



Northern Ireland Assembly

COMMITTEE FOR COMMUNITIES

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Thursday 16 June 2016
Room 29 Parliament Buildings

Present: Colum Eastwood MLA (Chairperson)
Michelle Gildernew MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Steven Agnew MLA
Andy Allen MLA
Jonathan Bell MLA
Fra McCann MLA
Adrian McQuillan MLA
Carol Ní Chuilín MLA
Christopher Stalford MLA

In Attendance: Kevin Pelan (Assembly Clerk)
Ashleigh Mitford (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Stewart Kennedy (Clerical Supervisor)
Oliver Bellew (Clerical Officer)

Apologies: Naomi Long MLA
Nichola Mallon MLA

The meeting commenced in open session at 10:03am with the Deputy Chairperson in the Chair

1. Apologies

Apologies are recorded above.

2. Draft Minutes

The draft minutes of the meeting of 9 June 2016 were agreed.

3. Chairperson's Business

Items were deferred and considered under the Forward Work Programme and AOB.

4. Matters Arising

The Committee noted a checklist that was provided to the Committee for Social Development by Professor Eileen Evason.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to return to consider the checklist when it comes to consider its forward work programme for the 2016/17 session.

The Committee noted an extract from the Examiner of Statutory Rules' report, drawing its attention to SRs 2016/196 and 2016/233 because they were in breach of the 21 day rule.

Agreed: The Committee was content to note the Department's response.

The Chairperson advised members that the Minister for Communities will propose w/c 20 June that the Social Security Benefits Up-rating Order (Northern Ireland) 2016 be approved.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Chairperson will speak in support of the motion on the basis that the Committee for Social Development considered and agreed that it had no objections to the rule. The Committee noted that the Rule deals with routine annual up-rating of pensions and benefits.

The Committee discussed a draft committee response to the Energy Wise consultation.

Christopher Stalford left the meeting at 10:14 am

Agreed: The Committee agreed to issue the response as drafted.

The Committee noted a draft paper on Armed Conflict Bill – Legislative Consent Motion.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to issue the response to the Minister as drafted.

5. Deputy Secretary Briefing - Regeneration & Housing

The following departmental officials joined the meeting at 10:12 am.

- Tracy Meharg, Deputy Secretary Community Regeneration & Housing.
- Bernie Rooney, Director Housing Performance & Governance.
- Mark O' Donnell, Director Belfast Regeneration.

The officials briefed the Committee

Colum Eastwood joined the 10:15 am and took the chair

Christopher Stalford joined the meeting at 10:16 am

The briefing was followed by questions and the Committee agreed to seek additional information from the Department.

The officials left the meeting at 11:02 am

6. The Housing Benefit (Abolition of the Family Premium And Date Of Claim) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 – Departmental Briefing

The following departmental officials joined the meeting at 11:03 am

- Anne McCleary, Director, Social Security Policy & Legislation Division
- Michael Pollock, Deputy Director, Social Security Policy & Legislation Division
- Rosemary Hughes, Deputy Principal, Social Security Policy & Legislation Division

The officials briefed the Committee on the proposed subordinate legislation and this was followed by questions.

The officials left the meeting at 11:25 am

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content for the Rule to be made.

7. Arts Strategy for Northern Ireland Consultation – Departmental Briefing

The following departmental officials joined the meeting at 11:25 am

- Patricia McAuley, Director, Culture Division (Community Cohesion Group)
- Angela McAllister, Head of Arts& Creativity, Culture Division (Community Cohesion Group)

The officials briefed the Committee on the outcome of the consultation on the Arts Strategy for Northern Ireland.

Stephen Agnew declared an interest as a participant of the Open House Festival.

Adrian McQuillan left the meeting at 11:29 am.

The officials left the meeting at 12.15 pm

8. SL1 The Landlord Registration Scheme (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016

The Committee considered SL1 The Landlord Registration Scheme (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content for the Rule to be made.

9. SL1 The Registered Rents (Increase) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016

The Committee considered SL1 The Registered Rents (Increase) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content for the Rule to be made.

10. SL1 The Licensing (Form of License) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016

Colum Eastwood declared a family interest in the licensing trade

The Committee considered SL1 The Licensing (Form of License) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content for the Rule to be made.

11. SL1 The Licensing (Designation of Outdoor Stadia) (No2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016

The Committee considered SL1 The Licensing (Designation of Outdoor Stadia) (No2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content for the Rule to be made.

12. SL1 The Licensing (Designation of Outdoor Stadia) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016

The Committee considered SL1 The Licensing (Designation of Outdoor Stadia) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content for the Rule to be made.

13. SR The Discretionary Support Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016

There were no objections to the Rule.

Question put and agreed:

“That the Committee for Communities has considered the Statutory Rule The Discretionary Support Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 and subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules’ report, recommends that it be affirmed by the Assembly.”

14. SR The Welfare Supplementary Payment (Loss of Disability Living Allowance) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016

There were no objections to the Rule.

Question put and agreed:

“That the Committee for Communities has considered the Statutory Rule The Welfare Supplementary Payment (Loss of Disability Living Allowance) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 and subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules’ report, recommends that it be affirmed by the Assembly.”

15. SR The Welfare Supplementary Payment (Loss of Disability-Related Premiums) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016

There were no objections to the Rule.

Question put and agreed:

“That the Committee for Communities has considered the Statutory Rule The Welfare Supplementary Payment (Loss of Disability-Related Premiums) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 and subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules’ report, recommends that it be affirmed by the Assembly.”

16. SR The Welfare Supplementary Payment (Loss of Carer Payments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016

There were no objections to the Rule.

Question put and agreed:

“That the Committee for Communities has considered the Statutory Rule The Welfare Supplementary Payment (Loss of Carer Payments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 and subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules’ report, recommends that it be affirmed by the Assembly.”

17. Correspondence

The Committee noted the correspondence memo.

The Committee noted correspondence in relation to the PRONI annual report on Public Bodies and Public Appointments for 2014/15.

During discussion on the report:

Adrian McQuillan joined the meeting at 11:50 am

Carál Ní Chuilín and Michelle Gildernew declared interests as former Ministers.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Executive Office to raise concerns about the lack of female representation on boards, particularly in the position of chairpersons of public bodies, and the lack of representation from minority groups such as ethnic minorities and people with disabilities. The Committee agreed to ask the Executive Office what plans they have to address this imbalance.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite the Public Appointments Commissioner to a future meeting to discuss the issue.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to other Committee Chairpersons to establish if there could be a collective approach to taking this issue forward.

Agreed: The committee agreed to action all other correspondence as outlined on the correspondence memo.

18. Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted the draft Forward Work Programme.

The Committee discussed the fact that it is scheduled to meet and deal with a packed agenda on 23 June 2016, the day of the EU Referendum. A number of members gave their apologies.

Agreed: The Clerk would look at potential quorum issues and advise members of any proposals to reschedule the day's business.

The Committee noted that the meeting on 30 June may need to start at 9.45 am to ensure business is finished on time to allow members to attend a Simon Community event at noon.

Carál Ní Chuilín left the meeting at 12:02pm

19. AOB

The Chairperson advised members that he has agreed to address the NILGA Annual Conference and Exhibition, which will be held on Thursday 6th October 2016.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to hold an external meeting in Derry/Londonderry on the same day.

20. Date, time and location of the next meeting

Committee staff agreed to liaise with members regarding any change to the scheduled meeting of 23 June 2016 at 10 am in room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12:05 pm

Mr Colum Eastwood MLA

Chairperson, Committee for Communities

23 June 2016