



Northern Ireland Assembly

COMMITTEE FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Thursday 28 January 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 Gregory Campbell MLA
Mr Stewart Dickson MLA
Mr Sammy Douglas MLA
Mr Phil Flanagan MLA
Mr Adrian McQuillan MLA
- In Attendance: Ms Stella McArdle (Assembly Clerk)
- Mr Damien Martin (Clerk Assistant)
Mr Michael Scholes (Research Officer)
- Mrs Ashleigh Mitford (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Stewart Kennedy (Clerical Supervisor)
Ms Alicia Muldoon (Clerical Officer)
- Apologies: None

The meeting commenced in closed session at 9.32 a.m.

The Chairperson advised members that Ms. McArdle will be standing in for Mr. Pelan today.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to send a letter of condolence to Mr. Pelan on his family bereavement.

1. Raise briefing on budget setting 2016/2017

Michael Scholes, NIA Research Office, joined the meeting at 9.32 am.

Members noted a briefing paper from the Assembly's Research and Information Service on the 2016/2017 budget.

Mr Scholes provided a briefing to the Committee on budget setting for 2016/2017 and answered members' questions.

Paula Bradley joined the meeting at 9.45 am

Agreed: the Committee agreed to forward the briefing papers to the Department for comment.

Mr Scholes left the meeting at 9.51 am

2. Licensing Bill – Procedural Advice

Damien Martin, Clerk Assistant, joined the meeting at 9.52 am.

Mr Martin provided procedural advice to the Committee on the Licensing Bill and answered members' questions.

Mr Martin left the meeting at 10.05am

The meeting moved into public session at 10.05 am

3. Apologies

Apologies were noted as above.

4. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The draft minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2016 were agreed.

5. Chairperson's Business

No items were raised.

6. Matters Arising

Members noted some minor rescheduling to the agenda to facilitate witness and official support to the Committee.

7. Licensing Bill – Committee Consideration

The Chairperson advised members that, procedurally, today would be the final date on which the Committee can agree a motion to further extend the Committee Stage of the Licensing Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to table the following motion to the Assembly:

That, in accordance with Standing Order 33 (4), the period referred to in Standing Order 33 (2) be extended further to 19 February 2016, in relation to the Committee Stage of the Licensing Bill (NIA Bill 69/11-16).

Agreed: Members agreed to continue to work to 12th February to complete its consideration and report on the bill.

Adrian McQuillan joined the meeting at 10.06 am

Roy Beggs joined the meeting at 10.07 am

- Judith Cochrane MLA, the Member in charge of the Bill, joined the meeting at 10.07 am

Members noted a briefing paper from Ms Cochrane, a research paper on the Bill, statements submitted by Ravenhill Steering Group, correspondence from Ulster Rugby and an email from a Ravenhill Resident.

Gregory Campbell joined the meeting at 10.11 am

Phil Flanagan joined the meeting at 10.20 am

Ms Cochrane briefed the Committee and this was followed by questions from members.

Ms Cochrane left the meeting at 11.10 am

Members gave consideration to and identified the key issues in relation to the Bill

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request legal advice on the Bill. The Committee wished to understand if the Bill as drafted would allow a stadium with a licence, granted as specified in the Bill, to continue to apply for occasional licenses.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider a draft amendment to the bill. The amendment would allow alcohol to be sold on Sundays at premises such as Drumbo Park Greyhound Stadium.

The Committee noted procedural advice that an amendment to allow licensed premises operating, for example, under 18 Discos, to operate within the law, was in all likelihood outside the scope of the bill.

Agreed: Officials will draft an issues paper for the Committee's consideration next week ahead of it undertaking its Clause-by-Clause Scrutiny of the Bill on 11 February 2016.

The session was recorded by Hansard.

Alex Maskey left the meeting at 11.22 am

Fra McCann took the Chair

8. Update on Affordable, Shared Equity Housing – Departmental Briefing

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting 11.23 am

- Mr Stephen Martin, Deputy Director of Housing Policy Delivery, DSD

- Ms Julie Lavery, Deputy Principal, Affordable Housing Team, DSD
- Mr John McCord, Head of Housing Affordability Branch, DSD

The Committee noted a written submission from the Department.

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

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department on a number of issues related to the briefing.

Ms Lavery and Mr McCord left the meeting at 12.01 pm. Mr Martin remained at the table.

9. Houses in Multiple Occupation Bill – Committee Report

The Committee noted amendments to the Bill and a table of amendments provided by the Department.

The Chairperson reminded members that there are additional amendments for the Committee to consider, subsequent to its completion of its Clause-by-Clause Scrutiny last week.

Stephen Martin briefed the Committee on the amendments to Clause 88 and Schedule 2 and consequential amendments to Clauses 86 and 87 and answered members' questions.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek assurances from the Department that it will be provided for in guidance that a letting agent who is not a managing agent must inform a tenant who the managing agent is.

The following questions were put and agreed:

“That the Committee recommends to the Assembly that clause 88 be further amended as per the amendment presented by the Department on 28 January 2016”

“That the Committee recommends to the Assembly that Schedule 2 be amended as per the amendment presented by the Department on 28 January 2016”

“That the Committee recommends to the Assembly that clauses 86 and 87 be amended as per the paper presented by the Department on 28 January 2016”

Stephen Martin left the meeting at 12.08pm

The session was recorded by Hansard up to this point.

The Committee noted its draft Report on the Houses in Multiple Occupation Bill.

The Chairperson took the Committee through the Report section by section. No amendments were proposed.

Jim Allister left the meeting during consideration of the Report at 12.11

The Committee noted that a final draft of the Report will be presented on 4 February 2016 for the Committee's consideration.

10. SL1 The Automatic Enrolment (Earnings Trigger and Qualifying Earnings Band) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016

The Committee considered the SL1.

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

11. Correspondence

The Committee noted tabled correspondence from the Department regarding the launch of the Inter-Departmental Review of Housing Adaptations Services Consultation on the Final Report and Action Plan 2016. Members agreed that this was a crucial piece of work to be noted for the future.

The Committee noted a correspondence memo.

The Committee discussed correspondence from the OFMdfM Committee in relation to the Orchardville Society's concerns that Employment Services will transfer to the new Department for Communities.

Jim Allister joined the meeting at 12.17pm

The Chairperson reminded members that in correspondence to the OFMdfM Committee on 22 January 2016, the Committee for Social Development advised that it was content with the range of functions to be transferred and believes that this alignment optimises the potential to make significant changes to people's lives.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Clerk respond in similar terms to the OFMdfM Committee on this specific issue.

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

One Member referred to an item of correspondence from Ulster Rugby that was noted during the earlier session of the Licensing Bill. Concerns were noted by the Committee that the information provided in the letter in response to the Committee's enquiries differed to the evidence provided by the organisation on 14 January 2016.

12. Forward Work Programme

Agreed: The Committee agreed its Forward Work Programme.

13. AOB

No items were raised.

14. Date, time and place of next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee for Social Development will take place on 04 February 2016 at 10.00am in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12.20 p.m.

Alex Maskey

Chairperson, Committee for Social Development

4 February 2016