



# Northern Ireland Assembly

## COMMITTEE FOR COMMUNITIES

### MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**Thursday 15 September 2016  
Room 29 Parliament Buildings**

Present: Michelle Gildernew MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Steven Agnew MLA  
Andy Allen MLA  
Jonathan Bell MLA  
Naomi Long MLA  
Nichola Mallon MLA  
Fra McCann MLA  
Adrian McQuillan MLA  
Carál Ní Chuilín MLA  
Christopher Stalford MLA

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

Apologies: Colum Eastwood MLA (Chairperson)

*The meeting commenced in open session at 10:05 am*

Carál Ní Chuilín declared an interest in relation to agenda item 6 as a former Executive Minister.

#### **1. Apologies**

Apologies are recorded above

## **2. Chairperson's Business**

The Deputy Chairperson advised that the Chairperson has been invited to attend the 67<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Founding of the People's Republic of China at the Consul General in Belfast.

## **3. Draft Minutes**

*Agreed:* The draft minutes of the meeting of 30 June 2016 were agreed.

## **4. Matters Arising**

The Committee noted that the Examiner of Statutory Rules has not identified any issues with SRs under the remit of the Department for Communities in her report which was published on Friday 9 September 2016.

The Committee noted that the timescales for the budget process have changed since the Committee's last meeting in June. It was originally anticipated that the Department would brief the Committee today however this has been rescheduled to October but has still to be confirmed.

In addition, the briefing on the October Monitoring Round will not take place on this date as the Department is still awaiting information from DoF.

## **5. Departmental Briefing – The Licensing and Registration of Clubs (Amendment) Bill**

The Committee noted briefing papers from the Clerk and the Department

The following officials joined the meeting at 10:09 am

- Mr Liam Quinn Head of Social Policy Unit.
- Mrs Carol Reid
- Mr Francis Connolly

*Naomi Long joined the meeting at 10:10 am*

The officials briefed the Committee and this was followed by questions from members.

The officials left the meeting at 11:03 am

The Committee considered and discussed a paper from the Clerk setting out proposals for the handling of the Bill.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed its approach to its call for evidence.

*Agreed:* Due to the call for expediency from some quarters the Committee agreed to issue its call for evidence after First Stage rather than wait until the Bill reaches Second Stage in the Assembly. The Committee also agreed to schedule oral evidence sessions with key stakeholders before the call for written evidence closes.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to consider its detailed timetable for the handling of the Bill when it has had an opportunity to assess the range and nature of issues being raised by stakeholders.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that committee staff should begin to schedule oral evidence sessions as set out in the Clerk's paper with some additions. Further witnesses will be agreed when the call for written evidence closes.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to seek additional information on a number of issues from the Department.

*This session was recorded by Hansard*

## **6. The imbalance of representation on the boards of public bodies- briefing by the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland**

The committee noted a memo from the Clerk and a briefing paper from the Commissioner.

The following witnesses joined the meeting at 11:07 am:

- The Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland - Judena Leslie; and
- Pat Neeson - Business and Policy Manager, Commissioner for Public Appointments

The witnesses briefed the committee and this was followed by questions from members.

The witnesses left the meeting at 11:52 am

Agreed actions for agenda items 6 and 7 are listed under item 7.

## **7. The Boardroom Apprentice – briefing by Strictly Boardroom**

The committee noted a memo from the Clerk and a briefing paper from Strictly Boardroom.

Carál Ní Chuilín and Fra McCann left the meeting at 11:55 am

The following witness joined the meeting at 11:55 am

- Eileen Mullan, Owner and Non - Executive Director, of Strictly Boardroom

The witness briefed the committee and this was followed by questions from members.

The witness left the meeting at 12:11pm

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the following:

- Expect achievement of the public appointment targets set by the Executive;
- Request DfC to report bi annually on its strategy and efforts to promote diversity in public appointments;
- Ask the Department to set out what it is doing to achieve the Executive gender targets for the appointment of women to Chairs of public bodies;
- Expect DfC to have a focus on good governance and the pursuit of excellence in its public administration;
- Request that the Department set out a plan of action for the further development of good governance within its public bodies and to report on that plan. Such plans should include skills audits, training, development and mentoring initiatives;
- Expect the Executive Office to implement the agreed reform of the CPA NI legislation (this relates to diversity in public appointments and the Commissioner having a role in the re-appointment process);
- Request the Executive Office to report on progress on implementing the agreed changes to the CPA NI legislation;
- Express the view to the Executive office that the Committee would be supportive of legislation to give the Commissioner the power to intervene in the legislative process;
- Expect the Executive Office to implement its commitment to review the practice of appointing local councillors to public bodies and seek a report from the Executive Office on progress on this commitment;
- Expect Departments to collaborate and work in partnership across public appointments; and
- Request the Executive Office to ensure that it promotes the role of the Public Appointments Forum in sharing best practice, resources and support between Departments involved in making public appointments.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Committee for the Executive Office, include today's papers on the issue, and ask that it consider taking the lead on this issue and suggest that a committee-wide approach may be required given the number of NDPBs that come under the remit of each of the departments. The Committee also agreed that the Commissioner should be at all Public Appointments Forum meetings and that these should not reduce in frequency.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to ask the Department if it is willing to support programmes such as the Boardroom Apprentice proposal given its role in promoting social inclusion and gender equality.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to commission a research paper regarding term-limited public appointments including a review of practice elsewhere.

#### **8. Cultural Property (Armed Conflicts) Bill – Legislative Consent Motion**

The Committee noted a draft Report and supporting papers in relation to the Minister’s Legislative Consent Memorandum which has been laid in the Assembly.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to request information from the Department in relation to the mechanism that would determine how cultural property is designated by the Minister.

