Northern Ireland Assembly

Committee for Communities

Minutes of Proceedings

Wednesday 11 November 2026

Meeting Location: Room 21, Parliament Buildings

Present:
Mr Colm Gildernew MLA (Chairperson)
Ms Nicola Brogan (Deputy Chairperson) (via Zoom)
Mr Andy Allen MBE MLA
Mrs Kellie Armstrong MLA
Mr Paul Boggs MLA (via Zoom)
Mr Maurice Bradley MLA
Mrs Pam Cameron MLA
Mrs Sian Mulholland MLA (via Zoom)

In Attendance:
Mrs Emer Boyle (Assembly Clerk)
Mrs Victoria Bourquin (Assistant Clerk)
Mr Chris McAfee (Clerical Supervisor)
Ms Patrice Morris (Senior Assistant Clerk)
Ms Kathryn Black (Senior Assistant Clerk)

The meeting commenced in closed session at 2.00 p.m.

Northern Ireland Assembly

1. Declarations of Interest

The following interests were declared:

Colm Gildernew - Member's Bill on mitigating the threat of homelessness, Charity Trustee.

Andy Allen – Charity Trustee, Private Sector Landlord.

Kellie Armstrong – Associate of Chartered Institute of Housing.

Maurice Bradley - Member of Harry Gregg Foundation, member of Coleraine and District League Management, member of North West Football Association, member of Irish Football Association Council.

Paul Boggs – Family Member employed at Shelter NI.

Pam Cameron – Former Junior Minister with sight of Executive and cross-departmental policy, strategy and legislation.

2. Apologies

There were no apologies.

The Chairperson advised Members that the Bill Clerk would be in attendance to assist and advise Members on Agenda Items 3,4 and 5.

3. Charities (Amendment) Bill: Committee Deliberations

The Committee considered the Clause by Clause table which detailed all the comments and evidence received as part of the Call for Evidence for Charities (Amendment) Bill.

Members discussed the Clauses of the Bill, and the range of stakeholder views and comments received.

Maurice Bradley left the meeting at 2.44 p.m.

Agreed: That the Bill clerk is asked to finalise an amendment to Clause 13 in relation to a timeframe for Commencement and biennial reporting on Bill implementation.

Maurice Bradley rejoined the meeting at 2.56 p.m.

Nicola Brogan joined the meeting at 2.56 p.m.

4. Charities (Amendment) Bill: Informal Clause by Clause

The Committee commenced its informal Clause-by-Clause consideration of the Charities (Amendment) Bill.

Clause 1 – References to the 2008 Act

The Committee considered Clause 1 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was informally content with Clause 1 as drafted.

Clause 2 – Disclosure of information

The Committee considered Clause 2 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was informally content with Clause 2 as amended by the Department.

Clause 3 - Official warnings to be issuable

The Committee considered Clause 3 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was informally content with Clause 3 as drafted.

Clause 4 - Removal of trustees etc. following inquiry

The Committee considered Clause 4 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was informally content with Clause 4 as drafted and agreed that comment should be made its report in relation to a future review of Charities law in the next mandate.

Clause 5 - Directions for specified action not to be taken

The Committee considered Clause 5 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was informally content with Clause 5 as drafted.

Clause 6 – Automatic disqualification from being trustee

The Committee considered Clause 6 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was informally content with Clause 6 as drafted.

Clause 7 – Requirement to prepare accounts

The Committee considered Clause 7 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was informally content with Clause 7 as drafted.

Clause 8 – Auditing: disapplication for small charities

The Committee considered Clause 8 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was informally content with Clause 8 as drafted and agreed that comment should be made its report in relation to how auditing is undertaken in other jurisdictions across these islands and increases in thresholds.

Clause 9 – Gross income: provision about what counts

The Committee considered Clause 9 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was informally content with Clause 9 as drafted.

Clause 10 – Annual reports and returns

The Committee considered Clause 10 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was informally content with Clause 10 as drafted.

Clause 11 – Removal of regulatory arrangements

The Committee considered Clause 11 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was informally content with Clause 11 as drafted and agreed that the Department should be asked to communicate clearly the changes in regulatory arrangements to all funding bodies operating in Northern Ireland.

Clause 12 – Updating as to department and staff

The Committee considered Clause 12 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was informally content with Clause 12 as drafted.

Clause 13 – Commencement

The Committee considered Clause 13 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee requested the text of an updated amendment to be drafted by the Bill Clerk to Clause 13 in relation to a commencement timeframe and biennial reporting.

Clause 14 - Short Title

The Committee considered Clause 14 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was informally content with Clause 14 as drafted.

Paul Boggs left the meeting at 3.15 p.m.

The Chairperson requested a Member to assume Chairperson for agenda Item 5, as the Deputy Chairperson was not in attendance.

Agreed: That Kellie Armstrong MLA would assume Chairperson for Agenda Item 5.

Northern Ireland Assembly

5. Housing (Amendment) Bill: Committee Deliberations

As the Chairperson is the sponsor of this Bill, the nominated Chairperson, Kellie Armstrong MLA, assumed the Chair for this item.

The Committee considered the Clause by Clause table which detailed all the comments and evidence received as part of the Call for Evidence for Housing (Amendment) Bill.

Paul Boggs rejoined the meeting at 3.28 p.m.

Nicola Brogan left the meeting at 3.31 p.m.

Members discussed the 3 Clauses of the Bill, and the range of stakeholder views and comments received.

Pam Cameron left the meeting at 4.02 p.m.

Agreed: That that the Bill Clerk would ***not be*** asked to draft any amendments for Committee consideration.

Agreed: That the Committee team should expedite responses from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Supporting People and the Simon Community in relation to a range of additional considerations which were raised during Bill scrutiny and in relation to which Committee should make comment, in the Committee's report on the Bill.

Andy Allen left the meeting at 4.06 p.m.

6. Date, time and location of the next meeting

The next meeting is at 10.00 a.m. on Thursday 12 November 2026, in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 4.08 p.m.

Northern Ireland Assembly

Colm Gildernew MLA

Chairperson, Committee for Communities