

## COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURES

### MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**TUESDAY 23 SEPTEMBER 2014  
ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr Gerry Kelly MLA (Chairperson)  
Mr Jim Allister MLA  
Ms Paula Bradley MLA  
Mr Samuel Gardiner MLA  
Mr Kieran McCarthy MLA  
Mr Barry McElduff MLA  
Mr Alban Maginness MLA  
Lord Morrow MLA  
Mr George Robinson MLA

In attendance: Alison Ross (Clerk)  
Nick Mitford (Senior Assistant Clerk)  
Neil Currie (Assistant Clerk)

**1.01pm** The meeting opened in public session.

#### **1. Apologies**

Mr Trevor Clarke MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

#### **2. Draft Minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2014**

*Agreed:* Members agreed the draft minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2014.

#### **3. Draft End of Session Report**

The Committee considered the draft End of Session report summarising the work of the Committee from 1 September 2013 to 31 August 2014.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the End of Session report and was content for it to be published.

#### **4. Review of Topical Questions – briefing from junior Ministers**

**1.04pm** Junior Minister Bell, junior Minister McCann and OFMDFM officials Neill Jackson and Graeme Reid joined the meeting. The junior Ministers briefed Members on the views of Executive Ministers on the Topical Question process. This was followed by a question and answer session.

**1.06pm** Mr Allister joined the meeting.

The junior Ministers advised Members that a written briefing paper would be submitted to the Committee following the meeting.

**1.28pm** The Chairperson thanked the junior Ministers for the briefing, and they left the meeting.

**1.29pm** Mr Robinson joined the meeting.

The Committee discussed a number of issues relating to the review.

**1.46pm** Lord Morrow left the meeting.

The Clerk was asked to prepare a briefing paper summarising the discussion, for consideration at the next meeting.

#### **5. Inquiry into the extent to which Standing Orders should permit the Attorney General to participate in proceedings of the Assembly**

*Agreed:* It was agreed to defer this item until the next meeting.

#### **6. Public Petition Procedures**

The Committee considered a Research and Information Service briefing paper on e-petitions systems in other legislatures.

*Agreed:* It was agreed to carry out a review of the public petition procedures in the Assembly, and that this should be done by way of an inquiry. It was agreed to consider the inquiry further at the next meeting.

#### **7. Forward Work Programme**

The Committee was content with the Forward Work Programme.

#### **8. Correspondence**

(a) The Committee considered correspondence from Damien Martin, Clerk Assistant, in relation to the form of the oath administered to witnesses, as set out in Standing Order 71.

*Agreed:* It was agreed to seek legal advice on this matter and to consider

it further on receipt of the advice.

(b) The Committee considered correspondence from a Plenary Clerk in the National Assembly for Wales, requesting information on the background to the new Standing Order which provides for an Exceptional Further Consideration Stage.

*Agreed:* It was agreed that the Clerk could provide this information.

**9. Any other Business**

None.

**10. Date, time and place of next meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Committee would take place on 21 October 2014 at 1.00pm in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

**1.55pm** The Chairperson adjourned the meeting.

Gerry Kelly  
Chairperson, Committee on Procedures

21 October 2014