

COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURES

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**TUESDAY 19 MARCH 2013
ROOM 144, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr Gerry Kelly MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Jim Allister MLA
Mr Samuel Gardiner MLA
Mr Chris Lyttle MLA
Mr Barry McElduff MLA
Mr Oliver McMullan MLA
Mr Alban Maginness MLA
Lord Morrow MLA
Mr George Robinson MLA

In attendance: Alison Ross (Clerk)
Neil Currie (Assistant Clerk)
Jonathan Watson (Clerical Supervisor)

1.02pm The meeting opened in closed session.

1. Apologies

None.

2. Draft Minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2013

Agreed : Members agreed the draft minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2013.

3. Standing Order 60 – Establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee on Conformity with Equality Requirements

The Committee considered legal advice and a briefing paper on the genesis and application of Standing Order 60, which relates to the establishment of an ad hoc committee on conformity with equality requirements.

In discussing the options on taking this issue forward, the Chairperson drew

Members' attention to the "Review of D'Hondt, Community Designation and Provisions for Opposition" currently being undertaken by the Assembly and Executive Review Committee (AERC), part of which includes consideration of changes to the "rules" governing Petitions of Concern.

Agreed : In view of the work being undertaken by the AERC, it was agreed that the Clerk should ascertain if the AERC review has the scope to cover the issues under consideration by the Committee on Procedures, and to consider this matter further at the next meeting.

4. Inquiry into Topical Questions – Draft Report

The Committee read the draft report on its inquiry into Topical Questions paragraph by paragraph.

Report:

Paragraphs 1 – 13, agreed

Paragraph 14, agreed, as amended

Paragraphs 15 – 55, agreed

Summary of Recommendations – agreed

Topical Question process flow chart – agreed

Executive Summary – read and agreed

Agreed: The inclusion of the following appendices was agreed:
Appendix 1 – Minutes of Proceedings relating to the report
Appendix 2 – Written Submissions
Appendix 3 – Research Papers
Appendix 4 – Correspondence

Agreed: Members ordered the report to be printed.

Agreed: It was agreed that the Chairperson could approve the minutes for the part of today's meeting dealing with consideration of the draft report, in order for an extract to be included in the report.

Agreed: It was agreed that the report should be embargoed until commencement of the debate of the report in plenary.

Agreed: The motion to accompany the report's introduction to the Assembly was agreed, as follows: 'That this assembly approves the Committee on Procedures report on its inquiry into Topical Questions'.

Agreed: It was agreed that a press release should be issued to coincide with the debate of the report. The Committee considered and agreed a draft press release.

1.25pm The meeting moved into public session.

5. Inquiry into the Attorney General participation in proceedings of the Assembly

Agreed: The Committee agreed:

- a) The list of stakeholders who should be invited to submit written evidence.
- b) The draft letter to stakeholders.
- c) The draft “Call for Evidence” pro-forma that respondents should use. The Chairperson advised Members that the pro-forma would be sent to Legal Services for clearance before issue. Should any changes to the pro-forma be required, Members agreed that the Chairperson could approve it, rather than waiting to the next meeting, and the revised pro-forma would be sent to Members.
- d) The deadline for submissions should be 9 May 2013.

6. Standing Order 32(2) – Reasoned Amendments to Bills

The Committee considered the responses that had been received from Parties and Independent Members and other stakeholders, on whether Standing Orders should be amended to state a period during which a Bill that has been rejected at Second Stage cannot be reintroduced.

Agreed: It was agreed to seek legal advice on some of the issues raised by respondents, and to consider the matter further on receipt of the advice.

7. Subsidiarity Monitoring

The Committee noted correspondence from the Assembly’s European Project Manager, which advised Members that a trial period for subsidiarity monitoring and reporting would be undertaken by the Committee for OFMDFM before proceeding with any proposals to amend Standing Orders.

8. Forward Work Programme

The Committee was content with the Forward Work Programme.

9. Correspondence

The Committee considered correspondence from the Evangelical Alliance NI requesting that an e-petition facility be added to the Assembly website.

The Chairperson advised Members that consideration of the public petition

procedures is part of the Terms of Reference for the project that is underway to review committee structures.

Agreed: It was agreed to revisit this matter in the autumn of 2013, when the outcome of the review project is known. A draft response to the Evangelical Alliance NI was considered and agreed.

10. Any other Business

None.

11. Date, time and place of next meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Committee would take place on 23 April 2013 at 1.00pm in Room 144, Parliament Buildings.

1.40pm The Chairperson adjourned the meeting.

Gerry Kelly
Chairperson, Committee on Procedures

23 April 2013