

(administration note – see addendum to minutes of 10 March 2016 for corrected attendance details of this meeting)



Northern Ireland Assembly

COMMITTEE FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Thursday 03 March 2016

Room 29, Parliament Buildings

- Present: Mr Alex Maskey MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Fra McCann MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Jim Allister MLA
Mr Roy Beggs MLA
Ms Paula Bradley MLA
Mr Stewart Dickson MLA
Mr Sammy Douglas MLA
Mr Phil Flanagan MLA
Mrs Dolores Kelly MLA
- In Attendance: Dr Kevin Pelan (Assembly Clerk)
Mrs Ashleigh Mitford (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Stewart Kennedy (Clerical Supervisor)
Ms Alicia Muldoon (Clerical Officer)
- Apologies: Mr Gregory Campbell MLA
Mr Adrian McQuillan MLA

The meeting commenced in open session at 10.05 a.m.

1. Apologies

Apologies were noted as above.

2. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The draft minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2016 were agreed.

3. Chairperson's Business

No items were raised

4. Matters Arising

The Committee noted that the Department have sought a copy of the NIFHA paper on Rent Policy from the Committee meeting of 25 February 2016.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to issue the paper to the Department.

The Committee noted a checklist provided by Eileen Evason to assist the Committee in monitoring the implementation of the Welfare Reform Mitigations Working Party Report.

Members also noted that there will be an additional panel paper to address the issue of adequate support being provided to the Independent Advice Sector.

Agreed: The checklist (and forthcoming panel paper) will be sent to the Department for information and, where relevant, initial comment.

The Committee noted its draft Legacy Report for the Assembly Mandate 2011-16.

Agreed: Members agreed to provide comments to the Committee Office ahead of the Committee being asked to agree the Report next week.

The Committee noted a paper summarising discussions in relation to its Building Future Homes event that was held in conjunction with the CIH in January.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to publish the paper to its website.

The Committee noted further Amendments to the Houses in Multiple Occupation Bill and the Licensing Bill.

Paula Bradley joined the meeting at 10.09am

5. SL1 The Housing Benefit and State Pension Credit (Temporary Absence) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 – Departmental Briefing

The Committee noted the SL1 and correspondence issued jointly by Housing Rights Service and the Law Centre NI.

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 10.09 am

- Mr Michael Pollock, Deputy Director of Social Security Policy and Legislation Division, DSD
- Ms Rosemary Hughes, Deputy Principal, DSD

The Departmental officials briefed the Committee and this was followed by questions from members.

The Committee noted that the Department had not had sight of the correspondence from Housing Rights and the Law Centre NI.

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

The Chairperson however requested that the officials consider the concerns of Housing Rights and the Law Centre NI and provide the Committee with a response ahead of it considering the Statutory Rule at its final meeting on 10 March 2016.

The Departmental officials left the meeting at 10.17 am

6. Reporting of Deaths of Homeless People - Joint briefing by homeless organisations and DSD/NIHE

The following witnesses joined the meeting at 10.18 am

- Ms Sandra Moore, Director of Homelessness, Welcome Organisation
- Ms Kerry Anthony, Chief Executive Officer, Depaul Ireland
- Ms Ricky Rowledge, Director, Council for the Homeless Northern Ireland
- Mr Stephen Martin, Deputy Director of Housing Policy Delivery, DSD
- Mr Des Marley, Homeless Services Manager, NIHE

The witnesses briefed the Committee and this was followed by questions from members.

Phil Flanagan joined the meeting at 10.21am

Paula Bradley left the meeting at 11.20 am

Jim Allister left the meeting at 11.31am

Agreed: The Committee agreed a draft press release (as amended).

The witnesses left the meeting at 11.40 am

7. The Welfare Supplementary Payments Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 - Social Security Agency Briefing

The Committee noted papers from the SSA, a written statement by the Minister for Disabled People and a paper from the Law Centre NI.

The following officials joined the meeting 11.42 am

- Mr Tommy O'Reilly, Chief Executive, Social Security Agency
- Ms Sinead Crossan, Head of Social Welfare Policy, Social Security Agency

- Mr Mickey Kelly, Assistant Director, Social Security Agency

Paula Bradley joined the meeting at 11.45am

The officials briefed the Committee and this was followed by questions from members.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request further information from the SSA in relation to households currently in receipt of benefits above the benefit cap.

Agreed: Members agreed that they were content for the draft Rule to be made.

The officials left the meeting at 11.55 am

The session was recorded by Hansard

8. Update on the Review of the Role and Regulation of the Private Rented Sector - Outcome of Consultation - Departmental Briefing

The Committee noted a briefing paper from the Department.

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting 11.56 am

- Mr Stephen Martin, Deputy Director of Housing Policy Delivery, DSD
- Ms Eilish O'Neill, Project Leader of Private Rented Branch, DSD
- Ms Avril Hiles, Deputy Principal of Private rented branch, DSD
- Ms Karen Barr, Private Rented Sector Branch, DSD

The Departmental officials briefed the Committee and this was followed by questions from members.

Sammy Douglas left the meeting at 12.17 pm

The Departmental officials left the meeting at 12.18 pm

Fra McCann left the meeting at 12.19 pm

9. SL1 The Social Security (Scottish Rate of Income Tax etc.) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016

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

10. SL1 The Social Security (Great Britain Reciprocal Arrangements) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016

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

11. SL1 Proposals for The Occupational and Personal Pension Schemes (Modification of Schemes and Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016

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

12. SL1 Proposals for Pensions (2015 Act) (Contribution Equivalent Premium) (Consequential Provision and Savings) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016

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

13. SR 78 The Pensions (2015 Act) (Consequential and Supplementary Amendments) Order (NI) 2016

The Committee had no objections to the rule.

The Chairperson read the following motion into the record:

“That the Committee for Social Development has considered the Statutory Rule SR 78/2016 The Pensions (2015 Act) (Consequential and Supplementary Amendments) Order (NI) 2016 and subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules report, recommends that it be confirmed by the Assembly”.

14. SR 80 The State Pension (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016

The Committee had no objections to the rule.

The Chairperson read the following motion into the record:

“That the Committee for Social Development has considered the Statutory Rule SR 80/2016 The State Pension (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2016 and subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules report, recommends that it be confirmed by the Assembly”.

15. SR 88 The State Pension (Amendment No 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016

The Committee had no objections to the rule.

The Chairperson read the following motion into the record:

“That the Committee for Social Development has considered the Statutory Rule SR 88/2016 The State Pension (Amendment No 2) Regulations (NI) 2016 and subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules report, recommends that it be confirmed by the Assembly”.

16. Correspondence

The Committee noted the Westminster Social Security (Penalty Notice) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016.

The Committee noted a correspondence memo.

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

17. Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted its Forward Work Programme and itinerary for its external meeting in Coleraine on 10 March 2016.

Agreed: The Committee agreed its Forward Work Programme.

18. AOB

No items were raised.

19. Date, time and place of next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee for Social Development will take place on 10 March 2016 at 10am in the NIHE District Office, Coleraine.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12.25 p.m.

Alex Maskey

Chairperson, Committee for Social Development

10 March 2016