

COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

TUESDAY 25 FEBRUARY 2014
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Mr Paul Frew MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Joe Byrne MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Ms Judith Cochrane 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: Mr Thomas Buchanan MLA

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

1.05 p.m. The meeting commenced in Open Session

1. Apologies

The apologies are recorded above.

2. Chairperson's Business

The Committee noted the presentation notes from AFBI, following a visit by the Committee on 13 February 2014. The Chairperson advised the Committee that an invite will issue from AFBI to their Dairy Conference in the Kings Hall on 20 March 2014.

Agreed: A reminder would issue to Committee Members regarding the importance of attendance at committee visits.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 17 and 18 February 2014

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft minutes of the meeting held on 17 and 18 February 2014.

4. Reservoirs Bill – Key Issues

Noted: The Committee noted the memo on key issues within the Reservoirs Bill.

5. Oral briefing Local Councils: Reservoirs Bill

The following local council representatives joined the meeting at 1.10 p.m.

Ian Bowden, Belfast City Council
Rose Crozier, Belfast City Council
Jonathan McGilly, Newry & Mourne Council
Eamon McManus, Newry & Mourne Council
Marcus Malley, Craigavon Council
Gerard McGibbon, Craigavon Council

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

1.12 p.m. Mr Swann joined the meeting.
1.14 p.m. Ms Cochrane joined the meeting.
1.33 p.m. Mr McMullan joined the meeting.
1.40 p.m. Mr Irwin left the meeting.
1.45 p.m. Mr McAleer joined the meeting.
1.50 p.m. Mr Irwin rejoined the meeting.
1.55 p.m. Mr Byrne and Mr Milne left the meeting.
1.56 p.m. Mr McAleer and Mr Swann left the meeting.
1.58 p.m. Mr McMullan left the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to NILGA to request that they take note of council planning issues in respect of the Reservoirs Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to Craigavon Council to request further information on the two reservoirs which are subject to decommissioning.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the three councils to ask if they have considered the proposed dispute and appeals mechanisms contained in the Reservoirs Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to Belfast City Council to ascertain if they have insurance in place against the risk of flooding if one of their reservoirs flooded.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek a response from Rivers Agency on issues raised in respect of the Reservoirs Bill.

1.59 p.m. The meeting suspended

2.51 p.m. The meeting resumed with the following Members present: Mr Frew, Mr Byrne, Mrs Dobson, Mr Irwin and Mr Swann.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to NI Water to ask if a fee is paid for water drawn from Camlough Lake.

6. Matters Arising

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft letters to the Minister and the Executive in respect of the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020.

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 19 February 2014 from the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment in respect of the Rural Broadband Infrastructure Programme.

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 5 February 2014 from the Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster thanking the Committee for meeting with them recently.

7. Single Farm Payment Trading Deadline: Oral Briefing DARD

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 2.55 p.m.

Valerie Bell, Head of Grants and Subsidies Policy
Andrew Elliott, Director of Rural Payments

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

Mr Irwin declared an interest as a farmer.

3.05 p.m. Mr McMullan rejoined the meeting.

Mrs Dobson declared an interest that her husband is a farmer who receives Single Farm Payment.

3.10 p.m. Mr Milne and Mr McAleer rejoined the meeting.

3.11 p.m. Mrs Dobson left the meeting.

3.39 p.m. Ms McIlveen rejoined the meeting.

3.45 p.m. Mr McMullan left the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the proposal from the Department to extend the deadline for Single Farm Payment Trading.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to seek clarification on the 2014 Single Farm Payment applications.

Agreed: The Committee noted the correspondence from Mr D Orr and Mr K Murphy regarding CAP Reform and agreed to forward them to the Department for reply.

8. Northern Ireland Meat Exporters Association: Oral Briefing

The following representatives from the Northern Ireland Meat Exporters (NIMEA) joined the meeting at 3.48 p.m.

Phelim O'Neill, Chief Executive
Campbell Tweedie, President

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

3.49 p.m. Mr McAleer left the meeting.

3.55 p.m. Mrs Dobson rejoined the meeting.

3.58 p.m. Mr McAleer rejoined the meeting.

4.08 p.m. Mr McAleer left the meeting.

4.11 p.m. Mr McMullan rejoined the meeting.

4.15 p.m. Mr Swann left the meeting.

4.23 p.m. Mr Irwin left the meeting.

4.34 p.m. Mr Irwin rejoined the meeting.

Mr Irwin declared an interest as a farmer.

Mrs Dobson declared an interest that her husband is a suckler farmer.

4.41 p.m. *The meeting suspended.*

5.16 p.m. *The meeting resumed with the following Members present: Mr Frew, Mr Byrne, Mrs Dobson, Mr Irwin, Mr Milne, Ms McIlveen and Mr Swann.*

The briefing from the Northern Ireland Meat Exporters Association continued.

5.18 p.m. *Mr McMullan rejoined the meeting.*

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request figures on the full range of beef cuts.

9. The Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing Regulations (NI) 2014: Oral Briefing DARD

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 5.44 p.m.

John McConnell, Acting Head of Animal ID, Legislation & Welfare
Jim McAlister, Veterinary Officer
Jim McBrien, Animal ID, Legislation & Welfare

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

5.45 p.m. Mr Irwin left the meeting.

5.58 p.m. Mr Irwin rejoined the meeting.

6.00 p.m. Mr McMullan left the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing Regulations (NI) 2014 should proceed to the next legislative stage.

10. SL1: The Conservation of Sea Bass Regulations (NI) 2014

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Conservation of Sea Bass Regulations (NI) 2014 should proceed to the next legislative stage.

11. SL1: The Sea Fishing (Licences & Notices) Regulations (NI) 2014

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Sea Fishing (Licences & Notices) Regulations (NI) 2014 should proceed to the next legislative stage.

12. SL1: Importation of Animals (Amendment) Order 2014

Noted: The Committee noted the SL1: Importation of Animals (Amendment) Order 2014.

6.03 p.m. Mr McMullan rejoined the meeting.

13. Correspondence

Agreed: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 20 February 2014 from the OFMDFM Committee on the Inquiry into the Barroso Task Force. The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Department for comment.

Noted: The Committee noted the European Union Explanatory Memorandum 35641, 35683 and 35744.

14. Forward Work Programme

Agreed: The Committee agreed to host a stakeholder event on 18 March 2014 for private reservoir owners in respect of the Reservoirs Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft Press Release to publicise the stakeholder event.

15. AOB

There was no other business.

16. Date and time of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development will take place on Tuesday 4 March 2014 at 1.30 p.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting adjourned at 6.07 p.m.

Paul Frew, Chairperson, Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development

Date