



Northern Ireland Assembly

COMMITTEE FOR COMMUNITIES

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Thursday 5 November 2020

Room 29, Parliament Buildings

Present: Paula Bradley MLA (Chairperson)
Kellie Armstrong MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Andy Allen MBE MLA
Alex Easton MLA
Robin Newton MBE MLA
Fra McCann MLA

Present: Starleaf Mark Durkan MLA
Sinéad Ennis MLA

In Attendance: Janice Thompson (Assembly Clerk)
Sean McCann (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Oliver Bellew (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced in open session at 10:01 a.m.

1. Apologies

There were no apologies to record.

2. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson welcomed Alex Easton to the Committee and suggested to Members that a letter of thanks is sent to Jonathan Buckley for his contribution to the Committee.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to send a letter of thanks to Jonathan Buckley.

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 5 November 2020.

4. Matters Arising

The Chairperson informed Members that they had been provided with a reply from the Finance Minister to Committee queries on the impact of Covid-19 on local councils.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to Solace to ask what alternative plans they have in place in relation to setting the district rate.

The Chairperson informed Members that they had been provided with a reply from the Minister for Finance to queries raised during the recent briefing by the Northern Ireland Football League (NIFL).

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward a copy of the reply to NIFL for information.

The Committee noted a reply from the Finance Minister to Committee queries on the High Street Vacancy Strategy.

The Chairperson informed Members that they had been provided with a reply from the Finance Minister to queries raised by NIPSA on the Job Support Scheme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward a copy of the reply to NIPSA for information.

The Chairperson informed Members that they had been provided with a Ministerial reply to queries raised during the recent NIFL briefing on the impact of Covid-19 on local football.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward a copy of the reply to NIFL for information. The Committee also agreed to write to Sport NI for an update on how Covid-19 sports funding is being allocated.

The Chairperson informed Members that they had been provided with a Departmental update on the Covid-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to Solace asking what the funds outlined in the reply have been spent on and also asking how much administration fees the councils have been able to claim back.

Members noted a Departmental letter on Covid-19 funding bids as part of the delayed October Monitoring Round.

The Chairperson informed Members that, at the meeting on 22 October a query was raised into the IFA potentially building a training facility at the site of the old Avoniel

Leisure Centre. Departmental policy officials have advised that they are not aware of any such plans having spoken to the Operational Manager at the IFA.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to Belfast City Council for more information on the plans for the Avoniel Leisure Centre site and to ask if the Council is working with the IFA in relation to future plans.

The Committee noted a tabled paper from the Minister for Communities on the next steps in Tackling the Housing Executive Investment Challenge in Line with New Decade, New Approach Commitments.

5. Briefing by We Make Events on the Impact of Covid-19 on the Events Sector

The following representative joined the meeting:

Sean Pagel, Regional Lead, We Make Events

The representative briefed the Committee and took part in a question and answer session with Members.

The Chairperson thanked the representative for his attendance.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a briefing from the Department and the Arts Council on the Allocation of Covid-19 Arts funding.

The meeting was suspended at 11.37a.m.

The meeting recommenced at 11.42a.m. with all Members present.

6. Licensing and Registration of Clubs (Amendment) Bill

The Chairperson informed Members that they had been provided with several papers in relation to the Committee Stage of the Bill, including requests to brief the Committee.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the content of an online template to be used for the Committee's call for evidence.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to add representatives from the taxi industry, the night time economy group, Food and Drink NI and the four main churches to the key witness list.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite the following organisations to brief on the Bill at future meetings:

- The Northern Ireland Retail Consortium
- Drumbo Park
- The Northern Irish Brewery and Independent Pub Association
- The Northern Ireland Federation of Clubs.

7. Clause by Clause Scrutiny of the Pension Schemes Bill

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting:

Mr Gerry McCann, Grade 7, State & Private Pensions & EU
Ms Doreen Roy, Grade 7, State & Private Pensions

Clause 1 - Master Trust schemes: definition

The Committee considered Clause 1 as drafted.

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

Clause 2: Relevant public service pension schemes

The Committee considered Clause 2 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 2 as drafted.

