

COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**TUESDAY 4 NOVEMBER 2014
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr William Irwin MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Joe Byrne MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Sydney Anderson 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

Apologies: Mr Thomas Buchanan MLA

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

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

1. Apologies

The apologies are noted above.

2. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson advised that a Committee visit to Scotland had taken place on 22/23 October 2014; a note of the visit will be provided in the meeting pack for the next meeting.

Noted: The Committee noted the note of the informal meeting with the NI Retail Consortium which took place on 21 October 2014.

The Chairperson advised the Committee that the publication of Member's Attendance at Committee meetings will be on the website on 7 November 2014.

3. Minutes of the meeting held 21 October 2014

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2014.

4. Matters Arising

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 20 October 2014 from AFBI in respect of the implications of its reduced budget.

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence from Rural Support in respect of its Issues Paper on Rural Stress.

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 24 October 2014 from the Department in respect of the meetings of the Fisheries Taskforce.

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 24 October 2014 from the Department in respect of the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020.

Agreed: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 24 October 2014 in respect of issues raised at the meeting on 7 October 2014. The Committee agreed to place the information on the Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Inclusion on the Committee website. The Committee also agreed to request that the Department updates the Committee on its work on the Adoption of Online consultation.

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 24 October 2014 from Rivers Agency on the ownership of six reservoirs and the power to undertake essential work.

Agreed: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 27 October 2014 from the Department in respect of issues raised at the Committee meeting on 30 September 2014. The Committee agreed to forward the relevant extract on the Infrastructure Investment Strategy Portal to Mr Patsy McGlone MLA and the relevant extract to NIACA following its presentation to the Committee.

Agreed: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 27 October 2014 from the Department in respect of issues raised at the Committee meeting on 1 July 2014. The Committee agreed to request updates on the proposals for a ban on driftnet fishing as it progresses.

Agreed: The Committee noted the monthly update from the Department in respect of Ash Dieback and agreed to request that the update moves to a quarterly basis unless the situation deteriorates.

1.38 p.m. Mrs Dobson joined the meeting.

5. Oral briefing on Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion: Rural Community Network

The following representatives of Rural Community Network joined the meeting at 1.39 p.m.

Kate Clifford, Director
Aiden Campbell, Policy and Public Affairs Officer

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

1.48 p.m. Mr McMullan joined the meeting.

1.54 p.m. Mr Anderson joined the meeting.

1.55 p.m. Mr McCarthy left the meeting.

1.56 p.m. Mr Milne and Mr McAleer joined the meeting

1.57 p.m. Mr Poots left the meeting.

2.11 p.m. Mr Elliott left the meeting.

2.15 p.m. Mr Elliott rejoined the meeting.

2.17 p.m. Mrs Dobson left the meeting.

2.19 p.m. Mr Poots rejoined the meeting.

2.22 p.m. Mr Milne left the meeting.

2.32 p.m. Mr McAleer left the meeting.

2.34 p.m. Mr McAleer rejoined the meeting.

2.36 p.m. Mr Elliott left the meeting.

6. Oral briefing DARD: Nitrates Action Programme (NAP) 2015-18

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 2.37 p.m.

Brian Ervine, Principal Officer
Alistair Carson, Assistant Secretary
Ian McCluggage, Agricultural Inspector Grade 1

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

2.38 p.m. Mr McAleer left the meeting.
2.46 p.m. Mrs Dobson rejoined the meeting.
2.47 p.m. Mr Elliott rejoined the meeting.
2.59 p.m. Mr McCarthy left the meeting.
2.59 p.m. Mr McMullan left the meeting.
3.02 p.m. Mr Elliott left the meeting.
3.14 p.m. Mr McAleer rejoined the meeting.
3.18 p.m. Mr McAleer left the meeting.
3.20 p.m. Mr Poots left the meeting.
3.20 p.m. Mrs Dobson left the meeting.
3.26 p.m. Mr McMullan rejoined the meeting.

Mr Irwin declared an interest that he is a farmer.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request updates on the Sustainable Use of Poultry Litter competition and to consider an oral briefing if deemed necessary.

7. Oral Briefing DARD: Strangford Lough

The following Departmental official joined the meeting at 3.27 p.m.

Ian Humes, Principal Officer

Mr Humes briefed the Committee and this was followed by a question and answer session.

3.30 p.m. Mr Elliott rejoined the meeting.
3.41 p.m. Mr McAleer rejoined the meeting.
3.51 p.m. Mr Poots rejoined the meeting.
3.59 p.m. Mr Anderson left the meeting.

8. Written Briefing SL1: The Dogs (Licensing and Identification) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2014

Agreed: The Committee noted the SL1: The Dogs (Licensing and Identification) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2014 and agreed that it was content with the merits of the policy.

9. Correspondence

Agreed: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 23 October 2014 from the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment in respect

of NI Economic Strategy – year 2 Annual Monitoring Report. The Committee agreed to forward the report to the Department for comment.

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence from the OFMDFM Committee in respect of the October edition of the EU Matters Newsletter.

Agreed: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 23 October 2014 from the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment in respect of its intention to seek bi-annual updates on the progress of actions within Going for Growth. The Committee agreed to consider a joint stakeholder event with the ETI Committee in respect of Going for Growth.

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 21 October 2014 from the Department in respect of a written update on the Conservation of Sea Bass Regulations (NI) 2015.

Noted: The Committee noted the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland Investing Activity Report October 2014 for the Department.

10. Forward Work Programme

Noted: The Committee noted that a Departmental briefing on the Draft Budget 2015-16 has been requested for 18 November 2014.

Noted: The Committee noted that the Committee meeting on 11 November 2014 will commence at 1.00 p.m. to facilitate a closed session briefing on the Reservoirs Bill.

Noted: The Committee noted that the Draft BVD legislation briefing has been deferred to later in the session at the request of the Department due to issues with the database.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the list of organisations to be invited to the stakeholder event on 20 November 2014 in respect of the thematic review on Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft Forward Work Programme.

4.04 p.m. Mr Anderson rejoined the meeting.

11. AOB

There is no other business.

12. Date and time of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development will take place on Tuesday 11 November 2014 at 1.00 p.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

4.05 p.m. The meeting adjourned.

William Irwin, Chairperson, Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development

Date