

COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS AND PRIVILEGES

WEDNESDAY, 20TH JANUARY 2016

ROOM 21, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Mr Paul Givan (Chairman)
Ms Anna Lo (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Steven Agnew
Mr Cathal Boylan
Mr Gerard Diver
Mr David Hilditch
Mr Fra McCann
Mrs Sandra Overend
Mr Robin Newton

In Attendance: Mr Paul Gill (Clerk Assistant)
Mrs Hilary Cleland-Bogle (Assistant Clerk)
Miss Alison Ferguson (Clerical Officer)

Apologies: Mr Gordon Dunne

The meeting commenced at 1.34pm in closed session.

The Chairman welcomed Committee members to the meeting. The Chairperson welcomed Mr Gerard Diver to his first meeting of the Committee. Mr Diver replaced Mr Colum Eastwood.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Declaration of Interests

The Chairman reminded Members of their obligation to declare any relevant financial or other interest before or during each Committee meeting.

3. Draft minutes

Agreed: The draft minutes of the meeting held on 13th January 2016 were agreed by the Committee.

4. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Report from the Assembly Commissioner for Standards

The Committee noted that Ms Kelly would be present at the meeting to assist the Committee with its deliberations.

The Chairperson welcomed Ms Angela Kelly, Legal Adviser to the meeting.

The Committee noted that, as agreed at the last meeting, the Committee would recommence its consideration of the documents appended to the Commissioner's Report at today's meeting to identify any references which should be redacted in order to ensure that the Committee complies with its obligation under the Human Rights Act 1998.

The Committee noted that it was essential that the arguments are properly considered, that a detailed analysis of the documents appended to the Commissioner's Report is undertaken and that the Committee records its decision making process.

The Committee also noted that neither the Clerk nor the Legal Adviser could undertake the balancing exercise that is necessary. The Committee is the decision maker and is solely responsible for its own decision.

The Clerk commenced taking the Committee through the remaining documents appended to the Commissioner's report.

The Committee considered each document and identified references within the documents which should be redacted in order to ensure that the Committee complies with its obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998.

The Committee agreed to seek legal advice on a number of issues.

2.13pm Mr Newton left the meeting.

2.16pm Mrs Overend left the meeting.

2.30pm Mrs Overend returned to the meeting.

2.43pm Mr Hilditch left the meeting.

2.45pm Mr Agnew left the meeting.

2.50pm Mr Agnew returned to the meeting.

2.50pm Ms Lo left the meeting.

2.54pm Mr McCann left the meeting.

2.56pm Mr Hilditch returned to the meeting.

3.15pm Mr Agnew left the meeting.

3.22pm Mr Agnew returned to the meeting.

3.30pm Mrs Overend left the meeting.

3.45pm Mrs Overend returned to the meeting.

3.45pm Mr Diver left the meeting.

The Chairperson thanked Ms Kelly for attending the meeting.

6. Any other business

There was no other business.

7. Time, date and place of next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on Wednesday, 27 January 2016 at 1.30pm in Room 21.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting at 3.55pm.

Mr Paul Givan MLA
Chairman, Committee on Standards and Privileges

Date: 27th January 2016