



Northern Ireland Assembly

COMMITTEE FOR COMMUNITIES

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Thursday 23 June 2016
Room 29 Parliament Buildings

Present: Steven Agnew MLA
Jonathan Bell MLA
Naomi Long MLA
Nichola Mallon MLA
Fra McCann MLA
Christopher Stalford MLA

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

Apologies: Colum Eastwood MLA (Chairperson)
Michelle Gildernew MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Andy Allen MLA
Adrian McQuillan MLA
Carol Ní Chuilín MLA

The meeting commenced in open session at 10.13am

The Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson were absent and the Committee Clerk was in the chair.

Fra McCann moved that Nichola Mallon do take the Chair of the Committee.

Jonathan Bell seconded the motion.

There were no further nominations and Nichola Mallon took the chair at 10.14 am.

Christopher Stalford joined the meeting at 10.15 am

Nichola Mallon and Jonathan Bell both declared interests as landlords.

1. Apologies

Apologies are recorded above.

2. Draft Minutes

The draft minutes of the meeting of 16 June 2016 were agreed.

3. Chairperson's Business

The chairperson advised members that each briefing would need to be restricted to 30 minutes due to a busy agenda.

4. Matters Arising

The committee agreed to consider **The Landlord Registration Scheme (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016** under Matters Arising in case quorum was lost later in the meeting.

There were no objections to the Rule.

Question put and agreed:

“That the Committee for Communities has considered the Statutory Rule The Landlord Registration Scheme (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 and subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules’ report, recommends that it be affirmed by the Assembly”

The Committee considered a draft letter to The Executive Office regarding the imbalances in appointments to Public Bodies.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to issue the letter to The Executive Office.

5. Strategic Policy and Resources – Briefing by the Deputy Secretary

The committee noted a memo from the Clerk.

The following departmental officials joined the meeting at 10.19 am:

- Andrew Hamilton, Deputy Secretary for Strategic Policy and Resources
- Deborah Brown, Director of Financial Management
- Gillian Morton, Temporary Director of Financial & Commercial Services

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

The Committee noted that the Department will be in a position to provide a briefing on its Programme for Government Action Plan at a meeting in early September.

Stephen Agnew left the meeting at 10.45 am

The officials left the meeting at 10.46 am

6. Social Inclusion – Briefing by the Deputy Secretary

The committee noted a memo from the Clerk.

The following departmental officials joined the meeting at 10.46 am:

- Denis McMahon, Deputy Secretary for Social Inclusion
- David Malcolm, Temporary Director of Inclusion and Social Change
- John McKervill, Director of Pensions, Disability & Corporate Services
- Aidan Cassidy, Temporary Director of Social Inclusion, Transition & Planning.

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

The officials left the meeting at 11.16 am

7. Working Age – Briefing by the Deputy Secretary

The committee noted a memo from the Clerk and a briefing paper from the Department.

The following departmental officials joined the meeting at 11.17 am:

- Tommy O'Reilly, Deputy Secretary for Working Age
- David Sales, Director, Universal Credit
- Geraldine Brereton, Assistant Director, Central Benefits
- Jane Corderoy, SSPLD.

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

Christopher Stalford left the meeting at 11.21am and the meeting became inquorate.

Christopher Stalford re-joined the meeting at 11.27 am and the meeting became quorate.

Stephen Agnew joined the meeting at 11.32 am

The officials left the meeting at 11.52 am

Agreed: Members agreed to re-order the agenda to take the briefing on the Savills Report before the briefing on the Social Housing Reform Programme.

8. Savills Report – Departmental Briefing

The committee noted a briefing paper from the Department.

The following departmental officials joined the meeting at 11.54 am:

- Jim Wilkinson, Director, Housing
- Paul Price, Programme Manager
- Ronan O'Hara, Programme Asset Management Advisor
- Paul Isherwood, Director of Asset Management, NIHE

The officials briefed the committee on the Savills Asset Commission.

The briefing was followed by questions from members.

Ronan O'Hara and Paul Isherwood left the meeting at 12.17 pm

9. Social Housing Reform Programme – Departmental Briefing

The committee noted a briefing paper from the Department.

The following departmental officials joined Jim Wilkinson and Paul Price at the table at 12:17 pm:

- Grace McGuinness, Structures Project Manager
- Heloise Brown, Rent Project Manager

The officials briefed the committee on the Social Housing Reform Programme.

The briefing was followed by questions from members.

Agreed: Officials would provide schedules and timetables regarding 4 planned stock transfers.

Christopher Stalford left the meeting at 12.34 pm

The officials left the meeting at 12.35 pm

—

The Chairperson suspended the meeting at 12.36 pm

The Committee reconvened at 1.00 pm with the following members present:

Nichola Mallon (in the Chair)

Steven Agnew, Jonathan Bell, Naomi Long and Fra McCann.

—

10. Homelessness Briefing

The committee noted a briefing paper from the Department.

The chairperson reminded members that the Simon Community is holding an event on homelessness in Parliament Buildings on Thursday 30 June 2016.

The following officials and representatives joined the meeting at 1.00 pm:

- Stephen Martin, Deputy Director, Housing

- Liam Kinney, Homelessness Services Manager, NIHE
- Ricky Rowledge OBE, Chief Executive, CHNI
- Sandra Moore, Director of Homelessness Services, Welcome Organisation
- Kerry Anthony, Chief Executive, Depaul Ireland

The officials and representatives briefed the committee on homelessness.

The briefing was followed by questions from members.

Agreed: The committee agreed to seek information in relation to tenancy fraud.

The officials and representatives left the meeting at 2.10 pm

Agreed: The committee agreed to follow up the concerns raised by witnesses regarding the effectiveness of representation on the Homelessness Strategy Steering Group.

Agreed: The committee agreed to follow up on issues discussed regarding cross-departmental working on homelessness with other Statutory Committees.

11. Correspondence

The committee noted the correspondence memo.

The committee noted a letter from the Minister accepting the committee's invitation to provide a briefing on his priorities at its meeting on 30 June 2016.

The committee noted a number of responses in relation to the recommendations contained in the 2011-16 Legacy Reports and agreed to consider these at the Committee Strategic Planning Day in September.

The committee noted an invitation to the Chair and Deputy Chair to meet with the Chief Executive of the Commissioner for Older People NI.

Agreed: The committee agreed that the Clerk bring the letter to the attention of the Chair and Deputy Chair but noted that any meeting with stakeholders would be most beneficial once the committee has agreed its strategic priorities in September.

Agreed: The committee agreed to action all other correspondence as outlined on the correspondence memo.

12. Forward Work Programme

Agreed: The committee agreed the draft Forward Work Programme.

Agreed: The committee agreed that its meeting on 30 June 2016 will begin at 9.45 am so members may attend an event being run by the Simon Community in Parliament Buildings.

13. AOB

No items were raised

14. Date, time and location of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee for Communities will take place on Thursday 30 June 2016 at 9.45am in room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 2.15 pm

Nichola Mallon MLA

(elected) Chairperson, Committee for Communities

30 June 2016