



Northern Ireland Assembly

COMMITTEE FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Thursday 10 March 2016
NIHE Coleraine District Office

Present: Mr Alex Maskey MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Fra McCann MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Roy Beggs MLA
Ms Paula Bradley MLA
Mr Gregory Campbell MLA
Mr Stewart Dickson MLA
Mr Sammy Douglas MLA
Mr Phil Flanagan MLA
Mrs Dolores Kelly MLA
Mr Adrian McQuillan 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: none

The meeting commenced in open session at 10.06 a.m.

1. Apologies

Apologies were noted as above.

2. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The draft minutes of the meeting held on 03 March 2016 were agreed.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Chairperson of the Committee approve the minutes of today's meeting as the Committee is not scheduled to meet again.

3. Chairperson's Business

No items were raised.

4. Matters Arising

Agreed: The Committee agreed a press release in relation to its external meeting and its visit to the Incredible Edible project today.

The Committee noted correspondence from Department in relation to The Housing Benefit and State Pension Credit (Temporary Absence) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2016.

The Clerk briefed the Committee on procedure in relation to Secondary Legislation during dissolution.

Sammy Douglas joined the meeting at 10.11 am

5. SL1 The Occupational and Personal Pension Schemes (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016

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

6. SL1 Jobseekers Allowance (Extended Periods of Sickness) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016

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

7. SL1 The Child Support (Deduction Order and Fees) (Amendment and Modification) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016

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

8. SL1 The Child Support (Deduction from Earning Order & Regular Deduction Orders) (Amendment & Modification) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations (NI) 2016

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

9. SR The Welfare Supplementary Payments 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 draft Statutory Rule The Welfare Supplementary Payments Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 and subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules report, recommends that it be affirmed by the Assembly.”

10. SR 91 The Social Security (Claims and Payments) (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 91/2016 The Social Security (Claims and Payments) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2016 and subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules report, has no objections to the Rule.”

11. SR 92 The Social Security Benefits Up-Rating Order (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 92/2016 The Social Security Benefits Up-rating Order (NI) 2016 and subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules report, recommends that it be confirmed by the Assembly.”

12. SR 99 The Pensions 2015 Act (Pension Sharing on Divorce etc.) (Transitional Provision) Order (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 SR99/2016 The Pensions (2015 Act) (Pension Sharing on Divorce etc.) (Transitional Provisions) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016 and subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules report, has no objections to the Rule.”

13. SR 100 The State Pension (Amendment No. 3) 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 100/2016 The State Pension (Amendment No 3) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 and subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules report, has no objection to the Rule.”

14. SR 107 The Occupational Pension Schemes (Schemes that were Contracted-out) 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 107/2016 The Occupational Pensions Schemes (Schemes that were Contracted-out) Regulations (NI) 2016 and subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules report, has no objections to the Rule.”

15. SR 109 The Social Security Benefits Up-rating 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 109/2016 The Social Security Benefits Up-rating Regulations (NI) 2016 and subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules report, has no objections to the Rule.”

16. SR 110 The Social Security Benefits (Adjustment of Amounts and Thresholds) 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 110/2016 The Social Security Benefits (Adjustment of Amounts and Thresholds) Regulations (NI) 2016 and subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules report, has no objections to the Rule.”

17. SR 72/2016 The Social Security Revaluation of Earnings Factors Order (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 72/2016 The Social Security Revaluation of Earnings Factors Order (Northern Ireland) 2016 and subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules report, has no objections to the Rule.”

18. Committee for Social Development - Legacy Report for Assembly Mandate 2011-16

The Committee noted its draft Legacy Report and some suggested amendments.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the cover page, contents page and powers and membership sections of the Report

Agreed: The Committee agreed the 'Committee's Achievements' section of the Report, subject to factual amendments, when data becomes available.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the section on issues and matters that the incoming Committee may wish to consider, subject to a number of amendments.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department in relation to its recommendations on social housing.

In relation to the Committee's view on legislative priorities for the next mandate which includes, without prejudice, reform of the gambling laws Mr Beggs wished it to be recorded that he would not be in favour of any reform that would allow casinos to operate in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the following appendices, subject to factual amendments to data when available:

Appendix 1: Changes to Committee for Social Development Membership during the 2011-16 Assembly Mandate;

Appendix 2 - Committee for Social Development – overview of Assembly Mandate 2011-16, subject to amendments to factual data when it is available;

Appendix 3 – Committee for Social Development - Summary of the 2015/2016 Session, subject to amendments to factual information when it is available;

Appendix 4 - Committee for Social Development 'Forward Work Programme – remaining 'to be scheduled items' at the end of the Assembly Mandate 2011-16; and

Appendix 5 - An Exploration of Social Housing Structures Seminar (Scoping Document).

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Report be uploaded to the Committee pages of the Assembly Website at the same time as all other Committee Legacy Reports.

19. Welfare Reform – Communication and Engagement - Briefing by the Social Security Agency

The following senior officials joined the meeting at 10.30 am

- Mr Tommy O'Reilly, Chief Executive, Social Security Agency
- Ms Lisa Hamilton- Sturdy, Senior Communications and Engagement Manager, Social Security Agency

Members noted a briefing paper and correspondence from the SSA.

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

The officials agreed to consider a number of suggestions made by the Committee. These included a review based on the principles of 'plain English', regional information sessions for the advice sector, an MLA communication event in Parliament Buildings and constituency office communications and support. The Committee also emphasised the risks of telephone 'scammers' using this as an opportunity to extract bank details from vulnerable people and recommended the SSA take appropriate steps to reduce this risk. The Committee welcomed communications that are being developed for local councillors.

Paula Bradley left the meeting at 11.12 am.

The officials left the meeting at 11.14 am

20. Correspondence

The Committee noted the Clerk's memo regarding a Freedom of Information Request.

The Committee agreed that it was content to note a number of items of tabled correspondence.

The Committee noted a correspondence memo.

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

Agreed: The Committee agreed that, should any correspondence be sent to the Committee prior to dissolution, that a standard letter will be issued, stating that the Committee has no further meetings scheduled but the correspondence has been forwarded to its members.

21. Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department in relation to the remaining 'to be scheduled items' on the Committee's Forward Work Programme.

22. AOB

No items were raised.

The Chairperson thanked the management and the staff of the NIHE Causeway for their hospitality.

On concluding the meeting at 11.16am, the Chairperson extended his thanks to Committee Members and staff for their support and work over the mandate.

Alex Maskey

Chairperson, Committee for Social Development

14 March 2016

Addendum to 10 March 2016 minutes (correcting 3 March attendance to remove Mrs Dolores Kelly from the list of those present)



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

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

[EXTRACT]