



Northern Ireland Assembly

COMMITTEE FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Thursday 12 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 Sammy Douglas MLA
Ms Dolores Kelly MLA
Mr Adrian McQuillan MLA
- In Attendance: Dr Kevin Pelan (Assembly Clerk)
Mrs Ashleigh Mitford (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Stewart Kennedy (Clerical Supervisor)
Mr Stephen Magee (Clerical Supervisor)
Ms Alicia Muldoon (Clerical Officer)
- Apologies: Mr Gregory Campbell MLA
Mr Stewart Dickson MLA
Mr Phil Flanagan MLA

The meeting commenced in open session at 10.04 am.

1. Apologies

Apologies were noted as above.

2. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The draft minutes of the meeting held on 05 November 2015 were agreed.

3. Chairperson's Business

No items were raised.

4. Matters Arising

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department regarding the Draft Guide to Licensing of Pavement Cafés Act (NI) 2014. The correspondence addressed the issues originally raised by the Committee following a briefing from Imtac and Guide Dogs for the Blind on 11 June 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider the correspondence and discuss at its 19 November meeting whether it is content with the approach taken by the Department.

The Committee noted correspondence from Mr Gregory Burke. Mr Allister informed the Committee that he had met with Mr Burke to discuss his concerns. Mr Allister indicated that he did not believe that the Committee could take any action on these concerns. However, he advised the Committee that he wished to consider other information provided to him by Mr Burke and that he may bring the issue back to the Committee.

Agreed: The Committee therefore agreed to note Mr Burke's correspondence at this time.

The Committee noted that the Housing (Amendment) Bill is now in Committee Stage. The Committee agreed that while it hopes to be in a position to report before Xmas recess, it would be prudent to seek to extend Committee Stage to 15 January 2016 to allow for unforeseen circumstances. This would allow the Committee one extra meeting to complete its consideration of the Bill if necessary.

Agreed: The Committee therefore agreed the following Motion:

That, in accordance with Standing Order 33(4), the period referred to in Standing Order 33(2) in relation to the Committee Stage of NIA Bill 58/11-16 Housing (Amendment) Bill is extended to 15 January 2016.

5. November Monitoring Round - Departmental Briefing

The following Departmental Officials joined the meeting at 10.09 am.

- Mr Ian Snowden Acting Deputy Secretary of RSPG, DSD
- Ms Deborah Brown Finance Director, DSD

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

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek additional information from the Department.

The Departmental officials left the meeting at 10.39 am.

This session was recorded by Hansard.

6. The Charities Act 2008 (Designated Religious Charities) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015

The Chair advised the Committee that since briefing the Committee on the 5 November 2015 the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland has written to the Department expressing a number of concerns in relation to the practical out-workings of this Order and around the designated religious charity provisions contained within the Act.

To ensure that these issues can be fully investigated and considered in conjunction with legal advice and the CCNI, the Department has taken the decision not to progress the draft Order at this time.

10.41 am Alex Maskey left the meeting and Fra McCann took the Chair.

7. Housing (Amendment) Bill Committee Consideration – Departmental Briefing

The following Departmental Officials joined the meeting at 10.42 am.

- 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 Committee discussed outstanding issues in relation to the Housing (Amendment) Bill with the Department.

The Committee noted that a further session to discuss the Bill has been scheduled for next week.

The Departmental Officials left the meeting at 11.22 am.

This session was recorded by Hansard.

8. Houses in Multiple Occupation Bill Evidence Session – Chartered Institute of Housing

The following representatives joined the meeting at 11.23 am.

- Ms Nicola McCrudden, Director, Chartered Institute of Housing
- Mr Justin Cartwright, Policy and Public Affairs Officer, Chartered Institute of Housing

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

11.37 am Sammy Douglas left the meeting.

The representatives left the meeting at 11.38 am.

This session was recorded by Hansard.

9. Correspondence

The Committee noted a correspondence memo.

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

10. Houses in Multiple Occupation Bill Evidence Session –Landlords’ Association NI

The following representatives joined the meeting at 11.40 am.

- Dairmid Laird, Estate Agent and Property Manager, Landlords’ Association NI
- Stephen Magill, Estate Agent and Property Manager, Landlords’ Association NI
- Robert Greer, Chartered Surveyor and Property Manager, Landlords’ Association NI

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

Paula Bradley left the meeting at 11.55*.

Paula Bradley re-joined the meeting at 12.00.

Adrian McQuillan left the meeting at 12.01 pm*.

The representatives left the meeting at 12.31pm.

This session was recorded by Hansard.

**The Committee has a quorum of 5- at this point in the meeting the Committee was reduced to 4. The Committee can take evidence but may not take decisions or put questions unless it has a quorum.*

11. Houses in Multiple Occupation Bill Evidence Session – Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service

The following representatives joined the meeting at 12.32 pm.

- Mr Alan Walmsley, Acting Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer, Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service
- Mr Eamon Gallagher, Group Commander, Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service
- Mr Kevin O’Neill, Group Commander, Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service

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

The representatives left the meeting at 1.01 pm.

This session was recorded by Hansard.

12. Forward Work Programme

Consideration of this item was deferred as quorum had dropped to four.

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 19 November 2015 at 10.00am in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 1.02 p.m.

Alex Maskey

Chairperson, Committee for Social Development

19 November 2015