



Northern Ireland Assembly

COMMITTEE FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

THURSDAY 27 February 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 Michael Copeland MLA
Mr Stewart Dickson 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 Sammy Wilson MLA

The meeting opened to the public at 10.02 am.

1. Apologies

Apologies were as noted above.

2. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The draft minutes of the meeting held on 20 February were agreed.

3. Chairperson's Business

There was no Chairperson's business.

4. Matters Arising

4.1 The Chairperson drew Members' attention to a draft schedule of witnesses under Phase One of the Committee Inquiry, and noted that the intention is to schedule all of the witnesses for the meeting of 13th March.

Agreed: Members agreed to the proposed schedule.

Agreed: Members agreed to issue a letter to Mr Trevor Turkington, in respect of the meeting of 25 January 2012.

The Committee noted further information provided by the Department in respect of Phase One of the Inquiry; particularly, information relating to the meeting of 28 June 2013.

4.2 The Chairperson reminded Members that in November 2013, the Minister wrote to the Chairperson, advising of his intention to table a small number of amendments to the Pavement Cafés Bill at Consideration Stage, which is scheduled for 4th February. These amendments have been tabled in response to concerns raised at Committee Stage. The Chairperson further informed the Committee that he will be speaking on the Committee's behalf at the Consideration Stage of the Bill.

4.3 The Chairperson informed Members that, following the previous meeting, Committee staff contacted the BBC regarding their provision of documents relating to the Committee Inquiry. The BBC has advised that they are currently reviewing their material and should provide the Committee with their substantive response by early next week.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that, should a substantive response not be received by the meeting of 6th March, they will decide on follow up action.

4.4 The Department has issued a press release announcing that consultation on the Anti-Social Behaviour Bill has been extended to 24 March 2014. The Chairperson reminded Members that, at the meeting of 6th February, the Committee wrote to the Department requesting an extension to the deadline.

Agreed: Members agreed to issue a press release welcoming the Department's extension to the consultation and encouraging stakeholders to submit responses.

5. Social Housing Reform – Departmental Briefing

The following officials joined the meeting at 10.09 am:

- Andrew Hamilton – Deputy Secretary, DSD
- Jim Wilkinson – Director of Housing, DSD
- Madeline Nelson – Landlord Project Director, SIB

The officials briefed the Committee on the research and analysis carried out to date on issues relating to the reform of social housing.

The officials then took questions from Members.

Paula Bradley MLA left the meeting at 10.30 am.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to liaise with the Department on their work programme, in respect of Social Housing Reform, which will inform the strategic direction of the Committee's Forward Work Programme.

Dolores Kelly MLA left the meeting at 11.44 am.

The officials left the meeting at 11.48 am.

Jim Allister MLA left the meeting at 11.50 am.

Michael Copeland MLA left the meeting at 11.50 am.

This briefing was recorded by Hansard.

6. SL1 The Social Security (Maternity Allowance) (Participating Wife or Civil Partner) Regulations

Agreed: Members were content for the Rule to be made.

7. SL1 Mortgage Interest Direct Scheme – Transaction Charge

Agreed: Members were content for the Regulations to be made.

8. Westminster Financial Assistance Scheme Regulations

Agreed: Members were content to note the Regulations.

9. SR33 The Social Security (Crediting and Treatment of Contributions and National Insurance Numbers) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014

The Committee had no objections to the Rule.

The Chairperson read the following motion into the record:

That the Committee for Social Development has considered Statutory Rule SR33/2014 The Social Security (Crediting and Treatment of Contributions and National Insurance Numbers) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 and, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules' report, has no objections to the Rule.

10. Correspondence

- 10.1 The Chairperson noted that the OFMDFM Committee have written to the Committee, seeking its views on the Terms of Reference it has drafted for its Inquiry into the Barroso Taskforce.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to issue a nil response to the OFMDFM Committee.

- 10.2 The Chairperson noted that the Department has responded to the Committee's concerns about the Landlord Registration Scheme, including concerns about the search facilities on the database.

Agreed: Members agreed to write to the Department requesting further details on their plans for raising awareness of the Scheme over the coming months.

The Committee noted the rest of the correspondence, as outlined in the Correspondence memo.

11. Forward Work Programme

The Committee agreed to have the draft Forward Work Programme amended to include the agreed Schedule of Witnesses for Phase 1 of the Committee Inquiry.

Members also discussed the need give strategic consideration to the Committee's Forward Work Programme.

Agreed: To schedule a meeting for the 27 March to develop a strategic direction for the Committee's Forward Work Programme.

12. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

The next meeting of the Committee for Social Development will take place on Thursday 6 March 2014 at 10.00 am in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 11.55 am.

Alex Maskey

Chairperson, Committee for Social Development

6 March 2014