



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Communities

Minutes of Proceedings

Wednesday 16 March 2022

Meeting Location: Starleaf Virtual Meeting

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Ms Paula Bradley MLA (Chairperson)

Mr Paul Frew MLA

Mr Mark Durkan MLA

Ms Ciara Ferguson MLA

Ms Áine Murphy MLA

Ms Aisling Reilly MLA

Ms Kellie Armstrong MLA

Apologies: Mr Stephen Dunne MLA

Mr Andy Allen MBE MLA

In Attendance by Video or Teleconference:

Dr Janice Thompson (Assembly Clerk)

Mr Sean McCann (Assistant Clerk)

Ms Rachel Ashe (Clerical Supervisor)



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Ms Antoinette Bowen (Clerical Officer)

The Chairperson, Paula Bradley, assumed the Chair. The meeting began at 14.04 pm in open session. The following Members were present at the start of the public session: Paula Bradley, Ciara Ferguson, Kellie Armstrong, Paul Frew, Áine Murphy and Mark Durkan.

1. Apologies

Apologies as above.

2. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson informed Members that they had been asked by the Department to consider an urgent confirmatory resolution Statutory Rule in advance of it being debated on 21st March.

The Chairperson further informed Members that, as the next full Committee meeting was not until 24th March, she had agreed to convene a short virtual meeting to consider this and a number of SL1s.

The Chairperson told Members that the Committee would also be considering a request from Mark Durkan MLA asking for Committee support for his request for accelerated passage for the Emergency Exceptional Circumstances (Energy Prices and Other Contingencies) Bill.



Northern Ireland
Assembly

3. Request for Accelerated Passage: The Emergency Exceptional Circumstances (Energy Prices and Other Contingencies) Bill

The Chairperson informed Members that, in accordance with Standing Order 42 (3), Mark Durkan was formally requesting that the Communities Committee supported accelerated passage for the Emergency Exceptional Circumstances (Energy Prices and Other Contingencies) Bill, which he hopes to table as a matter of urgency in the Assembly.

The Chairperson further informed Members that the Bill is to enable the Northern Ireland Assembly to enable Northern Ireland departments to make schemes for financial assistance in certain exceptional circumstances, namely the emergency circumstances of rising energy costs and the absence of an Executive.

The Chairperson thanked Mark Durkan for bringing the proposal to the Committee's attention and acknowledged that it would be the Committee for the Executive Office that would ultimately be asked for its support for accelerated passage should the Bill be given approval.

Ms Aisling Reilly joined the meeting at 14.18 pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to support accelerated passage for the proposed Bill.

4. SL1 – Guaranteed Minimum Pensions Increase Order (NI) 2022

Agreed: The Committee was content for the Department to proceed to make the Rule.

5. SL1 The Licensing (Notice relating to Local Producer's Premises – Authorisation for On-Sales) Regs (NI) 2022

Agreed: The Committee was content for the Department to proceed to make the Rule.



Northern Ireland
Assembly

6. SL1 Licensing and Registration of Clubs (Amt) Act (NI) 2021 (Consequential Provision) Regs 2022

A Member raised a number of reservations in relation to the legislation.

Agreed: The Committee was content for the Department to proceed to make the Rule.

7. SL1 The Coronavirus Act 2020 (Extension of Modifications of Requirements Regarding Medical Certificates for Cremations) Order (NI) 2022

Agreed: The Committee was content for the Department to proceed to make the Rule.

8. SR 2022 No.108 -The Coronavirus Act 2020 (Extension of Provisions Relating to Local Authority Meetings) Order (Northern Ireland) 2022

A Member raised concerns regarding the use of emergency legislation as a vehicle to extend current legislation and called for specific, fit for purpose legislation to be brought forward in the future.

Although the Committee supported the legislation, Members agreed that there is a need for further debate and consultation in the new mandate.

Agreed: The Committee considered SR 2022/108 – The Coronavirus Act 2020 (Extension of Provisions Relating to Local Authority Meetings) Order (Northern Ireland) 2022 and recommended that it is confirmed by the Assembly.



Northern Ireland
Assembly

9. Forward Work Programme

The Chairperson reminded Members that there would not be a committee meeting on Thursday 17 March as it was St. Patrick's Day. The next committee meeting will be on Thursday 24 March.

The Chairperson informed Members that, at this meeting the Committee will be finalising its Legacy Report. The Chairperson reminded Members to forward any comments on the report to the Committee Clerk by close of play on Wednesday 16 March.

The Chairperson also informed Members that, at the meeting on 24 March 2022, the Committee would receive a briefing from RaISe on Urban and Rural Community Networks, a briefing from DePaul on Housing First and a briefing by Action Mental Health on a range of issues, including current European Social Fund delivery under the DfC remit and future Shared Prosperity Funding.

10. Date, Time and Location of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 24 March 2022 at 9.30 am.

The meeting was adjourned at 14.37 pm.

Paula Bradley MLA
Chairperson, Committee for Communities