



# Northern Ireland Assembly

## COMMITTEE FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

### MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**Thursday 16 April 2015**  
**Room 29, Parliament Buildings**

- Present: Mr Alex Maskey MLA (Chairperson)  
Mr Mickey Brady MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Jim Allister MLA  
Mr Roy Beggs MLA  
Ms Paula Bradley MLA  
Mr Gregory Campbell MLA  
Mrs Dolores Kelly MLA  
Mr Fra McCann MLA
- In Attendance: Dr Kevin Pelan (Assembly Clerk)  
Mrs Ashleigh Mitford (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Stewart Kennedy (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Richard Reid (Clerical Officer)
- Apologies: Mr Sammy Wilson MLA

The Deputy Chairperson declared the meeting open at 10:04am.

#### **1. Apologies**

Apologies were noted as above.

#### **2. Draft Minutes**

*Agreed:* The draft minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2015 were agreed.

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

- 3.1** The Deputy Chairperson drew members' attention to correspondence from the Chief Executive of the Social Security Agency which sought to postpone the briefing on the Welfare Reform Communication and Engagement Strategy.

*Mr Fra McCann MLA joined the meeting at 10:07am*

- 3.2** The Deputy Chairperson informed the Committee that the Chairperson attended an event on homelessness which was organised by the Participation and the Practice of Rights.

#### **4. Regeneration Bill – Departmental Briefing**

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 10:07am:

- Henry McArdle
- Anthony McDaid
- Ian Snowden
- Peter Toner

The officials briefed the Committee on some of the main issues raised by stakeholders in written evidence to the Committee on the Regeneration Bill. Officials also addressed key issues raised by members and stakeholders during oral evidence sessions.

*Mr Alex Maskey MLA took the Chair at 10:11am*

Members discussed the Department's response to some of the key issues which included the lack of definition in the Bill regarding "social need", and "deprivation".

Given the absence of a code of conduct for local government, the Committee queried whether the Department should have considered introducing a qualified majority voting clause to the Bill to address controversial issues requiring a council decision which could adversely affect community relations.

*Agreed:* The Department agreed to consult with the Office of Legislative Council on this issue and respond to the Committee.

The Committee also queried what arrangements have been put in place for Departmental employees who will transfer to local councils.

*Agreed:* The Departmental officials agreed to provide the Committee with the scheme relating to the transfer of Departmental employees.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to cancel its meeting on 7 May 2015 due to the forthcoming election and to hold an additional meeting on Tuesday 28 April 2015 to consider the Regeneration Bill.

This session was recorded by Hansard.

The representatives left the meeting at 10:46am.

**5. SR 184 The Social Security (Members of the Reserve Forces) (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 184 The Social Security (Members of the Reserve Forces) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules report, recommends that it be confirmed by the Assembly.”*

**6. SR 185 The Employment and Support Allowance (Repeat Assessments and Pending Appeal Awards) (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 185 The Employment and Support Allowance (Repeat Assessments and Pending Appeal Awards) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules report, has no objections to the Rule.”*

**7. SR 211 The Social Security (Maternity Allowance) (Earnings) (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 Statutory Rule SR 211 The Social Security (Maternity Allowance) (Earnings) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules’ report has no objections to the Rule.”*

**8. SR 204 Registered Rents (Increase) 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 Statutory Rule SR 204 Registered Rents (Increase) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 and subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules’ report has no objections to the Rule.”*

**9. SR 179 The Social Security (Contributions) (Republic of Chile) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015**

The Committee noted the Rule.

**10. SR 206 (c.14) The Pensions (2012 Act) (Commencement No. 5) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015**

The Committee noted the Commencement Order.

**11. SR 207 The Social Security (Application of Reciprocal Agreements with Australia, Canada and New Zealand) (EEA States and Switzerland) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2015**

The Committee noted the Rule.

**12. Correspondence**

**12.1** The Committee considered correspondence from the Department on the outcome to the consultation on the Pension Schemes Bill Equality Impact Assessment.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing from the Department on the outcome of the consultation.

**12.2** The Committee considered correspondence from the Department on the 2015/16 Business Plan.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing from the Department on the 2015/16 Business Plan

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

**13. Forward Work Programme**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the Forward Work Programme as drafted.

**The meeting moved into closed session at 10:59am.**

**14. Inquiry into allegations, arising from a BBC NI Spotlight programme, aired on 3 July 2013, of impropriety or irregularity relating to NIHE managed contracts and consideration of any resulting actions – phase 3 Report**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to include a minority report in the appendices of the Committee Report.

The Committee discussed a response from Mr Brimstone in relation to the draft report.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to take Mr Brimstone's comments into account when agreeing its final Report.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to include Mr Brimstone's comments in the appendices of its Report.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the introductory and background sections of its report.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the outline of central and contextual issues of phase 3 of its Inquiry.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed its consideration of evidence in relation to the actions of Minister McCausland section of the Report.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed its consideration of evidence in relation to contextual issues section of the Report.

The Committee noted a draft conclusion of its Report

A member proposed that the conclusion should be forwarded to two individuals for comment.

The Committee divided

<u>Ayes</u>	<u>Noes</u>	<u>Not voting</u>
Paula Bradley	Jim Allister	Alex Maskey
Gregory Campbell	Mickey Brady	
	Dolores Kelly	
	Fra McCann	

The motion fell

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the Conclusion of its Report

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the Table of Contents of its Report as amended

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the appendices of its Report.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the Executive Summary and Recommendations of its Report as amended.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the Report be the 12th Report of the Committee for Social Development.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed a draft extract of the minutes of 16 April 2015 be included in the appendices of the Committee's Report as amended.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the Report remain embargoed until commencement of debate in plenary.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the Report be printed.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed its Motion for debate.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the chairperson will move the motion and the Deputy Chairperson will do the wind.

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

The next meeting of the Committee for Social Development will take place on 23 April 2015 at 10.00am in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 11:31pm

**Alex Maskey**

**Chairperson, Committee for Social Development**

**23 April 2015**