



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee on Standards and Privileges

Minutes of Proceedings

10 June 2026

Meeting Location: Room 106, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Cathy Mason MLA (Chairperson)

Connie Egan (Deputy Chairperson)

Stewart Dickson MLA

Emma Sheerin MLA

In attendance by video or teleconference:

Keith Buchanan MLA

Paul Frew MLA

Declan McAleer MLA

Apologies:

Trevor Clarke MLA

Mark Durkan MLA

In Attendance:

Shane McAteer, Committee Clerk

Ashleigh Mitford, Senior Assistant Clerk

Elaine Farrell, Assistant Clerk

Laura Gourley, Clerical Supervisor

Alison Ferguson, Clerical Officer

The meeting commenced at 10.03 a.m. in closed session, in accordance with agreed procedure.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Declaration of interests

The Chairperson advised Committee members of the ongoing requirement to declare relevant financial or other interests as and when they arise and before taking part in any Assembly proceedings, including Committee proceedings, relating to that matter.

Stewart Dickson declared an interest in relation to the complaint case to be considered under agenda items 5, 6, and 7 in that he is a member of the Committee referred to in the Commissioner's complaint investigation report.

Connie Egan declared an interest in relation to the complaint case to be considered under agenda items 5, 6, and 7 in that she was a member of the Committee referred to in the Commissioner's complaint investigation report.

Emma Sheerin declared an interest in relation to the complaint case to be considered under agenda items 5, 6, and 7 in that she was a member of the Committee referred to in the Commissioner's complaint investigation report.

The Chairperson advised the Committee that Trevor Clarke has indicated to the Committee Clerk that he will recuse himself from all consideration of the complaint case under agenda items 5, 6 and 7.

3. Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 27 May 2026.

4. Matters Arising

The Chairperson advised the Committee that the debate on the motion by the Committee on Procedures on the repeal of Standing Order 70 will be scheduled in plenary in due course and that she will be speaking to that as Chairperson of the Committee.

5. Complaints against a Member – briefing by the Commissioner for Standards

The Commissioner for Standards, Mr Stephen Wright, joined the meeting at 10.07 a.m. The Commissioner briefed the Committee on his investigation report on complaints against the Member. This was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked the Commissioner for his attendance.

The Commissioner left the meeting at 11.03 a.m.

6. Complaints against a Member – oral hearing with respondent

The Member who is the subject of the complaints (the respondent) joined the meeting at 11.04 a.m.

An oral hearing was held with the respondent, the purpose of which was to give them the opportunity to present their previously submitted written response to the Commissioner's investigation report and to answer any related questions from Committee members.

After making an oral statement and responding to questions from members, the respondent left the meeting at 11.37 a.m.

7. Complaints against a Member – Committee deliberation

The Committee deliberated on the complaint case following the briefing by the Commissioner and consideration of the written and oral response from the respondent.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to offer the Commissioner the opportunity to make a written reply to the respondent's criticism of the investigation report, in accordance with normal practice.

8. Correspondence

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence from the Chairpersons' Liaison Group, dated 26 May 2026, on the Committee's recommendation regarding the use of the embargo marking on Assembly committee reports.

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence from the Committee on Procedures, dated 2 June 2026, on the proposed repeal of Standing Order 70 and consequential amendments to Standing Orders.

Agreed: The Committee noted the correspondence, dated 5 June 2026, from the Committee for the Executive Office on guidance on witnesses use of abusive language and making overly political statements or comments, and agreed to consider the issue at a future meeting of the Committee.

9. Forward Work Programme

Agreed: The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme and agreed the schedule of September to December 2026 meeting dates.

10. AOB

The Chairperson advised the Committee that the Assembly Commission has received a Subject Access Request for information held in relation to the breach of the Committee's embargo on a report on 2 February 2026 and correspondence has been provided to the Information Standards Office for its consideration in response to the request.

11. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 1 July 2026 at 10.00 a.m. in Room 106.

The meeting was adjourned at 11.54 a.m.

Cathy Mason MLA

Chairperson, Committee on Standards and Privileges

1 July 2026