



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

# Committee for Communities

## Minutes of Proceedings

Thursday 3 June 2021

**Meeting Location:** Room 29, Parliament Buildings, Belfast

**Present:** Ms Paula Bradley MLA (Chairperson)  
Mr Andy Allen MLA

**Present by Video or Teleconference:**

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

**Apologies:** Mr Robin Newton MLA

**In Attendance:** Dr Janice Thompson (Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Sean McCann (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Oliver Bellew (Clerical Officer)  
Mrs Angela Kelly (Examiner of Statutory Rules)



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

**In Attendance by Video or Teleconference:**

Ms Antoinette Bowen (Clerical Supervisor)

Ms Claire McCanny (Assembly Clerk, Bill Office)

The meeting commenced at 10.05 am in open session.

**1. Apologies**

Apologies as above.

**2. Draft Minutes**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 27 May 2021.

**3. Chairperson's Business**

The Chairperson informed Members that on Tuesday 1 June 2021, the Committee held its third informal stakeholder event on post-Covid - The Way Forward.

The Chairperson informed Members that the Committee secretariat would provide a note of the meeting to Members in order to assist consideration as to how they wish to proceed on the issues raised.

The meeting moved into closed session at 10.08 am to allow the Committee to be briefed by the Examiner of Statutory Rules and by an Official from the Northern Ireland Assembly Bill Office.



## Northern Ireland Assembly

The Chairperson informed Members that they had been provided with a paper from the Examiner of Statutory Rules (ESR) on the delegated powers within the proposed amendments to the Licensing and Registration of Clubs (Amendment) Bill.

The Committee noted that the ESR was satisfied that the delegation of legislative powers presently provided for in the proposed amendments to the Bill is not inappropriate and was also satisfied that the exercise of these powers is subject to an appropriate level of scrutiny by the Assembly.

The Chairperson informed Members that they had been provided with a Departmental paper on the proposed series of additional amendments proposed by the Minister to the Licensing and Registration of Clubs (Amendment) Bill that were made after the Committee Stage had completed.

The Assembly Bill Office Official briefed the Committee on the proposed series of additional amendments to the Bill.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with the Minister's amendments to the Committee amendments and understood the rationale for making them at Consideration Stage.

The meeting moved into open session at 11.00 am

### **4. Matters Arising**

#### **Departmental Response in Relation to Post Office Card Accounts**

The Committee noted the response and agreed to discuss further during the Departmental briefing scheduled to take place at the meeting on 24 June 2021.

#### **Response from the Department of Health in Relation to Full Cost Recovery for the Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise Sector (VCSE)**

The Committee noted that the Department of Health is supportive of the need to pay fair rates to the VCSE for the services such organisations provide. However, without being privy to the exact arrangements to which NICVA referred, the Department of Health is unable to provide a fully informed view on whether or not full cost recovery is being achieved or appropriate.



## Northern Ireland Assembly

A Member expressed disappointment that the Department of Health could not provide confirmation on whether it will be responsible for the costs of the 15% administrative charges for charities.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department for Communities to request a written briefing paper on full cost recovery and fair contracting.

#### **4. Department Briefing on the Video Relay Service (VRS)**

The following Departmental Official joined the meeting:

Mr Tommy McAuley

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

The Chairperson thanked the Official for his attendance.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the councils that provide a Video Relay Service to ask how it is managed and how the service is being promoted.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to all councils to ask if they are aware of the number of deaf people living within their council area and to ask how they gather this data and whether it is gathered under community planning.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to those councils that do not currently provide a Video Relay Service to ask if they have plans to offer such a service and, if they do not, to outline the reasons for this.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Deaf Campaign Group to highlight that the Sign Language Partnership Group will be seeking nominations in the future.

*The meeting was suspended at 11.30 am and restarted at 11.40 am*

#### **5. RaISe Briefing on a High Street Taskforce Paper**

The following RaISe Research Officer joined the meeting:



## Northern Ireland Assembly

Mr Michael Scholes

The Assembly Research Officer briefed the Committee and took part in a question and answer session with Members.

The Chairperson thanked the researcher for his attendance and for his informative paper.

The Chairperson informed the Committee that the research paper contained a number of questions for the Department for Communities and the Executive Office.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department for Communities to request a response to questions raised in the paper and on its responsibilities in relation to the High Street Taskforce.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Executive Office to request a response to questions raised in the paper.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Committee for the Executive Office to ask if it has conducted any work in relation to this issue.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forward a copy of the research paper to all Statutory Committees for information.

### 6. Correspondence

- i. The Committee considered correspondence from the Committee for Finance regarding a Fiscal Council for Northern Ireland.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Committee for Finance in support of the Fiscal Council for Northern Ireland and to highlight that more work needs to be done on cross cutting expenditure and to monitor outcomes.

- ii. The Committee considered correspondence from BT Group 'Hope United' seeking the Committee's support for this initiative via its social media channels.



## Northern Ireland Assembly

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to support the cause via its Twitter account.

- iii. Letter of concern regarding the application and appeals process for the Arts council NI Individual Emergency Resilience Programme 2.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forward to the Department for Communities for comment.

The Committee noted the following item of correspondence:

- i. Correspondence regarding the Review of the Charity Commission.

### **7. Forward Work Programme**

Members noted that, at the meeting on 10 June 2021, the Committee will be briefed by Departmental Officials on the June Monitoring Round and on the draft Charities Bill and by NICVA and CO3 on post-Covid recovery.

### **8. Any Other Business**

The Committee discussed its continued concerns regarding the outstanding Welfare Supplementary Mitigations and agreed to discuss the concerns further with Departmental Officials when they confirm their availability to brief at a future meeting.

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

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 10 June 2021 at 09.30 am in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 12.31 pm.



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

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