



# Northern Ireland Assembly

## COMMITTEE FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

### MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**Thursday 04 February 2016**  
**Room 21, Parliament Buildings**

- Present: Mr Alex Maskey MLA (Chairperson)  
Mr Fra McCann MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Jim Allister MLA  
Mr Roy Beggs MLA  
Ms Paula Bradley MLA  
Mr Gregory Campbell MLA  
Mr Stewart Dickson MLA  
Mr Sammy Douglas MLA  
Mr Phil Flanagan MLA  
Mr Adrian McQuillan MLA
- In Attendance: Dr Kevin Pelan (Assembly Clerk)  
Mrs Ashleigh Mitford (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Stewart Kennedy (Clerical Supervisor)  
Ms Alicia Muldoon (Clerical Officer)
- Apologies: Mrs Dolores Kelly MLA

The meeting commenced in open session at 10.01 a.m.

#### **1. Apologies**

Apologies were noted as above.

#### **2. Draft Minutes**

*The Committee noted a required amendment to the minutes to reflect that Roy Beggs declared an interest as a non-playing member of Larne Rugby Club.*

*Agreed:* The draft minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2016 were agreed as amended.

### **3. Chairperson's Business**

The Chair reminded members that there have been some changes to the running order of the agenda today.

The Chair advised members Consul General of the People's Republic of China in Belfast and the Chinese Welfare Association NI have invited him to attend the Grand Chinese New Year Showcase 2016 in Belfast on 21 February 2016.

### **4. Matters Arising**

The Chair reminded members that the Committee has agreed to meet informally with the Social Security Advisory Committee during their visit here next week. The meeting has been scheduled for 10 am – on 10<sup>th</sup> February in room 106.

*Adrian McQuillan joined the meeting at 10.03 am*

*Agreed:* Members agreed to indicate their availability to the Committee Office to attend the meeting.

The Committee noted an extract of the Examiner of Statutory Rules Report with respect to SR6/2016 - The Housing Benefit (Executive Determinations) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016.

### **5. Houses in Multiple Occupation Bill – Committee Report**

Members noted correspondence and an updated Delegated Powers Memorandum in relation to the bill. Members noted that the Examiner of Statutory Rules has informally indicated that the revisions seem in order and that this will be followed up formally before Consideration Stage of the bill.

Members noted the second draft Report in relation to the bill.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed its cover page, powers and membership and table of contents of the Report.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the Introduction of the Report.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the Consideration section of the Report.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the Clause-by-Clause Scrutiny section on the Report.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the Links to Appendices page of the Report.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the Executive Summary and Recommendations of the Report.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the Report be the fifteenth Report of the Committee for Social Development.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to order the Report to be printed.

*Gregory Campbell joined the meeting at 10.15 am.*

**6. SL1 The Social Security Revaluation of Earnings Factors Order (Northern Ireland) 2016**

*Agreed:* The Committee was content for the rule to be made.

**7. SL1 The Pensions (2015 Act) (Abolition of Contracting-Out For Salary Related Pension Schemes) (Consequential Amendments) Order (NI) 2016**

*Agreed:* The Committee was content for the rule to be made.

**8. SL1 The Pension Protection Fund and Occupational Pension Schemes (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations (NI) 2016**

*Agreed:* The Committee was content for the rule to be made.

**9. SR 25 The Pensions (2015 Act) (Consequential Supplementary and Incidental Amendments) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016**

The Committee had no objections to the rule.

The Chairperson read the following motion into the record:

*“That the Committee for Social Development has considered the Statutory Rule SR 25/2016 The Pensions (2015 Act) (Consequential, Supplementary and Incidental Amendments) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016 and subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules report, has no objections to the Rule.”*

**10. Welfare Reform Mitigations – Presentation by Working Group lead by Eileen Evason**

The following witnesses joined the meeting 10.16 am

- Prof Eileen Evason BA, MSSC, CBE, Lead Member, Mitigations Working Group
- Mr Barry McVeigh BA (Hons), Independent Member, Mitigations Working Group
- Ms Lisa McElherron, Independent Member, Mitigations Working Group
- Mr Kevin Higgins, Independent Member, Mitigations Working Group

Members noted the report of the Working Group.

