

PARLIAMENTARY BUREAU

SELECTION OF THE FIRST MINISTER

Introduction

1. At last week's meeting, the Minister for Parliamentary Business indicated that he would bring forward a proposal for business in week commencing 27 March 2023 that includes selection of the First Minister.
2. To inform the Bureau's consideration of that proposal, this brief note outlines the processes to be followed in the Parliament's selection of a nominee for appointment by the King.

Nominations for First Minister

3. Once the FM submits a resignation, Parliament will be notified. At that point, it will be possible for nominations to be made. Nomination forms will be available from the Parliamentary Business Team in T1.03. Forms must be signed by the proposer and seconder of the nomination and by the nominee. Completed forms can be submitted up to 30 minutes before the time specified in the business programme for the selection of the First Minister.

Conduct of the selection process

4. At the start of the process, the Presiding Officer will read out the names of all nominees in alphabetical order (by surname).
5. Each nominee, again in alphabetical order, will then be invited to speak for up to 5 minutes. Once each nominee has spoken, the Presiding Officer will ask Members to cast their votes for their preferred nominee (there will be a technical break to allow Members to log in to the Digital Voting system).
6. If there is more than one nominee, Members will be asked to vote "yes" only for the nominee they wish to support. Once votes for each nominee have been cast there will also be an opportunity for any Members who do not wish to vote for an individual to record their abstention. Each Member should vote only once during each round of voting. The results of the votes will be verified to ensure that no Member has voted more than once before being announced by the Presiding Officer.
7. If there is only one nominee, Members will be invited to vote "yes", "no" or "abstain".
8. A nominee will be chosen if they achieve a simple majority of votes. If there are multiple candidates in a round of voting and a simple majority is not achieved, the nominee with the lowest votes will be eliminated and Members asked to cast their votes for the remaining candidates. This process will be repeated until a nominee has been selected.
9. In the event that the process does not result in the selection of a nominee, the Presiding Officer will arrange, in consultation with the Bureau, for a further selection process to take place.

Parliamentary Business Team

March 2023