

# COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL AFFAIRS

## MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

WEDNESDAY 1 JULY 2020  
THE SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Mr Declan McAleer MLA (Chairperson)  
Mr Philip McGuigan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Ms Clare Bailey MLA (via StarLeaf)  
Mrs Rosemary Barton MLA  
Mr John Blair MLA  
Mr Maurice Bradley MLA  
Mr Harry Harvey MLA  
Mr William Irwin MLA  
Mr Patsy McGlone MLA (via StarLeaf)

In attendance: Ms Stella McArdle, Committee Clerk  
Ms Barbara Love, Committee Clerk (via StarLeaf)  
Ms Elaine Farrell, Assistant Clerk (via StarLeaf)  
Ms Marion Johnson, Clerical Supervisor  
Ms Marrienne McGuiggan, Clerical Officer (via StarLeaf)

*The meeting commenced at 3.04 p.m. in open session*

### 1. Apologies

None

### 2. Draft Minutes

*Agreed:* The minutes from the meeting held on 24 June 2020 were agreed.

### 3. Matters arising

*Noted:* The Committee noted the note of the informal meeting which took place with the House of Lords EU Sub Committee on 25 June 2020.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the contents of a letter from the Chairperson to the Chairperson of the House of Lords EU Sub Committee outlining a number of concerns regarding the Protocol.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to seek a briefing from of the NI ports after summer recess.

*Noted:* The Committee noted the correspondence from the Department on issues raised at the Committee meeting on 18 June 2020.

*Mr Irwin joined the meeting at 3.09 p.m.*

#### **4. Oral Briefing: NIEA Draft Business Plan 2020-2021**

The following departmental officials joined the meeting at 3.12 p.m.

Tracey Teague, Acting Chief Executive  
Helen Anderson, Director of Natural Environment  
Tim Irwin, Director of Resource

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

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the NIEA to request further information on a number of issues.

#### **5. Ministerial Oral Briefing**

Minister Poots joined the meeting at 4.08 p.m. The following departmental officials were also in attendance:

Dr Denis McMahon, Permanent Secretary  
Robert Huey, Deputy Secretary, Veterinary Animal Health Group  
David Small, Deputy Secretary, Environment, Marine & Fisheries Group  
(via StarLeaf)  
Tracey Teague, Acting Chief Executive. NIEA

Rosemary Agnew, Grade 5, Brexit Director

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

The oral evidence was reported by Hansard.

*The Chairperson left the meeting at 5.14 p.m. The Deputy Chairperson assumed the chair.*

The Deputy Chairperson thanked the Minister and his officials for their attendance.

**6. SR 2020/81: The Direct Payments to Farmers Single Application Amendment Date (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020**

The Committee considered SR 2020/81 which allows farmers to make changes to the single application, without penalty, due to the difficulties they may have had in finalising their applications due to Covid-19 restrictions.

The Committee noted that the Examiner of Statutory Rules (ESR) has highlighted that the Department are in breach of the 21-day rule but she is content with the explanation provided by the Department. The Committee also noted that the ESR has drawn attention to a drafting error which the Department intends to amend by way of a correction slip.

Question put and agreed:

“That the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, has considered SR 2020/81: The Direct Payments to Farmers Single Application Amendment Date (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 and has no objection to the rule”.

**7. SR 2020/112: The Waste (Fees and Charges) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020**

The Committee considered SR 2020/112 which allows fees and charges to be updated for the registration of brokers, dealers and carriers of waste and the processing of registration for exemptions from waste management and licensing.

Question put and agreed:

“That the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs has considered SR 2020/112: The Waste (Fees and Charges) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 and has no objection to the rule.

The Waste (Fees and Charges) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020.

*The Chairperson rejoined the meeting at 5.34 p.m. and resumed the chair.*

## **8. Departmental Written Briefing: Covid-19 Update**

*Agreed:* The Committee noted the Covid-19 update from the Department and agreed to publish it on the Committee webpage and to issue a Tweet to advise that the briefing has been published.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to seek a further Covid-19 written briefing for the first meeting in September following summer recess and if the circumstances dictate, move to monthly updates thereafter.

## **9. LCM Report on the UK Fisheries Bill**

The Committee considered the finalised LCM Report on the UK Fisheries Bill.

Question put and agreed:

“That the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs orders the report on the Legislative Consent Memorandum on the UK Government Fisheries Bill 2019-2020 (Report NIA 13/77-22) to be printed”.

## **10. Committee Motion – Climate Change**

The Committee considered a proposed Committee Motion on Climate Change and a number of proposed amendments.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to have a Committee debate on Climate Change at the next available Plenary date.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the wording of the Committee Motion and the proposed amendments until after the informal meeting scheduled for Thursday 2 July 2020.

## 11. Correspondence

The Committee noted the following:

- i. Correspondence from Arc 21 which has issued to Minister Dodds and copied to DAERA requesting to meet with Arc 21 to discuss waste management issues.
- ii. Correspondence from the Committee for the Economy highlighting the role of the Small Business Commissioner.
- iii. Correspondence from the Department on the launch of a discussion document on the Future Recycling and Separate Collection of Household Waste. The Committee noted that it will receive a briefing on Waste Management and EU Exit in September 2020.
- iv. Correspondence from the Department on the Committee on Climate Change 2020 Progress Report to Parliament on Reducing UK Emissions.
- v. The Fourteenth Report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules 2019-2020.
- vi. The ISNI Investing Activity Report for June 2020.

The Committee considered correspondence from the TB Eradication Partnership which requests a meeting with the Committee.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to schedule an informal meeting with the TB Eradication Partnership in September 2020.

The Committee considered correspondence from the Department on a DEFRA consultation on the contractual relationship in the UK dairy industry.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request that it informs and encourages the local dairy industry to take part in the consultation. The Committee also agreed to seek a written update on the outcome of the consultation and the proposed way forward.

The Committee considered correspondence from the Scottish Parliament's Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform (ECCLR) Committee which provides a link to its LCM Report on UK Environment Bill.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to forward its LCM Report on the UK Environment Bill to the ECCLR Committee and advise it of the outcome of the NIA debate on the report.

The Committee considered correspondence from the EU Affairs Officer on the Common Frameworks which will require NIA Committee scrutiny.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to forward letters referred in the correspondence to the Department for comment on how it intends to engage with the Committee on the Common Frameworks mentioned.

## **12.AOB**

There was no other business.

## **13.Date, time and place of the next meeting**

The next meeting of the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs will be an informal meeting which will take place on Thursday 2 July 2020 at 2.00 p.m. via StarLeaf.

*The meeting moved into Closed Session at 6.00 p.m.*

## **14.Forward Work Programme**

The Committee considered the draft Forward Work Programme for September-December 2020.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing with the NI Business Brexit Working Group for the meeting of 3 September 2020.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing with NIEL for the meeting on 10 September 2020.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to provide a copy of the Forward Work Programme to the Department and request that the Committee is kept informed of any developments over the summer recess period in relation to EU Exit work that will come to the Committee.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the draft Forward Work Programme and its publication on the Committee webpage.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed its approach to its forward work programme to December 2020 including that its priority and focus would be EU Exit.

*The meeting adjourned at 6.20 p.m.*

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Declan McAleer, Chairperson, Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development

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Date