



Northern Ireland Assembly

COMMITTEE FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Thursday 05 November 2015
Room 29, Parliament Buildings

Present: Mr Alex Maskey MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Fra McCann MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Jim Allister MLA
Mr Roy Beggs MLA
Ms Paula Bradley MLA
Mr Gregory Campbell MLA
Mr Stewart Dickson MLA
Mr Sammy Douglas MLA
Mr Phil Flanagan MLA
Mr Adrian McQuillan MLA

In Attendance: Dr Kevin Pelan (Assembly Clerk)
Mrs Ashleigh Mitford (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Stewart Kennedy (Clerical Supervisor)
Ms Alicia Muldoon (Clerical Officer)

Apologies: Ms Dolores Kelly MLA

NB The sessions on the Housing Amendment Bill and the Houses in Multiple Occupation Bill were held in anticipation that these Bills will be referred to the Committee in due course.

The meeting commenced in open session at 10.04 a.m.

1. Apologies

Apologies were noted as above.

2. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The draft minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2015 were agreed.

3. Chairperson's Business

No items were raised

4. Matters Arising

10.06 am Roy Beggs joined the meeting

The Committee noted the Department's final monitoring return for 2015-16 and further noted that a briefing has been scheduled for next week.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to issue a nil response to the Assembly and Executive Review Committee in relation to the Assembly and Executive Reform (Assembly Opposition) Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to issue a nil response to the OFMdfM Committee in relation to the 'Towards a Wellbeing Framework' report.

5. The Charities Act 2008 (Designated Religious Charities) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 - Departmental Briefing

The Committee noted the SL1 - The Charities Act 2008 (Designated Religious Charities) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015

Roy Beggs declared an interest as a member of a Presbyterian Church Committee and Boys' Brigade Officer.

Stewart Dickson declared an interest as a Boys' Brigade Officer.

The following departmental officials joined the meeting at 10.07 am

- Mr Peter Toner, Head of VCU Charities Policy and Legislation Team, DSD
- Mr Martin Ireland, Deputy Principal of the Charities Team, DSD

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

Agreed: Members agreed that the officials should return to brief the Committee on 12 November on the issues raised on the SL1.

The Departmental officials left the meeting at 10.39am

6. Housing (Amendment) Bill – Departmental Briefing

The following departmental officials joined the meeting at 10.40 am

- Dr Heloise Brown, Head of Housing Research, Policy and Legislation, DSD
- Ms Avril Hiles, Private Rented Housing, DSD
- Mr Stephen Baird, Policy and Legislation Manager, DSD
- Ms Maryann Dempsey, Deputy Principal of Private Rented Housing, DSD

The Departmental Officials briefed the Committee.

Agreed: The Committee would consider the Department's briefing and its written submission and return to consider the Bill on 12 November 2015.

The Departmental officials left the meeting at 10.49 am

The session was recorded by Hansard.

7. Houses in Multiple Occupation Bill Evidence Session – Housing Rights Service

The Committee noted a memo from the Clerk in relation to today's evidence sessions on the HMO Bill.

The following representatives joined the meeting at 10.50 am

- Ms Janet Hunter, Director, Housing Rights Service
- Mr Christopher McGrath, Housing Solicitor, Housing Rights Service
- Ms Etain Ní Fhearghail, Web Editor, Housing Rights Service

The Committee noted the written submission.

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

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Clerk follow up on any outstanding issues with the Department and/or witnesses.

The representatives left the meeting at 11.33am

The session was recorded by Hansard.

8. Houses in Multiple Occupation Bill Evidence Session – Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities

11.34 am Phil Flanagan joined the meeting

The following representatives joined the meeting at 11.34 am

- Mr Patrick Yu, Executive Director, Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities
- Mr Luke Kelly, Policy Officer, Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities

The Committee noted the written submission.

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

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Clerk follow up on any outstanding issues with the Department and/or witnesses.

The representatives left the meeting at 11.59 am

The session was recorded by Hansard.

12.01pm Gregory Campbell left the meeting.

9. Houses in Multiple Occupation Bill Evidence Session – Residents Association Joint Briefing

The following representatives joined the meeting at 12.01 pm

- Ms Bríd Ruddy, Chairperson, College Park Avenue Residents Association
- Ms Eileen Sung, Chairperson, Sans Souci Residents Association
- Mr Tony McGuinness, Committee Member, Belfast Holyland Regeneration Association

The Committee noted the written submission.

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

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Clerk follow up on any outstanding issues with the Department and/or witnesses.

The representatives left the meeting at 12.43pm

The session was recorded by Hansard.

10. Houses in Multiple Occupation Bill Evidence Session – Queen’s University Belfast

The following representatives joined the meeting at 12.44pm

- Mr Damien Toner, Director of Estates, Queen’s University Belfast
- Ms Caroline Young, Director of Student Plus, Queen’s University Belfast

The Committee noted the written submission.

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

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Clerk follow up on any outstanding issues with the Department and/or witnesses.

The representatives left the meeting at 13.11pm

The session was recorded by Hansard.

11. Correspondence

The Committee noted a quarterly update on the Northside Regeneration Scheme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request an oral briefing on the Northside Regeneration Scheme in the new year.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Voluntary and Community Unit advising Members that the 'Advising, Supporting, Empowering – A Strategy for the delivery of generalist advice services in Northern Ireland 2015-2020' has been completed.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request an oral briefing in the new year.

The Committee noted an update on the work of the Housing Repossessions Taskforce.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request an oral briefing in the new year.

The Committee noted correspondence from Supporting Communities NI.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to include a briefing from Supporting Communities NI as part of a possible visit in relation to its work on housing matters.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Council for the Homeless NI.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it would be inappropriate to engage with CHNI on an issue related to a competitive tendering exercise and agreed to respond accordingly.

The Committee noted a written submission from the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission in relation to the Houses in Multiple Occupation Bill.

The Committee noted correspondence from Mr Gregory Burke regarding a complaint against the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland (CCNI)

Agreed: The Committee agreed to defer consideration of this correspondence until 12 November 2015.

The Committee noted that the Social Security Advisory Committee plan to visit here in February 2016.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule an informal meeting between Members of the Social Development Committee and the Social Security Advisory Committee during their visit.

Members noted a correspondence memo.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to action correspondence as outlined on the correspondence memo.

The Committee noted tabled correspondence in relation the HMO Bill which has been copied to the Department.

12. Forward Work Programme

Agreed: The Committee agreed its Forward Work Programme.

13. AOB

No items were raised.

14. Date, time and place of next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee for Social Development will take place on 12 November 2015 at 10.00am in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 1.16 p.m.

Alex Maskey

Chairperson, Committee for Social Development

12 November 2015