



# Northern Ireland Assembly

## COMMITTEE FOR COMMUNITIES

### MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**Thursday 3 December 2020**

**Room 29, Parliament Buildings**

Present: Paula Bradley MLA (Chairperson)  
Kellie Armstrong MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Andy Allen MBE MLA  
Alex Easton MLA  
Robin Newton MBE MLA

Present: Starleaf Mark Durkan MLA  
Sinéad Ennis MLA

In Attendance: Janice Thompson (Assembly Clerk)  
Sean McCann (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Antoinette Bowen (Clerical Supervisor)

*The meeting commenced in open session at 10:01 a.m.*

#### **1. Apologies**

Fra McCann MLA

#### **2. Chairperson's Business**

The Chairperson informed Members that they had been provided with a note of the informal stakeholder event held on 24 November. The Chairperson further informed Members that the proposed date for the next stakeholder event was 26 January 2021.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the note and proposed actions and that the next stakeholder event should take place on 26 January 2021.

The Chairperson informed Members that she had attended a joint meeting with the Chairs of the Committees for Economy, Health, Justice and the Executive Office to

discuss the impact of Covid-19 on students. It was agreed that a joint letter would issue to the Executive and Members had been provided with a copy of the letter in their tabled papers.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the joint letter as drafted is issued.

The Chairperson informed Members that she had attended an event with Action Mental Health where concerns were expressed about the ending of the European Social Fund and the future UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to contact other Committees in relation to a joint response on this issue.

The Chairperson informed Members that, due to the Assembly Recess dates, Statutory Committees are planning to hold their first meetings of 2021 in the week beginning 11 January 2021.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to hold its first meeting, post recess, on 14 January 2021.

### **3. Draft Minutes**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 26 November 2020.

### **4. Matters Arising**

Members noted the latest report from the Examiner of Statutory Rules.

Members considered a reply from the Minister for Finance in relation to tax relief for the Ulster Orchestra.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to forward a copy of the letter to the Ulster Orchestra for information.

Members noted a Departmental reply in relation to major capital projects.

Members noted a Departmental reply in relation to Committee queries on the application period for the musical instrument for bands programme.

The Chairperson informed Members that they had been provided with a reply from CO3 outlining their suggestions for the criteria for the Department's Covid-19 Fund.

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

### **5. Briefing by The Northern Irish Brewery and Independent Pub Association on the Licensing and Registration of Clubs (Amendment) Bill**

The following interest was declared:

Mark Durkan – family interest in licensed premises.

The following representatives joined the meeting:

William Mayne, Bullhouse Brewing Company  
Pedro Donald, Owner of Sunflower Public House  
Matthew Dick, Boundary Brewing Co-operative

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

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance.

*The meeting was suspended at 10.54a.m. and restarted at 11.00a.m.*

## **6. Briefing by NI Federation of Clubs (NIFC) on the Licensing and Registration of Clubs (Amendment) Bill**

The following interest was declared:

Mark Durkan – family interest in licensed premises.

The following representatives joined the meeting:

Harry Beckinsale, Secretary  
Lawrence Shearer, Accountant  
Maura McKay, Solicitor  
John Davis, Chairman

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

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to ask NIFC for more information on their request to seek a relaxation of Article 40 of the Registration of Clubs (NI) Order 1996 and the Accounts Regulations through the Bill.

## **7. Departmental briefing on the Covid-19 Culture, Languages, Arts and Heritage Programme**

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting:

Maeve Walls  
Joanna Gray  
Iain Greenway

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 representative bodies for Ulster Scots and Irish language to ask for their experience of the application process for the programme and to ask for more details on the applications to the programme.

## **8. Briefing by Peter Corry on the impact of Covid-19 on the Arts Sector**

The following individual joined the meeting:

Peter Corry, Producer, Performer and Artistic Director

Mr Corry briefed the Committee and took part in a question and answer session with Members.

The Chairperson thanked Mr Corry for his attendance.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to Belfast City Council and the Belfast Harbour Commissioner to ask for the reasons why the Titanic drive in concerts proposed by Mr Corry in May 2020 to query further the reasons why the Titanic drive in concerts proposed by Mr Corry in May 2020 did not take place.

## **9. SL1 - The Pension Protection Fund (State Aid) (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2020**

The Chairperson informed Members that, due to time constraints, agenda items 9 and 10 would not be considered and would be rescheduled for consideration at the meeting on 10 December 2020.

## **10. SR 2020/283 - The Occupational Pensions (Revaluation) Order (Northern Ireland) 2020**

## **11. Correspondence**

Members noted a tabled letter from the Department in relation to the Sports Sustainability Fund.

The Chairperson drew Members' attention to correspondence from the Chief Executive of the Charity Commission NI, which provided further information regarding issues raised during the briefing by CO3 at the meeting on 26 November over the length of time some charities were waiting for registration.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department to ask for a written briefing paper on why Section 167 of the Charities Act (NI) 2008 had not yet been enacted.

The Chairperson drew Members' attention to correspondence from the Secretary of Down Masonic Widows Fund regarding the criteria around 'reserves' for the Covid-19 Charities Fund.

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

The Chairperson drew Members' attention to correspondence from the Committee for Justice in relation to its call for evidence on the Criminal Justice (Committal Reform) Bill.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to discuss this in greater detail at a future meeting.

The Chairperson drew Members' attention to correspondence in relation to youth sport.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to forward a copy of the letter to the Executive Office for comment.

The Committee considered a Departmental reply in relation to the governance of the IFA.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to forward a copy of the reply to the original correspondent.

The Committee considered correspondence from St Vincent de Paul in relation to families in poverty.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to forward a copy of the correspondence to the Executive Office for comment.

The Committee considered correspondence from the Committee for Infrastructure in relation to assistance for funding for the Community Transport Sector.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Minister for Communities to support the call for assistance for funding for the Community Transport Sector.

The Committee noted the following:

- i. Link to Ekosgen Report and a copy of the Executive Summary.
- ii. Departmental letter in relation to November Covid-19 Allocations.
- iii. Copy of Report from the Committee for the Executive on Local Councils – Impact of EU Exit.
- iv. Investing Activity Report for Department for Communities November 2020.

## **12. Forward Work Programme**

Members noted that, at the meeting on 10 December, the Committee will be briefed by the Department on the following issues:

- Proposals for a Gambling Bill;
- The Department's 5 Year Strategy; and

- Labour market interventions.

The Committee will also be briefed by National Museums Northern Ireland and the Model Engineers' Society and by Assembly Research on the Northern Ireland public finance framework; the Budget 'rules' and the scope for Committee and Assembly involvement in the Budget Process for 2021-22.

### **13. Any Other Business**

There was no other business

### **14. Date, Time and Place of the Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be on Thursday 10 December 2020 at 9:00 a.m. in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

*The meeting adjourned at 13.22p.m.*

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