

## COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

THURSDAY 14 JANUARY 2021  
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Mr Declan McAleer MLA (Chairperson)  
Mr Philip McGuigan MLA (Deputy Chairperson) (via StarLeaf)  
Ms Clare Bailey MLA (via StarLeaf)  
Mrs Rosemary Barton MLA  
Mr John Blair MLA (via StarLeaf)  
Mr Maurice Bradley MLA (via StarLeaf)  
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  
Ms Elaine Farrell, Assistant Clerk  
Ms Marion Johnson, Clerical Supervisor  
Ms Kate Duffy, Clerical Officer  
Mr Mark Allen, Research Officer (agenda item 5)

*The Committee commenced at 10.05 a.m. in Open Session*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to move into Closed Session to discuss Chairperson's Business.

*The meeting moved into Closed Session at 10.05 a.m.*

#### **1. Chairperson's Business**

The Committee discussed a number of items of correspondence for issue and agreed that suggested amendments could be cleared by email, after which the letters could issue.

*The meeting moved into Open Session at 10.12 a.m.*

## **2. Apologies**

None.

## **3. Minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2020 and 7 January 2021**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2020 and 7 January 2021.

## **4. Matters arising**

None.

## **5. Oral Briefing RalSe: Agricultural Policy Developments – UK, Ireland and other Selected Jurisdictions**

The Assembly Research Officer joined the meeting via StarLeaf at 10.14 a.m.

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

The Chairperson thanked the Research Officer for his briefing

*Agreed:* The Research Officer agreed to forward his PowerPoint presentation to the Committee for information.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to commission a RalSe research paper on the Shared Prosperity Fund and its engagement with rural stakeholders and communities.

## **6. Oral Evidence Session DAERA: Revised Northern Ireland Bovine Tuberculosis Programme**

The following departmental officials joined the meeting via StarLeaf at 10.43 a.m.

Neal Gartland, Director of Animal Health & Welfare Policy Division  
Michael Hatch, Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer  
Seamus Murray, Grade 7, TB Policy Implementation Branch  
Raymond Kirke, Grade 7, TB Strategy, VEU and Wildlife Unit

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

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

*Mr Irwin left the meeting at 11.03 a.m.*

*Mr Irwin rejoined the meeting at 11.12 a.m.*

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request information on the comparative figures with the incidence rate of TB in cattle here and in the Republic of Ireland.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request an update on the issue of provision of alternative control herds.

## **7. Oral Evidence Session DAERA: Common Frameworks – Resource and Waste Policy**

The following departmental officials joined the meeting via StarLeaf at 11.33 a.m.

John Mills, Grade 5, Head of Environmental Policy Division  
Janice Harris, Grade 6, Assistant Director, Environmental Policy Division  
Robert McLaughlin, Deputy Principal, Waste Strategy Branch

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

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

*Mr Irwin left the meeting at 11.49 a.m.*

*Mr Irwin rejoined the meeting at 11.56 a.m.*

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

## **8. SR 2020/304: The Fluorinated Greenhouse Gases and Controls on Ozone Depleting Substances (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020**

The Committee considered SR 2020/304: The Fluorinated Greenhouse Gases and Controls on Ozone Depleting Substances (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020, which will make amendments to

legislation in the field of ozone depleting substances and fluorinated greenhouse gases.

Mrs Barton sought clarification on the role of the Protocol in respect of the SR.

Colin Nugent, Environmental Policy Advisor and Environmental Health Officer, DAERA, joined the meeting at 12.08 p.m.

Mr Nugent provided clarification on the issues relating to the Protocol.

Question put and agreed:

‘That the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs has considered SR 2020/304: The Fluorinated Greenhouse Gases and Controls on Ozone Depleting Substances (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 and, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules Report, has no objection to the Rule’.

Mrs Barton raised an objection to the SR on the grounds of the Protocol.

Mr Irwin and Mr Harvey advised that they are abstaining on agreeing the question.

*Mrs Barton left the meeting at 12.08 p.m.*

*Mr Irwin left the meeting at 12.09 p.m.*

#### **9. SR 2020/319: The Seed Marketing and Fertilisers (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020**

The Committee considered SR 2020/319: The Seed Marketing and Fertilisers (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 Which will implement the EU Withdrawal Agreement and the Protocol in relation to the marketing of agricultural seed and fertilisers and amends the Seed Marketing Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016.

Question put and agreed:

‘That the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs has considered SR 2020/319: The Seed Marketing and Fertilisers (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 and, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules Report, has no objection to the Rule’.

#### **10. Written Briefing DAERA: Future Programmes, Investments and Education Policy at CAFRE**

*Agreed:* The Committee noted the departmental written briefing on Future Programmes, Investments and Education Policy at CAFRE and agreed to forward questions on the briefing to the clerk for response by the Department.

#### **11. Written Briefing DAERA: Monthly Covid-19 Update**

*Agreed:* The Committee considered the departmental written briefing dated 6 January 2021 on the monthly Covid-19 update and agreed to forward questions on the briefing to the clerk for response by the Department.

