

COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**TUESDAY 3 JUNE 2014
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr Paul Frew MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Joe Byrne MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Ms Judith Cochrane MLA
Mrs Joanne 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 Roisin Kelly, Bill Clerk (for agenda item 7)
Ms Elaine Farrell, Assistant Clerk
Mr Mark O'Hare, Clerical Supervisor
Ms Alison Ferguson, Clerical Officer

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

1. Apologies

The apologies are recorded above.

2. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson reminded Members to advise committee office staff if they will be attending the National Ploughing Championships in September 2014.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 27 May 2014

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft minutes of the meeting held on 27 May 2014.

4. Matters Arising

Agreed: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 27 May 2014 from the Minister in respect of a meeting with the Fishermen's Forum and beef prices. The Committee agreed to forward the extract in respect of beef to the Livestock Auctioneers Association for information.

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 22 May 2014 from the Department in respect of issues raised at the meeting on 6 May 2014.

Agreed: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 29 May 2014 from the Department in respect of issues raised at the meeting on 13 May 2014. The Committee agreed to forward an extract relating to the impact on ground-based solar PV on Single Farm Payments to the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment.

Noted: The Committee noted the copied correspondence dated 19 May 2014 from the Minister to the Lough Foyle Oyster Sub-Committee.

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 29 May 2014 from the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister advising that there is a proposal to cut the budget for the Human Rights Commission.

5. Oral Briefing DARD: June Monitoring Round, DARD's 2013/14 Provisional Outturn, Savings Delivery Plans Update and 2014/15 Main Estimates.

The following officials joined the meeting at 1.37 p.m.

Graeme Wilkinson, Assistant Secretary
Roger Downey, Accountant
Lynda Lowe, Deputy Principal

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

1.39 p.m. Mr Irwin joined the meeting.

1.46 p.m. Mr McAleer joined the meeting.

1.52 p.m. Ms Cochrane joined the meeting.

1.54 p.m. Mr Byrne left the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to seek clarification on the Windfarm Development Project and the potential conflict which exists by the sale of timber by Forest Service.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to seek clarification on the impact the TVR project may have on the Veterinary Services budget.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request the strategic timeline and funding breakdown for the Farm Improvement Scheme within Going for Growth.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Department's proposals for the June Monitoring Round.

6. The Public Bodies (Abolition of Food From Britain Order) 2014

Agreed: The Committee agreed the report on the Public Bodies (Abolition of Food) from Britain Order 2014 and that it should be published on the Northern Ireland Assembly website.

2.17 p.m. Mr Byrne rejoined the meeting.

7. Reservoirs Bill: Formal Clause by Clause

The following Rivers Agency officials joined the meeting at 2.18 p.m.

Mr David Porter, Director of Development
Mr Kieran Brazier, Head of Bill Team

The officials briefed the Committee on proposals for amendments to clauses 36, 49, 70 and 106 of the Reservoirs Bill.

2.24 p.m. Ms Cochrane and Ms McIlveen left the meeting.

2.37 p.m. The meeting moved into Closed Session.

2.49 p.m. Mr Milne joined the meeting

3.01 p.m. Mr Swann left the meeting.

3.10 p.m. Mr McAleer left the meeting.

3.25 p.m. The meeting moved into Open Session

The following Members were present: Mr Byrne, Ms Cochrane, Mr Frew, Mr Irwin, Mr Milne, and Ms McIlveen.

The Committee commenced its formal clause by clause consideration of the Reservoirs Bill.

Clause 1 – Controlled reservoirs

Question: That the Committee is content with clause 1 put and agreed to.

Clause 2-5

Question: That the Committee is content with clauses 2-5 put and agreed to.

Clause 6 – Reservoir Managers

Question: That the Committee is content with clause 6 put and agreed to.

3.28 p.m. Mrs Dobson rejoined the meeting.

Clause 7 – Multiple reservoir managers: supplementary

Question: That the Committee is content with clause 7 put and agreed to.

Clause 8 – Duty of multiple reservoir managers to co-operate

Question: That the Committee is content with clause 8 put and agreed to.

Clause 9 – Controlled reservoirs register

Question: That the Committee is content with clause 9 put and agreed to.

Clause 10-14

Question: That the Committee is content with clauses 10-14 put and agreed to.

Clause 15 – Registration: supplementary

Question: That the Committee is content with clause 15 put and agreed to.

Clause 16 – Offences: registration

Question: That the Committee is content with clause 16 put and agreed to.

3.33 p.m. Mr McMullan joined the meeting.

Clauses 17-20

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was not content with clauses 17, 18, 19 and 20 as drafted and opposed that the clauses stand part of the Reservoirs Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it would consider the option to register its formal opposition to these clauses at Consideration Stage.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Minister to advise that the Committee is not content with clauses 17-20 of the Reservoirs Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider a form of words to reflect the Committee view on clauses 17-20, for inclusion in the Committee report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to pause its formal clause by clause consideration of the Reservoirs Bill until the next meeting to allow time for further amendments to be presented to the Committee.

8. Correspondence

Noted: The Committee noted the May 2014 Investing Activity Report from the Department.

9. Forward Work Programme

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Forward Work Programme and noted the briefings scheduled for September and October 2014.

3.55 p.m. Mr McAleer rejoined the meeting.

4.00 p.m. Mr McMullan left the meeting.

10. AOB

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Minister to urge her to meet with the Committee and the Northern Ireland Livestock Auctioneers Association to discuss the changes in the beef pricing process.

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

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request an appraisal of the recent flooding incident in Fintona.

11. Date and time of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development will take place on Tuesday 10 June 2014 at 1.30 p.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting adjourned at 4.01 p.m.

Paul Frew, Chairperson, Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development

Date