



Northern Ireland Assembly

COMMITTEE FOR COMMUNITIES

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**Thursday 18 March 2020
Room 30 Parliament Buildings**

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

In Attendance: Kevin Pelan (Assembly Clerk)
Sean McCann (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Claire Milliken (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Antoinette Bowen (Clerical Supervisor)
Oliver Bellew (Clerical Officer)

Apologies: Mark Durkan MLA
Fra McCann MLA
Carál Ní Chuilín MLA
Sinéad Ennis MLA

The meeting commenced in open session at 13:16 p.m.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Chairperson's Business

Members noted a memo from the Speaker to all Committee Chairpersons regarding Covid-19 and Assembly Business.

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 12 March 2020.

4. Matters Arising

The Chair advised members that the strategic planning day scheduled for Thursday 19 March 2020 in The Skainos Centre would be postponed until the committee can have further discussions regarding its work programme.

5. Ministerial briefing on Welfare Reform Mitigations

The Chairperson advised Members that the Minister for Communities, Ms Deirdre Hargey MLA, could no longer attend today's meeting but had provided a written statement on the extension of mitigation payments beyond 31 March 2020.

Agreed: Members agreed to invite the Minister to brief the Committee at its meeting on 26 March and to forward a number of queries to the department.

6. Consideration of Statutory Rule

S.R 2020 No. 32 The Statutory Sick Pay (General) (Coronavirus Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020

The Chairperson advised members that the SR was made on 12 March and came into operation on 13 March. The Chairperson further advised members that the rule had been laid in breach of the 21-day rule but, under the circumstances, this was understandable.

The Committee noted the regulations would provide a person who is isolating themselves, as far as possible, from other people, in line with guidance provided by the Regional Agency for Public Health and Social Well-being relating to coronavirus, and is deemed to be incapable of work, to statutory sick pay.

Agreed: The Committee considered S.R 2020 No. 32 - The Statutory Sick Pay (General) (Coronavirus Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 and, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules Report, had no objection to the rule.

7. Any Other Business

There was no AOB to record.

8. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting will be on Thursday 26 March at 10.00 a.m. in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting adjourned at 13.32 p.m.

Ms Paula Bradley MLA
Chairperson, Committee for Communities