



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee on Procedures

Minutes of Proceedings

29 May 2024

Meeting Location: Room 21, Parliament Buildings

Present: Sinéad Ennis MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Danny Donnelly MLA

Órlaithí Flynn MLA

Maolíosa McHugh MLA

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Robbie Butler MLA

Cara Hunter MLA

William Irwin MLA

Apologies: Kellie Armstrong MLA (Chairperson)

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 at 10.00 a.m. in public session.

1. Apologies

As above.

The Deputy Chairperson welcomed Cara Hunter MLA to the Committee and placed on record the Committee's appreciation of the contribution of Matthew O'Toole MLA during his time as a Member.

2. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 15 May 2024.

3. Matters Arising

The Committee noted the updated membership of the Committee.

4. Broadcasting Issues - Briefing by Assembly Head of Communications (Acting)

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

The meeting moved into closed session at 10.04 a.m.

The Deputy Chairperson welcomed Michael Cairns, Assembly Head of Communications (Acting) to the Committee. Mr Cairns briefed the Committee on the

new broadcasting system, the issues experienced by the Committee during meetings, the causes identified and remedies put in place.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Mr Cairns indicated that he would provide further clarification regarding one issue discussed during the session.

Cara Hunter left the meeting at 10.26 a.m.

Robbie Butler left the meeting at 10.28 a.m.

The Deputy Chairperson thanked Mr Cairns and he left the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to Michael Cairns regarding the further information he had indicated he would provide on the broadcasting issue from a previous meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to monitor the situation regarding the broadcasting system at future meetings and seek further clarification from officials if necessary.

5. Schedules 6A and 6B of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 – Briefing by Assembly Officials

The meeting moved into public session at 10.44 a.m.

The Deputy Chairperson welcomed Paul Gill, Clerk Assistant, and Shauna Mageean, Assembly EU Affairs Manager to the meeting. Mr Gill and Ms Mageean briefed the Committee on Schedules 6A and 6B of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The Deputy Chairperson thanked Mr Gill and Ms Mageean and Ms Mageean left the meeting.

6. Schedules 6A and 6B of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 – Legal Advice

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

The meeting moved into closed session at 11.24 a.m.

The Deputy Chairperson welcomed Ms Helen Smyth, Assembly Legal Advisor, to the meeting. Ms Smyth outlined the legal advice on Schedules 6A and 6B of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and implications for Standing Orders.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The Deputy Chairperson thanked Ms Smyth and Mr Gill and they left the meeting.

7. Schedules 6A and 6B of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 – Committee Consideration

The Committee considered the need for Standing Orders in relation to Schedule 6A or 6B of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

The meeting was suspended at 12.13 p.m.

The meeting resumed at 12.20 p.m.

The following Members were present: Sinéad Ennis MLA (Deputy Chairperson), Danny Donnelly MLA, Maolíosa McHugh MLA, Órlaithí Flynn MLA.

The following Member was present by video or teleconference: William Irwin MLA.

The meeting moved into public session at 12.23 p.m.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule further consideration of the need for Standing Orders in relation to Schedule 6A or Schedule 6B of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 for a future meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request legal advice from Assembly Legal Services on the potential provision of substitute members and for proxy voting for the Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny Committee.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny Committee to update it on the Committee's considerations, and to request further information on its requirements.

8. Annual Debate on the Executive's Legislative Timetable – Legal Advice

Agreed: The Committee agreed to defer this briefing to a future meeting.

9. Proxy Voting for Parental Leave in Plenary

The Committee noted the position on proxy voting for parental leave in Plenary.

10. Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered its Forward Work Programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Forward Work Programme should be updated to reflect on-going work priorities and the need to reschedule some items.

11. Correspondence

The Committee considered a letter from the Chairperson of the Committee for Communities on procedural guidance for committees holding closed sessions.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to refer the matter to the Chairpersons' Liaison Group for initial consideration and to advise the Committee for Communities of the action taken.

12. Chairperson's Business

None.

13. Any Other Business

None.

14. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 12 June 2024 at 10.00 a.m. in room 21, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 12.32 p.m.

Kellie Armstrong MLA
Chairperson, Committee on Procedures

12 June 2024