



COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS AND PRIVILEGES

WEDNESDAY, 30TH APRIL
ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Mr Alastair Ross (Chairperson)
Ms Anna Lo (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Steven Agnew
Mr Cathal Boylan
Ms Paula Bradley
Mr Colum Eastwood
Mr Fra McCann
Mr Ian McCrea
Mrs Sandra Overend
Mr Mervyn Storey

In Attendance: Mr Paul Gill (Assembly Clerk)
Mrs Ashleigh Mitford (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Jonathan Watson (Clerical Supervisor)

Apologies: None

The meeting commenced at 1.30pm in closed session.

Chairperson's Introduction

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the meeting should commence in closed session and then move into open session from agenda item 6.

The Chairperson welcomed Committee members to the meeting.

1. Apologies

No apologies were received.

2. Declaration of Interests

The Chairperson reminded Members of their obligation to declare any relevant financial or other interests before and during each Committee meeting.

No interests were declared.

3. Draft minutes of the meeting held on 9th April 2014

Agreed: The draft minutes of the meeting held on 9th April 2014 were agreed as amended by the Committee.

4. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Correspondence from the Assembly Commissioner for Standards on complaints against members

Members noted the Clerk's Papers and related items of correspondence, dated 31st March 2014 and 25th April 2014, from the Assembly Commissioner for Standards on complaints against two Members.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr Douglas Bain, Northern Ireland Assembly Commissioner for Standards, and invited him to brief the Committee on these items of correspondence. Following each briefing the Commissioner answered Members' questions.

The Chairperson thanked Mr Bain who left the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed with the conclusion of the Assembly Commissioner for Standards that both complaints against Members are inadmissible.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Clerk write to the Members complained of and the complainants enclosing a copy of the Commissioner's correspondence and informing them of the Committee's decision.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Clerk write to the Commissioner informing him of the Committee's decisions.

The meeting moved into open session at 1.39pm

6. Review of the Code of Conduct

The Committee noted the Clerk's paper in relation to the Review and a briefing paper from Dr Tom Walker (Director for the Centre for Ethics at Queen's University Belfast)

The Chairperson welcomed Dr Walker and invited him to brief the Committee. This was followed by a question and answer session.

During questions

1.48pm Mr McCrea joined the meeting

2.03pm Mr McCrea left the meeting

2.00pm Ms Bradley left the meeting

The Chairperson thanked Dr Walker for attending the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 2.13pm

The meeting resumed at 2.20pm in open session with Mr Ross, Ms Lo, Mr Agnew, Mr Boylan, Mr McCann, Mr Storey and Mrs Overend present.

The Committee noted a briefing paper from the Northern Ireland Ombudsman.

The Chairperson welcomed Dr Tom Frawley and Ms Marie Anderson (the Northern Ireland Ombudsman and Deputy Ombudsman) and invited them to brief the Committee. This was followed by a question and answer session.

During questions:

2.49pm Mr Eastwood joined the meeting

3.15pm Mr Storey left the meeting

3.16 pm Ms Lo left the meeting

The Chairperson thanked Dr Frawley and Ms Anderson for attending the meeting.

The Committee noted a submission on the review of the Code from the Northern Ireland Assembly Commissioner for Standards.

7. Any other business

No items were raised.

8. Time, date and place of next meeting

The Chairperson advised Members that the next meeting will take place on 14th May 2014 at 1.30pm in room 106.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 3.22pm.

Mr Alastair Ross MLA

Chairperson, Committee on Standards and Privileges