



Northern Ireland Assembly

COMMITTEE FOR COMMUNITIES

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Thursday 8 December 2016
Room 29 Parliament Buildings

- Present: Colum Eastwood MLA (Chairperson)
Steven Agnew MLA
Andy Allen MLA
Jonathan Bell MLA
Nichola Mallon MLA
Carál Ní Chuilín MLA
Fra McCann MLA
- In Attendance: Kevin Pelan (Assembly Clerk)
Ashleigh Mitford (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Paula Best (Clerical Supervisor)
Stewart Kennedy (Clerical Supervisor)
Stephanie Wilson (Clerical Officer)
- Apologies: Michelle Gildernew MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Naomi Long MLA
Adrian McQuillan MLA
Christopher Stalford MLA

The meeting commenced in open session at 10:10 am

1. Apologies

Apologies are recorded above

2. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The draft minutes of the meetings of 1 and 6 December 2016 were agreed.

3. Chairperson's Business

No items were raised

4. Matters Arising

The Committee noted a Written Statement from the Minister for Communities to the Assembly on the introduction of Universal Credit.

The Committee noted a draft a response to the Committee for the Executive on the Programme for Government.

Agreed: The Committee was content with the response as drafted and agreed to forward the response to the Committee for the Executive Office.

The Chairperson reminded members that one Committee member attended Housing Rights' conference on the Private Rented Sector on 23 November 2016 at the East Belfast Network Centre.

The conference aimed to look at key issues facing the private rented sector here and consider best practice across the UK and Ireland. Details of the conference and a links to papers were provided for members' information.

5. Licensing and Registration of Clubs (Amendment) Bill – Consideration session with the Department for Communities

The Committee noted a briefing paper from the Clerk, correspondence from the Department and Asda.

The following departmental officials joined the meeting at 10:11am

- Liam Quinn, Social Policy Unit
- Carol Reid, Social Policy Unit

The Committee and the Department discussed issues set out in the paper. In particular, the Committee discussed issues in relation to clauses 11 and 12. Members were invited to raise any other issues they wished to discuss in relation to the Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to give further consideration to the Clerk's paper over Christmas recess in order that the Committee be well placed when it returns in January to reach a final position on the issues discussed.

The officials left the meeting at 10.14 am

The session was recorded by Hansard

Jonathan Bell joined the meeting at 10.15am

6. The Occupational and Personal Pension Schemes (Automatic Enrolment) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2016

The Committee noted the SL1.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to defer its consideration and to seek further information from the Department in relation to workers with transitional protection.

7. SR 419 The State Pension Revaluation for Transitional Pensions Order (NI) 2016

The Committee noted the SR and that the Examiner of Statutory Rules has not yet reported on it.

Question put and agreed:

“That the Committee for Communities has considered the Statutory Rule SR419/2016 The State Pension Revaluation for Transitional Pensions Order (NI) 2016 and subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules’ report, has no objection to the Rule.”

8. Correspondence

The Committee noted tabled correspondence from the Department of Justice in relation to the Judicial Pensions (Amendment) Regulation (NI) 2017.

The Committee noted tabled correspondence from the Minister in relation to the planned review of Arms-Length Bodies. Briefings in relation to this review have been added to the ‘to be scheduled’ section of the Committee Forward Work Programme.

The Committee noted tabled correspondence from the Department in relation to Registration of Local Councillors’ Interests.

The Committee noted a correspondence memo.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content to action all other correspondence as outlined on the correspondence memo.

9. Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted its draft Forward Work Programme.

The Committee noted that it is scheduled to receive a briefing from Steps 2 Success providers on 2 February 2017.

Agreed: Given that there are 13 regional providers supporting three lead provider the Committee agreed to seek views in writing in the first instance. Committee staff will then draft proposals on the best way to approach the oral evidence session.

The Chairperson invited views from members on any specific information they wished the regional providers to include in their written submissions.

Members expressed concerns regarding the existing scheme and how it was procured and tendered. The Committee acknowledged that there will be lessons learned that must be taken into consideration by the Department when preparing for a replacement scheme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing from the Department after it has received a briefing from the Steps 2 Success providers.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft FWP.

10. AOB

A member asked for the Committee to seek an update on the Private Rented Sector consultation. Members were of the view that there are a number of key housing strands under review and it would be beneficial to receive a status update on these.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to seek a comprehensive status update on key strands of housing that are under review by the Department.

The Clerk briefed the members on the Committee visit to Stella Maris and the Housing First project which was scheduled to take place after the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the travel and lunch arrangements.

11. Date, time and location of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee for Communities will take place on Thursday 12 January 2017 at 10.00 am in room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 10.30 pm

Chairperson, Committee for Communities

12 January 2017