



Northern Ireland Assembly

COMMITTEE FOR COMMUNITIES

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Thursday 13 October 2016
Room 29 Parliament Buildings

Present: Colum Eastwood MLA (Chairperson)
Michelle Gildernew MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Andy Allen MLA
Nichola Mallon MLA
Fra McCann MLA
Adrian McQuillan MLA
Carál Ni Chuilín MLA
Christopher Stalford MLA

In Attendance: Kevin Pelan (Assembly Clerk)
Ashleigh Mitford (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Stewart Kennedy (Clerical Supervisor)
Ciarán Brannigan (Clerical Officer)

Apologies: Steven Agnew MLA

The meeting commenced in open session at 10:12 am

The Chairperson declared an interest the agenda items 4-8: the Licensing and Registration of Clubs (Amendment) Bill. The Chairperson has family interests in licensed premises.

1. Apologies

Apologies are recorded above

2. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The draft minutes of the meeting of 6 October 2016 were agreed.

3. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson updated the Committee on a meeting he and the Deputy Chairperson had with Comhaltas last week and encouraged members to support the launch of its 5-year plan which is provisionally scheduled to take place in the Long Gallery on 13 February 2016.

4. Matters Arising

The Chairperson reminded members that at its meeting on 6 October, the Committee had expressed significant concerns around the engagement with Committees in the budget process. The Committee had agreed that the Clerk request a copy of the papers submitted by the Department for Communities to the Department of Finance in relation to the October Monitoring Round and Budget. The Committee noted that, while a short paper on the October Monitoring Round had been provided that morning, a paper on the budget had not been provided by the Department as requested.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department in relation to the timeliness and adequacy of the paper supplied.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to return to the October Monitoring Round paper next week

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The Committee noted the Examiner of Statutory Rules' Report. The Examiner has drawn the attention of the Committee for Communities and the Assembly to the S.R. 2016/333, The Domestic Energy Efficiency Grants (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 (the Regulations), on the ground that they were laid in breach of the 21-day rule. The Examiner is content that the Department has provided a satisfactory explanation for the breach in this instance.

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The Committee noted a briefing paper from the Assembly's Research and Information Service on Diversity and Public Appointments in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to return to the subject when the Permanent Secretary for the Department for Communities has responded to the Committee's correspondence of 23 September 2016.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the Department a copy of correspondence from the Committee for the Executive Office on the same subject.

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Christopher Stalford left the meeting at 10:25

The Committee noted correspondence from the Treasury Select Committee regarding the decision by HMRC not to renew the Concentrix tax credit contract in 2017. The Treasury Committee has responded positively to the Committee for Communities' concerns.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite Senior Officials from HMRC to provide it with a briefing on the issue.

Christopher Stalford joined the meeting at 10:30

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The Committee noted that it will be asked to consider and agree a motion to extend the Committee Stage of the Licensing and Registration of Clubs (Amendment) Bill at its meeting on 20 October 2016, in order that it may carry out sufficient scrutiny, agree any amendments it wishes to table and agree its Report on its Consideration of the Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a closed session with the Bill Office and a briefing from the Department in order to inform its consideration of a motion to extend Committee Stage on 20 October 2016.

The Committee noted a briefing paper from the Clerk in relation to Clause 13 of the Bill – Code of Practice.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek clarity on a number of issues related to Clause 13 from the Department.

The Committee noted a report provided by Hospitality Ulster *Pilot Review with the Hospitality Sector*.

5. Licensing and Registration of Clubs (Amendment) Bill – Evidence Session with NI Hotels Federation

The Chairperson Tourism NI were scheduled to brief the Committee however had advised the committee office yesterday that they were not in a position to provide a briefing today.

Michelle Gildernew joined the meeting at 10:32

The committee noted a written submission from NI Hotels Federation.

The following witnesses joined the meeting at 10:33

- Janice Gault, Chief Executive;
- Ciaran O'Neill, President;
- Linus Murray, (O'Reilly Stewart Solicitors)

The witnesses briefed the committee and this was followed by questions from members.

The witnesses left the meeting at 10:52

The session was recorded by Hansard

6. Licensing and Registration of Clubs (Amendment) Bill – Evidence Session with Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association

The committee noted a written submission.

The following witness joined the meeting at 10:53

- Glyn Roberts, Chief Executive

The witness briefed the committee and this was followed by questions from members.

The witness left the meeting at 11.09

The session was recorded by Hansard

7. Licensing and Registration of Clubs (Amendment) Bill – Evidence Session with Drumbo Park Greyhound Stadium

The committee noted a written submission.

The following witnesses joined the meeting at 11:10 am

- Michael McAdam, Director, Drumbo Park Ltd
- Linus Murray, Partner, O'Reilly Stewart Solicitors

The witnesses briefed the committee and this was followed by questions from members

The witnesses left the meeting at 11:25am

The session was recorded by Hansard

8. Draft Statutory Rule - The Welfare Supplementary Payment (Benefit Cap) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016

The Committee noted the Draft Statutory Rule and correspondence from the Department.

Agreed: Members were content with the Department's rationale for not having completed a full EQIA in respect of the Regulations.

The Chairperson advised the Committee that the Examiner of Statutory Rules has not yet reported on the Rule and as such the Committee would be asked to agree it subject to the Examiner's Report.

Question put and agreed:

That the Committee for Communities has considered the Draft Statutory Rule The Welfare Supplementary Payment (Benefit Cap) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 and subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules' report, recommends that it be affirmed by the Assembly

9. Correspondence

The Committee noted a correspondence memo and tabled correspondence.

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

The Committee noted tabled correspondence from Mencap inviting members to attend the APG on 18 October 2016. The Deputy Chair indicated that she will be attending the event.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Clerk provide a note for the Deputy Chair in relation to the Committee's Forward Work Programme.

10. Licensing and Registration of Clubs (Amendment) Bill – Evidence Session with NI Federation of Clubs

Fra McCann and Colum Eastwood declared interests as members of registered clubs.

The committee noted a written submission.

The following witnesses joined the meeting at 11:30 am

- John Davidson, Chairperson
- Lawrence Shearer, Chartered Accountant
- Jim Cullen, Golfing Secretary/Managers Association
- David Larmour, Treasurer
- Richard Johnson, NI Sports Forum

Adrian McQuillan left the meeting at 11:40 am

The witnesses briefed the committee and this was followed by questions from members.

The witnesses left the meeting at 11:54 am

The session was recorded by Hansard

The meeting suspended at 11:55am

The meeting resumed at 12:40 pm with the following members present

Colum Eastwood MLA (Chairperson)

Michelle Gildernew MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Andy Allen MLA

Fra McCann MLA

Adrian McQuillan MLA

Carál Ni Chuilín MLA

Christopher Stalford MLA

11. Planning for the Reclassification of Housing Associations -Departmental Briefing

The committee noted a written submission.

The following departmental officials joined the meeting at 12:40 pm

- Andrew Hamilton, Deputy Secretary
- Shane Clements, Social Housing Reform Programme, Policy Project Manager.

The officials briefed the committee and this was followed by questions from members.

The officials left the meeting at 1:05 pm

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek information from the Department in relation to the SIB project on land that is available for social housing.

12. Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted its draft Forward Work programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed its Forward Work Programme as amended.

13. AOB

The Committee agreed that staff should explore the possibility of hosting a reception for Olympians and Paralympians in Parliament Buildings to celebrate their success at the 2016 games.

14. Date, time and location of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee for Communities will take place on Thursday 20 October 2016 at 10.00 am in room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 1:07pm

Chairperson, Committee for Communities

23 January 2017