*Mr Irwin rejoined the meeting at 12.13 p.m.*

#### **12. Written Briefing DAERA: EU Exit Transition**

*Agreed:* The Committee considered the departmental written briefing on EU Exit Transition and agreed to write to the Department to seek clarification on the inspection and delay of tractors coming from GB to Northern Ireland.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Committee for the Economy to highlight the issue of goods at risk and tariffs.

*Mrs Barton rejoined the meeting a 12.18 p.m.*

#### **13. Written Briefing DAERA: NIEA Regulatory Charging Policy 1 April 2021-31 March 2023**

*Noted:* The Committee noted the departmental briefing on NIEA Regulatory Charging Policy 1 April 2021-31 March 2023.

#### **14. Correspondence**

The Committee noted the following:

- i. The Department's Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Report 1 April 2019-31 March 2020;
- ii. Correspondence from the Department in relation to the Statutory Instrument on The Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (Commission Regulations (EC) No 865/2006) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 (CTS 02);
- iii. The Department's Covid-19 update for December 2020;

- iv. Correspondence from the Department on the UK decision to proceed with the implementation of a UK Emissions Trading Scheme (UKETS) as a carbon pricing option;
- v. Follow-up correspondence from the Department on issues raised at the meeting on 3 December 2020;
- vi. Correspondence from the Committee for the Economy on the issue of the potential economic impact at the end of the Covid support schemes, which it has issued to the First and deputy for First Minister for response.
- vii. Copied correspondence from the EU Affairs Manager from HM Treasury to the House of Lords EU Committee on issues raised in relation to EU proposal for a Single Window Environment for Customs and the implications for Northern Ireland.
- viii. Correspondence from the Minister on issues facing the wool market due to the pandemic and the measures he is taking to develop a strategy to assist with the profitability and sustainability of the wool market.
- ix. Copied correspondence from the Minister of Finance on the delays in consideration of the Draft Budget 2021-22 by the Executive;
- x. Correspondence from the Department advising that the Draft Greenhouse Gas Emission Trading Scheme (Amendment) Order 2020 was laid in the Assembly on 17 December 2020 and will be considered by the Committee in due course;
- xi. The ISNI Investing Activity Report for the Department;
- xii. Correspondence from NICCY on the report on Children's Rights in Northern Ireland;
- xiii. Follow-up correspondence from the Department on issues raised at the meeting in 12 November 2020;
- xiv. Follow-up correspondence from the Department on issues raised at the meeting on 10 December 2020;
- xv. Correspondence from the Department on the Internal Audit Review of Guidance and Process for Ministerial Submissions: Climate Change;
- xvi. Correspondence from the Department advising that the 2019 Annual Report on Bovine Tuberculosis will be published on its website and has been shared with key stakeholders;
- xvii. Correspondence from the Children's Law Centre on the NI NGO Stakeholder Report to inform the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child List of Issues;
- xviii. A report from Pivotal on 'New Decade, New Approach – One Year On'; and
- xix. The 18<sup>th</sup> Report from the Examiner of Statutory Rules.

The Committee considered correspondence from Tourism NI in response to the letter issued by the Committee on the marketing of angling as a sport.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to advise the Ulster Angling Federation of the response from Tourism NI.

The Committee considered the copied correspondence from the Committee for the Executive Office which issued to the First and deputy First Minister on the issue of committee scrutiny of Common Frameworks.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Committee for the Executive Office to request that the response to the letter to the First and deputy First Minister is shared with the Committee.

The Committee considered a series of correspondence from Jim Shannon MP on the DFP/Barnwell Farm Judicial Review case.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request details of the number of cases over the past three years when the Department overruled the findings of the Independent Panel of Review of Decisions and the reasons for that.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to further consider the issue of role and effectiveness of the Independent Panel of Review of Decisions following the briefing by the Department on the 28 January 2021.

The Committee considered correspondence from the Minister on the issue of importation of sheep from Scotland and associated EU requirements.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Minister to request that he keeps the Committee informed of any further developments in relation to this matter.

The Committee considered correspondence from the Northern Ireland Fishermen's Federation (NIFF) on its concerns and the impact of the EU Trade Deal on local fishing communities.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to invite NIFF to present to the Committee on 28 January 2021 on the issues it has outlined in relation to the EU Trade Deal.

The Committee considered correspondence from the Department on the Statutory Instrument (SI) on International Waste Shipments.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request that it is kept informed about the ongoing discussions in relation to the SI.

### **15. Forward Work Programme**

The Committee considered the draft Forward Work Programme.

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

### **16. AOB**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to invite departmental officials to appear before the Committee to provide a briefing on the delay of the Covid-19 support payment to Lough Neagh fishermen.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to invite departmental officials to appear before the Committee to provide an update on the ongoing issue of Mobuoy dump.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to invite NI Farm Groups to the Committee to present on their proposal to legislate for a Farm Welfare Bill.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to request a RaISe research paper and briefing on a Farm Welfare Bill.

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

The next meeting of the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural affairs will take place on Thursday 21 January 2021 at 9.30 a.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

*The meeting adjourned at 12.40 p.m.*

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Declan McAleer, Chairperson, Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development

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Date