



Northern Ireland Assembly

COMMITTEE FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

THURSDAY 6 March 2014

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 Stewart Dickson MLA
Mr Fra McCann MLA
Mr Sammy Wilson MLA

In Attendance: Dr Kevin Pelan (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Stephen Orme (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Stephen Todd (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Stewart Kennedy (Clerical Supervisor)
Miss Allison Ferguson (Clerical Officer)

Apologies: Mr Michael Copeland MLA
Ms Dolores Kelly MLA

The meeting opened to the public at 10.06 am.

1. Apologies

Apologies were as noted above.

2. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The draft minutes of the meeting held on 27 February were agreed.

3. Chairperson's Business

There was no Chairperson's business.

4. Matters Arising

4.1 The Chairperson advised Members that, following the Committee's agreement to recall witnesses under Phase 1 of the Inquiry, Ian Young and Jim McKeag have informed Committee staff that they are unavailable to attend between 13-24 March; they will therefore be providing a written briefing. The Minister, his Special Advisor and the Permanent Secretary are scheduled to appear before the Committee on 13 March.

The Chairperson also advised the Committee that Michael Sands, Deputy Director of Housing at DSD, will be unavailable to give evidence until after 14 March.

4.2 The Chairperson drew Members' attention to a letter from the Glass and Glazing Federation providing clarification on a query regarding a 2011 press release, requested by the Committee as part of its Inquiry.

4.3 The Chairperson noted that a response has still not been received from the BBC regarding the Committee's Inquiry.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek advice from Legal Services on this issue as a matter of urgency.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to issue a press release expressing its disappointment with the way in which the BBC has responded to requests for additional documentation.

Mr Trevor Clarke MLA joined the meeting at 10.13 am.

4.4 The Chairperson informed Members that Committee staff have drafted a letter to stakeholders notifying them of the Committee's forthcoming Strategic Review of its Forward Work Programme and asking for their views on any strategic issues which they feel the Committee should consider.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to send this letter to stakeholders.

5. EQIA Consultation: Responses to the Pensions Bill – Departmental Briefing

The following officials joined the meeting at 10.18 am:

- Anne McCleary – Director of Social Security Policy and Legislation, DSD
- Gerry McCann – Social Security Policy and Legislation, DSD
- Gillian McMaster – Social Security Policy and Legislation, DSD

The officials briefed the Committee on the consultation.

Mr Stewart Dickson MLA joined the meeting at 10.27 am.

The officials then took questions from Members.

This session was recorded by Hansard.

The officials left the meeting at 11.36 am.

6. SL1 The Social Security (Habitual Residence) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014

The Committee agreed to request more information on this proposed Statutory Rule.

7. SL The Housing Benefit (Habitual Residence) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2014

The Committee agreed to request more information on this proposed Statutory Rule.

8. SL1 The Occupational and Personal Pension Schemes (Automatic Enrolment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014

Agreed: The Committee was content for the Rule to be made.

9. SR 62/2014 The Pneumoconiosis etc. (Workers' Compensation) (Payment of Claims) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014

As the Committee was content with the Regulations the Chairperson read the following into the record:

'That the Committee for Social Development has considered Statutory Rule SR 62/2014 The Pneumoconiosis etc. (Workers' Compensation) (Payment of Claims) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 and, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules' Report, recommends that it be affirmed by the Assembly.'

10. SR 63/2014 The Mesothelioma Lump Sum Payments (Conditions and Amounts) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014

As the Committee was content with the Regulations the Chairperson read the following into the record:

'That the Committee for Social Development has considered Statutory Rule SR 63/2014 The Mesothelioma Lump Sum Payments (Conditions and Amounts) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 and, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules' report, recommends that it be confirmed by the Assembly.'

11. Correspondence

The Committee noted the correspondence, as outlined in the correspondence memo.

12. Forward Work Programme

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Forward Work Programme as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to explore the possibility of a Committee visit in conjunction with the Building Successful Communities initiative at its strategic away day on 27 March and to explore the impact of the Boiler Replacement Scheme with regards to the Department's Warm Homes Strategy.

13. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

The next meeting of the Committee for Social Development will take place on Thursday 13 March at 10.00 am in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 11.44 am.

Alex Maskey

Chairperson, Committee for Social Development

13 March 2014