



# Northern Ireland Assembly

## COMMITTEE FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

### MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**Thursday 10 December 2015**  
**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 Gregory Campbell MLA  
Mr Stewart Dickson MLA  
Mr Sammy Douglas MLA  
Ms Dolores Kelly MLA  
Mr Adrian McQuillan MLA
- In Attendance: Dr Kevin Pelan (Assembly Clerk)  
Ms Patricia Casey (Assembly Clerk)  
Mrs Ashleigh Mitford (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Stewart Kennedy (Clerical Supervisor)  
Ms Alicia Muldoon (Clerical Officer)
- Apologies: Mr Phil Flanagan MLA

The meeting commenced in open session at 10.04 a.m.

*Roy Beggs declared an interest in that his son lives in an HMO.*

#### **1. Apologies**

Apologies were noted as above.

## **2. Draft Minutes**

*Agreed:* The draft minutes of the meeting held on 03 December 2015 were agreed.

## **3. Chairperson's Business**

No items were raised

## **4. Matters Arising**

Members noted that the Committee Stage of the HMO Bill is due to finish on 8 February 2016.

*Agreed:* To allow time to deal with unforeseen circumstances related to what is a large and complex Bill, the Committee agreed to table the following motion:

*That, in accordance with Standing Order 33(4), the period referred to in Standing Order 33(2) in relation to the Committee Stage of NIA Bill 60/11-16 Houses in Multiple Occupation Bill is extended to 12 February 2016.*

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The Committee noted that the Committee Stage of the Licensing Bill is also due to finish on 8 February 2016.

*Adrian McQuillan joined the meeting at 10.06 am*

*Agreed:* The Committee noted that timescales in regard to the Bill are extremely tight and agreed to table a motion seeking a short extension:

*That, in accordance with Standing Order 33(4), the period referred to in Standing Order 33(2) in relation to the Committee Stage of NIA Bill 69/11-16 Licensing Bill is extended to 12 February 2016.*

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The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in regards to the Public Consultation of Proposals for a Successor to DARD'S Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Framework 2011/15.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the Clerk should issue a nil response.

## **5. Budget: 2016/17 - Departmental Briefing**

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting 10.09 am

- Mr Ian Snowden, Acting Deputy Secretary, Resources and Social Policy Group (RSPG), DSD
- Ms Deborah Brown, Finance Director, DSD
- Joyce Bill, Director of Financial & Commercial Services, DSD

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

The Departmental officials left the meeting at 10.44am

*Fra McCann left the meeting at 10.44am*

## **6. Housing (Amendment) Bill Clause-by-Clause Scrutiny**

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 10.45 am

- Dr Heloise Brown, Head of Housing Research, Policy and Legislation, DSD
- Ms Avril Hiles, Deputy Principal of Private Rented Branch, DSD
- Mr Stephen Baird, Policy and Legislation Manager, DSD
- Ms Maryann Dempsey, Deputy Principal of Private Sector Grants Team, DSD

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department including a draft amendment to Clause 2 of the Bill.

The Departmental officials updated the Committee on the outcome of their meeting with DFP when the possibility of extending the information sharing provisions under Clause 1 to councils was discussed.

*Sammy Douglas joined the meeting at 10.49 am*

Concern was expressed by some members that effective information sharing with local government needs to be addressed.

The Committee undertook its Clause-by-Clause Scrutiny of the Bill.

### **Clause 1 – Sharing of information relating to empty properties**

Question put and agreed

“That the Committee is content with Clause 1 as drafted”

### **Clause 2 – Disclosure of information relating to anti-social behaviour**

Question put and agreed

“That the Committee is content with Clause 2 as amended”

### **Clause 3 – Registration as statutory charge of certain loans**

Question put and agreed

“That the Committee is content with Clause 3 as drafted”

#### **Clause 4 - Commencement**

Question put and agreed

“That the Committee is content with Clause 4 as drafted”

#### **Clause 5 – Short Title**

Question put and agreed

“That the Committee is content with Clause 5 as drafted”

*Fra McCann joined the meeting at 10.55 am*

#### **Long title of the Bill**

Question put and agreed

“That the Committee is content with the Long Title of the Bill as drafted”

The Committee noted a memo from the Clerk in relation to the drafting of the Committee’s Report.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that its concerns around information sharing with local government should form part of the recommendations of its Report.

*Agreed:* The Clerk would present a draft Report for the Committee’s consideration on 7 January 2016.

