

COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

TUESDAY 25 MARCH 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
Ms Michelle McIlveen MLA
Mr Oliver McMullan MLA
Mr Robin Swann MLA

Apologies: Mr Declan McAleer MLA

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

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

1. Apologies

The apologies are recorded above.

2. Chairperson's Business

Noted: The Committee noted the report for the visit to CAFRE on 20 March 2014.

The Chairperson advised the Committee that he and the Deputy Chairperson met with the Health and Safety Executive today to discuss its plans for the development of its new Farm Safety Action

Plan and its formal launch on 7 April 2014. Committee Members will receive an invitation to the launch in due course.

1.39 p.m. Mr Buchanan joined the meeting.

1.40 p.m. Mr McMullan joined the meeting.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2014

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2014.

4. Matters Arising

Agreed: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 14 March 2014 from the Department in respect of Single Farm Payment Trading Deadline. The Committee agreed to forward the relevant extract to Mr Orr and Mr Murphy for their information.

Agreed: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 18 March 2014 from the Department requesting an extension to the deadline to respond to issues in respect of the Reservoirs Bill.

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

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 21 March 2014 from the Department in respect of the Reservoirs Bill. The Chairperson advised the Committee that the paper on the methodologies for risk assessment for Scotland is still at draft stage and therefore should not be shared outside the Committee.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to issue the notes taken at the Reservoirs stakeholder event on 18 March 2014 to all attendees and place on the Committee website.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule an oral evidence session in respect of the Reservoirs Bill with Mrs Denise Corbett.

Noted: The Committee noted the response from the Department of the Environment in respect of planning.

Agreed: The Committee noted the written submission from Mr David Barr and the Wilson family and agreed to place them on the Committee website.

Agreed: The Committee noted the designation process flow chart and agreed to place it on the Committee website.

Agreed: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 14 March 2014 from the Department for the Environment in respect of the Reservoirs Bill from a planning perspective and agreed to place it on the Committee website.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider agenda items 8 and 9 next.

6. Correspondence

Agreed: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 14 March 2014 from the Committee for Finance and Personnel in respect of the Investment Strategy Project Delivery Portal and agreed to forward it to the Department for comment.

Agreed: The Committee noted the copied correspondence from the UFU to the Minister in respect of the anti-competitive measures in the beef trade. The Committee agreed to write to the UFU to advise that it has written to the main supermarkets and the Groceries Code Adjudicator on this issue. The Committee also agreed to request that the Minister copies the Committee into her response to the UFU.

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 19 March 2014 from the Minister advising that Rivers Agency will cease to be an Executive Agency with effect from 1 April 2014.

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 14 March 2014 from the Public Accounts Committee in respect of its report on the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute.

Noted: The Committee noted the copied correspondence dated 12 March 2014 from NILGA to the Minister expressing thanks for the recent announcement of financial support for the fishing industry.

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 11 March 2014 from the Minister for the Environment regarding the EU proposals for roadworthiness testing for the agricultural sector.

7. Forward Work Programme

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing from Hannon Meats.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Forward Work Programme.

1.57 p.m. Ms McIlveen and Mr McMullan left the meeting.

8. Reservoirs Bill: Oral briefing Ligioniel Improvements Association

The following representatives joined the meeting at 2.00 p.m.

Damien McCallin, Environmental Recreation Officer
Dr Jim Bradley, Belfast Partnership Hills Partnership Manager

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

2.01 p.m. Mr Swann joined the meeting.

2.05 p.m. Mr Irwin left the meeting.

2.07 p.m. Mr Byrne left the meeting.

2.09 p.m. Mrs Dobson left the meeting.

2.25 p.m. Mr Irwin rejoined the meeting.

2.28 p.m. Mr Irwin left the meeting.

2.32 p.m. Mr Swann left the meeting.

2.32 p.m. The meeting suspended.

*2.37 p.m. The meeting resumed with the following Members present
Mr Buchanan, Mr Byrne, Mr Frew, Mr Irwin and Mr Milne.*

2.50 p.m. Mr McMullan joined the meeting.

9. Reservoirs Bill: Oral briefing the Institution of Civil Engineers

The following representatives from the Institution of Civil Engineers joined the meeting at 2.51 p.m.

Alan Cooper
Jack Meldrum
David McKillen
Stephen Orr

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

2.53 p.m. Mr Swann rejoined the meeting.

3.05 p.m. Mr Milne left the meeting.

3.09 p.m. Ms McIlveen rejoined the meeting.

3.16 p.m. Mr Milne rejoined the meeting.

3.55 p.m. Mr Byrne left the meeting.
4.28 p.m. Mr Irwin left the meeting.
4.45 p.m. Mr Swann left
4.50 p.m. Mr Irwin rejoined the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward additional questions to the Institution of Civil Engineers for answer.

10.AOB

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider a request from the Northern Ireland Agricultural Consultancy Association to brief the committee on Single Farm Payment application process.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department on the issue of whether a landowner and farmer who is no longer an active farmer, will be able to obtain his or her Farm Business ID number as this may impact on planning permissions.

11.Date and time of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development will take place on Tuesday 1 April 2014 at 1.30 p.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting adjourned at 5.02 p.m.

Paul Frew, Chairperson, Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development

Date