



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee on Procedures

Minutes of Proceedings

15 May 2024

Meeting Location: Room 21, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Kellie Armstrong MLA (Chairperson)

Trevor Clarke MLA

Órlaithí Flynn MLA

Maolíosa McHugh MLA

Matthew O'Toole MLA

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Robbie Butler MLA

Danny Donnelly MLA

Sinéad Ennis MLA

Apologies:

William Irwin MLA

In Attendance:

Christine Darrah, Assembly Clerk

Stella McArdle, Assembly Clerk

Michael Best, Assistant Assembly Clerk

Kevin Marks, Clerical Officer

Karen O'Hare, Clerical Officer

The meeting started in public session at 10.09am

1. Apologies

Apologies as above.

2. Draft Minutes

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

The meeting experienced some broadcasting issues at this point.

3. Matters Arising

Broadcasting Issues

The Committee considered a response from the Assembly's Acting Head of Communications regarding the broadcasting issues raised by the Committee in relation to recent meetings.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite relevant officials to attend the next meeting to discuss the broadcasting issues.

Private Members' Bills

The Committee noted a letter from the Speaker to all MLAs setting out his ruling on privately drafted bills and the Handbook for Members' Bills for the 2022 – 2027 mandate which referred to the intention to provide for a final deadline for the introduction of a Private Members' Bill in Standing Orders.

The Committee noted that a draft Standing Order to provide for a final deadline of the last sitting day in June of the penultimate session of a mandate for a Private Members' Bill to be introduced to the Assembly, as agreed at the meeting on 1 May 2024, will be available for consideration at the meeting on 12 June 2024.

4. Provision of Proxy Voting for Parental Leave in Plenary

Matthew O'Toole joined the meeting at 10.20 a.m.

The meeting was suspended at 10.24 a.m. due to a broadcasting issue.

The meeting resumed at 10.29 a.m.

The following Members were present: Kellie Armstrong MLA (Chairperson); Trevor Clarke MLA; Órailthí Flynn MLA; Maolíosa McHugh MLA; and Matthew O'Toole MLA

The following Members were present by video or teleconference: Sinéad Ennis (Deputy Chairperson); Robbie Butler MLA; and Danny Donnelly MLA

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the meeting should move into closed session.

The meeting moved into closed session at 10.32 a.m.

The Committee discussed the types of fostering that may be included in the definition of parental leave.

The meeting moved into public session at 10.50 a.m.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the types of fostering that may be included in the definition of parental leave.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to commission research on the registration arrangements for foster carers and kinship carers.

The Committee discussed its preferred approach to proxy voting for parental leave in Plenary.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to contact the Assembly Business Office to establish the rationale for the 9.30 a.m. deadline for the notification of proxy voting arrangements during the COVID pandemic.

Sinéad Ennis left the meeting 10.57a.m.

Matthew O'Toole left the meeting at 12.04 p.m.

5. Review of Assembly Oral Questions

The Committee considered background information relating to its future Review of Assembly Oral Questions.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to commission research on the number of Assembly Oral Questions (AQOs) that are grouped and withdrawn and the occasions on which all selected AQOs are answered in Plenary.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Assembly Parties and Independent MLAs for views and suggestions on what may be covered in a future review of Assembly Oral Questions.

6. Committee Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme that reflected the key priority areas of work agreed by the Committee.

7. Correspondence

The Committee noted a response from the Clerk to the Committee for Finance providing an update on a recent Inter-Parliamentary Forum.

8. Chairperson's Business

None

9. Any Other Business

None

10. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 29 May 2024 at 10.00 a.m. in room 21, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 12.13 p.m.

Kellie Armstrong MLA
Chairperson, Committee on Procedures

15 May 2024