The Departmental officials left the meeting at 10.56am

*The session was recorded by Hansard*

### **7. Houses in Multiple Occupation Bill Committee Consideration - Departmental Briefing**

The following departmental officials joined the meeting at 10.57 am

- Mr Stephen Martin, Housing Policy Delivery, DSD
- David Grimley, Private Rented Sector, DSD
- Ronan Murphy, Private Rented Sector, DSD
- Christine Hayes, Private Rented Sector, DSD

The Committee noted a clause-by-clause table setting out the Department’s response to issues raised by stakeholders in relation to the Bill.

*Jim Allister joined the meeting at 11.34 am*

*Gregory Campbell left the meeting at 12.01 pm*

The Departmental officials briefed the Committee on the Department’s responses to those issues raised under clauses 14 – 60 of the Bill and answered Members’ questions. The Department agreed to follow up on a number of issues including concerns raised on clauses 50 and 60 of the Bill.

The Departmental officials left the meeting at 12.08 am

*The session was recorded by Hansard*

#### **8. Private Rented Sector: Regulation Review – Departmental Briefing**

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting 12.09 pm

- Mr Stephen Martin, Deputy Director of Housing Policy Delivery, DSD
- Ms Eilish O’Neill, Project Leader of the Private Rented Sector Review, 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.

*Dolores Kelly left the meeting at 12.11 pm*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to seek additional information from the Department on the number of landlords that have been prosecuted for non-registration.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to schedule a follow up session on the Private Rented Sector Review as part of its February – March 2016 Forward Work Programme.

The Departmental officials left the meeting at 12.28 pm

#### **9. SL1 The State Pension (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2015**

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

*Fra McCann left the meeting at 12.29 pm*

#### **10. SL1 The Pensions (2015 Act) (Consequential Supplementary and Incidental Amendments) Order (NI) 2015**

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

#### **11. SL1 The State Pension (Credits) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015**

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

#### **12. SL1 The Pensions (2015 Act) (Pension Sharing on Divorce etc.) (Transitional Provisions) Order (NI) 2015**

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

#### **13. SL1 The Occupational Pensions Schemes (Schemes that were Contracted-out) Regulations (NI) 2015**

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

The Committee also noted that the Department has advised that it proposes to make The Pensions (2015 Act) (Savings) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015. This is not subject to any Assembly procedure and does not require to be laid before the Assembly.

**14. SL1 The Pensions (2015 Act) (Consequential and Supplementary Amendments) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016**

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

**15. SL1 The Housing Benefit (Executive Determinations) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to seek an oral briefing on this SL1 at its meeting on 7 January 2016.

**16. SR 384 Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations (NI) 2015**

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 SR384/2015 The Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations (NI) 2015 and subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules report, has no objection to the Rule.”*

**17. SR 385 Charities Act 2008 (Substitution of Sums) Order (NI) 2015**

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 385/2015 Charities Act 2008 (Substitution of Sums) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 and subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules report, has no objection to the Rule.”*

**18. SR 402 The Payment of Pension Levies for Past Periods Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015**

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 402/2015 The Payment of Pension Levies for Past Periods Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules report, has no objections to the Rule.”*

## **19. SR 403 The Occupational Pensions (Revaluation) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015**

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 403/2015 The Occupational Pensions (Revaluation) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 and subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules report, has no objections to the Rule.”*

## **20. SR 404 The Social Security (Crediting and Treatment of Contributions, and National Insurance Numbers) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015**

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 404/2015 The Social Security (Crediting and Treatment of Contributions and National Insurance Numbers) (Amendment) 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 OFMdFM Committee in relation to the Departments Bill and Transfer of Functions Order.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to consider this in more detail on 14 January 2016, in conjunction with a written update that has been requested from the Department on the new Department for Communities project progress.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department regarding priorities for EU Reform. The Committee had previously agreed to consider this issue at its meeting on 7 January 2016 and provide a response due to OFMdFM by 22 January 2016.

The Committee noted an invitation to the NI National Citizen Service graduation event in the Crumlin Road Gaol on Tuesday 15 December from 6.30pm-9.30 pm.

*Agreed:* Any members wishing to attend should contact the Clerk.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Social Security Agency in relation to the Advice Sector and Welfare Reform.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to seek further information on the ‘meetings that have already taken place with senior representatives of the advice organisations with a view to agreeing a model which will enable the Department to award contracts for additional services.’

The Committee noted a correspondence memo.

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

## **22. Forward Work Programme**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed its Forward Work Programme as amended.

## **23. AOB**

No items were raised.

## **24. Date, time and place of next meeting**

The next meeting of the Committee for Social Development will take place on 07 January 2016 at 10.00am in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12.36 p.m.

**Alex Maskey**

**Chairperson, Committee for Social Development**

**07 January 2016**