



**Northern Ireland  
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL  
AFFAIRS**

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

**THURSDAY, 15 SEPTEMBER 2016**

**ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Ms Linda Dillon MLA (Chairperson)  
Ms Caoimhe Archibald MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Sydney Anderson MLA  
Mr Maurice Bradley MLA  
Mr David Ford MLA  
Mr William Irwin MLA  
Mr Patsy McGlone MLA  
Mr Harold McKee MLA  
Mr Oliver McMullan MLA  
Mr Edwin Poots MLA  
Mr Robin Swann MLA

In Attendance: Mrs Stella McArdle (Assembly Clerk)  
Miss Ciara McKay (Assistant Clerk)  
Mr Oliver Bellew (Clerical Supervisor)  
Ms Marion Johnson (Clerical Officer)

Apologies: None

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to open in public session at 9.54 a.m.  
following the arrival of the Minister.

The meeting opened in public session at 9.54 a.m.

**1. Apologies**

There were no apologies.

## **2. Oral briefing from the Minister on Strategic Priorities**

**9.56 a.m.** The Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Miss McMillveen, and her officials, as listed below, joined the meeting:

Mr Noel Lavery, Permanent Secretary; and

Mr Norman Fulton, Head of Food and Farming Group.

The Minister and her officials briefed the Committee on the strategic priorities of the Department.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to request: a more detailed oral briefing on Climate Change and the potential for a climate change bill; further information on the commissioning of £7m for research with AFBI and local universities; a date for a future Ministerial briefing on Brexit; and clarification around the Rural Basic Services application process in relation to the types of organisation that can apply.

**11.06 a.m.** Mr Edwin Poots left the meeting.

**11.07 a.m.** The Minister and her officials left the meeting.

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

There was no Chairperson's business.

## **4. Draft Minutes**

*Agreed:* The draft minutes of the meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2016 were agreed.

## **5. Matters Arising**

The Committee noted an update from the Department on the Killeel Harbour Infrastructure project.

The Committee noted the Third Report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules.

The Committee noted the details and dates of forthcoming RaISE briefings.

## **6. Oral briefing from DAERA – Overview of Central Services and Rural Affairs Group**

**11.09 a.m.** The following officials joined the meeting:

Ms Louise Warde Hunter, Head of Central Services and Rural Affairs Group;

Mr Graeme Wilkinson, Finance Director;

Ms Tracey Teague, DHR and Corporate Services Division; and

Ms Catherine McCallum, Rural Affairs Division.

The officials briefed the Committee on the functions of the Group.

**11.14 a.m.** Mr Edwin Poots re-joined the meeting.

**11.18 a.m.** Mr Robin Swann left the meeting.

*Agreed:* Officials agreed to provide an oral update to the Committee on the Department's Headquarters relocation programme.

**11.37 a.m.** Mr Robin Swann re-joined the meeting.

*Agreed:* Officials agreed to clarify whether match funding is a pre-application criterion for LAGS funding.

**11.45 a.m.** Mr Patsy McGlone left the meeting.

**11.56 a.m.** Mr Oliver McMullan left the meeting.

**11.59 a.m.** Ms Caoimhe Archibald left the meeting.

**12.03 p.m.** The following official joined the meeting:

Mr Paul McGurnaghan, ICT, Central Services and Rural Affairs Group.

**12.09 p.m.** Mr Sydney Anderson left the meeting.

**12.09 p.m.** Mr Edwin Poots left the meeting.

**12.17 p.m.** The officials left the meeting.

## **7. Written briefing from RaISe – EU Referendum Update**

The Committee noted a written briefing on an EU Referendum Update by Assembly Research and Information Services.

## **8. Written briefing DAERA – Update on Area Based Schemes**

The Committee noted a written briefing by the Department in relation to area based schemes.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to schedule an oral briefing, following the deadline of advance payments.

## **9. The draft Environmental Better Regulation (2016 Act) (Commencement No.2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016**

The Committee noted the draft Environmental Better Regulation (2016 Act) (Commencement No. 2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016.

## **10. SL1 The Rathlin Island (Prohibition of Fishing Methods) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016**

The Committee considered the proposed statutory rule: The Rathlin Island (Prohibition of Fishing Methods) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that it was content that the Department proceed to make the statutory rule.

## **11. Correspondence**

The Committee noted correspondence from the EU Debate NI/Centre for Democracy and Peace Building in relation to Establishing the Best Outcome for Northern Ireland.

The Committee noted an invitation to the Attorney General's Colloquium – 'Getting Legislation Right: Improving the Process'.

The Committee noted an invitation to the NI Environment Week Conference on 30<sup>th</sup> September at the Belfast Harbour Commissioner's Office.

The Committee noted correspondence relating to the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board's Annual Report and Accounts.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department in relation to the EU Commission Farm Support Package July 2016.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department to: ascertain how this information has been disseminated to farmers; and request updates on the development and roll out of this programme to local farmers.

The Committee noted correspondence from 'Planet Earth' regarding micro beads.

## **12. Forward Work Programme**

The Committee agreed its Forward Work Programme.

**12.24 p.m.** Mr Edwin Poots re-joined the meeting.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to discuss how it might address illegal dumping and waste crime at its Strategic Planning Day.

The Committee took receipt of the embargoed report from RSBP on State of Nature 2016: Northern Ireland. The Committee took no formal position on the report but noted that it might be formally launched at the launch of Northern Ireland Environment Week.

The Committee noted the draft Press Release from Northern Ireland Environment Link regarding Northern Ireland Environment Week.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the draft quote provided by the Chair should be included in NIEL's press release.

The Committee considered a request from NIEL that the Committee pay for refreshments as part of Northern Ireland Environment Week. Reservations were expressed by Members of the Committee regarding the precedent that this might set.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to pay for lunch time refreshments as part of Northern Ireland Environment Week as it has sponsored the event, on the condition that this is a one-off goodwill gesture.

Mr Edwin Poots expressed concern about the Committee paying for refreshments. The Committee agreed to formally record his concerns.

**13. Any other business**

There was no other business.

**14. Date, time and place of next meeting**

The Committee noted that its next meeting will be held at 10.00 a.m. on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2016 in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

**12.37 p.m.** The Chairperson adjourned the meeting.

**Linda Dillon MLA**

Chairperson, Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs  
22<sup>nd</sup> September 2016