

## COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

### MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**TUESDAY 24 NOVEMBER 2015  
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr William Irwin MLA (Chairperson)  
Mr Joe Byrne MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Sydney Anderson MLA  
Mrs Jo-Anne Dobson MLA  
Mr Declan McAleer MLA  
Mr Kieran McCarthy MLA  
Mr Ian McCrea MLA  
Mr Oliver McMullan MLA  
Mr Ian Milne MLA  
Mr Edwin Poots MLA  
Mr Robin Swann MLA

In attendance: Ms Stella McArdle, Committee Clerk  
Ms Lynda Conlon, Assistant Clerk  
Mr Mark O'Hare, Clerical Supervisor  
Ms Dagmar Walgraeve, Clerical Officer  
Mr Mark Allen, Research Officer  
Mr Colin Pidgeon, Research Officer

*10.11 a.m. The meeting commenced in Open Session.*

#### **1. Apologies**

There are no apologies.

#### **2. Rural Needs Bill: Written Submissions**

*Agreed:* The Committee noted the written submissions received in response to the Rural Needs Bill Call for Evidence and agreed to forward these submissions to the Department for comment.

### **3. Oral Briefing RaISe: Rural Needs Bill**

The Committee received a briefing from Assembly Research Officers on the Rural Needs Bill.

- 10.17 a.m. Mr Anderson joined the meeting.*
- 10.20 a.m. Mr McAleer joined the meeting.*
- 10.32 a.m. Mr Poots joined the meeting.*
- 10.33 a.m. Mr McAleer left the meeting.*
- 10.35 a.m. Mr Milne joined the meeting.*
- 10.45 a.m. Mrs Dobson joined the meeting.*

### **4. Oral Briefing DARD: Rural Needs Bill**

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 10.50 a.m.

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

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

- 10.51 a.m. Mr McAleer rejoined the meeting.*
- 11.36 a.m. The officials left the meeting.*

### **5. Oral Briefing Local Rural Support Networks: Rural Needs Bill**

The following representatives joined the meeting at 11.36 a.m.

Mary T. Conway, Omagh Forum for Rural Associations  
Loraine Griffin, Community Organisations of South Tyrone and Areas  
Brendan McCann, The Armagh, Down and Antrim Network  
Nicholas McCrickard, County Down Rural Community Network

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

- 11.37 a.m. Mr McMullan left the meeting.*
- 11.45 a.m. Mr McMullan rejoined the meeting.*
- 11.50 a.m. Mr Milne left the meeting.*
- 11.53 a.m. Mr Milne rejoined the meeting.*

- 11.59 a.m. *Mr Poots left the meeting.*  
11.59 a.m. *Mr Swann joined the meeting.*  
12.10 p.m. *Mr Poots rejoined the meeting.*
- 12.11 p.m. *The Local RSN representatives left the meeting.*
- 12.11 p.m. *The meeting suspended.*
- 12.24 p.m. *The meeting resumed in Open Session with the following Members present: Mr Irwin; Mr McAleer; Mr McCarthy; and Mr McMullan.*

## **6. Oral Briefing Rural Community Network and Rural Development Council: Rural Needs Bill**

The following representatives joined the meeting at 12.24 p.m.

Kate Clifford, Rural Community Network  
Aidan Campbell, Rural Community Network  
Teresa Canavan, Rural Development Council

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

- 12.28 p.m. *Mr Swann rejoined the meeting.*  
12.33 p.m. *Mr Milne rejoined the meeting.*
- 12.42 p.m. *The RCN and RDC representatives left the meeting.*
- 12.42 p.m. *The meeting suspended.*
- 1.26 p.m. *The meeting resumed in Open Session with the following Members present: Mr Anderson; Mr Irwin; Mr McMullan; and Mr Poots.*

## **7. Oral Briefing LIDL: General Purchasing Policy**

The following representatives joined the meeting at 1.26 p.m.