Clause 3: Prohibition on operating a scheme unless authorised

The Committee considered Clause 3 as drafted.

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

Clause 4: Application for authorisation

The Committee considered Clause 4 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 4 as drafted.

Clause 5: Decision on application

The Committee considered Clause 5 as drafted.

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

Clause 6: Referral to Tribunal of refusal to grant authorisation

The Committee considered Clause 6 as drafted.

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

Clause 7: Fit and proper persons requirement

The Committee considered Clause 7 as drafted.

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

Clause 8: Financial sustainability requirement

The Committee considered Clause 8 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 8 as drafted.

Clause 9: Financial sustainability requirement: business plan

The Committee considered Clause 9 as drafted.

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

Clause 10: Scheme funder requirements

The Committee considered Clause 10 as drafted.

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

Clause 11: Systems and processes requirements

The Committee considered Clause 11 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 11 as drafted.

Clause 12: Continuity strategy requirement

The Committee considered Clause 12 as drafted.

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

Clause 13: List of authorised schemes

The Committee considered Clause 13 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 13 as drafted.

Clause 14: Requirement to submit annual accounts

The Committee considered Clause 14 as drafted.

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

Clause 15: Requirement to submit supervisory return

The Committee considered Clause 15 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 15 as drafted.

Clause 16: Duty to notify Regulator of significant events

The Committee considered Clause 16 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 16 as drafted.

Clause 17: Fixed penalty notice for failure to comply with request for information

The Committee considered Clause 17 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 17 as drafted.

Clause 18: Escalating penalty notice for failure to comply with request for information

The Committee considered Clause 18 as drafted.

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

Clause 19: Withdrawal of authorisation

The Committee considered Clause 19 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 19 as drafted.

Clause 20: Triggering event: duties of trustees

The Committee considered Clause 20 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 20 as drafted.

Clause 21: Triggering events

The Committee considered Clause 21 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 21 as drafted.

Clause 22: Notification requirements

The Committee considered Clause 22 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 22 as drafted.

Clause 23: Continuity options

The Committee considered Clause 23 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 23 as drafted.

Clause 24: Continuity option 1: transfer out and winding up

The Committee considered Clause 24 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 24 as drafted.

Clause 25: Continuity option 2: resolving triggering event

The Committee considered Clause 25 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 25 as drafted.

Clause 26: Approval of implementation strategy

The Committee considered Clause 26 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 26 as drafted.

Clause 27: Content of implementation strategy

The Committee considered Clause 27 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 27 as drafted.

Clause 28: Duty to pursue continuity option

The Committee considered Clause 28 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 28 as drafted.

Clause 29: Prohibition on winding up except in accordance with continuity option 1

The Committee considered Clause 29 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 29 as drafted.

Clause 30: Periodic reporting requirement

The Committee considered Clause 30 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 30 as drafted.

Clause 31 and Schedule 1: Pause orders

The Committee considered Clause 31 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 31 as drafted.

Clause 32: Prohibition on new employers during triggering event period

The Committee considered Clause 32 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 32 as drafted.

Clause 33: Prohibition on increasing charges etc. during triggering event period

The Committee considered Clause 33 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 33 as drafted.

Clause 34: When it becomes clear that authorisation not to be withdrawn

The Committee considered Clause 34 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 34 as drafted.

Clause 35: When a decision to withdraw authorisation becomes final

The Committee considered Clause 35 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 35 as drafted.

Clause 36: Fraud compensation

The Committee considered Clause 36 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 36 as drafted.

Clause 37 and Schedule 2: Master trusts in operation on commencement: transitional provision

The Committee considered Clause 37 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 37 as drafted.

Clause 38 and Schedule 3: Minor and consequential amendments

The Committee considered Clause 38 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 38 as drafted.

Clause 39: Interpretation of Part 1

The Committee considered Clause 39 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 39 as drafted.

Clause 40: Regulations modifying application of Part 1

The Committee considered Clause 40 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 40 as drafted.

Clause 41: Power to override contract terms

The Committee considered Clause 41 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 41 as drafted.

Clause 42: Regulations: general provisions

The Committee considered Clause 42 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 42 as drafted.

