



**Northern Ireland  
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

Please use this form to submit written submissions in relation to the Licensing Bill.  
Return to [committee.socialdevelopment@niassembly.gov.uk](mailto:committee.socialdevelopment@niassembly.gov.uk) by Thursday 31 December.

**Name:** Tim Keville

**Organisation:** (if applicable) None

**Date:** 3 January 2016

**Members of the Committee**

I live in Ravenhill Park approximately 500 metres from the rugby stadium and I wish to urge you not to endorse Judith Cochrane's private member's Licensing Bill as it stands.

I understand that one of Mrs Cochrane's major reasons for introducing the bill is to bring the licensing legislation for the three national and regional stadia in Northern Ireland into line with that for the Odyssey Arena. I would point out that the three stadia differ significantly from the Odyssey Arena. The Odyssey was built on reclaimed land well away from residential housing. It benefits from purpose built transport infrastructure and the Arena itself is part of a major entertainment complex. The three stadia are, to a greater or lesser extent, all surrounded very closely by residential properties. They do not have good transport infrastructure (although Windsor Park does benefit from the proximity of Adelaide railway station) and they are all stand alone structures designed for specific sporting events.

Mrs Cochrane is trying to rush through legislation which has not been properly

thought through and is unsuitable for the stadia concerned. She admits her Bill is not completely new legislation. She admits it mirrors something that is already in place for an indoor arena and claims "It is the same business model as operates elsewhere. A precedent has already been set for this." This is not true!

By its very nature and location the Odyssey Arena differs significantly from the stadia concerned. If the licensing arrangements for the stadia are to be changed then it must be done by legislation specifically tailored to the particular circumstances of the sports stadia concerned. In particular it must take account of their urban location, the nature of the events to be held and the impact on areas of high residential density.

Mrs Cochrane has not consulted with the residents. In her appearance before the committee on 15 October 2015 she stated that "I have done letter drops in some areas, for instance in the vicinity of Kingspan." I did not receive any such "letter drop" and I know a significant number of my neighbours did not receive a "letter drop" either. I would guess that very few of the residents near Windsor Park and Casement Park are even aware of this private member's bill.

As a resident who has suffered major inconvenience from drunken patrons of Ulster Rugby, I think there should be quite strict controls over the time periods when alcohol can be served at the stadium. The part of the Bill concerned with the "Attachment of conditions to licenses" should be redrafted to enforce latest times for selling alcohol at stadia. These times should be specific to stadia and not be the same as other premises selling alcohol. Conditions on the prohibition of children from parts of the stadia should be specifically amended to take into account the timing of the events being held. These conditions should be set by the elected representatives in the Assembly after proper consultation with residents and not in the courts at the whim of a judge.

I see absolutely no point in paragraph 5 of Mrs Cochrane's Bill. I don't think it could possibly apply to the operators of the stadia concerned and believe it is an example of the lack of thought given to the wording of this proposed legislation. Can you please ask her why it is there?

Paragraph 6 of Mrs Cochrane's Bill is entitled "Additional permitted hours and

suitability for functions". I can't see how this paragraph impacts on possible additional hours. Again, an example of lack thought in the drafting of the Bill.

This Bill as it stands has been hurriedly prepared and sloppily drafted. The proposed changes to legislation are not appropriate for the stadia concerned and in my opinion can only have a negative effect on the residents who live in the areas concerned.

By all means, amend the licensing arrangements for these stadia but do it in a considered, professional, democratic manner which takes account of their particular circumstances.



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