



Northern Ireland Assembly

COMMITTEE FOR COMMUNITIES

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Thursday 17 November 2016
Room 29 Parliament Buildings

- Present: Colum Eastwood MLA (Chairperson)
Steven Agnew MLA
Andy Allen MLA
Jonathan Bell MLA
Naomi Long MLA
Nichola Mallon MLA
Fra McCann MLA
Adrian McQuillan MLA
Carál Ní Chuilín MLA
Christopher Stalford MLA
- In Attendance: Kevin Pelan (Assembly Clerk)
Ashleigh Mitford (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Stewart Kennedy (Clerical Supervisor)
Alison Ferguson (Clerical Officer)
- Apologies: Michelle Gildernew MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

The meeting commenced in open session at 10:10 am

The Chairperson declared an interest in agenda items related to the Licensing and Registration of Clubs (Amendment) Bill given family interests in licensed premises.

1. Apologies

Apologies are recorded above

2. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The draft minutes of the meeting of 10 November 2016 were agreed as amended to fully set out the Committee's discussion around its Report on the Savings (Government Contributions) Bill - Legislative Consent Memorandum.

3. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson advised members that he has agreed to speak at a Building Change Trust event on the Independence of the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector in the Long Gallery on 28 November 2016.

The Committee noted that the Chief Officers 3rd Sector (CO3) have invited the Chair to attend their Gala Awards Dinner on Thursday 24 February 2016. As the Chair cannot attend the invitation has been extended to the Deputy Chair.

The Chairperson updated the Committee on the meeting he and the Deputy Chair had with Pobal after the Committee meeting of 10 November 2016.

4. Matters Arising

The Chairperson reminded members that the Committee considered correspondence from NIPSA at its meeting on 10 November, requesting an opportunity to brief the Committee on issues related to housing. The Chairperson further advised members that the Department has requested a copy of the letter.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the requested correspondence to the Department.

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The Committee noted a tabled email from HMRC in relation to the Committee's invitation to brief it on its decision not to renew the Concentrix Tax Credits contract in 2017.

Agreed: The Committee was content to note at this interim correspondence, noting that a formal response will be issued by HMRC.

5. Licensing and Registration of Clubs (Amendment) Bill – Evidence Session with Food NI, CAMRA, Lacada Brewery and Armagh Cider Company

Stephen Agnew and Adrian McQuillan joined the meeting at 10:12 am

The Committee noted written submissions and a memo from the Clerk.

The following witnesses joined the meeting at 10:12 am

- Ms Michele Shirlow, Chief Executive, Food NI
- Mr Tim Page, Chief Executive, CAMRA
- Mr Laurie Davies, Head Brewer and Director, Lacada Brewery Ltd
- Ms Helen Troughton, Brewer, Armagh Cider Company

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

The Committee expressed its support for the need for liquor licensing legislation to be brought up to date to meet the needs of this important, fast-growing sector.

The witnesses left the meeting at 10:48am

The session was recorded by Hansard

6. Licensing and Registration of Clubs (Amendment) Bill – Evidence Session with NI Drinks Industry Group

The Committee noted a written submission and a briefing paper from the Clerk.

The following witness joined the meeting at 10:49 am

- Ms Nicola Carruthers, Representative, NI Drinks Industry Group

Christopher Stalford joined the meeting at 10:53 am

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

Adrian McQuillan left the meeting at 11:05 am

The witness left the meeting at 11:06 am

The session was recorded by Hansard

7. Licensing and Registration of Clubs (Amendment) Bill – Evidence Session with the Institute of Licensing

The Committee noted a written submission and a briefing paper from the Clerk.

The following witness joined the meeting at 11:06 am

- Mr David Brown, Vice Chairman of the Northern Ireland Region, Institute of Licensing

Naomi Long joined the meeting at 11:16 am

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

The witness left the meeting at 11:25 am

The session was recorded by Hansard

8. SR 393 - The Social Security (Great Britain Reciprocal Arrangements) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016

The Committee noted the SR.

While there were no objections raised, one member drew the Committee's attention to what seemed to be an inconsistency between SR 393 and another set of Regulations in respect of absence from NI.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek clarity on this issue from the officials dealing with The Housing Benefit and State Pension Credit (Temporary Absence) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 when they come to brief the Committee in December.

Question Put and Agreed

“That the Committee for Communities has considered the Statutory Rule SR393/2016 The Social Security (Great Britain Reciprocal Arrangements)(Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 and has no objection to the Rule.”

9. SR 394 The Public Use of the Records (Management and Fees) Rules (NI) 2016

Carál Ní Chuilín declared an interest having brought forward the SL1 as a former Minister.

Members noted the SR is not subject to any Assembly procedure.

Agreed: Members were content to note the SR.

10. Correspondence

The Committee noted a correspondence memo and tabled correspondence.

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

Members noted a tabled response from the Department to its correspondence of 3 October 2017 in relation to the Licensing and Registration of Clubs (Amendment) Bill. The correspondence deals specifically with background information on the Surrender Principle and with micro-breweries.

The Committee noted that the annexes referred to in the document are lengthy and have been provided to the Committee Office in hard copy only at this stage.

Agreed: The Committee was content to note the correspondence and return to it when discussing issues related to the Bill with the Department next week.

11. Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted its draft Forward Work Programme.

Members noted that the session on The Housing Benefit and State Pension Credit (Temporary Absence) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 will need to be scheduled for 1 December 2016 and not 24 November as provisionally indicated.

Agreed: The Committee agreed its Forward Work Programme as amended

12. AOB

One member advised the Committee of a conference on the Private Rented Sector to be held on 23 November. As the Committee identified regulation of the private rented sector as a key strategic priority, it was agreed it would be beneficial for members to attend if possible. Committee officials agreed to seek information on this event and advise members accordingly.

13. Date, time and location of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee for Communities will take place on Thursday 24 November 2016 at 10.00 am in room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 11:29 am

Chairperson, Committee for Communities

24 November 2016