



Northern Ireland Assembly

COMMITTEE FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Thursday 2 July 2015
Room 29, Parliament Buildings

- Present: Mr Alex Maskey MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Roy Beggs MLA
Ms Paula Bradley MLA
Mr Gregory Campbell MLA
Mr Stewart Dickson MLA
Mr Sammy Douglas 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 (Clerical Supervisor)
Mr Richard Reid (Clerical Officer)
- Apologies: Mr Jim Allister MLA

The meeting commenced at 10:03 a.m.

1. Apologies

Apologies were noted as above.

2. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The draft minutes of the meetings held on 25 June 2015 were agreed.

3. Chairperson's Business

The Committee noted that the Chair and the Clerk met with the 'Speak Up' project and its young advisors at their premises on 1 July 2015. Members noted that the informal meeting with the wider Committee, originally scheduled for 18 June 2015, is to be rescheduled in the new session.

10.04 a.m. Dolores Kelly joined the meeting

The Chairperson reminded the Committee that the Law Centre has invited the Convenor of Scotland's Welfare Reform Committee to talk to the Law Centre's Welfare Reform Group about the work of the Scottish Committee. The Law Centre has also invited the Chairperson to speak and take part in a Q&A session at the event on 3 July.

Agreed: The Committee agreed procedures for the handling of FOI requests that are received during the summer recess period.

4. Matters Arising

The Committee note correspondence from Dr Malcolm McKibbin, Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service, in relation to the recommendations contained in the Committee's phase 3 Inquiry Report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it will note the correspondence pending the response from OFMdFM and the Minister for Social Development.

The Committee noted that the Housing (Amendment) Bill was introduced in the Assembly on 30 June 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to proceed to consult with its stakeholders on this Bill. Stakeholders will be advised that, subject to approval by the Assembly at Second Stage in autumn, the Bill will then be referred to the Committee for Social Development which has responsibility for the Committee Stage of the Bills.

The Committee noted that the Houses in Multiple Occupation Bill was not introduced in the Assembly on 30 June 2015 as anticipated and that any introduction will now be in the new session.

Members noted that, in the interests of cost savings, Committee offices will no longer be producing hard copy meeting packs.

The Committee noted that Advice NI has requested a copy of the SSA's briefing paper on Improving Benefit Uptake Strategy which was presented to the Committee on 18 June 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to the issue of the requested briefing paper to Advice NI.

5. European Activity for 2015 - Action being taken to source EU Funding - Departmental Briefing

The following departmental officials joined the meeting at 10:15 a.m.

- Mr Tony McKibben – Urban Policy Branch
- Mr Jack O’Connor – Urban Policy Branch
- Mr Andrew Johnston – Urban Policy Branch

The Committee noted a briefing paper and a memo from the Clerk.

The officials briefed the Committee.

10.18 a.m. Sammy Wilson joined the meeting.

Sammy Douglas declared an interest.

The briefing was followed by questions from members.

10.55 Sammy Douglas left the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it will schedule an overview session on European Funding.

The officials left the meeting at 11:00 a.m.

6. Affordable Warmth Scheme – Departmental briefing

The following departmental officials joined the meeting at 11.01 a.m.

- Ms Bernie Rooney – Social Inclusion Housing Division
- Ms Eilish O’Neill – Social Inclusion Housing Division
- Ms Siobhan McAuley – NIHE Regional Services Director

The Committee noted a briefing paper and a memo from the Clerk.

The officials briefed the Committee.

The briefing was followed by questions from members.

12.04 p.m. Sammy Douglas joined the meeting.

12.10 p.m. Fra McCann left the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek regular updates on the progress of the scheme and in particular, on the end to end efficiency review and the delivery figures that were presented by the officials.

12.21 p.m. Gregory Campbell left the meeting.

12.22 p.m. Dolores Kelly left the meeting.

The officials left the meeting at 12.22 p.m.

7. SR 281 The Social Security (Application of Reciprocal Agreements with Australia, Canada and New Zealand) (EEA States and Switzerland) 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 281 The Social Security (Application of Reciprocal Agreements with Australia, Canada and New Zealand) (EEA States and Switzerland) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules report, has no objections to the Rule.”

8. Correspondence

The Committee noted correspondence from Imtac and the Department in relation to draft Guidelines on the Licensing of Pavement Cafes.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to return to the issue in the autumn.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department in relation to the Liquor Licensing Bill.

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 the Committee office issue a correspondence pack to members half way through summer recess.

9. Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted that the Clerk has written to the Department to seek its input to a draft Forward Work Programme for the new session.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to meet on Thursday 3 September 2015, primarily to consider its work programme for the 2015/2016 session.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that Housing issues will be its focus for the 2015/2016 session alongside its consideration of the Housing (Amendment) Bill and the Houses in Multiple Occupation Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that a briefing be scheduled with key housing stakeholders.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that Committee staff pilot a Committee Twitter page, primarily as an additional platform from which to communicate the Committee’s work programme to stakeholders.

10. AOB

No items were raised.

11. Date, time and place of next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee for Social Development will take place on 3 September 2015 at 10:00am.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12:28 p.m.

Alex Maskey

Chairperson, Committee for Social Development

3 September 2015