

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

### **MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

**TUESDAY 7 OCTOBER 2014  
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr William Irwin MLA (Chairperson)  
Mr Joe Byrne MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Sydney Anderson MLA  
Mr Thomas Buchanan MLA  
Mrs Joanne Dobson MLA  
Mr Tom Elliott MLA  
Mr Ian Milne MLA  
Mr Declan McAleer MLA  
Mr Kieran McCarthy MLA  
Mr Oliver McMullan MLA  
Mr Edwin Poots MLA

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

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to issue a letter to Ms Michelle McIlveen to acknowledge her time on the Committee.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr Anderson and Mr Poots to the Committee as new Members.

*1.31 p.m. The meeting commenced in Closed Session.*

#### **1. Oral Briefing DARD: NIFAIS Information on the Outline Business Case once considered by DFP**

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 1.33 p.m.

David Torrens, Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer

Garry Corscadden, Principal Officer  
Nigel Trimble, Senior Principal Veterinary Officer

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

*1.33 p.m. Mr Elliott and Mr Milne joined the meeting.*

*1.34 p.m. Mr Buchanan joined the meeting.*

*1.39 p.m. Mr Poots joined the meeting.*

*1.43 p.m. Mr McAleer joined the meeting.*

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

*2.06 p.m. Mr Anderson and Mr McMullan left the meeting.*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Minister and Permanent Secretary to express its concern around the cost implications of NIFAIS and the success of the project.

*2.07 p.m. The meeting moved into open session.*

*2.07 p.m. Mrs Dobson left the meeting.*

## **2. Apologies**

There are no apologies.

## **3. Chairperson's Business**

The Chairperson advised the Committee that a copy of the Department's Resource Accounts 2013-14, which officials referred to at last week's meeting, is available on the committee office.

The Chairperson reminded the Committee that an informal meeting with Farmers for Action will take place on 14 October 2014 at 12.00 p.m. in Room 30.

## **4. Minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2014**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the draft minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2014.

## **5. Matters Arising**

*Noted:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 2 October 2014 from the Department in respect of issues raised at the Committee meeting on 9 September 2014.

*Noted:* The Committee noted the correspondence dated 2 October 2014 from the Department in respect of issues raised at the Committee meeting on 16 September 2014.

## **6. RalSe Briefing: Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion**

The Assembly Research Officer joined the meeting at 2.10 p.m. and briefed the Committee on his research paper. This was followed by a question and answer session.

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

## **7. Oral briefing DARD: Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion**

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 2.25 p.m.

Pauline Keegan, Assistant Secretary  
Colette McMaster, Assistant Secretary  
Paul Donnelly, Principal Officer  
George Sampson, Deputy Principal

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

*2.28 p.m. Mr Milne left the meeting.*

*2.31 p.m. Mr Anderson rejoined the meeting.*

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

*2.36 p.m. Mr Byrne rejoined the meeting.*

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

*2.50 p.m. Mr Elliott left the meeting.*

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

*2.52 p.m. Mr Anderson left the meeting.*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request details of the financial contributions from other Departments against each of the projects identified in The Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Framework.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the draft Press Release on the launch of the review on Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion.

## **8. Pre Consultation EQIA: The adoption of Online as the primary channel for communicating and transacting with customers**

*Agreed:* The Committee noted the Pre Consultation EQIA: The adoption of Online as the primary channel for communicating and transacting with customers and agreed that the Department should return to the Committee with an analysis of the consultee responses.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to forward its concerns regarding the impact of this policy on certain sections of the community.

## **9. Pre Consultation: The Animal By-Products (Enforcement) Regulations (NI) 2015**

*Agreed:* The Committee noted the Pre Consultation: The Animal By-Products (Enforcement) Regulations (NI) 2015 and agreed that the Department should return to the Committee with an analysis of the consultee responses.

## **10. Committee visit to Scotland**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the draft itinerary for the visit to Scotland.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the following Members would attend the visit to Scotland: Mr Byrne, Mr Buchanan, Mr Elliott, Mr Irwin, Mr McMullan and Mr Poots.

## **11. Correspondence**

*Agreed:* The Committee noted the correspondence from the RSPB, requesting to brief the Committee on its concern around the Rural Development Programme. The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing with RSPB for 14 October 2014.

*Agreed:* The Committee noted the correspondence from the Strangford Lough Fishermen, on its concerns on the restrictions on pot fishing in Strangford Lough. The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing with the Department in respect of the issues outlined in the correspondence.

*Noted:* The Committee noted the Investment Strategy Report September 2014 for the Department.

*3.13 p.m. Mr Elliott rejoined the meeting.*

## **12. Forward Work Programme**

*Noted:* The Committee noted the informal meeting with Farmers for Action on Tuesday 14 October 2014 at 12.00 p.m.

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

### **13. AOB**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department to ascertain if a policy exists which prevents farmers from accompanying Single Farm Payment Inspectors during an inspection.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing with CAFRE to discuss its provision for the demand for courses for the Young Farmers Scheme.

*3.19. p.m. Mrs Dobson rejoined the meeting.*

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

The next meeting of the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development will take place on Tuesday 14 October 2014 at 1.30 p.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

*The meeting adjourned at 3.20 p.m.*

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William Irwin, Chairperson, Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development

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Date