Liam Casey, Purchasing Manager, LIDL  
Brendan Conway, Senior Buyer, LIDL

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

- 1.26 p.m. *Mrs Dobson rejoined the meeting.*

- 1.32 p.m. *Mr McAleer rejoined the meeting.*  
1.37 p.m. *Mr McCarthy rejoined the meeting.*  
1.40 p.m. *Mr Swann rejoined the meeting.*  
1.55 p.m. *Mr McMullan left the meeting.*  
2.03 p.m. *Mr Milne rejoined the meeting.*
- 2.05 p.m. *The LIDL representatives left the meeting.*
- 2.05 p.m. *The meeting suspended.*
- 3.03 p.m. *The meeting resumed in Open Session with the following Members present: Mr Irwin; Mr McAleer; Mr McMullan; Mr Milne and Mr Poots.*

## **8. Oral Briefing Northern Ireland Local Government Association and Solace NI: Rural Needs Bill**

The following representatives joined the meeting at 3.03 p.m.

Derek McCallan, CEO, Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA)  
Cáthal Mallaghan, Chair of NILGA's Rural Development Action Team and Presiding Councillor, Mid Ulster Council  
Anthony Tohill, CEO, Mid Ulster Council

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

- 3.09 p.m. *Mr McCrea joined the meeting.*  
3.10 p.m. *Mr Poots left the meeting.*  
3.11 p.m. *Mr Swann rejoined the meeting.*  
3.26 p.m. *Mr Milne left the meeting.*
- 3.32 p.m. *The NILGA and Solace NI representatives left the meeting.*

## **9. Rural Needs Bill: Motion to Extend Committee Stage**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the Motion to extend the Committee Stage of the Rural Needs Bill until 26 January 2016.

## **10. Chairperson's Business**

The Chairperson advised Members that Committee Members undertook a

visit to the Institute for Global Food Security at Queen's on Tuesday, 17 November 2015.

The Chairperson advised Members that Mr Poots and he met with Members of the EFRA Committee and the Groceries Code Adjudicator in London on Wednesday, 18 November 2015.

## **11. Minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2015**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the draft minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2015.

## **12. Matters Arising**

*Noted:* The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister dated 13 November 2015 informing the Committee about the introduction of the Single Common Market Organisation (Emergency Aid for Milk Producers) Regulations 2015 which will enable the payment of EU targeted aid to dairy farmers in NI.

*Agreed:* The Committee noted correspondence from DARD dated 09 November 2015 providing an update on the Outline Business Case (OBCs) for the capital investment requirements to replace AFBI facilities and agreed that the Committee should be kept informed of the progress of both OBCs.

*Agreed:* The Committee noted correspondence from DARD dated 11 November 2015 advising that the EU Commission recently confirmed that proposals for a complete ban on all fishing with driftnets in EU waters had been withdrawn and agreed that the Department should continue to update the Committee on all relevant developments.

*Noted:* The Committee noted an update from DARD on the NIFAIS Programme.

*Agreed:* The Committee noted correspondence from DARD dated 18 November 2015 regarding the launch of the public consultation on a successor TRPSI Framework and agreed to request a briefing on the outcome of the consultation once completed.

*Noted:* The Committee noted correspondence from Tesco dated 17 November 2015 assuring the Committee that they pay producers a fair price for turnips sold in their stores.

### **13. Correspondence**

*Agreed:* The Committee noted the European Commission's recent call for experts for the 'Agricultural Markets Task Force' and agreed to enquire whether the Department is aware of this call and if they know of any NI or UK 'experts' who may apply to participate.

*Noted:* The Committee noted the most recent issue of EU Matters.

*Noted:* The Committee noted an update on the Sustainable Use of Poultry Litter (SUPL) Project forwarded by the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment.

*Noted:* The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Finance and Personnel, forwarded by the Committee for Finance and Personnel, outlining the performance of each department in implementing their Savings Delivery Plans at 31 March 2015.

*Noted:* The Committee noted a briefing paper on the implications for Northern Ireland of the referendum on whether the United Kingdom should remain in or leave the European Union.

### **14. Forward Work Programme**

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

### **15. AOB**

There was no other business.

### **16. Oral Briefing Ulster Farmers' Union and NI Agricultural Producers Association: Rural Needs Bill**

The following representatives joined the meeting at 3.36 p.m.

Ian Marshall, President, UFU  
Freda Magill, Rural Affairs Chair, UFU  
Jim Carmichael, NIAPA

Michael Clarke, NIAPA

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

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

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

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

*3.57 p.m. Mr McMullan left the meeting.*

*3.59 p.m. The UFU and NIAPA representatives left the meeting.*

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

The next meeting of the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development will take place on Tuesday 01 December 2015 at 1.30 p.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

*4.00 p.m. The meeting adjourned.*

-----  
William Irwin, Chairperson, Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development

-----  
Date