



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

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

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

THURSDAY, 30 JUNE 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 Jim Nulty (Clerical Supervisor)
Ms Andrienne Magee (Clerical Officer)

Apologies: None

10.06 a.m. The meeting opened in public session.

1. Apologies.

The apologies are noted above.

2. Chairperson's Business

The Committee considered arrangements for dealing with Freedom of Information requests during the summer recess period.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to delegate authority to the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson to submit views on the releasing and/or withholding of the information in any non-routine/contentious Freedom of Information requests received, during the recess period.

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The draft minutes of 16th June 2016 were agreed.

4. Oral briefing – Ulster Farmers’ Union and Northern Ireland Agricultural Producers’ Association on Initial Views on Brexit

10.08 a.m. The following witnesses joined the meeting:

Mr Barclay Bell, President, Ulster Farmers’ Union;

Mr Wesley Aston, Chief Executive, Ulster Farmers’ Union; and

Mr Victor Chestnutt, Ulster Farmers’ Union.

10.22 a.m. The following witnesses joined the meeting:

Mr Michael Clarke, Chairman, Northern Ireland Agricultural Producers’ Association; and

Mr Jim Carmichael, Development Officer, Northern Ireland Agricultural Producers’ Association.

The witnesses updated the Committee on their initial views of the impact on Brexit.

10.30 a.m. Mr Edwin Poots joined the meeting.

10.43 a.m. Officials left the meeting.

5. Oral briefing – Northern Ireland Environment Link on Initial Views on Brexit

10.43 a.m. The following witnesses joined the meeting:

Mr Patrick Casement, Chairman, NIEL;

Mr Craig McGuicken, Chief Executive Officer, NIEL;

Mr Sean Kelly, Parliamentary Development Officer, NIEL;

Ms Jennifer Fulton, Chief Executive Officer, Ulster Wildlife; and

Ms Joanne Sherwood, Director, Royal Society for the Prevention of Birds NI.

The witnesses updated the Committee on their initial views of the impact on Brexit.

11.03 a.m. Mr Edwin Poots left the meeting.

Agreed: Officials agreed to provide to the Committee DEFRA's 'Balance of Competencies' paper.

11.11 a.m. Mr Edwin Poots rejoined the meeting.

11.12 a.m. Officials left the meeting.

11.12 a.m. Ms Caoimhe Archibald left the meeting.

6. Oral briefing – Rural Development Council, Rural Community Network and Northern Ireland Rural Women's Network on Initial Views on Brexit

11.12 a.m. The following witnesses joined the meeting:

Ms Teresa Canavan, Chief Executive, Rural Development Council;

Ms Kate Clifford, Director, Rural Community Network; and

Ms Majella Murphy, Co-ordinator, Northern Ireland Rural Women's Network.

The witnesses updated the Committee on their initial views of the impact on Brexit.

11.16 a.m. Ms Caoimhe Archibald rejoined the meeting.

11.37 a.m. Officials left the meeting.

7. Departmental briefing – Implications of Brexit on DAERA

11.37 a.m. The following officials joined the meeting:

Mr Noel Lavery, Permanent Secretary;

Mr Robert Huey, Deputy Secretary;

Mr David Small, Deputy Secretary; and

Ms Louise Warde Hunter, Deputy Secretary,

The officials updated the Committee on the implications of Brexit on the Department.

Agreed: Officials agreed to provide to the Committee: details of the Department's negotiating position, including responsibilities; and clarification of the position in relation to accessing Horizon 2020 funding post Brexit, including acting as lead partner.

12.29 p.m. Officials left the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to: request an oral briefing from the Minister and officials in early September on Brexit, including the Department's negotiating position; request a copy of the Department's scoping paper, outlining all issues relating to Brexit; request that the issues raised by Members and stakeholders during the briefings are taken into account and raised during negotiations; receive monthly briefings from the Department; to meet over summer recess if more information becomes available; requested indicative timings and details of meetings that the Minister and/or DAERA's officials have with

the UK on Brexit. Officials agreed to keep the Committee informed.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to commission research on: the impact that Brexit may have on agricultural, fisheries, environmental and rural affairs; the exit process and likely timescales; alternative models including how cross compliance standards are dealt with, costs of being a member, tariffs, regulation and farm support.

12.35 p.m. Mr Patsy McGlone left the meeting.

8. Report on the Grocery Code Adjudicator Conference

Mr Harold McKee MLA provided an update to the Committee on the Grocery Code Adjudicator Conference.

12.43 p.m. Mr Edwin Poots left the meeting.

9. Matters Arising

12.47 p.m. Mr William Irwin left the meeting.

12.47 p.m. Mr Sydney Anderson left the meeting.

The Committee noted The Test and Vaccinate or Remove Wildlife Intervention Research Project Year 2 Report.

