

COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

TUESDAY 14 APRIL 2015
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Mr William Irwin MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Joe Byrne MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Sydney Anderson MLA
Mr Tom Buchanan MLA
Mrs Jo-Anne 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 Dagmar Walgraeve, Clerical Officer

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

1. Apologies

There are no apologies.

2. Chairperson's Business

Agreed: The Committee noted the record of the informal meeting with Commission Hogan on 27 March 2015 and agreed to consider a meeting with him in Brussels before summer recess.

Agreed: Members agreed to forward details of case studies they are aware of which illustrate difficulties with CAP to the clerk for onward transmission to the EU Commissioner.

Noted: The Committee noted the invitation from the Minister to the DARD Breakfast Event at the Balmoral Show on 14 May 2015. Members are asked to advise if they will be attending.

1.34 p.m. Mr Buchanan and Mr Poots joined the meeting.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 2015

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft minutes of the meetings held on 24 March 2015.

4. Matters Arising

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 31 March 2015 from OFMDFM in respect of Shackleton Barracks, Ballykelly.

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 1 April 2015 from the Department in respect of CAP Basic Payment Scheme.

5. Oral Briefing DARD: Better Regulation and Research and Development Strategy

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 1.36 p.m.

Philip Gilmore, Deputy Principal
Norman Fulton, Director of Policy and Economics
Alistair Carson, Assistant Secretary
Paul McGurnaghan, Director of Digital Services
Damien Kerr, Grade 7

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

1.39 p.m. Mr McMullan joined the meeting.

1.42 p.m. Mr Elliott joined the meeting.

2.00 p.m. Mr Buchanan left the meeting.

2.02 p.m. Mr McMullan left the meeting.

2.02 p.m. Mr Milne joined the meeting.

2.03 p.m. Mr Byrne left the meeting.

2.05 p.m. Mr McAleer left the meeting.

2.16 p.m. Mr McAleer rejoined the meeting.

2.22 p.m. Mr Milne left the meeting.

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

2.31 p.m. Mr Buchanan rejoined the meeting.

2.33 p.m. Mr Byrne rejoined the meeting.

2.33 p.m. Mrs Dobson left the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request a summary on the level of collaboration which has existed and currently exists between AFBI and QUB.

6. Oral Briefing DARD: Business Plan Targets for 2015-16

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 2.46 p.m.

Graeme Wilkinson, Assistant Secretary

Colette McMaster, Assistant Secretary

Tracey Teague, Assistant Secretary

Pauline Rooney, Acting Assistant Secretary

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

2.52 p.m. Mr Anderson left the meeting.

2.53 p.m. Mr Poots left the meeting.

2.58 p.m. Mr McAleer left the meeting.

3.17 p.m. Mr McMullan rejoined the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request details of the private sector sick absence figures which it uses to benchmark against.

7. Oral Briefing DARD: AFBI Horizon 2020 Officer

The following Departmental official joined the meeting at 3.20 p.m.

Dr Elaine Groom

Dr Groom briefed the Committee and this was followed by a question and answer session.

3.31 p.m. Mr McAleer rejoined the meeting.

3.32 p.m. Mr McMullan left the meeting.

8. Written Brief DARD: Progress on Digital Services

Noted: The Committee noted the Departmental written briefing on Progress on Digital Services.

3.40 p.m. Mr McMullan rejoined the meeting.

9. SR 2015/135: The Agriculture (Student Fees) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2015

Question put and agreed:

That the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development has considered SR 2015/135: The Agriculture (Student Fees) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2015 and has no objections to the rule.

10. Correspondence

Noted: The Committee noted the Conflicts of Interest: A Good Practice Guide which was forwarded by the NI Audit Office.

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 25 March 2015 from the Department of Justice on Guidance on Crime Prevention, Protection and Reasonable.

Agreed: The Committee noted the Procurement Activity Report for the Department and agreed to request an update from the Department in respect of the amber targets.

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

11. Forward Work Programme

Agreed: The Committee discussed the options for a Committee Review and agreed on Better Regulation. The Terms of Reference for the review will be considered at a future meeting.

Noted: The Committee noted that there will be no meeting on Tuesday 28 April 2015 due to the scheduling of the Consideration Stage of the Reservoirs Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Forward Work Programme.

3.46 p.m. Mr McAleer left the meeting.

12. AOB

There was no other business.

13. Date of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development will take place on Tuesday 21 April 2015 at 1.30 p.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

3.51 p.m. The meeting adjourned.

William Irwin, Chairperson, Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development

Date