



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

THURSDAY, 15 OCTOBER 2015

SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Ms Anna Lo MLA (Chairperson)
Mrs Pam Cameron MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Colum Eastwood MLA
Mr William Irwin MLA
Mr Alban Maginness MLA
Mr Barry McElduff MLA
Mr Gary Middleton MLA
Mr Ian Milne MLA
Mrs Sandra Overend MLA

In Attendance: Miss Ciara McKay (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Mark McQuade (Assistant Clerk)
Mr Neil Sedgewick (Clerical Supervisor)
Ms Stephanie Mallon (Bill Clerk)

Apologies: Mr Cathal Boylan MLA
Lord Morrow MLA

The meeting opened in public session at 10.00am.

1. Apologies.

The apologies are noted above.

2. Chairpersons Business.

The Committee noted an invitation to visit the Agri-food and Biosciences Institute.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to visit the Agri-food and Biosciences Institute.

Mr Irwin joined the meeting at 10.02am

The Committee noted that Ballycraigy Primary School has won a National Gardening award.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to arrange a visit to Ballycraigy Primary School.

The Chairperson advised members that the Local Government (Numbers and Addresses of Buildings in Townlands) Bill had been introduced; and that correspondence had been received Mr Roy Beggs MLA regarding his Scrap Metal Dealer Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite Mr Phil Flanagan MLA to brief it on his Local Government (Numbers and Addresses of Buildings in Townlands) Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite Mr Roy Beggs MLA to brief it on his proposed Scrap Metal Dealer Bill.

3. Minutes.

The minutes from the meeting held on 8th October 2015 were agreed.

4. Matters arising.

The Committee noted a response from the Department providing information regarding recommendations and remedial action following four internal audit reports that received limited assurance.

Mr Eastwood joined the meeting at 10.05am.

The Committee noted a response from the Department regarding waste on the Brickkiln waste site.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department for further information regarding costs.

The Committee moved to agenda item 5

5. Ministerial briefing

The Minister of the Environment and his officials joined the meeting at 10.07am.

The Committee was briefed by:

Mr Mark Durkan MLA	Minister of the Environment
Mr Leo O'Reilly	Permanent Secretary, DOE
Ms Liz Loughran	Director of Road Safety, DOE
Mr Wesley Shannon	Acting Chief Executive, NIEA

Mr Middleton joined the meeting at 10.10am.

Mr Maginness left the meeting at 10.52am.

The Minister and his officials left the meeting at 11.33am.

Mr Eastwood left the meeting at 11.33am.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department regarding the processing of chicken litter.

The Committee returned to agenda item 4.

6. Matters arising

The Committee noted a response from the Department regarding public liability insurance for the Ulster Way.

Mrs Cameron left the meeting at 11.36am.

The Committee noted a response from the Department regarding the Northern Ireland Civil Service Voluntary Exit Scheme.

7. The Environmental Better Regulation Bill - Deliberation of clauses

Officials joined the meeting at 11.37am.

Mr Robert Gray Regulatory and Natural Resources Policy Division

Mr Dave Foster Director, Regulatory and Natural Resources Policy
Division

The Committee carried out an informal deliberation of the following clauses while officials remained in attendance:

Clause 1 - General purpose: protecting and improving the environment.

Mrs Cameron rejoined the meeting at 11.41am.

Mr Irwin left the meeting at 11.47am.

Mr McElduff left the meeting at 11.57am.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the Department to consider an amendment to elaborate on the purpose of the Bill; address concerns regarding the vagueness of the Bill; and to better define the framework of what will be enforced in the future.

Clause 2 - Regulations relating to protecting and improving the environment.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Department's explanation of the key issues surrounding this clause.

Clause 3 - Regulations relating to protecting and improving the environment: consultation

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the Department to consider an amendment to replace 'such other persons as it thinks fit' to 'such other relevant persons'.

Clause 4 - General environmental rules

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Department's explanation of the key issues surrounding this clause.

Clause 5 – Interpretation

Mr McElduff rejoined the meeting at 12.34pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the Department to provide more detailed information in the Explanatory & Financial Memorandum to explain what is meant by 'offence to the senses of human beings'; and ecosystems.

Officials left the meeting at 12.41pm.

8. SL1 - The Draft Local Government (Domain Names) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 - Departmental briefing

Officials joined the meeting at 12.42pm.

The Committee was briefed on the Draft Local Government (Domain Names) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 by:

Ms Nicola Creagh Local Government Policy Division, DOE

Mr Patrick Smith Local Government Policy Division, DOE

The question was put:

'That the Committee for the Environment is content for the Department to proceed with making the Statutory Rule for the Draft Local Government (Domain Names) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015'.

The Committee divided: Ayes 3; Noes 3; Abstentions 0

Ayes:

Ms Anna Lo MLA, Mr Barry McElduff MLA, Mr Ian Milne MLA.

Noes:

Mrs Pam Cameron MLA, Mr Gary Middleton MLA, Mrs Sandra Overend MLA.

The motion fell.

Officials left the meeting at 1.03pm.

9. SL1 - The Smoke Control Areas Authorised Fuels (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2015.

The Committee considered the Smoke Control Areas Authorised Fuels (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content for the Department to proceed with the proposed statutory rule.

10. SL1 - The Fluorinated Greenhouse Gases Regulations (NI) 2015

The Committee considered the Fluorinated Greenhouse Gases Regulations (NI) 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content for the Department to proceed with the proposed statutory rule.

11. Correspondence

The Committee noted correspondence from Mr Roy Beggs MLA regarding his Scrap Metal Dealer Bill.

The Committee noted correspondence from Dr Alan Lennon regarding the costs involved generating wind energy.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward this letter to the Department seeking its views on the issues raised.

The Committee noted a letter from the Department regarding publication of Statutory Guidance on the Operation of Community Planning.

The Committee noted a letter from the Department regarding the Protocol for the Care of the Government Historic Estate Biennial Report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to defer consideration of this matter to a subsequent meeting.

The Committee noted a letter from the Department providing advance notice of consultations.

The Committee noted correspondence from Committee for the Office of the First Minister and the deputy First Minister providing a briefing paper from the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission on the UN Human Rights Committee report on the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

The Committee noted correspondence from Solace NI regarding local government representation.

The Committee noted an EU Explanatory Memo regarding Persistent Organic Pollutants.

The Committee noted a response from the Northern Ireland Audit Office regarding its consultation on the Code of Audit Practice for Local Government Bodies Consultation.

The Committee noted the EU Matters newsletter for October 2015.

The Committee noted the Irish Environment Newsletter for October 2015.

The Committee noted the Northern Ireland Environment Link e-bulletin for October 2015.

12. Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted its Forward Work Programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department regarding the implementation of taxi legislation.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to carry out a review of river pollution in Northern Ireland.

13. Any Other Business

No other business was discussed.

14. Date, Time and Place of next meeting.

The Committee agreed that its next meeting will be held at 10.00am on Thursday 22nd October 2015 in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 1.22pm.

Anna Lo, MLA

Chairperson, Committee for the Environment

22 October 2015