



**Northern Ireland  
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT**

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

**TUESDAY, 23 FEBRUARY 2016**

**SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Ms Anna Lo MLA (Chairperson)  
Mrs Pam Cameron MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Cathal Boylan MLA  
Mr Paul Girvan MLA  
Mr William Irwin MLA  
Mr Alban Maginness MLA  
Mr Barry McElduff MLA  
Mr Ian Milne MLA  
Mr Alastair Patterson MLA

In Attendance: Miss Ciara McKay (Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Mark McQuade (Assistant Clerk)  
Mr Neil Sedgewick (Clerical Supervisor)  
Mrs Sharon Young (Clerical Officer)

Apologies: Mr Patsy McGlone MLA  
Mr George Robinson MLA

The meeting began in closed session at 12.07pm.

**1. Correspondence**

The Committee noted correspondence from the Northern Ireland Environment Agency and RAISE, in relation to the research paper on the overview of river pollution.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Employment and Learning regarding its Inquiry into post Special Educational Need Provision for those with Learning Disabilities.

*Mrs Cameron joined the meeting at 12.13pm.*

*Agreed : The Committee agreed that it would table a motion following the Committee Stakeholder event on river pollution.*

***The Committee moved to public session at 12.18pm.***

**2. Apologies.**

The apologies are noted above.

**3. Chairperson's Business**

The Committee noted a report on an informal meeting with the Our Sperrins Our Future concerned residents group.

*Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Minister to seek assurances that any application will be taken in line with planning policy; and that a robust and thorough environmental impact assessment will be undertaken.*

**4. Minutes**

The minutes from the meetings held on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2016 and 11<sup>th</sup> February 2016 were agreed.

**5. Matters arising**

The Committee noted a response from the Department providing a further breakdown of spending on the Strategic Waste Infrastructure Programme.

The Committee noted a response from the Department to queries on waste collected and recycled by councils.

The Committee noted a response from the Department to issues raised during the Committee's informal meeting with Mid-Ulster Council.

*Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the response to Mid-Ulster Council*

The Committee noted a response from the Department providing an update on its Biodiversity Strategy.

The Committee noted a response from the Department regarding an amendment to the Pollution Prevention and Control (Industrial Emissions) Regulations,

The Committee noted a response from the Department regarding schemes for protecting built heritage/listed buildings from the impact of flooding.

The Committee noted a response from the Department on offences under taxi regulations which would affect the driver's insurance.

*Mr Alban Maginness joined the meeting at 12.27pm.*

The Committee noted a response from the Belfast Public Hire Association in relation to taxi legislation.

The Committee considered a draft response to the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and the deputy First Minister regarding scrutiny undertaken in respect of good relations and Together: Building a United Community.

*Mr Girvan left the meeting at 12.30pm.*

*Agreed: The Committee agreed its response to the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and the deputy First Minister regarding scrutiny undertaken in respect of good relations and Together: Building a United Community.*

The Committee noted a response from the Department on built heritage.

## **6. Better management and control of bonfires – Departmental briefing.**

The Committee was briefed by:

Mr Chris Mills      Director, Resource Efficiency Division, DOE

Mr Tim Irwin      Environmental Policy Division, DOE

*Mr McElduff left the meeting at 12.34pm*

*Mr Milne joined the meeting at 12.38pm.*

*Mr Maginness left the meeting at 12.57pm.*

*Mr Irwin joined the meeting at 1.01pm.*

The Committee was briefed on the outcome of the Department's discussion paper on Better Management and Control of Bonfires. A question and answer session followed.

*The officials left the meeting at 1.06pm.*

## **7. Issues arising from the spread of Japanese Knotweed – Departmental briefing.**

The Committee was briefed by:

Mr Ken Bradley      Regulatory & Natural Resources Policy Division, DOE

Mr Mark Wright      Natural Environment Division, NIEA

Mr Declan Looney      Natural Environment Division, NIEA

*Mr Irwin left the meeting at 1.27pm.*

*Mr Patterson left the meeting at 1.28pm.*

The Committee was briefed on issues arising from the spread of Japanese Knotweed. A question and answer session followed.

*The Committee continued to take evidence in the absence of a decision-making quorum in line with Standing Order 49(5) with the following Members present: Ms Anna Lo (Chairperson); Mr Cathal Boylan; Mrs Pam Cameron; and Mr Ian Milne.*

*Officials left the meeting at 1.41pm*

*The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 1.41pm as quorum was lost.*

**Anna Lo, MLA**  
**Chairperson, Committee for the Environment**  
**3 March 2016**