The Committee noted that it will need to agree its Report next week.

*Adrian McQuillan left the meeting at 12:15 pm*

#### **9. SL1 Local Government Pension Scheme (Nursery Assistants) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016**

The committee noted the SL1.

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

#### **10. SL1 Domestic Energy Efficiency (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016**

The committee noted the SL1.

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

#### **11. SL1 The Pension 2015 Act (Consequential Amendments) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016**

The committee noted the SL1.

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

#### **12. SR 255 The Registered Rents (Increase) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016**

Question put and agreed:

“That the Committee for Communities has considered the Statutory Rule SR 255/2016 The Registered Rents (Increase) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016 and has no objection to the Rule.”

#### **13. SR 294/2016 The Licensing (Designation of Outdoor Stadia) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016**

Question put and agreed:

“That the Committee for Communities has considered the Statutory Rule SR 294/2016 The Licensing (Designation of Outdoor Stadia) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 and has no objection to the Rule.”

**14. SR 295/2016 The Licensing (Form of License) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016**

Question put and agreed:

“That the Committee for Communities has considered the Statutory Rule SR 295/2016 The Licensing (Form of License) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 and has no objection to the Rule.”

**15. SR 296/2016 The Licensing (Designation of Outdoor Stadia) (No.2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016**

Question put and agreed:

“That the Committee for Communities has considered the Statutory Rule SR 296/2016 The Licensing (Designation of Outdoor Stadia) (No.2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 and has no objection to the Rule.”

**16. SR 310/2016 The Housing Benefit (Abolition of the Family Premium and date of claim) (Amendment) Regulation (NI) 2016**

The Committee noted that the Examiner of Statutory Rules has not yet reported on this SR

Question put and agreed:

“That the Committee for Communities has considered the Statutory Rule SR 310/2016 The Housing Benefit (Abolition of the Family Premium and date of claim) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 and, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules’ Report has no objection to the Rule.”

**17. SR315 The Hybrid Schemes Quality Requirements (Amendment) Rules (Northern Ireland) 2016**

The Committee noted that the Rule is not subject to any Assembly procedure and does not require to be laid before the Assembly

The Committee therefore noted the Rule.

**18. SR 316/2016 The Employer’s Duties (Implementation) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016**

Question put and agreed:

“That the Committee for Communities has considered the Statutory Rule SR 316/2016 The Employer’s Duties (Implementation) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 and has no objection to the Rule.”

## 19. Correspondence

The committee noted a correspondence memo and a number of items of tabled correspondence.

The Committee considered correspondence from the Department in relation to a transfer of Functions Order to transfer the Appeals process from the Department for Communities to the Department of Justice.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department to advise that while it is content with the principle behind the transfer of functions, it is concerned about the level of funding available to those making appeals.

The Committee noted correspondence regarding a public consultation for the provision of strategic support to the Voluntary and Community Sector.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to schedule an early briefing on the consultation.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that committee staff liaise with the Department to arrange a briefing on the Social Strategy.

The Committee noted various items of correspondence with Ravenhill Residents Association and Ulster Rugby.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to Ulster Rugby on the progress made to date to establish a Stadium Community Committee.

The Committee noted a number of requests to meet and brief the Committee.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the Clerk write to these organisations to advise that the Committee is currently considering its strategic priorities and until such times as these are finalised, the Committee is content to receive *written* briefings.

The Committee noted that the Committee for Economy are sponsoring an event of the Northern Ireland Impact Forum on Adult Learning and expressed its support for the event.

The Committee noted an Assembly Research and Information Service paper on the reclassification of Housing Associations.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to organise a briefing as soon as possible on the contingency plans that are in place should the ONS designate Housing Associations in Northern Ireland as public organisations.

*Agreed:* The Committee also agreed to write to the Department and the Committee for Finance on this matter.

The Committee noted a statement from the Department in relation to reports in the media that HMRC does not plan to renew the Concentrix Contract in 2017.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Minister to ask that he seek further information. The Committee wishes to be satisfied that the issues lie with the provider and not the contract itself. The Committee also expressed concern around on-going issues with claims and how the announcement was handled from an employee point of view.

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

*Andy Allen left the meeting at 12:41 pm*

## **20. Forward Work Programme**

The Committee noted its draft Forward Work programme

*22 September 2016 – External meeting and attendance at Welfare Reform Seminar – Ulster University, Belfast*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed its itinerary for 22 September, amended to include an informal strategic planning follow-up session.

*Agreed:* Members agreed to indicate their attendance at the morning meeting and the afternoon seminar to the Committee Office by noon on Friday 16 September.

The Committee noted that it is anticipated that members will make their own travel arrangements. Should any member require additional assistance they should contact the Committee Office.

*Assembly Research and Information Service Briefing on the Licensing and Registration of Clubs (Amendment) Bill – 22 September 2016*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed a number of issues to be included in the paper.

*6 October 2016 – External meeting and attendance at NILGA conference in Derry/Londonderry*

The Committee noted the agenda for the NILGA conference

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to hold its meeting after lunch to allow those members wishing to attend the conference to do so.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to indicate their attendance at the conference and the meeting to the committee office by noon on Friday 16 September 2016.

*Agreed:* The committee agreed the draft Forward Work Programme.



**21. AOB**

No items were raised

**22. Date, time and location of the next meeting**

The next meeting of the Committee for Communities will take place on Thursday 22 September 2016 at 10.00 am in the Ulster University, Belfast Campus.

*The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12.50 pm*

**Michelle Gildernew MLA**

**Deputy Chairperson, Committee for Communities**

**22 September 2016**