The Committee considered correspondence from the Department following its consultation on Areas of Natural Constraint and review of CAP Coupled Support.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to ascertain the timescale of when the Minister will take a decision on the way forward on the consultation; how and when this will be communicated to the Committee; and request the rationale/justification for the Minister's decision on these issues.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department, dated 21st June 2016, providing information on: responsibility for Kilkeel Harbour Infrastructure; challenges around cod fishing; and security at Ballykelly.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department, dated 24th June 2016, providing information on: an update on the supply chain; details regarding penalties imposed on farmers on Rathlin Island; EU and NI targets on Greenhouse Gas Emissions; cost to farmers for obtaining a licence for tyre disposal and issues around transporting tyres between farm sites; approaches to addressing waste crime and the farming industry; and an update on the planned review of the role and remit of the Grocery Code Adjudicator.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask for further information regarding why the cost of the fee for obtaining a licence for tyre disposal is so large; and to ask the Department what opportunities there are to either reduce or exempt the cost to farmers.

The Committee considered correspondence from the Department, dated 24th June 2016, on its approach to working and integrating with NIEA.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a copy of the Framework Document with NIEA.

The Committee considered correspondence from the Department, dated 24th June 2016, providing an update on the Horse Racing (Charges on Bookmakers) Order (NI) 2016.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward a copy of this correspondence to the Northern Ireland Horse Racing Group.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department, dated 24th June 2016, providing: a breakdown of the resource and capital allocations, including income generating projects; interaction between QUB and AFBI; clarification on expenditure on waste repatriation and the Department's responsibilities regarding this; a breakdown of the income generated by Forest Service; information on schemes that may be allowed under FBIS; updated position on June Monitoring; information on landings obligations; an update on the TVR programme; and a breakdown of funding allocated to rural tourism under LEADER/LAGS.

The Committee considered correspondence from the Department, dated 24th June 2016, providing information on capital expenditure for broadband.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request the criteria for accessing funding for this scheme; the total fund available; criteria for applications; and how this will be targeted to rural businesses.

The Committee noted correspondence from the PSNI acknowledging receipt of the Committee's letter on the online application process for firearms licences.

10. Correspondence

The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for the Executive Office providing a copy of the Delivering Social Change update from the Executive Office.

The Committee considered correspondence from the Committee for the Executive Office providing a copy of the PfG scrutiny timetable.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider their approach to this process under Agenda Item 11: Forward Work Programme.

The Committee considered correspondence from the Committee for Finance providing a copy of the budget timetable.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider their approach to this process under Agenda Item 11: Forward Work Programme.

The Committee noted DAERA's Investment Activity Report for June.

The Committee noted the Report of the Proceedings of the Agricultural Wages Board for the Two Years ended 31 December 2015.

11. Forward Work Programme

The Committee discussed its approach to the consultations on Programme for Government 2016-2021 and budget process 2017-2020.

Agreed: The Committee agreed: its approach to these consultations; and to write to the Department for information on PfG and the Budget and to request oral briefings. The Committee also agreed to write to stakeholders for their views.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it would hold its next meeting on 8th September; and agreed its agenda for that meeting.

The Committee considered the draft agenda and provisional arrangements for Northern Ireland Environment Week.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft agenda and guest list.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to light the columns in the Great Hall green for the launch of Northern Ireland Environment Week.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that a member of each party provide a welcome ahead of each seminar scheduled for Tuesday 27th September.

12. SL1 The Rathlin Island (Prohibition of Fishing Methods) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016

12.51 p.m. Mr Edwin Poots rejoined the meeting.

The Committee considered the proposed Statutory Rule The Rathlin Island (Prohibition of Fishing Methods) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016.

Agreed: The Committee requested more detail on who the respondents to the consultation were, and agreed to defer consideration of the proposal until that information was received.

13. SL1 The Pollution Prevention and Control (Industrial Emissions) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016

The Committee considered the proposed Statutory Rule The Pollution Prevention and Control (Industrial Emissions) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Department's proposal to make the Statutory Rule.

14. Written briefing – Consultation on The Packaging Waste Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016

12.53 p.m. Mr Sydney Anderson rejoined the meeting.

The Committee noted the forthcoming consultation on The Packaging Waste Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016.

15. SL1 The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016

The Committee considered the proposed Statutory Rule The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Department's proposal to make the Statutory Rule.

16. SL1 The Carlingford Area (Definition of the Mouth of the Clanrye River) Regulations 2016

The Committee considered the proposed Statutory Rule The Carlingford Area (Definition of the Mouth of the Clanrye River) Regulations 2016.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Department's proposal to make the Statutory Rule.

17. SL1 The Foyle Area and Carlingford Area (Exemption from Angling Licence Fees) Regulations 2016

The Committee considered the proposed Statutory Rule The Foyle Area and Carlingford Area (Exemption from Angling Licence Fees) Regulations 2016.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request the following information: the numbers in the second category of exempt groups; and why exemption did not extend to all private river watchers within DAERA's remit. The Committee agreed to defer consideration of this proposal until this information was received.

18. Any Other Business

The Committee raised the Report on the Grocery Code Adjudicator Conference.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills to ask what consideration could be given to allowing the Grocery Code Adjudicator the power to recoup 100% of the cost of such investigations.

The Committee raised the Department's response on the responsibility of Kilkeel Harbour Infrastructure, as considered under Matters Arising.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department asking that the Minister meet with all relevant bodies to discuss how this can move forward, and to report back to the Committee.

19. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The Committee noted that its next meeting will be held at 10.00 a.m. on Thursday 8th September 2016 in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

13.00 p.m. The Chairperson adjourned the meeting.

Linda Dillon MLA

Chairperson, Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

8th September 2016