



Northern Ireland Assembly

COMMITTEE FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

THURSDAY 12 December 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 Trevor Clarke MLA
 - Mr Michael Copeland MLA
 - Ms Dolores Kelly MLA
 - Mr Fra McCann MLA
- In Attendance:
- Dr Kevin Pelan (Assembly Clerk)
 - Ms Claire McCanny (Assistant 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 Stewart Dickson MLA

The Chairperson declared the meeting open to the public at 10.04 am.

1. Apologies

Apologies were as noted above.

2. Committee Inquiry – Evidence Session with Minister McCausland

The Chairperson noted his disappointment at the way in which the Department has responded to information requests made by the Committee, noting that further relevant evidence has only become available after initial Committee requests, and that all information released by the Department is first ‘noted’ by the Minister.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the DSD Permanent Secretary to brief the Committee on 9th January 2014 regarding how he intends to deal with future document requests from the Committee.

Minister McCausland joined the meeting at 10.12 am. The Minister gave evidence to the Committee. The Minister then took questions from Members.

The Minister left the meeting at 12.06 pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to call the following witnesses to the meeting on 9th January:

- Stephen Brimstone, Special Advisor to Minister for Social Development
- Michael Sands, Deputy Director of Housing, DSD
- Barbara McConaghie, former Private Secretary to the Minister

Agreed: The Committee also agreed to write to Susan McCarty, Housing Director's Office, DSD to seek clarification on communications sent to the NIHE by the Department.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 12.09 pm.

The meeting re-opened in public session at 12.24 pm.

3. Alcohol-Related Harm – Briefing by Chief Medical Officer for Northern Ireland

The following officials joined the meeting at 12.24 pm:

- Dr. Michael McBride, Chief Medical Officer for Northern Ireland
- Professor Sir Ian Gilmore

The officials briefed the Committee. The officials then took questions from the Committee.

Mickey Brady MLA left the meeting at 12.35 pm.

Jim Allister MLA left the meeting at 1.12 pm.

4. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The minutes of the meeting held on 5th December were agreed.

5. Chairperson's Business

The Chair advised the Committee that he will be attending a Housing Rights Service event about Tenant Involvement on the afternoon of 12th December, to partake in a question and answer panel. The Chair offered to report back to the Committee at the meeting on the 9th January 2014. The Committee agreed to discuss what issues they wished to incorporate into the forward work programme in the New Year in respect of social housing.

6. Matters Arising

6.1 Following the briefing from Donald Hoodless on 28th November, the Committee requested the original, unedited draft of the Campbell-Tickell report; the Department advised the Committee that this will not be released.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek legal advice on the matter.

6.2 *Agreed:* The Committee agreed to consider its response to the BBC in January following a review of the evidence it has received at that time.

6.3 Volunteer Now have written to the Committee regarding their concerns about the volunteering strategy and asking the Committee to review the role of volunteering infrastructure support, and the Department's decision-making, implementation and levels of engagement with relevant organisations on this issue.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to return to the issue early in the New Year.

7. Subordinate Legislation

SL1 The Occupational and Personal Pension Schemes (Disclosure of Information) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013

The Committee agreed that it was content for the Statutory Rule to be made.

SL1 The Housing Benefit (Executive Determinations) (Targeted Affordability Funding) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014

The Committee agreed that it was content for the Rule to be made.

The Committee agreed to request further information on which specific areas would be targeted.

SR 276 (C.18) The Child Maintenance (2008 Act) (Commencement No. 12 and Savings Provisions) Order (Northern Ireland) 2013

The Committee noted the commencement order.

SR – The Licensing (George Best City Airport) Order (Northern Ireland) 2013

The Committee was not content to note the order.

The Committee agreed to seek re-assurance as to any implications the order could have for the corporate status of George Best City Airport.

SR282 The Housing Benefit (Local Housing and Executive Determinations) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013

The Committee considered the above mentioned Statutory Rule

Question put and agreed:

That the Committee for Social Development has considered SR 282 2013 The Housing Benefit (Local Housing and Executive Determinations) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern

Ireland) 2013, and subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules' report has no objection to the Rule.

SR 283 The Occupations Pensions (Revaluation) Order (Northern Ireland) 2013

The Committee considered the above mentioned Statutory Rule

Question put and agreed:

That the Committee for Social Development has considered SR283 2013 The Occupations Pensions (Revaluation) Order (Northern Ireland) 2013 and subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules' report has no objection to the rule.

8. Correspondence

The Committee noted the Correspondence as outlined in the Correspondence Memo.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request more information from the Department about development of the Girdwood site.

9. Forward Work Programme

The Committee agreed the Forward Work Programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek a written briefing from the DSD Repossessions Task Force.

10. Any Other Business

The Chairperson thanked the Committee for expressing their condolences on his recent family bereavement.

11. Adjourn

The next meeting of the Committee for Social Development will take place on Thursday 9 January 2014 at 10.00am in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 1.35 pm.

Mr Alex Maskey

**Chairperson, Committee for Social Development
9 January 2014**