



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

THURSDAY, 3 MARCH 2016

SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Ms Anna Lo MLA (Chairperson)
Mrs Pam Cameron MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
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)
Mrs Sharon Young (Clerical Officer)

Apologies: Mr Paul Girvan MLA
Mr Patsy McGlone MLA
Mr Cathal Boylan MLA
Mr George Robinson MLA

The meeting began in closed session at 10.17am.

Agreed: The Committee noted its issues paper on river pollution; and that the scheduled date for the debate is 8th March 2016.

The Committee moved to public session at 10.20am.

1. Apologies.

The apologies are noted above.

2. Ministerial Briefing on proposals for NI Climate Change Legislation and Establishment of an Independent Environmental Protection Agency.

The Minister and his officials joined the meeting at 10.20am.

The Committee was briefed by:

Mr Mark Durkan	Minister of the Environment
Mr Leo O'Reilly	Permanent Secretary, DOE
Ms Nichola Creagh	Acting Director, Local Government Policy Division, DOE
Ms Liz Loughran	Director of Road Safety & Vehicle Registration Division, DOE
Ms Helen Anderson	Director of Natural Environment Division, DOE

Mr Irwin joined the meeting at 10.47am.

The Minister and his officials answered questions on a range of topics, before leaving the meeting at 11.45am.

3. Chairperson's Business

No Chairperson's business was discussed.

4. Minutes

The minutes from the meeting held on 23rd February 2016 was agreed.

Mr Irwin left the meeting at 11.46am.

5. Matters arising

The Committee noted a response from the Department to issues raised by a taxi driver regarding taxi legislation.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the response to the individual who raised this matter with it.

The Committee noted a response from the Department on draft Policy Guidance on the Identification and Designation of Quiet Areas.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to copy the response to the Belfast Airport Watch group who had written to it on this matter.

The Committee noted a response from the Department providing updates on Sea Gen and Rose Energy projects; and a response to the issues raised by Windwatch NI on recent correspondence.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward relevant information to Windwatch NI.

The Committee noted correspondence from Derry City and Strabane District Council regarding the Transfer of Functions Order.

Agreed: The Committee agreed a draft a response to the Council explaining the rationale for the timescale.

The Committee noted a response from Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council regarding Japanese Knotweed.

The Committee noted correspondence about the evidence given by officials to the Committee on Japanese knotweed.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Department for a response to the issues raised in it.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the correspondent to advise of the action that Committee has taken and that Japanese knotweed will be included in the Committee's legacy report.

The Committee noted a report on an informal meeting with the Ulster Architectural Heritage Society.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the report to the Department.

6. Consultations.

The Committee noted a synopsis of responses to a consultation on the Draft Local Government Reorganisation (Compensation for Diminution of Emoluments) Regulations.

The Committee noted a synopsis of responses to a consultation on a proposal for mandatory wearing of helmets on motor tricycles.

Mr Milne left the meeting at 11.56am.

The Committee noted a synopsis of responses and Departmental response to the Entertainment Licensing Review.

7. SL1 - The Groundwater (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016

Mr Milne rejoined the meeting at 11.58am.

The Committee considered the Groundwater (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016.

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

8. The Draft Local Government (Community Planning Partners) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016

The Committee considered The Draft Local Government (Community Planning Partners) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to clarify that the section in the Explanatory Memorandum is incorrect, as the Committee did not agree the Order on 28th January; and that reservations of the Committee were forwarded to the Department at that time.

Mrs Pam Cameron and Mr Alastair Patterson expressed reservations that CCMS is named as a statutory partner in the Order, as it is represented on the Board of the Education Authority which is also a statutory partner.

The Committee expressed reservations that government departments did not wish to be named as statutory partners in the Order. However, while these reservations were noted, the Committee proceeded to agree the Statutory Rule:

Question put and agreed:

“The Committee for the Environment has considered The Draft Local Government (Community Planning Partners) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016 and, subject to the report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules, recommends that it is approved by the Assembly.”

9. The Draft Local Government (Standing Orders) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016

The Committee considered the correspondence from the Department responding to the Committee’s queries in relation to The Draft Local Government (Standing Orders) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite officials to provide further clarification on the correspondence.

Officials joined the meeting at 12.04pm

The Committee was briefed by:

Ms Nichola Creagh Acting Director, Local Government Policy Division, DOE

Ms Julie Broadway Local Government Policy Division, DOE

Agreed: The Committee noted reservations of some Members. Given the timescale for considering the Rule, which is subject to draft affirmative, the Committee agreed that the Department should proceed to formally lay the Rule, following which it would be formally considered by the Committee.

Officials left the meeting at 12.16pm.

10. SR 2016/79 The Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016

Question put and agreed:

‘The Committee for the Environment has considered SR 2016/79, The Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 and, subject to the report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules, has no objection to the Rule.’

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department regarding the Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2016.

11. Correspondence

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department regarding developer contributions to affordable housing.

The Committee noted a letter from the Department seeking nominations for waters that might be included in the list of formally identified bathing waters.

The Committee noted a response from the Department to the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development regarding nitrogen levels in turkeys.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance and Personnel regarding the Executive's Draft Budget 2016-17.

The Committee noted an invitation to a conference on The New Northern Ireland Planning System.

The Committee noted the Northern Ireland Environment Link bulletin for February 2016.

12. Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted its Forward Work Programme.

The Committee noted its visit to external Committee meeting in AFBI on Thursday 10th March 2016. The following Members indicated that they would be attending: Ms Anna Lo; Mrs Pam Cameron; Mr Alastair Patterson; Mr Alban Maginness; and Mr Ian Milne.

13. Any Other Business

No other business was discussed

14. Date, time and Place of next meeting

The Committee noted that its next meeting will be held at 10.00am on Thursday 10th March 2016 in the offices of the Agri-Food & Biosciences Institute, Newforge Lane, Belfast.

The Committee agreed to move into closed session at 12.05pm.

15. Draft Legacy Report

The Committee discussed its draft Legacy Report; and noted that it would be formally considered at its meeting on 10th March 2016.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12.37pm.

Anna Lo, MLA
Chairperson, Committee for the Environment
10 March 2016