

# COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

## MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**MONDAY 14 DECEMBER 2015  
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

- Present: Mr William Irwin MLA (Chairperson)  
Mr Sydney Anderson MLA  
Mrs Jo-Anne Dobson MLA  
Mr Declan McAleer MLA  
Mr Ian McCrea MLA  
Mr Oliver McMullan MLA  
Mr Ian Milne MLA  
Mr Robin Swann MLA
- Apologies: Mr Joe Byrne MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Kieran McCarthy MLA  
Mr Edwin Poots MLA
- In attendance: Ms Stella McArdle, Committee Clerk  
Ms Lynda Conlon, Assistant Assembly Clerk  
Mr Mark O'Hare, Clerical Supervisor  
Ms Marion Johnson, Clerical Officer  
Mr Jonathan McMillen, Acting Head of Legal Services  
(Agenda Item 2)

*11.07 a.m. The meeting commenced in Closed Session.*

### **1. Apologies**

The apologies are recorded above.

### **2. Fisheries Bill: Consideration of Legal Advice**

The Committee was briefed by the Acting Head of Legal Services.

*11.12 a.m. Mr Swann joined the meeting.*

11.23 a.m. *The meeting moved in Open Session.*

### **3. Fisheries Bill: Committee Discussion**

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 11.24 a.m.

Seamus Connor, Chief Fisheries Officer, DCAL  
Liam Devlin, Deputy Principal, Inland Fisheries Group, DCAL  
John Terrington, Fisheries Bill Team, DARD  
Mark McCaughan, Chief Fisheries Officer, DARD  
Paddy Campbell, Sea Fisheries Policy, DARD

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

11.29 a.m. *Mrs Dobson joined the meeting.*

11.38 a.m. *The officials left the meeting.*

11.39 a.m. *The meeting moved into Closed Session.*

11.45 a.m. *Mr McCrea joined the meeting.*

11.48 a.m. *The meeting moved into Open Session.*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to undertake Committee Stage scrutiny of only Clause 6 (and appropriate technical provisions) of the Fisheries Bill.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure to inform them of the Committee's decision and to ascertain if that Committee wished to undertake the scrutiny of Clauses 10, 11, 12 and 13.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Minister regarding its decision and to offer a joint press statement regarding the decision to proceed with only Clause 6 of the Fisheries Bill and to seek assurances that this mutual decision will be referenced during her Second Stage speech.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to publish the letter from the Minister, dated 14 December 2015, on Committee section of the Assembly website.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to prepare Committee Motions not to move the appropriate clauses at Consideration Stage of the Fisheries Bill.

#### **4. Rural Needs Bill: Informal Clause by Clause**

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 11.50 a.m. to discuss issues in relation to the informal clause by clause of the Rural Needs Bill.

Colette McMaster, Assistant Secretary, Director of Food, Farm and Rural Policy  
Astrid Stuart, Head of Rural Proofing Branch

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

*Agreed:* The Committee discussed Clause 1 and agreed that it is content with the DARD position in connection to “due regard”.

*Agreed:* The Committee discussed Clause 1 and agreed to that it is content with the DARD position on the addition of the word “budgets” to Clause 1(1)(a).

*Agreed:* The Committee discussed Clause 1 and agreed that it is content with the advice that DARD received and its subsequent decision not to include a provision to mitigate against adverse impact.

*Agreed:* The Committee discussed Clause 1 and agreed that it is content with the DARD position to include a list of public bodies, as laid out in *The Draft Local Government (Community Planning Partners) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016*, on the face of the Bill.

*Agreed:* The Committee discussed Clause 1 and agreed that it is content with the DARD position to include a provision to review the list of public bodies included on the face of the Bill within an agreed timescale.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that it is content with Clause 1, as per the proposed amendments, with the proviso that the Committee has yet to see the actual amendments.

*Agreed:* The Committee discussed Clause 2 and agreed that it is content with the DARD amendment to replace the word “may” with “must”.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that it is content with Clause 2, as per the proposed amendments, with the proviso that the Committee has yet to see the actual amendments.

*Agreed:* The Committee discussed Clause 3 and agreed that it is content with the DARD position to require the publication of the annual report and a statement by the Minister to the Assembly on that report.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that it is content with Clause 3, as per the proposed amendments, with the proviso that the Committee has yet to see the actual amendment.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that it is content with Clause 4 as Introduced.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that it is content with Clause 5 as Introduced.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that it is content with the DARD Letter of Intent with regard to providing further clarification of definitions in guidance.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that it is content with Clause 6 as Introduced.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that it is content with Clause 7 as Introduced.

## **5. Date and time of the next meeting**

The next meeting of the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development will take place on Tuesday, 12 January 2016 at 10.30a.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

*4.57 p.m. The meeting adjourned.*

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William Irwin, Chairperson, Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development

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Date