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

*Agreed:* Eileen Evason agreed to provide the Committee with a checklist to assist it in the monitoring of the implementation of the mitigation measures.

The witnesses left the meeting at 10.59 am

*The session was recorded by Hansard.*

## **11. Budget Setting 2016/2017 – Departmental Briefing**

*Alex Maskey left the meeting at 11.00 am and Fra McCann took the Chair.*

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting 11.00 am

- Ian Snowden, Acting Deputy Secretary, Resources and Social Policy Group, DSD
- Deborah Brown, Director of Financial Management, DSD
- Joyce Bill, Director of Finance, Social Security Agency
- Paul Killen, Analytical Services Unit, DSD

The Committee noted a briefing paper from the Department and other items related to the briefing.

*Paula Bradley joined the meeting at 11.04 am*

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

The Departmental officials left the meeting at 11.34 am

*The session was recorded by Hansard.*

## **12. The Charities Act 2008 (Designated Religious Charities) Order (NI) 2016 – Joint Evidence Session with Church Organisations**

The following witnesses joined the meeting 11.35 am

- Rev Trevor Gribben, Clerk of the General Assembly & General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (also Joint Secretary to the Church Leaders Group (Ireland)).
- Fr Timothy Bartlett, representing the Catholic Church
- Mr Stephen Gowdy, General Assembly Solicitor, Presbyterian Church in Ireland

*Roy Beggs declared an interest as a Committee member in the Presbyterian Church.*

*Stewart Dickson declared an interest as an Elder in the Presbyterian Church.*

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

*Sammy Douglas joined the meeting at 11.50 am.*

The witnesses left the meeting at 12.25pm

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to consider today's evidence further and return to this item of business at its meeting on 12 February 2016.

*Agreed:* The Committee noted that Designated Religious Charities in Scotland are exempt from legislative provisions that are equivalent to Clause 86 of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008. The Committee agreed to seek information on how this exemption is working in practice.

*The session was recorded by Hansard.*

*The meeting was briefly suspended at 12.26pm*

*The meeting resumed at 12.30pm with the following members present: Fra McCann, Roy Beggs, Stewart Dickson, Sammy Douglas, Adrian McQuillan*

### **13. Social Housing Enterprise Strategy – NIHE Briefing**

The following officials joined the meeting 12.30 pm

- Gerry Flynn – Director of Landlord Services, NIHE
- Jennifer Hawthorne – Head of Income & Communities

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

*Paula Bradley and Jim Allister joined the meeting at 12.40 pm*

The officials left the meeting at .001 pm

### **14. Licensing Bill – Committee Consideration**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to schedule a meeting on Tuesday 9 February at 9.30am to consider the Licensing Bill due to time constraints today.

*The session was recorded by Hansard.*

### **15. Correspondence**

The Committee noted a correspondence memo.

*Sammy Douglas left the meeting at 1.05 pm.*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note correspondence related to an update on the Northside Regeneration Project.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to action all correspondence as outlined on the correspondence memo.

### **16. Forward Work Programme**

*Adrian McQuillan left the meeting at 1.07 pm*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to not to proceed with its ½ day seminar on Social Housing Structures due to pressures of other business but to recommend that this be taken forward by the new Committee for Communities.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed its Forward Work Programme.

#### **17. AOB**

No items were raised.

#### **18. Date, time and place of next meeting**

The next meeting of the Committee for Social Development will take place on Tuesday 9 February 2016 at 9.30am (room tbc)

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 1.10 p.m.

**Alex Maskey**

**Chairperson, Committee for Social Development**

**11 February 2016**