



# Committee for Communities

## Minutes of Proceedings

Thursday 1 April 2021

**Meeting Location:** Room 30, Parliament Buildings, Belfast

**Present:** Ms Paula Bradley MLA (Chairperson)  
Mr Andy Allen MLA  
Mr Robin Newton MLA  
Mr Alex Easton MLA

**Present by Video or Teleconference:**

Ms Kellie Armstrong MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Mark Durkan MLA  
Ms Karen Mullan MLA  
Ms Sinéad Ennis MLA  
Mr Fra McCann MLA

**In Attendance:** Dr Janice Thompson (Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Sean McCann (Assistant Assembly Clerk)

**In Attendance by Video or Teleconference:**

Ms Antoinette Bowen (Clerical Supervisor)



Mr Oliver Bellew (Clerical Officer)

Ms Claire McCanny (Assembly Clerk, Bill Office)

The meeting commenced at 9.18 am in open session.

### **1. Apologies**

There were no apologies.

### **2. Draft Minutes**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 25 March 2021.

### **3. Chairperson's Business**

*Robin Newton joined the meeting at 9.20 am.*

The Chairperson informed Members that the Committee had requested the Minister to brief on the Sports Sustainability Fund and that a number of days had been offered to allow for the Minister's attendance. However, due to prior diary commitments the Minister was unable to attend.

A number of Members expressed disappointment at the Minister's non-attendance.

### **4. Departmental/Sport NI briefing on the Sports Sustainability Fund (SSF)**

*Karen Mullen declared an interest as Chair of a Boxing Club.*



The following Departmental Officials and Sport NI representatives joined the meeting:

Ms Kathryn Hill, Department for Communities

Mr Tony Murphy, Department for Communities

Ms Antoinette McKeown, Chief Executive Office, Sport NI

Mr John News, Interim Director of Participation & Facilities, Sport NI

The Officials briefed the Committee and took part in a question and answer session with Members.

The Chairperson thanked the Officials for their attendance.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Minister to ask if capacity building for smaller organisations and clubs is being considered to ensure that all individuals/groups are aware and can apply for future funding opportunities.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Minister and to Sport NI to express its confidence that the SSF is being administered correctly and to praise the Officials for outlining the governance arrangements and the due diligence that is being carried out on the SSF.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department to ask if there is ongoing work with the Department for the Economy in relation to Project Stratum and on rural outreach.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to Sport NI asking that it provides a breakdown of funding under the SSF including grassroots, disability and women's sports.

*The meeting was suspended at 11.22 am and restarted at 11.33 am*

## **5. Committee Deliberations on the Clauses of the Licensing and Registration of Clubs (Amendment) Bill**

*Mark Durkan declared an interest as family members own licensed premises.*



*Andy Allen left the meeting at 11.34 am.*

The Chairperson informed Members that the Committee would continue its deliberations on the Licensing and Registration of Clubs (Amendment) Bill.

The following Departmental Officials joined the meeting:

Mr Liam Quinn

Ms Carol Reid

The Chairperson informed Members that they had been provided with a recent press release from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) in relation to alcohol specific mortality in Northern Ireland.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to note the press release.

The Chairperson informed Members that they had been provided with further correspondence from the Society of Independent Brewers' Association which provided details of the social and economic impacts of taprooms in Great Britain. Members had also been provided with a tabled paper from the Independent Craft Brewers of Ireland on the operation of equivalent licensing legislation in the Republic of Ireland which allows for taprooms to operate.

The Chairperson informed Members that they had been provided with several letters of concern from publicans in relation to taprooms.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to note all of the correspondence and to reconsider it during the closed session deliberations on clause 8.

The Chairperson informed Members that they had written to the Department with queries on several clauses following deliberations at the meeting on 25 March 2021.

The Chairperson informed Members that a Ministerial response had not yet been received, however the issues would be gone over again and the Departmental Officials would answer what they could today.