Clause 43: General interpretation

The Committee considered Clause 43 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 43 as drafted.

Clause 44: Commencement

The Committee considered Clause 44 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 44 as drafted.

Clause 45: Short title

The Committee considered Clause 45 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 45 as drafted.

The Chairperson thanked the Departmental officials for their assistance with the Bill and informed Members that a draft report would be brought back to the Committee for agreement in the coming weeks.

8. SL1 - The Personal Independence Payment (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2020

Agreed: The Committee was content for the Department to make the Rule.

9. SL1 - The Registration of Clubs (Accounts) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to ask for a briefing on this proposal at a future meeting.

**10. SL1 - Licensing and Registration of Clubs (Amendment) Act (NI) 2011
(Commencement No 6) Order (NI) 2020**

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to ask for a briefing on this proposal at a future meeting.

11. SR 2020/226 - The Universal Credit (Earned Income) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2020

The Committee considered SR 2020/226 - The Universal Credit (Earned Income) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2020 which amend the Universal Credit Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 (S.R. 2016 No. 216) in order to reallocate a calendar monthly payment of earnings reported via the Real Time Information (RTI) service to a different Universal Credit assessment period where it is necessary to maintain a regular payment cycle.

Agreed: The Committee considered SR 2020/226 - The Universal Credit (Earned Income) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2020 and, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules Report, had no objection to the rule.

12. SR 2020/227 - The Social Security (Coronavirus) (Prisoners) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2020

The Committee considered SR 2020/227 - The Social Security (Coronavirus) (Prisoners) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2020 which amend the Social Security (Coronavirus) (Prisoners) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 (S.R. 2020 No. 63), extending their expiry date by 6 months, in response to the continuing outbreak of coronavirus in Northern Ireland. They will continue to make provision for individuals on temporary release from a prison in Northern Ireland due to the outbreak of COVID-19 in Northern Ireland to access means tested benefits during the period of that release.

Agreed: The Committee considered SR 2020/227 - The Social Security (Coronavirus) (Prisoners) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2020 and, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules Report, had no objection to the rule.

13. SR 2020/231 - The Licensing (Designation of Outdoor Stadia) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020

The Committee considered SR 2020/231 - The Licensing (Designation of Outdoor Stadia) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 which designates the Down Royal Racecourse, at Maze, Lisburn, BT27 5RW, as a stadium of importance to the whole of Northern Ireland. In doing so it allows Down Royal Racecourse to apply to the courts for a liquor licence for the above venue.

Agreed: The Committee considered SR 2020/231 - The Licensing (Designation of Outdoor Stadia) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 and, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules Report, had no objection to the rule.

14. Correspondence

The Committee considered a request from Ulster Rugby brief on the impact of Covid-19.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite Ulster Rugby to brief at a future meeting.

The Chairperson informed Members that they had been provided with correspondence from an individual in relation to the Charity Commission.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask for a written briefing from the individual.

The Committee noted the following:

- i. Armagh Observatory and Planetarium Annual Report and Accounts for year ending 31 March 2020.
- ii. Copy of Public Accounts Committee's 'Report on Major Capital Projects'.
- iii. Copy of report – Tackling Racism at the Grassroots.
- iv. Memo from the Executive Committee in relation oral evidence sessions with local councils.
- v. Investing Activity Report for Department for Communities.
- vi. NIHE Annual Report & Accounts year ended 31 March 2020.

- vii. Copy of Belfast chamber letter to the Minister for Communities regarding Phase 3 of Belfast Streets Ahead.

15. Forward Work Programme

Members noted that, at the meeting on 12 November, the Committee will be briefed by the Department on policy proposals for a Gambling Bill and by the Northern Ireland Retail Consortium on the Licensing and Registration of Clubs (Amendment) Bill. The Committee will also be briefed by the Ulster Orchestra on the impact of Covid-19 on the Arts Sector.

16. Any Other Business

17. Date, Time and Place of the Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on Thursday 12 November at 10:00 a.m. in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting adjourned at 12.35 p.m.

Ms Paula Bradley MLA
Chairperson, Committee for Communities