



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Assembly and Executive Review Committee (AERC)

Minutes of Proceedings

Tuesday 15 September 2026 at 9.30 a.m.

Meeting Location: Room 21, Parliament Buildings

Present:

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

Apologies:

Carál Ní Chuilín MLA

In Attendance:

Shane McAteer, Committee Clerk
Marie Austin, Committee Clerk (agenda item 5)
Ashleigh Mitford, Senior Assistant Clerk
Laura Gourley, Clerical Supervisor
Alison Ferguson, Clerical Officer



Northern Ireland Assembly

Anurag Deb, Research Officer (agenda item 6)

The meeting commenced at 9.36 a.m. in open session with Mr. Sheehan in the Chair.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Declaration of Interests

The Deputy 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.

3. Draft minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2026.

4. Matters arising

None.



Northern Ireland
Assembly

5. Review into Assembly and Executive Reform – oral evidence session with Chris Hazzard MP

Agreed: The Committee agreed for the oral evidence session to be recorded by Hansard.

Chris Hazzard MP joined the meeting at 9.39 a.m.

Mr Hazzard briefed the Committee on the Sinn Féin position on reform options, and this was followed by a question and answer session.

Mr O'Toole joined the meeting at 9.47 a.m.

Mrs Erskine joined the meeting at 9.57 a.m. and took the Chair.

Miss McIlveen left the meeting at 9:57 a.m.

Mrs Ennis left the meeting at 10.02 a.m.

The Chairperson thanked Mr Hazzard for his attendance.

Mr Hazzard left the meeting at 10.22 a.m.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to add the Sinn Féin submission to the evidence base for the Review.

Noted: The Committee noted that Gavin Robinson MP has confirmed his attendance at an oral evidence session, to present the DUP position, at the meeting on 29 September 2026.

Agreed: The Committee agreed for the Committee secretariat to follow up with Paul Givan MLA to confirm whether he intends to provide oral evidence, in his capacity as former First Minister, to the Committee on 29 September 2026.

6. 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

The Senior Assistant Clerk briefed the Committee on the Review.



Northern Ireland Assembly

Noted: The Committee noted there was pressure on its decision-making quorum and brought forward its consideration of key decisions before returning to the Research Briefing. Consequently, the agenda for the meeting was reordered (with the Research Briefing becoming item 9).

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the extract from the review of evidence paper as provided for in the Committee meeting pack.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a review of evidence briefing for the meeting to be held on 29 September 2026.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the correspondence, dated 28 July 2026, from the Senedd is incorporated into the review of evidence paper and agreed to write to the Senedd to thank it for its assistance.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to add the research paper to the review of evidence paper.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the research paper is brought to the attention of statutory committees for information, noting that the AERC will report its recommendations to the Assembly in due course.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments at Westminster to establish whether it considers technical scrutiny exclusively from the perspective of Westminster or more broadly.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Examiner of Statutory Rules (ESR) to seek her formal views on the merits of Standing Orders being amended so that Assembly committees may delegate technical scrutiny of Westminster Statutory Instruments that are subject to Assembly procedure to the ESR.

Agreed: The Committee noted the progress of an update of the Executive's Handbook of Subordinate Legislation (the 'Red Book').



Northern Ireland
Assembly

7. Draft End of Session Report

The Committee considered the draft End of Session Report for the period 1 September 2025 -31 August 2026.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Remit, Powers and Membership section of the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Key Activities, Outputs and Achievements section of the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with paragraph 1 of the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with paragraphs 2-6 of the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with paragraph 7 of the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with paragraph 8 and the Appendix on Committee Expenditure.

Noted: The Committee noted that the End of Session report will be published on the Committee webpage in due course.

8. Correspondence

Noted: The Committee noted a response from the Department of Justice confirming acceptance of the Committee's invitation to provide oral evidence on the Committee's Review of Assembly committee engagement on cross-cutting Executive strategies.

Agreed: The Committee noted the correspondence from Kellie Armstrong MLA requesting that the Committee considers undertaking a review of the role of the Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly. The Committee agreed that its response should note that some of the issues raised are already covered in the evidence to the Committee's ongoing Review into Assembly and Executive Reform.



Northern Ireland Assembly

Mr O'Toole left the meeting at 10.32 a.m. (the Committee lost decision-making quorum).

9. Review into the development of a formal process and guidance on the handling of Westminster Statutory Instruments which include a role for the Assembly – RalSe Briefing

The Assembly Research Officer, Anurag Deb, joined the meeting at 10:32am and briefed the Committee on his research paper.

The Chairperson thanked Mr Deb for his briefing.

Mr. Deb left the meeting at 10.42 a.m.

10. Forward Work Programme

Noted: The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme.

11. AOB

None.

12. Date, time and place of the next meeting

The next meeting of the AERC will take place on Tuesday 29 September 2026 at 9.30 a.m. in Room 21.

The meeting was adjourned at 10.43 a.m.



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Deborah Erskine MLA
Chairperson, Assembly and Executive Review Committee

29 September 2026