



Northern Ireland Assembly

COMMITTEE FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Thursday 05 March 2015

Room 29, Parliament Buildings

Present: Mr Alex Maskey MLA (Chairperson)
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
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 Stewart Kennedy (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Richard Reid (Clerical Officer)

Apologies: None

The Chairperson declared the meeting open 10.04am.

1. Apologies

Apologies were as noted above.

2. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The draft minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2015 were agreed.

3. Chairperson's Business

3.1 The Chairperson advised the Committee that a meeting with the Minister to discuss the Fact-finding report did not take place and referred members to correspondence from the Minister on this issue.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to discuss the way forward in closed session.

3.2 The Chairperson informed the Committee that he will meet with the Lisburn Carer's Forum to discuss concerns they have regarding the provision of support for lifelong carers.

4. Matters Arising

4.1 The Chairperson referred members to correspondence regarding the Phase 2 Report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider the correspondence in closed session.

Ms Paula Bradley MLA joined the meeting at 10.10am.

4.2 The Chairperson informed the Committee that the Department had extended an invitation to the Committee to accompany the Minister to a number of locations in England to explore approaches to social housing issues.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it would undertake a separate exercise to visit other jurisdictions as part of its work on social housing.

4.3 The Committee noted correspondence from the Department advising that the Permanent Secretary had retired.

5. Human Rights of Carers – Briefing by NIHRC

The following officials joined the meeting at 10.10am:

- Les Allamby Chief Commissioner - NIHRC
- Colin Caughey - NIHRC
- John McCormick – Carers NI
- Mary O'Neil – Carer

Ms Dolores Kelly MLA joined the meeting at 10.23am.

The officials briefed the Committee on the report *'The Human Rights of Carers'*. Members discussed with the representatives a number of key issues and difficulties being faced by carers. The Committee noted the recommendations in the report and acknowledged their cross cutting nature.

The representatives left the meeting at 11.22am

Ms Paula Bradley left the meeting at 11.22am

Agreed: The Committee agreed to further consider the key issues and recommendations at a later date in order to agree a course of action.

Mr Maurice Devenney MLA left the meeting at 11.24am

6. Rinmore Stock Transfer

The Committee noted that a response from Mr Brian Rowntree on the Rinmore stock transfer was outstanding.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to send a reminder to Mr Rowntree and defer the item of business.

7. SL1 The Occupational and Personal Pension Schemes (Disclosure of Information) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

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

8. SL1 The Occupational Pension Schemes (Transfer Values) (Amendment) and Transfer Values (Disapplication) (Revocation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

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

9. SL1 The Occupational Pension Schemes (Consequential and Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

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

10. SL1 The Pension Schemes Act (Transitional Provisions and Appropriate Independent Advice) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

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

11. SL1 The Maternity Allowance (Curtailment) Regulations (NI) 2015

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

12. SL1 The Statutory Maternity Pay (Curtailment) Regulations (NI) 2015

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

13. SL1 The Social Security (Invalid Care Allowance) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

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

14. SR 79 The Pension Protection Fund and Occupational Pension Schemes (Levy Ceiling) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015

The Committee had no objections to the Rule.

Mr Maurice Devenney MLA re-joined the meeting at 11.28am.

The Chairperson read the following motion into the record:

“That the Committee for Social Development has considered the Statutory Rule SR 79 The Pension Protection Fund and Occupational Pension Schemes (Levy Ceiling) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 and subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules report, has no objections to the Rule”.

15. Correspondence

15.1 The Committee noted correspondence from the Social Security Agency advising that the Department’s response to Dr Litchfield’s fifth and final independent review of the Work Capability Assessment is available. The Committee also noted that the Department had accepted all of NI specific recommendations.

15.2 The Committee noted a letter of concern from the Cathedral Quarter Trust regarding the uncertainty of Departmental funding.

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

16. Forward Work Programme

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

The meeting moved into closed session at 11:29am.

17. Committee Inquiry - Phase 2 Report

The Committee considered correspondence from an individual requesting that a paragraph be taken out of the Phase 2 Report.

The Chairperson reminded the Committee that at its meeting on 26 February the Committee agreed to retain the paragraph in the Report given that the individual is not named and that the paragraph relates to a report that has already been published by PAC.

The Chairperson also reminded the Committee that at the same meeting the Committee agreed its Report and an embargoed manuscript copy has been laid with the business office ahead of it being printed.

However, four members noted their objections to the paragraph’s inclusion in the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the individual confirming the Committee’s decision and explain the reasons for retaining the paragraph in the Report.

18. Committee Inquiry – Phase 3 Report

The Committee considered a first draft report on Phase 3 of its Inquiry.

One member stated that report was biased and did not take the minority view into consideration.

Other members noted that the report was based on evidence and, while it largely reflected the majority view, the Committee was engaged in a process of drafting and the report was therefore subject to amendment.

The Chairperson suspended the meeting at 12.01pm to allow discussion.

The Committee reconvened in closed session at 12.15pm

The Committee then moved to consider the draft report.

A number of amendments were proposed to the draft report and Committee decisions on these are outlined below.

The motion was proposed to amend paragraph 18.

The Committee divided.

Ayes; 6

Noes; 3

Abstentions; 0

Did not vote; 1

AYES:

Mr Jim Allister MLA

Mr Roy Beggs MLA

Mr Mickey Brady MLA

Mr Stewart Dickson MLA

Mrs Dolores Kelly MLA

Mr Fra McCann MLA

NOES:

Ms Paula Bradley MLA

Mr Gregory Campbell MLA

Mr Maurice Devenney MLA

DID NOT VOTE:

Mr Alex Maskey MLA (Chairperson)

The motion was carried.

The motion was proposed to amend paragraph 19.

