



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee on Procedures

Minutes of Proceedings

25 February 2026

Meeting Location: Room 21, Parliament Buildings

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

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Danny Baker MLA
Robbie Butler MLA
Danny Donnelly MLA
Cara Hunter MLA
Philip McGuigan MLA

Apologies: None

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

The meeting started at 10.05 a.m. in public session.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2026.

Robbie Butler joined the meeting at 10.05 a.m.

3. Matters Arising

The Committee noted that there was a typographical error in the Minutes of Proceedings for the meeting on the 28 January 2026 and that the error had now been corrected.

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

The meeting moved into closed session at 10.07 a.m.

4. Standing Order 27A Voting by Proxy – Consideration of feedback from stakeholders, final position and commissioning of draft Standing Order

The Committee considered responses from stakeholders on the Committee's preferred position on the extension of Standing Order 27A Voting by Proxy to include long-term illness and injury.

Danny Baker joined the meeting at 10.12 a.m.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that legal advice is commissioned on a draft amendment to Standing Order 27A Voting by Proxy to provide for proxy voting for serious long-term illness or injury; and that the Committee

report, to be drafted in due course, reflects the Committee's preferred position.

The Committee considered responses from stakeholders on the Committee's preferred position on the extension of Standing Order 27A Voting by Proxy to include bereavement.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the duration of a proxy vote for bereavement should be five working days, with flexibility for a further five working days.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the definition to be applied to bereavement for the purposes of proxy voting should mirror that available to Assembly Commission staff for bereavement leave.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that legal advice is commissioned on a draft amendment to Standing Order 27A Voting by Proxy to provide for proxy voting for bereavement; and that the Committee report, to be drafted in due course, reflects the Committee's preferred position.

The Committee considered responses from stakeholders on the Committee's preferred position on the extension of Standing Order 27A Voting by Proxy to include absence on official Assembly business.

Trevor Clarke joined the meeting at 10.35 a.m.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Speaker for clarification on the specific circumstances where the Assembly might agree that Members should participate in other business on a Plenary Day.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that proxy voting for absence on official Assembly business should not be available to Members conducting such business in Parliament Buildings.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to defer further consideration on the extension of Standing Order 27A to absence on official business pending a response from the Speaker.

5. Repeal of Standing Order 70 – Further consideration of consequential amendment to Standing Order 22(2)

Trevor Clarke declared an interest as a member of the Business Committee.

Philip McGuigan declared an interest as a member of the Business Committee.

The Committee considered the responses received from the Speaker and the Business Committee on the consequential amendment to Standing Order 22.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request that Legal Services provide an alternative amendment to Standing Order 22(2), and the associated legal advice.

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

6. Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered an updated Forward Work Programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the updated Forward Work Programme.

7. Correspondence

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

8. Chairperson's Business

None.

9. Any Other Business

None.

10. Date, Time and Place of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 11 March 2026 at 10.00 a.m. in the Senate, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 10.45 a.m.

Kellie Armstrong MLA
Chairperson, Committee on Procedures
11 March 2026