



**Northern Ireland  
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

**THURSDAY 26 September 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 Fra McCann MLA  
Mr Sammy Wilson MLA
- In Attendance: Dr Kevin Pelan (Assembly Clerk)  
Ms Angela McParland (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Stephen Todd (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Stewart Kennedy (Clerical Supervisor)  
Ms Allison Ferguson (Clerical Officer)
- Apologies: Ms Judith Cochrane MLA  
Mr Mark H Durkan MLA

The meeting commenced in closed session at 10.05am.

The Chairperson declared the meeting open to the public at 11.02am.

**1. Apologies**

Apologies were as indicated above.

## **2. October Monitoring Round including the Budget Position within the NIHE – Ministerial briefing**

The following officials joined the meeting at 11.05am.

- Minister Nelson McCausland, Minister for Social Development, DSD
- Dr John McPeake, Chief Executive, NIHE
- Mr Jim Wilkinson, Director of Housing, DSD

Prior to the Minister's briefing, the Chairperson stated that the committee was deeply concerned about the significant NIHE underspend particularly at a time when there is great need for social housing and the delivery of a planned maintenance programme.

The Minister stated that contract management issues within the NIHE were legacy issues that needed to be resolved, but that this would take time. He briefed the committee on this and other matters including the 'buy-back' scheme, co-ownership and the potential lifting of the injunction that is preventing the awarding of double-glazing contracts. Dr McPeake then elaborated on the Housing Executive's proposals in respect of these issues.

Following the briefing, committee members carried out a detailed discussion with the officials, expressing concern over why there were no bids from the department for social housing, the continued surrender of funds over several monitoring rounds and the validity of the previously stated £18million pound overpayment in respect of planned maintenance.

The Chairperson reiterated the committee's concern and requested a copy of the criteria for the 'buy-back' scheme. He emphasised the importance of having the Chair of the NIHE brief the committee on the independent review relating to planned maintenance.

The officials left the meeting at 12.28pm.

*This session was recorded by Hansard.*

## **3. Draft Minutes of the meeting held 19 September 2013**

*Agreed:* The minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2013 were agreed.

## **4. Chairperson's Business**

The Chairperson reminded members that next week's Committee meeting would take place in University of Ulster Magee campus and advised that, due to a full agenda, the meeting would last into the afternoon.

## **5. Matters Arising**

- 5.1** The Chairperson informed members that Committee for Finance and Personnel has requested a response from committees on the Call for Evidence on the Public Services Pensions Bill by 27 September. The Committee agreed that it was content to send a nil response.
- 5.2** The Chairperson informed members that Michael Copeland MLA agreed to represent the Committee at an event hosted by Action Mental Health on 8 October.
- 5.3** The Chair reminded members that committee training on effective questioning was scheduled for 7 November. As a number of members had already attended this training, it was agreed that this session would be cancelled.

## **6. Correspondence**

The Committee noted the correspondence as outlined on the correspondence memo.

## **7. Forward Work Programme**

The Committee was content with the proposed Forward Work Programme.

## **8. Any Other Business**

It was proposed and agreed that next week's meeting will start in closed session for further discussion on the draft terms of reference for the inquiry.

## **9. Date, time and place of next meeting**

The next meeting will take place at 10.00am on Thursday 3 October 2013 in the Rehearsal Room at University of Ulster Magee Campus.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12.37pm.

**Mr Alex Maskey**

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