

COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**TUESDAY 25 NOVEMBER 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
Mr George McClelland, Clerical Supervisor
Mr Jonathan McMillan, Legal Advisor (agenda item 11)

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

1. Apologies

There are no apologies.

1.34 p.m. Mr Buchanan joined the meeting.

2. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson advised the Committee that he and the Deputy Chairperson had met with Rivers Agency officials this morning to discuss a

recent reservoir incident. The Committee will receive a written briefing with regard to this issue.

3. Minutes of the meeting held 18 November 2014

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

4. Matters Arising

Agreed: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 13 November 2014 from the Department in respect of issues raised at the meeting on 21 October 2014. The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Committee for Finance and Personnel for information.

5. Oral briefing on Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion: MARA Project

The following representatives of the Public Health Agency joined the meeting at 1.41 p.m.

Mary Black, Assistant Director
Colette Brolly, Health and Social Wellbeing Improvement Manager

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

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

1.54 p.m. Mr McMullan joined the meeting.

1.55 p.m. Mr McCarthy left the meeting.

1.57 p.m. Mr Milne left the meeting.

1.58 p.m. Mrs Dobson left the meeting.

2.03 p.m. Mr Milne rejoined the meeting.

2.12 p.m. Mr Poots left the meeting.

2.14 p.m. Mr McMullan left the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Public Health Agency to request the percentage of farmers who have availed of the MARA project and information on super output areas by each zone.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a detailed analysis of the information gathered to date in connection with the MARA Project and for a copy of the final evaluation of the project upon completion.

6. Written briefing DARD: Avian Flu

Noted: The Committee noted the written briefing from the Department on Avian Flu.

7. Correspondence

Noted: The Committee noted the EU Matters Newsletter.

Agreed: The Committee noted the emailed correspondence from Dairy UK requesting to brief the Committee on dairy markets. The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing on 2 December 2014.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to ask if the operating rules for the Rural Development Programme will be available in the New Year.

8. Forward Work Programme

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft Forward Work Programme.

9. Oral Briefing DARD: Budget 2015/16

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 2.26 p.m.

Noel Lavery, Permanent Secretary
Gerry Lavery, Deputy Secretary
Graeme Wilkinson, Assistant Secretary

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

2.28 p.m. Mrs Dobson rejoined the meeting.

2.52 p.m. Mr Buchanan and Mr Milne left the meeting.

2.57 p.m. Mr Poots rejoined the meeting.

3.12 p.m. Mrs Dobson left the meeting.

3.20 p.m. Mr Buchanan rejoined the meeting.

3.25 p.m. Mr Elliott left the meeting.

3.35 p.m. Mrs Dobson rejoined the meeting.

3.37 p.m. Mr Poots left the meeting.

3.37 p.m. Mr Byrne left the meeting.

3.38 p.m. Mr McMullan rejoined the meeting.

3.39 p.m. Mr McAleer left the meeting.

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

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request a breakdown of the projected savings to be made from NIFAIS.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request further detail on its statutory obligations and the number of staff associated with them. The Committee also agreed to request detail on costs, including salary, for the statutory obligations.

3.40 p.m. The meeting suspended.

3.57 p.m. The meeting resumed in Closed Session.

The following Members were present: Mr Buchanan, Mr Byrne, Mrs Dobson, Mr Irwin, Mr Milne and Mr McMullan.

10. Budget 2015/16: Committee Response

Agreed: The Committee discussed the response to the Department on the Budget 2015/16 and agreed that the clerk should draft the response and bring back to the Committee at the next meeting for sign off.

4.01 p.m. Mr McMullan left the meeting.

11. Legal Advice

The Assembly Legal Advisor joined the meeting at 4.09 p.m. and briefed the Committee on the legal advice requested in relation to the proposal put to the Committee by Farmers for Action.

4.10 p.m. Mr Anderson joined the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the clerk would draft a response to Farmers for Action based on the legal advice which has been received and bring the draft back to the Committee for sign off at the next meeting.

12. AOB

There was no other business.

13. Date and time of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development will take place on Tuesday 2 December 2014 at 1.30 p.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

4.20 p.m. The meeting adjourned.

William Irwin, Chairperson, Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development

Date