

COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

TUESDAY 1 APRIL 2014
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Mr Paul Frew MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Joe Byrne MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Thomas Buchanan MLA
Mrs Jo-Anne Dobson MLA
Mr William Irwin MLA
Mr Ian Milne MLA
Mr Declan McAleer MLA
Ms Michelle McIlveen MLA
Mr Oliver McMullan MLA
Mr Robin Swann MLA

Apologies: Ms Judith Cochrane MLA

In attendance: Ms Stella McArdle, Committee Clerk
Ms Elaine Farrell, Assistant Clerk
Mr Mark O'Hare, Clerical Supervisor
Ms Michelle McDowell, Clerical Officer

1.33 p.m. *The meeting commenced in Open Session*

1. Apologies

The apologies are recorded above.

2. Chairperson's Business

The Committee noted that a "top tips" session on the functions of the meeting pack tablet is being offered to any Member who wishes to avail of it. The committee office will contact Members by email in respect of this.

Noted: The Committee noted the update from the Department on the suspected illegal movement of milk.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2014

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2014.

4. Matters Arising

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 20 March 2014 from the Minister on her proposals and budget for the Rural Development Programme and an update on Going for Growth.

Noted: The Committee noted the copied correspondence dated 21 March 2014 from the Department to the Committee for Employment and Learning regarding its inquiry into post-school provision for individuals with learning disabilities.

Agreed: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 20 March 2014 from the Department in respect of issues raised at the meeting on 4 March 2014. The Committee agreed to seek a closed session briefing with the Department on NIFAIS post Easter.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to seek information on the funding the Minister is seeking from the Executive for the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2014-2020

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the extract from the Department's letter in respect of a proposal to tackle rural crime to Mr Shannon and Redcap Solutions.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the PSNI to seek an update in respect of the Redcap proposal to tackle rural crime.

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 26 March 2014 from the Joint Committee on Agriculture, Food and the Marine in respect of the issue of illegal slaughter of cattle in Northern Ireland.

5. Reservoirs Bill: Clerk's memo on key issues

Agreed: The Committee noted the written submission from Lissanoure Farms in respect of the Reservoirs Bill and agreed to place it on the Committee website.

6. Reservoirs Bill – Delegated Powers within the Bill – Response from Examiner of Statutory Rules

Agreed: The Committee discussed the paper from the Examiner of Statutory Rules on the Delegated Powers within the Bill and agreed to write to Rivers Agency on the issues raised in the paper.

7. Reservoirs Bill: Oral briefing Creggan Country Park

The following representatives from Creggan Country Park joined the meeting at 1.44 p.m.

Gerry Quinn, Manager
Emmalene Edgar, Administrator

The representatives briefed the Committee and this was followed by a question and answer session.

1.45 p.m. Mr Buchanan joined the meeting.

1.56 p.m. Mr McAleer joined the meeting.

2.03 p.m. Mr Irwin left the meeting.

2.11 p.m. Mr Irwin rejoined the meeting.

2.21 p.m. Mr Swann left the meeting.

2.23 p.m. Mr Buchanan left the meeting.

2.31 p.m. Mr McAleer left the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to Derry City Council to ascertain what it deems are its potential responsibilities within the Reservoirs Bill in respect of the lease of reservoirs within Creggan Country Park.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department for Regional Development to ascertain what it deems are its potential responsibilities within the Reservoirs Bill in respect of its ownership of a path on the dam wall.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider a visit to Creggan Country Park post Easter 2014.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider agenda item 9 next.

8. Reservoirs Bill: Oral briefing Denise Corbett

Denise Corbett, Chairperson, Ballysaggart Environmental Group, joined the meeting at 2.40 p.m..

Ms Corbett briefed the Committee and this was followed by a question and answer session.

- 2.41 p.m. Mrs Dobson left the meeting.*
- 2.43 p.m. Mr McMullan left the meeting.*
- 2.51 p.m. Mr McMullan rejoined the meeting.*
- 3.00 p.m. Ms McIlveen left the meeting.*
- 3.03 p.m. Mr Buchanan rejoined the meeting.*
- 3.11 p.m. Mr Milne joined the meeting.*

9. Draft DARD Corporate Plan 2014-16 & Annual Business Plan 2014/15: Oral briefing DARD

The following departmental officials joined the meeting at 3.15 p.m.

Gerry Lavery, Deputy Secretary
Graeme Wilkinson, Assistant Secretary
Tom Rodgers, Principal Officer

The officials briefed the Committee and this was followed by a question and answer session.

- 3.16 p.m. Mrs Dobson rejoined the meeting.*
- 3.25 p.m. Mr Irwin left the meeting.*
- 3.30 p.m. Mr Milne left the meeting.*
- 3.39 p.m. Mr McMullan left the meeting.*
- 3.42 p.m. Mr Irwin and Ms McIlveen rejoined the meeting.*
- 3.49 p.m. Mr Milne rejoined the meeting.*
- 3.54 p.m. Mr Swann rejoined the meeting.*
- 3.55 p.m. Mr Milne left the meeting.*
- 4.05 p.m. Mr McAleer rejoined the meeting.*
- 4.20 p.m. Mr Irwin left the meeting.*
- 4.22 p.m. Mr Byrne left the meeting.*
- 4.23 p.m. Mrs Dobson left the meeting.*
- 4.24 p.m. Mr McAleer left the meeting.*

4.27 p.m. The meeting suspended.

4.31 p.m. The meeting resumed with the following Members present; Mr Buchanan, Mrs Dobson, Mr Frew, Ms McIlveen and Mr Swann.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department on a number of issues identified which require a response.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to defer a briefing from the Department, scheduled for the 8 April 2014, in respect of DARD HQ relocation. The Committee agreed to write to the Department to seek an update on this issue and an indication of the likely timescale for it going to the Executive.

10. Correspondence

Agreed: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 20 March 2014 from the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment to the Department in respect of the Impact on Ground Based Solar PV on Single Farm Payments. The Committee agreed to request that it is copied into the reply from the Department.

Noted: The Committee noted the emailed correspondence from Mr Kieran Murphy in respect of farm entitlements.

Agreed: The Committee noted the emailed correspondence from Rural Support Group on a targeted response to deal with rural crime. The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Department and the PSNI for comment.

11. Forward Work Programme

Agreed: The Committee agreed to defer a decision on meeting on 20 May 2014 until after a decision has been made in respect of Plenary running on that date.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Forward Work Programme.

12. AOB

There was no other business.

4.37 p.m. The meeting moved into Closed Session. The following Members were present: Mr Buchanan, Mr Byrne, Mrs Dobson, Mr Frew, Mr Irwin, Ms McIlveen, Mr McMullan, Mr Swann.

13. Reservoirs Bill – Discussion

The Committee discussed the main themes and issues within the Reservoirs Bill.

4.45 p.m. Mr Milne rejoined the meeting.
5.00 p.m. Mr McAleer rejoined the meeting.
5.20 p.m. Mr Irwin left the meeting.

5.27 p.m. The meeting suspended.

5.43 p.m. The meeting resumed with the following Members present:
Mr Buchanan, Mr Byrne, Mr Frew, Mr Irwin, Mr McAleer, Ms Mcilveen, Mr Swann.

5.45 p.m. Mr Irwin left the meeting.
5.46 p.m. Mrs Dobson rejoined the meeting.
6.12 p.m. Mr Irwin rejoined the meeting.

14. Date and time of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development will take place on Tuesday 8 April 2014 at 1.30 p.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting adjourned at 6.14 p.m.

Paul Frew, Chairperson, Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development

Date