



# Northern Ireland Assembly

## COMMITTEE FOR COMMUNITIES

### MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**Wednesday 20 May 2020**  
**Room 29, Parliament Buildings**

Present, Senate: Paula Bradley MLA (Chairperson)  
Kellie Armstrong MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Andy Allen MBE MLA

Present, Teleconferencing: Mark Durkan MLA  
Sinéad Ennis MLA  
Carál Ní Chuilín MLA  
Robin Newton MBE MLA  
Fra McCann MLA  
Jonathan Buckley MLA

In Attendance: Kevin Pelan (Assembly Clerk)  
Sean McCann (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Oliver Bellew (Clerical Officer)

*The meeting commenced in open session at 13:08 p.m.*

#### **1. Apologies**

There were no apologies to record.

#### **2. Chairperson's Business**

There was no Chairperson's Business.

#### **3. Draft Minutes**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 13 May 2020.

#### **4. Matters Arising**

The Chairperson informed members they had been provided with a copy of the ninth report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules. The Examiner had drawn the Committee's attention to The Employment and Support Allowance and the Housing Benefit (Transitional Provisions) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 and stated that the Department had breached the 21-day rule. However, the Examiner was content with the Department's reason for doing this which was as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak. Members agreed to note the Report.

Members noted a copy of updated guidance for landlords following the making of the Private Tenancies (Coronavirus Modifications) Bill.

The Chairperson informed Members that they had been provided with a letter of response from the Minister to the committee's request for information on the Sports Covid-19 Hardship Fund.

*Agreed:* Members agreed to write to the Department requesting a copy of the criteria that Sport NI is using to assess applications to the Sports Covid-19 Hardship Fund along with a breakdown of the sports groups that have already been awarded funding and a list of applications that are still to be assessed.

Members noted a departmental response to Committee queries on the social supermarket pilot.

#### **5. Correspondence**

The Committee considered a letter from Golfing Union of Ireland (Ulster Branch) regarding the safe return to golf amid Covid-19.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to Golfing Union of Ireland (Ulster Branch) asking if they have encountered any problems in relation to the Executive's decision, and if a uniformed approach was being implemented by all golf clubs.

Carál Ní Chuilín MLA joined the meeting via teleconference at 13:13 p.m.

The Committee noted the following:

- I. Copy of correspondence to the Minister regarding CCNI and Victoria Housing Estates.
- II. Letter from Chief Executive of Co/Ownership welcoming the introduction of The Housing (Amendment) Bill (NI).

III. Memo from the Clerk of the Justice Committee, seeking Committees comments/views on the Domestic Abuse Proceedings Bill.

## **6. Briefing by CO3 and NICVA on the impact of Covid-19 on the charity, voluntary and community sectors**

The following interests were declared:

Andy Allen MBE MLA declared an interest as a Charity Trustee. The charity is a member of NICVA.

Kellie Armstrong MLA declared an interest as a previous employee in the Community and Voluntary Sector.

The following CO3 and NICVA representatives joined the meeting via teleconference at 13:19 p.m.:

Nora Smith, Chief Executive, CO3  
Seamus McAleavey, Chief Executive of NICVA

The representatives provided the Committee with an overview of the impact of Covid-19 on the charity, voluntary and community sectors.

The oral evidence was followed by a question and answer session.

*Agreed:* Members agreed to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer reflecting the Committee's position on furloughing of charity employees.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to request sight of the Emergencies Leadership Group minutes of proceedings.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Minister for the Economy asking that she consider the criteria for application to the Hardship Fund in respect of social enterprises.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Minister for Communities regarding the criteria for releasing the £15m Hardship Fund to the third sector.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Minister for Finance regarding progress made in releasing money from the Dormant Accounts Fund, the role of the National Lottery Community Fund in its administration and to request the criteria for eligibility including date when funds will be allocated.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives of CO3 and NICVA for their attendance.

## **7. Forward Work Programme**

Members noted that the Committee will be briefed by the Arts Council on the impact of Covid-19 at its meeting on 27 May. Members also noted that departmental officials will brief on the June Monitoring Round and Sport NI will brief on the impact of Covid-19 on 3 June.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request a briefing on 'Supporting People' in relation to the £10m allocated for Covid-19 response.

#### **8. Any Other Business**

There was no AOB to record.

#### **9. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting**

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 27 May at 12:30 p.m. Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

*The meeting adjourned at 14:35p.m.*

**Ms Paula Bradley MLA**  
**Chairperson, Committee for Communities**