Ayes; 6

Noes; 3

Abstentions; 0

Did not vote; 1

AYES:

Mr Jim Allister MLA
Mr Roy Beggs MLA
Mr Mickey Brady MLA
Mr Stewart Dickson MLA
Mrs Dolores Kelly MLA
Mr Fra McCann MLA

NOES:

Ms Paula Bradley MLA
Mr Gregory Campbell MLA
Mr Maurice Devenney MLA

DID NOT VOTE:

Mr Alex Maskey MLA (Chairperson)

The motion was carried.

The motion was proposed to amend paragraph 41.

The Committee divided.

Ayes; 4

Noes; 6

Abstentions; 0

Did not vote; 1

AYES:

Ms Paula Bradley MLA
Mr Gregory Campbell MLA
Mr Maurice Devenney MLA
Mr Sammy Wilson MLA

NOES:

Mr Jim Allister MLA
Mr Roy Beggs MLA
Mr Mickey Brady MLA
Mr Stewart Dickson MLA
Mrs Dolores Kelly MLA
Mr Fra McCann MLA

DID NOT VOTE:

Mr Alex Maskey MLA (Chairperson)

The motion fell.

The motion was proposed to amend paragraph 44.

The Committee divided.

Ayes; 3

Noes; 6

Abstentions; 0

Did not vote; 2

AYES:

Mr Gregory Campbell MLA

Mr Maurice Devenney MLA

Mr Sammy Wilson MLA

NOES:

Mr Jim Allister MLA

Mr Roy Beggs MLA

Mr Mickey Brady MLA

Mr Stewart Dickson MLA

Mrs Dolores Kelly MLA

Mr Fra McCann MLA

DID NOT VOTE:

Mr Alex Maskey MLA (Chairperson)

Ms Paula Bradley MLA

The motion fell.

Mr Gregory Campbell MLA left the meeting at 13.20pm

The motion was proposed to amend paragraph 67.

The Committee divided.

Ayes; 6

Noes; 3

Abstentions; 0

Did not vote; 1

AYES:

Mr Jim Allister MLA

Mr Roy Beggs MLA

Mr Mickey Brady MLA

Mr Stewart Dickson MLA

Mrs Dolores Kelly MLA

Mr Fra McCann MLA

NOES:

Ms Paula Bradley MLA

Mr Maurice Devenney MLA

Mr Sammy Wilson MLA

DID NOT VOTE:

Mr Alex Maskey MLA (Chairperson)

The motion carried.

The motion was proposed to amend paragraph 69.

The Committee divided.

Ayes; 3

Noes; 6

Abstentions; 0

Did not vote; 1

AYES:

Ms Paula Bradley MLA

Mr Maurice Devenney MLA

Mr Sammy Wilson MLA

NOES:

Mr Jim Allister MLA

Mr Roy Beggs MLA

Mr Mickey Brady MLA

Mr Stewart Dickson MLA

Mrs Dolores Kelly MLA

Mr Fra McCann MLA

DID NOT VOTE:

Mr Alex Maskey MLA (Chairperson)

The motion fell.

The motion was proposed to amend paragraph 75.

The Committee divided.

Ayes; 3

Noes; 6

Abstentions; 0

Did not vote; 1

AYES:

Ms Paula Bradley MLA
Mr Maurice Devenney MLA
Mr Sammy Wilson MLA

NOES:

Mr Jim Allister MLA
Mr Roy Beggs MLA
Mr Mickey Brady MLA
Mr Stewart Dickson MLA
Mrs Dolores Kelly MLA
Mr Fra McCann MLA

DID NOT VOTE:

Mr Alex Maskey MLA (Chairperson)

The motion fell.

The motion was proposed to amend paragraph 89.

The Committee divided.

Ayes; 6

Noes; 3

Abstentions; 0

Did not vote; 1

AYES:

Mr Jim Allister MLA
Mr Roy Beggs MLA
Mr Mickey Brady MLA
Mr Stewart Dickson MLA
Mrs Dolores Kelly MLA
Mr Fra McCann MLA

NOES:

Ms Paula Bradley MLA
Mr Maurice Devenney MLA
Mr Sammy Wilson MLA

DID NOT VOTE:

Mr Alex Maskey MLA (Chairperson)

The motion carried.

Mr Mickey Brady MLA left the meeting at 13.43pm

The motion was proposed to amend paragraph 92.

The Committee divided.

Ayes; 5

Noes; 2

Abstentions; 0

Did not vote; 1

AYES:

Mr Jim Allister MLA

Mr Roy Beggs MLA

Mr Stewart Dickson MLA

Mrs Dolores Kelly MLA

Mr Fra McCann MLA

NOES:

Mr Maurice Devenney MLA

Mr Sammy Wilson MLA

DID NOT VOTE:

Mr Alex Maskey MLA (Chairperson)

Ms Paula Bradley MLA

The motion carried.

Mr Sammy Wilson MLA left the meeting at 13.47pm

Ms Paula Bradley MLA and Mr Maurice Devenney MLA left the meeting at 13.49pm

The Committee considered amendments to a number of paragraphs of the draft report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider a revised draft report at its meeting on 12 March 2015.

19. Committee Inquiry Procedural Issues

The Committee considered correspondence of the 4 March 2015 from the Minister. The Committee noted that the Minister was willing to meet with the Chairperson but was unable to accede to the proposal for arbitration as outlined in the Chairperson's letter of 26 February.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that given the Minister's clarification on this matter, a meeting would have little or no merit.

Agreed: The Committee agreed a press release on this matter.

20. Date, time and place of next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee for Social Development will take place on 12 March 2015 at 10.00am in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at **15:06pm**

Alex Maskey

Chairperson, Committee for Social Development

12 March 2015