



Northern Ireland Assembly

COMMITTEE FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Thursday 29 January 2015
Room 29, Parliament Buildings

- Present: Mr Alex Maskey MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Mickey Brady MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Jim Allister MLA
Mr Gregory Campbell MLA
Mr Maurice Devenney MLA
Mr Stewart Dickson MLA
Mrs Dolores Kelly MLA
Mr Fra McCann MLA
Mr Sammy Wilson 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 10.06am.

1. Apologies

Apologies were as noted above.

2. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The draft minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2015 were agreed.

3. Matters Arising

- 3.1** The Chairperson noted that following today's regular business the Committee would convene in closed session to take legal advice and review evidence in relation to its Inquiry.
- 3.2** The Chairperson noted that the Speaker confirmed a Section 44 notice has been issued requiring the Department for Social Development to release the fact-finding report into the DSD Special Adviser to the Committee.

Gregory Campbell MLA joined the meeting at 10.08am.

- 3.3** The Chairperson noted that a response had been received from the Department regarding stock transfer at Rinmore.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to DSD requesting access to the content of an audit report referred to in correspondence and for a timeline related to this and other associated correspondence.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to Brian Rowntree seeking clarity on comments he made in respect of Rinmore.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Permanent Secretary to seek clarification on the reason for his communication with the NIO regarding Mr Rowntree's actions relating to Rinmore.

4. Pensions Bill – consideration of issues

The following officials joined the meeting at 10.16am:

- Gerry McCann, Social Security, Policy and Legislation Division, DSD
- Seamus Cassidy, Social Security, Policy and Legislation Division, DSD
- Doreen Roy, DSD

The Committee discussed issues raised as a result of its consideration of the Pensions Bill.

Sammy Wilson MLA joined the meeting at 10.18am.

The officials provided further clarification on some of the issues.

Agreed: The Committee agreed for today's discussion, together with the discussion paper provided, to form the basis of the Committee's draft Bill report.

The officials left the meeting at 10.38am.

This session was recorded by Hansard.

5. SL1 The Social Security (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

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

Dolores Kelly MLA joined the meeting at 10.39am.

6. Correspondence

- 6.1** The Committee noted correspondence from the Fermanagh Trust and DSD relevant to the Regeneration Bill.
- 6.2** The Committee considered correspondence regarding a recent investigation by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland into members of Lough Neagh Rescue.
Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland seeking information in relation to its investigative process.
Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the author of the correspondence to advise him of the Committee's view on the issues he raised.
- 6.3** *Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the rest of the correspondence as outlined on the correspondence memo.

7. Forward Work Programme

The Committee agreed the Forward Work Programme as drafted.

8. AOB

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to clarify whether DSD/SSA staff have the statutory authority to conduct interviews under caution using the Police and Criminal Evidence Order (Northern Ireland) 1989.

9. Date, time and place of next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee for Social Development will take place on Thursday 5 February 2015 at 10.00am in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting moved into closed session at 10.45am.

The Committee took legal advice in relation to the privilege afforded to legal advice provided to the Committee in error.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek clarification on legal advice that was provided to it erroneously.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to return to this issue when it considered its draft report into Phase 3.

The Committee considered evidence in respect of Phase 3 of its Inquiry.

Agreed: The Committee agreed an initial way forward in the development of the report relating to Phase 3 of the Inquiry.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12.17pm.

Alex Maskey
Chairperson, Committee for Social Development

5 February 2015