## **Clause 2: In relation to 'Permitted Hours' on Sundays**

The Chairperson informed Members that the Committee had agreed that the Minister should now take forward an amendment to bring the legislation relating to an Article



44 'Permitted hours' (late licence) on Sundays into line with the 'Permitted Hours' for the other late nights granted for premises.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to await the Minister's response on these issues.

### **Clause 7: Licensed race tracks: Sunday sales**

The Chairperson informed Members that the Committee had agreed to seek clarification from the Department as to whether this clause allowed the sale of alcohol at the venue on a Sunday if a race meeting was not taking place or if the sale was contingent on a race meeting taking place.

The Chairperson informed Members that the Committee had also agreed to seek clarification on whether Drumbo Park was to be classified/categorised as an outdoor stadium in the near future.

The Chairperson informed Members that S.R 2021/81 - The Licensing (Designation of Outdoor Stadia) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 was made by the Department on 25 March 2021 and that the Committee would consider the Rule at its meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

*Andy Allen re-joined the meeting at 11.39 am.*

The Chairperson advised Members that under this Statutory Rule the Department has designated Drumbo Park as a stadium of importance to the whole of Northern Ireland. In doing so it will allow Drumbo Park Stadium to apply to the courts for a liquor licence for the venue.

Departmental Officials confirmed that Clause 7 was contingent on a race meeting, however, Drumbo Park could avail of a restaurant licence under Article 44 and apply for an occasional licence under Article 47.

*Robin Newton re-joined the meeting at 11.41 am.*

### **Clause 8: Licence for off-sales**

The Chairperson informed Members that the Committee had not yet reached an agreed position on clause 8 and agreed to discuss the clause further during closed session.



### **Clause 18: Occasional licences: conditions**

The Chairperson informed Members that they had previously discussed the inclusion of a provision for an organisation to apply for an occasional licence in order to hold a festival or event without the need for an existing premises licence holder being involved.

The Chairperson informed Members that they had raised concerns that some local producers may find themselves worse off as they currently use occasional licences in order to hold occasional taproom events.

### **Clause 9: Requirement for Off-licence**

The Chairperson informed Members that they had previously noted that the wording of the PSNI proposed amendment was not suitable and agreed to request that the Minister provides a suitably worded amendment to deal with the issue for the Committee's consideration.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to await the Minister's response on these issues.

### **Clauses 19 and 32: Code of Practice**

The Chairperson informed Members that they had agreed to seek clarification on whether the clause as drafted allows for the existence of a number of codes of practice written by different sectors and approved by the Department.

The Departmental Officials confirmed that the Bill allows for more than one Code of Practice.

Members indicated that they were content with the Departmental Officials' response.

### **Clauses 12 and 28, 11 and 27: Underage Functions and Private Functions**

The Chairperson informed Members that they were waiting for clarification from Counsel on the supervision of children at private functions and on the time that under 18's must leave the venue. The Officials thanked the Committee for highlighting these gaps in the Bill

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to await the Minister's response on these issues.



### **Clause 29**

The Chairperson informed Members that they had requested that the Minister make an amendment to extend the time period in 29(1) from 1<sup>st</sup> May to 30<sup>th</sup> September and the number of nights in 29(3) to “not more than three”.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to await the Minister’s response on these issues.

### **Clause 22**

The Chairperson informed Members that they had previously noted that the Minister was minded to consider amendments and that the Committee had agreed to request that the Minister make amendments to address the anomaly identified between clubs and other licensed premises and to clarify 1-day memberships.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to await the Minister’s response on these issues.

### **New Clauses**

#### **Duty to Produce Guidance:**

The Chairperson informed Members that the Committee had agreed to request that the Minister forwards a proposed new clause for the Committee’s consideration.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to await the Minister’s response on these issues.

#### **Review Clause:**

The Chairperson informed Members that the Committee had agreed to request that the Minister drafts a clause which contains a review of the implementation of the provisions of the Bill and a subsequent report to the Northern Ireland Assembly by the end of three years of the Bill getting Royal Assent and, following that first review, subsequent reviews and a report should happen within five years of the previous report.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to wait for the Minister’s response on this issue.



