



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee on Procedures

Minutes of Proceedings

17 April 2024

Meeting Location: Room 21, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Kellie Armstrong MLA (Chairperson)

Trevor Clarke MLA

Danny Donnelly MLA

Órailthí Flynn MLA

Maolíosa McHugh MLA

Matthew O'Toole MLA

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Sinéad Ennis MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Robbie Butler MLA

William Irwin MLA

Apologies: **None**

In Attendance:

Christine Darrah, Assembly Clerk

Stella McArdle, Assembly Clerk

Michael Best, Assistant Assembly Clerk

Kevin Marks, Clerical Officer

The meeting commenced at 10.03 a.m. in closed session

1. Committee Strategic Planning Session – Further Discussion

Agreed: The Committee agreed to start the meeting in closed session.

Members discussed the priorities identified at the strategic planning session on 10 April 2024.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a copy of previous proxy voting forms and guidance from the Business Office.

Sinead Ennis joined the meeting remotely at 10.11 a.m.

Trevor Clarke joined the meeting at 10.16 a.m.

Matthew O'Toole joined the meeting at 10.20 a.m.

Robbie Butler joined the meeting remotely at 10.51 a.m.

The Committee moved into public session at 10.54 a.m.

2. Apologies

None.

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2024.

4. Matters Arising

The Chairperson welcomed William Irwin to the Committee.

The Committee noted the updated list of the membership of the Committee.

The meeting was suspended at 10.58 a.m. due to a broadcasting issue.

The meeting resumed at 11.04 a.m.

The following Members were present: Kellie Armstrong MLA (Chairperson); Trevor Clarke MLA; Danny Donnelly MLA; Órailthí Flynn MLA; Maolíosa McHugh MLA; and Matthew O'Toole MLA

The following Members were present by video or teleconference: Sinéad Ennis MLA (Deputy Chairperson); Robbie Butler MLA; and William Irwin MLA.

There was discussion on the problems that Members have experienced when attending Committee meetings remotely.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to Assembly Broadcasting concerning the issues Members are having attending meetings remotely.

5. Committee Strategic Planning Session – Agreed Approach

Agreed: The Committee agreed the priorities for shorter-term and longer-term areas of work and the approach to undertaking this work.

Agreed The Committee agreed to undertake a review of these priorities in September 2024.

6. Update on the implementation of the recommendations from the Inquiry into Private Members' Bills and Legislative Consent Motions

The Committee noted the reply from the Director of Parliamentary Services on the current position regarding the implementation of the recommendations in the previous Committee's Inquiry Reports on Legislative Consent Motions and Private Members' Bills.

The Chairperson informed the Committee that the Deputy Chairperson and herself have sought a meeting with the Speaker to discuss his forthcoming guidance on Private Members' Bills to ensure consistency with any potential changes to Standing Orders on Private Members' Bills.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Committee for the Executive Office and the Committee for Finance regarding a recent Interparliamentary Forum that considered Legislative Consent Motions and Common Frameworks, to ask whether there were any relevant matters that they wished to raise with it.

The Committee noted the research paper on Legislative Consent Motions.

The Committee noted the position of the House of Commons Procedure Committee on its Territorial Constitutional Inquiry.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to The Executive Office with a reminder letter for a response on the measures being taken to ensure full compliance by Executive Ministers with Legislative Consent Motion Standing Order 42(A).

7. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee on Standards and Privileges on proxy voting in Plenary and Committees for Members on parental leave.
- ii. The Committee noted a reply from the Attorney General of Northern Ireland on the Committee's request for priorities for its forward work programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write back to the Attorney General informing her of the key priority work areas identified, advising that these will be reviewed on a regular basis and consideration given to scheduling other issues into the work programme in due course.

- iii. The Committee considered a memo from the Clerk of the Assembly and Executive Review Committee requesting input on potential work topics.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to include designation and cross community voting in a response and to include a list of key issues that have arisen as a result of the NI (Ministers, Elections and Petition of Concern) Act 2022, apart from the Petition of Concern mechanism and the timing of the formation of the Opposition.

- iv. The Committee considered a letter from the Minister of Justice concerning changes to Standing Order 42(A).

Agreed: The Committee agreed to respond to the Minister advising that the issue raised has been included on the list of work items for the Committee's forward work programme and that the House of Commons Procedure Committee and the House of Lords Constitution Committee are also undertaking work that include legislative consent issues which may inform the Committee's considerations.

- v. The Committee noted a response from the Speaker as Chairperson of the Business Committee on the Committee's request for priorities for its forward work programme.
- vi. The Committee noted a reply from the Committee for Standards and Privileges on the Committee's request for priorities for its forward work programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to respond informing it of the key priority work areas identified, advising that these will be reviewed on a regular basis and consideration given to scheduling other issues into the work programme in due course.

- vii. The Committee noted a reply from the Chairpersons' Liaison Group on the Committee's request for priorities for its forward work programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to respond to the Chairpersons' Liaison Group informing it of the key priority work areas identified, advising that these will be reviewed on a regular basis with consideration given to scheduling other issues into the work programme in due course.

viii. The Committee noted a reply from the Alliance Party on the Committee's request for priorities for its forward work programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to respond to the Alliance Party informing it of the key priority work areas identified by the Committee and advising that the priorities will be reviewed on a regular basis with consideration given to scheduling other issues into the work programme in due course.

ix. The Committee noted a reply from the Speaker on the Committee's request for priorities for its forward work programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to respond to the Speaker informing him of the key priority work areas identified, advising that these will be reviewed on a regular basis with consideration given to scheduling other issues into the work programme in due course.

x. The Committee noted a response from the Audit Committee on the Committee's request for suggested forward work priorities.

8. Committee Forward Work Programme

The Committee discussed the draft Forward Work Programme, which will enable progress on the agreed key priority shorter term and longer-term areas of work.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft Work Programme subject to the confirmation of dates of particular sessions.

9. Chairperson's Business

None

10. Any Other Business

None

11. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting is provisionally scheduled for Wednesday 1 May 2024 at 10.00 a.m. in Room 21, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 11.16 a.m.

Kellie Armstrong MLA
Chairperson, Committee on Procedures