



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

# Chairpersons' Liaison Group

## Minutes of Proceedings

**22 October 2024**

**Room 21, Parliament Buildings**

**Present:**

Kellie Armstrong MLA  
Phillip Brett MLA  
Joanne Bunting MLA  
Deborah Erskine MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Nick Mathison MLA

**Apologies:**

Paula Bradshaw MLA  
Jonathan Buckley MLA  
Robbie Butler MLA  
Alan Chambers MLA  
Colm Gildernew MLA  
Liz Kimmins MLA  
Daniel McCrossan MLA  
Philip McGuigan MLA  
Carál Ni Chuilín (Chairperson)  
Matthew O'Toole MLA

**In Attendance:**     Roisin Kelly (Assembly Clerk)  
                              Mary Kerr (Senior Assistant Clerk)  
                              Charmaine McBride (Assistant Assembly Clerk)

                              Lesley Hogg (Chief Executive/Clerk to the Assembly)  
                              Frank Geddis (Clerk Assistant)  
                              Paul Gill (Clerk Assistant)  
                              Stephanie Mallon (Clerk Assistant)

The meeting commenced at 1:15pm in closed session.

The Deputy Chairperson welcomed members to the fifth meeting of the Chairpersons' Liaison Group (CLG) and provided an overview of the items of business.

### **1. Apologies**

As above.

### **2. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

**Agreed:** The Chairpersons agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2024.

### **3. Matters Arising**

#### **3a) Parliamentary Excellence Programme**

Members were content to note the Autumn update on the Parliamentary Excellence Programme 2024.

*Phillip Brett left the meeting at 1:18pm*

*The meeting lost a decision-making quorum at 1:18pm, therefore no further decisions could be made.*

The Deputy Chairperson asked Roisin Kelly (Clerk to CLG) to speak to members on the recent 'Effective Questioning' sessions that were delivered to committees by John Sturrock KC of Core Solutions. The Clerk asked members for feedback on the 'Effective Questioning' sessions and if there was anything they would require for a more bespoke training session.

Members expressed views on their respective committees' agenda; the pressure on Chairs to get business through; the timeliness and quantity of departmental papers and; how these impact on an appropriate level of scrutiny.

### **3b) Update – Report on Strengthening Scrutiny**

Members received an update on the progression of the predecessor Chairpersons' Liaison Group (2017-2022) recommendations on strengthening committee scrutiny.

Members discussed delegated legislation and had an interest in expanding knowledge of what is required of committees when they review these rules to ensure compliance with legislation. Members also discussed breaches of the 21-day rule.

*While noting that they did not have quorum to decide actions, the Chairpersons present suggested that agreement of the Chairpersons be sought by email for the issue of correspondence to Ministers on the issues discussed; and asked the Clerk to action this suggestion.*

### **8. Date, Time and Place of next meeting**

The Deputy Chairperson announced that the next meeting of the CLG was scheduled for Tuesday 3 December 2024, in Room 21 at 1pm.

*Joanne Bunting left the meeting at 1:59pm.*

*Having lost quorum, the meeting adjourned at 2pm*

**Carál Ni Chuílin MLA**

**Chairperson, Chairpersons' Liaison Group**

**22 October 2024**