



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

# Committee on Procedures

## Minutes of Proceedings

**27 November 2024**

**Meeting Location:** Room 21, Parliament Buildings

**Present:** Kellie Armstrong MLA (Chairperson)  
Trevor Clarke MLA  
Órlíathí Flynn MLA  
Maolíosa McHugh MLA

**Present by Video or Teleconference:**

Sinéad Ennis MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Robbie Butler MLA  
Danny Donnelly MLA  
Cara Hunter MLA  
William Irwin MLA

**Apologies:** None

**In Attendance:** Christine Darrah, Assembly Clerk  
Stella McArdle, Assembly Clerk  
Michael Best, Assistant Assembly Clerk  
Veronica Lo Pinto, Clerical Officer

The meeting started at 10.04 a.m. in public session.

### **1. Apologies**

As above.

### **2. Draft Minutes**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2024.

### **3. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

The meeting moved into closed session at 10.06 a.m.

Sinéad Ennis joined the meeting at 10.06 a.m.

### **4. Northern Ireland (Ministers, Elections and Petitions of Concern) Act 2022 – Petitions of Concern**

The Chairperson welcomed Mr Paul Gill, Clerk Assistant, to the meeting.

Mr Gill briefed the Committee on Petition of Concern procedures in respect of Section 42 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 as amended by the Northern Ireland (Ministers, Elections and Petitions of Concern) 2022 Act and on other issues that may need to be considered regarding possible amendment of Standing Order 28.

Trevor Clarke joined the meeting at 10.38 a.m.

Cara Hunter joined the meeting at 10.41 a.m.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked Mr Gill and he left the meeting.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that consideration of whether to provide for a new or amended Standing Order 28 should be included on the list of priority areas of work.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to commission advice from Assembly Legal Services on Section 42 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 as amended by the Northern Ireland (Ministers, Elections and Petitions of Concern) 2022 Act

The meeting moved into public session at 10.55 a.m.

## **5. Inquiry into Extension of Standing Order 27A Voting by Proxy - Draft Terms of Reference**

The Committee considered draft terms of reference for an inquiry into the extension of Standing Order 27A Voting by Proxy.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the draft terms of reference for the inquiry.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to commission research papers from RalSe on the position in other legislatures on the categories of proxy voting to be considered during the inquiry.

## **6. Forward Work Programme**

The Committee considered an updated Forward Work Programme.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that the next meeting of the Committee should take place on Wednesday 15 January 2025.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the amended Forward Work Programme.

## **7. Correspondence**

The Committee considered further correspondence from Mr Timothy Gaston MLA on his request that consideration be given to setting out in Standing Orders a number of

requirements regarding arrangements for meetings between a Committee Chairperson and witnesses prior to their appearance.

Mr Robbie Butler MLA declared an interest as Chairperson of the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to Mr Gaston providing information on the strategic planning process it has undertaken and the resultant list of issues that it has prioritised for consideration.

## **8. Chairperson's Business**

None.

## **9. Any Other Business**

### **Item 1 – Guidance on Proxy Voting for Paternal Leave in Plenary**

The Chairperson advised the Committee that the Speaker is progressing his guidance on proxy voting for paternal leave in Plenary.

### **Item 2 – Committee Study Visit to the Scottish Parliament**

The Chairperson advised Members that the travel pack for the Committee Study Visit to the Scottish Parliament would be available by the end of the week. .

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

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 15 January 2025 at 10.00 a.m. in Room 21, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 11.06 a.m.

Kellie Armstrong MLA

Chairperson, Committee on Procedures

15 January 2025