



Northern Ireland Assembly

COMMITTEE FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Thursday 27 November 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 Maurice Devenney MLA
Mr Stewart Dickson MLA
Mrs Dolores Kelly MLA
Mr Fra McCann MLA

In Attendance: Dr Kevin Pelan (Assembly Clerk)
Mrs Ashleigh Mitford (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Stephen Todd (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Stewart Kennedy (Clerical Supervisor)
Mr Richard Reid (Clerical Officer)

Apologies: Mr Michael Copeland MLA

The Chairperson declared the meeting open to the public at 10.07am.

1. Apologies

Apologies were as noted above.

2. Draft minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2014

Agreed: The draft minutes were agreed.

3. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson noted that he would be speaking this evening at the Simon Community's event to launch their new App.

Jim Allister MLA joined the meeting at 10.09am.

Dolores Kelly MLA joined the meeting at 10.10am.

4. Matters Arising

- 4.1** The Chairperson noted that following today's meeting the Committee would convene in closed session to review evidence taken for its Inquiry.
- 4.2** The Chairperson noted that the Committee had agreed to meet on Tuesdays to expedite its consideration of the Pensions Bill and indicated that representatives from NIPSA would brief the Committee on their response to the Bill on Tuesday 2 December.
- 4.3** The Chairperson referred to an anonymous letter of complaint about a member of SSA staff.
Agreed: The Committee noted that it had no role in internal disciplinary matters relating to the SSA but agreed to forward the letter to the SSA seeking assurances that the appropriate internal procedures were followed in this case.

5. Social Housing Reform Programme: Tenant Participation Strategy – Departmental Briefing

The following officials joined the meeting at 10.14am:

- Jim Wilkinson, Director of Housing Division, DSD
- Paul Price, Programme Manager, Social Housing Reform Programme, DSD
- Shane Clements, Policy Project Manager, Social Housing Reform Programme, DSD

Dolores Kelly MLA declared an interest as a private landlord.

The officials briefed the Committee on the draft consultation on a proposed Tenant Participation Strategy.

Paula Bradley MLA joined the meeting at 10.20am.

The officials took a range of questions from the Committee about the Tenant Participation Strategy consultation.

Members also stressed the need to ensure that tenants themselves were consulted on the Strategy during the consultation process.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Department should proceed with its consultation.

The officials left the meeting at 10.56am.

6. Developer Contributions – Departmental Briefing

The following officials joined the meeting at 10.56am:

- Stephen Martin, Deputy Director of Housing, DSD
- Heather McKinley, Housing Affordability Branch, DSD
- John McCord, Housing Affordability Branch, DSD

The officials briefed the Committee on responses to its consultation on Developer Contributions.

The Department took questions from the Committee about the Developer Contributions consultation. The Department indicated that they expected to complete the further stages of the consultation in the next six months. The Committee welcomed this further work.

Agreed: The Department agreed to provide the Terms of Reference for its further work into Developer Contributions, once they are finalised.

The officials left the meeting at 11.16am.

7. SL1 The Occupational Pensions Revaluation Order (Northern Ireland) 2014

The Committee were content for the Rule to be made.

8. Correspondence

8.1 The Committee noted correspondence from the Department in respect of Phase 3 of its Inquiry.

8.2 The Committee noted correspondence from Paddy McIntyre in respect of Phase 3 of its Inquiry.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider this and the previous item of correspondence when reviewing evidence in respect of Phase 3 of its Inquiry.

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

9. Forward Work Programme

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the meeting on Tuesday 2 December would begin at 9.30am.

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

10. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

The meeting moved into closed session 11.20am.

The Committee considered evidence in relation to Phase 2 of its Inquiry.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that Committee Staff should begin drafting a report in respect of Phase 2 of its Inquiry.

The Committee considered correspondence from the Department in relation to Phase 3 of its Inquiry.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek legal advice to assist in a response to the Department.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to defer all inquiry evidence sessions scheduled for 4 December until the New Year.

The Committee considered the Minister's letter in relation to the disclosure of the report on the fact-finding exercise into the DSD Special Adviser

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek legal advice to assist in a response to the Department.

Agreed: The Committee considered correspondence from Brian Rowntree noting he was unable to attend to give evidence on 4 December. The Committee agreed to invite Mr Rowntree to give evidence at its meeting on 11 December.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to postpone the review of evidence in respect of Phase 3 of the Inquiry to the New Year.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 11.57am.

11. Date, time and place of next meeting.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 2 December 2014 at 9.30am in Room 30 Parliament Buildings.

Alex Maskey
Chairperson, Committee for Social Development
4 December 2014