



Northern Ireland Assembly

COMMITTEE FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Thursday 12 March 2015
Room 29, Parliament Buildings

- Present: Mr Mickey Brady MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Jim Allister MLA
Mr Roy Beggs MLA
Ms Paula Bradley MLA
Mr Gregory Campbell MLA
Mr Maurice Devenney MLA
Mr Stewart Dickson MLA
- In Attendance: Dr Kevin Pelan (Assembly Clerk)
Mrs Ashleigh Mitford (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Stewart Kennedy (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Richard Reid (Clerical Officer)
- Apologies: Mr Alex Maskey MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Fra McCann MLA
Mr Sammy Wilson MLA
Ms Dolores Kelly

The Deputy Chairperson declared the meeting open 10:06am.

1. Apologies

Apologies were as noted above.

2. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The draft minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2015 were agreed.

3. Chairperson's Business

The Deputy Chairperson advised the Committee that the Chairperson had met informally with representatives of the Lisburn Carer's Forum on Tuesday to hear some issues encountered by life-long carers.

4. Matters Arising

4.1 The Committee noted correspondence from the Department in relation to the Landlord Registration Scheme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a Departmental briefing.

4.2 The Deputy Chairperson reminded members that the Committee's report on Phase 2 of the Inquiry was due to be published on Friday 13 March 2015. The Deputy Chairperson noted that unexpected delays had resulted in the Minister receiving the report two working before publication rather than the three as stated in guidance.

5. Regeneration Bill – Briefing by NILGA

The following representatives joined the meeting at 10:14am:

- Karen Smyth – Head of Policy, NILGA
- Cllr Dermot Nicholl, Limavady Borough Council

The representatives briefed the Committee on a number of key issues relating to several clauses of the Regeneration Bill. This was followed by a question and answer session.

Agreed: The representatives of NILGA agreed to respond to the Committee with its views on the definition of 'Social Need' within the Bill. The representatives also agreed to provide the Committee with the detail of a resolution made at a recent Political Partnership meeting regarding the disparity of funding in the West.

This session was recorded by Hansard.

The representatives left the meeting at 10:39am

6. Universal Credit Payment Flexibilities – Briefing by the Social Security Agency

The following officials joined the meeting at 10:39am:

- Brian Doherty – Director Universal Credit, SSA
- Sinead Crossan, SSA

The officials briefed the Committee on the Universal Credit Payment Flexibilities Scheme in Northern Ireland.

Paula Bradley MLA joined the meeting at 10:52am

Members discussed with the officials a number of issues relating to the Payment Flexibility Scheme. In particular, members questioned the cost of the IT system and any associated costs to the block grant should there be any divergence in Northern Ireland from the main IT system.

The representatives left the meeting at 11:23am

7. SL1 The Social Security (Members of the Reserve Forces) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

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

8. SL1 The Social Fund Winter Fuel Payment (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

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

9. SL1 The Social Security (Miscellaneous Amendments No. 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

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

10. SR 109 The Social Security (Claims and Payments) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

The Committee had no objections to the Rule.

The Deputy Chairperson read the following motion into the record:

“That the Committee for Social Development has considered Statutory Rule SR 109 The Social Security (Claims and Payments) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules’ report has no objections to the Rule”.

11. SR 111 The Social Security Revaluation of Earnings Factors Order (Northern Ireland) 2015

The Committee had no objections to the Rule.

The Deputy Chairperson read the following motion into the record:

“That the Committee for Social Development has considered the Statutory Rule SR 111 The Social Security Revaluation of Earnings Factors Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 and subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules report, has no objections to the Rule.”

12. SR 112 The Social Security Pensions (Low Earnings Threshold) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015

The Committee had no objections to the Rule.

The Deputy Chairperson read the following motion into the record:

“That the Committee for Social Development has considered Statutory Rule SR 112 The Social Security Pensions (Low Earnings Threshold) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 and subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules’ report has no objections to the Rule”.

13. SR 114 The Social Security Pensions (Flat Rate Accrual Amount) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015

The Committee had no objections to the Rule.

The Deputy Chairperson read the following motion into the record:

“That the Committee for Social Development has considered the Statutory Rule SR 114 The Social Security Pensions (Flat Rate Accrual Amount) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 and subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules report, has no objections to the Rule.”

14. SR 115 The Occupational Pension Schemes (Levies) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2015

The Committee had no objections to the Rule.

The Deputy Chairperson read the following motion into the record:

“That the Committee for Social Development has considered the Statutory Rule SR 115 The Occupational Pension Schemes (Levies) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2015 and subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules report, has no objections to the Rule.”

15. SR 116 The Child Support (Modification Miscellaneous and Consequential Amendments) Regulations (NI) 2015

The Committee had no objections to the Rule.

The Deputy Chairperson read the following motion into the record:

“That the Committee for Social Development has considered Statutory Rule SR 116 The Child Support (Miscellaneous and Consequential Amendments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules’ report has no objections to the Rule”.

16. SR 117 The Guaranteed Minimum Pensions Increase Order (Northern Ireland) 2015

The Committee had no objections to the Rule.

The Deputy Chairperson read the following motion into the record:

“That the Committee for Social Development has considered Statutory Rule SR 117 The Guaranteed Minimum Pensions Increase Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 and subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules’ report has no objections to the Rule”.

17. SR 119 The Automatic Enrolment (Earnings Trigger and Qualifying Earnings Band) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015

The Committee had no objections to the Rule.

The Deputy Chairperson read the following motion into the record:

“That the Committee for Social Development has considered Statutory Rule SR 119 The Automatic Enrolment (Earnings Trigger and Qualifying Earnings Band) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 and subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules’ report has no objections to the Rule”.

18. SR 124 The Social Security Benefits Up-rating Order (Northern Ireland) 2015

The Committee had no objections to the Rule.

The Deputy Chairperson read the following motion into the record:

“That the Committee for Social Development has considered Statutory Rule SR 124 The Social Security Benefits Up-rating Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 and subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules’ report recommends that it be confirmed by the Assembly”.

19. SR 138 The Jobseekers Allowance (Extended Period of Sickness) (Amend) Regulations (NI) 2015

The Committee had no objections to the Rule.

The Deputy Chairperson read the following motion into the record:

“That the Committee for Social Development has considered Statutory Rule SR 138 The Jobseeker’s Allowance (Extended Periods of Sickness) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules’ report recommends that it be confirmed by the Assembly”.

20. SR 139 The Social Security Benefits Up-rating Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

The Committee had no objections to the Rule.

The Deputy Chairperson read the following motion into the record:

“That the Committee for Social Development has considered Statutory Rule SR 139 The Social Security Benefits Up-rating Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules’ report has no objections to the Rule”.

21. Correspondence

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department which provided notification of amendments which are to be tabled at the Consideration Stage of the Pensions Bill.

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

22. Forward Work Programme

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

The meeting moved into closed session at 11:32am.

23. Committee Inquiry – Phase 3 Report

The Committee noted a revised draft report on Phase 3 of its Inquiry.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider the report and to provide the Clerk with suggested amendments by 5pm on Monday 16 March 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek advice in relation to the draft report.

24. Date, time and place of next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee for Social Development will take place on Thursday 19 March 2015 at 10.00am in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The Deputy Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 11:51am

Alex Maskey

Chairperson, Committee for Social Development

19 March 2015