

## **COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

**TUESDAY 30 SEPTEMBER 2014  
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr William Irwin MLA (Chairperson)  
Mr Joe Byrne MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Thomas Buchanan MLA  
Mrs Joanne Dobson MLA  
Mr Tom Elliott MLA  
Mr Ian Milne MLA  
Mr Declan McAleer MLA  
Mr Kieran McCarthy MLA  
Ms Michelle McIlveen MLA  
Mr Oliver McMullan MLA

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

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

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to issue letters to Mr Paul Frew and Ms Judith Cochrane to acknowledge their time and work on the Committee.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr McCarthy to the Committee as a new Member replacing Ms Cochrane.

*1.04 p.m. Mr Milne joined the meeting.*

#### **1. Apologies**

There are no apologies.

## **2. Chairperson's Business**

The Chairperson advised Members that the visit to the National Ploughing Championships and Grange Research Centre took place on 23/24 September 2014 and three Members attended.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to consider a further visit to the Grange and Teagasc Sheep Centre post-Christmas 2014.

The Chairperson advised that Members Attendance Figures had issued and urged Members to check them for accuracy prior to publication on the Assembly website.

The Chairperson advised Members that the visit to the Northern Ireland Ploughing Championships will take place on Friday 17 October 2014 at Balmoral Park, Maze. Members were asked to indicate their intention or otherwise to attend.

## **3. Minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2014**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the draft minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2014.

## **4. Matters Arising**

*Agreed:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 15 September 2014 from the Committee for Finance and Personnel in respect of Post Project Evaluations. The Committee agreed to write to the Department to seek an update on the outstanding evaluations.

*Noted:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 16 September 2014 from the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister in respect of the NI Rural Development Programme.

*Noted:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 25 September 2014 from the Department in respect of issues raised at the Committee meeting on 9 September 2014.

## **5. Terms of Reference for Committee Review**

*Noted:* The Committee noted the Terms of Reference and work programme for the review on the DARD Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion Programme.

## **6. End of Session Report**

*Agreed:* The Committee noted the End of Session Report 2013-2014 and agreed that it should be published on the Assembly website.

## **7. SL1: Brucellosis Control (Amendment) Order (NI) 2014**

*Agreed:* The Committee noted the SL1: Brucellosis Control (Amendment) Order (NI) 2014 and agreed that it was content with the merits of the policy.

## **8. Correspondence**

*Agreed:* The Committee noted the correspondence from the RSPB in respect of its concerns around the new Rural Development Programme. The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the correspondence to the meeting on 7 October 2014.

*Agreed:* The Committee noted the copied correspondence from the Strangford Lough Fishermen's Association and agreed to defer consideration of the correspondence to the meeting 7 October 2014.

*Noted:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 18 September from the Committee for Education in respect of its STEM Sentinus Event on 1 October 2014.

*Noted:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 18 September 2014 from the OFMDFM Committee in respect of the Investment Strategy Implementation Report to June 2014.

*Noted:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 18 September 2014 from the OFMDFM Committee in respect of the Programme for government Progress Reports.

*Agreed:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 10 September 2014 from Mr Patsy McGlone MLA in respect of the Infrastructure Investment Strategy (ISNI) Portal. The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Department for comment.

*Noted:* The Committee noted the Media Release from Defra in respect of Professor Chris Elliott's recommendation for a national food crime prevention framework.

*Agreed:* The Committee noted the invitation to the Agri-Food Stakeholders and Queen's University Belfast event on 21 November 2014. The Committee agreed that the Assembly Research Officer could attend on behalf of the Committee.

*Noted:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 17 September 2014 from AgriSearch on its consultation document on its future strategic direction.

*Agreed:* The Committee noted the Press Release from Brussels on the EU plans to tighten the rules on horse passports. The Committee agreed to write to the Department to ask how this will be implemented.

## **9. Forward Work Programme**

*Noted:* The Committee noted the emailed correspondence from the Department in respect of the SL1: Draft CAP Direct Payments to Farmers under Support Schemes (Cross Compliance) Regulations (NI) 2015.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the draft Forward Work Programme

## **10.DARD: Public Expenditure – October 2014/15 Monitoring**

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 1.18 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.

*1.47 p.m. Mr McAleer left the meeting.*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to support the Department's proposals in respect of the October monitoring round.

1.50 p.m. The meeting suspended.

2.06 p.m. The meeting resumed.

*The following Members were in attendance: Mr Buchanan, Mr Byrne, Mr Elliott, Mr Irwin, Mr McCarthy, Mr Milne and Mr McMullan.*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to move to agenda item 12 next.

### **11. NIACA: SFP and the new payment scheme.**

The following NIACA representatives joined the meeting at 2.07 p.m.

David Rankin, Chairman  
Mary McCormack, Vice Chairperson  
Rory Gormley, Secretary  
Philip Christie, NIACA Member

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

*Mr Irwin declared an interest that he uses an agent to process his Single Farm Payment.*

*Mr McCarthy declared an interest that he is a recipient of Single Farm Payment.*

*Mr Elliott declared an interest that he is a recipient of Single Farm Payment.*

*2.43 p.m. Mr McAleer rejoined the meeting.*

*2.44 p.m. Mr Byrne left the meeting.*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to send the Hansard of the briefing with NIACA to the Department for comment on the issues raised.

*2.45 p.m. The meeting suspended*

*3.32 p.m. The meeting resumed.*

*The following Members were in attendance: Mr Byrne, Mrs Dobson, Mr Elliott, Mr Irwin, Mr Milne, Mr McAleer and Mr McMullan.*

### **12. DARD: SFP 2014 and preparation for the new payment scheme**

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 3.33 p.m.

Andrew Elliott, Assistant Secretary  
Pauline Rooney, Senior Principal Officer  
Richard Crowe, Senior Principal Officer  
Sharon McFlynn, Principal Officer

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

*3.37 p.m. Ms McIlveen joined the meeting.*

*3.57 p.m. Mr McMullan left the meeting.*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to seek a written response to issues raised in the briefing paper.

### **13. AOB**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department to ask that it gives consideration to a dedicated unit to deal with queries from agents who help to process Single Farm Payments.

### **14. Date, time and place of next meeting**

The next meeting of the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development will take place on Tuesday 7 October 2014 at 1.30 p.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

*The meeting adjourned at 4.31 p.m.*

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William Irwin, Chairperson, Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development

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Date