### **Additional Measures:**

#### **Entertainment Venues:**

The Chairperson informed Members that they had previously agreed that the Assembly Bill Office would bring a proposal to the Committee regarding a potential amendment in relation to cinemas.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to consider the Assembly Bill Office proposal during the closed session.

#### **Minimum Unit Pricing:**

The Chairperson informed Members that, in closed session at the meeting on 25 March 2021, the Assembly Bill Office advised the Committee that the issue of Minimum Unit Pricing (MUP) was potentially within the scope of the Bill.

The Chairperson informed Members that they had agreed that the Assembly Bill Office would work with the Committee on a potential for an amendment.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to discuss the proposals during closed session.

The Chairperson thanked the Officials for their attendance.

### **6. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

### **7. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 15 April 2021 at 9.15 a.m. in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.





The meeting moved into closed session at 11.53 am to allow the Committee to be briefed by an Official from the Northern Ireland Assembly Bill Office.

The Chairperson informed Members that they would continue on from their deliberations at the meeting on 25 March 2021.

The Assembly Bill Office Official provided Members with a draft range of amendment options for Members to consider taking forward in relation to taprooms

The Assembly Bill Office Official advised Members that the proposed amendments made proposals for local producers' produce to be sold (on-sales) on a limited basis in exchange for a guided tour, an entrance fee, cash and at craft fairs.

*Kellie Armstrong left the meeting at 12.00 pm.*

The Assembly Bill Office Official discussed each amendment in detail, including potential unintended consequences.

A Member raised concerns regarding a number of taproom type establishments being endorsed by NI Tourist Board and any possible unintended consequences regarding the advertisement of destinations that serve alcohol.

*Robin Newton left the meeting at 12.17 pm.*

The Assembly Bill Office Official discussed correspondence received from the Independent Craft Brewers of Ireland.

*Alex Easton left the meeting at 12.33 pm.*

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to reconsider the options again at its meeting on 15 April 2021.

*The meeting was suspended at 12.42 pm and restarted at 13.17 pm.*

The Committee Chairperson sought Members' agreement to forward a copy of the draft amendments to the Department for comment.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forward a copy of the amendments to the Department for comment.



The Assembly Bill Office Official provided Members with a draft range of options for amendments for Members to consider in relation to Drumbo Park, Licence for Cinemas, General Permitted Hours and Minimum Unit Pricing (MUP).

The Assembly Bill Office Official discussed a range of options/amendments for Committee consideration in relation to Drumbo park.

Members discussed a range of issues and agreed to seek clarification from Departmental Officials during the closed session.

**Licence for Cinemas:**

The Assembly Bill Office Official discussed a proposed amendment to include cinemas as a Place of Public entertainment to permit the serving of alcohol, similar to theatres etc.

**General Permitted Hours:**

The Assembly Bill Office Official discussed proposed amendments to Article 42 the General Permitted Hours (Licensing Order 1996).

Members indicated that they were content with the proposed amendments.

**Minimum Unit Pricing:**

The Assembly Bill Office Official discussed a potential amendment that would place a duty on the Minister for Health to introduce Minimum Unit Pricing within a certain timescale.

Members indicated that they were content with the proposed amendment.

*Alex Easton re-joined the meeting at 1.46 pm.*

**Review Clause:**

The Assembly Bill Office Official discussed a potential amendment.

**Duty to Produce Guidance:**

The Assembly Bill Office Official discussed a potential amendment.



The following Departmental Officials re-joined the meeting during closed session to provide clarification on the issue of Drumbo Park:

Mr Liam Quinn

Ms Carol Reid

The Committee was content with the clarification provided by the Departmental Officials.

The meeting was adjourned at 14.44 pm.

**Paula Bradley MLA**  
**Chairperson, Committee for Communities**