee Secretariat as out-of-scope, and agreed that these are appended to the Committee's review report with a recommendation that future consideration should be given to them as applicable.

Matthew O'Toole joined the meeting at 9:42 a.m.

The Committee Clerks briefed the Committee on approaches to assessing and reporting on the reform options.

Agreed: The Committee agreed 'approach 1b', set out in the Committee Secretariat briefing paper as follows:

The Committee will report to the Assembly asking it to note the analysis of the benefits and drawbacks of the reform options as cited in the evidence. The Review will be concluded with no further assessment, and a Committee report will be drafted for consideration and agreement. An extended debate will be proposed to the Business Committee to allow Committee members to set out their initial party positions on each of the 24 reform options and the Hansard of the debate will be published as an addendum to the Committee's report. Following the debate, the Committee will also offer the opportunity to all Assembly parties and independent Members to respond in writing setting out their formal positions on all 24 reform options. Any responses will be published as further addenda to the Committee's report.

Noted: The Committee noted that Matthew O'Toole's preference would have been for the Committee to agree an approach that would result in the Committee's report including party positions and potentially Committee recommendations on the reform options, ahead of the Assembly debate.

6. Date, time and place of the next meeting

The next meeting of the AERC will take place on Tuesday 17 November 2026 at 9.30 a.m. in Room 21.

The meeting was adjourned at 9.59 a.m.

Deborah Erskine MLA
Chairperson, Assembly and Executive Review Committee

17 November 2026