



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee on Procedures

Minutes of Proceedings

14 January 2026

Meeting Location: Room 21, Parliament Buildings

Present: Kellie Armstrong MLA (Chairperson)
Cheryl Brownlee MLA

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Robbie Butler MLA
Danny Donnelly MLA
Aoife Finnegan MLA
Philip McGuigan MLA

Apologies: Órlaithí Flynn MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Trevor Clarke MLA
Cara Hunter MLA

In Attendance: Stella McArdle, Assembly Clerk
Christine Darrah, 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 10 December 2025.

3. Matters Arising

Item 1 – Response from the Speaker on potential Inquiry into Rescheduling Plenary Business

The Committee considered a response from the Speaker on a potential Inquiry into Rescheduling Plenary Business.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider the correspondence from the Speaker at the meeting on 11 February 2026.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Mediahuis judgement should be provided to Members for information in advance of the Committee meeting.

Item 2 – Letter from Matthew O'Toole MLA regarding Petitions of Concern

The Committee considered correspondence from Matthew O'Toole MLA on the process for Petitions of Concern which is due for further consideration at the meeting on 28 January 2026.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider the correspondence from Matthew O'Toole MLA at the meeting on 28 January 2026.

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

The meeting moved into closed session at 10.10 a.m.

4. Inquiry into an Extension of Standing Order 27A Voting by Proxy for long-term illness, bereavement and absence on official Assembly business – Consideration of preferred position

The Committee considered its preferred position on the extension of Standing Order 27A Voting by Proxy for long-term illness, bereavement and absence on official Assembly business.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Speaker, the political parties in the Assembly and the independent MLA asking for views on its preferred position with specific views to be sought on the options for the duration of proxy voting for bereavement.

The Committee considered a revised timetable for the remaining steps of the Inquiry.

Agreed: The Committee agreed a revised timetable for the Inquiry.

5. Repeal of Standing Order 70 and consequential amendments to Standing Orders – Further consideration of consequential amendment to SO22(2)

The Committee noted the current position regarding responses from the Speaker and the Business Committee on this matter.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to defer consideration of this issue to a future meeting.

6. Private Members' Bills – Costing Requirements for Members' Bills: a comparative perspective across the United Kingdom – RalSe Briefing Paper

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

Mr Mulholland provided an overview of a briefing paper on the comparative costing requirements of Private Members' Bills in the UK Parliament, the Scottish Parliament and the Senedd.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked Mr Mulholland and he left the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request research on the costing requirements for Private Members' Bills in the Oireachtas.

The meeting moved into public session at 10.46 a.m.

7. Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered an updated Forward Work Programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the updated Forward Work Programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that a reminder should be sent to those parties that have not yet provided a response to the Committee's proposed approach for the provision of Section 42 of the Northern Ireland Act and petitions of concern.

8. Correspondence

The Committee considered correspondence from a member of the public on the process for public petitions.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the member of the public advising them of the process for submitting public petitions to the Assembly

The Committee noted correspondence from the Public Accounts Committee on its primacy over Northern Ireland Audit Office reports.

The Committee considered an invitation from the Assembly's Public Engagement Manager to participate in the 2026 Balmoral Show.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to decline the invitation as the opportunity is more appropriate to Statutory Committees.

The Committee considered a response from the Chairperson of the Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny Committee providing information on the operation of Standing Order 59A.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to reply to the Chairperson of the Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny Committee thanking them for the information and advising that no further review of Standing Order 59A would take place at this time.

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 28 January 2026 at 10.00 a.m. in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 10.53 a.m.

Kellie Armstrong MLA
Chairperson, Committee on Procedures
28 January 2026