



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR COMMUNITIES

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**Wednesday 17 June 2020
Room 29, Parliament Buildings**

Present, Paula Bradley MLA (Chairperson)
Kellie Armstrong MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Andy Allen MBE MLA

Present, Starleaf: Mark Durkan MLA
Sinéad Ennis MLA
Fra McCann MLA
Robin Newton MBE MLA

Apologies: Jonathan Buckley MLA

In Attendance: Kevin Pelan (Assembly Clerk)
Sean McCann (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Oliver Bellew (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced in open session at 14:11 p.m.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson advised members that Minister Hargey has temporarily stepped aside due to illness.

Agreed: Members agreed that the Chairperson writes to Ms Hargey on behalf of the Committee to wish her a speedy recovery.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the new Minister, Carál Ní Chuilín, wishing her well for the time ahead and to indicate the Committee's willingness to work with her during her time in post.

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 11 June 2020.

4. Matters Arising

Members noted a departmental response to Committee queries on the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Corporation Tax.

5. Departmental briefing on the Immigration and Social Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal) Bill: Legislative Consent Motion

The following departmental officials joined the meeting via Starleaf at 14:16 p.m.:

Ms Anne McCleary, Director of Social Security, Policy, Legislation and Decision-making

Mr Gerry McCann, State and Private Pensions & EU

Ms Michelle Grills, Social Security Policy, Legislation and Decision-making

Mr Seamus Cassidy, Social Security Policy and Legislation Division

The departmental officials provided the committee with an overview of the Immigration and Social Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal) Bill: Legislative Consent Motion.

The oral evidence was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked the departmental officials for their attendance.

6. Departmental briefing on The Pension Schemes Bill

The following departmental officials joined the meeting via Starleaf at 14:37 p.m.:

Ms Anne McCleary, Director of Social Security, Policy, Legislation and Decision-making

Mr Gerry McCann, State and Private Pensions & EU

Ms Doreen Roy, State and Private Pensions

The departmental officials provided the committee with an overview of The Pension Schemes Bill.

The oral evidence was followed by a question and answer session.

The chairperson thanked the departmental officials for their attendance.

7. Departmental briefing on the Supporting People Programme

The following departmental officials joined the meeting via Starleaf at 14:56 p.m.:

Ms Siobhan McCauley, Director of Regional Services with the NI Housing Executive
Mr Paul Price, Director of Social Housing Policy and Oversight with the department

The departmental officials provided the committee with an overview of the Supporting People Programme.

The oral evidence was followed by a question and answer session.

The chairperson thanked the departmental officials for their attendance.

8. Consideration of Secondary Legislation

SL1 – Universal Credit (GB Reciprocal Arrangements) Regulations (NI) 2020

Agreed: The committee agreed that it was content for the rule to be made.

9. Correspondence

The committee considered a departmental response to correspondence forwarded on behalf of Armoy Community Association.

Agreed: Members agreed to forward a copy of the response to the Armoy Community Association.

The committee considered a departmental response to correspondence forwarded on behalf of Friends of Knock Iveagh.

Agreed: Members agreed to forward a copy of the response to the Friends of Knock Iveagh.

The committee considered a departmental response to correspondence forwarded on behalf of Ulster Hang-gliding Club.

Agreed: Members agreed to forward a copy of the response to the Ulster Hang-gliding Club.

The committee considered a departmental response to correspondence forwarded on behalf of Commedia of Errors Theatre Company.

Agreed: Members agreed to forward a copy of the response to Commedia of Errors Theatre Company.

The committee considered a request from the Committee for Finance for updates on the progress of the Housing (Amendment) Bill.

Agreed: Members agreed to keep the Committee for Finance updated on the progress of the Bill.

A member raised an issue in relation to Consideration Stage of the Housing (Amendment) Bill.

Agreed: Members agreed to write to the Minister to ask if the former Minister was aware of the Joint Consultation Response Report on Proposals to Seek Reversal of the Reclassification of Registered Housing Associations in Northern Ireland when she briefed the committee, at its meeting on 13 May 2020, on the need for accelerated passage for the Bill. If the Minister was aware, members would like to know why a copy of the analysis of responses to the consultation was not made available to the Committee in advance of the briefing session in order to inform its decision on accelerated passage. Furthermore, the committee would like to know if the department sought or received information from the Office for National Statistics in relation to the Bill.

Members considered correspondence from the Arts Collaboration Network on Covid-19 and the challenge of recovery.

Agreed: Members agreed to invite 2-3 representatives from the group to brief the committee at the meeting on 1 July 2020.

The Committee noted the following:

- I. Copy of letter of response to the Minister regarding a complaint against the Charity Commission
- II. Copy of a departmental response to correspondence regarding the Charity Commission.
- III. Copy of Emergencies Leadership Group Minutes – from 9 March to 21 May 2020.

10. Forward Work Programme

Members noted that, at the meeting on 24 June, the committee will be briefed by departmental officials on the reform of liquor licensing; and Solace will provide an update briefing on Covid-19 funding to local councils.

11. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

12. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 24 June at 14:00 p.m. in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting adjourned at 15:53 p.m.

Ms Paula Bradley MLA
Chairperson, Committee for Communities