



Northern Ireland Assembly

COMMITTEE FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

THURSDAY 18 September 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
Mrs Dolores Kelly MLA
Mr Fra McCann MLA

In Attendance: Dr Kevin Pelan (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Stephen Todd (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Stewart Kennedy (Clerical Supervisor)
Ms Charis Anderson (Clerical Officer)

Apologies: Mr Sammy Wilson MLA

The Chairperson declared the meeting open to the public at 10.02am.

1. Apologies

Apologies were as noted above.

2. NIHE Planned Maintenance Settlements – Briefing from the Minister for Social Development and DSD and NIHE officials

The following officials joined the meeting at 10.04am:

- Mr Nelson McCausland MLA, Minister for Social Development, DSD
- Mr Will Haire, Permanent Secretary, DSD
- Andrew Hamilton, Deputy Secretary, DSD

- Mr Donald Hoodless, Chairperson, NIHE
- Ms Mags Lightbody, Acting Chief Executive, NIHE

The Chairperson acknowledged that the Minister would have to leave at 10.30am to attend a meeting of the Executive.

The Minister briefed the Committee on his announcement on 10 June 2013 regarding estimated overpayments to NIHE planned maintenance contractors and the means by which this figure was reviewed and amended to a lesser figure, agreed in a settlement with contractors announced on 5 August 2014.

The Minister took questions from the Committee.

The Minister left the meeting at 10.39am.

The Chairperson noted that, due to the limited time available to brief the Committee on this occasion that the Committee would reflect on the information provided at today's meeting and determine whether it would invite the Minister to return to further brief the Committee on this matter.

The DSD Permanent Secretary, NIHE Chair, NIHE Acting Chief Executive and senior DSD official remained to take further questions on this issue and the single tender action process for the appointment of Campbell-Tickell.

The officials left the meeting at 12.08pm.

This session was recorded by Hansard.

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The draft minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2014 were agreed.

4. Chairperson's Business

There was no Chairperson's business.

5. Matters Arising

5.1 The Committee considered a letter from the Department of 16 September applying for departmental officials to be accompanied by legal representatives when giving evidence in respect of the Committee's Inquiry.

The following motion was proposed:

'Having considered the request from the Department in a letter dated 16 September 2014, that the Committee for Social Development is in favour of agreeing to the Department's application for legal representation at Inquiry evidence sessions'.

The Committee divided:

Ayes 2;

Noes 7;

Abstentions 0.

AYES:

Ms Paula Bradley

Mr Gregory Campbell

NOES:

Mr Jim Allister

Mr Mickey Brady

Mr Michael Copeland

Mr Stewart Dickson

Mrs Dolores Kelly

Mr Alex Maskey

Mr Fra McCann

The motion fell.

The Chairperson noted that the meeting would move into closed session for the purpose of agreeing the Committee's End of Session Report for the period 1 September 2013 – 31 August 2014.

The meeting moved into closed session at 12.14pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed for the End of Session Report to be published as drafted.

The meeting recommenced in public session at 12.16pm.

5.2 The Chairperson noted that financial scrutiny training would be available to members prior to the meeting of 25 September 2014.

6. Correspondence

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

7. Forward Work Programme

The Committee agreed the Forward Work Programme as drafted.

Proceedings were suspended at 12.17pm.

Proceedings recommenced in public session at 1.06pm, in Room 21 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
Mr Stewart Dickson MLA
Mrs Dolores Kelly
Mr Fra McCann MLA

In Attendance: Dr Kevin Pelan (Assembly Clerk)
Ms Claire McCanny (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Stewart Kennedy (Clerical Supervisor)
Ms Charis Anderson (Clerical Officer)

The Chairperson declared the meeting open to the public.

8. Committee Inquiry into allegations, arising from a BBC NI ‘Spotlight’ programme aired on 3 July 2013, of impropriety or irregularity relating to NIHE-managed contracts and consideration of any resulting actions, Phase 3 – evidence session with DSD Officials

The following officials joined the meeting at 1.08pm:

- Mr Will Haire, Permanent Secretary, DSD
- Mr Jim Wilkinson, Director of Housing, DSD

- Mr Michael Sands, Deputy Director of Housing, DSD
- Ms Heather Cousins, former Deputy Secretary, DSD

The officials briefed the Committee on Phase 3 of the Inquiry and took questions from members.

The Committee expressed concern about failure to provide update on fact-finding exercise into the alleged actions of the Minister's Special Adviser, which was completed in September 2013.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the officials, as required, seeking clarification on any outstanding issues.

The officials left the meeting at 2.54pm.

This session was recorded by Hansard.

9. Committee Inquiry into allegations, arising from a BBC NI 'Spotlight programme aired on 3 July 2013, of impropriety or irregularity relating to NIHE-managed contracts and consideration of any resulting actions, Phase 3 – evidence session with NIHE staff

The following officials joined the meeting at 2.54pm.

- Mr John McVeigh, Head of Internal Audit, NIHE
- Mr Declan Allen, Head of Procurement, NIHE
- Mr Clark Bailie, Former Acting Head of Corporate Services, NIHE
- Mr Raymond Kitson, Former Repairs Inspection Unit Manager, NIHE

Mr Clark Bailie noted that he had been invited to the Committee as 'former Director of Corporate Services'. He clarified that his current role in the NI Housing Executive is Director of Finance, and that he had previously held the post of Acting Head of Corporate Services from February to September 2011.

The officials briefed the Committee on Phase 3 of its Inquiry and took questions from members.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the officials, as required, seeking clarification on any outstanding issues.

The officials left the meeting at 3.56pm.

This session was recorded by Hansard.

10. AOB

There was no other business.

11. Date, time and place of next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee for Social Development will take place on 25 September 2014 at 10.00am in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 3.57pm.

Alex Maskey
Chairperson, Committee for Social Development

25 September 2014