



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**THURSDAY 17 October 2013
Room 29, Parliament Buildings**

- Present:**
- Mr Alex Maskey MLA (Chairperson)
 - Mr Mickey Brady MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
 - Mr Jim Allister MLA
 - Ms Paula Bradley MLA
 - Mr Gregory Campbell MLA
 - Mr Trevor Clarke MLA
 - Mr Michael Copeland MLA
 - Mr Stewart Dickson MLA
 - Mrs Dolores Kelly MLA
 - Mr Fra McCann MLA
- In Attendance:**
- Dr Kevin Pelan (Assembly Clerk)
 - Ms Angela McParland (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
 - Mr Stephen Orme (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
 - Mr Stephen Todd (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
 - Mr Stewart Kennedy (Clerical Supervisor)
 - Ms Allison Ferguson (Clerical Officer)
- Apologies:** None

The Chairperson declared the meeting open to the public at 10.01am.

1. Apologies

No apologies were received.

2. Draft Minutes of the meeting held 10 October 2013

Agreed: The minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2013 were agreed.

Ms Dolores Kelly MLA and Mr Gregory Campbell MLA joined the meeting at 10.03am

3. Chairperson's Business

- 3.1. The Chairperson reminded members that the committee meeting on 28 November would be held at the Everglades Hotel in Derry during the Conference of the Isles and that the Committee agreed to put forward members to participate in a panel discussion in the afternoon.

Dolores Kelly MLA volunteered to participate in the panel discussion.

- 3.2. The Chairperson reminded members that Committee participation had been requested at the Law Centre AGM on 13 November.

Michael Copeland MLA, Paula Bradley MLA and Mickey Brady MLA volunteered to participate in the Law Centre AGM.

- 3.3. The Chairperson advised that the figures of members' attendance at Committee meetings, agreed at the meeting on 12 September, will be published on the Assembly website on 21 October.

4. Matters Arising

- 4.1 Members discussed the title of the Inquiry into allegations made by the Spotlight programme on 3 July and agreed on the title:

Inquiry into allegations, arising from a BBC NI Spotlight programme aired on 3 July 2013, of impropriety or irregularity relating to NIHE managed contracts and consideration of any resulting actions.

Mr Trevor Clarke MLA joined the meeting at 10.22am

Members discussed meeting arrangements to ensure the schedule can maximize members' attendance. Further consideration of the schedule was agreed.

The Chairperson advised that the Terms of Reference for the Inquiry have been published on the Assembly website, and that a Press Statement had been drafted to this effect. Members considered and agreed the draft press statement.

4.2 The Committee agreed to defer making comment on Alcohol Licensing until the Minister makes his proposals.

5. Pavement Cafés Bill – Oral Evidence Session with IMTAC and Guide Dogs NI

The following officials joined the meeting at 10.30am:

- Mr Michael Lorimer, IMTAC
- Mr David Mann, IMTAC
- Mr Andrew Murdock, Guide Dogs
- Ms Elaine Orwin, Guide Dogs

The Chairperson offered apologies on behalf of the Committee for having to postpone this briefing, originally scheduled for 10 October, at short notice and invited the officials to brief the Committee.

The officials noted the need to regulate pavement cafes, which they considered overdue, but outlined a number of concerns with the proposed Bill, particularly the perceived lack of emphasis on ensuring unobstructed movement of pedestrians on the pavement.

Focusing on this issue there was discussion around the ‘light touch’ approach of the Bill, the need for robust enforcement of the licensing arrangements, greater clarity on a range aspects including the definition of a ‘pavement café’, and emphasis on ‘pedestrians’ rather than ‘persons’, as currently noted in the Bill.

Ms Dolores Kelly MLA left the meeting at 11.05am

This session was recorded by Hansard.

The officials left the meeting at 11.09am.

6. Community Asset Transfer – Briefing by Development Trusts NI

The following officials joined the meeting at 11.11am:

- Mr Charlie Fisher, Programme Manager, Development Trusts NI
- Mr Nigel Kinnaird, Chair, Development Trusts NI
- Mr Lauri McCusker, Director, Fermanagh Trusts
- Ms Helen Quigley, Vice Chair, Development Trusts NI

The officials briefed the Committee on the benefits of Community Asset Transfer (CAT) and the work of Development Trusts NI (DTNI) to promote and support this. They

emphasised the need to move away from a grant dependency culture and the role CAT can play in regeneration through the development of social enterprises.

There was discussion around the selection process for Community Asset Transfer projects and how the success of projects could be predicted. The officials noted that projects had to be taken on a case by case basis and highlighted assets in a number of constituencies that potentially could be transferred to community groups. The officials noted that the Strategic Investment Board had so far been very supportive of the projects but were conscious of the challenges involved.

The officials noted that DTNI is a relatively new organisation and that they are optimistic about the potential benefits of CAT, but that for this approach to work it is vital that cross-party support is shown and that a champion in the government is identified.

The officials left the meeting at 12.02pm.

7. Correspondence

- 7.1 The Social Security Agency wrote to the Committee providing key findings from the call for evidence for the fourth independent review of Work Capability Assessment. This correspondence has been forwarded to Professor Litchfield and the Committee agreed to invite the Department to brief the Committee once Professor Litchfield has completed his independent review.
- 7.2 The Participation and the Practice of Rights Project (PPR) has written to the Committee asking that it holds the Minister and NIHE accountable to their statutory obligations to address religious inequality in housing allocation. The Committee noted that they would be receiving a briefing from the Department on housing allocations on 28 November and would address the issue at this briefing and as part of its ongoing work on housing. The Committee agreed to write to the PPR to this effect.
- 7.3 The Chairperson drew members' attentions to event invitations and asked that they respond to Committee staff if they wish to attend.
- 7.4 The Department wrote to the Committee advising that the NIHE hoped to consider the Campbell Tickell report at their meeting on 30 October and should be available to brief the Committee on 21 November. The Committee agreed to schedule this briefing.
- 7.5 The Committee agreed to note the remaining correspondence as outlined on the correspondence memo.

8. Forward Work Programme

The Committee was content with the proposed Forward Work Programme.

9. Any Other Business

None.

10. Date, time and place of next meeting

The next meeting will take place at 10.00am on Thursday 24 October 2013 in Room 29 Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12.04pm.

Mr Alex Maskey

**Chairperson, Committee for Social Development
24 October 2013**