



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee on Procedures

Minutes of Proceedings

28 January 2026

Meeting Location: The Senate, Parliament Buildings

Present: Kellie Armstrong MLA (Chairperson)
Cheryl Brownlee MLA
Trevor Clarke MLA

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Órlaithí Flynn MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Danny Baker MLA
Robbie Butler MLA
Danny Donnelly MLA
Cara Hunter MLA
Philip McGuigan MLA

Apologies: None

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

The meeting started at 10.02 a.m. in public session.

1. Apologies

As above.

The Chairperson welcomed Danny Baker to his first meeting of the Committee.

The Chairperson placed on the record the Committee's appreciation for Aoife Finnegan's contribution to the work of the Committee.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to Aoife Finnegan MLA thanking her for her contribution as a member of the Committee.

2. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2026.

3. Matters Arising

None.

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

The meeting moved into closed session at 10.05 a.m.

4. Private Members' Bills – requirement for PMBs to be fully costed – RalSe Briefing Paper and consideration of proposed approach

The Chairperson welcomed Nathan Mulholland, Assembly Research Officer, to the meeting.

Mr Mulholland provided an overview of a briefing paper on the costing requirements of Private Members' Bills in the Oireachtas.

Cara Hunter joined the meeting at 10.09 a.m.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked Mr Mulholland and he left the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed not to add the requirement that Private Members' Bills should be fully costed to its list of priority work areas and to include the matter in the Legacy Report for consideration by the Committee in the next mandate.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the First Minister and deputy First Minister informing them of its decision not to include fully costed Private Members' Bills on its list of priority work areas and that it would be included in the Legacy Report for consideration by the Committee in the next mandate.

5. Northern Ireland Act 1998 Section 42 – Petitions of Concern – further consideration of potential provision in Standing Orders

Trevor Clarke joined the meeting at 10.18 a.m.

Danny Donnelly joined the meeting at 10.20 a.m.

The Committee considered the responses received on the draft illustrative Standing Orders on petitions of concern.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to bank those paragraphs where all responses had expressed broad agreement.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to bank paragraphs in draft SO28 (1), (6)(a), (6)(b), (8), (9), (11), (12) and (13).

Agreed: The Committee agreed to bank draft SO28(2) subject to a minor amendment.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek procedural advice on how to allow the Assembly to decide on the inclusion of draft SO28(3).

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Speaker for his views on the concerns raised in some of the responses to draft SO28(4), 28(5), 28(6)(c) and 28(7).

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek legal advice on the concerns raised in some of the responses to draft SO 28(10) and 28(11).

Agreed: The Committee seek legal advice on (i) concerns raised in some of the responses to draft SO36A and 40A (ii) suggestion for refinement amendments and (ii) a suggestion that a single Standing Order covering all aspects of petitions of concern is drafted.

The Committee considered a letter from Matthew O'Toole MLA on the absence of provision in Standing Orders for petitions of concern.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to reply to Mr O'Toole providing an update on the work that the Committee has undertaken on petitions of concern.

6. Private Review of Assembly Written Questions – Cost of Assembly Questions – RaISe Briefing Paper

The Committee noted the RaISe briefing paper on the cost of written questions in the Assembly and other legislatures and the lack of available information.

The Committee noted that further consideration of the Review of Assembly Written Questions will be scheduled into the Forward Work Programme in due course.

The Chairperson suspended the meeting at 11.18 a.m.

Órlaithí Flynn left the meeting at 11.18 a.m.

Cara Hunter left the meeting at 11.18 a.m.

The meeting resumed in public session at 11.27 p.m.

7. Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered an updated Forward Work Programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the updated Forward Work Programme.

8. Correspondence

The Committee considered correspondence from the Chair of the Committee for Finance, Matthew O'Toole MLA, on the Public Office (Accountability) Bill Legislative Consent Memorandum (LCM) raising concerns about the LCM process for this Bill.

The Committee noted that consideration of its approach to LCMs is on the agenda for its next meeting on 11 February 2026.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to add consideration of the correspondence to the agenda item for the meeting on 11 February 2026.

9. Chairperson's Business

None.

10. Any Other Business

None.

11. Date, Time and Place of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 11 February 2026 at 10.00 a.m. in Room 21, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 11.34 a.m.

Kellie Armstrong MLA
Chairperson, Committee on Procedures
28 January 2026