



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

TUESDAY, 4 FEBRUARY 2014

ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Ms Anna Lo MLA (Chairperson)
Mrs Pam Cameron MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Cathal Boylan MLA
Mr Colum Eastwood MLA
Mr Tom Elliott MLA
Mr Alban Maginness MLA
Mr Ian McCrea MLA
Mr Barry McElduff MLA
Mr Ian Milne MLA
Lord Morrow MLA
Mr Peter Weir MLA

In Attendance: Mrs Sheila Mawhinney (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Sean McCann (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Neil Sedgewick (Clerical Supervisor)
Ms Antoinette Bowen (Clerical Officer)
Ms Éilis Haughey (Assembly Bill Clerk)

Apologies: No apologies were received.

The meeting commenced in public session at 12:38pm

1. Apologies

Apologies were indicated as above.

Mr Maginness joined the meeting at 12:39pm

Lord Morrow and Mr Weir joined the meeting at 12:40pm

2. Informal clause by clause consideration of the Local Government Bill

Linda MacHugh (Director, Local Government Policy Division), Julie Broadway (G7 Local Government Policy Division) John Murphy (Local Government Policy Division) and Mylene Ferguson (Local Government Policy Division) were in attendance to discuss outstanding issues in relation to the Local Government Bill.

Clause 46: Admission to meetings of councils

Agreed: The Committee was broadly content with this clause.

Clause 47: Access to agenda and connected reports

Agreed: The Committee was broadly content with this clause.

Clause 48: Inspection of minutes and other documents after meetings

Agreed: The Committee was broadly content with this clause.

Clause 49: Inspection of background papers

Agreed: The Committee was broadly content with this clause.

Clause 50: Application to committees and sub-committees

Agreed: The Committee was broadly content with this clause.

Clause 51: Additional rights of access to documents for members of councils

Agreed: The Committee agreed that Departmental officials would provide the wording of a technical amendment to Clause 51(5) changing the resolution of regulations from negative to draft affirmative.

Clause 52: Councils to publish additional information

Agreed: The Committee was broadly content with this clause.

Clause 53: Supplemental to provisions and offences

Agreed: The Committee was broadly content with this clause.

Clause 54: Exempt information and power to vary Schedule 8

Agreed: The Committee agreed that Departmental officials would provide the wording of a technical amendment to Clause 54(2) changing the resolution of regulations from negative to draft affirmative.

Clause 55: Interpretation and application of this Part

Agreed: The Committee was broadly content with this clause.

Mr Maginness left the meeting at 12:59pm.

Mr Milne joined the meeting at 12:59pm.

Clause 56: Code of conduct

Agreed: The Committee was broadly content with this clause.

Clause 57: Guidance

Agreed: The Committee was broadly content with this clause.

Clause 58: Investigations

Agreed: The Committee agreed that Departmental officials would provide the wording of a technical amendment to Clause 58 to deal with the issue of minor complaints.

Agreed: The Committee further agreed to seek assurance from the Minister that the role of the Commissioner will be reviewed in 3-4 years, as previously indicated by his predecessor.

Clause 59: Investigations: further provisions

Agreed: The Committee was broadly content with this clause.

Clause 60: Reports, etc.

Mr Elliott left the meeting at 13:18pm.

Agreed: The Committee was content for Departmental officials to raise the possibility of a moratorium on complaints raised immediately prior to an election with the Minister for consideration.

Clause 61: Interim reports

Agreed: The Committee was broadly content with this clause.

Clause 62: Decision following report

Agreed: The Committee was content for Departmental officials to raise the issue of a right of appeal to the High Court with the Minister for consideration.

Clause 63: Decisions on interim reports

Agreed: The Committee was broadly content with this clause.

Clause 64: Recommendations

Agreed: The Committee was broadly content with this clause.

Clause 65: Disclosure and registration of councillors' interests etc.

Agreed: The Committee was broadly content with this clause.

Clause 66: Extension of 1996 Order

Agreed: The Committee was broadly content with this clause.

Clause 67: Expenditure of Commissioner under this Act

Agreed: The Committee was content for Departmental officials to raise with the Minister the issue of how the Commissioner of Complaints is to be funded.

Clause 68: Interpretation

Agreed: The Committee agreed that Departmental officials would provide the wording of a technical amendment to Clause 68 to clarify the position of a councillor who has been disqualified from the council and its committees/sub-committees, but continues to represent the council on outside bodies.

Clause 69: Community Planning

Mr Eastwood left the meeting at 13:57pm

Lord Morrow left the meeting at 13:57pm

Mr Milne left the meeting at 13:58pm

Agreed: Deferred for further consideration.

The briefing was recorded by Hansard.

3. Any Other Business

No business was discussed.

4. Date, time and place of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 6th February 2014 at 10:00am in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 13:59pm

Anna Lo, MLA

Chairperson, Committee for the Environment

13 February 2014